

Stewardship Notes

Indiana Division of Forestry



Indiana's Old Growth Forests

What is Old Growth?

Definitions for “old growth” and “virgin” forests often differ from state to state. In Indiana, virgin forests are those untouched by human presence or unnatural disturbance. Only a few virgin forests are found in Indiana, including Donaldson Woods, Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest and Wesselman Woods. There are several tracts of what is considered old growth forest. These tracts of woods contain trees that are very large and very old; a hardwood forest in Indiana that contains trees 150 to 200 years old and older is often considered an old growth forest.

Visiting Old Growth Forests

The tracts listed here are owned by city, county, state and federal government agencies, and are open to the public. Please respect our enduring old growth forests by leaving nothing but footprints, and taking nothing but pictures.

Listed along with each nature preserve is a contact for more information. For information about other nature preserves, or for maps and locations of these old growth forests, contact: Division of Nature Preserves
402 W. Washington St. Room W267
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-4052

Bendix Woods Nature Preserve

27 acres located within Bendix Woods County Park. Old growth woods dominated by beech and sugar maple. Owned by: St. Joseph County Park and Recreation Board, 50651 Laurel Road, South Bend, IN 46637 (219) 277-4828.

Calvert & Porter Woods Nature Preserve

40 acres of one of the highest quality old growth woods in the state. Very large trees some over 60" in diameter. Located in Montgomery County; access is by permission only. Contact the Division of Nature Preserves.

Dogwood Nature Preserve

A 20-acre tract of old growth hardwoods located within

Versailles State Park. Contact Versailles State Park, Box 205, Versailles, IN 47042, (812) 689-6424.

Donaldson's Woods Nature Preserve

Found in Spring Mill State Park, 67 acres of old growth woods recognized as one of the most impressive stands of original forest in Indiana. Contact Spring Mill State Park, P.O. Box 367, Mitchell, IN 47446, (812) 849-4129.

Hemmer Woods Nature Preserve

Located near Buckskin in Gibson County, this 73-acre stand of old growth woods is also a National Natural Landmark. Owned by the Division of Nature Preserves.

McClue Nature Preserve

This 80-acre area is managed by volunteers under the authority of the Steuben County Commissioners. Includes some of the best old growth forest in northeast Indiana. Contact: McClue Reserve, c/o Pokagon State Park, 450 Lane 100, Lake James, Angola, IN 46703 (219) 833-2012.

Pine Hills Nature Preserve

The rugged hills and deep gorges of this 480-acre tract contain remnants of white pine, hemlock and Canada yew left from the time of the last glacier. Located near Shades State Park. Contact Shades State Park, Waveland, IN 47989 (317) 435-2810.

Rocky Hollow Falls Canyon Nature Preserve

1,609 acres located in Turkey Run State Park. The forested upland and terraces along Sugar Creek are covered with old growth forest. Contact: Turkey Run State Park, Marshall, IN 47859 (317) 597-2635.

Shrader-Weaver Nature Preserve

Part of this 96-acre preserve is an old growth upland forest. Located near Bentonville in Fayette County. Contact the Division of Nature Preserves.

Wells Woods Nature Preserve

An impressive 20-acre tract of old growth forest in Jennings County in southeastern Indiana. There is no parking area or trail system for this preserve. Contact the Division of Nature Preserves.

Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve

The City of Evansville owns this high-quality, 197-acre tract of old growth lowland forest. The interior of the woods has been protected for many years. Contact: Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve, 551 N. Boeke Rd. Evansville, IN 47711, (812) 479-0771.

For more information about forestry and forest management in Indiana, contact:

Division of Forestry
402 W. Washington St. Room W296
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-4105