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Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern.

My family and I are blessed to be permit holders on Holland Lake; our cabin is directly across from Holland Lake Lodge. It is our privilege and duty to honor, respect and maintain the integrity of the land and the Lake.

In fact, the Forest Service, over the 35 years we have been there, checks regularly and insists on keeping the property and land pristine and safe, without change. They have been incredibly strict about how, if any, repairs or modifications be done. For any of the permit holders across the lake to make any adjustments, we must contact the FS, get approval from their office and Forest Heritage Team. They present those plans to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) who then makes the final determination. We must stay within the existing footprints, no additional buildings or structures are allowed; no removal of any trees or vegetation. We must be cognizant of the wildlife and keep them safe (to the detail of no hummingbird feeders!). Nearly all the cabins are without any septic systems because of proximity to the Lake and the possibility of degradation. Until recently, due to fire mitigation by the FS, none were visible from the Lake; again, to maintain the integrity and beauty of the ecosystem. We are grateful for their stewardship and concern; happy to comply with the many restrictions and regulations. I find it astonishing and disheartening that none of these parameters are being imposed on or required of this proposal. It seems a flagrant disregard for the sensibility and sensitivity which has been required of all permit holders there, and those who use Holland. It is a complete and appalling double standard.

That being said, I am stunned that they are remotely considering the proposal presented by POWDR Corporation and Holland Lake Lodge, Inc. This does not fall under the premise of maintaining the integrity and footprint of what is there. The notion this proposal presents that this is merely an improvement to the property and "will retain the integrity of the location" is absurd and completely disingenuous. It is a travesty. The scale is preposterous. Should they want to upgrade, improve the existing buildings, that makes sense. It is hard to manage the Lodge and make a living, and some improvements are certainly warranted. If anything, one should improve the campgrounds.

We sit across from the Lodge and joyfully watch the weekly weddings, the guests sitting happily on the lawn, the visitors walking up the trail to the Falls. But, 25 new cabins, a new 13,000 sq foot lodge, parking for 121 vehicles, a restaurant for 100? And, a visitor center, a water sports pavilion, floating docks? How will that change this idyllic place? It seems folly.

The beauty of Holland Lake and its surroundings is the quiet, the natural beauty. The majesty. The obvious enjoyment by so many of the Lake and surrounding area, the many hikes and trails, is evident every day. And, respected. Lately, it seems, even more so, most people on the Lake are canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking, recreating with much reverence for their surroundings. And, so enjoying this unique and special spot.

Also, the loons have arrived; we even have beaver making (or trying to) their lodge under our dock. And turtles sunbathing on the downed logs. We need to live with and amongst these creatures. All this wildlife will be gone with such a drastic increase in use.

This is a small lake. Truly; a small lake. (I grew up in Minnesota, so I know!)

Should POWDR want a resort or a development in MT or elsewhere, maybe a larger lake that could accommodate a large population would be a positive and lucrative option.

But, Holland; it is so pristine. It is not the right choice.

Finally, the so-called process to date has been a total sham; less than transparent to say the least.

The Forest Service received this proposal in April; and held on to it surreptitiously until September.

Technically it was revealed on 9/1/22; but in actuality, the public was not made aware until 9/6.

A supposed "public meeting" was announced for 9/8, 2 days later.

At the "meeting" it was announced that no presentation was to be made, no public comments were to be heard or recorded. Held in the horse pasture below the Lodge with us standing for 2 hours, it was such a mockery of what could have been, should have been a meaningful dialog.

Public comments may only be made until 9/21*, less than 3 weeks' time to do so, when it should be a 60 day period.

Despite now nearly 1700 comments* about this proposed "expansion", it has been suggested that none will have an impact on the decision to be made by Flathead National Forest Supervisor Kurt Steele to change his decision to only apply a Categorical Exclusion (CATX), the least rigorous review, rather than an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as designated by NEPA (missoulacurrent., 9/7/22). This is the most egregious and suspect part of the entire process. In addition, why is a FS employee (Tami MacKenzie) a spokesperson for this proposal rather than the applicants? She is a Public Affairs specialist for the Forest Service, and the one referred to by the Corporate applicants to present (and apparently defend) their proposal. The FS appears complicit; as already a proponent of this proposal, as though this is a done deal. Is this in the public's interest? Whom do they serve? The motto of the FS is: "Caring for the Land and Serving People. The phrase of caring for the land and serving people captures the Forest Service mission." Which people? The wealthy individuals who will be the only ones able to afford to stay at this resort? Caring for the land?

An EIS must be completed on this proposal; to consider the environmental impacts on the land, endangered species and other wildlife; and a review by SHPO for the historical and cultural impacts... for starters. Public opinion and sentiment must play a key role in evaluating the changes proposed for beloved Holland Lake.

Please, do not grant a permit to POWDR, an out of state Corporation, and Holland Lake Lodge, Inc. for the proposal as presented. It would be devastating.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Now amended to 10/7 for public comment; and presently 3,350 comments online