

GROVE OF THE PATRIARCHS BRIDGE REPLACEMENT & TRAIL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Mount Rainier National Park

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Where can I learn more about this project and hear about any updates?

A: The project planning site is here: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/GroveOfThePatriarchsBridgeAndTrail>. We will also be posting construction updates here: <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/park-construction.htm>. A detailed Storymap about the project is located here: <https://arcg.is/0bu1DP1>.

Q: Why has the Grove of the Patriarchs bridge been closed for so long?

A: Severe flooding and heavy drift in November 2021 caused major structural failure to the 1961 suspension bridge, forcing its immediate closure and removal for safety. Because the Ohanapecosh River experiences dynamic flood events, engineering experts conducted comprehensive hydrological and geotechnical studies to design a relocated, longer structure that can withstand future climate and river conditions rather than repeating past flood damage.

Q: How does the new bridge design differ from the original structure?

A: The original bridge was 110 feet long and sat lower over the river. The new bridge is approximately 215-foot-long suspension bridge positioned 30 to 35 feet high. It includes a 5-foot-wide deck, ground anchors, micropile foundations, and an integrated stiffening truss to eliminate swaying and ensure long-term stability.

Q: What steps are being taken to protect old-growth trees and threatened wildlife during construction?

A: Environmental protection is a top priority. Construction will utilize highline rigging to suspend materials across the river, avoiding heavy ground equipment in delicate root zones. Work timelines are coordinated with annual field biologist surveys to ensure no disruption to protected Northern Spotted Owls or Marbled Murrelets during critical nesting seasons.

Q: When will the Grove of the Patriarchs reopen to the public?

A: Following public open houses in August 2026 and environmental compliance completion in 2027, trail and bridge construction is planned for 2028. The bridge and trail are scheduled to welcome visitors back in 2029.