



Hoosier National Forest Highlights



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How the Hoosier National Forest Benefits Communities



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The 202,000 acres that make up the Hoosier National Forest occurs in nine counties in Southern Indiana. Each County has communities near the Forest that receive multiple benefits simply by being located near the National Forest. Bloomington, Bedford, Orleans, Paoli, English, French Lick, Birdseye, and Tell City are just a few of the communities that occur in close proximity to the Hoosier National Forest.

Like any business National Forests need a staff to operate. The Hoosier has personnel that you would expect to find on a National Forest; foresters, wildlife biologists, a soil scientist, a fish biologist, trail technicians, a wilderness ranger, and more. Additionally there are business support staff that perform functions in accounting, purchasing, contracting, customer service, public affairs, and human resources just to name a few.

The two Hoosier National Forest offices, in Bedford and Tell City combined have about 65 employees. These folks invest in their community and help out as coaches, scout leaders, fund raisers, community government members, Red Cross volunteers, Sunday school teachers, band boosters, PTO leaders, youth mentors, master gardeners, Little League umpires, historical society volunteers, National Guard members, EMTs, paramedics, volunteer firefighters, conservation club members, and more. Most government employees are drawn to a life of service, in general they are people that take action and want to be involved whether at work or at home.

National forest employees are called on as first responders after natural disasters in their own communities and elsewhere. Hoosier personnel have helped after tornados, hurricanes, the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster, floods, and of course, fires. They

worked at Ground Zero after the 9/11 attacks and most recently helped those affected by Superstorm Sandy.

National forests increase tourism opportunities in the communities they surround, bringing more money into the community. The people that visit the national forest often need a place to stay, something to eat or drink, and a souvenir to remember their visit. National forests bring other funds to the community as well, through partnerships and contracting opportunities.

National forests provide jobs. Both for the employees and for contractors that help complete the work on the National Forest, constructing buildings, harvesting timber, laying sidewalks, maintaining openings, operating campgrounds, and more. Secondly, the timber products harvested here provide jobs locally and regionally in lumber mills, pulp plants, and furniture producers.

Some of the most important benefits of a national forest are the resources provided by the forest itself. Natural spaces to rest and rejuvenate; places to get away from everyday life, and enjoy nature. Most of the visitors to the Hoosier National Forest come from within 25 miles of the Forest. The Hoosier provides local communities a “backyard” in which to experience the outdoors.

National forests were originally created to protect and provide water. Water for navigating and moving products, water for drinking, and water to grow things; almost all the water we use comes from the national forests across our country. Forests also convert carbon dioxide and sequester carbon, they provide habitat for wildlife and fish, and particularly here in southern Indiana, they support a diverse environment underground, all while maintaining and sustaining these valuable resources for members of the community.

For more information on how the Hoosier benefits southern Indiana communities contact Judi Perez at 812 276-4770 or japerez@fs.fed.us.



Caption: Hoosier National Forest sign at the Bedford office in winter after a snow storm.