

Indiana Classified Forest Certified Group

High Conservation Value Forest Assessment & Management Summary

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry



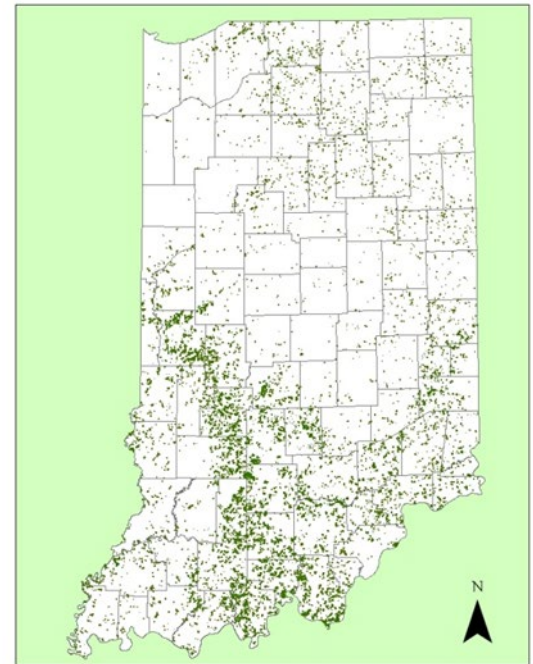
November 12, 2017

Indiana Classified Forest Certified Group (ICFCG)

The Indiana Classified Forest Certified Group (ICFCG) is a subset of landowners and land enrolled in the Classified Forest & Wildlands Program. The classified program is a conservation program that gives enrolled landowners a property tax break in return for managing their land for timber, wildlife habitat, and water quality. In order to be eligible for inclusion in the ICFCG, the Classified Forest & Wildlands tract must contain a minimum of 10 acres of forest. As of November 2017, ICFCG consisted of 7,489 landowners and 501,383 acres of forest. The average tract is just over 50 acres of forest. Management intensity on group tracts is typically light.

The Indiana Classified Forest Certified Group is committed to managing enrolled lands to the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) standards and policies. ICFCG has been certified through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC-C071226) since 2010. The Division of Forestry holds the group certificate and serves as the group's administrator. Landowners are the group members and are responsible for implementing the FSC certification standards and policies on their classified forests.

Distribution of Indiana Classified Forest Certified Group Tracts



High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF)

High Conservation Value Forests are forests that include and are managed for one or more high conservation values (HCV) as identified in Principle 9 of the FSC-US Management Standard:

1. HCV forest areas 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 an abundance;
3. HCV forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems;
4. HCV forest areas that provide basic services 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 (area of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

Identification of High Conservation Value Forests within the ICFCG

FSC provides guidance on identification of HCVF through the High Conservation Value Forest Assessment Framework (<https://us.fsc.org/preview.fsc-us-hcvf-assessment-framework.a-190.pdf>). The assessment

framework has been used to aid in the identification of ICFCG tracts containing HCVF. HCVF forests can also be identified during field visits by Division of Forestry staff. The Indiana Division of Forestry maintains a secure online database (INFRMS) of all lands enrolled in the Classified Forest & Wildlands Program including ICFCG lands. Presence of HCVF is reported on the tract records within INFRMS. Individual tract maps are also contained in the system. For the purposes of this assessment report, maps of HCVF will be at the state level or if a local scale with minimum detail to protect landowner privacy and to protect specific locations of rare, threatened and endangered species and special communities.

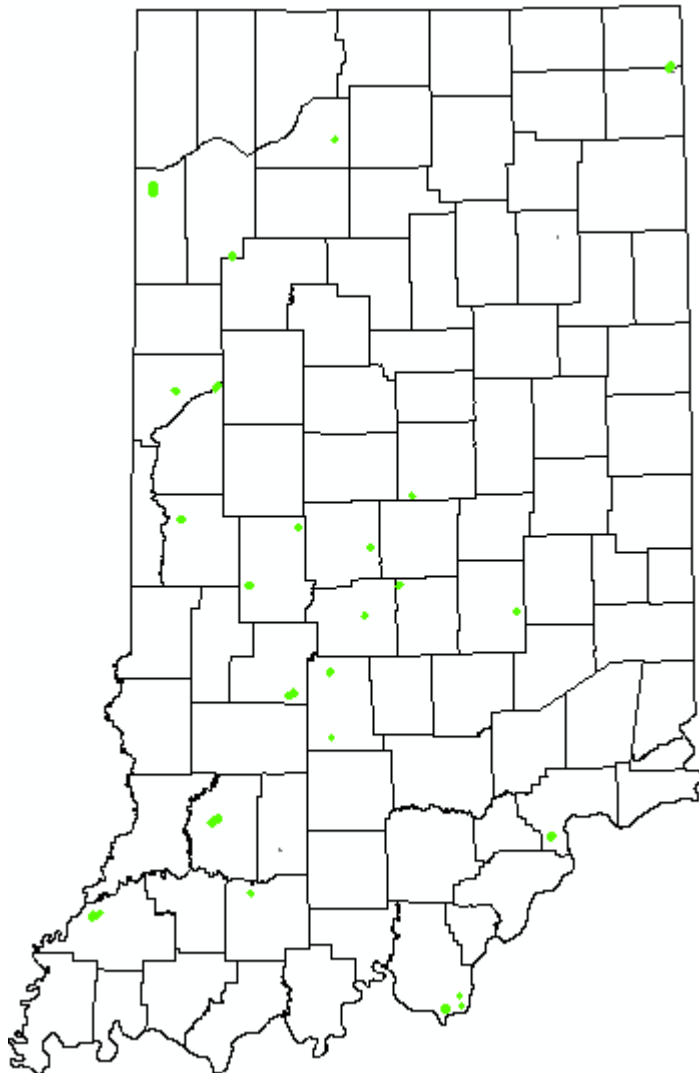
Management of High Conservation Value Forests within the ICFCG

High Conservation Value Forests are managed to protect and enhance the attribute(s) that led the forest to be identified as a type of HCVF. In this document, a management summary is included.

HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE 1: Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values.

High Conservation Value Forest Identified: 34 tracts, 5810 acres contains within the following nature preserves:

Amos Butler Heron Sanctuary
Beanblossom Bottoms NP
Bitternut Woods NP
Black Rock Barrens NP
Blue Bluff NP
Burnett Woods NP
Cedar Bluff NP
Chelsea Flatwoods NP
Conrad State NP
Douglas Woods NP
Douglas Woods NP
Fall Creek Gorge NP
Fern Cliff NP
Fischer Oak Savanna NP
Goose Pond Cypress Slough NP
Green's Bluff NP
Hemlock Ridge NP
Mayme Hinton Glade NP
Meltzer Woods
Mosquito Creek NP
Mossy Point NP
Ober Savanna NP
Plaster Creek Seeps NP
Saunders Woods NP
Teeple Glade NP
Thousand Acre Wood NP
Wening - Sherrit Seep Springs NP



Resources: Natural Heritage Database, Indiana Managed Lands GIS layer, INFRMS

Discussion: Considering that most of the land in the ICFCG is privately owned and in relatively small size of ICFCG tracts (average size 50 acres), the likelihood that the any given forest management unit is legally protected, being managed primarily for biodiversity at a large scale, or has significant concentrations of biodiversity values are low. Many of the biologically important lands have been identified and are owned by governmental agencies and are therefore not included within the certified group. However, there are ICFCG lands owned and managed by conservation non-profits that are dedicated as State Nature Preserves. These are being identified as HCV1.

Management Summary: State Nature Preserves are managed in accordance with a Master Plan developed at the time of the dedication. The table below lists management activities allowed in the Master Plan. Master Plans provide details under what conditions that activity may occur. The Master Plan should be reference before any activity is conducted. All other plans developed for the Nature Preserve are subordinate to the Master Plan.

Name	Purpose	Boundary Work or Marking	Trail Construction-Maintenance	Native Wildlife Population Control	Erosion Control	Water Level Alteration for Restoration	Hazard Tree/Branch Felling	Noxious and Invasive Species Control	Prescribed Burning	Species Introduction or Reintroduction	Biotic Succession Control	Visitor Access Mgmt (Parking Lot(s))	Building & Grounds Maintenance
Amos Butler Heron Sanctuary													
Beanblossom Bottoms NP	Preserve and protect mesic floodplain forest, refuge for native plants & animals	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Bitternut Woods NP (Efroymsen Woods)	Purposes of the Nature Preserves Act	x	x		x		x	x*				x	
Black Rock Barrens NP	Maintain and or restore siltstone barrens, mixed dry upland forest, floodplain forest	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Blue Bluff NP	Purposes of the Nature Preserves Act	x	x		x		x	x*				x	
Burnett Woods NP	Central Till Plain flatwoods, rare species	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Cedar Bluff NP	Purposes of the Nature Preserves Act	x	x		x		x	x*				x	

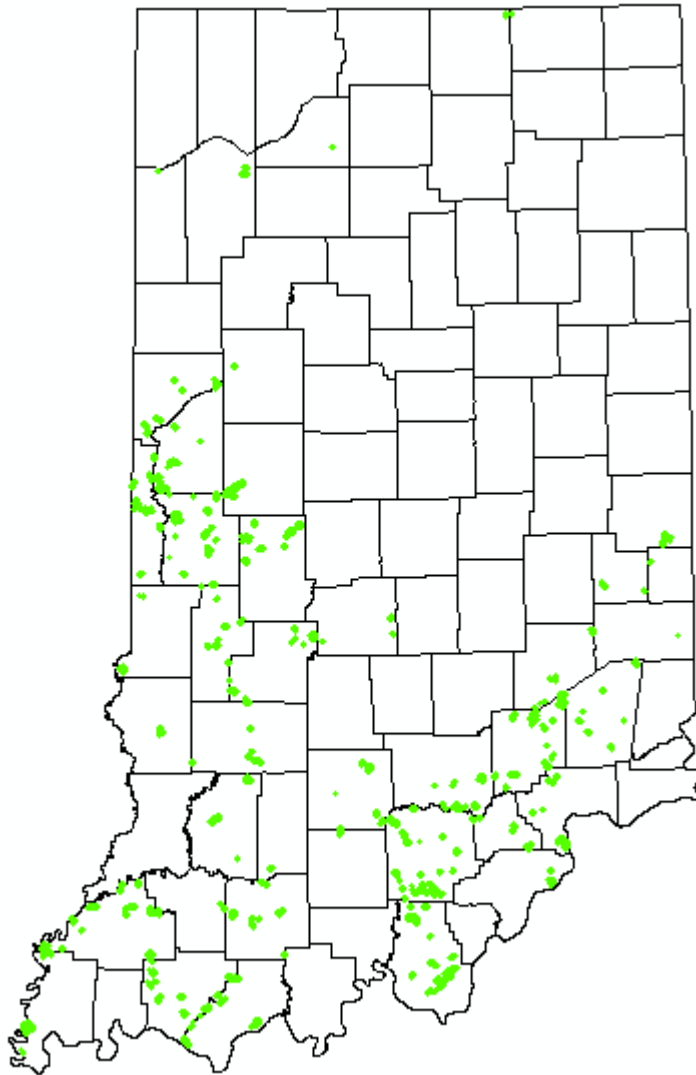
Name	Purpose	Boundary Work or Marking	Trail Construction-Maintenance	Native Wildlife Population Control	Erosion Control	Water Level Alteration for Restoration	Hazard Tree/Branch Felling	Noxious and Invasive Species Control	Prescribed Burning	Species Introduction or Reintroduction	Biotic Succession Control	Visitor Access Mgmt (Parking Lot(s))	Building & Grounds Maintenance
Chelsea Flatwoods NP	Preserve and protect a large, high quality Bluegrass Till Plain Flatwoods plant community	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Conrad State NP	Restore & maintain the black oak sand savanna	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Douglas Woods NP	Protect woodlands and watershed and streambed of Fish Creek	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Douglas Woods NP	Protect the woodlands and the watershed and streambed of Fish Creek	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Fall Creek Gorge NP	Purposes of the Nature Preserves Act	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x	
Fern Cliff NP	Protect & restore to natural conditions the sandstone ravine and cliff communities and their associated forest communities	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x	x

Name	Purpose	Boundary Work or Marking	Trail Construction-Maintenance	Native Wildlife Population Control	Erosion Control	Water Level Alteration for Restoration	Hazard Tree/Branch Felling	Noxious and Invasive Species Control	Prescribed Burning	Species Introduction or Reintroduction	Biotic Succession Control	Visitor Access Mgmt (Parking Lot(s))	Building & Grounds Maintenance
Saunders Woods NP	Maintain bottomland hardwood forest	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Teeple Glade NP	Protect and enhance glade plant communities and rare plants contained within	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Thousand Acre Wood NP	Protect and preserve large wet floodplain forest community	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Wening - Sherrit Seep Springs NP	Protect and preserve an acidic seep wetland community with associated rare plants.	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x			

* Noxious weeds only

HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE 2: 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.

High Conservation Value Forest Identified: 617 tracts; 43,597 acres part of an intact forest block in an agriculturally dominated landscape.



Resources: Cover type maps, Division of Forestry Wildlife Biologist

Discussion: The Division of Forestry identified ICFCG tracts within intact forest blocks (>740 acres) in agriculturally dominated portions of the state. Based on forest breeding bird studies, a forest patch greater than 740 acres is large enough to provide habitat for most forest species. 740 acres and greater would provide suitable habitat for more than 70% of the forest breeding bird species in Midwestern fragmented forests (and, presumably, other taxa). Even the most area- sensitive forest bird species would find at least “moderately suitable” habitat.

Management Summary: The objective for management for tracts within intact forest blocks in agriculturally dominated portions of Indiana is to maintain the land as forest and prevent conversion. The following management activities are appropriate as recommended in individual management plans:

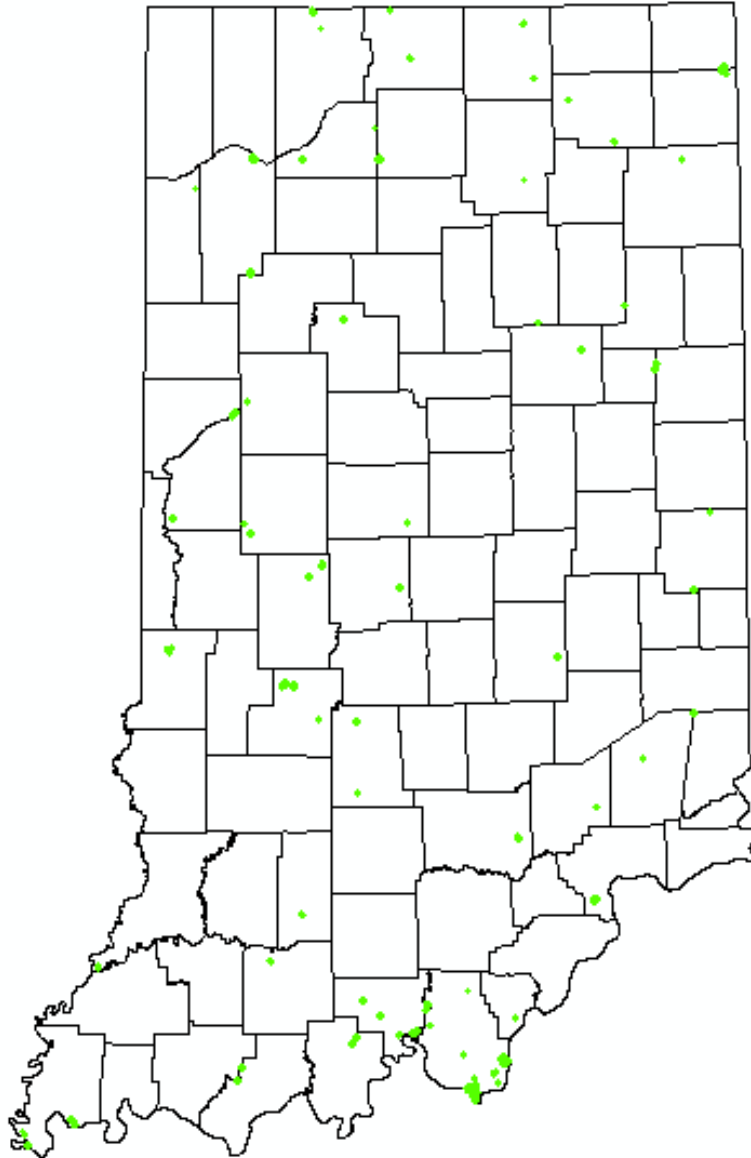
- Boundary/Survey work
- Erosion control
- Integrated pest management
- Prescribed burning
- Timber harvest
- Timber stand improvement
- Trail/Access Road maintenance
- Tree planting
- Trespass prevention/management
- Wildlife brush pile construction
- Wildlife food plots (small scale)
- Wildlife population control (hunting/trapping)
- Wildlife waterholes
- Other activities that promote forest development and forest health

HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE 3: Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.

High Conservation Value Forest Identified:

S1, S2 Communities: 109 Tracts; 10,110 acres

Community



Old Growth Forest: *Type 1:* 1 tract, 48.1 acres; *Type 2:* none currently identified

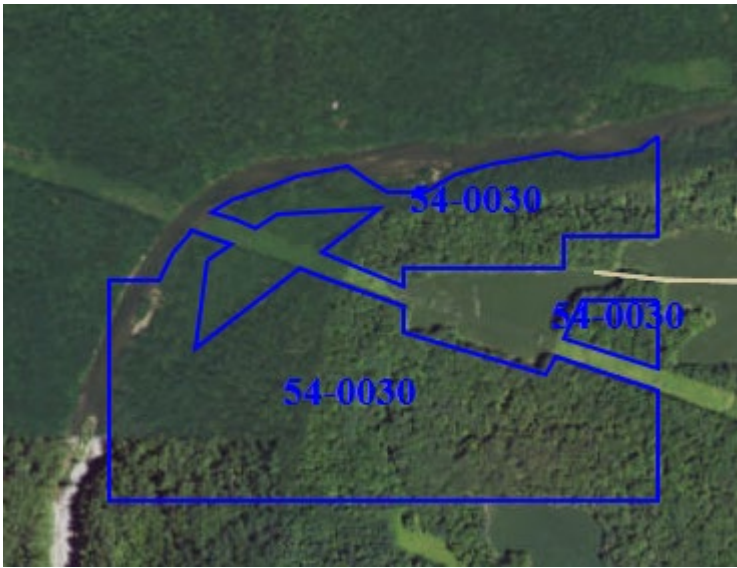


Meltzer Woods, Type 1 Old Growth,
Shelby County, Indiana

Hemlock: 6 tracts; 432 Acres



Tract 1
Hemlock Ridge Nature Preserve,
Putnam County, Indiana
48.76 Acres



Tract 2
Montgomery County, Indiana
121.4 Acres



Tract 3
Montgomery County, Indiana
161 Acres



Tract 4
Montgomery County, Indiana
40 Acres



Tract 5
Montgomery County, Indiana
37 Acres



Tract 6
Montgomery County, Indiana
23.5 Acres

Resources: Natural Heritage Database, Indiana Classified Forest & Wildlands Program, Division of Nature Preserves' Staff

Discussion:

Roadless areas: "Roadless areas" as defined in the framework guidance is not applicable for Indiana.

Old Growth: During the late 19th century and early 20th century 94% of Indiana's forests were cleared. The limited areas of Type 1 have been identified. One tract within the ICFCG contains Type1 old growth. There is potential for Type 2 old growth as the second growth forests begin to age. Type 2 old growth will be identified during field reviews. There are several know properties with type 2 in the Classified Forest & Wildlands Program, but they are not currently in the ICFCG.

RTE Ecosystems: Used S1 and S2 communities from the Natural Heritage Database that occurred on ICFCG tracts. Other ecosystems identified for inclusion are hemlock forests and pine stands of native origin in northern Indiana. Hemlock: Considering the national threat to hemlock by wooly adelgid and the fact that hemlock only occurs in disjunct populations in Indiana, areas where it occurs should be considered HCV and managed for the hemlock component. Pine: The counties bordering Lake Michigan are within the range of white pine and jack pine. Much of the forest in this area has been converted or is highly fragmented. Any remaining naturally occurring stands of pine should be managed to maintain them on the landscape. Hemlock and pine will be identified during field visits. Acreage reflects tract acreage not necessarily the area covered by the community.

Management Summary: The objective for management for HCVF 3 tracts is to protect and enhance the community identified.

The following management activities are appropriate for all HCVF 3 as recommended in individual management plans:

- Boundary/Survey work
- Erosion control
- Integrated pest management
- Trespass prevention/management

Additional management notes by HCVF 3 community type:

Old Growth

- Avoidance

Hemlock

- Monitor for wooly adelgid
- Deer population control
- In general avoidance of hemlock areas, particularly on steep slopes is recommended. If areas where hemlock regeneration is a concern single tree selection, small group openings, or timber stand improvement focusing on removal of hardwoods. Regeneration is dependent on balance of sunlight/shade, moisture retention, and soil disturbance.

Barrens

- Successional management – 90% + open condition desired
- Prescribed fire

Flatwoods

- Plan timber harvest during dry season

Lake

- Restoration of hydrology /prevention of hydrologic disruptions
- Erosion control to prevent sedimentation
- Nutrient management in watershed

Prairie

- Successional management – open conditions desired
- Prescribed fire
- Mowing
- Strip disking but not on relict areas

Gravel Wash

- Successional management – open conditions desired
- Avoidance during management in surrounding habitats

Savanna

- Prescribed fire
- Mowing
- Successional management

Wetland

- Restoration of hydrology /prevention of hydrologic disruptions
- Erosion control to prevent sedimentation
- Successional management as determined by wetland type
- Avoidance of wetland during management in surrounding habitats

HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE 4: Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations.

High Conservation Value Forest Identified: None

Resources: None

Discussion: The Division of Forestry considers all forests in the state to be part of a water supply watershed-either as surface water or ground water regeneration. No critical situations identified. All lands in the program are managed for water quality.

HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE 5: Forest area fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities.

High Conservation Value Forest Identified: None

Resources: Division of Forestry Archaeologist, Communications with Native American Tribes

Discussion: In general, forests in Indiana are not used to provide 'basic human needs' as defined in the framework. The Department of Natural Resources has contacted the federally recognized tribes that have expressed interested in Indiana and also attends Native American Indiana Affairs Commission meeting. Except for letters to express thanks for contacting, no other input regarding ICFCG lands have been received. If a request was received from a tribe, the Division of Forestry would consider the area for HCVF.

HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE 6: Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity

High Conservation Value Forest Identified: None

Resources: Division of Forestry Archaeologist, Communications with Native American Tribes

Discussion: The Department of Natural Resources has contacted the federally recognized tribes that have expressed interested in Indiana and also attends Native American Indiana Affairs Commission meeting. Except for letters to express thanks for contacting, no other input regarding ICFCG lands have been received. If a request was received from a tribe, the Division of Forestry would consider the area for HCVF.

Indiana laws regarding archeological and cultural sites are very protective. The Division of Forestry cannot have access to information on specific resources on private lands.