



The Tahoma News

Winter 2019 | January 1 - April 30, 2020



JD Hascup photo



Mount Rainier: A Winter Wonderland

The mountain's landscape undergoes a dramatic transformation in winter. Its colorful subalpine meadows and lush old-growth forests are draped with a thick blanket of snow for much of the year. The sometimes dusty-grey appearing glaciers are freshly covered in white and the snow-covered steeply pitched roofs of the rustic historic buildings are rimmed with icicles, creating a picture perfect setting.

This winter wonderland creates spectacular opportunities for crosscountry skiing, snowplay, snowshoeing, winter photography, and cloud watching. At lower elevations you may find snow-free opportunities for hiking and exploring. Winter is the perfect time to visit historic Longmire with its rustic buildings draped in snow, lowland trails, and, on clear days, views of the mountain. Activities and information are available at the Longmire Museum. The National Park Inn offers meals, lodging, and a general store.

Stop by the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise weekends and holidays to learn about the mountain's winter ecology by taking a snowshoe walk with a ranger and by viewing the exhibits and film. Warm up in the visitor center while enjoying the snowy view from the great hall. Have lunch or browse in the gift shop. Winter activities at Paradise include sliding, crosscountry skiing, winter camping, and snowboarding. See the facility hours on page 4 for snowshoe and ski rental locations inside the park.

Wander through a temperate rainforest, hike, and explore at Carbon River. Visit the ranger station for area information.

Sled See the Exhibits and Film at Paradise

Explore Historic Longmire

Dine *Ski* Bring a Picnic

Enjoy the View

Snow Camp Relax

Hike Take a Ranger-led Snowshoe Walk

Winter Photography

Pick up a free Junior Ranger Activity book at the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise or the Longmire Museum. Upon completion kids can earn a badge and certificate. They will learn lots of cool stuff about the park!

Become a Citizen Ranger by completing a Quest. Quests are self-guiding learning adventures available at the Longmire Museum and the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise.

Get out there and enjoy this winter wonderland!

Welcome...

... to Mount Rainier National Park—one of the snowiest places on Earth! Its snowy landscapes evoke a sense of wonder and draws many to explore on snowshoes and skis, while others choose to enjoy time with family and friends on the sledding run at Paradise.

Winter is also a challenging time for staff and volunteers involved in maintaining roads and facilities under extreme winter conditions. Snowplow operators are out early clearing roads, rangers assess avalanche danger and patrol snowy roads daily, and utility operators keep the power and heat on. We are all here to help you have an enjoyable winter visit. We hope you will share your stories with others online using #RainierWinter.

In any season, national parks are places of peace and renewal. People representing a diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and viewpoints gather in these national treasures with common goals—to soak in history, explore landscapes, and marvel in the beauty of nature. Whatever brings you to these special places that belong to you, I hope you have a memorable experience and come again in all the seasons!

Chip Jenkins
Superintendent

Snowplows Working!

Never ski, slide, or camp on plowed roadways or parking lots! Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.

Tire Chains Required

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when traveling in the park in winter and spring. See page 4 for more information on requirements and winter travel.

Keep in Touch

Visit the park's official website and join us on social media:
www.nps.gov/mora



@MountRainierNPS

Winter road updates at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS

Winter Recreation

Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks

Join a park ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing. Discuss the ecology of the Paradise area during these two hour guided walks.

Snowshoe walks are offered on weekends and holidays through March, weather permitting. Public snowshoe walks are offered at 11:00 am and 1:30 pm and traverse 1.8 miles. Walk times may be adjusted/cancelled depending upon gate opening times and other factors. 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 (all those attending must be present to sign up).

Snowshoes for the ranger-led walks are provided by the park. A \$5.00 donation from each snowshoe walk participant helps the park provide snowshoe walks, and repair and replace snowshoes. Don't forget sunscreen, sunglasses, layers of warm clothes, hats, mittens, and suitable boots. You can sink into the snow even with snowshoes on.

The park also offers snowshoe walks to school groups by reservation only. Call (360) 569- 6592 for school group reservations.

Share your Mount Rainier winter experience online!



#RainierWinter

#FindYourPark

#EncuentraTuParque

@MountRainierNPS



Snowplay Area

Sliding and sledding are permitted only in the designated snowplay area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise.

Runs are only opened when there's sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. The snowplay area may remain open until late 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.

- Access the snowplay area from the main trailhead behind the visitor center.
- 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.
- Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.
- Take broken sleds home for disposal.

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 waterproof boots. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10:00 am - 4:15 pm, weekends and holidays).

Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Free permits are available at the Longmire Museum daily, the Paradise Jackson Visitor Center weekends and holidays, and at the Paradise Ranger Station Mondays-Thursdays. Camp in designated areas well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots. When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snow caves to keep others from falling in. Fires are not permitted.

The gate at Longmire to Paradise closes nightly. Snowplows routinely operate on the wrong side of the road when it is closed. Avoid parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger or listen to Radio 1610-AM Paradise, to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of up to 60, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least four weeks in advance by calling (360) 569-6575. Groups of 13 persons or greater must request a Special Use Permit by emailing mora_special_use@nps.gov.

Access to 24-hour restrooms and an emergency phone are available in the upper parking lot near the Guide House. Others should use "blue bags" to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in the 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!

Proper food storage is required. Hang your food, garbage, and scented items or secure in approved hard-sided containers. Hard-sided containers are required for camping at Paradise, Reflection Lakes, Tatoosh, and Mazama Ridge. Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan—ask a ranger when you get your permit. Approved containers for winter camping at Paradise are five-gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids, or manufactured wildlife resistant food containers.

Overnight parking is allowed in designated areas only. Do not set your parking brake; it may freeze.



Cellular service is spotty at best, and varies with service provider. Public wifi is available in the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise.

Climbing & Backpacking

Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. Around 70 well-skilled climbers attempt it in winter. Camping and climbing in winter are much more demanding and hazardous than in summer. The climbing fee is \$50 dollars/person 25 years and older, and \$35 dollars/person 24 years and younger, per calendar year and can be paid in advance at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm.

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the wilderness and for travel above 10,000 feet and/or on glaciers. Rangers issue permits from the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise weekends and holidays. Self-registration is available at the Paradise Ranger Station, Carbon River Ranger Station, and at the winter closure of SR410.

Overnight parking at Paradise is in designated areas only. See the overnight parking map on page 4.

Guided climbs and climbing seminars available by:

- Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
- International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
- Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462



Patricia Huesner Dorris photo

Check today's avalanche forecast at an entrance station or visitor center.

Avalanche on Nisqually Glacier.

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 www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm.

Washington's National Park Fund serves as the park's official philanthropic partner. Founded by Governor Daniel Evans in 1993, 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:

- Trail Maintenance and Search and Rescue
- Youth and Education Programs
- Science and Research
- Volunteerism and Stewardship

Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, or purchase a Washington State 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. Visit <http://wnpf.org/> for more information. Tax ID#: 01-0869799

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 the Longmire Museum (daily) and Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise (weekends and holidays).

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 five feet of snow before building jumps.

Mount Rainier National Park

Superintendent
Chip Jenkins

E-mail
MORAInfo@nps.gov

Park Headquarters
(360) 569-2211

Lost and Found
(360) 569-6608

Website
www.nps.gov/mora



Know Before You Go

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve the natural and cultural resources in this area, and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. This information has been prepared to help you stay safe and protect the park during your visit.



Winter Wildlife

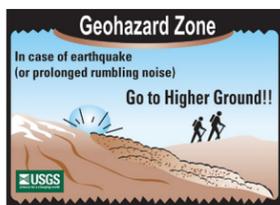
The snows of winter concentrate wildlife where life is easier—where

shallow snow provides easier travel and access to food. Parking areas and roadways are efficient travel corridors for deer and foxes, and deer may find the most available forage along roadways. Many visitors mistakenly think that feeding the animals helps them through the winter months. But this brings wildlife closer to roads and people, where they can be injured or killed by vehicles.

Please pick up food particles and do not leave your lunch on your bumper—a fox or a jay will find it. Feeding wildlife is illegal and you may be fined.

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. Debris flows and rockfalls, however, can occur with little warning.

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 200 feet or more above river level should be safe.

No Drone Zone!

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



Camping

Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

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 guidelines:

Dress Warmly and 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.

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. Always know where you are and how to get to safety. Know how to assess avalanche hazards to minimize risk. Don't head out when storms are predicted.

Prepare

When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "Winter 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!

NOTICE: Marijuana is Illegal in Mount Rainier National Park

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, surrounding national forests, and all federal lands.

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, 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.

An audio description and the Braille file of the park are available at <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/park-brochure.htm>. Braille copies of the park brochure are available at entrance stations and visitor centers.

In the Paradise Jackson Visitor Center, 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.



Avalanche Aware!

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. Summer trails may lead through avalanche terrain.

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. Even small avalanches can be deadly.

Winter storms along the Muir Snowfield can produce hurricane force winds, blinding snow, and white out conditions. Avalanches occur with frightening regularity in the Paradise area. Each person in the hiking party should carry and know how to use a beacon, probe, and shovel.

Avalanche conditions challenge even the best mountaineers. Obtain daily avalanche forecasts from the Northwest Avalanche Center at <http://www.nwac.us/>. Before your hike, consult a park ranger for current conditions on the mountain.

Give advance notice of your plans to a responsible person so they can contact rangers if you fail to return. Cell phone coverage is limited inside the park.

Winter on the Mountain: Are You Ready?

As one of the snowiest places on Earth, Mount Rainier National Park boasts a long season for outstanding winter recreational activities in a true wilderness setting.

History has shown that snow, wind, and low visibility conditions resulting from winter storms significantly increase visitor mishaps and serious accidents in the backcountry. Many winter hikers and snowshoers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges or winter weather conditions that can occur at any time. Conditions change rapidly during the day, and freezing temperatures, wet snow, and high winds can be encountered at any time during your hike. This has left many day and overnight hikers, skiers, and snowboarders exposed and suddenly thrust into life-threatening situations due to weather resulting in injuries and fatalities.

Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly—a pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Make sure you are aware of weather forecasts for the area, and heed any cautions or warnings. Navigation in storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you are ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that's not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather. Prepare for the fact that daylight hours are short in winter; you will have less time to get out to your destination and to return. Always carry a flashlight or headlamp, and extra batteries. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the winter ten essentials, etc.) is a must.

Be prepared for route-finding conditions. A GPS device with local maps pre-loaded, extra batteries, and knowledge of how to use it is the only way to navigate the Muir Snowfield in poor visibility. Even a great map, compass, and altimeter will not work in poor conditions on the snowfield. Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead note important landmarks and consider using wands on snow-covered trails. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and determine where you are before continuing. It is extremely important that you know how to use your navigation tool.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. If at any point you begin to feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around, get out safely, and call it a day. Mount Rainier will be waiting for you on your next trip.

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

1. Shovel (avalanche rescue, emergency shelter/dig a snow cave)
2. Full Length Insulated Sleeping Pad
3. Stove & Fuel (melt water)
4. Heat Packs
5. Goggles & Wool/Pile Hat
6. Gloves (waterproof/lined)
7. Avalanche Transceiver
8. Avalanche Probe
9. Reliable Weather & Avalanche Forecasts
10. Map, Compass, & GPS (with extra batteries)



Winter Driving and Facility Hours

In Case of Emergency
Dial 911 from any phone
located inside the park.

Winter Driving Safety

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Tire chain requirement updates are posted on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS. Listen to Radio 1610-AM at Paradise for updates to changing road information and requirements.

Most of Mount Rainier's roads are snowed in and closed to vehicle access during winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather.

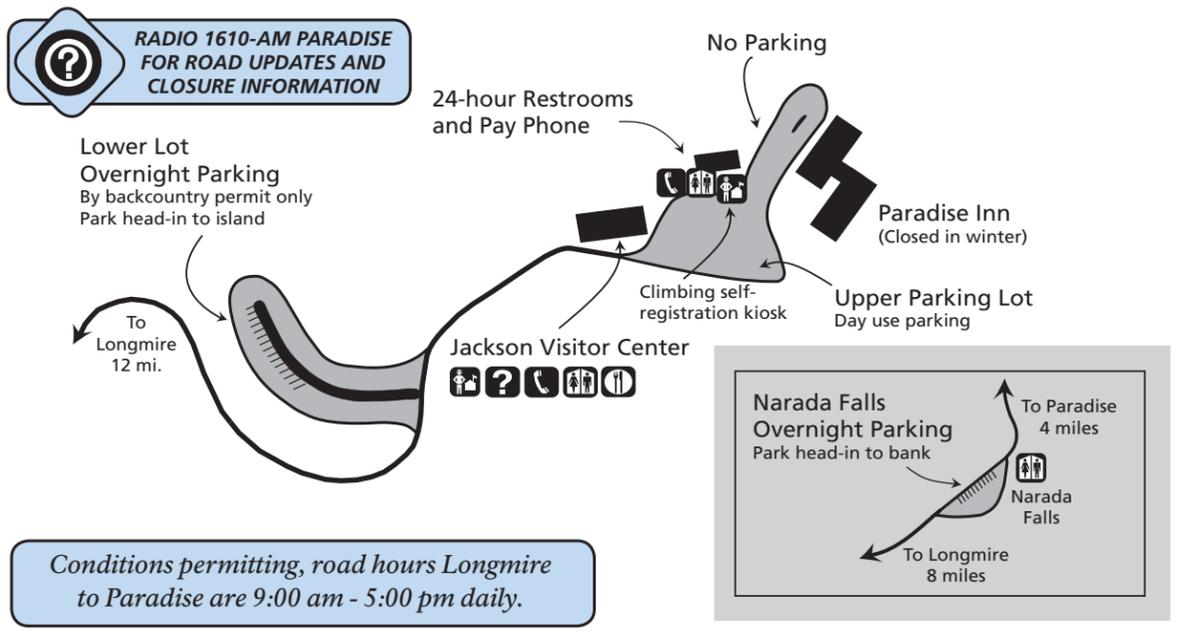
Rangers and snowplow operators evaluate road, weather, avalanche, and staffing conditions each morning before making a decision on whether it is safe to open the gate to Paradise. *The Longmire to Paradise road hours are approximately 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily, conditions permitting.* The road may close early or remain closed the entire day due to avalanche danger, severe weather, or with a shortage of the necessary staffing to maintain safe access. Visitors must head downhill from Paradise by 4:30 pm to clear the Longmire gate by its 5:00 pm closure. The uphill gate at Longmire closes at 4:00 pm.

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when driving in the park in winter and spring. Use may be required at anytime. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds must carry a second set of chains and chain up whenever traction tires or chains are required. AutoSocks are allowed for passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds as an alternative traction device.

Winter Driving Safety Tips

- * Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction.
- * Reduce your speed.
- * 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 vehicle skids: accelerate slightly and steer where you want to go.
- * Brake sparingly to avoid skidding by locking your brakes.
- * Keep your headlights on for visibility.
- * 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 you need them.
- * 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.
- * Shady areas and bridge surfaces can be treacherously icy even when other sections of the road are not.
- * Stay alert, use caution, and anticipate hazards.

Paradise Overnight Parking Areas



Facility Hours

Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise

(360) 569-6571
Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, and climbing and backcountry permits. Climbing permit self-registration at the Paradise Ranger Station.
10:00 am – 4:15 pm weekends and holidays
Hours may be extended mid-winter.

Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise Camp Deli & Gift Shop

Food, gifts, books
11:00 am – 4:00 pm weekends and holidays

Paradise Ranger Station

Backcountry and climbing permits, information.
Open until 4:00 pm Monday - Thursday. Open Fridays as staffing allows.

Longmire Museum

(360) 569-6575
Information, exhibits, book sales, and climbing and backcountry permits
9:00 am – 4:30 pm daily or as staffing allows

National Park Inn at Longmire

Open year-round
Lodging, dining room. Reservations (360) 569-2275 or mtrainierguestservices.com
Front Desk 7:00 am – 10:00 pm
Dining Room
Breakfast 7:00 am – 11:00 am
Lunch 11:30 am – 4:30 pm
Dinner 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm daily

Longmire General Store

Open year-round
Food, gifts, books, apparel
10:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday
8:30 am – 6:00 pm Weekends and holidays

Carbon River Ranger Station

(360) 829-9639
Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information
Call for hours

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 inside the park.

Mount Rainier Winter Gate and Road Daily Updates

www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
Twitter account not required

Winter Conditions Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts

(206) 526-6677
<http://www.nwac.us/avalanche-forecast/current/cascade-west-south/>

Highway Pass Reports

(800) 695-7623 or dial 511
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/>



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/