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Historical group backs wilderness proposal

By COLIN KYLER

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An historical organization wants to preserve nature as much as it does artifacts.

During a meeting earlier this month, the Elk Township Historical Society board of directors voted unanimously to endorse the "Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest." The proposal is published by Friends of Allegheny Wilderness.

FAW issued a statement noting the proposal includes two forest reserves within Elk Township.

One would be the 3,022-acre Cornplanter Wilderness Area between Webb's Ferry boat launch and Camp Olmstead. The other would be a 4,752-acre Scandia National Recreation Area, covering most of the ANF land south of Camp Olmstead to the Kinzua Dam.

ETHS Board Member Dr. Julie Lindbloom Boozer said her organization's work is more than just restoring a wooden building as it did with the 1870s Scandia one-room school. It also includes preserving clear water and trees, she said, which brought Scan-

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dinavian immigrants to the area.

The area looked like Sweden to them, Boozer said, and had an abundance of clean water. Trees were part of the reason the water was so clean, she said.

"Those who have lived here for many years really appreciate the beauty of the west shore of Kinzua Lake as it is right now," Boozer said. "It's undisturbed as opposed to what Chautauqua Lake looks like."

Residents make some tradeoffs, Boozer said, such as dealing with snow as well as wildlife. However, she said, they do so because they want to be surrounded by the beauty of the countryside.

According to FAW, nearly 50 organizations from the local level to the national level have endorsed the proposal. The group is asking for Congress to act on it in order to leave the majority of the Allegheny Reservoir's western shoreline undeveloped.