

In response to concerns over the Pigeon River FWA campground closure:

Thank you for your interest in the campground at the Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area.

There was a significant amount of discussion regarding the closure of the Pigeon River FWA campground and a number of alternatives were discussed. The idea of allowing a private vendor to operate the campground was strongly considered, as were rate increases, and the addition of more employees to work specifically on campground maintenance. In the end, there were significant drawbacks or hurdles with each option.

The decision to close this campground has been a difficult one, and there were a variety of reasons for the closure: fewer campers, increased illegal activities, reduced manpower, private sector opportunities in the immediate vicinity, and increased cost of operations all factored into our final decision.

The Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife is funded by fishing and hunting license revenue, as well as, through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration programs. These programs collect excise taxes on shooting, archery, and fishing equipment and motor boat fuel. Years ago, the campground was developed to help facilitate hunting and fishing opportunities when there were few, if any, alternative campgrounds. Over the years, the division has seen a shift in usage patterns and neighboring camping opportunities.

The division has only a finite amount of resources and is constantly evaluating services to focus resources in areas that best serve our constituents. With this in mind, the division feels as though those finite resources should be more finely focused on wildlife management activities and allow the private sector to fill the demand for camping. Wildlife management activities are a direct benefit to those individuals that help support the division.

Fortunately, there are a number of other public and privately operated campgrounds nearby. The Indiana State Department of Health's inspection and approval program <http://www.in.gov/isdh/22910.htm> lists sixteen other campgrounds in LaGrange County and an additional 24 more in neighboring Steuben County. The Division of Fish and Wildlife would recommend you support one of these other camping facilities while recreating in the area.

Thank you,

Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife