



The Tahoma News

May - June 2013

This edition is dedicated to Climbing Ranger Nick Hall, 1978 - 2012. Nick lost his life during a rescue on the upper mountain on June 21, 2012. We will never forget.



Mountain in Springtime

Spring comes slowly to the mountain. The sound of falling water marks the warmer days, while snow flurries in May will have you questioning the season. Watch for signs of spring while traveling through the park. There are many hidden treasures to enjoy if you take time to let Mother Nature entertain you. For example, this is perhaps the best time of year to view waterfalls such as Christine and Narada Falls, as they brim with sparkling clear water fed by melting winter snow. Trees are leafing out, mushrooms carpet the forest floor, and birds are returning to The Mountain.



Lowland flowers, clockwise from upper left: coltsfoot, skunk cabbage, calypso orchid (fairy slipper), trillium

Often overlooked are the forest wildflowers that bloom much earlier than their subalpine counterparts. One of the telltale signs of spring is the yellow skunk cabbage blooming in the marshy areas. The early-season blooms of the coltsfoot flower and the three-petaled flower of a trillium can be found in the lowland forests.

One of the greatest springtime discoveries in the lower snow-free forests is the elusive Fairy Slipper or Calypso Orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*). They grace us with their presence for only a few short weeks.



Spring is a time of new birth and in late spring wildlife can often be found with their young offspring in tow around the Trail of the Shadows at Longmire. Geese and goslings glide quietly on beaver ponds and black-tailed deer browse the meadow with their spotted fawns while the chorus of frogs and songbirds fill the air.

What springtime treasures does The Mountain have waiting for you to discover?



Become a Volunteer Mount Rainier Ranger

As you visit Mount Rainier, keep your eyes open for people wearing hats, shirts, and jackets with a “volunteer” logo on them. You’ll see them working in the visitor centers and assisting visitors in the meadows. Even more are busy behind the scenes, organizing the park’s collection of historic photos and taking care of plants in our greenhouse.

Last year more than 1,800 people worked in partnership with the National Park Service to protect the natural and cultural resources of Mount Rainier and serve its visitors. These invaluable partners help us accomplish far more than we would be able to without their help.

But they also find great personal rewards. Carbon River volunteer George Coulbourn says, “When I’m asked why I volunteer, I respond that I began for altruistic reasons. Having spent many rewarding days in the park, I felt that I had arrived at a good time for payback. Doesn’t work. Like most volunteer activities, the volunteer gets more than he gives, and the harder he tries, the more he gets.”

Have you ever dreamed of being a park ranger? You still can—for a day, for a summer, or on winter weekends as your schedule permits. Opportunities abound. Ask how you can become part of our team!

www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm

Stevens Canyon Road Travel Advisory

This summer, rehabilitation work continues on two 5-mile sections of Stevens Canyon Road, from its intersection with the Nisqually Road at the Canyon Wye to Stevens Creek Bridge, and from its intersection with State Route 123 to just east of Backbone Ridge. Visitors can expect up to 20-minute delays at each construction zone through mid to late September.



Buckle up, drive safely, and please take extra care while driving in construction zones.

Welcome...

...to spring at Mount Rainier National Park!



Superintendent Randy King

As you travel through the park you will see that spring arrives slowly on the mountain. On March 31, 167 inches of snow covered the ground at Paradise, a place where 600 – 700 inches of snow falls each year, and where snow typically persists into July.

The spring opening of facilities is an annual rite of passage at Mount Rainier, one of the snowiest places on Earth. Between March and July, roads completely snowed in since last fall are cleared by park and state road crews using heavy equipment and rotary snow blowers; snow is removed from park buildings; water and utility systems shut down since fall are reactivated; damage from winter’s harsh conditions is repaired; and many other maintenance activities that ready facilities for summer use are accomplished. Concurrently, NPS and concession employees are hired, trained and prepared to operate the park and serve visitors. By summer, over 500, mostly temporary, employees are on board. Many people working together, including many volunteers, are needed to “start up” Mount Rainier National Park each spring!

May and June are great times to experience the rebirth of the mountain. Please be attuned to the potential hazards of the season before heading into the park’s backcountry, and make sure your visit is both memorable and safe.

Thank you for visiting Mount Rainier!

Randy King,
Superintendent

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U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park

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Websites
Mount Rainier National Park: www.nps.gov/mora
North Coast and Cascades Science & Learning Network: <http://nwparkscience.org/>

Official Social Media Sites
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MountRainierNPS
Flickr: www.flickr.com/groups/MountRainierNPS
Twitter: www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
YouTube: www.youtube.com/MountRainierNPS



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help for wheelchair users. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistive listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits is available; and the building and exhibits are accessible to wheelchair users. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible when snow-free. An accessible trail leads to the base of the Paradise meadows, and a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help; inquire at the Jackson Visitor Center for more information. TDD: (360) 569-2177

Do Your Part for Climate Friendly Parks!



Mount Rainier National Park is a climate friendly park with a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2016 - the centennial of the National Park Service. You can be part of the effort by logging on to the Do Your Part website

to calculate your carbon footprint and set your personal goals. Don't forget to select Mount Rainier as your favorite park! To log on to Do Your Part, go to <http://doyourpartparks.org/index.php>. Visit the Climate Friendly Parks website for more information on Climate Friendly Parks: <http://www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/index.html>.

Protect Your Park

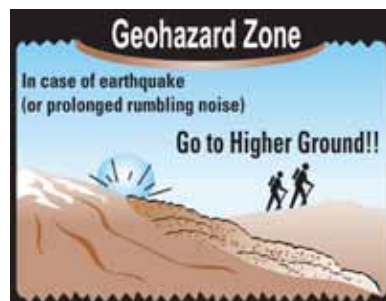
Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve the natural and cultural resources in this area and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. To protect yourself and your park, during your visit please follow these rules:

- Pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet and are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or on snow.
- Do not feed or disturb the wildlife.
- Hunting is prohibited.
- Stay on designated trails.
- Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited.
- Fire are prohibited in the backcountry.
- Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.
- Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.
- The use of firearms is prohibited within Mount Rainier National Park. Also, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places are posted with signs at public entrances. People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them in the park.

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano

Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead. Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

The more time you spend in an area with geologic hazards, the greater the chance that you could be involved in an emergency event. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, you must decide if you will assume the risk of visiting these potentially dangerous locations.



If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from up valley

- often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train - move quickly to higher ground! A location 200 feet or more above river level should be safe.

Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, or visit the U.S.G.S. Cascade Volcanoes website: vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Help Us Enhance Mount Rainier National Park



If you are one of the MANY people who cares very deeply about Mount Rainier National Park, Washington's National Park Fund may be for you.

Founded by the Governor Daniel Evans in 1993, the Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves as the park's official philanthropic partner. The Fund accepts charitable gifts that are then given back to Mount Rainier National Park for projects focusing on these four main areas:

- Improve Visitors' Experiences by maintaining trails, supporting the park's Search and Rescue program, and improving campgrounds
- Bring more Youth and Families - many of whom might otherwise never visit - into the park
- Fund necessary Science and Research on glaciers, rivers, flora (flowers) and fauna (animals)
- Strengthen Mount Rainier's Volunteerism and Stewardship activities (the Fund provides \$50,000 each year so the park can support nearly 2,000 volunteers whose efforts are valued at \$1.6 million!)

The \$50,000 given each year results from a Seattle couple who included Mount Rainier National Park in their will THROUGH Washington's National Park Fund. The Fund listened carefully to their wishes, then shared them with park staff when these individuals passed away thereby ensuring their wishes were fulfilled.

Whether an estate gift, a gift given online, purchase of a Washington State national parks license plate (last year plates generated \$120,000 for Washington's National Parks), or a few coins dropped in the donation boxes at Rainier's Visitor Centers, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Please consider giving BACK to Mount Rainier National Park through Washington's National Park Fund. Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow.

For more information please go to the Fund's website: www.wnpf.org. Call Washington's National Park Fund at 253-566-4644. Tax ID#: 01-0869799



Where's Charlie?

Those of you familiar with the Longmire Museum's mascot, Charlie the Cougar, may wonder why he's not at his post this year. After 89 years Charlie has gone for some conservation treatment and should be back next year.

Park Partners

Who's responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone! Here are some groups that deserve special thanks; for more information on these partners, and how to join the effort, please visit their websites.



Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers
www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm



Discover Your Northwest
www.discovernw.org



Washington's National Park Fund
www.wnpf.org



Student Conservation Association
www.thesca.org



Washington Trails Association
www.wta.org



Mount Rainier creates its own weather which causes sudden and drastic changes in conditions. 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

Winter snowpack lingers late on the mountain. As of April 3, the season snowfall total is over 626 inches with upwards of 12 feet on the ground at the 5000 foot elevation. Snow may be found covering portions of trails well into August. History has shown that heavy snowpack conditions significantly increase search and rescue incidents that occur in the backcountry. Many early season hikers are not prepared for the route finding challenges encountered by a late snowpack. 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 situation has resulted in many lost individuals and has contributed to injuries and fatalities.

Snow avalanches are common in spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing in avalanche terrain. 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. Navigation in spring 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 early season hazards that you may encounter, and be honest with yourself in assessing your skills and experience. In addition, having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the ten essentials, etc.) is a must.

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. Early season hiking in the mountains can be an amazing experience when properly prepared.

Secrets to a Safe and Enjoyable 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 as 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!

Climbing

Each year, approximately 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier. Nearly half reach the 14,410 foot summit. Climbing permits are required for travel above 10,000' and/or on glaciers. Climbing information – including fees, routes, and conditions – is available at ranger stations and climbing information centers. 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 4 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 (1-12 people) for 1 to 14 consecutive nights. Seventy percent of all backcountry sites and zones are available for reservation. The remaining 30% are issued on a first-come, first-served basis the day of, or one day before the trip begins.

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...

Please hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow.

Leave No Trace

- Plan ahead & prepare
- Travel & 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 don't feed the wildlife.
- Store your food in an animal-proof container, or inside your car.
- Don't 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. Birds like jays or ravens are effective nest predators – eating the eggs or young of other birds. By feeding birds, visitors concentrate

these nest predators near roads and trails and inadvertently contribute to the death of songbirds in the same area.

Still, one of the most common mistakes people make at Mount Rainier National Park is to feed the wildlife. Visitors seeking a personal connection with animals think they are "helping" them. In fact it harms them in many ways.

Beggar squirrels, foxes, deer, and jays learn to approach people and busy areas and often get hit and killed by cars. Animals that become accustomed to humans and human food may 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 of the area
2. compass
3. extra food & water
4. extra clothing (warm!) & rain gear
5. emergency shelter
6. first aid kit
7. flashlight or headlamp
8. sun glasses & sun screen
9. pocket knife
10. matches (waterproof!)

Visitor Facility Hours

Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (360) 569-6575	May 1 - June 30 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily July 1 - September 2 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Paradise Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center (360) 569-6571	May 1- May 4 Closed weekdays May 5 - June 14 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily June 15 - September 1 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. daily	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, books, food, gifts
Ohanapecosh Visitor Center (360) 569-6581	CLOSED for 2013 due to sequestration budget cuts See below for Ohanapecosh Campground information	Restrooms
Sunrise Visitor Center (360) 663-2425	Scheduled to open July 3	Exhibits, information, books

Wilderness & Climbing Information Centers

Longmire WIC (360) 569-6650	May 24 - October 14 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily	Wilderness camping & climbing permits
Paradise Climbing information Center (Guide House) (360) 569-6641	May 4 - May 5 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. May 11 - September 30 6:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Sun. - Thurs. 6:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Fri. - Sat.	Climbing & wilderness permits, exhibits, information
White River WIC (360) 569-6670	Scheduled to open May 24 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sun. - Thurs. 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Fri. 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Sat.	Wilderness camping & eastside climbing permits
*The NEW! Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639	New facility opening in May 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Wed. - Sat. <i>*Located on the Carbon River Road 5.5 miles east of the Mowich Lake (SR165) junction.</i>	Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits (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 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. daily	Lodging, dining room
Longmire General Store	May 1 - June 13 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily June 14 - September 1 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. daily	Gifts, snacks, firewood
Paradise Inn	Open for the season May 22 Front Desk open 24 hours daily	Lodging, dining room, cafe, gift shop, post office
Paradise Jackson Visitor Center Snack Bar & Gift Shop	May 1 - May 3 Closed weekdays May 4 - June 14 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily June 15 - September 1 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. daily	Food, gifts, books
Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop	Scheduled to open July 3 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. daily	Food and gifts. Day use only, no overnight lodging

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. GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK

Parking in Paradise

Due to the popularity of the Paradise area, parking in the upper Paradise lot (adjacent to the visitor center) is limited to two hours and is generally full by 11:00 a.m. Parking for longer than two hours is permitted in the lower Paradise lot and along the Paradise Valley Road.



Naturalist Programs

Join a park ranger or volunteer for a talk, guided walk, or evening program. These free programs explore the park's natural and cultural history. Find out who else has come to Mount Rainier and why. Discover what this mountain really is and what it may become. Meet some other users of the park's resources - from owls to elk - and find out why they are here. Check at a visitor center for program times and locations.

HEY KIDS!

Ask for a Junior Ranger Activity Book. It's FREE at all park visitor centers. Complete it to learn lots of cool stuff about your park and earn a badge and certificate.

Road Opening Schedule

Estimated Dates (subject to change)

Nisqually to Paradise	Open
Westside Road to Dry Creek	Open
Paradise Valley Road	June 21
Stevens Canyon Road	May 24
State Route 410/Chinook Pass	May 21
Cayuse Pass via State Routes 410 & 123	May 4
White River Road to White River Campground Parking Lot	May 24
Sunrise Road	June 28
Mowich Lake Road	July 4

Use caution while driving this spring.

Drive-in Campgrounds

Campground	Open Dates	Elev.	Sites	Fee	Group Sites	Group Fees	Toilets	Dump Station	Maximum RV/Trailer Length
Cougar Rock*	June 27 - Sept. 29	3,180'	173	\$12/15*	5	\$40-64	Flush	Yes	RV 35'/Trailer 27'
Ohanapecosh*	May 24 - Sept. 29	1,914'	188	\$12/15*	2	\$40	Flush	Yes	RV 32'/Trailer 27'
White River	June 28 - Sept. 29	4,232'	112	\$12	0	N/A	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 27 through the night of September 2. These can be made up to 6 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.**