

Watch: Clearing 70-foot snow drifts to Artist Point

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By [Daniel DeMay](#), SeattlePI

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Photo: WSDOT

Image 1 of 19

Crews worked seven days a week to clear the final stretch of Mount Baker Highway to Artist Point. They did some pioneering in April and again in May and then got the bulldozers and snowplows involved on Tuesday, May 31. - WSDOT. Crews fought through rain, snow, fog and 70-foot snow drifts to get it clear. The road was set to open at 5 p.m. Thursday.

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After a winter like we've had, clearing mountain highways isn't an easy task.

On state Route 542 — the highway that leads to Mount Baker Ski Area in the winter and another 2.5 miles to Artist Point in the summer — the task might have seemed insurmountable to the uninitiated.

The Washington State Department of Transportation sent its crews up first in April and then in May to start looking at how they might get the job done.

As winter clung to the Pacific Northwest, so it clung to the area around Artist Point, making the job of the WSDOT crews all the tougher. At times, crews worked seven days a week to get the road clear, encountering 70-foot snow drifts while snow, rain and fog made their work that much tougher.

They finally completed the work and the road was set to open at 5 p.m. Thursday.

SR 542 at Artist Point closes each winter and reopens in the summer. After battling 70-foot snowdrifts, rain, snow, wind and fog, crews reopened the road Thursday, June 29.

Media: WSDOT

That final stretch of Mount Baker Highway is normally closed October through June as it is buried under many feet of snow each winter. This year's opening, despite the hefty winter, is only five days behind last year's opening.

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Even with the road open, hiking to the top of Table Mountain (a glorious hike in mid to late summer) might be more of a snowshoe adventure, so if you head up, be prepared for the possibility of a damp or snow-covered trail.

Click through the images above to see some of the work that went into clearing the highway.

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