

August 5, 1934

[Two Medicine Chas., Glacier National Park]

FDR Speech File

Reading Copy

Speech made at Glacier National
Park--August 5, 1934.

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On Friday and Saturday I had the opportunity of seeing the actual construction work under way in the first two national projects for the development of the Columbia River Basin. At Bonneville, Oregon, a great dam, 140 miles inland, at the last place where the river leaps down over rapids to sea level, will provide not only a large development of cheap power but ^{also} will ~~also~~ enable vessels to proceed another 70 or 80 miles into the interior of the country.

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Today, for the first time in my life, I have seen Glacier Park. Perhaps I can best express to you my thrill and delight by saying that I wish every American, old and young, could have been with me today. The great mountains, the glaciers, the lakes and the trees make me long to stay here for all the rest of the summer.

Comparisons are generally objectionable and yet it is not unkind to say from the standpoint of scenery alone that if many and indeed most of our American national parks were to be set down anywhere on the continent of Europe thousands of Americans would journey all the way across the ocean in order to see their beauties.

There is nothing so American as our national parks. The scenery and wild life are native and the fundamental idea behind the parks is native. It is, in brief, that the country belongs to the people; that what it is and what it is in the process of making is for the enrichment of the lives of all of us. Thus the parks stand as the outward symbol of this great human principle.

It was on a famous night, 64 years ago, that a group of men who had been exploring the Yellowstone country, gathered about a campfire to discuss what could be done with that wonderland of beauty. It is said that one of the party, a lawyer from the State of Montana, Cornelius Hedges, advanced the idea that the region might be preserved for all time as a national park for the benefit of all the people of the Nation. As a result of that suggestion, Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872 by Act of Congress as a "pleasuring ground" for the people. I like that phrase because, in the years that have followed, our great series of parks in every part of the Union have become indeed a "pleasur^{ing} ground" for millions of Americans.

My old friend, Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior in the Wilson Administration, well described the policies governing the national park administration when he said:

"The policy to which the Service will adhere is based on three broad principles: First, that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time; second, that they are set apart for the use, observation, health and pleasure of the people; and, third, that the national interest must dictate

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Today I have seen some of the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps boys in this northwestern country. Of the three hundred thousand young men in these Camps, 75,000 are at work in our national parks. Here, under trained leadership, we are helping these men to help themselves and their families and at the same time we are making the parks more available and more useful for the average citizen. Hundreds of miles of firebreaks have been built, fire hazards have been reduced on great tracts of timberland, thousands

I believe, too, that we are building a better comprehension of our national needs. People understand, as never before, the splendid public purpose that underlies the development of great power sites, the improving of navigation, the prevention of floods and of the erosion of our agricultural fields, the prevention of forest fires, the diversification of farming and the distribution of industry. We know, more and more, that the East has a stake in the West and the West has a stake in the East, that the Nation must and shall be considered as a whole and not as an aggregation of disjointed groups.

May we come better to know every part of our great heritage in the days to come.

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT AT TWO MEDICINE CHALET

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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large tract of parched land for the benefit of this and future generations. Many families in the days to come, I am confident, will thank us of this generation for providing small farms on which they will at least be able to make an honest and honorable livelihood.

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It was on a famous night, sixty-four years ago, that a group of men who had been exploring the Yellowstone

country gathered about a campfire to discuss what could be done with that wonderland of beauty. It is said that one of the party, a lawyer from the State of Montana, Cornelius Hedges, advanced the idea that the region might be preserved for all time as a national park for the benefit of all the people of the Nation. As a result of that suggestion, Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872 by Act of Congress as a "pleasuring ground" for the people. I like that phrase because, in the years that have followed, our great series of parks in every part of the Union have become indeed a "pleasuring ground" for millions of Americans.

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"The policy to which the Service will adhere is based on three broad principles: First, that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time; second, that they are set apart for the use, observation, health and pleasure of the people; and, third, that the national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks."

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tion and to its former duties I added last year by transferring from other departments many other parks, battlefield sites, memorials and national monuments. This concentration of responsibility has thus made it possible to embark on a permanent park policy as a great recreational and educational project -- one which no other country in the world has ever undertaken in such a broad way for protection of its natural and historic treasures and for the enjoyment of them by vast numbers of people.

Today I have seen some of the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps boys in this northwestern country. Of the three hundred thousand young men in these Camps, 75,000 are at work in our national parks. Here, under trained leadership, we are helping these men to help themselves and their families and at the same time we are making the parks more available and more useful for the average citizen. Hundreds of miles of firebreaks have been built, fire hazards have been reduced on great tracts of timberland, thousands of miles of roadside have been cleared, 2500 miles of trails have been constructed and 10,000 acres have been reforested. Other tens of thousands of acres have been treated for tree disease and soil erosion. This is but another example of our efforts to build, not for today alone but for tomorrow as well.

We should remember that the development of our national park system over a period of many years has not been a simple bed of roses. As is the case in the long fight for the preservation of national forests and water power and mineral deposits and other national possessions, it has been a long and fierce fight against many private interests which were entrenched in political and economic power. So, too, it has been a constant struggle to protect the public interest once cleared from private exploitation at the hands of the selfish few.

It took a bitter struggle to teach the country at large that our national resources are not inexhaustible and that, when public domain is stolen, a two-fold injury is done, for it is a theft of the treasure of the present and at the same time bars the road of opportunity to the future.

We have won the greater part of the fight to obtain and to retain these great public park properties for the benefit of the public. We are at the threshold of even more important a battle to save our resources of agriculture and industry against the selfishness of individuals.

The Secretary of the Interior in 1933 announced that this year of 1934 was to be emphasized as "National Parks Year." I am glad to say that there has been a magnificent response and that the number visiting our national parks has shown a splendid increase. But I decided today

that every year ought to be "National Parks Year". That is why, with all the earnestness at my command, I express to you the hope that each and every one of you who can possibly find the means and opportunity for so doing will visit our national parks and use them as they are intended to be used. They are not for the rich alone. Camping is free, the sanitation is excellent. You will find them in every part of the Union. You will find glorious scenery of every character; you will find every climate; you will perform the double function of enjoying much and learning much.

We are definitely in an era of building, the best kind of building -- the building of great public projects for the benefit of the public and with the definite objective of building human happiness.

I believe, too, that we are building a better comprehension of our national needs. People understand, as never before, the splendid public purpose that underlies the development of great power sites, the improving of navigation, the prevention of floods and of the erosion of our agricultural fields, the prevention of forest fires, the diversification of farming and the distribution of industry. We know, more and more, that the East has a stake in the West and the West has a stake in the East, that the Nation must and shall be considered as a whole and not as an aggregation of disjointed groups.

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STATEMENTS FILE

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Joe Murray

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