

THE FUTURE OF THE RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

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The most pressing need in mountain affairs in Washington at the present time is the improvement and extension of the roads of the Mt. Rainier National Park. The mountain is attracting wide attention and people are coming from afar to visit it. If they find the mountain accessible they will tell their friends about their trip and the mountain will receive the best form of publicity. If, on the other hand, they find there are no roads or only one fair one, they will probably so state and by so doing dissuade many from a visit. Now is the time to go at this matter with all the vim that can be shown, and the Mountaineers should be the ones to lead in this work. They should prove that they know what is needed in mountain work in the state and not leave this important work for the commercial bodies of the two cities. The work is broader than the purposes of commercial bodies, the park is a national one and not a Seattle, Tacoma, or even a Washington one. Therefore the work in behalf of the park should be national. The senators and representatives of Washington may work for a system of roads, but they must have the support of others before the necessary bills will pass. The club should organize a campaign of publicity, get the eastern mountain clubs to help and have them take the matter up with their senators and representatives, urging the passage of this bill. Eleven thousand people passed through the park entrance last season. The majority of these would be willing to write to their representatives at Washington in favor of a bill to improve the roads. They know that they need improvement. President Taft was able to reach Paradise Park, but he learned just what was needed to make the road a success.

The first thing that should be decided upon is a plan of action that can be followed for years, and all parts of the park opened. No money can be appropriated for roads until surveys are made, therefore those surveys should be started the coming summer.



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Mt. Rainier from Indian Henry's Hunting Ground southwest side of the mountain. A survey has been made for a road into this park from the present road to Longmire Springs. This road should be constructed as soon as possible to afford a relief to the crowds now going to Paradise Park. This road would also open up Van Trump Park, which lies between Paradise and Indian Henry's.

There is need of a road on the north side as well as the south side. This can go from the present road at or near Fairfax and reach the ice of the Carbon Glacier. From this point it can be continued into both Spray and Moraine parks. Some road should be opened from the east to permit people to come in on that side and go out via the south. The important thing is to decide as soon as possible where roads are to be constructed and then see that a continuing appropriation is made for such development.

There is no question but that the present road should be widened from Ashford to Paradise Park sufficient to permit autos and stages to travel over it safely. The government began a stage road to the park and then allowed the use of autos. This has created a menace which the government is morally bound to remove.

Right here in the matter of roads is where the Mountaineers can do a great good for the state. Being a state-wide organization they can do much to remove the partisan spirit. If Seattle and Tacoma can be united upon a system of roads for the Rainier National Park, the chance of getting the necessary appropriations from Congress will be increased many fold. As long as there is a feeling that the state is not united in this matter Congress feels safe in passing up all appropriations.

A north road is certain to come and the Mountaineers should be the first ones to back the movement for it. They are familiar with the region to be opened, the scene of their 1909 outing, know of the beautiful parks that will be made accessible to tourists, and should do all in their power to aid in the work.

Superintendent Hall has opened some of the old trails on the north side and built some new ones. An application has been made for a hotel permit in Moraine Park, and also one in Spray. It will be only natural, when these hotels are open, for the tourist to wish to make the trip from one side to the other. This will, more than anything else, lead to the opening of trails, and later, roads around the mountain.

I realize that the true Mountaineer would much rather see the mountains from the trail or the unexplored wilderness, but to make mountains at all popular, to get the majority of people into them, it is necessary to have roads.