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Comments: The Flathead Comprehensive River Management Plan proposes a number of good actions, including: prohibiting parking and car camping on gravel bars; requiring containment of human waste within 200 feet of the river's edge; prohibiting drones; requiring a fire pan or blanket for campfires within or above the highwater mark; and noise level and group size limits. But the Plan also falls short in a number of areas.

The agency lists user capacity numbers, but provides no information on how these numbers were reached or data to show the actual user limit when considering the well-being of fish and wildlife and the experiences of other wilderness visitors. The Forest Service needs more scientific data informing user capacity numbers. And data collection and analysis need to include the entirety of the Flathead River corridor, one-quarter mile to either side of the river.

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. 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. And immediate action is needed to bring the impacts along the South Fork of the Flathead into compliance with the area's Wilderness Management Plan.

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.

While I am grateful that the Forest Service has taken steps toward limiting impacts and gathering data regarding recreation overuse, if it 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.

Thank you.