



Marker Text

Indiana's oldest state forest, established 1903. Portions of Clark's Grant (1781) included in original 2,000 acres. Experimental plantings and reforestation began 1904; became national models in scientific forestry. Multiple land uses include timber management, recreational activities, wildlife areas, and watershed protection.

Report

The marker text is generally correct, but needs to include broader historical context about forestry and conservation in Indiana. Also, while the [Clark State Forest](#) was widely known in Indiana, few newspaper, journal articles, or books published outside of the state note that the forest was a national model in scientific forestry as the marker claims.¹ However, partnerships with the notable Purdue forestry department and extension services, as well as early management under the notable Indiana state forester [Charles C. Deam](#) from 1909-1913, 1917-1928 may have increased its notoriety.²

Originally, half the land that currently comprises the United States was covered in forests; Indiana alone contained 20 million acres.³ However, like many forests nationwide, European-American settlers cleared much of Indiana's forests for farming, fuel, and lumber by the mid-19th century.⁴ The widespread clearing of forests helped foster a new, conservation ethic in America in the late 19th century as some Americans worried current practices would deplete natural resources. Instead of viewing natural resources, including forests, as inexhaustible, conservationists advocated using science and technology to rationally plan efficient development and use of natural resources to ensure enough would be available for future generations. The United States federal government and some states, including Indiana, created their own forestry departments, established forestry reserves, and promoted the tenets of scientific forestry, under which annual cutting did not exceed annual growth of trees, and methods to reduce disease and fire damage of trees were employed.⁵

The creation of Clark State Forest stands as an important moment in the history of conservation in Indiana. The Clark State Forest, initially called the "State Forest Reservation" was established in 1903, in the midst of the conservation movement in the United States.⁶ [Governor Winfield T. Durbin](#) signed into law an act that allowed the state forestry board, established in 1901, to purchase land for a state forest reservation in March 1903.⁷ Thirty-two tracts were offered to the board shortly thereafter.⁸ On April 24, the board announced that a 2,000 acre site in Clark County near Henryville, Indiana would serve as "a forest reservation, laboratory of forestry demonstration and state nurseries."⁹ On May 28, the board bought the land for \$16,000 from a total of seventeen land owners and the land officially became state property.¹⁰ The Clark State Forest remained Indiana's only state forest until 1929, when the [Morgan-Monroe State Forest](#) was created.¹¹

Portions of the original 2,000 acres of the Clark State Forest appear to have been part of the [Clark Co. Land](#) granted to George Rogers Clark and his soldiers for revolutionary war service against the British, though some of it also may have been purchased from adjoining land in Monroe Township



outside of the grant.¹² At the time of the purchase of Clark State Forest, about 60% of the 2,000 acre forest contained second growth hardwood timber.¹³ However, there was a lot of work to be done as much of the forest had been heavily logged in the past and some of it damaged from forest fires.¹⁴ Much of the early work involved surveying, cutting down dead or defective trees, pruning, repairing buildings and building roads.¹⁵

Afterward, the forestry board could begin their goal of demonstrating the profit of scientific forestry management. Experimental plantings began on May 6th, 1904 of walnut, hickory, black locust, ash, lin, catalpa, and pine seeds.¹⁶ Reforestation of old cleared fields not suitable for agriculture began in the spring of 1904, with the planting of white pine saplings from a Wisconsin nursery. Two hundred decorative trees were also planted around buildings on the grounds in honor of [Arbor Day](#).¹⁷ The construction of all of the reservation's buildings and roads, as well as initial forest cleaning, field planting and field cultivation were completed by 1907.¹⁸

Deam, a botanist and entomologist became the secretary of the state forestry board, as well as the first state forester in 1909.¹⁹ Under his supervision, the state forest began to keep official, detailed records of their experimental tracts. One year later, the experimental station at the reserve was overseeing forty one experimental tracts to determine which tree species were best suited to Indiana's soil, topography, and climate and to hone proper forestry managing practices.²⁰ Trees from the reserve and its nursery also began to be sold to the public in 1916.²¹ Additionally, Deam worked hard to educate Hoosiers about the value of forestry and the state forest in Clark county. During his tenure, Deam held an annual forestry essay contest for students, created a forestry exhibit for the Indiana State Fair, issued press releases, and held special visitor days to show off the work being done.²² Deam's improvement of Clark State Forest's facilities and roads, and the addition of a popular watch tower, coupled with the proliferation of the automobile, increased visitation to the forest during the 1920s.²³

A formal relationship between the Clark State Forest and the forestry school at Purdue University began in the spring of 1921. Students, supervised by Purdue faculty, engaged in practical forestry work for a week planting trees, recording data from the experimental plots, and selecting trees to cut down for sale.²⁴ In 1929, the camp expanded to roughly eight weeks long and was called the "Purdue Forestry Camp."²⁵ All students in the program attended to complete work in the nursery, experimental tracts, and surveying. The camp continued at Clark State Forest until 1959.²⁶ Learn more about the Purdue summer forestry camp from "[Roughing It in Clark State Forest: Purdue Forestry Summer Camp](#)" on the IHB Blog.

Indiana's state forestry program expanded during the 1930s. Due to financial strain from the [Great Depression](#), many farmers were unable to pay mortgages or taxes on their land. Banks repossessed the land and many eventually entered into state ownership. As a result, Indiana gained 10 state forests during the 1930s.²⁷ The [Civilian Conservation Corps \(CCC\)](#) undertook development projects at these state forests, as well as Clark State Forest. The CCC built roads, dams, trails, buildings, and water supply systems at the state forests. At Clark State Forest in particular, the CCC built an irrigation



system and water supply dams for the tree nursery, packing shed to handle shipment of seedlings, and three artificial lakes stocked for public fishing.²⁸

During the 1950s, forest management at Clark State Forest (and the other state forests in Indiana) shifted from timber management to multiple use management. This strategy involved not only timber management, but also watershed management, wildlife production, and recreation.²⁹ Official emphasis on recreation reflected attitudes of the postwar era. Soldiers returned from war, gained employment in industry, and focused on raising families. Many families now had the money to spend on leisure and recreation, such as traveling, camping, and visiting state forests.³⁰ As of 2016, the Indiana State Forest management policy continued to embrace this multiple use policy.³¹

Further Reading

Indiana State Board of Forestry Annual Reports (1901-1917) and Indiana Department of Conservation Annual Reports, 1919-1922 on <https://www.hathitrust.org/>. These documents contain yearly summaries of all the experimental tracts, activities, expenditures, and improvements made at Clark State Forest.

Outdoor Indiana digital archive on the Indiana University Digital Library, <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu>. It has issues from 1934-1993. Issues include articles on the activities of the DNR, including updates on all of the state forests it manages.

Purdue Agriculture's FNR Past and Present webpage <https://ag.purdue.edu/fnr/PastPresent/Pages/default.aspx>, contains a history of the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue, a digital archive of their forestry camp's newsletter the *Log*, and shared memories from past graduates.

Robert C. Kriebel's *Plain Ol' Charlie Deam* (1987) gives a detailed biography of Deam's life, including his work at Clark State Forest.

Sam F. Carman's article "Indiana Forest Management History and Practices," in *The Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment: A Framework for Studying Responses to Forest Management* (2013) provides a concise overview of the history of forestry in Indiana.

¹ Numerous articles were found claiming Clark State Forest to be the best, largest hardwood experimental station in Indiana and a leader in the field of forestry, however few were found published outside Indiana. See "Many Will



Observe State Forestry Day,” *Indianapolis Star* 21 July 1912, accessed newspapers.com, “Proves Worth of Conservation Work,” *Indianapolis Star* 30 December 1922, accessed newspapers.com, FD Streightoff, *Indiana: A Social and Economic Survey* (Indianapolis: Indiana, Stewart, 1916) for examples of Indiana sources found.

² On Charles Deam, see Alton A. Lindsey, “Search and Study” and “Protection Beginnings,” in *The Natural Heritage of Indiana*, Marion T. Jackson, ed., (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 400, 407. Also, Robert C. Kriebel, *Plain Ol’ Charlie Deam: Pioneer Hoosier Botanist* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1987), 35, 63. In addition to bringing the practice of scientific forestry to Clark State Forest, Deam was a well-known botanist of the time. He wrote four books, *Trees of Indiana* (1911), *Shrubs of Indiana* (1924), *Grasses of Indiana* (1929), and *Flora of Indiana* (1940). He also greatly improved the experimental plantings in Indiana at Clark State Forest. His detailed experimental studies recorded in the early volumes of the Indiana State Board of Forestry’s annual reports later became required reading for many students of forestry in the Midwest. Deam also wrote the Forest Classification Act for Indiana (1921), which developed standards an owner was required to maintain in order to exempt woods from taxation. This helped increase the acreage of private woods registered under law in the state. Many other states created similar legislation modeled after this law.

For a detailed account of the Purdue Forestry Department and extension services’ accomplishments and history, see William C. Bramble, ed., *Forestry and Conservation in Indiana* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Department of Forestry and Conservation, 1965). Purdue started forestry classes in 1905-1906 school year, by 1926 forestry had its own department in the School of Agriculture. In 1942, it was accredited by the Society of American Foresters, and in 1961 it offered a PhD in forestry. Numerous faculty have produced research that has contributed to the field, including research related to cattle grazing in forests, timber production reporting, mensuration and log grading, and long range planning in forestry management.

³ Douglas W. MacCleary, *American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery* (Durham, North Carolina: Forest History Society, 2011), 1.

⁴ Louis D. Hasenstab, Sr. “History of Public Conservation in Indiana,” in *The Natural Heritage of Indiana*, Marion T. Jackson, ed., (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 385.

⁵ Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 2-3, 27-28.

⁶ Indiana State Board of Forestry, W.H. Freeman, Sec., *Third Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1903* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wm B. Burford, 1904), 19.

⁷ “Signed by the Governor,” *Indianapolis Journal*, 4 March 1903, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles; “New Laws,” *The Brookville Democrat*, 7 March 1901, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles.

⁸ Indiana State Board of Forestry, *Third Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1903*, 20.

⁹ “Forest Reservation Site,” *Indianapolis News*, 25 April 1903, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles.

¹⁰ Indiana State Board of Forestry, *Third Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1903*, 8, 20.

¹¹ “State Forestry Purchase Urged,” *The Indianapolis Star*, 5 December 1929, accessed newspapers.com.



¹²Indiana State Board of Forestry, *Third Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1903*, 8; W.W. Clayton, "Map of Clark County, Indiana," *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana*, Baskin, Forster & Co., 1876, accessed [Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections](http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/dc035/id/60/rec/1), <http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/dc035/id/60/rec/1>; General Index of Deeds, Grantee 1900-1910, Clark County, Record of Partitions, Vol 1, 1880-1949, accessed Indiana State Library, Genealogy Microfilm Collection: County Records.

IHB staff found no original map of the original 2000 acres of the Clark State Forest that marked out township, section, and range lines and Grant's sections was found. The General Index of Deeds (Grantee) from Clark County, Indiana, 1801-1910 showed that in 1903 the State of Indiana bought land from the following township sections that border or are near the Clark's grant boundary line in Monroe township in Clark county: 2, 31, 35, 36. They also bought land from the following sections of Clark's grant: 270, 281, 282, 283. The land bought in Clark's Grant amounted to a total of approximately 1, 187.93 acres. The land bought in Monroe Township outside of the grant was 1,020. Since the State Forestry Board's Annual Report of 1903 indicates 2000 acres were bought, it is likely that not all was bought within Clark's Grant, nor all outside of it in Monroe Township, Clark County.

¹³ "Indiana Forestry Reserve," *Indianapolis Journal*, 31 May 1903, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles, "Indiana Forestry Reservation," *Indianapolis Journal* 25 October 1903, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles.

¹⁴ "Not Far from Columbus," *The Evening Republican*, 25 April 1903, accessed newspapers.com; Sam F. Carman, "Indiana Forest Management History and Practices," in Swihart, Robert K., Saunders, Michael R.; Kalb, Rebecca A.; Haulton, G. Scott; Michler, Charles H., eds. 2013. *The Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment: A Framework for Studying Responses to Forest Management*. Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-P-108 (Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station, 2013): 15, accessed http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr-nrs-p-108papers/02carman_hee_p108.pdf

¹⁵ "Indiana Forestry Reservation," *Indianapolis Journal*, 25 October 1903, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles.

¹⁶ Indiana State Board of Forestry, W.H. Freeman, Sec., *Fourth Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1904* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wm B. Burford, 1904), 10.

¹⁷ Ibid, 23.

¹⁸ Indiana State Board of Forestry, W.H. Freeman, Sec., *Seventh Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1907* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wm B. Burford, 1907), 81.

¹⁹ "Deam Will Be Forester," *Indianapolis Star*, 16 May 1909, accessed Hoosier State Chronicles.

²⁰ Indiana State Board of Forestry, Charles C. Deam, Sec., *Tenth Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1910* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wm B. Burford, 1911), 15.

²¹ Indiana State Board of Forestry, Elijah A. Gladden, Sec., *Sixteenth Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1916* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wm B. Burford, 1917), 21.

²² Indiana State Board of Forestry, *Tenth Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1910*, 55, 61; Indiana State Board of Forestry, Charles C. Deam, Sec., *Twelfth Annual Report of the State Board of Forestry, 1912* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Wm B. Burford, 1913), 41, 65-68; "Forester Open to State Reservation to Visitors," *Indianapolis Star* 29



June 1919, accessed newspapers.com; "Crowds Visit State Forests," *Indianapolis Star*, 10 July 1919, accessed newspapers.com.

²³ The Department of Conservation of the State of Indiana. *Second Annual Report* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Fort Wayne Printing Company, 1921), 290.

²⁴ "Purdue Students Will do Practical Work in Forestry," *Indianapolis Star*, 9 March 1921, accessed newspapers.com

²⁵ "Takes Time to Propagate Fish," *The Daily Reporter*, 29 June 1929, accessed newspapers.com.

²⁶ "New U.S. Highway Writes Epitaph to Henryville," '59 *Purdue Log*, Forestry Club, Department of Forestry & Conservation, Purdue University, 1959, 30 accessed <https://ag.purdue.edu/fnr/PastPresent/Documents/1959compressed.pdf#page=31>.

²⁷ Sam F. Carman, "Indiana Forest Management History and Practices," in *The Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment*, 16.

²⁸ "Civilian Conservation Corps Taking Leading Part in Forestry Program," *Outdoor Indiana*, 2.6 July 1935, 23, 28, accessed [Indiana University Digital Collections](#). "Division of Forestry," *Outdoor Indiana*, 7.12 January 1941, 28, accessed [Indiana University Digital Collections](#).

²⁹ Robert Raisch, "Indiana State Forests: A 60th Anniversary," *Outdoor Indiana*, 7.7 January 1964, 26, accessed [Indiana University Digital Collections](#).

³⁰ Sam F. Carman, "Indiana Forest Management History and Practices," in *The Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment*, 17.

³¹ Indiana Department of Natural Resources, "State Forest Properties," accessed <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/3631.htm>; Indiana Department of Natural Resources, *Division of Forestry Strategic Direction, 2015-2019*, 3 accessed http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-State_Forest_Strategic_Plan_2015_2019.pdf.