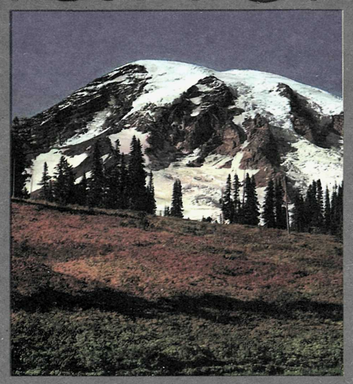
mount rainier



50th anniversary Yakima Park 1931-1981

GETTING TO RAINIER
Longmire is 113 kilometers (70 miles) southeast of Tacoma, 153 kilometers (95 miles) southeast of Seattle, and 166 kilometers (103 miles) west of Yakima.

Rail: AMTRAK operates the Coast Starlight/Daylight from San Francisco and the Empire Builder from Chicago. Both trains stop in Seattle; and nearby at Centralia and Tacoma (the Coast Starlight/Daylight) and at Yakima, Ellensburg, and East Auburn (the Empire Builder).

Bus: From June to mid-September, buses run daily to the park from Tacoma and Seattle. For information, write the Mount Rainier National Park Hospitality Service, 4820 So. Washington, Tacoma, WA 98409.

Air: Seattle and Portland have airline service.

WE'RE JOINING THE METRIC WORLD
The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful to park visitors from other nations.

ADMINISTRATION
Mount Rainier National Park, established on March 2, 1899, has an area of 980 square kilometers (376 square miles) and is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Ashford, WA 98304, is in immediate charge. Tel. (206) 569-2211.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service **U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR**

"Listen to me, my good friends. I must talk to you," a tall Yakima hunter named Sluiskin told two young men whom he had just guided to the base of Mount Rainier. In words recalled later, Sluiskin then warned the pair:

> *Your plan to climb Takhoma [Rainier] is all foolishness. No one can do it and live. . . .*
>
> *At first the way is easy, the task seems light. The broad snowfields over which I have hunted the mountain goat, offer an inviting path. But above them you will have to climb over steep rocks over-hanging deep gorges where a misstep would hurl you far down—down to certain death. . . .*
>
> *And if you should escape these perils and reach the great snowy dome, then a bitterly cold and furious tempest will sweep you off into space like a withered leaf. . . .*
>
> *Don't you go!*
>
> *You make my heart sick. . . .*

The year was 1870. The mountain was second to none then known in America and no documented climb to the summit had yet been made. Despite Sluiskin's words, the two determined men, Philemon Beecher Van Trump and Hazard Stevens, began the ascent and reached the summit late that afternoon of August 17.

Only the great good fortune of finding a warm volcanic steam cave on the summit kept the two men from freezing to death during an unplanned overnight stay there. By the time the two straggled into camp again the next day, Sluiskin had given them up for dead. When finally he realized that Rainier had been conquered, his words showed profound admiration for men who had done what he considered impossible: *"Skookum tilicum, skookum tumtum,"* he said wonderingly, *"Strong men, brave hearts."*

A MOUNTAIN BEYOND IMAGINING

Stevens and Van Trump's close brush with death on the summit gave them an appreciation for Mount Rainier's size that must be experienced to be believed. On a clear day, one can see the peak's snowfields from a distance of 200 kilometers (over 100 miles). The mind rebels at the idea that an object so distant and yet so much above intervening peaks can be anything more substantial than a cloud formation. But when the cloud refuses to dissipate and remains alone in the sky, the mind evaluates the possibilities and then, when the information is in, suddenly admits to the fact of Mount Rainier.

For those driving toward the park, the hours that follow the first glimpses are an eternity of hide-and-seek, played as one loses the great peak behind successively closer ranges. When finally the lower peaks are behind and the great mountain looms directly ahead, nearly 2,500 meters (8,000 feet) higher than anything nearby, one must come to grips with a new set of personal standards about mountains. In a 1915 article written for *The Mountaineer,* Bailey Willis, Stanford University professor of geology and member of the Northern Transcontinental Survey, found Mount Rainier to be unsurpassed in his experience.

> *I have seen the glories of Switzerland, the grandeur of the Andes, and the grace of the beautiful cone of Fujiyama, but among the most renowned scenery of the world, I know of nothing more majestic or more inspiring than the grandeur of my own old camping ground, Mount Rainier.*

SNOWFALL AND THE MOOD OF A WINTER MORNING

At 4,392 meters (14,410 feet), Mount Rainier reaches into the upper atmosphere to disturb great tides of moist maritime air as they flow eastward from across the Pacific. The resulting encounter creates spectacular cloud halos, wrings out the air, and produces a prodigious amount of snowfall. Paradise Park, located at 1,650 meters (5,400 feet) on the mountain's south slope, commonly has enough snow to bury the three-story high Paradise Inn right up to its roof. Even so, the road to Paradise is usually kept open in winter for visitors. When the weather is right, the trip can be most worthwhile. In the words of Josef Scaylea,

> *Mount Rainier speaks most eloquently in the winter, especially after it has been hiding, perhaps sulking for several weeks behind a curtain of clouds and rain. Then one cold morning we awaken and there it is, rising out of the swirling mists, its eastern profile shining in the early morning light. . . . This visual communion will perhaps go on for several mornings but will never be as impressive nor show the sparkle and enthusiasm of that morning of reawakening.*

Snowfall is heaviest from Paradise Park up to 2,900 meters (9,500 feet). At that height the mountain rears above the wet maritime air masses and the amount of snowfall decreases.

THE FOREST: SOLEMNITY AND REMOTENESS

So overwhelming is the presence of Mount Rainier that too little attention is paid to the park's encircling forest. Like all the old-growth forests of the Pacific Northwest, it is a classic of its kind. Douglas-fir, redcedars, and western hemlock soar more than 60 meters (200 feet) above mossy, fern-draped valley floors. There is a closeness, a solemnity, in this forest that imparts a feeling of remoteness. The forest in places like Ohanapecosh and Carbon succeeds especially well in this respect.

Tacoma, Seattle, and their counterparts are not just a few kilometers away—they seem not to exist.

Ohanapecosh is in the lowland; its forest is like that of many areas in the Puget Sound region. The tall, massive, and lush look of this forest provides a pleasant interlude for arriving park visitors and for those campers who stay at areas as Ohanapecosh or Cougar Rock. In a way, the lowland forest might be considered a dramatic ploy on the part of nature, for it hides Mount Rainier from those entering the park and lowers the curtain for those who are leaving.

SUBALPINE MEADOWS . . . A FULLNESS OF BEAUTY

Rainier is a mountain that epitomizes the fullness of beauty where life zones meet. Here, there is always a zone where winter meets the other seasons. Most visitors seek out the zone of contact between advancing springtime and retreating winter. There, in an interplay beginning in April at lowest elevations and ending at treeline in late August or early September, the wildflowers and greening meadows follow the melting snow.

By the time most visitors arrive at Mount Rainier, the line is well up the mountain. The open, subalpine meadowlands at Paradise and Sunrise are shedding their blankets of snow. The zone is vibrant; its intensity is sharpened by the contrast between snow and the purity of new life. Under the warmth of the sun, visitors respond much as plants do—with a rare enthusiasm for life. Israel C. Russell, distinguished American geologist, described the scene this way in 1898:

> *Paradise Park presents many and varied charms. It is a somewhat rugged land, with a deep picturesque valley winding through it. The trees grow in isolated groves. Each bunch of dark-green firs and balsams is a cluster of gracefully tapering spires. The undulating meadows between the shady groves are brilliant in summer with a veritable carpet of gorgeous blossoms.*

. . . PLENTIFUL WILDLIFE

Because of the openness of the subalpine landscape, wildlife is easy to find. Deer and mountain goats may be seen in the distance, but marmots are of most interest to the majority of visitors. Nobody who walks through the open meadows just below treeline can escape being noticed by these furry rodents. From beside burrows and among rocks, they watch, they whistle, they pose, and otherwise busy themselves with affairs of animal importance. With patience, one can usually get close enough to marmots to take good pictures.

Paradise is undoubtedly the most popular single area in the national park, though other subalpine areas rival it in beauty. Sunrise, on the northeast flank of Mount Rainier, offers perhaps the most sweeping road views of the mountain and the string of volcanic peaks towering above the Cascade Range.

. . . AND A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

Since the subalpine meadows are the Mount Rainier most of us find superlative, they are the areas where the park's activities are centered during the summer. Given a sunny day, there will be thousands of visitors roaming the trails through the meadows, taking pictures, exploring the visitor centers, and hiking to the edge of the snowfields. Along with the day hikers will be pack-laden overnighters heading for the back country. Ahead of them will be nights and days of gentle challenge and unending beauty.

THE GRANDEUR OF GLACIAL ICE

Mount Rainier's glacier system, the largest single mountain system in the lower 48 states, consists of 90 square kilometers (35 square miles) of ice in 27 named glaciers. Much of the great spectacle that so awes visitors to the park is attributable to these glaciers. Because of them, the mountain appears higher, more varied than it otherwise would. Because of them too, there are deep valleys separated by high craggy ridges or broad plateaus like those found at places like Sunrise. From these overlooks, the view drops off into valley depths 490 meters (1,600 feet) below, then abruptly soars up the slopes of Mount Rainier. The mountain's height is thus accentuated by the glacial valleys.

AVALANCHES AND MUDFLOWS

The glaciers provide constant reminders of their continuing activity. On warm days, avalanches of ice, snow, and rock make the mountain extremely dangerous. At any time, huge masses of snow and ice may break loose. One climber reported, after descending Mount Rainier along the Gibralter Rock route:

> *The impressive and frightening thing was they [the rocks] came without sound or warning—due to steep and overhanging nature of cliffs much stuff falls free, without any bounces. . . . Without warning the rocks started shedding extremely large pieces, most of which fell between two [mountaineering] rope teams. . . . [when] the sun reappeared. . . . a tremendous rock fall occurred . . . that lasted over five minutes. Had we been caught under this fall we could have done nothing to save ourselves. . . .*

Mudflows, another hazard, may suddenly gush downslope when huge quantities of water, mud, and rock trapped under glaciers break loose. The Kautz Mudflow is the best-known example, but even a small mudflow like the one that occurred on August 21, 1970, can show terrifying power. On that day, Denny Cline of the U.S. Geological Survey was alone at the Tahoma Creek Picnic Area during his lunch break.

> *I had just finished eating lunch and was getting ready to head up the trail at about 1:05 p.m. when suddenly I became aware of a roaring sound that was increasing from up the valley. Having become particularly aware of the previous mudflow while studying its deposits in the former campground area, I immediately decided it was time to remove myself from the area with due haste. About 100 yards from my position at the car I saw trees, some a foot or more in diameter, beginning to fall toward me. I hopped into the car and got away fast. . . . Tahoma Creek was chocolate brown and was rolling boulders 2 feet in diameter. . . .*

THE SUMMIT—AND ETERNITY

The Mount Rainier summit climb is a trip made by more than 2,500 persons each year. Two days are usually needed, the first to reach base camp and the second, beginning about 2:00 a.m., to reach the summit and return to Paradise or other starting points. Endurance and determination are prerequisites, but the effort is entirely worthwhile. The impression of Mount Rainier as a presence linked in some eternal bond to earth, stars, and infinity is rarely felt, but when it is, the impression comes most often to those on the upper slopes. Author Thomas Hardy has written of this feeling:

> *To persons standing alone on the hill during a clear night such as this, the roll of the world eastward is almost a palpable movement. The sensation may be caused by the panoramic glide of the stars past earthly objects, which is perceptible in a few minutes of stillness, or by the better outlook upon space that the hill affords, or by the wind, or by the solitude; but whatever its origin, the impression of riding along is vivid and abiding.*

VOLCANISM: A BEGINNING—AND AN ENDING?

> *All the evidence available tends to show that Rainier is an extinct volcano. It belongs, however, to the explosive type of volcanoes, of which Vesuvius is the best-known example, and there is no assurance that its energies may not be reawakened.*
>
> Israel C. Russell, 1898

Mount Rainier, as it is enjoyed today, will not last long in terms of geologic time. The mountain is quite capable of reawakening any day, perhaps in an eruption violent enough to return it to its dawning day. Mount Rainier's identity as a volcano, if not immediately obvious from its size and shape, is betrayed by two craters on its summit. Evidence of the energy still ebbing within the craters is seen at caves along their rims where steam has melted tunnels in the summit ice cap. Exploration parties have crossed the east crater beneath its floor and descended as far as 120 meters (400 feet) below the surface by following these passages. Others have "swum" in a small lake beneath the snows of the west crater. In emergencies, climbers have taken shelter from howling blizzards in the warm steam caves.

MEN AND MEMORIES

Mount Rainier continues to be an active landscape. Swirling clouds, roaring rivers, luxuriant growth, and rugged mountains impart a feeling of vitality that is at once exciting and relaxing. Dee Molenaar, from 30 years of mountaineering experience on Rainier, describes the spell of the land this way:

> *As one moves from the lowlands and up the mountain, what happy thoughts are conjured by the springtime pungency of alder buds bursting forth from thickets still bottomed in snow; the smell of freshly dampened trails and the whispering of fir boughs or the far-off muffled roar of a waterfall; the scent of wood smoke and crackle of the forest campfire; the smell of leather and creak of the pack; the fragrance of lupine and soft gurgle of a heather-trenched brook; the sudden, high-pitched whistle of the marmot; the deep throaty echoes coming from deep within the ice where surface meltwater cascades into a glacier* moulin; *the smell of white gas or butane and the hiss of the mountain stove at high camp; the otherwise prosaic aroma of Chap-Stik, Sno-Seal, and sun cream; the crunch of crampons sinking into frozen early-morning snow; the ozone-gunpowder pungency of metal striking rock; and the flapping of fabric of parka or tent as gusts of wind remind one of the vagaries of high-mountain weather—these and many more ingredients form the Rainier climbing atmosphere.*

This is the Rainier of memories; the mountain of men who have known it for decades and have grown to anticipate and love its many moods. But this is also to some degree the mountain of the casual visitor, for to anyone who has seen Rainier, the mountain is an unforgettable experience.

Clark E. Schurman, chief guide on Mount Rainier from 1939 to 1942, was a man who knew and loved the peak like few others. Before his death in 1955, he put to words his own view of Rainier, a mountain that meant memories shared with friends of a lifetime:

> *Last campfires never die. And you and I*
> *On separate ways to Life's December,*
> *Will always dream by this last fire*
> *and have this mountain to remember.*

Appreciation is extended to The Mountaineers for use of material from THE CHALLENGE OF RAINIER by Dee Molenaar and to the Superior Publishing Co. for the passage from Josef Scaylea's MOODS OF THE MOUNTAIN

☆GPO 1978—261-212/118 Reprint 1978

hiking & other activities

Information for a pleasant and safe visit to Mount Rainier is presented here.

Hiking is a very popular activity in the park. Enjoyable and safe hiking is a matter of good planning. Indispensable advice for hikers and backpackers is contained in the booklet *Fragile, Handle With Care,* available at visitor centers or by mail. Permits, available from ranger stations and visitor centers, are required for overnight backpacking.

Climbing Mount Rainier and neighboring peaks in the park is regulated by the National Park Service. Write the superintendent for information. Then consider your stamina and determination—you'll need plenty of both. Inexperienced persons should contact the guide service at Paradise, which offers 1-day snow-and-ice climbing seminars and rents minimum equipment. If you are undiscouraged, you may attempt Rainier's summit in two days.

Experienced mountaineering parties must register with a ranger before and after each trip. Solo climbing requires approval by the superintendent. Before attempting a summit ascent, consider your party's experience on similar glaciated mountains and evaluate your equipment, leadership, and strength. Climbers under 18 years of age must have written permission from a parent or guardian.

PRESERVING THE PARK

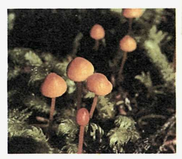
Pets are prohibited on trails or in public buildings and should not be left unattended. They must be confined or leashed at all times.

Firearms must be unloaded, broken down, and packed out of sight. Hunting is prohibited.

Clean up your campsite or picnic areas. Leave no litter!

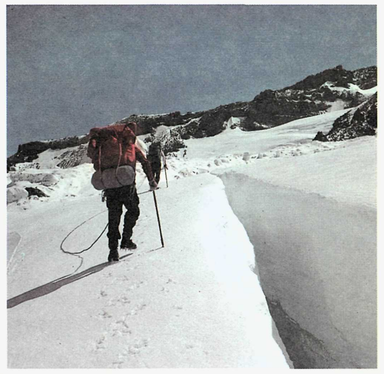
Vehicles off the roads cause damage, frighten wildlife, and infuriate hikers. No vehicles are allowed off public automobile roads.

All natural features, including rocks, plants and animals are protected by law, and must be left in place and unharmed.



Few places contain the variety so much in evidence at Mount Rainier. Snowy hemlocks, cautious marmots, and colorful mushrooms hint of the many environments for which the park is so well known.

Horseback riding information may be obtained from park rangers or by writing the superintendent. Rental horses are *not* available in the park. To protect the park's fragile plant life and to prevent erosion, trail riding is allowed only on designated trails.



Two worlds co-exist at Mount Rainier National Park: a lush living world with flowers such as paintbrush and a cold, austere world of snow and ice.

Fishing in park waters is permitted all year; fishing license is not required. Most lakes melt out in early to mid-July. Fishing through the ice is not permitted. The Ohanapecosh River and its tributaries are open to fly fishing only. Specific regulations, including creel limits and special closures, are available from any ranger station.

Mule deer, one of the park's inhabitants, commonly give birth to twin fawns.

A sunset silhouettes the Paradise Visitor Center. Spectacular skies, with cloudcaps, halos, and mountain wave clouds, are not at all exceptional in the park.

Winter sport facilities at Paradise are operated on weekends and holidays from December through April. Inner tubes and platters may be used in prepared play areas. Snacks and equipment are available. Persons interested in ski touring should ask rangers about routes and conditions. Snow mobiles are permitted on designated roads only.

some precautions

In the back country, hike only in the company of others; remember your limitations. Be prepared for sudden and extreme weather changes. Carry a lightweight stove if you can. Extinguish cigarettes and put campfires out. Stay on trails. Bring your own shelter. Respect the wildlife and vegetation.

On the highway, curving and narrow mountain roads demand careful driving. Observe posted speeds; drive defensively. Use lower gears for steep hills. Watch for drivers who are preoccupied with scenery. Expect the park to have many pedestrians, cyclists, and animals. Allow traffic to pass when you impede its flow.

Snow closes roads for short periods. Chains may be required for winter driving. Except for the roads from Nisqually Entrance to Paradise (Wash. 706), park roads are usually closed from late November to June or July.

When encountering bears or deer, keep your distance and don't try to feed them.

Sliding on snowbanks can result in injury. Snowbanks sometimes hide rocks, cliffs, or even streams. In the springtime, snow bridges over streams may collapse under a person's weight.

Stay off glaciers. They contain deep, hidden crevasses. Rocks fall continuously from their snouts.

Emergency help and first aid are available at any ranger station.

for your information

Interpretive programs are presented by the National Park Service from late June through Labor Day. Program schedules are posted in the visitor centers and on campground bulletin boards. Programs include nature walks and evening slide programs.

Visitor centers are at Longmire and Paradise (open all year) and Ohanapecosh and Sunrise (summer only). Information and publications are available; slide programs and films are presented regularly.

Self-guiding nature trails are at the Kautz Creek Mudflow, Longmire Meadows (Trail of the Shadows), Sourdough Ridge, Nisqually Vista, Emmons Vista, Ohanapecosh, Hot Springs, Grove of the Patriarchs, Carbon River and Ipsut.

Campgrounds are maintained by the National Park Service in various sections of the park. Camping is permitted only in designated sites. Major campgrounds with running water and flush toilets are located at Ohanapecosh, White River, and Cougar Rock. The only campground open all year is at Sunshine Point near the Nisqually Entrance. All sites are open on a first-come, first-served basis, with camping limited to 14 days per season.

There are no trailer utility hookups but trailer holding-tank disposal stations are at Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds. Build campfires only in designated places. Gathering of firewood is prohibited in the park. Do not leave fires unattended; use water to extinguish them. Report unattended fires to park officials.

Campers should keep food in their automobile trunks or suspended from high tree limbs to avoid problems with bears. Valuables tempting to humans deserve equal care.

Accommodations are available at National Park Inn at Longmire (early May until mid-October) and at Paradise Inn (mid-June until Labor Day). Write to Mount Rainier National Park Hospitality Service, 4820 So. Washington, Tacoma, WA 98409, for reservations and rates.

Food service snack bars are open in summer at Longmire, Paradise, and Sunrise. Cafeterias are at Longmire and Paradise; a dining room is at Paradise Inn. In winter, a snack bar is open daily at Longmire and on weekends and holidays at Paradise.

Groceries of limited variety are for sale at Longmire and Sunrise in summer. Other stores are outside the park.

Equipment for summer mountaineering can be rented at Paradise.

Gasoline is sold at Longmire all year and during the summer at Sunrise. The Paradise area has no gasoline station.

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST

GIFFORD PINCHOT NATIONAL FOREST

CARBON RIVER ENTRANCE

573 m 1880 ft

IPSUT CREEK

Gove Peak 1622 m 5321 ft

MOWICH LAKE

SUNSET PARK

KLAPATCHE RIDGE

EMERALD RIDGE

SUNRISE 6400 ft

WHITE RIVER ENTRANCE 1067 m 3500 ft

WHITE RIVER

SOURDOUGH MTN 1951 m 6400 ft

TIPSOO LAKE

Yakima Pk

Chinook Pass

Tipsoo Naches Pk

Cayuse Pass 1431 m 4694 ft

Barrier Peak 1986 m 6514 ft

Buell Pk 1809 m 5933 ft

Seymour Pk 1936 m 6351 ft

Shriner Peak 1782 m 5846 ft

Shriner Lake 1500 m 4920 ft

Bald Rock 1690 m 5411 ft

Sheep Lake 1488 m 4881 ft

Three Lakes 1425 m 4712 ft

Fir Lake

Deadwood Lakes

Crystal Lake

Clover Lake

Crystal Mtn

Slide Mtn

Landslide

Burnt Park

Bear Park

Brown Pk 1774 m 5820 ft

The Palisades

Marcus Pk

Dege Pk

Baker Pt

Mt Ruth

Steamboat Prow

Camp Schurman

Mount Rainier

Columbia Crest 4394 m 14410 ft

Point Success 4314 m 14150 ft

Liberty Cap 4309 m 14133 ft

Gibraltar Rock 3866 m 12679 ft

Camp Muir 3048 m 10000 ft

Anvil Rock 2922 m 9584 ft

Little Tahoma Pk 3395 m 11138 ft

Unicorn Pk

Boundary Pk

Stevens Pk

Wahpenayo Peak

Tokaloo Rock

Castle Peak

Pyramid Pk 2114 m 6937 ft

Round Pass 1219 m 4000 ft

Gobblers Knob 1676 m 5500 ft

Tolmie Pk 1811 m 5939 ft

Eunice L

Howard Pk

Florence Pk

Arthur Pk

Sweet Pk

Virginia Pk

Berry Pk

August Pk

Martin Pk

Fay Pk 1982 m 6500 ft

Mount Pleasant

Hessong Rock

Paul Pk

Tillicum Pt

Division Rock

Golden Lakes 1686 m 5537 ft

Needle Rock

Jeanette Heights

Tumtum Peak 1426 m 4678 ft

Satulick Mtn

Iron Mtn

Copper Mtn

Mirror Lakes

Pearl Falls

Mildred Pt

Panorama Pt

McClure Rock

Cowlitz Rocks

Wonderland Trail

Paved Road

Gravel Road

Dirt Road

Trail (other)

Campground

Ranger Station

Overlook

Information Visitor Center

Picnic Area

Amphitheater

Selfguiding Nature Trail

Kilometers 1 0 1 2

Miles 1 0 1

NISQUALLY ENTRANCE 609 m 2003 ft

SUNSHINE POINT

OHANAPECOSH 609 m 2004 ft

STEVENS CANYON ENTRANCE

LONGMIRE Park Headquarters

COUGAR ROCK

PARADISE

To Enumclaw Seattle

To Yakima