



Friends of White's Woods, Inc.

P.O. Box 1271
Indiana, PA 15701

June 3, 2026

Joshua Castle, Chair
Louis Garzarelli, Executive Director
IUP Student Cooperative Association Board of Directors
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Dear Dr. Castle, Mr. Garzarelli, and Members of the IUP Student Cooperative Association Board of Directors:

The seamless connection between the White's Woods Nature Center and the IUP College Lodge forest is readily apparent to anyone who either walks in the woods or looks at a map: Our collective forest is a complex, integrated woodland with only the defining property lines on the maps and in the County deed book clearly distinguishing one section (with one municipal/non-profit owner) from the other.

One map posted on the IUP Student Cooperative Association website actually depicts these two properties as a single property (see page three of this letter for a copy of this map). More detailed maps make clear that our shared forest is essentially two ridges with one valley in between and a second valley on the north side.

White's Woods Nature Center (WWNC) is a multi-sided "Y"-shaped property. The IUP College lodge forest touches WWNC on three sides.

The soil, mycelium network, plants, insects, birds, animals, trees, and even a lot of the humans who walk there can't tell one side from the other.

Inevitably, major forest management activities in one part of this forest will affect the other parts in a large number of ways.

1. Heavy timbering will precipitate considerable animal movement/migration to the adjoining property.
2. "Opening the canopy" will cause new explosions of invasive plants (unless extensive invasive plant removal projects are conducted and deer-exlosures are constructed in the newly opened canopy gaps) and put even more invasive plant pressure on the surrounding forest, including WWNC, than already exists.
3. Significant logging on the ridge tops and slopes will change stormwater run-off and impact surrounding properties.
4. Degradation of habitat will reduce the size of the natural area and, as such, adversely impact migrating Eastern U.S. forest songbirds, species that are already collectively suffer huge population drops, in part due to habitat decline. (Larger natural areas, which are increasingly rare, provide more suitable habitat.)
5. Timbering of large canopy trees will damage the forest's mycelium network (the underground network that nourishes the forests' trees) both by removal of host trees and by

compaction of the soil by heavy machinery. Damage to this nutrient supply network can last for as much as 50 years, according to recent research.

6. Removal of shade on the trails will increase summer temperatures dramatically. The forest floor can be as much as 10 to 30 degrees cooler when in shade. Recreational users will be looking for shade and themselves migrate elsewhere (e.g. to the WWNC) in the summer and early fall months. More human use will put even more pressure on the park.

The preliminary work in the College Lodge forest by Millstone Land Management, along with the larger outlines of a proposed project in the College Lodge forest as described in the COOP news release, points to plans for enormous change in the forest ecosystems. The entire character of the College Lodge forest will be changed. And the negative impact on WWNC could likely be substantial.

Neighbors can't always look out for each other, of course. But we think that it is important to do so if we can. For instance, as Friends of White's Woods (FWW) has worked to control invasive Japanese barberry in WWNC, we have been mindful of the potential impact of our project on the IUP College Lodge forest. We intentionally started our work on two College Lodge forest boundary areas, consciously working to back off the barberry before it spread into the College Lodge property. And twice (when we had the resources), we offered to organize volunteers to help remove invasive plants from the IUP College Lodge side of the forest.

The mission of FWW is to protect the White's Woods Nature Center and we are fearful that our neighbor forest's management approach will create harm.

As such, we respectfully request that you share the College Lodge forest management plan with White Township, with IUP students and faculty, and with the public, including FWW.

We also urge you to seek additional information and consultant expertise as you work to protect this extraordinarily valuable property that, in conjunction with WWNC, provides one of the largest urban natural areas in Pennsylvania. Protecting the forest canopy is essential to protecting the forest and protecting the trails from direct sunlight is necessary to make continued summer recreational use possible.

FWW would be pleased to share or point to relevant documents, consultant information, plans, and plan evaluations with anyone.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors,
Friends of White's Woods

CC: Mr. Chris Anderson, Manager, White Township
Dr. Michael Driscoll, President, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana University of Pennsylvania Student Government Association
Indiana University of Pennsylvania Alumni Association



Map on IUP Student Cooperative Association website depicting WWNC and IUP College Lodge forest as a single entity.

<https://www.coop.iup.edu/campus-recreation/lodge/>