



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.

A Chance to Advocate ANF Wilderness at Second Round of Forest Plan Revision Workshops in August

The Allegheny National Forest (ANF) will host a second round of workshops for Forest Plan revision on August 14th, 16th, and 18th. Like the initial round of workshops in May, these workshops are a way for people to become involved in protecting new ANF wilderness as part of the process for Forest Plan revision. The dates and locations are:

August 14th, Quality Inn and Suites, east of Erie, junction of Interstate 90 and PA Route 97, 2 p.m. until 9 p.m., with breaks.

August 16th, Holiday Inn, off U.S. Route 6, west of Warren, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with breaks.

August 18th, Ramada Inn, off U.S. Route 322, east of State College, 2 p.m. until 9 p.m., with breaks.

These workshops seek to accomplish several objectives:

--Facilitators will present to the public what was learned at the first two workshops in DuBois and Bradford on May 2nd and 3rd;

--ANF planning staff will talk about how public comments are tracked and processed during plan revision, and they will ask for suggestions how to improve this work; and

--The workshops will also provide another opportunity for the public to give comments in a collaborative learning setting

regarding their concerns and issues about management of the ANF.

Earlier, as part of the DuBois and Bradford workshops, the public presented suggestions to improve the public involvement process for Forest Plan Revision. According to the ANF, suggestions included publishing notice of meetings further in advance and via more methods. Participants suggested more meetings further from the ANF to draw more participants, particularly forest users from urban areas. The Erie and State College locations provide ready access to the largest concentrations of ANF users from urban areas. At the same time, many other people suggested keeping meetings near the ANF, and the Warren location will continue workshops near the Forest.

The public found the use of non-Forest Service facilitators and the collaborative learning mode of public input, with small group work, to be comfortable and productive. The August workshops follow the pattern of the DuBois and Bradford meetings, taking advantage of outside facilitators and a collaborative learning style of interaction. Photographs of the first two meetings, with captions, are available to be viewed or downloaded from the ANF website at: (www.fs.fed.us/r9/allegheny).

The ANF planning team asks those who will attend meetings to please RSVP @ (814) 723-5150 giving your name, phone number, which workshop you plan to attend, and if you have special needs of any sort. An RSVP helps personnel plan and assure there are sufficient materials, seating, and prepar-

ations for breaks. Note that no lunch or dinner is provided.

Warren Times Observer

July 7, 2003

A Forest Partnership: Conservation group teams with USFS on trail work

By Dean Wells, Staff Writer

A local conservationist group has teamed up with the U.S. Forest Service to maintain a hiking trail in a wilderness area of the Allegheny National Forest.

The Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) have adopted the Hickory Creek Wilderness Trail, an 11-mile loop near Heart's Content. FAW have agreed to provide maintenance for the trail, coordinating with U.S. Forest Wilderness Ranger Eric Flood, who is based in Bradford.

"It's a way of maintaining wilderness resources," FAW director Kirk Johnson says. "Our original priority at this point is significantly increasing wilderness. But it's also important that we appreciate and maintain current wilderness areas."

FAW officially adopted the Hickory Creek trail last fall. Since then, FAW has participated in three maintenance events this year, including tree planting and blow-down cleanup.

Most recently, FAW and Flood, along with members of the Student Conservation Association, spent a weekend in mid-June repairing a marshy area of the trail near Coon Run.

"We tried to create some drainage out of muddy areas and harden it with rock," Flood says. "We tried to make it as natural looking as we could."

In May, FAW and Flood planted trees to reclaim an old logging road near the Heart's Content campground that people were mistaking for part of the trail.

"We naturalized that road as much as we can," Flood says. "It's the remnant of an old wood road. People were actually maintaining it without a permit. It was causing conflicting interest with the wilderness values and confusions with the trail. It actually does cross the trail."



FAW volunteer and Lake Erie Group Sierra Club member Taffi Skopinski working to upgrade a muddy stretch of the Hickory Creek Wilderness trail near Coon Run. Photo by Kirk Johnson

According to Flood, FAW donated trees for planting in the area of the road.

Also in May, the volunteers cleared blown down trees and limbs from sections of the trail using primitive hand tools.

"It's a 'leave no trace,' area," Flood says. "We try to keep our party size to a minimum. And we use the minimum tools. What that means is whatever I need to accomplish, I use the most minimum tool it takes to accomplish it. Often that means me, on foot, with an ax."

In addition, the volunteers use shovels and mattox to perform repair work on the trail. Chain saws are prohibited.

“Under the Wilderness Act,” Flood says, “all motorized equipment is prohibited. That applies to me, as well.”

According to Flood, he would like to get in one more cleanup event this year. But there's still work to be done on drainage near Coon Run.

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The work of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness in adopting the Hickory Creek Wilderness hiking trail continues. This is an excellent way of appreciating and maintaining first hand the wonderful wilderness resource that has already been established in the Allegheny National Forest, and provides perspective as we deliberate over designating additional areas of the Forest as part of our National Wilderness Preservation System. If you would like to participate in trail maintenance projects such as clearing deadwood or fixing wet spots along the trail, please contact FAW for more information.

Many thanks to the dedicated FAW supporters who have already volunteered their time and energy toward the five Hickory Creek trail projects we have held since last spring with Wilderness Ranger Eric Flood and the USDA Forest Service.

Contact Your Legislators For Allegheny National Forest Wilderness!

The Forest Service has the ability to recommend new wilderness designations in the Allegheny National Forest as part of its Forest Plan revision. However, only Congress can make the designations final by passing a law. To get additional areas of the ANF permanently protected as wilderness, it will require the support of the Commonwealth's federal legislators.

In particular, if you live in the Congressional District of Representatives John Peterson (5th district) or Phil English (3rd

district), please take the time to contact them and thank them for their attention to this issue to date. Encourage them to work toward drafting significant new wilderness legislation for the ANF in the near future. Feel free to peruse the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness website (www.pawild.org) for talking points.

The Honorable John Peterson
Member of Congress
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 226-5121

The Honorable Philip English
Member of Congress
1410 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-5406

Pennsylvania's two Senators must hear the same message:

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senator
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-9027

The Honorable Rick Santorum
United States Senator
120 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202) 224-6324

“Mr. President, after a year and a half of intense study by two senate subcommittees, I am pleased that the so-called Eastern Wilderness Areas Act of 1974 is now before us. I have taken an active interest in the development of this vital bill, especially as it concerns the Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania...Mr. President, I am proud to have played a role in developing this bill. I hope the Senate will approve it and pave the way for swift action in the House of Representatives.” -- Pennsylvania Senator Hugh Scott (R) during Senate debate of the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act, May 31, 1974

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Your Contribution to Friends of Allegheny Wilderness Goes Directly to Saving Wilderness!

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220 Center Street
Warren, PA 16365