

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 8, 2023

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Randy Moore  
Chief  
U.S. Forest Service  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Chief Moore,

As the three U.S. Representatives who represent Ohio's Wayne National Forest, we are writing regarding the recent announcement by the U.S. Forest Service to change the name of Wayne National Forest to the Buckeye National Forest.

In the August 21, 2023, announcement, the Forest Service notes the renaming comes in response to requests from American Indian Tribes and local community members. As for the reason to rename the forest to Buckeye National Forest, the Forest Service notes: "The buckeye is both the State Tree and the most prevalent nickname for Ohio. The national forest is currently named after General Anthony Wayne, whose complicated legacy includes leading a violent campaign against the Indigenous peoples of Ohio that resulted in their removal from their homelands. The current forest name is offensive because of this history of violence. Buckeye National Forest is one of the names suggested to the Forest Service by American Indian Tribes. Other proposed names considered included 'Ohio National Forest' and 'Koteewa National Forest.'"

While we have general concerns with removing Anthony Wayne as the namesake of the forest, and whether it is worth the \$400,000 price tag, we would like additional information as to why, after 70 years, the decision to rename the forest was done with little to no community involvement. As you know, the U.S. Forest Service provided only a 15-day public engagement period on whether the proposed name, Buckeye National Forest, "would be unacceptable."

As the Forest Service notes in the announcement, "the effort to change the forest name to Buckeye National Forest is based in respect and inclusion for all of Ohio communities." In an effort to truly respect and solicit feedback from local communities in southeastern Ohio, we request the U.S. Forest Service:

- Extend the public comment period and encourage local residents and communities to not only express concerns about your proposed name, but to solicit alternative names for the forest that reflect the culture and history of southeast Ohio.
- Commit to community forums with local communities and residents in southeast Ohio to explain why you believe it is appropriate to change the name of the forest and solicit potential alternatives to the proposed name.

- Meet with local leaders and elected officials to solicit their feedback on changing the name.
- Provide the local communities with detailed information on why the US Forest Service believes it is in the community's best interest to remove Anthony Wayne as the namesake of the forest and provide information on the procedure for selecting a new name.
- Provide a justification as to why renaming the forest is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,



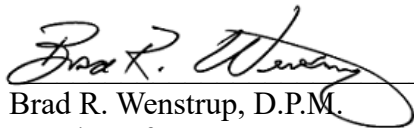
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Troy Balderson  
Member of Congress



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Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
Member of Congress