

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/7/2022 2:10:01 AM

First name: Andrea

Last name: Kesler

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed expansion to the Holland Lake lodge as presented by POWDR. There are many environmental and social reasons this expansion would be detrimental to our community, the wildlife and the people of Montana should this proposal be accepted and it is the job of the United States Forest Service to safeguard this treasured space for all Americans and our future generations. This proposed expansion would cause irreparable harm to the environment and create an exclusive place for a very narrow margin of society, violating your founding principal of "The greatest good for the greatest number".

Your organization claims to be "Grounded in world class science and technology and rooted in community", but I have failed to see this displayed in your handling of this project to date. The threat to the natural environment is great should you allow this development to proceed. I am specifically concerned about the water quality of Holland lake being impacted by the greatly increased use of the area and once this is ruined it will be impossible to reclaim. We owe it to our future generations to protect this pristine place.

I am also deeply concerned about the impact on the Common Loon population that has just recently come back to the lake and began nesting there. Your own organization lists this bird as a "sensitive species" and they are threatened because "Disturbance of loon nesting areas by humans can cause annual nest failures and consequently affect long-term occupancy of lakes and population viability" (citing Hammond C.A.H. 2009 Conservation Plan for the Common Loon in Montana. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Kalispell, MT.) Allowing increased occupancy at the lodge and increased boating would most certainly threaten this population, and for this reason at a minimum, there should be no dock installation or increased boating allowed by the lodge. In addition to the Common Loon, this habitat is also home to lynx and grizzly bears who are already being threatened by the increased population and development around Western Montana and the impact to these species needs to be considered also. It is your due diligence to complete a thorough environmental impact study prior to making any decisions about this proposed development.

I also oppose this development for the social impact. This is a small, quite, pristine place that I have been coming to since I was a child and I want to pass it on that way to my son. The increased use on this scale would utterly ruin the peace and quite we all seek to find when we come to Holland Lake. In order for a project of this magnitude to cash flow for POWDR they will have to charge rates that make the lodge exclusive for a small number of uber wealthy and celebrities, and locals like me will be shut out of this place that we love. The current owner has already profited off this lease and failed to invest any of his earnings back into the lodge and for that reason I think the Forest Service should reconsider if this lease should exist at all, since it seems that people are more interested in turning a profit than actually caring for and stewarding this exquisite historic and culturally important site. I suggest that the Forest Service revoke the lease and take back the lodge to truly be open to the public in the way that your cabin rental program makes the outdoors accessible to all. The current lease that was signed in 2017 is also not transferable to POWDR from the current lodge owner and POWDR should be required to apply for a new lease which should not be approved. Finally, the proposed expansion is nearly double the current Special Use Permit of 10.53 acres and can only be seen as a land grab by a wealthy out of state corporation. The expansion would also ruin several prime campsites in Bay loop of the camp ground as they would back up to employee housing and massive parking lots.

Holland Lake is special and "soulful" just the way it is. You can not improve the beauty of this place and a development of this scale would utterly ruin the experience that we all seek to find when we come there. Please do not approve this project.

Respectfully,

Andrea Kesler, Missoula MT