

Who owns Indiana's timberland?

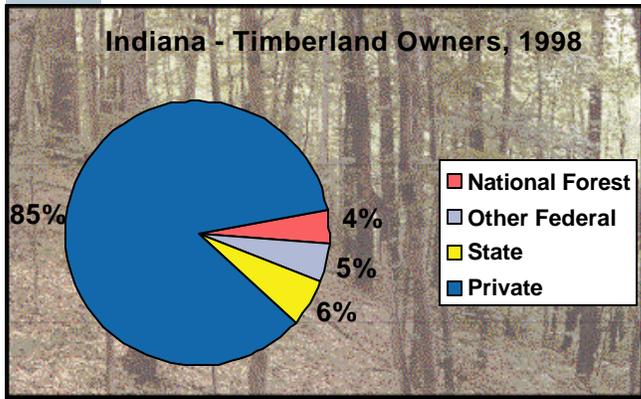


FIGURE 7

Each private landholder owns timberland for a unique reason. This makes it difficult to explain and predict how landowners will manage their forest resources. When private owners were asked what they expect from their forests over the next decade, most expected visual enjoyment of their forests. Other less important benefits include farm and home use, recreation, income from timber, increasing land values, and firewood (Birch, 1996).

Public timberland is owned by the State of Indiana, counties, municipalities, or the U.S. government. In Figure 7, "State" ownership includes a small amount of county and municipal land. Federal timberland in Indiana consists of one national forest (Hoosier National Forest), several wildlife refuges, and military grounds. Unlike forestlands, timberlands exclude areas such as state parks, nature preserves, national parks, and the Charles C. Deam Wilderness within Hoosier National Forest—the only congressionally designated wilderness area in Indiana.

Map 3 illustrates all public lands in Indiana. The majority of public lands are wooded (see Map 1 for distribution of forestland). Exceptions include, but are not limited to, reservoirs owned by the State of Indiana or the federal government that are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Hoosier National Forest and several state forests are

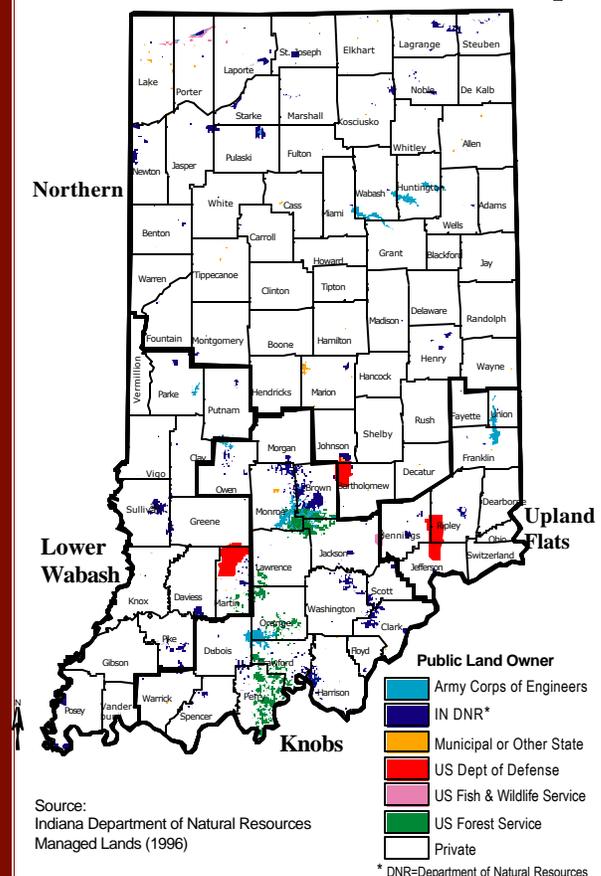
Private landowners own 85 percent of the timberland in Indiana (Figure 7). As of 1994, more than 150,000 private forest landowners owned over 3.7 million acres (Birch, 1996). Interestingly in 1978, there were only about 50,000 forest landowners. In that 16-year period, the number of Indiana's private timberland owners tripled; however, the amount of private timberland increased by only 30,000 acres.

located in the Knobs Unit. Major U.S. military properties are located primarily outside the Knobs unit.

Regional differences in ownership characteristics across the state are evident when contrasting timberland owners in the Northern Unit (Figure 8) with those in the Knobs Unit (Figure 9). The Northern Unit has the greatest proportion of private owners. Just like public land agencies, each private owner has a unique plan for their woods.

MAP 3

Indiana Public Land Ownership



Management strategies vary across and within the public land management agencies. Variables include forest resources, access to the public property, goals and management objectives of the agency, the interests of the public, and how much private land surrounds the public land.

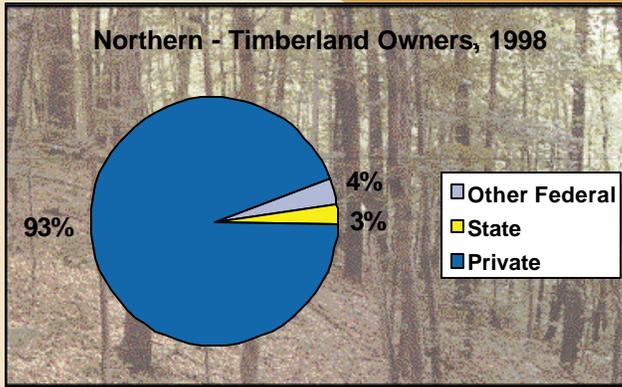


FIGURE 8

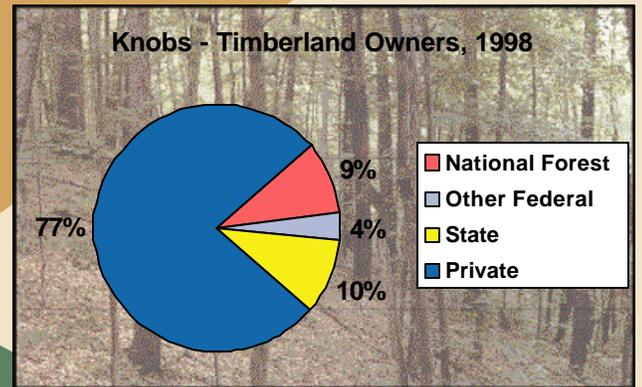


FIGURE 9

How do different ownership factors impact Indiana's timberland? Interaction between public and private interests is high in the Knobs Unit, due to the high amount of public ownership and percentage of timberland. It is important to strive for a balance between these stakeholders. In the other three units, the concerns and interests are oriented more toward private timberland owners. It is important to consider these differences when evaluating recreational opportunities and limitations, wildlife habitat possibilities, and forest product (timber) uses.

