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Comments: We are long-term residents of the Swan Valley having owned a cabin there for almost 40 years. Over those years we have visited the Holland Lake Lodge many times, particularly when it was owned by Howard and Lois Uhl. We even stayed in one of their cabins when we were building our place in the early 1980s. We recognize both the historic significance of the property and the need for investment in restoration.

We've reviewed the proposed plan by the private company POWDR for development of the Holland Lake Lodge. It appears to be a well thought out plan and one, at least in tone, tries to recognize the historic, cultural and environmental significance of this piece of public land. That said, we are concerned about the lack of community involvement in this planning process. Even if the Forest Service decides that this project fits the statutory requirement for a categorical exclusion from NEPA review, this is still public property. And, consequently, the public should have an opportunity to meet with the government and the developer and to discuss in a fulsome manner the plans for and impacts of this project.

If this project is approved and constructed as proposed, it will, invariably, have long-term impact on the valley and community. The environmental change to the 15-acre site will certainly be dramatic even if the Forest Service is able to ensure that the proposed plan is adhered to by the developers. But the inevitable increase in use to Holland Lake and the connecting routes to and around the lake will be substantial. The community can and should have a reasonable opportunity to work with the government and the developer to bring its substantial knowledge of the area to the table. Perhaps, as detailed as this proposal may be, it could be made better by such involvement. At a minimum, it would provide the community with a process for its voice and concerns to be raised.

If this were private land, perhaps this extended process might not be necessary. Although, we would argue that it would still be a wise strategy for the developer. But this is public property and the community has a right to be heard. Learning about this proposal on September 1 with a 20-day window to comment and short notice for one public meeting is far from adequate. We deserve better from the government. The Forest Service can easily remedy this deficiency by extending the period and requiring the developer to hold at least one additional community forum to explain and solicit ideas for the project. We hope that the Forest Service will adopt this approach.