

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

I think many of us would agree that being able to utilize the Flathead River freely and without having a permit is ideal. Many of us choose to live in the area for the plentiful and easy access to recreational opportunities. That is one of the things my husband, close friends and I value. We created an annual multi-day float trip on the North Fork of the Flathead that we all commit to each summer. It's one of the highlights of our summer along with occasional day trips where we float and fish. This summer we chose to float a weekend in late July and I was surprised at how many people were *not* on the river. We had an incredibly quiet and peaceful weekend. I think that requiring a permitting system at this point is premature.

It's very apparent that the area is growing and more people are wanting that wild and scenic experience. If regulation becomes necessary in order to keep the area wild, scenic, and support a healthy ecosystem, I would not be opposed to an annual fee or county tax that would allow local residents to utilize the Flathead River on their own timeline yet limit those from out of the area to a higher fee and more regulatory permitting system. With this fee or tax, one could be issued an adhesive sticker for their flotation device allowing access to the river.

I would love to continue this tradition of floating with family and friends without restriction or overbearing regulation. I think it's an important and valuable aspect to our quality of life and it provides an opportunity to teach our kids, the future generations, how to appropriately engage in and with nature.