

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 13, 2022

DOWNLOADABLE PHOTOS
[Link](#)

WASHINGTON'S NATIONAL PARK FUND RELEASES ANNUAL "TOP 10 THINGS TO DO THIS WINTER IN OUR STATE'S NATIONAL PARKS" LIST

Sledding, Snowshoeing, Hiking, Camping...Even Picnic Spots on the List for Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks

SEATTLE – Just in time for the official start of Winter this Wednesday, December 21, and with many people looking for inspiration on how to best enjoy the outdoors as the temperature dips, Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) – the official nonprofit partner to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks – today released its much-anticipated "Top 10 Things to Do This Winter in Washington's National Parks" list for 2022.

"While many people enjoy Washington's national parks in the warm summer months when the wildflowers are out in force, in the fall when the leaves are changing, or in the spring when everything is starting to bloom once more, the frosty winter months are some of the most amazing you can find in Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks," said Laurie Ward, CEO of Washington's National Park Fund. "In fact, some would argue that winter in Washington's national parks is one of the best-kept secrets here in our big backyard."

Between snow, inaccessible trails, and major road closures, winter travel can be intimidating, which is why WNPF has put together this much-anticipated list of how to experience the parks in the winter, along with some important tips to make sure people enjoy them safely.

WNPF's Top 10 Things to Do This Winter in Washington's National Parks

Olympic National Park

1. **Innertube (or snowboard or downhill ski or cross-country ski or snowshoe) at Hurricane Ridge** – Hurricane Ridge has one of the best views of the Olympics you can get. In the winter, the road is scheduled to be open Friday through Sunday and on holiday Mondays (weather and road conditions permitting). There is a family-friendly ski, snowboard, and tubing area operated by the Hurricane Ridge Winter Sports Club. The park also has a Small Children's Sliding & Tubing Area for kids 8 and younger that's free of charge. For those looking to snowshoe to the summit of Hurricane Hill or enjoy the 20 miles of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing routes throughout the park, you can learn more [here](#).
2. **Hike in the Hoh Rain Forest** – Check out some of the amazing trails around the [Hoh Rain Forest](#), but be sure to check the weather before you go – the Hoh gets frequent rain in the winter (some say it's among the wettest spots in the continental U.S.)!
3. **Picnic on the Beach** – If you're not feeling like a snowy adventure, you can always take a picnic down to [Kalaloch or Ruby Beach](#), or a classic favorite: [Rialto Beach](#). There you can drive right up to the beach and hike a mile to Hole in the Wall to capture some stunning photos

(be mindful of tides, as always). Nearby [Mora Campground](#) is open year-round, making it great for family car camping.

WINTER SAFETY AT OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

Check out Olympic National Park's "[top ten tips](#)" for fun and safe winter recreation. When visiting Hurricane Ridge, all vehicles must carry tire chains during the winter. Check the road status before you go by calling (360) 565-3131 for their recorded message. The park's website has a [great page](#) to help you plan your winter Hurricane Ridge visit. If hiking or snowshoeing, pack the [Ten Essentials](#) and have an emergency plan.

Mount Rainier National Park

4. **Ranger-Guided Snowshoe Walks for Beginners** – Great for those just learning the art of snowshoeing and who want to learn how plants and animals in the park deal with winter conditions. Typically offered on weekends from late December through March, these 1.8-mile Park Ranger-guided snowshoe walks leave from the Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise. Walks are first-come, first-served, limited to 25 people, and participants must be at least 8 years old. Bring your own snowshoes or rent them inside or outside the park. More [here](#).
5. **Moderate & Experienced Snowshoeing or Cross-Country Skiing** – Rampart Ridge is a lovely 4.6-mile loop out of Longmire. Both directions are great but heading clockwise will give you the most remarkable views of the mountain. Those looking for bigger adventure and more solitude will find a great workout (11 miles, 2,400 ft. elevation gain) snowshoeing from Paradise to Reflection Lakes. Keep the gate closure in mind; the road from Longmire to Paradise is generally open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends in the winter but is dependent upon weather conditions. Another great place for a relatively flat snowshoe hike or cross-country ski through a winter wonderland is along the closed portion of Highway 410 just past the turnoff to Crystal Mountain, though go in with the expectation of a magical forest along the White River instead of big mountain views in the alpine. More [here](#).
6. **Snowmobiling** – If you have access to snowmobiles, your options grow considerably. Even with gate closures, you can still enjoy miles-wide areas such as White River, Carbon River, and Mowich Lake on the north side of the park. More [here](#).

WINTER SAFETY AT MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

There are several important considerations to recreating at Rainier in the winter. There are plenty of avalanche-prone slopes in the Paradise area. Please educate yourself on safe winter travel by talking with rangers or looking into the amazing resources provided by the [Northwest Avalanche Center](#). **All vehicles are required to carry chains in the winter regardless of tires or four-wheel drive.** And like snowshoes, you can rent chains (and much more!) at [Whittaker Mountaineering](#) in Ashford. The [Mount Rainier National Park Twitter](#) is another great source for road closures, weather conditions, and more.

North Cascades National Park

7. **Visit Stehekin** – This small town within the park complex is located at the northern end of Lake Chelan. In the winter, you can access the area by boat and it's a gateway for backcountry camping, rustic lodge stays, and wonderful day hikes. Check out our [Virtual Field Trip about Stehekin](#) and start planning your trip!
8. **Practice Photography at [Diablo Lake](#)** – The lake's stunning blue waters draw visitors into the park year-round, and luckily for us, it sits before the park's annual winter highway closure point. Take in the winter views of the lake at the viewpoint and impress your friends with your nature photography skills.
9. **Walk the [Sterling Munro Boardwalk](#)** – Located behind the North Cascades Visitor Center near Newhalem, the boardwalk is the shortest trail in the park, flat and perfect for families with little ones who are just looking to get outside. You'll be rewarded with views of the steep and jagged peaks of the Picket Range that you'll one day conquer when the kids are older!

10. **Car Camp for the Weekend** – Check out [Gorge Lake and Goodell Creek campgrounds](#). They're open this time of year on a first-come, first-served basis, which is perfect for a quick weekend getaway. Remember to pack out your trash and be sure to pack in firewood and water, since none is in supply this time of year.

TRAVEL NOTES FOR NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

North Cascades National Park is one of the least visited and most remote national parks in the National Parks Service...and one of the only ones that has NO ENTRANCE FEE! In the wintertime, the park feels even more remote due to the seasonal North Cascades Highway (SR 20) closure. According to [WSDOT](#), the highway is closed between milepost 134 (near Ross Dam) and milepost 178 (Early Winters gate near Mazama and Winthrop). But recreation in the park does not have to end once the road closes! Be sure to plan your trip, considering how you'll get to where you want to go within the park around the road closure.

WINTER SAFETY AT NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

With road closures, changing weather, and minimal signal and amenities in the wintertime, plan ahead and let a loved one know your plan. Check out the [WSDOT road alerts page](#), the NPS app and park websites, regional weather reports, and up-to-date trail reports for any hikes you plan to do.

###

About Washington's National Park Fund

Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) is the official nonprofit partner to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. WNPF is the only philanthropic organization dedicated solely to Washington's three largest national parks, and 100% of donations stay in Washington state for this purpose. Founded by former governor and senator Dan Evans and legendary mountaineer Lou Whittaker, WNPF has awarded nearly \$7 million to the parks in the last decade. Learn more about how we support the parks at wnpf.org.

Media Contact

Alex Day (she/her), Marketing and Communications Manager, 206-623-2063, alex@wnpf.org