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First name: James

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

I am a fly fisherman that uses the SouthFork of the Flathead River. I have both backpacked along the trail system and wade-fished, as well as packed in and floated and fished down the river in a lightweight (less than 10 lbs. total gear) pack-raft. The fishing when floating was always stopped and out of the pack-raft. I have fished the SouthFork every year for the past 10 years, and enjoy the ruggedness of this wild-and-scenic river. My party is always very conscientious about carrying out trash, hanging food, burying human waste well away from any campsite, and well away from the river. We practice low-impact on the environment, and treasure this great resource.

I am in support of free, mandatory float permits to help the US Forest Service monitor the number of visitors, and improve visitor use data without restricting access. I am also in favor of packing out waste, as well as firepan requirements to protect water quality and the environment, with waste containment systems suitable for pack-rafters.

I support increased visitor experience monitoring to track usage and river conditions. I typically will go for 10 days from the confluence to the Mid Creek takeout, usually within some period 13 July - 7 August. I have never experienced any river congestion during our 10 days out in these past 10 years.

I would greatly appreciate knowing user capacities are determined and how private user input is being considered. Finally, I would like to know how the US Forest Service will consider private paddlers differently from outfitters.

Thank you for your consideration.