

Within the State Forest certification for sustainable forests the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) provides for the designation of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs). These are forest areas that receive added consideration of management activities in order to maintain or enhance conservation value attributes. These attributes may be of biological, ecological, or cultural significance. General information about HCVFs is available of the FSC web site.

In 2007, the Division of Forestry (DoF) designated an initial 15 areas containing a total of 1,991.5 acres as HCVFs. All of these initial areas were dedicated Nature Preserves. Dedicated Nature Preserves are a logical choice for designation at HCVFs since the attributes that make them Nature Preserve quality are the same biological or ecological attributes sought for HCVFs. In 2008-2010 the Division of Forestry added 3 additional areas containing 500.7 acres. In 2014 the Division of Forestry added a 153-acre HCVF, 2017 and 2018 953.5 acres, and 591 acres in 2020 for a current total of 4,202.57 acres. With the exception of one HCVF, all others have subsequently been dedicated as State Nature Preserves. The Division of Nature Preserves web page (dnr.in.gov) provides additional information on Dedicated Nature Preserves.

Under FSC standards, designation of areas as HCVFs does not preclude management activities. Management of HCVFs will be directed toward maintenance or enhancement of the condition for which the HCVF was designated.

While in cooperation with the Division of Forestry, primary management responsibility of HCVFs that are also Dedicated Nature Preserves will be with the Division of Nature Preserves due to their expertise with botanical and ecological resources. DoF will have secondary management responsibility and will provide support and resources when possible. These are most likely to be HCV1, HCV2 and HCV3 type HCVFs (though not all HCV1, HCV2 and HCV3 areas will be Dedicated Nature Preserves).

Primary management responsibility of all other HCVFs will fall to DoF. This will include all 6 of the HCVFs types.

DESIGNATION OF HCVFs

While DoF will continue to nominate Dedicated Nature Preserves as designated HCVFs, it will also consider nominations of areas for HCVFs from interested, knowledgeable individuals. Below is the process for nominating, reviewing and designating HCVFs.

Nomination

Dedicated Nature Preserves will be nominated by DoF. The nomination process will follow the long-standing process to dedicate State Nature Preserves and includes a site evaluation by Nature Preserve staff and public presentation of the proposal to the Indiana Natural Resources Commission (NRC).

Individuals may nominate areas for HCVF designation by sending a letter to Brenda Huter, Certification Coordinator, Indiana Division of Forestry, 402 W. Washington Street, Room W296, Indianapolis, IN 46204; bhuter@dnr.in.gov; 317-232-4105. This letter should include location information of the proposed area – State Forest name, legal description by Section, Township and Range, and County. It should also include an aerial and topographical map of the proposed area that also includes identifiable landmarks for reference (roads, intersections, rivers/lakes). Nominations must also include a detailed and substantiated description of the High Conservation Value attributes (1,2,3,4,5, or 6) of the proposed area that make it worthy of consideration as a HCVF, relative to other conservation lands. Applicants should provide verifiable evidence to support their

nomination such as names of experts consulted for identification of rare, threatened, and endangered flora, fauna, ecosystems, or cultural areas. The original nomination is limited to 6 pages, including maps. Nominators must provide contact information – name, address, phone number and email address – so DoF can contact them to gather more information or to clarify nominations.

High Conservation Value Attributes from the FSC-US Management Standard:

- 1.) HCV forest area containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refugia), including RTE species and their habitats;
- 2.) HCV forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance;
- 3.) HCV forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems;
- 4.) HCV forest areas that provide a basic service of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control);
- 5.) HCV forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence health); or
- 6.) HCV forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

Public Comment

Nominated areas will be placed on the DoF website for public comment for a minimum of 30 days. Comments should be specific to the area and, in particular, should contain information on the attributes of the area in terms of the criteria for the HCVF types. Comments will be reviewed by a designated review team.

In addition, as part of the Nature Preserve dedication process, proposed nature preserves go before a public meeting of the Natural Resources Commission where public comments are taken about proposals.

Review Process

A review process for a nomination will generally take up to 12 months to allow enough time for necessary field visits to verify the presence or absence of seasonally rare flora and fauna, and will involve a team from DoF, and possibly other knowledgeable persons if needed. DoF may add experts with pertinent expertise to the review team depending on the nature of the criteria to be considered. These may be people from sister agencies or outside state government.

Members of the review team will perform an onsite visit of the nominated area. They will evaluate the nominated area against the criteria it is being nominated for, and in the context of other examples of the same type to determine if it warrants HCVF designation. They will review public comments, particularly in terms of gathering additional information on attributes of the nominated area.

Designation Decision

The review team will present the nomination and the results of its review to the State Forester. They will provide a recommendation regarding designation to the State Forester. The State Forester will have up to 60 days to make a final decision. This decision will be given to the review team.

Members of the review team will then post the designation decision on the DoF website along with a summary of comments received and a response to the comments.

For designated HCVFs, members of the review team will create a management strategy regarding the maintenance or enhancement of the attributes of the HCVFs, and monitoring of the areas. In the case of Dedicated Nature Preserves, the Master Plan for the Nature Preserve serves this function.

DESIGNATED HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS

Clark State Forest

White Oak Nature Preserve HCV3 143.1 acres

White oak/mixed oak and hickory forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance and development.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves (DNP) and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

No known public comments received.

Virginia Pine-Chestnut Oak Nature Preserve HCV3 23.6 acres

Native Virginia pine and chestnut oak forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance and development.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public

comments received.

Alum Cave Hollow Nature Preserve HCV3 142 acres

Siltstone cliffs, mesic, dry-mesic, and dry upland forests with native Virginia pine forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance and development.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

No known public comments received.

Outbrook Ravine Nature Preserve HCV1 & HCV3 518.57 acres

Mesic to dry upland forest, including the northwestern most extension of naturally occurring Virginia pine, rare plants.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning, control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance and development.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

Harrison-Crawford State Forest

Post Oak - Cedar Nature Preserve HCV1 & HCV3 266 acres

Dry upland forest, mesic upland forest, glades, rare plants.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning, control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance and development.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

No known public comments received.

Scout Mountain Nature Preserve HCV1 40 acres
Mixed mesophytic forest with beech maple and oak-hickory types, cave – *Myotis sodalis hibernacula*.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development. Construction of barriers to limit cave access is prescribed. Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry.

Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), DNP and DoF.

No known public comments received.

Leavenworth Barrens Nature Preserve HCV1 & HCV2 761.3 acres
Dry upland forest, mesic upland forest, glades, barrens, rare plants.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning; minimal disturbance and development; control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

No known public comments received.

Bat Wing Cave Nature Preserve HCV1 10 acres
Cave – *Myotis sodalis hibernacula*.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development. Construction of barriers to limit cave access is prescribed. Additional buffer zone with management limitations outside the actual preserve covers 71 acres of adjoining forest.

Joint management by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry.

Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DFW, DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Deam (Charles C.) Nature Preserve HCV1 & HCV3 258.9 acres
Floodplain forest, talus slopes, limestone cliffs, sandstone cliffs, upland forests, rare plants and animals.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning; minimal disturbance and development; control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DFW, DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Blue River Gravel Wash Barrens Nature Preserve HCV3 78 acres
This tract includes nearly 2 miles of river frontage along the Blue River. It contains floodplain forest, limestone cliffs, and gravel wash barrens. Rare species include *Baptisia australis*, *Asplenium rutamuraria*, and *Vitis rapestris*.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in the Master Plan – prescribed burning, control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance, and development.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DFW, DNP, and DoF.

Greenbrier Knob Nature Preserve HCV3 144.2 acres
Limestone cliffs, Blue River gravel wash, rare plants.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning, control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance, and development.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

County Line Glades Nature Preserve HCV1 & HCV3 84.6 acres
Limestone barrens, dry upland forest, rare plants.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning, control of noxious weeds, minimal disturbance and development.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

Jackson-Washington State Forest

Indian Bitter Nature Preserve HCV1 35 acres
Dry-mesic Upland forest, mesic upland forest, cucumber magnolia.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – remove competing vegetation around cucumber magnolia.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Knobstone Glades Nature Preserve HCV3 60 acres
Siltstone glades, xeric, dry and dry-mesic upland forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning; minimal disturbance and development; control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Martin State Forest

Henshaw Bend Nature Preserve HCV3 77 acres
High quality mesic upland forest, river bluffs.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning; minimal disturbance and development; control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.
No known public comments received.

Tank Spring Nature Preserve HCV3 60 acres
Mesic upland forest, sandstone cliffs, prominent spring.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – prescribed burning; minimal disturbance and development; control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring

will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Morgan-Monroe State Forest

Scout Ridge Nature Preserve HCV3 14.5 acres
Old growth beech maple forest

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Sweedy Hollow Nature Preserve HCV2 150.1 acres
Mesic, dry-mesic and dry upland forest; mesic floodplain forest; sandstone cliff communities

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Low Gap Nature Preserve HCV3 320 acres
Mesic, dry-mesic and dry upland forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Ravinia Seeps Nature Preserve HCV1 52.4 acres
Mesic upland forest with groundwater-fed seeps and open sedge meadow prairie fens, rare species.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in the Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

Owen Putnam State Forest

Pleasant Grove Nature Preserve HCV1 64.2 acres
Seep springs and sandstone cliffs.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.
Joint management by Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

Section Nine Seep Springs Nature Preserve HCV1 46.72 acres
Upland forest with seep springs.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through the periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

Yellowwood State Forest

Crooked Creek Nature Preserve HCV1 35 acres
Yellowwood tree, mesic and dry-mesic forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Miller Ridge Nature Preserve HCV1 30.6 acres
Yellowwood tree, mesic, dry-mesic and dry upland forest

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF. No known public comments received.

Lucas Hollow Nature Preserve HCV3 42.78 acres
High quality mesic upland forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment buffer considerations, control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.

Yellowwood Conservation Area HCV1 & HCV3 591 acres
State endangered yellowwood tree, mesic and dry-mesic forest.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain yellowwood tree described in the Yellowwood Restoration and Recovery Management Guide.

Management by the Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DoF.

Covered Bridge State Forest

Coal Hollow Nature Preserve HCV1 & HCV3 153.05 acres
Sandstone canyon, hemlock groves, and mesic upland forests.

Prescribed management to enhance or maintain described in Master Plan – minimal disturbance and development, control of noxious weeds.

Joint management by the Division of Nature Preserves and Division of Forestry. Monitoring will be performed through periodic inspection by DNP and DoF.