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ABOUT THE GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM

The George Wright Forum was the journal of the George Wright Society from 1981 through 2018, published in 35 volumes with a total of 125 issues. Its mission was to "examine critical issues and present new research related to parks, protected areas, and cultural sites around the world." The hallmark of the journal was its interdisciplinary approach, covering all fields relevant to natural and cultural heritage stewardship.

Early volumes of the journal did not carry dates embedded on each page, so that information is provided on this cover sheet.

The George Wright Forum ceased publication at the end of 2018. Beginning in 2020, it is continued by *Parks Stewardship Forum*, an open-access journal co-published by the George Wright Society and the University of California, Berkeley, Institute for Parks, People, and Biodiversity. *Parks Stewardship Forum* continues both the mission and the interdisciplinary approach of *The George Wright Forum*. The first volume of *Parks Stewardship Forum* is denominated as Volume 36 to indicate this continuity. *Parks Stewardship Forum* is published at https://escholarship.org/uc/psf and has been selected by the Library of Congress to be archived as "an important and valuable addition to our collections and to the historical record."

CITING THE GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM

We recommend that you use the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) as the weblink. DOIs for each article are available at *The George Wright Forum's* permanent archive website, https://escholarship.org/uc/gwf.

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ABOUT THE GEORGE WRIGHT SOCIETY

The George Wright Society supports parks, protected/conserved areas, cultural sites, and other kinds of place-based conservation by encouraging communication among and convenings of researchers, managers, educators, practitioners, and the public to facilitate informed decisions and actions that embrace our values.

GWS is a membership organization and we would welcome your support. To find out more, or to donate, please go to https://www.georgewrightsociety.org.

Guest Editorial

An "informed cry" from the heart of wilderness might describe the guest editorial in this issue. It was written by Dr. Jack A. Stanford, director of the University of Montana's Yellow Bay Biological Station on the east shore of Flathead Lake, Bigfork, Montana.

The mining operation to which Dr. Stanford alludes is the Cabin Creek project by Sage Creek Coal Ltd., located in British Columbia. Glacier National Park, just 12 miles to the south, was listed in the 1980 National Park Service Report to the Congress as the most threatened of the national parks.

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

An Island in a Sea of Development

Jack A. Stanford

National park, biosphere reserve, international peace park, a pristine piece of America...these labels all supposedly describe Montana's Glacier National Park. On this day, I have skied some 15 km to the patrol cabin at the head of Kintla Lake in the northwest corner of the Park. I am very much alone, except for the deer, elk, goats and other wildlife I observed on my way to the cabin.

The labels all seem to apply to this natural and peaceful place. Never mind that only hours ago I left my vehicle on the North Fork (of the Flathead River) Road, a dirt artery into Canada over which flows an army of loggers, petroleum geologists, four-wheelers, snowmobilers, skiers, fishermen, foresters, hunters, land developers, backpackers and, occasionally, a disoriented moose.

Never mind that the forests along this road have been more than 40 percent clear-cut, even right to the Park boundary on the Canadian side, as US and Canadian foresters scramble to salvage lodgepole killed by a beetle epidemic (probably caused by 50 years of fire suppression in the Flathead Basin).

Never mind that a Canadian coal company (a subsidiary of an American steel corporation) plans to strip mine more than two miles wide and more than 2000 feet deep only six miles from the Park boundary (only 15 miles from where I now sit). On this day this scientist finds the Park a truly beautiful place, indeed pristine.

I am here to take water and plankton samples from Upper Kintla Lake and other subalpine lakes in this part of the Park in support of my study on the effects of volcanic ash (Mt. St. Helens) on the oligotrophic waters. As Director of the University of Montana Biological Station at Flathead Lake, I am involved in many limnological studies in the Flathead River basin. Much of this work is designed to quantify baseline conditions, so that impending and perhaps already chronic degradation of the Flathead River-Lake Ecosystem (which includes the Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness complex) may hopefully be ameliorated by redirection of land management policies.

Because much of Northwest Montana is federally or Native-American owned, a myriad of federal and state managers are struggling with the problem of maintaining natural resource values in the face of a whole scale development onslaught (of everything from micro-hydro to golf balls).

As a scientist, I (and others doing basic research) am supposed to provide understanding of how the ecosystem works. A citizens steering committee receives my data and the results of other studies (e.g., fisheries, wildlife, air quality, etc.) under the auspices of the US Environmental Protection Agency in an attempt to protect and conserve the valuable, natural attributes of the Flathead River-Lake Ecosystem.

And truly a remarkable and unique system it is: the Flathead harbors the last of the US grizzly bears (outside of a very few in Yellowstone and, of course, Alaska); one-quarter of all bald eagles in the US migrate through Glacier National Park; the west-slope cutthroat trout and bull trout are found nowhere else; one or two grey wolves reportedly roam the North Fork; and the majestic, glacier-sculptured peaks rival any scenery in the world. Streams from the mountain areas in Glacier National Park and adjacent national forests contain an assemblage of insects and other aquatic fauna and flow clear and clean into Flathead Lake, the largest natural lake west of the Mississippi River.

I like doing this work in winter, because many of the sampling sites are fairly inaccessible and one is alone to reflect on science, or human nature or whatever. But winters of heavy snows, like this one, are hard on the big game. The herds are forced out of the higher country and must depend on riparian habitats along the valley rivers. Unfortunately, these are the same areas intensely affected by development activities. Most of Glacier National Park's 1.5 million visitors (annually) are on hand June through September. The conflict between wildlife (and other Park attributes) and development would undoubtedly be more visual during the starkness of winter.

On the other hand, it is nice here today with no one around... not that I mind explaining what I am doing with a backpack full of weird nets and meters to hiker after hiker in summer. As I leave this warm fire in the cabin to cut holes in two feet of lake ice in order to sample, I brace myself, not against the cold winter wind, but against the sound of chain saws echoing over Boundary Mountain.

—Kintla Patrol Cabin, Glacier National Park, 6 February 1982—

Thurman Trosper, chairman of the Flathead River Basin Environmental Impact Study group, funded by EPA, said the proposed mine operation "could be extremely disruptive to the area," and called for a joint Canadian-US management plan for the entire Flathead drainage.

The EPA-funded impact study will enter its fifth year on May