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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hoosier NF to discuss plans to implement a restoration project near the town of Mifflin. Neighborhood meeting planned for the Mifflin Area

Tell City, IN June 26, 2008 – The Hoosier National Forest is inviting its neighbors in the Mifflin area to a meeting at Patoka Elementary School on July 9, 2008 at 6 p.m. to discuss a restoration project and possibilities for local landowners to cut hay on Forest land within the project area. The public meeting will provide landowners an opportunity to hear about the project and to learn about the required procedures for haying on Forest Service lands. The meeting will be held in the Multi-Education Room.

The Mifflin project area consists of two large properties acquired by the Forest Service in 2000 and 2006. The land most recently was used for hay production, production of row crops such as corn or soybeans, or pasture for grazing animals. Currently, much of the project area where treatments are proposed includes:

- nonnative invasive species such as multiflora rose, Chinese lespedeza, and tall fescue, which are competing with native grasses,

- Eastern redcedar and hardwood species which are growing into open areas and shading out grasses and other herbaceous plants,
- a small plantation of nonnative pines (about 4 acres) which is providing less suitable habitat and less biodiversity than native forest for birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, and a range of mammals including bats,
- only a few species of trees including sycamore, maple, and river birch trees which occur along stream banks, and
- woody vegetation and other vegetation which threaten the integrity of earthen dams on three small ponds.

“This project includes restoring and maintaining early successional habitats (grassland and shrubland habitats), forest communities, and fire-adapted ecosystems, as well as restoring, enhancing, and maintaining the function of wetlands, streams, and ponds in the project area,” said Cynthia Sandeno, Team Leader for the project. “This is a small area, but there is a lot of potential to improve habitat for wildlife species. And, we will need the help of local landowners to maintain the project into the future.” For this reason, Sandeno said, it becomes important to involve private property owners near the project area.

“In the past, we have had requests to hay portions of the project area, but we weren’t able to grant those requests” emphasizes Sandeno, “Now we are including this as an important tool for the project.”

Sandeno said she hopes landowners and interested publics near the town of Mifflin will come to the meeting. All are welcome. More information about this project is available on the Hoosier’s website at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier/project_docs/current_analysis.htm. Or you can contact the Bedford Office at 812-275-5987.