

Outfitter Permit Re-issuance
Cumulative Effects March 2005
Resource Area 1- South Fork Flathead, BMWC

Resource Area 1, comprised of over 35% of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, and administered by SBRD has 22 permitted outfitter assigned sites operated by 20 licensed Outfitters. Of this area Opportunity Class 1 comprises most of the resource base at 62 %; Opportunity Class 2 at 20 %; Opportunity Class 3 about 8 %; and the more utilized Opportunity Class 4 about 11 %. Using monitoring information from the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process, part of Forest Plan administration and also active permit administration; visitor use studies; and incorporating Wilderness stewardship management, it is estimated that non-regulated public use is over 60% and commercial outfitted use the balance. Following is an assessment of the accumulative effects for the permitted Outfitter activities in Resource Area 1.

Opportunity Class 1- there are no established assigned sites in this zone. Use is limited to infrequent and casual pass through of visitors during summer progressive trips and hunting activities during the fall.

Opportunity Class 2- 4 assigned sites occupy this zone of which 3 are heavy and 1 moderately impacted. Overall there has been a decrease in both total assigned sites and in the accumulative heavily impacted sites for this zone. This information is based upon early data collected through LAC monitoring. Further information gathered through annual permit administration with consolidation and removal of assigned sites (at Picture Ridge, Pagoda and Bartlett Pass), and efforts with Wilderness stewardship and Leave No Trace principles, has reduced the impact level of these camps to a moderate category. The trend of this OC is overall good and improving. The majority of the use is sporadic and mostly attributed to infrequent summer progressive trips and fall day hunting. No assigned sites in this zone are associated with any area of concern and are fall operations only.

Opportunity Class 3- 7 assigned sites occupy this zone. Of the early monitoring information provided, 3 are heavily impacted and 4 are moderate. In this zone there has been continuous monitoring and administrative effort to reduce impacts. Heavily impacted sites overall have been reduced and the majority of remaining heavy sites reduced to moderate impacts. No assigned sites (camps) are set up in the summer and are predominately fall operations with the majority of use occurring in that time period. No assigned sites are in areas of concern and overall conditions good and improving.

Opportunity Class 4- 11 assigned sites utilize this zone. A combination of continuous LAC monitoring identifies 7 heavy impacted sites and 4 moderate. OC 4 has the majority of all use activities in the entire Wilderness Complex. Permit administration has eliminated sites (at Damnation and Gype Mtn), consolidated (Big Prairie) and diminished the impact level of some camps. 2 historically located camps remain in areas of concern mostly attributed to general, non-outfitted public activities. Current management activities have reduced overall numbers, density and impacted camp concerns. The 2

camps in areas of concern have active LNT efforts in place, and active permit administration ongoing. Through campsite scheduling for use, reduction of stock support and site rehabilitation, reduction of accumulated impacts will continue. Wild and Scenic River mgmt is also a factor for improving conditions through permit administration; only allowing limited float operations, continued education and not permitting any summer use of assigned sites in the summer season. Throughout OC 4 conditions are static to improving. Areas of concern, mostly attributed to general public use, are being managed to further improve conditions, and the level of general Wilderness degradation is not being approached.