

Friends of White's Woods Initial Public Use Survey Results (With Select Comments)

6/22/20

N=195

All frequencies are shown as percentage (%)

1. **Zip code:** _____

2. **Do you currently live in White Township?**
50% (97) Township 33% (65) Borough 17%(33) Other

3. **How often do you use White's Woods Nature Center?**
0 ___ Have never been there
14 ___ 1-2 X/Year
15 ___ 4-6 X/Year
12 ___ Monthly or less
13 ___ 2-3 X/month
20 ___ weekly
18 ___ 3-5 X/week
8 ___ Daily

4. **Why do you visit White's Woods Nature Center? (check all that apply)**
96 ___ Walking or hiking
32 ___ Running
10 ___ Bicycling, mountain biking
12 ___ Cross country skiing
83 ___ Enjoying fresh air and enjoying being outdoors
81 ___ Relaxing, relieving stress, mental health
53 ___ Spending time with family
41 ___ Walking dog
27 ___ Bird watching
15 ___ Teaching others about nature
24 ___ Photography
10 ___ Other: please explain

5. **What would enhance your experience in White's Woods? (check all that apply)**
50 ___ Provide better directional signage and trail maps
44 ___ Provide signage about vegetation and wild life
37 ___ Provide historical markers
17 ___ Remove obstacles in trails (roots, logs, small bushes)
26 ___ Provide benches for resting
18 ___ Provide picnic tables
29 ___ Beautify areas around gas wells with wild flowers and other plantings
13 ___ Reduce deer grazing

Please indicate your opinion of each of the following:

	Strongly Agree 4	Somewhat Agree 3	Somewhat Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	Mean
White's Woods Nature Center should be left in a natural state.	83	15	2	1	3.8
White's Woods Nature Center should have pit toilet facilities at a convenient location.	10	49	31	9	2.6
White's Woods Nature Center needs pavilions or other structures for group gatherings.	4	18	55	23	2
Parking access near park entrances is sufficient.	20	48	29	3	2.9
The quality of the trails in White's Woods Nature Center is good.	43	50	7	0	3.4
The number of trails in White's Woods Nature Center is adequate.	43	54	4	0	3.4
White's Woods Nature Center exists exclusively for recreation, conservation, and historical preservation.	75	23	2	1	3.7
A park commission with citizen membership should be established to govern White's Woods Nature Center.	62	36	2	2	3.6
White's Woods Nature Center enriches Indiana by providing scenic beauty and as a home to diverse flora and fauna.	92	7	1	0	3.9

	Strongly Agree 4	Somewhat Agree 3	Somewhat Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	Mean
White's Woods Nature Center needs better trail maintenance, including litter removal.	8	49	38	5	2.6
A comprehensive, science-based management plan should be established for White's Woods Nature Center	54	39	5	2	3.5
White's Woods Nature Center affords opportunity for a healthier life style	89	10	0	1	3.9
White's Woods Nature Center is an important resource for the community.	94	6	1	0	3.9
White's Woods Nature Center attracts visitors to Indiana, PA.	48	45	7	1	3.4

6. **How are you willing to help with park maintenance? Check all that apply.**

- 53 ___ Clear trails and clean surrounding areas
- 41 ___ Remove invasive species by hand
- 72 ___ Pick up litter
- 46 ___ Plant wild flowers
- 14 ___ Build benches and/or picnic tables
- 52 ___ Make financial contributions
- 11 ___ Other: Please explain _____

7. **Additional comments/suggestions**

8. **Contact (optional): Name, phone, email**

Selected comments (9 of 66):

Tell the supervisors to let the woods alone. Maybe if any one of them had been in the park in the last ten years, they'd understand the dangers of what they proposed.

6/3/2020 11:03 PM

White's Woods is a gem. Part of its charm is that it is not overly curated. We do not want White Township's foresters in there constantly messing with things. Let the woods be the woods. Citizens will step up to form a task force for removal of litter, invasive species, etc. We do not want a "park." We want a woods. White Township needs to understand that their short-sighted financial interest does not outweigh the majority opinion - and physical and mental health- of their community.

6/4/2020 10:34 AM

I am hoping that we can finally create a conservation plan for the park guided by ecologists and conservation biologists, so that that forest biodiversity and health may be enhanced. That is the number one priority. We should be enhancing the woods's role in carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat and biodiversity preservation.

6/4/2020 11:22 AM

I understand the need for removing invasive species and better maintenance of existing trails. However, as much as it is possible Whites Woods should retain a natural setting. I. Don't particularly see a need for more toilets, benches or picnic tables. Several of those are currently available on the University Park side and with adequate planning should meet the needs of those who wish to have picnics. The most appealing aspect of Whites Woods is its natural setting, rather than a artificially created park with shelters, benches and toilet facilities. People should not expect an array of facilities when going to the woods. If they have to have a shelter, bench or toilet around every curve, a trip to Blue Spruce or Yellow Creek might be a better option. Let's please maintain the NATURAL setting of the woods as much as it is possible. Thank you to FWW for all you do on our behalf.

6/4/2020 2:44 PM

Whites Woods is frequently used by IUP faculty for field trips--my students LOVE it and are discovering the woods often for the first time. It also help me recruit grad students, most of whom are looking to live in a town that has natural areas and outdoor rec/activities.

6/5/2020 12:04 PM

In the item above about "a science-based management plan," I was not sure how to answer, because often "management" means cutting lots of trees while making claims that the science supports timber extraction. I said I "disagree" in the sense that this could lead to unnecessary cutting of old trees or removal of new growth. I certainly do support scientific data collection and research study on forests, including the gathering of information on how forested areas remove carbon from the environment and improve the health of species including humans. I want to add that research could be done, in the area, on insects including endangered butterflies

and the cicadas, as well as on migratory bird species that are in decline and use White's Woods as a refuge. If I were still a local, this is something I would be studying and agitating around; Western Pennsylvania Audubon and other organizations surely are interested in large forested areas. I now live in western Washington, but I would like to be more involved to support the ongoing enjoyment of White's Woods by the Indiana community. White's Woods is a significant recreational and conservation area, and I enthusiastically encourage the community (and IUP, my alma mater) to think of White's Woods as a space for study and sustainability. I believe that sustaining Indiana County's wooded spaces will in the long run be celebrated by a majority of western Pennsylvania residents. Indiana could model the preservation of woodlands, where too often the town and county have taken short-sighted action that led to long-term regret. We are all struggling right now with environmental grief. Thank you for your work to keep this beautiful place intact, and please let me know when actions are scheduled so that I can take part, either in person or from a distance.

6/5/2020 8:15 PM

Although I'm not a White township resident, I live right on the township border and my home and yard back up to Whites Woods. I walk and photograph the woods several times a week in all seasons. We moved here in 2013 and we purchased our home (a modest structure built in the 1960s) because of the proximity to the lovely woods. Being part of nature brings mental, physical, and spiritual health to many including myself and my family.

6/8/2020 12:12 AM

Living "downhill" from White's Woods, our property has been adversely affected by previous development, necessitating thousands of dollars of runoff mediation--and the amount of water that flows seems to increase every year. I shudder to think what the catastrophic removal of a majority of the mature canopy will bring to the basements of homes around White's Woods. This is a shameful plan--a blind money grab by greedy politicians and what seems like a greenwashed, self-interested contractor.

6/10/2020 11:19 AM

The park is an incredible place that I have grown up running through during my highschool career. I would absolutely say the park has great sentimental and practical value to me as a college athlete and as a local citizen, and I would be willing to offer my time and my voice to help preserve and maintain one of the most wonderful locations in the township

6/17/2020 3:41 PM