



While the high country is still deep in snow this is a great hike to see the early blooming flowers of a remarkable rain forest and one of Rainier's magnificent old growth forests all in one day. The best time in normal years would be May and early June (narrowed further the last two weeks in May, i.e. for Skunk Cabbage and Trillium). Due to the closure (now permanent) of the Carbon River Road this is no longer a short hike!

1st Leg - Carbon River Rain Forest Loop Trail: *Approximately .30 mi., +100', -100'*. Take time to experience a true rarity in the Park - one of the very few temperate rain forests so far inland from an ocean coast. The forest includes Sitka Spruce, normally only found in coastal areas. The swampy environment is covered with mosses and lichen and the giant Yellow Skunk Cabbages grow in huge masses. Information panels make it a great self guided tour of a truly unique ecosystem.

2nd Leg - Carbon River Road: *Approximately 3.25 mi., +350'*. Once a short drive to the trailhead this now becomes a relatively easy bike ride or stroll along the Carbon River. Many of the low elevation flowering plants can be seen along this stretch, i.e. Western Corydalis.

3rd Leg - Carbon River Road to Green Lake: *Approximately 1.5 mi., +1,250', -150', average grade 19%, steepest grade 23%*. The trailhead is where the road crosses Ranger Creek. The trail in this truly exquisite old growth forest is accentuated by really large trees which have fallen over and bridging the trail. Look for the short spur trail to Ranger Falls at about .75 mi., 2,800'. This is the best of early forest hiking with a wonderful variety of plants from very large Trilliums to tiny Woodnymphs and Mitreworts.

4th Leg - Green Lake: The lake has many moods depending on weather and fog cover. Look for the tiny Marsh Violets in the shallows along the lakeshore.

- 1 - **Yellow Skunk Cabbage**, *Lysichiton americanus*
- 2 - **Bleeding Hearts**, *Dicentra formosa*
- 3 - **Stream Violet**, *Viola glabella*
- 4 - **Arctic Coltsfoot**, *Petasites frigidus* var. *palmatum*
- 5 - **Vanilla Leaf**, *Achlys triphylla*
- 6 - **Western Trillium**, *Trillium ovatum*
- 7 - **Western Corydalis**, *Corydalis scouleri*
- 8 - **Woodnymph**, *Moneses uniflora*
- 9 - **Bunchberry**, *Cornus unalaschkenis*
- 10 - **Western Spring Beauty**, *Claytonia lanceolata*

Guides and Map: Hike 23 in Tami Asars' *Day Hiking Mount Rainier* (2nd edition), Hike 44 in Ron Judd's *Day Hike! Mount Rainier* (4th edition). Greens Trails Maps, No. 269, Mount Rainier West, WA or Mount Rainier Wonderland, No. 269S.

Distance and Difficulty: While the Green Lake Trail is only 1.5 miles, due to the road closure the total distance is 4.75 miles, or 9.5 miles round trip. Naturally the trip out on the road will seem longer than the trip in. The guide books generally classify the Green Lake hike as "moderate". This is probably due to its relative shortness. The elevation gain, however, is significant with nearly a 1,200' gain in the first mile, or about a 23% grade; enough for any early season work out! The trail is usually in good shape but since its early there may still be blow downs which haven't been cleared. In heavy and/or late snow years there may still be snow patches at the higher elevations.

Preparation: The hike is in a forest environment which usually provides some protection from the elements. However, this hike is early in the season and preparations should include good protection from wind, rain, cold, fog, snow and whiteouts. The trail is fairly well maintained and heavily used but has its share of rocks, roots and other ankle twisters so good footwear is important. Also, be aware of the condition of the Carbon River by checking in with the ranger station. 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: Carbon River Ranger Station, (360) 829-9639 (may be a summer number only).. Call Longmire Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6650, for year-round assistance.

- 11 - **Wild Strawberry**, *Fragaria vesca*
- 12 - **Creeping Raspberry**, *Rubus lasiococcus*
- 13 - **Starry False Solomon's Seal**, *Maianthemum stellatum*
- 14 - **Alpine Mitrewort**, *Mitella penstandra*
- 15 - **False Lily-of-the-valley**, *Maianthemum dilatatum*
- 16 - **Baneberry**, *Actaea rubra*
- 17 - **Cascade Oregon Grape**, *Mahonia nervosa*
- 18 - **Salmonberry**, *Rubus spectabilis*
- 19 - **Marsh Violet**, *Viola palustris*
- 20 - **Jeffrey's Shooting Star**, *Dodecatheon jeffreyi*

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike: / /