

Athens County Commissioners



15 South Court St.
Athens, Ohio 45701

Visit us at our website:
athenscountygovernment.com

Lenny Eliason
Mark Sullivan
Larry Payne

JoAnn Sikorski
Clerk/Admin. Assistant
Telephone (740) 592-3292
Fax (740) 594-8010

October 4, 2011

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

The Board of Athens County Commissioners wishes to file a protest to the Lease Sale to be conducted on December 7, 2011.

We request that the three parcels in the Wayne National Forest in Athens County be removed from the sale. They are ES 043-12/11 OHES 57246 ACQ, ES 044-12/11 OHES 57247 and ES-045-12/11 OHES 57248 ACQ. We also would like one parcel in the Wayne National Forest in Perry County removed as well. It is ES-041-12/11 OHES 57244 ACQ.

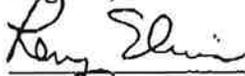
We are concerned that the stipulations in your lease do not protect the Hocking River and the aquifer which several counties depend on for their water supply. The City of Nelsonville has a wellhead for their drinking water close to one of the proposed tracts as well. 95% of the public drinking water in our area is provided from this aquifer. The potential adverse impacts of fracking on these public lands far outweigh any financial benefit BLM would receive from this sale.

We also want to point out that one of the tracts for which drilling leases are proposed (Tract A-8103 in Map Parcel 3 of the attached set of maps) borders the Hockhocking-Adena Bikeway for close to a mile between mileposts 13 and 14. This is one of the most scenic portions of the bikeway. Damage to the forest in this area resulting from a fracking accident (and such accidents are not uncommon) could have a serious negative impact on the experience of using the bikeway and consequently its ability to attract visitors to the county.

In an experimental study conducted by a US Forest Service soil scientist in West Virginia, recently reported in the Journal of Environmental Quality (vol. 40:1340-1344 [2011]), it was demonstrated that hydrofracturing fluid can badly damage forest vegetation. "During application [of hydrofracturing fluid], severe damage and mortality of ground vegetation was observed, followed about 10 d[ays] later by premature leaf drop by the overstory trees. Two years after fluid application, 56% of the trees within the fluid application area were dead." In a separate study of a drilling operation in West Virginia, severe damage to trees and understory vegetation was observed as a result of accidental aerial release of fluids due to loss of control of the drill bore (USFS Technical Report NRS-76). If such an accident were to occur in tract A-8103, it could devastate the forest along that portion of the bikeway.

We have heard from a number of our citizens about this issue and feel you should listen to the input of the local community before proceeding.

Regards,


Lenny Eliason

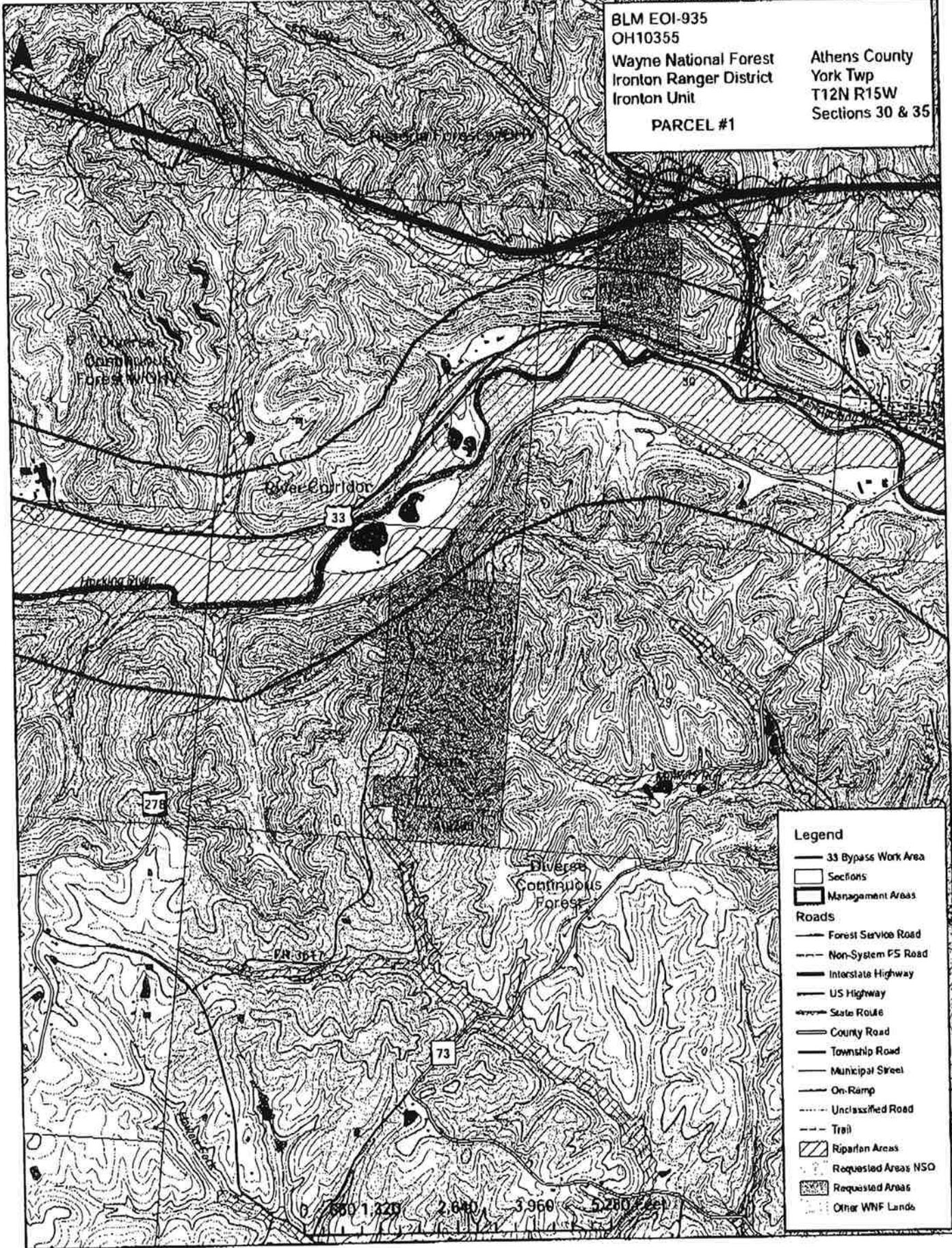

Larry Payne


Mark Sullivan



BLM EOI-935
 OH10355
 Wayne National Forest
 Ironton Ranger District
 Ironton Unit
 PARCEL #1

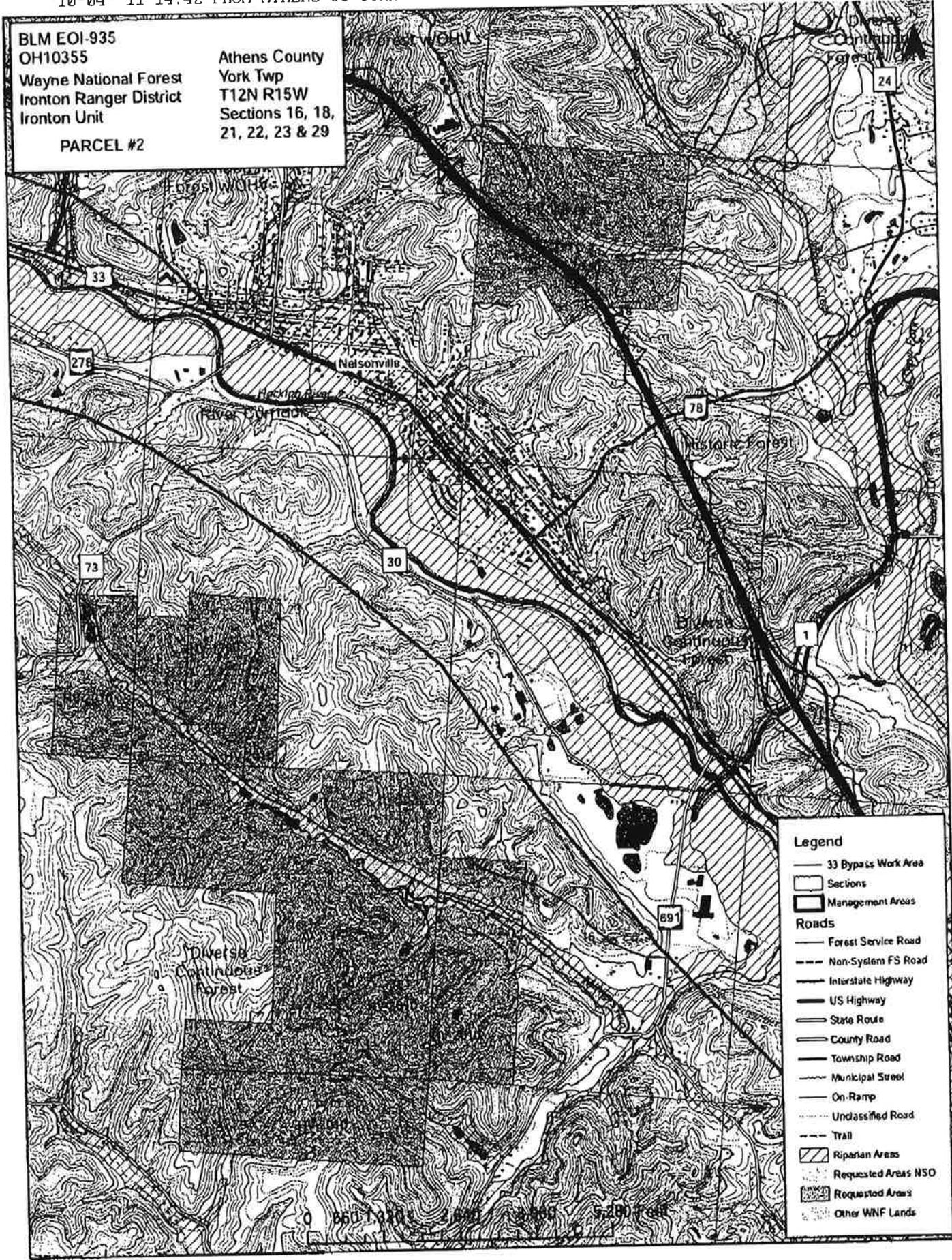
Athens County
 York Twp
 T12N R15W
 Sections 30 & 35



- Legend**
- 33 Bypass Work Area
 - Sections
 - ▭ Management Areas
 - Roads**
 - Forest Service Road
 - Non-System FS Road
 - Interstate Highway
 - US Highway
 - State Route
 - County Road
 - Township Road
 - Municipal Street
 - On-Ramp
 - Unclassified Road
 - Trail
 - ▨ Riparian Areas
 - ▨ Requested Areas NSO
 - ▨ Requested Areas
 - ▨ Other WNF Lands

BLM EOI-935
 OH10355
 Wayne National Forest
 Ironton Ranger District
 Ironton Unit
 PARCEL #2

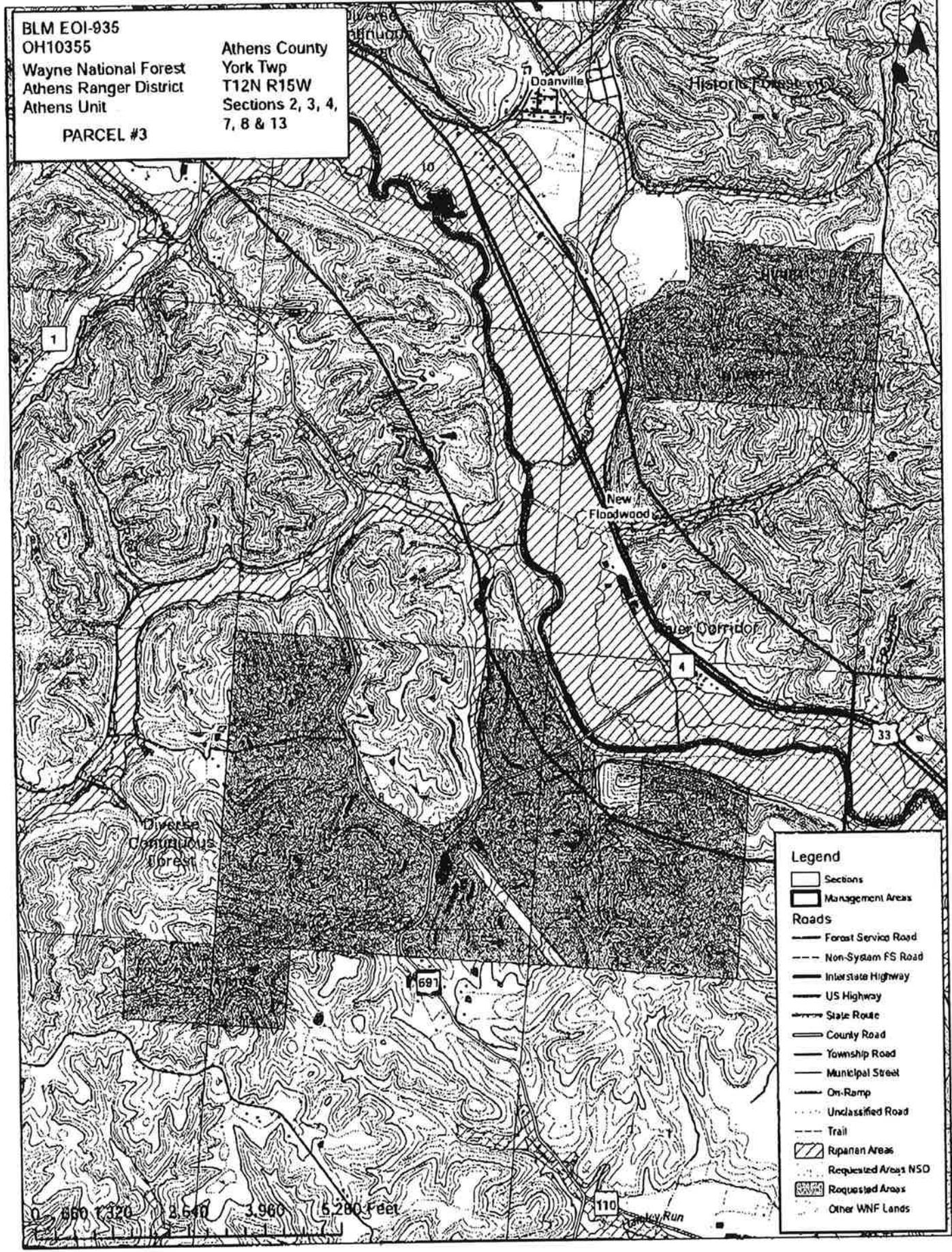
Athens County
 York Twp
 T12N R15W
 Sections 16, 18,
 21, 22, 23 & 29



- Legend**
- 33 Bypass Work Area
 - Sections
 - ▭ Management Areas
 - Roads**
 - Forest Service Road
 - - - Non-System FS Road
 - Interstate Highway
 - US Highway
 - State Route
 - County Road
 - Township Road
 - Municipal Street
 - On-Ramp
 - Unclassified Road
 - - - Trail
 - ▨ Riparian Areas
 - ▤ Requested Areas NSD
 - ▧ Requested Areas
 - ▩ Other WNF Lands

BLM EOI-935
 OH10355
 Wayne National Forest
 Athens Ranger District
 Athens Unit
PARCEL #3

Athens County
 York Twp
 T12N R15W
 Sections 2, 3, 4,
 7, 8 & 13



Legend

- Sections
- Management Areas
- Roads**
 - Forest Service Road
 - Non-System FS Road
 - Interstate Highway
 - US Highway
 - State Route
 - County Road
 - Township Road
 - Municipal Street
 - On-Ramp
 - Unclassified Road
 - Trail
- Riparian Areas
- Requested Areas NSD
- Requested Areas
- Other WNF Lands