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3.27 MANAGED LAND IMPACTS

3.27.1 Introduction

The Mid-States Corridor project encompasses a 12-county Study Area that includes some of the most popular forests, nature preserves and recreational areas in the State of Indiana. This section evaluates the potential impacts of each alternative on managed lands in the Study Area. Managed lands are both public and privately owned lands managed for stewardship, conservation and preservation. For purposes of this study, managed lands include the following: outdoor recreation facilities, trails, publicly managed lands and private properties whose owners participate in federal, state and local programs. The programs may be directed toward wetlands, habitat or other conservation management programs. Managed lands located within the Study Area are illustrated in **Figure 3.27-1**. Managed lands within the Study Area include Naval Surface Warfare Center, Crane Division (NSWC Crane), Hoosier National Forest, Morgan-Monroe State Forest and the Martin State Forest. **Appendix GG – Managed Land Appendix** describes and maps each managed land impacted by proposed alternatives.

Programs that enroll privately-owned lands in government cost-share programs, which commonly focus on conservation, are listed below. These programs are analyzed in this chapter for the areas within the 12-county Study Area where data are available.

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
 - Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)
 - Emergency Watershed Protection Floodplain Easement (EWPP-FPE)
- USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA)
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
 - Classified Forest and Wildlands Program (CFWP)

3.27.2 Methodology

Relevant government agencies were contacted to identify managed lands within the Study Area in addition to those in publicly accessible databases. Properties were identified within the Study Area based on available Geographic Information System (GIS) data, county property data and coordination with resource agencies. Managed lands impacts were assessed using GIS overlay and geometry calculation analyses. See **Appendix GG – Managed Land Appendix** for details about data sources.

Coordination with State and Federal natural resources agencies identified the existence of managed lands at multiple points during the development of alternatives. An Agency Scoping Meeting was held on August 20, 2019 to present the 12-county Study Area and recognize agencies' roles in identifying the project's potential environmental impacts, including to managed lands.

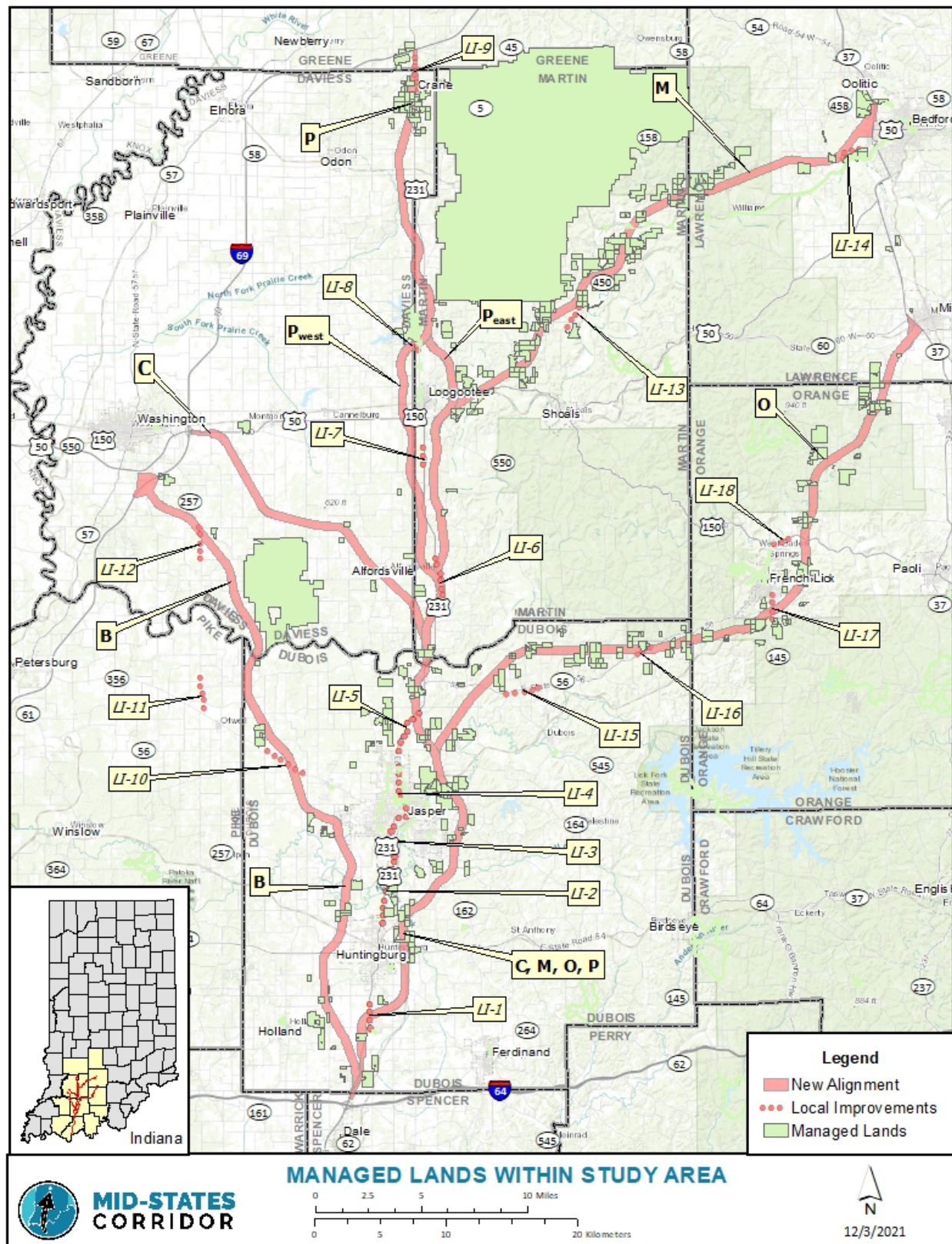


Figure 3.27-1: Managed Lands within the Study Area

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Another Agency Coordination Meeting was held on March 3, 2020, followed by a March 4 field tour of alternatives identified in the February 2020 Screening of Alternatives Report. Agency partners were asked to provide input for refining alternatives. During the meeting and field tour, Mid-States Project Team members requested that participating agencies provide the most current GIS coverage of any known managed lands within the 12-county Study Area.

The project team contacted both USFWS and IDNR to obtain digital managed land data. USFWS's Hoosier National Forest (HNF) District Ranger provided current information on the HNF, including data on its acquisition boundary, ownership and management areas. IDNR's Natural Heritage Data Center Coordinator provided data on holdings, past and present, for the State of Indiana. These data were characterized as a "living layer" that may change frequently. These data are not an authoritative source of boundaries, and its topology is not set as a parcel management layer. Project staff also searched publicly available data sets from several trusts and conservancies including IDNR Bicentennial Nature Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Sycamore Land Trust, Central Indiana Land Trust, Indiana Karst Conservancy and Indiana Land Trusts. Properties enrolled in the IDNR CFWP were identified using property data provided by the county governments in the Study Area.

An intersect operation was performed in ArcGIS Desktop 10.8.1 between all managed land and trail data and the working alignments for each alternative to identify managed lands within the anticipated right-of-way. Additionally, buffer analyses were performed at 500 feet and 1,000 feet around the anticipated right-of-way limits to identify lands that may be indirectly impacted by the project or directly impacted if future alignment shifts occur.

3.27.3 Analysis

The impacts of each alternative on managed lands within the 12-county Study Area are summarized in **Table 3.27-1**. There are potential impacts to some planned trails by some of the proposed alternatives, with Alternative M impacting a planned trail and multiple variations of Alternative P impacting at least one planned trail. There is one open trail within 500 feet of the right-of-way and two open trails within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way. No existing trails or trails under development would be impacted by any of the proposed alternatives. Maps of each impacted area are provided in **Appendix GG – Managed Land Appendix**.

Managed Lands Impacts**						
Alternatives*	Managed Lands (acres)		Classified Forest/Wildlands (acres)		Trails (feet)	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
B	2	2	5	6	1,713	1,713
C	7	12	10	18	2,476	2,476
M	34	48	111	130	2,978	3,032
O	7	12	201	218	2,476	2,476
P	12	18	45	58	6,660	6,694

* Tier 1 Alternative impacts are reported in ranges including all the local improvements, facility types and bypass variations.

**Facility type 1, freeways, has been removed from consideration. Therefore, no modifications to existing US 231 in Section 1 and existing SR 37 in Section 3 are anticipated. No impacts are anticipated on either of these facilities.

Table 3.27-1: Summary of Impacts to Managed Lands



3.27.3.1 Section 1

Facility Type 1, freeways, has been removed from consideration. Therefore, no modifications to the existing US 231 roadway in Section 1 and the existing SR 37 roadway in Section 3 are anticipated. No impacts are anticipated on either of these facilities.

3.27.3.2 Section 2

The analyses revealed direct impacts to IDNR Managed Lands, Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) properties and Classified Forest for alternatives B, C, M, O and P for both expressway and Super-2 options. There would be impacts to Jasper Multi-Use Pathway for Local Improvement 3 for Alternatives B, C, M, O and P and for Local Improvement 4 for Alternatives C, M, O and P.

JASPER MULTI-USE PATHWAY (PLANNED)

This 2.1 mile pathway includes a riverwalk and shelter houses. It offers fishing, boat access, grills and playground along the Patoka River. The analysis identified 1,713 feet of impacts by Local Improvement 3 and 763 feet of impacts by Local Improvement 4. Local Improvement 3 is associated with all alternatives; Local Improvement 4 is associated with all alternatives except Alternative B.

BARNES-SENG (JASPER MARSH) WETLAND CONSERVATION AREA

This area is owned and managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and consists of approximately 180 acres of deciduous forest intended for wildlife habitat. The analysis identified two acres of impacts by Local Improvement 2 which is associated with all alternatives.

WRP IMPACTS

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is the nation's premier wetlands restoration program. It is a voluntary program that supports landowners to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA NRCS manages the program and provides technical and financial support to help landowners that participate in WRP. Direct impacts to WRP properties for Alternatives C, M, O and P are approximately 10 acres each for expressway facility types. Super-2 Alternatives C, M, O and P would impact up to 4.6 acres of WRP land each. The expressway facility types for each of the listed alternatives would have a higher impact than the Super-2 variations.

CLASSIFIED FORESTS AND WILDLANDS IMPACTS

Classified Forest and Wildlands (CFWP) lands are privately owned and must have at least 10 contiguous acres supporting a growth of native or planted trees, native or planted grasslands, wetlands or other acceptable types of land cover. These must be designated and managed to produce timber, wildlife habitat and/or watershed protection. These lands are eligible for property tax assessment at \$1 per acre. The program requires that the land be protected from development, livestock grazing, uncontrolled fires, destructive management practices and other inappropriate activities that threaten natural resource sustainability (Indiana Classified Forest and Wildlands Program, IDNR).

Classified Forests are impacted near the City of Huntingburg at the CR 400 W and CR 400 S crossings. There are also Classified Forest impacts near the City of Jasper for Alternatives C, P, M and O at the CR 500 N and CR 190 N crossings. Impacted Classified Forest properties were identified for all alternatives and range from approximately less than 0.5 to 10 acres for Super-2 facility types, with Alternatives C, M and P having the highest impacts of 10 acres each. The expressway facility types impact from approximately 0.5 acre to 18 acres, with Alternatives C, M and P having the highest impacts with 18 acres each. Alternative O has the least amount of impacts on classified forests with less than 0.5 acre for both facility types.

There are no Wildlands impacted in Section 2.

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While both Classified Forests and Classified Wildlands are a part of the CFWP and are funded through it, they are different classifications. A Classified Forest contains at least 1,000 timber producing trees per acre, be a native forest with at least 40 square feet of basal area per acre or be a tree plantation with at least 400 well-established timber-producing acres. Eligible wildlands include wetlands, native woody vegetation, natural or planted grasslands or areas of open water that average less than four feet deep or less than two acres in size.

500-FOOT BUFFER ANALYSIS

Additional managed lands within 500 feet of an alternative right-of-way include Buffalo Pond, managed by the DNR Nature Preserves, and Sultan's Run Golf Course, which is privately owned. Additional Classified Forests within 500 feet of the right of way are near Huntingburg and Jasper. One Classified Wildland is within 500 feet of the right-of-way near Jasper.

1,000-FOOT BUFFER ANALYSIS

An analysis was performed for the areas within 1,000 feet of the proposed corridor right-of-way. There are additional lands within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way. Classified Forests within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way are near the City of Huntingburg, the City of Jasper and the Town of Dubois. There are no additional Wildlands within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way.

3.27.3.3 Section 3

There would be impacts to the planned Milwaukee Road Trail and to the planned Loogootee Trail System. Lands impacted include the Martin State Forest, Daviess-Martin County Park (West Boggs), WRP properties, Classified Forests and Wildlands and Indiana Forest Bank Fee property. Impacts were identified for alternatives C, M, O and P for both expressway and Super-2 facilities.

MILWAUKEE ROAD TRAILS (PLANNED)

The Milwaukee Road Trail is a 10.9-mile public trail near Bedford. The trail is open to the public and is for hikers of all skill levels. There are plans to extend the trail from Williams to Indian Springs in Martin County. The analysis identified between 502 and 556 feet of impacts by Alternative M to the planned extension of the trail between Williams and Sulphur Springs.

LOOGOOTE TRAIL SYSTEM (PLANNED)

The proposed plan for the public trail system is to assist with future development of recreational and leisure facilities. The trails are an effort to make Martin County and the Hoosier Uplands Region more attractive for residents and workforce. The plan is not final but is used as a guide to create diverse and universal facilities that will impact all citizens of Loogootee. The trail will be owned and managed by the Loogootee Park Board and the City of Loogootee (Loogootee, Indiana Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2021-2025). Alternative P identified between 736 and 294 feet of impacts associated with the new route and 4,184 feet by Local Improvement 8.

MARTIN STATE FOREST

Martin State Forest is located in Martin County northeast of Shoals and consists of 7,863 acres. It is owned by the State of Indiana and managed by the IDNR Division of Forestry. The property features camping, fishing, hunting, picnicking, an arboretum and several hiking trails. The analysis identified between 27 and 35 acres of impacts by Alternative M.

DAVIESS-MARTIN CO. PARK (WEST BOGGS)

The park is owned and managed by Daviess-Martin Joint County Parks and Recreation Department. The park is open to the public. The park features a fishery, a beach area, a playground, camping and trails. The analysis identified less than one acre of impacts by Alternative P.



WRP

Impacted WRP properties were identified for Alternative M and total less than one acre for the both the Super-2 facility and the expressway facility. No impacts from the other alternatives on WRP properties were identified in Section 3.

GANTZ WOODS NATURE PRESERVE (INDIANA FOREST BANK)

Gantz Woods Nature Preserve is located in Daviess County north of Loogootee off US 231. It is owned by the Nature Conservancy and managed as part of the organization's Indiana Forest Bank Fee program. The property is open to the public for activities such as birdwatching and hiking. Private forest owners work with the Forest Bank to receive guaranteed annual payments based on their properties' standing timber. The Forest Bank preserves biodiversity using environmentally sound methods, while also yielding reasonable economic return to landowners. The Forest Bank provides and protects rural viability, landscape and scenery, biodiversity, water viability, soil quality, resilience to natural hazards and climate regulation with carbon storage. The analysis identified between five and six acres of impacts by Alternative P, with the Super-2 variations having the smaller potential impact compared to the expressway variation.

CLASSIFIED FORESTS AND WILDLANDS

Classified Forest properties are impacted near the cities of Loogootee and Bedford, as well as near the towns of Williams, Dubois, French Lick, Orleans and West Baden. Impacted Classified Forest properties were identified for Alternatives C, M, O and P. The impacts associated with the new routes range from less than one acre to 198 acres for the Super-2 facility type and from less than one acre to approximately 215 acres for the expressway facility type. Alternative O has the highest Classified Forest impacts for both the Super-2 and expressway facility types. Alternative C has the smallest impact of less than 0.5 acre for both facility types. Approximately one acre of Classified Wildland would be impacted in Section 3 by Alternative M, and this is the only alternative that will impact wildlands in Section 3. The analysis identified two acres of potential impacts by Local Improvement 3 which is associated with all alternatives, and six acres of potential impacts by Local Improvement 16 which is associated with Alternative O.

500-FOOT BUFFER ANALYSIS

An analysis was performed for the areas within 500 feet of the proposed corridor right-of-way. In addition to previously mentioned trails, the West Boggs Park Trails, Jasper Multi-Use Pathway and Dave McIntyre Trail are within 500 feet of the project. Additional lands, not previously mentioned, within 500 feet of the right-of-way include the Barnes-Seng Wetland Conservation Area. Additional Classified Forest lands within 500 feet of the project were identified in or near the City of Bedford, as well as the towns of Cannelburg, Oolitic, Shoals, French Lick, Orleans and West Baden.

1,000-FOOT BUFFER ANALYSIS

An analysis was performed to identify areas within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way. No additional trails were identified. Additional lands within 1,000 feet of the right-of-way are Glendale Fish and Wildlife Area and Crane Naval Weapons Support Center. Additional Classified Forest properties were identified in or near the cities of Jasper and Bedford, as well as the towns of Cannelburg, Oolitic, Shoals, Dubois, French Lick and West Baden.



3.27.4 Mitigation

Efforts to minimize impacts to managed lands will continue in Tier 2 NEPA studies and subsequent design. These efforts will be based upon consultation with management entities. In addition to avoiding direct impacts, reasonable efforts will be made to avoid construction impacts and effects to managed lands from nearby construction activities. These efforts may include grading, culverts and other measures. Mitigation for direct impacts may include tree planting, expanding existing managed lands and allowing continued use, where feasible.

Mitigation for impacts to privately-owned properties may entail repaying funding agencies for portions of funds in cost-sharing agreements. If a managed land is publicly owned, a determination will be made as to whether the land enjoys Section 4(f) protection. See **Chapter 4 – Section 4(f) Impacts**. Privately-owned lands not officially designated as a park, recreational area or wildlife/waterfowl refuge are not afforded Section 4(f) protection.

3.27.5 Summary

No impacts to managed lands are anticipated in Section 1. A total of seven different managed lands are associated with Section 2 while 33 are associated with Section 3. Alternative B has the fewest impacts overall. Alternatives O and M have the most impacts to classified forest/wildlands, Alternative M to managed lands, and Alternative P to trails. Preferred Alternative P impacts between 12-18 acres of managed lands, 45-58 acres of classified forest/wildlands and 6,660-6,694 linear feet of trails.