



File Code: 6270

Date: July 30, 2019

The Flathead National Forest, in coordination with Glacier National Park, is announcing the initiation of the scoping process for the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP) for the Flathead River. The Flathead River was designated a Wild and Scenic River (WSR) on October 12th, 1976 and is a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. It encompasses the North Fork of the Flathead from the Canadian border to its confluence with the Middle Fork, the entire Middle Fork, and the South Fork from its headwaters to Hungry Horse Reservoir. The North Fork and the lower Middle Fork form the boundaries between the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park. Portions of the Middle and South Forks flow through the Bob Marshall and Great Bear Wilderness Areas. A total of 219 miles of the Flathead River are included in the designation.

The purpose and need for the Flathead WSR CRMP is:

- To protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) identified in the original designation.
- To update the existing river management plan as required to maintain compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and to reflect changes that have occurred since designation (1976) in forest and park management, special status species, and other laws that affect resources within the WSR corridor.

The public is asked to pay particular attention to how the desired condition statements as well as the proposed monitoring indicators, thresholds, and triggers protect and preserve Outstanding Remarkable Values for the three forks of the Flathead River system presently and into the future. This is the foundation of the CRMP and will inform management actions and inform determination of user capacity for the Flathead WSR.

The proposed action can also be accessed at the Flathead National Forest NEPA page (Flathead Comprehensive River Management Plan): www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56536. Hard copies of the proposed action document are also available for review at the Hungry Horse-Glacier View Ranger Station (10 Hungry Horse Drive, Hungry Horse, MT, 59919) or at the Forest Supervisor's Office (650 Wolfpack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901).

Public open houses to provide further information about this project will occur on **August 13 and 20, 2019, from 6 pm to 8 pm** at the lower level of the Arts and Technology Building at Flathead Valley Community College.

Your comments on the proposed action are important because we will use them to refine our proposed activities and inform our environmental analysis. Please provide comments on the proposed action by **Friday, September 13, 2019**. If you do not have any site-specific comments at this time, but would like to receive information about the project, please let us know via email, mail, or phone so we can add you to the contact list.

You can provide us comments by doing the following:

- Email comments to: comments-northern-flathead@usda.gov. Acceptable formats include MS Word, RTF, or PDF.



- Fill in an electronic form by going to the same Flathead National Forest NEPA page (see above) and selecting “Comment/Object on Project” on the right hand side of the screen.
- Hand-deliver or mail comments to the Hungry Horse-Glacier View Ranger Station in Hungry Horse or the Forest Supervisor’s Office in Kalispell (see above for addresses).

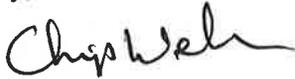
This comment period provides those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official, Forest Supervisor Chip Weber. Only those who provide timely and substantive comments will be eligible to object to the decision pursuant to the 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

At this time, I anticipate the project analysis will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA). The EA will evaluate issues, consider alternatives, and analyze effects of the proposed action and any alternatives. An EA and draft CRMP are expected in January/February 2020. At that time there will be an additional 30-day public comment period. Following this comment period, we will be publishing a draft decision notice which will include a pre-decisional objection process. Only those people who provided timely and substantive comments during the scoping or EA comment periods will be able to participate in the objection process. A final decision is expected sometime in the fall of 2020.

I appreciate your interest in the Flathead CRMP Project, and I thank you for your help with developing our project. To obtain additional information about this project, please contact Chris Prew at (406) 758-3538.

Sincerely,



CHIP WEBER
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure