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TIMES OBSERVER



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THIS WEEKEND

Father of Wilderness Act to be honored at Library Theatre

Father of the Wilderness Act, and Tionesta native, Howard Zahniser, will be Celebrated by Conservation Group on the 100th Anniversary of His Birth. Friends of Allegheny Wilderness will mark the 100th birthday of Howard Zahniser with a free public presentation at 7 p.m. Feb. 25 at the Struther's Library Theatre. Mark Harvey, author of a new book about this American wilderness leader, will keynote the event.

Also on hand will be Howard and Alice Zahniser's son Ed, a writer steeped in wilderness philosophy and advocacy who lives in West Virginia. Ed Zahniser will talk about his father's work in, and the overall evolution of, the wilderness preservation movement over the years.

Finally, Allegheny National Forest Supervisor Kathleen Morse will give a presentation about her past work in California's Inyo National Forest, where as a District Ranger she oversaw thousands of acres of wilderness. Ms. Morse plans to show slides of her vast experience exploring the wilderness of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

A native of Tionesta, Howard Zahniser led The Wilderness Society from 1945 through 1964, and his work culminated in the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act, which continues to be used today to permanently protect special wild places across

the nation for future generations to use and enjoy. That single law now protects more than 106 million acres in 680 wilderness areas, including Pennsylvania's Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands Wilderness Areas.

Born in Franklin, Zahniser grew up in a family of Free Methodist ministers in Tionesta, and although he moved away from any specific denomination, a spiritual outlook informed his thinking about wilderness. His love of nature was not so much a result of scientific curiosity as a sense of wonder at its beauty, and a wish to exist in harmony with other living things.

Mark Harvey, a professor of history at North Dakota State University in Fargo is the author of *Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act* (University of Washington Press, 2005). In addition to keynoting the event at Struther's Library Theater, Harvey will sign copies of his book at the Warren Mall Waldenbooks on the 25th from 3-5 pm.

For further information about the events on the 25th, contact Friends of Allegheny Wilderness at 814-723-0620 or alleghenyfriends@earthlink.net. Also check out The Wilderness Society: www.wilderness.org or Friends of Allegheny Wilderness: www.pawild.org.