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*Hoosier  
National Forest*

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*2007  
Year in Review*

# From Forest Supervisor Ken Day



As I reflect on the past year I am humbled by the achievements of the Hoosier National Forest and the accomplishments a small staff and dedicated partners continue to accomplish.

It is my honor to work with some of the finest resource professionals in the agency. The Hoosier is fortunate to continue to attract and keep such high caliber people. We

also have dozens of state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, and universities who contribute to wetland, wildlife, fisheries, and plant projects forest-wide. Our partners are key components of our success and I can't say enough about how much they are appreciated.

In 2007 the Indian-Celina and Tipsaw Recreation Areas on the Hoosier were selected in the top 100 Campgrounds in the country by Reserve America. As a recreation destination of choice we strive to make the Forest a safe and fun place for all and if you haven't come down to camp, hike, or fish on the Hoosier I encourage you to come. It's yours to enjoy.

The Hoosier co-sponsored the production, and hosted a premier showing, of a film on caves and karst that has since played around the world. This year we continued to restore wetland and riparian areas and established early successional habitat which is in short supply in the eastern hardwoods.

We're reaching out to teach the next generation with innovative programs on conservation education, and getting youth involved with wildlife, invasive species, and history. A program with Perry Central Schools received national recognition linking children to history and the land through the historic Rickenbaugh House at Celina Lake.

We started a monthly column in 2007 for local newspapers on Forest news items as a way to inform people of how we were implementing the Forest Plan. We will continue to do that as we look to 2008 and report on new successes and accomplishments.

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# Courageous Conservation

The Mission: To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of the present and future generations. This report is organized under the five Region 9 Courageous Conservation Goals.

## Protecting Ecosystems Across Boundaries

The Hoosier continues to implement its Forest Plan in 2007. Wetland restoration is a major Forest goal. An example are vernal wetlands, shallow wetlands that generally do not support fish populations but are ideal habitat for a variety of aquatic species, such as dragonflies, tree frogs, and salamanders.

Goals of vernal wetlands are to correct continuing erosion associated with illegally used and abandoned roads and create wildlife habitat. Over 100 vernal wetlands have been created on the Forest

providing habitat for eastern forest bats, reptiles and amphibians, curtailing existing erosion, and limiting illegal ATV use.

A total of 2.2 million board feet of timber was sold in 2007; all of the timber sold was salvage. This timber goes into the local economy to provide jobs, wood products, and woody biomass for fuel.

The Forest partnered with Purdue University to conduct forest inventories and studies on thinnings and growth over time.

The Hoosier restored or improved 375 acres of wildlife, fish, and threatened and endangered species habitat. In addition 151 acres were treated to control invasive species. In many cases, these invasives are destroying or degrading habitat for native species.

The Hoosier National Forest also had the distinction of hosting the national Forest Service Threatened and Endangered Species Meeting.

*Volunteers reduce the population of Japanese stiltgrass as part of a youth conservation education program.*



*Old road before and after a vernal wetland was built.*



The 60-acre Houston-Pin Oak Wetland in the headwaters of Lake Monroe was constructed with the help of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (shown in photo to the right), US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and a former landowner. This wetland restored native plants and ecosystems and will improve water quality downstream and provide wildlife and aquatic habitat.



# Connecting Citizens to the Land

The showing of “Caves: Life Beneath the Forest,” culminated a 2-year collaboration with over thirty partners, premiered at a red carpet event in Bloomington, Indiana, and was attended by over 600 people. The evening began with a variety of children’s activities centered on caves and cave critters. Kids had the chance to see live bats, crawl through a 37 foot constructed cave, make bat finger puppets (photo below), and meet the mascot of the evening—a giant Indiana bat.



The film’s goal is to show the importance of cave conservation by giving the public an opportunity to see creatures they will likely never encounter on their own. Film clips are online at [www.cavebiota.com](http://www.cavebiota.com).



*The marquee of Bloomington's Buskirk Theater the night of the film premier.*



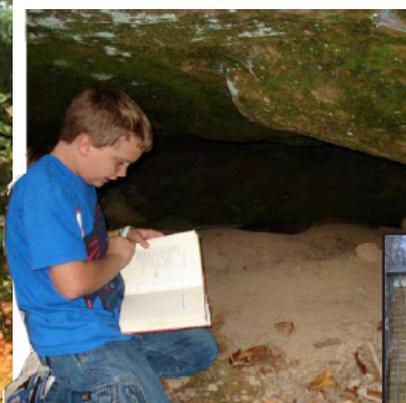
The Hoosier is one of 21 partners who have sponsored the Wildflower Foray for the last 22 years. In 2007 the foray featured 25 hikes, three of which were on the Hoosier National Forest, including the wild hyacinth hike (left photo) and the Waldrip Cabin hike (right).



*A student identifies animal tracks in a cave.*

The ‘Hands on the Land’ program has taken Perry Central students on weekly field trips to the Rickenbaugh House to learn about history and their environment.

Over 300 people came out for the fifth annual Adventures in Nature Day at Tipsaw Lake in July. The day featured hands on activities, demonstrations (such as soap carving below), games, and entertainment. Several partners helped make this day a success.



*Local hunter and reenactor describes life in the 1870s.*



# Walking the Talk for Sustainability

Four employees on the Hoosier were awarded the 2007 Presidents Award from the Wildlife Management Institute. Clark McCreedy, Kelle Reynolds, Cynthia Sandeno, and Tom Thake were honored during the 72nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Portland, Oregon.



*Tom Thake (left) and Kelle Reynolds accept 2007 Presidents Award from Steve Williams, WMI's president.*

The Presidents Award recognizes an agency that significantly advances natural resources conservation in North America. Early successional shrubland

and young forest habitats have been declining dramatically from Indiana's landscape. Hundreds of native wildlife species such as prairie warblers, yellow-breasted chats, ruffed grouse, and blue-winged warblers have disappeared along with their habitats.

Since 2001, the team has been conserving these habitats and species. In Indiana, early successional habitat is created through timber harvest or clearing habitat patches within the Forest. Team members completed a comprehensive landscape assessment including documenting current and historic landscape conditions for more than 500 wildlife species. The team focused on developing management strategies to reverse waning bird populations that depend

on these habitats. Without active management the Forest could lose some of Indiana's native species in the next five years.



*Blue-winged warbler*



*The Hoosier stabilized 1,800 feet of Lake Monroe shoreline in the Hardin Ridge Recreation Area. The riprapped shoreline stabilized and protected roads, parking areas and controlled erosion.*



*Sycamore Flats, the day use and beach area at the Hardin Ridge Recreation Area now fully complies to accessibility standards with the construction of new sidewalks. Two new fully accessible shower buildings and accessible toilet buildings were also added to Indian Lake and Tipsaw Recreation Areas.*

In 2004, 80-mph winds moved across the Hoosier leaving 4,005 acres of storm damaged forest. Since that time many of the wind thrown trees have been salvaged, while other timber sales are still active. Forest staff regularly monitor the progress of the sales to ensure contractors are adhering to terms of the timber sale contract. Monitoring ensures that soil erosion and other mitigation measures for soil, wildlife, and other resources are in place.



*Forest staff discuss monitoring process.*

# Revolutionizing Effectiveness and Efficiency

To minimize environmental impacts and cost, the Forest purchased a portable, modular bridge for use in crossing small streams and riparian areas. The \$20,000 bridge is expected to last 15 years.

The bridge was used during a timber sale where a small stream needed to be crossed. The bridge was loaded on a flat bed truck and transported 15 miles to the job site. There it was unfolded and placed over the crossing using a small tree skidder. The 13 foot wide, 30 foot long, 17,000 pound bridge is large enough to accommodate

vehicles up to a semi-trailer. The whole process, from loading to placement, took approximately 2.5 hours.

The bridge will be used for future timber sales, wildlife, and ecosystem restoration projects.

Another cost saving measure was installing video teleconferencing equipment in the Tell City office. This equipment allows the two offices to be connected by video and audio feed on a large screen TV as well as allowing for viewing visual presentations between sites. The Bedford office already had the equipment, but having the equipment at both offices allowed significant savings in travel and time and is safer for employees who no longer have to drive between offices for meetings.



## Being an Employer of Choice

GATE (Group Advocating Terrific Employment) was formed by a group of Forest employees to improve diversity and overall well-being of employees. GATE's mission is to nurture the work environment on the Hoosier for the development, growth, and well-being of all employees, and facilitate an energized and enthusiastic multicultural workforce.

In 2007 GATE members were recognized regionally with an Eastern Region Honor Award for their outstanding dedication to improving employee diversity and well-being.

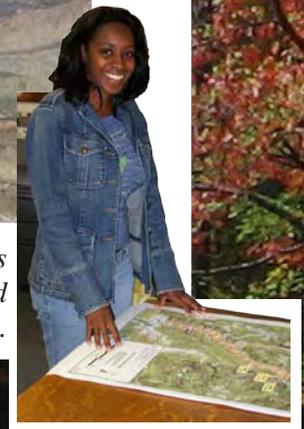


*Hoosier employees at an after-hours golf outing organized by members of GATE.*

The Hoosier works to mentor employees through a number of intern and student-based programs for natural resources and other fields. Through the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP), the agency can develop a diverse, upcoming workforce from within its ranks.



*SCEP students Brian Peoples (above) in wildlife biology and Latasha Lyte (right) in soil science.*



*SCEP student Leslie Thaxton worked in budget and accounting*

# Working with Partners



For over 50 years, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Division, and the Hoosier National Forest, have worked together to improve wildlife and fish habitat the Forest. Their work has impacted thousands of acres benefiting countless outdoor recreationists. Recognizing the recreation and habitat value of the Forest, the partners have become a model of agency collaboration.



*Hoosier Forest Supervisor Ken Day and IDNR - Fish and Wildlife Division Director Glen Salmon*

Some of the partnership projects include:

- Creating and maintaining public parking areas, trailheads, and trails
- Maintenance of levees and dams
- Rehabilitation of skid roads and log landings
- Restoration of deer, turkey, and grouse
- Road obliteration through vernal wetland development
- Surveys for fish, grouse, turkey, great blue heron, and eagle
- Wetland restoration and construction
- Wildfire suppression and prescribed burning

On May 5, 2007-206 volunteers participated in the 21st annual "Take Pride in America Day". The volunteers worked at 15 different projects and together planted 2,000 trees; removed 500 feet of old fence; maintained 13 miles of trails; cleaned up 32 miles of trail, 8 miles of lakeshore, and 5.5 miles of roadside; rehabilitated 8 campsites; maintained 4 cemeteries; treated sites for invasive plants; painted the cab of the lookout tower; and weeded 5 seedbeds of native plants.

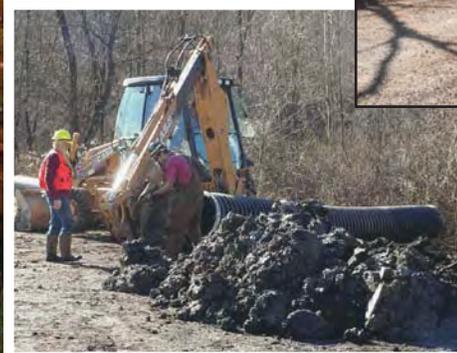
With the help of this army of volunteers the Forest was able to remove and recycle 59 old tires and remove 36 cubic yards of trash from the national forest.



*Big brown bat*



*Prescribe burning and digging up tiles to restore a riparian area.*



*Eighteen volunteers pose after maintaining the Youngs Creek trail and campground. Each year, the Hoosier Backcountry Horsemen and members of the Orange County*



*Saddle Club volunteer several days to help the Hoosier with trail projects.*

In 2007 the Hoosier had 712 volunteers who contributed 7,939 hours of service to the Forest.

# Employee Recognition



*Jim Denoncour*

District Ranger Jim Denoncour retired January 3, 2008 after serving 17 years as District Ranger on the Hoosier National Forest. Denoncour was a veteran of the US Navy and had been with the Forest Service for over 30 years.

Irv Williamson, Hoosier NF firefighter was recognized for his quick action in and likely saving a man's life on September 21, 2007. Williamson was the first to reach a Tell City Street Department employee who fell from a moving trash truck. He was



able to clear his airway and resuscitate him so he could resume breathing. Employee Kevin Beck also assisted Williamson at the scene.

Lisa Faulkenberg, Tell City, was awarded the first 'Branching Out to the Community Award' for community service from the Hoosier.



*Lisa Faulkenberg with her community service award.*

Faulkenberg was recognized for her work with a local sorority that raises money for charities, leadership at her church, and work on the board for the Perry County Relay for Life.

*The second grade class at the St. Vincent Catholic School in Bedford recognized the Hoosier National Forest with a basket of goodies to thank us for our service to the environment.*



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