

Final Environmental Assessment
To Allow Limited Use of Indiana Fish and Wildlife Properties
for Field Trials
Glendale, Pigeon River, Tri-County, and Winamac

December, 2002

Submitted to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Division of Federal Aid

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Table of Contents

1. Purpose and Need	1
1.1 Purpose	1
1.2 Need	1
1.3 Decisions That Need to Be Made	1
1.4 Background	2
1.5 Issues and Concerns	3
2. Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action	3
2.1 Alternatives Not Considered for Detailed Analysis	3
2.2 Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Analysis	3
2.2.1 Alternative A: Allow Limited Field Trials - Proposed Action	3
2.2.2 Alternative B: Allow Limited Field Trial Use and Phase out after 10 Years	4
2.2.3 Alternative C:(No Action)	5
3. Affected Environment	5
3.1 Physical Characteristics	5
3.2 Biological Environments	7
3.2.1 Habitat/vegetation	7
3.2.2 Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species	7
3.2.3 Other Wildlife Species	8
3.3 Land Use	8
3.4 Cultural/ Paleontological Resources	10
3.4 Local Socio-economic Conditions	10
4. Environmental Consequences	10
4.1 Alternative A: (Proposed Action)	10
4.1.1 Habitat Impacts	10
4.1.2 Biological Impacts	10
4.1.3 Listed Species	10
4.1.4 Cultural Resources	11
4.1.5 Cumulative Impacts	11
4.1.6 Public Opinion	12
4.1.7 Environmental Justice	12
4.2 Alternative B:	12
4.2.1 Habitat Impacts	12
4.2.2 Biological Impacts	12
4.2.3 Listed Species	12
4.2.4 Cultural Resources	12
4.2.5 Cumulative Impacts	12
4.2.6 Public opinion	12

4.2.7 Environmental Justice	12
4.3 Alternative C: (No Action)	13
4.3.1 Habitat Impacts	13
4.3.2 Biological Impacts	13
4.3.3 Listed Species	13
4.3.4 Cultural Resources	13
4.3.5 Cumulative Impacts	13
4.3.6 Public opinion	13
4.2.7. Environmental Justice	13
5. List of Preparers	14
6. Consultation and Coordination with the Public and Others	15
7. Public Comments and Responses to the Draft Environmental Assessment	15
List of Appendices	20

Final Environmental Assessment to Allow Limited Use of Indiana Fish and Wildlife Properties for Field Trials.

1. Purpose and Need

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the assessment is to accurately define the type of activity proposed for the fish and wildlife area and then to assess environmental impacts of the proposed action. The Division of Fish and Wildlife hopes to allow limited use of fish and wildlife properties for smaller field trials that will not have negative environmental or biological impacts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) audit findings specified that all field trial/test activity must stop until such activities were properly reviewed, documented and amended into the appropriate Federal Aid grants. The division proposes to accurately and precisely define acceptable types of field trial/test activity and to amend field trial plans into the appropriate Federal Aid grants.

1.2 Need

The Division of Fish and Wildlife 1998 Audit and Programmatic Review found that field trial activity on some Division of Fish and Wildlife properties had expanded to the point that primary property uses were excluded and habitat disruption was occurring. The FWS and Division of Fish and Wildlife have determined, following a national policy review, that certain specific types of field trial/test activity can occur without interfering with the purpose for which the land was acquired, developed, and/or managed.

Further, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has determined that appropriate field trial/test activity would benefit sportsmen and women in Indiana and wishes to proceed with the necessary process to allow specific types of trial and test activity defined in this document.

There is a continuing interest by part of our constituency base in field trial /test activity. The Division is attempting to develop a program that is compatible with Federal Aid regulations on property purchased, developed and/or managed with Federal Aid assistance.

1.3 Decisions That Need to Be Made

The Service's regional Director will select one of the alternatives analyzed in detail and will also determine whether that alternative would result in a significant impact to the human environment, thereby requiring an Environmental Impact Statement or if a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

1.4 Background

Many activities may be defined as dog field trials. As applied here, the term means competition in which hunting dogs are tested for the abilities to perform specific tasks for which a breed was developed. A “trial” may be formally organized by a regional or national organization and may include substantial entry fees and prize money. At the other end of the spectrum is the informal field trial conducted by a local club. Trials include pointer trials conducted and viewed from horseback, and non-horseback events such as, pointer, flusher, retriever, beagle, and coon dog trials. Pen-raised game birds such as pheasants or quail are usually placed on the course for dogs to point, flush, or retrieve. These birds may or may not be shot for retrieval. Different trials have very different site and management requirements. Formally organized horseback trials require the largest sites and the most intensive site management. Management includes annual mowing of “courses” and “gallery trails” for spectators, as well as development of specific woody cover and/or food plot areas used as “objectives”. The largest national trials attract large numbers of dogs, horses, and mounted dog handlers, judges and spectators. They may last for a week or more. Organizers may require that stables, dog kennels, camping and/or equipment storage areas and food service, dining and meeting facilities be available on the site. They may also demand and receive on site services such as clean up, traffic management, and assistance with trial activities. Informal trials and some formal trials, for example retrievers, may be accomplished on very limited areas over a day or a weekend with little or no management of vegetation or habitats and no infrastructure requirements. At the conclusion of competition, a winner and sometimes a runner-up dog is named. Cash prizes and additional prizes such as trophies are awarded for the winner and runner-up dogs. The real prize for winning a large national tournament, however, is the increased value of the championship dog and the value of their offspring.

Audit findings released by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in July 1998 determined that field trials, as conducted on Federal Aid Purchased properties managed by the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, were not federal aid compatible uses. These findings were reported in a document titled “Programmatic Review of the Indiana Field Trial Program at Indiana Fish and Wildlife Areas” in December 2000. The programmatic review concluded that field trial activity of any sort could not be continued unless specifically amended into federal aid grants. Further, the review required that these amendments include policies and guidelines that would ensure the field trial/test activity would not interfere with the purpose for which the lands were either acquired, developed, and/or managed.

In 2001 the FWS reviewed field trial and test policies at the national level and determined that certain types of field trials and tests and certain levels of field trial/test activity are legitimate activities. These activities could be conducted on lands purchased with Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Federal Aid funds provided the activities did not destroy habitats or displace other primary property uses. The results of this review are summarized in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service memo dated May 16, 2001.

Using this guidance, the Division of Fish and Wildlife responded to the programmatic review with a grant amendment ending all field trial activity and providing for restoration of any and all

habitats disrupted by field trial activity. This amendment brought the Division into compliance with the audit findings and maintained Federal Aid funding for the entire Division of Fish and Wildlife .

1.5 Issues and Concerns

Issues and concerns were expressed in the programmatic review (Appendix E).

2. Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action

2.1 Alternatives Not Considered for Detailed Analysis

Only three alternatives are considered. Other alternatives that could be developed involved more or fewer regulations on the field trials. More regulation would not offer any further protection to the environment and would provide unnecessary limitations to the constituency that wish to hold trials on the properties. Less regulation would encourage habitat damage and move the activity toward non-compliance.

2.2 Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Analysis

2.2.1 Alternative A: Allow Limited Field Trials - Proposed Action

Alternative A: Allow field trial/test activities according to the definitions listed above on certain Fish and Wildlife Properties and allow non compatible trials to use the newly purchased Inter-Lake area (3000 acres purchased with state funds). The proposed activity should be permitted at, and limited to Glendale, Tri-County, Winamac, and Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Areas (see attached location and property maps).

Field trials and tests are specifically limited to the activities defined as follows:

Field trial activities will be limited to February 1 through April 15, during daylight hours only. This will eliminate any interference with hunting seasons. A maximum of ten (10) individual days during this period will be available for trial/test activities at each property. No trial will exceed two consecutive days in length. Only one trial/test will be hosted per day. Persons participating in, judging, or observing field trial/test events are restricted to walking. The banning of horseback trials will eliminate large trials. Therefore no restrictions on the numbers of participants, either dogs or humans, is necessary. The permitted trials should have fewer than 100 dogs and under 200 people. We believe that the trials run under these rules will not be large enough to attract either large entry fees or large prizes. Normally prizes are trophies or ribbons with a rare cash prize of around \$25 to about \$250.

Field trial/testing activities will not occupy more than a total 100 acre block in an area designated by the property manager. This area can be selected in different locations

within the field trial area by the property manager to prevent any cumulative affect. No vegetation management will be undertaken by any party to accommodate or enhance the use of the property for these activities. The Department will not provide any building, equipment, supplies, fixtures, etc. to accommodate these activities. The event will take place in an area designated by the property manager.

No other type of field trial or test activity will be conducted unless specifically reviewed and approved according to Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration regulations and procedures.

The Department of Natural Resources will provide an alternative site (for field trials that are not compatible with federal use guidelines) on a recently acquired tract of 3000 acres of reclaimed mine land purchased without federal funds. The Division will provide technical advice during the initial set up period.

2.2.2 Alternative B: Allow Limited Field Trial Use and Phase out after 10 Years

Alternative B: Allow field trial/test activities according to the definitions listed above on certain Fish and Wildlife Properties and allow non compatible trials to use the newly purchased Inter-Lake area (3000 acres purchased with state only funds). The proposed activity should be permitted at, and limited to Glendale, Tri-County, Winamac, and Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Areas (see attached location and property maps).

Field trials and tests are specifically limited to the activities defined as follows:

Field trial activities will be limited to February 1 through April 15, during daylight hours only. This will eliminate any interference with hunting seasons. A maximum of ten (10) individual days during this period will be available for trial/test activities at each property. No trial will exceed two consecutive days in length. Only one trial/test will be hosted per day. Persons participating in, judging, or observing field trial/test events are restricted to walking. The banning of horseback trials will eliminate large trials. Therefore no restrictions on the numbers of participants, either dogs or humans, is necessary. The permitted trials should have fewer than 100 dogs and under 200 people. We believe that the trials run under these rules will not be large enough to attract either large entry fees or large prizes. Normally prizes are trophies or ribbons with a rare cash prize of around \$25 to about \$250.

Field trial/testing activities will not occupy more than a total 100 acre block in an area designated by the property manager. This area can be selected in different locations within the field trial area by the property manager to prevent any cumulative affect. No vegetation management will be undertaken by any party to accommodate or enhance the use of the property for these activities. The Department will not provide any building, equipment, supplies, fixtures, etc. to accommodate these activities. The event will take place in an area designated by the property manager.

The number of days available for field trials will be phased out to zero after 10 years.

No other type of field trial or test activity will be conducted unless specifically reviewed and approved according to Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration regulations and procedures.

The Department of Natural Resources will provide an alternative site (for field trials that are not compatible with federal use guidelines) on a recently acquired tract of 3000 acres of reclaimed mine land purchased without federal funds. The division will provide technical advice during the initial set up period.

2.2.3 Alternative C:(No Action)

Alternative C: No Action. This alternative will prevent any field trials from occurring on any of state lands that were purchased, developed or managed with Federal Aid assistance. This alternative would not require special restrictions.

3. Affected Environment

3.1 Physical Characteristics

This proposal affects four Fish and Wildlife properties located in Indiana. They are as follows:

Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area - located in south west central Indiana near Washington, Indiana

Glendale includes upland fields, woodlands, a marsh, a 1400 acre lake and 25 ponds ranging in size from 1/4 acre to 25 acres. Upland fields vary from flat to gently rolling and make up 5500 acres of the property. About 550 to 650 acres of Glendale are tenant farmed each year, while other fields are left fallow or are planted to dove fields or food plots. Wood lots vary in size from a few acres to 80 acres and total 1,200 acres of the property.

The habitat in the trials area consists of primarily open upland fields, gently rolling terrain and a small pond. Some small wood lots or wooded fence rows are also found. There are parking lots nearby and several rest rooms on the property. The area has been used for field trials since the early 70's.

Tri-County Fish and Wildlife Area - located in north east Indiana near N. Webster, Indiana

Tri-County Fish and Wildlife Area is located in the heart of the lake region of northeastern Indiana, approximately 50 miles southeast of South Bend and 45 miles northwest of Ft. Wayne in Kosciusko and Noble Counties. Ten natural lakes and thirty-two man-made impoundments dot the surrounding landscape, contributing to the setting that attracts outdoor enthusiasts to Tri-County. The area is composed of flat to rolling upland fields and gradual to

steep slopes of oak-hickory woodlands, falling off to depressions of wetlands and natural lakes. Soils vary considerably from deep, moderately well drained, gently sloping loam to a deep, well-drained, moderately sloping sand, with outcrops of gravel. The area has average annual precipitation of just under 35", average temperatures of 50 degrees and a growing season of 150 to 160 days. The elevation varies from a high of 950 to a low of 868 feet above sea level. Representative cover types include crop/fallow 900 acres, brush 910 acres, hardwood 985 acres, conifer 66 acres and water/marsh 685 acres bringing the total acreage for Tri-County to 3,546.

The habitat in the trials area is a mixture of small impoundment surrounded by old fields, prairie grass fields and some small grain food plots. The rest of the area is pretty much the same, except with some additional fence row and wooded habitat. There are several parking lots nearby. There are also several rest rooms located on the property. If a field trial organization wishes to bring a Port-a-John, there are several locations for them to put it. This particular area has been used for field trials since the early 80's.

Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area - located in north west Indiana near Angola, Indiana

The topography of Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife area has been strongly influenced by glaciers. The bottom lands are glacial out-wash plains of nearly level to moderately sloping knolls and Eolian dunes. The uplands are till plains of nearly level loamy sands. Pigeon River consists of 4000 acres of crop and fallow fields, 1000 acres of brush/shrub, 4000 acres of hardwood/conifer and 2600 acres of water/wetland.

The field trial area is flat to gently sloping Plainfield sand and Oshtemo sands. The vegetation consists of upland warm season grass, cool season grass and brushy to wooded fence rows. There are parking lots close to the field trial areas. There are several rest rooms located on the property. The area has been used for field trials since the early 70's.

Winamac Fish and Wildlife Area - located in north central Indiana near Winamac, Indiana

Winamac Fish and Wildlife Area consists of 4,670 acres covered by approximately 47% timber. Second growth oak forests, with an occasional pignut hickory, dominate most of the upland areas, which consist of Plainfield fine sands and Berrien loamy sands. The lower wet Maumee and Newton fine sandy loams and mucky loams are covered mainly by quaking aspen, and occasional big-tooth aspen, and black willow. The remaining 53% of open areas consists of crop fields, grass legume strips, fallow fields covered with perennial grasses and a few low marshy areas.

The field trial areas consist of primarily open grasslands, scattered food plots, small pockets of brush and shrubs, and small areas of oak woodlands. There are parking lots available near the new designated field trial areas. Several rest rooms are located on the property. Field trials have been held in the new designated field trial areas since 1940's.

3.2 Biological Environments

3.2.1 Habitat/vegetation

The properties in question consist of a variety of successional stages of habitat. These are maintained by commonly used wildlife management techniques such as burning, tenant farming and clearing. The cover types vary from plowed ground to mature forest. All of these properties are intensively managed and provide hunting, fishing, trapping, viewing, and shooting range opportunities for many Hoosiers. The areas differ in their species management emphasis as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Acres managed on Glendale, Pigeon River, Tri-County, and Winamac Fish and Wildlife Areas.

PROPERTY	UPLAND GAME	WOODLAND	WATERFOWL/ WETLAND	MOURNING DOVE	SHOREBIRD
Glendale	4890	1250	1700	75	0
Pigeon River	5200	5200	1000	200	0
Tri County	1250	1600	650	0	0
Winamac	2500	1900	100	60	0

3.2.2 Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species

The affected properties are within the range of the following species:

Federal Endangered: Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*) - critical habitat: Rays (Greene County) and Big Wyandotte (Crawford County) Caves

Trees throughout the entire state are potential summer habitat.

Federal Endangered: Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly (*Neonympha mitchellii*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana counties: LaGrange, La Porte

Federal Endangered: Clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Carroll, Dekalb, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe, White

Federal Endangered: Northern Riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Dekalb, Pulaski

Federal Endangered: Tubercled-Blossom Pearlymussel (*Epioblasma torulosa torulosa*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Carroll, Fountain, Gibson, Fulton, Jackson, Knox, Posey, Pulaski, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Vermillion, Vigo, Warren (possibly extirpated from those counties)

Federal Threatened: Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - critical habitat: NA

Nesting and wintering eagles may occur statewide although most of the nesting to this date have been in the southern one-half of the state.

Federal Threatened: Copperbelly Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*) - critical habitat NA

Indiana counties: Kosciusko, St. Joseph, Steuben

Federal Candidate: Massasauga Rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) - critical habitat: NA

Indiana Counties: Allen, Carroll, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, LaPorte, Marshall, Noble, Porter, Pulaski, Starke, Steuben

3.2.3 Other Wildlife Species

The following are the species commonly hunted or trapped on the various properties.

Rabbit	Deer
Quail	Duck
Squirrel	Goose
Pheasant	Turkey
Grouse	Red Fox
Woodcock	Gray Fox
Snipe	Raccoon
Dove	Opossum

3.3 Land Use

All of the Fish and Wildlife properties mentioned have directed their efforts toward the goal of providing quality hunting, fishing, trapping and other compatible use opportunities without depleting the resource (Table 2 below).

Table2: Property use in user days on Glendale, Pigeon River, Tri-County, and Winamac Fish and Wildlife Areas

ACTIVITY	Glendale	P i g e o n River	Tri- County	Winamac	TOTALS
Hunting (Gun)	6,033	16,648	5,287	3,940	31,908
Hunting (Archery)	1,499	5,126	1,484	1,771	9,880
Hunting (Night)	92	1,262	190	148	1,692
Trapping		1,143	275		1,418
Shooting range (Gun)		5,784	6,926	4,000	16,710
Shooting Range (Archery)		1,112	207	700	2,019
Field Trials	730	88	2,800	250	3,868
Dog Training	244	2,770	800	225	4,039
Fishing (Open)	64,266	43,650	7,640	1,262	116,818
Fishing (Ice)	56	1,100	740	65	1,961
Spear Fishing		500			500
Boating/Canoeing	476	26,675	160		27,311
Camping	28,377	13,576			41,953
Picnicking	1,849	4,100			5,949
Hiking	2,415	8,450	235	850	11,950
Bird-watching/ Nature Studies	5,045	22,250	87		27,382
School Study Group	53	975	850	150	2,028
Military Use					0
Mushroom/Berry/ Nut Picking	1,508	12,700	1,125	550	15,883
Sightseeing	98,651	121,000	28,806	12,350	260,807
Other			18,225	1,100	19,325
AREA TOTAL	211,294	288,909	75,837	27,361	603,401
TOTAL CONSUMPTIVE	72,190	72,199	16,416	7,411	168,216
TOTAL NON- CONSUMPTIVE	139,104	216,710	59,421	19,950	435,185
% NON-CONSUMPTIVE	65.83%	75.01%	78.35%	72.91%	72.12%

3.4 Cultural/ Paleontological Resources

Much of Indiana was used extensively by Native Americans as home sites or travel lanes. These areas are normally surveyed for artifacts before any disturbance is carried out.

3.4 Local Socio-economic Conditions

All properties are located in rural areas. The surrounding area is farmed extensively as a major income source.

4. Environmental Consequences

4.1 Alternative A: (Proposed Action)

4.1.1 Habitat Impacts

The proposed action will have no adverse effects on the habitat. The field trials will be smaller and will be held on 100 acre parcels of land. The ability of the property manager to move the 100-acre area that will be affected to different areas within the property will prevent any habitat damage. If weather conditions, such as heavy rain, could cause problems with habitat damage on a property the property manager does have the authority to cancel the trial to prevent damage.

4.1.2 Biological Impacts

Field trials have been limited to 10 days of actual trial days. This coupled with the ability of the property manager to pick different sites for the trials will prevent any adverse impacts to the animals in the area.

4.1.3 Listed Species

There are several listed species that include the properties in their range. However the animals have either not been recorded on the properties or the activities involved in trials will not impact these animals. Section seven clearance is currently in effect for all of the properties listed in the grant. A clearance will accompany the amendment to the grant to insure compliance.

Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*) - critical habitat: Ray's (Greene County) and Big Wyandotte (Crawford County) Caves

Trees throughout the entire state are potential summer habitat. The major threat to the Indiana Bat during the field trial period is in cutting brood trees. Since no habitat modification will be done for the trials, there is no danger to the species.

Federal Endangered: Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly (*Neonympha mitchellii*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana counties: LaGrange, La Porte

There have been no reports of this species on any the Fish and Wildlife Areas in question.

Federal Endangered: Northern Riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Dekalb, Pulaski

All activity will occur in upland habitat or near manmade ponds.

Federal Endangered: Clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Carroll, Dekalb, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe, White
All activity will occur in upland habitat or near manmade ponds.

Federal Endangered: Tubercled-Blossom Pearlymussel (*Epioblasma torulosa torulosa*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Carroll, Fountain, Gibson, Fulton, Jackson, Knox, Posey, Pulaski, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Vermillion, Vigo, Warren (possibly extirpated from those counties)
All activity will occur in upland habitat or near manmade ponds.

Federal Threatened: Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - critical habitat: NA
Nesting and wintering eagles may occur statewide, although most of the nesting to this date have been in the southern one-half of the state. If nests are located on the property, managers will create zones around nests and relocate field trials so as not to cause interference.

Federal Threatened: Copperbelly Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*) - critical habitat NA
Indiana counties: Kosciusko, St. Joseph, Steuben
There have not been any recent reports of a Copperbelly Water Snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*) being sighted on these properties.

Federal Candidate: Massasauga Rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) - critical habitat: NA
Indiana Counties: Allen, Carroll, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, LaPorte, Marshall, Porter, Pulaski, Starke, Steuben
In northern Indiana, Massasaugas typically emerge from hibernation mid-April, and disperse within a week or two. In some years, warm conditions may stimulate emergence as early as late March. While Winamac and Tri-County are in the historic range of the animal, these snakes have not been found on either property in the past 10 years. Pigeon River has had about 10 sightings in the last 10 years and none by the field trial participants. In the rare chance that one might be found, the field trial can easily be relocated.

4.1.4 Cultural Resources

The activities involved in the trials will not affect any cultural resources. There will be no manipulation of habitat for trials.

4.1.5 Cumulative Impacts

The activities involved in the trials have been held on Winamac since the 1940's, on Tri-County since the early 80's, and on Pigeon River since the 1970's. The typical trial on these areas is small with few, if any, horses and few participants. There have been no long term affects. Glendale trials have been held for about 30 years and have done considerable damage in the past. They often require many days of work to prepare the area and to repair damage on 20 miles of trials and some 30 stream crossings. This alternative will prevent damage and not require preparation time. Future field trials will be restricted to these areas. Once the larger trials use Inter-Lake area, they will find the area meets their needs and will probably not want to leave for any other area.

4.1.6 Public Opinion

Public sentiment clearly shows that these activities are desirable if conducted in a legitimate manner.

4.1.7 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 59 Federal Register 7629 (1994), directs federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice in their decision making process. Federal agencies are directed to identify and address as appropriate, any disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority or low-income populations

No environmental justice issues exist for any of the alternatives. The property is currently unoccupied and unused for agricultural, industrial or any other economic activity. None of the alternatives would create any environmental pollution. No minority or low-income populations would be displaced or negatively affected in any other way by the proposed action or any alternative.

4.2 Alternative B:

4.2.1 Habitat Impacts

(Same as Alternative A)

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4.2.2 Biological Impacts

(Same as Alternative A)

4.2.3 Listed Species

(Same as Alternative A)

(Same as Alternative A)

4.2.4 Cultural Resources

(Same as Alternative A)

4.2.5 Cumulative Impacts

(Same as Alternative A)

4.2.6 Public opinion

Public sentiment clearly shows that these activities are desirable if conducted in a legitimate manner. There may be some protest about the phase out of field trials.

4.2.7 Environmental Justice

(Same as Alternative A)

4.3 Alternative C: (No Action)

4.3.1 Habitat Impacts

Trials will not be held; therefore there will be no impacts.

4.3.2 Biological Impacts

Trials will not be held; therefore there will be no impacts.

4.3.3 Listed Species

Trials will not be held; therefore there will be no impacts.

4.3.4 Cultural Resources

Trials will not be held; therefore there will be no impacts.

4.3.5 Cumulative Impacts

Trials will not be held; therefore there will be no impacts.

4.3.6 Public opinion

Public opinion clearly shows that there would be a negative response to a decision not to allow this activity when the activity is conducted in a manner consistent with Federal and State guidelines for field trial/test activity on lands purchased with Federal Aid funds.

4.2.7. Environmental Justice

Executive order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 59 Federal Register 7629 (1994), directs federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice in their decision making process. Federal agencies are directed to identify and address as appropriate, any disproportionately high and adverse environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority or low-income populations

No environmental justice issues exist for any of the alternatives. The property is currently unoccupied and unused for agricultural, industrial or any other economic activities. None of the alternatives would create any environmental pollution. No minority or low-income populations would be displaced or negatively affected in any other way by the proposed action or any alternative.

4.4 Summary of Environmental Consequences by Alternative

Consequence Matrix

Consequences	Alternative A Limited Trials	Alternative B Limited Trials Phased Out	Alternative C No Action
Habitat Impacts	none, no habitat modification	none, no habitat modification	none
Biological Impacts	none, limited days, time of year	none, limited days, time of year	none
Listed Species	none, either not present or site selection	none, either not present or site selection	none
Cultural Resources	none, no habitat modification	none, no habitat modification	none
Cumulative Impacts	none	none	none
Environmental Justice	none	none	none
Public Acceptance	high, local clubs want to trial	medium, local clubs want to trial	low, local clubs want to trial

5. List of Preparers

Name	Degrees	Years of Experience
Gary Armstrong, Federal Aid Coordinator	BS Fisheries and Wildlife Biology Certified Fisheries Scientist	26 years
John Olson, Wildlife Staff Specialist	BS Wildlife Science MS Wildlife Science Certified Wildlife Biologist	31 years
Mark Reiter, Wildlife Staff Specialist	BS Wildlife Certified Wildlife Biologist	22 Years

6. Consultation and Coordination with the Public and Others

A list of meetings is to be found in Appendix C.

7. Public Comments and Responses to the Draft Environmental Assessment

This chapter of the Environmental Assessment presents comments that were received on the draft EA and provides the Division's response to the comments. Some comments were specifically addressed to the EA, some addressed the programmatic review. Other comments did not indicate to which document they were addressed. A total of 58 comments resulted from the request for input.

The public comment period began on April 26, 2002 and ended May 28, 2002. The Draft Environmental Assessment was made available to the public via a USFWS Press Release on April 26, and was on the USFWS Region 3 Internet Site. An announcement of availability was published in Indiana's Wild Bulletin on May 2, 2002. Copies were available at Indiana DNR offices in Indianapolis, Montgomery, Syracuse, Winamac, and Mongo, IN.

Respondent	Comment	Response
General comments or themes from multiple responses	Respondents were in favor of field trials.	All field trials were prohibited from PR managed or purchased properties by the requirements of the federal aid audit, the field trial programmatic review and subsequent corrective action plan .These documents indicated current Field Trial activity had put the State in non-compliance with federal aid regulations. This EA attempts to document the compatible nature of certain types of trials and that they should therefore be allowed on lands managed or purchased with Federal Aid funds
“	Respondents said they liked things the way they were, or did not want to change	All field trials were prohibited from PR managed or purchased properties by the requirements of the federal aid audit, the field trial programmatic review and subsequent corrective action plan. These documents indicated current Field Trial activity had put the State in non-compliance with federal aid regulations. Large field trials were discontinued resulting from the programmatic review and corrective action plan. This EA attempts to document the compatible nature of certain types of trials and that they should therefore be allowed on lands managed or purchased with Federal Aid funds. Current conditions (e.g. Alternative C) are to continue with no field trials.
“	Respondents believed none of the presented alternatives are acceptable. They were either too restrictive or didn't meet the need for field trails	The presented alternatives were designed to allow Field Trial Activity as a compatible use of properties managed or purchased with Federal Funds according to the procedures and practices approved as part of the audit corrective action plan. As stated in sub-section 2.1, more liberal Alternatives were not considered because they would take the activity back to non-compliance.

Respondent	Comment	Response
“	Respondents considered trials to be a legitimate use of PR land. Dogs are part of hunting	Both dogs and field trials can continue to use the properties. The trials and the dogs must use the property in a manner that is compatible with the uses for which the property was purchased. Compatible use is established by this EA.
“	Trialers support PR land acquisition & management by purchase of licences, guns, ammo	The Indiana DFW continues to believe that compatible field trial use is important. This document demonstrates all users can continue to use the property for compatible activities according to the procedures outlined in the EA.
“	Field trials are not damaging habitats or wildlife	Data from the programmatic review indicated large trials did damage habitat. This document identifies strategies for compatible trials that could be held on the Fish and Wildlife Areas with out causing habitat damage.
“	The DNR should work with trialers to allow less restrictive trials (horses, more areas, days, acres)	Some less restrictive trials would violate the Federal Aid audit corrective action plan. The division has written the current EA to show that there are compatible field trials that can be allowed on Fish and Wildlife Areas
Specific comments	The EA didn't address the economic effects, such as the benefit to local economy	Specific negative impacts were not quantified in the comment so specific response is difficult. The division has written the current EA to show that there are compatible field trials that can be allowed on Fish and Wildlife Areas to minimize any potential economic impacts. There were no comments from either local business or local units of government indicating any negative effects to the economy. The use of the property by smaller compatible field trials and possible increases in other users can help augment any possible loss of income from the few larger field trials. While we recognize that there may be some possible loss, our primary responsibility is to the resource and to the wise utilization of it through hunting, fishing and trapping.

Respondent	Comment	Response
“	Field trialers don’t make money on dogs	While the commercial nature of large field trials was mentioned in the EA, this was not the major contributing factor in the non-compatibility issue. Compatible use is established by this EA.
“	The lack of horse use will kill field trialing in IN	This document provides for compatible field trials that can be held on Fish and Wildlife Areas without horses.
“	Field trials do less damage than DNR farming, burning, clearing, mowing	Carefully regulated burning, farming, clearing, and mowing are well documented wildlife management techniques that are used to enhance the wildlife populations on the areas. The programmatic review did document excessive habitat damage resulting from horse use.
“	The EA does not present data to substantiate negative effects of trials	This data was presented in the Programmatic Review, which was presented as an attachment to the EA.
“	Interlake is not a suitable replacement for lost FWAs - smaller, not well located	The Inter-lake property was offered as a possible area for larger field trials that could not be made compatible with the corrective action plan. This site, 5000 acres plus, is a location in Indiana that could provide this program flexibility. With that said, the purpose of this EA is to determine whether some field trials can be compatible within the restrictions and requirements of Federal Aid properties, not to address the overall desires of field trialers.
“	Dogs should be able to use FWAs	All IN fish and wildlife areas allow the training of hunting dogs on the property at appropriate times of the year.
“	IN Department of Natural Resources is the only state to bend to federal pressure to ban field trials.	As with other states such as Illinois and Ohio, Indiana is modifying it’s field trial policies to allow compatible trials on our Fish and Wildlife Areas and to be compatible with USFWS. Regulations.

Respondent	Comment	Response
“	USFWS is stopping all trials because of horse issues	The EA is proposing to allow compatible field trials. The use of horses will be discontinued due to habitat damage associated by the use, transportation and care of horses.
“	The Programmatic Report is flawed - errors, no user input, preconceived to eliminate trials	The programmatic review, and corrective action plan was developed according to standard procedures. It was developed to insure compliance with Federal Aid regulations and allow continued IDFW access to federal aid funding. The programmatic review was accepted by the IDFW, USFWS and the Inspector General for the Department of Interior. This document provides alternatives to allow the areas to be in compliance with federal aid regulations and still allow certain types of field trials.
“	The Division should prepare an EA that allows field trials to continue	The current EA is designed to allow the use of Fish and Wildlife Areas for compatible field trials.
“	IN is the only state to ban trials on PR land	As with other states such as Illinois and Ohio, Indiana is modifying field trial policies to allow compatible trials on areas purchased with or managed with federal aid funds.
“	Respondents indicated that the prohibition of large trials had overlooked or eliminated an important cultural component of IN/US outdoor tradition	The division has written the current EA to show that there are compatible field trials that can be allowed on Fish and Wildlife Areas to continue the trialing tradition. The IDFW is continuing to work with Field Trial organizations to provide an alternative area for larger, horseback operated field trial activity but that activity will occur outside of Federal Aid interest property and is beyond the scope of this EA.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Map showing the location of Fish and Wildlife Properties in the State

Appendix B: Property map of each property outlining the field trial area

Appendix C: List of people contacted

Appendix D: Copy of the grant amendment

Appendix E: Copy of the programmatic review