

January-March 2015 Area Plan Public Comment Summary



Prescribed burn conducted at Fourche Creek Conservation Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
April 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- For the period of January – March 2015, 17 area plans (covering 14 conservation areas and 14 towersites) were posted for month-long public comment periods (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).
- Comment periods were advertised locally with notices posted on Conservation Area bulletin boards, contacts made with neighboring landowners, and in some cases, news releases or other outreach methods were used.
- During this time period, we received 114 comments from 90 respondents on 15 area plans.
- Themes and issues identified for these plans included suggestions to add wildlife food plots, add/expand multi-use trails, expand camping opportunities, requests for more frequent mowing, increased enforcement, opposition and support for timber harvest, concern with lack of good fish cover, support for acquiring additional land, and general support for management plans.
- Area planning teams are responding to themes and issues as they finalize area management plans. Final area plans with responses to public comment themes and issues are posted online (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

For the period of January – March 2015, 17 area plans (covering 14 conservation areas and 14 Towersites) were posted for month-long public comment periods. Comment periods were advertised locally with notices posted on conservation area bulletin boards, contacts made with neighboring landowners, and in some cases news releases or other outreach methods were used. During this time we received 114 comments from 15 area plans (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of comments received by plan, January - March 2015

| Comment Month | Area Plan | MDC Region | Comments Received |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------|
| January 2015 | Birch Creek CA | Ozark | 2 |
| January 2015 | Dent County Towersites¹ | Ozark | 3 |
| January 2015 | Fourche Creek CA | Ozark | 4 |
| January 2015 | Lois Arlene Boesl Outdoor Education Area | Ozark | 0 |
| January 2015 | R. F. Clement Memorial Forest and Wildlife Area | Ozark | 0 |
| January 2015 | Huckleberry Ridge CA | Southwest | 27 |
| January 2015 | The Lewis Family Memorial CA | Southwest | 4 |
| February 2015 | Little Dixie Lake CA | Central | 17 |
| February 2015 | Eminence District Towersites² | Ozark | 1 |
| February 2015 | Howell and Ozark County Towersites³ | Ozark | 2 |
| February 2015 | Phelps and Pulaski County Towersites⁴ | Ozark | 2 |
| March 2015 | Canaan CA | Central | 9 |
| March 2015 | Riverbreaks CA | Northwest | 7 |
| March 2015 | Gist Ranch and Midvale CAs | Ozark | 15 |
| March 2015 | John Alva Fuson MD CA | Ozark | 2 |
| March 2015 | Wilbur Allen CA | Ozark | 2 |
| March 2015 | Woodson K. Woods Memorial CA | Ozark | 17 |
| January-March TOTAL | | | 114 |

¹Plan includes Montawk and Lenox Towersites.

²Plan includes Doniphan, Rose Hill, Thomasville and Hunter Towersites.

³Plan includes West Plains, Mountain View, Tecumseh, Brandsville and Timber Knob Towersites.

⁴Plan includes Dixon, Fort Leonard Wood and Rosati Towersites.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

We received 114 comments from 90 respondents (Table 2). Several respondents submitted multiple comments, so the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents.

Table 2. Respondents by respondent category, if self-identified

| Organization Type | Count |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Individual citizens | 83 |
| Equestrian groups ¹ | 6 |
| Non-profit groups ² | 1 |
| TOTAL | 90 |

¹Back Country Horsemen of Kansas, Cowgirl Up Ladies Trail Riding Group, Friends of Huckleberry Equine Group, Kearney Saddle Club, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen, National Equestrian Trails Association

²James Foundation

How they responded:

Table 3. Total number of each response received

| Response Type | Count | Percent |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| Web comment form | 105 | 92 |
| Hard copy form | 8 | 7 |
| Phone call | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 114 | 100 |

Where respondents are from:

Table 4. Total number of respondents by location

| State | Count | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Missouri | 82 | 91 |
| Arkansas | 3 | 3 |
| California | 1 | 1 |
| Indiana | 1 | 1 |
| Kansas | 1 | 1 |
| Texas | 1 | 1 |
| Unknown | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 90 | 100 |

Figure 1. Map of Respondents by ZIP Code

The pinpoints below represent the geographic center of ZIP code boundaries from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers in them represent multiple responses from a single ZIP code or region. One respondent did not provide a ZIP code.



Figure 2. Map of Missouri Respondents by ZIP Code

The pinpoints below represent the geographic center of ZIP code boundaries from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers in them represent multiple responses from a single ZIP code or region.



THEMES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED

The following are themes and issues that were identified from public comments received on draft area management plans available for public review January-March 2015. Missouri Department of Conservation responses to these themes and issues can be found in each final area plan, posted online at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans, once each plan receives final approval.

Terrestrial Resource Management

Wildlife/Natural Community Management

- Concern not seeing as many deer, quail, rabbits.
- Concern with too many deer eating neighbors' gardens.
- Suggests adding wildlife food plots to the area. Suggests managing food plots along power line right-of-ways.
- Suggests leaving brush piles for quail after clearing woody vegetation.
- Suggests removing fescue, conducting more prescribed burns and increasing native grasses on the area to increase quail populations and support quail hunting.
- Suggests taking extra consideration of the needs of turkeys and their poults when conducting prescribed burns.
- Suggests managing bottomland fields for small game.
- Suggests more native grasses and smaller percentage of row crops/old field. Suggests more native wildflowers and less grass in area grasslands.
- Concern area is becoming overgrown with cedar and sassafras.
- Appreciates seeing wildflowers, woodlands and glades.
- Supports removal of invasive plant species (fescue, sericia lespedeza, autumn olive).
- Supports prescribed burns.
- Volunteers to help with habitat management (clearing brush) and trail maintenance.
- Values the fen.
- Suggests managing for savanna habitat.

Forestry

- Concern with several dead trees near property line.
- Opposes timber harvests on the area. Concern that oaks would be removed and only maples would regenerate.
- Supports current timber management.
- Requests information about timber management plan/compartments inventories. Concern with harvesting most producing trees.
- Suggests limiting the amount of tree harvesting in some areas. Would like some old-growth forests to remain.

Other

- Would like to see biological surveys of the area (i.e., have access to a list of plants and animals).
- Suggests including a compartment map.

Aquatic Resource Management

- Concern with lack of good fish cover.
- Concern about too many grass carp. Suggests removing carp during electroshocking surveys.
- Suggests adding strategies to increase the size of crappie.
- Suggests removing undesirable aquatic vegetation along shorelines.
- Suggests stocking fish in fishless ponds.
- Recommends maintaining 200 ft. corridors around streams and fens.
- Supports the addition of a large fishing lake.
- Concern fishing ponds are “fished out” and choked with branches.
- Suggests stocking catfish at area lakes.
- Suggests working with Trout Unlimited or other groups to improve trout habitat.
- Suggests changes in fish harvest regulations.
- Suggests updating public use data to more accurately determine area fishing pressure.

Public Use Management

Trails

- Suggests keeping trails permanently open.
- Suggests adding/expanding multi-use trails (for bicycling/hiking/horseback riding).
- Supports better marking of trails and creation of trail map.
- Shares concern about severe erosion on trails.
- Concern that multi-use trail is closed during hunting season. Would like to see ban on hunting near equestrian trails.
- Supports and suggests increased equestrian group partnership with the Department for trail maintenance, etc.
- Suggests reinstating the Adopt-a-Trail program.
- Supports allowing horseback riding on the multi-use trails.
- Would like horseback riding to be limited to fewer trails.
- Suggests creating or expanding hiking trails.
- Suggests rerouting the trails to bypass gravel roads and include more scenic areas.
- Suggests rerouting trails away from erosion-prone (steep-gradient) areas.

- Suggests providing better trail access (bridge) at areas that are periodically flooded/wet and become difficult to cross (e.g., for children).
- Opposes bicycle use and horseback riding.
- Appreciates being able to horseback ride.

Hunting

- Requests more signs that firearms deer hunting is not permitted.
- Recommends statewide hunting regulations (instead of antlered deer-only regulations).
- Suggests allowing archery deer hunting and turkey and small game hunting.
- Concern that area is over-crowded with hunters and has observed unsafe hunting practices. Suggests increased and more visible enforcement activities.
- Supports maintaining archery-only deer hunting regulations. Opposes allowing firearms deer hunting.
- Suggests monitoring deer herd on area for CWD and other health concerns.
- Suggests stricter regulations to protect turkeys and increase turkey populations.
- Suggests allowing firearms hunting of deer for a limited draw of hunters.
- Suggests improving hunting access for people with mobility disabilities.

Camping

- Suggests providing informational signage to deter campers from leaving waste.
- Suggests allowing camping.
- Suggests adding more camping areas.

Amenities

- Suggests adding a restaurant or allowing a concessionaire to sell food.
- Supports exploration of a new boat ramp.
- Suggests finding a way to inform the public when the current boat ramp is unusable due to low water levels. This information could be included in the weekly fishing report.
- Supports the addition of a pavilion at the shooting range.
- Appreciates using the shooting range. It's clean and well-maintained.
- Suggests adding berms to the shooting range.

Area Maintenance

- Suggests more frequent mowing.
- Concern with poorly maintained privies. Suggests more frequent cleaning of these facilities.
- Appreciates maintenance work and additional amenities that were recently added to the area.

Enforcement/Policy

- Concern with people partying on the area after hours.
- Suggests limiting all motorized boats to “no-wake speed only.”
- Suggests allowing night fishing, even if only a few times a year.
- Opposes allowing dogs on the area.
- Suggests adding gates or other methods to block vehicular access to unimproved logging roads and make-shift trails.
- Suggests allowing all-terrain vehicles on area roads outside of hunting season.
- Concern with lack of enforcement.

Other

- Suggests allowing citizens to adopt a spot to grow wildflowers.
- Appreciates the Department maintaining fire towers and protecting them from vandalism.
- Suggests adding a bird feeder).
- Would like greater ADA accessibility at the area (specifically, to off-road ponds/lakes).
- Suggests wider roads and more turnaround areas at parking and camping areas for vehicles with campers or trailers.

Administrative Considerations

- Expresses personal interest in acquiring and relocating fire towers that may be considered for disposal.
- Supports acquiring more land, as opportunities arise.
- Chat roads are too prevalent at the area.
- Suggests labeling ponds on area map as fishless or fishable.
- Values river accesses.
- Concerns with easement road maintenance.
- Neighboring landowner interested in new fencing agreement.
- Concern that area map does not adequately define private land boundaries.
- Neighboring landowner requests habitat assistance on their property.

General Comments

- General support for the management and of the area.

NEXT STEPS

Area planning teams are responding to themes and issues identified for their particular area plan. Area plans with responses to comment categories are approved by RCT, UCT, and Division Chief and then will be posted on the public website as a final area plan (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

Appendix A. Birch Creek Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (January 1-31, 2015)

I would like express my concern towards any proposed road/trail closures in the birch tree area These provide access for multiple users and all should remain open permanently

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Area Management Plan for Birch Creek CA. Shannon County is blessed with many equestrian trail opportunities on State and Federal public lands; the county is not underserved in this regard. Birch Cree CA's location in the southwest corner of Shannon Co. is near Howell and Texas Counties which are underserved--do not offer public land riding opportunities consistent with the equine population. Birch Creek CA is nearly perfectly suited to the development of an extensive multi-use trail system. Proximity to U.S. Hwy 60 and being intersected by MO Hwy 99 and a county road provide good public access to the area. The area does not have a public shooting range; particularly sensitive natural areas are not inventoried. The CA is within an Audubon Missouri Important Bird Area; a multi-use trail network would increase opportunities for bird watchers. The size (5,646 acres), soils, topography, geographical location, public road access, and current uses of the area are all conducive to the development of a nice multi-use trail system. Parking lots are, of course, needed.

Show Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen recommends developing a multi-use trail network on Birch Creek CA to benefit hikers, bikers, and equestrians. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix B. Dent County Towersites Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (January 1-31, 2015)

The towersites provide a historic prospective and an opportunity for an outdoor adventure with family and friends. The area plan for these units seems appropriate.

If there is interest in selling the 40 acres at Montauk fire tower I would be willing to purchase the land and give rights of use for the tower and parking area to the conservation department. Please advise. In addition I would be interested in setting up a quail and Rabbit habitat to increase the population on one of my properties on cr 6020. salem mo 65560
Regards, Allen

Personally we live directly behind this property and we join it, we would like to buy the acreage as this has been a party place for teens and whoever and several people climb this tower, one day someone will get hurt. I would be interested in buying this. I would fence it off and preserve the tower or you could take it. If interested please contact John or me at 573-578-9968 or 573-578-2887. Thanks

Appendix C. Fourche Creek Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (January 1-31, 2015)

Please apply to all conservation areas:

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous: http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Fourche Creek CA Draft Management Plan. Fourche Creek CA is near the southwest corner of Ripley County; neither Ripley County or nearby Oregon County are underserved by public land equestrian opportunities in relation to the equine population. That being said the larger tract of the CA, around 2,800 acres located on the Arkansas line, is large enough to facilitate a nice multi-use trail network. This portion of the area is made publicly accessible by MO Hwy P and county roads; the soils, landscape position, and topography are conducive to trail development. Parking lots are, of course, needed.

Show Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen recommends developing a multi-use trail network on Fourche Creek CA to benefit hikers, bikers, and equestrians. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Hand-written note: We like conservation but we can not have a garden because of the deers eating everything we plant even onions, tomatoes, radishes, and even wild greens, squash, greens we plant, lettuce just to name it. We need our food with prices as high as they are. Thanks for giving us a chance to comment.

Phone call: Requested that there be statewide hunting regulations on Fourche Creek CA (at present it is antlered deer only).

Appendix D. Huckleberry Ridge Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (January 1-31, 2015)

There are very few places for horseback riders to ride in the SW part of the state. Please take it in consideration when planning to change or make new trails. I have rode at this conservation area and would like to ride there again. I think there would be several clubs that would be on board to help build and maintain trails to keep them open with the lack of funds Missouri has to spend on areas. Thank you

The trails at Huckleberry Ridge are heavily used by horseback riders. Please keep and improve them. Many people come to ride there from quite a distance away, and spend money in the area, supporting local businesses and campgrounds. They are also used by many local day riders.

I love riding horseback at Huckleberry as well as all my trail buddies please keep this park available to us it is a lovely place to ride and the wildflowers are just wonderful to view, as well as the woodlands and glades. The trails did not seem to be over used and

Please keep the equestrian trails open to us, I love riding there and so enjoy the wildflowers, and woodlands, and glades, there is nothing like seeing all of this from the backs of our trusty steeds.

Huckleberry is a beautiful place to trail ride and experience the wildlife and scenery.

It is by far one of the favorite equestrian areas, left untouched.

Please consider this when planning for the future of equestrians and hikers.

Multi use lets all enjoy its beauty, please don't limit its use to one group.

Leave it for the trail riders/hikers.

National Equestrian Trails Coalition, LLC!

We use the Huckleberry Ridge area to go horseback riding quite a bit. The area is beautiful, trails are beautiful, and it is close to our area. We do not ride in unsafe areas, or go off the trails. We actually would love to have more trails in this area. I do think that they can be marked, and maps drawn out for the trails. Please do not close this area to riders and hikers, but enhance the area. It would be a shame to have this wonderful place here and it not be available for use for our children to enjoy.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Huckleberry Ridge CA Draft Management Plan.

There are over 17 miles of designated multi-use trails. Horseback riding is permitted. Conversations with area residents indicate that local trail riders, the Friends of Huckleberry, work diligently to pick up trash, trim and maintain trails, monitor violators, and report problems including abandoned campfires. The Draft Management Plan indicates a concern about trails with severe erosion; the Friends of Huckleberry share that concern. They report that a significant part of the problem is caused by riders abandoning the switchback trails and following cleared fire roads that run straight up and down the hills. The riders report that the Department is addressing the problems by constructing water bars and diversions on the fire roads. The Friends are assisting by blocking the roads to keep trail users on the trails. The Friends report a good relationship with Department staff.

Show Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen commends the Department for permitting equestrian use of the wonderful trail network on Huckleberry Ridge CA, the Friends of Huckleberry for the service they provide that benefits all trail users, and both for the effective partnership. The Friends of Huckleberry should be mentioned along with area scout troops in Public Use Management Objective 3.

The Friends of Huckleberry stand ready to assist the Department to resolve issues, including resource concerns, associated with trail use (Public Use Management Objectives 1 and 2). SMMBCH recommends that the effective partnership be further strengthened by communication and consultation. This partnership could be a model to be replicated at other CAs around the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

we camp and ride our horses at the horse camps adjacent to Huckleberry Ridge Conservation. We take our grandkids there to camp and ride our horses almost every weekend. Please in your plans please continue to let us ride our horses there. It would be a great loss not to be able to continue the use of it

It is important to maintain trail access for all users, including horseback riders. Many people, such as my husband, have physical limitations that prevent them from hiking or cycling. The only way for him to get out and enjoy the beautiful areas Missouri has to offer is by riding a horse on these trails. Horses were also important historically in the settling of this state, and it is important to maintain ties to our heritage.

Please, do reach out to area saddle clubs and equestrian groups, like Back Country Horsemen, to find ways to keep the trails maintained and open for all to enjoy. Thank you!

Besides founding CU, we are homeowners that purchased land next to the Huckleberry for the express purpose of horseback riding. We have a very strong interest in keeping the park clean and the trails trimmed. We will gladly map, mark and work on trails as well as the CU group. (over 100 members) We love this beautiful area and want to keep it open and functional for equine use.

Huckleberry Ridge is a popular equestrian trail riding area for Missouri equestrians as well as those who occasionally visit from other states. Please keep the trail riders in mind as you develop the GMP for the next 10 plus years.

With this said, the National Equestrian Trails Coalition, LLC (NETC) realizes that with decreased budgets and doing more for less, We The People also need to take on more responsibility for maintaining our trails. One of NETC's goals for 2015 is to set up a 3-tier reward system to encourage voluntary trail maintenance on our public lands. We would be happy to work with you, building a Strategic Alliance, in establishing a mileage program where members of our Trail Buddy Program can earn points for miles of trails they help maintain. The NETC is also planning to become educators and proponents of Leave No Trace for Stock Horse use and will be promoting proper trail etiquette. We will be happy to work with you to maintain our equestrian trails on public lands.

You can reach me at:
National Equestrian Trails Coalition, LLC
website: www.nationalequestriantrailscoalition.com
We can also be found on Facebook.

Thank You and Happy New Year!

We ride our equestrians here about 15 times a year. Sometimes we have as many as 30 riders. Please continue to keep these trails open to equestrians as it is one of our favorite places to ride.

One plan objective is to contact horseback riding clubs and groups for volunteer assistance in maintaining the trails. if you have not already done so please contact:

The missouri chapter of Back Country Horsemen.
Please contact <http://showmebch.org/>
The Kansas chapter may also be interested in assisting.

Please keep the trail riders in mind as you develop the Area Management Plan for the next 10 plus years. Trail riding is compatible with your Management Objectives and is a great need of the public. Trail riding continues to grow in popularity and is essential for aged individuals and those with disabilities to enjoy the remote areas our rural resources.

Under Public Use Management Considerations:

Management Objective 1; Strategy 2 - Rather than simply closing the trail please consider re-routing so that any negative impact may be eliminated or significantly reduced. I think this would work well in conjunction with Management Objective 3 (Volunteer group involvement).

Regarding Management Objective 3: In addition to reaching out local saddle clubs please also reach out to any other organizations that may assist with these efforts (Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen, National Equestrian Trails Coalition etc.)

A lot of locals and others that camp,ride,hike and hunt have picked up trash for years here even before adopt a trail was formed,then done away with,we also try to keep the trails cleared and have also had the fire dept and sheriffs office here when fires have been started from partiers in the middle of the night and have been discovered by horseback riders the next mornings,90 per cent of trash and destruction come from partiers,we also keep picking it up after the adopt a trail program was done away with and have kept records ,if there is anything we can do to help contact us please Thanks Rick at Huckleberry

Phone call to Amy Buechler (1/12/2015) - This commenter is a neighboring landowner. He owns Huckleberry Stables - provides horseback riding and cabin rentals. If we need any new signage placed on trails, he would be happy to assist. He and others have picked up trash on the area for years. They are part of the Friends of Huckleberry Equine Group - horseback riders and hikers that help clean up the area. He asked why we no longer have the Adopt-a-Trail program. He indicated that people partying after hours is the main problem on the area.

We ride our horses in Huckleberry Ridge several times a year. Huckleberry Ridge is a popular equestrian trail riding area for Missouri equestrians from all over the state plus riders who visit from other states. Please keep the trail riders in mind as you develop the GMP for the next 10 plus years.

We have joined the National Equestrian Trails Coalition, LLC (NETC). NETC realizes that with decreased budgets and doing more for less, We The People also need to take on more responsibility for maintaining our trails. One of NETC's goals for 2015 is to set up a 3-tier reward system to encourage voluntary trail maintenance on our public lands. We would be happy to work with you, building a Strategic Alliance, in establishing a mileage program where members of our Trail Buddy Program can earn points for miles of trails they help maintain. The NETC is also planning to become educators and proponents of Leave No Trace for Stock Horse

use and will be promoting proper trail etiquette. We will be happy to work with you to maintain our equestrian trails on public lands.

Contact:

National Equestrian Trails Coalition, LLC

Holts Summit, MO 65043

website: www.nationalequestriantrailscoalition.com

I would like to see equestrian use continue in this area. We like trail riding throughout MO, and don't want to lose this area.

Heard that you are looking to take away the Equestrian trails from the Huckleberry Ridge Conservation Area from the National Equestrian Trails Coalition, LLC and the Missouri Horse, Tack & Hay Trading Post! Please keep these trails available to riders and horses. It's hard enough to find good, safe places to ride, we certainly don't want to lose any more! Thank you!

As you know, this area is frequented by many equestrians who enjoy it's beauty and excellent trails. I myself travel from the West Plains, MO area to enjoy Huckleberry and ride there with my Cowgirl Up Ladies Riding Club. Many equestrians would be more than willing to help with trail maintenance to improve the trails and keep them nice for horse riding. Please continue to provide this great riding opportunity in our State. Thank you.

Please keep horse multitrails open as you have a lot of us trail riders in Mo and want to keep trails we have and get more open when and where we can.

Although I haven't made it to this area yet, I'm hoping to this year with my horse. I would like to see additional trails to the area. Shortening the amount of trails would prevent me from coming, as it wouldn't make the long drive worth it. I like to ride for several hours when I go somewhere.

It is simply exhausting trying to keep up with where and when one can ride equestrian trails in Missouri. We don't stop riding just because it's winter yet we must because y'all continue to "close areas to equestrian" during hunting season. How about this....stop allowing hunters near/around equestrian trails. Stop closing us off from hiking trails. It's not us leaving trash behind. We have saddle bags and pack out our own trash but your hikers and hunters consistently leave trash behind. I've watched them do it. And open the Katy trail across the state for equestrian. It's silly and ridiculous for us to have only from Clinton to Sedalia to equestrian ride the Katy trail. We pay taxes like everyone else and guess what...my truck and trailer tags cost WAY more than those buying hunting license. Keep up the way you are going and watch your \$\$\$ support drop. There are many who are moving and going elsewhere for equestrian vacations from MO now because of all the restrictions.

This country was settled on horseback. And I pay my fair share to use the same public lands as the bird watchers, hikers, fishermen, hunters and the likes.

OPEN ALL TRAILS TO EQUESTRIAN

I am an avid horseback trail rider and am interested in the preservation of the horse/multi-use trails in the Huckleberry Ridge Conservation area. Please let me know what I can do to help keep these trails open. I am the program manager of Top Trail (www.toptrailhorse.com) and am affiliated with www.opentrail.us which is an online repository of horse trails across the U.S.

Appendix E. Lewis Family Memorial Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (January 1-31, 2015)

We live right beside the conservation area, and we love it. I do have a suggestion, though. When the land first opened, the grass around the entrance at highway 176 was mowed, and we took our boys out to play there in addition to walking the trail. Although the trail stayed consistently mowed, the area around the entrance did not. We would love it if that area could be consistently mowed so it could be used for play, picnics, gathering, etc. Thanks!

Hard copy: 1. I don't like the idea that fire arms can be used on the property. A couple of times sounded like someone was using it for target practice. 2. When it was used as a pasture the place was bush hogged every year. Now the area behind my house is becoming a thicket of cedar and sasafra bushes. Soon want to be able to see the deer and the other game back there. Also there are several dead trees near my backyard. 3. Either something has happened to the deer or someone is hunting them back there because we only see one every few months. We were seeing them several times a week. 4. I do like it used for hiking and other none hunting uses even though my health won't let me hike there.

Hard copy: Wonderful area on Bull Creek Basin. Natural place for Ozark pristine land to be protected. Used to hear "bobwhite" calls but wonder if the quail are gone and need to be restocked or reintroduced. Please protect this natural God given gift!

Hard copy: I own a 3 acre lot adjacent to this area. #1 - Allow archery deer hunting. - Allow turkey and small game hunting. - Hiking trails - Wildlife food plots

Appendix F. Eminence District Towersites Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (February 1-28, 2015)

Thanks so much for continuing to maintain these tower sites. These are important historical landmarks and pieces of history to teach not only about fire prevention (and its history) but also the goals of conservation here in our great state. I'm happy to see in the report that these sites are to be continued to be maintained and also steps taken to protect them from vandalism. Keep up the good work and thanks again for maintaining these important pieces of history and conservation!

Appendix G. Howell and Ozark County Towersites Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (February 1-28, 2015)

Thanks so much for continuing to maintain these tower sites. These are important historical landmarks and pieces of history to teach not only about fire prevention (and its history) but also the goals of conservation here in our great state. I'm happy to see in the report that these sites are to be continued to be maintained and also steps taken to protect them from vandalism. I also noticed a few lines that mentioned that unsafe towers, towers without infrastructure would be disposed of. If any towers are to be resigned to this fate, I would encourage you to offer these to individuals for the sake of preserving them in some fashion. For example, if a tower were to be disposed of, I would love to approach my town (Pleasant Hill) in relocating the tower, in some fashion (if the tower is mostly unsafe, possibly just the cab and top section, etc.) for a type of display that would highlight the importance of these pieces of history and conservation. I would be highly interested in any tower that was to be disposed of. Please feel free to contact me at:

Keep up the good work and thanks again for maintaining these important pieces of history and conservation!

It appears to me that coyotes have been introduced in the past. This increase in the coyote population resulted in a significant drop in the turkey and rabbit populations. Then I stumbled on a bobcat. I have inadvertently added rabbit habitat. I actually saw 4 turkeys a couple of months ago. The first time in years. Who should I contact about these fluctuations? We would like a stable balance.

Thanks.

Appendix H. Little Dixie Lake Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (February 1-28, 2015)

I am not familiar with the land so have no specific comments about your management plans. We do appreciate and support your work in all areas of conservation. Several times a year we visit conservation areas. Sometimes we just drive through looking for wildlife. Other times we hike if there is a trail. We enjoy these times and are very proud of all our conservation department does for our state and its citizens.

Put up a restaurant, or make facilities available for private management.

Request considering limiting motorized boats to "no-wake speed only" regardless of horsepower allowed. Last summer, I witnessed certain small horsepower gas engine operators throttling at full speed in horseplay zig-zag pattern (two boats). The result was waves that disrupted fishing and struck the shoreline disrupting natural vegetation. Thank you for all you do for us.

Very happy to see the exploration of a new boat ramp - the current ramp is problematic for the reasons mentioned in the draft. The one benefit it has is being fairly well shielded from some of the winds that can blow through outside that small protected cove. If a ramp could be built close

to the existing boat dock, this would simply launching by providing a place to tie off the boat (particularly beneficial for those who are launching solo).

It would be great if some night fishing was allowed rather than closing overnight - even if just a few weekends out of the year. Camping also likely adds a lot of unneeded complications, but it would be nice to be able to camp at that facility. The only other real camping availability near Columbia, MO, is Finger Lakes (that I am aware of) but the ATV traffic makes that a bit less attractive.

I am a fairly recent graduate from the Fisheries and Wildlife program at Mizzou and I enjoy Little Dixie for the most part. My biggest disappointment in the area is the lack of good fish cover in the large lake. I understand that the majority of people fishing out there don't want brush piles along the bank because it causes them to get "hung up", however, the fish need that cover to thrive. It is a delicate balance between maintaining a good public image and providing wildlife with the habitat that they need, so I understand the conflict. On another note: I think that the smaller ponds on the property could be labeled on the area map as to whether they are amphibian ponds or ponds with fish in them. I spent a full day last year jumping from one pond to the next trying to figure out which ones had fish and which did not. Overall you guys are doing a great job so keep up the good work!

I usually quail hunt the Little Dixie Area once or twice a year, although this year I didn't get a chance. The northern part of the area used to have a food plot or two of corn or milo, but have had none for a few years. I don't understand why on this area and other conservation areas it seems the conservation department doesn't food plots. Where there are food plots, especially milo, you can find quail. With disappearing quail numbers, it looks to me like they would want to provide food and cover that would benefit the quail during harsher winters. The edge feathering might help with cover for a few years, but once the trees that are cut settle I don't think it will benefit the quail. The best thing would be to get rid of fescue and siera lespedezia and start putting food plots back every year.

(Phone conversation with Amy Buechler): Mr. Choate called to share stories of his time as the first area manager of Little Dixie Lake Conservation Area. He said it was always a special place. Neighbors always took pride in the area and a number of local people were helpful taking care of the area. He was well acquainted with many local anglers. He conducted his Master's thesis on the effects of size limit regulations on largemouth bass in an impoundment on the area (1970).

I spend many days each year fishing, traveling throughout central and southern MO. By far, the privies at Little Dixie are the most poorly maintained facilities I have ever seen. I have visited several Forest Service facilities, in similar situations where no running water exists to hose them down, and yet they are kept in a clean condition. There is zero excuse for a facility so easy for cleaning staff to access, with so many visitors, being left with feces on the floor. I see feces approximately 80% of the time I am forced to visit the privy. Leaving one person's mess leads to more people creating a mess, similar to illegal dumping, because no one values it. Your plan **MUST** include changes to contractor or employees responsible for cleaning. Extend a water line if necessary. Do whatever it takes. No public facility should be left in such condition.

Other than the lack of maintenance, my recommendations would include changes to grass carp [fewer], and allowing primitive camping at the north end of the property. Too little aquatic vegetation occurs in the lake in my opinion. I would remove some of the carp during shocking surveys.

I would like to see more control of grasslands, less grass, more wildflowers, native to this area. I also pick up a lot of trash, on county roads, 228, 246, and 248. is there anyway I could get an adoption sign? also, maybe adopt a spot, like Columbia does, to grow wildflowers. like at the entrance of boat ramp. thanks

Summary of phone call to Michele Baumer (received 2/2/2015 at 1600 hrs): Mr. Gallatin stated that the trail at Little Dixie is overgrown and he would like it mowed more often. He would also like the brush trimmed along the trail, which is about 1/4-1/3 of a mile long. He would like the trail to be paved but realizes that probably won't happen. He would like the trail to be wood chipped like they do at Runge. Mr. Gallatin, in addition to having the trail cleared out, would like it marked so it is easier to find his way around the lake to go fishing. He said he would like the other smaller trail with the little bridge to be cleared out and wood chipped as well.

Hard copy: I have fished many waters of the State of Missouri; my primary focus is on Crappie, Catfish (both pole and trotline), Walleye and other pan fish as well as non-game fish by pole and during gigging season. I have fished Little Dixie Lake once with excellent results for catching but not so good at keeper size. Just about every cast yielded a fish but they were almost always about six inches or less.

Although one time fishing is by no means a good scientific sample I talked with other anglers and they were all having similar results. I would like to see something in your management plans to address increasing the size of crappie in Little Dixie.

Thanks.

February 7, 2015

Dear MDC

I am Lewis Baumgartner and I have lived around Little Dixie Lake all my life. (I'm 67 years old). I was South of it when it was built, then I moved to West side, it ran along my East fence. Now I'm on the Northeast corner of it. It runs along my West fence.

My Dad (he had polio) used to fish in the fish ponds. My dad caught the biggest fish that was caught in the lake at that time. (I think was April of '75)

I can hear my Mother tell the story, "Jim said I had to show Lewis, Owl Creek." Mom was about to whip us, but she had some other ladies tell her not whip us.

I used to ride my bicycle around it. Now that I've had a stroke, I just drive around the main parking lot, and spend a lot of my time just looking at birds and walking the handicapped trail

around the east side. I was wondering would it be asking too much if you put a bird feeder. It wouldn't have to be anything fancy but I was wondering could you just something over at the east side.

Thank you for keeping Little Dixie in great condition. As a neighbor of the Conservation Area, we are privileged to enjoy its beauty every day. We frequently hike the trails, fish from the banks, canoe the water, picnic on the shore, and observe the many animals and birds. Little Dixie is our backyard. I'm not sure how I can convey to you what it means to me. Not only is it a beautiful place, where I find serenity and peace, it is filled with many happy memories for me. When my husband and I first started dating, we hiked many miles together at Little Dixie. It is where I discovered that he shared my love of the outdoors, and I also learned how much he respected and appreciated what it means to have Little Dixie and other Conservation Areas in our great state. I fell in love with my husband in the woods of Little Dixie and, lucky for me, it's where he proposed. We were married in a small ceremony under the beautiful trees at the lake's edge. I want to grow old in these woods, by this water, in this beautiful place. But it's not about our story. It's about the fact that we were able to make a story here, that we are one of many, many stories from countless people who visit Little Dixie. Please continue to support and care for Little Dixie and other Conservation Areas, so that future generations have the opportunity to make their own stories.

This is a great fishing resource to have so close to a large number of anglers, and it gets a tremendous amount of public use. I have two suggestions that would benefit users.

1. The privies need much more frequent attention. I have seldom been there and found the privies were anything except a mess, even close to weekend and holidays. If existing staff cannot check and clean more often, perhaps someone local can be paid as temporary labor to clean more often. As an MDC retiree, I find it really frustrating to think the agency cannot do a better job with something so visible to the public.

2. I'm glad to see there is a strategy for improving the boat ramp situation. But as long as the existing ramp must be used, is there a way that the public could be informed when the ramp is unusable due to low water levels? It's a shame to pull a boat all the way to the lake only to find the ramp unusable because of low water level. Someone takes time to make a weekly fishing report, April-October; couldn't that person also mention in the report when the water level gets too low to launch the average-size fishing boat?

Thanks for considering these comments.

It was a good idea to distribute fliers to neighbors encouraging comments on the plan. The plan appears to stay the course of past years' management.

Please continue to attempt control of *Sericea lespedeza* on conservation property, and we will continue to do the same on ours.

Some confusion has been generated: Fig. 1 legend shows the Boundary Trail as multi-use (hiking and biking), and the Shoreline Trail as hiking only. The legends for Figures 3, 4, and 5 indicate

that the Boundary Trail is hiking only, and the Shoreline Trail is multi-use. I think Figure 1 is the current situation. Are you flipping the trail users? I'd be glad to bike the Shoreline Trail, but I think you'll get more resource damage since it has many low spots, intermittent streams. It would be best to leave the bikers on the Boundary Trail, even though it doesn't have as many views of the lake.

We are always glad when you burn adjacent to our property. It makes burning our native grasses so much easier! When is the next burn planned north of CR 246 parking lot?

When do you plan to collect more current public use data? Is the most recent angler data really from 1991? Is it only anecdotal that "the lake continues to receive heavy fishing pressure"?

Which pond is the one you call General Lee pond?

We appreciate the cooperation with MDC managers regarding burns and sericea control in the past. Sadly, I don't think we'll ever win the sericea war. Good luck with your management planning.

I noticed not much priority has been given to removing undesirable vegetation. I have not fished in Little Dixie lake for 2 seasons, because the last time I was there the aquatic vegetation was growing along most of the shoreline and extended out as much as 20-30 ft. Because of this it was impossible to fish the shoreline or structures near the shoreline. I think it is good to have desirable species of aquatic vegetation along the shoreline for habitat, but it shouldn't be so prevalent that it prevents the public from using the lake. A priority should be put on removal of undesirable vegetation.

Appendix I. Phelps and Pulaski County Towersites Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (February 1-28, 2015)

Hello,

I was glad to read in the report of the continued maintenance of the tower sites and the possibility of placing them on the National Registry of Historic Places. I've always been a fan of the fire towers and love what they represent to forestry protection, management and fire prevention. I would please encourage the continued support and preservation of these historic symbols that go hand-in-hand with the very ideals of conservation.

Keep up the great work!

I purchased property 5 years ago and have not yet been able to cut or eradicate tall grass and thistles in some areas adjacent to the Rosati Towersite. I would love assistance to safely conduct a control burn near the edge of the conservation areas short leaf pine stand, which I believe would mitigate vulnerability from a fire emanating from the overgrowth during a dry period. My plan is to replace overgrown tall fescue and wild blackberry thickets with buffalo grass, legumes, and chokeberries (aronia). Also, we need more visual guidance (signs) for users that firearms deer hunting is not permitted at the Rosati Site .Occasionally, individuals are confused in this regard.

Appendix J. Canaan Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous: http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the

wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

I am pleased to see the plan to continue to allow horseback riding on the multi-use trails. So many areas are pushing horses out, leaving equestrians with fewer opportunities. Although I also hike, thereby having continued access to those areas, my husband is partially disabled and cannot do so. He relies on his horse to take him places he would never see otherwise. Horseback riding gives him an opportunity to enjoy Missouri's wonderful outdoors.

Can the 12 ponds on this area be stocked? I would like to stock and manage the fish taken. No point of having ponds, if not stocked for kids to fish. Also if some clearing needs to be done, I think the brush piles should be left for quail habitat cover. If help is needed, I would like to be apart of this. Thanks

In all cases buy more land when the opportunity is there. Maintain the trail and if possible add to it. The fen is very important. Consider limiting horseback usage to only parts of thee trail.

As a volunteer hiking leader I would like to see the gravel roads eliminated from the hiking loops by the following suggestions. (1) From the camping area parking lot on Bock Road after crossing the branch to the east there is an access trail to the top of the ridge if this were connected to the trail which crosses the east parking lot road this would complete a loop which would eliminate using the gravel roads. Hiking on a gravel road doesn't give you a feeling of nature at it's best. (2)The Southwest loop could be improved by crossing the gravel road at the SW parking lot and developing a trail in the timber end at the south camping area. If possible instead of hiking the edge of the fields and utilizing more of the wooded area would help.

Trail marking for the trail in section 34 does not show the northerly direction and back westerly crossing the parking lot road. My memory seems to recall a cable across this entrance. Users are exiting at south end of the parking lot.

I would like to see hiking trails improved for wet weather access. Some of the multi-use trails cross streams and it is sometimes difficult for families with young hikers to cross these when water flow and/or levels are up. This is particularly on the trail to the spring house. Otherwise the area is very enjoyable for my family.

Please plan ahead and deny access for dogs and mountain bikes as both are destrictive to natural areas and detrimental to enjoyment of those areas by others.

1. I would like to see a biological survey of the flora and fauna in the Canaan Conservation area. If a survey has not been done recently, it should be done. I thought I saw a plant list that listed some rare ironweed and some a rare native bromus on this site.
2. I don't belive that timber harvest should be conducted on this site. There is a rarity of old growth forest and dead snags in this area. Timber harvesters tear up the land and bring in exotics. In a clear cut timber harvest situation in the 1990's at Painted Rock that cut all the oaks nothing but maples came back.

3. There should be some informational signs about primitive camping. I noticed several human fecal piles and scattered toilet paper on the surface. Campers should know to bury their waste.
4. I believe that a 200 foot corridor should be maintained around streams and fens. not 100 feet.

Thank you.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Caanan CA Management Plan. MDC is to be commended for making the enjoyment of Caanan CA available to many citizens through the multi-use trail network. Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen recommends that these trails continue to be made available to all users. The extent of the trail system is appropriate to provide optimum opportunities to equestrian users in the community. The trails, to a large extent, are properly situated on the landscape and show minimal erosion or resource damage; the exceptions are a number of locations where the trail grade is excessive and long (where the trails runs up and down big hills) with excessive erosion as a result. SMMBCH recommends that these trail segments be rerouted to minimize trail gradient and length. It is also noted that the trails could be better marked. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help with rerouting and marking the trails.

Thank you again for maintaining a great trail network on a beautiful area, and thank you again for the chance to comment.

Appendix K. John Alva Fuson, MD Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and

next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video:
<http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous:
http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

Wright County is the fifth most underserved county in Missouri in terms of equestrian trail riding opportunities on public land; it is part of the top priority area for equestrian trail development—ten counties in Southwest Central Missouri—in Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen's 2015 proposal for expanding public land trails.. The Fuson CA possesses many important desirable characteristics for multi-use trail development with permitted equestrian use. The soils, topography, area size, and relatively light competing uses are conducive to trail development; access can be gained just a short distance off the end of Route DD.

SMMBCH recommends the development of 10-12 miles of multi-use trails on the Fuson CA. Much of the existing, extensive area access trails could become part of the network. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix L. Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

I like the idea of a large lake stocked annually. This along with the excellent hunting would make this a great draw. It might be worth while to have a camping area, maybe on both sides of the area.

Hard copy comment received 3/16/2015: This area was purchased with tax payer money but more of it is opened up with chat roads for the city hunter thats to lazy to walk. These roads are cutting through good hunting areas. The biggest thing I have a problem with is the stoppage of riding 4-wheelers on the trails that are already there. Trucks and Jeeps do more damage on soft ground because of their weight. I would like to be able to ride on all trails where other vehicles can go. The local hunter is having to take a back seat to the out of state and city people. U send out those fancy flyers all over pushing the local out.

I have carefully read the draft plan and am in full agreement with it. The addition of a large fishing lake will greatly improve the area as will improvement of access to more areas within the CA. I currently use the shooting range and a small pavilion would be a welcome enhancement. I don't currently hunt there because of over crowding of the easier access areas and observed careless and dangerous activities of some of the hunters. Enhanced and more visible enforcement of the wildlife code would be welcome. Thank you for the opportunity to view and comment on the draft plan.

Texas County is an underserved county in terms of equestrian trail riding opportunities on public land; it is part of the top priority area for equestrian trail development—ten counties in Southwest Central Missouri—in Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen's 2015 proposal for expanding public land trails. The Gist Ranch CA possesses many important desirable characteristics for multi-use trail development with permitted equestrian use. The soils, topography, and the area's huge size are conducive to trail development; access can be gained easily off hard-surface roads—Highways 17 and 137, and the shooting range is confined to the northeast corner making assurance of safety easily accomplished.

SMMBCH recommends the development of 10-12 miles of multi-use trails on the Gist Ranch CA. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

When the main road off of hwy 17 was put in it was wide enough for 2 lanes and graveled. Then someone(?) graded ditches on both sides making a high one lane road in the middle. At least it's one lane to me. Hunters with campers, family campers, riders with horsetrailer have a very, very hard time crossing one another without falling off the road. The road going North doesn't offer enough room to pull over campers or turn arounds. The only nice area is the site on the West end going to hwy 137, however the county road is so rough trailers have a hard time getting in. I would like to see more riding/walking/bike trails marked. A group of us at one time were wondering if the park manager would let us mark horse riding trails. (There are also Trail

riding groups that I'm sure would help). Riders used the park years ago but it's probably overgrown by now. So, I would like to see wider roads, turn around spots, and parking/camping areas. The campfire rings at the West end are nice.

Thank you for letting me respond.

When the main road off of hwy 17 was put in it was wide enough for 2 lanes and graveled. Then someone(?) graded ditches on both sides making a high one lane road in the middle. At least it's one lane to me. Hunters with campers, family campers, riders with horsetrailer have a very, very hard time crossing one another without falling off the road. The road going North doesn't offer enough room to pull over campers or turn arounds. The only nice area is the site on the West end going to hwy 137, however the county road is so rough trailers have a hard time getting in. I would like to see more riding/walking/bike trails marked. A group of us at one time were wondering if the park manager would let us mark horse riding trails. (There are also Trail riding groups that I'm sure would help). Riders used the park years ago but it's probably overgrown by now. So, I would like to see wider roads, turn around spots, and parking/camping areas. The campfire rings at the West end are nice.

Thank you for letting me respond.

P.S. A fishing lake! That would be great! I haven't fished in years.

This would apply to any area...I am 75 with minor disability that leaves me unable to use much of any area because I can't get to it....like the off road ponds and lakes only the conservation trucks get to.

I really enjoy using the shooting range at Gist. It is always clean and in good repair. I have been very disappointed with the two fishing lakes at Gist though. I have fished there several times and sometimes don't even get a nibble using worms fishing from the shore. I have not caught a catfish there despite effort. Another fisherman told me that he had the same experiences. He said that he thought both lakes were "fished out" and he wondered if there were still any fish, to speak of, in these two lakes. I don't know if these two lakes are being stocked, and I have given up on taking my grandson fishing there. I was very hopeful that I would have a good fishing lake nearby, especially where we could fish for catfish. It also seems that these two lakes are choked with branches. I have trouble reeling in line without snagging so bad that I usually end up with the line breaking. I would love for these two fishing lakes to be evaluated, improved and regularly stocked. Thank you for allowing me to comment on this. Our department is the best anywhere! Sincerely,

Shortly after MDC purchased Gist Ranch, it was closed to ATV's. I was told by the local MDC office in Houston the reason was during deer and turkey season the ATV's were a nuisance to hunters which I can understand. However, after deer and turkey season why can't ATV's be allowed on the roads inside Gist Ranch. Local people are deprived of enjoying the ranch's beauty on ATV's. 99.9% of ATVer's do not destroy the property. My father's land joined the ranch south of Eunice and I enjoy traveling the roads within it's boundaries and would enjoy it better if allowed to travel the roads on my ATV. Please consider changing the ATV policy by allowing

ATV's on Gist Ranch except during deer firearm season and turkey firearm season.

Thank you

Handwritten comment (Received 3/23/2015): The areas provide a great resource to the public. The Gist Shooting Range is a huge benefit as well. I feel larger bodies of water (for fishing) would be welcome by the general public. Glad to see MDC managing this piece of real estate for wildlife. Keep up the good work.

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

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The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

Regarding Management Objective 2 to enforce Wildlife Code and other state statutes:

I encourage MDC to block unimproved logging roads and make-shift trails into the Gist Ranch to vehicular traffic. By blocking or gating these access points, allow better management and control of recreational activities and help limit opportunities for Wildlife Code violations and trespass onto private lands.

Handwritten comment (Received 3/20/2015): On the south slopes maybe we could put some small game plots to get quail and maybe some grouse started.

Handwritten comment (Received 3/26/2015): I have done Forestry improvement work for Mark Twain Forest Department Fort Wood Forestry Department and MO Conservation Department. Several thousand acres all together the timber management is fine they seem to know what their doing. On the wildlife side I would be careful with fire a setting turkey needs cover water close by she can find enough insects to feed the poults. If digging a pond in oak timber you need to clear a strip around the pond set it in pine to catch the leaves from going in the pond. Also I would cut when the leaves were out. They make good cover for nesting turkeys the deer and other wildlife seem to be doing OK. The quail I have no complaints with the MDC staff they are doing fine. I voted for the MDC tax and would do so again.

You all have a good day

Sincerely

I applaud your plan. I have known this area for 40 years. The plan for a fishing lake 20 acres is super. Somewhere in Pad-a-long hollow?

Perhaps in the future some hiking/horseback trails along old logging roads. This will keep all the interesting areas accessible.

Thank you,

Appendix M. Riverbreaks Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

I would like to see more camping areas on your grounds, primitive is fine.

My main concern is small game and quail. I am an avid hunter and I frequent many MDC areas on a regular basis and I am sad truly unhappy with the lack of rabbits and quail that I see. Without exaggeration I go entire seasons without seeing any rabbits or quail on your areas. I really wonder where your focus is concerning the rabbit and quail hunting. I don't seem to have a problem on my farm finding game or neighbors farms but I am sadly disappointed on MDC land!

I have personally used the Riverbreaks CA and really enjoy it. While I understand the economical impact as well as the forage benefits to Deer & Turkey. I feel the ratio of row crop to native grasses and prairie is lopsided. The Strategic Direction is described as "The Riverbreaks Conservation Area (CA) is managed to benefit populations of game and non-game species; enhance native vegetation in grassland, woodland and forest ecosystems;...". I do not feel that 34% of this land in row crop and 2% in native grass is meeting that direction. This large percentage of row crop also goes against the efforts to curb erosion in this area. I would propose and increase over the 10 year period to 8%-12% warm season native grasses, prairie and wildflowers. I believe the benefits to pollinating species, birds, wildlife and erosion control would be extraordinary. There are organizations such as Pheasants & Quail forever, National Wild Turkey Federation and others that will assist with conversion of these lands to Prairie in whatever manner they can. Further more utility companies are becoming more aware of benefits to their companies and wildlife by introducing different management practices in large right-of-ways. With a moderately large power right-of-way running through Riverbreaks that offers another unique opportunity to create prairie land possibly at a reduced cost to the state.

Adding berms to the shooting range would make it safer, especially on the 100 yard. On occasion I have had shooting occur while I was setting up/replacing a target on the 100. I have hiked or hunted almost all of the land at Riverbreaks and it is a very nice and well maintained area.

Having ridden the trail(s) at the Riverbreaks CA, I have wondered why there is only horseback riding only on designated multiuse trail located on East tract and NONE on the West tract. There is more acreage on the West tract and the possibility of riding the perimeter of the conservation area and other multiuse areas would not - in my opinion - impact the area.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Riverbreaks CA Draft Management Plan. MDC is to be commended for permitting equestrian use on four miles of multi-use trails on Riverbreaks CA. Although the equine population in Holt County is not large the Riverbreaks area provides a riding opportunity to neighboring counties, some of which are underserved. The four miles of trail on the east tract, however, are not long enough to provide a quality day-use experience; 10-12 miles of trails are really needed. Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen recommends the development of an additional eight miles of trails. Since the east tract is small it would seem practical to develop these trails on the larger west tract. Some existing hiking trails (that follow the general contour) and unimproved Prairie Rd might be used. Although the terrain

is steep the soil can be protected from erosion by careful trail layout.

Expansion of the equestrian trails on Riverbreaks CA is a priority in SMMBCH's 2015 comprehensive proposal to expand public land riding opportunities in Missouri. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

My husband is partially disabled and cannot hike, but can ride his horse. We really appreciate having trails open to equestrians because it is the only way he can see much of what Missouri has to offer. Please continue allowing equestrian access to trails - and please consider allowing equestrian use on interior service roads. Thank you!

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A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

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Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

Appendix N. Wilbur Allen Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

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Refer. To the Wilbur Allen Wildlife Area.

I'm a landowner bordering the area by about one fourth of a mile on the east side; the farm next to the Conservation area on the north side of the road at the end of Radford Drive.

I've worked with the Conservation personnel for the past 2 years, mainly disking, plowing, brush hogging and haying.

There has been this last 2 years: A boat launch for fishermen, new bathroom facilities, 2 picnic tables, and a lot of foundation and gravel road work. I'm sure this was greatly appreciated by the community as a whole.

I feel like as a citizen, conservationist, landowner and admirer of wildlife, that there could be some improvements and endeavors made in the area on the east side of the river. I am referring to approximately 90 acres of land.

I have a plan. By strip farming at first, using strips about 300 to 500 yards wide, a quarter mile long, by using the south entrance road by the cattle guard and using the north road as a border, with circle fields, mainly 2 or 3 acres to themselves, with a grown up fence row. Also, terraces should go with fence rows, making wildlife protection areas. The cleared areas could and should be maintained with native grass, with areas for quail, deer, turkeys and other assorted wildlife. Plus, I feel with the help of the local community, with very little money spent by the conservations department, this could be a good example of a community working together; a wonderful place for wildlife, hunters, and community respect.

Sincerely Yours,

Appendix O. Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

Looking over the plan I think it looks like a good overall plan. Would love to see hiking trails developed such as a rope bridge over the dry fork for easy crossing of the river. As a landowner next to the area I am striving to rid my farm of the autumn olive bushes and glad to see the plan includes removal of this plant.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the plan for the Woods Area. I understand the plan is very basic and can not include everything but I would like it to mention the management of the numerous food plots and waterholes that are located on the area. Maintaining the water holes is definitely a plus for wildlife during drought years and the food plots add green browse in places where there is little. Also most area users don't see the benefits of timber harvest as a wildlife management tool but they do recognize that food plots indicate that you are doing something for wildlife. Something as simple and cost effective as planting wheat is a big plus.

Is it necessary to place (Forestry) in plan to indicate what Division is responsible? I thought that Forestry was responsible for all the area with the exception of the fishery management. I didn't think Wildlife was involved on the Woods Area.

General Information and Conditions, II(B) Caves: I have found several caves on the area that may support overwintering bats. They are located under Suicide Hill and along the right descending bank bluff 1/4 to 1/2 miles upstream from Suicide Hill.

Management Considerations, V: It is difficult to review this plan for the seven compartments outlined in the draft since there are no maps or descriptions of where these seven compartment are. In addition, there are no defined plans outlined for what is planned in these compartments. I am concerned about timber harvest on these areas and would like to have better information presented on specific timber harvest plans, what compartments, time frame and if there is any input on specific plans? I would also like to see some more crop land/habitat improvement on many of the food plots or open lands on the area. There are some crops in the fields near the old sand/gravel pits but many of the food plots scattered around the area have very little diversity or food sources for wildlife. Some of the open field areas are beginning to become too overgrown with succession and would be good to see some of these set back to more herbaceous settings. Without these food plots and open areas, with a mast failure, there is limited resources for wildlife. In addition if you plan on harvest of mast producing trees in some of these compartments, without plans for openings, savannahs, etc. could set back some of the management goals for the area. I know the powerline ROW with Ameran provides a large swath of open areas that provide forest openings. Could there be an agreement with Ameran to expand the food plots or even plant milo/corn/or other food sources along this alignment? These would not encroach or endanger the ROW maintenance.

Section VI, Aquatic Resource Mgt. Conserations, Obj. 1: I fish the trophy trout section of WKW and have seen a major decline in the brown trout fishery since the 1990's and 2000's. I believe a lot of it may be due to deteriorating habitat conditions with no sinuosity, deep holes filling in with sand/gravel and shortage of good overhead woody cover and debris. I realize this is a very

flashy, high velocity section of river but would like MDC to consider working with Trout Unlimited and other groups to investigate if some large boulder, bank stabilization, habitat structures could be put in place. As for harvest, I would recommend a 1 fish, 18-inch length limit, and the elimination of gigging in the trophy trout reach. I have seen the fishery on the Current River benefit from these stricter regulations. I have been encouraged this winter by larger brown trout being stocked which may help improve the fishery. However, I never see any enforcement presence and I remember years ago when Spence Turner ran the trout program that there was annual sampling, creel surveys, etc. and I can remember some really memorable brown trout trips. I understand the competing interests and difficulty of new regulations but I think with some effort we could have a Blue Ribbon fishery here.

Section VIII, Lands Proposed for Acquisition: I would encourage MDC to consider purchasing lands in Crawford County in the area just downstream of Dry Fork confluence along the north (left descending bank) of the Meramec River and down to Suicide Hill. Also, contact Chaumier Farms on the lands bordering the eastern side of the area north of Highway 8 to see if there is any interest in selling this land to the department. I don't know what compartments these are. Hopefully the James Foundations properties remain as is, but if not make a priority to purchase these properties on the north side of the Meramec River in Crawford and Phelps Counties. Future land uses in the areas I identified could have a negative effect on this priority watershed area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I would like to see a map of the 7 compartments and what plans are for these areas. I have used WKW since 1990 and consider it one of the Department's jewels. Priority for purchasing surrounding lands if available and affordable would only benefit the area. Savannah management would benefit the area. I understand the importance of TSI management, but would like you to really consider limiting the amount of clear cuts or major tree harvests in some areas. It would be good to see some old growth forest remain.

There is approximately 40 acres of Woodson K. Woods CA that lies north of Co. Rd 3620. (The most extreme northern portion of the CA) Over the past few years, home sites have risen in close proximity to the area. In the past no firearms deer hunting has been allowed on the CA and thus we have not had an issue with safety from hunters using the area. I strongly urge you to keep that provision intact for the CA or at least on that northern portion north of Co. Rd 3620. Safety is our number one concern. Thank you for the opportunity to offer input into the Woodson K. Woods CA future plans.

I just wanted to clarify my earlier comment. The area we have a concern for was in the northern portion of the "Gray" tract that was added later. Thanks again.

I appreciate the work done on Woodson K. Woods. The conservation area is more than beautiful. Enjoy it at least 60 or 7 times a year. Access along Meramec Farms Road important access for family. Want to keep Woodson's request for hiking access for full use.

The river access on State Rd 8 is well maintained and important to the community. Thank you for all your work.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Woodson K. Woods Memorial CA Draft Management Plan. It is stated that the original donation from the Woods Foundation carried a request that the area be accessed by hiking only. Out of respect for this request Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen has chosen not to recommend amending use restrictions to permit equestrian use. Instead SMMBCH will focus on adding multi-use trails that permit equestrian use on Meramec State Park and Huzzah CA, thereby providing needed trail riding opportunities in underserved Crawford County.

That being said, the Woods Memorial CA possesses key desirable characteristics for equestrian use—soils, topography, some infrastructure, and access off of good, paved roads. Should development of multi-use trails on Meramec SP or Huzzah CA not be authorized, and should the Department find that equestrian use is in keeping with the intent of the request carried by the original donation, SMMBCH recommends consideration of development of multi-use trails with equestrian use allowed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

I think for the most part you finally got it right. The poaching has declined significantly and we are finally getting a deer and turkey population back. I believe that is primarily due to the creation of a safer area for wildlife to propagate. It is imperative to have an area that is less likely to be poached by making it a bows only hunting area. Plus this gives an exclusive area for the growing population of bow hunters to use, increasing their odds for success.

In our area the turkey and deer population are still low compared to to rest of the state. I have been hunting here since 1967. I moved here ten years later. I wish that MDC would put a moratorium on taking hen turkeys for ten years. Bad hatches, due to weather, varmints, due to increased numbers and continued poaching do to non thinking offenders plagues our population. You top that with inconsistent acorn production and the turkey needs relief. thus the tom should also be protected by taking only one bird in this area of Crawford county. We have more hunters and we need more birds. When I moved here I consistently saw flocks of 50 or more birds. I haven't seen that in decades. This is already to long. I have mush more to say but this is a good start. rather talk to someone in person.

Sincerely,

I believe you future plans are very good for Woodson K. Woods but I would like to add 1 comment for your relationship with adjacent landowners. I live for modern firearms deer season and Woodson K. Woods allows NO hunting during this period. In the past when everyone could hunt there, slob deer hunters have caused many problems so the area was closed to gun hunting to stop these problems. Granted that action worked but it gave the deer a huge refuge area to go to and hurt the hunting chances for the bordering landowners by not keeping the deer moving. I suggest having a limited draw for a determined amount hunters so that the area isn't flooded with hunters that cause problems but still keep the deer moving. This would benefit both groups of hunters and the development of good will for all involved. Thank you, Mike Sammelman

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I would like to see more upland game management. I enjoy quail hunting and remember back

in the early 80's hunting numerous coveys of quail on the Woods area. I have hunting it several times over the past couple of years and have only found quail on the northern boundary, where you conducted a prescribed burn a few years ago in an old field. Much of the remainder of the Woods area has Fescue on the boundaries of the crop ground and little to no native grass. Would like to see the Fescue eradicated as an invasive species and native grass planted in it's place. I have improved quail habitat on my private property, which is near the Woods area and now enjoy quail on the property. I learned these habitat improvement techniques from MDC, however I do not see them widely implemented on the Woods area. It appears the focus is for deer habitat.

My RV park and campground bordered Woodson K. Woods on the east and north side of my property. Campers use the conservation area for: hiking, nature walks, exploration, pond fishing, varmit hunting, access to Dry Fork Creek, and bow hunting (only) in season for deer and turkey. I feel comfortable with bow hunting being the only type of hunting allowed on WKW land, for the safety of constituents that utilize the land. Personally I enjoy taking camping children on walks in the woods to introduce them to plants and trees of the areas and to introduce them to land conservation (the whys and hows), and that includes scout groups, as well. WKW is a beautiful area with so many features to explore.

Submitted by mail: We are the landowners described on page 1, under IV (Area Restrictions or Limitations), C Easements. We access our 80 acres of ground thru your easement. This 10 year Management Plan is pretty complete, but I feel that some additions could be added or addressed.

Nowhere in the plan have you addressed enforcing existing rules and regulations for this area. The public camps and makes fires all the time on the Meramec River within the Woodson K Woods area. Fishing with live bait and not following length and limit rules on trout is also done. ATVs also run on my gravel bar at the upper end of my property. Trespassing has been and always will be a big issue.

On Page 5, VII Public Use Management Considerations, (3) Build relationships with neighboring landowners and Page 6, Management Objective 3, Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners. On this issue I feel that Mo Dept of Conservation has failed or been very poor in the past. Since Conservation gave us an easement and provided public access many years ago, we have had major problems. These problems are, but not limited to the following.

1. The easement road has not had yearly maintenance. The road is very steep in areas (cardiac hill) and requires the run outs and ruts repaired often. In short, I acknowledge that the road is a maintenance nightmare. We have worked on this road in the past to allow normal non 4-wheel drive vehicles to access our property. I finally requested in 2010 that Conservation work on the road (see enclosed letter). I received no reply to this letter, but a short time later the road was graded. I assume Conservation did the work, but a short reply to my letter would have been appreciated. We also keep the tree trimming and whatever fallen tree removal is necessary to allow access. As you can see in the enclosed letter, I also said that I would keep this road up if you gave me permission. Received no reply.

2. At the entrance to the easement off Besmer Road, there has always been a cable with a

conservation lock on the left and our lock on the right. The lock on the right is also key shared with the landowner (40 acres) up river from us. This cable has never been of any value in stopping trespassing. Pulling posts, unscrewing hardware, etc. has all been done, and subsequently repaired by us.

We have a small cabin on the river so it falls on us to keep things repaired and secure. After much complaining, over many years, Conservation is putting in a new steel post gate to replace the cable. Thank you very much. Conservation doesn't use this road very much. Trout stocking off our property seems to be the main use. I have a very good relationship with the manager of the Maramec Springs Trout Hatchery. We have talked about many issues including the road/cable problems.

3. When we received our easement, Conservation, in partnership with us, built the fence and gate that separates Woodson K Woods and our property. Conservation provided the materials and we provided the labor. Conservation also "promised" that they would provide access to the river outside of our gate. With the public going down Cardiac Hill on your road and our property/gate/fence cutting off this access, a trail was needed across the field to the river. Conservation has never done this. Because there is no trail, the public has continuously trespassed on us, broken down our gate and cut our fence many times. Finally as the public used the area more and more, I started (about 10-12 year ago) to cut a bush hog trail from our gate across the end of the field to the river. I do this about 3 times a year (spring/summer/fall) and it has helped dramatically to cut the damage to our fence/gate. In regard to this bush hog trail, my son said that "Conservation" usually does this in other conservation areas. The fence that I mentioned will have to have major repair or be replaced this year. Age and trespassing damage (corner posts broken, wire cut, metal posts pushed over) demand that this be done. This fence and the signs that are on it are all that keep our property from being overrun with people that come from your parking lot on Besmer Road. Is Conservation interested in a new partnership to repair or replace this fence? This fence also provides a limit to gun hunting during gun season for Woodson K. Woods.

4. In regard to public trespassing. Many people use your maps to help them know where they can legally hunt/fish/hike. In my opinion, your maps do not define private ground adequately.

On page 6, Management Objective 3, Strategy 2, Promote habitat on neighboring landowner's properties. I would love to help with this as I want our land to be better for the time that I looked over it.

I am 76 years old and have hunted/fished and trapped extensively all my life on what used to be "The Powell Ranch" and is now Woodson K Woods. I lived for 3 months each summer in your "cabin". I am very familiar with this entire area, including Maramec Springs. If anyone who reads this would like to talk with me, I would be happy to share what little I know.

Good Questions/discussion points might include the following:

Why otters?

Why is giggering allowed on Red ribbon trout streams?

The Dry Fork River deterioration and pollution issue.
The loss of the hellbender, fewer crawfish, fewer frogs, loss of hellgramite, etc.
Much fewer turkey.
Better Quality Deer Management (good job conservation)

I have always been an avid supporter of Missouri Department of Conservation. I also really wish that I wasn't your neighbor.

Sincerely yours,

John P. Sturm
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St. James, MO 65559
1-573-265-0953
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Handwritten comment: Please maintain Archery Only deer status and work to improve handicap hunting access deeper into Conservation Area.

Handwritten comment: Typo under Area Background of Appendices Maramec is the correct spelling in reference to the James Foundation park.

Handwritten comment: Please maintain archery only deer hunting, no firearms deer hunting.

Handwritten comment: Maintain Archery only deer regulations. Hopes we are monitoring deer herd for CWD and other health concerns. Would like to see bottom fields that were planted to trees in the past managed for small game.