

## **Project Progress Report**

**Project Title: Glacier National Park Culturally Scarred Tree Study**

**Park: Glacier**

**Funding Source: Rocky Mountains CESU Research Funding; Glacier Fund**

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**University Partner, PI: Salish Kootenai College, Bill Swaney**

**Other Partner, PI: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Historic Preservation Department, Dave Schwab**

### **Project Description:**

#### **Project Progress:**

Prior to field studies the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Preservation Department (TPD) staff reviewed site form information and historical reports provided by Glacier National Park for the previous documentation of culturally scarred trees (CST) in the park. Four areas of the park have been previously identified for containing scarred trees. These areas include Bowman Creek area (24FH213), Covey Homestead (24FH214), Post Office Creek Scarred Trees (24FH215), and the Singer Scarred tree (24FH17). The locations of these previously recorded sites were plotted on project maps and coded into the project GIS. Each of these sites will be revisited, GPS'd and documented in the field under the current project.

On October 19 SKTPD staff Kevin Askan and Dave Schwab accompanied by SKC Student Martin Charlo and UM Student Ira Matt conducted a preliminary survey of the Study area for the North Fork Flathead Scarred tree Study. An initial survey was conducted on two terraces overlooking Big Prairie along the North Fork Flathead River. Survey teams documented four scarred trees in a section of about 1/8 mile distance on a terrace of the North Fork Flathead. None of these trees had been previously documented. All CSTs were individually mapped using GPS and digitally photographed. A series of data categories were collected on each CST and logged into the GPS/GIS to initiate the creation of a Glacier National Park CST database. Database categories include tree species, tree girth, scar height, scar width, scar depth, scar orientation, presence or absence of post-scar cut marks and other observations.

Trees mapped appear to present a roughly linear distribution and may be associated with a clear trail tread observed during survey along the second bench above the North Fork Flathead River. If this patterns remains consistent it will verify earlier work conducted by the TPD on the Lolo Trail showing a strong relationship of scarred trees with

aboriginal trails. The trail tread will be mapped at a later time as part of ongoing research.

Following survey, the team investigated the project area boundaries identifying survey areas and strategies on project maps. A large portion of the southern segment of the study zone, from the park entrance gate south has been altered by recent fires thereby removing old growth trees from the area. The northern segment of the study area around Big Prairie is intact with the highest likelihood for CSTs on the forested second and third benches above the river. Also forest zones bordering the North Fork River in Big Prairie appear to have excellent potential for the presence of undocumented scarred trees.

Current planning is to conduct a 3-day field survey in mid-November, weather permitting. Additional and follow up surveys will be conducted in the spring and early summer of 2005.

### **Project Future**

The planned week-long field trip the week of October 18 was shortened to one day due to a snow storm. It is hoped that the additional field days can be made up later in November. The second planned field survey will occur next spring, thus necessitating a change in the final product delivery dates to the end of the summer 2005.

Bill Swaney of the Salish Kootenai College found no students willing to participate in the week-long field trip. Matt Charlo, an intern in the TPD, is a student at SKC. The park will work with SKC to have Matt Charlo also become a SKC student participant in the project. The TPD also will look at ways to obtain student participation in Pablo-oriented project work items.