



Flathead National Forest
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 758-5200

**Flathead Wild & Scenic River
Visitor Survey 2012**



Glacier National Park
West Glacier, MT 59936
(406) 888-7800

Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park River Managers would like to find out about your visit to better understand what you value about this section of the Flathead Wild & Scenic River System. **The information you provide will help us better manage the river for your enjoyment and to retain the Wild & Scenic River values and prepare a Comprehensive River Management Plan to guide the management of the river and the protection of its Outstanding Remarkable Values.** *Please note this survey is for ALL Flathead River corridor/area users including floaters, campers, hikers, stock parties, and any other groups recreating in or adjacent to the river within approxitally ¼ mile.*

Privacy and Paperwork Reduction Act statements: 16 U.S.C. 1a-7 authorized collection of this information. This information will be used by the U.S. Forest Service to better serve the public. Response to this request is voluntary. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. When analysis of the questionnaires is completed, all name and address files will be destroyed. Thus, the permanent data will be anonymous. Please do not put your name or that of any member of your group on the questionnaire.

We appreciate your assistance in helping us manage the Flathead Wild and Scenic River.
Please contact the following people if you have questions about this survey

River Manager
Hungry Horse –Glacier View Ranger Districts
(406) 387-3800

River Manager
Spotted Bear Ranger District
(406) 758-5376

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Agriculture, Clearance Officer, OCIO, AG Box 7630, Washington, DC 20250; and the Office of Management and Budget, paperwork Reduction project (OMB #596-XXXX), Washington, DC, 20503

What is the **zip code** for your primary residence? _____

- (1) What is your **age**? 16-20 30-39 50-59
 21-29 40-49 60-69 70+

This section asks about your activities during your recent visit to the Flathead River corridor/area (questions 3 to 8).

(2) When and where did you start and end your visit to the Flathead River?

- a. What segment/section/area of the Flathead River did you visit?: _____
b. Beginning date: _____(month/day/year) starting from
(trailhead/put-in/creek?): _____
—
c. Ending date: _____(month/day/year) leaving from (trailhead/put-in/creek): _____

(3) About what percentage of this trip was devoted to recreation in the Flathead River corridor/area?

- 0-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%

(4) How many people were in your group, including yourself? _____

(5) What activities did you participate in during your visit to the Flathead River? (check **all that apply**)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whitewater rafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic/Wildlife viewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Floating the river | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking/Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse riding/Stock packing | <input type="checkbox"/> Day use/Picnicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying at a Forest Service rental cabin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

(6) What was the **primary** activity you participated in during your visit to the Flathead River? (check **only one**)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whitewater rafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic/Wildlife viewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Floating the river | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking/Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse riding/Stock packing | <input type="checkbox"/> Day use/Picnicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying at a Forest Service rental cabin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

(7) What **forms of transportation** did your group use to get to the Flathead River? (mark all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking/Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Airplane/helicopter to Schafer Meadows provided by an outfitter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal vehicle/car | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus or any vehicle provided and driven by an |

- Personal saddle/pack stock
- Pack stock provided by an outfitter
- Personal airplane/helicopter to Schafer Meadows
- Outfitter
- Car or vehicle provided by a commercial shuttle or taxi service
- Other _____

(8) Did you float on any section of the Flathead River during this trip?

- No (Skip to Question 14)
- Yes (continue to Question 10).

This section asks about float/whitewater trips on the Flathead River (questions 10-14), if you did not float on the river, please skip to question 14.

(9) Where did you **start** your float? _____

Where did your float **end**? _____

(10) What kind of **watercraft** did your party use? Please indicate the **number** of each.

- Multi-person raft/catacraft
- Inflatable personal (one-person) raft (ex. Alpaca ©) or catacraft
- Hard shell kayak
- Hard sided canoe
- Inflatable canoe, kayak, duckee
- Inner tube/river tube
- Other _____

(11) Did you have **stock support** (horses/mules) for any part of, or all of your entire trip? No Yes

If Yes, how many head of stock did you use? _____

If Yes, for which portion of your trip and/or how did you have stock support?

(12) A. Did you have to wait to launch on the river? No Yes

If yes, about how long was your wait?

- 5-10 minutes
- 11-20 minutes
- 21-40 minutes
- More than 41 minutes

- B. What do you consider to be an acceptable wait time to launch on this section of the Flathead River?
_____minutes

This section asks questions for all Flathead River corridor/area users who camped overnight during their visit your recent visit to the Flathead River (questions 14 to 19), if you did not camp please skip to question 20.

(13) A. How many nights did your group camp by the Flathead River? _____
If you did not camp, please skip to question 20.

C. **If you camped**, where did you camp? (please list all locations such as specific side-trails, drainages, or recreation sites/facilities).

(14) A. Did you have trouble locating a campsite that met the needs of your group? No Yes
B. Outside of the wilderness, would you prefer **more designated camping** with facilities? No Yes
If yes, where? _____

(15) A. On a typical night about **how many other groups** did you see or hear while you were in your campsite?
 0-2 3-5 6-10 11+

B. Did you consider this number of parties to be:

- Too many
- Too few
- Just right

(17) A. On average, **how many people** were in these parties that you could see or hear in your campsite?
 0-2 3-5 6-10 11-15 15+

B. Did you consider this number of people to be:

- Too many
- Too few
- Just right

(18) Did Forest Service or Park Service length of stay regulations affect your visit? No Yes

If yes, please describe: _____

(19) Did you encounter wildlife within your campsite? No Yes

If yes, please describe the encounter: _____

This section is for all Flathead River corridor/area users and asks questions about how you planned your visit to the Flathead River (questions 20 to 28).

(20) How many days/months in advance did your group plan this trip? _____ days, or _____ months

(21) What was the primary reason for visiting the Flathead River **when you did**? (Mark only one)

- Better river flow conditions for floating
- Trying to avoid the crowds Available vacation days Hunting season
- Better chance of good weather Better chance of good fishing I am a local; as schedule allowed
- Couldn't get a permit on a preferred river Other _____

(22) Did your group hire a commercial outfitter or guide to support your trip? No Yes

If so, what services did they provide you?

- Overnight/multi day full service float Full day float Half day float Drop float
- Livery service (shuttle and/or delivery of rental equipment) Fishing
- Other _____

What was the name of the outfitter or guide service? _____

(23) What would you have done if you had not been able make this visit to the Flathead River, i.e. the recreation sites were not available, there were too many other users, etc.?

- I would have visited another river. If so, please name it here _____
- I would have recreated elsewhere nearby in Glacier National Park or the Flathead National Forest.
- I would have recreated somewhere else entirely.
If so, please describe _____
- I would have stayed home.
- Other _____

(24) A. In previous years, have you visited **this portion/area** of the river that you visited on this most recent trip?

- No Yes

B. **If yes**, have you noticed changes in the area's conditions, e.g. number of visitors, campsite availability, campsite conditions, etc.? No Yes

C. If yes, please describe when that was and what the difference is: _____

(25) A. Were you aware of the regulations associated with storage of food in a bear-resistant manner (i.e. requirements to hang food, use bear proof boxes/ panniers /coolers, etc)?

No Yes

B. Was it difficult to comply with the regulations? No Yes

C. If yes, please describe: _____

(26) Where did you get your information about the regulations associated with storage of food in a bear-resistant manner?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service trailhead or river access site bulletin board | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends and/or family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service website | <input type="checkbox"/> Other hiking/guidebook _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service office | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Flathead River Float Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> I did not know the regulations for storage of food in a bear-resistant manner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glacier National Park website | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glacier National Park visitor center or backcountry permit office | |

(27) Where did you get information about other regulations, camp sites and/or land ownership boundaries?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service trailhead or river access site bulletin board | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends and/or family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service website | <input type="checkbox"/> Other hiking/guidebook _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service office | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Flathead River Float Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> I did not know the regulations and/or land ownership boundaries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glacier National Park website | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glacier National Park visitor center or backcountry permit office | |

(28) Please rate your overall experience on your recent trip to the Flathead River (circle the appropriate number):

Very good	Good	Neutral	Bad	Very bad
5	4	3	2	1

Please explain your rating here: _____

This section is only for those who visited the North Fork or Lower Middle Fork (below Bear Creek) of the Flathead River (questions 29-30). If you did not visit either of these segments of the river please continue to question 32.

(29) Are you aware that the National Park Service (Glacier National Park) and the National Forest Service (Flathead National Forest) co-manage the Flathead River? Yes No

(30) If you camped during your visit to the North Fork or Lower Middle Fork of the Flathead River, did you camp within:

- Glacier National Park Private Lands
 Flathead National Forest Other _____

(31) Did you recreate at any other locations in Glacier National Park during your visit to the Flathead River?

- Yes No

If **yes**, please describe what you did and where it occurred, e.g. drive Going-to-the Sun Road, visit Polebridge Ranger Station, camp at Many Glacier, hike the Highline Trail, etc?: _____

This section is for all users and asks you to rate the impacts that the following conditions had on *this* visit to the Flathead River corridor/area (items 32-34).

(32) On a scale from +3 (added a lot to) to -3 (detracted a lot from), rate how these items affected the quality of your river experience. If the item does not apply to your trip, rate the item as "0 or N/A". For each type of encounter, please also indicate how many groups you saw.

Added to \longrightarrow Detracted from experience

	+3	+2	+1	0 or N/A	-1	-2	-3	About how many groups on a typical day did you see?
Encounters with float groups								
Encounters with stock/horse groups								
Encounters with backpacker groups								
Encounters with fishing groups/individuals								
Encounters with any outfitted/commercial groups								
Encounters with other groups at swimming holes, lunch/picnic spots, other day use sites, or special river locations								
Contact with river rangers, wilderness rangers, or park rangers								

Please feel free to comment on any specific experiences (good or bad) you had in regards to encounters with other parties. We are particularly interested in encounters that may have enhanced or detracted from the Wild and Scenic river experience.

(33) On a scale from +3 (added a lot to) to -3 (detracted a lot from), rate how these items affected the quality of your river experience. If you did not camp near one of these groups rate, the items as "0 or N/A". For each type of encounter, please also indicate how many groups you saw or heard. **If you did not overnight camp, please skip to question 34.**

Please continue survey on next page

Added to \longrightarrow Detracted from experience

	+3	+2	+1	0 or N/A	-1	-2	-3	About how many groups on a typical camping night did you see and/or hear?
Camping within sight or sound of float groups								
Camping within sight or sound of stock/horse groups								
Camping within sight or sound of backpacker groups								
Camping within sight or sound of outfitted/commercial groups								
Camping within sight or sound of fishing groups/individuals								
Camping within sight or sound of vehicle supported groups not otherwise identified above, including at undeveloped and developed recreation sites								

Please feel free to comment on any specific experiences you had in regards to the presence of others when camping, on the river, or at the take out/put in. We are particularly interested in the locations of situations that may have enhanced or detracted from the Wild and Scenic river experience.

(34) On a scale from +3 (added a lot to) to -3 (detracted a lot from), rate how these items affected the quality of your river experience. If the item does not apply to your trip, rate the item as "0 or N/A".

	Added to \longrightarrow				Detracted from		
	+3	+2	+1	0 or N/A	-1	-2	-3
Being in or near Glacier National Park							
Being in Flathead National Forest							
Being on a designated Wild and Scenic River							
Being in a designated Wilderness Area (Bob Marshall or Great Bear Wilderness)							

This section asks you to rate how the following characteristics of river area recreation influenced the quality of your visit.

(35) For each item you noticed on *this visit* to the Flathead River, please mark (1 to 7) how it affected your experience. If you did not notice an item, mark "NN" for Not Noticed.

How much of a problem was it?

	How much of a problem was it?							
	Not Noticed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Big
Amount of improperly disposed of human waste or toilet paper								
Amount of litter								
Conditions of campsites that you used, i.e. impacts from previous use, including exposed tree roots, tree scars, barren ground, many side/social trails								
Condition of the natural environment								
Amount on invasive species and weeds								
Weather conditions								
Trail conditions								
Area/rules and regulations not adequately enforced								
Too many rules and regulations								
Erosion at popular stopping points								
Lack of adequate parking at river access sites								
Length of wait time at river access put in/take out								
Amount of development at river sites not in the wilderness								
Amount of artificial light glow from cities/towns								
Lack of solitude								

Please feel free to comment on any specific experiences you had in regards to recreating in the Flathead River corridor/area. We are particularly interested in experiences that may have enhanced or detracted from the Wild and Scenic river experience.

This section lists possible management actions that might be taken along the Flathead River corridor/area.

(36) Please indicate your support or opposition for how recreational use should be managed on the Flathead River.

	Strongly favor (+2)	Favor (+1)	Neutral (0)	Oppose (-1)	Strongly oppose (-2)
Provide more information to visitors about appropriate behaviors					

Please continue survey on next page

Require boaters to pack out human waste					
Require land based river users (stock groups, backpackers, vehicle campers) to pack out human waste					
Limit the number of boaters if necessary to protect fisheries					
Decrease group size					
Begin charging user fees to offset management costs.					
Limit the number of boaters if most visitors feel crowded					
Add more river rangers and park rangers for enforcement					
Increase the number of outfitters and guides					
Decrease the number of outfitters and guides					
Implement a permit system to limit the number of river launches					
Regulate the number of landings per day at Schafer Meadows to limit the number of river launches					

Please share with us any comments you have about possible management actions that might be taken along the Flathead River to improve the quality of the Wild and Scenic River experience that you would support or oppose.

Please share with us any other comments that you have on the Flathead Wild & Scenic River management program.

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