



Get the facts on ...

Hoosier National Forest

Rolling hills, back-country trails, and rural crossroad communities make this 204,000 acres of public land a local treasure. Spread across nine counties from Monroe Lake to the Ohio River, Indiana's only national forest offers outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, diverse wildlife habitats, watershed protection and support for rural communities.

Watershed Protection

The Forest Service was founded with a mission to protect water quality, and the Hoosier National Forest, continues that mission today by managing for diverse, healthy forests and restoring stream health. Within both the Monroe Lake and Patoka Lake municipal watersheds, tools such as prescribed fire and forest thinning allow us to create a more resilient forest that will protect water quality now and into the future.

Heritage Resources

Southern Indiana is rich in history. Archaeological sites are still being discovered and documented, indicating humans have used this area for over 12,000 years. Cemeteries and historical structures on the national forest offer visitors a glimpse into the past. Some notable ones include:

- Buffalo Trace
- Hickory Ridge Lookout Tower
- Rickenbaugh House
- Brooks Cabin
- Lick Creek Settlement
- Initial Point
- Mano Point
- Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest
- German Ridge Recreation Area (CCC)

For details visit our [website](#).

Outdoor Recreation

Hoosier National Forest, in the hills of south central Indiana, is within a 2-hour drive of Cincinnati, Evansville, Indianapolis, and Louisville. Information offices are located in Bedford and Tell City.

The Forest offers visitors a tranquil setting to explore, fish, hike, hunt, camp, bike, ride horses, boat, bird and reconnect with nature. There are over 260 miles of trails on the forest for hiking, mountain biking, or horseback riding. Most are multiple use, but several are hiking only.

For those who enjoy the water, Hardin Ridge, Tipsaw Lake and German Ridge Recreation Areas offer seasonal swimming beaches. The many lakes can be explored by paddlecraft and the larger lakes allow electric trolling motored boats. Hardin Ridge offers easy access to Monroe Lake and Mano Point offers Ohio River access.

The 13,000 acre Charles C. Deam Wilderness is managed to provide opportunities for solitude in a natural environment with primitive camping and trails for hiking and horse riding. This is the only Congressionally designated wilderness in Indiana and laws restrict uses. Visitors should review the website prior to visiting to be in compliance with maintaining this special area.

Annual or daily Trail Use Permits are required for horse and bicycle use for those 17 years of age or older. Camping reservations can be made at [recreation.gov](https://www.fs.usda.gov) or by calling the National Reservation System at 1-877-444-6777 (TTY is 1-877-833-6777). Visit our website to get information, maps and directions for our recreation sites and to learn more about our education and volunteer opportunities.

Web: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/R09/Hoosier>

Bedford: 812-275-5987

Tell City: 812-547-7051



Managing Forest Resources

The Forest Service is within the United States Department of Agriculture. Congress established the Forest Service in 1905 to provide quality water and timber for the nation's benefit. Congress later directed the Forest Service to broaden its management scope for additional multiple uses and benefits and for the sustained yield of renewable resources such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation.

The land that now comprises Hoosier National Forest has a long history of impacts from humans and natural processes such as wind, ice, animals and fire. These processes helped shape the forest over time, and the wildlife that depend on them. More recently, fire suppression, pests, diseases, and non-native invasive plants have had tremendous negative impacts. In addition to being highly fragmented, the loss of most past disturbances has led to overly dense and shaded forests, which lack diversity in age and structure – very different than the historical conditions. Current conditions make our forest less resilient to predicted warmer, drier summer conditions, wetter winters and future pest outbreaks, thereby making them more vulnerable to mortality.

Our staff uses science-based forestry practices to improve the health and diversity of forest ecosystems, enhance recreation opportunities and ensure a diversity of habitats to support all native wildlife.