



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

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## Mount Rainier National Park News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NATIONAL PARK WEEK April 22-26 – Come Visit Mount Rainier for Free!**

Mount Rainier National Park Superintendent Randy King advises that April 22 – 26 is designated as National Park Week across the nation. In celebration of this week, admission to all national parks will be free during that time. Please come and enjoy your park!

Spring is a great time to visit the park, to enjoy spring skiing and snowshoeing, experience the 16 feet of snow currently on the ground at Paradise, or just spend a night and enjoy the peacefulness of the mountain – and pay no entrance fee!

While many of the areas and roads at Mount Rainier still remain under winter snows at this time of year, the park is open to Longmire and Paradise. Road access is through the Nisqually Entrance (southwest area of the park via State Route 706). The gate from Longmire to Paradise remains open 24 hours a day, but may close at any time if unusually heavy snowfall occurs or other conditions are present making the road unsafe for travel. Through April 30, park visitors must carry tire chains in their vehicles when traveling on park roads. Spring weather in the mountains is very unpredictable and sudden snow storms may necessitate chains even later into the season, for safe travel.

The winter activities of sledding and ranger-led snowshoes walks have concluded for this season. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are still very popular activities during this time of year. Visitors should check with Rangers for current weather and avalanche conditions before heading out on a trip. Conditions can change rapidly and getting caught unprepared in a sudden storm could result in tragedy. Be sure to let someone know your plans in case your return is delayed.

The National Park Inn at Longmire is open year round offering lodging, dining, a gift shop, as well as ski and snowshoe rentals – a great place for a getaway in early Spring.

The Paradise Inn is scheduled to open for the season on May 22. For reservations at Paradise or Longmire, call 360-569-2575 or on the web at [www.mtrainierguestservices.com](http://www.mtrainierguestservices.com)

On the east side of the park, the Washington State Department of Transportation is in the process of clearing the winter snowpack from State Routes 123 and 410. There are no confirmed opening dates at this time. Local businesses in the gateway communities surrounding the park are open and ready for the beginning of the 2013 visitor season. For more information visit these websites: [www.visitrainier.com](http://www.visitrainier.com), [www.mt-rainier.com](http://www.mt-rainier.com), [www.staycrystal.com](http://www.staycrystal.com), [www.destinationpackwood.com](http://www.destinationpackwood.com), [www.minerallake.com](http://www.minerallake.com), or [www.mtrainierguestservices.com](http://www.mtrainierguestservices.com)

The Skate Creek Road (Forest Service Road 52) which travels along the park's southeastern boundary east of Ashford to Packwood remains closed at this time. Current information can be obtained from the Cowlitz Ranger District Office in Randle, Washington - 360-497-1100.

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#### **EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA**

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

If you are looking for a good location to hike or bike, the Carbon River area is currently snow free to Ipsut Creek Campground and provides a great opportunity for hikers and bicyclists.

You can connect to Mount Rainier National Park through our social media pages. Join the Mount Rainier community on [Facebook](#), find out breaking news and road status updates through Mount Rainier's [Twitter](#) feed, explore the park and behind-the-scenes operations with our videos on [YouTube](#), and share your own photos of Mount Rainier with other visitors in the Mount Rainier [Flickr](#) group.

Links used:

<http://facebook.com/MountRainierNPS>

<http://twitter.com/MountRainierNPS>

<http://youtube.com/MountRainierNPS>

<http://flickr.com/groups/MountRainierNPS>

For recorded park information on roads and current conditions call 360-569-2211 and follow the menu. Road and weather conditions are updated as conditions change. Information is also available on the Mount Rainier web page – [www.nps.gov/mora](http://www.nps.gov/mora). Web cams showing current conditions at Paradise can be accessed from the web page – scroll down to Paradise web cameras.

**SPRING SAFETY TIPS:** Recreating during the transition between winter and summer offers challenges and hazards unique to this time of year. The following information will help you prepare for conditions that may be encountered:

- Storms can occur any month of the year at the mountain. Spring and early summer are notorious for unpredictable and rapidly changing weather. Be prepared for winter-like conditions even into June.
- Before starting your hike, check with the Wilderness Information Center or visitor center for current weather, avalanche and trail conditions or visit the park's website at [www.nps.gov/mora](http://www.nps.gov/mora)
- Hypothermia and frostbite are cold weather hazards which can lead to serious injury or death. If you are spending time outside dress sensibly, drink lots of fluids, and take warm-up breaks indoors.
- A reliable map and compass skills, along with use of a GPS, may be needed in many areas of the park because snow-covered trails can be difficult to follow.
- Avoid crossing steep, snow-covered slopes where a fall or avalanche could be disastrous. Turn around instead.
- Falling through thin snow bridges is a hazard anywhere streams remain snow-covered. Stay alert for muffled sounds of running water.
- Falling into snow moats, or tree wells around trees and adjacent to logs and rocks, can cause injury or even death. Avoid getting too close and make sure you have firm footing before proceeding.
- Avoid stepping on wet, slippery rocks, especially near rivers and waterfalls. Be mindful that ice may be covering these areas.
- Avoid stepping onto snow cornices. They may collapse under your weight.
- Observe for avalanche conditions and take precautions to prevent being caught in an avalanche.

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