



Flathead National Forest

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Forest Service News Release

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Flathead National Forest seeks input on recreation events and guiding services

Kalispell, MT April 22, 2021—The Flathead National Forest is accepting public comment on recreation events and temporary outfitting and guiding activities across the forest. These events would take place on various dates between May and October.

The events and activities would provide a spectrum of opportunities like livery services, trail running and races, guided mountain biking, bike races, motorized tours, among others.

“Interest in outdoor recreation continues to grow in our area and we are excited to see so many people getting out and enjoying their national forest,” says Kurt Steele, Flathead National Forest Supervisor. “Our permit holders provide an amazing opportunity for connecting people with nature and are great partners in offering the public a wide variety of recreation opportunities.”

The Forest Service authorizes outfitters and guides to provide specialized knowledge, skills, experience and equipment that general recreationists might not otherwise possess. This contributes to high quality opportunities for people to recreate on public lands regardless of their skill level or prior experience. In addition, these types of activities expand recreation access to the public and provide jobs for the local economy.

“We’re excited to once again be working with the fine folks at the Flathead National Forest. Through Special Use Permits, the Flathead National Forest provides good paying jobs for our local employees, endless recreational opportunities for our guests, and an uncrowded option for locals to find solitude and adventure right out their backdoor,” says Whitefish Outfitters and Tours owner Kurt Schram. “We look forward to educating our guests on responsible tourism, while taking them mountain biking, hiking, and sightseeing in the Flathead.”

The Forest Service issues permits for these activities based on a “user day” which means that one person on a guided trip would be counted as one user day. Ten people on a one-day trip would be counted as ten user days for example. All proposed uses would occur on existing roads, trails, facilities, recreation sites, or in areas where such activities are currently allowed.

Based upon preliminary analysis, the Flathead National Forest anticipates these projects fall within the Forest Service category of actions under 36 CFR 220.8 that may be excluded in either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS) and that no

extraordinary circumstances exist which would preclude use of this category. Scoping comments along with additional review will determine whether these projects can be categorically excluded.

Additional information and how to comment on each project can be found on the Flathead National Forest [website](#). The Forest will update the website with additional information about the status of each permit as it is reviewed by specialists and any permits are issued. The public should submit comments by May 12, 2021.