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**Degawëno:da's of Defend Ohi:yo' completes 300-mile journey down the
Allegheny River in Pittsburgh this Saturday**

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019
Noon

North Shore, By the Tribute to Children, Fred Rogers Statue

Degawëno:da's of Defend Ohi:yo' will paddle the final miles of the Allegheny River completing a five-month, 300-mile journey to highlight the need for vigilance in the protection of our waters from oil and gas pipelines and waste. (Ohi:yo' translates to good river in the Seneca language).

The public and media is invited to paddle alongside him for these final 5 miles. The paddle will launch from James Sharp Landing in Sharpsburg at 9 a.m. on **Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019**, and finish by the fountain at Point State Park where Degawëno:da's will offer a prayer at the headwaters of the Ohio in a ceremony similar to the one he offered when he began the journey last May.

Following the ceremony at the point, Degawëno:da's will make his landing around noon on the North Shore riverfront trail in front of Heinz Field below the Tribute to Children/Fred Rogers statue where he will share his reflections of the journey. The public is welcome to join. He will be available for media interviews.

There will be excellent opportunities for photographs as the weather looks clear. (Degawëno:da's asks that the water blessing at the Point not be photographed.) Media is also welcome to photograph his arrival to Pittsburgh on the North Shore with other kayakers that will be with him.

"This journey was an opportunity to express my love and compassion for our waterways and the natural environment and encourage others to establish a relationship with the natural world and honor it as we all should," he said. "My hope is that this journey initiates a greater awareness of our rivers and the impact that industries are having on our region."

Degawëno:da's journey began on May 18 before the summer solstice (June 21) with a sunrise/full moon ceremony near the apex of the *Triple Divide*, the headwaters of Ohi-yo'/Allegheny, Susquehanna and Genesee, located near Coudersport, Pa. It was his intent to make the journey in 2 weeks in honor of World Peace and Prayer Day but heavy rains impeded his progress, turning it into a summer-long endeavor.

The summer journey will be completed just before the Fall Equinox (Sept. 23) and on the International Day of Peace.

His time spent on the river allowed him to commune with the spirit of the water herself and receive several important messages, he says. He saw and met so many people along the way, both in the communities he passed and on the water, who shared his love for the water.

“I was able to gain more knowledge and reverence for our waterways and what they provide,” he said. “We all love this river. Our rivers are a natural heritage worth preserving”

Having completed the journey, Degawëno:da's says he will be reaching out to the people that he met along the way in an effort to impress upon them the need to initiate change. He hopes to find a way to initiate conversations with people who reside along the river to uphold the Rights of Nature similar to the declaration written into Pennsylvania's Environmental Amendment.

“We're just getting started,” he says of Defend Ohi:yo'. “Local municipalities must give this body of water the same rights as a human being for its safety and well-being. If we can band everyone together in unification and stand on common ground we can accomplish that goal.”

“This is my personal contribution to Defend Ohi:yo',” he adds. “I'm just the paddler.”

About [Defend Ohi:yo'](#)

We are Defend Ohi:yo' or Deyögwë'nega:nyadö' (we who defend the waters) in the Seneca language. We are a grassroots, non-politically affiliated, community based organization committed to the protection of the Ohi:yo' (good river) or commonly known as the Allegany River and all waters for future generations to come, for those faces who have yet to rise from our mother and her earth. We look to raise awareness and educate while preventing any future attacks upon the waters, the life's blood of all creation.