

# THE FOREST PRESS

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## *Biking On Hiking Trails*

### Group Files Formal Objection To ANF's Proposal

Longtime Friend of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) board member Dr. Ronald Simonsen, of Warren delivered detailed formal objection materials the Warren-based non-profit organization prepared in response to the Allegheny National Forest's Tracy Ridge Mountain Biking On Hiking Trails proposal.

The meticulously prepared materials were delivered directly to the office of Allegheny National Forest (ANF) Supervisor Sherry Tune in North Warren, Pennsylvania on Thursday, September 14.

FAW's formal objection to the project focuses on, but is not limited to, four areas:

- The ANF's failure to prepare a full Environmental Impact Statement for the project (as opposed to the cursory Environmental Assessment that they hurriedly prepared) was arbitrary and capricious.

- The ANF failed to seek meaningful input from wilderness advocates from the beginning of the process, while openly and enthusiastically courting mountain

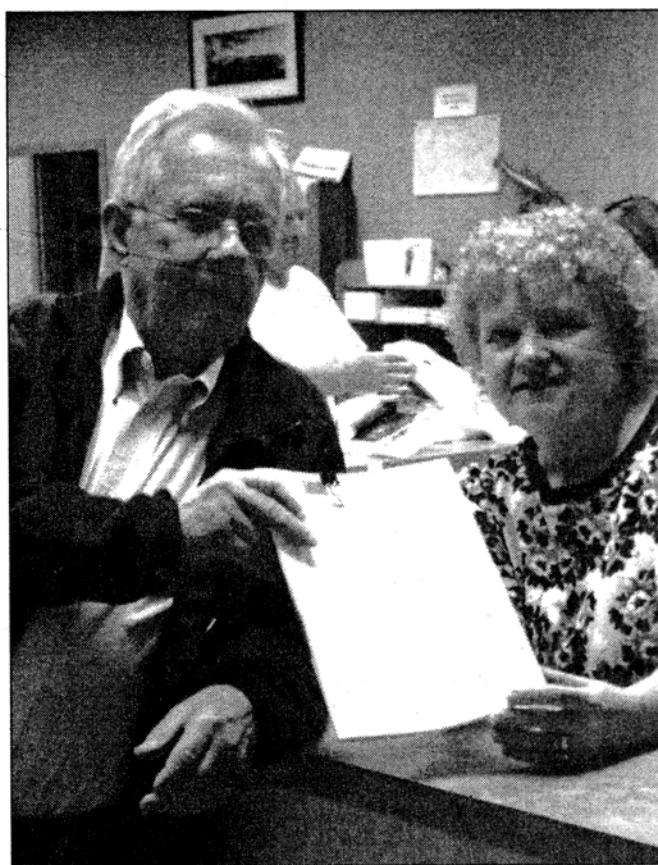
biking groups. There was never even the slightest air of objectivity.

- Opening the hiking-only trails at Tracy Ridge to mountain biking may have the practical effect of permanently barring a wilderness designation under the Wilderness Act of 1964 for this eminently qualifying area.

- The proposed Tracy Ridge Mountain Biking On Hiking Trails project puts the integrity of the non-motorized foot-traffic-only North Country National Scenic Trail at risk.

"We believe that this bizarrely ham-handed development scheme for one of the Keystone State's exceedingly rare untrammled wildlands ultimately will not stand," noted FAW executive director Kirk Johnson. "It represents an existential threat to the stunning 9,700-acre proposed Tracy Ridge Wilderness Area, and to the long-term integrity of the ubiquitously cherished North Country National Scenic Trail," Johnson concluded.

More than 80 percent of the 8,200 members of the public who participated in the most recent



**Longtime Friend of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) board member Dr. Ronald Simonsen, of Warren, is shown delivering detailed formal objection materials the Warren-based non-profit organization prepared in response to the Allegheny National Forest's Tracy Ridge Mountain Biking On Hiking Trails proposal.**

ANF Forest Plan revision process specifically agreed with FAW that Tracy Ridge should be designated by law as part of America's Na-

tional Wilderness Preservation System -- forever protected in its natural condition from all forms of development as an end in itself.