

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHANGES ARE COMING TO PACK FOREST THIS FALL

More than just the color of the leaves will be changing at Pack Forest this fall, as a new environmental education program for area schools is launching in September. In the coming months, the Mount Rainier Institute will transform Pack Forest into an outdoor classroom for elementary, middle and high school students throughout the region.

“We’ve been working with our partners at Mount Rainier National Park for over five years to develop opportunities for students to explore the outdoors and learn about our region’s environment,” says John Hayes, director of the Mount Rainier Institute. “We’re excited to start our first full season of programs this fall.”

This new program will bring a large increase in students, staff, teachers and parents to Pack Forest, with school groups using the forest throughout the week, and students staying overnight. To keep these students safe, Pack Forest will be making a change to its hunting policy beginning this season: Hunting on Pack Forest property will be limited to Friday, Saturday and Sunday only, and no longer permitted Monday through Thursday. Hunters will notice new signs advertising the policy change at the entrances to the forest, and they are encouraged to hunt safely and be aware of their surroundings. Visitors to Pack Forest are encouraged to wear blaze orange or other bright clothing during hunting season.

“We allow hunting at Pack Forest as part of our management,” says Greg Ettl, director of the Center for Sustainable Forestry at Pack Forest. “In addition to providing an opportunity for local hunters to find game and feed their families, it provides an important role in controlling wildlife populations that kill young trees and make reestablishing forests difficult. Changes to our policy will let hunting continue, and also help students and visitors enjoy the forest.”

Part of the University of Washington, Pack Forest is a 4,300-acre working forest located in Eatonville, Washington. Since its founding in 1926, the Charles Lathrop Pack Forest has been balancing forestry research, sustainable timber production and public outdoor recreation. It hosts numerous visiting students, researchers and conference groups, and provides recreation opportunities for Eatonville and the surrounding area.

Visit www.packforest.org to learn more about Pack Forest. If you have questions or comments about the Mount Rainier Institute or changes to the hunting policy, please contact Greg Ettl at 206-616-4120 or ettl@uw.edu.