



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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Clarion Wildlife Society Endorses *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* Venerable Science Conservation Organization Urges Allegheny Wilderness Protection

WARREN – The Clarion University Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society (CU-TWS) has formally added its support to the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*, produced by the Warren-based non-profit organization Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW).

CU-TWS is a chapter of the international Wildlife Society, and promotes many of the same values and principles embodied in the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*. Some of CU-TWS's goals, also inherent in the proposal, are to augment educational opportunities for students in natural resources, provide and conserve high quality habitat for native wildlife, and build the active support of an informed citizenry.

"Setting aside the tracts of land delineated in the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* will provide open space and a natural environment in which members of The Wildlife Society can enjoy the peace, serenity, and healing qualities of a wilderness area," said Luke Bobnar, president of CU-TWS. "This is especially important as oil and gas well drilling is increasing in our national forests."

Copies of the formal CU-TWS endorsement letter for the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal* are being sent to the offices of Congressman Glenn Thompson, Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper, Senator Robert Casey, and Senator Arlen Specter. An act of the U.S. Congress is required to add qualifying portions of federal public land to America's National Wilderness Preservation System.

The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937, and is committed to a world where humans and wildlife co-exist. Members are active across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The society's mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

FAW published their *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest* in 2003. The ubiquitously supported FAW proposal identifies eight areas totaling 54,460 acres as qualifying for permanent protections under the Wilderness Act of 1964. During the recently completed ANF Forest Plan revision, more than 6,800 of 8,200 public comments received by the agency specifically advocated for FAW and the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*.

In addition to formally endorsing the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*, CU-TWS also gathered the signatures of more than 100 Clarion University students, and other interested citizens at an Earth Day event in April on the Clarion University campus. Twenty-two of these signatures were from student and faculty members of CU-TWS.

To date 45 local, state, and national organizations (whose memberships total more than 400,000 people), and 117 businesses from throughout the region have endorsed the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*. In addition, 67 scientists with Ph.D.'s in the fields of ecology, biology, economics, and other related sciences have signed onto a letter formally asking the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation to support legislatively the areas carefully delineated in the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*.

Finally, FAW has recently joined with five other conservation organizations to form the Pennsylvania Wilderness Coalition in a concerted effort to compel Congress to designate more of the ANF as wilderness. Member organizations are FAW; The Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter; Pennsylvania Division, Izaak Walton League of America; Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited; The Wilderness Society; and the Campaign for America's Wilderness. This coalition supports the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*.

The Wildlife Society online: <http://www.wildlife.org>

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

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