

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.

The Wilderness Society

Friday, December 12, 2014

Victory! Congress Protects Over One Million Acres of Public Land

Congress has heeded the call of people across the country and acted to protect some of our most precious wild places for future generations.

A host of bipartisan wilderness and public lands bills added to the National Defense Authorization Act were passed by the Senate on Dec. 12 and are on their way to the president's desk to be signed into law.

As a result, irreplaceable lands in Colorado, New Mexico, Washington, Nevada and many other states across the country will be protected for future generations – with a big assist from voices like yours.

Thank you for all your help in getting these bills across the finish line!

All told, more than 1 million acres of public land are set to gain new protection, including 245,000 acres of wilderness.

The legislation came together through bipartisan negotiations between many members of Congress, and though it includes provisions that The Wilderness Society does not support, on the whole, it represents a big win for conservation.

“Today, Congress has given the American

people an enduring, irreplaceable gift by protecting a number of wild places to explore and celebrate across the country. These landscapes showcase America at its finest: Lewis and Clark country on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front, a rugged watershed in Colorado's Hermosa Creek, and sacred cultural lands deep in New Mexico's Columbine-Hondo Wilderness, among others,” said The Wilderness Society President Jamie Williams in a statement.



Photo of the Rocky Mountain Front addition to the legendary Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana from The Wilderness Society, www.wilderness.org.

“The wild places permanently protected by this measure ensure that generations of Americans will have the opportunity to enjoy these lands and all they have to offer. Congress has proven that protecting our public lands is not a Republican or Democratic issue but an all-American value.”

Throughout 2014, as we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, we have said the most apt celebration of the...

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...landmark law would be for Congress to work with renewed determination to conserve our most special landscapes. Now, thanks to supporters like you, that has been realized. These are some of the wildlands that we have worked for years to protect.

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Two New Ways to Support FAW – At No Cost to You

Hey all Friends of Allegheny Wilderness! We now have a two new ways for supporters to contribute to FAW.

Do you do much shopping through Amazon? If and when you do shop with Amazon, won't you please be sure to shop through the "AmazonSmile" charitable giving program, and contribute to FAW at the same time? This is of no extra cost to you, the funding all comes from Amazon. And it is exactly like shopping on the regular Amazon.com site.



You shop. Amazon gives.

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Friends Of Allegheny Wilderness** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.

All you have to do is specifically designate FAW as the beneficiary of your purchases. Every quarter FAW will receive a dividend check from Amazon from all of our

supporters' purchases. Click here to find out more:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/01-0816864>

And here we have yet another way for wilderness proponents to support FAW. "Goodsearch" is a search engine pretty much like Google, Yahoo, or Bing, but when you search or shop using Goodsearch you can automatically contribute to FAW at the same time – at absolutely no cost to you. Simply log on to Goodsearch every time you need to search the web and/or shop online, and designate "Friends of Allegheny Wilderness" as your beneficiary before you begin your web searching and shopping activity. At the end of the year FAW will receive a dividend check from Goodsearch from all of our supporters' activity. Click here to get started:

<http://www.goodsearch.com/choosecause>

Please log on today! Thank you!

Annual FAW Winter Backpack February 21-22 – Hedgehog Run Valley

The annual winter backpacking trip of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness will take place this year over the weekend of February 21st and 22nd. This year we will be hiking off trail into the untrammled wilds of the proposed Allegheny Front Wilderness Area in Warren County. The location is the northern end of the area, into the Hedgehog Run drainage.

This wild, remote valley will give you a fine sense of the area's roadless qualities and allow hikers to understand why the area has been a focus of wilderness designation efforts since the initial Sierra Club surveys of the early 1970s. Since the distance covered will likely be less than five miles, we will also have time to linger along the way to survey Eastern hemlock trees (*Tsuga canadensis*) for the

presence of the invasive hemlock wooly adelgid threat.



Three of the hikers from FAW are shown off in the distance at the bottom of a ravine during the group's 2014 winter backpacking trip.

There is no cost to join this hike, but participants will be responsible for bringing all of their own food, camping equipment, and should come fully prepared for any weather conditions that we may encounter. Depending on the depth of the snow during that weekend, snowshoes may be advisable. Contact FAW at info@pawild.org or 814-723-0620 for more information or to sign up for the trip.

The Wilderness Society

Friday, July 25, 2014

In Memory of Alice Zahniser, Widow of Wilderness Act Author

Alice Zahniser, widow of Wilderness Act author Howard Zahniser, passed away on

July 8 at 96. She attended that landmark law's signing in her late husband's stead.

The youngest of nine children, Zahniser was witness to the act that would set our nation's highest standard for public lands protection. She typed the first handwritten draft of the Wilderness Act in early 1956. That draft would go through 17 revisions before twin bills were introduced in the House and Senate in July 1956.

With those bills introduced, the Zahniser family left for a series of five wilderness trips, from Minnesota to Wyoming, Montana, and Washington state. The wilderness treks — by canoe, on horseback, and on foot — were tied together by car camping. "Our mother was a saint for her years of cooking over open wood fires," said her son, Edward Zahniser. "She was the logistician behind our wilderness experiences that buttressed her husband's wilderness preservation work." Alice Zahniser's 1956 trip journal was later published as *Ways to the Wilderness*.

Howard Zahniser died in May of 1964, only days after testifying in support of the bill at the last of 18 hearings in Congress and nationwide. He had worked on the legislation through 65 revisions. The Senate passed a wilderness bill in 1963, followed by the House in August of 1964. Alice was invited to the bill-signing ceremony along with Mardy Murie, the widow of late former Wilderness Society President Olaus J. Murie and a formidable conservationist in her own right. Each received a pen used by President Johnson.

Soon after, in the Spring-Summer 1964 issue of *The Living Wilderness*, a magazine published by The Wilderness Society and mailed to all members, an editorial put it thusly: "We now have an accomplished Wilderness Act, born of sacrifice that few have been privy to. Patience, tolerance, restraint, and the ability to negotiate with reason and respect, were qualities which played a heavier role than will ever be known.

The Zahnisers and the Muries will be remembered.”



Alice Zahniser cooking over an open fire at Lake Solitude, Cloud Peak Primitive Area, Bighorn Mountains, Wyoming, 1956. She was “the Mother Teresa of outdoor cooking over open wood fires.” Photo courtesy of Ed Zahniser.

It is significant that the piece saluted both Zahnisers. Howard’s conservation ethic was influenced by a 1937 canoe trip he took with Alice on the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania. Little did they know that the islands they canoed by – and one they camped on, Thompson Island – would eventually be protected as the Allegheny Islands Wilderness. Alice also voiced her opinion on issues facing The Wilderness Society at meetings of the organization’s governing council over the years.

Initially joined by a love of music – Alice was an accomplished coloratura soprano – the Zahnisers would come to embark on countless outdoor adventures as a couple. Fittingly, for years to come, their names will both be attached to a moment in history when a great American truth was codified:

wildness, and wilderness, define us as a nation, and should be preserved for the enjoyment of all.

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Warren Times Observer

Monday, December 15, 2014

FAW director named to NCTA board

By ROB ANDERSEN

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The fifteen-member North Country Trail Association (NCTA) board of directors voted to add Kirk Johnson to their board for at least a three-year term, with possibly two more terms to follow.

“My new position on the board of directors for the North Country Trail Association started when I was voted on to the board this past Saturday, and is a volunteer position,” he said, “just like board service for any other non-profit organization.”

“At a minimum it will entail my attending three board meetings in person every year: two in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a third which will rotate from year to year around the seven states through which the North Country Trail passes,” he said.

Johnson noted that the North Country Trail was established by Congress in 1980, in the tradition of the Appalachian Trail and other National Scenic Trails, and is the longest backpacking trail in America at over 4,600 miles. One year afterwards, the NCTA was founded as the volunteer non-profit organization partnering with the National Park Service in the stewardship in the North Country Scenic National Trail. Their headquarters are in Lowell, Michigan.

“The North Country Trail passes for 265 miles through Pennsylvania, including 95 miles

through the Allegheny National Forest,” Johnson said. “Friends of Allegheny Wilderness has identified several prospective wilderness areas in the ANF that the North Country Trail passes through such as Minister Valley, the Tionesta old-growth area, and Tracy Ridge. Tracy Ridge is the largest roadless area in the ANF, and encompasses a nine-mile segment of the North Country Trail.”

He said that in terms of other well-known National Scenic Trails, the Appalachian Trail passes through 26 federal wilderness areas, the Continental Divide Trail passes through 20 federal wilderness areas, and the Pacific Crest Trail passes through 48 federal wilderness areas. However, so far the North Country Trail only has five federal wilderness areas along its length: the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area in Minnesota, the Rainbow Lake and Porcupine Lake Wilderness Areas in Wisconsin, and the McCormick and Beaver Basin Wilderness Areas in Michigan.

“Being elected to serve on the NCTA board of directors is an honor, and I believe that it will dovetail well with my primary work for Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. The mission of FAW is certainly not inconsistent with the mission and vision of the NCTA,” he said. “People who are passionate about FAW and preserving additional wilderness areas in the ANF are also by and large passionate about hiking, backpacking, backcountry camping, and the stewardship of the North Country Trail. It’s going to be great fun, he added.”

He said the trail is unique, in that a large portion of it is on private lands, which made blazing the trail more difficult.

Johnson earned his BA from Albion College in Albion, Michigan in 1992, where he did frequent trail work in the Whitehouse Nature Center on campus, where he was employed. He earned a Master of Environmental Studies

degree from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington in 1999. While living in Washington he was a volunteer trail maintainer for the National Park Service in Olympic National Park.



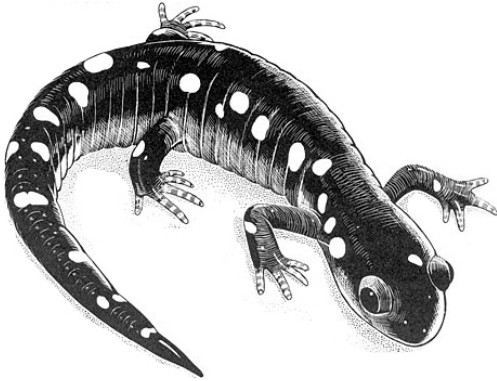
Kirk Johnson shown during a February 2012 FAW backpacking trip into the remote North Hodge Run drainage of the proposed Scandia National Recreation Area. Photo by Brent Silvis of FAW.

He serves as executive director for the Warren-based Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, which he founded in 2001 and which seeks to have qualifying portions of the Allegheny National Forest designated as wilderness areas under the Wilderness Act of 1964. These include areas that the North Country Trail passes through such as Minister Valley, Tionesta, and Tracy Ridge. Johnson has been an NCTA member since 2000, and for the last ten years the volunteer adopter/maintainer of the 5.5-mile segment of the NCT through the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness Area.

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Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) – bright yellow spots distinguish this nocturnal amphibian. Spotted salamanders spend most of their lives hidden in dark, damp places, and vernal pools are necessary for their breeding. They can reach nine inches in length, and are prevalent in mature deciduous forests from eastern Canada throughout the eastern U.S., including the ANF. Their numbers are generally stable, but they are sensitive to changes in their ecology, and the pet trade and habitat loss also take a toll.

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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