

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 2011



25 businesses awarded grants for new signage through PA Wilds Design Assistance Program

June 15 – More than two dozen businesses across the Pennsylvania Wilds region have been awarded mini-grants for new signs through a popular program offered by the PA Wilds Planning Team.

PA Wilds Business Signage Grants are designed to encourage businesses in the Pennsylvania Wilds to improve their prospects – and the look and feel of their communities – by utilizing the *Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide* in the creation and construction of new signage.

The *Design Guide* is a voluntary planning document that highlights how communities in the Pennsylvania Wilds can protect or enhance their rural character as they grow – whether that growth is due to tourism, resource extraction or other industries. It promotes such things as using natural materials or themes the region is known for – wood, stone, water, wildlife – in construction, design or landscaping.

“The region’s rural and historic character and strong sense of place is part of what makes the Pennsylvania Wilds attractive to visitors and residents, so it is important for us to be good stewards of these characteristics as we grow,” said PA Wilds Planning Team Chair Matt Quesenberry, of Elk County. “Part of our job as the Planning Team is to give our communities tools to accomplish this. That’s what we’re trying to do with the *Design Guide* and our related grant programs.”

Last year’s signage grant program led to the creation of 27 new business signs and community welcome signs. It leveraged nearly \$30,000 in private investment, and helped businesses improve their bottom lines and triggered other community investments. This year’s program has proven to be even more popular. The business signage grants were for up to \$1,500 and required at minimum, a dollar-for-dollar cash match by the business. So far, 52 applications have been received; 25 were funded, leveraging more than \$73,000 in private match dollars.

Still to come are community signage grants, which the Planning Team hopes to offer in the fall, as well as design grants geared toward larger building and landscape projects, which the group plans to announce next month.

Funding for the programs has been made available through a variety of sources: the PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources; the PA Department of Community & Economic Development; and the National Park Service’s Preserve America Program. The Planning Team, Lumber Heritage Region and the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission have been instrumental in applying for, securing and administering the funds.

A list of all the businesses receiving PA Wilds Business Signage Grants are below. The applicants have until this fall to install their new signs.

My Place, Cameron County
Sweet Basil Restaurant, Clarion County
The Alley Popper Restaurant & Banquet Facility, Clearfield County
Winkler Gallery of Fine Arts, Clearfield County
Wapiti Ridge Wine Cellars, Clearfield County
Latinos & Company, Clearfield County
Brady Street Florist, Clearfield County
Millbrook Playhouse, Clinton County
Diamond view Restaurant & Lounge, Elk County
Diversified Wood Products, Elk County
Elk Country Store, Elk County
Zimmerman Lumber, Forest County
Sharon's Horse Heaven, Forest County
The Open House Shop, Jefferson County
Grace Place Community Resource Center, Jefferson County
Camp Susque, Lycoming County
Pittsburgh Corning, McKean County
Flickerwood Wine Cellars, McKean County
PA Wilds Artisan Workgroup, multiple counties
Laurelwood Inn & Steakhouse, Potter County
Green Elk Farm & Kennel, Potter County
Rainbow Paradise, Potter County
Genesee Environmental Center, Potter County
Allegheny Outfitters, Warren County
Natures Cabin Gift Shop, Warren County

###