

Winter 2007

New Ground

News of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Gifford Pinchot
National Forest

Fall Storms Impact Forest Roads and Recreation Sites

November's record rainfall and subsequent flooding affected roads, bridges, trails, and Sno-Parks across the Forest. November's rain was followed by a large windstorm on December 14, which brought down trees across roads and trails. The hardest hit areas on the Forest were the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District and parts of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. On November 7, the Cowlitz River crested at more than 7-feet above flood stage. Also on the South side of Mount St. Helens, the June Lake weather station recorded 15.2 inches of rain in a 24-hour period, between November 6-7, setting a state record. Heavy snowfall followed the flood and storm events cutting off access to assess some of the damage. As a result, spring and summer snowmelt will reveal additional road and trail damage. The total damage to Forest roads and recreation facilities is currently estimated at more than \$17.3 million. Forest staff is currently working internally and with Federal Highways Administration to fund repairs to Forest roads and facilities. (Photo: Forest Road 81 – near Red Rock Pass)



Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Award



Employees of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, along with a number of community partners, have received national recognition from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation with the 2006 "[Elk Country Achievement Award for Wildlife Habitat Improvement.](#)" Partners with the Forest in this effort included, the Federal Highways Administration, Lewis County, Skamania County, students from Skamania County schools and volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Representatives of the Forest accepted the honor at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's national convention. Since

2001, Forest employees have worked with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and other partners to enhance elk forage areas across the Forest. (Photo: L-R - Tom Kogut, Mitch Wainwright, Steve Freitas, Carol Chandler, and Rocky Pankratz. Not pictured LaRae McCaslin)

Recreation Site Facility Master Planning

Recently, Forest staff began to take a close look at the Forest's developed recreation program – opportunities offered, facilities, visitor use, preferences, and recreation trends. Like many other forests in the Northwest, the Gifford Pinchot has many developed recreation sites (including campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches, and trailheads), some with costly infrastructure to maintain, such as water systems. Some of these sites were built 30-50 years ago and are showing their age. Visitor preferences and demand have changed since the 1950s-60s. As part of a National process, Recreation Site Facility Master Planning (RS-FMP), Forest personnel are reviewing these sites. Through this process and with the public's help, the Forest can make more informed decisions on where to focus limited resources to best meet visitor demand, and develop a 5-year work plan. The Forest welcomes any comments or suggestions on the results of the process and resulting proposals. More information will be able soon on the Forest website.

New Interagency Recreation Pass Replaces Golden Passports



A new interagency recreation pass that will benefit visitors to national public lands was unveiled in December. The pass combines the benefits of existing recreation passes from five federal agencies into one pass, the "America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Interagency Pass." Access to most public lands remains free. The new program replaces the Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and the Golden Access Passports as well as the

National Parks Pass. Existing Golden passes will remain valid until expired, lost, or stolen. Sales of the new pass started in January 2007. A new annual interagency pass costs \$80. Senior passes are still \$10 and the disabled Access pass is still free. For more information, [please visit the Forest website.](#)

How to reach us:

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Mt. Adams Ranger District

2455 Highway 141
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Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument

42218 NE Yale Bridge Road
Amboy, WA 98601
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Mount St. Helens Visitor Center: Silver Lake

3029 Spirit Lake Highway
Castle Rock, WA 98611
(360) 274-0962

Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center

Located at MP 43
(360) 274-2114
FAX: (360) 274-2129
TTY: (360) 274-2102

Johnston Ridge Observatory

Located at MP 52
(360) 274-2140
TTY: (360) 274-2102

Internet:

www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/



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Urban Youth Christmas tree Harvest



On a cold Saturday morning in early December, the Forest Headquarters in Vancouver, Wash., was full of activity. Children and adults of all age groups gathered with an objective in mind - their Christmas tree. This day marked the 17th Annual Urban Youth Christmas tree harvest hosted by the U.S. Forest Service, and partners from

Vancouver Housing Authority, Vancouver/Clark Parks and Recreation Teen Services, Evergreen School District 112, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Vancouver Branch, and the Community African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Beginning in 1989, these groups have teamed up to treat a special group of kids with an unforgettable Christmas experience. This year's event broke a new record with 97 people in attendance. By *Nathan Webster* – WSU-Vancouver.

2007 Mount St. Helens Climbing Permits Available Online

Thursday, February 1, marked the beginning of sales of Mount St. Helens climbing permits for the 2007 climbing season. Climbing permits are sold online, in advance through the Mount St. Helens Institute at www.mshinstitute.org with fees and purchase procedures the same as last year. Additional information about the climbing permit system is available on the [Forest website](#).



Volcano Volunteers Needed



The Forest and the Mount St. Helens Institute are currently recruiting volunteers to assist with volcano visitor information, climbing and backcountry services, and trail maintenance during the spring and summer of 2007. Opportunities range from weekend projects to season-long internships and volunteer positions. For more information contact the Mount St. Helens Institute at (360) 449-7883 or visit the Forest website at

www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/volunteering/BecomeaVolcanoVolunteer.shtml

Sno-Park Updates



Wondering what conditions are like at your favorite Forest snow play area? Visit the Forest website for updates of the conditions at Sno-Parks around the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Forest personnel update that site at least once a week.

www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/winter/current-conditions.shtml

Skamania Winterfest Scheduled for President's Day Weekend

The annual Skamania Winterfest at Oldman Pass, on the Wind River Highway north of Carson, Wash., will take place February 17-18, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Skamania County Parks and Recreation has a number of family-oriented activities planned. For more information, call (509) 427-9478.

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