



# Rebuilding Rainier

No. 5 ■ January 18, 2007

Mount Rainier National Park

## MAJOR PART OF FLOOD RECOVERY FUNDING SECURED

On Friday, January 12, Congressman Norm Dicks announced that the National Park Service had approved the expenditure of funds for flood recovery efforts at Mount Rainier.

The congressman, who serves as chairman of the House Interior and Environment appropriations subcommittee, said that \$18 million would be redirected from other National Park Service highway and construction accounts. Some of the funding will pay for restoration work necessary to reopen flood-damaged roads at Olympic National Park.

Emergency repairs at Mount Rainier are estimated to total \$36 million. Dicks said that the remainder of the funding will come from the "Emergency Repair of Federally-Owned Roads" program of the Federal Highway Administration, though details have yet to be worked out.

"We're halfway there," said Superintendent Dave Uberuaga. "The message from Congressman Dicks is full steam ahead."

## FIRST WAVE OF EMPLOYEES SET TO RETURN TO LONGMIRE

On Monday, January 22, the first wave of employees will return to their offices at Longmire. This first group will be limited to individuals whose jobs require access to resources at Longmire. Employees will caravan in and out at specific times due to safety concerns on the long one-lane service road between the Community Building and Skate Creek Road.



Preparatory work begins for installation of new culverts at Kautz Creek

Employees at Longmire can anticipate frequent disruptions to power and telephone service as repairs continue. From January 23 through 27, for example, power outages will affect the west side of the park from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Longmire, Nisqually Entrance, and Paradise will be on back-up generators. The outages allow the road crew to work safely under the overhead lines at Kautz Creek.

## MAJOR CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

With road and levee reconstruction essentially complete at Sunshine Point, crews are now focusing on road repairs at Westside Road, Kautz Creek, and Mileposts 5.2 and 9.1.

### Westside Road

Road crews completed repairs last week on the Westside Road blowouts. Downed trees will be removed and salvaged between the gate and Dry Creek as time permits.

### Kautz Creek

Crews will soon be installing three new 30-inch culverts, following designs by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Travis Nelson, a habitat ecologist with Washington State, inspected the area with park staff to suggest methods of dewatering the site during installation of two 12-foot diameter by 80-foot long culverts, which will arrive later this month. The FHWA is evaluating the use of pre-stressed girders to span the new Kautz Creek channel running through the service area. Meanwhile, rock has been delivered and repairs have begun on the rip rap protecting the Kautz Creek Bridge foundation.

### Mileposts 5.2 and 9.1

The road crew has cut a temporary access road for construction on the south side of the washout at Milepost 5.2, and will completed it as weather permits. FHWA is finalizing plans for the work at Mileposts 5.2 and 9.1,

including methods of dewatering, updated design drawings, and construction sequencing. Rock deliveries will begin soon, depending on weather and road conditions outside the park.

### Public Information

Over the past two weeks, interpretation staff contacted almost 500 visitors at the Nisqually Entrance and presented a community meeting in Eatonville. Naaman Horn is working with division representatives to update flood information on the park's phone system.

### SCA WILL LEAD FLOOD RECOVERY VOLUNTEERS

Superintendent Dave Uberuaga has named the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to direct flood recovery efforts at Mount Rainier. SCA will work with park staff to assess backcountry damage, 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,” Superintendent Dave Uberuaga explained. “The recovery effort will stretch over at least two years.” Uberuaga noted that SCA's Yellowstone recovery program following the wildfires in 1988, as well as its experience managing 50,000 conservation volunteers over the past fifty years, make it the ideal partner to meet the restoration challenges ahead.

SCA Regional Vice President Jay Satz, an expert in wilderness conservation and a longtime Seattle resident, says that 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 be grateful that so many organizations and individuals have come forward.”

Satz is already in discussions with the Washington Trails Association, EarthCorps, Washington's National Park Fund and the National Parks Conservation Association, among others, about coordinating support efforts. The recovery operation will initially focus on trail and bridge reconstruction, erosion control, revegetation and site restoration, and invasive plant control.

Those interested in volunteering or receiving additional information may e-mail [nwrecovery@theSCA.org](mailto:nwrecovery@theSCA.org) or [Kevin\\_Bacher@nps.gov](mailto:Kevin_Bacher@nps.gov).

### WEEKEND PROGRAMS

#### Sunshine Point Walk

Saturdays and Sundays, 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 2:00 p.m. Join a ranger for a ¾ mile round-trip walk to view flood damage and recovery efforts at Sunshine Point. Meet at the

Nisqually Gate.

#### Westside Road Walk

Sundays at 1:00 p.m. Rangers lead a 2½ mile round-trip walk through Sunshine Point to the beginning of the Westside Road. Meet at the Nisqually Gate.

#### Evening Program

Saturdays at 7:00 p.m. Attend an illustrated program about flood damage and its implications for park management and planning. Call 360-569-2211 ext. 6131 for location.

#### Flood Walk at Longmire

Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. National Park Inn guests are invited to join a ranger at the Longmire Community Building for hot drinks and an illustrated presentation about the flood. The National Park Inn is open on Fridays and Saturdays until the park reopens. Inn guests park at Guest Services, Inc. in Ashford and ride a shuttle to the hotel. Reservations are still available.

### LIMITED ACCESS CONTINUES ON THE PARK ROAD

The main park road from the Nisqually Entrance to the Westside Road intersection is open for pedestrian and bicycle traffic on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Westside Road is also open to walkers, providing the opportunity for longer hikes. At all other times the Nisqually and Westside Roads are closed. No public vehicle access is permitted at any time.



Cody Manzer and Jeri Mierkey, hard at work at Kautz Creek

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*Together we preserve, for future generations, the natural and cultural resources in Mount Rainier National Park. Through a variety of high quality park experiences, we promote park values, personal connections, and responsibility for the environment in our local and global communities. With integrity, teamwork, pride and motivation, we demonstrate environmental leadership and deepen our understanding of the park's ecosystems. We value our diverse range of individual contributions by showing respect and concern for each other and the park. The Mountain inspires stewardship. Its protection and preservation is our legacy.*