

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/8/2022 2:43:20 AM

First name: Nancy

Last name: McCourt

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service,

I have a lot of concerns about the Holland Lake Expansion proposed by POWDR. Wear and tear on infrastructure between Missoula and Kalispell, as well as potential overuse and abuse of minor backroads in the immediate area is of concern. Year-round use proposed by POWDR would likely increase area needs for seasonal road maintenance and snow removal.

One need only drive Highway 200 from Missoula to Clearwater Junction to observe the incredible number of white crosses signifying fatalities on a highway that is not designed for this potential increase in use.

Recently the City of Missoula announced plans to seek funding to enhance safety along Highway 200's East Missoula Corridor. This would not impact the safety of Highway 200 beyond East Missoula. The increased number of potential visitors under POWDR's proposal would only bring more vehicular traffic to Highway 200, with drivers unfamiliar with the road and potential hazards like wildlife and winter conditions. I would expect increased nighttime traffic and possibly increased impaired driving from a popular concert venue in Bonner by guests at Holland Lake.

Missoula County is large geographically and rural, creating unique challenges on law enforcement in terms of response times, and availability for incidents requiring multiple responders, or for multiple incidents occurring simultaneously in distant parts of the county. I have concerns about how POWDR's development as it is proposed and any related law enforcement needs, will impact availability of law enforcement for Missoula County residents.

People on vacation, recreating in wild country and on water have accidents and incur injuries. How will this proposed development impact our local emergency response teams and medical services, which are already struggling with shortages of providers and support staff?

People who visit Montana can be unfamiliar and unaware of hazards associated with being in nature - see recent fiascos in Yellowstone National Park involving visitors trespassing, tormenting wildlife, and generally having disregard and disrespect as guests. Those examples happened on public lands. What types of education and training does POWDR require of their guests who visit wild places to reduce need for emergency rescue, infractions on the surrounding areas and to increase respectful behaviors on what they might think of as their private playground?

Beyond the impact of POWDR's vision on county and community services, I have great concern about the potential harm on an already fragile system. Water is precious and dwindling. The lack of a complete environmental impact assessment ignores the risks to not only Holland Lake, but it's surrounding tributaries and wetlands. The Holland Lake area is critical habitat for grizzlies, bull trout, lynx and (proposed) wolverine and loons. Year-round use will negatively impact areas that protect wildlife and provide winter habitat.

Wildfires are on the top of everyone's mind from June - September. How will the increased numbers of humans envisioned by POWDR's plan not only increase the potential for human caused fires, but increase the need for evacuation planning and resources, should a major fire occur in the area.

Residents of Montana and Missoula County in particular have experienced devastating increase in the cost of living here as a result of increasing costs of housing, often related to increase property taxes. How will the cost

of increased need for county services as a result of POWDR's development be addressed to avoid further financial harm to our community's current residents.

Montana residents, with far greater technical understanding than I possess, of the permitting process, the requirements for accurate assessment of impact on water quality, and requirements for wildlife management have submitted comments clearly articulating gaps in the process to permit this project. These gaps appear to disregard administrative rules/policy. I ask that you review, consider and speak to these gaps.

You work for citizens on behalf of the next generation. I urge you to consider the very valid and legal questions submitted and to deny this proposed plan by POWDR to expand Holland Lake Lodge.

Most Sincerely,  
Nancy L. McCourt