



A Landowner's Guide to Sustainable Forestry

in Indiana



Part 6. Maintaining the Aesthetic Beauty and Enhancing the Recreational and Cultural Values of Your Forest

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Beauty. Who can put a price tag on it? The beauty of a forest pleases our senses. It stirs within us both feelings of humble reverence and passionate exultation. For increasing numbers of forest owners, the enjoyment they derive from

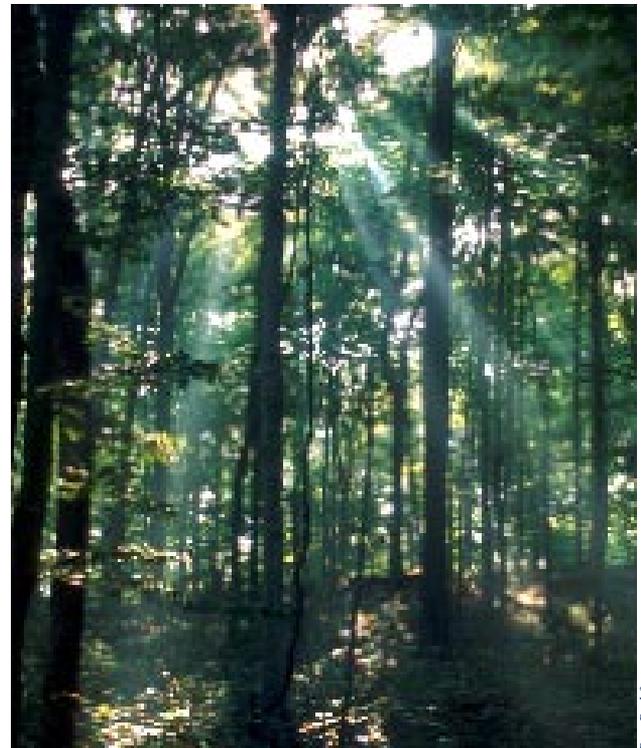


Virgin's-Bower

walking in, camping in, working in, meditating in, and just being in their forest, far outweighs economic considerations. Selling timber remains an important ownership objective for many forest owners, but recreational enjoyment

and seeking peace and tranquility are becoming paramount in our fast-paced society.

Scenic beauty and recreation values extend beyond the boundaries of your forest. Many other people may enjoy the beauty of your forest unbeknownst to you. They enjoy your forest from the county road or the highway, from the campground or the hiking trail on the next hill over, or from the front porch or backyard of their home on the edge of town. Most often, they take your forest for granted, never thanking you, much less compensating



A beech woods in Orange County.

Checklist

Aesthetics, Recreation, and History

- Maintain visual buffers along public roads and next to residential and other public areas.
- Maintain important scenic views.
- Use best management practices (BMPs) and other recommended practices to improve a logging job's appearance.
- Develop the recreation potential of your forest.
- Protect and enhance cultural and historic sites.

you, for maintaining a beautiful view for them. All too often, many of these same folks are quick to complain when you make any changes — particularly if you harvest timber.

The investment value of your property, particularly as a home site or a vacation home site, depends in part on its aesthetic qualities. A well-managed forest that is aesthetically appealing will add value to your investment.

Sustainably managing your forest considers your economic and recreation needs as well as those of your community. You can help meet both needs by incorporating the following ideas in your management plans.

Maintain Visual Buffers Next to Public Places

Of all forest management activities, harvesting timber has the most dramatic impact on the appearance of the forest. This impact can be screened or “softened” by maintaining a buffer between areas being harvested and highly visible locations such as public roads, parks, campgrounds, hiking trails, and adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Leave a 50- to 100-foot strip next to these sensitive areas where no trees or perhaps only a limited number of trees are removed in harvesting.

Maintain Important Scenic Views

Scenic highways, wild and scenic rivers, hiking trails, and other popular tourist destinations and outdoor recreation facilities depend on the surrounding forest



Ron Retzlaff

Is your forest important to the scenic quality of your community? Forest management can be tailored to maintain scenic views.

scenery to be what they are — “scenic.” These places attract tourists and bring tourism dollars into local communities. Your forest plays an important role in the overall scenic quality of your community. Just by being there, your forest is contributing tourism dollars to the local economy. An important part of sustainable forest management is figuring out just how visible your forest is from these places and what your forest contributes to the scenic view, and then managing to maintain these views.

If your forest is very visible, using the single tree and group selection methods of harvest and cutting fewer trees per acre more frequently may be preferable to a “heavier” cut that removes more than 10 to 15 mature trees per acre all at once and has a more lasting visual impact. Clearcuts should be avoided or designed so their boundaries lessen the visual impact. Longer, narrower

clearcuts with irregular or “wavy” boundaries have less visual impact than a perfect square or rectangle. These concerns must be weighed against forest health concerns discussed in Part 3 of the *Sustainable Forestry Series, Keeping the Forest Healthy and Productive* (FNR-182). Good logging practices, and a little “clean-up” in highly visible locations when the logging is complete, reduce the visual impact of a logged forest. Discuss your scenic quality concerns with a forester. He/she will help you achieve the balance you desire.

Tips for a Better-Looking Logging Job

Often the biggest complaints about a timber harvest have less to do with the trees removed and more to do with the appearance of the haul roads, skid trails, and log yarding area. Many of the “Best Management Practices” for protecting soil and water quality, discussed in Part 5 of the *Sustainable Forestry Series, Forests and Water* (FNR-184), also provide for a better looking logging job long after the job is completed. The following is a list of ways to improve the appearance of logging jobs:

- Avoid wet weather logging to reduce the likelihood and extent of rutting of roads and trails.
- Ruts should be graded from trails and log yard areas.
- In visually sensitive areas such as next to your home or your neighbor’s home, or along a scenic lane, cut up tops of felled trees (see Part 3, *Keeping Your Forest Healthy and Productive, Sustainable Forestry Series, FNR-182*).



Ruts should be graded to protect soil and water resources, improve access to your forest, and to improve your forest’s appearance.



Careful logging minimizes damage to remaining trees.

- Damage to unmarked trees should be kept to a minimum. Even with a careful logging job, some unmarked trees will be damaged. If badly damaged trees are in very visible, high-use locations, they should be cut down. Otherwise, they can either be killed in the timber stand improvement work or just left to slowly deteriorate for use by wildlife.

- Push leftover wood behind the tree line bordering the log yard or cut it for firewood.

- Wood waste left on the log yard can be minimized by cutting up the logs in the woods instead of skidding the entire tree length out. Thus, the unusable wood can be left in the woods.
- Trash should be cleaned up and properly disposed of daily. Used motor or hydraulic oil should not be dumped on the ground.



Log yards are often next to public roads or other high use areas. Cleaning up a log yard by grading ruts and seeding with native grasses and forbs improves its appearance and its value for wildlife habitat.



Ron Radtjof

The judicious use of gravel can prevent unsightly rutting and erosion and prevent log trucks from tracking mud on to public roads.

- Seeding trails and log yards with a grass and forb mix not only keeps bare soil from eroding, it provides wildlife feeding areas, particularly for turkeys, and it looks more attractive. Use species of grass and forbs native to your area and adapted to your specific growing conditions. To improve the benefits, also use species valuable for wildlife food, nesting, and cover.
- The judicious use of gravel and rip-rap at approaches to stream crossings and other soft sections of skid trails not only improves the efficiency of the logging operation and prevents rutting and soil erosion from trail surfaces, but also helps to improve the appearance of the logging job.
- In more highly populated areas, where feasible, log yards should be located away from residential neighborhoods and screened from heavily traveled roads. Working hours should be modified to minimize disturbance to local residents. Truck speeds should be reduced to and from the log yard.
- Laying down 200 feet of gravel or wood chips at the intersection of haul roads and public roads helps keep trucks from tracking mud on to public roads.
- Erect gates on trails to reduce unwanted traffic and other trespass-related damage.
- Inform your neighbors of your timber harvest plans. Let them know they can call you first if they have concerns about the logging. It is usually easier and cheaper to resolve problems when your neighbor comes to you directly than after lawyers have been called in.

Develop the Recreation Potential of Your Forest

Most forest owners enjoy recreating on their property. You may feel comfortable inviting friends and family to recreate in your forest. Because of liability and privacy concerns, particularly if you live on your property, you may be less inclined to open your land to the general



Ron Ratliff

Well located and constructed logging trails can improve your enjoyment of your forest.

public. The choice is yours. Under Indiana law you may restrict public access to your land. Restricting public access in no way diminishes from the sustainability of your forest management.

You can take advantage of forest management activities such as timber harvesting to develop the recreation potential of your property. Well located and constructed logging trails and log yards contribute to enjoyable hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and camping, and provide access for other forms of recreation such as mushroom hunting.

There is growing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities. In some regions, public lands and recreation facilities are overused. Forest landowners can provide access to trails, streams, and rivers for fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and bird watching. Outdoor recreation provides you with additional income producing opportunities. Part 7 *Managing for a Diversity of Value-Added Forest Products, Sustainable Forestry Series, FNR-186* discusses income-generating, outdoor recreation opportunities for forest landowners.

Protect and Enhance Cultural and Historic Values

The past holds clues to the present. It contains the secrets to who we are and why things are the way they are today. Every forest has a tale to tell—of fire, of storm, of logging, of pioneers carving out a farm to eke out a meager hand-to-mouth existence.

There are often reminders of the past obscured by trees and shrubs; a decaying house or barn; an old fence line; an abandoned wagon trail; a pile of rocks on a subtle boundary dividing a younger forest from

an older forest; a forgotten cemetery whose inhabitants' survivors have long-since moved on, forsaking a land found unsuitable for agriculture.

Your forest may hold the secrets to an even more distant past. Native American tribes — Delaware, Pottawotamie, Miami, Shawnee — all called Indiana home. Prehistoric peoples predated these tribes. They hunted elk and buffalo; cultivated maize and squash; they inhabited cliff and cave. As you become well acquainted with your forest, you may discover clues to these former inhabitants. You may find stone implements like arrow or spear points or shards of ancient pottery.

Sustainable forest management includes the conservation and protection of significant cultural resources left by earlier inhabitants. Such conservation may be as simple as documenting and gathering facts and stories of old home sites, historic markers, and cemeteries. A history of property ownership is in the abstract for your property available at the county courthouse. You may have received a copy of the abstract when you purchased or inherited the property. If you know the legal description of your property (township, range, section, etc.) the U.S. Government Land Office can tell you when your property was originally purchased from the government and who the original purchaser was. Go to their web site to take advantage of this service.

Cultural resource conservation may involve active protection of archaeological sites. In fact, Indiana law protects archaeological sites predating 1816 and all human burial sites. Artifacts found on the surface of your property are yours — you are free to collect and keep them. You should carefully preserve such



Ron Ratliff

“Every forest has a tale to tell . . .”

Got an old cemetery on your property?

Genealogy has become a major pursuit as many people try to unlock the secrets of their own past. The Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA) maintains a statewide cemetery registry. You can cooperate with this effort by notifying DHPA of cemeteries located on your property. The Indiana Pioneer Cemeteries Restoration Project maintains a database of cemeteries and their locations and works to encourage pioneer cemetery maintenance and restoration. Contact these organizations or your local genealogical society to learn how to clean up and maintain these cultural treasures for future generations. Descendants of former residents may someday come seeking their roots on your property.

Contact Information:

Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

402 West Washington St., Rm. W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-1646

www.state.in.us/dnr/historic

Indiana Pioneer Cemeteries Restoration Project

www.rootsweb.com/~inpcrp/



finds and document where and when you found them. Contact your local historical society or the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology to find out if they are interested in recording your find. Remember, however, it is illegal to dig for artifacts or disturb burial or other significant archaeological sites.

If you suspect you may have an archaeological site on your property, contact the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. They can help you identify archaeological sites and give you guidelines on how to protect them. Archaeological sites do not necessarily preclude other uses of your land. However, you may need to take special precautions to ensure that the buried secrets of Indiana's past are not forever destroyed.

Additional Information

Jones, G. 1993. *A Guide to Logging Aesthetics: Practical Tips for Loggers, Foresters, and Landowners*. Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service, NRAES-60. 28 p.

Jones, J.R. and A.L. Johnson. 1999. *Early Peoples of Indiana*. Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. 55 p.

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A Landowner's Guide to Sustainable Forestry in Indiana

Part 1. Sustainable Forestry - What Does It Mean for Indiana?—FNR-180

- Sustainable Forestry Described
- Historical Perspective
- Indiana's Forests Today
- How This Series Is Organized

Part 2. Planning for the Future—FNR-181

- The First Step - Who Can Help You?
- Your Objectives
- Gathering Information
- Planning Your Management Activities
- Using Legal Contracts

Part 3. Keeping Your Forest Healthy and Productive—FNR-182

- Maintaining and Enhancing Site Productivity
- Improving Tree Growth and Protecting Timber Quality
- Regenerating the Forest

Part 4. Conserving Nature—FNR-183

- Provide Wildlife Habitat
- Unusual Habitats
- Endangered Species
- Invaders! Harmful Exotic Species
- Forest Fire - Friend or Foe?
- Fragments of Forests

Part 5. Forests and Water—FNR-184

- Livestock
- Reforestation Benefits Water Resources
- Avoid Clearing Forest
- Forest Roads and Trails
- Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Timber Harvesting
- Pesticides
- Protecting Sensitive Water Resources

Part 6. Maintaining the Beauty and Enhancing the Recreational and Cultural Values of Your Forest—FNR-185

- Maintain Visual Buffers Next to Public Places
- Maintain Important Scenic Views
- Tips for a Better-Looking Logging Job
- Develop the Recreation Potential of Your Forest
- Protect and Enhance Cultural and Historic Values

Part 7. Managing for a Diversity of Value-Added Forest Products—FNR-186

- Forest Herbs
- Mushrooms
- Nature-based Tourism
- Christmas Trees and Greenery
- Maple Syrup
- Value-added Wood
- Do Your Homework!

Part 8. Help!—FNR-187

- Cost Share Grants
- Classified Forest and Wildlife Habitat Programs
- Leaving a *Forest Legacy* - Permanent Forest Protection Through Conservation Easements
- Tax Incentives and Estate Planning
- Forest Bank
- Forest Cooperatives
- Carbon Sequestration
- Forest Certification
- Education and Technical Assistance