



*“Protecting Indiana’s Public Forests”*

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**INDIANA NEEDS TO ESTABLISH WILD AREAS IN OUR STATE FORESTS!**

**HB 1580 and SB 548 would set aside 13 of the most rugged areas in our state forests as State Wild Areas for the enjoyment of wild nature, wilderness recreation, and deep forest habitat for native wildlife.** These areas comprise 36,820 acres, 23.6% of our state forest acreage, leaving more than three fourths of the state forest still open to logging.

**1) Hoosiers Need These State Wild Areas!** Indiana’s State Outdoor Recreation Plan cites research from the book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, (R. Louv, Algonquin Books, 2008) which states that increased asthma, attention deficit disorders, obesity, and depression in our kids are linked to their growing lack of connection to nature.<sup>1</sup> Studies in America, Australia, Canada, England, Sweden, and Japan have documented that people experience quantifiable health benefits from spending time in forests. We ought not to leave our children a world so devoid of wild nature that they will have to travel hundreds of miles out of state to find it.

**2) Not Enough Land Is Set Aside for the Public Enjoyment of Wild Nature in Indiana!** The latest US Census data indicates more than 2 million people live within 20 miles of our state forests and more than 14.5 million live within 100 miles of them. Indiana’s state and federal land off limits to logging is extremely limited at 3 hundredths of an acre per Hoosier (221,000 acres), and much of this land is not suitable for wilderness recreation. The total acreage in state parks and dedicated nature preserves off limits to logging is 101,992 acres, less than a half of one percent of Indiana’s area. Even on this sliver of land, an extensive infrastructure of roads and developed facilities in state parks detracts from the solitude sought. Those seeking to primitive camp outside of developed campgrounds can do so only in 2 state parks, Chain Of Lakes and Shades. No hiking is allowed off trail. Many areas in state parks designated as nature preserves are off-limits to public visitation altogether. Hunting, mushroom picking, or hiking with a dog off leash are not allowed.

**3) The Best Wilderness Recreation Lands in Indiana Are Being Eliminated by the Unprecedented Increase in Logging in our State Forests!** Indiana’s longest and most famous hiking and backpacking trails such as the Knobstone, Tecumseh and Adventure Trails are in the state forests. **Twelve years ago, 40% of the state forests, some 60,000 acres, were off limits to commercial logging** to protect steep topography, natural areas and other ecologically sensitive areas, and to meet wildlife needs.<sup>2</sup> **Today, this acreage has been reduced to 7,000-8,000 acres, just 5% of the state forests.**<sup>3</sup> The long distance trails are being closed repeatedly for logging in numerous segments, usually temporally but sometimes rerouted or

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<sup>1</sup> IDNR Division of Outdoor Recreation. *Indiana Outdoor Recreation Plan 2011-2015, Hoosiers Planning Play*. Jan. 2012. p. 40.

Sources for information in this fact sheet not referenced in the footnotes below are provided in: “Why Indiana Needs Wild Areas in Our State Forest: A Position Statement from the Indiana Forest Alliance Supporting a State Wild Areas Act” at [http://indianaforestalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IFA-Position-Statement\\_State-Wild-Areas-Leg\\_Jan-22-2015.pdf](http://indianaforestalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IFA-Position-Statement_State-Wild-Areas-Leg_Jan-22-2015.pdf). IFA will provide this position statement upon request (phone 317-489-7112 or 812-269-6404).

<sup>2</sup> Letter from IDNR Director John Goss to IFA President David Haberman, February 1, 2002. IFA will provide this letter upon request.

<sup>3</sup> IDNR Division of Forestry (DOF). *INDIANA STATE FORESTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT 2008-2027 Increased Emphasis on Management & Sustainability of Oak Hickory Communities On the Indiana State Forest System*. Dec. 2008. pp. 107-108. DOF Property Specialist, John Friedrich confirmed that nature preserves, lakes and rec. areas are the only areas in state forests now off limits to timber harvest on Jan. 9, 2015, (phone: 317-234-5210).

shortened entirely. Apparently, all public uses of our state forests have been subjugated to the production of wood for private industry at levels 4-10 times what was cut in the previous century from the state forests.

**4) Recreation Can Generate More Dollars From Our State Forests Than Logging Them!** US Forest Service data indicates that recreation supports nearly five times as many jobs in communities surrounding our national forests as logging, generating 205,000 jobs and contributing \$13.6 billion to America's gross domestic product each year, compared to 42,000 jobs generated by the timber industry contributing \$3 billion to the US's gross domestic product each year.<sup>4</sup> This economic diversification helps rural communities grow from protecting wild nature.

**5) Creating State Wild Areas in the State Forests Will Not Hurt the Timber Industry!** According to the 2013 and 2014 Consulting Foresters Stumpage Timber Price Reports, approximately 4.9 to 7.5 percent of the timber purchased by Indiana saw mills each year comes from the state forests. Given that the timber industry was successfully operating when 40% of the state forests were off limits to logging, setting aside 24% of them now should have a similarly negligible effect on the industry.

**6) Increased State Forest Logging is Harming Forest-Dependent Wildlife!** The Division of Forestry (DOF) acknowledged the plight of declining forest animals, including many song birds, bats, small mammals, and amphibians, stating, "the DOF must ensure the life requirements of Indiana's species of greatest conservation need, specifically species requiring late-successional communities and mature forests, are addressed as well" in an Environmental Assessment. They then contradicted this goal by authorizing the increase in logging that is greatly diminishing this habitat in the state forests.<sup>5</sup>

**7) Forests Are Healthy Without Forestry.** Forestry imitates the natural processes of forest growth and development to produce saw timber of better quality for human use,<sup>6</sup> but the forest does not and never has depended on forestry or silviculture to survive. In *The Practice of Silviculture: Applied Forest Ecology*, one of the most widely used college textbooks on forestry in America, the authors state: "*The most magnificent forests that are ever likely to develop were present before the dawn of civilization and grew without human assistance.*"<sup>7</sup> Foresters have also long favored leaving large tracts of public multiple use forests alone to serve as controls and provide information on how forests are responding naturally to stresses. Research by the US Forest Service supports leaving stands of white ash alone, to provide enough genetic variability for the few ash that may be genetically resistant to emerald ash borer to survive and maintain this important species for the timber industry.<sup>8</sup> Foresters state: "The ability of society to understand, manage and sustain the diversity of values associated with forests depends in part on our ability to understand ecological changes that forests undergo over time in natural, seminatural, or unmanaged stands and landscapes"<sup>9</sup>

**8) Passage of HB 1580 and SB 548 Will Resolve an Important Public Policy Debate By Setting Aside Some Areas of State Forest for Recreation Rather than Logging.** Current management of state forests is a radical change from all previous management. Establishing State Wild Areas will restore balanced multiple use to our state forests and ensure that future generations of Hoosiers will not have to wait another century before they can once again enjoy the over 100-year-old stands of majestic forests that have returned to our state forests, and that are now on the chopping block.

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<sup>4</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. "Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Overview". Apr. 2013. p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> IDNR DOF. *INDIANA STATE FORESTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT 2008-2027 Increased Emphasis on Management & Sustainability of Oak Hickory Communities On the Indiana State Forest System*. Dec. 2008. p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, D.M., Larson, B.C., Kelly, M.J., and Ashton, P.M.S., *THE PRACTICE OF SILVICULTURE Applied Forest Ecology, Ninth Addition*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., ©1997. pp. 4 & 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> US Forest Service Northern Research Station, Knight, K.S., Brown, J.P., Long R. P., *Factors affecting the survival of ash (Fraxinus spp.) trees infested by emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis)*. 2012 Published online.

<sup>9</sup> *Creating a Forestry for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, The Science of Ecosystem Management*. eds. Kohm & Franklin, ©1997. p. 12.