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Organization:

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Comments:

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To whom it may concern,

Holland Lake and the Swan Valley have been an important part of my 81-year-old life for some 50 years. Arriving from Michigan in 1966 to attend graduate school at the University of Montana, I had never come across country so wild and beautiful, so close by, as the Swan Valley and Holland Lake, the Mission Mountain Range on one side and the Swan Mountain range on the other. It was a paradise I didn't think possible having come from the Detroit area, the blight, the traffic, the thousands upon thousands of folks all trying to make a living and providing shelter and sustenance for their families.

An afternoon at any nearby lake meant sharing beach space with other families, our blankets and beach towels inches away from those of others. Birds overhead must have looked down with amusement over our patchwork quilt arrangements, our sunburns, our picnics scattered by summer storms, our paper plates sprinkled with sand, ants, flies, yellow jackets, tumbling here and there when winds picked up.

Then there were the drivers of every temperament maneuvering here and there for better parking, tempers sometimes flaring, getting out of hand, and, of course, the excessive drinking and bickering as afternoons wore on. But it was all we had then, all we knew that was close by and possible for families to enjoy. And we went and swam in murky waters, relaxed in the humid air, the sun sunk behind almost always overcast skies, rarely ever blue, ultraviolet rays nevertheless working their terrible magic on our susceptible skin, cancers popping up as we aged. And the only choice we had was to call it fun.

Directly across from the Holland Lake Lodge is a cabin, the second one ever built on Holland Lake by University of Montana world renowned geneticist, Dr. Lud Browman. It is there that my wife and I began our deep and growing appreciation for Holland Lake, the rich forest it settled in, compliments of a huge glacier many thousands of years ago, spilling out of a place we now call the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the pulse of ice so thick that only the tips of the highest peaks of the Swan Mountain range ever poked through.

Sunsets were spectacular, mosquitoes in our early days too! Sitting on the dock, we tried to imagine how the ground everywhere must have looked like after the ice melted away, without plants or trees, sedges, grasses, flowering plants, birds or beasts, etc. We tried to imagine how many thousands of years it took for these life forms to settle in.

Given all this and more I find myself asking: Isn't it miraculous that the Forest Service had the wisdom it did long ago when it mandated that only seventeen private cabins would ever be allowed on the lake? That the cabins would be shielded by trees and vegetation from one another, and also from those paddling or cruising down below on the lake? Then I asked myself why POWDR would be allowed (with Forest Service approval should it grant POWDR its permit) to cut down up to 200 trees on its parcel of 15 acres to make room for all its buildings some of which would be built right on the shores of the lake?

As I see it, minus the nefarious deal consummated behind every body's back between Christian and his lodge and the POWDR Corporation, Holland Lake, otherwise, seems to be in near perfect balance between the visiting public and private cabin owners. Just look at the amenities the Forest Service provides for the public:

- A Packer's Camp with corrals, places to park, unload stock, water, power, units to hold hay to feed stock, well-built bathrooms; even a nice log cabin to rent.

- There's a place to launch boats, pull them out, a parking lot for boat trailers, vehicles.

- There's a public beach; a roped in area to swim in; picnic tables; a parking lot, bathroom, and fresh water.

- There are two public campgrounds with sites for folks to park their vehicles; pitch their tents, back their camping trailers and rigs into; each site has a picnic table, easy access to the lake; firewood for a price; a safe beach; an iron grate for campfires, kids roasting marshmallows, chowing down on s'mores; substantial nearby lockable lavatories.

- There is ample parking room for folks wishing to go hiking up to Holland Falls, Upper Holland Lake, deeper into the Bob Marshall wilderness.

- There are places along the lake beyond the lodge where people have sunbathed and swam for years. There's the island where the old school-teachers once lived that people can explore as well.

Lots of amenities for public and private alike, as you can see. But as for a multi-million dollar complex completely out of context, I once again ask myself can the water table over there support not only the resort and all its perks but also the first in line historically and by decree, the needs of all our short-stay kids and their families trying to enjoy themselves camping and swimming around and in one of the most beautiful, mountain-jeweled lakes on this planet.

I say NO! to this project. Do not grant the Holland Lake Lodge and the POWDR-for-profit-Corporation a permit to permanently destroy what many many thousands of us over the years have come to love and cherish.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

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