

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FORESTS GONE?



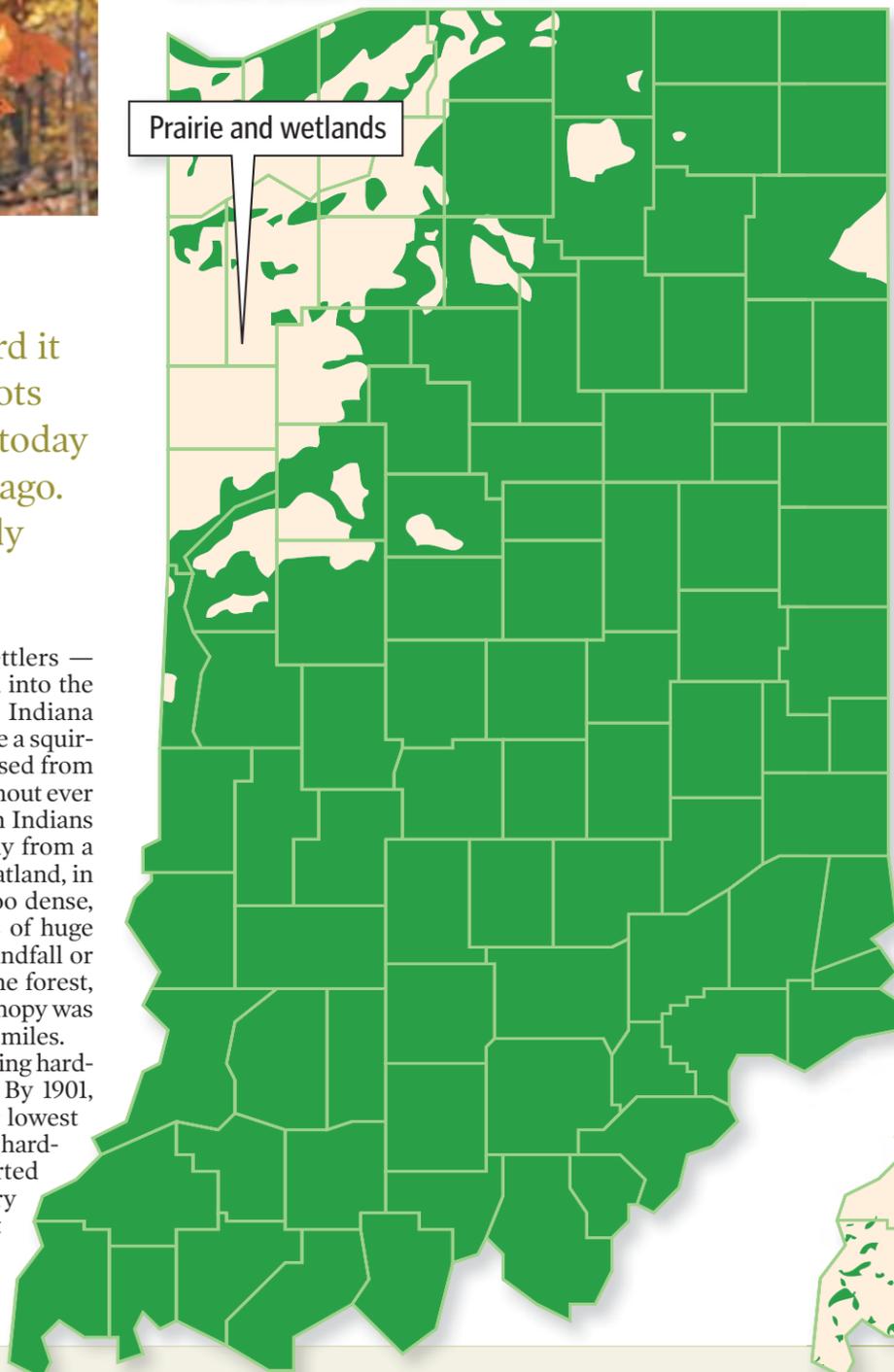
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You've probably heard it before: Indiana has lots more acres of forest today than it did 100 years ago. That true, but it's only half the story.

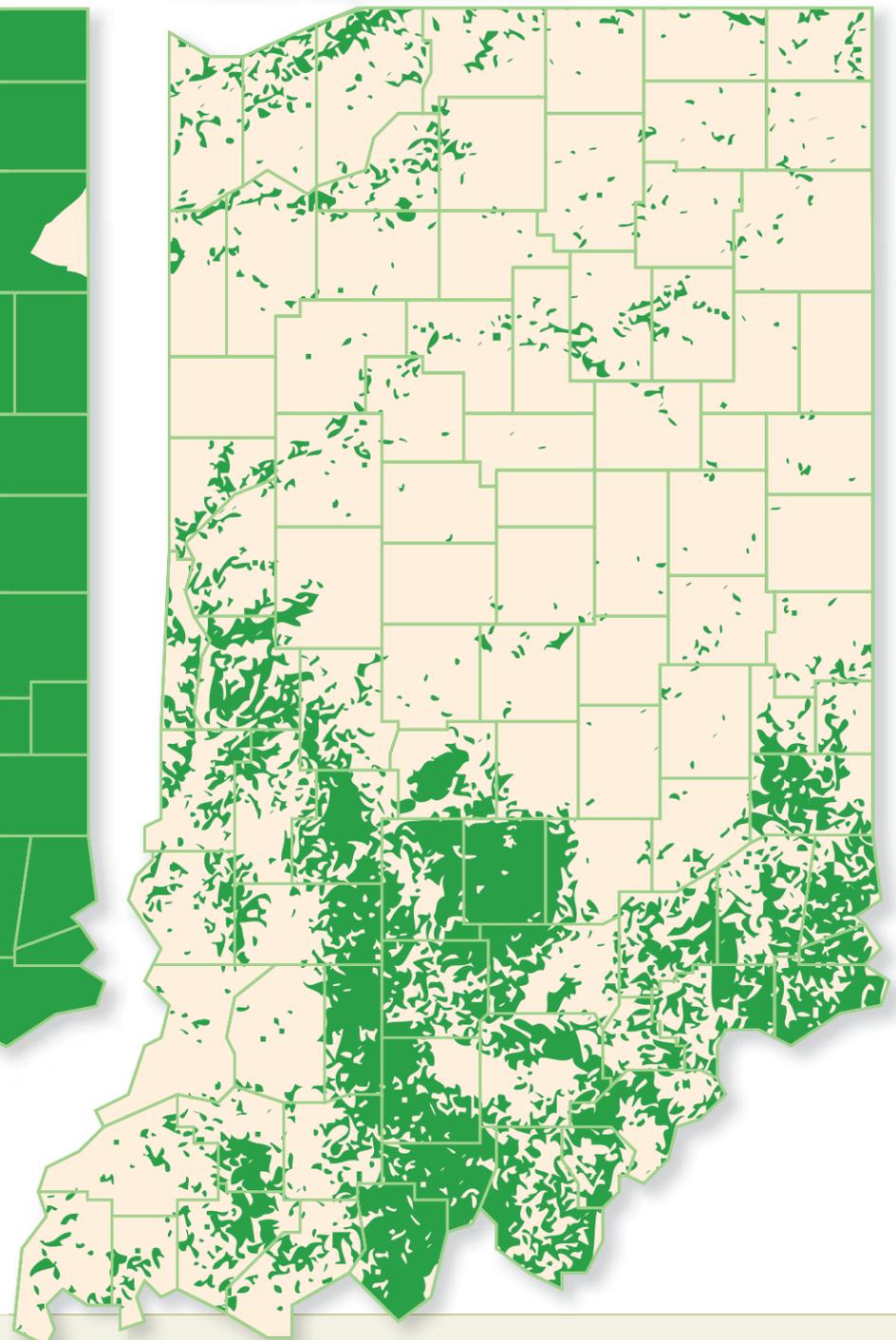
Before European settlers — pioneers — moved into the area, what is now Indiana had forests so dense a squirrel could have crossed from Ohio to Illinois without ever touching the ground. American Indians could see sunrise or sunset only from a few tall bluffs, because in the flatland, in the summer, the foliage was too dense, and even in winter, the trunks of huge trees obscured the horizon. Windfall or fire may have poked holes in the forest, but for the most part, the tree canopy was closed for thousands of square miles.

By 1900, Indiana was the leading hardwood producer in the nation. By 1901, forests in Indiana were at their lowest point, and thousands of acres of hardwood forests had been converted to fields and pastures. Forestry experts at the time forecast that there would be little to no forestland remaining by the 1930s.

Circa 1820 forest cover



Present day forest cover



STEVE SNYDER | HOOSIER TIMES

Hiking in the Hoosier National Forest near O'Bannon State Park.

Indiana's Forests

- Total land area: **23,226,240 acres**
- Presettlement forest area: **19,840,000 acres**
- Presettlement percent forested: **85.4**
- 1900 forest area: **less than 2 million acres**
- 1900 percent forested: **7**
- 1967 forest area: **3,866,000 acres**
- 1967 percent forested: **17.7**
- 2005 forested area: **4,700,000 acres***
- 2005 percent forested: **20.2**
- Private forest vs. public, percent: **86:14**
- Protected forests: **about 76,000 acres****

* Includes forests that have been timbered recently, including clearcutting, but will be reforested.

** Includes the Deam Wilderness in the Hoosier National Forest, state parks and state nature preserves. Except for protected areas, public and private forest land is subject to logging.

Sources: Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry; "Indiana Forest Facts," pub. 1960 by Indiana Forest Industries Committee

Remnants of the forest primeval

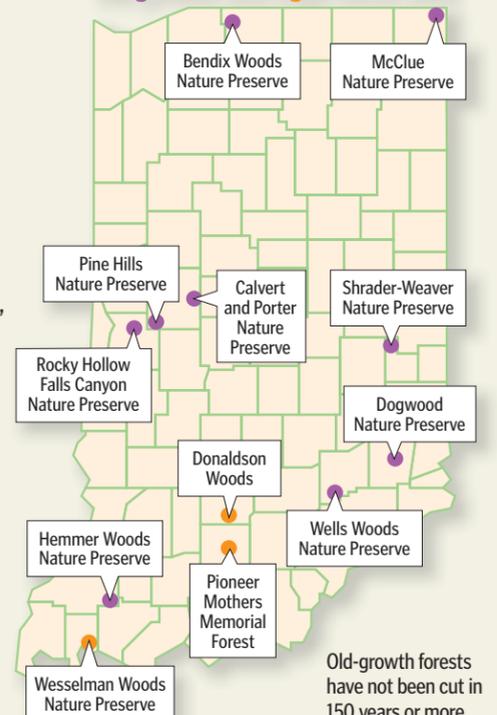
Only a few virgin forests — areas that have never been logged — remain in Indiana:

■ **Donaldson Woods**, 67 acres within Spring Mill State Park in Mitchell

■ **Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest**, 88 acres near Paoli

■ **Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve**, 197 acres in Evansville

Old-growth and virgin forest sites



Old-growth forests have not been cut in 150 years or more.

Science cafe looks at Indiana forests

IU geography professor Tom Evans will look at a history of deforestation and reforestation in south-central Indiana 7-8:30 p.m. Dec. 4 at Seattle's Best Cafe in Borders Books & Music in Bloomington. The talk will describe how forests have changed in Indiana over the past 200 years. Historical data from aerial photography and satellite imagery will be used to identify where and why forests are changing in Indiana and compare this to global forest change.