



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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From the Director

Well, the election is over and the people have spoken. Coincidentally enough, of the 19 Congressional seats in Pennsylvania, the only ones that changed hands as a result of November's election are the two that encompass the Allegheny National Forest.

In the 5th Congressional district, which includes the vast majority of the ANF, Republican Glenn Thompson defeated Democrat Mark McCracken to win the seat being vacated by retiring Congressman John Peterson.

In the 3rd Congressional district, which includes two small portions of the ANF in Warren County, Democratic challenger Kathy Dahlkemper defeated Republican incumbent Phil English.

Both Thompson and Dahlkemper will take office next January when the 111th Congress opens.

These developments are acutely relevant to the FAW campaign. An act of the United States Congress is required to designate wilderness as part of America's National Wilderness Preservation System – protecting it in its natural condition in perpetuity for future generations to use and enjoy. Given the traditional mechanisms by which wilderness legislation for a particular area advance in the Congress, there will be no ANF wilderness bill passed without the support of the next 5th district Congressman. For example, even though 30,000 acres of ANF wilderness was strongly supported by both of Pennsylvania's Senators during the 1975 Eastern Wilderness Areas Act debate, local

Congressman Albert Johnson opposed the move and there was ultimately no ANF wilderness designated.

Please take the time to write to both Glenn Thompson and Kathy Dahlkemper and congratulate them on being elected to the United States House of Representatives. Take the opportunity to remind them of the urgent nature of our wilderness campaign – *less than two percent of the entire ANF is permanently protected as wilderness!* Please encourage them to support the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest* legislatively in full upon ascension to the Congress. A convenient template letter is available on the FAW website, pawild.org (look on the right-hand side of the front page).

Mailing addresses are as follows:

Congressman-elect Glenn Thompson
Pennsylvania's 5th Congressional District
127 West Spring Street
Titusville, PA 16354

Congresswoman-elect Kathy Dahlkemper
Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District
1921 West 8th Street
Erie, PA 16505

Thank you very much for your help and support as we adjust during this important time of transition! -- *Kirk Johnson*



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304 Mayer Street
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Warren Times Observer

Saturday, August 9, 2008

Backyard wilderness

By Dr. Ronald Simonsen

When I was approached by Kirk Johnson to become a member of the Board of the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness (FAW), I said I would be honored to serve and that I “will do what I can.” For more than 70 years my roots have been in Warren, Pennsylvania. From my home on Park Avenue, with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins up and down the street, my early world was mostly ‘Glade.’ (I still have vivid memories of getting my head stuck in Glade Run’s concrete bridge rail on our walk home from church one Sunday.) I spent my formative years ‘exploring’ along the Allegheny and hiking our beautiful hills.

Though now I’ve ventured beyond Glade Run to traveling around the world – west to Vietnam and east to Khazakstan – throughout my life’s experiences, I’ve never forgotten the importance of the back yard in which I began my journey. Over time, many others have journeyed along Glade Run in Warren County. We know our Native American brothers explored here shortly after the valley was rearranged by the massive floodwaters of the last retreating ice age. We stand on distinctive flat beds of sediment unlike the folded and deformed Appalachians to our east. Well known to miners and drillers, the Allegheny Plateau slopes a little, so that the coal in Clarion County and to its south has eroded

away in Warren County, leaving oil, gas, and timber.

In the four counties that make up the Allegheny National Forest, there are perhaps thousands of ideas on how to prosper in this critical time for our small communities which are besieged by economic turbulence. We are surrounded by poverty, and many of our children have moved away. A few individuals can prosper from timber, oil, and gas, but the majority of people need a new strategy. Our leaders linger in conflicting postures, while most of us wait for a plan that will lift our communities out of the present lethargy and confusion. I have come to realize that part of the answer to this economic uncertainty is wilderness protection.

Historically, we know that the original settlers started to market timber, and in 100 years our hills had been stripped of their virgin white pine and hemlock. Iron and steel fabrication followed the oil industry, and by the mid-20th Century, my father and his fellow workers were producing gigantic industrial pressure vessels for the Manhattan project. I believe this was the peak of heavy manufacturing in Warren. But before that, in 1911, the land surface, then considered worthless, was recognized by early environmentalists as at imminent risk of catastrophic erosion. Beginning in 1923, much of this land was purchased for the creation of the Allegheny National Forest. It is on a portion of this land that FAW proposes to establish legislative protection.

Wilderness, defining a value understood by many to transcend objects of lesser permanence and beauty, may now become our most valuable enduring resource. This resource needs federal protection if it is to serve as a means of prosperity for the people of this region. FAW has proposed eight tracts of land in the Allegheny National Forest, a total of almost 55,000 acres, for wilderness designation. This designation would preserve these wild places – from Tracy Ridge and Chestnut Ridge in the northern end of the forest to the Clarion River area just west of Ridgway in Elk County – a

great thing for the eastern United States. Future generations will be able to enjoy them, free from development – their beauty forever preserved. This wilderness will also drive tourism, as these areas of the national forest will be set aside for use in hiking, fishing, backpacking and birding, etc., thus providing a perpetual boost for the local economy.

A recent economic study, The Esolen Report, made several recommendations for moving our economy toward a successful tourism industry, confirming that FAW's proposal is not unfounded. This new found tourism is something that will help Warren County to prosper and will share with others what I have loved so much about my home.

Let's fast forward and see what might be possible with this new economic outlook and ideas suggested by the Esolen Report. Warren's stately homes and the Victorian downtown become the permanent summer home of a world class symphony. Our leaders invite this merger and collaborate with our sister city to provide a 2,500-seat performing center. Support staff and schools fill now empty buildings, and patrons shop, dine, lodge, and explore. The hills across the Allegheny River remain beautiful, but life in Warren has changed – for the better. You know this will last and impact future generations even if they only stop to clear their minds and heal their souls.

Can all this happen? It is my dream.

This is why I am here – doing what I can.

Ronald Simonsen, M.D., is the President of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Allegheny Wilderness.

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Business Campaign Growing Rapidly

More than 100 businesses from throughout the region and across the state have joined in the call for Congress to designate additional wilderness in the Allegheny National Forest.

The businesses have officially endorsed the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest*, stating their support for the wilderness campaign led by Friends of Allegheny Wilderness. FAW and its supporters seek Congressional wilderness designation of eight areas totaling 54,460 acres in Pennsylvania's only national forest.

"The business endorsements speak to the depth and breadth of support for Congressional wilderness designation of the areas proposed in the *Citizens' Wilderness Proposal*," said John Bartlett, field representative for FAW.

Ellen Holleran, marketing director of Appalachia Outdoors in State College, said the decision to endorse was an easy one for the business. Appalachian Outdoors is one of the largest outdoor clothing and equipment stores in the region, doing business since 1974.

"We at Appalachian Outdoors appreciate the unique backcountry recreational values of wilderness, but most of all the importance of protecting our most natural areas," she said. "We are not only about getting people in to the outdoors, but making sure we have those special places for them to visit."

Only two areas – the 8,600-acre Hickory Creek Wilderness and the Allegheny Islands Wilderness composed of seven islands totaling 368 acres in the Allegheny River – are designated wilderness. That is less than two percent of the 513,200-acre ANF.

The endorsing businesses range from small, family-owned stores in the heart of the ANF to major manufacturers. The entire, ever-growing, list of endorsing businesses can be found at pawild.org under the "supporters" button at the top of the home page.

To sign up your business as endorsing FAW, or to find out more information about the campaign in general, contact John Bartlett at 814-676-4474 or jbartlett@pawild.org.

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness
220 Center Street
Warren, PA 16365



Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) prefer cool, clear waters of high purity and a narrow pH range in lakes, rivers, and streams in the Allegheny National Forest region. Wilderness provides high-quality habitat for our native brook trout. It's diet includes crustaceans, frogs, insects, smaller fish, and even small mammals such as voles, worms, and flies. It's maximum size is 33 inches and 14 pounds.

Your contribution to Friends of Allegheny Wilderness goes directly to saving wilderness!

Yes, I want to support Friends of Allegheny Wilderness and help protect Pennsylvania's Wilderness.

Yes, I want to contribute! Here is my donation of (circle one):

\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 \$_____

Please make checks payable to "Friends of Allegheny Wilderness." Friends of Allegheny Wilderness is an IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Donations are tax deductible. The official registration and financial information of Friends of Allegheny Wilderness may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

Send to:
Friends of Allegheny Wilderness
220 Center Street
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