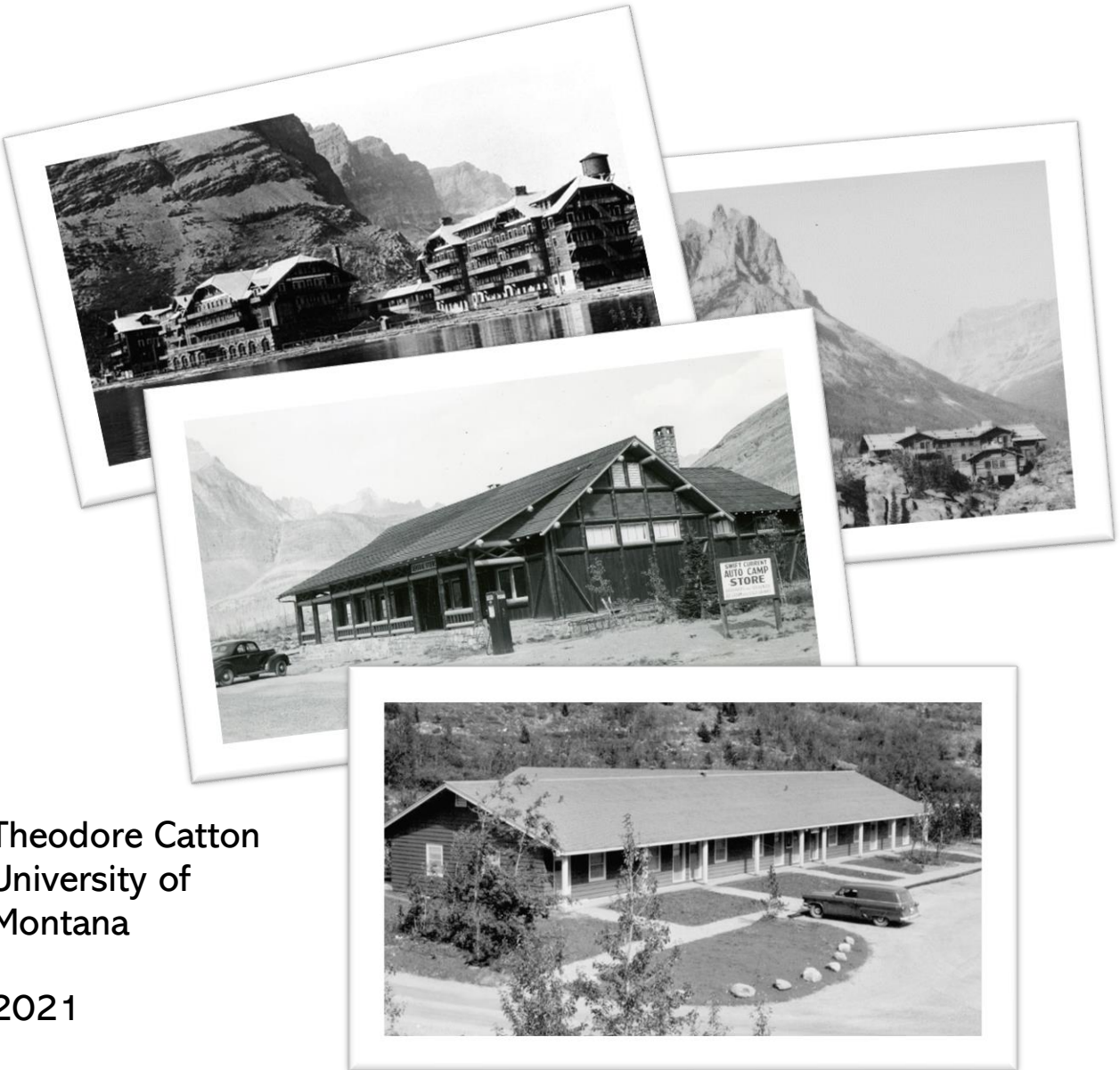


From Grand Hotels to Modern Motels

Traditions of Overnight Lodging in Glacier National Park
A Management History



Theodore Catton
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2021



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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Foundations	9
Chapter 2: The Mather-Albright Years, 1915-1930	39
Chapter 3: Through Depression and War, 1930-1945	71
Chapter 4: The Postwar Decade and Mission 66, 1945-1960	101
Chapter 5: Glacier Enters its Post-Railroad Era, 1960-1990	133
Chapter 6: In Search of a Status Quo, 1990-2015	167
Chapter 7: The Backcountry Chalets	191
Photo Essay	199
Bibliography	209

Introduction

One of the hallmarks of America's oldest national parks is the distinctive architecture of the grand hotels. Lake McDonald Lodge and Many Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park keep company with Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone, El Tovar Hotel in Grand Canyon, and the Ahwahnee in Yosemite, together with a half dozen other national park lodges of near comparable fame and grandeur. This collection of historic structures forms a unique legacy of the early national park movement. They have been called "monuments to the wilds of the West," and the national parks' "log palaces."¹

These buildings are strongly associated with an era when railroads played a key role in national park development. Nowhere in the National Park System was the influence of the railroads stronger than in Glacier National Park, where the Great Northern Railroad built not only Many Glacier Hotel, but Glacier's unique system of backcountry chalets as well as Glacier Park Lodge at the east entrance to the park and Prince of Wales Hotel in neighboring Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta.

Railroads took a major role in the early development of national parks because the federal government was eager to partner with private investors, while railroad corporations were eager to promote travel and economic development in the West. Railroad corporations were among the most powerful, well-capitalized corporations of the day. A handful of railroad corporations got involved with developing visitor facilities in numerous western national parks. The Great Northern Railroad's involvement with Glacier was more profound and lasting than any other railroad-national park connection. It would persist until 1960.

When the National Park Service (NPS) was created in 1916, railroad capital was already heavily invested in the national parks. NPS took up the task previously charted in the Yellowstone Act of 1872 to partner with private capital in providing visitor accommodations in the national parks. The principles of national park concessions management laid down in the early days of NPS park administration

¹ Christine Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West* (Bend, Ore.: W. W. West, Inc., 1997), 9; Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990).

became known as the Mather-Albright principles. Congress enacted legislation on national park concessions management two times, in 1965 and 1998, codifying the Mather-Albright principles and making modest reforms.

The story of concessions management in Glacier revolves around how the railroad-national park connection was forged after Glacier National Park was established in 1910 and then how it slowly unwound through the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. The story also focuses on the evolution of national park concession policy and the professionalization of concessions management in the post-railroad era.

In the early years, Glacier's concessions were operated with relatively little government oversight. The superintendent dealt directly with the concessioner or he went through the regional director or a concessions management specialist who was located in the regional office or the Washington Office. The superintendent forwarded the concessioner's annual financial reports to the Washington Office where they were put in a long queue for eventual auditing. In the 1970s, NPS moved concessions management to the field level, ramped up its auditing of concessioner's financial reports, and instituted regular health and safety inspections of concession operations. Glacier had its first concessions management specialist on staff in the mid 1970s. It had two on staff in the 1980s and three in the 1990s. Concessions management became its own staff division in 2004. A major milestone in the development of Glacier's concessions management program came with the preparation of its *Commercial Services Plan* completed in 2004. Nowadays Glacier's concessions management staff handles six concession contracts, as well as approximately three dozen smaller operations that are programmed under Commercial Use Authorizations, but there has always been a *prime* concession contract covering the operation of Glacier's grand hotels and other visitor accommodations.

Glacier National Park had three prime concessioners in succession during its first century. Glacier's original prime concessioner, Great Northern, pulled out in 1960. Glacier's second prime concessioner was Don Hummel's Glacier Park, Inc., which lasted through the next twenty years. In 1981, Hummel sold his interests to Greyhound Food Management, Inc. Greyhound formed a subsidiary with the same name, Glacier Park, Inc., and that company held the prime concession contract until 2014. Glacier transitioned to its fourth prime concession, Xanterra Parks and Resorts, Inc., (Xanterra) only in 2014, at which point this history ends.

Throughout the park's history the prime concessioner has operated most of the overnight lodging establishments in the park as well as a tour bus service. After 1954, Glacier's two backcountry chalets were operated by another concessioner under a separate contract.

Chapters 1 through 4 of this report deal with the federal government's relations with Great Northern from the early days through 1960. Chapter 5 covers NPS relations with Hummel's Glacier Park, Inc., 1961-1981, and Chapter 6 treats Greyhound's Glacier Park, Inc., 1981-2014. Chapter 7 focuses on the backcountry chalets. This report discusses the park's other concessions – boat concessions, horse concessions, and other tour guide services – only peripherally.

This administrative history of concessions management does two things. First, it provides an analytical narrative of how NPS formulated and carried out a policy of working with the private sector to accommodate visitors in Glacier National Park from 1910 to the modern day. And second, it chronicles the development of the physical infrastructure of visitor accommodations in Glacier. It has two technical audiences in view: the professionals who work in national park concessions management, and the professionals who take care of Glacier's historic structures.

The history of concessions management and the history of physical development intertwine around a third element, a storyline that is central to both, and that is the changing pattern of visitor use from railroad-based tourism to automobile-based tourism that began to take shape soon after Glacier was established. Ultimately, the switchover to automotive tourism had a profound impact for concessions management as railroad capital pulled out and new sources of capital investment came in, and it also had a profound impact on physical development as the auto tourist wanted a different array of visitor accommodations to augment the grand hotels and chalets built by Great Northern. Thus, this administrative history of concessions management revolves around three themes, which may be summarized as follows.

Theme One: The Partnership of Government and Private Capital

The national park concession idea is virtually as old as the national park idea. The famous campfire story about the original idea for Yellowstone National Park featured the notion of using the power of the federal government to control adverse hotel development. The vision was not to keep hotels out of Yellowstone altogether but to make sure they were erected in the public interest. When Congress framed the Yellowstone Park Act, it admitted that the federal government was not the right entity to build and operate hotels or other visitor accommodations in the national park and that the task must be left to private capital operating under government supervision. The basic formula was for the government to lease parcels of ground where visitor accommodations could be suitably developed and run as a business for

profit. The government retained control of the concession through the limited term of the lease.²

Early experience in Yellowstone, Yosemite National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, and elsewhere showed that a ten-year lease made a weak foundation for capital investment. Multiple hotels and transportation companies, operating under conditions of fierce competition to capture enough business to cover their investments, generally provided shoddy service to the public. With the creation of the National Park Service (NPS) in 1916, Director Stephen Mather reformed national park concession policy by instituting the regulated monopoly form of concession. Modeled after the public utility company that served a municipality, the national park concession was given a twenty-year lease and an exclusive franchise for providing specified visitor services. In return for giving a private business that privileged standing, NPS regulated the rates that the company could charge to the public.

As national park concession policy was crafted by Mather and honed by his assistant and successor, Horace M. Albright, it came to embrace a standard formula for framing the partnership of NPS and the concession within each park. It had four essential features: 1) the long-term lease, 2) the exclusive franchise, 3) a preferential right of renewal when the lease expired, and 4) the promise of compensation for possessory interest in the buildings should the lease be conveyed to a new concessioner. The policy succeeded admirably through the interwar period and became known as the Mather-Albright principles of concession management.

National park concessions suffered through the hard years of the Great Depression and the even tougher business conditions brought about by travel restrictions during World War II. They saw their relative power in the partnership sharply diminish. The federal government toyed with nationalizing all national park concession operations, or at least acquiring all the buildings in public ownership. The concessions resisted the move, and fiercely defended the principle of possessory interest.

After World War II, the concessioners scrambled to regain their former power in the partnership, reaching out to Congress for help. Concessioners and NPS sparred over how to approach the enormous task of rehabilitating structures that had been allowed to deteriorate through the depression and war years. The sparring continued even as NPS forged ahead with redevelopment of national parks in Mission 66. Concessioners finally secured the principle of possessory interest in the Concession Policy Act of 1965.

² John Ise, *Our National Park Policy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1961), 18, 32.

NPS moved toward greater oversight of concession operations in the 1970s. From the perspective of Glacier concessioner Don Hummel, national park concessioners once again saw their power ebb as NPS teamed with environmentalists in attempting to restrict visitor services and relocate many visitor accommodations outside of national parks. This is the theme in Hummel's polemical book about national park concession policy, *Stealing the National Parks* (1987). Even though NPS did not get far in relocating existing facilities outside of park boundaries, it did move aggressively in the 1970s and 1980s to leverage greater control over concession operations. In Glacier, NPS came to recognize Hummel as a foe of the agency and so it forced him to relinquish the concession and retire from the business. During the 1990s, administrative reforms further strengthened NPS's hand in overseeing concession operations. Congress passed another law on national park concessions management in 1998, repealing the 1965 law and making concession contracts more competitive.

*Theme Two: The Relationship of Concessions Management to Changing
Patterns of Visitor Use*

Great Northern Railway Company financed most of the original hotel and chalet development in Glacier. Its subsidiary, Glacier Park Hotel Company, was the park's prime concession from 1910 until 1961. Great Northern subsidized the Glacier Park Hotel Company year after year because it sought to boost the railroad's fortunes through Glacier tourism. In the park's early years, most visitors arrived by train and availed themselves of Glacier Park Hotel Company's services. The park tour might begin with a stay at the Glacier Park Hotel (today's Glacier Park Lodge), then the visitor might proceed to a horse trip from chalet to chalet through the park's backcountry, or transfer by bus to the Many Glacier Hotel, or take a boat up Saint Mary Lake to the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. Glacier Park Hotel Company catered to an affluent clientele who came to the park for a stay of several days. Great Northern's president Louis W. Hill was the enthusiastic patron of Glacier's east side tourism development, and the government allowed him practically a free hand in building his hotels and chalets wherever he thought best to put them. It was an infrastructure founded on railroad-based tourism.

Almost from the time Mather brought Great Northern into the fold of national park concession policy, automobile tourism began to replace railroad tourism as the dominant pattern of visitor use in Glacier. In contrast with the affluent railroad tourists who came to sojourn in the hotels and avail themselves of the guide services, the car tourists tended to be a more independent breed of park visitor. Many had their own camp kits. They were more representative of the broad middle class, typically

having less money and time to spend in the park than the railroad tourist did. The transition from the railroad era to the automobile era, occurring so soon after Glacier's establishment, created a fundamental tension between NPS and the concessioner. Glacier Park Hotel Company wanted to take extra care of its customers who arrived by rail on its parent company's railroad; NPS aimed to provide for the enjoyment of the mass of visitors who arrived by car.

The existing infrastructure of hotels and chalets was slowly modified and expanded to serve the rising numbers of car tourists. In the 1920s, NPS developed public campgrounds as a complement to overnight lodging facilities. In the 1930s, NPS coerced Glacier Park Hotel Company into developing auto cabin camps at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun. In the postwar years, NPS supported the company's removal of most of the chalets, while the company supported NPS's splitting off the last two remaining chalets into a separate concession. During Mission 66, NPS catered to the public's new preference for motels over housekeeping cabins: it directed the concession to build motel units at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun, and it acquired the motel-style Apgar Village Inn. All this teamwork by NPS and Great Northern had to be accomplished under the strain of Great Northern's lingering bias toward its railroad and hotel patronage.

Changing patterns of visitor use continued to test the NPS-concession partnership after Great Northern pulled out of Glacier. As NPS grew more attuned to ecological concerns in the 1960s and 70s, a few of Glacier's visitor facilities such as those in the Swiftcurrent Valley became problematic. The growing visitor load on the park prompted NPS to reassess which visitor facilities and services were necessary and appropriate, and which ones might be properly relocated outside the park. Yet the railroad-era hotels proved to have a tenacious hold in the park. Each time NPS initiated discussion of potentially removing visitor facilities the general public sided with the concession in wanting to maintain the status quo. In both the *Final Master Plan* completed in 1977 and the *General Management Plan* completed in 1999, NPS affirmed that existing visitor facilities at Many Glacier, Swiftcurrent, Rising Sun, Two Medicine, Lake McDonald, and Apgar would be kept as is, neither removed nor expanded.

A similar friction between protecting resources and preserving the visitor experience developed around the two backcountry chalets. As use of Glacier's backcountry boomed in the 1960s and 70s, the chalets came to accommodate nearly 5,000 overnight guests each summer – a heavy load for the fragile environment in which each chalet was located. The chalets were a throwback to an earlier era when visitor impacts were smaller because there were many fewer visitors. Nevertheless, the concessioner, Belton Chalets, Inc. resisted moves to close the chalets. Problems

with sewage disposal finally forced NPS's hand in the 1990s. Even then, the public rallied behind the chalets and they were reopened with composting toilets (an inadequate fix, it turned out) some years later.

Just as *change* in the pattern of visitor use was a potent force in Glacier's historical development, *continuity* in the pattern of visitor use was important, too, and ultimately came to shape concessions management as much as change did. In the 2004 *Commercial Services Plan*, NPS committed itself to preserving what it called *traditional* visitor services and facilities. It harkened to the 1999 *General Management Plan* with its central finding that the public had a strong interest in protecting continuity in the visitor experience, or keeping Glacier the way it was, whether that was driving in private automobiles over Going-to-the-Sun Road or staying in one of the park's overnight lodging facilities.

The power of traditional use became evident in recent years when Sperry Chalet was partially destroyed in a forest fire. The public's feeling of loss was profound. Should the chalet be rebuilt? Or should nature be allowed to reclaim the area? Faced with the logistical challenges and exorbitant cost of rebuilding, and the known environmental difficulties of operating a busy overnight accommodation at that high elevation, NPS had to ask whether the visitor facility was necessary and appropriate. Somewhat surprisingly, the argument that Sperry Chalet constituted an important traditional use won the day. With backing from Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, the rebuild project was fast-tracked and completed in 2019.

Theme Three: The Relationship between Concessions Management and Historic Preservation

There was another dimension to maintaining the status quo besides preserving traditional use. In the 1980s, Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, Sperry Chalet, Granite Park Chalet, and the Two Medicine Camp Store all received designation as national historic landmarks. Later, the Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun auto camps and the Apgar townsite were placed on the National Register of Historic Places as historic districts. Concessions management overlapped with cultural resource management as both programs featured preservation of these same historic buildings and complexes.

The big railroad corporations were the primary source of capitalization for the development of visitor facilities in America's national parks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Glacier is the premier example of a railroad park. Yellowstone, Mount Rainier, and Grand Canyon National Parks were railroad parks, too, but none had the close tie to a transcontinental railroad that Glacier did. The

grand “log palaces” built by Louis W. Hill on the east side of Glacier are practically unrivaled in their architectural splendor. The chalets, with their Swiss-inspired architecture and function, have no parallel elsewhere in the U.S. national parks. Even the Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun auto camps, architecturally humble in comparison, stand as outstanding examples of the shift toward automobile-oriented visitor facilities in the 1930s. Great Northern and NPS collaborated in the planning and design of the latter facilities. The history of concessions management in Glacier includes the architectural history and business history of how these national historic landmarks and historic districts came to be.

Under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, maintenance of old buildings became something more: the stewardship of historic resources. NPS took the lead in documenting the buildings and nominating them for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The concessioner had responsibility for maintenance and repairs. Over time, as NPS increased its oversight of concession operations, historic preservation and the maintenance program were blended; one activity could not be independent of the other.

When NPS looked at potentially closing visitor facilities to protect ecologically sensitive areas or to enhance wilderness values, it had to weigh those considerations with historic preservation. It was much easier to preserve a national historic landmark in public use than to preserve it as an empty shell, boarded up and closed to public use. To raze a historic building and completely remove it from the landscape was a big step. Thus, the historic preservation of Glacier’s hotels, chalets, and auto camps came to militate strongly against the closure of any of Glacier’s visitor facilities. Historic preservation and traditional use were mutually reinforcing.

Chapter 1

Foundations, 1890-1915

The relationship between government and private capital in the national parks has changed over time and must be viewed as a product of its times. At the time that Glacier National Park was established, people viewed the purpose of national parks differently than they do today, and they viewed the roles of government and private capital differently then as well. The writings of Mary Roberts Rinehart, an early park visitor, will serve to illustrate the early perspective on the relationship of government and private capital that was reasonable then but would not make much sense in our own time.

Mary Roberts Rinehart was a novelist, playwright, journalist, and outdoor enthusiast from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At the age of 39 she joined a large horse party on a 300-mile trek through the newly established Glacier National Park. She loved the experience. She was enthralled by the alpine scenery. She was amused by the company of men and women in the wilderness. She enjoyed fishing and seeing bears and other wildlife in their natural habitat. Visiting Glacier National Park afforded her a chance, she thought, to see the vanishing Old West. She published an account of her adventures in *Through Glacier Park: The Log of a Trip with Howard Eaton*. She was so smitten by her Glacier experience that two years later she made another trek up the west side of the park, which she wrote about in a second book, *Tenting To-Night: A Chronicle of Sport and Adventure in Glacier Park and the Cascade Mountains*. Rinehart also published essays about Glacier in *Collier's* and *Cosmopolitan* and she provided advertising copy for Great Northern Railway's publicity department.³

In a Great Northern booklet, *The Call of the Mountains: Vacations in Glacier National Park*, Rinehart joined with other preservationists of her day in lauding the national park concept. She found the federal government's idealism in establishing

³ Mary Robert Rinehart, *Through Glacier Park: The Log of a Trip with Howard Eaton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), and *Tenting To-Night: A Chronicle of Sport and Adventure in Glacier Park and the Cascade Mountains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918); Glenda Riley, *Women and Nature: Saving the "Wild" West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 74-76.

the park to be praiseworthy, even though the U.S. Congress had been “niggardly” in appropriating funds for it. Then she added this interesting remark: “If the Government had not preserved it, it would have preserved itself, but you and I would not have seen it.”⁴

What Rinehart meant by this was that the Glacier country was so mountainous and remote from centers of population it needed little government protection to keep it pristine. The government’s action in establishing Glacier National Park branded the area a national playground, raised its profile, and sowed the ground for tourism development, and that was its chief significance. In another piece, Rinehart stated that the government had “done a splendid thing” in creating the national park but it had “failed to open up the park properly.”⁵

Rinehart’s remarks were a fair reflection of early-twentieth-century public opinion, and her point of view paralleled arguments frequently heard in Congress whenever national park bills were debated. Montana’s Senator Joseph Dixon, who introduced the Glacier National Park bill for consideration by the U.S. Senate on January 20, 1910, stated that the proposed park was “an area of about 1,400 square miles of mountains piled on top of each other” containing “no agricultural land and no mineral-bearing formations of any significance or commercial value.” When skeptics of the measure questioned why the government’s protection was needed at all if the land was so inaccessible and inhospitable, proponents responded that it was right to make the area a national park, as it had been right to establish Yellowstone National Park, to bring honor on the nation. Montana’s Senator Thomas Carter said, “No one who has ever visited Yellowstone National Park...can fail to realize that it would have been a public calamity to have permitted that wonderland to have passed into private ownership.” When skeptics said the government should not incur the expense of developing another national park, proponents answered that the expense to the U.S. Treasury would be minimal because private capital would come in and pay for the accommodation of pleasure-seekers.⁶

In Rinehart’s experience, that was exactly what occurred in Glacier National Park when Great Northern Railway Company undertook development. “Were it not for the Great Northern Railway,” she wrote in 1915, “travel through Glacier Park would be practically impossible.”⁷ Relations between government and private capital from this point of view were simple. The park administration’s job was to build roads and

⁴ Mary Roberts Rinehart, *The Call of the Mountains: Vacations in Glacier National Park* (St. Paul: Great Northern Railway, n.d.), 1.

⁵ Mary Roberts Rinehart, “Through Glacier National Park with Howard Eaton,” *Collier’s* 57 (April 29, 1916), 26.

⁶ Andrew C. Harper, “Conceiving Nature: The Creation of Montana’s Glacier National Park,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2010), 18-19.

⁷ Rinehart, “Through Glacier National Park with Howard Eaton,” 26.

trails into the area. Great Northern's job was to provide transportation and accommodations. When Great Northern picked up the government's slack in this partnership and built roads and trails as well as hotels, well then, hail to the public spiritedness of the railroad company.

Glacier National Park Established

Congress was usually more forward-thinking in creating national parks than it was in paying for their administration. National park establishing acts often placed a ceiling on public investment in the park, and many included no initial funding for administration or development. True to form, the act to establish Glacier National Park did not provide any funding for park administration; that was left to annual appropriations acts for the Department of the Interior. The act dedicated the area as a "public park or pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States under the name of 'The Glacier National Park'." It charged the Secretary of the Interior with "the care, protection, management, and improvement of the same," with its overall direction aimed at "the protection of the park in a state of nature so far as is consistent with the purposes of this Act."⁸

Besides those central purposes, the bill was larded with numerous provisions for use. Railroad rights of way might be granted inside the park along the valleys of the Middle Fork and North Fork of the Flathead River. The Reclamation Service might enter and utilize the streams for power and irrigation projects. The Secretary of the Interior was authorized to lease tracts of up to ten acres for up to twenty years for the erection of buildings to accommodate visitors, and to lease parcels of up to one acre for up to twenty years for the erection of summer homes and cottages. Finally, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized to sell timber within the park for building construction.

In the judgment of historian John Ise, the establishing act's many lax provisions meant that Glacier National Park as originally constituted "was not really a national park, in the proper sense of the word, but a sort of hybrid national forest with a few park features, and it was first administered as such."⁹

Other historians agree with Ise that Glacier National Park at its conception was mainly intended for tourism development. C. W. Buchholtz avers that "Congress, in 1910, did not intend Glacier to be an absolute wilderness." He points out that Glacier's first superintendent, William R. Logan, arrived in the park with the title of

⁸ Act of May 11, 1910, 36 Stat. 354.

⁹ John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 175.

superintendent of road and trail construction – with the development of public access being a high priority.¹⁰ Andrew C. Harper gives a detailed recounting of the campaign for the park and concludes at the end of his essay:

What is clear from the story of Glacier's creation and that of other national parks of the same period is that, whether meant to be preserved close to nature's design or just reserved until their best use could be determined, national parks were created to be used. It is the manner and extent of their use that provoked meaningful discussion then and still does today.¹¹

In his classic history, *National Parks: The American Experience*, Alfred Runte calls attention to the rhetoric deployed repeatedly in Congress which argued that public lands should be put to their "highest use." In other words, public lands deemed worthless for agriculture or mining should be put to work in some other capacity, namely for tourism. The debate over the Glacier National Park bill followed in that vein. In 1910, Senator Dixon assured his Senate colleagues that he had "hunted and traveled over almost every inch of the [Glacier] country" and he was able to vouch that it was "one of the grandest scenic sections in the United States, absolutely unfit for cultivation or habitation." Even skeptics of the national park bill were led to accept that preservation was "as good a use as can be made of that land."¹² The trope of "highest use" was part of what Runte has termed the "worthless lands thesis." Lands proposed for national park designation had to pass a litmus test that they were worthless for any other kind of economic development.

In the case of Glacier National Park, the worthless lands litmus test had already occurred some years prior to the congressional debate over the establishing legislation. It took place after the federal government coerced the Blackfeet Nation into ceding the western portion of the Blackfeet Reservation, which was thought to contain valuable mineral deposits. Prospectors went into the so-called Ceded Strip in the mid to late 1890s but failed to find much valuable ore. George B. Grinnell, an eastern sportsman and editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine, took the lead in advocating the creation of a national park that would overlap much of the Ceded Strip. He had been traveling to the Glacier country since 1885 to hunt big game, glory in the mountain scenery, and collect Blackfeet lore. He proposed making the area into a national park as early as 1894, when the east slope of the Rockies was still part of the Blackfeet Reservation. As a friend of the Blackfeet, Grinnell reluctantly accepted a role in negotiating the land cession agreement that was concluded on September 26, 1895, which ultimately proved so crucial to the process

¹⁰ C. W. Buchholtz, *Man in Glacier* (West Glacier, Mont.: Glacier Natural History Association, Inc., 1976), 51-52.

¹¹ Harper, "Conceiving Nature," 24.

¹² Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2nd revised edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 76.

of consolidating lands in federal ownership for the creation of a park. When the search for valuable minerals proved a bust, Grinnell stepped up his campaign to create a national park. In an article published in *Century Magazine* in 1901, Grinnell gave the area its moniker “Crown of the Continent” and brought it national attention. By the final stage of the campaign for Glacier National Park, from 1907 to 1910, when bills were under consideration in Congress, Grinnell’s primary concern was that the Blackfeet Reservation would be allotted and thrown open to white settlement, leading to homestead entry and commercialization along the edge of the Ceded Strip. The national park designation was chiefly important to protect low lying areas around St. Mary Lake and elsewhere that might be taken up in private holdings.¹³

Besides Grinnell, the other leading advocate for Glacier National Park was Louis W. Hill, son of James J. Hill, the founder and president of Great Northern Railway. Like Grinnell, Louis W. Hill was a sportsman and conservationist with a personal attachment to the Rocky Mountains in northwest Montana, where he made several hunting trips in the first decade of the twentieth century. Unlike his father, who had no use for a national park, Louis W. Hill saw the potential for a national park adjacent to the Great Northern Railway line to increase the flow of passenger traffic over the line. Furthermore, he conceived of building visitor accommodations that would fetch still more passenger traffic and tie the national park to the railway through advertising in a way that could rival the Northern Pacific Railway’s prestigious association with Yellowstone National Park. In 1907, Louis’s father James J. Hill retired as president of the company and Louis was elevated in his place. Louis W. Hill soon persuaded his father that the national park project was worthwhile, especially as it would neutralize the Northern Pacific’s major asset as a passenger carrier. Henceforth, Great Northern Railway would play a key role in developing tourist facilities in Glacier National Park, just as the Northern Pacific Railway had done in Yellowstone.¹⁴

With the establishment of Glacier National Park in 1910, Great Northern Railway joined a handful of other transcontinental railroads interested in promoting the western national parks. Indeed, Great Northern was the only transcontinental railroad whose line ran along a national park boundary. Great Northern already had the distinction of being the only transcontinental line to be built without the aid of generous public land grants. James J. Hill, the “Empire Builder,” had succeeded in financing and completing his line from St. Paul, Minnesota to the Pacific Coast by

¹³ Harper, “Conceiving Nature,” 11-13.

¹⁴ George Bristol, *Glacier National Park: A Culmination of Giants* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2017), 60-62; C. W. Guthrie, *All Aboard! for Glacier: The Great Northern Railway and Glacier National Park* (Helena, Mont.: Farcountry Press, 2004) 60.

promoting agricultural settlement and securing sustaining levels of local freight traffic as the railroad line was pushed methodically westward. Colonization of the northern prairie and shipping of farm-to-market freight were Great Northern's stock in trade, and the senior Hill once underscored that fact when he told an associate, "We do not care enough for Rocky Mountain scenery to spend a large sum of money in developing it." But the son, Louis W. Hill, who would serve as president or chairman of the board of Great Northern Railway for the next two decades, was determined to change that.¹⁵

West Side Developments before 1910

When Glacier National Park was established the whole east side of the park was undeveloped for tourists. The east side of the park would soon see Great Northern Railway's construction of big hotels and smaller chalets. Meanwhile, across the Continental Divide, the west side of the park presented a different situation. There, an array of humble visitor accommodations already existed on private inholdings within the park boundary when the park came into existence. Glacier's concession complex would rise from those two separate, nonequivalent foundations on the two sides of the park, and it would retain an asymmetric cast through the first half century of the park's existence, being strongly weighted toward the east side of the park where the major capital investment occurred.

While the west side tourist accommodations were largely financially independent of Great Northern Railway, they arose nonetheless as a direct result of the coming of the railroad. Great Northern Railway surveyed its route through Marias Pass in 1890, and laid track from the Blackfeet Reservation over the mountains to the upper Flathead Valley in the next year. In December 1891, the line reached the tiny settlement of Columbia Falls. In February 1892, it connected to Kalispell. In August of that year, Great Northern Railway ran its first passenger train from St. Paul, Minnesota to Spokane, Washington. Great Northern Railway accomplished its final hurdle in building a transcontinental railroad, breeching the Cascade Range in western Washington, in the winter of 1892-93. These far-flung developments across three states brought a pulse of new settlement into Montana's upper Flathead Valley in the early 1890s. Homesteaders began exploring the edges of the valley and were soon attracted to Lake McDonald, lying just two miles from the railway line.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ralph W. Hidy, Muriel E. Hidy, and Roy V. Scott, with Don L. Hofsommer, *The Great Northern Railway: A History* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1988), 124; Michael P. Malone, *James J. Hill: Empire Builder of the Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 249.

¹⁶ Guthrie, *All Aboard! for Glacier*, 40-42.

German immigrant Frank C. Geduhn made the first homestead claim at the foot of Lake McDonald in February 1891. Homesteader John “Scotty” Findlay filed a claim at the head of the lake a few weeks later, and a man named John Elsnor staked a claim nearby that summer. Partners Milo Apgar and Charles Howe left their homes on the east side of the mountains and followed the Great Northern Railway route over Marias Pass, arriving in the area in June. They filed homestead claims by the foot of the lake on either side of McDonald Creek. At the end of 1892, Findlay drowned in McDonald Creek and Geduhn took over his claim at the head of the lake, vacating his own claim at the foot of the lake. With at least two homesteaders at the head of Lake McDonald and two more at the foot in 1893, the tiny community came together that year to make a primitive wagon road through the dense forest from the north bank of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River to Lake McDonald.¹⁷

These homesteaders probably never intended to clear their land for farming. They did some trapping and hunting for subsistence and intermittently worked for wages in the Flathead Valley, and as soon as the opportunity presented itself, they began accommodating tourists. Milo Apgar and Frank Geduhn each built a cluster of rental cabins on their respective claims at either end of Lake McDonald. Additional homesteaders George Snyder, Frank Kelly and Denis Comeau moved into the area and added more tourist accommodations during the mid 1890s. Snyder seems to have had his sights on the tourism business from the day he arrived. A young businessman from St. Paul, he used his father’s money to buy a small parcel near the head of the lake and erect a two-story hotel, which he called Glacier House. To bring his guests up the lake, Snyder acquired a 40-foot Flathead Lake steamboat and transported it by rail and wagon to Lake McDonald. Possibly Snyder’s inspiration to set out from his home state of Minnesota and develop tourism on Lake McDonald came directly from Great Northern Railway’s passenger agent, F. I. Whitney, or perhaps Snyder acted on the information contained in Whitney’s 1894 publication, *Valley, Plain, and Peak*. At any rate, once he was ensconced in his new home in Montana, Snyder named his boat *F. I. Whitney* after the St. Paul-based Great Northern Railway passenger agent.¹⁸

Meanwhile, another businessman Edward E. Dow established tourist accommodations at the railway stop known as Belton. Dow built a single-story log

¹⁷ Jessie Ravage, “Recreational Camps on Lake McDonald, Glacier National Park, Montana,” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form and National Register of Historic Places Registration Forms, Glacier National Park, February 2006; Alan S. Newell, David Walter, and James R. McDonald, *Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey* (Missoula, Mont.: Historical Research Associates, Inc., 1980), 27.

¹⁸ Calvin H. Mires, “Plying the Waters in America’s Little Switzerland: Early-twentieth-century Lake Tourism in Glacier National Park,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 45.

hotel beside the tracks in the winter of 1892-93. After two summer seasons, he dismantled the structure and replaced it with a two-story frame building. Later, he added a dining room, store, and post office, and began operating a stage service between Belton and the foot of Lake McDonald.¹⁹

The homesteaders around Lake McDonald continued to pool their efforts in making Lake McDonald an attractive resort, even as they competed with one another for business. They joined together to build a bridge across the Middle Fork. They improved the road from the river crossing to Lake McDonald, widening it and laying down corduroy sections through the wettest places. Snyder's lake steamer carried guests to Geduhn's cabins at the head of the lake as well as to his own hotel. As Michael J. Ober observes in his 1973 master's thesis on the history of concessions in Glacier National Park, the homesteaders around Lake McDonald were a different breed from the early concession operators in Yellowstone National Park. They were small landowners offering limited services to a small number of visitors. Unlike their contemporaries in Yellowstone, they were not seeking outside investment capital or angling for advantage in a realm of cutthroat competition. They were not moved by "corporate pride," but rather by "pioneering autonomy."²⁰

In 1897, the vicinity around Lake McDonald together with all the lands that would make up Glacier National Park became forest reserve lands. President Grover Cleveland proclaimed two forest reserves in the area: Flathead Forest Reserve encompassing 2.3 million acres from the Flathead Valley to the Continental Divide, and Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve covering the Ceded Strip and lands southward along the east side of the Continental Divide. The forest reserve proclamation withdrew the lands around Lake McDonald from homestead entry but did not affect existing claims. In those early days when forest reserves were under the administration of the General Land Office in the Department of the Interior the ranger force was extremely sparse. One forest ranger was posted intermittently in Belton to put out fires along the railroad that were ignited by the steam engines' thrown sparks. Ranger Frank Herrig was assigned to patrol the entire North Fork district in 1900. Another ranger Frank Liebig was posted to the Lake McDonald area in 1902. From his ranger headquarters on Lake McDonald, he was tasked to patrol the entire country that would later become Glacier National Park.²¹

¹⁹ Michael J. Ober, "Enmity and Alliance: Park Service-Concessioner Relations in Glacier National Park, 1892-1961," M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 1973, 16; Guthrie, *All Aboard! for Glacier*, 43.

²⁰ Donald H. Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park: An Administrative History* (West Glacier, Mont.: Glacier Natural History Association, Inc., 1960) 63; Newell et al., *Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey*, 27; Mires, "Plying the Waters," 46; Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 15-16.

²¹ Harper, "Conceiving Nature," 10; Buchholtz, *Man in Glacier*, 39-40.

The tourist accommodations around Lake McDonald underwent little change through the late 1890s and early 1900s. Then, starting in 1906, there were a few further developments that finished “setting the table” for how tourists would be accommodated on the west side of Glacier National Park in the park’s early years. One impetus for the latter developments was the Forest Homestead Act enacted in 1906 that opened selected “agricultural” lands within forest reserves to homestead entry again. Probably another impetus was the national park movement, which gathered steam after 1906 and held the promise of boosting tourism to the area significantly.

The first new development in 1906 was “Kelly’s Camp.” Homesteader Frank Kelly built guest cabins on his land at the northwest end of Lake McDonald, and acquired his own 35-foot boat, *Emeline*, for bringing tourists up the lake. Kelly’s gas-powered vessel was newer and better than Snyder’s coal-fired steamer, *F. I. Whitney*, which was soon retired from service. Kelly’s Camp became the fourth tourist resort on Lake McDonald, after Apgar’s cabin cluster (which by this time was known as “Apgar”), Geduhn’s resort (which by this time included a small hotel as well as cabins), and Snyder’s hotel.²²

The other change that year came when Snyder sold his hotel to local businessman John E. Lewis. This newcomer to Lake McDonald in 1906 was a resident of Columbia Falls and settler in the Flathead Valley since 1892. He already ran one hotel as well as some fur-trading outlets, and he speculated in land, which led him to the Snyder property. After acquiring Snyder’s hotel, he renovated the building and renamed it the Glacier Hotel. He also added guest cabins on the property in 1907-08. When the national park was established, the Glacier Hotel was the largest tourist facility in the west side of the park, and it became popularly known as the Lewis Hotel to distinguish it from Great Northern hotels on the east side.²³

After Snyder sold his land and improvements to Lewis, he moved to the north side of the Middle Fork across from Belton and built another small hotel. Snyder’s new hotel stood on a parcel of 132.25 acres. This parcel was patented to George Snyder’s father, Edwin A. Snyder, in 1907. The irregularly shaped parcel locked up the land just north of the river crossing at Belton, the area that is now occupied by the park headquarters complex.²⁴

In 1909, confident that the Glacier National Park bill would be passed, Louis Hill initiated development of the Belton Chalets. The early land acquisition and construction history is murky. Apparently, Great Northern Railway Company paid

²² Mires, “Plying the Waters,” 46-48.

²³ Mires, “Plying the Waters,” 47-48; Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 47.

²⁴ Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 18.

\$6,040 to a state land agent for an 80-acre parcel of what was presumed to be state land because it fell within Section 36, a school section. But the U.S. Forest Service maintained that the tract belonged to the Flathead National Forest and the sale was canceled. Cancellation of the land sale did not stop construction of the chalets from going forward, however. The Belton Chalets opened for business on June 27, 1910. Over the winter of 1910-11, the facility served as a temporary park headquarters.²⁵

West Side Tourist Accommodations from 1910 to 1916

With the creation of Glacier National Park in 1910, the west side developments continued as before but with some changes brought by the national park designation and the advent of park administration.

By 1910, some of the homestead claims around Lake McDonald were patented and some were not. Any claim that was patented became a private inholding within the park. The owner of the inholding did not need a concession permit to operate a hotel or guest cabins on his or her private land. Both John Lewis's hotel and the late Milo Apgar's log cabin summer resort (operated by Milo's son, H. D. Apgar, after Milo died in 1896) were on private land and therefore were not subject to regulation by the park administration. However, all boat transportation on Lake McDonald was immediately put under concession permit and since the hotels and cabins up the lake depended on boat transportation for their clientele, the park administration did acquire control over tourist operations to a limited extent through the boat concession. The first concession permit granted in the park was made to Frank Kelly and Orville Denny for boat operations on the lake. Lewis partnered with Kelly in 1912, and together they ran three boats on the lake, the *Emeline*, the *Cassie D*, and the *Ethel*.

Frank Kelly did not have a patent to his homestead claim when Glacier National Park was established as he had not yet resided on the property for the requisite five years. The federal government took a lenient view toward his case and other ones like it. A law was enacted on July 3, 1916, that gave claimants like Kelly a further amount of time for proving their claims. Kelly eventually received a patent for his 55-acre property on the northwest side of Lake McDonald, and afterwards invested in rental cabins, which replaced the ones he built in the 1890s. Kelly's cabins would survive for nearly a century, passing into various private hands before eventually

²⁵ S. F. Ralston to Secretary of the Interior, April 21, 1917, File 900-04, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 154-55.

coming into government ownership, until they burned up in the Howe Ridge Fire in August 2018.²⁶

John E. Lewis expanded and upgraded his hotel and cabin resort facilities in 1913-14. Lewis entered upon this investment on his inholding without prompting or oversight by the early park administration. He did go to the park administration for permission to cut timber on park lands near his inholding to use in construction of a new grand hotel. Other building materials were brought by boat up the lake or by sled over the ice during the winter. As his hotel guests all came by boat, Lewis wanted the hotel to appear impressive from a distance out on the lake. He tore down the former hotel so that he could build the new one on the same eminence above the lakeshore. Lewis wanted his new hotel to imitate the Swiss style of architecture used in the Belton Chalets, but he also wanted something larger and better than Great Northern Railway's visitor accommodations in Belton. He hired Spokane architect Kirtland Cutter to design his new hotel. Cutter was known for his Swiss-chalet style buildings, and he was also a proponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement and advocated the incorporation of local materials such as cedar and native stone in his architectural designs. Lewis's and Cutter's collaboration resulted in the construction of one of Glacier National Park's great lodges, the three-story building now known as Lake McDonald Lodge, then known as Lewis's Lake McDonald Hotel. When completed it had 105 guest rooms and was the showplace of visitor accommodations on Glacier's west side.²⁷

The park administration was undecided at first over what to do with the legislative authority to lease parcels for the erection of summer homes and cottages. Numerous applications for "residence sites" (also called "concessions") were approved by 1913, when Department of the Interior officials began to question if those leaseholds would become a nuisance. Where would they get timber for the construction of cabins? How would the cabins be lighted and heated and supplied with water, and what kind of provisions for sanitation would be made? How much annual rent would be charged? The Department of the Interior took a more restrictive stand toward issuing licenses for summer homes and cottages after 1913, but by then several lessees already had summer homes or rental cabins constructed on their leaseholds. Superintendent Galen provided a list of fourteen lessees – eleven on Lake

²⁶ Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 181; Justin Franz, "Destroyed Cabins Welcomed Generations to Glacier Park," *Flathead Beacon* (Kalispell, Mont.), August 18, 2018.

²⁷ Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 41-42; Charles and Dorothy Wood, *The Great Northern Railway: A Pictorial Study* (Edmonds, Wash: Pacific Fast Mail, 2nd edition, 1979), 78; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park, 1913* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914), 9 (hereafter *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park* [year]).

McDonald, two on Bowman Lake, and one on Red Eagle Lake – that were approved in 1911 or 1912.²⁸

Great Northern Railway expanded the Belton Chalets but stopped short of investing in a large hotel to rival the ones it built on the east side of the park. The main chalet was a three-story building containing ten guest rooms, dining room, and kitchen. In 1911, the railroad added three more cabins, one styled as an artist's studio. In 1913, it added a fifth building containing another twenty-four guest rooms. The total construction cost of the complex was reportedly \$60,000, and the facility could accommodate up to 118 guests.²⁹

A law was enacted on March 2, 1917, that authorized the Secretary of the Interior to sell and convey the 80-acre tract of land that Great Northern Railway Company had been unable to acquire from the State of Montana in 1909. The law was a private bill brought forward by Senator Thomas Walsh (Democrat of Montana) for Glacier Park Hotel Company. Although the land was outside the park, the law was pertinent to Glacier because it was assumed that Glacier Park Hotel Company would replace the Belton Chalets with a new hotel at that location to serve park visitors. Consequently, the law provided that “any hotel erected on said land shall be operated by the said Glacier Park Hotel Company, its successors and assigns, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe for the conduct and operation of hotels with Glacier National Park.” In other words, while the land was outside the park the visitor accommodations were annexed to the park. By 1917, Great Northern Railway had invested heavily in hotel construction on the east side of the park and was no longer interested in building a large hotel at Belton, yet the legislation was enacted anyway.³⁰

The question of where to locate the park headquarters arose immediately after designation of the park, but the site would not be selected for five more years. The park's first superintendent, William Logan, who was faced with organizing a major firefighting effort from the day of his arrival in the late summer of 1910, established

²⁸ Adolph C. Miller, Assistant to the Secretary, to J. L. Galen, Superintendent, October 27 and October 29, 1913, and Galen to the Secretary of the Interior, November 25, 1913, Folder 2, File Unit 12, Subseries 01.07, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007. Galen described the parcels and improvements for the following lessees: C. W. Pomeroy, F. D. Kehew, Will M. Nettler, J. M. Gruber, Mrs. J. M. Gruber, J. S. Pomeroy, Dr. D. Braden Kyle, Arthur C. Green, John E. Lewis, E. C. Garruth, Ada E. Swank, Eugene Corrie, N. A. Forsyth, and F. H. Kiser.

²⁹ Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 155-58.

³⁰ Joseph J. Cotter, Acting Superintendent, to S. F. Ralston, Supervisor, April 2, 1917, and Ralston to the Secretary of the Interior, April 21, 1917, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10 – Central Files 1907-39 (hereafter Entry 10), Record Group 79 – Records of the National Park Service (hereafter RG 79), National Archives II (hereafter NA II). See also the description of a tract of five acres at this location recommended for long-term lease to Great Northern in Sanford H. E. Freund, General Attorney, to John H. Carroll, June 30, 1914, File 900-02 Part 1, Box 258, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

his headquarters at Apgar in six rented cabins.³¹ He moved his headquarters to Belton for the winter of 1910-11. Logan died abruptly in 1912 before he resolved the issue of locating a permanent park headquarters. Acting Superintendent R. H. Chapman urged his superiors to select a headquarters site and authorize construction of buildings, adding “In my opinion these buildings can be built of logs and of a type that would be both artistic and in keeping with the surroundings and wholly efficient for the transaction of public business.”³² In 1913, Superintendent J. L. Galen established temporary headquarters at Fish Creek, site of a Forest Service ranger station and near a portable sawmill erected for processing salvage timber that had been killed in the 1910 fires. Other temporary structures erected at this site included a blacksmith shop, a horse barn, a wagon shed, and tent houses for living quarters.³³ In 1914, Supervisor S. F. Ralston renewed the urgent request to locate a site for a permanent headquarters, commenting that the appearance of the permanent headquarters “should be in keeping with the surroundings and the dignity of the United States.”³⁴

While the headquarters site remained unresolved, the road between Belton and Lake McDonald was improved. Superintendent Logan stated that the road was built with “much difficulty” as its route ran through dense forest and over sections of swampy ground. The government had to secure a 60-foot right of way from private landowners for most of its length.³⁵ As built in 1911, the road crossed the Middle Fork at the old bridge, ran along the north bank of the river for a half mile and entered the future headquarters area where it simultaneously rounded the foot of the Belton Hills and crested the bench above the river. From that point it ran in a straight line north by northwest to Apgar. From Apgar, a primitive wagon road continued around the southwest end of the lake to Fish Creek, humped over Howe Ridge, and went up the North Fork of the Flathead River. After the three-mile section from Belton to Lake McDonald was improved, acting superintendent Chapman described it as an attractive macadam road through spruce, fir, cedar, and tamarack forest.³⁶

Ironically, when park visitors entered Glacier on the new government road the first thing they saw when they rounded the bend and got on top of the bench was George Snyder’s rather seedy-looking hotel. In March 1912, Snyder applied to

³¹ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1911, 8.

³² *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1912, 14.

³³ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1913, 8, and *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1914, 5.

³⁴ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1914, 10.

³⁵ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1911, 8.

³⁶ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1912, 13; Marius R. Campbell, “The Glacier National Park: A Popular Guide to the Geology and Scenery,” *U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin* 600 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914), 40.

Flathead County for a license to open a saloon in a cabin beside the hotel. Although federal officials opposed the application on the principle that no saloon should be permitted in the park, the county commissioners granted the license anyway. After one year of operation, however, the saloon was shut down. Under pressure from park authorities (as well as Snyder's prime competitor, Belton hotel proprietor Ed Dow, who alleged that Snyder was a drunk) the county commissioners did not renew the license, citing a report that Snyder ran a "disreputable place which was the scene of one murder."³⁷

In 1915, Stephen Mather, the future first director of NPS and then assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, visited Glacier on his epic 10,000-mile tour of western national parks. He viewed the situation at the park entrance with disgust. Indeed, the problem posed by Snyder's crummy hotel business was not unique to Glacier. Mather discovered on his western tour that entrance roads and private inholdings in other national parks were often blighted by inferior tourist accommodations. Mather concluded that the Snyder property on the north side of the Middle Fork was the best location for a permanent headquarters. Not only would it place the headquarters in proximity to the railroad station, it would also take care of the Snyder property. As the property was about to be sold on foreclosure, Mather decided to purchase it with his own money and give it to the government. In this way, he solved two problems at once: the park now had a site for permanent headquarters, and it had control of the park entrance. Due to legal complications, however, the government did not actually take ownership for more than a year. Finally, in 1917, the government had clear title and could begin development of the administrative site.³⁸

Besides protecting the park entrance from clutter, the headquarters site had other features to recommend it. Being situated on alluvial deposits, the site was flat as a pancake and would require minimal grading. It also afforded pleasant mountain views and it was located nearest to the Flathead Valley of any possible site.

The park administration in the years 1910 to 1916 found that the several existing hotels and cabin resorts located around Lake McDonald on private inholdings, as well as in Belton just outside the park boundary, were serving the public well in that section of the park. Therefore, it saw no need to lease lands for hotel development on the west side as authorized under the establishing act. As a result, concessions

³⁷ Henry W. Hutchings, Acting Superintendent, to Secretary of the Interior, March 12, 1912, and J. L. Galen, Superintendent, to Thomas J. Walsh, U.S. Senator, July 14, 1914, Folder 1, File Unit 075, Series 01.03, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 28.

³⁸ Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 80, 120-21; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1917, 12.

management in Glacier in the early years came to focus almost exclusively on the east side.

Louis W. Hill and the East Side: Opening Moves and the Chalets

Much has been written about Louis W. Hill and Glacier National Park. Few individuals have made such a mark on a single national park's architectural legacy as Hill did in Glacier. The early park administration practically gave Hill a free hand in choosing where to build his tourist accommodations within the park, as well as what appearance the buildings should take. Hill took a deep, personal interest in the development of Glacier National Park, selecting most of the hotel and chalet sites himself and choosing his own design themes. With the financial backing of Great Northern behind him, and his own vision of the future of Glacier National Park before him, Hill had a powerful shaping influence on the early tourist experience in Glacier. Through the vigorous efforts of Great Northern's publicity department, Hill gave Glacier National Park a distinctive brand, "America's Switzerland," and made it practically a colony of his father James J. Hill's Northwest empire.³⁹

Louis W. Hill was born in 1872, the third of ten children. After graduating from Yale, he went to work in his father's business and worked his way up the corporate ladder through various positions until, at age 35, he succeeded his father as president of the line. By then, Louis W. Hill had made several hunting trips to northwest Montana and considered himself a conservationist. He was already committed to the national park movement, convinced that a national park would be a boon to his railroad as well as a credit to the nation. As the new president of Great Northern, he lobbied for the national park bill and then, after the bill's passage, threw himself into the national park development program. A few years into it, he informed his father that he expected to make Glacier National Park his legacy, just as the so-called Inland Empire of the Pacific Northwest was James J. Hill's legacy. So absorbed was Louis W. Hill with his Glacier National Park project that he left much of the railroad operation to subordinates. An official of Great Northern once said, when he was

³⁹ Michael G. Schene, "The Crown of the Continent: Private Enterprise and Public Interest in the Early Development of Glacier National Park, 1910-17," *Forest & Conservation History* 34, no. 2 (April 1990), 69-71; Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney and Deirdre Shaw, "Glacier National Park: People, a Playground, and a Park," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2010), 47-49; Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 12-13; Bristol, *Glacier National Park: A Culmination of Giants*, 61, 70; Guthrie, *All Aboard! for Glacier*, 60-61; Biloine W. Young with Eileen R. McCormack, *The Dutiful Son, Louis W. Hill: Life in the Shadow of the Empire Builder, James J. Hill* (St. Paul, Minn.: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2010), 114.

asked where the younger Hill could be found, “If he isn’t in his office on the next floor look for him in northwestern Montana.”⁴⁰

Hill’s first project in Glacier was to establish a walking route through the park between Great Northern’s two train stations at Belton and Midvale. Some of the distance could be traveled by boat on Lake McDonald and St. Mary Lake. To introduce boat service on St. Mary Lake the Great Northern shipped two passenger boats, *Red Eagle* and *Glacier*, by railroad to the Midvale Station and from there by wagons to the lake. The boats were put in service in 1911. The hiking route between the lakes went over the Continental Divide at Gunsight Pass. Several years earlier Great Northern had contributed money for the construction of a hiking trail to Sperry Glacier and Gunsight Pass, its first gesture toward development of the area. Now Great Northern employed a timber cruiser to extend the trail system, and Great Northern advertised guided walking trips through Glacier National Park starting in 1911.⁴¹

While Hill was formulating a plan for opening the east side of Glacier National Park to tourism, Superintendent Logan hosted four federal officials on a park tour for the purpose of planning road and trail development. The four federal officials were Clement Ucker, a clerk in the Department of the Interior who dealt frequently with national park matters; F. N. Haines, forest supervisor of the Flathead National Forest; Marius R. Campbell, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey; and Robert B. Marshall, chief geographer for the U.S. Geological Survey. During the summer of 1910, the party traveled up the west side to Kintla Lakes, crossed over the Continental Divide, and returned to Belton. Although the expedition had to be curtailed due to forest fires in the park, Marshall used this reconnaissance to prepare the park’s first master plan. It described a comprehensive plan for roads, trails, fire signal stations, and hotels. It included a through-park road that would extend up the length of Lake McDonald and go over the Continental Divide on a northward trajectory to Waterton Lakes in Canada. In the new partnership with Great Northern Railway, Marshall assumed that the government would determine the location and architectural design of the hotels, while the railroad company would put up the investment capital and operate the hotels for profit as the park’s concessioner. Marshall estimated the government’s investment for roads and trails and other improvements would amount to \$2.2 million. That was a far greater sum than Congress was willing to invest in national park development during that era, so Marshall’s report was quietly set aside. Lacking development funds and a viable

⁴⁰ Hidy, et al., *The Great Northern Railway*, 124; Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier’s Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 9; Guthrie, *All Aboard! for Glacier*, 61; Harper, “Conceiving Nature,” 14; Rufus Steele, “The Son Who Showed His Father,” *Sunset: The Pacific Monthly* 34, no. 3 (March 1915), 480.

⁴¹ Hidy et al., *The Great Northern Railway*, 124-25; Mires, “Plying the Waters,” 53-54.

master plan, the government gave its implied consent to Great Northern to go forward with its own development plan.⁴²

In September 1911, Louis W. Hill attended the First National Parks Conference in Yellowstone National Park. The government faced mounting pressure to make the national parks more accessible and accommodating to the public, and Secretary of the Interior Walter L. Fisher called the conference to have an exchange of ideas on what should be done. Significantly, Fisher opened the proceedings and then yielded the podium to the wealthiest capitalist at the conference, the Great Northern president. Hill noted that the railroads were greatly interested in the passenger traffic to the national parks, and they would advertise the national parks, but it was up to the government to open them with roads and trails. Glacier was the newest national park, Hill said, and Great Northern was taking an early interest in establishing tourist facilities there. “With the cooperation and assistance of the Government we hope within two or three years to get financial people interested in the park and then we can get out and attend to railroading,” he told the gathering. However, that was to prove a fleeting aspiration as Hill would soon discover it was not possible to attract investment capital on the scale he had in mind.⁴³

It was around this time that Hill’s development plan for the east side of Glacier began to take shape. Tourists would come by rail and start their adventure when they got off the train at Midvale (now East Glacier Park). At that location, which lay just outside the park on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Great Northern would have its signature hotel. From that starting point, park visitors could choose from a range of guided horse trips spanning one to seven days in length. The trips would be conducted over a trail system with chalets for overnight accommodation placed at one-day intervals along the trail system. The chalets would be small, two-story structures equipped with kitchen, dining room, and sleeping rooms. Initially, Hill proposed that the chalets would be built at the following five locations: Two Medicine, Cut Bank, Gunsight Pass, Sperry Glacier Basin, and Lake McDermott (Swiftcurrent Lake).⁴⁴

To get the park open for tourism as soon as possible, Hill contracted with horse packer W. J. Hilligoss in the early summer of 1911 to prepare tent camps at each of

⁴² James W. Sheire, *Glacier National Park Historic Resource Study* (Philadelphia: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Office of History and Historic Architecture Eastern Service Center, 1970), 193-95; Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 156.

⁴³ *Proceedings of the National Park Conference held at the Yellowstone National Park, September 11 and 12, 1911* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), 5.

⁴⁴ Clement S. Ucker, Chief Clerk, to H. A. Noble, General Passenger Agent, January 16, 1912, File 900-02 Part 1, Box 258, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; Guthrie, “*All Aboard! for Glacier*,” 45; Schene, “The Crown of the Continent,” 70.

the locations intended for chalets, acquire saddle and pack stock, and lead tourist parties at the end of that summer. After the tourist season ended, the tent camps would house construction crews for building the chalets. Superintendent Logan issued a concession permit to Hilligoss granting him the privilege to establish “permanent camps within Glacier National Park.” Assistant Secretary of the Interior Carmi Thompson executed the concession permit and transmitted two copies to the superintendent on September 27, 1911. The permit was valid for one year from August 1, 1911 to July 31, 1912 and granted the privilege to erect five permanent camps at designated points in the park and to use 50 head of horses. It charged a fee of \$25 per camp and \$1 per head of stock, a total of \$175.⁴⁵

Each of Hilligoss’s tent camps included several sleeping tents and a central kitchen-dining hall tent and was staffed by a cook and waiter. While the tent camps were short-lived – soon replaced by the chalets – they left a modest architectural legacy of their own. According to a Great Northern Railway advertisement, some of the camps were tepee camps consisting of “Indian tepees” grouped around a central “cabin” with dining room and kitchen. For a few years, chalet groups and tepee camps, also called “tepee villages,” existed side by side at the chalets by St. Mary Lake and the chalets by Swiftcurrent Lake. The tepee camps catered to a free style of camping in which campers brought their own provisions and paid just 50 cents per night for use of the kitchen range, firewood, and cooking utensils. Two decades later, when Glacier Park Hotel Company built “housekeeping cabins” to provide a cheaper alternative to its hotel rooms, the small cabins were arranged in so-called “tepee circles.” The tepee circles were a token of the tepee camps of the park’s early days, as well as a tribute to the Plains Indian culture.⁴⁶

Between 1911 and 1913, Swiss-style chalets were built at Two Medicine, Cut Bank, Gunsight Lake, Sperry, Granite Park, Swiftcurrent Lake, and three locations on St. Mary Lake: one at the foot of the lake, one at the Narrows about half way up the lake, and one a little higher at Sun Point. Hill personally selected each site, taking account of the scenic routes and distances between chalets as well as the commanding views afforded by each overnight location. Distances between chalets were as follows: Midvale to Two Medicine, fourteen miles; Two Medicine to Cut Bank, sixteen miles; Cut Bank to St. Mary, twenty-two miles; St. Mary to Gunsight, fifteen miles; Gunsight to Sperry, twelve miles. From Sperry Chalet, which was

⁴⁵ W. R. Logan, Superintendent, to Secretary of the Interior, September 22, 1911, and Carmi Thompson, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, to Logan, September 27, 1911, File 900-02 Part 1, Box 258, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

⁴⁶ *Glacier National Park Hotels and Tours* (St. Paul: Great Northern Railway, n.d.), 27; Mathilde Edith Holtz and Katharine Isabel Bemis, *Glacier National Park: Its Trails and Treasures* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), 50; J. A. Shoemaker, Manager, to Secretary of the Interior, March 8, 1915, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

located on Sprague Creek below the Sperry Glacier, Lake McDonald was seven miles away.⁴⁷

Hill's choice to build Swiss-style chalets was all his own. It harkened to the Swiss chalet type of architecture introduced by the nineteenth-century American landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing and popularized in the Great Camps of the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York during the Gilded Age. Hill's summer home in North Oaks, Minnesota was built in the Swiss style. The choice of architectural style supported Hill's advertising theme for Glacier National Park, which branded the place as "America's Switzerland." The Swiss motif had the further object of reinforcing Great Northern Railway's advertising message to "See America First." Although Hill and Great Northern did not invent the slogan "See America First," his company popularized it and oriented it to Glacier. The "See America First" slogan coupled with the "America's Switzerland" brand carried the suggestion that patriotic Americans ought to break with European and American convention and tour their own scenic wonderlands in the American West instead of taking the grand tour of Europe culminating in the Swiss Alps.⁴⁸

Architectural historians have noted that the Swiss style of architecture had practical benefits as well. The large overhanging roofs on these structures were made to support a heavy load of snow, and when the snow slid off the roof it piled up far enough out from the building that it did not obstruct doors and windows.⁴⁹

The backcountry chalets became a special feature of Glacier, unique to this national park. No other park had such well-appointed backcountry accommodations arranged in a string to accommodate multi-day horse trips through the park. Because of this feature, no other park was so popular with horse parties. It took considerable effort to scour the surrounding region for saddle and pack horse outfitters and bring them together in Glacier National Park. Their numbers and the numbers of stock grew each year. In 1911, there were 385 horses registered in the park; in 1912, there were 525. In 1915, the several outfits were consolidated into one concession run by W. F. Noffsinger of the Park Saddle Horse Company. In time, this company owned over 1,000 head of horses and served 10,000 visitors a year, making it the largest saddle horse outfit of its kind in the world. The chalets and the horse parties went hand in hand, but some of the chalets could be accessed by stage, automobile, or boat

⁴⁷ Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 12-13; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1911, 6.

⁴⁸ Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 12-13; Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 72-74.

⁴⁹ Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 13.

as well as by horse, and eventually they became popular destinations for hikers, too.⁵⁰

Great Northern's publicity department tried to create a mountain club around Glacier's distinctive outdoor recreation. It formed the American Rockies Alpine Club, which granted membership to any visitor of Glacier National Park. A person joined the club for a 25-cent fee and registered his or her name in the registration book at the park. As explained in a company brochure, the club member started with a *green* button and once the member crossed the Continental Divide the *green* button could be exchanged for a *red* button. When a member crossed the divide three times or climbed any three peaks in the park, then the *red* button was exchanged for a *blue* button. When a member bagged five summits or crossed the divide five times or made five annual visits to the park, then the member was entitled to the club's highest honor, a *white* button.⁵¹

The American Rockies Alpine Club joined a roster of other mountain clubs in the United States headed by the Appalachian Mountain Club (founded 1876), the Sierra Club (1892), the American Alpine Club (1902), the Mazamas (Portland, Oregon, 1896), and the Mountaineers (Seattle, Washington, 1906). Unlike those other clubs, however, it was the only mountain club organized under a corporate sponsorship. That, and Montana's small population, probably limited the club's appeal. Although the club acquired a few proud members, it would soon fade out of existence. In the short run, however, it added to Glacier's growing mystique as America's Switzerland.⁵²

The mountain club was just one of many marketing ventures undertaken by Great Northern's publicity department to promote the new national park. In 1911, the railroad company put on a junket for newspaper writers from sixteen major Midwest newspapers to visit Glacier and experience the park's allure firsthand. Hill drove his own car in two well-publicized automobile caravans that went bumping over the primitive rural road system from St. Paul to the Montana Rockies. Great Northern passenger agents were dispatched to major U.S. cities to present public slide shows and lectures about Glacier. In 1914, the railroad spent \$300,000 to advertise the park – more than the government's entire expenditures on Glacier up to that time. It billed the Great Northern main line from St. Paul to Seattle as “the National Park Route.”

⁵⁰ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1911, 10; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1912, 7; Wood and Wood, *The Great Northern Railway*, 81.

⁵¹ *Glacier National Park Hotels and Tours*, 28.

⁵² Mathilde Edith Holtz and Katharine Isabel Bemis, co-authors of *Glacier National Park: Its Trails and Treasures* (1917), were listed as members of the American Rockies Mountain Club on the book's title page.

During these years Louis W. Hill personally took part in two well-publicized automobile treks from St. Paul to the Montana Rockies.⁵³

Hill soon took a proprietary interest in the development of the national park. The government was not fulfilling its co-responsibility to develop roads and trails, he believed. In 1912, he railed against the park administration's lack of progress and haughtily pulled out of the second conference on national parks. In the following year, Hill worked through back channels to remove the acting superintendent, R. H. Chapman, and replace him with a man who was friendly to the railroad interest. Although Secretary of the Interior Fisher would not accept Hill's first pick, a former Great Northern engineer, he did acquiesce in replacing Chapman with a compromise candidate, James J. Galen. Not long after Galen took over, Hill sent the new superintendent a detailed proposal for trail construction.⁵⁴

Hill wanted the government to prioritize road and trail development on the east side of the park. That idea met resistance from the park's early superintendents, who made their headquarters on the west side and were uniformly interested in completing a good park road to Lake McDonald and beyond before doing anything else. However, the park administration did start to focus on road and trail development on the east side by 1914. Besides improving the trails linking the chalets, the park administration opened additional trails on the east side that made the Swiftcurrent Valley an attractive hub, and it established passable roads into Two Medicine Lake and Cut Bank. Further, it contracted with Great Northern to build a road up the east side of the park on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation that would come to be known as the Blackfeet Highway.⁵⁵

Glacier Park Hotel Company and Many Glacier Hotel

In December 1911, Hill resigned the office of president of Great Northern Railway Company and took up the position of chairman of the board to have more time for his Glacier project. Hill's search for a financier for Glacier came to an end; for the time being, he decided, Great Northern would assume that mantle and take on the park development itself. To start with, Great Northern would build a large hotel

⁵³ Schene, "The Crown of the Continent," 70; Douglas V. Shaw, "The Great Northern Railroad and the Promotion of Tourism," *Journal of Cultural Economics* 13, no. 1 (June 1989), 68; Alan R. Havig, "Louis W. Hill, the Great Northern Railway, and the Origins of Automobile Tourism in the Northern Plains," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 62, no. 3 (Autumn 2012), 56; Christiane Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige: The Glacier Park Hotel Company, 1914-1929," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 47, no. 2 (Summer 1997), 48.

⁵⁴ Schene, "The Crown of the Continent," 71.

⁵⁵ Schene, "The Crown of the Continent," 71-72; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1914, 6-7.

near its Midvale Station as a stepping off point for park visitors. (This hotel, now known as the Glacier Park Lodge, lies outside the park and therefore it falls outside the purview of Glacier's concession operations; nevertheless, it is significant to this story as the first showpiece of Hill's unfolding Glacier project.) Hill turned to Senator Dixon of Montana to put a bill through Congress that would enable Great Northern to secure a tract on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation for the hotel. The legislation was passed expeditiously, and Great Northern acquired the land in 1912. The hotel was built over the following year and opened for business on June 15, 1913. The hotel contained 155 guest rooms and cost nearly \$500,000. Its most impressive feature was its massive interior lobby, 200 feet long by 100 feet wide and soaring sixty feet high and lined with giant Douglas fir boles with the bark still on them. Brought from the Pacific Coast, these trees were more than 800-years-old, four feet in diameter, and forty feet high. They lifted a person's gaze to the vaulted ceiling with its heavy crossbeams of rough, round timbers and three enormous skylights. The Blackfeet soon dubbed the place "Big Tree Lodge."⁵⁶

Hill's next major initiative was to form Glacier Park Hotel Company, which was incorporated in May 1914. A subsidiary of Great Northern Railway Company, it was organized for purposes of conducting overnight accommodations and other concessions in Glacier National Park in the interests of the parent company, and for dealing locally and directly with the park administration. All property of the railroad constructed for use by park visitors, including Glacier Park Hotel outside the park, was transferred to Glacier Park Hotel Company. The list of properties was comprehensive and included not just the hotel and chalets but restaurants, stores, livery stables, boats, stage lines, and more. While the subsidiary company was wholly owned by the parent company, it soon had assets worth more than \$2 million.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Guthrie, *All Aboard! for Glacier*, 45; Wood and Wood, *The Great Northern Railway*, 81; Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 35. Horace M. Albright described the impression the hotel made on Mather and him when they saw it for the first time in September 1915: "We spent the night at the Glacier Park Hotel, completed only a few years before. How does one even describe the 'Great Tree Lodge,' so called by the local Blackfeet Indians? First, there was a lobby four stories high with twenty-four giant fir-tree pillars ringing it, huge Indian-design carpets, a buffalo skin tipi, great Japanese lanterns, shops, and other wonders. Then came a dining room to seat two hundred hungry people at a time, waitresses in Swiss costumes, not to mention a swimming pool, a sun parlor with afternoon tea, outbuildings with laundry, a power plant, a fire station, and an eighteen-hole golf course (yet to be constructed). It was a thousand feet from the railroad station, with real Blackfeet tipis nearby and real Blackfeet Indians who greeted the trains, danced on the lawn at regular intervals, and posed for endless picture-taking by the tourists (for a few pieces of silver, of course)." Mather thought it was "the perfect hotel for a national park," Albright recounts, while he "admitted it was all pretty awesome," but privately he considered it "too ostentatious for the lovely natural setting." (Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: The Missing Years* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 102-03.

⁵⁷ W. P. Kenney, (GN) Vice President, to Secretary of the Interior, July 28, 1914, File 900-02 Part 1, Box 258, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; Hidy et al., *The Great Northern Railway*, 124.

Louis W. Hill was Glacier Park Hotel Company's president and chairman of the board. There were four other members on the company's board of directors, all officers of Great Northern Railway Company. The company's general manager reported to the railroad's vice president of traffic at first, and to the railroad's general passenger agent after 1921.⁵⁸

The company began with a capital stock of \$1,500,000 in 15,000 shares valued at \$100 apiece. It had a 30-year charter.⁵⁹

As a subsidiary of the giant railroad company, Glacier Park Hotel Company had many advantages. Foremost was its financial position. Each year Great Northern advanced operating funds to the hotel company. Interest on the loan was entered in the ledger books, but the hotel company only had to pay down the principal on the loan and when the hotel company fell in arrears the debt just floated on the hotel company's books. The hotel company paid nothing for the railroad's advertising, even though the park featured prominently in the railroad's lavish advertising program. Furthermore, the hotel company was able to draw on personnel in the railroad company and save on its own personnel expenditures. Railroad attorneys drew up the hotel company's legal documents; railroad architects prepared building designs or oversaw the work; railroad engineers made repairs on buildings; and best of all, railroad agents provided support for the big task of hiring a seasonal staff year after year.⁶⁰

One of the first items of business between the park administration and Glacier Park Hotel Company was to get the company's permits in order. The previous permits for conducting "permanent camps" were for one-year duration, renewed annually, which did not provide much insurance on the company's investments. In 1914, the company started the process of converting these several permits into a 20-year lease for each chalet site. The company made a survey of each site and prepared a survey plat and legal description. Each application included a list of improvements. For example, in the application for a 20-year lease for the chalet site at Two Medicine Lake, the company stated:

The hotel facilities located on the said tract of land are known as "Two Medicine Chalet Group," and comprise the following buildings: 1. Dormitory 28' by 84'. Log building. 2. Kitchen and dining room for help 18' by 60'. Log building. 3. Dining room 42' by 85'8". Log building. 4. Laundry and toilet 20' by 49'. Log building. 5. Generator house 14' by

⁵⁸ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 29.

⁵⁹ Articles of incorporation reproduced in Annual Report of the Glacier Park Hotel Company Year Ended December 31, 1919, Roll 233, Louis W. Hill Microfilm Publication (hereafter L. W. Hill Papers), Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter MHS).

⁶⁰ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 29-30.

18'. Log building. 6. Two cabins, each 18' by 18'. Log building. 7. Cabin 28' by 28'. Log building. 8. Septic tank 12' by 30'. Concrete.

The applications for 20-year leases went back and forth between Great Northern attorneys and government attorneys several times over the next couple of years before the whole package was finally approved. The package included a \$5,000 bond for the company's faithful performance of all the lease terms. The back and forth over the leases signaled a deepening interest by both sides in the public-private partnership. While the government now took pains to get the leases in proper shape, the company brazenly pushed ahead with its development program even without the 20-year leases in hand. The long-term leases were not yet finalized when Glacier Park Hotel Company went forward with construction of Many Glacier Hotel in August 1914.⁶¹

The siting, design, and construction of Many Glacier Hotel all originated with Louis W. Hill and his company. Hill picked the location beside Swiftcurrent Lake for its commanding view of the mountains and its proximity to numerous hiking trails to alpine lakes and passes. The hotel would be a grand presence, placed in a dominating spot at the junction of two alpine valleys. It would be a destination resort for park visitors interested in venturing out on hiking trails deeper into the mountains or content to enjoy the views from the hotel.

The Many Glacier development required extensive preparations. First, the primitive road to the site had to be improved. The railroad company took the initiative, constructing or improving more than 50 miles of road on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation from Midvale to St. Mary and from St. Mary around to Babb at the entrance to the Swiftcurrent Valley. Some of the work was built under contract with public funds and some of it was done at company expense. Within the park, the existing road up the Swiftcurrent Valley to the defunct Swift Current mining district had to be put back in service. This section was of interest to the U.S. Reclamation Service because it was preparing to build a dam on Swiftcurrent Creek just outside the park boundary. (The dam was completed in 1914 and the reservoir, Lake Sherburne, extended into the park almost as far as the hotel site.) In 1913 and 1914, the Reclamation Service completed the six miles of road from the park boundary to the hotel site. In 1914 and 1915, the section of road from St. Mary to Babb was

⁶¹ Application for Site at Two Medicine Lake, February 8, 1915, Stephen T. Mather, Assistant to the Secretary, to Glacier Park Hotel Company, May 28, 1915, and John H. Carroll, General Attorney to Secretary of the Interior, January 7, 1916, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; Sanford H. E. Freund, General Attorney, to Carroll, June 30, 1914, and Freund to W. B. Acker, Assistant Attorney, July 17, 1914, File 900-02 Part 1, Box 258, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

mostly built, completing the road connection from the railroad station at Midvale to the Many Glacier hotel site.⁶²

The company acquired rights to timber and built a sawmill. It was emblematic of Louis W. Hill's imperial view of his park development program that he built the sawmill before he got the ground under lease from the government. Hill applied for the lease of the sawmill site on July 27, 1915, noting that a sawmill, dry kiln, shop building, and lumber shed already stood on the tract of land.⁶³ Acting Assistant Secretary E. J. Ayers noted in reply that Glacier Park Hotel Company already had ten acres under lease at Many Glacier, the maximum allowed under the Glacier Park Act, so it was "impracticable" to approve a lease for an additional two acres for the sawmill site. However, the government granted a temporary permit for operation of the sawmill and requested that the company adjust the lines of its ten-acre lease to include the sawmill site prior to renewing the lease. The practical result of this back and forth was acquiescence by the government in Hill's vision and timetable for his park development project. The company then initiated a rather extensive logging operation at Many Glacier with almost no government supervision.⁶⁴

Water power was another prerequisite for development of the site. A small dam and hydroelectric plant on Swiftcurrent Creek were needed to generate electrical power for the hotel operations. The government granted the company the right to build such a plant under supervision by the park superintendent. The company had to pay an annual fee of \$100 for the privilege. The government stipulated that the plant had to be placed on the creek where it would not change the level of the lake or destroy the beauty of the creek. An early plan to build a dam at the outlet of Swiftcurrent Lake was scotched in favor of a site 300 feet below the upper falls at the outlet.⁶⁵

⁶² Bristol, *Glacier National Park*, 80-81; "Swift Current," *Mining* 4, no. 1 (July 1897), 86; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1913, 6; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1914, 4; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1915, 6.

⁶³ Application for Sawmill Site at Many Glaciers, Glacier National Park, Montana," July 27, 1915, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

⁶⁴ E. J. Ayers, Acting Assistant Secretary, to E. C. Lindley, General Solicitor, August 3, 1915, and J. H. Carroll to Lindley, August 3, 1915, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

⁶⁵ Department of the Interior, "Contract with Glacier Park Hotel Co. for Maintenance of Hotels, Chalets, and Camps in Glacier National Park, Montana, 1916," File 900-01, Box 257, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; Theodore Catton, Diane L. Krahe, and Deirdre Shaw, "Protecting the Crown: A Century of Resource Management in Glacier National Park," report prepared by the University of Montana through the Rocky Mountain Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit for the National Park Service, June 2011, p. 49, at www.npshistory.com/publications/glac/protecting-the-crown.pdf <February 12, 2019>. A description of the power plant – intake, pipe line, and power house – may be found in "Application for Site at Many Glaciers Hotel, Glacier National Park," February 8, 1915, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

Hill turned to architect Kirtland Cutter of Spokane, the same person who John E. Lewis hired to design the Lake McDonald Hotel, to draw up plans for Many Glacier Hotel. Hill was not satisfied with the results, terminated his contract with Cutter, and took the unfinished drawings to his own Great Northern architect, T. D. McMahon, who had completed most of the design for Glacier Park Hotel at Midvale. When it was completed, Many Glacier Hotel was a blend of both architects' designs. It was more Swiss-themed than Glacier Park Hotel, but its great hall was basically a half-size version of the other. With its sprawling, multi-section floor plan, Many Glacier Hotel surpassed Glacier Park Hotel in guest capacity and was the biggest hotel in Montana.⁶⁶

Built mainly between August 1914 and late 1915, Many Glacier Hotel consisted of five sections: a lobby, 120 feet by 60 feet and four stories high, with lobby and office on first floor and 30 bedrooms off of the interior facing balconies on the second, third, and fourth floors; a T-shaped dormitory, 160 feet by 40 feet and 102 feet by 45 feet and four stories high, containing 119 bedrooms; the bridge, 50 feet by 36 feet and two stories high, the first floor connecting the dormitory to the dining room and containing a lounge, and the second floor containing six bedrooms; the dining room, 100 feet by 50 feet and one story; and the kitchen, 108 feet by 36 feet, also one story. All five sections were wood frame structures and all except the kitchen had stone basements. Besides the hotel complex itself, other facilities included an employee dormitory, 100 feet by 34 feet and three stories high containing 42 bedrooms, an ice house, and a pump house. An annex with 80 bedrooms and a swimming pool was added in 1917.⁶⁷

Hill involved himself deeply in the hotel construction. He consulted with McMahon on design elements as specific as the type of flooring used in the basement below the main lobby, the layout of the kitchen, the placement of hot water pipes, and the appearance of the chimney and skylights in the dining room. He fretted over the mounting construction costs and called for a report on cost comparisons with those incurred by the Rainier National Park Company of Seattle in building the Paradise Inn at Mount Rainier (completed in 1916). The comparison was not very pertinent because Many Glacier Hotel site was far more remote and the structure was more luxurious, with all bedrooms and bathrooms wired for electric lighting and plumbed for steamed heat and hot and cold running water. The final cost

⁶⁶ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 30; Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 50-51.

⁶⁷ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 30; "Application for Hotel Site at Many Glaciers, Glacier National Park, Montana," February 8, 1915, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

of Many Glacier Hotel came to more than \$500,000 (around \$12 million in 2019 dollars).⁶⁸

Glacier Park Hotel Company's two major hotels were probably of a higher class than any other national park hotels in the United States. They were also immense by national park standards; with completion of Many Glacier Hotel, Hill was able to boast that Glacier National Park had more beds in it than any other national park including Yellowstone. Hill did want to attract a wealthy clientele to Glacier, but he was not trying to create an exclusive resort for the upper class. To the contrary, he conceived of the system of chalets and tepee camps with the aim of attracting a broad clientele inclusive of the middle class. Even the hotels were welcoming to middle class guests. Hill wanted to make Glacier National Park popular with the American middle class to generate maximum business for his railroad.⁶⁹

Thanks to Hill's personal interest in developing Glacier for Great Northern, the amount of capital investment and the pace of construction of visitor accommodations in Glacier were unlike anything that occurred in other national parks before or after. By 1916, Great Northern had invested somewhere between \$1.2 million and \$2 million in the park. This compared with the federal government's investment of about \$634,000 through the same period. Hill complained about the government's stinginess. Railroad officials claimed that the company spent ten times what the government spent on the park in the first decade. While the difference in spending was nowhere near what company official claimed it was, the imbalance was apparent to anyone who visited the park. Mary Roberts Rinehart certainly saw it that way, praising "Louie" Hill's efforts while chiding the government for not doing more.⁷⁰

Thus far, Hill had developed the park largely as he saw fit. He had concentrated the visitor accommodations on the east side of the park. He had introduced regular horse trips through the backcountry and boat trips on St. Mary Lake, as well as destination resort hotels at Midvale and Many Glacier. Utilizing Great Northern's robust advertising arm, he had created Glacier National Park in the image of "America's Switzerland," inscribing the park's infrastructure with a unique blend of Swiss, Western, and American Indian motifs. He had made Glacier National Park, in a sense, a colony in Great Northern's empire.

⁶⁸ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 38-39; Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 54; Bristol, *Glacier National Park*, 82.

⁶⁹ Sheire, *Glacier National Park Historic Resource Study*, 197; *Proceedings of the National Park Conference held at Berkeley, California, March 11, 12, and 13, 1915* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), 15-20.

⁷⁰ Mary Robert Rinehart, "Through Glacier National Park with Howard Eaton," *Collier's* 57 (April 29, 1916), 26.

After more than two years of correspondence between the Department of the Interior and attorneys for Great Northern, Glacier Park Hotel Company finally had an approved contract with the government to put in its files. The eight-page contract bore the signatures of Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane and W. P. Kenney, vice president of Glacier Park Hotel Company. It was dated March 28, 1917. Five signed copies were sent to J. H. Carroll, Great Northern's chief lobbyist in Washington in June 1917. The cover letter to Carroll was signed by Horace M. Albright, then acting director of NPS.⁷¹

Viewed in historical perspective, the eight-page contract constitutes a foundation document in Glacier National Park's history of concession management. It established a long-term relationship between the government and Glacier Park Hotel Company over a 20-year term from January 1, 1916. It vested authority in the company, under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior, to establish and operate hotels, chalets, and camps in the park, provided that the plans, specifications, and locations of all buildings constructed from the date of the agreement forward would be approved by the Secretary. It granted the company a right of tenure on leased parcels of land for each accommodation. Altogether it named nine accommodations known as (1) Two Medicine Chalets, (2) Cut Bank Chalets, (3) Sperry Chalets, (4) St. Mary Chalets, (5) The Narrows Chalets, (6) McDermott Chalets, (7) Granite Park Chalets, (8) Many Glacier Hotel, and (9) Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. The contract allowed for additional sites to be leased by the company. It stipulated that the government could build and maintain roads, trails, and bridges on the leased ground if the company's buildings were not harmed.⁷²

The contract granted the company other privileges in the park. The company could manufacture brick and concrete, quarry sand and stone, mine coal, and use dead and down or other timber as necessary for construction of buildings and for operation of its facilities. The company could lay pipe for water supply and sewer lines and erect transmission wires. The power plant on Swiftcurrent Creek was described and authorized. The company could graze horses, mules, dairy cows, beef cows and sheep and keep fowls in the park, but this privilege was revocable if the

⁷¹ Horace M. Albright, Acting Director, to J. H. Carroll, June 2, 1917, File 900-01, Box 257, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

⁷² Agreement of March 28, 1917 accompanying Horace M. Albright, Acting Director, to J. H. Carroll, June 2, 1917, File 900-01, Box 257, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II. Note that each chalet group was referred to as chalets in the plural because most had multiple dormitory buildings. The Sperry Chalet and Gunsight Chalet had just one dormitory and one dining room each, but they still went by the plural designation at this time.

Secretary of the Interior should later find it necessary to revoke it for the better protection of the park.⁷³

The contract also put certain requirements on the company. It would pay an annual fee to the government amounting to \$5 per acre of leased ground plus \$50 for the privilege of operating the power plant on Swiftcurrent Creek. It would develop an annual schedule of rates and submit it to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. All company employees would wear a uniform or badge. The company would submit an annual report giving the details of its organization, management, and operations, and it would furnish a bond of \$5,000. The company would provide free room and board at all its accommodations for employees of the Department of the Interior visiting the park on official business and park employees on assignment away from their regular work stations.⁷⁴

The contract helped define the partnership between public administration and private capital in Glacier National Park. The legal instrument solidified Glacier Park Hotel Company's position as a park concessioner committed to serving the public over the long term. In many ways the contract was a statement of how things had transpired so far and how they would be different going forward, as in the proviso that all buildings "hereafter established" would be subject to "prior approval" by the Secretary. Indeed, the numerous provisos sprinkled through the document – each one highlighted with the underlined word "Provided" – can be viewed as the stepping stones to the new partnership between the company and NPS that was forged after 1916. It now fell to officials in the new NPS to take the upper hand in the partnership and assert policies that would better protect the public interest.

⁷³ Agreement of March 28, 1917 accompanying Horace M. Albright, Acting Director, to J. H. Carroll, June 2, 1917, File 900-01, Box 257, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 2

The Mather-Albright Years, 1915-1930

The National Park Service Act was signed into law on August 25, 1916, heralding a new era for the national parks and Glacier. The dozen existing U.S. national parks were welded into a National Park System and placed under administration of a new government bureau in the Department of the Interior. The act included a unifying statement of purpose for the national parks: “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations.” NPS had a clear mandate. As the mandate was interpreted in that era, it meant that the parks were to be developed for public use and enjoyment as the nation’s premier scenic areas, taking care that their development did not go so far as to impair the parks’ scenery.⁷⁵

Concern about proper development of tourist accommodations lay at the core of the movement to put national parks on a better administrative footing. Both in Yellowstone and Yosemite, development of tourist accommodations in the national park context had thus far produced a shamble of lodging and transportation services that were mostly of inferior quality and vexing to park visitors. Uncontrolled competition between concessioners was often ruinous, while the government intent to regulate these private enterprises was often undone by political influence peddling. Stronger government supervision was needed. The National Park Service Act did not change the basic framework of park concessions, in which the government worked with private enterprise to provide public accommodations in the parks, but it did raise an expectation that the government would do a better job at it.⁷⁶

The first director of NPS, Stephen T. Mather, made it a top priority to improve the management of park concessions. His concession policy was one of his most

⁷⁵ Richard West Sellars, “The Roots of National Park Management,” *Journal of Forestry* 90, no. 1 (January 1992), 16-17.

⁷⁶ Peter J. Blodgett, “Striking a Balance: Managing Concession in the National Parks, 1916-33,” *Forest and Conservation History* 34, no. 2 (April 1990), 60-61.

important reforms of park administration. Competition between the various concessioners within each park was debilitating to the concessioners, he found. Glacier Park Hotel Company, well-capitalized and without rivals in its location on the east side of Glacier National Park, was exceptional. The many smaller concessioners at Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Mount Rainier were more typical. These concessioners spent so much effort warding off competitors that they could not provide good service to the public. There were too many fly-by-night operators. Even the more established ones tended to be undercapitalized. The solution, Mather decided, was to consolidate tourist services in each park under one licensed operator. Each park concession would be a regulated monopoly: *regulated* so that NPS could ensure it was providing good service, a *monopoly* so that the operator could be induced to accept low yearly returns on long-term investments. When Mather assumed leadership over the national parks, first as assistant to the Secretary of the Interior in 1915, and later as first director of NPS, he poured a lot of effort into coaxing and cajoling concessioners in Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Mount Rainier to merge with one another and raise more capital. He insisted that they adapt themselves to the new policy of regulated monopoly or get out.⁷⁷

Mather and his close assistant, Horace M. Albright, visited Glacier for the first time in September 1915. Despite being met by an early winter snowstorm, the pair made a three-day pack trip over the Continental Divide, staying one night at Sperry Chalet and the next night at Going-to-the-Sun Chalets on St. Mary Lake. (They found the Gunsight Chalet unusable because it had been trashed by a grizzly bear.) Mather and Albright found the chalets to their liking, but the roads in Glacier left much to be desired. When the September snowfall melted away the roads turned to gumbo. At one point their car got completely mired. Albright later wrote: "We concluded that while the park's accommodations, built by Great Northern, were fine, its roads and trails were terrible."⁷⁸

For Mather and Albright, the only thing that rivaled the park concessions in importance was park roads. Mather observed that automobile ownership was starting to sweep the country, and he understood clearly before others did that the newly formed National Park System was joined at the hip with the rising car culture. Already in 1915, automobile clubs were calling for improved access to national parks. Mather saw presciently that in a few more years the mass of park visitors would enjoy parks chiefly in their private cars, that is, by partaking in an activity that

⁷⁷ Blodgett, "Striking a Balance," 60-61; Theodore Catton, *National Park, City Playground: Mount Rainier in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 64; Anne F. Hyde, "From Stagecoach to Packard Twin Six: Yosemite and the Changing Face of Tourism, 1880-1930," *California History* 69, no. 2 (Summer 1990), 166-68.

⁷⁸ Horace M. Albright as told to Robert Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-33* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1985), 29.

NPS would generically classify as “driving to view scenery.” In Mather’s mind, good roads and comfortable accommodations were the twin essentials for assuring that a park visit was an enjoyable experience. He was determined to develop the national parks with roads that were smooth, sinuous, and a pleasure for the motorist to drive on. Meanwhile, NPS would ensure that concessioners provided quality service. “Scenery is a splendid thing when it is viewed by a man who is in a contented frame of mind,” he said. “Give him a poor breakfast after he has had a bad night’s sleep, and he will not care how fine your scenery is. He is not going to enjoy it.”⁷⁹

Mather’s overarching project was to sell the national parks to the American public. He sought to increase the popularity of parks in order to justify the cost of administration and assure that the National Park System would have a permanent place in American life. To him, park visitation was the key metric for measuring success. Parks were for use. “The greatest good to the greatest number is always the most important factor in determining the policy of the service,” he declared, echoing Gifford Pinchot’s famous definition of conservation as “the greatest good for the greatest number over the long run.” Mather placed the national parks squarely in the tradition of the utilitarian conservation movement.⁸⁰ Mather cherished the national park idea, and his guiding star was to make the parks so popular with the American public that the national park idea would be forever enshrined in the nation. Working toward better concessions management was a crucial underpinning of his larger project because, as he said, you had to have good meals and comfortable beds if you were going to get more people to come to the parks.

Concessions Policy in the Making, 1915-1920

In March 1915, Mather convened the national park conference at Berkeley, California. It brought together nearly all the park superintendents as well as several park concessioners and representatives of railroad companies for another exchange of ideas. Supervisor Samuel F. Ralston of Glacier attended, as well as Roe Emery, manager of the Glacier Park Transportation Company. Emery gave what Albright described as a “fiery” speech on the need for road maintenance on the twenty-six

⁷⁹ *Proceedings of the National Parks Conference held at Berkeley, California, March 11, 12, and 13, 1915* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), 12; David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 42-44; Theodore Catton, “The Hegemony of the Car Culture in U.S. National Parks,” in *Public Nature: Scenery, History, and Park Design*, edited by Ethan Carr, Shaun Eyring, and Richard Guy Wilson, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 56-57.

⁸⁰ Richard West Sellars, “Manipulating Nature’s Paradise: National Park Management under Stephen T. Mather, 1916-1929,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 43 (Spring 1992), 5.

miles of road on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation that connected the several park roads into development areas on the east side of Glacier. Great Northern had built the road, Emery said, and now the government needed to improve and maintain it. Louis W. Hill did not attend this conference, which was the third one of its kind after the conferences in 1911 and 1912.⁸¹

Mather kept his remarks brief and mostly listened. The proceedings were his first opportunity to meet many of the individuals involved in park administration. As Albright recalled, Mather basically turned the conference over to Mark Daniels, the general superintendent and landscape engineer for the national parks since the previous year. Daniels said that the current pattern of visitor use in the national parks called for three types of accommodations: hotels, in which the visitor found both a bed and prepared meals; permanent camps, in which the visitor slept in a tent and ate prepared meals in a dining room; and tent camps, in which the visitor slept in a tent and prepared his or her meals in a shared kitchen with other campers. This description was very close to the range of accommodations offered by Glacier Park Hotel Company in its hotels, chalets, and tent camps (the only difference being that the chalets were permanent structures rather than tents). Daniels noted that he had consulted with Louis W. Hill, and he seemed to view Glacier Park Hotel Company operations as a model for other parks insofar as it catered to a variety of visitor preferences across a socio-economic spectrum.⁸²

Daniels then described a fourth type of park visitor who would soon be coming to the parks in greater numbers and whose needs would soon have to be met as well. This was the auto tourist who brought his or her own camping and cooking equipment, the so-called “sagebrusher.” Still a rare breed in 1915, the colorful sagebrusher would soon become the most common type of park visitor, outnumbering both the visitor who came by railroad and the visitor who came by car but still patronized the concessioner’s facilities. Daniels predicted that in five to ten years Yosemite would have 10,000 to 15,000 people camping in the Yosemite Valley each summer. Glacier, he said, would soon have 35,000 people in the park each year. So many campers would require infrastructure to supply drinking water and maintain sanitary conditions. The many campers would constitute a kind of “village,” Daniels said. Such a transient village population would require infrastructure and services similarly to a small municipality: things like a public telephone, a police force, a general store, and so on. Mather thought the idea of a

⁸¹ *Proceedings of the National Park Conference held at Berkeley, California, March 11, 12, and 13, 1915* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), 103-05; Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 50-51.

⁸² *Proceedings of the National Park Conference held at Berkeley, California, March 11, 12, and 13, 1915*, 18.

planned park “village” had merit, while Albright advised that park development should not get too far ahead of visitor use.⁸³

The park “village” idea led in a few years to the formulation of public campgrounds. At first, NPS merely cleared campsites and installed water and sewer systems. Soon the campgrounds came to include such amenities as water taps, flush toilets, and picnic tables. “As a general thing,” Mather commented in 1920, “all public utilities of this kind should be owned and operated at a profit by the Government, and should include power plants, telephone systems, and water systems, as well as sewer systems.”⁸⁴ When NPS began constructing public campgrounds it established two principles that would be crucial for concession policy. First, it laid down the principle that public funds would be used to develop this alternative type of visitor accommodations. The second principle, implicit in the first but every bit as important, was that the park concession would not have a monopoly over all park patronage; rather, NPS would provide facilities that would enable some portion of public use to happen without patronage of the park concession.⁸⁵

From 1915 to 1918, Mather and Albright fashioned a concession policy largely around their efforts to consolidate visitor services into one or two concessions for each park and prepare a twenty-year contract for those concessioners like the contract that NPS entered with Glacier Park Hotel Company in March 1917. During the winter of 1917-18, Albright worked on a set of policy principles for NPS based on Mather’s ideas as well as his own extensive reading and practical experience over the preceding three years. After much review and revision, this document became the famous “Lane letter” addressed from Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane to Director Mather. The Lane letter was a succinct statement of NPS policy, and an amplification of the directives contained in the 1916 act. It was 23 paragraphs long and included three paragraphs setting out principles of park concession policy:

Low-priced camps operated by concessioners should be maintained, as well as comfortable and even luxurious hotels wherever the volume of travel warrants the establishment of these classes of accommodations. In each reservation, as funds are available, a system of free camp sites will

⁸³ *Proceedings of the National Park Conference held at Berkeley, California, March 11, 12, and 13, 1915*, 18-19; Albright and Schenk, *Creating the National Park Service*, 50, 54.

⁸⁴ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), 133 (hereafter *Report of the Director of the National Park Service* [year]).

⁸⁵ Campground development at Mount Rainier National Park during the years 1916-1920 was seminal for NPS concession policy. It was shaped in part by a challenge from the Cooperative Campers of the Pacific Northwest joined by the Mountaineers, who made the case to NPS that the park concessioner’s monopoly on transportation and lodging facilities priced working class people out of the park. See Catton, *National Park, City Playground*, 69-81.

be cleared, and these grounds will be equipped with adequate water and sanitation facilities.

As concessions in the national park represent in most instances a large investment, and as the obligation to render service satisfactory to the department at carefully regulated rates is imposed, these enterprises must be given a large measure of protection, and generally speaking, competitive business should not be authorized where a concession is meeting our requirements, which, of course, will as nearly as possible coincide with the needs of the traveling public.

All concessions should yield revenue to the Federal Government, but the development of the revenues of the parks should not impose a burden upon the visitor.⁸⁶

Another pertinent paragraph stated:

In the construction of roads, trails, buildings, and other improvements, particular attention must be devoted always to the harmonizing of these improvements within the landscape. This is a most important item in our program of development and requires the employment of trained engineers who either possess a knowledge of landscape architecture or have a proper appreciation of the esthetic value of park lands. All improvements will be carried out in accordance with a preconceived plan developed with special reference to the preservation of the landscape, and comprehensive plans for future development of the national parks on an adequate scale will be prepared as funds are available for this purpose.⁸⁷

To implement the concession policy, NPS needed contract lawyers, auditors, and examiners to manage concession operations, and it needed landscape architects and engineers to review the design and location of concession buildings. Mather began to assemble these staffs in the field and in the Washington office. In 1918, Mather formed a civil engineering department headed by George Goodwin in Denver, and a landscape engineering department under the direction of Charles P. Punchar, Jr., and Daniel R. Hull in Washington. The small professional staffs began to impose

⁸⁶ Quoted in Albright as told to Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service*, 71. Albright discusses his authorship of the Lane letter on p. 68 and in Albright and Schenk, *Creating the National Park Service*, 274-77.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Albright as told to Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service*, 70.

NPS standards on all new construction by operators that had not had that kind of government oversight before.⁸⁸

Fortunately, the chalets and Many Glacier Hotel already built by Great Northern and the Glacier Hotel (Lake McDonald Lodge) built by John E. Lewis were all a good fit with the building design standards that the Lane letter sketched and that would soon be prevalent throughout the National Park System. Though Many Glacier Hotel and the Glacier Hotel predated NPS and the creation of the National Park System, they were nonetheless a great credit to Glacier, iconic of a specific time and place. Indeed, Great Northern's Glacier Park Hotel (Glacier Park Lodge) inspired Mather to think that it might serve as a model for other hotels at Yosemite and Crater Lake. The Glacier hotels' and chalets' distinctive touches of Swiss style architecture notwithstanding, they were excellent specimens of the wilderness Craftsman style of architecture that would soon be refined into "National Park Service rustic" by NPS landscape architects. They belong to that rich architectural heritage – mostly dating to the 1920s and 30s – known in the NPS affectionately as "parkitecture."

Still, the way Many Glacier Hotel dominates the landscape around Swiftcurrent Lake and the way Glacier Park Hotel rises on the prairie at East Glacier Park cannot be viewed as "harmonizing" with the landscape either by today's standards or by the standards that NPS laid down in 1918. Punchard and Hull and their staff of landscape architects would not have consented to a structure of the grandiose size and commanding presence of Many Glacier Hotel if those architectural plans had been submitted to NPS for approval. In that respect the developments that Great Northern designed and built were ones that belonged to the pre-1916 era. They have been called log palaces. They displayed a kind of opulence or ostentation that NPS eschewed. They were built to a scale that would not be replicated after 1916. They were, in effect, grandfathered into the park much as the private residences around Lake McDonald were grandfathered into the park.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Blodgett, "Striking a Balance," 62-64; *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1920, 90-93.

⁸⁹ On Mather's appreciation of the chalets and Glacier Park Lodge, see Albright and Schenk, *Creating the National Park Service*, 102-03. During these formative years of NPS, Glacier National Park left another mark on NPS policy. The inholdings around Lake McDonald proved to be an irritant for the park administration. Early park superintendents, and then Mather and Albright, recommended that these inholdings be eliminated as quickly as possible. Other parks had inholdings, but Glacier had more than most. Making matters worse for the park administration, two Montana senators acquired inholdings on Lake McDonald and worked to obstruct NPS efforts to eliminate the inholdings. The difficulties with the inholdings at Lake McDonald fueled the NPS animus toward inholdings generally as NPS leadership made their elimination another early principle of NPS policy. Unfortunately, acquiring inholdings one parcel at a time was expensive and it would take decades to acquire them all. Since the inholdings on Lake McDonald were a nuisance, NPS soon soured on granting one-acre leases for summer homes in Glacier, fearing that the leaseholds would create similar problems. Many inholdings around Lake

The Car Culture and the Changing Face of Park Visitation in the 1920s

The car culture came roaring into Yosemite, Mount Rainier, and Rocky Mountain National Park around the time of the First World War and created a new visitor use pattern in those parks during the 1920s. The car culture entered Glacier more gradually. Glacier, more than any other park, was opened by a railroad. In Glacier's early years, nearly all visitors came by way of the railroad and stayed in accommodations built by the railroad. Glacier, being remote from big cities and difficult to reach by rural highways, did not attract the crush of automobile tourists that some other parks did. Yet, if the car culture changed the pattern of visitor use in Glacier more slowly than it did in other parks, eventually it brought about the same result: the tourists who came in their private cars overwhelmed the tourists who came by rail. In 1914, 90 percent of Glacier's visitors came by rail; in 1929, only 20 percent did. The total number of rail passenger visitors held steady at around 10,000 to 15,000 per year, while the number of auto passenger visitors climbed from a few hundred in 1914 to nearly 48,000 in 1929.⁹⁰

Glacier's superintendents reported on the number of people who came to the park by rail or car year by year, for they were mindful of the trend toward car use in other national parks and they knew that Glacier would eventually see the same pattern. In 1914, Superintendent Galen reported that 249 private cars were issued \$1 permits for a single round trip into the park. This was in a year when 12,168 visitors were registered at the park's two main entrances at Belton and Glacier Park Station. In 1920, the number of private cars entering the park for the season stood at 2,009. In 1929, the reported statistics were 13,983 cars carrying 47,765 people.⁹¹

Automobile use in Glacier lagged that of other parks because Montana's car-owning population was small and a trip to Montana from several states away was an arduous undertaking when the rural highway system still consisted mostly of unpaved roads. Since automobile clubs were not beating down the door to get into the park, development of roads in Glacier was not as urgent as in other parks.

Congress began to appropriate significant funds for road development in rural counties under two federal laws, the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 and the Federal Highway Act of 1921. It got easier for Congress to fund road development in national parks after it took up the cause of rural road development elsewhere. Mather

McDonald were finally eliminated with the inclusion of a grandfather clause in the land purchase agreement.

⁹⁰ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 32.

⁹¹ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1914, 7; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1920, 4; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1929, 3.

saw an opportunity and was able to secure a series of three-year programs for road construction in the national parks in 1921, 1924, and 1927. Each new three-year program was larger than the last. Under the influence of the national program, road development in Glacier ramped up slowly through the decade.

Park administrators pushed for development of a through-park road, but the project made slow headway at first. In 1922, this main park road was completed to the head of Lake McDonald; in 1924, it reached Avalanche Creek. Progress halted at that point until 1927, when NPS turned over its entire road construction program to the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads. Then the difficult task of engineering the road over Logan Pass began. Through the decade of the 1920s, Glacier's auto tourists could drive no farther than Avalanche Creek on the west side. On the east side they could drive the Blackfeet Highway and the stub-end roads to Two Medicine Lake and Many Glacier. The two sides of the park remained unconnected by road, however. The section of U.S. Highway 2 over Marias Pass was only completed in 1930; until then, cars had to be hauled over the divide on a flatcar. The cost for haulage was \$32, about half the price of a train ticket from Chicago to Seattle – a prohibitive amount to most auto tourists. These limitations tended to discourage auto travel to Glacier.⁹²

More camps appeared on the west side of the park in the early 1920s. An outfit called Gold Brothers or Lake McDonald Camp opened at the foot of Lake McDonald along with Greenwalt Camp and Houston Camp. These new camps featured bungalows or guest cabins in the tradition of the existing developments around Lake McDonald. A more unusual camp was the Skyland Camps that opened at Bowman Lake and Kintla Lakes in 1922. A boys' camp operated by the Culver Military Academy of Culver, Indiana, the outfit enrolled boys from July 2 to August 27 and served as a tourist camp in the shoulder seasons before and after those dates. The main camp at Bowman Lake consisted of a log lodge and dining room, several outbuildings, and canvas tents. There were subsidiary tent camps at Upper and Lower Kintla Lakes, with the latter camp equipped with a log dining room as well.⁹³

By 1925, horse trips across the northern sector of the park linked the Skyland Camp with new tent camps at Goat Haunt, Cosley Lake, Belly River, and Flattop Mountain established by the Pack Saddle Horse Company. A popular five-day hiking trip made the rounds of the four camps. Since Goat Haunt was also accessed by boat from Waterton Park, a chalet-style building was erected there. Sometimes referred to

⁹² Peter J. Hugill, "Good Roads and the Automobile in the United States 1880-1929," *The Geographical Review* 72, no. 3 (July 1982), 342; Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park*, 90-9; John Fraley, *A Woman's Way West: In and Around Glacier National Park from 1925 to 1990* (Whitefish, Mont.: Big Mountain Publishing, 1998), 134.

⁹³ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1924, 128; Ann Hubber, "Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing, Flathead and Glacier counties, Montana," July 1995, 18; Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park*, 68-69.

as the Goat Haunt Chalet, it should not be confused with the ten chalets groups built by the railroad, for it was part of the saddle horse concession, not the hotel concession.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, the number of chalet groups operated by Glacier Park Hotel Company shrank from ten to eight. In December 1916, the Gunsight Chalets were destroyed by a snow slide and were not rebuilt. Some time thereafter, the chalet group called The Narrows was consolidated with the chalet group across the lake on Sun Point called Going-to-the-Sun Chalets, or Sun Camp. The name of another chalet group was changed: the chalets at Swiftcurrent Lake originally designated McDermott Chalets became known as Many Glacier Chalets.⁹⁵

By 1925, Glacier also had four public campgrounds accessible to auto tourists. They were located at Two Medicine Lake and Many Glacier on the east side and Avalanche Creek and Sprague Creek on the west side. In mid to late summer the Two Medicine campground would see 25 to 30 camping groups per night. Many Glacier had somewhat fewer. In the summer of 1926, the park administration recorded 56 cars in the Avalanche Creek campground that were associated with car campers staying for several nights, and several hundred more cars that were associated with picnickers. Over the same summer, the Sprague Creek campground saw about three groups of campers per night.⁹⁶

NPS charged entrance fees and campground fees in the early years but the goal was never to make the national parks produce revenue. Mather stressed that the fees were set low because NPS did not want to discourage anyone from visiting the national parks. Indeed, some parks such as Rocky Mountain National Park were completely free of charge. The entrance fee for Glacier was assessed per motor vehicle and NPS controlled the revenue. In 1926, Congress reduced the auto fees across the National Park System. In 1927, Congress abolished fees for all national park campgrounds.⁹⁷

With overall visitation to Glacier on the rise, the 1920s have been called the “golden years” for Glacier Park Hotel Company. The hotels did a booming business. With the paucity of roads in Glacier, horse trips remained the preferred mode of travel for exploring the park even as the popularity of horse trips began to wane in other parks from the effects of the car culture. On the park’s east side, the Glacier

⁹⁴ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1925, 34.

⁹⁵ Superintendent to the Director, November 13, 1929, Folder 3, File Unit 02, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA.

⁹⁶ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1925, 128.

⁹⁷ Barry Mackintosh, “Visitor Fees in the National Park System: A Legislative and Administrative History,” typescript report, 1983, Natural Resources Library, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Park Transportation Company operated a fleet of touring cars or buses that shuttled rail passenger visitors between the hotels and chalets and boat service on St. Mary Lake. In one year, 1925, the railroad put on 52 special trains that brought some 5,000 more visitors to the park than in the previous year, setting a record for total park visitation. Much of the increase in rail passenger traffic to Glacier that year was a byproduct of several big conventions held on the West Coast. The next year, Great Northern's total passenger traffic fell back and so did the number of rail passenger visitors to Glacier.⁹⁸

But a closer look at Glacier Park Hotel Company's financial performance during the 1920s presents another picture. Historian Christiane Diehl-Taylor finds that even in its heyday the company was unable to turn a profit. "Including taxes, interest, and depreciation, which is the traditional view of profit and loss, the hotel company showed a loss every year from 1914 to 1929," she writes. Losses were heaviest during the years 1914-1917, when the company poured money into hotel construction, and in 1918, when World War I impacted railroad operations. Losses were lighter through the 1920s and almost shrank to the break-even point in 1925, the year of the West Coast conventions. Even by the method of accounting used by Great Northern, which wiped away the 6 percent interest on capital investment, Glacier Park Hotel Company only managed to turn a slight profit in 1923 and 1925. Over the whole decade, Great Northern showed a loss of \$1.2 million on a total investment of nearly double that amount.⁹⁹

Great Northern officials justified the investment in Glacier based on it generating more passenger traffic for the railroad. Yet even by that measure, the investment did not bear fruit. With the rise of the automobile, Great Northern faced a precipitous decline in its passenger traffic overall: from over 9 million passengers in 1914 to less than 3 million passengers in 1929. During these years, the railroad's passenger traffic to Glacier held steady at around 10,000 to 15,000 passengers per year, and therefore the Glacier traffic rose as a percentage of the railroad's overall passenger traffic. Yet, as Diehl-Taylor points out, the numbers were not large enough to matter much: the number of passengers bound for Glacier rose from a tenth of a percent of all passengers in 1914 to seven-tenths of a percent in 1929. The park never became the goose that laid the golden eggs that railroad investors wished for. At best, all the

⁹⁸ Fraley, *A Woman's Way West*, 47; Mark Hufstetler, "The Auto Arrives at Glacier," *Society for Commercial Archeology Journal* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1997), 7; *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1925, 34; Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 32-33.

⁹⁹ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 34.

tickets sold to Glacier-bound passengers might have produced a revenue stream barely big enough to offset the railroad company's losses in the park.¹⁰⁰

The growth of car travel to Glacier National Park in the 1920s might have been viewed as anathema to the interests of Great Northern Railway Company. Glacier Park Hotel Company, as a subsidiary of Great Northern, clearly preferred to see park visitors come to the park by railroad. When the managers of Glacier Park Hotel Company balked at investing more capital in auto camp facilities to accommodate the growing number of car travelers, park officials assumed that the company's reluctance owed at least in part to its bias in favor of rail passenger visitors. "I have begun to suspect Glacier Park Hotel Company will never be interested in the auto camp game," Superintendent Eakin wrote to Albright in 1930.¹⁰¹

In fact, Great Northern and Glacier Park Hotel Company took a much more benign view of the rising car culture than one might expect. While it was true that practically all rail passenger visitors to Glacier patronized Glacier Park Hotel Company's lodging facilities and only a fraction of auto passenger visitors did so, nonetheless the growth of car travel to Glacier did bring more business to the company's hotels and restaurants. The relationship between car travel and rail travel to Glacier was not so much competitive as it was mutually beneficial. Rail travel enhanced the array of lodging and food services available to the car traveler; car travel enhanced the road system available to the visitor who arrived by rail and used the company's buses. Glacier Park Hotel Company was just as impatient as the park administration to see the completion of the through-park road because the Going-to-the-Sun Road would boost public interest in Glacier and increase overall park visitation and business.

Louis W. Hill was a booster for the car culture from the early days of his Glacier National Park project. In 1911 and 1913 he helped publicize two "endurance runs" from the Twin Cities to the Montana Rockies. Endurance runs were promoted by the American Automobile Association and local auto clubs as a sporting event for auto enthusiasts to test the touring capabilities of autos as well as build support for highway development. In an endurance run, a guide car or pace setter would set the route and pace, marking the way across country by dropping confetti 100 yards before and after each turn junction. Participants were awarded points for keeping up

¹⁰⁰ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 33. Diehl-Taylor argues that Great Northern Railway Company's investment in Glacier National Park was always a money loser and can only be explained as a quest for *prestige* as well as passengers and profits. On Glacier Park Hotel Company's profits and losses in these years, and the mitigating factor of added passenger traffic on Great Northern, see also Shaw, "The Great Northern Railroad and the Promotion of Tourism," 70-72. Note that Shaw uses different indices and cites different figures from Diehl-Taylor but his conclusions are basically similar.

¹⁰¹ Hufstetler, "The Auto Arrives at Glacier," 10; J. Ross Eakin, Superintendent, to Horace M. Albright, Director, May 2, 1930, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

the pace at various checkpoints and completing the run. Hill drove his own car in both events. A car enthusiast like Mather, Hill had a special boxcar on his railroad adapted for transporting his personal Packard runabout out west. Historian Alan R. Havig comments that Hill welcomed the advent of the car culture despite its obvious perils for the railroad industry: “Louis Hill endorsed the theme that railroads and motor vehicles complemented each other because they shared in numerous ways the economic growth that both created.” Another railroad official expressed much the same thing when he addressed a convention of the Yellowstone-Glacier Beeline Highway Association in 1919: “Good roads will help the railroads, inasmuch as they encourage settlement of agricultural districts, which means increased commercial activity.”¹⁰²

Mather took a similarly large view of the car culture and the growth of the American West. Like Hill, Mather was an early adopter of the new technology. He took pleasure in operating his own machine. When he was NPS director, he maintained his own Packard touring car in a garage in Los Angeles and used it for taking friends to the parks. Its license plate bore the registration code USNPS-1. Mather enthused over car travel because he saw that it was key to democratizing public use of the national parks.¹⁰³ While Hill viewed the railroads and the highways as combining to build up the nation’s commerce, so too did Mather see the national parks and the car culture as working together to build up the West. Mather suggested that every park visitor was a “potential settler and investor” in the “new West.” Waxing Turnerian on this theme in his annual report for 1925, he painted car travel to the national parks in the mythic, golden hues of the westward course of American history:

The march of the huge wagon trains along the scarcely discernible trails in the fifties marked the beginning of the settlement of the West. The new people were the settlers and the builders. They carried with them plows, and the seeds from which the granaries of the future were to be filled. Their descendants are the living pioneers of western development. The new West, however, is being built up by later visitors who came to see, and having seen, brought their families to become citizens of now large prospering communities. Hundreds of thousands in the past few years have pulled stakes in the East and invested in western ranches and fruit farms, in mines, and other industrial enterprises. In all this the national parks, as the scenic lodestones, through their attractions draw these future settlers and investors for their first trip and in this way

¹⁰² Havig, “Louis W. Hill, the Great Northern Railway, and the Origins of Automobile Tourism in the Northern Plains,” 56-59. See also Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 23.

¹⁰³ Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, 148.

contribute their vital share in the prosperity of the institutions, scenic resorts, and general business of the country.¹⁰⁴

Hill and Mather were both strong-willed, visionary men – and rich. One was the son of a Gilded Age railroad baron, the other an advertising man who made a fortune in borax. Both were deeply interested in the development of Glacier National Park. Each man was public-spirited after his own fashion, drawing on his personal wealth to aid in the pursuit of his public goals.¹⁰⁵ While the railroad tycoon and the NPS director soon clashed, their differences were not over the car culture because on that subject they basically agreed. Rather, they clashed over who controlled access to Glacier.¹⁰⁶ Glacier National Park had begun as a virtual colony of Great Northern and now it was part of the National Park System.

Relations between NPS and Glacier Park Hotel Company

The advent of NPS did not impress Louis W. Hill; he had formed a dim view of the park administration over the preceding six years and expected NPS would not bring much change. He thought NPS might pick up the pace of building roads and trails, but he was soon disappointed. He believed that Great Northern Railway's large investment in the park entitled him to a certain influence over the park superintendents, and in that, too, he was disappointed. Once he began a letter to Superintendent Eakin by reminding him that Great Northern had invested \$1.5 million in the park; then he listed all the trails that needed repairs or rebuilding. On other occasions he berated superintendents to their face as abusively as he treated his own employees. When superintendents refused to go along with Hill's requests he went over their heads to Mather, and when that got him nowhere, he went over Mather's head to the Secretary of the Interior. Eventually, the Department of the Interior wearied of Hill's demands and ignored his telegrams.¹⁰⁷

As prickly as Hill was for the government to deal with, Glacier Park Hotel Company was the clear choice for the park concession. In some ways Glacier Park Hotel Company was a model entity for NPS concession policy because it was well-capitalized and handsomely supported by Great Northern Railway's robust advertising program. The tension between the capital investor and the government administrator was to be expected; it was at the heart of the concept of a "regulated

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1925, 1-2.

¹⁰⁵ Bristol, *Glacier National Park: A Culmination of Giants*, 79, 107; Sellars, "Manipulating Nature's Paradise," 5.

¹⁰⁶ Schene, "The Crown of the Continent," 72.

¹⁰⁷ Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 42; A. A. Aszmann to W. P. Kenney, August 12, 1925, Minnesota Historical Society, letter reproduced at <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00702/pdfa/00702-00059.pdf> <February 20, 2019>.

monopoly.” Mather’s idea of a regulated monopoly was based on a hard-headed compromise: NPS would continue to woo private capital to develop the national parks for public use; however, it would limit the number of private enterprises operating in the national parks and hold those enterprises under strict government control.

By the mid-1920s, Mather would push his idea of a public-private partnership further, describing the park concession as a “public utility.” He contended that a park hotel company operating in a national park was analogous to a municipal public utility company such as a publicly held water or power company. The comparison was a stretch, since no park concession ever operated under a profit-sharing plan with park visitors, who were the nearest equivalent to a public utility’s rate payers. Nor could a park concession turn to park visitors for more capital, the way a public utility might appeal to city voters to pass a bond issue. Since the park concession did not have that kind of relationship with park visitors, it could not be expected to behave in the same way a public utility did. Mather’s expectations for Glacier Park Hotel Company were unrealistic, just as Hill’s expectations for NPS were unrealistic.

An early indication of the testy relations between the park administration and Glacier Park Hotel Company occurred in 1915 in a tiff over guided horse trips. Mather authorized horse packers to raise the rate for a saddle horse from \$2 to \$3 per day. Hill fumed that Great Northern had already printed its advertising for the coming season and had priced its multi-day trips based on the \$2 rate for saddle horses. Hill claimed that the saddle horse providers would make a financial killing at \$3 a day while the rate increase would hurt the hotel business since it “would be against all the interests of the middle class of tourists, which the Glacier Park has accommodated as no other park has.” Mather acknowledged Hill’s position but still took the side of the horse packers and stood firm on the \$3 rate.¹⁰⁸

Another disagreement between the company and the park administration arose over the contract clause that required the company to provide free room and board for employees of the Department of the Interior working in the park. The company objected to covering expenses for an employee of the U.S. Geological Survey who stayed in the company’s hotels for several days while conducting a water resource study. NPS insisted on enforcing the contract clause. The amount of money involved was not significant, but the government’s privilege was an irritant to the company.

¹⁰⁸ Louis W. Hill to Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, April 2, 1915, and Stephen T. Mather, Assistant to the Secretary, to Hill, April 22, 1915, File 900-06, Box 263, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

Later, NPS softened its stand on the contract requirement that the company require free room and board for park rangers on duty away from their stations.¹⁰⁹

Another point of contention arose at the end of the 1917 summer season when Glacier Park Hotel Company closed for the winter earlier than advertised. Complaints came to NPS from the Sierra Club and others. Acting Director Albright wrote to H. A. Noble, the general manager, to demand an explanation. Noble responded to Albright that the amount of business had fallen off sharply at the end of that summer and the company “had absolutely no reservations ahead of any kind,” and furthermore, the company’s operating costs had risen as a result of elevated costs of provisions and an eight-hour labor law passed by the Montana legislature the previous winter. In any case, Noble stated, the closing of the chalets – the subject of the Sierra Club’s complaint – was always variable depending on the timing of the first snowstorm in September. Noble was pointing out the difficult problem of the shoulder seasons and the company’s desire to be in control of its own end-of-season closing date. All park concessions had to contend with the marginal business conditions at the start and end of the bustling summer season. Park concessions and NPS would always have a tug-of-war over opening and closing dates, for the concession’s desire for profit called forth one response to the problem of the shoulder seasons and NPS’s desire for good public service called forth another.¹¹⁰

Besides wanting to assert some control over opening and closing dates, NPS had oversight on another sensitive matter of the company’s business operations: approving the company’s rates for services. Almost nothing came closer to a company’s ability to thrive or survive in a free market than its ability to adjust the rates it charged for goods and services. Since the national park was not a free market but a controlled one, the hotel company had to give up some control over its rate setting and trust NPS to make reasonable allowance for rate changes. NPS approved three rate increases for Glacier Park Hotel Company through the 1920s. The rate for a standard room with bath at Many Glacier Hotel was \$6 per person in 1920, \$7 in 1924, and \$8 in 1930. That was a 33 percent rate increase over the decade and a generous increase considering the very low rate of inflation during the 1920s. Each schedule of authorized rates included separate rates for hotel rooms with or without bath, somewhat lower rates for board and lodging at chalets, and a special weekly

¹⁰⁹ H. A. Noble, General Manager, to W. A. Lamb, Geological Survey, July 23, 1917, Lamb to Chief Hydraulic Engineer, July 26, 1917, George Otis Smith, Director, to Director, National Park Service, July 31, 1917; J. R. Eakin, Superintendent, to Director, August 25, 1922, and Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director, to Eakin, September 5, 1922, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; H. A. Noble to G. R. Martin, March 2, 1921, Roll 233, L. W. Hill Papers, MHS.

¹¹⁰ Horace M. Albright, Acting Director to H. A. Noble, General Manager, September 19, 1917, and Noble to Albright, October 1, 1917, and William E. Colby, President of the Sierra Club to National Park Service, September 5, 1917, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

rate at the chalets. All rooms were on the “American plan,” meaning that meals were included in the room charge.¹¹¹

Besides requiring approval of rates, Mather insisted on NPS’s prerogative to review and approve all new construction by Glacier Park Hotel Company. As with all other forms of government regulation, Hill chafed over this requirement. In a 1915 letter to Secretary of the Interior Lane, Hill complained that Mather was questioning construction plans that the department had already “verbally authorized.” He wanted Lane to overrule Mather and give him the free hand he had before. “Life is too short for you or me to make work of these matters with so much to do elsewhere. I hope you will straighten it out.”¹¹² The dismissive tone of Hill’s remarks was not appreciated. Ultimately, Mather would show Hill that NPS was not so easily brushed aside.

In 1923, Superintendent Eakin learned that Hill had made a sublease on Glacier Park Hotel Company’s lease for its Two Medicine Chalets without informing the government or obtaining its authorization. Furthermore, Hill had given permission to the sublessee to erect three rental cabins on the land. Eakin informed Mather of the transgression, remarking “it means a fight with Mr. Louis W. Hill, but one fight more or less does not make any difference.” Mather then wrote to J. H. Carroll, attorney for Great Northern, stating that no sublease without prior approval was allowed. Therefore, the sublease was void, and the building construction must cease.¹¹³

Regulation of the hotel company also entailed oversight of sanitation. Supervisor Ralston inspected the Many Glacier Hotel site in August 1915 and reported on its garbage dump. A third of a mile from the hotel he saw where the hotel company was disposing of garbage. “A great deal of garbage had recently been dumped and nearby a shallow trench had been dug and filled with all kinds of refuse from the kitchen, over which a light covering of earth had been thrown. This earth had become saturated with the moisture from the slops and was a seething mass of maggots and nearby were wood crates and dry goods boxes which had been dumped there.” Ralston directed the hotel manager to consolidate the trash heap, cover it with brush from the nearby sawmill, burn it, throw lime over it, and then cover it with earth.

¹¹¹ Stephen T. Mather, Director to H. A. Noble, General Manager, January 21, 1920, J. R. Eakin, Superintendent, “Glacier National Park, Glacier Park Hotel Company, Authorized Rates for Public Utilities Season of 1924,” and A. E. Demaray, Acting Director, “Glacier National Park, Glacier Park Hotel Company, Authorized Season 1930,” File 900-06, Box 263, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

¹¹² Louis W. Hill to Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, April 2, 1915, File 900-06, Box 263, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

¹¹³ J. R. Eakin, Superintendent to Stephen T. Mather, Director, September 15, 1923, and Arno B. Cammerer, Acting Director to Eakin, October 11, 1923, File 900-04 Lands, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

Ralston reported on similar conditions at the St Mary Lake and Going-to-the-Sun camps. “I am constantly after the hotel people about the unsanitary conditions of their camps and find it almost impossible to have them take proper care of the refuse from the hotels,” he wrote.¹¹⁴

Sanitation problems were not limited to the hotels and chalets, it should be noted. Public campgrounds, park administrative sites, and road construction camps all posed sanitation problems, too. Sanitation at the road construction camps was notoriously lax. NPS issued a 14-page set of regulations covering the camps but proper sewage and garbage disposal was elusive. Wild animals were attracted to the camps’ meat houses, kitchens, and garbage dumps. The road construction camp at Reynolds Creek may serve as an example. Grizzly bears began to frequent the garbage dump there soon after the camp was erected in 1929. Then the bears started coming through the camp at night, digging around the crew tents where dogs had buried bones. In one harrowing nighttime incident, a grizzly charged a tent and knocked a sleeping workman off his cot on the other side of the tent wall. On the night of November 6, 1929, two grizzlies entered the camp, and one of them charged a cook, who said he “kicked dust in his face getting away.” The next morning, the terrified crew abandoned the camp.¹¹⁵

Park concessions were permitted to cut dead and down timber for firewood, graze livestock, and catch fish for the table. All these activities needed to be regulated. The woodcutting operation at Many Glacier Hotel was substantial – as much as 1,200 cords per year not counting all the timber that went through the sawmill.¹¹⁶ Enormous piles of cordwood were “banked in every direction out of the hotel.”¹¹⁷ Acting superintendent Goodwin gave general manager of Glacier Park Hotel Company H.A. Noble instructions on how the woodcutters should cut timber so that it would “not unduly disfigure the landscape.” They should be required to cut standing trees very low to the ground, Goodwin wrote. Preferably they should take trees that were out of sight of roads and trails, and they should take special care not to destroy any green trees or seedling coming up in old burns.¹¹⁸

Goodwin used his authority to end gill net fishing for whitefish in St. Mary Lake. The hotel company had a white resident of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation under contract to supply fish to the hotels. Using a gill net, the fisher caught more fish than

¹¹⁴ S. F. Ralston, Supervisor, to the Secretary of the Interior, August 11, 1915, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

¹¹⁵ Fraley, *A Woman’s Way West*, 126-28.

¹¹⁶ J. R. Eakin, Superintendent, to The Director, January 17, 1928, File 900-2 Part 2, Box 258, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

¹¹⁷ Charles J. Kraebel to Howard A. Noble, May 28, 1924, Roll 233, L. W. Hill Papers, MHS.

¹¹⁸ George E. Goodwin, Acting Superintendent, to H. A. Noble, General Manager, October 19, 1920, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

the hotels could use, and the surplus fish were simply thrown away. Goodwin urged the adoption of seine nets so that the surplus fish that were caught could be released live back into the lake.¹¹⁹

In sum, NPS demonstrated during its first decade and a half of existence that it had policies and ideas for managing Glacier National Park and that the concession must comply with its directives. Meanwhile, Glacier Park Hotel Company, in its dealings with NPS, rested on its laurels through the 1920s having built its impressive complex of hotels and chalets before NPS came on the scene. Automobile tourism did not strain the relationship in the 1920s the way it would in the following decade. By and large, the existing hotels and chalets served the public well. Tensions between Glacier Park Hotel Company and NPS revolved around the men at the top of each organization, their egos, and the power of command.

The Sawmill Incident

Tensions between Mather and Hill culminated in Mather's surprise decision to dynamite the company's sawmill at Many Glacier, an incident that became part of NPS lore.

As noted in the last chapter, Hill built the sawmill in 1915 before he secured a lease for the ground it stood on. The Department of the Interior balked at granting Hill's lease application for the sawmill site, but in April 1916 Superintendent of National Parks Robert B. Marshall finally issued a one-year permit to Glacier Park Hotel Company. The sawmill operated intermittently through the next four years supplying logs and lumber for the construction of Many Glacier Hotel. The permit for the sawmill site was renewed year after year. In March 1919, with construction of the hotel complete, General Manager H. A. Noble inquired with Mather if the idled sawmill could be left standing where it was until such time as Glacier Park Hotel Company had need to move it to a different place in the park for further building construction. Mather reluctantly gave his permission.¹²⁰

After five more years went by Mather's patience with Hill and Glacier Park Hotel Company ran out. The concession was given a year notice that it had to dismantle the sawmill. The order was ignored. When Mather visited the park in the summer of 1925 and learned that the concession was not complying, he took matters into his

¹¹⁹ George E. Goodwin, "Memorandum to Mr. Griffith reference taking white fish by net from St. Mary's Lake," March 6, 1918, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

¹²⁰ "Application for Sawmill Site at Many Glaciers, Glacier National Park, Montana," July 25, 1915, R. B. Marshall, Superintendent of National Parks, to J. H. Carroll, Counsel for Glacier Park Hotel Company, April 13, 1916, and H. A. Noble to Stephen T. Mather, March 25, 1919, File 900-04, Box 261, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II; Shankland, *Steve Mather and the National Parks*, 209.

own hands. He obtained thirteen charges of dynamite from the park's trail crew, recruited Assistant Superintendent J. P. Brooks and the trail crew to accompany him on his mission, and drove from St. Mary to Many Glacier with the load of dynamite in the government vehicles. Arriving at Many Glacier in the early afternoon, and without announcing his purpose to the hotel manager, he went straight to the sawmill site just beyond the hotel on the edge of Swiftcurrent Lake where he set the charges inside the sawmill complex. Then he invited the hotel guests to come down and see the show. The hotel manager, A. J. Binder, was alerted to Mather's plan and hastened to the spot to try to talk him out of it. Binder and Mather argued for most of an hour. By one account, Mather did most of the talking and "he did not talk like a sane man" – an appraisal apparently shared by Mr. Binder. Finally, Mather announced to the crowd that he would light the fuses himself, which he proceeded to do. The structure was blown to pieces. What had been an eyesore, with sawdust and wood scraps lying around it, was turned into a pile of wreckage. Mather insisted that concession employees haul away the debris afterwards, while he ordered the foreman of the trail crew to return after a few days and confirm that the cleanup was complete.¹²¹

Hill found Mather's action to be such an affront he threatened to sue the government for damages. Although Hill's attorneys never filed suit, they did prepare for litigation by collecting depositions from several concession employees. Aubrey L. Chaplin, a bus driver for the Glacier Park Transportation Company, stated in his deposition that "Mather intercepted my bus the morning the sawmill blew up. He said he wanted to talk to the passengers. During his conversation, he criticized Mr. Hill and said that Great Northern thought it ran the park, but it didn't." Paul C. Donahue, another bus driver, reported virtually the same thing: he overheard Mather saying that some people had the impression that Great Northern and Glacier Park Transportation Company were running the park and Mather said it was not so – "we are running the park."¹²²

Another story emerged that a bystander at the scene of the sawmill detonation asked Mather what he was doing, to which the NPS director responded: "Celebrating my daughter's nineteenth birthday." His daughter Betty had indeed accompanied him to the park, but she was not present for the fireworks display.¹²³

¹²¹ Thomas H. Reagan to M. J. Lines, August 12, 1925, Minnesota Historical Society, letter reproduced at <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00702/pdfa/00702-00059.pdf> <February 20, 2019>; Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 36; Shankland, *Steve Mather and the National Parks*, 209; Buchholtz, *Man and Glacier*, 61.

¹²² Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 36.

¹²³ Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, 209. According to Albright, Mather instructed his driver to take his daughter to the station to catch the next train home prior to summoning hotel guests down to the sawmill. (Albright as told to Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service*, 171.) In

William P. Kenney, vice president of Glacier Park Hotel Company, declared Mather's action to be "the most high-handed, unwarranted and illogical thing that has probably ever occurred in any park." Performed by the director of NPS no less, it was "particularly deplorable."¹²⁴

Since Mather suffered from bipolar disorder (manic depression), the incident can be interpreted as a manic episode.¹²⁵ On the other hand, Mather's attention-getting act just may have been calculated for effect. The *Great Falls Tribune* headlined the incident "Glacier Saw Mill Dynamited by National Parks Director."¹²⁶ Some people quietly applauded the action. Two months after the incident, Mather received a confidential letter from O. J. MacGillis, former chief clerk of Glacier Park Hotel Company, currently employed at the St. Paul Athletic Club (where, MacGillis carefully noted, he was not out of reach of retribution from Hill if the railroad magnate ever learned of his writing the letter.) MacGillis began:

Though but a very humble citizen, I cannot resist the urge to congratulate you on your answer to Mr. L. W. Hill for his abuse of the personnel of your department of the Government. I refer to your dynamiting of the worthless and disreputable shacks near the Many-Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park, known as the sawmill property. I heard of the incident early in September and I want to tell you that it made me feel pretty good to know there was someone with courage enough to put the stop signal on the "Emperor of the Northwest."

...If I have been correctly informed as to what was said and done in Glacier Park during the season just passed, I can only conclude that you have a fight on with Mr. Hill and I want, in my humble way, to offer you my good wishes for success. If you do succeed and should happily rid Glacier Park of the influence of its pink whiskered czar you will have

Shankland's telling, his daughter had not yet left the hotel when the sawmill was blown up, but she appeared to be taken by surprise by her father's deed.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels and Chalets*, 94.

¹²⁵ Without discounting the influence of Mather's erratic personality, Albright emphasizes that the sawmill incident occurred after Hill provoked Mather one time too many when he brought a group of newspaper reporters to Many Glacier Hotel in June 1925, found the area still too snowbound to impress the group with its offerings, and blamed NPS for his own miscalculation. In that prior episode, Hill flew into a rage against Superintendent Kraebel and later told the press to "go after Steve Mather and the terrible condition of Glacier Park." In his recounting of the episode Albright defends Mather up to a point but makes clear that he did not condone his boss's action. (Albright as told to Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service*, 169-71.)

¹²⁶ "Glacier Saw Mill Dynamited by National Parks Director," *Great Falls Tribune*, August 12, 1925, p. 6.

performed a great service for all who know Glacier Park and who have its best interests at heart.¹²⁷

Whether Mather was in full self-control when he dynamited the sawmill can never be known. No matter what, his action spotlighted the fight over who oversaw Glacier National Park and sent a clear message that when push came to shove the government held sway.

The Concession and the Blackfeet

Glacier Park Hotel Company used the Blackfeet Indians in its advertising, and it cultivated a commercial relationship with members of the Blackfeet nation to make Indian singing and dancing and greetings an integral part of the tourists' experience. NPS followed Glacier Park Hotel Company's lead by embracing the Blackfeet presence and heritage as an important theme of Glacier National Park interpretation. Blackfeet leaders sought to protect their people's heritage by preserving Blackfeet place names in Glacier.

As soon as Glacier Park tourism began, Blackfeet Indians began greeting tourists at the train station and working the tourists for tips. Louis W. Hill might have opposed that practice (Superintendent Logan disparaged it as begging and bumming) but instead he welcomed the Blackfeet presence at the train station because the tourists clearly enjoyed it. With the opening of Glacier Park Hotel in 1913, the contact between resident Blackfeet and Glacier tourists quickly evolved into a commercial enterprise on the part of interested Blackfeet Indians and the hotel company, with the Blackfeet Indians dressing in regalia, dancing, and singing, much to the tourists' delight. Blackfeet Indians not only availed themselves of tourists' tipping, some were employed by the company as official hosts, with men posing as "chiefs" and women serving as "Indian door girls." According to historians Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek,

The tribe drummed, danced, and signed postcards on the sprawling estate of a hotel, then conducted naming ceremonies in the crowded lobby. Indians 'passed the tom-tom' for tips and sold miniature bows, arrows, and tepees. Between 1914 and 1919 hardier tourists slept in real tepees

¹²⁷ O. J. MacGillis to Stephen T. Mather, Director, October 13, 1925, File 900-05 Part 2, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II. Note: MacGillis subsequently worked for Great Northern in St. Paul. In 1930, he held the position of advertising purchasing agent.

on the lawn of East Glacier Hotel. When the popularity of such camping declined, the railroad hired Blackfeet to live on display in tepees.¹²⁸

Hill incorporated Indian cultural motifs into the hotels' and chalets' interior décor. While some effort was put toward highlighting Blackfeet culture, much of the décor was generalized to Plains Indian culture or a hodgepodge of American Indian cultures. For example, seven totem poles were brought from the Pacific Northwest to decorate the lobby of Many Glacier Hotel. (Lewis, the owner of the Glacier Hotel at Lake McDonald, was equally insensitive to local tribes on the west side, having Navajo rugs draped from the balconies of his hotel's interior.)¹²⁹

Hill hired Blackfeet Indians to travel by train to promote Great Northern Railway and Glacier National Park in cities far from Montana. His troupe of performers went by special train and made appearances at the Travel Show in New York City, the Land Show in Chicago, the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and the Rose Festival in Portland, Oregon, among other shows and fairs. Sometimes Hill accompanied them personally and on other occasions he sent Great Northern agents along as their handlers. At the San Francisco Exhibition in 1915, six Blackfeet Indians were paid by Great Northern to pose as "live mannequins" in a life-size diorama, while Great Northern agents presented lectures, movies, and transparencies featuring Glacier. At these events, the participating tribal members were billed as "Glacier Park Indians" rather than Blackfeet. The made-up name largely replaced the true tribal identity of the Blackfeet in much of Great Northern's advertising literature as well.¹³⁰

A Hollywood movie producer was soon interested in these picturesque Blackfeet Indians with their magnificent mountain backdrop. A scout for Marshall Neilan Productions corresponded with Hill in 1920. It led to a film shoot in and around Glacier Park Hotel for the silent film *Bob Hampton of Placer* (1921). Afterwards Marshall Neilan thanked Hill in a telegram, saying that the Blackfeet Indians "gave us wildest time I ever saw." Following Marshall's success with the tribe, other Hollywood filmmakers went through Hill to arrange for Blackfeet tribal members to

¹²⁸ Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 57.

¹²⁹ Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 43, 53. Barnes notes that the totem poles were an advertisement to entice guests to visit the Pacific Northwest. Japanese lanterns were also part of the hotels' décor, serving to remind guests that the Great Northern line linked to the port of Seattle and shipping lanes to the Far East. The Great Northern passenger train was called the *Oriental Limited*. Later, the name was changed to the *Hiawatha*, after the fictional Ojibwe warrior in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem. Hotel décor also featured Swiss, Bavarian, and Western frontier themes. As Barnes notes (p. 38): "What the décor really reflected was the business interests of the Great Northern."

¹³⁰ Steele, "The Son Who Showed His Father," 481; Diehl-Taylor, "Passengers, Profits, and Prestige," 41; Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels and Chalets*, 21; Young with McCormack, *The Dutiful Son*, 122-23.

take part in their film productions, the tribal members traveling on Hill's railroad to distant cities and the film companies paying expenses.¹³¹

Few people raised objections, even though the Blackfeet Indians were clearly being demeaned and exploited in this relationship. What few objections there were came mostly from officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Yet the BIA could be as racist in its policies as Great Northern. E. B. Meritt, a longtime BIA administrator, said that the bureau wanted the traveling Indians to settle on their allotments and become assimilated. "Their employment for exhibition by circuses, wild west shows, and the like, tends to influence them to continue their nomadic habits," he wrote. Despite Meritt's objection, however, the BIA permitted the traveling shows to take place provided that certain conditions were met. Great Northern was required to obtain written approval from the Blackfeet agent and the BIA office in Washington to engage those Blackfeet in its enterprise, and the company was to supply all their food, transportation, and medical care in addition to their salary. Whether Great Northern honored the BIA's requirements is not known, but some level of mistreatment was inevitable. When a committee of Congress held extensive hearings on the conditions of Indians in 1929-31, one witness, a BIA field investigator, testified that Glacier Park Hotel Company did in fact mistreat the Blackfeet who camped by Glacier Park Hotel. The witness's report, entitled "Indians Exploited by Hill Hotel," stated that Blackfeet were paid with handouts and "the leavings of the hotel kitchen."¹³²

NPS was not involved with the traveling shows or film shoots, of course, nor did it have any jurisdiction over what occurred at Midvale just outside the park. But it exploited the Blackfeet to much the same end, characterizing them as a vestigial people and using a romanticized notion of the nineteenth-century Blackfeet for national park branding. Robert Sterling Yard's *National Parks Portfolio*, NPS's leading publication about the national parks, introduced its series of plates on Glacier with a photo of three Indians in traditional dress overlooking St. Mary Lake.¹³³ Horace M. Albright highlighted the Blackfeet and Glacier in the chapter titled "Indians!" of his book *"Oh, Ranger!"* Writing to a white readership with his opening comment that "Americans thrill at the thought of Indians," Albright fell into stereotyping almost as readily as did Great Northern:

¹³¹ W. P. Kenney to L. W. Hill, October 1, 1920, Marshall Neilan to Hill, October 12, 1920, A. J. Dickinson to Hill, January 27, 1921, and Dickinson to W. C. Tuttle, March 9, 1922, Roll 233, L. W. Hill Papers, MHS.

¹³² Keller and Turek, *American Indians and National Parks*, 58.

¹³³ Robert Sterling Yard, *The National Parks Portfolio*, 5th edition, revised by Isabelle F. Story (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 155.

Glacier National Park is the place to see the Plains Indians in real life. Here the visitor sees the picturesque and colorful tepees of the Blackfoot Indians, one of the outstanding tribes of Plains Indians. They were mighty hunters and valiant warriors, tall, proud, dignified, the very personification of the redskin of story-book fame. The Plains Indians ranged over the vast, gentle eastern slope of the Rockies, living almost exclusively by hunting. Many were the wars they fought with the white pioneers, even resisting the troops sent to conquer them....

It is a happy circumstance that this fine nation of Plains Indians should live still on the border of Glacier National Park. The ancient hunting grounds of the Blackfeet included the eastern half of the park.¹³⁴

The Blackfeet did score one success in dealing with the new national parks administration when four tribal leaders went to Washington to protest the use of white men's names on mountains, lakes, and rivers in Glacier National Park. The four leaders were Wolf Plume, Bird Rattlers, Curly Bear, and Many Tail Feathers Coming Over the Hill. The meeting occurred in 1915, when Mather was assistant to the secretary of the interior and NPS was not yet established. Secretary of the Interior Lane asked Mather to meet with the tribal delegation. Mather brought in Robert B. Marshall, the chief geographer of the U.S. Geological Survey and at that time the superintendent of national parks. Marshall told the Blackfeet leaders he had decided against the use of Blackfeet names because the public would have difficulty pronouncing or spelling them. He also said that some Blackfeet names were difficult to translate, citing the example of Almost-a-Dog-Mountain. The exchange brought forth a commitment from Mather and the U.S. Geological Survey to use Blackfeet names in English translation for geographic features that were yet to be named officially, and to restore Blackfeet names for some other features.¹³⁵

The Concessions and the Interpretive Program

NPS addressed the educational purpose of national parks by developing formal interpretive programs in the national parks. Early interpretive programs pulled together several disparate elements: field museums, natural history bulletins, regular

¹³⁴ Horace M. Albright and Frank J. Taylor, *"Oh, Ranger!"* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1928), 86.

¹³⁵ Albright as told to Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service*, 21-22; Albright and Taylor, *"Oh, Ranger!"*, 88.

natural history lectures, and nature guide services.¹³⁶ Park concessions shared in some of these activities, helped sponsor some, and provided venues for others.

The first nature guide service in Glacier was provided by Miss Gertrude P. Norton, a botanist with the University of Montana, who served as an employee of the hotel company in 1919.¹³⁷ The next service was offered by Professor M. P. Somes, an entomologist, who led walks for a fee under a special permit issued by the park administration in 1921 and 1922. Somes discontinued his service in August 1922 for lack of paying customers.¹³⁸ The park administration then inaugurated its own nature guide service, appointing Dr. Morton J. Elrod as the first park staff nature guide. Superintendent Eakin and the hotel manager at Many Glacier jointly asked Elrod to accompany park visitors on a “deluxe trip to the Belly River.” The deluxe trip included interpretation by Dr. Elrod along with transportation, meals, and bedding provided by the concessioner.¹³⁹

A professor of biology at the University of Montana, Elrod was a veteran of more than 20 years of field studies in the park area. He made his first trip to the Glacier area in the early 1890s. His second and third trips to Glacier in 1909 and 1910 were made in the spirit of scientific expeditions, as he and his companions collected plant specimens and photographic images, “prospected” Sperry Glacier, took rock samples from adjacent cliffs, and investigated aquatic life in the mountain lakes.¹⁴⁰ Dr. Elrod returned to Glacier nearly every summer after it became a park.¹⁴¹ Having spent so much time in the park, he was well qualified to serve as “dean” of the new “nature service” when it was first established in cooperation with the University of Montana in the summer of 1922.

Dr. Elrod’s title was nature guide from 1922 to 1926 and ranger-naturalist from 1926 to 1928. He headed a seasonal interpretive staff of three, usually comprised of himself and two younger professors from the University of Montana. Dr. Elrod based himself at Many Glacier, while he posted his two assistants at the Glacier Hotel (Lake McDonald Lodge) and Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. The three nature service

¹³⁶ C. Frank Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” *Journal of Forest History* 22, no. 1 (January 1978), 28-29.

¹³⁷ Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” 32.

¹³⁸ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1921, 6; *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1922, 4.

¹³⁹ George M. Dennison, “Morton J. Elrod: Glacier Park Naturalist,” *Crown of the Continent Dispatches* 2 (Autumn 2012), 9.

¹⁴⁰ “Botany in Glacier Park,” undated typescript, Folder 7, Box 21, Series IV, Collection MSS 486, Morton J. Elrod Collection, K. Ross Toole Archives, Mansfield Library, University of Montana.

¹⁴¹ “The 1929 Ranger Naturalist Staff,” *Glacier Nature Notes* 2, no. 3 (August 1929), 27.

staff gave evening talks, conducted nature walks, and received visitors at a “nature information desk” set up in the lobby of their respective hotels.¹⁴²

Glacier National Park acquired its first full-time permanent park naturalist position in 1929. George C. Ruhle was appointed to the position and began his long tenure as head of the park’s interpretive program from 1929 to 1941. Ruhle had formerly worked as a seasonal ranger naturalist at Yellowstone and Yosemite.¹⁴³

By his third summer in Glacier, Ruhle had developed a full schedule of natural history lectures and guided walks, with lectures provided at Many Glacier Hotel, Many Glacier Auto Camp, Going-to-the-Sun Chalets, Two Medicine Chalets and Auto Camp, Lake McDonald Hotel, Sperry Chalets, Granite Park Chalets, and Avalanche Creek Campground. Guided walks were offered to Grinnell Glacier, Granite Park, Sperry Glacier and on two different trails out of Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. Naturalist services were also offered upon request by the concessioners on boat trips and horse trips.¹⁴⁴

In the coming decade, the range of offerings would change as car travel to the park increased. The interpretive staff would experiment with leading auto caravans, and it would feature campfire programs in campgrounds. Interpretation in the chalets would be curtailed. While the concessions were instrumental in the early development of the park’s interpretive program in the 1920s, they would be less supportive as the years passed. At some hotel and chalet venues, particularly in the smaller lobbies in the chalets, lectures were no longer welcomed; the outdoor campfire programs were favored instead. Increasingly, the park administration and the concessions distinguished between interpretive activities and hotel guest entertainments, with park staff providing the former and the concessioner providing the latter.¹⁴⁵

Late Developments

Several things happened in 1929 and 1930 – some connected and some not, some specific to Glacier and some on the national stage – that marked those years as a transition in the story of Glacier National Park concessions management. To tick them off briefly: there were changes of leadership as Albright succeeded Mather as director of NPS and Hill stepped down as president of Glacier Park Hotel Company.

¹⁴² Morton J. Elrod, “Report of the Park Naturalist, Glacier National Park, 1926,” File Unit 018, Subseries 01.03, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA.

¹⁴³ Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” 35.

¹⁴⁴ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1931, 20.

¹⁴⁵ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1932, 15.

There was another benchmark in the evolution of NPS concession policy: concessioners in national parks all over the West were summoned to Washington to convene the first National Park Operators Conference, where each one was asked to prepare a five-year plan to adapt its operations for the rising car culture. There was a downturn in the economy: the stock market crash in October and November 1929 augured hard times for the concessioners in the 1930s. And, there were changes in Glacier Park Hotel Company's assets: along with completing the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton Lakes National Park (in 1927), the company took over the Lewis Hotel on Lake McDonald in 1930. These various events will be discussed in chronological order to show how rapidly concessions management in Glacier was set upon a new course at the end of the 1920s.

Mather was felled by a stroke in November 1928. In the next month he rallied, asked Albright to take over for him, and resigned his office. He would survive in frail health for just one more year. In January 1929, Albright was sworn in as the second director of NPS. He was reluctant to take it on, but finally decided that he must do so to assure the success of what had been achieved thus far. Mather and he had worked as a team since January 1915. As Albright stated in his memoirs, he wanted to strengthen the organization and improve the administration of the national parks "so that the power and the personality of the Director would no longer have to be controlling factors in operating the Service."¹⁴⁶

Among the elements of national parks administration that Albright aimed to institutionalize was Mather's idea of how to handle park concessions as regulated monopolies or so-called public utilities. Albright supported Mather's efforts to combine park concessions whenever possible. The Mather-Albright ideal was to have a single concession in any given park, though in large parks like Glacier that would be hard to achieve and so the result would be a winnowing of the number of concessions down to just a few. The goal remained one of restricting competition in order to strengthen capital investment in each park. Fewer concessions also allowed greater administrative control over concessions management. Albright continued Mather's use of the term "public utility" to describe the concessioner's role. He also used the terms "operator" and "concessioner." The term "concessioner" eventually became standard in NPS (preferred over "concessionaire," which is often used by other public lands agencies.)¹⁴⁷

One of Albright's first initiatives as director was to call a conference of park concessioners in Washington, D.C. This first annual conference was called the

¹⁴⁶ Albright as told to Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service*, 222-27.

¹⁴⁷ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1930, 37; William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 113.

National Park Operators Conference. Joined by Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, the meeting of twenty-five park concessioners convened December 6 and 7, 1929 at the Department of the Interior Building. The concessioners represented a combined capital investment of \$20 million, which, as concessioner Don Hummel observed in his memoirs, “was big money indeed...after the stock market crash two months earlier.”¹⁴⁸

The thrust of the conference was to improve the public-private partnership looking ahead to a big increase in car travel to the national parks in the coming decade. Travel to national parks was already setting a record year after year; the total of 2,680,597 visitors to all national parks in the year ending September 30, 1929 exceeded the total in 1928 by 158,409. Those figures did not include an additional half million visitors recorded in national monuments.¹⁴⁹ Great Northern and other railroads had played an enormous role in financing the development of the parks up to that time. It required a strong pitch from the government to get the railroads’ subsidiaries – including Glacier Park Hotel Company – to double down on their investment as NPS pivoted to prepare for more car travel to the national parks.¹⁵⁰

The government also wanted to bring about greater consistency of visitor services from park to park. Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur stated the government’s position this way:

We must remember that the visiting public looks upon the whole thing as a national enterprise. If visitors find adequate accommodations in one park, and then find inadequate facilities in another, they wonder why the Government does not do something about it. Therefore we must work toward standardization of service; or perhaps I should say uniformity. We do not, of course, want to make everything alike in the parks; that would be a calamity. Rather we want to work for uniformity in types of accommodations available and in prices charged.¹⁵¹

When Wilbur and Albright talked about “types of accommodations” they had in mind the rising auto tourist and the growing demand for the new “auto camp” type of development. In contrast to the grand park hotels, auto camps provided shelter and privacy without a big show. Auto camps typically consisted of a cluster of small, one-room “housekeeping cabins” with shared lavatory and shower facilities housed in a separate building. More will be said about auto camps in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁸ Don Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks: The Destruction of Concessions and Park Access* (Bellevue, Wash.: Free Enterprise Press, 1987), 90-93.

¹⁴⁹ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1929, 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1930, 37.

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 94.

One result of the conference was a commitment by each concessioner to submit a five-year plan to NPS within the next few months describing how the concessioner proposed to build more infrastructure to accommodate more visitation.¹⁵² Months later Glacier Park Hotel Company formally reneged on its commitment, saying that NPS refused to commit to a timetable for finishing the road over Logan Pass so it would not commit to a five-year plan for developing more accommodations. Since rising future demand hinged on the completion of a through-park road, the company did not want to invest in the development of auto camps prematurely. This was the juncture at which Superintendent Eakin said that he suspected the company would “never be interested in the auto camp game.” Eakin thought it might be necessary to seek another operator to develop auto camps.¹⁵³

Six weeks later Hill retired from heading Glacier Park Hotel Company. Eakin commented to Albright on the transition as follows:

At the recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the Glacier Park Hotel Company, Mr. Kenney succeeded Mr. Hill as President. Mr. Hill is still President of the subsidiary company operating the Prince of Wales but I have it straight that if he acts up he will be kicked out of that too.

On the basis of recent letters from Mr. Kenney it would appear we are not much better off. Being an optimist I still think Mr. Kenney can be brought around to our viewpoint in time. Mr. Hill has been bitterly antagonistic to the Service for years and Mr. Kenney just had to carry out this policy. I have hopes things will be better now that this influence has been removed.¹⁵⁴

What was more, NPS planned for a rotation of superintendents in the fall. Eakin would be reassigned to Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the concessioner would have a new superintendent to work with. Sometimes a fresh face was good for smoothing a roiled relationship, and NPS had hopes that the turnover in personalities on both sides would lead to an improvement in the park’s relationship with its prime concession.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 95-96.

¹⁵³ A. J. Binder to Horace Albright, April 29, 1930, and J. R. Eakin, Superintendent to The Director, May 2, 1930, Folder 1, File Unit 015, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA.

¹⁵⁴ J. R. Eakin to Horace M. Albright, June 14, 1930, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

¹⁵⁵ J. R. Eakin, Superintendent to The Director, May 2, 1930, Folder 1, File Unit 015, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA; Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 97-98.

Meanwhile, Glacier Park Hotel Company acquired the Lewis Hotel, renaming it Lake McDonald Hotel. NPS helped to facilitate this sale as it was glad to consolidate major hotel operations on the west and east side of the park under a single concession. Before there were roads connecting the west and east sides, Glacier Park Hotel Company was content to focus on the east side. NPS accepted that state of things. By the end of the 1920s the situation had changed. U.S. Highway 2 was completed over Marias Pass in 1930. The so-called Trans-mountain Highway, the future Going-to-the-Sun Road, would soon be completed as well. Park operations on the west and east sides of the divide would become increasingly integrated. Glacier Park Hotel Company and NPS were aligned in wanting to secure a regulated monopoly across the whole park.¹⁵⁶

John Lewis, owner of the Lewis Hotel, was a willing seller in 1930. His property had been threatened in the historic Halfmoon Fire in 1929. He probably fretted over the economic outlook after the Stock Market Crash in October 1929. Perhaps, too, he worried about the NPS's intentions as it sought to acquire inholdings through condemnation.¹⁵⁷ Lewis and Great Northern reached a sale price of \$275,000 on March 1, 1930.¹⁵⁸ The deed of sale covered the land and improvements together with all furnishings and equipment tied to the hotel operation. The land area was about 265 acres. The property transferred to the railroad's title company, Dakota and Great Northern Townsite Company. The Lewis Hotel became the Lake McDonald Hotel.¹⁵⁹

NPS encouraged Great Northern to acquire this property by offering to reimburse the railroad company for one-half the purchase price after the sale was made. As part of the deal, Great Northern would give the property to the federal government with a reservation of the buildings for twenty years. In other words, the federal government would then own the land and buildings, and the company would then have a twenty-year lease or concession. As Albright first explained this rather convoluted deal to Kenney in February 1929, it was tied to NPS's legal authority to acquire inholdings in national parks, according to which one half the funds had to come from outside the government. Albright emphasized that NPS's interest in seeing Great Northern

¹⁵⁶ Great Northern officials were concerned when they learned that agents for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway were scouting the west side of the park. The rival railroad went through Missoula, and Great Northern officials wanted to prevent it from getting a foothold in the national park via a property on Lake McDonald and a bus line between Lake McDonald and Missoula. Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 145-46.

¹⁵⁷ Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier's Historic Hotels & Chalets*, 146.

¹⁵⁸ Adjusted for inflation, the price was equivalent to \$4.2 million in today's dollars.

¹⁵⁹ Contract for Deed, March 1, 1930, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNPA; Director to Assistant Secretary of the Interior, no date, Folder 5, File Unit 012, Series 01.07, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA. On the renaming of the hotel, see Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 148.

acquire the Lewis Hotel was linked to its interest in sustaining Great Northern's overall position in Glacier National Park. Albright stated, "the consummation of the transaction would justify the issuance of a new twenty-year franchise covering all operations of the Hotel Company in the park in accordance with our policies."¹⁶⁰

After the sale to Great Northern was completed on March 1, 1930, it took another two years of negotiations for NPS to complete its part of the bargain. The first sticking point was that the legal authority to acquire an inholding might cover the land and the buildings, but it did not extend to furnishings and equipment as itemized in the bill of sale for \$275,000. NPS could not pay half the cost of sale until those disallowed items were deducted from the sale price. The second sticking point revolved around the government's desire to secure another twenty-year contract with Glacier Park Hotel Company and the reluctance of Great Northern to back that commitment. Glacier Park Hotel Company's twenty-year concession contract was due to expire on December 31, 1935. NPS aimed to leverage the sale of the Lewis Hotel property for a new concession contract so that it would not come up hard against that expiration date a few years hence.¹⁶¹

These differences were finally negotiated. The Dakota and Great Northern Townsite Company and the United States entered an agreement on May 26, 1932 for the sale of the property to the United States. The company transferred title for 265 acres with all appurtenances. The acquisition surely stands as the most important acquisition of an inholding in the park's history. The U.S. government agreed to a sale price of \$303,765.86 on condition that Great Northern would contribute half that amount – meaning that the government got it for half price. On the same day, Glacier Park Hotel Company and NPS entered a new twenty-year contract.

By 1932 the United States had entered the Great Depression. The economic downturn would put a severe and lasting crimp on Glacier Park Hotel Company and its parent company Great Northern. The long-term effects of the depression on NPS-concession relations in Glacier are the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁶⁰ Horace M. Albright to W. P. Kenney, February 11, 1929, Folder 5, File Unit 012, Series 01.07, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA.

¹⁶¹ Horace M. Albright to W. P. Kenney, April 11, 1930, Kenney to Albright, August 4, 1930, Acting Director to F. J. Solinsky, Jr., August 9, 1930, Arno B. Cammerer to Kenney, August 9, 1930, Albright to Kenney, September 29, 1930, and Albright to Kenney, March 31, 1932, Folder 5, File Unit 012, Series 01.07, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007, GNPA; Untitled agreement, May 26, 1932, File C3823, Box 7, Concessions files from warehouse, GNPA.

Chapter 3

Through Depression and War, 1930-1945

The National Park Operators Conference in December 1929 took place against a backdrop of looming economic depression. The Stock Market Crash had just played out over the previous three months. The debacle had begun with jitters and jolts in September, then a thundering slide in stock values through October culminating in the disastrous meltdown on Black Tuesday, October 29, when half the stock value of all the nation's big corporations was wiped out in a single day. With the sudden fall in stock values, millions of ordinary Americans lost their life savings. In the coming year consumer spending would contract, gross national product would fall by more than 10 percent, 1,553 banks would fail, and 3 million workers would lose their jobs. Looking into this abyss, the national park concessioners braced for a decline in national park visits and a drop in their revenues. With the business outlook so bad, it was a wonder that the concessioners rallied and agreed to the government's request that they each submit a five-year development plan to NPS. Each plan was to lay out a year-by-year schedule of capital investment for expansion of visitor facilities and services. After the disappointing 1930 travel season, however, none of the concessioners met their commitments and their five-year development plans were quietly shelved.

National park visitation dropped significantly in 1931, 1932, and 1933, the worst years of the Great Depression. It then rebounded to pre-depression levels and climbed to new heights through the rest of the decade. Yet visitation was not the whole key to the volume of business activity for the concessions. Faced with hard times, most park visitors scrimped on travel expenses by availing themselves of free national park campgrounds and picnic areas. Many hotel rooms in the national parks went unrented even as campgrounds filled. In the worst of times hotel dining rooms saw only a trickle of customers. Hotel guests drifted through souvenir shops or lingered at service counters without making any purchases.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1931), 266-81; David Shannon, *Between the Wars: America, 1919-1941*, 2nd edition

The Great Depression affected business for Glacier National Park's concessioners much the same as it did other concessioners in the rest of the national parks. Glacier had recorded 70,742 visitors in 1929, shattering previous records. In the first year of the depression it received even more, 73,783. Visitation fell by about a third in 1931 and 1932, rebounded to 76,615 in 1933 (the year of the opening of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway) and climbed to 170,073 in 1939.¹⁶³ But more visitors did not mean a commensurate increase in business revenues for the concessioner. As more people came to the park by car, rather than by rail, the public demand for more campground spaces grew much faster than the public demand for more lodging facilities. Indeed, the car camping mode of park use had begun cutting into Glacier Park Hotel Company's business in the 1920s. The visitor who came by rail tended to be wealthier than the visitor who came by car, to spend more freely, and to stay in the park longer. The rail arrival was generally a hotel patron, a "dude." Car campers were mostly spendthrifts, "sagebrushers." So, it was discouraging to Glacier Park Hotel Company to see the number of rail arrivals flatten out as the number of car arrivals rose. In 1927, a fifth of Glacier's visitors came by rail. In 1929, it was just 12 percent. In 1933, it plunged to 5 percent. As a percentage of total visitation, the rail component kept shrinking after World War II. In 1947, it would be just 3 percent, and in 1957, a negligible 1.1 percent.¹⁶⁴

Seeing public use slowly bifurcate into two classes of tourists, "dudes" and "sagebrushers," spenders and spendthrifts, the well-heeled and the struggling middle class, NPS had a markedly different perspective from the concessioner. While the concessioner valued visitors according to how much money they spent in the park, NPS counted all visitors, regardless of income level, as a measure of public enjoyment. To NPS, more public use translated into more public support, hence more congressional support, and ultimately more congressional appropriations for the National Park System (that is, more public money that would enable NPS to serve the public good). While national park concessioners took account of their declining revenues and saw nothing but grim times ahead, NPS held a much more confident view of the future. NPS was entering a period of growth rather than contraction. At the start of the 1930s public enjoyment of the national parks had never been greater. With marked improvement in the nation's road system and steady increase in car ownership in American society, more and more middle-class Americans were taking automobile vacations. National parks were popular destinations. Nothing, not even

(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979), 131-35; *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1930, 37.

¹⁶³ Visitation statistics are from Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park*, 127.

¹⁶⁴ Shaw, "The Great Northern Railroad and the Promotion of Tourism," 72.

hard times, would stem the tide of public use of national parks through the coming decade.

Furthermore, NPS now enjoyed solid support at the highest levels of government. The new Hoover administration looked with favor on the National Park System. President Herbert Hoover was a former president of the National Parks Association. His secretary of the interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur, was formerly on the California State Park Commission. Under their influence, the NPS budget was increased by \$3 million in 1930. The following year, it saw another significant increase. Much of the money was for road construction in the national parks, including the ambitious trans-mountain highway project in Glacier.¹⁶⁵

E. T. Scoyen, superintendent of Glacier National Park from 1931 through 1938, was a veteran park administrator. One might say he was himself a product of the NPS-concessions relationship, for he was born in Yellowstone National Park the child of a young couple who worked for Yellowstone's concession. He began his NPS career working in Yellowstone, and served as chief ranger at Grand Canyon and superintendent at Zion prior to his appointment to Glacier. Starting on duty at Glacier in the second winter of the depression, Scoyen recorded in his first annual report the contrasting outlooks of the park administration and the concessioners. He expressed sympathy for the concessioners' present struggles in the deteriorating economy, but he was bullish on Glacier's future visitor numbers. Despite hard times, he was sure that public enjoyment of Glacier would increase in the next few years, thanks to the spreading car culture. "Although the year showed a loss of travel over 1930 – especially rail visitors – and was rather discouraging to park operators, there were many bright spots in the picture," he wrote. Completion of the Theodore Roosevelt Highway (today's U.S. 2) over Marias Pass, together with other highway developments outside the park, would bring an increase in tourist travel to Montana and Glacier. "Nothing can be considered more important to the future of the park than the aggressive highway policy of this state," he commented.¹⁶⁶

This chapter carries the story of concessions management in Glacier forward from 1930 to 1945, through the Great Depression and World War II. The decade and a half from 1930 to 1945 was a period of decisive change in the relationship between government and private capital in the national parks. Three crosscutting currents affected the park administration and Glacier Park Hotel Company in this period. One current was the growth of car culture and how it reshaped public use of the park, especially as it affected types of accommodations needed in the park. As Scoyen clearly saw, the rising car culture was so influential in encouraging more national

¹⁶⁵ Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 325-26.

¹⁶⁶ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1931, 1.

park use that it overcame the dampening effect of the Great Depression. The park administration had to accommodate expanding public use even as the concession faced dwindling revenues. The second current was the depression, which drove down hotel occupancy rates in Glacier even as more people came to enjoy the park. And here it is appropriate to highlight that the World War II years, which brought restrictions on travel, had an even more depressing effect on park concession revenue than the worst years of the depression did. The Great Depression and the wartime travel restrictions from 1942 to 1945 were successive calamities for the park concession from which it never recovered. The third current was the strengthening of NPS through this same period. Starting in the Hoover administration, and intensifying in the New Deal era of 1933-1940, NPS accrued more power and responsibilities. As a result of NPS strength and park concessioners' weakness, NPS relations with private capital were reordered in the period 1930 to 1945. NPS came to dominate the relationship, being much more assertive about park development needs. It dictated design standards for concessioner buildings and oversaw concessioner rate schedules. NPS even went so far as to impose conditions for concession employee contracts, a move that would have been unthinkable previously. All this was happening generally across the National Park System as well as specifically in Glacier, but our focus through most of this chapter will be on local developments and the actions of Glacier Park Hotel Company.

Accommodating the Car Tourist

The Glacier National Park administration counted automobiles in the park with an eagle eye. It maintained a yearly count of people coming to the park, which it compiled from running tallies kept at seven points of entry in the 1930s. Cars as well as people were counted at four road locations at Belton (West Glacier), Sherburne (Many Glacier Entrance), St. Mary, and Two Medicine. Rail arrivals were enumerated at the Glacier Park Station. Hikers, horseback riders, and boaters were counted in two backcountry locations at Belly River and Waterton Lake (Goat Haunt). Additionally, counts of cars and people were made at the park's major campgrounds. Car license plates were inspected to determine park visitors' places of origin. Accordingly, the park administration recorded the fact that people from every state in the union visited Glacier, driving thousands of miles from home in many cases.¹⁶⁷

Superintendent E. T. Scoyen included still more auto transportation statistics in his annual reports: miles of road. In 1932, the park had 136 miles of oiled high-

¹⁶⁷ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1932, 5.

standard highways. This included fifty-two miles of road on the Blackfeet Reservation that were maintained by the park. The frontage road down the east side of the park was called the Blackfeet Highway. In addition, the park had sixty-two miles of dirt road (or second-class road) and twenty-five miles of wagon road, making a total of 223 miles of park roads. This compared with 872 miles of trails of which a little less than half were tourist trails and the balance were boundary and fire trails.¹⁶⁸

Both counts – miles of road in the park, and numbers of cars and people arriving yearly – were trending strongly upward. Scoyen well knew that more and better roads encouraged more people to come to the park in cars and he appreciated the fact that this upward spiral could not continue forever. Scoyen heard visitors' complaints about noise, dust, and the smell of gasoline. With other park superintendents of his day, he probably did not have much concern about Glacier becoming overcrowded or reaching ecological limits of use, thinking that those problems lay far in the future.¹⁶⁹ Mather had famously promised that the NPS would not "gridiron" the parks with too many roads. Scoyen fully supported Mather's vision. He affirmed that Glacier would always be a "trail park," a place renowned for its backcountry as well as its scenery viewed from the road. But the park's road system was not yet complete, and getting the roads built was still a top priority of park administration in the 1930s. Indeed, nothing was so central to park administration in the early 1930s as getting the Going-to-the-Sun Highway open. Scoyen stated that completing the road over Logan Pass was "an obligation of the Government to its citizens" since it would afford everyone the opportunity to enjoy the park's "alpine glories." That democratic vision of providing automobile access to the heart of wilderness was consistent with mainstream NPS thinking in that era.¹⁷⁰

Scoyen and his staff monitored a slew of major and minor road construction projects during the summer months each year. The park administration was responsible for the completion of each road construction contract, and while each contract was active the superintendent kept tabs on the work to be accomplished, the dollar amount, the project schedule, and who was performing the work. But NPS relied on the Bureau of Public Roads to provide technical oversight of all the roadwork, to put an engineer on the job site. Project supervision by the Bureau of Public Roads proceeded under a systemwide agreement between the two agencies. The arrangement dated back to 1926 when NPS began receiving large appropriations

¹⁶⁸ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1932, 4.

¹⁶⁹ Richard Quin, "A Vicious Circle: Automobiles and the National Parks," in *Making Protection Work: Proceedings of the 9th Conference on Research and Resource Management in Parks and Public Lands*, edited by David Harmon (Hancock, Mich.: The George Wright Society, 1997), 56.

¹⁷⁰ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1931, 1; Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 68-75.

for park road development. Mather approached the Bureau of Public Roads for assistance because he favored interagency cooperation over needless bureaucratic duplication. With the Bureau of Public Roads providing supervision for all park road construction projects, NPS reduced its own engineering staff and focused on growing a more specialized staff of landscape engineers instead. NPS landscape engineers combined the practical goals of engineering with the aesthetic philosophy of landscape architecture. By the 1930s, the NPS Landscape Division had a good working relationship with the Bureau of Public Roads so that park roads, potentially so ruinous to the scenery, would lie lightly on the land. NPS design specifications included all sorts of features such as naturalization of road banks; scenic overlooks; and bridges, guardrails, and culverts faced with native stone so they would harmonize as much as possible with the natural landscape. Road alignments were selected with utmost care. NPS design standards called for gentle grades, sinuous curves, quality seal for a smooth ride, and dramatic effect in the way views were revealed as a park road wended its way through a mountainous or forested landscape. The distinctive aesthetic design of park roads not only aimed at preserving park scenery “unimpaired,” it presented car owners with a new kind of pleasurable driving experience. In this way NPS courted the car culture, broadening the appeal of national parks through the invention of a new type of roadway.¹⁷¹

The Going-to-the-Sun Highway was completed in 1933. Scoyen called it “a large event in the history of the park,” which was perhaps an understatement, because no other road in the National Park System is more spectacular or famous, nor was any other work of engineering so central to a park’s management and use as this road would be for Glacier. The completion of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway tied together the two sides of the park, making administration more efficient and solidifying the case for placing all visitor accommodations under one park concession. It also led to a concentration of visitor use along the road corridor, and soon spurred more development at strategic points along the route.¹⁷²

More than ten years in the making, the Going-to-the-Sun Highway (the name was later changed to Going-to-the-Sun Road) was a feat of engineering and a supreme test of Mather’s vision to reconcile roadbuilding and landscape protection. Threading its way from the shore of Lake McDonald, up McDonald Creek, and along the Garden Wall to Logan Pass on the Continental Divide, then down the east side to St.

¹⁷¹ Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 187-92, 201-26; Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 60-62.

¹⁷² *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1933, 3; Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 176.

Mary Lake, the road secured Glacier's place as a "crown jewel" in the National Park System and made it a popular resort for automobile-based tourism.

The park held an elaborate dedication ceremony at Logan Pass on July 15. It drew a crowd of 4,000 people, including distinguished citizens representing the federal government, the State of Montana, and the Dominion of Canada, and a large contingent of American Indians representing the Blackfeet Nation and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. One year later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Glacier and traversed the Going-to-the-Sun Road in a presidential motorcade, bringing more fame and attention to the park and its spectacular new motor trail.¹⁷³

More than sixty years after these events occurred, NPS commissioned a national historic landmark theme study of NPS landscape architecture that featured the Going-to-the-Sun Road Historic District as an outstanding case study of landscape engineering. The theme study resulted in an excellent monograph, *Wilderness by Design* (1998) by Ethan Carr. Carr's chapter on Going-to-the-Sun Road provides an incisive administrative history of this epic construction project, showing how crucial it was in the development of the NPS Landscape Division and the formation of a working relationship with the Bureau of Public Roads across the whole National Park System.¹⁷⁴

NPS's work with the Bureau of Public Roads on road construction proved to be good preparation for NPS's rapid move into coordinating roles with other agencies. As NPS expanded and acquired new specialized staff in the Washington Office, it coordinated with the Bureau of Biological Survey on predator control and the Bureau of Entomology and the Forest Service on forest pest control and fire suppression.¹⁷⁵ Glacier National Park, with other large parks, was provided with specialists from other agencies who virtually became part of the park administration. When the Roosevelt administration implemented the New Deal, federal money began to flow into the park from various public relief agencies such as the Public Works Administration (PWA), further expanding the reach of the park administration.

With the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933, NPS had a role in managing the conservation work of thousands of young enrollees based in national parks. Glacier National Park had eight CCC camps through the mid 1930s and four camps from 1937 to 1942. Besides performing conservation work, CCC enrollees constructed campgrounds and other infrastructure that furthered the park

¹⁷³ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1933, 1, and 1934, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 139-87.

¹⁷⁵ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1932, 16-17; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1934, 5.

administration's efforts to accommodate visitors. During World War II, the Civilian Public Service, an organization that gave conscientious objectors an alternative to military service, had about 150 men in Glacier, providing a diminutive follow-up to the CCC.¹⁷⁶

New Deal federal relief agencies poured money into the national parks and transformed NPS. In 1933, NPS had a budget of \$10.8 million. Over the next several years, the PWA plowed \$50 million into the national parks while the CCC brought in well over twice that amount – enough to employ 7,000 staff during the peak of the program. Park staffs acquired their own wildlife biologists, historians, landscape architects, and sanitation engineers – virtually all with salaries paid from Emergency Relief Act (ERA) funds being channeled through the CCC to the park administration. Whereas park staffs in the early years had consisted of only a superintendent, a tiny clerical staff and a small ranger force, now they included a variety of technicians, researchers, and supervisors, many acting as liaisons to other workforces. If Glacier Park Hotel Company had once appeared to be running Glacier National Park (at least in some people's minds), now there was no mistaking that the federal government was in charge.¹⁷⁷

The New Deal worked in other ways to transform the context of concessions management both in Glacier National Park and systemwide. The federal government took responsibility for national recreation planning and tapped NPS to lead the effort. At the same time, it provided infusions of money to states to develop state parks and recreation areas. NPS provided guidance to nascent state park systems as well as supervision of CCC crews employed in building campgrounds and cabin complexes in new state parks. NPS offices for planning and design began turning out master plans and architectural drawings for state park as well as national park areas. These developments broadened the NPS outlook beyond its traditional focus on the big western national parks. Also instrumental in this process was the dramatic expansion of the National Park System under the Reorganization Act of 1933. President Hoover signed this act into law on his last day in office and President Roosevelt used the authority to transfer numerous areas formerly administered by various federal agencies into a single system of federal parklands administered by NPS. Notably, the shuffle moved dozens of national cemeteries and battlefields from the War Department to the Department of the Interior. Joining the numerous national monuments in the National Park System that featured prehistoric archeological sites, the history sites made NPS almost equally committed to natural and cultural areas.

¹⁷⁶ Numbers of camps are found in the superintendent's annual reports.

¹⁷⁷ Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 132-42; Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 31-32; Michael J. Ober, "The CCC Experience in Glacier National Park," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 32-33.

Director Albright welcomed the NPS's expanded role to preserve and interpret American history. Likewise, Director Arno B. Cammerer welcomed the NPS's expanded role to administer other types of recreation sites that were still farther removed from national parks in concept and design. These included national recreation areas that were comprised of lands adjoining reservoir sites, public monuments and buildings around the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and a handful of national parkways. National parkways, which amounted to little more than long strips of wooded land on either side of beautifully designed park roads, further demonstrated NPS's affinity for the car culture.¹⁷⁸

All these developments in the 1930s added to NPS's bureaucratic power. With its expertise in land planning, its large corps of landscape engineers, its access to federal highway moneys, its ties to the CCC, and its newfound responsibilities for national recreation planning, the NPS acquired enormous stature with the tourism industry. Indeed, NPS saw fit to open its own U.S. Travel Bureau in New York City in 1937 whose aim was to promote domestic travel to the national parks as well as foreign travel to the United States.¹⁷⁹

NPS recognized car travel as the most common and ubiquitous mode of travel to the national parks. According to its own survey data, touring or sightseeing was the most popular outdoor activity of vacationing Americans in the 1930s. Other forms of outdoor recreation in descending order of popularity were fishing, picnicking, swimming, camping, hiking, boating, nature study, sports and games, and horseback riding. (Hunting did not figure in the survey since it was prohibited in most public parks.) In one national survey, people were asked how many miles they traveled by car from home: a) for summer vacation, b) for a weekend of outdoor recreation, and c) for a day trip. The answers varied from region to region, with people in the Mountain states traveling the greatest distances in all three categories. The ratio of cars to people varied from region to region as well, with people in the Mountain states possessing one car per four people, which was a smaller rate of car ownership than that found in the Northeast, the Midwest, or the Pacific Coast states, but greater than that in the South. NPS noted that a vacation with outdoor recreation depended on two things: funds for travel expenses and leisure time. The NPS study found that 42 percent of Americans lacked one or both and could only enjoy outdoor recreation locally.¹⁸⁰ However, in the depressed economy many middle class people were

¹⁷⁸ Ronald A. Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington: Resources for the Future, Inc., 1984), 43-45; Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington: National Park Service, 1991), 24-34.

¹⁷⁹ *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1937* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937), 36.

¹⁸⁰ National Park Service, *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941), 11.

employed less than full time, giving them ample time for travel, and they found ways to cut travel expenses and enjoy outdoor recreation on a limited budget. By 1935, the middle class was spending more money on gas, oil, and other car expenses than ever before. Expenditures for auto travel continued to go up even as the depression dragged down ticket sales on passenger trains. Indeed, as the depression eased in 1936, Americans spent more on auto touring than they did on all other kinds of other recreational spending – for movies, radios, sporting goods, and the like – according to a 1937 study in the *Harvard Business Review*.¹⁸¹

As auto touring increased from the 1920s to the 1930s, it also changed in character. While most car travelers in the 1920s carried camping equipment, the greater portion of them in the 1930s relied on cheap roadside accommodations, particularly the new *tourist cabin*. This simple dwelling unit could be very small, just big enough to contain a bed, table, and chair. The tourist cabin was generally part of a group of cabins with a shared bathhouse and toilets. Generally, the complex was called a *tourist cabin camp*. NPS preferred the term *auto camp* since it favored the term *visitor* over *tourist*. Likewise, it used the term *housekeeping cabin* instead of tourist cabin. Housekeeping in this context meant simply that the facility provided basic amenities for sleeping, preparing meals, and washing up. Historian Warren James Belasco explains the aesthetics and economics behind the car travelers' new preference for the tourist or housekeeping cabin in the 1930s:

The cabin seemed a happy compromise. There was still enough roughing it to reinvigorate family life. Beds and other domestic arrangements were cruder than home. Everyone lived in the same small space and huddled around a common old-fashioned stove. Since camps were generally located in the country, children could still play outdoors, and everyone could breathe healthy fresh air....

Cabin comfort was not necessarily more expensive. For a dollar a night – just fifty cents more than the tent fee – a family saved one hundred dollars or more by not buying a good tent and camp furniture. By bringing their own bedding, food, and utensils, they still saved a good deal over hotels. Some camps also offered inexpensive meals, thus sparing road-weary mothers the evening chores. Tourists still saved money by eating breakfast in the cabin and picnicking on the road at noon.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1979), 142-43.

¹⁸² Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 132-33.

Nationwide, auto camps drew some of their business from the hotels as travelers simply had less money to spend. The same held true in Glacier. Hotel managers noted sardonically that in stormy weather the flow of business from hotels to campgrounds was reversed: the impecunious campers flocked to the hotels and chalets to get a room, crowding the lobbies but not the dining rooms.¹⁸³ As Belasco has documented, the depression hurt the hotel industry and spurred growth of the auto camp. Eventually, in the 1940s, when prosperity returned and travelers came to desire more comforts, the auto camp was largely superseded by the motel. Thus, in the long run the motel filled the niche between campground and hotel, and the auto camp became a relic of the Depression era.¹⁸⁴

NPS observed these changes in the auto touring industry and sought new development in the national parks to stay abreast of them. NPS policy held that national park lodging should be minimal and basic, no more than was necessary to satisfy the public need. But as the public need evolved, NPS would expand, diversify, or upgrade national park lodging to meet changing demand. At the National Park Operators Conference in December 1929, NPS pushed for development of auto camps in various national parks including Glacier. A few weeks after the conference, NPS sent sketches and layouts for proposed auto camps at Many Glacier and Roes Creek to Glacier Park Hotel Company. The park administration was more eager to meet the changing demand than was the concessioner, who insisted on waiting one more year to determine the location of auto camps.¹⁸⁵

NPS and Glacier Park Hotel Company finally settled on the development of two auto camps, one adjacent to the Many Glacier Campground and the other next to the Roes Creek (Rising Sun) Campground. As indicated by the park's master plan, the housekeeping cabins were placed close to public campgrounds so that the two types of accommodations could share utilities and other facilities. The design intent of placing the cabins and campground in proximity was probably more obvious in the 1930s than it is today. Both the Many Glacier and Roes Creek developments included a camp store and a "lunch room" – facilities that served campers in the campground as well as cabin guests. NPS eventually included gasoline pumps as part of the concession operation at each location, too, at least at Many Glacier. The two development areas were conceived as full-service auto camps with campsites and

¹⁸³ Superintendent to The Director, May 2, 1930, Folder 1, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

¹⁸⁴ Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 142-73.

¹⁸⁵ A. J. Binder to Horace Albright, April 29, 1930, and J. R. Eakin, Superintendent to The Director, May 2, 1930, Folder 1, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

cabins viewed as two complementary types of accommodation that were co-located in a shared space.

The original close association of the campground and the concession area is worth stressing because subsequent use and development made them seem more like separate entities, making their original close association not so evident today as it was then. After World War II, the concessioner would upgrade the buildings to be in keeping with visitors' rising expectations. Motel units would be built. The so-called "lunch room" of the 1930s would evolve into a restaurant by the 1950s. Meanwhile, in the public campgrounds trailer camping soon emerged. The auto camp had a somewhat communal character in the 1930s that faded away as car travelers showed more desire for privacy and autonomy.¹⁸⁶

With the rise of trailer camping in the 1940s, NPS considered supplying electrical outlets for trailer campers and putting the installation and operation of the electrical system on the concession. NPS surveyed how various units in the National Park System were handling the rising public demand for trailer hookups and canvassed superintendents on what they thought. The main question was whether NPS could, as a general policy, provide that need without injury to park values. Glacier's Superintendent D. S. Libbey was dubious. He recommended against installing electrical facilities in the park's campgrounds, since trailer campers could find those facilities, if they so desired, in campgrounds outside the park at St. Mary or Belton (West Glacier).¹⁸⁷

Glacier National Park added several more campgrounds in the 1930s. The Many Glacier Campground was completed in 1936 with ninety-five sites for tent campers and thirteen sites for trailer campers. The Roes Creek Campground was opened that year with sixty tent sites and six trailer sites.¹⁸⁸ Altogether in 1939 there were thirteen campgrounds located at Many Glacier, Roes Creek, Avalanche Creek, Fish Creek, Two Medicine, Sprague Creek, Kintla Lake, Bowman Creek, Bowman Lake, Quartz Creek, Logging Creek, Cut Bank, and Walton. (Bowman Creek and Walton campgrounds were later closed; today's Apgar and St. Mary campgrounds were not

¹⁸⁶ Place names also tended to split the concession areas from the adjoining campgrounds. The concession development at Many Glacier was called Swiftcurrent Auto Camp while the campground was called Many Glacier Campground. The concession development at Roes Creek was originally called East Glacier Auto Camp, while the campground was named Roes Creek Campground. In 1950, the whole complex was renamed Rising Sun.

¹⁸⁷ Superintendent to Regional Director, March 11, 1944, File Unit 024, Subseries 01.09, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

¹⁸⁸ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1936, 14.

yet built.) The first six named had piped running water, and except for Fish Creek they had flush toilets. The other seven campgrounds were more primitive.¹⁸⁹

Campgrounds completed the overall mix of visitor accommodations available in Glacier National Park in this period. Visitor accommodations now covered a spectrum from “world class” hotels (James J. Hill’s term) to chalets to housekeeping cabins in auto camps to free public campsites. Although the campgrounds were not part of concessions management, they were an integral part of the Park Service’s overall design in making the national park accessible to public use. Campgrounds were largely built with CCC labor during the Great Depression.

Layout of campgrounds followed the principles developed by the eminent plant pathologist E. P. Meinecke, a consultant to NPS, who noted the effects of soil compaction on vegetation where the early style of campground permitted campers to pitch their camps wherever they pleased and trample the ground indiscriminately. Meinecke’s prescription for campground design included individual campsites carefully laid out so each camper occupied a designated campsite. All campsites had equivalent amounts of sunlight and shade, tent space, and privacy from neighboring sites. All were equipped with a vehicle parking stall, picnic table, and campfire grate in fixed position. The object was to limit trampling and contain soil compaction to a small portion of each campsite to protect forest health in the campground area.¹⁹⁰

In 1938, park staff in consultation with Meinecke conducted a survey of the park’s campgrounds to evaluate forest health conditions in each one. Forest conditions in the Many Glacier Campground were not good. Just two years after the campground was laid out, most trees in the western third of the area were dead, and many trees in the rest of the area were dead or dying. The cause of tree mortality appeared to be from a combination of exposure to wind and cold after the stand was partially opened by campground development, and injury from the Heavens Peak Fire that swept through the valley in 1936. Ranger John F. Aiton suggested that in places of severe climate conditions such as the Swiftcurrent Valley the park might have to adopt a system of campground rotation, allowing the Many Glacier Campground to rest for twenty years or more between short periods of use. Superintendent Scoyen rejected this idea, saying that the campground must be managed as a permanent installation and the vegetative cover must be stabilized.

¹⁸⁹ National Park Service, “Facilities Available in Parks and Monuments to Visitors Using House Trailers, 1939 Season,” File Unit 024, Subseries 01.09, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

¹⁹⁰ McClelland, *Building the National Parks*, 276-85.

Meinecke agreed, adding that to adopt a program of rotation would be a tacit admission of failure in making the vegetative cover permanent.¹⁹¹

The main significance of campground development to the story of concessions management in Glacier is that it shows how NPS catered to the car culture through its embrace of public use of the national parks. NPS favored making Glacier more accessible to the broad middle class, and in doing so it challenged the concessioner's traditional orientation to the railroad tourist who was generally more well-to-do than the auto tourist. Consequently, the park administration had to bring about a drastic change in visitor accommodations. In the 1930s, NPS went full bore into building campgrounds and planning auto camps. Planners in the 1930s worked on the assumption that some 250 to 350 more housekeeping cabins would be erected at the two auto camps (with potentially still more at a third auto camp at Apgar), but as the car culture continued to evolve after World War II construction of housekeeping cabins was checked while two more large campgrounds were built at Apgar and St. Mary. Today there are just over a thousand campsites in Glacier's thirteen campgrounds and just over a hundred cabins at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun. The two cabin complexes are preserved as quaint vestiges of the depression era while the park's thirteen campgrounds serve a much wider populace in an enduring tradition of national park use.¹⁹²

Development of the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp

The development of the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp turned into a crucial test of power between NPS and Glacier Park Hotel Company over which one would dominate development planning. NPS first indicated the need to develop auto camps in Glacier at the National Park Operators' Conference in December 1929. Glacier Park Hotel Company manager, A. J. Binder, informed Director Albright by letter dated April 29, 1930, that the company would not submit a five-year plan for development as requested at the conference, nor would it construct housekeeping cabins in the coming year as proposed by Superintendent Eakin. Director Albright found the company's intransigence out of line with NPS concession management and told Eakin in June 1930 that he saw a "showdown" coming. If NPS determined there

¹⁹¹ Senior Forester to Superintendent, August 13, 1937, Ranger (Forester) to Chief Ranger, March 26, 1938, Superintendent to The Director, April 19, 1938, and E. P. Meinecke to E. T. Scoyen, May 10, 1938, File Unit 024, Subseries 01.09, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

¹⁹² Plans for expansion of cabins in the 1930s depicted an additional seven cabin circles (or 70 cabins) at Swiftcurrent and about 180 additional cabins at Rising Sun. Another plan for the Many Glacier area showed sixteen cabin circles (160 cabins) at Swiftcurrent. In 2020, websites listed the number of campsites in Glacier as follows: 194 at Apgar, 178 at Fish Creek, 25 at Sprague Creek, 87 at Avalanche Creek, 7 at Logging Creek, 13 at Kintla Creek, 46 at Bowman Lake, 7 at Quartz Creek, 84 at Rising Sun, 100 at Two Medicine, 148 at St. Mary, 14 at Cut Bank, and 103 at Many Glacier.

was a need for housekeeping cabins in Glacier and Glacier Park Hotel Company refused to build them, then NPS would have to find another concessioner who would.¹⁹³

Michael J. Ober, in his master's thesis on NPS-concessioner relations in Glacier National Park, pinpoints this message from Albright to Eakin as the moment when NPS started "to eclipse the position of leadership that the Great Northern had held in Glacier for twenty years." Both sides avoided a showdown, however. The next year, in June 1931, Albright sent his chief landscape architect, Thomas C. Vint, to Glacier to meet with company and park managers and discuss the proposed development in more detail. By then NPS had surveyed an area about a mile from Many Glacier Hotel where it intended to lay out a campground with the expectation that the auto camp would occupy part of the area. The company built something token on the site – enough to satisfy NPS that it had made a start at building the auto camp – and there the matter rested as the company endured two more years of business losses.¹⁹⁴

In October 1932, an opinion piece appeared in the *Kalispell Times* that assailed Glacier Park Hotel Company and the park administration for failing to provide tourist cabins and catering only to the well-to-do:

Large, fine hotels are too classy as well as too large for the average American traveler seeking only outing recreation. In Glacier Park particularly, there should be erected at once, at every camp, good, substantial, permanent buildings of one, two, three, and four rooms for just the "forgotten man" which he may occupy with his family or party.... There should also be constructed at each camp a building for a restaurant or cafeteria where meals at a reasonable price may be obtained. Do this and let the Great Northern have its wild animals, its conventional meals and its millionaires.¹⁹⁵

Such criticisms hit the mark. The plea for the "forgotten man" resonated. Superintendent Scoyen wrote in his annual report for 1932: "There is urgent need in this park for facilities designed to accommodate this class of visitors and the main problem of the development in the park in the next few years will be to provide adequate camp ground facilities and housekeeping units to take care of these people."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 100-01.

¹⁹⁴ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1931, 4; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1932, 20; Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 101.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 106-07.

¹⁹⁶ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1932, 20.

In the summer of 1932, a young wife and husband by the names of Margaret and Hugh Black opened an auto camp at St. Mary just outside the park. Before starting their business venture, Margaret Black worked for Glacier Park Hotel Company and Hugh Black worked as a seasonal park ranger. Their new establishment consisted of six cabins, a café, a general store, and a gas station. The hotel company did not think the Blacks' business venture stood a chance in the depressed economy, but it thrived. Superintendent Scoyen remarked that the cabin camps located on the edge of the park "did a 'land office' business." He worried that small businesses like the Blacks' would take hold and create just the kind of competitive business climate that NPS concession policy aimed to avoid. NPS might be unable to maintain a regulated monopoly in the park; the concession might fail.¹⁹⁷

While in the state's capital city Helena in March 1933, Superintendent Scoyen discussed Glacier's visitor accommodations with the chair of the Montana Highway Commission, O. S. Warden. Warden was publisher of the *Great Falls Tribune* and a prominent Montana Democrat who took an interest in economic development throughout the state. A highway commissioner since 1924, he was well informed about the auto touring industry. Warden thought NPS should insist that Glacier Park Hotel Company build housekeeping cabins before the coming travel season, and if it refused then NPS should give the right to another concessioner.¹⁹⁸

Scoyen finally insisted that Glacier Park Hotel Company move ahead with the auto camp, informing Binder that he wanted "to see not less than twenty cabins ready at Many Glacier by the opening of the Park season." The company obliged, constructing a total of twenty-seven cabins in three circles. The Swiftcurrent Auto Camp opened for its first season in 1933. The cabins soon filled with guests even though no store or cafeteria was provided, with guests having to go to Many Glacier Hotel or Babb if they wanted to be served a meal. The auto camp slowly took shape through the rest of the decade with the addition of more cabin circles, a store (built in 1935), and a coffee shop, lobby, and registration desk (in an addition to the store built in 1940).¹⁹⁹

The layout of the camp and design of buildings was a joint process between Glacier Park Hotel Company and the NPS Branch of Plans and Design. NPS pushed

¹⁹⁷ Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 66; Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 99, 105. The Blacks' resort lasted. In 1952 they built the first lodge at St. Mary. Hugh Black died in 1983. Margaret Black continued the business for a time and lived to the age of 105. Ray Djuff and Chris Morrison, editors, *Glacier from the Inside Out: Best stories from The Inside Trail* (Minneapolis: The Glacier Park Foundation, 2012), 173-75.

¹⁹⁸ Superintendent to The Director, March 15, 1933, Folder 2, File Unit 05, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

¹⁹⁹ Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," 105; "Café and Store #832," no date, File Unit 024, Subseries 02.05, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

the idea of cabin circles with the thought that the arrangement called to mind a Plains Indian village or the “tepee villages” that Glacier Park Hotel Company once had in the park’s early days. Along with the layout plan for each cabin circle NPS provided a prototype sketch of an eight-sided “tepee type cabin.” (The sketch appeared on a sheet labeled “Development Plan Roes Creek Campground,” but the April 1930 date of this plan indicates that it was under consideration at the time of the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp development.) The floor plan for the tepee type cabin showed the interior space divided into a living room in the front half and two equal-size bedrooms in the back half and a wood stove in the center. The steeply pitched roof with stove pipe coming out the middle vaguely resembled the conical lines of a tepee. The cabin circle complex was tentatively called a “council unit,” and the plan even included a fireplace for a “council fire” at the center of the cabin circle. Stranger still, the plan included parking stalls radiating out from the council fire with an annotation that the arrangement might foster evening “summits” among guests.²⁰⁰

Glacier Park Hotel Company accepted the idea of cabin circles but in place of the octagonal-shaped cabins it offered plans for three types of cabins prepared by Great Northern’s architect, Thomas McMahon. The three types were a single cabin with bathroom, a duplex cabin with two bathrooms, and a three-room cabin with shared living room in the middle, bedroom on either side, and no bathroom. The plans called for rustic siding with wood shingles covering the eaves. The plans were based on housekeeping cabins newly installed at Mount Rainier National Park. NPS approved them and they were transmitted to the construction contractor, Superior Building Company of Columbia Falls, Montana. The first twenty-seven cabins were built at a cost of \$12,297.21.²⁰¹

As built, the cabins presented a basic yet pleasing design and appearance: economical, unpretentious, and tidy. In 1935, the NPS Branch of Planning produced a book, *Park Structures and Facilities*, that provided a digest of plans, photos, and commentary on the “rustic” architecture that was then finding expression in the national parks. The book covered a wide array of structures from foot trails and guardrails to comfort stations and picnic shelters. At the end of the book the authors discussed the tourist cabin as a type of park structure. The authors noted that the cabin was an echo of America’s pioneer past but in the park setting it had to be part of a colony or group of cabins, unlike the solitary cabin of the old frontier. It was not practical to build cabins in seclusion because it would spread the impact over a wide area. Placed close together, the tourist cabin should evoke a sense of community

²⁰⁰ National Park Service, Landscape Division, “Development Plan Roes Creek Campground, Glacier National Park,” April 1930, copy attached to Ann Hubber, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination, Rising Sun Auto Camp Historic District,” 1995.

²⁰¹ Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 95.

rather than solitude. Furthermore, tourist cabins had to be made with cheap materials to keep costs down, since overnight rental rates must be appropriate to the income level of the occupants.²⁰²

NPS provided a layout plan to the company that indicated where the cabin circles would be built. Each cabin circle was indicated by a plain circle on a plat map. The company arranged the cabins in the first three circles around the *inside* of each circle circumference, only to discover afterwards that NPS had desired the cabins to be arranged around the *outside* of the circle circumference. As the width of each cabin was ten feet, Circles “A” and “B” measured about 80 feet across the interior of the cabin circle and 100 feet across the exterior. Circle “C” was slightly bigger because the company construed the circle on the plat map as being slightly bigger, 108 feet instead of 100 feet.²⁰³

When the company prepared to add two more cabin circles in 1934, it asked NPS whether it should enlarge those cabin circles in line with NPS’s original intent or make them consistent with the first three cabin circles. It proposed to have them match the slightly bigger Circle “C.” NPS insisted that they be enlarged so that the interior space in each circle was 100 feet across. The company followed NPS direction. As a result, Circles “D,” “E,” and “I” were made larger than Circles “A,” “B,” and “C” and remain so today.²⁰⁴

The company built a general store in 1935. The architectural plan for this structure was prepared by Great Northern’s architect Thomas McMahon and approved by NPS. The rustic design featured exposed log post and beam walls with vertical siding between posts, a shallow-pitch gable roof, a chimney made of stone, and a covered front porch with wood railing and decorative cross bracing beneath the eaves.

Just three years after it opened the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp was mostly destroyed in the Heavens Peak Fire. The lightning-caused fire started on August 18, 1936 on a spur of Heavens Peak. It smoldered for several days and then spread to the Garden Wall on the west side of Swiftcurrent Pass. For several more days it smoldered on the steep slopes above the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Then, on August 31, around mid-morning, strong winds brought it out of the crevices in the cliff and drove it over the ridge and down the Swiftcurrent Valley in a matter of hours. Superintendent Scoyen

²⁰² National Park Service, Branch of Planning, *Park Structures and Facilities* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935), 215-17.

²⁰³ A. A. Aszmann to E. T. Scoyen, March 15, 1934, Folder 2, File Unit 05, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. See also Branch of Plans and Design, “Tourist Cabin Area, Many Glacier, Part of the Master Plan for Glacier National Park,” map copy attached to Hubber, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination, Swiftcurrent Auto Camp Historic District.”

said the wind in the Swiftcurrent Valley later that morning was of hurricane strength, causing the blaze to race down the valley to Boulder Ridge, east of Many Glacier Hotel, in just two hours. Besides ravaging the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, the Heavens Peak Fire scorched much of the new Many Glacier Campground, destroyed nearly all the government buildings there, and took out some of the chalets across the road from Many Glacier Hotel. Many Glacier Hotel and the other concession buildings belonging to the Swanson Boat Company, the Glacier Park Transport Company, and the Park Saddle Horse Company were saved from the conflagration due mainly to protective action taken by the employees.²⁰⁵

The Heavens Peak Fire was much smaller than the devastating Halfmoon Fire of 1929. The Heavens Peak Fire burned an area of about 9,000 acres while the Halfmoon Fire burned about 47,000 acres in the park and about 100,000 acres altogether. But the Heavens Peak Fire was dramatic in the swath of destruction it made through the popular Many Glacier area. Scoyen wrote to the director: “I have never seen as complete a burn-out as occurred in Swiftcurrent Valley.”²⁰⁶ Scoyen wired the director on September 2: “The Swiftcurrent Valley was absolutely denuded of all trees and practically all other vegetation however two thirds of the timber at public auto camp escaped damage.” Within the Swiftcurrent development area the timber that did not burn in the 1936 fire still survives nearly a century later as a mature stand of fir trees, while the area that did burn in 1936 is now populated by smaller aspen trees.

Most of the housekeeping cabins in the auto camp were destroyed or so badly damaged they had to be replaced. The general store escaped destruction. Based on a “Master Plan” dated 1937, it is thought that thirty-two cabins were lost and twenty-two were spared. All the cabins in Circle “B” were destroyed as were all but five cabins in Circles “C,” “D,” and “E.” All the cabins in Circle “A” survived as did all but one cabin in Circle “I.” The camp’s shower facility also survived. The cabins that were lost were rebuilt in the same style and same exact locations as before.²⁰⁷

In the fall of 1940, the company built an addition to the general store that turned it into a store and lunch room.²⁰⁸ The addition more than doubled the size of the

²⁰⁵ Superintendent to The Director, September 10, 1936, and E. T. Scoyen to Herbert J. Winegrad, March 14, 1938, Folder 13, File Unit 033, Series 01.09, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁰⁶ Superintendent to The Director, September 10, 1936, Folder 13, File Unit 033, Series 01.09, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁰⁷ Hubber, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination, Swiftcurrent Auto Camp Historic District.”

²⁰⁸ Chief of Planning to The Director, February 27, 1940, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1941, 2.

building while preserving its rustic style of architecture. Great Northern's Thomas McMahon, the architect for the original building, prepared the architectural drawings for the addition as well. With the addition of a dining room and kitchen, the building now featured two more stone chimneys and a longer front porch. This addition should not be confused with a later expansion and remodel in the 1950s that once again doubled the size of the building and covered up most of its rustic features with horizontal wood siding, giving the building its present look. No photograph of the building in the 1940s has been found but judging by the architectural drawings it must have been an attractive rustic-style building.

Development of the Roes Creek (Rising Sun) Auto Camp

With the opening of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway, many visitors now enjoyed driving the road from one side of the park to the other or even driving the road out and back in one day. The park administration heard complaints from some of them that no meal service was offered over this considerable driving distance apart from the formal dining service found at Lake McDonald Hotel and the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. Auto tourists were put off by those establishments' fancy crystal-and-china table settings and high-priced fare. They wanted a simple roadside café or coffee shop along the park road. Over the past decade the roadside café had found a strong footing in the new American landscape taking shape around the car culture, and auto tourists missed its presence on the Going-to-the-Sun Highway. Superintendent D. S. Libbey wanted to meet this demand. "I am quite anxious that we do obtain reasonably-priced cabin accommodations with cafeteria and general store services adjacent thereto for both the west and east sides of the park on the Going-to-the-Sun Highway," he wrote to the regional director. Superintendent Libbey discussed the need with A. A. Aszmann, general manager of Glacier Park Hotel Company. On the east side, they focused their attention on the Roes Creek Campground area.²⁰⁹

As with the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp development, NPS pushed for it and brought the company along reluctantly. Company officials noted that the auto camp would be located just three miles from the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets and would take away its business, probably necessitating the chalets' closure. The auto camp would possibly have the same effect on the St. Mary Chalets. NPS did not disagree but pressed for the auto camp anyway.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director, November 7, 1939, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²¹⁰ Regional Director to the Director, November 7, 1939, and Superintendent to the Director, November 28, 1939, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

NPS and Glacier Park Hotel Company tentatively agreed on the Roes Creek Auto Camp development at the National Park Service Conference held in Santa Fe in October 1939. Discussions continued over the winter of 1939-40, with the company formulating a plan and schedule. Top NPS officials met with Aaszmann and Great Northern's architect, Thomas McMahon, on February 19, 1940 to approve the development program. At the meeting, NPS selected cabin types and approved a general layout of the development. It was agreed that NPS would prescribe the locations for all structures, and that the park's resident landscape architect would be available for consultation if, during construction, the concessioner saw need to depart from the master plan in any way. Construction went forward in the spring of 1940, and the new development – a store/café and nineteen housekeeping cabins – was in operation by summer.²¹¹

The Roes Creek Auto Camp was built beside the existing Roes Creek Campground. The development area was located on a gradual slope above Going-to-the-Sun Road and the mouth of Roes Creek (now spelled Rose Creek). The campground and the auto camp each had its own entrance road from the Going-to-the-Sun Road, with a parking area or “plaza” for each one. The creek draw separated the two areas while a vehicular bridge spanned the creek and linked the two plazas. As with the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp development, this one tied in with water and sewer lines already installed for the campground.

The cabins at the Roes Creek Auto Camp differed from those at the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp. The company submitted nine different plans, NPS selected three types, and of those the company settled on two. Both types were double units, one with private toilet and shower for each unit and the other with private toilet only for each unit. One type measured fifteen feet by twenty-four feet and the other was fourteen feet by thirty feet, both dimensions being somewhat larger than the cabins at Many Glacier.²¹²

All nineteen cabins were rectangular wood-frame structures with side-gable roof lines. Walls were plywood sided with exposed exterior wood framing or “studs-out” design. Roofs were covered with asphalt shingles. Each building rested on concrete-pier foundations, most with concrete stoops in front of each doorway. The cabins were placed in an irregular pattern going up the slope, rather than in cabin circles.²¹³

²¹¹ Superintendent to Regional Director, December 16, 1939, and Chief of Planning to the Director, February 27, 1940, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1941, 2.

²¹² “Duplex Guest Cabins #813 through #831,” File Unit 024, Subseries 02.05, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²¹³ Ibid.

The store/café was located below the cabin area on the plaza just off the Going-to-the-Sun Road. It contained a general store on one end, a coffee shop on the other end, and a large lobby area with fireplace and soda fountain in the middle. The store/café anchored the whole complex and was intended to provide a range of services for all auto tourists: guests who were staying in the auto camp cabins, campers who were using the nearby public campground, and passersby on the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Some thought was given to installing a gasoline pump just outside the store if it could be put in a spot that was convenient yet inconspicuous. That proved difficult, however, so the gas station idea was nixed for the time being.²¹⁴

The auto camp development included one other significant structure, a combination camp registration office, public shower, and employee dormitory. This two-story building was located midway between the store/café and the cabins. The building featured a porte-cochere, a roof projecting from the front of the building over a driveway. This feature was already becoming a common architectural feature of the modern motel. NPS requested that the porte-cochere be reduced in size from a two-lane to a one-lane width.²¹⁵ (Later, when the registration office was moved to a new building, the porte-cochere would be removed altogether.)

Neither the concessioner nor NPS was satisfied with the name, Roes Creek Auto Camp. Since this development was part of a larger vision of providing auto tourist services on both sides of the Going-to-the-Sun Road, it was decided to call the place “East Glacier” and to designate the planned auto camp development at the foot of Lake McDonald “West Glacier.” This change went into effect at the end of 1940. These place names never took hold, in part because the village at the foot of Lake McDonald was already known locally as Apgar. In 1950, NPS officially changed the name of the Roes Creek/East Glacier Auto Camp to Rising Sun. Around the same time, the names East Glacier and West Glacier were adopted elsewhere. The name East Glacier was substituted for Midvale and the name West Glacier was substituted for Belton. It was emblematic of the changing times that East Glacier and West

²¹⁴ Chief of Planning to The Director, February 27, 1940, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; “Duplex Guest Cabins #813 through #831,” File Unit 024, Subseries 02.05, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²¹⁵ Chief of Planning to The Director, February 27, 1940, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; “Duplex Guest Cabins #813 through #831,” File Unit 024, Subseries 02.05, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

Glacier, place names born of the car culture, replaced Midvale and Belton, place names previously imposed on the map by the railroad.²¹⁶

Only a year after the new facility at Roes Creek opened on June 15, 1940, NPS proposed a large expansion. NPS wanted the company to install eighty additional units there and forty additional units at Many Glacier. Indeed, plans prepared by the NPS Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design reveal that NPS had a larger development at Roes Creek in view from the start. The park's growing popularity in 1940 and 1941 appeared to justify the additional investment and the construction might have gone forward had it not been for the nation's entry into World War II at the end of 1941. The war brought a sharp curtailment of public use of national parks, and when the war was over housekeeping cabins quickly became obsolete. Consequently, expansion was postponed until the 1950s, when it took the form of modern motel units instead of more cabins.²¹⁷

West Side Developments

As discussed at the end of the last chapter, Glacier Park Hotel Company purchased the Lewis Hotel in March 1930 under an arrangement with NPS that pledged the government to reimburse the company for half the value of the property. To facilitate what was tantamount to a federal subsidy of the purchase, Glacier Park Hotel Company would donate the property to the United States in exchange for a twenty-year lease of the premises. This arrangement was duly executed in May 1932. When the deal was completed it introduced a new form of concession management into the park: government *ownership* of the buildings coupled with private *operation* of the same.

On May 26, 1932, NPS and Glacier Park Hotel Company executed a contract, No. I-1p-1101, covering all the concession's operations in the park. It provided for a twenty-year lease of Lake McDonald Hotel together with twenty-year extensions on the twenty-year land leases that were negotiated in 1915. The company still owned Many Glacier Hotel and the chalets, and it would acquire a vested capital interest in the auto camp buildings erected at Many Glacier and Roes Creek. So, apart from

²¹⁶ D. S. Libbey to A. A. Aszmann, November 14, 1940, and December 2, 1940, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; "Duplex Guest Cabins #813 through #831," File Unit 024, Subseries 02.05, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²¹⁷ Mark Hufstetler, Kathryn L. McKay, and Janet Cornish, "Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier National Park, Montana: Cultural Landscape Report," report prepared for the National Park Service, June 2002, Vol. 1, p. 274.

Lake McDonald Hotel, the rest of the concession continued under the old form of private ownership and operation.²¹⁸

The Lake McDonald Hotel property included some forty-six separate structures in addition to the hotel. They included a score of cottages and bungalows (some used as guest cabins, others as employee dormitories or service buildings), as well as barns, sheds, workshops, boat houses, garages, a sawmill, a smoke house, an ice house, a barber shop, and a general store. Many of these buildings required repairs, remodeling, or outright removal. The hotel kitchen needed a total overhaul. The company proceeded to make many changes to numerous structures with the park administration allowing the company a free hand with the government-owned buildings. In one or two cases, old cabins were practically razed and rebuilt from the ground up. When costs began to mount, the company manager and NPS belatedly got together to discuss which of these items should be charged to maintenance and repair, and which items should qualify as new assets belonging to the company. Once these issues were resolved and account books were cleaned up, the NPS Park Operators Division was prepared to track all such items going forward. As one official in Washington noted, NPS had recently initiated a similar arrangement of government ownership and private operation in Yosemite National Park (for the Wawona property) and it was “working out very nicely.” So, there was an expectation that the arrangement in Glacier, while initially involving some give-and-take, would ultimately run smoothly as well.²¹⁹

The arrangement soon faced another test as several old buildings stood in the way of laying a short loop road off the Going-to-the-Sun Highway through the area. The company thought the cost of demolition of buildings should be charged to the road construction project, or at least borne by the government since they were government-owned buildings. NPS thought the buildings were so dilapidated that their removal was just a part of cleaning up the site, which was the company’s responsibility. Fortunately, NPS’s control of the CCC camps in Glacier provided a way out of this impasse. A CCC crew was assigned to landscaping the area, and it removed the structures. It also removed many stumps, dead trees, and other debris from around the hotel.²²⁰

²¹⁸ “Statement handed to Director, National Park Service, by President, Great Northern Railway, in Meeting in Director’s Office,” April 10, 1950, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²¹⁹ A. A. Aszmann to E. T. Scoyen, August 21, 1934, and October 16, 1934, Superintendent to the Director, December 13, 1935, and Chief, Park Operators Division, Memorandum, January 2, 1936, Folder 2, File Unit 05, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²²⁰ Superintendent to the Director, March 10, 1936, Acting Director to the Superintendent, May 23, 1936, and E. T. Scoyen to A. A. Aszmann, December 2, 1937, Folder 2, File Unit 05, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

Despite its many dilapidated outbuildings, Lake McDonald Hotel remained a popular resort in the 1930s and performed better financially than most other locations in Glacier Park Hotel Company's parkwide operations. An official guide book for the park stated that the facility had a general store, gas station, curio shop, and all modern conveniences. The dining room, with its view of the lake, was "one of the most appropriate and charming in the park." The lobby was "filled with well-mounted animals and birds of the region." The location was a hub for hiking trails and fishing opportunities.²²¹

By November 1939, NPS was keen to develop an auto camp on the west side of the park to complement the popular auto camp at Many Glacier along with the second one soon to be built at Roes Creek. There was not room for such a development at the Lake McDonald Hotel location, so it focused on the area at the foot of the lake. On January 4, 1940, the company committed to building the Roes Creek Auto Camp first (in the spring of 1940) and the west-side auto camp at the foot of Lake McDonald one year later (spring of 1941).²²²

The hotel company followed through with the first part of its commitment but not the latter. The hotel company's parent company, Great Northern Railway Company, did not submit architectural plans to NPS in the winter of 1940-41 as promised, signaling that the railroad company wanted more time to assess its position on Glacier investments. Among the railroad's concerns was the mounting cost of rehabilitating Lake McDonald Hotel. Glacier Park Hotel Company had a list of projects which included spending \$28,000 on new guest cottages, \$15,000 on a remodel of the women's dormitory, \$21,500 on a remodel of the hotel kitchen, and \$65,000 on a new power house, as well as sundry others. Both NPS and Great Northern now contemplated abandoning Lake McDonald Hotel in favor of consolidating all west-side visitor accommodations at one location at the foot of the lake.²²³

With the west-side development plans up in the air, U.S. entry into World War II in December 1941 soon made it clear that development of any kind would be held up by the national emergency. However, one more meeting took place between senior NPS officials and representatives of Great Northern before the plans were shelved

²²¹ "Statement handed to Director, National Park Service, by President, Great Northern Railway, in Meeting in Director's Office," April 10, 1950, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; National Park Service, *Glacier National Park, Montana* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1936), 15.

²²² Superintendent to Regional Director, November 7, 1939, and Regional Director to the Director, November 7, 1939, Folder 2, File Unit 05, and Newton B. Drury to A. A. Aszmann, February 5, 1941, Folder 3, File Unit 01, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²²³ Superintendent to the Director, August 1, 1941, Folder 3, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

for the duration of the war. The meeting was held in St. Paul on February 3, 1942. Superintendent Libbey did not attend. When Libbey learned that a decision was made to abandon Lake McDonald Hotel, he raised strong objections. Director Drury overruled him. Thus, the fact that World War II placed a hold on the west-side development probably had the indirect consequence of saving Lake McDonald Hotel from demolition in 1942. After the war, the plan to tear down the old hotel was quietly set aside. Libbey's memorandum to Drury in February 1942, and Drury's reply to Libbey on March 12, 1942, entailed a very fulsome discussion of their reasons for and against maintaining Lake McDonald Hotel. Their exchange contained three salient points.

First, they referred to Glacier's visitor accommodations' lingering class lines with its mix of grand hotels, chalets, auto camps, and campgrounds. Libbey contended that Glacier's existing range of accommodations largely separated Glacier's "two types of travel," and it was better to maintain that pattern across the park. Drury disagreed, saying that the preferred pattern was not to separate the two types of travel anymore but to plan new developments on the principle that any park visitor would "be able to secure at one registration office any one of a wide range of accommodations which meet his particular fancy and pocketbook." Drury cited the examples of Yellowstone's developments at Mammoth Hot Springs and Lake as well as the new development planned at Canyon.

Second, they considered the hotel in relation to visitor circulation and further park road development. Boosters wanted NPS to develop a long "loop road" up the North Fork and into the west side of Waterton Lakes National Park and thus far NPS had resisted that outside pressure. Libbey cautioned that moving the hotel operation to the foot of Lake McDonald would strengthen boosters' efforts. Drury insisted that the hotel location and the North Fork road proposal were separate matters; NPS should not compromise on one based on the other.

Third, Libbey believed the private inholdings at the foot of the lake would interfere with a new hotel development there. Drury took the view that by moving the hotel operation to the foot of the lake NPS would be able to enlist the help of Glacier Park Hotel Company in purchasing those inholdings.²²⁴

The discussion illustrates how the development at Lake McDonald was viewed within the context of a master plan, and how various considerations about public access throughout Glacier National Park were weighed at that time. Ultimately, further development in the Lake McDonald area would be postponed until 1950. The

²²⁴ Superintendent to the Director, February 24, 1942, and Director to the Superintendent, March 12, 1942, Folder 3, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

old hotel was spared from demolition for long enough that it would eventually find protection as a historic property.

Wartime Concession Operations

Wartime conditions presented a new challenge for NPS-concession relations in Glacier National Park as they did in all the national parks. The most important factor for concession management was the high-level decision to keep national parks open to visitors, not to gate and shutter them but to allow continued public access during the national emergency. The federal government intended to stand by the nation's commitment to the national park idea and hold parklands inviolate from resource exploitation while continuing to manage the parks for public use and enjoyment. As Drury explained the government's wartime policy, "In war, no less than in peace, the national park areas serve as havens of refuge for those fortunate enough to be able to visit them." The parks, Drury said, offered "relief from a warring world" and were viewed "as a factor in the physical and mental rehabilitation that will be increasingly desirable as the war progresses." Some parks found a new use in receiving troops who were brought to the parks for a morale-boosting stint of rest and recuperation. By the second summer of the war, the National Park System had hosted approximately two million members of the armed forces.²²⁵

The second crucial factor affecting concession management was that the number of visitors coming to Glacier plummeted. The plunge in visitor numbers did not result from any official action to discourage visits. Rather, it resulted from the practical difficulty of traveling to Glacier after gas rationing and other transportation restrictions were put in place. During the summers of 1942, 1943, 1944, and most of the summer of 1945, Glacier's visitation plunged to just a trickle compared to what it had been before the war. Travel restrictions generally limited public use of the park to residents of nearby communities, civilians traveling on official business, and enlisted personnel or war workers traveling between stations. Still, the public came, and they continued to drive park roads and hike backcountry trails.²²⁶

So, the park administration continued to provide visitor services even as it reduced operations overall. Rangers maintained use of most public campgrounds in the park while the CCC organization wound down and CCC camps were liquidated. A reduced park staff still saw to its customary tasks of visitor protection and

²²⁵ Newton B. Drury, "The National Parks in Wartime," *American Forests* 49, no. 8 (August 1943), 375. The U.S. Army Air Force wanted to lease Glacier's chalets for rest and recuperation of air crews, but the plan never materialized. (Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 52.

²²⁶ Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park*, 127; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1942, 1.

interpretation. In 1943, two women joined the force of seasonal rangers – a first for Glacier – and were posted at the west entrance station and the St. Mary entrance station. Members of the park staff, like the general public, adjusted to gas and food rationing.²²⁷

The concessions bore the brunt of the impact of wartime travel restrictions on the park. Rail arrivals at Glacier ceased during the war years as Great Northern Railway was reoriented to military use. Great Northern's *Empire Builder* Numbers 1 and 2 suspended making stops at the Midvale and Belton stations. Both the bus transportation company and the boat company ceased operations when rail arrivals stopped coming. Trail rides were also suspended. Glacier Park Hotel Company operated most of its facilities on "skeleton crews" in 1942, and provided services at just one facility, East Glacier (Rising Sun), in 1943 and 1944. All other company facilities stayed in their winterized condition from the end of the summer season in 1942 through the rest of the war.²²⁸

The park administration, sensitive to the concessions' business perspective, cooperated with the concessions in reducing visitor services to a bare minimum consistent with maintaining public safety. Since the park remained open to car travel, hiking, and camping, everyone was concerned for car travelers running out of gas or finding themselves desperate for a meal or a room when so many facilities were boarded up. The minimal visitor services were strategically located at Rising Sun part way along the Going-to-the-Sun Road. On the west side of Logan Pass, auto travelers and hikers could obtain emergency assistance from the caretaker at Lake McDonald Hotel. The rangers at the east and west entrance stations, meanwhile, cautioned auto travelers who were entering the park about the limited services and referred them to business establishments located outside the park at Belton and St. Mary if they needed those services.²²⁹

The long-term consequences of these adverse wartime conditions were profound. Glacier Park Hotel Company suffered financial losses that compounded the losses it had already experienced through the depression. The financial losses owed not just to lack of business but even more to depreciation of assets. The buildings aged quickly during the war years. The hotels and especially the chalets took a fearful beating from the elements and were in terrible shape when the war ended. High winds and heavy snows caused damage to roofs, porches, railings, and exposed stairways.

²²⁷ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1942, 2-3, 1943, 3-4, 1945, 2.

²²⁸ A. A. Aszmann to D. S. Libbey, January 13, 1942, Folder 3, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1943, 1-3, 1944, 2.

²²⁹ A. A. Aszmann to D. S. Libbey, April 22, 1943, Folder 3, File Unit 015, Subseries 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

Extreme temperature variations cracked interior plaster walls, buckled floors, and put doors and windows out of kilter. The aging structures had already suffered three decades of punishing mountain weather since their construction in the years around 1914. Some, like the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets and the St. Mary Chalets, appeared to have little future after the war. The company had little incentive to invest in their upkeep. Consequently, the company did not place caretakers at any of the chalets when they were closed from 1943 through 1945. Routine maintenance was neglected. When the chalets were boarded up for the duration of the war, most of them were put on a road to ruin.

Chapter 4

The Postwar Decade and Mission 66, 1945-1960

With the return of peace in August 1945 travel restrictions across the nation were lifted. National parks saw an instant upsurge of public use. “There was a decided increase in travel during August when gasoline rationing was abandoned,” wrote the new superintendent of Glacier National Park, J. W. Emmert. Full demobilization took many months, but by the following summer millions of Americans were eager to take vacations and go on the road. The park counted 201,145 visitors in 1946, a new record. It saw a big jump to 324,396 visitors in 1947, and another big jump to 478,839 visitors in 1949. The phenomenal rate of growth in the immediate postwar years turned into steady year-to-year increases through the 1950s. In 1960, the park’s annual visitation stood at 724,538.²³⁰

Along with the increase in numbers came a significant change in the visitor population. There were many more families in the mix. In her book *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations*, historian Susan Sessions Rugh finds that the family vacation became a staple of American middle-class culture as soon as World War II ended. Most often it took the form of a two-week road trip in summer when school was out. The family vacation was made possible for the broad middle class by the spread of the two-week paid vacation, which became a standard employee benefit in labor agreements in the 1940s. The family road trip was facilitated by the spread of car ownership. Among families, car ownership rose from 54 percent in 1948 to 77 percent in 1960 to 82 percent in 1970. The station wagon became the quintessential family car in the 1950s and 60s. The family road trip was also popularized by improvements in the nation’s highway system, which included not just better surfacing but an overhaul of route numbering, signage, and other navigational aids such as free state highway maps. Starting in the mid 1950s, the system of interstate four-lane freeways made interstate travel faster, safer, and easier. Car manufacturers, oil corporations, and the growing travel industry all contributed

²³⁰ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1945, 2; Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park*, 127.

to the popularization of the family road trip through their ubiquitous advertising. For all these reasons the American populace took to the road with unprecedented zeal. Rugh refers to a “golden age” of family vacations not to evoke some “rosy-hued portrait of the past,” she says, but to acknowledge that the family vacation experienced a heyday from 1946 to around 1970. In the 1970s, the popularity of the family road trip began to wane. Competing forms of leisure as well as changes in the structure of the family led to a gradual diminishment of the family road trip as a feature of American life.²³¹

Many family vacations in this era centered on visits to national parks. National parks beckoned family vacationers because the parks were wholesome, invigorating, kid-friendly places to explore on a family budget. National parks were heavily advertised by the American Automobile Association, the Rand McNally Corporation, and other leading promoters of the car culture.

In 1951, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads cooperated with the Montana State Highway Commission in conducting a survey of Glacier National Park visitors. The study found that 98 percent of visitors traveled to the park by private automobile. Less than 2 percent came by rail, and even fewer came as part of organized bus tours. The survey did not collect information on the proportion of visitors who were families, but Glacier National Park entry permit data showed an average of 3.6 persons per automobile, which is suggestive. Nearly a third of visitors interviewed said that visiting Glacier was the principal purpose of their trip. More than half stated the visit was part of a larger “general vacation.” About 23 percent of visitors were residents of Montana and about 16 percent came from Canada. The states of California and Washington each accounted for another 10 percent of visitors, and Oregon, Minnesota, and Illinois each accounted for around 4 percent of visitors.²³²

Glacier’s visitor use pattern was closely analyzed in the park’s *Master Plan Development Outline*. The visitor survey in 1951 found that the average length of stay in Glacier was 1.8 days. It was estimated that about half of all visitors limited their activities to an auto tour of the park, which would normally include stops for short hikes at places such as Logan Pass or Trick Falls, as well as stops for picnicking, viewing scenery, and taking photos. Some day trippers through the park took time to accompany a ranger naturalist on a short hike or to enjoy a boat trip. Visitors who spent one or more nights in the park generally went hiking or perhaps

²³¹ Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2008), 2-4, 12-13, 17-18.

²³² Montana State Highway Commission in cooperation with U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads and U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Glacier National Park Tourist Survey*, (Naegel Printing Co., Helena, Mont., 1951), 17.

fishing. Some took one of the launch trips. Campers did more hiking and fishing than hotel guests, but both groups took part about equally in guided walks with park naturalists.²³³

In sum, Glacier's visitation in the decades following World War II was overwhelmingly middle class, substantially made up of families on summer vacation, and almost entirely arriving in private automobiles. These facts shaped how NPS redeveloped visitor accommodations and managed concessions through the whole postwar era. The years from 1945 to 1960 saw a continuation of two major trends that had shaped park development from the beginning: ever-expanding public use, especially by the middle class; and ever-increasing domination of the car culture over the railroad.

End of an Era for the Chalets

In the 1940s, Glacier's seven existing chalet groups were obsolete. Originally built to accommodate visitors who came to Glacier by rail to spend several days to two weeks in the park, they did not appeal to visitors who arrived in the park in a private car with their own camping gear, or who wanted to drive through the park in a day or a day and a half. The chalets were billed as rustic accommodations, charming in their rusticity. One Great Northern brochure described the chalets' appeal as "artistic crudeness with comfort." The chalets provided soft beds, clean bedding, tasty prepared meals, and service with a smile. They were organized for sojourning, with most offering horse trips, boat trips, or both. The St. Mary's Chalets featured a large recreation building. The Going-to-the-Sun Chalets (also known as Sun Camp), largest and most popular of the chalet groups, had a formal dining room and a spacious lobby with artwork on display. Female staff wore Swiss-style uniforms and park naturalists offered lectures there. All these amenities were designed to appeal to sojourners, not visitors in cars who enjoyed the freedom to drive around and stop wherever they pleased.²³⁴

Most of the chalets were strategically located for the purpose of accommodating multi-day saddle horse trips across a section of the park. In the early days, a significant portion of visitors experienced Glacier by taking a trail ride from chalet to chalet. As Glacier became developed with roads and campgrounds, the locations of some of the chalets no longer made sense. This was especially true of the St. Mary Chalets and the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. When the Going-to-the-Sun Road was

²³³ "Master Plan Development Outline, Glacier National Park, Montana, Interpretation," March 1953, Folder 1, File Unit 02, Series 02.03, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²³⁴ Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 47, 65, 73-75, 81.

completed, those two chalet groups seemed anomalous in their locations alongside the main park road. Neither one had the look or feel of roadside accommodations. When the Roes Creek Auto Camp opened for business in 1941, the company permanently closed the St. Mary Chalets and transferred the crew of summer employees to the Roes Creek development. In 1943, the company contracted with Hugh Black to dismantle the St. Mary Chalets dormitories, kitchen/dining room building, and recreation building, leaving only the boathouse and dock. The Sun Camp was closed after the 1941 season and was never reopened. The company finally removed the buildings in 1948.²³⁵

The Cut Bank Chalets were next to go. Although this complex had been accessible by car from the beginning, it lay at the end of a minor road and generally did not attract car tourists. Rather, it was a favorite for visitors who were keen on horse trips. In the 1920s, Glacier Park Hotel Company coordinated with W. N. Noffsinger of the Park Saddle Horse Company in using the Cut Bank Chalets as a base for horse trips. The most popular one took visitors to Red Eagle Lake where Noffsinger maintained a permanent tent camp for several years. During the Great Depression the Cut Bank Chalets received fewer guests and in the hardest year of the depression, 1933, the facilities were kept shuttered all summer. In 1937, Noffsinger proposed that he take over the chalets as a dude ranch, charging guests a weekly rate. Despite Noffsinger's offer, Glacier Park Hotel Company elected to close the facility again in 1938 and the chalets were never reopened. After World War II, the buildings were found to be dilapidated beyond repair. They were dismantled in the winter of 1948-49.²³⁶

The Two Medicine Chalets eventually faded into oblivion as well. In the 1930s, NPS wanted the concessioner to renovate the chalets or replace them with cheaper accommodations in the auto camp mold but the concessioner demurred. Closed for the duration of the war, the Two Medicine Chalets reopened for business on June 15, 1946 with just half the former capacity as fifty-eight rooms were taken out of service because of their state of disrepair. In 1952, NPS suggested that all cabins be torn down and the dining hall converted into a store for campers staying in the nearby public campground. The concessioner agreed to that plan and removed all cabins soon thereafter.²³⁷

²³⁵ Ibid, 69, 81.

²³⁶ A. A. Aszmann to E. T. Scoyen, February 7, 1938, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 55-60.

²³⁷ Sources differ on the year the buildings were removed. Bridget E. Moylan states that it was the winter of 1953, and the dismantling was headed by Tom Dawson, the original builder of those same buildings. (*Glacier's Grandest: A Pictorial History of the Hotels and Chalets of Glacier National Park*, 55.) Djuff

Belton Chalets closed during the war like all the other chalets. In May 1946, Glacier Park Company (the company dropped “hotel” from its name in 1943) advertised the Belton Chalets for sale. The ad stated that the Swiss-style “hotel, dormitory, and two chalets” were located at the western entrance to Glacier and on the main line of the Great Northern Railway on approximately 3 ½ acres. Following a detailed description of the buildings and appurtenances, the advertisement noted that the property was “free from encumbrances except that under Act of Congress on March 2, 1917 (Public No. 370, 64th Congress) any hotel on these premises must be operated under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe for the conduct and operation of hotels within Glacier National Park.”²³⁸

William A. Murrill, a local resident, purchased the property for \$25,550 in June 1946. NPS informed Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug of the sale and Krug approved the sale on July 12, 1946. The Department of the Interior deemed the secretary’s approval to be necessary under the provisions of the March 2, 1917 act.²³⁹

Superintendent Emmert met with the new owner and followed up with a letter explaining the unique arrangement between the park administration and the operator of the Belton Chalets. He noted that NPS had jurisdiction over the operation under the law and explained what that meant in practical terms. “This means that the chalets are subject to periodic inspections by National Park Service personnel in connection with fire, safety, and sanitation,” Emmert wrote. “Before any changes are made to the structures and facilities beyond routine repair, plans must be submitted to the National Park Service for approval. Also prior to each operating season a proposed schedule of rates must be submitted for approval by the Director of the National Park Service.” Emmert further informed Murrill that the situation was anomalous because the facility was not a park concession; Murrill had no contractual obligation to NPS. Emmert thought NPS should seek amendment of the 1917 law to sever NPS jurisdiction over the property.²⁴⁰

NPS discussed the peculiar case of the Belton Chalets internally over the next several months. Emmert pointed out to his superiors that the secretary of the interior’s authority was interpreted by NPS to be permissive rather than mandatory and no direct control over the property was being exercised. Associate Director Arthur E. Demaray advised that any control over the property should be

and Morrison say it was in the winter of 1955-56, and the demolition was performed under contract by Wesley House of Browning, Montana. (*View with a Room*, 53.)

²³⁸ Glacier Park Company, “Glacier National Park Gateway Chalets Offered,” May 15, 1946, in Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²³⁹ Acting Director to Secretary of the Interior, no date, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁴⁰ J. W. Emmert to William A. Murrill, March 13, 1947, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Ober, “Enmity and Alliance,” 148.

accomplished by advising the owner of any violation of the regulations together with a warning that unless the violation was discontinued appropriate steps to forfeit the grant would be taken. Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam further advised the superintendent that the violation would have to be a “clear-cut case” for the government to take it to court. Also, general law enforcement over the property was to be handled by state and local authorities since it was outside the park boundary. Nonetheless, Merriam informed Emmert in August 1948, NPS found that it was not desirable to seek amendment or repeal of the 1917 law.²⁴¹

Various details still needed to be worked out. Concerning sale of liquor on the premises, NPS found that the state law was applicable, and its enforcement was vested in state and local authorities. Concerning fire hazards on the property, NPS found that fire safety inspections, too, were a function of state or local authorities. If a fire should occur, the park administration would not be bound to respond to a call, but it would respond if there was a danger that the fire would spread to nearby park lands.²⁴²

Murrill operated the Belton Chalets through four summers and sold the property to H. A. Berryman of Great Falls, Montana on August 1, 1949. Again, NPS advised the secretary of the interior of the sale and recommended approval.²⁴³

Berryman held the property through the summer of 1950 and then put it up for sale again. Albert and Mildred Gunn of Great Falls bought the property for approximately \$55,000 in June 1951. Again, NPS sought the secretary’s approval of the sale. It seems that each time the property changed hands, Superintendent Emmert collected letters of reference from banks and other creditors after the fact to accompany NPS’s recommendation. Since the process could take several months, the secretary’s approval of one sale came just months before the property was sold again.²⁴⁴

After the property changed hands for a third time in five years, Emmert renewed his call for NPS to seek repeal of the 1917 law. This time, Regional Director Howard W. Baker supported him, writing to Director Conrad Wirth that “to all intents and purposes, the chalets are a part of the town and are in no way connected with the

²⁴¹ Regional Director to Superintendent, August 20, 1948, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁴² Acting Regional Director to Superintendent, September 15, 1949, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁴³ Acting Director to Secretary of the Interior, no date, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁴⁴ J. W. Emmert to Mr. and Mrs. R. Albert Gunn, August 15, 1951, Emmert to Montana Bank and Trust Company, October 5, 1951, Acting Regional Director to the Director, November 5, 1951, and Acting Director to Secretary of the Interior, December 7, 1951, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

operation of the park.” Since the Belton Chalets were built, Baker noted, the gateway community had changed in character “to the point where the hotel has lost much of its significance.” Despite Baker’s urging, however, NPS did not seek repeal of the law.²⁴⁵

Sometime in the early to mid 1950s the property was sold again, this time to Grant and Virginia Spears, who tried to make it into an art colony. In 1956, Grant Spears wrote to Superintendent Emmert seeking permission to build a service station and a “Stop and Go” hamburger stand. Emmert pushed the request up the chain, again calling attention to the “outmoded” law. Acting Regional Director I. J. Castro advised Emmert that NPS had no objection and reiterated that NPS sought to exercise “as little control as possible” over this property. Castro enclosed a legal opinion on the subject for the superintendent to have in his records.²⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the frequent turnover of owners continued; at one point in the 1960s the Swiss-style chalet had a pizzeria. Not until 1970 did the facility return to stable ownership when it was acquired by B. Ross and Katherine (Kay) Luding.²⁴⁷

Granite Park and Sperry chalets were the two remaining chalets. Glacier Park Company reopened both backcountry chalets after World War II and began catering to a predominantly hiker clientele. The company continued to provide bedding, meal service, and nightly entertainment for guests even as the cost of supplying the isolated chalets mounted. With their short operating season and high operating costs, the backcountry chalets lost money year after year. But they provided a unique backcountry experience, so NPS did not recommend closing them.²⁴⁸

In 1950, Great Northern suggested closing the two chalets and developing a new “Hidden Lake Camp” in lieu. It seemed that the actual location proposed for this camp was at Hidden Lake overlook with a road being built to the site from Logan Pass. NPS quickly scotched this idea. Superintendent Emmert wrote, “We are very much against an intrusion with overnight facilities and roads in this lovely section of the park. In our minds there just isn’t any public demand for such a development at this point. Let’s leave the area for the hiker as a part of his recreation and inspiration to be gained from a visit to the Logan Pass area.”²⁴⁹ Although the proposal was

²⁴⁵ Regional Director to the Director, December 11, 1953, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁴⁶ Grant Spear to Jack Emmert, February 27, 1956, Superintendent to Regional Director, March 1, 1956, and Acting Regional Director to Superintendent, March 16, 1956, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

²⁴⁷ Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 161.

²⁴⁸ Edwin C. Matthias to Wirth, January 8, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁴⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director, April 21, 1950, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

short-lived, it was an interesting echo of an earlier proposal made in 1930 by John Lewis to develop visitor accommodations at Logan Pass.

By 1953, Great Northern declared to NPS that it was willing to dispose of the Sperry and Granite Park chalets to a different operator if that was the only way it could be relieved of its contractual obligation to operate them at a loss. Since the Sperry and Granite Park chalets were both backcountry facilities, the company decided that putting them under a different operator would not set up competition with its own business interests. In the words of the concession's chief legal counsel, Edwin C. Matthias, the chalets represented "two facilities that can be carved out of our present concession without creating any competitive disadvantage for the Glacier Park Company."²⁵⁰

Company officials negotiated with H. Frank Evans of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for the purchase of the chalets. Evans was a teacher who guided wilderness trips in Glacier during the summer. But Evans wanted to own the buildings, whereas NPS wanted to convert the backcountry chalets over to government ownership and private operation, so the negotiations with Evans did not pan out.²⁵¹

In March 1954, Glacier Park Company sold the two chalets to the United States for \$1 each. In return, Glacier Park Company was relieved of its obligation to operate the chalets under its existing contract. Director Conrad L. Wirth wrote to Matthias, "We greatly appreciate the cooperation of your Company in making the structures available to the United States rather than to transfer them otherwise." Wirth acknowledged transfer of inventory contained in the buildings and noted that NPS would proceed with locating an individual, or perhaps a husband and wife team, to operate the chalets under permit. With the change of ownership, NPS renamed them Sperry Chalet and Granite Park Chalet (in the singular form). The goal of the NPS was to maintain these two backcountry facilities for trail users, providing overnight accommodations and a place where overnight stayers could be served meals or do their own cooking.²⁵²

Once NPS owned the chalets, it secured the services of Ross and Kay Luding as operators of the Sperry Chalet for the summer of 1954. Ross cooked in the kitchen while Kay served meals to guests in the dining room. They brought in a Maytag gas-powered washing machine and washed linens on site; previously, Glacier Park

²⁵⁰ J. M. Budd to Conrad Wirth, November 4, 1953, and Edwin C. Matthias to Wirth, January 8, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁵¹ Edwin C. Matthias to Wirth, January 8, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, and C. E. Alison to J. W. Emmert, February 6, 1954, and G. G. Pool to Wirth, January 7, 1954, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁵² Conrad L. Wirth to Edwin C. Matthias, April 8, 1954, and Director to Regional Director, April 8, 1954, Folder 5, File Unit 04, Series 01.10, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

Company packed the washing back and forth to the laundry facilities at Lake McDonald Hotel. With their pared down operations, the Ludings served a total of 585 overnight guests. They cleared \$888 for the whole summer after expenses.²⁵³

In 1955, NPS requested that the Ludings expand the operation to include the Granite Park Chalet. NPS issued a one-year concession permit for 1955, charging a fee of \$100 for each of the two government-owned chalets.

In the spring of 1956, NPS and the Ludings entered a five-year contract. The franchise fee remained the same. Superintendent Emmert informed the director that he thought the permittee might gross around \$5,000 at each chalet, in which case the \$100 fee would be 2% of the gross. In view of the short operating season, July 1 to August 31, profits would be nominal. In the second year NPS had inquiries from three other interested parties but decided to continue with the Ludings because they were doing “an excellent job.”²⁵⁴

National Park Concessions Policy and Glacier

National park concessions policy came under review at the end of World War II. The main question at issue was who should own the concession facilities: the federal government or the concessioner? As numerous lodges in the western national parks came to be several decades old, it prompted the question whether concessioners could be compelled to invest in the necessary repairs and improvements to sustain those aging facilities, or did the government need to take them over in the public interest to save them from ruin? Many Glacier Hotel and Lake McDonald Hotel were two prominent examples among others in Yellowstone, Yosemite, Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, and other national parks. To manage the upkeep of these many great lodges and protect the public interest in them, Secretary of the Interior Ickes sought to push the idea of government *ownership* and private *operation* – the formula broached earlier in a tentative way at the start of the depression.

Ickes began to steer national park concessions policy in that direction before the United States entered World War II. In 1941, Ickes oversaw the establishment of a new model of park concession, National Park Concessions, Inc., a nonprofit distributing corporation that would operate in those parks where the government could not find anyone in the private sector to invest in new facilities. Introduced at Mammoth Cave National Park, it soon had operations at Big Bend National Park, Isle Royale National Park, Olympic National Park, and Blue Ridge Parkway. These

²⁵³ B. Ross Luding to J. W. Emmert, September 1, 1955, and Conrad L. Wirth to H. Frank Evans, May 8, 1956, File C3815, Box 801, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; L. R. Luding to National Park Service, undated, Folder 1, File Unit 001, Subseries 02-02, GNPA; Djuff and Morrison, *View with a Room*, 134-35.

²⁵⁴ Superintendent to the Director, December 15, 1954, File C3823, Box 848, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

were all places where isolated conditions and short operating seasons made it hard for concessions to turn a profit. At each location, the nonprofit's rates, distributions, and concession fees were structured so that facilities would pass into government ownership relatively quickly. The purpose was to demonstrate the practicality of converting concession facilities in all national parks to government ownership in the coming years. With the big national park concessions operating under twenty-year contracts, several of those long-term contracts were set to expire in the late 1940s. Ickes anticipated that many old facilities would be taken into government ownership around that time.²⁵⁵

But World War II interrupted the tourist business in the national parks and when the war was over concessioners faced a new set of challenges. Business was back, but patrons wanted better rooms, more comforts, less crowding. Many national park visitors complained of high prices and poor service. Hotels were in a dilapidated state. The House Appropriations Committee responded to the public outcry and undertook an examination of national park concessions. After a series of hearings, the House committee seemed intent on raising franchise fees and inviting business competition, thus doing away with Mather's system of regulated monopoly. Some of the public's unhappiness and Congress's impatience with national park concessions rested on ignorance of the difficult conditions that the concessions operated under. The public and Congress did not fully appreciate that these enterprises operated in remote locations far from sources of supply, usually in harsh mountain climates, with business concentrated in the height of summer and tapering in the shoulder seasons, and a seasonal staff needing to be hired and trained each year.²⁵⁶

Although Ickes was no longer in charge of the Department of the Interior, his successor Julius Krug and Krug's close assistant Oscar L. Chapman both aimed to continue Ickes's push for government ownership of concession buildings. Chapman's goal was almost to nationalize the national park concessions, a move the concessioners adamantly opposed.

Director Drury found himself in the middle of the controversy over national park concession policy. He defended the Mather tradition of regulated monopoly, pushing back on both the idea of more competition and the idea of public ownership. Drury went into the problem in some detail in his annual report for 1946. His discussion of the difficult circumstances surrounding ownership of concession facilities is quoted

²⁵⁵ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 115-18; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 460; Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 127.

²⁵⁶ *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 1946, (Government Printing Office, Washington, 1946), 312-13; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 460.

at length here because it is relevant to the negotiation that NPS would soon be having with Great Northern over concession operations in Glacier:

Owners of private capital, generally speaking, have erected the buildings, furnished transportation equipment and provided the organization necessary to care for the public staying in the parks. Some have sought this business opportunity; others have been induced to undertake it. In either case, they have not invested their money in these provisions for the public in the parks without a reasonable expectation of fair earnings and the ultimate amortization of their investment.

Existing law forbids concession contracts exceeding 20 years in duration. Since the useful life of such substantial structures as the concessioners are expected to provide is normally more than 20 years, and since Internal Revenue regulations in many cases preclude writing off the investment in this period, this limitation, instead of being for too long a period, as is sometimes claimed, is in reality too short from the standpoint of the investors of private capital on these Federal lands. It compels either an unreasonably high allowance for depreciation, which usually cannot be allowed, or an implied understanding either that the concession contract will be renewed at the end of the 20-year period or that the Government will give the concessioner an opportunity to recover the remaining value of his investment when the contract expires.

If the Government were to acquire the facilities which are normally operated through concessioners, operation, through concession contracts, would have to be on one or the other of two bases. One would be that it should produce a sufficient return to the Government to meet reasonable interest charges and to amortize the investment during the expected life of the structures. The other would be consciously to permit a lower return and the absorption by the Government of some portion, at least, of this investment, because of the social benefits accruing to the public as a whole, with operation at something less than the cost of rendering the service. In other words, a subsidy. Since only a small percentage of the whole public actually utilizes the facilities, it is doubtful if an adequate case could be made for the second course. In general, it would seem logical that rates for special services such as hotel accommodation, meals, and transportation, even if the plant were Government-owned, should be set at levels calculated to amortize the investment in facilities

within the period of their useful life, and afford the operating agencies reasonable compensation for their services.²⁵⁷

Drury based his skepticism toward government ownership on the ideal that national parks are democratic, serving the broad masses of the people. He was dubious toward government ownership of Many Glacier Hotel, for example, because it would be tantamount to providing a public subsidy for an operation that traditionally served an elite clientele.

The concessioners generally opposed transitioning to a system of government ownership and private operation of concession facilities. At the Western Conference of National Park Concessioners, held in Washington on December 3, 1946, the concessioners were informed by officials of the Department of the Interior that the government was preparing to assert government ownership of concession facilities. According to a solicitor's opinion, Article IX of the standard twenty-year concession contract vested in the United States complete title to the buildings erected by the concession company. The company's possessory interest in the buildings only counted for something if the contract was terminated early or the concession was transferred to another company. If the concession was simply renewed for another twenty years, then the company's possessory interest went away. This interpretation of Article IX was contrary to Drury's position and certainly anathema to the concessioners' understanding. The concessioners generally perceived the move as a betrayal, a draconian measure, virtually "stealing" from them according to concessioner Don Hummel in his book *Stealing the National Parks*. The day after this announcement, December 4, the concessioners went to Congressman J. Hardin Peterson, a Democrat of Florida, who was chairman of the House Committee on Public Lands, asking for his assistance. The congressman promised them that his committee would consider the matter.²⁵⁸

The next major development in the debate over national park concessions policy came when another concessioner, the Rainier National Park Company, tried to get the federal government to buy the aging hotel facilities in Mount Rainier National Park. Congressman Peterson used the hearings on the Mount Rainier bill as an opportunity to debate Interior's general proposition of government ownership and private operation of concessions. Concessioners went on the offensive and threatened to pull out of the parks altogether unless the government protected their possessory interests.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 1946, 312-13.

²⁵⁸ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 130-34.

²⁵⁹ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 149-53; Catton, *National Park, City Playground*, 114-18.

Meanwhile, Secretary Krug had appointed a citizens advisory group to study the issue and make recommendations. After more than a year of study, the advisory group reported its findings. The advisory group vigorously re-affirmed the Mather tradition of regulated monopoly and rebuffed the notion that concessions were reaping big profits while giving shoddy service. It also offered measured support for government ownership of facilities. Former NPS director Albright was asked by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman to opine on the advisory group's report. Albright essentially endorsed the report, including its position on government ownership of facilities, while underscoring Drury's position that the government needed to go slow in that regard and respect concessioners' possessory interests. Albright's comments were printed in the *Congressional Record*.²⁶⁰

The advisory group report offered timely perspective, blunting calls to shake up concessions management by introducing more free enterprise. Yet the debate and controversy surrounding national park concessions policy was hardly over. In 1948, Secretary Krug announced that all national park concessions must comply with the department's labor initiative instituting a forty-hour workweek with time and a half for overtime. The secretary's order met with strong protest from concessioners, who were used to a forty-eight-hour workweek. The shorter workweek would require a longer payroll and more employee housing, which was already in short supply. The fight over the forty-hour rule would be carried into contract negotiations over the coming years.²⁶¹

Another problem plaguing concessions management was the shortage of auditors in NPS. The agency's small number of concession management personnel were centralized in the Washington Office. They were years behind in auditing concessioners' financial reports. In 1949, there were 671 unaudited reports, and the backlog was growing. Altogether NPS was tasked with auditing 250 concessions doing a gross business of \$25 million, and it could not keep up.²⁶²

Finally, NPS faced a crush of expiring twenty-year contracts. Usually it was in both parties' interest to negotiate a new contract well in advance of the expiration date. With the concessions policy in flux, those early negotiations were put off. By 1949, the NPS had a score of twenty-year contracts on the brink of expiring. Glacier Park Hotel Company's contract was set to expire on December 31, 1951. Under the circumstances, NPS resorted to issuing year-to-year contract extensions to keep the concessions operating, which only exacerbated tensions all around.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 148; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 461.

²⁶¹ Catton, *National Park, City Playground*, 118-19; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 463.

²⁶² Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, 462.

²⁶³ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 159-61.

The matter that was most upsetting to concessioners – the threatened liquidation of their possessory interest in concession facilities – was partially resolved when the secretary of the interior issued two statements on concessions policy in May and October 1950, each one backing off the Department’s earlier contention that it would assert government ownership of facilities in the next generation of twenty-year contracts. In the latter statement, titled “Concessions Policies of the National Park Service,” the government acknowledged that the concessioners had “substantial property rights” in the concession facilities. While the concessioners were satisfied to a degree, they eventually succeeded in getting full protection of their “possessory interests” written into the Concession Policy Act of 1965.²⁶⁴

The Withdrawal of Great Northern from Glacier

While national park concession policy was in flux, Glacier Park Company was loath to invest more capital in facilities. From 1941 to 1950, practically the only thing the company did to improve facilities was install sprinkler systems in Many Glacier Hotel. NPS did not push the concession to make other improvements. Plans for developing visitor accommodations at Apgar, which were deemed a high priority in 1940-41, were quietly set aside through the rest of the decade.²⁶⁵

Meanwhile, Glacier visitation climbed higher and the need to expand the concession operation became ever more apparent. Over the winter of 1949-50, NPS resolved to renew its demand that the concession build more visitor accommodations. According to a survey conducted by the park administration the previous summer, existing visitor accommodations were filled through the whole month of July and some 22,191 visitors were turned out of the park during that peak month of travel. Cabin camps located near the park could not absorb the overflow, turning away a total of 32,304 people (including many of the same people, it was presumed, who were turned away from park accommodations). Director Drury concluded that the situation was “unsatisfactory,” and more facilities were needed. By January 1950, NPS had decided that it wanted to build the park’s capacity to accommodate 1,000 more people per night. Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam provided the following recommendation for expansion of facilities:

	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
West Glacier	0	500
Lake McDonald	130	300
Many Glacier	390	390

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 161-63, 238-42.

²⁶⁵ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1948, 5.

Swiftcurrent	125	300
Rising Sun	87	300
Two Medicine	56	100
Sperry	43	43
Granite Park	<u>41</u>	<u>41</u>
	872	1,884 ²⁶⁶

In February 1950, Drury wrote to F. J. Gavin, president of Great Northern, informing him of these findings and requesting a meeting to begin discussion of plans. Drury stated that the need for additional facilities, last broached in 1941, was now “many times more acute.”²⁶⁷

In Gavin’s reply to Drury two weeks later, the railroad president arranged to meet with Drury the following month, but he also conveyed the heavy news that Great Northern, after forty years of service to Glacier National Park, would probably pull out of Glacier at the expiration of Glacier Park Company’s twenty-year contract, on December 31, 1951, less than two years hence. Gavin reminded Drury that Great Northern built the Glacier hotels and chalets to attract business to its railroad, and since the advent of the automobile the whole picture had changed. Now a paltry 1½ percent of park visitors traveled to Glacier by rail. The company calculated that it would take a whopping \$9 million to rehabilitate and expand its park facilities. Considering the other demands on its capital investment, Great Northern had to shed its Glacier hotel operations.²⁶⁸

In the month of April 1950, the railroad president delivered a fifteen-page memo to Drury explaining his company’s assumptions and conclusions. The salient points were first, that NPS wanted new development to focus on more auto camps, which was far from Great Northern’s original purpose of investing money in park accommodations to stimulate rail travel; second, that through the years the Glacier hotel operations had been unprofitable and they would likely remain so; and third, that a new twenty-year contract would likely be on terms that the company would find unfavorable, such as a forty-hour workweek for concession employees. This memo disclosed interesting financial data, such as the development cost, depreciated cost, and net income for each one of the company’s seven facilities in Glacier (Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Hotel, Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, Rising Sun Auto Camp, Sperry Chalets, Granite Park Chalets, and Two Medicine Chalets) plus its two facilities outside of the park (Glacier Park Hotel and Prince of Wales Hotel). It claimed a total capital investment in facilities of \$4,080,801, and a net book

²⁶⁶ Regional Director to the Director, January 16, 1950, File C14, Box 740, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁶⁷ Newton B. Drury to F. J. Gavin, February 16, 1950, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁶⁸ F. J. Gavin to Newton B. Drury, February 27, 1950, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

investment on the property after depreciation of \$482,135. Giving revenue figures for the seven facilities in Glacier for the last season only, it revealed that the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp was the only one to earn income; the Rising Sun Auto Camp, Lake McDonald Hotel, and Two Medicine Chalets virtually broke even, while all other facilities operated at a considerable loss.²⁶⁹

The memo contained interesting details on maintenance of buildings in Glacier's harsh climate. "Age and obsolescence have taken a huge toll," the memo stated. "The type of timber construction with numerous outside stairways, railings and porches results in excessive deterioration to exteriors from high winds and deep snows." Cold and dry conditions cracked plaster walls and warped wood floors and door and window frames.²⁷⁰

The memo observed that interior furnishings were comfortable but not modern and needed lots of attention. "New coil springs and inner spring mattresses were installed in most rooms about ten years ago, otherwise the furniture is practically the same as installed when operations were begun," the memo noted. "Bathrooms are antiquated, tubs are mounted on feet with unfinished ends and sides and exposed plumbing. Toilets have the high flush type boxes with pull chains. The addition of various power equipment has overloaded the power plants at Glacier Park and Many Glacier."²⁷¹

NPS responded with a counterproposal for a development program that would accommodate more people at less cost than what Great Northern envisioned. Whereas Great Northern proposed to abandon the Sperry and Granite Park chalets and replace them with a new chalet at Hidden Lake, the NPS plan nixed this idea in favor of scaling back services at the Sperry and Granite Park chalets. Whereas Great Northern envisioned total replacement of the hotel at Lake McDonald, the NPS plan kept Lake McDonald Hotel and called for greater emphasis on a new cabin camp at Apgar. Drury wrote to Gavin that the NPS proposal would accommodate 2,838 visitors parkwide compared with 2,332 under Great Northern's plan and would cost an estimated \$7,960,000 as opposed to an estimated \$9,325,000 under Great Northern's plan. But NPS did not attempt to counter all the other reasons that Great Northern gave for jettisoning its Glacier hotel operations.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ "Statement Handed to Director, National Park Service, by President, Great Northern Railway, in Meeting in Director's Office," April 10, 1950, File C58, Box 905, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ "Statement Handed to Director, National Park Service, by President, Great Northern Railway, in Meeting in Director's Office," April 10, 1950, File C58, Box 905, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁷² Newton B. Drury to F. J. Gavin, May 5, 1950, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II. For discussion of the proposed Hidden Lake Camp see Superintendent to Regional Director, April 21, 1950, same file.

Great Northern held to its position that it would soon relinquish its operations in Glacier. It hoped that NPS would find an interested party to keep the operations going – mainly to preserve the legacy of the railroad’s development of Glacier but also to compensate the company for its possessory interest in the buildings. Great Northern’s legal department claimed that if the property was leased to another party then the Secretary of the Interior would need to appraise the value of the property and establish terms by which Great Northern would be compensated for the transfer of its possessory interest to the new concessioner. If, on the other hand, the hotels came to be operated by NPS or were simply abandoned, then no compensation would be due. NPS did not respond to Great Northern’s legal argument, nor did it search for an interested party to take over the lease. Instead, NPS leadership clung to the hope that Great Northern could be persuaded to stay. However, when rumors of Great Northern’s impending departure began to arise in Montana communities, Superintendent Emmert advised his superiors that the rumors were hurting the park’s reputation. He proposed that NPS issue a press release to control the message. A few weeks later, the *Hungry Horse News* broke the story with a headline, “Great Northern Not Renewing Park Contract.”²⁷³

According to the newspaper story, NPS obtained assurances from the railroad that the railroad subsidiary would continue to operate the hotels on a year-to-year contract for an indefinite period. At the end of 1951, the new NPS director, Conrad L. Wirth, did take that step, using the off-season to secure a one-year contract, which was transmitted to the railroad shortly before the expiration date of December 31 and signed by the railroad’s lead attorney in January 1952. In fact, Wirth resorted to practically the same thing the next year and the year after that, merely writing a letter to extend the contract by another year. As dicey as that procedure seemed, both parties were extremely disinclined to terminate the relationship without a resolution. To do that would mean leaving the hotels and chalets shuttered as the summer season came on, perpetrating a colossal disservice to the public and delivering a severe blow to both parties’ reputations. So, as both parties had the other one over a barrel, they used the tenuous situation and the extra time to forge a compromise that gave Great Northern an acceptable exit strategy for getting out of Glacier National Park.²⁷⁴

The bargain was essentially this: Great Northern would enter a new long-term contract and commit to a program of rehabilitation and expansion of facilities with

²⁷³ “Statement Handed to Director, National Park Service, by President, Great Northern Railway, in Meeting in Director’s Office,” April 10, 1950, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; Acting Regional Director to the Director, May 15, 1951, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; “Great Northern Not Renewing Park Contract,” *Hungry Horse News*, May 25, 1951.

²⁷⁴ Conrad L. Wirth to John M. Budd, December 20, 1951, Edwin C. Matthias to J. W. Emmert, January 18, 1952, Wirth to Budd, September 24, 1952, and Wirth to Budd, October 20, 1953, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

the understanding that NPS would search for a competent party who would take over the concession and compensate the railroad for its possessory interest in the facilities. While the search was on for a new concessioner, NPS would work with Glacier Park Company to experiment with the chalet and hotel operations and make them more profitable and attractive. If necessary, the chalet and hotel operations might be split into two concessions.²⁷⁵

The contract included an increase in the franchise fee but not as big an increase as what NPS was getting from some other concessions. It called for a fixed fee of \$1,500 per year plus one-fourth of 1 percent of gross receipts. As gross receipts had averaged \$830,000 annually over the past five years, the total franchise fee was expected to run from \$3,500 to \$3,750 annually (up from \$500 previously). It was subject to renegotiation or arbitration every five years.²⁷⁶

While attorneys for NPS and Great Northern hammered out the new twenty-year contract over several rounds of talks from 1951 to 1954, the two parties continued to wrestle over plans for redevelopment of visitor accommodations. Old differences surfaced all over again as Great Northern's president, John M. Budd, accused NPS of "encouraging automobile travel and discouraging travel by train." Great Northern wanted to prioritize rehabilitation of Many Glacier Hotel over the expansion of auto camps; NPS wanted it the other way around. Budd put the railroad's position very plainly: "We feel the necessity for fixing up the hotels to take care of the rail patrons who use the hotel facilities to a much greater extent than they do the cabin facilities." He informed Director Wirth that the railroad executives were certain that NPS officials showed a strong bias toward the automobile traveler. "The literature put out by the National Park Service gives further evidence of the leaning of the Department," he wrote. "The discouragement you have shown on fixing up facilities at the hotels for rail travelers was the final blow."²⁷⁷

Due to the protracted negotiations over a new long-term contract, no substantial money was put toward rehabilitation or expansion of visitor accommodations until 1955. Finally, with the new contract signed on November 8, 1954, a joint program of capital investment was agreed to and initiated. It focused on new facilities at Lake

²⁷⁵ Chief Counsel to Director, March 12, 1952, Assistant Director to Regional Director, September 15, 1952, John M. Budd to Conrad L. Wirth, August 3, 1953, Budd to Wirth, November 4, 1953, and Edwin C. Matthias to Wirth, January 8, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; Budd to Wirth, June 7, 1955, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁷⁶ Acting Director to Assistant Secretary of the Interior, August 25, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Glacier Park Company, Contract 14-10-0100-345, November 8, 1954, File C3823, Box 7, Concessions Files in Storage, GNP.

²⁷⁷ John M. Budd to Conrad L. Wirth, February 25, 1953, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

McDonald, Swiftcurrent, and Rising Sun. Wirth provided a list of new construction and improvements with estimated costs, and Budd approved it.²⁷⁸

Lake McDonald

	<u>Concessioner</u>	<u>Government</u>
Construct three 14-room motels	\$195,000	
Sewer and water system improvements		\$175,000
Roads and parking areas		62,500
Improvements to Lake McDonald Hotel	<u> </u>	<u>720,200</u>
Totals	\$195,000	\$957,700

Swiftcurrent

Additions to store and dining room		
Remodel cabin office		
Install toilets in 33 cabins		
Equip 20 cabins for housekeeping		
Construct 20-room employee dormitory		
Construct 14-room motel	\$358,000	
Water, sewer, and power extensions		\$124,200
Roads and parking areas	<u>38,700</u>	
Totals	\$358,000	\$162,900

Rising Sun

	<u>Concessioner</u>	<u>Government</u>
Addition to store and dining room		
Construct two 14-room motels		
Construct 10-room employee dormitory	\$242,000	
Water and sewer system extensions		\$126,400
Roads and parking areas	<u> </u>	<u>29,300</u>
Totals	\$242,000	\$155,700

These were the priorities for new facilities; they did not include costs for rehabilitating Many Glacier Hotel. Nonetheless, the total expenditure was decidedly modest compared to earlier estimates of around \$9 million. The new construction at Swiftcurrent was accomplished in the spring of 1955; that at Rising Sun was begun in 1956 and completed in 1957. Renovations were made to Lake McDonald Hotel and six Lake McDonald area cabins in 1957 and 1958.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Conrad L. Wirth to Edwin C. Matthias, August 2, 1954, and John M. Budd to Wirth, August 9, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁷⁹ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958.

For the new motel units, Great Northern furnished architectural plans to NPS, then the Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) made recommendations, and then the concession modified the plans and resubmitted them. NPS did not get every modification it wanted. For example, the WODC twice raised concerns that the motel units at Swiftcurrent should have double windows rather than single windows to bring more light into the rooms but the company insisted on single windows; it then put in double windows on the motel units at Rising Sun. As for the locations of buildings, the WODC provided general guidelines, which the concession followed. There was a tussle over the location of the motels at Rising Sun, with Great Northern's president being "adamant" that the motels should be placed on the south side of the Going-to-the-Sun Road near the lakeshore. NPS insisted that the development area be confined to the north side of the road for visitor safety.²⁸⁰

Three years into the new twenty-year contract the concession was still operating in the red. In fact, the business losses got worse. In 1955, Glacier Park Company lost \$128,093 on a gross income of \$914,534. In 1956, it lost \$319,245 on \$1,018,937. At the end of that year, Glacier Park Company signed a three-year contract with the Knutson Hotel Corporation of Minneapolis to run its operations. The head of the corporation, Don Knutson, ran a construction company as well as a hotel company. The railroad wanted Knutson to oversee renovations on Many Glacier Hotel while making all the Glacier hotel operations more profitable. The goal was to put the hotel operations physically and financially in shape to sell. The railroad looked to Knutson himself as a potential buyer.²⁸¹

Knutson was unable to reverse the tide of red ink for Glacier Park Company. The concession lost \$431,344 in 1957, \$588,034 in 1958, and \$578,175 in 1959. Knutson tried various gimmicks to attract more hotel patrons. He introduced the "Glacier Playhouse," a series of theater-in-the-round play productions. A troupe of professional actors moved back and forth between Many Glacier Hotel and Lake McDonald Lodge, performing six different plays over the summer. He hired a professional square dance caller who visited each hotel once per week. He poured money into advertising. He brought in a convention of the Knights of the Maccabees at Many Glacier Hotel and amused the convention goers on the last night with "Las

²⁸⁰ Acting Chief, Western Office of Design and Construction, to Superintendent, April 13, 1955, and J.W. Emmert to J. S. Jeffries, April 19, 1955, Folder 1, File Unit 040, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Chief, Western Office of Design and Construction, to Chief, Division of Design and Construction, February 18, 1955, Acting Chief, Western Office of Design and Construction, to the Director, July 29, 1955, Emmert to Jeffries, August 18, 1955, Regional Director to the Director, October 6, 1955, Emmert to Jeffries, October 18, 1955, and Stanley C. Joseph to Jeffries, October 28, 1955, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁸¹ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park, 1957*; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 185-86.

Vegas type entertainment” and gambling. He tried to get NPS to allow Lake McDonald Hotel to introduce a “floating cocktail lounge” on Lake McDonald. NPS officials viewed these park uses with growing skepticism. When it came to serving martinis on Lake McDonald, Regional Director Howard Baker instructed Superintendent Emmert to be cool to the idea. When the matter arose a second time he wrote to Wirth about it, saying, “It now appears that a flat ‘no’ is indicated.”²⁸²

NPS officials mostly responded to Knutson’s dubious efforts to increase hotel patronage by standing back and watching his experiments fail. Regional Chief of Interpretation H. Raymond Gregg was somewhat more critical, suggesting that some of Knutson’s choices, like his use of billboards to advertise Glacier, were repugnant to NPS and ought to be opposed. Such “aggressive promotion” was counter to NPS initiatives that were aimed at alleviating overcrowded conditions in national parks. If park visitation was up and hotel patronage was down, then the obvious conclusion was that Knutson was “trying to operate too much of the wrong kind of accommodations at a price out of reach of the average visitor.” Instead of spending so much money on advertising and entertainment, Gregg wrote, surely the better approach would be to drop room rates and attract a wider clientele.²⁸³

Knutson proceeded with rehabilitation of Many Glacier Hotel. Some of his renovations were regrettable from a later standpoint of historic preservation. He altered the grand lobby to make room for a larger gift shop, and in doing that he eliminated the impressive double helix stairway that once led from the lobby down to the lower lake level. He built a porte-cochere onto the front of the building to provide a protected drop-off zone for visitors arriving by car or bus. Other renovations included upgrades to the kitchen, strengthening of balconies, and remodel of guest rooms to give each room a private bathroom.²⁸⁴

According to Don Hummel, who took over the Glacier hotel operations from Knutson in 1960, employee theft at Many Glacier Hotel ran rampant on Knutson’s watch. Employees of Knutson’s construction company were the worst offenders. The workers “loaded their cars with building materials at the end of each week and took them home,” Hummel wrote. “Glacier chief engineer Cy Stevenson protested to Great Northern officials in St. Paul, but to no avail.”²⁸⁵

²⁸² Regional Director to the Director, May 16, 1957, Superintendent to Regional Director, July 12, 1957, and Superintendent to Regional Director, October 24, 1957, File C58, Box 965, Entry 10a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁸³ Regional Chief of Interpretation to Regional Director, July 22, 1957, File C58, Box 965, Entry 10a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁸⁴ National Park Service, *Many Glacier Hotel Historic Structure Report, Glacier National Park, Montana* (Denver: National Park Service, Intermountain Region, 2002), 9-10.

²⁸⁵ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 193.

Knutson lasted four years in the manager position but never assumed ownership.²⁸⁶ Meanwhile, Great Northern did not wait for NPS to find a new concessioner but went looking for one on its own.²⁸⁷ The railroad's property manager, James Kenady, contacted Don Hummel of Tucson, Arizona, a longtime national park concessioner with concessions in Lassen Volcanic and Mount McKinley National Parks. Hummel visited Glacier in September 1960 and was conducted on a tour of the hotel properties by Kenady. Hummel wrote in *Stealing the National Parks*, "I was impressed with all of Glacier and decided to buy the concession." It was obvious to him that Great Northern wanted out. The two parties negotiated a purchase price of \$1,300,000 with \$250,000 down and the remainder to be paid over ten years.²⁸⁸

The deal between Great Northern and Don Hummel ended an era for Glacier National Park. Great Northern and NPS were partners for fifty years. Throughout that period, Great Northern was a pillar of financial investment in Glacier, helping to make the park accessible for public use and enjoyment through its system of hotels and chalets. Other railroad companies were similarly instrumental in the early development of other western national parks, but no other railroad created such a rich architectural legacy as Great Northern did in Glacier National Park.

Lake McDonald and Apgar

In the period after World War II, planning for redevelopment of visitor accommodations on Glacier's west side presented NPS with a quandary. The Lake McDonald development area had limited space for expansion of facilities, which made the Apgar area an obvious alternative site for placing new, modern visitor accommodations. But there were many inholdings at the foot of the lake, and it was unclear when NPS would acquire those lands. Furthermore, some of the park's

²⁸⁶ According to John Dobberty, Jr., Knutson offered to buy it if Great Northern would subsidize him for a period of five years, but Great Northern declined the offer. (John Dobberty, Jr., "The Hummel Era: The End of the Line for the Great Northern Railway and a Tumultuous Two Decades," *The Inside Trail* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2016), 21.

²⁸⁷ How active was NPS's search for a concessioner to replace Great Northern? Wirth stated to Great Northern that NPS was looking but he did not provide specifics. The situation was tricky. Peeling off the chalet business to make a separate concession proved to be a step in the right direction. But when NPS suggested a similar action for west side visitor accommodations, Great Northern objected that that would compete with its remaining east side accommodations. NPS finally issued a prospectus in March 1960. (Chief of Concessions Management to Regional Director, February 26, 1960, File C3815, Box 801, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.)

²⁸⁸ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 190. Hummel quotes (p. 210) from a report by the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission, released in January 1962, which suggested that Great Northern gave Hummel an excellent price because it saw Hummel as a good prospect to preserve the railroad's important legacy in Glacier.

inholders continued to build more cabin camps there, which soaked up some of the demand for more accommodations elsewhere. Since NPS concession policy rested on the agency's ability to control competition, the extensive inholdings at Apgar and elsewhere around Lake McDonald strongly affected NPS's options in that section of the park.

In 1950, as NPS resumed discussions with Great Northern about park redevelopment plans, Superintendent Emmert offered his thoughts to Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam. Emmert believed the development of an auto camp at the foot of Lake McDonald should be undertaken ahead of anything else in the park because it was where the demand was greatest. He thought it should start with a 300-guest capacity with provision for expansion to a 500-guest capacity a few years later. As each cabin would accommodate two people, that meant 150 to 250 cabins. He recommended that Lake McDonald Hotel be dismantled and replaced by a "central lodge" and "multiple deluxe cabin units." The lodge and cabins at that location would include 200 units with a 400-guest capacity. The Lake McDonald complex would continue to provide a "higher class of accommodations for rail and auto visitors on the west side of the park."²⁸⁹

Those plans were modified as NPS took account of the growing preference for motels over small tourist cabins. NPS architects prepared plans for multi-apartment "cabin units," each one comprised of sixteen abutting guest rooms. At a meeting with Great Northern representatives in St. Paul in February 1952, NPS officials proposed that Great Northern build twelve such cabin units at Apgar for a total 384-guest capacity, and five cabin units at Lake McDonald for a total 160-guest capacity. In this new plan, Lake McDonald Hotel would be rehabilitated rather than replaced. In addition, NPS called for a cafeteria and gas station at Apgar, expanded dining facilities at Lake McDonald, and employee dormitories at both locations. Eight months later, NPS met with Great Northern representatives in St. Paul again and wrangled an agreement that the company would build three cabin units or an annex on the hotel for a total of fifty rooms. This was substantially fewer rooms than in the earlier proposal, but it was understood that NPS would remodel and expand the government-owned hotel as funds became available. In the final agreement, signed by Wirth and Budd in August 1954, Great Northern's commitment was further reduced to "three 14-room motels" at the Lake McDonald Hotel location for an estimated cost of \$195,000. In that agreement, Lake McDonald was listed top priority, followed by Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director, April 21, 1950, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹⁰ Regional Chief, Concessions Management to Regional Director, February 6, 1952, Chief Counsel and Assistant Chief of Concessions Management to the Director, March 12, 1952, and John M. Budd to

As Great Northern at last proceeded with its long-awaited new construction in the spring of 1955, Budd informed Wirth that the company was changing the order of priorities, moving Swiftcurrent to the top and putting Lake McDonald third after Rising Sun. Thus, it would complete the work at Swiftcurrent in 1955, turn to Rising Sun in 1956, and build the three motels at Lake McDonald in 1957. It was putting off the work at Lake McDonald because it wanted to see what NPS would do with the government-owned hotel.²⁹¹

Budd and Wirth continued to exchange plans for Lake McDonald. In 1956, NPS had architectural drawings prepared “for reconstruction of the existing hotel” that placed the estimated cost to the government at \$1,056,500.²⁹² As the cost seemed high, NPS reversed course, suggested abandonment of the hotel facility, and once more urged Great Northern to cooperate with NPS in new development at Apgar instead. Great Northern reaffirmed it was not interested in Apgar and proposed \$720,000 in improvements at Lake McDonald Hotel. Later it dropped that amount to \$352,000. NPS then considered a plan to remove three or more of the 27 existing cabins at Lake McDonald to make way for new development. All these various plans stalled. While the concessioner complained that it could not start on renovations until it knew what NPS was doing to the government-owned buildings, NPS likewise hesitated to remove old buildings until it knew what the concessioner was prepared to build in their place.²⁹³ Finally, Great Northern’s contractor, Don Knutson, launched into renovation of the government-owned Lake McDonald Hotel in 1958. Knutson’s improvements included the addition of a cocktail lounge and gift shop in a space formerly occupied by a luggage check room, reconfiguration of public bathrooms, construction of a new front desk, and conversion of some of the first-floor guest rooms into office and utility rooms. The name Lake McDonald Hotel was changed to Lake McDonald Lodge.²⁹⁴

Part of Great Northern’s and NPS’s difficulty in coming to agreement on the Lake McDonald facility had to do with it being a government-owned building. Part of the difficulty stemmed from their both awaiting developments at Apgar, where motels began to pop up like mushrooms after a spring rain. Whatever happened on the various inholdings at Apgar was outside the purview of NPS concessions

Conrad L. Wirth, August 9, 1954, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; Assistant Regional Director to Regional Director, November 19, 1952, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹¹ John M. Budd to Conrad L. Wirth, June 7, 1955, Wirth to Budd, November 23, 1955, and Budd to Wirth, November 28, 1955, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹² Superintendent to Regional Director, December 5, 1956, C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹³ Superintendent to Regional Director, August 16, 1957, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹⁴ Mark Hufstetler, “Cultural Landscape Report: Lake McDonald Lodge Historic District, Glacier National Park, Montana,” report prepared for National Park Service by Renewable Technologies, Inc., February 2006, p. 21.

management, so the concessioner and NPS essentially watched those developments as interested bystanders even as they occurred inside the park.

The main developer at Apgar was William R. “Bill” Mackin, a resident of the area since the 1930s. Bill Mackin married Jeanette Apgar in 1936 in Deadwood, South Dakota and moved to her parents’ property at the foot of Lake McDonald soon thereafter, where he assisted his in-laws in expanding their cabin resort in the late 1930s. Mackin and his wife bought the resort in 1941 and when the couple divorced five years later Mackin got the land. He began to modernize the facilities in the late 1940s with completion of new water lines, installation of bathrooms and kitchenettes, and substitution of better heating systems. Some cabins were moved and strung together to resemble motel units. In 1951, Mackin built a single-story, frame, nine-unit motel, perhaps the first actual motel in Apgar. It sat on concrete piers facing the road. The next year, he built a six-unit motel with picture windows facing McDonald Creek. As Mackin’s motels attracted a lively business another Apgar resident, John Washburn, opened a five-unit hotel in 1953 and the Greenwalt family opened a twenty-unit motel in 1954. Frank and Laura Stuart, who owned a parcel of land just north of the McDonald Lake Hotel, built a ten-unit motel on their property in 1955-56 and added a second story one year later.²⁹⁵

In the winter of 1955-56, Mackin started construction of the Village Inn. Designed by Kalispell architect Richard Taylor, the building exhibited a modernist architectural style with large vertical window panes ranked along the front façade facing Lake McDonald. In contrast to earlier motel units at Apgar, which were “drawn back into the trees to provide a sense of wilderness retreat,” the Village Inn stood prominently on the lakeshore to take full advantage of the view up the lake. Its twenty-four units were stacked two high and one deep so that every unit had possession of the view. Bathrooms were placed in the rear of each unit. The facility cost an estimated \$140,000. Mackin moved eight of his guest cabins out of the way to make room for it. A twelve-unit addition to the motel was completed over the winter of 1957-58. A separate two-story office building was constructed at the same time.²⁹⁶

NPS accepted these developments and even included them in annual reports on improvements to visitor accommodations in Glacier. As early as December 1956, Superintendent Emmert conferred with Regional Director Baker about the suitability of acquiring the new motels in Apgar and incorporating them into the concession

²⁹⁵ Jessie Ravage, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination, Apgar’s Cabin Resort and Village Inn Historic District,” 2010, pp. 20-22; Glacier National Park, “Annual Report of Improvements to Visitor Accommodations and Services,” undated, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹⁶ Jessie Ravage, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination, Apgar’s Cabin Resort and Village Inn Historic District,” 2010, p. 25.

operation.²⁹⁷ In 1957, the park administration prepared a list of all the private inholdings at Apgar, with the tract number, name of owner, improvements, acreage, and estimated cost of acquisition of each parcel. The total cost was \$797,180, which the park administration proposed to put in the following year's acquisition program budget.²⁹⁸ That did not happen, which forced the park administration to approach land acquisitions on a more opportunistic basis. In 1958, Mackin sold most of his property excluding the Village Inn to the Belton Mercantile Company, and the park administration thought the Belton Mercantile Company might sell the combined holding to the government. That did not happen either. However, NPS was able to purchase Mackin's remaining property, his prized Village Inn, for \$230,000 in 1959. The purchase included the two-story building facing the lake together with an addition and the office building.²⁹⁹

As soon as NPS acquired the Village Inn it initiated the process of adding the property with its 36 guest rooms to the concession operation. Knutson was requested to take over the Village Inn operation in the upcoming season and he was notified that there would be an adjustment of the franchise fee. As the Village Inn was another government-owned building, NPS determined that use of the building would increase the franchise fee by \$3,500. The change to the concession contract was made effective from December 31, 1959, one year before Great Northern sold everything to Don Hummel.³⁰⁰

Meanwhile, the land acquisitions program petered out. In 1960, it was still thought that all the Belton Mercantile Company's holdings at Apgar together with the Stuart Motel property just north of Lake McDonald Lodge could be acquired for approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000. But those acquisitions never came to pass. NPS did manage to acquire several inholdings and dispose of several buildings around Lake McDonald over the next few years, while numerous inholdings with private cabins, guest cabins, and a few small motels remained.³⁰¹

Mission 66 and Visitor Accommodations in Glacier

²⁹⁷ Superintendent to Regional Director, December 5, 1956, C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹⁸ Glacier National Park, "Private Land standing in the way of Apgar Development," undated, C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

²⁹⁹ Jessie Ravage, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination, Apgar's Cabin Resort and Village Inn Historic District," 2010, p. 25.

³⁰⁰ Regional Director to the Director, November 2, 1959, Assistant Director to Regional Director, November 20, 1959, and Chief of Concessions Management to Regional Director, December 21, 1959, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

³⁰¹ Hubert H. Humphrey to Conrad L. Wirth, March 9, 1960, Folder 1, File Unit 037, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1964, 3.

Mission 66 was Director Wirth's program to modernize and redevelop national parks. Launched in 1956, the ten-year construction program was set to be completed by 1966 when NPS would be fifty years old. Wirth masterfully sold the ambitious program to Congress and the Eisenhower administration. Through Mission 66 the NPS received dramatic increases in appropriations. Congress appropriated \$49 million for Mission 66 in 1956, \$68 million in 1957, and \$76 million in 1958. The construction dollars increased to more than \$128 million in 1965. NPS's total ten-year budget estimate for Mission 66, not including the effects of inflation and new additions to the National Park System, was \$786,545,600. After more funds were added to compensate for inflation and new-areas development, total Mission 66 funding topped \$1 billion.³⁰²

Wirth offered two main rationales for his systemwide redevelopment program. First was the fact that park infrastructure needed attention after years of neglect. Federal spending on parks had been curtailed through World War II, the immediate postwar years, and the Korean War, leaving a backlog of repair work to do. Second was the burgeoning public use of parks in the postwar era. NPS estimated total visitation would grow to 80 million by 1966. In fact, it would top 133 million. Parks had to be re-engineered to accommodate those numbers and stem overcrowding.³⁰³

A key element of Mission 66 plans was to improve visitor *circulation* in the larger parks like Glacier. NPS sought to relieve pressure of numbers at the most popular gathering places by redistributing visitors to other parts of the park. Modern visitors to Glacier were primarily automobile-borne visitors who explored the park via roads. Planners thought that the increased mobility of the modern visitor could be turned to advantage to spread visitor use more evenly around Glacier. They believed that by modernizing the park's infrastructure they could keep traffic flowing, reduce the feeling of crowding, and enable the park to accommodate larger numbers overall without the visitor experience being degraded. To unclog destination points like Many Glacier, the driving tour was encouraged. The sinuous park road, the scenic overlook, and the wayside exhibit came to frame the common visitor experience as never before.³⁰⁴

Glacier received about \$23 million in Mission 66 development funds over the ten-year span. Major Mission 66 projects in Glacier included visitor centers at Logan Pass and St. Mary and development of the Camas Road from Apgar over to the North Fork. Other Mission 66 projects included campground and picnic area development, employee housing, and a new administrative building at park

³⁰² Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 256, 261.

³⁰³ Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 237-38, 261.

³⁰⁴ Catton, *National Park, City Playground*, 142.

headquarters. Considerable infrastructure development went into the ground in the form of water and sewer lines and gas and electric utilities to support visitor accommodations. Mission 66 spending on concession buildings such as the Lake McDonald Lodge coffee shop was relatively minor compared with Mission 66 spending on everything else, but it was important because concession buildings were highly visible to the public.³⁰⁵

As in the past the government looked to the private sector for help in developing new visitor facilities. Systemwide, NPS wanted concessioners to spend \$47 million on concessioner-built facilities. It got about \$33 million. In Glacier, NPS wanted Great Northern to invest not only in repairs but in an expansive new construction program. Don Knutson, taking over management of Glacier Park Company in 1956, boldly informed Regional Director Baker that Great Northern was prepared to spend about \$3 million on its Glacier properties. In 1957, Knutson walked that back to \$2 million. Great Northern's actual investment in the Glacier properties in the Mission 66 period was probably under \$1 million.³⁰⁶

The launch of Mission 66 came less than a year after Great Northern recommitted to a long-term concession contract in Glacier, so Mission 66 planning happened to coincide with the park administration's efforts to finalize a concession development program with Glacier Park Company. Indeed, Great Northern contracted with Don Knutson's company to take over management of Glacier Park Company and revamp its facilities just as Wirth's Mission 66 staff began issuing data calls to all park superintendents. Due to the timing, Superintendent Emmert delayed sending his report on Glacier's accommodations to the Mission 66 staff.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the new construction that Great Northern undertook in Glacier in 1956-57 and the renovations that Knutson made to Many Glacier Hotel and Lake McDonald Lodge in 1957-58 were taken into account in the Glacier National Park Final Prospectus for Mission 66, which was completed in 1959. In the final analysis, all the new concession development that was done at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun and elsewhere was consistent with the Mission 66 program.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Bristol, *Glacier National Park*, 136-37; Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 244.

³⁰⁶ Ethan Carr, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, and Len Warner, "National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources," 2015, p. 23; Superintendent to the Director, July 8, 1957, Folder 1, File Unit 037, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Regional Director to Superintendent, October 31, 1956, and Regional Director to the Director, April 2, 1957, C3828, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

³⁰⁷ Chief, Mission 66 Staff to Superintendent, June 21, 1957 and Superintendent to Director, July 8, 1957, Folder 1, File Unit 037, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³⁰⁸ National Park Service, "Glacier National Park Final Prospectus, Mission 66," January 1959, Folder 3, File Unit 02, Series 2.3, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

At Swiftcurrent, Glacier Park Company built three fourteen-unit motels with a total guest capacity of 129, made an addition to the store and café, added an employee dormitory, and converted four cabins from employee to guest use. A steel building was erected behind the kitchen for storage and washing of garbage cans, and electrical wiring was put underground. With costs of new equipment added in, the company's total expenditures came to \$362,650. The government, for its part, expended \$141,430 on development of utilities, roads, and parking areas. Under a government contract, the water and sewer systems in the cabin area was expanded at a cost of \$73,697. The Swiftcurrent Auto Camp was renamed the Swiftcurrent Motor Inn.³⁰⁹

At Rising Sun, the company built two fourteen-unit motels with capacity for eighty-six guests and an employee dormitory addition on the café/store. The estimated cost was \$205,434. The government built a new water distribution and waste disposal system, including an intake structure on Roes Creek and a chlorinator house. The government also buried power lines and improved the roads and parking areas for a total cost of \$150,000. The Rising Sun Auto Camp was renamed the Rising Sun Motor Inn.³¹⁰

NPS considered constructing visitor centers at Rising Sun, Many Glacier, and Lake McDonald. Visitor centers were a Mission 66 innovation to help improve visitor circulation. Ultimately the Mission 66 plan for Glacier settled upon three visitor centers at St. Mary, Logan Pass, and Apgar. The money ran out before the visitor center at Apgar was built.³¹¹

Mission 66 highlighted the basic conundrum in national park policy of how to reconcile preservation and use. Wirth insisted that the fundamental purpose of Mission 66 was not development but conservation. NPS had to innovate new approaches to park management and design in order to keep pace with modern forms

³⁰⁹ Glacier National Park, "Annual Report of Improvements to Visitor Accommodations and Services," undated, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; Superintendent to Director, April 4, 1956, Acting Chief to Director, April 13, 1956, and J. S. Jeffries to J. W. Emmert, April 26, 1956, Folder 2, File Unit 040, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Narrative Statement and Form 10-195 for Water and Sewer Systems, Swiftcurrent Cabin Area, August 30, 1956, Folder 1, File Unit 027, Series 02.03, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³¹⁰ Glacier National Park, "Annual Report of Improvements to Visitor Accommodations and Services," undated, File C58, Box 965, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; Narrative Statement and Form 10-174 for Water and Sewer Systems, Swiftcurrent Cabin Area, February 12, 1958, Folder 1, File Unit 027, Series 02.03, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³¹¹ Superintendent to Chief, WODC, January 21, 1958, Chief Park Naturalist to Superintendent, September 22, 1958, Acting Chief of Design and Construction to Chief, WODC, October 2, 1958, and Meeting at WODC, October 9, 1958, Folder 5, File Unit 02, Series 02.03, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Bristol, *Glacier National Park*, 136-37.

of outdoor recreation. Critics thought it went too far and risked undermining the national park idea.

Wirth's Mission 66 planning team prepared guidelines aimed at protecting national park ideals. Several guidelines pertained directly to concessions. For example, the guidelines held that "Concession-type services should be provided only in those areas where required for proper, appropriate park experience, and where these services cannot be furnished satisfactorily in neighboring communities." Another guideline stated that "operating and public-use facilities of both government and concessioners which encroach upon the important park features should be eliminated or relocated at sites of lesser importance, either within or outside the parks." The proposal to relocate visitor facilities to communities outside of parks was not new; Drury had advocated it. Almost every time NPS tried to remove existing park development, however, it encountered strong resistance by local business interests. So, this Mission 66 guideline was soon downplayed. That gave critics of Mission 66 more cause for concern.³¹²

An article appeared in the May 1960 issue of *National Wildlands News* with the provocative title, "Toward Heartland Clearing at Glacier." The writer, noting that a change of concessioners for Glacier was in the offing, challenged NPS to "accept this opportunity to further clear Glacier's heartlands of unsightly structures." The author noted that obsolete chalets had been removed at three locations in Glacier already, and argued that now was the time to remove the old hotels at Many Glacier and Lake McDonald and the motels and cabin camps at Swiftcurrent, Rising Sun, and Apgar, thereby restoring those areas' wilderness values.³¹³

The article prompted numerous letters to NPS, some in favor of the idea and some opposed. NPS, in its response to these letters, included in each reply a standard paragraph which stated unequivocally that the facilities would not be removed:

The removal of the overnight accommodations from Glacier National Park would be a great inconvenience to many visitors and would detract from their enjoyment of the area. The experience of a night or two in the Park under memorable conditions means a great deal to them. Although the Glacier Park Company, a subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway, has declared its interest in finding a purchaser for the concession facilities, we have given no thought to closing the establishments.³¹⁴

³¹² Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 258-59; Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, 233-34.

³¹³ "Toward Heartland Clearing at Glacier," *National Wildland News* 1, no. 6 (May 1960), 1.

³¹⁴ A. C. Stratton to Helena Huntington Smith, May 20, 1960, Folder 1, File Unit 037, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

The author of the article was Devereux Butcher, a former executive director of the National Parks Association (NPA) and longtime editor of *National Parks Magazine*. Butcher had recently split with the NPA over its weak opposition to NPS's Mission 66 program. He launched his own publication, *National Wildlands News* in December 1959. His article about Glacier followed an earlier editorial titled "The Stage Coach Era," in which he argued that visitor accommodations no longer had a place in the interiors of national parks; they should all be relocated to the peripheries. In that editorial, Butcher began with a rhetorical question: "Is the Mission 66 approach to taking care of increasing numbers of national park visitors the best?" Butcher railed against what he saw as the commercialization of national parks and the abandonment of NPS principles. He sounded alarms over the growth of downhill ski facilities, the spread of powerboating and marinas, the development of resort villages, and the accommodation of gift shops and commercial-type entertainments. He thought Mission 66 held promise for the national parks but was being misdirected.³¹⁵

Critics also objected to the sharp trend toward modernist architecture in national parks. By the early 1950s, NPS architects adopted modernist forms in place of the exaggerated craftsman or "government rustic" style that had prevailed in national park architectural design since 1916. Butcher published an article in 1952 titled "For a Return to Harmony in Park Architecture," which charged that NPS had abandoned its longstanding policy of designing buildings to harmonize with their environment. Ethan Carr, author of *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, observes that this criticism confused harmony with something else, an aesthetic preference for the pseudo vernacular form of government rustic. It was true that a hallmark of the government rustic style was to incorporate native materials and to use colors and lines that made buildings blend into their natural settings. But modernist architecture could aim toward the same thing, using low profiles and horizontal massing as well as natural materials, rough textures, and color schemes. What really bothered those critics was that the modernist design in the national park context seemed urban, common, and not distinctive to national parks. The new motel units at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun, while architecturally plain compared with the older hotels and chalets, probably succeeded better than they did in blending into the landscape. The Swiftcurrent Motor Inn, tucked back in the trees, was hardly visible to anyone but motel patrons. The Rising Sun Motor Inn was situated off the road and painted in a color scheme not to call attention. That was in sharp contrast with Many

³¹⁵ Devereux Butcher, "The Stage Coach Era," *National Wildlands News* 1, no. 2 (January 1960), 2; Miles, *Guardians of the Parks*, 188-93.

Glacier Hotel, standing picturesquely and grandly on the shore of Swiftcurrent Lake.³¹⁶

NPS had no choice but to adopt modernist architecture. To expand visitor accommodations in Glacier by constructing more grand structures like Many Glacier Hotel was not economically feasible nor desirable. Modernist architecture met NPS requirements in ensuring that new construction was cost efficient and practical. As Mission 66 historian Ethan Carr points out, “New postwar building technologies made construction more rapid, economical, and efficient. No builder could afford to ignore labor-saving techniques such as the prefabrication of structural elements, innovative uses of steel and concrete, curtain wall construction, and extensive applications of glass.”³¹⁷

When it came to visitor accommodations, Mission 66 had to respond to changing public demand. The vacationing American family wanted motel rooms with private bath, free linens and towels, central heat, and convenient parking all at an affordable rate. The old-style housekeeping cabin was too primitive; the grand park hotel was too fancy. The only way concessioners could provide what the public wanted was to build new accommodations in the modernist style of the plain, shoebox motel.

³¹⁶ Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, 133-36.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, 137.

Chapter 5

Glacier Enters its Post-Railroad Era, 1960-1990

Glacier, the nation's premier railroad park, entered its post-railroad era in the 1960s. National park concessions drew on another grand tradition besides their old connection with railroad capital. The second grand tradition featured the family-owned business that was passed down from generation to generation. The best-known example was the Curry family, who started a transportation service in Yellowstone in 1894, then moved to Yosemite National Park in 1898, where the Curry family grew its enterprise from a camp with seven tents into the park's prime concession, Yosemite Park and Curry Company. In Glacier's post-railroad era, NPS partnered with two such family business concerns. One was the Luding family who took over operation of the Sperry and Granite Park chalets in the mid 1950s, eventually incorporated as Belton Chalets, Inc., and stuck with the business through more than six decades. The second was Don Hummel, a self-made businessman who went from seasonal ranger to startup concessioner at Lassen Volcanic National Park, California during the hardest years of the Great Depression. After getting established at Lassen Volcanic, Hummel extended his interests to Mount McKinley National Park in 1957, and Glacier in 1960.³¹⁸

Hummel's nearly fifty-year career as a national park concessioner spanned a middle era in national park concession history, when railroad capital fell away and NPS transitioned to partnering with smaller concession companies who were by and large descended from those family-owned businesses like Curry's and Hummel's. Ironically, Hummel himself was instrumental in ushering in the present era of national park concessions in which large corporations like Xanterra, Forever Resorts, and the food service giant Aramark hold concession contracts in many of the big national parks.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 131; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 69-82.

³¹⁹ Christopher Palmeri, "Coddled Concessionaires," *Forbes* 156, no. 11 (November 6, 1995), 74-75.

Don Hummel's Glacier Park, Inc.

Don Hummel took possession of Glacier Park Company's properties in December 1960. The purchase agreement between Glacier Park Company and Hummel included sale of Glacier Park Hotel outside the entrance to the park at East Glacier, Montana, and Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada, as well as transfer of capital stock in Glacier Park Transport Company and Waterton Transport Company, Ltd.³²⁰

The concession contract between NPS and Hummel was executed on May 10, 1961 and covered the period from January 1, 1961 through December 31, 1985, twenty-five years. The contract mostly followed the provisions of the last concession contract made with Glacier Park Company in 1954 word for word. Changes or additions were minor. The contract's Section 4 on land and improvements added the Village Inn to the list of properties assigned to the concessioner. Altogether six properties were listed in Hummel's contract, identified in some cases by old names. They were: (1) Many Glacier Hotel, (2) Lake McDonald Hotel (renamed Lake McDonald Lodge), (3) Two Medicine Camp Store, (4) Rising Sun Cabin Camp (renamed Rising Sun Motor Inn), (5) Swiftcurrent Cabin Camp (renamed Swiftcurrent Motor Inn), and (6) Village Inn. Section 9 on the franchise fee increased the base sum from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Section 15 on preferential rights was broadened to include bus and boat transportation operations, reflecting the consolidation of those visitor services with lodging and food service under a single concession contract. Section 20 on general provisions added a few more clauses to the previous set of nondiscrimination protections toward employees and employment applicants.³²¹

On the touchy matter of possessory interest there was no change in the language from the 1954 agreement. Section 5 on concessioner's improvements defined the concessioner's possessory interest as "all incidents of ownership, except legal title which shall be vested in the United States." Section 12 on compensation for concessioner's possessory interest further detailed how the possessory interest would be calculated and handled in case of resale.³²²

³²⁰ Agreement dated January 11, 1961, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³²¹ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Glacier Park, Inc., Contract No. 14-10-0100-1039, May 10, 1961, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³²² United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Glacier Park, Inc., Contract No. 14-10-0100-1039, May 10, 1961, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

NPS prepared long-term concession contracts such as this one at the Washington level. Chief of Concessions Management Thomas F. Flynn, Jr. coordinated the contract negotiation, in which Director Wirth took part. In February 1961 the proposed contract was sent up to the Office of the Secretary of the Interior for recommendation. Wirth noted in a cover letter to the assistant secretary that Hummel was a seasoned national park concessioner with operations in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska and Lassen Volcanic National Park, California; he was reputable and NPS was confident he would perform well in Glacier. The Office of the Secretary transmitted the proposed contract to the Congress on March 6. The House Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs held a hearing on the contract on May 2 and a resolution was adopted giving notice that the committee had no objection to the secretary's recommendation that the contract be awarded to Glacier Park, Inc.³²³

As required by the contract, Hummel submitted an opening balance sheet showing the concession operation's assets and liabilities. This document went to the superintendent in April 1962, then to the regional director, and then to the Washington Office. At the Washington level, NPS found Hummel's opening balance sheet to be deficient. The contract stipulated that it was to be accompanied by a schedule "describing the items sufficiently in detail to establish clearly their identity and respective values." NPS wanted a breakdown of the assigned value of each building. Hummel complied with this request only half way. The "Buildings Schedule" that he finally submitted in May 1963 itemized some but not all his buildings and it did not assign specific values to any of them. He claimed that he could not assign specific values to each building without having each one appraised, and he did not want to pay for an appraiser. Behind the posturing was the fact that both parties knew they would tussle over how much maintenance was due on all those buildings. Hummel may have figured, too, that assigning a value to every building could lead to a reduction of value of his possessory interest when the time came to sell the property to the next concessioner.³²⁴

Hummel's "Buildings Schedule" is quoted verbatim as a record of the concessioner-owned buildings in Glacier in 1961. The schedule did not include Glacier Park, Inc.'s holdings outside the park nor the government-owned buildings at

³²³ Thomas F. Flynn, Jr. to Don Hummel, December 27, 1960, Director to Assistant Secretary, Public Land Management, February 9, 1961, and Chief of Concessions Management to Director, May 8, 1961, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

³²⁴ Acting Assistant Director to Regional Director, April 27, 1962, Assistant Director to Regional Director, August 16, 1962, and Don Hummel to H. L. Bill, May 6, 1963, File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

Lake McDonald and Apgar. The number of cabins at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun was rounded to fifty apiece without explanation.

Buildings Schedule³²⁵

Many Glaciers:

1. Hotel and annex, 231 rooms and dining room, kitchen, cocktail lounge, convention rooms, and gift shop.
2. Two dormitory buildings
3. Three caretaker residences
4. Garage for bus storage

Swiftcurrent Motor Inn:

1. Central building, containing office, coffee shop, kitchen, gift shop, and camp store
2. Four motel units containing 50 rooms
3. Fifty – one and two room cabins
4. Central shower, linen and laundry building
5. Utility building

Rising Sun Motor Inn:

1. Central building containing office, coffee shop, kitchen, gift shop and camp store
2. Two motel units containing 28 rooms
3. Fifty – one and two room cottages
4. Dormitory, linen and laundry building

Lake McDonald Lodge:

1. Camp store
2. Two dormitories
3. Caretaker's garage
4. Six room house

Two Medicine:

1. Central building, housing gift shop, camp store, lunch room, employees quarters and kitchen
2. Generator building

³²⁵ File C3823, Box 846, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II.

At the end of 1965, NPS proposed to revise the franchise fee. The existing franchise fee was \$2,500 plus one-fourth of 1 percent of concessioners' gross receipts. NPS had initiated a new formula for assessing franchise fees that did away with a flat fee and substituted a straight percentage fee of 2 percent of concessioners' gross receipts. Based on Glacier Park, Inc.'s annual gross receipts from 1961 to 1964, that would have raised Hummel's franchise fee from around \$5,549 to \$27,313 per year. Hummel balked at that. Chief of Concessions Flynn settled on a compromise: the flat fee would be replaced by a fee for all government-owned buildings assigned to the concessioner, while the percentage fee would remain at one fourth of 1 percent. The contract was amended at the end of 1966. A list of government-owned structures and the annual fee for each was attached to the contract as Exhibit A.

Exhibit A is quoted verbatim as a record of the government-owned buildings used by the concession operation in 1966. Most were part of the Lake McDonald Lodge complex; the last three on the list were at Apgar.

GOVERNMENT-OWNED STRUCTURES ASSIGNED TO Glacier
Park, Inc. pursuant to Concession Contract No. 14-10-0100-1039

<u>Building No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Annual Fee</u>
722	Guest cabin	\$ 15.00
723	Guest cabin	15.00
724	Guest cabin	15.00
725	Guest cabin	15.00
726	Guest cabin	15.00
727	Guest cabin	15.00
728	Guest cabin	15.00
729	Guest cabin	10.00
730	Linen storage and hot water system	7.50
731	Guest cabin	15.00
732	Guest cabin	10.00
733	Guest cabin	15.00
734	Guest cabin	15.00
735	Employee dorm	63.00
737	Employee dorm	200.00
738	Employee dorm	25.00
739	Paint storage	5.00
740	Lake McDonald Lodge	800.00
741	Grill and recreation hall	70.00

742	Dispensary, barber, laundry and dorm	20.00
743	Employee dorm	38.00
744	Employee dorm	25.00
746	Engineer residence	10.00
749	Carpenter shop and lumber shed	15.00
751	Root cellar	8.50
1038	Village Inn Motel	1,460.00
1039	Motel office	333.00
1142	Coffee Shop	<u>1,000.00</u>

\$4,250.00*

*To be prorated on a monthly basis when less than a full year is involved.

If the concessions chief was simply interested in obtaining more revenue from the concession, then this result would hardly seem to have been worthwhile. If, on the other hand, Flynn used the franchise fee to obtain more oversight of the many buildings involved in the concession operation, then the change in franchise fee served its purpose. Flynn probably had the second purpose in view. The Concession Policy Act of 1965 explicitly states that “Consideration of revenue to the United States shall be subordinate to the objectives of protecting and preserving the areas and of providing adequate and appropriate services for visitors at reasonable rates.”³²⁶ The revenue was a paltry sum, whereas the total value of all those buildings was significant. The schedule of government-owned buildings no doubt added to Hummel’s sense of grievance that NPS was slowly accreting greater control over concessioners’ operations – in his phrase, “stealing the national parks” – just as it had been doing since the 1930s.

The Flood of 1964 and New Construction in 1965

There was a heavier than normal snowpack in 1964. A stretch of unseasonably warm days in early June caused a surge of snowmelt. Then a torrential rainstorm hit, triggering a major flood event on June 8, 1964. Nine counties around Glacier were declared federal disaster areas and an estimated \$63 million of damage was done to roads, bridges, campgrounds, and buildings. U.S. Highway 2 and the Going-to-the-Sun Road were both closed by slides and bridge collapses. The park was closed to visitors for many days while emergency repairs were made. But 600 concession

³²⁶ Public Law 89-249, 79 Stat. 969, October 9, 1965.

employees were already on the job and had to be cared for during the cleanup. Concession facilities did not reopen for guests until June 29.³²⁷

Concession facilities at Many Glacier, Swiftcurrent, Rising Sun, Lake McDonald, and Apgar all sustained flood damage. Swiftcurrent Lake rose so high it flooded the bottom floor of Many Glacier Hotel. Flood water submerged electrical transformers housed in the basement of the Swiftcurrent Motor Lodge, knocking out power. The worst damage occurred on the west side. Hummel described what he found after he flew from the east side over to West Glacier aboard a Glacier County Civil Defense helicopter:

We flew into the Village Inn and inspected the damage. Ten-mile-long Lake McDonald had risen six feet in eight hours. I waded through the Inn with water up to my thighs, pushing aside all the furniture floating around. My manager said they could have moved the furniture to the second floor, but were assured by the ranger that it would be foolish – they would never have water that high. Some 13 large plate glass windows had been smashed and the place was filled with silt and debris. Incredible.

We then flew to Lake McDonald Lodge. The damage was appalling. Snyder Creek had rampaged down the mountain, undermining huge cedar trees which formed a dam that diverted the flood directly into the hotel. The dining room had been undermined, an empty shell hanging over eroded streambanks. Its floor lay at the bottom of the creek. The big stone fireplace that had stood at its far end was completely gone. Ragged logs and the tattered remains of its roof hung over empty space. The mounted elk and goat heads still hung intact on what remained of the walls, dangling above the creek.³²⁸

NPS made rapid repairs to Lake McDonald Lodge in 1964. Since the whole park was consumed by emergency repairs during the summer and fall, putting the lodge back to its original condition was not a high priority at that time. Some repairs, such as the fireplace and dining room windows, were made so quickly that the work did not pass muster when the historic lodge was put through extensive renovations some twenty-five years later. At that time (in 1989) the dining room floor, windows, and fireplace were ripped out and rebuilt closer to the original design.³²⁹

The flood in 1964 also damaged the Lake McDonald Lodge's auditorium/recreational hall. That building contained a small grill and soda fountain for serving guests. Rather than restore that facility's kitchen and dining area, NPS decided to build a new modern building with coffee shop.

³²⁷ Bristol, *Glacier National Park*, 138-39; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 230-36.

³²⁸ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 232-33.

³²⁹ Mark Hufstetler, "Cultural Landscape Report: Lake McDonald Lodge Historic District, Glacier National Park, Montana," report prepared for National Park Service by Renewable Technologies, Inc., February 2006, p. 23. See also Barnes, *Great Lodges of the West*, 44-46.

Over the winter of 1964-65, Glacier Park, Inc. developed plans for a new coffee shop at Rising Sun as well. Glacier Park, Inc. hired the architectural firm of Brinkman and Lenon, Kalispell, to design the building. Glacier Park, Inc. submitted the plans to NPS, where they were reviewed by WODC and approved by the regional office in January 1965. Glacier Park, Inc. also hired Brinkman and Lenon to prepare plans for remodeling the existing café/store, converting some of the space into motel rooms. Those plans were circulated as well and approved in July 1965.³³⁰

Construction crews built the coffee shop at Lake McDonald in the summer of 1965 and the coffee shop at Rising Sun in the summer of 1966. The government paid for the new coffee shop at Lake McDonald while Glacier Park, Inc. paid for the development at Rising Sun. NPS consulted with Hummel's architects on how to install fixed equipment in the kitchen of the former structure. Since the coffee shop at Lake McDonald was built under federal appropriation, NPS stipulated that Glacier Park, Inc. did not accrue any possessory interest in that building aside from the \$14,000 value of fixed equipment. The government's investment was \$160,000.³³¹ Glacier Park, Inc.'s investment in the new coffee shop at Rising Sun is not known.

Upgrading Maintenance

Overdue maintenance on old buildings, a perennial concern since World War II, only became more worrisome as time went on. An excerpt from an inspection report by Hudson Bay District Ranger Robert N. Brauson gives a flavor of the kinds of things that needed attention. The subject of Brauson's inspection was Many Glacier Hotel:

Balconies on the south annex on the lake side are supported by steel columns which are fastened to the building with lag screws that are pulling out of the wood. The bottoms of these steel columns have no support. Structurally these columns are doing very little to support the balconies.³³²

³³⁰ Keith Neilson to Don Hummel, January 20, 1965, Hummel to Neilson, January 25, 1965, Neilson to Hummel, January 27, 1965, Acting Regional Director to Director, January 28, 1965, Acting Assistant Regional Director to Director, June 10, 1965, and Neilson to Hummel, June 17, 1965, Folder 1, File Unit 041, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³³¹ Superintendent to Director, May 10, 1966, File C2621, Box 769, Entry 11a, RG 79, NA II; Thomas F. Flynn, Jr., to Elbert Smith, July 7, 1965, and Management Assistant to Superintendent, July 26, 1965, Folder 1, File Unit 041, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³³² Hudson Bay District Ranger to East Unit Manager, July 24, 1970, Folder 2, File Unit 041, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

The balconies were in danger of collapse because year after year they had weathered the strain of heavy snow loads. Cables were installed to guy up sagging beams but some of the cables were no longer effective because “some of the wooden cantilevered members of the balconies are rotten where they come in contact with the cable suspension system.” This kind of issue was prevalent throughout the park.

NPS and the concessioner acquired new responsibilities under federal laws and regulations. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), established in 1970, set new federal standards for building and fire safety. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) intensified NPS’s concern for preserving historic resources. James W. Sheire’s historic resource study for Glacier National Park, completed in 1970, underscored the historical significance of Glacier’s hotels. These conditions pointed to the need for closer cooperation between the park administration and the concessioner in maintaining old buildings.³³³

In 1967, Superintendent Keith Neilson tried to get Hummel as president of Glacier Park, Inc. to sign an agreement to provide for a regular schedule of building maintenance but Hummel refused. Instead, Hummel agreed to an annual joint inspection of government-owned buildings assigned to the concession, with maintenance needs being identified on a case by case basis. When inspection of Lake McDonald Lodge pointed to the need to replace the balconies the concessioner balked. To force the issue, Superintendent Neilson advised the concessioner by letter that the balconies were integral to the fire escape system; therefore, the lodge would not open until the balconies were replaced. The park administration obtained an allotment of \$10,000, requested a waiver of possessory rights in connection with the new balconies, and completed the work by contract.³³⁴

In 1970, Director Hartzog directed all park superintendents to establish a procedure in cooperation with the concessioner to provide annual maintenance inspections for all government buildings assigned to the concession. In February 1971, Superintendent Briggie initiated that effort with Hummel. NPS’s draft memorandum of understanding provided guidelines for maintenance of water lines and good drainage around buildings, electrical wiring inspections, exterior and interior painting, snow removal from roofs, and seasonal opening and closing of buildings. Hummel modified the NPS draft memorandum of understanding so that it

³³³ William J. Briggie to Al Donau, October 30, 1973, and Phillip R. Iversen to Ashley C. Roberts, September 25, 1974, Folder 2, File Unit 041, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; James W. Sheire, *Glacier National Park Historic Resource Study* (Philadelphia: National Park Service, Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, 1970), 209-11.

³³⁴ Superintendent to Regional Director, March 25, 1969, Folder 2, File Unit 037, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

applied to government-owned buildings only.³³⁵ Briggie reminded Hummel that NPS responsibilities under OSHA and NHPA extended to Many Glacier Hotel and other concession-owned buildings in the park since the U.S. government held title to those buildings.³³⁶

The increasing technical demands in overseeing maintenance of buildings set the stage for NPS's decision to beef up concession management at the field level in the 1970s. Until then, concessions management was centralized in the Washington Office with some technical support in the regional offices. Superintendents were given oversight of concessions, but they were not trained to do building inspections, perform audits, or handle arcane contractual issues. In the 1960s, Superintendent Keith Neilson mostly delegated the growing concession management workload to his management assistant, Dan S. Nelson. Nelson handled such routine yet time-consuming tasks as coordinating with Glacier's concessioners about opening and closing dates.³³⁷ In 1976, Glacier added to its staff its first full-time, permanent concessions management specialist, Richard Munro.³³⁸

Munro's first task was to prepare a concessions management plan for Glacier. The opening paragraphs of Munro's plan described roles and responsibilities, making it clear that concessions management in Glacier was now centered at the park, not in the Washington Office. While the superintendent had responsibility for the concession operation, much of the work was delegated to other park staff. The management assistant had responsibility for concession management and land acquisitions and assisted the superintendent and division chiefs by coordination of departmental functions. The concessions management specialist assisted the management assistant by making recommendations on all aspects of the concessioner operations; carried out evaluation inspections; followed up on health, safety, and fire inspections; reviewed concessioner financial reports; had oversight of rates and services; and reviewed complaints and operating problems with the concessioner. Other park staff assisted in myriad other concession management

³³⁵ William J. Briggie to Don Hummel, February 18, 1971, Hummel to Briggie, April 12, 1971, and "Memorandum for Maintenance and Repair Responsibility for Concession-Operated Government Buildings in Glacier National Park," April 17, 1971, Folder 2, File Unit 041, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³³⁶ William J. Briggie to Al Donau, October 30, 1973, Folder 2, File Unit 041, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³³⁷ Dan S. Nelson to Al Donau, April 1, 1969, Folder 5, File Unit 01, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³³⁸ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1976, p. 11.

duties. For example, district rangers provided safety orientations to concession employees.³³⁹

In November 1977, Munro sent Hummel a four-page letter giving a digest of all the matters that had come to his attention through the year. All were “areas of service that need improvement to better serve the park visitor.” They ranged from notice of building maintenance items to a critical comment on employees’ informal attire to a request that the concession desist from collecting deposits for room keys. Maintenance items predominated.³⁴⁰ Munro’s letter amounted to a year-end operation evaluations report and that was what it became. As concessions management moved to the park level, the yearly concessioner evaluation report soon became institutionalized, an important tool for exercising leverage over the concession operation.

Hummel bridled at this development just as he contested every other move by NPS to gain more control over facilities maintenance. In November 1978, Hummel returned the second annual concessioner evaluation report to Superintendent Phillip Iversen, signed per NPS’s request, with a rejoinder that he did not like seeing the company’s own “maintenance program included as part of the evaluation report.” The company had offered NPS a list of what it expected to accomplish over a span of years, and it was misleading, Hummel said, to bring up items from that list that had not been done yet.³⁴¹ Maintenance responsibilities remained a sore point between Hummel and NPS.

Hummel Sells to Greyhound

Hummel was profoundly disillusioned with NPS by the time Richard Munro arrived in Glacier to professionalize concessions management there. But Hummel’s issues with NPS went beyond Glacier. In 1974, NPS closed Hummel’s main operation in Lassen Volcanic National Park. NPS’s ostensible reason for the closure was to protect the public from the threat of a volcanic hazard that had previously gone unrecognized. Hummel did not believe it; he thought NPS was using the volcanic hazard for a smokescreen to activate its real agenda of getting overnight accommodations out of national parks. Embittered by his setback in Lassen, Hummel wanted to sell Glacier Park, Inc. and retire. While he prepared to sell, he took an

³³⁹ Richard Munro, “Concessions Management Plan, Glacier National Park, Montana,” December 1977, Folder 4, File Unit 011, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³⁴⁰ Richard J. Munro to Don Hummel, November 28, 1977, Folder 1, File Unit 005, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³⁴¹ Don Hummel to Phillip R. Iversen, November 13, 1978, Folder 12, File Unit 012, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

active role in the Conference of National Park Concessioners where he grew more and more critical of NPS leadership.³⁴²

In Hummel's view, "extreme environmentalists" wanted to remake national parks for the benefit of wilderness recreationists. Hummel thought groups like the Sierra Club acted for the special interest of a small minority, and when they called for greater protection of resources, they were intent on hoarding those resources for their own members. The Sierra Club and its ilk aimed to get overnight accommodations out of parks mainly to degrade access for the masses of people who needed such amenities. These groups had gotten control of NPS policy. As a result, NPS was straying from its mission to administer national parks for the public enjoyment. In his book *Stealing the National Parks* Hummel wrote:

As the decade of the 1970s developed, the environmentalists grew bolder and their influence on the Park Service grew more evident. In time, employees and volunteer leaders of environmental organizations were to find positions within the Interior Department, spreading their ideological gospel of environmental purism into an already rigid system. The years from 1973 to 1975 saw the overt change of the Park Service from guardian of the Mather-Albright principles to betrayers of the public in the name of political and social change.³⁴³

Contrary to Hummel's argument, though, NPS had been debating whether to locate overnight accommodations inside or outside national parks for a long time. NPS established an important early precedent at Great Smoky Mountains National Park where the master plan envisioned that all overnight lodging facilities would be located outside the park. Director Drury suggested in 1944 that Great Smoky Mountains might serve as a model for postwar national park design; NPS might limit concession facilities in all future park development to what was necessary for day use while depending on nearby communities to provide overnight lodging.³⁴⁴ Wirth's Mission 66 committee took this principle a step further when it suggested that existing overnight lodging facilities that encroached on important park features might be eliminated or relocated at sites of lesser importance.³⁴⁵ However, eliminating existing overnight lodging facilities proved to be extremely difficult to do; the swift action at Lassen was an aberration. In the 1960s, there was growing

³⁴² Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 290-302. On the closure at Lassen, see Diane L. Krahe and Theodore Catton, *Little Gem of the Cascades: An Administrative History of Lassen Volcanic National Park*, pp. 239-61, online at nps.gov/lavo/learn/historyculture/upload/lassen_volcanic_national_park_administrative_history.pdf (accessed March 14, 2020).

³⁴³ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 287.

³⁴⁴ *Report of the Secretary of the Interior for 1944*, 218-19.

³⁴⁵ Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 259.

debate about moving concession facilities out of ecologically sensitive areas but most of it came to naught.³⁴⁶

As NPS prepared recommendations on wilderness designations in the early 1970s, discussion about visitor accommodations sharpened. The NPS Management Policies Manual in 1975 included the statement: “If adequate facilities exist or can be developed to meet people’s commercial needs outside park boundaries, such facilities will not be provided by the park.” That position was no different from Drury’s in 1944 or Wirth’s in 1955 but being in company with the wilderness review it carried a bigger wallop. Asked to clarify whether NPS intended to remove existing facilities, NPS Director Gary Everhardt informed Congress that NPS was looking at each case on its own merits, holding that the agency had statutory authority to close facilities wherever it seemed wise to do so. That prompted a rebuff from Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington and chair of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, who argued on the Senate floor that the policy would tend to limit public access in ways he found unacceptable.³⁴⁷

NPS concession policy came under review again. Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton formed a concessions management task force in October 1974. The House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation held hearings in May and June 1975. In a repetition of the review of concessions policy that took place in the late 1940s, former director Horace Albright, now in his eighty-sixth year, provided a written statement to Congress elucidating the foundations of the policy.³⁴⁸

Hummel testified on behalf of concessioners to the congressional subcommittee. Hummel’s role in national park concessions had grown in the preceding years. In 1969, he merged his concessions in Lassen Volcanic National Park and Mount McKinley National Park with United States Natural Resources (USNR), becoming a major stockholder in that corporation as it positioned to take over a third concession, the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. (Glacier Park, Inc. was not included in the merger.) By 1972, USNR had control of the Yosemite concession and Hummel was managing it – and butting heads with NPS over the rehabilitation of facilities there. In 1973, USNR sold the Yosemite concession to Music Corporation of America (MCA) with Hummel still at the helm. When Hummel testified on Capitol Hill, the corporate trading of national park concessions was a central issue in the national park concession policy review as both the secretary’s task force and the House

³⁴⁶ Krahe and Catton, *Little Gem of the Cascades*, 253-54.

³⁴⁷ Foresta, *America’s National Parks and Their Keepers*, 99-102; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 328-31.

³⁴⁸ U.S. House, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Concession Operations in the National Park System*, 94th Cong., 2d sess., May 21, 24, 25, and June 7, 1976, pp. 25, 109-11, 869-76, 893-98.

subcommittee re-examined the old bugbears of preferential rights and possessory interest. The concern was that those two foundation stones of policy were fostering a trend toward consolidation of national park concessions in the hands of large corporations such as USNR and MCA that were not necessarily sensitive to national park values. Certainly, the Conference of National Park Concessioners had evolved into a powerful lobbying organization, much to the dismay of groups like the National Parks and Conservation Association and the Sierra Club.³⁴⁹

Two things came out of the task force review and congressional hearings that held significance for Glacier National Park. First, the secretary's task force report gave impetus to NPS's move to strengthen concessions management at the field level. Basically, it said that NPS needed to recognize that national park concessions were becoming big business and that concessions management had to professionalize to handle those changing conditions.³⁵⁰

The other result with significance for Glacier was a study commissioned by the Conference of National Park Concessioners and conducted by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI). The findings by SRI bolstered the case for preserving facilities like Many Glacier Hotel. SRI conducted a visitor survey of national park users that found a solid majority of the public opposed removal of *some* overnight lodging facilities from any given park, while an even larger majority opposed removal of *all* overnight lodging facilities. Among the subset of respondents who had used overnight lodging in national parks an overwhelming majority was opposed to removal. Hummel crowed about those survey findings, pointing out that when NPS solicited public input on its master plans and wilderness recommendations it failed to obtain that public perspective. (One could question the bias in SRI's visitor survey, however, since the survey focused on twenty-two NPS administered areas where overnight lodging was already targeted and controversial.) Besides obtaining that important survey data, SRI reviewed the history of NPS concessions management and urged that the basic principles of preferential rights and possessory interest were time-tested and sound.³⁵¹

Meanwhile, NPS's public process to develop a new master plan replete with wilderness recommendations culminated in its *Glacier National Park, Montana, Final Master Plan*, which was published in 1977. All the talk about moving

³⁴⁹ U.S. House, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Concession Operations in the National Park System*, 94th Cong., 2d sess., May 21, 24, 25, and June 7, 1976, pp. 25, 109-11, 869-76.

³⁵⁰ U.S. House, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Concession Operations in the National Park System*, 873-75.

³⁵¹ U.S. House, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Concession Operations in the National Park System*, 8-14; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 344-45.

overnight lodging out of the park that had given Hummel so much anxiety finally came to naught. For all of Hummel's rants about environmental extremists and government overreach, Glacier's *Final Master Plan* was a conservative document, not a threat to existing concession facilities. It offered a core-and-periphery model for protection of park resources. Visitor use would continue to grow, the plan said, but future demand for more visitor facilities would be met by private development outside the park – on the park's periphery – at West Glacier and St. Mary. Visitor facilities at Many Glacier and Lake McDonald – in the park's core – might be upgraded but they would not be expanded. While the plan talked about the park's carrying capacity, the most significant gesture it made toward setting limits on public use was to float the idea of a public transit system over the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The plan incorporated NPS's wilderness proposal for Glacier, but it suggested that Sperry Chalet and Granite Park Chalet would continue operations to accommodate backcountry users who did not have the requisite equipment or experience for backcountry camping.³⁵²

In 1977, Hummel entered negotiations with Trans World Airlines (TWA) for sale of Glacier Park, Inc. TWA owned the Hilton hotel chain and more recently it had acquired the concessions in Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, and on the North Rim of Grand Canyon. TWA fought NPS efforts to remove visitor accommodations in Zion and Bryce Canyon in the mid 1970s, so it was no stranger to controversy in the national park concessions arena. TWA and Hummel could not reach agreement, however, because TWA wanted to acquire the Glacier National Park operations without Glacier Park Lodge and Prince of Wales Hotel and Hummel wanted to sell the whole package. After the talks with TWA stalled, Hummel had a change of heart and decided to keep going; his contract ran through December 31, 1985. But Hummel's change of heart did not carry his business much farther for he soon found that NPS was showing him the door.³⁵³

In his polemical yet well-documented book *Stealing the National Parks*, Hummel contends that his antagonism toward NPS came to be richly reciprocated, with NPS using the administrative tools at its disposal to drum him out of Glacier and force his removal from the leadership of the Conference of National Park Concessioners. Park records reviewed for this study do not offer much corroboration for Hummel's story, but they do not contradict him either, so the story is presumed to be factual in outline. It is summarized below, and the reader who wishes to read Hummel's firsthand account of his downfall with all its color about personalities and NPS's

³⁵² National Park Service, *Glacier National Park, Montana, Final Master Plan* (Denver: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1977).

³⁵³ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 353.

alleged vendetta against him can find it in his book in the first half of Chapter 19, “Saving the National Parks.”³⁵⁴

In September 1979, a team of sixteen government inspectors convened in Glacier to examine concession facilities, preparatory to developing a plan for rehabilitation. The attention to Glacier’s concession facilities was part of a newly initiated program to make concessioners undertake life/safety improvements to concession facilities systemwide. In the next month, Hummel had a sharp confrontation with NPS Director William Whalen at the midyear meeting of the Conference of National Park Concessioners. Whalen objected to the conference’s heavy-handedness in hiring a former member of Congress to lobby for the organization in Washington. Whalen took it as a sign that Hummel intended to go around the director and the administration to deal with Congress, and he threatened to hit back by taking the story to the editors of the nation’s leading newspapers. Hummel taped their heated exchange and distributed thirty copies of the tape to other concessioners. Subsequently the tape was leaked to Congress, and Whalen was soon forced out of the job for his supposed bullying tone and method in the way he had dealt with Hummel. Meanwhile, NPS completed the life/safety plan for Glacier. The plan called for \$1.75 million of repairs and was backed up by a 300-page report that Hummel described as a “hatchet job” on his company. Ostensibly all needed repairs had to be addressed before Glacier Park, Inc. could open for business in June 1980.³⁵⁵

The hefty price tag on the life/safety improvements raised the old problem of requiring a concessioner to invest in properties without long-term security in the investment. Hummel requested an extension of the contract. NPS offered him one, but it was encumbered by another \$3 million of required improvements. Finding it unacceptable, Hummel negotiated a compromise approach to the life/safety program that gave the company more time and allowed for concession facilities to open on schedule while the work was in progress. As part of the agreement, NPS would issue a prospectus calling for a new concession contract with the \$3 million added to the \$1.75 million worth of improvements.³⁵⁶

Now things became complicated. Hummel submitted a proposal for Glacier Park, Inc. to take on the new twenty-five-year contract and arranged with Del E. Webb Construction Corporation, concessioner at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, to buy his company. Initially NPS indicated it would reject Glacier Park, Inc.’s proposal; then it reversed itself and accepted the proposal on the basis that Glacier

³⁵⁴ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 353-71. See also portions of Chapters 16, 17, and 18 that trace Hummel’s contentious relations with NPS directors Gary Everhardt and William Whalen.

³⁵⁵ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 357-62.

³⁵⁶ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 362-63.

Park, Inc. would shortly be acquired by Del E. Webb and Hummel would be out. Then Del E. Webb announced it was not interested in buying Glacier Park, Inc. after all. NPS informed Rex Maughan, a principal in Del E. Webb and chairman of the Conference of National Park Concessioners, that NPS would not execute the contract with Glacier Park, Inc. unless someone else stepped up to buy out Hummel. Maughan approached Greyhound Corporation at Hummel's suggestion, and Greyhound took the bait and negotiated a purchase of all Glacier Park, Inc.'s stock by its subsidiary company, Greyhound Food Management Company, Inc. The latter company partnered with Maughan in a purchase agreement executed on February 5, 1981. The purchasers then formed Glacier Management Company, incorporated in Arizona on March 10, 1981, to purchase all outstanding shares of Glacier Park, Inc. After the stock transfer was made on March 20, 1981, Glacier Park, Inc. merged with Glacier Management Company and gave its name to the new entity on May 29, 1981.³⁵⁷

Hummel's leaving Glacier was not as momentous as Great Northern's departure twenty-five years earlier, but it did mark another significant break in the history of Glacier concessions. While Great Northern made Glacier the quintessential example of a national park that was developed and promoted by a railroad, Hummel stewarded the concession operation through a transitional era when national park concessions were mostly run by small entrepreneurs. Even if Hummel helped usher in the next generation of corporate national park concessions, he was himself the personification of the small entrepreneur, a hands-on business owner with a personal love of the national parks from which he derived his living. His roots were in the NPS, having begun his working life as a seasonal ranger at Lassen Volcanic National Park. Even at the end of his career when he owned or managed concession operations in several national parks, he remained a familiar figure to his hundreds of seasonal employees at Glacier.

Superintendent Iversen recognized the epochal nature of Hummel's departure from Glacier. It formed a transition to a different type of concession operator, and therefore a different kind of partnership. He shared his perspective in a letter to Hummel:

You have often lamented the decline and deterioration of relationships between the National Park Service and concessioners throughout the system. There could be numerous explanations for this change, but the change is not necessarily bad. We have evolved from a sort of buddy system to a more professional relationship. The Service now employs more

³⁵⁷ Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 366-71; "Hummel plans concession sale," *Hungry Horse News*, October 1, 1980; Purchase Agreement between Greyhound Food Management, Inc., Rex G. Maughan, and Glacier Park, Inc., February 5, 1981, and S. E. Sayre to J. M. Dobyys, April 11, 1983, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

specialists and professionals, i.e. sanitarians, law enforcement specialists, concessions specialists, building fire experts. You are encountering these professional people more often and obviously resent it, regarding it as an intrusion into your domain.

In bygone days park concessions operated more independently. Let's face it, some of the big companies, Union Pacific, Great Northern and Santa Fe Railroads barely acknowledged the presence of the National Park Service. They played a dominant role in establishing some of the parks, provided a great service to the public but at the same time displayed a possessory interest in the real estate.

During George Hartzog's era, this term "partnership" between the concessioners and the National Park Service became a pet phrase. I think it was not so much an acknowledgement of the concessioner's role as a new assertion of NPS responsibility. Today, the Service has reached, in my opinion, a proper position of responsibility.³⁵⁸

Iversen approved of NPS's move to strengthen oversight of concession operations at the park level, but he did not yet know what it would be like to work with the new concessioner. That was left for park staff to discover in the ensuing decade.

Legal Challenge to the New Concession Contract

In the late 1970s, a group of current and former Glacier concession employees laid plans to form a nonprofit organization for the purpose of competing to become the park's next major concessioner when Hummel's 25-year contract expired. In their view, an employee-driven nonprofit would do a better job of operating the park lodges in the public interest. One of the leaders of the group was John Hagen, a law student from Minneapolis and Many Glacier Hotel employee since 1970. Hagen explained their thinking in an interview in 1982:

Many of us felt that with the short tourist season, archaic buildings, and unpredictable weather, the profitability of the concession was inherently very tenuous. The only ways to ensure a profit seemed to be cutting services, skimping on maintenance – or raising the rates to a point where only the rich could afford the facilities. We were also concerned about the recent trend of conglomerates buying up the concessions in most of the major parks. We feared a conglomerate might acquire the Glacier facilities, send in management people who had no sense of park values, and disrupt the lodges' atmosphere.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Quoted in Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 366.

³⁵⁹ Rosie Hansen and Einar Hanson, "An Interview with John Hagen," *The Inside Trail* 2, no. 2 (June 1982), 4.

When the change of concessioner suddenly loomed in 1980, the group decided to incorporate as the Glacier Park Foundation and submit a proposal. The NPS issued the prospectus with no advance notice on June 9, 1980, allowing just sixty days for proposal preparation, the minimum time period under the law. The Glacier Park Foundation scrambled to make the necessary financial and legal preparations and inquiries and submitted a 220-page proposal. Although the group had plenty of insider knowledge about the concession operations and possessed a high level of commitment, their newly organized entity had just \$10,000 of startup capital. Since the amount of capital was totally insufficient to address life/safety concerns, NPS rejected the proposal. At the same time, NPS rejected the proposal from Glacier Park, Inc., being determined to terminate its partnership with Hummel. There were no other proposals. NPS sent brief, pro forma, rejection letters to the Glacier Park Foundation and Glacier Park, Inc. Both letters were dated September 24, 1980. NPS did not have to secure a new concessioner at that time because Hummel's contract still had five more years to run.³⁶⁰

However, shortly after NPS sent the rejection letters, Hummel secured Greyhound's interest in taking over his contract. In the next month, NPS reopened negotiations with Hummel's Glacier Park, Inc. over the rejected proposal on the condition that Hummel would shortly sell his company to Greyhound. When the Glacier Park Foundation learned that NPS and Glacier Park, Inc. had come to an arrangement after all, it filed suit and sought a court injunction to block the new contract from taking effect. The suit alleged that NPS violated the law in reopening negotiations with one bidder and not the other. Attorneys for NPS held that the Glacier Park Foundation's proposal had been nonresponsive because the Foundation did not have a plan for how it would purchase Hummel's possessory interest valued at more than \$6 million. Since the proposal had been nonresponsive, attorneys said, NPS had no obligation to reconsider it and the Foundation had no standing with the court. A hearing was held in Butte, Montana in January 1981, and the suit was dismissed. The Glacier Park Foundation appealed, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided in December 1981 that the Foundation did have standing to file suit. The case was remanded to the federal district court where a trial without jury was scheduled for August 1983.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ "The History of the Glacier Park Foundation," *The Inside Trail* 1, no. 1 (April 1981), 3; "Lawsuit: Back to Courtroom in Montana," *The Inside Trail* 3, no. 3 (October 1983), 1; John Pike to Paul Tsongas, Folder 10, File Unit 011, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

³⁶¹ Statement of Position of Defendant, Department of the Interior, in *Glacier Park Foundation vs. James G. Watt and Glacier Park, Inc.*, United States District Court for the District of Montana, Missoula Division, January 7, 1983, Folder 11, File Unit 011, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; "Park Service Rejects Two Proposals to Operate Glacier's Visitor

The pending case did not stop NPS from moving ahead with its new partner, Greyhound Food Management Company, Inc. The case did cast a pall over the concession operation while the dispute was being resolved. Evidence was gathered for the court around the adequacy of the two proposals and how the bid process was handled. Judge Valdemar Cordova ruled for the government in November 1983.³⁶²

The Glacier Park Foundation did not fold up after it lost in court. It evolved into a citizens' group devoted to promoting the public interest in Glacier, with an emphasis on preserving Glacier's historic hotels. In 1983 it started a regular newsletter, *The Inside Trail*. While the newsletter carried stories on management issues facing the park, it also became a forum for sharing memories and preserving colorful tales of yore. Four decades after the Foundation was created, it had several hundred members – mostly former concession employees – and was carrying on its advocacy still.

Glacier's Concession Employee Tradition

Few national parks were so revered by so many former concession employees as Glacier. Across the decades, thousands of young people enjoyed a profound experience working and living in a place that others only dreamed of visiting. George Bristol was one example. Bristol worked as a jammer (tour bus driver) for two summers in 1961 and 1962. In his early twenties then, he would later describe his short stint of working in the park as a "life-changing experience." He visited Glacier nearly every summer for the next thirty years, "simply to drink in its beauty and repair my soul," he wrote. Following his concession employee experience, he finished his education and pursued a career in conservation mostly in his home state of Texas. In 1994, he was appointed to the National Park Foundation by President Clinton. In 1999, he helped found the Glacier Fund (later the Glacier National Park Conservancy). In 2017, he published *Glacier National Park: A Culmination of Giants*, his reflections on the major personalities who shaped the park, from George B. Grinnell and Louis Hill to Steve Mather and Franklin D. Roosevelt.³⁶³

What was so special about the Glacier concession employee experience that made an alumni organization like the Glacier Park Foundation possible? Perhaps it was the grandness of Glacier's hotels set in all that natural splendor. Perhaps it had

Services," *Kalispell Weekly News*, October 1, 1980; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 367-70; "Employee Group Loses Glacier Concession Suit," *National Parks* 58, no. 2 (March/April 1984), 33; "Lawsuit Back to Courtroom in Montana," 1.

³⁶² Bob Gilluly, "Glacier Park housekeeper faces 1982 concession test," *Great Falls Tribune*, June 27, 1982; "Employee Group Loses Glacier Concession Suit," 33; "Lawsuit Back to Courtroom in Montana," 1.

³⁶³ Bristol, *A Culmination of Giants*, xvi-xvii; American Academy for Parks and Recreation Administration, "George L. Bristol," at aapra.org/Pugsley-bios/george-l-bristol <March 26, 2020>.

something to do with the concession's colorful traditions: the red jammers, the Swiss-style employee uniforms, Christmas in August, the Many Glacier Olympics, and the extraordinary profusion of employee-provided music at the Many Glacier Hotel. On that hotel's one hundredth anniversary, the *Billings Gazette* printed a story under the headline: "The hills are alive, and the sound of music has been a big part of Many Glacier's century."³⁶⁴ The newspaper story profiled several former concession employees, including married couples who had met in Glacier some fifty years earlier. More than a few concession employees discovered – like Julie Andrews's Maria – new purpose, vitality, and love during their months in the park. John Slater, a bellhop at Glacier Park Lodge in 1965, later wrote of his experience, "Something inside me I had not known about came alive. That magical spirit of the park has been with me ever since."³⁶⁵

Perhaps, too, for many concession employees the deeply affecting experience had to do with Glacier's remoteness out West and the romance of the railroad in getting there. When Great Northern had the concession, most employees were recruited in Minnesota and were transported to the park on the railroad. After Great Northern sold the concession to Hummel, the railroad company continued to offer concession employees a discounted fare on the train from St. Paul to East Glacier Park. Many of them would long remember the 28-hour train ride and the anticipation of reaching their exotic destination. "I recall the dramatic sight of the front range of the Rockies, surging suddenly up above the prairie horizon," wrote former Many Glacier Hotel employee John Hagen, who returned every summer through the 1970s. "The morning sky was bright blue, the spring grass was a vivid green, and the snowy peaks looked like a line of tremendous icebergs rising out of an emerald sea. For an hour I was spellbound, watching the contours that I would come to know as Chief Mountain, Merritt, Going-to-the-Sun and Rising Wolf growing larger and larger as we crossed the miles of windswept grass."³⁶⁶

Glacier Park Hotel Company general managers H. A. Noble and A. J. Binder personally interviewed job applicants at the Great Northern headquarters in St. Paul during the 1920s and 30s. In those days the company preferred to hire college students or young adults who had experience in the hotel business. Noble and Binder insisted on personal interviews so they could adequately explain employee living conditions, eating arrangements, and other facets of the job that were peculiar to working in a national park. The company provided rail transportation out and back as part of each employee's compensation package. Indeed, a significant fraction of an

³⁶⁴ Vince Devlin, "The hills are alive, and the sound of music has been a big part of Many Glacier's century," *Billings Gazette*, August 10, 2015.

³⁶⁵ Djuff and Morrison, eds., *Glacier from the Inside Out*, 25.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19, 24.

employee's summer wages in those years went to paying the cost of this transportation. Employees worked seven days a week and received three days of leisure time for exploring the park at the end of the season.³⁶⁷

The Glacier Park Hotel Company introduced Swiss-style uniforms for waitresses in 1924. The Swiss-style uniforms were discontinued in 1941 but were reintroduced some years later. Starting in the 1950s, bellhops were clad in Alpine lederhosen.³⁶⁸ Glacier Park Inc. carried on the tradition of Swiss-style uniforms.

In the early years when employees rode the train to Glacier, they were assigned to employee train cars. Sometimes they entertained themselves with music during the two-day trip. The most musically talented employees were identified and invited to perform for hotel guests. Employees and hotel guests enjoyed these musical concerts, and a tradition was born. In the 1940s and 50s, the tradition faded, giving way to occasional appearances by professional musicians and then the theater-in-the-round productions that Don Knutsen arranged in the late 1950s. The tradition of employee-based musical programming returned in the 1960s.³⁶⁹

Many Glacier Hotel's musical program reached its zenith under the direction of Ian Tippet, hotel manager from 1961 to 1983. To many concession employees, the English-accented, elegant, and effervescent Mr. Tippet was a legend. Born in Devonshire, England and raised in London where as a child he attended the Royal Academy of Music, he came to the United States at the age of eighteen on a hotel management scholarship from Conrad Hilton, founder of the Hilton Hotel chain. He came to Glacier for a summer's employment in 1950 and ended up staying with the park concession for sixty-three years, retiring in 2014. "Glacier ate me up," Tippet said. "I married GPI instead of a beautiful woman."³⁷⁰

As hotel manager, Tippet went to great lengths to hire employees who were musically talented. He notified every music department at every college or university in the nation that Many Glacier Hotel needed talented individuals as summer employees. He reviewed up to 25,000 applications a year to find bellhops and cooks who could play a musical instrument or sing. With his many assembled music and drama majors, Tippet arranged a full summer schedule of concerts, dances, singalongs, skits, and Broadway musicals. He formed a committee to put on each type of event, and he recruited a graduate student in music to conduct the orchestra

³⁶⁷ A. E. Demaray to Barbara Barker, undated, File 900-05, Box 262, Entry 10, RG 79, NA II.

³⁶⁸ Hagen, "A History of Many Glacier Hotel."

³⁶⁹ John Hagen, "A History of Many Glacier Hotel," at glacierparkfoundation.org/History/mgh.html <March 26, 2020>.

³⁷⁰ Ian B. Tippet obituary, March 20, 2020 at whitneymurphyfuneralhome.com/tippet-ian-b <March 26, 2020>; Devlin, "The hills are live, and the sound of music has been a big part of Many Glacier's century."

and another in drama to direct a Broadway musical. Theater tech students worked in their off-hours on costumes, lighting, stage sets, and sound systems. Over the years, the Many Glacier employees staged a total of 27 Broadway musicals. The entire musical program was accomplished through volunteer effort.³⁷¹

In 1983, Tippet was promoted to vice president and personnel director for the whole company operation, and his position moved from Many Glacier Hotel to Glacier Park Lodge. But the musical tradition continued in the park albeit at a lower volume. To this day the concessioner still tries to hire people with a musical background.³⁷²

The Concession Management Program in the 1980s

Glacier's concession management program got started under Glacier's first concessions management specialist, Richard Munro. Munro was on the Glacier staff from 1976 to 1979, when he retired with a medical disability. Four more concessions management specialists followed Munro in the 1980s. They were: Joe Shellenberger (1980-1982), Richard Hayes (1983-1984), Karen Whitney (1985-1987), and Marty Nielson (1987-1992). Those individuals acquired staff assistants to help meet the needs of an expanding program. Concessions management specialist James Miller was detailed from Yellowstone to Glacier to assist Shellenberger in the summer of 1980. Concessions assistant Karene Forman (later Manus) joined the park staff in the early 1980s. Concessions management specialist Jan Knox entered on duty as an assistant to Nielson in the late 1980s and succeeded him as chief of the concession management staff in 1992. Eventually the staff comprised one concessions management specialist at the GS-12 level, one or two more at the GS-09 level, and a clerical assistant.³⁷³

The park administration consolidated the concessions management program at the park level as NPS continued down the road of professionalizing and institutionalizing its concessions management program systemwide. NPS-48, *Concessions Management Guidelines*, produced by the Washington Office in the early 1980s, provided the structure. Much of this tome dealt with new oversight procedures. While the concession contract remained the key instrument for concessions management, NPS instituted annual evaluations of each concession to help keep operations on track. Evaluations were based primarily on inspections of

³⁷¹ Djuff and Morrison, eds., *Glacier from the Inside Out*, 106-09.

³⁷² Devlin, "The hills are live, and the sound of music has been a big part of Many Glacier's century."

³⁷³ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1979, 1; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1984, 12; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1988, 27; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 363-65; Personal communication with Jean Tabbert, February 23, 2019.

facilities and services made by NPS personnel throughout the year. Inspections were not new, but they became much more numerous and standardized. Annual evaluations carried an overall rating of satisfactory, marginal, or unsatisfactory. Marginal and unsatisfactory ratings had consequences. Repeated poor ratings could lead to termination of the contract. Concessioners could appeal a marginal or unsatisfactory rating. Inspections and annual evaluations generated a more formal set of relationships – or as Superintendent Iversen noted to Hummel, it ended the old buddy system.

Having people on staff dedicated to overseeing concession operations was an improvement over the past situation, but the staff of two or three was hardly robust considering all the oversight it had to do. Shellenberger calculated in 1982 that if he were to do all the pre-opening inspections of facilities that his superiors called for, it would amount to separate inspections of all guest rooms, employee rooms, boats, corrals, food and beverage services, kitchens, general stores, public shower and laundry facilities, gas stations, and gift stores, for a grand total of 785 inspections. Not even a third that many inspections was realistic.³⁷⁴

After Glacier Park, Inc. came under new management in 1981, it continued to provide the same services and facilities that it did under Hummel. The company had facilities at six locations: Apgar, Lake McDonald, Rising Sun, Swiftcurrent, Many Glacier, and Two Medicine. It provided lodging at the first five locations and had a total capacity of 1,515 guests per night within the park. It operated a total of seven restaurants, coffee shops, and snack bars within the park. It operated camp stores, gas stations, and a bus transportation service. As Shellenberger stated, the sheer number of facilities and their locations made inspections a daunting task.³⁷⁵

NPS oversight of concession operations was not limited to looking out for the welfare of visitors and the protection of park resources. It included concern for the concession employees, ensuring that they received adequate housing, food, and orientation. The size of Glacier's concession employee workforce was no less impressive than the extent of facilities. In its first season of operations under new management, Glacier Park Inc. had 406 employees stationed in the park. The workforce was distributed around the concession facilities as follows: Lake McDonald, 125; Rising Sun, 50; Many Glacier, 175; Swiftcurrent, 50; Two Medicine, 6. In its second year of operation the company increased the staff to approximately 450 and in its third year of operation it increased the staff to approximately 500. The company had an additional 300 employees stationed at its

³⁷⁴ Management Assistant to Associate Regional Director, February 26, 1982, File 6210 Annual Overall Concessioner Rating 1981, Box 25, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³⁷⁵ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1981, 4.

two major facilities outside the park, Glacier Park Lodge and Prince of Wales Hotel.³⁷⁶

Glacier Park Inc. was just one of a growing number of concessions in Glacier, albeit the big one. Until 1980, there were four concessions. Besides Glacier Park, Inc., there was Belton Chalets, Inc., the Glacier Park Boat Company, and Rocky Mountain Outfitters. In 1980, the number increased to five with the addition of Waterton Shoreline Cruises. In 1984, it increased to six with the addition of Glacier Wilderness Guides. In 1985, it increased to seven with the addition of Lake McDonald Boat Company, Inc., an offshoot of Glacier Park Boat Company. While Glacier Park, Inc. operated under a long-term contract, Glacier Park Boat Company and Rocky Mountain Outfitters operated under five-year contracts, Belton Chalets and Waterton Shoreline Cruises operated under five-year permits, and Glacier Wilderness Guides and Lake McDonald Boat Company each had a two-year permit. Most of Glacier's other concessions had around twenty employees each. Glacier Wilderness Guides and Lake McDonald Boat Company had just a few employees.³⁷⁷

Glacier Park, Inc.'s new president and general manager was Martin Schultz. During each summer season (from May 15 to September 15), Schultz made his headquarters in East Glacier Park. In the off-season (September 15 to May 15) he had his office in Phoenix, Arizona where Greyhound had its corporate headquarters. Schultz was the main point of contact for NPS but not the only one. NPS communicated with the president of Greyhound Food Management, Inc., Joseph K. Fassler, as well as the parent company's vice president and chief engineer, J. M. Dobyns, and the Greyhound Corporation's legal counsel.

Glacier Park, Inc. had a rough start. It received poor ratings in its first evaluation report at the end of the 1981 season. It received an unsatisfactory rating in the important food service category. It got marginal ratings in the areas of overnight accommodations, automobile service stations, showers and laundries, employee accommodations, employee food service, and merchandising. The only area of service in which it received a satisfactory rating was in its diligent pursuit of the program to make life/safety improvements to buildings. It got an overall marginal

³⁷⁶ Glacier National Park, "Evaluation Report, 1981 Operating Season, Glacier Park, Inc.," File 6210 Annual Overall Concessioner Rating 1981, Box 25, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1981, 4; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1982, n.p.; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1983, 7.

³⁷⁷ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1980, p. S-2; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1984, 8; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1985, 12.

rating, which put it on notice of losing its contract. The new concession's stumbling debut was reported in the *Great Falls Tribune*.³⁷⁸

Schultz protested to Superintendent Robert A. Haraden over the recommendations contained in the report, many of which, he thought, went beyond NPS's oversight role and interfered with Glacier Park, Inc.'s management prerogatives. For example, NPS recommended that the menus at Many Glacier Hotel and elsewhere demonstrate "imagination and originality" and include a "specialty Glacier Park item" such as buffalo, game, or fish. Schultz shot back, "The proposal to sell buffalo steaks, game, etc. comes as a surprise, as game preservation in our National Parks is one of paramount concern." Summarizing his overall position on the many recommendations, Schultz wrote:

We do understand that the role of the government in the National Parks is to insure that a concessioner is operating under safe and sanitary conditions; that there will be a balanced service with a range of facilities at approved prices; that all visitors must be treated courteously and equally, without favor or discrimination; and that the government does have an oversight role, but we do feel they do not have the right, and sometimes not the knowledge, to make operating and management decisions.³⁷⁹

For the next five years, Glacier Park, Inc. received an overall satisfactory rating from the park. Still, park officials continued to press the concession on numerous matters, from its massive employee turnover from year to year, to persistent problems with its hotel reservation system, to the quality of information being given to visitors at hotel information desks. Meanwhile, the concessions management specialists honed their ability to deliver constructive criticism. Sometimes they offered the park's support. One example may be cited from the 1985 evaluation report:

Because of the critical need to orient new employees to the safety considerations of Glacier, we feel there is a need to improve the way in which park orientation is included in the GPI training. We need a strong commitment from GPI to ensure that each employee receives the orientation. The park will work with the training staff at GPI to find a

³⁷⁸ Glacier National Park, "Evaluation Report, 1981 Operating Season, Glacier Park, Inc.," File 6210 Annual Overall Concessioner Rating 1981, Box 25, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP; Gilluly, "Glacier Park housekeeper faces 1982 concession test."

³⁷⁹ Martin Schultz to Robert A. Haraden, December 15, 1981, enclosing "Comments on Concession Evaluation Report, Glacier Park, Inc., October 9, 1981, File 6210 Annual Overall Concessioner Rating 1981, Box 25, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

more effective way of including this orientation as employees come on duty.³⁸⁰

In 1987, Glacier Park, Inc. received its second marginal rating. Superintendent H. Gilbert Lusk warned President Fassler of Greyhound Food Management, Inc. that “marginal ratings in consecutive years constitute grounds for termination of the concession contract.” Lusk assured Fassler that it was not NPS’s desire to terminate the contract; rather, the purpose of the marginal rating was to focus Greyhound’s attention on what needed to be done. Lusk told Fassler that Greyhound had a public relations problem. It had to be a better team player. It needed to show concern not just for the park, but for its role in the Montana tourism industry. NPS heard complaints from park visitors, tour groups, individuals in the tourism industry, and the Montana governor’s office. There was a perception in those circles that the Greyhound subsidiary was “unprofessional, uncooperative, uninterested in Montana and its future, and unwilling to come out and be a part of a strong ongoing cooperative effort.” Many people were unhappy over the concession’s hotel reservation system and how the company handled refunds.³⁸¹

This time, Greyhound appealed the marginal rating. The appeal process required that the regional office review the matter. After a month-long review process, Regional Director Lorraine Mintzmyer replied to Fassler that she saw no reason to reverse the superintendent’s rating. She seconded what Lusk had told Fassler: “If you wish to avoid another marginal or unsatisfactory rating in 1988 with its consequences, we urge you to manage this contract so as to eliminate deficiencies before evaluations are made and before visitors use the accommodations and services provided under your contract.”³⁸² Greyhound persisted with its appeal, and it was pushed up the chain to the Undersecretary of the Interior where the park decision was still sustained.³⁸³

Annual evaluations could be a hammer for compelling the concession to take remedial action. After the marginal rating in 1981 the concession duly improved its food service, and after the marginal rating in 1987 it made improvements to the hotel reservation system. The rating system, because it was contentious, tested the concession management specialists as well as the concessioner. Inspections had to be conducted with rigor and reported in a consistent manner. After the park issued the marginal rating in 1987, Marty Nielson considered measures to ensure that the next

³⁸⁰ Glacier National Park, “NPS Concessioner Annual Overall Rating” (Form 10-631), December 6, 1985, File C6210, Box 25, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³⁸¹ H. Gilbert Lusk to Joseph K. Fassler, December 1, 1987, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³⁸² Lorraine Mintzmyer to Joseph K. Fassler, February 17, 1988, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³⁸³ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1988, 27.

year's evaluation report would be as fair and thorough as possible should another subpar rating lead to action on the concession contract. To that end, he and his staff needed to sample the breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus at each dining facility, stay one night at each overnight lodging facility, review front-desk procedures, and evaluate all employee housing facilities using standard forms. To extend his limited resources, he sought to incorporate ranger staff into his oversight program, especially for follow-up inspections. There was a significant change in procedure: on every inspection a member of the Glacier Park, Inc. management staff was asked to accompany the government inspector.³⁸⁴

In the winter following the park's issuance of a marginal rating, Superintendent Lusk called for an operations evaluation with the concessions program named as one of three areas needing scrutiny. The operations evaluation report noted a critical backlog of work in concessions management and recommended the assignment of one additional position for a two-year period to eliminate the backlog. The extra person was duly added to the staff in 1989. It was also as a result of the operations evaluation that the two existing concession management specialist positions in 1988 were upgraded to GS-12 and GS-09.³⁸⁵

The park and Glacier Park, Inc. joined forces to get the latter's performance back to an acceptable standard. The company put substantial resources toward upgrading services and making improvements to building interiors. Park staff inspected all guest rooms prior to the season opening. Fortunately, the park was able to recommend a satisfactory rating in that year's evaluation report.³⁸⁶

The concessions management staff made further progress in 1990 in better handling the workload and improving the working relationship with Glacier Park, Inc. Major accomplishments that year included working with all park concessions to expand the length of the visitor season in the fall, and to provide a more comprehensive training program for all concession employees.³⁸⁷

Capital Investment in Facilities in the 1980s

In one respect Greyhound proved to be a strong partner: it put several million dollars into the concession facilities, going well above the minimum requirements set

³⁸⁴ Mike to Marty, undated, and handwritten notes, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1988, 28.

³⁸⁵ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1988, 27; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1989, 35.

³⁸⁶ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1988, 28.

³⁸⁷ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1990, 32-33.

out in the contract. Greyhound's financial contribution to improvements and repairs of concession facilities was important when federal appropriations were never enough to meet all the park's needs. Of course, enlisting the help of the private sector to commit large capital investment in the national parks had been at the core of national park concession policy since the beginning. It was written into the Yellowstone Park Act of 1872 and it was re-affirmed in the Mather-Albright principles laid down after 1916. In Glacier, the transition from Hummel to Greyhound in 1981 represented another reaffirmation of that longstanding goal. Whereas Hummel had balked at the expense of the life/safety program to bring all the old concession facilities up to code, Greyhound had the financial resources for it and proceeded to make those life/safety improvements without a hitch.

Greyhound's investment in concession facilities began with its purchase of Glacier Park, Inc. from Hummel. Greyhound paid Hummel about \$6.5 million for physical assets. That sum included about \$2.4 million for Hummel's possessory interest in buildings in Glacier, nearly \$3 million for Glacier Park Lodge, about \$900,000 for Prince of Wales Hotel, and about \$400,000 for the Lake McDonald Motel, formerly the Stuart Motel. The in-park possessory interest was further broken down as follows:

Many Glacier Complex	\$1,527,136
Swiftcurrent Complex	433,293
Rising Sun Complex	355,382
Two Medicine Campstore	38,414
Lake McDonald Complex	<u>54,165</u>
	\$2,408,390

In the contract negotiations between Hummel and NPS that preceded Hummel's sale of Glacier Park, Inc. to Greyhound, NPS agreed to the above valuation of possessory interest. NPS's book value of those same assets came to about \$600,000, or about 25 percent of fair market value. To correct that disparity, NPS built an accelerated depreciation schedule into the long-term contract that began in 1981. Both parties were agreeable, as the concessioner was able to increase the non-taxable cash in the early years of the contract, while NPS got its potential liability reduced at a faster rate.³⁸⁸

Greyhound's second large investment in concession facilities started in the summer of 1981 as it provided capital for its new subsidiary Glacier Park, Inc. to embark on life/safety improvements that would cost a total of \$1.75 million. Even as

³⁸⁸ Purchase Agreement, February 5, 1981, and Acting Associate Regional Director to Regional Director, January 28, 1981, attaching Glacier Park Asset Re-Valuation, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

Glacier Park, Inc. did a lackluster job with its food service in its first year of operations, it won praise from NPS for vigorously attacking the long list of life/safety improvements. Greyhound also put up the money for the so-called accelerated capital improvement program. This referred to an additional \$3 million of improvements that NPS had identified to Hummel in 1980. Glacier Park, Inc. launched into those in 1982, eager to get on a better footing with NPS after it received a marginal rating in 1981. Both the life/safety program and the accelerated capital improvement program were included in the contract by NPS, attached as Appendices A and B respectively. In each case the program extended over several years and Glacier Park, Inc. stayed on schedule or worked ahead of it.³⁸⁹

Finally, the concession expended significant capital on a five-year accelerated maintenance program of painting exteriors, replacing interior furnishings, and making needed repairs. The concession approached the maintenance program aggressively and completed it ahead of schedule in 1985. According to Greyhound, it went on spending about double what was required of it year after year for the next decade because the facilities were in worse shape than NPS realized when the contract was drawn.³⁹⁰

As in the past, the concession and NPS sometimes differed over whether an expenditure qualified as a capital improvement or a maintenance expenditure. The former contributed to the concession's possessory interest while the latter did not. With greater professionalization of concessions management, NPS was able to provide stronger oversight in protecting the government's interest as those issues arose. Part of Greyhound's contract compliance was to maintain detailed records of all capital improvement items, which it filed with each year's concessioner annual financial report. Concessions management staff reviewed the annual financial report when it was submitted in the spring to ensure that the company did not claim any unfounded additions to its possessory interest.³⁹¹

A Comprehensive Plan for Rehabilitation of Concession Facilities

Despite Greyhound's and Glacier Park, Inc.'s hefty financial investment, much more was needed. By the late 1980s, Glacier Park, Inc. expended approximately 10

³⁸⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director, November 19, 1982, File C6210, Box 25, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³⁹⁰ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1985, 13; Joseph K. Fassler to Dave Mihalic, July 28, 1994, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

³⁹¹ J. M. Dobyns to H. Gilbert Lusk, April 25, 1988, C3823, Box 7, Glacier NP Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1997, 47.

percent of its gross revenues on facility maintenance. NPS noted that that percentage compared favorably with maintenance expenditures by other hotel companies, but it was still not nearly enough to save Glacier's old, historic, weather-beaten structures. In the mid 1980s, NPS tasked the Denver Service Center with preparing development concept plans for three areas in the park where the aging concession facilities were concentrated. These were the Lake McDonald development area, the Sun Point/Rising Sun/St. Mary development area, and the Many Glacier/Swiftcurrent development area.

Of the three areas, the Lake McDonald development area was the most problematic. Concession employee housing was substandard and overcrowded. Some of the buildings used for employee housing were in the 100-year floodplain along Snyder Creek; others were interspersed with visitor facilities. A proposal to build a new employee dormitory south of the lodge was rejected after it was determined that the area was critical bald eagle habitat. An alternative proposal to convert the Stuart Motel into an employee dormitory could not get traction because Glacier Park, Inc. owned the Stuart Motel in fee, so it was outside of NPS's control. That led to a third alternative, to build a new employee dormitory behind the coffee shop. But the space was limited so the dormitory would only house about half the workforce. A substantial number of Lake McDonald Lodge employees would have to live outside the park and commute to their job. Glacier Park, Inc. thought that would make it harder to recruit and retain employees and NPS tended to agree. As a stopgap measure, NPS waived the housing standard for employee quarters in 1988 while NPS and the concession grappled with finding a solution.³⁹²

Greyhound lobbied Congress for help, and Congress responded with a line item appropriation of \$500,000 for NPS to take a comprehensive look at concession facility needs in Glacier. The Denver Service Center assembled a team of engineers and architects to make a full evaluation of all concession facilities. The team was in the park for two weeks in December 1989. NPS also obtained an appraisal of Glacier Park, Inc.'s possessory interest. Concession specialists from the park and region and project coordinators from the Denver Service Center then joined with the engineers and architects in developing different scenarios for how the government could fund a ten-year program of rehabilitation. This effort lasted into the summer of 1990.

³⁹² Richard Alesch, "Task Directive, Lake McDonald Development Concept Plan Amendment, Glacier National Park," 1988, File D18, Folder 1, File Unit 09, Subseries 02.03, Historical Files, GNP; National Park Service, *Revised Development Concept Plan, Lake McDonald, Glacier National Park, Montana* (Denver: National Park Service, 1991), 1-3, 22, 27-28.

Superintendent Lusk commented that it was the biggest taskforce of its kind since the Yellowstone concession buyout in 1979.³⁹³

The taskforce produced a document entitled *Rehabilitation of Concession Facilities, Glacier National Park*. It used the development concept plans from the mid 1980s as a basis for estimating the cost of planning and rehabilitation of existing facilities as well as new facilities. The grand total came to a whopping \$60 million (\$49 million for construction and \$11 million for planning.) The construction costs were itemized by facility, with a total of 215 separate facilities lumped into three categories: government-owned improvements (\$9 million), Glacier Park, Inc. improvements (\$24 million), and new construction (\$16 million). The big-ticket items were \$18 million for rehabilitation of Many Glacier Hotel and \$5 million for a new lodge at Lake McDonald.³⁹⁴

The crux of the report was an explanation of four alternatives for how the rehabilitation program would be implemented. Under the “No Action” alternative, the government would not spend any funds on rehabilitation and the whole cost would be put on the concession. To spend \$60 million over ten years, the concessioner would have to expend 70 percent of its gross revenues annually on facility construction, repair, and maintenance, which was clearly out of the question when the law stated that the concessioner would have “a reasonable opportunity...to realize a profit.” Another alternative, which would limit government expenditures to government-owned facilities only, would still leave the concessioner needing to spend about \$32 million over ten years, still an impossibility.³⁹⁵

A third alternative was labeled “full rehabilitation by the government with a buyout of concessioner possessory interest and fee ownership.” Similar to what had been done in Yellowstone, it would entail federal acquisition of Glacier Park, Inc.’s possessory interest (appraised at \$6 to \$7 million), and development of a new service-type contract under which the concessioner would put about 20 percent of gross revenues into cyclic rehabilitation. Under this scenario there would be about \$1.6 million available each year for rehabilitation, far short of the amount needed to finance the ten-year \$60 million rehabilitation program.³⁹⁶

That left the final alternative, labeled “full rehabilitation by the government without acquiring the concessioner’s possessory interest.” Under this alternative, the government would fund the rehabilitation program with some limited financial

³⁹³ *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1989, 35; *Superintendent’s Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1990, 32.

³⁹⁴ National Park Service, *Rehabilitation of Concession Facilities, Glacier National Park*, (Denver: National Park Service, 1990), ix, 41-51.

³⁹⁵ National Park Service, *Rehabilitation of Concession Facilities*, vi-viii.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*, vii.

contribution by the concessioner in the form of partial forfeiture of possessory interest. The forfeiture might be accomplished by agreement or by accelerated depreciation of book value with a concomitant reduction of the concession's federal taxes. Either way, the concessioner would face a loss that would once again likely conflict with its legal protection to have a reasonable opportunity to realize a profit.³⁹⁷

The study of how to implement a ten-year rehabilitation program failed to identify a clear path forward. But it did succeed in bringing more attention to the problem. The huge cost of rehabilitation would somehow have to be surmounted if the concession facilities were to be saved. By 1990, Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, Sperry Chalet, Granite Park Chalet, and the Two Medicine Store were all designated national historic landmarks. Many Glacier and Lake McDonald were listed as historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, the public opposed removal of these facilities and their replacement by overnight lodging facilities outside the park. So, it seemed clear that the concession facilities must be rehabilitated and preserved. It remained for NPS to determine a course of action as it headed into the second decade of its long-term contract with Glacier Park, Inc.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, vii.

Chapter 6

In Search of a Status Quo, 1990 to 2015

In recent decades concessions management in Glacier faced a kind of Catch-22. The public wanted overnight lodging accommodations to stay the same within the park, but it also wanted Glacier to host more and more visitors every year. At least that was how NPS interpreted the extensive public feedback it received when it worked on a new general management plan in the 1990s and when it worked on a commercial services plan in the early 2000s. As a result of those two planning exercises, both the *General Management Plan* (1999) and the *Commercial Services Plan* (2004) stated that visitor facilities would be neither expanded nor removed; NPS would do the public's bidding and make no significant changes to the park's infrastructure. Yet, visitor numbers would be allowed to go on increasing year after year. And they did. In 2009, annual visitation passed 2 million. In 2016, it passed 3 million. The park administration had dealt with the challenge of rising annual visitation since the park's beginning, but never had it tried to reconcile growth in visitation with a commitment to keeping the park's infrastructure basically unchanged.

Behind this Catch-22 was the fact that Glacier tourism became a big driver in Montana's economy in the late twentieth century and on into the present century. Tourism emerged as the fastest growing sector in the state's economy, with some 12 million non-resident visitors spending around \$3 to \$3.5 billion in the state annually in recent years. Of that amount Glacier tourism accounted for about one third, Yellowstone tourism for another third, and all other Montana tourist attractions for the last third. Glacier's share of the whole was even more impressive when the shortness of its summer season was considered. In July and August, Glacier saw bumper to bumper traffic, long waiting lines, and jammed parking areas. Most Montanans with a stake in the tourist economy were keen to reap as much benefit from Glacier's allure as possible. Yet many Montanans had their own fond experiences in Glacier and were keen for their children to have the same

opportunities to enjoy the park as they did. These competing public desires led to a challenging search for some kind of status quo.

Park Planning, Aging Visitor Accommodations, and Historic Preservation

The park administration went through a major planning exercise in the 1990s with huge implications for concessions management. It began in the mid 1990s and culminated in 1999 with the adoption of a new *General Management Plan* (GMP) for Glacier. The GMP replaced an earlier GMP for Glacier that dated from 1977 and was no longer useful.

Since 1977, Glacier's annual visitation had risen to two million and was projected to reach three million by 2020. The growing visitor numbers put increasing pressure on Glacier's limited staff and resources. During the peak season, campers vied for campsites in the campgrounds and vehicles jammed the parking area at Logan Pass. As park officials and planners considered Glacier's future, much of the discussion revolved around the problem of how to provide for a variety of visitor experiences for these growing numbers of people while protecting the park's natural and cultural resources. Overnight lodging accommodations were in the spotlight.³⁹⁸

Besides the mounting pressure of visitor use, the new GMP had to take account of another big change since 1977: a more developed program of historic preservation. Cultural resource management had evolved from small beginnings in the 1970s into a much larger presence in NPS's overall mission of preservation. When cultural resource management was still in its early stages of development in the 1970s, NPS was reluctant to treat early-twentieth-century park structures as historic; to preserve the imprint of early park administration and visitor use on the natural landscape seemed contrary to NPS's mission to preserve natural conditions. So, for example, when NPS historian James W. Sheire prepared a historic resource study for Glacier in 1970, he recounted the human story in Glacier from prehistoric times to the twentieth century but devoted just the last two percent of his text to the development of the park for visitor use. In the recommendations at the end of the report, Sheire minimized historic preservation of the park's administrative structures saying that when these structures came to the end of their useful life a select few should be preserved from demolition and stabilized as artifacts of the park's early history. Sheire stressed that he had "no intention of infringing on policymaking responsibility," and he acknowledged that historic preservation must be subordinate to other aims, such as preservation of wilderness values.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Greg Hanscom, "Glacier Park finds itself inundated," *High Country News*, September 30, 1996.

³⁹⁹ Sheire, *Glacier National Park Historic Resource Study*, 193-201, 211-12.

Sheire and his contemporary historians in the NPS history program cautioned against the agency memorializing itself. They perceived a potential for self-aggrandizement since NPS administered both the national parks and the National Register of Historic Places. For this reason, Sheire focused attention on Glacier's pre-1916 ranger cabins, and he gave much more attention to what Louis Hill did to develop the park than to what NPS did in planning and building roads and trails.⁴⁰⁰

Through the 1970s and 1980s, Glacier made halting steps toward accomplishing a comprehensive inventory of the several hundred historic structures within its boundaries, most of which relate to the early development of the park. In the mid 1970s, NPS named Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, and what remained of the chalet groups as national historic landmarks. Around 1980, NPS contracted with Historical Research Associates, Inc., a cultural resource management consulting firm in Missoula, to conduct a more in-depth historic structures survey for Glacier. This report by Historical Research Associates, Inc. was followed by a second, "Multiple Property Submission," in 1985, and a third, "Historic Context and National Register Guidelines for Concession Operations, Glacier National Park, Montana," in 1991, and a fourth, "Multiple Property Submission," in 1995. Each successive study by Historical Research Associates, Inc. dealt with a larger scope as NPS reassessed what was historically significant (and as more buildings approached fifty years of age, the somewhat arbitrary marker assigned by the National Register of Historic Places for determining eligibility for listing).⁴⁰¹

Meanwhile, in the 1980s Glacier acquired its first cultural resource specialist on staff. Ellen Seeley served as the first park curator and began the laborious process of recording Glacier's many historic structures on NPS's List of Classified Structures (LCS). As the LCS aimed to capture information on structures when they were forty to fifty years old (ahead of the fifty-year mark identified by the National Register of Historic Places), Seeley oversaw the initial historical surveys of the Depression-era cabin camps at Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun when they came of age in the mid-1980s. Bruce Fladmark, a ranger naturalist on the park staff with degrees in biology and history, relieved Seeley of the task of doing "Section 106 compliance" (research and analysis in service of the National Historic Preservation Act's Section 106) in 1988. Fladmark continued to serve the park in that capacity through the 1990s as Seeley transferred out and Deirdre Shaw came in as Glacier's second park curator.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ Sheire, *Glacier National Park Historic Resource Study*, 193-201; Stephanie S. Toothman, "Cultural Resource Management in Natural Areas of the National Park System," *Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1987), 65; Catton, *National Park, City Playground*, 139-40.

⁴⁰¹ Bruce Fladmark, interview by Theodore Catton, October 22, 2009.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

By the time Glacier National Park's second GMP was produced, the park had over 350 structures on the National Register of Historic Places including about 100 used in concession operations. Any proposed changes to these structures – modernization, rehabilitation, or demolition – required Section 106 review and consultation with the SHPO. Any proposed changes to the park's five national historic landmarks faced even greater scrutiny. And as the GMP process soon made plain, the public put a high value on the most well-known of Glacier's historic structures. The public was much more aware of the legal strictures that stood in the way of removing historic buildings in the 1990s than it was when Glacier's first GMP was produced in the 1970s.⁴⁰³

NPS's cultural resource management program was far more robust across the agency than it was twenty years earlier. NPS now had a chief of cultural resources in the NPS directorate and a division of cultural resources in each regional office. It had a cultural landscape preservation program in development. A burgeoning of academic studies of national park history in the 1980s and 1990s helped NPS to gain a better appreciation of the so-called "built environment" in national parks, and especially to reevaluate the historical significance of NPS-built facilities such as roads and campgrounds. New studies like Linda Flint McClelland's *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942*, published in 1993, and Ethan Carr's forcefully titled *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service*, appearing in 1998, gave impetus to enlarging the scope of historic preservation in parks like Glacier and Yellowstone that were previously perceived as wilderness parks. Indeed, at the very time that Glacier's second GMP was in development, NPS was producing a national historic landmark theme study for NPS landscape architecture. The principal investigator for the study, Ethan Carr, selected Glacier's Going-to-the-Sun Road as a case study for his chapter on park roads. Planners who were engaged with preparing the GMP for Glacier recognized that Going-to-the-Sun Road was not only designated a national historic landmark, it was preeminent among park roads.⁴⁰⁴

In the preliminary phase of preparing the new GMP, the park received strong input from environmental groups who wanted greater protection of wilderness values and ecologically sensitive areas in the park. NPS developed a draft plan with four alternatives, two of which would have taken various measures to give stronger

⁴⁰³ National Park Service, *Final General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Glacier National Park, Montana, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park* (West Glacier, Mont.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999), 57.

⁴⁰⁴ Reconceptualization of wilderness and the built environment in the national park context was also energized by the debate around William Cronon's essay, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," which appeared in 1995. (William Cronon, ed. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995): 69-90.

protection to wilderness values and ecologically sensitive areas. When Superintendent Mihalic released this draft plan for public comment in the spring of 1996, it provoked a public outcry. One alternative would have removed the Swiftcurrent Motor Inn and cabins, closed the North Fork to motorized vehicles, and taken out the Two Medicine camp store, a national historic landmark, as well as putting new strictures on public use in the Logan Pass area. It seemed to many traditional park users that NPS was going too far to restrict public access. Mihalic and the park administration were surprised by the backlash from those user groups, especially when environmentalists who had been vocal in the early going suddenly became quiet, seemingly cowed by the strength of the opposition.⁴⁰⁵

Mihalic and the planning team regrouped and developed a new set of alternatives. Since the basic message they drew from the large public response in the first round was “keep the park the way it is now,” and “why fix something that isn’t broken,” they concluded that the GMP should present a set of alternatives that did not seek radical change.⁴⁰⁶

The new set of alternatives emphasized repairing the existing park infrastructure. Mihalic said the team focused on three issues: rebuilding the Going-to-the-Sun Road, rehabilitating the historic lodges, and revising regulations governing scenic air tours over the park. The planners found it necessary to reorient the GMP around six geographic areas that were well known to the public. These were Many Glacier, Goat Haunt-Belly River, the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor, Two Medicine, Middle Fork, and North Fork. Each geographic area was divided into four management zones: the visitor service zone, the day use zone, the rustic zone, and the backcountry zone.⁴⁰⁷

With the aim of keeping the park the way it was, the GMP called for overnight lodging facilities to stay the same. The visitor facilities would not be removed, nor would they be expanded, nor would aging historic structures be replaced with modern ones. Yet the visitor facilities did need repairs, which left two alternatives. Under the preferred alternative, NPS would seek funding to undertake a comprehensive rehabilitation effort to restore each visitor facility to serve the public well into the future. The GMP cautioned that the rehabilitation would be expensive, ranging upwards of \$61 million. Private donations would be sought but most of the cost would probably be public funded. “All funding sources would be evaluated,” the

⁴⁰⁵ Ben Long, “Drastic changes laid out in Glacier plan,” *Daily Inter Lake* (Kalispell), July 24, 1996; Greg Hanscom, “Glacier Park finds itself inundated.”

⁴⁰⁶ Michael Jamison, “Newsletter Five promises new planning alternatives,” *Hungry Horse News*, May 1, 1997.

⁴⁰⁷ Jim Mann, “Repairs a big part of park planning,” *Daily Inter Lake* (Kalispell), February 18, 1998; National Park Service, *Final General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Glacier National Park, Montana, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park*, 23.

plan stated, “but ownership must remain with the National Park Service, and any additional development would be considered only if necessary to serve visitor needs.” NPS would not solicit private capital if it meant giving any ground on other management objectives. The only other alternative to the preferred alternative was a no-action alternative. The GMP stated that under this alternative the concessioner would continue to make repairs and improvements under NPS direction, but it would be inadequate over the long run. Visitor use of the facilities would continue for an indeterminate period. But visitor satisfaction would decline and eventually the buildings would deteriorate to a point at which life/safety issues would require their closure.⁴⁰⁸

Besides pointing toward an expensive program of rehabilitation, the GMP described needed improvements at each location. For Many Glacier Hotel, work was needed on failing structural elements such as exterior balconies, walls, floors, and foundations. Electrical systems did not meet modern fire codes. There were issues with asbestos and bat infestation. The guest rooms needed bigger bathrooms and better soundproofing and insulation, and the hotel lacked wheelchair access. Employee housing was inadequate. All needed improvements would cost in the range of \$35 to \$48 million. For Lake McDonald Lodge, the rehabilitation would include more life/safety improvements to the main lodge, renovations to the 1960s-era restaurant, winterizing of utility systems and support facilities, and reconfiguring of employee housing, all estimated to cost about \$23 to \$36 million. At Swiftcurrent Motor Inn, many of the cabins were in deteriorated condition and had asbestos problems. At Rising Sun Motor Inn, there was structural deterioration and need for asbestos abatement, and some facilities were in the 100-year floodplain. The cost of rehabilitating the two 1930s-era cabin camps was around \$8 to \$18 million.⁴⁰⁹

Once the GMP became final, there was renewed skepticism about the high cost of rehabilitation. “Striving and succeeding are two very different matters,” commented Michael Jamison, reporter for *The Missoulian*, noting that the “building repair bill is estimated at nearly \$100 million” and no funding for it was yet on the horizon. On the other hand, park planner Mary Riddle noted that the GMP did a good job in providing a framework to begin finding solutions. It narrowed options and made decision making more focused.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ National Park Service, *Final General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Glacier National Park, Montana, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park*, 59-60.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 58-59.

⁴¹⁰ Michael Jamison, “Glacier repairs revised,” *The Missoulian*, July 16, 1999.

The Rehabilitation Puzzle

Through the 1990s and into the early twentieth century, NPS and Glacier Park, Inc. searched for a better approach to the upkeep of concession facilities. Longtime issues still pertained. The concessioner wanted security on its investment as it put more money into assets where the government held title. NPS wanted to obtain a bigger investment from the concessioner while holding down the concessioner's accumulation of possessory interest as much as possible. Both NPS and Glacier Park, Inc. wanted to take proper care of the buildings, but neither wanted to do more than its fair share. It was the same tug-of-war between private capital and public land use that had animated national park concession policy from the beginning. But the old days of resolving that tug-of-war under what Superintendent Iversen once called "the buddy system" were now long gone. The cost of rehabilitation was much greater than it was in the 1960s and 70s, and accounting systems were more exacting. Whatever the two parties agreed to do, the agreements had to be contractual.

Historically, national park concessioners relied on two key provisions of the concession contract to give them security on their investment: the preferential right that gave the concessioner a leg up in contract renewal, and the possessory interest that provided some guarantee of money in, money out. When national park concessioners lobbied Congress to protect their position from government overreach, they always focused on those provisions. NPS, meanwhile, exercised the power of the landowner through two other key provisions of the concession contract: the limited term of contract and the franchise fee. When NPS moved to institute a more rigorous mode of concessions management in the 1980s, it focused on the limited term of contract and the franchise fee because those were its best sources of leverage. The system of evaluating performance annually that was institutionalized in the 1980s bolstered the limited term of contract, providing steps to terminate the lease early if NPS found it advisable to do so. The franchise fee, meanwhile, served to leverage more capital investment.

In 1994, Glacier Park, Inc.'s franchise fee was increased from 1.5 to 5 percent of gross receipts and earmarked for investment in Glacier's concession facilities rather than being deposited in the U.S. Treasury. The franchise fee funds were henceforth deposited in a new account labeled the Capital Improvement Account (CIA). Building fees for Glacier Park, Inc.'s use of government-owned buildings – a relatively small add-on to the former franchise fee – were henceforth deposited in another new account labeled the Government Improvement Account (GIA). CIA

funds were directed to improvements on concessioner-owned buildings, and GIA funds were directed to improvements on government-owned buildings.⁴¹¹

The 5 percent of gross revenues came to approximately \$500,000 per year. It was a large increase over what existed before, when Glacier Park, Inc. was required under its contract to put a minimum of 1 percent of gross receipts into a Long-Range Capital Improvements Program. That 1 percent requirement remained, so that the company's obligation was now 1 percent plus 5 percent for a total of 6 percent of gross revenue each year. The separate accounts were necessary because the 1 percent expenditures were put to improvements that added to the company's possessory interest in concession facilities, while the CIA and GIA account expenditures, which would have otherwise been deposited in the U.S. Treasury, did not add to the company's possessory interest.⁴¹²

The contract modification significantly enhanced the capital improvement program. But it was still nowhere near enough money to tackle the large rehabilitation projects that were needed to put historic facilities such as Many Glacier Hotel in shape for long life. After two years of experience with the new CIA and GIA accounts, Superintendent Mihalic wrote: "Trying to tackle the necessary improvements through the Capital Improvement Account funds is comparable to trying to spit out a forest fire."⁴¹³ It was still just a stopgap effort.

Furthermore, the new arrangement caused friction. The 5 percent franchise fee was retroactive to 1992 with offsets for the company's investments made in 1992 and 1993, and the company dickered with NPS over which investments qualified as offsets. The dollar amounts of the offsets were minor in the grand scheme yet big enough to scrap over. The company found NPS oversight of the CIA expenditures meddlesome, especially as the various projects still amounted to mere band-aid solutions. In the spring of 1996, Glacier Park, Inc. president and general manager, Dale Scott proposed another scheme that would have the company put substantially more capital investment into facilities while providing security on the investment. Under Scott's plan, CIA expenditures would give the government an increasing

⁴¹¹ Glacier National Park, "1994 Concessioner Overall Rating, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," Folder 6, File Unit 015, Subseries 03, Glacier National Park Historic Concession Records, 1973-2007, 1973-2007, GNP; Amendment No. 5, Concessions Contract CC-GLAC002-81, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park, Folder C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴¹² Glacier National Park, "1994 Concessioner Overall Rating, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," Folder 6, File Unit 15, Subseries 03, Glacier National Park Historic Concession Records, 1973-2007, GNP; Amendment No. 5, Concessions Contract CC-GLAC002-81, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park, and David A. Mihalic to Dale Scott, July 17, 1996, Folder C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴¹³ Superintendent to Deputy Field Director, March 13, 1996 and April 30, 1996, Folder C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

share of “owner equity” in the company. Glacier Park, Inc. would receive a free hand in deciding how the capital investment funds were spent, while the government’s interest in the CIA funds would be protected because it would have an increasing share in the capital stock of the company through the owner equity plan. This and other proposals were on the table when NPS Director Roger Kennedy and park officials met with the company in July 1996. Other ideas for bringing in more capital investment included setting up a foundation separate from the company, seeking larger tax credits, and negotiating a new long-term concession contract.⁴¹⁴

Scott continued to advocate a restructuring of the federal government-private company partnership. In 1997, he wrote to Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt that he saw two main options to recapitalize the concession assets in Glacier. In the first option, the government could secure large private investment through a thirty-year contract extension, provided there were pricing changes to increase the concession’s gross revenues as well as the usual provisions to protect the concessioner’s possessory interest. (In other words, private capital would flow into the park if only NPS were amenable to making concession operations more profitable and business friendly.) Since NPS had always guarded against such an approach, Scott touted the second option, whereby the government could acquire the assets from Glacier Park, Inc. through the creation of an entity like a real estate investment trust (REIT). An REIT is a company that owns and manages real estate. Akin to the owner equity idea, the REIT would allow the government to acquire shares in the new entity, affecting a gradual buyout of Glacier Park, Inc.’s possessory interest.⁴¹⁵

None of these schemes was adopted. Too much uncertainty surrounded the concession facilities as Glacier went through the contentious public process of developing a new GMP from 1995 to 1999. Scott added to the controversy when he announced that his company could raise \$80 million in bank loans toward a long-range rehabilitation program if only it had an extension of its long-term contract. But alas, Scott said, Congress enacted the Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 that shortened the length of contracts, reduced preferential rights, raised franchise fees, and strengthened government oversight – all things that tended to discourage long-range capital investment.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁴ Superintendent to Field Director, July 7, 1996, Folder C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴¹⁵ R. Dale Scott to Bruce Babbitt, October 2, 1997, and Superintendent to Counselor to the Secretary of the Interior, March 9, 1998, Folder C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴¹⁶ Michael Jamison, “Newsletter Five promises new planning alternatives,” *Hungry Horse News*, May 1, 1997; Pierre Marcoux, “Park vendors worried by new law,” *Great Falls Tribune*, November 6, 1998.

At a Senate hearing in 2000, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt suggested that Many Glacier Hotel should be torn down; the cost of rehabilitation was simply too high. He even remarked that he would put a match to it. Babbitt's remarks drew fire from Montana politicians, even after the secretary of the interior walked back his remarks by insisting that he had not meant them literally; he was only making a rhetorical point about the enormous backlog of rehabilitation across the whole National Park System. The following year, Congress began appropriating funds for the rehabilitation of Many Glacier Hotel. Altogether, the rehabilitation project would run for more than a decade and a half and would consume about \$42 million before it petered out. Notwithstanding all the discussion with Glacier Park, Inc. that preceded it, the rehabilitation was basically a federal undertaking, augmented by private donations that allowed the work to go beyond basic safety needs to include historic restoration.⁴¹⁷

The work began in the fall of 2001 with the main wing being lifted on hydraulic jacks, bound with cables, and moved sideways onto a new foundation, rectifying a dangerous lean in the building where it had been slowly sliding into the lake. The next phase of work focused on re-siding the whole exterior, rebuilding exterior balconies, reroofing, repairing exterior doors and windows, and replacing one of the elevators. These renovations lasted through the mid 2000s. A project to abate hazardous materials was conducted in the off-season starting in the fall of 2006. Rehabilitation of the main wing interior occurred from the fall of 2010 through the spring of 2012, which necessitated closure of approximately half the guest rooms and the main dining room during the 2011 summer season. Finally, in 2016 the lobby and annex were closed for interior renovations, and in 2017 the double-helix staircase, which had been torn out in the 1950s to make room for a larger gift shop, was fully restored.⁴¹⁸

Glacier Park, Inc. Ups and Downs

At the end of the 1991 summer season, Superintendent Lusk warned Glacier Park, Inc. that the park administration would give the company an unsatisfactory rating unless it took steps to change its top management and work with park staff to identify necessary corrective actions for operational performance. Lusk's warning

⁴¹⁷ Nate Schweber, "Montana's Many Glacier Hotel is Revitalized against the Backdrop of a Changing Landscape," *Preservation Magazine* (Spring 2018).

⁴¹⁸ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2003, 51; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2007, 62; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2011, 83; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2012, 82; Glacier Park Foundation, *A Historical Handbook for the Employees of Many Glacier Hotel* (May 2017), at http://www.glacierparkfoundation.org/History/ManyGlacier_HistoricalHandbook.pdf <April 5, 2020>.

packed a wallop, since an unsatisfactory rating would be grounds for revoking the concession's right of preference and terminating its contract. Glacier Park, Inc. duly responded to Lusk's demands, and the park eased up to the extent of giving the company an overall rating of marginal instead of unsatisfactory. The agreed upon corrective actions were listed in the evaluation report as "expectations for 1992." This was Glacier Park, Inc.'s third marginal rating in eleven years, a dubious record.⁴¹⁹

Martin Schultz, president and general manager of the company since 1981, had to step down to appease Lusk. Though the two worked together effectively for several years, when operational problems arose in the 1991 season Schultz became impossible for Lusk to work with. Lusk and his concessions management team found that Schultz would not take responsibility for problems but instead blamed all the company's failings on his various site managers. Furthermore, company management seemed to be responsible for low employee morale and a "recurrent cloud of fear and distrust throughout the operation." There was even a report that Schultz had once mistaken two guests for concession employees and tried to fire them.⁴²⁰

NPS urged Glacier Park, Inc. to invest more in its site managers, who were seasonal hires. It wanted the concession to give the site managers more pre-season training and provide them more incentive to return year after year. When problems arose in the summer of 1991, the company sent three additional managers from Phoenix to Glacier to assist. But those individuals were not empowered to take over operations at any site, so employees at each location were "continually confused by taking sometimes conflicting orders from five different individuals." Glacier Park, Inc. agreed to extend the pre-season training for site managers. It established a year-round position for one site manager by maintaining a winter office for that individual in Kalispell. During the winter, this person's responsibilities were to improve public relations with local communities and recruit locally for summer employees. NPS approved a small rate increase for the next summer to cover the cost of the year-round position.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ Glacier National Park, "Narrative Statement, Concessioner Annual Overall Rating – 1991, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," Folder 9, File Unit 015, Subseries 03, Glacier National Park Historic Concession Records, 1973-2007, GNPA.

⁴²⁰ Glacier National Park, "Narrative Statement, Concessioner Annual Overall Rating – 1991, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," and H. Gilbert Lusk to Joseph K. Fassler, November 12, 1991, Folder 9, File Unit 015, Subseries 03, Glacier National Park Historic Concession Records, 1973-2007, GNPA.

⁴²¹ Glacier National Park, "Narrative Statement, Concessioner Annual Overall Rating – 1991, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," Folder 9, File Unit 015, Subseries 03, Glacier National Park Historic Concession Records, 1973-2007, GNPA; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1991, 8.

Glacier Park, Inc.'s parent company, Restaura, Inc. (Greyhound Food Management, Inc., changed its name in 1987) replaced the concession's entire management team at the beginning of 1992. R. Dale Scott, recruited from outside Greyhound, replaced Schultz as Glacier Park, Inc.'s new president and general manager. Scott established a good relationship with Superintendent Lusk and with Lusk's successor, Dave Mihalic. While Scott diligently attended to the details of concession operations each summer, he took a keen interest in the longer view of Glacier Park, Inc.'s place in the park. Through the 1990s, he devoted considerable energy to developing a stronger relationship with the Blackfeet Nation. He promoted the vision of the Glacier-Waterton Lakes International Peace Park. He helped NPS arrive at a long-term solution to the problem of rehabilitation of facilities. Toward the end of the decade he prepared a vision statement on how Glacier's concession facilities might look in the year 2030.⁴²²

After nearly a decade on the job, however, Scott's good relations with the park administration wore thin. Glacier Park, Inc. received a marginal rating in 1999, which rankled Scott deeply. The lower rating came as a result of some late payments by the concession and some infractions of public health standards around the food service operations. Scott believed the lower rating was undeserved. The company appealed it. Regional Director Karen Wade upheld the park's finding. Scott resigned in 2000 after losing the appeal.⁴²³

Jan Ek was promoted from Room Division Manager to General Manager in October 2001 and held the position through the following summer season. That fall, four senior management positions were reassigned to year-round offices near the park rather than bringing them back to corporate headquarters in Phoenix for the off-season as was the usual pattern. In the following summer, concession operations ran smoothly after a slow startup due to late spring snows. At the end of the season, Glacier Park, Inc. received an overall rating of "satisfactory" and an appreciative comment for working cooperatively with NPS and other concessioners.⁴²⁴

After this year of transition, Cindy Ognjanov was named president and general manager of Glacier Park, Inc. in October 2002. Ognjanov received a true baptism by

⁴²² R. Dale Scott to David A. Mihalic, October 1, 1996, and Scott to Bruce Babbitt, October 2, 1997, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴²³ R. Dale Scott to David Mihalic, October 1, 1999, Mihalic to Scott, October 15, 1999, Scott to Rick Shireman, February 3, 2000, Shireman to Scott, February 17, 2000, Scott to Karen P. Wade, April 3, 2000, and Wade to Scott, May 4, 2000, Folder 1A, File Unit 015, Subseries 03, Historic Concessions Records 1973-2007, GNPA.

⁴²⁴ Glacier National Park, "2001 Concessioner Overall Rating, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," and "2002 Concessioner Overall Rating, Glacier Park, Inc., Glacier National Park," File C6210 Annual Overall Rating 2001, Box 24, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

fire. In her first summer season, two large forest fires, the Roberts Fire and the Trapper Creek Fire, blew up and forced the evacuation of four of the company's overnight lodging facilities in a single day. Ognjanov's started her day on July 24 at 4 a.m., leaving East Glacier Park to be at Many Glacier by dawn. After helping the local managers at Many Glacier and Swiftcurrent initiate the evacuation of all guests and employees, she drove over Logan Pass to repeat the same drill at Lake McDonald Lodge and Apgar Village Inn. Employees helped visitors pack their cars and go; then employees bundled their essential belongings and themselves into red buses and company trucks for transport to East Glacier Park. At 7 p.m. that night, Ognjanov held an all-employee meeting back at East Glacier Park. She finally returned home at 10 p.m. For the next two days, Glacier Park Lodge fed and housed the hundreds of evacuated concession employees while they waited for the all-clear to return to their jobs. Lake McDonald Lodge employees were kept away for another ten days beyond that. When the lodge finally re-opened, just a third of the employees remained, most having given up and left. "It was OK," Ognjanov wrote after the event. "The heavy smoke kept occupancy at an all-time low for the next four weeks, so we managed with our small group of employees. God bless them all."⁴²⁵

Ognjanov remained president and general manager of Glacier Park, Inc. through the next twelve summer seasons until it lost the concession contract in 2014.

The Blackfeet Nation and Glacier Tourism

In the early 1990s, the Blackfeet Nation pushed for opportunities to get more involved with visitor services in Glacier National Park. The initiative occurred against a background of friction between NPS and the tribe over other matters. The Blackfeet Nation and NPS held differing interpretations of the Blackfeet Agreement of 1895, with the tribe maintaining that Glacier National Park had been established in 1910 with lands that properly belonged to the tribe. The dispute lay at the root of decades of frosty relations that persisted into the twenty-first century. NPS, for its part, said it wanted to improve relations with the tribe, but it would not engage on the land issue. NPS and the Blackfeet Nation both took positive steps in the early 1990s to reach a better understanding. NPS invited tribal member Curly Bear Wagner to take part in a Native American awareness seminar for its non-Indian staff each summer. Tribal members Earl Kipp and Jack Gladstone delivered summer programs in campgrounds and hotel lobbies.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ Djuff and Morrison, *Glacier from the Inside Out*, 138-40.

⁴²⁶ H. Gilbert Lusk to Martin Schultz, May 9, 1991, Folder 5, File Unit 5, Subseries 03, Concessions Files 1973-2007, GNP; Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, *American Indians and National Parks* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 63.

By 1992, the Blackfeet Nation had clarified for the Department of the Interior that it had three main objectives in promoting the tribe's employment and business activity in Glacier. Those objectives were first, to see more tribal members employed within the park; second, to see Blackfeet arts and crafts marketed more effectively in gift shops in the park; and third, to increase opportunities for Blackfeet to contract with NPS to provide visitor services.⁴²⁷

The tribe's search for employment opportunities in the park took in both NPS and Glacier Park, Inc. A few tribal members had served on the park staff in the past. Francis X. Guardipee served as a ranger on Glacier's staff from 1932 to 1947. Gerald Cobell began as a seasonal laborer in 1975 and moved to a permanent position in resource management after he obtained a master's degree in wildlife management from Utah State University.⁴²⁸ Blackfeet tribal representatives thought they received an assurance from the park administration that it would use a special local hiring authority to recruit more tribal members onto the staff in 1992, but the results were unclear.⁴²⁹ Disappointed, the tribe turned its efforts to Glacier Park, Inc., asking NPS for help. The tribal government had some authority over Glacier Park, Inc. without NPS's help, since Glacier Park Lodge was on the Blackfeet Reservation. The company needed a tribal liquor license for the bar and restaurant in Glacier Park Lodge, as well as a business license for its gas station, and it had to stay in good standing with the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO).⁴³⁰

After a tense meeting or two at the outset, Glacier Park, Inc. appeared to take genuine interest in building better relations with the Blackfeet Nation and improving its record of hiring tribal members. Glacier Park, Inc.'s president and general manager Dale Scott informed Superintendent Gil Lusk in October 1992 that the company employed 165 members of the tribe that summer, a 50 percent increase over the previous year's number. It reached out to Blackfeet Community College to offer help in developing a program in hotel and restaurant management, and it established two scholarships for Blackfeet tribal members enrolled in a hospitality related field in any Montana college.⁴³¹

⁴²⁷ Daniel S. Press to Timothy Glidden, July 6, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴²⁸ Keller and Turek, *American Indians and National Parks*, 63.

⁴²⁹ Daniel S. Press to Timothy Glidden, July 6, 1992, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks to Director, NPS, October 19, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴³⁰ Dale Scott to Joe Fassler, August 5, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴³¹ R. Dale Scott to H. G. Lusk, October 26, 1992, and Scott to Joe McKay, November 25, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

Concerning sales of Blackfeet arts and crafts, tribal representatives wanted Glacier Park, Inc. to provide more outlets for Blackfeet artists to sell their products to tourists. They expressed outrage that gift shops in the park carried souvenir merchandise that was American Indian- or Western-themed but was in fact made in Asia. NPS had a history of working with organizations to protect American Indian artists from being exploited by non-Indian buyers and sellers of American Indian arts and crafts. In this case, there was no complaint of exploitation or selling of faux Blackfeet art; rather, the Blackfeet simply wanted access to the curio trade. The Blackfeet demand gained traction after tribal representatives addressed the National Park System Advisory Board when it met at St. Mary in August 1992. Following the meeting, the Board passed a resolution expressing hope that NPS would act on the tribe's demand. Superintendent Lusk relayed that message to Glacier Park, Inc.⁴³²

Scott explained that the company had not sold Blackfeet arts and crafts previously because the items were hard to stock on a regular basis. But starting in 1992, Glacier Park, Inc. did make the extra effort, and it arranged retail space for Native American arts and crafts at each of its locations. By 1995, the company's retail manager reported that he was purchasing around \$10,000 of Blackfeet arts and crafts each year.⁴³³

The tribe's third objective was to improve opportunities for Blackfeet to obtain contracts in the park. Glacier Park, Inc. was responsive to this request as well. Starting in 1993, the company contracted with a Blackfeet-owned construction company to build a public shower and restroom facility at Swiftcurrent, and it turned to a Blackfeet-owned business for supply of firewood bundles to sell at its camp stores.⁴³⁴

More contentious was a move by tribal member Ed DesRosier to start his own bus tour business in the park. In the summer of 1992, DesRosier and two associates, John Vaile, and Raymond Croft, were apprehended by park rangers for operating a tour service in the park without a permit. NPS took the position that the concessioner had a monopoly on bus tours in the park, and it was necessary for NPS to maintain the monopoly to protect the quality of that visitor service. After the federal government brought charges against DesRosier, the tribe sued NPS and the Department of the Interior, defending DesRosier and seeking a court declaration that the tribe had not

⁴³² Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks to Director, NPS, October 19, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴³³ R. Dale Scott to Joe McKay, November 25, 1992, and Scott to Don White, June 16, 1995, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴³⁴ R. Dale Scott to H. G. Lusk, October 26, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

relinquished rights reserved to it in the 1895 agreement. The case was appealed all the way up to the Ninth District Federal Court of Appeals.⁴³⁵

Blackfeet Tribal Chairman Earl Old Person tried unsuccessfully to get NPS to drop the charges against DesRosier, Vaile, and Croft. But even as NPS declined to drop the charges and the case wended its way through the courts, NPS explored the possibility of a subconcession for DesRosier under which he would offer a tour service separate from Glacier Park, Inc.'s tour service, providing park interpretation from a Blackfeet perspective. In the spring of 1993, NPS approved a subconcession agreement with Sun Tours and Glacier Park, Inc. A subconcession was an unusual entity in the National Park System. Under the 1988 *Management Policies*, subconcessions were not encouraged and were allowed only if two conditions were met: the proposed subconcession operation had to be "essential to provide better service to the public" and the prime concessioner had to provide "the basic facilities needed to provide the service." *Management Policies* also stipulated that the prime concessioner and the sub would each pay half of the franchise fee. Glacier Park, Inc. consented to entering a subcontract with Ed DesRosier. The subconcession proved to be a transitional arrangement. In the spring of 1994, Glacier Park, Inc. waived its right to the tour service with interpretation from a Blackfeet perspective, allowing NPS to issue a concession permit for that service with Sun Tours.⁴³⁶

The persistent DesRosier lost money on the business each year until 1998 when his business finally began to thrive. From a single Ford van operated without a permit in 1992, DesRosier grew the business into a big enterprise with an eleven-vehicle fleet and a large team of Blackfeet tour guides. He was widely recognized for his business acumen and vision. In addition to running the company, DesRosier served in tribal government and on the Montana Governor's Tourism Advisory Council.⁴³⁷

Two decades on from the Blackfeet Nation's initiatives in the early 1990s, one could point to successes and disappointments. More Blackfeet tribal members held jobs in Glacier than before, but the employment picture was mixed. Glacier Park,

⁴³⁵ "Blackfeet sue feds over Glacier Park rights," *Daily Inter Lake* (Kalispell), November 17, 1992; Lynn Armitage, "Meet Ed DesRosier, Founder of Sun Tours and Native Business Top 50 Entrepreneurs Honoree," *Native Business*, June 27, 2019.

⁴³⁶ Earl Old Person to H. Gilbert Lusk, June 9, 1993, and R. Dale Scott to Lusk, October 26, 1992, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1992, 11; National Park Service, *Management Policies* (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1988), p. 10-5; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1993, 8; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1995, 18.

⁴³⁷ Philip Burnham, *Indian Country, God's Country: Native Americans and the National Parks* (Washington: Island Press, 2000), 206-10; Sun Tours, "About Sun Tours," at glaciersuntours.com/about-us/ <April 7, 2020>.

Inc. continued its program to recruit Blackfeet employees, with efforts centered on making multiple trips each winter to the Blackfeet Community College and the Glacier County Job Service and coordinating with the TERO. The company also broadened its scholarship program, collaborated with the Blackfeet Boys and Girls Club, and held a yearly benefit, the Harvest Moon Ball, to raise money for the Blackfeet Community Foundation. Since a significant fraction of Glacier Park, Inc.'s jobs were located on the Blackfeet Reservation at Glacier Park Lodge, the company made extra efforts to support the local community at East Glacier Park.⁴³⁸ The number of Blackfeet tribal members employed in the park lodges leveled off. There were impediments to raising the number more: tribal members generally hesitated to use employee housing if they could commute from homes on the reservation instead, and child care services were lacking.⁴³⁹

As for the number of Blackfeet employed on the park staff, that was never made public because an employee's tribal affiliation was protected class information. NPS continued to use the special hiring authority but it could not guarantee park housing with the job. The commute from Browning or other reservation communities to park locations could be more than forty minutes one-way. So, there was some continuing frustration around the fact that the park staff remained largely white.⁴⁴⁰

More progress was made in the area of exposing park visitors to Blackfeet culture. The park interpretive program and the concessioner worked together in looking for opportunities to expose hotel guests and campground users to Blackfeet culture. More Blackfeet tribal members gave presentations in the park. The red bus drivers received improved cultural training. Glacier Park, Inc. offered a bus tour that made stops at the Blackfeet Heritage Center and the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning. A strong ethic arose that Blackfeet should tell their own story to park visitors whenever possible; if nontribal members conveyed the tribe's history it had to be done with proper training and circumspection.⁴⁴¹

The third goal of the Blackfeet Nation, to compete for park concessions, primarily rested on individual tribal members' business initiative. DesRosier's success with Sun Tours so far remained an isolated case. A change in concession policy in 1998 removed concessioners' right of first preference, which made concession contracts more competitive. In theory, the policy revision was good for Blackfeet entrepreneurs who might want to get into the park concessions business. Blackfeet entrepreneurs still faced a challenge in accessing capital.

⁴³⁸ Cindy Ognjanov to Jan Knox and Stephanie Dubois, November 9, 2006, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴³⁹ Sierra Mandelko and Mary Wysong, communication with author, July 1, 2020.

⁴⁴⁰ Sierra Mandelko and Mary Wysong, communication with author, July 1, 2020.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

While the Blackfeet Nation made tangible gains in becoming more involved with Glacier tourism, Blackfeet leaders stressed that there was still far to go. And the past still pained them. When Glacier Park, Inc. invited the Blackfeet Nation to take part in the centennial anniversary celebration of Glacier Park Lodge in 2013, the concession was rebuffed by Tribal Chairman Willie A. Sharp, Jr., who wrote: “We do appreciate the invitation, but believe that from the standpoint of the Blackfeet, there is little to celebrate. We do not want to continue to perpetuate the misleading idea of a bygone era that the Blackfeet were an integral part of the Lodge’s history, when in fact our Tribal members were the token face of the ‘Noble Redman’ who were reduced to, many times, begging at the train station for attention from tourists coming to the Lodge.”⁴⁴²

The Commercial Services Plan

Glacier started work on its *Commercial Services Plan* in the fall of 2000 and released the *Final Commercial Services Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* in June 2004. The park solicited public input at two stages in the planning process, holding open houses in several Montana communities and garnering more than 700 public comments. The final document was more than 400 pages in length. The four-year undertaking to prepare the plan followed right on the heels of the public process to formulate the park’s *General Management Plan*; consequently, the latter planning process tapped into the public excitement that the GMP had sparked just a few years earlier and the *Commercial Services Plan* hewed closely to what the GMP promised. The GMP put it quite simply: “The overwhelming majority of the people who commented during the development of this *General Management Plan* have indicated that they would like to ‘keep Glacier the way it is.’” When it came to overnight lodging facilities, the public would not abide any closures of the park’s historic hotels, motels, cabin groups, or chalets. In line with the GMP, the *Commercial Services Plan* affirmed that all existing overnight lodging facilities were necessary and appropriate for visitor enjoyment and would be preserved in the park as traditional visitor service facilities.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² Willie A. Sharp, Jr. to Ron Cadrette, June 17, 2013, File C3803, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴⁴³ National Park Service, *Final Commercial Services Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Glacier National Park, Montana, Waterton Glacier International Peace Park* (West Glacier, Mont.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2005), pp. ES1-3, ES18-30; National Park Service, *Final General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Glacier National Park, Montana, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park* (West Glacier, Mont.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999), 23.

The *Commercial Services Plan* addressed all visitor services provided by concessioners, not just overnight lodging. Other commercial services included commercially guided hiking and bicycle touring and many other services. Where the plan did focus on overnight lodging facilities, outstanding issues included the condition of employee housing, the need for better separation between employee and guest areas, problems with parking and circulation, the need for more life/safety improvements, the pros and cons of modernization or expansion of facilities, and managing construction with sensitivity to wildlife concerns. Considerable attention was given to Granite Park Chalet.⁴⁴⁴

Several issues that were of large importance to Glacier in the early 2000s were considered in the commercial services planning process but were finally judged to be outside the scope of the final commercial services plan. Among those issues were the parkwide transit system, commercial air tours, utility upgrades in developed areas, rehabilitation of campgrounds, and private lands in the park. Another issue that had always been central to NPS-concessioner relations in Glacier and was strategically omitted from the plan was the funding challenge around rehabilitation of historic buildings. Rather than allow the planning process to get bogged down in charting a solution to the rehabilitation puzzle, it just assumed that a solution would be found.⁴⁴⁵

Concessions Management Staffing and Training

The development of a concessions management staff in the park, which began in the 1970s and took hold in the 1980s as discussed in the last chapter, went through some further changes in the 1990s and the 2000s. Jan Knox headed Glacier's concessions management staff from 1992 until 2015, when she retired after a total of twenty-six years on the park staff. Over this period the concessions management staff started at three, with one concessions management specialist at the GS-12 level, one more concessions management specialist at the GS-09 level, and a clerical assistant. Later a second concessions management specialist at the GS-09 level was added; for a long time, this was a term position. Sometimes the small staff had to cover a vacancy and other times it had a staff member temporarily assigned to it from outside as when Ron Speedy, a sanitarian with the Public Health Service in Denver, worked at Glacier in 2002-03 and his position was partially funded by the park.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ National Park Service, *Final Commercial Services Plan*, pp. ES3-5.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. ES6.

⁴⁴⁶ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2003, 5; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2004, 51; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2006, 55; "Glacier Park Names New Deputy Superintendent, Administrative Assistant," *Flathead Beacon* (Kalispell), October 9, 2015.

Knox and her assistants shared in the service-wide trend toward greater standardization of concession management operations. NPS developed standardized methods and protocols for inspections, for example. The Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 furthered the trend toward standardization of concession management operations. The law made contracts more competitive and shortened their duration to ten years in most cases. It defined procedures for contract solicitation and proposal evaluation. Other changes to concession policy included a broadening of advertising requirements. Efforts to make concession contracts more competitive tended to put more demands on NPS personnel as the process of developing a prospectus and advertising the opportunity and selecting the winning proposal became more rigorous, expensive, and frequent.⁴⁴⁷

Staff training opportunities increased. NPS developed four- and five-day courses for training concessions management specialists in technical areas such as assets management and pricing management. Concessions management specialists often had a degree in business management and some kind of business-oriented background. For help with complicated business accounting problems, they could seek assistance from financial analysts in the regional office.

In the early 2000s, the concessions staff at Glacier became a separate division in the park organization. It was the smallest division, but it had an expanding workload. Besides managing eight concessions, it issued many commercial use authorizations for activities ranging from guided cross-country ski and bicycle tours to outdoor photography seminars.⁴⁴⁸

With a large amount of rehabilitation of historic buildings looming, Glacier was fortunate to add a historic architect, Lon Johnson, to its cultural resource management staff in 2001. Concessions management specialists consulted Johnson on rehabilitation projects when those projects called for Section 106 compliance. Johnson was already familiar with Glacier's historic properties from his past work on the staff of the Montana SHPO. Johnson filled a vacancy on the cultural resource management staff after Bruce Fladmark retired at the end of 2000.

After Knox retired in 2015, Mary Wysong was hired to take her place as chief of the division. Wysong had worked for national park concessioners in Grand Teton and Denali National Parks before joining the NPS. She had served all of her NPS career in concessions management, first at Denali National Park and then Mount Rainier National Park, before coming to Glacier. There were changes in the makeup of the division after Wysong became chief. The division still numbered four, but the two GS-09 concession management specialist positions were upgraded to assistant

⁴⁴⁷ Mary Wysong, communication with the author, July 1, 2020.

⁴⁴⁸ Jean Tabbert, communication with the author, February 23, 2019.

manager at the GS-12 level and the other to the GS-11 level. A GS-09 term position was added in 2015 and converted to a permanent position in the winter of 2016. The administrative assistant position was eliminated.⁴⁴⁹

Last Years of the Glacier Park, Inc. Concession

Glacier Park, Inc.'s long-term contract was set to expire on December 5, 2005. NPS initiated development of a prospectus in the fall of 2003 but the contract to prepare the prospectus was delayed. Due to the complexity of the concession operation (including how it would interface with rehabilitation of Going-to-the-Sun Road) prospectus development was projected to take nearly three years. In fact, preparation of the prospectus took much longer, and the solicitation of bids was not finally made until 2012. Year after year, beginning in 2006 and continuing for eight years, NPS asked Glacier Park, Inc. to undertake a continuation of visitor services under a one-year contract extension. The one-year extensions hobbled the company's ability to do long-range planning and investing, but Glacier Park, Inc. had little choice other than to oblige.

The concessioner's annual contributions to the Capital Improvement Account and Government Improvement Account, and the unused balances at the end of each year, began to add up to a considerable sum. In 2010, the Capital Improvement Account had a balance of \$2,090,638, while the Government Improvement Account had a balance of \$30,657.70. That year, NPS decided to use those funds to address some longstanding needs in the Lake McDonald Lodge development area.⁴⁵⁰

The main project, which cost more than \$1 million, was construction of a new employee dormitory and a new employee dining room with kitchen. The Centennial Dormitory was completed in the spring of 2011 and greatly improved employee living conditions as well as alleviated pressure on the main hotel kitchen. It joined the Lewis Dormitory built during the off-season in 2008-09. Completion of a new parking area followed in the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, and then rehabilitation of the Cobb House and Snyder Hall followed that in the fall of 2012 and the spring of 2013.

Altogether, these improvements resolved the longstanding issue of substandard employee housing for Lake McDonald Lodge employees. (The problem was called out in the development concept plan for the area in 1985, reiterated in *Rehabilitation of Concession Facilities* in 1990, and carried into the park's *Commercial Services Plan* in 2004.) All employee housing was removed from the floodplain and the new

⁴⁴⁹ Mary Wyson, communication with the author, July 1, 2020.

⁴⁵⁰ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2010, 77.

facilities provided better separation between employee and guest areas. Snyder Hall was converted from employee housing into a budget hostel for the public and Cobb House was converted from an employee reading room into a visitor area.⁴⁵¹

In 2013, NPS was at last prepared to advertise a long-term concession contract to replace the one operable since 1981. A prospectus was issued by Jennifer Parker, chief of concessions in the Intermountain Region. Although Glacier Park Inc. had been Glacier's prime concession for thirty-two years, it did not receive a preference for renewal. The Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 repealed the renewal preference in the Concession Policy Act of 1965, giving NPS limited discretion to assign a preference in certain cases. NPS Director Jon Jarvis determined that there was no preferred offeror for the forthcoming contract for Glacier, and it was so stated in the prospectus.⁴⁵² Even so, Glacier Park, Inc. appeared to have a strong competitive advantage because any other contractor would have to buy out Glacier Park, Inc.'s possessory interest. Moreover, the company had received satisfactory ratings every year from 2000 through 2013. It came as a shock both to company officials and interested people in the region when it did not win the competition. Glacier staff offered no public comment on the outcome, and in fact Glacier staff had no part in the evaluation process as required by law.⁴⁵³

Glacier Park, Inc.'s possessory interest in 2012 was placed at \$22 million. In 1981, Hummel's possessory interest was placed at \$2.4 million. Adjusted for inflation, that was about \$6.1 million in 2012 dollars, so the value of Glacier Park, Inc.'s possessory interest increased by more than three-fold from 1981 to 2012. The three-fold increase came on top of depreciation of the value of assets from wear and tear. The fact that the concessioner's possessory interest had grown by so much when NPS wanted it to shrink was a discouraging revelation, though it was hardly unique to Glacier. It was happening across the National Park System. According to Derrick Crandall, a leading spokesperson for national park concessioners, Congress

⁴⁵¹ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2008, 55; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2010, 77; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2011, 84; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2012, 83; Personal communication with Jean Tabbert, February 23, 2019.

⁴⁵² National Park Service, "Prospectus, Lodging, Food & Beverage, Retail, Transportation, and Other Services," December 14, 2012, File C3817, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴⁵³ Chief, Business Resources Division, Intermountain Region, to Concessions Program Manager, WASO, undated, Michael D. Snyder to Joseph K. Fassler, January 2, 2007, December 16, 2008, and December 22, 2009, and John Wessels to Fassler, December 10, 2010, File C3823, Box 7, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP; Jenna Cederberg, "Glacier Park, Inc. shocked by loss of contract," *The Missoulian*, August 14, 2013.

was ultimately to blame for the growth of possessory interest because it failed to provide NPS with enough funding to maintain its visitor facilities.⁴⁵⁴

The cost of buying out Glacier Park, Inc.'s possessory interest amounted to about one third of a total estimated initial investment of about \$33 million. Purchase of Glacier Park, Inc.'s personal property (things like furniture, equipment, vehicles, and art collections) amounted to another \$5 million. Remaining items such as replacement of out-of-park support facilities, working capital, and other pre-opening expenses all added up to another \$6 million.⁴⁵⁵

The prospectus called on the concessioner to undertake a list of improvements to visitor facilities. This feature was considered part of the startup cost (if the concessioner was some entity other than the existing one) and it was defined as a Personal Property Improvement Requirement (PRIR). The concessioner would be required to undertake this program of improvements costing not less than \$2,480,000 commencing in 2014 with the expectation that work would be completed by the start of the 2015 summer season.⁴⁵⁶

The prospectus set the proposed minimum franchise fee at 1 percent of annual gross receipts. In addition, the concessioner would be required to contribute a minimum of 2.35 percent of annual gross receipts to repair and maintenance. The term of contract was for sixteen years beginning January 1, 2014. The prospectus stipulated that possessory interest acquired by the concessioner would automatically convert to "Leasehold Surrender Interest" (LSI), which would depreciate on a straight-line basis over a forty-year schedule during the sixteen-year term of the contract.⁴⁵⁷

Notwithstanding the extra burden of acquiring Glacier Park, Inc.'s possessory interest, Xanterra Parks & Resorts, Inc. was selected over Glacier Park, Inc. to serve as Glacier's next prime concessioner. Descended from the Fred Harvey Company long associated with Grand Canyon, Xanterra was no stranger to the national parks. The large hospitality company already had concession operations in Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Zion, Death Valley and other national parks.

⁴⁵⁴ Phil Taylor, "NPS bid for contract competition spurs Grand Canyon clash," *E&E News*, February 11, 2015, at eenews.net/stories/1060013287 <April 13, 2020>.

⁴⁵⁵ National Park Service, "Prospectus, Lodging, Food & Beverage, Retail, Transportation, and Other Services," December 14, 2012, File C3817, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ National Park Service, "Prospectus, Lodging, Food & Beverage, Retail, Transportation, and Other Services," December 14, 2012, File C3817, Box 5, Glacier National Park Unprocessed Concessions Records, Glacier Park, Inc., 1980-2013, GNP.

Termination of the contract did not mean the end of Glacier Park, Inc. Through more than thirty years of operation, the company had expanded its holdings outside the park to include St. Mary Lodge and Resort in St. Mary and Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, Montana. It still had Glacier Park Lodge and Prince of Wales Hotel as well as the Stuart Motel, located on an inholding next to Lake McDonald Lodge. So, the relationship between NPS and the company did not evaporate; Glacier Park, Inc. continued on as a park neighbor and inholder.

In the summer of 2014, Glacier Park, Inc. further expanded its assets and inholdings with acquisition of the West Glacier Motel and Cabins, located just outside the park, and Apgar Village Lodge, located on an inholding at Apgar. As one big purchase from the Lundgren family, business owners in West Glacier and Apgar since 1946, it put Glacier Park, Inc. in ownership of the West Glacier Mercantile, West Glacier Gift Shop, West Glacier Restaurant, West Glacier Bar, and almost 200 acres around that gateway community, plus the Cedar Tree Gift Shop in Apgar, as well as staff housing units at both locations. After the purchase, Ognjanov, who was still head of Glacier Park, Inc., announced that the company was mindful of the Lundgren family's long history in the area and that it looked forward to "carrying on their traditions in this historic town."⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁸ Vince Devlin, "Lundgren family sells Glacier assets to GPI," *The Missoulian*, July 6, 2014; Viad, "Viad Corp Expands in Glacier National Park Area with Acquisition of Hospitality Assets," July 2, 2014, at Viad.com/newsroom/news-releases/press.release-details-2014/Viad-Corp-Expands-in-Glacier-National-Park-Area-with-Acquisition-of-Hospitality-Assets/default.aspx <April 3, 2020>. Greyhound changed its name to Viad Corp. in 1996, with the corporate office still located in Phoenix, Arizona.

Chapter 7

The Backcountry Chalets

Glacier's concessioner-operated backcountry visitor accommodations are a rarity in the National Park System. Other examples are the LeConte Lodge in Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Bearpaw High Sierra Camp in Sequoia National Park. The Sperry and Granite Park chalets, vestiges of the Great Northern's early development of an overtly Swiss style of alpine accommodation, are unique to Glacier.

Preserving the two vestigial chalets proved to be a challenge for concessions management from several standpoints. With a short operating season, they were a marginal business proposition. Maintenance and repairs were a perennial issue in the extreme subalpine environment. And perhaps most significantly, the historic structures had to be adapted to accommodate a much larger visitor load as time went on.

Boom Times

As Glacier's two backcountry chalets were put back in business in the mid-1950s, the forty-year-old facilities underwent extensive repairs. At Sperry Chalet, NPS removed or replaced unsafe wooden balconies on the hotel/dormitory building and made minor repairs to the kitchen/dining room building. It changed the interior floor plan of the kitchen/dining room building, and added new hot water tanks and a refrigerator. At Granite Park Chalet, NPS rebuilt the wooden balcony structure, replaced rotted logs in two 1924 additions to the main building, and installed new hot water heaters and a refrigerator in the kitchen. A log annex on the south side of the building seems to have been left standing at this time for it appears on a 1966 plat. It was removed later.⁴⁵⁹

In 1964, Mission 66's modernizing makeover of park facilities touched the two high-country chalets. NPS built new comfort stations with flush toilets and revamped

⁴⁵⁹ L. R. Luding to National Park Service, undated, Folder 1, File Unit 001, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

the water systems at both locations. The old pit toilets at Granite Park and the original flush toilets at Sperry were removed. At Granite Park, the old pits had been blasted out of solid rock when the chalet was built. At Sperry, the original flush toilets had consisted of a tin-lined trough with four one-holers along it. The flush took the waste into a wooden sewer pipe that went downslope a few yards and discharged the effluent over a high cliff. The new comfort stations were installed with sewer systems and septic tanks. While the new toilets were a welcome improvement over the old rudimentary systems, eventually the new septic systems would fail and cause their own problems.⁴⁶⁰

When Ross and Kay Luding took over management of the chalets, backcountry use was minimal and horse parties still made up a significant part of the clientele. That soon changed. Backcountry recreation boomed in the 1960s as the baby boom generation reached an age to go hiking and new, specialized, backpacking equipment such as aluminum frame backpacks, lightweight tents, and portable stoves made wilderness more accessible to novices and young families. Glacier, already known as a trail park, saw a large increase in backcountry use by independent day-hikers and backpackers. The Sperry and Granite Park chalets saw a dramatic rise in hiker visits and overnight occupancy rates. From 1955 to 1975, the volume of business at the two backcountry chalets quadrupled.⁴⁶¹

By the early 1960s at Sperry Chalet independent hikers came to outnumber people in horse parties and ranger-led groups. According to a 1963 survey, 78 percent of Sperry's visitors had college training and 90 percent came from out of state. Group sizes varied, with 47 percent of parties containing just one or two persons. Nearly two-thirds of all parties were family groups. Income levels of family groups tended to be relatively high, with 44 percent being in the business-education occupational group. Over half of respondents in the survey were inexperienced in backcountry recreation and 37 percent lacked basic outdoor equipment such as hiking boots, raingear, and insect repellent. While some knew about the chalet prior to their arrival in Glacier, fully 40 percent only learned of the chalet from a ranger talk or NPS literature while they were in the park. Nearly all visitors in the survey stayed at the

⁴⁶⁰ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1964, 3; National Park Service, "Concession Permit No. 14-10-0232-1123," April 11, 1966; L. R. Luding to National Park Service, undated, Folder 1, File Unit 001, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

⁴⁶¹ L. R. Luding to National Park Service, undated, Folder 1, File Unit 001, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

chalet one night, and 88 percent stated that they would like to see more such accommodations.⁴⁶²

On August 13, 1967, Granite Park was the scene of a fatal grizzly bear mauling. Occurring on the same night as a separate fatal mauling at Trout Lake, the freakish twin incidents became sensationalized as “the night of the grizzlies.” For the park administration, the incidents were a catalyst in adopting a new, proactive approach to human-bear interactions. Backpackers needed to be educated on how to behave when they met a bear. Campers had to be taught how to contain food smells. Garbage disposal had to be handled with greater care. The open-pit garbage dump at Granite Park Chalet was closed immediately.⁴⁶³

Park rangers and resource managers struggled to explain the coincidence of two bear attacks in one night when they prepared a 22-page report on the incidents several months later. Possibly the bears had been under physiological stress from extensive lightning storms in the preceding weeks. Both bears were evidently conditioned to feeding on garbage. The sow that attacked in Granite Park had been observed feeding with her two cubs at the garbage pit near the chalet; the old sow that invaded a backcountry camp at Trout Lake was found to have shards of glass stuck in her teeth.⁴⁶⁴

Management assistant Dan S. Nelson sent a copy of the official report to Ross Luding to share with managers at each of the chalets and to provide reference material for answering employees’ and guests’ questions about the bear incidents. Nelson wrote: “We hope this helps counteract Mr. Jack Olsen’s articles in *Sports Illustrated* and other false impressions people may have from poor journalism, exaggeration and rumors.”⁴⁶⁵ (Jack Olsen’s bestselling *The Night of the Grizzlies* was published in 1969.)

In the wake of the bear incidents, NPS reassessed backcountry management and the need for the chalet operations. The rising popularity of backcountry recreation convinced NPS to keep the chalets going but revamp how food and kitchen scraps were handled. A garbage incinerator was installed in a dedicated storeroom at each facility. Garbage that was not burnable was hauled out by packhorse; liquid propane

⁴⁶² L. C. Merriam, Jr., Kay Luding, and R. B. Ammons, “Glacier Park Chalet Visits: An Introduction to Wilderness Experience,” *Research Notes* (School of Forestry, Montana State University) No. 2 (February 1965), 1-3.

⁴⁶³ Kate Kendall, interview by Theodore Catton, October 19, 2009.

⁴⁶⁴ Glacier National Park, “Report: Grizzly Bear Attacks at Granite Park and Trout Lake in Glacier National Park, August 13, 1967,” typescript, George C. Ruhle Library, GNP; Heidi Desch, “Night of the grizzlies – 40 years later,” *Hungry Horse News*, August 9, 2007.

⁴⁶⁵ Dan S. Nelson to B. Ross Luding, June 23, 1969, Folder 1, File Unit 015, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

for the incinerators was hauled in by the same method. The concessioner paid Rocky Mountain Outfitters to do the hauling.⁴⁶⁶

The chalet operations were further modified with the introduction of a reservation system to limit numbers. This was put into effect for the 1970 season. The concessioner established radio communications between the chalets and the company's office in West Glacier. All reservations were made according to the American Plan (three meals included as part of the room charge). A limited amount of space was set aside for backpackers without reservations, those guests being accommodated according to the European Plan (meals optional for an additional charge). The extra space was not advertised. NPS helped the concession to inform the public about the reservation system.⁴⁶⁷

With these changes in operations, the concessioner found it necessary to add employees and raise rates. Anxious to keep rates affordable for families, the Ludings asked for one modest rate increase, then another. In 1977, the chalets still used the American Plan and charged \$22 per person. For a family of five, the cost was \$110. If the family came on horseback, the cost was an additional \$15 per person, or \$185 total. Adjusted for inflation, that was \$468 by foot or \$788 by horse in today's dollars. Regrettably, that priced out many families, and use of the chalets began to shift to a somewhat wealthier clientele.

NPS recognized that the rates were exorbitant but concluded they were reasonable for the service being provided. Two concessions management specialists from the Denver Service Center, Andrew C. Wolfe and Allen Keske, inspected Sperry and Granite Park chalets in 1977 and concluded that the experience was worth the price. "A visit to either or both of the chalets is a step back in time to the 1914 era of the railroad grand tour, prior to the advent of paved roads and massive use of personal automobiles in the National Park System," they wrote. It was a unique experience and "worth the cost to preserve such an experience, so long as visitors utilize and enjoy the opportunity." In other words, if the chalets stayed fully booked then NPS

⁴⁶⁶ L. R. Luding to National Park Service, undated, Folder 1, File Unit 001, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; William J. Briggles to B. Ross Luding, December 29, 1969, Folder 2, File Unit 005, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

⁴⁶⁷ L. R. Luding to National Park Service, undated, Folder 1, File Unit 001, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; William J. Briggles to B. Ross Luding, December 29, 1969, Folder 2, File Unit 005, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

did not need to “offer apology or be embarrassed” when the cost rose beyond some people’s reach.⁴⁶⁸

The Ludings continued running the operation year after year, decade after decade. The park administration was fortunate to be able to partner with such a couple. Beloved by their guests, they were “part of the charm of the chalets,” wrote Wolfe and Keske in 1977. “The time will inevitably arrive when the Ludings will be unable to carry on as they have in the past. At that time it will be necessary to find new operators in much the same vein as the Ludings, who love people, love the outdoors, love to cook, and are in good health so as to withstand the climate, altitude, isolation, and seven-day-a-week schedule that would be part of an operating season at the chalets.” They recommended that NPS begin planning a strategy for dealing with the chalet operation when the Luding family was no longer able to run the chalets. Their ideas included foregoing any expansion of facilities, staying with the American Plan, holding rate increases to a minimum, and subsidizing maintenance and other operations as needed to keep the chalets going.⁴⁶⁹

From 1956, when the first five-year permit was issued, until 1991, when the chalets were temporarily closed because of their broken septic systems, the serial five-year permits saw few changes. The Ludings consistently received satisfactory performance ratings, so they were given right of preference each time the permit was advertised for renewal and were reassigned the permit without competition. In 1966, there was a change in the franchise fee. Instead of a flat fee of \$200 per year, a rental fee of \$100 was imposed for use of the government-owned buildings together with a franchise fee of 3/4^{ths} of 1 percent of gross receipts.⁴⁷⁰ In 1971, the Ludings incorporated their business as Belton Chalets, Inc. The concession contract was assigned to Belton Chalets, Inc., and Superintendent Briggie accepted the assignment. Ross Luding was president of Belton Chalets, Inc. until his death in 1979, at which time Kay Luding became president. She continued to head the operation when she was well into her seventies, eventually turning it over to her son Lanny Luding.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ Chief, Branch of Concessions Management, DSC, to Assistant Manager, Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team, DSC, December 1, 1977, Folder 1, File Unit 005, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

⁴⁶⁹ Chief, Branch of Concessions Management, DSC, to Assistant Manager, Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team, DSC, December 1, 1977, Folder 1, File Unit 005, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

⁴⁷⁰ Superintendent to Regional Director, April 12, 1966, and Dan S. Nelson to B. Ross Luding, April 6, 1966, Folder 2, File Unit 015, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007.

⁴⁷¹ Acting Superintendent to Associate Regional Director, December 1, 1980, Folder 2, File Unit 005, Series 02.02, Glacier National Park Historic Records and Central Files, 1910-2007; Jeff Gerth, “Way Stations in the Wild,” *New York Times*, April 29, 1984.

In the 1980s, the two chalets were run at about a 95 to 97 percent occupancy rate. Total guests at both locations numbered nearly 5,000 per season. Meals served numbered over 15,000 as day hikers brought more business. Belton Chalets, Inc. employed around 20 to 24 people.⁴⁷²

Closure and Reopening

In the early 1990s, a controversy arose over Glacier's two backcountry chalets when it was found that heavy visitor use together with their antiquated systems of sewage disposal were causing contamination of the environment and a threat to wildlife. The Wilderness Society, joined by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, called for a fix of the problem even if the only practical fix would be to close the chalets. The question of the chalets' future involved not just the classic tension between preservation and use, but the added dimension of *historic* preservation. The chalets were already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated as national historic landmarks. For all practical purposes, permanently closing the chalets would not have served the interests of historic preservation; therefore, the Montana SHPO and other historic preservationists among the general public had a strong interest in seeing that the chalets remain open for public use.

The park administration had long suspected that it had a problem with sewage disposal at the chalets. Those suspicions were confirmed when a 1988 surface water study of the leach fields down slope of each chalet revealed that the chalets' overloaded septic systems were failing. The park reluctantly allowed the chalets to continue operating through the next four summer seasons even though the water and sewage systems were not in compliance with state and federal laws. But faced with the threat of a legal challenge by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Superintendent Lusk and Regional Director Robert M. Baker decided in the fall of 1992 that the chalets would not re-open for business until the sewage treatment problem was solved. Lusk estimated that the closure would last at least three years.⁴⁷³

The announcement immediately aroused controversy. Governor Stan Stephens protested that the closure was premature and that NPS had other options. Many people suspected that NPS officials secretly wanted to make the closure permanent.

⁴⁷² *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1981, 5; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1982, n.p.; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1983, 8; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1984, 8.

⁴⁷³ *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1991, 8; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 1992, 12; Gil Lusk, "Chalet problems entwined in new regs," *Hungry Horse News*, June 10, 1993; Bob Haraden, "Chalet closures a big Park blunder," *Hungry Horse News*, June 24, 1993.

Perhaps too conveniently, Belton Chalets, Inc.'s five-year permit ran to the end of 1992 and was simply allowed to expire. National park concessions policy required that NPS determine whether a concession was necessary or appropriate prior to issuing a concession prospectus. It also required that the concessioner should have a reasonable opportunity to make a profit. Although Lusk insisted that NPS would seek a solution that would allow for continued operation of the chalets under a new concession permit, some people chose not to believe him.⁴⁷⁴

In the fall of 1993, NPS prepared an environmental assessment with four alternatives. As anticipated, the cost of environmental protection, historic preservation, and continued public use would be high. Alternative 1 would have stabilized the buildings but kept them closed to overnight use. Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 offered various approaches to the sewage problem and provided for overnight use, each for a total cost of around \$4 million – about six times the cost of Alternative 1. The park's preferred alternative involved two water and sewage systems, one for handling gray water from food preparation, employee showers, laundry, and dish washing and another for handling human waste. The latter would be treated in eight composting toilets. One NPS employee would be stationed at each chalet to maintain the water and sewage systems. Renovation of the chalets would include numerous life/safety improvements.⁴⁷⁵

The park received an initial funding allowance of \$700,000 in 1994 to complete design work and begin structural repairs. Congress appropriated an additional \$2.3 million for the 1995 fiscal year with the understanding that another \$1.2 million would be raised through private donations. The fundraising drive had begun in 1993 under the auspices of a nonprofit organization, Save the Chalets, formed by Wayne and Kathy Phillips. Although the fundraising organization attracted more than 1,300 donors, it was unable to break through to sizeable donations and finally had to give up. Making do with less than full funding, the park reopened Granite Park Chalet as a backpackers' shelter without food service or running water. For several years it was operated by Glacier Wilderness Guides. In 1999, the park reopened Sperry Chalet as a full-service backcountry hotel offering cooked meals, bedding, linens, and hot running water, and composting toilets in place of flush toilets, and Belton Chalets, Inc. returned to the park as the concessioner. In 2005, Belton Chalets, Inc. resumed operation of Granite Park Chalet as well under a new ten-year contract.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁴ "Lusk frustrated by public, budget," *Hungry Horse News*, July 15, 1993.

⁴⁷⁵ National Park Service, *Environmental Assessment, Management of Backcountry Chalets, Glacier National Park* (Washington: National Park Service, 1993), 25, 123.

⁴⁷⁶ National Park Service, *Revised Environmental Assessment, Management of Backcountry Chalets, Glacier National Park* (Washington: National Park Service, 1995), 1; "Efforts to save Glacier Chalets comes up short," *The Missoulian*, May 13, 1999; "Glacier veterans chosen to run park chalets," *The Missoulian*, December 22, 2004; *Superintendent's Annual Report for Glacier National Park*, 2005, 53.

The composting toilets ultimately proved to be unworkable. Composting in cool mountain temperatures was too slow to handle the high volume of public use. The park finally gave up on composting and began instead to airlift out the human waste. Meanwhile, although the park set a limit on overnight use, increasing numbers of day hikers put an additional load on the sewage system (especially at Granite Park Chalet when the introduction of a free shuttle service made it possible for day hikers to complete the one-way trip from Logan Pass via the High Line Trail and Granite Park Chalet to the Loop without having to retrieve a vehicle at Logan Pass). Both from the standpoint of managing for wilderness values and minimizing the park's carbon output, the airlift operation was a monstrosity – yet it followed from the park's actions to protect the environment, provide for public use, and preserve the historic chalets.⁴⁷⁷

In August 2017, Sperry Chalet dormitory was burned in the Sprague Fire. Immediately afterwards, there was an outpouring of support to rebuild the facility. NPS estimated the cost for reconstruction would be between \$8 million and \$12 million. The high cost reflected the fact that reconstruction aimed at restoring the historic structure back to its original condition, and that the work site was in a remote location where transportation and mountain weather conditions posed serious obstacles. The restoration of Sperry Chalet proceeded with remarkable speed and dedication owing to an extraordinary level of community engagement, effective public and private partnership, and high-level political support. A full account of the near destruction and restoration of Sperry Chalet is a story for another history.

⁴⁷⁷ Catton, Krahe, and Shaw, "Protecting the Crown: A Century of Resource Management in Glacier National Park," 222-23.

Photo Essay



Figure 1. Belton Chalets, circa 1910. Great Northern built these accommodations about the time Glacier National Park was established. The Swiss chalet style of architecture, which featured extensive balconies and large roof overhangs, became a motif of Great Northern's architectural projects throughout Glacier. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 7666, Fred H. Kiser, photographer.)

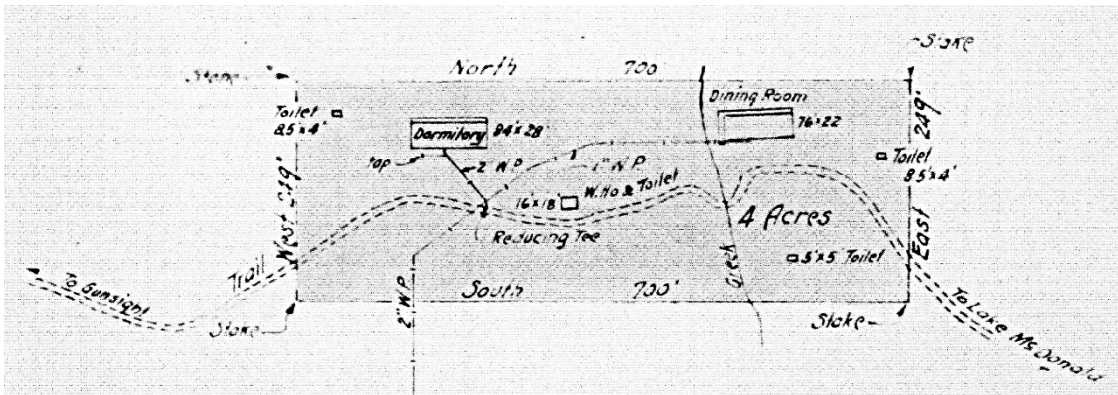


Figure 2. Detail from plat of Sperry Chalet group, July 1914. The Glacier Park Hotel Company applied to the Secretary of the Interior for lease of a parcel for each of its ten chalet groups. Each application included a legal boundary description, a list of buildings, and a plat map. Great Northern had a free hand in choosing where to locate visitor accommodations, acquiring the leases only after the buildings were already constructed. (File 900-04, Box 261, Entry 10, Record Group 79, National Archives II.)



Figure 3. Many Glacier Hotel, circa 1920. The massive structure was made of adjoining segments tracing the shore of Swiftcurrent Lake. Most of the timber that went into it was harvested locally and milled on site. (Glacier NP photo, DI 446, T. J. Hileman, photographer.)



Figure 4. The double helix staircase and fountain in Many Glacier Hotel exemplifies the flavor of frontier opulence that gave such national park “log palaces” their unique appeal. (Glacier NP photo, circa 1940, GLAC 8249, T. J. Hileman, photographer.)



Figure 5. In this photo, ca. 1915, guests come and go at the entrance of Many Glacier Hotel. Two jitneys, one with a roof and one without, can be seen in the center of the picture. In the early days, most visitors traveled to the park by railroad and relied on the jitney service for transportation over rough roads to Many Glacier Hotel, where they might sojourn and explore the surrounding area on foot or horseback. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 7532, Fred H. Kiser, photographer.)



Figure 6. Lake McDonald Lodge dining room. Animal heads and cedar boughs grace the exposed rafters while white table cloths cover the rustic dining tables. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 6021, R. E. Marble, photographer.)



Figure 7. Many Glacier Campground, July 1932. Development of campgrounds represented a shift toward automotive tourism. Initially campers made their camps anywhere. In the 1930s, NPS redeveloped these areas with designated sites to limit impacts on soil and vegetation. (Glacier NP photo, DI 11728, George A. Grant, photographer.)

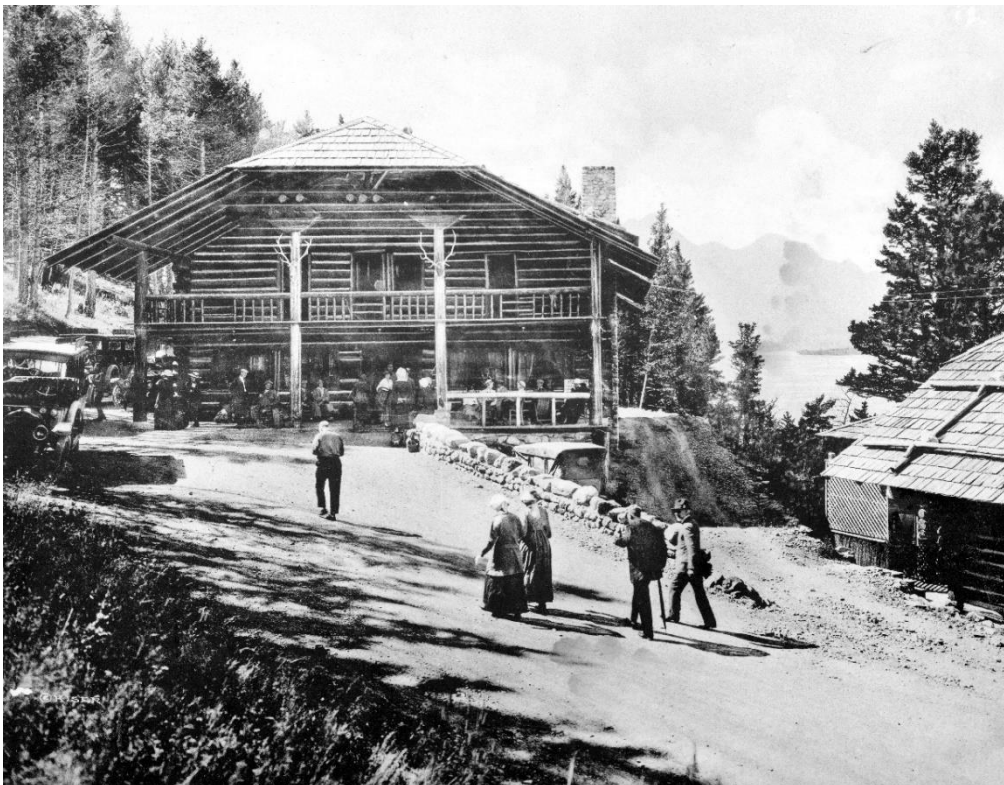


Figure 8. St. Mary Chalets, circa 1915. Great Northern's system of chalets, built before World War I, grew outmoded with the coming of the car culture. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 11814, Fred H. Kiser photographer.)



Figure 9. Going-to-the-Sun Chalets on Sun Point was the most popular of the chalets. In the early days it was accessed mainly by boat. (Glacier NP photo, ca. 1914, HPF 1880, R. E.



Figure 10. Another view of Going-to-the-Sun Chalets across The Narrows. Already made obsolete by the Going-to-the-Sun Road, these accommodations were closed when the Rising Sun Auto Camp opened a few miles down the road. (Glacier NP photo, ca. 1914, HPF 3307, R. E. Marble, photographer.)



Figure 11. Granite Park Chalet. With NPS's encouragement, Glacier Hotel Company divested itself of this and Sperry Chalet in 1952, allowing NPS to make a separate concession around the operation of the two backcountry chalets. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 10522, ca. 1939, T. J. Hileman, photographer.)



Figure 12. Concession employees at Going-to-the-Sun Chalets, circa 1940. Glacier Park Hotel Company introduced the Swiss-style uniforms in 1924 and the tradition continued into the modern era. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 11052, Great Northern publicity photo.)

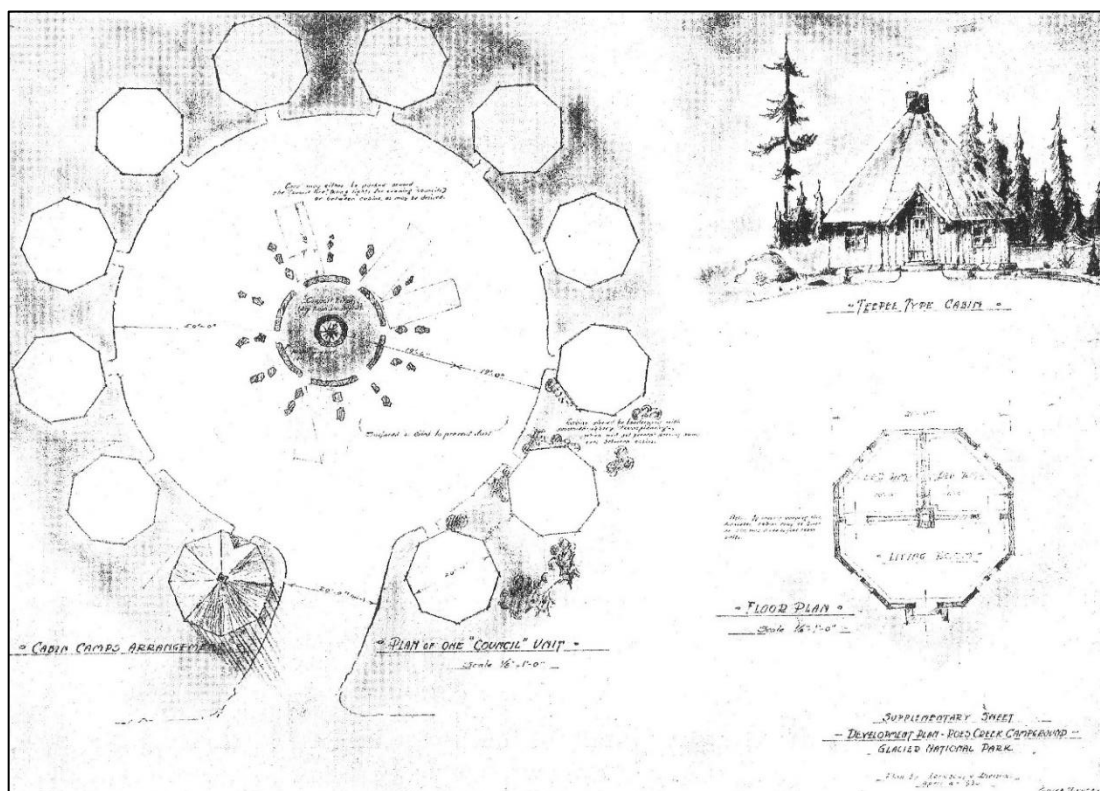


Figure 13. NPS development plan for Roes Creek Campground, 1930. These early concepts for accommodating the car culture included the “teepee type cabin” shown at right, and arranging the cabins in a “council circle” as shown at left. Cabin guests might park their cars around the center circle, using their car headlights for a “council fire.” (NPS Technical Information Center, Denver.)



Figure 14. Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, 1933. The concept of a cabin circle was implemented in the development of Swiftcurrent Auto Camp. Note that the idea of a center circle with parking around it was nixed. Also note comfort station in newly developed Many Glacier Campground in distance. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 15546, unknown photographer.)

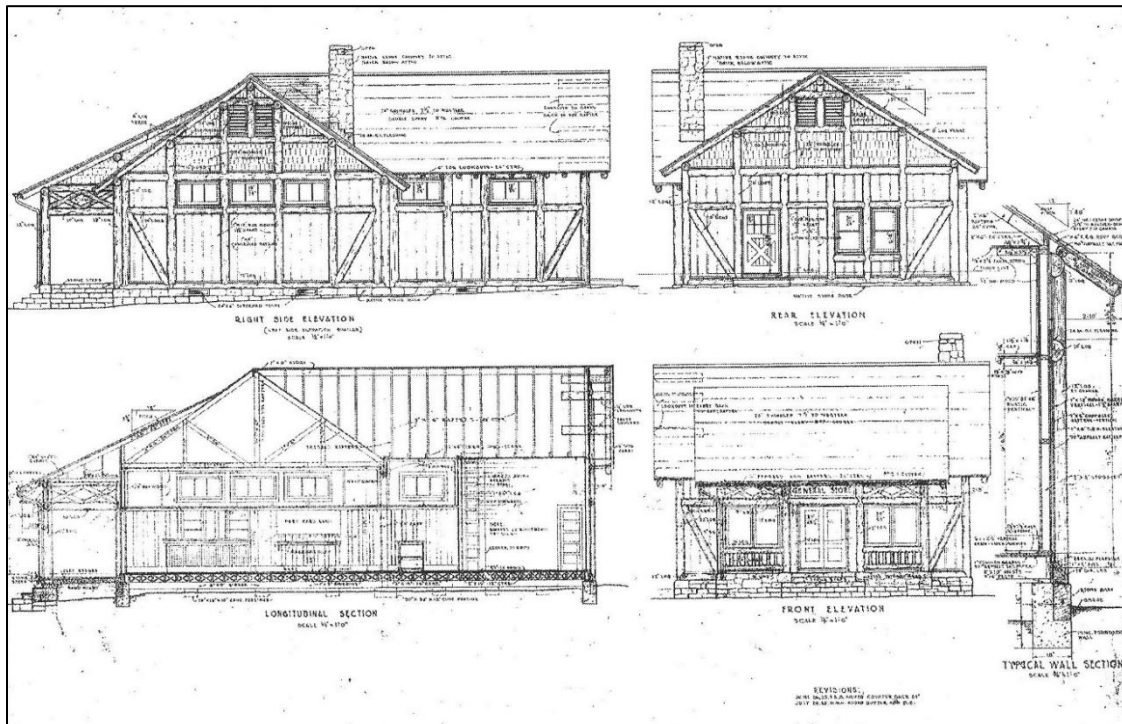


Figure 15. Architect's drawings for the Swiftcurrent Autocamp Store. Designed by Great Northern architect Thomas D. McMahon and built in 1940, the structure exhibited the craftsman style with showy use of native materials including exposed vertical log posts and cobblestone chimney. These design elements were largely covered up when a large addition was put on it in the 1950s. (NPS Technical Information Center, Denver.)



Figure 16. Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, 1936. The cabins in Circle I stand alone following the Heavens Peak Fire that swept down the Swiftcurrent Valley and destroyed most of the development. The burnt cabins were rebuilt the following year. (Library of Congress photo.)



Figure 17. Rising Sun development area before development, 1928. NPS selected this site for development along the Going-to-the-Sun Road because it was the last relatively level ground on the eastern approach to Logan Pass. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 15590, unknown photographer.)



Figure 18. Rising Sun Café and Camp Store. Rising Sun Auto Camp and Rising Sun Campground were planned as one development area flanking Roes Creek. The camp store was intended to serve campground users and autocamp guests. Parking plazas for the campground and autocamp were linked by a bridge across the creek. (Glacier NP photo, DI 8634, unknown photographer.)



Figure 19. Motel units, Swiftcurrent Motor Inn and Cabins, ca. 1957. The last major expansion of visitor accommodations came in the late 1950s. It featured the motel type of accommodation, popularized by the car culture because motel rooms were cheap and came with private bath and convenient parking. Besides these three units at Swiftcurrent, motel units were added at Rising Sun, Lake McDonald, and Apgar around the same time. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 10892, Great Northern publicity photo.)

Figure 20. Many Glacier Hotel employees sing for guests, 1957. While the car culture led to many changes in Glacier's visitor accommodations during the park's first half century, NPS and the public sought to keep things the same in the park's second half century. Musical programming at Many Glacier Hotel was one popular tradition. The backcountry chalets were another. Glacier's GMP calls for visitor accommodations to stay as they are, to be neither expanded or removed. (Glacier NP photo, GLAC 10883, Great Northern publicity photo.)



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