



## The Newsletter of the Indiana Forest Alliance

# New Terrain I-69 Threatens Endangered Species in Southern Indiana

Alex Smith, Julia Ferguson, Jonathan Bauer and Katherine Jameson

**T**HE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION of a new highway from Indianapolis to Evansville would destroy key habitat for many threatened and endangered species that dwell in our natural areas. The Indiana Department of Transportation has already identified a number of species that could be affected by the I-69 project, including the federally endangered Indiana Bat. In addition, we found two protected bird species along the proposed highway route that were not identified in INDOT's environmental impact assessment – Cerulean Warbler and Hooded Warbler. We hope to spark discussion about the impacts that this highway could have on Indiana's biodiversity, and draw attention to some species that could be imperiled by I-69 construction.

One inhabitant of the proposed highway route that has already received some attention is the federally endangered Indiana Bat. In INDOT's environmental impact assessment, they estimated that the highway would destroy 660 acres of woods within the foraging range of four summer Indiana Bat colonies, and lead to the annual mortality of 1.3% of all Indiana Bats in our area. The road could also affect several wintering caves, known as hibernacula. While INDOT concluded that these impacts would be "relatively insignificant," it seems fair to argue that any loss of habitat or loss of life could be devastating for a species already on the brink of extinction.

There are many other less conspicuous creatures

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living along our portion of the I-69 route that may be in even more danger. For example, the construction of I-69 would disrupt the water flow through several cave systems in our area which are home to a host of rare species. In one cave, surveyors for INDOT found four invertebrates that are found nowhere else on Earth outside this region of Indiana. One of these, the Ashcraft Cave Springtail, has been found only in that particular cave. Most of us have probably never seen a cave springtail, and we probably never will. But we should ask ourselves if it is ever worth knowingly placing an entire species, no matter how humble, at risk of total destruction.



*source: Wikimedia Commons*

Because we are concerned about the possible impacts of I-69, we recently organized a small environmental survey of our own. We identified bird species at several points along the planned highway route in Greene and Monroe counties in mid June 2010, near the end of the breeding season. One of us has worked professionally on bird surveys in the Hoosier National Forest for researchers at Purdue University. We followed the methodology used for those surveys, which is the exact

same process as that used for the Hardwoods Ecosystem Experiment, also run by Purdue University. In the course of one weekend, we identified the Cerulean Warbler (state endangered, federal species of concern) and Hooded Warbler (state species of concern) along the highway route.

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## Director's Note: Endings and Beginnings

IT HAS BEEN AN ACTION-PACKED, educational two years and two months since I became Director of Indiana Forest Alliance. In that time, I have met a great many people across the state that are concerned for the future of our forests and their ability to regenerate and restore not only themselves, but the health and security of Indiana's people.

There are very different philosophical viewpoints about what is best for Indiana's public and private forests and the threats they face today: climate change, conversion to non-forest uses, soil loss, biodiversity loss, overharvesting, water stress, invasive species, and many others. One of the most challenging things I've seen is the direct questioning of the character of organizers and activists around forest issues. Rather than building understanding and dialogue (one of the things I've sought to do throughout my tenure), there have been challenges. How we respond, that has a lot to say about our future together.

It isn't a tomato or two tossed in my direction that urged me to step back as director. Instead, I'm withdrawing my energies as director to focus more on my permaculture teaching and design work. Since permaculture is really about the way to create permanent sustainable communities, I will be working parallel to Indiana Forest Alliance--from protecting wild places to encouraging individuals and communities to use less energy (think NO Biomass!) to urging the restoration of natural riparian forests.

And it is my pleasure to introduce Brian Richwine as the new Director for Indiana Forest Alliance. Brian's depth of experience in and around the forest, his grasp of the issues, and unique skills and talents promise great things for the forest movement in Indiana.

Signing off for the forests, *Rhonda Baird*

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### **The mission of Indiana Forest Alliances is to:**

1. Oppose commercial extraction of resources from our public forests.
2. Hold governments and corporations accountable for their policies and behaviors as they concern forestry and forest products.
3. To promote economic and political models that support truly sustainable use of private forest lands.

### **Current Board Members:**

President: David Haberman, PhD.

Treasurer: Joanna Sparks

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At large: Tim Wilson, Linda Greene, Audrey Moore

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# **“Back Country Area and the Wilderness Movement in Indiana”**

*David Haberman*

**T**HE 1960’S MARKED the birth of a new style of environmentalism in the United States. One result of this was the emergence of a national wilderness movement, perhaps most evident by the passage of the Wilderness Act by Congress in 1964 to set aside land that was “untrammelled by man” and retained its “primeval character and influence.” Later realizing that the majority of the population lives in the eastern United States and acknowledging that there are virtually no virgin forests left in this part of the country, the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 was passed by Congress as an addendum to the Wilderness Act, thus allowing eastern areas to be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. This addendum recognizes the growing public desire for the protection of forests as wilderness and aims to identify wild areas that if left alone could return to the condition of wilderness. The Charles C. Deam Wilderness, which is comprised of nearly 13,000 acres of the Hoosier National Forest, was designated a wilderness in 1982 as a consequence of the dedicated work of preservationists in Indiana. This history is fairly well known; less well known is the role the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) played in the events that led to the establishment of the Deam Wilderness. Perhaps even less known is the connection between the establishment of the Back Country Area in Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests and the DNR’s resistance to



*The Back Country Area of Morgan-Monroe State Forest on an August day. Photo by Rhonda Baird*

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***There is an unremembered connection between the Charles Deam Wilderness and the Back Country Areas.***

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the Deam

Sierra Club records indicate that the original proposal for the wilderness area that became the Deam was for a little over 30,000 acres. There was great enthusiasm in Indiana for establishing wilderness lands. Several public polls at that time demonstrate that Hoosiers overwhelmingly favored the establishment of wilderness on public lands in our state. 95% of the in-state comments collected during the public comment period for the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) of the late 1970’s favored wilderness designation in Indiana, and the Indiana Forest Resource Plan Questionnaire administered to the public around the beginning of the

1980's indicated that 74% of the general public wanted public lands to be set aside as wilderness. Considering the public's increased awareness of the current threats to wild lands, we can expect that these numbers are even higher today. One of the reasons that the Deam today is less than half of what was initially proposed is due to the DNR's active opposition to the establishment of a federal wilderness in Indiana. DNR director James Ridenour announced the creation of a new Back Country Area in the Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests in early August of 1981. The then deputy director of the DNR, John Costello, is quoted in the Brown County Gazette (August 12, 1981) as saying that "designating the 'back country' area shows the department is attempting to respond to the desire of some Hoosiers for a wilderness experience. . . . We're suggesting that you can take Indiana hardwood forests on DNR property, and create a primitive outdoor experience that meets some of the needs that are expressed by wilderness proponents, and that we can do it under state law, without the need for federal legislation." Thank God for the federal legislation that established the Deam, for the very area designated as back country wilderness is extremely vulnerable in Indiana today.

The original DNR documentation for the Back Country Area states that this area is "to be enjoyed by the wilderness seeker as a place of solitude and repose," and that "it will offer an experience of visiting a forested area looking much the same as it may have appeared a century and a half ago." One hundred and fifty years is about the time it takes for our hardwood forests to reach the climax condition of a mature forest and achieve their greatest biodiversity. In the 1981 press release in which DNR director James Ridenour announced the establishment of the new Back Country Area, he states: "The State designation of 'Back Country' is similar to the Federal Wilderness Area designation, but we think our program more nearly fits the needs of Hoosiers." In some senses the Back Country Area is more restricted than the federal wilderness areas. For example, although both dogs and horses are permitted in federal wilderness areas, DNR documentation prohibits both in the Back Country Area. Today, however, the DNR Division of Forestry under the directorship of John Seifert is proposing to begin commercial timber operations in the Back Country Area on

20-year harvest cycles, treating it much the same as the rest of the state forest land. To begin commercially logging land that had been set aside as wilderness and not logged once since it was established as such would

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***...the very area designated as back country wilderness is extremely vulnerable in Indiana today.***

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be an enormous tragedy that cannot be allowed to happen. (See action box) By now proposing to begin to commercially log the Back Country Area, the DNR is reneging on their promise to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining the Back Country Areas as wilderness areas on state forest property. Since this promise was never put into law, it is vulnerable to the changing whims of the state administration. All of this highlights the urgent need to pass legislation that will permanently protect the Back Country Areas from commercial logging.

### ***Take Action Now!***

Contact John Davis, Deputy Director of the Department of Natural Resources and tell him you want the state to fulfill its promise--The Back Country Area is a wilderness--ask for no commercial logging!

Mr. John Davis  
Department of Natural Resources  
402 W. Washington St., Room 256  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-4021  
jdavis@dnr.in.gov

# A New Era for the Hoosier National Forest? (Or more of the same)

Andy Mahler

**A**T A RECENT HEARING in Scottsburg, Indiana regarding the Liberty Green (sic) proposal to build a biomass incinerator in their community, the approximately 600 at the meeting heard hours of testimony as to why biomass incineration is bad for forests and bad for human health. Of the dozens of individuals who spoke, only six spoke in favor of the incinerator proposal and all of those were from outside the County and had an interest in either building the facility or supplying fuel. The last of these was Anne Carey, the new District Ranger for the Hoosier National Forest who prior to her assignment to the Hoosier had been a Recreation Planner on the Cleveland National Forest in California. Those of us in attendance were surprised and dismayed to hear her speak favorably of biomass incineration and to state that the Hoosier National Forest could provide fuel for the facility.

Not knowing on whose authority this opinion had been offered, hers, the Forest Supervisor's, or higher ups in the Forest Service or the Obama Administration, I subsequently called the Forest Service office in Bedford to schedule a meeting with long-time Forest Supervisor Ken Day to discuss biomass and its potential harms. I was told that Ken had just announced his plan to retire and that he would be gone within the month – his replacement, at least on an interim basis, would be Anne Carey -- who would be Acting Supervisor until a permanent replacement could be named.

Representatives from several organizations with interest in Indiana's forests participated in the meeting we then scheduled with Supervisor Carey and members of her staff. Among these were Indiana Forest Alliance, Heartwood, Citizens Action Coalition, Concerned Citizens of Crawford County, Concerned Citizens of Scott County, Concerned Citizens of Orange County, and State Senator Richard Young of Milltown. Linda Greene wrote about the meeting for the Bloomington Alternative (<http://www.bloomingtonalternative.com/>

[articles/2010/07/11/10452](http://www.bloomingtonalternative.com/articles/2010/07/11/10452))

The meeting was cordial with those of us opposing both biomass incineration and logging in the Hoosier National Forest expressing our opinions and sharing scientific research in support of those positions and the

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***Those of us in attendance were surprised and dismayed to hear her speak favorably of biomass incineration...***

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Forest Service personnel listening attentively and asking thoughtful questions. The Forest Service personnel did not make any promises regarding biomass incineration other than to commit to read the materials we provided. They did state that there was support for biofuels from the Department of Agriculture (the Forest Service is within the USDA), but the impression was that the Bedford Forest Service staff would not be taking any further public positions regarding biomass incineration in the state.



*Biomass plant. Photo by Andrew Ciscel.*

# Cool the Incinerator's Fire: Unite with the Trees

By Shaina Dexter and Audrey Moore

**T**HE IMPORTANCE OF TREES is the shade that they give according to Cara Beth Jones, a co-chair of Concerned Citizens of Crawford County. The life they provide and beauty they possess are their true wealth to our planet. She cherishes one of the few sugar maples left on her 350-acre farm. Her sense of the land she has lived on her whole life has shown her that trees provide cover for the planet, and without them the land heats up. It heats up and dries up, as trees are a key component of the rain we experience. They also can be found to evapotranspire, a process generating the winds, as discussed in James Astill's article "A special report on forests: Seeing the wood."

Two Russian physicists, Victor Gorshkov and Anastassia Makarieva, claim that forests, not temperature, are the main drivers of winds. They base this on the previously unconsidered drop in pressure that occurs when water passes from gas to liquid state in condensation.

The land on Cara's farm without tree cover has burnt grass and dry soil. The trees are losing leaves early, and a severe drought is present in the area. In taking a look at the landscapes around us, we can begin to observe

the changes occurring. We can begin to question what the causes are and how to develop solutions.

In questioning how individuals come to believe that burning the forest is carbon neutral, confusion increases when considering the emissions are greater than that of coal, releasing 89 chemicals into our air supply. This includes a known carcinogen dioxin, plaguing women's breasts across the world. It biomagnifies right to the top of the food chain, our babies, and still the milk is the most nutritious option for them. Virtually the only source for biomass is forest farming. The Department of Agriculture will pay for farmer's seeds and trees to grow switchgrass and other potential incinerator fuels. What they do not pay for are the liver lesions and hair loss found in horses, sheep, and goats after they consume the grass that is toxic to them. According to Cara, it is quite rambunctious and spreads rapidly, and would be an endangerment to the big business brought to the area from horse and goat farming. How does a process so harmful begin to infiltrate into the sustainable energy category?

It all began, like much else, as a result of the energy crisis. The use of biomass incinerators began to be pitched by energy companies as a clean energy solution that would help move the country away from dependence on foreign oil. The organizations then infiltrate communities, sweet-talking the politicians with promises of increased job opportunities for the community, as well as the promise of being a part of an up-and-coming "clean energy" movement. Before a community is hardly aware, an incinerator is in the works; this all happens so quickly that the citizens don't have chance to research a bit further and uncover that these plants are not as stellar as they initially seem. Biomass incinerators pollute the air with greenhouse gases and particulate matter, as well as adding to the epidemic of global deforestation.

The Concerned Citizens of Scott County thankfully had their eyes open when a biomass plant



*De-limbering machine works on timber. Photo by Velo Steve.*

began planning to build in their area. They worked initially to further educate themselves and others in their community about the dangers of biomass, mobilizing and empowering them with information and steps to take, such as writing letters to the editor, canvassing, and calling their local officials, banding together in building a powerful grassroots movement. As Pat Berna of the Concerned Citizens said, in talking of the creation of such a movement, "If we build it, they will come!" They are currently pushing for an ordinance that would allow the city council and county commissioners to decide what potentially dangerous industries are and are not allowed to do with the land. They are dealing with the difficulties of garnering the necessary governmental support for this. The Concerned Citizens of Scott County have secured a recent success, however, in that the Area Plan Commission voted "NO!" on Liberty Green's proposed site. Hooray! This group also works to quickly empower other communities threatened by the possibility of biomass neighbors to defend their health and environment, giving birth to activists right and left.

In a similar manner, the Concerned Citizens of Crawford County reacted to the plant proposal in their area. Through careful analyzation of regulations applying to the biomass incineration plant proposed by Liberty Green Renewables, 14 violations were found. Included in the plan was a map that showed the site as too close to residential areas. In knowing the land, residents were also able to identify several springs and caves in too close of range. The water source proposed was the Blue River, where 800,000 gallons would come out to cool the plant daily, returning to the river as 90° F wastewater. The company also attempted to get water from local suppliers, but they did not have enough. If rain comes from trees, and water in the area is scarce, how is a plant that uses an exorbitant amount of water daily to burn local trees a good idea?

Take a look at the DNR report "Woody Biomass Feedstock for the Bioenergy and Bioproducts Industries," and see them refute their own points, all based upon "reasonable assumptions." The only money found

in burning biomass comes from governmental tax benefits and resource handouts. Possible sources of woody "residues" are already used for papermaking, mulch, and animal bedding. Transportation costs are so high that larger diameter trees would have to be taken with the smaller trees to be cost effective, though: "the combination of removing both small and large diameter material may leave a "clear cut" look, creating an unfavorable public opinion and opposition to woody biomass use." The idea of potential economic stimulus in jobs is hardly going to affect the town harmed by the plants, as workers would mostly come from elsewhere. The increase in investments and research suggested to possibly reach cost effectiveness is a final grasp at making the process sound like a worthwhile idea.

What can we do to help solidify an end to this preposterous proposal for our energy crisis? Research what promotes a healthy, thriving forest along with the dangers of burning it up for fuel. Talk to your neighbors, your kids, friends, colleagues, politicians, and strangers. Analyze regulations and vocalize

when harmful proposals break them. Demand that people with appropriate education and experience be the guardians of our forestlands. As Cara Beth notes, "you can't farm by a pencil," and direct experience and observation provide the clear knowledge of how forests operate. Getting outside and connecting with the landscape can teach us in a way that bridges what we learn to the life in front of us. Learning about the outside world without entering it robs us of sensing the enchantment of the forest. Let the connection to our life support systems rejuvenate us to stop proposals for destruction! As Albert Einstein said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Relaying that to incinerators, Tom Kruzen clarifies, "Burning got us into the climate change business and burning cannot get us out!"

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***...these plants are not as stellar as they initially seem.... [they] pollute the air...[and] add to global deforestation.***

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# I-69: Being right isn't enough

*An interview by John Flannelly*

*Matt Dellinger is the author of Interstate 69: The Unfinished History of the Last Great American Highway, a book that chronicles the ongoing story of I-69 throughout the country and the people for and against its construction. This interview was conducted on September 16th, 2010.*

*With this issue, there are new subtleties and complexities added to it every day, so with that in mind, what are some of the recent developments with Indiana's situation with I-69?*

The big thing that is going on right now is the Section 4 environmental study. The comment period was just extended. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) wants to start to get a recorded decision on section 4 so they can start work, but the thing standing in their way is that the Bloomington Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prepares a new transportation improvement program every year or two called the TIP. In order for the state to spend federal money on a project like this, the Bloomington MPO has to put it in their TIP. So far, they have refused to do that. They were supposed to vote on the matter on September 10th, but INDOT withdrew their request. Nobody's really sure why, but they say it has something to do with extending the comment period.

It's potentially kind of a big vulnerability on the part of INDOT because if the Bloomington MPO did refuse to put it into their TIP, the state would have to spend state money on it or put off doing it. City councilman Andy Ruff told me that he felt that the DOT was essentially blackmailing them by threatening to withhold money for other projects if they didn't put it in the TIP. This issue could turn out to be a pretty big deal, but the MPO policy board would have to stand very firmly against INDOT.



*Source: [http://mattdellinger.com/i69/images/Dellinger\\_byGusPowell.JPG](http://mattdellinger.com/i69/images/Dellinger_byGusPowell.JPG) (picture of Matt by Gus Powell. Used with permission.*

*Environmental issues have played a big role in the I-69 saga in Indiana. Could you talk a bit about that?*

Interstate 69 has always been a huge topic for it. People like the Hoosier Environmental Council (HEC) and Citizens for Appropriate Rural Roads (CARR) have looked very closely at the environmental studies and have pointed out that the routes chosen by the state are the most environmentally destructive ones that they considered. In their lawsuit with the Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC) and HEC and CARR, they brought a lot of these issues up. If you read the decision by Judge Hamilton, he actually talks quite a bit about the mating and nesting habits of the Indiana Bat. So, the Endangered Species Act came up as well. It seemed like he left the door open for lawsuits based on the second tier studies, so that's always a possibility too. He said he couldn't reverse the tier 1 decision because the state had followed all of the laws. I think there's potential for more environmental action on Section 4.

A lot of the things to watch now are the mitigation, what the state's exactly doing, they're supposed to be filing environmental impact statements. A woman named Wendy Wertz from Bloomington is writing a book about Lynton Caldwell, who I think helped found SPEA at IU and wrote the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA.) So Bloomington is, whether people know it or not, sort of an epicenter of environmental law, and a lot of good work was done here.

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***Get political....If you think you possess the truth, there's still more to do.***

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*What advice do you have for people who are against the highway?*

Get political. The information is sometimes not enough to carry your message. If you think that you possess the truth, there's still more to do. You have to figure out how things work and try to wield political power to stop it. It's very difficult. It's not easy. Very few big projects are stopped. The law is not necessarily on the side of the environment. The reason I say that about the truth not being enough is the Tokarskis and HEC and ELPC have been pointing out truths about the environmental consequences of this road for many years in the hopes of stopping it, and the federal lawsuit decision kind of drove home the point that, in fact, the state can do whatever it wants as long as it does the right paperwork. So, if you're someone who's concerned about the environment and wants to stop things like this, I guess being right is not always enough.

At the moment, the momentum is on the side of the state. They're moving dirt. They're building. The more that gets constructed, the more inevitable the rest seems. If they ever succeed in building it all the way up to Crane, people will look at the map and ask why that doesn't connect. And that's what the state is counting on. A lobbyist told me that a road project in Arkansas started at both ends. They built a big interchange in the middle of nowhere, and another big interchange up a

few miles, and it became impossible not to build the thing in between. These are things they do. They think about the psychology of this and political momentum.

And figure out where you can get leverage. The MPO is a good example. The MPO didn't even quite know what power they have or don't have, and they're actually in the process of trying to have a conversation with INDOT about this. How can they punish us? What are they allowed to do? Because the whole idea of the MPO is that this local group should have power over these decisions. That's why they exist. But with the way things work, that's not even always true, because sometimes there are checks and balances, and sometimes the state can leverage other power to get what they want done. As the two sides struggle, it's not always information that is the most important thing.

*I think that since your book provides so much information and gives a clearer look at both sides of this struggle, it can be useful and empowering for activists to know the full story.*

Well, despite what I just said, information is very important for knowing how things work. So once you know how things work, you need to get in there and make them work the way you want them to.

As I was writing the book, I interviewed a lot of people who were sort of perplexed by the other side. The people who wanted to build the road didn't understand why people were so upset, and the people against it kept wondering why they kept saying it would bring jobs when it wouldn't. Yet, each side cared enough about it that individuals had worked for 20 years or more so obviously there was something to it that these people cared about. I was trying to piece together both sides of the whole story. I think that you're right, and I have heard from people on both sides of the issue that they think the book helps their cause which makes me think I did a good job of being balanced, but it also might end up reigniting a lot of these conversations about privatization, raising the gas tax, road, rail, transit, walking, and biking. That conversation's only just begun.

(Full disclosure: Matt Dellinger and John Flannelly, the interviewer, are cousins.)

## I-69 and Endangered Species (from front)

Both the Cerulean and Hooded Warbler are inhabitants of the deep woods – reclusive species that avoid edges where the forest meets cleared land. This means that the impacts of a highway cutting through their forest habitat would extend beyond the actual trees that are felled. They prefer large trees for nesting, which restricts them to the remaining patches of mature forest. Both species spend their winters in Central or South America, where they face additional threats from rampant deforestation. According to the Cerulean Warbler's conservation action plan, compiled by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, it is the fastest-declining warbler species in North America. If there are no further threats to the Cerulean Warbler, current models estimate that it will be reduced to 10% of its current population 100 years from now. With the possible threat posed by I-69 construction, it is difficult to know how this species will fare.

When we read the recently released environmental impact statement for section 4 of the I-69 route (passing through Greene and Monroe counties), we were surprised and a little bit shocked to learn that the document does not mention either the Cerulean or Hooded Warbler. This is a document in which INDOT is supposed to assess the potential impacts on any protected species that could possibly be affected by the project, and ensure that those impacts are minimized. We are submitting our findings to INDOT, and we hope that they will be given full consideration. At the same time, we worry about other imperiled species that may have been overlooked in the assessment.

For us, this experience has emphasized the importance of public participation and discussion when it comes to large projects like I-69. If we had not taken the time to go look for birds on these properties, it is possible that the highway could have been built without anyone considering the threat it may pose to these endangered warblers. Because of this, we urge all of you to educate yourselves about the impacts of this highway. If you know of an area that could be affected, take a walk and make note of what you see. The environmental impact statement for section 4 of I-69 (passing through Greene and Monroe counties) is open for public comment until October 28, and INDOT is required to take any substantive findings into

account. Most importantly, talk about this with your friends and neighbors, and let your state legislators know your thoughts on the matter. With the majority of this project still unfunded and environmental impact studies for half the route unfinished, it is by no means a done deal. By speaking out about I-69, you can lend a voice to the many imperiled species that cannot speak for themselves.

Contact: Alex Smith, alexadamsmith@gmail.com

Hi Indiana Forest Alliance Friends!

You are all invited to join us for the Indiana Old-growth Forest Celebration on Sunday October 17 at 2pm in Paoli, Indiana at The Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest. I hope some of you can come! I have been researching the history of this forest, (the largest patch of old-growth in Indiana), for the past year and I was so inspired by the story behind it, that I decided to have a celebration to share it with everyone else! There will be

FREE FOOD! - provided by the Lost River Co-op in Paoli

LIVE MUSIC! - performers include Andy Mahler, Chris Barth, Malcolm Dalglish, and Steve & Nancy Dickey

EXPERT SPEAKERS! - including old-growth expert Prof. Orie Loucks from Miami University, forester Teena Ligman, forest activist Andy Mahler, and more!

HISTORICAL PHOTO DISPLAY! - there are a number of unique, old photos from the 1940s taken of this forest that will be on display.

Directions: From Bloomington, take Hwy 37S to Paoli. Continue for exactly 2 miles past the square on Hwy 37S and the celebration is on the left.

Need a ride? or Have room in your car? Contact Katie Hicks at ktmilady@hotmail.com or (812) 327-8503.

\*\*Thank you to our sponsors for this event: the Orange County Visitors Bureau and Orange County Homegrown and to Margie VanAuken for providing the artwork for the flier!\*\*\*

# Old Growth's a No Brainer for Indiana Foresters

By *Ryan Fitzpatrick*

Following State Senator Richard Young's (D-Milltown) resolution calling for the Natural Resources Study Committee (NRSC) to examine the topic of old growth forests, DNR representatives and citizens convened in McCormick's Creek State Park to discuss, among other pressing issues, the role of old growth forests within the Division of Forestry's land management policies. The discussion began with a report from DNR Deputy Director John Davis explaining the history of the DNR's involvement in forest lands and general state forest history.

Davis stated that the establishment of Indiana's state forest system was a reactionary measure to the destructive nature of pre-20th century land management—assumed here to be the complete removal of over 90% of Indiana forests—and continues today in the traditional vein. Davis overviewed the major state forests and parks of southern Indiana and claimed that of DNR managed forest lands (150,000 acres) there were around 67,000 acres of forests that would never be cut. However, this promised area was said to be limited to the major state parks (Turkey Run, Brown County, McCormick's Creek, and Spring Mill) and doesn't include the majority of state forests.

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***...biodiversity is demonstrated to be greater in old growth forests than in regenerating forests...***

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It is important to note that this purported protection is based on the previous management practices of state foresters and is not a binding limitation of public land

use. Comparatively, the back country area of Morgan-Monroe/Yellowwood was established as what would grow to be a succession forest and was then selectively logged some 30 years later. The NRSC's previous examination of the backcountry area was referenced by some speakers as the predecessor for the old growth discussion, a connection that demonstrates the nature of the conversation.

The similarity between the backcountry issue and the old growth topic may also be exemplary of the DNR's opinion of logging on public land: what necessity dictates at one time does not deserve permanent changes that would limit future plans of logging. Davis noted that other backcountry areas in Jackson-Washington and Clark state forests are selectively cut routinely. Davis stated the day's topic was not just about the role of old growth in DNR land management, but about creating more lands of designated old growth forest. To this idea Davis said the 67,000 acres of unprotected forest he promised not to cut was enough.

State Forester John Seifert offered his opinion about the efficacy of the Division of Forestry's management practices through the claim that Indiana forests cannot be viewed through the western states' mentality of old growth redwood forests (due to tree age). He also stated that through DNR silviculture practices, biodiversity increases compared to what would arise naturally.

As biodiversity is demonstrated to be greater in old growth forests than in regenerating forests (consider Canadian old growth or the rainforests of South America to other reoccurring forests of the regions), Seifert's insights are perplexing. His suggestion that human engineered biodiversity exceeds naturally occurring levels in regenerating forests has also been falsified through studies of the diversity and amount of soil producing microbes and log decomposing insects in engineered monoculture forests vs. naturally reoccurring ones. Despite the likely inaccuracies behind Seifert's claims,

they demonstrate the ubiquitous Division tendency to claim that they take better care of the earth than itself.

The IFA's David Haberman stressed the relevance of the current mass extinction event as a beneficial reference frame for forestry practices and ecological decision making. He felt the initiation of the day's old growth conversation was crucial to highlight the errors and necessary changes in public land management. Instead of viewing state controlled forest lands as simple aesthetic areas or as potential timber farms for a small number of players, Haberman argued for the realization of the state forest system's true potential: reclaimed areas of permanent growth.

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### **...the DNR claims there is enough old growth in the state...**

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According to Haberman, the Division of Forestry operates on twenty year rotations of harvesting trees and seeks to keep its forests continually young for maximizing profit. By doing so, the soil is robbed of nutrients and homes that fallen trees provide for future generations of wildlife. Additionally, carbon isn't allowed to be sequestered into soil or mature trees in continually harvested forests. The practice of silviculture also prevents the environmental benefits of a natural succession forest, stating that a single mature oak filters and releases as much as 40,000 gallons of water per year.

With the DNR claims that there is already enough potential old growth in the state (as well as the negative outlook they have for old growth), we have to wonder whether benefits the forests offer in aiding a weakening planet are something the DNR even cares to consider. It seems there is limited belief in old growth policies within the current manifestation of the DNR. Consider the roughly 900 acres of actual old growth forest left in Indiana, which is down from over twenty million acres before centuries of clearcutting. According to state and DNR

statistics, this is about four thousandths of a percent of total state land mass, and only two hundredths of a percent of total forested area. The DNR-deemed appropriate amount of 67,000 acres of promised future old growth is still only a third of a percent of state land mass and 1.4 percent of total forested area. Again, that acreage is dependent on the whims of foresters and not enforced by any direct state law.

The IFA calls for an end to commercial logging in public forests, which dictates a complete old growth restoration policy in all state and national forests. If all 150,000 acres of state forest were declared future old growth, this would still mean less than one percent of Indiana's land mass would be old growth after the necessary decades of recovering time. Protecting Indiana's public forests would be a small concession for the state to make in the public's interest.

Haberman cited former U.S. Forest Service scientist Dr. Robert Zahner as saying, "Should we be able to reserve all of the potential on eastern public lands for the preservation and restoration of old growth, such a realization would allocate less than 4% of the total land area of the region." By making the nearly complete destruction of our native woods clear, as well as describing the dangerous precipice on which the state finds itself, the status quo, trees as "timber" policy points to the necessity of reform.

The IFA appreciates the work Senator Young has put into beginning a conversation between concerned citizens and the DNR, but this is just the beginning. Please contact DNR Director Robert Carter (317.232.4020), John Davis (317.232.4025), and John Seifert (317.232.4105) and let them know what you think about logging public lands. If you would like to voice your ideas on furthering the old growth conversation, please contact Senator Young (812.633.4946) and the Indiana Forest Alliance (812.332.4878).



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“Now when you cut a forest, an ancient forest in particular, you are not just removing a lot of big trees and a few birds fluttering around in the canopy. You are drastically imperiling a vast array of species within a few square miles of you. The number of these species may go to tens of thousands. ... Many of them are still unknown to science, and science has not yet discovered the key role undoubtedly played in the maintenance of that ecosystem, as in the case of fungi, microorganisms, and many of the insects.”

--E.O. Wilson



*Selmier State Forest. Image by Tim Wilson*

## Indiana State Forests

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources manages 12 state forests, totaling about 150,000 acres located primarily in the southern part of the state. Although the state forests comprise less than 1% of the land in Indiana, they represent 30% of the land available for public recreation. Besides offering a wide variety of recreational opportunities and chance for spiritual renewal, the state forests moderate climate, provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, protect watersheds, stabilize soil, produce oxygen, sequester carbon, preserve native biological diversity, and supply forest products such as mushrooms. According to the Purdue University Department of Forestry, forest fragmentation is the number one threat to the health and biodiversity of Indiana forested lands, and an Indiana University poll conducted in 2001 found that the majority of citizens of Indiana oppose all commercial logging in the state forests. Indiana's state forests provide a little over 1% of the timber produced in the state. The state's demand for timber could easily be met through sustainable harvests on private land, allowing the restoration of our public forests and dedicating them to the preservation of biodiversity.

### ***Get to know your state forests:***

#### **Clark State Forest:** (Acres: 23, 979)

Location: Clark County (on U.S. Highway 31, 10 miles south of Scottsburg) Established in 1903, this is the oldest of the state forests in Indiana. It is connected with the 1,300-acre Deam Lake State Recreation Area.

#### **Ferdinand State Forest** (Acres: 7,657)

Location: Dubois County (about 1 hour southwest of Paoli) Established in 1934 as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp.

#### **Greene-Sullivan State Forest** (Acres: 8,000)

Location: Greene and Sullivan counties (2 miles south of Dugger along SR 159) Established in 1936 with land initially donated by coal companies.

*continued on page 14*

**Harrison-Crawford State Forest** (Acres: 24,000)

Location: Harrison and Crawford Counties (10 miles west of Corydon) Established in 1932, this rugged hardwood forest borders the Ohio River.

**Jackson-Washington State Forest** (Acres: 18,000)

Location: Jackson and Washington Counties (southeast of Brownstown on RS 250) Established with land purchased by the state in the 1930's and 1950's. A 2544-acre Back Country Area was established in this state forest in 1979.

**Martin State Forest** (Acres: 7,023)

Location: Martin County (20 miles southwest of Bedford on US Highway 50) Martin State Forest features rugged hills, deep woods and long hiking trails.

**Morgan-Monroe State Forest** (Acres: 24,000)

Location: Morgan and Monroe Counties (16 miles north-east of Bloomington) This state forest was established with eroded farmland purchased by the state in 1929. A 3000-acre Back Country Area established in 1981 and shared with Yellowwood State Forest.

**Owen-Putnam State Forest** (Acres: 6,245)

Location: Owen and Putnam Counties (6 miles west of Spencer on SR 46) Features hardwood forests, beautiful hills, and a 50-foot sandstone bluff.

**Pike State Forest** (Acres: 2,914)

Location: Pike County (Located off State Road 364, four miles east of State Road 61) Established with poor farmland purchased by the state beginning in the 1930s.

**Salamonie River State Park** (Acres: 850)

Location: Wabash and Huntington Counties (8 miles east of Wabash) Established in the 1930s as a riverside forest for the reclamation of eroded land.

**Selmier State Forest** (Acres: 355)

Location: Jennings County (2 miles northeast of North Vernon on CR 350 North) Established as a gift from the Selmier family who restored this forest in the 1920s.

**Yellowwood State Forest** (Acres: 23,326)

Location: Brown County (7 miles west of Nashville off State Highway 46) Created from federal land leased to the state in 1940, and deeded in 1956. Features the fabulous 133-acre Yellowwood Lake and a 3000-acre Back Country Area shared with Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

Information source: DNR Indiana State Forests. For more information visit: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/3631.htm>.

**Visit Often, Bring Friends, Have Fun, Take Ownership of What is Yours...**

## Indiana Forest Alliance Fall Forest Fest and Heartwood Reunion, Oct 8-10

Join the Indiana Forest Alliance and Heartwood for the Indiana Forest Alliance Fall Forest Fest and Heartwood Reunion, Oct 8-10, at the Lazy Black Bear in the beautiful Hoosier National Forest just south of Paoli, Indiana. This year's Forest Fest will feature a strategic discussion on how to defend Indiana forests from a new wave of forest-consuming biomass incinerators (see related article) proposed for the state and nation. There will be an Indiana Forest Alliance meeting Saturday morning and a variety of workshop topics including Integrated Forest Management with Gary Anderson of the Forest School and Solar Energy with Jeff Auxier of the Kentucky Solar Society, as well as numerous other inspiring field trips, speakers and topics. IFA Co-Director and IU Religious Studies Department Chair, David Haberman will provide the keynote address Friday night.

There will also be great music, including the phenomenal songs of social change, inspiration and justice of international eco-troubadour David Rovics, dancing to the Lick Creek Band, and the ever-entertaining and death-defying Saturday night Talent Show! Chefs Shane McElwee and Emily Winter will again delight the taste buds and nourish the soul with a delicious menu featuring local, organic and healthy ingredients, with vegan and gluten-free option available at each meal.

Please plan to join us and bring your dancing shoes, benefit auction items, and your ideas for discussion topics. Registration information, directions, a downloadable brochure, and more are available at <http://www.heartwood.org/reunion/>, or call 812.723.2430, for more information

Join our Forest FUNd Campaign to raise \$20,000 by the end of January 2011! How would you like to help us reach that goal?

**Hear our Plea!** Donate now to support the on-going movement to protect and restore Indiana's forests. Indiana Forest Alliance and its allies are challenging more threats to our forests than ever before. Your support means we can use every penny to be more effective in our work. *Thank you!*

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*You may also set up recurring payments through our paypal account by visiting [www.indianaforestalliance.org](http://www.indianaforestalliance.org).*

*\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive all communication by email (rather than paper)*

*Please note: In an effort to save paper and to stretch your dollars wisely, we are encouraging you to receive and reply to us via electronic forms.*

*For the Forests,  
Indiana Forest Alliance Volunteers*

***Indiana Forests***

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