

Kendra Nielsen

Dear Members of the MPCA,

It is hard to know where to begin when you are trying to save a place that is part of your own childhood and the area where your mother and extended family were raised and where some still live. When I say "save" that is not an overstatement. West River Dairy, overseen by Riverview LLP, and its proposed expansion threatens the health of the land, the water, the wildlife, and the people who live and visit in the surrounding area. Let me correct that slightly by saying it has ALREADY threatened those things and people since its inception, but now GRAVELY threatens the land, the water, the wildlife inhabitants and the people.

I truly believe it is greed that has been the motivation behind this dairy and the almighty dollar is now threatening an expansion of gross proportions. Gross in every sense of the word. I visit the area where my mom grew up - just one mile away from West River Dairy - several times a year, as do several of my siblings and their families. Every time, since the day the dairy operation began, we have to cross our fingers that the smell from the dairy doesn't hinder or completely wreck our plans during our time at Frog Lake (Gorter Lake on the map) while visiting family nearby and staying at what was my grandparents' home which my mom owns now. The lights from the dairy can be easily seen across the field at night, that's how close it is.

My grandfather, Alfred Holslin, bought farmland back in the early 1920's and was married and began raising a family in the 1930's in the area that I am talking about that is so near the West River Dairy and proposed expansion. That legacy of farming was passed down to my uncle, Maurice Holslin, and continues to be carried on by my cousin, Mark Holslin, and his sons, Justin and William Holslin. Not only does an operation like West River Dairy and its overseer, Riverview, LLP, threaten the things I previously mentioned, but it also has a choke hold on the family farms in America. The average farmer can't compete with corporate or factory farms when it comes to buying land to expand their own operations. When I think about a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), such as what is being proposed to expand, I think about my grandpa Al Holslin and how upset he would be over the confinement of such a large amount of animals for "maximizing efficiency" and in knowing what kind of decimation these operations cause to the land, the water, the animals, and the people exposed to it. This dairy and the proposed expansion is crushing my grandfather's dream for future generations. This is just one story. There are more. Please listen. Don't allow the expansion to go forward.

Sincerely,

Kendra (Haag) Nielsen