



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.

For Immediate Release: July 30, 2007

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Clearwater Conservancy endorses ANF *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*

State College – ClearWater Conservancy has endorsed a proposal for expansion of Congressionally designated wilderness in the Allegheny National Forest.

ClearWater Conservancy's board of directors voted to endorse the Allegheny National Forest wilderness proposal of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) July 12th, joining a rapidly-growing, broad-based grassroots constituency seeking protection for some of Pennsylvania's last parcels of remote, wild forestland.

FAW's *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for the Allegheny National Forest* advocates eight areas totaling 54,460 acres be added to America's National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS), which was established with the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

"We are pleased to be supporting this proposal for additional wilderness protection in the Allegheny National Forest," said Jennifer Shuey, executive director of the ClearWater Conservancy. "Preserving our last remaining roadless and wild areas is preserving our heritage. We support conserving more wilderness in Pennsylvania's only national forest for nature itself and for future generations of American citizens to enjoy."

ClearWater Conservancy is a Centre County-based land trust and natural resource conservation organization formed in 1980. Their mission is to promote conservation and restoration of natural resources in central Pennsylvania through land conservation, water resource protection, and environmental outreach to the community.

"Friends of Allegheny Wilderness is honored to have the endorsement of such a committed organization as ClearWater Conservancy supporting our carefully developed proposal for the Allegheny National Forest," said John Bartlett, field representative for FAW. "We look forward to further expansion of our wilderness coalition in the coming months with like practical-minded groups."

The *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* was published in 2003 to coincide with the revision of the ANF's long-term management plan, or "Forest Plan." Forest Plan revision lasted nearly four years, with the new plan being published by the Forest Service this past March. Since its unveiling, the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*

has been endorsed by 24 separate local, regional, and national organizations representing more than 400,000 Americans.

Originally encompassing nine million acres around the country, today there are 107 million acres protected as part of the NWPS, but only two wilderness areas totaling 9,000 acres in the ANF – Pennsylvania's sole national forest. This acreage equates to a scant two percent of the 513,200-acre forest. Nationally, 18 percent of national forest land is protected as wilderness.

"While we recognize and applaud the significance of continued timber production and other important uses of the Allegheny National Forest to the region's economy and way of life, it must also be acknowledged that there is an acute shortage of protected wilderness here," said Kirk Johnson, FAW's executive director. "We are grateful to the ClearWater Conservancy for recognizing this unfortunate problem, and acting to help us rectify it."

Wilderness designated under the Wilderness Act consists of significant parcels of federal public land set aside to be left in their natural condition on a permanent basis. Hunting, fishing, hiking, backpacking, cross-country skiing, and other forms of non-mechanized recreation are permitted within federal wilderness areas. New roads, motorized recreation, permanent developments, logging and other forms of commercial extraction are not permitted.

In addition to the ClearWater Conservancy, other organizations supporting FAW's proposed wilderness areas include Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Butler Outdoor Club, Campaign for America's Wilderness, Finger Lakes Trail Conference, French Creek Valley Conservancy, Howard County Maryland Bird Club, Lake Erie Group Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, Pennsylvania Republicans for Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited, The Wilderness Society, and many others.

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On the web:

ClearWater Conservancy: www.clearwaterconservancy.org

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness: www.pawild.org