



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.

FAW Looking for Helpers to Search for Tiny Threat to Giant Hemlocks

The U.S. Forest Service, Pennsylvania DCNR, the New York DEC, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, and others are looking for volunteers to help monitor for signs of hemlock wooly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) infestations throughout the Allegheny Plateau region this summer.

The hemlock wooly adelgid – or simply HWA – a non-native, invasive insect that feeds off of and kills Eastern hemlock trees (*Tsuga canadensis*) has advanced westward across Pennsylvania to Clarion and Jefferson counties where infestations have been confirmed in two popular state parks to the immediate south of the Allegheny National Forest (ANF).

“The hemlock wooly adelgid, a pervasive insect threat that has killed thousands of hemlocks, has been detected in both Cook Forest State Park, Clarion County, and Clear Creek State Park in neighboring Jefferson County,” DCNR Secretary Richard Allan said in April. “This discovery is especially unsettling due to the signature hemlocks in both parks’ forests.”

Home to the most significant hemlock stand north of the Great Smoky Mountains, Cook Forest State Park is famous for its old-growth trees. Its “Forest Cathedral” of towering hemlock and white pine (*Pinus strobus*) is a National Natural Landmark. The Cook Forest infestation area is home to some of the tallest hemlocks, including the celebrated Seneca

Hemlock, the area’s third-tallest at 147 feet and 4 feet in diameter.

In the face of the HWA’s northwestward spread, DCNR entomologists, foresters and park officials have ramped up early-detection efforts at the two parks. Attempts to delineate HWA infestation and chart feasible methods to combat its spread are now under way.



This photo provides an example of a hemlock branch heavily infested with the small white cottony egg sacs of the hemlock wooly adelgid. Look on the underside of young branchlets for signs of infestation.

DCNR will be embarking on a two-pronged treatment effort that relies on selective application of insecticides and the release of predatory beetles.

DCNR is partnering with a number of agencies and organizations to develop a hemlock management plan for northwest Pennsylvania. In addition, its Bureau of Forestry is drafting a hemlock conservation plan for Pennsylvania.

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HWA is a fluid-feeding insect, easily detected by telltale egg sacs resembling cotton swabs that cling to undersides of hemlock branches.

Introduced into the United States from Asia, HWA was first discovered in southeastern Pennsylvania in 1969 and has since been spreading steadily westward. It is now found in 56 of the Commonwealth's 67 counties.

Hemlock trees are a critical component of the ANF ecosystem. Losing all or most of the ANF's hemlocks would be devastating. To add insult to injury, if they were in fact to spread here, a substantial HWA infestation in the ANF would quite possibly spell the end for the stunning hundreds-of-years-old hemlocks at the Hearts Content National Scenic Area within FAW's proposed Hearts Content National Recreation Area, and at the Tionesta Scenic and Research Natural Areas within FAW's proposed Tionesta Wilderness.

Homeowners and other private property owners can learn more about the HWA, the damage it causes, and efforts to combat it at www.dcnr.state.pa.us (click on "Forestry," then "Insects and Disease" at upper left).

FAW has been asked this summer to help monitor for the HWA in the ANF. Those who wish to volunteer for these efforts are welcome! The protocol for this monitoring work is not overly complicated, nor particularly time consuming if you're going to be out hiking anyway. If you can readily identify an Eastern hemlock tree then you can perform this work.

Allegheny National Forest locations FAW volunteers are needed include:

- Hearts Content National Scenic Area old-growth forest and environs

- North Country National Scenic Trail within the Tionesta Scenic Area old growth forest (part of the proposed Tionesta Wilderness)
- East Fork Run and West Fork Run in the Tionesta Research Natural Area old growth forest (also part of the proposed Tionesta Wilderness)
- Cherry Run
- Minister Creek Campground and proposed Minister Valley Wilderness
- Hickory Creek Wilderness
- Proposed Tracy Ridge Wilderness
- Proposed Cornplanter Wilderness
- Proposed Chestnut Ridge Wilderness
- Proposed Clarion River Wilderness

Tools that would come in handy for doing this work include a GPS unit, and a digital camera. Important: *volunteers should never collect hemlock material/samples, especially if it appears to be infested with HWA.*

If you are familiar with any of the above-listed areas and this is something you think you can contribute a little time to this summer, just send an email to info@pawild.org and we can get you more detailed maps for that area, as well as the monitoring protocol that we use. Also, a representative of FAW, or ANF staff Andrea Hille may even be able to meet with you in the field if that would be helpful.

WESB News Radio Bradford

Friday, May 31, 2013

200 White Pines Planted in ANF

WARREN - The Warren-based non-profit organization Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) teamed up Thursday with the U.S. Forest Service, and inmates from FCI McKean to plant 200 white pine (*Pinus strobus*) trees in the Allegheny National Forest (ANF).

The planting took place at three specific sites

as part of ongoing cooperative ecological restoration work between FAW and the agency:

- At the head of an abandoned road near the North Country National Scenic Trail in the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness.
- At the head of an abandoned road leading from the Hearts Content Campground into the Hickory Creek Wilderness. FAW and the ANF have been working to restore this site since 2001.
- At the head of an abandoned road at the Hickory Creek Wilderness trailhead. FAW and the ANF have been working to restore this site since 2006.



Bradford District Ranger Mac Herrera, and Fred Robson, also of the Bradford Ranger District (right and left, respectively) planting white pine trees in the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness Area, May 30th, 2013. Photo by Kirk Johnson.

The objective of this restoration work is ultimately to for all intents and purposes erase from the landscape all evidence that there were ever roads present, and to help prevent illegal non-conforming uses in these wild areas – such as by motorized and mechanized vehicles.

FAW will continue to advocate for and contribute significant staff and volunteer time, resources, and labor to road closure, obliteration, and rehabilitation at numerous

sites within areas delineated in their widely-supported *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*.

The trees used in Thursday's planting were donated by the U.S. Forest Service as part of their ANF-wide reforestation program.

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Erie Times News

April 7, 2013

Give a kid trout fishing memories

By Mike Bleech

Ray Bimber and I were on a string of nice weather for the opening day of trout fishing.

That string was the first few years that I was old enough to follow Ray up and down the steep Allegheny National Forest hills and valleys to reach the small streams that were home to wild brook trout.

So, my earliest impressions of opening day included reliable, nice weather.

Ray had been taking me fishing since I was 2 years old. It was two or three years later before he started taking me to the remote wild brook trout streams. Sometimes we called wild brook trout natives and small streams were called "cricks."

On this particular day, Ray was taking me to East Hickory Creek, in an area that Congress has since declared the Hickory Creek Wilderness.

Wilderness land covers 8,663 acres on the watersheds of East Hickory Creek and Middle Hickory Creek.

Our goal was to fish some beaver dams. It was the first time I had fished for brook trout in beaver dams.

I had been told that bigger brook trout could be caught from beaver dams, and I was not disappointed.

Ray was tall and slender, with broad

shoulders. He had been walking those hills all of his life.

Without letting me know it, we would stop a few times to keep from wearing me out.

Always, we picked a comfortable seat, one of the boulders that were scattered along the hillside, or a fallen tree trunk.

It was during these pauses that he nurtured my enthusiasm for fishing and hunting with tales from his youth.

Already before he passed away when I was 15 years old, I appreciated the link he gave me to the late 19th century and early 20th century.

That gave me a genuine perspective to compare fishing and hunting as I have seen it with that of what by now is more than 100 years ago, back to a time when spring hillsides were white with American chestnut blossoms.

Nearing the upper beaver dam, we flushed a pair of wood ducks.

They cried, "Pee, peee, peee" as they disappeared behind tall trees.

Even now, the vision of sunlight sparkling off the water that trailed behind the ducks is clear in my mind.

Male wood ducks are among the most strikingly beautiful creatures. They deserve all of the attention you give them.

For a while after the ducks were out of hearing distance, the woods remained quiet.

Then we were moving again, in a crouch, as we neared the edge of the water.

A couple of my first lessons in fishing were to keep a low profile and walk softly.

Mess up on either account, and all of the brookies in the pool you were approaching would be well hidden among the roots of an overhanging hemlock tree.

When we were close enough, I flipped a

writhing red worm into the deeper part of the beaver pond.

Within a few seconds, something was tugging at my line. I set the hook into a 9-inch brook trout. It was the longest brook trout I had seen up to that time.



Students from the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg are pictured during a June 13th tour of the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area, and the ancient hemlocks of Hearts Content with FAW. This was the second year in a row FAW and the Gettysburg Seminary program have teamed up. Photo by Gil Waldkoenig.

In those years – the 1950s – there were paths along nearly every stream that held trout, stocked or wild. The minimum size for trout was 6 inches, and maybe one in a dozen at wild brook trout streams were longer than 6 inches. People kept the trout they caught at that time, including us. After trout season had been open a few weeks, the population of most small streams was cropped close to 6 inches.

But in our beaver dam, things were different. We did not catch any more 9-inch trout, but we did catch limits of wild brook trout, none less than 7 inches long.

After catching our fish, and before we started walking back to Ray's car, we built a nice, small fire and cooked hot dogs on sticks. Nothing beats food cooked over an open fire, even if it is just hot dogs.

I have made lunch cooked over open fires a standard part of fishing or hunting outings.

Walking back to the vehicle was a lot tougher than walking to the creek because it is all uphill. And the hills you go up are quite steep, so Ray paused more often, and told more

stories.

Some of my favorite stories were about Canadian moose hunts. The wild places where he hunted moose have now been gobbled by suburban sprawl.

I have seen old newspaper photos of huge moose being brought home. While researching for a college history course, I came across old newspapers that reported on his hunting prowess.

I have been fortunate to be able to introduce fishing and hunting to a few young people. I tried to do as Ray had done with me, but one cannot compete with memories.

I urge anglers to take a kid fishing during the upcoming trout season. Don't muddy the kid's mind by telling him how much better things used to be. Be upbeat and encouraging.

The truth is that fishing is great now. Focus on this and you will give that kid great memories that include warm feelings of you. Every kid deserves this kind of introduction to trout fishing.

MIKE BLEECH can be reached by e-mail at mikeb73@verizon.net. Read more of his columns at www.nwpaoutdoors.com.

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The Forest Press

Wednesday, May 15, 2013

FAW Honors Earth Day

The FAW (Friends of Allegheny Wilderness) volunteers honored Earth Day by having a trail stewardship weekend along the Allegheny National Forest's scenic Hickory Creek Wilderness trail. Using only axes, they cut a hiker passage through a large-diameter oak tree that had fallen on the trail. In federal wilderness areas such as the Hickory Creek Wilderness, no power tools are used for trail clearing or for any other purposes.

The pictured method of trail clearing also has significant value because, while it allows easy

passage for hikers on foot, it acutely frustrates and discourages illegal non-conforming uses of the trail such as by motorized and mechanized vehicles. Rough axe cuts also provide a rustic, aesthetically pleasing appearance for the wilderness hiker.

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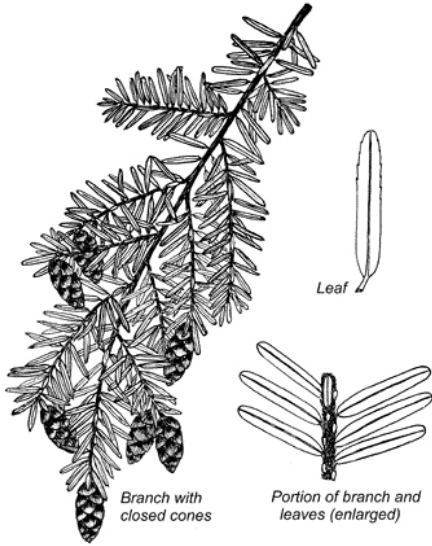
Pictured are volunteer trail stewards with the Warren-based non-profit organization Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) along the Allegheny National Forest's scenic Hickory Creek Wilderness trail during FAW's recent trail stewardship weekend in honor of Earth Day. Photo courtesy of Tom Tefft.

Order Your Friends of Allegheny Wilderness Leave a Legacy Bumper Stickers Today!

Good news! FAW recently received a new shipment of our popular "Leave a Legacy" bumper stickers. If you would like one or more to display on your bumper or elsewhere to show your support for the acutely urgent need to protect additional wilderness in Pennsylvania's only national forest, simply let us know at info@pawild.org and we will mail them out to you asap, free of charge!



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Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) is a coniferous tree native to eastern North America, and the state tree of Pennsylvania. The shade-tolerant hemlock is long lived, reaching ages of more than 550 years, growing to more than 150', and 6' in diameter. It is threatened by the hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*), a non-native insect introduced from Asia to the U.S. and first found in the hemlock's native range in the 1960s.

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):

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

Please make checks payable to "Friends of Allegheny Wilderness." Friends of Allegheny Wilderness is an IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Donations are tax deductible. The official registration and financial information of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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