

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/22/2025 10:07:55 PM

First name: J

Last name: Bernosky

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Even if owners Jacobsen and Knowles are restricted to operating within the existing footprint and facilities, granting a 20-year special use permit for the Holland Lake Lodge area is a bad idea for many reasons:

~ Environmental Sensitivity: Holland Lake lies within a pristine, ecologically sensitive area. Further development - especially under a long-term permit - threatens local wildlife habitats, water quality, and forest health. Even modest expansions or increases in visitation could have lasting, outsized impacts on the fragile ecosystem.

~ Loss of Local Access and Affordability: As development pressures grow, places like Holland Lake are at risk of becoming luxury destinations catering to wealthy out-of-state visitors. This trend drives up housing costs and limits access for ordinary Montanans, pushing local families out of the very landscapes that have long been part of their daily lives and cultural heritage.

~ Undermining Public Trust and Stewardship: Holland Lake sits on public land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, intended to remain wild and accessible to all. Granting a 20-year permit to a private LLC signals a troubling shift toward privatization and commercial control, undermining public trust and the Forest Service's responsibility to manage these lands for the benefit of all, not just a few.

~ Skepticism Around Intentions: There is widespread public concern that issuing a long-term permit, even with restrictions, opens the door to future expansion and greater commercialization. Jacobsen and Knowles' ties to larger corporate interests, including POWDR Corp, raise red flags about whether this proposal is truly about preservation, or a strategic first step toward large-scale development.

~ Lack of Transparency and Local Input: The process thus far has been marked by insufficient communication and a lack of meaningful engagement with the public and local communities. Many Montanans feel excluded from decisions that will affect a cherished landscape for decades, and that local concerns have been dismissed or ignored.

~ Setting a Dangerous Precedent: Approving this 20-year permit hands over another piece of Montana's public lands to commercial developers seeking to profit from its natural beauty. It sets a dangerous precedent for other protected or semi-protected areas, paving the way for similar long-term deals that erode public access, fragment wild landscapes, and prioritize profit over preservation.

Despite the required environmental analysis, the risk of permanent harm far outweighs any perceived benefits of the proposed operations - no matter how limited they may initially seem. This latest attempt by the new owners to profit from Montana's public lands at the expense of local communities, public trust, and ecological integrity is just another effort to exploit what makes this place truly special to the people who call it home.