



June 25, 2008

Contact: Denise Germann
(406) 758-5252
(406) 249-1714 cell

40th Anniversary of Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Flathead National Forest Hosts 219 Miles of Designated River

The Flathead National Forest hosts and manages 219 miles of the Flathead River as congressionally designated areas of the Wild and Scenic River Act. The Wild and Scenic River Act was enacted in 1968 to preserve and protect selected rivers, or segments of rivers, in their free-flowing condition.

The Act states, “each component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included without limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values.”

Segments of the North Fork, Middle Fork and South Fork Flathead River were designated in 1976 for the spectacular scenery, historic sites, unique fisheries and wildlife and outstanding recreational opportunities. The designated segments include the North Fork from the Canadian border downstream to its confluence with the Middle Fork; the Middle Fork from its headwaters to its confluence with the South Fork; and the South Fork from its origin to the Hungry Horse Reservoir.

Within the National System, three classifications define the general character of the designated rivers: wild, scenic or recreational. Classifications reflect levels of development and natural conditions along a stretch of river. These classifications are used to help develop management goals for the river.

“Wild” rivers or sections of rivers are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. “Scenic” rivers or sections of rivers are free of impoundments with shorelines or watersheds still largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. “Recreational” rivers or sections of rivers are readily accessible by road that may have some development along their shoreline, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

The Flathead River designation includes 97.9 miles as wild, 40.7 miles as scenic and 80.4 miles as recreational. The North Fork is designated scenic and recreational. The Middle Fork is recreational and wild, while the South Fork is predominantly wild.

The only other river segment in the State of Montana designated by the Act is 149 miles of the Missouri River from Fort Benton downstream to Robinson Bridge, managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

For more information about the management of the Flathead River on the Flathead National Forest contact the Hungry Horse – Glacier View Ranger District at 387-3800 or Spotted Bear Ranger District at 758-5376. For more information about the National Wild and Scenic River System visit www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/cda/wild-scenic-rivers.

--END--