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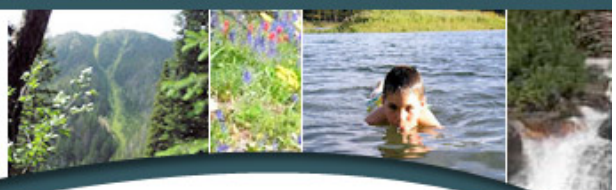
Headwaters Montana



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Jack Potter, Glacier Park's Conscience, Retires

May 12, 2011

Dear [member_name_first]:

Headwaters Montana has been quietly working since our last "issue email" in February. The Montana legislature's 90 tenure in Helena has required many of our members and readers to focus on events there, and we did not want to distract.

However, now that the legislative session has ended, and Governor Schweitzer continues to weild his VETO brand over environmentally and socially destructive legislation, ***Headwaters Montana*** is ready to move out front and center with issues germane to the Flathead Valley.

With this issue we want to emphasize good public service. We single out **Jack Potter,** chief of Science and Resource Management, at Glacier National Park.

While Jack's career exemplifies the best in public resource management and public service, his retirement raises a daunting challenge for the colleagues he leaves behind at Glacier.

That challenge can be stated as a question: *Who will rise to be Glacier's next 'Jack Potter'?*

Please read and enjoy the article below on Jack's career. And when you next see Jack, thank him for his years of service to Glacier and our country.

The Headwaters Montana Board

Jack Potter,

Jack Potter in his National Park Service 'issue'. Jack retired from the NPS on May 2, 2011, after 40 years of service to Glacier National Park.
This issue of Headwaters Montana News is dedicated to commemorating Jack's service.

Thank you Jack!

Jack looking a bit more relaxed. It wasn't always this easy being Chief of Science and Resource Management.

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fragile subalpine ecosystem. He made hundreds of daily management decisions to keep bulldozers out of creeks, pavement areas smaller, and Park, contractor or concessionaire activities quieter or more in keeping with the Park's preservation mandate.

More recently, he used his position to help prevent mountaintop removal coal mining in the British Columbia headwaters of the North Fork Flathead River. He did so by helping guide the 2009 IUCN/World Heritage site "in danger" review initiated because of BC mining and other threats. Headwaters Montana was one of the petitioners of that issue.

Jack said of that effort, "We were able to demonstrate the incompatibility of mining in this area with the world heritage site."

He also called the recent agreement between BC and Montana to ban mining and energy development in the North Fork Flathead "the biggest thing in my career," some 36-years in the making.

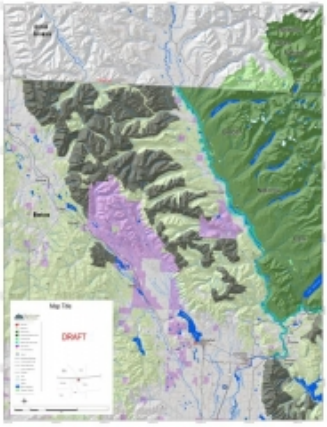
Yet mining development in BC is just one of many threats to Glacier. Jack lists development pressure on Glacier's perimeter and climate change as the two biggest.

He includes in those threats, the perennial issue paving the North Fork Road, oil and gas development on the Blackfeet Reservation, and adds that just the sheer volume of human visitors put pressures on wildlife and park resources that the public remains unaware of.

The primary challenge will be keeping the Park from becoming an island surrounded by incompatible land uses. The challenge will be keeping Glacier "intact and connected to adjoining wildlife habitat, particularly as the threat of climate change looms in the future."

What does Jack see as his legacy to Glacier National Park? Park Science Magazine asked that question. He responded: "Resource protection has been a constant effort, with some problems that came and went and others that persist. I would say at least for the relatively short term, the General Management Plan, the Commercial Services Plan, and the Backcountry and Wilderness Plan and wilderness proposal have put some ideas into policy. There are many other efforts relating to fire and other issues that may also add up. Our Resource Management Plan was good for the time [i.e., 1994, updated in 1998], but it needs to be updated into a Resource Stewardship Plan."

Stewardship. That word seems to sum up Jack's time and commitment to Glacier National Park. Jack's shoes will be very hard to fill, but



The Whitefish Range

In our next issue we will present the emerging community discussion on the future of the Whitefish Range, west of Glacier Park.
The Whitefish Range is vital habitat for many critters that call Glacier Park "home", and a critical wildlife corridor between British Columbia and Montana.
Please stay tuned...

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Headwaters Montana *continues to work for Jack's vision of designating Glacier's backcountry as Congressionally protected wilderness, as well as additional protections for the lands that surround Glacier.*

Please Donate Today to Continue the Work

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to: http://www.nature.nps.gov/ParkScience/index.cfm?ArticleID=326&page=1

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Office: 545 Holt Drive, Bigfork, MT 59911 | Invoices, etc: PO Box 4310, Whitefish, MT 59937
info@headwatersmontana.org | www.headwatersmontana.org

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