

WINTER ACTIVITY GUIDE

Mount Baker Ranger District

North Cascades National Park

2010-2011 Issue



Mt. Shuksan photo by Lief Hazelet

Welcome

Head east along the Mt. Baker Highway, SR 542, to access National Forest Lands and the popular Mt. Baker Ski Area or travel the North Cascades Highway, SR 20 along the Skagit Wild & Scenic River System into the heart of the North Cascades.

This region has much to offer but the terrain can be challenging and difficult to navigate at times. Mountain weather conditions can change dramatically and with little warning. Snow levels are dependent on temperature, precipitation, and elevation.

For a quality wintertime experience, please check the current weather forecast before leaving home, be safe and prepare accordingly.

Plan Before You Go

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest /
Mt. Baker Ranger District
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284
(360) 856-5700 ext. 515
Glacier Public Service Center
10091 Mt. Baker Highway
Glacier, WA 98244
(360) 599-2714
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/mbs>

North Cascades National Park Service Complex
(360) 854-7200
www.nps.gov/noca

Washington State Winter Recreation and
State Sno-Park Information:
www.parks.wa.gov/winter

State Road Conditions:
Washington State Dept. of Transportation
Dial 511 from within Washington State
www.wsdot.wa.gov

National Weather Service
www.nws.gov

Northwest Weather & Avalanche Center:
Mountain Weather Conditions
(206) 526-6677
www.nwac.us

Mt. Baker Ski Area
Ski Area Snow Report:
(360) 671-0211
www.mtbaker.us

Cross-country ski opportunities along the Mt.
Baker Highway:
www.nooksacknordicskiclub.org

For eagle watching information, visit the Skagit
Wild & Scenic River website at:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/special_places
or
Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center
www.skagiteagle.org



Recreation Ethics

1. Pack it in; pack it out. Dispose of all waste properly.
2. Slow down and use caution when approaching others.
3. Avoid disturbing wildlife and areas posted for their protection.
4. Use designated areas and established ski tracks when available.
5. Follow trail use signs.

Learn more about how to minimize impact and practice Leave No Trace ethics at:
www.lnt.org or call: (800) 332-4100



Downhill Skiing



Located along the upper reaches of the Mt. Baker Highway in the Heather Meadows area, the Mt. Baker Ski Area has a wide range of runs for snowboarders and skiers of all skill levels.

Special events include the

Legendary Banked Slalom Race hosted annually by the ski area; dates for 2011 race, Feb. 11-13.

Operating hours are from 9 am to 3:30 pm. Two day lodges offer spectacular mountain views. Opening and closing dates depend on snow levels each year. There is no overnight lodging at the ski area and snow camping restrictions apply within the Heather Meadows area.

Mt. Baker Ski Area strictly prohibits sledding and snowplay within ski area boundaries. For public safety, cross-country skiers and snowshoers must stay off all downhill ski runs.

For more information and a list of services, snow safety classes, lessons and special events visit the ski area website at: www.mtbaker.us or for snow conditions call the snow phone at: 360-671-0211.

Sledding

Mt. Baker Highway MP 55

Take your sled down snow covered hillsides located near the one-way loop before the Mt. Baker Ski Area's upper day lodge. Winter snow play in this area is at your own risk as it is outside the ski area boundaries and is not patrolled.

MOUNT BAKER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Travel the Baker Lake Road off State Route 20 to Forest Roads 12 and 13 leading to the Mt. Baker National Recreation Area (NRA).

An impressive 8,000 acres of mountainous landscape located on the south side of Mt. Baker, the NRA is open to many types of winter recreation including snowmobiling when snow levels are sufficient, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Surrounded by the Mt. Baker Wilderness, the National Recreation Area designation allows for winter snowmobile use on the Easton Glacier and around the popular Schrieber's Meadow.

If you are planning on using your snowmobile in the Mt. Baker NRA take the time to know your location and stay on the correct side of the Wilderness boundaries.

EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION on the slopes of Mt. Baker where crevasses exist.



Snowmobiling

Know Your Boundaries

Snowmobiles are prohibited in Congressionally Designated Wilderness Areas. While snowmobiling please take the time to know your location and stay on the correct side of the Wilderness boundaries.

Winter recreationists are welcome to use the following areas and road systems groomed for snowmobile use. All snowmobiles must be registered through the Washington State Dept. of Licensing, unless registered in another State or Canadian Province. Washington State registration includes a State Sno-Park permit.

*** Washington State Sno-Park Permits are required at the following motorized Sno-Park areas:**

Baker Lake Area

*** FS Roads 12, 1230 & 13**

Groomed roads lead to the Mt. Baker National Recreation Area (NRA) on the south side of Mt. Baker and to Blue Lake, FS Road 1230, below Dock Butte.

Snowmobile use is allowed in the NRA when snow levels are above 24" at the trailhead located at the end of FS Road 13. Snowmobile use is prohibited in the adjacent Wilderness area including the summit of Mt. Baker.

*** Anderson-Watson**

FS Road 1107; east of Baker Lake Road. past dam. 14 mile trail system.

South Skagit Area

*** Finney Creek - FS Road 17**

From State Route 20 southeast to Concrete-Sauk Valley Road and FS Road 17.

*** Segelson Creek - FS Road 18**

East of Darrington; Hwy. 530 to FS Road 18.

Mt. Baker Highway Area

*** Glacier Creek FS Road 39**

Located 3/4 mile east of the Glacier Public Service Center, an approximately 15 mile route leads out towards Grouse Butte.

*** Canyon Creek FS Road 31**

1.5 miles east of the Glacier Public Service Center, leads into the Canyon Creek drainage.

Snowshoeing

Forest roads and trails are not maintained during the winter, but are open for snowshoeing when snow levels are sufficient. Check for current weather conditions and avalanche danger forecasts before heading out.

Cross-Country Skiing

Along the Mt. Baker Scenic Byway, SR 542, groomed ski tracks are set at the Salmon Ridge Cross-Country Trail System when snow levels are sufficient. The trails are maintained by the Nooksack Nordic Ski Club in an agreement with the Forest Service. The club asks visitors not on skis to please stay off set cross-country skiing tracks.

Check out current conditions at the club website www.nooksacknordicskiclub.org

* A Washington State Sno-Park permit is required for parking within the Salmon Ridge Area.

Other Winter Recreation and Cross Country Ski Opportunities

Hannegan Pass FS Road 32, MP 47, SR 542

Beautiful views of Mt. Shuksan and Ruth Mountain can be seen along this route, popular for snowshoe and cross country ski outings.

White Salmon Road, MP 51, SR 542

FS Road 3075, off Mt. Baker Highway, leads to excellent mountain views. Limited parking is available at the beginning of the road.

Mt. Baker National Recreation Area FS Road 13

Mixed use winter recreation area. Cross-country skiers share the area with snowshoers and snowmobilers. - *Sno-Park Permit Required.

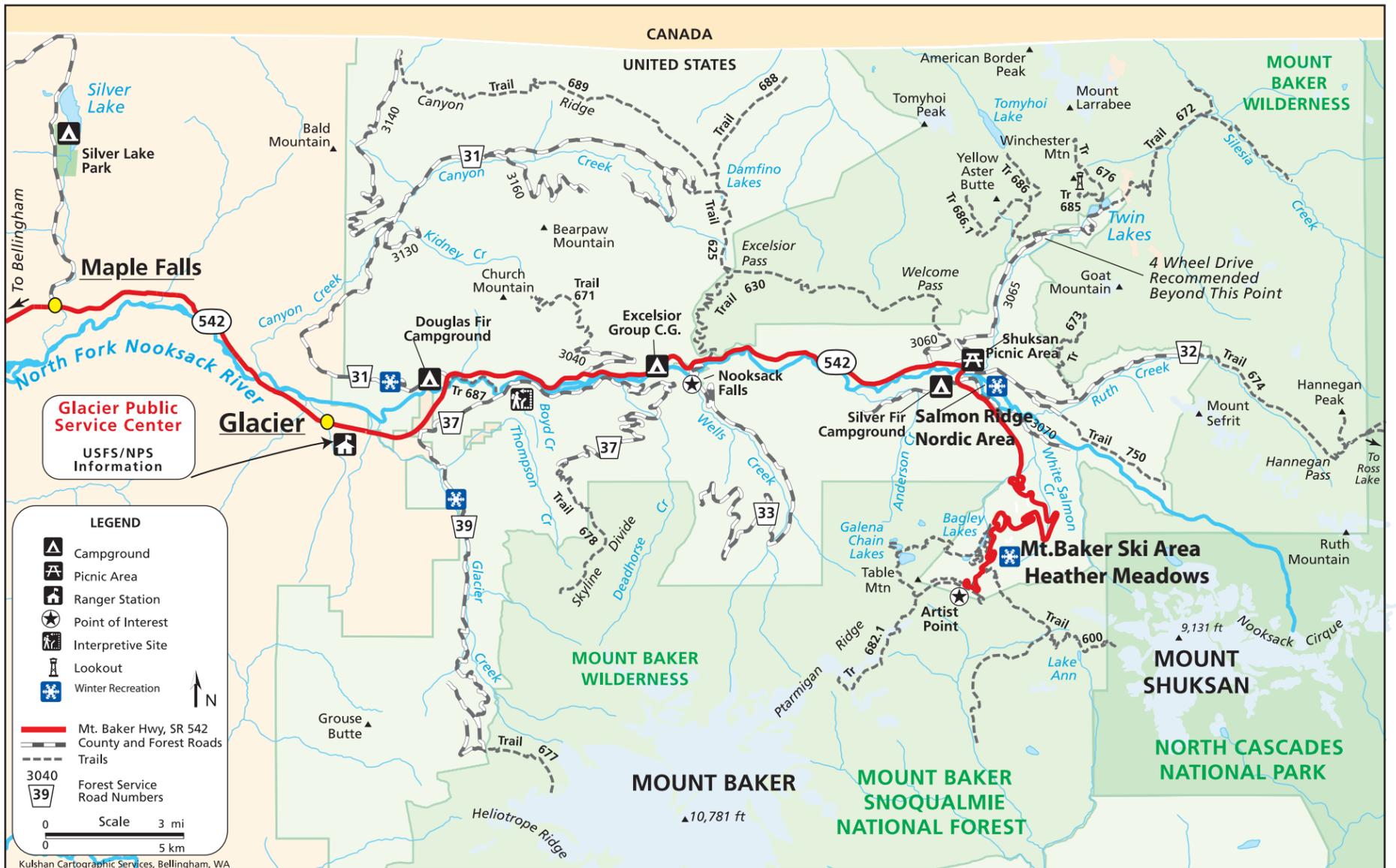
Baker Lake Area, FS Road 11

Explore the Baker Lake area on skis or snowshoes when snow levels are sufficient. A Sno-Park is located at the Shadow of the Sentinels Nature Trail; no State Sno-Park permit is required.

North Cascades National Park Service

Complex; Explore via the Cascade River Road and at the end of plowed section of SR 20, the North Cascades Highway (normal winter closure at MP 134 - Ross Trailhead).

Mt. Baker Scenic Byway, SR 542



Winter Safety

AVALANCHES ARE POTENTIALLY LETHAL, AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AVALANCHES COULD BE LIFE-SAVING.

Enroll in an avalanche awareness class and learn as much as you can before heading out into the backcountry during avalanche danger seasons.

- » Check avalanche and weather forecasts before departure.
- » Be aware of changing weather.
- » Carry avalanche rescue gear and develop skills to use them properly: shovel, probe and beacon.
- » Never assume you can outrun an avalanche on skis or a snowmobile. Chances are you cannot.
- » Be aware of terrain. The safest route is on ridgetops. Avoid steep, open slopes.
- » Only one person at a time should cross dangerous terrain; human activity can trigger an avalanche.
- » If you get caught in an avalanche, fight to stay on top. Once stopped, make an air pocket. Try to remain calm and breathe slowly.
- » If you see someone else get caught in an avalanche, assess the danger of attempting a rescue first. Search below the area where the victim was last seen. Time is critical!

Hypothermia is caused by the lowering of body temperature. Even the loss of a few degrees can be incapacitating and should be guarded against whenever you are outdoors. Protect yourself by remembering a few basic tips:

- » **MAINTAIN YOUR ENERGY** by eating high calorie foods frequently during your trip. Exercise will help maintain heat production. Avoid becoming overly fatigued.
- » **SEEK SHELTER** from wind and rain if you are lost. Try to stay dry and warm. Set up your tent or dig a snow cave. Build a fire if dry wood is available. Take care to stay dry. Put on any extra clothing.
- » **WEAR APPROPRIATELY LAYERED CLOTHING.** Wool is the best protection if you become wet. Certain synthetics also are good protection. Avoid wearing cotton next to your skin. When it is wet, it draws heat from your body. Down filled clothing is good in dry conditions but may become less effective when wet.
- » **CARRY THE TEN ESSENTIALS.** Having an extra set of dry clothes plus the necessary equipment to build a shelter may save your life.

The Northwest Avalanche Center promotes safety by helping winter recreationists with current information on snow pack structure and avalanche danger and by forecasting mountain weather conditions. Visit the Northwest Avalanche Center website at www.nwac.us

1. extra food & water
2. extra clothing
3. map
4. compass
5. knife
6. matches
7. fire starter
8. first aid kit
9. sunglasses
10. flashlight

