Yellowwood State Forest

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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April 2015

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2015
Abstract
During the mid-1900s, the United States began focusing on preserving nature under the guidance of President Roosevelt. Indiana started creating the State Forests with the goal of preserving and conserving the land, animals, and natural environment. This was meant to give the residents of Indiana a place to enjoy outdoor activities in a public place. Yellowwood State Forest had a unique beginning with being owned originally by the federal government before being transferred to the state. Yellowwood ensures that Indiana is preserving its natural history for the future, while allowing people to enjoy the outdoors.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Dr. Ronald V. Morris for advising me through this project. His assistance and time given during this large project was greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank Heidi and Mitchell for organizing the group project, helping throughout the project, and providing guidance to conduct the research.
History

During the Great Depression, under President Roosevelt, the government began acquiring land for the Land Utilization Program. The mission of the Land Utilization Program was to take agriculturally useless land and make something useful of it. Yellowwood State Forest began when the federal government began purchasing land in Southern Indiana as early as 1935. Land was purchased for conservation purposes to show how to constructively use the land. Beginning in 1934, the land where Yellowwood is currently located, was managed by Region 3, Division of Land Utilization of the Resettlement Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Resettlement Administration eventually became the Farm Security Administration.

Yellowwood State Forest was originally known as the Bean Blossom Agricultural Demonstration Project, LD-IN-4.¹ The purpose of the Bean Blossom Project was to acquire and develop 20,000 acres of land not suitable for farming. This was part of a nation-wide land utilization program to promote the constructive use of land. The project received the name Bean Blossom because there is a creek and town by that name north of Nashville, near the current location of Yellowwood State Forest.

When the Bean Blossom Project was initiated, over-cutting of timber had impacted the forests by decreasing wildlife. Farming done in the area was inadequate because the sub-marginal soil led to low yields. Floods were common in the valleys, and erosion increased after logging which had a negative affect for the farmers when they lost the top soil. Therefore, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture began converting the land into recreation, forestry, and wildlife conservation. This project was meant to “show the state and local communities how the land could be used for economically more desirable

¹ Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
purposes."² By planting more trees and building a dam, the problems of flooding and erosion were eventually solved over several years.³ Also, this project assisted with fixing the problems of tax delinquency and local government income in Southern Indiana. These were both caused by the low farming yields affecting local families, government providing assistance to the families and schools, which was higher than the tax income from the land.⁴ The timber and recreation provided by the 20,000 acres would pay better than the agriculture. By removing the roads, schools, and farms, tax money was saved in communities where farming was no longer providing enough income.⁵ This region of Indiana mainly only did subsistence farming, but the poverty level in the area was high.

Resettlement Administration

As early as 1935, the government began purchasing land in the Brown County area. Some known property owners, who sold their land to the government, are listed in Table 1. They once owned land that is now under part of Yellowwood Lake. [Insert Table 1 here] During 1936, project manager Ralph Wright said there were 75 farmsteads torn down with the lumber and other materials salvaged.⁶ Under the Bean Blossom Project, the government acquired 17,000 acres of land by 1937. Contributing to this acreage were dozens of small parcels: 47 farmsteads and 43 miles of fence were eliminated by this date, with 53 more farmsteads arranged to be removed.

In the Spring of 1936, more than 200 men were working on developing the Resettlement Administration's 20,000 acre land. The project manager, Ralph Wright said the workers were preparing the land for actual construction once the land transfers were complete. Engineers were

² Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
³ "20,000-Acre Brown County Project Will Be Dedicated On October 9," Outdoor Indiana, October, 1938, 16,24.
⁴ Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
⁵ "Conservation of Natural Resources Stressed in Two Moving Pictures," Outdoor Indiana, October, 1938, 18.
⁶ "Many Men Working on Land Project," Brown County Democrat, March 26, 1936
developing a 95 mile survey to determine the boundaries of the project. More than 35,000 yards of limestone were needed for the roads, so 40 men were retrieving 180 to 200 yards of stone from the quarry daily. The crushed limestone was used to surface the roads. Carpenters from Brown County remodeled an old farmstead into a tool house with its tool racks, saw sharpening room, facilities for making field repairs, and space for time keepers. Two similar houses were being remodeled, and one campsite was being developed.

The forest was improved by cutting out dead and diseased wood to allow young trees to thrive. This work was being done by five crews of 15 to 20 men who were covering 50 acres a day on average. At the time, they estimated 5,000 acres of young forests were improved through this method. The group prevented future erosion by planting trees in the open areas on the hills, including hardwoods and evergreens. Also, 75 miles of fences were removed and dozens of campsites were completed. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was responsible for planting 2 million trees in Indiana on abandoned farmland and eroded hillsides. These trees were planted with the goal of yielding a permanent income in future years.

In 1936, the Rural Resettlement Administration purchased a few thousand acres of land to add to the project. These were acquired from Brown County citizens whose information is listed in the Brown County Democrat. The government paid on average $1 to $16 per acre. In December of 1936, there were over 2,000 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) members working on the 12 Indiana State Forests and Game Preserves. At the time, state forests and game preserves covered 60,000 acres of Indiana. By the end of the year, crop acreage reduced from 20,702 acres to 191 acres through the Resettlement Administration. The CCC men developed

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7 "Many Men Working on Land Project," Brown County Democrat, March 26, 1936
8 Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
9 "20,000-Acre Brown County Project Will Be Dedicated On October 9," Outdoor Indiana, October, 1938, 16,24
10 "Government Buys More Land in County," Brown County Democrat, December 3, 1936
11 "CCC Enrollees Are Continuing Program," Brown County Democrat, December 24, 1936
1,301 acres for wildlife habitat by growing crops and hay for game in the hope of establishing
tree watching and hunting areas.¹²

**Bean Blossom Project**

At the location of the present day Yellowwood Manager’s residence, a Civilian
Conservation Corps camp was constructed in the early 1930s. The CCC performed a variety of
jobs on the property including wildlife management. They planted pine in thousands of acres of
fields, set up a fire protection system, cleaned up scrub areas, and planted saplings in damaged
areas of the forest.¹³

A steel lookout tower was built along with ten miles of fire breaks to assist with fire
control. The men made the breaks with a custom designed plow which cleared a ten-foot strip of
flammable material.¹⁴ Truck trails, fire lanes, and observation towers were constructed to protect
the forested area.¹⁵ Fire prevention is important because it saves the timber, as well as ensuring
the wild animals have cover and food available.¹⁶

Also, the CCC built all three lakes on Yellowwood State Forest: Yellowwood, Bear, and
Crooked Creek.¹⁷ In September of 1936, the dam on Yellowwood Lake started being developed.
The WPA was in charge of construction of the dam.¹⁸ Three shifts of men working on the dam,
with the night shift working with flood lights.¹⁹ With the nearing colder temperatures, the men
worked around the clock in order to complete the dam before the ground froze. The dam is 855
feet long and goes across the valley of Jackson Creek.²⁰ Since this region of Indiana is prone to

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¹² “18,927 Acres Bought Here By Government,” *Brown County Democrat*, December 31, 1936
¹⁴ “Many Men Working on Land Project,” *Brown County Democrat*, March 26, 1936
¹⁵ “20,000-Acre Brown County Project Will Be Dedicated On October 9,” *Outdoor Indiana*, October, 1938, 16,24.
¹⁶ Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
¹⁸ Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
¹⁹ “New Lake At Resettlement Camp,” *Brown County Democrat*, September 17, 1936
²⁰ “20,000-Acre Brown County Project Will Be Dedicated On October 9,” *Outdoor Indiana*, October, 1938, 16,24.
floods, the dam was built to prevent future flooding. Therefore, the dam was constructed partially in the ground and with a levee containing an emergency spillway. Any flooding coming down Jackson Creek would be stopped with this type of design. An estimated 800 acres of water were impounded by the dam. In the Spring of 1938, Yellowwood Lake was completed with 130 acres. The lake was 35 feet deep and centrally located in the forest.

The lake was originally created for both a drinking water source and recreational destination.

An estimated 500 parent fish were placed in Jackson Creek above the Yellowwood Lake Dam. To plan for the future, prior to the lake being filled, two fish-rearing ponds were built below the dam and spillway to maintain a population to stock the lake. Each pond covers an estimated three-fourths of an acre. Also, both ponds are fed by a pipe line that extends from the dam. Parent fish were stocked in the lake because they would reproduce and enlarge the population.

Workers placed bass, bluegills, suckers, red-eared sunfish, crappies, and a variety of other species in Yellowwood Lake. The various fish placed in the lake allow people to have a variety when fishing. In 1939, waterfowl food plantings were made in both Yellowwood Lake and Bear Creek. Later that year, under the Division of Conservation 4,724 smallmouth bass were raised and then planted in Yellowwood Lake.

By 1938, the Resettlement Administration had merged with the Soil Conservation Service, which had previously managed the project for a few years. The Indiana Conservationists held a dedication ceremony on October 9, 1938 for the Bean Blossom project on the property.

In 1939, The Soil Conservation Service took over managing the development of the Brown

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21 “Yearbook of the State of Indiana,” The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1938, 827
22 Linda Baden, e-mail message to author, April 14, 2015
23 Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015.
24 “Yearbook of the State of Indiana,” The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1937.
25 “20,000-Acre Brown County Project Will Be Dedicated On October 9,” Outdoor Indiana, October, 1938, 16,24.
26 “Yearbook of the State of Indiana,” The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1938, 827.
27 “Yearbook of the State of Indiana,” The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1938, 845.
28 “20,000-Acre Brown County Project Will Be Dedicated On October 9,” Outdoor Indiana, October, 1938, 16,24.
County area. Sometime during the year the property was completed and turned over to the Department of Conservation for administration.\textsuperscript{29} Yellowwood State Forest has a long history of various managements because of groups merging with others, changing names, or the transfer of property administration.

**World War II**

Starting January 1, 1940, the Department of Conservation’s Forestry Division was given a 99 year lease of the Bean Blossom Project from the USDA. The Division of Forestry renamed the property to Yellowwood State Forest. The forest was named for a tree common to southern areas, but rare this far north. In 1933, the Yellowwood Tree, *Cladratis kentuckea*, was found in Ogle Hollow which is part of the game preserve.\textsuperscript{30} This tree has a bright yellow wood that is hard and dense. Every three to five years the tree flowers in the spring with clusters of pea-like, white flowers. Less than 200 acres in Yellowwood State Forest feature the tree, but it is located on the north side facing the hills and ravines near Crooked Creek Lake; also an area of the yellowwood tree was planted at the Forest Office on Yellowwood Lake Road.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1940, Yellowwood State Forest was added to the properties managed by the Division of Forestry. The Division managed 14 state forests with a total of 108,578 acres; of which Yellowwood had 19,400. At that time, Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe State Forest were operated in conjunction. Morgan-Monroe is located north-west of Yellowwood.\textsuperscript{32}

Between 1943 and 1949, many improvements were made to Yellowwood State Park. In 1943, the animal corral fences, from previous land owners’ farms, were sold. Also, telephone

\textsuperscript{29}“Yearbook of the State of Indiana, The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1939, 823.
\textsuperscript{30}Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
\textsuperscript{31}“Yellowwood State Forest,” Indiana Department of Natural Resources, accessed January 19, 2015, http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/4817.htm#
\textsuperscript{32}“Indiana Forestry Program Creates Future Timber, Aids Recreation: Over Hundred Thousand Acres in Demonstration Areas- Nurseries, Fire, Prevention Important Activities,” *Outdoor Indiana*, July 1940, 17-19
lines were constructed throughout the forest. Two original animal feeding stations were used to construct a small house for the boat launch on Yellowwood Lake. That year an estimated 16,000 trees were planted in the forest.

Improvements to the lake were made in 1944 for fisherman, and a parking area and boat launch was built at the north end of Yellowwood Lake. This allowed fisherman to use private boats, and a new boat dock and shelter were constructed to be used by the concessionaire. The road that led to the patrolman’s area was graveled. During the year a small landslide occurred on the Yellowwood dam. The dam was repaired and surrounding area seeded to prevent further washing and on eleven acres 6,700 trees were planted.

United States Army

The U.S. Army used both Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forest as a training ground for the troops from 1943 to 1945. The unit was stationed at Camp Atterbury, located northeast of Yellowwood near Edinburgh. Camp Atterbury was under construction from 1941-1942. Construction of the camp started shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. During WWII, the camp held a hospital, prisoner of war camp, and four U.S. Army infantry divisions.

Beginning in 1943, the troops used the forest as a maneuver practice area. It was noted in the Indiana Yearbook, that the discipline of the troops was evident in the way they left no evidence in the areas they occupied. In 1944, the troops used the northeast corner of Yellowwood Lake and the surrounding area. They practiced maneuvers and trained in combat swimming. The Army built diving towers and foot piers on the lake, and they put gravel on the

33 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1943, 796.
34 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1944, 919
35 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1943, 1945
37 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1943, 805
beaches next to the swimming area. At this time the Army was in the process of developing plans to widen and rebuild approximately three miles of fire trails west of the lake. This would allow the group more room to bring in military supplies, and for equipment to build additional structures around Yellowwood Lake.

Early in 1945 co-operation by Yellowwood State Forest was extended to the War Department to assist with their training program for the troops at Camp Atterbury. The War Department used the forest to teach landing operations. In September 1945, World War II ended and the U.S. Army removed all improvements to Yellowwood. Diving towers and piers were removed with the scrap lumber cut down into wood to be used on the property. The Army fulfilled all their agreements, and any area they used was left in good condition. Training and preparing the soldiers at Yellowwood provided a large natural space to practice military exercises. Yellowwood provided the camp amenities such as the lake, beach, woods, and trails which otherwise were not available at Camp Atterbury.

Post-World War II

Hickory poles and logs were sold from Yellowwood that year, and many areas were rented for crop land to local farmers. During 1946, the majority of the year was spent on the maintenance of the large picnic area on Yellowwood Lake. There were 50 public fishing boats located on the lake available for rent, along with many privately owned boats. According to the Indiana Yearbook, a new picnic area was needed with the increase of visitors, which was due to

38 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1944, 919
39 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1945, 575
40 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1945, 564
41 "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1945, 564
the soldiers returning home from war. During the year 10,800 trees were planted including 1,200 cotton wood, 2,800 white pine, 2,000 shortleaf pine, and 4,800 Virginia pine.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1949, maintenance work was done to improve the public use areas, equipment, seed collection, and trails. Throughout the year 62,200 trees were planted and 400 pounds of seed was collected. Six tracts of timber were marked then sold, which yielded 287,698 feet of wood boards. Boat rentals increased during the year, and when the funds were available new boats were purchased.\textsuperscript{43} With the increased attendance at the forest, additional amenities were needed to accommodate the public. During this year, Yellowwood was the largest property operated by the Division of Forestry with 19,481 acres.\textsuperscript{44}

In 1951, Indiana and the U.S. government made a deal regarding ownership of Yellowwood State Forest. Indiana would gain ownership rights to Yellowwood only if they purchased undeveloped land in other parts of the state, then exchanged with the U.S. government. The exchange was dollar-for-dollar. Indiana was only charged the original price the federal government paid in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{45} The U.S. had little involvement with Yellowwood by this time since Indiana had been performing all the administrative activities and making improvements to the property.

Some of the land that is now part of Yellowwood State Forest was sold to the state of Indiana as the Yellowwood Project LA-IN-4 on or around March 20, 1951. The government had acquired approximately 18,860 acres under the authority of Title II of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act. The original cost was approximately $173,000. Indiana Governor Henry F. Schricker and Attorney General J. Emmett McMannamon signed and approved to form the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1946, 679
\item \textsuperscript{43} "Yearbook of the State of Indiana," The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1949, 249
\item \textsuperscript{44} NA, "State Forests Increased by 2,600 Acres," \textit{Indianapolis News}, July 22, 1949
\item \textsuperscript{45} NA, "The State Finds a Good Deal, Where Money Grows in Trees," \textit{The Indianapolis Times}, June 14, 1953
\end{itemize}
Yellowwood Project LA-IN-4 on January 24, 1951. The document that sold the land was signed by C.J. McCormick, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, on April 5, 1951.

By 1952 Yellowwood had a total of 21,563 acres; of which 20,000 were considered commercial forestland. This remained until the 1980s.46 In July of 1953, the U.S. government transferred 13,610 acres of forest land to Indiana.47 The deal was closed in a ceremony at the Agriculture Department, and signed by Agriculture Secretary Ezra Benson. Doxie Moore, Indiana State Conservation Director, signed to receive the land. The agreement states that the federal government would retain 75% of the mineral rights. In the article “Uncle Sam Packs Up, Quits Brown County,” Moore stated that this was done due to the Republicans promise to decentralize the government and restore states’ rights. This property was purchased by the federal government in 1933, and Indiana received the land through the Yellowwood Exchange. After this transfer of acreage, the federal government was completely out of Brown County.48 Although Indiana had immediate ownership of the land after the contract, it took some time to trace the deeds to the original owners of the land. The federal government owned the land for many years, but the State Conservation Department took care of the land.49 By 1957, Yellowwood State Forest had a total of 21,563 acres on the property.50

During the 1960s when the state forests became a popular destination spot for family vacations, horse trails were added to Yellowwood. There are a total of 19 miles on the five horse trails which go throughout the forest. Horse trails include “Y” (8.6 miles), “SY” (4 miles), “W”

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46 Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
48 Dan Kidney, “Uncle Sam Packs Up, Quits Brown County,” *The Indianapolis Times*, July 9, 1953
50 NA, “State Forests To Provide For Holidays,” *The Indianapolis Star*, August 30, 1957
(2.4 miles), “Z” (4 miles), and “X” (2 miles). These trails will be marked to allow horses, but hikers are also allowed on these trails.  

The Ten O’Clock Line Trail is 16 miles long and became part of the Yellowwood State Forest in the 1960s. It begins in Brown County State Park and ends at the north end of Yellowwood Lake. The trail follows ridges, valleys, Indian trails, and historic forest highways that were used over 150 years ago. The trail’s name comes from the Ten O’Clock Boundary Line. This trail went along the northern boundary of a land purchase between Governor William Henry Harrison and the Indians. It was part of the Treaty of Fort Wayne which was signed on 1809 by the Chiefs of Miami, Wea, and Delaware. Harrison purchased 3,000,000 acres of land. The Indians insisted the boundary line be determined by the shadow cast at 10 a.m. by the sun on the day the treaty was signed. It takes on average seven to eight hours to hike the entire trail.  

By 1964, Indiana State Forests were becoming more popular than the state parks because they were less crowded and more peaceful. The major attractions of the forests were hunting, fishing, and camping. The state forests ranked high on the list of vacation spots for families all over the state, and willing to travel farther to visit. The main aspect that made the state forests more appealing than state parks was the free entrance. The forests provided a place where families could explore the woods, hike the hills, see wild animals, and enjoy the lakes. Also, the state forests were ideal for families with pets because there was a vast amount of land available for them to run around and play.  

Timber harvesting was done on the State Forests in 1968 which yielded Indiana with $36,168. Yellowwood provided 116,088 of board feet. From the net profits of selling the timber, 

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51 “Yellowwood State Forest,” Indiana Department of Natural Resources, accessed January 19, 2015, [http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/4817.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/4817.htm#)
52 Ten O’Clock Line Trail, (Indiana Department of Natural Resources Indiana Division of Forestry)
Indiana reimbursed the counties where the timber was cut by 15 per cent.\textsuperscript{54} Yellowwood had a total of 22,315 acres by 1968.\textsuperscript{55}

The 42-mile Tecumseh Trail passes through Yellowwood, and is part of the Yellowwood Lake and Scarce O'Fat Trail. It was added to Yellowwood in 1973. Tecumseh, meaning a “panther in the sky”, was a Shawnee Chief who tried to join several tribes into one confederacy in the early 1800s.\textsuperscript{56} The trail commemorates his leadership, and it follows the originally proposed path from Florida to Canada in 1973. The trail begins near Panther Creek, which is west of Brown County State Park and ends at the Morgan-Monroe Headquarters. The trail follows ridge tops, crosses many streams, and follows the west side of Yellowwood Lake for almost two miles.\textsuperscript{57}

During the late 1970s until the 1980s many additions and updates were done on Yellowwood property. A boat rental building was constructed in 1976 to protect the boats from the harsh environmental conditions. In 1978, a visitor center and offices were built to provide information to guests. With the increased visitors, the forest needed a main public location with property information. The boat ramp was replaced in 1986, and a new boat dock installed in 1988. Both of these were constructed during the early development of the state forest.\textsuperscript{58}

In efforts to maintain the natural environment of the state forests, a 2,700 acre area in Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests was set aside as “Back Country” in 1981.\textsuperscript{59} This is to be used by hikers and campers for traditional outdoor activities. This is the third area to be included in the program. The purpose of “Back Country” is to provide traditional wilderness

\textsuperscript{55} NA, “State Forests,” \textit{The Indianapolis Star}, August 11, 1968
\textsuperscript{56} NA, \textit{Tecumseh Trail Yellowwood/Morgan-Monroe State Forest}, (Indiana Department of Natural Resources Indiana Division of Forestry).
\textsuperscript{57} IBD
\textsuperscript{58} Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
\textsuperscript{59} NA, “Wright, Rank in BASS Classic: Third wild areas...,” \textit{The Indianapolis Star}, August 2, 1981
experiences for Indiana residents. The addition of the area brings the total acreage of the program to 7,200.

Heritage Trust Program

The Indiana Heritage Trust was established in 1992 to acquire and protect lands that have provide good natural resources, habitats, historical, archeological, or recreational significance. Since it was started, the program has protected more than 56,000 acres across Indiana. The program purchases land from sellers who wish to protect Indiana’s natural heritage for recreation and wildlife habitat. It acquires property for state parks, state forests, nature preserves, fish and wildlife area, trails, river corridors, and wetlands. The Heritage Trust Program has assisted with providing additional land to be preserved and used by the public. This program has helped the state forests grow during recent years when the state could not afford to purchase additional land.

Along with several other Indiana properties, Yellowwood State Forest has received parcels of land through the Heritage Trust Program. In 1994, 30 acres that were meant for the construction of a radio tower were purchased. An additional 36 acres were purchased in 1995, which is next to a nature preserve. Later 49.28 acres were added to Yellowwood which feature woods and open fields. This will be planted with walnut and pine. Through the Heritage Trust Program, Yellowwood has gained some significant property during recent years which adds value to the property for Indiana as well as the public. If Indiana citizens continue to value the
outdoors and natural beauty, then this program will continue to receive land which will add to public areas.

**T.C. Steele Historical Site**

The T.C. Steele State Historic Site is located on the lower South-West side of Yellowwood State Forest, but is administered by a different division. The site was the home of famous Hoosier Impressionist painter, Theodore Clement Steel. He lived from 1847 to 1926. In 1907, Steele and his second wife, Selma, purchased 211 acres in Brown County. This region featured the subject matter that was best suited for his art. In an interview with *Indianapolis News*, Steele said “I bought this place not for agricultural purposes, but for its ravines and wooded hills.” The land held little value for agricultural purposes, but featured a variety of trees, ravines, streams, hills, and views into the distance. The House of the Singing Winds and Studio were built 600 feet above the surrounding land. The name of the home came from the winds that came into the dining room through the east-side screened porch. The screens in the porch made music from the winds, so it was suggested the name be known as The House of the Singing Winds.

Steele originated the Brown County Art Colony and was known as the person who brought Indiana to a world-wide reputation as an arts center. Steele was an artist in residence at Indiana University in 1922 where he was at the forefront of the state’s art movement, and is known as one of Indiana’s most honored artists. His appreciation of nature, intelligence, and concentration on studies are shown in his paintings, home, and his legacy. After Steele’s death in 1926, Selma continued to live at their home. In 1945 Selma Steele gave the T.C. Steele Historical Site

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66 “The T.C. Steele Memorial,” Division of State Parks, Lands, and Waters, Indiana Department of Conservation, 1946
67 Rachel Berenson Perry, “Paint and Canvas, A Life of T.C. Steele,” 201, 94-95
68 “T.C. Steele State Memorial,” Indiana Department of Conservation, Division of State Parks, 1964
69 Perry, “Paint and Canvas, A Life of T.C. Steele,” 201, 94-95
Sanctuary was to the Department of Conservation and opened as a historic site to the public in the fall. Her only request to the Department of Conservation was that “her property remain a tribute to natural beauty.” The property included 300 paintings done by Steele throughout his life during his times spent painting outdoors of Brookville, Munich, and Indiana, documenting parts in with portraits. Guided tours are given through The House of the Singing Winds and the Large Studio. Throughout the home and studio, exhibits are displayed, and regularly changed, of paintings Steele created throughout his life. These paintings illustrate Steele’s development as an artist spanning over 60 years.

**Controversial Issue**

A controversial issue that Yellowwood currently faces is the logging being done in the forest. The Indiana State Forests are operated under the “multiple use” concept in order to maximize benefits from timber production, wildlife production, watershed protection, and recreation. The earliest recorded state harvest dates back to 1951, when they were primarily done to remove lower value species with a marketable value. Also, their objective was to enhance the growth of more desirable species, “timber stand improvement.” Today, the state forest timber harvests have six broad functions: maintain vigor and health of forest stands, enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat, fulfill legislative mandates, provide raw materials for

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70 “Yearbook of the State of Indiana,” The Division of Accounting and Statistics, 1945, 564
72 “The T.C. Steele Memorial,” Division of State Parks, Lands, and Waters, Indiana Department of Conservation, 1946
75 Indiana State Forests. Indiana Clipping File. *Firewood Cutting on Indiana’s State Forests.* Indiana State Library
76 Linda Baden, e-mail message to author, April 14, 2015.
forest products industry, provide revenue for state and county governments, and to demonstrate sound timber management practices for private landowners.\(^77\)

A tool of timber management is the periodic harvesting of mature and over-mature trees in the forests.\(^78\) The reason the DNR allows and utilizes logging is to collect money for its operating budget.\(^79\) Every year, the sale of timber provides Indiana with an excess of $3 million in new revenue. Logging has increased after the DNR adopted the “Timber Management Plan” in 2005.\(^80\) In the mission of the plan, it says “However, by the employment of good husbandry, timber that has a substantial commercial value may be removed.”\(^81\) This plan outlines a new cycle which allows 50 percent of all new public forest growth will be logged each year.

According to Myke Luurtsema, Forest Watch Coordinator with the Indiana Forest Alliance, under the administration of Governor Mitch Daniels the state saw a substantial increase in logging. This was due to Daniels’ goal of increasing the amount of board feet taken from the forests by 13.6 million. More than 35,000 publicly-owned trees in Indiana were cut down by logging companies in 2013, which is a 1,000 percent increase from the last decade. All the trees cut down in the state forests are legally sold, but logging overall has seen a significant increase in recent years.\(^82\) The DNR has increased their public awareness of logging by keeping the

\(^{77}\) Linda Baden, e-mail message to author, April 14, 2015.
\(^{78}\) Indiana State Forests. Indiana Clipping File. Firewood Cutting on Indiana’s State Forests. Indiana State Library
community informed through open houses and public meetings to discuss the controversial topic.\(^{83}\)

In an email to Yellowwood State Forest Property Manager Jim Allen, he says “Although this was one reason our Division of Forestry and state forest were established, some feel all public property should be off limits to management of the timber resource.”\(^{84}\) Jim Allen also said that “A lot of people equate harvesting with removing the forest... We manage the forest so it will always be here. And we continue to harvest forever and ever into eternity.”\(^{85}\) In Yellowwood the areas which have been logged, do not have all trees completely cut from the area. This is due to a process they follow called “selective harvesting”.\(^{86}\) Selective harvesting means 90 percent is individual tree removal while the other part is to create small openings so new trees can be re-grown in that area.

One main decision regarding the harvesting is no clear cutting; selective cutting with create regenerative openings. The regenerative openings are to be less than five to ten acres, but usually less than three acres.\(^{87}\) A cosmetic aspect to logging which concerns the local residents is the tops of trees being left behind. According to Allen, these were not removed because it could cause more damage to the landscape, and the loose branches can be used as habitats for

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\(^{85}\) IBID

\(^{86}\) IBID

animals. The tops of trees are also left in the woods after the logs are removed because they can be used for fuelwood.

According to the DNR’s Division of Forestry, 15 percent of timber sale revenue is given back to the counties where the trees are harvested. The majority of the money is used for fire control in the state forests, while the remaining revenue supports the Division of Forestry’s operations. Director John Seifert of Indiana’s Division of Forestry says the main reason the logging has increased is due to proper forest management. He says that they are only logging 60 percent of what is being grown.

Conclusion

Yellowwood State Forest is located in Southern Indiana in Brown County, west of Nashville and north of SR 46. Yellowwood is between Brown County State Park and Morgan-Monroe State Forest. It was dedicated in 1938, the federal land was leased to the state of Indiana in 1940, and in 1956 the property was deeded to the state. Prior to Indiana owning the property, the CCC completed three lakes, a shelter house, and residence which are still used today. Yellowwood State Forest features 23,326 acres including three lakes, six hiking trails, five horse trails, overnight campsites, and a variety of wildlife. Over 2,000 abandoned and eroded acres on the property were planted with various trees: black locust, black walnut, white oak, red

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89 Indiana State Forests. Indiana Clipping File. Firewood Cutting on Indiana’s State Forests. Indiana State Library.
oak, and various pines. Through the Indiana Heritage Trust Program, Yellowwood has gained several acres of land over the years.

Yellowwood State Forest is important to Indiana because it provides a location where the residents can enjoy nature, take part in recreational activities, and be part of a movement to conserve our natural environment. The purpose of the state forests is to convert land to uses which it is naturally adapted: conservation, forestry, recreation, and wildlife. The utilization of forest resources was essential for human success, advancement, and survival at one point. Over time, this reliance on forest resources has shifted to improving the quality of our lives. Today the state forests are meant to conserve and protect timber, wildlife, top soil, and water resources for equal enjoyment among current and future generations. They are operated under a management philosophy to “produce consumptive and non-consumptive benefits in a sustainable manner.”

Yellowwood Forest provides a variety of products to Indiana: timber, game, recreation, watershed, wildlife, solitude, clean air, and an emotional well-being.

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94 Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015
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<tr>
<th>Property Owner</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<td>Lewis &amp; Alta Master</td>
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*Source:* Jim Allen, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2015