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Comments: The area around Holland Lake provides potential habitat for the following species of owl: Great Gray Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Western Screech Owl, Boreal Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Flammulated Owl.

Great Gray, Flammulated, Boreal, and Screech Owls are species of concern in Montana. Most of these species are obligate cavity nesters, and all depend on existing nest structures such as snags or stick nests to breed. Habitat destruction has the potential to decrease nest structures available for owls and compromise habitat around the nest. A buffer zone around any owl breeding territory is crucial for owl nestling and fledgling survival, providing cover, camouflage, and healthy prey populations. We ask that owl habitat be considered in the review process for the proposed Holland Lake Lodge expansion on public lands.

The Owl Research Institute has been studying owls in western Montana for over 35 years and is able to provide data and consulting services in regards to environmental assessments for owls and their habitat in an effort to assist with forestry management practices.

Signed,

The Owl Research Institute