

# DNR NEWS

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## Forestry strategic plan focuses on more public input

The DNR Division of Forestry recently released its Strategic Plan for 2008-2013. The plan was based on considerable public input.

“This plan expanded on the public input process to include open houses, public meetings and opportunities to comment on draft plans” said State Forester John Seifert. “We addressed each and every comment received from the public to the extent possible. Those comments covered a wide range of topics, from timber harvesting and wildlife habitat to recreation, ecosystem protection, funding and organizational efficiency.”

Most comments were in reference to the state forest section of the plan. The newly released plan and a “Summary and Division Response to Public Comments,” are at [dnr.IN.gov/forestry/index.html](http://dnr.IN.gov/forestry/index.html).

A few of the proposed changes Hoosiers will see in the state forests section of the plan:

- Increased focus on providing information to the public and involving public participation in decision making.
- Increased emphasis on wildlife habitat management of state forests, including employment of a wildlife biologist.
- Increased emphasis on land acquisition, including acquiring an additional state forest.
- Increased emphasis on development and management of recreation areas.
- Development of a state forest environmental assessment mechanism.
- Designation and management of high conservation value forests.
- Increased emphasis on control of exotic invasive species.
- Development of a percentage of lands into “older forest” conditions, i.e., forests that will be managed for a longer than usual rotation producing a high number of large, old trees, working toward is the appearance and wildlife habitat value of old, over-mature forests.
- Reduction in the upper limit on the timber harvest level to 60 percent of forest growth, or about 14 million board feet annually. Growth will be accurately determined with a continuous forest inventory system

The plan also addresses the Division’s private forest land-assistance programs and the strategic direction for tree nursery operation and hardwood economic development. For more information on these portions of the plan, see the previously listed computer link.

