



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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Hoosier NF Highlights

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Not in My Backyard!



By Judi Perez, Planning and Public Affairs Officer

Visitor surveys from the Hoosier National Forest show that most Forest visitors come from a relatively close distance. The Hoosier is a local Forest with mostly local users. Some larger western Forests, or those in the Northeast tend to be a destination and attract visitors from farther away and even international visitors. But that is generally not the case here, and we love being considered as many Hoosier's back yard.

The term NIMBY was coined in 1980 to refer to a person who opposes something that they do not think is appropriate in their local area, their town or neighborhood. NIMBY stands for Not In My Backyard. So if you wouldn't dump trash in your backyard why would you dump it on your National Forest? Or why tolerate other people dumping trash on your Forest?

Each year we spend thousands of your tax dollars to clean up dump sites on the Hoosier National Forest. It takes a lot of time and money to pick up and remove large amounts of trash. One dump site was so extensive it took an estimated \$30,000 to clean up. Often the trash is dumped within sight of the county transfer station. It is an ongoing, expensive, and potentially dangerous problem. I am not referring to the occasional garbage bag that falls off a vehicle in route to the dump, or even roadside litter, which is a whole other topic. The trash dumps we find may contain general household garbage, construction waste, furniture, carpets, mattresses, and more. To keep your National Forest and water clean and

to meet our mission of “Caring for the land and Serving the People” our employees clean these sites up as soon as they are found.

It’s not always an easy or safe process. First, we have to identify what is in there. There may be hazardous waste or unsafe construction materials, such as asbestos that puts our employees at risk.

During clean up, law enforcement personnel go through the trash looking for evidence that might identify who left the materials on the Forest. Trained law enforcement personnel spend time sifting through garbage bags, insulation, and other unpleasantries looking for anything that will identify where the trash came from. This could mean that it takes them longer to respond in the case of a real, life threatening emergency.

When they do find that nugget of information that might identify the dumper, they issue a citation for up to \$300. They also require the responsible party to appear in a US Court in Indianapolis or Evansville which could require the dumper to take time off from work. The judge could issue additional fines and collect clean up fees.

The Woodsy Owl campaign worked to convince people to “Give a Hoot, Don’t Pollute,” and then to “Lend a Hand, Care for the Land.” Trash dumping on your Hoosier National Forest impacts and damages natural resources and creates an unsightly health hazard. If you see a trash dump on National Forest land please report it so we can clean it up.

If you witness someone dumping on National Forest land, please call our office. You can remain anonymous, all we need is the location and if you know who is doing it. If you are dumping trash on National Forest land, be aware you could be caught. The National Forest belongs to all of us; we should all be concerned and be willing to lend a hand to care for the land.





Cleaning up a dump on a Hoosier National Forest road.