Mountain Biking

USDA Forest Service | Hoosier National Forest | 8/2011

Welcome!

Welcome to the Hoosier National Forest! The Hoosier has many miles of trails available for mountain biking. These trails are not designed exclusively for mountain bikes but are shared with hikers and horseback riders. All-terrain vehicle use is illegal on the Forest but may be occasionally encountered. Terrain on these trails varies from rolling hills and level ridgetops to some very challenging hills and steep slopes. Always wear a helmet and be careful.

In addition there are a variety of public roads which provide leisurely scenic rides for bicyclists. Bikers should be cautioned however that they may encounter local traffic, large trucks, and dogs.

Loose limbs and hazard trees can fall on the trail at any time, be especially careful on windy days. We make an effort to remove hazard trees when we are aware of them, but we need your help. Please report any hazard trees or large limbs across the trail to our offices.

A trail permit is required for riders 17 years of age or older to ride mountain bikes on Forest trails. These annual ($35) or daily ($5/day) permits may be purchased at any of our offices or from local vendors.

Hoosier N.F. Mountain Bike Trails

Each of the trails open to mountain biking on the Hoosier National Forest are briefly described here. Maps are available from our two offices or some local retailers. Descriptions are for a rider of intermediate ability. Trails are open year-round but can be muddy. Riding is best in June, September, and October. Watch for hunters, especially during deer season. Ticks are common anytime the leaves are green but are especially prevalent south of I-64.

Birdseye

Location: about 20 miles southeast of Jasper in western Crawford county
Length: 11.8-mile loop, although it's easy to put together longer rides with some backtracking
Skill/Aerobic Level: easy; flat to rolling, very little technical riding except for a few steep climbs. A favorite, offering a mix of single-track and fire road. Along the way are a lake, creeks, stands of hardwoods, old homesteads and a cemetery.

Large print copy available.

German Ridge

Location: about 20 miles east of Tell City in southern Perry county
Length: 24 miles laid out in a ladder style, for various length loops
Skill/Aerobic Level: easy to moderate; much of the trail has been widened and flattened to better accommodate horses. Frequent climbs, a few of which are difficult. The south end is a gravel lane through the woods. Some good single-track exists at the north end. The area on the south end is heavily used by horses.

Hardin Ridge

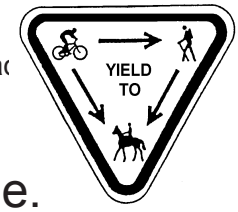
Location: South of Bloomington, just off SR 446.
Length: 2 miles, a linear trail from one end of the Hardin Ridge Recreation Area to the other.
Skill/Aerobic Level: In the campground area the trail is single lane and relatively flat. This portion of the trail makes for an enjoyable family ride although it is used primarily by campers. One end of the trail drops off to Lake Monroe and is very steep. The trail crosses the paved campground road in several places so watch for traffic. Bicycles also ride the paved campground roads. This trail is not subject to the trail permit requirement.

Hickory Ridge

Location: about 20 miles northeast of Bedford, just south of Lake Monroe
Length: 46.7 miles; a spaghetti bowl of trails, so other distances are easy to compile.

For more information:

Hoosier National Forest
Brownstown Ranger District
811 Constitution Avenue
Bedford, IN 47421
(812) 275-5987
www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier
Relay for deaf and hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339



Tell City Ranger District
248 15th Street
Tell City, IN 47586
(812) 547-7051

Skill/Aerobic Level: easy (if you stay on the ridges) to difficult (if you head for the ravines). A combination of narrow and wide trails. Considerable horse use near the parking area, fewer horse impacts as you move further out.

Nebo Ridge
Location: 20 miles south of Nashville, near Story
Length: 17.2 mile out-and-back (8.6 mi. each way)
Skill/Aerobic Level: moderate, with lots of short climbs. A roller coaster singletrack trip through the woods. May be most popular MTB (Mountain Bike) trail on the Hoosier National Forest.

Lick Creek
Location: about 10 miles south of Paoli
Length: 7.7-mile loop
Skill/Aerobic Level: easy to moderate. An excellent beginner's trail, Lick Creek offers a few "whoops", some narrow single-track, and a short rock garden mixed in with easy sections.

Mogan Ridge West
Location: about 12 miles northeast of Tell City
Length: 12.3-mile loop
Skill/Aerobic Level: moderate, with a few tough climbs. Some fairly technical single-track sections. Counter-clockwise offers best descents. Two sections of single-track with gravel road in between.

Oriole East
Location: about 5 miles south of Sulphur on State Road 66
Length: 6.5-mile trail. 1.3 mile straight trail leads to a five mile loop with a 0.2 mile tie in to a county road.
Skill/Aerobic Level: moderate, with a few tough climbs. Recommend riding the trail counter-clockwise and including the east end loop.

Oriole West
Location: about 3.5 miles south of Sulphur on State Road 66
Length: 7.2-mile loop
Skill/Aerobic Level: moderate; some technical sections; attention required on descents and climbs. Go counter-clockwise for a fast, "whoop-filled" descent that leads into a technical single-track. Scenic creek bottom section. Contains some wide, gravel-covered stretches.

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Shirley Creek
Location: about 10 miles west of Orleans in northwest Orange county
Length: 19.4 miles with many other options
Skill/Aerobic Level: moderate to high on the hills and in the streambeds, easy elsewhere. Loops within loops yield many options. Lots of hilly, technical singletrack. Fun, but demanding.

Springs Valley
Location: about 10 miles southwest of Paoli or 12 miles southeast of French Lick
Length: 10.3 main trail with an additional 2.4 mile spur out to CR 510S
Skill/Aerobic Level: Moderate to high aerobic demands with several short, steep climbs. Low skill level with wide tread and no technical sections. Scenic with frequent lake views. Recommend riding main loop counter-clockwise. Connect to Young's Creek via county roads for an epic ride.

Tipsaw Lake
Location: 5 miles south of I-64 on State Road 37.
Length: 5.9-mile loop, nearly all single-track
Skill/Aerobic Level: easy; mostly flat, a couple moderate climbs, some rocky parts. Closed to horses. Beginners get real mountain biking here -- rocky sections, shallow ravines, climbs -- without being overwhelmed. Fun for intermediate riders, too. Lake, picnic areas and camping.

Young's Creek
Location: about 5 miles south of Paoli
Length: 11-mile loop
Skill Level: moderate to high, with several challenging climbs and technical single-track. Perhaps the most demanding trail in the Hoosier, yet is 90 percent ridable, 90 percent fun.

Information on Mountain Biking
For information on all cycling-related subjects for the state, including new trails, MTB skill classes, group rides, and access issues contact the Hoosier Mountain Bike Association at www.hmba.org or the:

Indiana Bicycle Coalition
6358 N. College Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-466-9701

This Mountain Biking Guide was developed jointly by the Hoosier National Forest and the Indiana Bicycle Coalition. Special thanks to Rich Ries of the Big Ring Adventure Team in Madison, for his work on developing this Guide.