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Andrew O'Connor, District Forester  
5400 E Salamonie Forest Rd., Lagro, IN 46941  
Phone: (260) 782-0430 Email: [AOconnor@dnr.in.gov](mailto:AOconnor@dnr.in.gov)

December 30, 2024

NOBLE ACRES LLC  
C/o: Nikki Gilbert  
4728 N COUNTY ROAD 200 W  
ALBION, IN 46701

Dear Nikki,

Enclosed you will find the Stewardship Plan and Reinspection Report for your 30.50 acre property in Noble County, Indiana.

Please read the plan over and contact me with any questions you may have. Once you've read the plan over and approve it, please sign and date the "Acknowledgements" sheet and send it back to me. Signing this sheet does not commit you to any course of action; rather it simply states that the plan is acceptable to you and meets your current needs.

Also enclosed is a Customer Satisfaction Survey. Any information you can provide on how to improve our service to you or make it more useful will be greatly appreciated. Our goal is to provide useful information in an efficient and cost-effective manner and hope that your comments will lead to better service in the future.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Andrew O'Connor



## STEWARDSHIP PLAN & CLASSIFIED FOREST AND WILDLANDS REINSPECTION

Prepared for: NOBLE ACRES LLC  
C/o: Nikki Gilbert  
4728 N COUNTY ROAD 200 W  
ALBION, IN 46701

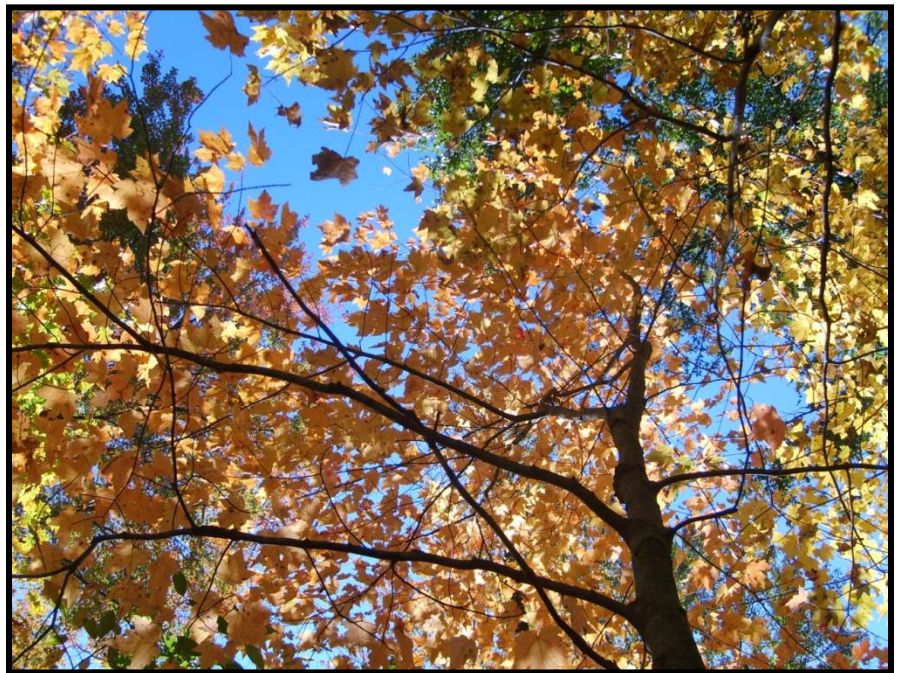
Date of this inspection:  
09/26/2024

Date of last inspection:  
04/23/2019

Green Certification  
Status: ELIGIBLE - Opted out

Was the landowner or  
his/her representative  
present for the  
reinspection? YES

Is corrective action  
required? NO



Section 01, T33N, R08E, Washington Township, Noble County  
30.50 Acres Classified Forest and Wildland  
Tract ID: 57-0047

### Mission Statement

**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 forestlands. This stewardship produces continuing benefits, both tangible and intangible, for present and future generations.**

Prepared by:  
Andrew O'Connor, District Forester  
5400 E Salamonie Forest Rd.  
Lagro, IN 64941  
260-782-0430  
[AOconnor@dnr.in.gov](mailto:AOconnor@dnr.in.gov)

Date Prepared: 12/30/2024  
Plan Expires after 10 Years

**The stewardship goals for this property are:**

- **To improve timber production**
- **To improve wildlife habitat**
- **To improve forest health**

## **PROPERTY OVERVIEW**

**PROPERTY ACCESS AND FOREST ROADS / TRAILS:** This property is accessible by parking along the east edge of CR 650 W right in the Classified tract. There is an existing trail system throughout the woods that is suitable for large machinery. Trails appear to be well-maintained.

**BOUNDARY MARKINGS:** This property is bordered by CR 650 W in the west, adjacent woodlands and wildlands in the north, and agricultural ground in the south and east. Some old fencing marks

A new Indiana law went into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2018 that may help you mark your property boundaries more efficiently to prevent trespassing. The “Purple Paint Law” is found in Indiana Code IC 35-43-2-2 and stipulates that appropriately applied purple paint can be used to mark your property with the same legal effect as using No Trespassing signs. You can find more information about this subject at

<https://www.purdue.edu/fnr/extension/what-can-you-do-with-purple-paint/>

**TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS:** This property is flat to gently rolling with slopes of 0-18% throughout. The most prevalent soil on site is a Glynwood silt loam that is moderately well drained and doesn't flood or pond frequently. The second most common soil is a Morley silty clay loam found in the SE part of the property that is moderately well drained and doesn't flood or pond frequently. The southern part of the property has a Wallkill silt loam that is very poorly drained and ponds frequently. Beneath 24" of depth in this soils there is muck. All soils on site are suitable for the growth of high-quality timber aside from the Wallkill silt loam. See the attached soils map for more information.

**WATER RESOURCES:** Forest and natural areas like this one are extremely good at filtering pollutants (fertilizers, pesticides, sediment, etc.) from flowing water. They also do a great job holding the soil in place along streams and on steep slopes. This prevents severe erosion and loss of your topsoil. By following basic Best Management Practices (BMP's), you can reduce the amount of pollutants and sediments entering nearby streams and rivers. BMPs are especially important during timber harvesting operations. For more information on BMPs, go to [www.DNR.in.gov/forestry](http://www.DNR.in.gov/forestry).

**PAST USE OF PROPERTY:** Historically, this area was likely grazed. The property was classified in 1947. This was a Purdue Demonstration Forest. IN 1968, a harvest of 18,000 Bd.Ft. was completed by Wayne Moore. IN 1972, Larry Lichtsinn marked 50,719 Bd.Ft. that was sold to Wayne Moore. In 1979, a salvage cut of 3,800 Bd.Ft. of pallet logs were sold to Naugler-Titus Mill in Wolf Lake. In 1980, 163 trees with 70,800 Bd.Ft. were sold to Wayne Moore. In 1981, 150 trees with 59,475 Bd.Ft. were sold to Moore Logging. In 2002, 26 logs with 3,350 Bd.Ft. were sold to Shipshewana Hardwoods. In 2006, 109 trees with 43,400 Bd.Ft. were marked by Chris Egolf and sold to Lakeside Lumber Mill of Middlebury. In more recent history, a harvest was done in 2019. It has largely been left to grow since then. The property is hunted.

**PREHISTORIC & HISTORIC FEATURES:** Most land parcels within the State of Indiana may be environmentally suitable to contain archaeological deposits but have not been investigated in order to verify the presence or absence of cultural deposits. Indiana Code 14-21-1 provides protection to archaeological sites and cemeteries on both private and public land by prohibiting digging anywhere with the intent to recover artifacts and disturbing the ground within 100 ft. of a cemetery without an approved plan from the IDNR – Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. In addition, if archaeological artifacts (an object made or modified prior to 1870), features (non-portable evidence of human occupations, such as a well), or human remains are uncovered during ground disturbing activities, state law requires that the discovery must be reported to the Department of Natural Resources within two (2) business days. Landowners who need to report archaeological sites or who are interested in learning more about cultural sites should contact the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology at 402 W. Washington St., Rm. W274, Indianapolis, IN 46204, 317-232-1646, [dhpa@dnr.in.gov](mailto:dhpa@dnr.in.gov), or at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/index.htm>.

**UNIQUE ANIMALS, PLANTS, & HABITATS:** The DNR Natural Heritage Data Center is a program designed to track Indiana's special plants, animals, and natural communities. It was contacted on the date this plan was written and there were no recorded rare plants, wildlife, or unique communities on or in the immediate vicinity of your property. This does not eliminate the possibility of species of concern existing on your property. Often, features on private lands, in particular, are missing from the database. You can find more information on this subject at the Division of Nature Preserves' website: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/naturepreserve/4725.htm>

**WILDLIFE RESOURCES:** This property provides shelter and food for many types of wildlife. White-tailed deer is one species that is abundant in this area. The large numbers of deer can have a negative effect on forest regeneration since they eat nearly all of the seed produced and seedlings that manage to germinate. Managing the deer herd, especially the doe population, will help keep the population at a sustainable level.

**EXOTIC AND INVASIVE SPECIES CONCERNS:** A couple of invasive exotic species were noted on this site though more may be present in the general area. Multiflora rose and Oriental bittersweet were both seen on the property. It is extremely important to monitor your

forest for these species and prevent them from becoming established. Otherwise, these species will take over the site, replacing high quality native species.

Multiflora rose is an invasive exotic shrub that spreads through open areas like this property. It is extremely thorny and birds spread it widely. If it is let to grow, it will spread throughout the understory of this stand making it extremely difficult to access to the property or for trees to regenerate. Eliminating it from the property will allow the native plants to germinate and grow.

Oriental bittersweet is an invasive exotic vine that tends to grow into the canopy of trees. When it gets into the canopy, the vine spreads out over the trees leaves and shades the tree. This stunts the trees growth. The vines will eventually create a thick matting in the canopy. This thick matting will collect snow and ice during winter and cause the trees to break. Then the thick vine matting will fall to the forest floor and prevent anything from growing due to lack of sunlight. It will then spread into the adjacent trees.

Invasive species were found scattered throughout the site as they are highly adaptable and can tolerate and even thrive in a wide range of conditions. Invasive species typically congregate along the edges of woodlands such as bordering croplands or along any trails. It is wise to treat for invasive species before conducting any other management in a property because invasive species will capitalize on any sort of disturbance and outcompete their native counterparts. Total invasive coverage for this site was under 10% throughout.

**PROPERTY SETTING AND REGIONAL CONSERVATION CONCERNS:** Urban sprawl is reducing tracts to unmanageable sizes. The sprawl introduces non-native species that are often invasive and crowd out native plants and animals. In addition, the increased roof and road area increase runoff in the short term and reduce water flow during dry periods. At the same time increased flow of polluted runoff from roads and parking areas is increased and the buffering of the water channels by vegetation is reduced.

**FOREST RESILIENCE AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION:** Harvesting and regenerating forests can also result in net carbon sequestration in wood products and new forest growth.

**CONSERVATION-BASED ESTATE PLANNING:** The first step to ensuring the personal and family legacy of you land is to talk about its future. This includes the co-owners, heirs, or others affected by the transfer of ownership. Common legacy tools include Family Partnerships; Gift or Sell to Heirs; Land Trusts; Last Will and Testament; Limited Liability Company (LLC); and Conservation Easement among others. Each method of transfer has its advantages and drawbacks. Discussion of this tools with the future owners is necessary to ensure the land is conserved for future generations.

## **AREA DESCRIPTION AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**RESOURCE DESCRIPTION:** This property is a mixed hardwood forest with an overstory composed pole to large sawlog size sugar maple, black cherry, northern red oak, white oak, shagbark hickory, pignut hickory, American elm, black walnut, sassafras, and some sweet cherry. There was a midstory of sapling to post size sugar maple and elm. Understory tree regeneration was mostly maple and hickory with some scattered oak. Other understory species include pawpaw, spicebush, and gooseberry.

Overall, this stand is fully-stocked with great timber value. The trees are competing with each other for resources including water, nutrients and especially sunlight. This competition is promoting the trees to grow taller. Most of the trees are tall and straight with few lower branches. These characteristics correspond to higher value timber. The management over the years in this woods is seen in the quality of timber that remains today after multiple harvests. The oak hickory component of this woods in the overstory is very strong when compared with other woods in the area.

**DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:** The desired future condition is a sustainably managed mixed hardwood forest that promotes the growth of valuable timber species while also offering habitat to wildlife in the area and generally maintaining forest health.

### **ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION:**

**Maintain Roads and Trails:** Maintaining a network of roads and trails in this stand will make maintenance and enjoyment much easier. The trails could be anything from simple walking paths, somewhat wider trails for ATV's, or roads suitable for four wheeled drive vehicles. These trails will allow you to easily access your property, which will make working on it and enjoying it much easier.

Avoid making trails in perpetually wet areas. This can lead to rutting and severe erosion. Also avoid using heavy equipment on this site unless the ground is hard and dry or frozen.

**Exotic Removal:** The main invasives found on site are multiflora rose and Oriental bittersweet. Invasive species disrupt ecological processes and displace their native counterparts. Invasive plant species reduce biodiversity by growing over other species and completely dominating the landscape. If left unchecked, they can run rampant and cause severe ecological and economic damage.

Removing exotics from any property is extremely time consuming and labor intensive. Usually, the best strategy in removing the exotics is to first prevent them from infesting areas where they aren't present now. These areas will be the "front line" of the removal process. Preventing them from taking the property completely over is the first step in controlling the exotics.

After you've established a "beach head" or "front line", start methodically removing exotics from a single area adjacent to it. Take it one acre at a time and systematically remove any exotics present from one end of your property to the other. Some areas may be harder than others but continue the process as needed.

The last step in removing exotics is to monitor areas you have already treated. It is highly likely that these exotics will come back to the site. Removing them while they are small is much easier and cheaper than waiting until it becomes an infestation.

Removing exotics in this way makes it easier to do and also allows you to look back on the progress you have made. Exotics are capable of replacing this forest but with some work and time, this forest will be here well into the future.

It is extremely important that the exotics are removed from this site **BEFORE** any thinning or harvesting is done. Otherwise, the increased sunlight in the understory will promote the spread of the exotics, making it even more difficult to remove them from the site.

Using a combination of techniques to remove exotics, called Integrated Pest Management, usually provides the best results. There are a number of different ways to remove exotics, including cutting (mechanical), spraying (chemical) and releasing predators (biological). Each one of these "tools" should be evaluated and the method(s) that best suits the site and situation should be used.

**Classified Program:** Under the program you receive a lowered property tax assessment, a periodic forester inspection, and an option to participate in and sell forest products as being 'green certified'. In return, you agree to care for the land and its resources according to program standards and the approved plan tailored to your objectives and property resources.

**In the case of storm, fire, pest outbreak, or other widespread damage, consult with your forester to adjust management activities and recommendations to put the property back on track to meet goals.**

## **CONTACTS**

This plan offers general guidelines to manage your natural resources and some recommend or required action to take. The use of a professional forester is encouraged as you undertake significant or unfamiliar land management actions. This is especially true with timber resources, where missteps can have consequences lasting decades. A list of consultant foresters and industry foresters is available at <http://www.findindianaforester.org/>

Wildlife biologist can help refine plans and provide detailed guidance where needed for specific wildlife issues and habitats of interest. You can reach your District Wildlife Biologist, Gillian Martin at 260-213-4515.

Federal cost-share programs can assist with funding the work mentioned in this plan. Programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) can alleviate much of

the financial burden and make hiring professional help much more feasible. If you are interested in applying for cost-share funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and their EQIP program you can ask your local District Forester for help or directly contact the NRCS by locating your District Conservationist online at:  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/find-a-service-center?state=18&county=>

## MANAGEMENT PROJECT SUMMARY

| SCHEDULED<br>YEAR | AREA NAME or NUMBER | PROJECT DESCRIPTION             | ACRES | Importance |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------|------------|
| 2025-2030         | Whole site          | Maintain Trails                 | 30.50 | Medium     |
| 2025-2026         | Whole site          | Invasive Removal                | 30.50 | High       |
| 2030              | Whole site          | Classified Program Reinspection |       | Required   |

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

*The links listed below will provide more detailed information about subjects listed in this plan.*

#### Exotics

- Multiflora Rose Fact Sheet – Penn State
  - <https://extension.psu.edu/multiflora-rose>
- Oriental Bittersweet Fact Sheet – IPSAWG
  - [www.in.gov/dnr/files/Oriental\\_Bittersweet.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dnr/files/Oriental_Bittersweet.pdf)
- Midwest Invasive Plant Network Control Database
  - <http://mipncontroldatabase.wisc.edu/>
- Why Should I Care About Invasive Plants?
  - <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/care.html>
- Invasive Control Landowner Toolkit – SICIM
  - <https://www.sicim.info/landowner-toolkit>
- Prioritizing Invasive Removal-IN Native Plant Society
  - <https://indiananativeplants.org/invasive-plants/prioritizing-invasive-plant-removal/>
- SICIM-Invasive Species Assistance
  - <https://www.sicim.info/assistance>

#### Misc. Publications

- The Consultant Forester – Stewardship Note
  - [www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/theconsultantforester.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/theconsultantforester.pdf)
- Indiana Forest and Woodlands Owners
  - <https://www.ifwoa.org/about/>
- Indiana Forestry Best Management Practices Booklet
  - <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2871.htm>
- Directory of Professional Foresters
  - <http://www.findindianaforester.org/>

#### Classified

- Classified Forest and Wildlands Law
  - [https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-IC\\_6\\_1\\_1\\_6\\_2014\\_revision.pdf](https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-IC_6_1_1_6_2014_revision.pdf)
- Classified Forest and Wildlands Stewardship Note
  - <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-ClassifiedForestBrochure.pdf>

The following questions deal with requirements established by the Classified Forest & Wildlands Act and the standards set by the Department of Natural Resources:

|                                                            |     |                                                            |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Is the acreage correct?                                 | YES | 6. Any evidence of dumping of material observed?           | NO  |
| 2. Are Classified Forest & Wildland signs posted?          | YES | 7. Is the management plan being followed?                  | YES |
| 3. Any evidence of grazing observed in Classified area?    | NO  | 8. Was any insect, fire, disease, or soil damage observed? | NO  |
| 4. Any unauthorized buildings observed?                    | NO  | 9. Are any special permits needed?                         | NO  |
| 5. Any evidence of haying or harvesting of crops observed? | NO  | 10. Any other violations noticed?                          | NO  |

Is there any corrective action needed? NO

If YES, please describe:

I have personally examined the above tract(s) of Classified Forest & Wildlands and certify that the information herein contained is correct to the best of my knowledge.

SIGNED:



DATE: 12/30/2024

Andrew O'Connor, District Forester



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have reviewed the attached Stewardship Plan dated 12/30/2024, and agree with its recommendations for reaching my management objectives. If enrolled in the Classified Forest and Wildlands Program, I agree to follow this plan as written, unless circumstances arise that amendments need to be made to meet ownership and program objectives. The administrating State District Forester must agree upon the plan amendments.

Landowner's Name: NOBLE ACRES LLC

C/o: Nikki Gilbert

County: Noble

Tract ID: 57-0047

Landowner's Acceptance: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

District Forester:  \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ 12/30/2024

Please sign this page and return it to:

Andrew O'Connor, District Forester

5400 E Salamonie Forest Rd.

Lagro, IN 46941

[AOconnor@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:AOconnor@dnr.IN.gov)

Scanned/emailed copies are acceptable.