

The Rising Sun Auto Camp

A Cultural Landscape History of the Concession Area at Rising Sun

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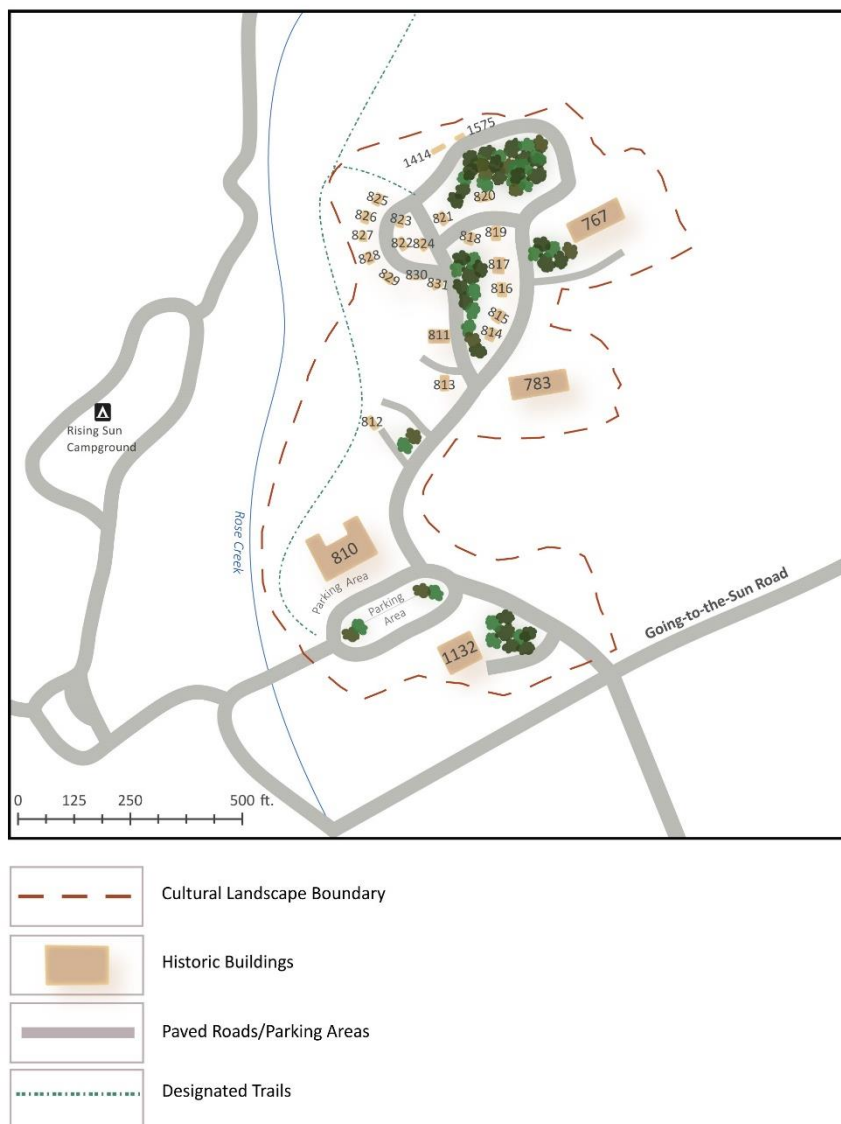
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Rising Sun Motor Camp Cultural Landscape



Key to Rising Sun Development Area Building Numbers

Building No.	Original purpose/current use	Building No.	Original purpose/current use
767	Upper Motel/same	813 through 831	Guest Cabins/same
783	Lower Motel/same	1132	Coffee Shop/same
810	Store and Café/Store, Registration, Motel, and Laundry	1414	Boatman's residence/ Employee Dormitory
811	Registration and Laundry/Employee Dormitory	1575	Unknown/not in use
812	Power House/Employee Dormitory		

Statement of Significance

The Rising Sun Auto Camp Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The historic district boundary as drawn in 1996 excluded additions to the development that were made during Mission 66 since they were not yet 50 years old. This report updates the 1996 nomination to include the later development, recommending enlargement of the historic district boundary to include those structures. It places the Rising Sun Auto Camp within the full sweep of park history: from the railroad era in the early twentieth century; through the transition to automobile use of national parks in the interwar period; and on into the modern era with its concerns over visitor crowding, visitor impacts on the environment, and historic preservation.

The Rising Sun Auto Camp Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with national park history. The Rising Sun development area is one of a half dozen development areas in Glacier National Park designed to accommodate park visitors through a concession operation. It is in the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor on the east side of Logan Pass. Built soon after the road was opened, the auto camp supplanted the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets at Sun Point. The auto camp was developed adjacent to a public campground on gently sloping ground alongside Rose Creek. The site is characterized by sparse tree cover and expansive views of the lake and the rugged peaks surrounding the St. Mary Valley.

The history of the Rising Sun Auto Camp highlights a crucial change in the development of national parks. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the spread of automobile ownership among the middle class led to a surge in public use of national parks. An early stage of railroad-financed development of national parks was superseded by a second stage of development for automotive tourism. Perhaps nowhere else in the National Park System were the two stages of development so marked as they were in Glacier National Park.

The Rising Sun Auto Camp is also eligible under Criterion C for its embodiment of National Park Service (NPS) landscape design concepts, its continuity with the park's first Master Plan of 1933, and its array of historic buildings that are characteristic of Park Service building types.

In many planning documents, the Rising Sun development area includes the Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins (the current name of the concession operation) together with the Rising Sun Campground, a boat dock, and a picnic area. This history of the Rising Sun development area focuses on the motels, cabins, and café operation only, with the campground and other features being treated peripherally. The concession operation forms its own enclave adjacent to the campground and across the Sun Road from the lake access/boat dock and picnic area.

The period of significance for the Rising Sun Auto Camp extends from ca. 1930, when the development was conceived, until ca. 1966, when the coffee shop building was constructed. Changes to the site since then have been modest. All subsequent master plans for Glacier National Park have supported continuing the Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins operation as it is; later ones have even defined use of the facility as a "traditional use" of the park. Because of its

association with Glacier National Park, one of the oldest and most renowned units in the National Park System, the Rising Sun Auto Camp Historic District has state-level significance.

The National Register areas of significance for the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp Historic District are (1) Conservation, (2) Architecture, and (3) Landscape Architecture.

Pertinent historic contexts listed in the NPS Cultural Landscapes Inventory *Professional Procedures Guide* (2009) are (1) Origin and Development of the National Park Service, (2) NPS Mission 66, (3) Tourism, and (4) Consumer Society of the Twentieth Century.

Significance under Criterion A

In December 1929, NPS called a national conference of national park concessioners and announced a plan to build auto camps – clusters of low-cost tourist cabins – as a new form of public accommodation in the national parks. Auto camps, relatively inexpensive to build, were to provide an intermediate priced option between upscale hotels and free public campgrounds, and they were to expand total capacity for overnight visitor accommodation in the park. The construction of auto camps in national parks was a physical manifestation of the deepening connection between national parks and the car culture.

Soon after the conference of national park concessioners was held, NPS proposed to develop two auto camps in Glacier, one at Rose Creek where the facility would serve visitors using the Going-to-the-Sun Road, and the other in the Swiftcurrent Valley, where it would provide a more economical form of lodging nearby the Many Glacier Hotel. Both auto camps would be associated with a public campground, providing a general store and lunch room for the use of campers. Perhaps nowhere in the National Park System was the growing influence of the car culture more striking than it was in Glacier. That is because the push for auto camps appeared in juxtaposition to what Glacier already had, which was the most well-developed system of hotels and chalets of any national park. Glacier's hotels and chalets were built by the Great Northern Railway for tourism in the railroad age. Grand as the system was, it did not serve the car culture well. NPS strove to reorient Glacier's visitor facilities to meet the demands of tourism in the automobile age, with the Rising Sun Auto Camp being a central part of that redevelopment.

Glacier National Park was established in 1910. Over the ensuing half decade, while the government established a park headquarters and began roadbuilding on the west side of the park, the Great Northern Railway proceeded to build hotels and chalets on the east side of the park. Great Northern's president, Louis W. Hill, was a keen promoter and investor. Under Hill's personal direction, Great Northern and its subsidiary, the Glacier Park Hotel Company, developed a system of chalets and grand hotels designed to accommodate visitors who arrived at Glacier by rail. Visitors could ride a bus to Many Glacier and sojourn in the company's magnificent Many Glacier Hotel, or they could take a guided horse trip through the park staying each night in a different backcountry location at one of the park's ten chalets. The Department of the Interior and the park administration practically gave Great Northern a free hand in

developing the east side of the park because the railroad's capital investment in hotels and chalets was a boon for Glacier National Park and the state of Montana.

The National Park Service was established in 1916 at a point when the railroad company's system of hotels and chalets in Glacier was fully developed. Practically from its birth, NPS aimed to develop national parks for automotive tourism. NPS Director Stephen T. Mather recognized the significance of the rising car culture in making national parks a strong and enduring presence in the cultural life of the nation. He sought to improve public access to national parks through the development of good roads. By the early 1920s, Mather urged the development of campgrounds to accommodate visitors who arrived by automobile and came equipped to camp out. As car ownership spread among the middle class, the total number of people visiting national parks grew. As total visitation grew, people of middling income came to form a higher percentage of national park visitors. Grand hotels like Many Glacier Hotel became unaffordable for the typical park visitor.

The onset of the Great Depression brought the income disparity between hotel patrons and campground users into sharp relief. The Glacier Park Hotel Company balked at developing auto camps in Glacier but NPS insisted. In 1930, the company made only a token start at development of the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp. Two years later, as the depression worsened, an opinion piece appeared in a local paper that assailed the Glacier Park Hotel Company and the park administration for catering only to well-to-do tourists and failing to provide tourist cabins for the "forgotten man." The superintendent cited the criticism in urging the concessioner to go forward with the development. The following year, the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp was mostly completed and opened to the public. A plan for the Rising Sun Auto Camp was prepared but not implemented at that time.

During the decade of the Great Depression, Americans' expenditures on car travel rose while railroads' passenger revenue fell. The car culture flourished despite hard times. As historian John Belasco observed in his book *Americans on the Road*, the depression hurt the hotel industry much more than it hurt automotive tourism as car travelers economized on room and board to keep their vehicles gassed and running. Depression conditions made the cheap tourist cabin camps, or auto camps, more popular. New on the landscape in the 1920s, auto camps took off in the 1930s. NPS pushed the Glacier Park Hotel Company to build the second auto camp at Rose Creek, and the company erected the cabins and main buildings in 1940-41. The facility opened for business in the summer of 1941. During World War II, when travel restrictions seriously depressed national park visitation, the facility served the small number of Glacier visitors while all other visitor facilities in the park were closed.

Despite the Rising Sun Auto Camp's suitability for park visitors in the 1930s, the popularity of the housekeeping cabin type of accommodation soon passed. After World War II, as prosperity returned, the austere auto camp quickly gave way to the motel. Cars got bigger, people took more stuff with them on car trips, and they wanted more space in an overnight lodging facility than the tiny housekeeping cabins afforded. Other changes in American life, such as the new standard two-week paid vacation and the improvement of interstate highways, helped create conditions for the rise of the family car trip. Motels were designed to meet the changing demand in automotive tourism. Whereas housekeeping cabins were tiny and spare, motel rooms

were replete with such amenities as private bathrooms, central heat, and convenient parking. NPS came to favor the new type of motel development in Glacier in the 1950s. Not only did the motel satisfy popular taste, but it also had a smaller footprint on the landscape than a complex of housekeeping cabins did. The Glacier Park Hotel Company added two motel units to the Rising Sun Auto Camp in an area that was previously designated for many more cabins. The expanded facility received the more modern name of Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins.

In some other national parks, when auto camps grew outmoded, they were completely dismantled, and the site was obliterated. The Rising Sun cabins hung on through the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Cabin roofs were replaced. Wood stoves were removed and replaced with electric heaters. Interiors and exteriors were repainted. Aerial wires through the area were undergrounded. A cabin complex that had become substandard and a little decrepit by the late 1960s gradually came to be appreciated as a historic relic. The Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins has not changed much since the 1970s. The cabins were recorded as cultural resources in 1988, and the cabin complex was placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district in 1996. Today, the adjacent motels – which stand outside the historic district as it was defined in 1996 – have a relic quality too, being small and plain by contemporary standards and now more than 50 years old.

The Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins continues to reflect significant trends in national park history in its modern configuration. Four times in the past forty years, the Rising Sun development area has been in the crucible of public debate over wilderness values, ecosystem management, historic preservation, and traditional use. Falling within the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor, the Rising Sun development area has figured in plans for public transportation and other measures to limit visitor impacts on ecologically sensitive areas. Proposals to move overnight lodging out of the park have met with strong opposition from advocates of traditional use. Further complicating the picture, the Rising Sun development area contains significant historic resources that require consideration under the National Historic Preservation Act, whether buildings are removed for environmental considerations or modified for human safety or other social factors. NPS must reconcile all these requirements. It works with the concessioner to provide visitors with an overnight lodging experience that is at once comfortable, economical, aesthetic, authentic, ecologically sound, and sustainable.

Significance under Criterion C

All buildings of the Rising Sun Auto Camp except for the coffee shop were designed by Great Northern architects. The coffee shop was designed by architects hired by Glacier Park, Inc. All building plans were approved by NPS architects and landscape architects. The architecture of the original auto camp buildings erected in 1940-41 reflects a drastic scaling down and simplification of themes present in the older hotels and chalets built by Great Northern. They exhibit a continuity with Glacier's magnificent railroad-era architecture as well as a transition to streamlined forms that were more suited to the automobile age. Newer buildings at the Rising Sun Auto Camp – the motel units built in 1957 and the coffee shop built in 1966 – reflect the shift to modernism in architectural forms during the Mission 66 era. Meanwhile, the layout of the Rising Sun Auto Camp was designed by NPS landscape architects. It strongly reflects the NPS tradition of park development according to a master plan. The close connection between the auto

camp development and campground development shows NPS's commitment during the interwar years to redevelop visitor facilities in national parks to meet the demands of the rising car culture.

The grand national park hotels of the railroad era have been described as "log palaces." They imitated the rustic architecture of pioneer days in their use of native log and stone, yet they also displayed an opulence and ostentation befitting the railroad companies that built them. Great Northern began its development of visitor facilities with the construction of several chalets, some built in the rustic style of frontier buildings and others built in the style of Swiss chalets with large roof overhangs and ornate balconies.

Many Glacier Hotel, built in 1913-15, combined both these styles. Four stories high and comprised of several attached structures in a string, it was the largest hotel in Montana. By 1916, when NPS was established, Glacier National Park had ten chalet groups and three large hotels if one includes Glacier Park Lodge and Belton Chalets, each located just outside the park boundary on the east and west sides, respectively. No other national park had such an array of railroad-era visitor facilities.

The fledgling NPS accepted the grand hotels of the railroad era while charting a new course for park development that saw to the interests of the broad middle class. As most park visitors after 1916 arrived in the park by automobile, the first order of business was road development, soon followed by campground development. NPS employed landscape architects, landscape engineers, architects, and planners to ensure that roads and other visitor facilities harmonized with the natural setting and did not impair the scenery. By the 1920s, NPS had developed an architectural style that would be called government rustic. It had formed an approach to development planning and programming that rested on the creation of a master plan for each park. These institutional developments provided the framework for NPS's decision in 1929 to develop auto camps as an alternative type of lodging to park hotels, and in Glacier, as a supplement to the existing complex of hotels and chalets.

The NPS Branch of Planning produced a book, *Park Structures and Facilities* (1935) that provided a digest of plans, photos, and commentary on NPS architecture. Concerning the architecture of the auto camp, the authors noted that the small tourist cabin or housekeeping cabin type of building was an echo of America's pioneer past but in a national park, where preserving natural conditions was a goal of park management, the tourist cabin had to be part of a colony or group unlike the solitary cabin of the old frontier. It was not practical to build tourist cabins in seclusion because it would spread the impact of development over a wide area. The authors stated that a cabin group should be arranged to evoke a sense of community rather than solitude.

An early plan for the Rising Sun Auto Camp, dated 1930, showed cabins arranged in circles. The cabin circle was supposed to evoke an American Indian "tepee circle" and to inspire a feeling of community. This arrangement was used at Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, which was developed first. By the time the Rising Sun Auto Camp was built in 1940-41, the cabin-circle idea was set aside in favor of placing the cabins in a meandering line. Instead of a feeling of community, the arrangement emphasized privacy. The arrangement gave the development a more organic look as each cabin appeared to nestle in its own spot on the gently sloping terrain.

NPS's *Park Structures and Facilities* also noted that tourist cabins had to be made with cheap materials to keep costs down, since overnight rental rates must be appropriate to the income level of the occupants. The nineteen cabins built in 1940-41 used sawn lumber for framing, plywood siding, and asphalt shingles on the roof. They were built "studs-out" to present a more rustic finish.

The registration building incorporated the Swiss chalet style roof lines and featured a porte-cochere, a roof projecting from the front of the building over a driveway where the registering guest could temporarily leave a car. The building was a version of the Many Glacier Hotel drastically scaled down and streamlined for the automobile age.

The store/café anchored the development and was intended to provide a range of services for all auto tourists: cabin guests, campers in the adjacent public campground, and passersby on the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The landscape design for Rising Sun consistently treated the auto camp and the campground as one cohesive developed area. NPS's original 1930 plan for the area depicted an "automotive camp" to the west of Rose Creek, a "cabin camp development" to the east of the creek, a parking plaza and bridge over Rose Creek tying the two areas together, and a "scenic reserve" extending from the bridge up both sides of the creek in between the two areas. This basic configuration was implemented at the time of construction in 1940-41. It was carried forward into plans for expansion of the concession development area in the 1950s. For instance, a 1952 plan labeled the area west of the creek as "campground," the area east of the creek as "cabin development," and the area in between as "scenic reserve." The only change in conception from 1930 to the Mission 66 era came after 1952 with the substitution of motel units in place of more cabins. NPS insisted that the concessioner build the two motels in the planned development area and not on the lakeshore as Great Northern's president John M. Budd wanted to do.

The two motel units built in 1958 were designed by Great Northern's architect and approved by the NPS Western Office of Design and Construction. The rectangular buildings were architecturally plain, low to the ground, and painted in earth tones to blend into the environment. The modern motel answered to changing public taste. The old-style housekeeping cabin was too spare; the grand hotel was too fancy. The public wanted motel rooms with private bath, free linens, central heat, and convenient parking, all at an affordable rate. The only way concessioners could meet the public's desire was to build new accommodations in the modernist style of the plain, shoebox motel. NPS insisted on a plain design and low profile for the buildings to ensure that they intruded minimally on the scenery.

The coffee shop building was designed by the architectural firm of Brinkman and Lenon of Kalispell, the plans were reviewed and approved by NPS, and construction was completed in 1966. Featuring a solid bank of tall picture windows across the upper story, the design was more overtly modernist than the design of the motels. By then, the entire concession facility had been given a new name: Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins. The buildings and grounds of the Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins have undergone relatively little change since the 1960s.

Physical History

Rising Sun development area is one of a half dozen development areas in Glacier National Park designed to accommodate park visitors through a concession operation. It is on the east side of the park on the Going-to-the-Sun Road about one third of the way from the St. Mary Entrance to Logan Pass.

The concession area occupies gently sloping ground adjacent to Rose Creek. A public campground covers about the same amount of land on the opposite side of the creek. A picnic area and a boat dock and parking area are also in the vicinity. The concession area and the campground are on the uphill side of the Going-to-the-Sun Road while the picnic area and boat dock facility are on the downhill side by the lakeshore (Fig. 1). The whole area is characterized by grand vistas of the many jagged peaks surrounding St. Mary Lake and the St. Mary Valley.

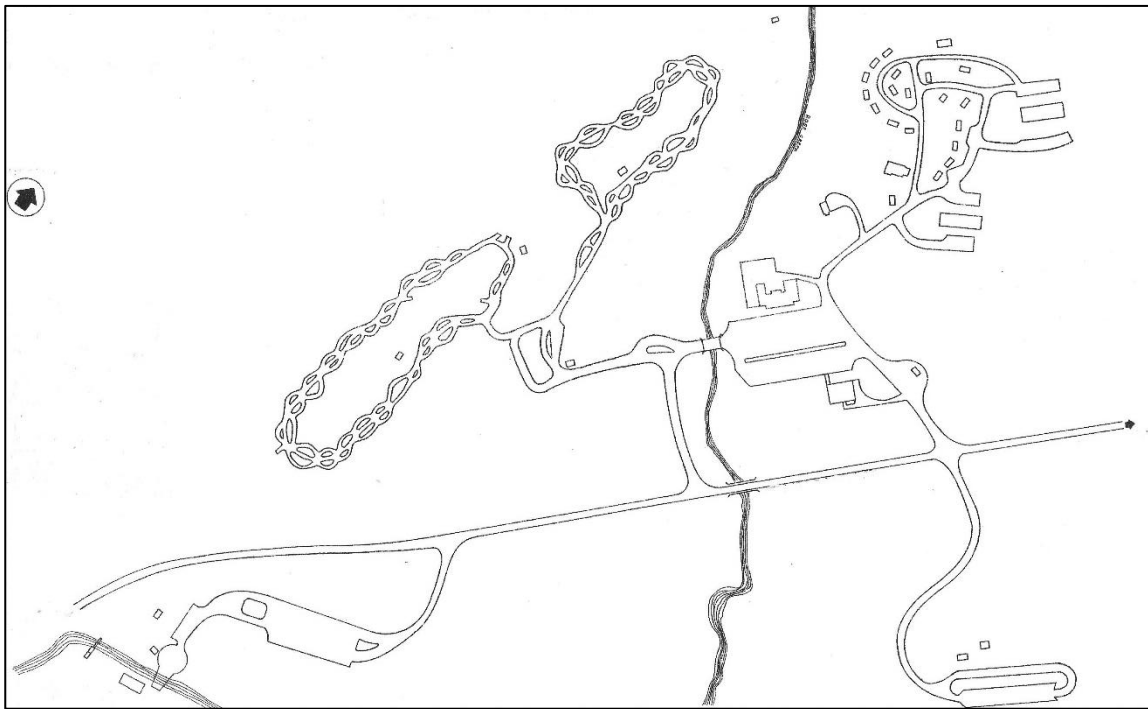


Fig. 1. The Rising Sun development area straddles the Going-to-the-Sun Road and Rose Creek. The complex comprises the Rising Sun Campground (upper left), Rising Sun Motor Inn and Cabins (upper right), picnic area (lower right), and boat dock area (lower left).

Vegetation in the Rising Sun area is made up of northern conifer forest, aspen groves, and dry grassland. At 4,500 feet above sea level, with mountain summits rising to 10,000 feet above sea level, the area has a harsh climate of cold winters, dry summers, and strong winds. The area is critical winter habitat for elk, but the concession operation only runs from June to September, so it does not affect elk. Grizzly bears occasionally move through the area during the operating season, but generally avoid the development. Bears are attracted to the area in the fall when berries ripen. The campground is closed to all but hard-sided camping in this season and if there is an aggressive bear in the area then the campground is closed altogether. The

management actions associated with fall bear activity do not impact the end-of-season operations in the concession area.

Vegetation within the development zone consists of islands and corridors of vegetation that blend with the natural vegetation of the area. This includes many mature trees standing close to cabins. NPS has long emphasized retention and restoration of natural vegetation in campgrounds and other development areas. NPS's vegetation management within the development zone aims to minimize the impact of development on natural conditions and to provide visual screening for aesthetics. For example, natural vegetation between individual campsites in the campground affords campers in each campsite a feeling of privacy and tends to limit campers' unwitting trampling of young plants and compacting of soil to the confined space within each campsite. Likewise, natural vegetation in the concession area gives guests a feeling of seclusion, dampens sound, and screens utilities from view. Original site drawings show the intent to retain natural vegetation in the concession area. Historic photographs show that a few mature trees were retained adjacent to cabins when the cabins were built, and numerous trees have grown up next to them since. The earliest known statement in writing on vegetation management within the concession area is found in the Natural Resource Management Plan of 1983, which indicated that all park construction projects would include plans and costs for the rehabilitation of disturbed sites with native vegetation. The 1983 plan was referenced in the Rising Sun Development Concept Plan of 1985. The historical record suggests that vegetation screening was always integral to the landscape design in a general way, while allowing latitude for development changes over time.

The Rising Sun area was developed around 1940 following the completion of the Going-to-the-Sun Road a few years earlier. Other nearby facilities along the Going-to-the-Sun Road are at the St. Mary and Sun Point development areas. The St. Mary development area is at the foot of the lake and consists of entrance station, visitor center, and campground. The Sun Point development area is near the head of the lake and consists of a picnic area and nature trail. In the park's early years Sun Point was the location of a major chalet group, Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. The Rising Sun concession area replaced the Going-to-the-Sun Chalets when Glacier was redeveloped for automotive tourism.

The history of the Roes Creek Auto Camp (the original name of the Rising Sun concession operation, which used an old spelling of Rose Creek) highlights a crucial change in the development of national parks. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the spread of automobile ownership among the middle class led to a surge in public use of national parks. An early stage of railroad-financed development of national parks was superseded by a second stage of development for automotive tourism. The Roes Creek Auto Camp was Glacier's second auto camp following development of the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp in the mid 1930s. Being situated along the main park road, the Roes Creek Auto Camp was emblematic of how the National Park Service (NPS) redesigned national park visitor facilities to accommodate a burgeoning public use of national parks wrought by the rising car culture. The small and humble housekeeping cabins, so trendy when they were erected in 1940-41, soon became outmoded by Americans' preference for motels. The nineteen cabins at Rising Sun survived as innumerable developments like it around the country were dismantled. Now known as the Rising Sun Motor Inn, the concession

operation perpetuates the use of historic visitor facilities that ably reflect that mid-twentieth-century transitional period.

Pre-Park History of the St. Mary Valley

In prehistoric times, the St. Mary Valley was one of many travel routes used by American Indians to cross the mountains and access resources found on the other side. Tribes on the Pacific Slope of the Rocky Mountains regularly crossed over the divide to hunt bison on the prairie. Plains-dwelling tribes on the east side of the mountains trekked into the mountain valleys to harvest game, fish, berries, tree bark, medicinal herbs, and other resources. They maintained trails into valleys and over mountain passes. Some trails were wide enough for large parties on horseback with travois, while other trails were more rugged and restricted to foot travel (Thompson, 2015, 44-48). Resident peoples on either side of Glacier went into the mountains for ceremonial purposes. The Kutenai and Blackfeet tribes still locate many of their sacred sites in Glacier. The area's indigenous tribes also interacted with the ecosystem by frequently setting fires to increase the abundance of plants and animals and to clear the forest understory for ease of travel and hunting.

Historically the Blackfeet considered the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, including the St. Mary Valley, to be within the tribe's territory (Fig. 2). Blackfeet names for the St. Mary Lakes were "The Lakes-Inside" and "Walled-In Lakes" (Buchholtz, 1976, 9). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Blackfeet, who were also known as the *Piikáni* (Piegan), were allied

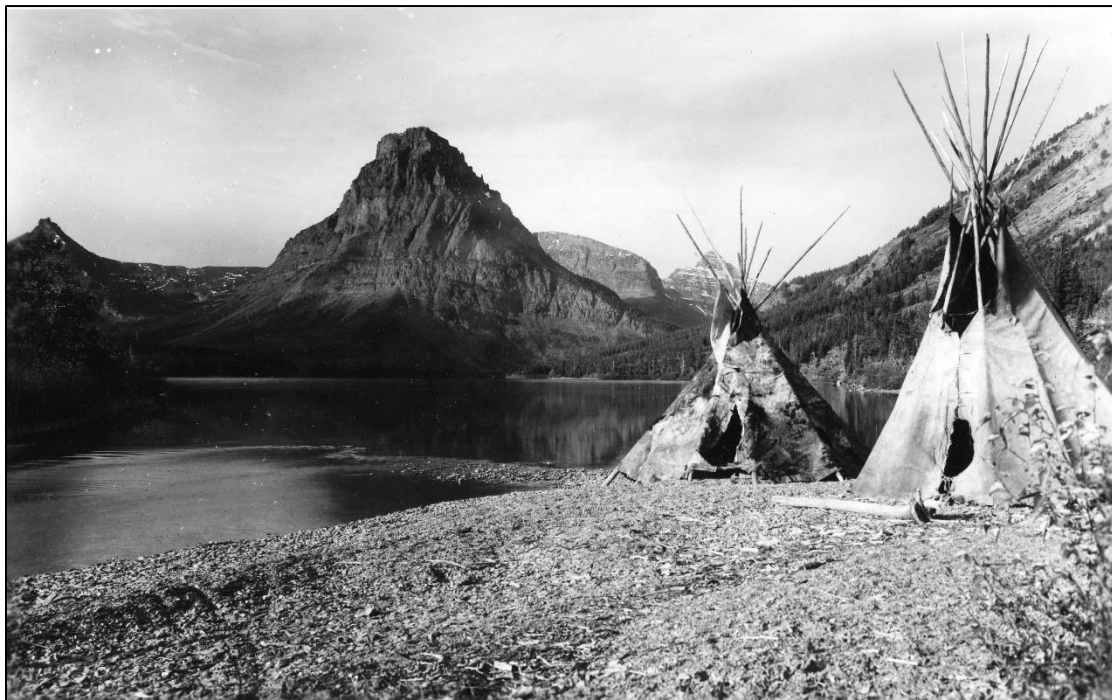


Fig. 2. Siksikáwa (Blackfoot) tepees at Two Medicine Lake photographed by R. E. Marble, ca. 1914. For Blackfeet and other American Indian peoples, the St. Mary Valley was a valuable hunting ground, a place of spiritual power, and a route to the other side of the mountains. (Glacier NP photo HFP 1877.)

with two other tribes, the *Káínaa* (Blood), and *Siksikáwa* (Blackfoot) in forming the Blackfeet Confederacy. The three tribes spoke a common Algonquian language and were associated culturally and militarily. They were a nomadic game-hunting nation who thrived on their relationship to the plentiful bison. Grouped into small hunting bands through most of the year, they lived about half the year in winter camps located along sheltered stream valleys on the northern prairie and spent the warmer half of the year on the move accessing resources and gathering in larger numbers for ceremonies.

Long before the three tribes of the Blackfeet Confederacy came in direct contact with Europeans, they acquired Europeans' guns through trade with neighboring tribes to the northeast, the Cree and Assiniboiné. Thus armed, and soon equipped with horses through trade with the Shoshoni to the south, they became a dominant military power in the region in a period when the many Plains tribes jockeyed for territory and influence with the English and French in eastern North America. By the mid-eighteenth century the Blackfeet Confederacy controlled a large area extending from the Yellowstone River on the south to the North Saskatchewan River on the north and from the Rocky Mountains on the west to the Musselshell River and the Cypress Hills on the east. The Piegan occupied the southern half of this vast domain while the Blood and Blackfoot held the territory to the north. When European fur traders first came into the area, they found the Blackfeet nation hostile or resistant to the fur traders' incursions. After the Blackfeet Confederacy's homeland was divided between the United States and Canada, the Piegan were cut off from the Blood and Blackfoot. The Piegan allied with the A'aninin tribe, another Plains tribe located to the east, thereby maintaining its ascendancy until around the mid-nineteenth century.

Despite the Blackfeet domination in the area, other tribes made forays into the St. Mary Valley from time to time. The Upper Kutenai lived in the Kootenay Valley west of Glacier and often hunted in the area now within the park. They hunted frequently in the St. Mary region before the Blackfeet pushed them out. Sometimes the Kutenai joined forces with the Kalispel and Flathead tribes in making an expedition into Blackfeet territory to hunt bison. The Nakoda or Stoney tribe, an offshoot of the Assiniboiné, also ventured into the Glacier area to hunt big game animals in defiance of the Blackfeet. Though their movements are not well known, it is thought they may have lived at one time in the Belly River area. Stoney Indian Pass in the northeast corner of the park is named for them (Buchholtz, 1976, 6-8).

Decades after Europeans' guns and horses came into the region through intertribal trade, European fur traders and explorers began to make their appearance. In the late eighteenth century, French and British fur traders extended their operations across the Canadian prairie to the edge of the Rocky Mountains. Peter Fidler, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, wintered with the Piegan in 1792 and explored the edge of the prairie near what is now the park. Chief Mountain appeared on a map made from his notes a few years later. Generally, fur traders met with a chilly reception from the Blackfeet, who did not want Europeans to trade guns to their enemies to the west (Robinson, 1960, 6-7).

Since Glacier National Park sits at the crown of the continent, where the watersheds of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic oceans all come to an apex, and since European nations in the eighteenth century used the boundaries of watersheds and major rivers to demarcate their claims

of empire, the region was destined to be remote yet contested in the imperial struggle for North America. The royal charter given to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 gave that company a supposed monopoly on Indian trade to the farthest limits of the Hudson's Bay watershed. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 gave the United States a vast territorial claim stretching to the edge of the Missouri River basin. When the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through present-day Montana on its homeward journey in 1806, Meriwether Lewis made a side exploration up the Marias River, interested to determine the northern extent of the Missouri River basin as well as to establish contact with the Blackfeet. His turnaround point was on Cut Bank Creek about 20 miles east of the Rocky Mountains. A little to his north was the Hudson Bay Divide, beyond which all waters drain northeastward to Hudson Bay. The St. Mary River starts at the outlet of St. Mary Lake and flows northeastward. The St. Mary Valley came within the Hudson Bay Company's 1670 charter and fell just outside the Louisiana Purchase. Lewis had good reason to suppose that the Hudson Bay Divide would become the permanent boundary between the United States and British North America. However, a convention between Britain and the United States in 1818 moved the boundary northward to the 49th parallel.

North West Company trader and explorer David Thompson established trading posts at Kullyspell House (near Kalispell) in 1809 and Salish House (near Thompson Falls) in 1810, and sent his employees on expeditions from those points eastward over the mountains, probably via Marias Pass, to initiate trade with the Blackfeet. The first such expedition, made by a Scotsman named Finian MacDonald in company with two French Canadians named Michel Bourdeaux and Baptiste Buché is reckoned to be the first recorded instance of non-Indians in present-day Glacier (Buchholtz, 1976, 17-19). But this expedition went nowhere near the St. Mary Valley. In truth, European and American fur traders remained fearful of the Blackfeet and may not have entered the St. Mary Valley at all while the Rocky Mountain fur trade was in its heyday. By the late 1830s, Blackfeet power waned but so did the Rocky Mountain fur trade.

After the quest for beaver pelts died away, the next thing that drew non-Indians into Glacier's remote mountain valleys was the quest for a pass through the mountains suitable for a transcontinental railroad. Isaac Stevens, appointed first governor of Washington Territory in 1853, led the northern survey. From his expedition's camp in the Bitterroot Valley, he sent a subordinate A. W. Tinkham, to explore the mountain passes east of the Flathead Valley. Tinkham set out with his Flathead Indian guide in search of the well-traveled American Indian trail over Marias Pass, but they lost their way and went over Cut Bank Pass instead. After Tinkham made his report, Stevens sent another subordinate, John Doty, to search for the fabled pass from the eastern side. Doty hired Hugh Monroe, a former Hudson's Bay employee who lived with the Piegan, and traveled up the St. Mary Valley until he was satisfied it was not the route for a railroad. Doty then explored north and south along the front range, locating the eastern approach to Cut Bank Pass once again mistaking it for Marias Pass. Since Tinkham and Doty each recommended that the pass was unsuitable, Stevens turned to other passes further south. More than 30 years went by until John F. Stevens (no relation to Isaac Stevens), chief engineer for Great Northern Railway, found Marias Pass with the help of another Flathead Indian guide, Coonsah (Buchholtz, 1976, 22-23, 32).

Gold seekers came to Montana Territory in the 1860s. The first wave of prospectors to travel through present-day Glacier may have been heading from Montana's gold fields northward

to new gold strikes in British Columbia and along the Saskatchewan River in 1866. Captain James Fisk reportedly led eighty prospectors on an exploration of the Upper Marias River drainages that year. Another party under the leadership of Joseph Kipp explored the St. Mary Lakes region in 1869 (Buchholtz, 1976, 28).

The Blackfeet opposed prospectors coming into their country just as they had checked fur traders' incursions earlier. Friction between the Blackfeet and Montana settlers led to the notorious "Baker Massacre" in 1870 in which 173 Blackfeet, including 53 women and children, were slain in an attack on their village by the U.S. military. Coinciding with a small pox epidemic, the defeat at the hands of the army broke the tribe's power to resist invasion. More prospecting parties entered what is now park domain after 1870, though the historical record of their movements is sketchy. A party led by one William Veach reportedly prospected in the St. Mary Lakes region in 1876. Duncan McDonald (for whom Lake McDonald may have been named) made numerous trips up the North Fork of the Flathead or over Marias Pass hauling freight to the mining camps. One man named Dick King reportedly made his home in the St. Mary Valley in the 1880s, the sole non-Indian resident (Buchholtz, 1976, 28-30).

Discovery of copper and quartz veins together with an oil seep at Kintla Lake in 1892 created a flurry of excitement. That led to more mineral finds in the mountains in the mid-1890s, which in turn brought pressure on the Blackfeet tribe to cede the western side of the Blackfeet Reservation. The Blackfeet Reservation in 1895 was already much reduced from its original extent as established by treaty in 1855. The Blackfeet tribe was by this time destitute, deprived of its basic resource when the bison were wiped out, and tribal leaders sensed that the land would be taken from them with or without their consent. Reluctantly, they agreed to a land cession for \$1,500,000, pushed by their friend and confidant George Bird Grinnell, who was thinking of the future national park as well as the interests of the tribe (Buchholtz, 1976, 28-34).

The ceded strip was formally opened to prospectors on April 15, 1898, and a mining rush ensued. Miners staked claims at locations in Swiftcurrent Valley, on Canyon Creek, at Cracker Lake, around Slide Lake, and at Rose Creek among other places. A tiny mining settlement of Saint Mary formed at the foot of Upper Saint Mary Lake near the present site of the Hudson Bay District Office. The mining camp did not last, but its name was transferred to the tourism-centered village that developed many years later on the other side of Divide Creek on the Blackfeet Reservation. Better known than (old) Saint Mary was the boom town of Altyn, which arose in the Swiftcurrent Valley. Around 1900, Altyn had a population of several hundred residents. Sawmills in the valley milled hundreds of thousands of board feet of lumber for construction of mills and town buildings. However, the mining excitement soon spent itself; by 1902, only a smattering of people remained (Buchholtz, 1976, 34-35).

The area was included in the Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve, established by presidential proclamation on February 22, 1897. Even then, preservationists including John Muir were eyeing the area as a potential national park. The Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve was administered by the General Land Office primarily for protection of timber and watersheds. In 1905, all forest reserves were transferred to the Forest Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 1907, the name changed from forest reserve to national forest. Forest administration in this period was limited to one or two rangers cutting trails, making patrols, putting out fires, and making arrests

for poaching. With such a vast territory to cover, the ranger activity was almost token. The ranger activity was confined mostly to the valley of the North Fork of the Flathead.

Developments around St. Mary Lake, Glacier National Park, 1910-1930

A few wealthy sportsmen and adventurous tourists made excursions into the area of the future park. James Willard Schultz had a trading post at Fort Conrad and was married to a Piegan. He wrote an article about the St. Mary Lakes for *Forest and Stream* after which he guided the magazine editor, George Bird Grinnell, on a hunting trip through the area. Grinnell and Schultz publicized the Glacier area through their writings and pushed for a national park. The area became more accessible after the completion of the Great Northern Railway line through Marias Pass in 1891. When Glacier National Park was established by act of Congress on May 11, 1910, some minimal tourist development existed on the park's west side around Lake McDonald and at Belton (now West Glacier) while none yet existed on the park's east side. Louis W. Hill was president of Great Northern Railway, the son of the famous railroad builder James J. Hill and heir to his railroad empire. Enamored with Glacier National Park from his own sport hunting trips to the area, he committed the railroad to developing the east side of Glacier National Park into a vacationland.

Starting in the summer of 1911, Great Northern began to promote Glacier tourism through its advertising department and to develop visitor accommodations and guided horse trips. It also transported two boats to St. Mary Lake, the *Red Eagle* and the *Glacier*, and established a boat service up the lake. Initially the company built a network of chalets located one day apart by horse or boat. Between 1911 and 1913, Swiss-style chalets were built at Two Medicine, Cut Bank, Gunsight Lake, Sperry, Granite Park, Swiftcurrent Lake, and three locations on St. Mary Lake, one at the foot of the lake one at the

Narrows about half way up the lake, and one a little higher at Sun Point (Figs. 3-5). Hill personally selected each site, taking account of the scenic routes and distances between chalets as well as the commanding views afforded by each overnight location. Distances between chalets were as follows: Midvale to Two Medicine, fourteen miles; Two Medicine to Cut Bank, sixteen miles; Cut Bank to St. Mary, twenty-two miles; St. Mary to Gunsight, fifteen miles; Gunsight to Sperry, twelve miles. From Sperry Chalet, which was located on Sprague Creek below the Sperry Glacier, Lake McDonald was seven miles away (Mires, 2009, 53-54; Djuff and Morrison, 2001, 12-13; SAR, 1911, 6).



Fig. 3. View from the Narrows of Going-to-the-Sun Chalets on Sun Point, circa 1914. Before there were park roads, chalet groups such as this one facilitated backcountry trips through Glacier by horseback and boat. (Glacier NP photo HPF 3307. R. E. (Ted) Marble, photographer.)

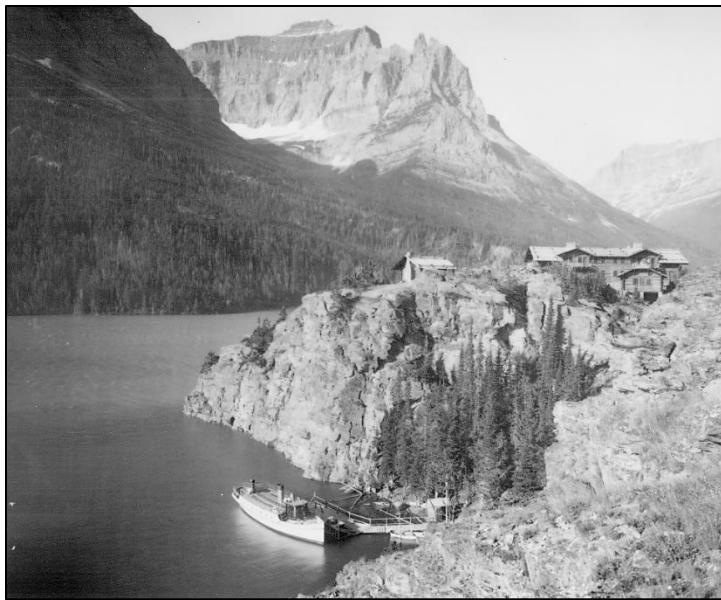


Fig. 4. Another view of Going-to-the-Sun Chalets with boat launch on St. Mary Lake, c. 1914. The facility was closed after Rising Sun Auto Camp opened in 1941. (Glacier NP photo HPF 1880. R. E. (Ted) Marble, photographer.)



Fig 5. St. Mary Chalets opened in 1913 and operated until 1941. (Glacier NP photo GLAC 11814. Fred H. Kiser, photographer.)



Fig. 6. Guests at Many Glacier Hotel, ca. 1915. In the beginning of Glacier's railroad era most visitors came by rail and stayed in the park's big hotels. (Glacier NP photo GLAC 7532. Fred H. Kiser, photographer.)

Once the chalets were operational, Great Northern completed its development plan for Glacier tourism with the construction of high-class hotels at Midvale and Many Glacier, the addition of boat launches on St. Mary Lake, and the introduction of bus service from the Midvale station to St. Mary and Many Glacier. Louis Hill formed a subsidiary company, Glacier Park Hotel Company, to operate all the railroad's tourist facilities and services. All this development was completed in five years, 1911 to 1915. It was still the railroad era of national park development; other national parks that were largely developed by a railroad included Yellowstone and Grand Canyon (Fig. 6).

National park administration was rudimentary in this era. The National Park Service (NPS) was not yet established. Glacier National Park was only the tenth designation of its kind. The Secretary of the Interior administered the national parks from the nation's capital with the help of a chief clerk and a general superintendent of national parks. At the field level, the federal staff consisted of a park superintendent and a few rangers. Under these conditions, Louis Hill had practically a free hand in deciding how to develop the area. He personally selected the locations for each chalet group and hotel. It was only after everything was built or under construction that attorneys for the railroad and the Department of the Interior completed the formal grants for all these national park visitor facilities. In 1914, each chalet group or hotel was covered by a 20-year lease of the ground on which it was built. A survey plat accompanied each filing. The correspondence surrounding the filings show that at this early stage in park development it was Louis Hill and the railroad who got to decide where visitor facilities would be built and what they would look like (Mather, 1915; Carroll, 1916; Freund, 1914a; Freund, 1914b).

Great Northern's hotels were as grand as any in the national parks. Many Glacier Hotel was the biggest hotel in Montana (Fig. 7). The backcountry chalets, meanwhile, became a unique feature of Glacier. No other park had such well-appointed backcountry accommodations arranged in a string to accommodate multi-day horse trips through the park. Because of this feature, no other park was so popular with horse parties. In its heyday, the Pack Saddle Horse Company of Glacier owned over 1,000 head of horses and served 10,000 visitors a year, making it the largest saddle horse outfit of its kind in the world. The chalets and the horse parties went hand in hand, although some of the chalets could be accessed by stage, automobile, or boat as well as by horse, and eventually they became popular destinations for hikers, too (SAR, 1911, 10; SAR, 1912, 7; Wood and Wood, 1979, 81).

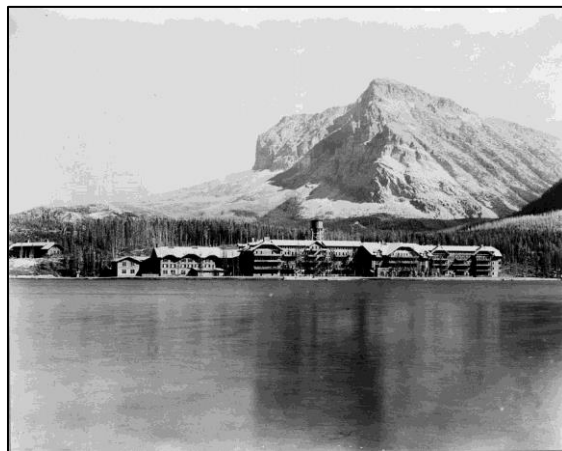


Fig. 7. Many Glacier Hotel was Montana's biggest hotel when it opened in 1915. (Library of Congress photo.)

The popularity of horse trips did not mean that Hill and Great Northern were opposed to improving automobile access. To the contrary, Hill wanted the government to prioritize road and trail development on the east side of the park. That idea met resistance from the park's early superintendents, who made their headquarters on the west side and were uniformly interested in

completing a good park road to Lake McDonald and beyond before doing anything else. However, the park administration did start to focus on road and trail development on the east side by 1914. Besides improving the trails linking the chalets, the park administration opened additional trails on the east side that made the Swiftcurrent Valley an attractive hub, and it established passable roads into Two Medicine Lake and Cut Bank. Further, it contracted with Great Northern to build a road up the east side of the park on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation that would come to be known as the Blackfeet Highway (Schene, 1990, 71-72; SAR, 1914, 6-7).

In 1914, Hill formed the Glacier Park Hotel Company, a subsidiary of Great Northern Railway Company, for purposes of running tourist operations in Glacier in the interest of the parent company. While the subsidiary company was wholly owned by the parent company, it soon had assets worth more than \$2 million. The company began with a capital stock of \$1.5 million in 15,000 shares valued at \$100 apiece. It had a 30-year charter (Kenney, 1914; Hidy et al., 1988, 124; Articles of Incorporation, 1919).

Thanks to Hill's personal interest in developing Glacier for Great Northern, the amount of capital investment and the pace of construction of visitor accommodations in Glacier were unlike anything that occurred in other national parks before or after. By 1916, Great Northern had invested somewhere between \$1.2 million and \$2 million in the park. This compared with the federal government's investment of about \$634,000 through the same period. Hill complained about the government's stinginess. Railroad officials claimed that the company spent



Fig. 8. The curving staircase, stone planter and log chandelier in the Many Glacier Hotel, ca. 1940, suggest the rustic opulence that was characteristic of visitor lodging facilities in the park's railroad era. (Glacier NP photo GLAC 8249. T. J. Hileman, photographer.)

ten times what the government spent on the park in the first decade. While the difference in spending was nowhere near what company official claimed it was, the imbalance was apparent to anyone who visited the park. Hill developed the park largely as he saw fit, concentrating visitor accommodations on the east side of the park. Utilizing Great Northern's robust advertising arm, he created a popular image of Glacier as "America's Switzerland," inscribing the park's infrastructure with a unique blend of Swiss, Western, and American Indian motifs. He made Glacier, in a sense, a colony in the Great Northern Railway's empire (Fig. 8).

With the creation of NPS in 1916, the federal government began to assert more control over park development. NPS Director Stephen T. Mather instituted a national park concessions policy based on the concept of regulated monopoly: an operator such as Glacier Park Hotel Company received an exclusive right to do business in the national park and in return for that protected status it had to follow NPS direction on planning and design of buildings. Hill's Glacier Park Hotel Company transitioned into that new subordinate role.

Around the same time, the spread of the automobile began to transform American patterns of leisure travel and national park visitation. Mather promoted the grand tour of western national parks by private automobile. The National Park-to-Park Highway was a 1,650-mile circuit of improved public roads such as the Yellowstone Trail that led the traveler to a dozen national parks from Glacier in the north to Grand Canyon in the south. Mather sought to develop each national park with carefully designed roads, providing better access to points of interest and inaugurating what would become a staple of the national park visitor experience, driving to view scenery. As more middle-class Americans acquired cars and the quality of interstate roads improved, the number of people going to national parks burgeoned. Mather recognized the growth of car culture as a central underpinning of his quest to make the National Park System a strong and enduring feature in the life of the nation (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. The National Park-to-Park Highway promoted auto travel around the West. NPS partnered with the National Park-to-Park Highway Association to increase public use of national parks. (Rocky Mountain National Park.com image.)

In Glacier National Park, the number of visitors who came by car steadily rose while the number of visitors arriving by rail slowly declined. The mode of travel was generally seen as a reflection of class, with car travel being the preferred mode for most middle-class visitors and rail travel being the usual mode of the well-to-do. This distinction had less to do with the cost of transportation than it did with the class of accommodation visitors sought once they got to the park: rail arrivals patronized the hotels and chalets; car arrivals were self-contained travelers who were apt to prefer free camping. Class labels were assigned to each type of park visitor: hotel sojourners were “dudes,” while car campers were “sagebrushers.” NPS welcomed the latter group and tended to view the rise of the automobile as a boon in making Glacier accessible to a broader public. Making the park accessible to all fulfilled the democratic promise contained in the national park idea.

National park campgrounds might have developed as an extension of concession operations, with camping facilities being built and operated by the hotel company. However, at an early stage NPS took over the function of campground development in all national parks. NPS may have been influenced by the example of city governments, which established free municipal campgrounds for the traveling public in order to control sanitation and public order as this low-budget form of leisure travel burgeoned. Mather considered camping facilities to be part of the total infrastructure of visitor accommodations in national parks, which he called “public utilities.” But he drew a line between government-run campgrounds and concession-operated hotels. He commented on the new campgrounds in 1920, “all public utilities of this kind should be owned and operated at a profit by the Government, and should include power plants, telephone systems, and water systems, as well as sewer systems.” National park campgrounds evolved through the 1920s. At first, NPS merely cleared some ground for car campers and installed water and sewer systems. Later, NPS put in water taps, flush toilets, and picnic tables. The crucial thing was that campgrounds provided an inexpensive alternative form of overnight accommodation to the older hotels. NPS assertively moved into this area of visitor service, managing campgrounds with park staff rather than folding the campground operation into the concession (Catton, 2006, 69-81).

By 1925, Glacier had four public campgrounds, two on the east side and two on the west side. At this early stage, the campground was just an open area without designated tent sites; campers pulled off the road and set up camp wherever they chose. There was no campground at Roes Creek, as construction of the Going-to-the-Sun Road had only begun and was focused on the west side.

The 1920s have been called the “golden years” for the Glacier Park Hotel Company. The hotels did a booming business. As the Going-to-the-Sun Road was not yet built, horse trips remained the preferred mode of travel for exploring the park. On the park’s east side, the Glacier Park Transportation Company operated a fleet of touring cars or buses that shuttled rail passenger visitors between the hotels and chalets and boat service on St. Mary Lake. In one year, 1925, the railroad put on 52 special trains that brought some 5,000 more visitors to the park than in the previous year, setting a record for total park visitation. Much of the increase in rail passenger traffic to Glacier that year was a byproduct of several big conventions held on the West Coast. The next year, Great Northern’s total passenger traffic fell back and so did the number of rail passenger visitors to Glacier. Another banner year was 1929, when the park

counted over 80,000 visitors, 10,000 arriving by rail (Fraley, 1998, 47; Hufstetler, 1997, 7; Diehl-Taylor, 1997, 32-33; Robinson, 1960, 127).

A closer look at the Glacier Park Hotel Company's financial performance during the 1920s presents another picture, however. Historian Christiane Diehl-Taylor finds that even in its heyday the company was unable to turn a profit. "Including taxes, interest, and depreciation, which is the traditional view of profit and loss, the hotel company showed a loss every year from 1914 to 1929," she writes. Losses were heaviest during the years 1914-1917, when the company poured money into hotel construction, and in 1918, when World War I impacted railroad operations. Losses were lighter through the 1920s and almost shrank to the break-even point in 1925, the year of the West Coast conventions. Even by the method of accounting used by Great Northern, which wiped away the 6 percent interest on capital investment, the Glacier Park Hotel Company only managed to turn a slight profit in 1923 and 1925. Over the whole decade, Great Northern showed a loss of \$1.2 million on a total investment of nearly double that amount (Diehl-Taylor, 1997, 34).

Great Northern officials justified the investment in Glacier based on it generating more passenger traffic for the railroad. Yet even by that measure, the investment did not bear fruit. With the rise of the automobile, Great Northern faced a precipitous decline in its total passenger traffic: from over 9 million passengers in 1914 to less than 3 million passengers in 1929. During these years, the railroad's passenger traffic to Glacier held steady at around 10,000 to 15,000 passengers per year, and therefore the Glacier traffic rose as a percentage of the railroad's overall passenger traffic. Yet, as Diehl-Taylor points out, the numbers were not large enough to matter much: the number of passengers bound for Glacier rose from a tenth of a percent of all passengers in 1914 to seven-tenths of a percent in 1929. The park never became the goose that laid the golden eggs that railroad investors wished for. At best, all the tickets sold to Glacier-bound passengers might have produced a revenue stream barely big enough to offset the railroad company's losses in the park (Diehl-Taylor, 1997, 33).

The growth of auto travel to Glacier National Park in the 1920s might have been viewed as unhelpful to the interests of Great Northern Railway Company, since auto travelers did not use the train nor did most of them stay in park hotels, preferring to camp in public campgrounds. The Glacier Park Hotel Company, as a subsidiary of Great Northern, clearly preferred to see park visitors travel to Glacier by railroad. Yet the Glacier Park Hotel Company and Great Northern executives took a more benign view of the rising car culture than one might expect. While it was true that practically all rail passenger visitors to Glacier patronized Glacier Park Hotel Company's lodging facilities and only a fraction of auto passenger visitors did so, nonetheless the growth of car travel to Glacier did bring more business to the company's hotels and restaurants. Car travel did not compete with rail travel so much as it complemented it, adding to total visitor numbers.

Development of the Roes Creek Auto Camp, 1930-1960

In 1929, NPS requested that the Glacier Park Hotel Company prepare a five-year development plan to address needs of middle-class visitors coming to the park by car. The new

direction in Glacier was part of an initiative by NPS leadership to expand visitor facilities in national parks throughout the system. NPS officials prodded the company to plan for auto camps as they appeared to be the wave of the future in outdoor recreation.

As auto touring grew in popularity it changed in character. While the so-called sagebrushers of the 1920s carried their own camping equipment, by the end of the decade many auto tourists relied on cheap roadside accommodations, particularly the new *tourist cabin*, in lieu of setting up camp each night. This simple dwelling unit could be very small, just big enough to contain a bed, table, and chair. The tourist cabin was generally part of a group of cabins with a shared bathhouse and toilets. Generally, the complex was called a *tourist cabin camp*. NPS adopted the term *auto camp* instead of *tourist cabin camp*. This was consistent with its strict adherence to the term *visitor* instead of *tourist*. NPS used the term *housekeeping cabin* instead of *tourist cabin*. Housekeeping in this context meant simply that the facility provided basic amenities for sleeping, preparing meals, and washing up. Historian Warren James Belasco explains the aesthetics and economics behind the car travelers' new preference for the tourist or housekeeping cabin in the 1930s:

The cabin seemed a happy compromise [between tenting out and renting a hotel room]. There was still enough roughing it to reinvigorate family life. Beds and other domestic arrangements were cruder than home. Everyone lived in the same small space and huddled around a common old-fashioned stove. Since camps were generally located in the country, children could still play outdoors, and everyone could breathe healthy fresh air....

Cabin comfort was not necessarily more expensive. For a dollar a night – just fifty cents more than the tent fee – a family saved one hundred dollars or more by not buying a good tent and camp furniture. By bringing their own bedding, food, and utensils, they still saved a good deal over hotels. Some camps also offered inexpensive meals, thus sparing road-weary mothers the evening chores. Tourists still saved money by eating breakfast in the cabin and picnicking on the road at noon. (Belasco, 1979, 132-33).

NPS observed these changes in the auto touring industry and sought to expand visitor accommodations in national parks to meet changing demand. NPS policy held that national park lodging should be minimal and basic, no more than was necessary to satisfy the public need. As the public need evolved, NPS intended to expand, diversify, or upgrade national park lodging accordingly.

NPS appealed to the Glacier Park Hotel Company to develop auto camps when it convened the first National Park Operators Conference in December 1929. NPS pushed for this new type of development in many national parks besides Glacier, and its architects and landscape architects were busy preparing design concepts for the new type of development. A few weeks after the conference, NPS sent sketches and layouts for proposed auto camps at Many Glacier and Roes Creek to Glacier Park Hotel Company (National Park Service, 1930). The Many Glacier location was selected to provide an alternative to the upscale Many Glacier Hotel, while the Roes Creek site was suggested because it would be on the new Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The trans-mountain park road, under construction since the early 1920s, was expected to be complete in one or two more years. The Glacier Park Hotel Company balked at building new facilities as the economy sank into depression (Binder, 1930; Eakin, 1930). Under pressure from NPS, it went forward with the first one, to be known as the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, in 1933. It finally built the second auto camp in 1940 (Figs. 10-11).

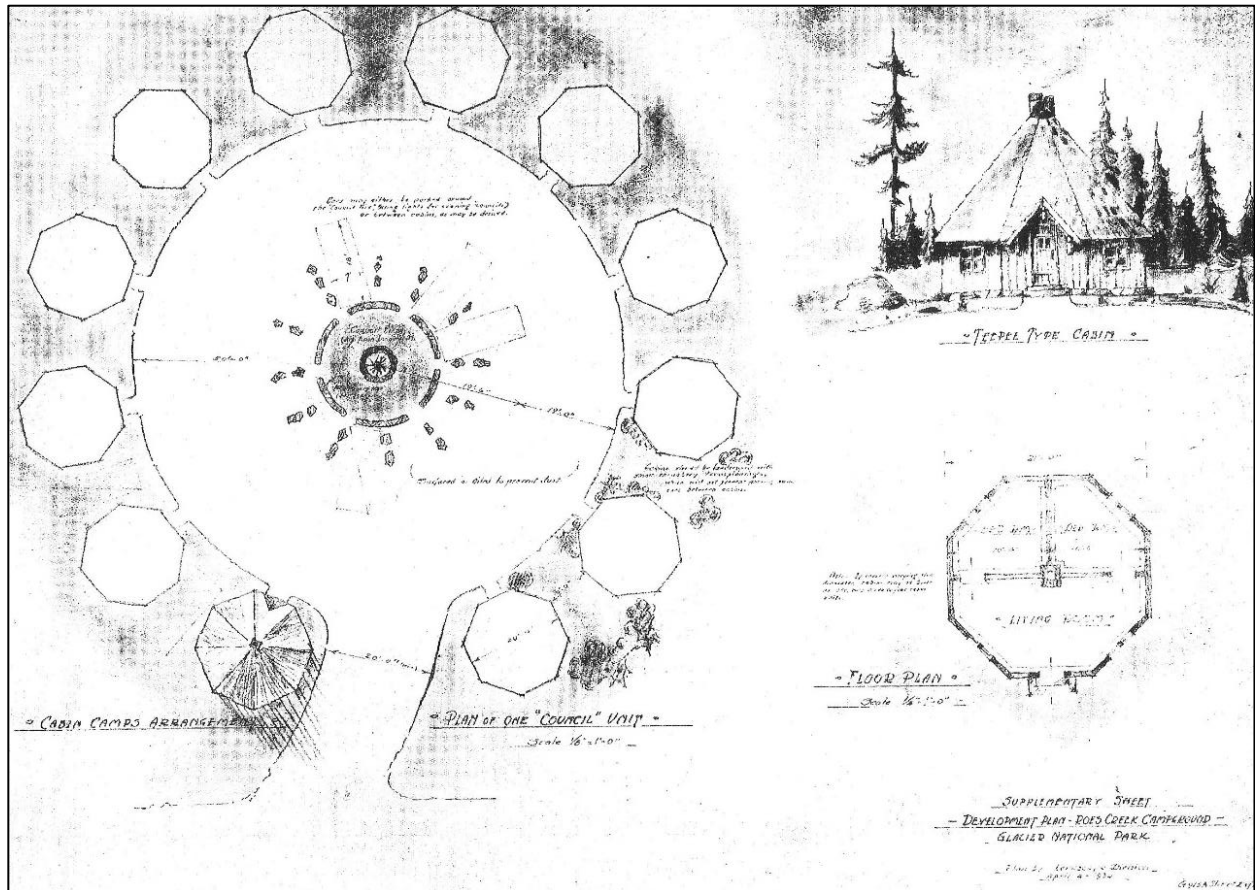


Fig.10. This 1930 plan illustrates concepts for a “tepee village” style of auto camp, with conical-shaped cabins around the edge and guest parking around a “council fire” in the center of each cabin circle. (TIC drawing.)

Fig. 11. NPS chose the Rose Creek area for a development because it is the first large area of gently sloping ground on the Going-to-the-Sun Road to the east of Logan Pass. (Glacier NP photo 15590, unknown photographer, c. 1928.)



The concession development at Rose Creek was called the Roes Creek Auto Camp (using an earlier spelling of Rose Creek) when it was in the planning stage in the 1930s. It was called East Glacier after it opened in 1940. That name became confusing after the town of Midvale became East Glacier Park. It acquired its present name of Rising Sun in 1950. For ease, we will omit use of the transitional name East Glacier and use just the original name and the present one.

Being located on the Going-to-the-Sun Road, the Roes Creek Auto Camp was even more closely tied to automotive tourism than the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp was. By 1939, more than 95 percent of Glacier's visitors came to the park by automobile. The Glacier Park Hotel Company and Great Northern executives agreed with NPS that the park needed more of the cabin type of accommodations to meet changing demand. They agreed with NPS that Glacier's accommodations were weighted too much toward the hotel type, a legacy of the railroad era, which most visitors found too pricy for their liking (Allen, 1939).

A distinguishing feature of both auto camps was that each one was located next to a public campground. NPS conceived of these paired auto camps and campgrounds as a single development area, with shared utilities such as water, sewer, and electricity (Fig. 12). Whereas the Many Glacier Hotel and the Swiftcurrent development area were located a mile apart for spatial separation between the two types of park visitors, auto camps and public campgrounds

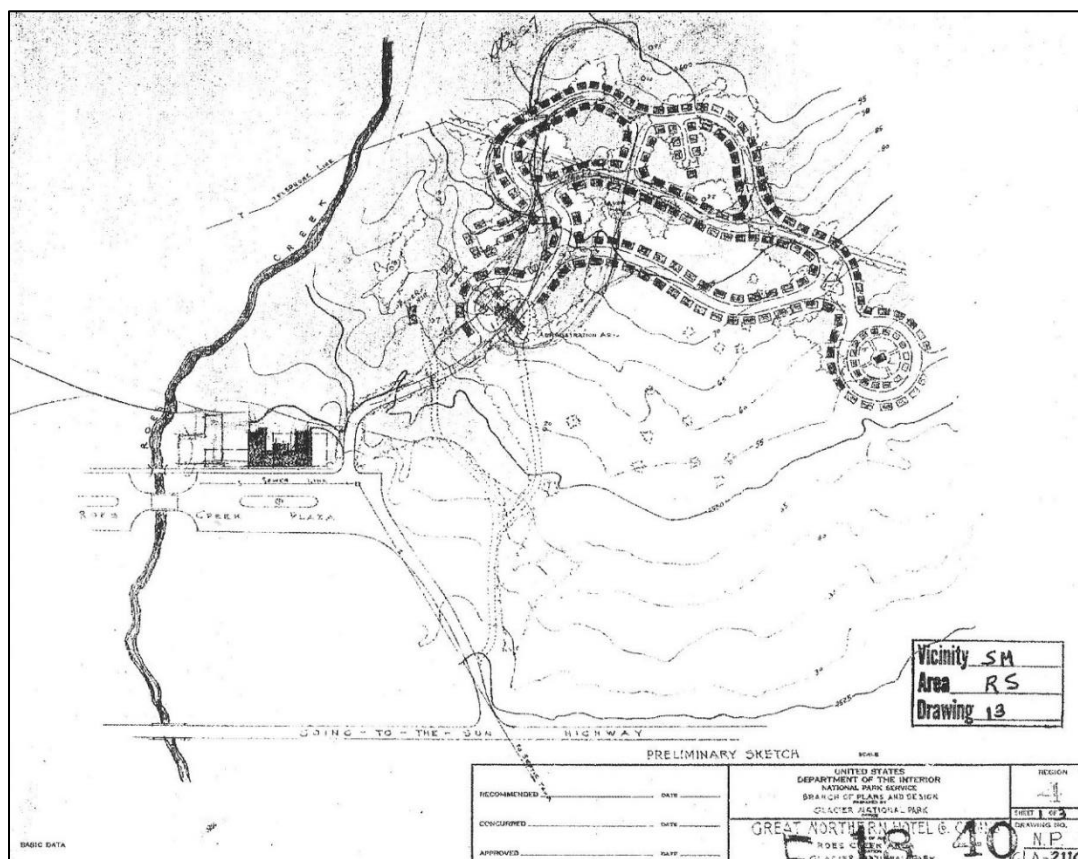


Fig. 12. This 1940 plan shows how the auto camp and campground developments were linked. A bridge over Rose Creek linked the two parking plazas, while the camp store was placed nearly equidistant between the cabin area shown here and the campground off the left edge of the map. (TIC drawing.)

were placed together in one development area so that people staying in each facility would make use of the whole complex. Public campground users, for example, could patronize the auto camp store, while auto camp guests could attend interpretive programs at the campground amphitheater. There was no significant difference between campers and cabin guests since virtually all were part of the influx of auto-touring middle-class park users.

Not every campground had an auto camp next to it. Glacier added several campgrounds in the 1930s. The Roes Creek Campground was opened in 1936 with 60 tent sites and six trailer sites (SAR, 1936, 14). Altogether in 1939 the park had thirteen campgrounds located at Many Glacier, Roes Creek, Avalanche Creek, Fish Creek, Two Medicine, Sprague Creek, Kintla Lake, Bowman Creek, Bowman Lake, Quartz Creek, Logging Creek, Cut Bank, and Walton. (Bowman Creek and Walton campgrounds were later closed; today's Apgar and St. Mary campgrounds were not yet built.) The first six named had piped running water, and except for Fish Creek they had flush toilets. The other seven campgrounds were more primitive (National Park Service, 1939).

Early NPS plans for the Roes Creek development show the connection between the Roes Creek Campground and Roes Creek Auto Camp. While each development had its own entrance road off the Going-to-the-Sun Road, they were linked by parking plazas and a bridge across the creek and they shared the same physical plant of water supply and electricity (National Park Service, Branch of Plans and Design, 1940).

As with the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, the development was a team effort. NPS prepared a site plan and built the road. The company prepared architectural plans with NPS input. The development consisted of two main buildings, nineteen cabins, and a small power house. Facing the parking plaza and conspicuous from the Going-to-the-Sun Road was the main building – a combination general store and lunch room building. It was a U-shaped structure with the store on one side, lunch room on the other, and a connecting lobby across the front. NPS recommended that the architectural plan for this building should be “restudied as a T-shaped plan in order that dependencies of the lunch room and the store may be in more intimate relationship,” but the company held to its U-shaped plan, which gave the exterior a long, low front facade with cross gable wings at each end. A double gable on each wing enhanced the appearance (Fig. 13). Historian Mark Hufstetler noted that this building “reveals refinements from the earlier, similar attempt at nearby Swiftcurrent...the



Fig. 13. Rising Sun store and lunch room, early 1950s. (Glacier NP photo DI 8635.)

Rising Sun structure exhibits a refinement of design resulting in both a more efficient and a more aesthetic structure” (Vint, 1940; Hufstetler, 1988).

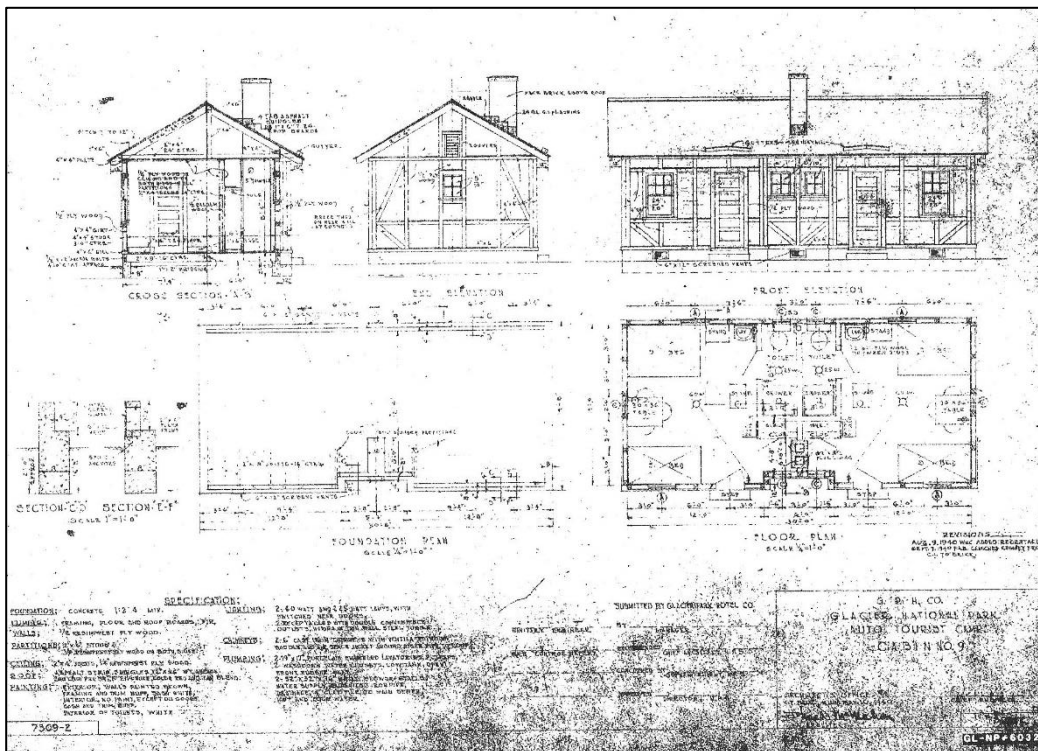
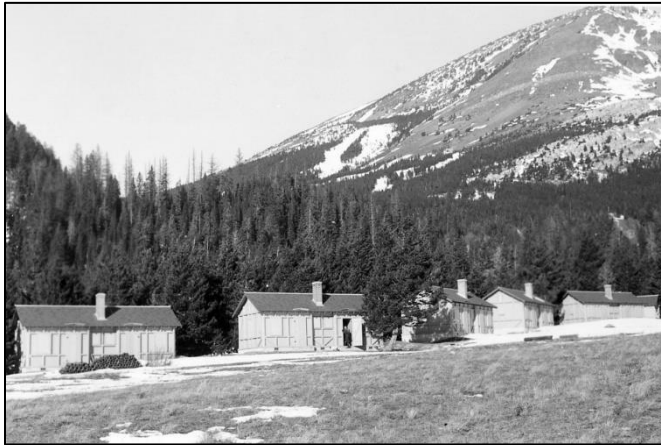
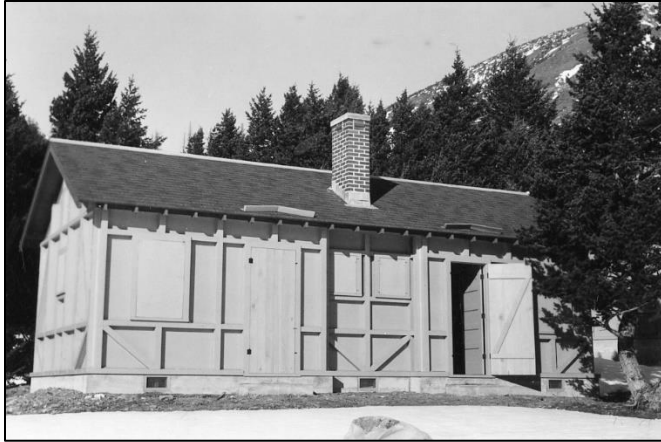
The second building was a separate registration building placed farther up the road in the cabin area. This building showed a touch of the Swiss style of architecture that was so pronounced in Glacier’s hotels and chalets, but toned down to suit the smaller building mass and leaner construction budget for the auto camp development. It featured a porte cochere, a common feature in the drive-up design of the new American motel (Fig. 14). NPS urged simplification of the roof lines and reduction of the porte cochere from a two-vehicle to a one-vehicle width (Vint, 1940; Hubber, 1995).



Fig. 14. The registration building was placed at the entrance to the cabin area. Its architectural design combined the Swiss look of the park’s grand hotels with a modest porte cochere scaled to the modern automobile age. The porte cochere was removed when the building was converted to an employee dormitory in the late 1950s. (Glacier NP photo DI 598.)

The company submitted nine cabin designs; of these, NPS recommended three; the company finally narrowed the selection to two. These were designated cabin types 4 and 9. Both types housed two side-by-side units, each unit equipped with a toilet, sink, wood-burning stove, and space for one double bed, one single bed, and table and chairs (Figs. 15-17). Type 9 units also had a shower, more floor space, and one extra window (Glacier Park Hotel Co., 1940). The cabins exhibited “studs-out” construction, a popular style in the 1930s and 1940s displaying some of the virtues of rustic design yet much cheaper to build than an equivalent size structure made with logs and native stone (Hubber, 1995).

The opening of the new auto camp spelled doom for the St. Mary Chalets located at the foot of the lake. The chalet business was already flagging, since the original purpose of accommodating people on horse trips through the park became outmoded after the Going-to-the-Sun Road made it possible to cross the park in a car trip in a matter of hours. Moreover, the St. Mary Chalets facility was too upscale to be adapted as a roadside accommodation. In May 1940, the general manager of the Glacier Park Hotel Company, A. A. Aszmann, informed Superintendent D. S. Libbey that he wanted to close the St. Mary Chalets as soon as the Roes Creek Auto Camp opened. NPS approved the decision. The Roes Creek Auto Camp opened for business in June 1941. The company closed the chalets according to plan and dismantled the buildings two years later (Aszmann, 1940; Libbey, 1940; Djuff and Morrison, 2001, 69).



Wartime travel restrictions led to a sharp curtailment of national park visitation. All visitor facilities in Glacier closed for the duration of the war except for the Roes Creek Auto Camp, which still operated seasonally to serve the small number of park visitors as well as the rare through-park traveler driving the Sun Road.

The Roes Creek development area was designed for expansion. Only nineteen cabins were built in 1940-41 with plans to add many more. World War II intervened before those plans were implemented. After the war, the Glacier Park Hotel Company was in a difficult financial position, faced with a backlog of maintenance on buildings on top of many years of operating at a loss. Consequently, NPS set aside plans for expansion for almost a decade. But as Glacier visitation climbed higher in the late 1940s, NPS renewed its request for the concession to build more visitor accommodations. In January 1950, Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam recommended increasing the total capacity of overnight lodging inside the park from an existing pillow count of 872 to 1,884, including an expansion at Roes Creek from 87 to 300 (Merriam, 1950). In February 1950, NPS Director Newton B. Drury wrote to Great Northern's president, F. J. Gavin informing him of NPS's overall plans for visitor accommodations in Glacier and requesting a meeting. Drury stated that the need for additional facilities, last broached in 1941, was now "many times more acute" (Drury, 1950a).

In the ensuing correspondence between Gavin and Drury, the railroad executive reviewed the concession's financial troubles through the years and the formidable cost of rehabilitating and modernizing facilities throughout the park, and he conveyed the heavy news that Great Northern, after forty years of service to NPS, would probably pull out of Glacier at the expiration of Glacier Park Company's twenty-year contract, on December 31, 1951, less than two years hence. Gavin reminded Drury that Great Northern built the Glacier hotels and chalets to attract business to its railroad, and since the advent of the automobile the whole picture had changed. In 1950, a paltry 1½ percent of park visitors traveled to Glacier by rail. The company calculated that it would take a whopping \$9 million to rehabilitate and expand its park facilities. Considering the other demands on its capital investment, Great Northern had to shed its Glacier hotel operations (Gavin, 1950).

In the month of April 1950, the railroad president delivered a fifteen-page memo to Drury explaining his company's assumptions and conclusions. The salient points were first, that NPS wanted new development to focus on more auto camps, which was far from Great Northern's original purpose of investing money in park accommodations to stimulate rail travel; second, that through the years the Glacier hotel operations had been unprofitable and they would likely remain so; and third, that a new twenty-year contract would likely be on terms that the company would find unfavorable, such as a forty-hour workweek for concession employees (Great Northern, 1950).

NPS responded with a counterproposal for a development program that would accommodate more people at less cost than what Great Northern envisioned. The plan focused on facilities other than the Roes Creek Auto Camp; for instance, the plan nixed rehabilitation of the Lake McDonald Hotel in favor of an entirely new auto camp at Apgar. Drury wrote to Gavin that the NPS proposal would accommodate 2,838 visitors parkwide compared with 2,332 under Great Northern's plan and would cost an estimated \$7,960,000 as opposed to an estimated

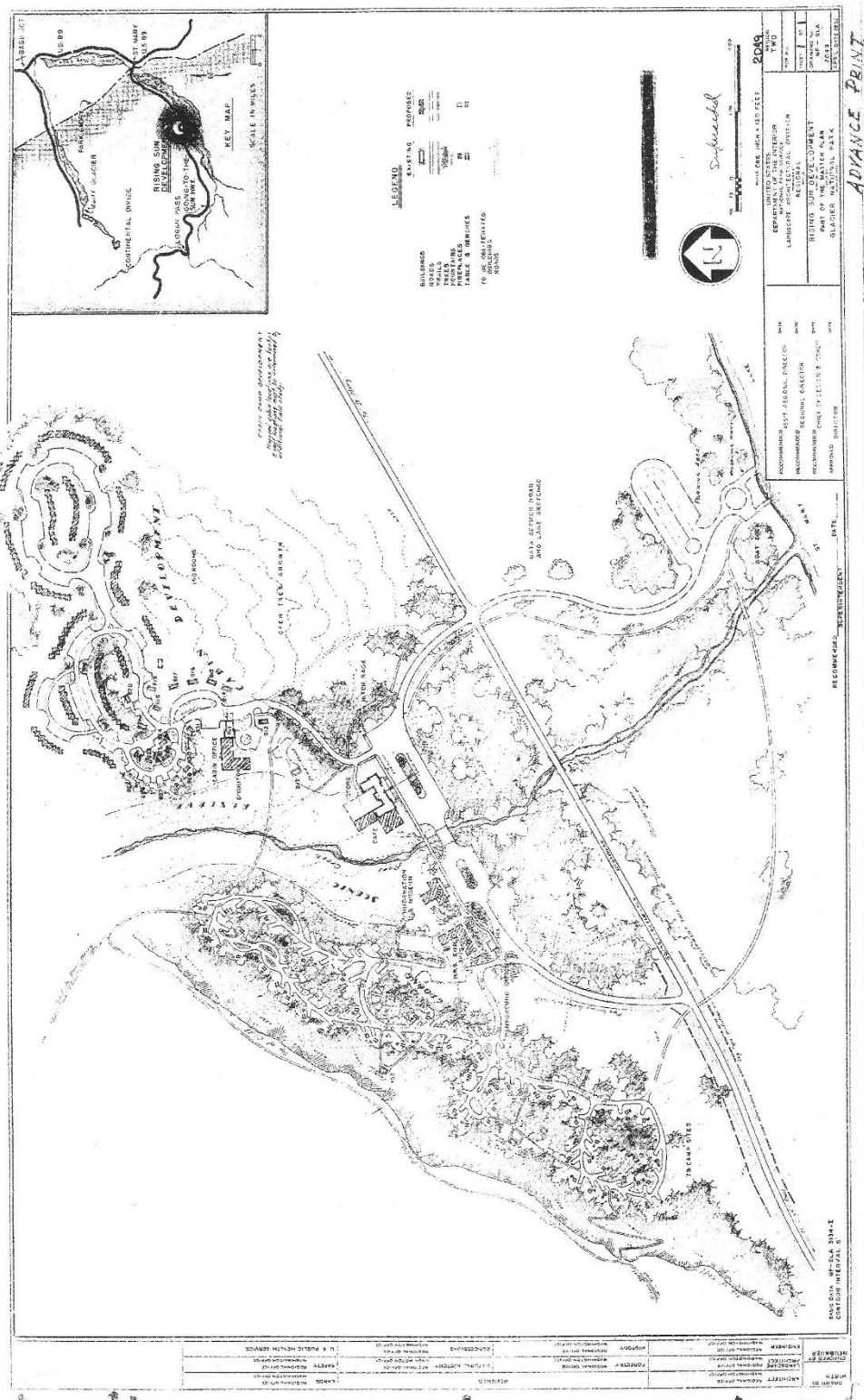


Fig. 18. This 1952 plan shows expansion with more housekeeping cabins. Instead, new construction would feature motel units rather than cabins. (Technical Information Center drawing.)

\$9,325,000 under Great Northern's plan. But NPS did not attempt to counter all the other reasons that Great Northern gave for jettisoning its Glacier hotel operations (Drury, 1950b).

Great Northern held to its position that it would soon relinquish its operations in Glacier. However, NPS obtained assurances from the railroad that the railroad subsidiary would continue to operate the hotels on a year-to-year contract while NPS searched for a new concessioner. Year-to-year contracts came to govern the strained partnership for four years until Great Northern relented and entered another long-term contract in November 1954 with the understanding that it would invest another \$1 million in new visitor facilities while NPS would find a competent party to take over the concession and compensate the railroad for its possessory interest (Price, 1952; Allen, 1952; Budd, 1953a; Budd, 1953b; Matthias, 1954; Budd, 1955).

Great Northern's \$1 million expansion program focused on visitor facilities at Rising Sun (as the former Roes Creek development area was now known), together with Swiftcurrent and Lake McDonald. The program was sequenced such that new construction at Swiftcurrent was accomplished in the spring of 1955; new construction at Rising Sun was begun in 1956 and completed in 1957, and renovations at Lake McDonald were made in 1957 and 1958 (Wirth, 1954; Budd, 1954; SARs, 1955-58).

By 1955, plans for both Swiftcurrent and Rising Sun featured the construction of new motel units rather than additional cabins. The decision to build modern motels in place of cabins occurred in 1952. Master plan drawings in the spring of 1952 still showed future construction in the form of cabins (Fig. 18), but in December of that year NPS architect John B. Cabot informed Superintendent John W. Emmert that Great Northern was opting for motels instead of cabins (Hall, 1952a; Cabot, 1952). The decision by Great Northern, approved by NPS, effectively turned the page on 40 years of craftsman-style architecture in Glacier and introduced modernist architecture in its place. Cabot would soon become supervisory architect in the Eastern Office of Design and Construction overseeing modernist architectural plans for visitor centers, administrative buildings and employee housing in the forthcoming Mission 66 construction program.

The modern motel answered to changing public taste. The vacationing American family wanted motel rooms with private bath, free linens and towels, central heat, and convenient parking, all at an affordable rate. The old-style housekeeping cabin was too spare; the grand hotel was too fancy. The only way concessioners could meet the public's desire was to build new accommodations in the modernist style of the plain, shoebox motel.

Great Northern planned to build two 14-unit motels. The company president, John M. Budd, was "adamant" that the motels should be built nearer the lake, on the other side of the road from the existing development. NPS overruled him, reasoning that if the development straddled the main park road it would create a hazard. Instead, the motels were situated on the sloping terrain near the cabins (Sutton, 1955; Emmert, 1955).

Architectural plans for the motel units were prepared by Great Northern and reviewed by the NPS Western Office of Design and Construction. The rectangular buildings each comprised a double row of back-to-back units with bathrooms and closets facing alternate directions down

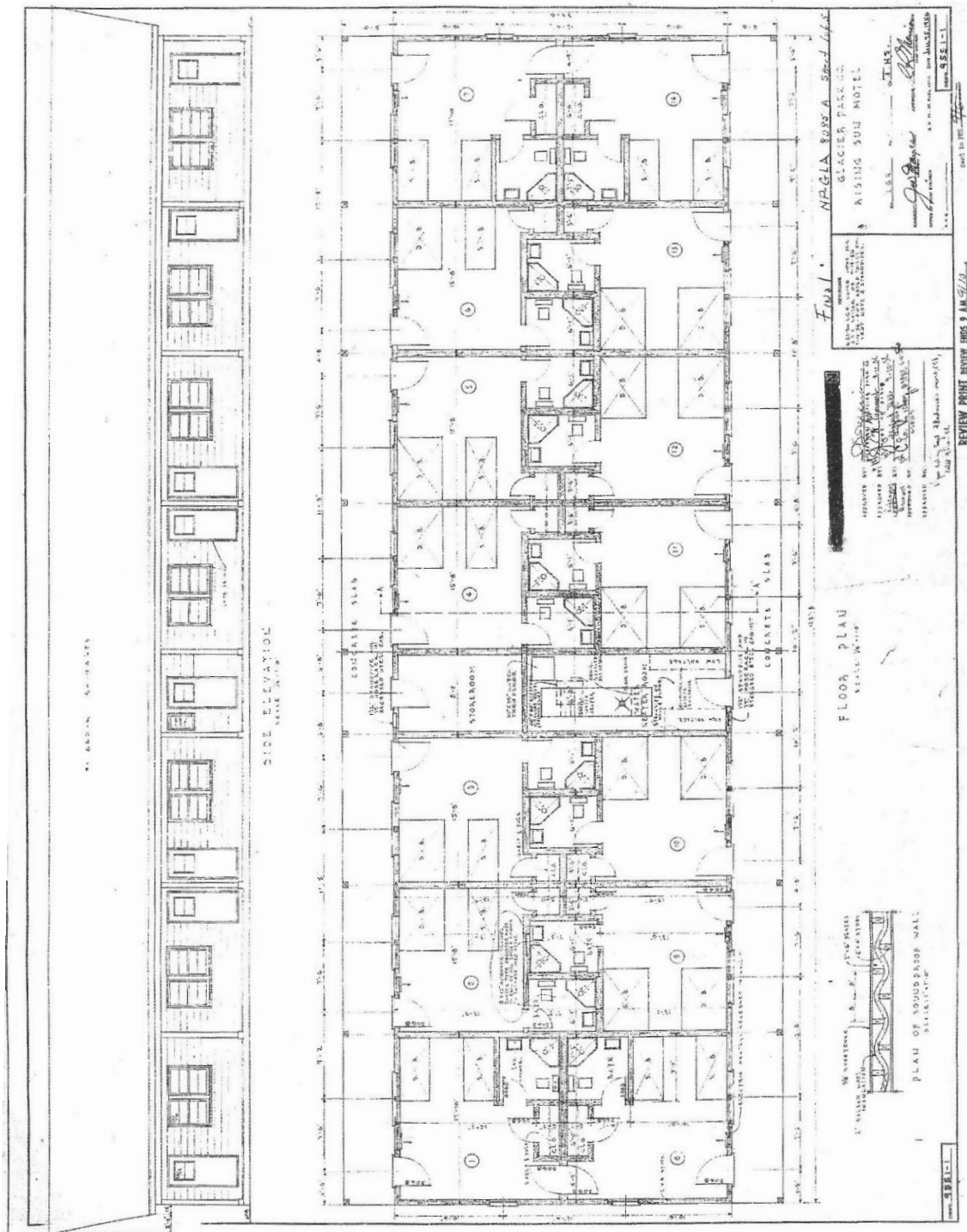


Fig. 19. The plan for the Rising Sun motel units. The transition from cabin to motel answered the public's desire for more comfort and convenience while still emphasizing economy. Note the small room dimensions compared with later standards. (Technical Information Center drawing.)

the center of the building. Rooms facing the lake were slightly bigger to accommodate two double beds; rooms facing uphill had one double and one twin bed, and rooms on the ends were adjoining, with two twin beds in each room. A long, narrow concrete-slab porch, with overhanging roof and wooden post supports, ran along the front and back of each building (Fig. 19). The building design was nearly identical with the one used at Swiftcurrent with the exception that each room had a pair of windows instead of a single window, a change made in response to NPS urging apparently (Hill, 1955).

The Great Northern planned to build an employee dormitory with 15 rooms but the NPS and the concessioner could not decide where to put it. NPS wanted the concessioner to build a rear addition to the registration building but the concessioner pointed out that to have employees lounging there when they were off duty could create a poor impression for arriving guests (Emmert, 1956; Hall, 1952b; Lee, 1954). Another idea was to build a large addition on the west end of the store/café. This, too, was nixed. Instead, the registration building was converted to an employee dormitory, and registration was moved to the lobby area of the store/café. The power house was converted to employee housing (two bedrooms, one bathroom) and another cabin was built in the cabin area and designated for housing the boat concessioner (National Park Service, 1959; Hubber, 1995).

It appears that these employee housing arrangements sufficed, and the proposed 15-room employee dormitory was not built. A memo to the superintendent in 1956 stated that the concessioner had decided not to build it (Nelson, 1956). Curiously, this building is depicted as built on NPS drawings in the early 1960s, and research could not confirm the negative finding that it was not built after all. The drawings showed it behind the main store/café building, assigned the number 764, and labeled as a dormitory. At least one drawing showed the building as an existing structure (National Park Service, 1963). Such a building may have been built after 1956, perhaps damaged by the 1964 flood, and removed. However, no correspondence was found to support that possibility, and this researcher believes it was never built.

The new construction was completed as NPS embarked on Mission 66, its ten-year plan to modernize national park facilities and prepare the national parks for an estimated 80 million visitors by 1966. While the motel units exhibited an unaffected design, they nonetheless announced the NPS's adoption of modernist architecture in place of the exaggerated craftsman or "government rustic" style that had prevailed in national park architectural design since 1916. Critics of Mission 66 assailed NPS for overdeveloping national parks and abandoning the longstanding policy of designing buildings to harmonize with the environment. The new motel units at Rising Sun did not draw the ire of Mission 66 critics, but they were at the leading edge of the wave of modernist architecture that the Mission 66 era brought to Glacier and other national parks. Ethan Carr, author of *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, observes that the criticism of NPS modernist architecture confused harmony with something else, an aesthetic preference for the pseudo vernacular form of government rustic. While it was true that a hallmark of the government rustic style was to incorporate native materials and to use colors and lines that made buildings blend into their natural settings, Carr notes that modernist architecture could and did aim for the same thing, using low profiles and horizontal massing as well as natural materials, rough textures, and muted color schemes (Carr, 2007, 133-36).

The motel units at Rising Sun exhibited all the traits identified by Carr. Despite being located on sloping ground above Going-to-the-Sun Road, the long, low motel units were not conspicuous in their relatively open setting. What really bothered Mission 66 critics was that the modernist design in the national park context seemed urban, common, and not distinctive to national parks. The new motel units at Rising Sun, while architecturally plain compared with Glacier's historic hotels and chalets, certainly succeeded better than the big hotels did in blending into the landscape. The motel units were hardly visible to anyone but motel patrons. That was in sharp contrast with the Many Glacier Hotel, for example, which stands picturesquely and grandly on the shore of Swiftcurrent Lake (Figs. 20-21).

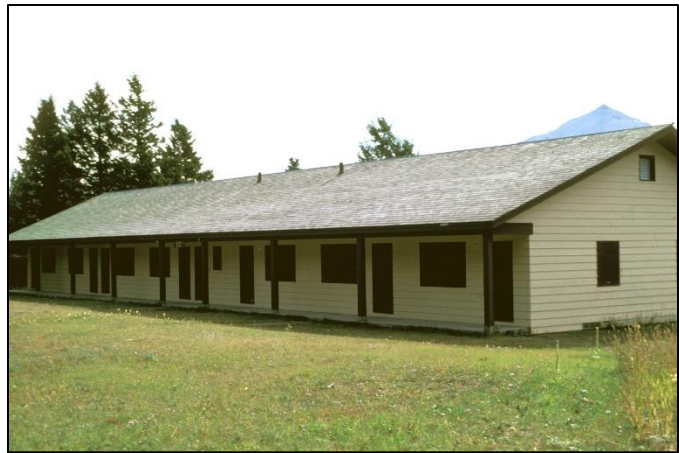


Fig. 20. Rising Sun motel unit. Its modern architecture did not call attention (Glacier NP photo DI 7639, unknown photographer, 1980.)

NPS had no choice but to adopt modernist architecture. To expand visitor accommodations in Glacier by constructing more grand structures like Many Glacier Hotel was not economically feasible nor desirable. Modernist architecture met NPS requirements in ensuring that new construction was cost efficient and practical. As Carr points out, “New postwar building technologies made construction more rapid, economical, and efficient. No builder could afford to ignore labor-saving techniques such as the prefabrication of structural elements, innovative uses of steel and concrete, curtain wall construction, and extensive applications of glass” (Carr, 2007, 137).



Fig. 21. While the modern architectural style was a new departure, the buildings' low profiles and muted color schemes remained in the tradition of landscape design to preserve natural scenery. (Glacier NP photo GLAC 10878.)

Rising Sun Motor Inn since 1960

The concession contract with Glacier Park Company was terminated in 1960 and a new 25-year contract was made with Don Hummel's Glacier Park, Inc., effective January 1, 1961. Hummel bought out the Great Northern's possessory interest in park facilities, including the Rising Sun development. The Great Northern's departure marked the end of an era for Glacier. No other park contains such a strong architectural legacy from the railroad era of national park development. There would be two more changes in Glacier's prime concessioner from 1960 to the present: a subsidiary of Greyhound Corporation took over from Hummel in 1981 (keeping the name Glacier Park, Inc.) and Xanterra Parks & Resorts, Inc. succeeded Greyhound in 2013.

Changes to the Rising Sun development area over the past 60 years have been minor. Two opposing impulses shaped the physical history of the site throughout this modern era. One impulse was to modernize the site with improvements such as better employee housing, greater separation of employee and guest areas, and removal of development from the 100-year floodplain of Rose Creek. Three times, NPS posed alternatives that would have made significant changes to the area when it prepared a development concept plan for the Swiftcurrent development area in the 1980s, a general management plan for the park in the 1990s, and a commercial services plan in the early 2000s. Meanwhile, the opposing impulse was to keep the area basically the same. This impulse rested on two principles. One principle was NPS's commitment to historic preservation: the Rising Sun cabins and camp store were deemed historically significant for the role that the auto camp played in Glacier's transition to automotive tourism in the 1930s and 40s and for the historic architecture of the buildings and layout. Another principle was NPS's commitment to public input in its planning process, which, in all four planning exercises that occurred through the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, exposed a strong public desire to "keep Glacier the way it is." NPS inferred from the public response that it had a responsibility to maintain the existing mix of motel and cabin accommodations at present levels of use as a "traditional use."

The first move toward modernizing facilities came with an upgrade of electrical power provided by Glacier Electrical Co-op, Inc. in 1962. Previously electrical power was distributed through the development area by a diesel generating plant. The upgrade entailed the installation of many aerial power lines that would mar the scenery for more than a decade until they were all undergrounded in the 1970s.

A gas station was added to the development in 1962 and opened for business on June 15, 1963. It was located part way up the entrance road in the place now used for bus parking. It was removed 30 years later. Showers were added to 24 cabin units that did not already have them (SAR, 1963; Hufstetler et al., 2002, 274-75).

As late as 1963, NPS still contemplated major expansion of the Rising Sun development area with up to 14 more motel units. Plan 2049-E for Rising Sun showed the motel units spaced like stadium seating across the gentle slope east of the existing motel units, each claiming unobstructed view of the mountains across St. Mary Lake. Design concept notes accompanying the plan stated: "Expansion of concession accommodations should continue with additional multiple units as needed since they offer more convenience to visitors and are more conservative of the landscape than individual cabins." It added that they should have a more "graceful design" than the two built in 1958 (National Park Service, Branch of Landscape Architecture, Western Office of Design and Construction, 1963).

Apparently, Glacier Park Inc. was not enthusiastic about or not waiting for the big expansion shown on Plan 2049-E, for it hired the Kalispell-based architectural firm of Brinkman and Lenon to prepare plans for remodeling the existing café/store, converting the space formerly devoted to restaurant and lobby areas into nine guest rooms. Those plans were shared with NPS and approved in July 1965 (Neilson, 1965c).

Using the same architectural firm, Glacier Park, Inc. also developed plans for a new coffee shop at Rising Sun. Glacier Park, Inc. The plans were reviewed by WODC and approved by the regional office in January 1965. (Neilson, 1965a; Hummel, 1965; Neilson, 1965b; Novak, 1965). Featuring a solid bank of tall picture windows across the upper story, which stood on top of a daylight basement, the modern design was a departure from the other architecture at the site (Fig. 22). A cultural landscape history of the Going-to-the-Sun Road states that “the coffee shop’s vertical massing and prominent location were likely chosen to make the building readily visible to Sun Road travelers; while perhaps appropriate from a business standpoint, this effectively negated the historic philosophy of unobtrusive development at the Rising Sun location” (Hufstetler et al., 2002, 275). Construction crews built the coffee shop at Rising Sun in the fall of 1965 and spring and early summer of 1966.



Fig. 22. Built in 1966, the coffee shop’s use of plate glass and vertical massing was more overtly modern than earlier development at Rising Sun. While the windows face the view, the building faces the parking plaza. Nevertheless, this rear view of the building is what appears from the Going-to-the-Sun Road. (Author photo.)

Meanwhile, the expansionist philosophy of Mission 66 had spent itself and NPS was giving more thought to phasing out visitor facilities wherever the same services could be provided outside of national parks. In 1966, Superintendent Keith Neilson appointed a committee to reevaluate all Glacier visitor facilities pursuant to the service’s policy. Consistent with the change in thinking, the committee recommended that the entire Rising Sun concession should be phased out – cabins and motels first, followed by the store, café, and gas station. The proposal went nowhere, however, and there is no evidence that it ever reached the public (Glacier Committee, 1966).

In the next decade, NPS revamped its planning process to involve public input. The public scoping for the *Glacier National Park, Montana, Final Master Plan* of 1977 broached the potential conflict between wilderness values and the existing level of development in some areas of Glacier National Park. The Rising Sun development area was in the Going-to-the-Sun Road

corridor; therefore, it was not much affected. However, public input on the planning process convinced NPS that removing visitor services from sensitive areas in the park was not an option. The plan stated, “while facilities may be upgraded or replaced, their type, amount, and general location will remain the same” (National Park Service, 1977).

In 1985, the Rising Sun development area had an 82-site campground and 75 lodging units. The lodging units were distributed among its 19 duplex cabins, two 14-unit motels, and nine guest rooms in the store building. The concession employed around 50 people during peak season. NPS made no further moves toward eliminating the facility; it only considered making a modest reduction in lodging units, reallocating them to the west side of the park where they were in greater demand (National Park Service, 1985). (Today, the number of lodging units at Rising Sun stands at 72, just three less than the number in 1985.)

During the 1980s, NPS explored making changes to the Rising Sun concession while preparing development concept plans for three areas in Glacier: Many Glacier/Swiftcurrent, the Lake McDonald Lodge vicinity, and the Sun Point/Rising Sun/St. Mary area. The principal aims for Rising Sun were to improve concession employee housing and move development out of the 100-year floodplain of Rose Creek (Fig. 23). NPS’s preferred alternative would have shifted the historic cabins to a new cabin loop east of the present location, and added a new employee housing and recreation area east of that. Besides getting the cabins out of the 100-year floodplain, it would have added a flood diversion levee to protect the store building. It would have eliminated guest lodging in the store building and added a wing to one motel unit with an equivalent number of rooms (National Park Service, 1986, 38). Once again, the public planning process failed to generate public support for making changes (National Park Service, 1982; National Park Service, 1985, 72-73).

Growing recognition of Glacier’s historic structures tamped down further discussion of removing or greatly modifying visitor facilities at Rising Sun. Many Glacier Hotel, Lake McDonald Lodge, the two surviving mountain chalets, and the Two Medicine Store were all designated national historic landmarks in the mid 1970s. As NPS expanded the effort to inventory and record national park historic properties in the 1970s and 80s, architectural historian Mark Hufstetler prepared a draft narrative description of the Rising Sun development. He characterized the nineteen cabins as the “core of the original Roes Creek/Rising Sun concession area” and possessing “a degree of integrity that is very unusual in concession lodgings.” Significantly, when Hufstetler made his study in 1988 the auto camp was just over 50 years old, the minimum age for considering a property “historic” under the National Register of Historic Places criteria. The Rising Sun motel units, dating from the Mission 66 era, were just 30 years old at that time (Hufstetler, 1988).

Historic preservation efforts continued with the nomination of the Rising Sun Auto Camp Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination was prepared under contract with Historical Research Associates, Inc. and was approved in 1995 (Hubber, 1995). The historic district boundary included the cabin area and the general store but not the two motel units because they were not yet 50 years old.

As the twenty-first century unfolded, NPS and the concession stayed the course in blending modernization of the Rising Sun Motor Inn and cabins with historic preservation and perpetuation of traditional visitor service. Modernization included installation of wheelchair ramps, mitigation of the flood hazard, asbestos hazard abatement, and sprinkler systems to meet with fire safety code. Meanwhile, the historic cabins were preserved, and visitors continued to have the opportunity to stay in old 1930s-style housekeeping cabins as such cabins became more and more rare across the nation (Figs. 24, 25).



Fig. 24. The historic general store building at Rising Sun with modern addition of a wheelchair ramp. The bike rack and the lamppost (with unshielded night lighting) are also newer additions. (Author photo.)



Fig. 25. The 70-year-old cabins are maintained for traditional use and are preserved as historic structures. Here they are about to be winterized at the end of the visitor season. (Glacier NP photo DI 7638.)

Existing Conditions

These building descriptions are adapted from the National Register registration form (1995) and are updated based on field visits in 2018. Building exteriors are described here. For description of building interiors, see the 1995 registration form.

General Store/Motel (Building No. 810)

This building was constructed in 1941 and with its size and prominence it anchors the complex. It is a one-story wood-frame building with a cross-gable roof and a concrete foundation. It is on a U-shape floor plan. The central side-gable component originally housed the lobby/soda fountain and now houses a nine-unit motel. The eastern front-gable component – extending beyond the rear elevation of the central component – has retained its original use as a general store. The front-gable western component – also extending beyond the rear elevation of the central component – originally housed the dining room/kitchen facilities and is now used for employee housing. The Mission 66-era additions of a transformer room (storage room) and public restrooms to rear elevation have only slightly modified the footprint. Lapped horizontal wood siding covers the exterior walls. Brown asphalt shingles cover the wood-framed roof. Both front gable “wings” are composed of two sections: the rear section is slightly narrower than the front is topped with a gable roof initiated approximately four inches below the eaves of the front section.

All gable ends are faced with vertical-board siding and contain louvered wood attic vents. Exposed rafter ends are cut flush with the overhanging eave.

Two small shed-roofed additions have been added to the rear of the building; one is at the north elevation of the west wing, the other is located along the rear elevation of the central portion of the building. The addition to the central component (housing public showers and restrooms) is constructed of the same materials as the original building. The addition to the west wing (constructed as a transformer house, now a storage room) is largely of the same materials with the exception of the west and north walls, which are constructed of concrete block.

The south gable slope of the central component extends to shelter a long front porch terminated at each end by a gable pediment. These gable pediments echo the cross-gables of the principal roof and highlight the location of the two principal entries. Six concrete steps with metal handrails, located at the east and west ends of the elevation, provide access to the porch. Fourteen simple six- by six-inch columns support the porch roof. The porch has a concrete floor and features a wood-framed rail with balusters cut in a decorative design patterned after a “Swiss” style. A wooden ramp for wheelchair access (running parallel rather than perpendicular to the porch) was added to the porch in 1987. The ramp’s balusters match those found on the porch and greatly reduce the addition’s impact on the original design.

Most doors appear to be original and consist of the following varieties: one or two panel with one-light, or vertical tongue and groove with cross bracing and eight-light. Windows are twelve-over-one, double-hung, wood-framed, arranged in a ribbon across the front elevation of the central component. Windows within the front elevation of the front-gabled ends are also double hung yet are arranged in pairs. Symmetrical rows of three-light wood-frame windows, placed just under the eave, line the east (side) and north (rear) elevations of the general store. The public shower addition obscures the entire rear elevation of the original building. Features within the addition include six-over-one wood-frame double-hung windows and separate paneled

and glazed doors to the men's and women's shower rooms. These doors are accessed by concrete stoops with metal rails. The concrete-block addition also obscures the rear elevation of the west wing. Features within this addition are limited to louvered metal vents along the north elevation and a doorway offset within the west elevation. The west elevation of the original west wing contains two paneled and glazed doors, paired with wood-frame screens and accessed by wood steps with metal rails. The doors are flanked to either side by wood-frame double-hung windows. All windows are covered with wood-framed screens. The building is painted yellow with dark-brown trim and is in good condition.

The building is located at the junction of the access roads to the Rising Sun cabins and to the campground and is easily accessed from the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The setting provides a view of St. Mary Lake and assures that the building is visible to passing motorists. The building also marks the entrance to the cabin complex. Sparse vegetation grasses and scrub pine surround the building to the north, west, and east. A large, paved parking lot is located south of the building.

Women's Dormitory (Building No. 811)

The building was constructed in 1941 and originally served as a registration office, dormitory, and public shower. Following the 1958 addition of shower facilities to the cabins, this building was converted from a registration center and public shower facility to an employee dormitory. A central linen room and small electric substation were added to the rear of the building. The building was modified to provide additional employee rooms, while public shower facilities were converted to laundry facilities.

The dormitory is a two-story, wood-frame building with a clipped-gable roof. The building rests on a concrete foundation. Four shed-roof dormers, two per gable slope, add interest to the roofline and light to the interior space. A one-story side-gable component, inset under the primary roof and running along the rear elevation, created the original T-shaped floor plan. This footprint has been slightly modified by a 1958 addition of a one-story front-gable addition to the northwest corner of the rear elevation. The entire building is sided with lapped horizontal wood siding up to the base of the second-floor windows, with vertical board siding from there to the roofline. The vertical board siding is not flush and resembles inverted board-and-batten construction, with the battens applied beneath rather than on top of the boards. Roof features include louvered wood attic vents in all gable ends, a central brick chimney located high on the north gable slope of the primary component, and enclosed eaves.

The main entry door, offset within the east elevation, is paneled, glazed, and paired with painted wooden screen door. A large wood-framed, front-gable porch with exposed trusses protects the entry. This porch originally extended to cover a portion of the adjacent roadway. The porch floor is concrete. Windows within the lower level and within the dormers of the central clipped-gable component are twelve-over-one double hung; these windows line the side and front elevations in a symmetrical pattern. Twelve-light hopper windows line the second story of the central component and are situated in line with the one-light component of the dormer windows. The east gable end contains two twelve-light hopper windows, and the west gable end contains two twelve-light hopper windows flanked to the south by a pair of hopper windows. Windows within the rear side-gabled component are also twelve-light hopper, arranged in pairs. There are no windows in the rear addition. All fenestration is wood-framed, and many windows are paired with ill-fitting screens in wood frames.

A five-panel door on the south elevation of the side-gable component provides access to the men's restroom. A particle board screen protects the entry. Additional doors within the rear components include a five-panel door within the west elevation of the side-gable component providing access to the linen room, a six-light three-panel door on the north elevation of the gable addition providing access to the laundry room, and an unpaneled, unglazed door immediately east of the six-light door.

The building is painted dark brown with yellow trim and is in good condition. It occupies an unobtrusive wooded site adjacent to the cabin access road. Although views of St. Mary Lake and of the mountains are available, these views appear incidental to its location. However, this building together with the general store were situated to be visible to tourists passing on Going-to-the-Sun Road.

Employee Residence (Building No. 812)

This building, constructed in 1941, was originally a power house. It was converted to employee housing in 1960. Consistent with its original function it is isolated from the rest of the complex and screened by a stand of Douglas fir. A small gravel road provides access.

The one-story wood-frame building is covered with lapped, horizontal wood siding and topped with a wood-framed, side-facing gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The building rests on a concrete foundation. A small gable-roofed addition of like materials has been added to the south elevation, slightly altering the original four-square floor plan and the uniform roofline. The addition is slightly narrower than the original component and is only three-quarter story with a side-gable roof of lower height than the original roof yet of equal slope. The original wooden roof vent has been replaced with a metal flue. The two doors on the front elevation are paneled wood without fenestration; the southernmost is two-panel and the northernmost is five-panel. One wooden-slat entry stoop serves both entries. Windows within the east, north, and west elevations of the original component are wood-framed, six-over-six, double-hung, with wood-framed screens. The south elevation of the bathroom addition contains a wood-framed one-light awning window. The building is painted brown with yellow trim and is in good condition.

Cabins (Building Nos. 813-831)

The nineteen cabins are located in three clusters (814-819, 820-821, 822-831) demarcated by both topographical features and by three loops in the narrow, paved, access road. Cabin No. 813, located south of the cabin complex in an open area visible from the Going-to-the-Sun Road, "advertises" the other, less prominently located units.

All nineteen cabins are one-story rectangular buildings constructed of plywood panels with exposed exterior wood framing ("studs-out" construction) and rest on concrete pier foundations. Some piers show signs of spalling. Brown asphalt shingles cover the wood-frame side-gable roofs. Purlin ends are exposed. There are louvered attic vents in each gable end. The original brick-faced metal chimneys have been removed; a metal flue now protrudes from low in each rear gable slope. A single five-panel door, paired with a wood-frame screen door and two-step concrete stoops, provides access to each unit (two doors per cabin, located near the center of the front elevations). The brass hardware on the doors appears to be original. Inverted V-shaped rain/snow guards are centered on the roof above each door. Cabins originally constructed with a toilet but no shower (818, 821-831) are identifiable by their slightly smaller size and by door and window placement within the front facades with the two entry doors centered within the elevation. Each is flanked to the outside by a wood-frame, six-over-one double-hung window.

Those cabins constructed with a shower contain two four-light hopper windows between the entries and a double-hung window to the “outside” of the entry. All cabins contain a pair of four-light hopper windows, centered in the rear elevation and flanked to either side by a double-hung window. The buildings are painted yellow with brown trim and are in good condition.

Exterior alterations appear to be limited to the replacement of the original cedar shingles with asphalt shingles and removal of the chimneys. They are in generally good condition.

Boatman’s Cabin (Building No. 1414)

This building, constructed in 1957, is located at the north end of the cabin complex at the edge of fir and scrub pine forest. It is accessed by the upper loop road that also serves cabins 820-830.

The boatman’s cabin is a one-story wood-frame building sided with board-and-batten. It rests on a partial cinder-block foundation and has an irregular floor plan. The wood-framed cross-gable roof is covered with corrugated metal. Windows within the front elevation are one-over-one, double hung in wood frames. The remainder are two-light sliding sash in aluminum frames. The main entry door located within the south elevation is wood with a single light. There are rough wood entry stoops and an unpainted wood deck adjoining a shed-roofed addition. The building is painted white and is in fair condition.

Upper and Lower Motels

The two motel units were built in the late 1950s and are both of the same design. Each building is single-story wood-frame building faced with lapped horizontal wood siding. Each one sits on a concrete foundation with porch extensions on the long sides of the rectangle. The upper motel has a wooden porch and railing on the west end elevation. A wood-framed side-gable roof covers each building. All gables extend out two feet at the peak and angle back to a six-inch overhang at the corners. The roofs have a shallow pitch and overhang the porches. The roof overhang is supported by six-inch square columns spaced along the porch. Roofs are covered with wood shingles.

The floor plan for each unit features a double row of seven guest units facing the long exterior walls with private bathrooms in the back of each guest unit. Each motel unit also contains a service area located near the center of the building between the third and fourth guest units.

Each long elevation features eight two-light doors and fourteen two-over-two double-hung windows. Each end elevation features two of the same style two-over-two double-hung windows. All windows are paired with wood-framed window screens with four-inch casings.

The motels are virtually identical with the three units at Swiftcurrent with one exception: there are twice as many windows on the long elevations. As noted above, this change in plan was made on a recommendation by the NPS.

The buildings are painted brown with yellow trim on windows and doors and eave facings. Parking areas alongside each unit are gravel. Vegetation around each unit consists of sparse grass stubble. The buildings are in generally good condition.

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Appendix 1. Historic Contexts, Primary Historic Function, Primary Current Use

The following are selected from pick lists in the *National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide* (January 2009) and can be inserted in the CLI template.

Historic Contexts

The Historic Context Themes, Subthemes, and Facets for the Glacier National Park Rising Sun Development Area are:

VII. Transforming the Environment

C. Conservation of Natural Resources

- Origin and Development of the National Park Service
- Origins of the National Parks Movement
- The Conservation Movement Matures 1908-1941
- Scenic Preservation
- The Great Depression and Conservation

And

III. Expressing Cultural Values

L. Architecture

- Craftsman (1890-1915)
- Rustic Architecture
- NPS Mission 66

M. Landscape Architecture

- Protection of Natural and Cultural Resources
- The 1930's: Era of Public Works
- NPS Mission 66

Primary Historic Function

The Primary Historic Function (Major Category, Category, and specific descriptor) is:

02. Commerce/Trade

02A. Business

- Concession

Primary Current Use

The Primary Current Use (Major Category, Category, and specific descriptor) is:

02. Commerce/Trade

02A. Business

- Concession

Appendix 2. Chronology

Start Year of Major Event	AD/BC	End Year of Major Event	AD/BC	Major Event	Major Event Description
8000	BC	1891	AD	exploited	The St. Mary Valley was used by American Indians as a travel corridor through the mountains and for subsistence and spiritual activities.
1818		1818		claimed	The St. Mary Valley became part of the territory of the United States when the Convention of 1818 established the international border on the 49th parallel.
1853		1853		explored	John Doty, a member of the Isaac Stevens railroad survey, explored the St. Mary Valley in search of a mountain pass. (Buchholtz, 1976, 23.)
1855		1855		reserved	The St. Mary Valley was included in the Blackfeet Reservation as established by the Treaty of Fort Laramie.
ca. 1853		1895		exploited	The St. Mary Valley was occasionally visited by non-Indian trappers and prospectors in spite of tribal opposition. (Buchholtz 1976, 37)
1891		1891		built	The Great Northern Railway completed its line through Marias Pass.
1895		1895		ceded	The St. Mary Valley was included in an area ceded by the Blackfeet Tribe.
ca. 1898		ca. 1902		prospected	The St. Mary Valley was prospected intensively, and mining claims were made including one on Rose Creek. (Buchholtz, 1976, 34.)
ca. 1885		1910		exploited	The St. Mary Valley was occasionally visited by wealthy sportsmen.
1910		1910		reserved	The St. Mary Valley was included in Glacier National Park, established May 11, 1910.
1911		1911		established	The Great Northern brought two boats, <i>Red Eagle</i> and <i>Glacier</i> to St. Mary Lake and established boat service.

1911	1913	built	The Great Northern built Swiss-style chalets at Two Medicine, Cut Bank, Gunsight Lake, Sperry, Granite Park, Swiftcurrent Lake, and three locations on St. Mary Lake, one at the foot of the lake one at the Narrows about half way up the lake, and one a little higher at Sun Point .
1913	1915	built	The Great Northern built grand hotels at Midvale (East Glacier Park) and Many Glacier.
1914	1914	established	The Great Northern Railway formed a subsidiary, the Glacier Park Hotel Company, which operated all visitor facilities in the park developed by the railway.
1910	1916	administered	Glacier National Park was administered by the Secretary of the Interior and a rudimentary park administration, which focused on the west side of the park while the Great Northern focused on the east side of the park.
1916	1933	administered	The National Park Service (NPS) administered Glacier National Park, and led by Stephen T. Mather and Horace M. Albright it developed a concession policy and took a more forceful role in managing the Glacier Park Hotel Company's park operations.
1916	1933	developed	The Mather-Albright years of national parks administration was a time of transition from the railroad era of national park development to the next stage of automobile-centered development and use; NPS developed Glacier and other national parks with roads and campgrounds.
1929	1930	planned	NPS communicated to the concessioner its desire to expand Glacier's visitor facilities to include auto camps to accommodate the growing numbers of middle-class park visitors coming by automobile.
1930	1930	sketched	NPS sketched ideas for an auto camp at Rose Creek, including a "tepee circle" layout for cabin clusters and conical-shaped housekeeping cabins.

1932	1933	built	The Glacier Park Hotel Company built the Swiftcurrent Auto Camp, the first of its kind in Glacier, and in some ways the prototype for the later Roes Creek Auto Camp.
1933	1933	built	The Going-to-the-Sun Road was completed including the section past Rose Creek, the future Rising Sun developed area.
1936	1936	developed	The Roes Creek Campground was opened with 60 tent sites and 6 trailer sites.
1939	1939	developed	Having secured a commitment from the Glacier Park Hotel Company to develop an auto camp at Rose Creek, NPS developed the area with water lines, roads, and parking plazas.
1940	1940	approved	NPS approved the concessioner's architectural plans for the general store/lunch room building, the registration/laundry building, and guest cabins (types 4 and 9 among 9 design variants).
1940	1940	renamed	The name of the planned development was changed from Roes Creek Auto Camp to East Glacier, with the intention that a third auto camp at Apgar would be called West Glacier.
1940	1941	built	The Glacier Park Hotel Company built the Roes Creek Auto Camp, consisting of Building Nos. 810, general store/lunch room; 811, registration/laundry; 812, power house; and 813-831, guest cabins.
1942	1945	closed	All visitor facilities in Glacier except for the Roes Creek Auto Camp were closed during World War II because of travel restrictions.
1950	1950	renamed	East Glacier was renamed Rising Sun because it was confused with East Glacier Park, formerly Midvale or Midvale Station.
1950	1950	planned	NPS Director Newton B. Drury informed the Glacier Hotel Company of its desire to increase the total pillow count in Glacier from 872 to 1,884, including an increase from 87 to 300 at Rising Sun.

1950	1954	delayed	Expansion at Rising Sun was delayed while NPS negotiated a new long-term contract with Great Northern executives and the Glacier Hotel Company.
1952	1952	planned	While plans were in development, the Glacier Park Hotel Company determined that it would build motel units rather than more housekeeping cabins.
1954	1955	planned	The concessioner agreed to invest around \$1 million in expanded visitor facilities at Swiftcurrent, Rising Sun, and Lake McDonald, starting with Swiftcurrent in 1955 and Rising Sun the next year.
1955	1955	planned	NPS decided new motel units at Rising Sun would be located north of Going-to-the-Sun Road overruling the Great Northern president's wish that they be located south of the road near the lakeshore.
1955	1955	planned	NPS approved architectural plans for the new motel units submitted by the concessioner.
1956	1957	built	Two motel units (Building Nos. 767 and 783), each containing 14 units, were completed and the dining area in the main building was enlarged.
1957	1958	built	A small addition was built on the rear of the west wing of the main building to house an electrical vault.
1959	1959	built	The boat concessioner's cabin (no building number assigned) was built.
1960	1961	transferred	The Great Northern sold its possessory interest to Don Hummel, and Hummel's Glacier Park, Inc. entered a 25-year contract with NPS as the new prime concession, beginning Jan. 1, 1961.
1962	1962	upgraded	The electrical power plant was upgraded.
1962	1963	built	A service station (no building number assigned) was built on the Rising Sun entrance road where the present bus parking is located.

1962	1963	considered	NPS drawing 2049-E, labeled Rising Sun, Part of the Master Plan, shows NPS still considered adding up to 12 more motel units to the existing two.
1962	1963	added	According to the Superintendent's annual report for 1963, showers were added to 24 cabin units that did not already have them.
1965	1966	built	The coffee shop (Building 1132) was built.
1966	1966	considered	The Glacier Committee, appointed by the superintendent, recommended that the Rising Sun development area be phased out to comply with NPS policy of relocating visitor services outside of parks when possible, but no action was taken on the recommendation.
1977	1977	considered	Scoping for the Master Plan of 1977 considered phasing out visitor services, but the final Master Plan affirmed that the location and capacity of visitor facilities would remain the same.
1981	1981	transferred	Hummel sold his possessory interest to Greyhound, which formed a subsidiary (taking name as Hummel's company, Glacier Park, Inc.) that entered a 25-year contract beginning Jan. 1, 1981.
1985	1985	considered	A development concept plan for Rising Sun proposed moving the guest cabins away from the eroding bank of Rose Creek, building new employee housing, and installing flood control levees to protect the main building.
1988	1988	recorded	Historic buildings (all those more than 50 years old in 1988) were recorded by Mark Hufstetler for cultural resource management.
1992	1992	removed	The service station was removed.
1995	1996	registered	The Rising Sun Auto Camp was recorded on a registration form by Ann Hubber and entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

1996	1999	considered	Scoping for the General Management Plan (GMP) of 1999 considered relocating visitor facilities, but the GMP reaffirmed that Rising Sun and other development areas would remain.
2000	2004	considered	Scoping for the Commercial Services Plan revisited alternatives in the GMP, while the final plan reaffirmed that Rising Sun and all other visitor lodging in the park would be preserved and maintained for traditional use.
2018	2020	established	A Cultural Landscape Inventory was completed for the Rising Sun concession development area.