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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for the Flathead Wild and Scenic River System. As a responsible paddler and advocate for sustainable recreation, I strongly support preserving the unique wilderness character of the Flathead River while ensuring reasonable access for all users, particularly those with minimal environmental impact.

Packrafting's Low Impact: Unlike larger rafts with heavy frames and gear, packrafts are lightweight, self-contained, and leave little trace on the river or its shores. The CRMP should explicitly recognize packrafting as a low-impact activity and consider this distinction when determining user capacities and access regulations.

Free, Mandatory Float Permits: I support the use of free, mandatory float permits as a means of gathering visitor data, provided they are not used to unnecessarily restrict access for small, low-impact groups such as packrafters.

Flexible Firepan & Waste Containment Requirements: While I agree with responsible waste disposal and fire management, I urge the Forest Service to allow flexibility in firepan and waste containment systems that are practical for packrafters, who often travel with ultralight gear.

Visitor Monitoring & Capacity Transparency: I support increased monitoring of river use and ecological impacts but request greater transparency in how user capacities are determined. Any restrictions should be based on clear, scientific data rather than arbitrary limitations.

Private Paddler vs. Outfitter Management: The plan should clarify how private paddlers are managed differently from outfitters to ensure fair access for independent river users.

The Flathead River is a cherished resource, and I appreciate efforts to balance conservation with recreational access. I encourage the Forest Service to consider the unique nature of packrafting when finalizing this management plan.

Sincerely,

Marcus K. Robinson