



*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:** December 8, 2014

**Contact:** 814-723-0620

**FAW Director Joins North Country Trail Association Board of Directors  
Local Non-Profit Manager to Help Oversee 95 Miles of Trail in Allegheny**

**WARREN** - At a board of directors meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan on Saturday, December 6, the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) voted to add long-time Warren, Pennsylvania resident Kirk Johnson to their 15-member board.

The NCTA was founded in 1981 as the volunteer non-profit organization partnering with the National Park Service in the stewardship of the North Country National Scenic Trail. The NCTA headquarters is based in Lowell, Michigan.

The North Country Trail (NCT) was created by the U.S. Congress in 1980 in the tradition of the Appalachian Trail and other National Scenic Trails, and is the longest such backpacking trail in America at more than 4,600 miles.

The NCT passes through seven northern states from North Dakota to New York, and also traverses 12 national forests along its length - including for 95 miles through the 513,300-acre Allegheny National Forest (ANF) in northwest Pennsylvania.

Johnson will replace East Brady resident Joyce Appel as the Pennsylvania representative on the NCTA board. Appel has served her maximum of three consecutive three-year terms, and so must take a required leave from board service.

Johnson earned his BA from Albion College in Albion, Michigan in 1992, where he did frequent trail work in the Whitehouse Nature Center on campus, where he was employed during his time as a student at Albion.

Johnson earned a Master of Environmental Studies degree from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington in 1999. While living in Washington during the mid-to-late 1990s he was a volunteer trail steward for the National Park Service in Olympic National Park.

Johnson currently serves as executive director for the Warren-based Friends of Allegheny Wilderness, a non-profit organization he founded in 2001 which seeks to have qualifying portions of the ANF designated as wilderness areas under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

These include areas that the NCT passes through such as Minister Valley, Tionesta, and Tracy Ridge.

Johnson has been an NCTA member since 2000. He completed hiking the 95-mile ANF section of the NCT in that same year, and for the last ten years has been the volunteer adopter and steward of the 5.5-mile segment of the NCT through the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness Area in southern Warren County.

# # #

North Country Trail Association: <http://www.northcountrytrail.org>

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness: <http://www.pawild.org>