

# MONTANA LIFE



PHOTOGRAPHER BRET BOUDA captured this image of Sperry Chalet during a stay there in July 2017, shortly before it burned in the Sprague Fire. Bouda's book, "Sperry Chalet 1914-2017" is being released this week. It chronicles the history of the iconic structure and also of the surrounding back-country in Glacier National Park. (Courtesy Bret Bouda)

## The Sperry experience

### Kalispell photographer releases new book on historic Glacier chalet

By SCOTT SHINDLEDECKER  
Daily Inter Lake

There is no denying the passion Kalispell's Bret Bouda has for Glacier National Park's historic Sperry Chalet.

The Czechoslovakian native is an acclaimed nature photographer who has spent the last several years traipsing across the American West exploring and photographing national parks. He left his homeland in 1981, settling in Germany for several years before coming to the U.S. in 1995.

But for all the places he's been, Glacier is his favorite, and Sperry Chalet holds a special place in his heart. Bouda was there shortly before it burned Aug. 31, 2017 in the Sprague Fire. Only the walls were left standing of the iconic structure that was loved by so many.

The National Park Service has approved a plan to rebuild the Chalet and work is expected to begin in July.

Bouda photographed the chalet area while he was there and those photographs, some of the last likely taken before the devastating blaze, became the inspiration for his latest book, "Sperry Chalet 1914-2017."

It will be released Saturday, June 23, at the reopening of the Mission Mountain Mercantile near Condon on Montana 83. Bouda will be signing copies of his latest book there, beginning at 11 a.m.

Bouda has published several books about Glacier, including "The Era of the Chalets" and "Jammin'-to-the-Sun."

Bouda's warm feelings about the chalet were different before he realized what it truly meant to him and so many others.

"I moved here in 2004 and I didn't get to the chalet until 2007. I was indifferent to it. It was on the back burner for me," Bouda told the Daily Inter Lake in a recent interview.

But once Bouda made the trek to Sperry and the surrounding Comeau Pass area, the love affair began.

"It was a very personal loss for myself," Bouda said. "It's in a strategic place. It gives me the chance to spend two nights there so I can explore the Sperry Glacier, Comeau Pass, the area that to me, is a very magical place. You can see more there in a 2-mile stretch than nearly anywhere in the park."

See SPERRY, C4



ARTISTS BRET BOUDA poses with the photograph that is being used as the cover of his new book, "Sperry Chalet 1914-2017" on June 14 at his home studio in Kalispell. Bouda will also have a book signing on Saturday, June 23, at the Mission Mountain Mercantile in Condon. (Brenda Ahearn/Daily Inter Lake)



BRET BOUDA photographed these mountain goats during one of his hikes in the Comeau Pass area in Glacier National Park. (Courtesy Bret Bouda)



A SIMPLE, but comfortable bedroom at Glacier National Park's Sperry Chalet, which has provided a memorable place for weary hikers and horseback riders for nearly a century. (Courtesy Terry Abell)



KAY LUDING at Glacier National Park's Sperry Chalet. She operated Sperry and the Granite Park Chalet with her husband, Ross, for several decades. (Courtesy Terry Abell)

**'For me and many others, it's one of the most beautiful places on earth.'**

**BRET BOUDA**  
Nature photographer