



Mount Rainier National Park Fact Sheet

Updated: November 2, 2007

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Flood Recovery Status One Year Later

1) Sunshine Point

Damage: The Nisqually River breached protective levees to reclaim about five acres of land at Sunshine Point, including 200 yards of the park road and much of Sunshine Point Campground. The park's main utility lines were broken, including the buried cable that provides commercial power to Longmire and Paradise.

Repairs to Date: Mount Rainier's road crews rebuilt the road at Sunshine Point, restored the park's buried utility line and completed paving in February 2007, marking the first project completed in the park. More than 10,000 tons of rock were used to reconstruct the road and protect it from the Nisqually River.

Current Status: The Park anticipates that Sunshine Point Campground will eventually reopen as a smaller campground or picnic area. Options for Sunshine Point will be assessed in 2008.

2) Westside Road

Damage: Flooding from Tahoma Creek damaged long stretches of this dirt road.

Repairs to Date: The Westside Road has been repaired as far as Dry Creek and is now open to that point.

Current Status: Open from the Nisqually Road to Dry Creek. The road was washed out repeatedly beyond this point in recent years, and has been closed to vehicle traffic since 1986. Below Dry Creek a smaller washout has reduced the road to one lane and park road crews are currently working to repair this section before winter sets in.

3) Kautz Creek

Damage: Kautz Creek changed course about a mile above the road bridge and flowed instead through the forest and across the park road 200 yards east of the bridge. The flood undermined the road, damaged the buried power line, and caused severe erosion through the Kautz Search and Rescue Helibase and maintenance yard.

Repairs to Date: Park maintenance crews have installed three 30-inch culverts and two twelve-foot culverts to accommodate the new creek channel. Temporary overhead power lines were installed to restore power to Longmire and Paradise. Most of the overhead power lines have now been buried.

Current Status: Damage remains at the Kautz Search and Rescue Helibase and maintenance yard. The park is still assessing the best alternatives to address restoration or relocation of this area.

4) Nisqually Road

Damage: The Nisqually River severely eroded the bank of the roadway in two places, at mileposts 5.2 (a mile below Longmire) and 9.1 (a mile above Cougar Rock Campground). At both locations the flood left the roadway partially unsupported above a sheer drop off, and in danger of collapsing into the river. Floodwaters also took out about 60-70 feet of the embankment at Van Trump Curves at Mile 9 where the road crosses Van Trump Creek, threatening access to Paradise.

Repairs to Date: Park road crews have rebuilt the road embankment along this road. Access to Longmire was re-established in December and the National Park Inn was allowed to re-open on a part-time basis before Christmas.

Current Status: The road is now open all the way to Paradise. Park road crews continue to work on Van Trumps Curves to stabilize the creek embankments and protect the road from further damage. Work is anticipated to be complete in early November.

5) Longmire

Damage: The Nisqually River destroyed long stretches of levee at Longmire, eroding the bank on both sides of the channel. On the north side, the river undercut a corner of the park's Emergency Operations Center. On the south side, the park road washed out in several places. Power and sewer lines were destroyed where they crossed the river, and the water system was flooded with debris.

Repairs to Date: Park crews have restored power, sewer and water services at Longmire. The Emergency Operations Center was stabilized, and the washouts leading to the park's service entrance were repaired. The National Park Inn and Longmire Museum are now open daily. Park employees based at Longmire have returned to their regular offices as well. In October, a new flood wall was constructed on the west bank of the Nisqually River to improve flood protection for the National Historic District and the Emergency Operations Center was reopened.

Current Status: On the community building and campground side of the river, a flood wall is proposed to be constructed in the spring of 2008.

6) Paradise

Damage: Like the one at Longmire, the water reservoir at Paradise filled with mud and debris during the storm. Freezing weather following the storm burst a water pipe in the Paradise Inn, currently under renovation, causing some damage.

Repairs to Date: Despite ten feet of snow on the ground at Paradise, park maintenance crews were able to dig out the flooded Edith Creek water reservoir. Contractors have continued the ongoing renovation of the Paradise Inn, scheduled for completion in April 2008.

Current Status: Construction of the Paradise Inn and new Paradise Visitor Center are on schedule, with the Inn scheduled for opening in May 2008 and the Visitor Center scheduled for completion in fall 2008. Paradise is fully operational and snow play is scheduled for this winter.

7) Stevens Canyon

Damage: Stevens Canyon Road washed out in three places. Damage to this area included many slides and culverts that required cleaning out. The worst washout, on Backbone Ridge on the east end of the road, involved a landslide that swept thousands of feet down to the Ohanapecosh River.

Repairs to Date: Repairs have been made to two washed out areas on Stevens Canyon Road and the road was open all summer for visitor traffic. A 4.5 mile section of the road was closed this fall for repairs to the washout at Backbone Ridge.

Current Status: Contractors are completing work to repair the major road landslide at Backbone Ridge, which is anticipated to be complete in mid-November. This road will remain closed throughout the winter as part of normal winter road closures.

8) Ohanapecosh

Damage: The Ohanapecosh River destroyed several campsites at the end of the “C” loop. High winds toppled numerous trees. Water runoff pooling behind the Visitor Center caused minor water damage to the building’s walls and floors.

Repairs to Date: Most of the campground at Ohanapecosh was repaired and opened May 25th as scheduled. Structures only received minor damages and were able to be repaired.

Current Status: Riverside walk-in campsites that were lost will not be replaced.

9) The Grove of the Patriarchs

Damage: Flooding buried this popular island of old growth trees in a layer of silt 3-4 feet deep. The debris-laden Ohanapecosh River destroyed the suspension bridge leading to the island, and knocked out the boardwalk through the grove off its foundation.

Repairs to Date: Crews replaced the damaged suspension bridge and repaired the boardwalk.

Current Status: Opened in October

10) Highway 123

Damage: This major highway through the park washed out in four places. One washout, at milepost 11.5, cut across both lanes to a depth of 70 feet. In some areas plugged culverts caused road undermining.

Repairs to Date: A contractor was able to fix the damaged washout at milepost 11.5 and park road crews cleared and re-established culverts. Washington State Department of Transportation made repairs to areas of the road that were undermined during the flood.

Current Status: Culvert maintenance is ongoing on this road. The road is open for public traffic until normal winter closures occur.

11) Highway 410

Damage: The White River overflowed its banks during the storm, inundating Highway 410 for several miles. However, the highway did not appear to sustain any long-term damage.

Repairs to Date: No repairs necessary and reopened as scheduled in May.

Current Status: Open

12) White River Road and Campground

Damage: Erosion caused damage to campsites and an amphitheater along the edge of the White River. The shoulders of the campground’s access road were also eroded.

Repairs to Date: Repairs have been made in the campground area.

Current Status: Construction to the campground amphitheater has begun and will be completed in the summer of 2008. Road repairs are largely complete with paving scheduled for next spring.

13) Mt. Fremont and Gobbler’s Knob Fire Lookouts

Damage: Either during the storm in November 2006 with 118 mph winds recorded or the severe windstorm in December 2006 with 122 mph winds recorded, high winds tore the roofs from the historic Mt. Freemont and Gobbler's Knob fire lookouts. At Gobbler's Knob, three of the walls caved in as well.

Repairs to Date: Park crews removed the walls and damaged structures down to the floor level and rebuilt the lookouts, securing the roofs prior to the onset of winter weather.

Current Status: Awaiting snow melt-out in spring to continue repairs to the interior and conduct the finishing work to the lookouts.

14) Carbon River

Damage: Flooding from the Carbon River partially or completely destroyed two miles of road between the park entrance and Ipsut Creek Campground. In places, only culvers and road signs remained to remind visitors that flooded channels used to be roadways. The historic Ipsut Creek Cabin was undermined when a channel of the river flowed directly beneath it. The windstorm in December 2006 toppled dozens of trees across the damaged roadway.

Repairs to Date: The Ipsut Creek Cabin was dismantled, flown to Mowich Lake, and trucked to Tahoma Woods for restoration.

Current Status: Restoration of the Ipsut Creek Cabin is underway at Tahoma Woods this fall. A decision has to be made as to where the cabin will be placed next summer, which is pending the outcome of the Environmental Assessment.

15) Trails

Damage: Most of Mount Rainier's trail damage was not apparent until snow melted out in early summer 2007. Most of the park's low-lying bridges were destroyed. Major sections of trail collapsed or were scoured down to bedrock, and require rerouting or rebuilding. Throughout the park, large trees felled during the storms obstructed access to many of the park's trails. In total, 2 suspension bridges, 31 foot logs and 20 bridges were damaged or destroyed in the flood and roughly 12 miles of trail severely damaged.

Repairs to Date: Work on the backcountry trail system was initiated in early 2007 with the help of over 1700 volunteers. During the summer, crews were able to repair the suspension bridge at Grove of the Patriarchs, replace 20 foot logs and repaired or replaced 6 trail bridges. The 93-mile Wonderland Trail, which circumnavigates the park, was reopened in August with only a 4-mile road walk required in Stevens Canyon.

Current Status: Much of the trail recovery work is yet to be accomplished and may take two more seasons to complete due to the short window of opportunity to make repairs. With the arrival of snow on the mountain, most trail work has been suspended until June 2008.

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