

2007 Indiana State Forest Open House Process

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Between January and May of 2007 the Division of Forestry conducted nine (9) open houses. Each of the state forest management units participated in one of the open houses. For the attendees convenience and to lessen the preparation effort for the properties, Jackson-Washington State Forest, Starve Hollow Beach SRA and Selmier State Forest jointly participated in a single open house as did Clark State Forest and Deam Lake SRA and Ferdinand/Pike State Forests. Salamonie State Forest joined with Salamonie Reservoir SRA in a single open house.

The purpose of the open houses was to provide information about the various programs at each state forest, create a venue for dialogue with neighbors/others and finally to receive written comments about the state forest's activities. Each open house was held on a mid-week afternoon/evening, except for the Deam Lake SRA and Clark State Forest open house, which was held on a Saturday. They were advertised both locally and through a state-wide news release.

Each open house featured displays (stations) covering the following areas of interest: Recreation Management, Resource Management, Land Management, Community Affairs, Property Direction and Staffing/Budget/Revenues. Each attendee was asked to register at the door and received a comment sheet. The comment sheet asked for any ideas they wished to share about that particular state forest. Each open house was attended by Division of Forestry/DNR Central Office staff, and as planned much of the interaction was between the visitors and the property staff.

2007 marked the sixth year of annual open houses for Division of Forestry properties. Local Conservation Officers were invited to attend, to both provide security and to answer questions. At those state forests that serve as the office for District Foresters, they were also invited to provide a display and man a station. The Division of State Parks and Reservoirs and the Division of Fish and Wildlife also provided displays and information at some open houses.

Attendance at the 2007 open houses varied from a low of 6 to a high of 118. A total of 301 people registered at the open houses and a total of 29 comments were received. Details on attendance and comments received can be found in the attached table.

The quality and thoroughness of the displays prepared by the properties was outstanding. The Division is convinced that providing both our local and statewide constituents current information about our activities and an opportunity to discuss them is helpful in maintaining public support. During the remainder of this year the Division will be evaluating whether there are more efficient formats than the current local open houses that we can use in future years to provide these opportunities while limiting the negative time impacts on staff resources. Notwithstanding potential changes in format, the Division will continue to provide information about scheduled forest management activities and opportunities for public input.

2007 State Forest Open House Comments Summary

PROPERTY	Pro-Timber Mgt.	Anti-Timber Mgt.	Recreation Support	Recreation Concerns	Fish and Wildlife Support	Fish and Wildlife Concerns	General Support	General Non-support	Budget	Other Issues	Registered Attendance.	Total Comment Sheets
Clark/Deam Lake											10	0
Ferdinand / Pike								1		2	17	2
Greene-Sullivan			2	7			3			1	27	8
Jackson-Washington/ Starve Hollow/ Selmier											118	0
Harrison-Crawford		1		2			2			2	13	4
Martin		2		1						1	6	2
Morgan-Yellowwood	1	2		7	1					5	34	10
Owen-Putnam			1				2				29	3
Salamonie River SF/Salamon											47	0
Total Number	1	5	3	17	1		7	1		11	301	29

Notes:

--All of the comments received were reviewed by the Division of Forestry and placed into one of ten broad categories shown above. Copies of each of the original comments sheets are on file in the Division of Forestry. Some sheets contained more than one comment. Single comment sheets bearing more than one signature were counted as one comment sheet; however, the comments were counted individually in the appropriate categories. Comments received within 30 days of each open house are reflected in this summary. Phoned and emailed comments were counted as comment sheets. Some individuals provided comments at several open houses.

--Comments in the "Other Issues" category included: support a DoF website for forestry practices (1); harvest rotation is too short and should be 150 years (1); should set areas of state forest for specific uses (1); should do more oak regeneration research before managing entire state forest system in that fashion (1); the "clear-cut" in the NW corner of Cherry Hollow in Morgan-Monroe SF surrounding the Three Lakes Trail and stream should be a "selective" cut instead (1); oppose DNR/DoF Strategic Plan 2005-07 (3); request for District Forester to contact (1); have weekly duck/rabbit hunting schedule at West Lake (1); concern that private poultry farm development may contaminate Ferdinand Lake (2);

--Comments in the "Recreation Concerns" category include: want horse trails on Morgan-Monroe SF (6); state forests should be managed more for recreation than for timber extraction (3); Harrison-Crawford SF hiking/horse trails need maintenance (1); requirement that bridle tags be placed on horse's bridle when riding results in tags being lost – Greene-Sullivan (1); make sure people are paying to camp at Ladder Lake campground – Greene-Sullivan (2); maintain horse trails, but not with large rock – Greene-Sullivan (1); sell horse tags on weekends (1); trash around Star Lake (1).