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Forest Service

Northeastern Area  
State and Private  
Forestry

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# Forests of Indiana: A 1998 Overview



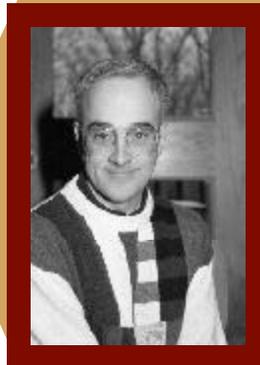
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# State Forester's Welcome

**Greetings!** On behalf of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Forest Service, I am pleased to provide you with a snapshot of our state's great forest resources. This booklet will answer many frequently asked questions about Indiana's forestland.

Indiana's forests are among the most diverse and productive in the country. Almost 200 years ago, forests covered 85 percent of the state. By 1860, most forestland disappeared to make room for farms, industry, infrastructure, and the growing number of Hoosiers. We're extremely pleased that Indiana has added over 400,000 forested acres since 1967. Forests now comprise 4.5 million acres (almost 20 percent) of the state. This valuable land provides homes and food for wildlife; cleans our water and air; protects soil that would otherwise disappear due to erosion; and provides fine hardwoods to Hoosiers, Americans, and the world.

The information you are about to read was collected during the 1998 inventory of Indiana's forest resources by the USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) research unit. FIAs are part of a nationwide effort to determine the owners, age, amount and condition of the nation's forests. Many congressional mandates, including the Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978, require periodic FIA inventories. This was only the fourth time Indiana's forests have undergone an analysis of this magnitude. Previous forest inventories were conducted in 1950, 1967, and 1986.



How we care for, manage, and sustain our forests will determine the future of this important resource. I invite you to take a few minutes and become acquainted with the highlights of Indiana's forestland. I hope you enjoy reading the information and, as a result, become more interested in our state's forests.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Burnell C. Fischer".

Burnell C. Fischer  
Indiana State Forester

This booklet provides highlights of the 1998 Indiana FIA inventory. Additional information pertaining to this inventory is available in a statistical report, "Indiana's Forests in 1998," published by the USDA Forest Service - North Central Research Station, on a CD-ROM or through a table generator on the North Central Research Station's Internet page. For more information, please contact the FIA manager at North Central Research Station at (651) 649-5139 or contact Joey Gallion, Forest Products Specialist at (812) 358-2160.

# Before you begin...

Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) is a USDA Forest Service program that monitors the condition of forest resources in the United States. FIA uses a two-phase procedure that samples a portion of a state's forests. Samples are designed to provide reliable statistics on a statewide basis and within each survey unit. The reported figures provide reliable and statistically significant estimates of Indiana's forests.

During the first FIA inventory in 1950, the state was divided into four "survey units": Northern, Upland Flats, Knobs, and Lower Wabash units. In order for results to be tracked from one inventory to the next, these survey units remain consistent. Each unit contains roughly one-fourth of the state's forestland. The units and counties included in each are shown on Map 1. For greater reliability, most information in this report is presented at the unit level rather than the county level.

Phase 1 of the FIA process uses aerial photography and satellite imagery of a large network of sample locations across the state, to examine land and determine forest area. Phase 2 builds upon the information collected in Phase 1, by providing a closer look at the sample areas in the state. Foresters gather additional information regarding the trees and other vegetation by visiting cross-sections of forested areas or those areas that might be forested. A cluster of ground sample plots is established. To provide a clearer understanding of forest conditions, several measurements are taken:

- The health, condition, age, and size of sample trees and shrubs;
- The nature of the vegetative community associated with the sample plants; and
- The physical characteristics of the site and the supporting community of forest vegetation (hill or flat, direction and steepness of the hill, wet or dry area, and soil conditions).

Each plot is around 1 acre and represents approximately 6,000 acres of forest. These permanent plots will be remeasured in later inventories.

Analysis of the measurements helps determine available wildlife habitat and food, amount and condition of forests within a watershed (drainage area), amount and quality of forest products (such as timber, firewood, syrup potential), land-use like urban sprawl and forest fragmentation, forest fire danger, and threat of insects and disease.

FIA uses two terms that are sometimes erroneously interchanged—"forestland" and "timberland." **Forestland** (4.5 million total acres in 1998) is all land in Indiana at least 1 acre in area, 120 feet wide, and 10 percent covered by trees of any size. **Timberland** (4.3 million acres total in 1998) is forestland that:

- Produces (or is capable of producing) more than 20 cubic feet per acre of industrial wood crops each year under natural conditions;
- Is not withdrawn from timber use; and
- Is not associated with urban or rural development.

Major Indiana land-holdings included in forestland but excluded from timberland are national and state parks, nature preserves, wilderness areas, and urban forests (such as cemeteries and city parks).