

WATERTON-GLACIER INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK

- **Waterton Lakes National Park is located in the southwest corner of Alberta; bordered on the south by Montana and on the west by British Columbia. Its small size (505 sq. km/195 sq. miles) encourages cooperation with its neighbours to maintain a healthy ecosystem. Some of these concerns were addressed with the establishment of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, which is 4,455 sq km (1,720 sq miles) in size.**
- **Canada and the U.S.A. have the longest undefended border in the world (5,525 miles/ 8,892 km.); peaceful since 1812. The international boundary, Waterton-Glacier's shared border, has a fascinating history.**
- **John George 'Kootenai' Brown and Ranger Henry 'Death on the Trail' Reynolds (Goat Haunt Ranger Station) were among the first proponents of the idea that the two parks should be joined. According to Rev. Middleton, Ranger Reynolds felt "It would be better to accept nature's creation by removing the boundary line and acknowledge one park, on lake in its own territory."**
- **On July 4th and 5th 1931, the first annual goodwill meeting of Alberta and Montana Rotarians was held at the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton. It was organised by the Cardston Rotary Club and attended by almost 100 members of clubs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana. It was at this meeting that members unanimously approved a resolution for the establishment of an International Peace Park (IPP).**

"Whereas one hundred members of the Rotary Clubs representing the Cities of Cardston, Lethbridge and Calgary of Alberta; Great Falls, Kalispell and Missoula of Montana, and Estevan, Saskatchewan, are assembled together attending an international meeting at Waterton Lakes National Park;

"And whereas, it has been decided that a similar meeting be held alternately at Glacier Park, Montana and the Waterton National Park, Alberta;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the proper authorities be petitioned to commence negotiations to establish the two parks indicated as a permanent International Peace Park, which shall be definitely set aside for this laudable purpose;

"Pledging our loyalty and allegiance to foster all international relationships."

- **Reverend Samuel Middleton was one of the driving forces behind the Peace Park idea. He drafted the original Rotary resolution for creation of an International Peace Park, which was seconded by Harry Mitchell, president of the Great Falls Rotary Club (Montana). Middleton served as the chairman of the Rotary Peace Park Committee for 25 years. Rotarians still hold their Peace Park Assembly each year, alternating between Waterton (odd numbered years) and Glacier (even numbered years).**

- In 1932, American legislation approved a bill to create the IPP, and it was signed into law by President Herbert Hoover on May 2nd. On June 16, 1932, the Canadian bill was proclaimed. Prime Minister R. B. Bennett stated that the two parks are...
- *" to be known as one International Peace Park for the purpose of indicating that a boundary line passes through the park and divides two great countries and two great peoples who have lived in peace for many years and who, we all hope, will continue ever to live in terms of amity, goodwill and peace."*
- The Peace Park was dedicated in the USA on June 18, 1932 at the Glacier Park Hotel in East Glacier. Amongst other speakers, and greetings sent by Prime Minister Bennett and President Herbert Hoover, were Glacier Superintendent E.T. Scoyen and Waterton Superintendent Herbert Knight. A bronze tablet was dedicated; its inscription saying,

*"Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park
Permanently commemorating the relationship of peace and goodwill long existing between
the peoples and governments of Canada and the United States"*

- A Canadian dedication ceremony, held up by closure of the Prince of Wales Hotel due to the Depression, later took place at the hotel on July 4th, 1936. That same year saw the opening of the Chief Mountain Highway, a key link between the two parks; and, the erection and dedication of a cairn to honour John George 'Kootenai' Brown.
- The bronze tablet unveiled at the dedication ceremony would not be mounted outside the Prince of Wales Hotel until 1951, on the 20th anniversary of the first Rotary gathering in Waterton. A similar installation of the Montana plaque outside the Glacier Park Hotel took place the next year.
- In 1947, two stone cairns, one on each side of the international boundary, were erected. They were funded by Rotarians in Alberta and Montana. A small tin container filled with mementos of the time was placed in the cement foundation of both cairns. The cairns were dedicated on August 2nd with a 'hands across the border' handshake ceremony that has become an enduring IPP tradition (although carried out in various locations over the years).
- In 1967, at Goat Haunt, Glacier National Park created a Ranger Station, boat dock, observation deck and a pavilion featuring exhibits with a Peace Park theme.
- In 1978, the first International Peace Park hike was held. It was, and still is, led by a US Park Ranger and a Canadian Park Interpreter. Hikers begin in Waterton, following the Lakeshore Trail, then lunch at the international boundary where a 'hands-across-the-border' ceremony is held, continue along to Goat Haunt, then take the *MV International* back to the Waterton townsite.
- Waterton opened a Peace Park Pavilion, with exhibits, on the lakeshore near the

marina on Jun 18, 1982 (the 50th anniversary of the IPP). At the same time, a Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park Canadian postal stamp (designed by Brent Laycock) was unveiled. The aging Peace Park exhibits were replaced with new ones in 2005.

- In 1985, the first annual Waterton-Glacier Superintendents' Hike was held.
- In 1987, the first Canada-US Days of Peace and Friendship was held on July 2nd and 3rd. The ceremony in the IPP was held at the Belly River Campground in Waterton.
- In 1995, the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was designated as a World Heritage Site (see the Waterton Resource Guide World Heritage Site chapter for details).
- While the International Peace Park is a symbol of peace and goodwill between the U.S.A. and Canada, it also represents need for cooperation and stewardship in a world of shared resources. Because nature moves freely across the border - including weather, water, fish, pollen, seeds, birds, and wildlife like elk, deer, wolverines and bears - cooperation within the Waterton/Glacier IPP area is reflected in wildlife and vegetation research, monitoring and management. The parks also share interpretive resources including joint hikes, programs, newsletters and exhibits and cooperate on search and rescue and backcountry programs.
- This is not only the case between the two countries but also between provinces, with British Columbia's Akamina-Kishinena Provincial Park on Waterton's western border and Glacier's northern border.
- Today, both parks strive to strengthen their shared management, not only between themselves, but also with their other neighbours - including adjacent/nearby provincial and state land and resource management agencies, local industry, agriculture and private landowners and other conservation groups such as the Nature Conservancy.
- Other examples of International Peace Parks are: Peace Arch (Blaine, Washington - Douglas, B.C.); the International Peace Garden (North Dakota -Manitoba), Campobello (N.B. - Maine), and Gold Rush International Park (Yukon - Alaska). There are now 138 peace parks worldwide.