

# Park Passion

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS • WINTER 2024



## A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

What a year it's been for Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks!

As we enter 2024, we're reflecting on the first couple years of the Together for the Parks campaign. With your help, each year we've met our goal of raising \$2 million annually to provide for the parks' priority projects. In 2023 alone, Washington's National Park Fund raised more than \$2.1 million to help support annual projects in the parks!

This incredible accomplishment would not have been possible without each and every member of our community of park supporters who choose to give back to Washington's national parks.

And momentum is growing for the other aspects of our campaign, too. See how early donor dollars are already having an impact on our "Restoring Paradise" project, with our update on page 3.

Thank you for showing up for the parks!

**–Andrea, Susan, Brianna, Elizabeth, Kristen, Kacee, and Alex**



*View of Mount Shuksan from outside North Cascades National Park's boundary, captured by WNPF Creative Partner Taylor Newlun.*

## Tales of the Trails

### How North Cascades National Park Manages 400+ Miles of Trails

*By Kacee Saturday, Donor Stewardship & Social Media Manager*

North Cascades National Park boasts an extensive network of trails, each with its own unique charm and breathtaking vistas.

From the riverside view of Thunder Creek Trail to the more challenging and remote area of Copper Ridge Trail, there is something for every level of hiker.

With over 400 miles of trails across the park complex's 680,850 acres, you might wonder who exactly is behind this extensive trail network? Meet the folks in the park's Trails & Preservation Program.

They are a dedicated team consisting of crew leads, maintenance workers, laborers, and volunteers. Together, they form the backbone of trail maintenance efforts in North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area – the three units that make up the North Cascades National Park Service Complex.

*Continued on page 3*



*Each year, the team installs bridges to open trails. As of 2022, there are five seasonal bridges in the park. Photo by Bill Zimmer/NPS.*

An update on

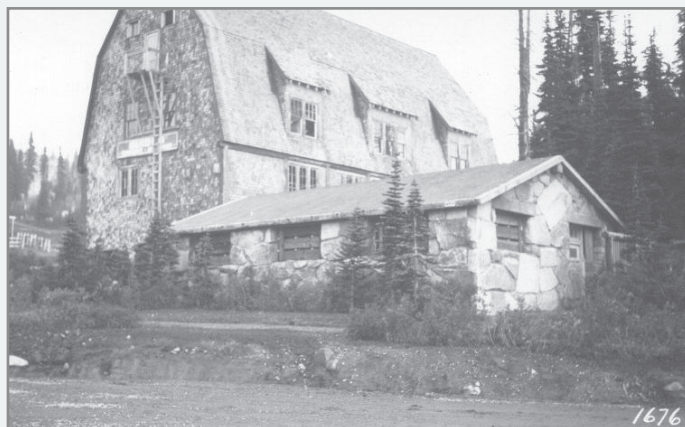
# Together FOR THE PARKS

Mount Rainier National Park is a significant natural and cultural landmark beloved for its dramatic natural beauty, its biodiverse ecosystems, its abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, and its scientific and historic value. As such, WNPF is supporting a critical and visionary project in Mount Rainier's most visited destination, Paradise, as part of our multi-year \$20 million campaign to fund a robust investment in enhancing park visitors' experiences.

**Restoring Paradise** is a bold, \$2 million plan that includes the restoration of the Paradise Meadows, rehabilitation of a main portion of the popular Skyline Trail, construction of a new 1.2-mile connecting trail from the lower parking lot and picnic area up to the Jackson Visitor Center, and rehabilitation of the historic Slate Comfort Station just off the Paradise parking area.

We're excited to report that passionate donors have already stepped up to invest in this key park priority. In 2023, early donation dollars helped secure a contract with an architecture and engineering group to produce schematic design documents for the Comfort Station rehabilitation. The schematic design is expected to be complete in January 2024, with construction tentatively planned for 2025.

**Stay tuned for an exciting soon-to-be announced update!**



NPS photo of the historic Comfort Station at Paradise, taken in 1929.

"It goes back to why we save historic structures in the first place – it's to tell those stories of the people. The stories aren't always saved, but we have the buildings here to interpret them."

—Stephanie Clarkson, Historical Architect at Mount Rainier National Park

You can learn more about the project – and what support from donors like you is making possible – in our Restoring Paradise blog at [wnpf.org/paradise](https://wnpf.org/paradise) or on our campaign webpage ([togetherfortheparks.org](https://togetherfortheparks.org)).

Thank you for helping invest in the future of Mount Rainier.

**Susan Nebel**  
Director of Philanthropy

## PARK PERSON OF INTEREST Michael Mauch

"My goal, number one, is to make sure people are safe. And then my ultimate goal is to help them make a connection. And if I can get them to make an emotional connection to the Mountain, then I think I've had a good day."

—Michael Mauch, Volunteer Meadow Rover at Mount Rainier National Park

This year, funding from donors allowed the park to hire two seasonal employees to coordinate the Meadow Rover program at Paradise and Sunrise and helped the park purchase uniforms and supplies. Overall, more than 280 Rovers contributed 13,200+ hours of service to the park and engaged with more than 200,000 park visitors – an all-time record for the program.



Michael with park visitors, by WNPF Creative Partner Mitch Pittman.

Meet Michael and learn about the donor-supported Meadow Rover program at [wnpf.org/rover](https://wnpf.org/rover).



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## TALES OF THE TRAILS

North Cascades National Park's Chief of Facilities, Bill Zimmer, joined us for a virtual field trip (which you can watch on WNPf's YouTube channel). He shared all about the work that goes into maintaining the trails throughout the park complex. Even the smallest section of a trail requires extensive planning and logistics!

### Behind The Scenes

Once the snow begins to melt, the bulk of the work begins with routine annual maintenance including clearing trails. Given the park's location, where harsh winters prevail, a significant portion of the team's time is devoted to opening trails and ensuring safe passage for visitors.

Another critical area for the team is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)-accessible trail work. They diligently maintain trails such as the Gorge Overlook Trail and Happy Creek Forest Walk by removing debris, repairing asphalt surfaces, and ensuring compliance with the necessary requirements to make these trails accessible to all visitors – even those with mobility impairments.

Each season, the team prioritizes routine maintenance to address immediate needs before shifting their focus to long-term projects, including repairs to structures and issues that require prolonged attention to ensure the sustainability of the trails.



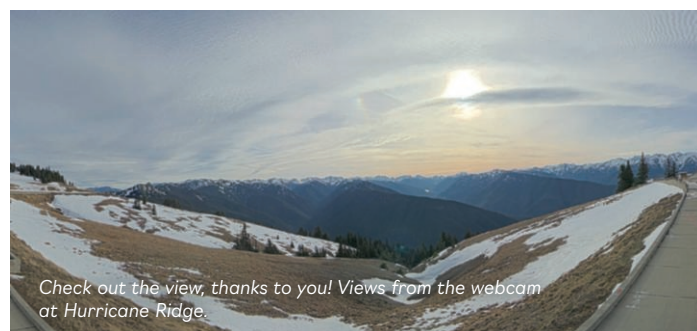
*The park's mules and horses bring some of the heaviest gear to the most remote trails in the park. Bill describes them as "friends, coworkers, and major part of our crew!" Photo by WNPf Creative Partner Mitch Pittman.*

### Donors Making a Difference

Extensive training and certification, coordination of volunteers, and supplying tools are a few examples of how donations can be put to work within the park. **"We couldn't talk about what we do without talking about our partnerships because they are so important for getting this work done,"** says Zimmer.

Thanks to generous supporters of WNPf, trail work is given the attention it deserves – and visitors get unforgettable experiences in the parks. As we often say, "Trail work can't happen overnight, but raising the funds for it can!"

**Did You Know?** Donor gifts have provided over **\$1 million in funds** designated directly to trail work in Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks in the last decade!



*Check out the view, thanks to you! Views from the webcam at Hurricane Ridge.*

### YOUR IMPACT IN THE PARKS

#### Peak Peeking: Hurricane Ridge's Webcams are Back!

When Olympic National Park's historic Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge burned down last May, the fire took the famous webcams with it. But donors stepped up right away to support the park through donations to WNPf's Fire Relief Fund at [wnpf.org/fire](http://wnpf.org/fire). Now, thanks to those donors, these iconic webcams are back up and running! Check out the views at [wnpf.org/cameras](http://wnpf.org/cameras).



### OUR FLAT HAT SALUTE

Our Flat Hat Salute goes out to our partners and friends at Good & Well Supply Co., Seattle-based candle makers who have a burning passion for nature and a profound commitment to preserving the natural wonders of the PNW. Learn about their new Washington national park-themed candle pack that's benefitting the parks – and see what the scents were inspired by – at [wnpf.org/candles](http://wnpf.org/candles).

### MEET THE WNPf BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marjorie Walter (Chair), Alma Busby-Williams, Tom Dugan, Jane Eckels, Beth Glosten, Teresa Hagerty, Fred Hammerquist, Cynthia Hartwig, Tony Hoskins, Kelly Lake, John Meyer, Dan Miller, Kirk Myers, Karen Povey, Jen Semsak, Bruce Tecklenburg, and Joel VandenBrink

## Calling All Fourth Graders (and Their Families)

Did you know that fourth graders can see America's natural wonders and historic sites for free? The Every Kid Outdoors initiative provides a year-long pass for fourth-grade students to visit our federal parks, lands, and waters – and that includes Washington's three national parks. Scan the QR code to read our *Ultimate Guide to the Every Kid Outdoors 4th Grade Pass* and learn how to get one of your own!



## EVENTS

FOR A FULL LIST OF EVENTS, VISIT [WNPf.ORG/EVENTS](https://wnpf.org/events)

### MONDAY, JANUARY 15

#### NPS Fee Free Day for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

First fee-free day of the year!

[nps.gov/planyourvisit/fee-free-parks.htm](https://nps.gov/planyourvisit/fee-free-parks.htm)

### Fee-Free Days: Everything You Need to Know

The National Park Service has announced their fee-free days for 2024. But what exactly does "fee-free" mean? Our new blog lists out free national park entrance days and explains how the NPS is celebrating at [wnpf.org/fee-free](https://wnpf.org/fee-free).

### MONTH OF FEBRUARY

#### Black History Month

See how the National Park Service and Washington's parks observe the month: [wnpf.org/BHM](https://wnpf.org/BHM)

### THURSDAY, FEB. 22

#### Over the Top Society Luncheon

Members of this society give \$1,200 annually. Not yet a member? Visit [wnpf.org/OTT](https://wnpf.org/OTT)

### MONTH OF MARCH

#### Women's History Month

Learn about WNPf-funded park projects like the all-girls trail crew in Mount Rainier: [wnpf.org/WHM](https://wnpf.org/WHM)

### THURSDAY, MARCH 2

#### Mount Rainier National Park's 125th Birthday

We have some great events in the works! Stay in the loop by subscribing to our emails: [wnpf.org/get-our-emails](https://wnpf.org/get-our-emails)

### FRIDAY, MARCH 22

#### Pints for the Parks at Dru Bru Snoqualmie Pass

Join us for a birthday pint or two at Dru Bru in celebration of Mount Rainier's 125th birthday: [wnpf.org/community](https://wnpf.org/community)

## Scaling Peaks & Preserving Parks

Photo by Nate Brown

If you've dreamed of climbing Washington's most iconic peaks but don't know where to start, Climb for a Cause is the fundraising program for you. Our climbers climb Mount Rainier (Tahoma), Mount Olympus, or Mount Baker (Kulshan) while giving back to a place that's special to them. Check out the climbs we're hosting this summer and reserve your spot today at [wnpf.org/climb](https://wnpf.org/climb).

And new this year, for those who aren't up for a mountaineering experience – how about a Trek for the Trails? This new fundraising program allows you to backpack while you give back, bringing together a group for a guided four-day trek to the Enchanted Valley in Olympic National Park. Spots are already filling up, so save yours today at [wnpf.org/trek](https://wnpf.org/trek)!



Washington's National Park Fund is the official philanthropic partner of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks