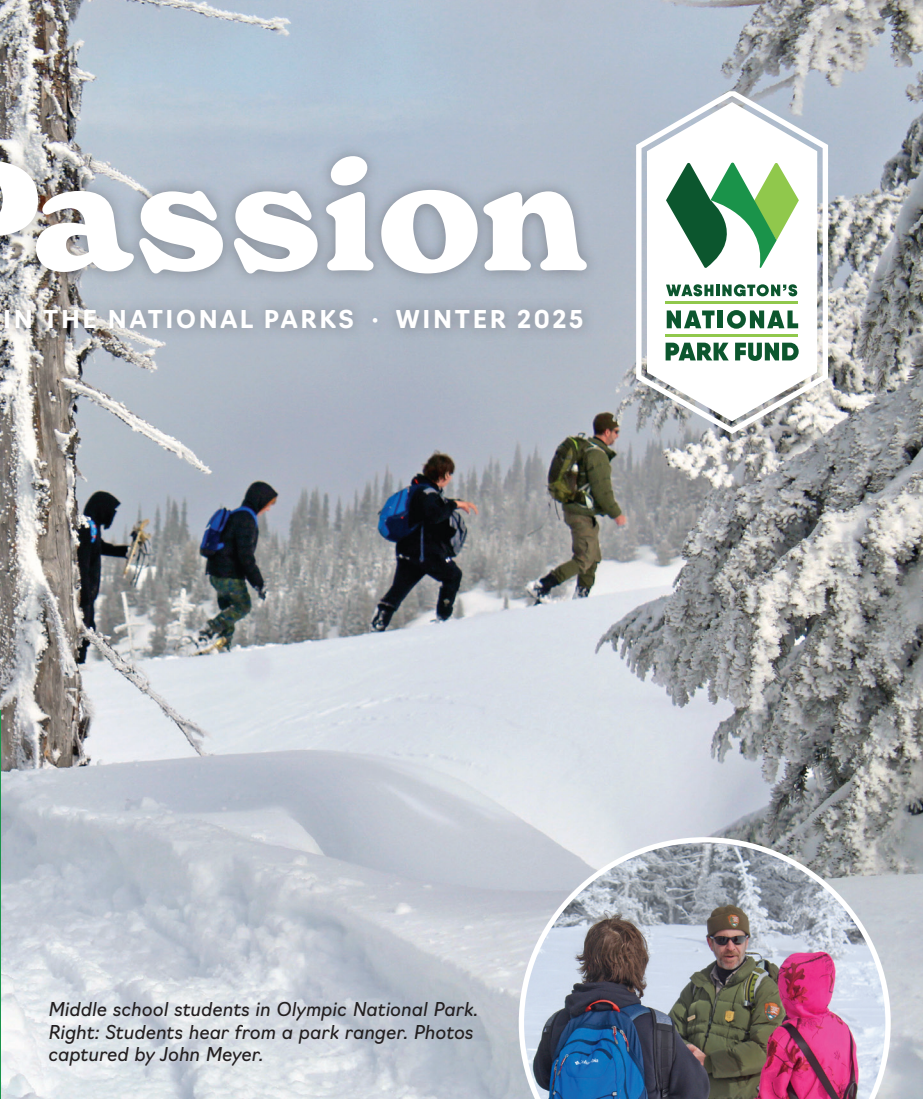


# Park Passion

THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS · WINTER 2025



*Middle school students in Olympic National Park. Right: Students hear from a park ranger. Photos captured by John Meyer.*

## FRIENDS OF WASHINGTON'S NATIONAL PARKS—

I'm thrilled to share some incredible news in my first message to you as CEO of Washington's National Park Fund.

Thanks to your unwavering support, we've achieved an exciting milestone—allocating \$1.3 million in funding for 32 essential projects across Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks in 2025.

These projects — ranging from science and research to restoring trails, enhancing visitor access, advancing equity, and more — are a testament to the power of our shared commitment to preserving these cherished landscapes for generations to come.

Thank you for making this possible. Together, we're making a lasting impact in Washington's national parks.

#ForTheParks,



Steve Dubiel  
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. In addition to funding annual projects, your contributions to WNPF's Together for the Parks campaign are enabling work to begin on Mount Rainier's Restoring Paradise initiative. Stay tuned for an update in our spring newsletter!



## Snow, Science, and Stewardship

### Your Donations Fund Middle School Field Trips in Olympic National Park

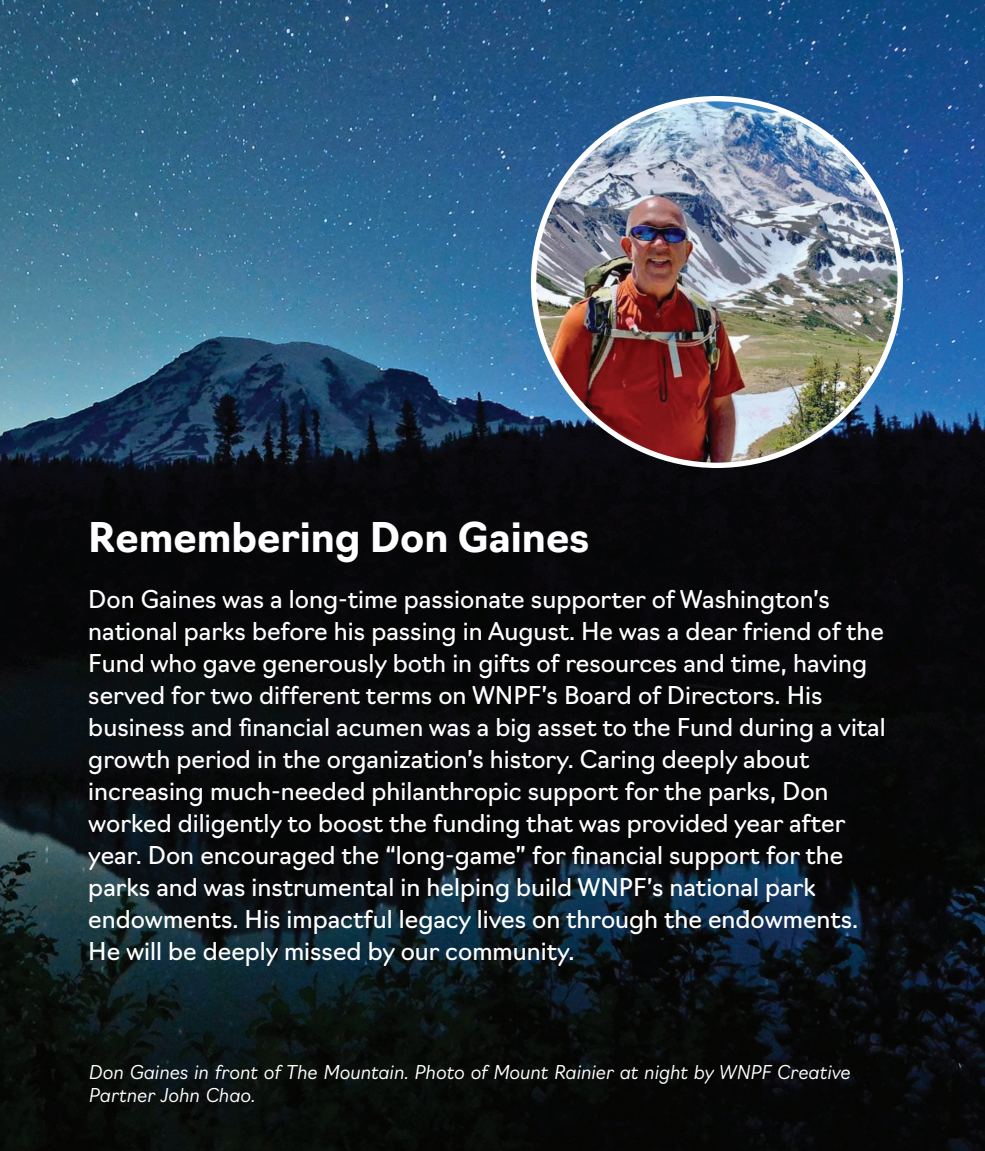
*By Alex Day, Director of Marketing & Communications*

Imagine this: a bunch of middle schoolers armed with snowshoes and hiking boots, braving the elements in the name of science. That's exactly what goes down for the seventh and eighth grade students at Stevens Middle School in Port Angeles thanks to Olympic National Park's middle school science program, supported in part by donors to Washington's National Park Fund.

### Young Scientists, Snowflakes, and Serious Fun

The park's Elwha Science and Snow Science programs aim to immerse students in hands-on experiences that cultivate a deep appreciation for our natural world while fostering essential scientific inquiry skills. Interns and rangers visit classrooms, igniting curiosity and excitement among more than 200 eighth graders. Then, through a 6-hour field trip to the Elwha River, many of these budding scientists get to collect data and conduct their own...

*Continued on page 3*



## Remembering Don Gaines

Don Gaines was a long-time passionate supporter of Washington's national parks before his passing in August. He was a dear friend of the Fund who gave generously both in gifts of resources and time, having served for two different terms on WNPf's Board of Directors. His business and financial acumen was a big asset to the Fund during a vital growth period in the organization's history. Caring deeply about increasing much-needed philanthropic support for the parks, Don worked diligently to boost the funding that was provided year after year. Don encouraged the "long-game" for financial support for the parks and was instrumental in helping build WNPf's national park endowments. His impactful legacy lives on through the endowments. He will be deeply missed by our community.

*Don Gaines in front of The Mountain. Photo of Mount Rainier at night by WNPf Creative Partner John Chao.*



## OUR FLAT HAT SALUTE

This issue's Flat Hat Salute goes out to our friends at REI Co-op, Patagonia, Rainier Watch, and Washington Trails Association, who supported a meaningful camping experience in Mount Rainier National Park for BIPOC youth.

Organized by Rachel Heaton, member of the Muckleshoot Tribe, WNPf was honored to help organize a trip for youth who don't typically have opportunities or resources to get outside. The weekend in the national park helped them learn how to camp, set up a tent, and, most importantly, find connections with nature. Read about the trip at [wnpf.org/camping-trip](https://wnpf.org/camping-trip).

## PRESERVING THE PARKS FOR THE LONG RUN

Are you interested in leaving a legacy for the parks? WNPf holds permanent endowment funds for each park whose investment earnings are contributed to the parks to support priority projects. With this continued stream of funding, endowments are a worthwhile place to designate funds for estate planning. By contributing to the endowments, you are not only helping to maintain the beauty and integrity of these parks but also ensuring that future generations can experience their wonders. You can learn more about the endowments and how to make an endowment gift at [wnpf.org/endowments](https://wnpf.org/endowments).

## Your Gifts in Action

"In 2018, Tolmie Peak Lookout was my first solo hike, and it inspired me to pursue a career in the outdoors. Now in 2024, this was a full circle moment for me to be at the same lookout, with some of the same volunteers who took care of the lookout and trail that holds some core memories for me. I can't thank volunteers enough for what they do!"

— Kacee Saturay, Donor Stewardship & Social Media Manager

Mount Rainier's 2,000-strong volunteer program – a program that receives about two-thirds of its funding from WNPf – protects the park's fragile alpine meadows, performs backcountry patrols and wildlife surveys, and offers guest interpretive programs.

Kacee Saturay, WNPf's Donor Stewardship and Social Media Manager, had the opportunity to join the dedicated volunteers tasked with reopening Tolmie Peak Lookout for visitors. Go behind the scenes and see what goes into reopening a historic lookout at [wnpf.org/tolmie](https://wnpf.org/tolmie).



*Heading to Tolmie Peak, by Kacee Saturay.*

investigations, all while getting knee-deep in the action of Elwha River restoration.

And the seventh graders aren't left "out in the cold." Despite the historic Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge burning down in 2023, the park quickly pivoted, working with teachers to offer more programming in classrooms (instead of in the Day Lodge, as in years past). Though the park had to downsize the student groups to accommodate the new schedule sans Lodge, more than 80 seventh graders were schooled in the art of snowshoeing and winter weather survival before donning their snowshoes and embarking on field trips to Hurricane Ridge to collect snowpack data.

**Building Bridges, Cultivating Conservation**

Thanks to partnerships with the Port Angeles School District and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, this program offers more than just a day in the park for local middle schoolers – it's a bridge to traditional ecological knowledge and a pathway to lifelong learning.

"This project allows us to serve all the middle school students in the Port Angeles School District and builds on a series of experiences that students have throughout their elementary school years," shares Dean Butterworth, Outreach and Education Specialist at Olympic National Park.

**"The hope is that these repeated positive experiences in the park will create lifelong learners and park supporters."**

By nurturing curiosity and instilling a sense of responsibility towards public lands, we empower students to become passionate advocates for the preservation of national parks.



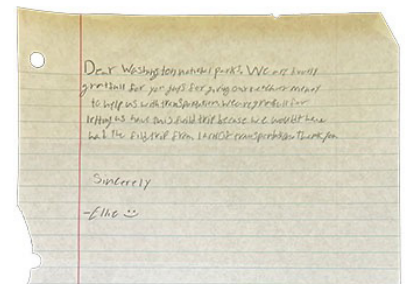
Learning about snow levels at Hurricane Ridge. Photo by John Meyer.

**The Role You Play**

Donors help make this possible through contributions to Washington's National Park Fund. These funds provide for seasonal staff to lead field trips to the Elwha River for the 8th grade students as well as the bus transportation needed to host the field trips.

We are especially grateful to our friends Kim and Scott Fancher and Sue and Gary Villella, as well as the Thomas O. Brown Foundation, Albert Haller Foundation, James M. Lea Foundation, Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation, and Wild Tribute for their generous support of the middle school science program.

Together, we can invest in inspiring the next generation of land stewards and make a difference that resonates far beyond the boundaries of Olympic National Park.



Ellie, a student at Stevens Middle School, wrote a thank you note to WNPf. It reads, "We are grateful for [you] letting us have this field trip because we wouldn't have had the field trip from lack of transportation. Thank you."

**Dozens of Park Projects Taking Place – Thanks to You!**

This year, 32 annual park projects will receive funding to the tune of \$1.3 million. And these grants come on the heels of WNPf's largest one-time project grant in its history: In March, nearly \$700,000 was awarded to Mount Rainier National Park to begin work on Restoring Paradise, one of the multi-year special projects WNPf is raising funds for as part of the Together for the Parks campaign.

This work would not be possible if not for the thousands of dedicated Washington national park supporters in Washington and beyond – thank you! See all the projects your support makes possible at [wnpf.org/funded-projects](http://wnpf.org/funded-projects).

**MEET THE WNPf BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Tony Hoskins (Chair) • Alma Busby Williams • Jane Eckels • Beth Glosten • Teresa Hagerty • Fred Hammerquist • Cynthia Hartwig • Ayesha Harper • Kelly Lake • Dan Miller • Kirk Myers • Mitch Pittman • Karen Povey • Ilona Rossman • Sunil Shah • Bruce Tecklenburg • Margot Tsakonas • Joel VandenBrink

And join us in welcoming our newest board member, Victoria Allen!



Climbers on Mount Rainier, by 2024 Climb for a Cause participant Catherine Maffett.

## Climb for a Cause

### 2025 Climbs Are Open!

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), a bucket list goal for many, while giving back to a place that's special to them: Washington's incredible national parks. And the best part? You don't have to be an experienced mountaineer – the climb includes glacier travel skills training while on the mountain. This unique fundraising climb is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Check out the climbs we're hosting this summer and reserve your spot today at [wnpf.org/climb](https://wnpf.org/climb).

## Events

For a full list of events, visit [wnpf.org/events](https://wnpf.org/events)

### THURSDAY, JAN. 16

#### Virtual Field Trip: Meet Our New CEO

Join us to hear from Steve Dubiel, followed by Q&A. Sign up at [wnpf.org/field-trips](https://wnpf.org/field-trips)

### MONDAY, JAN. 20

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

One of the first fee-free days of the year! Learn more: [wnpf.org/fee-free](https://wnpf.org/fee-free)

### THURSDAY, JAN. 30

#### Over the Top Society Luncheon

Interested in joining us and becoming an OTT member? Visit [wnpf.org/OTT](https://wnpf.org/OTT)

### MONTH OF FEBRUARY

#### Black History Month

See how the parks celebrate: [wnpf.org/BHM](https://wnpf.org/BHM)

### FRIDAY, FEB. 7

#### Virtual Field Trip: A Stewardship Toolbox for Mapping Wilderness Character: A Case Study in the North Cascades

Join us to hear the results of a recent research project by Andrew Giacomelli. Sign up at [wnpf.org/field-trips](https://wnpf.org/field-trips)

### MONTH OF MARCH

#### Women's History Month

See how the parks celebrate: [wnpf.org/women](https://wnpf.org/women)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 2

#### Mount Rainier National Park's 126th Birthday

The park was established on March 2, 1899. Learn more: [wnpf.org/mount-rainier](https://wnpf.org/mount-rainier)

### TUESDAY, MARCH 4

#### Pints for the Parks: Old Stove Brewing

Join us in Ballard for 'Giving in the Gardens.' Details: [wnpf.org/community](https://wnpf.org/community)



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