Washington's National Park Fund Celebrates Mount Rainier National Park, Recipient of Two National Honors for Volunteer Stewardship and Accessibility

Big Picture

- Mount Rainier National Park received two 2026 National Park Service Director's Awards for Excellence in Service.
- The park's volunteer Meadow Rovers received the Excellence in Volunteerism Innovation Award.
- Interpretive Media Specialist Patti Wold was the national recipient of the 2026 Accessibility Leadership Award.
- Washington's National Park Fund proudly supports both efforts, from Meadow Rover coordinators to the park's Access for All project.

Seattle, Washington (November 23, 2026) – Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF), the official philanthropic partner of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks, congratulates Mount Rainier National Park on receiving two **2026 National Park Service Director's Awards for Excellence in Service**. The annual awards recognize exceptional work by employees, volunteers, and partners across the National Park System. Of the five Excellence in Volunteerism Awards presented in 2026, the Meadow Rovers received the Innovation Award. Within the Director's Awards for Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, Wold was the recipient of this year's Accessibility Leadership Award, which honors leaders with at least five years of tangible results benefiting the disability community.

"Mount Rainier shines when it comes to not only caring for a fragile landscape, but finding ways to welcome everyone to experience it," said Steve Dubiel, CEO of Washington's National Park Fund. "National recognition like this is a testament to the devoted park staff and volunteers who do this work every day. We're proud that donors have helped power both award-winning programs, and we're thrilled to see the National Park Service recognize what so many visitors already know."

- **Meadow Rovers: Excellence in Volunteerism Innovation Award**
  Meadow Rovers are volunteers who patrol the trails above Paradise and Sunrise, Mount Rainier's two most popular alpine destinations. A single square foot of subalpine meadow can hold as many as 80 plants, and one step off trail can crush 20 of them. Rovers protect that ground through education rather than enforcement, sharing the "why" behind staying on trail while also keeping visitors safe through Preventive Search and Rescue. In 2025, 319 Meadow Rovers contributed 14,124 hours of service and connected with 224,758 visitors. WNPF donors fund both Meadow Rover Coordinator positions, along with the vehicles, radios, and safety supplies the program depends on for success.

- **Patti Wold: Accessibility Leadership Award**
  Over the past five years, Interpretive Media Specialist Patti Wold has advanced accessibility across every corner of Mount Rainier National Park, from museum exhibits and interpretive signs to site evaluations and staff training. Among her many accomplishments, Wold created Access for All, a multi-year collaboration launched in 2023 to make Mount Rainier's trails, facilities, and digital resources more accessible to people of all abilities. WNPF donors have supported the project from the start, beginning with a $55,000 grant to acquire a High-Efficiency Trail Assessment Process (HETAP) machine, which helps evaluate trails for accessibility, surface conditions and maintenance needs; WNPF also supports hiring of seasonal staff to build an online accessibility guide for the park.

The National Park Service presents the Director's Awards for Excellence in Service annually; 2026 recipients were honored at a ceremony at the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. See the full list of 2026 National Servicewide Award recipients.

About Washington's National Park Fund
Washington's National Park Fund (WNPF) is the official philanthropic partner of Mount Rainier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. Founded by former Washington Governor and U.S. Senator Dan Evans and legendary mountaineer Lou Whittaker, WNPF is the only nonprofit dedicated exclusively to supporting Washington's three largest national parks. To date, WNPF has awarded more than $13 million to advance stewardship, visitor safety, and the long-term health of these parks. Learn more at wnpf.org.

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