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Herald & Review

Monday, September 21, 2026 • A Lee Enterprises, Incorporated Newspaper – Majority shareholder, David Hoffmann, Hoffmann Media Group • herald-review.com • #TogetherDecatur

SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST

‘LOOKING AT THE FOREST AS A CROP’



KATE MCCANN, FOR CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Shawnee conservation activist Mark Donham, 73, of Brookport, hikes within the Burke Branch area of the Shawnee. The protected area backs up to Donham's 13-acre property, where he has lived since 1980.

Trump admin’s logging rule could expose forests, including Shawnee

KATE MCCANN
For Capitol News Illinois

GOLCONDA — In a remote corner of the , along the Ohio River’s northeastern banks, 73-year-old Mark Donham peered up at the handful of remaining trees in the newly sun-filled forest canopy. Two enormous piles of freshly cut timber — a mix of hardwood species but mostly pine — lay on the ground below.

The site was frustratingly familiar to the longtime Shawnee conservation activist, who recalled that only a week earlier he had seen the massive feller buncher rumbling past his home of 46 years, en route to this latest Shawnee logging project.

The logging project highlights

the newest threat emerging to the future of the forest, Donham said. This time, a pending Trump administration proposal would roll back the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which prevents road construction and timber harvesting on millions of acres of federal forest land, including approximately 11,000 acres in the Shawnee.

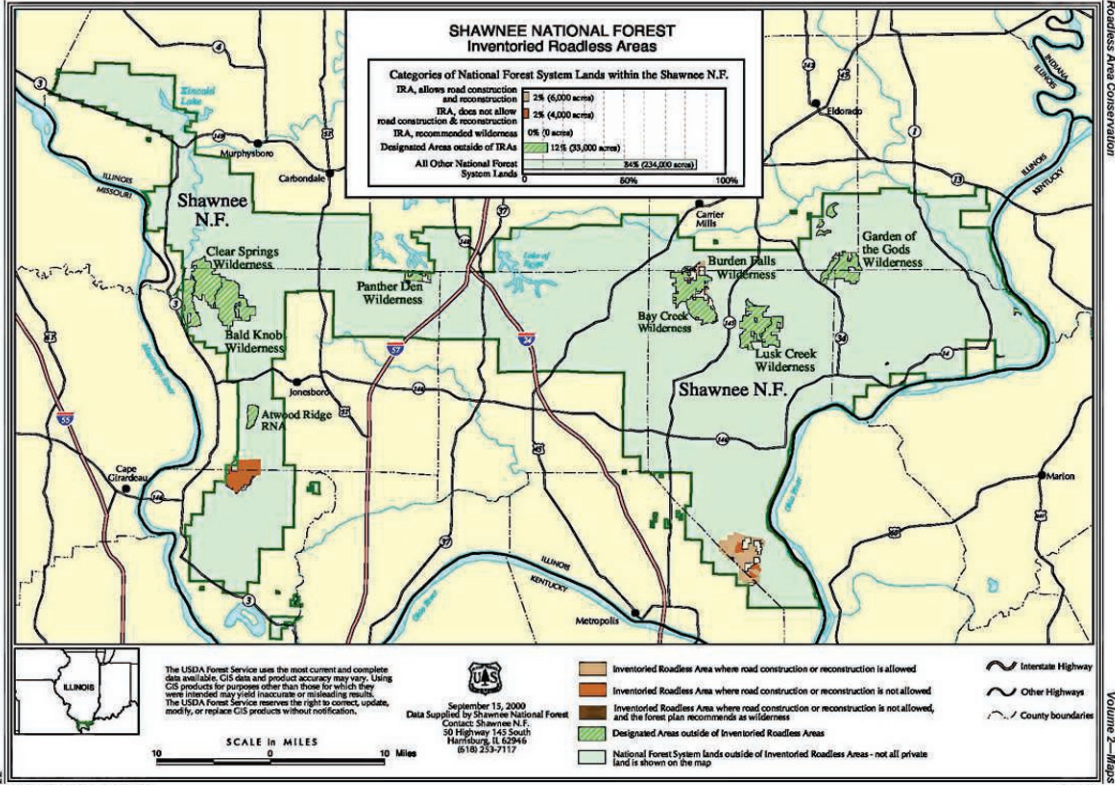
The proposal to rescind the wildly popular rule also triggered a harsh rebuke from environmental activists and nearly 170 members of Congress, the latter of whom signed a letter last week urging the Trump administration to abandon the plan.

The Shawnee — the crown jewel of Illinois’ wild lands and

the lynchpin of the southern Illinois tourism industry — contains six inventoried roadless areas tucked among the forest’s sandstone bluffs, canyons and wetlands.

The largest swaths of land that could become vulnerable to logging and drilling if rules are relaxed are 6,200 acres in Burke Branch, which lies roughly a half mile from the new logging project and straddles Pope and Massac counties. The second largest are 3,800 acres at Ripple Hollow near the communities of McClure and Jonesboro in the far western portion of the Shawnee. Overall, the inventoried roadless area

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A U.S. Department of Agriculture map shows the existing Roadless areas within the Shawnee National Forest.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Census: Rich got richer in 2025

Earnings for bottom 10% essentially flat as income gap widens

IGNACIO CALDERON
USA Today

Household income grew last year, but not for everyone. New U.S. Census Bureau data shows income for the top 10% climbed 1.7% in 2025, while earnings for the bottom 10% held essentially flat, widening the dollar gap between these income groups.

Overall, median household income rose 2.6% in 2025, while the poverty rate stayed at 13.1% and the share of people without insurance for the entire year was 7.9%, according to the data providing the most comprehensive account of income, poverty, and insurance coverage. The figures released Tuesday come with a lag and do not yet capture the effects of Trump administration policy changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid.

The topline income gains mask a widening divide. Since 1967, household income for the top has risen 121%, while growth for the bottom was 56%. This century alone, top earners saw 33% growth, while the bottom lagged at 8%.

That means that for every dollar earned by the 10% at the top, the bottom 10% made eight cents in 2025, a number that has gone down from the 11 cents in 1967.

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WASHINGTON, DC

Trump says arch will be a military complex

NATHAN LAYNE AND ANUSHA SHAH
Reuters

President Donald Trump said Sunday the triumphal arch he plans to build near Washington would double as a “military complex” housing drones and snipers, the second major construction project he sought to justify on national security grounds.

The president cited national security concerns for the move, though he did not identify specific threats. It echoes the rationale he offered for the estimated \$400 million ballroom complex under construction on the site of the White House’s former East Wing.

The arch and ballroom are part of Trump’s broader effort to remake the nation’s capital, including the renovation of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, the redevelopment of a golf course in East Potomac Park and a push to add his name to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The initiatives drew criticism from preservationists and others who argue they would alter some of Washington’s most prominent historic landmarks.

Trump said in a social media post that, at the “strong request” of the military, he agreed to turn the 250-foot arch “into a top grade Military Complex/Triumphal Arch, to house, store, and have the rapid ability to use

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