



Friday
September 18, 2015
M-Sunny
82°/59°

**Dragons come
back for OT win**

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FAW offering 3 free hikes this weekend

By **ROB ANDERSEN**

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The Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) will offer three free hikes for the Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Summit beginning this weekend.

All three hikes are open not only to Summit attendees, but also to the public. There is no charge to participate in any of the hikes, but hikers should bring their own food, water, hiking and camping equipment, and come prepared for any weather conditions. People can sign up for any or all of the hikes by emailing info@pawild.org.

The first hike, a moderate difficult level 13-mile, overnight backpacking trip on the Hickory Creek Wilderness Trail, will begin on Saturday, Sept. 19, making camp approximately halfway around the trail's loop at Jack's Run. Hikers will be back in time to attend the Summit's opening reception at the Struthers Library Theatre. The trailhead is approximately one-half mile north of the Hearts Content scenic area parking lot.

The second hike will be two miles on Sunday, Sept.

20, from noon to 4 p.m., starting at the Minister parking lot on Route 666, and going to the Minister Overlook in the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness. Kirk Johnson, executive director of FAW, said, "This hike provides one of the most spectacular views in all of the Allegheny National Forest."

For an idea of the view, go to [facebook.com/FriendsofAlleghenyWilderness/videos/10153251526191843](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofAlleghenyWilderness/videos/10153251526191843).

Johnson said the third hike will be a seven-mile hike around the Minister Valley loop trail within the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness, also culminating in a stop at the Minister overlook.

A portion of this trail is also concurrent with the North Country National Scenic Trail — a long-distance trail like the Appalachian Trail that in total runs for 4,600 miles from North Dakota to the Adirondack Mountains in New York State, including 95 miles through the Allegheny National Forest. The trail is rated with a moderate difficulty level.