

# DECISION MEMO

## ***2002 IRONTON GRAPEVINE CONTROL***

USDA Forest Service  
Ironton Ranger District - Wayne National Forest

### DECISION:

I have reviewed the ***2002 Ironton GRAPEVINE CONTROL*** project file. It is my decision to implement the proposed action: partially removing grapevines from 438 acres in 13 forest stands scattered throughout the Ironton Ranger District. A stand map and table are attached for your convenience. The table displays the stands and acres that will be treated. The attached map depicts stand locations. Implementation will begin in the fall of 2002 and continue as funding becomes available.

All stands proposed for treatment are located in Management Areas where timber stand improvement (TSI) activities are permitted under our Forest Plan. This TSI activity will help contribute to the desired future condition of the following Management Areas: 2.3, 3.1, 3.3 and 6.1.

### PURPOSE of DECISION:

Grapevines can cause serious damage to trees. When numerous, grapevines make crowns heavy and inflexible, breaking tops and limbs, and often breaking the bole of the tree. They can also cause trees to become uprooted and killed during heavy snow or ice storms. While grapevines provide food and shelter for many species of wildlife, reduced crowns from grapevine damage can adversely affect wood quality as well as the mast producing potential of a tree. Grape arbors (dense concentrations of grapevines) have been shown to be very beneficial to some wildlife species by serving as food and shelter resources.

The objectives of this project are to: 1) Improve the growth and wood quality of selected stands; and 2) Increase the potential mast production of these stands. Both can be accomplished by removing the grapevines affecting selected trees, thereby increasing the size and vigor of their crowns. With these objectives in mind, grapevine control will be implemented to increase production of high quality hardwoods, while minimizing adverse effects to wildlife. Treatment of grapevines in the stands listed in this document will occur under the following conditions: 1) Only stands with 60 or more grapevines per acre will be treated; 2) Treated stands will retain at least 20 grapevines per acre; 3) All grapevine arbors will be retained. Control of grapevines will be accomplished using hand-shears, clippers or chainsaws, to sever the vines at their base. This is a non-ground-disturbing activity.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Scoping was performed to insure that all resources were considered and that interdisciplinary input was achieved. Scoping included internal consultation with Forest Staff. A scoping letter was mailed out to interested individuals, groups, and agency officials on July 15th, 2002, to request comments on this project. My response to comments received on this project are as follows:

Wildlife Concerns. A Wildlife Biological Evaluation (BE) for this project was completed on August 27, 2002. The BE determined this project will have no effect on any federal threatened or endangered species, nor is it likely to cause a trend towards the federal listing or loss of viability of any Regional Sensitive Species.

Botany Concerns. A Botanical BE for this project was completed on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The BE determined this project would have no effect on any Federally Listed Species, but may negatively impact pigeon grape (*Vitis cinerea*), a species designated by the Regional Forester as Sensitive on the Wayne National Forest. The Forest Botanist recommended excluding twenty acres from stand 464-7, as it was identified as likely habitat for pigeon

grape. These changes have been incorporated into this decision; therefore, there will be no negative impact to pigeon grape.

Natural Selection of Crop Trees more Economical. With the continual decline of the oak component on our forest due to lack of fire, we prefer not to let grapevines indiscriminately select future crop trees. Our strategy is to maintain our options for future crop tree selection by first reducing the damage to potential crop trees by grapevines, then later selecting the desired crop trees during the pre-commercial thinning phase. At \$25 or less per acre, we consider grapevine control to be one of the more economic TSI activities.

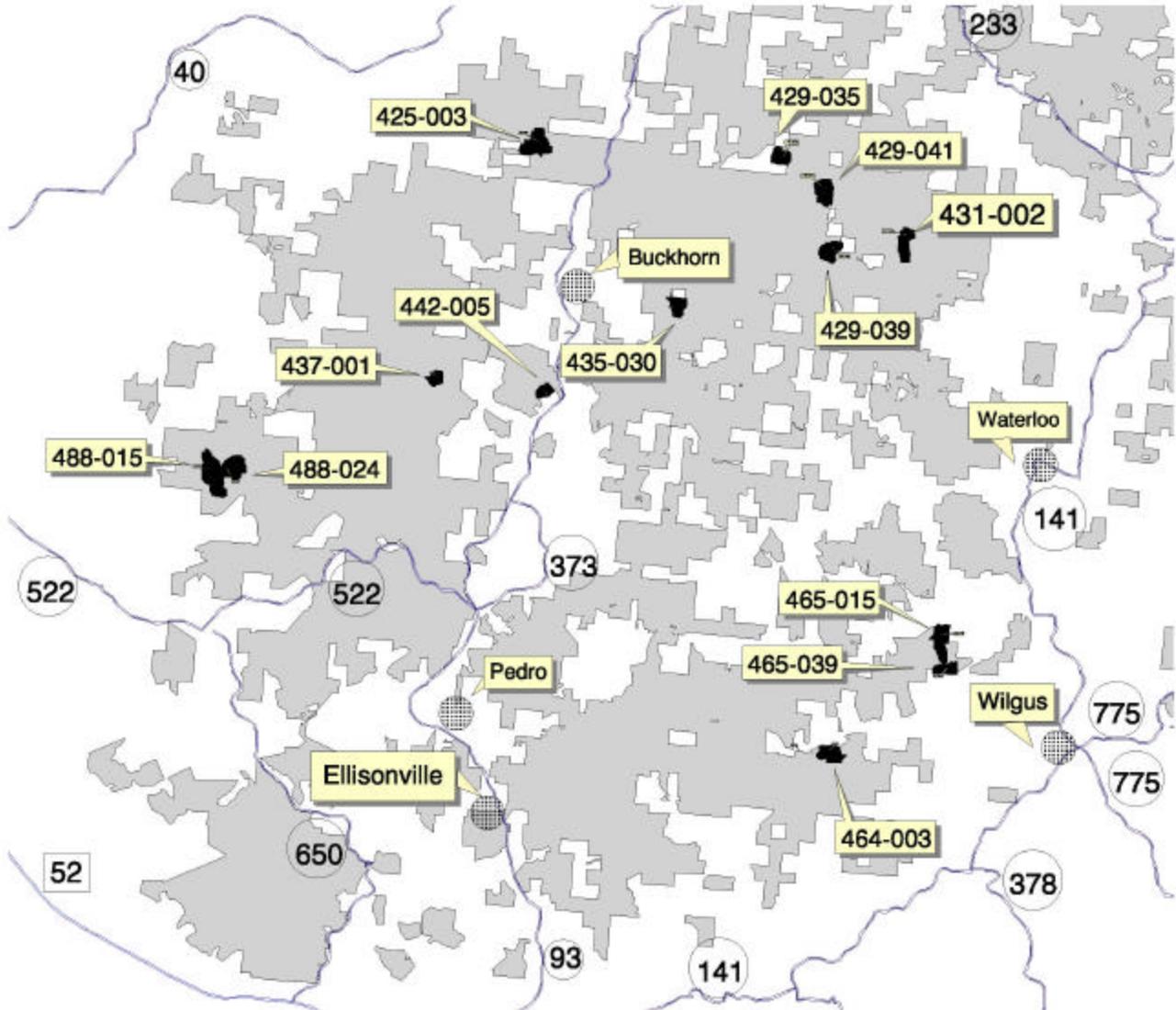
**Table 1. Treatment Stands Under The Ironton 2002 Grapevine Control Project.**

Ironton Stands			
Compartment	Stand	Acres	Management Area
425	3	53	2.3
429	35	22	3.1
429	39	22	3.3
429	41	30	3.1
431	2	25	3.1
435	30	18	3.3
437	1	11	2.3
442	5	12	2.3
464	3	42	6.1
465	15	32	6.1
465	39	25	6.1
488	15	67	3.1
488	24	79	3.1
Total Acres		438	

# Ironton 2002 Grapevine Control

Wayne National Forest  
Ironton Ranger District

## Stand Map - Ironton Ranger District



### Legend

- Grapevine Stands
- Stand Numbers
- U.S. Forest Service Land
- State Routes
- U.S. Highways
- Towns or Cities



Chuck Klee  
09-06-2002

### FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS:

A biological evaluation has been prepared by the Forest Botanist and a determination made that this project will have no effect on federally listed species, Forest Service Sensitive Species and Forest Species of Concern.

A biological evaluation has been prepared by the District Wildlife Biologist, and a determination made that this project will have no effect on any federal threatened or endangered species or Regional Sensitive Species.

The Forest Archaeologist, according to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, reviewed the project. The evaluation determined that this project will not affect any historic properties and should be allowed to proceed as planned.

### REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION:

This action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or EA because the project is within Category 31.2, Section 6 (Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures) which allows for "Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service level D, Forest Service Handbook 7709.56)".

Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures, Chapter 30, Section 30.3 identifies extraordinary circumstances. Our analysis has found that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to this project, which might cause this action to have significant effect.

Our analysis has found that the extraordinary circumstance of steep slopes or highly erosive soils is not present. The grapevine control activities prescribed in this document are considered non-ground disturbing in nature.

Our analysis has shown that the extraordinary circumstance of flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds is not present.

Our analysis has shown that the extraordinary circumstance of Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas is not present.

Our analysis has shown that the extraordinary circumstance of inventoried roadless areas is not present.

Our analysis has shown that the extraordinary circumstance of research natural areas is not present.

Our analysis has shown that the extraordinary circumstance of Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas may be present but there is no effect.

Our analysis has shown that the extraordinary circumstance of threatened and endangered species or their critical habitat is present but there is no effect.

### IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately upon signature of this Decision Memorandum.

### ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

This Decision Memorandum is not subject to appeal, which is in accordance with 36 CFR 215.8a(4). For further information about this decision contact Mike Baines, District Ranger, Ironton Ranger District, Wayne National Forest, 6518 State Route 93, Pedro, OH 45659, phone (740) 534-6500, E-mail: [mbaines@fs.fed.us](mailto:mbaines@fs.fed.us), or visit our website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne>.

*Mike Baines* /s/

MIKE BAINES  
District Ranger  
Ironton Ranger District

09-12-02

Date