



Nisqually to Paradise Corridor Management Plan Summer 2020 Newsletter

Introduction

The National Park Service is seeking public input to better understand issues and opportunities for visitor travel and recreation along the road from Nisqually Entrance (Ashford) to Paradise. The plan is in the early stages of development (see Planning Process and Timeline), and the National Park Service needs your help identifying key issues and potential management strategies.

Where is the Nisqually Corridor?

The Nisqually Corridor is a popular year-round transportation corridor in the southwestern section of the park on Paradise Road, starting at the Nisqually Entrance near Ashford, WA, and ending at Paradise (see map). The roads along the Nisqually Corridor are significant cultural and historic resources and lie within the Mount Rainier National Historic Landmark District. Surrounding the road corridor are remarkable natural resources and vast areas of federally designated wilderness. This plan will address issues related to visitor experience and resource protection throughout this corridor.

What will the plan consider?

The plan will consider key issues related to visitor experiences, natural and cultural resource protection, and vehicular crowding and congestion along the historic road from the Nisqually Entrance Station to Paradise. The planning process will provide recommendations for supporting high-quality public access to this area of the park while providing protection for natural and cultural resources and decades of positive visitor experiences.

Purpose of the Park

The purpose of Mount Rainier National Park is to protect and preserve unimpaired the majestic icon of Mount Rainier, a glaciated volcano, along with its natural and cultural resources, values, and dynamic processes. The park provides opportunities for people to experience, understand, and care for the park environment and provides for wilderness experiences and sustains wilderness values.



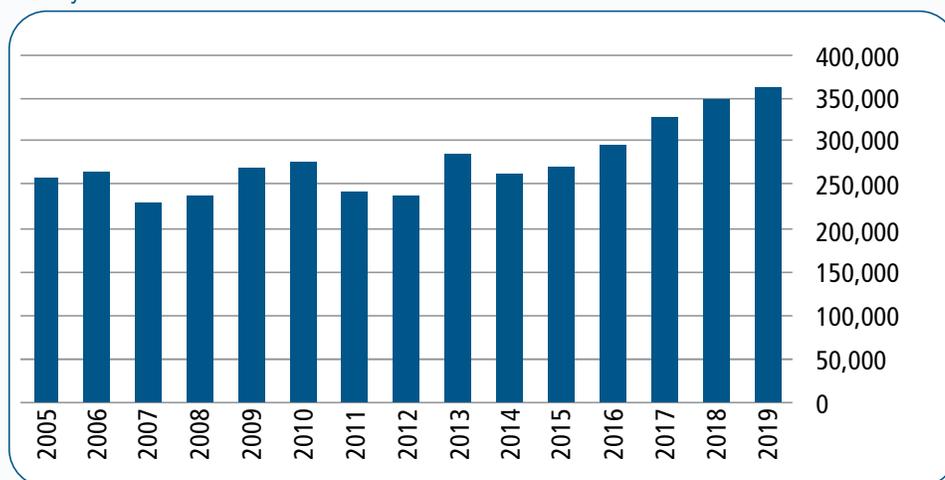
This planning process will develop strategies that protect and preserve key resources that contribute to the purpose and significance of this national park. These strategies will provide guidance for protecting fundamental resources such as the Mount Rainier National Historic Landmark District, wildflower meadows, and year-round access to high-quality recreational experiences, even if visitation levels increase substantially over the next decade.

Summary of Key Issues

This plan is needed to meet the changing needs of park visitors and to support positive visitor experiences in a sustainable manner. Mount Rainier grows in popularity each year and experienced a 30% increase in visitation between 2008 and 2018. In fact, 70% of annual visitation occurs between July and September, and most use is concentrated in a small number of destinations including the Paradise area. This corridor management plan is needed to address the following current issues within the Nisqually Corridor:

- **Quality of the visitor's experience from arriving to leaving the park**
- **Traffic congestion leading up to the park entrances and on the Nisqually and Paradise Roads**
- **Congestion in parking lots**
- **Quality of the experience at visitor facilities, scenic viewpoints, and along trails**
- **Damage to subalpine meadows, streamside vegetation, and other natural resources**
- **Protection of culturally significant transportation assets like roads, trails, and bridges**

July Visitation to Mount Rainier National Park



Planning Process and Timeline

The National Park Service is beginning the first phase of a three-phase planning process (see graphic below). The anticipated schedule for project milestones and opportunities for public input are as follows.

Phase 1: Summer 2019 – Winter 2020

- Define purpose and need for the project
- Initiate civic engagement

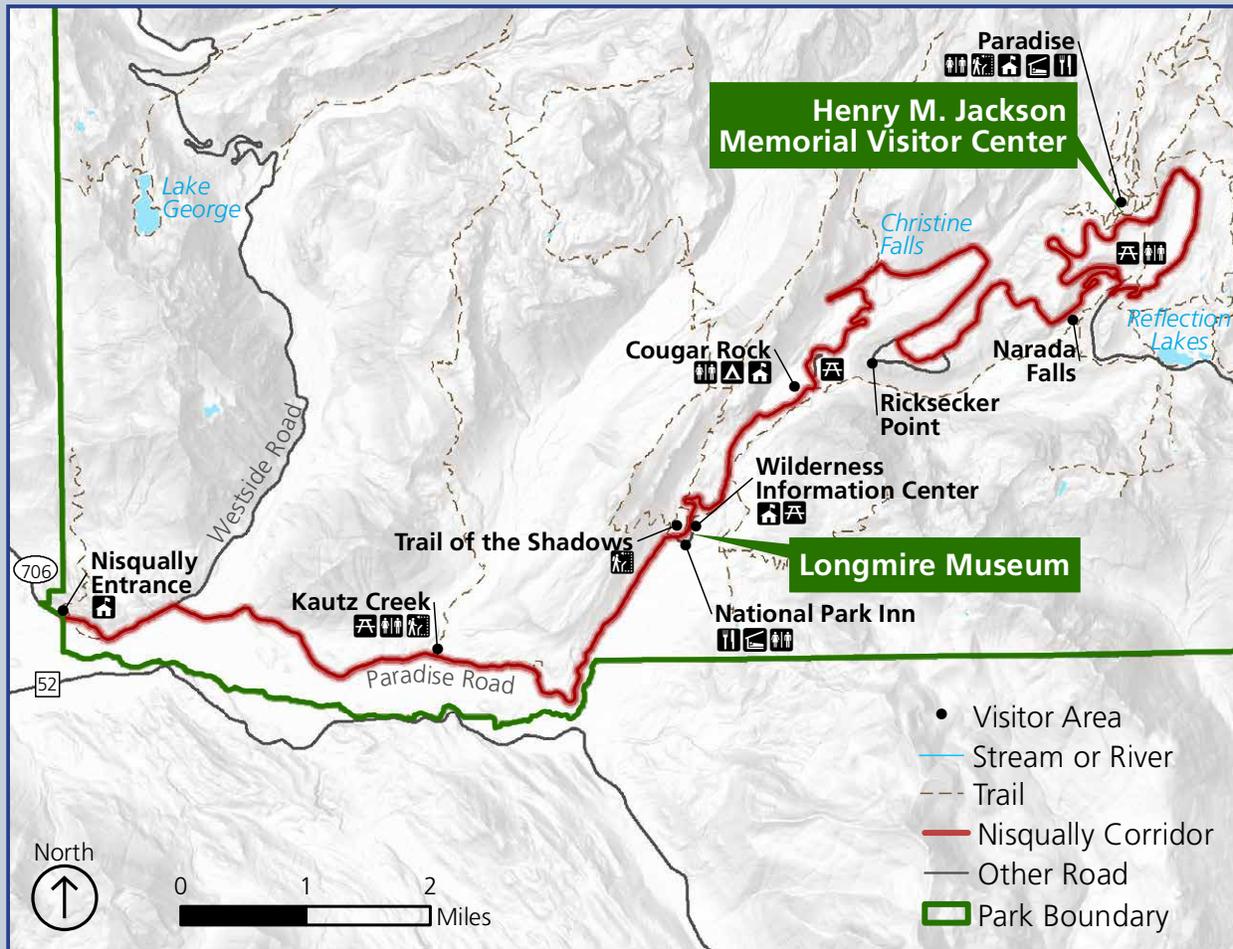
Phase 2: Winter 2020 – Summer 2021

- Explore potential strategies
- Request public input to inform plan development

Phase 3: Fall 2021 – Winter 2021

- Refine strategies and draft plan
- Hold public meetings and civic engagement events
- Finalize plan





HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

Between **August 10, 2020, and October 5, 2020**, you are invited to participate in the planning process (see details at parkplanning.nps.gov/NisquallyCorridor) as the first of several opportunities. The information gathered through this planning process will inform decision-making and priority-setting for public investments over the next decade. During this comment period, it is most helpful if you respond to as many of the following questions as you can.

1. What experiences in the Nisqually Corridor do you find most important?
 - » How are these experiences unique from other experiences you have in the rest of the park and/or in Washington state?
 - » What kind of experiences do you want future visitors/generations to have when they come to Paradise, Longmire, and other destinations along the Nisqually Corridor?
2. What issues most interfere with your desired park experience within the Nisqually to Paradise Corridor?
3. What strategies would you like the planning team to consider when brainstorming transportation and visitor experience solutions for the Nisqually Corridor?
4. What is the park doing well to manage these issues that you would like to see continue?

