

Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan FY 2018-2032




Wildlife Division Chief

26 MARCH 2018
Date

Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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ST. LOUIS REGION

RCT Chair



Signature

3/13/18
Date

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Wildlife Management Chief



Signature

3/21/18
Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area, #7111
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1971
- **Acreage:** 203 acres
- **County:** Lincoln
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Design and Development
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. **Strategic Direction:** Manage for wildlife, woodland, and glade resources with emphasis on glade species and compatible outdoor recreational opportunities.
 - B. **Desired Future Condition:** The desired future condition of Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area is healthy forest, woodland, and glade natural communities that form a diverse landscape for a variety of plants and animals.
 - C. **Federal Aid Statement:**
NA

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** Cuivre River Fisheries Priority Watershed, Priority Forest Landscape, Cuivre River Conservation Opportunity Area Stream Reach Reference Watershed
- B. **Natural Areas:** None
- C. **Other:** Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area is in the Cuivre River Woodland/Forest Hills Landtype Association of the Central Dissected Till Plains Section of Missouri. This landtype possesses strongly rolling to relatively rugged hills with rather narrow ridges, steep sideslopes, narrow valleys, and over 100 feet of local relief. Upland soils are mainly thin layers of till and loess, while lower slopes grade into sedimentary residuum. Historically, this area consisted of a complex mosaic of narrow ridgetop prairies and savannas, grading into oak woodlands on upper slopes, with well-developed oak and mixed hardwood forests on protected slopes and bottoms. Floodplains with marshes and wet prairies are interspersed throughout. Streams have mainly sandbed channels and well-developed floodplains of variable soil texture. While much of the landscape has been cleared for pasture, the largest blocks of remaining timber in this region occur here. Most blocks are dense, second-growth oak forest, fragmenting, and simplifying a potentially diverse landscape (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
- B. Caves:** None
- C. Springs:** None
- D. Other:** This area contains numerous limestone glades that support unique plants and animals.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- One parking lot
- One non-stocked pond (0.25 acres)

IV. 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:** Ameren Missouri electric utility line (Figure 5)
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area contains 202.75 acres of forest, woodland, and glade habitat.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage invasive species.
- 2) Enhance woodland/forest.
- 3) Reduce cedar encroachment on glades.
- 4) Partner with private landowners.

Management Objective 1: Manage invasive species.

Strategy 1: Identify areas where invasive species, such as sericea lespedeza, bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, and others, occur. Use proven treatment methods to reduce their occurrence. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Enhance woodland/forest areas.

Strategy 1: Identify areas suitable for woodland restoration and manage these areas with woodland thinning, prescribed burning, commercial harvest, and other techniques to enhance woodland natural communities and associated wildlife. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 2: If prescribed burning is not feasible, wooded areas may be managed with forest thinning or other techniques to enhance habitat for wildlife. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Reduce cedar encroachment on glades.

Strategy 1: Mechanically remove cedars from glades. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Dry Branch (1.6 miles), an intermittent spring, runs through Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Protect intermittent stream corridors.

Management Objective 1: Protect stream corridors.

Strategy 1: Maintain a 100-foot buffer adjacent to Dry Branch and at least a 50-foot buffer adjacent to other tributaries. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to follow best management practices to ensure consideration is given to streams, per the *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009), when management activities are conducted. (Wildlife)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities for the public.
- 2) Maintain positive relationships with neighboring landowners.
- 3) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Management Objective 1: Provide hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing opportunities for the public.

Strategy 1: Continue to enhance woodland, glade, and aquatic habitats to increase fish and wildlife populations on the area. (Wildlife, Forestry, Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Conduct patrols to enforce area regulations. (Protection)

Management Objective 2: Maintain positive relationships with adjacent landowners.

Strategy 1: Respond quickly and effectively to neighboring landowner questions, comments, and concerns. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) guidelines. (Design and Development)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Consider acquisition of land, when available.

Management Objective 1: Clearly mark boundaries of Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area.

Strategy 1: Maintain signage in a way that clearly designates Department property boundaries. (Wildlife)

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, are located within a priority geography, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area is located in northern Lincoln County and totals 203 acres. This area includes 202.75 acres of woods and a 0.25-acre pond. The area was donated to the Missouri Department of Conservation by Henry von Phul Thomas in 1971. Management of Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area focuses on providing food and cover for wildlife while providing outdoor recreational opportunities for the public.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Forest/Woodland	199.75		98
Glade	2.75		1
Pond	0.25		<1
Infrastructure	0.25		<1
Total	203		100
Stream Frontage (of Permanent Streams)		0	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Sept. 1–30, 2017. The Department received comments from four respondents (Appendix A). The Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife 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 Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area Management Plan public comment period.

Suggests adding horse-only trails to the area.

Due to the small size and steep topography of the area, horse trails are not feasible on this area.

Suggests adding a hiking trail and parking lot to the area.

The area currently has a parking lot on the west side of Highway UU. Due to the steep terrain and small size of the area, the Department does not desire to invest resources into developing a hiking trail on this area.

Would like to see the invasive bush honeysuckle controlled more.

The Department supports control of invasive plant species and, as part of this area plan, Management Objective 1 addresses identifying and treating bush honeysuckle in addition to other plant species. Treatment of invasive species will be directed to high priority areas first and will continue as staff and funding levels permit.

Supports not allowing rifle hunting on the area.

Due to the small size of the area and proximity to private land, the use of single fire projectiles is not in the plan for the future.

Old boundary signs should be picked up when new signs are posted.

As the area is posted, the old signs will be picked up when new signs are put up.

Need more enforcement to keep rifle hunters out of non-permitted areas.

If a violation is witnessed, everyone is encouraged to call Operation Game Thief (1-800-392-1111) or your local Sheriff Department.

References:

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.

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: Current Cover Type Map

Figure 4: Topographic Map

Figure 5: Easement Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

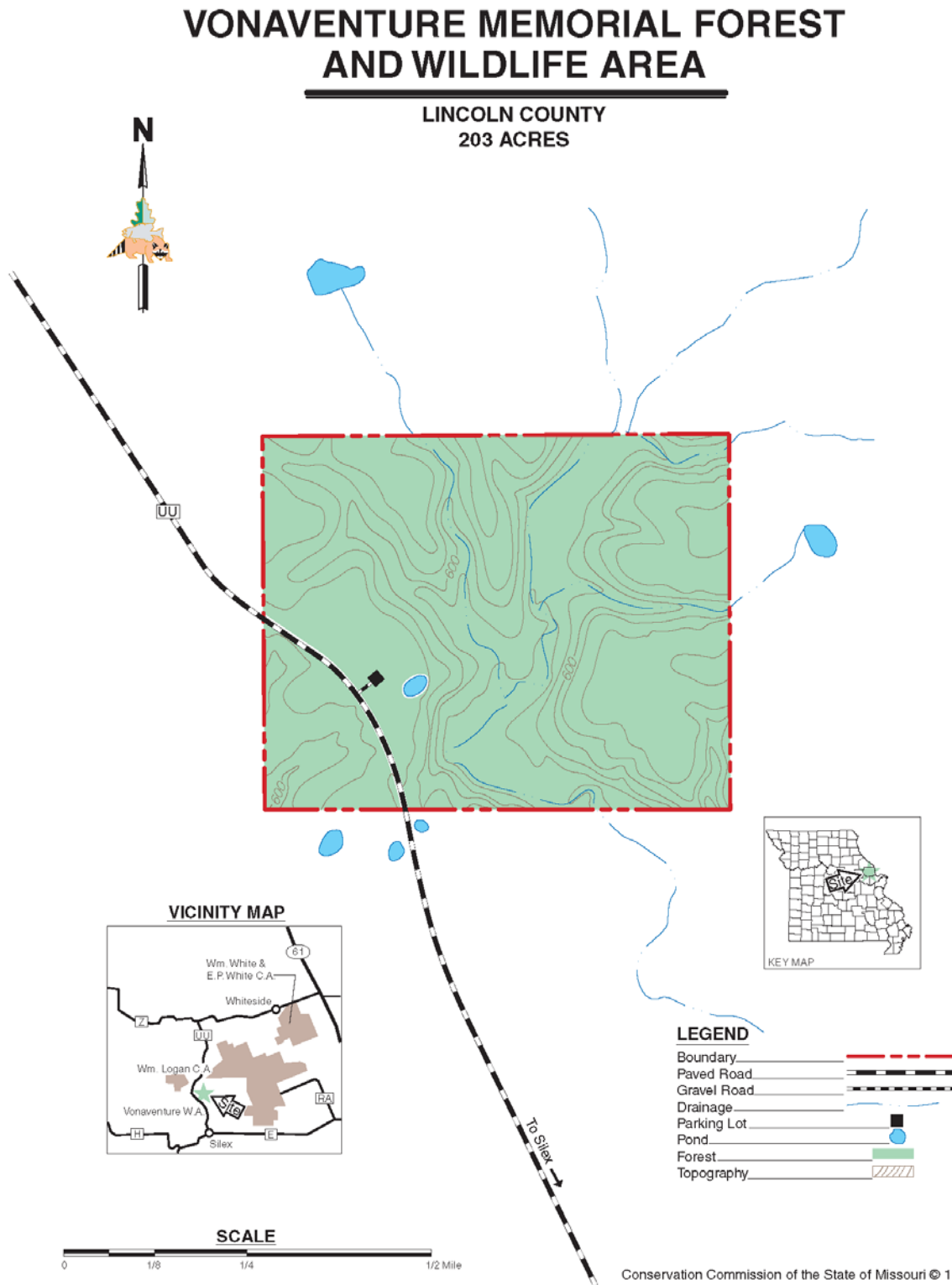


Figure 2: Aerial Map

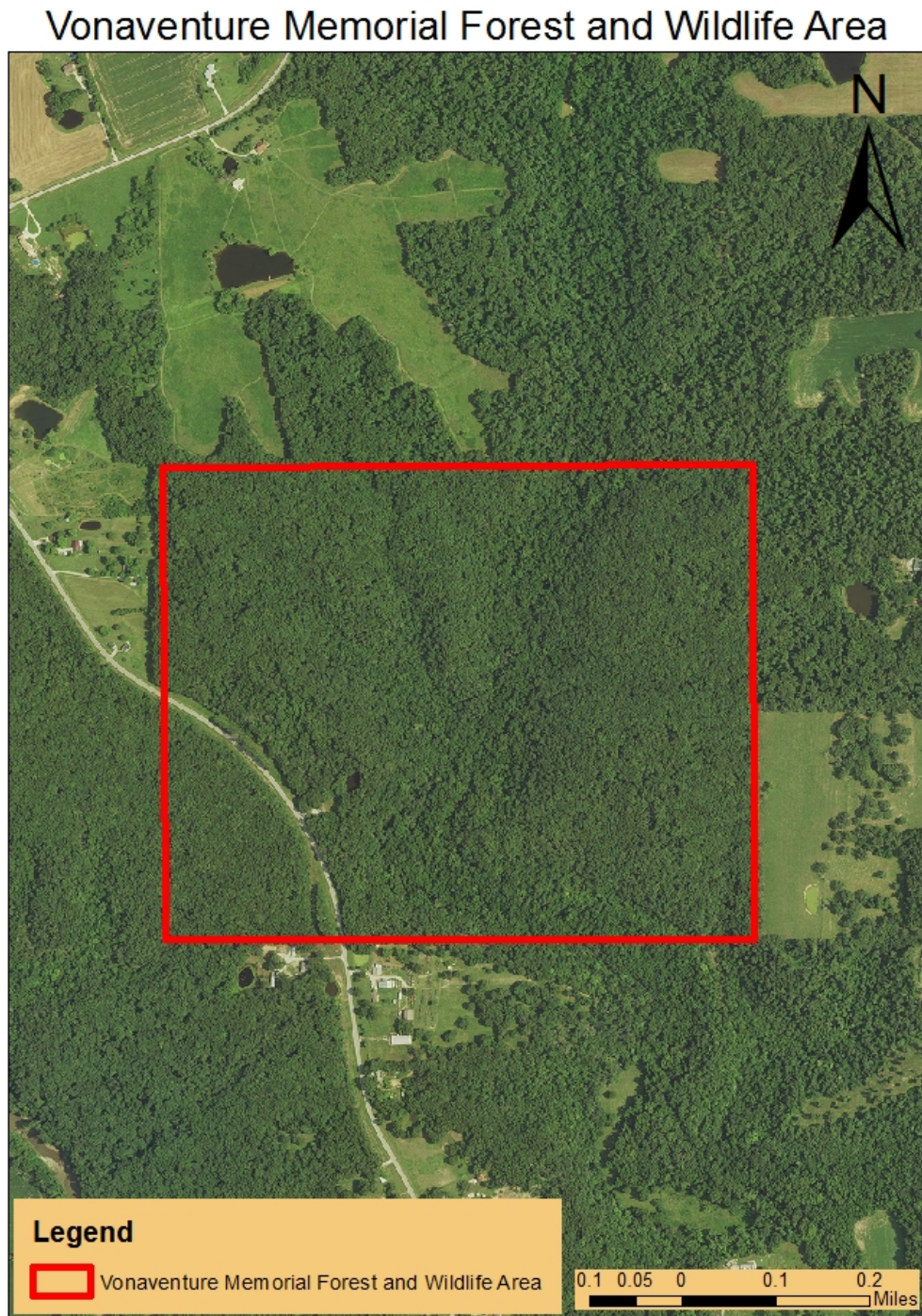


Figure 3: Current Cover Type Map

Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area

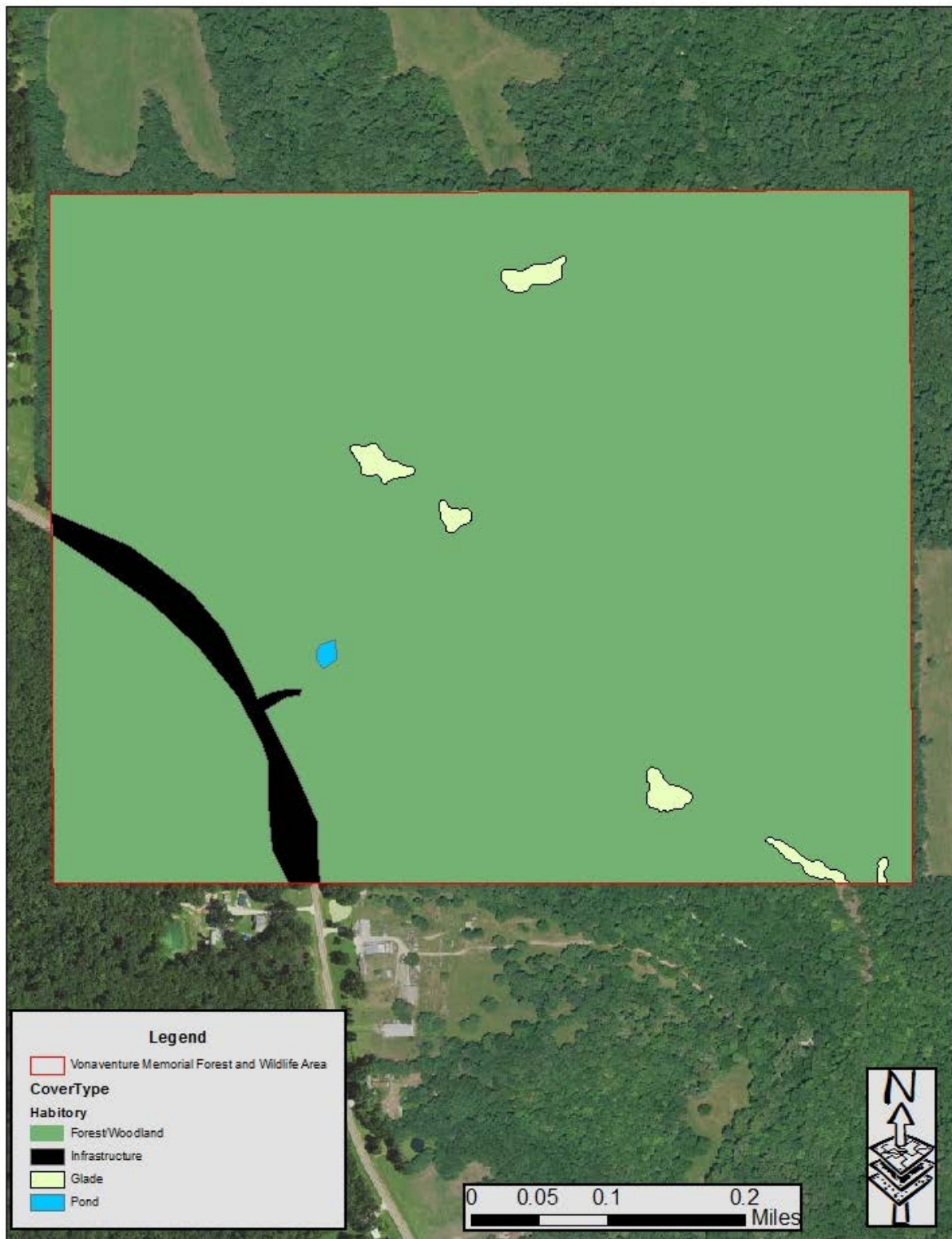


Figure 4: Topographic Map

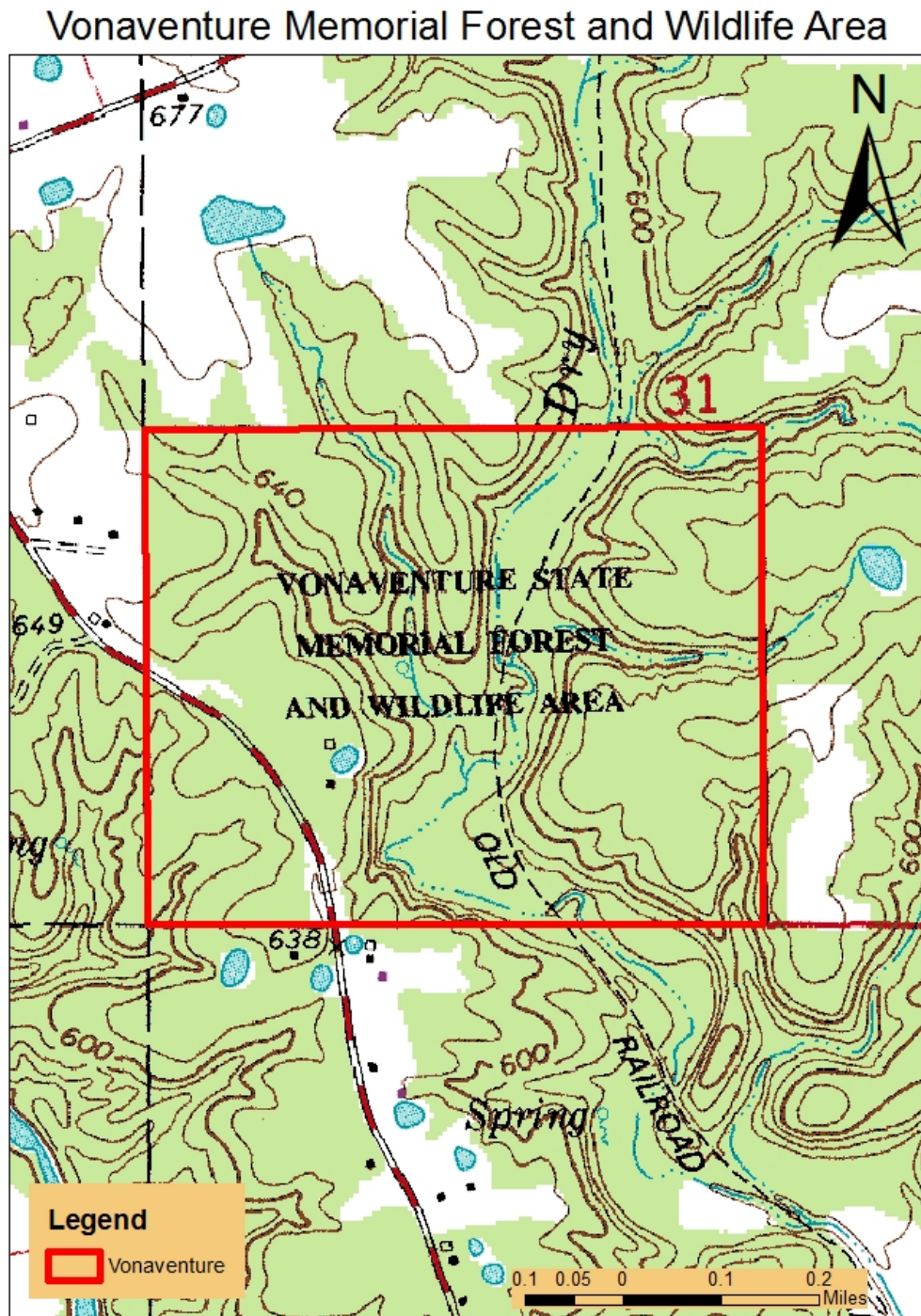
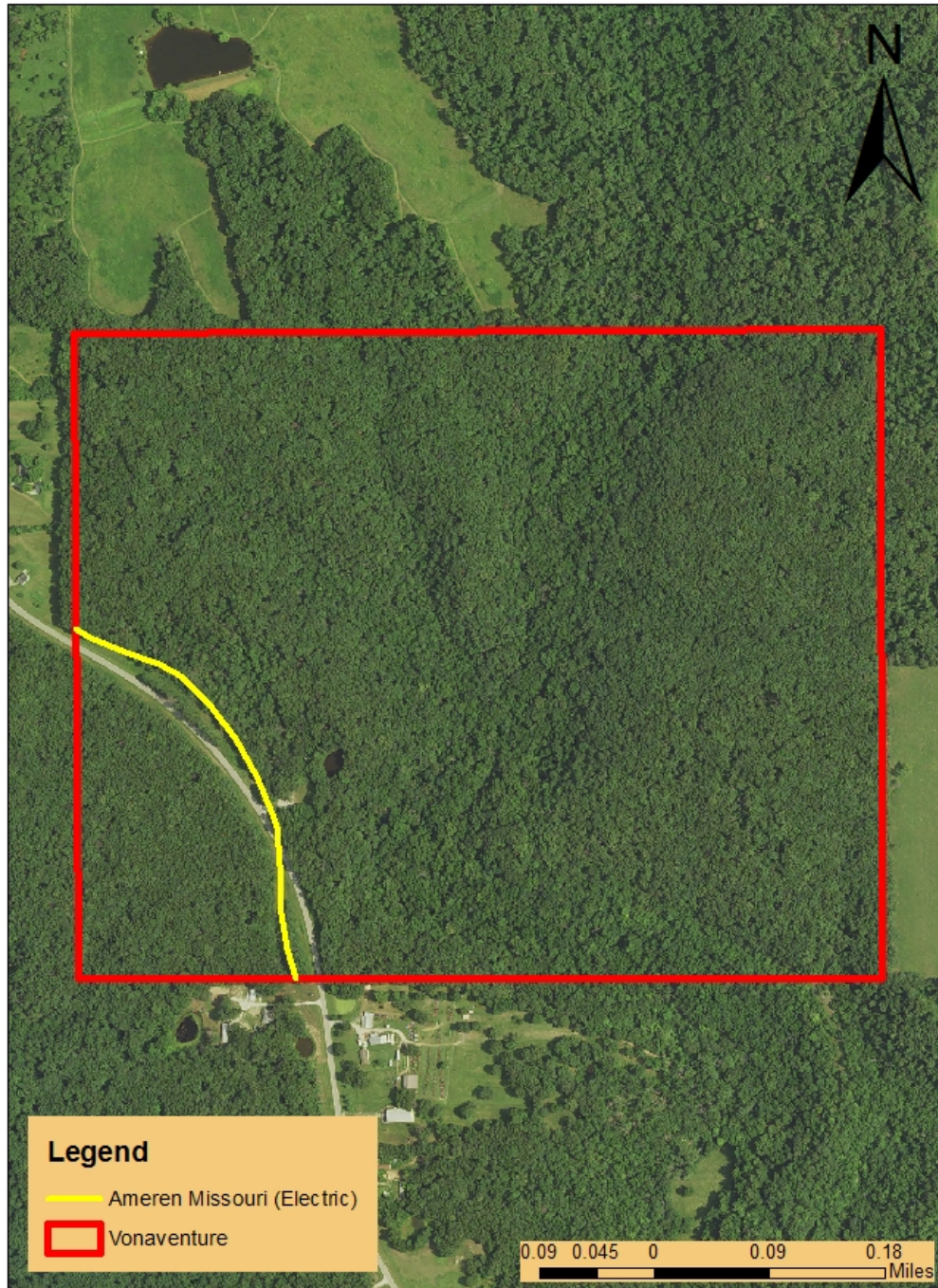


Figure 5: Easement Map

Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area



Appendix A: Vonaventure Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Sept. 1–30, 2017):

If possible, please include Equestrian Trails in suitable conservation areas. We could use additional "horse only" trails in Lincoln County. Thank you for your consideration of public comments and the great job you do with managing the public land.

Looks like a great place to hike and with other areas nearby a person could visit and hike at all of them. Therefor a hiking trail would be a great idea. The trail(s) would allow the public to view the flora and faun. If possible a parking area in another location might encourage more use.

My ground borders on the southeast corner. The bush honeysuckle has taken over everywhere and not sure what can be done at this point to take it back. Vonaventure is a nice place over all and like that you are not allowed to hunt it with rifles. There is also access to Vonaventure from the back of my property if needed.

Wish old boundary signs would be picked up when new ones are put up. Should be watched more during firearm deer season. I have observed too often hunters with rifles in the parking area. (It is closed to rifle deer hunting)