

# **MT. BAKER HIGHWAY SCENIC BYWAY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**PLACES OF SOCIAL, CULTURAL,  
HISTORIC, RECREATIONAL, AND  
SCENIC IMPORTANCE**

## Places of social, cultural, historic, recreational, and scenic importance

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SR 542 provides access to many spectacular locations in the National Forest. Seasonal usage places unique demands on the corridor, so it is important to recognize areas that visitors frequent and maintain safe and appropriate access.

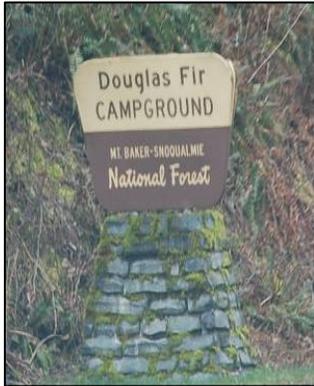
A variety of viewing opportunities enhance the scenic SR 542 experience and many of the landscapes change dramatically throughout the year. WSDOT and the USFS have collaborated to upgrade and acknowledge where additional resources would benefit safe access to and from this corridor. Section 6 of the easement agreement requires joint approval of byway locations that represent special places, viewpoints and appearance of the highway structures. This section provides a list of areas that are focal points for visitors that we would like to preserve and enhance.

Below is a listing of both historically identified and recreationally active areas accessed off SR 542 located approximately by milepost (MP) or identified Forest Service Road (FR), and direction if traveling eastbound. It is important to know where visitors travel and when, so we can jointly plan for safe access to these locations.

**MP 34- Glacier Public Service Center**- is listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. This complex marks the entry into the National Forest and showcases the Cascadian architectural theme that is the signature of Northwest forests. It was built in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and was added to the National Historic Register in 1980- identified as building #80004013.



Glacier Public Service Center (GPSC) is jointly operated by the USFS and National Park Service during the summer season. Visitor information staff provide interpretive material and programs to help plan outings, issue permits for backcountry use, and provide insight to the area's natural and cultural histories. The GPSC is open daily from Memorial Day to October, and weekends during select winter months. Restrooms and self-service information are located in an outdoor plaza year-round. Gallup Creek Picnic Area provides picnic tables and trash cans adjacent to the facility and the community of Glacier.



**MP 36-Douglas Fir Campground-** National Forest camp built by the CCC in the 1930s. Forested setting along the North Fork Nooksack River, 29 sites available for tent and trailer camping. Day-use picnic area with reservable picnic shelter. Restrooms and hand-pumped wells for drinking water. Concessionaire operated under special-use permit by USDA Forest Service.

**MP 36-Horseshoe Bend Trail** - This location offers access for guided river rafting on the Nooksack River. The hiker-only trail is approximately 1.5 miles long (2.45 km) one way, and wanders along a forested ledge above the North Fork of the Nooksack River. The first 700 feet of the trail, accessed from Douglas Fir Campground, offers accessible views of the River.

**MP 37 -Church Mountain viewpoint-** Elev. 6,315 feet. High elevation trails on southern slope are often the first area to open for summer hiking. (Right) Turnouts to view North Fork Nooksack River.

**Canyon Creek-** A Washington state Sno-Park is located up FR 31. This park provides access to spectacular snowmobiling or cross-country skiing, Washington State Sno-Park Permit required. Damfino Lakes Trailhead is located at the end of the road. This popular family hike leads to Damfino Lakes and on to Excelsior Pass and the scenic High Divide Trail.

**Glacier Creek Road-** FR 39 provides access to Glacier Creek and the Heliotrope Trailhead which serves as the main access route for hikes and climbers on the North Side of Mt Baker. The end of the road takes you to a dramatic viewpoint (weather permitting) of Coleman Glacier on the west side of Mount Baker. On the lower portion of the road, Washington state Sno-Park program offers plowed parking for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snow sports in the winter.

**Skyline Divide Trailhead and Boyd Creek Interpretive Trail-** FR 37 a quick left off FR 39 takes you to the a short, self guided nature trail focuses on healthy fish habitat, along a forested riparian area.

**Church Mountain Trailhead-** can be accessed on FR 3040. Church Mountain, elev. 6,315 feet has high elevation trails on the southern slope and is often the first in the area to open for summer hiking. Trailhead begins at an elevation of 2,400 feet. It also has turnouts to view the north fork of the Nooksack River.

**MP 40 Excelsior Group Camp** –National Forest Campground. There are two group sites for up to 100 people total. Picnic tables, vault toilets and fire grills are provided. The group campground is operated by Forest concessionaire.



**Nooksack Falls-** A thundering waterfall that tumbles 175 feet. FR 33, Wells Creek Road takes visitors a half-mile to off-road parking across from the falls. This is a popular destination for visitors, providing fence-lined pathways to scenic viewpoints, as well as several information kiosks. Portions of this road and the viewpoint are located on private property.

**Nooksack Falls hydroelectric power plant-** built in 1900 it functioned as an energy extraction and processing facility until 1924. It was added to the National Historic register in 1988, as District #88002735. It is privately owned, but the transmission conduct is visible next to the parking facility by Nooksack Falls.

**MP 41 - Excelsior Pass Trailhead** - Parking area and restroom at trailhead, hiker/horse trail leads up steep switchbacks to the High Divide Trail.

**MP 43 - North Fork Nooksack research natural area-** Established in 1934, this 1,400 acre reserve was established as an example of Douglas Fir-Hemlock forest types found at the mid-elevations in the North Cascades.

**FR 3060 High Divide Trailhead** – Hiker/horse trail leads up to Welcome Pass and alpine vistas.



**MP 46- Shuksan maintenance facility-** This property is owned by WSDOT and is not subject to the easement with the USFS. Being located in the heart of the National Forest, this facility provides maintenance for the Mt. Baker Area, along with covered sand storage used for winter road traction.

**MP 46 - Twin Lakes Road FR #3065-** at Shuksan highway maintenance sheds. Twin Lakes is not accessible until early to mid-August. FR 3065 is very steep and rocky. It provides access to the Yellow Aster Butte Trailhead beginning elevation 3,600, the Tomyhoi Lake Trailhead, beginning at 4,200 feet, the Twin Lakes, Trailhead to Winchester Mountain beginning at 5,200 feet, Silesia Creek beginning at 5,200 feet, High Pass beginning at 5,200 feet, and the High Divide Trailhead beginning at 5,300 feet. Originally constructed as a mine to market road, the road is rough and recommended for high clearance 4 wheel drive vehicles only beyond the Tomyhoi Lake and Yellow Aster Butte Trailhead at the 5-mile mark; visitors without the recommended vehicles can hike the remaining 2 miles to the Twin Lakes area.



**Shuksan picnic area** - Hannegan Pass Road, is a picturesque picnic spot along the river; picnic tables, stand up grills, restroom.

**Silver Fir Campground-** There are 20 sites at this National Forest Campground built by CCC. Concessionaire operated during the summer season, reservation sites available, day-use picnic shelter and riverside setting.

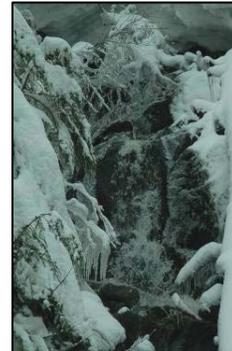
**MP 47- FR 32 to Goat Mountain**– elevation 6,891 feet to the NE provides summer grazing for one of four bands of mountain goats. The trailhead to Goat Mountain begins at elevation 2,500 feet. This road also leads to Hannegan Pass and Nooksack Cirque Trailheads. This road provides access to cross-country skiing areas in winter.

**FR 3071- Anderson Creek-** The north fork of the Nooksack River, and 500-year-old western red cedar.

**MP 48- “The Climb”**



After MP 48 the road hangs on to the hillside as it winds up toward its spectacular summit. For the next 10 miles, the road will climb 3,200 feet. Prepare for a series of switchbacks, sharp drop-offs and steep cliffs along the route. You'll see columnar basalt in the road cuts, waterfalls, and tiny alpine lakes.



Waterfalls located in the steep slopes of “the Climb” along SR 542.

**MP 49- View Mt. Shuksan** - elevation 9,131 feet to the east.

**MP 50- View Mt. Sefrit-** elevation 7,191 feet to the southeast

**MP 52- Mt. Baker Ski Area- FR 3080-** provides access to the White Salmon Day Lodge and parking facility. Day-use facility during the ski season with food and ski lifts. The ski resort boasts an unusually long ski season, deep powder, a variety of terrain and 8 lifts, and prides itself on its spectacular scenery. The base elevation is 3,500 feet at White Salmon, and 4,300 ft for Heather Meadows, while the summit at Chair #8 is at 5,089 feet. The average snowfall is 647 inches, and the vertical rise is 1,500 feet.





**MP 53 is the entrance to Heather Meadows-** This scenic area has self-guided interpretive trails, hiking trails and picnic spots during the summer season. Sections of the trails leading to scenic vistas are designed for persons of all abilities. At this location lava flows from Mount Baker have resisted glacial carving and columns of basalt are clearly visible against the sky. Exhibits inside the historical Heather Meadows Visitor Center offer a glimpse into the area's colorful natural and cultural history.

**MP 55 - The Firs Lodge-** A year-round retreat center for Christian groups.



After the road forks, staying to the right provides access to **Picture Lake**, elev. 4,100 feet. This location provides a postcard view of Mt. Shuksan, 9,038 feet. Parking is available on the road shoulder. A half-mile trail around the lake is designed for people of all abilities.



**The Mountaineers Lodge-** Owned by The Mountaineers Climbing Club. Open to members and the public summer and winter. **Vista Picnic Area-** no restrooms.

**Mt. Baker Ski Area-** Heather Meadows Day Lodge and Mt. Baker Ski Area Mountain Shop. Open during the ski season; ski lift, cross country trail and food.

**MP 56 - Austin Pass Picnic Area-** The CCC-built this area that sits in a bowl-shaped valley with glorious views and trails. Picnic tables and restroom.



**Heather Meadows Visitor Center** (formerly the Austin Pass Warming Hut) - This unique building has historic architectural significance as it was built by the CCC in 1939-1940. It was designated on the Historic Register in 1990, as Building #90001866, USFS No. CR06-05-03-13. Open mid-July to September while road access is available. Visitor information staff help provide current conditions and facilitate interpretive programming out of the center, books, maps and other sales items offered through Discover Your Northwest Sales Association.



**Wild Goose Pass tree-** was originally located at Austin Pass. This tree originally had the government survey marker blaze of Austin Banning, who surveyed the area back in 1893. It no longer stands at its original location. It has been preserved by the USFS and is available for public viewing during the summer season in the Heather Meadows Visitor Center. This item was added to the National Historic Register in 1991- Object # 91000706, CR05-03-07.



**MP58 -Artist Point-** elevation 5, 140 feet. End of SR 542. Parking lot surrounded by Mt. Baker's peak (south) Mount Shuksan (east) and Table Mountain, elevation 5,742 feet. This area is a dramatic visual highlight of the Mount Baker Area. The parking facility accommodates hikers and onlookers. The Artist Ridge, Table Mountain, Chain Lakes and Ptarmigan Ridge Trails all lead off from the Artist Ridge parking area. This area usually opens the latter part of July, as soon as WSDOT crews can clear the substantial snow cover. This area is maintained by the USFS during the short period it is open.

This list was developed to identify the many locations that draw visitors, and to better understand the use of the corridor. The maintenance of this corridor in the summer and winter has many challenges and financial commitments. It is appropriate to recognize the unique nature of the vistas sought when evaluating the needs of the corridor.