Mount Rainier National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Winter Group Camping in the Paradise Area

Winter camping at Paradise is permitted when there is sufficient snow (generally December through April). It can be a wonderful experience, or it can bring discomfort or danger to your group. Plan ahead to make your winter camping experience safe and fun!

Required Permits

Parties of 13 to 80 must camp in one of the designated group camping areas at Paradise and must pre-register. Please call (360) 569-6575, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., at least two weeks in advance. Provide group name, leader name, party size, date requested, and a call-back phone number. Your pre-registered permit will be available for pickup at the Longmire Information Center (open daily 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. , closed for lunch) on the day of your arrival to camp. **Pick up permits at the Paradise Visitor Center December 21 - January 1, during the holiday closure of the Longmire Information Center.** If your plans change, please call to cancel or reschedule your outing. If you fail to cancel or reschedule, another group may be denied the opportunity to camp.

Driving within the Park

The road between the Nisqually Entrance Station and Longmire is generally open 24 hours a day. The road from Longmire to Paradise is open Thursday - Monday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., when conditions are safe, and closed at dusk or when unsafe conditions exist.

Keep in mind:

The gate will not be opened until conditions are safe. Although we try to have it open for travel by 9:00 a.m., heavy snowfall or high avalanche danger frequently delay opening. If you arrive early, be prepared to wait in the parking lot at Longmire until the gate is opened. Do not park on the road by the gate—use the parking lots. Be aware that high avalanche danger may prevent the road from opening.

Make sure you're properly equipped before leaving home

- Tire chains. Have you practiced putting them on?
- Extra food and fuel for car and stove, in case you have to stay out an extra night.
- Test your stove. Is the fuel tank full?
- Trash bags for trash and wet clothing.
- Clothing and footwear which provides warmth, even if wet.
- Have a responsible contact person who knows when to expect you back home.

RADIO 1610-AM PARADISE
FOR ROAD UPDATES AND CLOSURE INFORMATION

The road downhill from Paradise to Longmire will be opened Thursday - Monday mornings after plowing is complete and conditions permit. Plows routinely operate on the wrong side of the road when it is closed. A sign at Paradise will indicate when the road is open and safe for travel downhill.

The road between Longmire and Paradise will likely be snow-covered. *All vehicles are required to carry tire chains in the park during winter.* Traction tires are advised throughout the winter season and include all weather radials with a mud and snow rating, snow tires, or studded snow tires. The following restrictions may go into effect at any time for vehicles travelling on park roads:

CHAINS REQUIRED EXCEPT 4WD — Chains must be applied to the drive wheels. 4WD/AWD vehicles need not apply chains, but must carry them.

CHAINS REQUIRED ALL VEHICLES — All vehicles must apply chains on drive wheels.

Overnight Parking

Carpool whenever possible since overnight parking space is limited. Park only in designated overnight parking areas at Longmire, Paradise, or Narada Falls. Cars parked outside of designated areas are hazardous to snow plow drivers and may be buried by plowed snow. Overnight parking locations will be provided when you obtain your permit.

Stay out of the parking lots and well away from snow plows and snow blowers while they are working. Plow operators cannot see pedestrians easily and cannot stop quickly. Snow blowers throw blocks of snow and ice 300 feet. Stay away from snow blasts!

Group Snow Camping at Paradise

Snow camping is permitted in the immediate Paradise area (lower Deadhorse Creek Basin, Guide House group camping, and the area behind Paradise Inn). Camping in vehicles is not permitted. Groups of more than 12 people must camp in the immediate Paradise area. Ask a park ranger for options.

Groups of more than 12 people should use the restrooms in the upper parking lot, open 24 hours. If that is not feasible, groups must use the 'blue bag' system to dispose of human waste. Obtain blue bags from the ranger station or visitor center. Special barrels for blue bag waste (marked "blue bags") are located inside the restroom tunnel at Paradise. Never drop blue bags in trash cans!

Low Impact Camping

Site selection: Look for deep snow drifts along sloping terrain; this will help prevent damage to plants or trees buried in the snow pack. Do not cut or damage plants or trees while digging a snow shelter. Be responsible for carrying out everything you packed in.

Do not feed animals. Wild animals have become accustomed to finding food at camp sites, but they need natural food to remain healthy. Secure your trash and food containers, and keep your camp clean. Proper food storage is required at all times when camping. Hang your food, garbage and scented items to keep them out of reach of wildlife, or secure them in an approved hard-sided container (five-gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids, or manufactured wildlife-resistant food containers). Containers are REQUIRED in all Paradise area winter camping zones (Paradise, Mazama Ridge, Reflection Lakes, Tatoosh). Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan–ask a ranger when obtaining your camping permit. One container per party. Groups should bring your own containers.

Blue bags for human waste can be obtained from the ranger station or visitor center. Using blue bags requires maturity and a commitment to protecting the park. When you use blue bags with your group, please explain carefully how to use them and why: blue bag use helps keep water pure, protects fragile vegetation from digging, and allows more people to use the wilderness without impacting it. You are responsible for properly disposing of human waste.

Winter "10 ESSENTIALS"

1. **Shovel (avalanche rescue)**
2. **Full Length Insulated Sleeping Pad**
3. **Stove & Fuel (melt water)**
4. **Heat Packs**
5. **Goggles & Wool/Pile Hat**
6. **Gloves (waterproof/lined)**
7. **Avalanche Transceiver**
8. **Avalanche Probe**
9. **Reliable Weather & Avalanche Forecasts**
10. **Map, Compass, & GPS (with extra batteries)**

Remember:

Camp at least 300 feet from any plowed road, parking lot, marked route, trail, or building and 100 feet from water sources.

For resource protection and safety, the maximum group size is 80 people.

Snow camping at Paradise is prohibited until there is at least five feet of snow on the ground. It's recommended that there be at least eight feet of snow at Paradise before snow caves are constructed in order to prevent damage to ground cover, shrubs, and trees. Collapse your snow caves and igloos before you leave camp—no one wants to be injured by falling into a deep hole left by careless campers.

Sledding and sliding is permitted only in the Paradise Snowplay Area. Tree wells, trees, and unexpected cliffs make the rest of the park hazardous. Use "soft" sliding devices only—flexible sleds, inner tubes, and saucers. Hard toboggans and runner sleds are not permitted.

Never walk or ski on the road. Snow plows work overnight and early in the morning. Slippery surfaces and the possibility of avalanches make the roads unsafe for pedestrians at any time.

Leashed pets are permitted only in picnic areas, campgrounds, parking lots, and along roads currently open to public vehicles. Ensure pets have adequate ventilation when left in vehicles in winter.

Do not dry clothing or gear in the restrooms or the Jackson Visitor Center. Bring extra plastic bags for wet clothing, then clean and dry at home.

Do not camp or cook in any building or in the restroom tunnel.

Wood and charcoal fires are not permitted.

Collecting or gathering of wood, rocks, plants or other park resources is prohibited. Never cut or break branches off trees.

In case of emergency, dial 911

Phones are located in the tunnel leading to the 24-hour restroom in the upper parking lot at Paradise, at the National Park Inn at Longmire, and on the porch of the Nisqually Entrance Station.

"LEAVE NO TRACE"

- **plan ahead & prepare**
- **travel & camp on durable surfaces**
- **dispose of waste properly**
- **leave what you find**
- **respect wildlife**
- **be considerate of other visitors**

LEAVE NO TRACE OUTDOOR ETHICS

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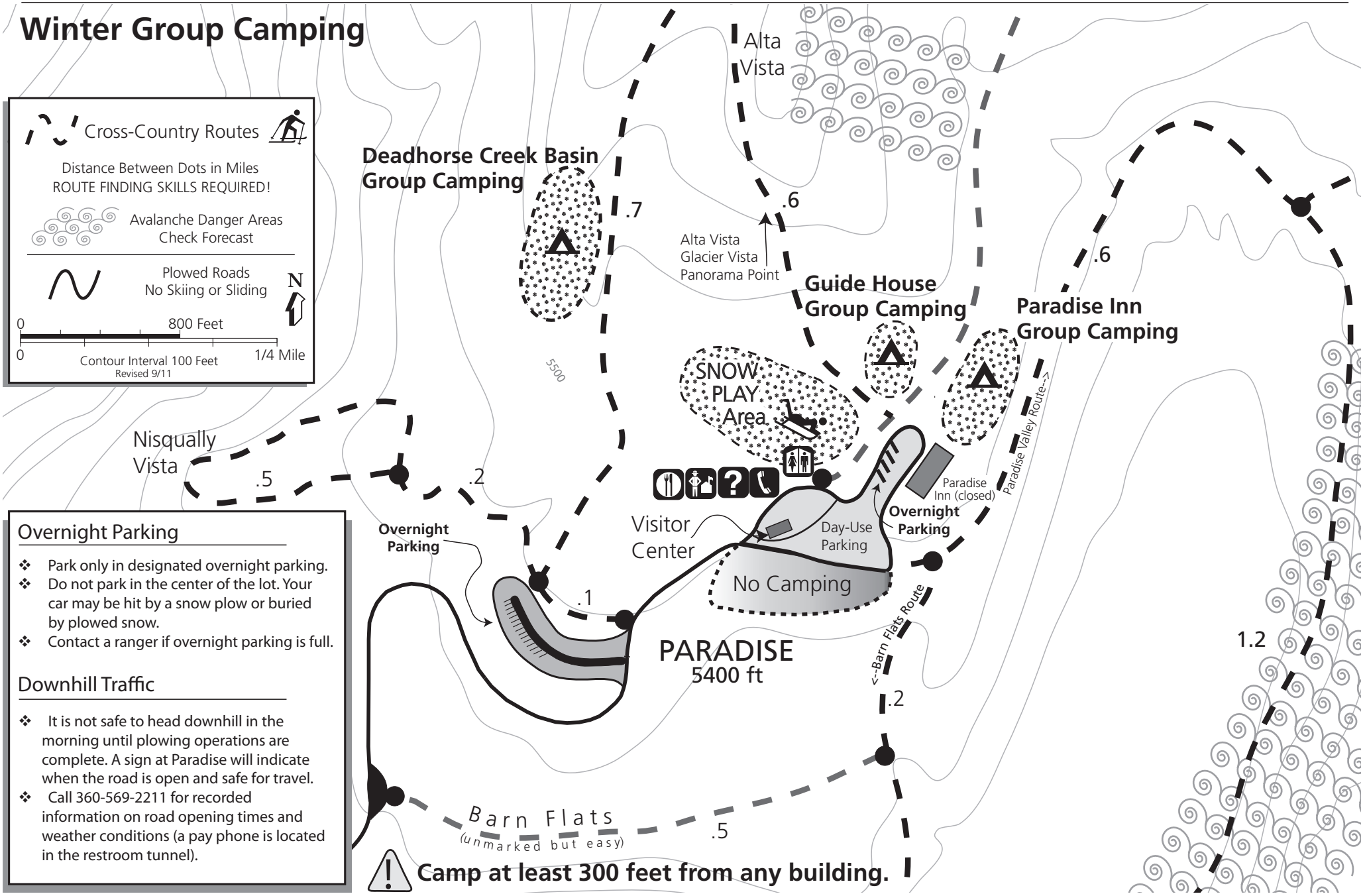
Winter Group Camping



Overnight Parking

- Park only in designated overnight parking.
- Do not park in the center of the lot. Your car may be hit by a snow plow or buried by plowed snow.
- Contact a ranger if overnight parking is full.

Downhill Traffic

- It is not safe to head downhill in the morning until plowing operations are complete. A sign at Paradise will indicate when the road is open and safe for travel.
- Call 360-569-2211 for recorded information on road opening times and weather conditions (a pay phone is located in the restroom tunnel).