

Clark State Forest & Deam Lake State Recreation Area

Property Overview

Founded in 1903, Clark State Forest is the oldest State Forest in Indiana. The property encompasses 25,589 acres and is managed under a multi-uses multiple benefits philosophy which provides many recreational opportunities while actively managing the forest. The property offers several lakes, shelters, historic features, camping (family and equestrian), and over 60 miles of multipurpose trails. Six Knobstone trailheads are located within the boundaries of Clark State Forest, proving access to Indiana's largest footpath and backpacking trail.

Deam Lake SRA is a modern recreational facility named in honor of Charles Deam, Indiana's first state forester. The property is anchored by a 194-acre lake and carved from the larger Clark State Forest.



Deam Lake SRA offers both family and equestrian camping, as well as rent-a-camp cabins. All sites offer electric. Equestrian sites have the option of sites with hitching post or a horse stall. All sites and cabins can be reserved online at [Camp.IN.gov](https://www.in.gov/camp).

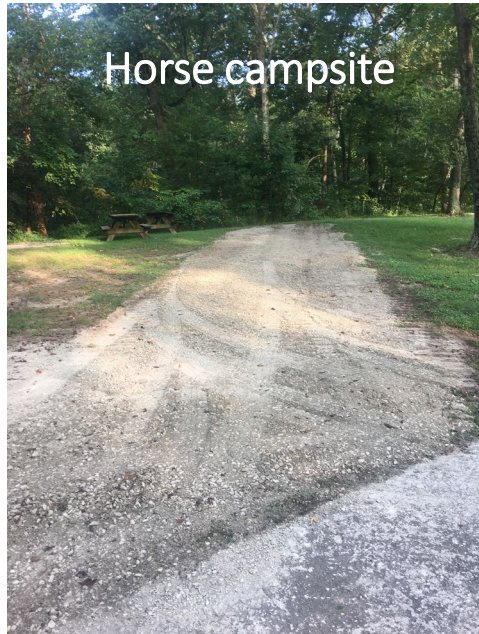
Between Memorial Day and Labor day, users can enjoy swimming at the large sandy beach, renting a rowboat or kayak, ice-cream from concessions, or learning about natural resource at the Forest Education Center.

Other amenities include playgrounds, hiking trails, boat ramp, shelters, and picnic areas.



Completed Projects

- A large portion of the Deam Lake loop trail was widened, graded, and stone added.
- An equestrian group of volunteers made improvements to the equestrian campground at Clark State Forest. The volunteers shaped and placed gravel on various camping pads as well as the hitching post areas.
- The baseball backstop in the field at the entrance of Clark State Forest was entirely replaced. The second backstop is in the process of being replaced.



In Progress Projects



- New property signs will be installed at both Clark State Forest and Deam Lake SRA to improve appearance and navigation throughout each property. Most of the signs for Clark have been routed, painted, and delivered to the property. Installation will begin in early spring at Clark.

- Taylor Road is currently under construction. This road on the Clark State Forest is made available to those with hunting limitation. Road improvements are expected to allow for greater use and access to the area. The remainder of road improvements will be completed once weather and soil conditions allow.



Taylor Road

In Progress Projects

Clark State Forest – New Family Campground

Construction of a new family campground is underway at Clark State Forest. The main road network for the campground is being constructed and progress on the comfort station continues. This campground will offer 35 sites with electricity and 18 rent a camp cabins. This location will provide a better camping experience than the current family campground, with less noise from I-65.

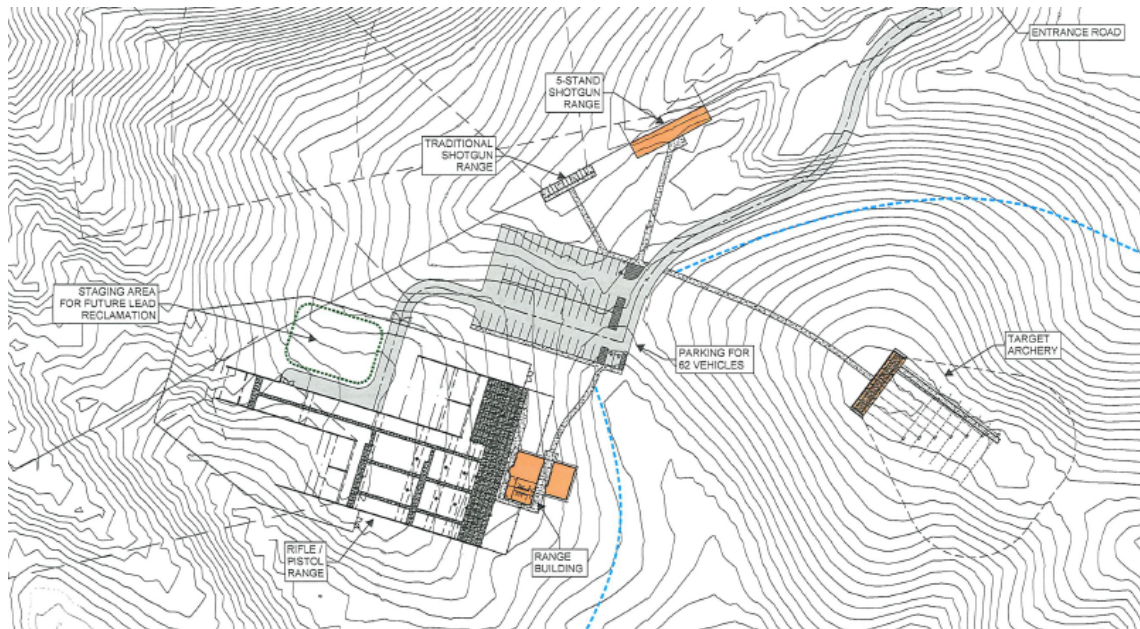


The comfort station viewed from the first cleared road.



New campground layout.

New Gun Range



The footprint for the new gun range has been determined. Various aspects of the process have been completed. A few preliminary steps remain before on the ground construction begins. We anticipate the start of construction in 2021.

The new gun range will accommodate shooters of all ages and skills. Options will range from pistol, rifle, shotgun, and archery. Management of the range will be through a concessionaire contract. This will always ensure the presence of a range master while the range is in operation. It will also provide customers the opportunity to purchase various shooting supplies and equipment during their visit.

Access to the shooting range will be off Winding road, through Clark State Forest.

At this time, the current gun range will remain open until construction of the new range is complete.

Upcoming Projects

- The Jackson Trailhead for the Knobstone Trail will receive improvements in 2021. Jackson road will be widened knocking back the encroaching vegetation, road graded, and new gravel added. A vista will be installed to allow the view of the surrounding landscape which is a young forest developing following the March 2012 tornado.
- Deam Lake SRA is in the early planning phase of constructing a wetland wastewater area and decommissioning the current wastewater treatment facility located below the dam. This project will reduce annual costs and improve the view below the dam.
- The floor will be replaced in the White Oak Center at Clark State Forest. A leak damaged the existing floor. This building was part of the original Purdue Forestry summer practicum and used as a study hall by students living at Clark State Forest during the summer. Students would receive hands on experience with forest management. This building is used by state personnel and can be rented by the public.
- Deam Lake SRA will have the windows replaced in all six (6) comfort stations located in the campground. Some additional exterior rehab will occur as well.
- The shelter located at the entrance of the campground at Deam Lake SRA will be replaced and made accessible.
- Trail and boardwalk improvement between Beach parking lot, nature center, and boat ramp.
- Roadside clean up and brushing back at both Deam Lake SRA and Clark State Forest.

“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.”

This stewardship is often achieved by means of timber sales, timber stand improvement (TSI), invasive species management, and prescribed burns.

Pictured on the right is a white pine conversion currently taking place on the Clark State Forest. As State Forest lands were acquired, conifers were planted in bare, depleted, and eroding soils. The conifers have done their job of replenishing and stabilizing the soils. In many cases the planted conifers are declining, thus the need to regenerate these areas. By harvesting the conifers (clearcutting/regeneration openings), we’re allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor to stimulate the regeneration of native hardwoods.



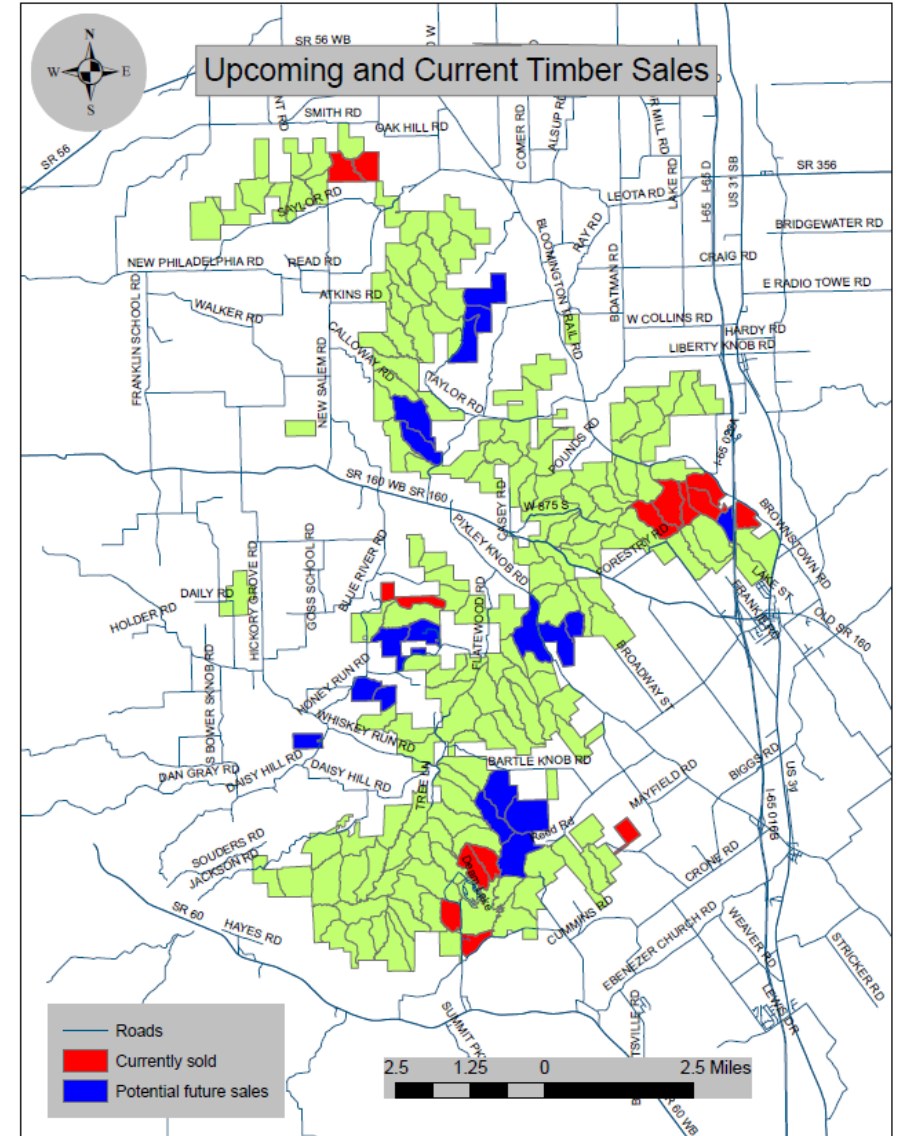
Timber Sales

The map to the right shows the location of tracts where trees have already been sold (RED). Tracts in BLUE are scheduled to be marked in the next 1-2 years.

There are currently ten (10) timber sale contracts for Clark State Forest. These contracts are for two years.



A small pile of intermediate and suppressed trees removed in the first harvest stage of an oak shelterwood.



Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)

The three most common types of timber stand improvement (TSI) performed on Clark State Forest are: pre-harvest TSI, regeneration opening completion, and post-harvest TSI. Pre-harvest may be vine or invasive control, or even mid-story removal.

We use midstory removal to reduce the abundance of shade tolerant stems in a stand. This allows additional sunlight to reach the ground to facilitate growth and increased ground cover diversity. We commonly perform midstory removals in the preparatory stage of a shelterwood harvest. Midstory removals are often performed with two methods: basal spraying or a cut stump method. Whether the trees are cut down or remain standing, the stems are treated with an herbicide to prevent resprouting.

When a regeneration opening is harvested, some of the non merchantable trees within the opening may be left. It is important to remove these trees to allow maximum sunlight into the opening to encourage regeneration.

Following a timber harvest, often marked trees remain. These trees may be girdled or felled during post-harvest TSI to improve spacing or light. Crop trees that were not sufficiently released during the harvest, can be aided in this way.



The stems on the left were cut and treated with an herbicide application. The tree on the right was treated with a basal bark application method.

Invasive Species Management

An important aspect of forest management in the Midwest is managing the invasive species. The most common species at Clark State Forest include Asian bush honeysuckle, oriental privet, oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, winged burning bush, Japanese stiltgrass, Amur cork tree, and Ailanthus.

Control is accomplished through a combination of foliar spray and cut stump. These treatments are often performed in successive years to manage resprouts. Invasive management is often done prior to and after a timber harvest.



Chuck Bergeron, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

Asian bush honeysuckle fruiting.



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Privet flowering



James H. Miller & Ted Bodner, Southern Weed Science Society, Bugwood.org

Stiltgrass becoming established



James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

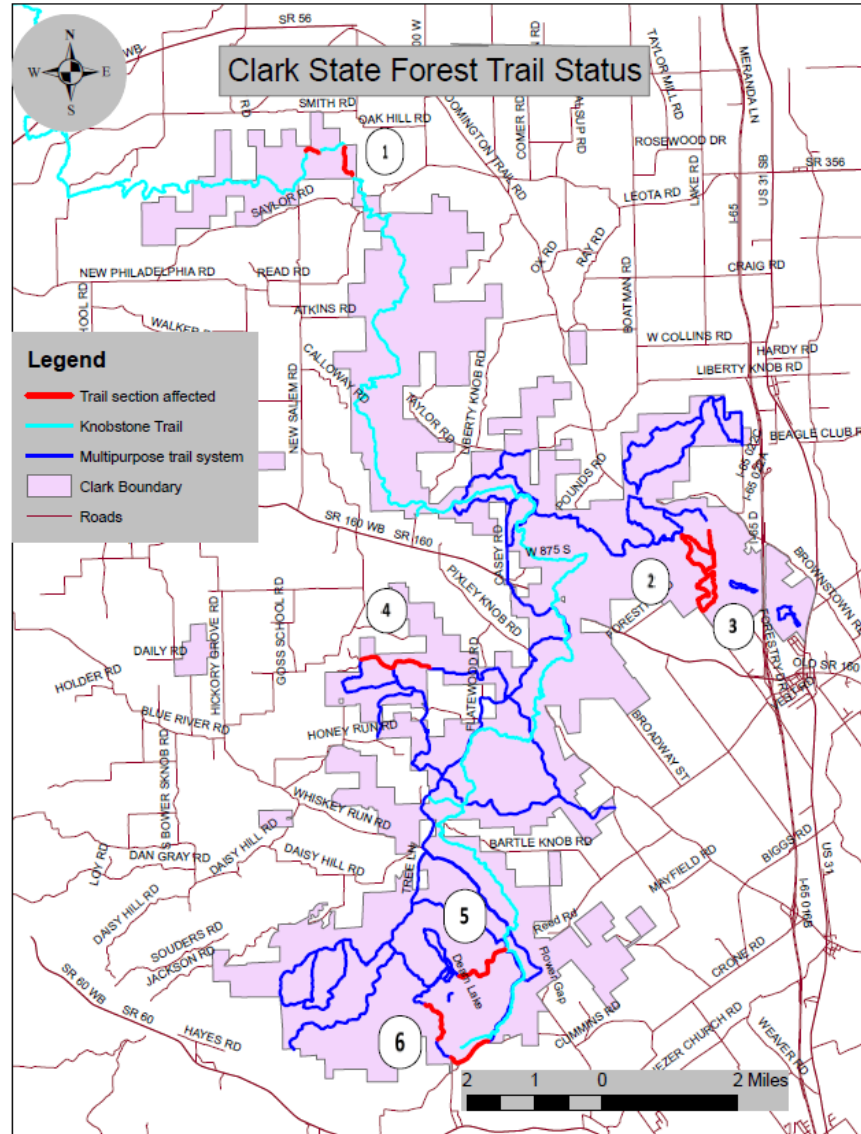
Oriental bittersweet

Trail Closures

Clark State Forest provides over sixty miles of multipurpose trails. The Knobstone trail is Indiana's longest footpath with 33 miles interior to Clark.

When active forest management occurs, sections of trails may require temporary closure or rerouting for public safety.

The map (pictured) shows sections of trail (RED) that may require closure/ rerouting in 2021-2022.



Possible Closure or Rerouting Sections

- 1: This section of the Knobstone Trail will be rerouted during a timber harvest. The trail will retake its original path once harvesting is complete.
- 2: This section of multipurpose trail will be closed for the duration of a timber harvest. The rest of the trail system will remain accessible from the north end of the horse campground.
- 3: We anticipate the beginner's loop to reopen next year.
- 4: This stretch of trail will be closed in two sections due to a timber harvest.
- 5: This section of the Deam Lake loop will be closed for a timber harvest. The trail section will only be closed between November and April, while sale is active.
- 6: These two sections of trail will be closed through the week and open on the weekends.

Fire has been present on the landscape since the arrival of the first peoples in North America. Native Americans commonly used fire to influence their landscape to help with agriculture, hunting, and making woodlands easier to travel by having less brush. In the early 1900s, we went through a period where fire was viewed as the enemy of nature and put it out wherever it was found. It was not until the end of that century that we realized a lot of the natural systems we love in Indiana evolved with fire and require it to thrive.

Today, we use prescribed fire (fire in a controlled setting administered by professionals) to maintain and enhance our oak forests. When used under the right circumstances, it can lower the density of shade intolerant species like beech and maple, which shade the forest floor, and remove leaf litter and expose soil creating a growing surface for plants, release nutrients, and lower fuel loads to help minimize the risk of wildfires.

Prescribed fire is not widely used on state forests, but without it we will likely see a reduction in our oak forests. Where possible and weather permitting, we try to burn sites where we have an oak presence with shade intolerant midstories. We target areas we anticipate a harvest as a preharvest treatment to lower understory maple and beech densities or as a post harvest treatment to influence plant communities as well as lower fuel levels after a cutting. Fire is also commonly used to help maintain oaks and hickories in shelterwood cuts. Trail closures due to a prescribed fire are normally brief, lasting a day or two.

Prescribed Fire



Photo by Purdue Department of Forestry and Natural Resources