

# Erie Times-News

Breaking News: GoErie.com

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**PREVIEW:** Wilderness Act anniversary inspires show

## Unparalleled nature photography

By Karen Rene Merkle  
Contributing writer

**H**ere's an anniversary that probably escaped your notice. Fifty years ago, on Sept. 3, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law.

It's an important piece of legislation on many levels, primarily because it protected more than 9 million acres of federal land. A local connection provides a reason for us to be especially proud. The act was written by environmental activist Howard Zahniser of the Wilderness Society, who was born in Franklin and grew up in Tionesta along the banks of the Allegheny River.

The anniversary was also the impetus for the Cray Art Gallery in Warren to organize and present "Wilderness at 50: Photographic

**SEE IT**  
"Wilderness at 50: Photographic Reflections on the Legacy of Tionesta Visionary Howard Zahniser" is on display through Sept. 28 at Cray Art Gallery, 511 Market St., Warren. Gallery hours are Thursday, noon-6 p.m.; Friday, noon-8 p.m.; Saturday, noon-6 p.m.; and Sunday, noon-4 p.m. For more info, visit [www.craygallery.org](http://www.craygallery.org).

Reflections on the Legacy of Tionesta Visionary Howard Zahniser." The exhibit features more than 40 works by 11 of the country's most renowned nature photographers. Thomas Paquette, artist and vice president of the Cray board of directors, tells us why we should make it a point to visit Cray before the show closes.

**Q How did the exhibit come together?**

A little over two years ago,

Kirk Johnson, the executive director Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, approached me about doing something again that we had done a few years back: in 2007, we had put together an exhibition of drawings, paintings, and photographs by local artists showing nearby proposed wilderness areas. Since the reason for a new show was national in scope — celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act — why not line up the most prominent photographers of wilderness we could locate, and make it the nation's pre-eminent invitational exhibit on this subject?

**Q Where did you find the artists?**

From coffee table books and museum shows, I had known and admired some of the photographers for decades, like Robert

Glenn Ketchum and David Muench and Craig Blacklock. Clyde Butcher, whom I should have known but didn't, I spotted at the Wilderness Society's headquarters in D.C. Marc Muench had done a show at the Wilding Museum in California, where I was having a solo show of my own wilderness paintings. Others appeared as we scouted around for the best out there, and our aim was to show the most diverse ecologies of wilderness areas possible. We put together a sort of dream team. If Ansel Adams were still alive, I am pretty sure we would have had him in this, too. To a person, each of the photographers in the show is appreciative of the significance of the Wilderness Act, and very happy to have their work celebrated here in Pennsylvania. A good example is Kevin Ebi, who told me that the act is why he is a

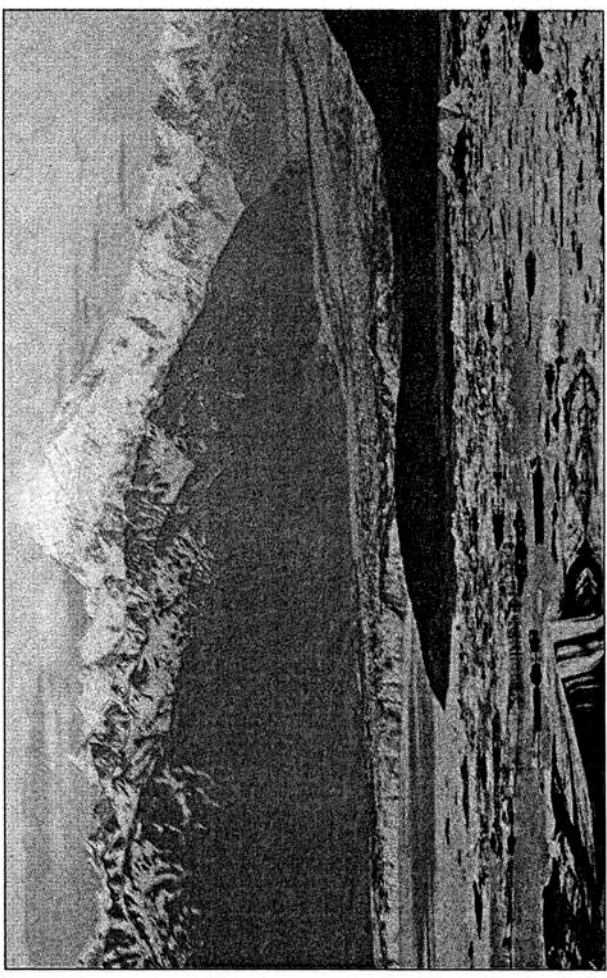
photographer, that it was those wild places set aside for nature to dominate that made him want to share what he sees there with the world.

**Q Can you give us an idea of what we'll see at the show?**

Each photographer brought such unique visions. It would be hard to pick one — or even 10 — of my favorite works without feeling I left something truly remarkable off that list. But I will say that in the evening, especially, it is particularly rewarding to stand in the main gallery where four of Ketchum's and four of Marc Muench's works — all eight on aluminum — glow and light up the room. Probably the most unusual piece is Marc's photo of the Milky Way as seen at a waterfall in Wyoming's Wind River Range.

# VISUAL ARTS

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Marc Muench's "Milky Way, Cirque of The Towers, Windriver Mountains, Wyoming," left, and Robert Glenn Ketchum's "Mt. Fairweather and the Alsek Glacier, 1 a.m."



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Marc Muench's "Milky Way, Cirque of The Towers, Windriver Mountains, Wyoming," left, and Robert Glenn Ketchum's "Mt. Fairweather and the Alsek Glacier, 1 a.m."

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Reflections on the Legacy of Tionesta Visionary Howard Zahniser." The exhibit features more than 40 works by 11 of the country's most renowned nature photographers. Thomas Paquette, artist and vice president of the Crary board of directors, tells us why we should make it a point to visit Crary before the show closes.

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**MORE THINGS:**  
in Erie art

**1 TRAINING.** The American Society of Railroad Artists' first exhibit opens Friday at the Station Art Gallery in Westfield, N.Y. It runs through Oct. 12. Call (770) 366-1448.

**2 ENTER.** Saturday, 2 p.m., is the deadline to enter Meadville Council on the Arts' 40th annual October Evenings exhibit. Fine art in all media is eligible. See [www.artsmeadville.org](http://www.artsmeadville.org).

**3 ROOF CALL.** The Woman's Club of Erie is looking for participants for "Artists Raise the Roof," set for Oct. 3-4. The deadline to register for a space is Wednesday. Call 823-9005.

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ON THE GO**  
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