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Comments: Proposing new regulations is a start, but the Forest Service's proposed actions fall far short, failing to acknowledge current recreation impacts or address the significant threats to Wilderness already occurring in one of America's preeminent wild places.

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.

In addition, the document also fails to provide information on impacts to Wilderness due to current recreation use, including the displacement of wildlife and waterfowl caused by rampant overuse, such as the endless stream of outfitting and guide services profiting from tours through the river corridor, and low-flying aircraft overhead. 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.

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex stands as 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. 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.

While I commend the Forest Service for taking 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. 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.

Public use only should be the norm, and only outfitting and guiding that is necessary and proper should be utilized. More scientific data about capacity numbers, as well as analysis for the entirety of the Flathead River Corridor should be done. Wildlife displacement because of recreation is an issue here, including flights in and out of the Schafer airstrip, so please keep this in mind.

Thank you for your time and consideration.