Most of Mount Rainier’s wildlife is fairly elusive. In summer you may see deer, marmots, and squirrels during your visit, and maybe even mountain goats if you venture into the highcountry. What’s missing here? The Pacific fisher, a small carnivore the size of a house cat, has been missing from its native habitat on Mount Rainier’s slopes since the mid-1930s. The first fisher reintroduction inside the park is expected to take place in winter 2017. Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks are working with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Conservation Northwest to restore fishers to their historical range in the Washington Cascade Mountains.

Last year 23 fishers were released on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, just south of the park. Biologists are monitoring fisher movements with radio telemetry from the air. The goal is to release 80 fishers in the southern Washington Cascades before moving to the North Cascades.

The fisher is a member of the weasel family that thrives in mature forests. Along with wolves, wolverines, and lynx, fishers were eliminated from Mount Rainier early in the last century. Fishers throughout Washington State declined through over-trapping, and habitat loss associated with an expanding human population. The State listed them as an endangered species in 1998.

Ecosystems respond to the interactions among all their constituent species, each one representing an integral component of the whole. Generally, more complete ecosystems are more stable. The return of the Pacific fisher will restore a critical native predator to a spectacular forest ecosystem.

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Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks

Join a park ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing. Discuss the ecology of the Paradise area during these two hour guided walks.

Snowshoe walks are offered on weekends and holidays through March, weather permitting. Public snowshoe walks are offered at 11:00 am and 1:30 pm, and traverse 1.8 miles. Walks are limited to 25 people, eight years old or older, on a first-come, first-served basis. A sign-up sheet is available at the Jackson Visitor Center information desk one hour before each walk (all those attending must be present for sign-up).

Snowshoes for the ranger-led walks are provided by the park. A $5.00 donation from each snowshoe walk participant helps the park provide snowshoe walks, and repair and replace snowshoes. Don’t forget your snow clothing, hats, mittens, and suitable boots. You can sink into the snow even with snowshoes on.

Organized groups (up to 25 people, ages 15 - 25) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 2:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum, the Jackson Visitor Center, or call (360) 569-6575. The park also offers snowshoe walks to school groups by reservation only. Call (360) 569-6592 for school group reservations.

Snow Play Area

Sliding and sledding are permitted only in the designated snow play area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Runs are constructed when there’s sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. The snow play area may remain open until late March, depending on snow.

Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is open to sliding (except skiing and snowboarding). Serious injuries and fatalities have occurred elsewhere when people have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down steep slopes, or broken through thin snow into stream gorges.

• Access the snow play area from the main trailhead behind the visitor center.
• Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted.
• Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.

Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric such as wool or polypropylene next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer, not in jeans or T-shirts. Wear a hat, gloves, and snow-sealed boots. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10:00 am - 4:15 pm, weekends & holidays).

Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Free permits are available at the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise on weekends and holidays. Camp in designated areas well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots. When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snow caves to keep others from falling in. Fires are not permitted.

The gate at Longmire to Paradise closes nightly. Plows routinely operate on the wrong side of the road when it is closed. A sign at Paradise will indicate when the road is open and safe for downhill travel.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of up to 80, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least two weeks in advance by calling (360) 569-6575. Access to 24-hour restrooms and emergency supplies are available in the middle parking lot near the Guide House. Others should use “blue bags” to remove human waste from the park and deposit blue bags in the special barrel provided. The blue bag barrel is located in the tunnel to the Paradise upper parking lot restroom.

Do NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!

Proper food storage is required. Hang your food, garbage, and scented items or secure in approved hard-sided containers. Hard-sided containers are required for camping at Paradise, Reflection Lakes, Tatoosh, and Mazama. Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan—ask a ranger when you get your permit. Approved containers for winter camping at Paradise are five-gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids, or manufactured wildlife resistant food containers.

Overnight parking is allowed in designated areas only. Do not set your parking brake; it may freeze. Avoid parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger or listen to Radio 1610-AM Paradise, to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

Winter Weather Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts: (206) 526-6677
http://www.nwac.us/avalanche-current/cascade-west-south/
Highway Pass Reports: (800) 695-7623 or dial 511 http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/
NOTICE: Marijuana is illegal in Mount Rainier National Park

While limited recreational use of marijuana is now legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park, surrounding national forests, and all federal lands.

Pets
Leashed pets are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking lots, and on roads currently open to public vehicles.

Prepare & Take Care
Mount Rainier offers excellent opportunities for exploration and adventure, but sometimes people get lost, injured, or worse. Reduce your risk by following these guidelines:

Dress Warmly & Stay Dry
Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily cool you of body heat. To avoid hypothermia and frostbite, dress warmly and stay dry. Wear layers of wool or synthetics like pile and polypropylene under a waterproof shell. Avoid exposure to wind. Drink frequently, drink lots of water, and take warm-up breaks indoors.

Pay attention to the weather
It's easy to get lost or fall when the weather turns bad. The trail can quickly cover with snow, or thick fog can blanket your route. You need to know where you are and how to get to safety. You also need to know how to assess avalanche hazards to minimize potential risk. Don't head out when storms are predicted.

Prepare
When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "Winter 10 Essentials" and know how to use them. In addition, obtain compass bearings to Camp Muir or other off-trail destinations; carry an altimeter; wear rain- and snow-resistant clothing; and take a whistle, a "space blanket," and a snow shovel.

Take Care
Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone or in poor visibility.

If you are not truly knowledgeable and prepared, or if the weather is questionable, don't push your luck!

Accessibility
Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campgrounds are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities.

In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistive listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits is available; and the building and exhibits are accessible by wheelchair.

The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible when snow-free. TDD: (360) 569-2177.

Bikes in the Park
Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano
Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead.

Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground! A location 200 feet or more above river level should be safe.

Become A Mount Rainier Steward
Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow!

Consider joining our team as a park volunteer. Your contribution of time and energy will protect the magnificent natural and cultural areas entrusted to us, and you'll go home with a sense of pride at having participated in something worthwhile. Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Learn more at www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm.

Washington's National Park Fund serves as the park's official philanthropic partner. Founded by Governor Daniel Evans in 1993, the fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, accepts charitable gifts that are then given back to the park for projects focusing on these four main areas:

- Trail Maintenance and Search and Rescue
- Youth and Education Programs
- Science and Research
- Volunteerism and Stewardship

Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, or purchase a Washington State license plate for your vehicle, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Please consider giving back to Mount Rainier National Park through Washington's National Park Fund. Visit http://wnpf.org/ for more information. Tax ID#: 01-0869799

Winter on the Mountain: Are You Ready?

As one of the snowiest places on Earth, Mount Rainier National Park boasts a long season for outstanding winter recreational activities in a true wilderness setting.

History has shown that snow, wind, and low visibility conditions resulting from winter storms significantly increase visitor mishaps and serious accidents in the backcountry. Many winter hikers and snowshoers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges or winter weather conditions that can occur at any time. Conditions change rapidly during the day, and freezing temperatures, wet snow, and high winds can be encountered at any time during your hike. This has left many day and overnight hikers, skiers, and snowboarders exposed and suddenly thrust into life-threatening situations due to weather resulting in injuries and fatalities.

Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly—a pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Make sure you are aware of weather forecasts for the area, and heed any cautions or warnings. Navigation in storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you are ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that's not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather. Prepare for the fact that daylight hours are short in winter; you will have less time to get out to your destination and to return. Always carry a flashlight or headlamp, and extra batteries. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the winter ten essentials, etc.) is a must.

Be prepared for route-finding conditions. A GPS device with local maps pre-loaded, extra batteries, and knowledge of how to use it is the only way to navigate the Muir Snowfield in poor visibility. Even a great map, compass, and altimeter will not work in poor conditions on the snowfield. Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate for snow at higher elevations. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead note important landmarks and consider using wands on snow-covered trails. If this becomes difficult to follow, stop and determine where you are before continuing. It is extremely important that you know how to use your navigation tool.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. If at any point you begin to feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around, get out safely, and call it a day. Mount Rainier will be waiting for you on your next trip.
**Paradise Overnight Parking Areas**

![Paradise Inn](image)

**Winter Driving and Safety**

As winter and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Traction requirements updates are posted on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS. Listen to Radio 1610-AM at Paradise for updates to changing road information and requirements.

Most of Mount Rainier’s roads are snowed in and closed to vehicle access during winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather.

The Carbon River Road is closed to vehicles just past the entrance parking lot, but is open to pedestrians and bicycles. Because it is at a lower elevation and often snow-free, the Carbon River Trail to Ipsut Creek can be a good place to hike during winter.

Rangers and snow plowers evaluate road, weather, avalanche, and staffing conditions each morning before making a decision on whether it is safe to open the gate to Paradise. The Longmire to Paradise road hours are 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily, conditions permitting. The road may close early or remain closed the entire day due to avalanche danger, severe weather, or with a shortage of the necessary staffing to maintain safe access. Visitors will need to be heading down the hill from Paradise by 4:30 pm to clear the Longmire gate by its 5:00 pm closure. The uphill gate at Longmire closes at 4:00 pm.

**Winter Driving Safety Tips**

- Keep your headlights on for visibility.
- Drive in the appropriate lane for your direction of travel. Avoid the center line.
- Ensure that your chains fit your tires and practice installing them before you need them.
- Stop in a chain-up area, pullout, or parking lot to install, adjust, or remove tire chains.
- When parking, avoid setting your emergency brake. It may freeze.
- Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of the road are not.
- Stay alert, use caution, and anticipate hazards.

**Follow Traction Requirements**

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains** when driving in the park in winter and spring as conditions can change quickly throughout the day. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds must carry a second set of chains and chain up whenever traction tires or chains are required. Traction tires or chains may be required at anytime in winter or spring. Obey the posted traction requirement:

- The road ahead has patches of snow and/or ice. Your vehicle should have approved all-season tires, snow tires, or chains** on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by “M/S”, “MS”, “+/-”, or “All Season” on the sidewall of the tires.
- The road ahead is snow-packed or icy and drivers can expect some difficulty. Your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable, or plastic)** on the drive wheels. AWD and 4WD vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels, are in four wheel drive, and carry one set of chains** in the vehicle for later installation if needed.

All vehicles must have chains** on the drive wheels including AWD and 4WD.

** AutoSocks are allowed for passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds as an alternative traction device.

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**Food & Lodging**

For in-park lodging reservations, call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mtrainierguestservices.com

**National Park Inn**

- Front Desk: 7:00 am - 10:00 pm daily
- Dining Room: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm Sunday to Thursday
- 7:00 am - 6:00 pm Fridays, Saturdays, and holidays

**Paradise Inn**

- Closed for the season

**Paradise Camp Deli and Gift Shop**

- Closed for the season

**Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop**

- Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities.

**GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK**

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**Park Partners**

- Discover Your Northwest
  - www.discovernw.org
- Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers
  - www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm
- Student Conservation Association
  - www.theca.org
- Washington Trails Association
  - www.wta.org
- Mount Rainier National Park Associates
  - www.mrnpa.org
- Visit Rainier
  - visitrainier.com
- Washington’s National Park Fund
  - www.wnpf.org

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**Winter road status updates and park news at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS**