



Visitor Update | Spring 2021

What You Need to Know

- Masks are required in all buildings, including restrooms, and outdoors when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Pets are not permitted on trails. Service animals are allowed.
- Visitor centers, wilderness information centers, and ranger stations are closed at this time.
- Rangers are staffing information tables outside of visitor centers and wilderness information centers.

Get the new NPS App!

The new NPS App is here! Use it to learn about trails, visitor centers, campgrounds, directions, fees and passes, and weather alerts. Download the app today to learn more about Mount Rainier National Park and to plan your visits to over 420 national parks. Search "National Park Service" in the iOS App Store and Google Play Store to download the app.

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Connect with @MountRainierNPS at www.nps.gov/mora, and on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and YouTube



Longmire to Paradise: Day Trip

For snow-free hiking in late spring, consider the Longmire and Ohanapecosh areas. Snowshoe rentals are available at the Longmire General Store.

Whether you are visiting for a few hours or the entire day, there is plenty to do at Longmire and Paradise. Take a hike, enjoy the views, hunt for the elusive forest wildflowers in the lowlands, or enjoy the snowy landscape at Paradise. Choose your favorites to easily fill your day:

Enter through the Nisqually Entrance via Ashford, WA. Enjoy the beautiful drive along the windy road through old-growth forest. It will be about 15 minutes before you reach Longmire.

Longmire

Visit Longmire to walk in the footsteps of those who first founded the area and learn about the history of the park. Enjoy trails leading through meadows, old-growth forest, and for the more adventurous, amazing views. The Longmire Museum and Wilderness Information Center are currently closed.

Walk the Trail of Shadows. 0.7 miles round-trip. Average hiking time: 30 minutes. A self-guiding loop around Longmire Meadow explores the early history of the Longmire Springs

Resort. Trail of the Shadows begins across the main park road from the Longmire Museum. For your safety, do not drink the water from the springs!

Drive the 30 minutes up to Paradise. Make a few stops along the way:

- Christine Falls- 4 miles from Longmire. Park at the designated pull outs and follow the short path down to the viewpoint of the waterfall.
- Ricksecker Point- 6 miles from Longmire. Take the slight turn towards Ricksecker Point where you will find a magnificent view of Mount Rainier!
- Narada Falls- 8 miles from Longmire. Turn into the parking area for Narada Falls. A quick but steep trail will bring you down to the base of the waterfall. If snow is present it is not recommended to walk on this trail.
- Stop at any other pull out if there is a view you want to enjoy.

Paradise

Expect snow-covered trails well into June. This area receives many feet of snow in winter and it lingers well into spring. The Paradise Jackson Visitor Center is currently closed. Look for trail information and rangers in the visitor center plaza.

Pledge to Preserve and Protect Mount Rainier!



Mount Rainier Pledge

Mount Rainier National Park was created to protect and preserve unimpaired iconic Mount Rainier, along with its natural and cultural resources, values, and dynamic processes.

The park provides opportunities for people to experience, understand,

and care for the park environment, and provides for wilderness experiences and sustains wilderness values.

Be a Mount Rainier Champion by learning more about park resources and supporting park efforts by sharing #RainierPledge!

I Pledge To:

“Protect Mount Rainier’s meadows and lakes by staying on trails in meadows and around lakes. One step onto a meadow damages an average of 17 plants that will take years to recover!

Never take my pets on trails or meadows. Pets are not permitted on trails. They are only permitted in campgrounds, parking lots, and on roads open for travel and must be on leashes no longer than six feet.

Respect the land and all that is connected to it as the original stewards of this land did and their descendants continue do today.

Welcome all people I encounter during my visit regardless of their identities or abilities.

Leave No Trace of my visit. Planning ahead and being prepared, disposing of waste properly, and leaving what you find, are just a few ways you can Leave No Trace.

Keep Wildlife Wild by not feeding or approaching animals. Feeding wildlife can be as direct as offering a bit of your lunch, or as indirect as leaving your food or garbage for animals to find.

Stay safe during my visit by keeping safety in mind. Watch for changes in weather and conditions. Know your limits when exploring Mount Rainier’s trails and backcountry.”

Hazards of the Season

The National Park Service conducts thousands of search and rescues servicewide each year, many of which could be avoided with visitors planning and making responsible decisions. During the ongoing health crisis, it's critical that we make wise choices to keep our national park rangers and first responders out of harm's way. Please follow these tips to safely spend time outside.

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. Watch for streams flowing underneath 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.

- Attending training in safe stream crossings is recommended.
- 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, Be Prepared

- Protect yourself by wearing appropriate outdoor clothing including footwear.
- Carry the ten essentials even on a short sightseeing hike.
- Always tell someone of your travel plans.
- Do not travel alone.
- If visibility is poor, do not travel at all.
- Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time and have a backup plan.

Enjoy Your Visit, Protect Your Park

- Stay on designated trails to protect vegetation.
- Do not feed, approach, or disturb wildlife.
- Leashed pets are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking lots and along roads open to public vehicles.
- People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them (but federal law prohibits discharging them) in the park. However, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places have signs at public entrances.
- Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft (drone) within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park is prohibited.
- While limited recreational use of marijuana is legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park and all federal lands.
- Fires are not permitted in the backcountry.
- Frontcountry camping is currently closed.
- Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.
- Carry the 10 Essentials and know how to use them: map and compass; sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat; extra clothing (warm!) and rain gear; flashlight or head lamp (extra batteries); first aid supplies; waterproof matches or lighter; repair kit and tools (for gear), extra food and water; emergency shelter.

Recreate Responsibly

A visit to a national park is a great way to enjoy life during the pandemic. Clear air and solitude, just what we all need right now! However, it is critical to remain vigilant in spite of the feeling of distancing ourselves from its spread. Here are some ways you can stay healthy and help stop the spread of COVID:

Avoid crowded areas. Seek another location to recreate.

Practice physical distancing. Keep six feet between you and anyone who doesn't live with you.

Wear a mask and practice good hygiene. Masks are required in all park buildings and when social distancing cannot be maintained. Wash or sanitize your hands and avoid touching any high-traffic surfaces.

Leave no trace. Always pack out what you pack in, including gloves and masks.

Know your limits. Postpone challenging hikes or trying new activities while first responders, parks, and communities continue to concentrate on responding to the pandemic.



Hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow to protect fragile vegetation.