

# Forest Facts - Hoosier N.F.



USDA Forest Service

Hoosier National Forest

3/2008

## Mission:

"Caring for the Land and Serving People." The Forest Service, part of the United States Department of Agriculture has a 100+ year history of public land management. The National Forests were established in 1891 to ensure the proper care, protection, and management of public forests and watersheds. Congress later decreed that the national forests would be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, minerals, and wildlife and fish habitat. A series of laws have continued to guide National Forest policies and ensure that public participation is a cornerstone of the agency's management.

## Goals:

The Hoosier National Forest has eight interrelated goals as a framework for forest management:

- Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat
- Maintain and Restore Sustainable Ecosystems
- Maintain and Restore Watershed Health
- Protect our Cultural Heritage
- Provide for Visually Pleasing Landscape
- Provide for Recreation Use in Harmony with Natural Communities
- Provide a Useable Landbase
- Provide for Human & Community Development

## Location:

At over 200,000 acres in nine counties of south-central Indiana, the Forest is located in two of the natural regions of Indiana. The northern portion of the Forest is within the Brown County Hills section of the Highland Rim Natural Region. The central and southern part of the Forest is within the Crawford Upland, Mitchell Karst Plain, and Escarpment sections of the Shawnee Hills Natural Region.

## Unique Features:

- Charles C. Deam Wilderness - Indiana's only Congressionally designated wilderness area has 13,000 acres providing for solitude and a remote experience.
- Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest - An 88 acre virgin old-growth forest and archaeological site. The Forest's only Research Natural Area.
- Hickory Ridge Lookout Tower - Constructed by the CCC in 1939. This historic tower is listed on

the National Historic Lookout Register.

- Hemlock Cliffs - a box-shaped canyon with sandstone formations, seasonal water falls and rockshelters.
- Rickenbaugh House - A stone house built in 1874, used as a local post office and church meeting house. Now on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Wesley Chapel Gulf - This National Natural Landmark is an 8 acre collapsed sinkhole with an alluvial floor which provides a window to the underground river system.
- Several special areas have been identified to manage and protect unique ecosystems. Rock shelters, bluffs, and coves provide interesting places on the Forest and are home to rare plants.

## Land Recreation:

Approximately 266 miles of hiking, horseback, and mountain bike trails; hunting; nature study; camping and picnicking; and scenic drives are all available on the Hoosier. Campgrounds are located adjacent to large lakes and in conjunction with some of the trail systems. Five horsecamps are associated with equestrian trails.

## Water Recreation:

Hardin Ridge Recreation Area is popular with boaters and anglers alike because of easy access

### For more information:

#### Hoosier National Forest Supervisors Office and Brownstown Ranger District

811 Constitution Avenue  
Bedford, IN 47421  
(812) 275-5987

Toll Free: 1-866-302-4173  
[www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hoosier)

Tell City Ranger District  
248 15th Street  
Tell City, IN 47586  
(812) 547-7051

For deaf and hearing impaired call:  
Federal Relay Service 1-800-877-8339

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to Lake Monroe. Recreation areas are also located on Celina Lake, Indian Lake, Tipsaw and German Lakes. The Little Blue and Lost River offer opportunities for seasonal float trips through the Forest.

Panfish, catfish, and bass fishing opportunities are available throughout the Forest. Mano Point provides boat access to the Ohio River.

### **Scenic Views:**

The Ohio River Scenic Byway parallels the Ohio River along the Indiana shore, weaving through historic towns and rolling river hills. The byway offers panoramic views of the forest and countryside.

Indiana's Historic Pathways Byway traverses the Hoosier along the Buffalo Trace, the historic stage coach route of US 150 and the railroad and original highway route of US 50. Each have a rich history to tell. Vistas and scenic areas are found throughout the Forest. Scenic drives are recommended for viewing fall colors and springs' dogwood and redbud.

### **Wildlife:**

The mix of openland and forest provides a wide variety of wildlife habitats. Common mammals include white-tailed deer, fox, woodchuck, opossum, and gray squirrel. Common birds are turkey, pileated woodpecker, several neotropical migrant songbirds, and migratory waterfowl. The karst ecosystems include many unusual cave species.

### **Watchable Wildlife:**

Indiana's Wildlife Viewing Guide recommends five sites on the Hoosier: Maines Pond, Paw Paw Marsh, Indian/Celina Lake, Buzzard Roost, and Little Blue River.

### **Heritage Resources:**

Southern Indiana is rich in history. Archaeological sites are still being discovered, indicating human use of this area for thousands of years. Cemeteries and historic buildings on the Forest offer visitors a glimpse into the past. Buffalo Trace, Brooks Cabin, Hickory Ridge Lookout Tower, Lick Creek Settlement, and the Rickenbaugh House are interpreted for the public.

### **Geology:**

The Mount Carmel Fault runs through the Forest area. Limestone and gypsum is mined extensively on private land in the area, as well as some coal. Geodes are common in some areas and people pan for gold and gems in area streams. Limestone

bluffs along area roads are rich in fossils.

### **Forest Resources:**

Central hardwoods, primarily oak and hickory, are predominant in southern Indiana. The pine on the Forest was planted primarily to restore eroding land and is not native to the area. The barren communities on the Forest have many rare species and are a fire-dependent ecosystem which are carefully burned periodically.

### **Timber Management:**

Timber harvest and vegetative management are used to perpetuate and enhance biological diversity. The Hoosier has inventoried 38 different forest types. A sustainable yield of high-quality hardwood products is also a priority in some areas. Management is a balance of uneven-aged and even-aged systems. The allowable sale quantity on the Hoosier has a ceiling of 5.7 million board feet per year. The average amount sold since 1990 has been about 1 million board feet per year.

### **Threatened and Endangered Species:**

There are four federally listed threatened and endangered species whose ranges could include the Hoosier National Forest. These species are: Indiana bat, gray bat, rough pigtoe mussel, and fanshell mussel.

### **Watershed Protection:**

Provides key protection for Lake Monroe and Patoka Lake watersheds. Lake Monroe is the sole source of water for the city of Bloomington and eight other water companies. Patoka Lake provides water for 22 cities, towns and water companies.

### **In Summary:**

The Forest is managed to provide a diverse mix of opportunities and resources for people to enjoy. The Hoosier National Forest comprises about half of the public forest land in Indiana. As such, the Forest has a key role in providing forest ecosystems which enhance biological diversity on a regional scale.

Wildlife habitat management occurs on some portions of the forest, timber harvests, prescribed burns, wetland development, and other practices occur in areas defined for appropriate uses. Each decision on a management practice is a commitment to enhancing the Forest. Forest managers work closely with the public to develop a shared vision of how the Forest should be managed. The challenge is to provide a Forest with the values and benefits people want while responsibly providing for the unique ecosystems on the Hoosier National Forest.