



Frozen Lake

For many this is their first true alpine experience and what a great way to start! Starting at 6,400' elevation the air will seem rarified from the beginning. Despite being short the hike includes a multitude of experiences; interesting terrain, awesome views and surprisingly good wildflower viewing along the trail. Ice around the lake reflects mystically in the azure blue water.

1st Leg - Sunrise Parking Lot to Sourdough Ridge: *Approximately 0.38 mi., +224', average grade 11%.* The Sunrise high subalpine meadow is dominated by Bunchgrass, much different than the flowery meadows on the Paradise side of The Mountain. Look closely for the elegant little Cusick's Veronica in amongst the grasses while the 'mopheads' of the Western Pasqueflower will pop up above the grasses. At the top of the ridge is a rest area with the first views to the north..

2nd Leg - Sourdough Ridge to Frozen Lake Switchback: *Approximately 0.88 mi., +253', -164', average grade 9%.* Heading west another viewpoint will be reached in about 0.30 mi. just before the junction with the Huckleberry Creek trail, near the high point, 6820'. The Tongue-leaf Rainiera can be seen looking downhill. Shortly after is the mother of all trail retaining walls, which surprisingly provides good plant habitat. Toward the end of the walled section look the Saxifrage Elmera with its scalloped leaves and creamy bells growing from the wall.

3rd Leg - Frozen Lake Switchback to Trail Junction: *Approximately 0.27mi., +75', -29', average grade 7%.* After crossing the small stream, which is the outlet for Frozen Lake, the trail turns sharply to the southeast requiring a short steady ascent before turning back to the west. This is the beginning of the alpine zone where plants are typically smaller and grow closer to the ground. The Cascade Aster is absent, succeeded by the superb smaller Alpine Aster. Cliff Paintbrush and Drummond's Anemone will be seen for the first time. The trail junction is like an interchange with trails going in every direction, all to fabulous destinations.

Guides and Map: Portion of Hikes 10 and 16 in Tami Asars' *Day Hiking Mount Rainier* (2nd edition), portion of Hike 40 in Ron Judd's *Day Hike! Mount Rainier* (4th edition), Tracy/Giblin *Alpine Flowers of Mt. Rainier*. Greens Trails Maps, No. 270, Mount Rainier East, WA or Mount Rainier Wonderland, No. 269S.

Distance and Difficulty: While the hike is only 1.52 miles, or a little over 3 mile round trip, the experience initially can seem a bit strenuous simply because it begins at 6,400' elevation. Many hikers start their day at sea level and the need for acclimation comes as a surprise even for the hardy. The guide books generally classify the hike as "easy" or "moderate", but of course that is always relative. The first leg, the steepest section, is +224' in 0.38 mi. with a grade of 11% so it will seem more like moderate than easy. There may be a lingering snow field on the ridge which could add some difficulty.

Preparation: The hike is in an alpine environment which can produce unexpected hazardous conditions including wind, rain, cold, and whiteouts, as well as dehydrating extreme sunlight and heat (possibly all in the same day!). Most of the hike is in the open, so if its hot be prepared with sun screen and twice the water normally carried. The *Ten Essentials* are always a good idea. The trail is well maintained and heavily used but has its share of rocks and ankle twisters so good footwear is important. Please see "Preparedness for Mount Rainier Hiking" on the *Flowers of Rainier* website, <http://www.flowersofrainier.com>.

Weather Forecast: http://www.atmos.washington.edu/data/rainier_report.html

Trail Conditions: <http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/trails-and-backcountry-camp-conditions.htm>

Ranger Station: White River Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6670 (may be a summer number only).. Call Longmire Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6650, for year-round assistance.

INDEX OF FLOWERS SHOWN ON MAP:

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| 1 - Bunchgrass , <i>Festuca viridula</i> | 12 - Cascade Catchfly , <i>Silene suksdorfii</i> |
| 2 - Cascade Aster , <i>Eucephalus ledophyllus</i> | 13 - Davidson's Penstemon , <i>Penstemon davidsonii</i> |
| 3 - Cusick's Veronica , <i>Veronica cusickii</i> | 14 - Tongue-leaf Rainiera , <i>Rainiera stricta</i> |
| 4 - Bistort , <i>Bistorta bistortoides</i> | 15 - Elmera , <i>Elmera racemosa</i> |
| 5 - Green False Hellebore , <i>Veratrum viride</i> | 16 - Pink Mountain Heather , <i>Phyllodoce empetrififormis</i> |
| 6 - Western Pasqueflower , <i>Anemone occidentalis</i> | 17 - Alpine Aster , <i>Oreostemma apigenum</i> |
| 7 - Spreading Phlox , <i>Phlox diffusa</i> | 18 - Cliff Paintbursh , <i>Castilleja rupicola</i> |
| 8 - Showy Sedge , <i>Carex spectabilis</i> | 19 - Shrubby Cinquefoil , <i>Dasiphora fruticosa</i> |
| 9 - Scarlet Paintbrush , <i>Castilleja miniata</i> | 20 - Dwarf (Mt. Albert) Goldenrod , <i>Solidago simplex</i> |
| 10 - Magenta Paintbrush , <i>Castilleja parviflora</i> | 21 - Drummond's Anemone , <i>Anemone drummondii</i> |
| 11 - Small-flowered Penstemon , <i>Penstemon procerus</i> | 22 - Newberry's (Davis's) Knotweed , <i>Aconogonon davisiae</i> |

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike: / /