Mount Rainier: A Winter Wonderland

The mountain's landscape undergoes a dramatic transformation in winter. Its colorful subalpine meadows and lush old-growth forests are draped with a thick blanket of snow for much of the year. The sometimes dusty-grey appearing glaciers are freshly covered in white and the snow-covered steeply pitched roofs of the rustic historic buildings are rimmed with icicles, creating a picture perfect setting.

This winter wonderland creates spectacular opportunities for cross country skiing, snowplay, snowshoeing, winter photography, and cloud watching. At lower elevations you may find snow-free opportunities for hiking and exploring. Winter is the perfect time to visit historic Longmire with its rustic buildings draped in snow, lowland trails, and, on clear days, views of the mountain. Activities and information are available at the Longmire Museum. The National Park Inn offers meals, lodging, and a general store.

Stop by the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise weekends and holidays to learn about the mountain’s winter ecology by taking a snowshoe walk with a ranger and by viewing the exhibits and film. Warm up in the visitor center while enjoying the snowy view from the great hall. Have lunch or browse in the gift shop. Winter activities at Paradise include sliding, crosscountry skiing, winter camping, and snowboarding. See the facility hours on page 4 for snowshoe and ski rental locations inside the park.

Wander through a temperate rainforest, hike, and explore at Carbon River. Visit the ranger station for area information.

Welcome ...

... to winter at Mount Rainier National Park!

Winter is a magical time here at Mount Rainier. With snow covering the park the majority of the year, it is a destination for those seeking a true winter experience. Snow-covered landscapes evoke a sense of wonder and draw many to explore on snowshoes and skis, while others choose to enjoy time with family and friends on the sledding run at Paradise.

Winter is also a challenging time for those staff and volunteers involved in maintaining roads and facilities under extreme winter conditions. Snowplow operators are on the road early clearing roads, rangers assess avalanche danger and patrol snowy roads daily, and utility operators keep the power and heat on. The National Park Service employees and volunteers are all here to help you have an enjoyable winter visit. We are glad you are here and hope you will share your stories with others online at #RainierWinter.

As you head home, our gateway community businesses offer good food, coffee, arts and crafts. I encourage you to enjoy their hospitality.

Have a wonderful visit at Mount Rainier.

Chip Jenkins
Superintendent

Snowplows Working!
Never ski, slide, or camp on plowed roadways or parking lots! Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.

Tire Chains Required
All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when traveling in the park in winter and spring. See page 4 for more information on requirements and winter travel.

Paradise Construction
Work continues on the Paradise Inn Annex through March 29, 2019. For your safety, avoid construction areas.

Winter road updates at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
Winter Recreation

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 (staffing dependent), 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 sunscreen, sunglasses, layers of warm clothes, hats, mittens, and suitable boots. You can sink into the snow even with snowshoes on.

Organized groups of 15-25 people may reserve snowshoe walks on certain weekends and holidays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum, at 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.

Snowplay Area
Sliding and sledding are permitted only in the designated snowplay area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Runs are only opened when there's sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. The snowplay 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 snowplay 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 safe and clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.
• Take broken sleds home for disposal.

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 waterproof boots. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10:00 am - 4:15 pm, weekends and 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 Jackson Visitor Center weekends and holidays, and at the Paradise Ranger Station Mondays-Thursdays. 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. Snowplows routinely operate on the wrong side of the road when it is closed. 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.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of up to 60, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least four weeks in advance by calling (360) 569-6575. Groups of 13 persons or greater must request a Special Use Permit by e-mailing mora_special_use@nps.gov.

Access to 24-hour restrooms and an emergency phone are available in the upper parking lot near the Guide House. Others should use "blue bags" to remove human waste from the park and/or 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 Ridge. 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.

In Case of Emergency
Dial 911 from any phone located inside the park.

Climbing & Backpacking
Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. Around 70 well-skilled climbers attempt it in the winter off-season. Climbing and backpacking in winter are much more demanding and hazardous than in summer. The climbing fee is $50 dollars/person 25 years and older, and $35 dollars/person 24 years and younger, per calendar year and can be paid in advance at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.html. Climbing information is also available on the website.

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the wilderness and for travel above 10,000 feet and/or on glaciers. Rangers issue permits from the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise weekends and holidays. Self-registration is available at the Paradise Ranger Station, Carbon River Ranger Station, and at the winter closure of SR410.

Overnight parking at Paradise is in designated areas only. See the overnight parking map on page 4.

Guided climbs and climbing seminars available by:
• Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
• International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
• Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

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/getinvolved/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

Skiing, Snowshoeing, & Snowboarding
Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmarked routes are available from the Longmire Museum (daily) and Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise (weekends and holidays).

In early winter or in years of low snowfall, trees and other plants are damaged by skiers and snowboarders when snow depth is not sufficient to protect vegetation. Ski and snowboard only in those areas where the snow is deep enough to cover and protect vegetation. There should be at least five feet of snow before building jumps.

Winter Weather Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts
(206) 526-6677
http://www.nwc.us avalanche-forecasts/ current/cascade-west-south/

Highway Pass Reports
(800) 695-7623 or dial 511
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/
Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve the natural and cultural resources in this area, and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. This information has been prepared to help you stay safe and protect the park during your visit.

Winter Wildlife

The snows of winter concentrate wildlife where life is easier—where shallow snow provides easier travel and access to food. Parking areas and roadways are efficient travel corridors for deer and foxes, and deer may find the most available forage along roadways. Many visitors mistakenly think that feeding the animals helps them through the winter months. But this brings wildlife closer to roads and people, where they can be injured or killed by vehicles. Please keep your food away from wildlife. Pick up food particles and do not leave your lunch on your bumper—a fox or aJay will find it. And lastly, feeding wildlife is illegal and you may be fined.

NOTICE: Marijuana is Illegal in Mount Rainier National Park

While limited recreational use of marijuana is 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.

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help and prepared, or if the weather is

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 upstream—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.

Avalanche Aware!

Avalanches are common in winter and spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing in avalanche terrain. Summer trails may lead through avalanche terrain. Consider snowpack, weather, and topography in selecting your route. Ask yourself, "Will this slope slide?" and if it does, "Where will I or my partner go?" Carry an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel. Even small avalanches can be deadly.

Carry the Winter 10 Essentials and know how to use them!

1. Shovel (avalanche rescue, emergency shelter/dig a snow cave)
2. Full Length Insulated Sleeping Pad
3. Stove & Fuel (melt water)
4. Heat Packs
5. Goggles & Wool/Pile Hat
6. Gloves (waterproof/lined)
7. Avalanche Transceiver
8. Avalanche Probe
9. Reliable Weather & Avalanche Forecasts
10. Map, Compass, & GPS (with extra batteries)

Winter storms along the Muir Snowfield can produce hurricane force winds, blinding snow, and white out conditions. Avalanches occur with frightening regularity in the Paradise area. Each person in the hiking party should carry and know how to use a beacon, probe, and shovel.

Avalanche conditions challenge even the best mountaineers. Obtain daily avalanche forecasts from the Northwest Avalanche Center at http://www.nwac.us/. Before your hike, consult a park ranger for current conditions on the mountain.

Give advance notice of your plans to a responsible person so they can contact rangers if you fail to return. Cell phone coverage is limited inside the park.

Prepare and Take Care

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 wind-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!

Prepare 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 and prepare 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 the trail 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.

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.

Winter Storms

Winter storms may bring excessive snowfall, strong winds, blinding snow, and white out conditions. Avalanches occur with frightening regularity in the Paradise area. Each person in the hiking party should carry and know how to use a beacon, probe, and shovel.

Avalanche conditions challenge even the best mountaineers. Obtain daily avalanche forecasts from the Northwest Avalanche Center at http://www.nwac.us/. Before your hike, consult a park ranger for current conditions on the mountain.

Give advance notice of your plans to a responsible person so they can contact rangers if you fail to return. Cell phone coverage is limited inside the park.

Carry the Winter 10 Essentials and know how to use them!

1. Shovel (avalanche rescue, emergency shelter/dig a snow cave)
2. Full Length Insulated Sleeping Pad
3. Stove & Fuel (melt water)
4. Heat Packs
5. Goggles & Wool/Pile Hat
6. Gloves (waterproof/lined)
7. Avalanche Transceiver
8. Avalanche Probe
9. Reliable Weather & Avalanche Forecasts
10. Map, Compass, & GPS (with extra batteries)

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 upstream—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.

Avalanche Aware!

Avalanches are common in winter and spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing in avalanche terrain. Summer trails may lead through avalanche terrain. Consider snowpack, weather, and topography in selecting your route. Ask yourself, "Will this slope slide?" and if it does, "Where will I or my partner go?" Carry an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel. Even small avalanches can be deadly.

Carry the Winter 10 Essentials and know how to use them!

1. Shovel (avalanche rescue, emergency shelter/dig a snow cave)
2. Full Length Insulated Sleeping Pad
3. Stove & Fuel (melt water)
4. Heat Packs
5. Goggles & Wool/Pile Hat
6. Gloves (waterproof/lined)
7. Avalanche Transceiver
8. Avalanche Probe
9. Reliable Weather & Avalanche Forecasts
10. Map, Compass, & GPS (with extra batteries)
## Winter Driving and Safety

### Winter Driving Safety

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Tire chain requirement 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.

Rangers and snowplow operators 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 approximately 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 must head downhill from Paradise by 4:30 pm to clear the Longmire gate by its 5:00 pm closure. The uphill path at Longmire closes at 4:00 pm.

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when driving in the park in winter and spring. Use may be required at anytime. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds must carry a second set of chains and chain installation, adjust, or remove tire chains. AutoSocks are allowed for passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds as an alternative traction device.

### Winter Driving Safety Tips

- **Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction.**
- **Reduce your speed.**
- **Allow extra distance between vehicles.**
- **Stay well back when following plows.**
- **Use low gears, especially when driving downhill.**
- **Never stop or park in a traffic lane. Your life may depend on it!**
- **If your RWD vehicle skids: reduce gas, steer where you want to go.**
- **If your FWD vehicle skids: accelerate slightly and steer where you want to go.**
- **Brake sparingly to avoid skidding by locking your brakes.**
- **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.**

---

**Paradise Overnight Parking Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Lot</td>
<td>Overnight Parking By backcountry permit only Park head-in to island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson Visitor Center</td>
<td>24-hour Restrooms and Pay Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradise Inn</td>
<td>(Closed in winter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narada Falls</td>
<td>Overnigt Parking Park head-in to back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise**

- Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, and climbing and backcountry permits.
- Climbing permit self-registration at the Paradise Ranger Station.

- **January 1 – March 29**
  - 10:00 am – 4:15 pm Friday – Sunday and holidays
  - 10:00 am – 4:15 pm weekends and holidays

- **March 30 – April 30**
  - Hours may be extended mid-winter.

**Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise Camp Deli & Gift Shop**

- Food, gifts, books
- 11:00 am – 4:00 pm weekends and holidays

**Paradise Ranger Station**

- (360) 569-7020
- Backcountry and climbing permits, information, Open until 4:00 pm Monday - Thursday or as staffing allows

**Longmire Museum**

- (360) 569-6575
- Information, exhibits, book sales, and climbing and backcountry permits.
- 9:00 am – 4:30 pm daily or as staffing allows

---

**National Park Inn at Longmire**

- Open year-round
- Lodging, dining room
- Reservations (360) 569-2275 or mtrainierguestservices.com
- Front Desk 7:00 am – 10:00 pm
- Dining Room
  - Breakfast 7:00 am – 11:00 am
  - Lunch 11:30 am – 4:30 pm
  - Dinner 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm Sunday – Thursday
  - 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm Friday – Saturday

**Longmire General Store**

- Open year-round
- Food, gifts, books, apparel
- 10:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday
- 8:30 am – 6:00 pm Weekends and holidays

**Carbon River Ranger Station**

- (360) 829-9639
- Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information
- Call for hours

---

**Services Outside Mount Rainier National Park**

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

---

**GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK**

---

**Keep in Touch!**

- Superintendent
  - Chip Jenkins
  - E-mail: MORAInfo@nps.gov
  - Park Headquarters
    - (360) 569-2211
  - Lost and Found
    - (360) 569-6608

Winter road updates at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS