



*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*, the Hellbender

# Allegheny Defense Project

*Protecting and Restoring the Forests of the Allegheny Bioregion*

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"*This Land is Your Land*" is available at [http://www.americanlands.org/this\\_land\\_is\\_your\\_land.htm](http://www.americanlands.org/this_land_is_your_land.htm)

## **Conservation Groups Expose Bush Administration Plans to Exploit Allegheny National Forest**

*New Report Documents Destructive Logging and Energy Development by Bush Administration*

CLARION, PA – Conservationists today condemned an array of Bush Administration proposals that threaten America's publicly owned forests. The citizens held a press conference announcing the release of a report – "This Land is Your Land" – which details how recent policy changes are playing out in communities across the country. The national report highlights threats to the Allegheny National Forest – a popular recreational retreat for citizens in Northeastern Ohio, Western New York, and Pennsylvania.

According to conservationists, the current Administration consistently puts logging and energy development ahead of other uses -- including recreation and valuable community protection programs -- on publicly owned forestlands. In Pennsylvania, conservationists claim that the Administration is violating even its own rules in order to implement logging in a proposed Wilderness Area and adjacent lands.

The report released today highlights 18 timber sales and one gas development project that are moving forward in 13 states. Among the list of projects are several that would cause irreparable harm to old-growth forests. The Allegheny National Forest was selected as the poster child of misguided forest management policies in the northeastern U.S. under the Bush Administration. The report says a recent project proposed by the Forest Service, the Martin Run timber sale, threatens the Tionesta Creek watershed in the heart of the Allegheny.

"The Martin Run timber sale proposes logging adjacent to the largest old-growth forest in Pennsylvania, along the North Country National Scenic Trail, within designated old-growth management areas and within a proposed Wilderness Area", said Jim Kleissler, Forest Watch Coordinator for the Allegheny Defense Project. "The Forest Service should be protecting these valuable public resources, not auctioning them to the highest bidder."

The Martin Run Timber Sale is also tied to another proposal under the Administration's 'Healthy Forest Initiative' which calls for salvage logging 6,000 acres of trees affected by a windstorm in July 2003. Under the new Bush regulations, most of the 6,000 acres is being exempted from any public environmental analysis while cutting out public comment opportunities.

“The Bush Administration’s ‘Healthy Forest Initiative’ is anything but healthy because it threatens the very things it claims to protect, such as clean air and drinking water, while simultaneously taking away the public’s ability to challenge these projects,” said John Demos, Northeast Organizer of American Lands Alliance. “Americans want to see their forests preserved and protected, not more fat subsidies being given out to oil and logging companies to destroy them.”

“The Bush administration’s forest policies have been skewed in favor of the timber industry at the expense of all Americans. There is a better way,” said Phil Coleman, Chairman of the Sierra Club’s Pennsylvania Chapter. “The Bush administration should focus on redirecting logging subsidies to create jobs in forest restoration in the Allegheny National Forest.”

“The focus is on intensive logging rather than enhancing recreation, forest health or community protection,” said Susan Curry, Executive Director of the National Forest Protection Alliance. “These lands are too important in terms of clean water, recreation and wildlife habitat to squander. The Allegheny is where local citizens look to relax or to go hunting and fishing – it would be extremely sad if this area were to become an industrial zone.”

“*This Land is Your Land*” is available at [http://www.americanlands.org/this\\_land\\_is\\_your\\_land.htm](http://www.americanlands.org/this_land_is_your_land.htm)

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