



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Over a hundred attend Valentine's Day Rallies in Support of Forests

Calgary, Edmonton, AB: More than 170 people attended rallies today in Calgary and Edmonton to send a strong message to the Government of Alberta: Albertans love their forests and don't want the heart of protected areas like the Castle Special Place or poplar trail systems in Bragg Creek to be logged.

The message for the Valentine's Day rally the Government of Alberta was clear: there is significant support for the protection of the places Albertans love. About 130 people attended a rally at the McDougall Centre in Calgary, the Office of the Premier in Southern Alberta while over 40 people rallied on the steps of the Legislature in Edmonton.

"Albertans love their forests, their Wildlands, their parks and recreation areas," said Sarah Elmeligi of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. "While logging has a place in the economy in Alberta, ensuring places like West Bragg Creek are prioritized for the use and enjoyment of visitors and residents to Kananaskis, and the Castle Special Place is protected for Southern Alberta's water supply is important."

"The government protected The Castle Special Place in 1998. Visitors and residents love the Castle," said Gordon Petersen, a resident of Beaver Mines, Alberta who traveled to Calgary for the rally. "75% of local residents want to see that protection made permanent as a Wildland Park."

"Local residents with the Greater Bragg Creek Trail Association, in partnership with Tourism, Parks and Recreation Alberta have invested more than two thousand, five hundred hours and \$300,000 constructing a trail system in West Bragg Creek so that locals and visitors can enjoy nature and support the local economy," said Ralph Cartar of The Bragg Creek Environmental Coalition. "Now we're going to log over 19 of the 21 trails we've built in partnership with the Government of Alberta. This makes no sense ecologically or economically. Local businesses depend on those trails to attract visitors."

"We're calling on the Premier to halt logging projects in the Castle and to meaningfully engage the public in logging plans for the Bragg Creek area until we can assess the best way to manage our forests in the Southern Eastern Slopes," said Nigel Douglas of the Alberta Wilderness Association. "Before we even have that conversation, the Castle Special Place must receive permanent protection as a Wildland Park. It's had protection on paper since 1998; it's time to show some love for Alberta's forests and make that protection permanent."

More than 100 Valentines were sent to the Premier by attendees at the rallies. Groups are encouraging Albertans who could not attend a rally to send a valentine message to the Premier asking that logging in the Castle and West Bragg Creek be halted, and that the Castle receive permanent protection as a Wildland Park. The Premier can be reached at 310-0000 or at premier@gov.ab.ca.

For further information

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