

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 4:04:23 PM

First name: Kasi

Last name: Spyker-Duncan

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I support the protection and restoration of significantly more old growth forest, both in the Hoosier National Forest (HNF) and elsewhere, via natural management method, i.e., allowing the forest to grow naturally, and I oppose the use of "thinning" (selective logging) and burning as management methods, which does not allow for the true regeneration of old growth forest conditions. We need to allow forests to recover on their own and watch/research how they will adapt over time without significant human interventions.

While fire is a natural management method elsewhere in the country, there is no evidence to support the idea the fire was a natural part of woodland management in this region/state. Additionally, other than the removal of invasive and dangerous species, logging (even selective thinning) will not help return old growth forest conditions. As we have monitored and observed more about forests and woodland in recent decades, especially about older trees and forests, we continue to learn significantly more about the best management of old growth forests, and the same old methods of logging and burning need not apply. Further monitoring as the older sections of the HNF continue to mature, undisturbed, is needed.