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Title:

Comments: Thank you for developing this proposed action plan for the three forks of the Flathead River, a locally cherished waterway. As someone who lives in the region, I believe it is important to continue protecting this resource while enabling local ways of life and recreation to continue in partnership with management actions. I support a free float permit. However, I believe the system should still enable locals from nearby communities to get off of work in the afternoon and be able to get a same-day permit and float without excessive hardship or planning. Part of the joy of living in East Glacier is the river access and the ability to go on a quick float without planning the trip too far in advance. An online system with day-of permits could support the local ways of life while providing management with usage data. I support the decision to manage waste pack-out and fire pan usage. As a pack rafter, I hope the management plans distinguish between a small party of pack rafters versus large raft groups and outfitters, enabling flexibility in the size of fire pans and waste management systems suitable for pack rafts. As someone who has floated the middle fork from Bear Creek to Essex frequently in the summers, I would like more transparency on how USFS determines user capacities. I have rarely experienced a crowded river in this section, and small quotas should not prohibit locals from recreating and ethical use. Outfitters who frequently bring large groups onto the river, should be managed differently than private paddlers who live in the region.