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Title:

Comments: Human Waster Containment: Please consider making human waste management a priority on the three forks of the flathead. Are there any other rivers in the lower 48 that do not require the use of groovers or similar waste management systems? If we are the exception, why is this so? I think it is clear what the boating community and river managers across the country feel about this practice, and I am personally shocked that it is taking so long for us to follow suite. I think many local boaters would be willing to adapt to such management changes, and I know that some visiting boaters are surprised that we don't already require more strict human waste management.

In regard to the above and other stewardship practices. I would like to see businesses that profit from use and enjoyment of the river held to a higher standard of stewardship with stricter rules in place regarding their potential impacts. Especially in the Wild sections of the South and Middle Forks. Outfitters and other commercial boating businesses are contributing to the impact and degradation of ORVs within the river corridor and the adjacent uplands, which is arguably no different than the publics impact, however the public is not profiting off of the resource. I think outfitters have a unique opportunity to set an example for the general public by upholding a golden standard of WSR stewardship. These groups ought to be mandated to carry and use human waste containment systems on all stretches and all forks of the Flathead. They also ought to be required to participate in invasive plant suppression and management, among other projects that help maintain/restore the ORVs.

I am glad to see that we are giving consideration of dog's impact to wildlife in the section of the Middle Fork between Bear Creek and Essex. To be thorough and consistent with this practice, I think we also ought to be prohibiting dogs between Paola and Cascadilla. There are equally well established and known salt licks being used by goats on this section of the Middle Fork as well.

Lastly, I'd really like to see some concerns addressed around camping and human waste at Saunderson Meadow. The camping opportunities at this site are outstanding and the scenery at this location is arguably as good as it gets on the North Fork of the Flathead. From June-October, it is has become increasingly rare to ever find a night at this location where your group is the only group using one of the many dispersed campsites at the Saunderson Meadow area. And yet there is disappointingly not a single vault toilet present anywhere on site. The result has been thousands of surface waste and cat holes littering the outskirts of this remarkable site. Despite there not being a boat ramp available here, it has not deterred users from utilizing this area as one of the primary river access points along the North Fork MU1. My recommendation would be to install two vault toilets that could be centrally located on the two main dispersed camping areas, and to consider some special camping regulations for the site from stay limits to vehicle size/trailer restrictions etc. I have slowly seen this site increase in popularity over the years, and I would like to see some management that will help maintain and preserve its incredible beauty.

Thanks for your consideration of my comments. May we always do what's best for the river, even when our own interests are at stake.

Jackson