



AFA Photo Contest

Have you heard about our “Sustainable ANF” photo contest? The purpose of this effort is to raise awareness of the AFA and to provide us with some much-needed photos for promotional purposes.

The contest runs from March 21—April 29 and photos taken on the ANF over the past two years are eligible. There are youth, adult, and professional classes and four categories: Landscape & Wildlife, Forest Recreation, Sustainability & Biodiversity, and Working in the Forest.

Cash prizes are being covered by our sponsors:



RAM Forest Products, Inc.

**North East
Hardwoods Inc.**

You can find the rules and registration form on our website at <http://allegheenyforestalliance.org/index.php/2018-sustainable-anf-photo-contest/>.

Please share this link and our Facebook posts!

AFA Membership Drive

If you haven't renewed your AFA membership for 2018 yet, please do! We have made it easier than ever by creating an



online membership form with PayPal and credit card payment options. You can also request a paper application, or print it from our website, and mail it with your check.

Do you know of individuals, businesses, organizations, or professionals with a vested or philosophical interest in the AFA's efforts? We are also working to reach new members by building a prospect list of those who perhaps are not currently aware of the AFA and why they should join our ranks / support our work.

You can email your suggestions to afaexec@gmail.com, or send your prospective members to our Join & Support page at this link:

<http://allegheenyforestalliance.org/index.php/join-support/membership/>

Spring 2018

Board of Directors

Officers:

Amanda Hetrick—President
Bob Kirchner—Vice Pres.
Becky Lucia —Secretary
Ed Sleeman—Treasurer

For a full list of AFA Board Members, please visit our [“About” page](#).

Next Meeting:

May 22, 2018
East Forest School
3:00 pm

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ALERT: Allegheny National Park Campaign Underway

You may have heard there is an effort underway to change the designation of the ANF to a National Park. This is part of a larger movement nationwide to create more National Parks.

The AFA is monitoring the effort, which thus far has a [website](#) and Facebook page (which they are deleting by end of April due to significant push-back.) We are also researching the impacts of National Parks from both economic and natural resource standpoints to share with the public.

While we oppose this effort, we are taking an education approach rather than a combative one. If you peruse their website and Facebook page, there is much to raise your ire. However, we hope that AFA supporters will follow our lead and

focus on the facts and educating others about the risks this poses to our communities, schools, and the Forest.

The proponents of this effort are saying a National Park could save the region's economy by sharply increasing visitation—a huge concern in respect to our quality of life and the health of the wildlife and the forest! The other major concern is that it would mean the loss of the 25% of timber harvest from the ANF for our communities and schools.

Watch for an informational page to be added to our website with talking points on this issue. Please help us in telling the other side of the story and recruiting additional supporters of maintaining the Allegheny National **FOREST!**

Forest Collaborative—Deer Issues

At the Forest Collaborative's forest land manager meeting held in February, several issues related to an increasing deer herd were discussed as immediate to long-term challenges to forest management.

Specific issues raised included chronic wasting disease, over-browsing of desirable species adding cost to sustainable timber management, impact of the herd on habitat, and a declining number of hunters to control the deer population.

The Collaborative prepared a letter to the Pennsylvania Game Commission regarding these challenges and the Collaborative's recommendations. Similar efforts are being made by the Society of American Foresters and the PA Forest Stewards and Tree Farms.

The PA Bureau of Forestry-Clarion District is organizing a meeting for May or June between the deer committees of these and similar groups to develop unified messages and recommendations.

Tracy Ridge Bike Use Project Halted

In January, Forest Supervisor Sherry Tune withdrew her [Draft Decision](#) to move forward with adding bike use on a 12.5 mile section of the Tracy Ridge trail. Ms. Tune's letter stated: "During the objection review process, which included a public meeting, I heard a number of perspectives as to how the Tracey Ridge area should be managed that merit additional consideration before I make a final decision."

The Draft Decision had stated: "I understand my decision is unpopular for some. It is, however, consistent with Forest Service policy and relevant laws and regulations, consistent with relevant research, and is a sensible compromise that allows the Forest Service to continue offering a robust range of recreational offerings."

While the initial decision has been withdrawn, the tone of Ms. Tune's letter does seem to exhibit an intent to continue to pursue the project. We are hopeful that her findings will not fundamentally change and the project will proceed.

A new Draft Decision Notice and opportunity for comment and objection will be announced. Please, watch for your opportunity to comment in favor of shared use by mountain bikes on the Tracy Ridge trails, and encourage others to do so as well!

Park vs Forest

A few of our concerns relative to the effort underway for re-designation of the ANF as a National Park:

- It would eliminate the motorized recreation currently enjoyed by hundreds of thousands on the ANF.
- It would reduce revenues from the motorized recreation segment of tourism for our businesses, local government, non-profit organizations, and the ANF.
- National Parks offer fewer recreation options than National Forests.
- A spike in visitation (as predicted by proponents) would devastate the landscape and put undue burdens on our communities.
- Proponents cannot guarantee an admission fee would not be charged. 128 of our National Parks charge \$12—\$15 per person.
- National Park status would eliminate the 25% funding our schools and communities receive from the sustainably managed harvests of timber on the ANF.
- Lack of forest management results in hazards for visitors, a higher fire risk, an increased threat to the forest from pests and diseases, and the loss of timber businesses and jobs.

ANF Project Comment Opportunities:

We encourage you to keep informed of and comment on proposed projects on the ANF.

Use the link below to view the current Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) Report for the ANF. <https://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/components/reports/sopa-110919-2017-10.html>

As we publish this newsletter quarterly, we suggest that you check the SOPA link frequently for any updates between issues. We will list critical projects and AFA comment actions here.

Tracy Ridge (ON HOLD): McKean, Warren; Forest Plan amendment to allow mountain biking on 12.5 miles of hiking trails; **SECONDARY COMMENT PERIOD TO BE ANNOUNCED.**

Pine Bear Supplemental EA (updated): Forest Products, Vegetation Management, Road Management; **Comment Period: Anticipated June 2018.**

Hoover Project EA: Warren; Forest products; **Estimated Comment Period: July 2018.**

Brush Hollow 2017 Windthrow Salvage CE: Elk; Forest Products storm salvage; **Comment Deadline: April 25, 2018.**

The Forest Service receives many comments from organizations (and their supporters) who seek to preserve the ANF rather than manage it responsibly for multiple use.

Please add your voice to that of the Allegheny Forest Alliance to balance the scales in public comment opportunities!