A Confluence of sovereignty and conformity: the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness

Diane L. Krahe

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A CONFLUENCE
OF SOVEREIGNTY AND CONFORMITY:
THE MISSION MOUNTAINS TRIBAL WILDERNESS

by

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Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date
Today, Montana's Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness stands alone as the only alpine wilderness designation on an American Indian reservation. But in the 1930s, the west slope of the Mission Range was just one of 16 tribally-owned areas throughout the West deemed "roadless" by Indian Affairs Commissioner John Collier and his chief forester, wilderness advocate Bob Marshall. This singular policy, imposed without tribal consultation, kept nearly five million acres of private Indian land off limits to development for over 20 years. The dozen tribes affected by these restrictions finally protested when early versions of what would become the Wilderness Act of 1964 proposed that these roadless areas be included in a national system of wilderness protected in perpetuity. Indians successfully lobbied Congress to drop reservation lands from the wilderness bill, and all but one of the tribes saddled with roadless designations effectively demanded their declassification.

In 1982, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation created their own independent wilderness area of 90,000 acres, from what was left -- after two decades of intensive timber harvest on the most accessible slopes -- of the former 125,000-acre Mission Range Roadless Area. Logging threats to the most scenic Mission slopes prompted the designation.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai value the Mission Mountains largely for aesthetic reasons and for the intrinsic worth of the range's wildlife, trees and water. Original, innovative policies of their tribal wilderness management plan reflect these and other culturally-specific priorities. But true to their cultural affinity to borrow and adapt, the Tribes model the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness after the federal law that ordains the preservation of sublime, untrammeled landscapes. This American ideal has little traditional grounding to these Indian people whose ancestors did not separate themselves from the land, for the good of the land or the good of the people. Our nation's first Indian wilderness embodies a mix of forces within this one native community -- tribal economics, politics, culture, and spirituality, as well as environmentalism -- all of which remain influenced by, if not entrenched in, dominant society.
I extend many and varied thanks to my thesis committee Rich Clow, Dan Flores, Dan Pletscher and Tom Roy. To Rich, for his invaluable guidance to primary sources and his steady moral support throughout. To Dan F., for turning me on to the brave new world of environmental history. To Dan P. for his cheerleading, and to Tom for signing on the dotted line.

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Although the four photographs included in this publication are my own, I have appreciated the use of Jack Greenlee's and Ted Wood's fine photography in several presentations I have made on this topic.

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To Dad
Buckling his knees and tucking his hooves beneath him, as bighorn sheep do, the old ram reclined on a rocky ledge for a nap in the bright sunshine. Mountain Sheep's wanderings that day had brought him to the highest point above the valley, when his morning's misdeeds against the tribes of animals, birds, fish and Indians called for a rest. Among other heinous acts, he had shamelessly knocked twin bear cubs off a canyon rim, and catching sight of hunters in a drainage below, he had kicked loose a few boulders to start an avalanche in their direction. Mountain Sheep's heartless behavior was seasonal and opportunistic. At spawning time, he would divert streams so that the fish would get trapped in shallow pools of the old, familiar channels and die. And he could not let a ripe huckleberry patch go untrampled, just to see the disappointment on the faces of the Indian women when they arrived with their baskets.

But his random tasks of chaos proved to be hard work, even for Mountain Sheep. Now he breathed easily as he lay overlooking the valley. His gaze slid down
steep forested mountainsides and past dark canyons to a wide expanse of lowlands, where a scattering of ponds, like a handful of beads tossed across the plain, caught the glare of the afternoon sun, and beyond to where the land begins to roll skyward again in low, solemn waves. Mountain Sheep's droopy eyelids finally drew a shade of sleep over the scene below. Meanwhile, the subjects of his ruthlessness were recovering from his latest round of terror and scheming their revenge.

Here Mountain Sheep would remain forever captive, under the weight of rocks stacked upon him as he slept that day by all able-bodied animals, birds, fish and Indians. The hateful Mountain Sheep would terrorize them no more. The instigators of this plan, Eagle and Coyote, knew even they lacked the power to kill their enemy outright, but their improvisation to immobilize him for eternity had worked. With his back pinned to the earth by the stones placed upon him one by one that afternoon, Mountain Sheep still holds his massive head high above the valley and the sentinel of summits surrounding him, keeping a resigned, silent vigil over all that lies below.¹

Sheep Face Mountain, so named by the Salish Indians, is not a character but the setting of another story -- this one told by the Kalispel tribe -- that took place when the world was not quite so young. A man mourning the death of his son set out to climb this same mountain, the highest peak above the valley. Among his people, it was a place of visions, yet this man did not come seeking a vision. As he plodded upward, the birds and animals offered him their powers, but he declined them. When the man crested the final ridge, he found no respite from the burden of his grief.
Tears welled from his heart and spilled from his eyes, blinding him to the beautiful broad valley below. He did not see how the mountains to the south stack upon themselves like overcrowded teeth and how far to the north they give way to gentler hills that taper to an immense lake. He did not look to any of the four horizons where other chains of Rocky Mountains cut into the sky with their jagged white profiles. Instead he lowered his eyes to the ground, looking for stones. Alone on the mountaintop, he gathered enough stones to build a low wall in the shape of a circle. He stepped within the circle and laid down to die. He did not come seeking a vision, but a vision came to him anyway.

The vision that appeared to the distraught father prophesied the coming of the Black Robes. The Salish tell a story akin to the Kalispels': a grief-stricken widower also wandered high into these mountains and in a vision learned about the men dressed in long dark gowns. "They are the ones that teach the right way of living, the right way of life," the widower was told. Also, the promise of reunion with deceased loved ones would come to all who believed in the Black Robes' medicine, both the Salish widower and the Kalispel father were assured. As the stories have been passed to the present, both men descended from the mountains and shared with their tribes the news their visions revealed.2

The Indians' literary traditions of native Coyote and introduced Christianity still dwell in the Mission Mountains of northwestern Montana. Similar contradictions exist side by side in the more contemporary lore of this austere yet stunning mountain range, when bureaucratic resource management terms are spoken in the same breath as sacredness. Yet what others may qualify as
contradiction seems almost inherent for the Indian people to whom the mountains belong, and who still belong to the mountains. Both the tension their ancestors felt towards their mountain landscape, told through the story of Mountain Sheep, and their openness to outside influence, evident in the prophesies of the Jesuits, are not lost today. By tapping their age-old propensity to meld the old with the new, and the spiritual with the empirical, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation have secured their latest vision for the Mission Mountains. It is one vision that focuses simultaneously on the longevity of the Indians' cultural ties to the Mission Range and the perpetual ecological health of the mountains, in more modern, scientific terms.

* * * *

Unfettered by foothills, the Mission Mountains' western front appears to pull upward from the Mission Valley like a great line of surf, frozen just before it crests and crashes. Long sweeping arms of forest buttress the Missions' bald, angular mountaintops, whitecapped year-round with snowfields and glaciers. Among a dozen 9,000-foot peaks congregated towards its southern end, the range's tallest mountain, at 9,820 feet, looms a full mile and a third over the Mission Valley. The indelible ram still serves his time atop this mountain that since the 19th century has been called McDonald Peak. The mountain's namesake, Angus McDonald, opened the valley's first trading post in 1846. McDonald's Scottish surname also lives on in his descendants, many of whom are today prominent within the community of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

A narrow string of mountains stretching about 60 miles north to south, the
Mission Range has weathered a diverse geological past. The Missions' tallest southern peaks drop suddenly into the Jocko Valley as the St. Mary's fault, which extends along the base of Missions' west side, turns eastward. To the north, the Mission Range loses elevation and width gradually, due to tremendous glacial scouring. During the ice ages, a great river of ice accrued mass and inched its way down the narrow Rocky Mountain Trench almost a thousand miles from the Yukon to northwestern Montana. During the Bull Lake Ice Age, which peaked sometime between 70,000 and 130,000 years ago, the head of this slender glacial snake -- 20 to 30 miles wide and several thousand feet deep -- made its farthest advance south. The Mission Range split the glacier, creating a two-headed monster. The mountains diverted one fork of ice east into the Swan Valley, while the other continued its crawl into the Mission Valley as far as where the town of Ronan now stands. The more rounded mountaintops of the northern Missions show the wear and tear of the Bull Lake era, having been buffed by "the sand and rock studded sole of a glacier rasping across bedrock... like an enormous sheet of coarse sandpaper," as Montana geologist Dave Alt describes the process.4

While the northern Missions lay buried beneath the Trench glacier, smaller mountain glaciers honed the still-exposed southern third of the range into the signature crags and abrupt ridges we know today. A few lingering descendants of those ancient sculpting forces still rest in the shadowy northern bowls of the Missions' crown, although the days of these remnant, receding glaciers probably are numbered to only a few more decades.

The glaciers' fodder all those millennia in the Mission Mountains and
elsewhere in northwestern Montana was Precambrian sedimentary rock. This Belt rock formed of mud, sand and lime deposits between 800 and 1500 million years ago. As *Roadside Geology of Montana* qualifies, that's "impressively old, even for rocks." The Missions are part of what geologists refer to as the Northern Rockies' "overthrust belt," a series of Belt rock slabs that slid off the Salish ranges just west of the Mission Valley and piled upon each other like overlapping shingles on a roof, eastward to the Rocky Mountain Front. The Mission slab lies partially pinned beneath the Swan Mountains to the east; the slab's exposed end, tilted skyward, is the sheer west face of the Missions. As the bottom, westernmost shingle in this layering, the Mission Range is the oldest chain of mountains within the overthrust belt, although it yields in seniority to the humble, older-still Salish hills which bore each of the overthrust ridges.

The Mission Mountains fall within the ecological bounds of what scientists have delineated the Columbian Rockies and the larger Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, as does nearby Glacier National Park. The park and its spectacular scenery actually share the Missions' geologic heritage, too. In fact, some tourists driving U.S. 93 through the Mission Valley on their way north to the park must believe they have arrived an hour and a half ahead of schedule with their first look at the dramatic Mission skyline. The same glamorous wildlife species that draw human hordes to Glacier live somewhat more peacefully in the Missions: the threatened grizzly bear, the endangered bald eagle and northern gray wolf, as well as black bear, elk, moose, mountain goat, mountain lion, wolverine, and golden eagle, to name the most fetching.
The Missions' vertical disparity provides niches for a range of vegetation. Along the divide and speckling the stony complexion of the highest mountaintops, alpine tundra carpets the ground in spots where the rocks have shed a resemblance of soil. These tundra communities -- prescribed by extreme elevation, instead of extreme latitude -- are made up of tiny, delicate plants that hurry through their active phases as the snow pack departs, sometimes as late as midsummer, when wildflowers decorate the lower alpine meadows. At treeline, around 8,000 feet, whitebark pine and alpine larch stubbornly hold to their brutal outposts. Subalpine fir, Englemann spruce and lodgepole pine grow thicker and taller a bit farther downhill, somewhere between 7,500 and 3,000 feet in elevation. Douglas fir and ponderosa pine favor the drier, southern exposures of the Mission slopes below 5,000 feet. In the fall, when the needles of the western larch turn yellow, the variegated mountainsides reveal the larches' intermingling with the evergreen conifer species. In the depths of the cavernous drainages along the Missions' west face, swift creeks skirt the descendants of colossal western redcedars and grand firs. Filling the sky between abrupt canyon walls, the towering trees minimize the sun's penetration to the forest floor, where saprophytes, both the pallid Indian pipe and neon-hued fungi, thrive in the moist soil.10

Up to 100 inches of precipitation, mostly snow, can fall on the Mission Mountains within one year. In contrast, the Mission Valley receives an annual average of only 16 inches, typical of most of Montana's valleys and plains.11 Much of the moisture west of the Mission Divide eventually ends up in the Mission Valley by season's end. The spring and summer thaw races downward, tripping
over outcrops and sometimes freefalling hundreds of feet. Runoff from the
watersheds of Post Creek, Mission Creek and Dry Lake Creek pools in McDonald
Lake, Mission Reservoir and St. Marys Lake, respectively. Canals running along the
base of the Mission Range leads its waters through an extensive irrigation system to
green the otherwise semiarid reservation.

The Mission Divide marks the eastern edge of the Flathead Reservation,
which spreads 1.3 million acres across the Jocko and Mission (or Lower Flathead)
valleys and includes the southern half of Flathead Lake, the largest natural
freshwater lake west of the Mississippi. (See map A for an overview of the Flathead
Indian Reservation.) This small pocket of the Indians' traditional territory,
originally about 22 million acres, was offered to them by the United States
government only a year after the St. Ignatius Mission dug into the soil and the souls
of the Mission Valley in 1854. The Hellgate Treaty of 1855 drew three reluctant tribes
together, ultimately relegating the Kootenai, the Lower Pend d'Oreille (or Kalispels),
and the Salish to one, condensed homeland.

The collective Kootenai tribe lived throughout what is today northwestern
Montana, the Idaho panhandle, and southern British Columbia and Alberta; their
southernmost band inhabited the western shores of Flathead Lake when the
reservation was established. This small group of Kootenais called themselves
A kipgani, meaning "Fish Trap People." The Lower Pend d'Oreilles, so named by
French trappers for their mollusk earrings, had split from the larger Kalispel tribe in
what became Washington state and lived just south of the Kootenais. These two
tribes shared hunting grounds, including the Mission Mountains.

The Salish-speaking Pend d'Oreilles were closely related to the Bitterroot Salish; together, the two tribes identified themselves as *Sqélixʷ*, "The People," in their common dialect.  

By 1855, the Salish had resigned from their long subsistence tradition of seasonal travel throughout the Northern Rockies and were settled in the Bitterroot Valley, a relatively safe refuge from European disease and the aggressive Plains Indians. A number of Salish remained in the Bitterroot, about 50 miles south of the reservation, decades after the Hellgate Treaty and the federal government's subsequent orders that demanded their removal to the Flathead Reservation. Chief Charlo and his band held out until 1891, when they finally abandoned their farms and moved north to join the other tribes.

The Bitterroot Valley was also home to Montana's first Christian mission, established by Jesuits, as the prophecies predicted. The Salish themselves initiated the Jesuits' arrival to their land. They were anxious to host these powerful holy men espoused by their Catholic Iroquois brothers, who lived among the Salish after deserting the European fur trade that had brought them west to the Rockies in the first place. In the 1830s, four separate delegations of Iroquois and Salish -- together with their Nez Perce neighbors -- crossed the Great Plains to St. Louis to solicit Black Robes for their people. Father Pierre-Jean de Smet finally heeded the Salish's request. In August of 1841, he and his priests reached the main camp of the Salish, along the banks of the Bitterroot River, and built St. Mary's Mission at present-day Stevensville. De Smet's hopes for "an 'empire of Christian Indians,' a wilderness kingdom in the uncontaminated reaches of the Rocky Mountains," as historian
Jacqueline Peterson writes, were soon dashed by the Indians' waning interest in many of the priests offerings. Nonetheless, Catholicism would endure as a powerful force on the Tribes' spirituality, culture and economy.

Among other satellite missions, the Jesuits established a community north of St. Mary's in 1854, in the wide valley below the imposing wall of mountains -- the Mission Range -- where the first visions of the Black Robes appeared. The priests followed the Pend d'Oreilles' recommendation to settle at the Indians' rendezvous point and winter camp known as senyélmen, which translates to "surrounded." Soon, a cluster of log cabins together with a chapel, a carpenter's shop, and a blacksmith's forge stood as an island in a sea of teepees. Thereafter, the town was known as St. Ignatius. Both the mild, fertile valley that harbored the new mission and the mountain range dwarfing the settlement took on their new identities, as well.

In the past century, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have not lived in isolation, spatially or culturally, from American society and its quest to divide and conquer the land. In 1910, the Flathead Allotment Act opened the reservation to white settlement, and the influx of non-Indians to the Mission Valley continues to the present. The Tribes have recovered some of their intra-reservation losses; since 1944 they have repurchased 245,000 acres. Today they control the majority of reservation lands: over 450,000 acres of forest -- primarily found on the hills and mountain ranges that rim the reservation on three sides -- and 380,000 acres of range and pasture. (These figures include both allotments owned by individual Indians and communal lands owned by the Tribes collectively.) But,
most irrigated croplands remain in the hands of non-Indian residents. The 1990 Census revealed that the reservation's population of 21,000 is 75 percent non-Indian, while the ancestry of most tribal members is as much European as it is Indian.

As a recent study on tribal politics on the seven Montana reservations recaps, "Native American life generally... has been a story of attempted recovery from savage assaults of various kinds, and in this respect the Indians of the Flathead reservation are typical." But, the story of the Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille and Salish -- again, generally -- has been a bit brighter than most, because they have adjusted well to change, given their openness to it, even on this grand scale. Their "native disposition to borrow and adapt, marked by progressive admixture and assimilation," as the study describes the Tribes, has known few religious, political or economic boundaries.

As a result, the strongly Catholic Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are represented by one of the most efficient, autonomous Indian governments in the country and are sustained by a healthy coffer of funds, largely due to their savvy management of the reservation's bountiful and renewable water and timber resources. As well as procuring profits, the Tribes' extensive natural resource program also attests to their environmental progressivism. In 1984, for example, the Tribes declared their reservation a nuclear-free zone, the first reservation to do so. And in 1980, the Flathead Reservation was only the second in the nation to be granted Class I air status from the federal government, which allows for no degradation in air quality, keeping most all industry at bay.
Above this clamor of modernity, high in the Mission Mountains, Eagle still soars and Coyote still saunters between mountain peaks named for St. Mary, Angus McDonald and Kakashe, a respected Indian judge of the early 1900s. Certainly by name -- as is evident in this diverse cast of honored characters -- the Missions have not altogether escaped the inroads white society has made on the nearby valleys and on the valleys' native people. Yet the inhospitable, rugged terrain of the Mission Mountains has deterred much of the technological affront, in terms of farming and logging that has transformed the rest of the reservation's landscape. To the Indians, the towering mountains themselves stand as a timeless backdrop to contemporary tribal life. According to a statement of policy issued by the tribal government in the early 1980s, the Mission Range harbors

the essence of traditional Indian religion and has served the Indian people of these Tribes as a place to hunt, as a place to gather medicinal herbs and roots, as a vision-seeking ground, as a sanctuary, and in countless other ways for thousands of years.24

But it is the Tribe's economic and political sophistication -- by modern American standards -- that has paved the road to better save their most valued traditions from disintegration into the mainstream, among them the natural integrity of the Mission Mountains, an emblem of stability and continuity for many tribal members. This story centers on a new name the Indians have chosen for their mountains. It's a lofty title that elevates the Missions even higher in any modern admirer's eye. It is not an Indian name, although it is an avenue to the past and simpler times of these Indian people. It is insurance that the soul within the land will endure into the future. Although contemporary, it is not really new, because
what it describes has been there all along. Applied to other "purple mountain majesties" across the country, its meaning gets more muddled and debated as fewer and fewer places remain worthy of its description. It is a label coated with good intentions yet still plagued with controversy. Some consider the title patriotic; others do not. This name is usually ordained only in the halls of the United States Congress, yet the Indians of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes themselves have bestowed it upon their mountains. That name is wilderness.

* * * *

In 1982, the Salish-Kootenai Tribal Council passed a tribal ordinance that withdrew nearly 90,000 acres of the Mission Mountains' western front from logging and other development, and consecrated it as wilderness. The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, tribally designated and independently managed, remains the only sizable Indian wilderness in the country. A handful of other Indian reservations have designated natural areas of some sort, but the Bureau of Indian Affairs still plays a management role in most of them. Besides the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, possibly just one other tribe has assigned the exalted distinction of wilderness to a portion of their reservation. In 1993, the Makah Indians of Washington state designated as wilderness a narrow strip of coastline edging the Olympic Peninsula's Cape Flattery.

The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness itself is only a tiny accession to the 103 million acres of federal lands -- most in national forests and parks and on national wildlife refuges -- that have received this highest protection status outlined by Congress in the Wilderness Act of 1964. After centuries of general
contemplation concerning the goodness or wickedness of wilderness in our surroundings, and after eight years of intense national deliberation, the passage of this act lent a legal definition to wilderness. A concept that had long stretched the spectrum of human sentiment, from sanctum to loathed barrier of progress and destiny, wilderness at last won its legitimate place in American culture. And, the legislation sketched a blueprint for saving those public lands valued for their undeveloped and scenic character from "expanding settlement and growing mechanization." 27

This elevated status of wilderness came about when precious little American soil was left untouched by agricultural, industrial, and residential advances, and when as a nation we could afford to forego any potential economic benefit of those lands, however minor. Only then did our collective conscience finally cast a wary eye to the questionable future our technological ambitions impose upon us. Reduce this national setting to the microcosm of a single Indian reservation, and the motivation behind the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness does not wander far from the legacy of those other, federally-owned remnants of our former "wilderness continent."

Typical of the Tribes' heritage, they borrowed significantly from the federal wilderness model in creating their own tribal wilderness management plan. This borrowing is most obvious in the Tribes' statement defining wilderness, which is nearly identical to the national prescription, and their use of federal procedures to monitor and mitigate recreational use. But the Tribes chose selectively, incorporating only those federal principles and tools that serve the explicit needs of
their tribal wilderness and their culturally-specific wilderness values. Original
management policies, further minimizing human interference in the natural
processes of the Missions' west side, round out their management plan. A
comparison of the tribal wilderness with the federal Mission Mountains Wilderness
Area on the east side of the range, part of the Flathead National Forest, reveals two
related but notably different management approaches presiding over these opposite
slopes of the same mountain ecosystem.

When the tribal leaders drew the boundaries for their wilderness, they chose
to enclose within the protected area lands classified as commercial forest at the time.
According to tribal member Thurman Trosper, a major player in the creation of the
tribal wilderness, "8,000 acres of the best pine-growing land on the reservation" was
among the sacrificed timberlands. In 1979 alone, that sacrifice equated to a loss of
three million board feet -- about five percent -- from the reservation's total annual
timber yield. But, the vast majority of the Tribes' designated wilderness, like most
mountain wildernesses, is basically an economic wasteland: too high, too remote,
and too rocky for much of anything besides a playground for the healthy, the hearty
and the solitude-hungry. In the case of the Missions, logging is the foremost
economic point to ponder. Yet, the rugged terrain of most of the tribal wilderness
would either render commercial timber harvest either impossible or too expensive
to make the endeavor worthwhile. The highest elevations of the tribal wilderness
are treeless altogether.

This "rocks and ice" characterization of many wilderness areas accounts for
their marginal value as wildlife habitat, as well. Animal presence atop these alpine
showcases dwindles after the short summer season, when many species must
descend to wintering grounds in lower, more hospitable territory. To date, scenic
and recreation values have prompted most of the wilderness designations across the
country, priorities that advocates of biological diversity scorn. To protect a wider
range of wildlife habitat and for aesthetic reasons, the Tribes included some
commercially productive land in their wilderness, and undoubtedly forfeited some
financial gain by doing so. But the bulk of the tribal wilderness, by sheer
topographical intimidation alone, was already relatively safe from human
exploitation.

The drastic verticality of the Missions' west face seems to reveal the extent of
the range's textures, moods and topography to the valley below. Actually, the
panorama is deceiving, as University of Montana wilderness specialist Bill
Cunningham elaborated in a 1986 tribute article to the tribal wilderness:

In reality, the extremely rugged topography masks countless hidden
basins, hanging valleys and unknown passes along its 40-mile north-
south sweep. . . . Perpetual snowfields slowly melt into cascading
streams of liquid ice that feed through hundreds of gem-like alpine
lakes and ponds. Waterfalls are abundant. . . .

The only route to these concealed treasures are trails "of punishing steepness,"
as one guidebook warns. The distance from the Mission Divide to the western
wilderness boundary varies from only two to six miles. This narrowness gives the
optimistic illusion that most every nook and cranny of the tribal wilderness should
be within reach of an easy day's hike, until you factor in your vertical gain, step by
step.

The overwhelming majority of those who take to the steep trails of the tribal
wilderness is non-Indian. In line with the national demographic of wilderness use dominated by white Americans, a 1977 study of the proposed tribal wilderness indicated that only one in 20 people who took part in a survey of recreationists was Indian. Although no formal numbers have been tallied since then, this extremely lopsided ratio of Indian-to-non-Indian use of the tribal wilderness has changed little. Tribal members value their wilderness for reasons other than recreation, and most Indians go to one of the reservation's two primitive areas, open to tribal members only, for both "cultural purposes and leisure camping." The Tribe's 1994 draft of the Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan claims that "staff observations and regional wilderness information suggest that [combined Indian and non-Indian] use has declined in the Tribal Wilderness since the 1980s. This is a bit hard to believe since the opposite trend applies to many of western Montana's natural areas that are plagued by popularity, due to the escalation of resident and tourist populations in the region.

Our nation's only mountainous Indian wilderness fits the basic profile of classic American wilderness. Its alpine splendor, of limited economic value in terms of extractive use and of limited use to wildlife in terms of habitat, is enjoyed primarily by white outdoor enthusiasts. Yet there is no denying the uniqueness of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, both in its tribally-ordained inception and its pliable, autonomous management, dictated by the Tribes' view and value of their mountains, of their home. The Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai people have a history here, and a much more personal stake in their tribal wilderness than
the American public at large has in the National Wilderness Preservation System. "We realize the importance of these mountains to our elders, to ourselves, and for the perpetuation of our Indian culture because of [our] stories," the Flathead Culture Committee summarized in their 1978 statement supporting the proposed wilderness. The statement continued:

[The Mission Mountains] are lands where our people walked and lived. Lands and landmarks carved through the minds of our ancestors through Coyote stories and actual experiences. Lands, landmarks, trees, mountain tops, crevices that we should look up to with respect. . . . They have become for us, the descendants of Indians, sacred ground.37

Today, most of these descendents are content to look up to the vertical sacred ground of the Missions' west face from the valley below, instead of venturing into its harsh terrain themselves. Therefore, the Tribes value the Mission Mountains largely for aesthetic reasons and for the intrinsic worth of the range's wildlife, trees and water. It is most fitting, then, that the Tribes choose to sanctify their mountains in the name of wilderness, defined by federal law as a sublime landscape unspoiled by human presence, where humans do not belong except for brief visits. Yet this American ideal has little traditional grounding to an indigenous people whose ancestors did not separate themselves from the land, for the good of the land or for the good of the people.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have encased their contemporary cultural and spiritual values of the Mission Mountains within the protective construct of wilderness, a symbol borrowed from the Western paradigm. The story to come, the Tribes' 20th-century journey leading to that sovereign decision, reveals that the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness also embodies the
ambitious pragmatism of tribal politics and tribal economics. The journey is inseparable from the Indians' tremendous loss of land, first to the U.S. government, then to white settlers, and finally, in terms of ravenous logging, to the Tribes' own timber industry. It is also intertwined with the federal government's unsuccessful attempts to instate wilderness on Indian lands, first in the 1930s by an order of the secretary of Interior and again in the 1950s with the national wilderness bill. More recently, the Indians' secured sovereignty over their mountains, a downward turn in the timber market, and an outcry against the advance of logging up the Mission slopes in the 1970s all guided the Tribes toward the yet-unrealized notion of a tribal wilderness.

The destination of that journey, the Tribes' naming of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, created a place apart -- in title, in practice, in spirit -- from other wildernesses. But in developing their management plan for the Missions, the Tribes did not hesitate to adopt, on their own terms, the very wilderness model they resisted for decades. The tribal wilderness, sustained largely by white dollars and visited predominantly by white hikers and fishers, nonetheless is the pride of a tribal government unrivaled in either its sovereign strength or its conformity to the white political structure.

Neither Indian environmentalists nor pure, native ideology alone created the nation's first tribal wilderness. Rather, the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness evolved by the hand of a conglomerate of tribal forces -- economic, political, cultural and spiritual -- all of which remain influenced by, if not entrenched in, dominant society.
Lower Riddell Lake reflecting Gray Wolf Peak
"It is doubtful if any scenery in the world surpasses that to be seen in the Mission [M]ountains in western Montana," wrote naturalist Morton Elrod at the turn of the century. Elrod, a member of the University of Montana Biological Collecting Expedition, camped for the month of July 1900 at the foot of the Mission Range with fellow scientists, photographers, artists, writers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Small teams trekked into the mountains everyday, loaded down with "camera and plates, gun and ammunition for birds, eatables, insect net, and material for the preservation of plants." While photographing the landscape and gathering biological and geological specimens for the university's museum, Elrod and his company discovered a new species of land snail living in the talus slopes above McDonald Lake, one of the expedition's base camps.

At the time, all but a few of the Mission peaks remained officially nameless. Elrod did his part to remedy this anonymity by calling one summit, positioned among the range's highest peaks, Sin-yale-a-min. (This was merely the phonetic
version of the Salish name *senyelmen*, meaning "surrounded," which formerly identified the village that the Jesuits named St. Ignatius.) Elrod believed the mountains should be assigned Indian names, to "preserve the Indian lore of the region, which is now fast disappearing." In the name of science and adventure, the heartiest of the group scrambled to several of the Missions' tallest summits, including McDonald Peak and Sin-yale-a-min Peak, later rechristened East St. Mary's. Detailed accounts of these two ascents comprise the bulk of Elrod's narrative of his blissful summer in the Missions, published in the *Rocky Mountain Magazine* in 1901. Short on details of the scientific accomplishments of the expedition (he did not identify the new snail species), Elrod's sweeping, sometimes dreamy, almost poetic prose speaks of the sublimity of the mountains and the more personal, the seemingly spiritual experiences this wild land offered him. He recalled:

Sitting around the fire on a midsummer evening in the home of the red man, far removed from the haunts of civilized man, now listening to the weird and mournful call of some night bird, again piling on a new supply of fuel, is an experience not soon to be forgotten. The silvery moon was at its full, and as it rose higher in the heavens it shed a brilliant light over the scene, and gave a romance to the situation experienced only by those who have camped in the woods on the banks of such a beautiful lake, and at the foot of a grand old mountain towering above thousands of feet.

There is record of only a handful of non-Indians who ventured into the Mission backcountry before Elrod and his crew, although the first white trappers passed through this area a full century before. Over the years, some of these trappers worked the lower drainages of the Missions, and some settled in the Mission Valley, marrying Indian women and mixing their European blood and culture with that of the Salish, the Pend d'Oreille and, to a lesser extent, the Kootenai people.
Eventually, a few daring missionaries from St. Ignatius took to mountain climbing. Father Louis Taleman is credited with the first successful ascent of McDonald Peak in 1894. On the mountaintop, he built a cross of stones "to crown the Mission Range," he said later, adding that he was unaware of the structure's longevity since he never repeated the arduous trip.

Before Taleman's climb, there are stories of failed attempts, including the extravaganza planned by Henry Villard, president of the Northern Pacific Railway Company. Villard, who wanted to celebrate the completion of his railroad to the West Coast, invited several hundred guests -- including national and international dignitaries, among them Ulysses Grant -- to join him for a mass ascent of McDonald Peak. After the 18-mile wagon ride from the nearest railway station at Ravalli, most all of the crowd opted for a relaxing afternoon at McDonald Lake, at the base of the mountain. Villard and a few obliging friends set out to make the climb, but the reported duration of their absence made it most improbable that they even came close to the summit.

Morton Elrod's collection of slain birds, netted insects, plant cuttings and bits of rock was not all he took from the Missions in 1900, on the eve of the white invasion of the Flathead Reservation. From the mountains he also carried a vision. Elrod's contemplation of his scientific and recreational pursuits here -- together with similar revelations of other white wilderness advocates across the country -- would come to impact the local Indians and their spectacular mountain range. Elrod shared the legacy of the Frenchmen who trapped more than beaver, the priests who crowned more than a mountaintop, and the railroad that delivered more than an
afternoon party. They all had visions of one sort or another; Elrod's was no less imperial than the rest:

This range with its wealth of lakes, canyons, peaks, sylvan retreats, rocky ridges, and timbered slopes, is deserving of a greater and wider recognition. To give it its due praise and bring the range into the prominence its beauties prompt is impossible so long as it remains an Indian reservation.7

Half a century later, the federal government would attempt to terminate the Flathead Indian Reservation and dissolve its trust responsibilities to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, as it did with other of the most self-sufficient reservations. At the same time, the writing of national wilderness legislation would include *private* Indian lands -- among them the Mission Mountains -- in a system of *federal* wilderness areas. The government's intermingling of termination and Indian wilderness did not favor the success of either. The hard-won but strengthening sovereignty of individual Indian tribes, including the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, would secure the defeat of both issues.

* * * *

The aged and weary, but still defiant, leader of the Salish people, Chief Charlo, boarded a Northern Pacific railcar in 1905 for his last journey to Washington, D.C., and a final battle in his life-long fight for Salish land. In 1883 he had a Congressional invitation to travel to Washington to tie up the Hellgate Treaty's loose ends, which had fluttered for decades and were not stilled until Charlo finally moved his tribe onto the Flathead Reservation in 1891. But Charlo had no Congressional invitation this time. Now the reservation itself, the land his people were forced to live upon,
was about to be dissected in the name of the General Allotment Act.

The iron horse carried him eastward, racing from the Rockies onto the open country of central Montana, the flatlands spilling to infinity beyond Charlo's dusty passenger window. Not long before, the Salish had traveled onto these vast plains to hunt buffalo while trying to avoid the combative Blackfeet, who claimed this country. Somewhere beneath the prairie sod, in an unmarked grave, lay Charlo's father, Plenty Horses, also known as Chief Victor, who was killed in an intertribal battle during a hunt. The earth that held Victor's bones no longer shook from the hooves of stampeding buffalo but trembled beneath the mechanized might that carried his son, in a few days' time, to the White House and an audience with President Theodore Roosevelt.

Although Roosevelt was busy celebrating his inauguration, Charlo managed a short meeting to argue his case against the most recent legislative assault on the Indians: the General Allotment Act, or the Dawes Act of 1887. Hailed as the "Indian Emancipation Act" by Indian reformers in the 1880s, the Dawes Act proved to be an effective device in eradicating tribalism. This latest ploy in Indian assimilation and self-sufficiency called for a national system that divided formerly communal reservation lands into arable plots and distributed, or allotted, these land parcels to every Indian on a tribe's enrollment list. The remaining "unused" lands were then made available to non-Indian settlers. The president decided when the allotment process began on individual Indian reservations; the Flathead Reservation was among the last to feel the effects of the Dawes Act.

Charlo contested the overwhelming loss of Indian land through this system
and its enforcement of individual ownership of property, which further undermined the Indians' traditional way of life and Charlo's power as a leader. He also had specific requests, in light of the inevitability of allotment on his reservation. Primary among his appeals was a tribal forest reserve to be sanctioned from the "surplus" land. Montana Congressman Joseph M. Dixon agreed to include provisions for a timber reserve in amendments to his 1904 legislation that enacted allotment in severalty on the Flathead Reservation. The 5,000-acre forest reserve provided the Indians with accessible timber for fuel and building materials. Cabins, outbuildings and fences had become essential in the Indians' assigned lifestyle of farming and cattle raising, now greatly reinforced by Dixon's Flathead Allotment Act.10

Witness to the demoralizing process that lead to the opening of the Flathead Reservation to white settlers in 1910, Chief Charlo died just months prior to the actual sale of Indian lands to outsiders. Enrollment of all Indians on the reservation was completed by 1909, when 2,390 tribal members chose allotments of either 80 acres of farmland or 160 acres of rangeland, with 13 Indians refusing to accept any plot. Their combined allotments totaled 245,000 acres, only one fifth of the reservation. After reclaiming over 18,000 acres for a national bison preserve, transferring 60,000 acres to the state of Montana for school purposes, and reserving limited acreage for tribal use, town sites, the federal Indian Agency at Dixon, and future power sites and reservoirs, the federal government put the vast majority of the reservation on the homestead market the following year. Over 100,000 persons registered for the drawing of the Flathead homesteads, but this monumental interest
in the Flathead properties subsided quickly, with only one fourth of the available land bought initially. In the next few years, over 4,500 white homesteaders moved onto the reservation and claimed properties totaling 404,000 acres. 11

Martin Charlot, son of Chief Charlo, recalled how quickly the Salish's fate in the Bitterroot Valley was repeated on the Flathead Reservation:

Just as we had done in the Bitterroot before the trouble began [with white settlers and the federal government], we started helping each other out and got quite a bit of farming done. ... All in all, we made a good living. But those days didn't last either. Pretty soon, maybe 15 years, engineers surveyed the reservation... But it wasn't long before we were allotted and the Whites moved in. Then, the government took hold of the irrigation system. They made it bigger, all right, but the Indians didn't get the water when they wanted it and needed it. Their crops burned up. Some of them went in debt. Pretty soon, most of them quit farming. The White man took over everything.12

Although most of the Indians resented allotment, the most potent bitterness coursed through the veins of the conservative, full-blood minority -- Charlo included -- who resisted white ways more vigorously than most of the younger and mixed-blood members of the Tribes. For the disgruntled, the Mission Mountains provided a refuge from the strife of reservation life, as well as a tactical advantage if war against the white newcomers became necessary.

Returning to their former life of hunting, fishing and gathering from the uncultivated land, the families of Charlie and Louis Mollman, Red Horn, Antoine Chief Eagle, Yellow Mountain, Johnny Ashley, the Finleys and Paschell Hammer lived in the Mission Mountains off and on during these troubled times. They walked the old hunting trails of their ancestors, footpaths which lead to the Mission Divide and continued east towards the open plains where buffalo could be found
only a generation before. Improving upon these routes, the Indians also constructed new trails into the Mission backcountry. Their trail work still benefits hikers today, proving the paths of least resistance to Ashley Lakes, Mollman Pass, and Eagle Pass.

In addition to serving the more benign travel needs of these traditionalists, the more fearful claimed the trails were built as part of an attack plan on the homesteaders. The steep but direct avenues between the Mission Valley and the Mission high country could provide the Indians access to the homesteads for quick hits and quick retreats back into the mountains, so they could descend on another trail farther up or down the range to attack again and retreat again, leaving the homesteaders wondering where the next strike would be. But aggression of such magnitude never materialized between the Indians and their new neighbors.\textsuperscript{13}

Nationwide, the allotment process was responsible for Indian lands shrinking from 139 million acres in 1887 to 48 million in 1932.\textsuperscript{14} Although the arrival of white settlers on the Flathead Reservation in 1910 was not a deluge, by 1960 only one in seven of the 2,000 productive farms within the reservation boundaries was operated by tribal members. By the early 1980s, only four percent of the Flathead Reservation's lands was owned by individual Indians, and tribal members comprised less than 20 percent of its population.\textsuperscript{15} The stream of outsiders to the reservation through the 20th century ran in spurts, much like the growth of the reservation's timber industry, which began small but gained momentum quickly.

The infancy of the Flathead timber business was tied directly to the government-prescribed settlement of the Indians, providing lumber for the construction of Indian Agency buildings and Indian homes and farms. The
Northern Pacific Railroad, the only commercial purchaser of reservation timber before 1900, cleared a right-of-way for its tracks and bought additional lumber for ties and trestles. By 1883 the Northern Pacific had stapled its way across the southern section of the reservation, preceding the arrival of Chief Charlo and the last of the Salish bands from the Bitterroot Valley by almost a decade. A familiar story throughout the West, railroad development on the Flathead Reservation met protests from Indians concerned with the security of their land given this new access to outsiders. By 1891, when the Bitterroot Salish joined the other tribes on the reservation, the Indians were already feeling the squeeze from white settlers surrounding the reservation and squatters illegally taking up residence on reservation lands.

While the railroad's major import to the Northern Rockies was people, its greatest export was the land, in the form of extracted raw materials. In the case of the Flathead Reservation, that export was timber. While the Indians' anticipation of infiltration by whites would prove true, they had yet to realize the tremendous role the railroad would play in the reservation's budding timber industry. Since the railroad transported an increasing volume of newcomers to the region, it indirectly contributed to the growing lumber demand that went hand-in-hand with settlement. But more directly, the proximity of the railroad to the reservation's vast forests would launch the Tribe's timber business into high gear in no time.

Although the Indians had no plans for commercial harvesting at the turn of the century, their own timber needs soon were dwarfed by those of non-Indian settlers. The railroad was already in place, linking the bounty of the reservation's
pine, fir and cedar forests with larger markets beyond the reservation's boundaries.

A powerful windstorm in 1906, which downed an estimated 18 million board feet of timber, prompted the reservation's first commercial timber sale, a salvage sale. In 1910, the Department of the Interior organized its own Forestry Branch of the Indian Office to replace the previous supervision of reservation forests by reservation superintendents and just recently by the newly formed U.S. Forest Service. The same year, amidst a quick succession of legislation attempting to order the nation's forestry scheme, the Indian Office's Forestry Branch formulated regulations that allowed the cutting of live timber on Indian lands for commercial use, when previously only the harvest of dead or fallen trees was permitted. The practice of "extensive" timber harvest -- large tracts of first-growth forest cut by a few large companies -- was off and running.

In the first few decades of commercial logging on the reservation, the most valuable trees in the most accessible locations were the favored targets of logging contractors, including the groves of mammoth western redcedars in the rich, wet bottomlands of the Mission Mountain drainages. These moisture-dependent giants, quite rare in the otherwise semiarid landscape of western Montana, found their niche in these lower ravines. Western redcedar wood decays slowly, one of its most valued traits, commercially speaking. This species characteristic is evident in the massive stumps that still hug the dark forest floor along Post Creek, where during the 1920s the logging company of Hitchner and Hitchner removed 3.8 million board feet of cedar. Interspersed among the stumps stand the smaller yet still impressive survivors of that harvest some 70 years ago.
By 1918, the Flathead Reservation's timber industry had already become big business. The boom lasted throughout the 1920s, with over 70 million board feet of timber logged from the reservation's forests in 1923 alone. The tribal enterprise would endure the hiccups of local, national and international economic trends through the 20th century and, with the evolution of forestry practices, become extremely lucrative for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The industry's financial rewards and environmental havoc both weighed heavily in the Tribes' eventual choice, decades later, to grant protective wilderness status to the Mission Range and forego the revenue to be gained from its forests.

The Great Depression slammed the Flathead Reservation as it did most everywhere. Both locally and nationally, no one was building or buying lumber. With no timber market, cutting operations froze almost overnight, and the Depression kept a heavy, suppressing foot on timber production through the 1930s. Just prior to the shutdown, trucks were replacing the railroad as the major local transporter of timber.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's plan to pull the country from this pit of economic despair had specific provisions for Indians. Their piece of Roosevelt's New Deal pie took legislative form in the Wheeler-Howard Act or Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). The IRA did not altogether halt the government's assimilation policy toward Indians, as the new progressive Commissioner of Indian Affairs had intended, but rather diverted it on a new, mollified tangent. The IRA did end allotment on reservations and closed tribal lands to homesteading by whites.
Remaining surplus lands from the allotment system became tribal property. (An order of the secretary of the Interior discontinued allotment on all reservations, even those that chose not to participate in the Indian Reorganization Act.) Securing property for tribal commons was a high priority for Commissioner John Collier, but his original plan for all lands of individual Indians to revert to communal ownership, by means including prohibition of inheritance, met strong resistance from both Congress and Indians.23

In matters of land ownership, as well as education and government, many Indians were not interested in "turning back" to traditional ways as Collier advocated. This reversal of philosophy in the Office of Indian Affairs would cause further irritation between conservative full-bloods and the more assimilated mixed-bloods in many tribes. Collier's critics quickly pointed out that his original reforms were largely based on the experiences of the Southwest Pueblo tribes -- for the most part, very traditional Indians quite isolated from mainstream American influence -- and hardly applicable to every tribe in the nation. Beyond tribal communities, many non-Indians thought Collier's provisions in this reform and others he introduced during his 12-year term as commissioner (from 1933 to 1945) were too idealistic. More than a few termed his intentions romantic, and more than a few termed Collier a communist.24

Collier was determined to right the wrongs of decades of repression and forced assimilation of Indian people by the federal government. The survival and salvation of the American Indian, Collier believed, depended upon reviving tribalism, including traditional Indian customs, values and spirituality. This would
benefit the country as a whole, Collier reasoned, by providing adolescent American society -- individualistic, materialistic and without soul -- with an alternative model for a more fulfilling, community-oriented lifestyle.²⁵

Collier hoped the mechanics of his ideals would promote the Indians' 1) economic rehabilitation, primarily from their reservations' natural resources; 2) political autonomy to manage their own affairs; and 3) civil and cultural freedom and opportunity.²⁶ What actually passed as law in 1934 was a compromise falling short of Collier's grand plan. Nonetheless, the IRA marked a new era in Indian policy, one that sought to break the dependency of Indians on the federal government by fostering Indian self-sufficiency through self-government. Besides securing Indian lands, the IRA also offered a system of limited home rule.

Each tribe had the option of accepting the Indian Reorganization Act as its own law. Participating tribes adopted a charter of incorporation, wrote a constitution and by-laws, and elected a tribal council for the primary function of protecting tribal interests. Most attractive among the legislation's perks was the opportunity for tribes to dip into the $10 million credit fund for economic development. But a tribe's acceptance of the IRA meant agreement to all its stipulations. Some were controversial, especially those granting more power to the Department of Interior with its initiation of conservation measures on Indian lands. The IRA's new forestry management guidelines, for example, were governed by the concept of sustained yield, soon to become the crux of Flathead forestry practices.

Forty percent of all Indians nationwide who voted on acceptance of the IRA actually voted against it²⁷, but nonetheless 192 tribes adopted its terms in the two
years following the Act's passage. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes were the very first in the nation to sign on. "The Flathead tribes' openness to the political values of other cultures has been a constant phenomenon," writes the authors of *Tribal Government Today*. The Tribes' eagerness to embrace the IRA and "the counsel and subtle coercion of white advisors ushered in by [this] era" was right in line with their tradition of adaption. The Flathead tribal constitution is assessed by these scholars as "in reality far more representative of white views than Indian values." The primary motivation for the Tribes to incorporate immediately was the legal leverage their new status would provide in their stalemate with Montana Power Company, which had abandoned construction of a dam on the reservation's Lower Flathead River. At the time, the Tribes received only nominal rental fees on the unfinished dam. A far greater financial gain, once the hydroelectric site was in operation, was indefinitely put on hold. Incorporation enabled the Tribes to take the legal reins from the Indian Office (thus far ineffective in this battle), win damages for the delay, and reactivate construction on Kerr Dam. Another natural resource issue was a top priority of the newly inducted Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. On January 3, 1936, the Tribal Council convened for a special session and unanimously passed the fourth resolution of its young legislative life, proposing that a 100,000-acre portion of the reservation -- to include specifically the Mission Mountains' west slope -- "be designated by the Secretary of the Interior as an Indian-maintained and supervised public recreational area." The resolution touted the "wonderful scenic value" of
the Mission Mountains as a treasure to be developed for the recreational benefit of
the public. With timber production still stalled and economic forecasts still looking
bleak, the Tribes emphasized that their idea held potential for new tribal
employment opportunities, both within the park and in nearby towns offering
services to visitors. The Council proposed that the tribal park be administered along
national park guidelines, although a lengthy portion of the resolution reinforced
that the park would remain Indian land and its operation would remain securely
within the jurisdiction of tribal authority.

The proposed Mission Mountains park would be preserved in "its present
natural state," without roads. A complete system of trails and camping shelters
would be constructed "for the convenience of the traveler and explorer," a press
release of the day read. "These trails will, for the most part, follow old Indian trails.
They will be wide and have an easy grade," the optimistic promotion assured hikers
and horseback riders.32

According to the proposal, Indian guides would lead parties through the park,
with visitors being able "to see and come to know" tribal members who would be
encouraged to live by traditional means in the mountains. "I have known people
who came from the eastern United States to see a western Indian and were
disappointed," Flathead Superintendent L.W. Shotwell concluded, "When our Park
is established let them come again."33

The proposal fell on deaf ears in Washington, and nothing came of the Tribes'
idea of an Indian park in the Missions. Without response -- let alone approval or
assistance -- from the Indian Office, the Tribes did not press the issue. Meanwhile,
Commissioner Collier, along with his assistant commissioner, William Zimmerman, Jr, and Bob Marshall, chief forester of the Indian Office, had other plans in mind for the Mission Range.

* * * *

The American wilderness movement, conceived in the 19th-century sentiment of Romantic writers like Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, and Transcendentalists epitomized by David Henry Thoreau, was just beginning to be nailed down to the new science of ecology and governmental regulations by the 1930s. In 1929, the Forest Service created its first national system of protected lands -- of "primitive areas" -- with its "L-20" regulations, although specific restrictions in terms of logging, grazing and the construction of roads and structures within these areas were decided by local forest districts. Forester Aldo Leopold, a primary force behind this first step towards a national policy for wilderness preservation, advocated "protecting wild country . . . [as] a matter of scientific necessity as well as sentiment." 34 The teachings of this philosopher-and-pragmatist-rolled-into-one, especially on his "land ethic" that extends human concern beyond the human community to the rest of the natural world, laid the foundation for the contemporary wilderness movement.

An uncanny concentration of Leopold's peers -- the nation's most vocal and most influential wilderness advocates -- held the highest positions in the Department of Interior's Indian Office in the 1930s. John Collier, William Zimmerman, and Bob Marshall made the most of their powerful posts by promoting the wilderness cause on Indian lands.
Less than two years after the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' failed attempt to make a park of their mountains, the west slope of the Missions was included in the 16 Indian areas deemed "roadless" or "wild" by the Office of Indian Affairs under Order No. 486, approved by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes on October 29, 1937. The policy was drafted by Marshall, the leading wilderness advocate in the country, and easily seconded by the like-minded Collier, Zimmerman and Ickes. It affected a dozen reservations and encompassed 4.8 million acres of Indian land.

The order created 12 roadless areas, each over 100,000 acres, and four much smaller wild designations on undeveloped reservation lands. The largest was the Navajo's Rainbow Bridge Roadless Area, covering 1.6 million acres of desert in both Arizona and Utah. At the other end of the size scale was the Makah Reservation's Cape Flattery, a 6,000-acre wild area jutting into the Pacific Ocean from the northwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington state.

The energetic, flamboyant Marshall had found time to survey all these areas in the preceding few summers, while touring reservations to carry out his more official duties as the Indian Office's chief forester, troubleshooting timber, range, and fish and game problems. In these Indian lands of "almost unbelievable scenery," Marshall wrote, he exercised his famous zeal for wilderness excursions, sometimes squeezing 30-mile day hikes into his busy schedule.

With two forestry degrees and a Ph.D. in plant physiology under his belt, Marshall spent most of his career with the U.S. Forestry Service. It was a career marked by valiant and often successful "attempts to shake up American forestry."
Commissioner Collier managed to "borrow" his good friend Bob from the Forest Service for the first few critical years of his administration, from 1933 to 1937, to implement the Indian New Deal's conservation reforms on reservations.

Before taking the job with Collier, Marshall had had little experience with Indians, although he did live in one native community in Alaska over the course of one year, in between expeditions into the Brooks Range in 1930 and 1931. He wrote about his Arctic wilderness explorations and the Koyukuk people in his popular book *Arctic Village*. Especially after his Alaskan trip, an "extremely happy" time for Marshall, he avidly shared Collier's romantic belief that societies yet untouched by modern development enjoy greater freedom, decency and general well-being than contemporary America.38

During his years with the Indian Office, Marshall co-founded The Wilderness Society along with Aldo Leopold, Robert Sterling Yard and other of the country's premier wilderness lovers. On his own, Marshall had been actively lobbying Secretary of Interior Ickes to appoint a wilderness planning board to study federal lands and recommend certain areas for Congress to set aside legislatively as wilderness, just like national parks. This larger wilderness scheme of Marshall's included Indian lands. "Since Indian cultures had evolved in wilderness, it seemed to him very consistent with the Indian New Deal to deem some reservation lands roadless," wrote Marshall's biographer, James Glover.39

Marshall's roadless order for Indian lands spoke passionately on behalf of the "millions" of Americans who "cannot believe . . . it is necessary to make every nook and corner of the country a part of the machine world and to wipe out all sizable
traces of the primitive." About a third into the document outlining the policy, "the standpoint of the Indian" was addressed:

Almost everywhere they go the Indians encounter the competition and disturbances of the white race. Most of them desire some place which is all their own. If, on reservations where the Indians desire privacy, sizable areas are uninvaded by roads, then it will be possible for the Indians of these tribes to maintain a retreat where they may escape from constant contact with white men.40

Marshall's order pushed the new employment opportunities these recreational areas would present to Indians willing to act as guides, much like the economic ambitions the Confederated Salish and Kootenai cited in their park proposal for the Mission Mountains. "It is obvious that no one is going to require a guide to travel down a road," the order read, reiterating the need to keep the areas "in a wild enough condition so that some one [sic] visiting them might conceivably need a guide."

After returning to the bigger picture of the nation's need to keep its dwindling roadless areas unscarred, the Indian Office unveiled its new goal:

[Existing areas without road or settlement on Indian reservations should be preserved in such a condition, unless the requirement of fire protection, commercial use for the Indians' benefit or actual need of the Indians clearly demand otherwise. ... It will be the policy of the Interior Department to refuse consent to the construction of establishment of any route passable to motor transportation within these areas].41

Shortly after this announcement, letters of gratitude from representatives of those "millions" of advocates of "the primitive" crossed the desks of John Collier and Harold Ickes. From the far corners of the United States, conservation groups including the National Association of Audubon Societies, the Ohio Division of the
Izaak Walton League of America, and The Wilderness Society praised Collier for his gutsy move to preserve "wilderness, wherever found," as Robert Sterling Yard, president of The Wilderness Society, put it. Yard apologized for the lack of fervor in The Wilderness Society's resolution commending the roadless designations on Indian lands. Yet "any other formality," he conceded, "would also fail to celebrate a policy so appreciative both of nature conservation and the essential needs of the Indian, himself a product of nature."42

The highly supportive E.M. Mill, assistant professor of zoology at the University of Miami, warned Collier:

You have been or will be, no doubt, criticized from many quarters for hindering "development" of the areas. But the term is certainly a wolf in sheep's clothing. . . . Too much of our so-called development has been exploitation, engineering without ecology, or just plain "scratching around." 43

A feisty footnote to Collier's otherwise formal reply to this kindred spirit read:

"[D]evelopment' often is nothing but a blind dynamiting of Nature's balance, a killing of the goose that lays the egg, and a destruction of the sources which feed imagination. Development"44

Other individuals wrote to Ickes with words of praise, including one rather naive and misinformed New Yorker who was thrilled with the new policy "to keep Indian territory free from roads and the other menaces to the Indians," while providing them the opportunity to lead visitors into their preserves. "The Indians are excellent [sic] guides," offered this citizen keeping the Indian myth alive and well, "and they like guiding people and going themselves into some giant jungle."45

But on the reservations, reviews were not so glowing. The primary source of
Indians' discontent? They were never asked if they "desired privacy," or if they desired the economic limitations that accompanied these road-building moratoriums, or if they had any opinion at all concerning the roadless designations on their lands.

Before the order was revealed, the Department of the Interior's Solicitor's Office and the Indian Office debated the legality of making these designations without consent of the tribes. The Indian Reorganization Act guaranteed every tribal council the right to advise and consult the Department of Interior on all matters affecting their reservation. Would not this order be skirting the tribes' right to participate? Acting Solicitor Frederic Kirgis requested that the order's wording concerning "absolutely no roads" be softened a bit. The Indian Office complied. With the reminder that development would be allowed if tribes demonstrated sufficient need, and with the reassurance that the proposed order was "simply an announcement of policy guiding departmental action," Kirgis let it slide.46

Ultimately, the Indians would not. Displeasure with the designations would fester for years, fueled by increasing pressure to develop some of these areas and building a resentment powerful enough in the late 1950s to reverse Marshall and Collier's policy to preserve Indian wilderness.

So, what did the order mean for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in 1937, with 125,000 acres of their reservation now deemed the Mission Range Roadless Area? The boundaries of this new designation surrounded the Flathead Reservation's western half of the Mission Mountains. Fifty miles in length, the roadless area extended from the Jocko Valley in the southeast corner of the
reservation, to the reservation's northern boundary where the mountains begin to
diminish to foothills. East to west, the roadless area was only a few miles wide, from
the Mission Divide -- the reservation's eastern edge -- to the mountains' base. This
was basically the same territory the Tribes proposed to preserve as a park, but the
separate origins of these two similar ideas made all the difference.

"State and Tribal lands [on the reservation] without any difficulty can be set
aside as roadless areas," Flathead Superintendent L.W. Shotwell promptly wrote to
Collier after the announcement of the designations. But Shotwell disagreed that
private lands, trust allotments, commercial timber sale units, developed power
reserves, and areas with preexisting roads could be deemed roadless. The western
boundary of the new Mission Range Roadless Area was a patchwork of such lands
and Shotwell asked that the roadless area be redrawn for their exclusion. He also
proposed that the lower elevation areas at both the north and south ends of the
range -- "generously covered with timber" and sparsely roaded already -- be trimmed
from the designation as well. Altogether, his deletions reduced the roadless area by
40 percent, to 73,000 acres.47

This acreage was still significant, Shotwell pointed out, considering that 67,000
acres of the east slope of the Missions -- Forest Service land -- already carried roadless
status. Under the new L-20 regulations, the Mission Mountains Primitive Area on
the Flathead National Forest had been established in 1931. (Map B outlines the
boundaries of both the tribal Mission Range Roadless Area and the federal Mission
Mountains Primitive Area.)

The Mission Range, combining both the Indian and federal areas, would still
comprise 140,000 contiguous acres of pristine country. But to compensate for the loss of roadless Indian acreage, Shotwell suggested that a 40,000-acre area in the Rattlesnake Mountains south of the Jocko Valley be added to the reservation's roadless classification. He urged the Indian Office to seek the Tribal Council's approval of such an addition, since "the matter of setting aside any portion of the reservation as a roadless area vitally affects the welfare of the Indians." 48

To Shotwell's recommendations, the Indian Office responded:

The Flathead roadless area was given very careful consideration when its boundaries were defined and there does not appear to be sufficient justification presented in your letter to authorize the modification as proposed. However, the Office is deeply interested in the addition to the roadless area which you have suggested. 49

In fact, the Tribes would not approve this addition, although decades later, in 1974, they designated their side of the Rattlesnake Mountains, on their own terms, as the South Fork Primitive Area. 50

In March of 1939 the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes formally protested "the setting aside of a Wilderness and Roadless Area without the approval of the Tribal Council." Resolution No. 157 reminded Collier that a few years before the Council requested that the Mission Range be preserved as a recreational park, given "that the Tribe should have exclusive control at all times." In contrast, the Council saw the designation of the Mission Range Roadless Areas by the federal government as an "action . . . contrary to the Constitution and By-laws of the Tribe." 51

The Council assured the Indian Office that "due to the natural inaccessibility" of the Missions, it would be "impractical to construct roads that would be in any way
harmful or detrimental" to the landscape of the mountains. In the same breath, they proposed that a road be built through the northern end of the area, for fire protection and "possible future commercial use." This new road would complement the one that already existed along the southern boundary; together, they would "merely encompass the entire area." 52

The Council's protest against the Mission Range Roadless Area made few waves in Washington. Like all the tribes saddled with the roadless "honor," the Confederated Salish and Kootenai had to appeal case by case to the Indian Office concerning development within their roadless area. The Tribal Council sometimes successfully overruled the policy at least temporarily. Often they did not.

For example, in July of 1938, the Dupuis Brothers were allowed to continue logging a unit in the Mission Mountains, since this timber sale preceded the designation of the roadless area. In addition, Assistant to the Commissioner John Herrick awarded them the right to future contracts on the Missions' accessible lower slopes, because the livelihood of these tribal members depended upon harvesting logs for their reservation sawmill. This offer stood with the understanding that the logging roads will not be maintained after logging operations are completed. Such temporary logging roads will soon be impassable if not kept in a state of repair and the areas should quickly revert to a roadless area condition. 53

The most monumental case of the roadless rule not budging involved a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project both the Indians and the Forest Service aggressively supported: the proposed Station Creek Truck Trail in the northern section of the roadless area. Since the early 1930s, the Indian Department (ID) of the
CCC, another of President Roosevelt's massive national programs to remedy the Great Depression, had been at work on the Flathead Reservation. Young Indian men constructed fire roads, horse trails, bridges, lookout towers, and telephone lines, and took on other "property improvement or protection" projects such as firefighting and insect and rodent control. The trail-building crews on the Flathead Reservation concentrated their efforts in the remote backcountry of the Missions' west slope. They would emerge in 1941, when the CCC ended, with a 140-mile network of foot and horse trails to show for their labors.

For the purposes of fire protection, recreation, and tribal hunting and berry gathering, the newly chiseled system featured a central trail running north-south in the high country below the Mission Divide, with perpendicular trails descending the range's drainages west into the Mission Valley.

Although CCC-ID trail construction continued within the Mission Range Roadless Area after its designation in 1937, road and truck trail construction did not. The Indian Office clarified to Flathead Superintendent Shotwell that while no new roads could be built in the Missions, "this does not mean that existing roads within the area need necessarily be abandoned." Shotwell wrongly assumed this preexisting-road clause would apply to the Station Creek Truck Trail, a 12-mile road surveyed but not yet constructed. Climbing from the shores of Flathead Lake, through both valuable yellow pine forests and lodgepole stands (commercially useless at the time, but still presenting a fire hazard), the Station Creek road was to connect with an existing Forest Service road at the Mission Divide. This interagency route would facilitate fire protection for both the federal and Indian forests in the
northern Missions. "It will help to keep this portion of the roadless area green in its natural attractive state," Shotwell added.58

Having demonstrated the need for such a road, the Tribes believed that their endorsement alone should serve as the go-ahead on road construction up Station Creek. On the other hand, document after letter after memo from the Indian Office addressing the Station Creek argument reiterated their policy that only "unusual justification" 59 and "highly beneficial . . . values other than fire protection"60 would allow for construction of new roads in the roadless areas. After years of remaining high on the Flathead CCC-ID's priority list, the proposed Station Creek Truck Trail -- undoubtedly a costly, ambitious project given the rugged terrain -- was axed from the 1939-1940 budget. By this time, financing of CCC projects had tightened considerably. Scarce funds defeated the Station Creek project as soundly as the roadless issue, which appeared to assist Indian Office officials in their budget-cutting decisions:

The amount that you requested was so large that it was necessary to omit some projects entirely and reduce others. . . . The Station Creek Truck Trail, being within the wild life [sic] area, has not been approved. Instead the Upper West Boundary trail has been approved.61

The CCC program closed up shop the following year, and the Station Creek road was never built.

Irrigation and reservoir development on the Flathead Reservation predated the CCC-ID era by several decades. In 1909, digging commenced on the Flathead Irrigation Project, initially proclaimed as a fundamental service to aid Indian farmers. Construction of the irrigation system conveniently coincided with the opening of the reservation to white settlers, who ultimately became the primary
recipients of the irrigation water. In the 1920s, the Bureau of Reclamation began
damming the sizable natural lakes at the base of the Mission Mountains to store
water for the extensive system. The Office of Indian Affairs eventually took control
of the irrigation system, including the reservoirs. By 1937 when the roadless
designation was made, "improvements" on McDonald Lake, St. Mary's Lake and
Mission Reservoir were already complete. From about 1930 to 1950 the Indian Office
and the Tribes pondered a more elaborate irrigation venture in the Mission
Mountains: diverting water from the Swan River watershed through the Mission
Divide to the Mission Valley via tunnels. This additional water would supplement
the Flathead Project's reserves, while generating electricity at the same time. Work
crews never broke ground on any of the tunnel routes considered. The roadless
question surely would have resurfaced if this pipe dream even approached the
construction stage.62

So while the proposed irrigation tunnels and fire roads in the Missions never
materialized, foot and horse trails within the roadless area certainly did, right in line
with roadless policy's ambitions. And these trails laid the foundation to fulfill the
Missions' recreational potential, as authors of the 1941 Annual Flathead Forestry
Report foresaw:

There are numerous mountain lakes and streams which attract the
week-end traveler and vacation guest. Many horse trails and truck
trials have been pushed high in the Mission Range and other remote
places by the CCC-ID organization. . . . Wayside shelters, camps and
cabins are being worked out. This feature, if properly managed and well
advertised should be greatly increased in years to come. There is a great
field to be developed along this line.63

* * * *
Although the CCC-ID projects made a significant mark on the forests of the Flathead Reservation, their impact paled in comparison to the repercussions of sustained-yield forestry practices, as dictated by the Indian Reorganization Act. The sustained-yield concept required that reservation forests be managed for "continuous production" and promised "eventual balance between net growth and harvest." 64 This new management decree did not influence Flathead timber operations until its headlining debut in the reservation's forest management plan of 1945, when high war-time timber demands had the Flathead forests buzzing with activity once again.

The 1945 forest plan reported that loggers harvested an average of 24 million board feet per year between 1911 and 1944. At that rate, the reservation's remaining accessible timber would be gone by 1962. The plan proposed a cautious annual limit of 10 million board feet (to be harvested from yet uncut stands) until 1988, when second-generation stands would be producing enough timber to sustain the yearly 10-million-board-feet standard. The Forestry Branch would amend this schedule several times through the 1950s, continually increasing the annual allowable cut for the short term to meet the escalating demands of logging contractors, both Indian and white, who strove to keep pace with the post-war building boom. The revised schedules never abandoned the annual 10-million-board-feet ideal but simply pushed it a few years further into the future, while actual yearly harvests averaged almost three times that amount.65

By the late 1940s, given the high price for timber, some Indian allottees wanted to liquidate the timber on their lands. If the forest in question already had
been logged, to any extent, IRA regulations prohibited further cuts. A Flathead Agency forester responded to one such request by reminding the allottee:

> When the Tribe accepted the Wheeler-Howard Act [IRA], they also accepted the sustained yield program. . . . [A]reas that have been logged cannot be relogged, except in case of fire or bug, or unless the entire reservation has been logged. [my emphasis]

Although some tribal members began to voice their concern over the depletion of reservation timber and suggested curbing or even discontinuing the sale of timber to white commercial loggers, business as usual prevailed.

In the early 1950s, the Tribes purchased a number of timber allotments that had been assigned to landless Indians at the close of the allotment era, before Collier's reforms prescribed forest planning for the larger tribal good. These acquisitions added considerable acreage to the tribal timberlands. At the same time, the tide of national Indian policy turned once more as the ultimate assimilation device took shape in Congress as House Concurrent Resolution 108. "Termination" would discontinue federal services on those reservations deemed by the Department of Interior as ready for independence, among them the Flathead Reservation. Despite their progressive tribal government and economy, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes had no desire to give up the benefits of federal assistance. The Tribes successfully defeated the threat of termination in 1954, their fight fueled directly by concern for their timber program, still funded and run largely by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. (In 1947, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or BIA, became the official name of the Department of Interior's previously known Indian Office or Office of Indian Affairs.) The extended political tussle drew more Indians closer to
the reservation's timber operations, and the Tribes' victory prompted elevated Indian participation in the forestry program.68

By this time, the Mission Range Roadless Area was described by the current Flathead Superintendent as "an inconvenience to the Tribes' operations to timber management." Although several timber contracts in the Mission Mountains had been approved and "in fact one small contract is in operation now," Superintendent Stone concluded that "from the over-all picture it would not seem that the area itself has been very much disturbed."69

The superintendent's 1956 report on the roadless area served to educate tribal attorney John Cragun, who professed ignorance of "any formal roadless area of this kind."70 Cragun had good reason to learn more. He had been informed of a group of conservationists lobbying Congress for legislation which would preserve certain undeveloped federal lands by prohibiting all mining, grazing, timber harvest, water impoundment and the construction of roads within designated "wilderness" boundaries. The first wilderness bill was drafted by Wilderness Society Executive Director Howard Zahniser and introduced by Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) and Representative John Saylor (R-PA). Zahniser's bill included in the proposed national wilderness system the existing Indian roadless areas, if the respective Indian governments "consented." This term rang with familiarity and irritation in the ears of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai and other Indians affected for two decades now by the Interior Department's rarely-bending roadless rules.

Eight years later, after considering 65 wilderness bills, the U.S. Congress passed the Wilderness Act of 1964, the ordination of the National Wilderness Preservation
System. Lands included in the system would be off limits to most development in perpetuity or until the unlikely passage of a retroactive bill by Congress. This much more powerful law replaced the former executive orders that set up federal primitive areas. The House passed the final wilderness bill 373 to one; the Senate passed it 73 to 12; and President Lyndon Johnson signed the bill into law on September 3, 1964. The Wilderness Act had survived the ravages of numerous opponents -- industry, the Forest Service, the National Park Service and Indian tribes among them -- but not without compromise. It deviated significantly from what wilderness purists had in mind back in 1956.

Major concessions included less restrictive uses of wilderness lands and the exclusion of preexisting federal primitive areas from automatic wilderness status. The Mission Mountains Primitive Area, on the Flathead National Forest east of the Flathead Reservation, would not become the Mission Mountains Wilderness Area until 1975, for example. The Wilderness Act dictated both wilderness classification and management of Forest Service, National Park Service and National Wildlife Refuge lands. But, it did not preside over the 5 million acres of Indian roadless areas, which had made up 8 percent of the original 65 million acres proposed for wilderness status. At the end of this long legislative saga, reservation lands were no longer part of the nation's plan "to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

Most Indians saw this exclusion as a victory, an escape from "the mysterious and evil interests reaching out to grab Indian lands, once again," as Navajo Chairman Paul Jones testified at an early Congressional hearing in 1958. Making
Indian land wilderness, under federal rules, was as good as surrendering it.

From the beginning, the matter of including Indian lands in the Wilderness Act was sticky, at best. The government's lingering termination policy played a contradictory role. At the same time the feds hoped to dissolve their trust responsibilities to many tribes, this new legislation sought to pull reservations more securely under the federal-lands umbrella. Many Indians found simply illogical and unacceptable the fact that the government would attempt to lump tribal property -- although communal, still private -- together with federal lands in this perpetual contract.

The wishy-washy consent issue initially ignited tribal opposition to inclusion of Indian land in the Wilderness Act. The threat of losing their lands to strict wilderness status led all but one of the tribes with assigned roadless areas to finally act on their stewing resentment. The earlier wilderness bills, which included Indian lands, precipitated the demise of nearly all the Indian roadless areas within a very short time.

* * * *

Bob Marshall created the Indian roadless areas back in the 1930s with the romantic and noble intent of providing "a retreat where [Indians] may escape from constant contact with white men." During the wilderness debates of the late 1950s, an unnamed tribal council member from the Warm Springs Reservation was quoted as saying "... from the testimony here today, it appears that the white man wants to get away from other white men." 

Most of the tribes already encumbered with roadless designations wanted no
part in this even more binding law that would lock up their lands forever, and they voiced their ardent opposition at various Congressional hearings on the wilderness bill in 1957, 1958 and 1959. Most tribes prefaced their arguments with either neutral or supportive statements concerning national wilderness legislation that steered clear of Indian lands. Their opposition ranged from demands that tribal consent to wilderness designations be assured beforehand, to insistence that tribal lands be dropped from the bill altogether. At the same time, tribal councils began to request the declassification of their roadless areas, based on need for commercial development.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' initial objection to the wilderness bill did not bring the Mission Mountain Roadless Area into the argument. With Resolution No. 991, adopted in July 1958, the Tribes formally opposed the S. 4028, H.R. 13013 version of the wilderness bill and all "identical or similar bills" that proposed inclusion of Indian lands in a national wilderness system "without the express consent of the tribes concerned." While previous bills retained the original draft's language of tribal "consent," this version changed the wording to "consultation." "Mere 'consultation' by the Secretary [of the Interior] is regarded by the tribes as inadequate protection of tribal lands and resources," the resolution read, adding that anything less than "express consent" of the tribes involved "may constitute a taking contrary to the United States Constitution." The Tribes' passionate spokesman through these days of wilderness backlash was their pro-business tribal chairman, Walter McDonald, who sought bold new timber options for his people now that "the cream of our crop of timber is gone."
His sermonic arguments -- at times blatantly contradictory -- projected to a congregation far beyond the Flathead Reservation. To Indian advocate Dorothy Van de Mark of Chicago, he confided that he thought the earlier wilderness bills "not too bad with the consent of the respective tribal councils [his emphasis]" and then expounded:

> Our Indians have the privilege [sic] to hunt and fish by our laws, gather berries and get wood -- This is our country and we do not want to be saddled by any more regulations and restrictions. It is our heritage that we already have a wilderness area. We believe we are ahead of the whiteman. Why does the Congressman single out the Indian tribes or reservations for wilderness areas? . . . We are getting along very well without a wilderness area.\(^{80}\)

In another letter to Van de Mark, McDonald spoke "on behalf of my Tribal Council":

> We are not interested in the Wilderness Area Bill at all, we operate under the Indian Reorganization Act . . . We operate our timber under a sustained yield program. Who would be responsible or withstand the loss if this bill became a reality, and a large forest fire would wipe us out?\(^{81}\)

At a Congressional hearing in Salt Lake City in November 1958, McDonald presented two letters of support from the Flathead Reservation's white community concerning the Tribes' opposition to inclusion in the wilderness bill. The Lake County Board of Commissioners and the Polson Chamber of Commerce both officially endorsed the Tribes' wish to harvest timber in the Mission Mountains rather than preserve the range as a wilderness. McDonald testified that "when they [the federal government] set aside our beautiful Mission Range and our valuable reservation," another "wrong [would be] done [to] my people that we cannot forget."\(^{82}\)

Previously, McDonald -- also chairman of the Inter-Tribal Policy Board, which
served Montana's seven reservations -- had distributed a memo of sorts to both
Indians and "interested non-Indian citizens" across the West. He asked them to
submit statements of opposition to the wilderness bill at the Salt Lake hearing or
similar ones held within the same month in San Francisco and Albuquerque. "If
this bill becomes law the Indians will have lost their prestige and dignity, along with
their natural resources as well as their exiting culture," McDonald surmised. To
rally his fellow bill-bashers, he concluded:

Today we have all joined hands in encouraging industrial development
on all reservations, and certainly we do not want any obstacles in the
way. But that is what it means to the Flathead, because the economy of
this tribe is dependent upon the sale of its timber.83

Other Northwest tribes with roadless designations -- the Yakima, Warm
Springs, and Colville Indians -- expressed similar concerns for their timber
resources. On the Navajo Reservation, interest in uranium and copper mining
prompted a reexamination of the roadless policy and "vigorous opposition" to the
inclusion of Navajo lands in the wilderness bill, regardless of the tribal-consent
clause.

The Navajo's Paul Jones laid blame for his people's "poverty and ignorance,"
in part, on the enforcement of the roadless policy in the Black Mesa, Painted Desert
and Rainbow Bridge areas:

These areas are more heavily populated than most of rural Arizona... Most of our reservation is a roadless area. This condition exists not
because we wanted to preserve these areas for their recreational, scenic,
or scientific purposes, but because our Navaho Reservation has been
ignored in respect to roads... I can, therefore, understand why the
casual visitor looks at various parts of our reservation and believes
them to be wilderness areas and finds them attractive targets for
creating permanent wilderness reserves. They think the Navaho
people themselves are part of the scenery, and not people like
themselves, who need jobs, doctors, and schools. Experience has been a
painful teacher for we have found that the perpetuating of the Navaho
Reservation as a roadless area has only projected great misery among us
Navahos, and has made the job of catching up a tremendous one.84

Also testifying on behalf of the Navajo people was Gordon Weller, executive
vice president of the Uranium Institute of America, who himself had plenty to say
about the injustice of keeping roads -- which could serve "both tourist travel and the
development of mineral reserves which abound" -- from the roadless designations
on the Navajo Reservation. His concerns extended a bit beyond the welfare of the
local Indians: "For such areas to be removed from the use of the Nation for all other
purposes in perpetuity is to commend our Nation to a blind course of predestined
resource poverty."85

Jones claimed he spoke beyond the needs of the Navajo, too, to those of other
Americans or those who lived in the West, anyway:

[B]ecause of the low productivity of western lands, western people have
an even greater need than easterners to make maximum use of their
lands for economic purposes. . . . We westerners, Indians and non-
Indians alike, submit that territorial days are over, and no section of this
country has a right to impose colonialism on any other section.86

But there were voices of support for Indian wilderness, among them William
Zimmerman, Jr., former assistant commissioner of Indian Affairs under John
Collier. Zimmerman testified at a 1957 Congressional hearing on the wilderness bill
as a private citizen, although at the time he was affiliated with the Association on
American Indian Affairs. He urged lawmakers to keep Indian lands in the
legislation for two reasons. First, given the proximity of these areas to national
forests or parks and "so long as the United States hold these lands as trustee, the
same principles of conservation should apply [to the Indian lands] as apply to other Federal lands [my emphasis]." Secondly, he said, the economic potential of these areas was limited, with "scenery and recreation" their best assets. As to the issue of the Indian lands being privately owned, Zimmerman advocated "the inclusion of any privately owned lands, again, of course, ... with the consent of the owner."87

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai did not agree. Their Tribal Council put pen to paper once again on the last day of 1958, requesting that the secretary of Interior "withdraw and revoke" the Mission Range from the Indian Office's roadless order. There was no beating around the bush as to why: "A large supply of merchantable timber is presently available within the existing 'Roadless and Wild Area,' and ... The Tribes are desirous of cutting and marketing this timber, now." Resolution No. 1003 claimed the Indian Office's department of roads was constructing eight miles of new road within the area anyway, and logging roads would be necessary for the Tribes "to cut and market their merchantable timber in accordance with the sustained yield program."88

By this time, several other tribes had successfully persuaded the Indian Office to declassify their roadless areas. In 1956, the Makah Indians asked that the Cape Flattery Wild Area be abolished, due to damage from the construction of military installations during World War II.89 The Indians of the Warm Springs Reservation were the first to have a larger, roadless designation -- their 105,000 acres surrounding Mt. Jefferson in the Oregon Cascades -- officially removed from the federal list of Indian roadless areas, in August 1958. The next month, the Hualapai Indians in Arizona quickly followed suit with their 530,000 acres of the Grand Canyon. In
following year, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes together with the Indians of the Colville and Grand Portage reservations comprised “the respective tribes (who) requested the elimination of these areas to facilitate economic development,” in one joint amendment to the dwindling roadless order. Upon publication of this announcement in the October 10, 1959 _Federal Register_, the Mission Range Roadless Area ceased to be. By 1962, only the Wind River Roadless Area on the Wyoming reservation of the Shoshone and Arapahoe remained intact. Today, 188,000 rugged, high-elevation acres of the original 220,000-acre designation, found in the southwest corner of the Wind River Reservation, is still managed as a roadless area by the BIA and the Shoshone and Arapahoe tribes. (See appendix 1 for a list of the 16 roadless and wild areas established by the Indian Office in 1937, with locations by reservation and state, acreages, and declassification dates.)

Once the inventory of roadless designations shrunk to only two, the days of Indians lands remaining part of the wilderness bill were numbered. The last version of the bill that included Indian lands, S. 1123, reverted to and even expanded upon the consent wording, stating that inclusion of reservation areas would be “upon the recommendation of or with the consent of the tribes.” Another round of hearings produced more negative testimony from Indians. In February of 1961, the S. 174 version of the wilderness bill was introduced, devoid of Section 2(d) which previously had discussed Indian lands.

Just as the Department of the Interior did not resist relinquishing the roadless areas, it did not resist the removal of Indian lands from the wilderness bill. Interior was a leading opponent of many of the bill’s provisions, especially those that stood
in direct conflict with their "Mission 66," a 10-year building program to ready the nation's parks for increasing volume and demands of visitors by 1966. (The Forest Service also contested the incompatibility between the wilderness bill and their new directive, the Multiple Use Act of 1960.) By all appearances, the Department of Interior was relieved to let the Indian lands go; at least the BIA-managed territory would be free of wilderness consideration. The overwhelming protests of tribes with roadless designations indicated that the respective tribal consent required for each of these areas to join the national wilderness system was highly unlikely anyway.

And, the era of the great wilderness advocates running the Bureau of Indian Affairs had passed. By the late 1950s, the major problem confronting the BIA was "too many people and not enough land," Don Foster, Portland area director of the BIA, reported at the Sierra Club's Fifth Biennial Wilderness Conference in 1957. The agency's policy of the day sought to improve health programs and educational facilities and pushed hard for economic development on reservations to foster the Indians' self-sufficiency, a prerequisite for termination.

Before Indian lands were excluded from the wilderness bill, a single sentence in the legislation projected the wilderness issue into the already muddled termination issue: "Unless the Congress shall otherwise provide, the termination of Federal trusteeship over a tribe or tribes shall remove from the Wilderness system any included tribal lands so affected." This additional incentive of sorts garnered greater resentment with some Indians who translated the above to: "Agree to termination of your reservation and you are free of the burden of participating in
our national wilderness scheme." Loraine Faulkner of the Wind River Reservation described the wilderness/termination linkage as "bait to induce the tribe concerned to ask for 'termination.'" Indian advocate Van de Mark testified that the wilderness bill contradicted termination policy, as well as recent BIA measures supporting greater resource development on reservations:

'It is quite impossible to logically support both... Termination is a major issue, and should not be a part of wilderness legislation. Controversial Indian issues such as consent and termination, will jeopardize the chances of this important wilderness bill, without themselves being solved."

"Is Wilderness un-democratic?" the retired John Collier asked himself just prior to passage of the Wilderness Act. While constructing an argument that no, it was not, in an essay entitled "Wilderness and Modern Man," Collier reflected on the fall of the Indian roadless areas and the Indians' missed opportunity to include their lands in the nation's wilderness system. He defended the "administratively [his emphasis] created" areas, with their flexible, changeable boundaries and the stipulation for full abolishment if a tribe -- "after genuine consideration" -- wished it so. "Across some twenty years," he recalled, "no tribe did want them abolished."

Collier did not conceal his anger with Indian Commissioner Glenn Emmons, whose swift administrative pen released the designations a few years before. Collier lamented this "rush of action... suggesting the kinds of influences which are fighting now against the Wilderness Preservation bill." He dismissed Emmons' accusations that the roadless areas contradicted the IRA:

The roadless order was violative neither of the letter nor the spirit of
the Indian Reorganization Act; and the Emmons' administration's invoking of that Act to justify its hurried destruction of the roadless areas was ignorant if not insincere.98

To the issue of not consulting the tribes before the order was made, Collier expressed regret and offered two reasons why he had not. First, he minimized the order's authority: "Leaving aside the words 'wilderness' and 'wild,' the Secretary's order was nothing except a directive that roads be not built within the described areas." Secondly, Collier claimed there was no time to consult each tribe, given the immense workload of the Indian Office at the time, which included implementation of new tribal councils across the country and the Navajo's critical erosion problems: "We were drowned, hemmed-in, sometimes crushed, by hundreds of jobs."99

Bob Marshall's order was "meant, in part, as a commencement of the Wilderness policy broadly conceived," Collier conceded. "In the hindsight of the whole Wilderness struggle, it would have been better if we had done what we did not do."100

Zimmerman recalled that the 1937 order "was based clearly on a sense of urgency,"101 although without further explanation of the nature of that urgency his argument lacks backbone, especially given the stagnant economic climate in the 1930s. Only two years after the roadless order became effective, Bob Marshall died at age 38, so he only experienced the order's honeymoon period, questionable as it was, when "widespread approval" -- Marshall's words -- prevailed.102 Today, Stewart Brandborg, another Wilderness Act veteran, still expresses "strong regret" over the exclusion of Indian lands from the legislation. Inclusion "simply would have given Indians the option [to designate wilderness] . . . and they could pattern their
wilderness areas to national standards," he said. "Something needs to be done yet. We could still include Indian lands." 103

Collier would concur. Ever the optimist, back in the 1960s he reminded the BIA administration that they "had complete authority to restore, or establish anew, roadless areas." 104

On the Flathead Reservation anyway, nothing could have been further from the minds of the BIA foresters. In the early 1960s, as initial harvest of the reservation's forests was close to complete, the Forestry Branch shifted from its former management approach of extensive logging -- primarily selective and salvage cutting of formerly unlogged forests -- to "intensive" logging. While the objective of sustained yield for maximum financial benefit to the Tribes remained the same, the aggressive approach of intensive logging lived up to its name. First of all, state-of-the-art equipment allowed logging operations to climb into formerly inaccessible, higher-elevation forests and cut these last remaining virgin stands, adding Englemann spruce, lodgepole pine and white pine to the reservation's menu of lumber. Secondly, attention to second- and third-growth stands -- by way of thinning, pruning, replanting, and controlling insects, disease and fire -- was emphasized. 105

The new 1962 timber survey, which revealed a volume of available timber almost double the previous estimate, boosted foresters' confidence in even higher yields from the reservation's forests. This recently realized bounty, coupled with the great potential of intensive logging methods, prompted the Forestry Branch to shelve the never-beyond-the-theory depletion schedules and raise the ceiling of
allowable annual harvests to over 70 million board feet.106

In 1964, the annual cut was a modest 29.6 million board feet.107 And as the ink dried on the nation's new Wilderness Act, the Flathead's BIA foresters pondered the new logging frontiers to be explored given the power of intensive technologies. The northern end of the former Mission Range Roadless Area sat front and center on their drawing board.
An American soldier stationed overseas daydreams of his homecoming. After touching down on Montana soil at the Missoula airport, he heads north on U.S. 93 for the last leg of his journey. Once on the Flathead Reservation, the highway follows the Jocko River for a while, leaving it at Ravalli, a tiny strip of a town, and climbing through a fold in the dry, yellow mounds of Palouse prairie. The soldier looks left, beyond the taller-and-sturdier-than-average barbed wire fence that encloses the National Bison Range, for a glimpse of the dark beasts grazing the hillsides. The upgrade requires him to downshift. The pavement widens, providing the northbound, uphill direction with a passing lane.

As the top of the rise approaches, the soldier's eyes are on the road ahead. The highway curves to the right and the Mission Mountains, one by one, line up before his windshield. The peaks grow skyward as he crests the hill. They rise and rise and rise -- well over a vertical mile in a matter of seconds -- as the lush Mission Valley falls away like a receding wave from the mountaintops. Mottled with ice and snow
fields, the range's highest peaks are straight on, a tumble of stone blocks in two massive clusters: one dominated by the twin McDonald summits, the other by East and West St. Marys peaks. The blackish-green cleft of Mission Canyon segregates the two alpine neighborhoods. A long thin alabaster ribbon -- Mission Falls -- threads the canyon's depths with its luminescence. The precipitous ridge known as the Garden Wall, high above the canyon on the range's divide, bridges the two serrated skylines. And below, an unobstructed carpet of forest descends the Missions' steep terrain, reaching out onto the valley floor busy with cattle, crops, and more and more new homes strategically positioned for, of course, the view.

"After 18 years in the military . . . there is no finer sight than coming over the Ravalli Hill and seeing the great Mission Canyon and Range come into view," SFC William Orr wrote from Germany to the Char-Koosta News, the tribal newspaper of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, in 1975.¹

Quite dramatically, this Route 93 approach introduces tourists, greets daily commuters and reacquaints weary homebound reservation residents with the Missions' memorable, almost surreal panorama. The mountains appear more as a mural pulled across your field of vision than as a three-dimensional landscape. The sheer verticality of the Missions' west face emphasizes only one dimension: up. Devoid of foothills, the narrow range is somewhat an exhibitionist, with its highest peaks not concealed behind lesser ones but in open view to the valley below. And yet while the mountains boast their height, they downplay their proximity and accessibility to the valley. One may feel inclined to lean back and admire them from a little distance, like a fine painting on a gallery wall, as most of the Indians do.
By the early 1970s, some Indians began to weigh the riches of the reservation's burgeoning timber business -- already advancing up the Mission slopes -- against the scenic value of their mountain range. Orr's letter home was more than a fond reminiscence. He wrote to defend this homecoming vision of the Missions that he carried with him around the globe:

To me even the Swiss Alps can not compare to our mountains. My greatest hope is that when I return home I can see the mountains as I remember them and not see a mess like the Government makes with their forests. I hope that the Tribal Council keeps up the fight to keep our reservation a place of beauty and not let the almighty dollar take priority. 

Since its 1962 management plan heralded the philosophy of intensive logging, the Flathead timber industry rode the ups and downs of the ever more fickle lumber market at a higher mean of annual harvests for over a decade. In 1966, 48.6 million board feet was cut from the reservation's forests; in 1968, a record 75.9. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the annual cut on average met the BIA's quota of 50 million board feet. These large annual harvests and inflated stumpage values together paid the Tribes handsomely; they grossed $2.8 million from timber in 1968.

Tribal participation in the reservation's timber industry expanded. Tribal funds constituted over a quarter of the Forestry Branch budget by 1970. More Indians worked in the forestry program, most taking part in the labor-intensive thinning, reforestation, fire control, and insect and disease control efforts dictated by intensive management. Unruffled by the dip in the timber economy in 1969 and 1970, BIA foresters assigned the reservation an annual allowable cut of 54.8 million
board feet until 1981. Despite the depletion of the reservation's original bounty of trees, intensive methods allowed harvests to keep pace with foresters' expectations and market demands. (Appendix 2 charts the Flathead Reservation's annual timber yields through the 20th century against timber-related events on the reservation. These events often were either a result or a contributing factor of the corresponding year's or era's harvest level. The timeline continues through the mid-1990s, citing major milestones in the evolution of the tribal wilderness.)

The harvest of high-elevation stands -- primarily Englemann spruce and Alpine fir, at altitudes between 5,000 and 7,000 feet -- played a major role in the maintenance of these large annual harvests. To entice loggers to tackle the greater challenge, and higher cost, of constructing roads into high, rugged country (only to extract the lower-value alpine species), the Forestry Branch prescribed clearcutting as a primary harvesting method on the five new timber units mapped for the northern Mission Mountains. Clearcutting, the Forestry Branch argued, also aided in disease control. On the Yellow Bay Unit -- northernmost of the five -- Englemann spruce bark beetle infestation, plus mistletoe infection in the Douglas fir and western larch stands, justified the marking of 20 blocks to be clearcut, ranging in size from 38 to 169 acres. Officials in charge of the sale conceded that the size of these clearcuts was "unusual for the Flathead Reservation forest," but they claimed artificial reforestation would be simple and effective on the large open areas.

The visual consequences of the first clearcuts on the west face of the Mission Mountains did not bode well with some Flathead Valley residents, especially David Rorvik of Bigfork, just north of the reservation. Speaking for himself, a non-Indian,
"and a good many others of the lake [Flathead Lake]," Rorvik wrote to reservation forestry officials and his Congressmen in 1971, condemning the clearcuts on "the steep, clearly visible" mountainsides which had degraded the natural beauty of the Missions. "The devastation . . . has been appalling," he wrote. "Here, where scenic values should count for so much, there has been absolutely no regard for the environment." 7

To Rorvik's protests, Flathead officials replied that together the BIA and the Tribes considered aesthetics when making timber decisions and the Tribal Council just recently announced plans "to delete considerable portions of the upper slopes of the Missions from logging and related activities."8 And although the 1972 forest management plan allowed the harvest of timber on the Mission slopes, it required "a review of logging procedures by the Tribal Council prior to the harvest."9

On the other hand, Flathead Superintendent Harold Roberson admitted that the Yellow Bay Unit constituted a clear exception to the scenic directive, citing the urgency of the beetle problem for the deviation. As to future logging on the Mission face:

Plans are to try to shape any future required clearcuts on the face of the Missions to give the appearance of a natural phenomena such as a snow slide or rock slide and thereby blend it into the landscape. Clearcuts will be a last resort, however, employed only where extreme decadent conditions so dictate.10

Rorvik's complaints initiated public debate of the question: would the BIA and the Tribal Council continue to allow logging operations to scale the scenic slopes of the Mission face? The answer: yes, and, ultimately, no.

The Yellow Bay, Boulder, Hellroaring, Ducharme and Moss Peak timber units
stacked up north to south in the northeast corner of the reservation, between Flathead Lake and the Mission Divide. End to end, these five large cross sections of the Mission Range measured almost 20 miles. Here, logging continued. (Map C illustrates these contiguous timber units, plus two other units at the base of the Mission Mountains, that were cut in the late 60s and early 70s.) Between 1966 and 1976, loggers removed 129 million board feet of timber from these less spectacular, gentler slopes of the Mission Range. Follow-up salvage sales on the Boulder, Hellroaring and Moss Peak units added another 2 million board feet to the total. Combined, the cuts in the northern Missions poured $5.6 million into the tribal coffers.  

11 (See appendix 3 for timber sale information on these five Mission units.)

Even more ambitious plans were in the works for the remainder of the Mission Range. Foresters slated eight timber units for selected "valley-facing" mountainsides from the Moss Peak Unit south to the Jocko Valley, with an estimated total harvest of 223 million board feet to be completed by the early 1980s. The first proposed sale was the 2,200-acre Ashley Lakes Unit, a narrow seven-mile strip between McDonald Lake and Mission Reservoir, along the base slopes of McDonald and Kakashe peaks. For this unit, the BIA allocated a cut of 9 million board feet, the removal of 40 percent of the area's trees, and between-tree spacing up to 20 feet. This project alone required 30 miles of new roads. The St. Mary's Unit at the base of the southern Missions was originally expected to yield 86 million board feet. This massive tract of land was divided into two smaller units, one of which was also scheduled for sale in the fall of 1974.  

12 Some tribal members were already scrutinizing the over-zealous management
methods of the reservation's timber program, especially its clearcuts, thinning practices, excessive roads, and the sales of such large timber units. The BIA's announcement of the conspicuous Mission sales, which threatened the venerable face of the Missions, elevated the scrutiny to blatant protest.

Some Indians wanted no logging of any kind along the Mission Front. William Orr's letter from Europe expressed their shared conviction that the sales sacrificed the scenic Missions to the insatiable appetites of local loggers, with little net benefit to the Salish and Kootenai people. These tribal members believed "the Mission forests [were] worth far more in cultural and recreational value than in stumpage," a *Char-Koosta News* article on the Ashley sale reported in the spring of 1974.¹³ Supporters of a ban on logging in the Missions, including Kathy Ross, spoke most passionately about returning home to their mountains and their roots:

> You know you are home when you see those mountains. [If logging is allowed, we would get up every morning and go to bed every night having to look at that mess, that would take most of the magic out of our home.]¹⁴

Serviceman Kenneth Orr also wrote from overseas to the tribal newspaper about the perilous predicament the Mission sales precipitated. He painted the scene of a bleak futuristic homecoming: his view atop Ravalli hill would reveal a desecrated Mission face, with a crisscross of roads etched across the lower slopes and small stands of pines huddled on otherwise naked, ravaged hillsides:

> Instantly I feel a great loss in my soul. It is as though some madman had come into my home and literally tore up the living room. . . . The Indian has little left of the old ways and world; is he ready now, to give [the Missions] up also?¹⁵

Clarence Woodcock, for one, affirmed that he was not. Above and beyond a logging
site, the Mission Range was a place of greater meaning and more uses, "a place to
gather a lot of the herbs and berries and plants and, in addition, a place that the
Indian people link with home and with Indianness."^16

But, of course, Mission logging had its share of supporters on the reservation,
as well. Some Indians endorsed timber harvest along the Mission Front only with
special precautions to minimize environmental and aesthetic damage. Others
favored the industry's business-as-usual methods and the addition of the Mission
units to the current timber schedule, largely responsible for the Tribes' continued
financial success. In 1972, tribal income from timber approached $5 million, and per
capita checks paid to all tribal members grew fatter.17

Councilman Tom Pablo of the Hot Springs District, on the west side of the
reservation and out of sight of the Mission Range, said his constituents voted for the
Ashley sale after BIA forestry officials reported their intentions at a special meeting.
Councilman E.W. Morigeau also reported support of the Mission sales from Polson,
near the northern end of the Mission Range and the notorious clearcuts. Morigeau
accused the Char-Koosta News of biased reporting on the impending Mission sales.
He claimed the paper emphasized the views of logging opponents, without
"presenting an accurate picture of the feelings of tribal members from all districts,"
such as his.18

Thurman Trosper, a Salish retiree and former supervisor of the Bitterroot
National Forest, editorialized in the March 15, 1974 edition of the Char-Koosta News
just how detrimental business as usual on the Mission Front could be:

The management of timber on the reservation has reached a point of
crisis.... Sales are too large and poorly supervised. Stands are being overcut. Too many roads are being built .... It can be safely assumed that, unless corrective measures are taken, this area will be logged in the conventional manner. Should this occur, the beautiful Missions will be defaced beyond redemption. We cannot, in all conscience, leave to our children and to all future generations a legacy of a defaced and scarred Mission face. It would be a crime against our people and against Mother Nature. 19

* * * *

The proposed Mission sales swiftly had become a political hot potato on the reservation. The Tribal Council election in December 1973 focused largely on logging, especially logging in the Missions, with many candidates favoring the exclusion of the Mission Mountains from the forestry schedule and reform of those intensive timber practices criticized as too intensive. Following the election, the Council called for several studies to review the reservation's timber operations. They hired faculty from the University of Montana's Forestry School to report on the impact of logging on the reservation's watersheds, wildlife and soils, and the BIA was asked to conduct an internal investigation of alleged mismanagement of the Flathead forests, including "stumpage overruns" (more timber removed from a unit than the contract allows). The new Council also agreed to look again at a proposal Trosper first had introduced to their unresponsive predecessors a few years before.20

In 1970, Trosper had propositioned tribal leaders with the idea of preserving most of the Mission Range as wilderness, a concept with which he was quite familiar given his career with the Forest Service and the Park Service, and his longtime involvement with The Wilderness Society. Trosper, who claims his left-leaning environmental views stilted his government career somewhat, was home on the
reservation vacationing when he first discussed the idea with the tribal council. He proposed that the upper two-thirds of the Mission Range be protected from all development and extractive use, leaving the forests of the lower slopes as commercial timberlands. Tribal Chairman Walter McDonald, who adamantly fought to eliminate Indian lands from the national Wilderness Act of 1964, was not impressed. Trosper could not appease the Council's fear that any wilderness designation would mean surrendering some degree of control to the federal government. His argument for a *tribal* wilderness, governed by tribal policies and as easily dissolved by tribal resolution as created, did not motivate the Council to take any action, and the issue was dropped.21

While the new Council contemplated plans and awaited studies, the BIA placed a moratorium on all Mission logging in March 1974. Acting Flathead Agency Forestry Manager Fred Malroy explained that he halted all preparations for the sales because he was "getting the message" that tribal members were unhappy with the BIA and "that we are over cutting the timber supply on the reservation. That the allowable annual cut is too high and is unreliable."22

Seizing the opportunity in this official delay of the Mission sales, Trosper recommended that the Tribal Council commission another independent study to the University of Montana's Forestry School: an analysis of the reservation's timber growth and annual harvest. This new inventory would allow the Tribes to set their own, more sustainable quotas and guidelines for the BIA managers to follow. The reservation's forests, especially the Mission forests, Trosper argued, were too valuable *not* to pursue this role reversal:
We do not need to follow in the footsteps of traditional bureaucratic forest practices or be beholden to BIA on how the timber on the Missions should be managed. . . . [W]e have the capability and foresight to manage this area in a manner that will leave intact the scenic, wildlife, and watershed values.23

Councilman Tom "Bearhead" Swaney shared Trosper's mistrust in the BIA's trust responsibilities to the Tribes, arguing that the Mission Front was not the place to parade the agency's incompetence:

> How can we turn you [BIA Forestry] loose on a more important, delicate and complicated project [like the Mission timber sales] when you have shown us that you can't even control the easy projects you already have?24

One tribal member tried to incorporate a wilderness provision for the Missions into the Tribes' new constitution, in the works at the time. Richard Orton's proposal was narrowly rejected (18 to 17) by the Constitutional Convention Committee, although everyone in attendance at that particular meeting in February 1974 voted in favor of wilderness protection for the Missions by some other means.25 So, Orton and Kathy Ross, together with their pro-wilderness following, continued to collect signatures for their "red-hot" petition calling for the end of logging in the Mission Mountains in perpetuity. By the time the BIA announced their logging moratorium for the Missions, the petition had 500 of the 600 signatures required to bring the issue of the Missions' fate before the entire tribal population in a referendum.26

Against the BIA's recommendations to sit tight for a while, the Tribal Council almost immediately took action to proceed, cautiously, with preparations for the Ashley Lakes sale. Several councilmen voiced their impatience -- and their
constituents' impatience -- with the assortment of logging studies that were delaying the Mission sales and therefore thwarting the current forestry schedule. The Council assigned the Tribes' Economic Development Committee with the task of reviewing various logging plans and choosing an appropriate plan for the Ashley Unit, given the area's controversial status.²⁷

The committee quickly concluded that any innovative low-impact logging proposal -- including their first consideration, a plan using horse skidding with road construction in draws only -- would be experimental, and a unit as large and prominent as Ashley should not serve as its testing ground. In April, the Council voted to endorse the BIA's logging freeze in the Missions and suspend the Ashley sale for at least one year. During this time "the cleanest and most feasible system" would be developed for the Ashley Unit but implemented elsewhere, as a trial. If review of the experimental site -- a smaller, less visible tract farther north in the Missions -- was favorable, the plan would be used on the Ashley Unit.²⁸

Shortly thereafter, the results of the logging studies began to roll in. The University of Montana's environmental impact assessment, directed by Leo Cummins, named logging roads as the leading cause of degradation of the reservation's forests. The researchers mapped 21,405 miles of roads through 252,000 acres of reservation forestland, nearly enough roads to encircle the globe. Among other evils, the multitude of roads was blamed for erosion problems, poor air quality from dust, declining game populations from lack of cover, increased fire hazard from slash concentration, landscape alteration, aesthetic ruin, disruption of "tribal culture by exposing hunting and gathering grounds," and "jeopardiz[ing] tribal
historical sites." The study recommended that the Tribes give higher priority to
their water -- "the most valuable resource you have in the reservation forest . . . not
timber" -- and consider "classifying the unroaded forest lands as natural areas,
eliminating the common environmental impact associated with roads for the
present generation of the Tribes." Although Professor Cummins concluded that
the Flathead timber operations "as a whole were generally good," sharper criticism
from other experts on the research team muffled his lukewarm praises.

Vic Stinger, chairman of the Tribe's Economic Development Committee,
paraphrased Cummins' conclusion that "our forestry practices are not all that bad"
when defending the Tribal Council's July decision (by a vote of 5 to 3) to prematurely
lift the year-long logging ban in the Missions and proceed with the Ashley sale. The
Char-Koosta News quoted Stinger as saying that "pressure' from several tribal
members had brought about the change in the committee's attitude.

After months of capricious decision-making by the Tribal Council on this
emotional issue, their latest flip-flop in policy fanned the flame of opposition to a
higher level. Surprised by the sudden approval of the Ashley sale, opponents
claimed they were deceived by the Council's flimsy commitment to postponement.
The petition calling for a permanent ban on all logging in the Mission Mountains --
shelved in the spring when the Council voted to suspend the Ashley sale --
circulated once more.

A small but potent team of angry tribal members confronted the Tribal
Council at their next meeting on August 2. In hindsight, many consider the
persuasive words of three of these protesters as the pivotal testimony in the tribal
discourse about wilderness preservation for the Mission Mountains. Christine Woodcock, Louise McDonald and Annie Pierre, each wearing her long gray hair bound behind her head in a bun and gazing steadily through spectacles, stood before the Council to give them a stern reprimand. These respected elders were known as *yayas*, Salish grandmothers to the whole tribe, not just to their direct descendants. They spoke on behalf of the Flathead Culture Committee when they told the Council to put away the logging plans for the Mission Mountains, for good. Later that evening, the Council voted 6 to 2 to reverse their decision one last time, reinstating the experimental clean logging project and postponing the Ashley sale. From this point, a failing timber market would begin to erode the practicality of logging the higher, move visible Missions forests and contribute significantly to the defeat of the most controversial Mission sales.

After record high timber prices in 1973 — the Tribes grossed $6 million that year — stumpage values fell throughout the summer and fall of 1974. The Western Wood Products Association Index, on which prices are based, dropped nearly one third between August and September. The nation's housing glut — concentrated far away on the East and West coasts — caused job layoffs at reservation mills and the halt of timber operations to reduce log inventory. Given these circumstances, the Tribal Council chose to hold off on new timber sales. Although BIA forestry officer Bob Miller recommended maintaining the timber schedule despite the ailing market, Tribal Secretary Fred Houle told the *Char-Koosta News* that taking on long-term contracts would be "crazy."  

While the deadlock over Mission logging continued for several years, the
impassioned debates surrounding it subsided. In 1975 the Tribal Council approved, with little fanfare, the BIA's 10-year forestry management plan, which called for the removal of 9 million board feet of timber from the Mission Mountains each year until 1981. The Council lamented tribal members' sudden apathetic turn concerning their timber future. Few Indians took advantage of the series of public hearings designed to involve everyone in the formulation of the plan; some meetings were canceled due to poor attendance.35

The plan centered on cutting the reservation's remaining 128,000 acres of commercial virgin forest, "bringing the forest under controlled growth conditions." It also set up 20-year harvesting schedules, so that every 100 years a reservation-wide cutting cycle would be complete.36 As for the 37.7 percent of the Mission Mountains deemed commercial forest land (the other 62.3 was classified as inaccessible, non-commercial or non-forested), the annual cut of 9 million board feet would be extracted while "carefully regulating road spacing and logging methods to reduce and minimize visual impact of logging."37

BIA foresters assured the Tribes they would be "careful" not to repeat the mistakes that were still blatantly evident on the Missions' northern slopes: "Past experience on the Yellow Bay, Boulder and Ducharme Logging Units has shown that clearcuts should not be made on the front slopes." Although the BIA foresters admitted their chosen scheme for the Missions was "based on maximizing economic return," they also claimed it did not "ignore the other multiple use values."38

The unveiling of this ambitious plan did nothing to appease critics of the reservation's timber practices. Those critics, both Indian and white, both
professional foresters and laypersons, thought the plan's productivity priority too extreme, with too little attention given to the forests' other values. From their perspective, clearcutting, damaging thinning practices, erosion problems, and forest-depleting annual harvests still prevailed. Larry Hall, comprehensive planner for the Flathead Reservation, argued that wildlife, watershed protection, recreation, cultural assets and aesthetics took "the back seat" in the BIA-formulated, Council-approved timber plan. David Rorvik reiterated his dismay over the unsightly logging in the northern Missions, this time writing a scathing letter to the editor of The Missoulian, blasting both the BIA and the Tribal Council:

[T]he tribe, under direction of the BIA, has clearcut, slashed, skidded and gouged roads in a pattern sufficiently appalling that even Genghis Khan might have blushed. . . . This "cut" had continued to grow since 1971 and is insidiously moving south down the Mission Range. . . . It's enough to make you want to pack up and leave for California where the damage is already done and you don't have to witness it in progress.

Tribal Secretary Fred Houle countered Rorvik's attack on the Tribes' forestry practices with a letter to the editor of the Ronan Pioneer the following week. He first dismissed Rorvik's editorial outburst, claiming it "was written in poor taste, is erroneous and misleading, and has little apparent object except to sensationalize and antagonize." He then defended the Tribal Council's recent closed-door meetings as a means "to stop the repeated distortion of tribal business" by the outside press, and passed the blame of "the unsightly logging near Yellow Bay" to private landowners from out of state. In fact, timber sale records clearly confirm that all the large, high-elevation clearcut sections in the northern Missions were under the jurisdiction of tribal and BIA foresters.
When the three Salish yayas convinced the Tribal Council to hold off on the Ashley timber sale in the summer of 1974, they in effect drew a line in the sand, a line tribal leadership dared not cross again. While a faltering timber economy lessened the appeal of the Mission sales and more Indians (Council members included) came to envision a nonlogging future for the range, Thurman Trosper lobbied hard for the ultimate protection for the Missions, behind that ethical line the yayas had set. A man of the white world and the white conservation movement, Trosper was well versed in contemporary wilderness philosophy and practice. After his high-ranking career with the Forest Service and the Park Service, he retired to the reservation in 1973 and immediately accepted a three-year term as president of The Wilderness Society, now that his governmental ties were no more. While steering the nation's premier wilderness advocacy organization, at home Trosper kept steady pressure on the Tribal Council to elect wilderness protection for the Missions.

In 1977 he persuaded the Council to commission the University of Montana's Wilderness Institute to conduct a wilderness study of the Missions' west slope. Throughout that summer, Professor Bob Ream, recent graduate David Rockwell, and a team of undergraduate students ventured into the Mission Mountains, somewhat in the spirit of naturalist Morton Elrod three-quarters of a century before, taking stock of the mountains' wilderness assets. But these young scientists explored, surveyed, inventoried, and studied to promote the Mission Range's "due praise," "prominence" and protection "so long as it remains an Indian reservation,"
an undertaking Elrod lamented as "impossible." \(^{43}\)

For a nominal fee of only a few thousand dollars -- no one can recall the exact amount \(^{44}\) -- the institute presented the Tribes with a management proposal for a "Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness" one year later. The document outlined a boundary for the wilderness area, summarized current recreational use and the status of wilderness resources, and formulated both a general management directive for the entire area and short-term management recommendations for each of the area's 12 "wildland units."

The institute advocated wilderness protection for the Missions top to bottom, extending from the Mission Divide to the base of the mountains, including the "bottom third" of the Missions that Trosper never intended to remove from the Tribe's productive timberlands. With the exception of a few small state and private tracts, the Tribes owned nearly all of the 95,000 acres within the proposed boundary. These lands -- "undeveloped and essentially wild," at the very least "currently impacted by man to a substantially limited or reversible degree" -- included portions of the Hellroaring and Moss Peak timber units. The Hellroaring clearcut, specifically, "is not suited for further timber management due to slow regeneration rates," the proposal read. "Although the basin is severely impacted, given proper protection and time it may regenerate... [and therefore be] well suited for inclusion within the [wilderness] boundary." \(^{45}\)

The 11,600 acres within the proposed wilderness that the BIA still listed as accessible commercial timberlands would no longer be available for harvest. From this logging ban to a lenient fire management plan to visitor education on safety and
wilderness ethics, the proposal listed a gamut of policies, serving to:

- "Preserve the scenic and wild character of the area";
- "Manage to protect [its] ecological integrity";
- "Enhance the primitive outdoor recreational opportunities"; and
- "Administer the area in such a manner as will leave it unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."^46

More immediately, the institute offered suggestions to improve conditions at a number of lakeside campsites that were "suffering from overuse" and were "too close to water sources, causing reduction in water quality and scenic beauty."^47 The objectives, policies and specific recommendations made to the Tribes mirrored the mainstream wilderness priorities of the time: protection with recreation. While the proposal's authors acknowledged the unique potential of this first Indian wilderness -- "it may prove to be an important precedent for other native peoples"^48 -- they expressed their hope that it not be an island in the surrounding sea of federal land:

Management direction must be clearly identified by the tribes, and to insure unity, the administration and management of the area must be coordinated by one office. Management activities should be coordinated as much as possible with those conducted on National Forest lands adjacent to the area.^49

While evaluating the area's "resource attributes" -- soils, water, vegetation, wildlife, air quality, "scenics," and "spiritual, historical and cultural" values^50 -- the researchers also surveyed the people who came into the Mission Mountains to enjoy these wilderness virtues. Visitor volume, distribution, and characteristics were tallied, as well as compliance with the requirement that all nontribal visitors carry a tribal recreation permit.
Using registration boxes at trailheads and interviewing all persons they encountered during their field work, the students learned that at least 4,000 visitors entered their study area that summer. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed were locals from the Mission Valley, with 12 percent from Missoula, 10 percent from elsewhere in Montana, and 14 percent from out of state. The overwhelming majority hiked; only six percent rode horses. One third of the nontribal users did not possess a tribal recreation permit, failing to pay the modest price for "sightseeing," "fun," "hiking," and "fishing," the most-often cited reasons for visiting the Missions. Perhaps the most striking result of the recreational portion of the study was that only five percent of those surveyed were Indians.51

While white reservation residents and outsiders were already using the west slope of the Mission Mountains as a wilderness playground, most Indians who liked to spend time in the mountains chose the Rattlesnake Mountains, just south of the Missions, instead. They still do. Tucked into the reservation's southeastern corner, the 59,000-acre South Fork Primitive Area covers most of the Tribes' side of the Rattlesnake Range. Much like the Missions, the federal portion of the Rattlesnake Mountains today includes a wilderness area, the Lolo National Forest's Rattlesnake Wilderness.

In 1979, the South Fork Primitive Area, along with the 35,000-acre Mill Creek (or Lozeau) Primitive Area in the northwest corner of the reservation, would be set aside as recreational sites for tribal members and their immediate families only. Roaded, and significantly logged in places, both areas provide tribal members easy access to remote country where they can gather berries and medicinal plants, hunt,
fish, and take part in sweats and other ceremonies without intrusion by non-Indians (although trespass is sometimes a problem). This is the sort of seclusion Bob Marshall revered in his order for Indian roadless areas, although undoubtedly he would not be impressed with the less-than-pristine conditions of both South Fork and Mill Creek. In the minds of the tribal majority, the privacy, accessibility, and few use restrictions tribal members enjoy in the primitive areas outweigh the Missions' wilderness character for both traditional purposes and "typical American outdoor adventure." 52

Although some Indians still hike or horseback ride into the Missions, most are content with their slightly removed appreciation of the rough, untamed mountains and the mountains' resident grizzlies, mountain goats, eagles and other wildlife. The Tribes have cultivated a unique intimacy with the Missions, based not on intense weekend recreation in the backcountry, but daily reservation life. The Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai people have endured, side by side with the Mission Mountains' scenic splendor, their picture-perfect backyard, "a link to their past," 53 their home.

* * * *

When the Wilderness Institute study on the Missions was just getting started in the spring of 1977, a newly formed group of tribal members offered another approach to protecting the Missions' scenic west face. The Save the Mission Mountains Committee unveiled a whole new petition at a St. Ignatius district meeting in March that called for a tribal referendum creating a tribal primitive area of the Mission Range. 54 Like the South Fork and Mill Creek primitive areas, the
proposed Mission Mountains Primitive Area would "be managed strictly for the
Cultural, Recreational and Aesthetic use of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai
Tribes," the petition read, to the exclusion of nontribal members.55

The proposed primitive area would extend from the Jocko Valley north to the
Mission peaks behind the town of Pablo. With its western boundary following the
Pablo feeder canal along the base of the mountains, this area included more
low-elevation, timber-rich acreage than the Institute's proposed tribal wilderness.
The institute's plan for the Missions addressed in detail a spectrum of wilderness
objectives -- recreation, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, to name a few -- for that
contiguous area of the range still unspoiled, or virtually unspoiled, by human
impact. In contrast, the main point of the referendum, to abolish all logging
throughout the reservation side of the Mission Range, was meant for both the
"pristine" high elevations of the Missions and its base slopes, some of which had
been logged already or otherwise had been altered by development.56

Spokesperson for the Save the Mission Mountains Committee, Doug Allard,
was (and still is) owner of a museum and trading post situated just east of the crest of
Ravalli Hill, where a most impressive view of the Mission Range enthralls tourists
while they indulge in huckleberry ice cream. His petition did not mention the
financial rewards in terms of tourism dollars to be gained from the logging ban:

The BIA has recommended that the Tribes log the face of the Mission
Mountains. . . . We, and our children, and their children want this
beauty to be there always. The old people say that these mountains are
sacred to our tribe, and we do not believe that we can sacrifice part of
our heritage for a few dollars.57

Rather, most talk of decreasing or ending timber harvest in the Missions never
wandered too far from concern over per capita payments. Allard calculated that if cutting continued in the Mission forests according to the BIA schedule, each tribal member would benefit financially only 15 cents a day, adding up to $60 a year, "a small amount to pay to leave the beauty of the mountains." By April, Allard had gathered 300 signatures, needing 350 more to place the referendum before the tribal membership.58

Up until the summer, the Char-Koosta News was once again laden with impassioned letters discussing the fate of the Mission Mountains. Even staff reporter Don Matt took to the editorial page, unabashedly revealing his bias:

Is there anyone so dead that he has not thrilled at the alpine beauty of the Mission Mountains as he entered this valley?... Logging as currently practiced on the reservation, would place roads about every 900 feet on the Missions' face as high as 5,500 feet.59

Most letters echoed Matt's lament over the past sins of BIA foresters elsewhere on the reservation and the still-menacing threat of logging on the Missions' most scenic slopes. Jerry McClure, tribal member and returning resident, pledged:

One thing I can say about my own Reservation is that the mountains are so beautiful, and mainly that is why I came back home. The Mission Range is known nationwide, and so please let's keep it nationally known without loggers or helicopters, or whatever the hell it takes to log it.60

Some contributors vehemently supported of the primitive area referendum for the Missions, including Mary Jean Decker from Douglas, Alaska. "I don't want there to be a day when I'll be old and telling the young people how there used to be such a beautiful Mission Range," she wrote. "It is only too sad to watch white people
raping the earth, but when your own people start doing so it is a disgrace!\textsuperscript{61}

On the other side of the coin, Louis Dupuis' comments reflected some of the sentiments of those tribal members opposed to the referendum. "To put the matter in plain language," he said, "I think the Tribe would be stupidly foolish to ban all logging on the Mission Range." Aside from prohibiting logging near ceremonial sites, and in game habitat and other selected areas, he felt the "inevitable" timber harvest from the Mission forests was crucial to tribal members. Dupuis estimated a per capita loss of $100 per tribal member per year if the ban on Mission logging continued, in his opinion a sacrifice too dear.\textsuperscript{62}

The referendum for a Mission Mountains primitive area never came before the tribal membership. While the official preference of the tribal majority concerning the Missions' fate remained unknown, the Tribal Council remained receptive to the wilderness idea proposed by Trosper and researched by the University of Montana's Wilderness Institute. Upon receipt of the institute's extensive study, the Council chose to proceed with plans to establish the nation's first Indian wilderness.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

In November 1979, the Tribal Council approved a BIA-amended set of wilderness boundaries for the Missions that differed only slightly from the institute's original recommendations. Namely, they excluded all state and private lands from the designation. While the east boundary of the tribal wilderness follows the curves of the Mission Divide, its western border was drawn with straight edges and right angles that rigidly adhere to U.S. Geological Survey section lines.
Downhill from this western edge, varying in elevation from 3500 to 4500 feet, logging would continue. But within the boundaries, timber harvest was banned along with most all other development. (The most significant exception to the anti-development rule was the secured potential for small hydroelectric installations in the north section of the tribal wilderness.)

Ken Dupuis, BIA forestry supervisor for the Flathead Reservation, reported that the wilderness designation reduced the annual allowable cut in the Mission Mountains forestry area by one third, from 9 million board feet to 6 million board feet, only a 5 percent loss to the reservation's total annual yield of 54.6. Dupuis said special logging procedures would be developed for cuts along the base of the mountains for "the maintenance of wildlife and aesthetic resources."

The most concrete result of the Council's 1979 resolution to approve the tribal wilderness and its boundaries was final removal of the Missions' higher-elevation forests from the forestry schedule. The notorious Ashley Lakes sale and the other Mission timber units within the new wilderness boundaries at last were stricken from the schedule. These long-delayed sales had remained on the books as long as possible so that the BIA could better justify their sustained yield quotas, claims Joe McDonald, a member of the Tribal Council at the time. Once the projected footage to be harvested from the Missions each year was gone from the timber schedule, foresters picked up the pace of logging elsewhere on the reservation to make up for the loss. According to McDonald, Dupuis also encouraged allottees at the base of the Missions to cut their stands. The twin units of St. Mary's and West St. Mary's, both located well west of the tribal wilderness boundary between Mission Reservoir
and St. Marys Lake, were ultimately sold and cut, although a few years behind schedule.  

Although the lines were drawn and the logging halted, the 1979 wilderness resolution otherwise only held the designation in a tentative holding pattern while the Tribes developed a management plan for the tribal wilderness. The bulk of this task fell to David Rockwell, primary author of the Wilderness Institute's tribal wilderness proposal. Rockwell was now the first director of the new Wildland Recreation Program within the Tribes' Natural Resources Department.

Over the next three years, Rockwell honed the institute's management recommendations to the Tribes' liking. Alterations to these recommendations served to better reflect the Tribes' culturally-specific wilderness values, which weigh heavily on aesthetics (as seen from the Mission Valley), intrinsic appreciation and wildlife habitat. Recreation was pushed down the priority list and ultimately all commercial recreation -- namely, outfitting -- would be prohibited from the tribal wilderness altogether.

Once Tribal Resolution 82-137 put the management plan in action, Rockwell passed his duties on to his assistant Herschel Mays, a tribal member. Thereafter, the Wildland Recreation Program, created specifically to oversee the tribal wilderness, would be lead by Indian directors.

After a dozen years of contemplation and preparation, the Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes declared their side of the Mission Range a protected wilderness on June 15, 1982.  

The designation shrunk over 5,000 acres between 1979 and 1982, to just under 89,500 acres. (Map D shows the extent of the
Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness in relation to the former Mission Range Roadless Area and the northern Mission timber units.)

The worst Hellroaring clearcuts were trimmed from the northern tip of the tribal wilderness, although several thousand acres of the former Moss Peak timber unit ultimately qualified as wilderness worthy. Also excluded from the wilderness was a relatively flat, very accessible, well forested area at its southern end. These deletions were among the small concessions Rockwell made to foresters and other tribal and BIA officials as he finalized the boundaries of the tribal wilderness and wrote its management plan. Rockwell never assumed the Council would approve his proposed tribal wilderness ordinance; he cautiously rallied support for his plan, provision by provision. "I wanted a consensus before I went before the Council for the deciding vote," he said. "I didn't want foresters objecting to the whole wilderness, so I dealt with minor compromises ahead of time."68

The motion to approve the official proclamation of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness -- Ordinance 79A -- carried seven to one.
Bear prints, Mollman Pass
Wo-demess ^>art, 1983-1995

Each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area. . . . Wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.

The Wilderness Act of 1964, Section 4b

This Wilderness shall be devoted to the purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, cultural, religious and historical use only insofar as these uses are consistent with the spirit and provisions of this Ordinance. Human use of this Area must not interfere with the preservation of the Area as wilderness.

The Tribal Wilderness Ordinance, Section 4a

"Pass fallen log, turn R onto trail at stump on L," I read again from the scribbling on my map. We plodded upward in silence. Just off the overgrown fire road a log emerged from the browning tangle of brush. Then the stump. Then a tiny shred of red surveyor's tape tied on a sapling's outstretched branch, now
leafless, waved us down. So we were home free. This called for a celebratory rest.

"This is it," I panted. We had found the trailhead.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are exceedingly proud of their Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, citing it along with the reservation's Class One air standards and status as a nuclear- and toxic-free zone as examples of their progressive environmental achievements. But they do not advertise their wilderness. There are no road signs to direct you to trailheads. Navigation through the maze of logging and fire roads at the range's base to the start of footpaths into the wilderness presents its own challenge. Official trailheads, themselves, are sparse, and once on your way within the wilderness expect no directional or mileage markers to guide you, as are prevalent in many of the more popular federal wilderness areas.

I had paid my dues with this particular trail the previous season with my friend Jack. We bushwhacked and heaved each other plus his 60-pound dog over endless downed trees and up shoulder-high, would-be waterfalls a full day with few rewards, other than the aerobic workout and almost stepping in a mammoth pile of grizzly scat. We intersected the elusive trail only minutes after our decision to head home and descend along the ridge, rather than the dry creekbed. During our hour-long stroll downhill to the car, I took notes in reverse that would lead me back to this pocket of the Mission high country again, someday.

I returned on another flawless October Sunday, the air sweet with summer's last breath. This time around, I generously "shared the trail" with another hiking companion who I couldn't help reminding, more than once, of his good fortune
that my trail-finding dues were paid. Like a twisting, unrelenting flight of stairs, the trail steered us through doghair lodgepole thickets, a grove of blazing aspen and alpine fields lumpy with beargrass, the larger bunches harboring in their shadows remnants of an early snowfall. We reached the lakes by lunchtime and wandered the afternoon in the green and lavender talus of the Mission Divide. The rippled texture of several large slabs of rock revealed the Mission Range's muddy beginnings -- although probably not an undersea origin, geologists speculate -- over 800 million years ago.¹ The exaggerated canine profile of Gray Wolf Peak seemed to keep a steady, but unconcerned, sideways eye on us, his only human distraction. We had the cirque, the lakes, and the length of the trail to ourselves all day long.

This is the "trailless" section of the tribal wilderness, where trails do exist but only the impact of passing wildlife and a small volume of hikers keeps them from fading back into the landscape. They are not marked on the map. The rocky, often vertical terrain of this area -- the high-elevation heart of the tribal wilderness -- makes trail development and maintenance impractical, the Tribes' wilderness management plan explains. And, the trailless zone is "desirable from a wilderness management standpoint."

[M]aintenance of this area as a trailless zone would continue to provide opportunities for cross-country travel, a much greater chance to experience solitude, and generally a more primitive and wild camping and hiking experience.²

Wilderness-wide, only a fraction of the 140-mile network of trails that the Indian Department of the Civil Conservation Corps built in the 1930s are used today, and even less are maintained. About 20 trails show some evidence of human use;
the Tribes' Wildland Recreation Program periodically repairs and clears vegetation from the dozen trails traveled regularly.3

But most visitor-related enhancement projects do not rank high on the Tribes' priority list for their wilderness. "Protection and preservation of the Area's natural conditions in perpetuity" is number one, according to the tribal wilderness management plan: "The wilderness resource shall be dominant in all management decisions where a choice must be made between wilderness values and visitors or their activities."4

To meet that goal, the staff of the Wildland Recreation Program strive to 1) keep "a low profile" for the tribal wilderness and 2) minimize maintenance as far as human amenities are concerned. So says the current director of the Wildland Recreation Program, Tom McDonald, whose grandfather Edward participated in the national park campaign for the Mission Range in the 1930s and whose great uncle (Edward's younger brother) Walter was the ardent anti-wilderness chairman of the Tribal Council in the 1950s and 1960s. "I guess we're all indicators of our times," Tom mused on the roles he and his family have played in the evolution of the tribal wilderness, an evolution he unequivocally regards as "all economically driven."

Today, McDonald considers his job of managing the tribal wilderness "a real luxury," because of the Tribes' prescribed wilderness policies that emphasize the welfare of the wilderness resources above and beyond the convenience of the public. He would not enjoy such a line of management priorities if he worked for the U.S. Forest Service just across the Mission Divide.5

Unlike federal wilderness areas that belong to us all, the Mission Mountains
Tribal Wilderness carries the anomalous distinction of being a *private* -- as well as an Indian -- wilderness. The current 91,786 acres within the tribal wilderness boundaries is all private land, although owned collectively by the Tribes. While federal wilderness officials are supposed to answer to the concerns and needs of the American public, the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness has a much smaller constituency: the 6,386 enrolled members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.$^6$

Yet most tribal members rarely visit the wilderness themselves; many "draw spiritual and physical refreshment from simply knowing the Area, and the plants and wild animals it supports, are protected as wilderness," the management plan expounds.$^7$ The Tribes chose for their wilderness a no-frills management style with diminished concessions for visitors, because recreation figures only marginally in the tribal view and value of the Mission Mountains, and the needs and values of tribal members will take precedent over those of nontribal members. A common thread through all management considerations will be the Tribe's own cultural and spiritual ties to wilderness.$^8$

All non-Indians must buy a Flathead Reservation Use and Conservation Permit to enter the tribal wilderness (and most other recreation areas on the reservation) legally. Six dollars will buy any Montana resident access to the tribal wilderness for one year. (Out-of-state visitors can purchase a three-day pass for the same amount or they must part with $10 for a year's admission; all campers are required to pay an extra $10 for year-long overnight use.) But for the vast majority of tribal wilderness users who aren't Indian, that access is more a privilege than the
right it is on federal lands. The Tribes may close the wilderness at any time; they carry no obligation to "the permanent good of the whole people," to which the authors of the federal Wilderness Act aspired.9

Perhaps quite fittingly, this Indian wilderness, frequented mostly by non-Indians, is supported almost entirely by white dollars. Currently, revenue from the conservation permits non-Indian recreationists are required to purchase contribute about $250,000 to the $1.3 million budget of the Tribe's Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation, which includes the Wildland Recreation Program. BIA funds make up nearly as large a percentage of the Division's income, but except for limited assistance from the BIA's fire management program, nontribal agencies take no part in the management of the tribal wilderness.10

The BIA is still entrenched in many workings within the Tribe's Natural Resources Department, but its influence is dissipating as provisions of the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975 -- designed to encourage tribal autonomy -- gradually take a substantive hold. One in a series of amendments to the 1975 legislation, the 1988 Self-Government Demonstration Project Act has promoted further the power shift on the Flathead Reservation and the other nine "demonstration project" reservations across the country. Today, federal money flows directly to the tribal governments of these reservations, funding tribally-run programs that are phasing out BIA operations. As of 1994, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes were managing 70 tribal programs and had contracted with the federal government to handle over one hundred federal programs on the reservation. The Tribes have indicated they would like to add the operation of the National Bison Range to the
expanding responsibilities of their Natural Resource Department. While permits and BIA funds constitute nearly half of the Tribe's Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation budget, the remaining half is feed by a variety of revenue sources. By far, the largest of these sources is the annual rental fee of $12.4 million the Tribes collect from Kerr Dam, a cost which ultimately trickles down to the paying customers of the Montana Power Company, the vast majority being white Montanans. (In 2015, the Tribes are scheduled to purchase the hydroelectric facility and expect to yield about $50 million each year from the operation.) Timber revenue makes up the other most significant portion of the Tribes' income, although logging profits still ride the precarious cycles of the timber market, as dictated by the mainstream economy. In 1995, the Tribes expect to take in about $6 million from timber sales and fees.

All these sources of income sustain the tribal wilderness today. The Tribes timber wealth in large part afforded them the luxury of setting aside the Mission Mountains in the first place. The Tribes' sacrifice of Mission logging dollars was not unthinkable in relation to their bigger financial picture, in the 1970s still dominated by federal assistance and timber sales. The monetary tie between the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness and larger American society is undeniable, as are the philosophical and managerial links between this singular wilderness and the national norm.

The morning side of the Missions, the east slope, is less imposing than the range's western profile. Here the Missions' streams travel a gentler descent to the
Swan River, a drainage over 1,000 feet higher in elevation than the Mission Valley. The lower terrain of this less glamorous side of the Missions -- a checkboard of national forest, state and Plumb Creek Timber Company lands -- is carved into a patchwork of clearcuts, in what otherwise would be a densely forested valley. Across the narrow valley, the Swan Range slices the sky with its clean Belt rock slab, displaying the same abrupt geologic thrust as the Missions' west face. Atop this bastion, stretching one million acres and 40 miles east to the Rocky Mountain Front, lies the Bob Marshall Wilderness, among the largest wilderness areas in the Lower 48.

In 1975, only a few years before the Tribes designated their own wilderness, Congress granted this highest level of protection to 74,000 acres of the Missions' east side, from the range's divide down to an elevation varying between 4500 and 6000 feet, where the lower boundary of the Mission Mountains Wilderness Area was drawn. Part of the Flathead National Forest, this federal wilderness is one "unit" of hundreds in the National Wilderness Preservation System, altogether covering about 103 million acres. Alaska claims better than half that sum. The addition of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness to the nation's wilderness acreage increased the total less than one-tenth of one percent.

The two Mission wildernesses adhere to one another along the Mission Divide, which turns eastward at the southern end of the range. This geographic curve gives the long, narrow tribal designation a foot of sorts, in which the parallel, slightly smaller federal area is cradled. This juxtaposition would seem to provide a convenient comparison-contrast scenario between these "separate" but
"cooperative" wilderness areas, as the joint Forest Service/tribal map describes the two. It does. But neither the ideological nor the practical managerial divisions between the two sets of regulations which govern these conterminous areas is nearly as precise as their shared physical boundary.

Given the turbulent history of federal attempts to mandate wilderness on their reservation, it is no surprise that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai -- as the first tribal group to exercise their sovereignty by creating their own independent wilderness -- base their wilderness management on the needs and attitudes of local tribal membership. What may be more surprising is how closely their overall design resembles the national wilderness scheme. But perhaps this is not so amazing. The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan mixes relevant national guidelines with original, some say ground-breaking, policies. Their wilderness plan is one example of the Tribes' many resourceful adaptations, further evidence of their tradition to borrow ideas, technologies -- even values -- and with a few alterations make them their own.

To begin with the most fundamental of questions, what defines a tribal "wilderness," anyway? I will ponder the wider philosophical ramifications of this query in my concluding chapter. But in line with this more fundamental comparison of wilderness canons, the Tribes' legal definition for their wilderness could be described as plagiaristic of the Wilderness Act of 1964, its wording is so similar. After all, in designating the first tribal wilderness in the country, the Tribes had no official precedent to go on. "Lacking the guidance of a formal wilderness act for a tribal wilderness or even a definition of tribal wilderness," the plan's authors
turned to the nation’s wilderness gospel, as well as to cultural leaders in the tribal community, for direction. Heavy reliance on this primary legislative source is credited in the plan’s introduction: "Although this ordinance parallels and even includes language from the 1964 Wilderness Act, it specifically excludes significant parts of the Act and gives great emphasis to other parts." 18

The Tribal Wilderness Ordinance mirrors the language of the Wilderness Act in its definition of wilderness as a zone with minimal human impact:

A wilderness is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined as an area of undeveloped tribal land, retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions. 19

By definition, then, Indian wilderness is the same as any other wilderness: a place where humans do best to stay out, or at the most stay only briefly. McDonald claims his staff actually emphasizes the "temporary visitor" ideal since their priority of protecting the Missions' fish, wildlife, water and forests lies high above human recreational improvements.

Beyond the Wilderness Act, the Tribes have adopted other guidelines from the ever-growing-more-bureaucratic field of federal wilderness management, their most pervasive borrowed tool being the controversial Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process. LAC is the procedure the Forest Service and other wilderness-administering agencies use to analyze recreational impacts in wilderness areas and set standards for "acceptable and appropriate resource and social conditions." 20 In short (without deviating from the jargon too much), LAC consists of a nine-step
progression of identifying and classifying problems, prioritizing alternatives, setting management actions for each, and implementing and monitoring those actions. As critics quip, the Limits of Acceptable Degradation more accurately describes this risk-assessment approach to wilderness overuse: allowing for a degree of decline from the pristine and then over-managing to compensate, in a place that was supposed to be left alone in the first place. McDonald asserts that although LAC is the formal management methodology for the tribal wilderness on paper, he and his staff hardly follow the process to the letter; they often use LAC only as a means to an end that is different -- or "in a different line of priority" -- from federal goals.21

The 1989 update to the tribal wilderness management plan reported that the Wildland Recreation Program used the LAC process to inventory and to evaluate human impacts on existing trails and campsites within the wilderness. Compared to the wilderness inventory done in 1977, the number of backcountry campsites overall deceased slightly, although the denuded ground of several individual sites had spread. Increased "proliferation of social trails" and trail erosion was also evident. The 1977 and 1989 inventories combined would serve as baseline data for future management actions, which "may range from trail improvements, revegetation with native species, and blocking social trails to more drastic measures which would actually limit or change visitation in certain areas," the update projected.22 The fact that the Tribes do resort to these "more drastic measures" -- closures and restrictions among other innovative management -- indeed sets their wilderness apart from federal areas.

But first, one more example of the Tribes' tapping of the federal storehouse of
natural resource management "systems." In creating an aesthetics standard for the buffer zone added along the western, low-elevation boundary of the tribal wilderness in 1987, the Tribes used the Forest Service's Visual Management System. The fundamental scenic value of the Mission Range, even along its base, was a primary consideration in the planning of the buffer zone's management:

The Mission Mountains serve as a focal point for the visual experience of individuals living, working, recreating, and traveling in the Mission and Flathead Valleys. . . . Modifications to a visually significant area, such as the Missions, could produce an impact to the aesthetic quality of the range and possible social, psychological, and political consequences.

The Visual Management System offers managers a choice of five "visual quality objectives" (VQOs) for the scenic landscape in question, each VQO carrying its own set of "acceptable alterations." The VQOs range in protection potency from "Preservation," which allows for ecological change only, to "Maximum Modification," which waives domination of human activity as long as it appears "as a natural occurrence when viewed as background." The new tribal wilderness buffer zone was assigned the VQO of "Retention," one step below preservation classification. Only activities "not evident to the casual forest visitor" are permissible, those which "only repeat form, line, color, and texture which are frequently found in the characteristic landscape." The Tribes interpreted such activities to include some selective logging in the zone's mostly second-growth timber stands, the practice of wildlife-friendly livestock grazing, and regulated recreational use of the zone's reservoirs, campgrounds, and trailheads.
A billboard stained flat mud brown, with big white block letters, greets visitors to the Mission Dam Recreation Area and the tribal wilderness just beyond the reservoir. "Please treat the land, water, wildlife, and people with care and remember to make your legacy one of honor," it asks. Swimming towards the sign's edge are the likenesses of two trout: one of a rainbow (daily limit five) and one of a bull trout, a threatened species that must be released if caught.

"You know you are somewhere different when the posted regulations ask you nicely to respect the bears," a friend once mentioned of these subtle yet arresting words that send hikers on their way into the tribal wilderness.

"Mission Mountain country is bear country," the message continues. "Please act accordingly and treat all bears and other wildlife with respect."

Although tribal wilderness by definition differs only slightly from federal wilderness and the Tribe's process of wilderness management may follow a federal blueprint, the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness is unique from other wilderness areas, in much more than spirit or culturally deviant language on trailhead signs. Examples of specific management policies provide a more concrete, empirical measure of the difference.

The only access restriction placed upon visitors of the federal Mission Mountains Wilderness Area is the prohibition of overnight camping within a quarter mile of three lakes popular with both hikers and grizzly bears: Glacier Lake and Upper and Lower Cold lakes. Across the Mission Divide, a 10,000-acre cross section of the tribal wilderness, which surrounds McDonald Peak and includes some of the range's most spectacular backcountry, is off limits to all recreational use every
year for almost the entirety of Montana's short summer. (See map D.) From July 15 to October 1, the grizzlies have to themselves this haven the Tribes have designated the Grizzly Bear Conservation Zone. Since the turn of the century, perhaps longer, this area's concentrations of ladybugs and army cutworm moths -- protein-packed cuisine for the bears -- have drawn grizzlies in unusually high numbers at the height of summer.

The Mission grizzlies, which frequently wander to and from the Swan Range to the east, face an increasingly tough coexistence with the escalating human population in the Mission Valley, where the bears often descend to feed in the spring and fall. "The combined density of people and livestock present in occupied grizzly range on the west slope of the Missions is probably unequaled in North America," the management plan reads, citing a report of University of Montana grizzly experts Chris Servheen and Lyndon Lee, who studied the Mission bears intensely in the 1970s.26

Serveen's dissertation was published in 1979, just as David Rockwell set to work writing the tribal wilderness management plan. While the logging issue alone motived the Tribes to create their wilderness, grizzly habitat preservation figured significantly in its management plan once Serveen's study alerted the Tribes to the bears' increasing mortality due to human-related causes.27

By the early 1980s, the grizzlies' bountiful summer feeding grounds -- the Ashley Creek drainage and the southern half of the Post Creek drainage -- had become a favorite destination for backpackers, as well. To eliminate the possibility of undesirable encounters between humans and bears in this area, and to guarantee the
bears undisturbed summer foraging in the high country, the Tribes mandated the commonly-known McDonald Peak bear closure in their 1982 tribal wilderness management plan. Since the zone extends to the western boundary of the tribal wilderness, bears can also reach lower-elevation food sources in early fall without human interference. The Tribes hoped the closure would curb the decline of the Mission grizzly population:

[With almost all grizzly bear-human problems and grizzly bear mortality occurring in the valleys, anything that will minimize the chances of bears making an early departure from the Mission high country would be advantageous for both bears and the people.]²⁸

Unfortunately, the number of Mission grizzlies continues to dwindle. McDonald estimates that only about a dozen grizzlies still inhabit the Missions' west side. To date, the tribal wilderness has no history of human injury or death from grizzly encounters, McDonald said, largely due to well-educated hikers and their small numbers, and now also due to the decreasing density of bears within the wilderness.

Some trespassers do drop over the Mission Divide from the federal wilderness into the grizzly zone during the summer months, most to camp at Cliff Lake or Lake of the Clouds, both achingly beautiful. But general compliance to the closure keeps human intrusion of the grizzlies' summertime alpine domain to a minimum.²⁹

When the grizzly zone reopens in the fall, the trail leading to Ashley Lakes and the lakes themselves in the southwest corner of the zone are still restricted to day use only from October until July.

On a temporary basis, federal agencies sometimes close small localities to
recreational use, either for the protection of a sensitive species or for safety precautions due to a "problem" animal, such as a bear guarding a food source. But the size and permanence of the Tribes' seasonal closure of the Grizzly Bear Conservation Zone is viewed as revolutionary in wildlife management circles.

Thirteen years after its creation, the grizzly zone remains a precedent-setting policy no one else has chosen to emulate. Steve Penner, recreation forester for the Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest, admires the Tribes' grizzly bear closure. Yet he believes his agency would never instate such a complete closure, even if a similar scenario -- of bears consistently congregating to specific area -- were to occur on the federal side of the Missions. "Maybe if it were outside of wilderness boundaries, we would prohibit motorized use," Penner said, "but I can't imagine a total recreational closure."

And why not? Penner cited the Forest Service's obligation to its creed of multiple use, and the recreational "rights" of the American people. "But I'm not really sure 'why not,'" he pondered, "except it's never been done before. While viable options for the Tribes, certain features of the tribal wilderness may not fit in larger national forest wildernesses."31

The ban of saddle and pack animals from the entire tribal wilderness between March 1 and June 30 each year constitutes the Tribes' other perennial wilderness closure. The Tribes reason that the absence of horse traffic on the trails during the spring rains will help keep erosion in check. Overall, the use of livestock within the tribal wilderness is discouraged, since the area's trails degrade quickly when hammered by heavy hooves and pose hazardous footing for animals carrying
supplies or riders. Wildland staff no longer maintain trails for horses, hoping stock usage will decline, and the Tribal Council has limited certain trails, for years at a time, to hikers only.

The federal Missions wilderness, open to livestock year-round, shares most of the tribal wilderness' livestock rules, which include picketing practices to minimize vegetation damage and use of weed-free feed only. But the Forest Service qualifies these guidelines as "recommendations." The Tribes chose not to "recommend" anything concerning use of the tribal wilderness; on the joint Mission Mountains wildernesses map, all of the notably longer tribal list of dos and don'ts falls under the heading "Regulations." For example, the Forest Service recommends that horse packing parties limit their number of animals to 12. In the tribal wilderness, groups exceeding eight, in either the number of livestock or the number of people, must carry a special-use permit, granted by the Tribal Council only on a case-by-case basis.

Although the Tribal Council allowed commercial outfitters to operate within the tribal wilderness through the 1980s, they reversed their decision in 1989. The philosophy of the tribal wilderness should stress the exclusion of any economic benefit by individual users, they concluded. Shortly thereafter, the Council denied the appeal of long-time outfitters Karen Cheff, a tribal member, and her husband Mick to use just one trail through the tribal wilderness, the trail over Mollman Pass, to reach the network of trails on the Missions' east side. Professionally guided horse trips through federal wilderness lands across the West, catering to hunters, fishers, and nature lovers of all levels of riding skill, have been catapulted into high
demand by the growing outdoor tourism industry. A commercial ban in federal wildernesses similar to that of the tribal wilderness is indeed unfathomable.

As a last note on livestock, the few grazing leases within the tribal wilderness expired a few years after the designation, and the Tribal Council chose to withdraw them all from commercial bidding, no great loss to anyone considering the sparsity of pasturelands within the wilderness. The Wilderness Act of 1964 did not ban grazing from federal wilderness, where today low lease fees still entice some cattle and sheep owners to transport their herds to remote wilderness areas to feed. In 1986, 14 percent of all livestock grazing in national forests spent at least part of the year within wilderness boundaries.

Within the tribal wilderness, only enrolled members of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes can legally hunt. Few do. Most hunting within the tribal wilderness actually qualifies as poaching, with non-Indians crossing over the divide from the Swan Valley in search of mountain goats, McDonald says. Possession of any firearm, including archery equipment, within the tribal wilderness is illegal, a regulation that differs from national forest wilderness areas but not most national park wildernesses where hunting is also prohibited. With the purchase of a season or three-day fishing stamp, anyone can fish those streams and lakes within the tribal wilderness, and elsewhere on the reservation, not listed as closed in the Tribes' fishing regulations.

Most tribal wilderness restrictions concerning visitors are tougher than those written for federal wilderness. But when it comes to wilderness upkeep, the Tribal Council has allowed their tribal and BIA employees certain mechanized liberties that
are less frequently taken in federal areas. In the case of emergency search and rescue, fire suppression, fish stocking and limited wildlife studies, helicopters are used. And for efficiency's sake, managers freely use chainsaws for their minimal trail maintenance, scheduled during the least sensitive seasons for wildlife, according to McDonald.  

Ranked among the most progressive policies in the nation, the current fire management plan for the tribal wilderness further testifies to the Tribes' deviation from the federal norm. The Council-approved BIA plan permits natural blazes to burn if all of several situational criteria are met, based on high elevation, sufficient distance from wilderness boundaries, time of year, drought conditions, and weather conditions. The total of these prerequisites severely hinders actual practice of leaving fires to burn in the wilderness, especially given the narrowness of the area, in places less than two miles from boundary to boundary and never exceeding six miles in width. Only the creation of an equally lenient, cooperative fire policy with the Flathead National Forest to the east would allow the true restoration of fire to the Mission Range ecosystem, McDonald laments. For now the tribal policy stands as little more than a symbol. McDonald and his staff may seek the Council's permission to set fires within the allowable-burn boundaries of the tribal wilderness under ideal conditions, which after decades of fire suppression would herald the return of a traditional tribal technique for wildlife habitat enhancement.  

A final eccentric feature of the tribal wilderness is its buffer zone, the envy of all those disgusted with clearcuts and paved parking lots abutting more than a few wilderness areas elsewhere. Within five years of the creation of the Mission
Mountains Tribal Wilderness, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes chalked up another first with their buffer zone, which runs 25 miles along the length of the low-elevation border of the wilderness. With the addition of a transitional management zone, one to three miles wide, the Tribes devised a unique "wilderness 'cushion' from outside influences."  

About one quarter of the size of the wilderness itself, the buffer zone enlarges the tribal wilderness management area by almost 23,000 acres. (See map D.) Here, between the western edge of the wilderness and the first line of irrigation canals that run along the base of the Mission Range, the Tribes keep a tighter rein on livestock grazing, timber harvest (including Christmas tree and post and pole harvest), recreation, cultural uses, and homesites than elsewhere on the reservation. These precautions are taken in light of the Tribal Council's recognition that "unrestricted activities occurring on lands in proximity to the Wilderness boundary may encroach into and compromise the integrity of the Wilderness."  

Currently, about 40 percent of the buffer zone is owned by the Tribes collectively, with 20 percent made up of tribal allotments, 35 percent the property of non-Indian individuals, and about 5 percent state and federal parcels. Tribal, BIA and other governmental entities are required to follow the guidelines of the buffer zone management plan. Private landowners are "encouraged" to do so. For example, new residential development within a half mile of the wilderness boundary or on grades steeper than 25 percent elsewhere within the buffer zone is "discouraged." But, "[O]n suitable sites, new development will be considered on a low-density basis near existing residential areas and will be designed to blend in with
the surrounding landscape."44

In 1984, the Tribal Council had halted all plans for timber sales east of the Pablo Feeder Canal, in what would become the buffer zone, and the reservation's forestry plan was amended to remove all proposed sales from that area. But in 1986 the Council revoked the moratorium and voted to permit salvage and select cuts within the buffer zone.45 Since then, no timber sales have been slated on tribal property within the zone, although about half of the privately-owned buffer forests have been logged since the 1970s.46 Just this year, in an informal referendum that dictates current Tribal Council action but does not set permanent policy, a narrow majority of the tribal voters indicated they do not want tribal lands within the buffer zone to be logged. So for now, tribal buffer property will remain off the timber schedule, although fire, disease and insect control will continue throughout the zone to protect timber assets on private lands.47

A 1992 survey conducted by the tribal and BIA forestry program revealed that more Indians "visited (used) the Mission Mountains area" than any other forest area on the reservation.48 McDonald speculates -- since there is no documentation to prove one way or another -- that tribal use of the Mission backcountry still lags far behind non-Indian use. One may assume, then, that the wilderness buffer zone, with its five campgrounds and three reservoirs, carries the brunt of the Missions' tribal popularity, in terms of recreation. The buffer zone offers both Indian and non-Indian visitors "a variety of recreational opportunities," its management plan reads, among them activities not allowed in the tribal wilderness. You can mountain bike on roads and designated trails, snowmobile on roads and within reservoir recreation
areas, or patronize the Cheffs and rent a horse for a trail ride. The Wildland Recreation Program staff monitor these activities for possible "detrimental effect[s]" on either tribal resources or private lands: "In all cases, recreation needs will be secondary to wildlife, fisheries, vegetation, private interests, and cultural needs."49

Management of this "very complex piece of real estate," as McDonald calls it, centers largely on preservation of aesthetics and water quality. But of greatest concern are the needs of two threatened species whose precarious populations in the Mission Mountains depend directly on this thin strip of low-elevation habitat. Grizzly bears forage in the buffer zone and sometimes farther into the Mission Valley in the spring and fall. Bull trout, holding their own in McDonald Lake, are only "hanging on by their fingernails" in Mission Reservoir and St. Mary's Lake, McDonald says.50 A primary wildlife "management action" cited in the buffer zone management plan -- and often repeated in other subsections -- calls for "Tribal purchase of land and conservation easements in order to best be able to manage land to favor wildlife, wilderness and related cultural considerations."51 Since 1987, the Tribes have purchased considerable buffer acreage from private landowners; so far, their acquisition of easements has not proven as successful.52

In addition, an ongoing inventory of those portions of the buffer zone already secure under tribal ownership will determine if certain areas might be "better suited as wilderness" than merely wilderness buffer.53 If so, the Tribal Council could vote to redraw the wilderness boundaries to encircle these additions. The preliminary draft of the reservation's next forest management plan, slated for completion in fall 1996, calls for the inclusion of a 160-acre block of the buffer zone, in the Courville
As "neutral ground," the Tribes' wilderness buffer zone incarnates the transitional layers between wilderness and civilization, both geographically and politically. It's an idea the Forest Service would do well to think about, say some of today's most progressive wilderness advocates, including David Havelick, whose masters thesis at the University of Montana questioned "The Wildness of Wilderness":

Is it wild to hike through fifteen miles of seemingly pristine landscape, then inadvertently cross a border and flounder in a world of stumps and road scars? ... In a pathetic reality of current Wilderness legislation, Congressmen (they are, almost exclusively, male) draw boundaries for wild lands, then make a special point to forbid any protective perimeters or buffer zones that might serve to diminish the effect of activities and industry along Wilderness borders.

Although no formal buffer zones edge federal wildernesses, officials of individual national forests may include in their forest plans less extractive management emphases near wilderness boundaries. Such is not the case for the Flathead National Forest. On its Management Area 15, adjacent to the Mission Mountains Wilderness, roaded timber harvest is prescribed right up to the very border of the wilderness.

With the buffer zone secure to the west of the tribal wilderness, the Wildland Recreation Program is looking to expand their wilderness acreage northward, as natural regeneration heals the logging scars of the infamous Mission timber units and the mountainsides eventually take on the likeness of an unaltered landscape. The current draft of the 1996 forest management plan proposes a 4,400-acre northern addition to the wilderness, which would include the Hellroaring Creek drainage and
extend north to Station Creek. The entire addition would carry yet another access restriction: it would be open to tribal members only. If the new designation is approved, Indians will be able to enjoy in part of their own wilderness, anyway, the privacy they know now only in the reservation's primitive areas. The draft also calls for one of the central sections of the wilderness to be reserved for tribal use only.57

This next forest plan proposes that another section of the northern Mission Mountains become a roadless area. The northeast corner of the reservation, above Flathead Lake's Yellow and Blue bays, is slated to permit helicopter logging only. This new roadless area, together with the northern addition to the tribal wilderness, would "reclaim" a major portion of the northern end of the former Mission Range Roadless Area, which since the late 1950s has been excluded from any protective status.

And if the new forest plan passes in its current form, the Tribes will create another tribal wilderness altogether, in the southwest corner of the reservation. The proposed wilderness encompasses 17,500 acres, surrounding Sleeping Woman Peak and Three Lakes Peak along the Nine Mile Divide. This time, the Tribes will need to look only as far as their own Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness ordinance and management plan for a wilderness model.58

While they pick and choose from the federal wilderness model, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes affirm their autonomy over their half of the Mission Range with ongoing inventions of unusually flexible wilderness
policies. Free from the constraint and entanglement of federal red tape, and a
diverse constituency, the Tribes' can react to new management concerns and
changes in tribal needs and attitudes as they arise, and alter the tribal wilderness
management plan accordingly. The Tribes' original plan inaugurated the
extraordinary Grizzly Bear Conservation Zone. Since 1982, the tribal wilderness plan
has evolved to phase out all grazing, exclude commercial recreational use, and
include a buffer zone, all bold measures not seen elsewhere. By pliable means made
possible by tribal jurisdiction, the Tribes practice their tenet of looking out for the
good of the wilderness well before the good of human fancies, recreational,
economical or otherwise.

But hand-in-hand with the flexibility that so marks the Tribes' style of
wilderness management is a weaker commitment to the longevity of wilderness
welfare overall. While federal wilderness is ordained by the highest national law of
the land, an act of Congress, the tribal ordinance that bore the Mission Mountains
Tribal Wilderness is not the Tribes' most binding legislation. The tribal wilderness
is not eternally untouchable, as federal wilderness is short of a whole new act of
Congress reversing the Wilderness Act of 1964. Although a step above a tribal
resolution, the Tribal Wilderness Ordinance can be revoked by the Tribal Council as
quickly and easily as any ordinance is instated, without direct participation of tribal
members beyond the Council itself.

The Tribal Council of the late 1970s opted not to create the tribal wilderness by
way of a referendum, the Tribes' strongest form of legislation, as the Save the
Mission Mountains Committee and its more than 300 supporters wanted. The
Tribal Wilderness Ordinance keeps open the options of succeeding councils, who will retain the authority to alter either the wilderness management plan or the ordinance itself at any time. Among the possibilities lies declassification of the wilderness altogether.

Theoretically, the Tribal Council may decide at some point to log portions of what is now wilderness. McDonald says this is highly unlikely -- unthinkable, really -- no matter how economically strapped the Tribes may become. But the fact remains that a referendum, the only sure ticket to securing the tribal wilderness in perpetuity, has not been called.

Tribal enthusiasm and pride for the wilderness does not equate to a majority vote that would seal the Tribe's pledge to protect the west face of the Missions for all time. Even the financial security from their current rental and eventual ownership of Kerr Dam has not convinced the Tribes they can afford such a unending covenant, regardless of the cultural and spiritual worth at stake. For now, at least, there is no urgency or inclination among tribal leaders to take this additional step to secure the tribal wilderness. But the idea still lingers.

"It's one job I have to do yet," says Thurman Trosper, the federal insider who instigated the wilderness option for the Tribes' Mission Front 25 years ago.

We chat in his living room, which is enclosed by floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides. We take in an up-close, 180-degree view of the dark wall of forest stretching far to the south and far to the north and skyward as far our nearsighted perspective -- here on the edge of the wilderness buffer zone -- allows. Tropser adds an epilogue to his recollection of the conception, birth and infancy of the tribal
wilderness. He tells me of his ambitions to see that a wilderness referendum is put before the tribal membership -- when the time is right, when there is enough support to ensure its success -- as a final rite of passage to permanence.
Mount Calowahcan, from the Mission Valley
Dear Mission Range, 'neath bright blue skies
It is a noble duty,
For me to love my childhood home,
Where dwells such wondrous beauty.

I love the Mission's lofty hills,
Her lonely lakes and mountains,
Her snowy peaks which pierce the sky,
And glaciers' sparkling fountains.

But how shall I tell her worth,
Deserving song and story,
And make her rise, Oh Mission Range,
And show her wondrous glory?

I long to move her voiceless tongue,
To soft melodious numbers,
To wake her hidden treasure,
From her mysterious slumbers.

A friend, Char-Koosta News, October 1957

Although geologists instruct us otherwise, mountains stand eternal before our
collective mind's eye. It's the names we cast upon them that wear away. As the
names assigned to the Mission Mountains wear away, or become overshadowed by newer ones, our rather shortsighted human view of these mountains evolves. Before the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes ordained their half of the Mission Range as wilderness, "her worth, deserving song and story," was told in other terms.

The Kootenai referred to the mountains across the water as akwukki·it, as they did any chain of mountains. The Salish speakers had no proper name for the Mission Mountains either, although they called some localities within the mountains by specific names, like snyelmn stipmetkʷ, what we know today as Mission Falls. Snyelmn lewtn and snöiptin, meaning "berry picking place" and "hunting place," described the mountains' bounty of wild fruits and game.

So named for the Jesuits' presence in the valley below, the Mission Mountains provided the backdrop for the condensed homeland of the Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille and Salish tribes, following the establishment of the Flathead Reservation in the mid-19th century. After the Flathead Allotment Act of 1904, the same Mission backdrop overlooked the Tribes' invaded reservation. Maps of the Mission Range filled with the English names early mountaineers and surveyors affixed to its peaks, passes, streams and lakes.

In the 1930s, the newly formed Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes asked the Department of the Interior to approve "an Indian-maintained and supervised public recreational area" in the Mission Mountains, an idea never realized. Soon after, the federal government deemed the west face of the Missions the Mission Range Roadless Area. Twenty years later, the
Tribes successfully demanded that the roadless designation be lifted from their
mountains.

Reservation forestry reports then classified the range as a "noncommercial
timber area" above treeline and "commercial timber area" below. In the 1960s, the
northern Mission Mountains became the last frontier for the Flathead Reservation's
insatiable logging industry, which awakened "her hidden [timber] treasure" -- to
which the above poem eludes -- to the tune of 130 million board feet and $5.6
million. The 1982 naming of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness is designed
to last a long while, although the Tribes could better secure their choice for the
mountains' perpetual protection by upgrading their tribal wilderness ordinance to a
tribal referendum.

The recent christening of Mount Calowahcan, the northernmost sentry in the
Missions' lineup of 9,000-foot peaks, marks on the map the Tribes' first step in the
direction of restoring Indian names to their Indian mountains. For 70 years, the
precipitous summit, its raggedy spires stacked like dollops of stone, was known as
Mount Harding, named in 1922 for Warren B. Harding who occupied the White
House at the time. In 1991, the Domestic Names Committee of the United States
Board on Geographic Names approved the retirement of the mountaintop's
impertinent tribute to the nation's 29th president and officially accepted the
Calowahcan name, that of a Pend d'Oreille family which translates to "Beaverhead"
in English. Changing the names of mountains can prove almost as tough as
moving them. The procedural maze of the name-changing subsidiary of the U.S.
Geological Survey, played out on paper in faraway Reston, Virginia, tests the tenacity
of anyone pursuing such a cause, like Lucille Otter who lead the Calowahcan campaign. But it's a process the Tribes hope to tackle again, to reclaim their mountains, one by one, by name.

But the ultimate modifier the Tribes have applied to their mountains collectively -- *wilderness* -- is hardly a traditional Indian name, and has little if any direct connection to the relationship the Tribes traditionally held with their mountains. A place that "has served the Indian people of these Tribes . . . for thousands of years" doesn't fit the mold of wilderness, as created and defined by Western society. Once equated with a worthless, sometimes evil, wasteland, the idea of wilderness has evolved to represent a more pleasant, even revered place for many -- although not all -- of us. But all along, wilderness' most consistent feature has been the absence of those who view it as such: humans, on the outside looking in. Yet the Indian people served by the Mission Mountains were not outside but within this landscape their descendents have named wilderness.

The Tribes' forced concentration onto the Flathead Reservation and their subsequent immersion in modern industrial society -- most evident in the reservation's aggressively consumptive timber business -- in time lead them to the same basic decision our nation recently confronted about saving the last pieces of our lands untouched by technological brawn. The Tribes' wilderness designation was their best bet for preserving the Missions as their ancestors had known the mountains. Probably the most traditional aspect of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness -- as a designation -- lies in the fact that the Tribes adopted this means of protection from beyond their own culture and fine-tuned it to fit their own needs, a
skill they have been honing for centuries.

* * * * *

The ever-evolving definition of wilderness, even at a precise point in history, is difficult to pin down. It remains one of those questions, infinitely clouded with shades of gray, to which the most neutral of teachers would assure their students there are no wrong answers. Some even argue which part of speech it falls under, noun or adjective. Roderick Nash, author of the closest thing we have to a comprehensive history on the wilderness movement, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, believes

There is no specific material object that is wilderness. The term designates a quality... that produces a certain mood or feeling in a given individual and, as a consequence, may be assigned by that person to a specific place.6

Four hundred pages later, Nash closes his treatise with the ominous speculation that since wilderness remains a fickle notion within the conscience of the populace -- which he addresses most explicitly throughout his text as white and male -- the tide on wilderness appreciation and preservation could well turn again. The whole effort "may have succeeded in accomplishing something posterity will find irrelevant." 7

Stephen Pyne, an environmental historian who specializes in fire ecology, agrees that wilderness is of our own making:

Wilderness is not an immutable order of nature or a universal concept in human societies. . . . Wilderness is, in fact, a peculiar creation of a peculiar people at a peculiar time in their national history. . . . [Basic wilderness values] all presuppose the values and institutions of American civilization; none are inherent in the landscape itself.8
In most renditions of our nation's history that ultimately leads to that "peculiar time" when wilderness was legitimized, the North American continent's native people played the dual role of feared barbarian and Noble Savage. In both these perceptions created by Euro-Americans, Indians were placed securely within uncivilized nature; they were even viewed as synonymous with wilderness. The most well-intentioned advocates of assimilation believed Indians' survival depended upon their abandonment of all traditional ways once their "wilderness" home was transformed. But just ahead of the American frontier that plowed through the wilderness, leaving farms and settlements in its wake,

the forest's darkness hid savage men, wild beasts, and still stranger creatures of the imagination. In addition civilized man faced the danger of succumbing to the wildness of his surroundings and reverting to savagery himself. The pioneer, in short, lived too close to wilderness for appreciation.\(^9\)

Following this argument put forth by Nash, if pioneers lived too close to wilderness to appreciate it, surely the native people living so long within wilderness would have no appreciation for their wilderness landscapes at all. Of course, this assumption is absurd, unless we acknowledge that Indians indeed "appreciated" their surroundings in ways altogether unrelated to the perception of wilderness. Absurd, too, might be this comparison, since Nash's "American Mind" is wholly Anglo-American. But his observation about pioneer proximity does magnify one pertinent point in American wilderness history: detachment from wilderness -- rather than connection with it -- precedes respect.

Contemporary scholars like Pyne, Alvin Josephy, Jr., and William Denevan, disparage the long-held popular belief that before the arrival of Europeans, North
America was a vast "wilderness continent." This archaic tenet portrays the New World that Columbus stumbled upon as home to only a sparse scattering of Indians, who lacked the knowledge and technology to alter their natural environments beyond what we today would qualify as wilderness. Alvin Josephy laments:

History still teaches falsely that pre-Columbian America was a wilderness, a virgin land, virtually untenanted, unknown, and unused, waiting for the white explorers and pioneers, with their superior brains, brawn, and courage, to conquer and "develop" it.10

Josephy quotes demographers' latest figure for the native population of the Americas in 1492 as almost 75 million, with about six million living in the present-day contiguous United States.11 In his eye-opening essay "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," William Denevan estimates that 53.9 million Indians were living in the New World before the onslaught of European disease and genocide, up from the "best counts" of eight to 15 million made by scholars in the 1940s. Of Denevan's tally of 53.9 million pre-Columbian Indians, 3.8 million inhabited North America, excluding Mexico which alone sustained 172 million people.12

According to Denevan, natives throughout the hemisphere had manipulated their surroundings plenty by 1492. Some burned forests and grasslands regularly, to create habitat preferred by game, to foster berries and other edible plants the Indians favored themselves, and to clear land for cultivation. The Indians' irrigation ditches and dams, settlements, roads and trails, and other earthworks also had made a noticeable mark on the American landscape. In "The Pristine Myth," Denevan concentrates on
the form and magnitude of environmental modification rather than with whether or not Indians lived in harmony with nature with sustainable systems of resource management. Sometimes they did; sometimes they didn't. What they did was to change their landscape nearly everywhere . . . 13

This change was so great, Devevan believes that human modification of the American landscape was more obvious in 1492 than in 1750, after 250 years of European intervention. This theory accounts, in part, for misconstrued beginnings of the wilderness myth our nation has long harbored:

[M]ost of our eyewitness descriptions of wilderness and empty lands come from a later time, particularly 1750-1850 when interior lands began to be explored and occupied by Europeans. By 1650, Indian populations in the hemisphere had been reduced by about 90 percent . . . . Thus, the "invention" of an earlier wilderness is in part understandable and is not simply a deliberate creation which ennobled the American enterprise. 14

Much of our nation's environmental policy still rides on our "invented" notion that wilderness and people have been and ever shall be mutually exclusive, according to botanist Arturo Gomez-Pompa and antropologist Andrea Kaus, co-authors of a BioScience article entitled "Taming the Wilderness Myth." They advocate that the knowledge and perceptions of our rural populations, "the people most closely linked to the land, who have a firsthand understanding of their surrounding natural environment as teacher and provider" be tapped by environmental policy makers and educators. 15 The authors cite recent scholarly acknowledgment that humans have played a significant role in shaping "wilderness" landscape as a primary foundation for their argument.

Advocating the return of fire to wilderness management, Pyne goes so far as saying that people -- indigenous people -- themselves make true wilderness:
Recreating the vegetation at the time of European discovery or preserving select natural processes does not recreate the historic wilderness experience because the most critical element, the encounter with humans, many hostile, all alien, is gone. It was those native peoples who made the wilderness "wild," which is to say, exotic, unpredictable, dangerous, exciting, and wondrous to those for whom it was not already home. Similarly dismissing the things those people did, including burning, only sustains a landscape that is historically incomplete.  

But the "Wholly Other" mysticism of wilderness is a hard nut to crack, especially for the "small . . . powerful minority, the community of wilderness purists" that Linda Graber writes about in her book *Wilderness as Sacred Space*. She describes a member of this elite among wilderness users as one who "postulates the attributes of wilderness, believes them and allows them to shape his behavior." For these true believers, 

The intense emotion and rigid codes of conduct associated with wilderness areas suggest a motivation beyond the practical. Whether we realize it or not, an influential portion of the American public treats wilderness as sacred space.  

In her self-proclaimed "unsatisfactory circular answer" to why wilderness is chosen as sacred as opposed to other landscapes and locales, Graber believes that the purists simply have taught themselves and others to see wilderness in this light. The reverence and discipline involved in this belief fulfills a spiritual, even religious, longing for individuals in this secular age. "To the purist, wilderness is a manifestation of the Absolute, yet is concrete, visible, and close at hand," Graber says. "He can immerse himself in perfection (if only for a weekend) and emerge purified."  

But in maintaining its sacred power, the purist and all other humans must emerge from the wilderness and emerge leaving no sign of their presence therein,
because "any man-made change pulls wilderness down from its peak of perfection. Therefore, the value and beauty of wilderness is precisely that it is the Wholly Other opposite from man.\textsuperscript{20}

Herein lies the justification of \textit{white} America's modern love of untrammelled landscape, most often "pure," mountainous terrain that humbles both our bodies and minds, should we chose to explore it. We allow ourselves to trespass only briefly into these shrines we have deemed perfect by our self-banishment.

\* \* \* \*

And what does the archetypical \textit{Indian} mind ponder on the idea of wilderness today? Western civilization, with its separatist philosophy towards the natural world, has been infiltrating North American native cultures for some time now, and the dichotomous context for wilderness is no longer foreign to many tribes. Although Indian writings on nature in general abound, specific mentions of wilderness are few and far between.

In a 1989 delivery in the University of Idaho's Wilderness Resource Distinguished Lecture Series, Chief Oren Lyons of the Onondaga Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy spoke directly of wilderness only in his conclusion. And then he quoted the sentiments of a historic figure of another tribe. Lyons repeated the words of Chief Luther Standing Bear of the Oglala Sioux, who explained the irrelevance of the term "wilderness" to his people in the 19th century, anyway:

\begin{quote}
We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth as "wild." Only to the white man was nature a "wilderness" and only to him was the land "infested" with "wild" animals and "savage" people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great
\end{quote}
Mystery. Not until the hairy man from the east came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the families we loved was it "wild" for us. When the very animals of the forest began fleeing from his approach, then it was that for us the "Wild West" began.21

Of course, non-Indian scholars of native societies have more to say about wilderness-related topics, including Edwin Bembaum who has studied the relationships between indigenous people and their revered mountain landscapes around the globe. In the North American chapter of his book Sacred Mountains of the World, he discusses the Koyukon's Denali, the Hopi's San Francisco Peaks, the Sioux's Black Hills and the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy's Mount Katahdin, among others. Bembaum writes with no apology:

Most people from mainstream American culture who seek a sense of the sacred in mountains do so in nontraditional ways, eschewing the aid of religious rituals [unlike certain Indians] . . . . In fact, the intensity with which some Native Americans still revere certain of their peaks makes the sentiments of sublimity experienced by many white Americans seem pale in comparison.22

John Collier, in his autobiography From Every Zenith, wrote of the intimacy that seemed to connect his Indian friends with their homelands: "Their lands live in their souls, and each place and each thing on earth is a timeless part of a whole whose essence is living spirit."23 Peter Matthiessen, a more contemporary Anglo advocate of Native American rights, also spoke of the infinite "sameness" he observed between Indians and nature:

The whole universe is sacred, man is the whole universe, and the religious ceremony is life itself, the miraculous common acts of every day. Respect for nature is respect for oneself; to revere it is self-respecting, since man and nature, though not the same thing, are not different.24

At the risk of overgeneralizing native philosophy, Matthiessen's analysis can serve as an contrasting example to dominant society's separation of humans from
the rest of the natural world. But modern Indian people are not immune from the pressures that demand such a separation. In the late 1950s, all but one of the Indian tribes with BIA-designated roadless areas requested their declassification, demonstration of a common need to assimilate economically and a common goal to assert their sovereign rights. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes later created their own wilderness of their former Mission Range Roadless Area, as a defense against external and internal pressure to exploit the land past a point that had become culturally acceptable. That acceptability was measured on a scale that factored in well over 100 years of influence by white industrial society. Had this one Indian community distanced itself enough from the land to see the need to "preserve" it in the modern sense of the word?

N. Scott Momaday of the Kiowa tribe, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for *House Made of Dawn*, explains what he believes to be the fundamental difference between Indian and non-Indian views of nature, although he did not specify wilderness landscapes in particular. He also addresses the division between humans and nature:

In [the Indian] mind, nature is not something apart from him. He conceives of it, rather, as an element in which he exists. He has existence within that element, much in the same way we think of having existence within the element of air. It would be unimaginable for him to think of it in the way the nineteenth century "nature poets" thought of looking at nature and writing about it. They employed a kind of "esthetic distance," as it is sometimes called. This idea would be alien to the Indian.25

Yet most members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes choose to admire their tribal wilderness from outside its boundaries, from the Mission Valley,
rarely if ever traveling by foot or horseback into the mountains to recreate or to engage in more traditional or ceremonial activities. The preference of most tribal members to remain slightly removed from the tribal wilderness indeed may be employing an aesthetic distance somewhat related to the 19th-century Transcendentalists and Romantics. Their choice more obviously illustrates their departure from the present wilderness "elite" who take to wilderness areas as frequently as possible. The tribal wilderness management plan attempts to explain this contemporary cultural divergence:

For whatever reason, backpacking, climbing, and other forms of wilderness recreation have not caught on amongst tribal members. . . . There is, however, an intense appreciation and love for the Wilderness that more than compensates for the lack of direct recreational use. . . . The need for preservation, then, is more out of a reverence for the land, its community of life, and what it means to the Indian culture than out of a need to enjoy the benefits of direct use.26

According to the traditional stories of these Indian people, the notion of wilderness as a place separate from themselves -- the notion of wilderness, period -- was at one time alien. Obviously, it is no longer. Today, the Tribes actually accentuate the human-absence ideal of wilderness with certain management policies that either prohibit or discourage the presence of recreationists in the tribal wilderness. The overall tribal contentment to revere the tribal wilderness without stepping foot within it further elevates this ideal. This contentment also could support the argument that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai have come to separate themselves from wilderness, from nature, to a degree greater than mainstream America, now accused of loving federal parks and wildernesses to death with overuse. Or perhaps the Indians' departure can be viewed more accurately in
terms of a lower level of consumption -- in this case, recreational consumption -- of nature.


In defense of wilderness perservation in the 1940s, Benton MacKaye assured doubters that he and his Wilderness Society cronies had no intentions of "revert[ing] from clerks to cavemen, nor from Times Square to Plymouth Rock." Benton, fond of popularized Indian buzzwords, continued that wilderness provided the opportunity "to recharge depleted human batteries directly from Mother Earth." The point to visiting wilderness, he advocated, was "not to escape a wicked world [but] to take breath amid effort to forge a better world." 27

For Indian people, then and now, the decisions of how to improve life on their reservations, only remnants of their traditional homelands and often harboring only remnants of their cultures as well, are difficult. Taking a breath in the wilderness does not prove inspiration enough. Wildland preservation, by any name, is but one tough decision. Preserving wilderness preserves culture, as well, but may sacrifice economic opportunities to battle the ensuing poverty of many reservations. As Bob Marshall's biographer James Glover concluded in light of the declassification of the Marshall designations, "The American people in general can afford much more easily than Indians to set aside wilderness." 28

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are an exception to that generalization; their economic stability, owed in large part today to Kerr Dam, has afforded them the choice of leaving productive forests on the Mission slopes uncut and protected as wilderness. On the Flathead Reservation, per capita payments have
been holding steady at $1,200 per year per tribal member for several years now. Although these payments used to depend exclusively on timber revenue, now only about 30 percent comes from logging income. The ever-cyclical nature of the timber industry has less of an impact on these individual payments, as well as the Tribes's collective economic well-being now that the steady rental fees from Kerr Dam constitute the majority of tribal income. The likelihood of having to open the Mission Mountains to logging once again, due to lulls in the tribal economy, also decreases as the reservation's monetary might shifts from timber harvest to their ultimate ownership and operation of Kerr Dam in 2015. The largest sources of income that currently sustain the tribal wilderness -- BIA funds, conservation permit fees, timber revenue, and the Kerr Dam rental -- come from nontribal pocketbooks. These dollars afford the Tribes their luxury of wilderness.

Yet, the option to rethink or even undo the tribal wilderness remains in the flexible, reversible legislation that declares, outlines and details its existence. A pragmatic Tribal Council in 1982 created the tribal wilderness with an ordinance, rather than a more binding referendum, knowing future circumstances might shift yet again tribal priorities concerning the Mission Range and its timber resources. The initial prudence surrounding the designation of the tribal wilderness remains, since no referendum calling for perpetual protection of the Missions has been put before the tribal membership.

The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness represents much more than the environmental progressivism of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, although that in itself is exceptional and notable. The tribal wilderness typifies the
shrewd workings of tribal politics and tribal economics, as well as the Tribes' renewed dedication to their cultural heritage. The Missions' west face, protected in the name of wilderness, embodies a borrowed devotion and a sovereign sanctity at the same time.

There is no great purpose served in teasing apart what is white and what is Indian, or even what is traditional and what is not, about the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness. The cross-cultural conglomerate of philosophy and management techniques behind our nation's only major tribal wilderness in no way detracts from its uniqueness or makes it less Indian. The mix of motive and influence in its creation and maintenance only adds to the complexity that surrounds the paradox of "Indian wilderness."

A similar dissection has been made of the origins of a more prominent Indian concept, that of Mother Earth. Sam Gill, in his book *Mother Earth: An American Story*, argues that the idea of Mother Earth emerged gradually among dynamic, adaptable Indian cultures in North America, as a response to the sometimes subtle but deeply-penetrating impact of invading European society over the long term. Gill believes that the Mother Earth concept is not as a land ethic premise evident in traditional Native cultures, but is rather an isolated notion that popular American sentiment exaggerated, scholars overemphasized and Indians collectively and resourcefully came to incorporate into their modern defenses against mainstream modernity:

Mother Earth has become a central figure of the Native American story. Native Americans have embraced her as mother, and she has returned their embrace by giving them identity, purpose, responsibility, and even
a sense of superiority over very powerful adversaries.\textsuperscript{29} Gill, too, concludes that the non-Indian influence his theory places on this hallowed mantra does not lessen the importance or the authenticity of Mother Earth today, especially in light of the inspiration She provides Indians in their struggle for sovereignty.

Of course, the idea of Indian wilderness is not nearly as universal among native people as is Mother Earth. The Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness demonstrates one Indian community's resourcefulness and flexibility in preserving their cultural landscape; it is but one contemporary native concept of land preservation put into practice. In 1993, the Makah Indians on the Olympic Penninsula of Washington state also decided to borrow the wilderness credo, to ban motorized activity from the coastline of Cape Flattery, where tourists come to stand on the very northwestern tip of the continental United States.

Other tribes have chosen other means to protect valued natural areas on their reservations, among them the Shoshone and Arapahoe in Wyoming, and Taos Pueblo in northern New Mexico. The only survivor of the Marshall roadless designations, the Wind River Roadless Area continues to be managed by the BIA and the Shoshone and Arapahoe tribes as a backcountry recreation area for both Indians and non-Indians. In 1970, the Taos Indians finally won the legal right to 48,000 acres of forested mountain terrain surrounding their sacred Blue Lake in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, just upstream from their pueblo. Part of the Carson National Forest for nearly 70 years, the area now is reserved for the exclusive, ceremonial use of tribal members.
For Indian nations facing difficult choices about resource use and landscape protection, the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness offers one detailed, working model, one that aligns most closely with the mainstream American ideal of land preservation. For the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the wilderness mold fits their current vision for the Mission Mountains well. The vision may prove malleable. The mold already has; the Tribes have made it so. The mountains, on the other hand, stand adamant and undaunted. Atop the highest of the Mission peaks, Mountain Sheep endures his interminable sentence.
APPENDIX 1. Indian lands included in the Office of Indian Affairs’ 1937 order "Establishment of Roadless and Wild Areas on Indian Reservations" and their subsequent declassification dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadless area</th>
<th>Reservation(s)</th>
<th>State(s)</th>
<th>Approximate acreage</th>
<th>Elimination date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Bridge</td>
<td>Navajo</td>
<td>UT/AZ</td>
<td>1,590,000</td>
<td>5/19/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Mesa</td>
<td>Navajo</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>820,000</td>
<td>5/19/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Canyon</td>
<td>Hualapai</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>530,000</td>
<td>1/10/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painted Desert</td>
<td>Navajo</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>5/19/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black River</td>
<td>San Carlos/</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>325,000</td>
<td>4/2/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fort Apache</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind River Mountains</td>
<td>Shoshone</td>
<td>WY</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>188,000 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Wind River)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>still exist as a roadless area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia-San Poil Divide</td>
<td>Colville</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>155,000</td>
<td>10/10/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Thomas</td>
<td>Fort Apache</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>10/20/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Range</td>
<td>Flathead</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>10/10/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesa Verde</td>
<td>Consolidated Ute</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>sometime after 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Ute Mountain)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat Rocks</td>
<td>Yakima</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>10/20/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Jefferson</td>
<td>Warm Springs</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>8/22/58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* contemporary name of reservation
### APPENDIX 1. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wild area</th>
<th>Reservation</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Approximate acreage</th>
<th>Elimination date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Adams</td>
<td>Yakima</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>10/20/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Charlotte</td>
<td>Grand Portage</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>10/10/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Portage</td>
<td>Grand Portage</td>
<td>MN</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>10/10/59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Flattery</td>
<td>Makah</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>sometime in 1956</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX 3. Timber sales in the northern section of the former Mission Range Roadless Area, 1966-1976, listed north to south.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timber unit</th>
<th>Harvest completion date</th>
<th>Volume cut (million board feet)</th>
<th>$ received (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Bay</td>
<td>April 1975</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder</td>
<td>November 1971</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellroaring</td>
<td>May 1972</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducharme</td>
<td>February 1971</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moss Peak</td>
<td>February 1976</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five units combined</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>129.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

Chapter 1
The Whiteness of Wilderness

1. Based on the story "Sheep Face Mountain," as recorded in the "Salishan Tribes: The Flatheads, the Kalispels, and the Coeur D'Alenes" chapter of Ella E. Clark, Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 90-92.

2. Taken from "Flathead and Kalispel Prophecies of the Black Rot"). Ibid., 125-127. This source emphasizes that these stories are set in a time before Europeans or word of their religion -- which most often preceded the white men themselves -- made contact with either the Salish or Kalispel people.

3. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan (Pablo, Mont.: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 1982), 72.


5. Alt and Hyndman, Roadside Geology of Montana, 35.

6. The region identified here and elsewhere in this paper as the "Northern Rockies" refers not to the northern extent of the Rocky Mountains in Canada but to those Rocky Mountain ranges within the northern states of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

7. General information on the overthrust belt from Alt and Hyndman, Roadside Geology of Montana, 42-46.


9. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan, appendix E.

10. Summary on vegetation species compiled from David B. Rockwell and others, Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness Management Proposal (Missoula,


13. Today, all Indians of the reservation are often referred to as Flathead Indians. In some instances the name is reserved for the Salish, distinguishing them from the Salishan linguistic group which includes dozens of tribes throughout the interior and coastal Northwest. Regardless, it's a case of mistaken identity the Flathead Culture Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes officially attribute to Lewis and Clark in CS&KT Flathead Culture Committee, *A Brief History of the Flathead Tribes* (St. Ignatius, Mont.: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 1978), 2. The explorers became well acquainted with the Salish during their travels back and forth across the Northern Rockies, but nonetheless confused them with another tribe on the Pacific coast who perhaps practiced cranial manipulation.

Another theory on the origins of the Flathead name claims the Salish people were identified in sign language with the hands pressing both sides of the head. Early explorers and trappers then anticipated meeting native people in this region who somehow resembled this gesture. From John Fahey, *Flathead Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 6.

Most Indians prefer to be known by the traditional name of the specific tribe or tribes of their ancestry. Throughout this paper, each of the three tribes of the Flathead Reservation will be identified individually as Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille and Salish. Collectively, they will be referred to as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes or simply the Tribes.

14. This overview of the three tribes was gathered from several sources, including: CS&KT Flathead Culture Committee, *A Brief History of the Flathead Tribes*, 2, 8-12; Fahey, *The Flathead Indians*, 3-26; Camel and Dupuis, *Flathead Reservation Comprehensive Resources Plan*, vol. 1, *Existing Conditions*, chapter 3: 1-8; personal interviews with various tribal members.


16. CS&KT Flathead Culture Committee, *A Brief History of the Flathead Tribes*, 8. Several variations on the origin of the Salishan name *senyélmen* are told, including Indian families camped around a cottonwood grove, hunters entrapping an elk, and the wind encircling and twisting willow branches until they are interwoven. From Octave Finley, tribal member, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, personal interview, 9 October 1995, Pablo, Mont. Notes in
possession of author.


19. Ibid., chapter 4: 3, 6.


22. Ibid.


25. Ibid.

26. The 1990 total of wilderness acreage in the U.S. was 92 million, cited in John C. Hendee, George H. Stankey and Robert C. Lucas, Wilderness Management (Golden, Colo.: North American Press, 1990), 530. Since then, new wilderness acts for the states of California, Colorado and Nevada have been passed, bringing the national total to approximately 103 million acres, according to Dennis Daly, Wilderness Watch, personal interview, 10 November 1995, Missoula, Mont. Notes in possession of author.


salvageable.... Protecting natural diversity, then, must be the major goal of the wilderness movement."


32. Steve Woodruff and Don Schwenesnen, Montana Wilderness: Discovering the Heritage (Kansas City, Mo.: The Lowell Press, 1984), 83.


34. Current trend of wilderness use by Indians and non-Indians obtained from Tom McDonald, director, Wildland Recreation Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, personal interview, 22 February 1994, Pablo, Mont. Notes in possession of author.

35. Quote on tribal members' use of primitive areas from Francis Auld, cultural resource protector, Kootenai Culture Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, personal interview, 10 October 1995, Elmo, Mont. Notes in possession of author.


Chapter 2
Wilderness Lost, 1900-1964


2. Ibid, 626.

3. Ibid, 624.

4. Ibid, 625.

5. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan (Pablo, Mont.: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 1982), 73.

6. Ibid.


8. CS&KT Flathead Culture Committee, A Brief History of the Flathead Tribes (St. Ignatius, Mont.: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 1978), 9.


11. Fahey, The Flathead Indians, 300-307; and James J. Lopach, Margery Hunter Brown, and Richmond L. Clow, Tribal Government Today: Politics on


13. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan, 74-75.


17. Ibid., 21.

18. Ibid., 13.

19. Ibid., 27-37.

20. Timber sale data on the McDonald Lake Logging Unit taken from Historical Research Associates, Timber, Tribes and Trust, 358.

21. Ibid., 318.

22. Ibid., 82-83.


25. Philp, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 159-160.


28. Collier, From Every Zenith, 176.


31. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Resolution No. 4, 3 January 1936, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.


33. Ibid.


37. Ibid, 141.


39. Ibid, 186.


41. Ibid, 708-709.


43. E.M. Miller to John Collier, 18 January 1938, File 40999-1937-308, General Service 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.

44. John Collier to E.M. Miller, 9 February 1938, File 40999-1937-308, General Service 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.

45. Author of letter illegible to Harold L. Ickes, 9 January 1937 (sic), File 40999-1937-308, General Service 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.

46. Frederic Kirgis to the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 21 July 1937, File 40999-1937-308, General Service 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.

47. L.W. Shotwell to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 15 January 1938, File 4852-1938-308, Flathead, Central Classified 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.

48. L.W. Shotwell to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 11 February 1938, File 4852-1938-308, Flathead, Central Classified 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.

49. John Herrick to L.W. Shotwell, 1 February 1938, File 4852-1938-308, Flathead, Central Classified 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.


51. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Resolution No. 157, 2 March 1939, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.

52. Ibid.


56. "Conservation Working Plan Report, July 1, 1939-June 30, 1940, Flathead Indian Reservation, MT," Flathead Box 56453, RG 75, Seattle FRC.
57. Herrick to Shotwell, 1 February 1938.
58. L.W. Shotwell to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 14 March 1938, File 4852-1938-308, Flathead, Central Classified 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.
59. Acting Director of Forestry J.D. Lament to J.F. Kinney, CCC-ID, 21 July 1939, File 4852-1938-308, Flathead, Central Classified 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.
60. William Zimmerman, Jr. to Senator Burton K. Wheeler, 14 April 1938, File 4852-1938-308, Flathead, Central Classified 1907-1939, RG 75, NA.
61. CCC-ID Director D.E. Murphy to Flathead Superintendent L.W. Shotwell, 1940, Flathead Box 56453, RG 75, Seattle FRC.
62. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan, 76.
63. "Annual Forestry Report, Fiscal Year 1941, Flathead Reservation,"
Flathead Box 26604, RG 75, Seattle FRC.
64. Historical Research Associates, Timber, Tribes and Trust, 96.
65. Ibid, 129, 133.
69. Superintendent Stone to John Cragun, 6 June 1956, as recorded in Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Council Minutes, 12 June 1956, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.
70. John Cragun to Superintendent Stone, 21 May 1956, as recorded in Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Council Minutes, 12 June 1956, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.
74. Office of Indian Affairs, "Establishment of Roadless and Wild Areas on Indian Reservations," 708.
76. Testimony by Indians urging Congress to exclude Indian lands from the

77. Amendments to the Office of Indian Affairs’ roadless order, which withdrew individual areas from the list of roadless and wild areas on Indian reservations, cite the need for economic development as the reason tribes requested declassification. These amendments appear in Federal Register (22 August 1958) vol. 23, no. 165, p. 6495; Federal Register (10 January 1959) vol. 24, no. 7, p. 251; Federal Register (2 April 1959) vol. 24, no. 64, pp. 2559-2560; Federal Register (19 May 1959) vol. 24, no. 97, p. 4030; Federal Register (10 October 1959) vol. 24, no. 199, p. 8257; and Federal Register (20 September 1960) vol. 25, no. 183, pp. 9002-9003.

78. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Resolution No. 991, 18 July 1958, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.

79. Walter McDonald to Mrs. P.T. Van de Mark, 10 July 1958, in records of the Wildland Recreation Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pablo, Mont.

80. Ibid.

81. Walter McDonald to Mrs. Dorothy Van de Mark, 25 July 1958, in records of the Wildland Recreation Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pablo, Mont.


83. Walter McDonald to "Indian leaders, tribal members, and interested non-Indian citizens," 30 October 1958, in records of the Wildland Recreation Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Pablo, Mont.


86. Statement of Mr. Paul Jones, National Wilderness Preservation Act, S. 4028: Hearings before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 937.

88. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Resolution No. 1003, 31 December 1958, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.


98. Ibid., 118.

99. Ibid., 119.

100. Ibid., 119-120.


103. Stewart Brandborg, personal interview, 20 April 1994, Darby, Mont.

Notes in possession of author.

104. Collier, "Wilderness and Modern Man," 120.
Chapter 3
Wilderness Found, 1964-1982

2. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 167.
5. Ibid., 189.
6. Ibid., 173.
7. David Rorvik to Forestry Department, 4 October 1971, "Yellow Bay Logging Unit, Contract and Bond" file, BIA Branch of Forestry, Ronan, Mont.
8. Harold Roberson to David Rorvik, 26 October 1971, "Yellow Bay Logging Unit, Contract and Bond" file, BIA Branch of Forestry, Ronan, Mont.
17. Ibid., 2.
20. "64-million Board Feet of Mission Timber to be Sold This Fall," 1, 16.
15 March 1974, 1.

28. "Mission Unit Logging will be Delayed," 1, 2.
31. Ibid., 1, 3; and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Council Minutes, 23 July 1974, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.
33. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Council Minutes, 2 August 1974, Records Office, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.
37. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Council Minutes from meetings on the forest management plan (3-5 September 1975), as they appeared in the Char-Koosta News, 1 November 1975, 11-12.
41. F. J. Houle, Jr, "Houle Claims Articles 'Inaccurate' on Flathead Reservation Affairs," Ronan Pioneer, 4 August 1976, 4.
42. Trosper, interview, 23 February 1994.
44. Thurman Trosper recalled the consulting fee was $4,000. Trosper, interview, 23 February 1994.
45. Tom McDonald said the cost to the Tribes was $2,500. Tom McDonald, director, Wildland Recreation Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, personal interview, 22 February 1994, Pablo, Mont. Notes in possession of author.
46. David Rockwell guessed the institute received between $3,000 and $5,000 for the project. David Rockwell, former director, Wildland Recreation Program, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, personal interview, 5 November 1995, Dixon, Mont. Notes in possession of author.
47. David B. Rockwell and others, Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness Management Proposal (Missoula, Mont: Wilderness Institute, School of Forestry,
Chapter 4

1. David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Montana*

2. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan (Pablo, Mont.: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 1982), 32.


4. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan, 14.


6. Tribal enrollment figure -- as of October 1995 -- obtained from the Enrollment Office of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribal Complex, Pablo, Mont.

7. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan, 14.

8. Ibid, 15.


10. These rounded budget figures for the Tribes' Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation were provided by Tom McDonald, personal interview, 9 October 1995, Pablo, Mont. Notes in possession of author.


15. Hendee, Stankey and Lucas, Wilderness Management, appendix F, section 5; and Dennis Daly, Wilderness Watch, personal interview, 10 November 1995, Missoula, Mont. Notes in possession of author.

16. "Mission Mountains and Mission Mountains Tribal Wildernesses" (USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, in cooperation with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 1992), map.

17. CS&KT Wildland Recreation Department, Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Management Plan, 3.

18. Ibid.

19. This statement constitutes, in its entirely, the Definition of Wilderness, Section 2, of the Tribal Wilderness Ordinance in CS&KT Wildland Recreation


24. Ibid., 9.

25. VQO definitions obtained from the glossary of Ibid., and the plan's aesthetics section, 8-10.


30. Ibid.


40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.


Management Plan, 6, 14.
45. Ibid., 24.
46. Camel and Dupuis, Flathead Reservation Resources Plan, vol. 1, Existing
Conditions, chapter 16: 8.
47. Tom McDonald, personal interview, 19 December 1995, Pablo, Mont.
Notes in possession of author.
48. Wilderness Buffer Zone Committee, 1993 Wilderness Buffer Zone
Management Plan, 25.
49. Ibid., 45, 48.
50. McDonald, interview, 22 February 1994.
51. Wilderness Buffer Zone Committee, 1993 Wilderness Buffer Zone
Management Plan, 39.
52. McDonald, interview, 14 December 1995.
53. Wilderness Buffer Zone Committee, 1993 Wilderness Buffer Zone
Management Plan, 48.
55. David Havelick, "The Wildness of Wilderness: A Study of Designated, De
57. McDonald, interview, 14 December 1995.
58. Ibid.
60. Thurman Trosper, tribal member, retired U.S. Forest Service and National
Park Service official, personal interview, 23 February 1994, Ronan, Mont. Notes in
possession of author.

Chapter 5
Indian Wilderness: Converging Ideals

1. Francis Auld and Clarinda Burke, Kootenai Culture Program, Confederated
Salish and Kootenai Tribes, personal interview, 10 October 1995, Elmo, Mont. Notes in
possession of author.
2. Lucy Vanderburg and and Felicite McDonald, Flathead Culture Committee,
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