



NORTHWOODS LAND TRUST

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(715) 479-2490, nwlt@northwoodslandtrust.org

February 5, 2008

<<Name>>
<<Business>>
<<Address>>
<<City, State Zip>>

Dear <<Name>>,

I am writing to ask for your help in preserving a valuable asset to the prosperity of the Ironwood/Hurley community, our local waterfall on the Montreal River, Interstate Falls. Often known as Peterson Falls or Montreal Falls, this eighteen-foot waterfall is a scenic and precious attraction right at the edge of our community.

While known to some locals for years, widespread awareness of this waterfall only began in 2001 when the Hurley Area Chamber of Commerce published their first local waterfall guide. Interstate Falls is a beautiful local attraction, and the nearest waterfall to Ironwood and Hurley. The trailhead to the waterfall is just off of US-2, a quarter-mile west of US-51.

Tourism is a major and growing part of our local economy, and our communities are fortunate to have a scenic waterfall so close. The owner of this property has been kind enough to allow the community to visit the waterfall for over fifty years, but the property is now for sale and public access is in jeopardy. The property is 38.7 acres and includes a half-mile of Montreal riverfront and the entire trail from the road to the waterfall. I am working with Northwoods Land Trust, a local non-profit land-conservation organization, to retain public access to the waterfall, and we need your help. Please consider offering a pledge to Northwoods Land Trust to maintain Interstate Falls access.

According to the Ottawa National Forest, the nearby Black River Recreation Area and its five waterfalls attract approximately 60,000 visitors a year. Interstate Falls is just as scenic as most of those waterfalls, and has the added value of *being right here in our community*. Even with limited signage and promotion, many visitors come to see our waterfall. Fisherman also use the trail to access the Montreal River for brook trout below the falls. For our community to prosper, we need to cherish and publicize our local attractions such as Interstate Falls.

The real estate agency selling the property, RE/MAX Action North, has an asking price of \$250,000. Iron County and the Town of Kimball have both declined to pursue options to acquire the property, and there is no public access from the Michigan side. We therefore hope to find private conservation buyers to invest in the property and allow the Northwoods Land Trust to acquire a conservation easement, preserving public access.

The Northwoods Land Trust, based in Eagle River, Wisconsin, works with private landowners in a six-county area, including Iron County, to help preserve natural shorelands, natural areas, promote sustainable forest management, and enhance recreation opportunities for the public. Our goal is to collect pledges to cover an estimated \$50,000 in costs needed to acquire a conservation easement. The land would remain private property, but the easement would protect the river corridor and existing trail, keeping them open to the public forever. Depending on cooperation with a future landowner, the easement would exclude approximately five acres, set back from the river, which would remain available for development. We are also pursuing grant opportunities to match pledges to Northwoods Land Trust, further leveraging your contribution.

If you would like to make a pledge, please complete the enclosed card and return it to Northwoods Land Trust. We will only ask you write a check if we find a conservation buyer and agree with them on a cost for acquiring the easement. If we can't save access to the waterfall, we will never call in the pledges. If you would prefer to donate now, you can make a tax-deductible donation online at www.interstatefalls.org, or send a check to Northwoods Land Trust, P.O. Box 321, Eagle River, WI 54521.

If you can take a larger role, please consider joining with other conservation investors to purchase or co-purchase the property, and then grant a conservation easement to Northwoods Land Trust. The property could be sold and subdivided for development at any time, so we urgently need conservation-minded investors to buy the property and work with us while we collect pledges and grants. Buyers would recoup their investment by receiving a fair price for the easement, while retaining a beautiful 38.7-acre property with a half-mile of riverfront, and an inland lot available for a home.

To visit the waterfall yourself, go west on US-2 a quarter-mile past US-51, turn right just before Stoffel's Country store, and drive another quarter-mile, following the signs to the waterfall. From the trailhead, a pleasant hiking trail follows the Montreal River through hardwood-hemlock forest for 0.3 mile to the top of the waterfall.

For more information, or if you would like to volunteer in the effort to save Interstate Falls, please visit www.interstatefalls.org, or contact me.

Sincerely,

Ian Shackleford
Ironwood resident and Northwoods Land Trust volunteer
(906) 932-3779
info@interstatefalls.org

P.S. The Penoquee-Gogebic Range is blessed with several scenic waterfalls, some of which have already been closed to the public. Please help our community keep access to this local waterfall, and make a pledge of \$10,000, \$1,000, \$500, \$100 or whatever you can afford today. Remember, this is just a pledge. We would only call-in the pledge if we can save access to the waterfall forever.