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Title:

Comments: Comment #1: This may be included in the EA, but I would like to see a timeline of proposed actions and when they will be enforced from the time of the signed EA/FONSI. Some actions can be completed or enforced right away, such as the use of fire pans, human waste rules, prohibiting dogs below Bear Creek, and vehicle camping restrictions.

Comment #2: Prohibiting vehicles from parking on gravel bars - I agree with this proposed action at most of the launch sites. However, at Paola there is very limited parking, and we often must park on the gravel bar. If parking there will be prohibited, I believe the FS should expand the parking area prior to enforcing this action. I agree motor vehicle camping should be prohibited, as it often restricts access for launching rafts at this site. The east side of Blankenship bridge also has limited parking with the amount of use that it receives. I understand there is no room to expand the launch area for easier user turn around. It would be beneficial to improve the two-track access on the southwest side of the bridge, both for user access and spreading out the number of vehicles using the launch.

Comment #3: If you are going to prohibit vehicle camping on the gravel bar at Blankenship, it either needs to be strictly enforced or the FS should create an improved official camping area on that side.

Comment #4: I would like to see installation of a vault toilet at the Essex launch part of the proposed action. A porta-potty has been there for years and sees frequent use. A vault toilet would be cleaner and require far less maintenance over the long-term.

Comment #5: There is no explanation of how the permit system will be utilized, but I have heard it will be an online system. We often don't know exactly what stretch of river we will be floating until we are leaving each day or when we meet up with others. I think the FS should have both an online system as well as install kiosks at river launch locations (similar to FS campground pay boxes or block management sign-in boxes). I think the FS would receive more accurate survey data by providing both options.

Comment #6: I would like to see a warning sign installed on the North Fork before the 'Shelf' for safety. New users of the North Fork are often unaware of the rapid called 'the shelf'. It would be beneficial to install some sort of signage either on the riverbank prior to the shelf or even at the upstream launches. Search and rescue is called to this site multiple times a year because of unaware floaters.

Comment #7: "Middle Fork Wild: No more than 3 boats per day passing the Bear Creek monitoring site, during 60% of the days monitored, in 3 out of 5 every 5 years."

-I would like to see this metric changed to # of parties per day and increased in allowable use. Schafer Meadows trips often consist of groups of 3-10 people, often for safety purposes. Many people take pack rafts down this stretch with a party of 2-3 boats. For example, when we floated Schafer to Bear Creek a couple of years ago, we put on and took off on the same days as two other parties. Our party consisted of 3 inflatable kayaks. One other party consisted of 3 rafts and two pack rafts. The third party consisted of 2 rafts. This would far surpass the trigger of 3 boats per day.