Flathead National Forest

Attn: Kurt Steele, Forest Supervisor, Shelli Mavor, Project Lead

Friday, October 7, 2022

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed, for-profit, Holland Lake Lodge expansion MDP submitted by POWDR Inc. on public land just outside of the Bob Marshall Wilderness and adjacent recommended wilderness area. It goes without saying that an expansion of this scale and scope would negatively impact Wilderness, wildlife, local landowners and communities, and public use of national forest land that belongs to all of us.

Based on the information that has been provided and especially that which has recently been uncovered and documented here in the numerous comments already submitted by concerned local citizens, this proposal is ill-conceived, deceptive, and overall inappropriate for further consideration (at taxpayers’ time and expense). The USFS is under no obligation to approve this proposal, as there are many unanswered questions on the legal status of the current special use permit, the acreage that it covers, the true scope of the project, and the appearance of a covert fast-tracking of the project through categorical exclusion.

At this time, it is in the interest of the public that this proposal be rejected as it does not serve the greater good and sets a precedent for the corporate takeover of public lands. As we have learned, through our own research, over the past few weeks, this process has been flawed from the outset with acknowledged mistakes and a lack of transparency with the public. There is no reason to spend more time conducting a needs assessment, impact analysis and further public dog and pony shows. The existing footprint of the lodge already has an impact on the lake and the surrounding environment which should be reigned in and transitioned to a larger campground and a Forest Service rental/events facility and historically recognized structure.

There simply is not a compelling “need” for this development on public land in such a pristine and unique environment. The current (or former?) owner of the lodge can’t seem to make end’s meet as it is. I feel that the public would be better served with an extended campground here. To the corporate class, “progress” is inevitable, and we should just go along with it. We’ve gone along with it up to this point and as a result we have less places like Holland Lake and we find ourselves in a precarious situation with the way our civilization interacts with the planet and long-term sustainability. It is time to try something different. The promises of unbridled corporate expansion have never come to fruition and the public always get left holding the bag. Just ask Butte.

Yet to this day, the spiritual energy and quiet solitude of a place like Holland Lake continues to rejuvenate and inspire the human community and nourish the indigenous plant and animal species that call it home. I am proud of the people of Montana for standing up for Holland Lake and there are still plenty of private property options out there for POWDR to consider for a “boutique” resort…in Idaho.

Thank you for your consideration

Jonathan Gale