



FOREST AND WILDLIFE FIELD TOUR

A crowd of forty people came out on a beautiful Saturday morning to take part in the Forest and Wildlife Field Tour at Morgan-Monroe State Forest. The group consisted of many forest landowners as well as local forest neighbors who had heard rumblings of a research project and simply wanted to check it out for themselves. Participants visited several demonstration and HEE research sites within the forest and had the opportunity to interact with Division of Forestry staff and HEE Researchers.



A crowd of forty people came out on Saturday, Nov. 7 to take part in the Forest and Wildlife Field Tour at Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

Brian MacGowan (Purdue FNR) introduced the different timber harvesting strategies of the HEE project and the potential impacts on plants and animals. Barny Dunning (Purdue FNR) specifically discussed songbird responses to timber harvesting. The group looked at examples of invasive plant species with Ron Rathfon (Purdue FNR Extension Forester) and discussed different control and treatment methods. The tour highlighted the HEE Unit 3 clearcut on

Main Forest Road with Scott Haulton (IDNR Division of Forestry) discussing the deer enclosure project and how deer browse can impact forest growth. Mike Saunders (Purdue FNR) demonstrated both chemical and mechanical methods of Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) that landowners can use on their property. In addition, participants were asked to complete a short pre-tour and post-tour survey regarding their attitudes toward different forest management techniques.

The field tour was held on Saturday, November 7, 2009 from 8:30-11:30am. This event was sponsored by Purdue University Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, Indiana DNR Division of Forestry, Morgan County Purdue Extension, and the Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center. Thank you to Brian MacGowan and Chris Parker (Morgan Co. Purdue Extension) for organizing this event.



Mike Saunders demonstrated how to girdle a tree with a chainsaw.

Acorns... or the lack thereof

Since the beginning of the Hardwood Ecosystem Experiment in 2006, we have been collecting acorns from roughly one hundred trees. Acorn “traps” are placed under black oak and white oak trees throughout the study area. Each individual tree receives two traps, and the traps are checked every two weeks from late-August to mid-December. The table below shows the total number of acorns collected by species each year.



This scientifically advanced piece of equipment is an acorn collection trap (or a plastic storage container atop a pvc pipe).

	2007	2007	2008	2009 (so far)
White Oak	120	256	106	6
Black Oak	235	414	9	22

2008 had a near failure of the black oak mast crop. Based on the number of acorns collected so far in 2009, we may be looking at an overall oak mast failure across the board. While these numbers only represent the white oaks and black oaks, based on observations by those working in the HEE sites on a daily basis, only a scattered handful of scarlet oak trees appear to be producing reasonable numbers of acorns.

Acorns are one of the most important wildlife foods in the deciduous forests of North America. Many species of wildlife depend on the yearly mast crop to make it through the winter—deer, turkey, squirrels, small mammals, birds. If we have any sort of a harsh winter this year, it is possible that the populations of these species may suffer.



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WHAT'S NEXT FOR HEE?

- Fall salamander sampling is just about finished.
- Oak mast collection continues.
- TSI work will continue throughout the harvest areas.
- NEW PROJECT!—Owl surveys will begin in December.

Callout for Volunteers

In anticipation of a new project for HEE—Owl Surveys—we will be holding two informational meetings for anyone interested in volunteering. Please pass this info along to others who may be interested. Thanks!

- Tuesday, November 17, 7:00pm @ Morgan-Monroe State Forest office
- Thursday, November 19, 7:00pm @ Yellowwood State Forest office

Executive Committee Update

The Executive Committee met at Purdue on September 9, 2009.

- **Next Contract**— The current contract with the IN DNR-DoF ends April 30, 2010. We are in the process of preparing the next four-year contract for the HEE project. The discussion will continue at our next meeting on November 18.

HEE Executive Committee Members:

John Seifert, IN DNR - DoF, Co-Chair

Rob Swihart, Purdue FNR, Co-Chair

Scott Haulton, IN DNR - DoF

Rebecca Kalb, Purdue FNR

Duane McCoy, IN DNR - DoF

Mike Saunders, Purdue FNR

Research Committee Update

The HEE Fall Researcher Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 21, 2009 at Purdue University. Twenty-six people were in attendance, including Division of Forestry representatives, faculty investigators, graduate students, and other HEE staff. Each research group provided an update of their latest results. The Executive Committee introduced a proposed HEE Research Site Use Plan that must be submitted by anyone intending to conduct research on the HEE sites. The group discussed the data storage and archiving needs of the project and a preliminary protocol for the use and sharing of data. With the end of the current contract fast approaching, the hot topic for the meeting was the funding of the next 4-year contract.

Check us out on the web!
www.HEEForestStudy.org



Do you have pictures from any HEE related event or activity?

If so, you can submit them to the HEE Project Coordinator for archiving. Please include any information about the pictures.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Please send your news, findings, tid-bits, publications, funding opportunities, and committee reports to Rebecca at rkalb@purdue.edu to be included in "The HEE Update."

"The HEE Update" is distributed to anyone interested in receiving quarterly updates on the HEE Project—you need not be actively involved in the project. If you know of someone that would like periodic updates on HEE, we can add them to the list!

Previous issues of "The HEE Update" are available on our website:

www.HEEForestStudy.org.