

Forest Plan Revision



Hoosier National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan





Primary Decisions Made

- ◆ Goals and Objectives
- ◆ Management Requirements
- ◆ Management area direction
- ◆ Lands suited and not suited for resource use
- ◆ Monitoring requirements
- ◆ Recommendations to Congress (if any)



Overview of Revision Process

- ◆ August 1999, USDA FS mailed potential need for change items to public.
- ◆ Fall 1999 we had: open houses, focus group meetings; trail group meeting, management indicator species meeting, and an interagency meeting.
- ◆ In August 2002 we released a draft NOI with public meetings.
- ◆ We published notice of intent November 2002 with public meetings December 2002.



Overview (continued)



- ◆ In 2002, Alternatives are developed
- ◆ In 2003 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Proposed Plan to be published
- ◆ In 2004, Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), revised Forest Plan, and Record of Decision to be published.



Why Roadless?

- ◆ We identified evaluation of roadless areas as a topic because of code of federal regulation (CFR) requirements at 36 CFR 219.17 and USDA Forest Service Regional policy.



Roadless Inventory



- ◆ **We are looking at 14 areas.**
- ◆ **We focused on backcountry areas— areas that have opportunity for solitude and a feeling of closeness to nature.**



What's next?

- ◆ **Details on roadless area characteristics**



Roadless Area Characteristics

Hoosier National Forest
USDA Forest Service

June 29, 2002



Purpose of Roadless Area Inventory

- ◆ Reviewing inventoried roadless areas is a topic of the forest plan revision.
- ◆ To determine whether previously designated roadless areas still meet roadless characteristics.
- ◆ To identify new areas that may have roadless characteristics.



Purpose of Today's Workshop

- ◆ To help Hoosier National Forest update the forest roadless inventory.
- ◆ To determine whether any existing backcountry areas qualify for roadless inventory.
 - If an area does qualify, it will later be evaluated for wilderness.
 - If an area does not qualify, it will continue to be managed as a backcountry area.



Understanding Definitions

- ◆ Definitions for understanding roadless characteristics
 - Backcountry
 - Roads
 - Classified
 - Unclassified
 - Improved
 - Unimproved



Understanding Definitions

◆ Backcountry area

- At least 1,000 acres of contiguous forest land that is not divided by “permanent linear structures,” including roads, power lines, pipelines, private land, etc.
- Is managed to be an undisturbed, forested environment influenced mainly by natural processes.



Understanding Definitions

- ◆ What is a Road?
 - A motor vehicle travelway over 50 inches wide, except those designated and maintained as a trail (USDA 2000).



Understanding Definitions



◆ Classified Road

- Road needed for managing the National Forest
 - Pond access, recreation access, openings access, etc.



Understanding Definitions

- ◆ Unclassified Road
 - Road not needed for managing the National Forest



Understanding Definitions

◆ Improved Road

- A constructed feature
- Can be driven by a two-wheel drive vehicle under dry conditions
- 50 inches in width or greater
- May include structures for surface runoff

Understanding Definitions

Improved Roads





Understanding Definitions

- ◆ Unimproved Road
 - Little or no recent maintenance
 - May be overgrown
 - Cannot be driven by a two-wheel drive vehicle under dry conditions

Understanding Definitions

Unimproved Roads



Roadless Characteristics

Forest Service Handbook 1909.12

- ◆ 1) The area contains less than a half mile of improved roads per 1,000 acres. (Applies to NFS only)
- ◆ 2) Less than 15% of the area is non-native vegetation. (Applies to NFS only)
- ◆ 3) Less than 20% of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years. (Applies to NFS only)
- ◆ 4) The area contains few private dwellings.
(Applies to entire area)

Roadless Characteristics (cont'd)

Forest Service Handbook 1909.12

- ◆ 5) Land is regaining a natural appearance.
(Applies to entire area)
- ◆ 6) Changes to the land are natural, disappearing, or muted. (Applies to entire area)
- ◆ 7) Contiguous National Forest System ownership patterns (Applies to entire area)
- ◆ 8) The location maintains wilderness qualities. (Applies to entire area)



Areas Under Evaluation

- ◆ **Deckard Ridge** – Brown County
- ◆ **Mt. Nebo Church** – Brown County
- ◆ **Nebo Ridge** – Brown County
- ◆ **Porter Hollow** – Brown County



Areas Under Evaluation



- ◆ **Danner Creek** – Orange County
- ◆ **Felknor Hollow** – Orange County
- ◆ **Lick Creek** – Orange County
- ◆ **Sam's Creek** – Orange and Martin Counties



Areas Under Evaluation

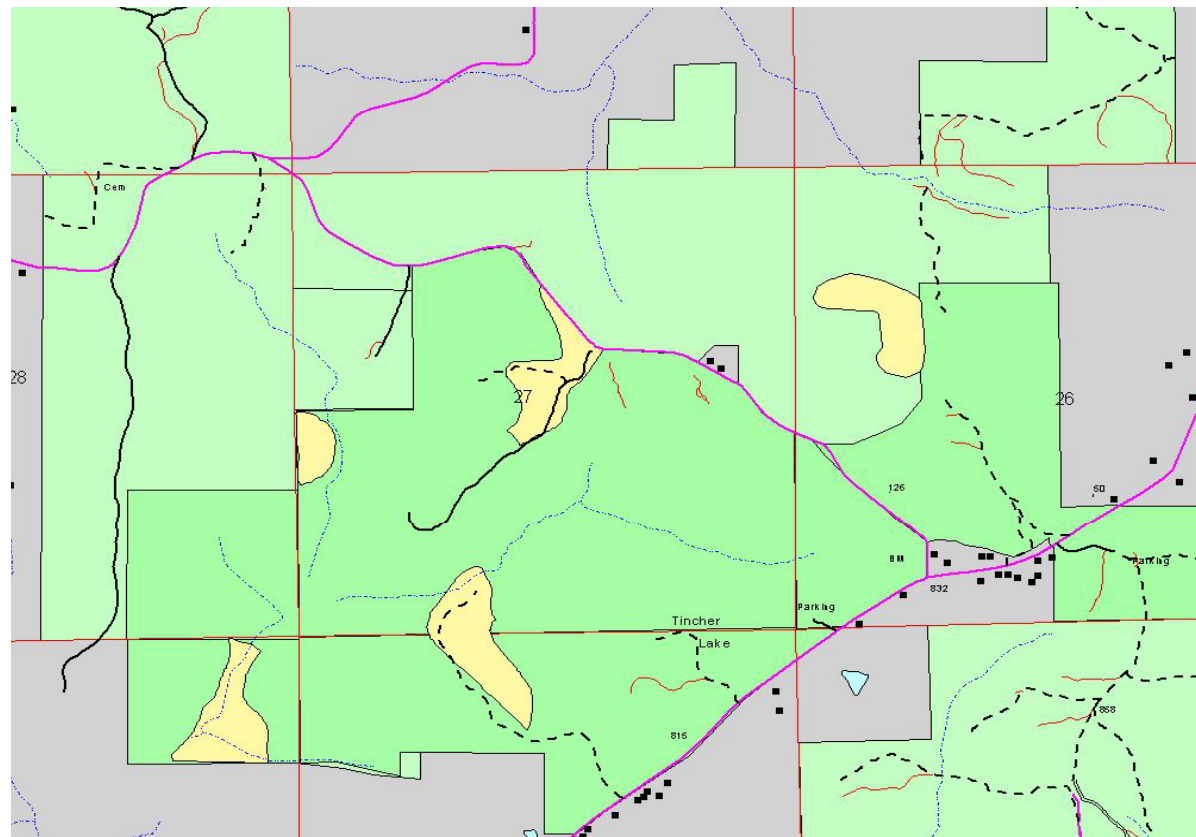
- ◆ **Happy Hollow** – Perry County
- ◆ **Middle Deer Creek** – Perry County
- ◆ **Mogan Ridge** – Perry County
- ◆ **Mt. Pleasant** – Perry County



Areas Under Evaluation

- ◆ **Hickory Ridge** – Jackson County
- ◆ **Tincher Hollow** – Lawrence County

Map Example





How to Evaluate Each Area

An Example Using Mt. Nebo Church



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 1: The area contains less than a half mile of improved road for each 1,000 acres, and the road is under Forest Service jurisdiction.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Mt. Nebo Church has 2.32 miles of improved roads per 1,000 acres.
- ◆ It does not meet Criteria 1.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form



- ◆ Criteria 2: Less than 15 percent of the area is non-native, planted vegetation.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Mt. Nebo Church is 6.41 percent non-native, planted vegetation.
- ◆ This area meets Criteria 2.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 3: Less than 20 percent of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ None of Mt. Nebo Church has been harvested within the past 10 years.
- ◆ This area meets Criteria 3.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 4: The area contains a few dwellings on private lands and the location of these dwellings and their access needs insulate their effects on the natural conditions of Federal lands.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Mt. Nebo Church does not meet Criteria 4 due to “spotty” ownership patterns.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 5: The land is regaining a natural, untrammelled appearance.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Does Mt. Nebo Church meet Criteria 5?
 - A pipeline bisects the area.
 - Major county roads provide access to private property within the area.
 - Presence of private property and houses, especially in the middle of the area.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 6: Improvements existing in the area are being affected by the forces of nature rather than humans and are disappearing or muted.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Does Mt. Nebo Church meet Criteria 6?
 - A pipeline bisects the area.
 - Major county roads provide access to private property within the area.
 - Presence of private property and houses, especially in the middle of the area.

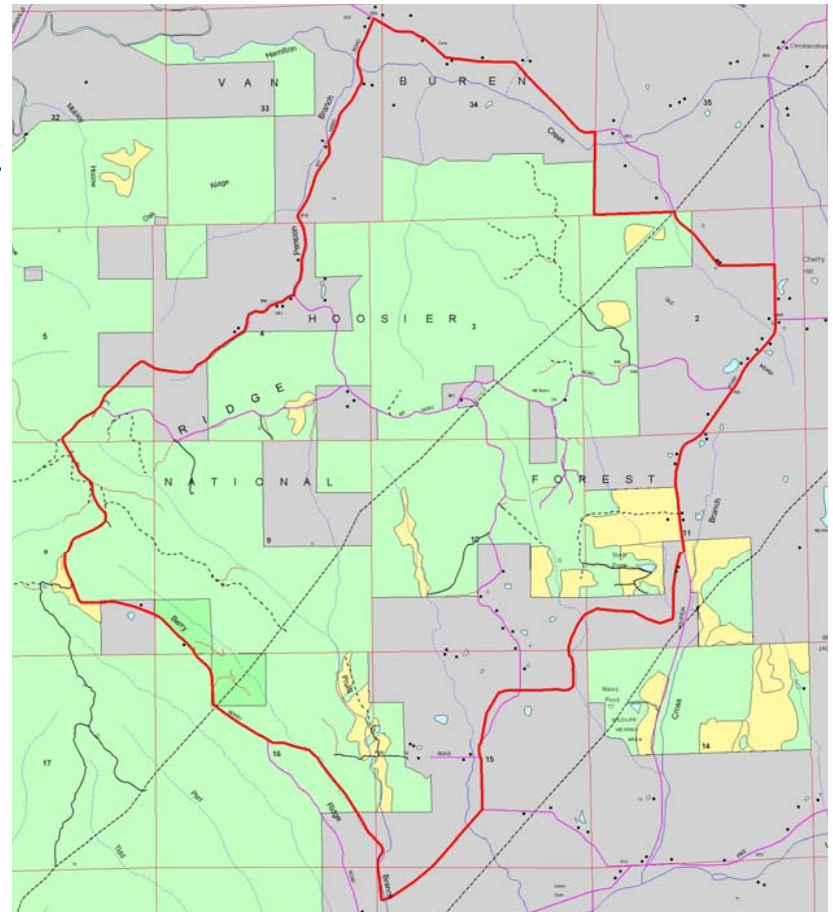


Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 7: The area has existing or attainable National Forest System ownership patterns, both surface and subsurface, that could ensure perpetuation of identified wilderness values.

Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Mt. Nebo Church has 70 acres of outstanding oil and gas rights.
- ◆ Mt. Nebo Church has “spotty” ownership patterns.





Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Criteria 8: The location of the area is conducive to the perpetuation of wilderness values.



Evaluate Each Criteria on the Evaluation Form

- ◆ Mt. Nebo Church is 2,763 acres.
- ◆ This area meets the 2,500 acre “coarse” screen for perpetuation of wilderness values.



Conclusion from the Evaluation of Mt. Nebo Church

- ◆ Does Mt. Nebo Church meet all eight roadless characteristics?
 - If yes, it will be included as an inventoried roadless area.
 - If no, it will continue to be managed as a backcountry area.



Questions?