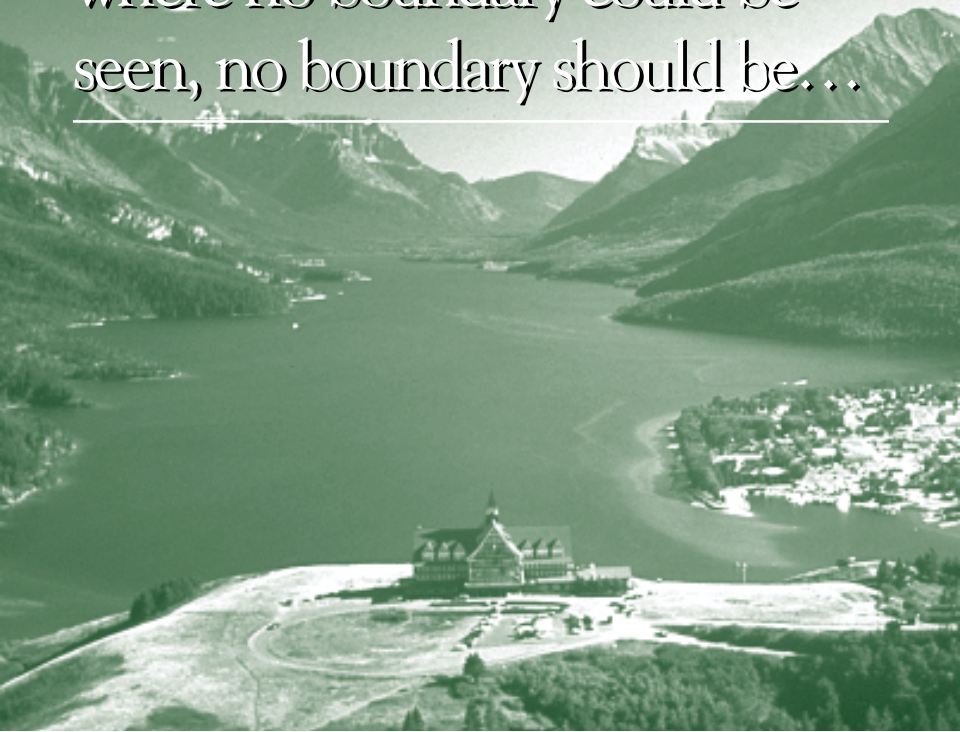

It began as a bold idea:
where no boundary could be
seen, no boundary should be...



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

By 1931, the parks' rangers were not the only ones advocating a union of Waterton and Glacier. Local Rotarians, following Rotary International's mission to promote peace and goodwill amongst all people and nations, felt the parks should be joined as a symbol of the friendship shared between Canada and the United States. At a time of isolationism in U.S. Foreign Policy, reaching across borders was not popular. But the Cardston Rotary Club went forth with the idea, finding support from Americans and Canadians alike. Rotarians from both sides of the border came together in Waterton for the first annual international goodwill meeting in July of 1931. There they unanimously endorsed the idea of a peace park. The clubs petitioned their local governments, who in turn lobbied the two federal governments. Designating this symbol of friendship was more than a casual agreement; it required that both the U.S. Congress and Canadian Parliament pass laws and that a U.S. Presidential Proclamation be signed. In 1932, the world's first peace park, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, was established.



The integral communication and cooperation between the parks reaches far beyond the meetings and handshakes. Lives are saved when search and rescues are expedited quickly and are carried out efficiently on both sides of the border.

However, designation as a peace park did not make a peace park. After all, Waterton-Glacier was the first of its kind. There was no example to follow, but with time the idea of being a peace park sank into the collective conscience of park managers. The title urged playing a role, and with practice and patience the parks learned how to be the peace park that the name implied. So what does it mean to be a peace park? At Waterton-Glacier it means thinking cooperatively and acting collaboratively while maintaining fiscal independence and administrative autonomy. Balancing these tenants promotes close relations between park managers. Cooperation and communication lead to improved research, more expedient search and rescues, and enhanced interpretive services. This unique relationship was fundamental in the designation of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park as a World Heritage Site in 1995.

Rotary International continues its support of the Peace Park through the International Peace Park Association. Annual assemblies and ceremonies, such as “Hands Across the Border,” serve to remind the parks of perhaps their greatest resource—the peace and friendship shared by two great nations. This resource, while elusive, is alive in Waterton-Glacier in the tranquility of the mountains, the freedom of the waters and the enduring circle of life.



The "International" has run the length of Waterton Lake since the early days of the parks. Even before the peace park was designated, visitors could dismount their horses in Goat Haunt, board the boat and dine at the Prince of Whales hotel.

Today, a simple gesture of peace and goodwill has evolved into a management philosophy and cooperative adventure that benefits the whole ecosystem. The experience of cross-border collaboration has given both parks the skills to reach out to all of their neighbors. With resource managers looking to “ecosystem management” as the key to maintaining species diversity and ecological integrity, the ability to work effectively with park neighbors is more important than ever. Waterton-Glacier is one piece of a greater ecosystem, comprised of federal, state, provincial, tribal, and private lands, whose managers are working together to ensure a healthy future for this special place. Conservation efforts require cooperation and collaboration for ultimate success. This success hinges on the dedication of individuals and agencies alike—locally, nationally, and internationally. A handful of rangers and Rotarians turned their idea into reality—what will you do?

What is Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park?

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park is a combination of two individual parks: Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta and Glacier National Park in Montana. They were joined through an act of Parliament and Congress as a symbol of the long-standing peace and friendship shared between the U.S. and Canada.

When was the Peace Park established?

Waterton Lakes National Park was established in 1895 and Glacier National Park was established in 1910. The parks were not joined into the International Peace Park until 1932 when Congress passed the bill on May 2, and Parliament following suit on May 24. A U.S. Presidential Proclamation finalized the union on June 30.

Who runs the Peace Park?

Waterton and Glacier are each ultimately responsible for the management of their own parks. Their budgets and administrations are separate. The two parks strive to work collaboratively on projects affecting both parks, such as park publications, research projects, and interpretive activities.

What is Rotary International?

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. It is this third tenant which led Rotary to promote the establishment of the Peace Park.



Wildlife may not understand the concept of peace, but it benefits them all the same. Working together the parks and their neighbors can preserve a habitat large enough for the survival of animals such as the mountain goat, wolf, and grizzly bear.

How is Rotary involved in the Peace Park today?

Rotarians continue their involvement today through the International Peace Park Association, who host an annual international goodwill meeting each September, in Glacier (even years) and in Waterton (odd years). Since the first meeting in 1931, these gatherings have provided an opportunity for Rotarians to discuss ways of promoting peace. They have erected symbolic artifacts, conducted ceremonies, and promoted the idea of peace parks elsewhere. One current Rotary initiative is the creation of an interpretive center with a thematic focus on peace. Another initiative is to stop the clearing of the border swath through the parks; this could require an amendment to the American-Canadian treaty, which states that a swath must be cleared along the entirety of the 49th parallel.

Are there other Peace Parks?

There are several monuments to peace along the American-Canadian border—the longest undefended border in the world. They include Roosevelt-Campobello International Park in New Brunswick, Peace Arch Provincial Park in British Columbia and Washington, and the International Peace Garden on the border of Manitoba and North Dakota. Other nations have also established peace parks, such as the Cordillera del Condor Peace Park in Ecuador and Peru.



Cameron Lake spans the Canadian/United States border.

Where can I get more information?

Rotary International: www.rotary.org

Glacier National Park: www.nps.gov/glac/home.htm

Waterton Lakes National Park: www.parkscanada.pch.ca/waterton

Rotary
International



Glacier
National Park



Waterton Lakes
National Park



Parks
Canada