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Tracy Ridge Wilderness Wins Carter's Support

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President Carter Monday recommended that Tracy Ridge on the Allegheny National Forest and seven islands in the Allegheny River be designated as wilderness areas.

The President's recommendations come in advance of Congressional action on the wilderness proposal.

According to John Butt, Allegheny National Forest Supervisor, the acreage approved by Carter was the same as that submitted to the Department of Agriculture by the Forest Service earlier this year, with one exception.

The exception, said Butt, involves the Hickory Creek area, 9,426 acres located between Tidioute and Hearts Content. The Forest Service had concluded that the Hickory Creek area should be withdrawn from any further consideration. The recommendation made by President Carter Monday was that the area be further studied to determine the best usage of the land.

Butt said he was not certain exactly what factors the administration took into consideration in changing the status of the Hickory Creek area, but said he understood some federal lawmakers from both Pennsylvania and Ohio had pushed for the amendment.

Butt explained Monday's action, saying, "This isn't final. What it amounts to is the executive branch making its recommendations for legislative action."

Other than Hickory Creek area, the administration's recommendations follow those made by the Forest Service in January, after an 18-month review under the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) program

Proposed for wilderness

areas by the Carter Administration are the following areas:

TRACY RIDGE—(9,188 acres). Located on the east bank of the Allegheny Reservoir between Sugar Bay and the Pennsylvania-New York state line.

CRULLS ISLAND—(96.2 acres). Located below Irvine near Dunn's Eddy.

THOMPSON ISLAND—(67 acres). Located just a few miles below Crulls Island.

R. THOMPSON ISLAND—(30 acres). Located about midway between Buckaloons and Tidioute.

COURSON ISLAND—(62 acres). Located just north of Tidioute.

KING ISLAND—(36 acres). Located just below West Hickory.

BAKER ISLAND—(67 acres). Located just upriver from Tionesta.

NO-NAME ISLAND—(10 acres). Located just below Baker Island and just north of Tionesta.

Minister Valley and Hearts Content, other areas studied by the Forest Service and ruled out, were also ruled out by the administration.

Hickory Creek joins a 7,763 acre parcel at Allegheny Front, 4,042 acres along the Clarion River and 3,012 acres in the Cornplanter area as parcels that will undergo further consideration.

In all, 9,600 acres were proposed for wilderness by the Carter administration and 23,000 have been set aside for further study.

Wilderness designation prohibits virtually all development, with only existing mining ventures and some livestock grazing permitting to continue.

Carter recommended that 9.9 million acres of national forest in the contiguous 48

states be set aside as wilderness. That amounts to about 470,000 acres more than the Agriculture Department had proposed in January.

In addition to the wilderness land, Carter called for further study on 7.7 million acres of forest land to determine the best uses for the land.

Congress has already set aside classified 14.7 million acres of public land as wilderness.

Congressman William Clinger could not be reached for comment on the administration's action Monday night, but on several occasions in the past

has voiced opposition to wilderness designation for Tracy Ridge.

Clinger has cited the following factors in opposing a Tracy Ridge wilderness status.

—Failure to consider existing roads in evaluation of proposed areas.

—Loss of valuable domestic oil and gas production, and lack of fair restitution to owners of oil, gas and mineral rights.

—Loss of valuable black cherry and hardwood lumber base and healthy benefits of current forest management techniques.

—Millions of dollars in expense for the government to ac-

quire oil, gas and mineral rights, camps, homes, concession facilities and to erase the "imprint of man's work" in wilderness areas

—The detrimental effect on the local economy if it were deprived of access to local natural resources

—Constraints that would be imposed on local economic growth, resulting from compliance with air quality standards.

—The effect of noise from bordering highways on the solitude of the proposed wilderness area.