



Panorama Point

A Rainier classic. Perhaps the best hike to experience the lush meadows of Paradise with The Mountain as a backdrop. The full loop on the Skyline and Golden Gate trails transverses distinct habitats with innumerable opportunities to encounter a diverse array of flowers; plus, drop dead views from Panorama Point. The best time in normal years would be mid-July through August (narrowed further to the first two weeks in August). Expect lots of company!

1st Leg - Visitor Center to Pebble Creek Trail Junction: *Approximately 1.6 mi., +1,200', average grade 15%.* Ascend the Muir steps from the Visitor Center, find the Skyline Trail and head toward the mountain. Enjoy the incredible floral display of the lush meadows full of blue subalpine lupine accentuated with red paintbrush, pink daisies and yellow arnicas. Bistort, valerium and pasqueflower (usually in seed) pop up above the grassy flower fields.

2nd Leg - High Skyline: *Approximately .78 mi., +400', -250', steepest grade 24% for .25 mi..* At the Pebble Creek trail junction stay right on the Skyline Trail. Rocky slopes and crevices provide spartan habitat for the fascinating plants of the alpine. After reaching Panorama Point (and seeing the world!) ascend to even a higher elevation on the High Skyline Trail. Look for Jacob's Ladder in the crevices and pussypaws and alpine lupine in the pumice flats.

3rd Leg - High Skyline to Golden Gate Junction: *Approximately .47 mi., -375'.* This section parallels the upper reaches of Edith Creek. Flowering wetland plants such as the monkeyflowers and Hornemann's Willow-herb are found growing near the stream.

4th Leg - Golden Gate to Paradise Inn: *Approximately 1.4 mi., -975'.* This is the shorter route back to Paradise and stays within the Edith Creek drainage. Great views of the Tatoosh Range with great flora at your footsteps including large clusters of Cascade Aster.

INDEX OF FLOWERS SHOWN ON MAP:

- 1 - **Green False Hellebore**, *Veratrum viride*
- 2 - **Mountain Daisy**, *Erigeron glacialis*
- 3 - **Subalpine Lupine**, *Lupinus latifolius* var. *oreopola*
- 4 - **Pink Mountain Heather**, *Phyllodoce empetriformis*
- 5 - **Sitka Valerium**, *Valeriana sitchensis*
- 6 - **Spearleaf Arnica**, *Arnica longifolia*
- 7 - **Showy Sedge**, *Carex spectabilis*
- 8 - **Magenta Paintbrush**, *Castilleja parviflora*
- 9 - **Western Pasqueflower**, *Anemone occidentalis*
- 10 - **Bistort**, *Bistorta bistortoides*
- 11 - **Mountain Sorrel**, *Oxyria digyna*
- 12 - **Elegant Jacob's Ladder**, *Polemonium elegans*
- 13 - **Alpine Lupine**, *Lupinus lepidus* var. *lobbi*

Guides and Map: : Portions covered in Hikes 80 in Tami Asars' *Day Hiking Mount Rainier* (2nd edition) and Hike 14 in Ron Judd's *Day Hike! Mount Rainier* (4th edition) and Tracy/Giblin *Alpine Flowers of Mt. Rainier*. Greens Trails Maps, No. 270, Mount Rainier East, WA. and No. 270S, Paradise, WA.

Distance and Difficulty: The total distance is approximately 4.25 miles. Add approx. 1.0 mi. if the Skyline Trail route is taken from the Golden Gate junction rather than the Golden Gate Trail (recommended here). Elevation gain is approx. 1,600'. Above Panorama Point is a trail junction. The Low Skyline Trail may very well be snow covered and should be avoided. Opt for High Skyline, potentially safer even though higher, better views and better flowers.

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!). 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 (the first .25 mi. are paved!) and heavily used. Trekking poles are a good idea to assist in maintaining footing in the snow patches and to lessen the impact on knees during the relatively long continuous descent. 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.

- 14 - **Bird's-beak Lousewort**, *Pedicularis ornithorhyncha*
- 15 - **Pussypaws**, *Calyptidium umbellatum*
- 16 - **Partridge Foot**, *Luetkea pectinata*
- 17 - **Tolmie's Saxifrage**, *Micranthes tolmiei*
- 18 - **Yellow Mountain Heather**, *Phyllodoce glanduliflora*
- 19 - **Hornemann's Willow-herb**, *Epilobium hornemannii*
- 20 - **Lewis Monkeyflower**, *Erythranthe lewisii*
- 21 - **Mountain Monkeyflower**, *Erythranthe tilingii*
- 22 - **Alpine Speedwell**, *Veronica wormskioldii*
- 23 - **Alpine Aster**, *Oreostemma alpigenum*
- 24 - **Cusick's Veronica**, *Veronica cusickii*
- 25 - **Arrowleaf Senecio**, *Senecio triangularis*
- 26 - **Cascade Aster**, *Eucephalus ledophyllus*

Trail notes, other flowers observed, highlights:

Date of hike: / /