



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

Mount Rainier National Park

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## Mount Rainier National Park News Release

For Immediate Release  
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### **The Road to Paradise to Remain Closed Weekdays Unless Conditions Permit Opening**

January 21, 2009 – The park is continuing to explore ways to safely open the road to Paradise on weekdays. This can only occur on those days when road and weather conditions are optimal. Last week the road was reopened on weekends and holidays after a landslide took out one lane of the road on January 7 or 8. A flagging operation and additional road maintenance was required to safely allow passage of approximately 1500 vehicles over the three-day weekend. The road damage occurred in the Glacier Hill area, which is susceptible to avalanches and snow and rock slides, has very narrow shoulders, and is on a steep grade. “Unusually mild weather conditions over the last week have greatly improved the condition of the road in the slide area. These conditions can allow for safe passage around the damaged area without the need for intensive traffic control,” said Chief Ranger Chuck Young. “If we get similar conditions in the future we will look at opening the road during the week with self-regulating traffic control on a day-to-day basis. However,” Young cautioned, “normal winter conditions would generally preclude opening the road during the week without a fully-staffed flagging operation and increased road maintenance.” The park has hired additional staff to ensure safe road passage on weekends. Safety of visitors who may be stopped on the road, weather and road conditions, and adequate staffing are the main considerations that will determine whether the park will open the road on any given day. Daily road status updates can be obtained by calling the park’s information line at 360-569-2211 or by checking the park website at [www.nps.gov/mora](http://www.nps.gov/mora). The park will continue to have the road to Paradise open to the public on weekends and holidays through the winter once daily snow clearing operations have been completed and avalanche danger assessed.

Whether the road to Paradise is open or closed, the road to Longmire is normally open. A visitor center, hotel with dining room, restrooms, and access to several trails are all located in the Longmire National Historic District. There are also several feet of snow on the ground. The West Side Road, just inside the park entrance, also offers cross country skiers and snowshoers several miles of terrain for excursions. Information on recreational opportunities and events in the communities and road corridors around the park can be found at [www.visitrainier.com](http://www.visitrainier.com)

The same January storm that caused the landslide on Glacier Hill likely has damaged a 100’ – 150’ section of the Stevens Canyon Road near Backbone Ridge. The damage to the Stevens Canyon Road was discovered during a flight surveying storm related damages in areas of the park that are inaccessible in winter. The impact of this damage on the spring opening schedule for the Stevens Canyon Road has not yet been determined. Park staff will work with engineers from the Western Federal Lands Highways Division on an assessment and repair plan for this site.

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