



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.

Public Overwhelmingly Favors Citizens' Wilderness Proposal!

The vast majority of people who commented on the draft Allegheny National Forest (ANF) management plan last summer joined Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) in asking the Forest Service to recommend more wilderness in their final revised plan than is offered in the four alternatives of the draft plan, according to a recent tabulation of the public comment.

Of the 8,277 official comments received on the ANF's draft plan, more than 6,800 (over 80 percent) favored the maximum amount of protected wilderness. Virtually all of those respondents specifically favored the eight areas identified in our *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*, published in 2003.

Less than two percent of the ANF is currently designated as part of America's National Wilderness Preservation System under the Wilderness Act of 1964. This compares to an average of 18 percent of all national forest land nationwide so protected, and 11 percent in the East. This acute wilderness shortage is in fact highlighted on page 5 of chapter 2 of the now under revision 1986 ANF Forest Plan:

It must be concluded that the demand for wilderness experience on the ANF is very high, given that half the country's population lies within a day's drive of the Forest...It seems

obvious that the demand for wilderness designation on the Forest is high, and the available supply in the regional area is low.

The ANF is located within the recently established Pennsylvania Wilds tourism region, an area of natural beauty in north central Pennsylvania being promoted as a tourism draw by a variety of agencies and organizations. A recent Pennsylvania Wilds study found that nearly a third of all Pennsylvanians visit protected forest areas in the state – such as a wilderness area – at least once every year. Maximizing wilderness opportunities here would clearly augment the ongoing Pennsylvania Wilds program – bringing a steady influx of tourism dollars to ANF communities such as Bradford, Ridgway, Tionesta, and Warren.

Between 2001 and 2003 FAW extensively surveyed the ANF and identified eight special areas, proposing them for wilderness designation in the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*. The areas include Allegheny Front, Chestnut Ridge, Clarion River, Cornplanter, an expansion of the existing Hickory Creek Wilderness Area, Morrison Run, the Tionesta old-growth forest, and Tracy Ridge. An additional three areas were identified as potential National Recreation Areas: Minister Valley, Hearts Content, and Cornplanter South.

The Forest Service's preferred Alternative C of the draft plan recommends only two of these areas for wilderness study – Chestnut Ridge...

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

...and Tracy Ridge. Alternative D does recommend four of these areas for wilderness study – Allegheny Front, Chestnut Ridge, Minister Valley, and Tracy Ridge. However, even Alternative D does not consider a number of highly deserving areas.

The thousands of comments that poured into the Forest Service's office specifically in favor of the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* illustrate just how important our remaining wild places are to people here in Pennsylvania, and throughout the country. With public opinion now abundantly clear, common sense dictates that the agency should listen to the people they are charged with serving and recommend protection for all of the ANF's remaining wild places that all Americans enjoy equal ownership of. We look forward to working constructively with the Forest Service and other practical stakeholders to ensure that ANF wilderness is ultimately properly represented.

The Allegheny Front

By Jim DeLong

Somewhere around 1956 our family began building a hunting camp along the Warren – Tidioute Road, Route 337. Directly across the road was Camp Grandview, an exceptionally nice camp with a sizable orchard and, believe it or not, a large brick dome housing a telescope. Old Harry Grandquist would take us into this observatory occasionally and point the telescope skyward – sharing the mysteries of the night sky with three young boys eager to see what the moon looked like, close up.

Over the years I have maintained a connection with that general area and have spent many

days both on the east side of the road, down Wildcat Run to Chapman State Park, and the west side, the Allegheny Front, an area proposed for and eminently deserving of wilderness designation. If the assumption is correct that this was one of the earliest areas to be timbered – due to the ease of sending the logs downhill to the Allegheny River – then it has likely been well over 100 years since there was any commercial logging on the Allegheny Front.

The mature trees, massive rock outcroppings and pure, unspoiled streams come together to make this area well worth an extended visit, despite the steep gradient on the west half of the tract, as the land slopes sharply to the river. Of course, the Tanbark Trail bisects this piece and, for those who prefer to follow paths, provides an unobstructed, well-marked passage from Route 62 to Sandstone Spring and beyond. But, as I have always been irresistibly drawn to water and prefer to neither follow nor leave a trail, my meanderings through the area have generally followed the streams – Lenhart Run, Charlie Run, Hedgehog, Clark, Slater – that run down the hillside, bound for the Allegheny. Certainly each stream has a bit of its own character, but most splash through tumbles of boulders, plunging into deep green pools scattered with quartz pebbles, and pour over tree trunks, fallen long ago forming small dams and spillways.

On a warm spring day the cool air, heavy with the moist smell of hemlock shade and leaf mould, drifting gently over moss-shrouded rocks is the very signature of Pennsylvania wilderness. Here, sitting on a laurel-draped boulder, an awareness creeps over you of the incredible vitality of an old forest, the collage of new life and old – fresh wood sorrel at the base of a 120-year-old hemlock whose roots wrap around ancient boulders shading pristine streams where spawning brook trout create new generations.

Take time to get lost in the rock cities of the northernmost branch of Slater Run or in the boulder-strewn upper end of Clark Run, where

the laurel gathers close around your ankles. Make your way down Hedgehog Run near where the two branches meet and where a decade or two ago a windstorm laid down hundreds of trees, small hemlocks and mountain laurel growing up through the branches of the prostrate trunks. Find yourself on the "hogback" separating the two branches – now there is an intriguing tangle of vegetation – and, from just the right spot, a stunning view of the downhill slope.



Looking northwest down Hedgehog Run valley into the vast roadless expanse of the proposed Allegheny Front Wilderness Area, November 2004.

This is one of those places you might hesitate to tell people about because you don't want to find anyone else there. It is a private, quiet place where the sound of a voice would be a violation and where a reverent solitary traveler, just passin' through, is humbled by the power of a Pennsylvania wilderness.

Election Update

With the Forest Service nearing completion of their Forest Plan revision it is now time to turn our attention primarily to Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation. There have been some changes to the makeup of the delegation as a result of the November election. Pennsylvania now has a new Senator – Bob Casey, Jr. (D) replaces Rick Santorum (R) and joins Arlen Specter (R) in representing Pennsylvania in the United States Senate.

Local Congressmen John Peterson (R – 5th District) and Phil English (R – 3rd District) both retained their seats in the United States House of Representatives, and will remain our primary focus as we continue to educate the delegation about the Wilderness Act and the urgent need to protect the remaining areas of the Allegheny National Forest as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. While the Forest Service and citizens can make wilderness recommendations, ultimately it requires a bipartisan act of Congress to designate wilderness.

Other changes to the Pennsylvania delegation include Jason Altmire (D) defeating Melissa Hart (R) in the 4th District, Patrick Murphy (D) defeating Michael Fitzpatrick (R) in the 8th District, and others. Regardless of the election results, our bipartisan approach to identifying and protecting qualifying Allegheny National Forest areas under the Wilderness Act remains the same.

You as a citizen and part owner of the Allegheny National Forest can help make a difference. Please take the time to write to Bob Casey and congratulate him on being elected to the U.S. Senate to represent Pennsylvania! The new Senator will want to know what issues are important to his constituency, so please tell him about the urgent need for him to support the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*.

Senator Bob Casey
B40-C Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6324 (phone)
202-228-0604 (fax)

Your Congressperson will want to know of your support for the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* too. To find out who represents you in the U.S. House and where you can write to them, go to **www.house.gov** and type your zip code in at the top of the page. This will give you all the information you need.

Thank you!

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness
220 Center Street
Warren, PA 16365



Coyote (*Canis latrans*) Once a resident primarily of the American West, during the 20th Century the opportunistic coyote expanded its range all the way to the eastern seaboard.

Illustration source: National Audubon Society *Pocket Guide to Familiar Animal Tracks of North America* (2000)

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 _____

Phone _____
Email _____

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