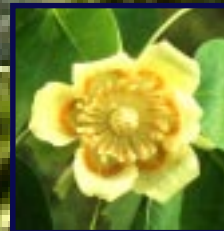
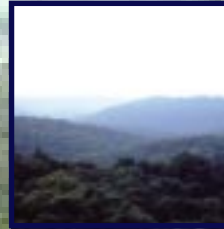


Indiana Forest Issues and Recommendations



A synopsis of the:
**Indiana
Forest
Roundtable**

Forestry & Natural Resources



Purdue University

Indiana Forest Issues and Recommendations

Indiana's forests have experienced tremendous pressures and changes over the past two centuries. Rich, diverse forests stand as a testament to nature's resilience. At the dawn of the 19th century, 20.1 million acres, or approximately 88% of the total land-base of Indiana, were covered by forest. By 1920, following 100 years of clearing, heavy cutting, burning, and livestock grazing, Indiana's forests were reduced to about 11% of the land-base. According to the latest state-wide forest inventory conducted in 1986, Indiana forests rebounded to 4.4 million acres, or 19% of the total land-base.

Although Indiana's forests made a small "come-back" in recent decades, new pressures, unlike those of the past, are being placed on them. Anyone who reads the newspaper or watches the news on television is aware of the divisive controversies surrounding the use and management of our nation's forests. Suburban sprawl, with its accompanying utility and highway infrastructure development and urban/rural interface conflicts, continues to encroach upon farms and forests all across the state. There are few rural communities left in Indiana that are not within commuting distance of a major urban center.

These concerns, along with others, are addressed in the recently published *Indiana Forest Roundtable Report*. The Indiana Forest Roundtables were organized under the direction of an ad hoc committee that consisted of representatives from The Audubon Society, Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association, Indiana Society of American Foresters, Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association, Indiana Department of Natural Resources—Division of Forestry, Purdue University Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, a consulting forester, and a middle school teacher. The roundtables were organized in response to a call for forest roundtables to be convened across the United States in conjunction with the Seventh American Forest Congress held in February 1996 in Washington, D.C.

Four groups of Indiana citizens, totaling 147 individuals (each very diverse in make-up), assembled between 1995 and 1996 in Indiana's Forest Roundtables to attempt to discover common ground. Forest landowners, environmental advocates, timber industry workers, foresters, wildlife managers, educators, and students met to craft a common vision statement, identify and prioritize the important issues relevant to Indiana's forests, and make recommendations to address those issues.

This brochure summarizes the results of the *Indiana Forest Roundtable Report* published in March 1997.



*Indiana Forest Roundtable
Vision Statements
1995*

Jasper, Indiana

We visualize the forests of the U.S., in the next several generations, to be of the same or greater land area. Healthy, productive forests will be sustained for a variety of uses and benefits for both people and native species, using management strategies to maintain and enhance forests.

Wabash, Indiana

The vision for America's forests is an expanding, well-distributed forest across the landscape: a diverse, resilient, sustainable forest connecting urban and rural areas, using stream and river corridors where appropriate. Management shall be scientifically sound and economically efficient, balanced in terms of the many values a forest can yield, and responsive to the need for biological diversity, including late-successional stage (i.e., old growth) forests. American forests and their management shall be supported by a knowledgeable public, actively engaged in stewardship.

1. Fragmentation and Destruction of Forest Lands and/or Fragmentation of Ownership Patterns

- Highways—all roads
- People pressure (population)
- Economic competition among communities
- Land-use changes
- Rural water systems
- Utility rights of way
- Other infrastructure

2. Need for Better Management on Private Property

- Harvest practices
- Best Management Practices (BMP) awareness
- Sustainable forest management
- Need to compile existing knowledge into easy-to-use format
- Logger/skidder education

3. Landowner Property Rights vs. Regulations

- Landowner compensation for takings

4. Education¹

- Include small woodland owners (less than 10 acres)
- Reduce consumption of forest resources through public awareness
- Know population impacts
- Use Forestry Best Management Practices
- Recognize differences between educating and informing “publics”
- Promote alternative fiber sources
- Practice sustainable forest management
- Promote logger/skidder education
- Educate children
- Educate other publics

¹ Note: Due to time constraints, not all the identified issues were addressed in these roundtables.

5. Lack of Strong Incentives for and Presence of Disincentives to Good Forest Conservation and Stewardship

- Include small woodland owners (less than 10 acres)
- Promote enlargement of forests/woodlands

6. How to Maintain Native Plant and Animal Species¹

- Harvest practices
- Fragmentation of habitat
- Control of exotic plants and animals
- Landowner compensation for takings

7. Need for Clear Forest Policy

- Knowledge is fragmentary—need for a compilation of existing laws and public policy affecting the forest

8. Division of Forestry's Role in Working with Private Landowners¹

- Harvest practices on private lands
- Small woodland owners included (less than 10 acres)
- Forestry Best Management Practices awareness
- Sustainable forest management

9. Public Lands Management/Acquisition¹



Proposed Actions ¹

Issue 1: Fragmentation and Destruction of Forest Lands and/or Fragmentation of Ownership Patterns

1. Forest Friendly Planning and Zoning

- Research and share forest-friendly planning and zoning models and make available to county officials (planners)
- Emphasize state zoning and planning
- Create better zoning laws at county level
- Encourage planning commissions to recognize forest resources
- Represent forest interests on planning and zoning commissions
- Use existing infrastructure corridors
- Create state Geographic Information System (GIS)

2. Education

- Educate forest land owners and the public regarding the advantages of forests and acceptable management practices
- Educate and involve forest landowners, natural resource professionals and the public in land-use decision making

3. Incentives and Disincentives for Forests

- Give landowners economic incentives to keep land in forests and pass to next generation
- Keep intact the Classified Forest Act and promote it
- Encourage and support land trust efforts

4. Mitigation

- Mitigate taking woods for any public use; mitigation should be contiguous (connecting) and local
- Mitigate conversion of forest for private use

5. Other

- Identify entities who can influence development projects
- Promote urban revitalization (idea of “Brown Field” legislation)
- Promote voluntary good stewardship practices over an ecosystem
- Encourage public support for consolidation of public forest land
- Create inventory of local plant and animal life

¹ Note: Due to time constraints, not all the identified issues were addressed in these roundtables.

Issue 2: Need for Better Management on Private Property



1. Education

- Educate landowners and the public regarding advantages of forests and acceptable management practices, including economic considerations
- Make better use of educational technology (video, etc.)
- Promote demonstrations to show the economic value(s) to forest owners
- Utilize database of all forest landowners to promote forestry best management practices (BMP) awareness via brochure (printed information)
- Develop a grant (proposal) to the U.S. Forest Service northeast area, state, and private forestry to fund mailing above listed database
- Utilize news releases to follow-up/continue forestry best management practices (BMP) awareness to statewide media
- Expand Purdue Forestry and Natural Resource Extension efforts to educate private landowners on benefits of long-term management
- Continue and expand Sören Eriksson's training to include landowners
- Continue with regional Tree Farm meetings for landowners
- Expand educational opportunities on state forests for private landowners
- Promote interpretive signs and self-guided management tours on state forests
- Make special efforts to reach people who have not been involved in forestry (mentoring)

2. Incentives

- Retain and expand the Classified Forest Act (program)
- Increase state funded incentives for forest management
- Develop one-stop shopping for landowner incentive programs
- Use capital gains tax reform for forest management
- Encourage \$50 scholarship to landowners for good management

Issue 2 (continued)

3. Other

- Encourage landowners to use certified/trained loggers (e.g. Sören Eriksson training)
- Require all timber sales to go through “bid” process
- Issue forester bonding and licensing
- Encourage use of professional foresters

Issue 3: Landowner Property Rights vs. Regulation

- Identify uncompensated regulatory takings related to forests and forestry

Issue 5: Lack of Strong Incentives for and Presence of Disincentives to Good Forest Conservation and Stewardship

- Promote conservation easements (purchase development rights)
- Maintain classification programs (Classified Forest and Wildlife)

Issue 7: Need for Clear Forest Policy

- Develop compendium of current forest policies for Indiana which could lead to an over-reaching statement of forest policy for Indiana
- Right to Practice Forestry Act
- People interested in forestry need to express their concerns to legislators/policy makers.

The results as contained in this report are certainly not all-inclusive of the full range of possible issues and actions available for consideration, nor are they the result of extensive, thorough, and exhaustive study and debate. Some of the proposed actions are, no doubt, controversial. However, it may be safe to say that they represent that which is commonly viewed as “most important” by those to whom our forests “matter the most.” They serve as starting points from which to initiate the study and debate necessary to craft good solutions. There are many good initiatives currently underway to conserve forests and promote forest stewardship in Indiana. The Indiana Forest Roundtables provide some fresh ideas for new initiatives and partnerships. It is now up to the various agencies, government officials, organizations, and individuals who are concerned about the future of Indiana’s forests to put these ideas into action.

For more information on the Indiana Forest Roundtables or to receive a copy of the report, call Ron Rathfon at 812-678-3401 or Joe Tutterrow at 317-232-4115.

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