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May 16, 2025
Rachel Reed, Forest Supervisor
Wayne National Forest
U.S. Forest Service
13700 US Hwy 33
Nelsonville, OH 45764
Subject: Letter of Support for the Non-Native Invasive Plant Control Project on Wayne National Forest
Dear Forest Supervisor,
On behalf of the Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society, I write to express our strong support for the U.S. Forest Service's updated Non-Native Invasive Plant Control Project for Wayne National Forest. As a professional organization dedicated to advancing wildlife science and responsible management of Ohio's natural resources, we recognize this initiative as a crucial step forward in preserving the ecological integrity of one of the state's most valuable public forest lands.
Invasive plant species pose a serious and growing threat to forest health, biodiversity, and the sustainability of native wildlife habitats across southeastern Ohio. Left unchecked, non-native invasives outcompete native plant communities, degrade critical habitats, reduce food and cover for native wildlife, and disrupt the natural ecological processes on which countless species rely. The Wayne National Forest is no exception; it has experienced increasing pressure from invasive species since the original plan's implementation in 2007.
We commend the Forest Service for its renewed commitment to adaptive, science-based land stewardship through this updated project plan. By incorporating the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), this plan represents a modern, flexible, and effective framework that can respond to evolving threats and improve long-term outcomes for forest ecosystems. IPM's combination of prevention, monitoring, and targeted control strategies ensures that treatments are both environmentally responsible and strategically effective.
Importantly, the revised plan recognizes the growing diversity and geographic spread of invasive species since 2007 and adjusts management tools accordingly. The inclusion of protocols for treatment in sensitive areas-such as near waterways, within the range of threatened and endangered species, and in other critical habitats-demonstrates the Forest Service's commitment to comprehensive ecological stewardship.
This approach aligns with the values and priorities of conservation groups across Ohio, including our chapter's members-wildlife professionals who regularly observe the harmful impacts of invasive plants on native wildlife and their habitats. We view this updated plan as an essential part of the broader effort to protect Ohio's natural heritage for future generations.
The Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society fully supports this initiative and encourages its timely implementation. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Forest Service and other partners to confront invasive species challenges and promote resilient, diverse, and healthy forest ecosystems in our state.
Sincerely,
Executive Board
Ohio Chapter of The Wildlife Society