Trail & Recreation Site Modernization on the Wayne National Forest

TOPICS:
1.) Reflection on the Last Year
2.) Great American Outdoors Act
3.) Specific Unit Discussion
   i. Marietta
   ii. Athens
   iii. Ironton
4.) Forest Plan Amendment to Increase Opportunities
5.) Question and Answer
Great American Outdoors Act Proposals

- Established the **National Parks and Public Lands Fund** to address backlog of maintenance issues at National Parks, Forests, Wildlife Refuges, Recreation Areas, and American Indian Schools
  - $1.9 billion/year for 5 years using revenues from energy development on federal lands (oil, gas, coal, renewable, alternative)

- Also establishes permanent funding for the **Land and Water Conservation Fund**
  - $900 million/year from offshore oil and gas royalties to invest in conservation and recreation opportunities across the country

- Funding for projects is competitive and approved by Congress.

- Projects for 2021 have been selected and funded. Developing project proposals for years 2022-2025

- **Public involvement and Partnerships are important.**
What type of projects can be funded with the GAOA restoration funds?

• Projects must reduce or eliminate *deferred maintenance* of an asset. Assets are defined in the bill as:

  “any real property, including any physical structure or grouping of structures, landscape, trail, or other tangible property, that—
  
  A. has a specific service or function; and
  
  B. is tracked and managed as a distinct, identifiable entity by the applicable covered agency.”
Great American Outdoors Act Proposals

• What is “deferred maintenance” and how is it different than annual or routine maintenance?

• “Maintenance that was not performed when it should have been or when it was scheduled and which, therefore, was put off or delayed for a future period.”

• Annual maintenance is defined as, “Work performed to maintain serviceability, or repair failures during the year in which they occur. Includes preventive and/or cyclic maintenance performed in the year in which it is scheduled to occur.”
Potential GAOA Projects

- Lake Vesuvius Recreation Area Waterline Replacement
- Multi Toilet Improvement/Replacement
- Lamping Homestead and Sand Run Dam Repair/Renovation
- Ohio River Access and Safety: Leith Run Recreation Area and Frontier Boat Launch
- Lake Vesuvius Recreation Area Boardwalk, Boat Launch, and Beach Renovation
- Recreation Lewis Lake and Smith Hollow Lake Dam Decommissioning
- Lake Vesuvius Recreation Area Road Stabilization & Improvements
- Ironton OHV Trail Heavy Maintenance and Bridge Replacement
- Marietta Land and Water Trail Access Deferred Maintenance
- Monday Creek OHV Trail System Reroutes and Trail Bridge Replacement
- Hanging Rock Spur A Road Stabilization and Restoration
- Monday Creek OHV Trailhead Bridge Repair (critical finding)
Amending the Forest Plan for Trail Flexibility

• We’ve heard a lot from the public wanting greater flexibility for trail access and better alignment with other trail systems in Ohio

• Our biggest hurdle is that our Forest Plan contains 2 standards that set limitations and trail closures that cannot be adjusted without a Forest Plan amendment
Plan Amendment - Trail Open Dates

Current condition: Motorized trails, equestrian trails, and mountain bike trails are closed (except to foot traffic) December 16 - April 14. (Recreation Standard 16)

Desired condition: Trails are maintained sustainably across the Forest with strong partnership engagement and expanded access to different users is provided where it makes sense.

Proposal:

• Remove the standard from the Forest Plan. Implement Closure Orders to enforce trail closures.

• Separate motorized trails that would establish defined closures that better align with the state's closures.

• For mountain bike and equestrian trails, allow for flexibility in seasonal closures (e.g. "Trails will generally be closed XX to YY unless conditions allow a trail system to remain open")
  ▪ Effective monitoring and strong partnerships are going to be key in allowing for broader openings during the winter season

• Allow for trail closures during the traditional “open” season as needed, too.

• Intent is not to add more trail miles. This is about adding flexibility and increasing partnership engagement in our current trail systems, including the ongoing construction of the Baileys from a previous decision.
Plan Amendment - Off-Highway Vehicle Width

Current condition: OHV trails are limited to motorized vehicles that are 50 inches or less in width (exceptions for administrative and oil and gas use). (Recreation Standard 35)

Desired condition: Diverse motorized recreation opportunities are provided on the Wayne NF within current capacities to sustainably manage trail systems.

Proposal:

- Remove the standard from the Forest Plan. Implement Closure Orders that provide the maximum motorized vehicle width for each trail or trail system.
- Parts of the Ironton OHV trail system could be assessed for vehicles up to 62 inches wide.
- Not all of the Ironton system may be made suitable.
- The Athens OHV trail systems would remain restricted to vehicles 50 inches wide.
- Broader consideration single-track opportunities could be considered – need partner discussions on increasing capacity to effectively establish and manage these trails.
- Intent is not to add more trail miles, but consider where our current trails can be adjusted to provide diverse opportunities and sustainably managed.
We Are Looking for Your Targeted Feedback

Question and answer session

GAOA
- Do you agree with the priorities?
- Are you interested in partnering with us on a project?
- What other projects are a priority to you?

Forest Plan Amendments
- Feedback on the proposed changes
- What important resources should we analyze in NEPA?

Submit feedback:
https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=60168