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Organization:

Title:

Comments: February 3, 2025

Anthony Botello

Flathead Forest Supervisor

650 Wolfpack Way

Kalispell, MT 59901

Re: Comments on the Comprehensive River Management Plan Proposed Action

Dear Supervisor Botello;

Please accept these comments on your Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) Proposed Action (PA) into the public record.

I am surprised and disappointed to be informed that after beginning to put a comprehensive river management plan together in the 1980's there is not a completed plan in 2025 after over 40 years. I am happy to know that the forest service is in process now to complete a plan for the Flathead Rivers. I understand there had been limited data gathering over the decades, so it may be difficult to monitor the degradation and losses in the river corridor and surrounds from how the river may have been in the 1980's.

Below are some points that I would like to see addressed in the CRMP.

Make local indigenous/tribal voices, considerations and historic use a mandatory part of the plan.

Provide transparency in data and methods used to write the CRMP and future data collection intentions to the public.

Be committed to wildlife concerns regarding habitat degradation and renewal.

Please limit outfitting access in favor of resource quality.

Be diligent and close areas that need habitat restoration while the CRMP is being finished or plans implemented.

Design a system of accountability to those user groups that disregard the rules for protecting our wild and scenic rivers while using the areas for their personal recreation or their for profit business.

I like some of the action steps outlines thus far.

For instance requiring a free river use permit for floaters to begin data collecting river corridor use.

I also appreciate the fire ring proposal for camp fire use while camping.

The proposal to ban motor vehicles from gravel bars or other surfaces along the river is wonderful. I remember the confluence of the Middle Fork and the North Fork during the pandemic years. That was a mess and the people in those vehicles left a mess.

The noise level limitation to not exceed 60 decibels at 50 feet is a good addition. One of the best things about wilderness camping is the silence which allows for the sounds natural to the wilderness to be heard and enjoyed.

Please remember the future generations of possible users of the wilderness areas. There may be some grumbling now with enforcement of protection of the land and water by user groups, but those people in the future will greatly appreciate the areas we protect now.

Sincerely,

Cary Saunders

Kalispell, MT

