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Bill Opens 110 million acres

Group Joins Stand Against Mountain Bikes

Add the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) to those opposed to mountain biking in wilderness areas.

Recently the group joined 149 other conservation groups in opposing legislation in Congress.

The sign-on letter from 150 organizations was prepared in response to two Republican bills (S. 2877 and H.R. 1349), which would open up all of America's 110-million acres with "wilderness" designation to mountain bikes and other wheeled vehicles within two years of passage. The Senate bill was just recently introduced in Congress.

"Tionesta, Pennsylvania native and Wilderness Act of 1964 author Howard Zahniser during his long career wrote chapter and verse emphasizing that all forms of modern mechanization must be

prohibited from wilderness areas in perpetuity," said Friends of Allegheny Wilderness executive director Kirk Johnson. "For example, as early as 1949 Zahniser wrote the following to Congress: 'Wilderness areas must be forever kept free from the sights and sounds of mechanical civilization, and all the influences which clash with the primeval environment or detract from its full enjoyment.'"

"Any honest person can readily see what the original intent of the Wilderness Act was in this regard. Zahniser would be spinning in his grave in Tionesta's Riverside Cemetery along the banks of the National Wild and Scenic Allegheny River were these two obtuse and hostile, overtly anti-wilderness, bills to pass," Johnson said.