



Glacier National Park
CONSERVANCY



Parks Canada
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Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park

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USA, Canada
Size: 4556 sq km (1,720 sq miles).



Participants in coordinating the ongoing transboundary cooperation:

National Government:

- US National Park Service
- Parks Canada

Objectives: Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks respectively protected one of the few remaining fully intact ecosystems in the Rocky Mountains of the Western US and Canada. These parks conserve outstanding examples of glaciation, alpine ecosystems, eco-tones between mountain and prairie landscapes in rich cultural history and tradition. The primary objective of the peace Park designation is to commemorate the long history of peace and friendship between Canada and the United States, and to emphasize both natural and cultural links.

Values and importance: The Waterton-Glacier international peace park promotes International peace and cooperation. That work is demonstrated through cooperative management of migratory wildlife, endangered species, invasive weeds, fire, and border security. Managers cooperatively and assist one another in communicating with visitors, search and rescue, border crossing and promotion of opportunities for recreation and education.

Aspects of transboundary cooperation: The two parks do not operate under the guidance of a formal joint management plan. While the cooperation is continuous and highly collaborative, it is also informal and based on sound personal relationships among the staff and partners of the two parks. Over the past several years WGIPP implemented a considerable cooperative program for invasive plant species, which includes the collection and propagation of native seed from a park greenhouse, in particular for the white bark pine. Parks also support one another in matters related to emergency response, such as search and rescue, or joint firefighting efforts. Other cooperative initiatives include communication regarding public safety warnings, weather conditions, and trail closures.

There have also been several single actions between two parks that were aimed at promotion of cooperation, and encouraging peace, goodwill and friendship between two countries – such as Peace Park Week that was organized by Rotarians and held in 1960-1962; Canada-U.S. Days of Peace and Friendship that took place in 1987; travelling exhibits on the peace park, and some others (Morrison 2007). Usually these one-time events were timed to some kind of anniversaries.

Stage in the process: Completed

Date Established: June 18, 1932

Official Protected Area Designation

- International Peace Park
- National Park,
- UNESCO World Heritage Site,
- UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

The Catalyst and History: Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was designated on June 18, 1932 “to commemorate the long history of peace and friendship between Canada and the United States, and to emphasize both natural and cultural links” (Sandwith et al. 2001). The park is located in the Rocky Mountains of North America and combines Canadian Waterton Lakes NP (established in 1895 in the province of Alberta) and American Glacier NP (established in 1910 in the state of Montana). Here Canada and the United States share a common landscape, and the dedicated Peace Park’s “outstanding scenic values, diverse wildlife populations, sparkling waters, remarkable historic and cultural heritage, and largely intact ecological processes make it one of the continent’s most valued treasures” (State of the Parks 2002).

British, American, and later Canadian survey teams established the international boundary between the two countries on paper during the 19th century. The rush for gold fields in the mid-1850s created a demand for demarcating the border. There were some occasional disputes, but the longest undefended border in the world has been peaceful since 1821 (International Peace Park 1981).

It is believed that the first proponents of the international park idea were George “Kootenai” Brown and Henry “Death-on-the-Trail” Reynolds. They suggested that the two parks be joined. George “Kootenai” Brown was a long-time local settler in Waterton, who was appointed forest ranger-in-charge in April 1910, becoming the park’s first on-site manager. In Glacier, William Logan, a former military man, became superintendent. Logan was responsible for contracting Albert Henry “Death on the Trail” Reynolds as a ranger in charge of a section of Glacier adjacent to Waterton (Morrison 2007).

“It wasn’t long before Brown and Reynolds became compatriots, comparing notes, seeking one another’s advice and assistance, and socializing, when possible. During the long winter months they had plenty of time to consider the philosophical aspects of their jobs and discuss topics of interest. They agreed on many things and both thought the presence of the international boundary between the two parks was artificial. According to Middleton’s [the first Chairman of the Peace Parks Committee] account, Reynolds said “geology recognized no boundaries and that as [Upper Waterton] Lake lay in its glacier cirque, no man-made boundary could cleave the waters apart. It would be better to accept nature’s creation by removing the boundary line and acknowledge one park, one lake in its own territory” - (Morrison 2007).

The park rangers first drove the idea of the international peace park. And although in reality the boundary line was not removed, their way of thinking in some way catalyzed the process of peace park establishment.

While the first proponents of WGIPP were local rangers, the real push and facilitation of the process was done by the non-government organization – Rotary International.

“This was the conviction of early rangers working in Canada’s Waterton Lakes National Park and the United States’ Glacier National Park. After all, the only thing separating the two parks was a political line. The mountains were continuous, the waters flowed freely from one side to the other; the wildlife knew no difference, so why should we?” (WGIPP Association 2015)

The Cardston Rotary Club in Alberta called an annual small get-together of Alberta and Montana Rotarians on July 4-5, 1931 at the Prince of the Wales Hotel in Waterton, and according to the historical records, that was the first time when discussions on the creation of a world-wide International Peace movement, and establishment of WGIPP arose (Morrison 2007). That meeting led to the adoption of a resolution, which called for petitions to the proper authorities for the establishment of an International Peace Park. One of the key people in this process was the Anglican Rev. Samuel H. Middleton, who just days before the gathering had been inaugurated as the third president of the Cardston Rotary Club. Middleton was the principal of St Paul’s Indian School and pastor of Waterton’s new All-Saints Anglican Church. He was the one who drafted a resolution, and was later pushing the idea forward.

That resolution was a call to action. Rotarians from both sides started by immediately contacting their elected federal representatives (Brig. General J.S. Steward from Alberta, and Rep. Scott Leavitt from Montana) under the umbrella of the newly formed International Peace Park Committee that consisted of 19 members from Alberta and Montana. Both sides began to lobby their prospective Government, and introduced bills for the establishment of the WGIPP. Congressman Scott Leavitt circulated his proposed bill during the Legislative Session of the 72d Congress in Washington DC, USA and managed to get it passed by December 8, 1931 (Annex E-1). An Act to establish Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was approved by the United State Senate in March 1932 (Annex E-2). Canada first had refused to enact peace park legislation until the American bill was passed, and the process was further delayed by a storm of protest from the proponents of the International Peace Park Garden at the border of Manitoba and North Dakota – an alternative idea of designating a land to promote peace (discussed in the next chapter). But eventually the Canadian Government passed the bill in 1932. The “Act respecting the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park”, sponsored by John S. Stewart, a Canadian war hero and a politician, was finally assented to on May 26, 1932.

Barriers, challenges, obstacles, or constraints: The informal nature of this cooperative arrangement requires considerable attention paid to ongoing communication. Issues such as changes and border security such as those that happened after 9-11, 2001 affect both sets of park managers. Dynamic ecosystem change such as fire disturbance or episodic events such as need for search and rescue need to be organized before a crisis sets in. Thus, Communication needs to be proactive and continuous. In the past decade visitation levels have increased variably and at times rapidly. This increased demand for recreational experiences can lead to deteriorating visit quality and impacts to natural resources. Policies implemented to manage visitation in one park can have implications for the other both in the management of the resources and economic impacts to surrounding areas. Thus, including one another in consideration of alternatives that could displace or

redistribute visitor use requires court nation. Like most trans-boundary protected areas, WGIPP is located in an area where land management policies external to the park can result in threats. Recent examples would include mining, oil and gas drilling, development pressure, and river management. The Crown Managers partnership provides a regional communication forum for communication to occur.

The Governance and Management Structures: The primary management authority rests at the National levels as described above and is managed by the National Park Services of the US and Canada. Within the ecosystem, that extends much beyond the parks' boundary, there is a broader cooperation between different stakeholders who built the "Crown Management Partnership". Its origins stem from a 2001 workshop in Cranbrook, BC, that was organized by superintendents of both parks, and became an annual forum since then. Participation includes federal, aboriginal, provincial and state agencies or organizations that are responsible for land, environment or resource management within the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem (Crown Managers Partnership 2015). The parks play central role in this Partnership, and considerable collaboration is carried out through it.

Results: The international peace Park is a source of considerable pride for both the US and Canada in specifically for Montana and Alberta. The core landscape that it provides lead to additional designations as a Biosphere Reserve and as a World Heritage Site. These layers of protection have helped conserve critical habitat, outstanding opportunities for civil society to enjoy inspirational landscapes, demonstrations of International cooperation and diplomacy and considerable positive economic impact to a broad region.

Lessons Learned: The GWIPP demonstrates the potential of how private sector support can contribute greatly to the enduring protection of an outstanding public resource. In this case, the Rotary clubs coalesced local energy to establish the peace Park and continue to celebrate its value annually. Additionally, this model demonstrates that carefully maintained and informal relationships can result in a resilient management structure the does not need a single guiding document for the function. In fact, the informal nature of the relationship between the National Park Service and Parks Canada enables management to nimbly respond to a dynamic set of challenges. Numerous stakeholders (from multiple forms of government and non-government organizations) are directly affected by the management of the peace park. That's coordination, communication, and a genuine appreciation the value of these relationships is critical to success.

For More Information

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The Glacier National Park Conservancy: www.glacier.org

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