

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS
FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6924

BILL NUMBER: HB 1414

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 22, 2026

BILL AMENDED: Jan 22, 2026

SUBJECT: Forest Management.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Baird

BILL STATUS: CR Adopted - 1st House

FIRST SPONSOR:

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: (Amended) *Forestry*: The bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish recreational fees for the access and use of state forest land. It provides that the DNR shall ensure that at all times: (1) 10% of state forest land consists of forests that are 100 years or older; and (2) 10% of state forest land consists of forests that are 20 years or younger. It provides that money in the State Forestry Fund does not revert to the state General Fund.

Limits on Liability for Recreational Use: The bill also establishes various restrictions on landowner liability to recreational users.

Effective Date: July 1, 2026.

Explanation of State Expenditures: *Forestry*: Workload could potentially increase for the DNR as the bill requires them to establish fees for the access and use of state forest land, to investigate new revenue raising methods, and to ensure at all times that state forest land consist of forests of certain ages by percentage.

(Revised) Limits on Liability for Recreational Use: The bill reduces the state's liability when a person, or their property, is injured on state-owned land, which could decrease potential future expenditures.

Explanation of State Revenues: *Forestry*: The bill could potentially increase revenue to the State Forestry Fund if the DNR establishes fees that are not currently charged (they currently charge for various things such as camping, shelter house rentals, horse trails, and lake use). The bill specifies that the State Forestry Fund is nonreverting, which should not have an impact as the fund is already administered as a dedicated fund.

(Revised) Limits on Liability for Recreational Use: The bill could impact civil cases indeterminately, but likely minimally. It expands limits to liability for landowners when a person is injured on their property, providing that the landowner does not assume responsibility or incur liability for the condition of the land and adding the purposes of exercising and cycling to the list of recreational activities for which a person would be on the land.

When civil cases occur and court fees are collected, revenue to the state General Fund is received. The total revenue per case ranges between \$100 and \$122, depending on whether the case is filed in a court of record or a municipal court. The following linked document describes the fees and distribution of the revenue: [Court fees imposed in civil, probate, and small claims cases](#).

Explanation of Local Expenditures: *(Revised) Limits on Liability for Recreational Use:* The bill reduces a local unit's liability when a person, or their property, is injured on their land, which could decrease potential future expenditures.

Explanation of Local Revenues: *(Revised) Limits on Liability for Recreational Use:* When civil cases occur and court fees are collected, revenue is collected by certain local units. If the case is filed in a court of record, the county receives \$32 and qualifying municipalities receive a share of \$3. If the case is filed in a municipal court, the county receives \$20, and the municipality receives \$37. The following linked document describes the fees and distribution of the revenue: [Court fees imposed in civil, probate, and small claims cases](#).

State Agencies Affected: Department of Natural Resources.

Local Agencies Affected: Trial courts, city and town courts.

Information Sources: Indiana Supreme Court, Indiana Trial Court Fee Manual; State Peoplesoft Financial Data; <https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/properties/recreation/>; <https://www.railstotrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Legal-Research-Digest-Liability-Aspects-of-Bikeways.pdf>

Fiscal Analyst: Heather Puletz, 317-234-9484.