

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.

This edition of the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness newsletter is dedicated to the recognition of an exceptional tract of majestic and unbroken maturing second-growth forestland in the Allegheny National Forest known as the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness Area. It is located on the north shore of the Kinzua Bay arm of the Allegheny Reservoir. FAW has identified nearly 7,000 acres of wilderness quality lands here encompassing Morrison Run, Hemlock Run, several miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT), and a significant length of Allegheny Reservoir shoreline. Get set to enjoy this introduction to one of the best-kept secrets in the ANF. We begin with a description of the area taken from FAW's *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*, and conclude with FAW supporter Sandra Brown's firsthand account of a visit to the area.



The unbroken wild of the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness along Kinzua Bay. Outside the proposed wilderness, in the foreground, State Highway 59 and the Kinzua Beach day use area are visible. Photo by Kirk Johnson/Lighthawk

Morrison Run Wilderness – Proposed Citizen Proposed Acreage: 6,887
Current Status: Management Areas 6.1, 6.2
Counties: McKean, Warren
Townships: Corydon, Hamilton (McKean County), Mead (Warren County)
ANF Ranger District: Bradford
USGS topographic maps: Cornplanter Bridge, Westline
Low Elevation: 1,328'
High Elevation: 2,150'

Morrison Run is a tributary of what was once Kinzua Creek, now Kinzua Bay since the construction of the Kinzua Dam in the 1960s. The proposed Morrison Run

Wilderness lies along Kinzua Bay. A century ago in this area, "the sight and sound of the geared locomotive was seen and heard in the valley for sixty-two years, a length of time not recognized throughout Pennsylvania." About 1885 or 1886 Joseph W. Neily purchased timber on warrants 5594 and 5575; 2,500 acres are recorded purchased by him. The mill was located about a half mile up Chappel Fork. His narrow gauge railroad probably ran off the Kinzua Railroad to go up Hemlock Run about two miles. Several known prehistoric Native American sites lie along Morrison Run in the northern portion of the proposed area.



6,887 Acres

The Morrison Trail, a 10.8-mile loop trail offers a pleasant two- to three-day backpacking experience or a shorter day hike. This trail leads to Morrison Campground, a primitive area of 32 boat access campsites that have picnic tables, fire rings, vault toilets, and pump water. Slopes along the reservoir and along the small streams are steep with large boulders on the steeper hillsides. Most of the area is heavily forested in second-growth timber, primarily oak and hickory. Hemlock is found along the streams, and splendid old white pines can be found in scattered locations. The month of June provides a perfect opportunity to view the mountain laurel in bloom. Opportunities to view deer, squirrel, grouse, beaver, and turkey are also good. A rare emergent wetland plant known as a thread rush (*Juncus filiformis*) has been recently recorded near Chappel Bay along the southern edge of the proposed wilderness. This is a Pennsylvania Rare state-listed species. Its discovery in 1991 coincided with drought conditions resulting in lower water levels in the reservoir and exposed mudflat habitats.



Rock outcroppings, such as these found along the Morrison Run hiking trail loop, are common in the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness Area. Photo by Kirk Johnson

The NCT passes through the eastern end of the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness from southwest to northeast. It follows the beautiful Hemlock Run drainage. On the west end of the proposed area is the popular Rimrock Drive and Overlook. This feature was formally dedicated on Friday, October 9, 1964 by Congressman Albert

Johnson. The Rimrock Drive and Overlook is not inside the boundary of the proposed wilderness, but is close enough for users of the Rimrock area to use the area as a starting point for their Morrison Run Wilderness experience. Surrounded by the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness, and located at the Rimrock Overlook, is a geologic feature classified as an “erosional remnant.”

Proposed Morrison Run Wilderness

- We recommend that the developed Morrison Run campground be excluded from the proposed wilderness.
- We recommend that the Rimrock Drive and Overlook be excluded from the wilderness designation by ‘cherry-stemming’ the area from the boundary. We recommend that the boundary be set at 50’ from the Rimrock Drive.
- We recommend that the Kinzua Beach Management Area 7 land, zoned for “Large scale recreation areas or resorts,” be excluded from the proposed wilderness in deference to those who may wish to develop a rustic lodge at this location. This area has already been developed as a public day use beach.
- The Forest Service owns three small tracts of mineral rights between Campbell Run and Morrison Run along Kinzua Bay, and another between Morrison Run and Hemlock Run along Chappel Bay within the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness Area. They do not allow surface occupancy to access these deposits if leased. We recommend that the mineral rights underlying the remainder of the proposed wilderness be acquired by the Forest Service.

**A Fiber Artist Looks at Wilderness
Kinzua Point – Allegheny National Forest
October 25th, 2002
By Sandra Brown**

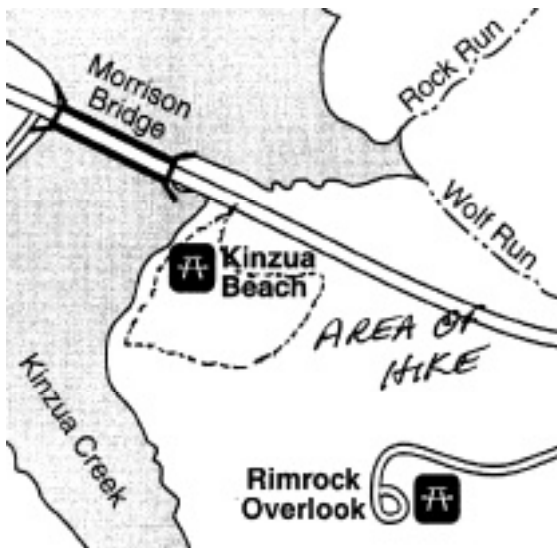
The experience of wilderness can be both large and small. In fall 2002 I took a hike into Allegheny National Forest up behind the area known as Kinzua Beach. I would have covered more territory, but every time I stopped I saw something remarkable.

These rocks stood in the forest. And as I came closer I wondered if bears were living there. Instead, [there were] ferns and green mosses. And I saw that these huge boulders were made of smaller, rounded rocks – rocks that had been abraded and then somehow cemented into each other...only to be worn off again. Some of these boulders supported trees.



Photo by Sandra Brown

After passing through the large boulders, heading toward the top of the hill, I came across a piece of sculpture and stopped to drink it in. This gray, textured monolith stood twisted on the forest floor. It was as beautiful as any thing I had ever seen in a museum, with shades of turquoise, rust red-brown and soft gray.



The bedding mostly yellow leaves were almost a blanket of 'children.' I read once where trees bring minerals up from deep in the soil below and their fallen leaves release

these minerals into the topsoil. If so, I was looking at a tree who had done its job well – the evidence was at its feet. For though it had been dead many years, it nourished the living soil around it.



Photo by Sandra Brown

As it turns out, it wasn't entirely 'dead' either. Moss was feeding off its feet and wormholes were sprinkled here and there.

I stayed with this tree stump a long while, sitting, eating some dates, drinking water.

Later, looking at [my] photos, I noticed that, turned sideways, the stump took on the aspect of coastal rock formations. Perhaps what Ian Stewart in *Nature's Numbers* says is right: "Mathematics lets us do the molecular bookkeeping" that runs through nature...through our whole universe.

As I sat there taking it all in - the beauty of this tree stump and of this moment - realizing as I looked around that I would never have enjoyed it so much if it hadn't been in the middle of wilderness...

The forest is rich in color because it is rich in diversity. I wondered what a slope of hard cherry trees would look like - rather like a monochromatic rug I suppose.

It seems incredibly sad that this effort to save wilderness still continues. [Wilderness] feeds us all, and we need such nourishing.

Action You Can Take To Help

Please contact Friends of Allegheny Wilderness if you would like more information about the Morrison Run area of the Allegheny National Forest, and to find out what you can do to protect this special area permanently as wilderness. There is only a finite amount of land remaining in the ANF with undeveloped character like Morrison Run. Please get out and visit this area soon if you can. You won't regret it! The Morrison Run loop trail can be hiked in a day and provides opportunities to experience a wide variety of ANF landscapes, forested areas, and waterfront views.

To receive a full-color map and description of the proposed Morrison Run wilderness, along with maps and descriptions of our other seven proposed ANF wilderness additions (and three proposed national recreation areas), please contact FAW to request a copy of *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*.

Also, advocates are needed to protect this special area in perpetuity, and ANF personnel must know of your support for designating the area. You can help directly by writing to the special "Forest Plan revision" mailing address for the ANF:



A view along the Allegheny Reservoir looking north into the bay at the mouth of Morrison Run and the interior of the proposed wilderness. Photo by Kirk Johnson

Michael Hampton, Forest Planner
Allegheny National Forest
P.O. Box 36
Warren, PA 16365

r9_allegheny_nf@fs.fed.us

Designating wilderness areas as part of America's National Wilderness Preservation System ultimately requires an act of Congress. It is important that you contact your federal legislators to inform them of your support for wilderness protection for the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness Area. To find out who your legislator is in the United States House of Representatives, go to:

www.house.gov

There you can search for your member of Congress by entering your zipcode. You will then be directed to your Member of Congress's website, where you can glean all of the relevant contact information.

You can find out who your two senators are by going to:

www.senate.gov

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness
220 Center Street
Warren, PA 16365
www.pawild.org
alleghenyfriends@earthlink.net
(814) 723-0620

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