



United States Department of Agriculture

**Forest Service**

Wayne National Forest  
Eastern Region  
13700 US Hwy 33  
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764  
Web: [www.fs.usda.gov/wayne](http://www.fs.usda.gov/wayne)

# News Release

Media Contact: Gary C. Chancey, Public Affairs Officer  
Voice: (740) 753-0862  
Cell: (740) 591-7996  
[gchancey@fs.fed.us](mailto:gchancey@fs.fed.us)



Release No.: FY19091403

## Wayne National Forest Project Aims to Benefit Wildlife

**PEDRO, Ohio** (Dec. 12, 2018) – The Wayne National Forest is seeking public feedback during a 30-day comment period on an environmental assessment for a project that promotes young brushy forest habitat emphasizing the regeneration of oaks and hickories on the Ironton Ranger District in southeast Ohio.

The project, called The Sunny Oaks Project, is located east of State Route (SR) 93, west of SR 141, north of the community of Aid and south of the community of Oak Hill. The project area is located in parts of Jackson, Gallia, and Lawrence Counties.

“Based on public input, as well as continued work by my team of staff, we developed an alternative 2 for the public to consider in order to meet the project goals,” said Ironton District Ranger Tim Slone.

Alternative 2 includes placing a higher emphasis on the oak-hickory objective of the project, determining whether or not there was the potential to increase flooding in small localized watersheds, and addressing recreation and scenery impacts identified by the public. The Forest Service has determined that the project’s proposed action and alternative 2 will have no significant environmental effects.

“The Wayne National Forest invites the public to view the environmental assessment through 11 video presentations that cover the background and potential effects to various resources within the project area,” said Slone. “We believe this new approach for delivering our analysis will produce increased public engagement and understanding of our work.”

The presentations can be accessed from the project website located at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/wayne/landmanagement/projects>.

If approved, the project would authorize the harvest of about 2,740 acres of forest through a mix of clearcut and shelterwood harvests. These harvest types are designed to favor oak and hickory forest regeneration, especially when they are combined with other “timber stand improvement” (TSI) treatments. TSI treatments include prescribed fire, manual girdling/felling of competing trees, and

herbicide treatment of competing trees. Prescribed fire would occur on 2,000-4,000 acres per year across the 25,000 acre project area. Natural re-growth could be supplemented with planted trees.

The project also includes timber harvests that would create a number of temporary clearings. Nine of these would be greater than 40 acres in size. The National Forest Management Act (36 CFR 219) allows temporary clearings greater than 40 acres, provided that the public is given 60 days' notice and the Regional Forester reviews the proposal. This 30-day comment period plus the scoping period (April 2 – May 1, 2018) constitute the 60 days' notice. The larger harvests are proposed in order to respond to the need to create young brushy forests.

Following the 30-day comment period Ranger Slone will consider if there is a need to further analyze or change the proposal, or if the proposal should proceed as planned. A Draft Decision Notice will then be issued. Those that submitted timely comments during the scoping period or submit timely comments during this 30-day comment period will be able to object to the project, if desired, prior to a final decision being made. When objections are received the agency works to collaboratively resolve issues when possible. When no agreement can be reached the agency will review the project in relationship to the objection points and make a determination on the merits of the objection(s). When an agency review is completed, a Final Decision Notice on a project must be consistent with the direction from that review. If approved, a decision would likely be made in the **spring of 2019**, with the project implementation occurring over 10-20 years. This process follows agency regulations found at 36 Code of Federal Regulations 218 Subsections A and B.

Comments should directly relate the proposed action to a resource impact and must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the official notice of the comment period. This notice will publish on or about **Thursday, December 13, 2018** in the legal notices section of *The Ironton Tribune*. The day following publication is considered day one. If day 30 falls on a weekend or federal holiday, the next federal business day marks the end of the comment period.

Public comments on the environmental assessment can be made to Rachel Reed at Wayne National Forest, Ironton Ranger District, 6518 State Route 93, Pedro, Ohio 45659, specifically stating that they are in reference to the notice and comment period for The Sunny Oaks Project. Comments should directly relate the proposed action to a resource impact. Include your name, current physical mailing address, phone number and signature or other verification of identity with your comments.

You may also call to discuss this project at (740) 534-6500 during normal business hours (M-F, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or submit comments electronically to: [comments-eastern-wayne-ironton@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-wayne-ironton@fs.fed.us)

Information about this and other projects being developed and analyzed can be found online at the Wayne National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/wayne/landmanagement/projects> .

For more information about the Wayne National Forest, visit our website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/wayne>. Follow us on Twitter: [@waynenationalfs](https://twitter.com/waynenationalfs) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/waynenationalfs).

The U.S. Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a mission of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Forest Service's Eastern Region includes twenty states in the Midwest and East, stretching from Maine, to Maryland, to Missouri, to Minnesota. There are 17 national forests and one national tallgrass prairie in the Eastern Region. For more information, visit [www.fs.usda.gov/R9](http://www.fs.usda.gov/R9).

The U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live. For more information, visit [www.fs.usda.gov/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/).

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).