

Iron Bridge Access Conservation Area

Ten Year Area Management Plan FY 2013-2022



Josie B. Allen

Forestry Division Chief

3-10-14

Date

Planning Team

This plan was completed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Interdivisional planning team.

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Tony Jacob, SLRCF Chair

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Signature:

Date:

Forestry Division

Mike Hoffman, Forestry Management Chief

Mike Hoffman 1-10-14

Signature:

Date:

OVERVIEW

- **Area Name and Number:** Iron Bridge Access Conservation Area - 9227
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1991
- **Acreage:** 70 acres
- **County:** Wayne County
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statement of Primary Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The primary purpose of the area is to provide public access to Bear Creek. The area also provides a riparian buffer zone to Bear Creek and opportunities for fishing and hunting. The main objective is to continue to provide these benefits to the public and the environment. The riparian buffer zone will be managed to maintain the health of the trees.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Iron Bridge Access CA is a bottomland forest and riparian buffer zone along Bear Creek.

C. Federal Aid Purpose

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

Special Considerations

Priority Areas: Iron Bridge Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area, Forest Action Plan
Priority Forest Landscape, Audubon Important Bird Area

Natural Area: N/A

Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. **Species of Conservation Concern:** None
- B. **Caves:** None
- C. **Springs:** None

Existing Infrastructure

- One helipad
- One county road and bridge.

Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. **Deed restrictions:** None
- B. **Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that

would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

- C. Easements:** Wayne county road right-of-way easement.
- D. Cultural Resource Findings:** There are no known cultural or archeological sites of significance on the area.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The area has potential hazards associated with broken glass along the creek bank.
- F. Endangered Species:** No known populations of endangered species exist on the area. If endangered species are discovered on the area the issue will be addressed at that time.
- G. Boundary Issues:** In the past, complaints received about public crossing from the conservation area onto private property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Prevent and control invasive insect and plant species.
- 2) Maintain a riparian buffer zone along the creek and provide protective cover for wildlife.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the riparian buffer zone for ecological purposes.

Strategy 1: Monitor the buffer zone for tree health and implement forest management practices if practical.

Management Objective 2: Provide cover for wildlife.

Strategy 1: Continue to allow fields to revert back to a forested condition to provide wildlife cover and minimize spotlighting from the county road.

Management Objective 3: Protect the area from invasive species.

Strategy 1: Monitor the area for the presence of invasive species and take the appropriate action to control invasive species.

Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Demonstrate the effectiveness of maintaining a healthy riparian buffer in managing for stable stream banks. Maintaining a healthy riparian buffer zone will be beneficial to aquatic species that are present in Bear Creek.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the riparian corridor along Bear Creek.

Strategy 1: Monitor tree health in the riparian buffer zone and implement any necessary forest management practices if practical to ensure adequate tree health, composition and density.

Strategy 2: Stabilize any excessively eroding stream banks using the most cost-effective bank stabilization techniques practical.

Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Ensure visitor safety and area sanitation at the river access. The area has had issues with illegal activities, particularly spotlighting, given the location of the area.
- 2) Present a good image to the public by maintaining a point of access to Bear Creek.

Management Objective 1: Ensure public safety and area sanitation.

Strategy 1: Establish a new information bulletin board and maintain a “No Littering” sign and area regulations sign on the board.

Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Dedicating the time and resources to maintain the property given other priorities and commitments that are undertaken by the Wayne County work team.
- 2) Continue to maintain a “defensible” boundary around the area. The area has also had issue in the past with visitors leaving the area and going onto private property.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the area’s boundary lines.

Strategy 1: Paint the boundary line with blue paint on an established 5 year rotational basis.

Strategy 2: Post and maintain signs on a regular basis to plainly indicate that visitors are entering private land as necessary.

Lands Proposed for Acquisition: Additional land acquisition is of low priority.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Administrative Considerations											
Objective 1											
Strategy 1		X					X				

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The Department purchased approximately 70 acres of the area in 1991 to be used as a public access to Bear Creek. In 2010, additional ground was purchased that totaled less than 1 acre. The area contains approximately 15 acres of fields, 56 acres of forests, and 2,474 feet of bank frontage along Bear Creek. After the initial purchase in 1991, an old structure on the property was demolished. In approximately 1992, cedars and red oaks were planted in the fields to help with reforestation and to provide a screen for wildlife. At one time the area contained a parking lot with an information bulletin board. During county road and bridge construction the parking lot and bulletin board were taken out along with the old iron bridge that was on the site. The area now serves as a place for recreation, hunting, fishing, and nature viewing for visitors.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Bottomland/Riparian Forest	56		79
Old Fields/Upland Fields	15		21
Total	70		100%
Stream Frontage		2,474	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Iron Bridge Access Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period August 1-August 31, 2013. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from one respondent (Attachment 2). The Iron Bridge Access Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes – including how they were incorporated or why they were not can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

MDC responses to themes and issues identified through Iron Bridge Access public comment period

Concern about littering on gravel bar.

We share the concern about litter on the conservation area. Litter is an issue on all of our conservation areas that must be dealt with. The goal of the Wayne County work team is to inspect the area at least once a month to ensure that litter is removed from the area and “No Littering” signs are posted and maintained at the creek access area. Due to the more isolated

location of the area it is difficult to check this area on a weekly basis. However, reports from the public about major litter issues are appreciated and an effort will be made to respond to any reports as quickly as is practical.

Suggest that MDC consider selling this property.

The Department periodically reviews properties to assess whether to dispose of areas. This determination is based on a thorough evaluation of the need for the property, cost-effectiveness, and consequences of retention or disposal on resource management. Historic importance and public reaction to disposal are also considerations, as well as aesthetic considerations and liability. The Department has no plans to dispose of Iron Bridge Access CA at this time. The reasons for this decision are so that the creek access will remain open to the public in that area. Places that provide both a point of access to a creek or river and an area to park can be difficult to find, and the Iron Bridge Access is able to provide that opportunity. Even though the area is somewhat isolated, it provides the opportunity for the Department to have contact with the public in that particular area. The comment to sell the property is appreciated but the Department has decided that it is beneficial to keep this piece of property for public enjoyment of the stream resource.

References:

Golden, Rick. 2012. MDC Resource Assistant. Personal Communication

Hovis, Ed. 2012. MDC Resource Technician. Personal Communication

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Topographic Map

Figure 3: Location Map

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Area Regulations

Attachment 2: Draft Iron Bridge Access Area Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

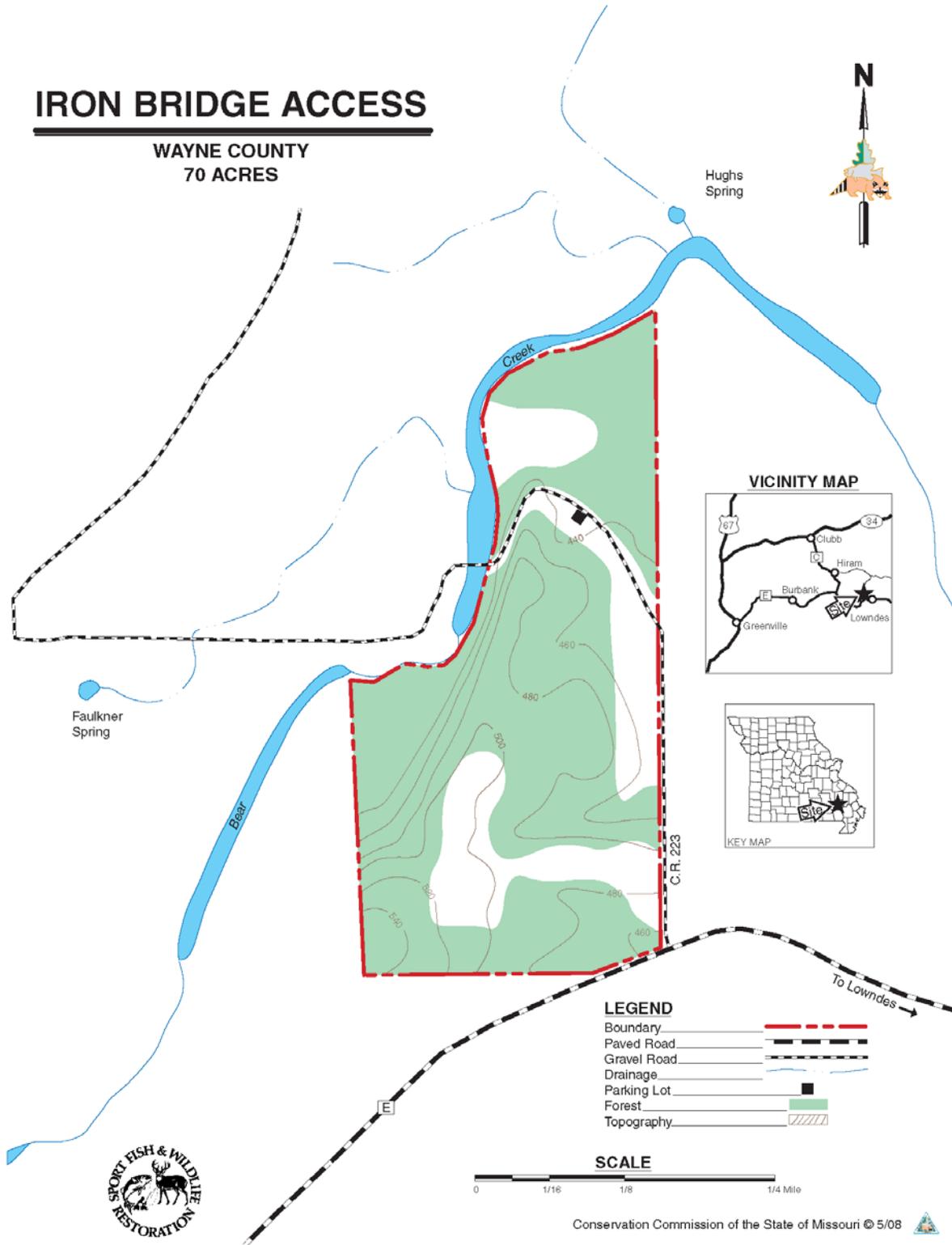


Figure 2: Topographic Map

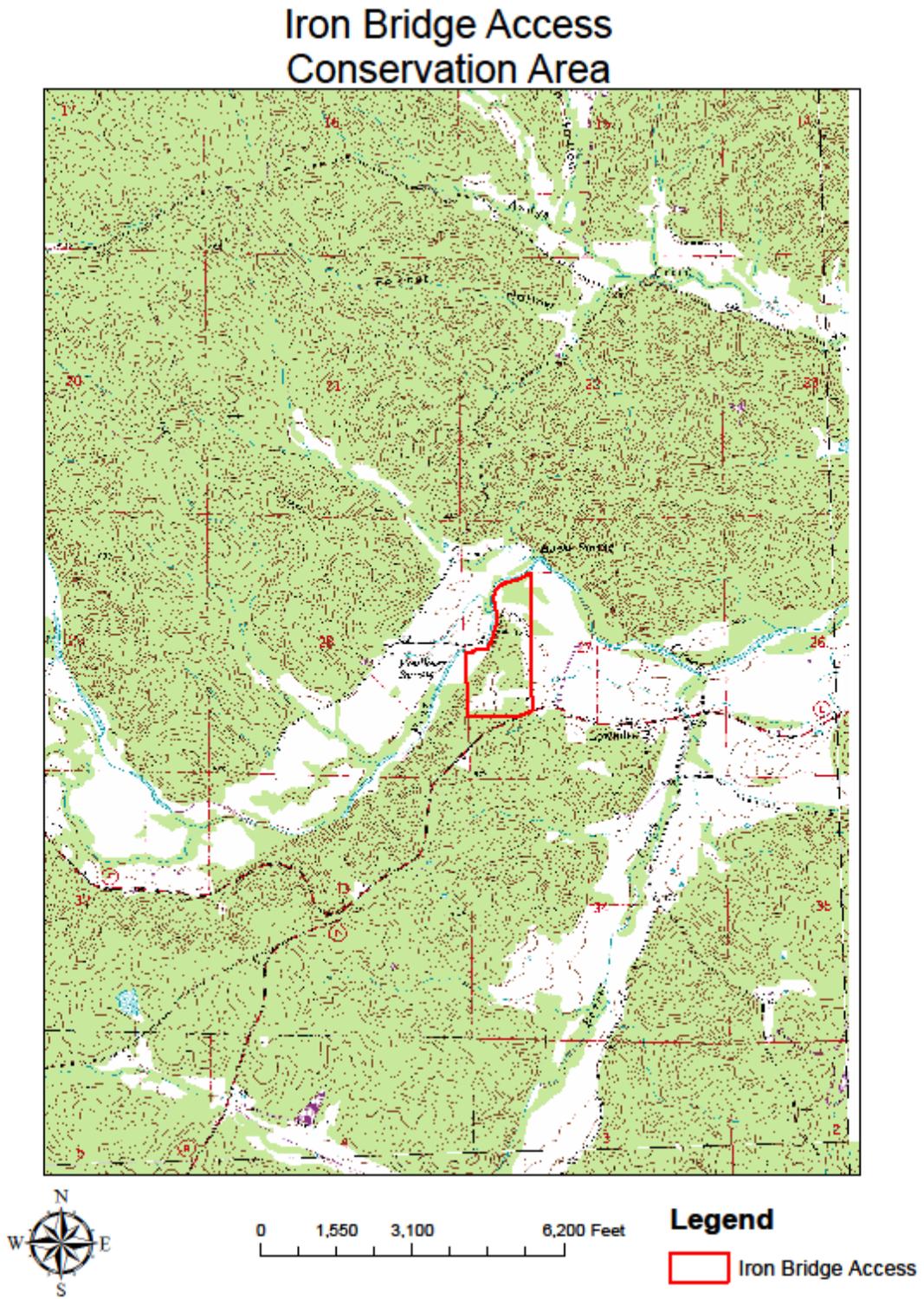
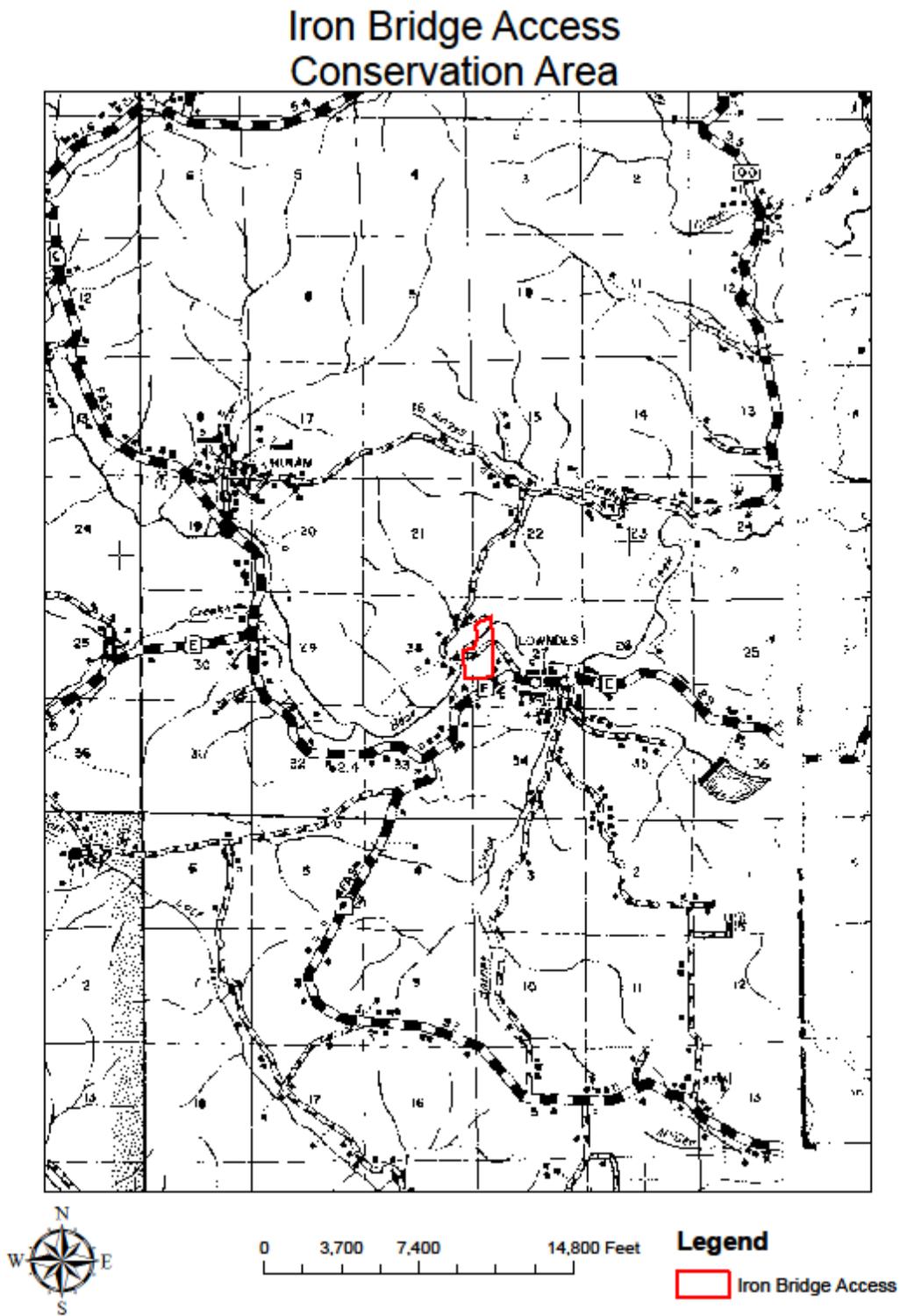


Figure 3: Location Map



Attachment 1: Area Regulations:

- Area hours: Open daily from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Trapping is by permit only.
- No motor vehicles off the designated road.
- No cutting or removal of vegetation.
- No littering.
- Mushrooms, berries, other fruits, and wild greens may be picked for personal use only.
- Primitive camping is permitted. Campers are limited to 14 consecutive days in a 30 day period. Groups of 10 or more campers need a special-use permit.
- Dogs must be leashed when not used for training or hunting.
- Special-use permits are required for field and retriever trials.
- For safety reasons target shooting is not permitted.
- Portable tree stands may be used between September 1 and January 31. Stands must be identified with the name and address, or conservation number, of the user. Screw-in steps or other materials that would damage the trees are prohibited.

Attachment 2. Draft Iron Bridge Access Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (August 1-31, 2013).

I have been an adjoining landowner to the Iron Bridge Access area for about 15 years. During this time, it seems like there are fewer and fewer people using the property. Years ago, there would be a hunting camp set up every deer season. Today, the only users I observe are day-camping in hot weather on the gravel bar. This would be fine if only everyone would remove their trash when they leave. Much of it ends up in the water and floats downstream. Often glass bottles get broken and contribute to the hazards in the shallow stream. Access to the creek is mostly limited to this gravel bar because of the steepness of the bank on the rest of the property. The scenic old iron bridge has been replaced with a modern concrete structure. The parking lot is gone. It seems to me that this may be a good time for the department to consider selling this small isolated piece of property and to redirect their resources to other more effective areas benefitting more users.