



The Tahoma News

January 1 - April 2012



Kevin Bacher photo

Discovering Winter at Mount Rainier



Visit the Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise on weekends or holidays this winter and learn about the park through interactive exhibits and the park film.

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 appearing glaciers are freshly covered in white and the snow-covered roofs of the rustic historic buildings are rimmed with icicles, creating a picture perfect setting.

Harsh winter conditions create an ecosystem that requires special adaptations for the mountain's

plants and animals. How do they spend the challenging winter months and cope with heavy snows and chilling winds? How do they survive the long winter to reproduce, gather food and store energy in the mountain's short snow-free season? Stop by the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise to learn about the mountain's winter ecology by taking a snowshoe walk with a ranger and viewing the exhibits and film.

Warm up in the visitor center while enjoying the snowy view from the great hall, having lunch or browsing in the gift shop. The snow play area is open for sledding when enough snow is on the ground to protect vegetation at Paradise. Other winter activities at Paradise include crosscountry skiing, winter camping and snowboarding. See the Winter Hours on page 4 for snowshoe and ski rental locations inside the park.

Be prepared for your own winter adaptations by wearing warm clothing with a waterproof outer layer, carrying tire chains in your car, being aware of current weather, road and avalanche conditions, and reading the winter safety and recreation articles on pages 2 and 3. For more information ask for a Winter Recreation brochure or check the park website winter pages at <http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/winter.htm>.

Winter Roads & Driving Safety

Follow the Official Mount Rainier National Park Twitter Newsfeed
www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS for winter road status, tire chain requirements and park news.

Most of Mount Rainier's roads are closed for winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather. The road between Longmire and Paradise closes nightly in winter and reopens in the morning once the road has been plowed. The road may close early or remain closed during the entire day due to poor road conditions or severe weather. While you're waiting for the road to open, please park in the parking lot, not in a traffic lane. See the Longmire - Paradise Winter Road Schedule on page 2 for estimated opening and closing times. Drive only on plowed roads in the park. The Carbon River Road to Ipsut Creek Campground is closed due to the November 2006 flood. See page 2 for helpful winter driving tips.

Follow Traction Requirements

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. *All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when driving in the park in winter and spring.* Traction tires may be advised or chains may be required at anytime in winter. Obey the posted traction requirement.

APPROVED TRACTION TIRES ADVISED

The road ahead has patches of snow and/or ice covering the surface. It is advised that your vehicle should have approved all-season tires, snow tires, or chains on the drive wheels. Approved traction tires are designated by "M-S", "M/S", "*-.*", or "All Season" on the sidewall of the tires.

CHAINS REQUIRED EXCEPT 4WD

The road ahead is snow-packed or icy and drivers can expect some difficulty. Your vehicle must have tire chains (link, cable, or plastic) on the drive wheels. AWD and 4WD vehicles may proceed without chains if they have snow tires on all four wheels, are in four wheel drive, and carry one set of chains in the vehicle for later installation if needed.

CHAINS REQUIRED ALL VEHICLES

All vehicles must have chains on the drive wheels including AWD and 4WD.

Welcome...



Superintendent Randy King

...to Mount Rainier National Park! Winter comes early and stays long at Mount Rainier, one of the snowiest places on the planet. November marks the transition time when snow begins to accumulate, feeding the park's 25 glaciers and the dreams of winter enthusiasts. Over the next several months, 600" - 900" of snow will fall at Paradise. Maintaining safe visitor access through the snow months is a challenge. Doing so requires a daily assessment of road, weather, snow and avalanche conditions, and - this is your part - properly equipped vehicles and cautious drivers. If you're heading out into the backcountry, be sure to get an update on current and forecasted conditions beforehand. Outstanding winter recreation opportunities await the well prepared at Mount Rainier!

November also marked a personal transition to superintendent. My commitment is to do my best to be a good steward of your park...to protect Mount Rainier's special values and resources; to provide excellent visitor services and opportunities for recreation, discovery and inspiration; to be a good neighbor and community member; and to honor and support the employees, volunteers and partners who make it all happen through their service.

I welcome your feedback and ideas, and thank you for visiting Mount Rainier!

*Randy King,
Superintendent*

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

1. Map of the area
2. Compass
3. Extra food & water
4. Extra clothing (warm!) & rain gear
5. Emergency shelter
6. First aid kit
7. Flashlight or headlamp
8. Sunglasses & sunscreen
9. Pocketknife
10. Matches (waterproof!)*

*For emergency use only; Fires are not allowed in Mount Rainier's Wilderness

Winter Driving Safety Tips

- * Beware of poor visibility and reduced traction
- * Always carry tire chains in winter and spring
- * Reduce your speed
- * Keep your headlights on for visibility
- * 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
- * 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 roadway are not
- * Stay alert, use caution, anticipate hazards, and slow down!

Climbing & Backpacking

Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. About half actually make it to the summit. Climbing information is available at ranger stations and on the park's website at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm. The fee for a climbing pass is \$43 dollars/person 25 years and older, and \$30 dollars/person 24 years and younger, per calendar year. Be aware that winter camping and climbing are much more demanding and hazardous than in summer.

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

Overnight parking at Paradise is in designated areas only.

Guided climbs and climbing seminars are available through:

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

Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. 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. Free permits are available at the Longmire Museum daily and at Paradise on weekends only.

Groups of 13 or more and organized groups of any size, such as church and scout groups, are advised to pre-register at least two weeks in advance due to limited space by calling (360) 569-6575. 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. Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan – ask a ranger when you get your permit. Approved containers for winter camping at Paradise are 5 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. Stay clear of 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.



Snow Play Area

Sliding and sledding are permitted only in the designated snow play area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Runs are constructed when there's sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage – at least five feet. The snow play area may remain open into mid-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 snow play area from the main trailhead behind the new 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.
- Compressed air is available on weekends and holidays during snow play hours at the upper parking lot restroom.
- Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.

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 snow-sealed boots. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center (open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends & holidays).

The snow play area normally closes at 4:30 p.m.



Snowshoe on your own or sign up to learn about the park's winter ecology on a snowshoe walk with a ranger.

Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks

Join a park ranger or volunteer for an exciting introduction to the art of snowshoeing and find out how plants and animals adapt to winter at Paradise. Snowshoe walks are offered daily December 17 - January 1, and on weekends and holidays only through March, weather permitting.

Public snowshoe walks are offered at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., traverse 1.2 miles, and last for about 2 hours. 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.

Organized groups (up to 25 people) may reserve snowshoe walks. These walks begin at 10:30 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, inquire at the Longmire Museum, the Jackson Visitor Center information desk, or call (360) 569-6575. The park also offers snowshoe walks to school groups by reservation only. Call (360) 569-6592 for reservations.

Snowshoes for the ranger-led walks are provided by the park. A \$4.00 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 will sink into the snow even with snowshoes on).

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

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

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 5' of snow before building jumps.

Winter Weather Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts:

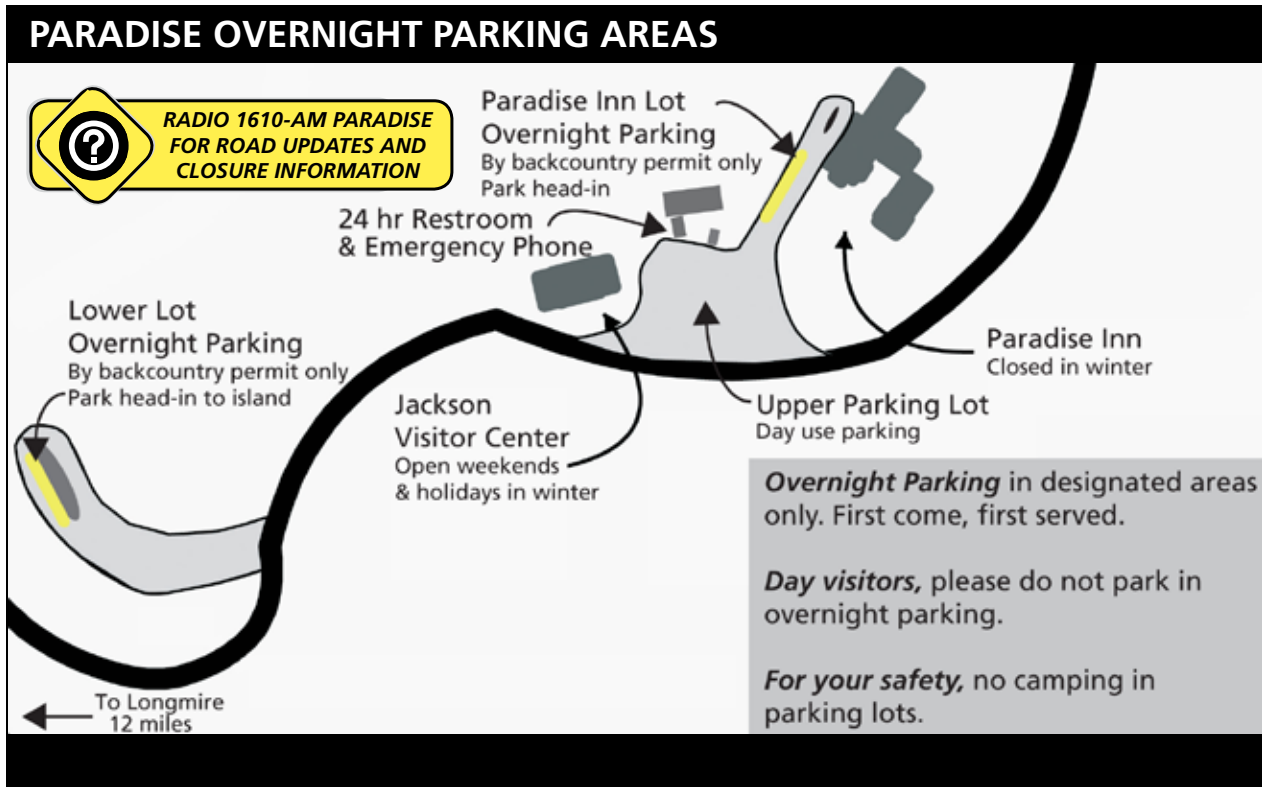
(206) 526-6677

<http://www.nwac.us/forecast/avalanche/current/zone/7/>

Highway Pass Reports:

(800) 695-7623 or dial direct 511

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/>



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 feed wildlife to get a better photograph and some mistakenly think that it helps the animals through the winter months. But this brings wildlife closer to vehicles and people, often with dire consequences. Animals attracted to these busy areas are often injured or killed by vehicles. The feeding of wildlife, an especially significant problem at Paradise, poses a threat to wildlife by increasing the risk of disease transmission (among themselves and to you), unnaturally increasing populations which may prey on other species (jays feed on eggs and nestlings of other songbirds), and causing digestive problems (their systems are adapted to natural foods, not cheese crackers).

Please keep your food away from wildlife. Pick up food particles and don't leave your lunch on your bumper – a fox or a jay will find it. And lastly, **please don't feed the wildlife** – it's bad for them, and it's bad for you – feeding wildlife is illegal and you may be fined.

Collars on Foxes??

Yes, you may see some of our foxes with collars. These collars automatically collect time and location information via GPS receivers, similar to what you use in your car or on the trails. The reason for the research is to determine how visitor use and developed areas alter the natural habits of foxes. This study is primarily the result of people feeding the foxes, either on purpose or inadvertently by not securing food items. The results of this study will lead researchers to better understand human impacts and develop new ways of protecting the foxes and keeping our wildlife wild.



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

Avalanche on Nisqually Glacier. Photo by Patricia Heusner Dorris.

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.

Learn more about safe travel in avalanche country. 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.

Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.



Avalanche Level Descriptions

Slopes between 30 and 45 degrees pose the greatest avalanche danger.

Low Risk: Generally stable snow. Travel is usually safe.

Moderate Risk: Human-triggered avalanches possible.

Considerable Risk: Human triggered avalanches probable.

High Risk: Natural and human-triggered avalanches likely. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended.

Extreme Risk: Widespread natural and human-triggered avalanches certain. Avoid travel in avalanche terrain. Confine travel to low angle terrain well away from avalanche path runouts.

Prepare & 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 simple guidelines:

Dress Warmly & 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.

Beware 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. You need to know where you are and how to get to safety. You also need to know how to assess avalanche hazards to minimize potential risk.

Prepare When hiking, climbing, skiing, or snowboarding, bring the "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.

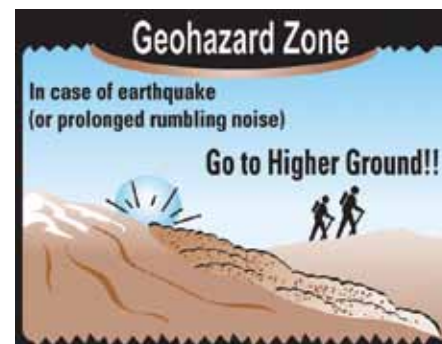
Take Care Tell someone your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return. Do not travel alone or in poor visibility.

If you are not truly knowledgeable and prepared, or if the weather is questionable, don't push your luck!

Protect Yourself & Your Park

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. Please enjoy the park safely and courteously, and help protect park resources by following these rules:

- Pets must be on leashes no longer than 6' and are not allowed in buildings, on trails, off-trail, or on snow.
- Do not feed, approach, or disturb the wildlife.
- Stay on designated trails.
- Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited.
- Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.
- The use of firearms is prohibited within Mount Rainier National Park. Also, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places are posted with signs at public entrances. People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them in the park.



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. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.

The more time you spend in an area with geologic hazards, the greater the chance that you could be involved in an emergency event. While most people consider the danger to be relatively low, you must decide if you will assume the risk of visiting these potentially dangerous locations. 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. Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, or visit the U.S.G.S. Cascade Volcanoes website: vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Winter Hours January - April 2010



Visitor Centers

Longmire Museum (360) 569-6575
Information, exhibits, book sales, climbing permits
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily

Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise
(360) 569-6571
Information, exhibits, movies, book sales, food service, gifts
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekends/holidays, and daily Dec. 17 - Jan. 1

Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639
Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits (including Ipsut Creek campground)
Call for hours

All other visitor centers are closed for the season.



Food & Lodging

For lodging reservations in the park call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mtrainierguestservices.com/

National Park Inn - Longmire
Lodging, post office, and dining room serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open year-round.

General Store - Longmire
Groceries, gifts, firewood. Open year-round (Ski and snowshoe rentals and tire chain purchases are available in winter.)
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily
During ski touring season:
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. weekends/holidays

Jackson Visitor Center - Paradise
Food service, gift shop and snowshoe rentals
11:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekends/holidays and daily Dec. 17 - Jan. 1

Paradise Inn & Sunrise Lodge
Closed for the season



Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities. Religious services are available in local communities outside the park.

GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK



Become a Volunteer Mount Rainier Ranger

As you visit Mount Rainier, keep your eyes open for people wearing hats, shirts, and jackets with a "volunteer" logo on them. You'll see them working in the visitor centers and assisting visitors on snowshoes and skis. Even more are busy behind the scenes, organizing the park's collection of historic photos and taking care of plants in our greenhouse.

Last year more than 1,700 people worked in partnership with the National Park Service to protect the natural and cultural resources of Mount Rainier and serve its visitors. These invaluable partners help us accomplish far more than we would be able to without their help.

But they also find great personal rewards. Carbon River volunteer George Coulbourn says, "When I'm asked why I volunteer, I respond that I began for altruistic reasons. Having spent many rewarding days in the park, I felt that I had arrived at a good time for payback. Doesn't work. Like most volunteer activities, the volunteer gets more than he gives, and the harder he tries, the more he gets."

Have you ever dreamed of being a park ranger? You still can—for a day, for a summer, or on winter weekends as your schedule permits. Opportunities abound. Ask how you can become part of our team!

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

Do Your Part for Climate Friendly Parks!

Mount Rainier National Park is a climate friendly park with a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2016 - the centennial of the National Park Service. You can be part of the effort by logging on to the Do Your Part! website to calculate your carbon footprint and set your personal goals. Don't forget to select Mount Rainier as your favorite park! To log on to Do Your Part! go to <http://doyourpartparks.org/index.php>. Visit the Climate Friendly Parks website for more information on Climate Friendly Parks <http://www.nps.gov/climatefriendlyparks/index.html>.

Green Planet Challenge: Pack a Trash-Free Lunch!

Help reduce landfill waste by packing your lunches in reusable containers with lids, refillable water bottles and with food that doesn't require containers. Less waste helps make a Greener Planet for everyone! Do you accept the Challenge?



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park

Superintendent: Randy King

Contact Information

Mailing Address
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E-mail
MORAInfo@nps.gov

Park Headquarters
(360) 569-2211
(360) 569-2177 TDD

Website
www.nps.gov/mora
www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help for wheelchair users. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, 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 to wheelchair users. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible when snow-free. Two accessible trails lead to the base of the Paradise meadows, and a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help when snow-free.
TDD: (360) 569-2177

Please Recycle!

Mount Rainier National Park has been recycling since the late 1960s. We recycle aluminum cans, plastic (no. 1 and 2), glass, office paper, mixed paper, cardboard, scrap metal, used oil, batteries, and a number of other items.

We also purchase recycled plastic products such as plastic bags, picnic tables, and plastic lumber; paper products made of pre- and post-consumer recycled paper; automobile products; and other products.

Be part of the effort! Please deposit aluminum cans, plastic bottles and glass in the recycle cans provided.

Park Partners

Who's responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone! Here are some groups that deserve special thanks; for more information on these partners, and how to join the effort, please visit their websites or the park website at www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark.



Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers
www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm



Discover Your Northwest
www.discovernw.org



Washington's National Park Fund
www.wnpf.org



Student Conservation Association
www.thesca.org



Washington Trails Association
www.wta.org