



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Seeley Lake Ranger  
District  
(406) 677-2233

HC 31, Box 3200  
18 Mile Marker, Hwy 83 N.  
Seeley Lake, MT 59868

File Code: 2720

Date: August 6, 2002

SCOPING LETTER  
Outfitter & Guides Permit Re-issuance for  
Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

Hello:

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC) Managers Group is seeking comments on the proposed action of reissuing the five-year outfitter and guide special use permits that are currently authorized within the complex.

The BMWC consists of the Bob Marshall, Great Bear, and Scapegoat Wildernesses and is managed cooperatively by the Flathead, Lolo, Helena, and Lewis & Clark National Forests. Most of the wilderness outfitter permits are due to expire in April 2003. Permits are issued on a five-year basis; the new five-year permit period would run from 2003 to 2008.

The reasons to allow outfitting in an area are: to assure that the public has reasonable access to National Forest recreational opportunities, that the use resulting from it is of the highest quality, that the resources are protected, and that the client learns the unique attributes of the environment. Given the remoteness and wildness of the BMWC, many users require and prefer the service of an outfitter in order to safely have access to the National Forests.

Currently there are 64 permitted outfitters that operate in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex or in lands adjacent to the wilderness. Many of these operations have been in existence from 20 to 65 years. The scope of this proposal is limited to the existing permits and assigned sites. It is beyond the scope of this proposed action to consider additional assigned base camps, assigned spike camps, or to change current use within seasons, or overall use levels. The permits would be reissued under the current allocation moratorium (1986 forest plan standards). Change of allocation of outfitted and/or non-outfitted use (including transfer of summer priority days to fall days or vice versus) is a forest plan revision or amendment action and not included within the scope of this action. Individual changes of each specific permit (including increases and/or decreases in priority use) would be within the existing allocation levels. The process for determining these changes is defined in the Outfitter – Guide Administration Guidebook, February 1997. These are administrative changes to specific permits and not within the scope of this proposed action.

Outfitting is provided for under the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Forest Plans of the four respective forests that make up the BMWC (Flathead, Lewis & Clark, Helena and Lolo National Forests). The following are the BMWC definitions for base and spike camps as described in the current 5-year operation management plans:



- **Base camps** are reserved sites where a full range of outfitting services are provided. Typically the base camps are utilized for fall (mostly hunting) operations, although some permits may allow use during other times of the year. The campsite and the defined periods of use are described in detail in each Campsite Management Plan. Permanent or temporary corrals, hitch rails, and meat/food storage poles (all constructed with native materials) may be present as approved and allowed for in forest plan direction.
- **Spike camps** are not generally assigned sites. These camps are approved by the Forest Service, based on the permit holder's request, other resource needs and other users, not on client's choice. They generally have no permanent corrals, hitch rails or meat poles and will typically contain 1 – 2 tents. The period of use is specified in the Campsite Management Plan and the approved annual itineraries. Approval is usually not for more than 14 consecutive days. Removal of spike camps is usually required during periods of non-use. Spike camps allow for a different experience than at the base camp or when on a roving trip. They are not intended to serve a second party of clients but to remain within the total party number that is at an assigned base camp or on a roving trip.

The Campsite Management Plans are prepared for each permit and associated camps. These are based off direction established in the Bob Marshall, Great Bear, and Scapegoat Wildernesses Recreation Management Direction (pages 10 and 14-20, Amendment to all of the associated Forest Plans). Within the Recreation Management Direction is the definitions and locations of Opportunity Classes. The following is a brief summary of the Opportunity Classes for the BMWC:

- **Opportunity Class I** - *This area provides an outstanding opportunity for isolation and solitude free from evidence of human activities, and very infrequent encounters with users. Environmental impacts are minimal, restricted to temporary loss of vegetation where camping occurs and along some stock travel routes. Structures such as permanent corrals, hitch racks, and toilets will not be used as a resource protection method.*
- **Opportunity Class II** - *A high opportunity existing for exploring and experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man with probability of encountering other users being low. Environmental impacts are low and restricted to minor losses of vegetation where camping occurs and along most travel routes. Structures, such as permanent corrals, hitch racks and toilets, may be provided only in a few extreme cases. Those that are permitted will only be for resource protection and will use only native materials.*
- **Opportunity Class III** - *Moderate opportunities for exploring and experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man, with the probability of encountering other users is low to moderate. Environmental impacts are moderate, with most areas along travel routes and near human impacted sites showing moderate losses of vegetation. Structures such as permanent corrals, hitch racks and toilets, may be provided in only a few cases. Those that are permitted will only be for resource protection and will use only native materials.*

- **Opportunity Class IV** – *Opportunities for exploring and experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of man are moderate to low. The probability of encountering other area users is moderate to high. Environmental impacts are relatively high in areas along major travel routes, along popular river corridors and lake shores, and near major entry points. Impacts often persist from year to year and there may be moderate loss of vegetation and soil at some sites. Impacts are readily apparent to most visitors. Structures such as permanent corrals, hitch racks and toilets, may be provided. Those that are permitted will only be for resource protection and will use only native materials.*

The following table displays by Ranger Districts, the assigned sites that are in the current permits and proposed to be reissued for similar operations. Displayed is the type of use the permit offers (summer roving, summer base camp, fall base camp, floating) season of use for the assigned site or as described, legal description of assigned site, ranger district assigned site is located on, and opportunity class of assigned site locations. No drop or spike camps are displayed that are not assigned sites as these locations/specific itineraries are approved annually. **Attached** is a map of the BMWC that displays the assigned site locations within each ranger district

| <b>Rocky Mountain Ranger District, Lewis &amp; Clark National Forest</b> |  |  |   |   |                                      |
|--|--|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Assigned Site Name</b>  | <b>Legal Description (T, R, Sec.) of Assigned Site</b> | <b>Opportunity Class (I,II,III,IV)</b> | <b>Wilderness/ Non-wilderness (W/non)</b> | <b>Type of Use:<br/>Summer Base (sb)<br/>Summer Roving (sr)<br/>Fall Hunt (fh)<br/>Drop Float (df)<br/>Float (f)<br/>Day Use (d)<br/>Spring Bear (b)<br/>Lion Hunts (l)</b> | <b>Remarks</b>                       |
| Two Medicine   | T29N,R13W,Sec.12                                       |  | non                                       | fh  |                                      |
| Lonesome Creek   | T23N,R10W,Sec.29                                       |  | non                                       | fh  |                                      |
| Circus Creek   | T27N,R10W,Sec.28                                       | OC III                                 | W   | sb,sr,fh  |                                      |
| Wrangle Creek  | T25N,R10W,Sec.32                                       | OC III                                 | W   | Sr,fh   | Associated with 7 Lazy P Guest Ranch |
| Gates Creek  | T23N,R10W,Sec.6  | OC IV                                  | W   | sb,sr   |                                      |
| Lynx Creek   | T23N,R10W,Sec.9  | OC III                                 | W   | fh  |                                      |
| Biggs Creek  | T23N,R10W,Sec.21                                       | OC IV                                  | W   | sb,sr,fh  |                                      |
| Deep Creek   | T23N,R9W,Sec.23  |  | non                                       | fh  |                                      |
| Cabin Creek  | T23N,R10W,Sec.33                                       | OC IV                                  | W   | sb,sr,fh  | Associated with Sun Canyon Lodge     |
| Blacktail Creek  | T22N,R9W,Sec.4   |  | non                                       | sb,sr,fh  | Associated with Sun Canyon Lodge     |
| Cigarette Creek  | T19N,R10W,Sec.25                                       | OC III                                 | W   | sr,fh   | Associated with Ford Cr. Resort      |

|                         |  |         |     |                 |  |
|-------------------------|--|---------|-----|-----------------|--|
| Lost Cabin Creek        | T18N,R9W,Sec.11                                    | OC III  | W   | fh              |  |
| Whitetail Creek         | T18N,R8W,Sec.32                                    | OC III  | W   | fh,l            |  |
| Blacktail Creek         | T17N,R8W,Sec.4                                     | OC III  | W   | fh              |  |
| Obs. Pass Spike         | T18N,R10W,Sec.19                                   | OC III  | W   | fh              | Associated with Ford Creek Resort                |
| Lwr. Green Fork Spike   | T19N,R10W,Sec.36                                   | OC II   | W   | fh              | Associated with Ford Creek Resort                |
| Falls Creek Spike       | T17N,R7W,Sec.30                                    |         | non | fh              |  |
| Moose Cr. Spike         | T22N,R11W,Sec.33                                   | OC III  | W   | fh layover site |  |
| High Country Adventures | Summer roving (hiking) on L&C and Flathead Forests | Various | W   | sr              | No assigned sites associated with this operation |
|                         |  |         |     |                 |  |

*Lincoln Ranger District, Helena National Forest*

| Assigned Site Name | Legal Description (T, R, Sec.) of Assigned Site | Opportunity Class (I,II,III,IV) | Wilderness/ Non-wilderness (W/non) | Type of Use:<br>Summer Base (sb)<br>Summer Roving (sr)<br>Fall Hunt (fh)<br>Drop Float (df)<br>Float (f)<br>Day Use (d)<br>Spring Bear (b)<br>Lion Hunts (l) | Remarks:  |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Middle Fork Creek  | T17N,R9W,Sec.26                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   | This camp is not currently active. The permit has been suspended. |
| Sheep Creek        | T16N,R8W,Sec.7                                  | OC III                          | W                                  | fh,sr  |   |
| Flicker Meadows    | T16N,R8W,Sec.29                                 | OC IV                           | W                                  | fh   |   |
| Mineral Creek      | T16N,R10W,Sec.10                                | OC II                           | W                                  | fh   |   |
| Meadow Creek       | T16N,R9W,Sec.9                                  | OC III                          | W                                  | sb,fh  |   |
| Camp Creek Spike   | T17N,R10W,Sec.26                                | OC I                            | W                                  | fh   |   |
| Baking Power Creek | T16N,R8W,Sec.22/23                              | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |   |
|                    |   |                                 |                                    |  |   |

*Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest*

| Assigned Site Name    | Legal Description (T, R, Sec.) of Assigned Site | Opportunity Class (I,II,III,IV) | Wilderness/ Non-wilderness (W/non) | Type of Use:<br>Summer Base (sb)<br>Summer Roving (sr)<br>Fall Hunt (fh)<br>Drop Float (df)<br>Float (f)<br>Day Use (d)<br>Spring Bear (b)<br>Lion Hunts (l) | Remarks: |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|----------|
| Crescent Lake Fishing | T18N,R14W,Sec.30                                |                                 | Non                                | sb,fh,f,d  |          |
| Dunham Hunting        | T17N,R13W,Sec.18                                |                                 | Non                                | fh   |          |
| Middle Fork Camp      | T18N,R12W,Sec.31                                |                                 | Non                                | sb,fh,sr,b   |          |
| Camp Pass Hunting     | T17N,R11W,Sec.31                                |                                 | Non                                | fh,sr  |          |
| Deer Park Hunting     | T17N,R10W,Sec.28                                | OC III                          | W                                  | fh,sr,d  |          |
| Theodore Creek        | T17N,R10W,Sec.2                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | fh,sr,d  |          |
| Dwight Creek          | T17N,R11W,Sec.3                                 | OC IV                           | W                                  | fh,sr,df,f   |          |

*Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest*

| Assigned Site Name                                    | Legal Description (T, R, Sec.) of Assigned Site                           | Opportunity Class (I,II,III,IV) | Wilderness/ Non-wilderness (W/non) | Type of Use:<br>Summer Base (sb)<br>Summer Roving (sr)<br>Fall Hunt (fh)<br>Drop Float (df)<br>Float (f)<br>Day Use (d)<br>Spring Bear (b)<br>Lion Hunts (l) | Remarks:   |
|---|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Lunch Creek   | T28N,R15W,Sec.34  | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |  |
| Wilderness River Outfitters & Trail Expeditions, Inc. | Floating activities on the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Ranger District. | OC III – HH<br>OC IV – SB       | W<br>W                             | f<br>f   | No assigned sites associated with this operation |
| Glacier Raft Company                                  | Floating activities on the Hungry Horse and Spotted Bear Ranger District  | OC III – SB                     | W                                  | f  | No assigned sites associated with this operation |

**Spotted Bear Ranger District, Flathead National Forest**

| Assigned Sites Name | Legal Description (T, R, Sec.) of Assigned Site | Opportunity Class (I,II,III,IV) | Wilderness/ Non-wilderness (W/non) | Type of Use:<br>Summer Base (sb)<br>Summer Roving (sr)<br>Fall Hunt (fh)<br>Drop Float (df)<br>Float (f)<br>Day Use (d)<br>Spring Bear (b)<br>Lion Hunts (l) | Remarks:                              |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Soldier Lake        | T26N,R16W,Sec.23                                | OC IV                           | non                                | b,f,d,fh   | Associated with Diamond R Guest Ranch |
| Scott Lake          | T27N,R13W,Sec.19                                | OC III                          | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Calbick Creek       | T27N,R12W,Sec.16                                | OC III                          | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Argosy Creek        | T26N,R13W,Sec.24                                | OC I                            | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Cox Creek           | T27N,R12W,Sec.27                                | OC III                          | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Dolly Varden Creek  | T27N,R13W,Sec.35                                | OC III                          | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Wapiti Park         | T27N,R12W,Sec.13                                | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Switchback Creek    | T26N,R11W,Sec.6                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Basin Creek         | T25N,R11W,Sec.3                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Gateway Gorge       | T27N,R11W,Sec.26                                | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Strawberry Creek    | T27N,R11W,Sec.9                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Head Creek          | T27N,R14W,Sec.4                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Silvertip Creek     | T24N,R13W,Sec.4                                 | OC I                            | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Dean Creek          | T25N,R13W,Sec.26                                | OC III                          | W                                  | df,f,sr,fh   | Associated with Spotted Bear Ranch    |
| Pentagon            | T24N,R12W,Sec.4                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | df,f,sr,fh   | Associated with Wilderness Lodge      |
| Gorge Creek         | T23N,R15W,Sec.17                                | OC III                          | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Stadium Creek       | T23N,R15W,Sec.27                                | OC II                           | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Black Bear          | T23N,R14W,Sec.22                                | OC IV                           | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Juliet Creek        | T23N,R12W,Sec.17                                | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   | Associated with Sun Canyon Lodge      |
| Lone Butte          | T24N,R12W,Sec.9                                 | OC III                          | W                                  | df,f,sr,fh   | Associated with Wilderness Lodge      |
| Brushy Park         | T23N,R12W,Sec.31                                | OC III                          | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Independence Park   | T22N,R14W,Sec.2                                 | OC IV                           | W                                  | b,df,f,sr,fh   | Associated with Wilderness Lodge      |
| Salmon Forks        | T22N,R14W,Sec.25                                | OC IV                           | W                                  | sr,fh  |                                       |
| Holbrook Creek      | T21N,R13W,Sec.17                                | OC IV                           | W                                  | df,fh  |                                       |
| White River Butte   | T21N,R12W,Sec.7                                 | OC IV                           | W                                  | sb,fh  |                                       |
| Lower Bartlett      | T20N,R13W,Sec.8                                 | OC IV                           | W                                  | fh   |                                       |
| Upper Bartlett      | T20N,R14W,Sec.20                                | OC II                           | W                                  | fh   |                                       |

|                    |                               |             |   |             |   |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| Prairie            | T20N,R13W,Sec.9               | OC IV       | W | sr,fh       |   |
| don Creek          | T19N,R14W,Sec.11              | OC IV       | W | sr,fh       |   |
| Shaw Creek         | T19N,R14W,Sec. 9              | OC IV       | W | sb,sr,fh    |   |
| Camp Creek         | T19N,R12W,Sec.10              | OC IV       | W | fh          |   |
| Ayres Creek        | T19N,R11W,Sec.18              | OC II       | W | fh          |   |
| Hahn Creek         | T19N,R13W,Sec.23              | OC III      | W | df,fh       |   |
| Cabin Creek        | T19N,R13W,Sec.28              | OC III      | W | fh          |   |
| Babcock Creek      | T19N,R14W,Sec.36              | OC II       | W | sr,df,fh    |   |
| White Creek        | T18N,R11W,Sec.7               | OC IV       | W | sr,fh       |   |
| Leota Park         | T18N,R14W,Sec.27              | OC III      | W | sr,df,fh    |   |
| Big Slide          | T21N,R15W,Sec.14              | OC IV       | W | df,sb,sr,fh |   |
| High Rock          | T23N,R15W,Sec.23              | OC III      | W | fh          |   |
| Gordon Base        | T21N,R13W,Sec.18              | OC IV       | W | sb,fh       |   |
| Hawkins Outfitters | Summer Roving<br>and Floating | OC III & IV | W | Sr,df,f     | No assigned<br>sites associated<br>with this<br>operation |

This scoping is being conducted to identify environmental, social, and other issues related to the proposed action. An appropriate level of environmental analysis will be conducted to assess the significance of the effects associated with the re-issuance of the existing permits. Comments must be site specific and must be limited to the scope of the proposed action. Please submit any comments, concerns or suggestions regarding the implementation of this proposal to the Chairperson of the BMWC Managers Group at the following address by September 13, 2002:

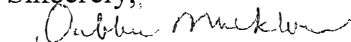
District Ranger, Daina Bambe  
Lincoln Ranger District  
P.O. Box 219  
Lincoln, MT 59639

Please contact Tim Love, Seeley Lake District Ranger, 406-677-3905, or Deb Mucklow, Spotted Bear District Ranger, 406-758-5376 if you have other questions or need clarification. We will be glad to direct you to specific district personnel.

If you wish to remain on our mailing list for this proposal, but do not have any comments at this time, please contact us. If we do not hear from you, your name will be removed from any future mailings related to this proposal. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.

I appreciate your interest in the management of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex and am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



DAINA BAMBE  
BMWc Ranger Chair 2002

