



April 26, 2022

Dear Interested Party,

The Flathead National Forest is requesting public input on the issuance of permits authorizing recreation events and outfitting and guiding activities across the forest from June 1 through October 31. The recreation events include **Mountain Archery Fest, Highlander Hiking and Camping Event, Logan Health Marathon, USA Cycling Bike Race/Ride, Kiwanis Motorcycle Fun Ride, and Last Best Ride**. The outfitting and guiding permit requests include **Adventure Cycling Guided Bike Tours, Bike Adventure Bike Tours, Montana Adventure Shuttle Services, BIKeternity Guided Bike Tour, Whitefish Outfitters Shuttle Services and Guided Tours, Alpine Running Guides Guided Running Trips, Action Rentals Guided UTV/ATV Tours, Whitefish Bike Retreat Shuttle Services, Northwest Montana Adventure Guided UTV/ATV Tours, Venture Shuttles Shuttle Services, Big Sky Bible Camp Hiking Trips, Glacier Institute Hiking Trips, Madison Browning Guided Backpack Trips, Glacier Ridge Runners Livery Services and Guided UTV/ATV Tours, Flathead Outdoors Guided e-Bike and Dirt Bike Tours, 406 Docks Livery Services and Montana Outdoors Science Academy Guided Hikes**. All proposed motorized activities would occur in areas open to the motorized use.

Based on resource information to date, I believe these projects fall within the Forest Service category of actions under 36 CFR 220.6 that may be excluded in either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement and that no extraordinary circumstances exist which would preclude use of this category. Scoping comments along with a resource analysis will determine whether these projects can be categorically excluded. These projects are specifically consistent with category 36 CFR 220.6(d)(8): Approval, modification, or continuation of minor, short-term (1 year or less) special uses of National Forest System lands; OR category 36 CFR 220.6(d)(12): Issuance of a new authorization or amendment of an existing authorization for recreation special uses.

The following provides information on each of the above projects:

Proposals led by Hungry Horse-Glacier View Ranger District

Please email Anthony Butterfield at anthony.butterfield@usda.gov for inquiries or to provide comments.

- **Glacier Ridge Runners** is requesting 200 day-use service days to provide watercraft livery services to the Hungry Horse Reservoir and guide UTV tours on selected open-motorized NFS Roads on the Hungry Horse Ranger District. Requested livery services include pontoon boats, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards rentals and delivery to Doris Point Boat Launch. Requested UTV tour routes include the west side of Hungry Horse Reservoir (National Forest System Road [NFSR] 895), Aurora Basin (NFSR 895H), Desert Mtn. area (NFSR 497, 497A, 546), the east side of Hungry Horse Reservoir (NFSR 38) and the Meadow Creek Gorge/Trailhead (NFSR 2826). UTV use would only be allowed on weekdays as requested. The requested season of use for all activities is 6/1-10/31, 2022 and is subject to seasonal road closures.
- **Great Northern Wilderness Guides** is requesting 100 backpacking service days July-Sept. The use would include 1-6 trips with 2-8 people. Hikes would be on the Hungry Horse, Swan Lake, and Spotted Bear Ranger Districts and include National Forest System Trails (NFST) 35, 415, 120, 48, and 42 in the Holland Lake area, Doris to Strawberry on NFS trails 5, 7, and 52, Napa-Bond or Hall w/ Chipmunk peak spur on NFS trails 61, 21, 7, 101, and 99.



- **Glacier Institute** is requesting to amend their existing priority use permit to include 224 additional user days for hiking on system trails on the Spotted Bear, Tally Lake, and Hungry Horse Ranger Districts. The use would be located outside Congressionally Designated Wilderness Areas and Jewel Basin Hiking Area. NFST 52, 410, 80, 80A, 84, 88, 88A, 800, 804, 176, and 45 with associated spurs are included in this proposal.
- **Big Sky Bible Camp** is requesting 98-120 backpacking service days on system trails. Backpacking for 4 trips of 8-10 people for 2-3 nights July/Aug. Hiking routes include Jewel Basin north to Doris Lakes/Creek on the Hungry Horse Ranger District (NFS Trails 7, 52, 295) and Jewel Basin south to Peterson Cr (Swan Lake Ranger District; NFS Trails 7, 293) or Hall Lake via Spotted Bear Ranger District (NFS Trails 7, 72, 61, 74, and NFSR 381. Big Sky Bible Camp currently has a priority use permit for hiking and overnight use in Jewel Basin. This proposal would allow for use outside of Jewel Basin.
- **Highlander** is requesting to host a non-competitive hiking recreation event. The event involves up to 100 people for multi-day hiking with camps at developed campgrounds in the northern Swan Range. The event is planned for September 17th and 18th. The event is proposed on NFS Trails 37, 7, 297, 295, 51, 57, and NFS Roads 895, 895A, and 895C. Overnight use would occur at either Lid Creek, Lost Johnny Point, Lost Johnny, or Doris Creek Campgrounds. The event would begin at either Lid Creek Campground or Peters Ridge Trail 37 Trailhead and finish at the Columbia Mountain Trail 51 Trailhead.
- **Venture Shuttles** is requesting 50 total service days to provide livery services to trailheads forest wide. Transport would include 2-4 people and/or bikes June through October.
- **Logan Health** is requesting to host a marathon on September 24, 2022, up to 1000 participants. Runners will start at Big Creek Campground and run south on the North Fork Road to Columbia Falls. Forest Service is responsible for permitting the use on National Forest System land only.

Proposals led by Tally Lake Ranger District

Please email Tad Wehunt at william.wehunt@usda.gov for inquiries or to provide comments.

- **Northwest Montana Adventures** is requesting 200 service days to provide guided ATV/UTV tours on the Tally Lake and Glacier View Ranger Districts. The proposed dates of operation are June 1st through October 31st with the restrictions of normal road closures for Side by Sides or UTVs. The tours would be permitted in conjunction with the Stillwater State Forest. The applicant is currently permitted on MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation lands adjacent to the requested area. Proposed routes include Taylor Creek NFSR 9790 road to Big Mountain summit house, to Warner Peak NFSR 1658 on the divide, and to Red Meadow Lake NFSR 115 only from the Tally Lake RD side.
- **Kiwanis Club of Kalispell** is requesting to host a one-day motorcycle ride event in July (date TBD) on system roads and trails. Participants are anticipated to be 30 with a max of 40. Two routes are proposed. For street legal bikes the loop route would be from Bitterroot Lake to NFSR 538, to 9784B, 313, 2908, 9887, 538B and back to the 538 and down out of the forest. Non legal street bikes would be trailered to the second route and park at the Lupine Lake Trailhead NFST 210 and utilized a down and back route on NFST 210, 310, 289 and 171. This event has been reoccurring and would be authorized under a 5-year permit with the operating plan updated annually.

- Whitefish Bike Retreat** is requesting to provide shuttle services (livery) on the Tally Lake system roads and trails. Drop off locations for livery services would occur at the intersection of Reid Divide, Bill Creek and Ashley Mountains. NFST 800, 801, 294, 310 and NFSR 313, 538, 542, 913, 2912, 2912B, 2942, 5263, 9601, 9763, 9784, 11258 (plus less than one mile of County Road crossing USFS lands) would be utilized. Shuttle capacity is 14 clients. Group size would be 1-12 clients. Shuttle services would run from June 1st through October 31st. Requesting 200 service days.
- Action Rentals** is requesting to guide ATV/UTV tours on the Tally Lake and Swan Lake Ranger Districts of the Flathead National Forest between June 1st and November 30th, 2022. Routes would include NFSR #910, Martin Cr. Road, to access Sunday Falls, NFSR #2872, Martin Lake Road, NFSR #9620, the West side of Martin Creek and a small portion of the Old Fort Steele Road which is under Country jurisdiction. On the Swan district, routes in the Island Unit will be included, as per the Motorized Use Vehicle Map (MVUM). Maximum group size will not exceed 15 and/or 6 vehicles per trip. Action Rentals is requesting 200 temporary service days. Action Rentals has a current permit with MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation on adjacent lands.
- Alpine Running Guides** is requesting to offer guided running trips to trail runners. See map for details. Approximately 10-14 participants would be on each trip with 1-2 guides. Trails would include the Reid Divide Trail (#800) and Nasukoin Trail (#375). Clients will receive transportation to and from the trailhead from Whitefish, snacks, and lunch, plus access to water filters, maps of the route, local knowledge/interpretation, and the ability to borrow bear spray. Guides would have trash bags and carry out any trash from clients as well as any trash found along the trail. Driving would only occur on roads open to motor vehicles. Note the Forest Service does not authorize activities on roads that are not under Forest Service jurisdiction, such as County roads. Requesting 100 service days.
- Whitefish Shuttle** is requesting shuttle services (livery), guided van tours, guided mountain biking and/or hiking trips on the Tally Lake and Hungry Horse / Glacier View system roads and trails from June 1 to October 31st. Requested shuttle routes and locations include NFS Roads: 115, 315, 316, 317, 376, 542, 909, 913, 2916, 2932, 2934, 2942, 5207, 11203 (plus ~18 miles of County Road crossing USFS lands). One touring route is requested from Polebridge up to Red Meadow Pass and down the Upper Whitefish Road, with a pullover at Red Meadow Lake for a stretch and picture break. No food service will be provided. Requested hiking only trails: Tally Lake RD – Stryker Mountain, #27, Finger Lake #802, and Lagoni Lake, #811. Hungry Horse/Glacier View trails – Cyclone Lookout #40, Glacier View Mountain #266, and Doris Ridge #52. There are three biking/ebiking routes requested, all on open gravel roads. 1) Cyclone Notch Loop, 2) Moose Lake Out and Back, 3) Red Meadow Loop. See map for details. Shuttle capacity is 14 clients. Maximum group size would be 14 clients and one guide. Requesting 200 service days.
- The Last Best Ride** is a one-day gravel bicycle race/ride, on Sunday August 22nd 21st, 2022, partially on the Tally Lake and Hungry Horse/Glacier View Ranger Districts. It is designed to showcase the amazing gravel roads Whitefish's surrounding areas have to offer. The event will start and finish in Depot Park in downtown Whitefish. Spectating will take place at Depot Park or on Whitefish Mountain Resort only. Set up for the race would occur on August 21st 20th, the course will be swept at the end of race day, and final signage clean up would continue the day after the race, on August 23rd. The event is proposing two routes, varying in length to accommodate how much

riders wish to challenge themselves. Two aid stations will be located off of the national forest and two will be located on national forest lands: one at the Summit House at the Whitefish Mountain Resort and one at the junction of NFSR 1658 (Werner Peak Road) and the Werner Peak Lookout Road. Trained volunteers will be scattered throughout the course for rider safety, both directing riders and helping to keep speeds safe. Maximum number of participants will be 550. See map for route details. Race coordination has occurred with Flathead National Forest, City of Whitefish, F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber, Whitefish Mountain Resort, MT MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and private land entities.

Proposals led by Swan Lake Ranger District

Please email Chuck James at charles.james@usda.gov for inquiries or to provide comments.

- **Mountain Archery Fest** is a multi-day event hosted by Blacktail Ski area on July 22-24, 2022. Event activities include 3D archery, recreational/competitive archery, archery target course, cornhole tournament, dinner/movie night, and day use and overnight camping. Event activities will be hosted within the Blacktail Mtn Ski Area permit area boundary.
- **406 Docks** is requesting to transport private boat docks to and from the Forest Service Swan Lake Boat Ramp to private residences along Swan Lake. Docks will be floated and towed by boat. Docks would be delivered in late May to the private residence and picked up and removed from the lake in fall.
- **Montana Outdoor Science Academy** is requesting day hikes for group sizes of 10-20 people comprised of 6th-12th grade students, teachers, and chaperones from June – October. Requesting for a total of 32 trips. Locations Holland Creek Falls (NFST 415, 416), Elbow Lookout, Bunyan Lake, Meadow Lake, and Glacier Slough.
- **Flathead Outdoors** is requesting to guide e-bike, e-dirt bike, and dirt bike trips on the Hungry Horse, Glacier View, Tally Lake, and Swan Lake Ranger Districts. Guided tours may have up to six clients. Flathead Outdoors is requesting 200 service days. Guide activities would occur between June 1st and Oct 31st. Flathead Outdoors would comply with seasonal road closure dates as indicated on the MVUM. Open motorized roads would be used to access trailheads.. Requested roads and trails are currently authorized on the MVUM as open to motorized use.
- **USA Cycling** is requesting to host a bike race/ride on June 24 with a maximum of 75 participants. The route is partially located on the Swan Lake Ranger District. The race would begin at Herron Park and proceed southwest along Foys Canyon Road and turn south on Patrick Creek Road (NFSR 2962, 2991) to Emmons Saddle and intersection with Foys to Blacktail Trail (NFST 185). Racers would then proceed north to Herron Park on the Foys to Blacktail Trail to complete the clockwise loop/s. The racecourse would only cross National Forest System land during the midsection of the course. The majority of the spectators and race support would remain at Herron Park.

Proposals led by Forest Supervisor Office

Please email Royelynn Warren at royelynn.warren@usda.gov for inquiries or to provide comments.

- **Adventure Cycling Association** is requesting to guide 10 bike tours across the Flathead National Forest between June 18 and September 19, 2022. The routes occur on Tally Lake, Glacier View and Swan Lake Ranger Districts. One tour is proposed with 42 participants over 4 days with no overnight camping on the Flathead National Forest. Nine tours are proposed with 13-14

participants over 1-5 days on the Flathead National Forest. Four tours include overnight camping at Holland Lake, Big Creek, and Tuchuck developed campgrounds.

- **Bike Adventures** is requesting one guided bike tour across the Flathead National Forest August 21-26, 2022. The route crosses Glacier View, Tally Lake, and Swan Like Ranger Districts. The number of participants projected is 15-25. The tour would overnight at Holland Lake developed campground on August 25.
- **Montana Adventure Shuttle** is requesting 50 service days for livery service June-September to various locations on Spotted Bear and Hungry Horse (including Meadow Creek Trailhead, Silvertip Cabin, Spotted Bear Campground, etc.) and to the Holland-Gordon Trailhead on Swan Lake. No more than 12 clients per trip.
- **BIKEternity** is requesting a guided bike tour August 14-28, 2022, that starts in Canada and follows the Great Divide mountain bike route going south. Use is requested on the Kootenai, Flathead, and Lolo NFs. Requesting 100 service days for use on the Flathead. Route for days on National Forest System lands are: Day 6 at Grave Creek with camping at Grave Cr Campground. Day 7 at Polebridge with camping at Red Meadow Campground. Days 8-10 at Whitefish. Day 11 at Swan Lake. Day 12 at Holland Lake with camping at Holland Lake Campground. Day 13 at Seeley Lake with camping at Big Larch Campground. Day 14 at Coopers Lake with camping at Big Nelson Campground. Day 15 at Marysville. No more than eight people on trip - requesting 150 total service days across three National Forests.

Maps of the project areas can be found on [the Flathead National Forest website under the Managing the Land/Projects page](#). Please review the proposal and provide us with your comments. To ensure full consideration of your comments in the NEPA analysis, we request that they be submitted by May 18, 2022. Input received in response to this solicitation, including names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record, and will be available for public inspection.

Sincerely,

**KURTIS
STEELE**

KURTIS E. STEELE
Forest Supervisor

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KURTIS STEELE
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