



The Tahoma News

Spring 2018 | May -June



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.



- **Heads Up! *SR410 Closed May 8 - June 11**
- This spring, a *short segment of SR410* will be closed while crews work to make safety improvements to a slide area.
- *Closure Area: From the SR410/White River Road intersection (near White River Entrance) south to Cayuse Pass.
- Check the park website or contact a ranger for more information.

Keep in Touch!

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



@MountRainierNPS
Road status updates on Twitter

Welcome to Mount Rainier National Park, a crown jewel of the Pacific Northwest and of the National Park System.



Spring is a season of transitions at Mount Rainier. This extreme mountain creates extreme weather with an annual average snowfall of 643 inches at Paradise. This time of year, roads and facilities buried by snow are plowed and dug out while campgrounds, visitor centers, inns, and other facilities are prepared for the busy summer season. Maintenance staff, trail and road crews, and so many more are working hard to open the snowiest parts of the park for your enjoyment.

While spring flowers are blooming in surrounding communities, be prepared for snow flurries, and snow-covered meadows and forests, especially at higher elevations. Remember, while trails may be snow-free at lower elevations, they are likely to be snow-covered further up the trail.

Whether this is your first visit or your twentieth, I hope you leave with a special connection to this magical place that draws you back time after time.

Chip Jenkins
Superintendent

Signs of Spring

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 Narada and Silver 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.

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?



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

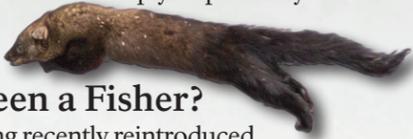
Daniel Keebler photo

Visiting Your Park



JD Hascup 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.



Have You Seen a Fisher?

The park is tracking recently reintroduced Pacific fishers by aircraft through signals emitted from implanted transmitters. You can help by reporting fisher sightings to a ranger. Remember that fisher, marten, and mink are very similar looking species. Even the experts can get them confused and photos (even fuzzy ones) are very helpful. One thing to look for is a long, bushy tail (a third of the total length) that is bushy all the way to the base. Marten and mink tails are tapered at the base. Fisher's ears are also much smaller in profile compared to marten and mink.

Camping

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

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.

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.

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.

No Drone Zone!

Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft (drone) within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park is prohibited.



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 year-round. 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 on the park website and at Wilderness Information Centers at Longmire, White River, and Paradise. See page 4 for hours.

Pay your annual climbing 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.

Guided climbs and seminars are available through: Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927 International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609 Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

Ranger-led 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 information.

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.

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.



Mount Rainier National Park

Superintendent
Chip Jenkins

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

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/

Know Before You Go

Emily Brouwer photo



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.

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.

Classic Backcountry Practices

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

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

You Can Help Protect Mount Rainier



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.

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.

- 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.

Please drive carefully and watch for wildlife.

Information, Facilities, and Services



Longmire Museum

(360) 569-6575
Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
May 1 - May 28
9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily
May 29 - June 12
Closed
June 13 - June 30
9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily

Longmire Wilderness Information Center

(360) 569-6650
Wilderness camping & climbing permits, general information
May 25 - October 8
7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily

National Park Inn at Longmire

Open year-round
Lodging, dining room
Front Desk: 7:00 am - 10:00 pm daily

Longmire General Store

Open year-round
Lodging, dining room
May 1 - June 8
10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily
June 9 - September 3
9:00 am - 8:00 pm daily

Carbon River Ranger Station

(360) 829-9639
Located on the Carbon River Road 5.5 miles east of the Mowich Lake (SR165) junction.
Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information
May 1 - September 29
7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily

Paradise Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center

(360) 569-6571
Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, books, food, gifts
May 1 - May 4
Closed
May 5 - June 15
10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily
June 16 - July 1
10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily

Paradise Jackson Visitor Center Snack Bar & Gift Shop

Food, gifts, books
May 1 - May 4
Closed
May 5 - June 15
10:00 am - 4:45 pm daily
June 16 - September 3
10:00 am - 6:45 pm daily

Paradise Wilderness Information Center (Guide House)

(360) 569-6641
Wilderness camping and climbing permits, exhibits, general information
May 4 - May 20
7:00 am - 4:00 pm weekends
Self-registration only Mon-Thurs
May 25 - September 3
7:00 am - 4:00 pm daily

Paradise Inn

Lodging, dining room, cafe, gift shop
Open May 18 - October 1
Front Desk open 24 hours daily

Food & Lodging

For in-park lodging reservations, contact Mount Rainier Guest Services (360) 569-2275
mtrainierguestservices.com

Ohanapecosh Visitor Center

(360) 569-6581
Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
May 25 - June 30
9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily

White River Wilderness Information Center

(360) 569-6670
Wilderness camping and eastside climbing permits, general information
May 25 - October 8
7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily

Sunrise Visitor Center

(360) 663-2425
Exhibits, information, books
Proposed opening June 28
10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily

Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop

Food and gifts. Day use only, no overnight lodging
June 30 - September 9
10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily

**In An Emergency
Dial 9-1-1**
from any phone
located in the park.

Paradise Inn: Open For Business During Rehabilitation of the Paradise Inn Annex

The Paradise Inn is the largest lodging facility located within Mount Rainier National Park. It was built using massive timbers and glacial boulders to blend the building with its natural surroundings and, therefore, the building is a contributing feature to the park's National Historic Landmark District designation.

Rehabilitation of the Annex began in August 2017 and will continue this spring. The Inn will open to visitors on May 18th and remain open through the summer season including overnight lodging at a reduced capacity, and access to the lobby, food services, gift shop, and evening ranger-led programs. Visitor parking will be reduced in the Paradise area throughout the construction period for contractor staging and safe access to the construction site. All traditional Paradise area services, activities, facilities, and trails are available and not affected by the rehabilitation project.

During the work, character defining features of the building exterior will be rehabilitated, including the use of the existing Annex foundation stones as a veneer to replicate the historic appearance of the building. Interior improvements include energy efficiency upgrades, sound dampening between guest rooms, new finishes and details that are historically compatible, and fire, life, and safety system updates.

The rehabilitation will correct deficiencies, resulting in a structure that is safe, stable, and serves visitors better. Work will continue throughout the spring and summer. The Annex is scheduled to reopen for the 2019 summer season. Please heed safety signs and fencing while in the area.

Road Opening Schedule Estimated Dates (subject to change)

Nisqually to Paradise	Open
Westside Road to Dry Creek	Open
Paradise Valley Road	June 29
Stevens Canyon Road	May 25
State Route 410/Chinook Pass	May 25*
Cayuse Pass via SRs 410 & 123	May 25*
White River Road to White River Campground Parking Lot	May 18
Sunrise Road	June 28
Mowich Lake Road	June 28

*SR410 is expected to be closed from the SR410/White River Road intersection (near White River Entrance) south to Cayuse Pass through June 11.

Please use caution while driving.

Services Outside Mount Rainier National Park

Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and religious and other services are available in local communities.

GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK.

Drive-in Campgrounds

Campground	Open Dates	Elev.	Sites	Group Sites	Toilets	Dump Station	Maximum RV/Trailer Length
Cougar Rock*	May 25 - Oct. 8	3,180'	173	5	Flush	Yes	RV 35'/Trailer 27'
Ohanapecosh*	May 25 - Oct. 8	1,914'	188	2	Flush	Yes	RV 32'/Trailer 27'
White River	June 22 - Sept. 24	4,232'	112	0	Flush	No	RV 27'/Trailer 18'
Mowich Lake	Primitive walk-in campground, tents only. 10 sites. 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 22 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.