

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.

Happy New Year greetings to all Friends of Allegheny Wilderness! As you read this issue of the newsletter, the USDA Forest Service is making important long-term decisions about the management of Pennsylvania's only national forest - the Allegheny - within their ongoing Forest Plan revision process.

Meanwhile, hard copies of the FAW report, *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*, are now available. To read the Executive Summary and view the maps of our proposed wilderness areas, go to [www.pawild.org](http://www.pawild.org). Feel free to contact us if you'd like a full hard copy mailed to you. Feel free to request more than one copy if you have friends or family who may also be interested!

The prospects look favorable for new ANF wilderness legislation, but we need to maintain our momentum. To contact the Forest Service to advocate that our wilderness areas be fully considered during their Forest Plan revision process, write to their special Forest Plan revision mailing address:

Forest Plan Revision  
Allegheny National Forest  
P.O. Box 36  
Warren, PA  
16365

Be specific about supporting the wilderness and national recreation areas delineated in our report. And as always, your Member of Congress needs to know that you support our proposal

because wilderness is a legal status granted only by an Act of Congress. To find out who your Congressperson is in the U.S. House of Representatives, and how to contact them, go to: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and do a search according to your zip code.

Finally, we leave you with a friendly reminder that you as readers are welcome and encouraged to submit to the March Friends of Allegheny Wilderness newsletter (Volume 4, Number 1). Photos, letters, poetry, prose, drawings, etc., as they relate to wilderness and the Allegheny National Forest, are all welcome. The newsletter will run in late March, so submissions should be made by the first week of March if possible.

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**A Word About Wilderness Trail Maintenance (Okay more than a word...)**  
**By Linda White, ANF Wilderness Manager**

"Needs fresh blazes, closer."  
"Clean the trail of brush"  
"Beautiful day hike but reblazing badly needed in places."  
"Lots of downed timber on the trail"  
"Sadly, the Forest Service is not maintaining the trail"  
"So many blown down trees across the trail....To Ranger Rick/DCNR: How about some trail maintenance? There are trees across the trail that have been there for years! Even the detours around them are blocked by blowdowns!"

These are a sampling of the comments we've received in the last year about the Hickory Creek trail. Yeah, we really

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alleghenyfriends@earthlink.net  
www.pawild.org

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This issue of the FAW newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Jay Rusalem of St. Marys, Pennsylvania.

April 1, 1916 – October 12, 2003

Mr. Rusalem, a lifelong resident of Johnsonburg, was a forest fire warden for over 40 years and a World War II Army veteran. His spirit remains in the woods.

do read the comments. So in case you're wondering...

Yes, we do maintain this trail, but it is maintained to "wilderness standards" so it probably doesn't look as neat or well-kept as you are used to in other areas.

"Wilderness standards" means that we manage according to the 1964 Wilderness Act, the 1975 "Eastern Wilderness Act", and a whole bunch of agency policies. All these laws and regulations tell us how to manage Wilderness, like Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands on the Allegheny National Forest, and many other areas on National Forest, National Park, and Bureau of Land Management lands, and Fish and Wildlife Refuges. There are over 106 million acres in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and while management can and does vary from one place to another, the overall goal is the same.

Wilderness, according to the 1964 Wilderness Act, is "an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which...generally

appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature..."

Because of this description, we here on the Allegheny National Forest try to keep the trail looking as natural as possible. Blowdowns are natural events, so we won't clear them if the following conditions are met:

- They can be stepped over
- They can be ducked under
- They can be by-passed without damaging the soil, sensitive plants, or existing archeological resources



Fall 2003 FAW Hickory Creek Wilderness trail crew.

Why? Cutting out a tree over the trail is unnatural in appearance and disruptive to the natural scene. It fails in meeting the goal of "retaining primeval character and influence" and preserving natural conditions. And only humans are silly enough to waste time and energy cutting a tree out of the way. The bear and deer simply walk around it. Downed trees provide habitat for critters, from holes that become dens, to drumming spots to attract a mate, to food, to a place to perch and check out the neighborhood. They decompose relatively quickly in the humid and wet Eastern part of the country and return all their stored carbon and other minerals to the system to be used by other plants and critters. They are as essential to the renewal of the forest as the sun and the rain. We like to leave them where they lay as much as possible, and Wilderness is one of the few places where we try not to manipulate the environment to please ourselves and our

human objectives. It's a perfect place to let fallen trees lie.

When the blowdown doesn't meet the above criteria, we have a couple options:

- Reroute the trail
- Cut it out of the way
- Cut a step in it

Rerouting the trail is time-consuming, requires a lot of environmental analysis, and may mean that both the old trail and the new trail are used, depending on if the visitors notice the change, and if they want to go where the new trail leads. If they don't, we've got 2 trails to maintain, and more impact into our Wilderness. Neither is a good situation.

If it lies between shoulder and knee height on an average person, we'll cut it out with an axe. Axes don't create straight lines [like a saw blade does] – especially depending on the skill of the user! Straight lines don't occur in nature, so they are to be avoided when trying to retain a natural appearance. Axes also create nice cracks and crevices to trap water and soil to aid in the growth of mosses, ferns, and other tiny plants. This helps the area naturalize more quickly from the management action of cutting out. After weathering darkens the wood of a new cut and especially when the mosses take over, an axe cut blends well with the surrounding scene, but a saw cut looks like a saw cut for a long, long time.

Cutting a step, also with an axe, is an option for when it's just a bit too high to step over. This gives you more clearance to step over, or a flat place to step onto to get over, but still provides a somewhat natural look and the function to plants, small animals, and insects that a downed tree would provide.

No matter which way we chose to go, remember that there are a limited number of people on the Allegheny who work in the Wilderness – two of us, in fact. Three if we can get a summer seasonal. We count on our volunteers,

like Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, to help us out. Also recognize that because of our lower standards for Wilderness, when something like the storm of July 21, 2003 happens and blows down a lot of trees, it's not our Forest's biggest priority to get the Wilderness trails cleared. First come ATV and snowmobile trails, because those folks pay for a permit to use the trails, and when they do, the trails *must* be clear. It's a safety hazard if they aren't. Then we try to work on the trails with national or regional significance, like the North Country National Scenic Trail, then the other pedestrian trails. Wilderness gets worked on when we have the time or the volunteers because challenge is an expected element of a Wilderness trip.

Now about those blazes...

We've decided, in the interest of promoting wildness, to let them fade away. After all, swatches of paint on a tree aren't natural, and they ruin the appearance of naturalness we're supposed to be protecting. Axe blazes are even worse. Not only do they provide the same affront to naturalness that paint does, they also open up the tree to infection by diseases, fungi, and insects. These are natural processes and serve their place in the world, but we don't want to willingly open our trees up to any more of it.

Naturalness isn't the only criteria we're meeting. The 1975 "Eastern Wilderness Act" determined that Wilderness should be a place of mental and physical challenge. That means you're actually supposed to think about where you're going in here. A map and compass is the best way to find your way around in Wilderness. Of course, it's always best to know how to use them before you go into the Wilderness area. Some people use those new-fangled GPS devices, which aren't illegal in Wilderness, but we think take some of the mental challenge out of Wilderness navigation, and hence, some of the fun. After all, it's just one more technical gadget telling you what to do, and didn't you come here to get away from technical gadgets and things telling you what to do? But go ahead and do it the "easy" way if

you like. We'll still challenge you as you climb over all the trees we've left...

*Linda White is the manager of Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands Wildernesses. She has worked in Wilderness for 15 years with the Forest Service in Utah, West Virginia, Colorado, Minnesota, and now Pennsylvania. She is a Master of Leave No Trace and was the Eastern Region representative for the agency's Wilderness Information Management Steering Group from Nov. 1999 to Nov. 2003.*

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**West Virginia Wilderness Coalition Update**  
**By Matt Keller**

As the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness works through the process of protecting special places in Pennsylvania, a group is doing the same on the Allegheny's 'sister' forest, the Monongahela of West Virginia. Our two states are fortunate to have both wild places and the opportunity to permanently protect some of them through inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. While there are many similarities in both wilderness campaigns, the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition started a good bit later and is several steps behind in the process. It has been very helpful for us to watch the progress of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness and to learn what they have done to be successful thus far. The West Virginia Wilderness Coalition is made up of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, the Sierra Club-West Virginia Chapter and The Wilderness Society. Two representatives from each of these groups sit on a committee that guides our current wilderness campaign. In February 2003, the coalition hired a full time coordinator.

This past spring and summer, an inventory of possible wilderness area candidates was conducted in order to determine which ones the coalition would pursue for permanent protection. Starting from a list of around 30 areas, the list has been nearly cut in half after

all areas were put through a matrix to evaluate their suitability for wilderness designation. We now have a list of strong candidates from which to select areas for the wilderness bill we hope to get introduced in Congress this year.

From its beginning we have tried to make the wilderness campaign a collaborative effort that takes into consideration the concerns of various stakeholders who also care about these special places. We have developed strong working relationships with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, the Monongahela National Forest Supervisor's office as well as the mountain biking community in the state.

Over the past year, we have been working very hard on outreach and education. There are many people in West Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic region that know and love our current wilderness areas. We aim to communicate to them the opportunity that we have to protect more. In traveling across the state, we have found that there are many misconceptions and outright myths that surround wilderness designation. An important part of our outreach and education has been to set the record straight and give folks accurate information. When most people find out what wilderness really is and that we are trying to protect more areas like Dolly Sods and Cranberry, they tend to be very enthusiastic and supportive of our efforts.

We are now focusing heavily on grassroots organizing and encouraging wilderness supporters to write West Virginia's congressional delegation, encouraging them to introduce legislation that will designate more wilderness areas on the Monongahela National Forest. We have gained formal endorsements from many businesses, non-profit groups, and civic organizations. We plan to keep pushing for more support until we reach a critical mass necessary to be successful in setting aside our best wild places on federal land for future generations to enjoy. For more information feel free to contact me or visit our web site: Matt Keller, West Virginia Wilderness Coordinator, 304-864-5530, mattk@twsw.org, www.wvwild.org

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**Clarification and Update on the Pennsylvania Sierra Club**

In the March 2003 Friends of Allegheny Wilderness newsletter, the Pennsylvania Sierra Club's March 9<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee vote of general support for additional wilderness designations in the Allegheny National Forest was mischaracterized as a specific vote of support for the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness campaign.

In fact, the official minutes from that March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting read as follows:

*ANF Wilderness Campaign (Kirk Johnson)*

*Kirk Johnson explained the amount of land currently protected as wilderness in the ANF and how that compares to other areas. Forest Service to develop their forest service plan this year. FAW has been working for two years to raise awareness of the issues. They have also been doing inventories. The process of designation may take several years.*

*Jeff Schmidt: Should make a motion to support wilderness area.*

*Kirk Johnson: Forest Service must make case for Wilderness Designation then Congress must approve.*

*Motion: Chapter supports increased acreage in Federal Wilderness Protection in ANF. Kirk Johnson. Nancy McGonnagal. Unanimous*

*Motion: PA Chapter should adopt the ANF Wilderness Campaign as a chapter campaign. Kirk Johnson. Dick Neller. Unanimous.*

We sincerely apologize for any confusion on this matter.

FAW is pleased to report that more recently, however, the Pennsylvania Sierra Club did formally vote to support the wilderness areas FAW has

proposed, which are depicted in detailed maps contained in our A Citizens Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest (see [www.pawild.org](http://www.pawild.org)).

**Wildness Tells Us Things**

Wildness tells us things civility obscures

Beings and things: all metaphor posits shared existence

Humility is the portal to all and any wilderness

Ruffed grouse drumming are our hearts beating too

They don't create loneliness by encouraging consumption

Like geese sucked into jets at 30,000 feet

Fear always floats to the top of our awful isolation

Speak truth and don't mislead another by your silences

Something in our national culture loves this wildness

That curious call of the wild whispers in America's ears

What then is our greatest failing but ingratitude

Anoint the wild with your own most sacred oils

Myth is the only place there isn't one

--Ed Zahniser

**Revised Old Growth Survey Released**

A revised edition of *Old Growth in the East: A Survey* by Mary Byrd Davis identifies old growth – defined as “forest, woodland, or savanna that looks largely as it would appear had not Europeans settled North America and that has experienced little or

no direct disruption by EuroAmericans” – from the Atlantic coast of the United States to western Minnesota and south through eastern Texas. The revised edition updates descriptions and includes old-growth identified since the 1993 edition. More information is available at:  
[www.old-growth.org/book.html](http://www.old-growth.org/book.html).

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**Leave No Trace Principle 6: Respect Wildlife**

**By Eric Flood, ANF Wilderness Ranger  
Master Educator in Leave No Trace  
Outdoor Ethics**

Greetings! This is article number seven in a series I am contributing on Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics for the newsletter. If you are a new reader to the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness newsletter, but have an interest in learning more about low-impact back-country travel and camping techniques, I highly recommend reading the preceding six articles. They may be found in the FAW newsletters archived on their website at [www.pawild.org](http://www.pawild.org). As for my credentials, I am fortunate to be Wilderness Ranger and a Leave No Trace Master Educator for the Allegheny National Forest.

As a rule, I begin each article by reviewing the definition of Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics, its origins, and explaining the role of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

Leave No Trace is a public education program designed to promote responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. This program was first conceived and developed by the USDA Forest Service, in cooperation with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). However, over time Leave No Trace has been expanded to include a wide range of partners in federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the private sector. A non-profit organization located in Boulder, Colorado currently known as the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor

Ethics is responsible for managing the program.



*“The Leave No Trace message is more than a campaign for clean campsites. It's a program dedicated to building awareness, appreciation, and most of all, respect for our public recreation places.... Leave No Trace is about enjoying the great outdoors while traveling and camping with care”-From the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics website ([www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)).*

The seven Leave No Trace Principles listed below are the foundation of the Leave No Trace outdoor ethics program:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. **Respect Wildlife**
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

My first article featured a general overview of Leave No Trace, as well as the role of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics within the program. The next five articles consisted of in-depth examinations of the first five of the Leave No Trace principles. And now we move on to discuss principle number 6: Respect Wildlife.

As has often been the case with the previous Leave No Trace principles, I think you will find this principle extremely inter-related with the others. For example, it is often the case that following principle number one, Plan Ahead and Prepare, has

much to do with your ability to follow this and all of the other principles, which in turn also has a lot to do with your ability to Respect Wildlife.

Let us begin by establishing that the only way to observe wildlife is always, without exception, from a distance. The animal has no way of knowing whether or not you are a threat, and you might force it to flee. Although it may not seem obvious to you, the animals in question may already be experiencing a great deal of stress, and to have people approaching or following them could contribute to making their situation all that more difficult.

When you add stress to an already taxing situation, the animals' very survival could be at stake. What may appear to you as casual behavior may actually be stalling for time, so that you will leave and they may go on about getting a much-needed drink, feeding on scarce fodder that may only be available where you are loitering, you may be blocking the only direction of escape from nearby predators, or they may have young hidden nearby. Especially sensitive times, when you should give wildlife the most room, include times when they are known to be mating, nesting, raising young, or during the winter months.

Except when traveling in bear country, avoid making a lot of noise to unduly cause anxiety animals who may be nearby. If you are in known bear habitat, it is appropriate to make just enough noise so the animals can hear and avoid you, preventing any "surprise" encounters. Otherwise, keep noise to a minimum; you are visiting here, and should be as considerate to the animals as you would when a guest in a person's home.

You can also lessen your impacts on wildlife by traveling in several smaller groups instead of one large one. And if you should come across a young animal without its parent, do not touch it, and leave the area immediately. Chances are

mom had put it there to hide, and is waiting nearby for the danger to pass so she may come back for it. If you handle or touch the baby in any way, this may cause her to abandon it, resulting in death by a predator, exposure, or starvation.

You can also be considerate to wild creatures by your choice of campsite. Staying two hundred feet or more from water sources for camping and disposal of human waste is as important to protect the water from contamination for the animals as it is for us. Another consideration is to be far enough from water (and natural food) sources so that we do not interfere with the animals' ability to access them. Again, remember this is their home, and you are technically their houseguest.

Everyone is familiar with the constant admonition "Please Don't Feed the Animals!", yet many, many people still do just that. People who engage in this sort of behavior should know that feeding wildlife isn't just a case of rebelling against authority and being nice to the animals. There are lots of good reasons why it is never okay, and always very bad, to feed wild creatures, and none of them are about preventing you from an act of kindness towards them. As a matter of fact, not only is it not being kind, many times the feeding of wild animals by the public have directly contributed to their demise. By feeding animals you are directly interfering with their normal interaction in the natural world by damaging their health, altering their natural behaviors, and exposing them to danger.

Take for instance problems that arise when animals come to think of humans as a source of food. Campsites become magnets for raccoons, porcupines, bears and other unwanted visitors. Bears who begin to think of humans as a source of food can become dangerously aggressive, and may begin to take what they want without waiting for a handout. Such bears may need to be relocated, or even destroyed, by wildlife agencies before they injure or kill anyone. *A fed bear is a dead bear.* Other nuisance animals may carry rabies and

other dangerous diseases, or become adept at robbing campers' food caches.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence out there about how much damage is done to wild creatures by thoughtless people who want to gain a moment of instant gratification by giving a handout to an animal. You may have heard of the elk that starved to such a pitiful state in Yellowstone National Park that they had to be destroyed several years ago. It seems that some visitors were feeding them corn, which is not a natural food for elk, during a time of the year when their digestive systems should have been readjusting to allow them to browse in the trees because of the snow pack. The corn they had eaten had interfered with this natural process, so when the visitors left, the elk were unable to digest their natural food and were cruelly starving to death.

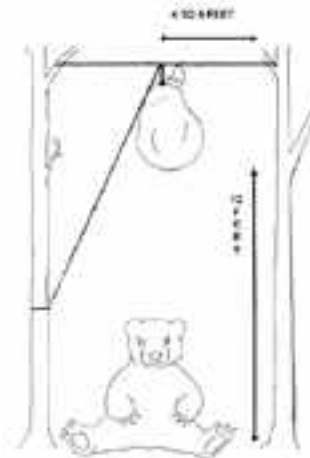
In some overlooks at Rocky Mountain National Park, all of the chipmunks and ground squirrels for miles around congregate and beg for food. Volunteers have to be stationed there to discourage folks from feeding them, because fat and lazy small animals hanging out in the open make an easy meal for birds of prey that linger nearby.

Sometimes even whitetail deer that become habituated to people can be a dangerous nuisance. One doe who loitered around a campground in a Maine state park several years ago would viciously kick any visitor who did not feed her, or even if they didn't give her enough food to suit her.

Sometimes, we don't intentionally feed wildlife; they simply steal an easy meal from poorly secured food caches, or are attracted to improperly disposed of waste. This is just as detrimental to wild animals as intentional feeding, and we must take full responsibility for properly storing our food items and disposing of waste properly. Not to mention that the food they take may force an early end to a multi-day trip.

To prevent this sort of unintentional feeding, you should always hang your food and the trash you will be packing out with you in a bear bag (see Leave No Trace principle three: Dispose of Waste Properly!). A "bear bag" is actually designed to discourage *all* animals, not just bears, and generally consists of an appropriately sized fabric utility sack hung from a line suspended between two trees at a distance of four to five feet from either one, and elevated a minimum height of 10 to 12 feet from the ground.

And remember, for your own safety as well as that of the wild creatures who may be attracted by it, food should never be taken into or stored in a tent. It is also never, ever proper to burn or bury any trash or leftover food. Burying is just not acceptable under any circumstances. Disposing in a fire is problematic as well because no matter how hot your fire may be, residual odors and some unburned material will remain, attracting bears and animals into your campsite. You should always hang trash and scented items such as toothpaste or deodorant in your bear bag, and *always* pack out what you pack in.



(Illustration by Eric Flood)

One final note: be sure to always control pets at all times, or leave them at home. Remember that dogs may have been bred to be man's best friend over the centuries, but they still possess the predatory instincts of their ancestors. If not kept in check, they may stress, injure, or even kill some unfortunate creature that you come across.



For more information on Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics, contact me at: Bradford Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest, 29 Forest Service Drive, Bradford, PA 16701, (814) 362-4613 extension 126, email: eflood@fs.fed.us. Or, visit the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics Website at [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org). In my next installment, we will be examining principle seven: Be Considerate of Other Visitors. As we close out 2003, I would also like to say many thanks to all of the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness volunteers who made our trails projects so successful over the past year. Happy Holidays, and I look forward to seeing you in 2004!

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**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 (5<sup>th</sup> district) or Phil English (3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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

***"Your contacting me concerning this matter is very much appreciated. I share your concern about designation of the Allegheny National Forest areas, and will give this legislation my close attention when it is reported from the Interior Committee to the full Senate, to be sure that Pennsylvania is not overlooked."***

-- Former Pennsylvania Senator Richard Schweiker (R), in a September 21, 1973 letter to a Sierra Club wilderness supporter during the development of the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act (EWAA) in Congress. Senator Schweiker was a strong advocate for more than 30,000 acres of ANF wilderness being designated as part of the EWAA.

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**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."

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:  
Friends of Allegheny Wilderness  
220 Center Street  
Warren, PA 16365