

July 15, 2020

**Governor Eric Holcomb
Office of the Governor
Statehouse Room 206
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797**

Dear Governor Holcomb,

Coronavirus has given many Hoosiers an opportunity to spend more time outdoors, which evidence shows has mental and physical benefits. In times of worry it is important that we have opportunities to de-stress, and natural areas and greenspace provide that relief.

One positive outcome of this situation is that more of the public is recognizing the need for nature and interested in spending time outdoors. Research shows improved blood pressure, lower asthma rates, reduced anxiety, and many other positive benefits of nature. Our fellow citizens are visiting our local and state properties in greater numbers to take advantage of these benefits and find some relief from their anxieties.

We applaud your recognition of this need for nature and your leadership in allowing the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) properties to remain open during the Covid-19 shutdown. We extend our thanks to you and all the employees of the DNR who helped to keep the properties open and safe for citizens to enjoy.

As we move past this epidemic, we look forward to continuing a conversation about improving and expanding our natural areas and providing the resources necessary to ensure all Hoosiers have access to these benefits.

Sincerely,

**IN Forests Forever Coalition
Including:
American Tree Farm System- Indiana
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association
IN Bowhunter Association
IN Prescribed Fire Council
IN Society of American Foresters
Indiana Association of Consulting Foresters
Indiana Forestry Educational Foundation
Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association
IHLA Forestry Council
Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable
Izaak Walton League
National Wild Turkey Federation
Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever**

*IN Forests Forever Coalition
1007 North 725 West, West Lafayette, IN 47906
765.583.3501*

**Quality Deer Management Association of Indiana
Ruffed Grouse Society
The Nature Conservancy
The Woodland Steward Institute**

CC: DNR Director

Indiana Forests Forever is a coalition of 20 wildlife and forestry organizations with a common interest in supporting the health of Indiana's forests and the use of science-based management to sustain and enhance those forests and the wildlife they support. We are committed to increasing public understanding of Indiana's wonderful woodlands, and supporting the use of the most current science and firsthand experience to manage them for the benefit of all.