National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2022



Paradise Picnic Area

Mount Rainier National Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Paradise Picnic Area

Resource Classification: Cultural Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 976213

Parent Landscape: 976213

Inventory Status: Complete

Park Information

Park Name: Mount Rainier National Park

Alpha Code: MORA

Park Organization Code: 9450

Park District: MORA

Region: Pacific West

Restricted: Yes

Landscape Description:

Paradise Picnic Area straddles the border of Pierce and Lewis counties in Washington State, approximately 70 miles southeast of Tacoma, Washington, and 20 miles east of Ashford, in the southern portion of Mount Rainier National Park. Centered around the iconic namesake active volcano, Mount Rainier National Park covers over 236,000 acres in the Cascade Mountains, the vast majority of which are designated as preserved wilderness. In addition to the mountain and its alpine glacial environment, Mount Rainier National Park boasts a variety of subalpine ecosystems, including dense old growth forests, subalpine meadows, and glacial valleys associated with several significant watersheds for the Puget Sound region, including the Paradise, Cowlitz, Nisqually, Puyallup, and White rivers.
Paradise Picnic Area is located on the southern slope of Mount Rainier, near the popular Paradise Inn (1916) and the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center (2008), and due west of Barn Flats. It is accessed by Nisqually to Paradise Road, which connects the Nisqually Entrance at the west side of the park to the Paradise Developed Area (including Paradise Inn and the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center) and to Stevens Canyon Highway. In turn, Stevens Canyon Highway connects to State Route 123 on the east side of the park.
Paradise Picnic Area is a good and intact example of National Park Service (NPS) Mission 66-era development in Mount Rainier National Park. The area was targeted for development under Mission 66 due to its location near the Paradise Developed Area, one of the park's most popular visitor destinations, and the need to provide more visitor parking and day-use facilities including picnicking and restroom facilities. Elements associated with this era of development, which were primarily constructed between 1964 and 1966, include the picnic area, four comfort stations, and the internal circulation (roadways) and parking network.

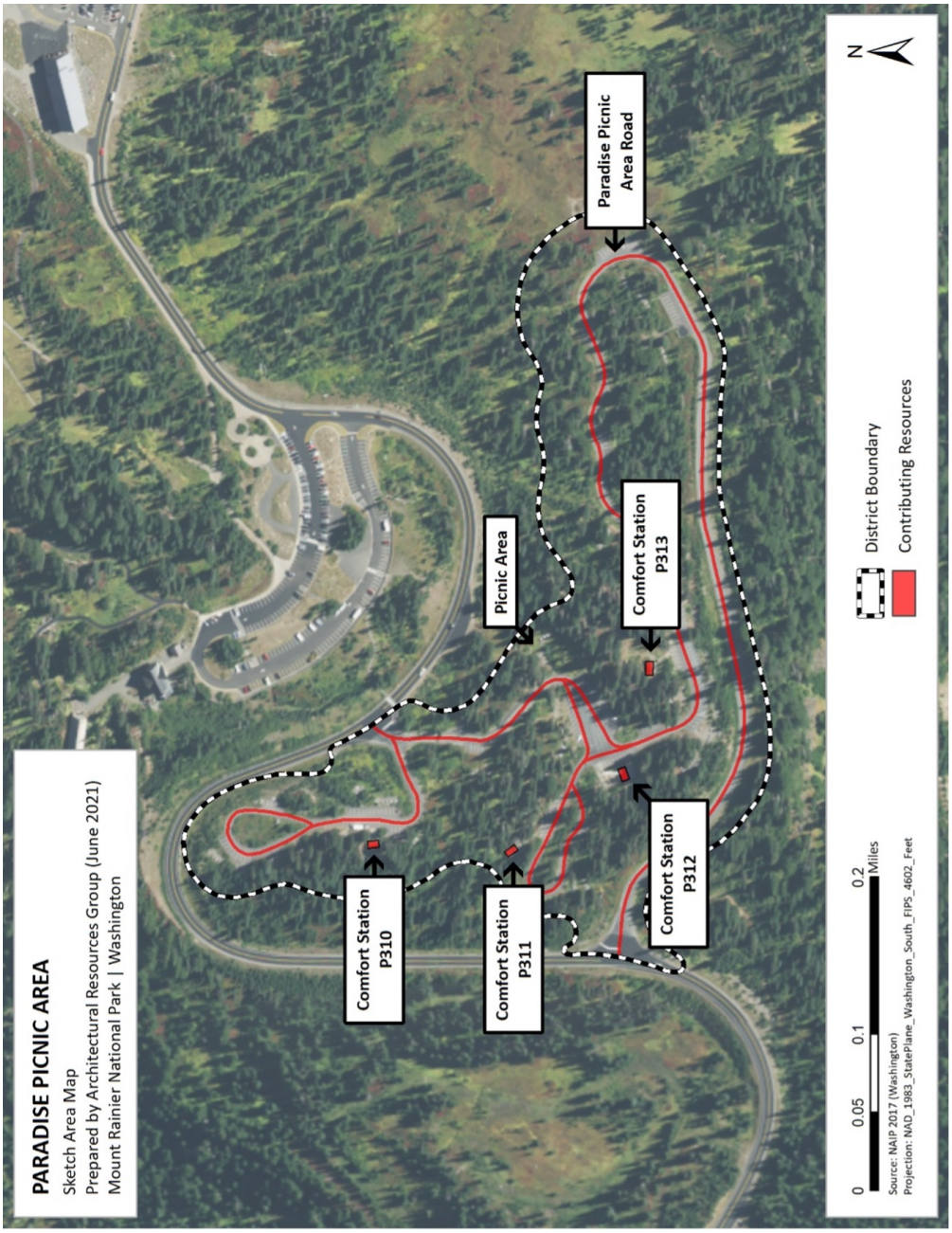
Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Paradise Picnic Area is a cultural landscape without any component landscapes.

Landscape Type:

Other Names:

Site Plan



Site Plan

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	09/29/2022

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

A determination of eligibility was completed by Architectural Resources Group, evaluating NR eligibility of the Paradise Picnic Area under the NPS Mission 66 and Parkscape context.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Washington	Pierce County

Size (Acres): 1

Land Tract Number(s)

Boundary Description:

Paradise Picnic Area straddles the border of Pierce and Lewis counties in Washington State, approximately 70 miles southeast of Tacoma, Washington, and 20 miles east of Ashford, in the southern portion of Mount Rainier National Park. Centered around the iconic namesake active volcano, Mount Rainier National Park covers over 236,000 acres in the Cascade Mountains, the vast majority of which are designated as preserved wilderness. In addition to the mountain and its alpine glacial environment, Mount Rainier National Park boasts a variety of subalpine ecosystems, including dense old growth forests, subalpine meadows, and glacial valleys associated with several significant watersheds for the Puget Sound region, including the Paradise, Cowlitz, Nisqually, Puyallup, and White rivers. Paradise Picnic Area is located on the southern slope of Mount Rainier, near the popular Paradise Inn (1916) and the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center (2008), and due west of Barn Flats. It is accessed by Nisqually to Paradise Road, which connects the Nisqually Entrance at the west side of the park to the Paradise Developed Area (including Paradise Inn and the Henry M. Jackson Memorial Visitor Center) and to Stevens Canyon Highway. In turn, Stevens Canyon Highway connects to State Route 123 on the east side of the park.

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
	Point	46.785146	-121.743728	
	Point	46.781423	-121.742797	
	Point	46.782014	-121.744908	
	Point	46.782635	-121.737905	

Location Map:



Location Map of Paradise Picnic Area

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/29/2022

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Paradise Picnic Area is located within a National Historic Landmark and therefore falls under management category A.

Management Agreements:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: SHPO Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

A Determination of Eligibility was prepared by the Architectural Resources Group of the Paradise Picnic Area for listing on the National Register under the Mission 55 and Parkscape context.

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 01/07/2022

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: Local

Contributing: Individual

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

Paradise Picnic Area is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. As described below, the picnic area meets the thresholds outlined in the NPS Mission 66 Era Resources Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form for Mission 66 historic districts. Furthermore, the area's major contributing resources meet the characteristics for associated property types as described in the MPD. The Paradise Picnic Area Historic District's period of significance is 1964-1966, reflecting the period in which the contributing resources associated with the area's Mission 66 development were constructed. The period encompasses the development of the internal circulation network and parking as well as the construction of Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, and P313. There is no evidence that any development occurred at the campground under Mission 66's subsequent program, Parkscape USA (1967-1972), indicating that any development or alterations that occurred after 1966 (i.e., the replacement of the water supply stations at Comfort Stations P310 and P312, changes to the paving plan, etc.) was not funded through the Mission 66 or Parkscape USA programs. As such, the period of significance ends in 1966 with the completion of the circulation network, picnic area, and comfort stations.

Paradise Picnic Area is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with Mission 66 development in America's national parks. Established in 1899, Mount Rainier was America's fifth national park and the first to have a comprehensive master plan; due to its proximity to a major metropolitan area and its location within a fast-growing region of the country, it was a bellwether of changing visitor use patterns within the park system, and so it was selected also to be the first national park with a development plan under the Mission 66 program. Paradise Picnic Area was among seven

picnic areas proposed under the Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park, in addition to Stevens Creek, Box Canyon, Tipsoo Lake, Cayuse Pass, Sunrise, and Sunshine Point. Mission 66 projects at Paradise consisted of the development of the multi-loop circulation and parking area, construction of paved pathways, concrete picnic table pads, and four comfort stations, and installation of picnic tables and trash cans. Paradise Picnic Area retains a high level of integrity to this period of its development.

The developed area is also eligible under Criterion C for its representation of Park Service Modern architecture and NPS planning during the Mission 66 period. Mission 66 redefined what types of facilities national parks needed to serve the public, and these new ideas were reflected in new types of day-use sites, such as picnic areas, and amenities, such as comfort stations with running water. Paradise Picnic Area's design reflects concepts that were established for Mission 66 public use areas, and Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, and P313 embody the Modern design aesthetic employed throughout the national park system during Mission 66.

Paradise Picnic Area is eligible under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance. Multiple developed areas located within Mount Rainier National Park have been recommended for National Register inclusion for their association with the Mission 66 development of the park, including Cougar Rock Campground, White River Developed Area, and the Tahoma Woods Employee Residential Area. Furthermore, potentially eligible Mission 66 developed areas are located in other NPS-managed areas in Washington, including Olympic National Park. For this reason, Paradise Picnic Area is eligible at the local level of significance.

Criterion A
Paradise Picnic Area is one of several developed areas at Mount Rainier National Park that were constructed during Mission 66, and it is one of seven picnic areas that were planned under the program. The selection and development of Paradise Picnic Area reflects the Park Service's desire to increase parking capacity near Paradise and to provide more and better facilities for the park's increasing number of day-use visitors. The picnic area (including more than a hundred individual picnic sites), four comfort stations, and parking and circulation network were completed at Paradise Picnic Area between 1964 and 1966, the conclusion of Mission 66 programming in America's national parks. All of the buildings and structures proposed for Paradise Picnic Area under the park's Mission 66 development plan were constructed and remain extant.

The developed area contains multiple distinct contributing property types including a day-use area (comprising the internal circulation and parking network as well as the picnic area) and four comfort stations. Despite minor alterations to the comfort stations, the replacement of two original water supply stations, and some modifications to the parking areas, Paradise Picnic Area is among the more intact Mission 66 developed areas at Mount Rainier National Park: its overall layout and configuration (circulation patterns, spatial relationship between contributing resources, etc.) and all of the buildings constructed during Mission 66 are intact. For these reasons, Paradise Picnic Area is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance for its association with Mission 66 development in Mount Rainier National Park.

Criterion C
Paradise Picnic Area is also significant for its representation of Park Service Modern architecture and NPS planning during the Mission 66 period. The developed area reflects the planning and design concepts that were established for Mission 66 developed areas, such as vegetal privacy screening between groups of picnic tables. Furthermore, as described in the above section regarding associated property types, the comfort stations within the developed area reflect standardized designs developed during the Mission 66 period and possess characteristics of the Park Service Modern Style, the development of which was influenced by the Modern Movement. Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, and P313 retain a horizontal emphasis, medium-pitched gable roofs with wide eaves, aluminum windows, and an overall lack of applied ornamentation or historical references. The buildings are also responsive to their environment, in that they are wood-framed, clad in wood siding, and sited to complement the forested landscape surrounding the developed area. For these reasons, Paradise Picnic Area is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level of significance.

National Register Significance Criteria:

A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1964 - CE 1966

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Category: Entertainment - Recreation

NRIS Information:

State Register Documentation:

National Histric Landmarks:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1964 - 1966	Built	The internal circulation and parking system within the Paradise Picnic Area was developed
CE 1964 - 1966	Built	A Picnic Area comprising 120 tables on asphalt-paved pads was established.
CE 1964 - 1965	Built	Four comfort stations (Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, P313) were constructed within the Paradise Picnic Area.

Physical History:

Geologic History and Indigenous Habitation of Mount Rainier

Mount Rainier National Park encompasses 236,381 acres in Pierce and Lewis counties in Washington State and is centered on Mount Rainier, a 14,411-foot active stratovolcano. Alongside the rest of the Cascade Range, Mount Rainier was formed by the subduction of the Juan de Fuca tectonic plate under the western side of the North America tectonic plate. Formation began approximately 500,000 years ago, and the mountain grew to an estimated height of 16,000 feet. Between 7,300 and 5,500 years ago, massive volcanic mudflows known as the Reflection Lakes Lahar and the Paradise Lahar swept across the Paradise area and down the Nisqually River valley, with the Reflection Lakes Lahar moving as far south as Mazama Ridge and the Reflection Lakes. Approximately 5,600 years ago, the Osceola Lahar lowered the summit by more than a thousand feet. Subsequent smaller mudflows have been identified by geologists, but no significant eruptions have occurred in the past 500 years.

Archaeological evidence suggests that humans began to inhabit the valleys and plains surrounding Mount Rainier at least 15,000 to 10,000 years ago. Between about 9,000 and 8,500 years ago, as temperatures warmed and the glaciers that formed during the most recent ice age began to recede, humans commenced seasonal use of the mountain's mid- to upper-elevation landscapes. Indigenous peoples established seasonal camps in the transitional area between the mountain's mid-elevation forests and the subalpine areas, where they resided during the summer and early fall. From these base camps, they made excursions to the mountain's upper forest, subalpine, and alpine tundra environments, where they gathered plants and hunted game including deer, elk, mountain goats, birds, marmots, and mountain beaver. At the end of the season, some groups set fires to prevent encroachment from the surrounding forests and to encourage revegetation, before returning to lower elevations for the late fall, winter, and early spring.

The descendants of the region's earliest human inhabitants include the Cowlitz, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, and Yakama peoples, whose traditional practices are intrinsic with the mountain's landscape and continue to this day. These groups refer to the mountain by a variety of names, including Tacoma, Tahoma, Takhoma, Tacobet, and təqʷuʔbəʔ (phonetically similar to "tah-qw-oh-buh"). According to Nisqually historian Cecelia Carpenter, "Ta-co-bet" translates to "nourishing breasts," as the Nisqually glacier was regarded as "the place where the waters began." Traveler and writer Theodore Winthrop, who visited the region in 1853, reported that the name Tacoma was "a generic term also applied to all snow peaks," while indigenous mountaineer and farmer So-To-Lick told one early American settler that Tahoma meant "highest" or "highest hill." The name "Rainier" was conferred by Captain George Vancouver of the British Royal Navy, who sighted the mountain while mapping Puget Sound in 1792 and named it for Rear Admiral Peter Rainier.

The British would be the dominant colonial presence in the region surrounding Mount Rainier in the first half of nineteenth century, until the United States government under President Millard Fillmore

created Washington Territory in 1853. Isaac I. Stevens, the territory's governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, subsequently coerced the indigenous groups living in Washington Territory to cede much of their land to the federal government in exchange for small reservations, sometimes located far from the groups' ancestral lands. Stevens negotiated ten treaties to this effect between 1854 and 1856, involving groups and lands from across the present-day state of Washington. All of these treaties consolidated numerous culturally distinct tribes into a few large tribal entities, imposing political, geographical, and territorial divisions that did not exist historically, and resulted in the removal of thousands of indigenous people from their ancestral lands.

Three of Stevens' treaties involved land within the present-day boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park: the Treaty of Medicine Creek, the Treaty of Point Elliot, and the Treaty with the Yakama. The Treaty of Medicine Creek, concluded in December 1854 with representatives of the Nisqually, Puyallup, Steilacoom, Squawskin (Squaxin Island), S'Homamish, Stehchass, T'Peeksin, Squi-aitl, and Sa-heh-wamish, nullified indigenous claims to more than two million acres around the south end of Puget Sound and eastward to the crest of the Cascade Range. The Treaty of Point Elliott, concluded in January 1855 with representatives of the Duwamish, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, Snohomish, Lummi, Skagit, Swinomish, and other tribes, encompassed all of the western slope of the Cascade Range in Washington Territory north of the area ceded by the Treaty of Medicine Creek. The Treaty with the Yakama, concluded in June 1855 with representatives of the Kah-milt-pah, Klickitat, Klinquit, Kow-was-say-ee, Li-ay-was, Oche-chotes, Palouse, Pisquose, Se-ap-cat, Shyiks, Skinpah, Wenatshapam, Wishram, and Yakama, described a land cession boundary "commencing at Mount Ranier" (sic) and circling around the Columbia Plateau to "the main ridge of the Cascade Mountains; and thence along said ridge to the place of beginning."

In exchange for these cessations, the federal government pledged a haphazard and unequal array of monetary payments and small reservations, as well as permanent rights of access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds. Disagreements over the treaties' conditions and over the quality and extent of the reservation lands led to Puget Sound War of 1855-1856 and the Yakima War of 1855-1858, both of which resulted in a disproportionate loss of indigenous lives. The nature of the hunting and fishing rights detailed in these treaties was also in dispute until the Boldt Decision of 1974, which reaffirmed the rights of numerous tribes to fish in their accustomed places. Today, indigenous peoples whose ancestral lands lie within or near Mount Rainier National Park continue to utilize the landscape in connection with their traditional cultural practices.

American Settlement and Tourism on the Slopes of Mount Rainier

Although the region was officially incorporated into the United States in 1853, American colonizers made only brief forays to Mount Rainier until the 1880s, when James Longmire became the mountain's first permanent American settler. Longmire had assisted the first known expedition to summit Mount Rainier in 1870, and in 1883 had succeeded in climbing the mountain himself. In the same year, he came upon the mineral springs along the Nisqually River southwest of Mount Rainier's summit. Recognizing the area's potential for tourism, Longmire filed a twenty-acre mineral claim in 1887 and developed a modest resort including two bathhouses, guest cabins, and the Longmire Springs Hotel. The resort, which Longmire advertised in regional newspapers, became a popular tourist attraction as well as a stopping point for climbers.

The Northern Pacific Railway, which completed a line to Tacoma in 1883, joined Longmire in promoting tourism at Mount Rainier during the late nineteenth century. Through the late 1880s and early 1890s, as additional rail lines were completed and local roads were improved, the number of visitors to the mountain increased dramatically. Thousands of tourists visited the western side of the mountain annually, stressing its fragile subalpine meadows and forests as they hiked, camped, and hunted in areas that lacked trails or sanitation facilities. The industrial logging industry, which had acquired hundreds of thousands of acres of timberland from the public domain in the 1880s, posed an even greater threat to the mountain's virgin forests. Concerns about long-term damage to Mount Rainier's ecosystem soon led local residents, mountaineering clubs, and conservationists such as John Muir, to appeal to Washington state representatives for regulation and protection of the mountain and its surrounding forests.

The Pacific Forest Reserve and the Campaign to Create Mount Rainier National Park

The federal government's first, tentative step to protect Mount Rainier and its environs came in 1893, when President Benjamin Harrison authorized the creation of the Pacific Forest Reserve in west-central Washington. Established under the auspices of the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, the Pacific Forest Reserve centered on the crest of the Cascade Range and included much of Mount Rainier and its eastern flank. While local interests and conservation advocates alike were encouraged by federal interest in protecting Mount Rainier, many were skeptical that forest reserve designation would afford the mountain adequate protection from logging activities or draw government funding for necessary road development. Furthermore, the boundaries of the reserve did not include Mount Rainier's western glaciers, leaving a significant portion of the mountain's ecosystem without formal protection.

Recognizing the inadequacies of the Pacific Forest Reserve, a group of scientists, climbers, conservationists, and business interests led a campaign to establish a national park at Mount Rainier. Much of the support for national park designation came from western and central Washington State, channeled through local newspapers, mountaineering clubs and conservation groups, business associations, and even University of Washington faculty. This sustained regional interest played a critical role in the eventual creation of Mount Rainier National Park, as it required more than five years of effort on the part of Washington state senators and congresspeople. The first bill to create a "Washington National Park" was proposed by Washington Senator Watson C. Squire in December 1893, just ten months after Harrison had authorized the Pacific Forest Reserve, but disagreements over proposed boundaries, concerns that a park would drain the federal budget, and difficulties surrounding land acquisitions delayed progress for years. Following a series of amendments, the bill finally passed both houses of Congress on March 1, 1899. President William McKinley signed it into law the following day, making Mount Rainier the country's fifth national park.

Early Development and the Automobile in Mount Rainier National Park

In the first four to five years after the park's creation, Mount Rainier welcomed more than 500 visitors each summer season. Most arrived via the “Mountain Road,” which had been constructed by James Longmire in 1893 and led from present-day Ashford only as far as the Longmire Resort. The Mountain Road was the only road leading into the park that could accommodate stagecoaches and horse teams at this time; other routes, such as the Bailey Willis Trail that began in Wilkeson, were passable only on foot or horseback. Most early visitors to Mount Rainier National Park hired a packer and saddle horses, either in Ashford or at Longmire Springs, and rented camping equipment from small concessioners before venturing on to Paradise. Other visitors joined expeditions organized by mountaineering clubs, including the San Francisco-based Sierra Club and the Portland-based Mazamas.

Circumstances dictated that early visitors stay overnight in the park, with most remaining for two days or longer. However, following the completion of the Tacoma and Eastern Railroad to Ashford and the inauguration of a connecting stage service to Longmire Springs in 1904, the park began to welcome day-use visitors for the first time. A significant increase in day-use visitors occurred in 1907, when the first automobiles were able to access the park via a newly constructed road to Longmire Springs. Park administrators were initially wary of the increasing number of day-use visitors, and of automobile travel to and through the park. In 1906, Acting Superintendent Grenville F. Allen argued that automobiles should be prohibited within the park, as “the presence of these contrivances would be a source of great annoyance and some danger to the public generally.” However, under pressure of local automobile clubs, Secretary of the Interior James R. Garfield authorized Allen to open the park to cars in 1907.

Mount Rainier National Park was the first national park to sanction the use of automobiles and did so only under carefully considered restrictions. Automobiles were required to carry a special permit issued by the superintendent and were allowed to operate during very limited hours. Drivers were held to a speed limit of six miles per hour, except on straight sections where no horse teams were visible, where the speed limit was set at fifteen miles per hour. Despite these usage restrictions, however, by 1910 nearly twice as many visitors came to the park by car as by train and stage. The early advent of automobile travel in Mount Rainier National Park, as well as the significant increase in visitors that followed, had a pervasive impact on the park’s approach to infrastructure development and the visitor experience. Transportation developments became even more important to park administrators, as did the distinction between the “front country,” developed for day-use visitors who arrived via automobiles, and the less accessible “backcountry,” reserved for visitors who desired a primitive camping experience away from most tourists.

As visitor numbers increased and as overnight stays became a matter of choice rather than necessity, park administrators also worked to increase and improve formal lodging options within Mount Rainier National Park. The Longmire Springs Hotel, constructed by James Longmire in 1890, was the only hotel within the boundaries of the park at the time of its establishment; operated by the Longmire family until 1916 and by concessioners thereafter, this hotel offered a “rustic” option to guests. A second and more upscale hotel, the National Park Inn, was constructed in Longmire by the Tacoma Eastern Railroad Company and opened for business in summer 1906. For those who desired a more rugged alternative, concessioner-operated campgrounds operated at Indian Henry’s Hunting Ground, near Longmire, and on the east shoulder of Alta Vista and at Theosophy Ridge, both near Paradise on the southern slope of the mountain.

By 1908, visitor numbers had increased sufficiently to justify the hiring of two permanent rangers; prior to this point, Superintendent Allen been authorized to hire only seasonal help. Among other duties, rangers constructed trails to serve as patrol routes and improve access to the backcountry; they completed the park’s flagship trail, the Wonderland Trail, in 1915. At the same time, the United States Department of War managed the construction of a road connecting the Nisqually entrance to Paradise. Completed in stages between 1905 and 1915, this “pleasure road” was designed to conform to the mountain’s topography and showcase its dramatic vistas. It was one of the earliest scenic mountain roads in the entire national park system and established a precedent for later road development in Mount Rainier National Park.

The National Park Service and Mount Rainier National Park's First Master Plan

The pace and direction of development within Mount Rainier National Park was significantly impacted by the creation of the National Park Service (NPS), a new agency within the Department of the Interior, in 1916. Authorized by the "Organic Act" under President Woodrow Wilson, the NPS was made responsible for protecting the thirty-five national parks and monuments then in existence and any that would be established in the future. An Executive Order signed in 1933 would later transfer fifty-six national monuments and military sites from the Forest Service and the War Department to the NPS, establishing the latter as the primary federal manager of sites of natural, historical, recreational, and scientific importance.

The first director of the NPS was Stephen T. Mather, a California mountain climber, conservationist, and the millionaire part-owner of the Thorkildsen-Mather Borax Company. As a businessman himself, Mather was a strong advocate of encouraging private development within national parks as a means to satisfy visitor demand and attract new demographics to the parks. Following a visit to Mount Rainier National Park and a high-level assessment of its facilities, Mather offered a group of Tacoma and Seattle business leaders an exclusive concession for recreational development in the park. The group accepted Mather's offer and formed the Rainier National Park Company (RNPC) in 1916. The RNPC played a prominent role in shaping the park over the next few decades, beginning with construction of the Paradise Inn in 1916. The company also established the first commercial guide service for the climbers attempting the summit.

Efforts to develop park facilities and infrastructure gained momentum in the 1920s, as park visitors continued to increase in number and demanded more elaborate and extensive amenities and services. Just as Mount Rainier National Park had been at the forefront of automobile access and road development in the 1900s, the park also took the lead in developing a style of rustic architecture that was eventually adopted in national parks across the country. Known as "NPS Rustic" or "Parkitecture," this style was influenced by the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement and is characterized by intensive use of hand labor, native materials including wood and stone, asymmetrical floor plans in buildings and structures, and an effort to blend landscape features with the natural surroundings. Dozens of new structures and landscape features in this style were constructed throughout the park in the 1920s, most notably the Longmire Administration Building and other buildings in the Longmire area.

As visitor numbers at Mount Rainier National Park continued to increase year over year, the NPS recognized the need for an organized planning effort to direct the development of roads, concessioner services, and administrative facilities through the late 1920s. The five-year plan subsequently produced for Mount Rainier National Park was the first master plan of its kind in the national park system. The development that followed included partial construction of the Westside Road, improvement and expansion of the Paradise area, and new development at Sunrise on the northeast side of the mountain.

Mount Rainier National Park during the Great Depression and World War II

Annual visitation to Mount Rainier National Park reached a quarter of a million people by the end of the decade but fell substantially with the onset of the Great Depression. However, campground use increased during the same period, as those visitors who did make their way to the park sought to reduce the cost of their trip through affordable lodging options. Less well-developed areas, such as Carbon River and Ohanapecosh, saw increased visitation relative to the more developed Sunrise, Paradise, and Longmire areas as visitors rejected park hotels in terms of tent- or car-camping. Demand for activities that were self-guiding or free-of-charge, such as ranger-led nature walks, evening lectures, self-guiding nature trails, and picnicking, also increased during this period.
Although construction within the park stalled during the first years of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal catalyzed a fresh period of intensive development in the mid- and late 1930s. In contract to the developments of the 1920s, the main focus of construction in the 1930s shifted away from major road and hotel construction and toward smaller projects that could be accomplished by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crews created by the New Deal. Between 1933 and 1940, the CCC operated camps at Tahoma Creek, Narada Falls, Ipsut Creek, St. Andrews Creek, White River, Ohanapecosh, and Sunshine Point, with as many as two hundred men in each camp. These men completed campground improvements, road and trail improvements, backcountry shelters and fire lookouts, landscape rehabilitation, plant beds, scenic turnouts, picnic areas, and various other projects during their time at the park.
The advent of World War II halted development in Mount Rainier National Park and in parks across the country, as Congress slashed park appropriations and terminated the CCC in 1942. The NPS was obligated to pause construction programs, defer maintenance to existing facilities, and slash the number of seasonal hires in all of its parks, even as a number of permanent employees were drafted into the U.S. military. Visitor numbers at Mount Rainier National Park, which had risen in the late 1930s as the country recovered from Great Depression, declined nearly 75 percent between 1941 and 1943. Along with other national parks, Mount Rainier was called upon to redirect some of its resources for military training and testing during the war. The U.S. Army's first "Military Ski Patrols," including the 10th and 87th Mountain Infantry Divisions, were trained on the slopes of the mountain and quartered in government housing at Longmire. The 938th Aviation Engineers also undertook snow camouflage tests on the mountain, and busloads of soldiers stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, received free trips to the park in the interest of boosting morale. These activities peaked in 1942 and concluded in late fall of 1943, about two years prior to the end of the war.

The National Park Service and Mission 66

Although visitation to America's national parks had declined sharply during World War II, these numbers rebounded swiftly as soon as wartime gasoline rationing and travel restrictions ended in late 1945. Mount Rainier National Park alone welcomed nearly half a million visitors in 1946, an increase of more than 50 percent from 1945 and nearly 350 percent from 1944. Visitor numbers broke half a million in 1947 and continued to climb through the end of the decade, straining the park's existing infrastructure, overwhelming staff and threatening the mountain's ecosystem with overcrowding and pollution.

National parks throughout the country faced a similar predicament, as park budgets remained stuck at pre-World War II levels despite a nationwide surge in visitor numbers. Conrad Wirth, who had become NPS Director in 1951, summarized problem in a 1956 speech, explaining, "In a large part visitors to the national parks today are not finding the satisfaction that they have a right to expect." Wirth pointed out that in 1955, America's national parks hosted more than 50 million visitors in a park system designed to accommodate only half that number, and with fewer staff than had been employed at the onset of the war.

Wirth had inherited the difficult task of managing a national park system with severely deteriorated or underdeveloped facilities and rapidly growing visitation. His plan, branded the "Mission 66" program, would accommodate the estimated 80 million people who were anticipated to visit national parks by the 50th anniversary of the NPS in 1966. For older parks like Mount Rainier, Yosemite, and Crater Lake, Mission 66 meant redevelopment, with upgrades to existing infrastructure and some new buildings, such as visitor centers, while for newer parks, the Mission 66 program would provide the first large influx of funding and the opportunity to create and implement park-wide planned development.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a consistent supporter of public works projects, personally endorsed the Mission 66 program. In the spring of 1956, Congress indicated a willingness to go along with the $700 million budget for the ten-year program by increasing the agency's budget for fiscal year 1957 to $68 million (up from $32 million in 1955). Further increases led to annual budgets of over $100 million by 1962. Mission 66 proved to be the most effective means of increasing NPS appropriations since New Deal "emergency spending" legislation.

Mission 66 did not conclude in 1966 as the NPS intended. Although Congress had spent about $1 billion nationwide on land acquisition, new staff and training, and construction projects in national parks by the 1966 deadline, there were still many projects that remained incomplete. As a result, the NPS initiated the program's final phase, "Parkscape USA" (1967-1972). In addition to completing program projects that were underway or planned in 1966, new parks, with an emphasis on national scenic riverways and trails, were introduced and incorporated into the national park system under Parkscape USA. The end of Parkscape USA coincided with the 100th anniversary celebration of Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.

Under the Mission 66 program, the National Park System grew by 70 park units, and the agency added entirely new categories of parks, including national recreation areas and national seashores. The NPS constructed or improved thousands of miles of roads and hundreds of miles of trails, as well as thousands of structures for visitor services or NPS support. Many parks received adequate water, sewer, and electric service for the first time. As historian Ethan Carr notes, "By the end of Mission 66, even the most remote parks enjoyed basic utilities, a visitor center, a maintenance yard, and standard housing for employees." The Mission 66 program had reinvented the national park system as well as the NPS itself in order to meet the demands of postwar American society.

Basic Elements of Mission 66 Park Development

Mission 66 architecture represented a departure from the “NPS Rustic” or “Parkitecture” style that had characterized development in the national parks during the 1920s and 1930s (for example, the development at Longmire in Mount Rainier National Park). By the 1950s, NPS architects designed buildings that adapted various strains of postwar American modernism while also being mindful of the programmatic and aesthetic requirements of individual national parks. The new “Park Service Modern” style, as described by Sarah Allaback in Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type, employed contemporary building types such as ranch houses and made full use of steel, concrete, prefabricated elements, non-traditional fenestration, and climate control. Mission 66 buildings were utilitarian, functional, and without the historical references found in the NPS Rustic style. Architects designed major buildings such as visitor centers and ranger stations individually, while employee residences, comfort stations, utility buildings, and other smaller/secondary buildings were typically based on standardized designs in an effort to limit costs.

To provide centralized visitor services as well as expanded employee housing and support services, the NPS created entirely new developed areas within most national parks. By concentrating visitor services in a developed area, planners sought to mitigate the impact on parks’ fragile resources. These concentrated developments usually contained some combination of functional areas, including visitor services, visitor accommodations (such as picnicking and camping), employee housing, and park support services. These functional areas were typically divided into two distinct zones: visitor services and park support. Park support areas such as housing, administrative buildings, and maintenance yards were typically separate and screened from public view. Modern roads allowed vehicular access between these sites.

Implementing these plans meant revamping park road systems, and automobile travel emerged as a driving force behind park planning and design. Mission 66 planners were charged with upgrading outmoded roads that had been designed for less traffic and had become badly congested (and in some cases, severely deteriorated), while simultaneously minimizing the impact of roads in sensitive areas. Park roads were widened, resurfaced, regraded, and realigned to accommodate the larger, faster, and more numerous vehicles of the postwar era. Planners also reconfigured parking lot design, layout, and flow. Increased vehicular traffic also influenced building placement and the design of some buildings, such as employee residences with attached garages or carports.

The NPS also prioritized other projects that would either modernize existing park facilities or provide new accommodations and recreational facilities. Accommodations, or the lack thereof, had been a particular problem in the past; rangers frequently found visitors sleeping on the ground in informal, unauthorized campsites or in their cars prior to Mission 66. The NPS thus developed policies to encourage new concession lodging, and the agency sought to provide free or low-cost options such as car and trailer campgrounds with modern comfort stations and new or upgraded utility systems. Nearly 18,000 campsites were added in new or expanded campgrounds nationwide under Mission 66, significantly broadening public access for those of more modest means. Concessionaires were also encouraged to build or expand trailer villages and cabin complexes, in order to provide an array of options for overnight visitors.

The NPS also sought to remedy deficiencies in maintenance and utility areas and employee housing through Mission 66. Maintenance areas were critical for supporting the new, modern buildings and roads, and the agency built 218 new maintenance or utility buildings under Mission 66. These were typically located out of public view, and they were often adjacent to but separate from employee residential areas. Maintenance areas typically included a shop, usually a rectangular building of standard design, as well as a paved yard enclosed by a wall or fence. Employee housing had long been insufficient both in quantity and quality of housing stock—most park housing had been built in the 1920s and 1930s, and sometimes lacked electricity and running water. The Mission 66 program intended to bring employee living standards up to par with what was available in a modern suburb (including streets and, in some cases, sidewalks). Architects designed standardized house plans, which were then used to build single-family residences and small-scale multi-family units during Mission 66. By 1966, the agency had constructed 743 single-family and 496 multi-family residences at parks across the country.

Mission 66 at Mount Rainier National Park

Mount Rainier National Park was the first national park to have a development plan under the Mission 66 program. The park's proximity to a major metropolitan area (Seattle/Tacoma), its early acceptance of automobiles, and its location in a fast-growing region of the country made it an early indicator of changing use patterns within the national park system. The trends that defined visitor use in the first fifty years of the NPS—including greater reliance on private automobiles, shorter stays, and an increase in overall numbers—emerged early in Mount Rainier, as did the demand for more free public camping options, reduced concessions revenues associated with increased preferences for day use, and problems with overcrowding. Because of the urgency of these issues, and because Mount Rainier appeared to act as a bellwether for visitor use trends across the national park system, it was selected for early implementation of the Mission 66 program.

The Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park was released on March 15, 1956. The plan proposed more than $10 million in development over the next decade, including approximately $4.3 million for road development, $2.7 million for the relocation of the park headquarters, and $3.8 million for visitor use facilities including visitor centers, campgrounds, and picnic areas. The central objectives of the plan included circulation improvements, to alleviate overcrowding; the expansion of day-use facilities, to serve the increasingly large number of day-use visitors; and the relocation of overnight guest and administrative facilities to lower elevations within or near the park.

The plan's first objective, circulation improvements, represented approximately 42 percent of the estimated total investment of Mission 66 programming in Mount Rainer and was central to the park's strategy to reduce overcrowding by dispersing visitors more broadly around the park. The roads were also intended to be a park attraction in and of themselves: one 1956 memo, released early in the Mission 66 planning process, promised, "This entire road system will be treated in such a way that the visitor will enjoy numerous scenic, recreational, and interpretive experiences as he drives through the park." The main road-building projects proposed in the Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park included the completion of Stevens Canyon Highway, construction of a new winter access road to Paradise (now called the Paradise Loop Road), and improvement of the Westside, Carbon River, and Mowich Lake roads.

Completion of Stevens Canyon Highway was the most highly anticipated element of the Mission 66 program for Mount Rainier National Park, as it would enable motorists to make a complete loop around the mountain, leaving from Seattle or Tacoma in the morning and returning in the same day. It would also connect the park's two most popular visitor sites, Paradise and Sunrise, and improve administrative efficiency. Construction on the road had been initiated in 1931, with most of the right-of-way nearing completion before World War II forced a hiatus of nearly a decade. Bridges at the Muddy Fork and Nickel Creek, viaducts below Stevens Creek, a tunnel near the Muddy Fork, and masonry retaining walls and parapets were completed between 1950 and 1952, and by the summer of 1952, Stevens Canyon Highway was passable to trucks and used for limited administrative purposes. Mission 66 provided much-needed funding to bring the road to completion, and it opened to the public in summer 1957.

Construction of the Paradise Loop Road, a new road from Narada Falls to Paradise, was the second and largest component of Mount Rainier's Mission 66 road construction program. The new road completed a loop with the existing road through Paradise Valley, easing summer traffic congestion and providing a safer winter route for visitors and Park Service staff. The third major component of the park's road construction program, the improvement of the Westside, Carbon River, and Mowich Lake roads, improved access to the west and north sides of the park while preserving much of the surrounding area as wilderness.

The second objective driving the Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park was the expansion of day-use facilities, including picnic areas, visitor centers, and wayside exhibits that would facilitate self-guided automobile tours of the park. Day-use and overnight use areas were to be completely separated, with the latter at lower elevations and the former dispersed widely throughout the park. The Mission 66 development plan proposed adding seven new picnic areas throughout Mount Rainier National Park, at Stevens Creek, Box Canyon, Cayuse Pass, Tipsoo Lake, Sunrise, Paradise, and Sunshine Point. Visitor centers were proposed for Paradise, Sunrise, Longmire, and

Ohanapecosh, ultimately resulting in the construction of new buildings at Ohanapecosh (1964) and Paradise (1966) and the reuse and functional reorientation of existing buildings at Sunrise and Longmire.

Wayside exhibits, originally viewed as a stopgap measure to compensate for inadequate museum facilities, were a major component of Mission 66 interpretive plans for Mount Rainier National Park. The park's first two wayside exhibits, at Tipsoo Lake and in the Kautz Creek flood area, had been installed in the late 1940s and were immensely popular with day-use visitors. Park naturalist Howard Stagner proposed new wayside exhibits at Nisqually, Puyallup Canyon, the Longmire homestead cabin, Canyon Rim, Reflection Lakes, Box Canyon, and Carbon River, as well as "viewfinders" at Ricksecker Point and Sunrise Point, and simpler "text signs" at Christine Falls, Narada Falls, Glacier Bridge, Ohanapecosh Hot Springs, White River Bridge, and beside the andesite columns on the road to Sunrise. Other interpretive programs expanded or implemented under Mission 66 included campfire programs, which were led by park naturalists at the outdoor amphitheaters or "campfire circles" at larger campgrounds, and self-guided nature tours.

The third and final objective of the Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park, to relocate overnight guest and administrative facilities away from the center of the park, drove proposals for the development (and redevelopment) of lower-elevation campgrounds, the relocation of park headquarters away from Longmire, and the removal of hotels to lower elevations or to areas outside of the park. Park planners reasoned that this redistribution of facilities would benefit both staff and visitors, as well as the natural environment. Construction at lower elevations tended to be more affordable, given the proximity to major population centers and access to utility systems. Gentler climatic conditions created fewer maintenance concerns and allowed for longer visitor seasons, as well as provided more pleasant living conditions for year-round staff. Finally, visitors to the park could be more effectively distributed, in the interest of preventing overcrowding and protecting the natural landscape.

Campground development was a major aspect of Mission 66 development within Mount Rainier National Park. Prior to Mission 66 programming, the park had a total of eight campgrounds, including three at high elevations (one at Paradise and two at Yakima Park) and five at low elevations (Longmire, Ohanapecosh, White River, Ipsut Creek, and "overflow" campground at Tahoma Creek). The development plan released in 1956 proposed to expand the five low-elevation campgrounds and to add new campgrounds at Sunshine Point, Mowich Lake, and Klickitat Creek; the campgrounds at Yakima Park and Paradise would remain small and eventually be eliminated. These plans were slightly modified over the course of the decade-long program, most notably by the development of Cougar Rock Campground (two miles northeast of Longmire) in lieu of the proposed Klickitat Creek site, but were ultimately some of the most successful, popular, and enduring elements of the Mission 66 program within Mount Rainier National Park.

In contrast, the park's proposal to relocate hotel accommodations—then located at Paradise and Sunrise—to lower elevations was met with consternation from local business and political interests, who felt that keeping and expanding overnight lodging options near the center of the park was necessary for developing the state's budding postwar tourism industry. Rather than refurbishing and expanding facilities at these two sites, the Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park proposed the development of visitor lodging on the lower portion of Crystal Creek, on the east side of the park, and on Skate Creek, just outside the boundary of the park and on the south side of the Nisqually River. Washington business interests and politicians immediately decried these plans, arguing that the Crystal Creek and Skate Creek sites were located too far from the park's primary attractions and would ultimately discourage tourism.

In 1957, at the insistence of Washington senators Warren Magnuson and Henry Jackson, the NPS contracted Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., to conduct a feasibility study with regard to new overnight accommodations within the park. In 1959, the consultants presented a final report stating that "overnight facilities in Mount Rainier National Park [count not] be operated on a profitable basis if interest and depreciation [were] taken into consideration"; however the report also found it "practical to construct in [the Paradise] area," and argued "that such facilities so located might more satisfactorily serve the public than in any other location." These ambiguous findings spurred nearly three years of additional discussion and argument between the NPS and Washington politicians. In 1962, the Department of the Interior and the Washington State Department of Commerce and Economic Development agreed to jointly fund a study considering four sites within the park for the development of overnight lodging: Paradise, Longmire, Crystal Creek, and Klickitat Creek.

The contract for the evaluation of these four sites was awarded to Harris, Kerr, Forster & Company in

1963, following a year of negotiations between Department of the Interior and Washington governor Albert D. Rosellini. The consultants considered each site from the perspective of winter and summer use potential, nearby natural and scenic features, climate, and historical development. Unlike the Jackson Hole Preservation study four years earlier, their findings were unequivocal: “We do not recommend the construction of any hotel type accommodations within Mount Rainier National Park,” concluded the final report. The Harris, Kerr, Forster & Company report also recommended that available funding be directed toward campsite development rather than hotel construction, “because such camping facilities can be provided in available areas unsuited to hotel sites and because of the appreciably lower cost of facilities and operation per person accommodated.” Ultimately, no new hotels were constructed within Mount Rainier National Park as part of Mission 66 programming.

The NPS’s proposal to relocate administrative facilities to lower elevations was equally fraught, though it elicited far less public debate. Prior to Mission 66, Mount Rainier National Park’s administrative headquarters were located at Longmire and were susceptible to flooding from the nearby Nisqually River. The Longmire location was also disliked by year-round staff due its distance from community services, such as schools; its long and dreary winter season; and the level of visitor congestion during peak visitation. As early as the 1940s, the park service began developing plans to move the headquarters to lower elevations within or just outside the park boundaries. However, when presented with a $2.5 million relocation scheme as part of the Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park, Congress questioned whether such a large sum would be better spent on visitor facilities, rather than on administrative buildings and park housing that most of the public would never see.

The Park Service’s efforts to relocate Mount Rainier’s administrative headquarters were not fully realized for more than three decades, well after the Mission 66 program had officially concluded. A potential site near the town of Ashford, about six miles outside of the park’s western boundary, had been identified in 1943, and the costs of new development were carefully weighed against the cost of comparable redevelopment at Longmire. New development at the Ashford site, dubbed “Tahoma Woods,” was projected to be a more affordable and resilient option than the flood-prone Longmire site. Additionally, Mission 66 planning urged the deemphasis of administrative facilities, and a headquarters located outside of park boundaries fit this ideal far better than one situated in the popular Longmire area. Following several years of debate, in which the threat of flooding at Longmire featured prominently, Congress approved the purchase of the Tahoma Woods site in June 1960. Securing funding for development took several more years, and the headquarters buildings were not fully completed and occupied until 1976. A full decade after the official conclusion of the Mission 66 program in Mount Rainier National Park, its objective to relocate the park’s administrative headquarters was finally achieved.

Paradise Picnic Area

The original Mission 66 development plan for Mount Rainier National Park called to increase parking capacity and to provide new day-use picnicking facilities near Paradise, one of the park’s most popular visitor destinations. As other elements of the development plan called for the construction of a new visitor center and a loop road connecting Narada Falls to Paradise, visitation to the area was expected to increase even further in future decades, and the Park Service sought to alleviate overcrowding by providing more parking areas and amenities for day-use visitors, including attractive picnicking areas and comfort stations.

Initially, these two goals—increased parking capacity and new picnicking facilities—were to be achieved by separate projects. Park planners first considered alternatives wherein parking was provided either underground or in a multilevel above-ground enclosed structure; these were preferred to surface parking, as they would have smaller footprints, would preclude the need for snow plowing large expanses, and would minimize scarring of the landscape. Plans for underground parking, which would be the least visually obtrusive of the two options, called for two or three sublevel floors of parking beneath a new day-use building. Plans for a multilevel above-ground structure, which would be slightly more cost-effective, were informed by the then-new, eleven-story Downtown Center Garage in San Francisco. Both of these options were eventually abandoned due to cost (an estimated $2.25 million for an above-ground structure and nearly $3 million for an underground one) and aesthetics: an above-ground parking structure would be unsightly and incongruous with the natural landscape, and summer visitors would invariably prefer to park in open air as opposed to a dark underground parking structure. Ultimately, it was decided that surface-level parking was the most suitable option for increasing parking capacity at Paradise.

Plans for an integrated parking and picnic area were prepared by the NPS Western Office of Design

and Construction as early as March 1964. The contract for construction of the road, parking, picnic sites, and water, sewer, and electric systems at Paradise Picnic Area was awarded to Cumming and Webber of Portland, Oregon, in August 1964. The contract for construction of the four comfort stations was awarded a month later, to Fitzpatrick-McIntyre Construction of Tacoma, Washington; at $43,332, Fitzpatrick-McIntyre was the low-bidder on the project. Construction began before the end of the year, but stop work orders were issued to both contractors in late October 1964 due to the oncoming winter.

Construction resumed in 1965, and the four comfort stations were completed by October of that year. The paving associated with the road, parking areas, and picnic sites carried over into the following year and, with the exception of site cleanup, was completed by October 1966. Picnic tables and other furniture, including trash cans and grills, were added by NPS around this time. Since the conclusion of Mission 66 programming in Mount Rainier National Park, the roads and pathways at Paradise Picnic Area have been periodically repaved; parallel parking has been delineated along the southern edge of part of Paradise Picnic Road; the Mission 66-era trash cans have been removed and some of the picnic tables have been removed or replaced; and the comfort stations have experienced minor alterations, including the replacement of their original wood roof shingles with standing seam metal cladding, the modification of associated pathways, and the replacement of two original associated water supply stations.

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Campground/Picnic Area	Yes	Yes	Yes

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status:

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Paradise Picnic Area is a good and intact example of National Park Service (NPS) Mission 66-era development in Mount Rainier National Park. The area was targeted for development under Mission 66 due to its location near the Paradise Developed Area, one of the park's most popular visitor destinations, and the need to provide more visitor parking and day-use facilities including picnicking and restroom facilities. Elements associated with this era of development, which were primarily constructed between 1964 and 1966, include the picnic area, four comfort stations, and the internal circulation (roadways) and parking network.

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Paradise Picnic Area is a day-use parking and picnicking area located in the southern portion of Mount Rainier National Park, south of the mountain peak and approximately 17 miles east of the park's Nisqually Entrance. At an elevation of approximately 5,300 feet above sea level, the developed area is situated in a glacial valley, on a wide ridge between the drainage basins of the Nisqually and Paradise rivers. The surrounding landscape is defined by a combination of subalpine wildflower meadows and old growth forests of conifers including subalpine fir (Abies lasiocarpa) and western hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla), as well as various shrubs.
Paradise Picnic Area is accessed directly from Nisqually to Paradise Road, which extends east from the Nisqually Entrance to Mount Rainier National Park to the Paradise Developed Area. Its main circulation road, Paradise Picnic Area Road, snakes down the area's sloping topography by a series of uneven switchbacks and includes two defined loops as well as several pull-off parking areas. The overall effect is to camouflage the size and extent of the surface parking while preserving views of Mount Rainier to the north and of the Barn Flats meadow to the east. Most of the pull-off parking areas are lined with paved picnic sites including tables and barbecue grills. Native vegetation including false hellebore (Veratrum viride), subalpine spiraea (Spiraea splendens), and huckleberry (Vaccinium membranaceum) separates groups of picnic tables from the roadway and from one another, providing a degree of privacy to users. Four comfort stations, accessed via asphalt-paved pathways that connect to the parking and picnic areas, are distributed throughout the site.

Picnic Area (Contributing Site)
Constructed concurrently with Paradise Picnic Area Road by Cumming and Webber, the Picnic Area includes approximately 120 picnic tables situated on asphalt-paved pads and accessed via asphalt-paved pathways that connect to the blocks of surface parking lining Paradise Picnic Area Road and Loops A and B; no picnic tables are located along the quarter-mile stretch of Paradise Picnic Area Road between the site's southernmost block of parking and the road's western intersection with Nisqually to Paradise Road. Four Mission 66-era comfort stations are distributed through the picnic area and are discussed in greater detail below.

The majority of the picnic tables at Paradise Picnic Area are original to the Mission 66-era and feature immoveable, angular, cast concrete bases and wood plank benches and tabletops. Although a few tables are situated individually, the majority are organized into groups of two to six. Grouped tables share a single graded, asphalt-paved pad and are frequently accompanied by one or two standing barbecue grills. All picnic tables are accessed via asphalt-paved paths, occasionally featuring planed timber steps, and they are generally separated from the roadway and from other groups of tables by a combination of topography, rows of small boulders or logs, and vegetal screening. Certain groups of tables, including those concentrated around the two parking loops, feature less separation from the roadway and parking areas, while others are tucked into the forested hillside and are relatively secluded. Common screening vegetation at Paradise Picnic Area includes false hellebore (Veratrum viride), subalpine spiraea (Spiraea splendens), and huckleberry (Vaccinium membranaceum), as well as wildflowers such as lupine (Lupinus latifolius), arrowleaf groundsel (Senecio triangularis), Sitka valerian (Valeriana sitchensis), and magenta Indian paintbrush (Castilleja parviflora).

Alterations to the Picnic Area are relatively minimal. The site generally retains its original configuration and its spatial relationship with Paradise Picnic Area Road and the various blocks of surface parking. Alterations are limited to the removal of the trash cans depicted on as-constructed plans; the in-kind replacement of wood plank picnic table benches and tabletops; the replacement of original picnic tables near Comfort Station P312 with moveable, metal-framed tables on a gravel base; and repaving activities, including the addition of an accessible concrete pathway near Comfort Station P312. Overall, the site retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic district.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Paradise Picnic Area	194227	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Paradise Picnic Area, view northeast of picnic sites lining Loop A.



Paradise Picnic Area, view south of picnic sites lining Loop A.



Paradise Picnic Area, view northeast of planed timber stairs leading to picnic sites along Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view north-northwest of picnic tables lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.

Landscape Characteristic: **Circulation**

Internal Circulation and Parking (Contributing Structure)
The internal circulation network and parking areas associated with Paradise Picnic Area were primarily developed between 1964 and 1966 by Cumming and Webber, Inc., of Portland, Oregon. Paradise Picnic Area Road, which provides access through the parking and picnic area, is a 0.75-mile long, asphalt-paved road that snakes down the sloping topography of the site via a series of gentle switchbacks. Much of Paradise Picnic Area Road is one-lane and one-way, with the exception of the connections to two closed loops that extend off the west side of the northern portion of the road. The entrance to Loop A is located approximately 30 feet south of the road's northern terminus, and the entrance to Loop B is located approximately 615 feet south of the entrance to Loop A. Short stretches of two-lane, two-way paved roadways connect Paradise Picnic Area Road to each one-lane, one-way loop.

Marked, asphalt-paved surface parking spaces line Loops A and B and the northern half-mile of Paradise Picnic Area Road. Additionally, a row of angled spaces is located in the middle of a large, triangular space immediately east of the entrance to Loop B. Within the two loops and along Paradise Picnic Area Road to the north of Loop B, blocks of between three and twelve angled or perpendicular parking spaces are situated at random intervals along the roadway. These are separated from one another by topography as well as vegetation, including subalpine fir (Abies lasiocarpa) and western hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla). Approximately 225 feet south of the entrance to Loop B, Paradise Picnic Area Road makes a 90-degree curve to the east. A block of more than two dozen angled parking spaces lines the southern edge of this stretch of roadway; two smaller blocks of five and six perpendicular spaces adjoin the northern edge. To the east, the south side of the road is lined by a series of more than two dozen marked parallel parking spaces, interrupted by one block of six perpendicular parking spaces. From this point, the road makes a hairpin curve to the south. Blocks of ten and twelve perpendicular spaces adjoin the east and north side of the roads, respectively. With the exception of the parallel parking spaces, each of the blocks of parking that lines Paradise Picnic Area Road features a low asphalt curb.

The alignment of the southern quarter-mile of Paradise Picnic Area Road, which terminates in an intersection with Nisqually to Paradise Road, predates the Mission 66 development of this site and was originally known as "Barn Flat Road," for the level meadow to the east of the picnic area. It is a one-lane, curbless road that runs from east to west, terminated in an intersection with Nisqually to Paradise Road. It forms the southern boundary of the parking and picnic area and is an integral part of Paradise Picnic Area's circulation network.

In addition to Paradise Picnic Area Road and its two associated parking loops, Paradise Picnic Area features a collection of poured concrete and asphalt-paved pathways that extend throughout the picnic area and connect the parking areas to picnic sites and to the four comfort stations located along the roadway. To accommodate elevation changes throughout the site, several of the asphalt-paved paths incorporate one or more short series of planed timber stairs. Examples include the path leading uphill from Loop B parking to Comfort Station P311, or the path leading uphill from parking along Paradise Picnic Area Road to Comfort Station P313. Poured concrete paths, which are a recent alteration to Paradise Picnic Area, are limited to the walkways and landings associated with Comfort Station P310 in Loop A and Comfort Station P312, to the south of the entrance to Loop B. The majority of paths throughout the picnic area are curbless, asphalt-paved paths lined by gravel, vegetation, or both.

With the exception of the new poured-concrete paths at Comfort Stations P310 and P312, alterations to the various paths at Paradise Picnic Area appear to consist primarily of in-kind repaving. The overall configuration of Paradise Picnic Area Road and its associated parking areas also remains largely intact, although parking capacity has been increased by the addition of approximately thirty parallel parking spaces along the south side of Paradise Picnic Area Road and the minor reconfiguration of the large, triangular space immediately east of the entrance to Loop B. The road and parking areas have also been repaved since the conclusion of the Mission 66 program, but original details such as the asphalt curbs at the parking areas have been retained, and repaving activities have been in-kind. For these reasons, Paradise Picnic Area's Internal Circulation and Parking network retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic district.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Paradise Picnic Area Internal Circulation and Parking	194228	Contributing	1169799				No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Paradise Picnic Area, view north of parking in Loop A.



Paradise Picnic Area, view south of parking lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view southwest of parking lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view southeast of parking area lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view east of angled parking spaces lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view northeast of parallel parking spaces lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view southeast of parking area lining Paradise Picnic Area Road.



Paradise Picnic Area, view west of Paradise Picnic Area Road.

Landscape Characteristic: **Buildings and Structures**

Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, and P313 (Contributing Buildings)
Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, and P313 are four nearly identical restroom facilities that were constructed between 1964 and 1965 by Fitzpatrick-McIntyre Construction of Tacoma, Washington, as part of the Mission 66-era development at Paradise Picnic Area. Comfort Station P310 is located at the south side of the two-lane, two-way roadway connecting Paradise Picnic Area Road to Loop A. It is accessed directly from the parking area via a broad poured concrete walkway. Comfort Station P311 is located off a block of angled parking lining the north side of Loop B, and is accessed via two separate, asphalt-paved pathways that connect to Loop B; one pathway slopes uphill, while the other features a short stretch of timber stairs. Comfort Station P312 is located at the west side of Paradise Picnic Area Road, immediately south of the road's intersection with Loop B. It is accessed by a level poured concrete pathway. Comfort Station P313 is located at the north side of Paradise Picnic Area Road, slightly south of Comfort Station P312, and is accessed from the roadway via a short flight of timber stairs and an asphalt pathway.

Based upon a standardized plan used in Mission 66 development throughout Mount Rainier National Park, the four comfort stations are nearly identical in design. All four buildings are one story in height with wood-framed construction, rectangular layouts, and concrete slab foundations. They feature medium-pitched, side-gabled roofs with overhanging eaves, simple fascia boards and exposed beams at the gable ends, and standing seam metal panel cladding (as-constructed plans indicate that the buildings' roofs were originally clad in wood shingles). The building exteriors are defined by board-and-batten siding punctuated by flush wood single-leaf doors and aluminum single-lite clerestory windows (both fixed and inward-opening hopper types) interspersed with plywood paneling. Each building's interior is divided into men's and women's restrooms, which are accessed by exterior doors on the gable ends of the buildings, and a centrally-located service room accessed by a half-glass door with louvered vents, centered in one of the eaves side façades.

Each comfort station also features an associated water supply station, but only two of these appear to be original to the buildings' Mission 66-era construction. Comfort Stations P311 and P313 both feature stacked-bond brick masonry water supply stations with metal spigots and metal drinking

fountain bowls. These water supply stations adhere to a Mission 66-era NPS standardized design (Standardized Design #1190) seen elsewhere throughout Mount Rainer National Park. Comfort Station P310 features a running-bond brick masonry water supply station with a drinking fountain bowl and a spigot, while Comfort Station P312 has a contemporary, timber-post water supply station with a metal strap detail, a metal drinking fountain bowl, and a low spigot that fills an attached metal dog bowl. As-constructed plans for the picnic area indicate that the water supply stations presently located near Comfort Station Stations P310 and P312 replaced original, Mission 66-era water supply stations.

Comfort Stations P310, P311, P312, and P313 exhibit only minor alterations, including the replacement of original wood roof shingles with standing seam metal cladding and the replacement of original door hardware. Most alterations are limited to the surrounding sites, particularly at Comfort Stations P310 and P313 where the original water supply stations were replaced and new poured-in-place concrete pathways and landscaping were installed for unobstructed accessible paths of travel. Overall, all four Mission 66-era comfort stations at Paradise Picnic Area retain sufficient integrity to contribute to the historic district.

Character defining features:
• One-story height
• Rectangular plan
• Medium-pitched side-gable roofs with overhanging eaves and exposed beam ends at the side façades
• Wood-framed construction on concrete slab foundation
• Board-and-batten siding throughout
• Fixed and hopper aluminum clerestory windows
• Internal division into women’s and men’s restrooms accessed by entrances on opposite gable-end façades, with a central service room accessed by an entrance on one of the eaves-side façades
• Flush single-leaf wood doors, including blank doors on the gable-end façades and a half-glass door with louvered vents on one of the eaves-side façades
• Stacked bond brick masonry water supply stations at Comfort Stations P311 and P313
• Asphalt-paved perimeter walkways at Comfort Stations P311 and P313

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Paradise Picnic Area Comfort Station P310	194229	Contributing	1169800				No
Paradise Picnic Area Comfort Station P311	194230	Contributing	1169801				No
Paradise Picnic Area Comfort Station P312	194231	Contributing	1169802				No
Paradise Picnic Area Comfort Station P313	194232	Contributing	1169803				No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Paradise Picnic Area, view west of Comfort Station P310.



Paradise Picnic Area, view northeast of Comfort Station P311.



Paradise Picnic Area, view south-southwest of Comfort Station P312.



Paradise Picnic Area, view north-northwest of Comfort Station P313.

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 6

Next Assessment Due Date: 09/20/2027

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/20/2021

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

General condition determined based on existing condition photos in DOE

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Landscape Documents:

File Name:	MORA_Paradise Picnic Area_Final.pdf
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