

2022 Virtual Open House IN DNR – Division of Forestry

The Division of Forestry held a virtual open house on January 13, 2022, from 6–8 p.m. The open house provides an opportunity for the division to receive public input from Indiana’s citizens. The event began with welcoming remarks and a presentation that provided an overview of the state forests, property updates from 2021, and proposed projects for 2022. Highlighted events from the past year included volunteer programs, ForestIN (an initiative to plant 1 million trees by 2025), forest management practices (including timber stand improvement and invasive species management), recreation improvements, trail surveys, and numerous additional programs and activities. Several new upcoming projects were introduced as well as the projected completion or continuation of several ongoing projects. Topics included forest management, recreational improvements, updating signs, dam management, restoration, and user fees, as well as recapping several additional ongoing projects.

Attendees of the virtual open house were able to interact through both the Chat throughout the two-hour Teams meeting and by asking questions during the open forum that covered the last half of the virtual event. Chats and discussions were tracked by division employees to capture all comments provided to the division through this medium. A summary of the comments is provided below. Chat comments relating to the operation of the virtual meeting (checks to see if messages are seen, questions to the length of time, etc.), specific location of items on the website, responses to verbal discussions that could not be attributed to a specific topic (for example for one post, “That is a great idea”, it is unclear what idea is being referenced), and ending thanks are excluded from the summary. Verbal comments received during the open forum were summarized. In cases where the comment led to a discussion between the participant and the Division, a summary of the entire conversation was included as a single comment for this summary, provided that the conversation was restricted to a single topic. If more than one topic was discussed, the discussion was counted as a separate comment for each topic. It was advised that if a person had a lengthy comment or recommendation to submit it to the Division via Forestry’s website at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/8122.htm>, in order that the entire comment could be captured and considered. All comments received through the portal within 30 days of the virtual open house were included in this summary if they referenced the open house. Comments that did not specify that they were made in relation to the open house or arrived after this report was completed are recorded and taken under consideration, but they do not appear in this document.

Attendees were assigned a unique identifier, and comments were tracked via that ID number. A total of 21 individuals of the 49 signed-in attendees commented via the virtual open house. It is probable that over 49 people attended the event since more than one individual may have been watching on a single computer or mobile device. Comments were classified into a number of categories: Division of Forestry policy, forest management, high conservation value forests (HCVFs), minerals, public input, staffing, the strategic direction, timber harvests, volunteers, and general comments. Comments or questions that were repeated by the same individual in the chat room and during the open forum portion of the meeting were logged as a single comment. This

often occurred as a result of the chat room question having not been answered or additional clarification being sought.

Related comments fell into three categories. First, and the most common, was when the same individual posted multiple posts in the chat room regarding the same topic. This may have occurred because of a continuing conversation after a response by DoF staff or because of chat room dynamics that develop around short blurbs rather than lengthy text. Provided that the same line of thought was being followed, the multiple posts, while logged individually, were counted as a single comment. The second reason this occurred was the dynamics inherent in a chat room, when attendees would follow up a comment with a comment regarding the original statement or follow-up questions to the statement. Again, all comments were logged, but only the initial comment was counted for the benefit of this analysis.

Of the nine comments received pertaining to Division policy, two pertained to property-wide management plans, two were regarding user fees and other revenue streams, two focused on DNR management of public land, and three concerned the overall management goals of the state forest system.

Forest management encompassed most of the comments from the virtual open house with 24 comments received covering a wide range of topics including invasive control (7), management practices (7), early successional habitat (2), prescribed burns (2), balance of age classes (1), Best Management Practices (1), forest health (1), old growth (1), pollinator habitat (1), and forest management on other DNR properties (1).

Five questions on High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) included support for the creation of more HCVFs (1), requests for updates on the current HCVF proposal (2), and a request to know where the information is located on the website (1). One comment came in that resulted from a mislabeled slide in the PowerPoint presentation (see Figure 1). A single asterisk was denoted behind the acreage number for HCVFs, and a double asterisk was present behind the acreage of nonforested areas on the second State Forest – Overview slide. At the bottom of the page, a single asterisk noted that *ForestIN has reduced this number*. That statement was intended for the double asterisk on the acres of nonforest land, which is decreasing as a result of the Million Tree Initiative. The single asterisk, which was inadvertently left off the slide, was intended to note that of the 27 HCVFs, 26 were Nature Preserves and one was the Yellowwood Management Area. The Division has no intention of reducing the number of HCVFs within the system.

Three comments were received that pertained to nonforest resources such as coalbed methane (2) and carbon (1). These comments were classified as relating to mineral resources and primarily centered around developing activities on previously strip-mined forestland.

The public input category received seven comments regarding additional public meetings (1), public input process for user fees (2), and input from the open house and the availability of the presented material (4).

Recreation received six comments that covered a wide range of topics, including the proposed trail surveys (1), the proposed shooting range at Clark SF (1), parking lots and roads (2), the annual Trail Report (1), and outhouses (1). Most comments sought updates or additional information regarding the subject.

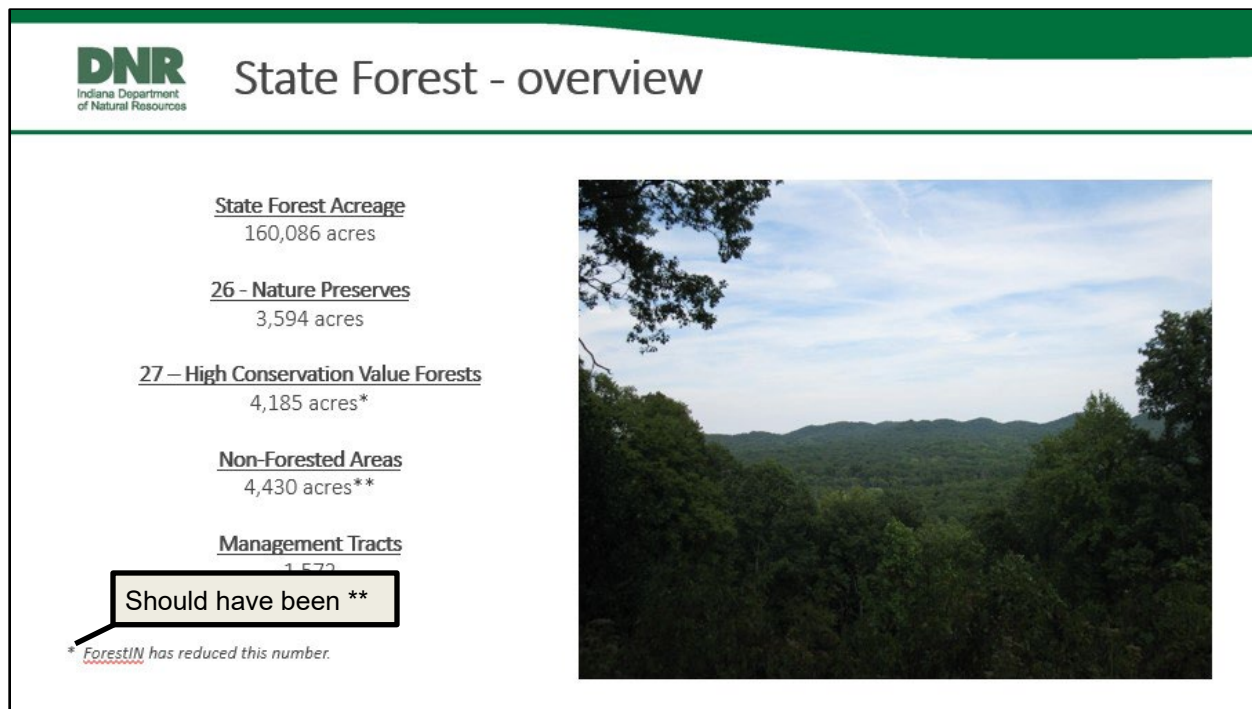


Figure 1: Presentation slide where *ForestIN had reduced this number* was referencing Nonforested Areas.

Three comments were received regarding staffing levels for the Division, and questions ranged from how can support be provided to increase staffing levels to issues with completing work due to reduced staffing levels.

The Division's Strategic Direction raised four comments primarily related to updates to the current 2015-2022 document (2) and the process for public input during the development of the next Strategic Direction (1). One additional comment was received asking how carbon storage and climate change is addressed in the document.

Timber harvesting received the second highest number of comments (14) during the 2022 virtual open house. These comments were not included in the forest management category because they dealt with specific aspects of the harvest or on a particular harvest, with the recent sale at Salamonie River State Forest (SRSF) gathering the majority of the comments (9) in this category. Comments regarding the SRSF harvest focused primarily on the low price of the timber (6), concern with invasive species and the herbaceous layer (2), and the amount of time for public input (1). Other comments regarding timber harvests in general included accessibility of information (1), restoration costs (1), and the bidding process (3).

Four comments were received concerning volunteering on the properties, including questions regarding how to volunteer (2) and the opportunities to volunteer at the nursery (1) or to combat invasive species (1).

A total of seven comments were received that were classified as general comments and covered topics such as accessibility of documents (1), budget (1), the Forestry Exchange system (1), land acquisition (1), nursery sales (1), and accountability (2).

Due to the restraints of the two-hour virtual meeting platform, all questions and comments could not be addressed on the night of the January open house; however, each comment was carefully recorded for further consideration, and responses to the comments are shown below. It should be noted that Comments were copied into the table as they appeared in the chat. Corrections were not made to spelling or grammar in order to preserve the voice of the speaker.



Comments

Category	Comment	ID	Related Comment	ID	Related Comment	ID	DoF Response
Division policy	The Forest Stewardship Council (that certifies DOF practices as sustainable) has recommended that the DOF develop a management plan for each state forest property. Does the DoF plan to do this and if so how? What will be the process for meaningful public participation in developing the new plan or plans?	19					Currently there is no plan for the Division to develop individual state forest management plans. It was determined that the best use of resources was a system wide plan. The certifying auditors have reviewed our plan structure, which has been in place since 2007, and have accepted our current approach of providing system wide and localized management plans.
Division policy	DOF should make Salamonie State Forest into a State Park	21					Thank you for your comment.
Division policy	Forests should be prioritized for recreation and ecological use.	30					Thank you for your comment.
Division policy	Pleased to see DoF exploring revenue streams that don't cut down trees. Are there projections for revenue from recreation fees or carbon markets?	21					The Division is currently exploring revenue sources; however, dollar figures are not calculated at this time. DoF is researching fee proposals to take to the executive office, as well as looking at opportunities regarding carbon. Once we have a better understanding of the options we will present a proposal for public input.
Division policy	How does one size fit all get us to multiple use?	21					The Division has actively managed its lands for nearly 120 years using a multiple uses multiple benefits approach. These benefits include timber production, biodiversity, watershed protection, recreation, wildlife habitat, and research areas. Recreational benefits include over 430 miles of designated recreational trails (e.g., horse, bike, hiking and interpretive), nearly 1,000 campsites and cabins, dispersed/back country camping, swimming beaches, hunting, fishing, picnicking, mushrooming and many other opportunities under this management philosophy.

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Division Policy	Would like to know process for developing new forest management plan. According to FSC they recommended a management plan for each property	21					It was determined that the best use of resources was a system wide plan. The certifying auditors have reviewed our plan structure, which has been in place since 2007, and have accepted our current approach of providing system wide and localized management plans.
Division policy	Are Deam Lake and Starve Hollow SRAs now under State Parks	3					Yes, Parks manages the lake and campground but surrounding land is still managed by DoF.
Division policy	Supports the preservation, conservation, and protection of Indiana forests and woodlands...They bring a number of benefits in addition to their natural beauty, like providing habitat for wildlife, and thus supporting biodiversity, but also sequestering carbon, which can help mitigate some of the worst effects of climate change.	76					Thank you for your comment.
Division policy	boooo don't like the idea of charging user fees outside of SRAs	1					Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	The USFS has recommendations concerning cleaning of equipment from brushing to washing. Should we not use those steps as well and make concessions after the minimum bid in the contract construction?	5					The Division of Forestry routinely reviews protocols and adjusts accordingly.
Forest management	I have not seen the invasive at McCormick's Creek State Park that I see in the Owen-Putnam state forest!	28					Thank you for your comment.
Forest Management	I would like to see the amount of young forests increased on our State Forests to increase ecological diversity.	6	What about all of the seedlings just planted, wouldn't that fulfill the young forest quota? planted in the open areas?	29			Thank you for your comment. Recent tree plantings are in areas already classified as young forest and, therefore, would not increase early successional forest areas.

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Forest management	Those who are concerned about invasives introduced through logging have also commented publicly against the use of herbicides. What gives?	6	Not sure about that comment on what gives, but as a member of a CISMA, I understand that controlled useage with BEST Management practices, that herbiicide is necessary to kill invasives.	24	On the herbicides, people forage in these forests and they don't want the fer they are eating blackberries that have been sprayed with round-up because they spray anything with thorns, raspberries, blackberries, multi-flora rose.	28	Invasive species presence and control needs are monitored as part of the property's normal operations. Treatments may be pre- or post-harvest and situational ranging from minor to aggressive based on the presence of the species within the county. Methods may include manual, chemical or use of prescribed fire. Only approved herbicides will be used following forest certification standards.
Forest management	Why not use best practices every time then?	24					BMPs are implemented on every timber harvest.
Forest management	I want to thank the DOF for their careful management of our State Forests. It is through this careful management that we have these forests that we all enjoy.	6					Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	What about Old Growth for future generations?	21	All but one HCVF is a nature preserve, right? Doesn't the Nature Preserves division run those? What is Forestry doing. to protect old growth?	49			Currently, any portion of state forest that could qualify as "old growth" is located within dedicated nature preserves. Thorough reviews of all state forest property have been conducted by Division of Nature Preserve ecologists to identify high quality natural communities, including forested stands exhibiting old growth conditions. Older forest stands on state forest are monitored over time to identify those that have developed characteristics typical of Midwestern old growth forests.
Forest management	Health of the forest or quota?	28	what about the health of the forest?	28			The Division of Forestry continues to monitor forest health through various programs and initiatives.
Forest management	Let's remember that old growth forests aren't immune to invasives.	6					Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	I would like to see old forests left to grow for biodiversity's sake and having a healthy balance of both young and old we insure forests for our future.	28	Don't forget there are as many species as rely on old forests to survive. that's whyyou need a balance.	28	Yes, a 'balance' of forest age classes and types would be the best for biodiversity and resiliance.	13	Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	I did attend several volunteer invasive weed wrangles last year at Salamonie. We had about 20 informed volunteers that routinely helped to cut back invasives.	7					Thank you for your service at SRSF.

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Forest management	I realize that state forests are the only DNR properties that allow for 'timber harvesting'. However, isn't there some 'management' on other state properties to create and/or maintain environmental conditions. For example, are there controlled burns on state park or wildlife areas? I thought that most timber harvests on state forests are 'improvement' harvests. This is part of the reason for some of those harvests going for lower bids.	13					Control burns are only one tool used to sustain forest habitat. Other management tools include timber harvests and timber stand improvement projects.
Forest management	DOF needs to expand its focus on invasive species.	21					Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	When you say "eventually a mature forest"---- that falls on deaf ears, considering you are cutting down "mature forests" ---- so why the hypocrisy?!?	29					Forest management activities ensure forests remain healthy, vigorous, diverse, and adequately stocked. Overstocking and largely over mature conditions jeopardize forest health, resiliency and resistance making them more vulnerable to mortality and disease and insect outbreaks.
Forest management	Are you all continuing to plant pollinator/native seeds in forested area that has been logged? How is that going?	24					The pollinator project was funded via a grant that was short term. The project may not be continued.
Forest management	Are the plans to get more controlled burns for oak regeneration? It looks like you are not meeting your overall goal on this.	13					DoF does have a goal of more prescribed fire; however, implementation has been a struggle due to weather and adequate trained human resources available to manage fires.
Forest management	How do you protect invertebrates and other creatures who slowly crawl along the forest floor during "prescribed" burning?	35					Prescribed fires done on state forests are done exactly the same way as at other DNR properties, including Nature Preserves. Typically done during late winter when temps are low and invertebrate activity is low. Additionally, fires are typically not hot enough to burn up logs and other sources of cover.
Forest Management	I agree with the need for more young forests. That is an issue with many species depending on young forests and we aren't meeting the goal of about 10% of the forest in a 'young' state to meet those needs.	13					Thank you for your comment.

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Forest management	Once you crush the forest floor the ephemeral spring flowers are destroyed or compacted for years and who knows if they will come back	24	Crush the forest floor from logging, skidders etc.	24			Only a small portion of a management unit is impacted by skidding. Typically, within 2-3 years the trail is healed through BMP implementations.
Forest management	When BCA was harvested it was required that equipment be washed. Why not do this on every single cut?	20	Isn't it true that when you know that when equipment comes in it brings in invasives? Would throw out that prevention is worth an ounce of cure.	20	I agree!! Just wash off the equipment everytime.	24	Properties make that determination based upon the environment conditions present at the management unit. In some areas invasives already have a foothold and the practice of washing equipment prior to the harvest would not help to prevent the spread of them into the tract.
Forest management	Immutable schedules is not incorporating current events and climate situation. Not seeing cuts relating to forest health if the end product is to remove x amount of timber. Illogical. Climate change and heat dry forest out and more stressful.	8					Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	I do not really want you to cut any trees in the forest at all. You are supposed to be running the forests for the benefit of the residents of Indiana and you are not doing a decent job of it. When you do sell the timber, you are selling it at below market price because that is the easy thing to do. I do not see why we residents should be cheated at these sales, most of which the owners did not want in the first place.	5					Thank you for your comment.
Forest management	If goal is to show how to be a good forest why stay on schedule.	19					The Division of Forestry actively manages its lands for multiple use multiple benefits. A part of that management is timber production. Annually, the division plans, schedules and implements forest management activities across state forests. Activities may include forest inventories, timber harvests, timber stand improvement (TSI), tree plantings, invasive species control, and prescribed fire. These activities help sustain the diverse hardwood landscape and ensure state forests remain vigorous and healthy supporting the multiple uses multiple benefits philosophy for future generations.

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Forest management	Indiana's state forests appear to be managed only for their ability to generate revenue, and the timber from the trees that are harvested often seems to be sold for below market prices. The state should get out of the timber business and leave it to private foresters/landowners. Our state forests should be for the people, floral and fauna who call Indiana home, and their interests should be the top priority. If you are selling timber to address budget shortfalls, shame on the state legislature for not properly funding this division. Indiana should distribute surplus funds to shore up budgets.	77					Forest management activities ensure forests remain healthy, vigorous, diverse, and adequately stocked. Overstocking and largely over mature conditions jeopardize forest health, resiliency and resistance making them more vulnerable to mortality and disease and insect outbreaks.
General comment	Private land owners are not held to the standard that PUBLIC LAND OWNERS ARE!!!! You are accountable to all of Indiana Public Land Owners!!!!\	29					Thank you for your comment.
General comment	If you have oversight by Forest Stewardship ---- then what give you the right to determine that your opinion is above your outside review organization??? That's like colleges determining that they are above their accrediting bodies. What???	29					The Forest Stewardship Committee is an advisory council, not an oversight board.
General comment	If the goal is to have public participation then why don't you provide material written in everyday language?	22	Archived timber sales is difficult to determine if sale is laid out according to the management plan. Tool for cross-referencing	21			Thank you for your comment. We are open to recommendations on how to clarify our material.
General comment	Help residences to understand DoF needs to raise 3.6 mil from sales to fund budget.	5					Thank you for your comment.
General comment	Please consider selling bundles of trees from the state tree nursery in bundles of 10, even if it's only one time a year or however it can easily be managed.	24	I think 10 trees for bundle is much more manageable as well.	28			Thank you for the comment on 10 tree bundles. It has been considered, but we are trying to not compete with local SWCD groups who sell small lots of trees.
General comment	Was there an acquisition in Owen-Putnam?	5	More than the 30 acres you bought last year?	5			Yes, 30 acres was recently purchased.
General comment	is the IN Forestry Exchange a new website? access thru dnr.in.gov ?	3	No, it is an old site. But the link off of DNR is now better.	5			No, IN Forestry Exchange website has been around for over ten years. The website is accessed through the Division of Forestry website.

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HCVF	where is the list of the 27 HCVF locations	3					The list of the 27 HCVFs is located on the Division's webpage: https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/ .
HCVF	What did you mean when you said that you would be LOWERING HCVF ? Lowering?	29					There was a typo on the second State Forest - overview slide. A single asterisk was marked behind the acreage number for HCVFs and a double asterisk was present behind the acreage of non-forested areas. At the bottom of the page a single asterisk noted that ForestIN has reduced this number. That statement was intended for the double asterisk on the acres of non-forest land, which is decreasing as a result of the Million Tree Initiative. The single asterisk, which was inadvertently left off the slide, was intended to note that of the 27 HCVFs, 26 were Nature Preserves and one was the Yellowwood Management Area.
HCVF	Will there be a document summarizing public comments for the HCVF proposal?	3					A summary of the public comments for the MM/Y SF backcounty HCVF proposal is in the process of being compiled.
HCVF	Feel like HCVF areas are important. There are places worth saving in each state forest. Should take a close look at setting aside areas in each state forest. Need to look closer at areas and understand that this is why people come to you. Should ask people what they think needs more care.	28					Most properties have multiple HCVFs; however, areas are continually being evaluated for potential designation. A procedure is in place to allow for unique areas to be recommended for HCVF status.
HCVF	can you give an update on the progress of the MM BCA HCVF review team tonight?	3					At this time comments are being compiled and taken under consideration.
Minerals	Where can I find the Brown Co Hills project for carbon?	21					That information may be housed with the Chicago Climate Exchange.
Minerals	Does DNR collect any fees or royalties from the coalbed methane wells?	33					No, the coal company has retained the mineral rights; however, we are trying to negotiate a surface agreement that will cover the area impacted by utilities.
Minerals	What remediation expense is involved with the Coal Methane operations and is it reimbursed by the company?	16					Currently in negotiations on a surface agreement with the company.

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Public input	Will tonight's participants be invited to public participation on user fees?	21					If it is determined to move forward with the consideration of new user fees there will be opportunities for public input.
Public input	Will PowerPoint presentation be available?	21					Hardcopies of the presentation will be available upon request.
Public input	Will comments in the chat be considered?	6					Yes, comments received through the chat platform will be considered.
Public input	how long will you receive public comments	3					Public comments are always accepted; however, to be included in the open house summary they needed to be received within 30 days.
Public Input	This is our public comment period and we should be able to say and ask what we want.	28					Thank you for your comment.
Public input	A 1-2 hour meeting each year is not adequate time for public input. Will you commit to providing more opportunities in 2022 for public input sessions.	19					The Division would like to return to more in-person opportunities; however, until then comments can be submitted anytime via the website and at the properties.
Public input	When do you anticipate having public comment sessions on fees?	29	The answer on timetable on fees what not clear. Timing?	29			The timeline with moving forward with the fee proposal is uncertain at this time; however, if it is determined to move forward with the consideration of new user fees there will be opportunities for public input.
Recreation	I like the idea of the surveys on the trails.	5					Thank you for your comment.
Recreation	Who pays for those roads? Where are those road building expenses tallied?	21					Funding for roadwork comes from a variety of sources depending upon the road type, surface treatment, and location.
Recreation	progress update on the Clark SF Shooting Range	3					The proposed gun range is still in the design phase.
Recreation	What is rationale for paving the existing graveled parking lots?	38					Graveled parking lots are often paved to improve customer accessibility and to reduce maintenance.
Recreation	what is the proper disposal method of old outhouses that were replaced?	28	when are we going to move the concrete out of the forest from previous outhouse, off of the MAIZE HOMESTEAD?	28	You moved it from one homestead to another. No biggy. We will take you to her grave and show where it is. You will see.	28	Concrete removed from disposed structures may be stored and repurposed (i.e. fill material for erosion control).

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Recreation	Any new data since trail report from 2019?	21					The 2020 Trail Report is available via the Division's webpage. Data for the 2021 report is being compiled and will be available soon.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Salamonie has been recognized as having excellent herbaceous layer. It was considered for nature preserve. Now that will be destroyed.	21					Thank you for your comment.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Why was the Salamonie timber sold for such a low price?	21					The forest management operation at Salamonie River State Forest has always been about improving forest diversity. Potential bidders had to factor in the impacts of seasonal operations, a short management window, and minimizing their impact on the environment. These constraints may have lowered our financial gain but are in place because we value the long-term health of our forests, and all that live, grow, and recreate there more.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Why were the trees at Salamonie sold at just \$.06/board foot, when the average selling price of even low quality timber is \$.31/board foot?	19					The forest management operation at Salamonie River State Forest has always been about improving forest diversity. Potential bidders had to factor in the impacts of seasonal operations, a short management window, and minimizing their impact on the environment. These constraints may have lowered our financial gain but are in place because we value the long-term health of our forests, and all that live, grow, and recreate there more.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Why does Salamonie need the investment of 4 toilets when you have just sold the heart of Salamonie for pennies on the dollar? Are you planning on committing to make Salamonie into a State Park???	29					The DNR is committed to improving recreation structures and facilities. The Natural Resource Commission heard a petition to transfer Salamonie River to State Parks in 2018 and elected to maintain the property as a State Forest.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Could you elaborate on the quality of the species at Salamonie (Hard maple brings good dollars now). 200 plus hard maples.	5					Hard maple (ie sugar maple) can bring higher prices if individual trees are defect free (free from fire scars, staining, bores, etc.), as well as a variety of other factors.

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Salamonie River SF harvest	I appreciate that there were plenty of opportunities to comment on the Salamonie sale prior to it selling.	6	Someone in the chat said we had ample time to make comment on Salamonie before the sale. The only time I am aware of for public comment is in the DRMG period. For Salamonie that was 7 years ago.	5			Thank you for your comment.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Salamonie sold way to cheap.	5					The forest management operation at Salamonie River State Forest has always been about improving forest diversity. Potential bidders had to factor in the impacts of seasonal operations, a short management window, and minimizing their impact on the environment. These constraints may have lowered our financial gain but are in place because we value the long-term health of our forests, and all that live, grow, and recreate there more.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Was there a minimum bid set for Salamonie, as laid out in the Procedures Manual? If so, what was the minimum bid?	19					Yes, a minimum bid was set for the harvest at SRSF. As per the Procedure Manual minimum bids are not available for public disclosure.
Salamonie River SF harvest	Considering your staffing issues, how do you plan to prevent the area of Salamonie that has been sold from being overrun by invasive species after the logging is done, if you don't have enough staff to execute the projects you already have going? The historical section of Salamonie currently has a very high quality native plant community that has managed to avoid the invasive issue found in many other areas of our forests, due to that area being pretty much left alone since Salamonie was acquired by the DNR.	19	Who determines "if necessary"??? Individual comments only receive a propaganda response..... but public forums let others hear the DOF response. So your response was inadequate. You owe more to your state forest owners!	29	Are you saying that invasive species management in the logged area of Salamonie will be a priority for the Dept of Forestry?	19	We are actively managing invasive species at SRSF and will focus our efforts in the harvest area as warranted.
Staffing	Are staffing challenges related to inadequate funding, low salaries, lack of qualified applicants, or some combination of above?	33	If you could expand on the answers to staffing challenges.	33	Internal or external factors - is budget a problem?	33	Several factors affect the Division's ability to hire and retain staff, including retirements, better opportunities outside the Division, low number of graduating foresters, etc. Often, particularly labor or intermittent positions, go unfilled due to a lack of applicants. The state is reviewing job descriptions to see if they are competitive, but forester salaries in Indiana are lower than many of the surrounding states.

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Staffing	I realize that you have serious issues with staffing in regard to managing tsi and controlled burns. There is also the issue of a number of activities needing to be done in the same timeframe.	13					Thank you for your comment.
Staffing	Staffing issues have been an issue for a long time (before covid). Staffing issues are an excuse for not doing many things.	21	how can we help you get more budget money and how to help DFOF retain competent staff	3			Several factors affect the Division's ability to hire and retain staff, including retirements, better opportunities outside the Division, low number of graduating foresters, etc. Often, particularly labor or intermittent positions, go unfilled due to a lack of applicants. The state is reviewing job descriptions to see if they are competitive, but forester salaries in Indiana are lower than many of the surrounding states.
Strategic direction	The DoF just "updated" the 2015-2019 Forest Management plan by renaming it, "2015-2022 Strategic Direction". Were there opportunities for public comment on that, because I didn't see it? What are the changes please?	24	Would like to see that Answer for Question re "Strategic Direction"	8			The DoF Strategic Direction update extended the plan through 2021. We intend to bring a new plan for public review in 2022.
Strategic direction	Can you elaborate on updates to Strategic Plan that you updated?	5					The DoF Strategic Direction update extended the plan through 2021. No additional changes were made to the plan.
Strategic direction	I would suggest that you allow public volunteers to help you develop the new strategic plan. Things are changing and it is time the DoF recognize the important contribution the public could make	35					Public meetings will be a part of the development of the new Strategic Direction. The Division encourages anyone who is interested in the formation of this document to attend these events.
Strategic direction	Global studies show that, the older the tree, the greater its potential to store carbon. How is this considered in the forestry plan? Who is addressing the climate crisis?	16					The Division of Forestry has reviewed and continues to review information on carbon sequestering.
Timber harvests	Encourage DoF to adopt USFS process. (Public advertise price that bidders are allow to bid above or below.)	5					Thank you for your comment.
Timber harvests	How much did the restoration cost associated with the timber sales and who pays for this? Likewise, who pays for the roads prepared for these timber sales?	16					Unclear of what is being requested as restoration cost. Road costs are covered by the revenue from the timber harvest.

Category	Comment	ID	Related Comment	ID	Related Comment	ID	DoF Response
Timber harvests	Minimum bid price is closely held. Who knows what it is at the time of the sale?	5					The minimum bid is known only to the property and the Property Specialist in the central office.
Timber harvests	New timber sale info is helpful to be online.	5					Thank you for your comment.
Timber harvests	Where do you find info on what constitutes the minimum bid? How do you compare sales with high price differences?	3	How do you place value on timber, carbon credits, with huge swing in prices	3			Factors guiding the determination of the minimum bid can be found in the Properties Procedure Manual and is based off the harvest tally. Differences in geography, markets, time frames, restrictions, species, etc. make it impractical to compare sales one to one. Harvests are designed to improve the health of the forest resulting in lower quality trees marked for removal which, in turns, reduces the price.
Volunteers	Why are our attempts at volunteering not accepted or ignored? Helping check in on payments for camping?	5	Is it dealing with the money? OK if so.	5			Campground fees are collected at self-registration booths at campgrounds; state policy restricts who is allowed to retrieve it.
Volunteers	Why not ask volunteers to come to the nursery?	3					Division of Forestry has been able to fulfill nursery requirements by utilizing staff who are trained in these duties.
Volunteers	who is the contact for volunteer opportunities?	3					Volunteers are handled at each property, typically by the property manager.
Volunteers	Can volunteer days be organized to help the division control invasive species? It would be a good way for concerned citizens to actually contribute to our state forests.	6					There are several volunteer days already organized. Please contact the property to see what opportunities may be available.