



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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Support for Friends of Allegheny Wilderness Continues to Grow

Three More Groups Sign on to Allegheny National Forest Wilderness Campaign

Warren, Pennsylvania – Three additional organizations have recently endorsed a citizen wilderness proposal for the Allegheny National Forest (ANF), located in northwest Pennsylvania, joining a growing list. The Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group, PrimalNature.org, and the Tiadaghton Audubon Society have all endorsed the Warren-based Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW) proposal to permanently protect select ANF tracts as wilderness.

FAW's *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest* was published in the fall of 2003 to coincide with the beginning of the revision of the ANF's long-term management plan. After two years of study, FAW identified eight parcels of the ANF – a total of 54,460 acres – as prospective wilderness. Once designated by an act of Congress, new ANF wilderness areas would augment America's National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS), which was established with the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Wilderness protection is an important component of the "Multiple Use" management of national forests, which also includes timbering and other uses that Congress has established. The U.S. Forest Service is required by the 1976 National Forest Management Act to review ANF wilderness potential as part of Forest Plan revision.

Encompassing approximately nine million acres in 1964, today there are more than 106 million acres from coast to coast protected as part of the NWPS, but only two wilderness areas totaling approximately 9,000 acres in the ANF. This acreage equates to less than two percent of the ANF as a whole. Nationally, 18 percent of Forest Service land is protected as wilderness. In the Forest Service's Eastern Region, of which the ANF is a part, the figure is 11 percent.

"We have reviewed the proposal of the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness and strongly agree that the eight proposed tracts are worthy of wilderness designation," says Ronald Comstock, president of the Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group of north central Pennsylvania.

The mission of PrimalNature.org is to further the preservation and restoration of old-growth forests in the eastern United States through furthering knowledge and protection of areas that have not been directly disrupted by humans or that have been carefully restored.

"We want to see more wilderness in eastern forests and feel that 10 percent of the Allegheny National Forest is a reasonable goal," says Philip Krajewski, president of the Tiadaghton Audubon Society of Potter and Tioga Counties. "We therefore support the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness proposal as part of the long-term management plan for the only national forest in Pennsylvania," he continues.

Wilderness designated under the Wilderness Act consists of significant parcels of federal public land left in their natural condition on a permanent basis for the benefit of wildlife and people alike. Hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and other forms of non-mechanized recreation are permitted in wilderness. New roads, permanent developments, logging, and other forms of commercial extraction are not permitted.

In addition to the thousands of individuals who have written to ANF and elected officials in support of FAW's proposal, the list of endorsing local, regional, and national organizations has now expanded to 15. They are: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Butler Outdoor Club, Campaign for America's Wilderness, Explorer's Club of Pittsburgh, Finger Lakes Trail Conference, Howard County Maryland Bird Club, Keystone Trails Association, Lake Erie Group Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited, Pine Creek Headwaters Protection Group, PrimalNature.org, Tiadaghton Audubon Society, and The Wilderness Society.

Organizations, businesses, and other entities interested in supporting *A Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest* are invited to contact FAW to sign up. For more information, log on to: www.pawild.org.

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On-line resources:

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness: www.pawild.org

PrimalNature.org: www.primalnature.org

America's National Wilderness Preservation System: www.wilderness.net

Allegheny National Forest: www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny