



The Tahoma News

September 8 - December 31, 2015

#FINDYOURPARK

Celebrating the National Park Service Centennial

Over the past 100 years, the world has been to the moon and beyond, built cars, televisions, and cellular phones, while advancing medical cures and scientific discoveries. Next year the National Park Service (NPS)—established in 1916—celebrates 100 years as a proud addition to these acclaimed accomplishments.

The NPS Centennial is a celebration of America's past successes and struggles, but also an invitation for you to help shape its future. For a century, American people have entrusted the NPS to guard their legacy and care for their national parks. Celebrate this centennial milestone at any national park site. Become part of the next generation of stewards.

The roots of the National Park Service lie in the parks' majestic, often isolated natural wonders and in places that exemplify our cultural heritage, but national parks now extend to places difficult to imagine 100 years ago—into urban centers, across rural landscapes, deep within oceans, and across night skies.

Mount Rainier, dedicated as the fifth national park in 1899, was one of 14 national parks, and 21 national monuments, along with the Hot Springs and Casa Grande Ruin reservations that initially fell under the direction of the National Park Service. Today, more than 400 sites, in all fifty states from memorials to battlefields, from deserts to glaciers, are safeguarded by the NPS with the help of volunteers and partners.

Each year, over 275 million people from around the world visit America's national parks. They listen to the stories, seek the wilderness, and challenge their beliefs, physical fitness and ideas about these protected places. Share your personal national park experiences and creative inspirations at <http://findyourpark.com/>. Just maybe, your story will ignite the next generation's passion for America's national parks.

FIND YOUR PARK

The countdown to the National Park Service Centennial celebration begins in 2015 with 99 activities! Pick one at <http://findyourpark.com/nps99>.

Post a picture of your experience on social media using the hashtag #FindYourPark.

Are You Ready To

Winter Road Closures

As autumn slips into winter and storms bring snow to Mount Rainier, roads will close for winter. Look for most roads to reopen in May or June.

- Stevens Canyon Road closes on November 2 or with the first heavy snowfall.
- The Sunrise Road closes at the junction with the White River Campground Road on October 12 or earlier with the first heavy snowfall.
- The White River Road closes at SR 410 on November 2 or earlier with the first heavy snowfall.
- Depending on snowfall, Washington State Department of Transportation will close SR410 and SR 123 on November 30. Call 1-800-695-ROAD for current status.
- Mowich Lake Road closes October 26 or with the first snowfall.
- The road between Nisqually Entrance and Longmire remains open throughout winter except during extreme weather.
- The road between Longmire and Paradise closes nightly late fall through winter. It reopens the following morning or when snow-removal activities and conditions allow.

Poor visibility and reduced traction present driving hazards in winter. Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of road are not. Use caution. Stay alert.

Roadwork Ahead

Construction on the historic Nisqually Road between Longmire and Paradise will resume after October 1 and continue into November, weather permitting.



This project addresses outdated utilities and deteriorating road conditions due to precipitation, structural and design deficiencies, large traffic volumes, and normal wear. The project is designed to protect the extraordinary natural and cultural resources within and adjacent to the road. Delays will be limited to no more than 30 minutes through the entire project. Expect rough road conditions.

While in construction zones:

- Slow down.
- Avoid passing at any time. Blind curves are everywhere limiting your sight distance.
- Driving in the wrong lane to avoid uneven surfaces is dangerous.
- Do not get out of your vehicle when stopped.
- Think clean air, don't idle.
- If you pull into a turnout while following a pilot car and all the vehicles in that line have passed, wait for the next pilot car going your direction. Otherwise you could find yourself in on-coming traffic or possibly head-on with construction machinery.
- Large machinery and heavy loads use the other lanes. Doing something other than following instructions could put you in grave danger.

Welcome...

... to Mount Rainier National Park!



Superintendent Randy King

One hundred years ago a Mountaineers group circumnavigated Mount Rainier, tracing the route that would become the superbly named 93-mile Wonderland Trail. With 22,000' of elevation gain and loss, sometimes the wonder in hiking that trail is, "Can I make it?"

Next year, 2016, marks another centennial. With the passage of the National Park Service (NPS) Organic Act in 1916, Congress created an organizing principle and governing mission for our national parks founded on preservation and enjoyment. From the handful of early parks like Mount Rainier, the system has evolved to today's 408 parks—places that represent the nation's incredibly rich natural and cultural heritage, places to be cherished and enjoyed. That this legacy belongs to all of us is the half of its power and beauty.

The NPS Centennial calls us to reflect on this wonderful heritage of parks and public spaces, and challenges us to ensure their future. Towards that end, NPS and partners are striving to encourage all Americans to explore their parks and public lands, to find and connect with their special place or story. For from those personal connections will come the caretakers of today and tomorrow—the people who will visit, love, support, and advocate for our parks and public spaces, and in turn, ensure that coming generations will share this same joyful right.

We hope you've found your special place at Mount Rainier!

Randy King
Superintendent

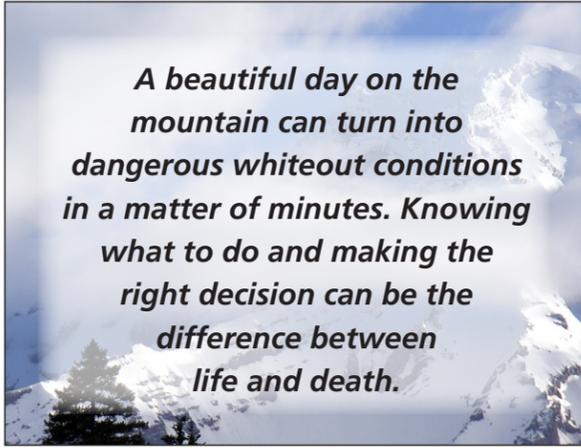
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A beautiful day on the mountain can turn into dangerous whiteout conditions in a matter of minutes. Knowing what to do and making the right decision can be the difference between life and death.

Hazards of the Season

While history shows that heavy snowpack conditions significantly increase search and rescue incidents, many hikers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges encountered by early snowpack. Snow may start covering trails as early as October. Conditions change rapidly during the day and footprints in the snow quickly disappear. This has left many day hikers disoriented upon their return trip, expecting to simply follow their own tracks back to the snow-free trail. This results in many lost individuals, injuries, and fatalities.

Snow avalanches are common year-round. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing. Be prepared for travel in avalanche terrain. Carry a transceiver, probe, and shovel and know how to use them. Determine if the location you are traveling is avalanche prone. When in doubt, ask questions or don't go. Unstable snow may slide at any time—not just in winter! Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.

Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly. A pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the ten essentials, etc.) is a must. Navigation in storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you're 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.

Also consider the steep snow slopes, melt holes, thinning snow bridges, and other hazards that you may encounter, and be honest with yourself in assessing your skills and experience.

Be prepared for route-finding conditions. 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 consider using wands on snow-covered trails. Always carry a good map and compass, and actively use them on snow-covered trails. Also consider supplementing your map and compass with an external antenna GPS for best coverage beneath a forest canopy. Again, it is extremely important that you know how to use these tools.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. When route-finding, note important landmarks. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and find where you are on the map before continuing. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around.

Climbing

Each year, approximately 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier. Nearly half reach the 14,410-foot summit. Climbing passes and permits are required for travel above 10,000 feet and on glaciers. Climbing information—including fees, routes, and conditions—is available at ranger stations. Guided climbs and climbing seminars are available through:

- Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
- International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
- Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

Wilderness Camping

Wilderness camping permits are required for all overnight stays in the park's backcountry. Permits and backcountry information are available at all wilderness information centers and most visitor centers (see page four for locations and hours).

Although permits are free, there is an optional, fee-based reservation system for campers and climbers in effect May through September. Backcountry reservations are \$20 per party (one–12 people) for one to 14 consecutive nights.

Seventy percent of all backcountry sites and zones are available for reservation. Permits for the remaining 30 percent are issued on a first-come, first-served basis, no more than one day in advance of the start of the trip.



Secrets to a Safe Hike

Hiking at Mount Rainier National Park can mean adventure, exploration, learning, or just plain having fun! The secret to a great hike? Staying safe!

Hikers need to emphasize personal safety as they journey by foot through the backcountry and along many of the popular trails. For trail information, talk with a ranger at any visitor center or wilderness information center. Use the following tips to keep your journey safe.

Use Common Sense

- Protect yourself by wearing appropriate outdoor clothing including footwear.
- Be prepared. Carry the ten essentials even on a short sightseeing hike.
- Always tell someone of your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return.
- Do not travel alone. If visibility is poor, do not travel at all.

Pay Attention To The Weather

At Mount Rainier, the weather can change rapidly. Hikers who aren't prepared for weather conditions increase their risk of becoming lost or injured. Avoid problems: plan and prepare for Mount Rainier's changeable weather.

Crossing Streams Safely

Many hikers underestimate the power of moving water and some consider their former successful stream crossings a ticket to the other side. This may not be true. Regardless of your knowledge, skills, and experience use these pointers in making wise decisions when crossing a stream:

- Early morning when river levels are generally at their lowest is the best time to cross.
- Look for an area with a smooth bottom and slow moving water below knee height.
- Before crossing, scout downstream for log jams, waterfalls and other hazards that could trap you. Locate a point where you can exit if you fall in.
- Use a sturdy stick to maintain two points of contact with the ground at all times.
- Unfasten the belt of your pack so you can easily discard it if necessary.
- Staring down at moving water can make you dizzy. Look forward as much as possible.

Taking these few precautions could save your day...and your life!

Before you step off the trail...

... consider this: each step into a meadow crushes an average of 20 plants!



When exploring Mount Rainier's fragile meadows hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow.

Leave No Trace

Plan ahead and prepare
Travel and camp on durable surfaces
Dispose of waste properly
Leave what you find
Minimize campfire impacts*
Respect wildlife
Be considerate of others

*Fires are for emergency use only; they are not allowed in Mount Rainier's Wilderness

Keep Wildlife Wild

- Please do not feed the wildlife.
- Store your food in an animal-proof container or inside your car.
- Do not leave food, beverages, pet food, or toiletries unattended for any length of time.
- Clean up picnic areas after you eat.



Human food puts animals at risk and some die as a result. For example birds, like jays or ravens are effective nest predators—eating the eggs or young of other birds. By

feeding jays or ravens, visitors concentrate these nest predators near roads and trails and inadvertently contribute to the death of songbirds in the same area.

Feeding wildlife harms them in many ways. Beggar squirrels, foxes, deer, and jays learn to approach people and busy areas. They often get hit and killed by cars. Animals that become accustomed to humans and human food may also pursue and injure visitors. Biologists and rangers must intervene, with killing the animal as the last resort.

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

1. Map and compass
2. Sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat
3. Extra clothing (warm!) and rain gear
4. Flashlight or head lamp (extra batteries)
5. First aid supplies
6. Waterproof matches or lighter
7. Repair kit and tools (for gear)
8. Extra food
9. Extra water
10. Emergency shelter

Visitor Facility Hours

Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (360) 569-6575	September 8 - October 12 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily October 13 - December 31 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Paradise Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center (360) 569-6571	September 8 - 14 10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily September 15 - October 12 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily October 13 - December 20 10:00 am to 5:00 pm weekends November 26 - 27 and December 23 - January 3 10:00 am to 5:00 pm daily	<i>Due to road construction delays the visitor center may open up to 15 minutes late.</i> Ranger programs, exhibits, information, park film, books, food service, gifts
Ohanapecosh Visitor Center (360) 569-6581	Closed for the season	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Sunrise Visitor Center (360) 663-2425	September 8 - September 20 10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Sept. 21	Exhibits, information, books. Check area bulletin boards for ranger programs.

Wilderness & Climbing Information Centers

Longmire Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6650	September 8 - October 12 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Oct. 13	Wilderness camping & climbing permits, general information
Paradise Climbing Information Center (Guide House) (360) 569-6641	Closed for the season.	Wilderness camping and climbing permits, exhibits, general information
White River Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6670	September 8 - October 12 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Oct. 13	Wilderness camping and eastside climbing permits, general information
*Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639	September 8 - December 31 Call for hours <i>*Located on the Carbon River Road 5.5 miles east of the Mowich Lake (SR165) junction.</i>	Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information (including Ipsut Creek Campground)

Food & Lodging

For in-park lodging reservations, call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mtrainierguestservices.com

National Park Inn at Longmire Open year-round	Front Desk: 7:00 am - 10:00 pm daily Dining room: 7:00 am - 7:00 pm daily 7:00 am - 8:00 pm weekends & holidays	Lodging, dining room
Longmire General Store Open year-round	September 8 - December 31 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily Extended ski season weekend & holiday hours 8:30 am - 6:00 pm weekends & holidays	Gifts, snacks, apparel, firewood
Paradise Inn	Front desk open 24 hours daily Closed for the season after breakfast on Oct. 5	Lodging, dining, gifts, apparel, ranger on duty, interpretive programs
Paradise Camp Deli and Gift Shop in the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise	September 8 - October 12 10:00 am - 4:45 pm daily October 13 - December 31 11:00 am - 4:45 pm weekends & holidays	Food, gifts, books, apparel
Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar and Gift Shop	June 27 - August 30 10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily Closed for the season starting Aug. 31	Food and gifts. Day use only, no overnight lodging
Firewood Sales	Available through September 27 at the Longmire General Store.	

Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities. A list of these services is available at park visitor centers and on the park's website at www.nps.gov/mora. Religious services are available in local communities.



Bicycling Opportunities

Bicycling on park highways has become increasingly popular. However, winding roads, blind curves, heavy traffic, and very narrow road shoulders present safety issues. Here are options for cyclists seeking less crowded routes during the fall season:

- **White River and Sunrise Roads:** After these paved roads close for the season to vehicle traffic (usually in late October, depending on weather conditions), bicyclists and hikers may travel on them from the SR 410 junction to Sunrise (6 miles one-way to White River Campground, 16 miles one-way to Sunrise). Road maintenance may require closure of the Sunrise Road at any time.
- **Westside Road:** A popular mountain-bike route, this gravel road is 13 miles one-way with an elevation gain of approximately 1,120 feet.
- **Carbon River Road:** This gravel road is open only to hikers and bicyclists beyond the park boundary. The road gains approximately 600 feet in elevation along its 5-mile length; some sections are rough and rocky. The road ends at Ipsut Creek backcountry camp, beyond which only hikers are allowed.

Remember, *there are no designated bike trails in the park. Bicycles are not permitted on any park trails, or in any off-trail areas.* Bicyclists are subject to the same laws as motor vehicles. Travel safely, and always wear a helmet.

Firewood: Buy It Where You Burn It!

Washington forests are in jeopardy from the transportation of invasive insects and diseases in firewood. New infestations of tree-killing insects and diseases often are first found in campgrounds and parks. Here's what you can do to help:

- Buy firewood near where you will burn it—that means the wood was likely cut within 50 miles of where you'll have your fire.
- Wood that looks clean and healthy can still have tiny insect eggs, or microscopic fungi spores, that will start a new and deadly infestation. Always leave it at home, even if you think the firewood looks fine.
- Aged or seasoned wood is still not safe. Just because it is dry doesn't mean that bugs can't crawl onto it!
- Tell your friends not to bring wood with them. Everyone needs to know that they should not move firewood.

More information is available online at www.dontmovefirewood.org.

Drive-in Campgrounds

Campground	Open Dates	Elev.	Sites	Fees	Group Fee	Group Sites	Toilets	Dump Station	Maximum RV/Trailer Length
Cougar Rock*	May 22 - Oct. 12	3,180'	173	\$20	\$60	5	Flush	Yes	RV 35'/Trailer 27'
Ohanapecosh*	May 22 - Oct. 12	1,914'	188	\$20	\$60	2	Flush	Yes	RV 32'/Trailer 27'
White River	June 26 - Sept. 28	4,232'	112	\$20	--	0	Flush	No	RV 27'/Trailer 18'
Mowich Lake	Primitive walk-in campground, tents only. 10 sites, 3 group sites (max. group size 12). No fee (must self-register at campground kiosk). Chemical toilets, <i>no potable water</i> . No fires allowed. Elevation 4,929'; generally open July through early October, depending on road and weather conditions. Call 360-829-9639 for information.								

***Advance reservations are recommended for individual sites at Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds from June 25 through the night of September 6. These can be made up to six months in advance. Reservations for group sites are recommended and are available throughout the season. These can be made up to one year in advance. To make a reservation online, go to www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.**