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Organization:

Title:

Comments: This is my second comment-

I grew up in the Swan Valley just over the hill from Holland Lake Lodge. My Great Aunt Ada White and her husband built the original lodge in 1925. I still own property in the Swan. I oppose the application from POWDR for an expansion of the USFS special use permit for the Holland Lake Lodge.

We love this lake. It's beauty and solitude feed our souls. Recreating on public lands in Montana, especially in the Swan Valley, is more in tune with nature and less about amenities. We like simple. We don't need or want POWDR's enhanced resort to enjoy our public lands. We don't need 'boutique'. This might be boutique in Snowbird, UT but it's huge in Swan Valley. It will not only destroy the beauty and threaten the environment, but it will bring even more visitors to the valley and push out those of us who have come here to recreate for a lifetime. Thousands of us have submitted comments from our hearts and our souls. But you are charged with making a decision based on a fair process, reviewing the facts, listening to public comment and following the established rule of laws. The federal regulations for special use permits provides clear guidelines and authority. The mission and goals of the USFS and the FS land use plan for the Swan identify the values to be protected.

Comments on the Holland Lake Lodge permit written by Marty Almquist, Jennifer Watson, Jim Miller and Duane Moe, all experienced administrators of Special Use Permits, point out the FS is not obligated to renew special use permits or amendments and may require improvements be removed when a permit expires. They identified several flaws in the application process and believe it does not fit under the CE section. The purpose of the permit is to 'benefit the general public and protect public and natural resource values'. 36CFR§251.54 gives you the authority to reject this proposal. Protecting the watershed, fish, wildlife and their habitat, identified in the forest plan, gives you the reason, the right and responsibility.

It is not your job to bail Mr. Wohlfeil out of his own poor business practices and lack of investment into the facilities. He chose to sell shares of his corporation to POWDR.

It is not your job to provide POWDR an easy path to ruin this valley. If POWDR plans to invest millions of dollars on improvements on FS land- our land- they must have a business plan to make this investment pencil out. It was pretty clear at the Seeley meeting that scaling this proposal down is not an option in POWDR's mind. You have the authority to see that business plan but don't just focus on whether their plan is financially sustainable. The ecosystem must be sustained. They promised at the meeting I attended in Seeley Lake not to provide motorized watersports or to build a ski area in Montana. However, other entrepreneurs could jump on an opportunity to contract with POWDR for all of those things. Also, visitors to the new lodge could bring their own toys. This enhanced lodge is just a toe in the door for POWDR and others.

The Swan Valley is unique with limited private land since all of the Plum Creek land in the Swan went to the FS. I am concerned that more special use permits will come to you. Maybe not from POWDR but with trailheads to Glacier Lake and beyond- and Crystal Lake, Greywolf and others, there is increased visitor traffic every year. The valley is also unique as it is nestled between two wilderness areas. Glacier National Park has gone to a ticket system to manage visitors. Increasing the size of the Holland Lake Lodge and having a mega-corp like POWDR with a big advertising budget drawn in even more visitors is not sustainable.

This valley does not have the infrastructure to meet increased demand. John Tapp, president of the Swan Valley Emergency Services, spoke in Seeley about the capacity of those 28 volunteers who serve the area. Five members are my immediate family members so I am aware of the strain of being on call 24/7. POWDR could donate money and equipment but it will still be the same core of people with even more demand for response. The roads that serve Forest Service trailheads, campgrounds and the lodge are overused. They are usually reached by driving on county roads and then forest service roads. Missoula County has been in more than one dispute regarding the dust from traffic on Holland Lake Road. Cell phone service and high speed internet is limited in the valley.

It is your job to follow the rules and protect public land and resources while ensuring access to the general public. You have the tools and the authority to deny this application. It may be a nice plan but its wrong for this place.

This valley does not have the infrastructure to handle this exclusive resort even if POWDR can mitigate their impact on the land, water and wildlife.

FUTURE GENERATIONS ARE COUNTING ON YOU TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION. DENY THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR HOLLAND LAKE LODGE.