



The Tahoma News

January 1 - April, 2005

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. Mount Rainier National Park is a source of inspiration, providing boundless opportunities for exploration, solitude, and contemplation.

Before You Enjoy The Snow, Here's What You Should Know!

WELCOME TO ONE OF THE SNOWIEST PLACES ON EARTH! The wildflower meadows of summer have given way to a winter wonderland. We've designed this edition of the Tahoma News to help you have a safe and enjoyable winter visit. Please see a ranger for more information.

Drive Safely

Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction. Drive with your lights on for safety. Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of roadway are not. Stay alert, use caution, anticipate hazards, and slow down!

Most of Mount Rainier's roads are closed for winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather. The road between Longmire and Paradise closes nightly in winter and reopens in the morning once the road has been plowed. The road may close early or remain closed during the entire day due to poor road conditions or severe weather. While you're waiting for the road to open, please park in the parking lot, not in a traffic lane. Drive only on plowed roads in the park. The Carbon River Road to Ipsut Creek Campground is open until closed by snow or flooding.

Winter Driving Safety Tips

- * All vehicles are required to carry tire chains.
- * Reduce your speed.
- * Keep your headlights on for visibility.
- * Allow extra distance between vehicles.
- * Stay well back when following plows.
- * Use low gears, especially when driving downhill.
- * Never stop or park in a traffic lane. Your life may depend on it!
- * If your RWD vehicle skids: Reduce gas, steer where you want to go.
- * If your FWD car skids: Accelerate slightly and steer where you want to go.
- * Brake sparingly to avoid skidding by locking your brakes
- * Drive in the appropriate lane for your direction of travel. Avoid the center line.
- * Ensure that your chains fit your tires and practice installing them before leaving home.
- * Stop in a chain-up area, pullout, or parking lot to install, adjust, or remove tire chains.
- * When parking, avoid setting your emergency brake. It may freeze.



Enjoy this southwest view the mountain while showshoeing or hiking the Trail of the Shadows at Longmire.

Follow Traction Requirements

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. **State law requires that you carry tire chains at all times when in the mountains.** Obey the posted traction requirement.

APPROVED TRACTION TIRES ADVISED

The road ahead has patches of snow and/or ice covering the surface. Your vehicle should 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" on the sidewall of the tires.

CHAINS REQUIRED EXCEPT 4WD

The road ahead is snow-packed or icy and drivers can expect some difficulty. Your vehicle 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.

CHAINS REQUIRED ALL VEHICLES

All vehicles must have chains on the drive wheels including AWD and 4WD.

Welcome...



...to Mount Rainier National Park, the nation's fifth oldest national park. I am Dave Uberuaga the Park Superintendent. As a public servant for 30 years, I am honored to be chosen to protect this special place which is cared for by a dedicated staff and enthusiastic volunteers. The park staff, volunteers and concessions personnel are here to help make your visit enjoyable, whether this is your first visit or if you have been here many times.

Winter at Mount Rainier creates a unique environment and traveling on the mountain road to Paradise is an experience in itself! If you are trying out your new SUV, remember that it's the skills of the driver that count more than the type of vehicle being driven. Many visitors become overconfident with all-wheel drive, but driving with caution can prevent many vehicle accidents.

An exciting family activity you may be planning is tubing and sliding down the snowplay runs at Paradise, or snowshoeing with a Park Ranger. My wife and I brought our children, who are now young adults, to Paradise to enjoy these same activities many years ago. We have great memories of our day of "family fun" in the snow. Please remember, the snowplay is designed as a family-oriented activity and not intended for the speed and excitement of the average 20-year old. If you're interested in a different snow challenge, sign up for the snowshoe walks and see another side of Paradise away from the snowplay activities.

As you head home, our gateway community businesses offer good food, coffee, arts and crafts. Stop and enjoy their hospitality and tell them the Superintendent sent you.

I hope you have a safe and wonderful visit to Mount Rainier – come see us again!

Dave Uberuaga
Park Superintendent

2 Winter Activities

Are you here for the snow? Where can you ski, snowshoe, or snow camp? Are there guided snowshoe walks? See the next page for winter recreation information.

3 Avalanche Aware

How are avalanches triggered? What can you do to avoid causing an avalanche? What are the different risk levels? Your introduction to avalanche awareness is on page 3.

4 Park Information

Where are the visitor centers? When are they open? Where can I get something to eat? How do I buy a National Parks Pass or a Mount Rainier Annual Pass? It's all on the back page!

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Visitor Services & Activities, Winter 2005



"Nature Coasting," has been a popular activity at Paradise since the turn of the century.

SNOWPLAY AREA

Sliding and sledding is permitted only in the designated snowplay area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Runs are constructed when there's sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage – at least five feet. The snowplay area may remain open into mid-March, depending on snow. Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is open to sliding (except skiing and snowboarding). Serious injuries and fatalities have occurred elsewhere when people have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down steep slopes, or broken through thin snow into stream gorges.

Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted. Compressed air is available on weekends and holidays during snowplay hours at the upper parking lot restroom. Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.

Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric such as wool or polypropylene next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer, not in jeans or T-shirts. Wear a hat, gloves, and snow-sealed boots. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends & holidays).

The snowplay area normally closes at 4:30 p.m.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park

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Contact Information

Mailing Address

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The Tahoma News

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA



SKIING, SNOWSHOEING, & SNOWBOARDING

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

In early winter or in years of low snowfall, trees and other plants are damaged by skiers and snowboarders when snow depth is not sufficient to protect vegetation. Ski and snowboard only in those areas where the snow is deep enough to cover and protect vegetation. There should be at least 5' of snow before building jumps.

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, written information, exhibits, and scripts for uncaptioned audiovisual programs are available.

TDD: (360) 569-2177

CAR CAMPING

Two campgrounds are open for car camping in winter. **Sunshine Point**, located 0.25 mile east of the Nisqually Entrance (SW corner of the park), \$10 per night/per site. **Ipsut Creek**, located 5 miles east of Carbon River Entrance (NW corner, unpaved road/subject to snow and washout closures), \$8 per night/per site. No potable water. Camping in vehicles in parking lots or along roadways is not allowed.

RANGER-LED SNOWSHOE WALKS

Join a park ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing and find out how plants and animals adapt to winter at Paradise. Snowshoe walks are offered daily December 18 - January 2, February 21-25, and on weekends and holidays only through April 6.

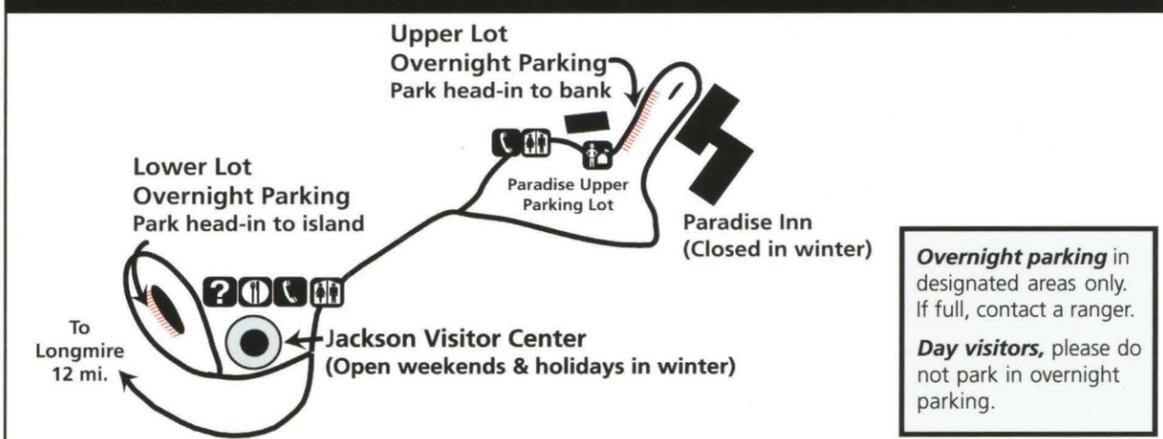
Public snowshoe walks are offered at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., traverse 1.2 miles, and last for about 2 hours. Walks are limited to 25 people, eight years old or older, on a first-come, first-served basis. A sign-up sheet is available at the Jackson Visitor Center information desk one hour before each walk.

Organized groups (up to 25 people) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 10:30 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum or Jackson Visitor Center information desk, or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314. The park also offers snowshoe walks to school groups by reservation only. Call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3319 for reservations.

Snowshoes are available for ranger-led snowshoe walks for a \$1.00 donation (per pair). Don't forget sunscreen, sunglasses, layers of warm clothes, hats, mittens, and suitable boots (you will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on).

NEVER SKI OR SLIDE ON PLOWED ROADWAYS OR PARKING LOTS!
Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.

PARADISE OVERNIGHT PARKING AREAS



CLIMBING & BACKPACKING

Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. About half actually make it to the summit. Climbing information is available at ranger stations and on the park's website at www.nps.gov/mora/climb/climb.htm. For prerecorded route conditions, call (360) 569-2211 ext. 2314. Climbers pay a Cost Recovery Fee of \$30 per person, per calendar year. Climbing Passes are available via fax or mail. For more information go to the above website. Be aware that winter camping and climbing are much more demanding and hazardous than in summer.

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the Wilderness and for travel above 10,000' and/or on glaciers. Rangers issue permits from the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise on weekends. Permits are also available at the Wilkeson Wilderness Information Center, and at the winter closure of SR410 near Crystal Mountain. Self-registration for climbers is available at the Paradise Ranger Station in the upper parking lot.

Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (360) 569-2227 (RMI) conducts guided climbs and related seminars. Guides for the Emmons Glacier Route include **Alpine Ascents International** (206) 378-1927, **American Alpine Institute** (360) 671-1505, **Cascade Alpine Guides** (800) 981-0381, and **Mount Rainier Alpine Guides** (360) 569-2889.

SNOW CAMPING

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Camp in designated areas well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots. When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snowcaves to keep others from falling in. Fires are not permitted. Free permits are available at the Longmire Museum daily, and at Paradise on weekends only.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of any size, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least two weeks in advance due to limited space by calling (360) 569-6003. Groups of 13 or more may camp in a designated group site *only* in the immediate Paradise area where there is access to 24 hour restrooms. Others should use "blue bags" to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in a special barrel provided. The blue bag barrel is located in the tunnel to the Paradise upper parking lot restroom. **Do NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!**

To prevent getting plowed in, park in designated overnight parking areas only. Do not set the parking brake on your vehicle; it may freeze. Stay clear of parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

Beware of Avalanches

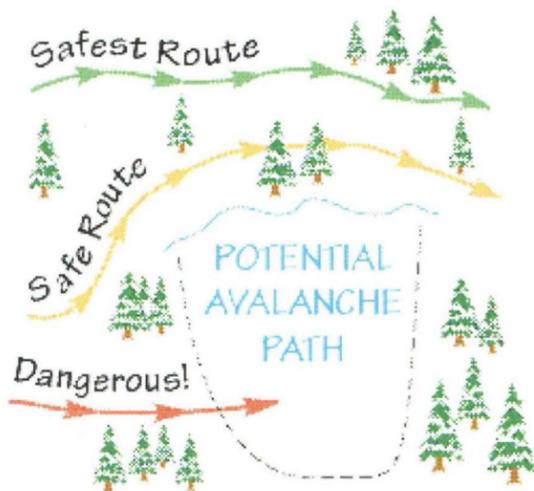


Avalanche on Nisqually Glacier.

Snow avalanches are common in winter and spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing in avalanche terrain.

Learn more about safe travel in avalanche country. Consider snowpack, weather, and topography in selecting your route. Ask yourself, "Will this slope slide?" and if it does, "Where will I or my partner go?" Carry an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel.

Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.



Avalanche Level Descriptions

Slopes between 30 and 45 degrees pose the greatest avalanche danger.

Low Risk: Generally stable snow. Travel is usually safe.

Moderate Risk: Human-triggered avalanches *possible*.

Considerable Risk: Human triggered avalanches *probable*.

High Risk: Natural and human-triggered avalanches *likely*. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended.

Extreme Risk: Widespread natural and human-triggered avalanches *certain*. Avoid travel in avalanche terrain. Confine travel to low angle terrain well away from avalanche path runouts.

Statewide Winter Weather Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts:
(206) 526-6677
<http://www.nwac.us/forecasts.htm>

Highway Pass Reports:
(800) 695-7623
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passess/>

Prepare and Take Care

Mount Rainier offers excellent opportunities for exploration and adventure, but sometimes people get lost, injured, or worse. Reduce your risk by following these simple guidelines:

Dress Warmly & Stay Dry

Cold temperatures, wet snow, and wind can easily rob you of body heat. To avoid hypothermia and frostbite, dress warmly and stay dry. Wear layers of wool or synthetics like pile and polypropylene under a waterproof shell. Avoid

exposure to wind. Snack frequently, drink lots of water, and take warm-up breaks indoors.

Beware

Pay attention to the weather. It's easy to get lost or fall when the weather turns bad. The trail can quickly cover with snow, or thick fog can blanket your route. You need to know where you are and how to get to safety. You also need to know how to assess avalanche hazards to minimize potential risk.

Prepare

When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them. In addition, obtain compass bearings to Camp Muir or other off-trail destinations; carry an altimeter; wear rain- and wind-resistant clothing; and take a whistle, a "space blanket," and a snow shovel.

Take Care

Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone or in poor visibility.

If you are not truly knowledgeable and prepared, or if the weather is questionable, don't push your luck!

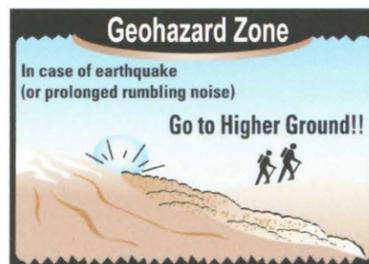
Carry the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them!

- map of the area
- compass
- extra food & water
- extra clothing (warm!) & rain gear
- emergency shelter
- first aid kit
- flashlight or headlamp
- sunglasses & sunscreen
- pocketknife
- matches (waterproof!)

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano

Recent research has improved our understanding of Mount Rainier, an active volcano. Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and reported historical 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. However, other geologic hazards like debris flows and rockfall can occur with little warning.

Needless to say, the longer you stay in an area where there are 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 personal 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 upvalley – often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train – move quickly to higher ground! A location 160 feet or more above river level should be safe. Detailed information is available at park visitor centers and from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, <http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov>.

Protect Yourself And Your Park

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve its resources and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. By observing the rules, you protect your park and yourself:

- 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
- Stay on designated trails
- Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited
- Weapons are prohibited in the park. Firearms transported through the park must be unloaded, broken down, and stored to prevent use
- Bicycle only on roads, not on trails

Animal Encounters



Black bear
(Ursus americanus)

The beauty and wonder of Mount Rainier National Park doesn't just come from the scenic grandeur of a single, towering mountain. The presence of wild creatures remains an essential part of the experience of wilderness. Being in the home of large creatures like black bear and mountain lion (cougar) can make Mount Rainier an exciting – and sometimes scary – place to visit. Though you are not likely to see them, if

you do meet one of these larger mammals, learning more about them serves as your best defense – and theirs!

Black Bear Sense

- Never feed a black bear, either intentionally or by leaving food unsecured
- Do NOT approach bears or cubs
- If a black bear approaches **you**, try to scare it away by shouting and making noise
- If attacked, fight back aggressively
- Report all sightings to the nearest ranger station or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3373 or ext. 2334

Avoiding Mountain Lions

- Hike in a group rather than alone. Avoid running – don't look like prey
- Keep children close to you – preferably in view just ahead of you
- Never approach cougar kittens – leave the area immediately
- Follow the rules regarding pets in the park – don't take your pet on trails or in the backcountry and never leave it unattended at the campground – you could lose it!



Mountain lion (Felis concolor)

Close Encounters With Mountain Lions

- DON'T RUN! Stand still and face the lion with your companions
- Immediately pick up and hold small children
- Stand upright to make yourself appear larger – wave your arms and make a noisy commotion if the animal moves toward you
- Back away **slowly** while facing the animal
- If attacked, fight back aggressively
- Report all sightings at the nearest ranger station or call (360) 569-2211 ext. 3373 or ext. 2334

In Case of Emergency Dial 911

From any phone located in the park.

Winter Hours January - April, 2005



Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (360) 569-2211 ext. 3314
Information, exhibits, book sales, climbing permits.
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. daily

Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise (360) 569-6036
Information, exhibits, movies, book sales, food service, gifts, showers.
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekends/holidays, and daily Dec. 18 - Jan 2 & Feb. 21 - 25

Wilkeson Wilderness Information Center (360) 829-5127 Information, exhibits, climbing and backcountry camping permits. Located in downtown Wilkeson. Call (360) 829-5127 for hours.

All other visitor centers are closed for the season.



Food & Lodging

For lodging reservations in the park call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.guestservices.com/rainier

National Park Inn - Longmire
Lodging, post office, and dining room serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. **Open year-round.**

General Store - Longmire
Groceries, gifts, firewood. **Open year-round.** (Ski & snowshoe rentals & tire chain purchases are available in winter.)

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily
During ski touring season:
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. weekends/holidays

Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise
Grill and Gift Shop:
11:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekends/holidays and daily Dec. 18 - Jan 2 & Feb. 21 - 25
Showers in the basement open during building hours.

Paradise Inn
Closed for the season. Will reopen in May.

Sunrise Lodge
Closed for the season. Will reopen in early July.

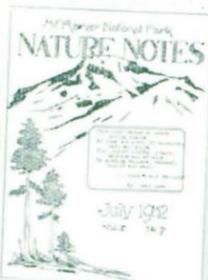


Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities. A list of these services is available at park visitor centers and on the park's website: www.nps.gov/mora. Religious services are available in local communities.

GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK.

A Window to the Past

Want to learn about Mount Rainier National Park through the eyes of old-time rangers? Check out *Nature Notes* on Mount Rainier's website. From 1923 through 1939, park naturalists published hundreds of issues of *Nature Notes*. They feature articles on plants, wildlife, and history, along with poems, illustrations, and anecdotes. The entire collection of over 175 issues is now on the web. Check out: www.nps.gov/mora/notes/nn-intro.htm.



Park Partners

Who's responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone! Here are some people who deserve special thanks:

Visitors Like You

Just by paying the entrance fee, you make a difference. Eighty percent of the fees collected at Mount Rainier are kept in the park, while twenty percent are made available to other parks in need. Your money is helping several projects right now:

- Construction of a new Education Center
- Rehabilitating park trails
- Meadow restoration at Sunrise and Reflection Lakes
- Upgrading exhibits and media
- Rehabilitating picnic areas

UserFee

improves this park

As you explore the park, look for signs of your fees at work!



Northwest Interpretive Association

NWIA operates bookstores in the park's visitor and information centers. As a nonprofit organization benefitting educational programs in the national parks and forests of the Pacific Northwest, NWIA plays an important role in making interpretive and educational publications available to travelers. It also funds special interpretive projects in the areas it serves. For more information or membership, call

(360) 569-2211, ext. 3320, or visit NWIA on the web at: www.nwpubliclands.com.



Washington's
National
Park Fund

Washington's National Park Fund

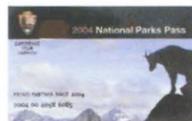
Every year millions visit Washington State's spectacular National Parks: Mount Rainier, North Cascades and

Olympic. Since 1993, Washington's National Park Fund has connected people to parks and inspired contributions of time, talent and money to help ensure that visitors have high quality, memorable experiences in our parks. This fund supports projects that enhance the visitor experience, promote volunteerism, engage communities, and provide educational opportunities. By securing financial contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and businesses, Washington's National Park Fund supports park restoration, enhancement and preservation. Washington's National Park Fund is an affiliate of the National Park Foundation—a congressionally chartered 501(c) 3 nonprofit which was rated "A" by the American Institute of Philanthropy for responsible use of donor funds. For more information about how you can help Washington's National Parks call (206) 770-0627, visit the website at www.wnpf.org, or look for brochures in any of the park's visitor centers.

Volunteers

Each year more than 85,000 volunteers donate over 3,000,000 hours of service in the national parks. They come from every state and nearly every country in the world to help preserve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of this and future generations. At Mount Rainier National Park, 1,105 volunteers contributed a total of 38,442 hours in 2004. We express our deep appreciation to them and to all who are volunteering in 2005! If you are thinking about volunteering, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Tahoma Woods, Star Route, Ashford, WA 98304. (360) 569-2211 ext. 3385.

Experience Your America with a National Parks Pass or a Mount Rainier Annual Pass



Purchase your **National Parks Pass** at any Mount Rainier Entrance Station, on-line at www.nationalparks.org, or by calling 1-888-GO-PARKS. Just \$50 (plus shipping and handling if you buy on-line or by phone).*

If you only plan to visit Mount Rainier National Park, consider the **Mount Rainier Annual Pass**. It costs \$30 and, like the National Parks Pass, is good for one full year.



*A National Parks Pass can be upgraded to a Golden Eagle Pass for \$15. This covers additional sites such as Forest Service trailheads requiring the Northwest Forest Pass, Mount St. Helens, and the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge

Explore Mount Rainier From Home!

Learn more about park resources, recreation opportunities, facilities, and much more on the web at www.nps.gov/mora or go directly to one the follow website pages:

Education Page
www.nps.gov/mora/education/index.htm

Information on teacher workshops, professional development and more!

Employment Page
www.nps.gov/mora/employment.htm

Great information on jobs within the park.

Nature and Science Page
linked from <http://www.nps.gov/mora/pphtml/nature.html>

Learn more about the park's natural resources.

Weather Links
www.nps.gov/mora/current/weather.htm

Links to Mount Rainier and area weather and avalanche conditions.

Doing Our Part!

We all share the responsibilities of caring for our environment and conserving scarce natural resources. You probably do your part at home by carpooling and by turning down your thermostat and switching off your lights. Staff at Mount Rainier National Park do these things and many more out of concern for the environment.

At Mount Rainier National Park we focus on using new "green" products as they are developed. Many of our park vehicles and one of our generators run on emissions-reducing fuel. Recently we added 18 new vehicles to the park fleet with a propane fuel option.



As an ENERGY STAR Partner organization we are committed to lowering our energy consumption by

purchasing ENERGY STAR rated devices including refrigerators, furnaces, and computers.

Please Recycle!

Mount Rainier National Park has been involved in recycling since the late 1960's. We reduce our consumption of resources by reusing and recycling. We recycle aluminum cans, plastic (no. 1 and 2), glass, office paper, mixed paper, cardboard, scrap metal, used oil, batteries, and a number of other items.

We also purchase recycled plastic products such as plastic bags, picnic tables, and plastic lumber; paper products made of pre- and post-consumer recycled paper; automobile products; and other products.

Be part of the effort! Please deposit aluminum cans, plastic bottles and glass in the recycle cans provided.

