Glacier

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Backcountry Guide
Summer 2012

High above Grinnell Glacier near Granite Park - photo by David Restivo

A Short History of Backcountry Camping in Glacier National Park

When you backpack in Glacier National Park you become part of a rich history that reaches back thousands of years. Native Americans have used Glacier's wild lands for over ten thousand years, taking advantage of its abundance of life to hunt and gather in the spring, summer, and fall. In July of 1806, during the Lewis and Clark expedition, Lewis had an encounter with the Blackfeet roughly 30 miles east of the park. This encounter forced the expedition to retreat quickly, leaving Glacier relatively unexplored by European Americans until the late 1800s.

When Glacier became a National Park in 1910, the typical visit consisted of a multi-day horseback tour through the backcountry, staying at a different chalets or tent camps built by the Great Northern Railway. Visitors not staying at the chalets and tent cabins could camp anywhere they desired. Fire permits were required for campfires beginning in the 1960's, but backcountry camping was pretty much a free-for-all until 1971 when the beginnings of a backcountry permitting system was born in the wake of "The Night of the Grizzlies" in 1967.

On a hot summer night of August 13th, 1967, two young women were killed by two different grizzly bears, about 20 miles apart from each other. This marked the first recorded deaths resulting from bear attacks in Glacier National Park. This tragedy caused the National Park Service to reconsider many of its food storage and backcountry use policies. The NPS assessed popular backcountry camping grounds and park officials designated a set number of sites per campground and established food preparation areas separated from tent sites to minimize bear/human conflict.

Backcountry campers were required to go to visitor centers and ranger stations to obtain a backcountry permit with a specific itinerary. During the 1990's, Glacier instituted a reservation system which allowed campers to plan their trips months ahead and be assured of their itinerary. Just over half of Glacier's backcountry campgrounds are included in the reservation system and the rest are available on a first-come, first-served basis. This permits an opportunity for everyone to obtain an outstanding backcountry experience in one of the country's most amazing and spectacular wild areas.

Today, during the summer camping season (May 1 to November 1), backcountry travelers using Glacier's extensive trail system are required to camp in the designated backcountry campgrounds. This policy is validated by recreation ecology research that indicates widespread resource impacts can be minimized in popular areas by concentrating use in designated sites.

You will find little evidence of human impacts or development in Glacier's pristine, off trail areas. These vast areas offer greater solitude and challenge, but are extremely rugged, with greater inherent risks and infrequent ranger patrols. While off-trail camping may be permissible in the Nyack/Coal Creek area, it is recommended only for very experienced, skilled backcountry travelers, and still requires a valid backcountry permit.

Glacier's backcountry has grown in popularity over the years, resulting in cumulative impacts upon the park's sensitive natural resources. High levels of backcountry use are typically concentrated in July and August, heightening the need for visitor stewardship and sound backcountry management practices. Please help preserve Glacier's wild backcountry by reading and following all of the regulations contained in this newspaper.

Have a safe adventure in the park and we hope you enjoy your backcountry experience in Glacier.

Knee-deep in FUN! - photo by Brian McKeon

Kayaking into the backcountry - photo by Chris Bode

Backcountry Jeopardy

You probably have lots of questions about your trip, almost everyone does. Here are the answers to the most frequently asked questions about planning a trip in Glacier National Park.

1. We don't make specific trip recommendations due to individual and often extreme differences in fitness levels, backcountry experience, individual risk assessment, weather variation (it snows every month of the year in Glacier), variability of terrain (steep, rocky, muddy, snowy, water crossings), vegetation (dense brush and downed trees), trail conditions (muddy, snowy, brushy), and animal encounters. Take time to plan your trip and be prepared for all of the above. The following broad generalizations may be helpful: Glacier comes in two flavors, east and west, roughly split along the Continental Divide. By and large, west side hikes are similar to each other and east side hikes are also similar to each other. West side trails start at a lower elevation (~3200') and offer the most solitude. The east side starts at a higher elevation (~5000') and due to a rain shadow effect from the west side, the terrain is more sparsely vegetated with more open vistas. Partly the result of an uneven east/west split, the east side tends to be more crowded in the backcountry than the west side.
2. Glacier's snow and water hazards generally clear up by the end of July.
3. About half of Glacier's backcountry sites are reserved in advance starting in April each year. There is a $30.00 processing fee for EACH confirmed trip request.
4. Although half of all sites are reserved for walk- in hikers, it does not mean that half of all sites will be available at all times. Backpackers on very long trips (~4 or more nights) may take walk-in sites well in advance since we don't require them to hike out every day to book those sites; we give them all of the sites that are available on the day they pick up their permit. Arrive at the Permit office EARLY the day before your trip starts for the best availability.
5. There is a $5/night/person camping fee due upon picking up your permit.
6. Check the advance reservation open dates for backcountry sites in the backcountry guide.
7. One backcountry campsite accommodates 4 people, 2 tents.
8. East side hiker shuttles operate from early June to mid September, by Glacier Park, Inc. The free National Park Service Going to the Sun Road shuttle operates from early July to Labor Day. There are no Commercial shuttles to the Polebridge area (Bowman, Kintla).
9. Proper use of bear spray has proven to be the most effective way of deterring bear attacks.
10. All of Glacier's 65 sites offer an incredible backcountry experience, it is impossible to rank them in terms of beauty. There is no bad trip in Glacier!

On the Trail

SETTING OUT

Check that you have all your gear. Take a moment to read trailhead signs. They contain important information.

Allow plenty of time for your trip. Consider distance, elevation, weight carried, physical condition, weather, and hours of daylight remaining. Early morning starts are recommended. Snow covers some trails well into July, so be prepared to do some route finding. Set a pace that all party members can handle.

PRACTICE GOOD STEWARDSHIP

Help minimize impacts to fragile soil and vegetation. Stay on the trail and hike single file. Do not walk off-trail when the tread is muddy. Wear gaiters if mud is deep. Shortcutting switchbacks is destructive and illegal. Pick up litter found along the way. Select resilient areas such as rocks or snow for rest breaks and other stops.

For sanitation along the trail where toilets are not available, carry a trowel and bury feces in a cathole, 6-8" deep in organic soil, at least 200 ft. from water. Fill and disguise hole and pack out paper. Urinate on durable surfaces that will not be damaged by animals digging for salts and minerals found in urine.

Horses have the right-of-way. If you meet riders, step off trail, on the downhill side, and stand quietly until they pass. Pay attention to the lead pack rider for instructions.

AT CAMP

Campgrounds have tent sites, pit toilets, food hanging or storage devices, and food preparation areas. Tents must be pitched within designated tent sites. Do not pitch tents on undisturbed vegetation, dig or trench around tents, pound nails in trees, or remove tree limbs or boughs.

Campsites have a maximum of 2 tents - photo by Chris Bode

Glenns Lake - photo by Brian McKeon

Fires are allowed in some campgrounds. If permitted, build fires only in designated pits. Collect only dead and down wood. Keep fires small and completely within fire pits. Be sure the fire is out cold before you leave. You may burn paper refuse at sites where fires are allowed, but do not burn plastic, foil, or food.

Properly store all food, cookware, toiletries, and garbage using the designated food storage device. A spare stuff sack and a rope at least 25 feet long are required. Store other gear in your tent. Cook and eat only in the designated food preparation area. Avoid odorous foods and plan meals so there are no leftovers. Never cook or eat in your tent. Do not wash yourself, clothes, or dishes directly in a lake or stream, even if using biodegradable soap. Strain food scraps from gray water and pack them out with your garbage. Scatter the gray water at least 100 feet from camp, lakes, and streams so that it will filter into the soil. Pack out all garbage. Do not throw garbage or food scraps in the pit toilets; doing so may attract bears, and shortens the useful life of the pit toilet.

Please be considerate of others and keep noise or loud conversation to a minimum.

Deer, goats, porcupines, and other animals are attracted by sweat and urine. They can destroy vegetation, campsites, clothes, boots, and camping gear in search of salt and other sweaty gear. Urinate only in the pit toilets. When pit toilets are unavailable, urinate on rocks, gravel, or snow to prevent digging by animals.

Some campgrounds have been abused in the past, and efforts have been made to restore them. Please use only established trails and avoid revegetated areas or blocked social trails to aid in recovery.

Plan Ahead

Proper planning and preparation is the key to a successful trip. Read the detailed information in this publication. Carefully consider daily distances and elevation changes (both up and down). Make sure that the degree of difficulty of your itinerary is compatible with all members of your party. As a general rule, carrying a heavy pack for more than 10 miles and a 2,500 foot elevation change would constitute an extremely rigorous day.

We reserve approximately one half of the campground sites for walk-in campers (a walk-in equals less than 24 hours in advance of trip start date). It is still possible that we will be unable to accommodate your entire walk-in trip itinerary, due to previous multi-night, walk-in trip requests that have already been filled.

We are unable to provide detailed trip planning services over the phone. It is your responsibility to plan and prepare your outing. Hiking and camping guidebooks and topographic maps are available for reference at Visitor Centers and Ranger Stations. They are also available for purchase through Glacier Association's bookstores, by mail order (see back page), and at many outdoor retail stores.

Please be aware that even though your proposed campgrounds may be open, the route to those campgrounds may be impassable, due to hazardous snow or water crossings. Routes with these hazards should not be attempted without a high degree of skill in the use of a map and compass, ice axe self-arrest, and/or skill in swift water crossing techniques. Snow and water hazards are generally gone by August 1st, but water hazards can reappear suddenly after thunderstorms.

Backpacking and Bears

Hiking in Bear Country

Don't Surprise Bears! Bears will usually move out of the way if they hear people approaching, so make noise. Most bells are not enough. Calling out and clapping hands loudly at regular intervals are better ways to make your presence known. Hiking quietly endangers you, the bear, and other hikers.

A bear constantly surprised by quiet hikers may become habituated to close human contact and less likely to avoid people. This sets up a dangerous situation for both visitors and bears.

Grizzly bear - NPS photo

Don't Make Assumptions! You can't predict when and where bears might be encountered. Don't assume you don't have to make noise on a well-used trail. Some of the most frequently used trails in the park are surrounded by excellent bear habitat. People have been charged and injured by bears fleeing from silent hikers who surprised them along the trail. Even if other hikers haven't seen bears recently, don't assume that bears aren't there.

Don't assume a bear's hearing is any better than your own. Some trail conditions make it hard for bears to see, hear, or smell approaching hikers. Be particularly careful by streams, against the wind, or in dense vegetation. A blind corner or a rise in the trail also requires special attention.

Don't Approach Bears! Bears spend a lot of time eating, so avoid hiking in obvious feeding areas like berry patches, cow parsnip thickets, or fields of glacier lilies. Keep children close by. Hike in groups and avoid hiking before sunrise, late in the day, or after dark.

Never intentionally get close to a bear. Individual bears have their own personal space requirements which vary depending on their mood. Each will react differently and its behavior can not be predicted. All bears are dangerous and should be respected equally.

If You Encounter a Bear

What do you do if you run into a bear? There is no easy answer. Like people, bears react differently to each situation. The best thing you can do is to follow all the suggestions for hiking and camping in bear country. Avoid encounters by being alert and making noise.

Bears may appear tolerant of people and then attack without warning. A bear's body language can help determine its mood. In general, bears show agitation by swaying their heads, huffing, and clacking their teeth. Lowered head and laid-back ears also indicate aggression. Bears may stand on their hind legs or approach to get a better view, but these actions are not necessarily signs of aggression. The bear may not have identified you as a person and is unable to smell or hear you from a distance.

Most bear attacks are defensive reactions and occur because people surprise bears.
If you surprise a bear here are a few guidelines that may help.

- Talk quietly; the time to make loud noise is before you encounter a bear. Try to detour around the bear if possible.
- Do not run! Back away slowly, but stop if it seems to agitate the bear.
- Assume a nonthreatening posture. Turn sideways, or bend at the knees to appear smaller.
- Use peripheral vision. Bears may interpret direct eye contact as threatening.
- Keep your pack on for protection in case of an attack.
- If a bear attacks and you have pepper spray, use it!
- If the bear makes contact, protect your chest and abdomen by falling to the ground on your stomach, or assuming a fetal position to reduce the severity of an attack. Cover the back of your neck with your hands. Do not move until you are certain the bear has left.

In rare cases predatory attacks by bears may occur.

These encounters can be very serious because it often means the bear is looking for food and preying on you. If a bear stalks you and then attacks, or if a bear attacks at night, you need to react differently than in a defensive attack.

- Don't play dead! Try to escape, preferably to a building, car, or up a tree.
- If you cannot escape, or if the bear follows, use pepper spray, or shout and try to intimidate the bear with a branch or rock.
- Fight back! Do whatever it takes to let the bear know you are not easy prey.

Backcountry Hazards

Accept the Risks

Risk is inherent with backcountry travel in Glacier and there is no guarantee for your safety. Significant hazards that you may have to contend with include stream and river crossings, steep snowfields, precipitous cliffs and ledges, unstable sedimentary rock, dangerous wildlife, and ever-changing weather, including sudden snowstorms and lightning.

While the National Park Service is renowned for its search-and-rescue capabilities, these services are often hours, if not days, away. The following factors commonly result in backcountry emergencies in Glacier:

- Failure to plan ahead and prepare
- Solo backcountry travel
- Inadequate footwear, clothing, or equipment
- Lack of skill or fitness level for type of terrain or outing
- Impaired or poor judgment, sometimes induced by fatigue, heat exhaustion, or hypothermia
- Unsafe behavior in bear country
- Failure to let family and/or friends know of your specific plans or route

SNOW & WATER HAZARDS

Trail status reports are available online at www.nps.gov/glac/activities/trails.htm and at Backcountry Permit issuing stations. This report notes current snow and water hazards, and the schedule of bridge installation throughout the park. The most significant snow and water hazards are noted on the map on pages 4 and 5, at permit issuing stations, and on newer Trails Illustrated/National Geographic Topographic Map of Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Park.

WATER TREATMENT

The protozoan *Giardia lamblia* may be present in lakes and streams. When ingested, their reproductive cysts may cause an intestinal disorder that appears weeks after your trip. The easiest method of effective water treatment is to boil water for one minute (up to five minutes at higher elevations) or use a filter capable of removing particles as small as 1 micron. Treatment tablets have also proven effective against *Giardia lamblia* when used as directed.

HYPOTHERMIA

Be prepared for sudden weather changes. Cool, wet, and windy conditions can cause hypothermia. Hypothermia is a progressive lowering of the body's core temperature causing physical collapse and diminished mental capacity. Prevent hypothermia by using rain gear before you become wet. Minimize wind exposure and if your clothes become wet, replace them with dry ones. Avoid sweating in cold weather by dressing in layers, rather than a single bulky garment. On warm sunny days watch for signs of heat exhaustion. Stay well-hydrated in all conditions.

SOLO TRAVEL

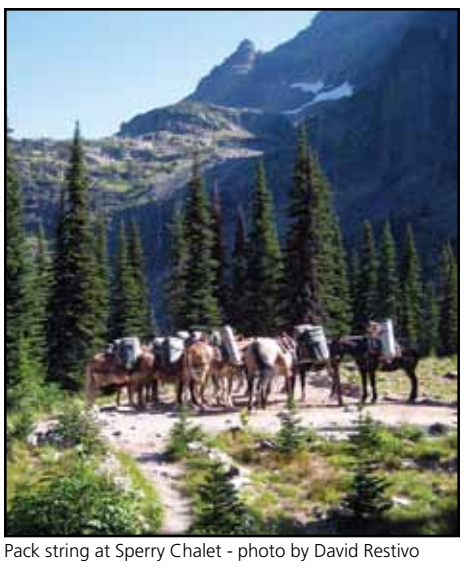
Solo travel in the backcountry is not recommended. The best insurance for a safe and enjoyable trip rests with your ability to exercise good judgment, avoid unnecessary risks, and assume responsibility for your own safety while visiting Glacier's backcountry.

Trip Essentials

The following items should be carried on every trip into Glacier's backcountry.

- Topographic maps
- Compass
- First Aid Kit
- Enough food (low-odor)
- Tent
- Sleeping bag and pad
- Appropriate footwear
- Appropriate clothing (layering is best)
- Rain jacket and pants
- Lightweight campshoes
- Footwear for stream crossings
- A weatherproof food & garbage hanging bag
- 25 feet of rope for hanging food and garbage
- Mesh or small strainer (for removing food scraps from gray water)
- Water container and water purifier, filter and/or treatment tablets
- Lightweight campstove and adequate fuel
- Emergency signalling device
- Insect repellent
- Trowel for human waste disposal

Be prepared for stream crossings on footbridges or through fording. - photo by Erin Aageson



Pack string at Sperry Chalet - photo by David Restivo

Stock Use

Horses, mules, burros, and llamas are permitted on most of Glacier's trails, but are prohibited off trail. Most of Glacier's backcountry campgrounds are open for stock use. Grazing is prohibited. Feed (hay cubes, oats, pellets, sweet feed, etc.) must be packed in, securely stored, and certified as weed-seed free. Spilled or leftover feed must be cleaned up and packed out. Obtain the Private Stock Use handout for more details.

Backpacking and Bears

Bear Spray

This aerosol pepper derivative triggers temporarily incapacitating discomfort in bears. It is a non-toxic and non-lethal means of deterring bears.

There have been cases where bear spray apparently repelled aggressive or attacking bears and accounts where it has not worked as well as expected. Factors influencing effectiveness include distance, wind, rainy weather, temperature extremes, and product shelf life.

If you decide to carry spray, use it only in situations where aggressive bear behavior justifies its use. Bear spray is intended to be sprayed into the face of an oncoming bear. It is not intended to act as a repellent. Do not spray gear or around camp with bear spray.

Under no circumstances should pepper spray create a false sense of security or serve as a substitute for standard safety precautions in bear country.

Be aware that you may not be able to cross the U.S./Canada border with some brands of bear spray. Canadian Customs will allow the importations of USEPA-approved bear spray into Canada. Specifications state that the bear spray must have USEPA on the label.

Feminine Hygiene and Bears

Stay clean, but avoid scented soaps, deodorants, and cosmetics. Although evidence is inconclusive, sexual activity or a woman's menstrual period may attract bears. Many women have traveled into Glacier's backcountry safely, during their menstrual cycle, by keeping themselves as clean and odor-free as possible. The premise is to keep a clean camp. Used feminine products should never be thrown into the backcountry pit toilets!

Many women fill a heavy duty Ziploc bag with some baking soda, put used feminine products inside, and then put that bag inside one or two more heavy duty Ziploc bags. Never keep this bag inside your tent and always hang it with food, garbage, and other scented items, from the food hanging device.

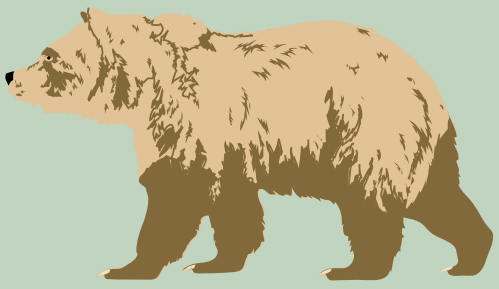
Grizzly bear - video capture by Bob Chinn

What Kind of Bear is That?

Grizzly Bear

Color — Range from blond to nearly black, sometimes have silver-tipped guard hairs that give them a "grizzled" appearance.

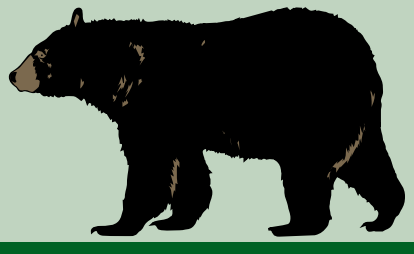
Physical Features — Grizzly bears often have a dished-in face and a large hump of heavy muscle above the shoulders. Their claws are around four inches (10 cm) long.



Black Bear

Color — Color is not a reliable indicator of species. Contrary to their name, black bears also come in brown, cinnamon, and blond.

Physical Features — Facial profile is straighter from tip of nose to ears, without the dished-in look. Lack the hump of a grizzly and have shorter claws, generally around one and a half inches (4 cm) long.



A fed bear is a dead bear! Bears that obtain human food may have to be destroyed. Don't leave any food, packs, or garbage unattended, even for a few minutes.

Backcountry Campground Information and Rout

Backcountry Camping Policies

PARTY SIZE AND LARGE GROUPS

The maximum party size allowed is 12 persons. Each backcountry campground has between 2 and 7 campsites. Each campsite is limited to a maximum of four people and two small 2-4 person tents. Parties of 1-4 people need one campsite, parties of 5-8 people need two campsites, and parties of 9-12 people need three campsites.

The national Leave No Trace program encourages small group size. This also increases your chances of obtaining your itinerary. It typically is difficult for large groups to obtain an adequate number of campsites. If a large group cannot be broken up, we will accommodate a limited number of advance reservations for large groups, based on the following criteria:

- Large groups requiring three campsites (9-12 persons) may submit an advance reservation application. A total of five large groups will be accommodated if campsites are available.

Backcountry Use Regulations

- Pets, motorboats, snowmobiles, and wheeled vehicles (including bicycles and canoe carts) are prohibited.
- Federal law permits the possession of loaded firearms in national parks, but does not change existing laws and regulations that prohibit the **use** of firearms in national parks.
- All natural features are protected. Fish and edible berries may be harvested for personal consumption only. Check park regulations, or ask a park ranger, for limits. Picking mushrooms is prohibited.
- Hunting and trapping are prohibited.
- Wood fires are permitted in designated fire pits only.
- Pack out all refuse, including uneaten food and scraps.
- Food must be prepared and consumed only in the food preparation area.
- Stock use is restricted to designated trails and campgrounds.
- Grazing stock is prohibited.
- Feeding, disturbing, or harassing wildlife is unsafe and illegal.
- Fishing does not require a license. Obtain the Fishing Regulations handout when you pick up your permit.
- Shortcutting switchbacks is unsafe, destructive, and illegal.
- Human waste must be deposited in a toilet. In the absence of a toilet, deposit feces in a 6-8 inch deep "cathole" at least 200 feet from water sources and pack out toilet paper.
- Commercial use (including guiding and outfitting) is prohibited, unless authorized by a concession permit or commercial use license.
- There is a 14 day limit in July and August.

Backcountry Accessibility

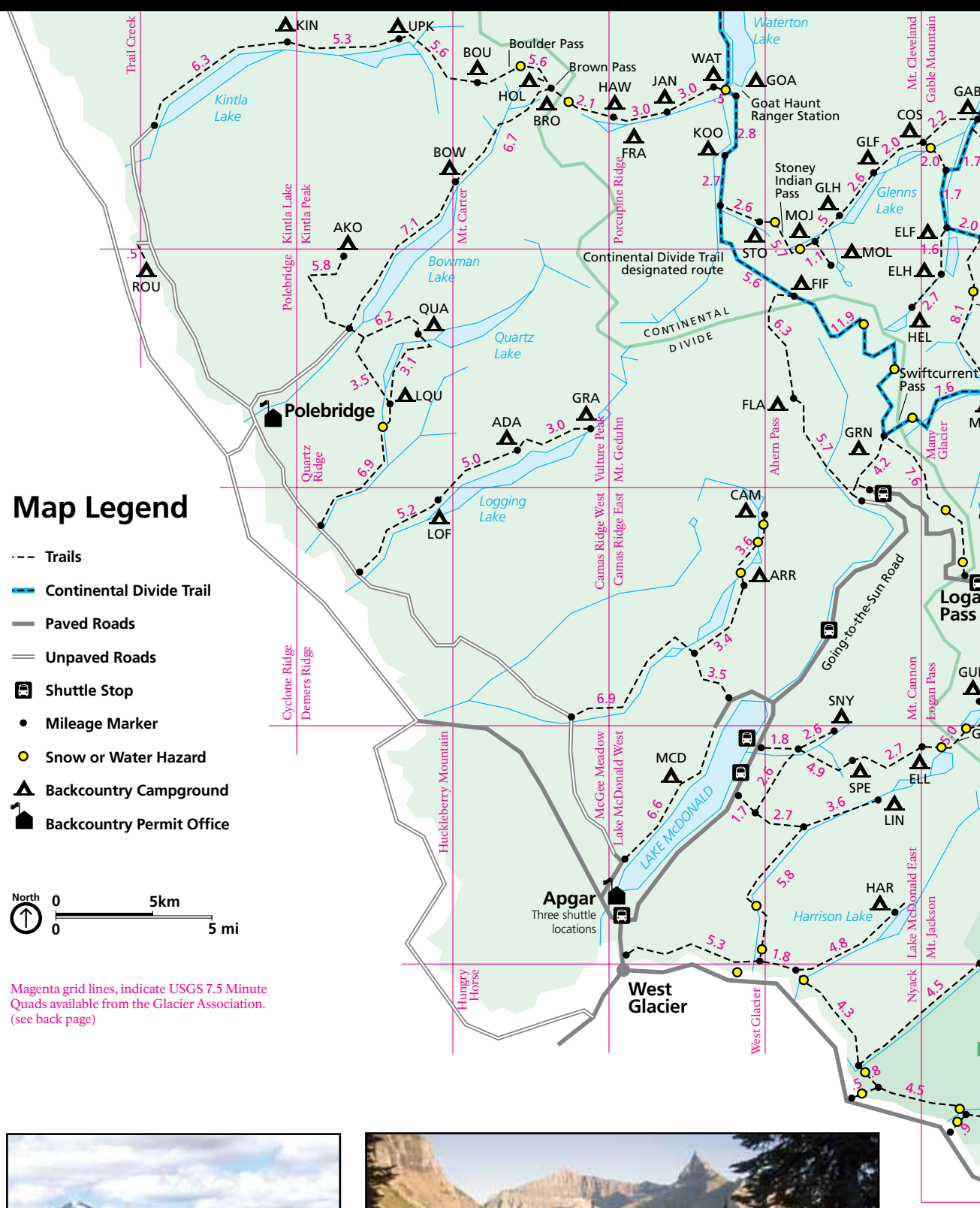
To meet the needs of special populations, wheelchairs and trained aid dogs are appropriate accommodations in the backcountry. While aid dogs are discouraged, due to potential hazardous interactions with bears, they are permitted.

Entering at Goat Haunt

Travel between Canada and the Goat Haunt Ranger Station, either by boat or by foot, will require an official government issued photo identification card for U.S. or Canadian citizens or permanent residents. All others must carry a valid passport.

Persons seeking to travel beyond the Goat Haunt Ranger Station into the United States must present documents that are *Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative* compliant. A list of government-approved documents is available at http://www.getyouhome.gov/.

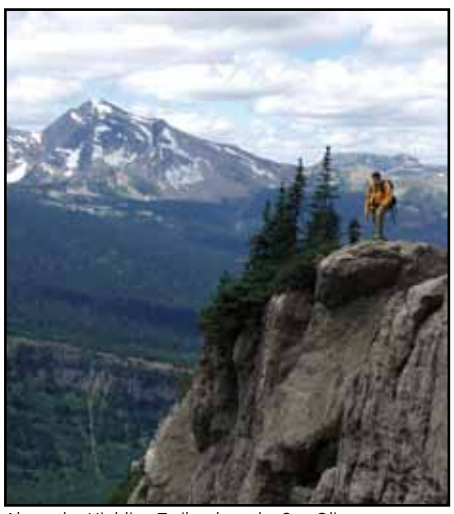
The Goat Haunt Port of Entry will operate between 11:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. No entry into the United States past the Goat Haunt Ranger Station will be authorized outside of the port's hours of operation. Hikers traveling northbound into Canada from the United States are required to contact the Chief Mountain Port of Entry upon their arrival at Waterton townsite. Information on contacting the Port of Entry is available at the Waterton Lakes Visitor Centre or the Waterton Station of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.



Map Legend

- Trails
- Continental Divide Trail
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Shuttle Stop
- Mileage Marker
- Snow or Water Hazard
- Backcountry Campground
- Backcountry Permit Office

North 0 5km 0 5 mi


Along the Highline Trail - photo by Sue Olin

Hole in the Wall Campground - photo by Chris Bode

Campground Information

The **Reservation Info** column, in the table to the right, lists the total number of sites (first number), the number of sites that may be reserved in advance (second number), and the first date that the campground is available by reservation.

For example: Sperry Campground is 4 - 2 - 8/1. The campground has four sites, two of which may be reserved in advance, but not for dates prior to August 1.

Do not submit a reservation request to use any campground with dates prior to those listed. These dates represent the approximate time of year that the campground is snow free and available for backcountry camping.

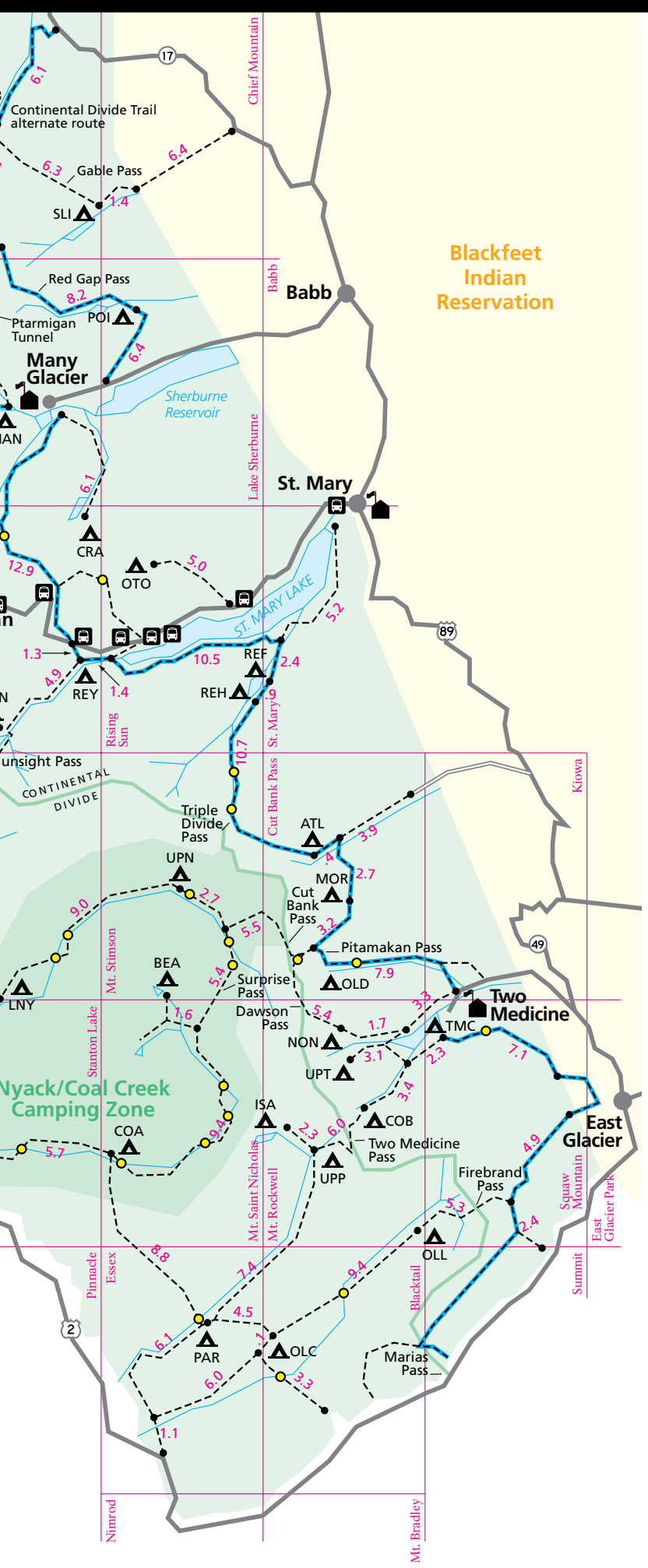
The number in the **Stock** column indicates the number of head of stock permitted overnight.

Items in the **Special** column are explained in the list at the far right.

Code	Campground	Reservation Info	Stock	Special
ADA	Adair	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	
AKO	Akokala Lake	3 - 2 - 6/15	0	◆
ARR	Arrow Lake	2 - 1 - 6/15	8	◆
ATL	Atlantic Creek	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	
BEA	Beaver Woman Lake	2 - 2 - 7/15	10	
BOU	Boulder Pass	3 - 2 - 8/1	0	◆
BOW	Bowman Lake HD	6 - 3 - 6/15	8	
BRO	Brown Pass	3 - 2 - 7/15	0	◆
CAM	Camas Lake	2 - 1 - 7/15	0	◆
COA	Coal Creek	2 - 2 - 6/15	10	
COB	Cobalt Lake	2 - 2 - 8/1	0	◆ ❶
COS	Cosley Lake	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	◆
CRA	Cracker Lake	3 - 2 - 6/15	0	◆
ELF	Elizabeth Lake FT	5 - 3 - 6/15	8	◆ ❶
ELH	Elizabeth Lake HD	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	
ELL	Lake Ellen Wilson	4 - 2 - 8/1	8	◆ ❶
FIF	Fifty Mountain	5 - 3 - 8/1	8	◆
FLA	Flattop	3 - 2 - 7/15	8	◆
FRA	Lake Francis	2 - 1 - 6/15	0	◆ ❶
GAB	Gable Creek	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	
GLF	Glenns Lake FT	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	◆
GLH	Glenns Lake HD	3 - 2 - 6/15	0	
GOA	Goat Haunt Shelters	7 - 4 - 6/15	0	*

Code	Ca
GRA	Gra
GRN	Gra
GUN	Gu
HAR	Ha
HAW	Ha
HEL	He
HOL	Ho
ISA	Lak
JAN	Lak
KIN	Kir
KOO	Ko
LIN	Lin
LNY	Lov
LOF	Log
LQU	Lov
MAN	Ma
MCD	Mc
MOJ	Mc
MOL	Mc
MOR	Mc
NON	No
OLD	Old
OLC	Ole

te Planning Map



Trail Closures

Hazardous or emergency conditions (fires, bears, landslides, etc...) may make it necessary to close a trail segment. These closures may effect your planned itinerary. Backcountry rangers will make an effort to contact you on the trail to let you know your options and assist with route changes. Glacier is a big park and it may take a while for everyone to be contacted. Do not enter any closed trail, even if it was part of your planned itinerary.

Continental Divide Trail

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT), follows a 3,100 mile route from Canada to Mexico. A 110 mile segment runs through Glacier. The designated CDT route, and an early/late season alternate route, are marked in blue on the map. Glacier frequently presents obstacles to CDT hikers in the spring and early summer in the form of steep snowfields, high-water crossings, and campgrounds under snow. Some CDT hikers avoid this by hiking Glacier as a separate segment in the middle of summer or as the last segment of their trip in the Fall. CDT hikers entering Glacier at Marias Pass, or the Canadian Border, should call the Backcountry Office (406-888-7857) for additional information.

Recreation on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation

A Conservation/Recreation Use Permit is required for all recreational activities, off paved roads, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. A separate permit is required for fishing on the reservation. For further information call 406-338-7207.

Nyack/Coal Creek Camping Zone

This area offers opportunities for solitude and higher levels of challenge and risk. It is best suited to experienced backcountry travelers well-versed in Leave No Trace outdoor skills. Brushy trails and unbridged stream crossings will be encountered here. In this area camping is not restricted to designated campgrounds. Outside designated campgrounds, undesignated camping is allowed, by permit only, which is obtainable from one of the backcountry permit offices (advance reservations not allowed).

Shuttles and Transportation Options

- Glacier's free shuttle system, on the Going-to-the-Sun Road, allows for expanded transportation options for some hikes.
- There are NO authorized public transportation options to and from the North Fork area (Polebridge). Trips in and out of this location will require extensive transportation planning. Two vehicles are highly recommended for trips beginning or ending in the North Fork.
- Glacier Park Inc., operates a fee-based trailhead shuttle from Many Glacier connecting to the free NPS shuttle at the St. Mary Visitor Center. They also provide transportation service on the east side of the park from Glacier Park Lodge to Two Medicine, Cut Bank Junction, St. Mary Visitor Center, Many Glacier, Chief Mountain and the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton. Visit www.glacierparkinc.com/images/_userfiles/files/GPI_Shuttle.pdf for reservations and information.

Camp scene - photo by Chris Bode

Ahern Pass - photo by David Restivo

mpground	Reservation Info	Stock	Special
ace Lake	3 - 2 - 7/1	0	
anite Park	4 - 2 - 7/15	0	◆ ❶ ✱
nsight Lake	7 - 4 - 7/15	8	◆
rrison Lake	3 - 2 - 6/15	8	
wksbill	2 - 2 - 6/15	0	◆
len Lake	2 - 1 - 7/1	0	◆
le in the Wall	5 - 3 - 8/1	0	◆ ❶
ke Isabel	2 - 1 - 7/1	0	
ke Janet	2 - 1 - 6/15	8	
tla Lake HD	6 - 3 - 6/15	8	■
otenai Lake	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	◆
coln Lake	3 - 2 - 7/1	8	◆
wer Nyack	3 - 2 - 7/15	10	
gging Lake FT	3 - 2 - 6/15	0	
wer Quartz Lake	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	
ny Glacier CG	3 - 2 - 6/15	0	❶ ✱
Donald Lake	2 - 1 - 6/15	0	■
okowanis Junction	5 - 3 - 6/15	8	◆
okowanis Lake	2 - 1 - 7/1	0	◆
orning Star Lake	3 - 2 - 7/15	0	◆
Name Lake	3 - 2 - 7/15	0	◆ ❶
dman Lake	4 - 2 - 7/15	8	◆ ❶
e Creek	3 - 2 - 6/15	8	

Code	Campground	Reservation Info	Stock	Special
OLL	Ole Lake	2 - 2 - 6/15	8	
OTO	Otokomi Lake	3 - 2 - 7/15	0	◆
PAR	Park Creek	3 - 2 - 6/15	8	
POI	Poia Lake	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	◆
QUA	Quartz Lake	3 - 2 - 6/15	0	◆
REF	Red Eagle Lake FT	4 - 2 - 6/15	0	◆
REH	Red Eagle Lake HD	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	◆
REY	Reynolds Creek	2 - 2 - 6/15	8	✱
ROU	Round Prairie	3 - 2 - 7/1	0	◆ ✱
SLI	Slide Lake	3 - 2 - 6/15	8	
SNY	Snyder Lake	3 - 2 - 6/15	8	◆
SPE	Sperry	4 - 2 - 8/1	0	◆ ❶
STO	Stoney Indian Lake	3 - 2 - 8/1	0	◆ ❶
TMC	Two Medicine CG	2 - 1 - 6/15	0	❶ ✱
UPK	Upper Kintla Lake	4 - 2 - 6/15	8	
UPN	Upper Nyack	2 - 2 - 7/15	10	
UPP	Upper Park Creek	3 - 2 - 6/15	8	
UPT	Upper Two Med. Lake	4 - 2 - 7/15	0	◆ ❶
WAT	Waterton River	5 - 3 - 6/15	8	

Unless otherwise noted in the special column, all campgrounds have a three night limit.

Special Conditions

◆ Limited fuel, no wood fires.
❶ One night limit, per trip, in July and August.
■ Access by motorized watercraft prohibited.
✱ Goat Haunt Shelters are three-sided camping structures near the boat dock at the head of the lake.
✱ Many Glacier and Two Medicine Auto Campgrounds are reservable on extended itineraries of three or more nights. These campsites are not available on the first night of an itinerary if the trip begins at Many Glacier or Two Medicine.
✱ Granite Park, in July and August, must be part of an extended itinerary of two or more nights in backcountry campsites.
✱ Reynolds Creek must be reserved as part of an extended itinerary of three or more nights in other backcountry campsites. Reynolds Creek may not be the first night of a trip that starts on the Going-to-the-Sun Road, or the last night of a trip that ends on the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Limit of one night only.
✱ Round Prairie Campground provides three campsites, two of which are reserved for river floaters each night.

Note: After 3 pm unreserved campsites at Granite Park, Reynolds Creek, and Round Prairie are available on a walk-in basis for that night only.

Obtaining Your Backcountry Use Permit

Permit Fees

The following per person per night fees are charged on permits issued between June 1 and September 30.

- Age 16 and over $5.00
- Age 8 through 15 ..... $2.50
- Age 7 and under..... free
- Interagency Senior & Access pass holders..... $2.50
- Season Pass..... $60.00*

*Valid for one year from date of issue, and covers per night camping fees for the person named on the pass. It does not cover advance reservation fees.

Reservation Fees
Backcountry trips starting between June 15 and September 30 may be reserved in advance. A non-refundable processing fee of $30.00 per trip is charged. Per person/per night fees will be charged when you obtain your permit.

No reservation processing fee is charged for walk-in permits, however per person per night fees are charged.

Winter Permits

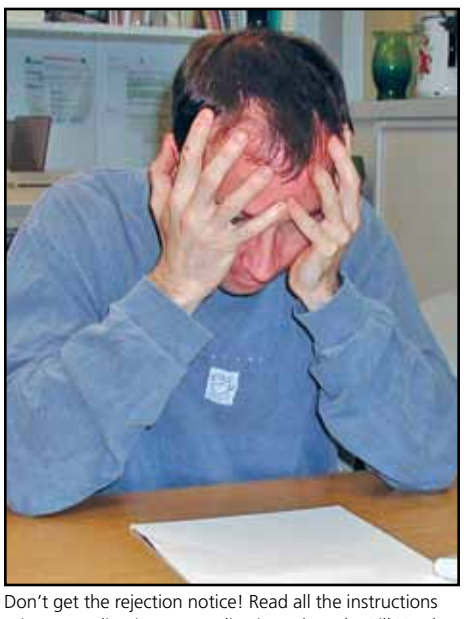
During the winter backcountry camping season (November 20 through April 30), Backcountry Use Permits may be requested and approved in person or by telephone, up to seven days in advance. Approved permits must be picked up in person. There are no fees for winter Backcountry Use Permits. All parties will receive the weekly avalanche and other pertinent advisories and regulations.

Please call 406-888-7800 during winter season for more information.

Plan Your Trip Online

Visit Glacier's website for trail and campground status, campground availability, and to watch the 14 minute backcountry video.
www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/backcountry.htm

Picking up the permit - photo by David Restivo


Don't get the rejection notice! Read all the instructions prior to sending in your application. photo by Bill Hayden

A BACKCOUNTRY USE PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL overnight camping, and must be in your possession while in the backcountry. They are valid only for the dates, locations, and party size specified. Permits will be issued only to someone going on the trip, and not to any third parties. **Reservations are held only until 4:30pm the day of the trip.**

Permits may be obtained by stopping in at any of the designated backcountry permit issuing stations listed below. All permits must be picked up in person no sooner than one day in advance of your departure. Permits will not be issued after 4:30pm at any location. The advance reservation fee ($30) will not be charged when you request a permit less than one day in advance, however per person per night fees are charged.

- **Apgar Backcountry Permit Center**
  (open daily from May 1 through October 31)
  When the Apgar Backcountry Permit Center has closed for the season permits are available at Park Headquarters on weekdays and at the Apgar Visitor Center on weekends.
- **St. Mary Visitor Center**
  (open daily from late May to mid-September)
- **Many Glacier and Two Medicine Ranger Stations**
  (open daily from late May to mid-September)
- Polebridge Ranger Station
  (open daily from early June through mid-September)
- **Waterton Lakes National Park Visitor Reception Centre**
  (open daily from early June through mid-September) accepts payment by credit card only (no cash). Waterton staff are only authorized to issue trips that start at Chief Mt. or Goat Haunt.

ADVANCE RESERVATIONS

Advance reservations (requests made more than one day prior to the start of the trip) may be requested for any of Glacier's backcountry campgrounds. Advance reservation applications are accepted for trips that begin June 15 through October 31.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

To ensure that your application arrives after the Permit Office has been staffed, we will begin accepting applications on January 1. Glacier National Park staff will begin processing application requests on April 16.

- All applications, received on or before April 15, will be randomly sorted before processing begins. This provides an equal opportunity for all applicants.
- Applications received after April 15 will be processed in the order they are received.
- Applications may only be submitted via mail or FAX 406-888-5819.
- Please allow up to one month for processing of your permit.

Applications will be accepted on the official form only. Additional copies are available by mail or on the park website.

You may submit two trip requests on one application. Each trip request still requires a $30.00 processing fee. There is a maximum of two trip requests per application. If you submit more than one application cross reference your dates, so you do not end up with overlapping trips.
(A trip is defined as a contiguous itinerary that enters and then exits the backcountry at a trailhead or developed area. Vehicle transportation between trailheads during a trip is not permitted.)

A NONREFUNDABLE processing fee of $30 must be submitted with each application. The $30 processing fee may be submitted via personal check, money order, or credit card only and will be deposited only upon confirmation of a reservation. Personal checks submitted with applications that are not able to be filled will be destroyed rather than returned. **Do not include the per person per night fees with your request.**

Do not submit duplicate applications. Duplicate applications may result in duplicate charges and/or overlapping itineraries.

Walk-in requests for reservations may be made starting May 1, at open permit stations. If there are still requests pending from a prior day, walk-in requests may not be processed on the day they are received, but will be placed in the que and processed in order. **Phone or e-mail applications are not accepted.**

Requests unable to be filled, will not be charged. If you have not heard from us by May 31, please call 406-888-7857 or 406-888-7859

We strongly encourage you to develop a second itinerary that may explore some less popular areas, in the event that your first choice is not available. Applicants will receive a confirmation letter by mail or by email, if you have provided an email address on the application form. The subject line in our email response follows the format "Glacier National Park Backcountry Permit."
Please set your spam blocker to accept email from @nps.gov.

ADVANCE RESERVATION CAMPGROUND OPENING DATES

Due to unpredictable campground opening dates, each campground has an "earliest available date" that applies to advance reservation itineraries. These dates are noted on pages 4 & 5. Please do not submit one that requests a campground with opening dates prior to those specified on Pages 4&5. In a typical summer the opening dates specified represent the time of year the campground is snow free and available for backcountry campers. If backcountry campgrounds emerge from snow-cover early, these campgrounds are placed in an "open" status prior to the specified dates , and are made available on both a walk-in and reservation basis. In some years there is more snow than usual and campgrounds may not open by the dates listed or reserved. In those cases, reserved itineraries will be modified when you pick up your permit at a permit issuing station.

ADVANCE RESERVATION CHANGES

Requests to change confirmed advance reservations will not be accepted via phone. You have the following options:

- Call and cancel your reservation (406-888-7900) and submit a new application. You will be charged a $30 fee for any successive advance reservation processed.
- Try to change your itinerary in person, the day before, or morning of, your start date. There is no charge for changing a permit itinerary up to 24 hours prior to permit issuance.

REFUND/CANCELLATION POLICIES

The advance reservation fee is non-refundable. It is a processing fee and covers time and materials involved in the reservation process.

If your plans change and you cannot use any, or part, of your backcountry permit or reservation, you are encouraged to call (406-888-7900) to cancel your trip. A refund will not be provided, but you will allow other campers access to those sites.

I NEED MORE INFORMATION!

Check the park website for additional information at:
http://www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/backcountry.htm.
From March 15 to October 31, staff will be available at 406-888-7857 if you need information or have a question. If you leave a message, please allow 24 hours for a response.

All food must be hung out of reach of bears - photo by Chris Bode

A Few More Things Before Mailing the Application

Application Checklist

Have you:

- Reviewed the information and instructions carefully?
- Cross-referenced availability dates and special conditions noted on pages 4 & 5?
- Fully completed the application?
- Enclose $30 fee (U. S. funds), for each trip request, payable to: Glacier National Park or National Park Service
- Mail or fax the application to:
  Glacier National Park
  Backcountry Reservations
  West Glacier, MT 59936
  FAX 406-888-5819

PLEASE BE PATIENT!
Because of the volume of mail and faxes we receive, you should not expect to hear back from us for at least 4 weeks. We will try to contact you via standard mail or email (if provided) to confirm your trip request. **Due to staffing limitations, we cannot provide information regarding your application online, or over the phone. Thank you for your consideration.**

PRESERVING THE BACKCOUNTRY
If you find litter in the backcountry, please pack it out. If you cannot pack it out, please notify park rangers where it is.

It is illegal to collect any natural or cultural resources, please leave all natural objects and cultural artifacts where you find them.

WILDLIFE
Deer, mountain goats, marmots, and other rodents are attracted to urine and sweat. They will chew holes in clothes, boots, and camping gear if left unattended.

Please report any bear or unusual animal sightings, trail conditions, or incidents to the nearest ranger station or visitor center. Mosquitoes and flies can be a nuisance in some areas in July and August. Bring insect repellent or be prepared to cover up with lightweight clothing and perhaps a headnet.

Thank you for helping to protect Glacier's backcountry and your National Park.

HIKING GUIDE SERVICE
Another way to experience the backcountry is with a guide service. Contact Glacier Guides for information at:
GLACIER GUIDES
P. O. BOX 330, WEST GLACIER, MT 59936
PHONE (406) 387-5555 OR (800) 521-7238
WWW.GLACIERGUIDES.COM

DROP TRIP SERVICE
Swan Mountain Outfitters offers drop-camp service, packing visitors gear into certain backcountry campgrounds, using stock. A backcountry permit is required.
For more information contact:
SWAN MOUNTAIN OUTFITTERS
P.O. BOX 130278, CORAM, MT 59913
PHONE 1-877-888-5557
WWW.SWANMOUNTAINOUTFITTERS.COM/GLACIER

Waterton River Bridge - photo by Brian McKeon

Exiting Ptarmigan Tunnel - photo by Brian McKeon

Spectacular vistas are commonplace in Glacier's backcountry.- photo by Chris Bode

Permit #
Office Use Only

Last Name
Office Use Only

Date Processed and Ranger's Initials
Office Use Only

Trip Leader Information

(please print)

Name _____
Address _____
_____
_____
City _____
State and Zip _____
Daytime Phone # _____
Evening Phone # _____

email address (make legible)

Method of Payment ($30.00 U.S. Funds)

☐ Check ☐ Mastercard
☐ Money Order ☐ Discover
☐ Visa ☐ American Express

Submit $30.00 for each trip request.

Credit Card Number (include spaces)

Expiration Date _____
Name on Card (please print)
_____
Signature of Cardholder
_____

Number of Trips Requested _____
Number of Campers per Trip _____
Number of Stock _____
Number of Boats _____

FAX 406-888-5819

Trip 1 - First Choice

Day	Date	Code	Campground
Example	8/16	CRA	Cracker lake
Night 1			
Night 2			
Night 3			
Night 4			
Night 5			
Night 6			
Night 7			

Trip 1 - Second Choice

Day	Date	Code	Campground
Example	8/16	CRA	Cracker lake
Night 1			
Night 2			
Night 3			
Night 4			
Night 5			
Night 6			
Night 7			

Trip 1 - Other Options

Will you accept different start/end dates?
☐ Yes ☐ No

- **Earliest Date You Can Start** _____
- **Last Night You Can Stay** _____
- **Will you accept minor changes on your first or second choice itinerary...**

☐ Yes ☐ No
for example: different campgrounds, reverse route, shorter trip, etc...

Trip 2 - First Choice

Day	Date	Code	Campground
Example	8/16	CRA	Cracker lake
Night 1			
Night 2			
Night 3			
Night 4			
Night 5			
Night 6			
Night 7			

Trip 2 - Second Choice

Day	Date	Code	Campground
Example	8/16	CRA	Cracker lake
Night 1			
Night 2			
Night 3			
Night 4			
Night 5			
Night 6			
Night 7			

Trip 2 - Other Options

Will you accept different start/end dates?
☐ Yes ☐ No

- **Earliest Date You Can Start** _____
- **Last Night You Can Stay** _____
- **Will you accept minor changes on your first or second choice itinerary...**

☐ Yes ☐ No
for example: different campgrounds, reverse route, shorter trip, etc...

If we can't come close to what you have requested, will you accept a completely different itinerary for the dates you have listed. This itinerary might be shorter (in days or miles), it might be in a different area of the park than you requested, and could significantly effect transportation logistics.

Trip 1 - ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
Trip 2 - ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Comments...for example: max. number of miles per day, max elevation gain per day, etc... _____

Please be aware that even though your proposed campgrounds may be open, the route to those campgrounds may be impassable, due to hazardous snow or water crossings. Routes with these hazards should not be attempted without a high degree of skill in the use of a map and compass, ice axe self-arrest, and/or skill in swiftwater crossing techniques. The Ptarmigan Tunnel is closed until mid-July. Snow and water hazards are generally gone by August 1st, but water hazards can reappear suddenly after thunderstorms.

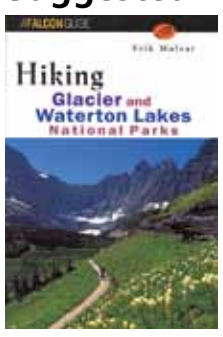
Do not submit duplicate applications

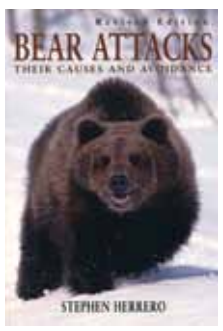
Helpful Publications

PRE-PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL TO A SUCCESSFUL BACKCOUNTRY EXPERIENCE. Hiking books and maps are an excellent way of preparing for your trip. The Glacier Association is a nonprofit organization working with the National Park Service to assist Glacier's educational and interpretive activities, cultural programs, and special projects. They stock a number of publications that are excellent pre-planning guides. Any of the publications listed are highly recommended, and may be purchased in person or through the mail. To order by phone or to obtain a complete catalog of publications, contact:

GLACIER ASSOCIATION
BOX 310, WEST GLACIER, MT 59936
HTTP://WWW.GLACIERASSOCIATION.ORG
gnha@glacierassociation.org - (406) 888-5756

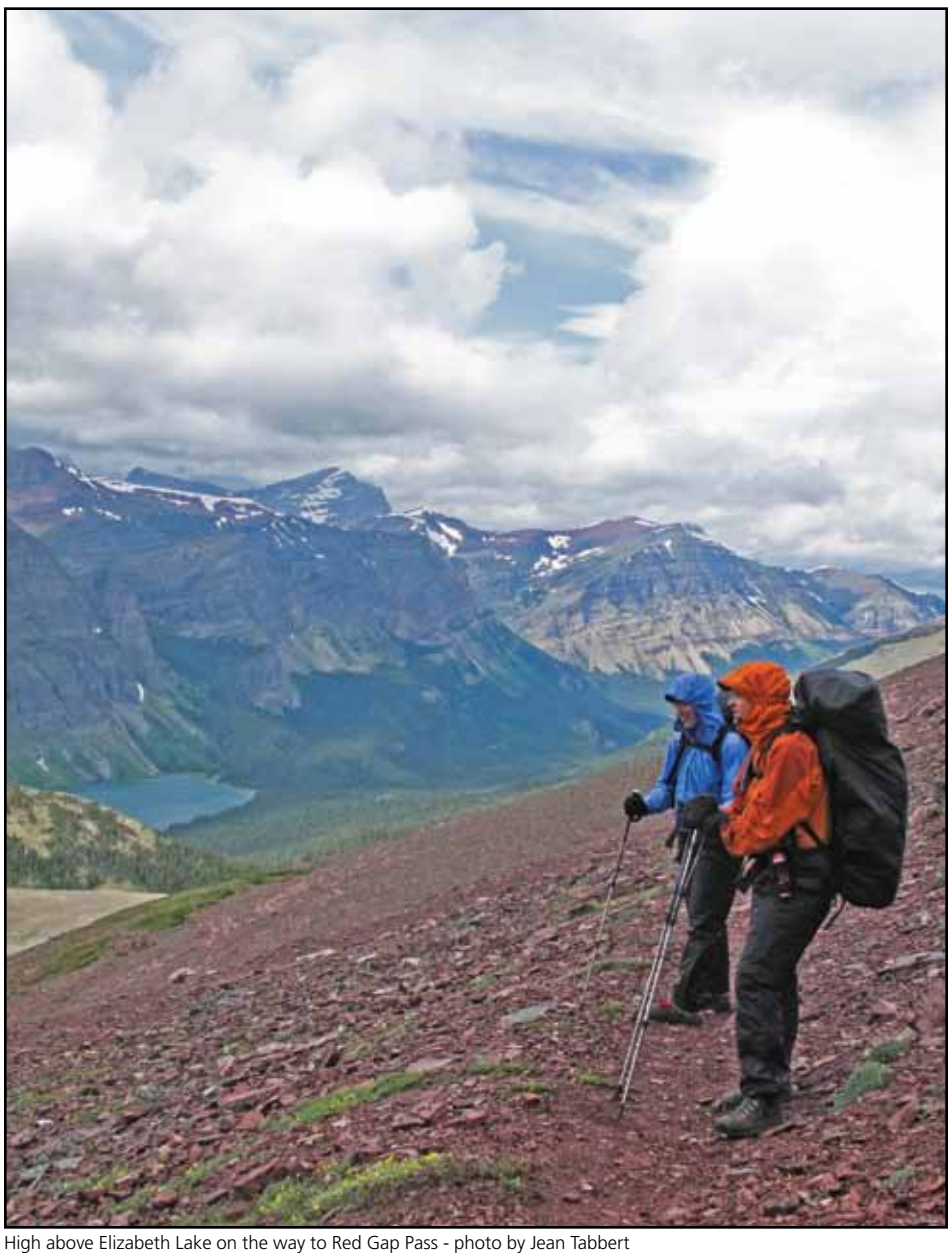
Suggested Publications to Assist in Trip Planning





Hiker's Guide to Glacier National Park $10.95
Glacier Natural History Association
Hiking Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks $15.95
Erik Molvar
National Geographic Trails Illustrated Topographic Map of Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Park $11.95
National Geographic
Bear Aware $7.95
Bill Schneider
U-Dig-It Trowel with Case..... $17.95
Northwest Interpretive Association
A Climber's Guide to Glacier National Park $14.95
J. Gordon Edwards
U. S. G. S. Topographic Map of Glacier (1998)..... $11.95
U. S. Geological Survey
U. S. Geological Survey Topographic Quad Maps..... $7.00
U. S. Geological Survey

Special Package Deal - Backcountry Users Package..... $36.95
Special package price, regularly a $52.00 value!
Includes all of the essentials needed to make your backcountry stay in Glacier enjoyable for you as well as future users. Includes: Hiking Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks, National Geographic Trails Illustrated Topographic Map of Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Park, Bear Aware, Glacier National Park Nature Guide, and Wilderness First Aid.


High above Elizabeth Lake on the way to Red Gap Pass - photo by Jean Tabbert

Leave No Trace

Challenge, adventure, a sense of discovery, and solitude can be part of your backcountry experience. But in order to ensure that Glacier's backcountry remains unimpaired for future generations, visitors must be motivated by an ethic that compels responsibility toward the resource. It is the task of every backcountry visitor to learn and practice Leave No Trace skills and ethics.

Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics is a national program promoting responsible outdoor recreation and stewardship of our public lands. The National Park Service is a partner in this program, along with other federal land management agencies.

Practice the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace

Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Know and respect regulations and the risks inherent in backcountry travel.
- Select terrain, mileage, and elevation changes everyone in your group can handle.
- Carry adequate food, water, clothing, and the trip essentials (page 3).

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Camp in designated campsites to limit impacts.
- Stay on maintained trails and walk single file down the middle of the trail, even when muddy.
- Shortcutting switchbacks is destructive and illegal.
- If you travel off trail, walk abreast and select the most durable route. Avoid fragile vegetation and saturated soils. Choose durable surfaces such as rock, snow, gravel, or dry grasses for all activities.

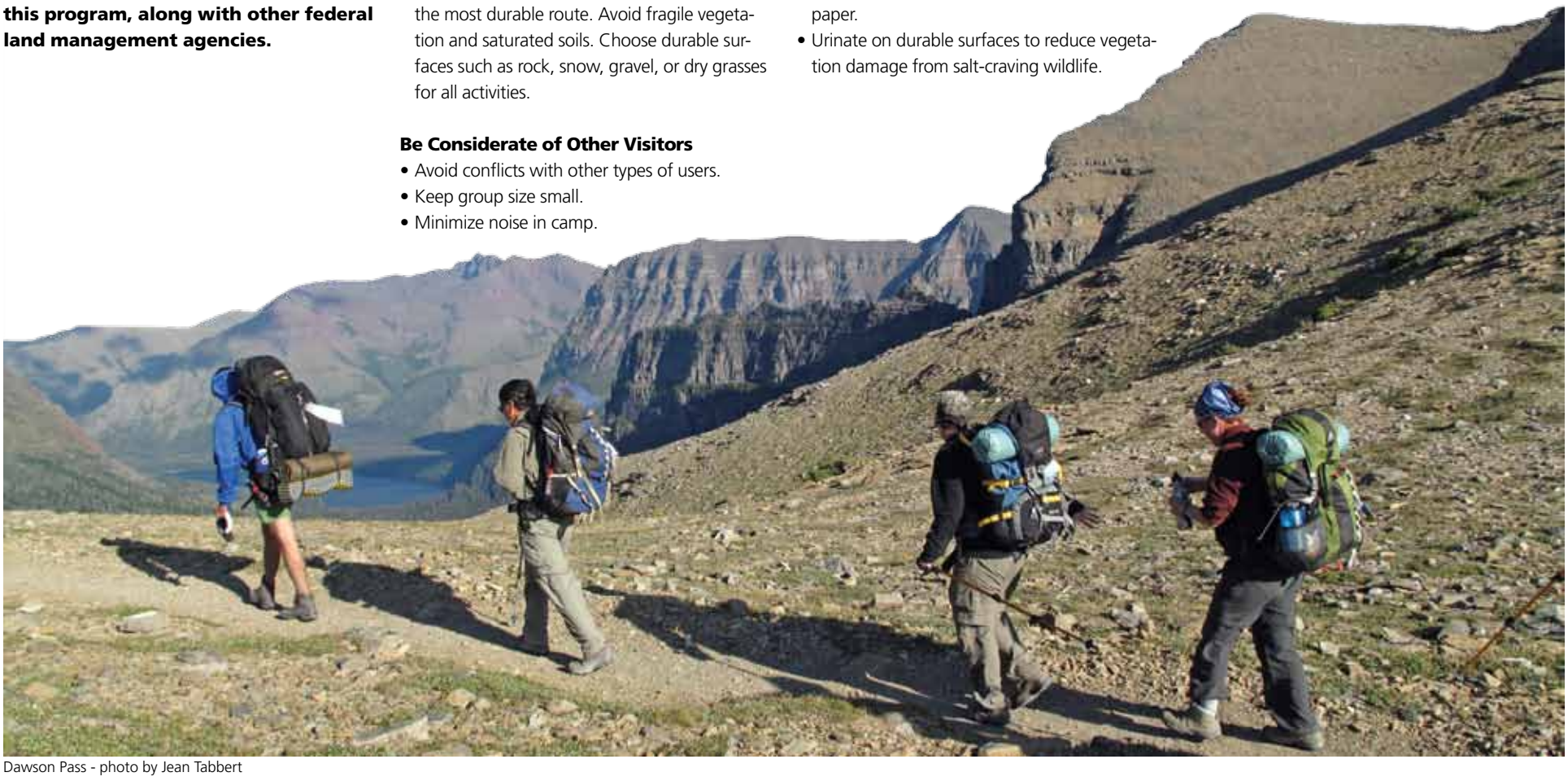
Be Considerate of Other Visitors
- Avoid conflicts with other types of users.
- Keep group size small.
- Minimize noise in camp.

Leave What You Find
- All natural and cultural resources are protected by law, with the exception of berries and fish for personal consumption only.
- Never make alterations to tent sites or natural features.
- Avoid new impacts to rehabilitated areas and blocked social trails.

Properly Dispose of Waste
- Keep Glacier litter free: pack it in - pack it out!
- Never bury food or garbage - pack it out.
- Use toilets when available for both urine and feces.
- In lieu of toilets, deposit feces in a cathole, 6-8" deep in organic soil, at least 200 ft. from water. Fill and disguise hole and pack out paper.
- Urinate on durable surfaces to reduce vegetation damage from salt-craving wildlife.

Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Self-contained camp stoves are the least impact.
- Fires are restricted to designated fire pits only.
- When permitted, collect down and dead wood only (size of wrist) and keep fires small and totally contained in fire pit.

Respect Wildlife
- Enjoy wildlife at a distance. Photograph with telephoto lens.
- Never intentionally approach, feed, or harass wildlife.
- Secure food and garbage properly. Remember - a fed bear is a dead bear.


Dawson Pass - photo by Jean Tabbert