

BACK COUNTRY HIKING AND CAMPING TIPS

“Leave No Trace” hiking is the way to maximize your enjoyment of your favorite trails. It helps to carry a small plastic bag and take home the occasional trash you find – otherwise it will probably be there next time to detract from the view.

Back Country Area Camping: Off-trail camping is permitted.

Campfires: Keep fires small. Do not build fires on the trail or in open grassy areas. The no-trace ethic suggests covering the fire with leaf litter after putting out (could to the touch). Scatter unused wood and fire rings. Portable back-packing stoves leave fewer traces of use.

Bright Colors: Hunting is permitted in the forest. For safety, wear bright colors during the hunting season; dull colors to blend in the rest of the year.

Water: Water from natural sources in the forest must be purified with iodine, filtering or boiling before use. Sources of water in the back country can fail during dry period, so plan ahead.

Always wash your dishes or yourself several feet from the edge of a lake or stream. The soil will act as a filter, preventing soap suds and scraps of food from polluting the water.

Human Waste: Please deposit human waste at least 200 feet from any water supply and camping area. To promote decomposition and sanitary conditions, dig a small hole several inches deep and then cover.

Pets: Although pets are permitted in the forest on a leash, they detract from the natural experience. Native wildlife often avoids areas used by dogs, thus preventing the close observations hoped for by many recreationists.

Safety: Carry a first aid kit and travel with a map and compass. Travel is safest with a companion. If alone, tell friends where you are going and when you plan to return.

HIKING TRAILS

All Trails are loops and marked with white diamond blazes (double blazes indicate a turn ahead); numbered wood posts; or brown plastic posts. Tecumseh Trail is marked with white rectangle blazes. Short trails not listed below connect the campground and office parking area to hiking trails. Reduce crowding by following the trail direction arrows.

1. Tree Identification Trail – 1 mile (easy)
The trailhead is located at the forest office parking area. A tree identification booklet is available at the trailhead
2. Scout Ridge Nature Trail -- .5 mile (moderate)
The trailhead is located behind firs shelter house at Scout Ridge Campground. An information booklet is available at trailhead
3. Three Lakes Trail – 10.1 miles (rugged)
Trailheads are located on the road to Cherry Lake Shelter, at the shelter and at Bryant Creek Lake Shelter.
4. Mason Ridge Trail – 2.9 miles (moderate)
Trailheads located at Orcutt Road and Landram Ridge on main Forest Road.
5. Rock Shelter Trail – 3.1 miles (moderate)
The trailhead is on Forest Road at Landram Ridge. The trail follows the first part of Low Gap Trail.
6. Low Gap – Back Country Trail – 10 miles (rugged)
Trailheads are located on main Forest Road at Landram Ridge and the parking area on Low Gap Road. Camping permitted in the Back Country Area located east of Low Gap Road

OUR MISSION

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Forestry promotes and practices good stewardship of natural, recreational and cultural resources on Indiana’s public and private forest lands. This stewardship produces continuing benefits, both tangible and intangible for present and future generations.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT ON STATE FORESTS

The Division of Forestry will continue to provide consumptive and non consumptive outdoor recreational opportunities. Developments will take precedence over natural resources conservation and protection and will continue to be structured on the natural rather than the “built” environment.

Firearms, including handguns, are permitted in the forest when used according to hunting regulations. They may not be used for target shooting, in safety areas, or within 200 feet of trails.

MORGAN-MONROE STATE FOREST

The forest is located southwest of Indianapolis, 35 miles south from I-465 via SR-37 (between Martinsville and Bloomington). The forest consists of steep, forested ridges and valleys which support some of the state’s finest hardwoods. The original settlers of the area cleared and attempted to farm the ridges, but were frustrated by rocky soil unsuitable for agriculture. The result was many acres of eroded abandoned land. The state purchased 24,000 of these acres to create Morgan-Monroe State Forest at the onset of the Great Depression in 1929.

The Back Country Area was created in 1981 for those seeking a wilderness experience similar to that on federal properties. Although hunting and single tree harvesting are permitted, the area contains 2,700 contiguous acres free of developed roads.

To enhance the wilderness experience for all visitors, users are asked to observe the philosophy of disturbing as little as possible in the natural woodland ecosystem.

HIKING TRAILS AT MORGAN-MONROE STATE FOREST



6220 Forest Road
Martinsville, IN 46151
765-342-4026



Division of Forestry
Indiana Department of
Natural Resources