

Hoosier National Forest Updates

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**Indiana Forest Stewardship Coordinating
Committee
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"Caring for the land and serving people"



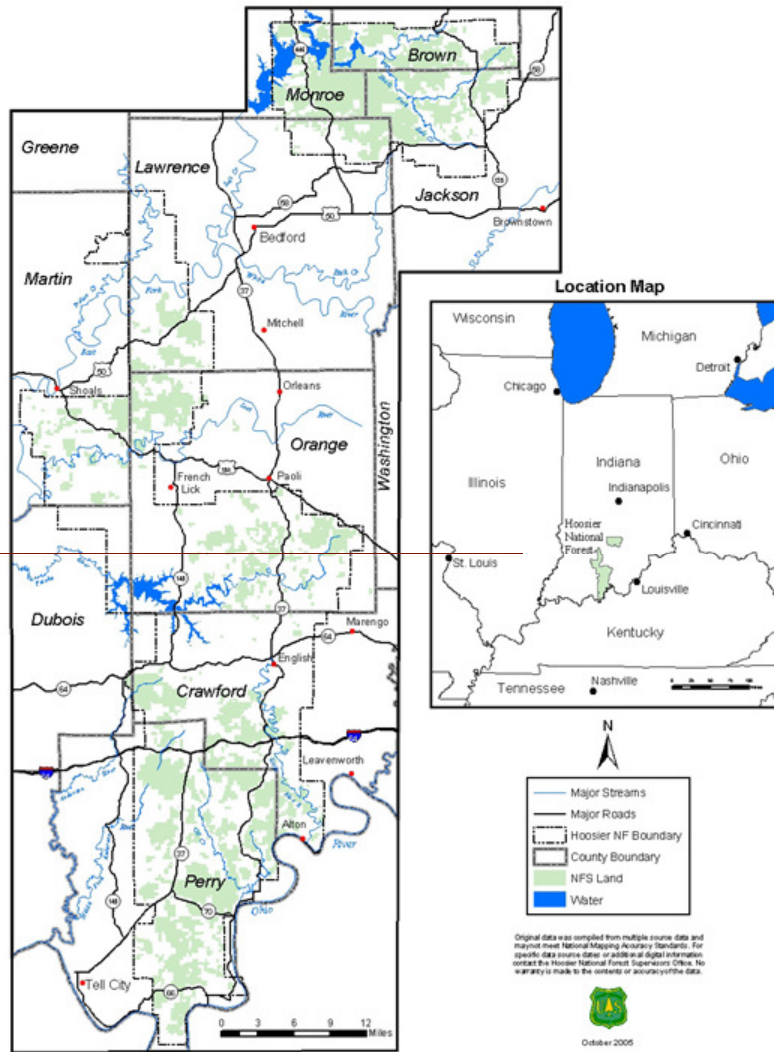
Overview



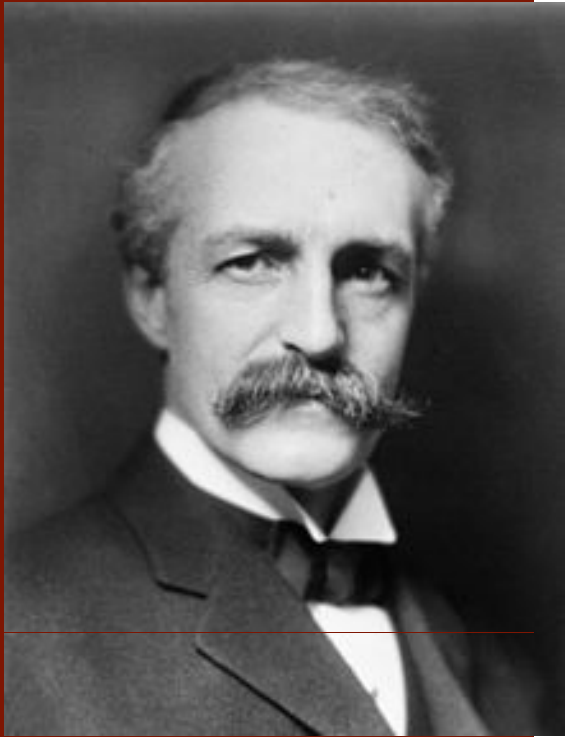
- Hoosier National Forest Basics
- Background of USFS Mission and Administration of National Forests
- Management of the Hoosier NF & Ongoing Efforts
- The way forward?

Hoosier National Forest - Basics

Hoosier National Forest Vicinity Map



- 203,000+ acres
- ~1,450 miles of boundary line
- Located in 9 counties (Brown, Crawford, Dubois, Jackson, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Perry)
- First established with 40 ac purchase near Houston in 1935,
 - not a “National Forest” until 1951 (105K ac at that time)
- Two administrative offices; Bedford, Tell City



Origin of the US Forest Service

- The Forest Service was established in 1905 to manage national forests for protection of watersheds and to maintain sustainable timber supply.
 - Borne of growing awareness of conservation needs (fear of “timber famine”, loss of wildlife, soil erosion)
- The mission has evolved and broadened to include recreation, grazing, wildlife conservation, etc
- The role of the Agency has shifted over time due to **changing social, economic, political expectations** as well as the evolution of forestry and forest management as a discipline.

“When conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question shall always be answered from the standpoint of **the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run.**”

- Gifford Pinchot, 1905

National Forests, East and West



- Western NFs established first, mostly by 1908; generally never held in private ownership
- Eastern NFs lands mostly privately held
 - 1911 Weeks Act authorized Federal Government to re-acquire “...lands within watersheds of navigable streams ... necessary to the regulation of the flow of navigable streams or for the production of timber.”
 - NFS lands gradually acquired through abandonment or willing sellers – most highly degraded

Multiple Use Lands

- Congress and the Executive mandate Forest Service *must*:
 - Recognize multiple forest values;
 - Protect the productivity and sustainability of the land;
 - Integrate and plan for multiple resource values
- MUSY, NFMA, NEPA (& 100+ other laws)

Recreation



Timber



Biodiversity



Water



Minerals



Grazing

Hoosier NF – Then & Now

🌲 By 1930's land that is now NF was logged over, planted in crops, eroding, abandoned



Hoosier NF – Then & Now



▲ Land acquisition by Forest Service in Indiana begins in 1935 at request of Gov. Paul McNutt and State Legislature

▲ 5 Civilian Conservation Corps camps established between 1935 and 1940

- Hundreds employed at camps.
- Seed collection, fire control, surveyed property lines, built 5 fire towers and roads to them, 76 miles of telephone lines, planted trees, built the TC administration buildings, treated eroded lands, and flood relief assistance.

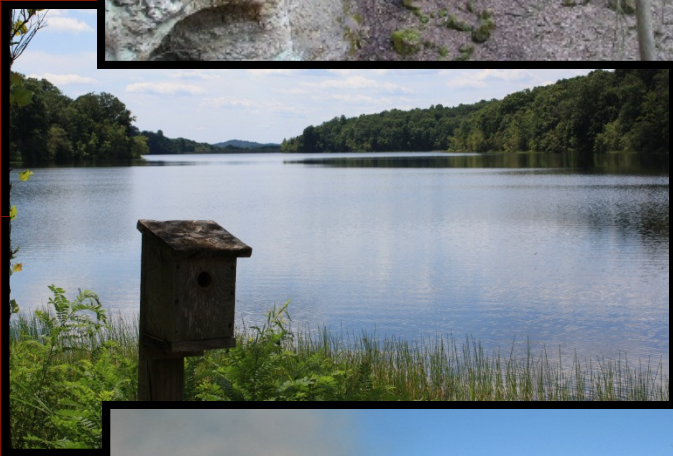
▲ 154 ac tree nursery established near Vallonia in 1936; produced planting stock for Hoosier, Wayne, Shawnee and Mark Twain NFs (mostly shortleaf and Virginia pine)

Management of the Hoosier NF



- We manage the Forest in accordance with:
 - Mission and policies of the agency;
 - Laws enacted by Congress and direction of the President;
 - Direction and guidance of the Forest Plan; &
 - Within the constraints of our annual appropriations.
- Forest Plan relies on eight broad goals:
 - Conservation of **threatened and endangered species habitat**
 - Maintain and restore **sustainable ecosystems**
 - Maintain and restore **watershed health**
 - Protect our cultural **heritage**
 - Provide for a **visually pleasing landscape**
 - Provide for **recreation use** in harmony with natural communities
 - Provide a **useable landbase**
 - Provide for **human and community development**

Management of the Hoosier NF



- Ecosystem management
 - Wildlife
 - Hydrology/fisheries
 - Botany
 - Non-native invasive species
 - Soils
- Heritage
 - Telling the story of southern IN
 - Restoration, preservation and maintenance of Archeological features
- Engineering
 - Road/bridges
 - Buildings/facilities
- Fire & Fuels Management
 - Fire suppression and incident response
 - Prescribed fire in support of habitat restoration and silv. objectives
- Planning & Public Affairs
 - GIS, NEPA
 - Conservation Education

Hoosier NF – Recreation



🌲 Provide public land for Recreation

- 🌲 Camping
- 🌲 3 large, developed campgrounds
- 🌲 4 designated horse camps
- 🌲 Many dispersed sites

🌲 Wilderness

- 🌲 ~13,000 acres
- 🌲 37 miles of trail

🌲 Provide trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding

- 🌲 265 miles available, most multiple use
- 🌲 ~ 200 miles horse back riding trails

🌲 Fishing, Hunting, Trapping

🌲 Viewing scenery and wildlife

🌲 Swimming and picnicking

🌲 Limited land base, lack of large contiguous blocks = need to share

Hoosier NF – Lands and Realty



- 🌲 Highly fragmented land ownership, lack of large contiguous blocks of National Forest
- 🌲 Boundary mileage as measure of complexity
- 🌲 Land acquisitions (purchase and exchanges):
 - 🌲 Protection of rare and unique habitats;
 - 🌲 Consolidate land base for management efficiency;
 - 🌲 Provide a contiguous land base for public use and to secure access.
 - 🌲 ~3,500 ac added since 2006, willing sellers or exchange only, partnerships key (TNC)

Hoosier NF – Timber Management

🌲 Timber harvest / sales

- 🌲 Conversion of non-native pine to native hardwoods
- 🌲 Improve forest health and diversity
- 🌲 Wildlife habitat creation and maintenance
- 🌲 Regeneration of oak/hickory, maintenance of barrens
- 🌲 Providing forest products to support local economies



🌲 Timber target generally ~3 – 4 MMBF / year since 2010

- 🌲 Peak of 12.5 MMBF sold in 1984, 0 MMBF in 1992
- 🌲 Goal of providing a consistent, reliable program

Hoosier NF – Timber Management (cont.)



🌲 Active sales

- 🌲 8 sales under contract; 13 MMBF
- 🌲 Contracts expiring between Nov '14 & Dec '17
- 🌲 From German Ridge, Oriole and Uniontown South projects

🌲 Vegetation Management planning efforts underway (est decision date)

- 🌲 Uniontown North Restoration: 2300 ac, mix of treatments, Crawford & Perry Cnty (July '15)
- 🌲 Buffalo Pike: ~50 ac, single tree & group selection, Jackson Cnty (Jan '15)

Hoosier NF – Ongoing Efforts / Hot Topics



- ▲ Continuing project planning efforts (veg management, habitat restoration/maintenance, etc)
- ▲ Travel Analysis Process (TAP)
- ▲ Illegal OHV activity
- ▲ Trash dumping, marijuana grows
- ▲ Potential listing of Northern Long-eared bat
- ▲ Lands / Realty / Rights of Way / Special Uses
- ▲ Invasive species

Hoosier NF – The Way Forward?



- 🌲 Focus on landscape restoration and resilience through collaboration
- 🌲 Competitive budgetary environment
 - 🌲 Dollars flow to nexus of threats/needs and agreement on actions (where things can get done)
 - 🌲 What is our competitive advantage and how do we tell our story?
- 🌲 Improve resiliency of land, ecosystems and communities
 - 🌲 What does a resilient Indiana forest landscape look like?
- 🌲 Not exclusively a National Forest answer

Comments or Questions?

"We were entrusted with the protection and development, through wise use and constructive study, of the timber, water, forage, farm, recreative, game, fish, and aesthetic resources of the areas under our jurisdiction. I will call these resources, for short, 'The Forest'."

• Aldo Leopold