



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:

August 13, 2001

Contacts:

Kirk Johnson, Friends of Allegheny
Wilderness, 814-730-3629

Michael Carroll, The Wilderness Society
970-247-8788

**REP. PETERSON, HISTORICAL COMMISSION, CONSERVATION GROUPS JOIN
TIONESTA COMMUNITY TO DEDICATE HOWARD ZAHNISER HISTORICAL MARKER**

Conservation Groups Call for More Wilderness in Pennsylvania

Tionesta, PA – Members of Howard Zahniser’s family were joined today by Representative John Peterson (R-PA), leaders of the Forest County Historical Society, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, U.S. Forest Service officials, representatives for Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), Friends of Allegheny Wilderness and members of other prominent conservation groups to dedicate a Pennsylvania State Historical Marker honoring the late Howard Zahniser. At the event conservationists called for more Wilderness protection of public land throughout Pennsylvania.

“When I learned that the father of the Wilderness Act was from Tionesta here on our own Allegheny National Forest, I was immediately both overcome and excited by this unique connection,” said Kirk Johnson, director of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. Johnson applied to the PHMC for approval of the Zahniser historical marker last fall. “This man whose vision has resulted in wilderness designation on public lands all across the country, including the Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands Wilderness areas here in the Allegheny National Forest, worked his first job in Tionesta at *The Forest Press* newspaper, and is in fact buried here along the banks of the Allegheny River.”

Zahniser was one of the country’s greatest conservation leaders and a native son of Tionesta, Pennsylvania. He was the primary author of the Wilderness Act of 1964, which created America’s National Wilderness Preservation System, and served as executive director of The Wilderness Society from 1945 to 1964.

The Howard Zahniser historical marker is located about one and half miles north of Tionesta on Highway 62 along the banks of the Allegheny River.

“The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is pleased to recognize the life and work of Howard Zahniser through this important new marker,” PHMC executive director Brent Glass said. Pennsylvania’s historical marker program commemorates the people, places and events that are significant in the history of the Commonwealth. An independent statewide panel makes recommendations to the PHMC, based on nominations made by historical groups, institutions and individuals.

Nearly 1,900 PHMC historical markers throughout Pennsylvania form a visual, educational, and cultural map to introduce travelers to the Commonwealth’s heritage.

“On behalf of the Zahniser family, I wish to express our heartfelt thanks for this great moment of honor for Howard Zahniser and his work for wilderness preservation. We are proud of this historical marker at the home town he loved, by the river he loved, within sight of the Allegheny Islands Wilderness, part of the 105-million-acre legacy of the 1964 Wilderness Act, for which he worked so tirelessly,” stated Ed Zahniser, Howard Zahniser’s son.

“Howard Zahniser’s contribution to public land protection is virtually unparalleled. The Wilderness Act today gives us the means to protect wild areas on our National Forests and other public lands,” said Darrell Knuffke, Vice President for Regional Conservation at The Wilderness Society. “It would be a fitting tribute to Zahniser to protect additional wilderness areas here on the Allegheny National Forest in his home state,” Knuffke added.

Johnson indicated that the need is high to designate new wilderness in the Allegheny National Forest. “With less than 2% of the Allegheny currently designated wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act, this is far below the national average of 18% for national forest land,” Johnson stated. “With Forest Plan revision on the horizon for the Allegheny, now is the perfect time for Friends of Allegheny Wilderness to begin our citizen’s inventory of lands suitable for wilderness here,” he added. “As much as 50,000 additional acres of wilderness in the Allegheny National Forest would certainly be appropriate.”

Howard Zahniser was a lifelong advocate of wilderness and wildlands protection and was an early proponent of a national policy for wilderness preservation on America’s public lands. Zahniser served as Executive Director of The Wilderness Society from 1945 to 1964, and was the chief architect of the Wilderness Act, which was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on September 3, 1964. The Wilderness Act established our National Wilderness Preservation System, which includes two wilderness areas on the Allegheny National Forest - the Allegheny Islands Wilderness and the Hickory Creek Wilderness.

For more information on the state historical marker program, including instructions and deadlines for nominations, call (717) 787-8823 or visit www.phmc.state.pa.us.

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness on the web: www.pawild.org.

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For more background info on Howard Zahniser’s role in the passage of the Wilderness Act and creation of the National Wilderness Preservation System, “A Wilderness Forever Future: A Short History of the National Wilderness Preservation System” by Doug Scott of the Pew Wilderness Center is an excellent resource. Please call either contact on the previous page to request a copy.