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To: <pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu>  
Subject: PABIODIV: ANF wilderness in IJW  
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Dear IJW,

Please allow me to alert IJW readers to the fact that northwest Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest (ANF) will formally begin the public process of revising their Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) this October, providing an important opportunity to advocate new federal wilderness designation in the Forest. The LRMP is a 10-15-year document that dictates management direction for the entire ANF that is Pennsylvania's sole national forest.

The ANF has been one of the United States' most heavily utilized national forest areas since occupation by European settlers began in earnest in the mid-19th century. Today, Pennsylvania is significantly underrepresented in terms of land designated as wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act (which was championed by Howard Zahniser, a native of Tionesta, Pennsylvania, located on the southwest boundary of the ANF). The existing Hickory Creek and Allegheny Islands wilderness areas total approximately 3,617 hectares, or less than 2% of the 207,617-hectare ANF. The mean for national forest land designated as wilderness nationally is 18%. The current LRMP for the Allegheny states that "It must be concluded that the demand for wilderness experience on the ANF is very high, given that half the country's population lies within a day's drive of the Forest.... It seems obvious that the demand for wilderness designation on the Forest is high, and the available supply in the regional area is low."

Pennsylvania Senators Hugh Scott and Richard Schweiker strongly advocated for ANF wilderness during the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act (EWAA) debate in 1974. Unfortunately, Congressman Albert Johnson, who represented the region at the time, blocked inclusion for the ANF in the EWAA when the bill reached the U.S. House of Representatives. At least five parcels retaining significant wilderness attributes exist in the ANF. These potential additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System could total as much as 16,000 hectares depending on final boundary placement.

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness is leading a campaign to complete the unfinished business begun by Senators Scott and Schweiker to preserve in perpetuity significant representations of the Allegheny Plateau forest. Of particular note is our effort to gain wilderness protection for a 1,670 hectare tract of hemlock-beech old growth in the upper reaches of the Tionesta Creek drainage known as the Tionesta Scenic and Research Natural Areas (Johnson, N.L. 2001. A proposal for Tionesta wilderness designation in the Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania, USA. *Natural Areas Journal* 2 1: 338-345).

To get involved in the public process of LRMP revision, write to: Kevin Elliott, Supervisor, Allegheny National Forest, 222 Liberty Street, Warren, PA, 16365. It is vital that the Forest Service receive recommendations in the earliest stages of the revision process so that wilderness will be incorporated in their LRMP "need for change" documentation.

For more information on wilderness potential in the ANF, please contact Friends of Allegheny Wilderness at the following address.

Sincerely,

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The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Listserve encourages open discussion about biodiversity issues in the state. It is hosted by the Allegheny Institute of Natural History, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and is moderated by the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership. The opinions expressed in messages are those of the authors and NOT the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership.