



## Top 10 Playful Ways to Enjoy the National Parks in Our Backyard this Winter Season

*Washington's National Park Fund Encourages People to Forget Hibernating and Play to Their Heart's Content in the Parks*

**Seattle, WA—December 18, 2018**— Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF), the official philanthropic partner for Mount Rainier, North Cascades and Olympic National Parks, today unveiled its list of the "Top 10 Playful Ways to Enjoy the National Parks in Our Backyard this Winter Season." Everyone knows that summer is a great time to be in the parks, but winter has its own magic, including beautiful white snow, gorgeous storms at the beach and an array of adrenaline-inducing winter sports.

"People sometimes forget how delightful the national parks are in the winter and there is an abundance of fun to be had," said Laurie Ward, CEO of Washington's National Park Fund. "All people need to do is bundle up, take some extra precautions and enjoy!"

The organization's complete list of "Top 10 Playful Ways to Enjoy the Parks in Our Backyard this Winter Season" is below.

1. **Storm watching at windy beaches.** The coastline can often be more beautiful when enhanced by winter storms that create magnificent and unruly waves. Wind in your hair, ocean spray in your face, a very happy place indeed. (Olympic National Park)
2. **Snowball fights with other joyful people.** Be a kid again. Pretend you are making a snowman only to toss the first snowball and laugh as the spirited snowball fight ensues. (All three national parks)
3. **Snowshoe with a real ranger.** Snowshoeing is winter's version of a "walk in the park," a snowy, chilly park. And, for a special treat, rangers are ready to show you their beauty-

filled world in guided snowshoes tours. (Mount Rainier National Park and Olympic National Park)

4. **Tubing for unbridled excitement.** It is unclear who started “tubing” years ago, but it provides pretty crazy thrills for those who like to be a little out of control. (All three national parks)
5. **Rejoice with other skiers.** Any skier, downhill or cross-country, will tell you they rejoice when winter arrives. They watch with impatience for signs of snow so they can get out and slide on skis to their heart’s content. Maybe it’s time for you to give it a try? (All three national parks)
6. **Snowboarding, like surfing on the snow.** Snowboarders often glide along as if they are surfing a big wave...calm, cool and collected. Surfing in the winter? They may be onto something! (All three national parks)
7. **Catch snowflakes on your tongue.** This is one that anyone can do, athletic ability aside. Just stick out your tongue and laugh like a silly kid as beautiful little snowflakes land on it. And don’t forget to catch a few on your glove and see how they really do look like the snowflakes you cut out of paper when you were young. (All three national parks)
8. **Winter camping for the hardy.** Brrrr. Yes, some very hardy folks do like to camp in the snow and otherwise chilly conditions. We salute them, and all their brawn, and are envious of the immensely peaceful campsites they are sure to find. (All three national parks)
9. **Romp in the snow and make a snow angel.** There’s nothing like taking a walk in the amazing quiet of a snow-filled landscape. You can even playfully plop down on your back and make a snow angel. So grab a thermos of hot cocoa and your reusable mug and head to the hills! (All three national parks)
10. **Fat tire biking to speed it up a bit.** A newer entrant to the world of winter sports, fat tire biking, on snow no less, lets you get your thrills, marvel at the snow-covered trees and move at the speed of bikes. If snowshoeing feels too sedate, this one is for you! (Mount Rainier National Park and North Cascades National Park)

Be sure to check each park's website on what is available as occasionally these activities, and access to them, are unavailable due to winter weather and other conditions. And remember to leave no trace in the beautiful parks.

### **Safety and Other Winter Tips**

Visiting the national parks in the winter can be a bit trickier than in the other seasons. The National Park Service Trip Planning Guide (and related PDFs) can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/noca/planyourvisit/safety.htm> and has tips for winter travel, essentials to pack, being alert for avalanches, what to do in the case of wildlife encounters and more. You can also learn more about avalanche safety through the video "Ranger Brief: Avalanche Risk on Mount Rainier" (<https://www.nps.gov/mora/learn/photosmultimedia/ranger-brief.htm>) or by taking a class at the Northwest Avalanche Center (<https://www.nwac.us/>).

### **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](http://www.wnpf.org)

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### **For more information, media and bloggers only:**

Gaby Adam (for WNPF)  
By the Sea Communications  
Email: [gaby@bytheseacomunications.com](mailto:gaby@bytheseacomunications.com)  
Mobile: +1 206-931-5942