



STATE OF INDIANA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State House, Second Floor
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Mike Braun
Governor

February 6, 2025

Chief Randy Moore
United States Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Chief Moore:

Since assuming office, the Trump Administration has demonstrated a seriousness about re-evaluating decisions of its predecessors in order to achieve optimal results for the American people. With this in mind, I write to ask the United States Forest Service (USFS) to immediately withdraw the Buffalo Springs Restoration Project in the Hoosier National Forest. This Project will log 5,000 acres and burn more than 15,500 acres of public national forest land between Paoli, French Lick, and English. As an avid outdoorsman, I know these areas firsthand.

The Project area is treasured by Hoosiers and recreationists alike. It contains Tucker Lake and the popular Springs Valley, Youngs Creek and Lick Creek Trails. Its forests are a favorite destination for horseback riders, hikers, mushroom foragers, hunters and campers. Many Hoosiers have voiced concerns that these resources and their enjoyment of the area will be harmed by the Project. What's more, the Orange and Crawford County Commissioners and Paoli Town Council have unanimously passed resolutions opposing the Project.

I am also concerned by the level of logging and burning proposed on steep slopes that drain to Patoka Lake, some directly on the Lake's shoreline. These actions can threaten the drinking water supply of more than 100,000 Hoosiers and the entire local community.

Regrettably, the Biden USFS has failed to modify or change, in a meaningful manner, the basic components of the Project from its original proposal, and despite several public rounds of comments from the public requesting changes. Local residents and multiple organizations have presented several alternatives. These alternatives would promote and manage the area for the famed Buffalo Trace that crosses it, once the migrating path for thousands of buffalo, and site of the state's first frontier road, and land survey as well as many other historical and archaeological sites. Yet, all of these alternatives have been rebuffed.

As Governor of Indiana, I respectfully request that the USFS withdraw the Project, and that it instead focus on the completion of the long overdue Hoosier National Forest Management Plan. I thank you in advance for your consideration of this timely request.

Sincerely,

Governor Mike Braun