



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Camas Creek Cutoff Road
other name/site number: International Park Road/Kishenehn Loop Road/Glacier Route 8; 24FH1219

2. Location

street & number: Glacier National Park not for publication: n/a
city/town: West Glacier vicinity: X
state: Montana code: MT county: Flathead code: 029 zip code: 59936

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally.

Robert K. Miller, Deputy FPO May 29, 2014
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
National Park Service
State or Federal agency or bureau (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Mark F. Zaunber 4/3/2014
Signature of commenting or other official Date
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 see continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register
 see continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 see continuation sheet
 removed from the National Register
 see continuation sheet
 other (explain):

Joe
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 7-16-14

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Carl M. Davis

4-30-2014

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Regional Archeologist/Delegated FPO, US Forest Service Northern Region

State or Federal agency or bureau

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public/federal	Number of Resources within Property	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property: District	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Buildings
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Sites
	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Structures
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Glacier National Park MRA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: TRANSPORTATION/Road-related RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation	Current Functions: TRANSPORTATION/Road-related RECREATION AND CULTURE/Outdoor Recreation
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7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: "Park Road" Landscape Architecture	Materials: foundation: n/a walls: n/a roof: n/a other: Pavements and Curbs: Packed Earth, Gravel, Asphalt, Concrete
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Narrative Description

The Camas Creek Cutoff Road ("Camas Road") is a paved, two-lane road located in the western portion of Glacier National Park, in Flathead County, Montana. Constructed between 1960 and 1967, the road begins at a "T" intersection with the Going-to-the-Sun Road National Historic Landmark near the village of Apgar, about two miles from West Glacier near the foot of Lake McDonald. From that junction, the road proceeds northerly and then westerly for approximately 11.7 miles, ending at an intersection with the North Fork Road (Montana Secondary 486) approximately 22 miles north of Columbia Falls. The Camas Road exits Glacier National Park at a crossing of the North Fork of the Flathead River, approximately 0.2 miles east of its junction with the North Fork Road, and the western terminus of the road is within the boundaries of the Flathead National Forest.

All but the far southern end of the route traverses a landscape that was inaccessible by vehicle prior to the Camas Road's construction; the road thus exists as a new, specifically engineered alignment. Designed partly to improve vehicle access to the remote valley of the North Fork of the Flathead River, and partly as a segment of a never-completed "International Loop Road" to Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta, Canada, the Camas Road is outside the travel corridor experienced by most Glacier Park visitors, and does not directly access major park attractions or scenic views. The road, however, is an uncommon and extremely well-preserved representation of mid-twentieth century roadway engineering and construction in the National Park system, and the park development philosophies of the Mission 66 program. Simultaneously, the road is a reminder of Glacier's long-standing challenge of planning to accommodate increasing visitor use, while protecting park resources from perceived outside threats.

(see continuation sheet)

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Environmental Setting

The Camas Road begins in a narrow, nearly-flat valley just below the foot of Lake McDonald, at an elevation of approximately 3180 feet. The area is a lodgepole pine forest, which last burned in a 1929 forest fire. Substantial human activity has occurred in the area since the late nineteenth century, although little of this activity is visible from the roadway corridor. After approximately one-half mile, the road crosses McDonald Creek and begins a climb up the western slope of the Fish Creek drainage, with the Apgar Mountains to the west. For most of the remainder of the route, the road follows the eastern and northern base of the Apgar Mountains, with Fish Creek, then McGee Meadow, then Camas Creek below the roadway and largely out of sight to the east and north. The road reaches a maximum elevation of approximately 3900 feet just south of the McGee Meadow Overlook. Prior to the construction of the Camas Road, this area was crossed only by a pack trail to Huckleberry Mountain Fire Lookout, although the unimproved "Inside" North Fork Road roughly parallels the southern two-thirds of the Camas Road alignment to the east, on the opposite side of McGee Meadow and the creeks.

With the exception of McGee Meadow and scattered, small wetland/meadow areas, a heavy, mixed forest dominated by lodgepole pines historically occupied most of the remaining road corridor. Forest fires in 1967 and 2003 burned substantial portions of this area, however, temporarily expanding views from the road. As the route approaches the northern end of the Apgar Mountains, the road curves around the northern base of Huckleberry Mountain and gradually descends to a crossing of the North Fork of the Flathead River at an elevation of 3364 feet. The river marks the boundary between Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest; the road continues across Flathead National Forest land for an additional 0.2 miles, ending at a "T" intersection with the "Outside" North Fork Road (Montana Secondary 486).

Description of Resources

As constructed and evaluated, the Camas Road consists of four features, all of which are contributing resources:

1. The Camas Creek Cutoff Road (constructed 1960-67);
2. The McDonald Creek Bridge (constructed 1962);
3. The North Fork Flathead River Bridge (constructed 1965); and
4. The Flathead River Overlook Spur (constructed 1967).

Each of these features is described separately below.

Feature 1: Camas Creek Cutoff Road: The Camas Creek Cutoff Road is a two-lane, asphalt-paved road, approximately 11.7 miles in length. The road, constructed according to the applicable design standards of the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), exhibits relatively uniform design qualities throughout its length.¹ The asphalt driving surface is 26 feet wide, divided into two lanes by a painted center stripe. (Construction drawings show the road with two, ten-foot driving surfaces flanked by three-foot paved shoulders, but the current shoulder striping is much nearer the edge of the pavement.)

¹ Unless otherwise noted, dimensional information in this section is from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, "Plans for Proposed project No. 8-A6, International Park Road, Camas Creek Cutoff, Glacier National Park Road System, Montana," digital copy of construction drawing set, accessed at the Glacier National Park Archives (hereinafter GNPA), West Glacier, Montana.

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The asphalt is above an 11-inch layer of compacted earth, shaped to give the road cross-section a 2% crown. Major roadway curves are superelevated, with the angle of superelevation varying depending on the sharpness of the curve.

Beyond the asphalt surface, the road cross-section slopes downward to provide drainage. The engineered slope varies from 1.5:1 on sections of high fill to 4:1 on sections of lower fill. Beyond the engineered roadway cross-section, the cut and fill slopes vary according to topography; those slopes display a rounded section, and were seeded following construction.

The roadway corridor was cleared of trees prior to initial construction, with the width of the clearing activity dependent at least partially on topography. Contract documents for the clearing project also specified that the width be artificially varied in areas of heavy forest cover, by adding “scallop” intended to break up the straight-line visual effect of the clearing. No visual indication of this remains, due both to natural forest regrowth and the effects of forest fires, and it is likely that the cleared corridor maintained by NPS crews today is now somewhat narrower than at the time of construction.

Because of the mountainous nature of the road’s geography, significant stretches of level roadway exist only near the road’s endpoints. Most of the route displays cut and fill work and near-constant elevation change. The maximum design grade for the road was 6%, although most of the grade is significantly more moderate. The heaviest extended grade is near the south end of the route, where the road climbs out of the McDonald Creek basin. The most visually prominent cut-and-fill work is also in the gully and sideslope traversed by the road in this area; elsewhere, most cut-and-fill work is less than 30 feet high.

Two bridges, described separately below, span the only major watercourses intersected by the Camas Road. Other watercourses intersected by the road are small and mostly seasonal or intermittent; these are carried under the roadway by galvanized metal culverts. Most culverts are small, ranging from 12” to 24” in diameter, and are placed to facilitate runoff drainage. A small number of larger culverts, usually 36” in diameter, are found at stream channels. Flared inlets are used on the upstream ends of larger pipes only. There are approximately three dozen culvert locations on the road.²

Construction drawings indicate that the Camas Road initially included three “overlook” parking areas for visitor use, sited at irregular intervals along the roadway. The largest and most prominent of these locations, the “Flathead River Overlook,” was accessed by a separate spur road and is described separately below. The other two locations were smaller areas designed to be more integral to the primary roadway corridor, combining roadway pullouts and small parking areas with opportunities for interpretive signage. The design of each pullout varies, reflecting the specific topography of the location and, perhaps, assumed level of use. At McGee Meadow and Camas Creek, the overlook parking areas are separated from the roadway by a concrete-curbed traffic island, and at McGee Meadow, there is a concrete aggregate sidewalk beyond the parking area. The original overall layout of these overlooks appears to be generally retained, though they were updated with new log railings, curbs, interpretive signage, and features for disabled access in 1996-97.³

The road now also includes additional parking/pulloff areas not specified in the original drawings, including a parking area at the Huckleberry Lookout trailhead and a pulloff at a small, newly-constructed plaza for the park entrance sign. These newer pulloffs display the modern log railings seen elsewhere, and the entrance sign pulloff is bounded by a

² Glacier National Park, “Route Maintenance Features Road Log.” Typescript dated November 1998, author’s collection.

³ Jack Gordon, Telephone interview by Mark Hufstetler, West Glacier, Montana, September 12, 2012.

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concrete curb. Two additional pulloff areas near the south end of the road (not specified in the original drawings) include modern interpretive signage but no other detailing.

The current park entrance sign itself dates from ca. 1997, and features decorative log-and-timber construction on a stone base. Reportedly, the sign was designed as a prototype that would eventually be utilized at all park entrances, though no other examples of the design have been installed elsewhere. Prior to 1997, only a standard metal sign announced the park entrance, and no pulloff was located here.⁴

The site of the Camas Creek Entrance Station to Glacier Park is located near the north end of the road, about 0.6 miles east of the North Fork Flathead River Bridge. This location, described variously as an “entrance plaza” or “checking station” in construction documents, is defined by a concrete-curbed traffic island in the center of the roadway. A small entrance station building, no longer extant, once stood in the center of this island. A small parking area is immediately southeast of the traffic island; it is historic, but has been reconfigured.

Other than the modern log railings at the pulloff and parking areas, there are no guardrails present on the road. (Construction drawings specify the locations for reflectorized “log guide posts” at the certain locations along the roadway shoulders. These are no longer extant, and may not have ever actually been installed.) A small number of “barrier rocks,” at least some of which may be historic, are used near pulloff areas to help visually delineate traffic islands and minor roadway junctions. The barrier rocks are flat, naturally shaped sedimentary rock boulders, averaging about two feet across and a foot high.

A total of five spur roads intersect the Camas Road at T-intersections along the route. Four of these junctions are in the southernmost 1.2 miles of the road, including paved roads leading to the Apgar Transit Center; Apgar Village; an area of summer homes (on private property); and the Fish Creek Campground. All but the Transit Center junction are historic, and the approaches were constructed as part of the Camas Road development. The fifth intersection is with a gated, two-track dirt road about 0.6 miles east of the Camas entrance station. This leads to a former shooting range area, which may have historically been used as a roadway materials source. No visible indication of that use remains, however.

Interpretive and directional signage on the road is uniformly modern. Directional and regulatory signs are metal, on metal poles. Interpretive signs at pullouts are on log supports.

Overall, the Camas Road retains a very high level of design integrity. The road remains in its original location throughout, and fully retains its historic width, substructure, and other key design elements. Pullout and viewpoint areas display a somewhat lower level of integrity, with changes to parking areas, curbs, railings, and interpretive signage.

Feature 2: McDonald Creek Bridge: The McDonald Creek bridge was constructed in 1962 near the south end of the Camas Road; it replaced an earlier bridge located several hundred feet upstream in Apgar Village. The bridge is a three-span concrete beam structure, measuring 160 feet long and 42 feet wide overall. It carries the two traffic lanes of the Camas Road, as well as a 6-foot “bridle path” (at the downstream side). The bridge displays a largely utilitarian appearance overall, but includes several noteworthy and unusual design elements, reflecting both engineering choices and visitor use assumptions. These characteristics make the structure unique among Glacier’s bridges.

⁴ Ibid.

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The bridge's substructure includes flat concrete abutments without wingwalls, and two open concrete piers. The concrete superstructure beams rest directly on chamfered concrete abutments and the concrete caps of the piers. Unusually, the abutment caps rest on a series of untreated timber pilings and appear to have been cast in place above the pilings. (The tops of the pilings penetrate the interior of the cap.) The pilings were intended to be fully buried in the earthen fill of the streambank, but erosion has left them partially exposed, especially on the northerly abutment. Deterioration of the pilings is evident there, as is spalling and cracking of the concrete.

The bridge piers are identical, each consisting of three, battered rectangular concrete verticals below a single concrete cap. Concrete bridging is present between the lower portions of the verticals. The pier verticals are above concrete footings placed below the level of the streambed. Construction drawings show timber pilings driven below these footings, with some pilings apparently extending upward into the core of the concrete verticals. These pilings are not outwardly visible.

The bridge's superstructure consists of five variable-depth concrete T-beams, regularly spaced across the width of the structure. The section of the beams is greatest at the piers, giving the structure a slightly arched appearance when viewed from the side. The beams are connected by concrete bridging, and are below a cast-in-place concrete deck.

The deck itself includes a 26-foot-wide roadway, and a six-foot-wide "bridle path" (at the downstream side, now used as a pedestrian sidewalk). The remaining ten feet of bridge width is occupied by a five-foot concrete curb/sidewalk on the upstream side, as well as concrete curbs on both sides of the bridle path. Identical metal railings exist on both sides of the bridge, and between the roadway and bridle path. The railings have three rungs of pipe displaying an oval cross-section ("squashed pipe," according to the construction drawings), supported by solid steel verticals. The top-most pipe is not parallel to the lower pipes, giving a slight arc to the cross-section of the overall railing. Rounded concrete endposts are present on both sides of the bridge.

Both ends of the bridge approach are located on a fill, and fill material has been placed around the bridge abutment area itself. A largely unused trail remains visible leading to the bridge's bridle path. (As designed, the structure also included a provision for a bridle path running underneath the bridge, next to the north bank of McDonald Creek; this was apparently destroyed in the 1964 flood, and never rebuilt.)

The bridge structure retains a very high level of integrity overall, with no apparent changes other than the addition of modern signage.

Feature 3: North Fork of the Flathead River Bridge: The North Fork of the Flathead River Bridge (completed 1965), is approximately 0.2 miles from the northern end of the Camas Road, at the boundary between Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest. The bridge is a four-span concrete girder structure, some 400 feet long, and with the same 26-foot-wide roadway as the rest of the Camas Road. The structure is largely utilitarian in design, but shares the "squashed pipe" railing design of the earlier McDonald Creek Bridge.

The bridge's substructure includes flat concrete abutments without wingwalls, and three solid, cantilevered concrete piers. The concrete superstructure girders rest directly on chamfered concrete abutments and the concrete caps of the piers. The bridge piers are identical, each consisting of a single, battered concrete vertical with rounded ends. A deep, variable-depth cap angles outward from the top of each pier, giving the full pier a modified "T" appearance.

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The superstructure consists of four evenly spaced, uniform-depth concrete girders, with concrete bridging between. The girders support a cast concrete deck. Wide concrete curbs exist on both ends of the deck surface, and include railings and endposts identical to those on the McDonald Creek Bridge. Both approaches to the bridge are on fill.

Overall, the structure appears to fully retain its historic integrity.

Feature 4: Flathead River Overlook: The Flathead River Overlook, completed in 1967, is approximately 0.3 miles east of the North Fork Flathead River Bridge, near the northern end of the Camas Road. The feature consists of a paved, two-lane spur road, approximately ¼ mile long, leading to a loop-shaped parking area and trailhead atop a low hill just south of the Camas Road. The parking area was originally intended as an observation point for a northward view of the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley, but after the area was burned in a large 1967 forest fire the site became a trailhead for the new Huckleberry Nature Trail, intended to interpret fire ecology.

Intended for limited, low-speed traffic, the design of the spur road contrasts noticeably from that of the main Camas Road, though it was constructed simultaneously with the road. The spur roadway is narrower, with a 20-foot paved width, and is without shoulders. The engineered grade up the hillside is 10%, rather than the 6% BPR standard, and curvature is much tighter. There are no structures along the spur road.

The overlook area itself includes an oval parking loop designed for one-way, counter-clockwise traffic. Most of the loop area is bounded with concrete curbs, with traffic lanes averaging ten feet wide. Barrier rocks, similar to those elsewhere on the road, are present at select locations along the loop. Parking is provided for both standard vehicles and larger recreational vehicles.

Primary components of the spur road and parking area largely retain their as-designed appearance. In common with the pullouts on the main Camas Road, the parking area was modified in about 1997 with reconfigured sidewalks and parking areas. A log railing was added to the parking area, and disabled access was provided.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): G

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Areas of Significance: GOVERNMENT;
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION;

Period(s) of Significance: 1960-67

Significant Dates: 1967

Architect/Builder: Bureau of Public Roads (designs);

N.D. Robinson, Missoula (roadway, 1960-64);

C.B. Lauch Construction, Great Falls (McDonald Creek Bridge,
1962);

Kyser Construction, Missoula (North Fork Bridge, 1964-65);

Crick Construction, Spokane (roadway, 1966);

Rocky Mountain Construction, Missoula (roadway, 1966-67)

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Constructed between 1960 and 1967, the Camas Creek Cutoff Road (Camas Road) is eligible under National Register Criterion "A" for its strong association with the National Park Service (NPS) Mission 66 planning and design program, and as an unusual implementation of that program. The Camas Road also is significant under National Register Criterion "C," as a quality, well-preserved example of Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) engineering design. Additionally, the Camas Road and its associated structures are eligible for the National Register under Criteria Exception "G." The southern end of the road and the McDonald Creek Bridge are now 50 years old, but the remainder of the road has yet to meet the National Register's 50-year age threshold. The Camas Road presents exceptional significance as a unique and major example of National Park Service Mission 66 planning, and as an exceptionally well-preserved example of the design philosophies of the Bureau of Public Roads. Because of this, the Camas Road is considered significant statewide.

National Register Criterion A Summary

Nationally, the Mission 66 program worked to improve, expand, and modernize NPS infrastructure in a variety of forms, both to meet the agency's administrative needs and to improve the visitor experience. The program is perhaps best known for its architectural products – new visitor centers, employee housing, and concession facilities – but roadway projects were also a significant component of the effort. Most roadway projects, however, resulted in the rehabilitation and improvement of existing travel corridors. The Camas Road is an uncommon example of creating an entirely new, major park roadway under the aegis of the Mission 66 program.⁵

(see continuation sheet)

⁵ While a number of broad studies of the Mission 66 program exist, none provide a substantial comparative look at the program's road construction activities. For an overview of the program, see Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press: In association with Library of American Landscape History, 2007. Also see Roy E. Appleman, "A History of the National Park Service Mission 66 Program," unpublished report, 1958, National Park Service, Denver Service Center. The reconstruction of the Tioga Pass Road in Yosemite National Park was among the largest Mission 66 road projects, and received substantially more national attention than did the Camas Road. See Anthony Wayne Smith, "The Tioga Road: Your NPA in Action." *National Parks Magazine* 33, no. 136 (1959): 3–7.

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As with many NPS units, Glacier's Mission 66 activities resulted in a wide variety of infrastructure improvements, including new housing, visitor contact facilities, and campgrounds, as well as improvements to the park's iconic Going-to-the-Sun Road. The construction of the Camas Road is perhaps a lesser-remarked example of Mission 66 in Glacier, but it was among the largest, spanning six years of construction and a total cost of approximately \$2,500,000. The scale of the endeavor suggests the relative importance of the road to NPS planners and Glacier administrators of the era.⁶

This perceived importance grew from a combined NPS concern for two distinct and largely unrelated local planning issues, each with the potential to significantly impact Glacier National Park. The first and most immediate of these issues was an ongoing call for the construction of a large dam on the North Fork of the Flathead River, which marks Glacier's northwestern boundary. First publicly envisioned in 1943, proposals for a "Glacier View Dam" were raised both by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, and were enthusiastically supported by many Montanans, who saw the possible dam as a source of cheap hydropower and local flood control. The NPS saw the proposal as a major threat to the park, however, since it would have inundated large tracts of parkland in the North Fork Valley. Recognizing that the remote and relatively unvisited nature of the North Fork country made its preservation difficult to defend in the public arena, the NPS reasoned that improving access (and visitation) to the area would ultimately strengthen the case for the region's preservation. The construction of the Camas Road was seen as a key initial component of that effort – a paradoxical situation where increased development was seen as a necessary step in preventing yet more development.⁷

The perceived need to increase visitor awareness and use of Glacier's North Fork country also gave park administrators the opportunity to preemptively address a second issue of concern: the fear that ever-increasing visitor numbers would ultimately put an impossible strain on the park's constricted roadway network. Since its opening in 1933, the Going-to-the-Sun Road (Sun Road) had been Glacier's most popular visitor attraction, and the lure of visiting the park's interior by road had caused Glacier's visitor numbers to increase dramatically. If the pattern continued, increasing visitor traffic would ultimately overwhelm the Sun Road, forcing the NPS to either limit visitation or provide alternative travel routes. The proposed construction of a road into the North Fork country offered a potential solution; if extended into Canada's nearby Waterton Lakes National Park, the route could provide an attractive east-west alternative to the Sun Road, thus reducing potential road capacity issues while allowing for continued visitation increases.

To NPS administrators of the 1950s, the construction of the Camas Road (and its planned northern extension) appeared to be an attractive, single solution to two important but divergent problems. The establishment of the national Mission 66 program gave the park a stronger funding source for the work as well as an added philosophical justification for beginning it – even though the development of major new park roadways was not a stated Mission 66 goal. Given this complex

⁶ "Schedule Opening of New Entrance," *Hungry Horse News*, August 10, 1967. For an overview of the Mission 66 program in Glacier and its planned expenditures, see Glacier National Park, "Mission 66 Prospectus," typescript dated 1956 with revisions through 1963, folder 104-4, GNPA.

⁷ Donald H. Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park* (West Glacier, Montana: Glacier Natural History Association, 1960), 99-100. For a series of contemporary articles and editorials on the subject, see volumes 14 and 15 (1948-1949) of *Planning and Policy Comment*, the journal of the American Planning and Civic Association, National Conference on State Parks.

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history, the Camas Road is significant as a unique reminder of Mission 66, and how the program could be used to creatively address a wide variety of park management concerns.

National Register Criterion C Summary

In addition to this Criterion "A" significance, the Camas Road is also significant under National Register Criterion "C," as a quality, well-preserved example of Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) engineering design. Surveyed by BPR staff and engineered using the agency's standard design specifications for roads, the route strongly reflects federal roadway design philosophies of the middle twentieth century. It is also among the last major federal highway projects overseen by the BPR, which was merged into the new Federal Highway Administration in 1967. Due to the road's national park setting, its relatively light traffic, and its seasonal use, the road retains an extremely high level of design integrity overall, still strongly evoking the era in which it was designed.

National Register Criterion G Summary

The process of planning and constructing the Camas Creek Cutoff Road spanned a number of years, proceeding incrementally as funds were available. The project's design and engineering, as well as its initial construction contracts, took place more than 50 years ago. The southern end of the road and the McDonald Creek Bridge are now 50 years old, but the remainder of the road, completed in 1967, has yet to meet the National Register's 50-year age threshold. When viewed as a unit, however, the Camas Road and its associated structures are eligible for the National Register under Criteria Exception "G" as a unique and major example of National Park Service Mission 66 planning, and as an exceptionally well-preserved example of the design philosophies of the Bureau of Public Roads. As noted above, the planning and construction of the Camas Creek Cutoff represented a bold and forward-looking effort by the National Park Service to resolve a major potential resource protection issue, while simultaneously preparing Glacier to handle decades of anticipated visitor growth. While the first concern never materialized and the latter effort ultimately remained incomplete, the Camas Road remains a monument to Mission 66 planning, and an integral part of Glacier's road network.

Historic Context

Introduction: Early Road Development in the western Glacier National Park and the North Fork Country

Glacier National Park was established in 1910 in a region of northwestern Montana that was thinly settled, extremely rugged, and very remote. The main line of the Great Northern (GN) Railway, completed in 1893, was the only established travel route between the two sides of the park, and most of the area was far from the nearest serviceable roadway. A primitive wagon road connected the GN station at Belton (now West Glacier) with the primitive tourist camps and homesteads at the foot of lake McDonald, but in 1910 even the future park headquarters site near Belton was several miles from the nearest improved, all-weather road. Most of the rest of the park had no road access at all.⁸

⁸ For a brief overview of the park's establishment and early years, see Robinson, *Through the Years in Glacier National Park*, 50-60; also see Chapter 4 of C.W. Buchholtz, *Man In Glacier* (West Glacier, Montana: Glacier Natural History Association, 1976).

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One exception was the valley of the North Fork of the Flathead River, which extended northward from a point near Belton and formed the park's northwestern boundary. The North Fork region could be accessed by a long and difficult wagon road that headed northward from Belton/Apgar along the east side of the rugged valley, continuing all the way to Kintla Lake, near the Canadian border. This road, constructed in 1901 by a company searching for oil reserves in the Kintla area, was reportedly extremely primitive and often impassible, but provided a transportation lifeline for a handful of homesteaders who had settled in the area prior to 1910. With the park's establishment, the road assumed a minor administrative role for Glacier's managers, but it was of little apparent interest or use to visitors. The road was too primitive for reliable recreational travel, and its forested, low-elevation route bypassed the spectacular, high-mountain scenery for which the park was established.⁹

Glacier's first administrators quickly realized the need to develop a reliable road network within the park, one designed to provide easier access to some of the park's most scenic areas. A variety of routes for future park roads were considered during the 1910s, most focusing on the construction of an east-west road across the continental divide. A few proposals, however, also considered the development of one or more north-south routes that might connect the Lake McDonald area with Alberta's Waterton Lakes National Park. The first major road reconnaissance in Glacier, prepared in 1910 by Bob Marshall of the U.S. Geographical Survey, recommended construction of a 213-mile road network in the park, including a route that followed McDonald Creek and continued north into Canada. R.H. Chapman, who was Glacier's acting superintendent in 1912, recommended a similar route. Glacier Superintendent S. F. Ralston also supported a Lake McDonald-to-Waterton route in 1914. He felt the road could later be connected to the east side via Swiftcurrent Pass and to the existing North Fork Road via Browns Pass and either Kintla or Bowman Lake. Trails from the road, he said, would make "practically every place worth seeing in the park" accessible by wagon, automobile, or horse.¹⁰

These early concepts for an international road connecting Glacier and Waterton were apparently strongly embraced by Canadian park administrators, as well. In 1915 the Chief Superintendent of Dominion Parks, P. C. Barnard-Hervey, advocated a route connecting Glacier and Waterton parks via the North Fork of the Flathead and Akamina Pass. He also urged the Canadian government to support a road between Waterton and Many Glacier via Gothaunt (at the foot of Waterton Lake) and Swiftcurrent Pass. Barnard-Hervey's proposal may have been the first public suggestion of an Akamina Pass road – a route that would become a key component of the extended Camas Road project proposed four decades later.¹¹

⁹ The best overview of the history of the North Fork area is Patricia Bick, "Homesteading in the North Fork in Glacier National Park" (unpublished manuscript prepared for the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, 1986). Also see National Park Service, *North Fork Road, Flathead County, Montana*, National Register of Historic Places nomination form, Washington, D.C., 1995.

¹⁰ Glacier National Park, *1914 Glacier National Park Superintendent's Report*, GNPA; GNP Superintendent Ralston to Secretary of the Interior, 3 Oct. 1914, in "1914" folder, box 1, Holden Collection, GNPA.

¹¹ Newell, Alan S., David Walter, and James R. McDonald. *Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey* (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1980), 110-111, 134.

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This initial interest in a north-south road through Glacier and into Canada continued at least until 1916. That year, the newly established National Park Service (NPS) commissioned T. Warren Allen to undertake a reconnaissance study of possible Glacier highway routes. Allen, who worked with a federal agency known as the Office of Public Roads, believed that Glacier's primary road corridor should follow the overall route proposed by Marshall in 1910, from Lake McDonald to Waterton via Flattop Mountain. (Allen's second stated priority was the improvement of the existing North Fork Road.) He also recommended, however, that an east-west road be constructed across Glacier via Logan Pass.¹²

Allen's recommendation for an east-west park road was one of an increasing number of similar calls during the 1910s, including consideration of routes over Logan, Swiftcurrent, and Gunsight passes. During the early and middle years of the decade, many local organizations and individuals supported the concept of an east-west "Transmountain Highway" through Glacier, presumably due to the local economic benefit that would ensue. The Montana State Highway Commission, the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, the Columbia Falls Commercial Club, and the Interstate Wonderland Trail Association (a good roads group promoting a highway from Minnesota to Puget Sound) all memorialized Congress for construction of an east-west highway through Glacier. An east-west road routing was probably appealing to the NPS, as well, since it would have a stronger administrative value than a route into Canada. Finally, during the 1910s Glacier's east side was the focus of a massive hotel and road development orchestrated by the GN, acting as a park concessionaire. This added to the importance of developing a trans-park road that directly served Glacier's east side.¹³

For whatever reason, Allen's reconnaissance was apparently the last major early study to advocate a new north-south road through Glacier, though the park retained at least some interest in the construction of a north-south road. Subsequent survey and engineering efforts focused on the development of an east-west route via Logan Pass, as detailed in a 1918 survey by NPS Chief Engineer George Goodwin. Construction of the new route was soon underway, with the first segment (to what is now Lake McDonald Lodge) opening to traffic in 1921. Work continued throughout the 1920s, and the difficult western approach to Logan Pass was finished in 1930. The completed Going-to-the-Sun Road was formally opened to the public in 1933.¹⁴

The construction of the Sun Road was a massive undertaking, both expensive and technically complex, and its construction and later improvement occupied nearly the entire focus of Glacier's roads program for years. Road improvement projects to and within the North Fork region were consequently very limited. A spur road was constructed from Polebridge to Bowman Lake in 1914, and the 1910s also saw the construction of a rough road into the valley on the Flathead National Forest side of the river. Several minor improvement and realignment projects were implemented on the

¹² Warren Allen, OPR General Inspector, to L. W. Page, OPR Director, 14 Nov. 1916, in "1916" folder, box 1, Holden Collection, GNPA; Steen, "Going-to-the-Sun Road," 12-14.

¹³ Kathryn Steen, "Going-to-the-Sun Road: HAER MT-67" (Historic American Engineering Record, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1992), 11-16. Also see Mark Hufstetler, Kathryn L. McKay, and Janet Cornish. "Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier National Park, Montana: Cultural Landscape Report" (unpublished report submitted to the National Park Service, Glacier National Park, 2002).

¹⁴ Ibid.

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“inside” North Fork Road using ECW funds in the 1930s. In general, though, the road network in the North Fork area was remarkably little-changed from the 1910s to the 1950s.¹⁵

The concept of an improved, north-south road between Glacier and Waterton Lakes still remained alive at the administrative and planning level, however. A 1926 inquiry by the Acting Superintendent of Waterton Lakes National Park, for example, included discussion of possible new international roads along both the eastern and western boundaries of Glacier Park. (The eastern proposal was realized in 1935 with the construction of the Chief Mountain International Highway.) The letter brought a cautious reply from Glacier Superintendent Charles Kraebel, who noted that the American segment of a proposed international route via the North Fork and Kishenehn Creek would cost over 1.1 million dollars. “The large appropriations involved,” Kraebel noted, “would not be obtained from Congress without adequate justification.”¹⁶ The park’s 1933 Master Plan also retained the concept of a fully rebuilt North Fork road extending across Akimina Pass to Waterton, but the document did not result in action and most of the North Fork Road remained a single-lane, minimally improved dirt track. Perhaps in part because of the poor road conditions, the North Fork region continued to see relatively few visitors, existing in what was (by National Park standards) a state of near-anonymity.¹⁷

The Glacier View Dam Proposal

The administrative obscurity enjoyed by the North Fork country ended abruptly in 1943, not because of any NPS action, but as a local by-product of changing national trends in industry and commerce. During the first decades of the twentieth century, federal interest in reclamation and irrigation projects increased rapidly, with both the US Reclamation Service and the Army Corps of Engineers becoming increasingly more active in dam-building projects across much of the country. These projects were undertaken with a variety of goals: improved water navigation, agricultural water storage, flood control, and hydroelectric development. By the 1930s, the federal government was actively promoting and undertaking numerous large-scale dam-building projects in the American West, focusing primarily on hydroelectric power generation and flood control. Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri and Hoover Dam on the Colorado were landmark examples of the effort, and important components of New Deal public works programs. The federal Flood Control Act of 1936 supported these efforts, putting control of electrical power development at dam sites into the hands of the Secretary of War and the Army’s Chief of Engineers.¹⁸

The public incentive for more-active hydroelectric dam construction grew during the 1940s, in part due to the industrial demands associated with World War II. Existing plants were expanded, and plans for further construction of dams and reservoirs were proposed. As part of this effort, in 1943 the Army Corps of Engineers released a plan for hydroelectric

¹⁵ National Park Service, *North Fork Road, Flathead County, Montana*; National Park Service, *Bowman Lake Road, Flathead County, Montana* (National Register of Historic Places, Washington, D.C., 1995).

¹⁶ Letter, Charles J. Kraebel to Herbert Knight, October 30, 1926. Folder D-30, GNPA.

¹⁷ U. S. Department of the Interior, Branch of Plans and Designs, *Master Plan for Glacier National Park* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, Branch of Plans and Designs, 1933), GNPA.

¹⁸ Toni Rae Linenberger, Leah S Glaser, and United States Bureau of Reclamation, *Dams, Dynamos, and Development: The Bureau of Reclamation's Power Program and Electrification of the West* (Washington, DC : Bureau of Reclamation, US GPO, 2002), 35-56; U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region, *Hungry Horse Project: Montana, Flathead County* (Washington, DC: The Bureau, 1983), 3.

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reservoir development in the Flathead River Basin of northwestern Montana. The proposal focused on the construction of a large dam to raise the water level of Flathead Lake, an idea that was quickly discarded in the face of strong local opposition. The Corps then suggested the development of reservoirs on the Flathead's upper tributaries, including Hungry Horse Dam on the Flathead's South Fork, and Glacier View Dam on the North Fork. The Glacier View proposal called for the construction of a 416-foot-high dam in a narrow section of the North Fork canyon, just above Big Creek. The \$95,000,000 project would create a reservoir inundating much of the North Fork valley, with the pool extending nearly to the Canadian border. Thousands of acres of Glacier Park land were included in the proposed reservoir area, including large tracts of prime winter wildlife habitat.¹⁹

Many of the Flathead Valley's business and political leaders eagerly supported the Glacier View Dam proposal, and Montana U.S. House Representative Mike Mansfield was also an early advocate of the project. In contrast, the NPS actively opposed the project, as did the Sierra Club and other national conservation organizations, who saw the dam proposal as not only a specific threat to Glacier, but to the broader philosophy that America's national park lands should be inviolate. Pro- and anti-dam forces publicly expressed their views on the project for the next five years as the Corps, which considered Glacier View a high-priority project, continued its analysis of the proposal. Among the most noteworthy voices was that of the National Parks Association, which in 1949 published a strongly worded essay titled "Glacier National Park in Danger."²⁰

NPS opposition to the Glacier View proposal was strident and public, both at the national and local levels. In his May 1949 annual report, Glacier's superintendent noted that the project was of "much concern to us," and reported that "every possible opportunity was found to acquaint the public with the effect this dam would have upon the park."²¹ A publicly released 1948 letter from NPS Director Newton Drury eloquently attacked the Glacier View idea, ending with:

Civilization is encroaching on the wilderness all over our land; what remains of it becomes increasingly precious to present-day Americans, and will be in even greater degree to Americans of the future. Here, threatened with permanent destruction, is an extraordinarily fine sample of "Original America." We cannot afford, except for the most compelling reasons, -- which we are convinced to not exist in this case -- to permit this impairment of one of the finest properties of the American people.²²

The NPS and its allies were gratified by a 1949 announcement from the Corps that the Glacier View Dam proposal was being shelved, but the Corps' decision failed to put the matter to rest for good. Dam proponents continued to press the issue for the next fifteen years, requesting further studies by federal planners, introducing memorandums of support in the Montana legislature, and penning statements of support. Much of this support came from businessmen in the Kalispell area, who saw the lure of cheap hydroelectric power as a promise of local industrial growth. Locally, this possibility was

¹⁹ United States Congress House Committee on Irrigation and Reclamation, *Columbia River and Its Tributaries* (Washington, US GPO, 1943), 8-23; Buchholtz, *Man in Glacier*, Chap. 6.

²⁰ Wallace W. Atwood, "Glacier National Park in Danger." *National Parks Magazine* 23 (January-March 1949): 10-17.

²¹ Glacier National Park, *1949 Glacier National Park Superintendent's Report*, GNPA.

²² Newton B. Drury, "A Statement by the Director of the National Park Service in Opposition to the Glacier View Dam. Presented at the public hearing conducted by the District Engineer, Seattle District, Corps of Engineers, at Kalispell, Montana, May 25, 1943." Folder 228-6, GNPA.

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dramatically illustrated by the 1953 completion of Hungry Horse Dam and the associated construction of a large aluminum plant in nearby Columbia Falls. Glacier View's advocates also pointed out the project's potential value for downstream flood control, a topic that was raised as late as 1964, following the massive local flooding that summer.

It was clear to the NPS that the agency needed to remain vigilant towards the Glacier View proposal, and by at least 1952 Glacier officials had determined that a more proactive approach to the issue was appropriate. That summer, the Superintendent's annual report noted that there were "plans in the making for the development of the North Fork area to avert pressure for the Glacier View Dam." Reasoning that increased visitor use of the North Fork country would make approval of the Glacier View project more complicated and difficult, the park developed a long-range plan for roads, cabin facilities, and new campgrounds in the area. The centerpiece of the park's concept was the construction of "a primary road through the North Fork area, to connect eventually with a road over Akamina Pass in Waterton Lakes National Park," thus reviving after four decades one of the earliest concepts for road development in the park. The 1952 document further noted that the new route, in conjunction with the Sun Road, would enable an automobile "circle tour" of the two parks. The concept would allow travelers to experience both Glacier and Waterton without backtracking on the Sun Road, potentially reducing the traffic load on the famous route.²³

This concept was further elaborated in a February 1952 conceptual map of the North Fork area prepared by NPS planners in the agency's Denver regional office. The map illustrated a proposed "International Park Highway" running from Apgar into the North Fork valley and then following Kishenehn Creek into British Columbia and on towards Akamina Pass. The road was a hybrid of existing and proposed alignments, following a route inside the park to the Polebridge area, and then continuing north outside the park before re-entering it at Kishenehn Creek. The southern segment of the proposed road closely followed the route later followed by the Camas Road. Possible locations for new campgrounds and "Developed Areas" were also included in the schematic.²⁴

Though not stated in the 1952 Superintendent's report, it is likely that the greatest obstacle to Glacier's North Fork development proposal was one of funding. The success of the smaller proposed North Fork improvements would be dependent on completion of the new highway, a project that was likely prohibitively expensive for the financially strapped NPS. No immediate work on the North Fork proposal was therefore undertaken, and none would occur until a substantial new funding source presented itself. Somewhat surprisingly, exactly such a funding source arrived on the scene four years later, in the form of the Mission 66 improvement program.

The Mission 66 Program

Mission 66 was a nationwide, large-scale NPS effort designed to upgrade the infrastructure of America's national park system after years of financial neglect. During the New Deal era of the 1930s, the parks had benefitted from a substantial level of public works improvements, but that support had ended with the onset of World War II, and it was not restored in the years following the War. The problem was compounded by greatly increased visitor numbers at many NPS units in the late 1940s and 1950s, due in part to the increased economic prosperity that followed the War, and the greater number

²³ Glacier National Park, *1952 Glacier National Park Superintendent's Report*, GNPA.

²⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. "Study for International Park Highway, North Fork Flathead River, Glacier National Park," February 1952. Folder 228-6, GNPA.

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of Americans who could afford personal automobiles. This new mobility enabled far more Americans to visit the national parks, particularly the landmark scenic parks of the American West. The NPS needed new facilities to accommodate the added visitor numbers, as well as to regroup after years of less-than-adequate infrastructure and maintenance funding.²⁵

NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth first conceptualized the idea of modernizing the parks through a massive, multi-year redevelopment program, following the centralization of NPS planning into the Eastern and Western Offices of Planning and Design in Philadelphia and San Francisco in 1954. Wirth and his planners saw the need for a well thought-out, long-term development program for the parks, supported by a 10-year budget rather than yearly appropriations. As envisioned, "Mission 66 would allow the Park Service to repair and build roads, bridges, and trails, hire additional employees, construct new facilities ranging from campsites to administrative buildings, improve employee housing, and obtain land for parks...to elevate the parks to modern standards of comfort and efficiency, as well as an attempt to conserve natural resources."²⁶ Wirth introduced the program to the Secretary of the Interior in February of 1955 and set about establishing pilot projects. By January 27, 1956, the program was presented to President Eisenhower and his cabinet where it received favorable approval. Subsequently, the Mission 66 concept was introduced to the U.S. Congress and the American public. Congressional funding for the program was made available for Fiscal Year 1956 starting in July. The overall effort was scheduled for completion ten years later, hence the "Mission 66" name.²⁷

As conceived, the Mission 66 program was remarkably complex and far-reaching, especially at major NPS units such as Glacier. Glacier's planning effort for the program was summarized in a thick typescript "Final Prospectus" document, which was released in 1956 and updated regularly until at least 1960. The bulk of the document consisted of detailed "development schedules" that outlined recommended improvements both by type and by location. Many of the listed improvements involved the construction of new NPS administrative facilities, and substantial rehabilitation work on the park's existing roads and trails. New visitor center buildings and campgrounds were also prominent, and ultimately became among the most publicly visible elements of the program. Most of the programmed work was concentrated at Park Headquarters, along the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor, and in the Many Glacier and Two Medicine areas.²⁸

A smaller number of campground and building projects were programmed for the North Fork area, and the Prospectus noted that "the lands within . . . the North Fork Valley should remain primitive areas with the natural wilderness character emphasized." This statement was followed by a perhaps contradictory paragraph discussing, among other things, the proposed international loop road:

Construction of no new main roads is contemplated but encouragement should be given to a North Fork loop road outside the park with connections inside the park at Kishenehn Creek and Camas Creek. . . . The proposed North Fork loop road should help reduce congestion on the Going-to-the-Sun Road by providing for better circulation.²⁹

²⁵ Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2000.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. Also see Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*.

²⁸ Glacier National Park, "Mission 66 Prospectus."

²⁹ Ibid., 13.

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This brief summary outlined the Mission 66 version of Glacier's long-standing international loop road concept. It called for the construction of a new road from Apgar to the park boundary along the North Fork River at Camas Creek. From there, the route could follow an existing Forest Service road northward, parallel to the river but just outside the park boundary, to a spot near the mouth of Kishenehn Creek, about four miles south of the Canadian line. There, the road would briefly re-enter the park, following the Kishenehn Creek valley northeast approximately three miles to the British Columbia border. From there, it was about 17 miles to Akamina Pass and the existing Waterton Lakes road system.

Several elements of this proposed routing likely made it attractive to NPS planners. The selected route followed the bottomlands of the North Fork Valley for much of its length, aiding the now-unspoken goal of deterring the possible construction of Glacier View Dam. Shifting much of the proposed route to an alignment outside the park boundary also reduced NPS capital and maintenance costs, while simultaneously encouraging local support for what would then be a multi-use (rather than just recreational) road. The routing also allowed the park to remain closer to its professed goal of preserving the primitive status of its portion of the North Fork country. Finally, by characterizing its portion of the route as a "connector" road, it allowed the park to sidestep any potential issues associated with utilizing Mission 66 funds for a major new NPS road.

The latter issue is one that was not fully articulated in Glacier planning documents of the era, but was likely at least a local undercurrent in planning for the Camas Road project. While early NPS management philosophies often encouraged the construction of new roadway corridors in at least some National Parks, by the mid-twentieth century the potential expansion of park road networks was usually viewed with less favor. Perhaps consequently, the vast majority of Mission 66 roadway projects emphasized improvements to already-existing roadways. Only a handful of entirely-new park roads date from this era, with the Camas Road being among the largest such projects. (The Kolob Canyons Road in Zion National Park, completed in 1967, is a second example.)

The Mission 66 routing for the International Park Road also had its disadvantages. One significant issue was the fact that by endorsing the "outside" routing, the park had effectively ceded control over the bulk of the planned route, including actions related to funding, location, and construction. The route would also require the construction of two major bridges over the North Fork, along with the acquisition of some private land along the planned right-of-way. It called for the construction of approximately four miles of primary highway along Kishenehn Creek that was effectively cut off from the rest of Glacier's primary road system. Perhaps most importantly, the full project relied heavily on Canadian support and involvement for its success. Neither the NPS nor the federal government had any influence over whether Canada would construct a roadway across the 17-mile gap between the international border and Akamina Pass – and without that segment, much of the value of the road would be lost.

On balance, though, the NPS clearly felt that there was merit to the International Loop Road proposal, and it was included in Glacier's Mission 66 Development Schedules. A total of \$2,900,000 was budgeted for the southern, "Camas Creek Cutoff" portion of the project, with an additional \$450,000 allocated for the northern connector road along Kishenehn Creek. As with all of Glacier's Mission 66 projects, the loop road components were assigned to one of three priority groups; the Camas Creek Cutoff was a priority 2 project, while the Kishenehn Creek Cutoff was assigned to priority 3.³⁰

³⁰ Glacier National Park, "Mission 66 Prospectus."

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The inauguration of the Mission 66 program in Glacier was accompanied by a heavily revised, "Mission 66 Edition" of the park's *Master Plan*. The document included a "Visitor Use Brief" describing a planned "figure 8" travel corridor for future park visitors, designed both to disperse traffic and increase visitor experiential opportunities. The "figure 8" concept, also described in period newspaper articles and other documents, included two loops joined by the central Going-to-the-Sun Road: a northern route featuring the new International Loop Road, and a southern loop utilizing U.S. Highway 2 over Marias Pass. The report noted that:

The figure "8" pattern of travel . . . is the one which takes fullest advantage of all existing and proposed roads in gaining a well-rounded impression of the Park and its surroundings. By arranging their directions of travel within this pattern, so as to cross the middle bar of the figure "8" first in one direction and then the other, visitors on the Going-to-the-Sun Road can enjoy from both directions Park scenes which vary according to the direction from which viewed and are among the finest to be seen along the entire figure "8" route.

The International Loop Road plays an important part in tying the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park into one unit. It emphasizes the simple means of crossing the International Border and the understanding fellowship between the two Nations.³¹

From the onset, it was apparently assumed that the Bureau of Public Roads would oversee the design and construction of the Camas Road, and that standard BPR road standards would be utilized. This followed standard NPS policy of the era, and was the procedure used on Glacier's other Mission 66 roadway projects. No concerns about the overall design or width of the Camas Road corridor were apparently expressed locally, although this generated controversy in other NPS units during the Mission 66 era. The most notable public concerns grew from the Mission 66 widening of the Tioga Road in Yosemite National Park, where the larger roadway footprint was considered by some to be incompatible with NPS resource protection goals.³²

Building the Camas Creek Cutoff

Once Mission 66 was underway at Glacier, initial work on the in-park portions of the proposed International Loop Road began relatively quickly. As with all major NPS road projects, most aspects of the project were the responsibility of the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), the federal agency that had overseen the construction of the Going-to-the-Sun Road some three decades earlier. The BPR regional office in Portland, Oregon supervised the project, with locating engineers from their Missoula, Montana office assigned to the on-site work. The BPR crew arrived in Glacier on June 17, 1957, and completed their route assessment by August. A "field inspection report" issued as the survey was being completed noted that "the alignment of the entire route is very easy." Additional survey work continued in 1958, along with discussions on

³¹ Glacier National Park, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Glacier National Park: Mission 66 Edition," 1961 revision, GNPA, Chapter 2, Section "D."

³² See, for example, Ansel Adams, "Yosemite 1958 – Compromise in Action," *National Parks Magazine* 32 (October-December 1958):166-176.

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the design configuration of the intersection of the Camas and Going-to-the-Sun Roads – apparently the only portion of the route to engender some controversy.³³

After the survey's completion, work on the International Park Road came to a halt for the next three years, apparently due to funding limitations and reprioritizations among all the Mission 66 projects. Minor administrative issues also surfaced regarding the status of the small portion of the Camas road that was outside the park boundary, and its connection with the Forest Development Road along the west side of the river. Meanwhile, though, local enthusiasm for the proposed road grew rapidly. Regular newspaper articles in the Columbia Falls newspaper, *The Hungry Horse News*, advocated for construction of the road and reported on local developments. Unsurprisingly, the newspaper also called for improvements to the southern end of the "outside" North Fork Road, between the Camas junction and Columbia Falls. If completed, this would have created a direct route from the Flathead Valley to Waterton, almost completely bypassing Glacier Park. Though some progress was made in improving the far southern portion of that road, obtaining funding for its construction was complicated by the still-present specter of the proposed Glacier View Dam, and the view of some that it was pointless to build a road that might soon be inundated.³⁴

Among the varied expressions of support for the International Park Road were a small number of well-publicized efforts to travel the full length of the Kishenehn road segment before construction had even begun. A 1959 article in Kalispell's *Daily Inter Lake* newspaper, for example, reported that four men from Lethbridge, Alberta, unsuccessfully attempted to traverse the route using "a four-wheel drive vehicle, power winch, chain saw, and other equipment."³⁵ The effort was abandoned after fifteen miles when the vehicle became hopelessly hung up in Kishenehn Creek. In a more successful effort the same summer, a 38-member horseback party followed the entire route of the Kishenehn Loop to Waterton, accompanied by considerable publicity. Similar tours over portions of the route took place other years, including a large Canadian-American auto caravan in 1960.³⁶

By 1960, enough NPS funding was in place to advertise for construction bids on the first segment of the Camas Creek Cutoff. This initial contract covered work only on a 1.6-mile segment at the far southern end of the road, beginning at the Sun Road intersection and continuing across Apgar Flats to a point near McDonald Creek. A primary focus of this initial project was to reconfigure the broader road network in the Apgar area, with the long-range anticipation that most Glacier visitors would prefer a circle route including both the Going-to-the-Sun Road and the new international highway. Consequently, a "T"-intersection was constructed near Apgar, with the straight-line route through the junction leading from the Sun Road to the Camas Cutoff. This required the large numbers of travelers entering Glacier through its West Entrance to come to a stop at the intersection and make a turn, a configuration that seemed inefficient to some involved in the road planning process.³⁷

³³ Bureau of Public Roads, "Field Inspection Report of Camas Creek Cutoff Location Survey in Glacier National Park," 1957. Folder 125-8, GNPA.

³⁴ The advocacy of the *Hungry Horse News* is displayed in numerous articles printed in that paper, particularly in the 1960-62 period. See, for example, "Asks \$1,000,000 for North Fork Road," *Hungry Horse News*, March 24, 1961.

³⁵ "Challenge Kishenehn with Truck," *Daily Inter Lake*, July 22, 1959.

³⁶ "Riders Travel Fabulous Kishenina Loop Route," *Daily Inter Lake*, July 22, 1959; "Announce North Fork Road Caravan," *Hungry Horse News*, July 22, 1960.

³⁷ Correspondence in the "Camas Road, 1956-59" file, folder 125-8, GNPA.

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In July 1960, the NPS announced a contract award for the Apgar Flats segment of the Camas road, accepting a \$141,083 bid by N.D. Robinson, of Missoula. Robinson completed the work the following summer, as the NPS and BPR continued planning for the next Camas project: a large bridge across McDonald Creek just south of Apgar. Glacier administrators saw this bridge as a particularly useful component of the Camas project, since its completion would allow for the removal of an older, failing bridge a quarter-mile upstream in the Apgar townsite. The project was initially advertised in July 1961, but all bids were well over the cost estimate and were rejected. A second bid opening the following month produced better results, and a contract for the bridge's construction was awarded to C.B. Lauch Construction of Great Falls, in the amount of \$208,302.50. The bridge was completed the following summer, and the park formally accepted the structure on November 28, 1962.³⁸

Work on the remaining sections of the Camas Road proceeded incrementally and mostly uneventfully. North of the McDonald Creek valley, construction work on the road was preceded by an NPS-sponsored archaeological survey of the area. This effort, reportedly the first to be conducted in the park in advance of a construction undertaking, provided a precedent for future project-related cultural resource activity in Glacier. Fieldwork along the Camas Road route was conducted over a two-week period in the summer of 1963 by a crew led by Carling Malouf of the University of Montana. Although no archaeological sites were noted in the Camas Road right-of-way, the crew utilized the opportunity to examine other areas of the park, with more productive results.³⁹

The year 1963 also saw the resolution of a minor issue affecting the northernmost 0.2 miles of the planned route, which was located on Flathead National Forest land outside the Glacier Park boundary. Discussions between NPS and Forest Service officials had resulted in the development of a "cooperative agreement" for the building of the road in 1962, in May 1963 this was superseded by a permanent Special Use Permit authorizing NPS construction of the road. The permit explicitly retained Forest Service control over other roads in the Special Use Permit corridor, including the "outside" North Fork Road.⁴⁰

Construction activities began along some of the northern portions of the road in 1963, as well. N.D. Robinson received a 1963 contract to clear and grub the entire remaining length of the future road, as well as construct a primitive "pioneer road" following the route of the future highway. This work was completed in 1964. Progress on this and other Camas Road projects apparently continued during the 1964 construction season, in spite of the massive floods that struck the Glacier area that June. Elsewhere in the park, repairing flood damage was a primary construction focus, and one of the necessary projects was the rebuilding of the approaches to the Camas Road's new McDonald Creek Bridge, which had been destroyed by floodwaters. The summer of 1964 also saw a contract award for the construction of the North Fork Bridge near the far end of the Camas Road. The 400-foot bridge was erected by Kyser Construction Co. of Missoula, at a bid price of \$239,096.80, with work completed in 1965.⁴¹

³⁸ Correspondence in the "Camas Road, 1959-61" file, folder 125-8, GNPA; "Montana's Most Unique Modern Bridge," *Hungry Horse News*, July 13, 1962; *Glacier National Park Superintendent's Reports, 1960-63*, GNPA.

³⁹ Carling Malouf, "Archaeological Reconnaissance, Vicinity of West Glacier, Glacier National Park, Montana, 1963." Typescript dated 1965, GNPA.

⁴⁰ "Special Use Permit" between the Flathead National Forest and the National Park Service, May 21, 1963. Folder 125-9, GNPA.

⁴¹ ; *Glacier National Park Superintendent's Reports, 1963-67*, GNPA.

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Camas Creek Cutoff Road
Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana

Two final contracts, to Crick Construction, of Spokane, and Rocky Mountain Construction, of Missoula, covered the grading and hard-surfacing of the remaining portion of the Camas Road, and the full project was finally completed by late August, 1967. The Camas Creek Cutoff formally opened to the public soon thereafter, apparently with little official notice or recognition. In part, this may have been to other news events that overwhelmed the park in August 1967, including two fatal bear attacks and major forest fires. The Flathead Fire, ignited on August 11, ended up burning much of the area around Glacier's brand-new Camas Creek entrance.⁴²

Epilogue

The 1967 completion of the Camas Creek Cutoff Road marked the end of active construction work on the proposed International Loop Road. The Kishenehn Creek portion of the route apparently never came close to construction; although land-acquisition issues west of Kishenehn may have played a small role in that, it is more likely that Glacier decided it would be pointless to build a "connector" road that simply dead-ended at the Canadian border. Indeed, there is little evidence that the Canadian government ever seriously considered constructing its segment of the Kishenehn-Akimina route, although Waterton-area businessmen were understandably enthusiastic about the project. The road would have been of little benefit to southeastern British Columbia, and many in the province valued the Kishenehn region more for its resource extraction possibilities than its tourism potential.

The southern portion of the "outside" North Fork Road was gradually improved in the 1960s and 1970s, although those projects eventually came to a halt due to opposition from North Fork residents, who valued the isolation provided by the lack of a paved road. Advocacy for the proposed Glacier View Dam appears to have largely faded away after the mid-1960s, perhaps in part due to well-publicized battles that defeated reservoirs on NPS land elsewhere in the West, combined with broader changes in America's views towards parkland and wilderness.

While some local residents continued their advocacy for an International Loop Road for a few years after 1967, no real action on the concept took place, and the idea assumed less and less prominence in NPS planning documents. Potential reservoir development in the North Fork was no longer a significant concern, and the park returned to the notion that the North Fork's primitive setting should be preserved. Though the park still publicly supported the loop road concept in the late 1960s, they were clearly less enthusiastic about the idea than they had been a decade earlier. Simultaneously, they recognized that Canada's continuing lack of interest in the route made its full completion unlikely. In response to a 1970 inquiry, Glacier Superintendent William Briggles summarized the situation by saying:

Initially, there was a good deal of optimism that through construction of the Camas Creek road, now completed, the U. S. and the National Park Service would have demonstrated its sincerity about the road and that this would

⁴² ; *Glacier National Park Superintendent's Reports, 1967-68*, GNPA; "Schedule Opening of New Entrance," *Hungry Horse News*, August 11, 1967.

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Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana

encourage the Canadians to go into action. This, however, has not been the case and at present, the International Loop Road is in limbo.⁴³

A draft version of the 1973 edition of the park's *Master Plan* included a sketch map showing a proposed road connection between the North Fork and Waterton, but following Sage Creek rather than Kishenehn in southern British Columbia – a route that completely bypassed Glacier's northwestern corner. The map of the Sage Creek route was removed during the Plan's editing process, however, and the final document did not include a discussion of the route at all. This editing action may have marked the end of official interest in Glacier's loop road to Canada.⁴⁴

Today, almost fifty years after the Camas Road's construction, the road remains a well-built but lightly used connector route to a still-primitive valley that is largely free of paved roads. The concept of an International Loop Road for Glacier is largely forgotten, and Glacier's portion of the Kishenehn drainage remains roadless and remote. Ironically, new roads in southeastern British Columbia now follow much of the hoped-for Canadian segment of the road, although the region is largely devoted to logging rather than tourism or resource protection. International travel is no longer allowed in the area, and the dream of being able to travel from the North Fork to Waterton is over.

⁴³ Correspondence, William J. Briggles to John S. Rice, April 2, 1970. Folder 217-8, GNPA.

⁴⁴ Correspondence in "1973 Master Plan" file. Folder 103-2, GNPA; National Park Service. *Master Plan: Glacier National Park, Montana* (West Glacier, Montana: Glacier National Park, 1973).

9. Major Bibliographic References

(see continuation sheet)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Specify Repository

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 272 acres

UTM References: see continuation sheet

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Camas Creek Cutoff Road begins at an intersection with the Going-to-the-Sun Road, approximately two miles north of West Glacier, Montana, in the NW1/4 of the SE1/4 of Section 23, Township 32 North, Range 19 West. The boundary follows the course of the road, 100 feet from either side of the centerline, in a northerly and then westerly direction to the road's terminus at an intersection with the North Fork Road (Montana Secondary 486), in the NE1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 14, Township 33 North, Range 20 West. The southerly boundary line widens at the location of the Flathead River Overlook spur road and parking area, to include an area extending 50 feet beyond the outer edge of the asphalted roadway and parking areas.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the historic (and current) alignment of the entire Camas Creek Cutoff Road. The boundary area also includes ancillary elements directly associated with the road, including the McGee Meadow, Camas Creek, and Flathead River overlooks, the entrance plaza site, and intersections with spur roads. The 200-foot width of the boundary corridor was chosen to include all areas of ground disturbance associated with the road's initial construction, including cut and fill areas. It also approximately corresponds with the maximum width of the forest swath originally cleared for the road.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Mark Hufstetler
organization: date: 9/1/2012
street & number: 502 North 16th Avenue telephone: (406) 587-9518
city or town: Bozeman state: MT zip code: 59715

Property Owner

name/title: Glacier National Park (southerly 11.5 miles)
street & number: West Glacier Park Headquarters telephone: (406) 888-7800
city or town: West Glacier state: MT zip code: 59936

name/title: Flathead National Forest (northerly 0.2 miles)
street & number: 650 Wolfpack Way telephone: (406) 758-5208
city or town: Kalispell state: MT zip code: 59901

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“Yosemite’s Tioga Highway.” *National Parks Magazine* 32, no. 134 (1958): 123–124.

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UTM Boundary Points

All Points NAD83

Point A	279320E	5378600N	Zone 12	Going-to-the-Sun Road Intersection
Point B	278800E	5379100N	Zone 12	McDonald Creek Bridge
Point C	718550E	5386520N	Zone 11	McGee Meadow Overlook
Point D	715670E	5389580N	Zone 11	Camas Creek Overlook
Point E	711800E	5389950N	Zone 11	Entrance Plaza
Point F	711500E	5389750N	Zone 11	Flathead River Overlook
Point G	710880E	5389280N	Zone 11	North Fork Bridge
Point H	711620E	5389280N	Zone 11	North Fork Road Intersection

Legal Location

A GLO land survey has not been completed for most of the land traversed by the Camas Creek Cutoff Road, since it is within the boundaries of Glacier National Park. However, using extrapolation, the following sections of land are traversed by the road, beginning at its southern end and progressing north:

Township 32 North, Range 19 West:	Section 23
	Section 14
	Section 15
	Section 10
	Section 3
	Section 4
Township 33 North, Range 19 West:	Section 34
	Section 27
	Section 28
	Section 21
	Section 20
	Section 17
Township 33 North, Range 20 West:	Section 18
	Section 13
	Section 14

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Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana

Photographs

Property: Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park
 Location: Flathead County, Montana
 Photographer: Mark Hufstetler
 Date of Photographs: May 13, 2012

Note: Photographs follow the route of the road sequentially, from southeast to northwest.

Photo Number	Description	Direction of View (approximate)
1.	"T"-intersection at the junction between the Camas Creek Road and the Going-to-the-Sun Road.	Southeast
2.	McDonald Creek Bridge, portal view.	Northwest
3.	McDonald Creek Bridge, downstream elevation.	East
4.	McDonald Creek Bridge, substructure view.	Southeast
5.	McDonald Creek bridge, equestrian sidewalk and guardrail detail	Southeast
6.	Camas Creek Road, ascending grade north of McDonald Creek.	Northwest
7.	Camas Creek Road, south of McGee Meadow.	Southeast
8.	McGee Meadow overlook, showing modern railings and interpretive sign.	East
9.	McGee Meadow overlook, detail of concrete curb and barrier rock.	Southwest
10.	Camas Creek Road, north of McGee Meadow.	Southeast
11.	Typical small culvert, Camas Creek Road.	East
12.	Upstream portal of typical larger culvert, Camas Creek Road.	East
13.	Camas Creek Road and barrier rock, near Camas Creek overlook.	Southeast
14.	Camas Creek Road, through burn area east of park entrance.	Southeast
15.	Camas Creek Road, at entrance plaza.	West
16.	Camas Creek Road, at entrance plaza.	East
17.	Curbing and sidewalk detail, Camas Creek Road, at entrance plaza.	East
18.	Spur road to Flathead River Overlook.	Northwest
19.	Parking area, Flathead River Overlook.	Southeast
20.	Camas Creek Road, at park entrance sign. Spur road to Flathead River Overlook in background.	East
21.	North Fork Flathead River bridge, portal view.	East
22.	North Fork Flathead River bridge, downstream view.	East
23.	North Fork Flathead River bridge, railing and endpost detail.	North
24.	Camas Creek Road, at junction with North Fork Road.	West
25.	Intersection of Camas Creek and North Fork roads, North Fork Flathead River bridge at left. View from Glacier View Peak trail..	Southeast

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Figure Number	Description	Direction of View (approximate)
1.	Pioneering/clearing work for the Camas Road, ca. 1963. Photographer unknown. GNPA image # GLAC 19382, T-9.	East
2.	Aerial photograph of the completed Camas Creek Road, 1967. J.A. Tyers, photographer. GNPA image # DI 1304 04-72.	Northwest
3.	Entrance plaza area near west end of the Camas Road, construction view, with curbing and traffic island in place. Photographer unknown. GNPA image # GLAC 19382 T-8.	West
4.	McDonald Creek Bridge, soon after completion. Photographer unknown. GNPA box 111, folder 12.	Northwest
5.	McDonald Creek Bridge, showing bank erosion caused by the June 1964 flood. Photographer unknown. GNPA image # DI 832.	East
6.	Cover page of construction drawings, dated 1965. National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 9560.	
7.	Typical cross sections and Summary, page 2 of construction drawings, dated 1965. National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 9560.	
8.	Camas Creek & McGee Meadows Overlooks, page 2 of working drawings, dated 1964. National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 3608A.	
9.	Flathead River Overlook, page 3 of working drawings, dated 1964. National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 3608A.	

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Figure #1: Pioneering/clearing work for the Camas Road.

Facing: Easterly

Description: Glacier National Park Archives # GLAC 19382 T-9, photographer unknown, no date recorded, ca. 1963.

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Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana



Figure #2: Aerial photograph of the completed Camas Creek Road, 1967.

Facing: Northwest

Description: Glacier National Park Archives # GLAC 1304 04-72, J. A. Tyers photographer, from 35 mm transparency.

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Figure #3: Entrance plaza area near west end of the Camas Road, construction view, with curbing and traffic island in place.

Facing: Westerly.

Description: Glacier National Park Archives # GLAC 19382 T-8, photographer unknown, no date recorded, ca. 1967.

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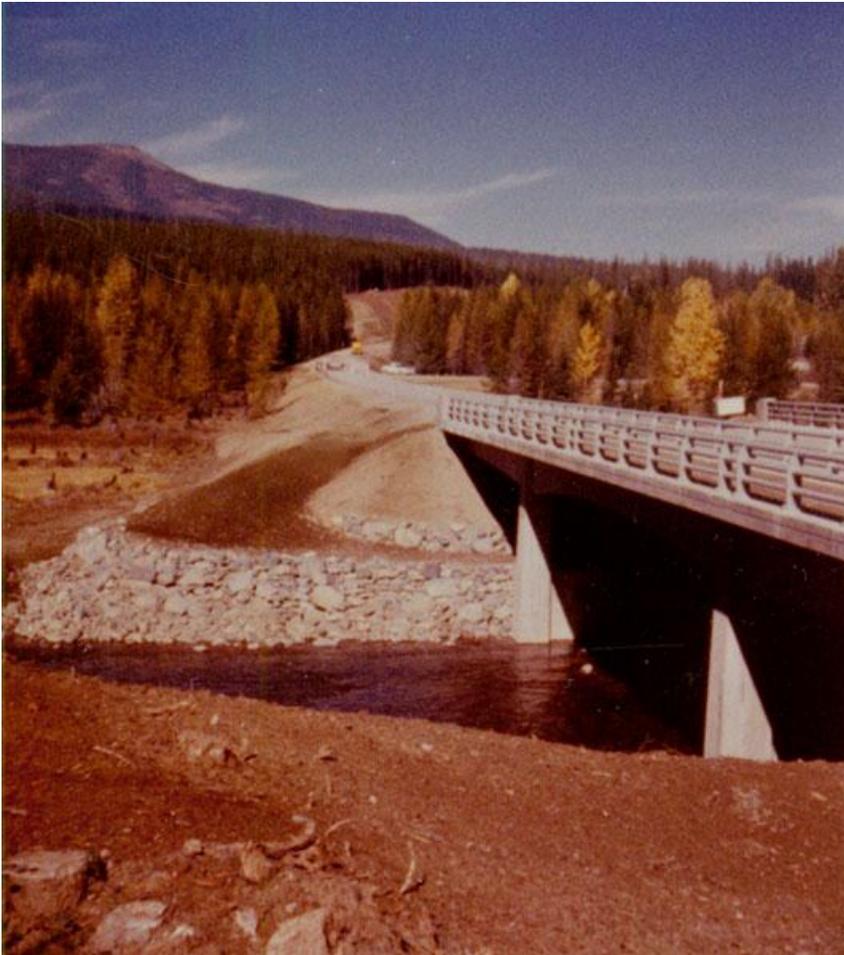


Figure #4: McDonald Creek Bridge, soon after completion.

Facing: Northwesterly

Description: Glacier National Park Records, 1910-1984, Box 111, Folder 12, photographer unknown, 1962

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Figure #5: McDonald Creek Bridge, showing bank erosion caused by the June 1964 flood.

Facing: Easterly

Description: Glacier National Park Archives # GLAC 832, photographer unknown, 1964.

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Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana

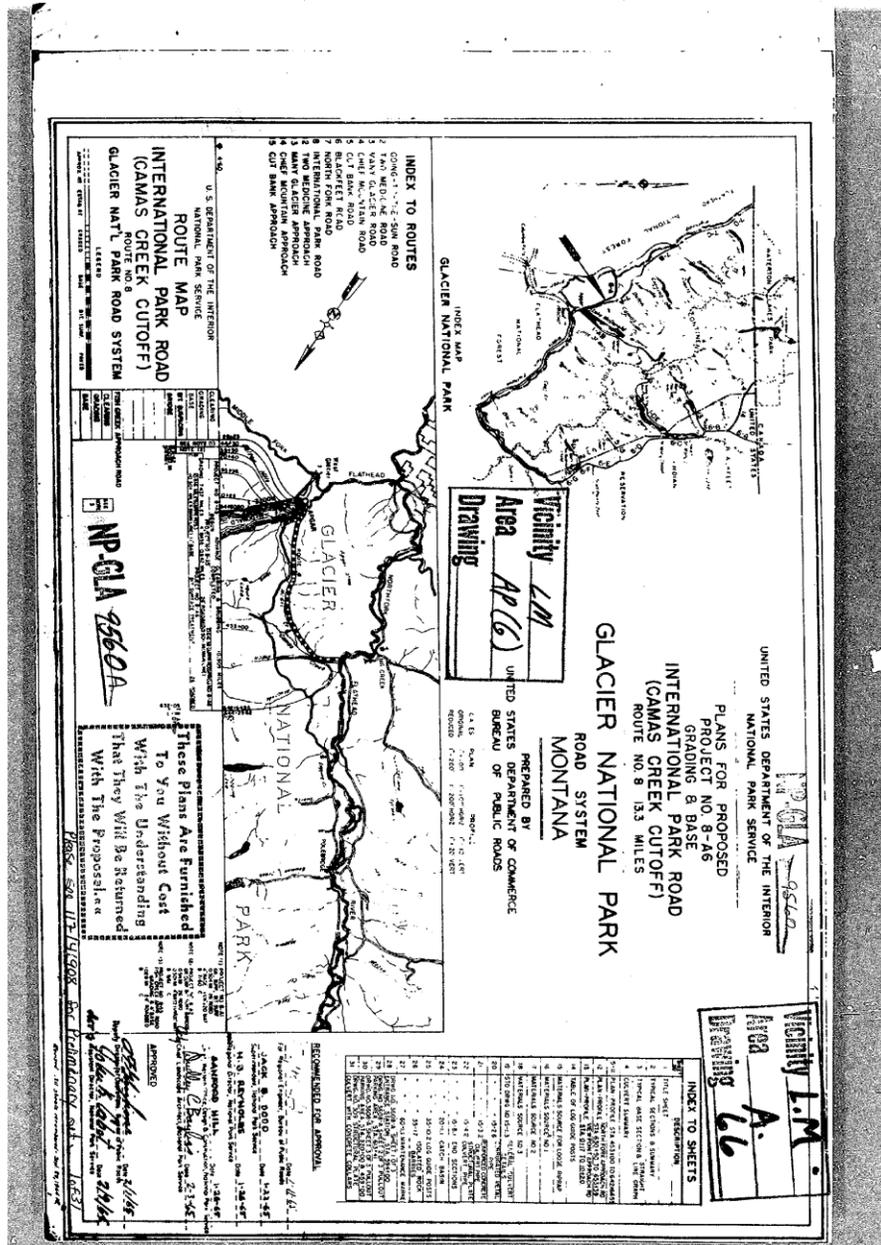


Figure #6: Cover page of construction drawings, dated 1965.
National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 9560.

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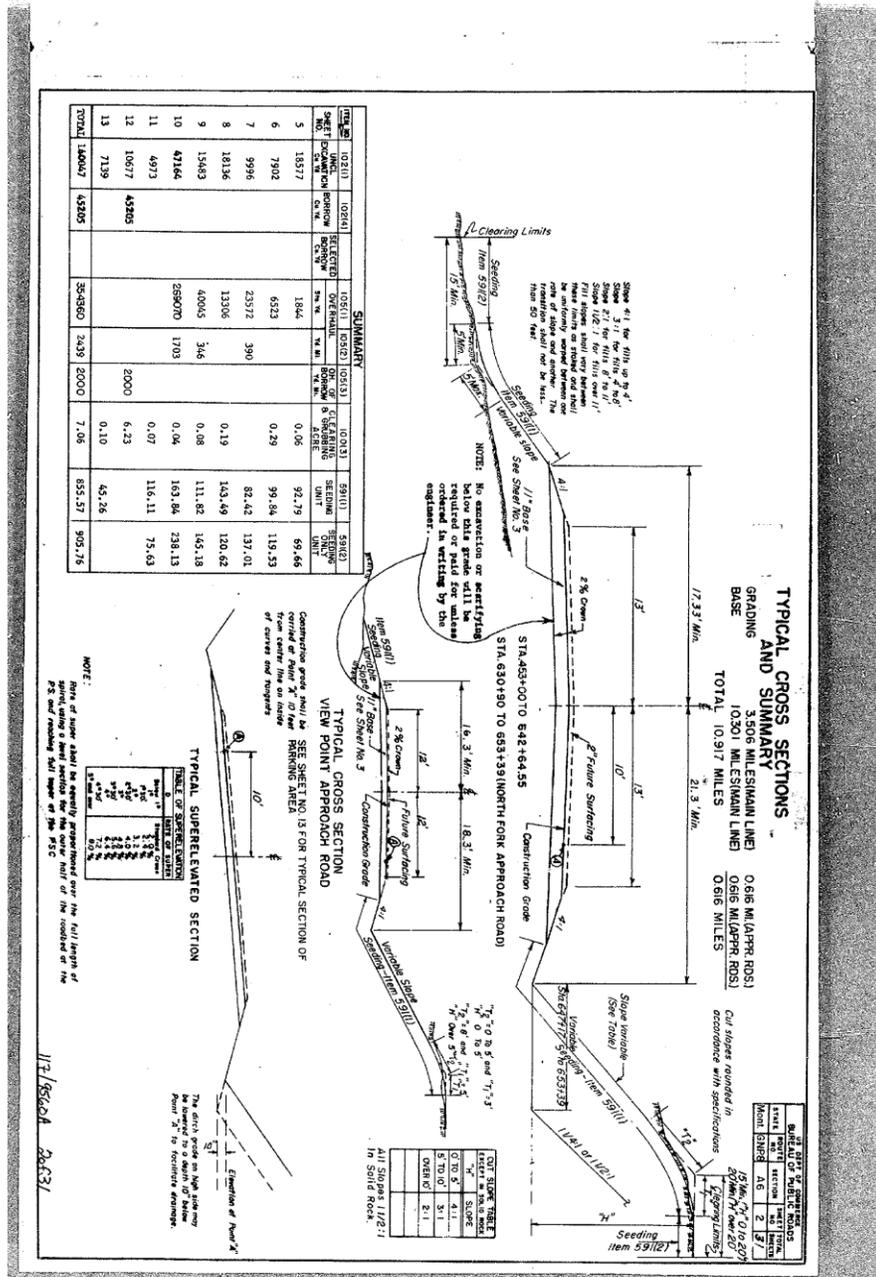


Figure #7: Typical cross sections and Summary, page 2 of construction drawings, dated 1965. National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 9560.

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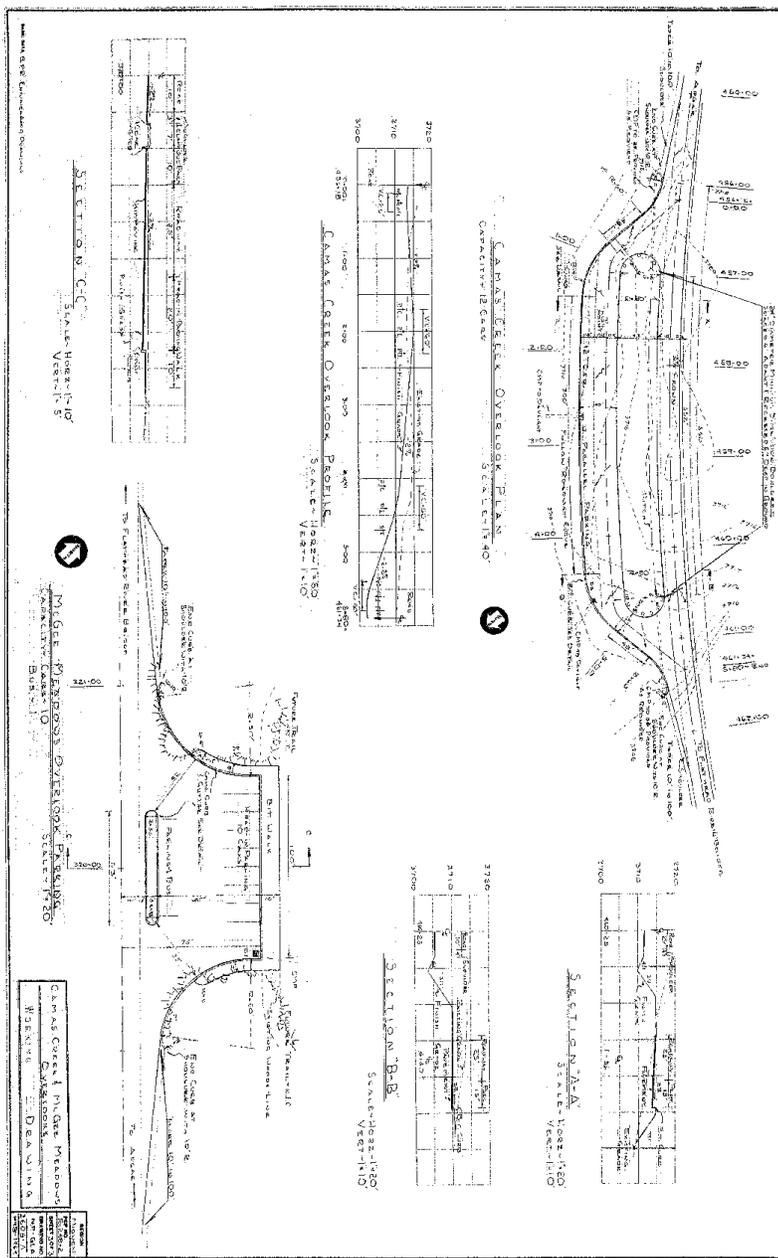


Figure #8: Camas Creek & McGee Meadows Overlooks, page 2 of working drawings, dated 1964. National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 3608A.

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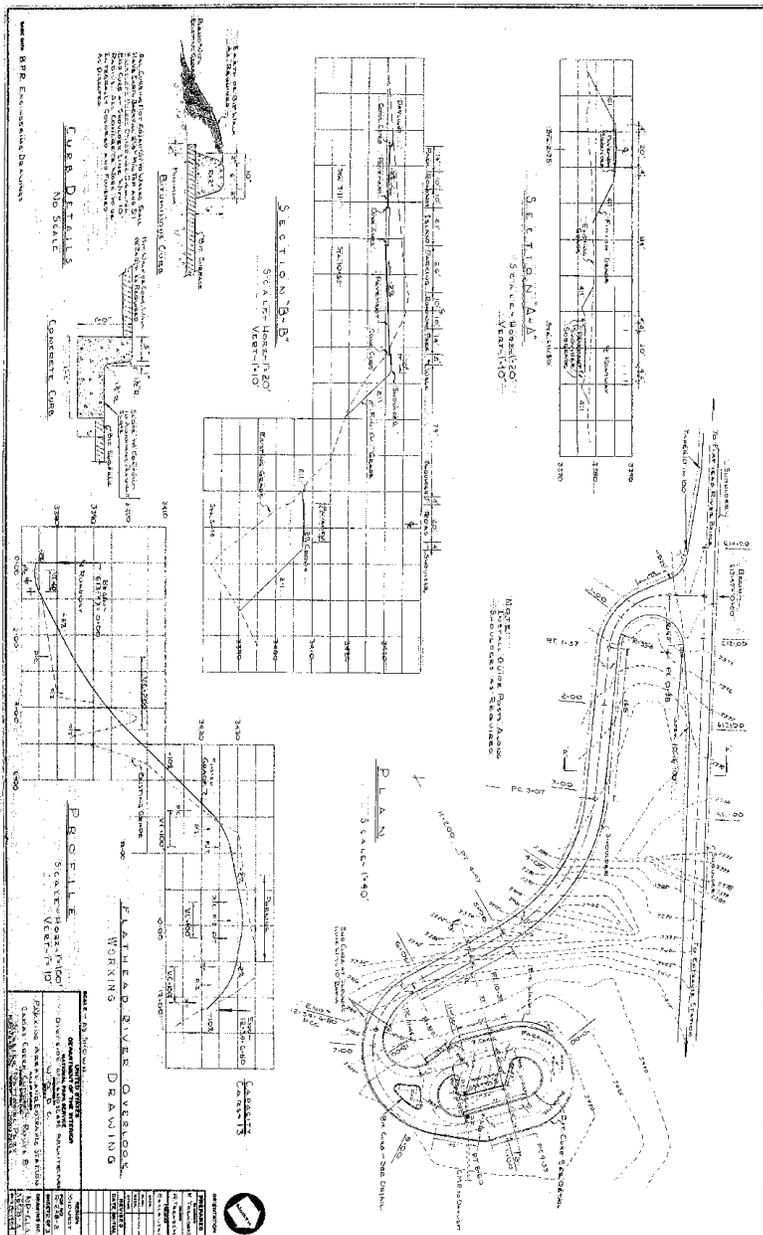
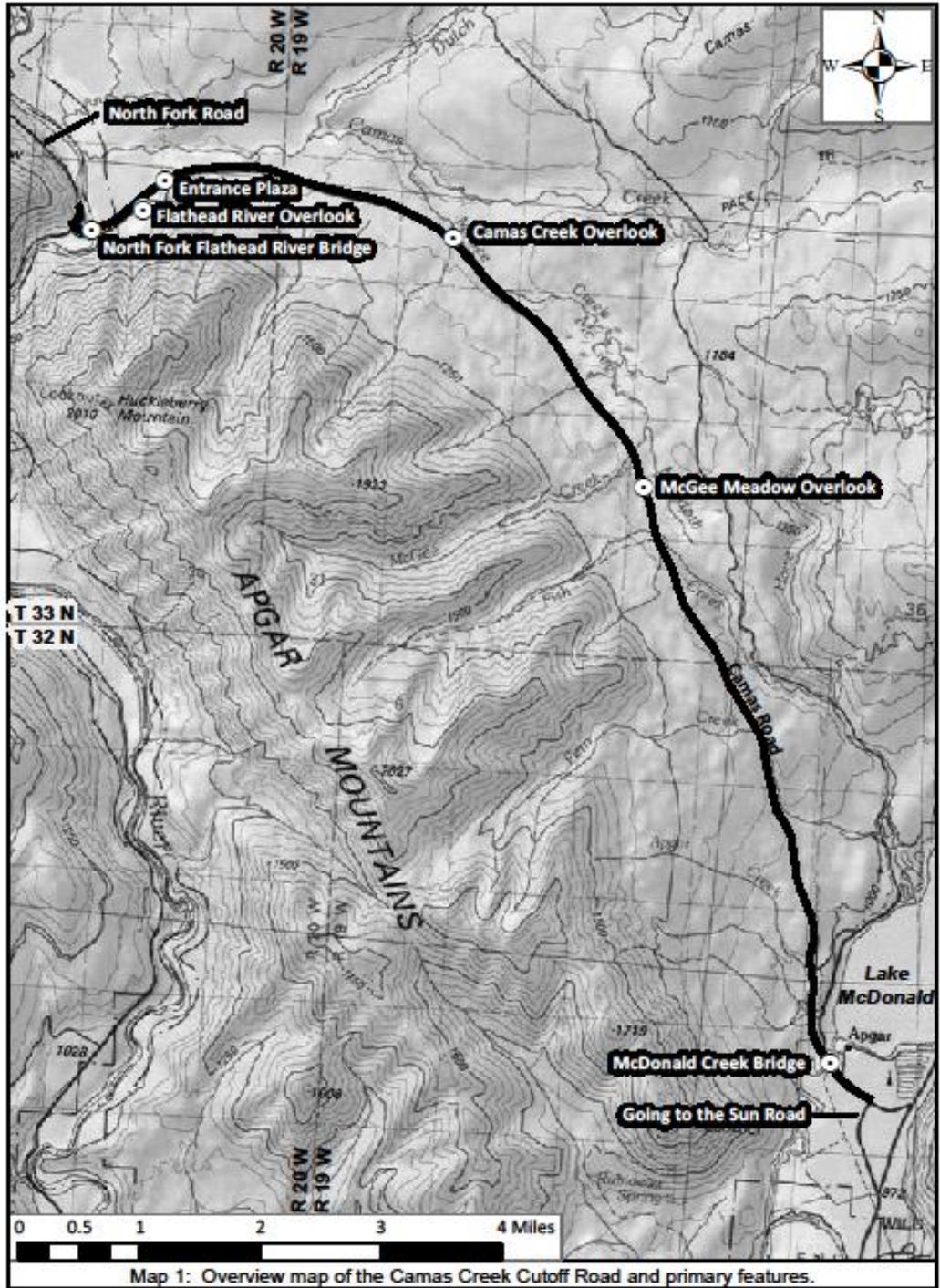


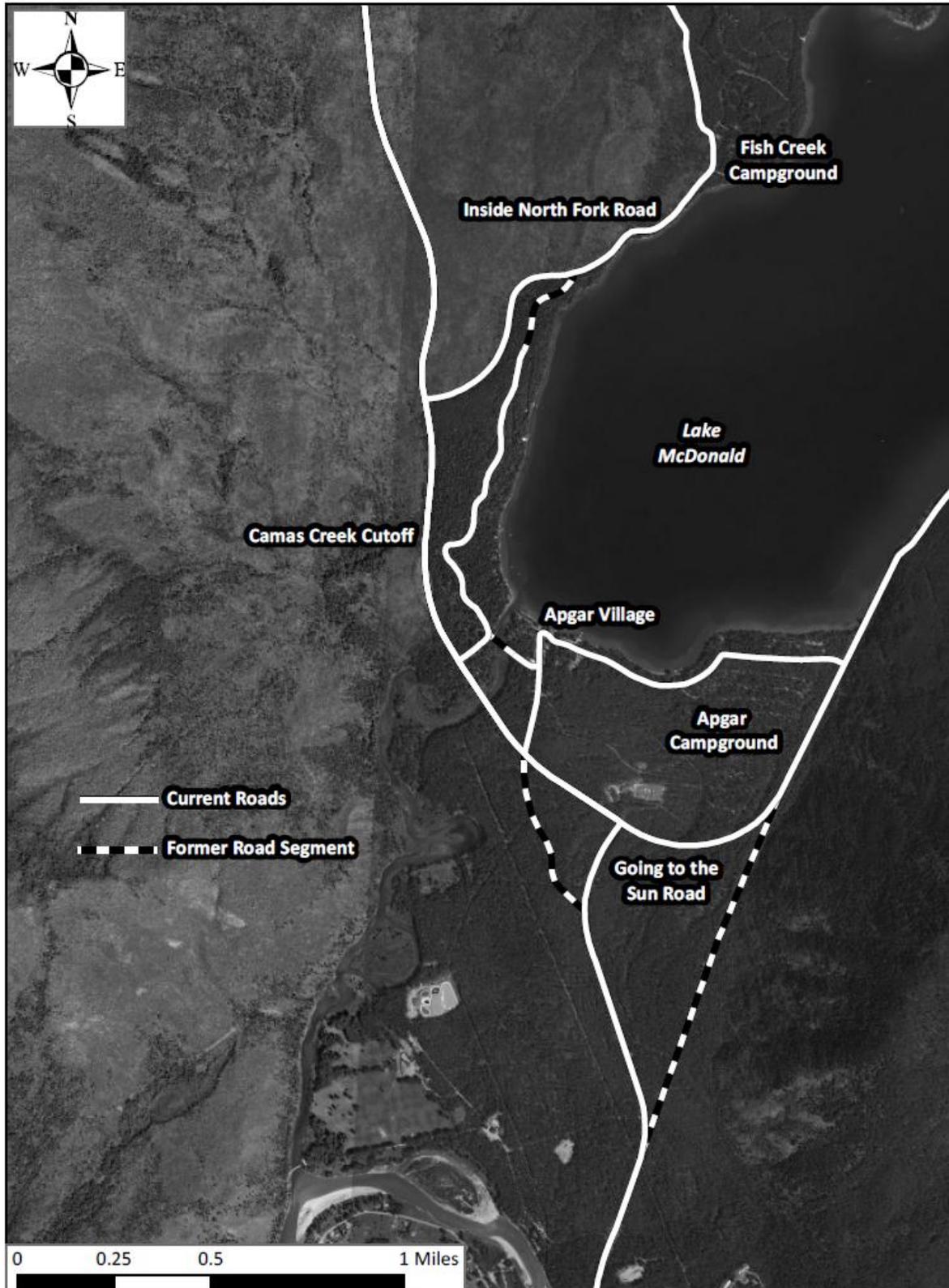
Figure #9: Flathead River Overlook, page 3 of working drawings, dated 1964.

National Park Service Technical Information Center, number 3608A.

Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana

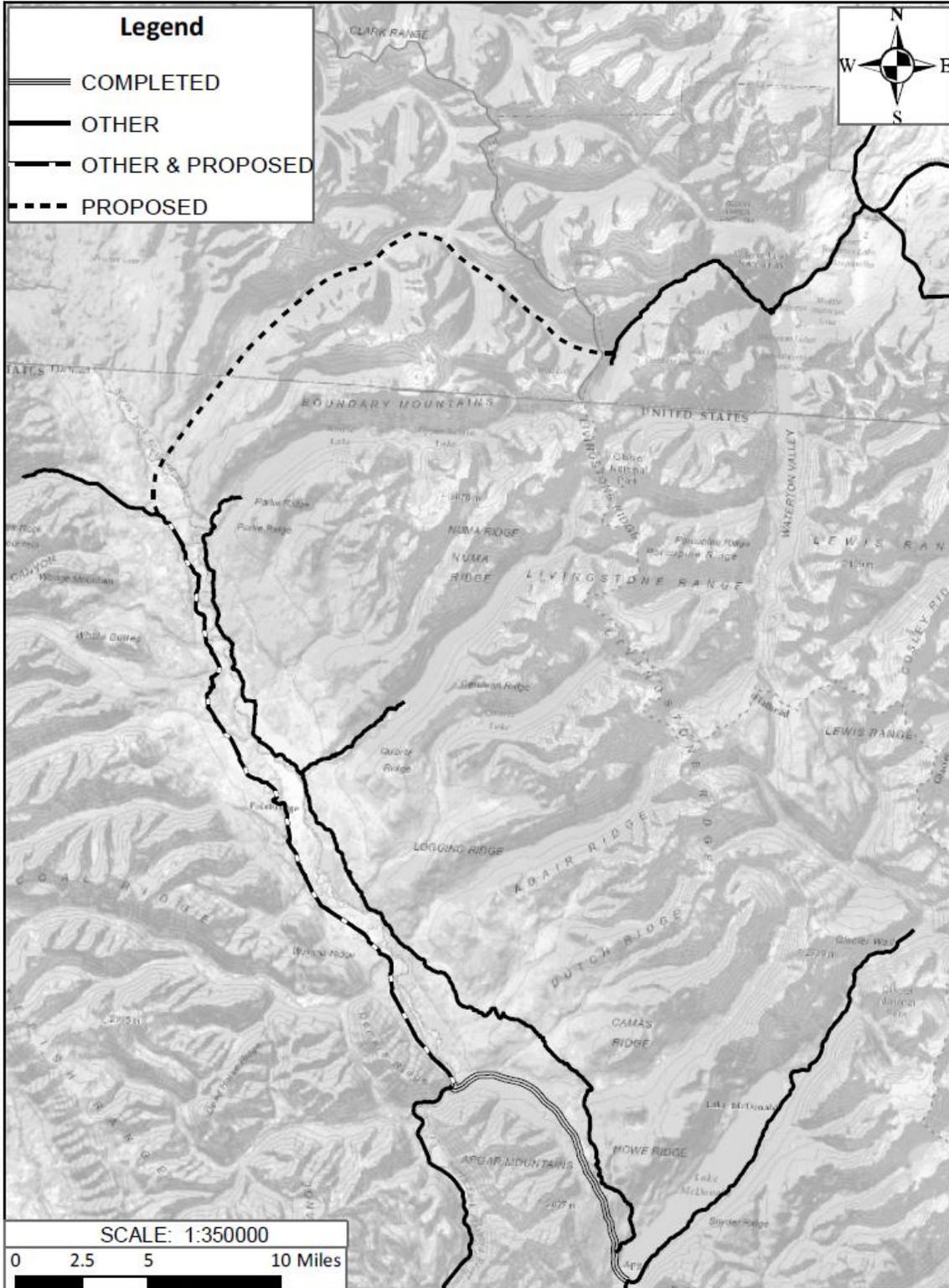


Map 1: Overview map of the Camas Creek Cutoff Road and primary features.

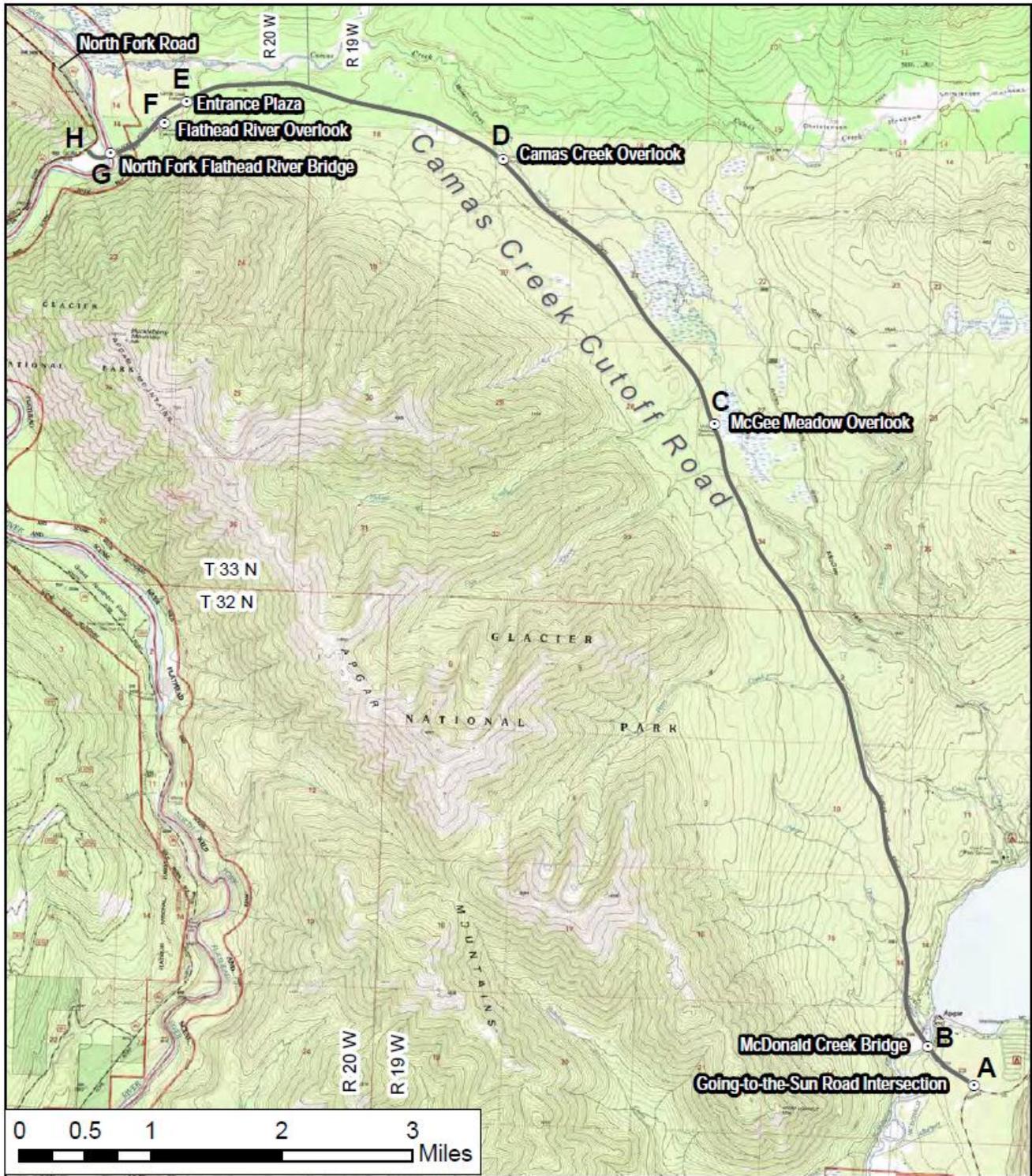


Map 2: Detail map of Apgar area and Camas Creek Cutoff Road.

Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana



Camas Creek Cutoff Road, Glacier National Park, Flathead County, Montana



UTM
Boundary
Points
(NAD83)

Point A	279320E	5378600N	Zone 12 Going-to-the-Sun Road Intersection
Point B	278800E	5379100N	Zone 12 McDonald Creek Bridge
Point C	718550E	5386520N	Zone 11 McGee Meadow Overlook
Point D	715670E	5389580N	Zone 11 Camas Creek Overlook
Point E	711800E	5389950N	Zone 11 Entrance Plaza
Point F	711500E	5389750N	Zone 11 Flathead River Overlook
Point G	710880E	5389280N	Zone 11 North Fork Bridge
Point H	711620E	5389280N	Zone 11 North Fork Road Intersection



Date: 2/25/2014





McDonald
Creek























Exhibit









KEEP
→
RIGHT

Camas
Creek
Entrance

STOP









GLACIER
NATIONAL
PARK

50



North Fork
Flathead
River







Polebridge 14
← Big Creek
← Columbia Falls

