



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.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Wednesday, September 28, 2005

Editorial: Forest folly / Arbitrary lines hurt Pennsylvania preservation

Sometimes, it doesn't take a bulldozer to make wilderness vanish. Bureaucrats can do it with the stroke of a pen, as in the case of Allegheny National Forest.

Ever since Congress passed the 1964 National Wilderness Preservation System Act, federal wilderness designation has preserved land from logging, construction and road-building while leaving it open to recreational uses like hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and horseback riding.

About 9,000 acres of wilderness areas exist in the ANF, and thousands more are eligible for wilderness evaluation during this round of forest management planning, now in its final stages and headed to Congress for approval in 2006.

Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness is pushing for more designated wilderness areas within the ANF and has created a list of roadless tracts for consideration based on a Forest Service inventory and a federal evaluation of roadless areas. But in 1997 the Forest Service Eastern Region ordered that a half-mile-wide buffer dividing roadless areas from roads, power lines and other unnatural features be deducted from their official acreage -- and that if what remained was under 2,500 acres, the area would not be up for wilderness evaluation.

The effect of this space-shaving is dramatic. One area, the Allegheny Front, dropped from 7,000 acres to 1,500; the Clarion River Tract shrank from 6,000 to 958, and the Cornplanter Tract was lopped from 3,000 acres to 197, due to the added loss of a half-mile on either side of an overgrown and unusable abandoned road that cuts through it.

Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness has been lobbying the Forest Service to rescind the 1997 directive, so far unsuccessfully. In the meantime, of roadless areas that had been eligible for wilderness evaluation, the three named have been ruled out by the Forest Service, three others are still eligible and three new ones have been proposed by the Friends. The conservation group will also lobby Congress, which isn't required to accept Forest Service recommendations, to consider the ineligible areas.



Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)

The Forest Service's 1997 regional criteria apply only to Eastern forests, such as Allegheny National and Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia; the Wilderness Act sets no minimum acreage for designation. Nationwide, many federally designated areas are under 2,500 acres, the arbitrary line drawn by the directive.

Continued on Page 2

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

The following organizations are formally supporting FAW's A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest. If you would like to add your business, organization, church group, etc. to this growing list, please contact Friends of Allegheny Wilderness using the above contact information.p

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Butler Outdoor Club
Campaign for America's Wilderness
Eastern Native Tree Society
Explorer's Club of Pittsburgh
Finger Lakes Trail Conference
Howard County, Maryland Bird Club
Keystone Trails Association
Lake Erie Group Sierra Club
Lehigh Valley Audubon Society
Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club
Pennsylvania Native Plant Society
Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited
Pine Creek Headwaters Prot. Group
PrimalNature.org
Tiadaghton Audubon Society
The Wilderness Society

The Executive Summary and maps of our proposed wilderness areas and national recreation areas can be viewed online at the above listed web site.

From page 1

The United States boasts huge wilderness areas, but only two-tenths of 1 percent are in the heavily developed Northeast. The Friends of the Allegheny Wilderness are right to challenge arbitrary rules that leave valuable lands vulnerable. Our region needs

to protect what little is left among the superhighways and sprawl.

Reprinted with permission

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness has recently learned that in addition to the Chestnut Ridge, Minister Valley, and Tracy Ridge areas, the Forest Service will also be considering the Allegheny Front area for possible wilderness recommendation when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Forest Plan revision is released this coming May. However, this still leaves the proposed Clarion River, Cornplanter, Hickory Creek Wilderness addition, Morrison Run, and Tionesta Wilderness Areas off the table for study as wilderness due to the overly restrictive criteria used by the agency. But you can still make a difference. Please take the time to write to the agency asking them to fully evaluate all proposed areas in A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest in the DEIS:

William Connelly, Forest Planner
Allegheny National Forest
Forest Plan Revision
P.O. Box 36
Warren, PA 16365
r9_anf_fpr@fs.fed.us

Winter Birds

The beauty of the woods in winter is in their stillness. No leaves rustle; there is only the stirring of evergreen boughs that bend in the wind, and the clouds of snow they scatter, silent crystalline songs. Warblers have left the deep woods; the hawk is circling quietly in his high kingdom. Turtle, frog, and toad sleep, burrowed in blankets of mud beneath the pond. Bat, bear, and skunk sleep, curled up in crevices and caves. Cloaked in his warm, brown feathers, the great horned owl hunts far afield for his prey, and every night Orion shoots his arrow into the dark. These are the desperate, hungry hours, barren of fragrance, stripped of flowering warmth, shining and still in the light of the long night moon.

Dawn comes late and dusk is early; in between, at the time of the winter solstice, nine hours of daylight, barely enough to keep the woods and its creatures alive. Even at noon, the sun is so low in the sky that the light is crepuscular, and shadows lie long on the pure white page of the snow. The heart of life beats slow, slow as the stately pace of an old English carol written about a medieval Bohemian king:

*Good King Wenceslas looked out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even.*

Wenceslas went out on the day after Christmas to give alms to the poor. I have come to our cabin to scatter corn, suet, and sunflower seeds for the winter birds—juncos and chickadees, woodpeck-ers, cardinals and mourning doves. Walking in to the cabin, I find the tracks of wild turkey, a scratchy, spiral dance I wish I could have seen, and the punctuation marks of deer hooves in the snow. Snow laps over the field, an insulating blanket. Snow is actually good for the ground, making a cover that closes in geothermal heat to warm the roots of trees as they wait out winter. Come spring, the snowmelt will nourish new life. And even now, between the snow and the ground is a layer of air known as the subnivian space, meaning "under the snow," where heat rising from the ground melts the snow away from itself, creating a crawl space for life. Here, in a few millimeters between the crusty dome of the snow and the ground, is a space where beetles, mites and spiders live, ignoring the cold, working all winter at breaking down the debris of summer into fertile humus on the forest floor. This is the winter's tale: without winter, there is no summer. Without darkness, there is no light. Each moment is a gift, each breath a miracle, each day a new beginning.

*Happy Solstice to All
Linda Underhill*

The Forest Press [Tionesta, PA]
Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness Donate Book to Marienville Library

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW), a Warren-based non-profit wilderness advocacy organization, donated a copy of "Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act" by Mark Harvey to the Marienville Area Library on Saturday, December 4.

"Wilderness Forever" is a new biography of Tionesta native and 1964 Wilderness Act author Howard Zahniser. It was published in October by the University of Washington Press.

FAW 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. Through recent generous donations from it's membership, FAW was able to purchase multiple copies of "Wilderness Forever," which the organization is donating to libraries throughout the four-county Allegheny National Forest region.

FAW has also donated a copies of "Wilderness Forever" to the Forest County Historical Society, the Sarah Stewart Bovard Memorial Library in Tionesta, the West Forest High School library, and numerous public libraries in Elk, McKean, and Warren Counties.

Join Our E-mail List!

FAW maintains an active email listserve on which subscribers are regularly updated on developments regarding efforts to designate additional wilderness in the Allegheny National Forest. If you would like more frequent updates on FAW's efforts than this newsletter provides, please send an email to alleghenyfriends@earthlink.net and ask to be subscribed to our listserve.

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness
220 Center Street
Warren, PA 16365



Wilderness and old-growth forests provide high quality habitat for the northern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*).

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 Other \$_____

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.

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

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