September 8, 2019

I am writing in regards to the Flathead Comprehensive River Management Plan #56536.

As a long time resident of the West Glacier area, 20+ year raft guide and a new land owner along the Middle Fork Corridor, I honestly feel there needs to a system of some sort in place, but do not feel that limiting the area to a application based permit system would not be in anyway beneficial for locals.

I would not be opposed to a conservation tax that would be imposed for Montana residents, which in turn would allow us to utilize recreation opportunities both on the Middle and North Fork rivers at anytime. This would allow locals to raft/fish the sections through the year and enjoy the area that many of us have grown up in and have worked so hard to purchase property.

I believe that there needs to be a system in place that helps to monitor river users in terms of the lengths of stays at camping areas (on river and river access points), requiring fire pans on overnight trips, portable toilet system usage and over all usage of parking areas. These areas do not have an effective management system, with the small amount of employees that monitor the river system including all access points. Pit toilets, parking lots and river ramps are in poor conditions and do not seem to be a priority, which needs to change greatly to increase responsible river management use.

I have a hard time seeing how the forest service is going to manage a new plan, when the management currently cannot handle what is already in place. The current management of river access points needs to be addressed and monitored with a lot more diligence to help recreation and commercial boaters.

I do not support a permit system that would require locals to apply for river usage in a lottery-based system. A main reason a lot of us live in the area it to access the recreational opportunities and enjoy the benefits of the wilderness areas in our backyard.

Please consider your local residents in regards to the river management policy.

I appreciate the time you have taken to read my comments and concerns.

Thank you,

Amy Bartels