



**Pacific Northwest Rangers presenting virtual field trips to the Mount Rainier,
North Cascades and Olympic National Parks**

*“During these uncertain times, when the people are hesitant to enter the parks, we’ll bring
the parks to the people!”*

Programs educate the public about in park projects

Seattle, WA—July 9, 2020— **Washington’s National Park Fund** (WNPF) – From soundscapes and glacial studies in the North Cascades and ocean acidification and third generation fishers in Olympic National Park, to Junior Rangers and wildflowers at Mount Rainier National Park, Washington State’s national parks have it all. And for the past three months, if you can’t get up into the parks, Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) is bringing the parks to you.

As COVID-19 took a stronghold, Washington's National Park Fund pivoted. Rather than pull back, Fund staff leaned in to address how best to keep the parks in the forefront of people’s minds. They created Virtual Field Trips that took donors and friends up and into the parks virtually. At the launch of each program, Laurie Ward, CEO of Washington's National Park Fund, asks participants “Do you have your hiking boots on? Your sack lunch in your pack? Plenty of water? Then let’s board the virtual bus and head on up to one of our national parks!”

[Virtual Field Trips to Our Backyard](#) are the Fund’s way of keeping people of all ages engaged. Audience members include people from around the world including Enid and Ian Crowe from Ireland, who haven’t missed an episode. “These field trips have really helped me personally to deal with the isolation; they take us to fantastic places with inspirational people,” Enid stated recently during an episode on KING 5’s [Evening Magazine](#). And Ian? He followed up with “...it’s like bringing the outdoors, indoors.”

Washington's National Park Fund's virtual field trips also touch those who can no longer visit the parks due to health-related issues. They also bring the parks to underserved communities whose members often only see the mountain from a distance; they may not have the means to cover the cost of transportation and park fees and now, they're experiencing the parks from home.

All programs center on projects that fall within one of the Fund's four core areas: Strengthening the parks' science and research; growing their volunteerism and stewardship programs; improving visitors' experiences; and providing programming for youth and families.

All field trips are recorded so individuals can watch them at their own pace. They are, of course, free of charge. Typical audience size hovers around 100 – 150. That said, a junior ranger program early on had to close Zoom sign-ups when it hit the 1,000 mark. At that point, the Fund knew it had struck a chord. For one individual, it struck such a cord that this person has included Washington's National Park Fund in estate plans. "I have decided to include WNPF in my will and join the Parks Everlasting Society. Watching several of the virtual park field trips, with the gorgeous photography, I felt close to the National Parks that I love and visited for the 40 years I lived in Washington."

Upcoming virtual field trips has gone to every other week through the summer. Upcoming programs will feature preventive search and rescue at North Cascades National Park; wildflowers and meadow restoration at Mount Rainier National Park; and coastal ecology at Olympic National Park. To join, go to <https://wnpf.org/field-trips/>.

For more information, contact Washington's National Park Fund at www.wnpf.org or email fund@wnpf.org.

About Washington's National Park Fund

Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) is the official philanthropic partner of Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks, which span more than 1.6 million acres of the Evergreen state. Annually, WNPF allocates monies to 50-75 park priority projects with the goal of deepening the public's

love for, understanding of, and experiences in Washington's National Parks. Get involved at www.wnpf.org

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