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Comments: As longtime residents of Western Montana, my wife and I have serious concerns about the wisdom, fairness, and environmental impact of the proposed expansion at the historic Holland Lake lodge facility. We have lived in Missoula since 1980 and raised our family here. We have been accessing Holland Lake off and on for decades. When our kids were young, and as they were growing up we used to take them up to Holland Lake for swimming and canoeing. We would either stay in one of the rustic cabins, which were affordable, or come up for the day to use the beach near by the Lodge which was open to the public in those days. The Lodge was a low key and very welcoming place. We knew Howard who ran it then, as well as Steve and Sherry who were his caretakers. The food was good and affordable, but not fancy. Right before going away to college, one of our daughters asked me to take her up to Holland Lake and canoe around the Lake as maybe a kind of right of passage and a last look at a significant part of her life. When this same daughter comes home in the summer with her husband and our grandkids, our family comes to the day use area for swimming, and my wife sometimes comes up with friends for swimming and kayaking. In more recent years our daughters have attended weddings of friends at the Holland Lake Lodge. A year ago in late September my wife and I hiked the trail to the Holland Lake Falls, which was still being actively used, and even then had quite a few hikers. Too many hikers, especially during the summer months could easily ruin the experience. Obviously, Holland Lake is very important to us.

Holland Lake is a small lake. It only takes a good hand with a paddle a limited number of minutes to canoe across the lake, and the length of it can be canoed in 15 to 20 minutes. It does not take many canoes, kayaks and paddle boats to make the lake feel crowded, not to mention power boats. Three to four power boats can infringe on the peacefulness of the lake very easily. We have never encountered jet skis on Holland Lake, but we know from our experience at another lake that it only takes two jet skis to disrupt an entire lake.

Holland Lake is a small backcountry type lake with its rustic lodge and few cabins that was meant to fit into the surroundings, aid people in accessing the limited recreational opportunities that are available (Example: there is a place on the trail to the Upper Holland Lake Falls where the trail is so narrow and precipitous that only one person at a time can be on the trail there.) and afford a limited income for whoever ran it. It takes a certain type of person, and local support, which the Lodge has always had, to make a facility like this work.

There is no compelling reason why this facility should be enlarged to increase recreational opportunities. The limited trails around Holland Lake and Holland Lake itself are already supporting a significant level of user days, and would not benefit from an incremental increase. A significant increase in recreation could and would negatively affect the fragile nature of this small mountain lake and its surroundings. I have a recent (2012) Masters Degree from the University of Montana in Resource Conservation. Based on my education and experience, I strongly believe that the proposed development would irreversibly damage the natural resources at Holland Lake and in the surrounding area. Access at Holland Lake has always been limited to the people who really wanted to be there (not minding driving the three mile dirt road to get there), not to the people with enough money to be there. The proposed development would change all that for the worse. The local nature of Holland Lake and the Holland Lake Lodge could be made to feel unavailable to the people of the Swan Valley and Western Montana. The U.S. Forest Service has never been, nor should be, in the business of enabling and supporting multimillion dollar businesses. At the very least, we need to have an Environmental Impact Statement.

Furthermore, the Swan Valley is inhabited by resourceful people who know how to live with the land and not dominate it. There are many small local businesses (restaurants, rental cabins and facilities, and numerous small stores), which could be severely impacted by a major business enterprise at Holland Lake. Should we ruin the local economy in order to help a developer? What about all the extra dust and traffic? How long will it be before they want to pave the dirt road?

Please deny this proposed development at Holland Lake because it is not in the best interest of the people of the Swan Valley, the people of Western Montana, and the animals and natural resources of the area. Thank

You.

Respectfully.