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First name: John

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Sept 8, 2022

Dear Flathead Forest Supervisor Kurt Steele,

I write to request a full, complete, professional and thorough review of the proposed mega-resort to replace the traditional Holland Lake Lodge.

I have paddled, camped, skied and walked the national forest shorelines of Holland Lake since 1975-47 years. To know Holland Lake is to love it and know Holland is NOT suitable for a major expansion -30 new buildings- which would transform a quiet traditional rustic forest lodge into an all season corporate mega-resort and marina.

The plan is a major departure from historic and traditional quiet recreational uses of Holland Lake. Holland Lake is treasured precisely because it is natural, wild and quiet, it offers solitude, accessible to all, not just the rich.

Holland Lake is a unique, accessible and fragile natural forest lake. The forested lake and Holland Falls border the Swan Front-Bud Moore Recommended Wilderness. Holland Lake and Owl serve as traditional gateways to the wild Swan and Bob Marshall Wilderness.

On the shores of Holland Lake, you encounter its delicate natural life, hear the calls of loons and pileated woodpeckers. Along its shores, you feel awe in the presence of the majestic Swan Front -forever part of "the Bob." This is why we return to Holland Lake, take our children, aging parents and loved ones.

The applicant POWDR CORPORATION <https://www.powdr.com/our-businesses> is a mega resort corporate operator that sells THRILLS ("Adventure Lifestyles") not traditional quiet nature settings such as Holland Lake Lodge has offered since the 1920s.

The first ask of POWDR CORPORATION is to demand "fast tracking" claiming -incorrectly- that their mega resort and marina project can be "Categorically Excluded" from environmental analysis.

No it cannot be fast tracked. Have you told them this?

This mega resort marina project is not available for CE fast tracking. There are present and affected special circumstances including protected species, a recommended wilderness, historic features, wetlands and a delicate natural lake whose very nature has been to provide experiences that include large healthy doses of quiet forest solitude-in all seasons.

Holland Lake is not at all suitable for thrill-based corporate "lifestyles" recreation for rich people. As public land owners, we have no responsibility to sacrifice the quality natural lake experience of all for rich thrill seekers.

I found it alarming that your press release lacks any sense that this will be rigorously analyzed, no sense that you are stewards of something precious and rare. It reads instead like a regurgitation of corporate catch phrases that hold no meaning to public land owners:

Improvements would provide a family-friendly destination with the modern comfort and conveniences that visitors, today, expect, while retaining the integrity of location. Architecture elements would reflect the Adirondack design commonly used in dude ranches, lodges, and resorts across Montana.

This does not assure any public land owner who has taken their family to camp, hike or paddle in this lovely and delicate blue forest gem that we can rely on the unbiased and thorough review of a professional public land managing agency.

We expect professional analysis from you and your staff, including a very real option to say NO to the thrill-based mega resort proposed by POWDR CORPORATION.

For example the lodge could become a forest historic site. Rustic forest camp sites -now much in demand- could be expanded.

Holland Lake is a sparkling gem of the Flathead National Forest. Public landowners and managers have ZERO responsibility to sell out and degrade present and historic high-quality natural quiet family recreation just to provide yet another mega-resort for rich thrill seekers. ZERO

I write today to request a full environmental analysis with at least two months additional time for public comment. This EA will, among other things determine whether a full EIS is advisable, which is highly likely in my experience.

Holland Lake offers a rare quality of forest lake recreation experience to all, with large healthy dose of solitude, that the U. S Forest Service must understand and safeguard.

I request a full analysis of the effects on traditional and historic uses, listed species, indicator species, old growth forest, the lake environment, wetlands, and the nearby Swan Front-Bud Moore Recommended Wilderness Area. I request consideration of a range of more suitable alternatives that fully preserve the natural Holland Lake experience such as designating the lodge a historic site and campground with no marina or mega resort.

Thank you for considering my initial thoughts. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Please keep me fully informed of what you intend to do, Supervisor Steele.

Keep it wild

John Gatchell  
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