

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/16/2022 12:25:30 AM

First name: Suzanne

Last name: Vernon

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Supervisor,

I lived in the Swan Valley for more than forty years and not only enjoyed many leisure hours at Holland Lake but also participated in many community activities focused on lake activities. Holland Lake And it's environs constitute a unique, national treasure, important to all people and the history of Montana and our country. The proposed new commercial expansion of Holland Lake Lodge should be reviewed with a complete Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Statement, not a Categorical Exclusion. The Forest Service needs to address all impacts of tripling the capacity of Holland Lake Lodge in light of the owners comments that profits have been slim in recent years. If so, why not downsize rather than expand? An EIS could address all options. Maybe a more rustic education or history facility would be more appropriate for the community, the ecosystem, and the Forest Service on this site rather than expanding the commercial permit. Certainly the present capacity of the Forest Service infrastructure to respond to increased development in such a sensitive area should be addressed. The Forest Service has barely been able to respond to public boat launch needs in recent years. The cost will be no access for those in lower income brackets if the Forest Service allows this large corporation to take over and cater to wealthy clientele.

The Holland Lake area includes many endangered and sensitive wildlife species which belong to all Americans. These species include the iconic common loon, bull trout, grizzly bears, lynx, and wolverine. The clear, clean, icy cold water of Holland falls and lake are legendary, cascading directly from wilderness, the free and wild country that the new Lodge owners apparently want to develop soon into "adventure" recreation territory, marketing this public land to the wealthiest of clientele. Their plan demands thorough study, and review by not only the Forest Service but USFWS, Montana FWP, Missoula County and especially the local Community of Condon and Swan Valley citizens who stand to lose, or gain, the most in terms of noise pollution, light pollution and just good old fashioned pollution. Not to mention garbage, which is a subject that divides neighborhoods regularly in the valley. The Condon Community Plan should be included in the review, and considered, as it addresses many of the items being proposed by the lodge, including the valuable resources at stake such as the public beach and boat access. The new Lodge owners could soon have control over all of those accesses via commercial concessionaire status. All of these subjects should receive proper review, and comment.

Some of the subjects addressed in the Condon Plan, also a concern of the Forest Service, which should be addressed by the FS in this proposal include: the quiet, preserving the darkness, wildlife conflicts especially grizzly bears and garbage, bull trout, and nesting loons during boating season with an increase of people on the lake, increased use of Rumble Lake trail from East Holland connector trail. Rumble is not a maintained FS trail. Though it appears the Lodge has plans to improve some of those trailheads, the FS doesn't have funding or infrastructure to back that up. Why let them expand if the support isn't there to monitor toilets, garbage, or use? Other subjects include road maintenance with increased use of the area. The Forest Service constantly battles for road dollars. Ditto for Missoula County and it's winter snow plowing budget during bad snow years. The proposal appears to lean toward developing more winter recreation. Who pays for the infrastructure to support the increased use of county facilities in winter? The Forest Service? Will Forest Service employees travel to Condon in winter to pick up garbage at trailheads in winter? Garbage is a subject addressed in the Condon Community Plan, as there is no local transfer site. Residents are expected to take care of their own garbage. So if the expansion of this new Lodge succeeds, who is going to pick up all of the trash around the lake shore and on the trails? Surely it will be there. Who will monitor the grizzly bears getting into the trash?

The existing community infrastructure isn't in sync with the proposed plan. Nor does the vision outlined in the Forest Service mission statement or the Condon Community Plan for sustainable, rural communities align with

the vision of this mega resort corporation.

Please extend the comment period, and conduct the most thorough review possible to ensure the Holland Lake area receives the utmost protection into the future. Do not lease our heritage to the highest bidder. If you must continue to lease it, then make sure the permit holder is the best steward who holds the land in their heart, and the trust of the community in their hand.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Vernon