



The Tahoma News

May - June 2015



Mountain in Springtime

Spring came early to the mountain this year. The sound of falling water marks the warmer days, (though snow flurries in May may have you questioning the season). Yet in time, spring does arrive. You should watch for its signs while traveling through the park. Make time to let Mother Nature entertain you and you will be richly rewarded. For example, this is perhaps the best time of year to view waterfalls such as Christine and Narada Falls, as they brim with sparkling clear water fed by melting winter snow. Green leaves burst from their buds, mushrooms carpet the forest floor, and birds arrive back at the mountain.



Lowland flowers, clockwise from upper left: coltsfoot, skunk cabbage, calypso orchid (fairy slipper), trillium

Don't overlook the forest wildflowers that bloom much earlier than their subalpine counterparts. You'll find white, brushy coltsfoot and the three-petaled trillium blossoms in lowland forests, and yellow skunk cabbage blooming in marshy areas. Look carefully for the elusive fairy slipper or calypso orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*), a great springtime discovery; they grace us with their presence for only a few short weeks.

Spring is a time of new birth. You may find wildlife with their young offspring in tow around the Trail of the Shadows at Longmire. Geese and goslings glide quietly on beaver ponds and black-tailed deer browse the meadow with their spotted fawns, while the chorus of frogs and songbirds fills the air.

What springtime treasures does the mountain have waiting for you to discover?

Paradise Trail Construction

This summer the Nisqually Vista Trail will undergo much needed repair starting as early as late June. Closures of sections of the trail will mainly be in place weekdays. Every effort is being made to open the trails on weekends. Watch for the occasional vehicle transporting materials on Paradise area trails. Follow detour signs to avoid having to backtrack at closures.

Nisqually Road Travel Advisory



Construction work on the historic Nisqually Road between the Nisqually Entrance Arch and the Paradise area is scheduled to take place mid-May through the end of July 2015. Additional work at Paradise is scheduled after October 1 and will continue into November,

weather permitting. Park staff will make an effort to keep the public informed of construction activities through the park's website and social media.

This work continues the second year of a multi-year road construction project that will address outdated utilities and deteriorating road conditions due to abundant precipitation, structural and design deficiencies, large traffic volumes, and normal wear. The project is designed to protect the extraordinary natural and cultural resources within and adjacent to the road, including rare plants and animals, archaeological resources, and the character of the historic roads.

In 2015, power and data lines between Longmire and Paradise are being replaced, which will greatly improve reliability and service. Paving and minor repairs between the Nisqually Entrance and Longmire will also cause minor delays in travel for visitors and staff alike. Delays will be limited to no more than 30 minutes through the entire project. Expect rough road conditions.

Always drive in your lane unless following a pilot car and always stay in your vehicle while stopped. Many workers, heavy equipment, and construction vehicles will be on the road.

Naturalist Programs

Join a park ranger or volunteer for a talk, guided walk, or evening program. These free programs explore the park's natural and cultural history. Find out who else has come to Mount Rainier and why. Discover what this mountain really is and what it may become. Meet some of the park's inhabitants—from owls to elk—and find out why they are here. Check at a visitor center for program times and locations.

Hey Kids!

Ask for a Junior Ranger Activity Book. It's FREE at all park visitor centers. Complete it to learn lots of cool stuff about your park and earn a badge and certificate.



Citizen Ranger Quests

Has your inner Junior Ranger never really gone away? Try out a Quest! They are designed for older children (12 and up) and adults. Information on Quests is available at visitor centers.

Welcome...

...to Mount Rainier National Park!



Superintendent
Randy King

Spring normally arrives slowly on the mountain; this year it's coming a little faster.

With an average annual snowfall of over fifty feet, snow usually lingers at Paradise into July. An exceptionally warm winter makes that much less likely this year. The precipitation that did fall on the lower half of the mountain was mostly rain, not snow. Consequently, Paradise in March had less than five feet of snow on the ground where fourteen feet is average. More snowfall can be expected this spring, yet it won't make up for a winter with relatively little.

Snow serves an important role in the ecology of Mount Rainier, and the entire Cascade Mountain range. Snow conditions determine when wildflowers bloom, how much and when water will be available for people and wildlife, and over time, whether glaciers and subalpine tree lines advance or recede, and which species thrive or diminish.

If global warming continues unabated and climate change models for the Pacific Northwest are correct, this winter's wet yet warmer weather could be a more frequent scenario for Mount Rainier. While you are experiencing the park, take a moment to consider how climate change might impact you!

Spring is a great time to visit your National Parks. Please be prepared for the changing conditions of the season to ensure your visit is enjoyable and safe.

Thanks for visiting Mount Rainier!

Randy King
Superintendent

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park

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Websites
Mount Rainier National Park: www.nps.gov/mora
North Coast and Cascades Science & Learning Network: <http://nwparkscience.org/>

Official Social Media Sites
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MountRainierNPS
Flickr: www.flickr.com/MountRainierNPS
Twitter: www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS
YouTube: www.youtube.com/MountRainierNPS



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Secrets to a Safe and Enjoyable Hike

Hiking at Mount Rainier National Park can mean adventure, exploration, learning, or just plain having fun! The secret to a great hike? Staying safe! For trail information, talk with a ranger at any visitor center or wilderness information center. Use the following tips to keep your journey safe:

Use Common Sense

- Protect yourself by wearing appropriate outdoor clothing including footwear.
- Be prepared. Carry the ten essentials even on a short sightseeing hike.
- Always tell someone of your travel plans so they can notify the park if you fail to return.
- Do not travel alone. If visibility is poor, do not travel at all.

Plan and Prepare for Changeable Weather

At Mount Rainier, the weather can change rapidly. Hikers who aren't prepared for weather conditions increase their risk of becoming lost or injured.

Crossing Streams Safely

Many hikers underestimate the power of moving water and some consider their former successful stream crossings as a ticket to the other side. This may not be true. Use these pointers in making wise decisions when crossing a stream.

- Early morning when river levels are generally at their lowest is the best time to cross.

- Look for an area with a smooth bottom and slow moving water below knee height.
- Before crossing, scout downstream for log jams, waterfalls and other hazards that could trap you. Locate a point where you can exit if you fall in.
- Use a sturdy stick to maintain two points of contact with the ground at all times.
- Unfasten the belt of your pack so you can easily discard it if necessary.
- Staring down at moving water can make you dizzy. Look forward as much as possible.

Taking these few precautions could save your day . . . and your life!

Wilderness Camping

Wilderness camping permits are required for all overnight stays in the park's backcountry. Permits and backcountry information are available at all wilderness information centers and most visitor centers. (See page 4 for locations and hours.)

Although permits are free, there is an optional, fee-based reservation system for campers and climbers in effect May through September. Backcountry reservations are \$20 per party (1-12 people) for 1 to 14 consecutive nights. Seventy percent of all backcountry sites and zones are available for reservation. The remaining 30 percent are issued on a first-come, first-served basis the day of or one day before the trip begins.

What You Need to Know...

Mount Rainier National Park was established in 1899 to preserve natural and cultural resources and to provide for public benefit and enjoyment. The following information will help you protect yourself and your park.

Bikes in the Park

Bicycle only on roads, not on trails.

Fires in the Park

Make fires only in a fire grill. Collecting firewood is prohibited.

NOTICE: Marijuana is Illegal in Mount Rainier National Park

While limited recreational use of marijuana is now legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park, surrounding national forests, and all federal lands.

Pets and Service Animals

Pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet and are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or on snow. Leashed pets are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking lots and on roads currently open to public vehicles. During hot weather do not leave pets in vehicles.

NOTICE: Research studies have shown mercury is present in some trout in a few park lakes. Check the Washington Department of Health website <http://www.doh.wa.gov/> for information on fish consumption.

Tree Hazards

Healthy trees with no defects can present a danger under certain conditions. Stay alert for falling limbs and cones on windy days, and avoid forested areas during storms when possible. Sudden gusts can do great damage to trees—as well as anything in range of falling debris.

Firearms

The use of firearms is prohibited within Mount Rainier National Park. Also, federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park; those places have signs at public entrances. People who can legally possess firearms under federal, Washington State, and local laws may possess them in the park.

Camping

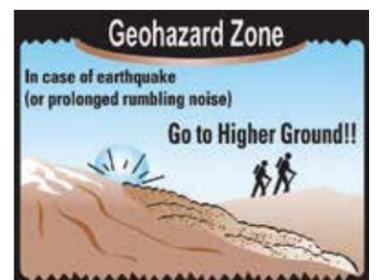
Camp in designated campsites only. Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

Accessibility

Most restrooms, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities. In the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise, the audiovisual programs are captioned; assistive listening devices are available for the park film; an audio described tour of the exhibits is available; and the building and exhibits are accessible by wheelchair. The Kautz Creek Boardwalk Nature Trail is accessible in summer. An accessible trail leads to the base of the Paradise meadows and a portion of the trails at Paradise are accessible with help. Inquire at the Jackson Visitor Center for more information.

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano

Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead. Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Other geologic hazards, however, can occur with little warning. These include debris flows and rockfalls.



If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground—200 feet above river level should be safe.

Detailed information is available at park visitor centers or from scientists at the U.S.G.S. Cascades Volcano Observatory, 1300 SE Cardinal Court, Building 10, Suite 100, Vancouver, WA 98661, vulcan.wr.usgs.gov.

Are You Ready?

FIND YOUR PARK

We invite you to be a part of this incredible movement celebrating the centennial of the National Park Service! Where will you Find Your Park? Get the inside scoop and share your experience at <http://prks.org/1F9voQq>

Park Partners

Who's responsible for protecting Mount Rainier National Park? Everyone! Here are some groups that deserve special thanks; for more information on these partners, and how to join the effort, please visit their websites.



Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers
<http://www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm>



Discover Your Northwest
www.discovernw.org



Washington's National Park Fund
wnpf.org



Mount Rainier National Park Associates
www.mrnpa.org



Student Conservation Association
www.thesca.org



Washington Trails Association
www.wta.org

If You See a Black Bear or a Mountain Lion



Among Mount Rainier's largest and most feared wildlife are the black bear and the mountain lion. Though you are not likely to see them, they are powerful animals, and your safety depends on how you act around them. Be aware of your surroundings, and follow these guidelines while in the park.

Close Encounters With Black Bears

- Never feed a black bear, either intentionally or by leaving food unsecured.
- Do not approach bear cubs. An adult may be nearby to protect and defend the cubs.
- Back away from a nearby bear, even if it appears unconcerned with your presence.
- Do not run. Back away slowly. Talk loudly.
- A defensive bear will appear agitated and will often give visual and vocal warnings like swatting or stomping the ground, exhaling loudly, huffing, snapping teeth, or lowering the head with ears drawn back while facing you. This response may escalate to a charge.

If Charged by a Black Bear

- If the bear stops, slowly back away while talking, keeping the bear in view while leaving the area.
- If it continues, act aggressively, shouting and throwing rocks or sticks.
- If the bear attacks and you have food, distance yourself from the food.
- If the bear attacks and you do not have food, fight back aggressively.

Close Encounters with Mountain Lions

Mountain lions (also known as cougars) usually do not like confrontation. If you see one, give it plenty of space so it can get away. Never approach lion kittens. Leave the area immediately.

- Do not run or turn your back on a lion.
- Gather children with adults. Quickly pick up and hold small children.
- Stand in a group with your companions.
- If the lion moves toward you, wave your arms and make noise. Make yourself look large, intimidating and in control: stand up tall, open your jacket, yell, throw things.
- Back away slowly while facing the animal.
- If attacked, fight back aggressively. Stay standing. Hit as hard as possible especially to the head. Use a stick or rock as a weapon. Throw dirt in the eyes. Protect your head and neck.



Report all bear and lion sightings to a ranger.

Climbing

Each year, approximately 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier. Nearly half reach the 14,410-foot summit. Climbing permits are required for travel above 10,000 feet and/or on glaciers. Climbing information—including fees, routes, and conditions—is available at ranger stations and the Paradise Climbing Information Center. (See page 4 for locations and hours.)

Guided climbs and climbing seminars are available through:

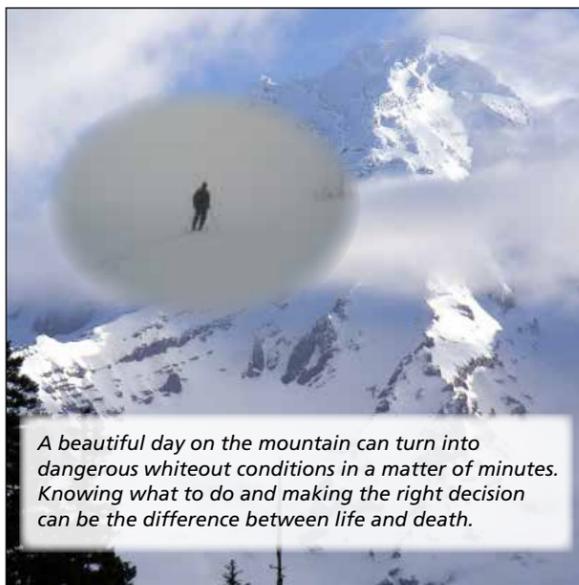
Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

Hazards of the Season

Winter snowpack may linger late on the mountain. As of March 20, the season snowfall total is over 176 inches with five feet on the ground at the 5,000-foot elevation. This past winter was unusually warm and dry, creating what will likely be an early hiking season this year. However, keep in mind that snow is not the only issue when it comes to safe backcountry travel. Many trails are likely damaged; bridges and footlogs may be out; and large fallen trees may obscure trails.

Many early season hikers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges encountered by a lingering snowpack. Conditions change rapidly during the day and footprints in the snow quickly disappear. This has left many day hikers disoriented upon their return trip, expecting to simply follow their own tracks back to the snow-free trail. This results in many lost individuals, injuries, and fatalities.

Snow avalanches are common in the spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing. Be prepared for travel in avalanche terrain. Carry a transceiver, probe, and shovel and know how to use them. Determine if the location you are traveling is avalanche prone. When in doubt, ask questions or don't go. Unstable snow may slide at any time . . . not just in winter! Remember, even small avalanches can be deadly.



Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly—a pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the ten essentials, etc.) is a must. Navigation in spring storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you're ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that's not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather.

Also consider the steep snow slopes, melt holes, thinning snow bridges, and other early season hazards that you may encounter, and be honest with yourself in assessing your skills and experience.

Be prepared for route-finding conditions. Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead consider using wands on snow-covered trails. Always carry a good map and compass, and actively use them on snow-covered trails. Also consider supplementing your map and compass with an external antenna GPS for best coverage beneath a forest canopy. Again, it is extremely important that you know how to use these tools.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. When route-finding, note important landmarks. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and find where you are on the map before continuing. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around.

Before you step off the trail...

... consider this: each step into a meadow crushes an average of 20 plants!



When exploring Mount Rainier's fragile meadows...

Please hike only on maintained trails or thick patches of snow.

Leave No Trace

- Plan ahead & prepare
- Travel & camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts*
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of others

*Fires are for emergency use only; they are not allowed in Mount Rainier's Wilderness

Keep Wildlife Wild

- Please do not feed the wildlife.
- Store your food in an animal-proof container, or inside your car.
- Do not leave food, beverages, pet food, or toiletries unattended for any length of time.
- Clean up picnic areas after you eat.



Human food puts animals at risk and some die as a result. Birds like jays or ravens are effective nest predators—eating the eggs or young of other birds. By feeding birds, visitors concentrate

these nest predators near roads and trails and inadvertently contribute to the death of songbirds in the same area.

Still, one of the most common mistakes people make at Mount Rainier National Park is to feed the wildlife. Visitors seeking a personal connection with animals think they are "helping" them. In fact it harms them in many ways.

Beggar squirrels, foxes, deer, and jays learn to approach people and busy areas. They often get hit and killed by cars. Animals that become accustomed to humans and human food may also pursue and injure visitors. Biologists and rangers must intervene, with killing the animal as the last resort.

Carry the "10 Essentials" and know how to use them!

1. Map and compass
2. Sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat
3. Extra clothing (warm!) and rain gear
4. Flashlight or head lamp (extra batteries)
5. First aid supplies
6. Waterproof matches or lighter
7. Repair kit and tools (for gear)
8. Extra food
9. Extra water
10. Emergency shelter

Visitor Facility Hours

Visitor Centers

Summer hours will be available in the summer newspaper.

Longmire Museum (360) 569-6575	May 1 - May 4 (open at Longmire WIC) 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily May 5 - May 31 10:00 am - 4:30 pm daily June 1 - June 16 Closed June 17- June 30 9:00 am - 4:30 pm daily	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Paradise Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center (360) 569-6571	May 1 Closed May 2 - June 16 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily June 17 - June 30 10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily	<i>Due to road construction delays the visitor center may open up to 15 minutes late.</i> Ranger programs, exhibits, information, theater, books, food, gifts
Ohanapecosh Visitor Center (360) 569-6581	June 26 - June 30 Noon - 4:00 pm Wednesday - Sunday	Ranger programs, exhibits, information, books
Sunrise Visitor Center (360) 663-2425	June 27 - June 30 10:00 am - 6:00 pm daily	Exhibits, information, books

Wilderness & Climbing Information Centers

Longmire Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6650	May 22 - October 12 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily	Wilderness camping & climbing permits, general information
Paradise Climbing Information Center (Guide House) (360) 569-6641	May 15 - September 7 7:00 am - 4:30 pm daily <i>Closed 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm daily</i>	Wilderness camping and climbing permits, exhibits, general information
White River Wilderness Information Center (360) 569-6670	May 22 - October 12 7:30 am - 5:00 pm daily	Wilderness camping and eastside climbing permits, general information
*Carbon River Ranger Station (360) 829-9639	Call for hours <i>*Located on the Carbon River Road 5.5 miles east of the Mowich Lake (SR165) junction.</i>	Wilderness camping & northside climbing permits, general information

Food & Lodging

For in-park lodging reservations, call Mount Rainier Guest Services at (360) 569-2275 or go to www.mtrainierguestservices.com

National Park Inn at Longmire	Open year-round Front Desk: 7:00 am - 10:00 pm daily	Lodging, dining room
Longmire General Store	May 1 - June 12 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily June 13 - August 30 9:00 am - 8:00 pm daily	Gifts, snacks, firewood
Paradise Inn	Open May 20 - October 5 Front Desk open 24 hours daily	Lodging, dining room, cafe, gift shop
Paradise Jackson Visitor Center Snack Bar & Gift Shop	May 1 Closed May 2 - June 16 10:00 am - 4:45 pm daily June 17 - September 7 10:00 am - 6:45 pm daily	Food, gifts, books
Sunrise Day Lodge Snack Bar & Gift Shop	Open June 27 - August 30 10:00 am - 7:00 pm daily	Food and gifts. Day use only, no overnight lodging

Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and other services are available in local communities. A list of these services is available at park visitor centers and on the park's website at www.nps.gov/mora. Religious services are available in local communities.
GAS IS NOT AVAILABLE IN THE PARK

Become A Mount Rainier Steward

Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow!

Consider joining our team as a park volunteer. Your contribution of time and energy will protect the magnificent natural and cultural areas entrusted to us, and you'll go home with a sense of pride at having participated in something worthwhile. Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Learn more at <http://www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm>.



Washington's National Park Fund serves as the park's official philanthropic partner. The Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, accepts charitable gifts that are then given back

to the park for projects focusing on these four main areas:

- Improving Visitors' Experiences by maintaining trails, supporting the park's Search and Rescue program, and improving campgrounds.
- Bringing more Youth and Families—many of whom might otherwise never visit—into the park.
- Funding necessary Science and Research on glaciers, rivers, flora, and fauna.
- Strengthening Mount Rainier's Volunteerism and Stewardship activities. The Fund provides support for nearly 2,000 volunteers whose efforts are valued at \$1.8 million!

Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, drop a few coins in the donation boxes at Mount Rainier's visitor centers, or purchase a Washington National Parks license plate for your vehicle, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Please consider giving back to Mount Rainier National Park through Washington's National Park Fund.

For more information please go to the Fund's website wnpf.org or email them at fund@wnpf.org.

Road Opening Schedule Estimated Dates (subject to change)

Nisqually to Paradise (nightly closures through April 12)	Open
Westside Road to Dry Creek	Open
Paradise Valley Road	May 22
Stevens Canyon Road	May 22
State Route 410/Chinook Pass	Open
Cayuse Pass via SRs 410 & 123	Open
White River Road to White River Campground Parking Lot	May 1
Sunrise Road	June 5
Mowich Lake Road	May 22

Please use caution while driving.

Drive-in Campgrounds

Campground	Open Dates	Elev.	Sites	Group Sites	Toilets	Dump Station	Maximum RV/Trailer Length
Cougar Rock*	May 22 - Oct. 12	3,180'	173	5	Flush	Yes	RV 35'/Trailer 27'
Ohanapecosh*	May 22 - Oct. 12	1,914'	188	2	Flush	Yes	RV 32'/Trailer 27'
White River	June 26 - Sept. 28	4,232'	112	0	Flush	No	RV 27'/Trailer 18'
Mowich Lake	Primitive walk-in campground, tents only. 10 sites, 3 group sites (max. group size 12). No fee (must self-register at campground kiosk). Chemical toilets, <i>no potable water</i> . No fires allowed. Elevation 4,929'; generally open July through early October, depending on road and weather conditions. Call 360-829-9639 for information.						

***Advance reservations are recommended for individual sites at Cougar Rock and Ohanapecosh Campgrounds from June 25 through the night of September 6. These can be made up to six months in advance. Reservations for group sites are recommended and are available throughout the season. These can be made up to one year in advance. To make a reservation online, go to www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777.**