

## Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry

### **2010 Indiana State Forest Open House Process**

Between April and September 2010, the Division of Forestry conducted six open houses. Clark State Forest/Deam Lake State Recreation Area, Ferdinand/Pike State Forest, Greene-Sullivan State Forest, Harrison-Crawford State Forest, Martin State Forest, and Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe State Forest each participated in an open house event. Other properties, including Jackson-Washington State Forest/Starve Hollow State Recreation Area and Owen-Putnam State Forest, opened their office doors at specific times throughout the year where property staff would be available for interested parties to come in and discuss issues, such as the management the properties or concerns that they might have.

The purpose of the open houses is to provide information about the various programs at each state forest, create a venue for dialogue with neighbors/others and to receive written comments about the state forest's activities. All open houses and designated office hours were advertised locally and through a state-wide news release.

Each open house featured a number of displays. Areas of interest covered by the displays included Recreation Management, Resource Management, Land Management, Community Affairs, Property Direction and Staffing/Budget/Revenues. Each attendee was asked to register and comment sheets were made available. The comment sheet asked for any ideas they wished to share about that particular state forest. Division of Forestry/DNR Central Office staff attempted to attend each open house; however, as planned, much of the interaction was between the visitors and the property staff.

2010 marked the ninth year of annual open houses for Division of Forestry properties. In order to reach more constituents, several properties attempted different formats than the prior year's including hosting designated office hours on multiple days throughout the year rather than a single day event. Total registered attendance at the 2010 open houses was 136, which was lower than the previous year but higher than the attendance for the 2008 open houses. Most of the attendance (35) occurred at Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe State Forest. The second highest attendance (32) was at Ferdinand State Forest. Formal, written comments were received at two of the six open houses, with the two highest attending events, Ferdinand SF and Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe SF, each receiving comments. Details on attendance and comments received can be found in the attached table. Property staff, in conjunction with Central Office staff where appropriate, evaluated each comment and decided what, if any, changes should be made in their operations. Comments were sent to the Central Office to be compiled into a system-wide database for tracking.

Comments received included several positive comments regarding employees (1) and the recently acquired property at Yellowwood SF – the former Tulip Trace Girl Scout Camp (5). Several recommendations were received regarding the management of the new acquisition at Yellowwood and included utilizing the facility as a meeting place for DNR or other nature or conservation groups, using the Purdue Research Group to help maintain the facility, making the facility available as a “city camp”, utilizing the facility for educational opportunities, leadership development, or internship partnerships, developing water facilities that would utilize rain based resources and/or solar power pumping, allowing the property manager to have control over the new acquisition, and not to allow harvesting on the new property. These recommendations were considered during deliberations on management of the newly acquired camp. One comment was received concerning the reopening of trails post harvest activities. Several comments (2) were received regarding timber harvest, including both harvests in the backcountry areas and within all of Yellowwood State Forest.

The open house program is one of the many ways the Division interacts with constituents. All properties regularly receive suggestions on area management from our visitors. Properties send newsletters annually

to all of our neighbors and to potentially affected neighbors of nearby management activities. All tract management guides that propose natural resource management at the tract level are posted on the State Forest web site with allowance for at least a 30-day comment period. Users of developed recreational facilities are given the opportunity to submit comment cards on the facilities they use.

The Division remains convinced that the open houses program is an important part of the public input process. The Division will evaluate whether there are more efficient and effective formats than the current local open houses that we can use in future years. Notwithstanding potential changes in format, the Division will continue to provide information about scheduled forest management activities and opportunities for public input.

## Comments Summary

Property	Forest Management		Recreation		Fish & Wildlife		General		Other		Attendance
	support	concern	support	concern	support	concern	support	concern	support	concern	
Clark/Deam											19
Ferdinand				1			1				32
Greene-Sullivan											17
Harrison-Crawford											10
Jackson-Washington/ Starve											
Martin											23
Owen-Putman											
Yellowwood/ Morgan-Monroe		2					5	1			35
<b>Totals</b>		2		1			6	1			136

### Notes:

--All of the comments received were reviewed by the Division of Forestry and placed into 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.

--The majority of the comments received included recommendations for the management of the new acquisition at Yellowwood State Forest and to prohibit harvests within Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe State Forest.