



# Naches Peak Loop

An extra special higher elevation loop hike suitable for almost all hikers and sure to satisfy even the most diehard of wildflower enthusiasts. Starting from Chinook Pass the loop route should be undertaken clockwise to more fully appreciate the views of the mountain.

**1<sup>st</sup> Leg – Chinook Pass to Park Entrance:** *Approximately 1.41 mi., +598', -256', average grade of 12%, steepest 18% for .10 mi.* After a short walk from the parking area the hike begins by crossing the marvelous newly reconstructed log bridge crossing over SR 410. This leg is on the infamous Pacific Crest Scenic Trail (PCT). Naches Peak looms off to the right with small streamlets and seeps appearing on its eastern flank. Look for wetland plants such as Nelson's Brook Saxifrage. At about .75 mi. is a small pond or tarn and fields of lupine.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Leg – Park Entrance to Knoll:** *Approximately .35 mi., +173', -54'.* Stay right at a junction and you will enter the Park; the PCT heads south down to Dewey Lake (and Mexico!). Soon the mountain comes into view with another tarn and a lovely meadow in the foreground. A large boulder next to the trail provides a great lunch spot. You may have found your new favorite place!

**3<sup>rd</sup> Leg – Knoll to Hwy 410:** *Approximately 1.0 mi., +16', -565', average grade 12% down.* The landscape now changes to a subalpine forest but still with great views through clusters of alpine firs. Flowering shrubs, such as mountain ash and rhododendron, become plentiful. Cascade Asters now outnumber the daisies. Look for the Tongue-leaf Rainiera.

**4<sup>th</sup> Leg – Hwy 410 to Chinook Pass :** *Approximately .44 mi., +146', -62', average grade 12%, steepest 18% for .17 mi.* After crossing the road the trail follows the west shore of Tipsoo Lake. Expect to see volunteer rangers encouraging the picnic crowds to stay on the trail in this sensitive area. Around the lake are stands of hellebore, fields of Arrowleaf Senecio and occasional clusters of Lewis Monkeyflower. The trail climbs through the woods back to the log bridge crossing.

**Guides and Map:** Hike 51 in Tami Asars' *Day Hiking Mount Rainier* (2nd edition), Hike 28 in Ron Judd's *Day Hike! Mount Rainier* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) and 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:** The distance of the loop is 3.2 miles plus .25mi round trip for the access trail for a total distance of 3.45 miles. Total elevation gain is 770' with an average grade of 11% with very short sections with grades to 18%. The guide books rate the hike as easy to moderately easy and very high for overall experience. This is a wonderful hike for those who may not be able to undertake strenuous mountainous hiking. It offers enough variety and beauty that the 3.2 miles can be enjoyed over a whole day at a leisurely pace. The trail is well maintained and generally quite forgiving under foot. The 1<sup>st</sup> leg on the east side of Naches Peak is outside the park boundary and is part of the Pacific Crest Scenic Trail where horses and dogs are allowed. This section may have lingering snow patches and muddy sections well into the summer.

**Preparation:** It might appear that due to its relative lack of difficulty and closeness to the main road that little preparation would be needed. Don't be fooled, this is still very much an alpine environment where changes in conditions can be unexpected and abrupt. Layered clothing, water, sunscreen, bug juice are all obvious needs. As always, 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](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 - <b>Western Pasqueflower</b> , <i>Anemone occidentalis</i>                     | 13 - <b>Sicketop Lousewort</b> , <i>Pedicularis racemosa</i>                |
| 2 - <b>Partridge Foot</b> , <i>Luetkea pectinata</i>                              | 14 - <b>Mountain Daisy</b> , <i>Erigeron peregrinus</i>                     |
| 3 - <b>Nelson's Brook Saxifrage</b> , <i>Micranthes nelsoniana</i>                | 15 - <b>Cascade Aster</b> , <i>Eucephalus ledophyllus</i>                   |
| 4 - <b>Broadleaf Arnica</b> , <i>Arnica latifolia</i>                             | 16 - <b>Rosy Spirea</b> , <i>Spiraea densiflora</i>                         |
| 5 - <b>Sitka Valerium</b> , <i>Valeriana sitchensis</i>                           | 17 - <b>Tongue-leaf Rainiera</b> , <i>Rainiera stricta</i>                  |
| 6 - <b>Cusick's Veronica</b> , <i>Veronica cusickii</i>                           | 18 - <b>Beargrass</b> , <i>Xerophyllum tenax</i>                            |
| 7 - <b>Crimson Columbine</b> , <i>Aquilegia formosa</i>                           | 19 - <b>Green False Hellebore</b> , <i>Veratrum viride</i>                  |
| 8 - <b>Magenta Paintbrush</b> , <i>Castilleja parviflora</i> var. <i>oreopola</i> | 20 - <b>Sitka Mountain Ash</b> , <i>Sorbus sitchensis</i> var. <i>grayi</i> |
| 9 - <b>Bistort</b> , <i>Bistorta bistortoides</i>                                 | 21 - <b>White Rhododendron</b> , <i>Rhododendron albiflorum</i>             |
| 10 - <b>Pink Mountain Heather</b> , <i>Phyllodoce empetriformis</i>               | 22 - <b>Arrowleaf Senecio</b> , <i>Senecio triangularis</i>                 |
| 11 - <b>Subalpine Lupine</b> , <i>Lupinus latifolius</i> var. <i>subalpinus</i>   | 23 - <b>Lewis Monkeyflower</b> , <i>Erythranthe lewisii</i>                 |
| 12 - <b>Gray's Lovage</b> , <i>Ligusticum grayi</i>                               |   |

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike:    /    /