

Wild & Scenic Rivers, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and Recommended Wilderness

September 26th, 2013

Field Trip Agenda

- 0800 Leave fairgrounds in Kalispell
- 0830 Meet at Super 1 parking lot in Columbia Falls (NW corner of parking lot)
- 0930 - **Stop 1: Big Creek Boat Launch** (North Fork residents can meet here)
1045 Introductions & expectations of field trip
75 min
- Topics: Wild & Scenic River Overview
 Condition & trends of the North and Middle Fork
 Condition & trends of the South Fork
 Wild & Scenic River eligibility process
- 1145- **LUNCH – Polebridge Mercantile**
1230 Bring your lunch (food will be available for purchase)
45 min
- 1300- **Stop 2: NF Community Center/Sonderson Hall**
1445
1 hr 45 min Topics: Conditions & trends of Inventoried Roadless Areas
 Assessing Potential Wilderness
 Overview of the 2006 wilderness evaluations process
 Upcoming 2013 wilderness evaluation
 Wilderness overview
 Recommended wilderness discussion
- 1600 Return to Super 1 Store in Columbia Falls
- 1630 Arrive at fairgrounds in Kalispell

Flathead National Forest Plan Revision

The Flathead National Forest is beginning the first phase of a multi-year planning process to revise the Forest Plan. The intent of the planning framework is to create a responsive planning process that informs integrated resources management and allows the Forest Service to adapt to changing conditions, including climate change, and improve management based on new information and monitoring. The planning process will consist of the following three phases:

- 1. Assessment.** The assessment rapidly evaluates existing information about relevant ecological, economic, and social conditions, trends, and sustainability and their relationship to the land management plan within the context of the broader landscape.
- 2. Revision.** The plan revision will be based on the identification of the need to change from the assessment. The plan revision will include development of a proposed plan, consideration of the environmental effects of the proposal, providing an opportunity to comment on the proposed plan, providing an opportunity to object before the proposal is approved, and, finally, approval of the plan revision.
- 3. Monitoring.** Monitoring is continuous and provides feedback for the planning cycle by testing relevant assumptions, tracking relevant conditions over time, and measuring management effectiveness.

Assessment

The Flathead National Forest is working on phase I – the assessment. The assessment is not a decision making document but provides current information on select topics relevant to the plan area. The assessment contributes to the planning process as follows:

- Informs the development of plan components and other plan content, including desired conditions, objectives, standards, guidelines, and suitability of lands.
- Identifies and evaluates a solid base of existing information relevant to the plan revision.
- Builds a common understanding of that information with the public and other interested parties before starting plan revision.
- Develops relationships with interested parties, government entities, tribes, private landowners, and other partners.
- Develops an understanding of the complex topics across landscapes that are relevant to planning on the forest.

In the assessment for plan development or revision, the responsible official shall identify and evaluate existing information relevant to the plan area for the following:

1. Terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and watersheds
2. Air, soil, and water resources and quality
3. System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, and climate change; and the ability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on the plan area to adapt to change
4. Baseline assessment of carbon stocks

5. Threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, and potential species of conservation concern present in the plan area
6. Social, cultural, and economic conditions
7. Benefits people obtain from the planning area (ecosystem services)
8. Multiple uses and their contributions to local, regional, and national economies
9. Recreation settings, opportunities and access, and scenic character
10. Renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources
11. Infrastructure, such as recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors
12. Areas of tribal importance
13. Cultural and historical resources and uses
14. Land status and ownership, use, and access patterns; and
15. Existing designated areas located in the plan area including wilderness and wild and scenic rivers and potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas.

Multiple uses and ecosystem services

The assessment will identify and evaluate existing information relevant to multiple uses and the benefits that people obtain (ecosystem services) from the Flathead National Forest. The following **multiple uses** and their trends will be discussed in the assessment: outdoor recreation, scenery, range, timber, watershed, fish and wildlife, energy and minerals.

Ecosystem services are benefits people obtain from ecosystems, including:

1. Provisioning services, such as clean air and fresh water, energy, food, fuel, forage, wood products or fiber, and minerals;
2. Regulating services, such as long term storage of carbon; climate regulation; water filtration, purification and storage; soil stabilization; flood and drought control; and disease regulation;
3. Supporting service, such as pollination, seed dispersal, soil formation, and nutrient cycling; and
4. Cultural services, such as educational, aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural heritage values, recreational experiences, and tourism opportunities.

In addition to the multiple uses that are listed above, the Flathead National Forest has identified the following **key ecosystem services** that will be addressed in the assessment:

- Forest products
- Water (water quality-clean drinking water)
- Clean air
- Wildlife & fish (the full complement of native species—non-consumptive, addressed by ecosystem integrity inspiration and non-use values (spiritual, solitude)
- Cultural services (cultural heritage, research and education
- Regulating services (flood control, climate regulation/carbon sequestration)

1. Flathead National Forest Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Flathead National Forest (FNF) has one designated Wild & Scenic River (WSR), the Flathead River, that has three forks – the South Fork, Middle Fork and North Fork that were designated by Congress in 1976 for a total of 219 miles. The FNF cooperatively manage the North Fork and portions of the Middle Fork of the Flathead with Glacier National Park; Flathead National Forest is the lead management agency.

There are three types of WSR classification – wild, scenic, and recreation. Management of the WSR is dependent on what classification it is and why it was designated (what is/are the outstanding remarkable values it was designated for).

For wild and scenic rivers, the designated management boundaries generally average one-quarter mile on either bank in the lower 48 states. The purpose of this one-quarter mile management corridor is to protect river-related values. River segments are classified as *wild*, *scenic*, or *recreational*.

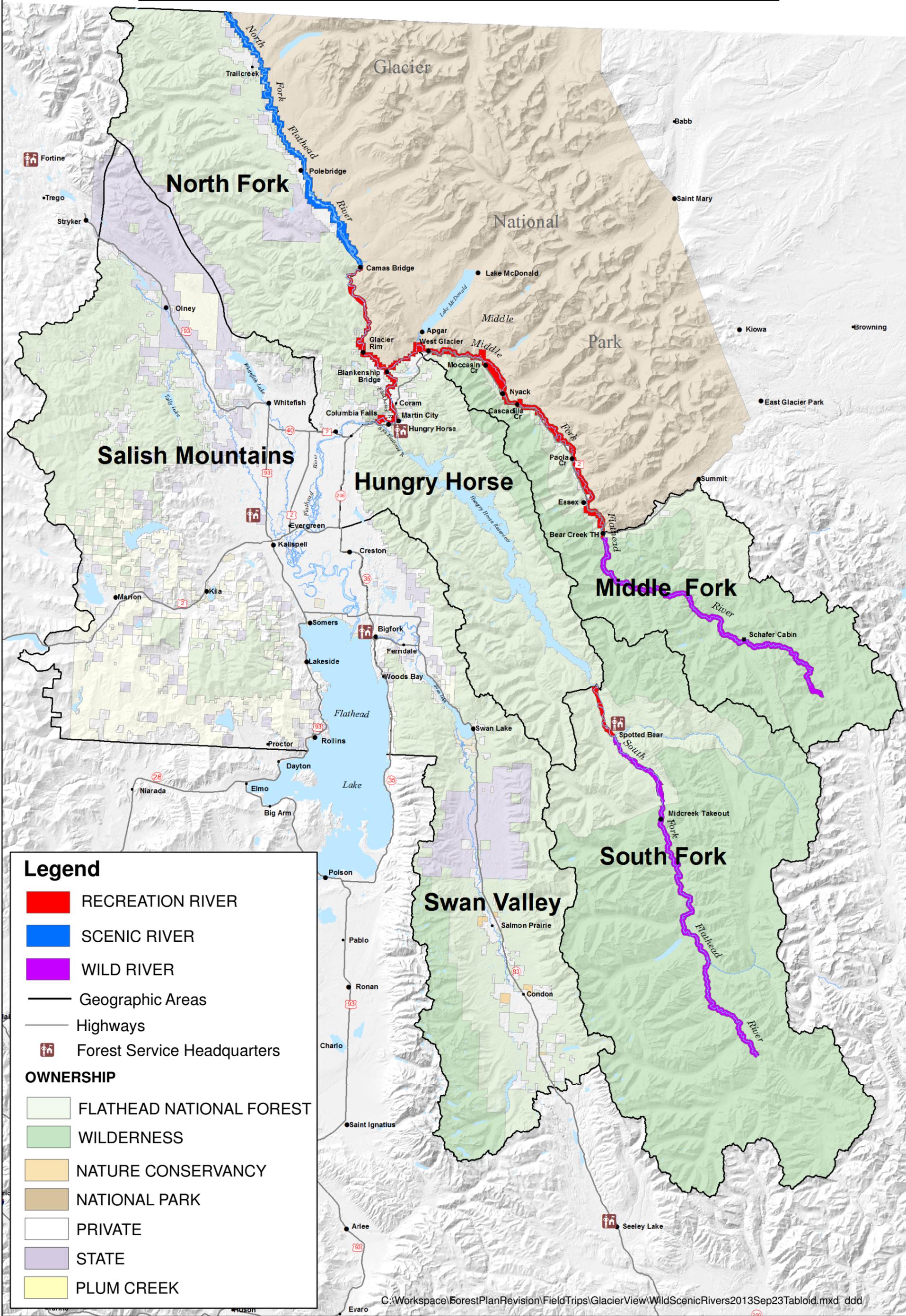


- **Wild River Areas** – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.
- **Scenic River Areas** – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
- **Recreational River Areas** – Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

Each river in the National System is administered with the goal of protecting and enhancing the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) for which it was designated. Recreation, agricultural practices, transportation development, and other uses may generally continue after designation.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER CORRIDORS

Flathead National Forest



Legend

- RECREATION RIVER
- SCENIC RIVER
- WILD RIVER
- Geographic Areas
- Highways
- Forest Service Headquarters

OWNERSHIP

- FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST
- WILDERNESS
- NATURE CONSERVANCY
- NATIONAL PARK
- PRIVATE
- STATE
- PLUM CREEK

North Fork of the Flathead River

Upper North Fork Segment

US/Canada border to Camas Bridge: This segment of the North Fork River is mostly classified as a *scenic river* and is about 37 miles long. The outstanding remarkable values for this segment are: fisheries, geologic, water quality, wildlife, botanic, recreation, scenic, historic and ethnographic.



Management

The North Fork of the Flathead is cooperatively managed with Glacier National Park. Motorized use is prohibited on this section of the North Fork. Regulations for waste disposal and campfire use vary depending on sites. Glacier National Park manages the east side of the river as recommended wilderness and has specific permitted use and regulations. River users are responsible for abiding by different rules between the forest and the park.

Condition

The headwaters of the North Fork of the Flathead originate in Canada. On the Flathead NF side, there are opportunities for dispersed camping, cabin rentals and touring to river access sites for day-use activities. Hikers, boaters, hunters, fisherman and photographers travel along this corridor. This section provides key spring/summer/fall habitat for grizzly bears and is important connectivity between Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest. Native fish populations are present throughout this segment and include bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. There is some private land within the WSR corridor. A large portion of river users on this stretch of river is non-outfitted. Commercial outfitting use is capped at days 670 service days.

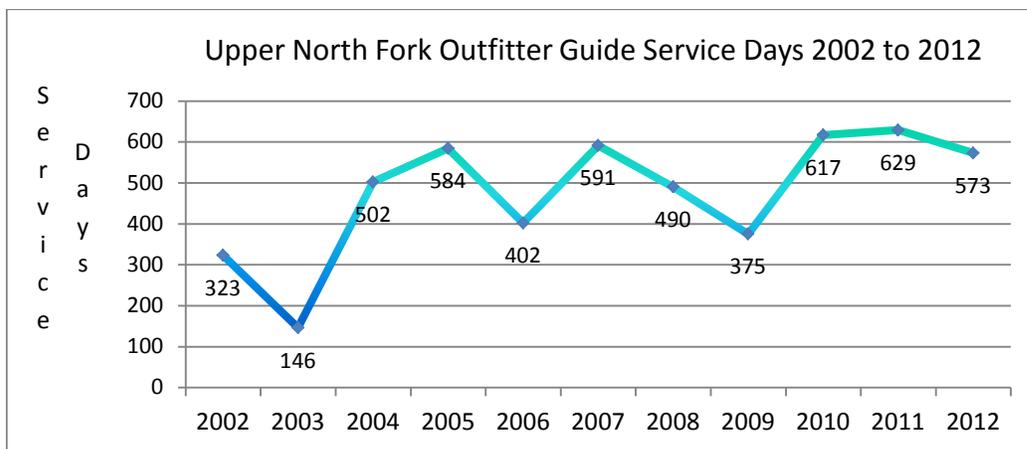


Figure 2: Graph of service days over the time period 2002 to 2012

Use varies from a low of 146 service days in 2003 to a high of 629 service days in 2011.

Outfitter Use

Whitewater outfitting businesses fill a specialized niche for many visitors who do not have the technical experience/knowledge to partake in whitewater opportunities or who do not have equipment for whitewater opportunities. Rivers recreation is part of the Flathead National Forest’s recreation niche and outfitters help us provide this type of experience to many visitors who come to the Flathead Valley/Glacier National Park. For many visitors, a whitewater trip on the Flathead River is one of the highlights of their trip. Use numbers vary between years depending on many different factors such as spring run-off, weather, and overall visitors to the area. Some river segments are capped with a specific service day limit while others allow for unlimited temp days to meet the need of the public.

Monitoring River Use

We have been monitoring river use for many years on the three forks of the Flathead. Unfortunately, our previous database to capture the monitoring became non-functional and we are in the process of building a new database to house our monitoring data. We will be analyzing this monitoring data this winter. An example of our monitoring requirements for the Upper North Fork is below:

Table 1. Monitoring Requirements for Upper North Fork

Indicator	Standard	Probability
Encounters per day with other FLOAT parties	Probability of encountering no more than 3 other float parties or individual boats on the per a float patrol day	Meet standard at least at 80% probability
Encounters per day with SHORE parties	Probability of encountering no more than 7 shore parties per float patrol day	Meet standard at least at 80% probability
Mechanical sounds heard	Probability of hearing no more than 12 mechanical occurrences per float patrol day	Meet standard at least at 80% probability



Lower North Fork Segment

(Camas Bridge to Confluence with Middle Fork)

This segment of the North Fork is classified as *recreational river* and is about 21 miles long. The outstanding remarkable values for this segment are: fisheries, geologic, water quality, wildlife, recreation, historic and ethnographic.



Management

The North Fork of the Flathead is cooperatively managed with Glacier National Park. Motorized use is allowed from Big Creek River Access to Blankenship (confluence of Middle Fork). Regulations for waste disposal and campfire use vary depending on sites. Campers in dispersed camping sites must pack out solid human waste. Glacier National Park manages the east side of the river as recommended wilderness and has specific permitted use and regulations. River users are responsible for abiding by different use rules between the forest and the park.

Condition

This section of the North Fork provides more whitewater opportunities with 3 class III rapids below Great Northern Flats. Because this section is closer to communities, it sees more use with day floaters and evening users making up the majority of use. Access is available from the forest side and limited from the park side. This section provides necessary spring/summer/fall habitat for grizzly and black bears. River bottoms and hillsides are important winter/spring habitat for elk, deer and moose. Native fish populations are present throughout this segment and include bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. There is some private land within the WSR corridor. Commercial outfitting use is 387 priority service days and unlimited temp use.

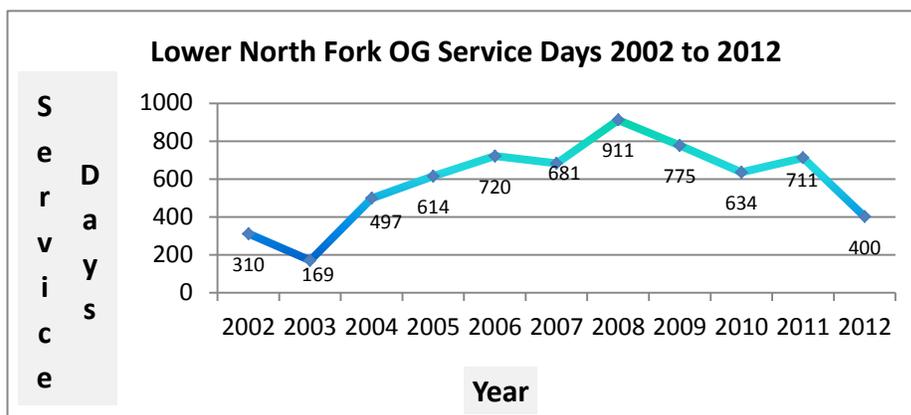


Figure 3. Graph of service days over the time period 2002 to 2012

Use varies from a low of 169 service days in 2003 to a high of 911 service days in 2008. Use is dependent on many variables – spring run-off, weather, etc.

Middle Fork of the Flathead River



Upper Middle Fork

Headwaters of the Middle Fork at the junction of Strawberry and Bowl Creek to Bear Creek: This segment of the Middle Fork is classified as a *wild river* with about 33 miles within the Great Bear Wilderness and 14 miles in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The outstanding remarkable values for this segment are: fisheries, geologic, water quality, wildlife, botanic, recreation, scenic, and historic.

Current Management

Motorized use is prohibited on this section of the Middle Fork. Human waste management is required and metal fire pans or fire blanket are required for campfires.

Condition

Some of the most remote whitewater recreation in the continental United States is found in this section with numerous class III and IV rapids for a challenging whitewater opportunity. Access to Schafer Meadows (where most people start this section) is by foot, stock or air delivery (plane/helicopter). The Big River Trail parallels the river which permits hunting, fishing, camping, horse packing and backpacking recreational use. This section provides connectivity between Glacier National Park, Canada and the Great Bear Wilderness for large, wild-ranging predators including the grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and wolverine. It provides spring/summer/fall habitat for several big game species, grizzly bear and other forest carnivores. Fishing is very good in most sections. Native fish populations are present throughout this segment and include bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout. Commercial outfitting use is capped at 456 priority service days.

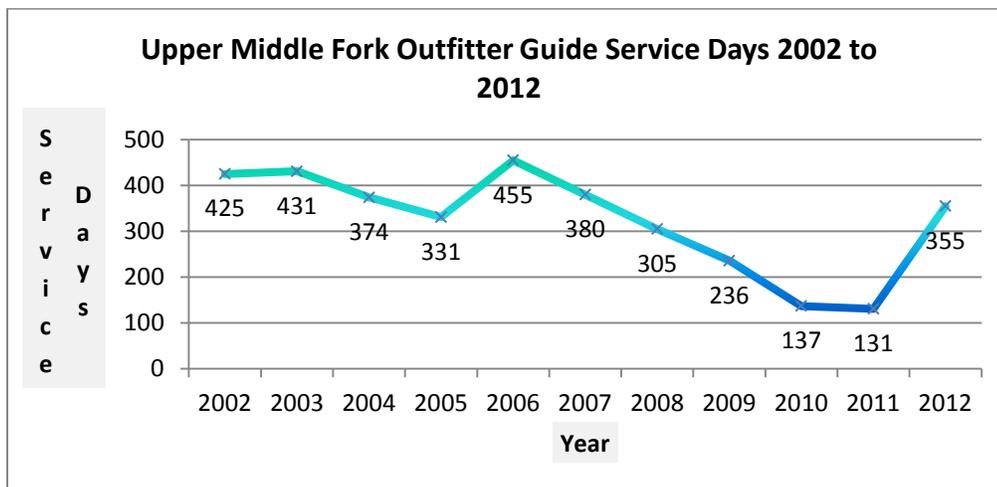


Figure 4: Graph of service days over the time period 2002 to 2012

Lower Middle Fork



Bear Creek to Confluence of South Fork: This segment of the Middle Fork is classified as a recreational river and is about 49 miles long. The outstanding remarkable values for this segment are: fisheries, geologic, water quality, wildlife, recreation, scenic, and historic.

Current Management

A more restrictive management was extended from Bear Creek to Essex to recognize existing use patterns and protect the Walton Goat Lick. Motorized use is prohibited from Bear Creek to Essex. Motorized use is allowed between Essex to the Confluence of the South Fork.

Conditions

This section offers great whitewater opportunities with many class III and IV rapids. Highway 2 parallels much of the river corridor. Glacier National Park side is mostly recommended wilderness and is managed like designated wilderness. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Company and Amtrak passenger service parallels the river corridor. There is quality wildlife viewing opportunities near Walton Goat Lick where there is a mineral deposit that attracts mountain goats. Key grizzly bear habitat with areas of unburned forest of large cottonwoods used by many wildlife species. Native fish are present but this section is threatened by the expanding presence of non-native rainbow trout.

Outfitter actual use data was broken into two sections to better reflect the use patterns. From Bear Creek to Paola there are 1031 priority service days. High use was 914 in 2012 and 356 in 2002.

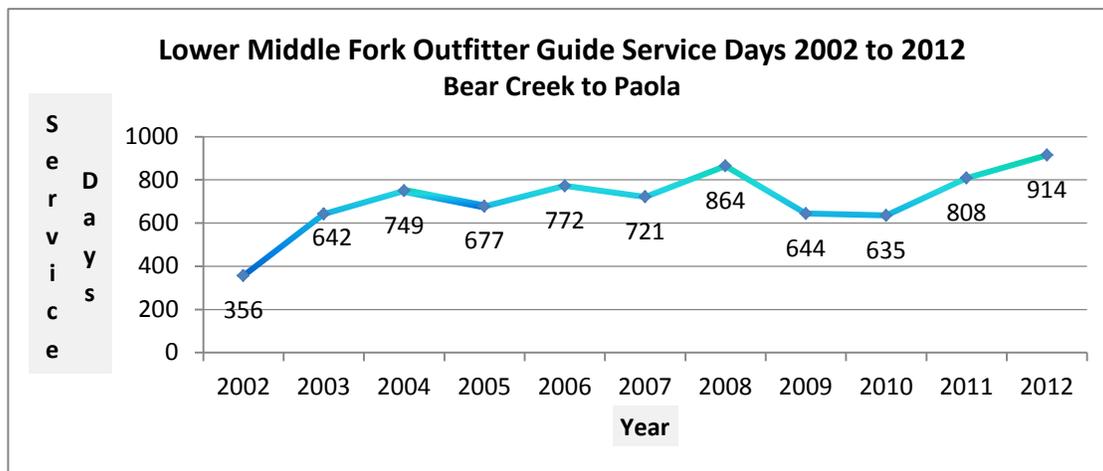


Figure 5. Graph of service days over the time period 2002 to 2012

From Paola to the House of Mystery, use is much higher due to the abundant whitewater rapids. This section of river has the highest recreation use and high volume outfitter use with 36,125 priority use days and unlimited temp use days. In the last 10 years the low use was 29,547 in 2003 and the high use year was 39,164 in 2007.

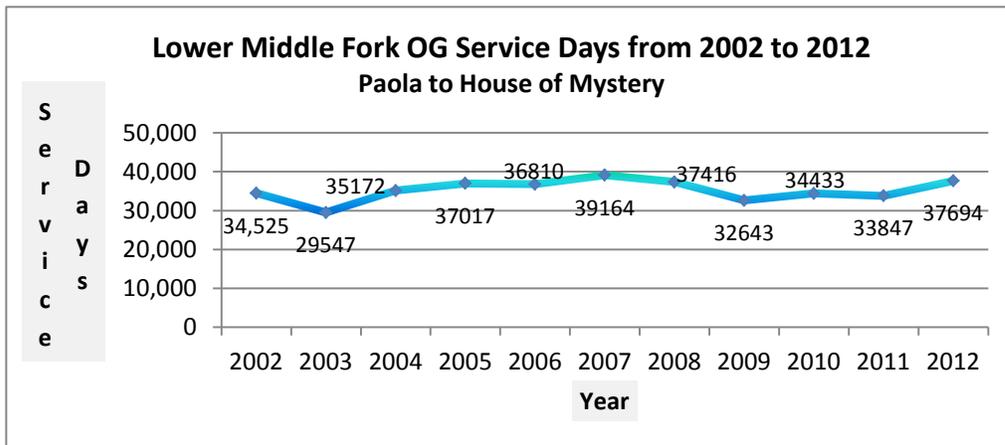
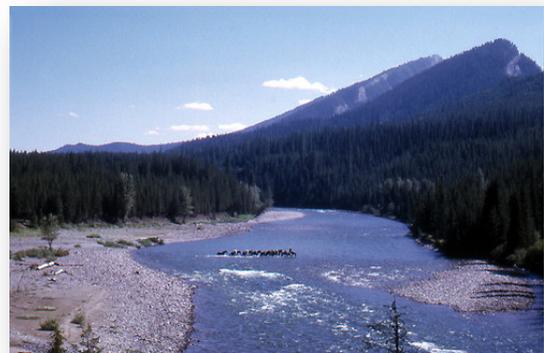


Figure 6. Graph of service days over the time period 2002 to 2012

South Fork of the Flathead River

Upper South Fork

- The headwaters of the South Fork are the confluence of Youngs and Danaher Creeks. The upper South Fork has a 41-mile section within the Bob Marshall Wilderness that is classified as *wild river*. Access this section of the upper South Fork is by trail only which makes this a very remote opportunity.
- Meadow Creek Gorge to Spotted Bear Ranger Station: This 11 mile section is classified as *wild river* and is the only wild section outside of wilderness in the Flathead system.



Current Management

The wild section is managed similar to wilderness. Because of active monitoring and user education in this section, recommendations exist, rather than regulations, for managing human waste and campfire use. There are party size limitations in effect in both wild sections. Motorboats are prohibited.

Condition

The wild sections provide connectivity between the Great Bear Wilderness, Bob Marshall Wilderness, and the Swan Range for many large, wide-ranging predators. Numerous big game species are abundant in the area. The South Fork offers unparalleled fishing opportunities for native cutthroat trout and bull trout; native fisheries exist in the South Fork without the presence of non-native species. The wild sections offer a higher level of solitude and primitive recreation experience.

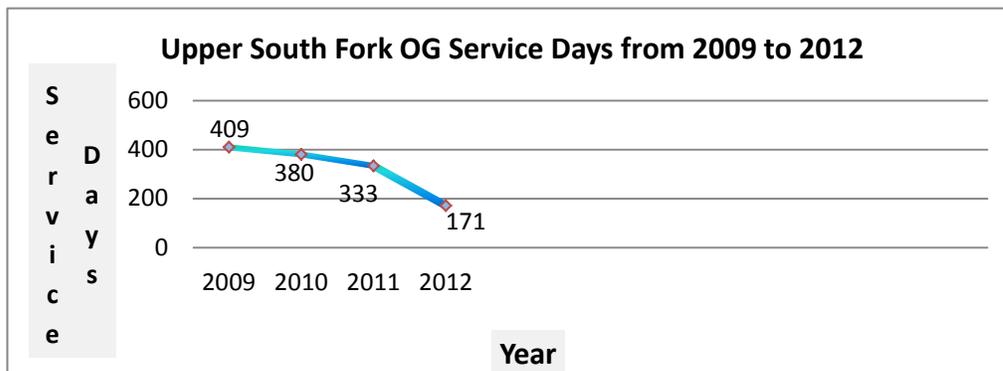


Figure 7: Graph of service days over the time period 2009 to 2012

Lower South Fork

Footbridge at Spotted Bear Ranger Station to the confluence of the Spotted Bear River: This 9 mile section of river is classified as a *recreational river*. This section offers multiple vehicle access for a variety of uses including fishing, camping, picnicking and floating

Current Management

Solid human waste containment and the use of fire pans and blankets is recommended. Motorboats are allowed and limited to 10 horse power.

Condition

This section provides habitat for grizzly bears and big game species. River bottoms and adjacent hillsides are important winter/spring habitat for large numbers of elk, deer and moose. The South Fork offers unparalleled fishing opportunities for native cutthroat trout and bull trout; native fisheries exist in the South Fork without the presence of non-native species. This section offers multiple vehicle access for a variety of uses including fishing, camping, picnicking and floating. This river segments offers a slower paced float, with just a few class I and II rapids.

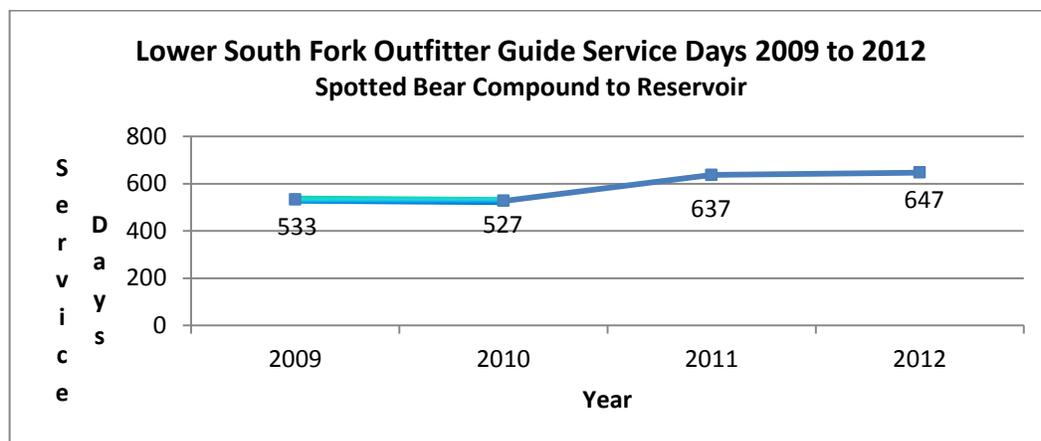
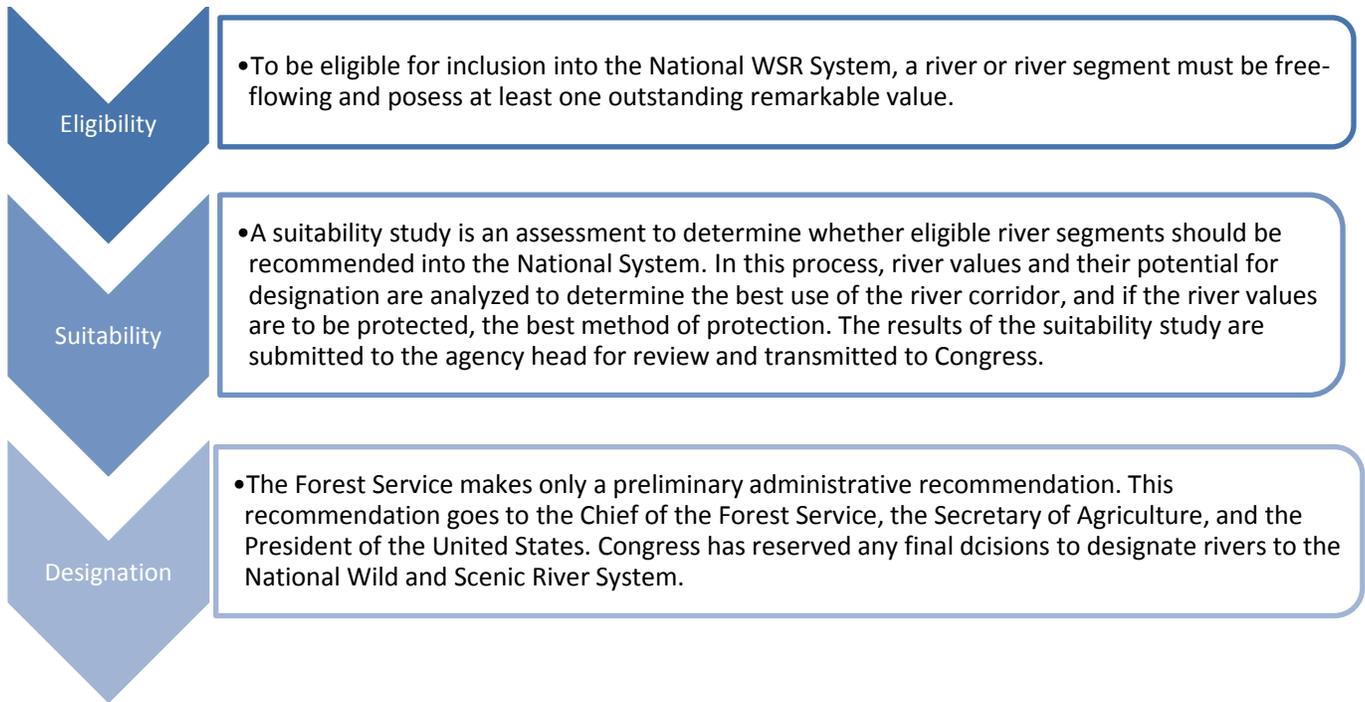


Figure 8 . Graph of service days over the time period 2009 to 2012

Trends Related to Wild and Scenic Rivers

The predicted trend for recreation is an overall increase in visitors and a greater demand for access and opportunities. Given the uncertainty with regard to specific types of uses and the magnitude of increase in visitor numbers, it is not possible to forecast a specific future need for special use permits or quotas to limit use, types of activities, party size, etc. on the designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.

2. Wild and Scenic Eligibility Process



To be identified as an outstanding remarkable value (ORV), a river-related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant when compared with similar values from other rivers at a regional or national scale.

Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the categories of outstandingly remarkable values are “scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values”. The determination that a river area does or does not contain one or more outstandingly remarkable values is a professional judgment on the part the responsible official as informed by an interdisciplinary team, best available scientific information, and public participation.

The interdisciplinary team will identify the region of comparison for each outstandingly remarkable value that will serve as the basis for meaningful comparative analysis. The region of comparison may vary for different rivers or categories of outstandingly remarkable values. The region of comparison should be scaled at an appropriate level for the type of river value being evaluated. For example, the appropriate region of comparison for scenic values may be an entire national forest or grassland in one instance, while for cultural values it may be the portion of the State in which the river is located.

2003 WSR Process for the Proposed 2006 Forest Plan

A map of all the named rivers that show up on the 1:100,000-scale map was sent to the districts for review. A spreadsheet with all the rivers that show up on the map was sent to recreation and resource specialists on the forest to fill in ratings for ORV. A list of questions was sent to these specialists to use when reviewing rivers for outstanding remarkable values. Each river was then rated 0-4 based on the description listed below by an ID team.

Table 2. Description of the value rating system

Value	Description
0	Value non-existent
1	Less significant than most in region
2	Typical, one of many equally significant in region
3	One of only a few this significant in region
4	The most significant in region

After all rivers were rated, the ID team looked at all the streams rated a “4” and made a decision on which ones that translated into an ORV for the region of comparison (which was the forest). Table 3 shows the rivers deemed eligible for the Flathead National Forest.

Table 3. 2006 Flathead National Forest Eligible WSR

Name	Potential Classification	Potential ORV
Big Salmon	Wild	Recreation; geology; fish; prehistory
Spotted Bear	Wild Scenic	Recreation; wildlife
White River	Wild	Geology; fish; history; prehistory
Danaher	Wild	Scenery; recreation; fish; wildlife; History; prehistory; botany, natural areas
Little Salmon	Wild	Scenery; fish; prehistory
Gateway	Wild	Scenery,
Yakinkak/Trail Nokio	Scenic	Fish (BT), prehistory (travel route)
LeBeau	Wild Scenic	Scenic, recreation, geological, natural area
Logan	Recreation	Scenic, recreational
Aeneas	Scenic	History

2013 WSR Eligibility Process

The 2012 planning rule requires the identification of rivers into the National W&S River System unless a systematic inventory has been previously completed and documented and there are no changed circumstances that warrant additional review.

Changed circumstances may include commitments made through settlement agreement or appeal decisions, and/or new information about the uniqueness and rarity of river-related values. When there is a changed circumstance, we must evaluate the eligibility of river segments affected by changed circumstances and document any change in status of past eligible rivers.

While we did a systematic inventory in 2006, we are refining our process because we have new information that was submitted to the Regional Forester from a group, Montanans for Healthy Rivers (MHR), who completed a state-wide review to identify eligible rivers in Montana which included the Flathead National Forest (46 rivers they submitted as eligible). They also requested that we change our region of comparison to be a more meaningful area of comparison depending on the value being analyzed rather than have the Flathead National Forest be the region of comparison for all resources.

We are planning on assessing the eligibility of the rivers that the group submitted as new information. The process will be very similar to the 2003 process except we will reassess the region of comparison to make sure it is appropriate for the value being considered. An interdisciplinary team will do the eligibility process and the results will go through public participation. The 12 rivers that the forest identified in 2006 as eligible will go forward into the revision process (10 of the 12 rivers identified in the 2006 Proposed Forest Plan overlap with the group's list of eligible rivers). During the preliminary WSR eligibility process, if new information on other rivers is shared with us, those streams would also go through the eligibility process.

The highlighted rivers are what we identified as eligible in 2006. The list below names the rivers that MHR provided us as new information on eligible rivers.

Aeneas Creek	Graves Creek	Schafer Creek
Basin Creek	Hallowat Ck	Shorty Creek
Big Creek	Lake Creek	Spotted Bear River
Big Salmon Ck	Unnamed Fork Lake Creek	Squeezer Ck
Clack Creek	Langsford Creek	Strawberry Ck
Coal Creek	Lion Creek	Sullivan Creek
SF Coal Creek	Little Salmon Creek	Upper Swan
Cyclone Creek	Logan Creek	Lower Swan
Danaher Creek	NF Lost Creek	Trail Creek
Dean Creek	SF Lost Creek	Twin Creek
Dolly Varden Creek	Mathias Creek	Whale Creek
Elk Creek	Moose Creek	White River
Gorge Creek	Morrison Creek	Yakinkak
Glacier Creek	Nokio Creek	Young's Creek
Goat Creek	Quintonkon Ck	
Granite Creek	Red Meadow Ck	

3. Inventoried Roadless Areas on the Flathead National Forest

Inventoried Roadless areas (IRAs) are statutorily designated areas under the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR; USDA Forest Service 2001). These areas were first inventoried by the Forest Service in 1972, as part of the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation phase I (RARE I). A second inventory was completed for RARE II in 1978. In 1972, the Forest Service initiated a review of National Forest System roadless areas

generally larger than 5,000 acres to determine their suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. A second review process completed in 1979, known as Roadless Area Review and Evaluation II (RARE II), resulted in another nationwide inventory of roadless areas. Currently on the Forest, there are 11 IRAs totaling 478,973 acres (Figure 8; Table 4). The acreage designated as IRA constitutes 20 percent of lands administered by the Flathead NF.

There were 3 roads built in inventoried roadless area in 1987, which totaled 1.9 miles (all in the same vicinity). These three roads were decommissioned in 2006. Therefore, there was no net change of roadless areas because the 3 roads built were decommissioned. The roads that currently exist within the IRAs, were there before 1987 (see table 4 below).

The Forest Plan allocated 4% of IRAs to timber without road emphasis and 38% for minimum, wildlife timber with roads management emphasis. To date, there has been little acreage harvested in IRAs and this trend is expected to continue. Motorized and mechanized use is allowed in IRAs.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule prohibits cutting, selling or removing timber in IRAs except in specific cases where the responsible official determines that a special circumstance exists: The cutting, sale or removal of generally small diameter timber is needed to improve threatened and endangered, proposed or sensitive species habitat or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure that would be expected to occur under natural disturbance regimes; if the roadless characteristics have been substantially altered in a portion of an inventoried roadless area due to the construction of a classified road and subsequent timber harvest. Both the road construction and subsequent timber harvest must have occurred after the area was designated an inventoried roadless area and prior to January 12, 2001. Timber may be cut, sold, or removed only in the substantially altered portion of the inventoried roadless area.

Table 4. Summary of motorized trails and roads in Inventoried Roadless Areas on the Flathead NF

Name of IRA	Acres *	Summer motorized trails (mi)	Winter motorized trails (mi)	Roads in basic custodial (closed) (mi)	Roads suitable for high clearance vehicles (mi)	Roads suitable for passenger cars (mi)
Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan	334,275	81	151	6.7	2.9	.5
Benchmark	6,318	0	0	0	0	0
Coal Ridge	15,429	.8	12.7	2.2	0	0
Deadhorse Ridge	23,648	0	9.9	1.0	0	0
Le Beau	5,450	0	0	1.2	.1	0
Mission Addition	2,221	0	2.0	.7	0	0
Mount Hefty	12,938	0	0	.1	0	0
Standard Peak	8,262	0	0	0	0	0
Swan River Island	465	0	0	0	0	.2
Tuchuck	17,730	0	0	0	0	0
Thompson-Seton	52,235	0	12.0	<.1	0	.2
Total	478,973	81.8	186.7	11.9	3.0	.9

*<http://www.fs.usda.gov/roaddocument/roadless/2001roadlessrule/summarydata>

Table 5. Summary of harvested acres since 1985 by IRAs on the FNF and by % of IRA

Name of IRA	Acres	Harvested Acres	% of IRA
Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan	334,275	3,083	<1%
Benchmark	6,318	28	<1%
Coal Ridge	15,429	419	2.7%
Deadhorse Ridge	23,648	254	1%
Le Beau	5450	0	0
Mission Addition	2,221	22	<1%
Mount Hefty	12,938	38	<1%
Standard Peak	8,262	68	<1%
Swan River Island	465	.41	<1%
Thompson-Seton	52,235	15	<1%
Tuchuck	17,730	19	<1%
	478,973	3,946	<1%

Harvested acres query 9/23/2013 for all harvest types since 1985

Trends

Since 1985, we have harvested less than 1% of the combined inventoried roadless areas on the Flathead National Forest. The IRAs have retained their roadless characteristics. Forest visitor numbers and recreation use is expected to increase over time. Because there are greater restrictions in wilderness, there may be increased pressure to accommodate more primitive recreation opportunities outside of wilderness.

4. Assessing Potential Wilderness

Proposed directives require us to see if there are not currently represented or minimally represented ecosystem or land types within the wilderness system. We are using evaluating our Inventoried Roadless Areas to determine if they contain under-represented or minimally represented land cover type for Region 1.

Ecosystem Settings in Wilderness

To determine if we have any under-represented ecosystems in Region 1, we looked at previous data of underrepresented land cover types in designated wilderness in Region 1. The list below shows the underrepresented land cover type (less than 10% representation) within designated wilderness in Region 1. Then we analyzed the Inventoried Roadless Areas on the forest to see if they contained any of the identified under-represented land cover type. Table 6 shows the acreage of under-represented land cover types Inventoried Roadless Areas on the forest.

Under-represented land cover type

- Wetlands
- Grass-dominated Riparian
- Shrub-dominated Riparian
- Forest-dominated riparian
- Grasslands
- Shrub-grasslands Association
- Xeric Upland Shrub
- Mesic Upland Shrub
- Salt-desert Shrub Flats
- Western Red Cedar
- Aspen

- Ponderosa Pine
- Mixed Barren Lands

Table 6. Acreage of under-represented land cover types in Inventoried Roadless Areas on Flathead NF.

IRA Name	Under-represented land cover type
BMSS*	Grasslands (13,644 ac), shrub (20,582 ac), riparian (953 ac), Western Red Cedar 914 ac), ponderosa pine 56 ac)
Benchmark	Grasslands (540 ac), shrub (145ac), riparian (2 ac)
Coal Ridge	Grasslands (559 ac), shrubs (181 ac), riparian 2 ac)
Deadhorse Ridge	Grasslands (404 ac), shrubs (277 ac), riparian (43 ac)
Le Beau	Grasslands (38 ac), shrubs (37 ac), riparian (75 ac)
Mission Addition	Grasslands (33 ac), shrubs (14 ac), riparian (7 ac)
Mount Hefty	Grasslands (139 ac), shrubs (116 ac), riparian (2 ac)
Standard Peak	Grasslands (273 ac), shrubs (355 ac), riparian (14 ac)
Swan River Island	Grasslands (4 ac), shrubs (55 ac), riparian (31 ac)
Thompson-Seton	Grasslands (2,462 ac), shrubs (1,516 ac), riparian 108 ac)
Tuchuck	Grasslands (1,399 ac), shrubs (289 ac), riparian (15 ac)

* Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan

5. Overview of the 2006 Wilderness Evaluation

The following 7 Inventoried Roadless Areas went through a capability, availability and needs evaluation process:

- Benchmark
- Coal Ridge
- Deadhorse
- Mount Hefty
- Thompson-Seton
- Tuchuck
- Standard Peak

Assessing Capability, Availability and Need

A capability, availability and need evaluation was completed for each IRA as well as an evaluation of unroaded areas less than 5,000 acres that met the following criteria:

- Areas can be preserved due to physical terrain and natural conditions.
- Areas are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- Areas are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive area, Administration endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other federal ownership, regardless of size.

Table 7. 2006 Proposed Forest Plan Recommended Wilderness

IRA Name	Proposed Management Areas (MA)
Benchmark	MA 2.2 (Backcountry)
Coal Ridge	Mostly MA 2.2 with some 3.3 (general forest low intensity management) and 4.1 (general forest moderate intensity management)
Deadhorse	Mostly MA 2.2 with some 3.3
Mount Hefty	Mostly MA 2.2 with some 3.3 MA
Thompson-Seton	Mostly MA 1.2 (recommended wilderness)
Tuchuck	Mostly MA 1.2 with some 3.2 MA (Research Natural Areas)
Standard Peak	Mostly MA2.2 with some 3.3 MA

6. Upcoming Wilderness Evaluation

The forest is still deliberating on which directives (2007 which is the current directives or 2012 which is the proposed directives) to follow for its wilderness evaluation process. Forests in revision can choose to follow either the current 2007 wilderness evaluation directives or the proposed 2012 wilderness evaluation directives. Significant changes are expected under the 2012 directives. The forest would like to work with its collaboration working groups to ensure the evaluation process meets the needs and intent of the planning rule as well as the public’s needs.

7. Wilderness Overview

The Wilderness Act

- Created a National Wilderness Preservation System
- Established a process for designating wilderness areas
- Set provisions for managing use of wilderness area.
- Defined wilderness
 - “Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticed”
 - “Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation”
 - Has at least five thousand acre of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.



Agency’s responsibility

“... these [areas] shall be administered for the **use and enjoyment** of the American people in such manner as will leave them **unimpaired** for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character”. Sec 2(a)

Qualities of Wilderness Character

Qualities	Definition
Untrammeled	Wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from the actions of modern human control or manipulation
Undeveloped	Wilderness retains its primeval character and influence and is essentially without permanent improvement or modern human occupation
Natural	Wilderness ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern human civilization
Outstanding Opportunities	Wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation

Special provisions

No motorized equipment, mechanical transport, motorboats, landing of aircraft, structures or installations

Except as specifically provided for (examples):

- Water projects (dams, ditches, power projects)
- Grazing of livestock
- Motorboats, airstrip

Except as necessary to meet the minimum requirements for the administration of the Act.

Mechanized use in wilderness

As enacted, section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act prohibits certain uses, some absolutely and others with limited exceptions:

Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.

Forest Service Definition of Mechanical Transport - Any contrivance for moving people or material in or over land, water, or air, having moving parts, that provides a mechanical advantage to the user, and that is powered by a living or nonliving power source. This includes, but is not limited to, sailboats, hang gliders, parachutes, bicycles, game carriers, carts, and wagons. It does not include wheelchairs when used as necessary medical appliances. It also does not include skis, snowshoes, rafts, canoes, sleds, travois, or similar primitive devices without moving parts. (Forest Service Manual 2320.5(3))



8. Recommended Wilderness Discussion

Topics

1. *Discuss RI's position on non-conforming uses in recommended wilderness*

Conforming and non-conforming uses are terms used to describe uses that are either appropriate or not appropriate in designated wilderness areas. These uses are identified in Section 4 (c) of the Wilderness Act.

The discussion of appropriate uses in recommended wilderness areas aligns with national policy and regional guidance for management of recommended areas and basically states that currently permitted, non-conforming activities may continue if they do not compromise wilderness values.

Questions:

1. Can historical non-conforming uses in these areas continue?
2. How do you know if wilderness values are being compromised if there is no monitoring in place to track non-conforming use effects on wilderness values?

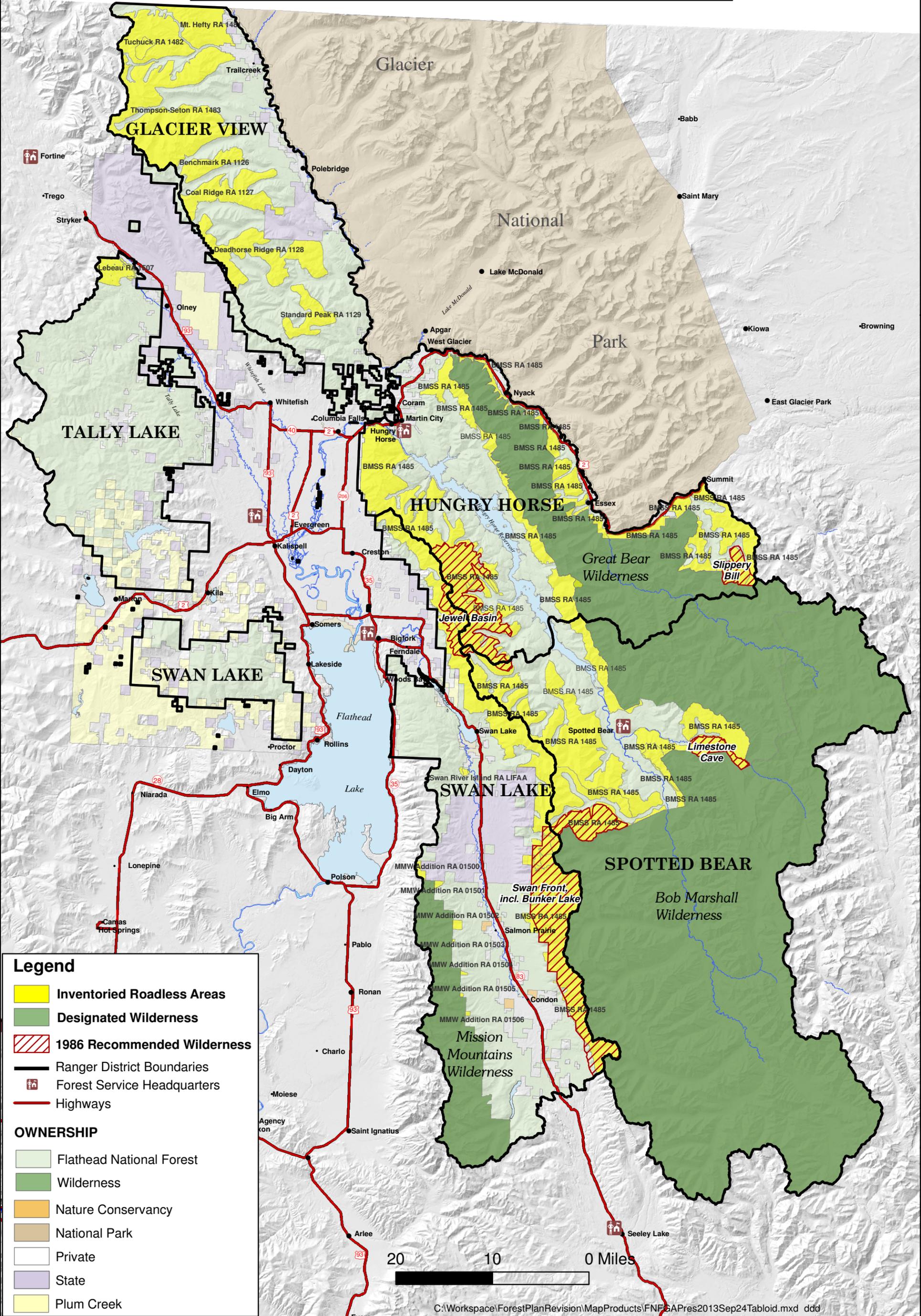
Consider the capability, availability and need for the area; is wilderness the best solution or is there another management area category that provides adequate protection of the area's unique character but may allow some non-conforming recreational uses.

- Backcountry management area that allows mechanized and motorized use and a backcountry MA that allows mechanized but no motorized use.
- Re-alignment of boundaries of roadless areas recommended for wilderness (cherry stem travel corridors if necessary; exclude over-snow use areas)

2. *Fire management*

3. *Fuel reduction*

1986 Forest Plan Recommended Wilderness Inventoried Roadless Areas Designated Wilderness Flathead National Forest



Legend

- Inventoried Roadless Areas
- Designated Wilderness
- 1986 Recommended Wilderness
- Ranger District Boundaries
- Forest Service Headquarters
- Highways

OWNERSHIP

- Flathead National Forest
- Wilderness
- Nature Conservancy
- National Park
- Private
- State
- Plum Creek

