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First name: Julia Lindblom

Last name: Boozer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Rich Hatfield, District Ranger Bradford Ranger District Allegheny National Forest

29 Forest Service Drive Bradford, PA 16701

1094 Peterson Road Russell, Pennsylvania September 14, 2017

Dear Mr. Hatfield,

Our family has remained in Elk Township for 150 years because of our relatively untrammeled natural forest, where we can hike to experience the serenity of nature and to restore a balanced sanity in an otherwise hectic world.

I am deeply concerned about the possibility of compromising the integrity of the Tracy Ridge Wilderness, by opening it to bicycles. I know you are well aware of the damage that bicycles can do to the delicate forest floor that is not done by foot travel.

The problem is compounded by the fact that bicycles are now being fitted with motors that will propel them faster and potentially more destructively. Having lived with people on this earth for over 80 years, I can only imagine how soon the term "motorized bicycle" will be interpreted as "motorcycle", with its deafening engine noise to tremble the forest creatures and stately trees. Bicycle and motorized bicycle damaged trails can take centuries to fully heal.

I would like to see Congress designate the entire Tracy Ridge area as part of America's National Wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. It is a shame that we have so little designated Wilderness lands in the east, the most densely populated area of the United States. It makes no sense that the vast majority of Wilderness is in the far West and Alaska, where relatively few people live. We need to work together to provide more wilderness opportunities for healing the harried citizens of the teeming megalopolis of the northeast.

I think we have responsibility in America to provide protected forest areas, such as the Tracy Ridge, where one can seek the deep quiet and healing contentment of the wilderness ... replacing the sound of vehicular horns with the call of a woodland lark.

From 50 years of clinical nursing experience, I can assure you this healing is needed today more than ever!

Allowing bicycles into this pristine wild land is simply not using good sense. There certainly must be other areas in the Allegheny National Forest that are more appropriate for bicycle trails.

I hope you will consider my plea, that of a descendent of some of the first European settlers to this region and of a family who remained here to savor its pristine beauty. Please don't compromise the integrity of the Tracy Ridge Wilderness area with potentially damaging cycle traffic. Thank-you.