

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/11/2022 8:44:05 PM

First name: Kathleen

Last name: Richardson

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I am a full time resident of Condon, MT, have been a Condon property owner since 1994, and a frequent visitor to Holland Lake since 1972.

I am opposed to the proposed expansion. I do not believe that a categorical exclusion should apply to new construction of a 28 room lodge, a 3000 sq. ft restaurant, cabins, bunk houses, maintenance buildings and employee housing. The extent of the project is equivalent to creation of a new resort and should be subject to an environmental impact assessment.

The Swan Valley Regional Plan (SVRP) was finalized 02/15/2018, pursuant to MCA 76-1-103, after numerous community meetings and listening sessions, for the purpose of providing "guidelines, decision making policy, and criteria for...(among others) Federal, State, and County agencies, and other private organizations and citizens involved in decisions that affect present and future growth in the Swan Valley." Its identified goals include enhancing air and water quality, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and connectivity, ensuring that wildlife corridors are preserved to the extent possible, and maintaining the open land rural character and wild qualities of the Upper Swan Valley.

Holland Lake sits at the foot of the Holland Trail and Gordon Pass access to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. "Bears are documented to move freely through the valley floor between the Mission and Swan Mountain ranges." (SVRP) Residents of the valley, including me, report repeated sightings and encounters with black bears and grizzlies. Other wild life present in the valley include elk, wolves, bobcats, wolverines, badgers, and loons. All of these species depend on the secluded, undeveloped nature of the valley and deserve our protection. According to the Flathead National Forest Land Management Plan, the Swan Valley is an important connectivity zone for many species of wildlife, including grizzly bears.

Holland Lake is accessed via Highway 83, a two-lane state highway which is overcrowded during the summer tourist season (actual daily trips est. at 1826 by SVRP) and is the site of frequent animal - vehicle collisions. Assuming the purpose of expanded overnight facilities and a 3000 sq. ft. restaurant is to increase visitors to the lodge, it is reasonable to expect an increase in collisions on the highway.

Structural and wildfire suppression and emergency medical services are provided to the valley by Swan Valley Emergency Services, a volunteer organization that has recruiting problems due to an aging population, the increasing number of part time residents, and the need to meet training requirements each year (20 hours per year for firefighters; 80 hours ea. two years for QRU) (SVRP) SVES already receives multiple calls for medical assistance on the Holland Falls Trail, and could well be stretched too thin to respond the increased tourist numbers and fire risk posed by an enlarged resort.

The Holland Lake public boat ramp has begun to silt in, over the past few years. This has led to a decrease in the number of larger, motorized boats on the lake. The result is a quieter, more secluded environment and more safety for kayakers and canoeists. The proposed Holland Lake Development Plan is a giant step backwards for wildlife, the environment, and the peaceful enjoyment of the Swan Valley.