

Feb. 8, 2019

Cascade County Planning Department and Board
Comment on Rezoning Proposal

To The Cascade County Planning Division & Board,

We own the Upland Angler Lodge LLC, DBA Hidden Canon Lodge at 2629 Old US Highway 91, Cascade, Montana 59404, which is currently operating under a special permit (Outfitter and Guide Facility).

Previously, the property was opened in 1990 and operated by Rick Pasquale (known as The Fly Fishers Inn). This property was also operated under a special permit (Outfitter and Guide Facility), and it offered guide and lodging services under that permit. It also operated as dining facility for area clients, outdoorsman and tourists alike, under a restricted headcount.

When we purchased the property, we met with various county planning division members (including Environmental Quality, Sanitation, Public Health, and multiple Planning staffers) and asked for guidance as to which permits were required to operate the facility in the same manner in which Mr. Pasquale operated the Fly Fishers Inn. Based on that guidance, we procured an Outfitter and Guide Facility Permit. We did our due diligence properly, and understood we were operating under the current county guidelines.

Unfortunately, as we approach our third season, county regulators now are questioning our operations, specifically as it pertains to allowing area residents and tourists to join us for dinners. The county does not appear to have a problem with us serving dinner to local outfitters and their guests. They understand that we have stayed within our head count guidelines as required by Environmental Quality and Sanitation. The county recognizes we work with multiple outfitters and their clients in the area, and the county understands we serve as a Booking Agent for outfitters as designated.

By rezoning the area from agricultural to mixed use, we believe it would allow us to work with the county regulators to find a solution to our current situation. The property has always operated under a specific headcount to ensure environmental safeguard. We are committed to continuing to operate in that manner as we value our environment and habitat of the Missouri River.

It is our philosophy and intent to operate in a manner that promotes growth in the area. We run a seasonal business, with a restricted headcount. We made an investment based on those factors. We also acted in reliance on our discussions with county regulators, that we would be able to pursue outside dinner operations within that headcount regulation. We maintain our core staff on an annual basis, not because we have to, but because employee continuity is healthy for our business, and more importantly, it is healthy for the local community the employees live in (our employees are not filing for unemployment in the off season, they have the ability to become permanent fixtures in their community, and in turn support the local economy year round).

To us, the importance of creating a mixed use area is that it allows us to be a supportive vehicle for growth in the area. By allowing us to expand more broadly into the dining arena, the county opens new avenues to support the local economy. Currently, the County interpretation of guidelines is to restrict our dining availability to existing outfitter relationships. The regulations state we are to operate "in conjunction with" outfitters, but somehow "in conjunction with" has been interpreted as "incidental to." We are not and do not wish to be "incidental to." We are and wish to continue working "in conjunction with," not only our local outfitter partners, but also with local area businesses.

By allowing us to operate in a mixed use fashion, we are able to advertise more broadly. We can partner more easily with our local communities and businesses (such as Malstrom AFB, United Way of Cascade County, Providence University, Benefis, Great Falls Rescue Mission, Humane Society, non-profit angling oriented groups, and community foundations, which all have already benefited from our partnerships and donations). Our intimate setting that lends itself to small groups (and fosters an environmentally sensitive stewardship), uniquely allows us to help promote area businesses as they find our facility a useful tool during their recruitment process (exposing potential employees to recreational benefits, culture, history and other hidden gems of the area). Local businesses have requested the use our facility for office parties and end of the season celebrations, as owners look to show employees gratitude for the year's hard work. We have business inquiries, looking for us to provide a unique entertaining experience in order to engage potential business partners or vendors. We want to offer something different to the area, while maintaining good stewardship of the nature and environment around us and promoting/introducing the unique experiences outside our doors to tourists and locals alike.

With that in mind, mixed use will also allow us to better serve the ever expanding outdoor recreation industry on which a great deal of Montana business relies (there is a great deal of research on this, but a recent article is referenced below). We currently work with and promote local tourist industry businesses (Central Montana Travel Planner, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park, GOSHAWK Ecotours, Adventure Caravans Inc., CM Russell Museum among others, not to mention all the local vendors we support). As we have been approached by area businesses such as these and others (which are outside the outfitting arena) to provide dining options for their various groups traveling in and around the area, Mixed Use designation would help us enhance their client experience, and in turn foster growth in those areas already identified as viable resources by the State/County (i.e Cascade County's Development & Growth Plan).

The outfitting and guide community is already extremely cut-throat, and restricting our advertizing/client base to a limited pool of existing outfitter relationships hampers area growth and opportunity. By supporting a facility like ours to operate in a mixed use fashion, we can openly engage not only locally but also outside the traditional demographic. We believe creating opportunities to engage the non-fishing community helps us introduce that community to all the great experiences the local area has to offer. This would allow us to source new relationships for our local outfitting community, and those new clients would likely visit the area fly shops, gas stations, grocery stores, various state parks, etc...

In short, mixed use fosters responsible growth in the area. The local residents want places they can go to without narrow restrictions. People from Helena and Great Falls call to dine with us, as they pass through from a day out on the lake, river, or trails. Tourists staying in local AirBNBs or camping stop by all the time looking to have dinner. Unfortunately, instead of welcoming them with Montana Hospitality, we have to turn them away. Those are important missed touch points for the community

at large. Missed opportunities to introduce both members of the angling community, and just as importantly, the non-angling community to all the area has to offer. We happily promote so many area businesses and public resources - scenic tours with GOSHAWK Ecotours, fishing with local outfitters

and fly shops, horseback riding, state parks like Tower Rock/First Peoples Buffalo Jump/Gates of the Mountain, and Lewis and Clark Interpretive Centers, and wildlife viewing to name a few.

We want to support this great area, great people and all it has to offer. The rezoning proposal will provide us the local government support we need to remain a part of this community.

Regards,

Peter and Patricia Wooldridge
Owners, Hidden Canyon Lodge
2629 Old US Highway 91, Cascade MT 59421
hiddencanyonlodge@gmail.com

Article referenced above:

https://missoulian.com/news/local/outfitted-and-guided-experiences-drive-tourism-revenue-in-montana/article_92c6a516-2273-5da5-97bc-589007caaf62.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Re: Public comment re zoning revisions from Peter and Patricia
Wooldridge, Upland Angler Lodge LLC DBA Hidden Canyon
Lodge

*This article is referenced in our comment - this is the web page
and the content is copied for your convenience below.*

https://missoulian.com/news/local/outfitted-and-guided-experiences-drive-tourism-revenue-in-montana/article_92c6a516-2273-5da5-97bc-589007caaf62.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

UM STUDY

Outfitted and guided experiences drive tourism revenue in Montana

- KEILA SZPALLER keila.szpaller@missoulian.com
- Dec 2, 2018



Floaters enjoy a quiet reach of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River that passes through the heart of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. The river was one of the inspirations for the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Outfitting and guiding are bringing significant and growing dollars to Montana, according to a new report from the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research.

Last year, spending on outfitters and guides hit \$374 million by nonresidents, or 11 percent of all visitor spending, according to the study. It reached the fourth-highest spending category by nonresidents, surpassed only by fuel, restaurants and lodging.

Jeremy Sage, economist and associate director of the institute, said one takeaway from the report is the growing importance of "experience-based tourism." The report is called "Montana's

Outfitting Industry: 2017 Economic Contribution and Industry-Client Analysis," and it is available online.

"We're not just selling stuff," said Sage, lead researcher of the study. "We're selling experiences, and Montana has lots of experiences. The more we can provide quality ones ... the more we can demonstrate the demand for Montana."

The findings come from a survey distributed to 1,090 email recipients, with a response rate of 35.6 percent, or 388. Of all respondents, 89 percent indicated "they provided some type of outfitting or guiding service in 2017."

The study noted a shift in outfitting and guiding. In the past, the industry was tied closely to hunting, fishing and rafting, but in recent years, it has grown to include other activities "of the Montana outdoor recreation experience." The report cited horseback riding and wildlife viewing as examples.

Mac Minard, executive director of the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, agreed the experiences available in Montana are bringing tourists. He said even llama trekking, or classes in long-range shooting or Dutch oven cooking, can be draws for visitors.

"They're looking for an experience, not a destination," Minard said.

The report said outfitters and guides served more than 700,000 clients last year, and 63 percent of those were from outside Montana. The study counted the amount of money visitor groups who hired guides spent at \$791 million.

Although the total amount is large, Minard said in rural economies such as Glasgow and Sidney, outfitting has a disproportionate benefit. In fact, he said that in discussions with tourism advisory councils, he has come to believe future sustainable tourism in rural economies will be tied heavily to the outfitted experience.

"It may be the lifeline of those communities economically," Minard said.

Sage also discussed spreading the wealth across Montana. As the industry takes hold and grows in the state, he said it will be important to minimize the "concentration of impacts" and maximize the shared benefit.

"I think a key to it is understanding how we work to distribute these visitors and their activities across the state," Sage said.

The institute looked at the industry more than a decade ago, and Sage said one significant change is that people are spending more money on outfitted or guided experiences than on retail. The report described the change and impact:

"In recent years, nonresident visitor spending on outfitters and guides has surpassed that of spending on retail goods, making it the fourth-highest spending category behind only fuel, lodging, and dining out. This rise comes despite only 5 [percent] to 6 percent of the visiting population taking part in these activities.

"This observation reiterates findings from the 2007 Montana Outfitter and Guide study characterizing the outfitting industry as high value, low impact. The high value is generated via the high average daily spending (\$481) compared to the average visitor (\$128) as well as the extended length of time spent in the state (7.28 days) compared to the average visitor (4.73 days).

"The low impact is a statement to the low volume of visitors making up the high economic contribution."

The report also noted that 39 percent of all clients took part in water trips, such as rafting or kayaking adventures. "Fishing was the next highest client volume activity," said a news release about the report. "By revenue generated from the outfitters and guides, fishing and hunting outfitters stood above all others, with 33 and 24 percent of all outfitting revenues, respectively."

The report itself also cited factors that could "limit or deter" visitors from coming to Montana in the future, such as extended fire seasons. "If this trend of prolonged and damaging fire seasons continues, many of the businesses surveyed expressed concerns over their ability to adapt."

The study also noted "rivers in Montana have experienced their own battles with Mother Nature in recent years." It examined a specific temporary closure of a portion of the Yellowstone River and its tributaries due to an invasive parasite along with low water, high temperatures and recreational pressure.

"Should the need to increasingly curtail or restrict water-based recreation arise, significant economic impacts are likely to be felt across the region," the report said.

The study also cited a 2016 U.S. Department of Agriculture report on recreation trends projected through 2030. "Overall, 14 of 17 activities showed average declines in total days of participation when accounting for climate change. The percentage point decline was greatest for three activities: snowmobiling, undeveloped skiing (cross-country skiing, snowshoeing), and floating (canoeing, kayaking, rafting), accounting for average net decreases of 39, 36, and 9 percentage points, respectively."

Currently, the report about Montana notes fishing represents the largest "revenue generating trip types for the outfitters and guides themselves" at \$76 million, and it cites hunting at \$55.3 million. It also notes that 90 percent of fishing clients and 85 percent of hunting clients are from outside the state.

Report highlights

Highlights from "Montana's Outfitting Industry: 2017 Economic Contribution and Industry-Client Analysis":

- More than 700,000 individuals took a guided or outfitted trip in 2017 in Montana.
- Visiting groups who took a guided trip spent on average \$3,501 per trip, while the average visiting group spends \$606.

- In 2017, 5.4 percent of all visitors participated in a guided trip and spent \$791 million while in Montana, accounting for nearly a quarter of all visitor (spending).
- Water based activities including rafting/floating/canoeing/kayaking (283,600 clients) and fishing (160,400 clients) represent the largest guided trip sectors when ranked by volume of clients.
- Fishing (\$76.7 million) and hunting (\$55.3 million) represent the largest revenue generating trip types for the outfitters and guides themselves. 90 percent and 85 percent of these clients, respectively, are from out-of-state.
- 61 percent of outfitted or guided trips that were land based took place on public lands.
- 28 percent of water based guided and outfitted trips accessed the waterways through a Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Fishing Access site.

Source: Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research at the University of Montana

Karen Carlson
346 Stockett Road
Sand Coulee, MT 59472

Re: Zoning Text and/or Map Amendment

Comment:

After reading the policy draft, I do want to say that a lot of work was put into all the changes. I realize that everything has to reflect MCA and ARM. There are many improvements to the old policy.

My concern is that the new policy seems to ensure that we get the slaughterhouse and CAFOs. According to partial MCA 76-2-203, 1. Zoning regulations must be: (b) (ii) promote public health, public safety, and general welfare (iii) adequate provisions of transportation, water and sewage 2. In the adoption of zoning regulations, the county commissioners shall consider: (a) reasonable provision of light and air (b) effect on motorized & non motorized transportation systems, (d) the character of the district and the suitability for particular uses. I do not want Great Falls to be known as a cesspool!

Other parts of the country are suing the large industrial Ag companies that have compromised their water, air and land.

Great Falls has worked too hard to bring companies here to allow all the negatives that come with the slaughterhouse and CAFOs. Property values have gone down in the parts of the country that have slaughterhouses and CAFOs. I hope you take into consideration the people that will move if the slaughterhouse and CAFOs are allowed into Cascade County. Crime rates in slaughterhouse communities have increased due to the type of workers that are employed by slaughterhouses. The Sheriff's budget will have to be increased. I can't imagine driving up 10th Avenue South and it being lined with feces and urine. This alone will cause the City of Great Falls to increase their budget to keep our roads clean. Also, schools will have to provide teachers for students with English as a Second Language. These are just a few samples of extra costs to our County and schools. The extra costs will exceed the monies brought in by this type of industry. It makes you want to follow the money since we, the tax payers, will loose and have to pick up the tab. I hope you contact the people of Brooks Alberta before a decision is made.

Please remember the purpose of a planning board per partial MCA 76-1-102:

(1) It is the object of this chapter to encourage local units of government to improve the present health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities to the end that highway systems be carefully planned; that the needs of agriculture, industry, and business be recognized in future growth; that residential areas provide healthy surroundings for family life; and that the growth of the community be commensurate with and promotive of the efficient and economical use of public lands.

I politely ask that the Public hearing of February 19 be kept open for public testimony due to the complexity of the zoning changes. The public needs time to understand how they will be effected. Please schedule future meetings until after 5:00pm to give the working people a chance to attend.

Thank you for your consideration!

Karen Carlson

Payton, Ian

From: BONNIE WARREN <bonniewarren4@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 3, 2019 9:33 PM
To: Planning Comments
Subject: East-side Slaughter house.

I oppose the re-zoning of this area to accommodate this project! It would negatively effect the City of Great Falls due to it's negative impact our air quality and the water table that flows into Giant Springs. As far as I can tell there would be no positive impact on our or the surrounding area and communities. Thank you for not changing nor allowing this business to come into our county.

Bonnie Warren

4428 4 th Ave N

Great Falls, MT. 59405.

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FOR OFFICE
USE ONLY

Date Received: 2/4/19

Date Reviewed: 2/4/19

Complete: Yes No

Hopkins, Sandor R.

From: Kim Wermling <riversedgeasstlv@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 28, 2019 5:10 PM
To: Planning Comments
Subject: A Community Residential Facility with 9 or more residents.

I am writing in support of the proposed rule change. I have been waiting on said rule change so that I can correct the error made when the initial application was processed.

Kim Kraus-Wermling
Owner/ Administrator
River's Edge Assisted Living
4800 Lower River Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-952-0262

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Date Received: 1-28-19
Date Reviewed: 1-28-19
Complete: Yes No