

# The Bradford Era

THE HIGH GRADE OIL METROPOLIS  
OF THE WORLD

Vol. 134 No. 124 • 43 Main St., Bradford, Pa. 16701 • Thursday, Feb. 24, 2011 • www.bradfordera.com • 75 cents

## Johnson to attend March Wilderness Stewardship Conference in Las Vegas

WARREN — Warren-based Friends of Allegheny Wilderness executive director Kirk Johnson has been invited to attend the second annual wilderness stewardship conference facilitated by the fledgling National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance.

This year's conference will take place from March 10-13 in Las Vegas, Nev., and will include expert panels, keynote speakers and hands-on workshops to provide wilderness groups with information to assist federal land management agencies in wilderness stewardship, helping to build strong stewardship organizations.

Johnson has been awarded a full scholarship from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance to enable him to represent Friends of Allegheny Wilderness at the

Las Vegas conference.

The mission of the recently established National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance is to "develop a growing network of volunteer-based organizations to provide stewardship for America's enduring resource of wilderness."

The organization's vision is to see each wilderness area in the National Wilderness Preservation System adopted by a wilderness organization dedicated to protecting the area through partnerships with government agencies charged with their management.

In addition to Friends of Allegheny Wilderness's ongoing primary mission of seeking to protect substantial additional portions of the Allegheny



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National Forest under the Wilderness Act of 1964, the non-profit organization has, over the last ten years, also devoted significant energy and resources to the stewardship of the Allegheny's existing Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands Wilderness Areas.

Johnson is frequently invited to wilderness advocacy-oriented conferences on behalf of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. Since 2000, he has attended in conferences in Boulder, Colo.; Tucson, Ariz.; Lake Tahoe, Calif.; Asheville, N.C.; Seattle, Wash.; Los Angeles, Calif.; and numerous conferences in Washington, D.C. among others.

Johnson earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Albion College and a master of environmental studies degree from The Evergreen State College.

He has been the executive director of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, an organization he founded in 2001, for nearly ten years.