

# **DRAFT**

# **Forest 44**

# **Conservation Area**

**Ten-Year Area Management Plan**  
**FY 2017-2026**



**To submit a comment on this document,  
click on the following link:**

<https://mdc.mo.gov/node/10013?ap=13817>

## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Forest 44 Conservation Area, # 9023; Dorothy E. Aselman Memorial Addition to Forest 44 Conservation Area, #200505
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1990
- **Acreage:** 998 acres, including the 40-acre Dorothy E. Aselman Memorial Addition
- **County:** Saint Louis
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
  - A. Strategic Direction**

Provide opportunities for diverse outdoor recreation; manage the natural communities and other habitats for fish, forests, and wildlife.
  - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Forest 44 Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy, diverse, and sustainable mosaic of stream, woodland, and forest communities; a network of hiking and multi-use (hike/horseback) trails that provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy; along with Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center that provides shooting opportunities and outdoor education.
  - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

### I. Special Considerations

- A. Priority Areas:** Lower Meramec/Missouri River Priority Forest Landscape, Audubon Missouri's Meramec Highlands Important Bird Area, Henry Shaw Ozark Corridor
- B. Natural Areas:** None

### II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the natural history biologist.
- B. Caves:** None
- C. Springs:** None
- D. Other:** Occurs in the Lower Meramec Oak and Mixed-Hardwood Woodland/Forest Hills Landtype Association. This landtype association consists of broad loess-covered ridges with steep slopes and broad valleys cut into Mississippian limestones. Historically, this landtype association was dominated by oak and mixed-hardwood

forest, but now has widespread commercial and residential development (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

### **III. Existing Infrastructure**

- Three parking lots, including one off Hillsboro Road with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parking, and two concrete parking lots at the Henges Shooting Range
- Three restrooms, including one ADA-accessible privy at the parking lot off Hillsboro Road, and two at the Henges Shooting Range. One is near the rifle range and one is in the educational classroom.
- Losing Stream Trail, 0.4-mile hiking trail (ADA accessible)
- Dogwood Ridge Trail, 2.2-mile hiking trail
- Multi-use hike/horseback trails, 11.8 miles
- Jay Henges fully staffed shooting range with pistol range, rifle range, shotgun patterning, field archery range, static archery range, and three trap shooting fields
- Ten fishless ponds (1 acre total)

### **IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** 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:** There is an electric distribution line easement owned by Ameren Missouri at the Aselman Tract. There is also an easement owned by the St. Louis Metropolitan Sewer District on both area tracts. An easement is held by St. Louis County for Antire Road at the Aselman Tract.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with the Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) environmental compliance specialist. Managers should follow best management practices for Cultural Resources found in the Missouri Department of Conservation Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Forest 44 CA contains approximately 927 acres of forest/woodlands and 60 acres of old field, primarily in bottomland sites that were once forested and were historically cleared of trees. Woodland management is directed at maintaining a healthy forest natural community for wildlife habitat. Old field management is directed at minimizing invasive species with a secondary goal of providing open land wildlife habitat for native species.

#### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Control invasive plants on the area (e.g., bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, sericea lespedeza, tall fescue, Japanese hop, tree of heaven) and prevent future infestations.
- 2) Woodland areas managed less intensely have resulted in overstocked woodlands (i.e., too many trees per acre); invasive species increasing in abundance; a tree species composition shift to shade-tolerant and fire-intolerant trees (i.e., away from oaks and hickories toward primarily sugar maple); and a major loss of diversity and abundance of ground layer herbaceous vegetation and tree regeneration.
- 3) Maintain healthy, sustainable, and diverse forests and woodlands that are approaching maturity and are mostly even-aged and have been subject to intense deer browse.
- 4) Enhance wildlife habitat by reforesting open lands or establishing warm-season grass fields and converting tall fescue, sericea lespedeza, and woody invasive dominated old fields to native vegetation.
- 5) Maintain a healthy deer population that allows regrowth of native plants and tree seedlings on the area.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain healthy forests and woodlands with management emphasis on wildlife habitat.

**Strategy 1:** Control invasive plants (predominantly bush honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese hop, and tree of heaven) to avoid significant negative impacts on natural communities. Routinely scout and seek to control invasive plants. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Conduct a forest inventory prior to conducting forest management. Once invasive species are under control, reduce tree stocking in forests and woodlands to desired stocking levels and to desired tree species mixes, as is appropriate for wildlife habitat improvement; use forestry best management

practices to guide all thinning projects. (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014). (Forestry)

**Strategy 3:** Utilize management tools, such as mechanical thinning of trees and prescribed fire, to stimulate herbaceous vegetation in woodlands, to increase oak regeneration in forests and woodlands, and to discourage unwanted vegetation, such as bush honeysuckle. (Forestry)

**Strategy 4:** Reforest open lands, where invasive species invasion requires excessive work to maintain native species (such as warm-season grasses), through a combination of natural tree regeneration and mechanical or hand tree planting. Select tree species that are valuable to wildlife and well-suited to the growing site. (Forestry)

**Strategy 5:** Conduct managed deer hunts to control deer population at a level that will minimize excessive damage from deer browse on the natural communities. (Forestry)

**Management Objective 2:** Manage existing open lands and old fields to enhance wildlife habitat.

**Strategy 1:** Control invasive plants (e.g., autumn olive, fescue, Johnson grass, exotic thistles, and sericea lespedeza) to avoid negative impacts on natural communities. Routinely look for and seek to control invasive plants. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Remove and thin undesirable tree species growing in and around open areas. (Forestry)

**Strategy 3:** Where it is manageable to maintain with herbicide and prescribed fire, establish warm-season grasses and other native herbaceous vegetation in open areas to provide diverse wildlife habitat. (Forestry)

**Strategy 4:** Utilize prescribed fire to stimulate herbaceous vegetation in open areas and to discourage undesirable species. (Forestry)

## VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Forest 44 CA offers valuable protection of water quality and quantity to Williams Creek and the Meramec River.
- 2) Flooding from Williams Creek is becoming more intense due to development and could threaten streambank integrity over time.
- 3) Fishless ponds provide good habitat for amphibians and a seasonal water source for wildlife.

**Management Objective 1:** Protect riparian corridors to maintain water quality.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain 100-foot-wide forested riparian corridors on all conservation area perennial and intermittent stream channels, minimize the number of stream channel crossings, and utilize appropriate stream crossing best management practices. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Monitor condition of stream banks and riparian corridor health along Williams Creek and implement bank stabilization or wetland projects as needed. (Fisheries, Forestry)

**Management Objective 2:** Ensure adequate amphibian habitat is provided on area.

**Strategy 1:** Monitor existing fishless ponds to ensure adequate habitat exists for amphibian species on the area. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** If too many ponds silt in and no longer hold water at any time of the year, improve ponds to provide necessary habitat. (Design and Development, Wildlife)

## VII. Public Use Management Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Area offers valuable recreational opportunities, such as hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and hunting.
- 2) Footbridge on ADA-accessible trail was damaged in flooding.
- 3) Area violations occur on this area.
- 4) Jay Henges range offers hunting/shooting/outdoor education programs to the public.
- 5) Area offers opportunities for educational programs for the public.
- 6) The area offers opportunities to build relationships with neighboring landowners.

**Management Objective 1:** Provide public hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Strategy 1:** Conduct management activities that will provide habitats for a diversity of wildlife species. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Conduct managed deer hunts to provide a quality hunting experience and achieve terrestrial resource management goals. (Forestry)

**Strategy 3:** Explore options for offering managed mentored turkey and/or small game hunts for either the public or for first-time hunters. (Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 2:** Work to minimize violations of area regulations.

**Strategy 1:** Ensure regulations are posted on Atlas Database and area bulletin boards, informing the public of area regulations. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Conduct patrols and enforce area regulations as needed. (Protection)

**Management Objective 3:** Provide trails to support a wide variety of area uses, such as hiking, ADA-accessible hiking, and horseback riding.

**Strategy 1:** Develop a plan and submit it to Department leadership for approval to remove the foot bridge on the ADA-accessible trail, and expand the existing section of the trail that goes from the parking lot to Williams Creek to continue providing ADA-accessible hiking access. (Forestry, Design and Development)

**Strategy 2:** Maintain existing trails to provide hiking, ADA-accessible hiking, and horseback riding access. (Forestry)

**Management Objective 4:** Continue to provide hunting/shooting/outdoor education programs to the public as well as staffed range access.

**Strategy 1:** Utilize outdoor education center facilities at Henges Shooting Range to conduct hunting and shooting programs, hunter education classes, and outdoor education programs. (Outreach and Education)

**Strategy 2:** Provide public range access and shooting opportunities at the rifle range, pistol range, archery range, shotgun patterning range, and trap range. (Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 5:** Improve educational and interpretive opportunities on Forest 44 CA.

**Strategy 1:** Communicate area recreational and educational opportunities to the public (e.g., using area brochures, Atlas Database, Conservation Connections). (Forestry, Outreach and Education)

**Strategy 2:** Communicate to teachers, students, scout groups, and youth groups the uniqueness of the area and Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center to facilitate as a possible destination for ecology classes, school programs, and workshops. (Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 6:** Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners.

**Strategy 1:** Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass, or any other issues affecting Forest 44 CA tracts. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner properties. (Private Land Services)

## VIII. Administrative Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The variety and intensity of public use at the area requires regular area maintenance and management.
- 2) Soil erosion on trails requires extensive maintenance of trail surface reinforcement.
- 3) Consider for acquisition parcels that border this area and provide additional recreational opportunities to the public.

### **Management Objective 1:** Maintain parking lots and trails.

**Strategy 1:** Perform routine maintenance on trails by maintaining signs, pruning, and adding/maintaining reinforcement of trail surface to minimize erosion.

(Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Perform routine trash pickup, mowing, sign maintenance, and other maintenance activities. (Forestry)

**Strategy 3:** Maintain signage to encourage trail use on only the yellow trail when trail conditions are wet to minimize soil erosion and trail maintenance. (Forestry)

### **Management Objective 2:** Maintain well-marked accurate boundary lines, area signs, and shooting range boundaries.

**Strategy 1:** Paint boundary trees and maintain signs along boundary lines every four years or as needed. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Maintain area signs as needed. (Forestry)

**Strategy 3:** Inspect range boundaries twice per year. (Outreach and Education)

### **Lands Proposed for Acquisition:**

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

## MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	<b>FY17</b>	<b>FY18</b>	<b>FY19</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>
<b>Administrative Considerations</b>										
<i>Objective 2</i>										
Strategy 1				X				X		

## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

Situated on the outskirts of a large population center, Forest 44 Conservation Area (CA) offers a unique opportunity for the public to enjoy a variety of outdoor activities. Forest 44 CA is in St. Louis County, about a mile from the intersection of Highway 141 and Interstate 44. The 998-acre area borders Interstate 44 for 3 miles.

This conservation area was once part of a 10,000-acre cattle ranch. The Missouri Department of Conservation purchased the 958-acre Forest 44 CA in 1990 from the heirs of the Reinken Estate. A 40-acre tract was acquired by a partial donation in 2004 and is known as the Dorothy E. Aselman Memorial Addition.

This rugged forestland is situated on the northeastern-most extension of the Ozark uplift and contains plants and animals typical of Ozark ecology. Trees commonly found on the area include a variety of oaks and hickory as well as flowering dogwood. Several springs feed Williams Creek on the eastern portion of the area.

The area offers the Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center for public use. There are also over 2 miles of hiking-only trails and over 11 miles of hiking and horseback riding trails throughout the area.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Forest and Woodland	927		93
Old Field	60		6
Other	11		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>998</b>		<b>100</b>
Williams Creek Stream Frontage		5,600	

### Public Input Summary:

Prior to writing this draft area management plan, the Department conducted a public input process (the Forest 44 Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage) from Feb. 1-29, 2016. The objectives of this phase were to inform key stakeholders that the Department is drafting an area management plan, to identify initial issues and concerns from stakeholders and to determine how best to reach out to stakeholders and the public during the upcoming public comment period. A total of 245 letters were mailed to managed hunt participants on the area from 2015, to Kraus Farms Equestrian Center and to Valley Mount Ranch. Notices were also posted at the parking lot, trail heads, and at Jay Henges Shooting Range. Altogether, nine comments were received.

The area planning team took comments into consideration as they drafted this 10-year management plan. A brief summary of public input themes and responses can be found in Appendix A.

**References:**

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri watershed protection practice recommended practices for Missouri forests: 2014 management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W. A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

**Maps:**

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map

Figure 5: Easement Map

**Additional Appendices:**

Appendix A: Department Responses to Public Comments – Forest 44 Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage

Appendix B: Comments Received During Forest 44 Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage

Figure 1: Area Map

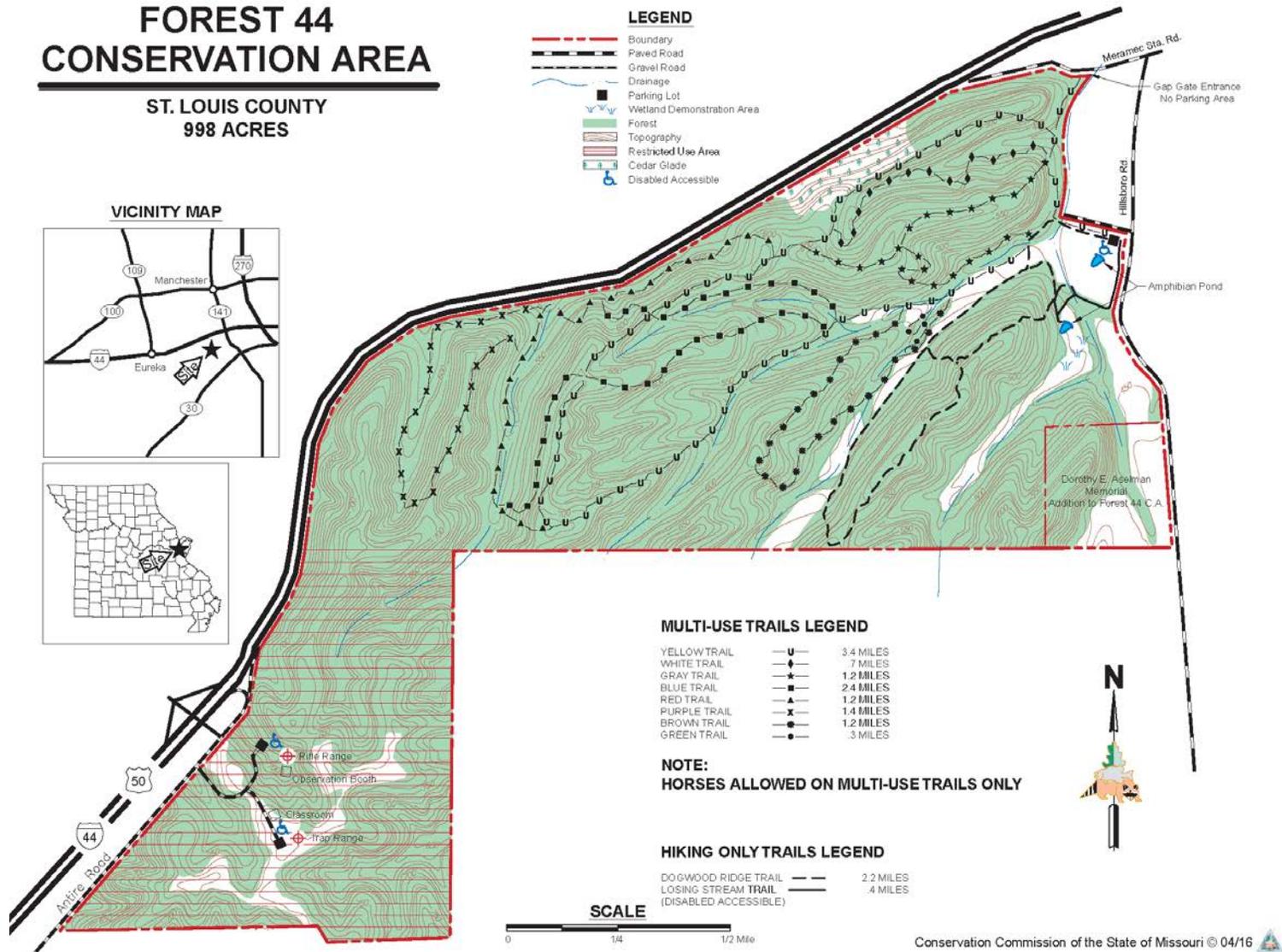


Figure 2: Aerial Map

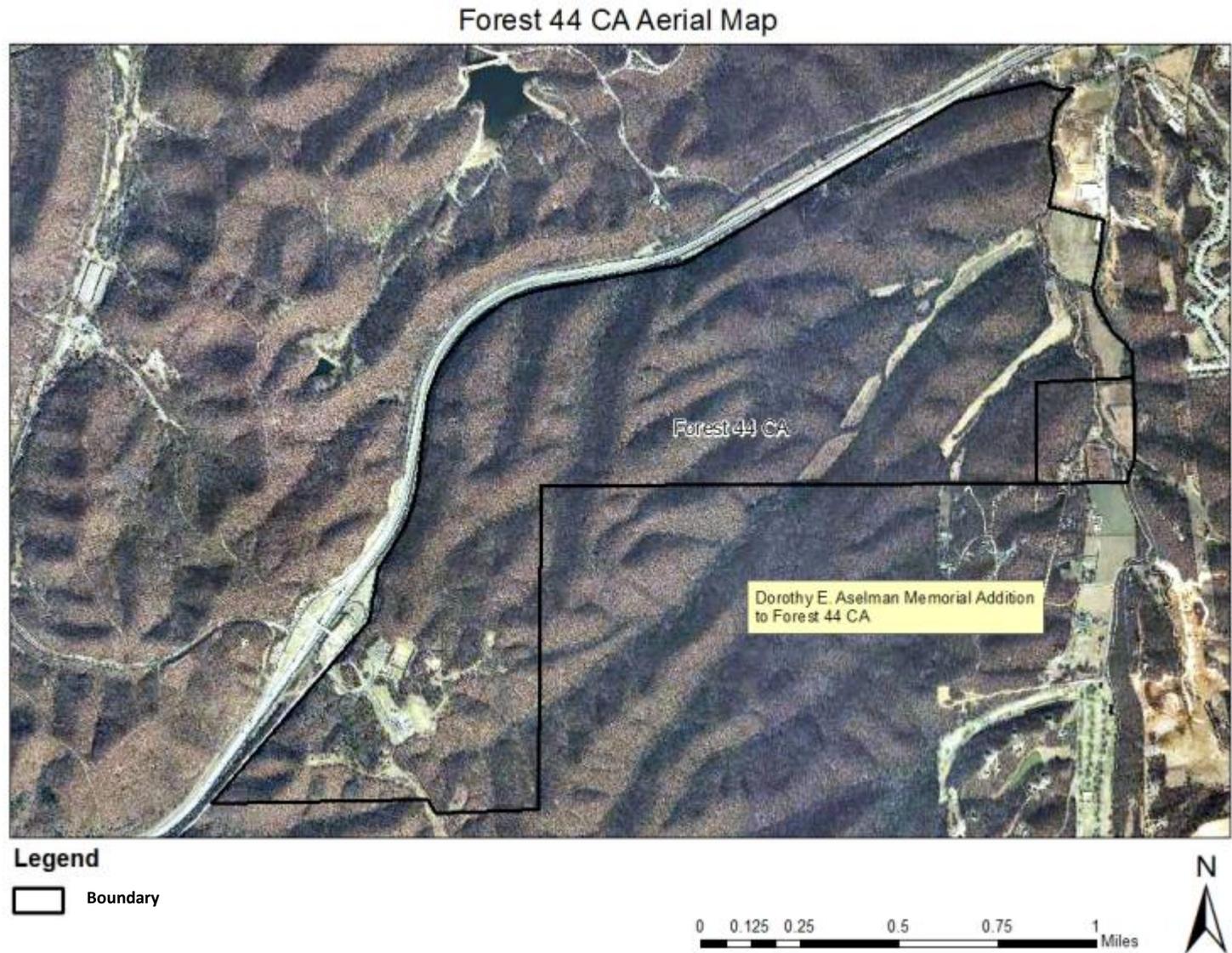


Figure 3: Topographic Map

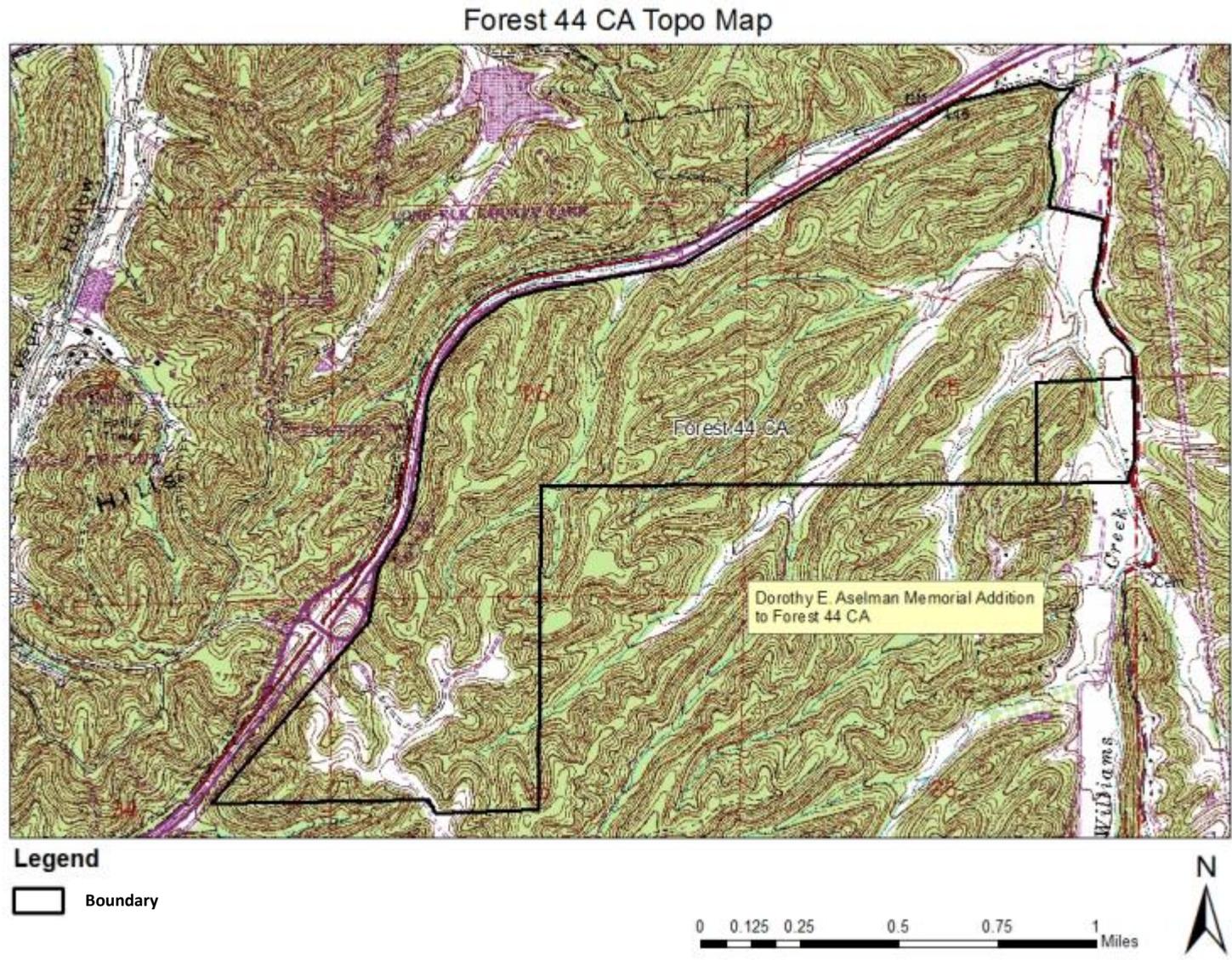


Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map

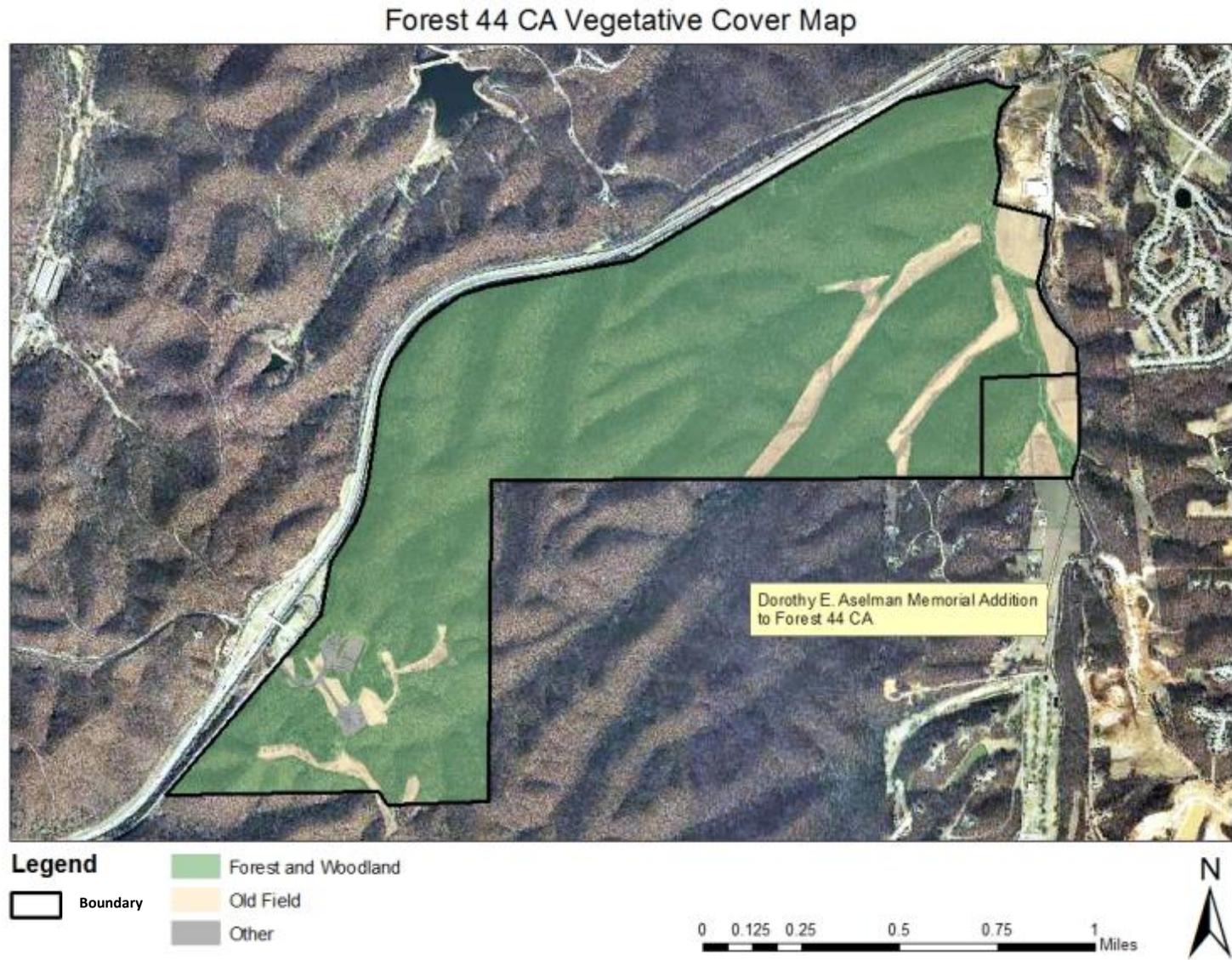
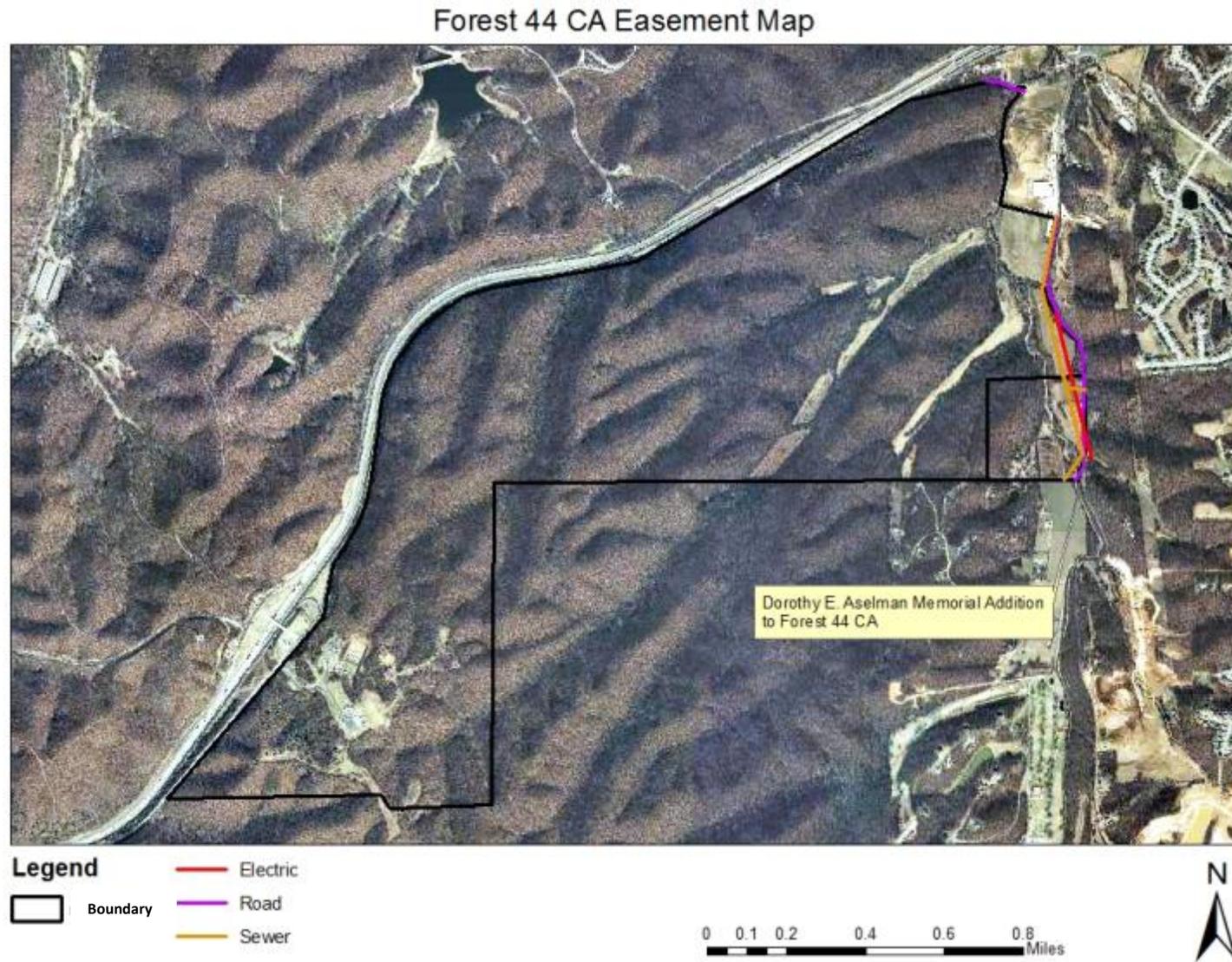


Figure 5: Easement Map



## **Appendix A: Department Responses to Public Comments – Forest 44 Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage**

### **Background:**

Prior to writing the draft Forest 44 Conservation Area Management Plan, the Department conducted an informal idea gathering stage Feb. 1-29, 2016, as described on page 10. The area management team took comments into consideration as they drafted the area management plan. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they will be incorporated or why they will not be included, can be found below. Comments were grouped into general themes and addressed collectively.

### **Terrestrial Resource Management**

#### **Suggests adding food plots.**

Although management on this area does not include food plots, the woodland/forest management done on this area benefits multiple wildlife species.

#### **Supports maintaining wildlife watering holes.**

The fishless ponds on the area are primarily to provide habitat for amphibians, but also provide an additional water source for wildlife. Amphibians require a variety of seasonal and annual water levels. Ponds are monitored and, if necessary, they will be excavated to hold more water. There is adequate water supply on the area for wildlife due to the spring-fed Williams Creek.

#### **Suggests eradicating bush honeysuckle and sericea lespedeza.**

Extensive work has been done to treat bush honeysuckle and sericea lespedeza. While eradication is not possible, suppression to a level that limits impact on natural communities is feasible. Planting trees in fields that have heavy infestations of sericea lespedeza along with chemical treatment will limit its abundance. Ongoing treatment of bush honeysuckle and other invasive species in the woods will also occur.

### **Public Use Management**

#### **Trails**

#### **Suggests restricting multi-use trail users (horseback riders and hikers) to certain trails during managed hunts. Suggests educating horseback riders about managed hunts.**

This is a multiple use area. The area is closed to all uses except hunting during the muzzleloader managed deer hunts, but is open to other users during the archery managed deer hunts, which occur usually over a month and a half each fall. Closing the area or restricting trails is not

feasible for this length of time due to interest by other users. Signs are put up during managed hunts to communicate to all area users that hunts are occurring.

**Concerned with overuse of trails by horseback riders. Concern with horseback riders riding off-trail.**

Horseback riding is allowed on the area, but only on designated trails. Regular maintenance of trails occurs to limit the amount of erosion on trails. Riders are encouraged by signage placed on the area to only ride on the yellow trail when the trails are wet. Horseback riding does occur off trail, but is not allowed according to area regulations. Staff inform riders of the area regulations when working on the area, and conservation agents patrol the area as necessary to enforce regulations.

**Suggests adding multi-use trails for hiking and cycling.**

Currently there are not any plans to add trails on this area. There are already over 12 miles of trails on this area that are either for hiking-only or both hiking and horseback riding. To provide for wildlife habitat, portions of this area are intentionally left undeveloped, but are open to users who wish to hike off-trail. There are no plans to allow biking on this area due to the intense use of the trails currently. Also, in the nearby area there are biking trails available at Rockwoods Range Conservation Area and Castlewood State Park.

**If footbridge is removed over Williams Creek, recommends placing large stepping stones so that creek can be crossed. Volunteers to help repair footbridge.**

A plan will be developed that will recommend to either replace the bridge or maintain a low-water crossing on the creek. There is currently a developed low-water crossing along the yellow trail that is open to the public. Due to liability concerns and department policy, volunteer labor to replace the bridge is not possible, but is possible for other projects on the area. Contact the area manager at 636-458-2236 for more information.

**Hunting**

**Suggests allowing archery hunting only.**

Currently muzzleloader and archery managed hunts have been effective at managing the deer population and providing opportunities for many hunters. There are no current plans to adjust the seasons, but if harvest numbers declined, then changes to the managed hunts could be proposed.

**Suggests keeping archery managed hunts rather than opening entire archery season.**

**Suggests opening area to archery hunters throughout the season (not as managed hunts).**

If this area was opened to the entire season of archery hunting, there would be excessive hunting pressure resulting in user conflicts.

**Suggests allowing small game hunting (rabbit, squirrel).**

There are no plans to allow small game hunting at this time, but in the future, there may be an opportunity to offer a limited managed hunt that is mentored for first-time hunters.

**Suggests extending the December archery managed hunt into January.**

Currently there is sufficient opportunity to hunt deer with the existing managed deer hunts, and there are no plans to expand the hunts.

**Suggests not allowing hunting of fawns.**

Deer hunting occurs on the area to manage deer populations at a healthy level and requires the harvesting of does and fawns. The only way to ensure fawns are not harvested is to only allow harvest of bucks, which would not achieve the management goals to keep the deer population healthy.

**Concerned about seeing fewer deer the past two years.**

Currently managed hunts have been effective at managing the deer population. Harvest levels have remained steady, which indicates that deer populations are still healthy on the area. Deer patterns do change due to hunting pressure and the availability of food resources, which can limit the frequency that deer are seen during the day.

**Other**

**Suggests adding more parking areas to make more of the area accessible.**

Parking is currently sufficient for area use, and there are no plans to add additional parking lots.

**Administrative Considerations**

**Confused with internal fence lines. Suggests removing fence lines that are no longer relevant.**

There are internal fences placed where the trails have been rerouted to ensure that the old trails are allowed to grow back up in vegetation to limit erosion. Once there is enough regrowth of vegetation, these fences will be removed.

## Appendix B: Comments Received During Forest 44 Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage

Received During Idea Gathering Stage (Feb. 1-29, 2016)

Received letter for next 10 years planning. Drew for December managed hunt several times in past. Few hunters show up for December hunt. Access is limited when water is high in Williams Creek. If we remove the foot bridge if we could place some large stepping stones to be able to cross creek when water is high that would help. Currently there are no food plots, could use food plots for game and population level of deer could be higher. Saw 6 deer in 20 days of December managed hunt and harvested a doe. During managed deer hunts it would be safer to encourage horse and hiking traffic on main trails instead of all the trails on area. Would like a letter when the plan is drafted and open for comment. Thanked MDC staff for work on the area.

I am writing in response to your letter concerning Forest 44 Conservation Area. I think bush honeysuckle eradication program should be on the list, as well as overuse of trails by horseback riders. I also believe that during deer hunts, the killing of fawns should be a violation.

- 1 – Add another parking area to make more of the area accessible
- 2 – Allow hunting archery only

Hunted October managed archery deer hunt. Enjoyed the hunt and saw lots of deer. Saw mink and 5 coveys of quail. Want to keep managed archery deer hunt but not open up to entire archery season. Interested in small game hunting on area for squirrel and rabbit even if archery only hunting. Didn't see many turkey. Horseback riders on area riding off trails in back fields and riders made comment that he shouldn't have an arrow nocked on his bow. Riders also got irritated with him standing on side of trail while they were riding by. Could possibly use effort to educate horseback riders about archery hunting.

Interested in adding multi use trails hiking and cycling single track trails in the St.louis County. Thought it would be possible to add trails on Forest 44 CA. Built trails on Cliff Cave Park, Castle wood state park, lost valley, Greensfelder County Park. Too much use at those areas and would like to add additional areas to spread the use out.

Thanks for reaching out to us hunters regarding Forest 44. We really enjoyed the hunt and generally the public and other hunters were courteous and conscientious. We did note the voracious stand of bush honey suckle devouring the forest floor. I know you are aware of the detriment this invasive is on native undergrowth vegetation and I encourage MDC to develop and implement an eradication and control plan for bush honey suckle for Forest 44. Same goes for sericea lespedeza, I noted thick stands in the open draws and fields. Thanks

I appreciate being given the chance to provide input for your planning of the next 10-year management plan for Forest 44 CA. I have hiked the CA frequently for the past 2 years, and this past December was my first participation in the Archery managed hunt. I did not fill my tag, but still had a great experience.

This past winter saw an extremely unusual event in the CA's history. I entered the CA

the morning of Saturday, December 26th, for a hunt. At the first sight of thunderstorms that morning, I left the CA (for obvious safety reasons). I returned the next morning, to see the overnight storms had created epic havoc: Williams Creek was flooded, with no way to cross on foot on the North end, and the South end foot bridge was crushed by trees. My first concern for the CA is to have the footbridge repaired. I'm not a carpenter, but if you need a volunteer some weekend to help with the repairs, please feel free to contact me.

I have hiked the property as recently as this past weekend; in the central meadow, I saw 10 deer, in 3 different groups, including 2 yearlings. I'm optimistic that the deer population will be plentiful for hunters this coming fall/winter. I am a little selfish, so maybe if you limit the black-powder hunt, you will keep a few more deer for us December Bow-Hunters (just kidding, those smoke and pipe folks deserve to have some fun also). If you were to extend the December hunt into January, or allow a hunter more than 1 managed hunt per year, I would take advantage of the opportunity.

I would suggest clearing some of the old fence-lines that mark outdated restricted access in the middle of the CA, as I believe those lines are no longer relevant. I also have yet to see any of the several wildlife water holes listed on the map, except for one at the far west end of the upper trail. It is likely due to my failure to recognize the holes, but if these not functioning, please maintain them (assuming that it is possible).

I will be applying for my managed hunt license again this year. I will also continue to hike the CA during the year, and am certain that your team is doing all it can to perpetuate this functional aspect of the CA. It truly is a pleasure to have such close access to wildlife and nature, in a serene setting so close to my home.

Regards

I have participated in the managed archery hunt there for over 10 years. My son (Kenny Jr.) has been in it for the last two years. The first few years that I hunted there I would see deer every time I would go in or out. It was nothing to see 10-15 deer a day. Either on stand, or just walking in or out.

But the last two years that I participated in the hunt with my son, we had seen a considerable less amount of deer than I was used to seeing. I believe that the deer have grown used to the hunters habits and usual whereabouts and avoid these times and places.

Horseback riders and walkers used to upset me until I noticed that they would move the deer just enough to keep them moving during the day. The deer are VERY aware of the trails that are present and will bed down half way between them as to see or smell them both.

This year I had seen an increase of new hunters, who had never hunted there before and most were very upset over the amount of traffic in the area. I have grown used to the horse back riders and actually, I like to ask them what they are seeing. Most are very nice and willing to give information, some not so much. I move on. I had a man one evening, about 4pm (I work close so I get in for an hour each evening) as I was going in, He was leading a big black horse with a child on its back wearing a blue coat, he was wearing a jean jacket and a ball cap, He asked if the hunt was open during the week down here. I said yes. He said "Well I'm not going

in there!! This looks like a deer, doesn't it? I don't want to get shot by some "Trigger happy hunter". He turned around and went back to the barn. How do you get people like that to understand bow hunters? I don't mind them, if I'm doing what I'm supposed to right they don't see me anyway.

What if you opened the area to all bow hunters during the archery season instead of a Managed Hunt? Put up more signs for the public warning of the hunt in progress?

The other thing you might consider is more parking over by the Memorial addition as well as over by the north entrance and maybe add one between Forest 44 and Jay Henges? This may break up the deer's patterns of hiding on the fringes and waiting for dark to come out they may get jumped more. As all the hunters enter from the front parking lot. Deer get smart and pattern us too!

Either way, my son and I enjoy hunting there as it is close to our house and gives us a place to hunt in December. I hope to see it open for a long time to hunters and I get the opportunity to get in this Dec.

Thank you

**To submit a comment on this document,  
click on the following link:**

<https://mdc.mo.gov/node/10013?ap=13817>