

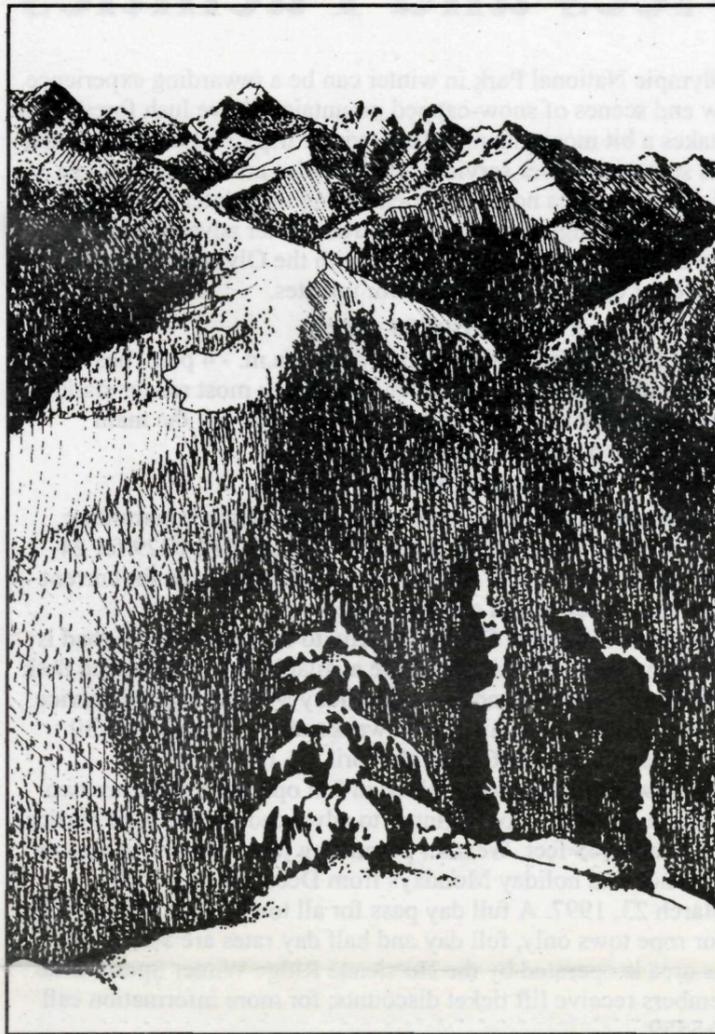
The Gift of Winter

Winter in Olympic National Park means many things. Powerful storms batter and carve the beach, tossing giant beach logs as if they were sticks. A deluge of rain drenches the west side of the Olympic Peninsula nursing the trees, mosses and ferns of the temperate rain forest. But the greatest change of all comes to the high country, where just a few thousand feet above the stormy seas and sodden forest lies a world of white.

Rejuvenating snow blankets higher elevations in the park for over half the year. A snowy state is actually the rule for the mountains. The fleeting summer most visitors see is just a brief interruption in a normally white world. Sub-freezing temperatures, high winds and blizzards of snow create an incredibly beautiful, yet extremely harsh landscape. Snow is the essential and preeminent force. While relatively dry Hurricane Ridge receives "only" 30 to 35 feet of snow a year, Mount Olympus can get over three times that amount!

Mountain life has, over thousands of generations, developed adaptations for coping with the extremes in these areas. Trees evolved ways to withstand heavy snowloads. Some animals, like black-tailed deer, winter at lower elevations, but others stay in the wintry mountains. Ravens and gray jays scavenge their snowy world for a wide variety of natural foods. Look for feathery clues of their visits captured in the snow. After spending summer turning wildflowers into a heavy layer of fat, Olympic marmots lower their body temperatures, slow their heart rates, pile together to conserve heat, and hibernate away the winter.

We bundle up and travel to this snowy world for winter recreation, for a change from the rainy world below, or to experience the wonders of winter. Whatever the reason, we all receive the same gift handed down by an earlier generation. The gift of a natural environment in its wild condition, an environment that deserves our appreciation and commands our respect. No matter which of the wondrous winter worlds you visit, we hope you treasure the gift of Olympic National Park.



Winter Hiking and Camping

Olympic is a park that can be enjoyed in all seasons. In fact, hikers can experience several seasons in one outing. A trail beginning on a warm spring day in a forest may lead to a blizzard in the mountains. Hikers and backpackers ready for changing and often unpredictable weather can experience the solitude of winter.

You should be prepared for wet conditions. The melting snow and heavy rain that nourish rain forests can swell streams overnight, making crossings treacherous. Camp well above the flood plain. Be cautious on bridges or boardwalks; they are extremely slippery when wet. Along the coast, storm surges and winds push tides higher, creating huge waves that easily move dangerous beach logs. Trails may be blocked by fallen trees. To be prepared, always carry the 10 essentials, even for short hikes. They are: **extra clothing, area map, extra food and water, compass, flashlight, knife, matches, sunglasses, fire starter/candle, first aid kit.**

But don't let winter chase you inside! If you're prepared, you can experience another side of the Olympics. The following areas usually offer snow-free hiking. Stop at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center in Port Angeles for maps, tide tables and trail conditions.

Low-Elevation Hiking

Elwha Valley: Geyser Valley Loop, West Elwha, West Lake Mills, Griff Creek, and Cascade Rock trails, and the lower parts of the Elwha River trail.

Lake Crescent: Marymere Falls and Spruce Railroad trails.

Ozette: Cape Alava or Sand Point trails; to make a 9.3-mile loop, hike the beach between these two trails.

Mora and La Push: Third Beach and Second Beach trails and beach access at Rialto Beach.

Hoh: Hall of Mosses and Spruce Nature trails, or the Hoh River trail before it climbs to snowline.

Kalaloch: Short access trails to beaches and nature trail in forest.

Quinault: Maple Glades and Irely Lake trails, and the lower stretches of the North Fork and East Fork Quinault trails if passable.

Queets: Sams River Loop; check road conditions before going into this area.

Staircase: Staircase Rapids Loop, Shady Lane trail, and lower parts of North Fork Skokomish trail if passable.

High Country Trips

For the truly adventurous, a trip into the mountains offers a unique wilderness experience. Winds off the Pacific Ocean funnel moisture and storms into the mountains, creating deep snow blankets. Snow camping requires a lot of preparation and many safety precautions, but it can offer an intimate glimpse into a season that few truly experience. Weather can change quickly. Places like Hurricane Ridge and Blizzard Pass earn their names, and whiteout conditions can occur anytime.

Hurricane Ridge and Deer Park offer the easiest access to winter high country. Because of the risk of sudden snow storms, overnight parking is not allowed at Hurricane Ridge in winter. You must park three miles below the ridge at Third Peak. When planning your trip, remember that the Hurricane Ridge Road is scheduled to open only Fridays through Sundays. Anyone heading out overnight in the Hurricane Ridge area must check with a ranger at Hurricane Ridge before parking at Third Peak.

All overnight wilderness users must obtain a backcountry permit. Register at Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center for trips in the Hurricane Ridge area. For other areas, register at the Wilderness Information Center behind the park Visitor Center in Port Angeles. Camping is not allowed within .5 mile of roads or trail heads. Pets are not allowed on trails. All high elevation areas are closed to fires. For more information, check with the Wilderness Information Center or Olympic National Park Visitor Center.





Services and Facilities

Visiting Olympic National Park in winter can be a rewarding experience. Crowds are few and scenes of snow-capped mountains above lush forests can be magical. It takes a bit more planning for a winter trip to Olympic National Park during this season as fewer services and facilities are available. Even park roads and other facilities normally open during the winter may close temporarily due to snow, high water, downed trees, other adverse weather conditions, or even budget constraints. Check with the Olympic National Park Visitor Center or call (360) 452-0330 for updates.

Port Angeles Area

Olympic National Park Visitor Center: open daily 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., has exhibits and staff to help you plan your visit. Since most ranger stations do not have regular hours fall through spring, please call the main Visitor Center with questions (360) 452-0330.

Hurricane Ridge Area

Hurricane Ridge Road: Open Friday through Sunday weather permitting, other days if weather and staffing permit. Call (360) 452-0329 for 24-hour recording, or tune to 530 AM in the Port Angeles area for current information. (See information on back page.)

Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center: Open 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. when the road is open. Restrooms and a warming area are available. An information desk is staffed Fridays through Sundays and holiday Mondays. Food service and equipment rentals are available on weekends 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from December 21, 1996 through April 19, 1997.

Hurricane Ridge Downhill Ski Area: When in full operation there are two rope tows and a Poma lift, for beginner to advanced skiers. Total vertical rise for the area is 665 feet. Weather permitting tows operate 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekends and holiday Mondays from December 21, 1996 through March 23, 1997. A full day pass for all tows is \$15.00, half-day \$11.00. For rope tows only, full day and half day rates are \$11.00 and \$9.00. The area is operated by the Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club whose members receive lift ticket discounts; for more information call (360) 457-5559.

Equipment Rentals: Ski rental packages include skis, boots, and poles. The Hurricane Ridge Ski Shop is open only on Saturdays, Sundays and Monday holidays and requires a driver's license to rent equipment. Olympic Mountaineering requires a deposit for all rentals.

Location	Cross-Country	Downhill	Snowshoes
Hurricane Ridge (no telephone)	\$13.25 a day	\$15.50 a day	\$6.50 a day
Olympic Mountaineering (360) 452-0240	\$16.00 a day \$28.00 for 2-3 days	not available	\$15.00 a day \$25.00 for 2-3 days

Cross-Country and Telemark Ski Lessons: Olympic Mountaineering, (360) 452-0240, offers both group and private lessons.

Downhill Ski Lessons: Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club, (360) 457-5559, offers group, private and semi-private lessons. Reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance.

National Park Campgrounds

Many park campgrounds close in winter. Even those usually open are sometimes closed by snow, flooding or downed trees. Some offer primitive camping with no running water in winter. Most campgrounds fully open in May. The fee when campgrounds are fully open is currently \$10 per site. Check at the Visitor Center for current status. The following campgrounds are usually open year-round. All other park campgrounds are closed in winter.

Quinault area: July Creek (walk-in only)

Queets: Queets campground, primitive facilities year-round

Kalaloch: Kalaloch campground

Hoh: Hoh campground

Mora: Mora campground

Ozette: Ozette campground

Elwha area: Elwha campground, primitive facilities in winter

Hurricane area: Heart O' the Hills campground, walk-in if it snows

Staircase: Staircase campground, may have primitive facilities in winter

Roads

Some park roads regularly close in winter and others may be closed by weather conditions. *Deer Park* road is closed 2.6 miles below the campground and is not maintained below the closure. *Dosewallips* road is closed at the park boundary. *Sol Duc* road may close if it snows. In the *Quinault* area, the *South Shore* road is closed by a washout near the park boundary, and the *North Shore* road is open weather permitting. The *Queets* road is open all year weather permitting. See page four for *Hurricane Ridge*.

Lodging and Other Facilities in the Park

Lake Crescent Lodge: Roosevelt Cabins available weekends only October 27, 1996 through April 19, 1997. No food service available. Lodge will fully reopen April 1997, (360) 928-3211.

Log Cabin Resort: Open all year with lodging, food service and store except January 1997, (360) 928-3245.

Fairholm Store: closed until April 1, 1997.

Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort: closed until April 1997. Hot pools open weekends only beginning in early April.

Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center: open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. daily, unstaffed.

Kalaloch Lodge: Lodging and food service open all year, (360) 962-2271.

Lodging and Food Service Outside the Park

Local communities provide lodging and food service all year. Contact local Chambers of Commerce or the North Olympic Peninsula Visitor and Convention Bureau 1-800-942-4042.

Snowshoe with a Ranger

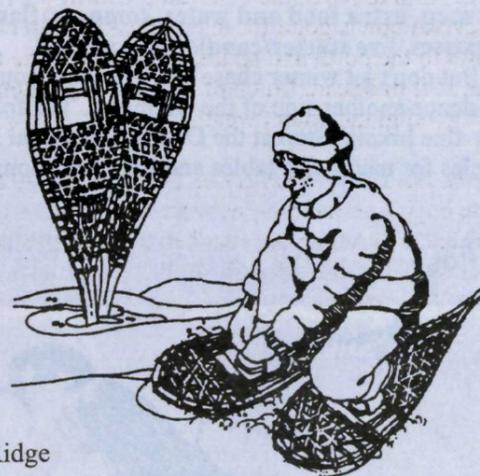
Join a Park Resource Educator at Hurricane Ridge to experience winter first hand on snowshoes. Discover how plants and animals are adapted to the deep snows, high winds and long winters. If you can walk, you can snowshoe. The National Park Service provides snowshoes and basic instructions on how to use them. A \$2.00 donation is suggested for each adult borrowing snowshoes. Money collected will help cover snowshoe repairs and replacement.

Participants should be prepared for snow, wind or even rain. Dress in layers so that clothes can be put on or taken off as the weather dictates. Wear waterproof boots and bring hats, mittens, sunscreen and sunglasses. Walks will only be held if the Hurricane Ridge Road is open.

Snowshoe Walk: This easy to moderate walk is offered at 2 p.m. December 20, 21 and 22, then daily December 26, 1996 through December 29, 1996. After January 1, the snowshoe walks will be offered Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, through March 31 and on Martin Luther King Day and President's Day. The walk lasts 1.5 hours and covers one mile. Group size is limited to 30 people. Please sign up at the Hurricane Ridge information desk one hour before the walk.

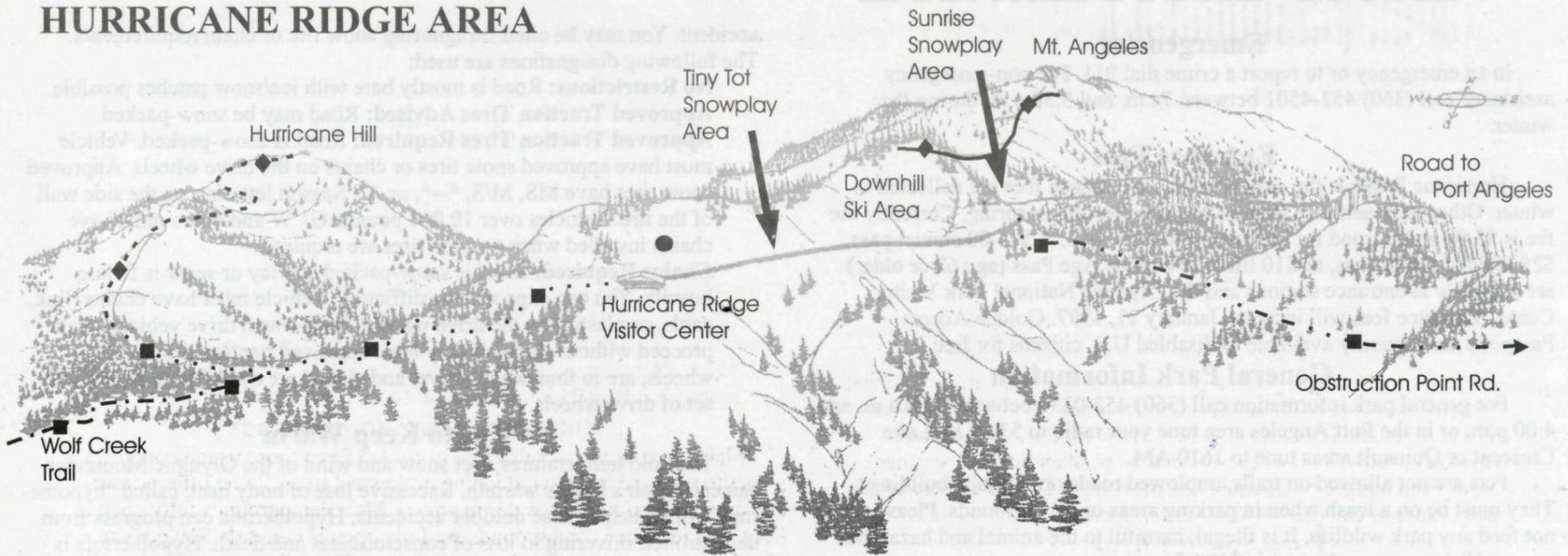
Snowshoe Trek: For this longer and more strenuous trip, participants should be prepared to be outside up to three hours. The trek may cover up to 2.5 miles and have up to a 300-foot elevation change. The snowshoe trek is offered Saturdays and Sundays from December 28 through March 30 at 1 p.m. Group size is limited to 30 people. Please sign up at the Hurricane Ridge information desk one hour before the walk. Participants should bring water and food.

Snowshoe Walks for Community Groups: Organized groups such as youth groups or schools can schedule a snowshoe walk. Walks for groups of 7 to 30 people are offered at 10:30 a.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from December 28, 1996 through March 30, 1997. Walks last 1.5 hours and cover one mile. Reservations must be made in advance. Call (360) 452-4501 ext. 236 for more information or to make a reservation.





HURRICANE RIDGE AREA



Cross-Country Skiing

With its easy access and over 20 miles of trails and routes, Hurricane Ridge is the focus of cross-country skiing in Olympic National Park. Skiers of all abilities can find something, although in this mountainous area, flat, easy beginner terrain is limited to above the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center. Slopes and bowls in the area allow telemarkers to explore as well. None of the trails are groomed or marked; however, several follow unplowed roads or trails and can usually be distinguished. Before heading out on any trip remember to register at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center and check the current avalanche conditions. Below are descriptions of routes in the Hurricane Ridge area.

Easiest

The Meadows

The meadows above the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center offer gentle, easy terrain for anyone and excellent views in fair weather.

More Difficult

Hurricane Hill Road 1.5 miles one way

Beginning just west of the visitor center, this trail follows the rolling, snow-covered Hurricane Hill Road along a moderate ridge line. Experienced skiers can use this trail to reach the Hurricane Hill Route (see Most Difficult), as well as several bowls good for telemark skiing. In clear weather, there are good views to the north and south, especially at the trail's terminus at the Hurricane Hill trailhead. Much of this trail is sheltered by a subalpine forest, making it good in inclement weather.

Wolf Creek Trail 8 miles one way to Whiskey Bend

This route begins about .5 miles west of the visitor center along the Hurricane Hill Road and follows an old roadbed through meadows and forests into the Elwha valley. There are several south-facing slopes near the beginning of the trail which are good for telemark skiing. The Wolf Creek Trail is seldom snow covered at lower elevations and skiers must often walk the last several miles. Check at the information desk for current conditions.

Waterhole 3.5 miles one way

Obstruction Point Road is 7.8 miles one way

A pullout along the Hurricane Ridge Road .5 mile below the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center marks the beginning of this route. After dropping down a steep but short hill, the trail follows the snow-covered Obstruction Point Road. The first 1.5 miles of the trail are relatively easy and sheltered by forest. Near Steeple Rock the trail crosses open, exposed sidehills which may be icy and difficult to traverse. After passing Steeple Rock the trail flattens and meanders through subalpine forest.



Most Difficult

Hurricane Hill Route 1.5 miles one way

This route starts at the end of the Hurricane Hill Road and climbs 700 feet to the summit of Hurricane Hill. There are several very steep sidehills, so use extreme caution under icy or avalanche conditions. As an alternative, skiers can follow the ridge line. Be careful to stay off cornices. Under good conditions, advanced skiers will find this a rewarding trip with good views and some nice bowls. Check with the information desk before venturing out.

Obstruction Point Road from Waterhole to the end 4.3 miles one way

This route begins at the midway point on the Obstruction Point Road. In the first .5 mile the route climbs steadily 900 feet to above timberline. In clear weather, views can be spectacular but steep sidehills and exposure to storms make this a difficult route. It is recommended only under good conditions for experienced skiers. Travel beyond Obstruction Point means entering areas with high avalanche potential.

Sunrise Ridge 3 miles one way

Beginning at the top of the intermediate rope tow on Alpine Hill, this route follows a narrow ridge to slopes on the south side of Mount Angeles. The path crosses avalanche prone areas at several points and is not recommended under unstable conditions. Be especially careful to stay off cornices along the ridge. Several nice telemarking slopes are found off the east side of the ridge and lead to the Hurricane Ridge Road.

Other Areas

The Deer Park area is another alternative for exploring the high country of Olympic National Park in winter. Four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended for winter travel on this primitive road. The road is not maintained in the winter and is closed to all motorized vehicles 2.6 miles below the Deer Park Campground. The snow-covered road is a good ski for advanced skiers. Depending on snow conditions, skiers may have to hike to reach snow.

For information on other ski tours on the Olympic Peninsula, refer to *Cross-Country Ski Tours: Washington's South Cascades and Olympics*, Second Edition, by Tom Kirkendall and Vicky Spring.

Visitor Information

Emergencies

In an emergency or to report a crime dial 911. For non-emergency assistance call (360) 452-4501 between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. during the winter.

Entrance Fees

Hurricane Ridge is the only area where entrance fees are collected in winter. Other park entrance stations begin collecting in spring. Currently the fee is \$5.00 and is good for seven consecutive days. A \$15.00 annual pass, \$25 Golden Eagle Pass, or \$10 lifetime Golden Age Pass (age 62 or older) are available at entrance stations and the Olympic National Park Visitor Center. Entrance fees will increase January 11, 1997. Golden Access Passports are currently available to disabled U.S. citizens for free.

General Park Information

For general park information call (360) 452-0330 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or in the Port Angeles area tune your radio to 530 AM; Lake Crescent or Quinault areas tune to 1610 AM.

Pets are not allowed on trails, unplowed roads or in public buildings. They must be on a leash when in parking areas or campgrounds. Please do not feed any park wildlife. It is illegal, harmful to the animal and hazardous to you. Violators are subject to a \$100 fine.

Hurricane Ridge Road Opening

In winter the Hurricane Ridge Road should be open Fridays through Sundays and Monday holidays, as well as daily from December 25 through December 29, 1996, weather permitting. It may be open other days as well, if staffing and conditions allow. The road usually opens by 9:00 a.m., but times vary depending on conditions. At 4:30 p.m. the road closes to uphill traffic at Heart O' the Hills, five miles above Port Angeles. It is locked to all traffic at 6:00 p.m. As days lengthen in spring, a later closing time will be posted. Severe storms, drifts or high avalanche conditions may delay or prohibit the road from opening or may force an early closure. For your own safety, do not ski or walk on roads when snowplows are operating since the operators have limited visibility. After March 30, 1997 the Hurricane Ridge Road may be open or closed depending on weather, staffing and equipment availability. By mid May the road is usually open 24 hours a day.

Winter Driving

Olympic National Park follows Washington State guidelines for traction devices. Restrictions must be obeyed to reduce your chance of having an

accident. You may be cited for ignoring snow tire or chain requirements. The following designations are used:

No Restrictions: Road is mostly bare with ice/snow patches possible.

Approved Traction Tires Advised: Road may be snow-packed.

Approved Traction Tires Required: Road is snow-packed. Vehicle must have approved snow tires or chains on the drive wheels. Approved snow tires have MS, M/S, *--*, or All Season lettering on the side wall of the tire. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVW and buses must have chains installed when traction tires are required.

Chains Required: Road is snow-packed and icy or snow is falling heavily. You can expect some difficulty. Vehicle must have chains (link, cable, or plastic) on the drive wheels. Four-wheel drive vehicles may proceed without chains if they have approved traction tires on all wheels, are in four-wheel drive, and chains are available to use on one set of drive wheels.

Tips to Keep Warm

The cold temperatures, wet snow and wind of the Olympic Mountains can easily rob a body's warmth. Excessive loss of body heat, called "hypothermia," often helps cause outdoor accidents. Hypothermia can progress from uncontrolled shivering to loss of consciousness and death. Hypothermia is more easily prevented than treated. For your safety here are some tips to help you avoid hypothermia and another winter hazard, frostbite:

- * Dress warmly and in layers to shed or add more as needed.
- * Wear a hat! Over half of your body's heat is lost through your head.
- * Stay dry. Moisture robs your body of heat.
- * Wear wool or synthetics like pile or polypropylene. They insulate even when wet. Avoid cotton clothing.
- * Avoid wind. Wind robs your body of more heat at any temperature.
- * Take breaks and snack frequently to maintain warmth and energy.



Snow Play

Snow sliding is a favorite pastime for some, but it is also one of the most dangerous activities at Hurricane Ridge. **Serious injuries, even permanent disability or fatalities, have occurred when people have collided with trees or other sliders.** For your safety, sliding is permitted only in designated areas. The Sunrise Family Snow Play Area, one mile below the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center, will be managed as a children's and family sliding area. The Tiny Tot Snow Play Area, on the north side of the Hurricane Ridge parking lot, will be managed for very young children only.

If conditions become too dangerous or there is inadequate staff to safely manage the sliding areas, they will be closed. The snow play areas at Hurricane Ridge will be evaluated this season. The future of this program will depend on a number of factors including safety and funding. The Sunrise area is supervised only on weekends and holidays from late December to mid March. For the safety of participants, metal runner sleds or wooden toboggans are not permitted. Compressed air for inflating inner tubes is not available. To be as safe as possible, please observe the following rules:

- * Slide only in the two designated areas. Sliding is not allowed anywhere else along the Hurricane Ridge road, only at the Sunrise or Tiny Tot Snow Play Areas.
- * For your safety, be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions can result in serious injury.
- * Only go one tube at a time and do not put more than one person on a tube.
- * At the Sunrise Family Snow Play Area park only on the downhill side of the road, facing downhill. Carefully check both ways before crossing the road. Remember, the road may be icy and cars may not be able to stop if you step in front of them.
- * Follow directions of snow play area staff, and pay attention to all area signs. If you don't, you can be ejected from the snow play area.
- * Pets, snowboards and skis are not allowed in the snow play areas.



Avalanche!

The Olympic Mountain's steep slopes, heavy snowfall and high winds create ideal conditions for avalanches. Before heading out, check with the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center or call (206) 526-6677 for current conditions. The four hazard levels are low, moderate, high and extreme. Even under low hazard conditions avalanches can occur on some slopes. With extreme conditions backcountry travel should be avoided. The survival rate for avalanche victims is extremely slim. Only 50 percent survive after 30 minutes of burial. If you or a group member are caught in an avalanche, take these steps in your rescue attempt:

- Ensure the safety of survivors.
- Mark where victims were caught and last seen.
- Quickly search downslope from the last seen points for clues.
- Search the avalanche debris below the last seen points by probing in a grid pattern with probes, ski tails or poles.
- Keep searching! The victim could be inches away from your boots.
- Send any extra person for help.
- If you are caught, make swimming motions and try to keep yourself on top of the snow. As the snow begins to slow down, push the snow away from your face to create an air pocket.



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