

VINTON FURNACE STATE FOREST

Forest History

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry manages 21 state forests to maintain forest health and vigor, offer a variety of woodland habitats for a diversity of flora and fauna, provide dispersed back country recreational opportunities and produce a profitable growth of quality wood products. The division's wildfire program provides leadership and support for wildfire management and prescribed fire, in Ohio. The service forestry program gives technical assistance and advice to Ohio's private forest landowners, and urban foresters assist municipalities with urban tree care.

VINTON FURNACE STATE FOREST HISTORY

The forest is one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the United States and is home to more than 50 years of ongoing forest research by the former landowner Mead Corporation and the U.S. Forest Service. Data collected at the forest has been cited in hundreds of scholarly papers on forest ecology, forest management and wildlife. The site is home to research dedicated to restoring oak trees to Ohio's forests. Oaks are some of Ohio's most important wildlife species and a valuable part of the state's multi-billion dollar wood industry. The state of Ohio obtained private and federal funding assistance to purchase the Vinton Furnace Forest. American Electric Power, The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and The Conservation Fund assisted in the purchase, which was finalized in 2010.

VINTON IRON FURNACE

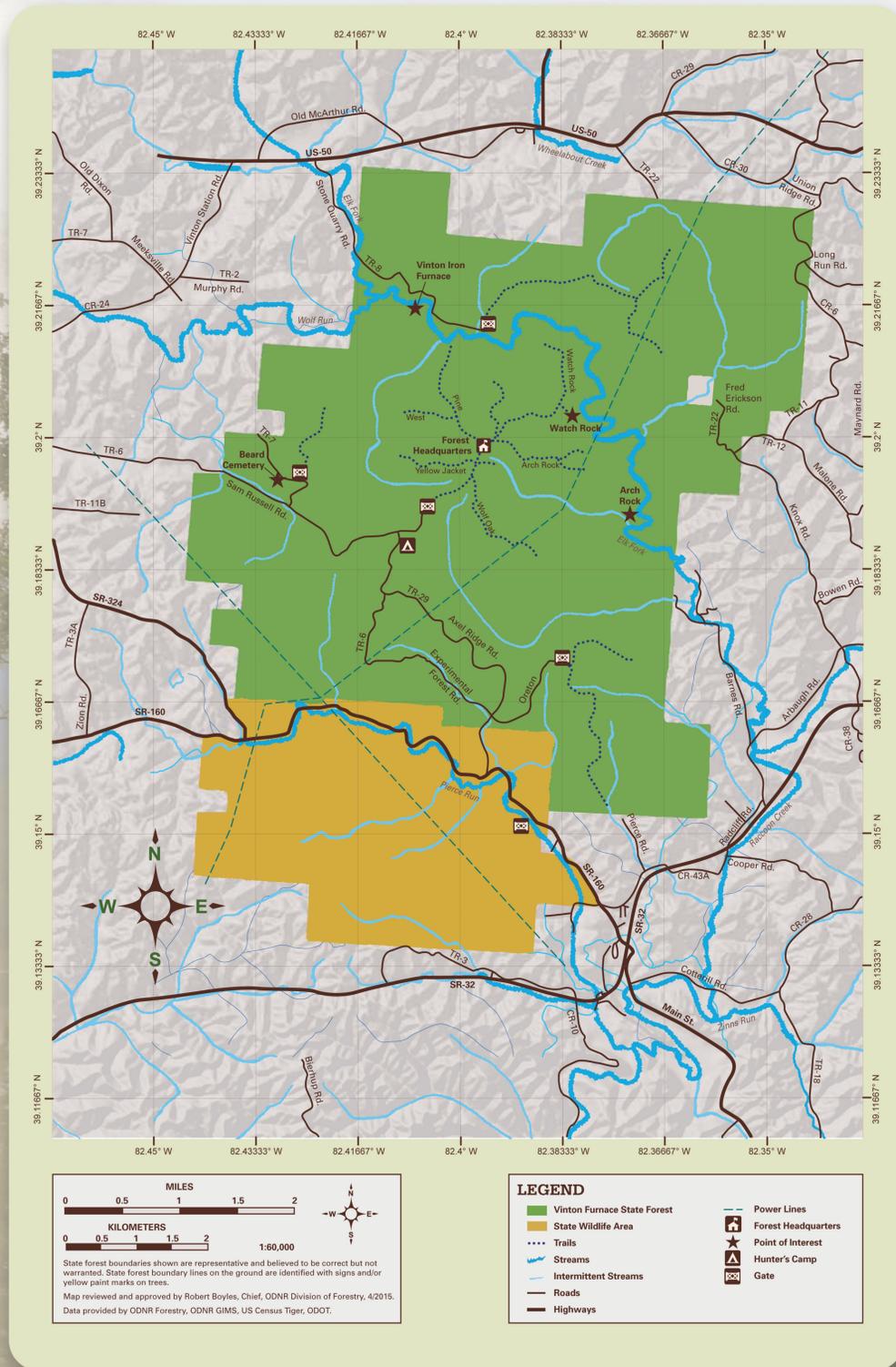
The construction of canals and railroads as well as the production of iron were largely responsible for the settlement of this part of Ohio. The area had vast reserves of iron ore, coal, limestone, clay and timber for charcoal, which was essential in the production of cast iron. During the late 19th century, there were 69 iron furnaces in the Hanging Rock Iron Region of Ohio. Vinton Furnace, which operated from 1854 to 1883, was one of those furnaces. These iron furnaces were a type of blast furnace used to smelt iron ore into cast iron. The furnaces were built of local sandstone in the shape of a truncated pyramid, and then they were lined with firebrick produced locally in kilns from clay mined in the area. They were generally charcoal-fired, but many of these furnaces were later converted to use coal or coke when timber for charcoal became increasingly scarce.

In 1875, the charcoal fired Vinton Furnace was converted to use coke for fuel. The unique feature of the Vinton Iron Furnace is the battery of 24 Belgian coke ovens used to process coal into the coke that was used to fire the furnaces. A Bradford Separator was used to rid the coal of rock, sulfur and other impurities through a process of pulverizing and washing. The company eventually failed because the local coal was too high in sulfur.

During the period of iron production, homes and community-based structures were erected to accommodate a growing community. Land clearing for farming, iron ore mining, clay mining, coal mining, and stone quarrying, in addition to logging for charcoal production, was extensive, significantly altering the landscape. Most of the "old growth forest" was removed, and the hillsides were stripped bare.

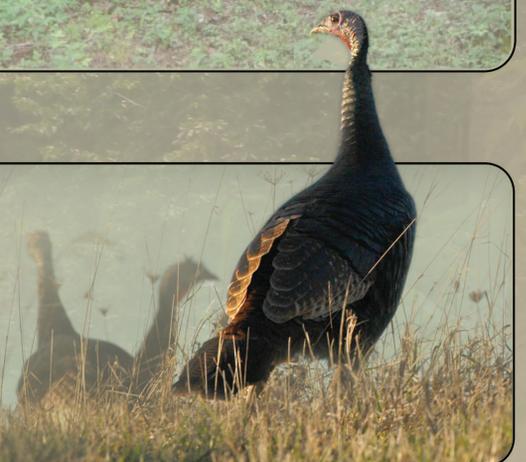


Originally part of the 69 iron furnaces of the Hanging Rock Iron Region of Ohio, remnants of the 24 Belgian coke ovens of Vinton Furnace can be seen at the Vinton Furnace State Forest.



Hunter's Camp

Camping is permitted at this location during established hunting seasons. Campers must be legally licensed hunters and must complete a self-registration form on-site. The campground offers a latrine. Sites are available on a first-come-first-served basis. The Hunter's Camp is operational one day before the start of squirrel season until one day after the close of grouse season. It is operational again 14 days before the start of spring wild turkey season and closes the day after the season ends.



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