

**Hoosier National Forest  
Administrative Change 17  
December 2023**

**Correction to Forest-wide Guidance to Caves and Other Karst Features**

An administrative change, as defined at 36 CFR 219.13(c), is any change to a plan that is not a plan amendment or plan revision. Administrative changes include corrections of clerical errors to any part of the plan, conformance of the plan to new statutory or regulatory requirements, or changes to other content in the plan (§ 219.7(f)).

Administrative changes do not require the preparation of an environmental document under Forest Service National Environmental Policy Act procedures and can be made any time following public notice (219.16(c)(6)).

Administrative changes should be printed on salmon colored paper and distributed to all employees for inclusion in their copy of the Forest Plan.

The 2013 Forest Plan Amendment #1 reworded the standard which originally read as “Prohibit timber harvesting and prescribed burning within 200 feet of cave entrances, direct drainage inputs, such as sinkholes and swallow holes, and any streams flowing into a known cave, except for research purposes.” to “Prohibit timber harvesting and prescribed burning within 200 feet of cave entrances.” Interdisciplinary team meeting notes from 2012 show that research and study were intended to be an important part of any alternative, making it clear that the wording “except for research purposes”, which was contained in the original wording, was inadvertently omitted from the new text. This administrative change corrects that clerical error.

Administrative Change 17 replaces page 3-9 of the Forest Plan.

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12/12/2023

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Date

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Maintain or enhance barrens or glades habitat. Removal of woody vegetation by burning, cutting, or mowing may be desirable to maintain or enhance these areas.

Avoid soil-disturbing activities in barrens or glades unless required to meet management objectives (i.e. provide for management access, put in fire lines for prescribed burns, or remove tall fescue or other nonnative invasive plants).

Identify other areas that are not barrens or glades, that harbor botanical Regional Forester sensitive species requiring full sun.

## **Nest Boxes and Other Structures**

For conservation and educational purposes, supplement natural cavities with nest boxes for cavity-nesting mammals and birds. Use nesting platforms or other structures as appropriate.

## **Forest Openings**

Whenever possible, create and maintain larger openings or opening complexes to provide habitat for species that are area sensitive.

Generally, manage forest openings to provide early successional habitat to benefit wildlife species, provide habitat for native plant communities, add visual variety, and provide for recreation opportunities. Manage the edges of most forest openings as shrubby edge or thickets. Develop and maintain other areas, or portions of shrubby areas, in native forbs and grasses.

Where possible, improve wildlife forage and native plant diversity on transmission lines and pipeline rights-of-way.

Where conditions allow, locate openings away from heavily traveled roadways.

Consider public access and recreation when establishing openings.

Mow openings from August to October when possible to minimize disturbance to nesting birds while maintaining some herbaceous food and cover over winter.

Restore native plant communities and replace exotic pasture grasses and other nonnative plants wherever possible.

Retain standing dead trees in created openings as needed, in conjunction with opening development and maintenance.

## **Caves and Other Karst Features**

- \* Prohibit timber harvesting and prescribed burning within 200 feet of cave entrances, except for research purposes.
- \* Do not discharge drilling muds into a karst hydrologic system.