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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it May Concern,

I've debated about writing back and forth. On one hand, I have been involved in tourism for the past 20 years - mostly in Mexico where I was living before the pandemic - and more recently here in Montana where I work with a company managing short term vacation rentals. So, obviously, it is not from a place of not agreeing with or liking tourism that I am writing about my concern with the proposed expansion project for Holland Lake Lodge. However, having lived in tourism areas for most of my life, I can say from experience that I KNOW when tourism has been (or is) approached in a way that is positive for the community, makes minimal impact on the environment around it vs. when it is approached in a way that is without care, without morals and purely based on profit. And, unfortunately, I have read through the planned developed that POWDR wishes to implement at Holland Lake and I do strongly feel that their current plan is the latter.

My family has a wheat farm in Ft. Benton and my parents currently live in Kalispell. My grandparents left Ft. Benton and retired in Polson before they passed many years ago and I spent more than 40 summers traveling to Flathead lake, Swan Lake & Holland Lake to spend with family and enjoy the beautiful nature that Montana so abundantly provides. We used to be able to rent small little cabins (picture attached) at Swan Lake and I remember those summers as being some of the best in my young life. Unfortunately, Swan Lake is now all private, those cabins are part of a distant memory - perhaps as someone's shed behind their beautiful multimillion dollar property. There's a tiny park there that you can still picnic at - but gone are those little cabin renting days.

But there was still Holland ... quaint lodge, quaint cabins, it had always been my dream to stay there when I was younger but the price was so high and I am a single mother - the pandemic nearly wiped me completely out and I had to start over. But the summer before last I managed to scrape enough together to spend two nights at the main lodge. I needed it - I was working 60-80 hours a week all Summer long and I was exhausted. The Lodge was short staffed - and I completely understood it - we in the valley were also short staffed and it was why I was working such long hours and was so strung out. I appreciated having someplace to go - to unwind, paddle board on the lake, have a drink watching the sunset, sharing the beauty of Holland with my daughter the way I had been able to enjoy it when I was a child, albeit from a hike along the lake - not at the lodge itself.

Does the lodge need improvements? Yes. No doubt about it - wouldn't argue that. Does it need to be rebuilt, built over, torn down, more buildings, more people, more more more? No, absolutely not - I have reread through hundreds of comments, documentation up the wazoo by people far smarter (and with far more time on their hands than I do - working two jobs and single momming it) but I honestly think it only takes common sense for you to walk around Holland Lake and know that the more buildings and people you pull into and put on that lake the more impact you are going to have to the natural beautiful habitat around it. You don't need a deep scientific environmental study to tell you that. I mean, if you need one because you can't reason that one out for yourself, then by all means let's have all the studies. Same thing for how the natural habitat, floral, fauna, wildlife will be impacted - visit Park City. I lived there the summer of the pandemic catering to multi billion dollar people and I can also tell you first hand that there is nothing organic, natural or welcoming about Park City for people who do not have money falling out their pores. Wildlife is pushed back, floral & fauna is carefully manicured and tucked out of the way, and it is so far from affordable that all their service workers have to live in Heber City which is 25 minutes away because they were pushed out of their own "home town." If you don't believe me, I welcome you to visit and see. Or, you know, mosey over to Whitefish - we who live here all know what's happened to that town.

Or, you know, try listening to all the public comments from all the very intelligent people pointing out errors in how

the public was informed, errors or complete lack of environmental studies that would seem to me, again from a common sense standpoint, that someone working for the Forest Service would want to make sure they do their due diligence before agreeing to such a huge increase of foot traffic, car traffic, not to mention buildings and septic.

Other people can come and enjoy Holland Lake the same way we do - they can drive. Park their car. Hike up to the falls or upper Holland. Try to do it on a weekday when there are less people so you can really hear all the beautiful nature on and around the lake. Or take (or rent one from the lodge - thankfully you can still do that) and paddle board out - sit out there for a minute - enjoy the quiet - watch others doing the same ... but not en masse. Not watching it from some fancy window on a fancy king bed with fancy sheets and thinking "aww nature - it's it beautiful out there" - there are plenty of places for you to get that experience with much bigger lakes, bigger resorts, finest dining, and all that hoopla that I guess some people can't just help prefer over "roughing it." Plenty of other places - Holland Lake doesn't need to be on that list. Upgrade it yes - absolutely. I can easily understand if Christian and his Mom (who was a sweetheart to me when we visited so I am not here to poke at either of them) want to rest and step away from it - the tourism business is not for the faint of heart or for people who are lazy, I can attest to that. But POWDR + Holland Lake will destroy the beauty and serenity that is there and if I could hardly afford the lodge two summers ago absolutely forget that once they have taken over. I've lived in those communities before - I know exactly how that works. And I do not wish that for Holland. I want my daughter to be able to visit and take a picture with my grandchild the way I did with her and my mother. The way I did when I was a teen with my dad. The way my dad did with my Grandfather. Don't destroy one of the few places we have left where we can still enjoy the solitude without having to hike miles and miles in to find it.

Sometimes what is right and what is permissible are not the same things. Just because you CAN does not mean you SHOULD. And deep down you know it.

Thank you.

Mishka Aznoe-Morales