

Welcome to the Neighborhood

For many people, having a piece of property next door to a national forest is the fulfillment of a dream. Living next to a national forest allows a homeowner to enjoy the beauty of the forest, abundant wildlife, spectacular scenery, and a sense of solitude.

At the same time, it is important for property owners to understand what it means to live next door to public lands. National Forests are "working" forests managed for multiple uses like wildlife, timber, water quality, and recreation. We offer opportunities for you to get involved and participate in project planning and have input in these decisions during a process called "scoping." Along with the many benefits of being a national forest neighbor, there are also responsibilities.

This brochure provides information on many topics that property owners should find useful. For additional information, contact a Forest Service office or check the Forest website.

Selling and Exchanging Your Land

The Wayne National Forest was established in 1935 and land acquisition continues to "grow" Ohio's only National Forest. The Forest Service buys land from willing sellers as funding is available. Properties that provide important wildlife habitat, protect endangered species, improve access to public lands, and improve the Forest ownership pattern are considered for purchase.

Land Exchanges

Although there is no authority to sell Forest land, the Forest Service may convey land through land-for-land exchanges when it is clearly in the public's interest. The lands to be exchanged must be of equal value or equalized

with a cash payment less than 25% of the value of the Federal land.

Boundary Management and Land Lines

The most valuable advice we can give you is to have your property surveyed by a licensed land surveyor. The fence you think is on the property line may not be. The site where you'd like to build your dream home may be partially on the Wayne. If you construct a building on the Forest, it will have to be removed.

Check your boundaries well in advance of your timber harvest as well. Avoid costly mistakes by knowing where your property lines are located!



The Wayne administers approximately 241,000 acres of land within 12 southeastern Ohio counties. There are approximately 2,000 miles of boundary lines on the Wayne. Many Forest boundary lines are not marked, but are described by deeds on file and shown on USGS Maps. Boundary lines are marked and maintained as funding permits.

Please contact your nearest Forest Service office to request Forest boundary information.

Who Maintains the Fence?

Fences are the responsibility of the private landowner. If you own livestock, it is your responsibility to build a fence to keep livestock off Forest land. It is imperative you first ensure the property lines are accurate before constructing your fence.



Contact Us

The Wayne has three offices to serve visitors. Office hours are 8 - 4:30 Monday through Friday.

Athens Ranger District
13700 U.S. Hwy 33
Nelsonville, OH 45764
Phone: 740-753-0101

Marietta Unit - Athens District
27515 State Route 7
Marietta, OH 45750
Phone: 740-373-9055

Ironton Ranger District
6518 SR 93
Pedro, OH 45659
Phone: 740-534-6500

Federal relay system for the deaf and hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339

More information on the Forest website:
fs.usda.gov/wayne
or visit us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/waynenationalforest>

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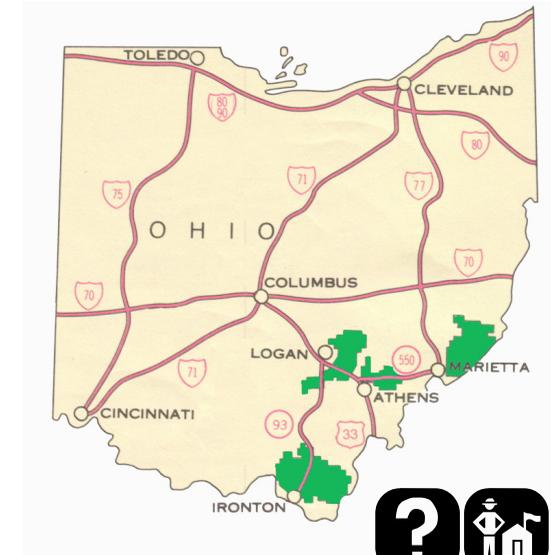


Typical corner boundary marked for National Forest land.

Wayne National Forest

Living Next Door to a National Forest

A Guide for Landowners living near the Wayne NF



Forest Service

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Who Manages the Roads?

Road systems within the Forest include State Highways, County, Township, and Forest Service Roads. The roads maintained by the Forest serve as access for recreation use, hunting, fishing, fire control, vegetation management projects, and other activities.



Some roads that access the Forest cross private land on easements acquired from the private landowners. When the Forest Service acquires an easement across private property, the Forest Service regulates the use of the road. The public has the right to use the road unless the Forest Service has closed the road to public use.

Access by permit across the Forest to private lands may be granted under some circumstances, if other access is not available.

Permits for Utilities, Events, etc.

Private uses on the Forest, such as private road rights-of-way and construction of public utilities, require a special use permit. These permits are issued if the use is compatible with Forest purposes and if it is in the public interest. Payment of an annual special use permit fee is required.

Uses on the Forest such as recreation events and commercial services also require a special use permit, as do gatherings of over 75 people. Not all permit requests are approved. For example, permits are not granted when the activity can be reasonably accommodated on private land. Processing an application for a special use permit does take time and certain fees may be billed to the applicant. Please contact your local Forest Service office for more information.

What about Fire?

The Wayne is responsible for protecting the Forest from wildfire. Through cooperative agreements, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), local Volunteer Fire Departments, and the Wayne suppress fires on state, private, and federal lands. The Forest Service suppresses fire on private land if it poses a threat to Forest land or when their assistance is requested during initial attack.



If a property owner allows a fire to escape onto Forest land, the landowner may be billed for suppression and restoration costs and damages.

The Forest Service sometimes uses prescribed fire to improve wildlife habitat, stimulate healthy ecosystems, or reduce hazardous fuels. Prescribed fire operations can reduce the hazard of wildfire occurrence and severity to national forest and private land.

Minerals

The Wayne is rich in mineral deposits. More than 65% of the mineral rights underlying the Wayne are privately owned. The Wayne must cooperate with private mineral operations. There are some 2,500 oil and gas wells on the Wayne, most are privately owned. Mineral operators are allowed privileges others are not, such as using ATVs to access their wells on Forest land.

When private sub-surface minerals are developed on Forest land, the mineral owner must coordinate with the Wayne and ODNR. Operating plans, Forest Service permits and State permits are required to occupy Forest land, even when the minerals are privately owned. Federal minerals are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

On lands leased by the BLM, the role of the Wayne is to manage the surface estate, provide consent to lease and input for environmental documents.

Who Provides Law Enforcement?

The county sheriff has the primary responsibility for protecting residents and personal property. The Wayne has cooperative agreements with a number of county sheriff's departments.

The Forest also has its own law enforcement officers who are responsible for the protection of the public and our natural resources. Fish and wildlife regulations are enforced by the ODNR.

Violations should be reported to the district offices or local sheriff's offices.

Recreation

Some popular national forest recreation activities include off-highway vehicle riding, camping, mountain bike riding, hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, and horseback riding.

Private landowners may NOT ride their off-highway vehicles, horse, or bicycle from their property across Forest land except on designated trails designed for that use. Please obtain a trail permit and map before riding. Permits may be purchased from a number of participating vendors or any Wayne offices. Visit the Forest website for a list of vendors. Permits are only valid on the Wayne from 4/15 through 12/15. All trails are closed to all riding (except hiking) from 12/16 to 4/14.



Collecting Plants and Firewood

The Forest Service may issue permits for collecting items such as firewood (dead and down wood) and plants. The public should contact their local Ranger District office prior to removing any forest product from the national forest.

Hazards Near your Property

There is always the potential for branches or entire trees to fall. If a potentially hazardous tree is on adjacent Forest land - call your local office to discuss your concerns.

Treating Non-native Invasives

The Forest Service is actively treating invasive plants on Forest land. If a population of invasive plants straddles both your property and Forest property, please contact us and we'll discuss how we might work together on controlling the plants.



There are many good resources to assist landowners in identifying, preventing, and treating invasive weeds. Contact your local office or the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts for more information.

Managing your Forested Land

Professional assistance in managing your private forest land is available from the ODNR. Service foresters are assigned to counties throughout the state. Contact ODNR to locate your local service forester.