

# WASHINGTON STATE WATCHABLE WILDLIFE CONFERENCE

September 12-13, 2007 | Crystal Mountain at Mount Rainier, Washington

## ACTIVITIES IN AND AROUND CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN

### HIKING TRAILS:

#### From Hwy 410

**Crystal Lakes:** A favorite of the locals. This is a fairly aggressive, 5 mile round trip hike to high alpine lakes with great views of Mt. Rainier. The trailhead begins at the parking lot ½ mile north of the road to White River Entrance.

**Clover Lake:** This is one of those hikes where you can go and go as far as you want -- a string of six alpine lakes to take you. You won't get any vistas of Mt. Rainier, but you'll see a rather imposing rock formation called The Palisades. And the herd of elk or other wildlife that you could encounter just might inspire you. From Enumclaw, drive Highway 410 to Mount Rainier National Park's White River entrance, and then proceed 11 miles on White River Road to the parking area at Sunrise Point, a hairpin curve at 6,150 feet elevation. The trail begins across the road at the north end of the horseshoe bend in the curve. Alas, this is a truly peculiar hike because the high point is right there. Yes, right where you start. Look over the stone railing and you can see the first lake in the chain, Sunrise Lake. The second one, Clover Lake is your destination, a good one for a family outing with kids.

#### CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN AREA:

**Norse Peak:** One of the most idyllic hikes anywhere is to the top of Norse Peak, offering lovely alpine meadows, lakes, and scenic beauty all within a virtual stone's throw of civilization, namely Crystal Mountain Ski Area. While you can see the ski slopes from some vantage points along the way, there are other places where you are alone with nature and the aesthetic charm of the surrounding vistas. You could easily imagine you're hundreds of miles from any evidence of humanity. To get there, drive Highway 410 east about 35 miles from Enumclaw to the turnoff (left) to Crystal Mountain Ski Area just before the Mount Rainier National Park boundary. Go just over 4 miles to a parking area on Crystal Mountain Road at about 3,850 feet. From the parking lot, walk up a gravel spur road (No. 410) about 1/4 of a mile to the signed trailhead. The trail is on the left. The route doesn't waste any time. You get moving upward rather suddenly, ascending steeply through a forest of silver fir.

**Sunrise Area:** The road to Sunrise rises to 6400ft and is the highest driveable point in the park. There is a visitor center, cafeteria and gift shop there. Many trails begin at the Sunrise.

**Emmons Moraine Trail:** This 3 mile roundtrip hike takes you to the snout of the Emmons Glacier, the largest glacier in the lower 48. The first mile of the trail follows the Glacier Basin Trail and then you'll take a half mile side trip. There are great views of Mt. Rainier. At the end of the trail you will notice the large ice caves across the way.

**Dege Peak Trail:** This 2 mile round trip hike takes you to one of the best views of Mt. Rainier. This is a relatively easy hike (about 900' elevation gain) along a ridge so its great even with kids.

**Fremont Lookout:** A 5 ½ mile round trip hike to one of the last remaining lookouts in the state. (this received some damage from the November floods) On a clear day with binoculars, you can actually see the Space Needle in Seattle. The trail starts high at Sunrise on the northeast side of the mountain. You get there by driving Highway 410 to the White River entrance to the park. Proceed 14 miles to Sunrise, elevation 6,400 feet. From the picnic area, take the Sourdough Ridge Trail upward.

**Shadow Lake:** This hike has great views of Mt. Rainier. It is an especially good hike with children since there are often lots of marmots and kids can play around the lake.

**Grand Park:** This is an anomaly in the park. Many millennia ago, a lava flow filled a canyon, streams were diverted and the lava was left as a high tableland covered with pumice. The wildflowers are beautiful here, and there is generally a small herd of elk present. This is a 13 mile roundtrip hike, with an elevation gain of only 700' in and 1500' out. You'll take the Wonderland Trail west, to the Northern Loop trail to Berkeley Park. Berkeley Park is beautiful with springs, marmots, and waterfalls.

**Burroughs Mountain:** Any part of this hike is beautiful. The crowds tend to dwindle as you get further along. However, you should be aware that the trail crosses a large snowfield that often doesn't melt until very late in the season. Check with a ranger for conditions before setting out. You will see tundra in the volcanic soil and the growing season is short

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## MOUNTAIN BIKING:

There are 35 miles of single track and access roads for intermediate to advanced riders all from Crystal Mountain area. Maps are available at the Ski Crystal Resort. Helmets are required.

There are over 25 Mountain Bike Trails in the White River area near Crystal Mountain: White River Area

Buck Creek Trail #1169	Grass Mountain Trail #1170	Christoff Trail #1171	Divide Trail #1172
Dalles Ridge Trail #1173	Naches Trail #1175	Frog Mountain Trail #1180	Suntop Trail #1183
Noble Knob Trail #1184	Silver Creek Trail #1192	Skookum Flats Trail #1194	Cloquhoun Peak Trail #1195
Deep Creek Trail #1196	Ranger Creek Trail #1197	Palisades Trail #1198	White River Trail #1199
Dalles River Trail #1162.1			

For more information and specific details see Mt Baker/Snoqualmie Ranger District website:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/recreation/activities/mtn\\_biking.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/recreation/activities/mtn_biking.shtml)

## ROAD TRIPS:

**SUNRISE – SUNSET – NE WHITE RIVER AREA** The Native American definition of Enumclaw translates to “place of evil spirits” but those who live in the region believe it is closer to heaven because it is so close to Mt. Rainier. The town was named for a nearby mountain and the name stuck despite its dark Native American origins.

From Enumclaw it is less than a 1-1/2 hour drive to Chinook Pass and Sunrise. Chinook Pass and Sunrise are closed in the winter but SR 410 is open year round to the Crystal Mountain Ski Area and several lower-elevation trails.

The sightseeing begins at the junction of SR 164 and SR 410 east. Between Enumclaw and Greenwater, SR 410 follows the route of the Osceola mudflow that occurred about 6,000 years ago.

At about 16.6 miles, you'll find Federation Forest State Park on the right-hand of the road with several hiking trails that parallel the White River. There is also a gift shop, picnic areas and facilities. The park closes November 11 and re-opens April 2 -- hiking trails are open year-round though the Interpretive Center is closed. Camping is not allowed and there is a \$5 fee to park.

At 18.2 miles the road goes through the little community of Greenwater where there is a store (the Greenwater General Store), gas station, food, lodging and a modernized version of the historical “Dick Crain’s Naches Tavern”. Across the street from the Naches Tavern is Wapiti Woolies, makers of knit hats and headbands.

The Dalles Campground is located between Greenwater and the Camp Sheppard Boy Scout Camp. Camp Sheppard Boy Scout Camp also offers several hiking trails, including a link to the White River Trail and Snoquera Falls.

There is a view of Skookum Falls along the highway, especially early in the season as Skookum Falls is often dry by late summer. At about 32.0 miles the road passes Silver Springs Campground and at 33.1 miles comes to the turn off for the Crystal Mountain Resort.

Just past the turn-off to Crystal Mountain at milepost 33.2 is the Entrance arch for the Mount Rainier National Park.

As SR 410 continues to climb you'll find the trailhead for Crystal Lakes at about 37.3 miles (left). This trail goes to pristine Crystal Lakes -- en route another trail branches off and climbs to the site of a forest lookout on Crystal Peak, another strenuous hike.

At 37.8 miles the White River/Sunrise Road (right) leads to the White River Entrance of Mount Rainier National Park, the White River Campground and the road to Sunrise.

You'll want to drive up to Sunrise, as it is one of the most spectacular areas of the park. The road climbs to Sunrise Ridge in a series of switchbacks. Sunrise Point is reached just before reaching Sunrise and, in summer, you can hike the Palisades Lakes Trail. Hikers and non-hikers alike will appreciate one of the best views in the region from Sunrise Point: on a clear day you can see five of the Cascade volcanoes; clockwise from Mt. Rainier are Mt. Baker, Glacier Peak, Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood.

Sunrise is at 6,400 feet elevation, the highest point to which one can drive in the park. It is accessible to visitors only during the summer months, due to the heavy snow that blankets the mountain. The Sunrise Visitor Center is always worth a visit with its emphasis on the geologic story of Mt. Rainier. At Sunrise you will also find restrooms, grill and gift shop, and several hiking trails, many of them leading to scenic overlooks on easy paths suitable for non-hikers.

Returning to SR 410, turn right onto the Mather Memorial Parkway, which runs all the way to Chinook Pass. Steve Mather was the first director of the National Park Service and the parkway was named to honor his dedication. SR 410 (Mather Memorial Parkway) climbs and

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passes Deadwood Creek on the left. Look carefully for semi-hidden Ghost Lake (right) at milepost 40.9 -- there is no trail to the lake.

At milepost 41.3, you'll reach the intersection of SR 123, Cayuse Pass (elevation 4,694 feet) and SR 410. SR 123, south, is closed due to flood damage. Continue straight as SR 410 continues to climb and at about 44.2 miles you'll find a picnic area and several parking areas near Tipsoo Lake. Here the parkway bends around the lake to the crest of the Cascades. There are views of Yakima Peak and Naches Peak.

At Chinook Pass, the Mather Memorial Parkway ends and SR 410 goes under the Mt. Rainier park boundary, a rustic entrance arch, at 44.8 miles. A tad below Chinook Pass, there is trailhead parking for the Pacific Crest Trail and the Naches Peak Loop, one of the most popular hikes in the region.

## OTHER SIDE TRIPS WORTH INVESTIGATING:

**SUNTOP LOOKOUT** – The reward: You feel as if you are on top of the world! The challenge: the road is difficult. Turn off of Hwy 410 east of Greenwater, onto FS Rd. 73. Follow the signs to Suntop Lookout. The views on a clear day are some of the best anywhere. The road is rough and 4 wheel drive is advised.

**FOREST SERVICE ROAD 74.** This road is unique among FS roads since it is paved. As you drive up the road you'll see the west fork of the White River on your right and as you round a corner, you'll get some absolutely beautiful views of Mt. Rainier. East of Greenwater.

## OTHER THINGS TO DO:

**GREENWATER:** Scout out the variety of shopping and coffee shops in Greenwater. Wapiti Woolies is a world known producer of the finest 100% wool hats in the world. Since 1974, Wapiti Woolies has been selling hats designed and individually crafted in the community of Greenwater.

**FEDERATION STATE FOREST:** A day use park with 619 acres of old growth forests. Over 12 miles of nature trails meander through old growth forest and along the White River. An interpretive center is not to be missed to learn of the natural ecosystem. The historic Naches Trail runs through a portion of the park. Anglers can enjoy fishing in the White River, while birders can find nearly 100 bird species in the park. A checklist is available at the interpretive center. It is located 18 miles east of Enumclaw at milepost 41.

**JOHN MUIR NATURE TRAIL AT THE DALLES CAMPGROUND:** ADA accessible, .8 mile loop for all ages.

**SKOOKUM FLATS TRAIL:** The 8.2 mile (one way) flat trail provides access to Skookum Falls and the geological rock formation, "the Palisades" Located off of Huckleberry Creek Road. Good views of Skookum Falls are available from Hwy 410 viewpoint.

**SNOQUERA FALLS TRAIL:** Accessible off of Hwy 410. The 2.4 mile trail is difficult but worthwhile.