

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/7/2022 3:12:18 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in opposition to the Holland Lake Lodge expansion plan. I have been a Montana resident since the early 2000s, and lived in Seeley Lake for nine years while I taught at the local elementary school. I always found solace in this special place, whether I was taking curious students there on field trips or hiking solo over a path of golden needles and leaves in the fall. I know that Holland Lake has been a sacred place to so many, and especially to the indigenous tribes who were in the area long before the original lodge was built. After being on Seeley Lake or Flathead Lake in the summer, full of loud motorboats and jet skis, it is amazing to arrive at Holland Lake and admire the stillness and quiet beauty.

I have several concerns about the current proposal. One main concern is that the daily visitors, according to the master plan submitted, could be three times the current amount. Even if no motorized boats will be allowed or rented out, that amount of guests will significantly shift the quiet and peace that locals and out-of-state visitors hold so dear. Additionally, the volunteer fire department and emergency services would be stretched incredibly thin. (Recall the EMS worker who commented on this at the October 4th meeting at Seeley Lake Elementary.) I also see that, under the current proposal, POWDR would be allowed to keep the current wastewater treatment conditions, monitor flow and impact to the environment, and add septic tanks as necessary. I don't see how tripling the visitor capacity could not greatly impact this. I am concerned about contamination from wastewater flowing to the lake. I'm encouraged that POWDR has plans to include education programs about wildlife, and that it has many sustainable plans, but I still see wildlife in the area being greatly impacted as well. When visitors with little to no experience recreating at Holland Lake, we will surely have kayakers paddling straight into loons' nesting areas and leaving trash on the banks of the lake.

I understand that the lodge needs to be updated and renovated. I really appreciate that Mr. Wohlfeil has turned away other buyers who did not wish to share the space with the public. If POWDR ends up being the owner of the Holland Lake Lodge, I sincerely hope that they keep to the current size of the lodge and grounds, but just make necessary upgrades. Anything beyond that is not acceptable, and will change Holland Lake as we know it and love it.

Finally, I expect the U.S. Forest Service and POWDR to be completely transparent about proposals and plans with the public. This is not a simple business deal, and the public should be a part of the process every step of the way.

Sincerely,

Kelsi Luhnnow