

Wayne Land Acquisition Benefits Heritage Resources

The number of historic iron furnaces on the Wayne National Forest increased by one with September's land purchase from the Ohio Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.



The remnants of Pioneer Furnace.

Rock Iron Region of southern Ohio.

The historic Pioneer Iron Furnace built in 1857, joins the Vesuvius Furnace (1836), the Cambria Furnace (1854), and the Etna Furnace (1832), on public land on the Ironton Ranger District. The Etna Furnace was included in the 718 acre acquisition from the Trust for Public land in 2002. The Center Furnace (1836) site was acquired when the Forest Service purchased 4,678 acres in 1996 from the Kosmos Cement Company. The Center Furnace stack no longer stands on the site. Three of the furnace stacks are in fair to poor condition but could be restored like the Vesuvius Furnace Stack.

The standing furnace stacks are impressive structures made of cut stone blocks. These stone monoliths are reminders of the industrial age that significantly formed the Hanging

The following quote from the web-site <http://www.oldindustry.org/iron.html>, paints a mental picture of the arduous life styles of the 1800's when the furnaces were in full operation.

"Whenever we visit an iron furnace, it must be remembered that countless

individuals lived, worked, and sometimes died at these sites. Iron furnaces ran twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for many months on end. The roar and fire heat were continuous, while the furnace cast an eerie glow that could light up the night for a considerable area. Smoke from the charcoal production hung in the air, while the hills and dales surrounding the furnace were stripped bare of trees. Being near a furnace town meant co-existing with a living inferno - a terrible beast, partly tamed, that would produce the desired transformation of ore to iron at a price - one paid in earth and blood."

The Vesuvius Furnace was listed to the National Register of Historic Places of Ohio in 1990.

It is possible the other three furnace stacks and one furnace site are potential candidates for the National Register of Historic Places. The Wayne land purchase program contributes to the growth of the Forest and provides amenities to the citizens of the nation in the form of geo tourism, open space, outdoor recreation, watershed protection and renewable natural resources for the future.

For more information contact Richard Jones at 740-534-6529