



THE BONA VENTURE



October 24, 2014

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Quick Center to host speech

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The Executive Director of The Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness will speak on the protection proposals for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest and the federal Wilderness Act on Oct. 30 at 4 p.m. in the Beltz Gallery of the Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts.

Kirk Johnson will present on the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which protects the United States' lands that remain wild and untouched from substantial human intrusion.

The Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness, a non-profit organization originated from the plans of Howard Zahniser, a native of the Allegheny National Forest area, who wrote the Wilderness Act of 1964.

According to Ludwig Brunner, Executive Director of the Quick Center, Johnson was chosen to speak on campus to compliment the Quick Center's current main exhibition. The exhibit, "On Nature's Terms: Paintings by Thomas Paquette Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act," will be on display until Nov. 22. Paquette's paintings are inspired by his travels through federal wilderness areas, including scenes from states across the country, according to Brunner.

Johnson's speech will appeal to students involved in Tread Lightly and anyone who is interested in learning about preserving wilderness and nature in the United States, Brunner said.

"(I hope students will gain) an appreciation of what it takes to protect wilderness and the different government and non-government channels the process has to go through in order to protect the lands," Brunner said.

Johnson received a masters degree in environmental studies from Evergreen State College in 1999 and founded the non-profit organization, The Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness, in 2001. The goal of the organization is to protect the Allegheny National Forest and the wilderness it encompasses.