

Pre-Work Questions for the Forest Recreation Niche Workshop

Please spend a few moments reflecting on these questions prior to the Niche Workshop. Jot down your observations and opinions. Please return your responses to (Linda White) in the Supervisor's Office by (February 15, 2008).

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS UNIQUE

- 1.** What is unique or exceptionally distinctive about the Allegheny National Forest and/or the recreation opportunities it provides?

The Allegheny National Forest (ANF) is Pennsylvania's only national forest. The ANF shares the land mass of northern Pennsylvania with numerous State Forests, State Parks, and State Game Lands in the Pennsylvania Wilds region. There is a network of forest roads and abandoned railroad beds that could offer extensive and special opportunities to the public for recreation, as well as historical/educational uses. (The region's historic nature, is very important and special.) The ANF has the potential to be of great value for family-oriented, wholesome recreation (such as camping, hunting, fishing, boating, swimming, picnicking, skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, etc.)

UNDERSTANDING OUR VISITORS

- 2.** What are the things that Forest visitors are most satisfied about?

This seems like a question that Allegheny National Forest personnel should already have researched, and already have the answers to, long before starting a Recreation Facilities Analysis. Individual recreational users would know only about their personal experience, and not that of others. As longtime volunteers on this Forest, we are not satisfied that the managers of the ANF are committed to any form of recreation.

- 3.** What is the importance of the Forest and/or the recreation opportunities it provides to the local communities? By law, the ANF is supposed to be a multiple-use public forest; the U.S. Forest Service personnel are supposed to assure the ANF is managed for multiple use, including recreation. According to a published study conducted by PLACES/TravelPlace.com, Inc. and Economic Research Associates on Dec. 4, 2006 "Directions for Tourism Development", page 10: "One overarching condition will be woven through these observations: the fate of tourism in Warren County is inextricably linked to the facilities, policies, and programs of the Allegheny National Forest."

OF LONG TERM VALUE

- 4.** 25 years from now, what do you expect the public to value the most about the Forest?

If the Allegheny National Forest is still regarded by the public to be a multiple-use public forest 25 years from now (this is by no means a foregone conclusion), then it is logical to assume the U.S. Forest Service found a way to assure the balanced multiple use of the ANF, including recreation. Given the Forest Service's current bias toward oil and gas exploration, it seems more likely the public will view the ANF in future years in terms of scandal because industrial uses such as oil wells seem to be destroying all other uses, including recreation. (Witness what happened to the North Country Trail in McKean County in 2006.)