

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Owen-Putnam State Forest, Storm Salvage Management

30 Day Comment Period Ending: 10/3/2024

Comments Received: 7

The table below is a summary of public comments received concerning the draft Resource Management Guide(s). The public comments received have been reviewed in their entirety and given due consideration summarized in the Division of Forestry response below.

Comment Summary	Division of Forestry Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General concern with cultural resources, over harvesting state forests, carbon storage, local markets, wildlife, and invasive species. • Concern with recreational trails and Fish Creek Campground. • Concern with steep slopes, intermittent streams, and erosion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archeological reviews are conducted prior to any timber harvest operation. Culturally sensitive areas identified during review are protected following guidance from the Division of Forestry Archeologist and Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA). • The storm salvage management posted online addressed which trees were targeted (e.g., damaged and uprooted) and listed by species the number of trees marked for removal. • The Division of Forestry has actively managed its lands for more than 120 years. This management has been a multiple uses multiple benefits approach. These benefits include timber production, biodiversity, watershed protection, recreation, wildlife habitat, and research areas. Recreational benefits include over 430 miles of designated recreational trails (e.g., horse, bike, hike and interpretive), over 500 individual camping options that include family and horse camp sites, rent-a-camp cabins, and family cabins. In addition, state forests offer dispersed primitive camping along three major hiking trails covering 125 miles, a swimming beach, shooting & archery range, hunting, trapping, fishing, boating, caving, picnicking, mushrooming, and many other opportunities under

this management philosophy across more than 160,000 acres.

- State Forest management is guided by science and implementation of sound silvicultural principles. They are managed under the principle that we're stewards of this land for the future. This work is guided through legislation and comprehensive scientific national and international forest certification standards which are independently audited to help insure long-term forest health, resiliency, and sustainability. [Forest Certification](#)
- Silvicultural prescriptions proposed in draft RMGs go through an ecological review process. This process includes a review of the National Heritage Database (NHD) and staff reviews by the divisions forest wildlife specialist and forest ecologist/botanist. Further information on direct and indirect impacts on species and habitats can be found in the [Indiana State Forest Environmental Assessment](#).
- Detailed flora and fauna inventories are beyond the scope of tract level management guides. Habitats, communities, and species are considered as part of the management planning process. Along with field observations, NHD review for threatened or endangered species (federally and state) on or near the management unit are considered. ***Please note, for the protection of sensitive flora and fauna NHD review results are not disclosed in draft RMGs.*** Further information on direct and indirect impacts on species and habitats can be found in the [Indiana State Forest Environmental Assessment](#).
- Implementation of RMGs utilize guidance from the US Fish & Wildlife Service on federally listed species known to occur on state forests.

- Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) data (2022) indicates Indiana State Forests contain approximately 62.9 million live trees, over 1 billion board feet (Doyle) of sawlog volume with an estimated annual growth exceeding 22 million board feet. Managed harvest levels are set at a level to insure long-term sustainability. These levels are periodically reviewed as new data is made available. System wide targets are set to not exceed net growth. See [CFI Summary of years 2017-2021](#)
- CFI data indicates stand age diversity across the state forest system at 6 percent young forest (0-19 years of age), 11 percent (20-59 years of age), 49 percent (60-99 years of age), and 34 percent older forest (100+ year of age).
- The Indiana Division of Forestry represents approximately 30 percent of the Indiana DNR public lands portfolio, which encompasses more than 500,000 acres. The Division of Forestry is the only land holding division with an active timber management program. In addition to the 70 percent of Indiana DNR lands not subject to timber management, the Division of Forestry has over 4,000 acres set aside as no harvesting and 7,700 acres restricted to single tree selection only with longer rotations to mimic older forest conditions. These figures do not include areas removed from timber management such as campgrounds, archeological or geologically unique features, or other special areas.
- The Division of Forestry considers recreational impacts during the planning and execution of management activities. The visual enhancement area (VEA) policy requires visual consideration when managing within high-use public areas or

	<p>high-use recreational facilities. During active management some sections of recreational trails may require temporary closure or rerouting for public safety. Those sections reopen following the completion of work. As outlined in the Recreation section of the storm salvage management posted online, there are no designated recreational trails or campgrounds in the salvage management areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invasive species, their presence and control, are evaluated as part of the property's normal operations. Treatments may occur prior to or following a timber harvest, or situational based on their presence within the county. Treatments range from minor to aggressive utilizing a variety of methods such as manual, mechanical, chemical, prescribed fire, or a combination. Only approved herbicides are used following forest certification standards and chemical labels.• Best Management Practices (BMP) will be implemented and monitored to address the soil erosion and sedimentation concerns. BMPs are required and included in each timber sale contract on state forests. The Division of Forestry will respond to reported BMP departures. 2022 BMP Field Guide• BMPs are guidelines, not law. However, contractual stipulations require BMPs to be implemented and followed on all State Forests. State Forest staff perform regular site visits during active operations and evaluate as part of their post-harvest review. Additionally, BMP monitoring is performed on each harvest for application and effectiveness. There are 58 individual BMPs measured across 5 categories: access/haul road, log landings or yards, skid trails, stream crossings, and
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	<p>riparian management zones (RMZ). View results BMP Monitoring Results for State Forest Properties 1996-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing climate change and carbon sequestration is beyond the scope of tract level resource management guides. See Forest Carbon Assessment for Indiana State Forests• State forest timber sales support local markets throughout the state, providing jobs and materials. They provide material used statewide and abroad. The statute does not imply only local markets or how a buyer must market material. Materials removed from state forests are certified globally recognized as material coming from well managed forests.
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