

## From the Forest Supervisor



The Wayne National Forest completed another landmark year of caring for the land and serving people in southeast Ohio. These pages feature some of the highlights of the past year and I hope you feel as proud as I am of the work that's been accomplished in our region.

We began 2006 with our new Revised Forest Plan and have already begun to see successes and progress through its implementation over the last year. We continue to make great strides in watershed improvement and water quality across the landscape; and in forest health through an active timber management program. We have employed new approaches to projects around the Forest, including the use of Stewardship Contracting to infuse project revenues directly back to the Forest. With this contracting authority we are making the best of the road construction of the Highway 33 Bypass around Nelsonville, Ohio,

which cuts through about 400 acres of the Forest.

And we continue to be a recreation destination of choice for thousands of off-road vehicle riders, campers, nature viewing enthusiasts, fishers, and hunters. The growing trends in visitation in these pursuits is evidence of the positive direction in which we are moving the Forest through our overall management plan.

Our 2006 Forest Plan is a fitting compliment to the newly-established Regional goal of Courageous Conservation. The Goal has five components, listed below, which are used as themes for the organization of this report:

- Protect ecosystems across boundaries
- Connect citizens to the land
- Walk the talk for sustainability
- Revolutionize effectiveness and efficiency
- Be an employer of choice

In 2006 we worked with 42 state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, and universities who contributed to wildlife, fisheries, and plant projects Forest-wide. Our partners are key components of our success and I can't say enough about how much they are appreciated.

Enjoy reviewing the accomplishments and highlights we have captured in this Annual Report for 2006. Please feel free to direct any questions you may have about the Wayne to my attention. We look forward to another prosperous and progressive year in caring for the land and serving people!

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# Protecting ecosystems across boundaries

In 2006 the Wayne National Forest completed five watershed projects which are changing the landscape of the once strip-mined areas in Athens, Hocking, and Perry Counties. Areas once written off as "ecological deserts" with acidic streams and barren gob piles, are now coming back to life.

Monday Creek's revival from "unrecoverable" to a stream that once again supports aquatic life is a living tribute to the hard work and perseverance of the Monday Creek Watershed Group, the Wayne NF, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Across the Forest, acid mine drainage is being treated and rerouted, an example is the next story on the old Essex Mine. Five seeps have been treated with limestone leach beds, and 29 subsidences have been closed to prevent surface water from entering the acidic mine tunnels below.

"What we've been able to accomplish in the five primary watershed projects we worked on this year is nothing short of phenomenal," said Gary Willison, Watershed Program Manager. "It was possible because locally people weren't giving up, where others saw an impossible situation, our partners saw an opportunity to change things for the better and they buckled down and did just that."

## Stream Reclamation Results "Pouring" In

This year a group of partners collaborated to install a chemical doser on a local stream heavily contaminated with acid mine drainage (AMD) from the old Essex Mine. Now, with several months of measurements, the group can quantify their success on Snow Fork Creek.

Snow Fork is in the Monday Creek watershed on the Athens District of the Wayne. The Forest worked with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Office of Surface Mining (OSM), and staff and volunteers with the Monday Creek Watershed Group (MCGW) to install the doser, which adds measured amounts of calcium carbonate to reverse high acid levels.

The Essex Coal Mine has shafts and underground rooms covering approximately 2,500 acres underground and discharges AMD at an average rate of 700 gallons per minute into Snow Fork. Snow Fork (pictured at right before and after treatment) was previously a "dead" stream with no aquatic life and pH levels of 4.5-5.1. Once subsidences were closed and the doser in operation, the stream's pH has risen to 6.7-7.4 downstream of the doser.

The doser cost \$324,500, with the partners contributing \$315,500. The doser is designed to treat water for a distance of about six miles downstream. As further work is done on the causes of AMD in the area, the doser could possibly be moved to another location to help improve water quality at another location on the Wayne.



Harry Payne (ODNR), Russ Gibson (Ohio EPA), Mike Steinmaus (MCGW), Bill Theisen, Athens County Commissioner, Jane Forest-Redfern with Rural Action, and Gary Willison, Wayne NF, cut the ribbon to start the chemical doser on Snow Fork Creek.

Essex Doser adds lime and reduces acidity in Snow Fork, a tributary of Monday Creek.

