



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.

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OPINION

Keep wilderness roadless

By LEE L. SNYDER, Ph.D.
Times Guest Columnist

Pennsylvania ("Penn's Woods") from colonial times has had beautiful forests and streams. To this day, spectacular landscapes and outdoor recreation areas, like Marsh Creek State Park, the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, and the Allegheny National Forest, offer welcome retreats from urban life for all Pennsylvanians.

At the Allegheny's Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands wilderness areas people can hike among towering second-growth hardwoods and can paddle the wild and scenic Allegheny River among the wilderness islands. Thousands of undeveloped acres of roadless land in the Allegheny, however, do not yet have the same permanent protection of the wilderness areas.

For many years the non-profit Warren-based Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (www.pawild.org) has worked with local stakeholders to craft a plan that protects the last remnants of wild Pennsylvania. With input from locals, the people who know the land best, substantial progress has been made for achieving the strongest possible protection for the undeveloped watersheds vital to the four-county Allegheny National Forest region.

It will be appropriate for more of our state to have this protection: A native, Howard

Zahniser, who grew up in Forest County, drafted the bill introduced by state Rep. John Saylor of Johnstown which eventually became the Wilderness Act of 1964. This act gives permanent national protection to areas designated by Congress as wilderness.



Members of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness hike through the wild interior of North Hodge Run within the proposed Scandia National Recreation Area during a FAW backpacking trip over the weekend of February 11th and 12th. Photo by Brent Silvis.

The Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act (H.R. 1581/S. 1087) now threatens the protection of remaining roadless areas, possible candidates for wilderness designation. This unfortunate proposal that might well be called the "Great Outdoors Giveaway," would summarily withdraw important protection from already formally recognized roadless lands throughout the country.

Under this proposal spectacular roadless areas such as Tracy Ridge, Allegheny Front, Cornplanter, and the Clarion River area....

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... would become more vulnerable to the kind of development inconsistent with preservation of wilderness values. These are areas that former senators Hugh Scott and Richard Schweiker back in the 1970s sought to have designated as wilderness.

This proposal will “release” from possible wilderness protection millions of acres across the country. These areas, popular with hunters, anglers, hikers, campers and birders, provide livelihoods in adjacent local economies. The outdoor industry contributes \$750 billions annually to the U.S economy and supports 6.5 million jobs that depend on conservation of public lands where its customers use the products they make and sell.

Leaders of the outdoor recreational industry, heads of hunting and fishing organizations, business owners, local elected officials, and conservationists have made clear that the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act is a threat to the vitality and protection of such important recreational resources.

Lee L. Snyder, Philadelphia University professor emeritus, is a member of the Wilderness Society and of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. His late wife, Helen, was the sister of Howard Zahniser, author of the Wilderness Act.

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TWS Chooses New President

Monday, March 5, 2012

By Neil Shader, Communications Manager
The Wilderness Society

The Wilderness Society announced today that it has chosen western conservation leader Jamie Williams, who comes to Wilderness from The Nature Conservancy, as its new president. At

The Nature Conservancy Williams served as Director of Landscape Conservation for North America, where he led that organization’s effort to protect large landscapes, primarily in the western United States.



The Wilderness Society’s new president Jamie Williams, formerly of The Nature Conservancy. Photo courtesy of The Wilderness Society.

“In our search for a new president, Jamie Williams was far and away the best candidate, with a track record of outstanding achievement and a well-earned reputation for succeeding in every endeavor,” said Wilderness Society Governing Council Chair Doug Walker. “Jamie is a high-impact leader who has a deep understanding of our issues and who knows how to get exceptional results.”

Williams brings a wealth of experience to The Wilderness Society. At the Nature Conservancy, Williams helped develop the large landscape focus within the Obama administration’s America’s Great Outdoors Initiative, and spearheaded critical efforts to secure conservation funding in Congress, among many other accomplishments.

“Jamie has been a great colleague and a great conservation leader at The Nature Conservancy,” said Mark Tercek, President and CEO of The Nature Conservancy. “We will miss him but of course look forward to working closely with him in his new role at The Wilderness Society as we tackle important conservation opportunities together.”

Williams has held numerous leadership positions over his 20 years at The Nature Conservancy, including Northern Rockies Initiative Director and Montana State Director. He also has been recognized for his outstanding work with awards from the Land Trust Alliance and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, among many others.

"I am thrilled to be chosen to head this organization, which has been the leader in public lands conservation for more than 75 years," said Williams.

"I am a strong believer in a collaborative, community-based approach to conservation, and that's one of the many areas where The Wilderness Society has been a true innovator. This is a tremendous opportunity to protect the majestic wild places that help define us as a nation."

In addition to his work at The Nature Conservancy, Williams is a founder of The Montana Association of Land Trusts, a founder of the Heart of the Rockies Initiative, and has served on the Board of the Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts and as Co-Chair of the Yampa River System Legacy Project.



Members of the Butler Outdoor Club and Friends of Allegheny Wilderness during a recent backpacking trip into the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness Area. Photo by Tom Baumgardner.

"Jamie has been a huge help to our community's effort to conserve the Blackfoot Valley because he took the time to listen and work with us on a common vision for landscape conservation," said Jim Stone of Blackfoot Challenge in

Montana. "I have full confidence that he will lead The Wilderness Society with the same kind of collaborative spirit to help local communities like ours sustain special places through strong partnerships."

Williams received a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies from Yale University and a Masters of Environmental Studies from The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. He was also a wilderness instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School.

"Jamie Williams has an extraordinary combination of inspiring leadership and a relentless focus on protecting our nation's wild places," said Bill Meadows, who announced that he would be stepping down as president of The Wilderness Society in October 2011. "I am so pleased that Jamie will be at the helm as The Wilderness Society continues its outstanding work to protect our nation's public lands."

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Second Annual Rimrock Bash May 27th!

Join the Pennsylvania Kinzua Pathways, the Council on Tourism, and many others for a day of family friendly fun, including music, activities, food vendors, hikes and more. Come out to the Bash on Kinzua Beach on May 27th and celebrate the Rimrock Trail. The event runs from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

At 4:00 p.m. rain or shine FAW will lead a three-hour hike into wilds of the proposed Scandia National Recreation Area above the Kinzua Dam. Upon summiting the plateau above the dam, hikers will be rewarded with sweeping views of the Allegheny River downstream of the dam, the Allegheny Reservoir, and of course the dam itself.

Be prepared for steep and rough conditions, as the hike will be all off-trail. There is no charge to participate, but please bring all of your own food and water, and dress appropriately for the weather. Sturdy hiking boots are recommended for this hike. Contact FAW at info@pawild.org or 814-723-0620 to register or for more information.

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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):

\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 \$_____

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