

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## WNPF AUCTION RAISES NEARLY \$300,000 FOR WASHINGTON'S NATIONAL PARKS

*Auction for the Parks raised funds for projects that help Washington's national parks welcome new visitors and provide new opportunities*

**SEATTLE** – On the heels of a record-setting \$1.1M distribution to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks, Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) raised over \$281,000 for the parks in the annual Auction for the Parks at the Seattle Design Center on May 6, 2023. That includes more than \$100,000 in funding for priority park projects.

“This year's successful Auction for the Parks is especially meaningful, as it's the first one that has focused solely on raising funds for projects that help our national park partners expand their efforts to be more inclusive,” said Laurie Ward, CEO of Washington's National Park Fund. “From supporting food sovereignty for North Cascades National Park's neighbors to enabling entry level jobs for diverse candidates in Olympic and welcoming Spanish-speaking visitors in their native language in Mount Rainier, our community of supporters have again stepped up to do their part to support the national parks.”

Key projects the Fund-a-Need (“Raise the Paddle”) supported are:

- **Serving Diverse Communities: Welcoming Spanish Speakers with Bilingual Rangers in Mount Rainier National Park.** Currently, most seasonal park rangers at Mount Rainier National Park speak only English, creating barriers for non-English speakers who attend interpretive programs or participate in educational programming. The park has been making strides in improving information services for Spanish-speaking visitors, and this funding will expand those efforts by supporting one of four new bilingual park rangers. This ranger will be stationed at the park's busiest location, Paradise, from May to October where they will interact with an estimated 30,000 visitors and participate in Spanish-language Facebook Live sessions to improve outreach to Spanish-speaking communities.
- **Supporting Food Sovereignty for North Cascades National Park Neighbors.** Part of the innovative five-year Food Sustainability and Native Plant Education project, which brings together the North Cascades National Park Service Complex, Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, Glacier Peak Institute and others, the Sauk-Suiattle Community Garden supplies tomatoes, strawberries, zucchinis, squash, and herbs to Sauk-Suiattle families – many of whom lack access to fresh local produce. Funding will enable the Sauk-Suiattle community to purchase materials to build two produce stands, a wagon to transport produce to the Sauk-Suiattle Elder's Food Program, supplies to support the greenhouse and the upcoming harvest, and stipends to support internships for local tribal youth who will assist in the garden.
- **Foot in the Door: Enabling Entry Level Positions to the National Park Service in Olympic National Park.** Olympic National Park is committed to having a workforce that better reflects

the makeup of our communities. Through the creation of three paid seasonal entry-level positions, young people from diverse backgrounds will have a progressive pathway to careers with NPS. Candidates will be recruited from youth programs at the park that target diverse audiences, including the American Sign Language trail crew, LGBTQ+ trail crew, Historically Black College and University interns, and Diversity Interns from the Scientists in Parks program as well as local tribal youth. They will receive mentorship in career development, the Park Service's mission, and their specific area of focus.

Each year, WNPF's Auction for the Parks focuses on a specific need within Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks for the Fund-A-Need. In 2023, WNPF chose to focus fundraising efforts around our new priority area: [Embracing Inclusion](#). This new project priority area reflects WNPF's commitment to help foster an environment in the parks where people who experience more life barriers based on their identities can feel welcome and that they belong. You can learn more about the three Fund-A-Need projects in our video at <https://youtu.be/SgGpg0Bp08U>.

This year's auction brought together more than 250 guests including park rangers, scientists, and leadership as well as park supporters. Attendees participated in a silent and live auction, dessert dash, and speaker program, and raised their paddles during the Fund-A-Need before the evening ended with an announcement launching WNPF's new five-year strategic growth campaign, [Together for the Parks](#).

WNPF is especially grateful to our 2023 Auction for the Parks Signature Sponsors, [Audi of America](#) and [HEST](#).

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### **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. Founded by former governor and senator Dan Evans and legendary mountaineer Lou Whittaker, WNPF is the only philanthropic organization dedicated solely to Washington's three largest national parks and has awarded more than \$7 million to the parks in the last decade. Learn more about how we support the parks at [wnpf.org](http://wnpf.org).

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