



Forest Service Centennial

Snapshot – Wayne N.F.

Celebrating – Ohio's Forests.

Nelsonville, OH: The first resource tapped by Ohio's early settlers was the vast forest. Legend holds the forest was so thick that a squirrel could travel from the Ohio River to Lake Erie without ever touching ground. Pioneers quickly began cutting trees, relying upon the forest to provide many of their basic needs. Lumber was used to build houses, barns, buildings, forts and fences. Trees were also used for fuel, first in homes and later to fuel industries. Vast areas of Ohio's forests were cleared to create farmland.

Ohio's forests contained some of the finest hardwoods in the world, including black walnut, black cherry and white oak. In the early 1800s, timber industry began cutting and exporting lumber from Ohio. In 1849, Ohio ranked fourth among the states in lumber production.

Before 1800, historians believe Ohio was 95 percent forested. By 1940 forest cover had dropped to about 10 percent. Today, forests cover about 30 percent of Ohio. Almost all forested stands have been harvested one or more times since settlement by European immigrants in the late 1700s.

As the forests were cut and left barren in southeastern Ohio the land began to erode. In 1934 Ohio's Legislature petitioned the U.S. Forest Service to create a national forest. At the time one acre in three was tax delinquent. Immediately lands began to be acquired for a national forest and in 1951, the Wayne National Forest was officially designated. Prior to 1951 the lands were designated as a Purchase Unit.

Much of the actual work of reforesting the land fell to the Civilian Conservation Corps. During the Great Depression in the 1930s the Corps planted trees, built roads and fire towers, extinguished wildfires, and put in utility lines, lakes, and recreation areas.

In addition to the Corps, there have been many others who have played in role in the reforesting of Ohio.

Individuals, communities, civic organizations, and school children have planted trees throughout the State. Today, groups continue to assist in planting seedlings on areas such as reclaimed strip mine lands.



Much of the low-grade timber was cut to make charcoal. The process involved burning a pile of cordwood under dirt to reduce the fire's oxygen. Reducing the oxygen meant the wood charred rather than burned. Here David and Floyd Malone remove charcoal from the pile and quickly cover the remaining wood with dirt (1942). This pit has burned for seven days and is about one-third its original size.

Forest Facts

The 238,053 acre Wayne National Forest is one of 155 national forests.

Mountain bike trails are open on the Marietta unit. Leith Run Recreation Area and the Monday Creek ORV Trail System are scheduled to reopen on July 1.

The comment period for the Wayne's Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Proposed Forest Plan ends July 1, 2005.

Check out our Websites

www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne

www.fs.fed.us/centennial