



SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

INDIANA SOCIETY

TO: Hoosier National Forest
FROM: Indiana Society of American Foresters
DATE: 1/26/2020
RE: Hoosier National Forest's Houston South Vegetation Management and Restoration Project

It is the Indiana Society of American Foresters (ISAF) position that the current disturbance regime (natural and prescribed fires, windstorms and harvesting activities) levels on the Hoosier National Forest (HNF) are insufficient to maintain the diversity of forest age classes and cover types that are essential for ecosystem sustainability. As a result, plant and animal communities that rely on the early forest successional vegetation communities and the oak-hickory forest cover type, will continue to diminish on the HNF landscape for the decades to come.

Therefore, the ISAF supports:

- Reducing the loss of the oak-hickory forest cover type by incorporating even-aged management on those sites most appropriate for the regeneration of shade intolerant endemic oak species. This best meets one of the current HNF's Forest Plan desired conditions: "to reduce the loss of oak-hickory habitat".
- Utilizing prescribed fire as a means to increase both horizontal and vertical vegetation structural diversity, early forest successional habitat and, on appropriate sites, encourage the reproduction of oak species.
- Developing a more even distribution of forest age classes over the landscape, while still increasing the proportion of the oldest age class over the current forest conditions. This is an important consideration in the management of forest ecosystems on both temporal and spatial scales.
- Permitting resource professionals the broadest range of management strategies to maintain watershed health while also increasing the oak-hickory forest cover type, forest structural diversity, and associated wildlife habitats, on the HNF landscape over future decades. This will also improve other recreational uses of the forest such as birdwatching, hunting, and hiking.
- Current best management practices for controlling existing non-native invasive plant species (even in natural areas). The use of herbicides, under the most current EPA regulations, is essential in increasing the odds of containing this threat. Furthermore, current research has shown that herbicides can play an important role in increasing the recruitment success of oak reproduction under the shelterwood harvest system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Dunn".

Travis Dunn
ISAF Chair

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The mission of the Indiana Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

The ISAF is comprised of a multitude of natural resource professionals that provide a wide range of experience and education to improve the management of forest and wildlands in Indiana.