Environmental Profile: Pike County, Indiana

Information & County Contacts

Pike County Visitor’s Center:
(812) 354-8155

Pike County Soil & Water Conservation District:
(812) 354-6120 ext. 3

Land, Water, & Biodiversity & Conservation Efforts:

Columbia Mine Preserve

Sycamore’s largest property, this preserve is a keystone piece in the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge. Columbia Mine Preserve provides diverse habitat for many uncommon species, such as bobcats, river otters, and Indiana bats. Columbia Mine and the neighboring refuge create a contiguous habitat block of 5,000 acres. Acquisition of this land has been a top priority for the managers of Patoka River NWR for over five years, but a deal failed to materialize. Peabody Energy ultimately agreed to sell the property to Sycamore Land Trust, who will have an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service allowing the agency to manage the property as part of the refuge even though it will remain privately owned.¹

¹http://sycamorelandtrust.org/columbia-mine/
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Ferdinand State Forest

In 1933, a local conservation club raised funds to buy 900 acres to build a lake and establish an area to hunt and fish. They offered management of the project to the Indiana Department of Conservation the following year, and this marked the establishment of Ferdinand State Forest.²

Endangered Species:

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

The Short-eared Owl is a medium-sized owl with relatively long wings, and tiny, often concealed ear-tufts set near the center of the forehead. Generally nocturnal, but often become active 30-60 minutes before sunset; some owls may be active during the day (to a much lesser extent) during the breeding season. Short-eared Owls inhabit wide open spaces such as grasslands, prairie, agricultural fields, salt marshes, estuaries, mountain meadows, and alpine and Arctic tundra. Breeding habitat must have sufficient ground cover to conceal nests and nearby sources of small mammals for food.³

²http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/4824.htm