



United States Department of Agriculture

Hoosier National Forest

2013-2014

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

From Mike Chaveas, Forest Supervisor



Mike Chaveas

As I progress in my first year as Forest Supervisor for the Hoosier National Forest, I continue to be amazed by the rich tradition and efficient management of this Forest by its employees past and present. Coming into this position after having worked on National Forests in the western US, I've been learning the different ways the people of Indiana and visitors to the state interact with their Forest and the expectations they have for its management. The National Forests of the east tell an inspiring story of rehabilitation and restoration. Formerly denuded and largely abandoned lands, the Hoosier stands as a living demonstration of what is possible with the right mix of social and political will, focused investments, hard work and enough time.

In 2015 we mark the 80th anniversary of the first acquisition of land which would later become the Hoosier National Forest. As we move to-

wards a century of public land management in Indiana, we are thinking of how these lands we have the honor of managing, fit in the broader context of a resilient southern Indiana landscape, across ownership boundaries; and what partners, communities, landowners and interested parties share common goals for healthy, productive forest lands that will benefit us all, and continually improve our quality of life for another 80 years and more.

The report that follows highlights just a portion of the great work that the Hoosier NF staff has accomplished over the last two years. As you read these examples, I hope you will share in the pride of ownership in our natural heritage, and feel inspired to get out and see more of it first-hand. More than ever, I believe our workforce is a shining example of efficiency and effective management of your natural resources, focused on seeking and achieving the greatest good for the greatest number for generations to come.

Mike Chaveas
Forest Supervisor

2013-2014 Hoosier Accomplishments- From National Report

Resource Area	Goal 2013/14	Accomp. 2013/14	% Target 2013/14
Forest acres regenerated and vegetation improvement	1280/1748 acres	1149/1853 acres	90%/106%
Lands treated to reduce risk of wildfire	2600/2106 acres	2179/2663 acres	84%/126%
Stream habitat restored or enhanced	3/1 mile	3/1 mile	100%
Lake habitat restored or enhanced	20/21 acres	20/26 acres	105%/129%
Wildlife habitat restoration	2320/3010 acres	2320/3014 acres	100%/100%
Recreation sites maintained to a 90% condition standard	27/27 sites	36/38 sites	133%/141%
Trails maintained to national standards	76/76 miles	75.5/76 miles	99%/100%
Timber sold	3594/7200 cubic ft	7846/7444 cubic ft	218%/103%

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Cover photos (counter clockwise): father and daughter fishing, prescribed burn in Lawrence County, and Smokey Bear giving a child an award.

Protecting Ecosystems across Boundaries



Patoka Wetland Restored



Osprey platforms were built with the help of the Orange County REMC.

Fields along the Patoka River previously drained and cleared for farming are being restored as wetlands. In the 1780's, 24 percent of Indiana was wetlands, today only 3.5 percent remain.

Drain pipes and ditches were removed, and a low dam was built to hold water from the hillside above. Two pools seasonally provide water for amphibians and other species.

There are 344 acres of wetlands now restored across the Forest in 12 wetland complexes. Each project involves the help of many partners.

Logging and Ecosystem Restoration

The Hoosier sold 13,563 CCF of timber in FY 2013 and 2014. This is comparable in volume, to 10,596 cords of firewood. At the end of 2014 there were still 5 timber sales under contract. Three sales are in the Uniontown South project area, and 2 sales are in the Oriole Restoration project area. Additionally, contractual requirements were completed on 5 more sales in 2014 including the last of the German Ridge sales and the Dutch Ridge Stewardship Sale.

In the winter of 2014, the Hoosier completed sale preparation on two sales which will be available for bid in 2015. One is a stewardship sale.

The sales focus on restoration of central hardwood forests which includes removing nonnative pine species, or improving stand density and



Log Landing on the Dutch Ridge.

structure in hardwood forests. Returning the stands to a higher percentage of hardwoods improves habitat for wildlife and benefits native plant and wildlife species. Recent research on pine in southern Indiana shows that pine inhibits many herbaceous species with dense needle mats, as well as fewer soil nutrients and higher soil acidity.

At the Patoka Wetland, since there were few large standing trees in the area, Orange County REMC assisted with constructing high platforms where osprey could safely raise their young.

Over 7,000 Indiana plant species and 900 animal species require wetlands at some point in their lives. Of those, 60 wetland-dependent animal species and 120 plant species are listed as endangered, threatened or rare. A few of these species you may see in this wetland. You may also see river otter and several waterfowl species.

Thanks to our partners: Ducks Unlimited, IDNR - Division of Fish and Wildlife, National Wild Turkey Federation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Quail Upland Game Alliance for their help with this project.

Monitoring Bats on the Hoosier

The Hoosier monitors 10 bat species. Two species, the Indiana bat and the gray bat are currently listed as federally endangered and the northern long-eared bat is proposed for listing.

Forest staff monitors bat populations by conducting annual acoustic bat surveys on pre-determined routes. Special instruments record ultrasonic bat sounds, giving biologists general population trend information. Hibernating bat surveys show decreasing numbers of bats.

Biologists also set up mist nets across streams in select locations. These nets catch bats, allowing biologists to closely examine the age, sex, weight, and health of each bat they catch. In 2014, few bats were caught compared to past years. This is consistent with other states where white-nose syndrome has taken a toll on bat populations.

Forest Supervisor Mike Chaveas continued Forest cave closures in 2014. Given the continued decline of bat populations, he hopes to slow potential spread of white-nose syndrome. "There are several ways the disease is spread," said Chaveas, "we cannot control bat-to-bat transmission or the spread from already infected environments to bats. By limiting access to the caves, however, we can try to slow the rate at which humans spread the disease to previously uninfected areas." Most Forest caves are thought to be infected with white-nose.

Connecting Citizens to the Land

Smokey Bear Turns 70

Everyone's favorite bear turned 70 this year and the Hoosier helped him celebrate with several birthday parties. Smokey received many home-made birthday cards and gave out awards for the best cards in different age groups.

There were opportunities to dress up as a firefighter, practice spraying out fires, learn about fire prevention, and see Smokey Bear.

A new generation of children got excited about meeting Smokey Bear and learning about fires, and old friends got to wish Smokey a Happy 70th!



Remember, only you can prevent wildfires!

Young boy dressed as a firefighter learns to use a fire hose to spray the spinning fire flame.

Lick Creek Descendents Visit Forest

Staff on the Hoosier have been studying the Lick Creek African American Settlement in Orange County for many years. During the summer of 2014, Archaeologist Angie Doyle was thrilled to have the opportunity to host a visit from many of the descendents of the very people who once lived in this area. Despite research done by Forest staff and Indiana State Museum, there have always been many unanswered questions about the people who lived on these remote farmsteads. The visit gave an opportunity to answer a few of those questions!

Donna Griffin, great granddaughter of Austin Bonds and a descendant of both Mathew Thomas and Elias Roberts contacted Doyle while doing her family genealogy. They were planning a reunion and she asked if some of them could come down for a visit. Both the Thomas and Roberts farmsteads had been investigated, so the Hoosier had a lot of information on these two families.

Twelve family members visited the cemetery from as far away as California and Florida. They brought flowers for the graves and shared stories passed down by their families about the area and their ancestors.

A few of them had last been to the cemetery

50 Years of Wilderness

The Hoosier celebrated the 50 year anniversary of the Wilderness Act with an event in 2014. With several activities offered in the Charles C. Deam Wilderness, including Mr. Deam himself, the event was well attended.

Visitors watched a flint-knapper at work, learned about the history of the Wilderness, met the mules who help maintain the Wilderness trails, learned about wilderness safety, search and rescue, and the fire tower among other activities.



Matt Jones, as Charles C. Deam interprets early botanical surveys to visitors at the Wonders of Wilderness Celebration.

Get Outdoors Celebrated

The 2nd annual Get Outdoors Day in June 2014, drew 247 kids and their families. They participated in 26 outdoor activities at Bedford's Murray Forest Park. Working with Bedford City Park and other partners, the Forest hosted an all day event where families could ride horses (shown below), learn to safely use a bow, shoot a .22 rifle, cast a fishing rod, use a map and compass, and try many other outdoor activities.

One local shopkeeper reported later that a family came by after leaving the event to buy fishing bait and a picnic lunch. They were on their way to the Forest to spend the rest of the day outdoors. That's what it's all about!



in 1989 and were happy with the changes made. It was a memorable day for the family to reconnect with their past, and for the Hoosier staff to "care for the land and serve the people".



Family members at Lick Creek Cemetery.

Walk the Talk for Sustainability

Improving Aquatic Resources

Two culverts on Indian Lake Road were replaced in 2014 to improve aquatic organism passages. The former culverts had large pools below their outlets creating a barrier for small aquatic organisms to move upstream. One pipe was 84 inches in diameter. It was replaced by a 13 foot x 6 foot x 9 inch multi-plate bottomless arch pipe.

With the previous culvert there was a 4-6 inch drop-off from the bottom of the pipe to the water level making it impossible for aquatic organisms to move up the stream. Now fish and other aquatic life can move from Celina Lake up and down the stream through the culvert without encountering obstacles.

The 84-inch pipe, which was in good condition, was then used to replace a smaller, rusting 48-inch pipe in an adjacent drainage. When it was replaced, the pipe

was wrapped in a protective wrap and buried 3 feet deep to create a natural stream bottom within the pipe.

This work had been in the making for several years and will reduce sedimentation and improve aquatic habitat in the area.

The work on the two culverts kept the road to Indian Lake closed for much of the summer. The work was done by a local contractor.



The original and the new culvert installed on Indian Lake Road.

Fire Season Highlights

Wildfires have been kept at a minimum with 29 fires totalling 102 acres in 2014 and only 6 fires totalling 6 acres in 2013. The wildfire protection boundary was revised to cover 872,000 acres in southcentral Indiana.

Weather patterns made it challenging to complete prescribed burns. Six prescribed fires were accomplished in 2014; burning a total of 1,421 acres. In 2013, seven burns treated 906 acres. During the two year time period, an additional 3,676 acres were treated mechanically. Firefighters from the DNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Nature Conservancy assisted on burns and in return

Hoosier fire staff helped with their burns. In 2014 the Forest completed a five year Inter-agency Master Agreement.



Paul Fountain shooting veri pistol rounds of fire into the interior of a prescribed burn.

Protecting Natural Resources from OHVs

Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use is a significant problem in many areas of the Forest. Riders create their own roads and trails through the Forest. Forest

Law Enforcement officials, Indiana DNR Conservation Officers, and local law enforcement are working to identify and ticket individuals who are riding illegally.

Illegal OHV riding on the Hoosier costs the Forest Service, and thereby taxpayers, many thousands of dollars in restoration and rehabilitation costs every year. Steep hills, degraded streams and severe erosion are expensive and time consuming to repair. Installation of gates and barrier posts are used in an effort to control the illegal use, yet natural resource restoration and rehabilitation efforts will take many years to complete.



Barrier posts put in to keep out ATVs.

Revolutionizing effectiveness and efficiency

Passport in Time Project Explores German Ridge History

In the fall of 2013, the Hoosier hosted its first Passport in Time (PIT) volunteer project in 21 years. The volunteers enjoyed their stay and did



PIT leaders and volunteers.

some great research. One volunteer, Stephen Waylett, logged his 100th project while on the Hoosier!

The group excavated portions of a 19th century German American farmstead. Findings of this work are now

shared through interpretive signs placed in the area.

During the second week, staff and volunteers focused on the "mystery domes". No one knew

the purpose of these rock domes or whether they were constructed during the historic or prehistoric period. A variety of survey techniques such as shovel testing, metal detecting, and sophisticated remote sensing equipment were used to examine the domes and try to solve the mystery.

The work was done in partnership with Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology - Indiana University. Passport in Time is a national program through USDA Forest Service.



Dr. Timothy Baumann with one of the mystery domes.

New Acquisitions on the Hoosier Add Value to the Landbase

In 2014, the Hoosier used Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies to purchase three parcels of land from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The Forest acquired 120-acre and 245-acre parcels in Orange County and a 90-acre parcel in Brown County. LWCF monies are derived from royalty payments from offshore oil and gas revenues. Funding for land purchases is obtained nationally, through a lengthy competitive process. In order to be responsive to landowners who expect payment quickly, TNC acquires lands from private landowners that meet objectives of both the Forest Service and TNC. They hold the lands until the Hoosier acquires funds to purchase the lands.

The Brown County parcel is on the north side of Monroe Lake, upstream from the Crooked Creek Boat Ramp. It is in an area of publicly owned lands, adjacent to Hoosier land. U.S. Army Corps of Engineer lands and Yellowwood State Forest lies to the north and west of the tract. The parcel is wooded and accessed from Crooked Creek Road. Benefits of acquiring this property include providing additional public access to a block of Forest land, consolidating Forest land, decreasing boundary maintenance costs, and protecting

the Monroe Lake watershed.

The 120-acre parcel in Orange County is surrounded by privately owned land and located about one mile south of Wesley Chapel Gulf. This parcel is forested with a county road providing access along the north boundary.

The 245-acre parcel is located west of Wesley Chapel Gulf. It has some mature woods, however most is open land, some of which TNC planted with native hardwoods. The property is bounded by county roads on three sides.

These parcels help provide protection to the underground resources at Wesley Chapel Gulf. They also provide additional land for dispersed recreation opportunities. Analysis is underway to determine if these parcels should become part of the Wesley Chapel Special Area.

Improving Facilities for the Public

With the help of volunteer Steve Robinson and his friend, mounting blocks have been added to the Birdseye Trailheads. Many equestrians, especially older or smaller riders, have welcomed the blocks which aid in mounting and dismounting horses.



Being an Employer of Choice

Volunteer Lands Job with Federal Government



Sarah Mathews, a senior at Indiana University started out as a volunteer collecting ash seeds for the Forest Service seed bank. Then she moved on to other volunteer projects and was soon helping in recreation, lands, fire, and engineering. Sarah was willing to learn whatever we would teach her.

Sarah volunteered 194 hours for the Hoosier, and earned a Bronze Presidential Award for

volunteerism.

Sarah graduated in May, and due to her contacts with employees on the Hoosier, received a recommendation for a Bureau of Land Management internship program. Sarah applied and got the job. She worked the summer as an intern and then was hired permanently for a job in northern California. In a tough job market, Sarah's contacts with the Forest Service, and her known job ethic and enthusiasm proved invaluable in getting her a position with a federal agency.

Brad Lidell Regional Engineer of the Year



Brad Lidell, Hoosier Supervisory Engineer received the Eastern Region Engineer of the Year Award for 2013. Lidell's 24 years of significant contributions were cited. In 2013, he and his engineering staff helped improve water treatment needs at Hardin Ridge Recreation Area and took the lead in designing

and issuing contracts for roof repairs on several facilities across the Forest. Lidell also worked with Federal Highway Administration staff, county road superintendents, and Indiana state highway staff to address long-term road maintenance needs throughout a nine county region. In 2013 he successfully secured partnership funding to reconstruct or maintain roads accessing Forest lands in Perry, Orange, Brown, Jackson and Monroe counties. Lidell is also leading the effort to bring a high hazard dam into federal and state compliance. He led the initiative as well to protect Forest areas from damage by off highway vehicles by placing barrier posts to restrict access.

Lidell serves as the Forest Safety Officer and helps with fire and other forest programs and responds to national emergency incidents.

Lidell has worked on the Hoosier since 1990; he previously worked on the Shawnee and Chequamegon National Forests.

Rod Fahl Recieves National Team Award

Rod Fahl, Wilderness Ranger on the Hoosier received the Traditional Skills and Minimum Tool Group Leadership Award for the second time in his career. This award was presented to Fahl for his work in 2013 after Hurricane Sandy.

Fahl and other members of the team cleared trails on the Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia after the hurricane left large, tangled timber, for great distances. The team honored Wilderness values and used only traditional tools and skills to accomplish the task. Forest Service crosscut sawyers, and axe men and women cleared 120 miles of trails in five designated wilderness areas. Twelve FS employees from six National Forests spent six weeks clearing downed trees while climbing through the tangle of debris following the trail tread underneath limbs and branches. When the crew left, the trails were cleared.

Fahl previously received this award in 2011 on the Hoosier for his work on the Martin Hollow Reroute in the Charles C. Deam Wilderness.



Rod waving from the other side of the trail as he clears the trail of downed trees.

Volunteer Service - 2013/2014

	# Volunteers	Vol. Hours	Value of Svc
Total 2013	272	3,806	\$84,265
Total 2014	289	3,530	\$79,590

2013/2014 Payments to Counties

Payments to counties is going through some changes as the US Legislature works through how to compensate county governments for Federal land. The chart below shows presumed payment in lieu of taxes and monies from the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act (2013) or 25% Fund (2014).

The Hoosier also provides funds for road projects, cooperative law enforcement, and volunteer fire department support.

County	Acres	Total 2013 \$	Total 2014 \$
Brown	18,206	\$44,664	\$35,326
Crawford	24,286	55,234	29,146
Dubois	427	1,222	1,142
Jackson	22,844	50,500	26,008
Lawrence	16,229	28,979	41,802
Martin	9,696	17,151	11,053
Monroe	18,811	53,700	36,378
Orange	32,805	74,225	47,377
Perry	60,195	126,635	77,186
Total	203,499	\$452,310	\$305,418

Hoosier Hosts Native American Tribes

Hoosier staff welcomed tribal leaders from the Delaware Nation, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the Shawnee Tribe, several eastern national forests, Grey Towers National Historic Site, and the Eastern Regional Office to a visit to discuss common issues. This was the first visit to a national forest in the east since the tribes were removed to Oklahoma in the 19th century. The goal was to strengthen relationships and promote mutual understanding of the issues forests deal with.

The Hoosier consults with tribes on a range of issues. A tour of the Forest highlighted what projects, processes, and resource management looks like on the ground. The visit though brief, was designed to pave the way to increased collaboration and partnerships.



Participants discussing past use of rock shelters at the 2014 Tribal Meeting.



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