



Enjoy this marvelous anomaly of the Park; within all its rugged steep terrain here is this beautiful nearly flat plateau. One might declare that they've reached the grandest place on earth once they've broken out onto the plain. A great place to see two of Mt. Rainier's endemic plants. The best time in normal years would be mid-July to September (narrowed further to the first two weeks of August).

1st Leg - FS Road 73 to Lake Eleanor: *Approximately .80 mi., +460'*. Still not shown on most maps this back door entrance is a partially maintained boot path (approximate route shown here in green) and is found where FS Road 73 crosses Eleanor Creek.

2nd Leg - Lake Eleanor to the meadow: *Approximately .60 mi., -130'*. The fully canopied forest breaks out into a wonderful meadow where the mountain will first come into view. Many wetland plants will be found here, i.e. Elephantheads, Jeffrey's Shooting Stars.

3rd Leg - Meadow to Grand Park: *Approximately 1.2 mi., +630', steepest grade 19% for about .50 mi.* Shortly after leaving the meadow it may be possible to see the fairly rare Lyall's Anemone in either its white or purplish form. Avalanche Lilies are abundant in the forest.

4th Leg - Grand Park to Trail Junction: *Approximately 1.45 mi., +140'*. This remarkable plain is a wildflower enthusiast's dream! Huge fields of Broad-leaf Lupine and Bistort dominate the eastern portion. Early in the season massive yellow fields are formed by Strickland's Tauschia. Two endemics, Mt. Rainier Lousewort and Mt. Rainier Paintbrush, are right alongside the trail. Look carefully in the grasses for the paintbrush for its also known as 'obscure' paintbrush.

5th Leg - Trail Junction to Viewpoint: *Approximately .45 mi., +45', -100'*. Well worth the extra effort! A rock outcropping along the Northern Loop Trail opens up an extraordinary vista.

INDEX OF FLOWERS SHOWN ON MAP:

- 1 - **Stream Violet**, *Viola glabella*
- 2 - **Pale Agoseris**, *Agoseris glauca*
- 3 - **Elephantheads**, *Pedicularis groenlandica*
- 4 - **Long-stalked Clover**, *Trifolium longipes*
- 5 - **Jeffrey's Shooting Star**, *Dodecatheon jeffreyi*
- 6 - **Lyall's Anemone**, *Anemone lyallii*
- 7 - **Fan-leaf Cinquefoil**, *Potentilla flabellifolia*
- 8 - **Nodding Arnica**, *Arnica parryi*
- 9 - **Avalanche Lily**, *Erythronium montanum*
- 10 - **Mt. Rainier Paintbrush**, *Castilleja cryptantha*
- 11 - **Mt. Rainier Lousewort**, *Pedicularis rainierensis*
- 12 - **Magenta Paintbrush**, *Castilleja parviflora*
- 13 - **Broad-leaf Lupine**, *Lupinus latifolius* var. *latifolius*

Guides and Map: Most guide books do not use this route, opting instead for the traditional route through Berkeley Park. Consult with Washington Trails Association, www.wta.org, for hiking guide and trip reports. Tracy/Giblin *Alpine Flowers of Mt. Rainier*. Greens Trails Maps, No. 270, Mount Rainier East, WA.

Distance and Difficulty: The total distance is 4.5 miles, or 9.0 miles round trip; 4.05 mi. and 8.1 mi. RT to the Northern Loop Trail junction (without the 5th leg). The elevation difference is 1050', however, total elevation gain could be over 1,500' RT due to overall gain/loss. The trail is usually in good shape except for the 1st leg which is partially maintained so there may be blow downs which haven't been cleared. Because of the remote nature of this leg the hike needs to be viewed as a backcountry hike where little help should be expected. In heavy and/or late snow years there may still be snow patches in the upper section of the 3rd leg and trekking may be difficult.

Preparation: The grandest hike can unfortunately be made at lot less grand by one thing - BUGS! Expect mosquitoes in the meadow and on the Grand Park plain. However, while not always present, the small black flies in the forest of the 3rd leg can make it miserable. A bandana worn 'cowboy style' can prevent breathing in the little buggers and make this section of the hike bearable. The *Ten Essentials* are always a good idea. 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.

- 14 - **Bistort**, *Bistorta bistortoides*
- 15 - **Strickland's Tauschia**, *Tauschia stricklandii*
- 16 - **Early Blue Violet**, *Viola adunca*
- 17 - **Mountain Daisy**, *Erigeron glacialis*
- 18 - **Woolly Pussytoes**, *Antennaria lanata*
- 19 - **Western Pasqueflower**, *Anemone occidentalis*
- 20 - **Glacier Lily**, *Erythronium grandiflorum*
- 21 - **Tiger Lily**, *Lilium columbianum*
- 22 - **Spreading Stonecrop**, *Sedum divergens*
- 23 - **Yellow Dot Saxifrage**, *Saxifraga austromontana*
- 24 - **Cliff Paintbrush**, *Castilleja rupicola*
- 25 - **Mountain Parsley**, *Lomatium martindalei*
- 26 - **Cliff Penstemon**, *Penstemon rupicola*

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike: / /