



Hoosier National Forest Highlights



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Landscape Scale Conservation A Collaborative Approach to Forest Restoration



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Landscape Scale Conservation is an emerging approach to managing our Nation's forested lands across boundaries and management areas in order to restore sustainable ecological forest conditions on a large panoramic level and address the threats to forest lands such as degradation of clean and abundant water, disease and insects, fire, and loss of wildlife habitat. Landscape Scale Conservation is becoming an essential tool for adapting forest lands to climate change and ensuring diverse and viable biodiversity in a changing landscape across state, private or federal boundaries. This all-lands approach addresses community health, sustaining clean and abundant water, restoring forests, and protecting communities from wildfire.

The Forest Service and State Foresters across the country recognize that public benefits as well as forest threats across boundaries are best addressed by working together. The threats facing our nation's forests do not recognize property lines. Therefore, Landscape Scale Conservation methods look across boundaries to develop, finance and plan, manage, and monitor projects to restore naturally functioning ecosystems through collaboration. Landscape Scale Conservation includes three basic features: 1.) A regional system of interconnected properties (lands); 2.) Actions organized to achieve one or several specific conservation objectives; 3.) Landowners and managers within a given conservation region cooperate or collaborate in some concrete fashion to achieve those objectives.

One tool that forest managers have in achieving Landscape Scale Conservation is the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, or CFLRP, that was created to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. The CFLRP aims to restore forest landscapes through close coordination with other landowners to encourage collaborative solutions through landscape-scale operations. Partnerships are crucial to this process. This is being referred to as an 'all-lands' approach because as Forest

Service Chief Tom Tidwell said “We cannot sustain the nations forests by focusing just on the National Forests.”

During his August 14, 2009 speech regarding the US Forest Service, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack presented new direction guided by the principles of conservation, management, and restoration of the National Forests. In his address he stated “The Forest Service must not be viewed as an agency concerned only with the fate of our National Forests, but must instead be acknowledged for its work in protecting and maintaining all American forests, including state and private lands. Our shared vision adopts an ‘all-lands approach’, requiring close collaboration with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and its work on America’s private working lands.” Vilsack also stressed that this shared vision begins with restoration, managing forest lands to protect water resources, while making forests more resilient to climate change, and promoting both traditional and non-traditional uses, such as carbon and sustainable bio-energy, of forest products that will create jobs in rural areas.

Why the need for forest restoration?

Climate change and the successful fire suppression campaign has placed our forests under increasing stress. Fire suppression has resulted in forests that are overstocked and susceptible to disease and wildfire. We have seen the results of this in fires burning millions of acres this decade. Past fire suppression has had an impact in the Hoosier National Forest. Current stands are overstocked and lack structural diversity. Seventy-nine percent of the Hoosier is closed canopy, mature forest. Without fire or other disturbances the oak and hickory are not regenerating and stands are being populated with maples and beech. Changing climate has increased the need to take a more proactive approach to making the nation’s forest lands more sustainable.

All of these changes have created impacts on drinking water, greenhouse gas emissions, local economies, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, etc. This has led to a realization that we need a shared, common vision to achieve the goal of healthy forests. This includes using the resources of the Forest Service, in collaboration with the State, NRCS, and other partners, to sustain all forest lands. Forest ecosystems, particularly here in the east, are typically a mosaic of not only plant and animal communities, but land ownership as well. The issues affecting our national forests affect lands under other ownerships as well.

As stated by Chief Tom Tidwell, “Especially in the era of climate change, we need to restore the resilience of America’s forests to disturbances of all kinds. Treatments needed will improve watershed health, increase water quantity, improve water quality, and build community prosperity and meet our shared vision of healthy, sustainable forests.” However, to achieve this goal, these treatments must be on a scale that goes beyond land ownership. Landscape scale conservation will “bring land managers, landowners, and stakeholders together across boundaries to decide on common restoration goals for the landscapes they all share. It will bring them together to achieve long-term restoration outcomes.”

In the future the ‘all-lands approach’ will be standard agency behavior for the Forest Service and State forests across the Midwest. The Hoosier National Forest continues to work closely with land managers from the Indiana DNR, the NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, and the Southern Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area. Specifically, the IDNR, NRCS and the Forest Service are all working on projects that will identify priority watersheds across the region. So as you hear more about Landscape Scale Conservation, you are now in the know.

For additional information on Landscape Scale Conservation, contact Vicki Gullang-Harris at 812-276-4721, vgullang@fs.fed.us or Judi Perez at 812-276-4770, japerez@fs.fed.us.



“Landscape Scale” view of the Hoosier National Forest and adjacent lands along Interstate 64 in southern Indiana. View shows the mosaic of forested and private lands.



View of farm and forest land in southern Indiana.