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Title:

Comments: I have been camping, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, birdwatching, turtlewatching, fishing and generally recreating at Holland Lake and in the vicinity for a long time. I am familiar with the lodge and restaurant, to the extent that I have dined there a dozen times and had drinks on the lawn many times over the years. I have been going there for at least thirty years, and have spent many nights in the nearby campground.

I am not against development, nor am I averse to rebuilding a ramshackle, poorly-maintained facility, simply because it is old and has been there for a long time.

HOWEVER

Holland Lake Lodge and the surrounding area is a unique, priceless and fragile spot, and one that should be protected from overdevelopment.

The Forest Service Master Plan no doubt has provisions for leaseholder usage for this and other lakeshore permits, but one would hope that those provisions do not allow for ruinous overdevelopment.

What makes Holland Lake special, in my opinion, is the silence. It is quiet enough in the early morning and evening to hear the loons that nest at the lake. In the fall, the bugling of elk echoes from the peaks. The campground is reasonably small and relatively quiet, and most of the campers that go there do so not because it offers state-of-the-art facilities, but rather, because it DOESN'T.

Places like Bigfork, Salmon Lake, Paws-Up Resort, numerous resorts on Flathead Lake, and Whitefish are already there, as playgrounds for the rich. Please don't let Holland Lake turn into another of those.

A very good example of how a government has allowed a resort corporation to ruin and close off a lake is Lake Louise in Canada. The average person can never afford to stay there, and has to carry their kayak or canoe across the lawn like a trespasser to put it in the water. As lovely as the lake is, it has been turned into a place where only the wealthy can stay. The general public is begrudgingly allowed to use the hiking trails-if there is room in the public parking.

The Holland Lake Lodge itself, is, in my opinion, worth saving. Refurbishing and modernization of plumbing, mechanical, wiring and windows would improve the place, but it should remain largely intact, to preserve a unique, attractive, and reasonably well-built building. The cabins could easily be replaced with better ones-not bigger ones, necessarily. An annex or additional lodge could be considered, but not some humongous monstrosity that will dwarf the beautiful old lodge and necessitate acres of additional parking.

There is not only no need for floating docks at Holland Lake Lodge, but the spectacular lakeshore lawn, where so many people have enjoyed drinks, quiet moments, and events like marriages, would be RUINED by the addition of floating docks.

And where would the boats be coming from for those docks? The boat ramp which is a whole mile away? The cabins across the lake that are even closer? There is a road serving the Lodge and lake, and boat docks are not needed.

Holland Lake is SMALL. It is a leisurely half-hour paddle in a canoe or kayak from one end to the other, twenty minutes if paddling fast for a workout. Power boats take perhaps three or four minutes to make the trip from the boat ramp to the inlet, and then they turn around and spend three or four minutes getting back. A limitation of horsepower to 5hp for boat motors would mean that small fishing craft and such could still make a pretty quick circumnavigation of the lake, without generating the wakes that wash the turtles right off their rocks and disturb the nesting loons.

Waverunners and Jet Skis should absolutely be banned from this lake! It would be like a motorcycle gang having a race across your backyard.

I own property in Missoula, and my smallish house is worth nearly a million dollars in the current real estate market. The price I have heard for the Holland Lake Lodge is only about three times that!

This property/lease needs a person or company to buy it who will cherish the good parts, refurbish the parts that need it, and run it as what it is and should continue to be: a small, intimate, quiet place suitable for a reasonably small number of guests. New England, Appalachia, and Minnesota have thousands of such family and

corporate run resorts on small lakes, and they do just fine for themselves. Clients return year after year and children grow up vacationing there and returning with their own children.

A small, well-run resort seems to me to be the best possible use for the Holland Lake Lodge property.

Surely, Montana can preserve a little of the good that makes it the Last Best Place?

Thank you for your consideration,

Christopher Connor