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Comments: It is an accepted truth that much of Montana, but particularly northwestern Montana, has been severely impacted by the negative effects of tourism and development in the last three decades. Construction and increased traffic in this corridor of the state pose an enormous threat to this historic place at a time when Glacier National Park and the surrounding region are already overpopulated during much of the year. As a recent NBC Montana article stated, updates are already required to the nearby "East Holland Lake Connector Trailhead, as it is no longer keeping up with overrunning demand."

As listed in Part 800.5: Protection of Historic Properties, Subpart B in Chapter 8 under Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, adverse effects are NOT limited to "the exterior of the Old Lake Lodge", but include "[c]hange of the character of the property's use or of physical features within the property's setting that contribute to its historic significance" and/or the "[i]ntroduction of visual, atmospheric or audible elements that diminish the integrity of the property's significant historic features". While the lodge is not currently listed in the NRHP, it is very likely to be eligible and it will therefore be the ethical responsibility of the US Forest Service and all involved parties to take these considerations more seriously. The landscape itself may also be eligible; however, many of my peers have already expressed concerns regarding the negative environmental impacts more eloquently than I can. Therefore, I will leave this issue in their capable hands. In short, the mitigation efforts included in this proposal are vastly insufficient and should be adjusted to honor this historic place in a more meaningful way.

While it is true that the historic structures within the designated project area have deteriorated, it is a misconception that they cannot be made safe in low-impact ways. Adjusting the goals of this project to protect what is already present will not eliminate the creation of jobs or prohibit the establishment of educational programs. I feel it necessary to clearly state that improvements to this historic facility do not require damaging this precious cultural landscape.

Large tourism corporations have exhibited a clear pattern of abuse in rural mountainous areas at a national level and this cannot be ignored. They capitalize on public interest to create "Holiday Boom Towns" that will inevitably die off as the region becomes overcrowded, a fate that is already looming in the Glacier Park area. As Montanans, we cannot agree to sell our land for the temptation of wealth that will not last. Nor is it in our best interest to accommodate companies that make false claims of supporting our communities. In addition to the great environmental and cultural risks posed by this project, we cannot ignore the resulting trend of "overrunning demand."

In summary, the stated rewards of these actions do not outweigh the damage that will be incurred. The proposal does not appropriately account for the physical, environmental, or cultural impacts of this project and should therefore be rejected.

Respectfully and in appreciation of your time,
Madeline Westrom