Welcome to the Jackson Creek Trail, a self-guiding, 1.5 mile hiking trail in Yellowwood State Forest. This trail takes you through a variety of habitat types, including marsh, pine forest and central hardwood forest. There are 23 stations marked along the trail, each featuring a particular plant or plant association or a geological characteristic. Some of the stations show examples of man’s direct involvement with the forest, including some of the many ways in which we derive benefits from the forest. A short list of these benefits includes watershed protection, air purification, wildlife habitat, recreation areas and over 5,000 useful items made from wood. We hope that as you hike the trail you will be able to appreciate some of these benefits.

Wheelchair Accessibility
The first 1,500 feet of this trail was improved in 1996 to provide wheelchair access. If you are a wheelchair user and have suggestions for improvement of this portion, please contact the forest office.

Recent History
The forest you will be walking through is a part of the Central Hardwood Forest and was settled by European immigrants and their descendants in the early 1800s. Much of the forest you will see was occupied by homesteaders and cleared for farming. Most of the ground was unsuitable for farming and was abandoned in the early 1900s. Although vacated many years ago, it is still possible to find evidence of the farms and dwellings that dotted the area. The locations of old home sites are often indicated by the remaining shade trees and ornamental plants and sometimes the house foundation or a well. The land was acquired by the public in the 1930s and the cleared areas have either been planted to pine trees or allowed to reforest naturally.

Please remember that the trail is for hiking and wheelchair only; use of horses, bicycles or motorized vehicles is prohibited.

OUR MISSION
The Indiana Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Forestry promotes and practices good stewardship of natural, recreational and cultural resources on Indiana’s public and private forest lands.
This stewardship produces continuing benefits, both tangible and intangible, for present and future generations.

The DNR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, sex, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to:
Department of Natural Resources
Executive Office
402 West Washington St., Rm W256
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-4020

772 Yellowwood Lake Road
Nashville, Indiana 47448
812-988-7945
Exotic Plants: There are several plants in our area that are referred to as exotic because they are not native to this region. Some of these are considered to be 'invasive' species, capable of displacing native plants. Many of these plants are planted intentionally for their beneficial qualities only to become problematic. Invasive species thrive on disturbed areas and can out-compete native plants. They take advantage of the available resources and outgrow native species, making it difficult for them to survive.

Marsh: This marsh provides habitat for many kinds of wildlife, including waterfowl, bobcats, and bald eagles. The area is rich in wildlife, providing a home for many species. Some common marsh plants include cattails, black willow and the evergreen purple loosestrife.

Bald Cypress: The bald cypress is one of the few 'deciduous' conifers; that is, it loses its leaves in fall. Cypress are native to southeastern Louisiana, but have been planted widely throughout the state. The conical projections rising from the roots of the trees are called 'knees'. The function of the knees is not known for certain, but popular theories include support of the tree and oxygen exchange.

Virginia Pine: This stand of Virginia pine was planted to replace the natural old-field pine. Pine trees serve various purposes and have been planted extensively to stop soil erosion on abandoned fields. The undershrubbery is dominated by native and exotic shrubs and vines.

Eastern White Pine: One of Indiana’s few native pine trees, the white pine is often called the monarch of the eastern forests. The age of these pines can be determined by counting the annual rings, which are measured by the number of solid wood rings.

Black Walnut: Black walnut is Indiana’s most prized tree species and is a common broadleaf species on the University of Indiana grounds. This tree is favored for furniture, veneers, and ornamental use. The nuts are prized for their excellent flavor by squirrels and humans alike. In the foreground is a black walnut plantation which was planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

Jackson Creek: This is the creek that was dammed to create Yellowwood Lake. wooded shoreline. About 40% of the Yellowwood Lake water supply is from this area.

Pine Forest Floor: Looking around you will see many of the ways in which the pine forest has impacted this former farm field. The needle cast and fallen logs encourage the growth of Lactuca and other weeds. The dense, year-round shade creates cooler conditions that are more moist than those found understory hardwoods. There is also a greater variety of native wildlife in this area, as the understory is designed to support a variety of wildlife. Following a forest disturbance that allows sunlight to reach the forest floor, the presence of these yellow poplar trees can be seen once more open to sunlight than it was before.

White Ash: Changes are the wooden baseball bat or tennis racket you were used to making the wod of this tree. The light, very strong wood of the ash tree is ideal for sporting goods and tool handles. The white poplar, ash, and maple (full sun tolerant), as well as the yellow poplar, are adapted to a variety of soil conditions. White ash is the most common species in this area, but it is not as common in the understory layer.

Streambank Erosion: In an age-old process of nature, the land is continuously moving soil and rocks to lower areas. Here you can see that the stream is cutting the bank away and moving soil to lower areas. The stream is also cutting down to the stream bottom, which is usually caused by the stream’s ability to carve through the soil.

Plant Succession: The area to the west of the station marker is an abandoned field that was not planted to pine like the area shown in #1. Before it returns to its native cover of hardwoods, it will go through a series of plant stages over a century. Each stage is a plant community that creates conditions that favor a different community. Typically, the first plants to move into a site like an abandoned farm field are plants that require full sunlight to thrive. These are known as 'shadetolerant' plants that are capable of creating shade, favoring plants that are 'shade tolerant'. One of the first trees to colonize an abandoned field in our region is Eastern Red Oak. Like the one behind the marker, the absence of further disturbance this site will eventually succeed to shade tolerant hardwoods. You will see examples of plant succession along the trail.

Bottomland Plants: This bottomland supports a variety of plants, both woody and herbaceous, that are very different from those found on the hillside. The area is rich in wildlife, providing a home for many species. Some common marsh plants include cattails, black willow and the evergreen purple loosestrife.

American Beech: American beech is one of the most distinctive trees in the forest, easily recognized by its smooth, gray bark. Unfortunately, this bark is also very attractive to vandals with carving tools who often leave their marks on the bark of this elusive tree. The beech tree's ability to live for a long time means it is a common tree for wildlife.

Orientalis Streem: This little stream bed is dry much of the year, but in the spring or after a summer storm it floods with activity. It carries the runoff from the surrounding woods, and in doing so it helps support many types of forest life, including amphibians, aquatic insects, crustaceans and many kinds of birds. During the dry summer months, animals will travel further downstream to reach water.

Central Hardwood Forest: The hillsides are covered in an example of the Central Hardwood Forest which embraces the central portion of the eastern United States. The trees in this forest are deciduous and they grow in association with hickories, oaks, aspen, yellow poplar, maples, gums, walnut and oaks. A significant feature of the hillside is the presence of this treecreeping into the leaves in autumn. Species varies from hickory, red and black oaks, beech and red maple to yellow poplar and black walnut.

Forest Road: The path you are walking on is a forest road that has a long history and many uses. It once was a country road that provided a travel route for the homesteaders, providing a way to get essential supplies from the hills until around the 1830s. It now serves as a bike trail and a forest access road for a variety of uses such as forest and trail maintenance.

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