



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Wayne National Forest  
Ironton Ranger District

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File Code: 1900 / 2600

Date: June 9, 2004

Route To:

Subject: Scoping – Prescribed Burning

To: Friend of the Wayne National Forest

The Wayne National Forest is proposing to prescribed burn four separate areas on the Ironton Ranger District in Lawrence County to improve sensitive plant habitat and to reduce hazardous fuels. The areas are :

Handley Branch Project is located north of County Road 4, just west of Waterloo (in T5N R17W, Section 26; 38° 42.50'N, 82° 30.35'W).

Fradd Hollow Project, is located south of County Road 5 approximately a mile south of Oakland Chapel (in T3N R17W, Section 5; 38° 35.63'N, 82° 34.62'W).

Darby Creek – Smith Hollow Project is located just northeast of Lawco Lake between State Route 522 and State Route 93 (in T2N R18W, Sections 4, 5, 8, and 9; 38° 39.57'N, 82° 38.84'W).

Youngs Branch Project is located between Youngs Branch Creek and the Forest Service Road 132 (New Road) and the Pine Creek ATV Trail (in T3N R18W, Sections 7 and 8, 38° 44.37'N, 82° 40.93'W)

During this initial public comment period called "scoping", we are inviting you to send us your ideas and concerns or to let us know of any significant issues that you feel should be considered.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

Both the Handley Branch and Fradd Hollow sites have been periodically prescribed burned in the last decade. The past burns have improved the habitat for certain sensitive plant species. If the periodic burning is not continued, the conditions will change and it is likely that some of the sensitive species will disappear.

The **Handley Branch** site is approximately 92 acres. Included are fields that are in the process of being converted to native warm-season grasses and wooded uplands that are significant for an Oak Barren community (white oak-black oak). The woodlands contain the only known population of the state endangered blue scorpionweed in the state. There are also three other rare species, including the endangered Sampson's snakeroot, the state threatened balsam squawweed, and the potentially threatened lesser ladies'-tresses. Not burning this area would result in the establishment and growth of woody species which over time would cause the loss of the prairie habitat and its associated species. The area was last burned in March 1998.



The **Fradd Hollow** site is approximately 5 acres and is significant for a quality Oak Barren community and contains many prairie species, including 3 state rare species. It has an overstory of post oak, virginia pine and scarlet oak. Burning will perpetuate the open savanna habitat and may aid in re-establishing additional prairie species. Not burning this area would result in the establishment and growth of woody species which would overtime cause the loss of the prairie habitat and its associated species. The area was last burned in March 1997.

The **Darby Creek – Smith Hollow** site is approximately 600 acres and is near the Lawco Lake residential area. The Darby Creek – Smith Hollow Site was burned by a wildfire in the late 1980's. That burn did reduce fire hazards and the likelihood of an intense wildfire, however since that time the amount of fuels has increased, particularly after the February 2003 ice storm which caused many trees and limbs to fall to the ground. If this areas is prescribed burned then the fuel buildup would be minimized, and the likelihood of a large and intense fire starting would be lessened.

The **Youngs Branch** site is approximately 480 acres and is in an area where the February 2003 ice storm was fairly heavy and many trees, limbs, and branches fell to the ground under the weight of the ice. The ice storm increased the amount of fuel on the ground so a wildfire could burn hotter and be more difficult to contain. The Youngs Branch Site has not been burned recently. This project site is around and adjacent to the 117 acre prescribed burn that was approved in the spring of 2004, and the Forest Service plans to burn it as soon as weather and fuel conditions are acceptable. By adding the land identified in this memo to the previously approved prescribed burn, the fuel conditions would be improved so that the research area and adjacent lands would be less likely to be impacted by an uncontrolled wildfire. Also, by adding the area identified in this memo, the efficiency of all the burns would be improved since existing roads and trails would be used as control lines instead of constructing new fire lines. No new firelines would be constructed.

The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended, for the Wayne National Forest provides guidance for the management for the lands and facilities on the National Forest lands.

The Goals include (page 4-2 and 4-2 in the Forest Plan):

- Promote the diversity of plant and animal communities by providing a variety of vegetative communities.
- Manage endangered and threatened plant and animal species to population sizes and distribution where they are no longer threatened, in cooperation with other State and Federal Agencies.
- Minimize the risk of damage from flood, wind, wildfire, and erosion.

Guidance in the Forest Plan is in the form of Standards & Guidelines both Forest Wide and within specific Management Areas.

Forest Wide Standards and Guidelines related to prescribed burning states on page 4-54, "Prescribed fire may be used to establish or maintain vegetation under established resource management prescriptions".

And “Wildfire prevention, detection, and suppression, as well as fuels management, including hazard reduction, will be planned based on an analysis of probable fire location, expected fire intensities, potential net resource value exchange, and risk to health and safety.”

Currently the Handley Branch area is within Management Area 3.3 of the Forest Plan; the Standards and Guidelines listed in the Forest Plan for this Management Area do not give any additional or conflicting direction for projects such as the one being proposed here.

Currently the Fradd Hollow area is within Management Area 6.1 of the Forest Plan; the Standards and Guidelines listed in the Forest Plan for this Management Area do not give any additional or conflicting direction for projects such as the one being proposed here.

Currently the Darby Creek – Smith Hollow site is within Management Area 2.3 of the Forest Plan; the Standards and Guidelines listed in the Forest Plan for this Management Area do not give any additional or conflicting direction for projects such as the one being proposed here.

Currently the Youngs Branch site is within Management Area 8.2 of the Forest Plan; the Standards and Guidelines listed in the Forest Plan for this Management Area do not give any additional or conflicting direction for projects such as the one being proposed here.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

#### **Handley Branch and Fradd Hollow Sites:**

The proposed action is to burn these sites every 2 to 5 years over the next decade so that the preferred habitat conditions remain or are improved for the plant species identified above.

#### **Darby Creek – Smith Hollow and Youngs Branch sites:**

The proposed action is to burn these sites every 3 to 5 years over the next decade so that the amount of fuel is low enough to lessen the likelihood of a very hot and hard-to-control fire that would risk private land nearby the Darby Creek – Smith Hollow Site or the integrity of the research being performed on Youngs Branch Research site.

The area being proposed in this letter as the Youngs Branch prescribed burn would use a portion of the Pine Creek ATV trail as a control line so new fireline would not be needed on the north edge.

In order to safely accomplish these burns, a variety of control lines will be used and/or constructed. Forest and Township roads will be used as fire control lines where available. Where roads are not available for control lines, creek beds may be used, 1 to 4 foot wide lines may be constructed with hand tools, or heavy equipment such as dozers may build control lines which could be approximately 8 foot wide.

In order to prevent the fire from burning outside the prescribed area, some dead or dying trees may need to be felled near the edge of the prescribed area so that they do not cause the fire to burn across the containment line.

Prescribed Burn Plans will be developed by qualified personnel before each burn so that the habitat is improved, and so that adjacent land and residents are not unreasonably impacted by smoke. These burn plans will specify such factors as minimum and maximum air temperatures, fuel moisture, wind speed and direction, and personnel needed on site so that the burns are effective and stay within designed boundaries as shown on the attached maps.

Maps depicting the locations of the proposed action are attached.

More detailed maps can be viewed or obtained by contacting Mike Freidhof at the Ironton Ranger District, 6518 State Route 93; Pedro, Ohio 45659; 740-534-6500.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

We are interested in your comments on the proposed projects. Please let us know at the address above or by phone by the close of business on June 30, 2004.

If, through the analysis, it is determined that the proposed project would be a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA guidelines (40 CFR Part 1500). The District Ranger will be the deciding officer.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Gloria Chrismer*

GLORIA CHRISMER  
District Ranger

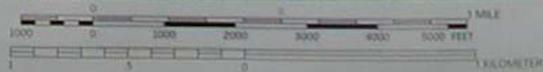
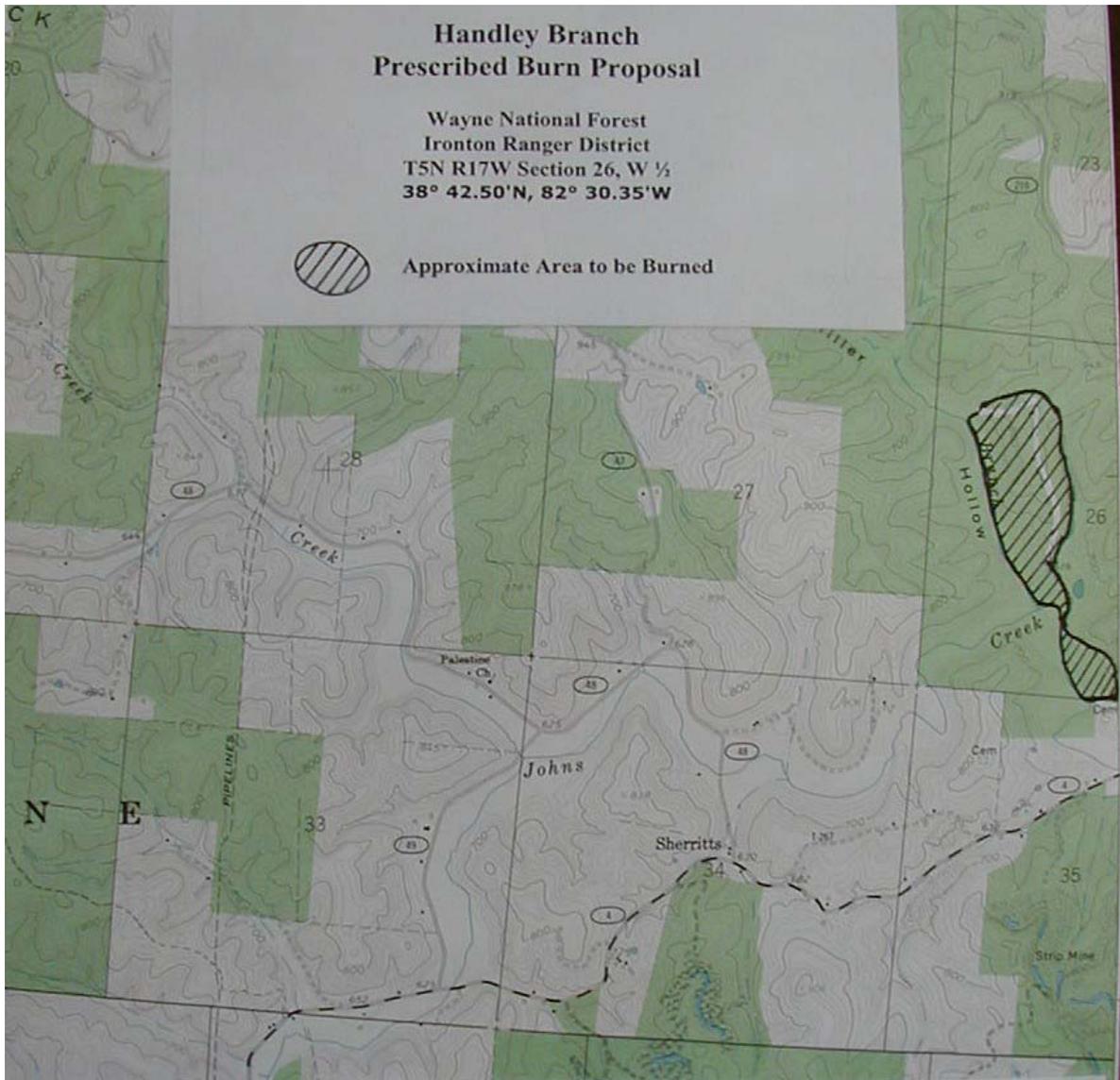
attachment

# Handley Branch Prescribed Burn Proposal

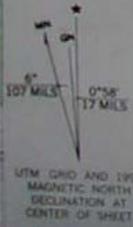
Wayne National Forest  
Ironton Ranger District  
T5N R17W Section 26, W 1/2  
38° 42.50'N, 82° 30.35'W



Approximate Area to be Burned



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



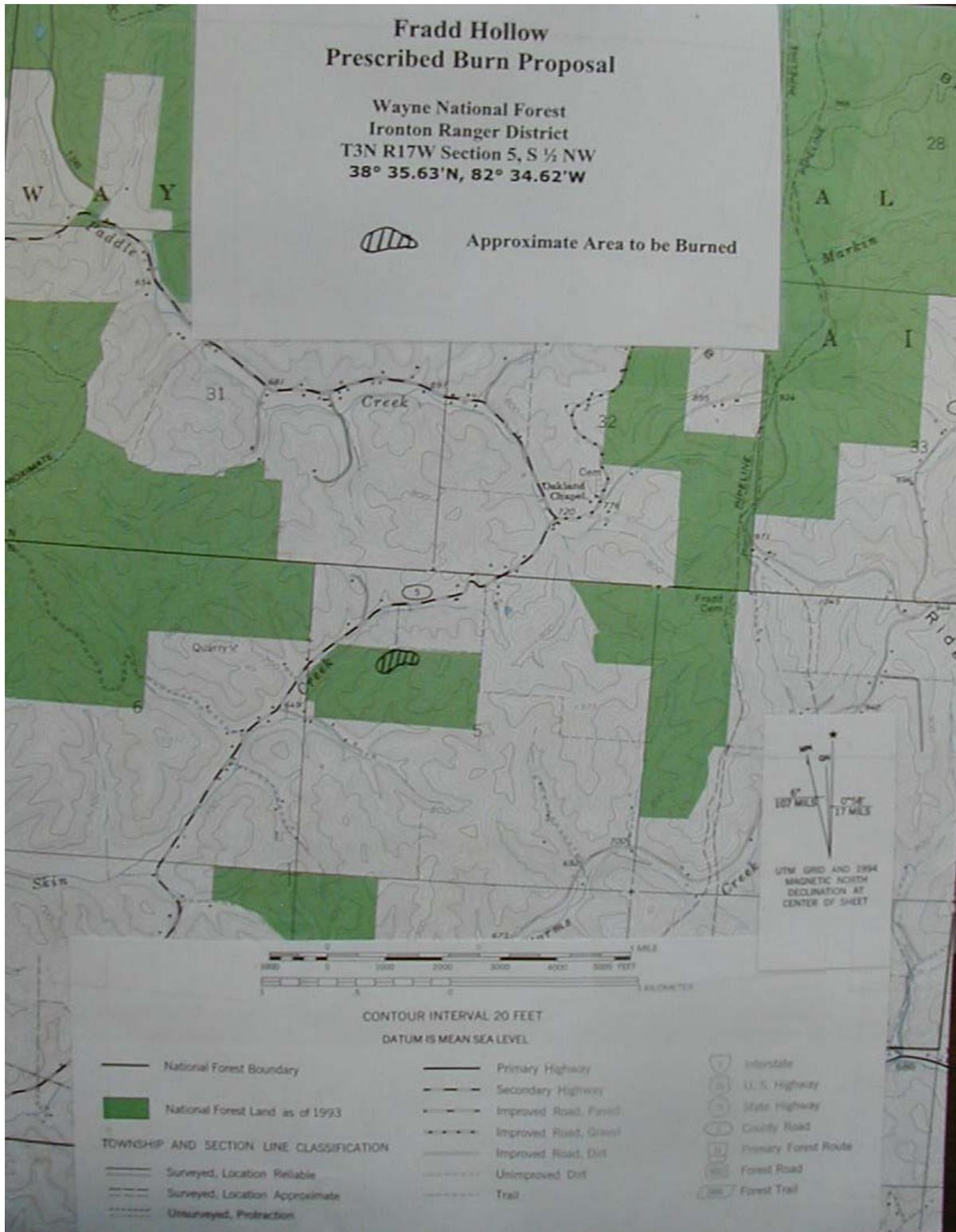
- |   |                                 |                        |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| — National Forest Boundary                      | — Primary Highway               | — Interstate           |
| ■ National Forest Land as of 1993               | - - - Secondary Highway         | — U. S. Highway        |
| <b>TOWNSHIP AND SECTION LINE CLASSIFICATION</b> |                                 |                        |
| — Surveyed, Location Reliable                   | - · - · - Improved Road, Gravel | — State Highway        |
| - · - · - Surveyed, Location Approximate        | - · - · - Improved Road, Dirt   | — County Road          |
| - · - · - Unsurveyed, Protraction               | · · · · · Unimproved Dirt       | — Primary Forest Route |
|   | - · - · - Trail                 | — Forest Road          |
|   |                                 | — Forest Trail         |

# Fradd Hollow Prescribed Burn Proposal

Wayne National Forest  
Ironton Ranger District  
T3N R17W Section 5, S ½ NW  
38° 35.63'N, 82° 34.62'W



Approximate Area to be Burned



# Darby Creek - Smith Hollow Project Area



The USDA Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were intended may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The USDA Forest Service reserves the right to correct, update, modify, or replace GIS products without notification. For additional information about this data contact the Ironton Ranger District of the Wayne National Forest (740)534-6500.

fjc 05/09/2004

Legend  
- - - Darby Creek - Smith Hollow Project Area  
U.S. Forest Service

0.4 0.2 0 0.4 Miles  
(Ruins)  
1 inch equals 0.25 miles

# Youngs Branch Project Area

