

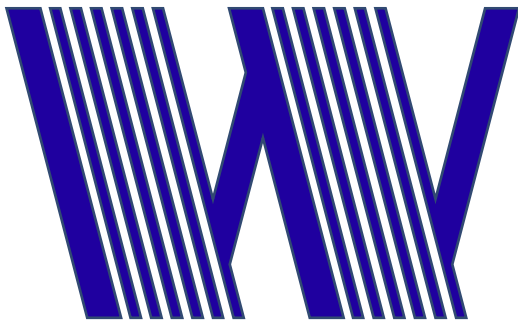


**IBM**

**THIS IS BOB MARSHALL COUNTRY**

BY RICK G





With the temperature hovering at 30 degrees below zero and the wind-driven snow piled high, my climbing

partner and I were heading toward the North Fork of the Teton Canyon for some backcountry skiing and a winter assault of Mt. Wright. It was the Christmas season and the saloon in Choteau, full of warmth and holiday revelers, was a most attractive preliminary stop. The cheer of the folks dancing western music made it difficult to leave. Still, we were excited to meet winter head on in the epitome of wilderness, in a region that has given me some of my greatest wildland adventures: the Bob Marshall country.

West of Augusta, Choteau, Bynum and Dupuyer, the towering walls of the Rocky Mountain Front abruptly terminate the sprawling, open Montana prairie. For 110 miles, this craggy limestone formation serves as the eastern rampart of the Bob Marshall country. Mountain ranges of this extensive territory have a distinct northwest-southwest axis and are separated by long river valleys, some carved by glaciers. From Ear Mountain, a prominent Front Range peak, it is 60 miles as the eagle flies to the slopes of the equally impressive Swan Range, the Bob's western rank.

Glacier National Park and Marias Pass form the northern border, and the valley of the Blackfoot River is the southern terminus of the Bob Marshall eco-system. Its longest axis, from West Glacier south to Rogers Pass, is 140 miles and it may be circled by highway, a 380-mile journey, but not a single road crosses it. This is a land of incredible diversity, a scaled down version of what the western American wilderness once was.

Windswept prairie ridges, deep canyons, towering cliffs, dense forests, wild rivers, lush meadows and a diverse wildlife population - all are part of this, the crown jewel of the nation's wilderness system.

With the Continental Divide as its backbone, the Bob Marshall country is considerable in size, grandeur and legend. Comprised of the contiguous 1.5 million acre Bob Marshall, Great Bear and Scapegoat wilderness areas and almost one million acres of surrounding wildlands, the Bob is home to almost every big game species found in North America, including the grizzly bear. Bald and golden eagles soar from its precipitous canyon walls and timber wolves still roam here.

Two of Montana's blue ribbon fishing and floating

streams, the South Fork and Middle Fork of the Flathead River, are born from its interior high country. The South Fork gets its start on the southern boundary of the wilderness as the Danaher River, and the Middle Fork commences as a trickle via Strawberry Creek at Badger Pass on the Continental Divide.

Other major streams and rivers are born in the Divide country. They are the Sun River, draining the area on the east side of the Continental Divide, the South Fork of the Two Medicine River, flowing north toward Glacier National Park, Birch Creek, flowing east from the Divide to the prairie, Badger Creek, rising from peaks of the Front Range and surging eastward and the Dearborn River, making its headwaters along the east wall of Scapegoat Mountain and rushing southeast to the Missouri River.

This realm is steeped in history acted out by Indians and early day mountain men. Its alpine passes and river valleys served as passageways for Western tribes trekking to the east in search of buffalo on the prairie lands beyond the mountain wall. Lewis and Clark Pass on the southern end and Gateway Pass, the headwaters area for the South Fork of Birch Creek, were favored routes. The Blackfeet Nation controlled lands that border the peaks on the east and to protect their hunting grounds, warriors were sent into the mountains to ambush those heading toward the plains.

At the confluence of the North Fork and South Fork of the Sun, to the west of Gibson Lake, Indians frequented the Medicine Springs. Pictographs are evident in this area, and atop Half Dome Crag, west of Heart Butte, Native Americans received visions from the Great Spirit. Travois tracks on the Great North Trail, used by prehistoric man and by Indian tribes in recent history, are still discernable along the Rocky Mountain Front.

The Rocky Mountain Front with its celebrated relief and towering limestone walls rising upwards of 1,000 feet or more from the prairie, is the eastern-most range. Steamboat and Ear mountains, as well as Castle and Sawtooth reefs, are prominent for 50 miles or more to travelers pointing west across the high plains of northern Montana. It was the abrupt rise of this massif that gave the name "land of the shining mountains" to Montana. In the summer of 1805, while moving against the current of the Missouri toward the Rockies, Meriwether Lewis in



his journal noted the “shining Mountains” to the west, explaining that the sun glancing off of the snow gave the mountains a “glittering appearance.”

The valleys of the Two Medicine, Sun and Dearborn rivers separate the Rocky Mountain Front from the Continental Divide Range. The impressive features of this watershed chain are the incredible 13-mile-long Chinese Wall and the Scapegoat Mountain complex.

Spotted Bear, the Middle Fork of the Flathead, the White and several other rivers come between the Divide and a central massif of mountains. The Flathead Range to the east of Hungry Horse Lake is the northern segment and its Great Northern Mountain is the most visible summit in the area. Prominent points farther south are Silvertip and Pagoda mountains and the Flathead Alps - a cluster of peaks just south of the Chinese Wall including Junction Mountain and the Pearl Basin country.

The big valley formed by the South Fork of the Flathead and Danaher rivers separates these central uplifts from the Bob’s western-most mountains, the Swan Range. The Swan Peaks, and those adjoining it to the south and east, including those near the town of Lincoln and the Monture Creek country just north of the Black-

foot Valley, represent the largest of the mountain masses of the Bob Marshall country.

Compared to other Montana mountains, the summits of the Bob Marshall are vertically challenged – none top 10,000 feet. Red Mountain, at 9,411 feet, is the highest. However, due to their imposing relief, these peaks appear to soar higher than most. Heavy snow loads, especially in the Swan Range and just south of Glacier Park, have helped maintain a few high cirque glaciers. These small alpine ice fields, existing on the slopes of Swan Peak, Holland Peak and Great Northern Mountain, are remnants of the big valley glaciers that helped sculpture the wilderness.

The wildlands of the Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Great Bear are known for their mixture of big meadows and dense forest cover. This pristine country abounds with ponderosa, larch, Douglas fir and lodgepole pine, as well as aspen and cottonwood trees. Purple and blue lupine intermingle with the red and orange shades of Indian paint brush on open slopes; yellow columbine, purple twining clematis, blue harebells, the elusive, mountain orchid the lady slipper, and the wispy fragrant bedstraw are strewn along cool forested trails. The meadows along the east side of the Chinese Wall and Scapegoat Moun-



Bear Lake looking west at Prairie Reef, the Red Buttes and the Chinese Wall and across “The Bob.” Photo: Rick & Susie Graetz

tain present some of the most stunning displays of bear grass in Montana.

Virtually all the terrain of the wilderness country and surrounding land is under U.S. Forest Service management and is accessible to the public. The sharp rise of the Swan Range and a dearth of canyons limit access on the west, but all other areas are reached easily by roads to or near the wilderness boundary. The Rocky Mountain Front on the east and the southern area has the most entry points. Horse travel is a popular way to visit the backcountry and many outfitters and guides

second week in July.

The heaviest human use is from early July until early September. Later, and on into November, come the hunters. Travel, especially beyond the trails, without skis or snowshoes, becomes difficult after mid-November, and sometimes sooner.

In recent years, Montana sportsmen have established three Rocky Mountain Front wildlife preserves - the Sun River, Ear Mountain and Blackleaf game ranges - to protect the wildlife population. Other private efforts, such as the Teddy Roosevelt Ranch and the Nature



Looking towards the Rocky Mountain Front near Browning and the Badger Two Medicine Country of the Bob Marshall Country (Photo Rick and Suzie Gratez)

offer trips for sightseeing, hunting, fishing and floating. Backpacking, snowshoeing and skiing are probably the most intimate ways to explore this big land. An excellent trail system provides routes in all directions. The roads that lead into or near the wilderness boundary provide a great sampling of what is available in the backcountry. Forest Service campgrounds along these routes are for the enjoyment of those not able to, or not desiring to, hike the land beyond.

The Bob may be visited any time of the year, but it is easiest to travel the backcountry in the summer months. Spring, with its melting snows and high run-offs, is perhaps the least desirable time. Peak run-off can occur between early May and mid-June. By mid-June most of the smaller streams can be crossed. The bigger waterways are still running fast and deep until about the

Conservancy of Montana's Pine Butte Swamp Preserve - where the grizzlies continue to roam the prairie as they did when Lewis and Clark came through - add to the public's awareness of this phenomenal landscape. Today, because of all of these entities' concerns, the elk and deer population of the Rocky Mountain Front area is far greater than at the turn of the 20th century. Elk have particularly done well as wildlife biologists consider this to be the nation's second largest migratory herd. And the big horn sheep population that makes a living here is one of the largest and most important in the nation.

Approximately 1,849 miles of trail extend throughout the Bob Marshall wilderness complex. This total does not include trails outside the boundaries of the three wilderness areas. There are extensive ribbons of those in the nearly one million acres of wildlands

contiguous to the designated wilderness. For instance, it is about six miles from the trailhead of the West Fork of the Teton to Teton Pass and the Bob's boundary.

The trail system got its official start in 1903 when the USFS constructed a route extending from Ovando to the Danaher Meadows, a distance of 21 miles.

Offering a myriad of wilderness experiences, the Bob Marshall country has created for me a priceless collection of memories: standing atop the Chinese Wall with a fresh wind blowing in my face... a full moon illuminating snow-covered Silvertip Mountain... storm clouds lifting to unveil the sheer face of the Swan Range... stars so brilliant they beg you to touch them... peaceful walks through Big River Meadows... hundreds of elk grazing on the slopes above the North Fork of the Sun... skiing untracked deep powder near Circle Creek... picking wild strawberries along the South Fork of Birch Creek... fly fishing the wild South Fork of the Flathead... lightning striking the rocks around me on top of Scapegoat Mountain... virtually swimming in a sea of bear grass along Halfmoon Creek... being on the summit of Mount Wright at 40 below zero viewing countless rainbows floating in the ice-crystal-filled air of the valleys below... gazing in awe at the incredible expanse of wild country stretched out before me from the top of Rocky Mountain Peak... reveling in an impromptu outdoor banjo concert at the Beartop Lookout Tower... and hearing a wolf greet the dawn with song at Gates Park.

Representing many things to many people, this untamed territory is a chance to experience wilderness



at its best. It is a charmer, a caster of spells, and a silver-tongued devil that captures your soul. One visit will convince almost anyone that wilderness is worth having. The Bob Marshall country is indeed a national treasure and thanks to the foresight of early-day conservationists, these magnificent mountains, canyons, rivers and valleys will remain wild and free.

NEXT PAGE: The sun says goodnight to Glacier National Park's Livingston Range – taken with student Mattie Weber's camera – Rick & Susie Graetz photo









# THE

# MAN

Bob Marshall is credited with single-handedly adding 5.4 million acres to the nation's wilderness system, and in 1941, two years after his death, 950,000 acres of western Montana wilderness were set aside in his name. The first snow that September was as unpredictable - and fierce - as ever. In a few short hours, the season catapulted from late summer, across autumn and smack into the frigid middle of January. Flowers and berries disappeared under the snowy blanket. Moss-topped boulders turned to icy blocks. The path muddled. Everything that made the forest warm and colorful had vanished.

By SHERRY DEVLIN

Photos courtesy of the US FOREST SERVICE  
and the WILDERNESS SOCIETY

**T**he first snow that September was as unpredictable - and fierce - as ever. In a few short hours, the season catapulted from late summer, across autumn and smack into the frigid middle of January. Flowers and berries disappeared under the snowy blanket. Moss-topped boulders turned to icy blocks. The path muddled. Everything that made the forest warm and colorful had vanished.

Now, as nightfall approached, the young woodsman was soaked and chilled--and lost in a howling snowstorm high on the Lolo Trail, somewhere in Montana or Idaho.

"I stopped in the soggy twilight to look at the map," he later wrote, "and observed with concern a discrepancy between my imagined position and the compass. With a cold, shrinking feeling in my stomach, I went over in my mind all the instructions, every fork in the trail, and could not recall a single dubious turn."

But young Bob Marshall had come West for a taste of the pioneer life, and a night alone in the howling winter wilderness promised just such an adventure. "On a snowy September night, a century and a quarter before," he remembered, "Lewis and Clark had been camped here, two years from the nearest settlement, winter closing in, food almost gone, meat unprocurable by the best hunters ... And I was worrying about a single miserable night."

Not only did Marshall survive his first scuffle with nature in the wintry Selway Bitterroot Wilderness, but he eventually weathered an Arctic shipwreck, a grizzly attack, scores of assaults on previously unclimbed peaks and innumerable grueling day hikes of 50 miles or more.

By his sudden death - of a heart attack at the age of 38 - Marshall was himself a legend, a 20th-century Lewis and Clark, the first white man to scale Alaska's central Brooks Range, a best-selling author, a radical bureaucrat and tireless advocate of wilderness preservation.

Marshall is credited with single-handedly adding 5.4 million acres to the nation's wilderness system and 16 natural reserves to Indian lands. He lobbied for preservation of Alaska's freezing winter lands long before other conservationists took up the cry. And in 1935, he was the catalyst around which the Wilderness Society was created.

In 1941, two years after Marshall's death, 950,000 acres of western Montana wilderness were set-aside in his memory. Today, the Bob Marshall Wilderness is the acknowledged crown jewel of American wildlands, a fitting tribute to the man who once wrote: "We can afford to sacrifice any other value for the sake of retaining something of the primitive."

Born to a wealthy Manhattan family in 1901, Marshall spent his city-bound boyhood "dreaming of Lewis and Clark and their glorious exploration into the unbroken wilderness which embraced three-quarters of a continent."

"Occasionally, my reveries ended in terrible depression," he later recalled, "and I would imagine that I had been born a century too late for genuine excitement."

Then young Marshall discovered the reddish-brown reports of the "Topographical Survey of the Adirondack Wilderness," tucked away at the bottom of a book-case in his family's summer retreat on Lower Saranac Lake, N.Y.

"Immediately, he became enthralled by the accounts of explorations in the mountains which surrounded us," wrote his brother George. "We determined to penetrate those mountains, which previously had been accepted as a scenic backdrop along the skyline across the lake."

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At first, the brothers were content with walks around Lower Saranac Lake. Then came the fishpond and pathless woods. Then the floating bog. "Every ridge and hollow and deer runway within the forest where we lived became familiar to Bob and he gave them such names as

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Found Knife Pass, Squashed Berry Valley and Hidden Heaven Rock." George remembered.

On August 15, 1916, the Marshall boys climbed their first Adirondack peak - Ampersand - a 3,365-foot mountain south of their summer home. Six years later, the Marshalls - together with old-time Adirondack guide Herb Clark - had climbed 42 of the region's 46 peaks above 4,000 feet. Eventually they climbed all 46.

Marshall had found his "genuine excitement."

"The sense of adventure which one gets in the wilderness reaches its perfection in the romance of mountaineering," he

wrote more than 20 years later. The glory of conquering a summit, which has baffled humanity by its ruggedness throughout all the passage of world history up to the present moment, affords elation to which nothing could equal.

Long before graduating from New York City's Ethical

Culture High School, Marshall had decided on a career in forestry and conservation. "I didn't have the remotest idea what forestry was," he once stated, "but I had a vague notion of thrilling adventures with bad men, of lassoing infuriated grizzlies and of riding down unknown canyons in Alaska."

Then, too, there was the example set by his father. An internationally known constitutional lawyer and Jewish unity leader, Louis Marshall led the fight in 1914 to retain New York's "forever wild" guarantee for Adirondack Park. He was a pioneer in bird protection reform and spoke harshly against the country's "hasty dismantling of her natural heritage."

The lesson wasn't lost on his son. In 1920, after a year at Columbia University, Bob Marshall enrolled at New State College of Forestry - where his father was a trustee.

But young Marshall still yearned for adventure. Immediately after graduation in 1924, he headed for a summer of mountain climbing and research at the Wind River Forest Experiment Station, near the Columbia River, in southwestern Washington.

**I**n the spring of 1925, Marshall received his master's degree in forestry from Harvard and again headed West--this time to the Northern Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station in Missoula. There he stayed three years working his way from Junior forester to assistant silviculturist.

It was in Missoula that the Marshall legend began.

"A real greyhound" in the words of one Forest Service colleague, junior forester Marshall spent nearly all his time in the backwoods of Montana and Idaho.

It was there, one September afternoon, that he wandered off the course in a blinding snowstorm. And there, too, that he came upon a pair of grizzly cubs one sunny summer morning.

"I stood watching their unconcerned antics with great interest," Marshall wrote in his Journal, "until all at once I heard a crashing noise behind. Wheeling around I saw a colossal grizzly, not 30 feet away, charging straight at me. 'There's not to reason why, there's but to climb or die,' so

I started on the run for a white bark pine which seemed to offer the closest haven. Up I went, faster than my un-aerial anatomy had ever progressed toward heaven. Up I went for about 10 feet, when in my haste I stepped too clumsily on a dead branch. It snapped and I flopped.”

**M**arshall survived the grizzly sow’s charge by playing dead. But he eventually contributed to his premature death by subjecting an already-frail heart to tortuous hikes in the Bitterroots, Flatheads, Missions, Cascades and Selkirks. Rarely was a day hike less than 40 miles; most totaled 50 or more.

“Up in northern Idaho, Bob decided to walk around the head of the East River drainage and when he got back to the Priest River Forest Experiment Station,” remembered retired forester Chuck Wellner in a recent interview, “he discovered he had traveled only 45 miles, he walked another five miles down the road so he could log 50.”

Ralph Space, retired supervisor of Idaho’s Clearwater National Forest, told of a 50-miler that Marshall made from Moose Creek Ranger Station in the Nez Perce Forest to the Bitterroot Valley near Hamilton.

“My fellas told me that when Marshall came in over the divide, he was so exhausted he would stumble, fall, lay there a while and then hike some more,” Space said. “He kept a record of any time he hiked over 50 miles. He really drove himself to the extremes.”

By the time he was 36 - two years before his death - Marshall had logged more than 200 wilderness hikes of 30 miles in a day, 51 hikes of more than 40 miles and several of up to 70 miles.

“Toting a 50-pound pack over an abominable trail, snowshoeing across a blizzard-swept plateau or scaling some jagged pinnacle which juts far above timber,” Marshall maintained, “all develop a body distinguished by a soundness, stamina unknown amid normal surroundings.”

And Marshall did indeed love the wilderness. “It is the perfect aesthetic experience,” he told Nature magazine readers in 1937. “It is vast panoramas, full of height and depth and flowing color on a scale so overwhelming as to wipe out the ordinary meaning of dimensions. It is the song of the hermitt thrush at twilight. It is the unique odor of balsams and of freshly turned humus. It is the

feel of spruce needles underfoot.”

A personable man, “filled with humor,” Marshall had little trouble finding wilderness converts among his friends. “He loved the feeling of wilderness - the animals, forests and waters,” said ecologist-writer Sigurd Olson in a telephone interview from his Ely, Minn. home.

“When Bob shared his feelings and experiences, whether



his writing or speaking, he had tremendous impact,” Olson said. “If he had lived even a normal life span, the history of our country and its wild places would have been a different story.”

But Marshall probably wasn’t cut out to be a “true scientist,” said retired forester Wellner, who had a long career as assistant director of the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station in Ogden, Utah.

“His real love was the wilderness, not the office or research lab,” Wellner said. “When I took over Bob’s old records in Missoula, there were hundreds of notes scribbled on little scraps of paper. He just wasn’t too keen on details.”

Marshall also left behind hundreds of “tall but true” tales when he journeyed back East in 1928 to study for a doctorate at Johns Hopkins University.



“Like the one about the time we was going to a dance in Missoula,” Willner said. “Harry Gisborne (the fire research pioneer) was a great friend of Bob’s. Harry’s wife, Alice, noticed that Bob had a hole in his sock right above the heel. So Bob got some black ink, painted his heel and went on to the dance.”

Seasoned by his years in the West, and by the first of four treks to far northern Alaska, Marshall wrote his

most important wilderness thesis while at Johns Hopkins. Marshall called it “The Problem of the Wilderness.” His admirers called it “The Magna Carta of the Wilderness Movement.”

In the Scientific Monthly report, Marshall warned that the “shrunk remnants of an undefiled continent are being despoiled.” Valleys that once knew “only footsteps of wild animals” now know the terrors of modern highways, he said. Gone is the ground cover of fresh sorrel and twinflower. Here to stay is “asphalt spotted with chewing gum, coal dust and gasoline.”

“Within the next few years the fate of the wilderness must be decided,” he said. “This is a problem to be settled by deliberate rationality and not by personal prejudice.” What followed was a step-by-step rationale for the preservation of wild country.

**A**nticipating protests by timber companies, Marshall explained that “what small financial loss ultimately results from the establishment of wilderness areas must be accepted as a fair price to pay for their unassessable preciousness.”

The doctrine of “the greatest good to the greatest number” does not apply to every acre on earth, Marshall said. “If it did,” he wrote later, “we would be forced to change our metropolitan art galleries into metropolitan bowling alleys. The Library of Congress would become a national hot dog stand, and the new Supreme Court building would be converted into a gigantic garage where it could house a thousand people’s autos instead of Nine Gentlemen of the Law.”

What was needed, then, Marshall concluded, was “the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness.” Without their help, “there will be countless souls born to live in strangulation,” he said, “countless human beings who will be crushed under the artificial edifice raised by man.”

The seeds of the wilderness movement thus planted and a doctorate in hand, Marshall fulfilled his lifelong dream early in 1931 and left for a 13-month sojourn to the basin of the Koyukuk River in Alaska. There he found Wiseman, a self-sustaining Arctic hunting and mining village of 77 whites, 44 Eskimos and six Indians spread over a land as large as Massachusetts and New Jersey combined.

Content as he never would be in Washington. D.C., Marshall mapped the Koyukuk drainage and much of the central Brooks Range. He scaled a long line of previously unclimbed peaks, named hundreds of geographic features (like Frigid Crags, Midnight Mountain and Blarney Creek) and relished in "the most glorious year of my life."

**H**is return to the east in 1932 brought Marshall's greatest literary success, the publication of "Arctic Village." Forum magazine called it "the personal biography of a wilderness settlement." Others heralded it as a "valuable sociological document fit to join the works of Margaret Mead."

But for Marshall, "Arctic Village" was a testimonial to all that is right about wilderness and life in the wilderness. "The Inhabitants of Koyukuk," he wrote, "would rather eat beans with liberty, bum candles with independence and mush dogs with adventure than to brave the luxury and the restrictions of the outside world. A person misses many things by living in the isolation of Koyukuk, but he gains a life filled with an amount of freedom, tolerance, beauty and contentment few human beings are ever fortunate enough to achieve."

His return from Alaska also brought Marshall's first major report for the Forest Service - "The Forest for Recreation and a Program for Forest Recreation," part of the National Plan for American Forestry submitted to Congress in 1933.

Marshall was now more convinced than ever that America's wild lands were in jeopardy. "The universe of the

wilderness, all over the United States, is vanishing with appalling rapidity," he wrote. "It is melting away like the last snow bank on some south-facing mountainside during a hot afternoon in June."

The solution, he said, was the protection of 45 million acres - 9 percent of the nation's commercial timberland.

Of that amount, 3 million acres would be "superlative

scenic areas" like Yellowstone or Yosemite and 9.5 million acres would be "primeval areas or tracts of virgin timber in which human activities have never upset the normal processes of nature."

A third category - wilderness areas - required set-asides of at least 10 million acres in Marshall's plan. "And by wilderness," he said, "I mean regions sufficiently spacious that a person may spend at least a week or two of travel in them without crossing his own tracks."

The remaining 12.5 million acres, then, would be divided

between roadside scenic areas, campsites, forest residence areas and non-wilderness outing areas. And rather than ruin commercial timber interests, Marshall said, his plan would actually increase the value of their land.

The trick, he claimed, was proper forest management - which in Marshall's book meant nationalization of timberlands. "Public ownership is the only basis from which we can hope to protect the incalculable values of forest for wood resources, for soil and water conservation and



for recreations,” he wrote in *The People’s Forests*.

“The time has come,” Marshall said, “when we must discard the unsocial view that our woods are the lumberman’s and substitute the broader ideal that every acre of woodland in the country is rightly a part of the people’s forests.”

Retired Clearwater Forest Supervisor Space spent many an hour debating the nationalization of timberland with Marshall. “We talked quite a bit about Bob’s high regard for communistic funs of government,” Space said. “He believed that goods should be produced for service, not profit.”

And while socialist and communist theories were popular during the depths of the Great Depression, it was “unusual to hear a millionaire advocate that kind of system,” Space said.

**M**arshall, who inherited a fortune from his father, eventually left \$750,000 to a foundation “for the promotion and advancement of an economic system in the United States based on the theory of production for use and not for profit.” Marshall’s will entrusted another \$400,000 to his friends in the Wilderness Society with the stipulation that it would be used to “increase the knowledge of the citizens of the United States as to the importance and necessity maintaining wilderness conditions in outdoor America for future generations.”

“He was a wealthy guy, all right,” remembered Clyde Fickes, “He was a protege of Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and both of them had all kinds of money. If he wanted to fly to New Guinea, he didn’t have to worry about it.”

Still, Marshall preferred a simple life and in 1933 ac-

cepted the post of Forestry Director for the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs. There he pushed his wilderness work to the forefront lobbying the Interior Department for more roadless areas, setting aside wilderness areas on Indian reservations and organizing the Wilderness Society.

He wasn’t without his detractors, however. Once, confronted by a particularly reactionary congressman, Marshall fired off this response: “Because I’ve been out



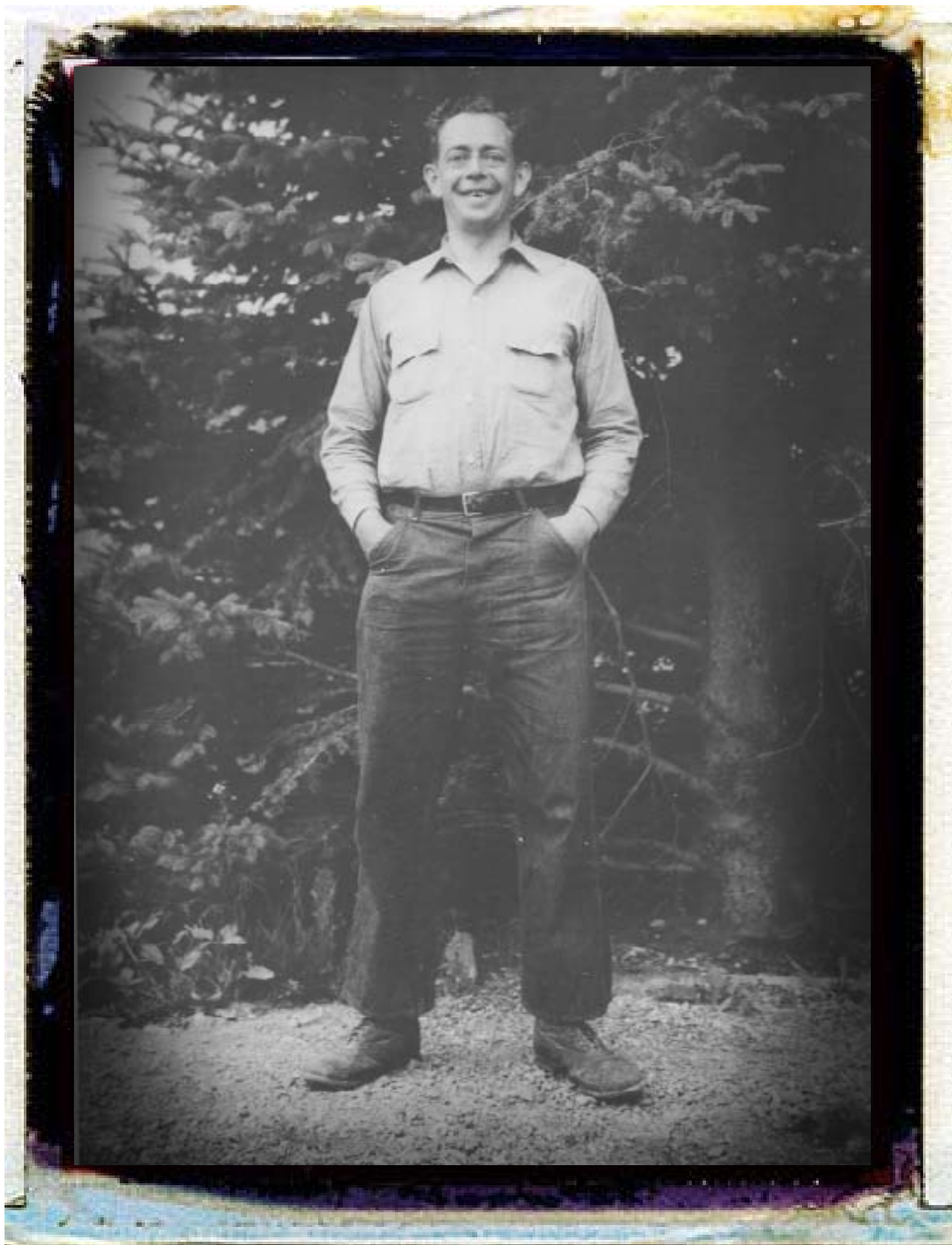
in the woods and up in the Arctic a good part of the past five years, it may be that the Bill of Rights was repealed without my hearing about it.”

[In] 1937 when Marshall was named Chief of the Forest Service Division of Recreation and Lands, he finally was in the right place at the right time to turn his wilderness advocacy into action.

Every roadless area of more than 100,000 acres should be protected as “primitive land,” Marshall said. And for every proposed highway, irrigation project or lumbering job, there should be a comparison of values: “Do the increased benefits of this extension of civilization really compensate for the loss of wilderness values?”

Taking to the road with a fervor often unknown in bureaucratic circles, Marshall set out to “inspect” the wilderness he wanted to protect. In August 1937, the trek





was to northern Minnesota for a weeklong canoe trip with ecologist/author Olson.

**B**ob was full of enthusiasm for the canoe country," Olson said. "We paddled all through what is now the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and Canada's Quetico Provincial Park. He told me that something inside of him needed to get out in the wilderness - so that's what he did."

In 1938, the call went out to Mississippi where now retired forester Roswell Leavitt "left him off along the road so he could hike 10 miles or so through the second growth southern pines." Another week it was New Mexico and an impromptu hike through desert brush and scrub pine.

"It was a good way of life for Bob," his brother George later wrote. "He enjoyed people just as much as the wilderness and needed both. He had a splendid sense of humor, great gusto and infectious enthusiasm."

The summers of 1938 and 1939 also found Marshall back among the people of Koyukuk and central Brooks Range. On his final journey, Marshall was shipwrecked in icy Arctic waters. "What an awfully easy way to die," he wrote. "I kept saying to myself 'Gosh, I wish I had time to think over all the swell experiences of my 37 years before dying - to have the fun of recalling them just once more before I go.'"

As fate would have it, Marshall had only a few months to live when he returned to Washington, D.C. after his final Alaska adventure. But in that time, he celebrated one of his greatest successes--adoption by the Forest Service of the "U" regulations, which prohibited logging in wilderness areas.

In November 1939, when Marshall died in his sleep while on a train to New York, his colleagues and friends were stunned. "If there is a Valhalla for the spirits of men, may Bob's spirit find there one of his beloved wilderness areas," wrote Forest Service Chief EA. Silcox.

"He was the one guy who could always pull you out of the squirrel cage and make you feel again the excitement, importance and opportunity in what you were trying to do," added a *New Republic* editorial.

"With his passing the cause of wilderness preservation lost one of its greatest champions," said ecologist Olson. "He would not be surprised to see that the battle for wilderness preservation is still raging. But Marshall knew the fight for wilderness would not be an easy one and, a year before his death, he penned what many believe to be his most fitting eulogy:

**W**e're all young enough that we'll probably meet many defeats in the next 50 years. It's even conceivable that when we die we still will not have won the fight. But win or lose, it will be grand fun fighting and knowing that whatever we do in the right direction will help eventual victory."

*This article originally appeared in the MISSOULIAN newspaper and then was reprinted in the book MONTANA'S BOB MARSHALL COUNTRY issued by Northern Rockies Publishing in 2004. Sherry Devilin is now the editor of the MISSOULIAN, Missoula Montana's newspaper. She has had several positions of responsibility with the paper and has served as editor for five years.*