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Comments: To whom it may concern:

I am writing to register comment on the river management plan released this past month. As a frequent visitor to the Flathead National Forest via foot, ski, and packraft, and author of the first and only guidebook on packrafting the Crown ecosystem, I consider myself knowledgeable about certain aspects of packrafting in the Flathead National Forest which may prove salient to the implementation of the management plan.

While the bulk of wilderness packrafting traffic will likely take place on practiced and convenient routes, the nature of packrafting lends itself to diverse and unexpected route options. Hiking up from and then floating back to the Mid Creek gorge TH on the South Fork will always be popular, as will hiking in either Granite Creek or Morrison Creek and floating to Bear Creek on the Middle Fork. Most users on the North Fork will use the west side road for access, but a few will hike in from either Boulder Pass or the Ten Lakes to start their floats. My hope is that any permit system for these rivers, the wilderness ones especially, will allow for reasonable convenience with alternate routes and especially start points for the floating parts of trips which are not used by other visitors, and might not have something like a permit kiosk.

I also hope that the river plan, and management plan generally, will take into account packrafting float traffic on major tributaries. Having floated all of them on all 3 Forks of the Flathead, I would suggest that the need for high enough volume of water and low enough volume of wood will most likely limit these to a fairly small list, foremost among them the White River, Youngs and Danaher Creeks.

If I can be of further assistance in the planning process it would be my pleasure.