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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prescribed Burns Reduce Fire Hazard on National Forest

Bedford, IN – March 10, 2004. The Hoosier National Forest will be doing a prescribed burn on a 1436-acre area of the Forest in Jackson and Lawrence Counties between March 15 and April 15, 2004.

Prescribed burning is a management tool where fire is purposely started under very controlled conditions to achieve a desired result. In this case, the purpose of the burn is to reduce the high volume of dead trees and limbs remaining after a severe windstorm and tornado in 1996. A timber salvage sale was conducted in 1999, but flammable fuels still remain, creating a wildfire hazard and threats to public and firefighter safety.

“The conditions have to be just right before we’ll burn,” stated Prescribed Burn Manager, Bruce Whittredge. “The humidity can’t be too low, no high winds or gusts and they have to be blowing in the right direction before it’s a go.”

Even with ideal conditions, Burn Boss Brad Lidell expects there still may be some temporary impacts to Forest users of the area and some adjacent landowners. “A Forest

closure order prohibiting public entry within the burn area will be in effect prior to and during the burn, and some roads may be closed for a short period during the start of the burn. The Squirrel Grove Road (Squirrel Town Road) will be closed during the entire burning operation.”

The actual time of the burn will be determined by the weather. “Right now we are planning sometime between March 15 and April 15,” stated Lidell. “Smoke may persist in the area for a while, so we want to take every precaution to advise those with potential health problems of possible smoky conditions. We will be contacting homes close to the burn the day before the fire so they can take any necessary action if any family members have respiratory problems.”

For additional information, contact Les Wadzinski or Franklin Lewis at 812.275.5987.