

# Wilderness Trip Planner



Mount Rainier National Park  
Tahoma Woods - Star Route  
Ashford, WA 98304  
(360) 569-2211



## Wilderness Management at Mount Rainier

For nearly 100 years people have hiked and camped in the forests and meadows surrounding Mount Rainier. Even before the establishment of Mount Rainier National Park in 1899, hiking enthusiasts and park employees built, maintained, and utilized hundreds of miles of trails around the mountain.

By 1973, however, these trails and many of the park's natural resources showed signs of deterioration. Park managers responded by developing a *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan* for Mount Rainier. The purpose of this plan was to provide the opportunity for a quality backcountry experience with minimal impact on the natural resources. To help accomplish its goal, the plan allowed for a permit system to limit the number of backpackers per night in specific locations.

In 1988, Public Law 100-668, the Washington Wilderness Act, designated 97% of Mount Rainier National Park as the Mount Rainier Wilderness. The ensuing *Wilderness Management Plan* was designated as an action plan to manage the Mount Rainier Wilderness according to principles of the Wilderness Act. It outlines systematic resource management strategies to preserve opportunities for solitude while strengthening protection for the park's natural resources. To help accomplish its goal, this new plan divided the park's 228,480 acres of wilderness into three management zones: Trailside, Crosscountry, and Alpine. These zones provide for varying degrees of challenge and solitude.

Familiarizing yourself with the challenges and opportunities available, as well as with the park's regulations, will help ensure that you, and other backpackers in years to come, will have an enjoyable wilderness experience at Mount Rainier.

*It is in solitude, in quiet communication with nature, that we reach most deeply into truth.*  
~ Sam Campbell ~

## Getting A Permit

### Wilderness Permits

*Individual permits* are issued for parties of up to 5 persons or one immediate family. *Group permits* are issued for parties numbering 6 to 12 persons. Maximum group size is 12\* persons. Group permits allow permit holders to camp in trailside group campsites only. (\*See "Wilderness Camping ~ Winter" for exception.)

- A permit is required for *all* wilderness camping.
- During the period of June 1 through September 30, a fee may be charged for permits. Funds collected will provide services and finance projects that directly benefit backpackers.
- Permits are issued on a first-come, first-served basis only.
- Permits are issued for specific locations. The number of permits issued for most locations is limited.
- Permits can be written for a maximum of 14 nights.
- Permits are available during summer from rangers at the Longmire and White River Wilderness Information Centers, the visitor centers at Paradise, Ohanapeosh and Sunrise, and the ranger stations at Sunrise and Wilkeson.

### Climbing Permits

Anyone planning to travel on glaciers or above 10,000 feet elevation must obtain a climbing permit which also serves as a wilderness permit.

- Two climbers per party minimum unless a climber has obtained prior written authorization for a solo climb.
- Climbers must be at least 18 years old or have written parental permission.
- Permits are \$15 per person per climbing attempt. Proceeds from permit sales go toward climber education and safety, and high altitude waste disposal.
- During summer, permits are issued at the Longmire and White River Wilderness Information Centers, the visitor center and ranger station at Paradise, and the Wilkeson Ranger Station.



Paradise Ranger Station

## Wilderness Camping ~ Winter

- Although winter camping is allowed nearly everywhere in the park, the most popular and accessible destinations are the Paradise, Reflection Lakes and Mazama Ridge areas.
- At Paradise, groups of more than 12 people may camp where there is access to 24-hour restrooms.
- Permits are available daily at Longmire, on weekends at Paradise, and by self-registration at the Wilkeson Ranger Station and at the winter closure of SR410 near Crystal Mtn.

## Regulations and Safety Tips

### For your care and safety. . .

- Proven experience using a topographic map and compass for route-finding is highly recommended when hiking before the trails are snowfree.
- Major glacial rivers may have washed-out bridges. All glacial river volumes rise and fall each day. If bridges are gone, morning river crossings, when water volume is lower, are easier and safer than afternoon crossings.
- Expect fallen trees across trails, especially early in the hiking season.
- Be prepared for wet, cold weather at any time. Snow can fall during any month of the year.
- Treat or boil all water before drinking.
- Watch for exposed rocks, tree roots, loose gravel and other hazards on trails. Wet rocks and roots will be slippery.
- Hang food at night, especially in camps where bears have been active and where poles for hanging food are provided.



## Wilderness Camping ~ Summer

### Trailside Camping Option

Most backpackers prefer to use campsites established and maintained by the National Park Service. These camps have toilet facilities, marked sites, and a nearby (untreated) water source. Camping along trails is allowed *only* at the established trailside camps. There are more than 125 individual campsites for use by parties of 5 or fewer backpackers and over 20 group campsites for use by parties of 6 to 12 persons. These trailside group campsites are the only locations where groups may camp in the Mount Rainier Wilderness (see map on back.)



### Crosscountry Camping Option

Although certain areas of the park are designated as day-use only, (i.e., developed areas at Longmire, Paradise, and Sunrise) most of the park lies in crosscountry zones which are available for camping. Within established crosscountry zones you choose your own campsite. Campsites must be located at least 1/4 mile away from any road or established trail and at least 100 feet away from lakes, streams, and wetlands. Many crosscountry zones, like the trailside camps, have limits on the number of parties allowed. Camping in a crosscountry zone requires a higher degree of *Leave No Trace* understanding and practice, but offers an opportunity for greater wilderness solitude as well.

### Alpine Camping Option

Alpine zones provide climbing and alpine hiking opportunities in areas above treeline. Camping is allowed only on permanent snow or ice or on bare ground areas *previously used* as campsites. Group size is limited to 12 persons camping on snow and ice, and 5 persons camping in established bare ground campsites. *Clearing new tent sites on rocky or snowfree areas is prohibited!* Alpine plants depend on the shelter of rocks to survive. Of particular concern is the area within the boundaries of the Muir snowfield between Pebble Creek and Anvil Rock. Anyone intending to travel on glaciers or above 10,000 feet elevation must obtain a climbing permit.



## Planning Your Visit

### Before Leaving Home

Consider *when* you plan to hike--winter at Mount Rainier usually lasts from mid-October through June. During those months, road access is limited, while trails at higher elevation (above 5000 feet) are generally snowcovered, making route finding a challenge. The months of July, August and September are considered the most viable ones for backpacking in Mount Rainier National Park.

Obtain a topographic map or hiking guide to help choose your destination and route. Use the map on the reverse side of this planner to choose your campsites. When selecting your route, consider the mileage and elevation gain involved. Be sure each member of your party is prepared for the choices you make. Please note the restrictions on group size for each location where you consider camping. Be flexible and have multiple alternative campsites in mind when planning your itinerary. If solitude or getting your first-choice campsite is important, consider that July and August are the busiest wilderness use months and that weekends and holidays are the busiest days.

Inform someone of your plans and expected return date. Instruct that person to notify rangers promptly if you are overdue. Contact the park regarding current conditions and closures. To notify park staff regarding overdue hikers or to obtain road and trail status reports, call: (360)569-2211.

### Bring the 10 Essentials

Always carry the *10 Essentials* and know how to use them:

1. Map of the area.
2. Compass.
3. Extra food.
4. First-aid Kit.
5. Fire starter.\*
6. Flashlight, extra batteries and bulb.
7. Sunglasses and sunscreen.
8. Pocketknife.
9. Extra clothing, including rain gear.
10. Matches in a waterproof container.\*

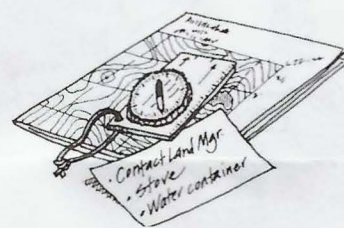
\*For true *emergency* use only since fires are not allowed in the Mount Rainier Wilderness.



## Leave No Trace

When traveling in the Mount Rainier Wilderness, as when hiking in any wilderness area, be prepared to *Leave No Trace* of your visit. Please incorporate the following ideas and practices into your wilderness planning and travel.

**Plan ahead and Prepare.** *Design your trip to match your expectations and outdoor skill level.* Seek information about your destination and the enroute difficulties you might encounter.



Know what to expect regarding weather, trail conditions, permit requirements, and hiker density. Select your route, clothing, food, fuel, and equipment based on the knowledge you obtain while planning your wilderness trip.

**Repackage food.** Get rid of unnecessary containers, boxes, and bottles. Utilize reusable containers or plastic bags instead. This practice saves weight and reduces litter for carry-out. **Select appropriate equipment.** Select equipment that will help you leave no trace. For example, gaiters that protect your feet and boots will allow you to stay on the trail when it's wet or muddy. Lightweight campstoves, free-standing tents and collapsible water containers allow the flexibility to camp in the most impact-resistant site available. Be unobtrusive, select earth-toned clothing and gear.



**Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces.** *In popular or high-use areas, concentrate use.* Hike on existing trails and select durable rest spots. In trailside wilderness camps, camp only in designated sites. In cross-country or alpine zones, choose a durable campsite at least 200 feet from water and one-quarter mile away from trails. Minimize impact at a campsite. Never scrape away leaves or needles. Avoid enlarging existing sites. Wear soft-soled shoes around camp. Anything left sitting outside on the ground is a potential chewable for critters. Clean camp when you leave. An unclean site might encourage the next visitor to choose a new site. Respect other visitors' desire for solitude. *In remote areas, spread use and avoid places where impact is just beginning.* Travel in small groups. Avoid fragile vegetation.

### Special Interest

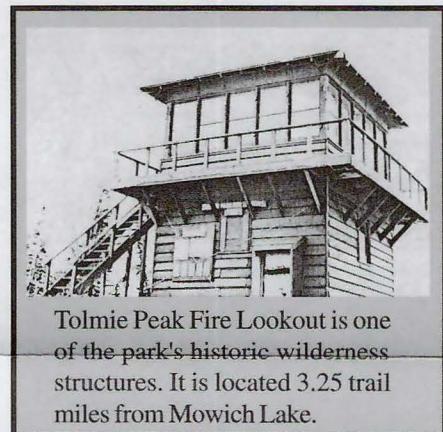
Information is available on many topics of special interest to backpackers, e.g., Hiking the Wonderland Trail, Food Cache Planning, Stock Use, Fishing, and Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail within Mount Rainier National Park. Call: (360) 569-2211. Write: Mount Rainier National Park, Attention: Wilderness Information Center, Tahoma Woods-Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304. Or access the park's website: [www.nps.gov/mora/](http://www.nps.gov/mora/)

### Maps and Books

Various books and maps are available for sale from the Northwest Interpretive Association (NWIA), a non-profit organization benefiting educational programs in the national parks and forests of the Pacific Northwest. Visit a sales facility within the park or contact the Mount Rainier Branch of NWIA to obtain a sales catalog. Write: Northwest Interpretive Association, Longmire, WA 98397. Or call: (360) 569-2211 ext. 3320.

## Cultural Resources

The Wonderland Trail, a 93-mile loop trail around the mountain, and its associated structures are contributing cultural resources to the history of Mount Rainier National Park. The Wonderland Trail is included in a newly designated Historic Landmark District. This district, designated in 1997, also includes all of the park's historic developed areas and all of the roads, bridges, and associated features. Together these structures represent a vision of an integrated rustic landscape representative of early master planning and development in the National Park Service.



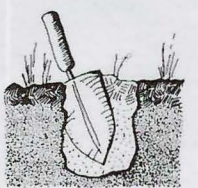
Tolmie Peak Fire Lookout is one of the park's historic wilderness structures. It is located 3.25 trail miles from Mowich Lake.

**Pack It In, Pack It Out.** *Reduce litter at the source.* Repackage food into reusable containers. Pack out all non-food trash and all food waste left over from cooking. Please pick up after less thoughtful people who have gone before you.

**Properly Dispose of What You Can't Pack Out.** Adhere to the principles behind *Leave No Trace* sanitation practices:

- Avoid polluting water sources.
- Eliminate direct contact with insects and animals.
- Maximize decomposition.
- Minimize the chances of social impacts.

All trailside camps at Mount Rainier have pit or composting toilets. If using one of these facilities is not an option, the "cathole" method is the most widely accepted alternative. To promote decomposition, choose a site in organic soil rather than sandy mineral soil. With a small garden trowel dig a cathole six to eight inches deep and four to six inches in diameter. Mix in dirt and cover, attempting to disguise the hole with brush and ground cover. Pack out all toilet paper. *Waste water from cooking.* Use hot water and elbow grease, not soap. Remove all food particles from the wash water before disposing of it and pack the particles out with excess food. *Waste water from washing.* Avoid contaminating water supplies. If you feel soap is necessary, lather up and rinse at least 200 feet from any water source.



**Leave What You Find.** *Minimize site alterations.* Leave all sites as you found them. Do not dig trenches, level sites, or construct tables or chairs. *Avoid damaging live trees and plants.* Never hammer nails into trees or girdle trunks with tent lines. *Leave natural objects and cultural artifacts.* Natural objects of beauty or interest such as rocks, antlers, or fossils, must be left undisturbed for others to enjoy. It is illegal to disturb or remove any such objects in a national park. The same applies to cultural artifacts such as pot shards, projectile points, and other items. If you find an artifact, leave it in context and report its location to a park ranger.

The National Park Service is a cooperating agency in the *Leave No Trace* educational program. For more information on this program or to obtain educational materials, call: 1-800-332-4100.

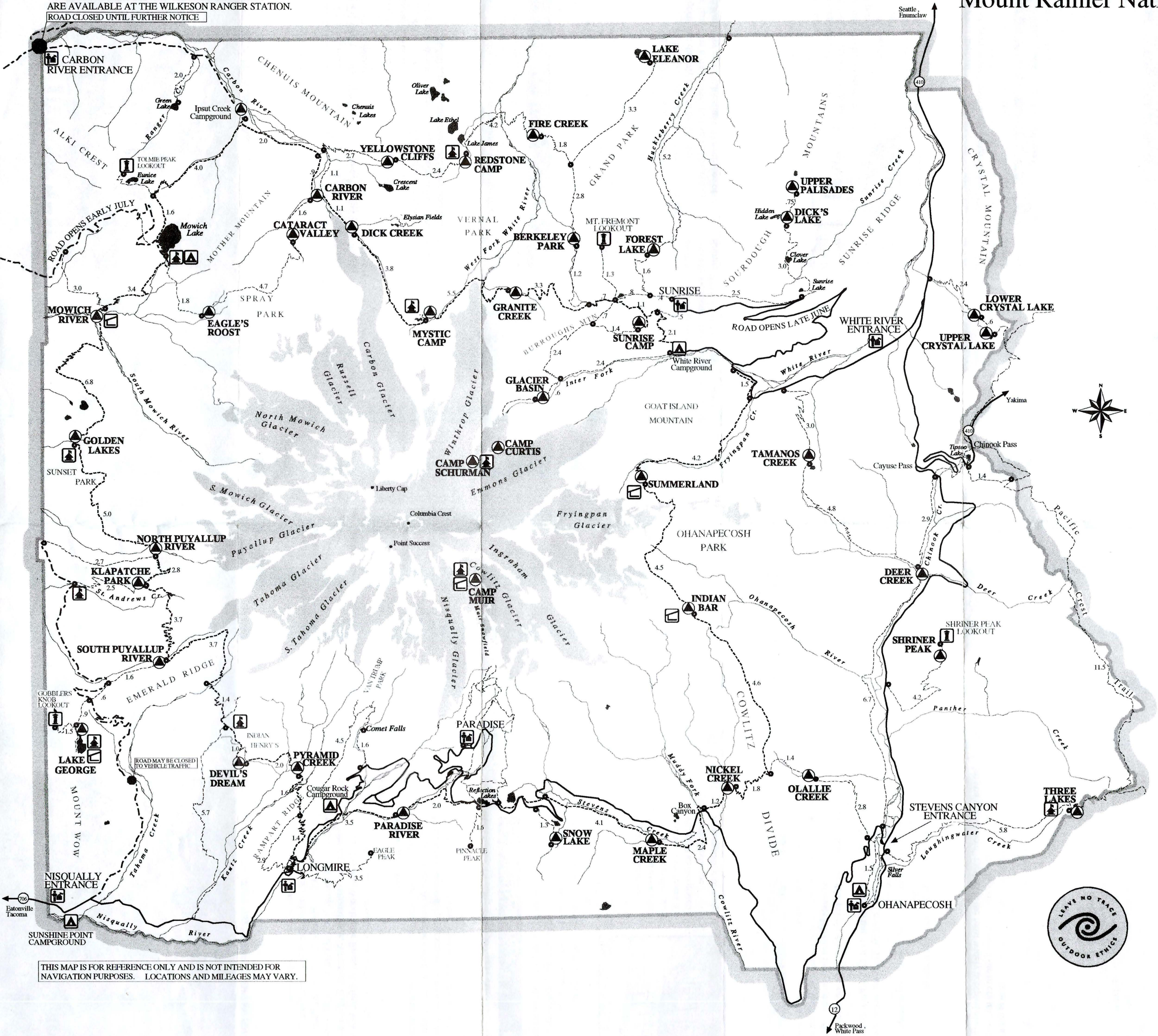


*In wildness is the preservation of the world.*  
~ Henry David Thoreau ~

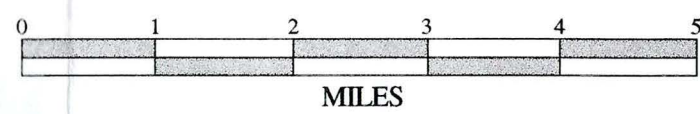


WILDERNESS PERMITS AND PARK INFORMATION ARE AVAILABLE AT THE WILKESON RANGER STATION.  
ROAD CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

# Mount Rainier National Park and Wilderness



- WILDERNESS TRAILSIDE CAMP
- FRONTCOUNTRY CAMPGROUND
- WILDERNESS PATROL CABIN
- FRONTCOUNTRY RANGER STATION
- FIRE LOOKOUT
- SHELTER
- SURFACED ROADWAY
- UNSURFACED ROADWAY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- TRAILS
- WONDERLAND TRAIL
- STREAMS
- LAKES
- GLACIERS
- TRAIL DISTANCES IN MILES (APPROX.)



## A LISTING OF TRAILSIDE CAMPS

Most backpackers at Mount Rainier use the trailside camps listed below. Individual camps have a capacity of five people, or one immediate family, and group sites have a capacity of twelve people.  
Camping by permit is also allowed in undesignated sites within crosscountry and alpine zones throughout the park.

Camp	Indiv. Sites	Group Sites	Elev. Feet
Berkeley Park	4	—	5600
Camp Curtis	5	—	8200
Camp Muir	11 0*	—	10000
Camp Schurman	48*	—	9510
Carbon River	4	—	3100
Cataract Valley	7	1	4700
Deer Creek	(H) 3	—	3125
Devil's Dream	7	1	5000
Dick Creek	2	—	4320
Dick's Lake	1	—	5680
Eagle's Roost	7	1	4700
Fire Creek	3	1	4600
Forest Lake	1	—	5600
Glacier Basin	5	1	5960
Golden Lakes	5	1	5000
Granite Creek	2	1	5732
Indian Bar	3	1	5100
Klapatche Park	4	—	5400
Lake Eleanor	3	1	5000
Lake George	5	1	5320
Lower Crystal Lake	2	—	5510
Maple Creek	4	1	2800
Mowich River	(H) 4	1	2600
Mystic Camp	7	2	5620
Nickel Creek	3	1	3350
N. Puyallup River	(H) 3	1	3600
Ollalie Creek	2	1	3800
Paradise River	3	1	3950
Pyramid Creek	2	—	3760
Redstone Camp	2	—	4630
Shriners Peak	3	—	5800
Snow Lake	2	—	4600
S. Puyallup River	4	1	4000
Summerland	5	1	5900
Sunrise	8	2	5300
Tamanos Creek	4	1	5200
Three Lakes	(H) 2	1	4650
Upper Crystal Lake	2	—	5800
Upper Palisades Lake	2	—	5840
Yellowstone Cliffs	2	—	5100

(H) = horse sites available

\*Space at Camp Muir and Camp Schurman is allotted by the number of people rather than by the number of parties.



THIS MAP IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR NAVIGATION PURPOSES. LOCATIONS AND MILEAGES MAY VARY.