



# Rebuilding Rainier

No. 6 ■ February 2, 2007

Mount Rainier National Park

## THE WORK GOES ON

The long process of flood recovery continues, with noteworthy progress on repair of the Nisqually Road. In addition, plans are evolving for Carbon River and the east side of the park. Here are key accomplishments from the past few weeks and what's planned next.

### Utilities

With the restoration of power to the Emergency Operations Center and L136, Longmire took another step toward complete recovery from the flood. Utility crews are now working on reconnecting power and phone service at the Kautz Helibase.

### Kautz Creek Area

Riprap has been replaced to protect the bridge foundation. The three 30-inch culverts are in as well as riprap protection for the outfall. Finish work for the 30-inch culverts continues while the crew awaits delivery of the 12-foot culverts needed to complete repair of this section of road.

### Sunshine Point

Temporary paving of the rebuilt roadway took place February 1st, with permanent paving and striping expected this summer. The repair of the 400-foot break carved by the Nisqually River is now virtually complete.

Twelve of 18 campsites in Sunshine Point Campground remain. The park has requested Federal Highways Administration (FHA) to survey and design an access road, riprap placement and parking to restore public access to the campground.



Paving the repaired road at Sunshine Point

### Milepost 5.2

Construction of the access road to the toe of the damaged road embankment continues, with rock deliveries this week.

### Stevens Canyon

The park held a meeting with FHA on January 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss a repair strategy and schedule for the Stevens Canyon Road and SR 123.

Mount Rainier staff will clear debris from two slides in Stevens Canyon. If they discover underlying road damage FHA will take over repairs. FHA will be responsible for road repair above the massive slide into the Ohanapcosh Campground. Work on Stevens Canyon will start in June and take two months. If the road is stable enough the park may allow single-lane traffic through the slide areas and postpone construction until after Labor Day.

### Highway 123

Repair of SR 123 will take four months and begin June 1<sup>st</sup> at the earliest. The details of what type of vehicle access, if any, will be possible during construction remain to be worked out.

### Carbon River

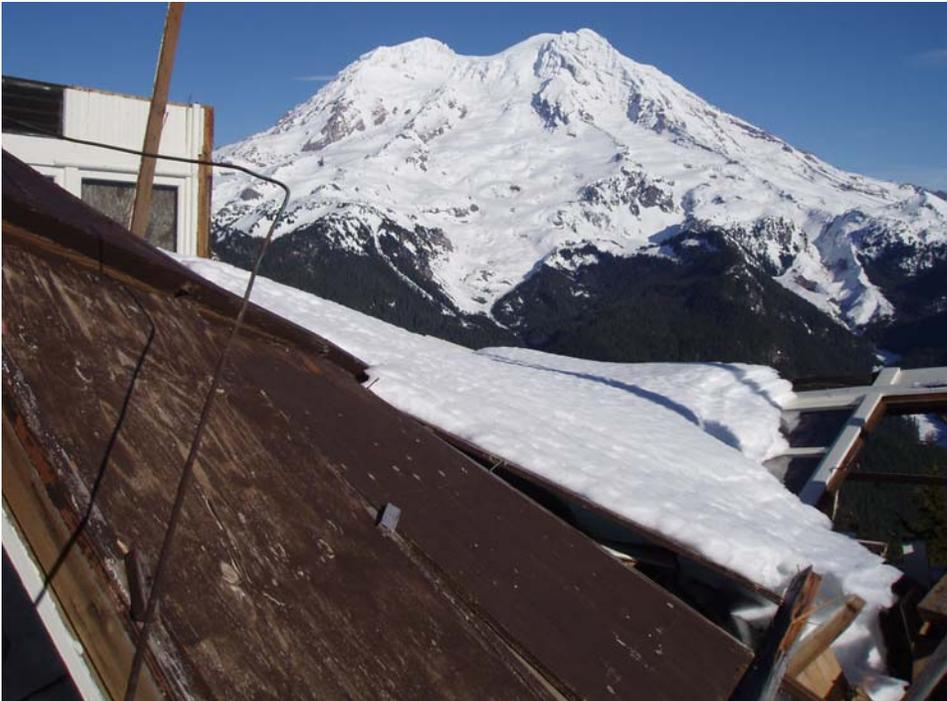
A group of NPS and FHA staff spent the week of January 22<sup>nd</sup> completing Damage Survey Reports for the Carbon River Road. Their goal was to describe the work needed to repair the road to its pre-flood condition and to estimate the cost. Road repairs will cost \$665,000, with an additional \$165,000 for design, surveys, compliance, revegetation, and contract oversight. An Interdisciplinary Design Team is working on design alternatives, construction phasing, and mitigation of resource impacts. The goal is to restore visitor access to some or all of the Carbon River corridor as soon as possible.



High winds blew the roof off the Mount Fremont Fire Lookout

### ON THE LOOKOUT: NO ROOF

Apparently torrential rain was not the only hazard during the November 6<sup>th</sup> storm. Park rangers on a recent backcountry trip came upon a startling sight at Gobbler's Knob: the fire lookout was missing two walls and its roof! A helicopter flight on January 31<sup>st</sup> to check on and repair radio repeaters revealed the Mount Fremont Fire Lookout in similarly battered condition. The Tolmie Peak Lookout is missing just two window shutters and Shriner Peak escaped damage. All four lookouts were constructed 1932-1934 and are on the National Register of Historic Places. The wind speed at Camp Muir reached 121 mph on November 6<sup>th</sup> and did not drop below 48 mph for more than 12 hours that day!



Gobbler's Knob Fire Lookout lost two walls and its roof

### BEETLE MANIA

Forest Pathologist Jim Hatfield and Entomologist Connie Mehmel, both with the US Forest Service, came to Mount Rainier February 2<sup>nd</sup> to warn of an impending invasion: the Douglas fir beetle.

These native beetles feed and breed in recently dead or weakened trees. They are choosy about their real estate, using exclusively Douglas fir trees, the bigger the better. The November flood and December windstorm left lots of downed trees and standing firs with inundated roots, Douglas fir beetle heaven!

The beetles emerge when spring temperatures hit 60°F and search for a tree to colonize. If successful, they secrete a pheromone that attracts other beetles and the mass attack begins. Once the tree is fully colonized the beetles secrete a different pheromone that says "No Vacancy."

The beetles lay eggs in tunnels under the bark. The larvae munch away, creating "galleries" that girdle and kill the tree. By the following spring these larvae have evolved into adults and the cycle begins anew.

Mount Rainier can anticipate an outbreak of beetles which could threaten even healthy trees. The park will submit an Emergency Forest Health Protection Suppression Request for funding to protect Douglas firs in developed areas with a lot of downed wood and vulnerable trees (Ipsut Creek, Ohanapecosh, etc.) By hanging plastic tags containing the "No Vacancy" pheromones on trees you can trick the beetles into moving on. Removing downed trees can also help.

*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.*