

"Camera Hunting" for Big Game in "Flivverless Forest" Will Attract Many Vacationists to Sun River Canyon



Photo Copyright by Stecker. **CHOTEAU CABINS.** These cabins were erected by big game hunters at the foot of Arsenic mountain, above Medicine Springs.



Photo Copyright by Stecker. **SALMON LAKE.** This lake is said to be a fisherman's paradise. It is five miles long in a bowl at the summit of the Rocky mountains.

CAMERA HUNTING for big game is the new outdoor sport in Montana, to be popularized among tourists who will enter Sun River Canyon. This is the plan fostered by the United States forestry office and the reclamation service, which have supervision over the west canyon area where it is said "you can lose 10,000 people."

Whereas the canyon is known to very few other than big game hunters who go after elk and deer in the late fall, it is to be opened up this year to tourists and Great Falls will be featured in its extensive advertising program inviting tired tourists to the quietude of the nation's most wonderful "flivverless forest."

Big game may be seen in Sun River canyon in its native haunts and a crafty "hunter" may get snapshots at fairly close range of big game at lakes and water holes in a two-day trip into the canyon. The amalgamation of the big pack outfits of the canyon makes possible the exploitation of this forest area as a tourist playground since the organization of the Sun River Big Game Tourist Bureau, which is composed of the oldest and best guides in the canyon makes available ample pack strings and saddle horses to handle all who visit the canyon.

Impossible for Autos. Sun River canyon is designated as "flivverless" since it is possible to go only a short distance into the canyon with a car, proceeding from the Allan camp with saddle horses and pack trains. Owing to the fact that the

national parks are losing their charm, in some cases, because they are made so readily accessible that there is no such thing as quiet and rest in the rush of traffic, the forestry service is hopeful that this canyon can be kept distinctive because of its "exclusiveness."

Guides and others interested are now opposing the plan to have the canyon designated as a national park, since big game hunting would be eliminated. The canyon is the native home of 5,000 elk, uncounted thousands of mountain sheep and goat, also moose, white tail deer, black tail deer, bear, mountain lions and other big game found in such numbers in no other area in the United States. During the past year 50 elk and a few deer were taken out of the canyon showing that the game is anything but "tame."

Yet it is possible to take a camera and go with someone who knows the habits of these animals and get fairly close pictures of herds of from five to 500. During the last winter, William Stecker, artist who lives at the Allan camp, crawled up on a herd of nine bull elk, an unusual number of bulls in a single herd.

An Unusual Week End. It will be possible for tourists who visit Great Falls to spend an unusual week end in the canyon. Driving to the Allan camp on Saturday afternoon, they can spend an enjoyable evening at the camp, where there will be a dance each Saturday night, remaining at the Allan hotel over night. At 9

o'clock Sunday morning the saddle horse train will start up the canyon over the famous "high trail," proceeding to Medicine Springs. The day can be spent at the springs or, after a refreshing bath in the medicinal waters the party can proceed across Sun river and across Bang creek to visit Lang falls, one of the beauty spots of the lower canyon.

This trip will serve to whet the curiosity of the sojourner to see the canyon above the forks of the river, which join at Medicine Springs. Another day added to the trip will make possible a visit to the West Forks licks, where it is possible to see scores of elk and deer.

At one time last spring there were more than 100 elk between the Medicine Springs and Two Shacks but as the green grass appears on the hillsides, the elk work back into the hills and by summer they will be found only on the high reefs or on the licks and water holes. The veteran guides and rangers who know the habits of the animals know the location, as a general rule, of the various herds at all seasons.

Twenty Trips Laid Out. Twenty trips to as many points of interest have been laid out, requiring from three days to eight weeks. The longest trips take the parties to Glacier park, crossing the majestic continental divide, after passing under the great Chinese wall. This great sheer

IF CENTRAL AVENUE, Great Falls, were extended 84 miles to the west it would enter a national forest, in the valley of which 10,000 people could be lost at one time and not one of the number be within seeing or hearing distance of the others. This tremendous valley is known as Sun River canyon and is but three hours' auto ride from this city. It is the home of thousands of wild animals—big game, such as elk, moose, mountain lions, mountain sheep and goats, white tail deer and black tail deer. It is not now, nor is it intended that it ever should be, a national park. It is an area with all the attractions of a national park, but it always will be more "exclusive" because of its size and because it cannot be "toured" with the ease and speed that so many tourists demand. It is expected that the summer of 1921 will see many thousands of visitors in this wonderful canyon.



Photo Copyright by Stecker. **A CATCH FROM SALMON LAKE.** There are 500 miles of fishing streams in Sun River canyon, Lewis and Clark forest, with the finest known fishing in Salmon lake, Wood creek, the head of White river and north fork of the Flathead.

wall is some 80 miles in length and forms an impenetrable barrier, from 300 to 1,000 feet high. At nearly all seasons mountain goat can be seen on narrow ledges at dizzy heights on this wall.

What promises to be one of the most attractive six-day jaunts is the trip to Scapegoat mountain, a climb to an elevation of 9,185 feet. Near the top of this mountain is an unexplored cave. The mouth of the cave is about 20 feet wide, but it narrows down at a distance of about 100 feet back to a small hole which will admit a man's body. There is then a vast room, with a level floor stretching back about 150 feet. The ceiling is so high that no flashlight powerful enough to light up the rocks above has yet been carried into this cave.

The level floor abruptly ends and is a 10-foot jump off into a subterranean lake. None knows its size. As far as a man can throw a rock, there is a response of splashing water. Guides of the canyon are talking of offering a cash prize to the person who will fully explore this lake. It has been proposed that someone taking a folding boat and attempt to explore the inner recesses, with powerful lights. The water is icy cold, placid on the surface and of an unknown depth.

Headquarters of Four Rivers. Scapegoat mountain is one of the wonders of the canyon, an idea of its size being suggested by the fact that it covers an area of 11 sections. Four rivers and 16 creeks head on this mountain flowing four directions, and into the two oceans. The south fork of the Flathead river flows into the Pacific; the south fork of Sun river flows into the Atlantic; the Dearborn river flows east; and the Big Blackfoot river flows southwest. Perhaps more bear and goat can be seen on this mountain than in any other like area in the Rocky mountains.

The trip to Red Shale, a six-day journey, offers the best opportunity to see moose. The trail leads under the Chinese wall at the continental divide, passing the "Three Sisters," and climbing to eternal snow from the "jungles," parties spending a night in camp at an

elevation of 8,000 feet. At the red licks at the head of Hoxsey creek there are always moose, elk, deer, goat and bear.

On several of the three-day trips outlined, it is possible to see moose, which is an unusual sight for the average tourist. Moose are protected by law though poachers have killed two or three during the last four years. During the past elk hunting season, a hunter killed a moose and cut the head off. Carrying the head away from the carcass, the "wise" hunter blazed a trail away from his cache. A game warden happened by, saw the blazed trail and followed to the moose head. The hunter returned for neither the head nor the meat and thereby escaped arrest.

Medicine Springs. The forestry service hopes to capitalize to its fullest extent the magical waters of Medicine springs. Montana Indian lore all points toward the Medicine springs, which were first known to white men on the occasion of the visit of the Lewis and Clark expedition to Montana, when at the site of the city of Great Falls the famous explorers were told of the magic springs from which Sun River took its name. Indian paintings on the cliffs still remain, the testimonial of those who bathed in and drank the curative waters.

These springs flow hot waters of a temperature of about 90 degrees, heavily laden with sulphur. The organized guides of the canyon have built a swimming tank and two small dressing rooms for the accommodation of the visitors this season and plans are afoot to improve these accommodations this year. In addition, there is a natural bath house, under ground. It is entered by climbing down a crude ladder to a room perhaps 15 feet long and 10 feet wide and high enough in places to stand erect. The water bubbles up at one end and forms a "bath tub," about 18 inches deep in the middle. In the coldest weather, the temperature of this cave remains constant.

During the summer of 1817 a man whom the doctors said could not live, as the result of acute kidney trouble, went to the springs as a last resort. He not only drank the water and bathed

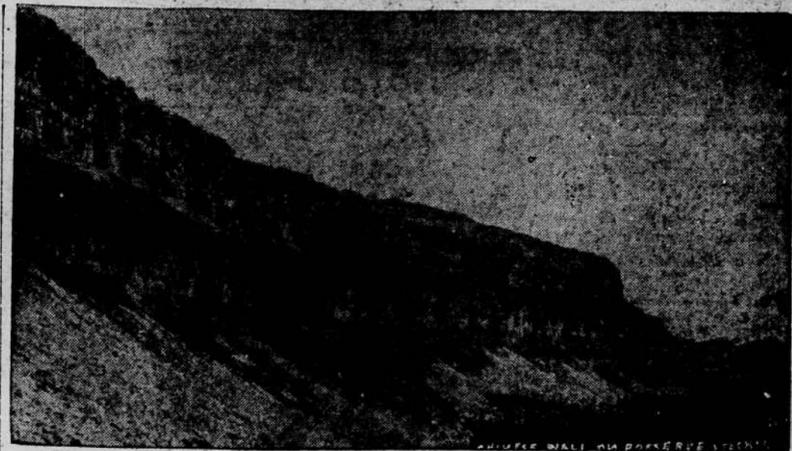


Photo Copyright by Stecker. **THE GREAT CHINESE WALL.** The great wall is an impenetrable barrier along the continental divide, extending up to Glacier park, with a sheer face from 300 to 1,000 feet. It is the home of countless mountain sheep and goats.



Photo Copyright by Stecker. **LANG FALLS.** Lang Falls is one of the beauty spots of Lower Sun River canyon, within a day's saddle horse trip on a route that passes Medicine Springs.

health. Persons suffering from rheumatism have spent a few months at these springs and then utilized their crutches as alpine sticks in mountain climbing.

To Construct Temporary Camps. The construction of temporary camps for the accommodation of tourist visitors will make it possible to remain at the springs for a few weeks, enjoying reasonable camp comforts, during the coming summer.

Of chief interest in Sun River canyon, to sportsmen, is the unexcelled fishing. There are 500 miles of fishing streams in Sun river canyon. The best fishing is across the divide in White river, in Salmon lake and the head of the Flathead. Trout weighing as much as 20 and 25 pounds have been hooked in these waters. One weighing 17 pounds was brought out by William Ferguson of Malta. It is possible to catch enough smaller trout to supply the day's meals in a half hour of morning fishing.

The best short fishing trip is to Wood creek. Elk hunters bring back glowing accounts of trout fishing in Wood creek, each year. This stream is stocked with eastern brook trout, one of the most beautiful species of the trout family. The stream will doubtless be designed as a nursery for the hatching of trout fry for Wood creek is the spawning place of thousands of fish each fall.

An active campaign to keep the streams of the canyon well stocked is to be launched by the forestry department this year. Arrangements have been made for the planting of 20,000 fry this spring, to be furnished by the state hatcheries. The reclamation service planted a few thousand fingerlings in upper Sun river last year.

To Preserve Primaval. The forestry department has adopted a policy looking toward the protection of the wild animal life, safeguarding the trails and maintaining the canyon in primeval wildness. Applications for homesteads in the bottom lands above the forks, which might block the trails have been denied by the forestry and reclamation officials. Cottage sites will be obtainable in the canyon; but only below the forks of Sun river.

The canyon will ultimately offer opportunity for one of the nation's greatest playgrounds, officials believe, summer and winter.

Completion of the new reclamation dam on Beaver creek will mean that the canyon will be flooded up to a point a short distance below the springs, necessitating the construction of a "high trail" from the canyon to the springs. This will be built by the reclamation service. The Allan camp will be flooded, and will doubtless be removed to the springs where a large hotel and resort will be constructed. Boats will be put upon the big lake, as one means of transportation from

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Photo by U. S. Reclamation Service. **SUN RIVER GORGE.**



Photo by U. S. Reclamation Service. **IN SUN RIVER CANYON.**