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Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the maintenance of the free, mandatory float permits for those wishing to experience the Flathead River on any fork- without access restrictions. As a former whitewater kayaker who has moved to the low impact and versatile sport of Packrafting, my self planned and organized South Fork trip in July 2024 was life changing for all involved. From getting to hold my first massive bull trout, to watching a group of couples transform into a cohesive group over the love and spectacle that is this river system- it has changed left a lasting impact on our lives. I want that to be possible for generations to come.

To allow for this precious resource to continue unfettered. I agree that waste pack out is the only way, and fire pan requirements will also go a long way to leaving as little trace as possible. However, there should exist flexibility in sizes to accommodate packrafters that allows for safe packing in and out. I am all for increased tracking of use by private and commercial groups to help inform best practices moving forward, but as one of the last unrestricted access drainages in the lower 48, everything should be done so that such a status can be protected.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Best,

Dylan Markey, MD