# HOOSIER NATIONAL FOREST
# PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION OF GEOSPATIAL DATA
# GUIDELINES

In general, the geospatial data collected, managed, and used by the Hoosier National Forest for resource management is public information.   The objective of this document is to:

- provide guidance and a consistent strategy for managing the release of geospatial data, compliant with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA),

- ensure a timely response to geospatial data requests and maintain a positive public relationship with minimal impacts on our ability to carry out the agency mission,

- provide guidance on which geographic data will be available for public release, and

- assure that the geospatial information released to the public is described and its release documented.

## Data Availability

Data Available for Release:  In general, geospatial data as described below which is used, maintained, or stored by the Hoosier National Forest will be considered available for public release:

- Layers composed of Primary Base Series data including vegetation, transportation, administrative boundaries, federally owned land administered by the Forest Service, and cultural features.

- Layers of data previously published or released to public information media and currently maintained by the agency (e.g. in Forest Plans, Environmental Assessments, etc.)

- Layers of data developed by the Forest that have been deemed releasable by the Forest.

Data Not Available for Public Release:  Generally, the agency can exempt from public disclosure certain types of information, as specified under the FOIA.

Data Obtained From External Sources:  Requests for geospatial data obtained from sources outside the Forest Service will generally be referred to the organization or individual which initially produced the information.

Data Available Through Map Services:  The public will be directed to use externally-facing, USFS Map services that house Hoosier data (when available) rather than duplicate efforts.

## Release of Existing Geographic Information:

Requesting Specific Hoosier Geospatial Information:  All external, specific requests for geospatial data will be directed to the Forest GIS Coordinator.  Requests must be submitted in writing or directed to the Forest GIS Coordinator's email address to provide a basis for tracking and filling requests.  Requestor should include name, address, email, phone number, and specific data or map needed.

Information will be posted on our external website regarding who to contact to access information for the Hoosier.

Data Format:   Hoosier geospatial data, unless available via a Map Service, will be released in current technology format as identified on our external website and generally will be provided by email.

Spatial data and associated reports may be released in hard-copy map and/or tabular form, provided that the data already exists in hard-copy format as a map or report.

Requests to provide data in a manner other than that specified above (e.g. providing information involving a different set or combination of data; performing analysis and providing information according to the requestors' specified parameters; maps at a different scale) will be considered requests for special data processing services. Such data may only be provided based on time and resource availability.

Provision of Media:  The Forest Service will provide the media rather than accepting media.

Release of Information:   Metadata to assist requesters in understanding and interpreting the provided data should accompany the data.  A transmittal letter or email with disclaimer statement will serve as a record of information release that can be referenced, if necessary, in the future.

If data is being released as hard copy maps, the following information should be on the map:

- Primary Map Title
- Secondary title information identifying the map source as Hoosier National Forest; District, purchase unit, county, or PLSS as applicable.
- Map legend explaining information displayed
- Scale
- North arrow
- USDA logo and Forest Service Shield
- Date of map production
- Map author
- Disclaimer statement

## Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the Forest Supervisor and District Ranger to ensure the efficient and timely release of geospatial information, upon request, within the framework of these guidelines, and to ensure procedures necessary to implement the guidelines are in place.

It is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Officer/Planning Team Leader to provide staff support concerning interpretation of these guidelines, as well as, interpretation of matters pertaining to information requested under the FOIA.

It is the responsibility of the Forest GIS Coordinator to review requests for data, serve as liaison between the public and forest resource specialists concerning requests; establish timelines, prioritize, and assess the cost of local information requests (if applicable); and follow appropriate collection procedures through a designated collection officer.  The Forest GIS Coordinator will also maintain a log of all digital information requests.