



Helping People...

...Help the Land.



Retired Army General Turns His Focus to Forest Health



At the sound of a fawn running through the undergrowth, Tim Adams slowly turns his head to try and catch a glimpse. Leaning on a walking stick with the sleeves of his salmon colored work shirt cuffed due to the last remnants of fall weather hanging on before winter, he surveys the woods he has worked so hard to preserve.

After he retired from the Army in 2012, Adams and his wife Sandy returned to their 80-acre plot of land in Martinsville, Indiana to settle down. His more than 30-year Army career had taken them throughout the world before he retired as a brigadier general. But the plan had always been to return to Indiana at the end. They've made their home on the front of the 80 acres with about 40 acres of forest and 36 acres of farmland extending behind them.



For Adams though, the land is more than a home. It is his heritage that he feels compelled to be a good steward of and protect.

Adams' great-great-grandfather settled in what is now Green Township and in 1875 he bought an 80-acre tract of land there. Three years later he bought another 80 acres on the other side of the road. That second track, which has been continuously in the family ever since, is where Adams now lives making it 142 years his family has lived and worked on the tract. Adams moved to Indiana for the first time after high school and quickly fell in love with the way of life.



"I guess I became sort of an Indiana homebody at a very young age, whereas my other siblings traveled different locations and had different pursuits in life," Adams said. "Being raised my whole life up to that point in urban environments or cities, I sort of gravitated away from that toward the country lifestyle and that whole heritage thing."

After college, Adams rejoined the Army as a commissioned officer in the veterinary corps, but his connection to the land never left him. The family sold one of the 80-acre tracts to a developer, but as a young major in the

District Conservationist, Tony Branam, walks the forest with Tim Adams while discussing forestry management opportunities.



early 1990s, Adams worked out a deal with his grandmother and bought the remaining acres from her in three segments.

“I had a strong interest, almost verging on obligation, in my mind to keep this property in the family and I hope one of my children will do the same and land here at some point too,” Adams said. “They could all settle on this property if they really wanted.”

It was not enough to just own the land, though. He learned from his grandparents that he also had to care for it. After buying the acres, Adams brought in a forester to see what needed to be done and held a timber harvest of mostly walnut.

Once he retired from the Army in 2012, Adams again asked a forester to check out the woods. The recommendation wasn't just about harvesting timber but doing a full management of the forest including removing invasive species, opening clearings for wildlife and cutting back the grapevines that were strangling the trees.

The forester recommended Adams contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to get help managing the woods. By working with NRCS, Adams was able to enroll in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to receive financial and technical assistance for managing his forests. His contract was approved in 2016, in part due to his status as a recently retired veteran which gave him priority in the application process. From 2017-19 the program was able to reimburse Adams' costs as he hired a forester to manage the woods.

“That was sort of a no brainer. I mean, I can have the health of

my woods taken care of at sort of no expense, other than the labor I put in it, which I come free of charge, as does my wife,” he said.

Without the help from the NRCS, Adams said it would not have been feasible to implement the management practices. But thanks to the NRCS, the change has been drastic, he said.

The invasive Asian honeysuckle that once covered the forest floor and strangled out the native species is mostly gone. He also had a timber stand improvement harvest in 2018 which created openings for turkeys, songbirds and bats to flourish in. The open areas will also allow hardwoods such as oak and hickory to take root and replenish the woods, which can already be seen as small saplings dot the open areas.

As his EQIP program ended, Adams enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) beginning in August 2020, which will help supplement his conservation practices for the next five years. Part of those funds will be used to plant small trees and shrubs at the forest border to create a gradient area from woods to farmland where wildlife will flourish.

“When I'm doing this kind of stuff, I actually think about my grandparents and my grandfather's father and his father. I think about them all the time,” Adams said. “When Wyatt Earp was running around the Wild West, this place was here, and my great-great grandfather was working the place. It's sort of a rich background to have and I want to maintain it.”

For more information about the EQIP and CSP programs and how to apply visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/farmland/>.