

February 22, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau,

In anticipation of your meeting on March 10, we wish to highlight one of the greatest opportunities for transboundary conservation that exists today between the US and Canada: the Flathead River Valley, a jewel in the Crown of the Continent.

This landscape is home to large and diverse carnivore populations, including the highest concentration of grizzly bears in the interior of North America. The water that flows through it is so pure that it is used as an international benchmark for purity, and it supports healthy populations of westslope cutthroat and bull trout that migrate freely between our two countries. The Flathead and adjacent drainages are a connectivity lynchpin in the Yellowstone to Yukon corridor and are critical to climate change adaptation. It presents one of the world's great integrated biodiversity conservation opportunities.

Canadians and Americans are proud to have established the world's first International Peace Park, Waterton-Glacier, in 1932. Yet it remains incomplete. The adjacent Flathead River Valley in southeast British Columbia remains unprotected, a vulnerable "missing piece of the puzzle" that threatens to undermine conservation efforts in adjacent jurisdictions. The concept dates back over 100 years, when Kootenai Brown presented the idea of expanding Waterton into the Canadian Flathead to the Canadian government. Although Prime Minister Jean Chrétien advocated for this in October 2002, the goal has yet to be achieved. The Ktunaxa Nation, in whose traditional territory the proposed park expansion is located, have formally requested that a national park expansion feasibility study be initiated.

Significant gains have been made recently, including a legislated moratoria on oil, gas and mining in BC and Montana. Alberta has recently added over one thousand square kilometres of protected areas just north of Waterton Park, yet the BC side has not received any additional protection, while intensive mining has led to selenium contamination of the adjacent Elk River. The fate of the Flathead remains in limbo, vulnerable to intensive logging, road-building and quarrying.

With the upcoming Centennial of the US National Park Service, and Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, the time is right to consolidate gains made to date and secure lasting conservation for the Flathead and adjacent habitat. We seek a solution that will establish a balance on the landscape - one that is firmly grounded in transboundary cooperation.

Since 2000, the Flathead Wild coalition has gathered over 20,000 supporters from both sides of the border who believe this valley deserves protection. We invite you to join us by supporting our vision for completing Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. We would be thrilled to provide you with a personal guided tour of this magnificent landscape.

We hope you will agree that protecting the Flathead River Valley in the Crown of the Continent is an excellent opportunity to celebrate our countries' joint commitment to conservation and to create a lasting legacy.

All the best,

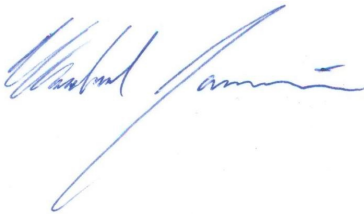
Flathead Wild Coalition



Bruce Passmore
Executive Director, CPAWS-BC



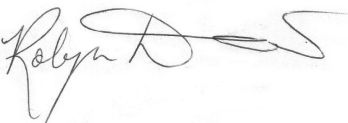
Dave Hadden
Executive Director, Headwaters Montana



Michael Jamison, Crown of the Continent
Program Manager
National Parks Conservation Association



Bob Peart
Executive Director, Sierra Club BC



Robyn Duncan
Executive Director, Wildsight



Dr. Jodi Hilty, PhD
President and Chief Scientist, Yellowstone
to Yukon Conservation Initiative

cc:

Ktunaxa Nation Council

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia

Steve Bullock, Governor of Montana

Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Wayne Stetski, MP Kootenay Columbia

Stephane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Christy Goldfuss, White House Council on Environmental Quality

David MacNaughton, Canadian Ambassador to U.S.

Chris Adamo, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Secretary Sally Jewell, U.S. Department of Interior

Jonathan B. Jarvis, National Park Service

Jonathan Putnam, Office of International Affairs, National Park Service

Secretary John Kerry, U.S. Department of State

Chris Sandrolini, Director, Office of Canadian Affairs

Bruce Heyman, U.S. Ambassador to Canada

Gina McCarthy, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Shaun McGrath, Regional Director, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Jon Tester, U.S. Senator for Montana

Steve Daines, U.S. Senator for Montana

Ryan Zinke, U.S. House of Representatives