

Appendix A

Public Involvement

Introduction

As a Federal agency, the Forest Service is required to solicit public comment on draft plans involving significant actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Further, the agency is directed to “assess and consider (the resulting) comments both individually and collectively.” In addition, comments are viewed as critical in shaping a responsible plan for management of the Wayne National Forest that best meets the Forest Service’s mission, legal mandates, the goals of NEPA and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), and the interests of the American public.

This appendix includes a summary of public involvement and efforts made to engage the public in the creation of the Proposed Revised Forest Plan. Also included is a list of the Federal, State, local agencies, and elected officials who submitted comments. Copies of all documents received are available to the public at the Supervisor’s Office in Nelsonville, Ohio.

Public Participation Prior to Notice of Intent

External Participation

In January 2002, the Wayne National Forest invited public comment as part of the Need for Change analysis in preparation for drafting a Notice of Intent (NOI) to revise the Forest Plan. To engage the public, a variety of strategies were employed.

A letter was mailed Jan. 14, 2002, to 1,400 addressees drawn from all WNF mailing lists. Letters were also sent to American Indian Tribes with possible interest in management of the WNF. On that same day, a news release was sent to more than 40 media outlets in Ohio. Three days later, a Plan Revision section was added to the WNF website.

The WNF began publishing quarterly issues of its Forest Plan Revision Newsletter in February 2003. This publication, sent to the Forest’s mailing list, summarizes progress made in the revision effort.

A series of public listening sessions was then held at three principal towns within the Forest. The first session was held Jan. 22 in Nelsonville, Ohio, followed by sessions in Marietta, Ohio, on Jan. 23 and in Ironton, Ohio, on Jan. 24.

More than 150 individuals attended these three sessions, and more than 70 took the opportunity to speak for three minutes. Their statements were recorded by a stenographer for later review by the Planning. In addition, letters, oral comments, and other replies were received in response to the press releases and individual mailings. A total of 264 comments were received and recorded.

Comments at the January 2002 public meetings covered nearly every resource and program on the Forest. Almost all individuals made a comment related to some form of recreation, most often expressing a preference for the Forest to provide for more or less of specific forms of recreation, such as OHV trail riding. Fewer comments were received on a wide variety of other management issues. Frequently mentioned topics other than recreation included:

- Vegetation management (primarily centered around timber harvest)
- Land acquisition
- Plant and animal species diversity
- Minerals management
- Wilderness / Roadless areas

A number of comments related to how the Forest had implemented direction in the current Forest Plan and whether the Forest was providing the quantity of a specific output as called for in the Plan, e.g., the amounts of OHV trails or timber harvest as forecast.

Internal Participation

A review by Forest employees had generated a list of over 100 recommendations for change. These fell into three general classifications. First, many recommendations were simply edits to the wording of standards and guidelines but did not change the substance of any standard or guideline. Second, other recommendations related to the implementation of various standards and guidelines for specific resources. The final grouping contained general recommendations not tied to any specific resource program.

The Planning Team then reviewed the comments gathered in the January 2002 public meetings and along with those previously collected from Forest employees to determine potential Forest Plan revision topics.

Criteria for Evaluation of Revision Topics

Comments from nearly 300 external and internal sources were considered. They were screened to identify subjects with the significance and relevance necessary to become potential Forest Plan revision topics using the following criteria:

- Proposed topics must be consistent with Federal laws and policies and relate to the Forest Service’s mission.
- Proposed topics must be within the responsible official’s decision-making authority
- The proposed topic is not adequately addressed in the current Forest Plan
- The topic is proposed because is new information warrants a reevaluation of one of the six decisions made in the Plan cited above in the first criterion.

Public Participation after NOI

Based on the analysis of the Need for Change, the Forest Service published in the Federal Register on April 4, 2002 a Notice of Intent to Revise the Wayne National Forest’s Land and Resource Management Plan. The NOI contained the potential revision topics gleaned from the public meetings, submitted comments, and internal discussions.

The public was invited to submit comments on the Notice of Intent for 90 days following its publication, and 626 responses were logged.

Public Meetings

Ten public meetings were held during the 90-day public comment period. All 10 took place in June 2002. Nine meetings were held in Ohio, and one was held in Huntington, W.Va. The Huntington location was selected because it is a large population center on the south side of the Ironton Ranger District. Comments resulting from these meetings were included in the content analysis.

Public meetings were held in the following locations:

- June 3, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio
- June 4, Clarion Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio
- June 5, Radisson Hotel, Huntington, W.Va.
- June 10, Embassy Suites Hotel, Dublin, Ohio
- June 13, Logan-Hocking Middle School, Logan, Ohio
- June 22, Graysville Community Center, Graysville, Ohio
- June 24, Holiday Inn, Independence, Ohio
- June 25, Four Points Sheraton, Canton, Ohio
- June 26, Holiday Inn, Zanesville, Ohio

- June 29, University of Rio Grande, Rio Grande, Ohio

Form Letters

The Forest Service received four unique form letters in response to the NOI. A form letter is one in which content is exactly the same from letter to letter. Some form letters include more than one signature. Since content analysis is not a voting process, the unique letters were coded. Because they are interested in the Forest Planning process and care about decisions made in the Forest Plan, however, the names and addresses of signatories of form letters were entered into the database of commentors. They have been kept informed as the revision has progressed. Their geographic distribution was also noted.

Petitions

Three petitions regarding the Need for Change were received. The names of signatories were entered into the log of persons commenting, and the text of the petitions was coded. Petitions submitted in response to the Notice of Intent were submitted by:

- Friends of the Wayne National Forest
- Rivers to Trails, Inc.
- Southwest Ohio Green Party.

Record of Public Comments

The original submission of all comments, including tapes of the verbal comments provided at the public meetings, are on file in the Forest Supervisor's Office, Wayne National Forest, 13700 US 33, Nelsonville, OH 45764.

In order to best understand and use information provided during this phase of the Forest Plan revision, a process known as content analysis was used. The purpose of content analysis is to help focus those issues that will guide the revision of the Forest Plan.

Overview of Post NOI Content Analysis

All letters received were reviewed and are retained in the planning files. A summary of the review process and the comments received is documented in a Content Analysis document, which is posted on the Wayne WNF website. The original comments are available for inspection at the Forest Supervisor's Office.

Summary of Response Statistics

It is important to note that content analysis is not a vote counting process. It is a tool for decision makers that displays collected information. In other words, it provides information on public input to the decision makers, so they understand the issues and concerns of the public. Content analysis provides a summary of the extent, content, and nature of public input, without any attempt to pass judgment

on comments received. This approach attempts to process every comment in an objective fashion to ensure equal consideration.

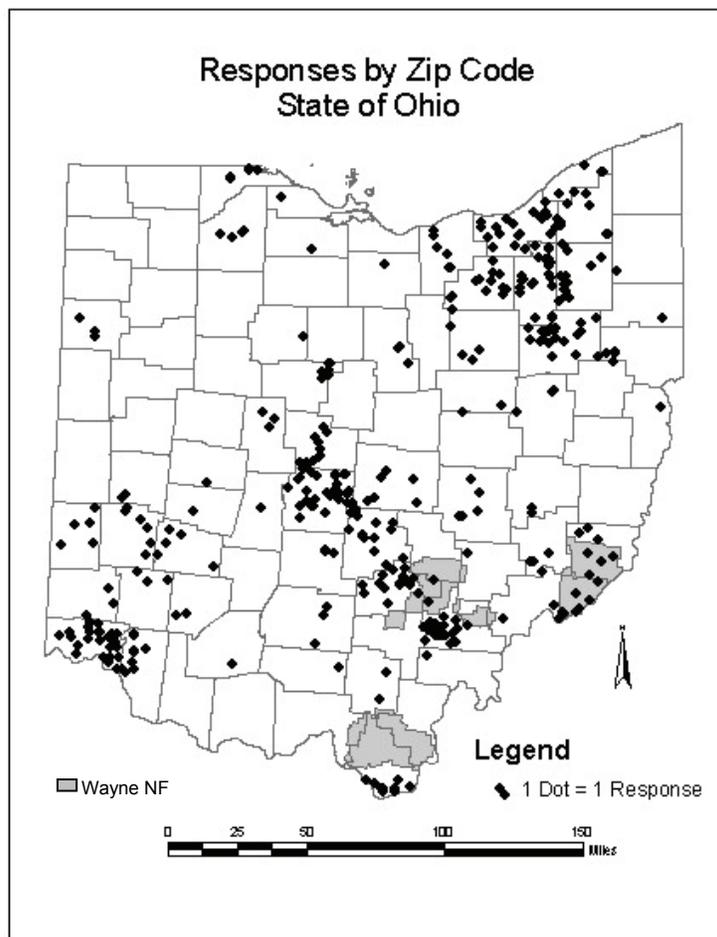
- Of the 626 responses to the Notice of Intent, 57 were duplicate submissions, leaving 566 responses to be coded. Responses were considered duplicate if they contained identical content and were submitted by the same individual. Form letters that contained the same content but were submitted by different persons were not considered duplicates.
- Of the 566 responses coded, 218 were form letters. There were four unique form letters. Responses that modified or added information to the content of the form letter were not considered form letters.
- In addition, 151 persons commenting were signatories to one of three petitions received.
- At the 10 public meetings held in June, 237 verbal comments were received, transcribed, and coded.

Geographic Analysis of Responses

The geographic information is based on self-reporting by the respondents. No independent effort was made to verify identity, addresses, or state of residence. In some cases, respondents who used e-mail and did not provide demographic or geographic information.

- 21 respondents, or 3.7 percent of the responses coded, identified themselves as from outside Ohio.
- Approximately four percent of the responses came from states other than Ohio: Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, West Virginia.
- Two respondents with return addresses in Australia indicated that they were Ohio residents working overseas.
- Ninety-two respondents, approximately 16 percent of all those coded, provided an address with a zip code found in a county in which Wayne National Forest land is located.

The scattergraph on the map below shows the location of addresses provided by respondents. Concentrations of responses coincide with Ohio population centers and the locations of the public meetings.



Response Types

Respondents used several methods to submit comments; written letters, comment forms, form letters, electronic mail, telephone, and verbal comments at public meetings.

Electronic versions of all coded comments were made. E-mails were converted to word-processing documents. Transcripts were provided by a legal stenographer. Commenters who submitted lengthy documents were asked to provide their comments electronically.

Public Participation in Development of Alternatives

Alternative Development Workshops

Three workshops were held in October and November 2003, one each in Akron, Brookville and Athens, Ohio, to provide people with an opportunity to generate and discuss ideas that should be considered in USDA-Forest Service decisions about the future management of the Wayne National Forest. The meetings were held in different locations around the state in an effort to make attendance easier

for those who want to participate. Those unable to participate in the workshops were encouraged to provide input on alternatives to the Wayne National Forest office in Nelsonville.

The workshops were designed using ideas from a collaborative learning approach (Daniels & Walker, 2001). Collaborative Learning is an approach appropriate for natural resource, environmental, and community decision-making situations with the following features: multiple parties, deeply held values, cultural differences, multiple issues, scientific and technical uncertainty, and legal and jurisdictional constraints. It emphasizes activities that encourage systems thinking, joint learning, open communication, constructive conflict management, and a focus on appropriate change.

The workshops were divided into three main parts. The first part of the workshop was a series of presentations by the Forest Service to provide information on the issues that had been identified for the revision. The second main part of the workshops was to provide an overview of the collaborative learning process and to involve everyone at the workshop in developing a situation map identifying components related to revising the Forest Plan and the interrelationships of those components. This was a way of starting the systems thinking part of the collaborative learning approach.

During the third main part of the workshops, participants worked with other members of the public to develop different general management approaches, called themes, as ways to improve on the current plan. The groups then presented their theme(s) to the entire workshop and explained their rationale and thinking related to the theme. The themes developed by each group were posted on the Forest's Forest Plan Revision web site shortly after the workshops were completed.

All of the themes developed at the workshops were carried forward and considered by the Forest Service as alternatives were developed. Recommendations included in some of the themes were integrated into the alternatives developed by the Forest Service.

Additional Briefings and Updates

Discussions of the proposed Forest Plan revision alternatives were held with the following government agencies and public groups beginning in January 2004.

- Forest biologists met with officials of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on January 6, 2004.
- A partnership meeting was held with Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife on April 14, 2004.
- Two planning team members met with the Ruffed Grouse Society's biologist Bill Hunyadi on April 23, 2004.
- On April 21, 2004 discussions were held with representatives of the North Country Trail Association and the National Park Service (via telephone)

regarding their recommendations for changes in Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines.

- Two planning team members met with representatives of the Southeast Ohio Oil and Gas Association on May 4, 2004.
- Two planning team members met with Frontier Local School District representatives on May 17, 2004.
- Two planning team members met with Richard Cooper of “Friends of the Wayne” to discuss the alternatives on July 8, 2004.
- Forest Planner briefed officials of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago on August 2, 2004 on the plan revision. Three representatives of the Forest Service’s Region 9 office attended.
- A program on the Forest plan Revision was presented to the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife’s annual agreements areas conference on August 28, 2004 at Shawnee State Park. Approximately 75 people attended representing the Ohio Division of Wildlife, Mead-Westvaco, American Electric Power (AEP), The Ohio State University, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Law Enforcement
- The director and staff of TNC were given a briefing in Columbus on the Forest Plan revision on August 12, 2004.
- The Forest Supervisor and the Forest Planner gave a briefing on the Forest Plan revision to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Assistant Director; Deputy Director for Recreation and Resource Management; and the Chief for the Division of Forestry on August 19, 2004. The Executive Director for Ohio Forestry Association also attended part of this briefing.
- Briefing for State and county representatives of the Ohio Farm Bureau was held for September 17, 2004.

Public Participation after Publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Forest Service published in the Federal Register on April 1, 2005 a Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Wayne National Forest's Proposed Revised Land and Resource Management Plan.

Publication of the Notice of Availability started the 90 day comment period which ran from April 1, 2005 through July 1, 2005.

Public Open Houses

Six public open-houses were held during the 90-day public comment period. All 6 took place in Ohio during May 2005. These open house sessions were informal sessions, offering the public a chance to talk with Forest Service representatives. The goal was to provide information about the documents that were out for review, and to help the public understand how to participate in the public comment process.

Public meetings were held in the following locations:

- May 2, Wayne National Forest Supervisor's Office, Nelsonville, Ohio
- May 3, Frontier Local High School, New Matamoras, Ohio
- May 5, Ironton Ranger District Office, Pedro, Ohio
- May 10, Columbus area, Holiday Inn – I-70 East, Columbus, Ohio
- May 11, Cincinnati area, Holiday Inn – I-275 North, Cincinnati, Ohio
- May 16, Cleveland area, Holiday Inn, Independence, Ohio

Responses Received

The Wayne National Forest received 678 letters and 2 petitions in response to the Draft EIS and Proposed Revised Forest Plan during the 90 day comment period.

Record of Public Comments

The original copies of all responses are on file and available for inspection at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Wayne National Forest, 13700 US 33, Nelsonville, OH 45764.

Overview of Content Analysis

A content analysis process was used to understand and use information received during this phase of the Forest Plan revision. The purpose of content analysis is to help focus those issues that will guide the revision of the Forest Plan.

All letters received were reviewed and are retained in the planning files. The Content Analysis process used at this stage is described in Appendix B to this Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Of the 678 responses received on the Draft EIS and Proposed Revised Forest Plan, 190 of these were unique original letters, and 488 were form letters. Responses were received from 34 different states. No responses were received from outside of the United States.

Form Letters

The Forest Service received five form letters in response to the Draft EIS and Proposed Revised Forest Plan. Form letters are letters that are received from different individuals but are identical in content. In cases when letter text paraphrases the content of a form letter with no change in meaning, the letter is still treated as a form. For our content analysis process, we had to receive five or more letters with identical or very closely paraphrased text for the letters to be considered a form letter.

One of the form letters was produced and sent to the Wayne using a letter generator on the World Wide Web. Two different web sites (Heartwood and the Buckeye Forest Council web sites) generated essentially the same letter. All someone had to do was insert their name and address and then click submit to send the letter to the Wayne NF. We received 285 copies of this form letter.

One form letter was a postcard which the Buckeye Forest Council sent to their mailing list asking that the postcard be clipped out and mailed to the Wayne NF. We received 35 of these postcards.

We received a package of form letters from the Buckeye Forest Council, mailed to us from a single source that had a form letter with different persons each signing an individual copy. In some cases the signatures were legible and some were not. Some persons signing these gave their address, some did not. We received 154 copies of this form letter.

The two other form letters were letters written that included exactly the same relevant comments. We received 8 copies of one from grouse hunters and 6 copies of one from OHV riders.

The names and addresses of signatories of form letters were entered into the database of commenters. Some form letters include more than one signature. If an address was included, the geographic distribution was also

noted. Many of the form letters included a statement that said basically to include their comments in the record but do not put them on a mailing list. For those persons who requested not to be on our mailing list, they were not added to our Forest Plan Revision mailing list.

Petitions

Two petitions regarding the Draft EIS and Proposed Revised Forest Plan were received. The names of signatories were entered into the log of persons commenting, and the text of the petitions was coded. Petitions submitted in response to the Drafts were submitted by:

- Heartwood – 3007 signatures *
- Buckeye Forest Council – 14 signatures

* Heartwood stated that these petitions included 3097 signatures. A Forest Service count of the signatures found duplicate pages and duplicate signatures. The Forest Service count showed 3007 unique signatures.

The Heartwood petition names 23 national forests that the petition states it refers to; one of these forests is the Wayne National Forest.

Geographic Analysis of Responses

Unique Responses

The forest received 190 unique responses. The geographic information below is based on self-reporting by the respondents who provided an address and who prepared a unique response. No independent effort was made to verify identity, addresses, or state of residence. In some cases, respondents did not provide an address that could be used for demographic or geographic information. See Table A-1 on the following page for a breakdown of percentage of responses received from geographical areas.

Form Letter Responses

The forest received 488 form letter responses. The geographic information below is based on self-reporting by the respondents who provided an address and who sent in a form letter response. No independent effort was made to verify identity, addresses, or state of residence. In some cases, respondents did not provide an address that could be used for demographic or geographic information. See Table A-1 on the following page for a breakdown of percentage of responses received from geographical areas.

Table A-1: Demographic Breakdown of Where Responses to the DEIS and Draft Revised Forest Plan Came From

Response Type	Percent of Responses			Percent of Responses From within the 12 Counties where Wayne NF is located (Subset of Column (A))
	(A) From within Ohio	(B) From outside OH	(C) No Zip Code Info	
Unique Letters	72%	8%	20%	30%
Form Ltr 1 – Buckeye Forest Council and Heartwood	18%	80%	2%	6%
Form Ltr 2 – Grouse hunters	50%	13%	37%	13%
Form Ltr 3 – Buckeye Forest Council	70%	6%	24%	12%
Form Ltr 4 – OHV Riders	83%	17%	0	0
Form Ltr 5 – Buckeye Forest Council	95%	3%	2%	1%

Response Types

Several methods were used to submit responses; hand written letters, comment forms, form letters, post cards, and electronic mail (email).

Electronic versions of all response letters were made. E-mails were converted to word-processing documents.