

# Park Passion

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS · SPRING 2024



## A NOTE FROM THE TEAM

It's a big year for Mount Rainier National Park – the park just celebrated its 125th anniversary. And we're celebrating in style, thanks to the generosity of park lovers across the country.

This year, we were able to pitch in \$1.5 million to spruce up Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. That's a *big win* – your generosity is truly something to celebrate!

And with spring arriving and temperatures beginning to rise, it's about time to start making your summer park plans. (If you're like us, you've been thinking excitedly about all that's to come since the first snowflake fell!) As you consider the trails you want to trek and the campsites you want to claim, know that your support has helped preserve the national parks we all care about so much. Thank you.

Can't wait to see you out there!

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

P.S. Be sure to keep in mind that visitors to Mount Rainier may need a timed entry reservation this year. You can learn more at the park's website: [nps.gov/mora](https://nps.gov/mora)



Above: Mount Rainier cloaked in snow. Photo by Stephen Matera. Right: Heidi, lead packer at Olympic National Park, helps oversee the park's team of 29 mules.



## Stocked & Loaded

### Meet the Mules of Olympic National Park

By Alex Day, Director of Marketing & Communications

Mules are a cross between a male donkey and a female horse. Their remarkable strength, agility, and endurance makes them especially able to navigate challenging, steep, and narrow paths.

And it's not just trail work that these hard workers are contributing to – they support virtually all backcountry projects in Olympic National Park, from carrying out steel I-beams and concrete to rebuild bridges to equipment for the parks' scientists and search and rescue teams.

The mule team has even supported a NASA research project, hauling millions of dollars' worth of equipment to a weather station in Enchanted Valley. And that's just the start.

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## A Note from WNPf's Director of Philanthropy:

We were saddened by the loss of a dear member of the WNPf family in early January. Bob Wiley was an avid hiker, mountaineer, and adventurer. He summited Mount Rainier twice, all the major peaks in Washington, Mt. Hood in Oregon, Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, and Mt. Fuji in Japan. He was a true champion for the outdoors.

Though we will miss his joyful laugh and happy presence, we are heartened knowing that Bob's generous philanthropy in support of Washington's national parks – in particular Mount Rainier – will have an enduring impact for many generations to follow.



**Susan Nebel**  
Director of Philanthropy

*Photo by Jayson Moorman*



### OUR FLAT HAT SALUTE

Our Flat Hat Salute goes out to the incredible team behind Dick's-A-Thon. This one-of-a-kind memorial run began in 2022 as a celebration of the life of Ian Cox, an adventurer and lover of the North Cascades (read his story at [wnpf.org/ian](https://wnpf.org/ian)). Participants circumnavigate Seattle via the classic hamburger drive-in in Ian's memory, stopping at Dick's locations along the way. All proceeds are donated to the Mountaineers and Washington search and rescue organizations, including Washington's National Park Fund, in honor of Ian.

## Your Gifts in Action

"These animals are incredibly special, just like every other animal in the landscape. I think it's a great thing to give them a new home, and a home that they should have had all along without our interference."

– Kristin Rine, Wildlife Biologist at North Cascades National Park

In the tapestry of conservation achievements, the fisher reintroduction effort stands as a testament to the resilience of nature and the unwavering dedication of those who strive to protect it, like Kristin Rine and the wildlife biologists of the National Park Service.



Peek behind the scenes of this important donation-fueled effort at [wnpf.org/fisher](https://wnpf.org/fisher).



Donor support helped Olympic National Park expand their mule team with several new additions. Get to know them at [wnpf.org/mules](http://wnpf.org/mules). Left: photo courtesy of the National Park Service/Heidi Brill. Right: photo by Alex Day.



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 STOCKED & LOADED

The mules are housed at their corral in the Elwha River valley during their working season, and then they head out to their winter pasture in sunny Sequim for a five-month break in the winter. But really, the mules' favorite times are those spent out on the job.

**"I think they really like going out on trips. They eat huckleberries. See new things. Meet new people. For most of these guys, you walk out there with a halter and they're fighting for whose nose goes in it first. They're that eager!"**

**—Heidi Brill, lead packer for Olympic National Park's stock team**

Often when they're on a trip, the mule team will have wide loads on while traveling down narrow trails, so safety is a key consideration for the team – both for the mules and for the visitors they encounter. If you're lucky enough to meet the mules while on a trail in the park, says Heidi, the best thing you can do is "step back off the trail and make space – and always follow the instructions that their humans are giving."

## Did you know?

WNPF donors have supported the mules that help make trail work possible in both Olympic and North Cascades National Parks over the years.

## Donors Making a Difference

With nearly three million visitors every year, the trail system at Olympic National Park endures a lot of wear and tear. Fortunately, the mighty mules are up to the task, whether it's hauling in shingles for backcountry ranger station roof repair or, on occasion, carrying out an injured hiker. And donors play a role: Last year, donor support helped the park add several new additions to the mule team.

If you love to hike in the park, thank a mule – they probably made the trail work possible that keeps your favorite trail pristine.

Meet the park's charismatic mules at [wnpf.org/mules](http://wnpf.org/mules).

## Get In Touch

**Questions or feedback?** We'd love to hear from you! Get in touch at [fund@wnpf.org](mailto:fund@wnpf.org) or call (206) 623-2063.

## MEET THE WNPf BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tony Hoskins (Chair) • Alma Busby Williams • Tom Dugan • Jane Eckels • Beth Glosten • Teresa Hagerty • Fred Hammerquist • Cynthia Hartwig • Kelly Lake • Dan Miller • Kirk Myers • Karen Povey • Jen Semsak • Bruce Tecklenburg • Joel VandenBrink • *And join us in welcoming our newest board members, Ayesha Harper and Margot Tsakonas!*

SAVE THE DATE

# Parkfest

Seattle, September 19, 2024

Washington's National Park Fund has historically hosted an auction and dinner in the spring to raise funds for projects in Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. This year, we are trying something new and will be offering a fun fall fundraising event for everyone to enjoy: Parkfest!

This new event will bring together park supporters for an unforgettable night of great food, park related games, a silent auction, and more — all to help push nearly-funded park projects over the top before the parks' fiscal year closes. It's going to be a blast and we hope you can join us! Stay tuned for registration details to come.

## Wear Your Park Love on Your Sleeve

Did you know that you can buy a WNPF t-shirt, hat, fleece, or jacket? Find something to wear on your next park adventure that shows off your park love while keeping you cozy at [wnpf.org/gear](https://wnpf.org/gear).



## EVENTS

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

**SATURDAY, APRIL 20**

**NPS Fee Free Day**

Spring's here – time to get outside!  
[nps.gov/planyourvisit/fee-free-parks.htm](https://nps.gov/planyourvisit/fee-free-parks.htm)

**World Premiere of North Cascades National Park's New Park Film**

Join us for a free screening of *The North Cascades: An Elevated Journey*. Details: [wnpf.org/events](https://wnpf.org/events)

**MONTH OF MAY**

**Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**

Learn more: [wnpf.org/AANHPI](https://wnpf.org/AANHPI)

**TUESDAY, MAY 7**

**GiveBIG for Washington's National Parks**

Give a gift to help us get a head start:  
[wnpf.org/GiveBIG](https://wnpf.org/GiveBIG)

**MONTH OF JUNE**

**Pride Month**

Learn more: [wnpf.org/pride](https://wnpf.org/pride)

**SATURDAY, JUNE 2**

**Pints for the Parks at Mill Haus Cider**

Join us at Mill Haus Cider in Eatonville as we celebrate Mount Rainier's 125th birthday:  
[wnpf.org/community](https://wnpf.org/community)

**MONDAY, JUNE 17**

**First Climb for a Cause of the Season: Amazon Climbs Mount Rainier (Tahoma)!**

There are still a few open slots in our climbs this summer! Sign up: [wnpf.org/climb](https://wnpf.org/climb)

**SATURDAY, JUNE 19**

**NPS Fee Free Day for Juneteenth National Independence Day**

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



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