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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Kurt Steele,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion of the Holland Lake Lodge. I am writing as a resident of Bigfork to express concern that the plan as proposed is not in the best interest of residents of the area, visitors to Holland Lake, the natural and cultural resources in the area, or future generations that will come to enjoy and love Holland Lake as we all do. I am also writing from the perspective of my education with an MA in archaeology and my professional experience with over 8 years in the outdoor recreation field. I believe an expansion of this size warrants an EA at the minimum, and likely a full EIS.

Some of my top concerns are outlined below:

Natural Resources:

There is no doubt the Wild Swan provides priceless habitat to grizzly bears, Canada lynx, and other protected species. Just this year there were several concerns regarding human-wildlife interactions in the vicinity of Holland Lake, including nearby Van Lake Campground being closed due to grizzly bear activity. Further analysis is needed to determine the impact such an expansion would have on wildlife.

Larger area impacts:

The entire Swan Valley already appears to be at or over capacity. Nearby campgrounds already have severe problems with drop camping and other issues as visitors attempt to secure campsites, and increasing travel to the area will only increase these issues and conflicts. Trailheads in the area are already consistently full. Roads in the area are already dangerous to travelers and cannot sustain increasing numbers of visitors. There is no doubt increasing traffic to Holland Lake Lodge will subsequently push more people into the surrounding campgrounds and trailheads.

Law enforcement and emergency services:

Local communities are strapped thin for LEOs and EMS. Increasing visitors to the area will stress these resources even more, which isn't in the best interest of either visitors or local communities.

There is no doubt this proposed project has attracted considerable concern from the local community. I urge you to consider their comments and whether this project as proposed is in the best interest of Holland Lake, the surrounding area and resources, and the people of Montana. This project as proposed does not appear eligible for CE, and greater adherence to the NEPA process should be observed.

Thank you for your time and diligence to this matter.

Best wishes,

Aletheia McCurry, MA