



# NEWS RELEASE

## Lolo National Forest

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United States  
Department of Agriculture

Forest Service  
Lolo National Forest  
Building 24, Fort Missoula  
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**For Immediate Release**

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## Missoula District Reviewing Rock Creek Outfitter Permits

Missoula, MT. – The Missoula Ranger District of the Lolo National Forest is conducting a review of float fishing outfitter permits on Rock Creek as part of their routine recreation program administration. The Proposed Action for the review, which is typically done every five years, is to essentially reissue the permits as they are. The issues and actions being considered under the review are described in a Scoping Letter sent out earlier this month.

During the District's last review in 2004, changes were made to regulate shuttle drivers, limit the number of guides per outfitter and the number of launches per day per outfitter, reduce or eliminate permitted wade fishing days for the outfitters who didn't use them and prohibit the removal of down woody material from the creek. Since that time the District has not had significant new issues arise. Monitoring by the District indicates that the three currently permitted outfitters are following the Terms and Conditions of their permits and their Annual Operating Plans and are providing a popular service to the fishing public.

**Background:** Rock Creek is located about 25 miles east of Missoula, Montana. Three outfitters are presently permitted to put in and take out on Lolo National Forest lands and provide guided float fishing trips on Rock Creek. These three outfitters are permitted to fish from boats until June 30 each year and provide a combined maximum of 200 boat launches per year. Float fishing is not allowed on Rock Creek after June 30. The Forest Service permits launching the boats and activities on Lolo National Forest land, but not the actual outfitting or fishing. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MTFWP) regulates fishing and licenses the outfitting operations.

Float fishing was first permitted and has occurred since 1986. Prior to 1986 commercial float fishing on Rock Creek was unregulated, and the initiation of a permit system was in response to growing float-fishing pressure on Rock Creek. In 1992 MTFWP initiated a regulation prohibiting fishing from boats from July 1 to November 30. Since 1986, the permits have been modified to:

- Set a June 30 ending date instead of a minimum stream flow volume.
- Reduce maximum permitted float days from 300 to 200.
- Issue individual permits instead of one permit to the Clark Fork Float Fishing Outfitters Association.
- Reduce the total number of outfitters from four to three.

For more information on the current review, or to comment on it, please contact Andy Kulla at (406) 329-3962. Comments will be received until May 15, 2009.

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