



Mount Rainier

Formed from the past, Protected in the present, Preserved for the future.

CLIMBER COST RECOVERY PROGRAM Mount Rainier National Park July, 1995

"I've never paid to climb Mount Rainier before. Why do I have to pay now?"

Fewer than one half of one percent of all park visitors climb above 10,000 feet but the park's costs for supporting this special activity are very high and keep increasing while funding decreases. This makes the mountaineering program a "special-use" activity. User fees are becoming a common alternative to having to close or severely reduce programs because of otherwise inadequate funding, and are charged to those visitors who most directly benefit from such funding. In some cases, user fees have been in effect for many years, such as those collected for camping in drive-in campgrounds.

"Do I have to pay just to take a day hike to Camp Muir or Camp Schurman?"

No ! The fee is charged only if you are climbing above 10,000 feet and on glaciers.

"Ok. So what is my \$15 per climb used for?"

Human Waste Management. This includes money to fly thousands of pounds of human waste off the mountain each year and have it properly treated. It also provides laborers for installing and maintaining high altitude dehydrator toilets at Camp Muir and eventually at Camp Schurman and for technically developing improved toilet facilities that will function well in cold weather.

Safety and Education. This provides more consistent climbing rangers staffing at the high camps to contact climbing parties, provide weather and route condition information, and to try to prevent climbing accidents before they happen. This money will also eventually provide brochures to assist climbers in planning climbs and inter-active video at certain registration points for basic information and safety hints.

Program Administration. This provides not only the necessary fee collection "machinery", but also for more consistently staffed climber registration offices which are staffed with informed climbing rangers who will register climbers and answer questions at the primary registration points (Paradise and White River).

"Do I have to pay \$15 every time I want to climb?"

No! For \$25, you may purchase an "Individual Annual Climbing Permit" which allows you to climb as often as you wish for a 12-month period. Annual permits may be purchased in the park at the time of Ranger-assisted climber registration or by writing to Mount Rainier National Park, Individual Annual Climbing Permit, Tahoma Woods, Star Route, Ashford, WA. 98304, and including your personal check (no cash or credit cards) made payable to: Department of the Interior - NPS. An annual permit will then be mailed to you within a week.

"Will the money collected be used to pay for search and rescue costs?"

No! Search and rescue costs will continue to be paid from National Park Service operating accounts. Park Rangers and volunteer search and rescue organizations will continue to perform search and rescue services.

"Will the climbing fees pay for only climbing-related expenses?"

Yes! Fees collected in any special use program must be used to fund that specific program and nothing else.

"How do I go about paying for my climb?"

Each member of your party will be required to pay \$15 (or purchase or show his/her own personal \$25 annual permit). A party of three, for example, would place \$45 in one envelope and insert it into the fee collection canister. If one or more people in the party wished to purchase an annual permit, that person would place \$25 in his/her envelope. An annual permit will be mailed to the purchaser within a week, but that person can immediately begin climbing. Payment can be either the exact amount in cash or by personal check. In order to speed the registration process and eliminate money processing by field personnel, change is not made. VISA or MASTERCARD credit cards will be accepted beginning in 1996.

"Where can I register to climb?"

At any of five different locations: The Old Ranger Station (in the upper parking lot at Paradise), in the Jackson Visitor Center, the Nisqually Entrance (for west side routes), the White River Ranger Station, and the Carbon River Ranger Station.

"Can I self-register?"

No, not at this time. We expect to have facilities in place that will permit self-registration by fall. After that, self-registration will be permitted only during non-business hours. If at all possible, climbers should register personally with a Ranger. If this is not possible, self-registration facilities and fee boxes will eventually be available at the locations listed above, except the Jackson Visitor Center. During the summer, self-registered climbing parties will not be permitted to camp in lower forest and sub-alpine areas where there are limits on the size and numbers of parties camped per night. Camping in the alpine areas, on snow or at designated camps will be permitted. In order to preserve fragile alpine plant communities, do not build campsites and rock walls or camp on even sparsely vegetated areas.