Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry

Morgan-Monroe State Forest
Storm Salvage Management

Compartment:	9 compartments impacted
Tract:	56 tracts impacted
7-digit Tract Number:	Multiple
Tract Acres:	852 (core) 2,008 (parameter)
Management Cycle End Year:	2056-2086
Management Cycle Length:	30-60
Storm Event Date:	June 18, 2026
Inventory Forester:	Not applicable
Property Manager Approved:	Not applicable

Location

Morgan-Monroe State Forest compartments 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 are located mostly east of I-69, except for compartment 10 which is west of I-69. The compartments stretch eastward along the Morgan and Monroe County line nearly ten miles. Martinsville, Indiana, is located approximately five miles north.

General Description

The compartments are generally composed of steep hills and narrow valleys covered almost entirely by native hardwood forest.

History

- 1929 – The first land purchase to establish Morgan-Monroe State Forest. Much of the land was eroded and formerly open from prior farming practice.
- 1930-1940's – The compartments impacted by the tornado on June 17, 2026, were purchased during this period.
- 1929 – 2026 In this period various management activities have occurred within each compartment. Because so many tracts were impacted tract history is not listed. Management activities include recreational improvements and forest management activities such as forest inventories, timber harvests, timber stand improvement (TSI), and prescribed burns.
- 2026 – On the evening of June 17, an EF-3 tornado touched down west of I-69 and moved east through the heart of Morgan-Monroe State Forest. The path stretched approximately 8 miles with seven compartments having significant damage (e.g., trees snapped or uprooted) and two receiving minor damage.

Landscape Context
The surrounding landscape is mostly closed canopy forest with some residential homes scatter across the landscape. I-69 is along the western side of the state forest with compartment 10 being the only compartment located west of I-69. Martinsville, Indiana, is located approximately five miles north and Bloomington, Indiana, ten miles south of the tornado path.

Topography, Geology and Hydrology
Because so many compartments and tracts were impacted across the state forest, individual soil information is not listed. Several soil types are present across the landscape, and the topography of the area is indicative of the Highland Rim Natural Region, more specifically the Brown County Hills subsection, characterized by deeply dissected uplands underlain by siltstone, shale, and sandstone. The topography ranges from moderate to very steep.

Access
Access to and within the area is good. State and county roads, and fire lanes will provide access to compartments and tracts.

Boundary
Tracts impacted are mostly interior adjoining other state forest tracts; however, there are some tracts that adjoin private property and will require care if salvage operations are possible in those locations.

Ecological Considerations
The Scout Ridge Nature Preserve, a 14.5 acres nature preserve representing maple-beech old growth experienced significant damage and no longer represents the designation. The Division of Forestry and Nature Preserve will review and determine the future management for this nature preserve.

Due to the forces of tornado, it is unclear how many standing dead trees (i.e., snags) remain across the compartments involved. The disturbance has undoubtedly increased the number by new snags through the many snapped tops and boles throughout the path. Snags are an important part of a healthy forest and benefit a multitude of wildlife, where applicable snags will be retained.

A formal Ecological Review process, which includes a search of Indiana's Natural Heritage Database, is part of the management planning process. If Rare, Threatened, or Endangered species were found to be associated with this area, the activities prescribed in this guide will be conducted in a manner that will not threaten the population viability of those species or communities.

Recreation
Mason and Oak Campgrounds received some damage but have reopened. Scout Ridge Campground received significant damage and is expected to remain closed. Scout Ridge Shetler and Bryant Creek Shetler received damage and will remain closed.

The paved Hike-Bike Trail, Tree ID Trail, Pathfinder Orienteering Trail, Three Lakes Trail and Scout Ridge Nature Trail all experienced varying degrees of damage. Most of these trails are

likely to reopen following their evaluation, debris removal, and any other necessary repairs.

Cultural
Cultural resources may be present, but their location(s) is protected. Adverse impacts to significant cultural resources will be avoided during any activities.

Silvicultural Prescription
Compartments 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 received the greatest damage. The southern most tracts of compartments 3 and 4 received little damage. A total of 56 tracts impacted with varying degrees of damage.

There are two areas of damage, core and parameter. The core experienced the greatest amount of damage, impacting 29 tracts and an estimated 852 acres. Damage among the tracts ranges from low to high with most trees in this area being uprooted or crowns snapped off or badly damaged. The midstory and understory were negatively impacted as well by uprooted trees and snapped tops crushing them.

The parameter represents the area from the edge of the core outward to no damage. This area impacts 27 tracts with varying degrees of damage encompassing an estimated 2,008 acres. Damage among the tracts ranges from low to high with scattered uprooting and crown damage. Less of an impact occurred to the mid and understory in this area.

The core area will be salvaged using an even-age management strategy. Since most of the canopy and mid-story trees are on the ground or crown missing, the core area will resemble a clearcut. All damaged and down trees within these areas will be removed at the discretion of the harvesting crew. Due to safety and emergency response considerations, priority will be given to damaged trees along internal roads, trails and ridgetops where various types of recreation are most likely to occur. Some standing and/or undamaged trees may be removed to facilitate the logistical operation of harvesting equipment.

The parameter area will be salvaged using single-tree and group selection harvest methods. Patch-cut openings may be required in locations where greater damage occurred. Some standing trees may be removed to facilitate the logistical operation of harvesting equipment.

The area of impact is significant, and likely some areas damaged will not be salvaged due to access or slope limitation.

All harvested areas will be monitored for post-harvest timber stand improvement (TSI) needs and invasive species treatments. Monitoring will continue for several years post salvage operations.

Using Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) data and mapping the path of the tornado an estimated 10,052,319 board feet has been impacted within the core area. An additional 12,416,606 board feet in the parameter area. The core area has significant loss in board feet available for salvage and there are degrees of damage within the parameter that will reduce what can be salvaged. Further, silviculture treatments in the parameter area will be single-tree and group selection, or

patch-cuts which reduce what will be salvaged.

Summary Tract Silvicultural Prescription and Proposed Activities
The salvage operations in the core and parameter areas will be harvested at the discretion of the Indiana Department of Natural Resource. Because the area of impact is large and most of the trees are on the ground or badly damaged, there is concern with the loss of material. The Division of Forestry logging crew cannot cover this large of an area in the time needed to minimize the loss of material. For this reason, contractual agreements with logging companies will be required, like the Clark State Forest tornado salvage in 2012.

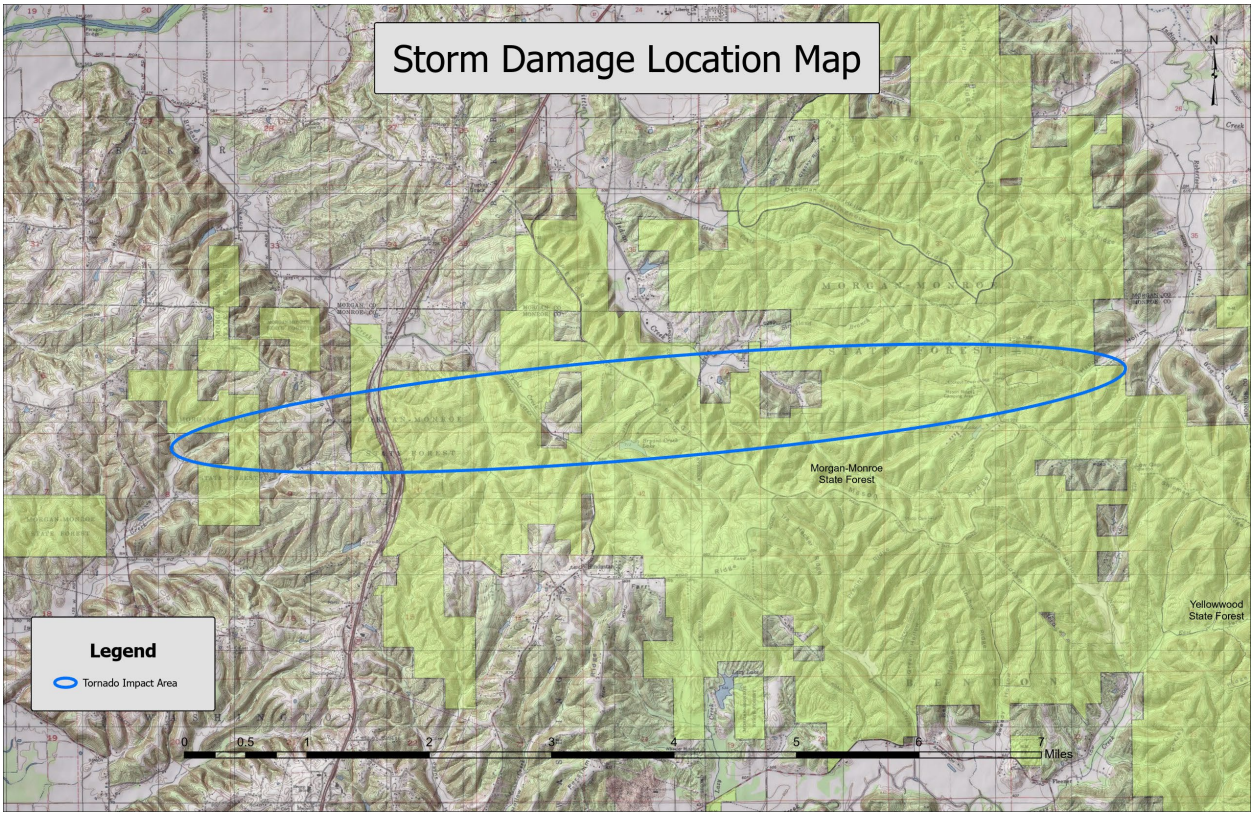
The tracts affected by the tornado will continue to receive management at regular intervals, which for those in the core area will mostly be monitoring and invasive species management.

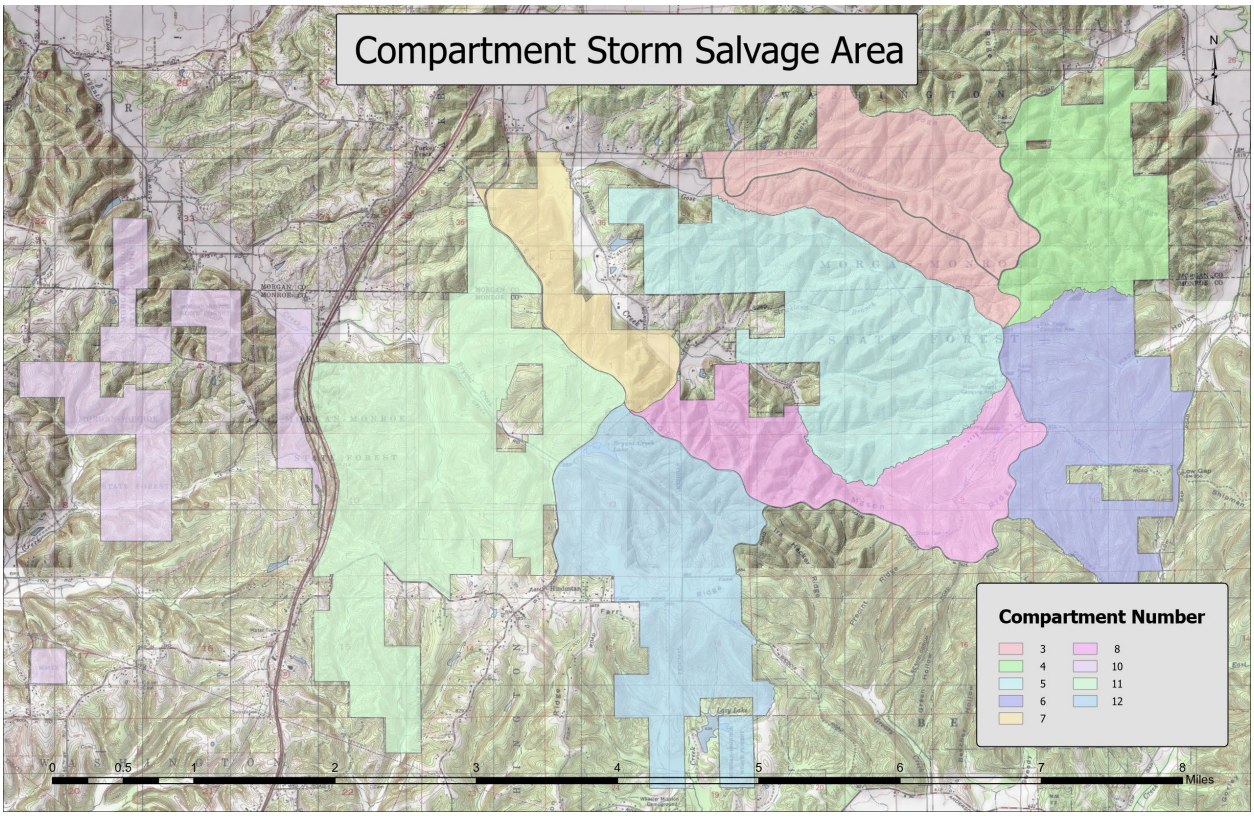
All harvesting operations will follow Indiana's Best Management Practices (BMPs) as stated in the current Indiana Logging and Forestry Best Management Practices 2022 Field Guide.

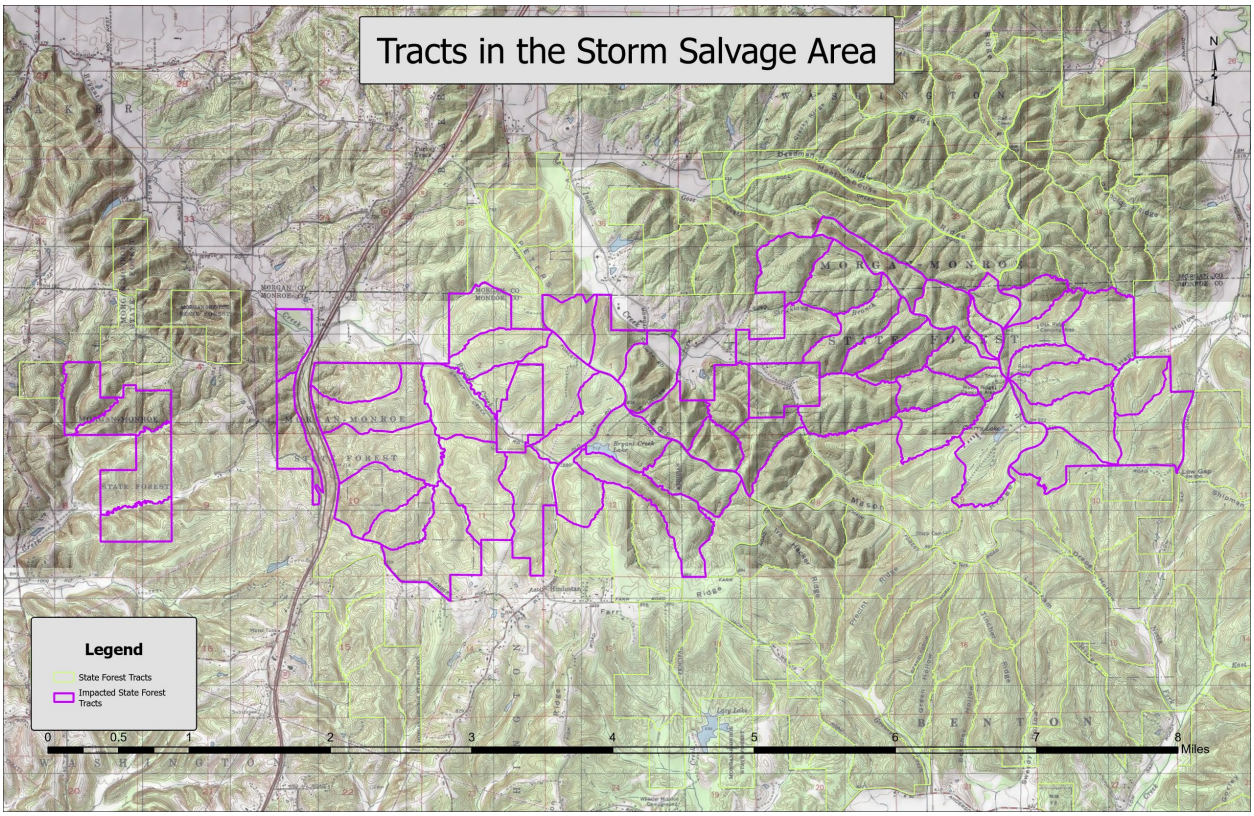
Proposed Activities Listing

Proposed Management Activity	*Proposed Date*
Salvage Harvest	2026-2027
Closeout Work	2027
Post-Harvest TSI and invasive species work	2026-2028
Prescribed fire	2027+
Monitoring or next forest inventory	Will vary among tracts

Maps:


Storm Damage Location Map
N
Morgan-Monroe
State Forest
Yellowwood
State Forest
Legend
Tornado Impact Area
0
0.5
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
Miles


Compartment Storm Salvage Area
N
Compartment Number
3
4
5
6
7
8
10
11
12
0
0.5
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
Miles


Tracts in the Storm Salvage Area
N
Legend
State Forest Tracts
Impacted State Forest Tracts
0
0.5
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
Miles