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ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SPEAK OUT AGAINST BACK COUNTRY LOGGING

INDIANAPOLIS, IN. -- As the public comment period closes on controversial logging plans for Yellowwood State Forest, two more environmental groups have spoken out in opposition. On Friday, Heartwood and the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter filed joint comments opposing the proposal to log 300 acres in the Yellowwood State Forest Back Country Area.

In their comments, the groups highlighted the lack of details in the Draft Resource Management Guides in which the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry outlines its plans for commercial logging in these interior forest tracts. For example, the Division of Forestry has not provided specifics as to the number of trees or volume of board feet it plans to “harvest,” leaving the public in the dark. Additionally, the management guides only speculate on what wildlife might be present in the tract without looking to see what is actually there. It also fails to address the adverse effects of commercial logging on the closed-canopy interior forest habitat that constitutes these tracts and upon which many threatened and endangered species rely for survival.

“What makes this proposal particularly offensive is the inclusion of a tract within the Ecoblitz area,” **said Bowden Quinn, director of the Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter.** “Led by the Indiana Forest Alliance, and with support from other groups including the Sierra Club, the Ecoblitz has brought scientists from around the country to document the astoundingly rich biological diversity of this forest, including many endangered species. By announcing its plans to log this area, the DNR is showing a blatant disregard for ecological and scientific integrity.”

According to Mykel Luteomas, Heartwood Council Chair, “The DNR uses Orwellian language of ‘single-tree selection’ to undersell the devastating impacts of its state forest logging policy.” He continued, “As more and more Hoosiers bear witness to the systematic elimination of the wildest and most diverse areas of our state forests, we must step up the fight to ensure that places like the Yellowwood Back Country Area stay wild long into the future.”

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About the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.7 million members and supporters. In addition to helping people from all backgrounds explore nature and our outdoor heritage, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit www.sierraclub.org.