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Of Attorneys for Plaintiffs

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN  
NORTHERN DIVISION

PARTNERS IN FORESTRY COOPERATIVE;  
NORTHWOOD ALLIANCE, INC.; JOE HOVEL;  
ROD SHARKA; SHERRY ZOARS; STEVE  
GARSKE; RICH SLOAT; SID HARRING; and  
CATHERINE PARKER,

No. 2:12-cv-00184-RHB

DECLARATION OF JOE  
HOVEL IN SUPPORT OF  
RESPONSE TO MOTION TO  
STRIKE APPRAISAL EXCERPT  
FROM RECORD

Plaintiffs,

v.

UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE,

Defendant.

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1. I am one of the plaintiffs in this case. I am also the president and acting director of plaintiff Partners in Forestry Cooperative. I make the statements in this declaration based upon my personal knowledge. I am competent to testify to the matters stated herein.

2. Plaintiff Partners in Forestry Cooperative (PIF) is a multi member based, regional organization, deeply involved in the health and well being of public lands in the Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This organization has participated in and has lead field trips of groups into the project area for education, relaxation, research and recreation. These activities include,

but are not limited to, viewing Wildcat Falls, studying the relationship between multiple species of trees as they age into old growth forest types and the aging forest's relationship to ground cover botanicals, simple meditation, wildlife viewing, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, hunting, rock climbing and nature dialogue.

3. While investigating the proposed land exchange in detail, and leading up to the filing of our first appeal in March of 2011, I felt the need to become as thoroughly informed as possible. I was very frustrated that land managers, with whom I have so much in common, could look at this issue so very differently than I do, as I could see this exchange as a grave injustice. I acted as a private land manager for decades, and appraisals were an important tool with which we could become more acquainted with specifics leading to valuation and even guiding some practices. I feel comfortable learning from appraisals and felt very strongly that the public had every right to know more about the details leading to this exchange.

4. Therefore I submitted a FOIA request to the Ottawa National Forest on March 21, 2011. It is attached as Exhibit A.

5. In response, I was supplied the two relevant appraisals in hard copy, enclosed with a cover letter dated April 18, 2011, signed by Bonnie Ilhardt and file code 5410/6270.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed this May 26, 2014, at Conover, Wisconsin.

s/ Joe Hovel  
Joe Hovel