

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

Idea Gathering Stage

Public Input Summary



Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

Missouri Department of Conservation
June 2016



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center is a 112 acre area in St. Louis County located within the city of Kirkwood. It is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Conservation areas support the Department's mission by offering places to restore and conserve fish, forest and wildlife resources, and providing opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources. Conservation areas are different from state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on team sports, recreational activities or social gatherings.
- MDC conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (May 1-31, 2016) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 10-year management plan for Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center.
- During this time period, we received comments from 24 respondents.
- Common themes heard during this idea gathering stage included concern with invasive honeysuckle and number of deer; suggestions for adding a nature explore outdoor classroom, partnering with neighboring property owners and conservation partners, and increasing nature center days and hours of operation; and expression of general enjoyment of the area.
- The Powder Valley planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year area management plan. The draft plan will be available online (likely winter 2017) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

INTRODUCTION

Public Comment on Conservation Area Management Plans

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. MDC is in the multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments. To preview draft management plans and share comments online, visit mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

MDC conservation areas cover almost 1 million public acres for the purpose of restoring and conserving forest, fish and wildlife resources, and for providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources. Most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of an MDC conservation area.

Missourians care about conservation and use conservation areas for many different reasons. These areas help people discover nature through various activities, and help make Missouri a great place to hunt, fish and enjoy other outdoor activities. We want to know how conservation areas are important to Missourians. Encouraging public comments on Conservation Area Management Plans is part of MDC's ongoing efforts of working for and with Missourians to sustain healthy forests, fish and wildlife.

Conservation Area Management Plans focus on natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. The plans do not address regulations on hunting, fishing and other area uses, which are set by the Conservation Commission and enforced under the Wildlife Code of Missouri. MDC will consider all ideas received and will work to balance the issues and interests identified with the responsibility of managing areas for the present and future benefits to forest, fish, wildlife, and people. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and statewide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff.

Questions? Please contact MDC Public Involvement Coordinator Amy Buechler at 573-522-4115 x3252, or amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center has 112 acres of oak hickory forest. The name comes from the historical use of the general vicinity for manufacture and storage of explosive powder used in the Civil War and World War II.

The area has three trails, one of which has interpretive signs and is disabled accessible. Naturalists conduct interpretive programs on numerous conservation topics for schools, homeschool families, civic groups, and the general public.

The nature center has two levels of exhibits related to backyard wildlife and conservation practices in urban areas.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (May 1-31, 2016) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 10-year management plan for Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. The plan, once drafted, will be posted online (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans) for further public comment.

Public Involvement

The idea gathering phase for development of the Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center Management Plan ran from May 1-31, 2016. The objective of this phase was to inform stakeholders about the area planning process and ask them to share their ideas. To communicate about this comment period, staff:

- posted online comment form available at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans;
- sent news release to local media outlets in early May and posted to Missouri Department of Conservation Facebook and Twitter accounts;
- sent announcement to area plan email list (6,000+ recipients);
- posted notices on bulletin boards in and around Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center;
- contacted local police and parks and recreation departments
- provided comment cards and area plan information in nature center lobby;
- provided information in teacher packets; and
- mailed notice to 280 neighboring landowners.

Next steps

The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year management plan for Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely winter 2017) for a month-long comment period at

mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

From May 1-31, 2016, we received comments from 24 respondents for the Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center Idea Gathering Stage.

Table 1. Total number of respondents commenting during the idea gathering phase (May 1-31, 2016) by respondent category*

Organization Type	Respondents
Individual citizens (no affiliation listed)	23
Non-governmental Organizations (Greenway Network)	1
TOTAL	24

*Respondent categories were self-identified by commenter. Comments do not necessarily reflect the official views of these organizations.

How they responded

Table 2. Total number of each response type received

Response Type	Comments
Web Comment Form	20
Hard Copy Comment Form	4
TOTAL	24

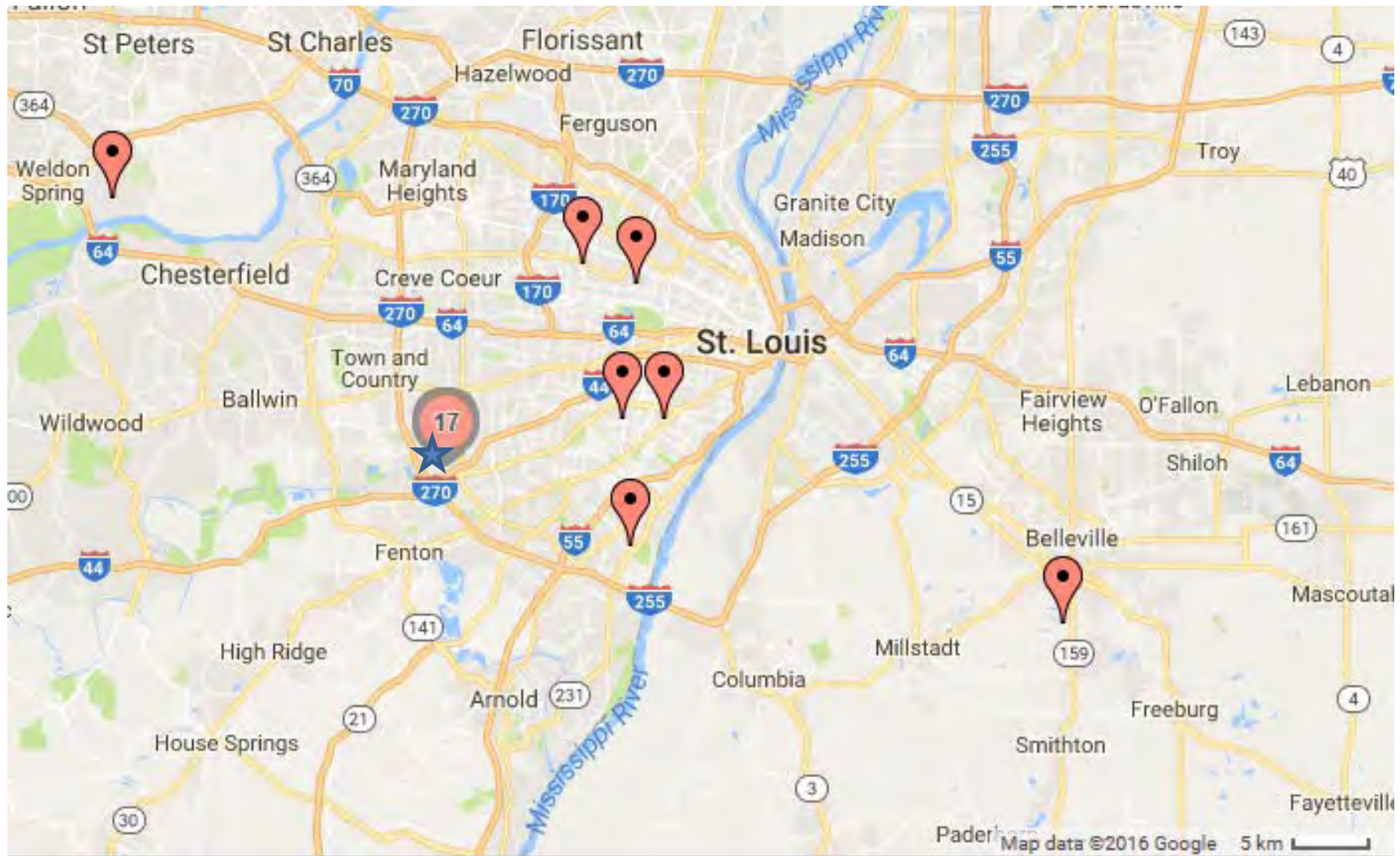
Where respondents are from

Table 3. Total number of responses categorized by each respondent's location

State	Respondents	Percent
Missouri	23	96%
Illinois	1	4%

Map of all respondent locations by ZIP code. ★ = Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

The pinpoints below represent the central point of ZIP codes from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers show multiple responses from a geographic area.



THEMES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH POWDER VALLEY CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER IDEA GATHERING PHASE (MAY 1-31, 2016)

The Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center Idea Gathering Stage was available for a public idea gathering period May 1-31, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 24 respondents. A brief summary of public input themes can be found below. The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year management plan for Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely winter 2017) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

Terrestrial Resource Management

- Concerned about invasive species on area. Suggests spending more time on eradication of invasive species such as honeysuckle.
- Concerned about the use of herbicide spray to eradicate invasive species.
- Suggests enhancing amphibian habitat on the area by adding fishless ponds.
- Suggests using prescribed fire to manage woodland and savanna habitats on the area.
- Suggests increasing forest management including cutting down certain kinds of trees.
- Suggests controlling ivy growing on trees.

Public Use Management

Hunting

- Concerned with deer population in the area. Supports managed deer hunts. Supports reducing deer population.
- Opposes managed deer hunts on the area. Concerned about the safety of managed deer hunts. Suggests requiring hunters to be at least 100 yards from area boundaries.

Trails

- Enjoys area hiking trails. Suggests expanding trail system.
- Suggests using natural surface for new trails or trail connectors.
- Opposes pet walking and cycling on the area.

Amenities

- Suggests keeping area as natural and undeveloped as possible.
- Opposes adding another parking lot to the area.
- Suggests allowing the outdoor restroom to be open year-round.

Education/Interpretation/Signs

- Suggests adding a nature explore outdoor classroom.
- Suggests enhancing fire pit area for interpretive programs.
- Supports native landscaping programs and demonstrations.
- Suggests adding more interpretive signs about native plants.
- Suggests adding more activities for children.
- Suggests adding more programs and hikes for adults.
- Suggests adding more fish to aquariums.

Volunteer/Partnerships

- Suggests building partnerships with adjacent property owners to assist in managing wooded areas.
- Suggests partnering with Audubon Society, Wild Ones, Grow Native, and Shaw Nature Reserve to help with interpretive programs. Suggests partnering with Greenway Network to offer educational lectures.
- Interested in volunteering with education programs and area management activities.
- Wonders if Powder Valley allows non-profits to use meeting space for free.

Other Activities

- Opposes picnicking at Powder Valley CNC.
- Opposes tree climbing near outdoor pavilion.

Administrative Considerations

- Suggests increasing nature center days/hours of operation.
- Suggests adding a rain garden run off area for the parking lot.
- Suggests replacing low-water bridge on Hickory Ridge trail.
- Suggests repaving slick trails on the area.
- Suggests increasing budget for nature center and hiring another full-time naturalist.

Other

- Suggests adding a community garden.
- Enjoys the Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Powder Valley Idea Gathering Stage Flier



We Want To Hear From You

As POWDER VALLEY Conservation Nature Center celebrates its 25th year, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is seeking visitor input to develop an Area Management Plan to guide the next 10 years.



The plan will focus on land management and public use rather than on educational programs. The Nature Center is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by MDC. These areas offer places to restore and conserve forest, fish, and wildlife resources and provide opportunity for citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Conservation Areas are different than state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on recreational activities.

Visit <mdc.mo.gov/areaplans> to submit comments online, or fill out the enclosed comment card and drop it by the Nature Center through May 31. For more information, feel free to contact us at 314-301-1500, or by e-mail at <Powder.Val@mdc.mo.gov>

Missourians care about conserving forests, fish, and wildlife.

Appendix 2. Powder Valley Idea Gathering Stage Press Release

PUBLIC INVITED TO SHARE IDEAS ABOUT FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF POWDER VALLEY CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

News from the region:

St. Louis

Dan Zarlenga

May 03, 2016

KIRKWOOD, Mo. — The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. MDC is in the multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center in Kirkwood is among the areas under review. MDC is inviting public comment for Powder Valley to aid staff in developing a 10-year management plan for the nature center grounds. Interested persons or groups—including recreational users, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials and government agencies—are invited to share ideas online now through May 31 at mdc.mo.gov/node/19563. People can also stop by Powder Valley in May to pick up a comment card.

"No matter your age or ability, Powder Valley is a great place to explore and discover nature," said MDC Powder Valley Nature Center Manager Tamie Yegge. "The public input and area planning process we have underway will help ensure that Powder Valley will continue to meet the diverse interests of Missouri citizens who utilize the area today and in the future. Although we won't be able to advance all ideas, we greatly appreciate feedback and will give all comments careful consideration."

MDC staff will review comments as they develop a draft Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center management plan for the nature center's grounds later this summer. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff.

The plan will be posted online this fall for an additional comment period, and will be available for viewing at After considering all public comments, the final plan will be drafted, approved, and posted online.

The grounds surrounding Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center contain 112 acres of oak hickory forest. The name comes from the historical use of the general vicinity for the manufacturing and storage of explosive powder used in the Civil War and World War II. The area has three trails, one of which has interpretive signs and is disabled accessible. Naturalists conduct interpretive programs on numerous conservation topics for schools, homeschool families, civic groups, and the general public. The nature center itself has two floors of interactive exhibits, a public access office and a gift shop.

To reach the Powder Valley, take the South Lindbergh Boulevard exit south from I-44 a half mile, and then go west on Watson Road, then Geyer Road north to Cragwold Road. Turn west on Cragwold and watch for signs.



Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

MDC is seeking public input about future management of Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center in Kirkwood. Those interested in sharing ideas on management of the nature center's grounds are invited to do so online now through May 31 at mdc.mo.gov/node/19563. People can also stop by Powder Valley in May to pick up a comment card.

Appendix 3. Powder Valley Idea Gathering Stage Hard Copy Comment Form



We Want To Hear From You

As POWDER VALLEY Conservation Nature Center celebrates its 25th year, the Missouri Department of Conservation is seeking visitor input to develop an Area Management Plan to guide the next 10 years.

Here's your opportunity to share your ideas and comments.

Name _____

Your email: _____

Organization affiliation (if any): _____

Complete mailing address: _____

Space on the back side for your written ideas and comments.

Please return your completed comment form to the front desk or mail it to:

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center
11715 Cragwood Road
Kirkwood MO 63122

You can also share your ideas online at:

mdc.mo.gov/areaplans

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We hope to hear from a broad range of public interests and will listen to and consider all ideas for improving this area. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the Area Management Plan and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its

physical and biological conditions and capabilities, available financial and staffing resources, the professional expertise of Department staff, and on the best role of the property in its local, regional and statewide context.

Your ideas and comments: _____

Stay In touch:

- Yes, email me with progress of this Area Management Plan.
- Yes, email me updates on other Missouri Department of Conservation Area Management Plans as they are posted.



Missourians care about conserving forests, fish, and wildlife.

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Appendix 4. Powder Valley Idea Gathering Stage Bulletin Board



We Want To Hear From You

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is seeking visitor input to develop a 10 year Area Management Plan* for POWDER VALLEY Conservation Nature Center.

*The plan will focus on land management and public use rather than on educational programs. Conservation Areas are different than state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on recreational activities.



Visit mdc.mo.gov/areaplans to submit comments online, or fill out a comment card in the Nature Center through May 31. For more information, contact us at 314-301-1500, or by e-mail at Powder.Val@mdc.mo.gov

Missourians care about conserving forests, fish, and wildlife.

Appendix 5. Comments received during Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center Idea Gathering Phase (May 1-31, 2016).

<p>I think a nature explore classroom like the one at Shaw Nature Reserve would be a great way to attract young families.</p>
<p>Please try to find the money to 1) keep the Visitor Center open on Sundays and 2) redouble your efforts to get rid of the honeysuckle.</p>
<p>Other than that, keep up the fantastic work with the programming, Visitor Center, trails, and forest resource. Powder Valley is a showplace!</p>
<p>I love hiking the trails and occasionally visit the nature center. I suggest leaving the area as natural as possible without further development other than maintaining existing facilities. Please do not add parking. On busy days visitors can car pool.</p>
<p>Keep up the good work!</p>
<p>Open it on Sunday and close one day during the week.</p>
<p>Powder Valley Nature Center is a valuable asset to the St. Louis region. It has been a shame to see the Center's budget and hours cut in recent years. It was great when more meetings could be held at this beautiful facility. The wonderful bookstore has been sadly reduced.....actually it is disappointing that there seem to be far fewer MDC books published in general. A lot of sales tax comes from the highly populated St. Louis region, and it would be good to show more robust returns to an urban population that will always be more interested in nature education than hunting.</p>
<p>Also, more money needs to be budgeted for controlling Amur Honeysuckle at Powder Valley. In general, MDC has been seriously dropping the ball on public awareness and action to control this rapidly expanding non-native invasive. MDC appears to have morphed into a state-supported "guns and ammo" club in recent years, more concerned with promoting hunting than nature education. Even as such, MDC must surely understand that the spread of Amur Honeysuckle destroys forests, and the mast deer depend on will disappear as mature oaks and hickories die off without a new generation of trees to replace them. Entire forest ecosystems will collapse, along with loss of the innumerable species that depend on them. MDC's failure to educate the public and dedicate resources to promotion of Amur Honeysuckle removal is making this an all-too-foreseeable ecological disaster.</p>
<p>Still, Powder Valley should not use methods for Amur Honeysuckle removal that would contaminate the creeks that run through it and have toxic impact on species, such as amphibians and invertebrates, downstream. I am concerned about run-off from broadcast foliar spraying of herbicides and diesel oil.</p>
<p>Powder Valley is the face of MDC in the St. Louis region. For decades MDC was a model for</p>

the nation of the ideal state conservation department, but if MDC continues to underfund public nature educational resources, including the Powder Valley facility, likelihood increases that voters will cut funding if a statewide measure were to appear on the ballot. For MDC's own sake, and the sake of conservation of this beautiful state into the future, please re-examine priorities and budget accordingly!

Thank you.

My property borders Powder Valley. I control the Honeysuckle. I notice a huge amount of it on the Powder Valley Line. Powder Valley management should undertake a serious effort to rid the Valley of it and also follow forestry guidelines on how to best maintain forests for regrowth including cutting down some/certain kinds of trees. Ivy also needs to be stopped from growing on the trees. e.g. Ch nine special on Biltmore area recently aired. I would like to see a partnership with abutting property owners to best maintain our smaller wooded areas. Thank you.

- 1) Continue and enhance aggressive management of invasive species.
- 2) Enhance amphibian habitat and woodland ponds for salamander breeding.
- 3) Enhance savannah management on Broken Ridge Trail and Hickory Ridge Trail.
- 4) Enhance prescribed fire use into woodland and savannah management areas in addition to the roadway.
- 5) Investigate natural surface trails, even if they are just connector trails to existing paved trails.
- 6) Enhance woodland fire pit area for interpretive programming. Possibly modify the area into an outdoor amphitheater.
- 7) Construct a certified Nature Explore Classroom.
- 8) Hire a third full time naturalist.
- 9) Give all staff a pay raise.

Please keep powder valley as natural and undeveloped as possible. Continue prohibiting inconsistent uses such as dog or pet walking and cycling. Interpretive & demonstration areas on use of native species for back yard landscaping highlighting the cost/benefit to property owners, rain gardens, wild life, the environment and durability for our climate would provide helpful info and opportunities to, the public and consistent with your mission. Maybe Audubon, wild ones, grow native, show nature reserve might be partners with MDC. Maybe a display and info on flooding of our rivers and streams- appropriate and inappropriate uses of flood plain- cost of human life and property for developing in floodplains, impact of impervious surface, restoration

of native plants in watersheds to benefit clean water and to mitigate flood damage. Thanks for your good work.

More fish in aquarium, guided nature trails,

Films or nature talks for all, not just school groups

(Hardcopy Comment Received 5/31/2016): We are your neighbors on the east side of Geyer. It is very important to us that you continue the 2 controlled kills you organize to control the deer population. The deer use my garden as a salad bar all summer and ruin the trees in the fall. Please continue to reduce the amount of control the deer population.

Thank you!

With a growing interest in Native plants, the native garden in the front of the center should be expanded and enhanced with signs and info. If possible any of the trails might be extended since they get plenty of use. The parking area could be more earth friendly a rain garden runoff area etc.

As a Master Naturalist and horticulture student I am grateful to have Powder Valley in the community. The trails and natural resources provide a respite from the frenzied urban areas surrounding it. Educating children and adults about the geological and biological gems that exist at Powder Valley seems an excellent way to keep people connected to the natural environment. Walking the trails enhances physical and mental health. It is fun to see the identification tags on the tree and plants to confirm what I have learned in my horticulture id classes. I'd be interested in volunteering to help with the education programs and plans for ridding the area of invasive plant species and maintaining and restoring the native plants and wildlife. I consider Conservation and education of our natural world to be the best use of Powder Valley. While walking the woodland trails it is possible to regain a sense of peace then at the next bend in trail be thrilled at seeing red-headed and pileated woodpeckers.

I was hoping that you mention some projects Greenway Network has on our web site in conservation connections. We hold monthly "Big Muddy Speakers Series" educational lectures related to river ecology and other environmental conservation topics at Big A's on Main in St. Charles on the second Wed each month. The series is also in Columbia Mo and KCMO monthly as well. Perhaps Powder Valley might consider hosting a "Big Muddy Speaker Series" to bring the education component to the general public in St Louis? Do you allow conservation volunteer non-profits free use of the facilities at Powder Valley and Busch WLA? We are always looking for opportunities to reach out with our educational component and would like to network in this activity but often the cost to rent facilities is prohibitive for us. By the way the 50th anniversary of the wonderful "death" of the Meramec Dam was incredible at Powder Valley, it was my first involvement in environmental issues many years ago.

Greenway Network

Friends of the Big Muddy

(Hardcopy comment received 5/31/2016): We have lived on Orchard Ln for over 45 yrs. When we moved here we saw very few deer on our property. Now we see as many as 10 at a time. They eat just about anything. We have to put deer repellent on our plants (which is costly) and put fencing around our orchards or they will destroy them.

Two years ago one ran into our vehicle and did considerable damage.

I don't think Powder Valley is doing enough to keep the deer population in check. It seems like you could have a long hunting season or do something to the deer to keep them from multiplying.

(Hardcopy Comment Received 5/19/2016): Powder Valley has way too many deer! We live adjacent to the nature center and have approximately 10 deer every day eating our plants and rubbing the trees. A few deer might be bearable but the number is way out of control. Please, please consider doing something about the population. Otherwise, you have a beautiful facility. Thanks!

We love walks through PV.

As a neighbor, I would like to see the continued removal of the invasive honeysuckle and planting of diverse Missouri native plants and trees to increase the biodiversity. More birds and less deer would be great!

Reduce or eliminate deer hunt in my back yard.

In 2015, 13 hunters were allowed in PVNC , allowed to come within 25 yards of our property line, and killed over 20 deer with lethal weapons, in a densely populated area. 3 wounded deer escaped the park but had to be "dispatched" by local authorities. 2 hunters left the park boundaries stalking a buck, Ito a neighbors yard who has to daughters under the age of 12. There are 9 children on the lower end of Wilton lane who for the 3 day hunt may or may not be aware of the danger.

I would expect at the minimum! the "safe" border should be 100 yards, and the maximum number of hunters to be reduced dramatically. We live and own expensive houses here to enjoy the wild life not to see it decimated by randomly selected hunters, so that the conservation department can show another park on their kill list.

A community garden on the grounds would be really cool! There could be flowers and fruits and vegetables, and voulemteers or workers could do matinence.

Keep it as natural as nature intended it to be. But reduce the deer population more than you already are. I've lived here on Cragwold Road since 1979, and used to enjoy gardens with numerous species of plants. In recent years deer have encroached at an increased rate to eat foliage and destroy property. If this online comments format would allow, I'd upload the photo of

the buck caught in the act after shortening the leg of my 6-ft teak bench he had walked over the deck to reach and placed upright to chew on.

1. The Powder Valley Nature Center is currently closed on Sundays and Mondays. PLEASE change to being closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. I have been going to PV at least 3 days a week for many years, and see lots of families with young children that would enjoy the Center on weekends, if it were open.
2. Please continue keeping the outdoor restroom facility open year-round.
3. Please Do NOT allow picnicking at PV.
4. Stop the tree climbing program by the outdoor pavilion/restroom. It is inappropriate for a conservation area. Save that activity for our state parks.
5. Please replace the low-water bridge on the Hickory Ridge trail. The single pipe is often clogged with debris after the slightest rain and makes the path impassable.

My daughter and I visited Powder Valley on April 23, 2016. We loved walking around and looking at all of the exhibits. The only thing that would make it better is maybe some more things (events) for the kids. I love taking her and her girl scout troupe to outdoor talks and learning days. I hope you keep the center there for years to come. We will be coming more often to do the trails. I wish we had a center like this in Belleville.

After breaking my leg March 2015 and going thru surgery and 6 months of physical therapy I would strongly encourage you to repave your trails. I slipped on a tar patch on your long downward trail early one morning thus the above situation. With the dew making the patches slick I am surprised more accidents don't happen. Also, on a positive note I would encourage more adult oriented programs and adult hikes. It is nice to listen to speakers and if publicized well enough I would think you could develop a good following.

(Hardcopy comment received 6/14/2016)-to continue to remove honeysuckle – to continue to allow hunting of deer to reduce the population – to reintroduce native shrubs/bushes & wildflowers – to remove Korean honeysuckle vine.