



2022 INDUCTEE

ROBERT "BOB" MARSHALL

1901-1939

Bob Marshall, United States Forest Service leader and activist for environmental and social causes, provided the foundation for wilderness protections on nearly 112 million acres in 44 states, including the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana.

Formally designated under the Wilderness Act of 1964, the million-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness Area extends for 60 miles along the Continental Divide, a stretch Bob could likely walk in fewer than two days.

Bob became the chief of forestry in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1933 and then director of Recreation and Lands for the United States Forest Service in 1937. Additionally, he fastened his passion for wilderness to progressive, racially inclusive policies, including a proposal to integrate USFS campgrounds and provide more forest access for urban dwellers.

His biographer, James Glover, asserts that Bob was probably the first high-level official to seriously fight discrimination in USFS policies. At the time, Jim Crow laws were enforced in the South and other states employed informal discrimination policies.

While Bob sowed his appreciation for wild places in his home state of New York, his passion for untrammelled wilderness blossomed in Montana.

From 1925 to 1928, Bob worked at the Northern Rocky Mountain Forest Experiment Station in Missoula. As Bob concentrated on a forest's ability to rebound after a fire, while in Missoula he battled yet another bout of illness in a life-long string of ailments. Still, Bob found time to

experience Montana's wild landscapes. He once covered 288 miles in eight days, taking him from Seeley Lake through lands now at the bottom of Hungry Horse Reservoir.

He'd go on to promote wilderness in popular forestry magazines and associated with some of the most respected wilderness figures of his time. Bob's friendship with Aldo Leopold, Bernard Frank, Benton MacKaye, and Harvey Broome would launch The Wilderness Society in 1935.

Bob, who became independently wealthy upon the passing of his father in 1929, funded the beginning of The Wilderness Society. He wrote the Society's Articles of Incorporation with Frank, MacKay, and Broome.

Historian T. H. Watkins contends that before Bob and The Wilderness Society, there was "no true movement" to preserve the nation's primitive areas. "One could comfortably argue," Watkins writes, "that Robert Marshall was personally responsible for the preservation of more wilderness than any individual in history."

On Nov. 11, 1939, while on an overnight train from Washington D.C. to New York, Bob died of heart failure at age 39.

Bob left most of his considerable estate to The Wilderness Society and various social causes.

More than a year before the United States entered World War II, in an unprecedented decree, the USFS named a wild million-acre expanse in western Montana for Bob Marshall. The announcement remarkably shielded the terrain from mechanized encroachment nearly 25 years before the Wilderness Act of 1964.

