



## STAR APPEAL

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## Bureaucrats 1, Nature 0

Let common sense work to protect some rare wilderness

The U.S. Forest Service appears ready to risk the loss of more Northeastern forest wilderness, as it considers management policies for the Pennsylvania woodlands south of New York's Allegany State Park. Foresters, applying a questionable regional rule, want to eliminate "roadless wilderness" designations for three more pieces of the Allegheny National Forest.

Although the area already has some designated wilderness areas totaling 638 acres, the Forest Service decided against the three now-isolated zones because each totals less than 2,500 acres. They fall below that threshold — itself an arbitrary num-

ber — when the regional office applies its own rule that such zones need a half-mile buffer from any roads, utility corridors, mines or railroads, and that buffer zone can't be part of the 2,500 acres.

Bureaucracy 1, Nature 0. And this game is heading into the late innings, as the Forest Service finishes its public-comment period and starts writing the draft environmental impact statement for revising its ANF forest plan.

The three areas deserve an unbiased and professional evaluation. The regional forestry service office should relent, or the national office should offer a better interpretation of the Wilderness Act, or Congress should just order this move.

Nobody's making any more wilderness and there's precious little left in the heavily settled Northeast.