

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.

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EDITORIAL

**Allegheny National Forest:
Let more grow wild**

When travelers pass “U.S. Forest Service” signs along a roadway, they assume they’re entering protected land.

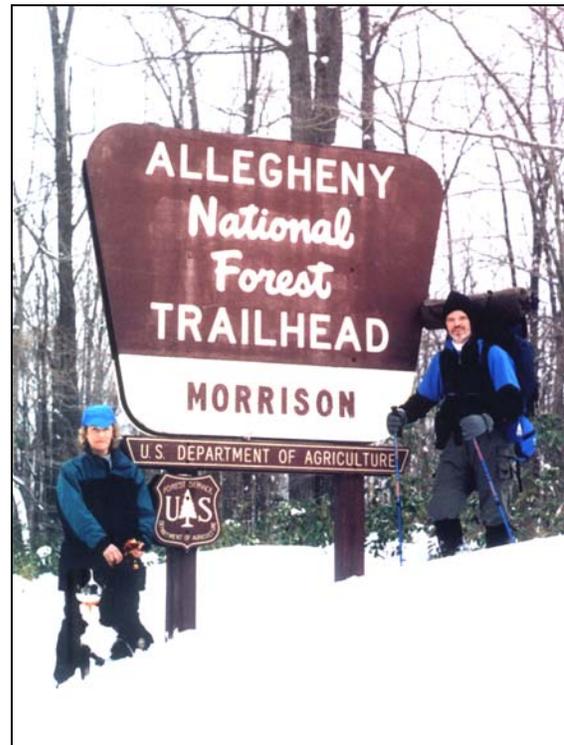
Many don’t realize that the federal land is managed by the Department of *Agriculture*, which implies harvest and yield. Trees are a crop, not just a source of solace and recreation.

That’s why loggers, drillers, sportsmen, off-road riders and environmentalists often disagree over how to interpret the Forest Service’s mission “to provide the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run.”

These competing interests really clash once a decade, when individual forests revise their management plans. The plans designate uses for various areas, similar to township zoning laws.

Allegheny National Forest, in Pennsylvania’s northwest corner, has been working on its plan for two years. Located at the junction of Elk, Forest, McKean, and Warren Counties, Allegheny is known for its furniture-quality hardwoods, oil and gas resources, and nature tourism. The Forest Service is deciding among

four alternatives to accommodate all of those uses, but none incorporates enough wild space – land that’s just left alone. Only “Alternative D” comes close.



Karen and Bill Greenawalt (and dog Annie) of the Butler Outdoor Club following a February 2005 BOC/FAW backpacking trip in the proposed Morrison Run Wilderness Area. Photo by Ben Moyer.

Currently, the Allegheny has just 9,000 acres of wilderness, or less than 2 percent of the forest’s 513,000 acres. That’s a far smaller proportion than the Forest Service’s 18 percent national ...

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...average or even the 11 percent Eastern region average. The Allegheny needs a bigger slice before the final plan is adopted in February.

By law, wilderness doesn't have to be virgin land. Indeed, most of the Allegheny was farmed or logged by the 1920s. When the national forest was designated in 1923, residents jokingly called it the "brush patch." Some worried that the forest would never recover.

It did. Now, as the only national forest in Pennsylvania, the Allegheny needs stricter protections.

Developers' bulldozers are threatening much of the Northeastern forest canopy. Nationally, the United States lost 10 million acres to development from 1982 to 1997, with 26 million more acres expected to be cut down by 2030. The country should safeguard public land where it can.

Wilderness designation allows uses such as hunting, fishing, hiking and horseback riding, but guards land from damaging logging, oil and gas drilling, and off-road recreation. It's the best way to purify water, preserve wildlife habitat, and buffer the few remaining old-growth tree stands.

The advocacy group Friends of Allegheny Wilderness seeks 54,000 more wild acres, which would bring percentages in line with national averages. There would still be plenty of acreage to harvest valuable black cherry and sites to drill for oil and natural gas.

The Forest Service sets aside wilderness areas as a first step to permanent designation. Ultimately, Congress makes the final decision.

Wilderness protection embodies the very hope of democracy by valuing the rights of future generations on par with those of the present forest users. More of the Allegheny is worth saving.

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What You Can do to Help Protect Pennsylvania's Wilderness

The public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the ANF's Forest Plan revision closed on August 28, and early indications are that more than 4,500 of some 5,500 official comments were in support of the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest!* Huge thanks go out to everyone who took the time to contact the Forest Service in support of wilderness!



The U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The Forest Service can make wilderness recommendations as part of their Forest Plan revision, but an act of Congress is ultimately required to designate wilderness. Every U.S. President since Lyndon Johnson has signed significant wilderness legislation into law.

The Forest Service will publish their final Forest Plan early next year. We must now turn our attention to educating Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation about the importance of supporting as much wilderness as possible once the final Forest Plan is released. Ultimately it requires an act of Congress to designate wilderness.

To that end, please find a sample letter below for you to use to construct your own letter to your member of Congress. If you do not know who your Representative is, you can find out by going online to www.house.gov and typing your Zip Code in at the top of the page. Your member of Congress' website will come up, and you can find their mailing address on that page. Pennsylvania's two Senators are Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum. They will want to hear from you on this important issue as well.

In addition to the sample letter, there are also talking points included below that you should feel free to incorporate into your letter, and/or come up with your own. The more personal the letter sounds (i.e. not "form letterish"), the stronger of an impact it will have. For more background information, you can also peruse our website at www.pawild.org.

The important thing to do is to emphasize the pressing urgency to protect qualifying areas of the ANF as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964 *now*, as an important end in itself. Concentrate on the positives of wilderness, why it is important to you, and why we should protect it (rather than focusing on negatives of things that degrade wilderness). Remember that the point of your letter is to ask your member of Congress to support ANF wilderness designation. So – for your letter to be most effective, you want to limit its scope to this one issue.

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear Congressman _____ [Dear Senator _____],

I am writing to ask you to contact the Forest Service and urge them to maximize wilderness protections in the Allegheny National Forest. Protecting the last special remnants of wild land in Pennsylvania's only national forest – the Allegheny – is a very important issue to me.

The Forest Service is currently revising its management plan for the ANF and I am

extremely concerned that the "Preferred Alternative" (Alternative C) in the Forest Service's draft revised management plan does not go nearly far enough in recommending new wilderness designations to Congress. Alternative C only recommends two new wilderness designations and Alternative D, which goes furthest in terms of recommending wilderness, still only recommends four areas.

The Forest Service should recommend the four areas included in Alternative D (Tracy Ridge, Chestnut Ridge, Allegheny Front, and Minister Valley), but also add to its recommendations the other areas proposed for wilderness in *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest* by Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. This includes Clarion River, Cornplanter, Morrison Run, the Tionesta old-growth forest, and the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area addition.

All of these areas qualify for inclusion in America's National Wilderness Preservation System, and should be included in the final plan. They provide opportunities for hunting and fishing, clean water, backpacking, solitude, and a wide range of other activities and values that will be so important to future generations. Please contact the Forest Service and urge them to maximize wilderness opportunities as they complete their revisions.

Once the Forest Service publishes their final Forest Plan early next year, it will be up to you, Congressman _____ [Senator _____], and the other members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation to act swiftly and boldly to permanently protect these areas for future generations of Americans to use and enjoy.

I am depending on your support.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Address

ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS:

- Wilderness designations protect watersheds, fishing and hunting opportunities, wildlife habitat, backcountry hiking, camping, and other recreation opportunities while helping our local economy.
- The ANF is located within the recently established Pennsylvania Wilds tourism region, which seeks to promote the natural beauty of north central Pennsylvania as a tourism draw. Maximizing wilderness opportunities in the ANF would be consistent with, and in fact augment, the ongoing Pennsylvania Wilds program.



Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in the proposed Tracy Ridge Wilderness Area near Willow Bay. Designating the prospective wilderness in the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* will make large tracts of high-quality undisturbed habitat permanently available to threatened and endangered species. Photo by Jim DeLong.

- Alternative D is a good first step, recommending four areas for wilderness: Chestnut Ridge, Tracy Ridge, Allegheny Front, and Minister Valley. Each of these areas has outstanding natural features, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, among other wilderness values, and should be recommended as wilderness in the final Forest Plan, and designated by Congress.

- All eight areas identified in *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest* by Friends of Allegheny Wilderness should be recommended to Congress. The agency should choose the wilderness component of Alternative D and amend it to include wilderness recommendations for Clarion River, Cornplanter, Hickory Creek Wilderness Area addition (which includes the headwaters of East Hickory Creek), Morrison Run (a popular backcountry hiking area), and Tionesta (an important old-growth forest). Each of these areas is highly qualified for wilderness designation.

- The ANF provides important remote wildlife habitat. Threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act occurring in or near the ANF include: the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), the clubshell mussel (*Pleurobema clava*) and the northern riffleshell mussel (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*), which are endangered, and the small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*) and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), which are threatened. By designating additional wilderness here we will be making large tracts of high-quality undisturbed habitat permanently available to these important species, and to other ANF species with viability concerns.

- Add your own thoughts and experiences: why is protecting wilderness important to you personally? Which proposed wilderness areas, if any, in the ANF have you personally visited, and what did you like about them?

New Trailhead for the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area established

The Allegheny National Forest's largest designated wilderness area, Hickory Creek, was established by the Pennsylvania Wilderness Act of 1984. Ever since then, hikers of the Hickory

Creek Wilderness Area have begun their hikes at the trailhead at the Hearts Content parking lot near the Hearts Content old-growth forest.



Some of the FAW trail crew after a hard day's work of trail construction. Volunteers came from as close by as Tidioute and Ridgway, and as far away as Pittsburgh and Ohio. The new Hickory Creek trail can be seen leading into the woods in the right background. Photo by Kirk Johnson.

This past summer, the Forest Service formulated a plan for establishing a new trailhead for the Hickory Creek Wilderness along the west side of Hearts Content Road, about a half mile north of the existing parking area at Hearts Content. The new parking lot and trailhead has been constructed in accordance with the plan, and Wilderness Ranger Eric Flood hopes to hold a grand opening ceremony for the new trail prior to Memorial Day, 2007.

FAW formally adopted the Hickory Creek Wilderness trail years ago, and is currently cooperating with the Forest Service on a series of volunteer work projects to help construct the new trail segment. By the time you receive this newsletter in the mail, the trail will be sufficiently established for hikers to start walking it. In fact, the more you walk the trail, the more you help establish it. It is currently marked with blue flagging tape tied to trees along the route.

The new route eliminates a road crossing and realigns the trail away from the developed recreation areas at Hearts Content. For now, the long-existing segment leading from the Hearts Content parking lot to the wilderness boundary

remains open, but early next year it will be decommissioned and restored to a natural condition.

For more information about volunteering with FAW to help with the stewardship of the Hickory Creek Wilderness Area trail, contact FAW at allegheynyfriends@earthlink.net.

FAW member, Tionesta native to turn 96 in December

FAW member and Tionesta native Dr. Jean Sanville will turn 96 on December 6th of this year and is being honored in California in the profession which she chose many years ago after her graduation from the University of Colorado.

An Institute of which she was a founder and the first Dean many years ago, once named the California Institute for Clinical Social Work, has been renamed the Sanville Institute. It offers a doctoral training program to candidates interested in the psychoanalytic training.

Dr. Sanville was for many years on the Faculty there, and was for years editor of the journal in this field – the *Clinical Social Work Journal*. She has contributed many volumes herself to this profession. One, *The Playground of Psychoanalytic Therapy*, has been translated into Spanish and published in Argentina. Dr. Sanville's father was Dr. Forest Bovard in Tionesta, and her mother, Ruth Diamond Bovard, was in the educational world and consulted with many schools and colleges in Pennsylvania.

Congratulations and Happy Birthday to Dr. Sanville, and thank you for your strong support of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness and wilderness preservation over the years for your home Allegheny National Forest!



Fisher (*Martes pennanti*)

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The tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is one of the tallest (up to 150 feet!) eastern North American trees. Its arrow-straight trunk reaches high up into an oblong crown of branches and foliage. These tall, straight trees stand like supporting pillars for the forested wilderness itself.
Illustration from Peterson's Field Guide to Eastern Forests (1998).

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.

Name _____
Address _____

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