

## WASHINGTON'S NATIONAL PARK FUND AWARDS NEARLY \$2 MILLION TO MOUNT RAINIER, NORTH CASCADES, AND OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARKS

*Funds include a recent record-setting \$691,000 grant supporting Mount Rainier's Paradise area improvements, as well as funding for 32 park projects in 2025*

**SEATTLE (Jan. 16, 2025)** – Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF), the official philanthropic partner serving Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks, this week announced the awarding of nearly \$1.3 million to support 32 projects across Washington's three largest national parks in 2025. These grants follow an earlier \$691,000 grant – the largest in WNPF's history – that was distributed in 2024 outside of the traditional grant cycle in support of Restoring Paradise, a multi-year special project WNPF is raising funds for as part of the [Together for the Parks campaign](#). This combined funding adds up to nearly \$2 million in support for Washington's national parks.

"This year's grants underscore the extraordinary commitment of our supporters to the well-being of Washington's national parks," said Washington's National Park Fund CEO Steve Dubiel. "As visitation continues to surge and park budgets remain flat, dedicated rangers and park staff face unprecedented challenges in preserving these cherished landscapes. Washington's National Park Fund is honored to stand alongside them, not only by funding their annual priority projects but also by investing in innovative, multi-year efforts like Mount Rainier's Restoring Paradise project that will shape the future of these parks. Together, we are ensuring these treasured places thrive for generations to come."

WNPF's role is to raise philanthropic support for Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. Each year, the three parks' superintendents and their leadership teams select priority projects in need of additional funding not covered under its existing budget and park revenue. WNPF funds projects in four core areas: science and research, visitors' experiences, volunteerism and stewardship, and embracing inclusion.

This year, thanks to generous donors:

- **Olympic National Park is awarded \$461,695 in funding for 12 projects. These include:**
  - Projects that enhance the visitor experience at Olympic National Park include **backcountry trail improvements** and the park's efforts to improve **backcountry ski access and safety** at Hurricane Ridge, a beloved destination for park visitors. Funding also supports initiatives such as **night sky interpretive programs** and the park's **artist-in-residence program**. And, following the fire that destroyed the historic Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge in 2023, donations to WNPF's Fire Relief Fund have allowed the park to bring back the popular Hurricane Ridge webcams, providing visibility into conditions at the park's high alpine location. This year, the remaining funds will support the park's **temporary structures at Hurricane Ridge**, allowing for a higher quality visitor experience.
  - Projects that support Olympic National Park in welcoming visitors of all backgrounds include support for **Wilderness Youth IDEA Rangers** who are trained to provide wilderness education through the lens of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Accessibility (IDEA) principles and **internship opportunities for youth** from a variety of backgrounds, including many underrepresented groups. Funds also support the park's popular **middle school science field trips** for local

youth, the **Adventures in Your Big Backyard youth program** in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sequim and Port Angeles, **engagement with neighboring tribes** in preserving and protecting the park's precious cultural resources, and researching and sharing **stories that reflect the incredible diversity** amongst the people who have served within the park over the years.

- Funding empowers dedicated volunteers to make a lasting impact through the **Matt Albright Native Plant Nursery**, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and stewardship for this natural treasure. This vital operation for restoration efforts in Olympic National Park brings together volunteers to plant seedlings that are used to revegetate areas of degraded habitat. The restoration behind what was once the Elwha River Dam is a shining example of the program's success. Since then, the nursery has grown into a resource center that supplies partners across the Olympic Peninsula with native plant materials and revegetation expertise.
- **North Cascades National Park is awarded \$294,093 in funding for eight projects. These include:**
  - Projects that aim to make the outdoors more accessible for people of all backgrounds include the **Nature Exploration Project**, which integrates outdoor experiences into the fabric of daily life at schools and libraries in the park's gateway communities and brings them to the tribal communities that surround the park. The **Food Sustainability Project** is another award-winning effort that brings together North Cascades National Park, the Lummi Nation School, and community partners including Common Threads and Glacier Peak Institute to create opportunities for youth participants to grow, prepare and eat fresh produce while learning about the native plants that populate the North Cascades.
  - Projects that enhance the visitor experience at North Cascades National Park include **technical rescue** and **incident management training** for park staff, **mental health support** for law enforcement officers and emergency responders, high-quality interpretive services like the **bear essentials safety program**, and educating backcountry adventurers with **bear safety education and signage** and a new **wilderness stewardship and safety informational video series** for visitors to view when they pick up their backcountry permit online.
- **Mount Rainier National Park is awarded \$516,808 in funding for 12 projects. These include:**
  - Projects that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within Mount Rainier National Park include the long-standing **Mount Rainier National Park Trail Crew and Washington Trails Association Partnership**, which will work on trails in the Carbon River and Mowich area and bring single identity youth trail crews to the park. Crews organized in the past have included LGBTQ+, All Girls, Asian Pacific Islanders, and crews from Latino Outdoors. This support will also fund the continuation of the park's **Access for All** project, which aims to develop an Accessible Trails Guide to ensure that the park's natural wonders are accessible and enjoyed by people of all abilities.
  - Projects that enhance the visitor experience at Mount Rainier include funding for improvements to the iconic **Wonderland Trail**, a **young adult conservation corps crew** to ensure early season hikers are remaining on trails and off meadows as snow is melting, **bilingual rangers** to welcome Spanish-speaking visitors, and **night sky interpretation and programming**. These projects are crucial for fostering a deep and lasting connection between individuals, especially young and first-time visitors, and the natural wonders that this protected area holds.
  - Mount Rainier's **Volunteer Program** is a powerful force for providing vital project support and creating passionate advocates for the park's mission. Each year the park's roughly 2,000 volunteers donate nearly 70,000 hours to the park – an effort worth an astonishing \$2 million in services and a priceless investment in building community connections. Volunteers protect the

park's fragile alpine meadows through the **Meadow Rover Program** and **Alpine Gardens Protection Team**, provide roadside assistance through the **Roadside Assistance Volunteer Network (RAVN)**, contribute to wildlife surveys and geologic research, and perform guest interpretive programs.

- By allocating resources to science and research efforts at Mount Rainier, we can play a role in bolstering the park's diverse wildlife and protecting its long-term health. This includes initiatives such as **restoring fragile, too-often-trampled alpine meadows and endangered keystone species like disease-resistant whitebark pine**, and involving community scientists in collecting valuable data on climate-vulnerable species like the Cascade red fox through the park's **Alpine Wildlife Conservation** project.

WNPF raises funds to support these projects through donations from individual and corporate donors, stock and estate gifts, foundation grants, contributions from [local brands and retailers](#), park lodge [guest donation programs](#), special [events](#), fundraising [climbs](#) and [treks](#), and the statewide [national park license plate program](#).

Any funds awarded to the parks that are not used in 2025 will support park projects in future years. Visit [wnpf.org/funded-projects](https://wnpf.org/funded-projects) to see the projects donors have made possible over the years.

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### **About Washington's National Park Fund**

Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) is the official philanthropic 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 \$10 million to Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. Learn how we support the parks at [wnpf.org](https://wnpf.org).

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