



Wayne NF and The Nature Conservancy Grow a Forest

A total of 1,268 acres of forest and grassland were added to the Wayne National Forest in September 2007 when the Forest Service purchased land from The Nature Conservancy (TNC).



Looking across Anderson Meadows on the newest tract of Wayne National Forest.

In September, the Wayne National Forest added a large tract of land when the Forest was able to close on a purchase of land from The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

"The property is a significant addition to the Wayne National Forest," said Wayne Forest Supervisor Mary O. Reddan. "It includes 1,268 acres of open meadow for song birds like the Henslow's Sparrow, young growth forest, and several fishing ponds. The

property contains the historic Pioneer Iron Furnace and is near the community of Blackfork, Ohio, where decedents of the Underground Railroad live today."

The land is in northern Lawrence County located between existing Forest property and a state wildlife area. TNC initially purchased 4,116 acres from Mead Westvaco in 2005. In September 2006, the Wayne was able to acquire the first 670 acres. This year, the Forest acquired another 1,268 acres.

TNC intends to hold the property until the Forest Service can purchase the rest of the land as L&WCF monies become available. TNC and the ODNR Division of Wildlife will continue to manage the remaining 2,180 acres under a partnership agreement that provides for public hunting.

"While the forest on this property is relatively young, this land is part of the Appalachian forest - the oldest and most diverse forest system in North

America," said Dr. Richard Shank, TNC's State Director in Ohio. "It's very important for plant and animal diversity in Ohio."

A portion of the newly-acquired land was named "Anderson Meadows" by TNC in honor of Ora E. Anderson, a former life trustee of The Nature Conservancy who supported the establishment and growth of the Wayne National Forest for decades.

"Ora Anderson was a strong ambassador for the Wayne National Forest and the Conservancy throughout his life," Shank said. "Even in his nineties, he helped us win the support of Congressman Ralph Regula, who in turn helped us secure funding for this project."

Regula is a senior member of the Appropriations Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The new property contains primitive trails and interior roads that were in place before the land purchase and will serve as walk-in access to vast grasslands, small fishing ponds and public hunting land. The property provides important consolidation of the northern portion of the Ironton Ranger District reducing fragmentation of the public land base.

This partnership with TNC is another example of the Eastern Region's vision goal of Walk the Talk for Sustainability.

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