Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 4:44:54 AM
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Comments: The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is more than 1.5 million acres of Wilderness with some of the best habitat for native wildlife such as grizzly bears, Canada lynx, wolverine, elk, gray wolves, moose, black bears, mountain lions, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep. The Bob Marshall Wilderness holds the distinction of being one of the original 54 Wilderness areas designated with the passage of the Wilderness Act 60 years ago!

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex has a long history of outfitting and guiding, and many outfitters there have been great supporters of protecting these Wildernesses. But, outfitting and camps have impacts which are often glossed over or overlooked, including Wilderness trails so heavily used by pack animals that they more resemble roads than foot or horse trails, and outfitter campsites in Wilderness that are allowed to have structures like tent frames, corrals, and hitching posts. All of these outfitter impacts are exacerbated by the extraordinarily large people and pack stock party sizes allowed in the Wildernesses.

Now the Forest Service proposes to renew 62 special use outfitter permits that will be in place for at least a decade, without disclosing the impacts from these commercial operations. The agency's scoping letter lacks important information, such as annual inspections and public complaints, and on top of that, the agency proposes to approve the renewals with a Categorical Exclusion (CE), rather than go through a more rigorous environmental review. STOP those renewals . It is far more important to protect the wilderness from the destruction that is inevitable from those permits.