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Comments: I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed Granite Moccasin Project and the forthcoming environmental assessment (EA). The project area includes inventoried roadless areas, the Slippery Bill-Puzzle Recommended Wilderness Area, and the Middle Fork of the Flathead Wild and Scenic River Corridor-landscapes that are nationally significant for their wilderness character, ecological integrity, wildlife habitat, and recreational value.

Given the sensitivity and importance of these areas, it is critical that the Forest Service design the EA with exceptional care, grounding its analysis in the best available scientific evidence and prioritizing the conservation of wilderness and roadless characteristics. Management actions in these landscapes should be guided by a clear understanding of how logging, road construction, utility corridor expansion, fuels treatments, and restoration activities may affect wilderness character, habitat connectivity, natural disturbance regimes, and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

I urge the Forest Service to ensure that the EA rigorously evaluates both direct and cumulative impacts of the proposed actions, particularly within IRAs, the recommended wilderness area, and the Wild and Scenic River Corridor. This includes careful consideration of whether commercial logging, new road construction, and utility corridor expansion are necessary to achieve project objectives, or whether less intrusive alternatives could better meet ecological goals while minimizing long-term impacts to undeveloped landscapes. Thank you for choosing to solicit public comment although it is no longer required by law.