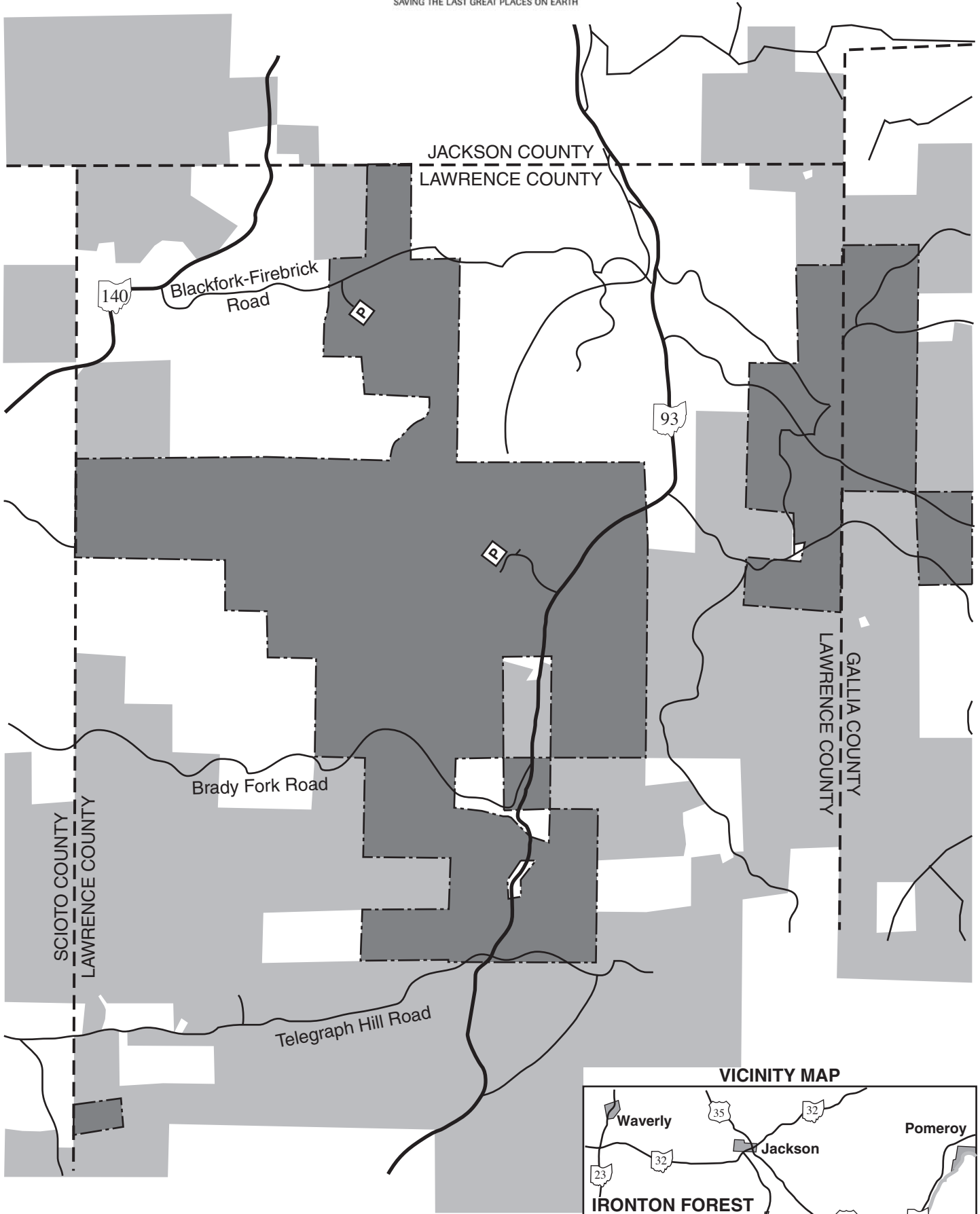




IRONTON FOREST WILDLIFE AREA

Lawrence and Gallia Counties



LEGEND	
	Parking
	Ironton Forest Lands
	U.S. Forest Service Lands





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DISTANCE FROM MAJOR
POPULATION CENTERS

- 17 miles from Jackson
- 27 miles from Ironton
- 48 miles from Chillicothe
- 55 miles from Athens

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

This 4,100-acre public wildlife area is open to hunting, fishing, bird-watching, and other non-motorized recreation. The center of this recreation area lies approximately 5 miles south of the Jackson County village of Oak Hill, in Lawrence and Gallia counties. It can most easily be reached from State Route 93, and local routes Blackfork-Firebrick and Brady Fork roads.

Approximately 25 percent of the property is reclaimed surface mine land, which provides habitat for grassland species, including game animals and songbirds. The remainder of the land is forest ranging in age from 1 to 100 years. Numerous ponds created either by beaver activity or during clay or coal mining, are found on the property and are available for fishing.

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

The wooded hills of southern Ohio are part of the Appalachian Forest, the oldest and most diverse forest system in North America. When healthy, these forests are home to a rich array of flowering and medicinal plants, dozens of tree species, songbirds, game species like ruffed grouse and wild turkey, and other wildlife including bobcat, black bear, bats, salamanders, and snakes.

The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit conservation organization, supports the restoration and protection of large parcels of unbroken forest, which are easier to manage efficiently for forest products and recreation, provide better habitat for native plants and animals, and allow forests to recover from natural disasters like fire or storms. The Conservancy purchased this land in 2004 and 2005 from MeadWestvaco Corp. In 2005, an agreement was executed between The Nature Conservancy and the Division of Wildlife which enables the Division to conduct wildlife management activities and permit free hunting, fishing, and trapping on these lands.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

The diverse mixture of habitat types, ranging from reclaimed surface mines to forested ridge tops, provides a rich variety of both game and non-game species.

The ponds on the area, created either by beaver or as part of the mining process, support populations of bluegill and largemouth bass. Wood ducks, mallards, and other waterfowl may be found, especially during migration. White-tailed deer, wild turkey, and gray squirrel are the principal abundant game species. The reclaimed surface mines provide habitat for cottontail rabbit. Raccoon, skunk, muskrat, and beaver are present, and bobwhite quail are found on nearby reclaimed surface mine lands and are presumed to be here in small numbers.

A rich variety of songbirds will be found as well, including many grassland and scrub species, such as Helmslow's and grasshopper sparrows, blue grosbeak, and Eastern meadowlark.

The habitat mix also leads to botanical diversity, including some rare flowering plant species such as rock skull-cap, small-flowered alumroot, and white milkweed.

HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING

Old fields and reclaimed surface mine areas provide the most productive areas for deer and grouse. Squirrels occupy the woodlands that have not been disturbed by mining. Wild turkeys are well established on the area and beaver are present on many watersheds.

PUBLIC USE FACILITIES

No permit or fee is required to hunt or fish in the Ironton Forest Wildlife Area. Hunters and anglers must carry valid Ohio licenses for hunting and fishing on the property.

Parking is available in designated lots located off State Route 93 and Blackfork-Firebrick Road. Parking areas along Brady Fork Road provide access to three fishing ponds.

There are no improved trails on the property. A number of logging and mining haul roads throughout the property allow for easy movement on foot through much of the area. Off-road vehicle use of any type is prohibited at all times on the Ironton Forest Wildlife Area. This prohibition will be enforced as part of The Nature Conservancy's agreement with the Division of Wildlife.

It is important to remember that this area is primitive. Drinking water, restrooms, and picnic facilities are not available. This is a day-use area; camping is prohibited.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information may be obtained from the Wildlife District Four Office, 360 East State Street, Athens, Ohio 45701-1895; telephone (740) 589-9930.

Please observe boundary markers and respect private property. Much of the Ironton Forest Wildlife Area adjoins the Wayne National Forest, which is open to the public. Property maps may be obtained through the U.S. Forest Service through its Web site: www.fs.fed.us/fo/wayne

TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.