

Hoosier National Forest Perspectives on the State of Indiana's Forests

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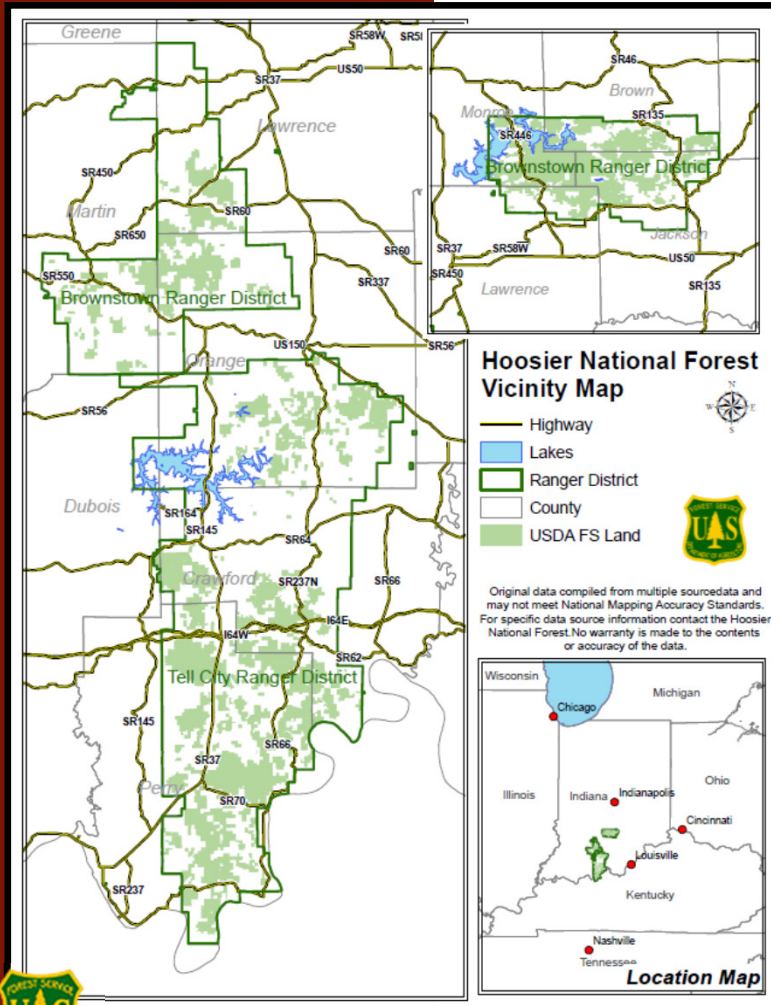
**Indiana Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee
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"Caring for the land and serving people"



Hoosier National Forest Today



- 204,000 acres
- ~1,450 miles of boundary line
- Located in 9 counties (Brown, Crawford, Dubois, Jackson, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Orange, Perry)
- First established with 40 ac purchase near Houston in 1935, at request of Gov. and State Leg.
- Managed as multiple use public land (recreation, water, forest products, wildlife habitat)



Indiana Forest Trends (briefly)

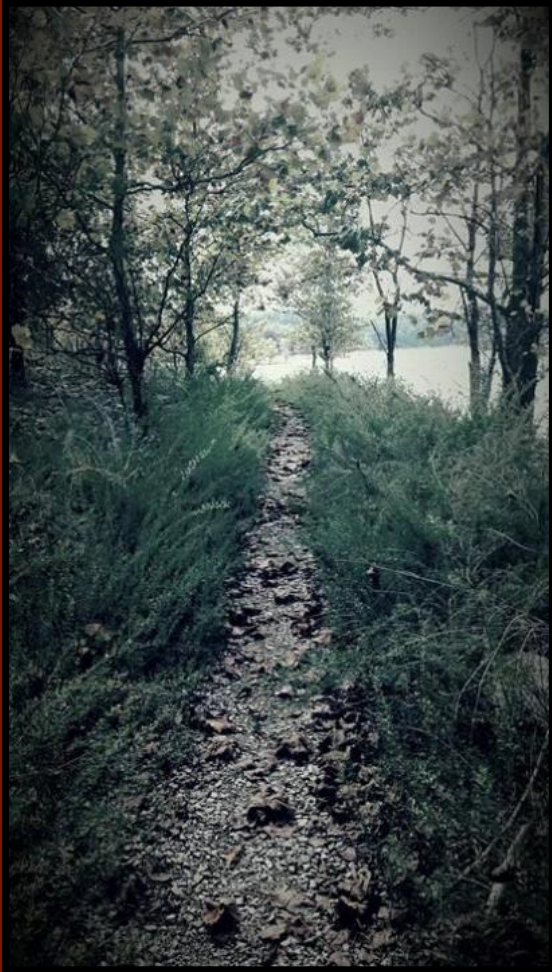


🌲 Positives:

- 🌲 1903 = 1.5 mil. ac. of forest; 1950 = 4.1 mil. ac.; today = 5 mil. ac.
- 🌲 15% of forest land is public
- 🌲 20% of private forest enrolled in Classified Forest program
- 🌲 We have an economy and industry that supports maintaining forested lands; 13% increase in employment in forest products industry from 2010-'13



Indiana Forest Trends (briefly)



🌲 Challenges:

- 🌲 IN forests (public and private) are highly fragmented
- 🌲 80% of private forest not enrolled in Classified Forest program
- 🌲 Lack of forest age diversity
- 🌲 Lack of oak recruitment
- 🌲 Invasive plants detected on >90% of FIA plots
- 🌲 Disconnected public



Where to Focus?



- **Disturb** – to promote forest diversity and oak regeneration
- **Disrupt** – Invasive species
- **Maintain** – Keep forested land forested (and add where we can)
- **Protect** – (and improve) water quality and riparian habitat
- **Connect** – more people to the values of forests
- **Collaborate** – all hands on deck (and find more hands)



Disturb

- Lack of age diversity
 - 90+% of IN forests in 20-99 year age classes
 - Missing early successional and old growth forests
 - What are the “right” numbers?
 - Must accept the trade-offs of both
 - Forest diversity is climate change adaptation
- Lack of oak recruitment
- Mimic historical natural disturbance
 - Plan across the landscape; timing, location, tools, size...
 - Will fire be included at significant scale?

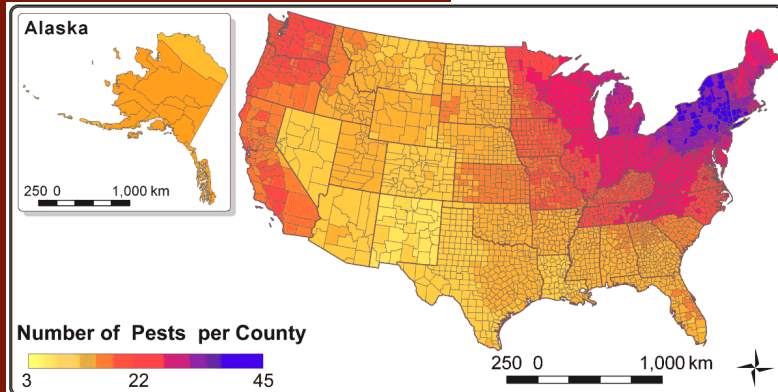


“the oldest task in human history: to live on a piece of land without spoiling it.”

- Aldo Leopold



Disrupt



- NNIS present in >90% of FIA plots
- Tremendous amount of resource spent to fight these
- What do we accept and where?
- What can we not tolerate and where?
- Collective action critical





Maintain (and grow)

- Keep forested land forested &
- Increase forested acres
 - Incentives for private landowners to maintain or expand their forests
 - Promotion of wood products/markets
- Public land acquisition at the margins
 - Highly valuable for priority ecosystems, management efficiency, public access
 - Not realistic for large scale, landscape conservation goals
 - Context: Hoosier NF acquired 1st 100K ac. in 15 years;
 - took 55 yrs to acquire next 100K ac.
 - at pace of last 10 yrs, would take 370 yrs to acquire next 100K ac.



Protect (and improve)

- 🌲 Water quality and riparian habitat
- 🌲 Recognize vital role of forests to water quality
- 🌲 Incentivize BMPs on private land
- 🌲 Protect and connect riparian areas
 - 🌲 Focal point for NNIS treatments
- 🌲 AOP improvements
- 🌲 Improve, replace, or remove poorly located or constructed roads
- 🌲 Seek opportunities for dam removal and river/stream restoration



Connect



- 🌲 People of IN losing connections to conservation and importance of forests, public and private
- 🌲 How do we engage new audiences together?
- 🌲 How do we bring people along regardless of constituency?



- 🌲 Hunters, Animal lovers, Environmentalists, Loggers, Bikers, Horseback riders, Hikers, Conservative, Liberal, Rural, Urban... All of the above
- 🌲 80% agreement?
- 🌲 Consensus on long term goals?



Collaborate



- 🌲 Too many threats and challenges, landscape much too fragmented to address piecemeal
- 🌲 Need common strategy
- 🌲 Constituencies/interest should talk to each other, not just the land manager
- 🌲 Share resources
- 🌲 Where do we find new partners?
 - 🌲 Private sector partners?
 - 🌲 Who is interested in clean air, clean water, open space, wildlife, places for their employees to recreate?



Comments, Questions?

“Let us restore this one element [forest] of material life to its normal proportions, and devise means for maintaining the permanence of its relations to the fields, the meadows and pastures, to the rain and the dews of heaven, to the springs and rivulets with which it waters down the earth.”

- George Perkins Marsh, in *Man and Nature* (1864)

