


Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2019-2028





Outreach and Education Division Chief



Date

**Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center Area Management Plan
Approval Page**

PLANNING TEAM

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RCT Chair

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Signature

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OUTREACH & EDUCATION DIVISION

Outreach and Education Chief

Shawn Gule
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Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center, # 9526
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1994; Platte county owns 188 acres leased to the Missouri Department of Conservation (October 20, 1994 – June 30, 2044). The Missouri Department of Transportation owns 12 acres with a renewed lease with the Missouri Department of Conservation (August 1, 2005 – June 30, 2025).
- **Acreage:** 200 acres
- **County:** Platte
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Outreach and Education
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Outreach and Education
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Conserve, enhance, and/or restore the area’s fish, forest, and wildlife resources while providing compatible outdoor recreational opportunities, including a safe, well-maintained, manned public-use firearms range.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center area is a healthy forest that provides riparian corridor protection to Brush Creek tributaries.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** None
 - B. Natural Areas:** None

- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None

- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - Staffed office, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible
 - Rifle/pistol shooting range, 25-point (ADA accessible)
 - Two restrooms (ADA accessible)
 - Three parking lots (with 95 spaces, five are ADA-accessible)
 - One four-point archery range
 - Hiking trail, 1.3 miles

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** The area is under two long-term leases. The largest is for 188 acres leased from Platte County 50 year leased 1994-2043, Missouri. The remaining 12 acres are leased from the Missouri Department of Transportation (renewed August 1, 2005 through June 30, 2025). Use agreements also exist with a waste management company, Republic Services, Inc.
- 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:** Easements exists for two powerline rights of way with Kansas City Power & Light. One is located on the area leased from the Missouri Department of Transportation. The other is located on the Platte County property and is a high voltage transmission line easement that crosses the entire property in an east/west direction.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) environmental compliance specialist. Managers should follow best management practices for cultural resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Invasive plants continue to be a threat. Sericea lespedeza, Johnson grass, crown vetch, shrub honeysuckle, and Japanese honeysuckle are well established. Small populations of garlic mustard have also been located on the area.
- 2) Upland habitats provide a variety of wildlife species food and cover. Active management is required to maximize diversity.
- 3) The area is mostly comprised of forested land that is inaccessible and small in size. Due to developments growing around the area, Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center is becoming an island of forested wildlife habitat. As time passes, this will become even more so. It is important to maintain the forest health of the area and to maintain a forested riparian corridor along tributaries to Brush Creek.

- 4) Opportunities exist to maintain and enhance forest ecosystem through the use of sustainable forest management practices for optimum wildlife habitat and forest health. In some areas, management is restricted by accessibility.
- 5) Mast production on the area could become limited by competition from species such as honey locust. Thinning to improve species diversity and increase hard mast would provide better wildlife habitat.
- 6) Ash trees on the area will continue to die as a result of Emerald Ash Borer activity. This die-off will also result in a change in the species composition of the area.

Management Objective 1: Reduce invasive plants on the area while not conflicting with other uses and efforts.

Strategy 1: Utilize local staff and/or volunteers to mechanically or chemically control small populations. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Explore additional funding opportunities to hire contractors to mechanically or chemically control highly infested areas. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Utilize a variety of management techniques including but not limited to prescribe fire, where feasible, to target larger populations. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Utilize active management practices to provide food and cover for wildlife and to maximize species diversity.

Strategy 1: Seek out opportunities to do larger scale prescribed fires to increase herbaceous vegetation and promote diversity. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Manage open areas and existing stands of planted native grasses with various management actions that will increase diversity. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Seek out opportunities to convert portions of the open fields to pollinator habitat. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: On appropriate sites, manage forested areas to improve overall natural community health while improving habitat for wildlife.

Strategy 1: Due to the area's small tract size, forest inventory may be completed on an as-needed basis to monitor stand composition and assess needs for forest health. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Periodically monitor and suppress invasive species on the area. (Outreach and Education, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Evaluate ash trees as they decline and die to determine if and when they need to be felled. (Outreach and Education, Forestry)

Strategy 4: Utilize sustainable forest management practices to promote healthy forest communities. Practices could include, but are not limited to, timber harvesting, forest thinning, tree planting, seeding, and prescribed burning. Over the next several years little thinning should be required on the area, other than the felling of ash and honey locust trees. (Outreach and Education, Forestry)

Strategy 5: Utilize best management practices during forest management as described in the Department's manuals: *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice* manual (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014b) and the *Missouri Forest Management Guidelines Voluntary Recommendations for Well-Managed Forests* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014a). (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Aquatic resources on the area are limited; however, there are two intermittent streams on the area that flow into Brush Creek. Fortunately, the watershed of these two streams is predominantly timbered.

Management Objective 1: Protect and enhance stream corridors to improve water quality, promote stable stream banks, provide flood abatement, and increase habitat diversity.

Strategy 1: Periodically evaluate buffer widths and conditions in order to account for changes in land management and area boundaries and make recommendations about stream corridor management. Management will be completed in accordance with the *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Outreach and Education, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Identify riparian corridors that need to be widened and establish appropriate vegetation using tree planting, direct seeding, or allowing natural regeneration. (Outreach and Education, Forestry)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The use of the area is limited by existing agreements. Those restrictions must be considered in all public-use considerations.
- 2) Opportunities exist to provide a safe, fun, and educational venue to facilitate participation in and enjoyment of hunting, shooting, and related outdoor skills.
- 3) Opportunities exist to partner with local law enforcement agencies for training and firearms qualifications.

- 4) Opportunities exist to expand shooting ranges to include additional shooting disciplines and offer increased opportunities to enjoy shooting activities.
- 5) Opportunities exist for school and group educational programming.
- 6) Opportunities exist to provide hunting, trapping, hiking, and wildlife viewing near a major metropolitan area.

Management Objective 1: Continue to maintain and operate established shooting ranges and explore opportunities to expand facilities as resources allow.

Strategy 1: Maintain a safe, clean, and family-friendly environment for hunters to practice shooting and become proficient before pursuing game. Provide opportunities for the public to learn about hunting, fishing, trapping, and other outdoor recreation. Additionally, provide a place for recreational shooters to enjoy shooting within the limitations and restrictions of the design of the ranges.

(Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Continue to allow use of facilities by law enforcement within the limitations of range design. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Conduct periodic review of shooting range facilities and explore opportunities to improve or expand facilities. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 4: Promote educational opportunities and school field trips, as area resources and staffing will allow. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 5: Continue to offer a variety of programming consistent with the mission and goals of the Department, that meets the needs of area users.

(Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 2: Maintain a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic habitats to provide public users with quality hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Implement management activities targeting improvement of terrestrial wildlife populations. Terrestrial management activities should provide opportunities for hunting and viewing a variety of species, including deer, turkey, and small-game species such as squirrel and rabbit. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Maintain access to area habitats through existing network of roads and parking lots. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Continue to allow trapping on area, as appropriate, through special use permits. (Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 3: Promote the use of the area by school and civic groups through special use permits.

Strategy 1: Allow group use requests that do not interfere with area management priorities in accordance with special use permits. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Promote educational opportunities and school field trips as area resources and staffing will allow. (Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 4: Maintain and improve designated hiking trails.

Strategy 1: Monitor and evaluate erosion on a regular basis and work to correct issues in a timely fashion. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Provide clarification on area signage and brochures to better communicate approved uses and trail locations. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Explore opportunities to create partnerships with not-for-profit organizations that could assist with improvements and maintenance of trails. (Outreach and Education)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain clear and identifiable boundaries.
- 2) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.
- 3) Prioritize acquisition of adjoining land because of the close proximity to a large urban area.
- 4) Existing leases and agreements will all expire at different times. Ensure that all agreements are updated as necessary.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area boundaries and access roads.

Strategy 1: Clearly identify and mark area boundaries with proper signage. (Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Monitor boundaries on an annual basis to ensure proper signage stays in place. (Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 2: Maintain area infrastructure.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines and at currently identified maintenance level. (Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Monitor for vandalism and illegal activities. (Protection, 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

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center is nestled in the hills along the Missouri River of southern Platte County. The area includes 200 acres of rugged bluff land. The tract is named in honor of William F. Parma, who donated 188 acres of the land to the Platte County Commission in 1986. In the fall of 1994, the Platte County Commission and the Missouri Department of Conservation entered into a 50-year lease agreement for the construction of a shooting range and outdoor education center. The shooting range was opened November 7, 2001.

Most of the area outside the immediate range area is forested. Tree species found on the ridges include black walnut, honey locust, elm, shingle oak, and hickory. The hillside tree species include chinquapin oak, walnut, basswood, white oak, northern red oak, and white ash. Some of the valley trees are sycamore and hackberry. The major goal of the area is to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the public.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area	Miles
Forest and Woodland	170	85	
Improved Structures	30	15	
Total	200	100	
Stream Frontage			0

Public Input Summary:

The draft Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center Management Plan was available for a public comment period Oct. 1–31, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from five respondents (Appendix A). The Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center 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 Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center Management Plan public comment period.](#)

Supports maintaining boundary signage.

Thank you for your comment. Boundary maintenance will continue.

Supports trail expansion. Would like to help with trail expansion.

Current and expected trail use does not warrant trail expansion during this management period. There are volunteer opportunities to assist with trail maintenance and upkeep of existing trails. Contact the site office for more information.

Would like the range at this area to be more like Lake City Shooting Range.

The area's topography and woodlands make significant upgrades challenging; however, staff continue to investigate shotgun options.

Suggests adding an outreach program to teach firearm safety to women.

The site already offers outreach programs that teach firearm safety to women and many other diverse audiences. These programs are offered at no cost to the participants. You can find details on upcoming events at the [Parma Woods Shooting Range-Events Page](#).

Would like to see range hours of operation expanded during the winter due to long lines at the range.

We currently have expanded hours through the November portion of the firearms deer season. Range use typically drops significantly after deer season. We are aware that range use is busy during any period of nice weather during the winter, especially if that occurs on a weekend. In fact, we strive to staff accordingly for these periods. Staffing and daylight length limit our ability to expand much beyond current operating hours. We will continue to look for ways to improve our services.

Suggests adding rifle stations.

There are no plans to add rifle lanes. The current range design is near the maximum that can be safely operated with existing structures. Redesigning the rifle range would not be feasible at this time.

Suggests adding a longer range (e.g., 300 yards) in the northern part of the area.

We continually look for ways to improve our services. However, there is no opportunity for such expansion at this facility. The topography makes such expansion cost-prohibitive and the limited size of the area limits the available land for an adequate safety zone for such a range.

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.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014a). *Missouri forest management guidelines: Voluntary recommendations for well-managed forests*. Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014b). *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.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial and Easement Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Current Vegetation

Figure 5: Ownership Map

Additional Appendices:

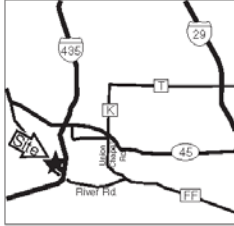
Appendix A: Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

PARMA WOODS RANGE and TRAINING CENTER

PLATTE COUNTY
200 ACRES

VICINITY MAP



LEGEND

- Boundary ————
- Paved Road ————
- Powerline ————
- Drainage ————
- Hiking Trail ————
- Parking Lot ————
- Privy ————
- Shooting Range ————
- Archery Range ————
- Disabled Accessible ————
- Building ————
- Forest ————
- Topography ————
- No Hunting Zone ————

SCALE



Figure 2: Aerial and Easement Map

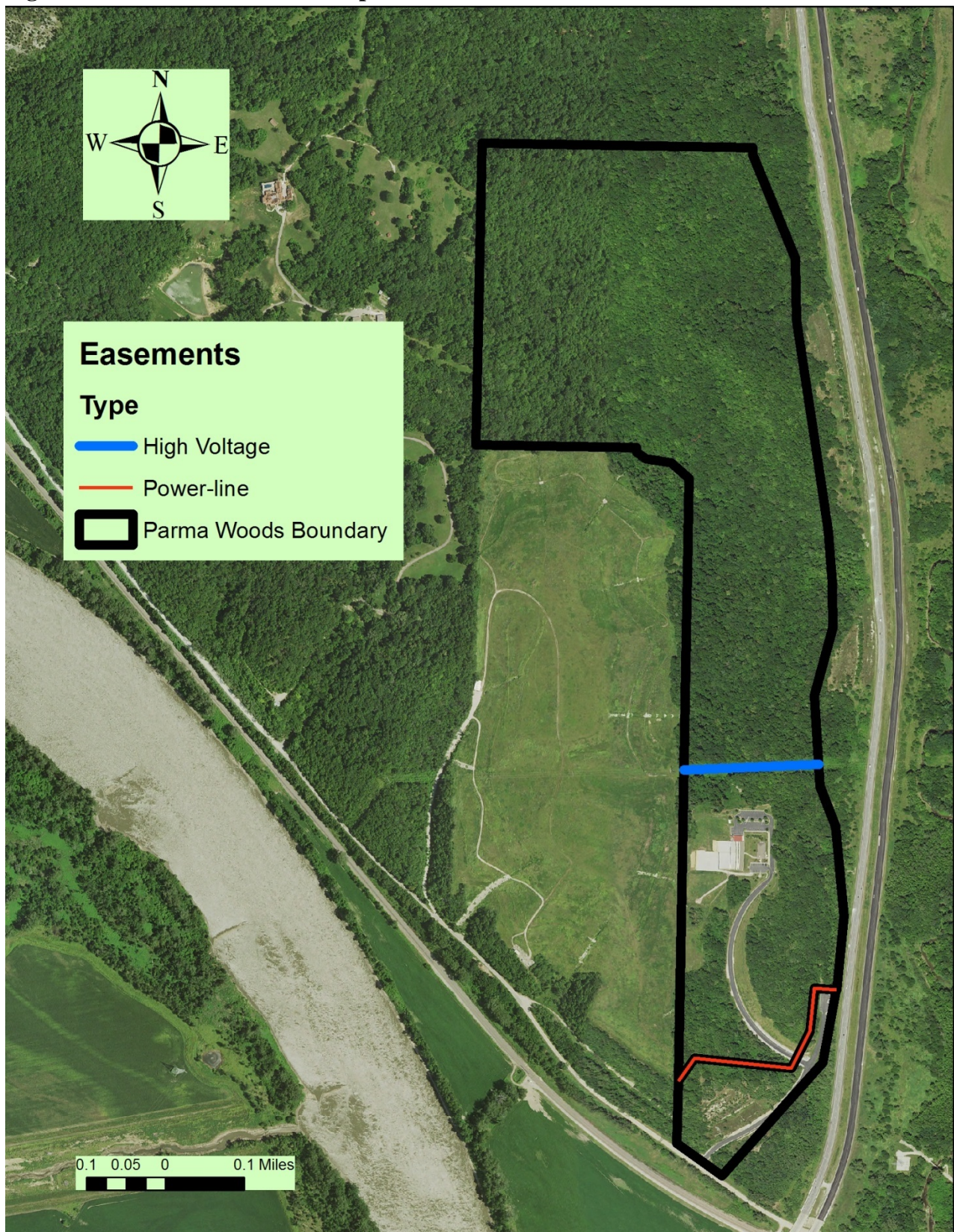


Figure 3: Topographic Map

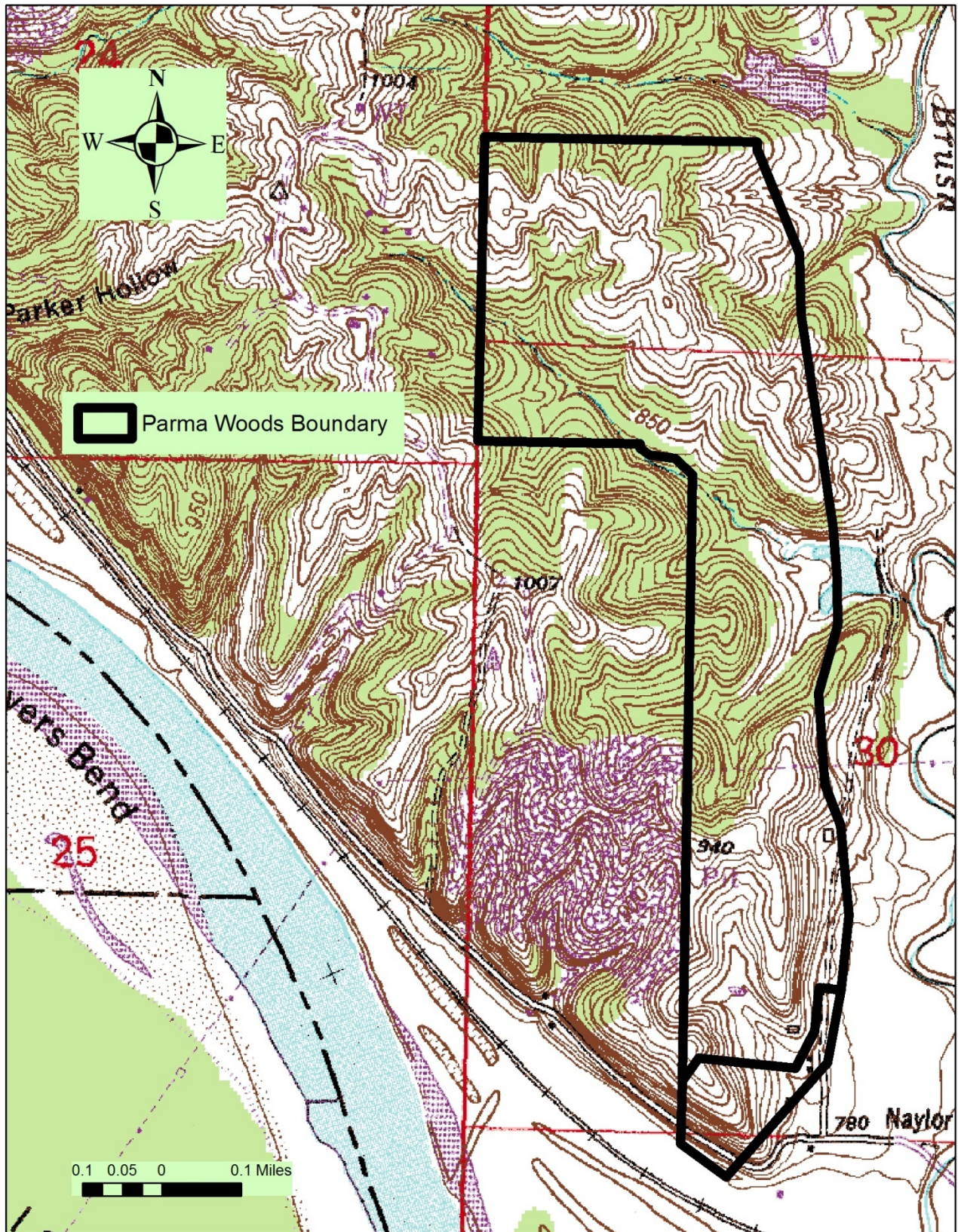


Figure 4: Current Vegetation

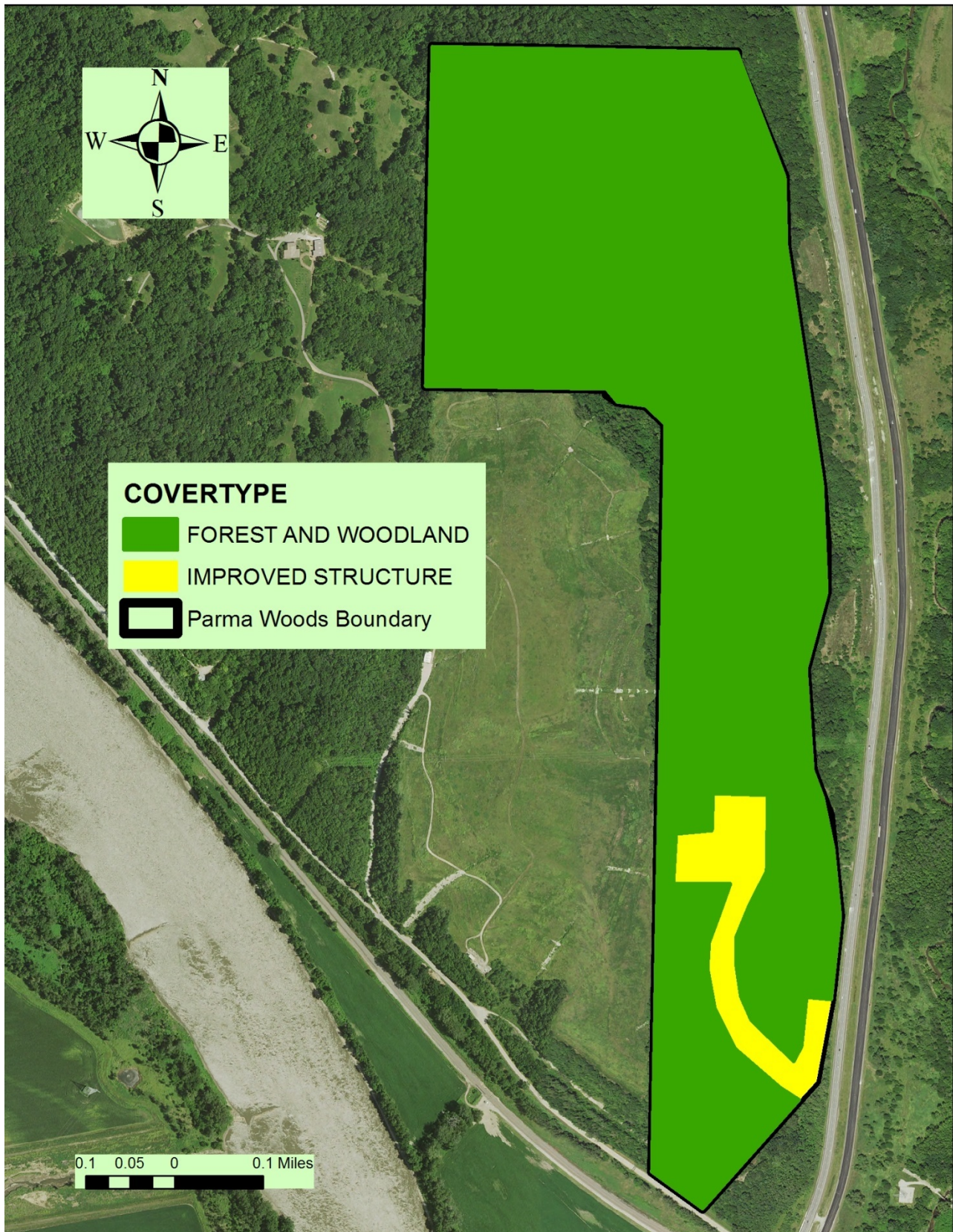
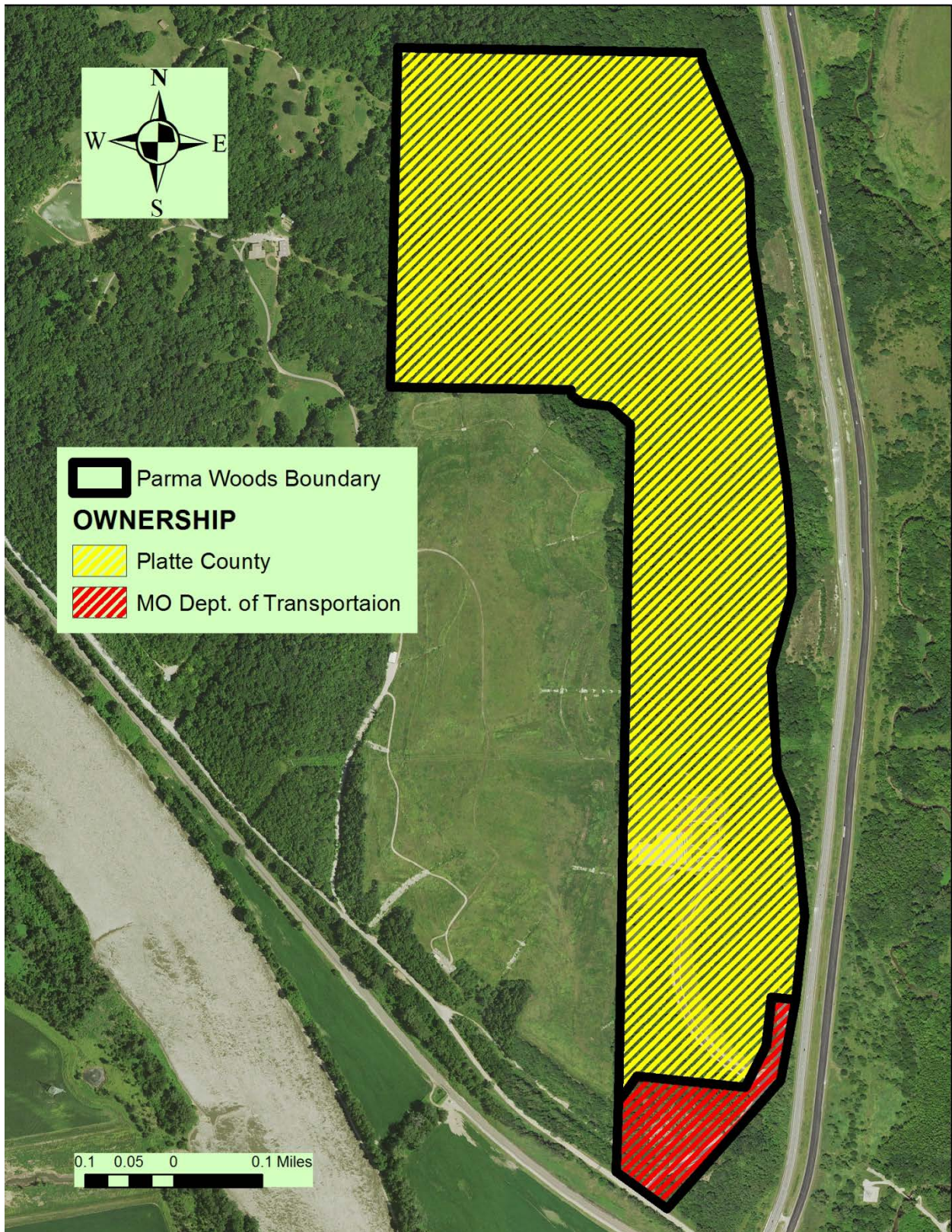


Figure 5: Ownership Map



Appendix A: Parma Woods Range and Outdoor Education Center Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Oct. 1–31, 2017):

<p>Pleased to see plans for boundary signage. Accidentally wandered off the property while walking the trail the first time. Though we did see some turkeys, which was very exciting!</p>
<p>The plan is great! I'm especially excited to see the trail expansion, and I would absolutely love helping out with trail management!!! Please put me on your list of volunteers, please!</p>
<p>I would like to see Parma Woods Range be more like the Lake City Range.</p>
<p>I would like to see a program included for outreach to women in the safe use of firearms. Providing use of the shooting range and an instructor at very low or no cost to women would be ideal.</p>
<p>The plan itself is fine. Suggestions below are for shooting range improvements. By and large, the group does a great job at the range.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Increase open hours of the range during winter. The facility could open up at 9AM. As it stands now, there is a waiting line every weekend, and clearly has more interest than the time permits.2) Look at adding more rifle stations.3) Look at possibility of a longer range to the north. Would be nice to get a 300 yd range out there somehow.