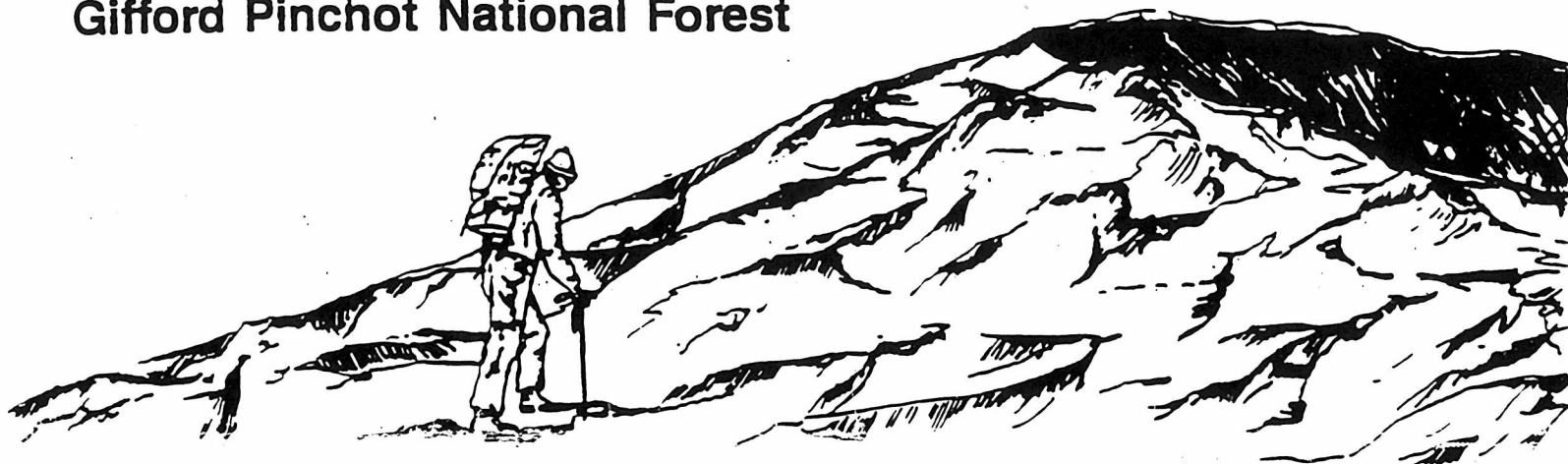


Mount St. Helens Climbing Reservation Application

Gifford Pinchot National Forest

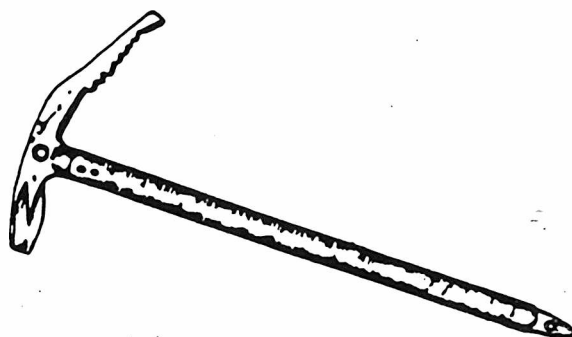


A Permit

Is required for climbing above the 4800 ft. elevation on Mount St. Helens between May 15 and October 31. During the remainder of the year climbers simply register before and sign out after their climb at the Climbers Register, located on State Hwy 503, 23 miles east of Woodland, Wa. The Forest Service has implemented the permit system for four major reasons: 1) To protect the biophysical features and processes from large numbers of people who may cause unacceptable resource damage. 2) To provide the visitor with an uncrowded primitive to semi-primitive recreation opportunity. 3) To provide the visitor with information on regulations, ethics, safety and current conditions. 4) To collect information on the amount, type and location of use so the Forest Service can better manage the Mount St. Helens resource.

A Quota System

Limits the daily number of visitors climbing above the 4800 ft. elevation on Mount St. Helens between May 15 and October 31. The Forest Service will monitor use and adjust the quota as necessary.



Early Reservations

Are strongly encouraged. Reservations may be made beginning February 1. Applications postmarked before February 1 will not be accepted and will be returned by mail. Early reservations increase your chances of obtaining the climbing date of your choice. Allow at least two weeks for the written confirmation of a climbing reservation.

Mail completed Climbing Reservation Applications to:

**Mount St. Helens NVM
42218 N.E. Yale Bridge Road
Amboy, Washington 98601**

To make an early reservation, one person in your group should follow these steps:

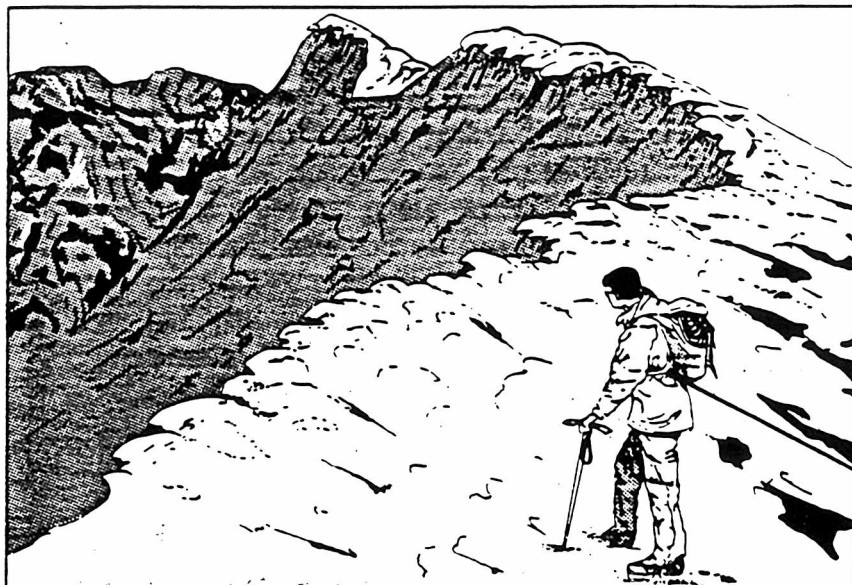
1.
Fill out the application form completely, including your group's first, second, and third choice of dates.
2.
Mail or personally deliver the application to the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument Headquarters. Applications are considered in order of the postmark date or personal delivery date.
3.
Within two weeks of receiving your application, the Forest Service will mail you a response. If your requested dates are available, you will receive a permit and an information flyer. If none of your dates are available, you will be notified by mail and encouraged to apply again. If you have any questions contact the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument Headquarters, Climbing Program (360) 750-3961.
4.
Unreserved permits for forty climbers will be available daily at Jack's Restaurant and Store, located on State Route 503, 23 miles east of Woodland (I-5 Exit 21). These permits will be available by lottery each day at 6:00 pm for climbers wishing to climb the following day. You may enter the lottery beginning at 5:30 pm. The lottery will be held promptly at 6:00 pm. All climbers present may enter the drawing. Lottery winners will be issued a permit for their group of up to four climbers. Larger groups will need to compete for additional permits. Permits remaining after the lottery will be available on a first come first served basis.
5.
Small groups of between 4 and 10 are recommended in order to minimize impacts on Mount St. Helens. Party size of 12 is the maximum per climbing permit.
6.
Each permit is valid for 24 hours starting at midnight for the day of issue.
7.
Mount St. Helens is an active volcano. All climbers will be exposing themselves to volcanic activity which cannot always be predicted. At times, the volcanic condition of the mountain may result in closure of the mountain to climbing. Volcanic activity advisories will be posted at the Climbers Register.

Mount St. Helens Climbing Information

Gifford Pinchot National Forest



USDA Forest Service
Pacific Northwest Region



EMERGENCY TELEPHONES

For emergency assistance, use the telephones found at the following locations; Climbers Bivoac, Marble Mountain Sno*Park and Pine Creek Information Center. These telephones automatically dial the Emergency Dispatch Center. Commercial telephones may be found in Cougar.

WEATHER AND AVALANCHE

For current snow avalanche information, call (206) 526-6677. For the local weather forecast, call WEATHERLINE at (503) 243-7575. NOAA weather radio also provides continuous weather forecasts and warnings. Those with special high-band FM radios can tune to frequencies 162.550 and 162.475 for information.

CLIMBING INFORMATION

For current climbing and permit information call (360) 750-3961, or write to:

Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument
42218 N.E. Yale Bridge Road
Amboy, Washington 98601

MOUNT ST. HELENS

Volcanic activity at Mount St. Helens remains relatively quiet. The mountain will continue to be open for climbing as long as the volcanic hazard remains low. A permit is required for climbing above 4800 feet. These permits may be canceled if the level of volcanic hazard increases. Climbers are responsible for their own safety. Current volcanic hazard and closure information is posted at the Climbers Register at Jack's Store.

Access into the crater itself is prohibited.

VOLCANIC HAZARDS

Mount St. Helens is an active volcano. In addition to the usual risks associated with mountaineering, climbers will be exposing themselves to hazards from volcanic activity, which cannot always be predicted. The latest volcanic activity advisories are posted at the Climbers Register. All climbers are required to sign in and out at the Climbers Register. This registration information will be helpful in the event a rescue becomes necessary. Rescue is not guaranteed, and it may take 24 to 72 hours to initiate a search, depending upon the level of volcanic activity and weather conditions.

VOLCANIC ERUPTION, WHAT TO DO?

In case of volcanic eruption, descend the mountain immediately. Avoid gullies or drainages which may channel mudflows. If caught in ash-fall, breathe through a moist cloth, protect your eyes and descend into the wind. If rocks are falling, protect your head and seek shelter behind large boulders or cliffs.

VOLCANIC HAZARD LEVELS

The following are the three levels of volcanic hazard climbers will find posted at the Climbers Register:

Low Volcanic Hazard

The volcano is at or below normal background levels of volcanic activity. There is little chance that any eruptive activity will occur which would pose danger to a person outside of the crater. The mountain is open to climbing.

Moderate Volcanic Hazard

The volcano is undergoing some activity that may lead to an eruption. This level of unrest means there is a low to moderate level of danger to climbers outside the crater. Climbers should use caution and avoid a prolonged stay on the mountain. The crater area is closed under this advisory.

High Volcanic Hazard

The volcano is undergoing major volcanic activity or is exhibiting unpredictable behavior. Hazardous eruptive activity is likely to develop soon or may be in progress. The mountain is closed to climbing until hazard abates.

CLIMBING PERMITS

From May 15 through October 31 Advance reservations are available by mail or in person at the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument Headquarters. Unreserved permits for forty climbers will be available daily at Jack's Restaurant and Store, located on State Hwy. 503, 23 miles east of Woodland WA (I-5 exit 21). These permits will be available by lottery each day at 6:00 p.m. for climbers wishing to climb the following day. You may enter the lottery beginning at 5:30 p.m. The lottery will be held promptly at 6:00 p.m. All climbers present may enter the drawing. Lottery winners will be issued a permit for their group for up to four climbers. Larger groups will need to compete for additional permits. Permits remaining after the lottery will be available on a first come first served basis.

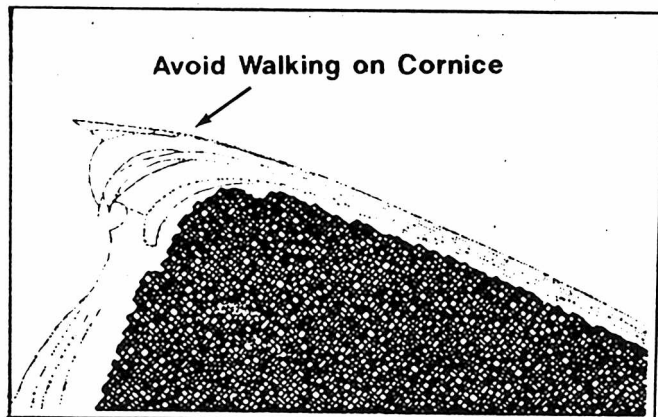
From November 1 through May 14 Climbers simply register before and sign out after their climb at the Climbers Register at Jack's Store, located on State Hwy 503, 23 miles east of Woodland WA. A winter climb may require a high camp, due to the long over-snow approach.

During months of snow cover, Sno*Park permits are required for parking along the 8300 road system leading to the climbing routes.

SAFETY

Even though the 8,365 foot Mount St. Helens is not considered a difficult climb by experienced climbers, its high elevation, irregular and frequently snow covered slopes and rapidly changing weather conditions can prove dangerous to those not properly experienced or equipped.

During winter and early spring, be alert to the potential for snow avalanches on lee and sun facing slopes. The crater rim of Mount St. Helens, including the summit area, is highly unstable. When on the rim, be careful not to cause additional rock fall or avalanche release; scientists may be at work below you in the crater. Large and dangerous cornices of snow and ice often form on the rim as well. Climbers are advised to stay off the cornice at the crater rim.



The crater is an area of extreme hazard. Rock, ice, or snow avalanches occur almost continuously. The lava dome is unstable and may produce rock fall at any time. Steam and gas explosions may occur without warning. These explosions, capable of sending ash and rock

debris miles from the dome and crater, including the rim and south side climbing routes, could be fatal for anyone nearby.

CLIMBING ROUTES

Monitor Ridge via Climbers Bivouac Monitor Ridge is the primary route used by climbers during the summer. It has the easiest access and highest elevation starting point. It is reached by following Forest Roads 8100 and 830 to Climbers Bivouac, elevation 3740 ft. No water is available. There is space for "car" camping near the trailhead. It is 4 1/2 miles from trailhead to summit, and involves an elevation gain of 4500 ft. For the first 2 miles and 1000 ft. gain in elevation, you will follow the Ptarmigan Trail; a well marked path through lush green forest land. For the remaining 2 1/2 miles and 3500 ft. to the crater rim, you will travel above timberline along the exposed slopes of Monitor Ridge. This part of the climb ascends a series of lava flows which form sometimes steep and unstable boulder fields. By following the route marked with wooden posts, you will conserve your energy, maximize personal safety and protect the returning natural vegetation. The final 1000 ft. below the summit is loose and erodible volcanic ash. The route is mostly snow covered through early June, and generally free of snow by mid July.

Butte Camp The approach for this route is via the Toutle Trail 238 near Red Rock Pass on Forest Road 8100, elevation 2800 ft., which leads to the Butte Camp Trail 238A. The distance from trailhead to summit is about 5 1/2 miles. The meadow and year-round creek at elevation 4033 ft. make the Butte Camp route a good choice for those wishing to camp on the slopes of the mountain. No water is available above this point. The higher meadow, at 4600 ft. is a research area and is **closed to camping**. This is an excellent route for late winter and early summer. The wide open slopes above 4600 ft. provide excellent ski and glissade descents. After the snow melts, however, the steep approach and non consolidated volcanic ash transform the climb into a difficult one. By July, expect a scenic and inviting approach at the lower elevations, but a rigorous climb above timberline.

Worm Flows This is the primary winter route. Access is from the Marble Mountain Sno*Park, which, at 2700 ft., provides the closest winter approach to the summit. The Sno*Park is at the end of the snow plowed area near Road 8312 on Forest Road 8300. The climbing route is approached via the Swift Creek Ski Trail, 244B and 244.

Leave the Sno*Park at the west side of the parking area on Trail 244B and proceed northward, joining Trail 244. About 2 1/2 miles from the Sno*Park you will emerge above timberline. The best climbing route above this point is as follows: At timberline, cross to the west side of Swift Creek, immediately upstream from Chocolate Falls. Proceed north along the first ridge system west of Swift Creek. This portion of the climb ascends a series of lava flows which form steps, each a few hundred feet high. As this ridge merges with others, it trends slightly westward, eventually joining with the Monitor Ridge route at about 7500 ft. Above this point the route ascends a large unbroken slope for the remaining 800 ft. Snow conditions can vary greatly with changes in temperature, slope, wind, elevation, time and precipitation. Avoid cornices and snow loaded slopes below them, as well as gully bottoms. Come prepared for changing snow and weather conditions.

Other Routes There are any number of other feasible routes. The more experienced climber can scan topographic and forest maps for road and trail access information and plan trips to suit their needs. Only the most obvious routes are described here. The USGS 15" Mount St. Helens quadrangle map is a helpful information source for those wishing to take other routes.

EQUIPMENT

For your enjoyment and safety, proper equipment is essential. Experienced climbers frequently carry the following items.

Layered clothing (regulates body temp.)

Wind breaker - full body

(chilling winds are common)

Rain gear (this is the Northwest!)

Sun glasses (snow can be blinding)

Goggles (blowing ash protection)

Glasses (in lieu of contact lenses)

Sun screen (your skin will thank you)

Good hiking boots (feet deserve them)

Ice axe (any time of year)

Crampons (for use on snow and ice)

Food (for "go" power)

Water (all routes are dry in summer)

First aid kit (cuts and blisters)

Take note that blowing ash can cause major eye discomfort to contact lense wearers. Opt for prescription glasses if at all possible.

SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT AND RESEARCH SITES

Climbers and hikers at Mount St. Helens have the opportunity to step inside a unique natural laboratory and experience the evolution of a changing landscape.

Plants are slowly returning to the lower slopes of the volcano. The portion of the Monitor Ridge Route from the top of Ptarmigan Trail (4800') to above Monitor Rock (5994') is marked with wooden posts. By using the marked route when ascending Monitor Ridge, you will protect fragile plant life and enable future climbers to experience undisturbed slopes punctuated with wildflowers and other plants.

The US Geological Survey maintains various monitoring sites around the mountain. Survey markers, antennas, glass reflectors, fence posts, wooden targets and steel rods are common sights. Each serves a specific purposes. Most frequently asked about are the large steel tripods used as instrument mounts for survey equipment, which can detect the slightest swelling or deformation of the volcano's flanks. There are also numerous seismometer stations used to register and measure earthquakes. This monitoring equipment is extremely sensitive. Please do not remove or in any way disturb these equipment sites.