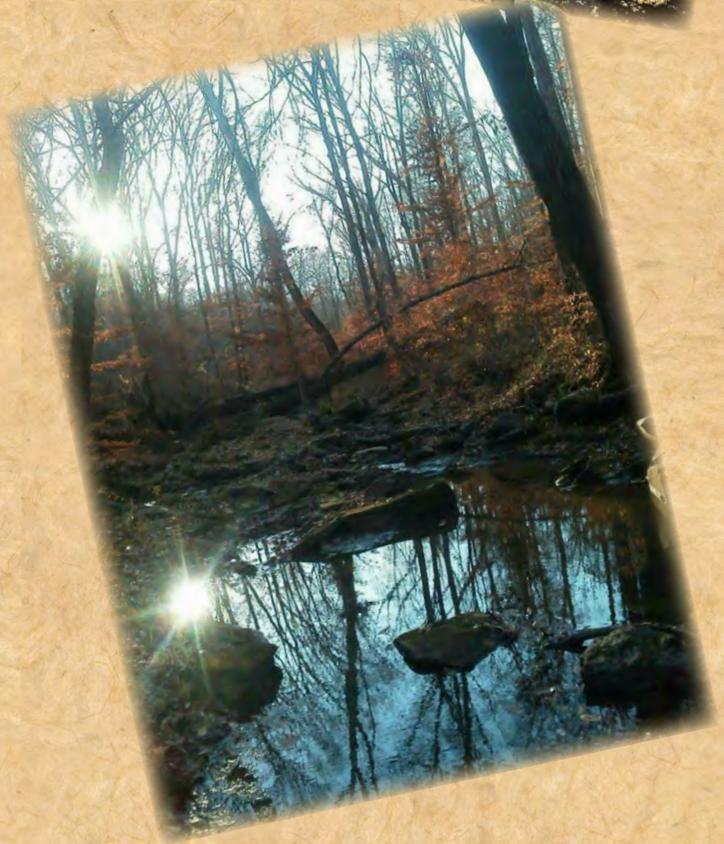




United States Department of Agriculture

Hoosier National Forest

2016 In Review



Forest Vision:

The Hoosier National Forest, one of Indiana's premier Federal resources, provides outstanding stewardship by restoring, maintaining, and interpreting our public's cultural and natural resources.

We offer high quality, resilient and rare ecosystems that provide diverse outdoor recreational experiences.



Forest Service
Hoosier National Forest

04/2017
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From Mike Chaveas, Forest Supervisor



Mike Chaveas

The report that follows will give you a sampling of some of the excellent work accomplished by Hoosier National Forest employees and our partners in 2016; work to restore and sustain your public land and its natural resources, connect communities to conservation, and preserve and interpret our local and national history. I am not only proud of what the Hoosier accomplished in the past year, but how we accomplished it; by making full use of new and existing partnerships, utilizing new authorities and funding sources, all while exposing youth to conservation careers, connecting people to their land and through a collective commitment to public service to the American people.

My hope is that through the pages of this report, you will be exposed to something new about the importance of not only the Hoosier National Forest, or national forests in general, but about the benefits all public lands provide and the good work of conservation professionals and engaged citizens. I count among these various federal and state government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, cities and counties that prioritize conservation needs for their citizens and the countless individuals who care for their own land, pick up trash from public spaces, build

lessons about nature into their school's curriculum, or otherwise serve the greatest good in their own way.

The 204,000 acre Hoosier National Forest helps provide clean air and drinking water to local communities, and is a recreational outlet for thousands of citizens whether you hike, fish, camp, ride a horse or a mountain bike. The Forest provides habitat for a wide array of wildlife, from the endangered to the common, which is vital to the hunter, the bird watcher or those who simply enjoy the chance encounters out on the trail or in their backyard. The Forest also supports our way of life in southern Indiana, a landscape that surprises many visitors with its scenic, forested rolling hills. These public lands improve our quality of life and social well-being, are a draw for tourism, a recruitment tool for employers, and a source of economic activity that supports local, sustainable wood-products industries with a rich tradition in this part of the state.

As we move into 2017 and beyond we continually strive to connect communities to their land in new and more meaningful ways. As Aldo Leopold pointed out "the science of relationships is called ecology", and conservation and public land management in the modern world is all about relationships. The Hoosier, as a multiple-use public land base, can bring together diverse interests with a common passion and appreciation for natural spaces and their benefits. I look forward to working with and learning from all of you.

Mike Chaveas, Forest Supervisor

2016 Hoosier Accomplishments- From National Report

Resource Area	Actual	5 Year Average
Acres of forest vegetation established	239 acres	195 acres
Acres of forestland vegetation improved	1,764 acres	931 acres
Acres treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire	3,523 acres	2,738 acres
Number of recreation sites maintained to standard	38 sites	36 sites
Miles of trail maintained to standard	65.5 miles	122 miles
CCF of timber volume sold	10,458 CCF	6,864 CCF
Miles of stream habitat restored/enhanced	3.85 miles	2.0 miles
Acres of lake habitat restored/enhanced	46.30 acres	24 acres
Acres of terrestrial habitat restored/enhanced	3,556.36 acres	2,781 acres

Cover photos (counter clockwise): Photo contest winner Ronald Arnold's sons hiking, Cory Young's natural features, and Arnolds, backwater kayaking. All taken on the Hoosier National Forest.

Sustain Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands

National Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Initiative-

Within the project's first year, the Hoosier Hills and Highlands Oak Community Restoration Partnership has reported significant progress in their efforts to regenerate hardwoods and improve water quality efforts in the region.

This three-year project is part of the National Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Initiative, a partnership between two USDA agencies, the Forest Service (USFS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), along with Indiana DNR and The Nature Conservancy. These agencies, plus a large group of public and private partners are focusing on oak tree regeneration and other conservation practices that lead to improved water quality, reduced wildfire risk, and enhanced at-risk habitat on public and private lands in 18 southern Indiana counties.

This area was selected because it is one of the

Good Neighbor Agreement

We expanded our successful partnership with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to include a Good Neighbor Agreement. This Agreement with the IDNR, with Supplemental Project Agreements executed with the Division of Fish and Wildlife for early successional habitat and wetlands restoration, and the Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology for aerial surveys to map the invasive tree, ailanthus (tree of heaven).

The Hoosier NF has worked collaboratively for over 50 years with the IDNR to establish and maintain early successional habitat and restore wetlands. The new authority provides a tool to build on our existing partnership and get quality habitat work accomplished on the ground in a cost effective manner.



Early Successional area.

During the first year of the Agreement over 400 acres of early successional habitat is expected to be restored and maintained. Most areas will also provide habitat for pollinators in addition to birds and other wildlife. Over 100 acres of wetlands will be maintained or restored in the first year. The multiple year agreement will have habitat work defined collaboratively by the Hoosier and IDNR.

most heavily forested and biologically diverse forest systems in the entire Central Hardwoods Region. It provides drinking water for several communities and habitat for federal and state-endangered species such as bats, birds, and cave-dwelling species.

Both agencies agree that educating those who own or manage property is one of the most effective ways to improve the landscape long-term. So far, nearly 200 consulting foresters, farmers, right-of-way managers, wildlife biologists, and others have been trained in woodland management topics such as invasive plant control, thinning and pruning techniques, and understory improvement.

The National Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership is now in its fourth year and proving to be effective in bringing together USFS and NRCS with partners to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet.



Thinned young stands of trees.

Ecosystem restoration at Indian-Celina

Sustainable forest ecosystems often require multiple land management activities be planned collectively. Recent timber harvests at the Indian-Celina Recreation Area are part of the larger Uniontown South Restoration Project.

The ultimate goal of this project is to create a healthier diverse forest that includes native species and younger tree stands. When this project is complete, there will be over 700 acres of young forest, created by removing non-native pine trees and thinning overstocked hardwood stands. By the end of 2016, the project was 70 percent complete.

Additional activities including harvests and prescribed fire, will continue for another five to ten years.

Deliver Benefits to the Public

D Trail Reroute

A great example of public-private partnering in 2016 came with the major rerouting of the D Trail that connects three major forest areas popular with mountain bikers. A total of five segments, totalling about one mile, were rerouted and redesigned to allow mountain biking.

The 2.2 mile Forest Service trail now connects to Indiana State Forest and State Park property, changing ownership three times, and connecting visitors from one public land ownership to the next. The entire stretch is now in a sus-



tainable location with spectacular views of Indiana's hardwood forests.

Working together, Hoosier NF employees (photo at left), and Hoosier Mountain Bike



Association (HMBA) members determined the new trail route. The Hoosier NF utilized the mule team to plow and grade the route, and HMBA volunteers (shown working in photo at left) worked with Hoosier NF personnel to finish the trail.

This trail provides a boost to the area economy and protects water quality by reducing sediment running off the trail during storm events.

Stock Program

In 2016, two of the hardest-working employees on the Forest retired after a combined 40 years of service- mules Ruth and Jack. Together the two mules helped plow and grade over 22 miles of new trail and hauled over 1,200 tons of gravel with a sled or in gravel saddle bags to resurface wilderness trails. They also made over 7,000 visitor contacts in the field and participated in countless public education efforts about primitive tools and assisted the Forest in outreach by being featured in newspapers and publications. Ruth and Jack and their team have won three Traditional Skills and Minimum Tool Leadership Awards from the Chief of the Forest Service. The Forest has recently acquired two new employees, Lollie and Cedar, who again com-

Buffalo Trace Working Group

The Buffalo Trace Working Group, organized by the Hoosier National Forest, worked for two years on a variety of projects related to the Buffalo Trace, and accomplished numerous collective goals.

The group's main mission was to research, locate, and preserve the location and historical significance of the Buffalo Trace in southern Indiana. The group created several products including a written report documenting the results of the surveys conducted to find extant trail segments, and a website (developed through a participating agreement with Indiana University Southeast and maintained by Indiana Historic Pathways). They also developed 70 Buffalo Trace educational boxes (funded through an Indiana Humanities grant) which contained 15 lesson plans and interactive materials, and were distributed to school districts across eight counties in southern Indiana for use in 4th grade Indiana History curriculum. The group also developed a Buffalo Trace interactive story map, (screenshot below,) which is now available from the homepage on the Hoosier NF website.



plete the four-member stock team and will help continue the program's long history of work in the wilderness and elsewhere.



Jack (left) and Ruth retire after a combined 40 years of work on the Hoosier.

-- Community Events --

The Hoosier National Forest has continued its long commitment to public education with an emphasis on youth and service. Using multiple partnerships and volunteers, the Hoosier NF visited classrooms, participated in community events, and hosted gatherings focused on youth and recreation.



The Hoosier sponsored a booth at the FFA National Conference to promote natural resource careers and teach youth about the Forest Service.



Volunteers collect trash from the shoreline of the reservoir on September 11, 2016, during the annual Monroe Lake cleanup sponsored by a variety of partners.

Adventures With Nature was held on June 25, 2016 at the Tipsaw Lake Recreation Area with a theme of Wilderness Survival. This young man (right) shows off a paracord bracelet he made at the event.



For Indiana's Bicentennial, Smokey Bear, two employees, and two retirees were honored as torch bearers.



Fishing derbies held at both the north and south ends of the Hoosier NF encourage kids to "get hooked on fishing." The Brownstown Ranger District's 25th annual event on May 14, 2016 had about 100 people in attendance. A young man above (left), shows off a fish he caught. The Tell City District event on May 21, 2016 at German Ridge Recreation Area had 60+ children attend. In the photo above, children at this derby learn to shoot a bow at floating carp targets in the lake.

Get Outdoor Day was celebrated on June 18, 2016 at Murray Forest Park in Bedford in partnership with several other organizations. A total of 386 people attended the event. The photo at right shows members of the Bloomington Bike Club assisting a young girl through the bike obstacle course.



Tribal voices returned to southern Indiana in two public presentations by members of the Miami and Delaware Tribes of Oklahoma. Michael Pace from the Delaware Tribe is shown here.



The Wildflower Foray was held April 22-24, 2016 and featured three hikes on the Hoosier National Forest. Two were small group hikes in the Charles C. Deam Wilderness.



The 8th annual Kids Unplugged event was on May 5, 2016 at Hardin Ridge Recreation Area with 209 5th graders from four schools. We had 13 stations with various agencies and environmental organizations teaching outdoor hands-on activities.

Apply Knowledge Globally

Heritage projects/partnerships

“Save Our Prehistory Service Project” is a new stewardship program for the Hoosier National Forest to increase awareness and protection of



Fencing crew at Mesmore Cliffs.

natural and cultural resources. “Save Our Prehistory” was spearheaded by Indiana University-Purdue University student and Anthropology Club president John Flood.

In April, the Hoosier hosted the first “Save Our Prehistory” service project at Mesmore Cliffs. The goal of this project was to construct a fence to protect fragile archaeological sites from further damage. The Mesmore Cliffs area contains many important cultural resources including some fairly remote caves, rockshelters, and open air habitations. In a single weekend Forest employees, AmeriCorps team members, and anthropology students constructed 1000 feet of ~28 inch high fence, both a mental and physical

barrier to protect these archaeological sites from further damage.

Other partnership highlights from our Heritage Program include: a collaborative effort with the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma to provide trees for use in a workshop where tribal members used traditional methods to manufacture lacrosse sticks; execution of a Regional Memorandum of Understanding with the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma to facilitate meaningful consultation; a partnership with Southern Illinois University (SIU) to continue archaeological investigations of the Lick Creek African American Settlement and an historic mill; a partnership with SIU for cultural resource surveys in advance of restoration projects; a new partnership with Ball State University to conduct surveys looking for an historic Native American village while providing a training opportunity for students; and a curation agreement with Indiana State Museum and Glenn Black Lab-Indiana University for the loan of artifacts for display in a local library.

Hoosier Know-how Mentors Africans

Hoosier NF employees take every opportunity to use knowledge and expertise gained in southern Indiana to benefit US citizens and the future of the planet. In 2016, for the second time, Hoosier NF Forest Fire Management Officer, Terry Severson, participated in a US Forest Service International Programs Technical Assistance Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

This International project brought together the major stakeholders within the 330,000 acre Lac Tumba pilot area of Mai-Ndombe Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo to begin developing a land management plan as well as to provide both suppression and prescribed fire operational and safety training. In addition, the mission was focused on local women taking the lead in fire management to protect critical habitat and grazing lands.

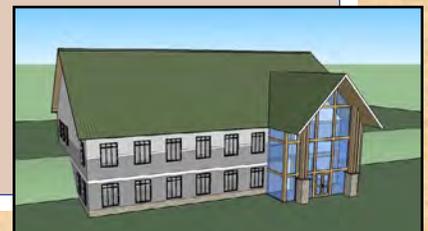
This project was so successful, it earned the Chief’s Honor Award for “Applying Knowledge Globally.”



Terry Severson (center of back row) with his African counterparts in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Rose Hulman Students Provide Design

Students from Rose Hulman Institute of Technology volunteered to design a new office for the Hoosier National Forest south of Bedford. Fully compliant to all current LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards they submitted a cutting edge design for consideration. A graphic of their design is shown here.



Excel as a High-Performing Agency

Utilization of different hiring authorities-

Every program area that routinely hires temporary or seasonal employees is dedicated to creating a diverse candidate pool and using unique hiring authorities. Managers locate alternative funding, recruit youth and veterans to apply for positions, and hire the best candidates possible. Our emphasis on hiring youth in particular is to encourage young people to care about and work to enhance public lands. We hope to inspire future generations to become active stewards while accomplishing forest health and public recreation goals.

Crew of employees from MobilizeGreen and Youth Conservation Corps.



Regional awards

Becky Bade was recognized by the Eastern Regional Office's 2016 Inspiring Woman Award in the category of *Outstanding Safety Achievement*.

These awards "honor the contributions and commitment of outstanding women in the Forest Service representing the Eastern Region" and are given to "honor women who work to improve the quality of life for their fellow employees and to recognize their contributions and extraordinary achievements to empower women in the workplace."

Becky was chosen for this award due to her many years of providing incredible support to the Forest's safety program and to all of us regardless of the day to day work we each perform. There is no doubt she has truly improved the quality of all of our work lives every day.

Sadly, Becky Bade, shown here, passed away in July 2016.



Two military veterans were hired, seven MobilizeGreen interns, one Public Land Corps recreation technician, one VetsWork intern, one National Wild Turkey Federation intern in wildlife management, and 10 AmeriCorps team members who worked a variety of projects. Some of these were permanent, some seasonal and some term positions but each gave individuals an opportunity to work for the Forest Service and help with the Forest Service mission.

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2016 Payments to Counties

Indiana counties with National Forest System lands received an average of \$1.57/acre (range of \$1.10 - \$2.74). Although national forests do not pay property taxes, funds are paid in lieu of taxes to compensate local government for land taken off the tax rolls. The payments were received from two contributing funds. The Hoosier National Forest also provides funds for road projects, cooperative law enforcement, and volunteer fire department support.

<i>County</i>	<i>N.F. Acres</i>	<i>Total \$</i>
Brown	18,205	\$38,107
Crawford	24,290	32,606
Dubois	427	1,168
Jackson	22,844	39,214
Lawrence	16,282	17,949
Martin	9,696	12,941
Monroe	18,811	38,132
Orange	32,805	52,517
Perry	60,370	86,208
Total	203,730	\$318,842

Volunteers Add Value to Forest!

Year-round volunteers are a blessing to the Hoosier National Forest. Much of the work on the Forest would not happen without their help.

In 2016, the Forest received prestigious Eastern Region Awards for two volunteer projects. One was for the outstanding work done with the Buffalo Trace Working Group mentioned on page 4. Thirty individuals were recognized for their contribution to the project.

A second regional award was received for the Monroe Lake cleanup. Each year the Hoosier works with Monroe County Stormwater and Indiana DNR- Paynetown, to plan the lakeshore cleanup. In 2016 there were 97 volunteers who put in a collective 392 hours cleaning up the lakeshore of Monroe Lake. The event not only removes huge amounts of trash from the lake, but teaches the consequences of trash in our water source and environment to those who attend. The volunteer event has now also received a national award! Congratulations to everyone who makes this and every other volunteer effort on the Hoosier a success!

Volunteer Service - 2016

	<i># Volunteers</i>	<i>Vol. Hours</i>	<i>Value of Svc</i>
Total	719	9,222	\$217,280



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