Harrison Crawford State Forest: A Wealth of History and Mystery

An Honor Thesis (Honors 499)

by

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May 2015
Abstract
While over time state forests have become synonymous with state parks, they have different purposes. The purpose of the state forests differ from state parks because state parks are for recreational use, while state forests are for timber management and conservation. By compiling information from newspapers, magazine articles, and personal interviews, the history of Harrison-Crawford State Forests is made more transparent. By combining these resources "Harrison Crawford State Forest: A Wealth of History and Mystery" helps readers understand why the forests were established, why they are managed the way they are, and the unique features the forest offers.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Morris for advising me through this project. He challenged me by providing opportunities to present my research, questioning my information, and setting deadlines. He truly improved my writing skills.

I would also like to thank Mitchell, Heidi, and Erin for compiling research that was the starting point for my thesis.

Finally I would like to thank Becca for accompanying me to the Indiana State Library so I would not have to research alone.
Harrison Crawford State Forest: A Wealth of History and Mystery

Harrison Crawford State Forest is a unique treasure located in Southern Indiana, just a few miles from Indiana’s historic capital Corydon. The over 24,000 acres of land boast scenic riverfront views of both the Blue and Ohio Rivers, mysterious caves, a bountiful forest, and easy access to O’Bannon Woods State Park. Harrison State Forest was established in 1932. The state of Indiana purchased the land from farmers suffering the consequences of the Great Depression and depleted soil. The mission of the state forests were to reforest the area for timber and to help resolve the serious soil erosion situation. The forest has grown to the size it is in 2015 through smaller purchases, such as one for 381 acres in 1939, and additions from families such as the prominent Rothrock family who sold land dotted with caves and the Cole family, who sold land known as the Greenbrier Knob.

Harrison Crawford State Forest can be a confusing area for some because many different entities exist within the forest or near it. These entities have also changed names a few times. Originally the land was Harrison State Forest, then it spilled into Crawford County and became Harrison Crawford State Forest, though the exact year the name changed is unknown. Next, in 1967, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources began planning a 25,000 acre recreation area and also bought 1,100 acres from the Rothrock family. This purchase included both Little Wyandotte and Wyandotte Cave. The purchase created three separate areas; the state forest, the recreation area, and Wyandotte Cave.

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Then, in 1974, the Indiana General Assembly allocated $2,500,000 to develop a recreation area in Harrison Crawford State Forest. The development was named Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area, and included the original recreation area and about 7,000 more acres of Harrison Crawford Forest. Due to its popularity, Harrison Crawford State Forest gave Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area more acreage in 1980. Before 1995, Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area, Wyandotte Cave, and Harrison Crawford State Forest were managed separately, but to make the most use of the land and to make management easier, the three areas’ management were combined in 1995. Finally, in 2004, Wyandotte State Recreation Area became O'Bannon Woods State Park. O'Bannon Woods State Park also included Wyandotte Cave. The difference between the state forest and O'Bannon Woods State Park can be unclear because O'Bannon Woods State Park is located within Harrison Crawford State Forest, but they are separate facilities with different purposes.

The Beginning of Harrison Crawford State Forest

The Corydon Republican first mentions the establishment of a forest reservation on February 18th, 1932. The Indiana State Conservation Department purchased 2,600 acres of land in Scott and Spencer townships, part of Harrison County. The land was purchased from several different citizens: Victor Rothrock, James B. Brewster, Dink Cole, T.J. Hudson, J.M. Conner, Joseph Pfeister, and the heirs of J.J. Rucker. Gradual purchases throughout the 1930s helped the forest continue to grow. James B. Brewster was one of the major supporters of Harrison State Forest. He served as an Indiana State Legislator and advocated for reforestation. Throughout the 1930s he sold or donated much of his land to the state forest. Besides Brewster’s contributions,

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5 “Conservation Department Acquires 2,600 Acres of Land in Harrison County,” Corydon Republican, February 18th, 1932.
the state forest continued to grow as the State Conservation Department purchased small parcels of land. Neither the *Corydon Republican* nor *Democrat* had any articles opposing the land acquisition for the state forest.

Only two years after its establishment, local groups wanted to see the state forest grow. The State Conservation Department allocated 2,000 trees for Harrison State Forest. Then volunteers from the American Legion Post No. 123, spent a Friday afternoon planting 1,000 spruce trees. The next day, Boy Scout Troops No. 22 and No. 24 planted 1,000 Red Pines. The groups were aided by J.C. Baker, the district forester. 

### Fire Prevention

In 1932, when the land for Harrison State Forest was purchased, plans were immediately made to build a fire tower. This is because Ralph F. Wilcox, state forester in 1929, was an avid supporter of fire towers, and wanted to build enough fire towers in the state so that a wildfire could be detected no matter the location. This was somewhat difficult task though, because unlike many other states, Indiana had yet to be completely topographically mapped. The state was surveyed for high points, and the surveyor proposed moving some fire towers, extending others, and building 11 new towers. In total, the state needed 32 fire towers to be accomplish Wilcox's goal of being able to provide fire detection surveillance throughout the entire state.

The first tower in Harrison State Forest was temporary. It was made of wood, had a base of 12 square feet, and a height of 60 feet. The first patrolmen was Mr. Bennett, a previous assistant patrolman at a forest reserve near Martinsville. The wooden fire tower was replace with a new tower which had four iron bars set in concrete, and a lookout booth about 100 feet in the

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air. It was named Wyandotte Fire Tower, and is still accessible in 2015. According to visitors it is 135 steps to the top.

CCC Contributions

The growth of Harrison State Forest can be attributed to the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC was one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's pet project. The organization provided work opportunities to single men aged 18 to 25. Applicants first had to be screened for physical fitness. Then the men would spend two weeks at an Army training camp to ensure they would be capable of the physical demands. Wages were $30 per month, but $25 dollars had to be sent home to families. Harrison County was approved around June 1933 for a CCC campsite to help with soil erosion prevention. Before a camp could be established, 400 acres of land had to be turned over to the federal government for the soil erosion prevention work. Within a few weeks, 629 acres of land were promised to the Federal government. When the CCC arrived, over 1,000 acres of land were promised to Federal government for soil erosion management. By the amount of acres promised to the CCC, it is evident that soil erosion was a serious problem in the area.

Just a month after getting the clearance for a camp, CCC Company 1556 was scheduled to arrive. The citizens patiently awaited the corps arrival, but the local newspaper alerted the town that Company 1556 was delayed. The Company arrived a week late. At first the men camped in numerous tents located just north of Cedar Hill Cemetery. However, within a couple weeks construction began on permanent buildings such as, mess halls, recreation halls, tent frames, and garages. The local newspapers wrote that the camp took on an air of permanency. The campsite was named S-54. However, the CCC's work was not limited to just soil erosion prevention. The roads leading to Harrison State Forest, the shelters, and many of its trees are all

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8 "Harrison County Approved for CCC Campsite," Corydon Republican, June 6, 1933.
9 "CCC Arrives," Corydon Republican, July 6, 1933.
10 "Camp Takes on Air of Permanency," Corydon Republican, July 7, 1933.
some of their accomplishments. They also built truck trails and fire lanes. The next company to come to Camp S-54 was Company 517, a segregated company of only black enrollees. The racial tension was high in Indiana and the area, so high that Company 517 was forced to move further into the forest due to community concerns. However, this relocation was not solely due to racial tension, it also put the CCC enrollees closer to their work sites.

A telling anecdote about the racial tension that was often brushed over happened in 1937. The Ohio River flooded, and Company 517 was enlisted to help. A corps member recounted that he found a woman and her cow stranded, but the woman said she would rather die than be saved by a black man, and instructed him to take only her cow to safety. However, some memories of Corydon were not blemished by racial tension. There are accounts of the community welcoming Company 517 to athletic and holiday events. Despite this tension, Company 517 was highly productive during the three years it was stationed at S-86. Some of their notable accomplishments included more roads, trails, a steel fire tower, a service building, a pumphouse and water supply system, barns, a campground, and shelter houses. One particular shelter house overlooking the Ohio River boasts a carving in the floor of a profile of a Native American Chief and an inscription that reads “Wyandotte Shelter 1936.” In 1941, Harrison Crawford State Forest gained more land, and the last CCC Company to work in the area, 1592, came to construct trails and picnic groves.

Fun in the Forest

Originally, recreational use of the Harrison State Forest was limited. But in 1958, Harrison Crawford State Forest was revamped along with twelve other state forests. According

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to a newspaper article by John V. Sellers, “The State Forests will have improved roads, larger parking areas, potable water, electricity, sanitation facilities, shelter houses, picnic tables, ovens, overnight camping sites, and playground equipment." In Harrison State Forest, four recreational areas were added. One important feature that was added during this improvement project was a landing for water craft to enter the Ohio River. Thirty small ponds and three small lakes were built and stocked for fishing. Sellers included, “The recreational use of each forest does not interfere with the forest’s management for timber.” As a visitor it is important to remember that the state forests were originally established to produce timber for the state, and recreational use was just a secondary benefit. This is still the purpose today, but there is more recreational use. At Harrison Crawford one can enjoy many activities including canoeing, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, and horseback riding.

Canoeing Down the Blue River

In 1966, when the state of Indiana purchased the Rothrock’s land, conservationists were pleased because this meant the State now could protect both banks of the Blue River. In 2015, canoeing down the Blue River is a favored recreation activity at Harrison Crawford State Forest due to the diversity of scenery one can see. This is in part due to the passage of Indiana Natural, Scenic, and Recreational River System Act. The act helps protect rivers for future generations.

Due to the success of the 1967 Nature Preserves Act, Indiana legislators wanted to provide more protection for the environment. In 1973, the Indiana General Assembly passed Public Law 134, known as the Indiana Natural, Scenic, and Recreational River System Act. The purpose of P.L. 134 was to help protect the quality of Indiana’s rivers. The Blue River was the first river to be studied for inclusion in the act. The study included four segments of Blue River.

All four segments studied received labeling of either natural, scenic, or recreational, and are

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currently protected under P.L 134. One can access the Blue River through Rothrock Mill, a few miles north of Harrison Crawford State Forest, and then stop at the Harrison Crawford access point to picnic. If one enters the Blue River through Harrison Crawford, it is possible to continue to boat down to the Ohio River.\footnote{“The Blue River Natural, Scenic and Recreational River Study,” \textit{Indiana Department of Natural Resources}, July 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1974, accessed March 20, 2015, http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/files/or-BlueRiver.pdf.}

History of Hunting

Hunting in Harrison Crawford State Forest was not always a place for large game. While presently the white-tail deer is overabundant, in 1934 the Indiana Department of Conservation actually stocked the forest with white tail deer.\footnote{W.L. Thompson “Ohio River Counties...What They Offer” \textit{Outdoor Indiana}, November 1958, 5-7.} The deer were stocked to reintroduce the species to Indiana. The last known white tail deer in Indiana was killed in 1893 in Knox County.\footnote{Jack Allen, “White-tail and their Plight,” \textit{Outdoor Indiana}, November 1958, 8-11.} The deer population was completely depleted due to over-hunting and habitat destruction. Harrison Crawford State Forest reintroduced another species as well. It was one of the areas that helped reintroduce the wild turkey to Indiana. In 1962, there were no wild turkeys in Indiana. Thus, Division of Conservation began restoring the wild turkey population. Wild turkeys were caught and brought to the state forest and given protection in 5,000 acres. By 1970, the Division of Wildlife and Fisheries deemed that the population was large enough to be released. Wild turkeys could be seen while walking on the trails, and eventually people were allowed to hunt them during season.\footnote{John D. Humphreys, “Forest, Walking, Hiking, \textit{Outdoor Indiana}, October 1970, 14-15.}

Horseback Riding

In 2015, there are eleven horseback riding trails totaling around 80 miles. However, in September 1974, \textit{Outdoor Indiana} contains an article that stated for two weeks every August
hundreds of riders would come together and traverse a 100 mile trail.\(^\text{18}\) This tradition started in 1962, and is celebrating its 53\(^{\text{rd}}\) anniversary in 2015. The 100 mile ride is broken into four days, with each day consisting of 25 miles of riding, and then scheduled entertainment at night. Awards go out to youngest rider, oldest rider; largest saddle club participating; longest distance traveled to get to the ride; best horsemanship; and best trail horse. Besides entertainment, lunch and nightly meals were served, and the group camps out together.

**Wyandotte Cave Recreation Area: Now Part of O’Bannon Woods State Park**

The first published letter about Wyandotte Cave was written in 1818 and published in 1820 by owner Benjamin Adams. However, there is a signature in the cave that reads F.I. Bentley, 1801. Most believe that Bentley was the first white man to explore the cave. Though not much is known about F.I. Bentley, he is believed to have been a squatter along the Ohio River. However, he is not the first human being to utilize the cave. In 1862 Richard Owen, the state geologist wrote,

> “The numerous Indian relics, in the shape of charred remnants of fires, part of wood yet unconsumed, portion of bark, which had evidently served as torches, sticks broken and never cut, skeletons of several wild animals, and the like, would furnish materials, if the facts were carefully collected, valuable to our archaeologists, or to the historian, who desires to preserve all evidence bearings on the manners and customs of the [Native Americans].”\(^{\text{19}}\)

Owen turned out to be partially correct, however it was not the Wyandotte Indians, part of the Iroquois tribe that utilized the cave, but prehistoric people. Patty Jo Watson, a prominent North American archaeologist, visited the cave twice in the early 1970s, and wrote the book


Archeology of the Mammoth Cave Area. Because of the findings published in this book, the Division of Forestry invited her back to study Wyandotte Cave. Her research along with others showed that prehistoric people used to mine the cave for aragonite, Magnesium Sulfate (epsomite), and chert. Watson was able to show that the aragonite in Wyandotte Cave is distinctive from other caves, and thus identified that artifacts found all the way in New York were made from aragonite from Wyandotte Cave. Archeologists found a historic epsomite scraper carved from white oak in the cave to show that mining happened. Many large pieces of chert were also found that had smaller flakes shorn off. This abundance of chert is the reason that historical projectile point could be found in Harrison Crawford State Forest.

Although, the cave is abundant in the nitrate saltpeter, a component of gunpowder, there is some controversy whether or not it was mined or this during the War of 1812. During the time of the War and within years after the War, there are several written accounts about large amounts of Magnesium Sulfate (Epsom salts) in the cave, but saltpeter production is never mentioned. It was not until 1879 that any mention of saltpeter production was described in a geological survey. Thus it is questionable that the main area of the cave was used for saltpeter even though some artifacts have been found. It might be that the less explored parts of the vast cave were mined for saltpeter.

The cave did have other commercial uses. Henry P. Rothrock bought a 5,000 acre tract of land from the federal government in 1820. He paid $1.25 per acre.20 Henry bought the land to use for timber and farmland. Wyandotte Cave, part of his property, was a nuisance because the government forced him to put up a fence to keep the neighbors cows out of the cave. The cows were drawn to the cave because there was abundant Epsom salts that they could lick off the walls. However, in 1850 several passages were discovered in Wyandotte Cave, and the family

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was able to turn it into a tourist attraction. When tourism increased in the 1930s and 40s, the family added a lodge, some hotel units, and about 600 more acres to their property. Wyandotte Cave became a popular tourist attraction as it possessed many unique features. First, it is the third largest cave in United States, with over 23 miles of explored paths spanning five levels. Second, it has the largest helictite formation ever found, the Pillar of Constitution. A helictite is a formation found in limestone caves that is more than just a vertical point; it is delicate with formations that seem more like the craftsmanship of an abstract artist rather than nature. The Pillar of Constitution is a massive rounded column that towers over visitors. The Pillar is 35 feet tall with a massive circumference of 75 feet. Lastly, the cave is home to Monument Mountain, the largest underground mountain. It is more than 175 feet and a quarter of a mile in circumference. During the late 1930s to early 1950s there were four different tours visitors could take that last between 45 minutes and two hours.

In 1884, some entrepreneurs from Evansville tried to corner the market on onions. Caves were known for their pureness off air that could preserve edibles like sweet potatoes. In an attempt to mimic the success of preserving sweet potatoes, the group bought all the onions produced that season and kept them in a rented room of the Wyandotte Cave. Their hope was to sell the onions for a higher price when they were out of season. However, their plot was foiled when onions began to sprout! Onions were not as easy to keep as sweet potatoes. The sulking entrepreneurs left the onions in the cave, and it was said to smell of their failure for many decades.  

Possibly due to a decline in the cave tourism business, in 1966, the president of Wyandotte Company and F.M Rothrock Company, F.Wallace Rothrock, announced that the

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State of Indiana had purchased the property. Indiana bought the 1,108 acres area for $350,000.22 Presently, the cave has extremely restricted access in an effort to help alleviate and reduce the effect of White Nose syndrome in the bat population.

White Nose Syndrome

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) is a fungus that has decimated bat populations around the U.S. It was introduced to the United States in February 2006 near New Albany, New York. There is not a consensus of the origin of the fungus.23 The fungus is mainly spread from bat to bat, but humans have caused it to spread also. Humans spread the fungus when a cave visitor does not decontaminate gear before entering a different cave. Since, the outbreak of the fungus, protocols have been made to decontaminate gear. Protocol usually involves placing gear in a near boiling hot bleach water solution. Because of the protocol, some gear such as ropes and electronic devices cannot be decontaminated properly. Since some gear cannot be decontaminated, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service advises to not use gear from effected cave in caves that have yet to be infected with WNS, even if the gear has been decontaminated.24 WNS is relevant to the Hoosier State because in May 2009 the DNR closed all state owned caves to public access, including Wyandotte Cave, to help impede the spread of WNS.25 Sadly, this precaution may have slowed the fungus, but it did not stop it. On January 23rd, 2011 two little brown bats were caught in a cave in Southern Indiana and discovered to have WNS. This marked

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22 “Purchase of Wyandotte Cave, Continued Improvements In Harrison Crawford Forest Will be Helpful for Tourists” Corydon Democrat, September 28, 1966.
the first known case in Indiana. Soon, cases of WNS were confirmed in Wyandotte Cave as well. To combat the spread of the disease, researchers are working on ways to identify bat populations with WNS. In Wyandotte Cave, the Indiana DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife have completed a study to use acoustic surveillance to identify WNS in hibernating bat populations. While the study found that acoustic surveillance could be used to monitor bats infected with WNS, disadvantages were acknowledge, such as no visual surveillance. The researchers hope to use the study from Wyandotte Cave to help better study other WNS affected bat population.

While WNS is the major threat to bats now, it is not the first threat the bats have endured. Many bats species prefer the climate of caves their hibernaculum. A hibernaculum is a place where bats hibernate. In 1850s the Rothrock family opened the cave to tourists. Walls and gates were installed to better facilitate the visitor's experience. Due to the increase in human traffic and the change in the layout of the cave, bats lost much of their hibernaculum space and their numbers began to decrease. By the 1950s as few as 500 bats hibernated in the cave. However, in 1966, the bats' fate changed. First, Wyandotte Cave became property of the DNR. Second, the Endangered Species Preservation Act, the predecessor of the more stringent Endangered Species Act of 1973, was passed. The Indiana Bat was protected by the Act 1966, and the state began to take action to make Wyandotte Cave a more suitable hibernaculum. Due to the DNR's efforts, that bat population increased to 13,000 by 1991. The bats of Wyandotte Cave have faced many

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adversaries, and WNS is just another. The DNR is hopeful Wyandotte Cave and will continue to be their advocates and protectors.²⁸

Perhaps it would be beneficial to look at how disease outbreaks such as WNS are handled. As of 2015, one cannot enjoy the beauty of the cave because it is closed to help contain the disease, however, it is evident that this tactic is not working because the WNS is still spreading. Maybe it would be more useful if a management plan was devised that allowed people who were educated about containment measures for WNS to utilize the cave. If the cave was opened to educated visitors then recreational use would not be lost and the bats well-being could still be paramount.

Recreational Areas

In 1966, after the purchase of over 1,000 acres of land from the Rothrock family, the DNR created a recreation area in Harrison Crawford State Forest; it was called the Blue River area. By the early 1970s it was evident that there would need to be major improvements, and the DNR requested $1,741,950 in two phases. In 1973, State Senator Frank L. O’Bannon reported to Corydon residents that the Indiana General Assembly approved $601,450 to make these improvements. The Phase I budget included $110,000 for transient camping, also known as primitive camping, $105,850 for picnic areas, $70,000 for a sewage plant, $65,000 for a maintenance area, $50,000 for sewers, $50,000 for roads, $45,000 for a water supply system, $30,000 for water lines, $25,000 for electric lines, $10,000 for boat docks, and $40,000 for an engineering fee. The state also purchases 701.29 acres of land in the Blue River area for

$374,000 to add to the recreation area. Funding for these improvements and purchases came from the State Cigarette Tax.29

In 1974, the DNR did not ask for the about $1,000,000 they proposed in 1973, but a massive $5,000,000. The Indiana General Assembly only allocated $2,500,000 to help develop the Blue River area into Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area. Nonetheless, Joseph Cloud, director of the Indiana DNR, was pleased with the budget. The budget covered two gatehouses; central water and sewage treatment plants; sewer and lift stations; elevated water tanks; water and electric lines; a canoe livery on the Blue River; boat docks and parking on the Ohio River; road alignment; bridges; and 96 tent and trailer camp sites that included water, electricity, and flush toilets.30

Beginning in 2004, in memory of Governor Frank O’Bannon, who died in office, Wyandotte Woods was seeded to be upgraded from a state recreation to a state park. In January 2005, it was officially upgraded and named O’Bannon Woods State Park.31 The state park is a fitting memorial to Governor O’Bannon. He was a major supporter of Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area, and as an Indiana State Senator lobbied for DNR when it needed money to make improvements on the area. When introduced in 2005, the area was described as being a bit more glamorous than it had been previously. O’Bannon Woods has one unique feature that brings the past to the present. At the Nature Center one can explore what it would be like to be on a pioneer farmstead. Volunteers reenact activities such as cooking, pressing hay, and blacksmithing on holiday weekends, and during other special events.

Yelling Timber!

30 "$2.5 Million Appropriate for Wyandotte Woods," Corydon Democrat, February 20, 1974.
Due to the climate of the area, Harrison Crawford State Forest is one of the most prosperous state forest in terms of timber. The forest averages an extra two weeks of growing season each year compared to the other state forests. In 1968, the state earned $36,168 from 1,133,066 board feet of timber. Harrison Crawford produced 93,376 of those boards.\(^{32}\) Although providing timber and income was one of the original goals of Indiana State Forest, Hoosier Forest Watch, an activist group that wants to reduce logging and protect forests, stated the logging production was exceeded by the balance which could be regrown. In 2002, logging produced 1.4 million board feet, while in both 2011 and 2012 fiscal years more than 14 million board feet were logged.\(^{33}\)

The DNR states that timber harvest are sustainable. The state forests produce 40 million board feet per year, and only 14 million board feet are harvested. The DNR maintains that all harvesting is done with the environment in mind. Areas to be harvested are checked for endangered species and the threat of soil erosion.\(^{34}\) Indiana State Forests are certified by both the Sustainable Forest Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council for adhering to sustainable harvest practices. Myke Luurtsema, a member of the environmentalist group, Indiana Forest Alliance, does not disagree with the DNR that the trees will regrow. However he states, “Trees are renewable resource, but a forest is not. Once logged, a mature forest will take 200 to 300 years to be a stable ecosystem again.”\(^{35}\) Myke also questioned the legitimacy of the SSI and FWC, and said that their standards may not be stringent enough to protect a forest ecosystem. Some of IFA concerns included that faster growing trees would prevent species such as oak from reproducing, that the soil disturbance would provide invasive species more advantages, and that the areas are


\(^{34}\) Dan Ernst, state forester, phone interviewed by author, Muncie, IN February 23, 2015.

\(^{35}\) Myke Luurtsema, Indiana Forest Alliance, phone interviewed by author, Muncie, Indiana February 20, 2015.
not being properly checked for endangered species. While it is unlikely that environmentalists
and the DNR will ever completely agree, one day they might reach a compromise to both utilize
and preserve the land.

Sweet Home Indiana

In 1903, Hoosiers decided that something needed to change to protect the beautiful
scenery of Indiana. Indiana Code 14-23-4-1 was passed and stated

"It is the public policy of Indiana to protect and conserve the timber, water
resources, wildlife, and topsoil in the forests owned and operated by the
division of forestry for the equal enjoyment and guaranteed use of future
generations. However, by the employment of good husbandry, timber that
has a substantial commercial value may be removed in a manner that
benefits the growth of saplings and other trees by thinnings, improvement
cutttings, and harvest processes and at the same time provides a source of
revenue to the state and counties and provides local markets with a further
source of building material."  

This code is what beget and protected the Indiana State Forests. It is the reason that when native
Hoosiers think of Indiana, they might see images of expansive cornfields, woods to hunt and
creeks to stomp. The state forests play an important role in maintaining Indiana’s picturesque
landscape. Though there are few alive that can remember Indiana when much of its farmland was
eroding, the forest were crumbling, and wildlife was scarce, but it could happen again. It might
not seem important in 2015 because Indiana does is not facing the problems it did in the early
1900s, but it is vital to still protect Indiana’s natural resources such as timber. The Division of

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36 Sam F. Carman, “Indiana Forest Management History and Practices,” access April 22, 2015
Forestry manages the land for us, but it is important that as a society we appreciate and utilize the state forests. If one day society decides these lands are useless, then Indiana might again become sub-marginal land with little beauty.

While some might not consider the state forests interesting, Harrison-Crawford has plenty to keep a visitor intrigued. The hiking trails offer the chance to explore land that Squire Boone once walked. The Blue River affords great views not only because of the scenery, but in history as well. Floating down the river one can see historic Corydon and imagine what Indiana was like when it was first settled. Wyandotte Cave gives a glimpse into prehistoric times and lets minds wonder what could have transpired in its caverns. So plan a trip. Hike through the woods. Canoe down the Blue River. Explore the natural beauty of Harrison Crawford State Forest, and discover its mysteries.
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