



# Hoosier National Forest Highlights



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## MANAGING THE LAND BASE ON THE HOOSIER NATIONAL FOREST – LAND ADJUSTMENT ACTIVITIES

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As the Hoosier National Forest has grown to 202,000 acres over the last 75 years, the Forest has been improving the amount of useable land for the public. With the patchwork ownership on the Forest, consolidating National Forest System (NFS) land is an ongoing challenge, as is resolving encroachments from the many Forest neighbors across the nine county area. The Hoosier's Lands Program staff strives to provide a land base for recreation opportunities; while protecting significant cultural resources, areas of historical interest, unusual geologic features, or habitats.

Two of the primary tools of acquisition used by the Forest Service are purchasing land and exchanging land. We also accept land donations, especially to consolidate ownership and protect critical resource areas. Each purchase or exchange improves the land base for biological diversity, recreational opportunities, and management efficiency. All land adjustment activities follow regulations to protect the public and private property owner's interest.

Congress appropriates funding for most land purchases annually. Proposed acquisitions compete regionally and nationally for funding. It can take several years to secure the necessary funds to purchase land from a willing seller. For more information on how the Forest Service purchases land, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/LWCF>.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and other land trust groups have assisted the Hoosier by purchasing land that meets the goals of both the Forest and the land trust. The land trusts purchase the properties and hold them until federal funding becomes available. This has proven to be a successful partnership and solution to the time lag when securing Federal funding, while meeting the needs of willing sellers. Since 1981 TNC has assisted the Hoosier with public support in acquiring over 2,000 acres of land. On behalf of the public who enjoy this land, the Forest thanks TNC and other land trusts for their continued support.

Exchanging land with the Federal government is a complex transaction. The Hoosier can exchange isolated tracts for privately-owned tracts of equal value. The resource benefits of exchanging land are similar to those of purchasing land.

We consider many factors in reviewing the public benefits for exchanging land in developing a proposal. A legal notice for each proposal is published in the local newspaper once a week for four weeks to get public comments. Public involvement is an integral part of the land exchange process. Costs for land exchanges are shared between the Forest Service and the private landowner. As with purchasing land, the time line to complete an exchange can be lengthy.

The Hoosier's Lands Program staff is also responsible for authorizing special use permits and managing boundary and title information. The Lands Program role in protecting the public's interests is essential to the land stewardship responsibilities of the Forest Service.

For additional information on any of these programs please contact Ken Crevier, Lands Program Manager by email at [kcrevier@fs.fed.us](mailto:kcrevier@fs.fed.us).



Recent land acquisition in Orange County.