

# Vernon and Bates County Small Prairies and Wetlands Multi-Area Plan

Big Drywood Creek Conservation Area  
Douglas Branch Conservation Area  
Flight Lake Conservation Area  
Gama Grass Conservation Area  
Ripgut Prairie Natural Area

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



*[Signature]*

Wildlife Division Chief

*5 May 2017*

Date

**Vernon and Bates County Small Prairies and Wetlands Multi-Area  
Management Plan Approval Page**

**PLANNING TEAM**

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**KANSAS CITY REGION**

RCT Chair

  
Signature

  
Date

**WILDLIFE DIVISION**

Wildlife Management Chief

  
Signature

  
Date

## OVERVIEW

| Area Name                                | Area Number | Year Acquired     | Acreage | County | Administrative Responsibility | Maintenance Responsibility |
|--|-------------|-------------------|---------|--------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Big Drywood Creek Conservation Area (CA) | 8732        | 1987              | 13      | Vernon | Wildlife                      | Wildlife                   |
| Douglas Branch CA                        | 9003        | 1990 <sup>1</sup> | 511     | Vernon | Wildlife                      | Wildlife                   |
| Flight Lake CA                           | 8406        | 1984              | 159     | Vernon | Wildlife                      | Wildlife                   |
| Gama Grass CA                            | 9202        | 1992              | 80      | Vernon | Wildlife                      | Wildlife                   |
| Ripgut Prairie Natural Area (NA)         | 8618        | 1986              | 280     | Bates  | Wildlife                      | Wildlife                   |

<sup>1</sup>An additional 391 acres was added in 1995, bringing the area to its current total of 511 acres.

### Statements of Purpose:

#### A. Strategic Direction

Protect, restore and manage fish, forest and wildlife habitats and their associated fauna by enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, while providing public use opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

#### B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of these areas is a complex of wetlands, prairies, and woodlands that provides diverse vegetative habitat, represents the associated natural communities within each area, and protects adjacent streams.

#### C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

### I. Special Considerations

| Area Name            | Priority Area  | Natural Area                  |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Big Drywood Creek CA | None   | None                          |
| Douglas Branch CA    | Marmaton River Complex Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Douglas Branch Aquatic COA | None                          |
| Flight Lake CA       | Marmaton River Complex Terrestrial COA   | None                          |
| Gama Grass CA        | None   | None                          |
| Ripgut Prairie NA    | None   | Ripgut Prairie NA (136 acres) |

**II. Important Natural Features and Resources**

| Area Name            | Species of Conservation Concern | Caves | Springs |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Big Drywood Creek CA | None                            | None  | None    |
| Douglas Branch CA    | None                            | None  | None    |
| Flight Lake CA       | None                            | None  | None    |
| Gama Grass CA        | None                            | None  | None    |
| Ripgut Prairie NA    | None                            | None  | None    |

**III. Existing Infrastructure**

| Area Name            | Parking Area # | Other   |
|----------------------|----------------|---|
| Big Drywood Creek CA | None           | 4 man-made marsh pools                              |
| Douglas Branch CA    | 1              | 2 fishing ponds (1 acre, 2 acres); 7 fishless ponds |
| Flight Lake CA       | 1              | 1 levee (0.5 mile) and 1 water-control structure    |
| Gama Grass CA        | 1              |   |
| Ripgut Prairie NA    | 1              | 1 levee (0.25 mile) and 1 water-control structure   |

**IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**

| Area Name            | Deed Restrictions | Federal Interest | Ease-ments       | Cultural Resources | Endangered Species | Boundary Issues  |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Big Drywood Creek CA | Yes <sup>1</sup>  | Yes <sup>2</sup> | None             | None known         | None observed      | None             |
| Douglas Branch CA    | Yes               | Yes <sup>2</sup> | Yes <sup>3</sup> | None known         | None observed      | Yes <sup>5</sup> |
| Flight Lake CA       | None              | Yes <sup>2</sup> | None             | None known         | None observed      | Yes <sup>6</sup> |
| Gama Grass CA        | None              | Yes <sup>2</sup> | None             | None known         | None observed      | None             |
| Ripgut Prairie NA    | None              | Yes <sup>2</sup> | Yes <sup>4</sup> | None known         | None observed      | None             |

<sup>1</sup>Area was acquired from the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission as a wetlands mitigation project. Area must be retained as developed wetlands.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>A portion of Douglas Branch lies within the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) H.S. Truman Dam and Reservoir flowage easement. Right of way deed to the State of Missouri for highway purposes. There is also an electric line easement.

<sup>4</sup>There is a USACE Truman Dam and Reservoir flowage easement.

<sup>5</sup>Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property. Specifically, the western boundary of the southwestern portion of Douglas Branch CA is in question.

<sup>6</sup>Flight Lake CA boundary survey was completed in 2015. Accurate and identifiable boundary markers were added to the western boundary, which contains a water body shared with the neighboring landowners.

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Management emphasis is placed on maintaining, protecting and restoring, where possible, habitat that supports species associated with the natural communities found on these areas. These include prairie swale and wet bottomland prairie on Douglas Branch CA, wet bottomland prairie on Flight Lake CA, hardpan prairie on Gama Grass Prairie CA, and wet and wet-mesic bottomland prairie on Ripgut Prairie NA.

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

- 1) Ripgut Prairie NA contains one of the best examples of wet and wet-mesic bottomland prairies in Missouri. Maintaining the natural area through management will be an ongoing priority. Controlling succession is a challenge because both historic hydrology and fire ecology have been altered.
- 2) There is opportunity to reconstruct prairie swale and wet bottomland prairie on Douglas Branch CA and wet and wet-mesic bottomland prairie on Ripgut Prairie NA on portions of the areas that are currently crop land.
- 3) Provide adequate protection to the Bates County Drainage Ditch watershed and stream bank along Ripgut Prairie NA by expanding the riparian corridor.
- 4) Multiple factors have changed floodplain hydrology on Douglas Branch CA. Preventing soil erosion and maintaining stream quality is a priority. There is opportunity to reduce and control further soil erosion by maintaining infrastructure and reconstructing wet prairie on portions of the crop land.
- 5) Monitor and control invasive and exotic species, particularly sericea lespedeza and Johnson grass on Douglas Branch CA and Flight Lake CA.
- 6) Flight Lake CA and Ripgut Prairie NA wetland units have potential to provide habitat for a suite of wetland species throughout spring, summer, and fall.

**Management Objective 1:** Manage the designated natural area on Ripgut Prairie NA to maintain high quality wet and wet-mesic bottomland prairie.

**Strategy 1:** Coordinate habitat restoration and maintenance with the natural history biologist. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Manage the natural area to maintain and/or enhance biological diversity and ecological integrity of a wet and wet-mesic bottomland prairie;

management will conform to the *Missouri Natural Areas Committee Procedures Manual*. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 3:** Explore feasibility and reconstruct or restore wet and wet-mesic bottomland prairie on appropriate portions of cropland on Ripgut Prairie NA. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 2:** Manage and/or restore natural communities

**Strategy 1:** Complete wet bottomland prairie restoration on portions of cropland on Douglas Branch CA. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Manage prairie swale and wet bottomland prairie on Douglas Branch CA. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 3:** Manage wet bottomland prairie on Flight Lake CA. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 4:** Manage hardpan prairie on Gama Grass Prairie CA. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 3:** Maintain and/or develop adequate riparian corridors.

**Strategy 1:** Reduce cropping to restore wet prairie on portions of cropland along the existing riparian corridor; both will combine for a minimum 200 feet riparian area on Ripgut Prairie NA. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Maintain riparian corridor to a minimum of 200 feet on Douglas Branch CA. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 4:** Minimize and prevent, where possible, soil erosion due to infrastructure and/or management.

**Strategy 1:** Continue to maintain native, perennial vegetation on areas affected by flooding and high current on Douglas Branch CA. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Maintain infrastructure to minimize floodplain erosion and encourage stabilization on Douglas Branch. (Design and Development)

**Strategy 3:** Ensure roads and road-side drainages are managed to reduce runoff, sedimentation, and erosion. (Design and Development)

**Strategy 4:** Follow the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009) and the Department's *Resource Policy Manual* to ensure that all management activities adhere to best management practices. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Design and Development)

**Management Objective 5:** Treat invasive and/or exotic species.

**Strategy 1:** Monitor and treat sericea lespedeza and Johnson grass on Flight Lake CA and Douglas Branch CA. Also, monitor all other areas for the presence of invasive and exotic species and treat as needed. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 6:** Manage wetland units for a suite of wetland-dependent plants and animals.

**Strategy 1:** Manage water levels opportunistically to provide seasonal habitat for a diverse suite of wetland-dependent species on Flight Lake CA and Ripgut Prairie NA. (Wildlife)

## **VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Altered landscapes have affected all these areas. These landscape-scale alterations have changed the hydrology and habitat conditions in streams and threaten aquatic biodiversity on the areas and throughout the watersheds.

**Management Objective 1:** Inventory all existing ponds on the areas where fishing is allowed to assess fishing suitability.

**Strategy 1:** Evaluate condition of pond basins and watersheds for their potential as fishing ponds. (Fisheries)

**Strategy 2:** Sample fish communities in potential fishing ponds. (Fisheries)

**Management Objective 2:** Manage fishing ponds.

**Strategy 1:** Update area map and brochures according to sampling results of potential fish ponds. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** List fishing ponds in Atlas Database and federal aid documents. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

**Strategy 3:** Renovate undesirable fish populations and stock additional fish, if needed. (Fisheries)

**Management Objective 3:** Protect, enhance, and maintain area stream resources.

**Strategy 1:** Monitor stream fish communities every three to five years. (Fisheries)

**Strategy 2:** Characterize in-stream and riparian habitats. (Fisheries)

**Strategy 3:** Explore opportunities to restore natural hydrology by modifying old ponds that serve no identified purpose. (Fisheries)

## **VII. Public Use Management Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Public access locations are somewhat limited on these areas. Maintaining existing parking lots is a priority in order to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.
- 2) Educational and interpretive opportunities are somewhat limited on these areas.

- 3) Opportunity for disabled-user access is limited. Maintain the designated area for Hunter Method Exemption special access for hunting on Douglas Branch CA.

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

**Strategy 1:** Maintain parking lots, trails (mowed field roads), and stream access throughout the areas. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of game and non-game species. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

**Management Objective 2:** Improve educational and interpretive opportunities.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain signage in accordance with Missouri Department of Conservation policy. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Update maps and information to inform the public on area opportunities through the Atlas Database. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 3:** Communicate to teachers and other youth leaders the possibilities for educational programs on the areas as opportunities arise. (Outreach and Education)

**Management Objective 3:** Provide special access for Hunter Method Exemptions.

**Strategy 1:** Continue to include Douglas Branch CA and Flight Lake CA as areas that have designated zones, where special use permits are issued for vehicle access to qualifying individuals for hunting. (Wildlife)

## VIII. Administrative Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Evaluate land offered as additions to these areas.
- 2) Work to build positive relationships with neighboring landowners by providing timely and effective service, as public use issues develop.

**Management Objective 1:** Foster positive relationships with neighboring landowners.

**Strategy 1:** Work with neighbors to prevent boundary and trespass issues. (Wildlife, Protection)

**Strategy 2:** Work to resolve boundary and trespass issues on Douglas Branch CA and Flight Lake CA. (Wildlife, Protection)

### **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:

|  | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | FY25 | FY26 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Terrestrial Resource Management</b> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <i>Objective 1</i>                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 3                             | X    | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <i>Objective 2</i>                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 1                             | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <i>Objective 3</i>                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 1                             | X    | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <b>Aquatic Resource Management</b>     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <i>Objective 2</i>                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 1                             |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 2                             |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 3                             |      |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| <i>Objective 3</i>                     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Strategy 1                             |      |      | X    |      |      |      |      | X    |      |      |
| Strategy 2                             |      |      | X    |      |      |      |      | X    |      |      |
| Strategy 3                             |      |      | X    |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

## APPENDICES

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Vernon and Bates County Prairies and Wetland Multi-Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Oct. 1–31, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from three respondents (Appendix A). The Vernon and Bates County Prairies and Wetland Multi-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.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the Vernon and Bates County Prairies and Wetland Multi-Area Management Plan public comment period.

### **Offers a land trade near “Hoover Slash” of Flight Lake CA to resolve conflict and safety issues with area users and neighboring property users.**

Please contact the area manager or the Regional Office with specifics at (816)-655-6254.

### **Supports the Vernon and Bates County Prairies and Wetlands Multi-Area Management Plan.**

Department staff is appreciative of the support.

### References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (n.d.). Missouri atlas database.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (1998). Missouri Natural Heritage Database. *Area and resource management policies and procedures manual*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Nelson, P. W. (2010). *The terrestrial natural communities of Missouri*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

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

### Appendices:

Appendix 1. Vicinity Map

- Appendix 2. Big Drywood Creek CA Background
- Appendix 3. Big Drywood Creek CA Area Map
- Appendix 4. Big Drywood Creek CA Cover Map
- Appendix 5. Douglas Branch CA Background
- Appendix 6. Douglas Branch CA Area Map
- Appendix 7. Douglas Branch CA Cover Map
- Appendix 8. Douglas Branch CA Easement Map
- Appendix 9. Flight Lake CA Background
- Appendix 10. Flight Lake CA Area Map
- Appendix 11. Flight Lake CA Cover Map
- Appendix 12. Gama Grass Prairie CA Background
- Appendix 13. Gama Grass Prairie CA Area Map
- Appendix 14. Gama Grass Prairie CA Cover Map
- Appendix 15. Ripgut Prairie NA Background
- Appendix 16. Ripgut Prairie NA Area Map
- Appendix 17. Ripgut Prairie NA Cover Map
- Appendix 18. Ripgut Prairie NA Easement Map

**Additional Appendices:**

- Appendix A. Vernon & Bates County Prairie and Wetland Areas Public Comments

**Appendix 1. Vicinity Map**



**Appendix 2. Big Drywood Creek CA Background**

The property was acquired from the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission in 1987. Prior to the change of ownership, four small wetland units were developed as mitigation for wetland loss associated with highway development. The area lies just south of the Marmaton River/Drywood Creek confluence, and is split up by Drywood Creek, US 54 Highway and the railroad.

The area lies within the Cherokee Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section. The landtype association is Four Rivers Alluvial Plains. Little management potential exists on the area due to its size, proximity from staff and equipment and water-management limitations.

Challenges aside, the area does provide limited hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

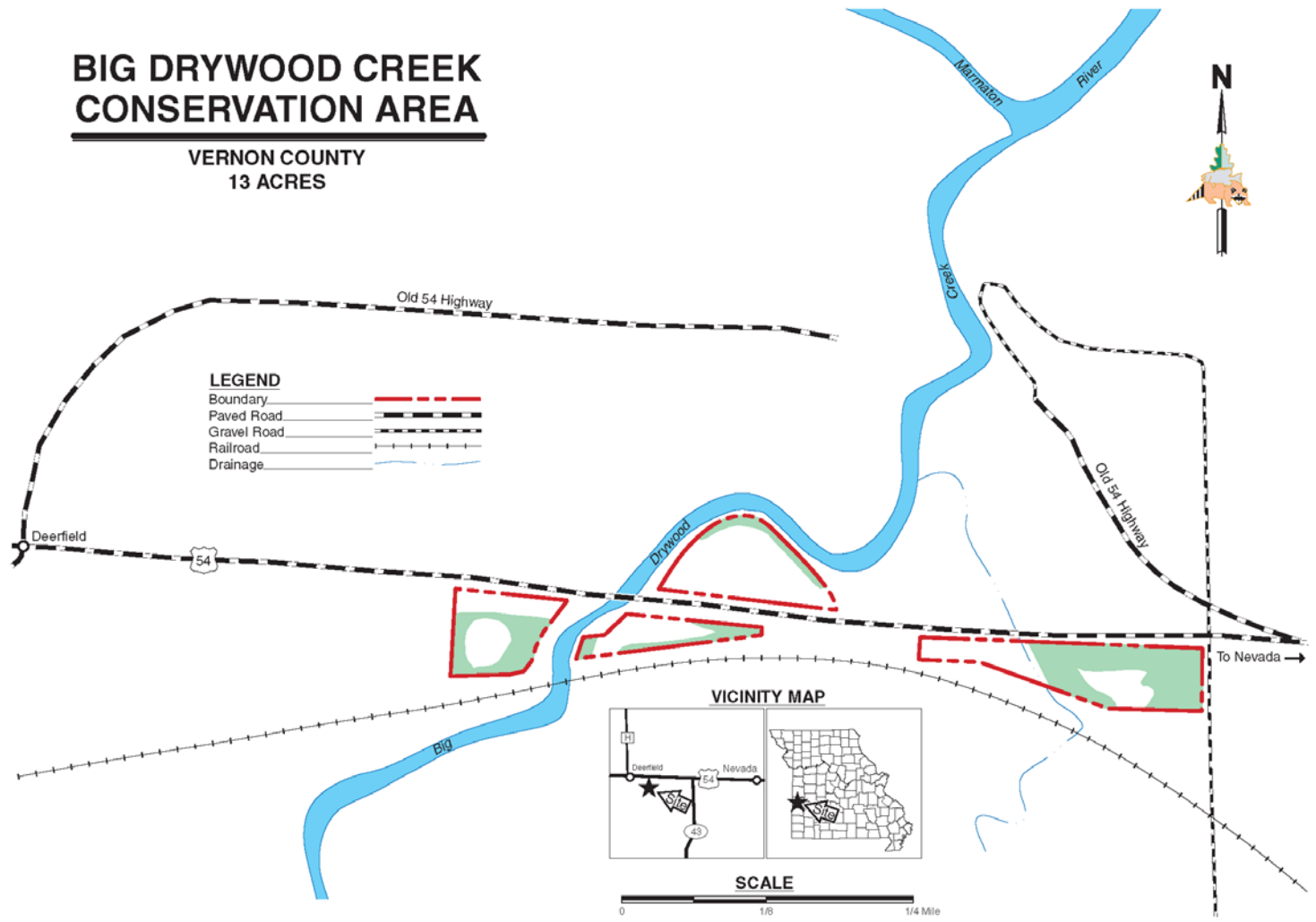
Legal Description: Township 35N, Range 32W, Section 5 and 8.

Area Location: Big Drywood Creek CA is located approximately 6 miles west from Nevada on Highway 54.

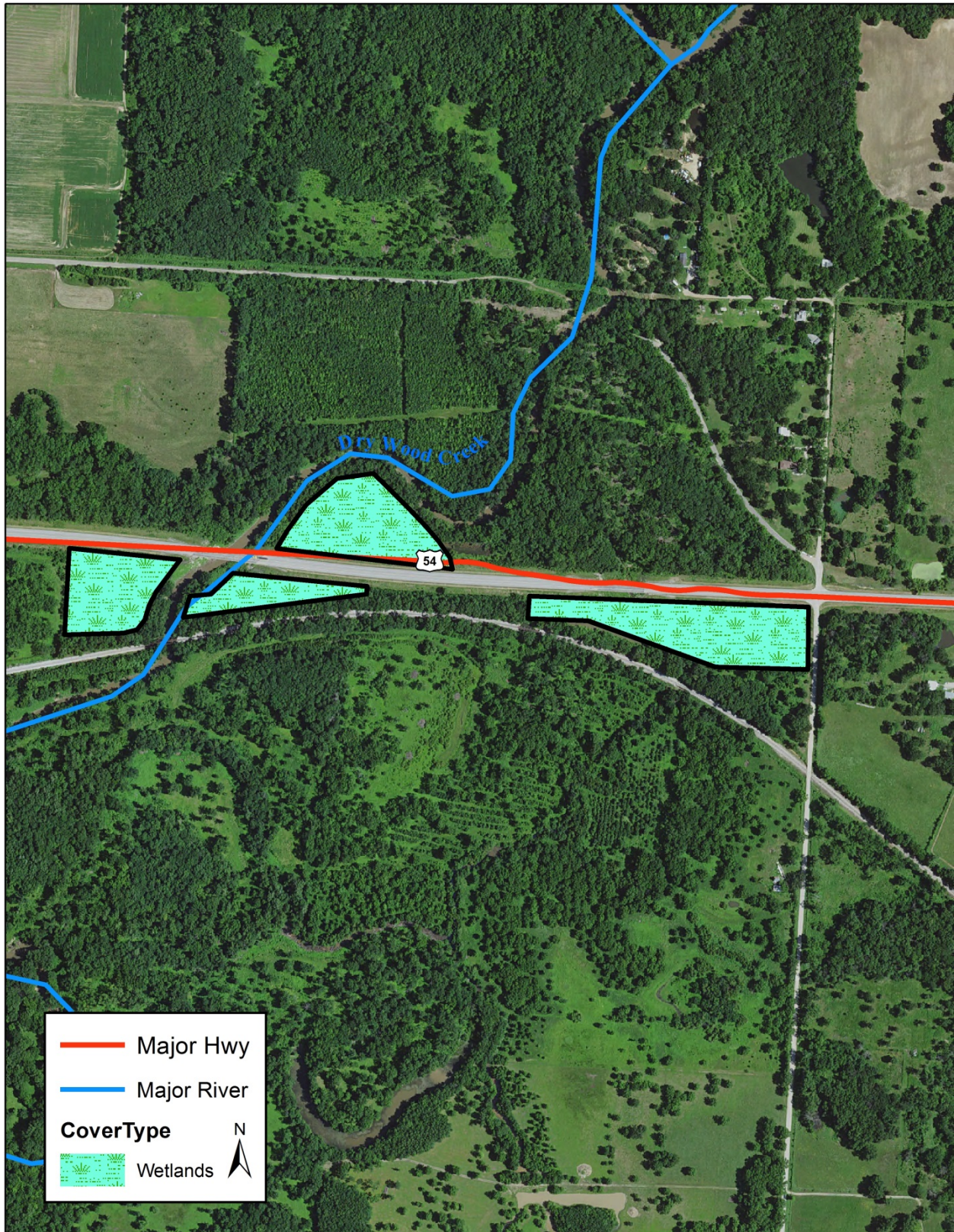
**Current Land and Water Types:**

| Land/Water Type | Acres | Miles | % of Area |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-----------|
| Wetland         | 13    |       | 100       |
| Stream Frontage |       | 0.33  |           |

Appendix 3. Big Drywood Creek CA Area Map



**Appendix 4. Big Drywood Creek CA Cover Map**



## Appendix 5. Douglas Branch CA Background

The original 120-acre portion of Douglas Branch CA was acquired in 1990, followed by a second acquisition of 391 acres in 1995. The area, which is mostly bottomlands, is divided by a stream, Douglas Branch, which meanders approximately 1.9 miles through the area.

A large portion of area lies within the flowage easement of the Harry S. Truman Reservoir. The impoundment has affected the hydrology of the Marmaton River, thereby affecting the Douglas Branch stream and its associated floodplain. Additionally, the development of US 71/Interstate 49, the overpass, and the county road along the south portion of the area are all significant impediments to sheet-flow, particularly during high flow events. As a result, excessive erosion has occurred on portions of the cropland and stream bank.

Douglas Branch CA lies within the Cherokee Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section. The landtype association is Four Rivers Alluvial Plains. It contains Prairie Swale and Wet-mesic Bottomland Prairie natural communities. Management on Douglas Branch primarily includes a combination of rotational prescribed burning and haying to maintain the native plant communities. Also, a portion of the area is cropped to provide food for wildlife. With its close proximity to Nevada and visibility from the interstate, the area offers a wide range of recreational opportunities.

Legal Description: Township 36N, Range 31W, Section 5, 6, 8 and Township 37N, Range 31W, Section 31, 32.

Area Location: To access to the area from Nevada, take I-49/Highway 71 north 3 miles. At the Compton Junction exit, take Route M east 0.2 miles, then outer road E. Take Infantry Pass north, and Indian Line Road west over highway to the parking lot.

### Current Land and Water Types:

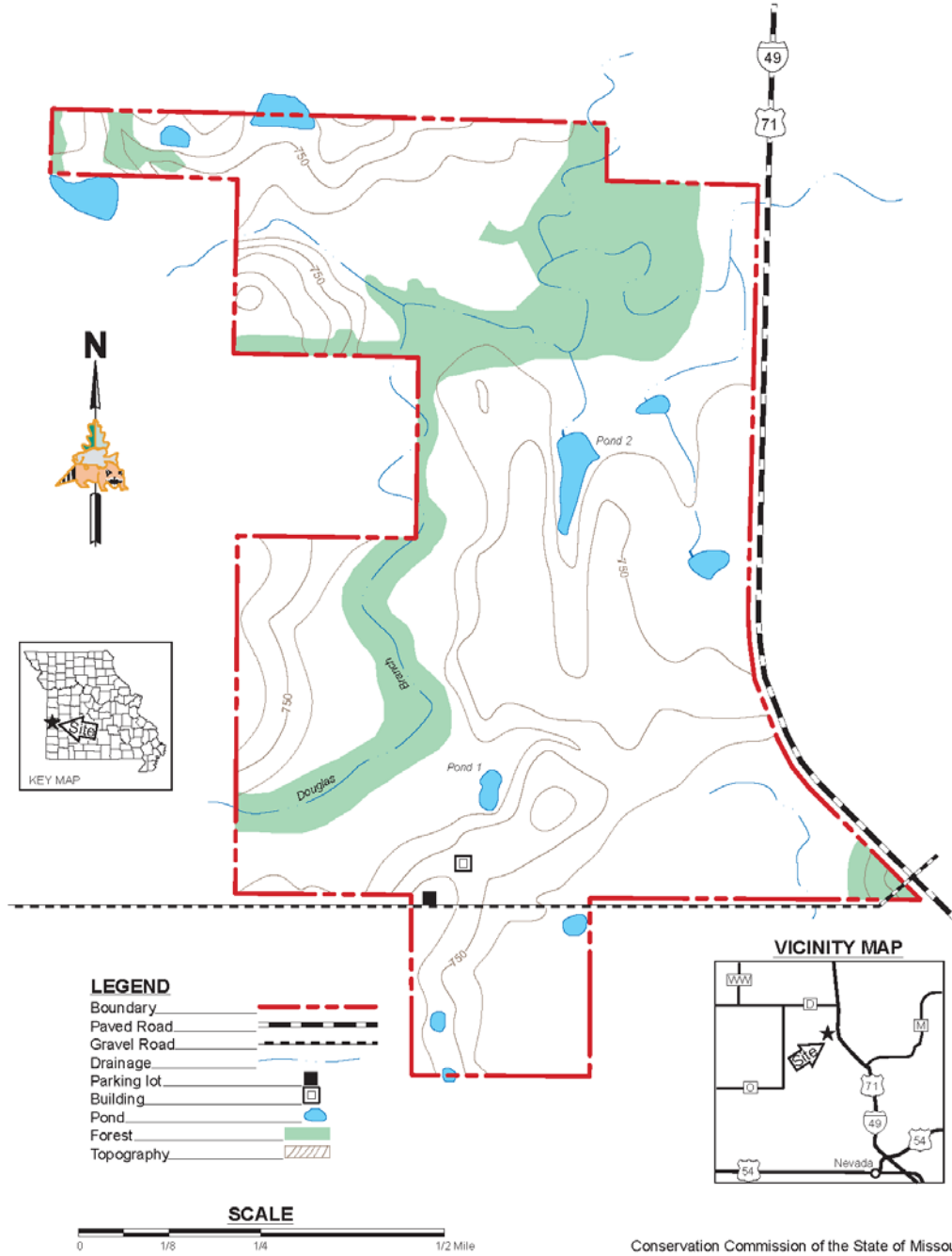
| Land/Water Type                      | Acres      | Miles | % of Area  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|------------|
| Forest and Woodland                  | 220        |       | 43         |
| Native Prairie (remnant wet prairie) | 125        |       | 24         |
| Cropland                             | 60         |       | 12         |
| Grassland                            | 54         |       | 11         |
| Old Field                            | 46         |       | 9          |
| Lakes/Ponds                          | 5          |       | <1         |
| Other                                | 1          |       | <1         |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>511</b> |       | <b>100</b> |
| Stream Frontage                      |            | 2     |            |



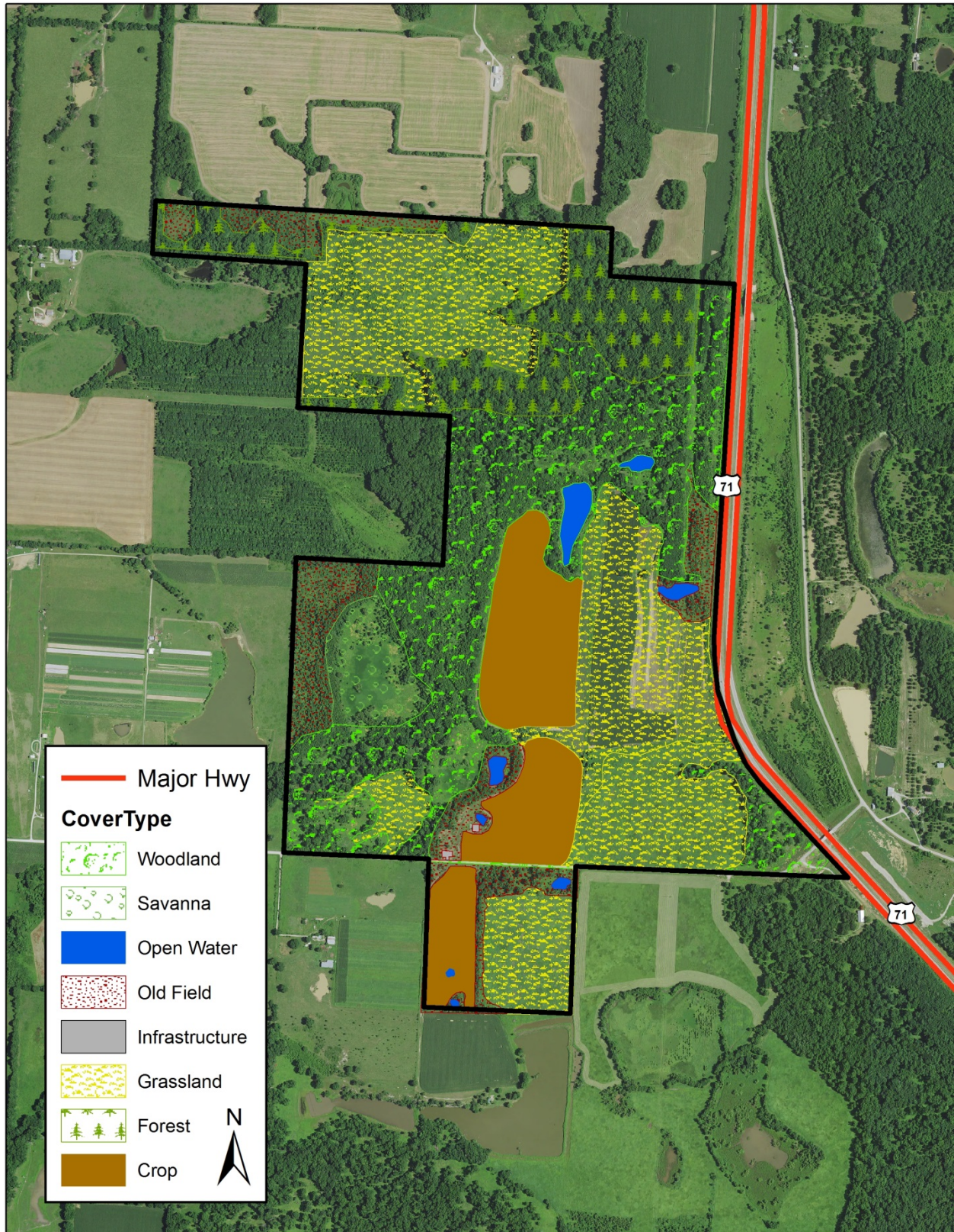
Appendix 6. Douglas Branch CA Area Map

# DOUGLAS BRANCH CONSERVATION AREA

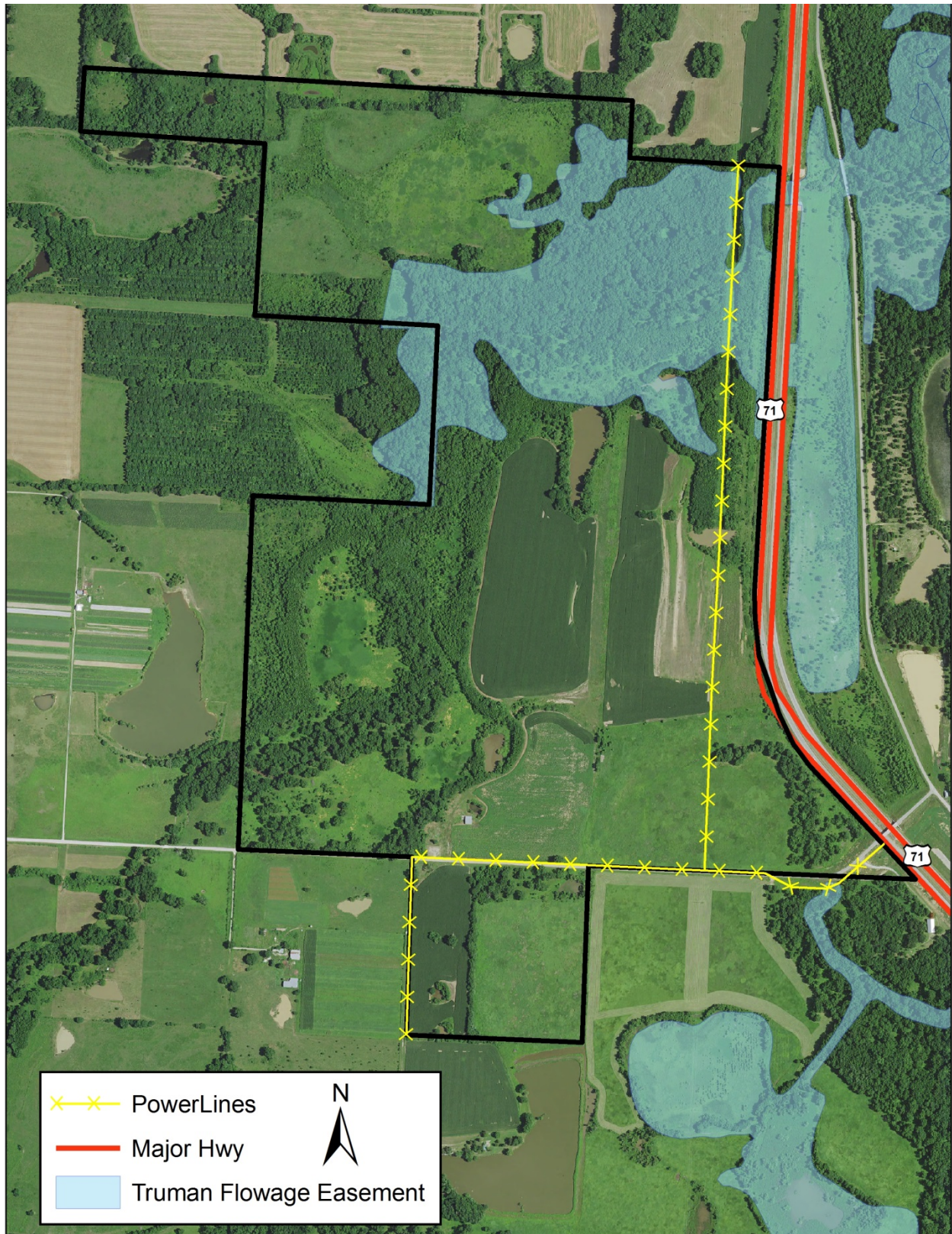
VERNON COUNTY  
511 ACRES



**Appendix 7. Douglas Branch CA Cover Map**



**Appendix 8. Douglas Branch CA Easement Map**



## Appendix 9. Flight Lake CA Background

Purchased in 1984, the 159-acre tract of land was once a local duck club. The area is in the Marmaton River floodplain and lies next to Stultz Lake Hunting and Fishing Club, one of the oldest clubs in west-central Missouri.

Flight Lake CA lies within the Cherokee Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section. The landtype association of the southern portion of the area is Four Rivers Alluvial Plains. Flight Lake CA was formerly listed as a natural history area and, although it is not currently listed in the Heritage Database, this portion contains habitat classified as Wet Bottomland Prairie and is dominated by prairie cordgrass. The northern portion of the area is Four Rivers Low Prairie Plains landtype association. Management of the prairie had included haying, but wet conditions have prevented that activity in recent years. To control succession and maintain the native plant communities, current management primarily includes a combination of mechanical and chemical treatments, along with prescribed burning when possible.

The area's greatest public use attraction is its 42-acre wetland. The unit was renovated in the late 2000s with a broader dam in order to sustain overtop flooding, along with a larger water-control structure. Additionally, creative borrowing and habitat mounds were added to increase habitat diversity for a broader suite of wetland species throughout the year. Flight Lake CA is managed to provide a range of recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.

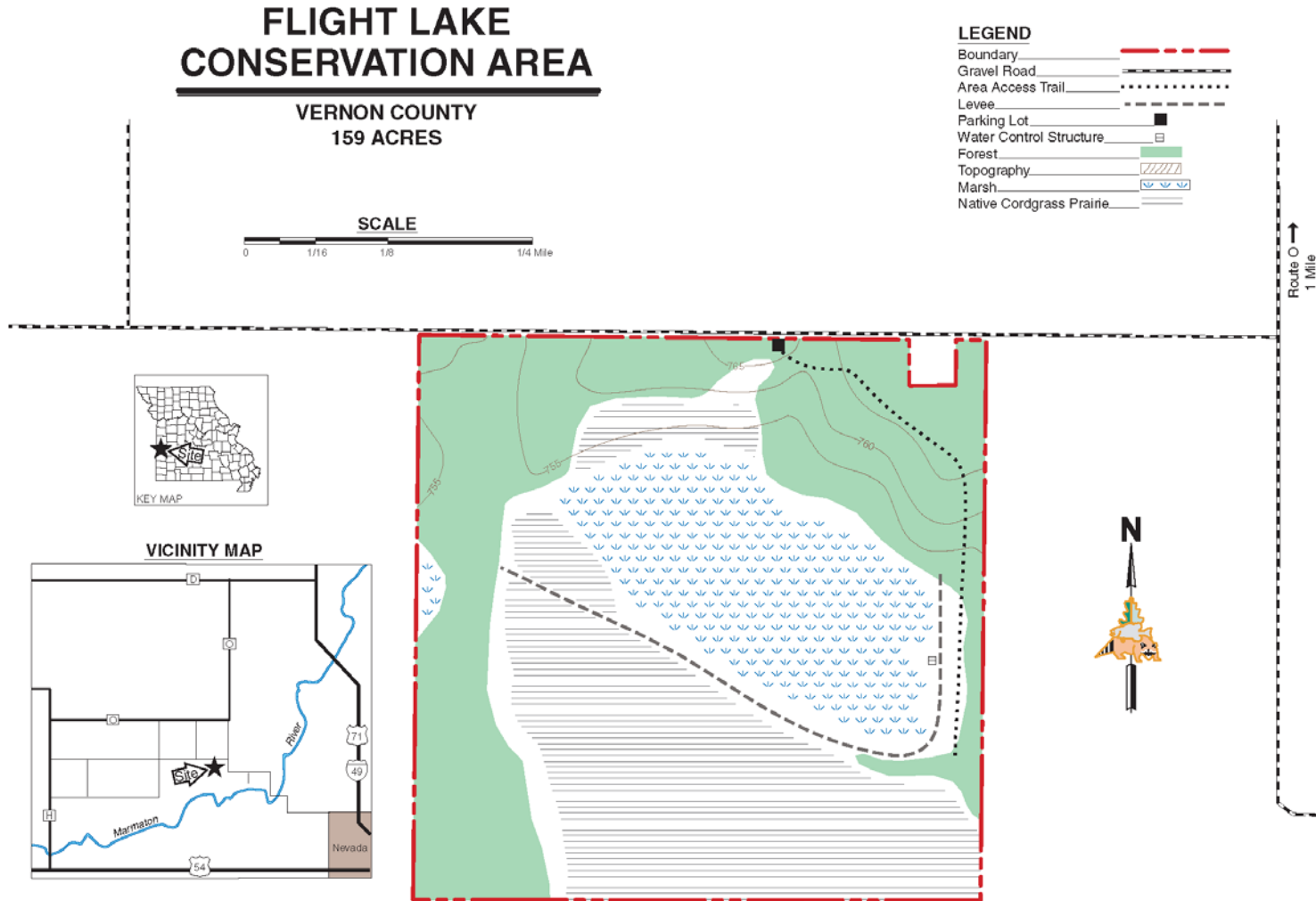
Legal Description: Township 36N, Range 32W, Section 26.

Area Location: From Nevada, take I-49/Highway 71 north 7 miles, Route D west 2.5 miles, Route O south 4 miles, gravel road 1200 south 1 mile, and west on Lady Road.

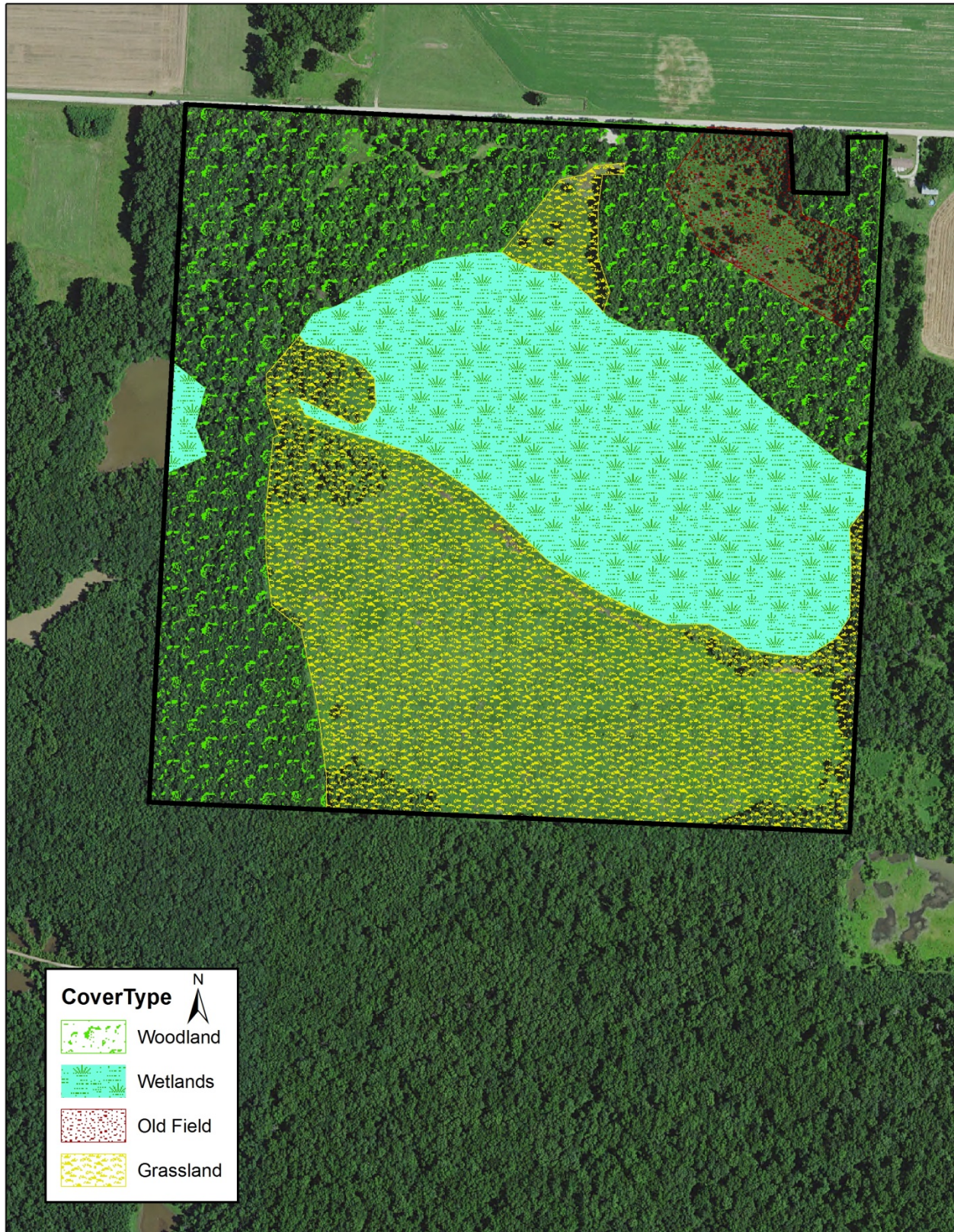
### Current Land and Water Types:

| Land/Water Type     | Acres      | % of Area  |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Forest and Woodland | 54         | 34         |
| Prairie             | 54         | 34         |
| Wetland             | 42         | 26         |
| Old Field           | 9          | 6          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>159</b> | <b>100</b> |

Appendix 10. Flight Lake CA Area Map



**Appendix 11. Flight Lake CA Cover Map**



**Appendix 12. Gama Grass Prairie CA Background**

The 80-acre property was acquired in 1992 and is comprised mostly of the remnant Hardpan Prairie natural community. As the area’s name suggests, a significant component of the prairie is native eastern gama grass. The area lies within the Scarped Osage Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section. The landtype association is the Inner Osage Prairie/Savanna Scarped Plain. Management of the prairie is mostly through a combination of rotational haying, burning and resting, with an emphasis on providing habitat for grassland birds.

The area offers easy access for wildlife viewing on a native prairie within close proximity to the interstate. The area generally sees light to moderate hunting pressure from deer, turkey, and small game hunters. Fishing is not allowed.

Legal Description: Township 37N, Range 32W, Section 1.

Area Location: From Nevada, take Interstate 49/Highway 71 north 12 miles to the Route TT exit. Then take the west outer road south about 1 mile, then west on Bailey Road 1 mile to the area.

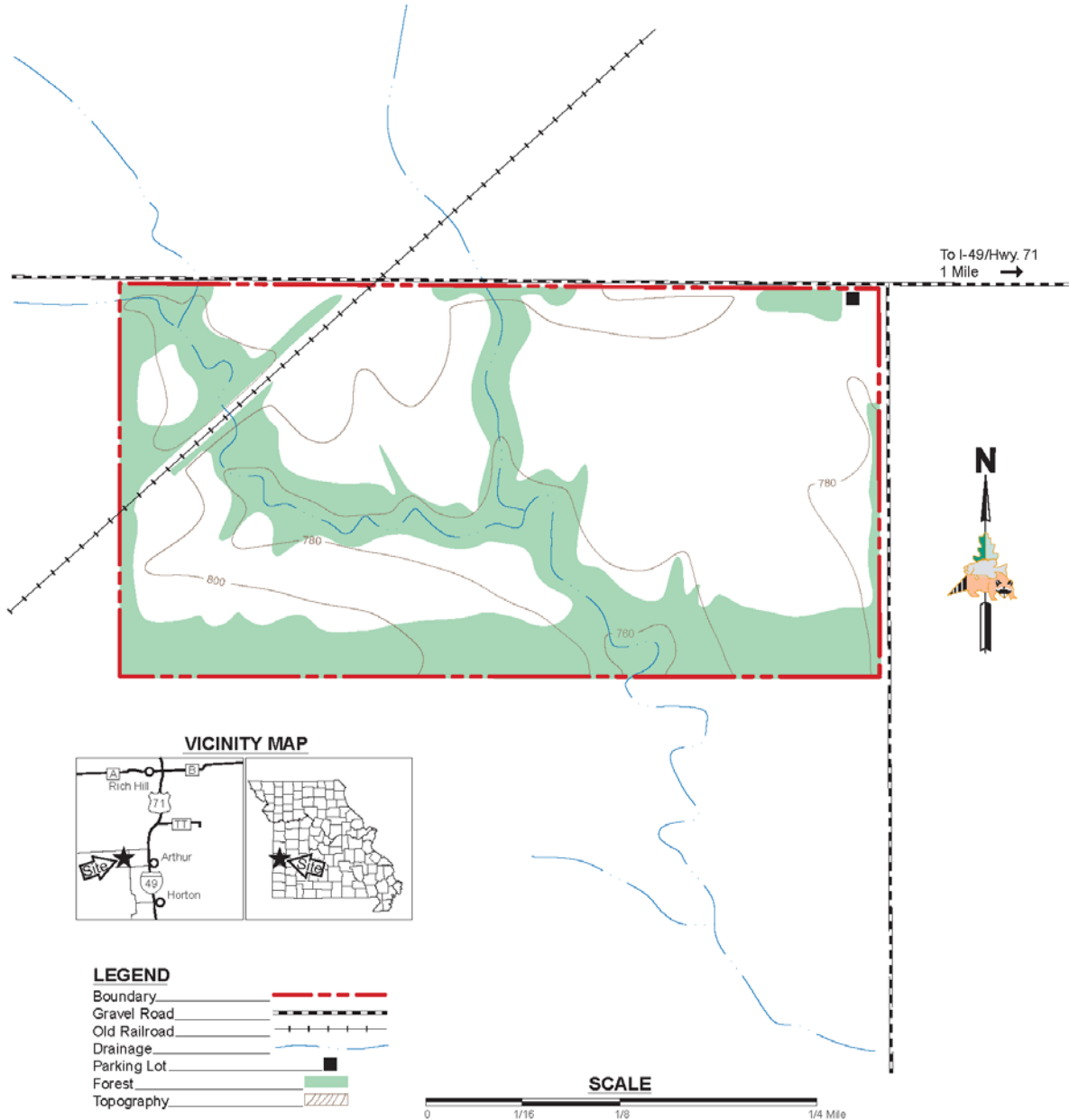
**Current Land and Water Types:**

| <b>Land/Water Type</b> | <b>Acres</b> | <b>Miles</b> | <b>% of Area</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Native Prairie         | 48           |              | 60               |
| Forest and Woodland    | 28           |              | 35               |
| Old Field              | 4            |              | 5                |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>80</b>    |              | <b>100</b>       |
| Stream Frontage        |              | 0.5          |                  |

Appendix 13. Gama Grass Prairie CA Area Map

# GAMA GRASS PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AREA

VERNON COUNTY  
80 ACRES





**Appendix 14. Gama Grass Prairie CA Cover Map**



## Appendix 15. Ripgut Prairie NA Background

The area was acquired in 1986, after having been hayed and farmed by one family for 55 years. First initiated in the 1890s, the Bates County Drainage Ditch channelized the Marais des Cygnes River and cut through the tract around 1920. This created a drier hydrology, likely encouraging row-crop farming on the higher portions of the tract. However, the area has since reverted back to a wetter hydrology, due to the influence of the Harry S. Truman Reservoir flowage easement.

Ripgut Prairie NA lies within the Cherokee Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section. The Landtype Association is Four Rivers Alluvial Plains. The natural area is the one of few remaining high quality examples of Wet and Wet-mesic Bottomland Prairie natural communities along the Marais des Cygnes River. The area contains a diverse assemblage of wildflowers, sedges and grasses, including the namesake of the prairie, “ripgut” or prairie cordgrass. The prairie is maintained by wet soil hydrology and rotational burning and haying.

Future management will include prairie reconstruction on portions of existing agricultural acres using on-site, native seed sources. Additionally, the riparian areas will be expanded to a minimum of 200 feet from the high bank of the Bates County Drainage Ditch. This will be accomplished by maintaining existing trees, and adding reconstructed wet prairie. The area will also continue to be managed to provide a range of recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing.

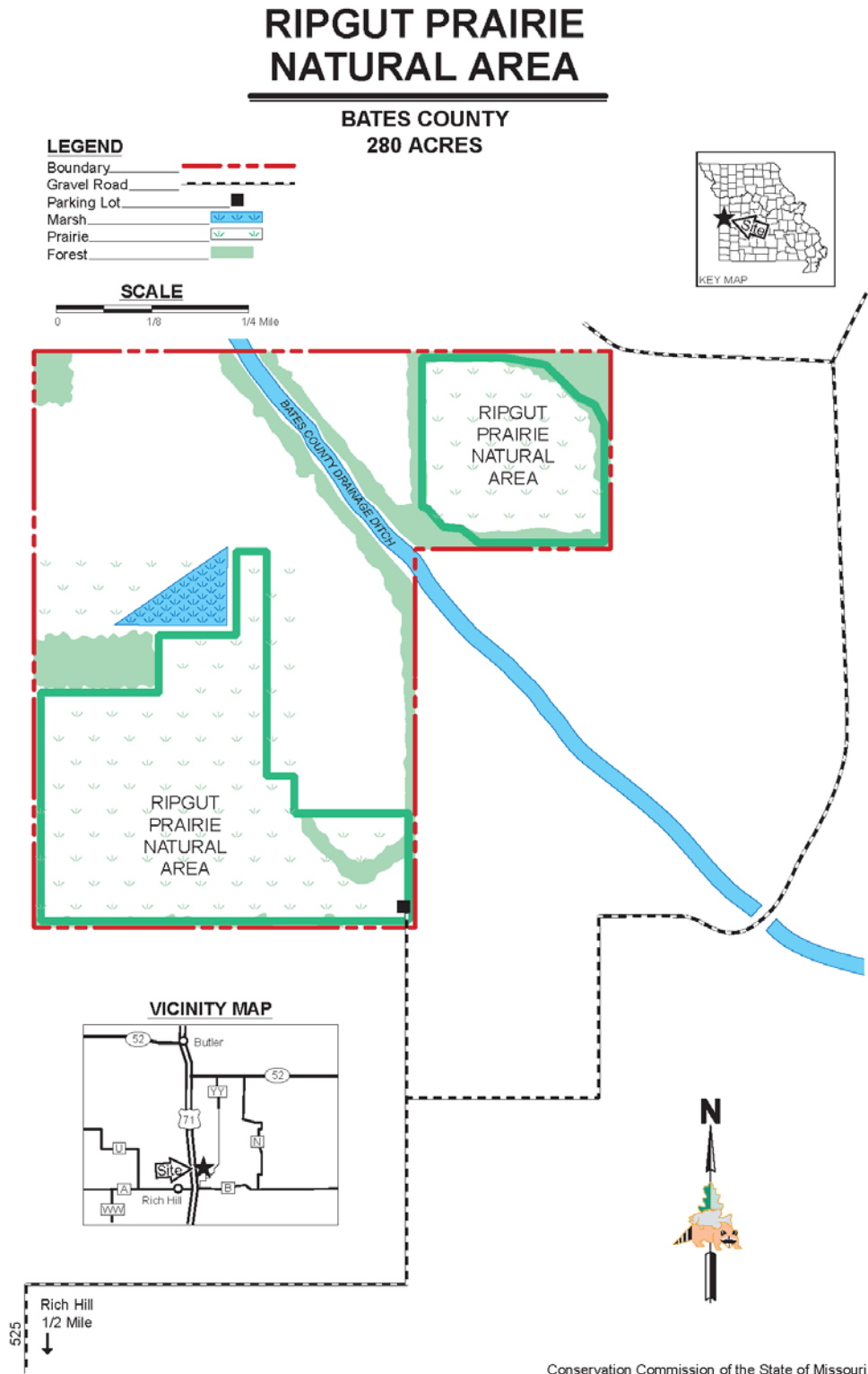
Legal Description: Township 39N, Range 31W, Section 33, 34.

Area Location: From Rich Hill, take Route B east 0.3 miles to the Ripgut Prairie NA sign. Take gravel road 515 north 0.5 miles until the road turns east. Go 0.5 miles, turn north, and go 0.25 miles to an unnamed gravel road that continues 0.25 miles north to the parking lot.

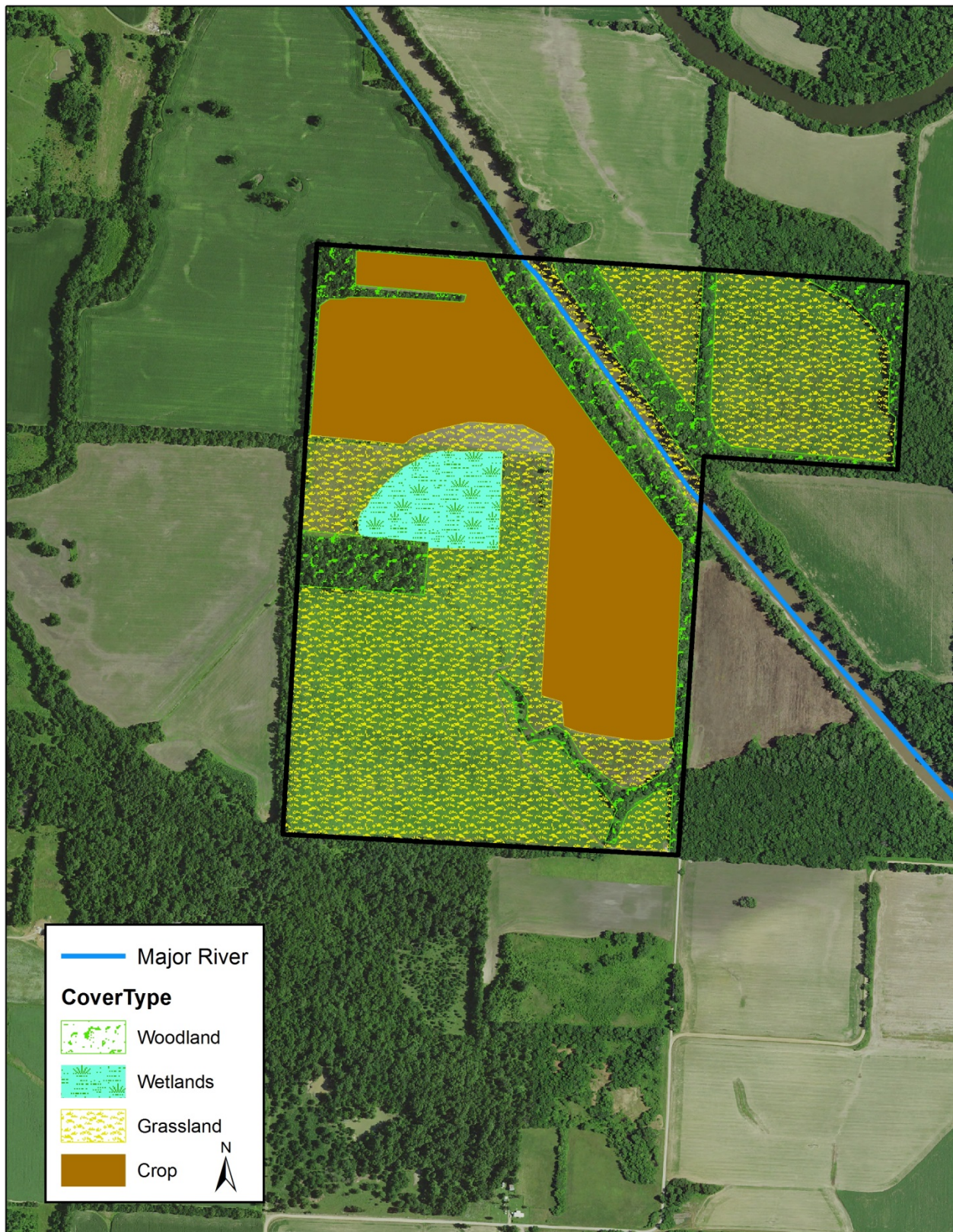
### Current Land and Water Types:

| Land/Water Type                      | Acres      | Miles | % of Area  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|------------|
| Native Prairie (remnant wet prairie) | 100        |       | 36         |
| Native Prairie (prairie planting)    | 65         |       | 23         |
| Cropland                             | 55         |       | 20         |
| Forest and Woodland                  | 48         |       | 17         |
| Wetland                              | 12         |       | 4          |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>280</b> |       | <b>100</b> |
| Stream Frontage                      |            | 0.4   |            |

**Appendix 16. Ripgut Prairie NA Area Map**



**Appendix 17. Ripgut Prairie NA Cover Map**



**Appendix 18. Ripgut Prairie NA Easement Map**



**Appendix A. Vernon and Bates County Prairies and Wetland Multi-Area Management Plan Public Comments**

Received during public comment period (Oct. 1-31, 2016):

I am in full support of the items found in this document. Thank. You for the time in preparing them.

As a 40+ year member and long president of Stultz Hunting Club, I would encourage you to take the opportunity to cure a long term dispute and safety issue that exists on the western border of your Flight lake property. MCC and Stultz have a property line that disects a small body of water referred to as "Hoover slash"

Over the years Stultz has had their duck blinds burn down, shots fired at blinds and face-to face arguments by individuals (guns in hand) as to right to hunt this water and whose hunting is being interferred with by others. Stultz has offered a land trade ( that has been in commission hands for quite some time) , the commission has conducted the survey, let's get this exchange completed, put this issue to rest, prevent any accidents and further friction between Neighbors.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am very concerned about the approved land swap between Stultz Hunting Club and the MDC. We have been waiting over a year for this to take place. I feel this is a very important move and should be acted upon as soon as possible. Hunting in that area is very dangerous, especially if someone is set up on the east side of the Hoover property. They are facing directly toward the Stultz blind. Anyone shooting from either side at low flying ducks is taking a chance at shooting directly at someone. My son and I had a close call during duck season last year. If someone is there sitting in the brush wearing camouflage, they are extremely difficult to see. I wouldn't want anyone to be involved in a horrible accident causing serious injury or death. Please take into consideration.

The trade would also greatly reduce trespassing, which has been a big problem in that area.

Also, the 4 reflective signs don't help when trying to get ducks to decoy in.

Your prompt consideration and action on this would be appreciated.

Thank You,