(BEDFORD) – On Monday, The Hoosier National Forest began opening Hardin Ridge, Tipsaw Lake, and Indian-Celina Lakes Recreation Areas, which are operated by FIND Outdoors.

The Forest Service is reopening its sites in a phased approach, allowing the agency to remain responsive to local conditions.

The concession operated recreation areas are the first sites to reopen at reduced capacity to remain in compliance with CDC guidance for social distancing. Additional recreation sites will follow once reopening plans are finalized. The agency is committed to maximizing public access to the national forests and grasslands while ensuring the physical, emotional, and psychological safety and well-being of its employees.

“While we understand there may be some excitement to return to these recreation areas, there may be limited services or spaces available,” says Michelle Paduani, district ranger. “We ask that visitors please continue to follow local, state, and federal guidelines on staying safe and practice good hygiene and social distancing wherever they choose to visit.”

Visitors are asked to stay as local as possible when choosing a site to visit and to pack out everything they bring, especially trash. Visitors are also urged to take the precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) along with local health and safety guidance. For tips from the CDC on preventing illnesses like the coronavirus, go to: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html.
Responsible recreation will help expand access to facilities, services, and other opportunities. Certain services may still be unavailable, so visitors are asked to plan accordingly and to remain flexible.

For a full list of open areas and up-to-date information on re-openings, visit the Forest website (www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier) and social media pages (www.facebook.com/HoosierNF/).

Contact information for the Hoosier National Forest is available online at https://www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier.