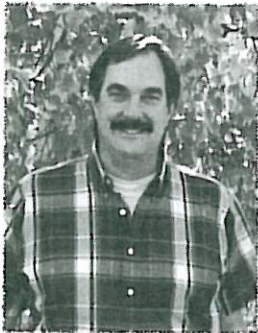


FROM THE CENTER

B&C Considers the Crown of the Continent



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WHEN GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, FOURTH PRESIDENT OF THE BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB, DESCRIBED WHAT WAS TO BECOME GLACIER NATIONAL PARK BACK AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, HE CALLED THE PLACE THE "CROWN OF THE CONTINENT." THE MAJESTIC PEAKS, DEEP GLACIAL CUT VALLEYS, TOWERING LIMESTONE REEFS, CASCADING WATERFALLS AND CHARISMATIC FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE NORTHERN ROCKIES MAKE THIS PART OF THE WORLD A VERY SPECIAL PLACE. LITTLE WONDER THEN THAT EARLY B&C MEMBERS PUT SO MUCH ENERGY INTO SECURING A NATIONAL PARK AT GLACIER. BUT ALL THIS GRANDEUR EXTENDS WELL BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, IN FACT WELL BEYOND THE PUBLIC LANDS. LITTLE WONDER TODAY THAT B&C MEMBERS CONTINUE TO PUT SO MUCH ENERGY INTO SECURING THE FUTURE FOR WILDLIFE DIVERSITY THROUGHOUT THE ROCKIES ON BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OWNERSHIPS.

The appellation, Crown of the Continent, is now used to describe a large, regional ecosystem that spans the crest of the Rockies in Montana, Alberta and British Columbia, from the

scenery and wildlife. In fact, it is one of the few places left in the lower 48 states that still supports viable populations of its native large mammal fauna: moose, elk, cougars, grizzly bears, black bears, mountain sheep, mountain goats, deer, bison, wolves, lynx, fisher, wolverine and, of course, humans.

The humans have a rich history here. They first moved along the East Front via a system of trails now known as the Old North Trail. For more than 12,000 years people have used the route

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of the Old North Trail, first to populate the continent; then to travel to and from hunting, gathering and trading places; to sally forth in skirmishes and wars; to settle, fence and claim the land; now to travel for sightseeing and commerce. The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch sits right on the Old North Trail; tipi rings and other remnant signs of the Blackfeet culture show us that they used the area that is now TRM Ranch as an encampment site; old homestead cabins tell of the ranch settlement period.

Throughout the years, people have changed the character of the land we now call the Crown of the Continent. They have dedicated national and international parks at Waterton and Glacier; preserved the great Bob Marshall wilderness complex; reserved lands for first peoples of the Blackfeet, Salish and Kootenai tribes; dammed rivers, cut trees, built towns, stopped wildfires, drilled for oil, erected recreational sites, brought in new plants and animals, constructed roads and trails and developed communities and industries out of the lands, waters, and natural

resources of the Crown. As you might guess with such a spectacular area and such human pressures, people continue to cause change. These changes both support our ways of life and impinge upon the future of wildlife in the Crown.

People are now increasing their presence in previously wild places along the Front and in the various valleys: Flathead, Swan, Seeley Lake, Blackfoot-Clearwater, Sun, and Teton River country are all under increasing development pressure. These are prime wildlife habitats. For example, 80% of the big game animals and large predators moving east out of the Bob Marshall wilderness complex winter on private lands along the Rocky Mountain Front and grizzly bears in the Mission Mountains depend on travel connections across the valleys of the Swan and Clearwater Rivers in the west.

One major reason for B&C's purchase of TRM Ranch was to secure a piece of prime private land wildlife habitat on the Front and conduct research and education to show how wildlife and rural lifestyles can continue to coexist. As we've reported in previous columns, this work is now well underway. But the Crown is an immense and great ecosystem and the Front is just one of its parts. Therefore, our wildlife conservation program at the University of Montana is increasingly involved with other partners around the Crown to bring a comprehensive approach to research, education and demonstration on managing ecosystems in the Crown for human developments that include sustainable uses of wildlife resources.

To carry this out at the University of Montana, we teach a graduate course on Managing Ecosystems for Sustainable Development. The second class of this pioneering course just finished their field tour of the Crown. Over a 4-day period they discussed rural economic development with accountant, Jay Duncel of Choteau Pride; learned about the Nature Conservancy's roles in ecosystem



THE B&C GRADUATE CLASS WITNESSED COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING FIRST HAND WITH THE SWAN VALLEY AD HOC COUNCIL AT THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE CONDON WORK CENTER.

Great Plains to the Flathead Valley and the East Kooteneys east to west and from the Blackfoot and Dearborn Rivers to beyond Waterton National Park south to north (see map on page 11). It is a contiguous ecosystem of more than 7,000,000 acres. The Blackfeet people called the Eastern Front of this part of the Rockies the Backbone of the World. It is rich in geology, culture,



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS BIOLOGIST, GARY OLSON, LEFT, AND B&C RESEARCH ASSISTANT, THOMAS BAUMEISTER DISCUSS DEER AT THE TRM RANCH.

sustainability from Mary Sexton at Pine Butte Swamp Preserve; talked about ranch management for wildlife with TRM Ranch Manager, Bob Peebles; got the story on Front Range grizzly bear conservation from Mike Madel of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; shared perspectives on big game and wildlife management with biologist, Gary Olson of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; observed the historic role of fire in conifer forests along the Marias Pass highway south of Glacier National Park; discussed national forest issues with Flathead National Forest Supervisor, Joel Holtrop and his staff of Jim Morrison and Nancy Warren; gained insight into scientific progress on the South Fork Grizzly Bear Study from Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks researcher, Rick Mace; and capped the trip with a superb session on community decision making with Bud Moore, Rod Ash, Pete Taylor and Doug Russell of the Swan Valley Citizen's ad hoc Council at the U.S. Forest Service Condon Work Center. Not only did the class of 17 graduate students see the Crown in its winter glory, they also sampled the people and issues now shaping its human and natural resources. From this firsthand perspective they prepared their ecosystem management report and public seminar which were presented on May 5 at B&C Headquarters.

As with all ecosystem management efforts, education and research will play major roles in keeping the Crown's human and natural assets healthy. Therefore, in February, we joined the Glacier Insti-

tute, the Nature Conservancy, Glacier National Park, Flathead National Forest, the National Bison Range, UM School of Education, Montana Project Wild and others to form the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium. Two B&C research assistants, Polly Thornton and Lisa Flowers, are now conducting a survey of conservation education programs in use in western Montana schools and field courses for the Consortium. When that is done this summer, they and other Consortium members will begin filling gaps with new courses and curricula, some of which will be conducted at TRM Ranch.

On ecosystem research we are developing partnerships with UM's Flathead Lake Biological Station and Center for the Rocky Mountain West, the School of Forestry's Bolle Center for People and Forests, the Governor's Consensus Council, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Bitterroot Ecosystem Research and Management project and others to strengthen biological, physical, social and humanities research on the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem.

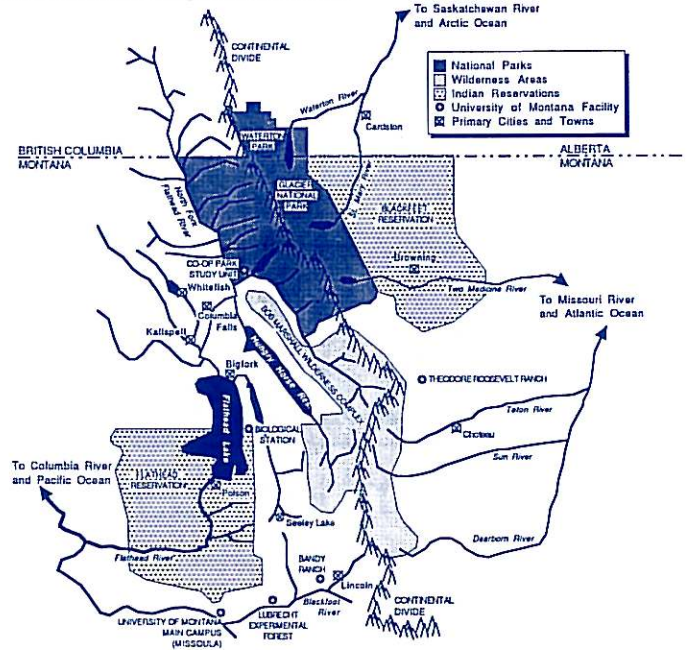
The University is trying to strengthen its biophysical research station at Flathead Lake (Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Research Center) on the west side of the Crown, its social and humanities programs related to



natural resources on campus, and its forest and range stations on the south side at Lubrecht Experimental Forest and the Bandy Ranch.

The University of Montana Wildlife Conservation Program is now entering its second year of ecosystem research, education and demonstration at our east-side delivery site for the Crown at TRM Ranch. Our focus there and elsewhere in the Crown is on (1) Forest and rangeland wildlife-habitat-relationships under B&C Research Assistant, Thomas Baumeister at UM, (2) Economic aspects of wildlife conservation under B&C Research Assistants, Kaush Arha, at UC Berkeley and Greg Schildwachter at UM, (3) Environmental history as a foundation for understanding human effects on

THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT IS AN IMMENSE ECOSYSTEM THAT COVERS MORE THAN 7 MILLION ACRES.



changing lands under B&C Research Assistant, David Keller at UM, and (4) Local community roles in natural resources decision making under B&C Research Assistants, Chris Gephardt at UM, and Colleen Rush at Yale. On the drawing boards are two new studies at TRM Ranch: rivers and fish, and range and riparian ecology. Together with our partners throughout the Crown, these efforts are moving Boone and Crockett and the University of Montana into the forefront of ecosystem management research.

B&C PROFESSOR, HAL SALWASSER, WITH HIS GRADUATE CLASS DISCUSSING GRAZING EFFECTS AND RESEARCH AT THE TRM RANCH.