



The Tahoma News

May - June 2017



Mountain in Springtime

Spring comes slowly to the mountain. The sound of falling water marks the warmer days, although snow flurries in May and June may have you questioning the season. Yet in time, spring does arrive. You will see signs of spring while traveling through the park. Make time to let Mother Nature entertain you and you will be richly rewarded. 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. Green leaves burst from their buds, mushrooms carpet the forest floor, and birds arrive back at the mountain.



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

Don't overlook the forest wildflowers that bloom much earlier than their subalpine counterparts. You'll find white coltsfoot and three-petaled trillium blossoms in lowland forests, and yellow skunk cabbage blooming in marshy areas. Look carefully for the elusive fairy slipper or calypso orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*), a great springtime discovery; they grace us with their presence for only a few short weeks.



Spring is a time of new birth. You may find wildlife 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?

Nisqually Road Travel Advisory

Construction work on the historic Nisqually Road between Longmire and the Paradise area is scheduled to take place through early fall. Most work will occur Monday-Friday, 7:00 am-5:00 pm, but occasional evening or weekend work may be required. There will be no road work planned for holidays. Park staff will make an effort to keep the public informed of construction activities and changes through the park's website and social media (listed on page 4).

This work continues the third year of a multi-year road construction project addressing outdated utilities and deteriorating road conditions due to abundant precipitation, structural and design deficiencies, large traffic volumes, and normal wear.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 corridor, including rare plants and animals, archaeological resources, and the character of the historic roads.

The majority of this year's work will be paving but there may be spots of construction along the road so always use caution and comply with construction warning signs and flaggers. Delays will be limited to no more than 30 minutes one-way through the project. Expect rough road conditions and workers and equipment on or near the road.

Always drive in your lane unless following a pilot car and stay in your vehicle while stopped. Many workers, heavy equipment, and construction vehicles will be on the 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 of the park's inhabitants—from owls to elk—and find out why they are here. Check at a visitor center for program times and locations. See page 4 for visitor center locations and hours.

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.



Citizen Ranger Quests

Has your inner Junior Ranger never really gone away? Try out a Quest! They are designed for older children (12 and up) and adults. Information on Quests is available at visitor centers.

Welcome to Spring at Mount Rainier National Park!

As you travel through the park you will note that spring arrives slowly on the mountain. At Paradise, 600 - 700 inches of snow falls in an average year and persists into July.



Superintendent Randy King

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, National Park Service 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 numerous 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 ensure your visit is memorable and safe.

Thank you for choosing to visit Mount Rainier!

Randy King
Superintendent

Road Opening Schedule	
Estimated Dates (subject to change)	
Nisqually to Paradise	Open
Westside Road to Dry Creek	Open
Paradise Valley Road	June 23
Stevens Canyon Road	May 26
State Route 410/Chinook Pass	May 19
Cayuse Pass via SRs 410 & 123	May 19
White River Road to White River Campground Parking Lot	May 15
Sunrise Road	June 30
Mowich Lake Road	June 30
Please use caution while driving.	

Please deposit recyclable materials (aluminum cans, plastic bottles, glass) in the green recycling cans

Michael Larson photo



Be Informed



Find Your Park



Be Aware

Delton Young photo

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve natural and cultural resources and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. The following information will help you protect yourself and your park.

Pets and Service Animals

Pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet and are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or on snow. Leashed pets are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking lots and on roads currently open to public vehicles. During hot weather do not leave pets in vehicles.

Firearms

The use of firearms is prohibited within Mount Rainier National Park. Also, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places have signs at public entrances. People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them in the park.

Camping

Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

Bikes in the Park

Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.

Fires in the Park

Make fires only in established fire grills. Collecting firewood is prohibited.

Marijuana is Illegal

While limited recreational use of marijuana is now legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park, surrounding national forests, and all federal lands.

Fishing and Boating

A license is not required for fishing. Some lakes and streams are closed to fishing and Ohanapcosh River is fly fishing only. Check at a visitor center for more information.

Motorized boating is prohibited in the park. Non-motorized boating is permitted on all lakes except Frozen, Reflection, Ghost, Shadow, and Tipsoo lakes.

Mercury in Park Lakes

Research studies have shown mercury is present in some trout in a few park lakes. Check the Washington Department of Health website <http://www.doh.wa.gov/> for information on fish consumption.

Wilderness Camping

Mount Rainier National Park offers outstanding wilderness hiking and camping opportunities. 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. 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 percent are issued on a first-come, first-served basis the day of or one day before the trip begins. Wilderness permits must be obtained in person at the Longmire Wilderness Information Center, White River Wilderness Information Center, or the Carbon River Ranger Station. See page 4 for hours.

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 feet and/or on glaciers. Climbing information—including fees, routes, and conditions—is available at ranger stations and the Paradise Climbing Information Center. See page 4 for locations and hours.

The park has a new procedure for paying annual climbing fees that replaces the traditional climbing pass. Simply pay the fee through pay.gov; keep your receipt and print or save it on your phone to serve as proof of payment; and bring a picture ID. By late spring the park is expecting to have public wifi access at payment stations at Paradise and Longmire.

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

Water Bottle Filling Stations

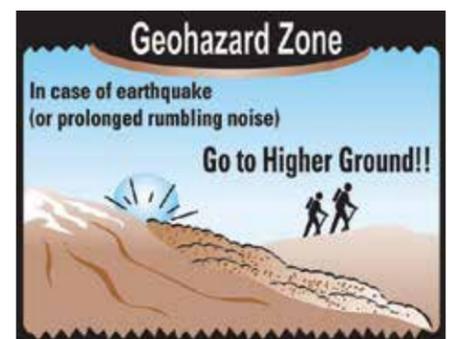
Mount Rainier National Park has free potable water available at most developed areas in the park. In addition to traditional water fountains, the park worked with its lodging and dining concessions partner, Rainier Guest Services (RGS), to install three new water bottle filling stations that make it easier for visitors to fill oversized bottles quickly. RGS offers several types of reusable water bottles for sale in the gift shops at Longmire and Paradise.

Accessibility

Most restrooms, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. 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 by wheelchair. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible when snow-free. An accessible trail leads to the base of 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.

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.



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 upvalley—often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground—200 feet 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, vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Tree Hazards

Keep a lookout for dead, diseased, or leaning trees that could fall or drop branches. Avoid stopping or picnicking near these hazardous trees. On windy days be especially careful, strong winds and gusts can do great damage even to healthy trees—as well as anything in range of falling debris.

Park Partners



Washington's National Park Fund
wnpf.org



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



Washington Trails Association
www.wta.org



Discover Your Northwest
www.discovernw.org



Visit Rainier
visitrainier.com



Mount Rainier National Park Associates
www.mrnpa.org



Mount Rainier Institute
www.packforest.org/mtrainierinstitute/



Stay Safe

Hazards of the Season

Many early season hikers are not prepared for challenges encountered by changing conditions and a snowpack that lingers late on the mountain.

Route-Finding Challenges

Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. 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. When route-finding, note important landmarks. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and find where you are on the map before continuing.

Be Prepared

If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around. 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.

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.

Snow Avalanches are Common in Spring

The greatest danger 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. If in doubt, ask questions or don't go. Unstable snow may slide at any time . . . not just in winter! Even small avalanches can be deadly.

Mountain Weather Changes Rapidly

A pleasant outing can quickly transform into a survival ordeal. Proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the ten essentials, etc.) is a must. Navigation in spring storms 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, dig in, and wait for better weather.

Cross 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. Use these pointers in making wise decisions when crossing streams.

- 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.

Plan Ahead

- Protect yourself by wearing appropriate outdoor clothing including footwear.
- Be prepared for rapidly changing weather.
- 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.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan.

If You See a Black Bear or a Mountain Lion

Among Mount Rainier's largest and most feared wildlife are the black bear and the mountain lion. Though you are not likely to see them, they are powerful animals, and your safety depends on how you act around them. Report all bear and lion sightings to a ranger.

Close Encounters With Black Bears

- Never feed a black bear, either intentionally or by leaving food unsecured.
- Do not approach bear cubs. An adult may be nearby to protect and defend the cubs.
- Back away from a nearby bear, even if it appears unconcerned with your presence.
- Do not run. Back away slowly. Talk loudly.
- A defensive bear will appear agitated and will often give visual and vocal warnings like swatting or stomping the ground, exhaling loudly, huffing, snapping teeth, or lowering the head with ears drawn back while facing you. This response may escalate to a charge.

If Charged by a Black Bear

- If the bear stops, slowly back away while talking, keeping the bear in view while leaving the area.
- If it continues, act aggressively, shouting and throwing rocks or sticks.
- If the bear attacks and you have food, distance yourself from the food.
- If the bear attacks and you do not have food, fight back aggressively.

Close Encounters with Mountain Lions

Mountain lions (also known as cougars) usually do not like confrontation. If you see one, give it plenty of space so it can get away. Never approach lion kittens. Leave the area immediately.

- Do not run or turn your back on a lion.
- Gather children with adults. Quickly pick up and hold small children.
- Stand in a group with your companions.
- If the lion moves toward you, wave your arms and make noise. Make yourself look large, intimidating and in control: stand up tall, open your jacket, yell, throw things.
- Back away slowly while facing the animal.
- If attacked, fight back aggressively. Stay standing. Hit as hard as possible especially to the head. Use a stick or rock as a weapon. Throw dirt in the eyes. Protect your head and neck.

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



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.

- 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.

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

A complete list of summer hours will be available in the summer newspaper and online.

Longmire Museum (360) 569-6575	May 1 - May 29 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily May 30 - June 13 Closed June 14 - June 30 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Paradise Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center (360) 569-6571	May 1 - May 5 Closed May 7 - June 16 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily June 17 - July 1 10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily	<i>Due to road construction delays, the visitor center may open up to 15 minutes late.</i> Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, books, food, gifts
Ohanapecosh Visitor Center (360) 569-6581	June 23 - June 30 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Sunrise Visitor Center (360) 663-2425	Opening June 30 10:00 am - 6:00 pm	Exhibits, information, books

Wilderness & Climbing Information Centers

Longmire Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6650	May 26 - October 9 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily	Wilderness camping & climbing permits, general information
Paradise Climbing Information Center (Guide House) (360) 569-6641	April 22 - May 14 8:00 am - 4:00 pm weekends only May 20 - September 4 7:00 am - 4:00 pm daily <i>Closed 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm daily</i>	Wilderness camping and climbing permits, exhibits, general information
White River Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6670	May 26 - October 9 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily	Wilderness camping and eastside climbing permits, general information
Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639 <i>Located on the Carbon River Road 5.5 miles east of the Mowich Lake (SR165) junction.</i>	May 1 - June 30 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily	Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information

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	Lodging, dining room
Longmire General Store	May 1 - June 9 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily June 10 - September 3 9:00 am - 8:00 pm daily	Gifts, snacks, firewood
Paradise Inn	Open May 24 - October 2 Front Desk open 24 hours daily	Lodging, dining room, cafe, gift shop
Paradise Jackson Visitor Center Snack Bar & Gift Shop	May 1 - May 5 Closed May 6 - June 16 10:00 am - 4:45 pm daily June 17 - September 4 10:00 am - 6:45 pm daily	Food, gifts, books
Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop	June 30 - September 4 10:00 am - 7:00 pm 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



Mount Rainier National Park

Superintendent
Randy King

Park Headquarters
(360) 569-2211; (360) 569-2177 TDD
Lost and Found (360) 569-6608

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/MountRainierNPS
Instagram: www.instagram.com/mountrainiernps/
Tumblr: <http://mountrainiernps.tumblr.com/>
Twitter: www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
YouTube: www.youtube.com/MountRainierNPS

Become A Mount Rainier Steward

Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow!

Consider joining our team as a park volunteer. Your contribution of time and energy will protect the magnificent natural and cultural areas entrusted to us, and you'll go home with a sense of pride at having participated in something worthwhile. Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Learn more at <http://www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm>.

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

- Improving Visitors' Experiences by maintaining trails, supporting the park's Search and Rescue program, and improving campgrounds.
- Bringing more Youth and Families—many of whom might otherwise never visit—into the park.
- Funding necessary Science and Research on glaciers, rivers, flora, and fauna .
- Strengthening Mount Rainier's Volunteerism and Stewardship activities. The Fund provides support for nearly 2,000 volunteers whose efforts are valued at \$1.8 million!



Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, drop a few coins in the donation boxes

at Mount Rainier's visitor centers, or purchase a Washington National Parks license plate for your vehicle, 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.

For more information please go to the Fund's website wnpf.org or email them at fund@wnpf.org.

Drive-in Campgrounds

Campground	Open Dates	Elev.	Sites	Group Sites	Toilets	Dump Station	Maximum RV/Trailer Length
Cougar Rock*	May 26 - Oct. 9	3,180'	173	5	Flush	Yes	RV 35'/Trailer 27'
Ohanapecosh*	May 19 - Oct. 9	1,914'	188	2	Flush	Yes	RV 32'/Trailer 27'
White River	June 23 - Sept. 25	4,232'	112	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). Vault 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 23 through the night of September 4. 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.**