# MIISTAKIS INSTITUTE 35
Connecting critical habitat along Highway 3

---

# MIISTAKIS INSTITUTE 35
Connecting critical habitat along Highway 3

# STEVEN GNAM 6
A photographer’s view of the Crown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>MIISTAKIS INSTITUTE</td>
<td>Connecting critical habitat along Highway 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>STEVEN GNAM</td>
<td>A photographer’s view of the Crown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ROB CHANEY</td>
<td>Advocates push for Glacier’s neighbor, Akamina-Kishinena, to be added as an international peace park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DAVE HADDEN</td>
<td>Jack Potter, Glacier Park’s conscience, retires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>MARK HUFSTETLER</td>
<td>The lonsome life at Kishenehn Ranger Station, 1910-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>JERRY FETZ</td>
<td>Explore historic Waterton, this issue’s “Town in the Crown”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>KIM DAVITT</td>
<td>Crown Roundtable discusses integration of culture, community and conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>RICHARD HUTTO</td>
<td>The beauty of a burned forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>WILL KLACZYNSKI</td>
<td>2020: Building a university for the global century</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 56   | RICK GRAETZ | Crossing the Crown: Marias Pass  
The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act |

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- **MIISTAKIS INSTITUTE 35**: Connecting critical habitat along Highway 3
- **STEVEN GNAM 6**: A photographer’s view of the Crown
- **MISSION STATEMENT**
  - Why Crown of the Continent is taught at the University of Montana
- **ROB CHANEY**
  - Advocates push for Glacier’s neighbor, Akamina-Kishinena, to be added as an international peace park
- **DAVE HADDEN**
  - Jack Potter, Glacier Park’s conscience, retires
- **MARK HUFSTETLER**
  - The lonsome life at Kishenehn Ranger Station, 1910-1940
- **JERRY FETZ**
  - Explore historic Waterton, this issue’s “Town in the Crown”
- **KIM DAVITT**
  - Crown Roundtable discusses integration of culture, community and conservation
- **RICHARD HUTTO**
  - The beauty of a burned forest
- **WILL KLACZYNSKI**
  - 2020: Building a university for the global century
- **RICK GRAETZ**
  - Crossing the Crown: Marias Pass  
The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act

---

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Why Crown of the Continent is taught at the University of Montana

---

**ROB CHANEY**

Advocates push for Glacier’s neighbor, Akamina-Kishinena, to be added as an international peace park

---

**DAVE HADDEN**

Jack Potter, Glacier Park’s conscience, retires

---

**MARK HUFSTETLER**

The lonsome life at Kishenehn Ranger Station, 1910-1940

---

**JERRY FETZ**

Explore historic Waterton, this issue’s “Town in the Crown”

---

**KIM DAVITT**

Crown Roundtable discusses integration of culture, community and conservation

---

**RICHARD HUTTO**

The beauty of a burned forest

---

**WILL KLACZYNSKI**

2020: Building a university for the global century

---

**RICK GRAETZ**

- Crossing the Crown: Marias Pass  
The Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act
foreword
with Vice President for Research and Development

It is my pleasure to welcome readers to this sixth issue of the University of Montana’s Crown of the Continent E-Magazine. As Vice-President for Research and Development at UM for the past decade, it has been exciting to watch the Crown Initiative and its Electronic Magazine grow and mature over the past several years. Since the main campuses of the University of Montana are located in Missoula, just at the southern edge of the Crown ecosystem, it seemed very appropriate to me from the beginning that the University focus some of its efforts—in research, but also in education and outreach—on this unique and diverse part of the Rocky Mountains. Additionally, the University has two very important research centers and facilities situated in the Crown—Lake Biological Station and the Lubrecht Experimental Forest. Both of these research and education centers, of course, have provided students marvelous educational opportunities and researchers and scholars very important field opportunities for decades. And their work has resulted in many research findings that have yielded significant insights into how parts of this and other ecosystems function and how to better manage them in order to preserve them.

What this relatively new UM Crown Initiative has offered, among other things, is the opportunity to foster greater collaboration among the programs and researchers on our campuses and further beyond them, as well as a means, through the EMagazine, to make all of these Crown-based educational opportunities and research activities and findings much better known both to the members of the greater UM community and to the general public beyond Missoula and even Montana. Many of the comments received from readers of earlier issues include such words as: “I didn’t know that…” or “I was surprised and happy to learn that…” These have been followed by references to articles on scientific research, such as some about climate change; to pieces about the history of Glacier National Park; to reviews of recent and important books about some aspect of the Crown, its natural history or its challenges from fire, floods, or political changes; or important pieces about work being carried out by some of the Initiative’s and the University’s many collaborating partners throughout the region. In this way, the UM Crown E-Magazine has attempted, and, in my mind, succeeded remarkably, in making a wide range of important information about the Crown accessible and available to anyone who has a computer and internet access. And it now has readers from around the world.

As this particular issue (#6) illustrates, the UM Crown Initiative and its E-Magazine are, as so many important things that involve the University, its students, faculty, and staff, collaborative efforts that involve people, institutions, and organizations far beyond the main campus. As with all such efforts, the University is very grateful for what those partners and collaborators bring to us as we work to fulfill our mission as a public university. Without the collaboration of individual photographers, scientists both on and off campus, of partners like The Missoulian newspaper or the Mistaksa Institute in Calgary, the magazine would be much less exciting, much less informative, much less inspiring. As an avid fisherman, I spend as much time as I can outdoors in Montana and the region, much of it in rivers and streams near or in the Crown. I get to know those places in intimate ways, to be sure, but they also have made me want to know more about how those places link to the rest, what their history is all about, how they have been preserved despite all the threats they have faced, and what kinds of research are being carried out in the region, and the ways in which we continue to face wisely the challenges and changes they face. The UM Crown of the Continent E-Magazine is a great place to learn about all of that. I hope that you will enjoy this issue and the previous issues as much as I have and that you continue to find inspiration and important information in these pages.
Views of the

Lightening storm, Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park.
ABOVE: Northern Pygmy Owl near the Flathead River.

LEFT: Crescent moon among dead Whitebark Pine.

FAR LEFT: Photographer Steven Gnam said of his own photo, "One of my favorite grizzly shots. Although grizzlies occupy so many kinds of habitat, I like to think of them as being in the rugged mountains, like this."
TOP LEFT: “the dancer”

TOP RIGHT: View of approaching storm from a high peak in the Crown.

BOTTOM LEFT: Muley joy.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Mountain goat kid scratching its ear on mom.
TOP: Double rainbow and summer storm.

BOTTOM LEFT: First snow of the autumn, almost time to den for this griz.

BOTTOM CENTER: Bald eagle along the North Fork of the Flathead.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Mountain Goat navigating steep terrain.
Steven Gabriel Gnam has been photographing wildlife, landscapes, and people in adventure across the western United States and Canada for the past 12 years. Most of his work focuses on the wildlands of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest. Steven lives with his wife Alyson in the Pacific Northwest. He is currently working in the Crown of the Continent to ensure it remains wild and beautiful for generations to come. To see more of his work visit: StevenGnamPhotography.com

TOP LEFT: A Yellowheaded Blackbird in a Swan Valley wetland.
TOP RIGHT: Steven Gnam photographing in British Columbia.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Wildflowers along the Rocky Mountain Front.
BOTTOM LEFT: Arrowleaf Balsamroot on the Flathead Indian Reservation.
Advocates push for Glacier’s neighbor to be added to international peace park

A single mud puddle sums up the wonder and weirdness of this place. Barely two miles over the hump from Waterton National Park’s busy Cameron Lake Road, a soggy spot in the trail bore the prints of a grizzly bear, an all-terrain vehicle, a wolf, hiking boots and a bicycle wheel. Elk scat lay nearby in the grass. So did a horseshoe.

British Columbia’s bit of the border above Glacier National Park defies easy understanding. While it shares the same chain of spectacular mountains as the International Peace Park, it has been a Canadian provincial park just 16 years. While Glacier and Waterton have extensive staffs of rangers and concessionaires, the Akamina-Kishinena park headquarters is an unoccupied 12-by-20-foot cabin. “We haven’t had staff permanently on site for about four years,” said Alex Green of the British Columbia Parks Department. “The area receives quite a bit of use, but it disappears in the background of Waterton.”

That background vibrates with change. U.S. and Canadian leaders announced plans to protect the Flathead River Basin from mining and energy development last year, but the details remain unfinished. Waterton and Glacier just celebrated their centennial birthdays, but calls to boost Akamina-Kishinena just won’t go away.

RIGHT: A 700-foot-tall nunatak remains where an ice-age glacier split as it carved a major valley in British Columbia’s Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park.
Kishina to federal status went unfulfilled. “We continue to pursue the dream of Kootenay Brown (Waterton’s first superintendent) 100 years ago to put the missing piece of the Peace Park in place,” said Harvey Locke, former president and now senior adviser to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. “The British Columbia Flathead is one of the most extraordinary places on Earth for biodiversity. It’s an essential part of the long-term future of Glacier and Waterton parks. It’s a dream worth pursuing.”

This 27,000-acre park runs from the Alberta border west above Glacier Park’s Upper and Lower Kintla Lakes, with a big cherry-stem of provincial national forest poking into its middle. The corridor includes old logging roads where some motorized travel is allowed, although it’s prohibited in the provincial park. Big-game hunters regularly use the area, and do much of the trail maintenance into remote camps. “There’s not much of a question if that should be a part of the Peace Park and World Heritage site,” said Casey Brennan of the Canadian conservation group Wildsight. “Making it a national park would get at least a half-dozen park rangers in there, plus education and interpretation for the schools. And there’d be science, more than the once-a-year fly-over that provincial ministry officials make to be sure there’s still goats in there.”

It’s not because of a combination of Canadian historical development and contemporary land management issues. Both those things could be changing. First the Canadian history. In the 19th century, what’s now Alberta was part of the Northwest Territories, owned by the federal government. British Columbia was a separate province that joined the Canadian federation in 1870. So while the Canadian central government could designate Waterton as a national park after creating Alberta in 1905, British Columbia retained provincial control over virtually all its public land. And British Columbia’s southeastern corner has rich underground wealth. The Elk River drainage north of Eureka supports major coal mines. The Flathead River drainage just to the east (which forms Akamina-Kishinena’s western border) has shown equal promise.

Locke recalled major efforts to expand Waterton when American and Canadian Rotary Clubs pushed for the International Peace Park designation in 1934, in the 1970s when nature writer Andy Russell led a campaign, and again in the 1990s when former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien proposed expanding the country’s national park system.

It was only in that last push that British Columbia decided to make Akamina-Kishinena a provincial park in 1995. Locke said. And in doing so, it created a boomerang-shaped space with all its low-elevation timberland excluded from protection.

Much of the Elk River area was a British Columbia wildlife refuge until 10 years ago, when British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell ordered it changed to a mining zone. The Akamina-Kishinena was simply provincial forest. In 2010, Campbell reversed course and signed a similar order making the Flathead off limits to mining and energy exploration. The deal was part of a memorandum of understanding with Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer, backed by the state’s senators, Max Baucus and Jon Tester. That’s put new wind in the sails of park supporters. But the memorandum of understanding remains unfunded on the American side and unlegislated on the Canadian side. Baucus has a bill moving through the Senate to buy out the mining interests, but the British Columbia Parliament hasn’t yet produced a measure to make Campbell’s order permanent.” It’s written in pencil,” said National Parks Conservation Association Crown of the Continent program manager Michael Jamison. “We’d like to see it written in pen.”

Two of Akamina-Kishinena’s features do draw regular attention. Forum and Wall lakes lie just across the British Columbia border of Akamina Pass. They rival Glacier Park’s Avalanche Lake for accessibility and beauty. Beyond there, park visitors are on their own. The park’s webpage warns it is a “wilderness area, without supplies or equipment of any kind. All arrangements for supplies and transportation must be made beforehand.”

See next page
“I don’t think four Americans have ever done this,” said Will Hammerquist as he led the way through a cliff notch between the Starvation Creek and North Kintla Creek drainages. “Hardly any Canadians ever get here.”

Below was a U-shaped valley punctuated by a 700-foot-tall nunatak - a Devil’s Tower-like pillar that defied the glacier that carved the rest of the drainage. Fossil algae swirls called stromatolites, 1.5 billion years old, littered the basin. The trunk of a dead whitebark pine tree 36 feet around had a chunk of stromatolite tangled in its roots. Hammerquist peeked over the valley’s southern lip, searching for the concrete obelisk signifying the U.S.-Canadian border. While he could see Glacier’s Upper Kintla Lake 3,000 feet below, the four-foot-high marker was buried in snow.

For Hammerquist, Akamina-Kishinena’s provincial status causes both social and environmental problems. Compared to Waterton, it has virtually no personnel to explain its wonders, enforce its rules or explore its scientific treasures.

That results in little control of the noxious weeds visitors track in, a hunting zone shoehorned between two high-protection wildlife parks, and a stalled effort to unify the whole area as a world heritage site.

“The whole notion of combining Waterton and Akamina has the weight of history behind it,” Hammerquist said. “It’s been there for 100 years. It’s not some idea we just came up with.”

In 2009, a Canadian opinion poll found 77 percent of the East Kootenay (including Cranbrook, Fernie and Sparwood) residents supported creating wildlife sanctuaries in southeastern B.C., where hunting and mining would be prohibited. But the 2010 international agreement on the Flathead specifically included hunting and trapping as permitted uses.

“It has global significance,” said Sarah Cox, spokeswoman for Sierra Club B.C., which advocates protecting a 100,000-acre swath of southeast British Columbia, including the Akamina-Kishinena. “It’s the largest, longest wildlife corridor left in North America.”

“The Akamina is only a few hundred meters wide in some places,” Cox said. “You can hunt a grizzly there. A bear that’s fully protected in Waterton and Glacier can step across the border and be shot in B.C.”

Published by permission from the Missoulian
The following piece, reprinted in a slightly edited form, was recently written by Dave Hadden, Director of Headwaters Montana upon the retirement of Jack Potter from Glacier National Park. Everyone who has worked with Jack over the past four decades, including those of us involved with the UM Crown of the Continent Initiative, have found a great friend and collaborator in him, and have relied heavily on his experience, insights, vast knowledge, and wisdom about all things related to GNP and beyond in the Crown. And even though he is now officially retired, and will have more personal time to pursue some additional interests, we continue to rely on him and look forward to continuing to work with him for many years to come. And thanks to Dave Hadden for allowing us to reprint his reflections on Jack below. For readers interested in learning more about the Headwaters Montana organization, its website is info@headwatersmontana.org.

On May 2 of this year, Jack Potter retired after 41 years with Glacier National Park, one of the few National Park Service employees to spend his entire professional career in one place. To many of us on the ‘outside’ of Glacier’s internal operations, Jack has been the conscience of the bureaucracy for Glacier’s safekeeping. The future challenges and threats facing Glacier are many and Jack’s vigilance and integrity will be hard to replace. It is fair to ask, “Who will be the next Jack Potter for Glacier?”

Jack ended his career as chief of Science and Resource Management. He started as a seasonal trail crew worker and worked his way up, learning the park from the inside out. As he said in an interview with the NPS Park Science Magazine, “I have been very fortunate to be able to broaden my working experience and move upward in the ranks, especially in Glacier.”

This exceptional GNP employee has received several honors for his outstanding work at Glacier. Jack was winner of the 2003 Intermountain “Regional Director’s Award for Resource Management”, as well as the 2007 Department of the Interior “Superior Service Award.” Among other accomplishments, he is credited with strengthening the park’s management team with his “in-depth knowledge” of Glacier and the National Park Service mission and objectives, and is recognized as being committed to the “highest principles of leadership and integrity.”

Jack can’t place his fondest memory of his time in Glacier. “There are so many days and nights in Glacier’s backcountry, and every one was memorable.” He recently recounted one funny incident when he was packing a trail crew out of No Name Lake. Jack was having a problem with his pack string, and instead of tying his horse up after dismounting, he let the reins drop. When he approached the problem mule, the mule stepped on his foot. He let out a pained yell, and half the pack string took off down the trail without him. Later, walking out and leading the remainder of the string, he encountered a woman who slyly asked, “Are you the one missing a horse and three mules? They seemed to be in an awfully big hurry.”

Jack Potter was part of many important Park decisions and decision-making processes. He said the drafting and finishing of the Glacier General Management Plan was one of the more challenging and rewarding efforts for him. The 1999 Plan basically “told the story of where the Park was headed for the next twenty years.”
Headwaters Montana works to conserve the water, wildlife and traditional outdoor heritage in the Crown of the Continent.

We focus on the west side of the Continental Divide and, more specifically, the Flathead Valley, with a pin-point focus on beating back the threat of mountaintop removal coal mining in the Canadian reach of the North Fork Flathead River. In 2010 we registered a historic breakthrough that ended 35 years of disagreement between Montana and British Columbia.

In February 2010, Montana and B.C. signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that committed both governments to not develop energy or mining resources in that transnational watershed. As with most agreements, the devil is in the details. Agreements like the MOU came into being only because the governments of Montana and B.C. got the message from citizens like you who expressed their concern. The North Fork Flathead issue still needs your voice.

Headwaters Montana and its “Flathead Wild” (www.flatheadwild.ca) team members have a nine-point conservation plan for the North Fork, including:

- Banning mining and energy development in the entire watershed;
- Doubling the size of Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada;
- Establishing a Wildlife Management Area between the border and Banff National Park;
- Legislating a high quality conservation plan for national forest lands south of the border.

To read the Park Science Magazine article referenced in this article, go to www.nature.nps.gov/ParkScience/index.cfm?ArticleID=326&page=1

Thank You!

Headwaters Montana
PO Box 3410
Whitefish, MT 59937
406-837-0783

To honor Jack Potter’s legacy of stewardship at Glacier National Park, Headwaters Montana established in 2011 an annual award in his name. “The Jack Potter Glacier National Park Stewardship Award” recognizes an individual who demonstrates courageous and above average commitment to the stewardship and protection of the natural resources of Glacier National Park. Nominations for the award may be made by contacting HeadwatersMontana at info@headwatersmontana.org.
Even by Montana standards, the North Fork of the Flathead River traverses a remote landscape, one that still evokes a sense of the frontier. Today, the long, forested valley remains inaccessible by paved road, lacks commercial electricity, and is home to only a handful of year-round residents. Although the North Fork marks the northeastern boundary of Glacier National Park, only a tiny fraction of the park’s visitors venture into the area.

The sense of “frontier” that characterizes the North Fork country is an enduring legacy of the early years of Euro-American settlement in the area and a reminder of the isolation and need for self-sufficiency that has always been inherent to life on the fringe of wilderness. Along the North Fork, those challenges were faced by homesteaders, loggers, and prospectors who entered the region beginning in the 1890s as well as a handful of park rangers charged with managing the land and its resources in a valley that was (and is) largely federal property, protected as part of the Flathead National Forest or Glacier Park. With duty stations that were very remote, even by North Fork standards, the area’s early rangers existed in an often-solitary world, their daily lives characterized by a unique combination of wilderness self-reliance and bureaucratic responsibility.

The North Fork country first received designated federal protection in 1897 with the establishment of the Flathead Forest Reserve. While the Department of Agriculture exerted a thin administrative control over the reserve in the years that followed, it was not until the 1910 creation of Glacier Park that the valley saw a significant federal presence. Glacier’s establishment effectively split the valley between two federal agencies—and more importantly, between two contrasting land management philosophies. West of the North Fork, the national forest land continued to sustain multiple uses, with homesteading, logging, and hunting all taking place. The land east of the river, though, was now part of a national park with land and wildlife protection as a primary goal. In the eyes of Glacier’s early managers, this dichotomy was a potential threat to the park’s management goals. To prevent hunting, timber-cutting, and other potentially damaging activities from filtering into Glacier, an active official presence along the park boundary seemed essential.

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, enforcement of the park boundary was a major focus of Glacier’s administrative efforts and a major duty of the park’s small ranger force. It was accomplished primarily by the establishment of a string of log-cabin ranger stations along most of the park’s borders and a newly built boundary trail intended primarily for administrative patrol. Most of Glacier’s rangers were based at these remote outposts, one man per station year-round, each a human presence to help distinguish the line between protected and open land. Three of these stations were in the North Fork country: Logging Creek, a former Forest Service facility; Polebridge, near the center of North Fork homestead activity; and Kishenehn, an isolated spot just south of....
Canadian border.

The Kishenehn facility was fairly typical of Glacier's early ranger outposts. Constructed near the spot where Kishenehn Creek entered the North Fork, Kishenehn served as the park's most northwesterly administrative site. From there, rangers could theoretically monitor the Canadian border just to the north as well as the park's western boundary along the river. Though the area's isolation meant that it was removed from most North Fork activity and settlement, a small number of homesteads lay across the river a few miles to the west, forming a rural community known as Trail Creek; these were Kishenehn's nearest neighbors, and perhaps a source of enough concern to park administrators to warrant a ranger's presence.

The Kishenehn district ranger oversaw a small, roughly triangular domain that included some of Glacier's most remote and little-visited country. The southern end of the Kishenehn district included patented homestead entries that predated the park, but otherwise the land was virtually undisturbed. Kintla Lake, across the foothills to the east, was the only location ever occasionally frequented by tourists; a small camping area existed there, reached by a rough automobile road that predated the park.

For most of the ranger station's history, road access to Kishenehn itself was problematic at best. Early maps show an unimproved fork of the Kintla road following the north fork of the North Fork, past Kishenehn all the way to the Canadian border, but early park documents mention travel to Kishenehn only on foot and horseback, suggesting that this pioneer route may have been impassible to wheeled vehicles. A rough truck road to Kishenehn was finally punched through from the Kintla road by the late 1920s, but its use was limited to the summer months. Dave Carvavina, an early Kishenehn ranger, recalled once attempting to make the drive in April; his truck became hopelessly stuck north of Polebridge, and a North Fork rancher used a team of horses to pull the vehicle the remaining fifteen odd miles to Kishenehn.

The vagaries of the park road meant that the most reliable access to Kishenehn was usually the hike in from Trail Creek, crossing the North Fork either in a boat or a primitive cable "bucket crossing" installed by the park.

This remote geography and limited infrastructure meant that, administratively, the Kishenehn ranger was largely on his own. Except under the best of conditions, the next-nearest ranger station (at Polebridge) was a full day's ride away. Despite this isolation, though, Kishenehn was the hub of a substantial network of trails, including the boundary route along the river; a route up Kishenehn Creek to British Columbia; and another heading over the ridge to Kintla Lake. A "patrol cabin" existed at both ends of Kintla Lake and at Ford Creek, providing overnight shelter for extended ranger patrols. Single strand telephone lines, strung through the trees, connected Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.

The Kishenehn station itself began with the construction of a small log cabin in 1913, a building that was destroyed by fire six years later. The replacement structure, completed in 1922, provided two small rooms and a covered front porch and served both as office and living quarters for the Kishenehn ranger. A small, rustic horse barn stood nearby, and in later years the park added a "fire cache" building, where equipment for fighting forest fires was stored. A woodshed and an outhouse completed the outpost. This collection of buildings was characteristic of nearly all of Glacier's early-twentieth-century ranger stations.

For the first quarter-century of Glacier's existence, the little cluster of buildings at Kishenehn was deemed a sufficiently strategic location that a member of Glacier's small ranger force was stationed there year-round. In the North Fork and elsewhere, most of Glacier's early rangers were local residents and area homesteaders, who already knew the area well. In the case of Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.

The Kishenehn station itself began with the construction of a small log cabin in 1913, a building that was destroyed by fire six years later. The replacement structure, completed in 1922, provided two small rooms and a covered front porch and served both as office and living quarters for the Kishenehn ranger. A small, rustic horse barn stood nearby, and in later years the park added a "fire cache" building, where equipment for fighting forest fires was stored. A woodshed and an outhouse completed the outpost. This collection of buildings was characteristic of nearly all of Glacier's early-twentieth-century ranger stations.

For the first quarter-century of Glacier's existence, the little cluster of buildings at Kishenehn was deemed a sufficiently strategic location that a member of Glacier's small ranger force was stationed there year-round. In the North Fork and elsewhere, most of Glacier's early rangers were local residents and area homesteaders, who already knew the area well. In the case of Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.

The Kishenehn station itself began with the construction of a small log cabin in 1913, a building that was destroyed by fire six years later. The replacement structure, completed in 1922, provided two small rooms and a covered front porch and served both as office and living quarters for the Kishenehn ranger. A small, rustic horse barn stood nearby, and in later years the park added a "fire cache" building, where equipment for fighting forest fires was stored. A woodshed and an outhouse completed the outpost. This collection of buildings was characteristic of nearly all of Glacier's early-twentieth-century ranger stations.

For the first quarter-century of Glacier's existence, the little cluster of buildings at Kishenehn was deemed a sufficiently strategic location that a member of Glacier's small ranger force was stationed there year-round. In the North Fork and elsewhere, most of Glacier's early rangers were local residents and area homesteaders, who already knew the area well. In the case of Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.

The Kishenehn station itself began with the construction of a small log cabin in 1913, a building that was destroyed by fire six years later. The replacement structure, completed in 1922, provided two small rooms and a covered front porch and served both as office and living quarters for the Kishenehn ranger. A small, rustic horse barn stood nearby, and in later years the park added a "fire cache" building, where equipment for fighting forest fires was stored. A woodshed and an outhouse completed the outpost. This collection of buildings was characteristic of nearly all of Glacier's early-twentieth-century ranger stations.

For the first quarter-century of Glacier's existence, the little cluster of buildings at Kishenehn was deemed a sufficiently strategic location that a member of Glacier's small ranger force was stationed there year-round. In the North Fork and elsewhere, most of Glacier's early rangers were local residents and area homesteaders, who already knew the area well. In the case of Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.

The Kishenehn station itself began with the construction of a small log cabin in 1913, a building that was destroyed by fire six years later. The replacement structure, completed in 1922, provided two small rooms and a covered front porch and served both as office and living quarters for the Kishenehn ranger. A small, rustic horse barn stood nearby, and in later years the park added a "fire cache" building, where equipment for fighting forest fires was stored. A woodshed and an outhouse completed the outpost. This collection of buildings was characteristic of nearly all of Glacier's early-twentieth-century ranger stations.

For the first quarter-century of Glacier's existence, the little cluster of buildings at Kishenehn was deemed a sufficiently strategic location that a member of Glacier's small ranger force was stationed there year-round. In the North Fork and elsewhere, most of Glacier's early rangers were local residents and area homesteaders, who already knew the area well. In the case of Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.

The Kishenehn station itself began with the construction of a small log cabin in 1913, a building that was destroyed by fire six years later. The replacement structure, completed in 1922, provided two small rooms and a covered front porch and served both as office and living quarters for the Kishenehn ranger. A small, rustic horse barn stood nearby, and in later years the park added a "fire cache" building, where equipment for fighting forest fires was stored. A woodshed and an outhouse completed the outpost. This collection of buildings was characteristic of nearly all of Glacier's early-twentieth-century ranger stations.

For the first quarter-century of Glacier's existence, the little cluster of buildings at Kishenehn was deemed a sufficiently strategic location that a member of Glacier's small ranger force was stationed there year-round. In the North Fork and elsewhere, most of Glacier's early rangers were local residents and area homesteaders, who already knew the area well. In the case of Kishenehn with Polebridge and ultimately with park headquarters in far-away West Glacier. The phone lines were notoriously unreliable, frequently broken by deadfall and largely unusable during the winter months.
outdoor skills that were mandatory for a wilderness life. All were male, and most were single; some were drawn to park service for the promise of steady wages as much as the lure of the outdoors. A Glacier ranger in the early 1920s might earn one hundred dollars per month, housing included—a respectable sum in an area where much blue-collar work was seasonal and homesteads often could generate only a subsistence lifestyle. During those years, the total Glacier ranger force typically consisted of fifteen to twenty men, most stationed alone at places such as Kishenehn. In the summer of 1921, a typical year, Glacier’s ranger staff consisted of a chief park ranger, three assistant chief park rangers, a “Carpenter and Park Ranger,” and twelve park rangers, four of whom held temporary positions. Some served for only a season or two, while a few made careers of the ranger life. Though park records are incomplete, most Kishenehn rangers apparently remained there only a short time before either leaving the service or moving on to less-accessible duty stations.

Though most of the men who served at Kishenehn were Montanans and seasoned outdoorsmen, adapting to the daily life of a Glacier ranger still required a significant change of focus. A ranger’s primary responsibility—monitoring the park’s borders and protecting its natural resources—placed him in direct contrast to the North Fork’s homesteaders, many of whom subsisted through the logging and hunting activities that Glacier prohibited. The early North Fork homestead community included both a growing number of settlers claiming National Forest land west of the river, as well as a handful of settlers within the park itself, who lived on grandfathered land claims filed prior to Glacier’s 1910 establishment. This complicated the issue still further, since logging—and, for a time, hunting—could still take place on those private holdings.

The dichotomy between resource policy and settlement lifestyle set the stage for fundamental conflict between the Kishenehn ranger and the people who were his only neighbors, a difficult situation that wasn’t always successfully managed. The homestead land nearest Kishenehn was long owned by a man named Matt Brill, who operated the “Kintla Guest Ranch” on the property. Over the years, the Brill family became the good friends of some North Fork rangers and the adversaries of others. Kishenehn rangers could alternate socializing at the Brill place with days spent chasing Brill’s trespassing livestock off of park lands. Persistent but unconfirmed North Fork rumors suggest that Brill and his dude-ranch guests, who had some political connections, finally had the last laugh by arranging for the transfer of one difficult North Fork ranger to Mount McKinley National Park in Alaska.

Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, GLAC 11549

BOTTOM LEFT: In the 1930s, with the completion of the Going-to-the-Sun Road, the park reduced the number of year-round ranger stations, shifting focus to areas that received more visitors. By the end of the decade, Glacier staffed Kishenehn only in the summer, and in later years the station stood empty except for the occasional ranger patrol. Here North Forkers Charlie Boyer (left) and Matt Brill cross an unidentified creek with their catch, enjoying the frontier lifestyle that characterized the world of Kishenehn and the North Fork country.

CENTER: By the 1930s, more of Glacier’s rangers were married, and the presence of family members at the ranger station helped strengthen social connections between the rangers and the North Fork community. Glenn and Mary Ellen Miller marked their first wedding anniversary while Glenn was stationed at Kishenehn in the winter of 1935–36. This photo shows Mary Ellen with the pelt of a coyote Glenn shot that winter. Mary Ellen later recalled that Glenn gave her the bounty he received for the coyote kill, so she could treat herself to a permanent wave.

Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, HPF 3720

BELOW: Kishenehn’s remoteness left its rangers largely self-reliant, connected to Polebridge and park headquarters only by notoriously undependable single-strand telephone lines. Strung through the trees, the North Fork telephone lines were often broken by deadfall and rendered unusable for extended periods. This 1938 view shows Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees transporting new telephone cable across Logan Pass, a modernization project that never reached Glacier’s North Fork country.

Chasing Matt Brill’s horses was an obvious and time-honored duty of the Kishenehn district ranger, one of many tasks that fell under the broad heading of resource protection. Beyond that overall goal, though, most new rangers arrived at Kishenehn with relatively little idea of the specific tasks expected of them. Dave Cannavina, who served at Kishenehn in the 1930s, recalled:

“In those days you were sent out to a station and you were left on your own; you were on your own to figure out what you were supposed to do. I read the diary and saw what the other rangers had done, and kind of guided myself accordingly. And I knew that there were trails to open up in the early spring, and equipment to get into shape for firefighting, and maintenance of the station. I had two horses. In those days each ranger had to have his own saddle horse and pack horse and had to take care of the horses, feed them, mend corrals and pasture fences, and get food and supplies in.”

Cannavina remembered most of his...
Kishenehn days as being focused on movement, traveling the district’s trail network to observe wildlife, searching for poachers or other violations, and simply asserting an official presence in the area. Rangers were reportedly expected to complete three hundred miles of patrol per month, and the Kishenehn logbooks list an endless, repeating cycle of major holidays and at the change of seasons. Late autumn generally meant a multi-day trip to West Glacier or Kalispell to purchase winter supplies, provisioning trips to the outlying patrol cabins, and extra time spent preparing and maintaining equipment. Fall also saw the station’s horses shipped out to their winter pasture. In the spring, reopening the trails and repairing telephone lines consumed considerable attention. Trail clearing was painstakingly accomplished with axes and saws, and rangers often spent days tracing remote telephone wires looking for breaks. Kishenehn’s rare visitors—nearly always fellow rangers—typically came during the summer months, and some summers a seasonal fire guard would live at the station, doubling its official population.

The seven-day workload of a back-country ranger left little time for leisure activity, though Kishenehn’s isolation made socializing difficult at best. Most of Kishenehn’s rangers were unmarried men, and their only social activities were with one another. Social occasions during the late fall and early winter were usually the only holidays noted in the diaries, though holiday celebrations at the station were uncommon. Thanksgiving 1933 was a rare exception, when most of Glacier’s west-side ranger force met at Kishenehn to celebrate the holiday. Over the years, a few Kishenehn rangers routinely traveled to the Polebridge or Logging Creek stations to spend holidays with fellow rangers, while others stayed at Kishenehn alone, sometimes preparing solitary holiday meals, sometimes appearing with other fellow rangers on the same day as the Polebridge entry. (Thanksgiving for December 25, 1930, is typical: “At station all day—taking care of Mr. Turkey. Weather is fine, dear; AM zero, PM 11.”) Another unsigned entry for Christmas 1934, though, was less satisfying: “Went to Trail Creek for food for Xmas dinner. Bad trip. Did not get back until 7:15 p.m. in the dark. A poor day.”

The ranger uncharacteristically took the twenty-sixth off as well to finally prepare his holiday dinner. By the 1930s, more of Glacier’s rangers were married, and some even had children; this changed the atmosphere of the back-country ranger stations considerably. Social activities took on a more visible role, with the North Fork community often embracing the Park Service employees more fully. A Depression-era Kishenehn ranger named Glen Miller brought his wife, Mary Ellen, to Kishenehn for the better part of a winter, and found her days were largely solitary, she reminisced about the time fondly: “I liked it up there. Because you would be snowshoeing and everything was so calm and so peaceful, the snow was so white. I loved it, and I still do . . . [We were] living up there at Kishenehn for our first anniversary. We were just sitting and talking, and had the radio going, and pretty soon we heard bells. And here comes Matt and Meta Brill. She had made a cake, and she had gotten flowers from her plants in the house, and some of the greenery and brought a bouquet. That was our first anniversary. I thought that was neat.”

Single or married, many of Kishenehn’s rangers clearly took to the life, in spite of the long periods of isolation, daily physical labor, and a largely mundane routine. Others tolerated the situation less well, and at Kishenehn this ultimately resulted in a tragedy. In the winter of 1925–26, Kishenehn’s ranger was a young man named William McAfee, a Texan who had relocated to Montana and settled on a homestead near Trail Creek. The winter isolation took its toll on McAfee, as did a failed relationship with someone he described only as “the kid.” Things grew worse when the Park Service laid him off due to a lack of funds while still asking him to remain at the station for the winter until he could be recalled to duty. On January 13, 1926, McAfee wrote to a friend in Kalispell: “You know, take it..."
all in all, there are many disadvantages to a job of this kind. You know what I mean. A fellow is shut out from...