



Montana Department
of Natural Resources
and Conservation

**ASSOCIATION OF
MONTANA FLOODPLAIN
MANAGERS AND
DNRC FLOODPLAIN
JOINT NEWSLETTER**

Serving Montana's Communities
Since 1974

HIGHGROUND

March 2016

This newsletter and other state floodplain management activities are funded, in part, through grants from FEMA.



New Mapping Products Shine In West Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek Re-Studies

By Michelle Phillips, DNRC Floodplain Specialist

In late January, DNRC and project contractors—Michael Baker International and Morrison-Maierle—along with FEMA, Gallatin County, and the City of Bozeman reviewed Draft map products for floodplain mapping re-studies on the West Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek in Gallatin County. This extensive project is part of a multi-year effort to update floodplain mapping for these waterways and obtain more accurate, current, and detailed data and mapping of flood risk in Gallatin County communities.

Right now, Brian Heaston, City of Bozeman Project Engineer and Floodplain Administrator, and Sean O'Callaghan, Gallatin County Planning Director and Floodplain Administrator, have in their hands Draft maps depicting updated flood risk information available, taking into

account high accuracy topographic information, updated hydrologic data, and state-the-art engineering models and methods. The draft maps and data provide better information of how a 100-year flood event could affect their communities, compared to their current study information which dates back to the 1970s and 1980s.

Additionally, Michael Baker International and Morrison-Maierle created Changes Since Last FIRM (CSLF) maps for Bozeman Creek and the West Gallatin River. CSLF maps compare the new Draft maps with the effective maps to show areas that are proposed to come into the floodplain, areas that are proposed to go out of the floodplain, and areas of no change. The maps also illustrate which structures are proposed to be mapped into

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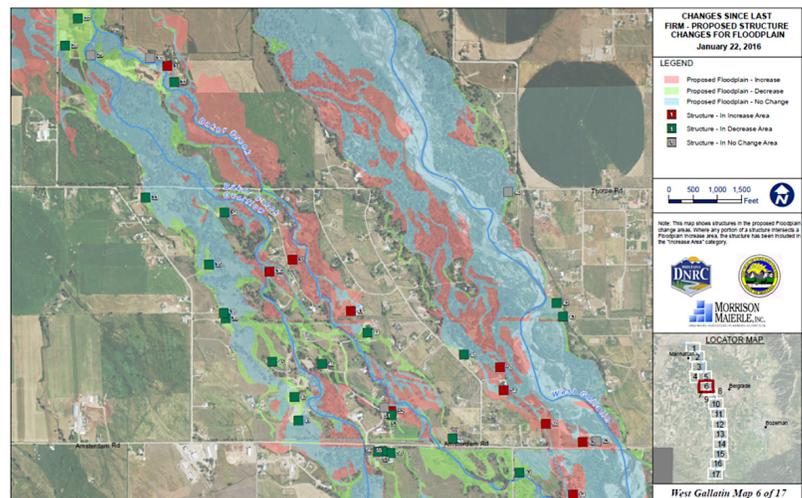
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Changes Since Last FIRM (CSLF) map showing land and structures proposed to be mapped into and out of the floodplain.

Sun River – photo by Mark Boesch

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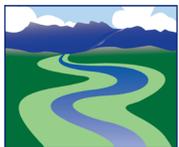
and out of the floodplain. Michael Baker International and Morrison-Maierle have created tables so that structures on the CSLF maps may be cross referenced for information about parcel size, parcel owner, etc. Specific structure information is particularly helpful in identifying which individual property owners will be most affected by the map changes. Floodplain Administrators like Brian and Sean are now working with their staff and commissioners, DNRC Floodplain staff, and FEMA to create and send targeted messaging to those affected property owners.

Finally, FEMA has developed an interactive map viewer for the CSLF maps that is publically accessible online at <http://tiny.cc/SaferGallatin>. Now, in addition to going to the county or city

to look at physical maps, community members may go online and use the map viewer to see proposed changes, if any, to their property.

Other projects occurring around the state have incorporated some of these featured CSLF products as well, including Flathead, Granite, Stillwater, and Sweet Grass Counties, along with the Yellowstone River update project in Carbon County. These projects are complex, requiring extensive time and effort from federal, state, county, and city government staff and their contractors. DNRC extends its gratitude to everyone involved in these projects; together we are supporting better community planning and decision making by equipping community leaders with the best available information about flood risk.

AMFM Corner



ASSOCIATION OF
Montana
FLOODPLAIN
MANAGERS

By Larry A. Schock,
AMFM Executive Director

*I look forward to seeing
all of you at Fairmont!*

17th Annual AMFM Conference: No Drought About It, The Flood Will Come

While the weather is cold outside and there is still snow on the ground, it is never too early to start thinking about floodplains. Spring, the run-off season, is right around the corner and will be here before we know it. This also means that it is time to register for the annual Association of Montana Floodplain Managers Conference. This year's conference is being held in the brand new conference facilities at Fairmont Hot Springs, March 15th through the 17th.

We have another great agenda again this year, offering a great variety of presentations that will interest every level of floodplain professional. The pre-conference workshops will provide an extensive education experience for not only the most seasoned, but also the most novice, floodplain professional.

- The Technical Session will provide comprehensive look at the new USGS Stream Stats software development and platform.

- The Basic Workshop Session will provide a comprehensive look at the permitting process, the Joint Application, including presentations from the other regulatory agencies that use the form.

Our Conference agenda includes a little something for everyone. It is packed full of interesting presentations covering a variety of floodplain topics. Thanks to our sponsors, there will be ample opportunities for you to network and share your experiences with the other conference attendees. The conference will also give you the opportunity to spend time talking to the many vendors and learning about the newest floodplain-related products and services.

For a complete agenda and/or to access the registration materials, go to the new AMFM website at; <http://amfm.wildapricot.org/event-2091999>

Flood Risk Awareness—Findings from FEMA

By Michelle Phillips,
DNRC Floodplain Specialist



As spring draws near, the State Floodplain Program is preparing this year's Montana Flood Awareness Campaign. Stay tuned for more details about the campaign as they become solidified. In the meantime, we thought we would wet your flood awareness pallet, so to speak, with key findings from a FEMA survey on flood risk awareness.

In 2012, FEMA conducted a nationwide survey of U.S. households in order gauge the public's general awareness of flood risk. Specifically, FEMA sought to understand if an increase in the public's awareness and understanding of risk management has resulted in a reduction of current and future vulnerability to flooding. The following are key findings from the survey.

Flooding wasn't a major concern; however, people search for information about it when they move.

- A large majority of respondents did not believe flooding was the primary hazard their community faced.
- About one-third of respondents believed their community was at risk of flooding (down 10% from 2011).
- One-quarter of people searched for information about their flood risk.
- Moving into a new home or apartment prompted flood research.

People wanted flood risk information delivered to them.

- People wanted to hear flood risk on the news and through mailings.
- People expected to hear about flood risk from their mayor or local media.

People were confused about flood insurance but weren't talking to agents.

- Almost one-third of households believed that flood damage was covered by their homeowner's or renter's policy.
- About half of those without flood insurance knew that it was available.
- People primarily took the same steps to reduce flood risk, whether or not they believed they were at risk.

Proactive searching was a better indicator of mitigation action than proximity to hazards.

- People who searched for flood information were more likely to take mitigation action.
- Proximity to hazards was not an indicator of mitigation activities.

Although the survey is a few years old, findings can still be useful to Floodplain Administrators and professionals throughout Montana. We will certainly consider these findings as we put together outreach activities, like this year's Montana Flood Awareness Campaign.

To access the complete 2012 Public Survey Findings on Flood Risk (FEMA 2013), visit the link below. <http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1923-25045-6047/keytakeaways2012publicsurvey.pdf>

FEMA Matters Section



FEMA

By Marijo Brady, FEMA Region VIII

New Elevation Certificate and (Dry) Floodproofing Certificate Forms

FEMA has recently released the new Elevation Certificate and (DRY) Floodproofing Certificate forms. Both forms expire 11/30/2018 and are available for immediate use.

On the Elevation Certificate, you will notice many formatting changes and a new building diagram (2B) for buildings with walkout basements. The Lowest Floor Guide and Special Certifications chapters of the Flood Insurance Manual will be updated in the April 1, 2016 edition to reflect the new diagram and forms. Although not required, FEMA encourages the surveyor and/or building official to record the building construction date in either Section D or Section G comments. The same is true for any later additions or Substantial Improvement (SI).

On the (DRY) Floodproofing Certificate, there are formatting

changes also. A couple other changes to note: 1) All elevations must be based on finished construction—elevations can no longer be based on Construction Drawings or Buildings under Construction. 2) New Non-Residential Floodproofed *Elevation Information Certification* signature and seal is now required in addition to the Non-Residential Floodproofed Construction Certification signature and seal requirement. As a reminder, DRY Floodproofing is only permitted for Non-Residential buildings—a *mixed use building is not eligible for DRY floodproofing certification.*

DNRC has posted these forms to their website for your convenience or can be found here:

http://nfipiservice.com/Stakeholder/W_16002/W-16002.html

Newly Mapped—Access to the Newly Mapped Rates End March 1, 2016

By Marijo Brady, FEMA Region VIII



For those property owners that were Newly Mapped into the Special Flood Hazard Area for FEMA flood insurance maps that went effective between October 1, 2008 and March 31, 2015—they would have needed to purchase a National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) flood insurance policy on/before March 1, 2016 to access the Newly Mapped rates. If a property owner missed the opportunity to purchase a policy using the Newly Mapped rates, then that ability to access those rates has gone away— forever. Not just for current property owners but for future owners of that property too. The NFIP policy must be maintained with no break in service or lapse to remain eligible for the Newly Mapped rates. The policy is transferrable and **NO ELEVATION CERTIFICATE IS REQUIRED.**

What are the savings?

For a pre-FIRM primary residence with \$150,000 in building coverage, a property owner could pay \$444 or they could pay \$2,300 if the opportunity is missed—a difference of \$1,836!!!! For a pre-FIRM non-primary residence the savings is even greater—\$2,730!!!! Pre-FIRM businesses can realize savings also—for \$400,000 building coverage the Newly Mapped rate is \$2,900 as opposed to \$8,200 for standard rates. Post-FIRM buildings are eligible also. Property owners were encouraged to contact their insurance agent to get a policy written **BEFORE MARCH 1, 2016. HOPEFULLY THEY DID NOT MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY!!!!**

Endangered Species Act (ESA) and FEMA CLOMRs/CLOMR-Fs

By Marijo Brady, FEMA Region VIII

Montana's Endangered Species

Black-footed Ferret

29 years after listing, this two-pound weasel remains the rarest mammal in North America. Introduced diseases and a century of prairie dog control have brought it to the brink of extinction. With the death of the last of nine captive ferrets at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in 1978, most people feared the species had become extinct.



[\[Learn more\]](#)

Least Tern

The interior population of least tern was listed as endangered in 1985. Populations along the East and West coasts are not endangered. The interior population, which once inhabited all the major river systems in the middle of the country, evolved to take advantage of constantly changing rivers.



[\[Learn more\]](#)

Pallid Sturgeon

The pallid sturgeon is the larger of two sturgeons historically found in the upper Missouri River. The other is the more common shovelnose sturgeon. The pallid sturgeon was not recognized as a species until 1905 and that classification is still being debated. Three genetic studies conducted to assess the relationship of the two species have been inconclusive.



[\[Learn more\]](#)

White Sturgeon

The Kootenai River white sturgeon was listed as endangered in 1994. This population had been declining for at least forty years and natural reproduction has been insignificant since 1974. Kootenai sturgeon began declining in the 1950s and 1960s as water quality deteriorated due to pollution.



[\[Learn more\]](#)

Whooping Crane

The world whooping crane population now stands at 319, the highest level of the century. Last summer 47 pairs nested in and around Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories and adjacent Alberta. This population of 190 whoopers—the only self-sustaining, wild population—winters at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast.



[\[Learn more\]](#)

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Feedback

Section 7 of the ESA requires each *Federal agency* to insure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. If a Federal action may affect threatened or endangered species, consultation with the (Fish and Wildlife) Services is required under Section 7 of the ESA.

On August 18, 2010, FEMA issued Procedure Memorandum 64—Compliance with the ESA for Letters of Map Change. Procedure Memorandum 64 unintentionally confused the issue of FEMA's action versus the requestor's action so that FEMA often acted as a facilitator for the requestor in dealing with the Services. *FEMA will no longer initiate consultation with the Services under Section 7 of the ESA for development projects that are not authorized, funded, or carried out by FEMA.*

For Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grants, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) projects, Flood Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants, and 406 Mitigation grants—which are funded by FEMA, the NEPA process would be followed and a Section 7 consultation would occur, if necessary.

The authority to provide final approval of projects and issue floodplain development permits lies with the local community, and, in some instances, State agencies. The project construction is not authorized, funded, or carried out by FEMA. Therefore, it is not FEMA's role to assist with accomplishing ESA compliance for these private actions or non-FEMA Federal actions.

CLOMR-Fs and CLOMRs are issued before a physical action occurs in the floodplain. *FEMA requires ESA compliance to be documented for all*

CLOMR and CLOMR-F applications prior to issuing a comment.

Section 9 of the ESA is relevant to the non-Federal actions of communities, developers, private citizens, etc. and prohibits anyone from "taking" or "harming" endangered wildlife, and similar prohibitions are generally extended through regulations for threatened wildlife. *Private individuals and local and State jurisdictions are required to comply with the ESA independently of FEMA's process.* Unless FEMA is directly involved with the project's construction or funding, ESA compliance should be obtained without FEMA's involvement.

For non-Federal actions, the CLOMR-F/CLOMR request will be processed by FEMA only after FEMA receives documentation from the requestor that demonstrates compliance with the ESA. For these projects, the requestor must demonstrate ESA compliance by submitting to FEMA written justification that a "Take," (meaning to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect) or to attempt to engage in any such conduct, will not occur to threatened and endangered species present in the county as a result of the project. If a project has the potential to "Take" listed species, an Incidental Take Permit may be submitted with justification as part of the CLOMR/CLOMR-F application that the project is the subject, or is covered by the subject, of the permit.

A new FEMA publication has recently been released—*Documentation of Endangered Species Act Compliance for Conditional Letters of Map Change.*

http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1449865883913-95472b08561a5a14738b38683ec256c7/ESA_Guidance_Nov_2015.pdf

Model Subdivision Regulation Update

By Allison Mouch, State Community Planning Bureau Chief



Over the past three years, the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) housed within the Planning Bureau at the Department of Commerce has been actively working to update the 2006 Montana Model Subdivision Regulations. This process has been a major undertaking, as CTAP's aim is to provide a comprehensive guiding document that not only serves as a template cities and counties may use in adopting or updating their local regulations, but also as a technical resource on best practices for local planners, board members, decision makers and the private sector on the 'how's' and 'why's' of subdivision review.

In early December 2015, a preliminary draft of the model document was provided to a peer review group consisting of planners representing both the public and private sector, elected officials, surveyors, engineers, realtors, builders, and state agency representatives (among others). Participants in the peer review group were given two months to evaluate the preliminary draft and provide initial comments to CTAP; the peer review comment period ended January 31st, 2016.

Following this initial comment period, CTAP will be compiling all input received, responding to comments and questions in writing for easy dissemination, and scheduling a conference call with the collective peer review group to discuss all feedback in an open forum. At the conclusion of this peer review call, CTAP will make a revised draft of the 2016 Model Subdivision Regulations available to the public for a final round of review and comment, with the goal of releasing the finished model document in early Spring 2016.

Anyone with questions or comments regarding the model subdivision regulation update can contact Allison Mouch, Community Planning Bureau Chief, at amouch@mt.gov or by phone at (406) 841-2598.

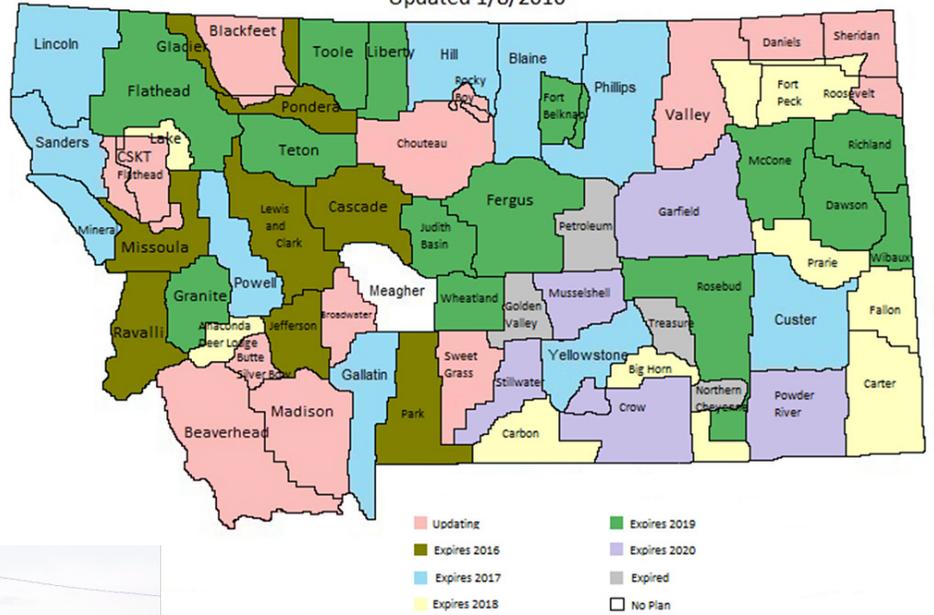
MITIGATION SECTION

Montana Mitigation News

By Nadene Wadsworth, State Hazard Mitigation Officer

Montana Pre Disaster Mitigation Plan Status

Updated 1/8/2016



Montana Mitigation Projects



Elevation of the Town of Valier pump house, this project is funded at 75% of the total costs under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.



Replacement of undersized culverts with spanning bridges along Mill Creek in Madison County, this is at Toledo Mine Road. This project is funded at 75% of the total costs under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM) was appropriated \$100 million dollars and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA) was appropriated \$175 million this year. These grants are a nationally competitive grant. The PDM grant is open to any county, tribe, or incorporated community that has a FEMA approved Pre- Disaster Mitigation Plan. The FMA grant is for those individuals that have national flood insurance. Both of these programs must be applied for by a county, tribe, or incorporated community. FEMA generally opens the application period up between March and April. The state will have 90 days to assist with application development.

If you are interested in applying for funds or have questions about the program eligibility or requirements please contact Nadene Wadsworth the Deputy State Hazard Mitigation Officer at (406) 324-4785 or nwadsworth@mt.gov.

Are Your Communities Prepared for Flooding?

By Abbe Boose, Floodsmart



Climate experts are warning residents to prepare for what could be the most historic El Niño on record. Years of drought and [wildfires](#) coupled with predicted heavy rainfall caused by El Niño could result in devastating flooding.

also based on such factors as river flow, topography, and changes due to recent [building and development](#).

To educate members in your community about their flood risk and financial preparedness, FloodSmart—the marketing and education campaign of the National Flood Insurance Program—offers several tools and resources on [FloodSmart.gov](#) that you can use, including:

- The [Cost of Flooding tool](#), which you can embed on your website to illustrate how just a few inches of water can cost tens of thousands of dollars in damage.
- Our [Flood after Fire tool](#) to simulate how fires can increase flood risk.
- [Consumer](#) and [business](#) checklists to share with residents to prepare before the next disaster strikes.
- [Before](#), [during](#), and [after](#) the flood infographics to outline the actions residents can take to stay safe and file a claim.
- [Social media messages](#) that you can share through Facebook and Twitter.



So what does that mean for you and your community? Since there is typically a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance takes effect, now is the time to help property owners better understand their flood risks and the importance of having flood insurance. It only takes one storm or an [early spring thaw](#) to cause devastating flooding.

Properties directly affected by fires and those located downstream of burn areas are at a heightened risk of experiencing a flood. Charred grounds in burn-scarred areas cannot easily absorb water, placing residents at an increased risk for [flash flooding](#) and [mudflows](#). Remind your community that flood risk isn't solely based on flood history—it's

Don't let out of sight mean out of mind. Now is the time to reach out to your community, help residents better understand their flood risk, and encourage them to protect what matters with a flood insurance policy. It's a conversation you won't regret.

State Floodplain Program Staff Announcements

Congratulations!



Steve Story

We would like to congratulate Steve Story, who was recently named Water Operations Bureau Chief! He took over the

position from Laurence Siroky who retired at the end of 2015 after 45 years with the State. We wish Steve the best in his new role!



Ashley Matkin

We extend our congratulations to Ashley, Engineering Specialist out of the Havre Regional Office, and Kurt who

just had a beautiful baby girl. Cassidy Hope Matkin was welcomed into the world on January 18, weighing 7 lb 14 oz and measuring 21" long. Ashley will be on maternity leave for the next several weeks. In the meantime, Sterling Sundheim will be assisting her with some of her duties—thank you, Sterling!



Don Simms

We also extend our congratulations to Don Sims, Cascade County Planner, and his wife on the recent birth of his baby girl!

Welcome!



Breena (Bree) Caldwell

Bree has joined the Water Operations Bureau as an Administrative Assistant at the end of

December, replacing Aspen Bowler. Bree brings 7 years of experience as a state employee and comes to us from the Department of Agriculture. Bree is an alumna of the University of Montana with a B.A. in Anthropology, Cultural Diversity.



Nicole Decker

Nicole joined the WOB's Floodplain Mapping Section as a Civil Engineering Specialist in November,

replacing Scott Pfahler. Nicole will be working on and leading floodplain mapping projects and associated program activities including technical support, training, and outreach. Nicole is a Montana Tech alumna with a M.S. in General Engineering (Civil Option); she has also served as a graduate research assistant for the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology and at Taylor Engineering in Florida.



Ethan Stapp

Ethan was hired at the beginning of the year as a Floodplain Specialist, providing program training and outreach. Ethan

brings 12 years of experience as a state employee and comes to us from the Department of Commerce, Community Development Division in Helena. From 2007 to 2012, Ethan served as the State Land Use Planner in DNRC Trust Lands. Ethan is an alumnus of Rocky Mountain College in Billings and has a Master's degree in Urban Planning from the University of Arizona.



Michelle Phillips

Michelle was also been hired as a Floodplain Specialist at the beginning of the year, serving the Floodplain Community

Assistance Section to provide program support, outreach, and training. Michelle comes to us from Marymount University in Arlington, VA where she worked as a Library Promotions Associate. She is an alumna of Wayne State University in Detroit, MI and has an M.S. in Climate Science and Policy from the Bard Center for Environmental Policy, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY.

A Number to Know



In case of after-hours or weekend emergencies, contact your local Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Coordinator or the State DES Duty Officer.

406-324-4777

They will contact key floodplain and/or dam safety staff and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Persons with disabilities who need an alternative accessible format of this document should contact DNRC public information officer at 406-444-0465.

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In Honor of Mary

The State Floodplain Program would like to dedicate this Highground Newsletter edition to our former colleague, Mary Guokas. Mary served the Floodplain Program as Outreach Specialist for eight years, making friends through the newsletter she created and the conferences and outreach activities in which she participated. Before joining DNRC, Mary spent many years with the National Park Service. She worked in several National Parks throughout her career; however, her favorite assignments were at Many Glacier and Goat Haunt in Glacier National Park.



Mary passed away last September after a long and courageous battle with cancer. We already miss Mary's warm, generous spirit. As we continue our careers and our lives, we will try to do so with the same passion that Mary had, remembering her love for life and for being outdoors.



*Many Glacier,
Glacier National
Park*

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