

DRAFT

**Atlanta Conservation Area
and Long Branch Lake
Management Lands**

25-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2020-2044



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OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	MDC Region	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
Atlanta Conservation Area (CA)	6116	1960	2,355	Macon	Northeast	Wildlife	Wildlife
Long Branch Lake Management Lands (MLs)	7846	1978	2,454 ¹	Macon	Northeast	Wildlife	Wildlife

¹Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Statements of Purpose:

A. Strategic Direction

Atlanta Conservation Area (CA) and Long Branch Lake Management Lands (MLs) are managed to provide diverse habitat for fish and wildlife species; protect soil, water quality, and Missouri species of conservation concern; demonstrate sound forestry practices; and provide recreational and educational opportunities for the citizens of Missouri.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Atlanta CA and Long Branch Lake MLs is quality grassland, woodland, forest, and wetland natural communities with quality public hunting and fishing opportunities.

C. Federal Aid Statement

- Atlanta CA, or a portion thereof, was acquired with Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds to restore and manage wildlife, conserve and restore suitable wildlife habitat, and provide public access for hunting or other wildlife-oriented recreation.
- Long Branch Lake MLs: N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

Area Name	Priority Areas	Natural Areas
Atlanta CA	Long Branch Lake Fisheries Priority Watershed	None
Long Branch Lake MLs	Long Branch Lake Fisheries Priority Watershed	None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

Area Name	Species of Conservation Concern	High Quality Natural Communities	Caves	Springs
Atlanta CA	Yes ¹	Yes ²	None	None
Long Branch Lake MLs	Yes ¹	None	None	None

¹Species 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.

²Records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) natural history biologist.

III. Existing Infrastructure

Area Name	Gravel Boat Ramp	Parking Areas	Privy	Ponds/ Pools	Shooting Range	Other
Atlanta CA	1	9 gravel lots ¹	1	7 fishing ponds (11 acres total), 5 wildlife watering holes (>1 acre)	1 rifle/pistol range	11 primitive campsites; MDC buildings (house, shop, two sheds)
Long Branch Lake MLs	None	9 gravel lots ¹	None	4 wetland pools with associated levees and water control structures	None	1 detention berm with water control structure

¹One parking lot has an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible concrete pad.

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

Area Name	Deed Restrictions	Federal Interest	Easements	Cultural Resources	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues
Atlanta CA	None	Yes ²	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁵	Yes ⁶	None
Long Branch Lake ML	Yes ¹	Yes ³	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁵	Yes ⁶	None

¹Owned by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and licensed to MDC for management of fish and wildlife. License number DACW41-3-08-0046 for the Long Branch Lake MLs extends through Dec. 31, 2033.

²Uses of land acquired with federal funds may not interfere with the purpose for which it was acquired. Federal funds may also 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.

³Federal 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.

⁴There is a powerline easement that runs through both areas.

⁵Records are kept with MDC environmental compliance coordinators. Managers should follow best management practices for cultural resources found in the MDC Resource Policy Manual.

⁶Endangered Species are known from this area. Area managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the natural history biologist.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resources Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage quality woodland and forest communities.
- 2) Manage quality grassland, old field, and wetland communities.
- 3) Control of invasive species is a high priority.

Management Objective 1: Manage forest and woodland natural communities for overall health, diversity, and wildlife habitat by completing scheduled inventory of all forest compartments by FY2038.

Strategy 1: Inventory Compartment #2 (Atlanta CA) in FY2019 and FY2034.
(Forestry)

Strategy 2: Inventory Compartment #1 (Atlanta CA) in FY2021 and FY2036.
(Forestry)

Strategy 3: Inventory Compartment #3 (Long Branch Lake ML) in FY2023 and FY2038. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Utilize a variety of sustainable forest management techniques to maintain healthy forest, woodland, and natural communities.

Strategy 1: Implement management prescriptions developed from forest inventory within five years of each inventory completion utilizing management techniques, including, but not limited to harvest, timber stand improvement, and prescribed fire to maintain healthy forest, woodland, and natural communities. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Follow the appropriate best management practices when conducting forest and woodland habitat management, per the *Missouri Forest Management Guidelines: Voluntary Recommendations for Well-Managed Forests* (MDC, 2014a). (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Follow the appropriate practices per the *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation* (MDC, 2009) and the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice Recommended Practices for Missouri Forests: 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watersheds to Protect Streams* (MDC, 2014b). (Forestry, Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Manage old fields not contracted under an Ag Crop permit and the MDC-planted food plot program to provide early successional habitat.

Strategy 1: Remove undesirable woody vegetation from old fields using mechanical and chemical techniques. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Use management techniques, including, but not limited to, mechanical removal and prescribed fire to maintain early successional habitat and inhibit woody encroachment. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 4: Opportunistically manage wetland marshes to provide habitat for resident marsh species and migrating waterfowl.

Strategy 1: Control woody invasion and invasive species in the wetland units. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Promote early successional wetland plant species through timely drawdowns and by soil disturbance or the Ag Crop program when conditions allow. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 5: Reduce the coverage of sericea lespedeza, fescue, autumn olive, and other invasive plants.

Strategy 1: Reduce coverage of sericea lespedeza and fescue through an aggressive combination of prescribed fire and herbicide applications. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Reduce autumn olive coverage on the area with the aggressive use of mechanical treatments and/or herbicide. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Incorporate autumn olive control in all forest and woodland management. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Management Objective 6: Provide cereal grain and green browse food plots to enhance small and large game habitat.

Strategy 1: Maintain open land through Ag Crop program and MDC planted food plots. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to work with a permittee farmer to ensure that a mixture of food is available for wildlife and to ensure that best management practices are being implemented. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resources Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain fishing opportunities for future generations.
- 2) Maintain water quality and quantity of the streams, ponds, and Long Branch Lake to support a healthy ecosystem.

Management Objective 1: Monitor the fishery in Long Branch Lake and compare current sampling results with historic and recently completed surveys.

Strategy 1: Conduct largemouth bass electrofishing surveys biennially, beginning in FY2020. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Conduct fall crappie trap netting surveys annually. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Stock hybrid striped bass annually at a rate of 10 fish per acre. (Fisheries)

Strategy 4: Stock walleye at a rate of 10 fish per acre if surplus fingerlings are available and water quality conditions are satisfactory for their survival. (Fisheries)

Strategy 5: Coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on issues such as water level management, habitat management, and erosion control, as needed to ultimately benefit the aquatic community. (Fisheries, Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Monitor and manage ponds 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 for self-sustaining largemouth bass and bluegill populations.

Strategy 1: Control excessive aquatic macrophytes chemically or biologically to promote efficient foraging by largemouth bass. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Survey ponds 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 every 5-10 years and evaluate fish communities beginning in FY2020. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 3: Maintain a put-grow-and-take fishery for channel catfish in ponds 1, 4, 8, 9, and 11.

Strategy 1: Stock ponds 1, 4, 8, 9, and 11 every three years beginning in FY2020. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 4: Improve long-term stream stability and ecological function of Long Branch Creek and East Fork Little Chariton River and their tributaries.

Strategy 1: Maintain and monitor a minimum 200-footwide, wooded riparian corridor on all lands bordering Long Branch Creek and East Fork Little Chariton River. Corridors that do not meet the 200-foot minimum width should be widened by establishing trees. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Establish, maintain, and monitor a minimum 50-footwide, permanently vegetated riparian corridor on all lands bordering tributaries to Long Branch Creek and East Fork Little Chariton River. Corridors that do not meet the 50-foot minimum width should be widened by shrub/tree planting. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Identify access roads that encroach on minimum corridor widths and consider moving/eliminating them. (Wildlife, Forestry, Fisheries)

Strategy 4: Maintain riparian corridors on the area to minimize erosion by utilizing best management practices during habitat management, as described in MDC's manuals: *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation* (MDC, 2009), *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice Recommended Practices for Missouri Forests: 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watersheds to Protect Streams* (MDC, 2014b), and *Missouri Forest Management Guidelines: Voluntary Recommendations for Well-Managed Forests* (MDC, 2014a). (Wildlife, Fisheries, Forestry)

Strategy 5: Inspect all stream crossings to ensure they meet design specifications for light equipment crossings. Crossings that do not meet specifications should be eliminated or corrected through the budget process. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Design and Development)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain current infrastructure.
- 2) Improve the shooting range backstop.
- 3) Provide quality hunting and fishing opportunities.
- 4) Enforce statewide and area regulations.

Management Objective 1: Maintain current infrastructure to established maintenance standards to invite public use and keep area users informed of regulations.

Strategy 1: Keep bulletin boards up-to-date with pertinent information at area parking lots. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Maintain current levels of area maintenance. Keep field roads periodically mowed to improve access for area users and staff. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Maintain the unmanned shooting range to the necessary maintenance standards, as outlined in the *Standard Operating Procedures, Atlanta Conservation Area Shooting Range* (MDC, 2017). (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Improve safety at the unmanned shooting range. Investigate renovating the backstop of the unmanned shooting range.

Strategy 1: Investigate increasing the height of the backstop of the unmanned shooting range as funding allows. (Wildlife, Outreach and Education, Design and Development)

Management Objective 3: Provide quality area use opportunities by maintaining area facilities to provide user access and safety.

Strategy 1: Maintain existing parking lots, field roads, and bulletin boards to facilitate use by area users. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to maintain some shoreline access by mowing. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Keep fishing access areas clean of brush and excessive vegetation. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Management Objective 4: Ensure statewide and area specific regulations are enforced and provide citizens a safe environment for outdoor recreational use.

Strategy 1: Regularly patrol and enforce the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*, with emphasis on enforcing area hours of closure. (Protection)

Management Objective 5: Inform public about area regulations.

Strategy 1: Maintain signs according to MDC policy. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Maintain accurate and timely information on MDC's public website. Review information annually. (Wildlife)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain a strong positive working relationship with adjacent neighbors, Army Corps of Engineers, and Missouri Department of Natural Resources by clearly identifying property boundaries.
- 2) Consider land acquisition, when available.

Management Objective 1: Maintain clearly identified property lines.

Strategy 1: Inspect and maintain area boundaries as needed. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Resolve boundary issues with adjoining landowners as they arise. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Maintain license for management of fish and wildlife for the Long Branch Management Lands.

Strategy 1: Renew license number DACW41-3-08-0046 for the Long Branch Lake MLs upon its expiration Dec. 31, 2033. (Wildlife)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent and/or nearby 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 MDC priorities, as identified in the annual MDC land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	Fiscal Year																									
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	
Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations																										
<i>Objective 1</i>																										
Strategy 1															X											
Strategy 2		X															X									
Strategy 3				X															X							
Aquatic Resource Management Considerations																										
<i>Objective 1</i>																										
Strategy 1	X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X		X	
<i>Objective 2</i>																										
Strategy 2	X					X				X					X						X					
<i>Objective 3</i>																										
Strategy 1	X			X			X			X			X			X			X			X			X	
<i>Objective 4</i>																										
Strategy 3	X					X					X					X					X					

APPENDICES

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.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2017). *Standard operating procedures, Atlanta Conservation Area shooting range*. Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Atlanta Conservation Area and Long Branch Lake Management Lands Area Map

Appendix 2. Atlanta Conservation Area Background

Appendix 3. Atlanta Conservation Area Easement Map

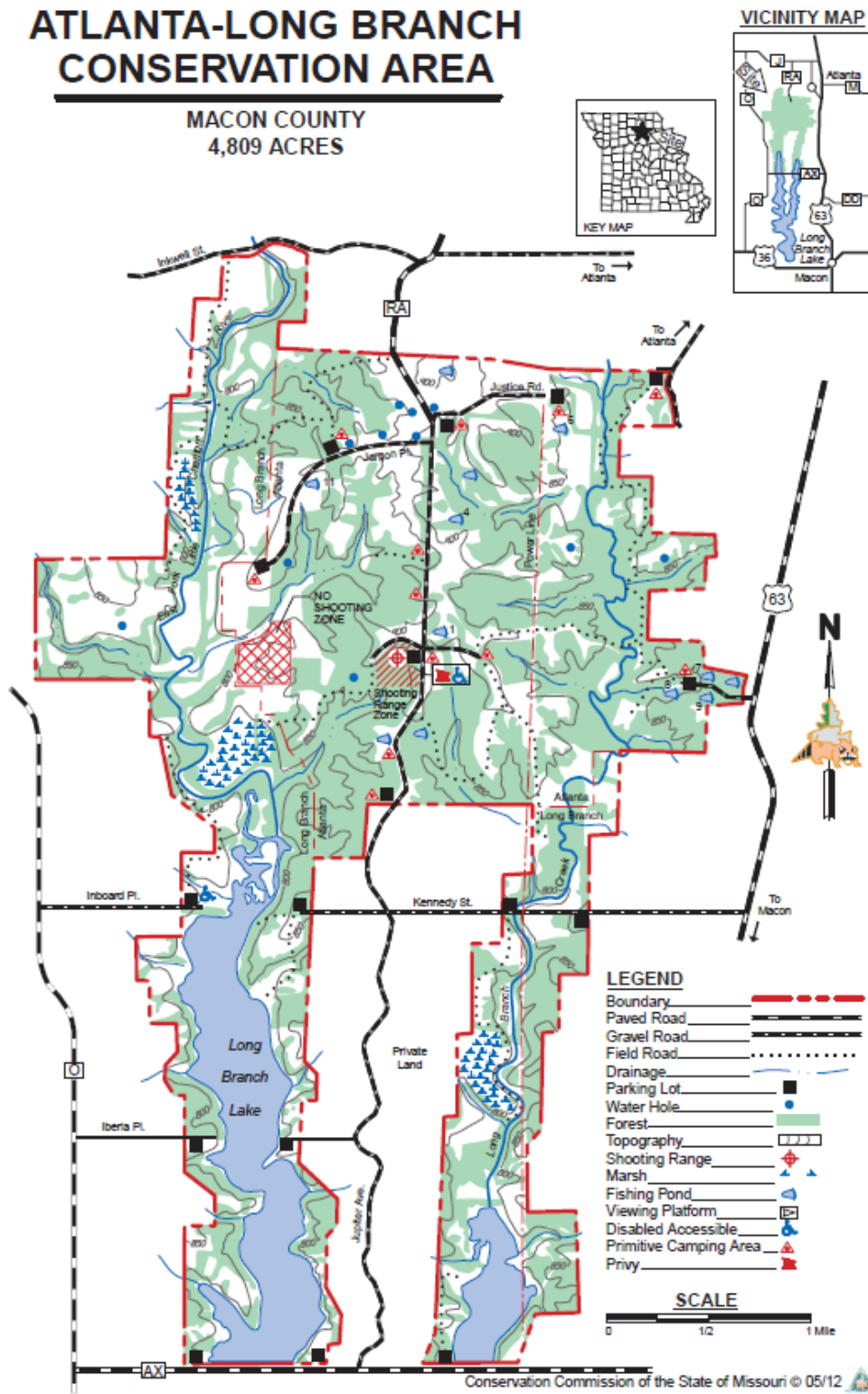
Appendix 4. Atlanta Conservation Area Land Cover Map

Appendix 5. Long Branch Lake Management Lands Area Background

Appendix 6. Long Branch Lake Management Lands Easement Map

Appendix 7. Long Branch Lake Management Lands Land Cover Map

Appendix 1. Atlanta Conservation Area and Long Branch Lake Management Lands Area Map



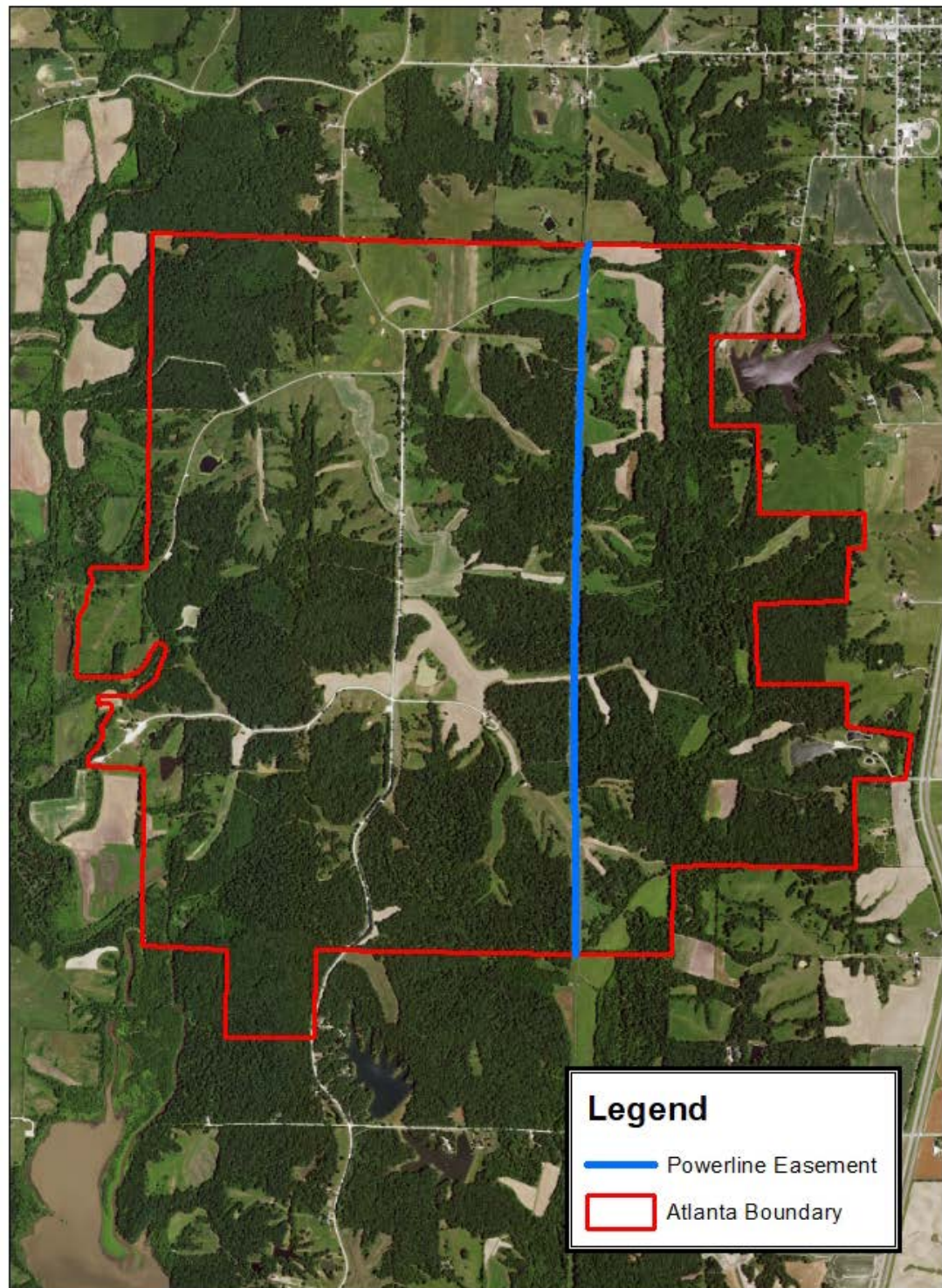
Appendix 2. Atlanta Conservation Area Background

Atlanta Conservation Area (CA) includes 2,355 acres in Macon County. MDC purchased Atlanta CA in 1960. The area is gently rolling, except for the bottomlands. The forest is predominantly oak/hickory in the uplands and mixed hardwoods in the lowlands and contains a variety of woodland edge and grassland wildlife. MDC manages the resources of this area to provide public recreation and protect soil and water quality. Management practices include farming, timber harvest, and prescribed fire. Most area ponds contain a variety of sport fish.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area	Miles
Woodland	899	38	
Forest	605	26	
Grassland	472	20	
Open Land	225	10	
Old Field	95	4	
Infrastructure	30	1	
Open Water	21	1	
Wetlands	8	<1	
Total	2,355	100	
Stream Frontage – Long Branch Creek			2.0

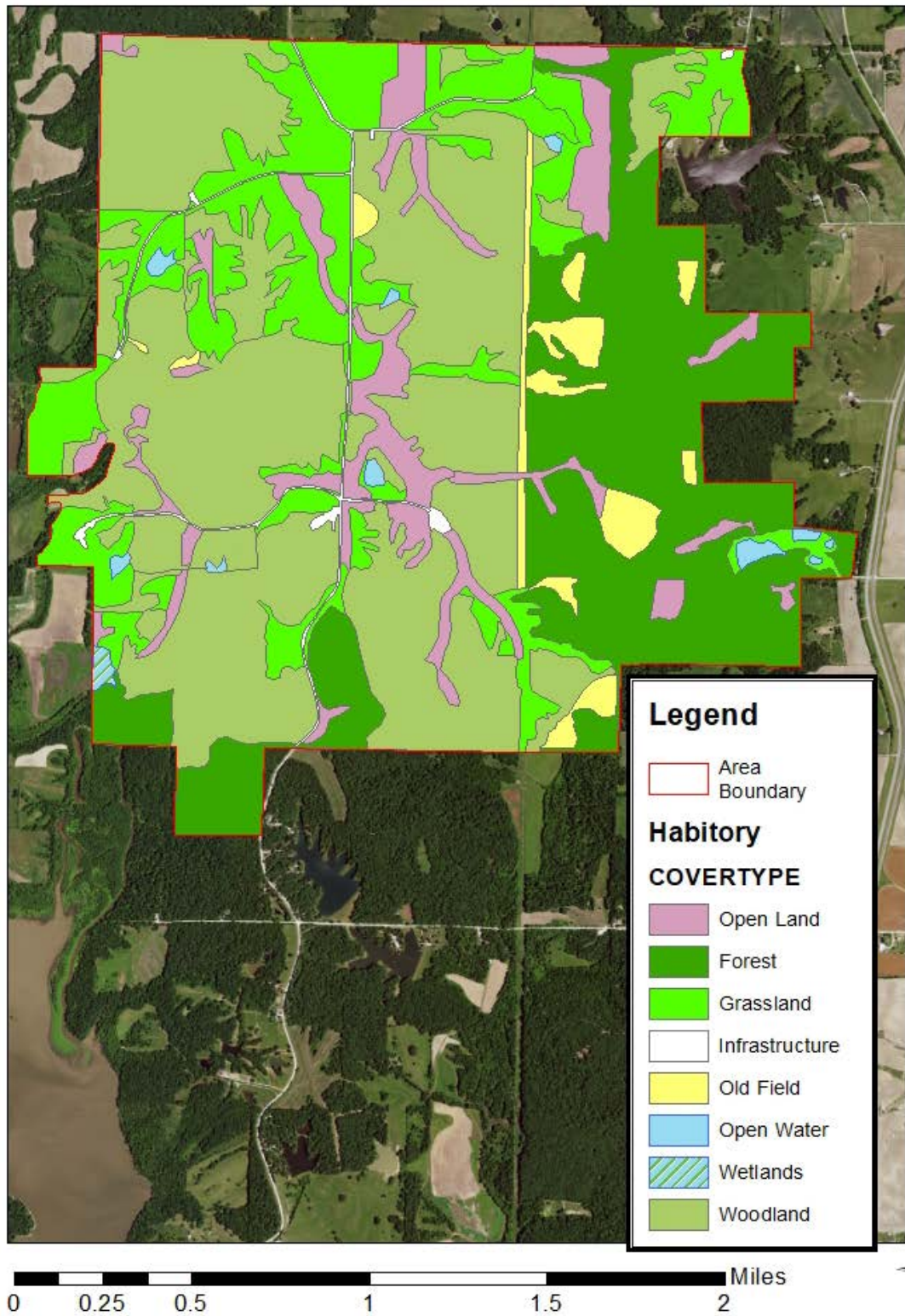
Appendix 3. Atlanta Conservation Area Easement Map



0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles



Appendix 4. Atlanta Conservation Area Land Cover Map



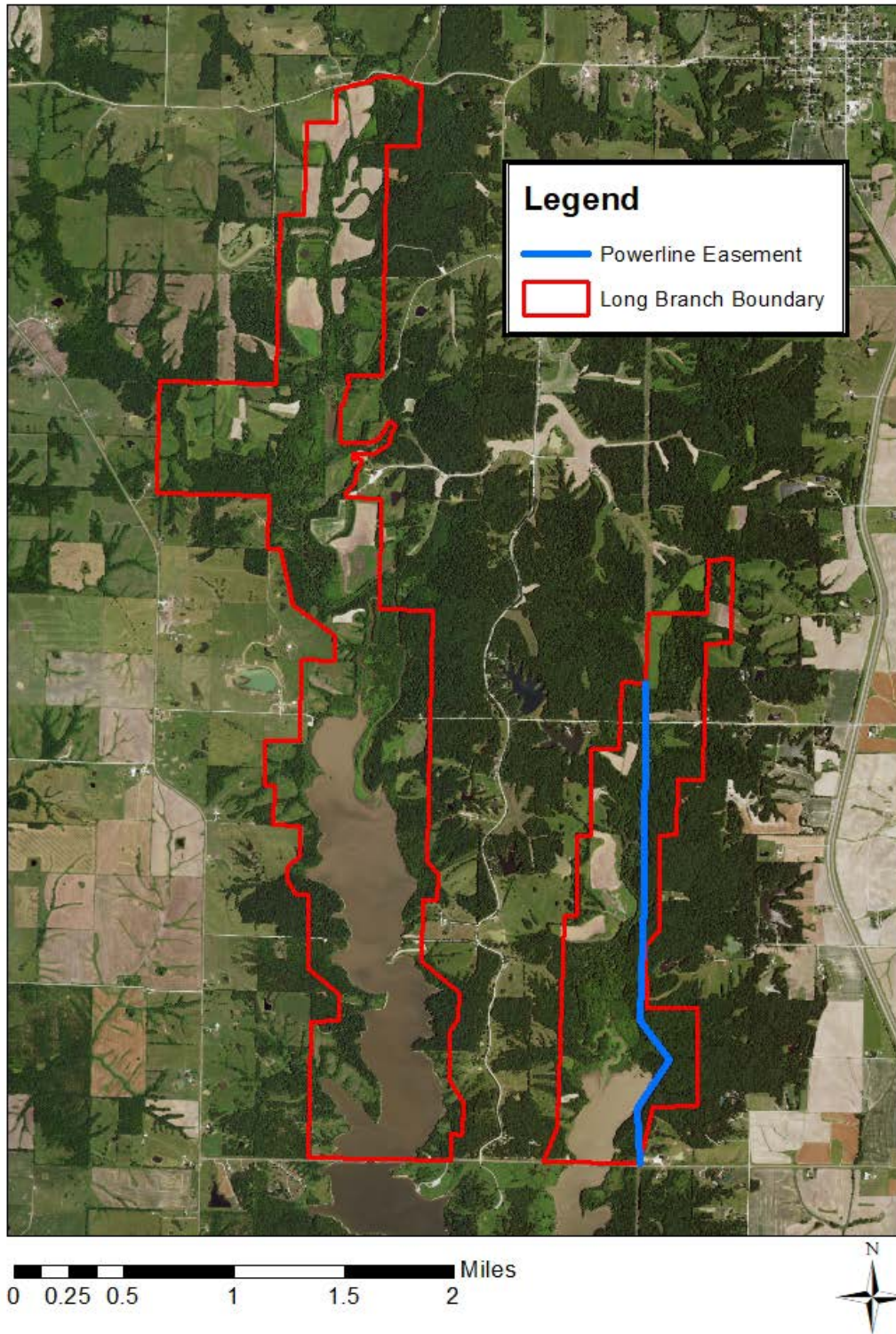
Appendix 5. Long Branch Lake Management Lands Area Background

Long Branch Lake Management Lands (MLs) includes 2,454 acres in Macon County. The management of Long Branch Management Lands was assumed by MDC in 1978, under license from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The East Fork Little Chariton River runs 3 miles through the western portion of Long Branch Lake MLs, and Long Branch Creek runs 4 miles through the eastern portion, which includes the upper reaches of Long Branch Lake. The area is gently rolling, except for the bottomlands. The forest is predominantly oak/hickory in the uplands and mixed hardwoods in the lowlands and contains a variety of woodland edge and grassland wildlife. The area also contains five managed marshes, totaling approximately 142 acres, and several natural oxbow sloughs. MDC manages the resources of this area to provide public recreation and protect soil and water quality. Management practices include farming, timber harvest, and prescribed fire. Most area ponds and Long Branch Lake contain a variety of sport fish.

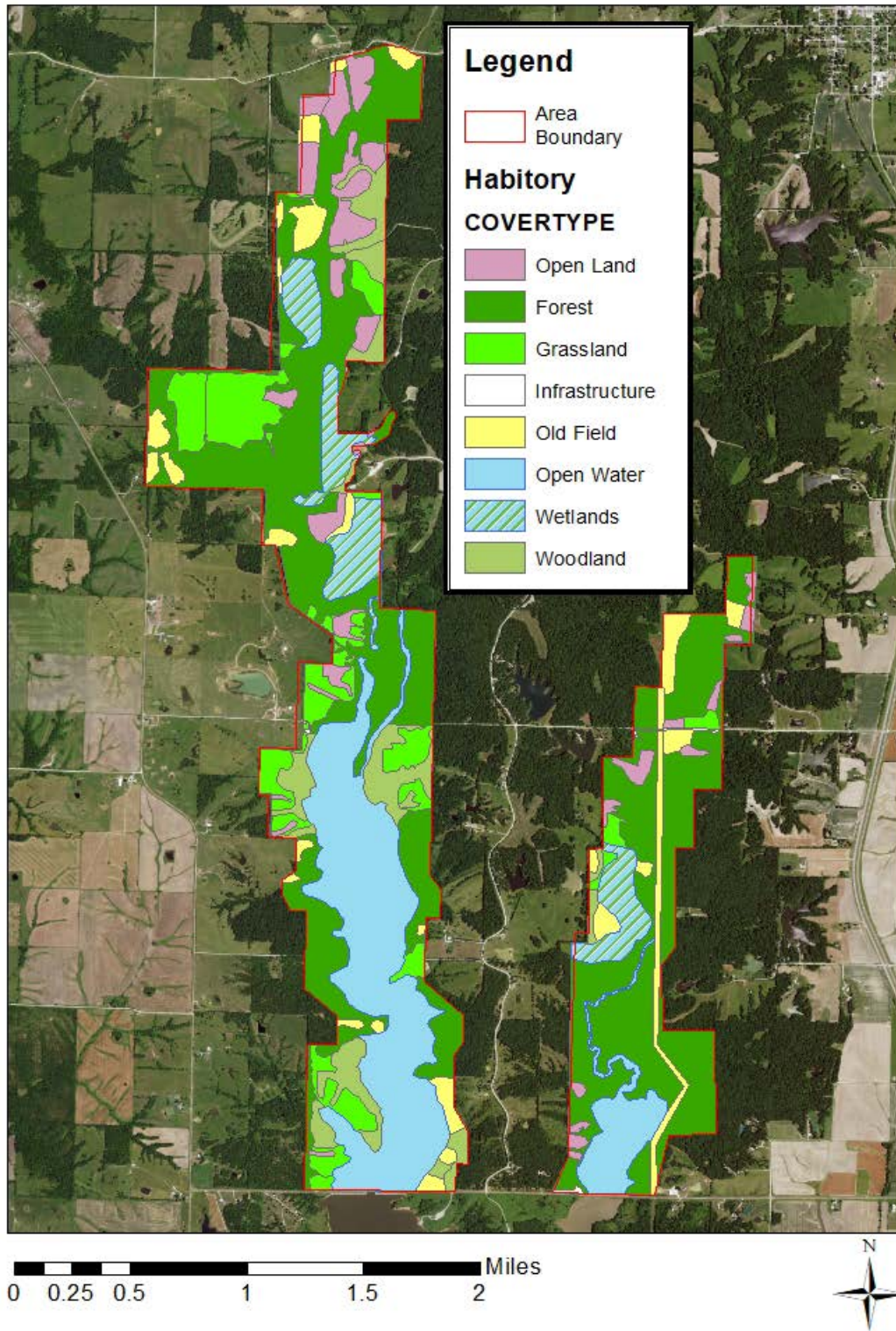
Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area	Miles
Forest	1,078	44	
Open Water	495	20	
Grassland	245	10	
Woodland	166	7	
Open Land	162	7	
Old Field	162	7	
Wetlands	142	6	
Infrastructure	4	<1	
Total	2,454	100	
Stream Frontage – Long Branch Creek			4.0
Stream Frontage – East Fork Little Chariton River			3.0

Appendix 6. Long Branch Lake Management Lands Easement Map



Appendix 7. Long Branch Lake Management Lands Land Cover Map



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