



# Tecumseh Trail Guide

*FROM THE HOOSIER HIKERS COUNCIL*

## CONTENTS

Contents.....	1
Overview .....	1
Indian Hill Railroad Area .....	2
Maps.....	2
Planning Your Trip .....	2
Camping and Lodging along the Trail .....	4
Water & Navigation Tips.....	6
Directions to Access and Parking.....	13
Trail Shuttles .....	19
Nearby Camping and Lodging.....	19

## OVERVIEW

The Hoosier Hikers Council built the Tecumseh Trail between 1998 and 2002. It is a 44-mile linear path beginning at the headquarters of Morgan-Monroe State Forest, which is about 5 miles south of Martinsville along SR 37. It continues through Yellowwood State Forest, where it ends near the southern border of Yellowwood SF near Lake Monroe. The southern terminus is unusual in that there are no accessible roads or parking there; it is about two miles south of the last parking area on Crooked Creek Road.

Most of the route is over hilly, wooded terrain, and ascents of 100 to 300 feet are common. Over the entire 44 miles, there is about 5 miles total of road-walk, the longest stretch being 2.8 miles around the city of Belmont. However, logging operations can result in detours that lengthen that distance. The trail is marked mostly with white rectangular blazes painted on trees. Some locations also have Carsonite or wood signs.



Tecumseh Rectangular Blazes – the top blaze indicates the direction of the trail turn

The mileages given in this guide are from north to south, with Mile 0 being at Morgan-Monroe State Forest headquarters and Mile 44 at the end at Panther Creek.

**Important!** Before hiking or backpacking this trail, be sure to check the [HHC website](https://www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org/category/trail-conditions/) (<https://www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org/category/trail-conditions/>) or the [DNR](#) for information on trail or camping area closures. The forest on which the Tecumseh traverses is actively logged by the DNR and private owners, so closures and trail re-routes are frequent. Sometimes trail re-routes can add miles of road-walking, which can drastically alter the length and nature of the hike you might have been expecting.

Note that the information in the guide below will not reflect temporary closures published on the [DNR website](#).

## INDIAN HILL RAILROAD AREA

The Tecumseh Trail route south of East Lost Branch Road originally went on Indian Hill Road between IN-45 and Bean Blossom Creek. But due to actions by the Indiana Railroad Company and the Brown County Commissioners, the north section of Indian Hill Road was closed in May of 2020. Neither of these organizations would take steps to allow even pedestrian traffic to cross the Indian Hill railroad. This effectively shut down the Tecumseh Trail, by dividing it in half, leaving a 5-mile highway and road walk to connect the two sections, and isolating one of the few shelters along the trail.

But thanks to the generosity of the Weddle Family and the Sycamore Land Trust, a new alternate route was established in June of 2022, which uses their land that is west of this closure. Unfortunately, the only way left to cross the Indiana Railroad Company's railway is to go about a mile west on IN-45 highway, crossing it there, right before you get back into the forest of the Sycamore Land Trust. Because the IN-45 is a highway with no shoulder at all, and takes a 90° turn at one point, hikers should take caution and note that you use it at your own risk. INDOT also does not recommend this as a walking route because of that lack of shoulder, and so requires pedestrians to walk on the highway pavement. To avoid this 1-mile walk on IN-45, as an alternative, you may arrange a ride or shuttle from East Lost Branch to the parking at Trevlac Bluffs (see the Trail Shuttles section below).

To avoid buying a new Tecumseh Map which includes this re-route, you can instead use your older map in combination with this free downloadable document which shows the 2022 re-route: [June 2022 Tecumseh Trail Reroute](#)

## MAPS

The HHC publishes a Tecumseh Map which contains detailed topographical, access, parking, and camping information. This map is a great resource not only during a hike, but also for the planning stages of any backpacking trip. It was HHC members who volunteered their time to create it, and we sell it at a price that covers the printing costs, which can be purchased at [www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org](http://www.hoosierhikerscouncil.org). The reference numbers designated on this map will be used throughout this guide.

## PLANNING YOUR TRIP

The Tecumseh Trail traverses Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests. Camping is not permitted in these forests except in designated locations. This situation is different from Clark and Jackson-Washington State Forests in southern Indiana, which allow camping along the Knobstone Trail within their forest boundaries, subject to certain restrictions. But the Morgan-Monroe/Yellowwood State Forest management has worked to provide sufficient camping along the Tecumseh Trail so that fit and well-prepared backpackers can hike its entirety without vehicular support. It is recommended that you study the camping and lodging options in the section below, and use that to plan your mileage for each day. For most backpackers of the Tecumseh these designated camping areas dictate the daily mileage and route selected.



Here is a summary table of the Tecumseh Trail camping options, which represents approximations of distances involved:

Mile	Camp	Water Near Camp?	
0	Mason Ridge Campground	Seasonal	
5	Start of Back Country Area	Possibly seasonal	5 miles between
8	End of Back Country Area	No	3 miles between
14	Fox Den Shelter	No	6 miles between
22	Charlie's Shelter/Indian Hill	No	8 miles between
33	Yellowwood Campground	Yes	11 miles between
37	Belmont Motel	Yes	4 miles between
44	Hoosier National Forest	Possibly seasonal	7 miles between

This table can be used to design the route you wish to take, i.e., how many miles you will hike each day and where you will camp each night. You can see that the daily mileage can be as low as 3 miles but will be as high as almost 11 miles. The nearly 11 mile stretch between Charlie's Shelter at Indian Hill and Yellowwood Lake is the longest one. If the Belmont motel is not an option for you, then you will need to hike about 12 miles in one day to get to the southern terminus of the trail. The south Tecumseh Trail terminus is located deep in the Yellowwood State Forest, 2 miles away from the closest road parking. This is because it is a short distance from another trail system within the Hoosier National Forest.

This table is only an approximation of the actual camp distances. The camping options at Yellowwood Lake can be accessed from either the north or south end of the lake. The distance between the north and south ends is 2 miles when hiking the Tecumseh Trail and this can impact your actual daily distance hiked. The camping area that extends from Charlie's Shelter south toward Plum Creek stretches over a distance of about 3/4ths of a mile. Your actual choice within that stretch will impact your daily distances hiked.

Access to water sources is a consideration when planning your route. In the table above, some rows designate water as "Possibly Seasonal". This is because those particular camp locations do have small streams nearby. In normal years that are not unusually dry, if your hike is during the spring season, there is a good chance that there is water. Otherwise it is recommended that you take a cautious approach, and assume these streams may be dry, and plan accordingly. It is not uncommon for some backpackers to stash water at strategic locations along the trail prior to their trip. Any water that is stashed should be labeled, dated, and hidden from the view of other hikers. The "Water & Navigation Tips" section below, on page 6, will provide a lot more detailed information on most water sources along the Tecumseh Trail, including each of these contained within the summary table above.



The table above designates the water source for Mason Ridge as “Seasonal”. This is because the water source for that campground is closed for the winter. There is a spigot on the outside wall of the Morgan Monroe Headquarters nearby, but it is not clear if that spigot will always remain open through the winter.

## CAMPING AND LODGING ALONG THE TRAIL

As mentioned above, Morgan-Monroe and Yellowwood State Forests allow camping only in designated areas.

**Note:** While there is no fee, the DNR requires that you register for any overnight backcountry camping in Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe Forests. When you register, you need to indicate the general area where you plan to camp. You can register with the DNR by calling them at 765-792-4654, or in person at either the Yellowwood office or the Morgan-Monroe Headquarters office. If those are closed, there is an outside sign-in kiosk located beside the parking lot to the Morgan-Monroe Headquarters office. It is a box mounted to the west side of the firewood bin.


In addition to registering, if you plan to backcountry camp along the Tecumseh Trail, we strongly recommend that you speak with the DNR before your trip. This is important because camping areas may be closed due to logging operations or periods of high-fire risk. Also inquire about the best place to park your vehicle.

The DNR limits backcountry camping group size to six people. Also, you cannot set up camp within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of any road or parking area. Finally, you cannot backcountry camp in the same area more than three consecutive days.

Below are listed overnight options that are along or within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of the trail. The distance in miles is provided to the left of each header, starting with the headquarters at Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

### Mile

#### 0.0 Campground at North Trailhead


 Morgan-Monroe State Forest offers primitive camping sites with a fire pit, picnic table, and a shared privy, available for a small fee. These sites are located just a quarter mile north of the headquarters office. As mentioned above, water is available seasonally, and there is a spigot at the Morgan Monroe Headquarters office, which may also be seasonal.




Overnight backcountry camping registration kiosk on the firewood storage bin at Morgan-Monroe Headquarters




## 5-8 Morgan-Monroe Backcountry Area

 Backcountry camping is allowed within the large designated “Backcountry Area” of Morgan-Monroe State Forest. The campsite should be located at least 200 feet away from any water sources or dry stream beds and ¼ mile from any road or parking area. This Backcountry area begins about a quarter of a mile after the Tecumseh Trail intersects Low Gap Road (denoted #5 on the HHC Tecumseh map). The Backcountry Area continues until about ¾ of a mile east of where the Tecumseh Trail intersects Shipman Ridge. At this point, there is a small stream, often dry, that is about 1/3 of mile east of the Backcountry Shelter, which helps mark the eastern boundary of the Backcountry Area. Camping is allowed only between these two points, and care should be taken to ensure compliance with that regulation.

## 8.5 Back Country Shelter

 The Back Country Shelter was built by the DNR in 2020, and is located just after the Morgan-Monroe Backcountry Area, on the north side of the trail. Like all three Tecumseh Trail shelters, it is built high on a ridge, and thus are there no water sources there, so be sure to stock up on water.

## 13.9 Fox Den Shelter


 The trail in this area and the shelter are all provided by the generosity of Lutheran Hills Church Camp. They provided the easement which allowed HHC to build the Tecumseh Trail across this property, and then they built the Fox Den Shelter to offer a very critical camping option for through-hikers. This shelter is the only overnight option on the trail between the Back Country Shelter and Mile 19.8. Look for a wooden sign directing hikers to the right toward the shelter on a short side trail. It is a 3-walled shelter with a fire pit and picnic table. No privy is available, and thus it is important to adhere strictly to backcountry standards for human waste. (See [www.backpacking.net/ethics.html](http://www.backpacking.net/ethics.html) for more information on backcountry ethics.) Always be sure to use the nice broom provided to clean the shelter before leaving, and be sure to sign the guest register. If you see any litter, please consider packing it out, to keep it clean for the next hiker, and to ensure continued public use of this privilege.

Note that the shelter sits on a private trail system that is owned by Lutheran Hills Church Camp. Please do not use those trails unless you have permission from them.


See the section “11.5 Richards Road Streams” below, page 9, since there are no ponds, streams, or other water sources located directly at this shelter.




## 21.9 Charlie's Shelter & Indian Hill-Plum Creek Camping

 Once you reach the top of Indian Hill, you will soon come across Charlie's Shelter, completed in 2019. At this location the main trail joins a forest road that runs about a ½ mile west to Indian Hill Road parking lot. If you don't want to use the shelter, you can also camp in this area. If you follow the trail's southward descent for about a ½ mile, you will reach a blue sign that designates the boundary of the camping area. Camping is allowed between this sign and north to the shelter. This area is marked with three triangles on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. There are no ponds, streams, or other water sources located at the shelter or this camping area, but if you continue south for 1/4<sup>th</sup> to ½ of a mile, depending on your exact location, the trail reaches Plum Creek, which historically has had water through all seasons (although this could change at any time). About a mile north of the shelter is Bean Blossom Creek on Indian Hill Road.


## 32.3 Yellowwood Campground

 Primitive camping, for a fee, is available along the east side of Yellowwood Lake. There are designated drive-in campsites south of the Yellowwood Forest office, and an open carry-in tent area north of it. These can be accessed by turning south on the Yellowwood Lake Road. You will come to the carry-in tent area in about a ¼ of a mile. If you proceed further south along Yellowwood Lake Road, past the forest office, you will reach the drive-in primitive sites, each having a picnic table, fire pit, and shared vault toilet. There is a fee to use any of these areas for camping, to be paid at the forest office.

## 37.1 Hickory Shades Motel in Belmont

 Hickory Shades Motel is the only full-facility, modern lodging along the Tecumseh Trail. It is located on the small stretch of the trail which borrows Highway 46, just west of #21 on the HHC Tecumseh Map. Their phone number is: 812-988-4694. Their website is: [hickoryshadesmotel.com](http://hickoryshadesmotel.com).

## 44.5 Hoosier National Forest

 The Tecumseh Trail ends at a small stream called Panther Creek, designated by a sign saying "End of Tecumseh Trail". There are no accessible roads or parking at this point. The most southern parking area is about 2 miles north at Crooked Creek Road. The reason it ends deep in the forest is because it is near the border with Hoosier National Forest. If you cross the stream and look around as you head in a southeast direction, you will find what used to be an old forest logging road cut in the side of the hill, which ascends upward to Horse Trail D of Hoosier National Forest. Just south of this intersection with the horse trail is a gate which marks the boundary between Yellowwood State Forest and the Hoosier National Forest. Backcountry camping is allowed in Hoosier National Forest, as long as you stay at least 200 feet away from any water sources or dry creek beds.

## WATER & NAVIGATION TIPS


As with all untreated water in the U.S., any obtained from streams, ponds, and lakes should be treated before drinking or cooking. A guide to backcountry water treatment can be located from the CDC at this URL: [https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/travel/backcountry\\_water\\_treatment.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/travel/backcountry_water_treatment.html).




While the main focus of this section is to provide information on Tecumseh Trail water sources, there is some navigational and points of interest information as well. The distance in miles is provided to the left of each header, starting with Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters.

## Mile

### 0.0 Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters

 A new office was completed at Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters in 2019. They installed a spigot in the field east of that building, at the intersection of the Main Forest Road and Cherry Lake Road. It is available for use, but the DNR has indicated uncertainty on whether it will always be available in winter months. Therefore, you should call the office for updates before relying on this source.

### 3 Rock Shelter Streams and Rock Shelter


 Just before Mile 3 the trail will make its first very large descent, coming down off Tincher Ridge, toward #4 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. At the bottom, you will cross and follow several small streams which intersect and run alongside the trail. These should not be relied upon because they can be dry.

#### *Item of Interest – Rock Shelter*

The trail will pass to the right of Rock Shelter, which is marked as #4 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. This is a small overhang resulting from the faster erosion of the underlying rock. It's a great place to plan lunch, a snack, or break, especially if it is raining.

### 3.5 Rock Shelter Pond

#### *Reliable Water Source*

 As you ascend to the ridge after the Rock Shelter, within a ½ mile the trail passes a small pond on the right. As with any small pond in the woods, the water is very dark in color due to tannins released from the decomposition of leafy and other organic materials.

#### *Navigation – Three-Mile Split*

At about 4 miles the trail will reach the “Three Mile Split”. If you were to bear left, this would complete the 3-Mile Loop Trail which started at the 3-Mile Parking Lot. To follow the Tecumseh, turn right and head east instead.

### 5.1 Landram Ridge Pond

#### *Reliable Water Source*

 Right before making a large descent to Low Gap, the trail passes another small pond on the left at Mile 5.1. The water is dark from decomposition of organic matter.




Icicles add an extra incentive to visit Rock Shelter in winter




### *Navigation – Low Gap Road and Parking*

At the end of a large descent the trail reaches Low Gap Road, which is #5 on the HHC Tecumseh Map. Be very careful to look both directions for cars before stepping onto the road. Cars drive fast on this road and they do not see hikers as they emerge from the woods.

## 5.4 Honey Creek at Low Gap Road

 Right after crossing Low Gap Road (#5 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map) the trail descends steep wooden steps to the gravel parking lot. It then crosses two bridges within a tenth of a mile, which has streams that can both be dry. There is more likely to be water in the second creek and bridge you come to, which is the East Fork of Honey Creek. The water in this second creek is also generally better quality due to purer drainage sources.

## 6.7 The Pine Forest Bottomlands


 After leaving the Low Gap Parking lot area, you will begin to ascend to a high ridge, the top of which is called Gorley Knob. You no sooner catch your breath from the climb when you quickly descend all the way back down. The trail meanders through the low, moist pine forest, crossing and following several small streams. The streams in the pine forest bottomlands may be dry.

### *Navigation – The Wedding Chapel*

Around Mile 8 the Tecumseh Trail comes to a T, by intersecting a forest road that runs east-west along Shipman Ridge. You turn right at this point, dubbed “The Wedding Chapel”, and start heading east toward Bear Lake.

As you head east on Shipman Ridge, keep your eye out for a turn to the left, as the Tecumseh leaves that ridge and heads toward Bear Lake at about Mile 8.5.

## 10.1 Bear Lake

 The Tecumseh Trail crosses a small, often dry stream about 1 mile after the Wedding Chapel, at about Mile 9. The next reliable water source is Bear Lake, denoted as #6 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

### *Navigation – Bear Creek Road*

The Tecumseh Trail only skirts the western edge of Bear Lake. The path that heads east across Bear Lake Dam is a spur trail that connects with the Bear Lake parking lot near the top of the hill. The actual Tecumseh Trail instead descends as it goes south past the dam, winds around the woods, and crosses a few streams before it emerges on Bear Creek Road. It crosses the road at the bottom of the hill, and continues into the woods.

**Note:** As of May 2022, because of a bridge being out, the DNR has a temporary route in place that takes the trail across the dam, then goes south (right) through the stand of pines before crossing the road.




Ferns add to the cool, moist atmosphere of the Pine Forest Bottomlands





## 11.5 Richards Road Streams

 There is a small, unreliable stream about 1/4<sup>th</sup> of a mile west of Richards Road, denoted as #7 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

Shortly after crossing Richards Road, the trail crosses two small streams which can be dry.

If they have water, these streams are often the next to last opportunity to obtain water before reaching the Fox Den Shelter, which is about 2 miles south at this point. If water is not obtained at this location, the hiker should beware he or she is gambling that the last stream ¼ mile before the shelter will have water. This last opportunity for water before reaching Fox Den Shelter is a stream in the last ravine before the final ascent up the hill on which the shelter sits. This stream may be dry, and indeed often is.

The Fox Den Shelter is at the top of a hill at Mile 13.9.

### *Navigation – Alternate Route*

In 2012 logging activities in this area resulted in the HHC building a re-route which allowed the Tecumseh Trail to remain open and eliminate the need to walk along roads during the period of these activities. This re-route is possible due to the generosity of the private land owners, Waycross Camp and Conference Center, and Lutheran Hills Camp, who have granted the right-of-way for this trail. These land owners have both allowed continued access on this trail. This provides an alternate route for Tecumseh Trail users. This route consists of a single path trail which begins after the trail nears the top of the hill. It then drops into a lush ravine and follows along a small stream. It is shown in blue HHC Tecumseh Trail map. The original route, depicted in red on the HHC map, remains high along the ridge, and borrows a forest road for parts of its length. The two trails rejoin at the base of the hill before heading toward the Fox Den Shelter.

Note: As of May 2022, this alternate route is temporarily closed due to logging operations.

## 14.8 Brier Creek

 About a mile after the Fox Den Shelter the Tecumseh Trail crosses Brier Creek. While this is one of the larger streams in the area, it can be dry.

### *Navigation – Carmel Ridge Road*

At #8 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, which is Mile 15.2, the trail emerges onto Carmel Ridge Road. It heads north on this road for 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a mile, heading up a hill. At the top of the hill, turn right onto a cable-gated forest service road to continue on the Tecumseh Trail. In less than ¼ of a mile after leaving Carmel Ridge Road, the trail crosses a small stream, which is often dry.

## 17.4 East Lost Branch Road

 About a ½ mile before reaching East Lost Branch Road, at Mile 17, the trail crosses a stream which can be dry. It crosses a stream again just before reaching East Lost Branch Road, denoted as #9 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, which is Mile 17.4. Both of these streams can be dry.



### *Navigation*

The trail goes north (right) on East Lost Branch Road, following it for about 2 tenths of a mile before it makes a sharp left turn to head south on West Lost Branch Road. Continue south until reaching IN-45.

Per the new 2022 route created from the Indian Hill railroad closure, you would head west on IN-45 for about 1 mile.

**Caution!:** This is a narrow highway with no shoulder, cars travel fast, and there is a sharp 90 degree turn. See the Trail Shuttles section below for other options to avoid this risk.

If you do walk this route, after a mile on IN-45, right after the road turns sharply left (south), you'll come to a very small parking area and gate, which is the Trevlac Bluffs property of Sycamore Land Trust. Follow the trail south for about 500 ft, then turn left (east) at the first Y. In another ~250 feet, you'll make another left to continue back east toward Indian Hill area.

Continue east on the trail for about a mile, until you reach Indian Hill Road, then turn right.

If there has been a lot of rain, the Bean Blossom Creek floods this section of the route. In this case, see the section "Indian Hill High Water Route" on page 17.

**Note:** This section of the trail, just south of IN-45, is possible only through the generosity of Sycamore Land Trust and the Weddle Family. This section is private property, and in order to continue use of it, which is necessary to keep the Tecumseh Trail open, it is important you stay on the trail, leave no trace, and do not stop to eat or camp.

## 20.6 Bean Blossom Creek



At Mile 20.6, denoted as #11 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, the trail turns right on Indian Hill Road and crosses a low-water bridge over Bean Blossom Creek. This creek is generally reliable, but since it is a fairly small creek, it should not be relied upon in particularly dry seasons or years.

In the case of high water, see the section "Indian Hill High Water Route" on page 17.

In 2013 the HHC completed a trail re-route which eliminated the need to take Indian Hill Road to ascend Indian Hill. This trail is depicted on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. After crossing Bean Blossom Creek on Indian Hill Road, go about 200 feet to the John Grunwald Memorial Tree Planting parking lot. Walk around the large post at the cable-gate that is located there, and you will see a small clearing just to the south (right). The single path Tecumseh Trail starts here, and it can be followed using the standard white rectangular blazes. This route re-joins the original route at the top of Indian Hill, where the designated camping area begins, described in the section "21.9

Charlie's Shelter & Indian Hill-Plum Creek Camping", on page 6.

Note that there is no water at Charlie's Shelter. Especially in drier seasons, for hikers heading north to south, Bean Blossom Creek may be the last opportunity to get water before reaching the shelter. For hikers coming from the south, Plum Creek is the last opportunity to get water before the shelter.



Charlie's Shelter is at the top of Indian Hill at Mile 21.9.

### 17.6 Indian Hill Road



As discussed above, just after crossing Bean Blossom Creek, you turn left off Indian Hill Road to get back on the woodland path. In less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile, the trail crosses a small stream, which is often dry, especially in summer and fall. If that is the case, and you plan to camp at Charlie's Shelter, it is recommended to go back to Bean Blossom Creek for camp water.

### 20 Plum Creek



At about Mile 22 the trail reaches a low area, crosses and travels along several streams which drain into Plum Creek. Within a short distance, the trail actually crosses Plum Creek. This creek and its close tributaries generally have water, but it may require searching for small pools in dry times. Be aware that it could be totally dry.

#### *Navigation*

At Mile 23.1, denoted as #13 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, the trail emerges onto Indian Hill Road. It makes a left to head south on Salmeron Road. Be careful not to turn onto Plum Creek Road, which heads up a hill. Walk for  $\frac{1}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> of a mile on Salmeron Road, and look to the right for the trail to leave the road, cross Plum Creek, and enter back onto the wooded path, heading up a hill.

### 24.0 Lanam Ridge



Between Salmeron Road and Lanam Ridge Road, denoted as #14 and #15 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, the trail crosses and follows along several small streams, which may be dry.

#### *Navigation*

When the trail emerges onto the blacktop Lanam Ridge Road, turn east (left). After about  $\frac{1}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup> of a mile, turn south (right) onto the gravel Dubois Ridge Road. In a little over a tenth of a mile, the trail heads off the road and into the woods to the west (right).



## 25.8 Prang Pond



### *Reliable Water Source*

At about Mile 23.7, which is #16 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, the trail reaches Prang Pond. A gravel parking lot can be reached by turning left and going around the north side of the lake to a short side trail.

## 26.7 Pattys Garden Ridge



About 1 mile after Prang Pond, at Mile 26.7, the trail descends to a small stream south of Pattys Garden Ridge. This stream can be dry.

There is a very small stream near Mile 27.2, but it has water only during very wet periods.

## 30 Jackson Creek and Yellowwood Lake



### *Reliable Water Source*

The trail crosses Yellowwood Lake Road at Mile 30, denoted near #17 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. Shortly after, it crosses Jackson Creek on a wooden bridge. This is just one of several water sources in the area. There is a seasonal spigot in the parking lot at the Yellowwood State Forest Headquarters, about 1.25 miles south on Yellowwood Lake Road. The trail also follows along the west side of the lake for the next two miles. In dry times this area could potentially be the last opportunity for a readily-accessible, reliable water source on the entire trail south of this point.

### *Navigation*

Shortly after crossing the bridge over Jackson Creek, the trail reaches a T intersection with another trail on Yellowwood Lake State Forest property. Turn south (left) to continue on the Tecumseh. After 1.8 miles, at the southern edge of the lake the trail emerges onto the gravel Jackson Creek Road. The trail follows this road for only a couple hundred feet before it turns west (right) back onto the wooded path, as it crosses a small stream.

## 33 Caldwell Hollow



At about Mile 33, between #19 and #20 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map, the trail begins to follow along and cross several times a small stream for the next mile. This stream can be dry, but if it is not, it is highly recommended to get water at this location, as it could be the clearest and most accessible opportunity for the rest of the trail south of this point.

### *Navigation*

The trail ascends to Scarce O' Fat Ridge, denoted as #20 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. At the top of the ridge, the trail turns south (left) and follows a gravel service road. After 1.7 miles the trail comes to a DNR gate and gravel parking lot. The trail continues on Scarce O' Fat Ridge Road, also a



Backpacking the Tecumseh along Yellowwood Lake in the early morning hours of a chilly late fall day



gravel road, for 3/4ths of a mile until it T's into SR 46. Head west (right) on SR 46 for less than ½ a mile. Turn south (left) on TC Steele Road.

### 37.2 North Fork Salt Creek



#### *Reliable Water Source*

A quarter of a mile south of SR 46 the trail crosses North Fork Salt Creek. Being so near to Monroe Reservoir, it almost always will have water. However, the water is often muddy and it is also difficult to access due to a very large, steep bank surrounded by thick vegetation at the top.

#### *Navigation*

Just after crossing North Fork Salt Creek, turn east (left) on Schooner Road. In a ¼ of a mile, turn south (right) on Stevens Road. In a little over ½ of a mile, the road ends and you reach a cabled gate in front of a forest service road. The trail follows that service road.

### 38 Crooked Creek Area



From Miles 38-42 the trail ascends Bartley Ridge and hops from ridge to ridge until reaching Crooked Creek at Crooked Creek Road. There are several deer ponds in this 4-mile stretch, but it may require a high level of diligence to spot them, particularly in summer seasons with high vegetation. Crooked Creek may be dry.

#### *Navigation*

Within this area between Miles 38-42, a bicycle trail uses a short section of the Tecumseh to continue down to Lucas Hollow, so be sure not to take the wrong turn on this bicycle route.

Upon reaching Crooked Creek Road, the trail goes north (left), crossing a small bridge. The trail only follows Crooked Creek Road for a few hundred feet before it goes back into the woods to the west (left). Within minutes the trail crosses Crooked Creek Road and comes to the gravel parking lot on the east side. The trail heads north out of the parking lot, up the hill. Be sure to take the trail that goes to the left beyond the gate, not the steep, eroded Handicapped Hunter trail to the right of the gate

### 44 Panther Creek



The trail ends at a small stream called Panther Creek, which can be dry.

## DIRECTIONS TO ACCESS AND PARKING

As many of the parking areas along the Tecumseh Trail are in isolated areas along very minor and back roads, it is highly recommended that you use the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map to locate the best parking areas. The directions provided below will frequently use reference numbers from that map.

Whenever parking along the Tecumseh, be considerate of those who live nearby, and never park along roads with private property, especially where there are homes and mowed yards. Below is a long list of public forest areas where parking is allowed. Be very careful to never block entrances, gates, cables, or other evidence of access needed by forest personnel. While many of these areas may seem remote, they are very frequently used by forest personnel.



When parking overnight because you plan to camp, you must register with the DNR, as described on page 4. When you do that, discuss with them your parking plans.

The parking options are listed below. Distance in miles is provided beginning with the northern terminus at Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

## Mile

### 0.0 Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters



This parking lot is denoted as #1 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

Because the back roads are difficult to navigate and often misrepresented on maps, it is recommended that you approach the forest from I-69.

**From the north:** If coming from the north, take exit #134, which is Liberty Church Road east. In about a ½ mile, turn right (south) on Old State Road 37, and in about another ½ mile veer right at a Y (don't go left on Hacker's Creek Road). Follow the road for about 3.5 miles, and you will come to a 3-way intersection with a big sign in the middle, "Morgan Monroe State Forest".

This is the start of Main Forest Road. Veer LEFT at this intersection. As soon as you veer left, keep straight ahead on the main road. You'll immediately see yet another road going down to the left, called Hacker's Creek Road. Do not take that road, but continue straight ahead. This is "Main Forest Road". You keep traveling on the Main Forest Road for another 4 miles, and the headquarters office will be on your left.

**From the south:** If coming from the south, on I-69, take the Sample Road Exit east. After just a tenth of a mile, continue straight through the traffic circle, heading east on Sample Road. After 1.2 miles turn left (north) on Old State Road 37. After about 5.5 miles you will come to a 3-way intersection with a big sign in the middle, "Morgan Monroe State Forest".

This is the start of Main Forest Road. Turn right at this intersection. As soon as you turn, keep straight ahead on the main road. You'll immediately see yet another road going down to the left, called Hacker's Creek Road. Do not take that road, but continue straight ahead. This is "Main Forest Road". You keep traveling on the Main Forest Road for another 4 miles, and the headquarters office will be on your left.

### 0.2 Mason Ridge (or Orcutt Road) Parking Lot



This parking lot is denoted as #2 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

To locate Mason Ridge Parking Lot, follow the directions above for Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters. This parking lot is about 1/4<sup>th</sup> of a mile southeast of the headquarters office on Main Forest Road. It is a gravel parking lot on the north side of the road.

### 1.6 Three-Mile Loop (or Landram Ridge) Parking Lot



This parking lot is denoted as #3 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.



The Three-Mile Loop Parking Lot can be located by referencing the directions above for Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters. This gravel parking lot is located about 1 and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> mile south of the headquarters office.

## 5.4 Low Gap Backcountry Parking Lot



This parking lot is denoted as #5 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

Follow the directions listed above for Morgan-Monroe State Forest Headquarters, to get to the three-way intersection with sign "Morgan Monroe State Forest", which is the start of Main Forest Road. From that point, take the Main Forest Road about 2.7 miles until you reach Bean Blossom Road on the right (south). Follow Bean Blossom Road to the end, where it comes to a T. Turn left (east) on Anderson Road. Head east on Anderson Road for 1.2 miles until you come to another T. Turn left (north) at the T onto Low Gap Road. Head north on Low Gap Road for 1.2 miles. The Low Gap Backcountry Parking Lot will be on your right (east). It is a gravel lot that is at a lower elevation than the road. The steep slope of the entrance makes this lot difficult to access when conditions are icy or slick.

## 10.1 Bear Lake Parking Lot



This gravel parking lot is denoted as #6 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

Bear Lake Parking Lot is best accessed from IN-45. This begins in the east from SR 135 at Bean Blossom, about 5 miles north of Nashville, Indiana. IN-45 can be accessed from the west in Bloomington, Indiana.

To get to Bear Lake Parking Lot from IN-45, you take Bear Creek Road north, which is located in Trevlac. For those coming from the east on IN-45, Bear Creek Road is 5.25 miles from Bean Blossom, at the intersection of SR 135 and IN-45. If coming from Bloomington in the west, Bear Creek Road at Trevlac is about 15 miles on IN-45.

When you turn onto Bear Creek Road you will immediately cross railroad tracks. Within seconds you will see North Shore Drive going to the left. Do not take that road, but continue straight ahead (north) on Bear Creek Road. After about ½ mile, you will pass Branstetter Road to the right (east). Do not turn on this, but continue straight ahead. After about 3 miles you will come to a Y in the road, which is not well-labeled. The road heading right (east) is Richards Road (but some maps show this as Lower Bear Creek Road). Do not take this, but turn left to stay on Bear Creek Road. About ½ mile after that Y, Bear Lake Parking lot will be to the left (west). It is a gravel lot near the top of a hill.

## 11.8 Along Richards Road – Not Recommended



There is no established parking lot on Richards Road. Cars must pull over to the side of this gravel road. During wet periods, this can result in cars getting stuck in the soft areas alongside the road. For these reasons, this area is not ideal or recommended for parking.

This area is denoted as #7 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

The directions above for Bear Lake Parking Lot can be used to locate Richards Road. Follow those directions to the Y in Bear Creek Road. Instead of veering left to go to Bear Lake Parking Lot, head



right (east) on Richards Road. In a little less than 1 mile you will reach the point that the Tecumseh crosses the road. This can be difficult to spot in a vehicle, because there is no parking lot, and no signs designed for street visibility. If you watch closely, you will see small, narrow brown Carsonite signs that are placed along the road for the purpose of hikers on the trail.

## 15.2 Carmel Ridge Road-North Parking Lot



The Tecumseh Trail traverses Carmel Ridge Road for about a ¼ mile. At the NORTH end of that stretch, there is a gravel parking lot. It is ¼ north of #8 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

Carmel Ridge Road is accessed from IN-45. Access to IN-45 is explained above under the directions for Bear Lake Parking Lot.

For those coming from the east on IN-45, Carmel Ridge Road is on the right (north) about 4 miles west of Bean Blossom, a small town at the intersection of SR 135 and IN-45. Carmel Ridge Road is located about 1.5 miles after passing through Helmsburg. If coming from Bloomington in the west, Carmel Ridge Road is on the left (north), about 16 miles on IN-45.

Turn north on Carmel Ridge Road, and continue north for 1.35 miles. There is small gravel forest road near the top of a hill on your right (east). If you turn on that, you will immediately come to a gravel parking lot within the woods. Except for a small sign for hikers, there are no signs clearly visible which makes it difficult to locate the area from a vehicle.

## 17.4 Along East Lost Branch Road – Not Recommended



There is no parking area on East Lost Branch Road. Cars must pull over to the side of this gravel road and there is only enough room for one or two vehicles. For this reasons, it is not ideal or recommended to park here.

This area is denoted as #9 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

East Lost Branch Road is accessed from IN-45. Access to IN-45 is explained above under the directions for Bear Lake Parking Lot.

For those coming from the east on IN-45, East Lost Branch Road is on the right (north) 3.7 miles from Bean Blossom, a small town at the intersection of SR 135 and IN-45. East Lost Branch is located about 1 mile after passing through Helmsburg. If coming from Bloomington in the west, East Lost Branch Road is on the left (north), about 16.3 miles on IN-45.

Turn north on East Lost Branch Road, and continue north for 0.4 miles. There is forest on your right (east), and if you go very slow and look closely, you will locate the Tecumseh Trail emerging from the woods. Except for a small sign for hikers, there are no signs clearly visible which makes it difficult to locate the trail from a vehicle.

## 21 Indian Hill Parking and High Water Route



There are two options to park on Indian Hill Road, both of which are accessed by taking IN-45 to Plum Creek Road.





**Note:** You can no longer access Indian Hill Road from IN-45 to the north, because the Indiana Railroad Company and Brown County Commissioners closed the railroad crossing there. Thus from IN-45, you must first turn on Plum Creek Road, at Needmore, Indiana.

The first parking lot is about a mile north of the intersection of Plum Creek Road and Indian Hill Road, and is noted as #12 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map. There is a ½ mile access route from the #12 parking lot to the Tecumseh Trail, which is shown in blue on the map.



Flooded ford at Bean Blossom Creek on Indian Hill Road

The second is about a half a mile farther north, at the bottom of Indian Hill and just south of Bean Blossom Creek, which is labeled as #11 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

### Indian Hill High Water Route

If there has been a lot of rain recently, the Bean Blossom Creek floods. It makes not only its crossing on Indian Hill impassable, but it also floods portions of the Tecumseh Trail just west of there. If you are unable to reschedule your hike to another day, then you will need to make use of the Indian Hill High Water Route.

The Indian Hill High Water Route begins at the junction of East Lost Branch Road and IN-45. Because IN-45 is a highway with not shoulder, it is recommended to locate a ride or a shuttle (see Trail Shuttles). To follow the route, go west on IN-45 for 2.4 miles, until you come to the very small town of Needmore. There is a road to the left (east) called Plum Creek Road. Take Plum Creek Road, following the directions to either of the two Indian Hill Parking Lots provided above.

## 25.8 Prang Pond Parking Lot



This parking lot is denoted as #16 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

Prang Pond is best accessed from IN-45. Access to IN-45 is explained above under the directions for Bear Lake Parking Lot.

From IN-45 you will turn east on Lanam Ridge Road. If coming from the west (from Bloomington), it is about 12 miles from Bloomington on IN-45. If coming from the east (from Bean Blossom on SR 135), it is about 7.4 miles from Bean Blossom, and a little over 1 mile from Needmore. The turn-off can be difficult to spot, because it is at a point where IN-45 is steeply sloped and curves sharply.

Continue east on Lanam Ridge Road for 1.8 miles. To your right (south) will be a gravel road called Dubois Ridge Road. In about 1/3 of a mile on Dubois Ridge Road you will see a gravel entrance to a small gravel parking lot, which is Prang Pond Parking Lot.

## 30.2 North Yellowwood Lake Road Parking Lots



These parking lots are denoted as #17 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.



These parking areas can be accessed from the north, coming from IN-45 to Lanam Ridge Road; however, it does involve travel on a gravel road.

Most find it easier to instead access these parking lots from the south, from SR 46. There is a sign for Yellowwood State Forest on SR 46, where Yellowwood Lake Road heads north. Yellowwood Lake Road is about 12 miles east of Bloomington and it is about 6 miles south and west of Nashville on SR 46.

Take Yellowwood Lake Road north from SR 46. After 1.2 miles you will cross a small bridge and come to a junction where four roads come together at various angles. Turn left, staying on the main blacktop road, which is Yellowwood Lake Road. In a little less than a mile you will turn right, which is still Yellowwood Lake Road. There are signs for Yellowwood Lake Forest at this right turn. After turning, you will pass several campgrounds and the Yellowwood Lake Forest Headquarters on your left (west). After about 1 and 3/4ths mile from that right turn, you will see a large parking lot to your left, which is at the north end of Yellowwood Lake. You can catch the Tecumseh Trail from this lot by taking a short ¼-mile trail north which intersects it.

If you stay on Yellowwood Lake Road and continue past the large parking lot for about ¼ of a mile you will come to another small parking lot which is at a cemetery. The Tecumseh Trail crosses Yellowwood Lake Road at this junction.

### 32.3 Yellowwood Lake Dam Parking Lot, Not Recommended



This parking lot is denoted as #19 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

This parking area is located at the south end of Yellowwood Lake, and it is very limited. Access involves crossing a natural ford that has a fairly large bank. It is strongly recommended to avoid crossing this ford.

The directions above to the North Yellowwood Lake Road Parking Lots can be used to access this area. As directed above, take Yellowwood Lake Road north from SR 46. After 1.2 miles you will cross a small bridge and come to a junction where four roads come together at various angles. Turn left, staying on the main blacktop road, which is Yellowwood Lake Road. In a little less than a mile the main road, Yellowwood Lake Road, will make a right. Instead of going right, continue straight ahead. In about 1/3 of a mile the road will come to a T. Turn right (north) at the T. There is parking in about 1,000 feet, after crossing the very treacherous ford mentioned above.

### 35.8 Scarce O' Fat Road Parking Lot



This parking lot is denoted by a car icon that is just north of #21 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.

This parking lot is accessed from SR 46 near the town of Belmont, which is about 8 miles west of Nashville and 12 mile east of Bloomington. About a ½ mile east of Belmont is a gravel road heading north called Scarce O' Fat Ridge Road. If you head north on this road, it will dead-end in about a ½ mile into a small parking area. Be careful not to block the cable gate for forest service access.

### 41.8 Crooked Creek Parking Lot



This parking lot is denoted as #24 on the HHC Tecumseh Trail Map.



It is best accessed from SR 46, at Belmont, which is about 8 miles west of Nashville and 12 mile east of Bloomington. Turn south on T.C. Steele Road, which is right across from the Hickory Shades Motel in Belmont (see page 6). In about 3 miles you will come to a junction with Gilmore Ridge Road. Do not turn right here, but continue on T.C. Steele Road. Go for another 4 miles, following the road as it does a large U turn and starts heading north. Shortly after the blacktop turns to gravel, you will see the parking lot on your right (east).

Note that the Crooked Creek Parking Lot, 1.8 miles north of the Tecumseh southern terminus, is the southern-most parking available along the Tecumseh Trail. There are no accessible roads or parking areas at the southern terminus. This is because of an original desire to extend the trail into Hoosier National Forest Land.

## TRAIL SHUTTLES

Pathfinder Outfitters (<https://pathfinderoutfitters.com/>) from Bloomington, Indiana is familiar with the Tecumseh Trail access points and offers year-round shuttle services for about any size of group. They are also able to transport a lot of gear if needed. You can email them at [stevechafin@gmail.com](mailto:stevechafin@gmail.com) or call at (812) 340-0700.

Another option for Tecumseh Trail shuttles is Kim Hall, who can be found on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/kim.na.life>). Her email is [kimtreks298@gmail.com](mailto:kimtreks298@gmail.com), and her phone number is 812-844-2756.

## NEARBY CAMPING AND LODGING

### *Martinsville*

About 7 miles north of the trail's northern terminus is the city of Martinsville on I-69. There are several large franchise and local lodging options which can be quickly found on the internet.

### *Bloomington*

The Tecumseh Trail runs north-south about 14 miles east of Bloomington. Home to Indiana University, it has numerous options for lodging that can be found on the web.

### *Nashville*

Nashville is about 8 mile east of the Tecumseh Trail. Tucked into the hills of Brown County, it is a quaint small town that is a very popular tourist destination. It has historically served as the center of the Brown County Art Colony, which has included some well-known artists such as T.C. Steele. It is full of many family-owned small shops which sell their hand-made arts and crafts. The lodging opportunities range from primitive cabins and bed and breakfasts in the surrounding woods to nationally known hotels. A great on-line resource for Nashville lodging and other amenities is [www.browncountylodging.com](http://www.browncountylodging.com).

### *Story*

The area just to the west of Story, Indiana was flooded in 1960 when the Monroe Reservoir was created. This severed the main road which connected Story with Bloomington. This isolation, along with the



Great Depression, contributed to Story's decline. The town and its surrounding area is now privately owned by a family who has opened up to the public its remaining relics of the past and offers a gourmet restaurant and a bed and breakfast. Directions and more information can be found at their website: [www.storyinn.com](http://www.storyinn.com). The town is about a 7 mile walk through Hoosier National Forest and along Elkinsville Road, from the Tecumseh Trail end at Panther Creek. You can read more at [www.storyinn.com](http://www.storyinn.com).

*Cindy Leffelman*  
*June 29, 2022*

