

Welcome to Richland Furnace State Forest

History

Richland Furnace State Forest is a reflection of days-gone-by. Located in the wooded hills of northern Jackson and southern Vinton counties, is evidence of two past eras in the history of Ohio. The oldest is the existence of flint outcrops that were used by the Native Americans prior to the Europeans arrival to the area. If you explore and look close, one can find these outcrops. The more recent reflection of the past is the evidence of the industrial revolution of the mid-1800s. During the 19th century, the Hanging Rock Iron Region was the second largest producer of iron for our young nation.

The stone remnant of the old Richland iron furnace still stands on private property just north of Richland Furnace State Forest and is adjacent to Vinton Township Road 6. The town of Richland, which is still listed on most maps, is gone but a keen eye can detect where many of the homes once stood. Furnaces of this era usually employed up to 100 people and most lived in the small crossroads "company" towns such as Richland. These furnaces were operated on the resources from the surrounding area. The required iron ore was mined by oxen from the underlying sandstone and limestone. The trees were cut and burned to produce charcoal to fire the furnace. The old ore pits are still quite noticeable near the ridges throughout the state forest.

With the development of the ore fields in Missouri and the Lake Superior region at the end of the 19th century, the Hanging Rock iron industry quickly faded away. Even though the furnaces are gone, their impact on the resources of the area will remain for many years to come.

The Vegetation

The oak-hickory forest vegetation that currently exists on Richland Furnace State Forest is a direct result of the past land use. During the iron era all the vegetation was removed (clearcut) for the production of charcoal. This allowed for direct sunlight to reach the forest floor and regenerate species that require full sunlight to reproduce, such as the oaks. After areas were logged for charcoal, the remaining slash was allowed to burn repeatedly. Wildfires were common and were not of concern unless they threatened human health or safety. Because of this, the thinly barked trees were eliminated from the regenerating forests which allowed the present day thicker barked oak-hickory stands to develop.

The railroad on the north and east sides of the forest also played a significant role in the present day composition and condition of the forest. Before the 1950s railroad engines did not have spark arrestors. As a result, during the spring and fall, railroad-ignited forest fires were very common and damaged many of the trees that are currently growing there. Today, many of the taller trees at Richland Furnace State Forest are of poor health or low vigor. The Division of Forestry is nurturing these stands back to health. Silvicultural treatments employed include removal of unhealthy individual trees through selection harvests, to the reestablishment of an entire stand through regeneration harvests. The result is a healthier forest for future generations.

Forest Management

The Division of Forestry manages the Richland Furnace State Forest under a multiple-use concept. This means the forest is being managed for wildlife habitat improvement, recreation, watershed protection, forest products, and aesthetics. Richland Furnace State Forest is open to public hunting and contains one of the four All-Purpose Vehicle (APV) areas operated by the Division of Forestry.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted within Richland Furnace State Forest as regulated by the Division of Wildlife. Discharging of any firearm, except during lawful hunting is prohibited.

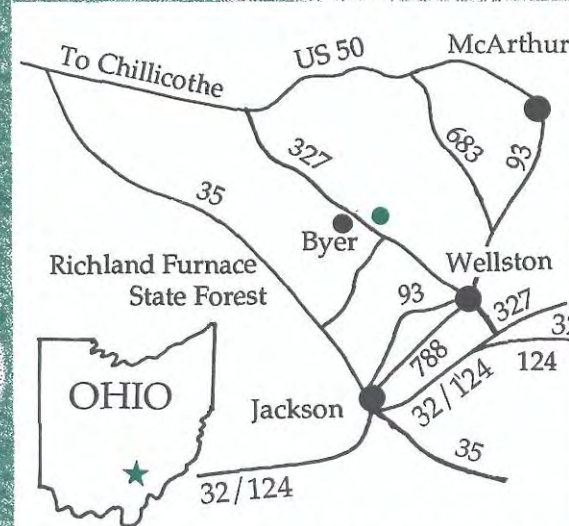
Trail and Boundary Marks

Depending on the work that is being conducted throughout the forest, different colors of paint may be found. Yellow spots indicate the boundary between state and private land. Orange spots designate the APV trail system. In past years, the APV trails were marked with white paint, some of the old white spots may still exist in certain areas and should be disregarded.



whitetail deer

LOCATION



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zaleski State Forest

P.O. Box 330
Zaleski, Ohio 45698-0330
(740) 596-5781

District 4 Forestry Office

360 East State Street
Athens, Ohio 45701-1852
(740) 593-3341

EMERGENCIES

Jackson County Sheriff's Office
(740) 286-6464

Southwest Ohio EMS

1-800-282-7777



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RICHLAND FURNACE STATE FOREST AND APV AREA

APV Rules

1) Vehicles permitted on the designated trails are all-purpose vehicles (APVs), trail bikes and motorcycles. APVs shall be no wider than 48 inches or have an engine displacement greater than 40 horsepower. Each vehicle shall display a valid APV or highway license. No car, truck, bus or four-wheel drive vehicle is permitted in the area. No APV shall be operated on a trail or on the forest unless such operation is permitted.

2) APVs shall be operated only on the trails marked with orange blazes.

3) Riding is permitted between the hours 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. Operating vehicles shall display lighted lights during the hours of darkness.

4) The speed of APV s shall be limited at all times to a speed within which the operator can stop his vehicle in the assured clear distance ahead. No vehicle shall at any time be operated at a speed greater than 25 mph. Speeds on areas designated as "novice areas" or "novice trails" shall not exceed 10 mph.

5) All operators and passengers shall use safety glasses or other protective eye device. It is recommended that all riders wear protective headgear while riding in the APV area.

6) All operators shall have a current driver's license. However, minors at least 12 years of age and less than 16 years of age may operate an APV if accompanied by a parent or guardian 18 years of age or older and who is the holder of a current driver's license.

7) All vehicles shall be equipped with adequate brakes, mufflers and spark arrestors.

8) No person who is under the influence of alcohol, narcotic drugs, opiates or drugs of abuse shall operate an APV.

9) No person shall smoke while riding an APV.

10) No person shall operate an APV in such a manner as to willfully damage or destroy vegetation and trails or for the purpose of chasing, capturing or killing wildlife.

11) Operators of APVs shall not carry on their person or transport any firearms or other weapons that are not unloaded and securely encased.

12) No APV shall be used to carry more passengers than the vehicle was designed to carry.














13) No camping is permitted in the area.

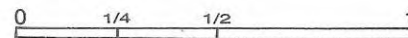
14) Operators of vehicles must report any accidents to the officer in charge or the Division of Forestry within 24 hours, in addition to the appropriate authorities as prescribed in the Ohio Revised Code.

15) No APV races or contests are permitted without the prior approval from the Chief of the Division of Forestry.

State forest ownership shown is representative and believed to be correct but not warranted. State forest boundary lines on the ground are identified with signs and/or yellow paint marks on trees.

RICHLAND FURNACE STATE FOREST

-  State Highway
-  County (C) or Township (T) Road
-  State Forest Land
-  State Forest Boundary
-  County Boundaries
-  Villages, Cities, Towns
-  Railroad
-  Stream, Creek, River
-  Parking
-  Hiking Trail
-  APV Trail - Two Way
-  APV Area
-  Private Land



MILES
SCALE

