

C. Inventory of Indiana Wildlife Habitat, Farmland, Cultural & Historic Resources

Strategic Action

As part of comprehensive plans or as an independent effort, jurisdictions in urban fringe and rural areas should incorporate into their comprehensive plans, inventory information regarding:

- a) Wildlife habitat (including acreage and capacity to support viable plant and animal populations)
- b) Prime farmland acreage
- c) Cultural and historic resources

This information can be used develop mitigation/protection measures in advance of development proposals.

Rationale

For those urban fringe and rural places where development pressures can be intense, proactive policies that anticipate development proposals should be encouraged. Through their own planning efforts, independent initiatives such as contracted studies, or the use of existing inventories compiled by various agencies and organizations, communities can incorporate information about their natural, agricultural and cultural/historical resources into comprehensive planning measures. With this information in hand, developers be informed in advance of the lay of the land in order to develop proposals that meet the requirements of local comprehensive plans.

Progress to Date in Indiana

Indiana does not have a coordinated, statewide assessment system in place for natural features inventories. Data is collected and maintained by a variety of agencies and organizations. Below are several examples of the primary **natural features inventories** that are available for the state.

- Partners with Fish and Wildlife Program (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 1987)
- Indiana Biodiversity Initiative (1996) (federal, state, and local agencies, non-profits, academia, and business and agriculture industries) – The Defenders of Wildlife-initiated program includes developing a statewide biodiversity conservation strategy, assessing Indiana's biodiversity, educating the public, and cultivating collaborations.
- Indiana Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy (CWS) (Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) in partnership with a number of state conservation organizations (2005)) - done in part to fulfill a Congressional mandate.
- Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan: The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), will identify important resource areas in the coastal region. Being developed by the IDNR's Lake Michigan Coastal Program, the plan is to include an assessment of priority land conservation needs and clear guidance for nominating and selecting land conservation projects within the state.
- National Wetlands Inventory (Indiana DNR and USFWS (1985)) - mapping of Indiana wetlands. Recently, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) received grant approval to investigate trends in wetlands losses and gains and recreate the work done by IDNR utilizing more recent information and newer habitat studies.
- Indiana Gap Analysis Project (Indiana State University (ISU), Department of Geography, Geology, and Anthropology and Department of Life Sciences and Indiana University's SPEA, in partnership with IDNR (1994)) – a compilation of over 60 specific habitat types through research and the use of GIS databases.
- Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center (IDNR (1978)) – part of worldwide Natural Heritage Network – 59 high quality habitats and over 700 significant natural areas in Indiana

- Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) (The Indiana Audubon Society (1988)) - maintains an inventory of important bird habitats. As of September, 2005, Indiana has 13 IBAs.

Below are examples of the **farmland inventories** that are available for the state. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Purdue University have been active over the years in collecting and maintaining records for Indiana.

- Indiana Farmland Statistics (The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistical Service (USDA NASS)) – data available for 1992, 1997, and 2002
- National Resources Inventory (NRI) (The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Science (NRCS)) – conducted every five years for non-federal US lands. The NRI is done to fulfill NRCS reporting requirements and to help measure the effectiveness of conservation practices and programs as authorized by the federal Rural Development Act of 1972. The Soil and Waters Resources Conservation Act of 1972 and the Food Security Act of 1985 highlighted the need for periodic assessment of the nation’s natural resources. Data available for Indiana for 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997. The 2003 survey is due in March, 2006.

Below are examples of the **cultural and historical inventories** that are available for the state. The National Historic Preservation Act (1966) mandated that each state create a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify, evaluate, register, and protect historic resources. The Indiana SHPO is managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Divisions of Historic Preservation and Archeology (DHPA).

- IDNR, Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology (DHPA) (1981) – has developed an Indiana Cultural Resources Management Plan (2005-2011). It also maintains approximately 200,000 records of above-ground resources identified since 1975 after surveying 92 Indiana counties. Interim reports are available through the Historical Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, county historical societies, and county libraries.
- National Park Service (NPS) – inventories of national historic landmarks, monuments, sites, battlefields, and parks and lakeshores - three nationally-recognized areas – Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, and Lincoln Boyhood National Monument and 36 national historic sites in Indiana.
- Indiana Board of Tourism - inventory of historical & cultural locations - battlegrounds, cemeteries, museums, districts, forts, ruins and trails.

In summary, many different sources exist for natural, cultural and historic features data, but these sources are not well coordinated within the state. Partnerships among various agencies and organizations have resulted in on-going efforts to maintain these inventories. Still, there is no systematic effort to coordinate all of these inventory activities in a way that is useful for planning entities. Currently, there are few, if any, real incentives for local governments to incorporate these types of inventories into their comprehensive plans. However, programs such as the Indiana Biodiversity Initiative and Planning with POWER (Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program and the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service) educate local governments on the benefits of incorporating inventories in into the comprehensive planning process and provide assistance to revise plans accordingly.

Other key initiatives include:

- Harrison County, Indiana has been using natural resources regional assessment data developed through the Indiana Biodiversity Initiative as a conservation tool to guide its local planning.
- The “Working Farmland Protection Program” Bill (HB 1654) introduced by the Hoosier Chapter, Soil & Water Conservation Society failed to pass in the 2005 Indiana Legislative Session. It outlined a policy where Indiana agricultural economic development and farmland protection are compatible with the USDA NRCS Federal Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program. A similar bill (SB 0392) is being considered in the 2006 Legislative Session, which establishes the Hoosier legacy fund to fund eligible projects under the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture’s farmland preservation and forest legacy

programs. The bill also authorizes the Land Resources Council to identify priority funding areas and provide technical assist to local governments.

Best Practices in Other States

Oregon is a leading state in developing legislation mandating that local comprehensive planning include the development and use of inventories. It adopted the Oregon Land Use Act (1973) in response to farmland preservation issues in relation to the city of Portland. The Act is administered by The Land Conservation and Development Commission and the Department of Land Conservation and Development. It calls for all cities and counties to prepare comprehensive plans and development regulations with goals that include: agreement on city and county-wide planning policies, designation of critical areas, agricultural lands, forest lands, mineral resources lands, and historical and cultural resources, designation of urban growth areas, adoption of regulations to protect these lands, and adoption of comprehensive plans that address land use, transportation, capital facilities, utilities, shorelines, and (for counties) rural land use and development. Cities and counties are also required to show how they meet statewide goals.

Washington adopted a comprehensive statewide legislative and regulatory approach to growth management with the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) (1990) and later amendments. Modeled after Oregon's initiative, the GMA was proposed as a result of increasing population growth and sprawl and traffic congestion in select counties of the state. The Act calls for local governments to prepare comprehensive plans and development regulations with 13 goals in mind, some of which include: agreement on county-wide planning policies, designation of critical areas, agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resources lands, designation of urban growth areas, adoption of regulations to protect these lands, and adoption of comprehensive plans that address land use, transportation, capital facilities, utilities, shorelines, and (for counties) rural land use and development. Unlike Oregon's Act, Washington's does not require a historic preservation or cultural resources element in a comprehensive plan. But, cities and counties planning under the GMA must consider and incorporate the historic preservation goal. The planning process and the relationships set up by Washington reflect a higher degree of local control than that specified by Oregon. Only counties (and the cities within) meeting thresholds of growth are required to plan fully under the GMA. The rest may choose whether or not they want to plan fully or to only designate critical lands and resource areas.

Prompted by the need to protect a federally listed, endangered owl, Pima County, Arizona is developing the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. The plan is designed to direct development in a way that will protect habitats for both rare and common species. It combines wildlife conservation with wetlands and riparian restoration, cultural and historical preservation — including ranch protection — and develops natural corridors to link protected areas. In conjunction, a series of county maps were developed showing areas of varying habitat importance. The county also updated its comprehensive plan by incorporating the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan into its local land use strategy.

Implementation Options

Following are possible approaches which could be pursued to promote the incorporation of inventory information into local comprehensive plans. These ideas will be discussed during one of the breakout sessions at the Coastal Connections Land Use Roundtable.

- C1. DNR clearinghouse for natural, cultural and historic features data. The IDNR should take on a leadership role to be the clearinghouse for all natural, cultural and historic features data. While other entities may generate and update some of the data (e.g., the non-natural features data), the DNR could establish a web site that serves as a clearinghouse with guidance on how to use the inventories in

developing comprehensive plans. Planning entities could use this clearinghouse and guidance as a “one-stop shopping” point for getting data on natural, cultural and historic features and guidance on how to incorporate that data into their plans.

- C2. Interagency coordination of data. State, regional and local agencies that generate and maintain this data should convene periodically to coordinate the delivery and distribution of their data. The IDNR could take the lead on an annual meeting of relevant agencies.
- C3. Natural, cultural and historic features state funding requirement. State agencies that fund local projects, (transportation, agriculture, commerce) should make the presence of a comprehensive plan with natural, cultural, and historic features part of their funding eligibility requirements.
- C4. Enact state legislation to require natural features data. The State legislature should pass a bill requiring comprehensive plans to reflect natural, cultural, and historic features inventory data and information to guide future community development and land and other resource protection.
- C5. Enact state legislation for protection of farmland. Pass state legislation to create a farmland preservation program administered by a relevant state agency or body (such as the Department of Agriculture or Indiana Land Resources Council) that will pass through federal financial assistance for farmland preservation to local governments.

Key Web Resources

Planning with Power, Purdue University, <http://www.planningwithpower.org/>

Purdue University Land Use Team, <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/anr/landuse/>

The American Farmland Trust, Great Lakes Region Office -<http://www.farmland.org/cgl/indiana.htm>

The Biodiversity Initiative – <http://www.biodiversitypartners.org/state/in/bioplaning.shtml>

The Historical Landmarks Foundation of Indiana - <http://www.historiclandmarks.org/>

The Coastal Historic and Cultural Resources Study of the Lake Michigan Watershed - <http://www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich/pdf/historicstudy.pdf>

The Indiana Audubon Society - <http://www.indianaaudubon.org/>

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology - <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/>

Indiana Department of Tourism - <http://www.in.gov/tourism/>

The US Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistical Service (USDA NASS) - <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/volume1/in/index1.htm>.

Indiana Historical Society - <http://www.indianahistory.org/>

Partners with Fish and Wildlife Program - <http://www.fws.gov/partners/pdfs/IN-needs.pdf>

Purdue University, School of Agriculture - <http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/>

Purdue University, Purdue Interdisciplinary Center for Ecological Sustainability (PICES) - <http://bilbo.bio.purdue.edu/~pices/index.html>

US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Science – National Resources Inventory Indiana - <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/nri/INNRIweb1.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) - Partners with Fish and Wildlife Program - <http://www.fws.gov/partners/pdfs/IN-needs.pdf>.