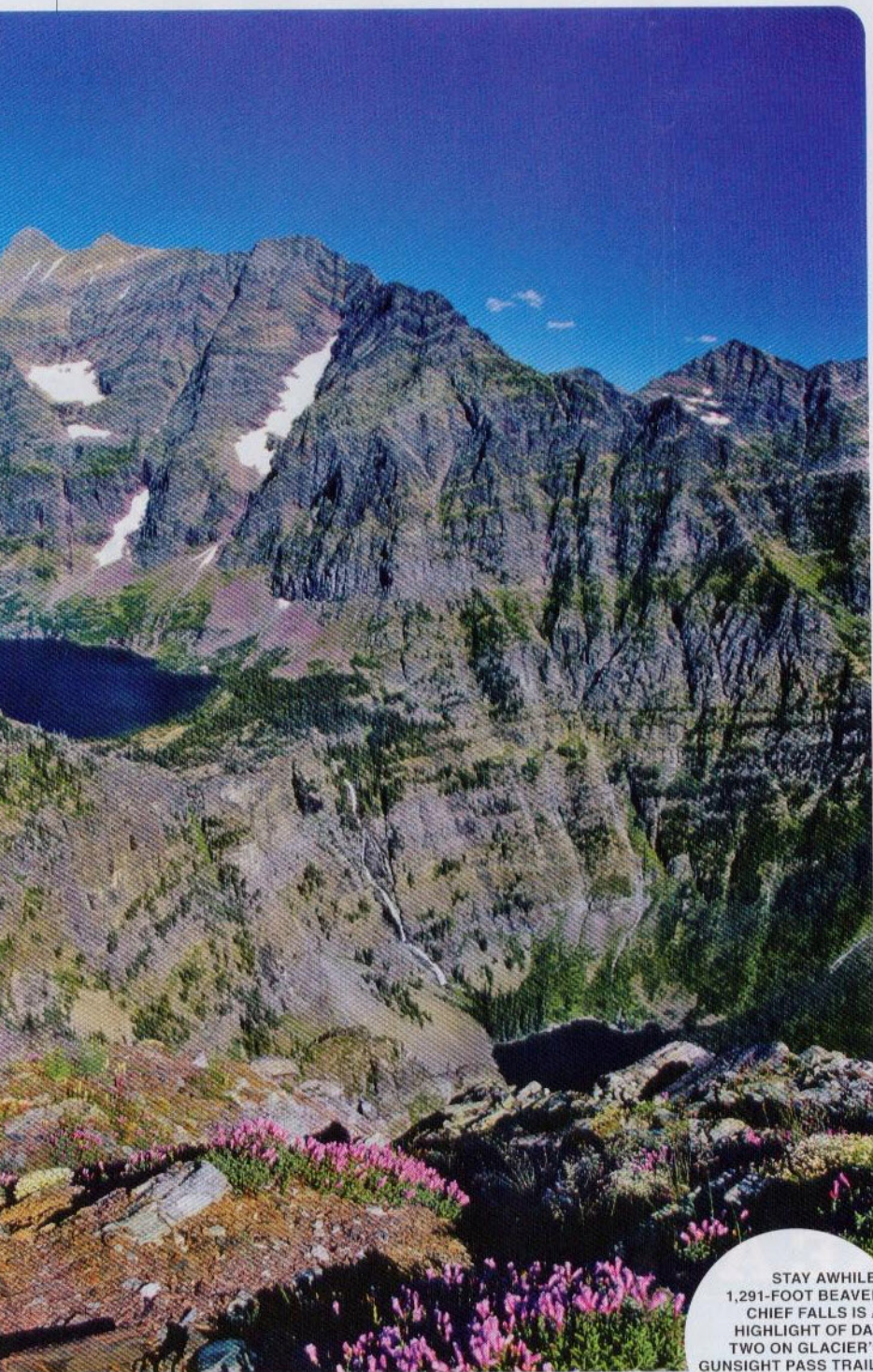


DESTINATIONS: READERS' CHOICE

Mountain West



WEEKEND

Gunsight Pass, Glacier NP

See the park's famed glaciers from a high mountain pass.

"The best view in the park, if not the whole country." That's what Jerry Kessler promises hikers who trek from St. Mary Lake to Lake McDonald via Gunsight Pass.

Day one Begin this 25-miler at the Jackson Glacier Overlook. Follow the Piegian Pass Trail for 1.3 miles, dropping gradually to Reynolds Creek and 30-foot high Deadwood Falls. Turn right onto Gunsight Pass Trail and ascend through moss-covered pines. At four miles, pass Florence Falls Trail and continue toward Gunsight Pass. Reach Gunsight Lake at 6.5 miles and follow the trail along its south shore to see 9,258-foot Gunsight Mountain reflected in its waters. Bounce across a suspension bridge before sweating up 1,600 feet over three miles to 6,946-foot Gunsight Pass. Gape at the Lewis Range to the southeast, but keep an eye on the clouds. If thunderstorms threaten (common in summer after 2 p.m.), duck into the stone hut to wait it out (safety up high is better than the long descent to treeline). Then drop 1,000 feet in one mile to camp at Lake Ellen Wilson (permit required).

Day two Climb to 7,050-foot Lincoln Pass before descending into Glacier Basin; continue to Sperry Chalet at mile two. Grab a bowl of soup at this mountain refuge (\$3, sperrychalet.com) before setting out on the spur trail (.2 mile beyond the dining hall) to the Sperry Glacier Overlook. You'll gain 1,600 feet over 2.5 miles, climbing through rocky cirques and up a narrow stone staircase to Comeau Pass. See the gleaming Sperry Glacier and the milky, opaline lakes it feeds far below. Then retrace your steps and rejoin Gunsight Pass Trail to descend along clear and cold Sprague Creek to Lake McDonald—and complete a 14-mile day.

PLAN IT **Driving** From West Glacier, drive 22 miles east on Going-to-the-Sun Rd. to Jackson Overlook. At Lake McDonald Lodge, catch an Orange or Green shuttle, then transfer to the Red Bus at Logan Pass to return to Jackson. **Permit** Required (\$30, 406-888-5819, nps.gov/glac) **Map and guide** Trails Illustrated Glacier National Park (\$10, natgeo-maps.com); *Hiking Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks*, by Erik Molvar (\$26, falcon.com) **Contact** (406) 888-7800, nps.gov/glac **Trip ID** 39440

STAY AWHILE:
1,291-FOOT BEAVER
CHIEF FALLS IS A
HIGHLIGHT OF DAY
TWO ON GLACIER'S
GUNSLIGHT PASS TRAIL.