

Photo by Dawn Kish

## Nature and Nurture

Childhood memories—which ones stand out for you? Racing the waves on a beach, taking a family walk beneath giant trees, camping under a starry sky, or building a snowman in the snow?

With Olympic National Park so close, local children are only a few miles away from such opportunities, but it can be a world away. So the park and its partners are helping kids get outdoors in this nearly million-acre playground.

### A Big Backyard

Last summer the *Adventures in Your Big Backyard* program brought children from the Sequim and Port Angeles Boys and Girls Club to all the park's ecosystems. Kids experienced the power of the ocean at Rialto Beach, touched centuries old trees in the Hoh Rain Forest, and hiked in the mountains at Hurricane Ridge. Some park visitors travel thousands of miles to see these sights—for many of these local children, it was their first time in the park.

To encourage families to explore, the park and local libraries partnered to provide *Explore Olympic!* day packs. The packs, with binoculars, maps and field guides, can be checked out for free. Other partners, like the Fiero Marine Life Center and NatureBridge, help thousands of students experience the park. Activities include measuring water quality in a local watershed or attending a multi-day science program at the NatureBridge campus on Lake Crescent.

The Marine Ambassadors Program, a partnership between the park, the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center and Forks High School,

offers students credit and teaches stewardship skills as they collect marine debris and study ocean resources. Families, scouts and other volunteers also visit the coast for beach cleanups in a partnership with Washington CoastSavers.

For families who would like to venture into the park with a guide, ranger-led programs like guided snowshoe walks are a good first step (see page 3). Other family programs include the annual Junior Ranger Day where walks, games and other activities give kids the opportunity to learn and earn their Junior Ranger badge!

### Making Memories

The benefits of reconnecting children with nature are well documented—from increasing attention spans to improving creativity and learning. But our technology-driven age is full of electronic distractions vying for kids' attention and time.

You're invited! The coast, forests and mountains of Olympic National Park offer countless places for children to venture outdoors, planting seeds for a lifelong love of nature while creating lasting memories.



*A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful,  
full of wonder and excitement.*

Rachel Carson





# Services and Facilities

Visiting Olympic National Park's mountains, coast and forests in winter can be magical, but it takes planning as fewer services and facilities are available. Many areas of the park are open and accessible 365 days a year, but roads and facilities may close due to snow, high water, downed trees or reduced staffing. Call (360) 565-3131 or see [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-conditions.htm) for road and weather updates.

## Emergencies

Dial 911 for emergencies or to report a crime. For non-emergency help call (360) 565-3000 ext. 0 from 7 to 5:30 or (360) 417-2459 after hours.

## Entrance and Other Recreation Fees

Entrance fees apply year-round in main spur road areas (Elwha, Heart O' the Hills, Hoh, Ozette, Sol Duc, Staircase). A single visit pass (1-7 days) is \$15 per private vehicle or \$5 per person (age 16+) entering by bus, bike or foot. The Olympic National Park Annual Pass is \$30. The America the Beautiful-National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass is \$80 and is honored at national park, national forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management lands. A \$10 lifetime pass for U.S. seniors (age 62+), and a free lifetime access pass for those with permanent disabilities are also available, as well as a free annual pass for certain military personnel and their dependents. Additional recreation fees apply for overnight camping permits. The Senior and Access passes provide a 50 percent discount on these fees.

Park fees provide critical funding for projects such as road, trail and sign repair; printing brochures; and staffing entrance station and wilderness permit locations. This year fees are being used for new exhibits for the Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center and accessible pathways at the Hoh and Quinault. Your support of the fee program is very important. Thank you!



## General Park Information

For park information see the park website [www.nps.gov/olymp](http://www.nps.gov/olymp) or call (360) 565-3130. Park information, maps, wilderness permits, bear cans and information on wilderness fees are available year-round at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center/Wilderness Information Center in Port Angeles. For the park's audio tour, call (360) 406-5056 and make selections for information about different areas of the park.

Pets are not allowed in public buildings, on trails or in winter use areas, and must be on a leash in parking areas or campgrounds. Check at the visitor center for a list of places pets are allowed. Please do not approach or feed any park wildlife, including birds. It is illegal, harmful to the animal and hazardous to you. Violators are subject to a \$100 fine.

## Port Angeles Area

**Olympic National Park Visitor Center & Wilderness Information Center:** Open 9-4 daily (except Thanksgiving and Christmas) with exhibits, movie, map and book sales and staff to help you plan a visit. Wilderness camping, hiking and permit information, as well as bear canisters, are also available. Most ranger stations do not have regular winter hours; call the main visitor center (360) 565-3130 for general park information or (360) 565-3100 for wilderness trip planning.

## Hurricane Ridge Road

Call (360) 565-3131 for a 24-hour recording. For the winter season, current conditions are also updated daily at [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/hurricane-ridge-current-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/hurricane-ridge-current-conditions.htm). Follow road condition updates on twitter at: [twitter.com/HRWinterAccess](https://twitter.com/HRWinterAccess).

To improve public safety, all vehicles (including 4WD) traveling above Heart O' the Hills on the Hurricane Ridge Road between November 15 and April 1 must carry tire chains. Weather permitting, the road is scheduled to be open Friday through Sunday and holiday Mondays (January 19, February 16) from November 28, 2014 through March 29, 2015. Weather permitting, it will also be open December 26 through January 2, 2015 (closed Christmas). The road usually opens at 9:00 a.m., but times vary depending on conditions. At 4:00 p.m. the road is closed to uphill traffic at Heart O' the Hills, five miles above Port Angeles. As days lengthen in spring, the road closes later. The Ridge parking lot closes at sunset and vehicles must be



below Heart O' the Hills by dusk (1/2 hour after sunset).

Storms, high winds, drifts or high avalanche conditions may delay or prevent road opening, or force an early closure. To minimize closures due to a full parking lot, please carpool and park close to other vehicles at Hurricane Ridge. For safety, do not

ski or walk on roads if plows are working since the operators have limited visibility. Also for safety, vehicle passengers must be inside vehicles or fully inside a pick-up truck bed. After March 29, the Hurricane Ridge Road may open as weather, staffing and road conditions allow. By early May the road is usually open 24 hours a day.

From mid December to late March the local business community works to provide shuttle service to Hurricane Ridge. Inquire at the Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center (360) 452-2363, [www.portangeles.org](http://www.portangeles.org), or the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau, (800) 942-4042, [www.olympicpeninsula.org](http://www.olympicpeninsula.org) for contact information on reservations, schedules and prices.

## Hurricane Ridge Area

**Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center:** Open with restrooms, exhibits, movie and warming area 9-4 weekends and holiday Mondays from December 13, 2014 through March 29, 2015; daily from December 26 through January 2; and other days as staffing allows. A foyer warming area and restroom are open 24 hours a day. Information desk staffed 10-4 weekends and holiday Mondays from December 13, 2014 through March 29, 2015, as well as daily December 26 through January 2.

**Hurricane Ridge Snack Bar & Rental Shop:** From December 13, 2014 through March 29, 2015, food and ski/snowshoe rentals are available at Hurricane Ridge 10-4 weekends and holiday Mondays, as well as December 26 through January 2. Weather and road permitting, it may stay open weekends in April; check at the park visitor center for updates. In May, gift shop/snack bar hours will be 10-6 weekends only from May 2 to 17, 2015, then daily May 22 through October 4, 2015.

**Hurricane Ridge Downhill Ski, Snowboard & Tubing Area** is operated by the Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club, [www.hurricaneridge.com](http://www.hurricaneridge.com). When fully operating there are two rope tows and a Poma lift for beginner to advanced skiers, and a tubing park. Weather and snow permitting, tows and tubing park operate 10-4 weekends and holiday Mondays from December 7, 2014 through March 29, 2015, as well as

December 26 through January 2. Full day rates are \$35 for all runs, \$32 half day. For rope tows only, rates for full and half day are \$24 and \$22. **Tube park rates** (including tubes) are \$10 for 2-hour sessions, \$8 for one hour. **Only tubes furnished by the ski area will be permitted in their tube park.** Cross country skiers in the ski area must use ski leashes.

**Downhill Skiing/Snowboard Lessons:** Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club offers lessons for ages four and up starting January 10, 2015. Private lessons are available with 24 hours notice. For more ski school information see [www.hurricaneridge.com](http://www.hurricaneridge.com) or call (360) 457-2879 (message only).

**Equipment Rentals:** Several businesses on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Puget Sound area rent winter recreational equipment. Hurricane Ridge Rental Shop (see hours and dates above) packages include skis, boots and poles. The shop requires a driver's license to rent equipment.

Location	Cross-Country	Downhill	Snowshoes
Hurricane Ridge (no phone)	\$32/day	\$37/day \$42/day w/ helmet	\$17/day \$22 w/ poles

## Roads

Some park roads regularly close in winter and others may be closed temporarily by weather conditions. Call (360) 565-3131 or see [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-road-conditions.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/current-road-conditions.htm) for current conditions. **Deer Park Road** is closed at the park boundary (9 miles from Highway 101, 2,000 feet elevation) from mid October until early summer, depending on snow. **Obstruction Point Road** is closed mid October until mid summer, depending on snow. **Dosewallips Road** is washed out 4 miles from the park boundary. Roads in the *Staircase, Elwha, Sol Duc, Hoh, Mora, Ozette, Queets* and *Quinault* areas are open year-round, weather permitting.

## Other Park Facilities

**Hoh Rain Forest Visitor Center:** Open 10-4 Friday through Sunday through January 4, 2015, and February 13 through April 26. Closed January 5 to February 12, 2015. Open daily starting May 1, 2015. Exhibits, information, wilderness permits, bear cans and books, (360) 374-6925.



## National Park Campgrounds

The following park campgrounds are closed this winter: Altair, Deer Park, Fairholme and South Beach. Others may be closed by snow, storms, high winds, flooding or downed trees. Several have primitive winter camping with pit toilets and no running water. Most campgrounds fully open in April. Fees at most campgrounds are \$12 a night, but range from \$10 to 18 depending on facilities and season. Check at the Visitor Center, see [www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm](http://www.nps.gov/olymp/planyourvisit/campgrounds.htm), or call (360) 565-3131 for current status. The following campgrounds usually have some loops open year-round.

**Quinault:** Graves Creek (primitive)  
**Kalaloch:** Kalaloch Campground Reservations can be made for Kalaloch campsites for June 10 through September 20, 2015 by calling (877) 444-6777 or at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) no more than 6 months ahead.

**Hoh:** Hoh Campground  
**Mora:** Mora Campground  
**Ozette:** Ozette Campground (primitive in winter, flooding may limit sites)  
**Sol Duc:** Sol Duc Campground (primitive in winter, walk-in if it snows)  
**Elwha:** Elwha Campground (primitive in winter)  
**Hurricane area:** Heart O' the Hills Campground (walk-in if it snows)  
**Staircase:** Staircase Campground (primitive in winter)



Hurricane Ridge earns its name during winter storms. Afterward, huge drifts often block the parking lot, a challenge for crews working to clear the way.

## Park Concessions

**Lake Crescent Lodge:** Open through January 1, 2015. Remainder of winter Roosevelt Cabins open weekends (no food service). Lodge fully reopens May 1, 2015 to January 1, 2016 with lodging and food service; (360) 928-3211, [www.olympicnationalparks.com](http://www.olympicnationalparks.com).

**Log Cabin Resort:** Closed in winter. Lodging, RV park, food service and store open May 22 to September 30, 2015; (360) 928-3325. [www.olympicnationalparks.com](http://www.olympicnationalparks.com).

**Fairholme Store:** Closed in winter. Open 9-6 Friday to Sunday, May 1 to 17, 2015; then open daily 9-7, from May 22 to September 7, 2015.

**Olympic Raft & Kayak:** Guided raft trips on the Elwha River March through September; (360) 452-1443, [www.raftandkayak.com](http://www.raftandkayak.com).

**Sol Duc Hot Springs Resort:** Closed in winter. Pools, cabins, restaurant and RV park open March 27 to October 18, 2015; (360) 327-3583, [www.olympicnationalparks.com](http://www.olympicnationalparks.com).

**Kalaloch Lodge:** Lodging and food service open all year, (360) 962-2271, [www.TheKalalochLodge.com](http://www.TheKalalochLodge.com).

## Lodging and Services Outside the Park

Local communities offer other services year-round. Contact the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau at (800) 942-4042, [www.olympicpeninsula.org](http://www.olympicpeninsula.org).



## Snowshoe With a Ranger

Join a park ranger at Hurricane Ridge to experience the wonders of winter on snowshoes. If you can walk, you can snowshoe! Snowshoes and instructions are provided. The walk is offered in partnership with Discover Your Northwest. A \$5 donation to this non-profit education organization for each participant helps continue the program and maintain the loaner snowshoes.

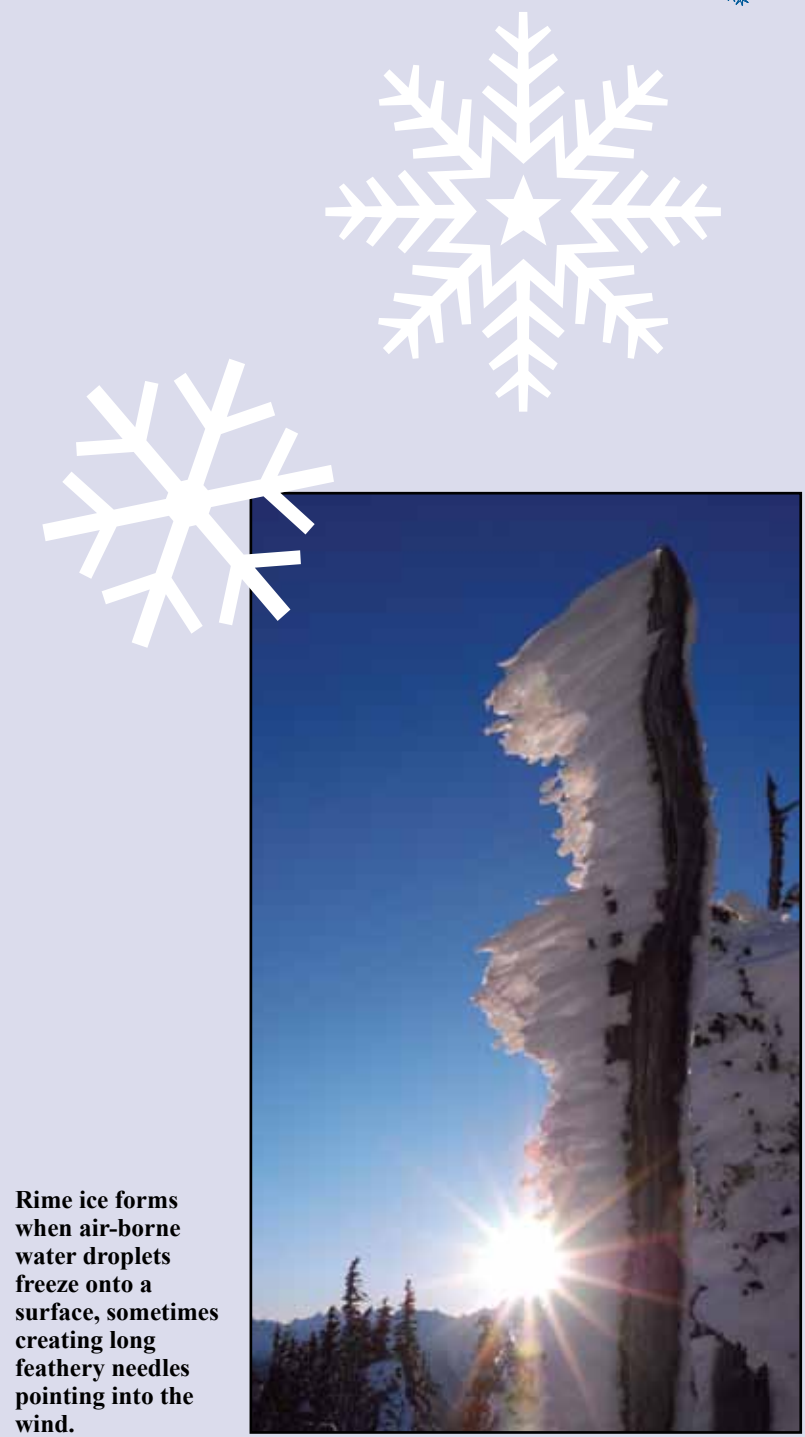
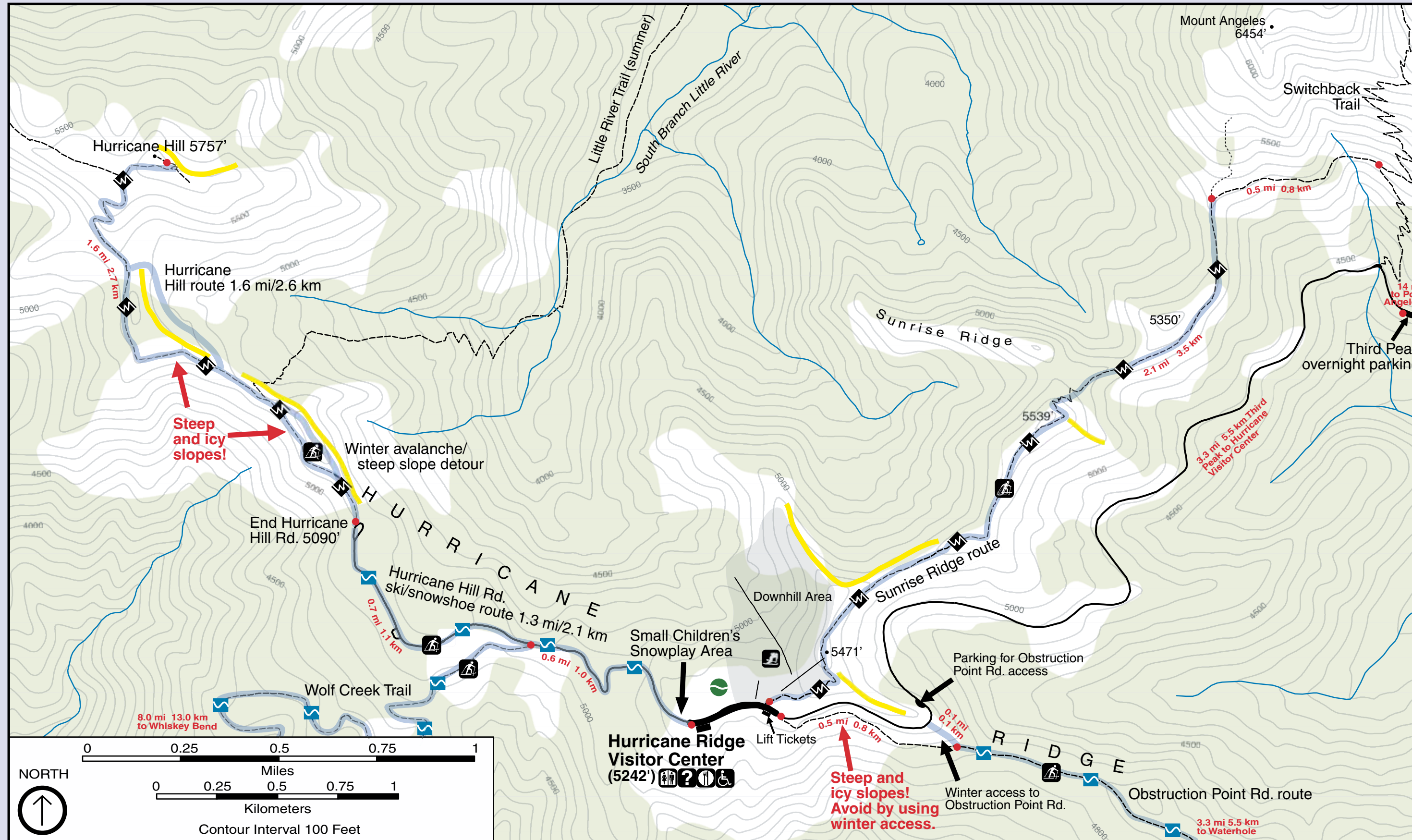
Participants should prepare for wintry weather, with cold, snow, wind or even rain. Dress in layers, wear warm, waterproof boots and bring hats, mittens, sunscreen and sunglasses. If the road is closed, walks are cancelled.

**Snowshoe Walk:** From December 13, 2014 through March 29, 2015, snow permitting, this easy to moderate walk is offered at 2:00 p.m. on weekends and holiday Mondays (January 19 and February 16) as well as December 26, 2014 and January 1, 2015. The walk lasts 1.5 hours and covers less than a mile. Group size is limited to 25 people. Sign up starts at the Hurricane Ridge information desk 30 minutes before the walk.

**Snowshoe Walks for Community Groups:** Clubs, youth groups or schools can schedule a reserved snowshoe walk for groups of 7 to 25 people. From December 20, 2014 through March 29, 2015, walks are offered at 10:30 a.m. on weekends and holidays Mondays (January 19 and February 16), as well as December 26, 2014 and January 1, 2015. Walks last 1.5 hours and cover less than a mile. Reservations **MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE**, by calling (360) 565-3136.



# Hurricane Ridge Area in Winter



### Legend

- Ski/snowshoe routes (unmarked & ungraded)
- Easiest
- More difficult
- Most difficult
- Summer trails
- Prevailing wind cornice areas (locations vary with wind patterns)
- Downhill ski area boundary
- 1.0 mi 1.6 km Distance between points

**!** Before heading out, check at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center for current avalanche conditions. Wear an avalanche beacon, carry a probe, snow shovel and the 10 essentials (see page 8), and avoid avalanche terrain such as cornices, gullies and steep lee slopes.



# Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

With its easy access and 15 to 20 miles of routes, Hurricane Ridge is the focus of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in Olympic National Park. Though winter explorers of all abilities can enjoy the area, flat, easy, beginner ski terrain is limited to the meadows above the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center. Backcountry skiers can explore several slopes and bowls in the area. No trails are groomed or marked; however, two routes use unplowed roads which can usually be navigated.

**NOTE FOR SNOWSHOERS, WALKERS, SNOWBOARDERS AND SKIERS:** Do your part to help everyone enjoy this area. Snowshoers, walkers and snowboarders, please stay to one side to avoid damaging ski tracks on trails, and do not snowshoe or walk through the downhill ski area.

**Before heading out on any trip remember to register at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center and check 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 everyone and excellent views in fair weather. Because the meadows are exposed to the sun and wind, they can be icy or wind packed.

## More Difficult

### Hurricane Hill Road 1.3 mi/2.1 km one way

Beginning just west of the visitor center, this trail first descends steeply, then follows the rolling, moderate ridgeline along the unplowed Hurricane Hill Road. Experienced skiers can use this trail to reach the Hurricane Hill Route (see Most Difficult), as well as several bowls for backcountry skiing. In clear weather there are good views to the north and south, especially at the trail/road terminus at the Hurricane Hill trailhead. Much of this ridgetop trail is sheltered by a subalpine forest, making it a good choice in windy, inclement weather or when there is elevated avalanche hazard.

### Wolf Creek Trail 8 mi/12.9 km one way to Whiskey Bend

This route begins 0.6 miles west of the visitor center along the unplowed Hurricane Hill Road (see above) and descends through meadows and forests into the Elwha valley. There are several south-facing slopes near the beginning which are good for backcountry skiing. The Wolf Creek Trail is seldom snow-covered at lower elevations. Users usually just descend a few miles through forest and several meadows with nice south views, then return the same way.

### Obstruction Point Road: To Waterhole 3.4 mi/5.5 km one way

Rather than descend the exposed, steep, often drifted and icy route of the summer Obstruction Point Road, the winter route starts at the sharp curve along the Hurricane Ridge Road, 0.5 miles below the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center. Park in the plowed pull-off below the curve, cross to the east side of the road and walk the snow bank back uphill to the curve. After descending a steep but short meadow, the route intersects and follows the unplowed Obstruction Point Road.

Other than the initial descent, the first 1.5 miles are relatively easy and sheltered by forest. After a steep climb, the route crosses below Steeple Rock and onto a short section of exposed slopes which can be drifted, icy and difficult to traverse. After that, the trail flattens and meanders through sheltered subalpine forest. Beyond Waterhole, it climbs steeply (see below).

## Most Difficult

### Hurricane Hill Route 1.6 mi/2.6 km one way

This route starts at the end of the Hurricane Hill Road route and climbs 700 feet to the summit of Hurricane Hill. There are several very steep sidehills if users follow the summer trail route, so use extreme caution under icy or elevated avalanche hazard conditions. As an alternative, skiers and snowshoers can follow the ridgeline, which has fewer steep sections. Be careful to stay off cornices that build up along the lee side of the ridge. Under good conditions, advanced skiers will find this a rewarding trip with good views and some nice slopes.

### Obstruction Point Road: Waterhole to end 4.3 mi/6.9 km one way (Obstruction Point Road is 7.8 mi/12.5 km one way)

This route begins midway out the unplowed Obstruction Point Road (see description above for the first 3.4 miles to Waterhole). After Waterhole, the route gains 900 feet, climbing steadily for 0.5 miles to open slopes on Eagle Point. 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 can entail steep terrain with high avalanche potential.

### Sunrise Ridge 2.1 mi/3.4 km one way

Begin this route by crossing below the intermediate rope tow and tube park, then climbing to the right of the ski hill (stay right of the trees). After crossing under the top of the ski area's intermediate rope tow, this route follows a narrow ridge toward the south side of Mount Angeles. There are several avalanche prone areas along the way, so check conditions and use caution under unstable conditions. Be especially careful to stay off cornices that form along the ridge and side ridges. Several nice slopes on the east side descend to the Hurricane Ridge Road.

## Other Areas

Depending on the snow level, other roads and trails in the park and in Olympic National Forest may be snow-covered. Check at the visitor center for current snow levels. The Deer Park Road may provide opportunities. For safety, this steep, narrow road is closed to cars at the park boundary, 9 miles from Highway 101, at around 2,000 feet of elevation. The road climbs steadily about 9 more miles from the park boundary up to Blue Mountain. If the snow level is low enough, the road may be skiable from the boundary; but users usually need to hike several miles before reaching snow.

For other routes on the Olympic Peninsula, refer to guides such as *100 Best Cross-Country Ski Trails in Washington*, by Tom Kirkendall and Vicky Spring, *Snowshoe Routes: Washington* by Dan Nelson, or *Backcountry Ski and Snowboard Routes: Washington* by Martin Volken.

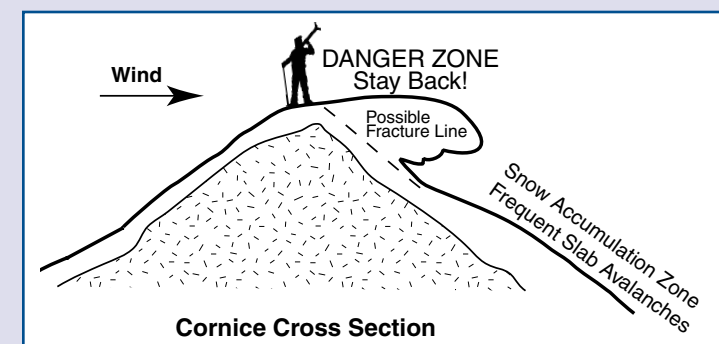
Cross country skier traverses an open slope below the Wolf Creek Trail ski route.



# Avalanche!

Olympic Mountain terrain and weather create ideal conditions for avalanches. Before heading out, check the Northwest Avalanche Center forecast at [www.nwac.us](http://www.nwac.us), and check at the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center for current local conditions. Wear beacons and carry a probe and snow shovel. The hazard levels range from low to extreme. Even in low hazard conditions avalanches can occur on some slopes. With extreme conditions backcountry travel should be avoided. Certain terrain features, for example steep gullies that funnel snow, unstable cornices (see below), or dark cliff faces on warm spring days, can increase avalanche hazard. The survival rate for avalanche victims is extremely low. 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 an 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.



Overhanging shelves of snow called cornices form on the lee side of windblown ridges. They can be unstable, breaking off far from the edge. Stay back from ridge lines to avoid traveling on unsupported cornices.

Skiers and snowshoers should stay well to the windward (southwest) side of unsupported cornices along this ridge en route to Hurricane Hill.



# PERSPECTIVES

Learn more about your park at these free public programs. Talks are at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, November through April, at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center, 3002 Mt. Angeles Road, Port Angeles. Seating is limited. Refreshments provided by *Friends of Olympic National Park*.

### December 9 - Free at Last: Elwha River Through Three Years of Dam Removal Andrew Ritchie, Geomorphologist, Olympic National Park

The last three years have seen dramatic change in the Elwha Valley as millions of tons of sediment are released from behind the dams. Learn how the river has responded to a shift from a sediment-starved to sediment-rich system.

### January 13 - Jump Starting Recovery Joshua Chenoweth, Restoration Ecologist, Olympic National Park

Revegetating the former Lake Aldwell and Lake Mills reservoirs after dam removal is essential to ecosystem recovery. Find out how park botanists and volunteers are working to restore this newly exposed land.

### February 10 - The Role of Science and Technology in Managing Pacific Salmonids in Olympic National Park Sam Brenkman, PhD, Fisheries Biologist, Olympic National Park

Explore some of the innovative technologies used to unveil the distribution, abundance, and migration patterns of salmonids. Learn about findings from headwaters-to-sea snorkel surveys and thermal imaging in major Olympic Peninsula rivers.

### March 10 - Sea Star Wasting Syndrome: Losing a Keystone Predator Melissa Miner, University of California Santa Cruz

Learn about the impacts of Sea Star Wasting Syndrome as documented by long term surveys and citizen science monitoring.

### April 14 - Blue Glacier: Past, Present and Future Howard Conway, PhD, University of Washington

How is Blue Glacier responding to changes in temperature and snowfall? The University of Washington has researched this glacier since 1957, one of the longest records of change for any North American glacier.

# Snow Play

Snow sliding is a favorite pastime for some, but it has also been one of the most dangerous activities at Hurricane Ridge. **Serious injuries, even permanent disabilities occurred when people collided with trees, other sliders, or lost control and ended up in the road.**

For your safety, sliding/tubing is permitted in only two locations:

- \* The Small Children's Snowplay area near the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center where children eight and under may slide.
- \* The tubing park operated by the Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club in the downhill ski area.

**Sliding is not allowed anywhere else in the Hurricane area or along the Hurricane Ridge Road.**

If conditions are too icy to allow safe sliding, the sliding areas may be closed. For the safety of participants, metal or hard plastic runner sleds and wooden toboggans are not permitted. **Only tubes provided by the ski area will be permitted in their tubing park.** Compressed air for inflating tubes is not available. To be as safe as possible, please:

- \* Slide only in the designated areas.
- \* Be sure the path is clear before starting your slide. Collisions can result in injuries. Watch for skiers and snowshoers crossing below the areas.





# Exploring Olympic in Winter

Olympic is a park for all seasons. Visitors prepared for unpredictable weather can experience the beauty and solitude of winter without summer crowds. But winter is the wet season. Snow and rain can swell streams overnight, making crossings treacherous and washing out trails. Camp above flood plains. Boardwalks and bridges are very slippery when wet or icy. On the coast, storms push tides higher, creating huge waves that easily move beach logs or trap hikers on rocks. Winter storms can blow down trees, blocking trails. Be prepared, always carry the 10 essentials, even for short hikes: **extra clothing, extra food and water, map, compass, flashlight, knife, sunglasses, matches, fire starter/candle, first aid kit.**

But don't let winter chase you inside! There are always options for exploring. Stop at the Olympic National Park Visitor Center/Wilderness Information Center (WIC) in Port Angeles for maps, tide tables and trail reports or check the park website [www.nps.gov/olymp](http://www.nps.gov/olymp). If you plan to camp overnight in the park's wilderness, check the above website for information on bear canisters, wilderness fees and required permits, or call the WIC (360) 565-3100. May through September some popular spots, including the coast, have camping limits. See the website for making reservations. For you and your pet's safety, pets are not allowed on trails in the park. The following options are usually accessible in winter, depending on snow level and storm damage.

## Low-Elevation Hiking

**Elwha Valley:** Madison Falls, West Elwha, Griff Creek, Cascade Rock and Geyser Valley/Humes Ranch area trails as well as lower parts of the Elwha River trail. Be sure to check out the view of the Elwha River at Glines Canyon if you're in the area (see article below).

**Lake Crescent:** Marymere Falls, Barnes Creek and Spruce Railroad trails.

**Ozette:** Cape Alava or Sand Point trails.

**Mora and La Push:** James Pond, Second, Third and Rialto Beaches.

**Kalaloch:** Short trails to beaches, beach hikes and the forest nature trail.

**Hoh:** Hall of Mosses and Spruce Nature trails, or lower Hoh River trail.

**Quinalt:** Maple Glades and Kestner Homestead trails at the park ranger station, Irely Lake and Cascading Terraces trails, or lower parts of the North Fork and Graves Creek trails. There are also several nature trails in Olympic National Forest along the South Shore Road.

## High Country Trips

Snow camping requires preparations, but offers a glimpse into a season that few truly experience. Weather changes quickly. Places like Hurricane Ridge and Blizzard Pass earn their names, and whiteout conditions can occur anytime!

**Hurricane Ridge** has the easiest high country access. For safety, observe these rules:

❄️ **Overnight campers must get a permit at the WIC, and register and check with a ranger at Hurricane Ridge for camping and parking locations.**

❄️ Plan trips for weekends since the road is usually closed Monday through Thursday. If a storm forces a road closure, you may need to install tire chains and have a shovel in case of a snowy descent. Use caution as plow operators may not see you! If you are locked in uphill from the gate, call (360) 565-3000 ext. 0 (before 5:30 p.m.) or (360) 417-2459 after hours.

❄️ **Because of the risk of sudden storms, winter overnight parking is not allowed at Hurricane Ridge.** You must park 3.3 miles below the Ridge at Third Peak (see map on pages 4-5). Check with rangers at Hurricane Ridge to see if a car shuttle is available.

❄️ Camps must be 1/2 mile away from the Hurricane Ridge parking lot and out of sight of ski/snowshoe trails. Check with a ranger for suggestions.

❄️ Use a camp stove. Campfires are prohibited.

❄️ Share the trails—avoid walking or snowshoeing in ski tracks.

❄️ In emergencies, dial 911 from the Hurricane Ridge Visitor Center foyer.

❄️ Check avalanche conditions and carry beacons (see page 7).



The Milky Way from Second Beach. Photo by John Chao.



## Restoring the Elwha

The largest dam removal in history is complete and the Elwha River flows freely once again. For the first time in 104 years, salmon have access to over 70 miles of habitat protected within Olympic National Park.

With the dams gone, the Elwha Valley is transforming. The Lake Mills and Lake Aldwell reservoirs are gone, revealing the pre-dam valley floor now greening with new life. To date, over 170,000 seedlings and 4,000 pounds of native seed have been planted in the former reservoirs. Millions of cubic yards of sediment, once trapped behind the dams, are washing downstream, adding 70 acres to the estuary at the river mouth, replenishing beaches, and creating critical habitat for spawning salmon and other marine life.

And even before the last dam concrete was scooped from river channel, Chinook salmon and migratory bull trout had made their way through and above the old dam site. The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, inhabitants of the Elwha Valley since time immemorial, has renewed access to historic and cultural sites long covered by the waters of Lake Aldwell.

The dams are gone, but the story of Elwha River restoration is just beginning. For more information, frequent updates and links to project webcams, visit Olympic National Park's website [www.nps.gov/olymp](http://www.nps.gov/olymp), share or interact with 'Elwha River Restoration' on Facebook, pick up a brochure at a park visitor center, or take a walk to one of the viewpoints along the Elwha River.

Glines Canyon Dam in September 2011 (inset) and a view of the free-flowing river from an overlook along the Whiskey Bend Road. A blast on August 26, 2014 removed the last 30 feet of the dam.