



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

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News Release

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Contact: Phil Sammon, Public Affairs Officer 740-753-0862 **March 28, 2007**
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Wheelin' Sportsmen Day Set for April 19th

PEDRO, OH – The fourth annual Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Day is scheduled for the Lake Vesuvius boardwalk on the Wayne National Forest's Ironton Ranger District for Thursday, April 19th, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Lake Vesuvius is a regional recreation attraction on the Ironton Ranger District, with picnic shelters, camping areas, boat rentals and lake access, and a swimming beach.

This year marks the fourth year for the event, put on through a partnership that includes the South Hills Long Beard Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), the Wayne National Forest, Ohio University Southern Nature Center, Lawrence County Bass Club, Izaak Walton League and the Ohio Division of Wildlife. The Board of Lawrence County Commissioners have proclaimed April 19 as Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Day. They point out that there are more than 5300 physically challenged outdoors persons residing in Ohio who would like to participate in outdoor activities of hunting and fishing, and many of them live in the Lawrence County area.

The Wheelin' Sportsmen is an outreach program established by the 500,000 – member National Wild Turkey Federation intended to provide physically challenged individuals with opportunities to participate in outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, bird watching and other outdoor pursuits.



According to Buddy Fry, former President of the Ohio State Chapter of the NWTF, “the first three Wheelin' Sportsmen events at Lake Vesuvius were such a success that Ohio Division of Wildlife agreed to provide trout this year for the fourth event.” This is a one time stocking of rainbow trout into Vesuvius by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. The trout will be released at approximately 11 a.m. the day of the event.

According to Robert Burcham, vice president of the Ohio State Chapter, “There are a lot of people who would like to fish, but haven't been able to do so for many years because age or disabilities have kept them from getting out and enjoying the lake.” Burcham went on to add, “all of that has changed now since the boardwalk has been built.”

In 2003, the Forest Service completed construction of a one-third-mile long boardwalk over the water between the boat dock and the dam. According to Ironton District Ranger, Gloria Chrismer, “It was built with a gentle grade, has safety railings and has benches for resting. The boardwalk makes it possible for persons young and old and of varying abilities to fish at the lake, or to just get out and enjoy the view it provides.” Chrismer also added that “this partnership is evidence of what folks working together for a common cause can accomplish. None of us alone could have produced an event of such quality but together we are successfully serving folks with special abilities. We are pleased to host this special annual event at Lake Vesuvius for the fourth year.”

Jim Adkins of the Lawrence County Bass Club noted that the annual Wheelin' Sportsmen event gives people of all ages an opportunity to enjoy a day of fishing. “The Bass Club is proud to be a partner in making this event happen for the community,” he said.

Interested participants should contact the Wayne National Forest's Ironton Ranger District at (740) 534-6500.