

PASSED: 8-0

RESOLUTION 2024-03

**RESOLUTION URGING PASSAGE OF UNITED STATES SENATE BILL 2990,
REGARDING THE EXPANSION OF THE CHARLES C. DEAM WILDERNESS
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BENJAMIN HARRISON NATIONAL
RECREATION AREA**

- WHEREAS, the restoration of our natural forest ecosystem requires that as many examples of that ecosystem of landscape scale in size be protected to return to the old growth condition as possible; and
- WHEREAS, while the Hoosier National Forest is one of America's smallest national forests, the Hoosier National Forest is by far Indiana's largest public forest; and
- WHEREAS, the Hoosier National Forest is Indiana's only national forest, and it contains the largest tracts of wild, undeveloped forest among the public lands in Indiana with several of those tracts located adjacent to each other in the northern Pleasant Run Purchase Unit of this public forest; and
- WHEREAS, the Charles C. Deam Wilderness (Deam Wilderness) and many thousands of adjacent acres of national forest land comprise an area of deep, uninterrupted hardwood forest of incomparable wild beauty in the nation's industrial heartland; and
- WHEREAS, most of the land within the Deam Wilderness and adjacent national forest land to the southeast, east, and north of this Wilderness is rugged hills with steep slopes and deep hollows that drain to streams and creeks that feed Monroe Reservoir, a public water supply for more than 130,000 people; and
- WHEREAS, on September 28, 2023, U.S. Senator Mike Braun of Indiana introduced Senate Bill 2990, legislation that would expand the Deam Wilderness to the north, east, and southeast by designating 15,300 acres of National Forest System land as "Wilderness", as well as establish the Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area consisting of 29,382 acres of National Forest System land; and
- WHEREAS, such designations endeavor to protect public national forest lands by law from activities that may adversely impact the water quality of Monroe Reservoir, which is the sole water supply of residents of the City of Bloomington; and
- WHEREAS, the aforementioned public national forest lands include Nebo Ridge, Bad Hollow, Porter Hollow, Will Hay Branch, Panther Creek, Deckard Ridge, Eel Creek, Hickory Ridge, Fleetwood Branch, Combs Branch and Moses Ray Branch, and other national forest lands within the Pleasant Run Purchase Unit of the Hoosier National Forest; and
- WHEREAS, these national forest lands have been set aside from commercial timber harvest for the past 32 years under the 1991 and 2006 Hoosier National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans; and
- WHEREAS, the designation of these national forest lands to the north, east, and southeast, of the Deam Wilderness as Wilderness should facilitate returning large tracts of old forest to old growth condition on a landscape scale and assist in providing an ample habitat for species such as the cerulean warbler, timber rattlesnake, Indiana bat, northern long eared bat, tricolored bat, and other forest dependent animals, plants, and fungi that are endangered or rare in the state and which have been identified present in these forests by recent Indiana Forest Alliance surveys; and
- WHEREAS, the Hoosier National Forest is heavily enjoyed by Hoosiers for its recreational value, and the establishment of the Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area aligns with this interest; and

WHEREAS, combined with the adjacent Brown County State Park, the expansion of the Deam Wilderness to include these national forest lands to the southeast, east and north will create a large sanctuary for the enjoyment of wild nature and native hardwood forest that is unparalleled in the states of Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA, THAT:

Section 1. The Bloomington Common Council hereby endorses and respectfully urges the passage and expeditious enactment of S. 2990, known as the Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area and Wilderness Establishment Act of 2023, introduced in the U.S. Senate by U.S. Senator Mike Braun of Indiana, that extends the boundaries of the Deam Wilderness to include approximately 15,300 acres of additional National Forest land, and establishes the Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area consisting of approximately 29,382 acres of National Forest land that surrounds the expanded Wilderness area.

Section 2. The City Clerk shall send a copy of this resolution, duly adopted, to the Indiana Congressional delegation.

PASSED by the Common Council of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 28th day of February, 2024.


ISABEL PIEDMONT-SMITH, President
Bloomington Common Council

ATTEST:


NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk

PRESENTED by me to the Mayor of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this 29th day of February, 2024.


NICOLE BOLDEN, Clerk

SIGNED AND APPROVED by me this 29th day of February, 2024.


KERRY THOMSON, Mayor
City of Bloomington

SYNOPSIS

This resolution, sponsored by Councilmembers Dave Rollo and Andy Ruff, would endorse and urge the passage and enactment of United States Senate Bill 2990, which would establish the Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area, as well as expand the Charles C. Deam Wilderness through designation of 15,300 acres of National Forest System land. If passed, this resolution would direct the city clerk to send a copy of it to the Indiana Congressional delegation.

Note: This resolution was revised after distribution in the Legislative Packet but before introduction at the February 28, 2024 Regular Session in order to list Cm. Andy Ruff as a co-sponsor.

Distributed to: CA, Clerk, Mayor, IN Congressional Delegation