

# Mount Rainier



The purpose of national parks is  
*"to conserve the scenery and the natural  
 and historic objects and the wildlife therein  
 and to provide for the enjoyment of the  
 same in such manner and by such means  
 as will leave them unimpaired for the  
 enjoyment of future generations."*

United States Congress  
 National Park Service Organic Act  
 August 25, 1916



## Legacy of Love

Mount Rainier National Park, 1899-1999 "A Century of Resource Stewardship".

At 14,410 feet, Mount Rainier is the tallest volcano in the 48 contiguous states and the highest mountain in Washington. It dominates the horizon (on clear days) for hundreds of miles and boasts the largest single-peak glacial system outside Alaska. On its slopes lie spectacular meadows of subalpine flowers and a skirt of old-growth Douglas-fir forest found in few other places.

When Congress established Mount Rainier as this country's fifth national park in 1899, it was the direct result of a dynamic grass-roots effort by local citizens. These early park advocates took to heart their responsibility as stewards of the mountain they loved and sought protection for its resources through legislative action.

Almost a century has passed since then. The park remains a monument to the awesome and subtle forces of nature. It now also represents our changing attitudes toward nature. Those attitudes linger in the Rustic architecture of the park's early buildings and road features; in trail bridges hand-built by the CCC; in visitor facilities which reflect the eras in which they were designed; in the granting of wilderness status for most of the park; in the efforts to repair fragile subalpine meadows where human use has damaged the environment; and in many more ways.

Mount Rainier National Park has many stories to tell—of the volcano, of the glaciers, of the forests and meadows, of the wildlife, and of its human past. Get to know this spectacular park. Familiarize yourself with its stories. Enjoy its challenges and its opportunities. But also recognize that WE are now the stewards of the mountain. Let our actions testify to an appreciation of park resources and to a respect for our national heritage.

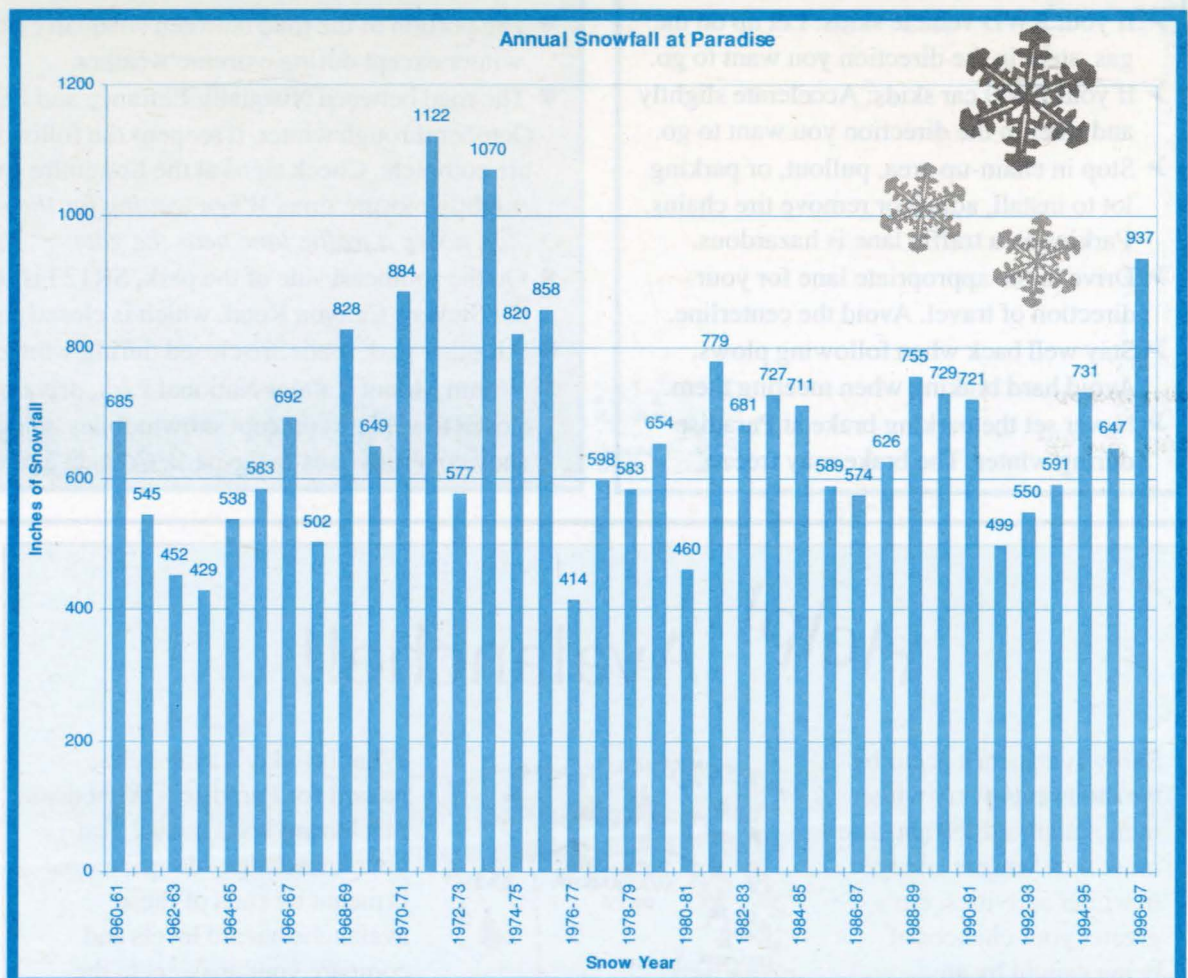
## Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow...

For many of us the first snowfall of the season captures our hearts and our imaginations. It triggers a rush of adrenaline and an urge to drop everything and head for the mountains. Thereafter, the more snow that falls, the more exciting winter becomes.

During the winter of 1996-97 a total of 937.5 inches of snow fell at Paradise, well above the 626 inch average (1920-96) and three times the 313 inch record low snowfall of 1939-40. Indeed, last winter was the snowiest at Mount Rainier in 23 years!

This year, however, may be quite different. According to weather forecasters, the Northwest should be warmer and drier than normal. They expect the weather pattern known as El Niño to steer winter storms away from the Pacific Northwest and toward other regions.

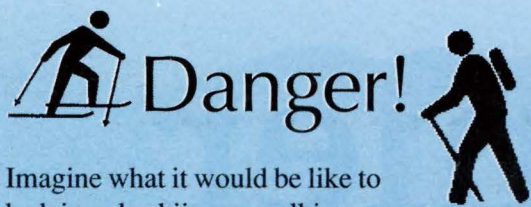
No matter if the snowfall total by year's end (June 30 is the end of the snow year) amounts to



less than last year's total. Even an average winter will see over fifty feet of snow fall at Paradise, with snow covering the ground from mid-October until early July.

Surviving long snowy winters on the slopes of Mount Rainier is a major environmental challenge for plants and animals. The ways they meet that challenge are varied. Some of their survival methods have been adopted by people who camp, ski, snowboard and otherwise enjoy Mount Rainier during winter. To learn more about winter ecology and safety, join a park naturalist for a guided snowshoe walk, review seasonal exhibits in the Jackson Visitor Center, or ask for winter safety handouts at the information desks in the visitor center or Longmire Museum. Enjoy the unique opportunities of this season. Get to know the winter stories the Mountain has to share.





Imagine what it would be like to be leisurely skiing or walking up the middle of a closed road, laughing and talking with a group of your friends...when a snowplow suddenly rounds a curve at full speed heading your direction! Could you get out of the way? *Never* ski, slide or walk on plowed roadways or parking lots when snowplowing activities are in progress. Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.

## Winter Driving Tips

Poor visibility and reduced traction present increased driving hazards during winter. Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy when other sections of roadway are not. Stay alert! Use caution. Anticipate hazards.

By following these driving tips, you can increase your margin of safety during winter:

- Reduce speed.
- Keep headlights on for visibility.
- Use low gears, especially driving downhill.
- Brake sparingly. Pump or squeeze brakes to avoid locking your wheels.
- Leave extra distance between vehicles.
- If your RWD vehicle skids: Let up on the gas, steer in the direction you want to go.
- If your FWD car skids: Accelerate slightly and steer in the direction you want to go.
- Stop in chain-up area, pullout, or parking lot to install, adjust or remove tire chains. Parking in a traffic lane is hazardous.
- Drive in the appropriate lane for your direction of travel. Avoid the centerline.
- Stay well back when following plows. Avoid hard braking when meeting them.
- Never set the parking brake at Paradise during winter. The brake may freeze.

## Traction Requirements ~ Getting Where You Want to Go

Mount Rainier conforms to Washington state guidelines for traction devices. Signs posted along park roadways inform drivers of the current traction requirements. As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Tire chains may be required at anytime. Carry them in your vehicle during winter. Obeying a posted traction requirement will reduce your chance of having an accident; ignoring traction requirements may result in an accident and a citation.



You may see one of four different traction requirement signs posted along park roadways:

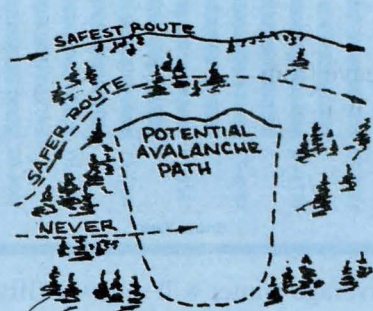
- **Watch for Ice.** The road ahead is mostly bare with patches of ice. Proceed with caution.
- **Approved Traction Tires Advised.** The road ahead has patches of snow covering the road surface. Proceed with caution.
- **Approved Traction Tires Required.** The road ahead is snowpacked or not yet completely plowed. Snow is probably falling. To proceed, your vehicle must have approved all-season tires, snow tires or chains on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by "M-S", "M/S", "\*\_\*\_\*", or "All Season" lettering on the sidewall of the tires. Drivers of vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVW and buses must install chains on their vehicles when traction tires are required.
- **Chains Required.** The road ahead is snowpacked or icy. It is likely that snow is falling heavily. Drivers can expect some difficulty. To proceed, vehicles must have tire chains (link, cable or plastic) on the drive wheels. AWD and 4WD vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels, are in four wheel drive, and carry one set of chains in the vehicle for later installation if needed.

## Winter Roads: Open or Closed?

- \* The portion of the road between Nisqually Entrance and Longmire remains open throughout winter except during extreme weather.
- \* The road between Nisqually Entrance and Paradise closes nightly at Longmire from mid-October through winter. It reopens the following morning when snowplowing activities are complete. Check signs at the Longmire gate for estimated morning opening time and nightly closure time. *When waiting for the road to open, park temporarily in the parking lot, not in a traffic lane near the gate.*
- \* On the southeast side of the park, SR123 is open only between SR12 and its junction with the Stevens Canyon Road, which is closed for winter.
- \* All other park roads are closed during winter. Look for *most* to reopen by next May or June.
- \* Within Mount Rainier National Park, drive only on plowed roads. All unplowed roads are closed to vehicles (except snowmobiles, which are allowed on a limited number of snowcovered roads in the park. Contact a ranger for complete information regarding use.)

## Help! Avalanche!!

Snow avalanches occur by the thousands every winter in mountainous terrain. The more time you are engaged in winter activities, the greater your chances of being caught by an avalanche.



What is today's avalanche hazard for Paradise? What does that hazard level mean? Test your knowledge--describe what is meant by each of these avalanche hazard levels and compare your answers to the descriptions on the final page of this newspaper.

- Low
- Moderate
- Considerable
- High
- Extreme

Learn the terrain and weather factors that influence avalanche hazard. Put that knowledge to good use when selecting the route you will travel, or even *if* you will travel. Knowledge can help you avoid being caught by a snow avalanche and will help you survive if you are caught.

Avalanche information is available from visitor centers and ranger stations.

## Tips to stay warm



Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily rob a person of body heat. To avoid hypothermia and frostbite that might result from heat loss: Dress warmly and stay dry. Wear layers of wool or synthetics like pile and polypropylene. Avoid exposure to wind. Snack frequently and take warm-up breaks.





Stephen T. Mather, first director of the National Park Service, enjoying winter activities at Paradise, 1923.

## Visitor Services & Activities

### CAR CAMPING

Camping in vehicles is not allowed in parking lots or along roadways. Camping is allowed *only* in Sunshine Point Campground.

**Sunshine Point:** Open year-round for camping and picnicking. Located 0.25 mile east of the Nisqually Entrance (SW corner of park). 18 sites campsites. Camping fee: \$10 per night. Accessible facilities.

### SNOWPLAY AREA

Look for the designated snowplay area at the edge of the upper parking lot at Paradise, 0.25 mile beyond the visitor center. This location is the *only* area where sliding is allowed. For your enjoyment and safety, only innertubes, plastic sleds, saucers and other soft sliding devices are allowed. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds or other hard sliding devices are permitted.

### VISITOR CENTERS

#### Longmire: Longmire Museum

Open daily: 9am - 4pm

#### Paradise: Jackson Visitor Center

Open Sat/Sun/Hol thru April: 10am - 5pm

Open daily beginning early May.

### FOOD and LODGING

For lodging reservations at the National Park Inn (year round) or Paradise Inn (summer), call Mount Rainier Guest Services: (360) 569-2275.

#### Longmire: National Park Inn

Lodging & dining--open year round.

**Front desk:** 7am - 10pm

**Restaurant:** 7am - 7pm Sunday-Thursday  
7am - 8pm Fri/Sat/Hol

#### Longmire: General Store & Ski Shop

Groceries, gifts, firewood--open year round. Ski & snowshoe rentals & tire chain purchases are available thru early April:

10am - 5pm Monday - Friday

8:30am - 6pm Sat/Sun/Hol

#### Paradise: Jackson Visitor Center

##### Grill & Gift Shop:

11am - 4:45pm Sat/Sun/Hol thru April.

Open daily beginning early May.

**Showers:** Open during building hours, located in basement.

#### Paradise: Paradise Inn

Closed for winter--reopens late May.

### POST OFFICE

#### Longmire: National Park Inn

Open year round.

8:30am - 5pm Mon-Fri; 8:30am - 12n Sat

Closed Sundays & Holidays.



### ACCESSIBILITY

➤ Comfort stations and buildings are mostly accessible or accessible with help.

➤ Accessible lodging is available inside the park as well as in local communities.

➤ In the Jackson Visitor Center, written information, exhibits and scripts for uncaptioned audiovisual programs are available. The film *Fire & Ice* is open captioned.

➤ TDD: (360) 569-2177.

### SNOW CAMPING

Snow camping requires both sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage and a camping permit. Permits are free and are available at Longmire on weekdays, Paradise on weekends.

➤ Camp well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots (beyond the range of snow blowers!) When you finish camping, please collapse igloos and snowcaves.

➤ Groups of more than 12 people may camp *only* in the immediate Paradise area where there is access to 24-hour restrooms. Others should use bags (provided free) to remove human waste from the park (don't throw in trash cans!)

➤ Park in designated overnight parking areas. Do not set the parking brake on your vehicle.

➤ In the morning, stay clear of parking lots and roads until plowing activities are complete.

➤ Before driving downhill in the morning, check the road sign posted at the visitor center junction to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

➤ Fires are prohibited unless car camping.



### GUIDED SNOWSHOE WALKS

Whether you are an experienced snowshoer or have never put on a

pair of snowshoes before, these ranger-guided walks can be educational and great fun!

Snowshoes are provided. Walks are limited to 25 people, ten years old and older, and are available on a first come, first served basis beginning December 27. Walks are conducted daily December 27 through January 4. Starting January 10, they are offered only on Saturdays & Sundays, through April 5. Walks leave from the visitor center at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. They last two hours. Register at the Jackson Visitor Center Information Desk on the day of the walk. Organized groups of 10 to 25 people may arrange and reserve a snowshoe walk for 12:30 p.m. on weekend days. Group leaders call (360) 569-2211 x3314 for reservations.

The snowshoe route is 1.2 miles round-trip. Its difficulty varies depending on snow and weather conditions. A \$1 donation is requested to help defray the cost of snowshoe repair. These walks are a great way to learn about winter ecology and enjoy the sights and sounds of winter away from parking lots and buildings.

### CLIMBING and BACKPACKING

All persons who plan to climb above 10,000 feet elevation or travel onto glaciers must obtain a Climbing Permit. Backpackers must obtain a Wilderness Permit. Rangers issue permits primarily from the Longmire Museum on

weekdays and at Paradise on weekends. Permits are also available by self-registration at the Wilkeson Ranger Station and at the winter closure of SR410 near Crystal Mountain. For information about guided climbs led by Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., call: (253) 627-6242.



### SKIERS, SNOWSHOERS, and SNOWBOARDERS

Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a current weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmarked routes are available from visitor centers and ranger stations.

### SNOWMOBILE USE

A limited number of unplowed roads are designated for snowmobile use. Obtain map and information at visitor centers.

### GASOLINE and OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES

Gasoline, lodging, dining and a variety of other services are available at businesses located in the communities surrounding the mountain. Ask for a list of these services at any park visitor center. *No gasoline is available within the park.*

### STATEWIDE WINTER REPORTS

Avalanche Hazard Forecast: (206) 526-6677  
Highway Pass Report: (888) 766-4636

## Emergency: 911

TDD: (360) 569-2177

24-hour information: (360) 569-2211

Website: [www.nps.gov/mora/](http://www.nps.gov/mora/)





## Into the 21st Century

Planning for the future of Mount Rainier National Park is a monumental task. It is a task, and a responsibility, that is shared by park managers and the public alike. You may have already attended public meetings or seen newsletters about the planning process in which Mount Rainier is currently engaged. When completed, the product of this process, a General Management Plan (GMP) for Mount Rainier National Park, will outline a broad philosophical approach to managing the park and specify actions that are needed to reach identified goals as we move into the next century.

For a copy of past GMP publications or to be put on the mailing list for future newsletters, please contact: Eric Walkinshaw, Chief of Planning, Mount Rainier National Park, Tahoma Woods - Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304. Telephone: (360) 569-2211. Website: [www.nps.planning/mora.gmp](http://www.nps.planning/mora.gmp)

Your feedback is a valuable and necessary part of this planning process.



## Wild & Domestic

Rules and regulations in national parks help protect their special qualities. By honoring them, you show respect for fellow park users and for our national heritage. Your cooperation is appreciated! Please remember:

- Pets must be leashed. They are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or on snow (seeing-eye and hearing-ear dogs excepted.)
- Park animals are wild. Observe them only. Feeding them (including the red fox!) is prohibited.

## Thank You Volunteers!

From those of us who recognize both the value of your time and the value of Mount Rainier National Park, a heartfelt THANK YOU! to each of the 837 volunteers who contributed a total of 52,059 hours during Fiscal Year 1997 to make a difference at Mount Rainier.

For information about the volunteer program, visit the National Park Service's Volunteer in Parks area at <http://www.nps.gov/volunteer> on the Web. To apply for volunteer service at Mount Rainier or to receive more information on the volunteer program in this park, contact a park ranger at any visitor center or ranger station. Or contact: Clay & Dixie Gatchel, Lead Volunteer Coordinators, Mount Rainier National Park, Tahoma Woods - Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304. E-mail: [dixie\\_gatchel@nps.gov](mailto:dixie_gatchel@nps.gov)

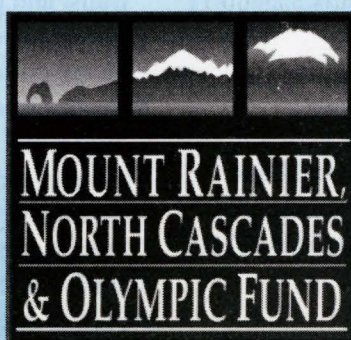
## Mount Rainier, North Cascades & Olympic Fund

The Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic Fund was created to restore, enhance, and preserve Washington's national parks.

The Fund is a private, independent, not-for-profit organization that works with individuals like you--as well as businesses, foundations and allied organizations--to secure financial as well as volunteer support for specific projects to improve the parks.

Projects completed at Mount Rainier National Park during 1997 include:

- Rehabilitating the Tolmie Peak fire lookout
- Initial steps toward restoring the White River



patrol cabin

- Producing two waysides
- Purchasing "Don't Be a Meadow Stomper" resource awareness pins
- Funding an educational CD-Rom project
- Producing a video that interprets resource issues

For detailed information about how you can help with these and other projects, contact: Jennifer Benn, Executive Director, The Mount Rainier, North Cascades & Olympic Fund, 1221 Second Ave., Suite 350, Seattle, WA 98101. Or telephone: (206) 621-6565. Look for donation boxes and contribution envelopes at park visitor centers.

## Why New Park Fees?

Our nation's parks, wildlife refuges, and public lands are for everyone to enjoy. They will always be places that people of every income can visit at low cost. But the parks and other public lands are suffering from inadequate funding, as many experienced travelers have seen. In response to this situation, Congress set up a three-year pilot fee program to see if people are willing to make a small additional investment in their parks. The answer, according to public opinion surveys, is a

resounding yes! More than 78% of Americans surveyed said they would pay a little more to visit a park if the money was going directly to that park.

It is! Eighty percent of the new revenue is now used for specific improvements at the park where it is collected. The remaining 20% of the money collected goes into a special fund to help other parks that don't charge fees.

The entrance fee for Mount Rainier National Park is now \$10 per single, private, non-commercial vehicle (including motorcycles). It covers all persons in that vehicle and is valid for seven calendar days. The entry fee for pedestrians, bicyclists, charter bus passengers, and passengers in non-privately owned vehicles is \$5 each. There is no charge for persons 16 years of age and younger. Information pertaining to fees charged for tour busses and annual passes may be obtained by calling (360)569-2211 or by asking entrance station staff.

Thanks for your support! This is a program where *everyone* wins but most importantly, the public gets healthy, thriving, accessible parks to enjoy today and during the years to come.



## Thanks NWIA!

Enhance your knowledge of the park. Increase your educational opportunities while visiting Mount Rainier. Books and maps are available for purchase at park visitor centers.

These sales outlets are operated by the Mount Rainier Branch of the Northwest Interpretive Association (NWIA), a non-profit organization benefiting educational programs in the national parks and forests of the Pacific Northwest. This newspaper is an example of these benefits. For a mail order catalog, write to the Northwest Interpretive Assn., Longmire, WA 98397. Telephone: (360) 569-2211 x3320. Or ask at any visitor center.

Avalanche level descriptions:

**Low:** Generally stable snow. Travel is generally safe.

**Moderate:** Unstable snow possible on steep terrain.

Use caution in steeper terrain on certain aspects.

**Considerable:** Be very cautious in steeper areas.

Unstable snow is probable on steeper terrain.

**High:** Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended.

Safest travel is on windward ridges and lower angle slopes without steep terrain above. Unstable snow is likely on a variety of aspects and slope angles.

**Extreme:** Travel in avalanche terrain should be avoided and travel confined to low angle terrain well away from avalanche path runouts. Extremely unstable snow is certain. Large destructive avalanches are possible.