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Court upholds Roadless Rule Decision affects areas within the Allegheny

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A U.S. Supreme Court ruling has the blessing of a local environmental group.

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) released a statement on Monday "praising this morning's U.S. Supreme Court ruling protecting national forest roadless areas."

The Associated Press reported that the Supreme Court turned away an appeal on Monday challenging a federal rule that bars the development of 50 million acres of roadless areas in national forests.

According to FAW, approximately 26,000 acres in the Allegheny Front, Clarion River, Cornplanter and Tracy Ridge areas retain the roadless rule protection that originated during the Clinton Administration.

The justices said Monday they will leave a federal ap-

peals court decision in place that upheld the rule. The state of Wyoming and the Colorado Mining Association said closing so much forest land to development has had serious consequences for residents of western states and the logging, mining and drilling industries.

FAW Executive Director Kirk Johnson has a different take.

"These areas and other areas on the ANF are still of course vulnerable to oil and gas development due to the presence of privately held mineral rights, but without question it is far more desirable to have the roadless rule protection in place for these important natural areas than to have lost it," Johnson said.

The challenge centered on the contention that that U.S.

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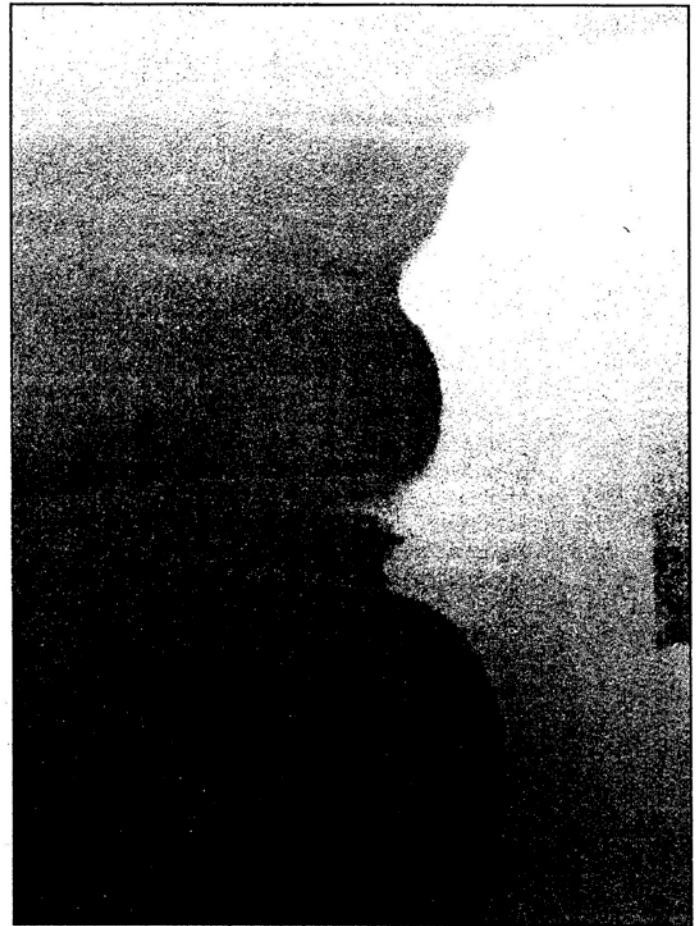


Photo submitted for publication

Tracy Ridge

The undeveloped shoreline of the Tracy Ridge area of the Allegheny National Forest is shown aerially from the north. Tracy Ridge is one of the areas of the ANF protected by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold roadless rule protections.

Roadless rule upheld...

Forest Service essentially declared forests to be wilderness areas, a power that rests with Congress under the 1964 Wilderness Act.

"In the wake of this good high court ruling, FAW and our thousands of supporters throughout the Commonwealth call upon Congressman Glenn

Thompson, Senator Bob Casey and Senator Pat Toomey to do the right thing and introduce legislation in both houses of the Congress to perma-

nently protect all qualifying areas of the ANF as wilderness under the Wilderness Act for future generations," Johnson explained.