

Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry

2011 Indiana State Forest Open House Process

Between March and September 2011, the Division of Forestry conducted seven open houses. Clark State Forest/Deam Lake State Recreation Area, Ferdinand/Pike State Forest, Greene-Sullivan State Forest, Harrison-Crawford State Forest, Jackson-Washington State Forest/Starve Hollow State Recreation Area, Martin State Forest, and Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe State Forest each participated in an open house event.

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 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.

2011 marked the tenth year of annual open houses for Division of Forestry properties. Total registered attendance at the 2011 open houses was 563. The highest attending events were those that were held in conjunction with other nearby public events. Most of the attendance (400) occurred at the Martin State Forest open house held at the Martin County Ag Day program. The second highest attendance (97) was at the Greene-Sullivan State Forest open house event held in conjunction with Marsh Madness in Linton. The remaining five open houses were attended by a total of 66 people. Formal, written comments were received at two of the seven open houses, with Greene-Sullivan 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 camping (1) and on properties in general (4). One comment was received concerning the reopening of trails post harvest activities. Several comments were received concerning the proposed roadwork to Yellowwood Lake Road. Concerns ranged for the opportunity for public comment during the development of the project, consultation with experts regarding impacts to the streams, minimizing impacts of the project, and the paving of the road. One comment was received regarding the dredging of Yellowwood Lake and the placement of silt debris within the group campground. Another comment received was in regards to BMPs, with a suggestion to review and upgrade the BMPs to include invasives/exotics and to reflect local communities. Several comments were received regarding timber harvest, including one to prohibit harvests in the backcountry areas and a second to prohibit harvests in the Yellowwood Lake watershed. Several people requested information to be sent to them, which would have been followed up on by the property. Although no written comments were received, one open house forum received several verbal comments on the dislike of the appearance of the 'clearcuts.'

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

Location	Forest Management		Recreation		Fish & Wildlife		General		Other		Attendance
	support	concern	support	concern	support	concern	support	concern	support	concern	
Clark/Deam											
Ferdinand											21
Greene-Sullivan			1				2				97
Harrison-Crawford											10
Jackson-Washington/ Starve											7
Martin											400
Yellowwood/ Morgan-Monroe		2		1				1		3	28
Totals		2	1	1			2	1		3	563

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.

--Comments in the "Other Issues" category included: concerns regarding the proposed plan for improvements to Yellowwood Lake Road.