



Flathead National Forest

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Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>

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News Release

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National Forest Surveys October 1st through September 30th, 2015

KALISPELL, MONT. – You may see more Forest Service and contract employees working in developed and dispersed recreation sites and along Forest Service roads on the Flathead National Forest. They will be wearing bright orange vests and be near a sign that says “Traffic Survey Ahead”. These folks may be out in all kinds of adverse weather conditions. The surveyors are waiting to talk to you, so please pull over for an interview. These well trained interviewers want to know about your visit to the national forest. All information you give is confidential and the survey is voluntary.

This on-going national forest survey has already been conducted once on every National Forest in the country. We are now returning five years later to update the information previously gathered as well as to look at recreation trends over time. The information is useful for forest planning and even local community tourism planning. It provides the National Forest managers with an estimate of how many people actually recreate on federal lands and what activities they engage in while there. Other important information forest and tourism planners need includes how satisfied people were with their visit and the economic impact of your recreation visit on the local economy.

This recreation visitor program gathers basic visitor information. All responses are totally confidential, in fact a person’s name is never written anywhere on the survey. The basic interview lasts about 8 minutes. Every other visitor is asked a few additional questions which may take an additional 5 minutes. The questions visitors are asked include: where they recreated on the Forest, how many people they traveled with, how long they were on the Forest, what other recreation sites they visited while on the Forest, and how satisfied they were with the facilities and services provided. About a third of the visitors will be asked to complete a confidential survey on recreation spending during their trip.

Information collected in this national study will be used in local Forest planning, at the state planning level, and even by Congress. The more they know about the visitors, especially their satisfaction and desires, the better managers can provide for their needs. The survey takes place from October 1st, 2014 through September 30th, 2015.

Although the survey is entirely voluntary, we greatly appreciate it if visitors would pull up and answer a few questions. It’s important for the surveyors to talk with local people using the forest as well as out-of-area visitors so all types of visitors are represented in the study. Even if you answered the survey questions once already, we would like to talk to you about each of your national forest visits, so if you see us out there again, please stop for another interview. If you have any questions about this program you can visit our web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum>.

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