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Comments: Habitat protection on the Flathead River cannot wait. Immediate action is needed in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in order to preserve the wild. Excessive recreation use inevitably harms habitat and displaces animals that rely on Wilderness in a world growing increasingly claustrophobic.

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex is one of the flagship Wilderness areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System-the 3% of land in the Lower 48 where native wildlife can still find refuge from the pressures of ever-expanding human civilization.

Protecting the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex begins with understanding the important effect recreation is already having on Wilderness and wildlife. To do so, the Forest Service must acquire complete scientific data informing user capacity (boats, planes, pack stock, hikers) in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex -- collected and analyzed on the entirety of the Flathead River corridor, one-quarter mile to either side of the river.

Immediate action is needed to:

- *Align current recreation use along the South Fork of the Flathead with the area's Wilderness Management Plan.

- *Prevent wildlife displacement in Wilderness by modifying current recreation activity. For example, prevent the negative effects of a busy flight pattern on the wildlife and biodiversity of the Middle Fork of the Flathead in the Great Bear Wilderness by curtailing flyovers from the airstrip in Schafer Meadows.

- *Allocate the vast majority of use on the wild rivers to the public, and limit commercial outfitting and guiding to only a level that is "necessary and proper" as required by the Wilderness Act.