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Mount Rainier National Park News Release

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SCA TO LEAD VOLUNTEER FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORT AT MOUNT RAINIER

JANUARY 16, 2007--The Student Conservation Association (SCA), a nationwide volunteer conservation organization, has been named to direct volunteer flood recovery efforts at Mount Rainier National Park, Superintendent Dave Uberuaga announced today.

SCA will work collaboratively with park officials to assess backcountry damage caused by last November's torrential rains, devise a restoration strategy, and organize a multi-year volunteer work plan to engage trail coalitions, friends groups, and individual volunteers.

"SCA will direct all aspects of volunteer efforts including site logistics, crew coordination, and workload planning and scheduling," Uberuaga explained. "The recovery effort will stretch over at least two years, and the resources and insights of SCA will prove invaluable." Uberuaga noted SCA's Yellowstone recovery program following 1988's wildfires, as well as the nonprofit's experience managing 50,000 conservation volunteers over the past five decades, as factors that make it the ideal partner to meet the restoration challenges ahead.

SCA Regional Vice President Jay A. Satz, an expert in wilderness conservation and a longtime Seattle resident, indicates a formal assessment of the backcountry impact cannot be completed until spring, due to Rainier's heavy winter snowpack. But, he adds, work on a response strategy is already underway.

"As tragic as the flooding is, it presents an opportunity to develop a volunteer management program that will serve the park long after the restoration effort is over," says Satz. "Public lands require the public's support and we should all be grateful that so many organizations and individuals have come forward in recognition of this responsibility."

Satz is already in discussions with the Washington Trails Association, EarthCorps, Washington's National Park Fund and the National Parks and Conservation Association, among others, about coordinating support efforts. The volunteer recovery operation will initially focus on trail and bridge reconstruction, erosion control, revegetation and site restoration, and invasive plant control. "In many ways, this is analogous to SCA's Yellowstone program," Satz says. "The land is absolutely raw and we need to help it heal."

Although on-the-ground volunteer activity must wait until snows recede, those interested in volunteering or receiving additional information may register on a listserv at www.theSCA.org or email nwrecovery@thesca.org.

SCA, now celebrating “50 Years of Students Conserving America,” placed its first volunteers at Olympic and Grand Teton National Parks in 1957. It is the nation’s largest conservation organization for young people, and today manages Northwest programming and a local conservation leadership initiative for young people of color from its regional office in Seattle. SCA volunteers provide more than 1.5 million hours of conservation service annually to America’s parks, forests, and local communities. Its ongoing mission is to develop new generations of conservation leaders, inspire lifelong stewardship, and preserve our planet. For more, visit www.theSCA.org.

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899. It is home to an active Cascade volcano encased in over 35 square miles of snow and glacial ice. The 14,410’ mountain is surrounded by lush old growth forests, spectacular subalpine meadows and a National Historic Landmark District that showcases the "NPS Rustic" style architecture. Numerous flood closures remain in effect. For more, go to www.nps.gov/mora.

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