LAND USE

Historical and Recent Land Uses

Lower Subbasin

The first settlers lived in the hill country along Cane Creek, which was named for the cane growing along the creek (Deems 1940). This cane was reportedly 25 feet tall and an important food source for the settlers' livestock. In the 1870's, the Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad and the Cairo and Fulton Railroad laid lines into the region. From 1872 to 1900, hundreds of sawmills sprang up. Millions of oak, cypress, ash, and gum trees were cut and rafted to Poplar Bluff or Corning, Arkansas (Deems 1940). By the early 1900's the majority of quality timber was exhausted from this subbasin.

Draining of the southern part this subbasin began in 1870 when the Butler County Court constructed a levee along the Black River and a ditch from Cane Creek to the Black River (Deems 1940). In 1906, Charles Lane designed the current system of north/south ditches at one mile intervals and a large levee along the western bank of the Black River (Deems 1940). This drainage system opened up the lands to the west of the Black River for farming. The construction of the levee along the Black River caused more flooding of the eastern part of the basin and in 1913 the Inter-River Drainage District was formed. This drainage district oversaw the construction of drainage ditches, small levees, and a large levee on the west bank of the St. Francis River. This large levee prevented floodwaters from the two basins from mixing.

Currently, the lower subbasin is 55% forest and 45% row crop or pasture (MDNR 1995; Figure lu). Soybeans, followed by rice and corn, are the three major crops in Butler County (personal communication, Ken Whitehead, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Butler County). The amount of rice planted in Butler County is rapidly increasing. In 1999, 70,000 acres were planted with rice, up from 49,000 acres in 1997 (personal communication, Bruce Beck, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension, Butler County).

Upper Subbasin

Like in the lower subbasin, the timber industry dominated in the early 1900's. The T.J. Moss Tie Company kept the three forks of the Black River full of railroad ties from early spring through late summer (Anonymous 1995). By the late 1920's, the lumber boom was over because most of the marketable timber was gone. Because of this widespread cutting, dense stands of shrubs and brush soon covered the watershed. To control this growth, large-scale burning became a common practice and consequently, the soil was laid bare to erosion (Anonymous 1995). Excessive gravel eroded from the hillsides and into the streams.

This subbasin lies within the Viburnum Trend, also known as the "new lead belt" (Smith 1988). In 1955, substantial deposits of lead, zinc, copper, and silver were discovered in this subbasin. By 1970, the new lead belt was the largest lead producing region in the world (Wixson and Tranter 1972). More information on lead mining can be found in the Water Quality and Use section.

Currently, this subbasin is 85% forest and 15% pasture (MDNR 1995), with no major urban areas.

Soil Conservation Projects

Lower Subbasin

One Public Law 83-566 project is under way in the City of Piedmont on McKenzie Creek. The goal of the project is to reduce flood damages by moving residents and businesses out of the floodplain and creating a greenway along the creek. As of February 2004, 101 properties have been purchased. Additional information pertaining to this project can be obtained by contacting the Natural Resources Conservation Service at Parkade Center, Suite 250, 601Business Loop 70 West, Columbia, Missouri, 65203.

An EARTH project in the northern one-half of McKenzie Creek watershed was started in September 1993. The project objective is to reduce erosion to "T" through the installation of erosion control structures, pasture and hayland improvement, and woodland enhancement through livestock exclusion. To date, two of the planned 56 ponds have been constructed and approximately 8,000 acres of pasture, hayland, or woodlands have been enhanced (personal communication, Tom Johnson, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wayne County).

Upper Subbasin

There are no completed, scheduled, or on-going soil conservation projects in this subbasin.

Public Areas

Lower Subbasin

Public lands total 114,997 acres (21% of subbasin) (Figure lp, Table 3). The majority of this acreage (87%) is owned by the U. S. Forest Service (USFS). On the Black River, concrete boat ramps are located at Coon Island Conservation Area (MDC), Sportsman's Park Access (MDC), Hilliard Access (MDC), Hendrickson Access (USFS), Markham Springs (USFS), and below Clearwater Dam (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE)). Only small boats or canoes can be launched from Bradley A. Hammer Memorial Conservation Area (MDC) and Highway 49 (Mill Spring City Park). A concrete boat ramp is also present at the Harviell Access (MDC) on Cane Creek.

Upper Subbasin

Lands open to the public total 188,555 acres (33% of subbasin) (Figure up, Table 3). Much of this is USFS land (69%), but the COE owns 19,000 acres around Clearwater Reservoir and the MDNR owns 9,200 acres (Johnson Shut-Ins State Park and Taum Sauk Mountain State Park). In June 1967, the Missouri Department of Conservation entered into a 25-year lease agreement with Union Electric, now called AmerenUE, to manage Lower Taum Sauk Lake and the surrounding lands (1,540 Acres). In 1992, this lease was renewed for an additional 25 years.

Three concrete boat ramps are located on Clearwater Reservoir (Piedmont Park, Webb Creek, and Bluff View). No concrete boat ramps are located on any subbasin streams. On the Black River, small boats or canoes can be launched from the Lesterville Access (MDC) and Highway K (COE). On the West Fork of the Black River, the Centerville Access (MDC) can be used to launch canoes or small boats.

Corp of Engineers Jurisdiction

The entire basin is under the jurisdiction of the Little Rock District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Permits issued under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act are required to conduct many instream activities. Applications for Section 404 permits should be directed to the Little Rock office:

Little Rock District
Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 867
Little Rock, AR 72203-0867
Phone: (501) 324-5295
http://www.swl.usace.army.mil

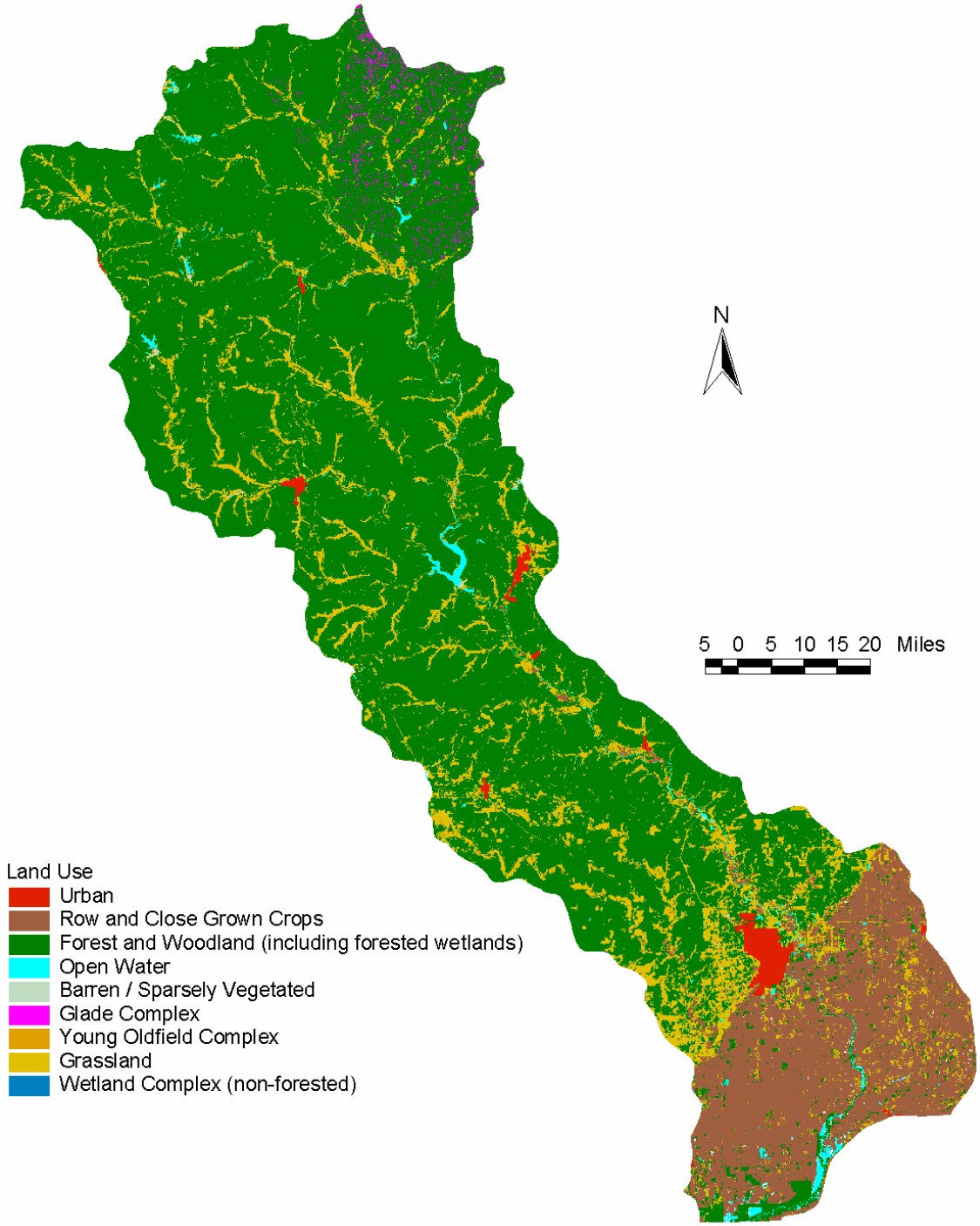

Figure lu. Land use in the Black River Watershed, in Missouri.

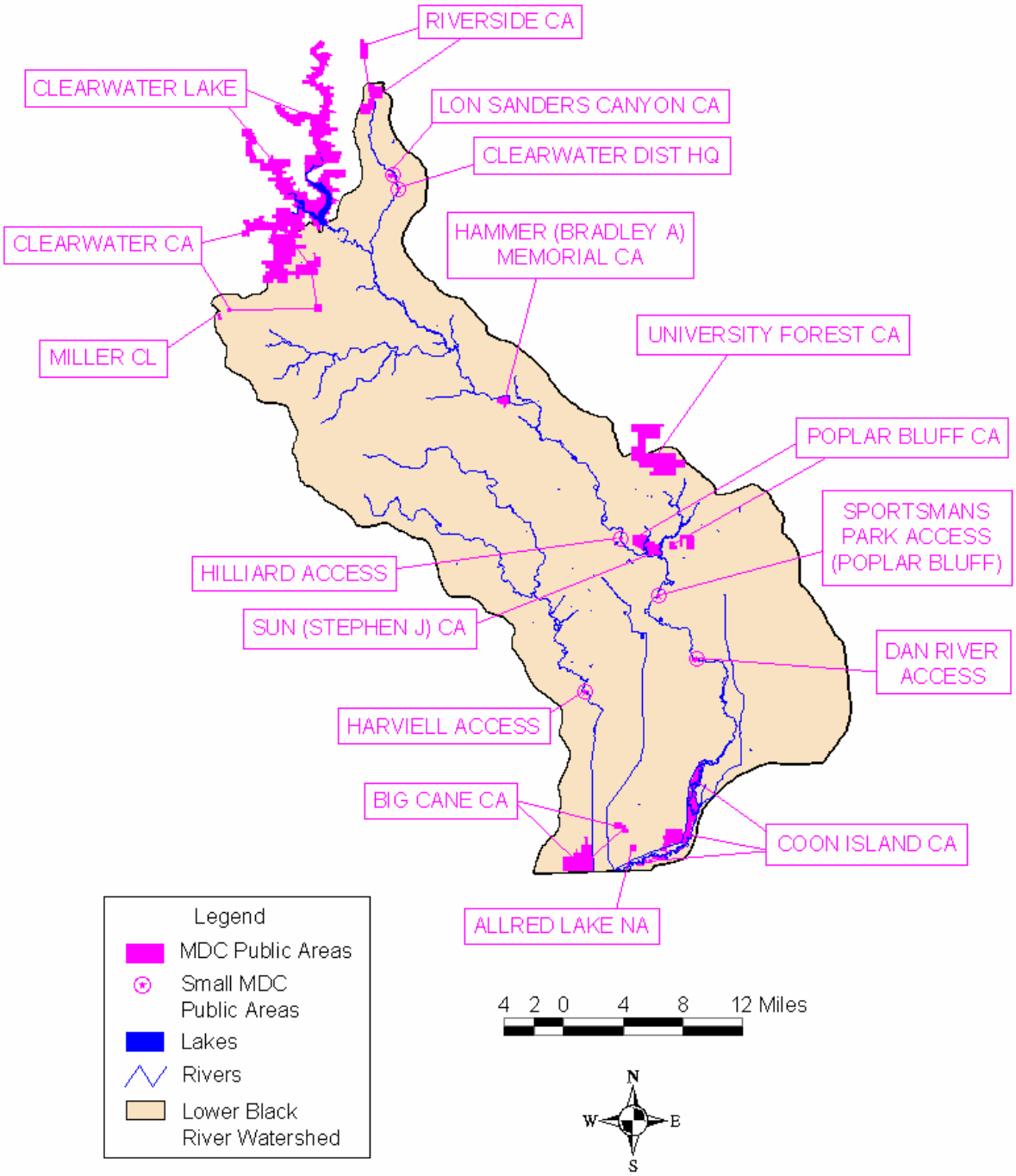

Figure lp. Public areas in the lower Black River Watershed. CA = Conservation Area. NA = Natural Area. DIST HQ = District Headquarters.

Table 3. Land and water open for public use in the Black River basin.

Lower Subbasin		Upper Subbasin	
Area Name*	**Acres**	**Area Name***	**Acres**
Aldred Lake NA	167	Centerville Access	46
Big Cane CA	1,929	Champion Springs CA	165
Mac and Zelma Carmichael SF	38	Clearwater CA	7,474
Clearwater CA	3,313	Current River CA	4,394
Clearwater District Office	4	Funk Memorial SF	449
Coon Island CA	3,199	Ketcherside Mountain CA	1,622
Crane Roost Access	18	Lesterville Access	42
Dan River Access	75	Lily Pond NA	8
Bradley A. Hammer Memorial CA	333	Logan Creek CA	10,808
Harviell Access	37	Riverside CA	937
Hilliard Access	1	Rock Creek CA	366
Lon Sanders Canyon CA	143	AmerenUE (Lower Taum Sauk Lake)	1,540
Miller Community Lake	62	MO Dept. of Natural Resources	9,208
Mussel Boat Landing Access	12	U.S. Corps of Engineers	19,317
Otter Slough CA	49	USFS - Mark Twain National Forest	127,179
Riverside CA	983	**Total =**	**183,555**
Sportsman's Park Access	8		
Poplar Bluff/Stephen J. Sun CA	1,699		
University Forest CA	2,483		
U.S. Corps of Engineers	271		
USFS - Mark Twain National Forest	100,094		
Total =	**114,997**		

* - CA = Conservation Area, SF = State Forest, NA = Natural Area, USFS = United States Forest Service

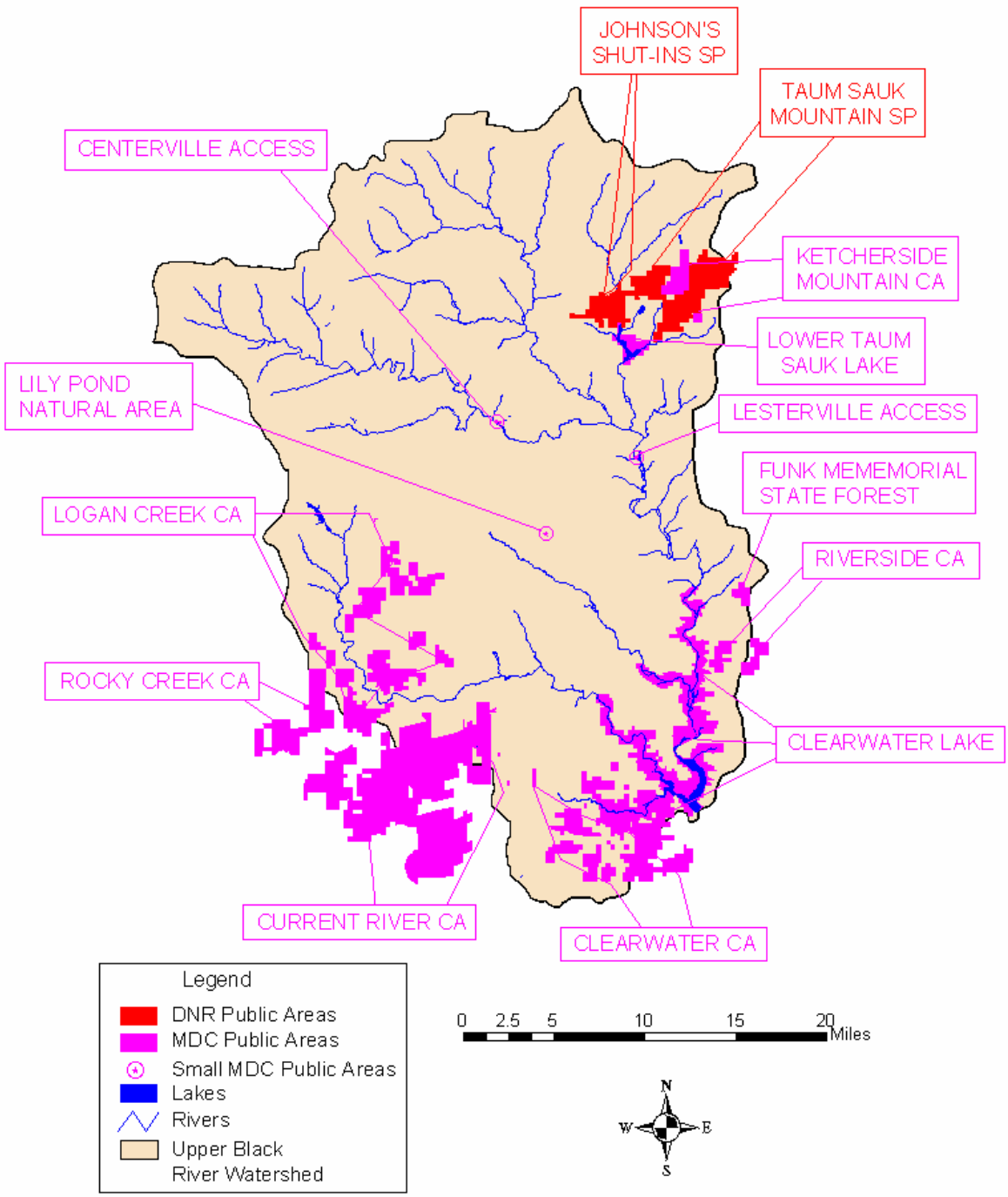

Figure up. Public areas in the upper Black River Watershed.
CA = Conservation Area. SP = State Park.