



Quite possibly one of the best wildflower hike on the planet! Beginning at Reflection Lakes the hike includes flora of the forest, subalpine and alpine zones and some of the very best densely flowered meadows anywhere. Only a fraction of what you will see is shown here. The return trip in the late afternoon with great views of the Tatoosh Range can be ethereal. The best time in normal years would be mid-July and August during the height of the blooming season.

1st Leg - Reflection Lakes to Faraway Rock Overlook: *Approximately .60 mi., +370', average grade 14%.* Between Reflection Lakes and Louise Lake is the junction of the Wonderland Trail and what's commonly referred to as the Lakes Trail (Mazama Ridge Tr. on some maps). Take the Lakes Trail and head north straight toward the mountain.

2nd Leg - Faraway Rock to Skyline Trail Junction: *Approximately 1.2 mi., +530', average grade 9%.* In approx. .10 mi. is the junction with the High Lakes Trail, stay to the right heading north. The subalpine zone opens up more and more as you ascend revealing massive fields of subalpine lupine and then the multi-flowered meadows. Here is where Rainier gets its reputation as one of the world's most flowery places. Enjoy!

3rd Leg - Junction to Stevens-Van Trump Historical Monument: *Approximately .40 mi., +260', average grade 13%.* Turning right at the junction onto the Skyline Trail. More hikers coming up from Paradise will be encountered. The trail has a short, but steep, stepped section and opens up further with expansive views. Look for the white variety of subalpine lupine.

4th Leg - Monument to Paradise Glacier: *Approximately 1.0 mi., +380', even grade averaging 8%.* Just after the monument veer right onto the Paradise Glacier Trail. Great examples of higher elevation flora including Elmera. At the end hundreds of cairns mark the spot of the Ice Caves, now long since melted out.

INDEX OF FLOWERS SHOWN ON MAP:

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| 1 - Beargrass , <i>Xerophyllum tenax</i> | 13 - Bracted Lousewort , <i>Pedicularis bracteosa</i> |
| 2 - Arrowleaf Senecio , <i>Senecio triangularis</i> | 14 - Showy Sedge , <i>Carex spectabilis</i> |
| 3 - Coiled-beak lousewort , <i>Pedicularis contorta</i> | 15 - Bistort , <i>Bistorta bistortoides</i> |
| 4 - Woodland Penstemon , <i>Nothochelone nemorosa</i> | 16 - Subalpine Lupine , <i>Lupinus latifolius</i> var. <i>subalpinus</i> |
| 5 - Magenta Paintbrush (white variety), <i>Castilleja parviflora</i> | 17 - Magenta Paintbrush , <i>Castilleja parviflora</i> var. <i>oreopola</i> |
| 6 - Bird's-beak Lousewort , <i>Pedicularis ornithorhyncha</i> | 18 - Western Pasqueflower , <i>Anemone occidentalis</i> |
| 7 - Cusick's Veronica , <i>Veronica cusickii</i> | 19 - Tolmie's Saxifrage , <i>Micranthes tolmiei</i> |
| 8 - Green False Hellebore , <i>Veratrum viride</i> | 20 - Lewis Monkeyflower , <i>Erythranthe lewisii</i> |
| 9 - Fan-leaf Cinquefoil , <i>Potentilla flabellifolia</i> | 21 - Elmera , <i>Elmera racemosa</i> |
| 10 - Mountain Daisy , <i>Erigeron glacialis</i> | 22 - Hairy Arnica , <i>Arnica mollis</i> |
| 11 - Sitka Valerium , <i>Valeriana sitchensis</i> | 23 - Partridge Foot , <i>Luetkea pectinata</i> |
| 12 - Smooth Mountain Dandelion , <i>Nothocalais alpestris</i> | 24 - Silver-leaf Phacelia , <i>Phacelia hastata</i> |

Guides and Map: Portions covered in Hikes 58/79 in Tami Asars' *Day Hiking Mount Rainier* (2nd edition) and Hike 19 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., No. 270S, Paradise, WA. or Mount Rainier Wonderland, No. 269S.

Distance and Difficulty: Unlike the referenced guide books, which describe only portions of this hike, the trailhead here is at Reflection Lakes with an 'up and back' route. The total distance is approximately 3.2 miles (6.4 mi RT). Elevation gain is approx. 1,540' with a constant grade. The difficult could be considered moderate except the trail has hundreds of steps making it a challenge for those with knee or hip issues. Skipping the 4th leg reduces the hike to 4.4 mi. RT. Portions of the trail may be snow covered making route finding difficult especially in sections of the 4th leg.

Preparation: The hike is predominantly 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!). Much of the hike is in the open, so if it's 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. Trekking poles are a good idea to assist in maintaining footing in the snow patches and to lessen the impact on knees. 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: Paradise Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6641 (may be a summer number only).. Call Longmire Wilderness Information Center, (360) 569-6650, for year-round assistance.

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike: / /