



Friends of Allegheny Wilderness seeks to foster an appreciation of wilderness values and benefits, and to work with local communities to ensure that increased wilderness protection is a priority of the stewardship of the Allegheny National Forest.

Father of RARE II Shares History

Former assistant executive director of The Wilderness Society and assistant Secretary of Agriculture under President Carter, Rupert Cutler, was the original proponent of the RARE II roadless inventory that resulted in dozens of wilderness bills being passed for our national forest lands through the 1980s and beyond, including lands in the Allegheny National Forest.

Mr. Cutler recently shared with Friends of Allegheny Wilderness remarks he made in Colorado during presentations to the U.S. Forest Service and general public in early June regarding the history of the wilderness movement. His full remarks will later be published in the *International Journal of Wilderness*. Here we excerpt portions dealing specifically with RARE II:

As assistant secretary I had several opportunities to influence American wilderness history. One element of that history was my initiation of the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation, or RARE II, that more than doubled the contribution of the national forests to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Chief John McGuire ably led that painstaking review of every roadless area in the entire 191-million-acre National Forest System. RARE II consisted of a nationwide review of every acre of the 192-million National Forest System and allocated so-called "roadless" lands either to wilderness consideration or to other "multiple uses." This program consumed the time of Forest Service field staff for three years and produced a bookcase shelf full of draft environmental impact statements

identifying some 62 million acres as roadless, recommending 15 million acres for wilderness and 36 million acres for other "multiple uses" and leaving 11 million acres in a "further planning" status. Its recommendations and its roadless area inventory became the basis for a long series of congressional acts to add areas to the wilderness system that has grown from 9 million acres in 1964 to 110 million acres today.



Hikers prepare to hit the trail after breaking camp along Pollys Run within the proposed Tracy Ridge Wilderness Area – the largest Roadless Area in the ANF. Photo by Tom Tefft taken during FAW's 10th anniversary hike June 11-12.

I initiated RARE II on the spur of the moment. I was testifying on the Endangered American Wilderness Act, a wilderness-creation bill drafted by private pro-wilderness groups, before a House of Representatives subcommittee chaired by Teno Roncalio of Wyoming in May of 1977. It became embarrassingly clear that the Forest Service had insufficient data on its roadless areas, or at least those that were the subject of that hearing. After checking over my shoulder with...

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...Chief John McGuire as to whether the agency could do such a review and getting his affirmative answer, I told the House subcommittee the Forest Service would review the whole National Forest System for its wilderness potential within two years, and it did.

I am proud of the job the Forest Service did on RARE II despite the fact that the environmental community condemned the process ("a rush to judgment") and its recommendations ("far too little for wilderness"). It provided substantive data for well-founded national forest resource allocations including many new wilderness areas, and it was responsive to the forest products industry's demand for an assurance that federal timber would be available to sustain sawmill-based western communities.



Rupert Cutler (left) and former ANF Forest Supervisor Kevin Elliott at the FAW historical marker dedication ceremony for Tionesta native and Wilderness Act author Howard Zahniser, August 13, 2001 in Tionesta. Photo by Dave Saville.

We all know of areas that qualify for inclusion in the wilderness system that still need to be added. Let's see to it that more such good roadless areas continue to be given wilderness system protection. Just as important, let's support efforts to protect the "wilderness character" of these lands, once they're

classified as wilderness. The federal land management agency wilderness managers need support as they try to see to it that our precious wilderness areas remain untrammelled, natural, and undeveloped and continue to offer solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. [End excerpt.]

As we face a new challenge with the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act (read more about it below), it is important to bear in mind our history and how much work, passion, blood, sweat, and tears have gone into identifying and protecting America's national forest Roadless Areas over the years. We can't let all of that good work, and potential protected wilderness, be undone by one short-sighted hostile bill.

Remarks by Rupert Cutler excerpted and printed here with permission.

Anti-Wilderness Bill Could Affect ANF

The Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act (H.R. 1581/S. 1087) threatens to weaken protections for millions of acres of wilderness-quality lands all across the United States, including special wild portions of the Allegheny National Forest right here in Pennsylvania.

The full text of the Senate and House versions of this hostile bill can be found at the following links:

www.pawild.org/pdfs/s1087.pdf

www.pawild.org/pdfs/hr1581.pdf

If passed into law, this bill would weaken protections for our own spectacular wild lands such as the proposed Allegheny Front, Clarion River, and Cornplanter Wilderness Areas; and the proposed Tracy Ridge Wilderness Area - the largest Roadless Area in the ANF.

While each of these four areas do currently enjoy special designations such as remote recreation area or national recreation area, providing good protection in addition to their formal Roadless Area status, passage of the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act would certainly whittle away at their protected status. It is patent

that retaining formal Roadless Area recognition for these important areas is far more preferable than the alternative.

If this bill passes, proponents of developing these areas could 'smell blood in the water' and aggressively seek to damage their roadless character through development proposals in response. For example, in the 2007 ANF Forest Plan, Regional Forester Randy Moore himself explicitly states that he rescinded a wilderness recommendation for Tracy Ridge specifically out of concern for those who would like to see extensive "development of overnight facilities" within the area.

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness is aware that in recent years developers have inquired with the Forest Service regarding the possibility of constructing a vast golfing resort on top of the ridge in the southern end of Tracy Ridge - complete with 36 holes of golfing, townhouses, and attendant roads, facilities and developments. Who among us wants to trade away our last remnants of wild Pennsylvania in order to facilitate golfing for the affluent?

FAW has been working with The Wilderness Society and others for two months on this issue as they develop a nationwide response. We recently signed on to a letter of opposition, along with dozens of other wilderness organizations, which can be found online here:

wilderness.org/files/Opposition-Letter-The-Wilderness-and-Roadless-Area-Release-Act.pdf

Watch for more information on our email listserve in the coming weeks regarding what you can do to help prevent the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act from becoming law.

In the meantime, please feel free to call your two U.S. Senators to ask that they oppose the Senate version of the bill, S. 1087. If you do not know who your Senators are, go to www.senate.gov to find out.

Also, please contact your U.S. Representative to ask him or her to oppose the House version of

the bill, H.R. 1581. If you do not know who your U.S. Representative is, go to www.house.gov.

The Wilderness Society Open Season on Open Spaces: The biggest attack in history?

By Christopher Lancette

When did it become open season on our open spaces? First, Congress slashed conservation and environmental programs. Then we saw a backroom deal that stopped the BLM's new Wildlands policy in its tracks. Now, to add insult to injury, we're facing a new bill that could end efforts to protect approximately 60 million acres.

This new House leadership bill, The Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act, introduced by House Majority Whip Rep. Kevin McCarthy, (R-Calif.), would roll back existing protections and place at risk tens of millions more acres of wilderness-quality but unprotected National Forest and BLM public lands. It also prevents Congress or future administrations from using a national policy like the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule to protect these lands in the future.

"This is the biggest attack on wilderness we have seen in the history of The Wilderness Society," Wilderness Society policy analyst Paul Spitler says. "These proposals fly in the face of Americans' support for the stewardship of our public lands. They also fly in the face of nearly fifty years of legislation designating new wilderness areas. The tranquility of your favorite places where you love to hike, camp and watch wildlife? Gone. Protection for our drinking water? Gone."

The McCarthy bill affects protected land all over the country from Alaska to West Virginia. In Nevada, Alder Creek and Burbank Canyons are two of the many special places that would lose protection."

"We are outraged at the wholesale attack on Nevada's wild lands," Friends of Nevada Wilderness Executive Director Shaaron Netherton adds. "This proposed legislation

would strip protection from virtually every wilderness study area in the state – 1.8 million acres would be opened up to development. Some of Nevada’s best wildlife habitat would be threatened.”



Part of FAW’s 14-mile 10th anniversary backpack trip deep into the roadless backcountry interior of the proposed Tracy Ridge Wilderness Area. Photo by Tom Tefft.

People in Idaho are equally outraged by the potential destruction of the Meadow Creek roadless area of the Nez Perce National Forest and the Peace Rock roadless area of the Boise National Forest.

“Overturning the national roadless protection plan would open up 9 million acres of public forests in Idaho to development,” according to John McCarthy, the Idaho forest campaign director for The Wilderness Society. “The bill would also throw out the cooperative framework for eight citizen-led, forest collaborative groups around the state. Going backwards to reopen the roadless forest debate would sacrifice the common ground we’ve built in forest collaborative groups to do forest restoration work, support forest jobs, improve recreation opportunities and treat forest fuels to protect communities.”

Even Rep. McCarthy’s hometown newspaper *The Bakersfield Californian* editorialized against the bill, noting that “The rumbling sound you may have noticed coming from the general vicinity of the Sierra Nevada is Teddy Roosevelt rolling over in his grave.”

Worse, the McCarthy bill comes on the heels of the backroom budget deal by Congress to prohibit the Bureau of Land Management from implementing its Wild Lands policy – one that intended to reverse the Bush administration’s policy of destroying wilderness-quality lands by opening them up to rampant oil and gas drilling and abusive off-road vehicle use.

Many have publicly voiced their support for the Wildlands policy, despite being denied an opportunity to testify at House subcommittee hearings. Sportsmen, outdoor industry leaders, ministers, county commissioners, and numerous newspaper editorial boards, have all issued support for the policy. A group of elected officials from several western states issued their own support of the Wild Lands policy in a piece submitted to *The Hill* newspaper. *The New York Times* didn’t care for the Wild Lands reversal, either.

“It is also important to note that not a single additional penny in the administration’s 2011 budget was dedicated to the Wild Lands policy,” Meadows says. “It’s an ideological fight brought by oil companies and their friends in Congress, not a money-saving issue.”

And let’s not forget the budget deal compromise, when President Obama double-teamed with Congress and said on national television that the environment should not be a factor when negotiating the federal budget.

“That’s short-sighted thinking,” Meadows says. “We have to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink to survive. The environment can’t be a pawn in a political game. It has to be a priority.”

Going forward, The Wilderness Society will be fighting on all fronts to protect our open spaces. Whether working to defeat the McCarthy bill or support the Wildlands policy, we are committed to ending open season on our open spaces in Washington.

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Warren Times Observer

April 1, 2011

Wilderness groups join forces

By DEAN WELLS
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A local wilderness preservation society has joined forces with the fledgling National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA), an organization designed to bring together wilderness conservation groups across the country.



Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) executive director Kirk Johnson attended the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance's national conference in Las Vegas on March 10-13.

According to David Cantrell, NWSA board president, his organization has been working with Friends of Allegheny Wilderness over the last six months. NWSA specializes in "trying to get organizations together to share resources and cooperate."

Cantrell said the feeling that there was a need to put these groups in contact with each other resulted in the creation of NWSA and the founding of a national conference.

"There are local regional groups spread all throughout the country," Cantrell said. "We had a meeting last March and decided we needed some sort of national organization."

The national conference held earlier in March in Las Vegas included expert panels on wilderness, workshops designed to provide organizations with information to assist federal land management agencies in wilderness stewardship, and keynote speakers.

Cantrell was impressed with the turnout for the conference. "We'd hoped for 75 people," he said. "We had 120. It was groups from every corner of the country, from Alaska to Georgia. It was a good gathering."



Attendees of the 2011 National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, March 11-13.

Johnson was awarded a full scholarship from NWSA to attend the conference.

Johnson has been the director of Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness since 2001. The organization's primary goal is to increase wilderness designation in the Allegheny National Forest, in addition to providing stewardship for the ANF's existing Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands Wilderness areas.

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National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance

To learn more about the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance, log on to their website at:

nationalwildernessstewardshipalliance.org

Or their Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/Wilderness.Alliance

To volunteer with FAW to do trail maintenance in the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area, email info@pawild.org



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Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*): a reclusive pit viper found in the eastern U.S. in rugged terrain of deciduous forests. Adults grow to an average length of 3-5'. Their main prey is small mammals. The Forest Service considers the rattlesnake to be a species with viability concerns in the ANF, and recognizes that "large blocks of contiguous and connected mature forest," such as wilderness areas, provide good rattlesnake habitat.

Your contribution to Friends of Allegheny Wilderness goes directly to saving wilderness!

Yes, I want to support Friends of Allegheny Wilderness and help protect Pennsylvania's Wilderness.

Yes, I want to contribute! Here is my donation of (circle one):

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