VEEKENDER



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Keep our wild areas wild, wilderness areas wilderness

Do not let their foot in the door. There are people who would prefer that all forms of outdoor recreation be allowed on all public lands. These people, I believe, are a small minority even within their user groups, and probably driven by business interests.

We see it beginning in our area with a proposal to allow mountain bikes to use trails in the Tracy Ridge area, and in the western states where there has been a proposal

nated wilderness areas.

This is simple opinion given realizgroups, specifically timber interests, mountain bikers, even motorized trail use. Each has its place and deserves support because each is good for the economy and each gets people outdoors.

Most important among these are the timber companies. The timber industry is vital to our area. To tree ity forests we now have without timber management on private lands. To on the ANF. those in the timber industry who allow public access, thank you, thank you, thank you.

for many more miles of trails. There groups from colleges hike and camp is plenty of room for them. These mountain bike trails, allowing for rel-



Mike Bleech **Outdoors Columnist**

to public health by building physical fitness. Mountain bike trails bring in tourism dollars.

Several lightly used areas would be perfect settings for mountain bike trails. Forest plancertainly could come up with an ideal mountain biking trail location, with input from mountain bikers. Sensitive headwaters streams could be avoided, while at the same time allow-

to allow mountain bikes to use desig- ing people to use mountain bikes to access excellent fishing streams.

But not at Tracy Ridge, nor in any ing the risk of alienating groups I designated wilderness area. Easing would rather not alienate because I access into a wild area through the am strongly in support of these use of machinery immediately takes away the wild part of it.

Tracy Ridge is the most logical area on the Allegheny National Forest for future wilderness designation. In its current state, it is the largest and maybe the best wild area on the ANF.

Should the ANF have more wilderness area?

I think, yes. Some more would be huggers I would suggest hey consider good for the local economy. Desigthat we would not have the high qual- nated wilderness areas attract visitors. This fits the multi-use concept

Even during winter we see vehicles parked at trailheads that access the Hickory Creek Wilderness. Often, To mountain bikers I offer support judging by the types of vehicles, on this wilderness area.

Spending time in wilderness is an the bare essentials.

atively minor mishaps, experience that can not be replicated make a big contribution elsewhere. The longer one is in a wilderness, the more natural human feelings and senses reappear. The mind clears. Thought processing improves. Imagination intensifies. Primal fears surface, which is not a bad thing since fears are vital to avoiding troubles.

> By the time a person has been in a wilderness long enough, howling coyotes spice the adventure. Sing back at them.

> Listen to all of the wild sounds. With enough time you can hear the plants. Listen to the wild silence.

> In a wilderness a person gains appreciation of little things and the overall picture.

> Clearly I recall an experience in an Adirondack wilderness area when I watched a confrontation between a frog and a toad of equal size. It evolved from a stare-off into a jumping for height contest. Fascinating, especially viewed in the light of a small campfire.

> Many among us feel the urge to spend time in wild surroundings. Many, many more should try it. There is no greater cure for the stresses of modern life than spending time in wilderness. But do it the right way. Do not civilize the wilderness.

> Nowhere can a person relax better than in a wilderness area, without the numbing effects of artificial stimulation such as television, computers, radio and music. Leave portable radios and DVD players at home. Take only

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