

Mount Rainier National Park

IMPORTANT SAFETY AND PROTECTION MESSAGES TO GIVE VISITORS

Mount Rainier National Park is truly one of the most beautiful places on earth. The wilderness environment here can be fragile and humans are the one animal that can destroy the splendor. All visitors to the park have a part in preserving this special place for future generations. To protect the plants and animals, please do the following:

- **Remain on the paved, rock-lined, or main trail at all times** – One average male footprint can kill 20 plants per step. Five people walking through a meadow can create a trail that may take 25-30 years to repair. It is important that those taking or posing for photos do not leave the trail. Do not trample fragile stream banks, shorelines, and wet areas.
- **Stay on the trail even when it is wet or muddy** – Stepping off the trail to avoid melting snow or mud destroys the vegetation. If you don't want your feet wet or muddy, please turn back.
- **Carry back everything you carried onto the trail** – There are no garbage cans along the trails. Plastic wrappers and bottles can kill curious wild animals. Please do not leave toilet paper in the environment; bring a plastic bag to pack it out.
- **Do not feed the animals or leave any food behind** – Feeding the animals harms them. It can also be dangerous for visitors.
- **Do not approach wildlife, even to take a picture** – Animals can attack if you come too close. It is dangerous for wildlife to become accustomed to being near humans and cars.
- **Do not pick or step on flowers and plants.** Avoid damaging all plants, trees, and park resources.
- **Step onto snow ONLY if it is directly on the trail** – Snow is so inviting, but stepping off trail to reach it damages the newly emerging plants and also those growing in the snow along the edges.
- **Sledding is allowed only at Paradise, and only during a designated period in winter** -- Sliding on snow with sleds, plastic bags, and other sledding devices is allowed only at Paradise, and only when there is enough snow to protect plants and sledders. The sledding period generally starts in the second half of December and ends late March or April when the snow pack thins.
- **Do not take dogs on trails** – Leashed pets can go wherever cars can go: campgrounds, parking lots, roadside pull-outs, picnic areas.

Large groups in particular may un-intentionally cause damage to the vegetation. To help preserve the fragile environment, we are asking groups greater than 12 persons to do the following:

- **Break into smaller groups of 12 or less** – This will allow other visitors to move ahead or around your group without stepping on the vegetation.
- **Choose different routes** – This lessens the impact on a very fragile area.
- **Stagger start times for each group** – Again this avoids having a very large group in any one area at one time, and facilitates trail use by others.

We must all work together to protect the beauty and wonder of Mount Rainier. The environment you enjoy today is what was preserved by the visitors who came before you. Thank you for helping to protect Mount Rainier National Park.