

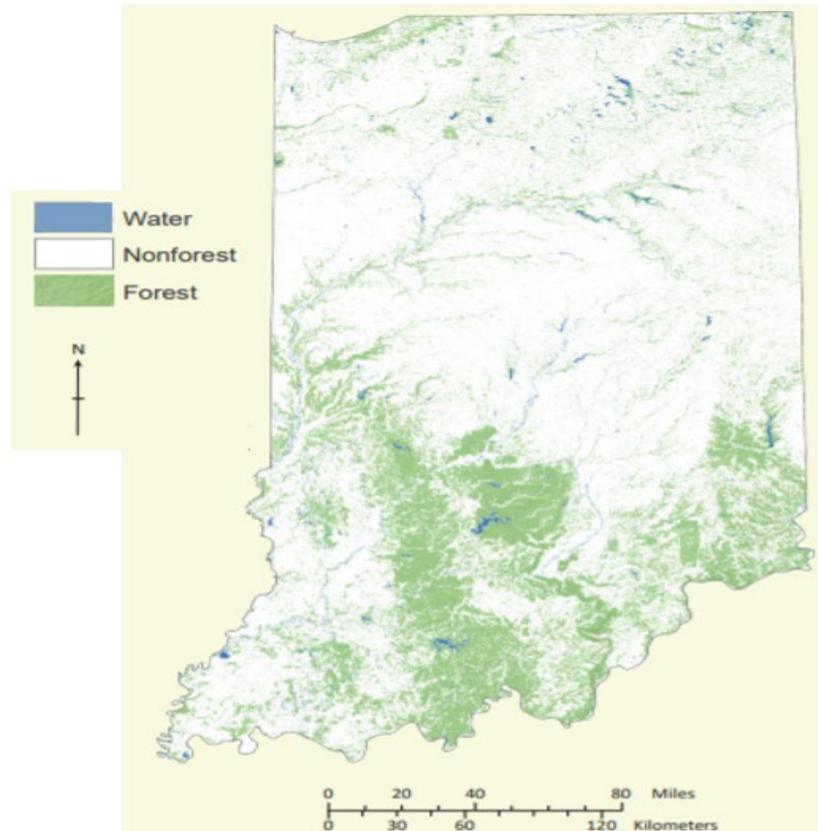
# DNR Division of Forestry

## 2023-2027 Strategic Direction

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### Forest Trends

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indiana's forests were being rapidly cut, cleared, and burned with little thought to providing a heritage for the future. By 1900 Indiana forests only comprised approximately 1.5 million acres. The forestry profession in general arose as a means to protect, plant, and nurture our forests...to ensure a continuity of growth for future generations. Now, largely due to the management guidance and example of the forestry profession, Indiana is home to approximately 4.8 million acres of forestland. Indiana is internationally renowned for producing high quality hardwood timber from its substantial and sustainable forest base, as well as providing recreation, wildlife habitat, environmental services, and quality-of-life benefits. Most forests are in the southern half of the state. Map 1 shows the current distribution of forest and non-forested.



Map 1. Indiana Forests 2019

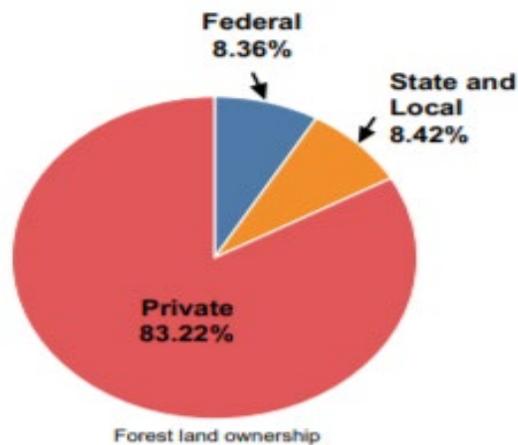


Figure 1.

Figure 1 depicts how this forestland is distributed among ownership classes. Private landowners own 83 percent of the forestland, with federal and state/local governments comprising nearly equal amounts of the remainder. Interestingly, in 1978 there were only about 50,000 private forest landowners. Today, there are an estimated 85,000 private forest landowners, the vast majority of which own less than 50 forested acres. Each private landowner owns forests for a unique reason. This makes it difficult to explain and predict how landowners will manage their forest resources. As owners age and pass their land on to the next generation, many times these

forested parcels are divided into smaller parcels, thus increasing the number of owners while reducing parcel size, and additionally adding complexity to managing these forestlands.

Indiana forests are dominated by the oak-hickory forest type (Figure 2),

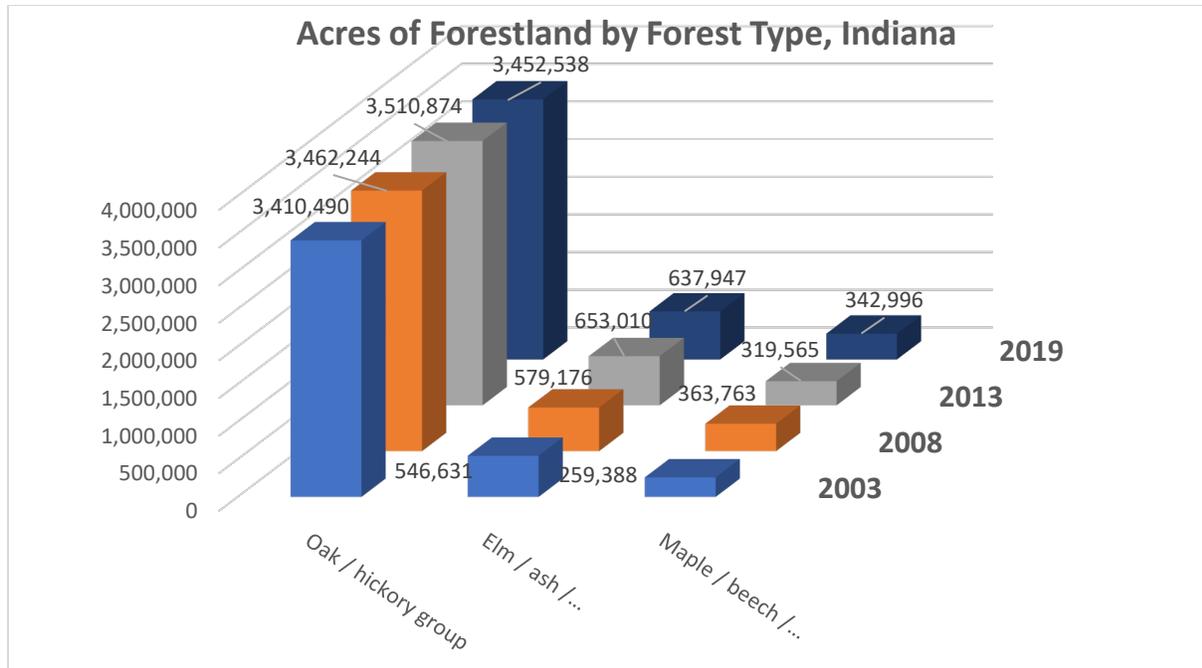


Figure 2.

brought about through the history of forest management referenced above. Indiana forests are maturing and continue to shift to larger-sized individual trees and older-aged stands as shown in Figure 3.

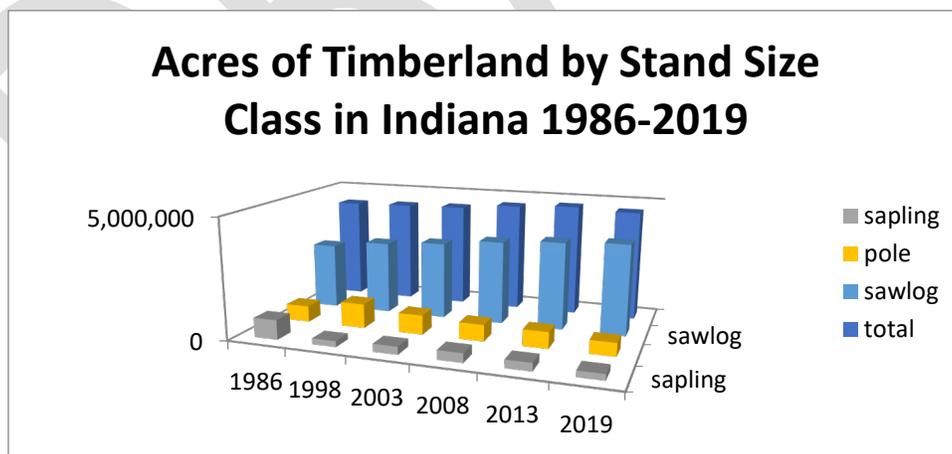


Figure 3.

As trees and stands mature, ecological processes change. Growth rates diminish. Stands become more susceptible to insect and disease infestation. Carbon sequestration slows. Managing these stands can keep them growing optimally.

Many stands are at a key turning point in time. Without manipulative intervention through forest management practices or major natural disturbances, these forests are primed to turn from our traditional oak-hickory forest types into the shade-tolerant beech-maple species mix. Forests are maturing, and through the process of forest succession, shifting to different forest types in many places throughout Indiana and the entire Central Hardwood region (Abrams 2003, Aldrich et al. 2005, Schmidt et al. 2000, Woodall et al. 2005). As maturing oaks and hickories die, they often are replaced by other competing species, such as sugar maple and yellow poplar, rather than young oaks or hickories. Driving these shifts are significant reductions or even failures in oak/hickory regeneration (Aldrich et al. 2005, Gormanson et al. 2016, IN DNR 2008, Lorimer 1993, Woodall et al. 2005).

Figures 4 and 5 depict changes in recent years of the number of oak and maple trees in the pole

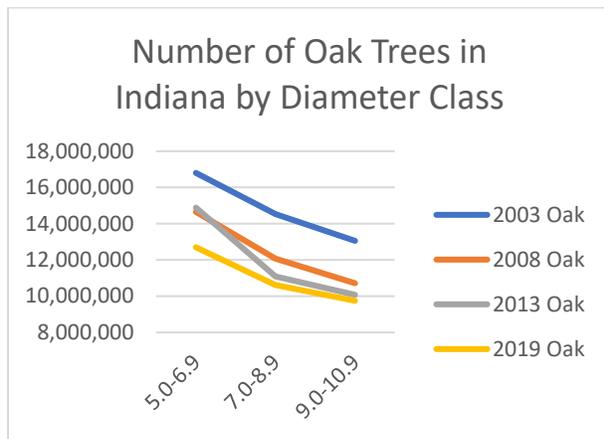


Figure 4.

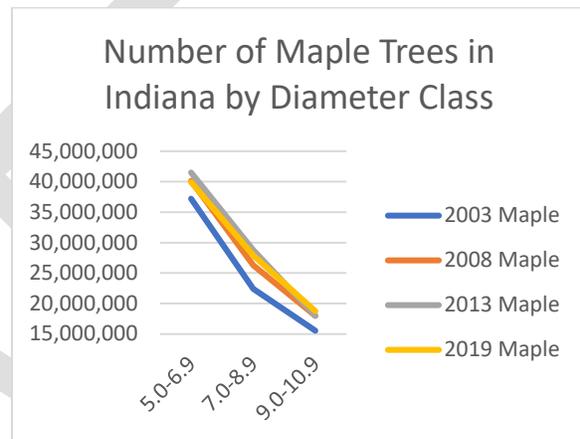


Figure 5.

size class (5-11 inch diameter range). Notice the difference in scale of the Y-axis, but also how the oaks are diminishing over time while the maples are increasing in numbers. This shows that the shade tolerant maples are poised to dominate the overstory in future years. If the perpetuation of the oak/hickory forest type is a primary goal for the forests of Indiana, natural resource managers will need new management strategies and practices to change the current trends, which could take decades to alter.

## Private Forestlands Management Section

It is an important mission of the Division of Forestry to advance the long-term sustainability of Indiana’s privately owned forestland for the many benefits these forests provide. We do this through a set of programs designed to retain, restore and wisely manage private forestland.

### Mission

Indiana’s Private Forestland Program promotes the stewardship of Indiana’s privately owned forests by providing forest management information and professional services to forest owners

and others to insure forest benefits, both tangible and intangible for present and future generations.

And, further, to work cooperatively with private woodland owners and related citizens' groups, and governmental agencies to accomplish on-the-ground forest management practices for the benefit of the landowner, the forest resource and the citizens of Indiana.

## Indiana Code

IC 6-1.1-6 Classified Forest & Wildlands Law

312 IAC 15 Classified Forest & Wildlands Rules

IC 14-23-1-1 Duties of the Department (Forestry)

IC 6-1.1-4-13 Agricultural Land

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal # 1: Retain Working Forests at Current Level.** Eighty-three percent of Indiana's forests are privately owned. It is imperative to work with forest landowners to keep forests on Indiana's landscape.

Objective 1.1 *Increase the value of forests to their landowners to reduce forest conversion by strengthening and expanding existing private lands programs such as the Classified Forest & Wildlands program.* The program provides property tax incentives to retain and manage forest lands. It is Indiana's primary program encouraging landowners to keep forests on the landscape. Participating landowners receive a property tax reduction and professional resource management advice in return for following the program's land conservation requirements. To date 857,000 acres on 17,600 ownerships are enrolled.

Objective 1.2 *Develop systems to pay landowners for the ecosystem services their forests provide.* Private forests provide a variety of ecological services that benefit all the citizens of Indiana: clean air and water, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration.

Objective 1.3 *Work to ensure long term conservation of private forests.* Guidance on conservation agreements and generational transfer of forests are important for long term retention of private forests.

Objective 1.4 *Improve landowner access to forest product markets.* Difficulties finding and accessing forest-based services and markets hampers forest conservation efforts and limits the economic vitality of the forest products sector.

**Goal # 2: Improve Forest Resource Awareness.** For the citizens to prioritize the conservation of Indiana's forest, they must first have a basic understanding of forests, forest management, and the benefits provided.

Objective 2.1 *Improved access to forestry knowledge and technical information.* Forest owners often cite access to forestry information as a limiting factor in their ability and willingness to undertake forest conservation projects on their land. Changing owner demographics and new technologies have changed the way information is accessed. Programs must recognize and adapt to these changes.

Objective 2.2 *Improve landowner access to and scope of forestry assistance so landowners can make informed decision regarding the management of their property.* The vast majority of Indiana's 100,000+ forest owners receive no professional forestry advice to guide the management of their land.

Objective 2.3 *Improve forest data and access to that data to better inform owners of current and future forest conditions.* Emerging new technologies will allow for more timely and better data collection through the use of remote sensing via satellites or drones to measure, quantify and then prescribe current conditions and future forest management options.

**Goal # 3: Accelerate the Restoration of Indiana's Private Forests to Insure Long Term Forest Health.** The health and productivity of Indiana's private forests impacts not only the current landowners, it also impacts future owners, neighboring owners, communities, and the public at large. However, only a small percentage of Indiana landowners actively manage their forests.

Objective 3.1 *Provide landowners with incentives to accelerate management of working forests (invasive control, prescribed fire, oak regeneration), especially on Classified Forest and Wildland tracts.* Insufficient financial and other incentives to undertake long term forest management and restoration are often cited as a reason for inaction.

Objective 3.2 *Promote diversification of forest age, structure, and composition to buffer against impacts of climate change.*

## **Nursery Section**

The nursery section consists of 2 programs: nurseries and tree improvement. The nursery program distributes between 2-3 million seedlings annually to approximately 5,000 Indiana landowners. The tree improvement program manages seed orchards to provide improved seed of selected high value hardwood species, to provide seed which is difficult to collect and is responsible for the procuring of all commercial seed sources.

## **Mission**

To grow and distribute to Indiana landowners' high quality plant materials for conservation plantings. Conservation plantings include plantings for timber, wildlife, windbreaks, soil and water protection, reclamation, carbon sequestering and education.

## Indiana Code

IC 14-23-1 Duties of the Department-Tree Nursery

IC 14-23-9 Planting Seedlings-Distribution to Every Third Grade Student

IC 2-3-7 Distribution of Trees to Legislators for Planting

## Goals and Objectives

### **Goal # 1:** Continue Seed Orchard expansion on State owned land.

Objective 1.1 *Increase the percent of seed coming from DNR established seed orchards.* This would reduce dependence on outside vendors and seed not purchased from optimal growing zones. Depending upon the year roughly 20% of the seed comes from our existing seed orchards.

Objective 1.2 *Provide plant species of high conservation value such as American chestnut, butternut, American elm, and yellowwood to maintain forest diversity.* It is important to reestablish these species that were once part of the natural forest landscape in Indiana.

### **Goal # 2:** Produce and provide to Indiana residents, high quality affordable seedlings for conservation tree plantings.

Objective 2.1 *Continue production of approximately 2.5 -3.0 million seedlings of 40-45 different native Indiana species both trees and shrubs annually.* Should demand from various conservation programs grow, the nursery will be able to increase production to meet that demand. Special emphasis on securing additional seed for bottomland hardwood species is a priority as demand exceeds supply.

Objective 2.2 *Maintain and improve the online ordering system for the convenience of ordering.* Around 40% of current orders are through the online ordering system. The expectation is this will continue to grow. Mail in ordering will also continue.

### **Goal # 3:** Provide nursery stock for the “Million Tree” Planting initiative and Other Non-Profit Endeavors.

Objective 3.1 *The Governor of Indiana set in place an initiative to plant 1 million trees over the course of this 5-year plan.* These trees will be planted across the state on state owned land.

Objective 3.2 *Provide seedlings to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students to schools request them.*

Objective 3.3 *Provide seedlings to Indiana State legislators up to 100 per request.*

### **Goal # 4:** Educate the public while promoting tree planting.

Objective 4.1 *Continue to support programs such as Arbor Day, Earth Day and various forestry field days on the value and benefits of planting trees for the environmental benefits as well as supporting the use of harvested trees to the forest products industry in Indiana.*

Objective 4.2 *Educate landowners and the public on the value of sequestering atmospheric carbon through the growth of trees seedlings as carbon sinks.*

## **Conservation Education Section**

The Division of Forestry is recognized as a state leader in the field of conservation education. Its approach has been based on two general premises: 1) given limited personnel and financial resources, the most efficient means of achieving our goals is to train educators rather than working directly with students; and 2) our forests are part of an interdependent natural system which should not be addressed as an isolated entity. Therefore, our approach must be holistic, to include all natural resources and their management

### **Mission**

The Forestry Education Program facilitates and promotes objective education concerning the natural environment and its management. This is accomplished by preparing educators to deliver accurate information and effective education techniques to the audiences they reach.

### **Goals and Objectives**

**Goal # 1: Provide educators with training that will help them better prepare students for environmental stewardship.**

Objective 1.1 *Working cooperatively with other agencies, organizations, and institutes of higher education, offer preservice and in-service training in Project Learning Tree and the Environmental Education Guidelines for Excellence to preK-12 educators as well as nonformal educators. In person workshops are facilitated to share successful environmental education teaching strategies. A minimum of 10 workshops will be conducted annually, training at least 100 educators.*

Objective 1.2 *Environmental education programs will be provided at association meetings and conferences such as the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers (HASTI) and the Indiana STEM Education Conference.*

Objective 1.3 *Assistance and resources will be provided for the development and use of outdoor classrooms and school forests in cooperation with community organizations. Potential sites will be identified regionally to promote and develop outdoor learning areas. Assistance in the*

identification of funding sources will be provided to sites that wish to serve as regional outdoor classrooms.

Objective 1.4 *Efforts will be made to encourage the Department of Education to better integrate forestry education, including the promotion of career opportunities, into school curricula.*

Forestry education materials will be correlated to Indiana State Learning Standards for early childhood through high school by 2023. If standards are revised, the forestry education materials correlations will be revised to meet them.

**Goal # 2: Provide educators the resources that will better prepare students for environmental stewardship.**

Objective 2.1 *With its interdisciplinary focus, Project Learning Tree lessons and activities incorporate all subject areas, making it effective across the curriculum.* Many PLT activities/lessons can be modified to contain more Indiana specific natural resource information. A minimum of two activities will be identified annually where Indiana specific information will make them more useful to educators.

Objective 2.2 *Efforts will be made to increase educator awareness of integrated curricular supplements that not only teach about the natural environment but will also help them meet learning standards.* To emphasize this point, materials will be correlated to Indiana State Learning Standards to demonstrate the effectiveness of these materials in the classroom.

Objective 2.3 *The Natural Resource Teacher Institute will continue as a week-long, immersive learning experience for Indiana educators.* Utilizing Project Learning Tree and Leopold Education Project materials provides participants with hands-on lessons and activities to take back to their students or other audiences. Up to 18 participants can be accommodated annually in the current model.

**Goal # 3: Establish mechanisms to make delivery of our programs and materials efficient and effective.**

Objective 3.1 *Indiana PLT will continue to work with National PLT to design online and blended workshops targeted to Indiana educators.* Indiana PLT Coordinator will participate in National PLT Leadership Development webinars to learn about new materials and new delivery methods.

Objective 3.2 *A cadre of PLT facilitators will be maintained in Indiana.* An estimated 3-5 new facilitators will be trained annually which will include new blended training. New online methods will be utilized to provide information to facilitators on new and revised PLT materials.

Objective 3.3 *Continue to develop partnerships with agencies, organizations, and educational institutes to identify where education projects might be initiated.*

Objective 3.4 *Employ and maintain mechanisms such as Arbor Day, Big Tree Register, etc. to generate interest about trees and forest management.*

Objective 3.5 *The Division of Forestry website will be used as an outreach tool for educators and others who have an interest in forestry education.* Indiana specific lesson plans focusing on Indiana's forests will be developed and posted on the Forestry website.

**Goal # 4:** Support the work of other local, state and national organizations that advance forestry education.

Objective 4.1 *Work with Communications to design and develop a communication and marketing plan to highlight the benefits of sustainable forest management on both public and private forest lands.*

Objective 4.2 *Technology and media can be utilized better to tell the positive forest management story, including the development of short videos with specific messages about the benefits of sustainable forest management.*

Objective 4.3 *Continue to coordinate the National FFA Forestry Career Development Event practicum at the National FFA Convention held in Indianapolis.* Institute national initiatives such as National Public Lands Day, Walk in the Forest, the Children and Nature Network, School Forests, and Green Ribbon Schools to strengthen these programs while enhancing our own.

Objective 4.4 *Maintain strong relationships and communications with Soil and Water Conservations Districts, Purdue University Cooperative Extension, The Nature Conservancy, Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association, and others.*

### **Conservation Education for Private Landowners**

Eighty-three percent of Indiana's forest land is held in private ownership by about 225,000 owners. Less than three percent of this private family forest land has written management plans guiding the future of these lands. Private forest landowners (PFLs) own land for many reasons, including wildlife habitat, recreation, and many just for the pleasure of having forest. Timber production is not a high priority for most private forest landowners. Forest health considers this audience a high priority. The actions of private forest landowners can either support or significantly harm forest health.

**Goal # 1:** Provide current, accurate, science-based information to private forest landowners in Indiana.

Objective 1.1 *Review current Division of Forestry online publications for timeliness and accuracy.* Revise current publications to meet current needs of PFLs.

Objective 1.2 *Based on state and national survey data on PFLs, write 2-3 new publications annually on various topics of most interest to landowners. Current data shows that landowners want information on both forest management and wildlife management.*

Objective 1.3 *Partner with public and private natural resource professionals to provide landowners with accurate, science-based information on sustainable forest management and how to use forest management to achieve the objectives for their woodland property.*

Objective 1.4 *Partner with Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas to provide private forest landowners with useful and sound information on the identification, impact, and treatment of invasive species of concern. Write publications on priority species of concern.*

## **Fire Section**

The Wildland Fire Program assists landowners by providing wildland fire training and equipment to rural fire departments. These fire departments provide initial attack on all of Indiana's privately owned forests. Prescribed Fire has become an accepted tool for habitat regeneration and maintenance on both public and private land. The Wildland Fire Program provides training in Prescribed Fire Management. This training allows public and private land managers to use fire effectively as a management tool. We also provide direct assistance to other divisions and agencies in conducting prescribed burns and in wildfire suppression.

## **Mission**

The Fire Management Program provides organizational, operational and technical leadership regarding wildland fire and prescribed burning. This leadership extends to all Division of Forestry land and may be extended to other DNR controlled lands and to all lands outside incorporated cities and towns.

## **Indiana Code**

IC 14-23-5 Forest Firefighting

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IC 14-23-6 Volunteer Forest Firefighters

IC 14-23-6.5 Indiana Rural Fire Protection Initiative

IC 14-23-7 Emergency Fire Hazard Areas

## **Goals and Objectives**

**Goal # 1:** *Increased Use of Prescribed Fire on Public and Private Forests.*

Objective 1.1 *Prescribed fire technical advice is offered and obtainable to all private individuals.* Initiating and planning prescribed burns is available to all state facilities. With the accessible technical and hands on support, encourage and promote prescribed fire on more private landscapes throughout Indiana.

Objective 1.2 *Train more professionals to implement prescribed fire on the landscape.* Research is documenting that fire was a natural part of the forest ecosystem and is necessary for the regeneration of most oak and hickory species. Getting more fire on the ground can only happen with better informed professionals.

**Goal # 2: Increase Wildfire Operational and Technical Assistance Delivery.**

Objective 2.1 *Utilize cross-trained personnel within the Division of Forestry and possibly other Divisions within DNR to increase the frequency and efficiency to provide fire suppression assistance during above-normal fire season activity.*

Objective 2.2 *Continue to encourage rural/volunteer fire departments to maintain cooperative mutual-aid agreements with DNR Fire Headquarters.* Work with rural/volunteer fire departments to adapt and/or acquire firefighting equipment that is capable of efficiently or effectively battling wildfires in Indiana.

Objective 2.3 *Continue to focus DNR Fire Headquarters staff on complex prescribed fires on public managed lands.* Investigate revenue generating prescribed fire operations such as those initiated with success at the Crane naval facility. Train and enable DNR properties to complete low complexity prescribed fires independent of direct DNR Fire assistance.

Objective 2.4 *Develop an equipment replacement schedule that is sustainable to maintain peak operational preparedness and execution.* Take advantage of any staffing level increase opportunities as well as new funding sources to increase effectiveness of the program.

Objective 2.5 *Develop a Prescribed Fire Council within the state incorporating all state and federal agencies that utilize prescribed fire as well as non-governmental organization (NGO's) that share similar land management missions.* Effectively promote positive publicity with regard to the effectiveness of the operational work that is accomplished.

**Goal # 3: Rural/Volunteer Fire Department Assistance**

Refine the combined fire department inspection of both Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) and Fire Firefighter Property/Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP/FFP) equipment. Investigate utilization of VFA funding to facilitate transport of quality equipment made available through FEPP/FFP for strategic placement at rural/volunteer fire departments. Investigate multi-state collaboration in the acquisition of FEPP/FFP equipment within the Big Rivers Forest Fire Management Compact for mutual benefit. Seek authority for increased screening of USDA excess property (including USFS, NRCS, etc.) for distribution to rural/volunteer fire departments with the intention of improving and increasing operational capacity, efficiency and safety. Encourage fire departments to turn in FEPP equipment/apparatus that has become a preventive

maintenance burden. Streamline the disposal of FEPP through scheduled sales continuing to utilize the established online sale process. Effectively promote positive publicity with regard to the increased capacity and success of the fire department assistance related programs.

#### **Goal # 4: Training and Prevention**

Objective 4.1 *Continue the “academy” style delivery of fire National Wildfire Coordinating Group courses that are pertinent to improving fire suppression and fire management capacity within the state of Indiana.* Refine fire training programs offered to rural/volunteer fire departments with the focus on successful initial attack strategies and tactics based in safety, effectiveness and efficiency.

Objective 4.2 *Partner with groups such as Indiana Fire Chiefs Association or Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association to assist in developing delivery of effective wildland fire training to fire departments.* Continue to partner with state universities to develop students with regard to fire ecology, fire management and operational insight. Foster inter-agency support and cooperation in promoting sound fire prevention messages during times of increased fire danger.

Objective 4.3 *Continue to focus delivery of the fire prevention message via Smokey Bear and other facilitative tools to school-aged children.*

## **State Forests Section**

The Indiana state forest system consists of 16 State Forests and 2 State Recreation Area properties containing 160,251 acres. This system was started in 1903 and was one of the first in the country. The state forests were initially created to restore eroded and worn-out lands when small subsistence farms began to be abandoned early in the century. Early state forest management focused on reforesting eroded areas, creating wildlife habitat, demonstrating good forest land management, providing public recreation, and conserving forest resources. The Division of Forestry is currently the only DNR Division that fully incorporates an active timber resource management program along with the management activities found within the other DNR landholding divisions. The Division also provides periodic assistance to other DNR lands in terms of forest health, resource management and utilization of trees and forest resources to achieve conservation goals.

### **Mission**

To manage, protect and conserve the timber, water, wildlife, soil and related forest resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, and to demonstrate proper forest management to Indiana landowners.

### **Indiana Code**

## IC 14-23-4 State Forest Management

### Goals and Objectives

#### Forest Resource Stewardship

##### **Goal # 1:** Actively and sustainably manage State Forests for the citizens of Indiana.

Objective 1.1 *Manage state forests with professional leadership in accordance with accepted scientific and forest certification standards for traditional and sustainable forest goods and services, including timber, wildlife habitat and historically or ecologically significant resources.* Science driven forest management has been the cornerstone of past and current management and will provide direction for future management. This approach over the last 117 years has placed these state forests at the forefront of all ownership classes in the State.

Objective 1.2 *Emphasis on oak restoration either through artificial or natural management processes.* Both state and private forest lands are lacking in seedling and pole size oak and hickory species. To maintain the current species mix, forest management practices will most likely need to change to include fire, enrichment plantings and more even-age management techniques.

*Objective 1.3 Monitor forest health.* Current forest inventory data suggests that natural aging, overstocked conditions and insect and disease occurrence are significantly increasing tree mortality. Also, invasive species (insects, diseases, and plants) are currently having an impact of regeneration and plant species vigor.

*Objective 1.4 Plan for climate change to affect forest resiliency and opportunities to incorporate climate change considerations into decision making.* Management plans will need to look out beyond the current 20-year cycle to assess options to manage possible species changes due to temperature and soil moisture conditions. The opportunity exists to enter into voluntary carbon markets to monetize standing forest carbon storage. As is being done with forest certification, the use of outside auditors can report annually on carbon additionality through improved forest management and land use changes via tree planting.

##### **Goal # 2:** Conserve and manage wildlife habitats, cultural resources, plant communities and high conservation value areas.

Objective 2.1 *Develop and implement a State Forest Habitat Conservation Plan for the federally endangered Indiana bat and the proposed listing of the northern long-eared and tricolored bats with the goal of obtaining an Incidental Take Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

Objective 2.2 *Update the wildlife habitat management plan for each property which will include management of T&E species utilizing the Division of Forestry wildlife specialist.*

Objective 2.3 *Continue to identify and designate forest types and exemplary communities that have High Conservation Values.*

Objective 2.4 *Continue to review projects by the DoF Archaeologist to conserve and avoid significant impact on cultural and archaeological resources.*

Objective 2.5 *Continue to review the heritage database in formulating forest management decisions or conducting forest management operations and avoid impacts to ecologically significant resources.*

Objective 2.6 *Begin the process of establishing a system wide botanical inventory of plants species. This will be done by collecting additional data on current continuous forest inventory plots. Will also develop management prescriptions for species of concern.*

## **Land Ownerships and Acquisitions**

**Goal # 1: Conserve important lands through strategic acquisitions, active resource management and boundary line management.**

Objective 1.1 *Maintain partnerships with both non-governmental and governmental organizations that support the acquisition of forest lands for long term management. The Division will continue to secure the integrity of all ownerships through boundary management and due diligence.*

Objective 1.2 *Review land offerings and identify lands of strategic and ecological importance for potential acquisition or trade only from willing sellers.*

Objective 1.3 *Identify State Forest land holdings that are non-essential to the DNR mission for possible sale or trade. Proceeds to be dedicated to other strategic State Forest acquisitions.*

Objective 1.4 *Identify and pursue lands for potential trade to reduce ownership fragmentation and improve land manageability.*

Objective 1.5 *Protect the integrity of State land ownership through an accelerated program to document and mark State Forest property lines and dedicated efforts to resolve boundary conflicts and land encroachments.*

## **State Forest Recreation**

**Goal # 1: Improve State Forest recreation user experience by investing in infrastructure to bring water, wastewater treatment, camping sites, trails, education centers, lakes and other related capital assets up to market expectations.**

Objective 1.1 *Develop a system-wide recreation plan that provides an array of recreational opportunities and levels of development from primitive to modern, based in part on the results of user opinion surveys, and begin implementation.*

*Objective 1.2 Identify state forests that have the greatest potential to provide improved forest-based outdoor recreation opportunities in current and underserved markets.*

*Objective 1.3 Seek and provide necessary funding to make the needed infrastructure improvements, correct deficiencies of high hazard dams, restore lakes, and improve user safety and guest experiences.*

*Objective 1.4 Evaluate the integrity of dams and water control structures on State Forest holdings and implement repairs as needed.*

*Objective 1.5 Evaluate sediment accumulation at Ferdinand Lake, Wyandotte Lake and other State Forest lakes, and lake restoration projects to remove the accumulated sediment and conservation measures to address the primary sources of siltation.*

*Objective 1.6 Continue working with the Division of Fish and Wildlife in managing fish populations, fish stocking and aquatic vegetation.*

*Objective 1.7 Assess current archery ranges and the Clark State Forest shooting range; bring existing ranges up to appropriate standards for the facilities and evaluate the potential for additional facilities at other State Forests.*

*Objective 1.8 Working with the Division of Parks, enhance State Forest campground facilities through upgraded restrooms, campsites, and camping cabins to better meet the expectations of today's outdoor recreationists. While also providing for primitive camping experience opportunities within State Forest campgrounds.*

*Objective 1.9 Undertake a system wide initiative to correct recreation trail condition deficiencies, including a review of State Forest recreation trail management protocols and standards.*

*Objective 1.10 Implement a user fee system that would include all state forests. Currently, one State Forest has a fee use area where all or part of the forest is accessed by a gate pass (Ferdinand State Forest). Going forward, the Division would expand the fees use areas to other State Forests and install gates, pass systems or new technologies to allow State Forest passes to be purchased remotely or on-site using technology similar to ATMs.*

## **Communications and Administration**

**Goal # 1: Provide information and educational opportunities to the public and develop an improved process to determine public attitudes, needs and desires.**

*Objective 1.1 Improve State Forest interpretive programs and facilities. Utilize existing and create additional methods to solicit meaningful input from Indiana landowners or residents.*

*Objective 1.2 Continue to be transparent with management activities. This will be done through Open Houses, website notice and public access to relevant management documents.*

*Objective 1.3 Continue to offer public input opportunities.*

Objective 1.4 *Improve State Forest communications by providing quality property maps for users, good neighbor newsletters, and enhanced web tools.*

Objective 1.5 *Provide opportunities to the public to offer input on identifying, designating, and managing High Conservation Value Forests.*

**Goal 2:** Evaluate and modify administrative procedures and organizational structure to improve management efficiency and effectiveness.

Objective 2.1 *Maintain high quality staff of professional foresters and resource managers. Add a new position, “Forest Ecologist” to the Division.*

Objective 2.2 *Maintain 20 hours of continuing professional education for all professional property staff to assure that professional staff members meet the continuing education requirement of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester standards and explore (and implement as available) financial or other incentives to encourage professional staff to become SAF Certified Foresters.*

Objective 2.3 *Expand and enhance volunteer opportunities at all State Forest and Recreation Area properties, including expanded campground host opportunities, adopt-a-trail programs and others.*

## **Community and Urban Forestry (CUF) Section**

### **Mission**

The Division's Community & Urban Forestry (CUF) Program provides statewide leadership to increase public awareness of the value of trees and associated natural resources in urban areas. We assist Indiana cities, towns, and non-profits and encourage resident involvement in protecting, expanding, and improving our community forests.

### **Goals and Objectives**

**Goal # 1:** Promote awareness of urban forestry issues. Only 11.6 percent of Indiana’s 567 cities and towns participate in the Tree City USA program. Tree City and Tree Campus participation is a tremendous opportunity to raise awareness and increase broad based support.

Objective 1.1 *Promote the Tree City USA program utilizing new technologies.*

Objective 1.2 *Empower and utilize partners to promote the Tree Campus program.*

Objective 1.3 *Connect Tree City and Tree Campus in municipalities who have capability of dual participation.*

Objective 1.4 *Advance the participation of Tree City and Tree Campus to the establishment of sustainable urban natural resource programs utilizing urban forestry.*

**Goal # 2: Protect, enhance, and expand urban forests and related natural resources.** Over 70% of Indiana's population now lives in urban areas. This urbanization impacts the amount and health of the urban forest. Urban trees benefit communities in many ways, including reducing energy consumption, reducing pollution and soil erosion, and increasing economic prosperity of all communities. For these reasons, the Indiana CUF Program promotes the management and increase of the urban forests in Indiana.

*Objective 2.1 Encourage and assist Indiana communities in developing comprehensive urban forestry programs.*

*Objective 2.2 Increase the availability of all types of urban forestry technical assistance.*

*Objective 2.3 Increase tree canopy cover in urban, suburban, and ex urban areas to complement strategies identified from the State Resource Assessment.*

*Objective 2.4 Develop Best Management Practices for Urban Forestry.*

*Objective 2.5 Assess the current condition of Indiana's urban forests on a periodic basis.*

*Objective 2.6 Develop new and provide existing tools to empower the development and adoption of comprehensive urban forest ordinances at the municipal and county levels.*

*Objective 1.7 Support and cooperate within the parameters of the State Strategic Plan to encourage native plantings, reduce the use of exotics, and control of invasive plants in urban woodlands and edges.*

**Goal # 3: Improve the communication of urban forestry Best Management Practices(BMPs).** Urban forestry is a field with rapidly changing technologies and new information. By providing education and opportunities to share information, and new research technologies, urban forestry practitioners and advocates will be able to increase their effectiveness.

*Objective 3.1 Communicate Indiana urban forestry best management practices.*

*Objective 3.2 Promote public knowledge of and use of qualified/certified tree care professionals and ANSI standards when using professionals in the arboriculture or nursery trades.*

*Objective 3.3 Connect to and provide technical training and other assistance using BMP guidelines for urban forest management for all interested customers.*

*Objective 3.4 Provide training, access to training, and current educational materials for urban forestry and arboricultural practices.*

*Objective 3.5 Support research efforts and communicate with researchers to learn about innovations and new practices.*

*Objective 3.6 Disseminate current research information in an understandable manner to appropriate audiences.*

**Goal # 4:** CUF and its partners will seek additional sources of urban forestry funding. CUF and its partners can no longer rely solely on funding from the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area. By seeking and securing other sources of monetary and material funding, CUF and its partners will raise awareness of the importance of the urban forest and be able to expand programs statewide.

Objective 4.1 *Seek non-traditional funding for specific initiatives.*

Objective 4.2 *Increase funding stream for the state program and its partners.*

**Goal # 5:** Encourage and facilitate communities and organizations to develop and maintain self-sustaining Urban Forestry Programs. Grant programs are important in providing seed money to help communities initiate and develop urban forestry programs. Communities must be able to develop reliable local support to fund a successful long-term effort.

Objective 5.1 *Encourage communities and organizations to develop self-sustaining urban forestry program defined by Best Management Practices for Urban Forestry.*

Objective 5.2 *Promote and encourage local governments to place the urban forest alongside other community infrastructure and include urban forestry in the budget.*

Objective 5.3 *Empower and encourage partners to inform and educate state, local, and county law makers on the importance of urban forests and the role of public funding.*

Objective 5.4 *Investigate and promote the use of funding from other "local" sources for funding urban forestry projects.*

**Goal # 6:** Promote networking and partnership building among public and private entities. Government agencies, businesses, utilities, non-profit organizations and citizen groups are involved in urban forestry issues. Working to establish links will generate interest and support for urban forestry. This will enable those involved in the partnerships to exchange expertise, ideas, and support.

Objective 6.1 *Develop shared mission between CUF and current and potential partners.*

Objective 6.2 *Identify and develop CUF and partner shared needs and shareable partner list to fill need.*

Objective 6.3 *Expand CUF communication base to move conservation groups and land trust non-profits toward at least one common urban forestry natural resource goal.*

Objective 6.4 *Improve IDNR interagency communication regarding goals, grants, projects, and shared staff expertise.*