the TRUTH *about forest set-asides*

WHY A 10% SET-ASIDE **ISN'T** SUCH A SMART IDEA

Some people are urging the Indiana General Assembly to set aside 10 percent of Indiana's state forests for protection from timber management. As with so many ideas, it sounds reasonable, but when you study the facts, it just doesn't make sense.

We appreciate well-meaning individuals and organizations who believe forests should be protected, but the most effective long-term protection demands professional forest management science rather than arbitrary percentages or broad restrictions.

THERE'S NO IDEAL PERCENTAGE

- 10% is an arbitrary number with no basis in forest science.
- It's misleading to say that we need more old-growth forests without stating that we also need more young forests. It is not an "either-or" choice.
- USDA Forest Service data says 80.1% of Indiana's state forestland is considered "mature" or older age.
- From 1986 to 2015, acreage comprising the youngest age classes in Indiana's state forest land decreased by 68% while those in the oldest age classes increased 50.5%.

MOST OF INDIANA'S FORESTLAND IS ALREADY BEING PROTECTED

- Well over half of Indiana's state and federally-owned forests are currently managed without timber harvest.
- 61% of DNR forestlands already do not allow timber harvesting.
- The Indiana Department of Forestry has special forest zones to protect threatened species such as the Yellowwood tree.

> ***...effective long-term protection demands professional forest management science rather than arbitrary percentages or broad restrictions.***

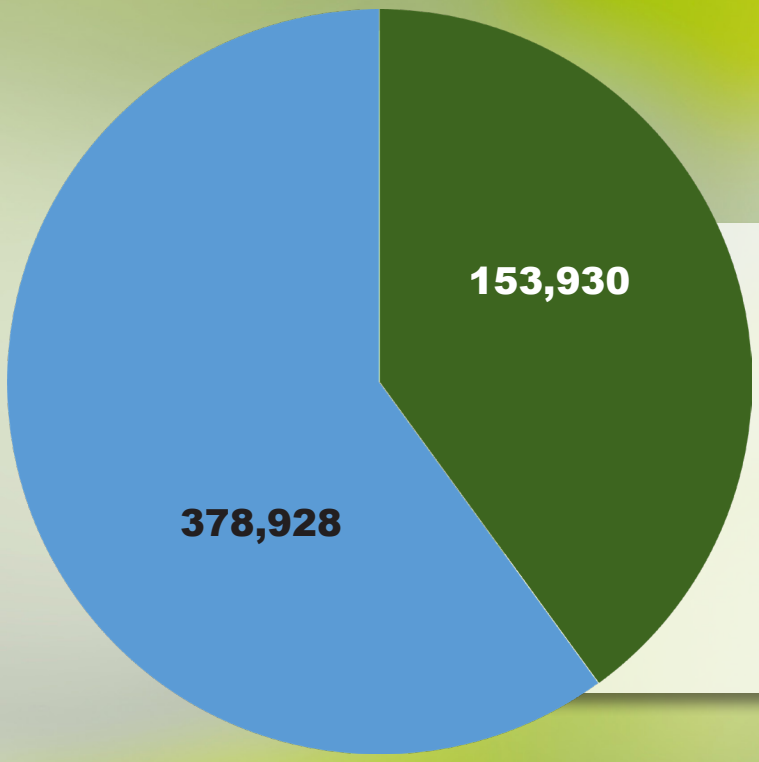
INDIANA NEEDS DIVERSE FORESTS OF ALL AGES

- Best practices call for maintaining diversity of all age classes in the forest, because different plants and wildlife have different needs.
- Creating varied habitats requires more active forest management on some lands.
- Indiana's shortage of younger forests is creating concerns about future habitat for many species including the ruffed grouse, American woodcock, eastern whip-poor-will, migratory songbirds, box turtle, and bobcat.
- Threatened and endangered species that depend upon young forests are declining more rapidly and are in much more dire condition than those that use older, mature forests.

PROFESSIONALS CREATE HEALTHY FORESTS

- Managing forests for multiple uses and habitat types over long periods is important for maintaining sustainable wildlife habitats.
- Removing forest management authority from natural resources managers will not improve efforts for healthy forests with thriving wildlife habitat.
- Professional timber harvesting does not involve permanent conversion of forest, but maintains healthy forests for the future.
- "Letting nature take its course" is not a viable option, given the significant existential threat posed by non-native invasive species.
- Banning prudent timber harvesting by professionals because it involves removing some trees is like banning doctors from performing surgery because it involves cutting patients' skin. Misguided efforts to protect "old" trees will actually hurt the health of Indiana's forest ecology.

DNR-MANAGED vs. "SET-ASIDE" ACREAGE



DNR FORESTS ARE ALREADY "SET-ASIDE"

Suggestions that only a small percentage of DNR forests are "set aside" are misleading, because the agency's land holdings are classified in multiple ways. A more honest and accurate total must include the hundreds of thousands of acres of Indiana forestland that are already "set-aside" but not classified as forests.

Indiana Forests Forever is a coalition of wildlife and forestry organizations with a common interest in supporting the health of Indiana's forests and the use of science-based management to sustain and enhance those forests and the wildlife they support. We are committed to increasing public understanding of Indiana's wonderful woodlands, and supporting the use of the most current science and firsthand experience to manage them for the benefit of all.