



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Hoosier National Forest
811 Constitution Avenue
Bedford, IN 47421

Web: www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier



Hoosier NF Highlights

Media Contact: Teena Ligman

Voice: (812) 275-5987

Cell: (812) 675-3826

tligman@fs.fed.us

Contact: Teena Ligman, 812-275-5987

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Paddling – The quiet side of the Hoosier NF



By Vicki Gullang-Harris, Recreation Program Manager

Many of us are familiar with the roar of a 150 horse-power motor attached to a boat racing across Monroe or Patoka Lakes, both of which have shoreline in or near the Hoosier National Forest. However, did you know the Hoosier National Forest also provides a quieter boating option?

With the explosion in popularity of sports like standup paddle-boarding (one of the fastest growing water sports in the country), kayaking, and canoeing, many folks are looking for new waters to explore. Many may be interested to find that the Hoosier has many small lakes waiting to be discovered by paddling enthusiasts. While some may simply be looking for opportunities to paddle a quiet lake, many are fishing buffs looking for the thrill of the catch from their paddleboard, kayak, or canoe. The Hoosier's small lakes have something for everyone.

Tipsaw Lake, located within Tipsaw Lake Recreation Area is a 131-acre lake offering a short but fun paddle.

Celina Lake is located within the Indian-Celina Recreation Area. This is a great little lake for doing some paddling and exploring of quiet inlets. At 164 acres, it is a good size to be able to spend a few hours out on the water.

Indian Lake is also located within the Indian-Celina Recreation Area. The lake is 152 acres and offers an even quieter opportunity for exploring. There is a large, shallow inlet on the north-east end of the lake, a great spot for paddlers to get off the main body of the lake and explore this backwater area. Caution should be taken by paddle-boarders around the north-west side of the lake due to underwater obstacles close to the surface. Long dead trees remain standing just below the surface from when the lake was created. Due to these structures close to the surface, this part of Indian lake is not advisable for standup paddleboarding, particularly novices. Alert kayakers and canoers should not be bothered by these underwater structures.

Each of the above lakes is in Perry County and offers camping and restroom facilities, as well as courtesy docks at the boat ramps.

Springs Valley Lake (AKA Tucker Lake) was created in 1963. It is 141 acres, southwest of Paoli, and offers scenic paddling. Primitive camping is also available.

Monroe Lake – Charles C. Deam Wilderness. Access to the shoreline of the Wilderness is available from several boat launches. This area offers seclusion along with great paddling opportunities. Saddle Creek can be explored depending on adequate water levels with a number of designated, primitive campsites near the shoreline of Lake Monroe. This area is a prime paddling/camping opportunity. If you go, please follow leave no trace principles and all wilderness regulations. These can be found on the Forest website at:
http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsbdev3_017286.pdf.

German Ridge and Saddle Lake on the Tell City Ranger District are both small but may offer a fun opportunity for folks camping at those facilities.

For more information on these lakes and other paddling and recreation opportunities, please visit our website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier/>

Paddling safety

Please be aware that state regulations apply even to canoes, kayaks and standup paddleboards. On Department of Natural Resource lakes and reservoirs, paddle craft are required to have an annual non-motorized boat permit affixed. Ensure that you are wearing an approved personal floatation device (PFD) while paddling. There are many new choices that do not involve the large, bulky life vests of old. New inflatable life vests and fanny pack style PFDs provide great, low profile alternatives, with both manual and self-inflating options, that won't obstruct paddling. A waterproof whistle is also recommended. For standup paddleboarders, a leash is a good investment to ensure you don't become separated from your board in the event of an unplanned "swim". Please stay outside designated swim areas.

For more information on DNR requirements for lake permits for non-motorized water craft: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/files/sp-LakePermitFAQ.pdf>. For more information on approved PDFs: <https://www.boat-ed.com/indiana/handbook/page/33/Chapter-5-Required-Equipment/>

For questions on paddling, kayaking or canoeing on the Hoosier contact Vicki Gullang Harris at 812-276-4772 or vgullang@fs.fed.us.

Photos and Captions:



Two examples of Personal Flotation Devices and a “leash” that attaches a person to his craft.



Children on paddleboards.



A man and his dog paddle on a lake.



Kayakers at Celina Lake in Perry County launch their craft for a day of paddling.