



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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Hoosier NF Highlights

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Launching a Day of Fun on the Water



By Stacy Duke, District Recreation and Wilderness Manager

The Hoosier National Forest has six boat launches accessing a variety of water recreation opportunities across several counties. An Indiana State watercraft permit is required on many of these lakes.

On the north end of the Forest, the Hardin Ridge Recreation Area provides a boat launch onto Monroe Lake. Hardin Ridge Recreation Area is located approximately 15 miles south of Bloomington. At 10,750 acres, Monroe Lake is Indiana's largest reservoir and offers a variety of recreation opportunities such as fishing, water skiing and kayaking. Monroe Lake receives high use during the summer season. The boat launch at Hardin Ridge has parking, an accessible courtesy dock (seasonally), a shoreline trail, restroom facilities, a nearby swimming beach with a playground, shelter houses, and ample camping within the Recreation Area- providing over 200 campsites and two rental cabins. Approximately 5 miles of trails are available. A day use fee of \$5 is charged seasonally. Camping/Cabin fees are separate.

Monroe Lake is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers whereas Hardin Ridge Recreation Area is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and operated by concessionaires.

Approximately 10 miles south of French Lick, Springs Valley Lake has a boat launch with a courtesy dock (seasonally), parking and a restroom facility. Although the 140-acre Springs Valley Lake is relatively small, and located off the beaten path, it is a popular area for fishing and boating. The recreation area has approximately 13 miles of trails which can be accessed near the boat launch. Popular uses of the lake include fishing and kayaking. Only trolling motors are permitted on this lake.

Indian-Celina Lake Recreation Area, just south of Interstate 64 offers another opportunity to launch your boat and enjoy two different tranquil lakes. Indian Lake is 152 acres, has a courtesy dock (seasonally), and a restroom facility. Celina Lake is slightly larger, at 164 acres, has a courtesy dock (seasonally), restroom facilities, and picnic tables. The historic Rickenbaugh House also sits adjacent to the boat launch. The Indian-Celina Lake Recreation Area provides 63 campsites and nearly 20 miles of trails. A day use fee of \$5 is charged seasonally. Camping fees are separate. Only trolling motors are permitted on these lakes. Fishing, paddle boarding and kayaking are popular.

Further south, Tipsaw Lake Recreation Area provides a boat launch accessing the 131-acre lake. A courtesy dock (seasonally), restroom facility, picnic tables and parking are available near the boat launch. Tipsaw Lake also has a swimming beach with a playground, nearby picnic shelters, and 57 campsites within the Recreation Area. Tipsaw, Indian, and Celina Lakes receive moderate to high use.

Lastly, Saddle Lake, just south of Tipsaw Lake Recreation Area offers a quieter, primitive boating experience. Saddle Lake is 40 acres in size and does not provide a courtesy dock or restroom facility at the boat launch but does have a 2.2 mile trail around the lake. Parking is available. Lake users can access restrooms at the nearby primitive campground about a ½ mile from the boat launch. Saddle Lake, which allows only trolling motors, is an ideal fishing spot.

For more information visit the Hoosier National Forest's website at www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier, call our toll free number at 866-302-4173, or visit our offices in Bedford or Tell City, IN.



A group of Girl Scouts preparing for day of kayaking at Celina Lake.



A variety of watercraft near the boat launch at Celina Lake.



A view of the boat launch at Hardin Ridge and the bay accessed by the Hardin Ridge boat launch.