

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/30/2025 1:05:02 PM

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Comments: Protect Wilderness and wildlife in the Flathead Wild and Scenic River corridor. Habitat protection on the Flathead River is not something that can wait, and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex deserves immediate action in order to preserve the wild. The Forest Service needs more scientific data informing user capacity numbers. Immediate action is critical to address wildlife displacement in Wilderness caused by current recreation numbers. Immediate action is needed to reduce impacts to the Middle Fork of the Flathead caused by flights in and out of Schafer airstrip in the Great Bear Wilderness. The vast majority of use on the wild rivers should be allocated to public use, and commercial outfitting and guiding should be limited to only the level that is "necessary and "proper" as required by the Wilderness Act. Data collection and analysis needs to include the entirety of the Flathead River corridor, one-quarter mile to either side of the river. Immediate action is needed to bring the impacts along the South Fork of the Flathead into compliance with the area's Wilderness Management Plan. If the Forest Service is truly interested in preserving the health of the Flathead River system, the agency should take this opportunity to research the impacts recreation is already having on Wilderness and wildlife, and act quickly to address the problems. For the sake of the Wilderness and its wildlife, limitations on current uses should be considered, and an analysis of impacts should expand beyond the river to include the entire corridor a quarter-mile on both sides of the river. Whether it is boats, planes, pack stock, or hikers, excessive recreation use will inevitably harm habitat and displace animals that rely on Wilderness in a world growing increasingly claustrophobic.

In just one example, the airstrip in Schafer Meadows results in multiple daily flights over the Middle Fork of the Flathead in the Great Bear Wilderness. One can only imagine the impact a busy flight pattern is having on wildlife in the Great Bear Wilderness!

PLEASE CONSIDER OUR WILDLIFE, WE ARE LOSING WILDLIFE LIKE NEVER BEFORE IN HISTORY!