



Hoosier National Forest

2012 Year in Review



Forest Vision:

The Hoosier National Forest, Indiana's premier Federal resource, 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.

From Melany Glossa, Forest Supervisor



Melany Glossa

As I've settled in for my second year on the Hoosier National Forest, I've gained a deeper appreciation for the diverse resources and partnerships we have here in southern Indiana.

I've watched with pride as our volunteers have been recognized at the regional level for the outstanding work that they have done. It was my honor to be present when the National Wild Turkey Federation recognized the local Dogwood Drummers Chapter and Hoosier wildlife biologist, Steve Harriss, for a Group Partnership Achievement Award. Together they have educated hundreds of students about the forest and wildlife with interactive presentations.

As you read through these pages I hope you will be as humbled as I am with the work that is being done on our public lands. With the stark realities of our national economy, we strive to be not only good stewards of the resource, but also of federal dollars.

I value your feedback, and appreciate those of you who have contacted us on how we can provide more value to communities, to the public, and to the land. Our work force continues to shrink. However, along with partners, contractors, and volunteers, I am continually amazed at the amount of excellent work that is done on your public lands. It is again, my privilege to serve as the Forest Supervisor of this small Forest with the can-do attitude.

Melany Glossa
Forest Supervisor

2012 Hoosier Accomplishments- From National Report

Resource Area	Goal	Accomplished	% Target
Forest regeneration and vegetation improvement	876 acres	2,072 acres	307%
Lands treated to reduce risk of wildfire	2,500 acres	2,523 acres	101%
Stream habitat restored or enhanced	1 mile	1 mile	100%
Lake habitat restored or enhanced	20 acres	22 acres	110%
Wildlife habitat restoration	2,400 acres	2,436 acres	102%
Recreation sites maintained to a 90% condition standard	35 sites	36 sites	103%
Trails maintained to national standards	76 miles	76 miles	100%
Timber sold	5,427 cubic feet	7,235 cubic feet	133%

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Cover photos of campers at Hickory Ridge Horsecamp, stream at Buzzard Roost, and planting a tree on the Forest.

Protecting Ecosystems across Boundaries

Hoosier begins Critical Load Study of Forest Waters



Kelly Weigel collects a water sample from a stream on the Hoosier.

Critical loads are thresholds of air pollution deposition that causes harm to sensitive resources in an ecosystem. When critical loads are exceeded, the environmental effects can extend over great distances. In the eastern United States, the primary concern is sulfate and nitrate deposition (acid rain).

The Hoosier received money through Duke Energy to perform an on-going critical loads survey. The Hoosier had never studied the pres-

ence or extent of acid deposition so couldn't determine the risk to a given resource. This project will provide the information necessary to begin to assess the risk to resources.

During a two day window in March 2012, Forest employees sampled water at 206 locations across the Forest. Water chemistry will be analyzed from each of these samples. The results will help determine the location for the follow-up soil chemistry sampling.

Soil chemistry sampling will involve putting in soil pits in riparian areas upstream from the water sampling sites to look at the effects on soils due to air pollution deposition.

Once data collection is complete, the Forest will analyze the data to determine critical loads for soils on the Hoosier.

Efforts Continue to Bring Back the American Chestnut

This is not your ordinary tree planting effort. It takes days to prepare the site and fence the area to keep deer out. But even at that, the work had only begun for these precious trees which Hoosier's have waited so long to see return to Indiana's forests.



Planting American chestnuts on the Hoosier.

It has been a long hard road to bring back the chestnut tree, and the last 2 years have proven to be anything but kind to the young seedlings. The fact that the young trees have survived are a tribute to the hardiness of the chestnut and the attention given to them by their Hoosier caretakers.

The first area was planted in 2011. It was an unseasonably wet spring and early summer in 2011 and the majority of the seedlings drowned. Where the sparse surviving trees had better drainage they were 12 feet tall in their second year.

The first area was replanted and a second site planted in 2012. When the trees were planted in early May the weather was hot and stayed hot. Temperatures were in the 90s and often over 100 degrees. The sites did not receive any rain through early July.

Hoosier Silviculturist Chris Thornton laments

that nature keeps throwing the chestnuts curve balls. "We couldn't just let them wither and die in the heat after losing so many last year, so we had to try to save them," said Thornton.

The trees are planted in remote parts of the Forest with no hydrants nearby. So Thornton enlisted the help of the Hoosier's fire crews. With the fire crew's assistance, porta-tanks were set up and filled with water, and hose lays were put out to the trees. The trees were watered every other week, which was enough to get many of them through the drought on a solid footing.

Jim McKenna from the Forest Service Northern Research Station's Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center designed the plantings and procured the seedlings. The plantings are an assortment of blight resistant American chestnut trees (genetically 15/16th American chestnut and 1/16 Chinese chestnut), pure American chestnut trees, and Chinese chestnut trees.

The Chinese and pure American chestnut seedlings serve as "controls" to compare performance with the blight resistant American chestnut. The Chinese chestnuts will be removed before flowering to prevent cross-pollination with the blight resistant seedling or local seed sources.

Connecting Citizens to the Land

The German Ridge Heritage Project: Living on the Edge

The German Ridge Heritage Project is a multi-year collaboration between the Hoosier National Forest and Indiana University to document the lives and culture of early settlers in the German Ridge community of Perry County, Indiana. These people “lived on the edge” as they farmed the narrow ridges.

Dr. Timothy Baumann directed a University field school, teaching records research and the systematic investigation of 19th century farmstead remnants through archaeological excavation. Though the area was first settled in the 1820's, immigrants from Germany soon populated the area. Their descendants have shared family stories and photographs.

Over the next few years we plan to excavate several farms to explore the possibility of a German “signature” from the archaeological evidence. Interpretive signs placed at these farmsteads and the associated church, cemetery, and school will convey what we learn to the Forest visitor.

In 2012, the focus was the overall history of the German Ridge area. We developed a website (www.germanridge.info) and Facebook page (German Ridge Heritage Project) to post population census records, family histories, maps, and cemetery records. We also investigated the farmstead originally occupied by

*Angie Krieger,
Forest Archaeologist works at
the project.*



Randolph and Miranda Connor Hall and later by John and Lisette Debus.

The house site was once an open area but has now grown up in woods. The main feature remaining is the limestone basement of the house. The house had an extension added during the Debus occupation as evidenced by the abundance of wire nails which replaced earlier square nails. It also had a covered porch and a rock walkway from the back of the house.

Other features include a collapsed cistern, spring box, remnants of an outbuilding and barn, and a narrow ditch that could be some sort of drainage or access feature. Artifacts were found on the surface and in the test units. These “forgotten items” include medicine bottles, window glass, stoneware containers, ceramic plate fragments, metal pans and buckets, buttons, watch cogs, a porcelain doll foot, and lots of square and wire nails. Results of field work are ongoing.

Bringing Nature to HandiCapable Camp

The Hoosier and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) have worked together for the last two years to bring nature to those who can't experience the Forest in the way most of us do. Together, the groups hosted a booth at Indiana University's Bradford Woods near Martinsville, Indiana each September. The three-day camp hosts approximately 100 campers annually. It gives physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped people the opportunity to experience various outdoor activities.

The Hoosier and NWTf booth features a live turkey that the campers can see up close and a variety of turkey calls they can try out. The Forest also provides an array of animal

pelts the campers can look at and touch. The fluffy fox tail is always a big hit, but most of the participants don't want to get too close to the skunk!



Handicapable Camp is a way to share nature with a group that doesn't often get to experience the outdoors.

Fishing with Kids on the Hoosier

Two annual kids' fishing derbies were held in 2012. The Brownstown Ranger District derby was held in June in partnership with the Maa-mee Boy Scout Camp. Over 50 kids attended, and in addition to fishing, they participated in a shooting range, learned to cast, tied knots, did crafts, and learned fish identification.

The Tell City Ranger District derby was held at Rainbow Pay Lake with 97 kids in attendance. Here, too, they did a variety of activities. At both derbies the goal is to get kids excited about fishing and outdoor fun!

The first Hoosier NF kids fishing derby was in 1991.

Walk the Talk for Sustainability

Dutch Ridge Stewardship Sale

"This was our fourth stewardship sale, but by far the most interesting one," commented Chris Thornton. The 60+ acre sale area is a single tree/group selection cut. The sale was put out on bid with the caveat that in return for the timber, habitat improvement services would be required in exchange. Only one bid was received.

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) received the sale contract and sub-contracted out the jobs. They hired a logger to cut the trees, and hired someone else to do the timber stand improvement work and cut the merchantable trees. The NWTF then contracted to mow openings, feather edges, and create vernal wetlands in the roadbeds.

Through the stewardship program, the Forest was able to create 155 acres of early successional habitat improvement with four vernal pools. These enhancements will not only be good for game species such as wild turkey, but also for frogs, salamanders, and bats.

After the harvest is complete, the Forest will continue to enhance the early successional areas inside the project area via disc-

ing and seeding.

Thornton noted, "Not only are we improving habitat, but the timber receipts exceeded the value of the services in this area, so the additional funds will be put in a fund for other habitat work."

Loggers operate on Dutch Ridge, and vernal pools are created in old road beds for wildlife and amphibians.



Boundary Management and Resolving Trespasses

With approximately 1,400 miles of property lines on the Hoosier, boundary line issues are inevitable. The Forest Service tries to keep these issues to a minimum by actively surveying and marking boundary lines. In 2012, the forest marked 10 miles of boundary line and

perpetuated 18 corners. Some of the boundary evidence was on the verge of being lost due to the passage of time. As funds are available, forest managers survey boundaries to ensure Forest activities do not trespass onto private land. Marked boundaries also help recreationists and hunters identify national forest land and limit trespassing on adjacent private land.

When marking boundaries we sometimes find trespassing has occurred and property rights become an issue. Resolution of trespasses can be expensive if court costs and possible restitution are required. It is far better to complete a boundary survey up front and establish where the true boundary lays versus resolving a trespass later.

In 2012, five trespass cases were successfully resolved.



Surveyor marks a boundary corner with witness trees on the Hoosier.

Revolutionizing effectiveness and efficiency

Hoosier Gains Prescribed Burn Partners

Spring came early in 2012, but in Indiana, the fire crews were ready. Fuels Technician Jeremy Kolaks and Center Manager Maggie Schuetter developed solid partnership agreements with Indiana DNR and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for our employees to supplement each other's burning crews.

Working against the spring green up, fire crews on the Hoosier finished up lines and burned 10 separate areas. The burned areas varied in size from 6 acres to 860 acres, and burned very well, accomplishing the goals established for the burns.

Kolaks was pleased with the results and glad the goals were met with acres to spare. He is especially proud of the partnership agreements the Forest put in place to bring in other fire personnel. "The 860-acre burn and 659-acre burn would have been tough to complete without the help of outside organizations," said Kolaks. "With a small workforce and no heavy equipment, we are limited in the number of people resources we can pull together."

The TNC agreement is a reciprocal agreement with the Hoosier assisting TNC with their burning program as well. The agreement with the IDNR reimburses the State for their employee's time. Both partners benefit from the experience they receive.

Congratulations to the Hoosier fire crew for 2,028 acres safely burned in FY 2012!



Firefighters monitor a line at the Fork Ridge burn.

Hunters Creek Road Improved Through Agency Collaboration

Hunters Creek Road is a gravel county road that parallels the southern and eastern boundaries of the Charles C. Deam Wilderness from SR 446 to Tower Ridge Road.

In 2012, Monroe County received a \$488,662 grant from the US Department of Transportation. The grant is for planning and preliminary engineering work for the reconstruction of this road. The Hoosier worked with the County through the grant process to ensure it was a priority project.

Over the last several years, several improvements have been made to the road. In 2004, the Lawrence County Highway Department replaced the bridge just off SR 446 across Tanyard Branch. In 2009, approximately 0.5 miles of Hunters Creek Road were reconstructed and widened to make the road safer. In 2011, Monroe County replaced the

bridge across Taylors Branch.

Each piece of work has improved the road, but the grant received in 2012 will allow for more work to be done making the road safe and improving access to the Hoosier and counties to the east. The design phase is expected to take 2 years before the rest of the reconstruction will proceed if funding is available.

Improving Our Proficiency in Search and Rescue

With national forest spread across nine counties, a patchwork land ownership, and a small staff, the Hoosier looks to other organizations to assist with search and rescue efforts. "The county sheriff is the lead for any efforts on our Forest," states Chris Zimmer, District Ranger. "But we have a trained and willing team of people able to assist." He noted that several other agencies and volunteers regularly assist with search and rescues on the Forest.

"Each year we have a handful of cases where someone is lost or injured on the Hoosier," said Zimmer. "We have revised our search and rescue plans, updated contact numbers, and brought the partners together. A good network is invaluable for those times when we are called on to work together to find someone or save a life."



The new bridge is placed over Taylors Branch in 2011. Notice the wide span allowing ample passage for aquatic organism and stream flow under the bridge.

Being an Employer of Choice

Engaging Youth in Natural Resource Work

In past years the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Program has been a crew of eight teenagers working on the Brownstown Ranger District. In 2012, the Hoosier tried something different. The change was a response to a suggestion that a smaller crew would be easier to manage and the Forest would save money on the need for a large passenger van.

The Brownstown District had a crew of five YCC members and completed trail maintenance and other projects. The Tell City District was able to hire three students for their YCC crew, offering opportunities for natural resource work on this district for youth for the first time in many years.

Two of them, Collin Malone and Gage Otto, worked primarily for the recreation staff assisting Jeff Fischer with clearing trails and maintaining the recreation areas. Jeff noted that when he was sawing downed trees he had trouble keeping ahead of the two young men. They built a retaining wall at Tipsaw to stabilize a campsite and helped install barrier posts around the Forest to block areas where

unwanted vehicle access was occurring.

The third student, Trent Lindsey, worked primarily with the Timber Staff measured trees to verify cruise formulas, helped lay out sale areas, and assisted the timber markers. Occasionally the students worked together on projects or switched roles to see what the others were learning.

Tell City staff were very pleased with the YCC students, commenting that all three had great attitudes, always showed up on time, and worked hard. YCC student Gage Otto said, "It was a great experience, something I would consider doing as a career and something I would appreciate doing again this year."

The Tell City District anticipates having the program again in 2013.

Three YCC students install barrier posts on the Tell City Ranger District to block access to a closed area.



Forest Service a Hit at the National FFA Event

The 85th National FFA Convention held in Indianapolis in October 2012, had a record attendance of 56,176. This annual event draws high school youth from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Five-person teams representing each state competed in various natural resource and agriculture competitions. Hoosier staff assisted with the forestry competition event.

The Hoosier also had an interactive booth representing the Forest Service. The Wayne, Shawnee, and Mark Twain NF assisted with the event financially or sent a staff person.

This year we developed a Jeopardy-inspired trivia game involving natural resource questions. The challenge was to gauge what State had the smartest FFA teams. Scores were projected on a big map on the wall. The kids were determined to win the homemade "Smartest State" trophy.

In the end, Missouri FFA teams won the tro-

phy, with Ohio second, and Wisconsin third. One student told us he'd never had so much fun playing a trivia game in his whole life! In the end, everyone was a winner because we all learned from the questions and answers and from interacting with each other.

Next year, the convention, and the thousands of blue corduroy jackets will move to Louisville, Kentucky. We'll miss them in Indiana. Our hope is that some of the bright young people we talked to in 2012 will someday be working beside us in the national forests, inspired by something they learned when they played our Jeopardy game and shared a laugh with us.



Missouri team with Smartest State Trophy

2012 Payments to Counties

In 2012, Indiana counties received an average of \$2.28/acre for national forest land located within their borders. Although national forests do not pay property taxes, funds are paid in lieu of taxes to compensate local governments for the land taken off the tax rolls. The chart below shows payment in lieu of taxes and monies from the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act.

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

County	Acres	Total \$
Brown	18,452	\$48,936
Crawford	24,362	54,867
Dubois	412	1,321
Jackson	23,280	51,977
Lawrence	16,439	28,753
Martin	9,550	15,878
Monroe	19,085	55,438
Orange	31,730	75,971
Perry	59,562	129,418
Total	202,872	\$462,559

Forest Service Employees Donate Food to Local Pantries

Hoosier NF employees donated over 500 pounds of food to local food pantries last summer as part of the USDA's annual Feds Feed Families Food Drive. Nationally, federal employees donate almost 3 million pounds of food each year.

In 2012, the Hoosier launched a friendly competition between their two offices. Dubbing the competition the "Battle for the Bucket" – the Tell City office won the contest, and the bucket. But the real winners are the families that benefit from the donations to local food pantries.

People in Lawrence and Perry County ate a little better last fall thanks to the generosity of the Hoosier National Forest employees.

Volunteer Hours and Value of Service Hoosier National Forest - 2012

<i>Both Bedford and Tell City offices</i>	<i>Vol. Hours</i>	<i>Value of Svc</i>
Total	2,154	\$47,106



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