



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Wayne National Forest  
Ironton Ranger District

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**File Code:** 1950  
**Route To:** 5100

**Date:** August 6, 2003

**Subject:** Proposed Second Phase Of Storm Debris Fuels Treatment

**To:** Interested Parties

I am writing to invite you to provide comments on the second phase of fuels treatment to reduce the large accumulation of downed wood from the February 2003 ice storm, which affected the Ironton Ranger District, Wayne National Forest as well as much of southern Ohio.

***You are invited to comment  
on this project.***

The first phase of treatment to reduce roadside fuels has been nearly completed. The excessive build-up of small- and medium-sized debris, primarily from pine trees felled by the storm along local roads, has been reduced to a layer of woody material less than two feet deep. This action reduces ladder fuels that could carry a fire up into the canopy of surrounding trees and changes expected fire behavior.

***First phase of treatment is  
nearly complete.***

Review of new aerial photographs and on-the-ground reconnaissance has identified approximately 930 additional acres in nine areas where significant tree damage has occurred. In these areas some trees were uprooted, other trees split in two, some trees broke and fell over, and many trees lost entire treetops in the storm. Research indicates that a tree with less than 25% of its crown remaining will likely die within the next few years.

***Many trees were toppled by  
from the roots  
and some trees completely  
lost their tops in the storm.***

Fire suppression and control will be very difficult with the high number of trees currently on the ground. The large amounts of fuels on the ground creates significant wildfire suppression difficulties because of the time and expertise required to cut a fireline through heavy debris and jack-strawed timber. Because many trees have significant crown damage and will likely die in the near future, there will soon be many standing dead trees that will catch on fire and then spread embers to start new fires, or the dead trees will fall in the future to create more obstacles to establishing control lines. Also, many firefighter injuries and deaths have occurred from burning dead trees that suddenly fall onto firefighters. Wildfires would be larger because suppression lines would have to be built outside the heavily damaged areas. These conditions compromise firefighter safety and put more structures and acreage at risk of fire.

***Concentrations of downed  
woody debris results in  
larger wildfires and more  
safety hazards to firefighters.***

The proposed reduction in fuels is necessary to reduce potential rates of spread and intensity and to maintain conditions that support desirable fire behavior. Since the nine areas proposed in this phase of treatment are also within ½ mile of private property, it is also necessary to reduce the risk of fire to private property and to the natural ecosystems in these watersheds.

***Large amounts of downed  
wood increase the risk  
of wildland fire to homes  
and communities.***



Wildfire occurrence on the Ironton District over the last 10 years ranges from a low of 9 fires in 1996 to a high of 86 fires in 2001, burning a total of 865 acres of Wayne National Forest. Ninety percent of all wildfires occurring on the Wayne National Forest are the result of arson. Lawrence County has the highest incidence of wildfire in Ohio.

***The Ironton District  
has a high incidence of  
arson fire.***

We are proposing to treat these nine areas by removing some of the damaged trees through commercial timber sales, if possible. A vicinity map is enclosed. Only fallen trees, broken trees, uprooted trees, and trees with less than 25% of their original live crown remaining, would be removed. The logging slash (tops and limbs) less than 6 inches in diameter would be lopped and scattered so that the slash would average less than two feet above the ground over the treatment sites, determined on a site by site basis, to reduce ladder fuels and to hasten decomposition.

***We propose to treat nine  
areas by removing  
salvageable wood.***

Many existing permanent roads would be used to access the sites; some of the roads would be brushed and/or drainage corrected before use. Temporary access roads and skid trails would be constructed to remove the damaged trees. Landings would be constructed on suitable locations approved by the Forest Service. Some live trees may be cut to construct the temporary access roads and skid trails, and to create landings. Temporary roads, landings, and skid trails would be rehabilitated using water bars, clean straw mulch, small wood and limbs, and / or seeded to establish protective cover.

***No new roads would be  
constructed; skid trails will  
be rehabilitated.***

Also some of the areas would be prescribe burned. Through the operations described above, some of the slash may be piled, such as at landings, and those piles would be burned during suitable control conditions. Fire control lines would be constructed, and those locations would be inspected for site-specific impacts when the prescribed burning plan is prepared, because final fuel conditions will not be known until the heavy wood removal occurs.

***Treatment may involve pile  
or other prescribed burning.***

All treatment areas would be surveyed for the presence of threatened and endangered species and mitigations prescribed as needed.

***We will survey all treatment  
areas for T&E species.***

Please make your comments specific to this proposed action. If you have already been contacted, your comments have been noted. To ensure that I have an opportunity to consider any other concerns, please submit written comments to me or to Marsha Wikle, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at the above address by **September 4, 2003**. You may also call to discuss this project (see number above) or submit comments electronically. Copies of this scoping notice and map are available on the Wayne National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne>.

***How to comment.***

Thank you for your interest in the Wayne National Forest.

/S/ *MICHAEL FREIDHOF* (FOR)

GLORIA CHRISMER  
District Ranger  
Enclosures

## Proposed Treatment Areas

<u>Area</u>	<u>USGS Quad</u> <u>Sheet</u>	<u>Legal Description</u>	<u>Acres</u>
101	Gallia	T4N R18W, Section 26 & 27	231
103	Gallia	T4N R18W, Sections 26 & 35	199
105	Gallia	T4N R18W, Section 26 T3N R18W, Section 1	57
107	Gallia	T5N R17W, Section s 5 & 8	27
109	Gallia	T5N R17W, Section 9	24
110	Gallia	T5N R17W, Section 9 & 10	16
203	Sherritts	T3N R18W Sections 12 & 13	50
204	Sherritts	T3N R18W Sections 13, 14, 23 & 24	226
301	South Webster	T4N R18W, Section 27	97
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>927</b>