

Sunday Patriot-News

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2001 • PAGE B10

.....
A Free Press — Armor of the Republic

JOHN A. KIRKPATRICK
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
PRESIDENT

JAMES J. STEPHANAK
GENERAL MANAGER

EDWIN F. RUSSELL
CHAIRMAN



DAVID NEWHOUSE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

DALE A. DAVENPORT
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR

THOMAS B. BADEN JR.
MANAGING EDITOR

HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

.....◆.....

‘Architect of wilderness’

Pennsylvanian who wrote preservation law honored

“Here are bits of eternity, which have a preciousness beyond all accounting.”

—*Harvey Broome, co-founder
of The Wilderness Society*

Many have waxed eloquently about wilderness, the protection of which, like the creation of national parks, ranks among America’s finest contributions to mankind.

But it was a Pennsylvanian, Howard Zahniser, who is credited as the architect of the 1964 Wilderness Act, under which 104 million acres of land “retaining its primeval character” have since been preserved in their natural state.

Tomorrow, along the banks of the Allegheny River, just north of Tionesta in the Allegheny National Forest, a state historical marker will be dedicated commemorating the lifelong contribution of Zahniser to wilderness preservation.

A native of the Forest County

community in northwest Pennsylvania, Zahniser was executive director of The Wilderness Society, a post he held for nearly two decades, when he drafted a bill in 1956 to protect America’s remaining wilderness areas. Some eight years and 66 drafts later, the legislation was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

For much of man’s existence conquering the wilderness was life’s greatest challenge.

Today the challenge is to preserve what “bits of eternity” remain to refresh the spirit, reveal nature’s secrets not yet exposed and to gauge the measure of our respect for the natural realm of our existence. Zahniser was a leader in making that possible.