

April 12, 2012

Partners in Forestry (PIF) and its associates are very disappointed in the Regional Forester's decision to uphold the Decision Notice and Finding of no Significant Impact by Supervisor Scardina, resulting in the trade of Wildcat Falls. PIF has felt from the beginning that this is an ill-advised and poorly-conceived project with great loss to the public. This is both a significant restriction of public access to a unique landscape attraction and a loss of integrity of a rare ecological feature. We are saddened and surprised that the public outcry against this plan was ignored, harming the very people who are the most ardent supporters of the Ottawa. In the revised EA comment period, at least 36 groups or individuals spoke against this, with only one in favor. Subsequently, there were at least 6 appeals filed to the decision, and over 100 people participated in a vigil at the falls on April 1. Recently we also learned that over one thousand signatures, on petitions to save the unique features with Wildcat Falls for public use, had been delivered to the Regional Office on April 6.

We understand we have only a very limited time period in which to file a complaint in US District Court, and we are exploring that option currently.

As we stated in our comments and appeals, our members use and enjoy the area in question, and we feel this loss to the public is too great to accept. In addition, it sets a dangerous precedent for future transactions involving public lands.

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