



*Of all the fire mountains which like beacons, once blazed along the Pacific Coast, Mount Rainier is the noblest.*

John Muir

A mountain of immeasurable inspiration, Mount Rainier is the center of the nation's fifth national park. It is a place of discovery and of personal triumphs, where family traditions endure.

At 14,410 feet, the mountain is the tallest volcano in the Cascade Mountain Range and the most glaciated peak in the continental United States. Basalt columns and other remnants of early eruptions and lava flows reveal Mount Rainier's ancient geologic history.

Glaciers, massive rivers of ice up to 750 feet deep, flow down the rocky slopes. Yet, on the summit, steam escapes from deep within the mountain's core, a reminder that it is still an active volcano.

Above Mount Rainier, millions of stars illuminate the night sky. The park minimizes the use of artificial light. This preserves darkness, through which constellations and planets are remarkably visible.

In spring, snow melts first in the foothills. Beneath the old growth forest, flowers bloom and ferns unfurl. Across the subalpine region, summer may only

last two months. Adaptations that have taken centuries to develop prove crucial in a race for survival. Profuse wildflower displays and pollinating insects bring life to the meadows. Birds and mammals forage on the abundance before winter quickly returns.

Entering the park is a step back in time—a portal into Mount Rainier National Historic Landmark District. Roads, buildings, and other structures were designed nearly one hundred years ago. Massive logs and round river boulders characterize early national park rustic architecture, which harmonizes with the park's natural scenery.

For thousands of years, Mount Rainier has been an important place for Pacific Northwest Indian people. Nearly two million people from around the world now visit Mount Rainier National Park each year. As global development increases, this mountain remains steadfast, a place where people can reconnect with what is important in their lives.

Moving up Mount Rainier's glaciers and lava ridges, their routes illuminated by headlamps, climbers travel steadily toward the summit under a star-filled sky (above).  
© JEFF BERKES

## Unforgettable Destinations

### Longmire



Longmire is a year-round destination.

Accessible year-round. Snowshoe or cross-country ski during winter. Stroll the edge of a meadow where history meets nature. Day hike to expansive vistas. Step back in time; discover rustic park architecture along the Longmire Historic Walking Tour. Stay a night at the historic National Park Inn. From the porch, admire the sunset's glow on the mountain.

### Paradise



Visit Paradise meadows when they are at their most spectacular.

During summer, hike the maintained trails around meadows, streams, and waterfalls. Watch and listen for wildlife—bears, grouse, butterflies, marmots, and more. Explore exhibits at the visitor and climbing information centers. Rest a night or have a snack at the historic Paradise Inn. Grab a sled and head for Paradise's winter snowplay area, set up a snow camp, ski, or snowboard.

### Ohanapecosh



Camp, hike, and explore beneath towering old growth trees.

Old growth forest is the signature of Ohanapecosh. Ancient trees, wildlife, waterfalls, spring wildflowers, and fall mushrooms abound. The Ohanapecosh River—transparent green or blue depending on the light and your perspective—surrounds the Grove of the Patriarchs. Many day hikes begin at Ohanapecosh. Camp or picnic in the campground.

### Sunrise



Enjoy unsurpassed, panoramic views while hiking amid resplendent subalpine meadows.

Sunrise, the highest point in the park reachable by car, offers a panoramic view of Mount Rainier and surrounding peaks. Day hikes lead to glaciers, lakes, and meadows. Dig into geology at the visitor center. Discover the rustic architecture and history of Sunrise. Enjoy a snack at the day lodge. Camp nearby at White River Campground.

### Carbon River



Capture the lush vegetation and giant old growth trees of the rainforest.

Meander moist, moss-carpeted paths through temperate rainforest. Discover the dynamic forces of a glacial river. Mountain-bike a historic road. Spend a night in the backcountry. Visit Mowich Lake—the park's largest and deepest lake. Camp near the lake or enjoy its serenity from a canoe. Fish the deep waters. Hike to subalpine meadows.

## Discoveries Await



View from Ricksecker Point  
NPS / STEVE REDMAN

Wonderland Trail  
© NICK POSTORINO

Winter at Paradise  
© DEBY DOON

Mowich Lake  
NPS / MELINDA SCHRITT

Grove of the Patriarchs  
NPS / CHRIS ROUNDTREE

Mountain goat  
NPS / JOHN CMOG

Black-tailed deer  
© JEREMY SELL

Mount Rainier from Tipsoo Lake  
© KATHRYN EROD

Box Canyon on Stevens Canyon Road  
NPS / STEVE REDMAN

Black bear  
DONNA DANNEN

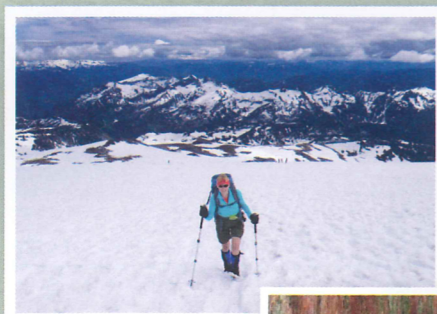
Reflection Lakes  
NPS / DANIEL KEEBLER

BACKGROUND PHOTO:  
NPS / CHRIS ROUNDTREE

### Explore Wilderness

Home to animals seen and unseen, Mount Rainier's wilderness is an evolving landscape of forests, meadows, glaciers, and craters. Wilderness performs functions essential to life on Earth. Melting snow produces fresh water. Plants pump oxygen into the atmosphere. Protecting the mountain's wild places, and the wildlife and the natural processes they support, will become ever more essential in our developing world.

Beyond the roads and parking lots is wild land. Over 97 percent of the park is Wilderness legally protected by the 1964 Wilderness Act—untrammeled, free from development; a place to recreate and find solitude.



Snowshoing in the park (above). The park's wilderness is habitat to wildlife such as this spotted owl (right).  
ABOVE: © JOHN T. STROTHER; RIGHT: NPS / KELTH BAGNALL



### Meet the People

People have been coming to Mount Rainier for more than 9,000 years. Archeological findings suggest that Native Americans hunted, gathered, and conducted spiritual and ceremonial activities on the mountain. Their descendants maintain a special connection with the mountain to the present day.

In the late 1800s, miners, entrepreneurs, and tourists recognized the mountain's potential to provide wealth and recreation. They came with the hope to prosper, to recreate, and simply to breathe the clear mountain air.

Inspired, mountain clubs, scientists, and communities successfully lobbied Congress to create Mount Rainier National Park in 1899.

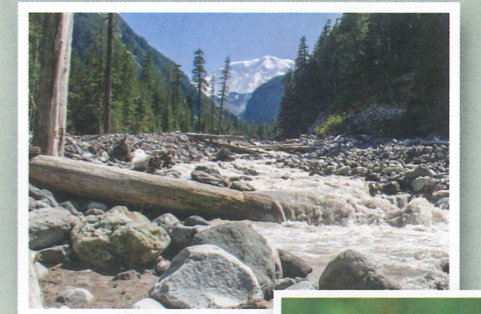


These projectile points, made 2,500 years ago, reveal a chapter of the park's history.  
NPS

### Witness Change

Though the mountain may convey a sense of permanence, Mount Rainier is anything but permanent. Ice and rock continually break away from the peak. Glaciers and rivers transport debris and water down the mountain, and often wreak havoc with roads and park buildings. Subalpine meadows, buried beneath deep snow most of the year, rapidly bloom once the snow melts. Animals must adapt to this ever-changing environment, migrate, or die.

As Earth's temperature rises, it is unclear how such a change will affect the mountain's dynamic forces, its plants, animals, or ourselves.



Wildlife habitat and ecosystems shift with changes in climate.  
ABOVE: © JAY THOMPSON; RIGHT: © THORSTEIN SCHEUERMAN



