Sunset Park Access

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2015 – 2024

Lisa G. Allen
Forestry Division Chief

4-5-15
Date

Sunset Park Access Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Brice Kelso, Resource Forester

Susan Swem, Conservation Agent

Andy Rhodes, Outreach and Education Outdoor Skills Specialist

Adam Boman, Fisheries Management Biologist

Landry Jones, Private Land Conservationist

Kyle Hedges, Wildlife Management Biologist

Rhonda Rimer, Natural History Biologist

SOUTHWEST REGION

SW RCT Chair — *Signature* — 3/30/15 *Date*

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forestry Unit Chief — John Tuttle *Signature* — 5/4/15 *Date*

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Sunset Park Access, # 6908
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1971
- **Acreage:** 21.1 acres
- **County:** Polk
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry Division, Southwest Region
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry Division, Southwest Region
- **Statement of Purpose:**
  - **A. Strategic Direction**
    Sunset Park Access was developed and managed as a Pomme de Terre River access for launching canoes and small boats, and bank fishing.
  - **B. Desired Future Condition**
    Sunset Park Access will be managed to provide boat and fishing access to the Pomme de Terre River, provide healthy riparian corridors and stream bank vegetation, and provide high quality aquatic habitat. The parking lot and roadway should be maintained to adequately handle ingress, egress and parking for public use.
  - **C. Federal Aid Statement**
    This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired with Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration funds to restore and manage sport fish, conserve and restore sport fish habitat (or a buffer to protect that habitat) and provide public access for sport fishing.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. <u>Special Considerations</u>

A. Priority Areas: None

B. Natural Areas: None

II. <u>Important Natural Features and Resources</u>

A. Species of Conservation Concern: None observed.

B. Caves: None

C. Springs: None

III. <u>Existing Infrastructure</u>

- 0.5 miles, ungated interior roads
- 1 concrete boat ramp
- 1 parking lot

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

A. **Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None

B. **Federal Interest:** Uses of land acquired with federal funds may not interfere with the purpose for which it was acquired. Closures to sport fishing must be based on the recommendations of the state fish and wildlife agency for fish and wildlife management purposes. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

C. **Easements:** Perpetual Transmission Line Easement with the Empire District Electric Company, Perpetual Roadway Easement with Polk County

D. **Cultural Resources Findings:** None

E. **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.

F. **Endangered Species:** None observed.

G. **Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

This access provides the opportunity to experience quality fishing and/or canoeing on the Pomme de Terre River.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the area to agency standards.

Strategy 1: Provide maintenance level 1 from May 1 to Sept. 15 and maintenance level 2 the rest of the year. (Forestry Division)

Management Objective 2: Manage invasive species.

Strategy 1: Monitor and manage exotic and/or invasive species using chemical, mechanical and biological methods. (Forestry Division)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

Excessive user pressure can deteriorate riparian corridors and stream bank vegetation.

Management Objective 1: Maintain or improve the water quality of runoff from the area.

Strategy 1: Encourage and maintain healthy riparian corridors and stream bank vegetation throughout the area.(Fisheries and Forestry)

Strategy 2: Address future accelerated stream bank erosion along the river frontage. (Fisheries and Forestry)

Strategy 3: Follow the Department's state forest management guidelines (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2005) and the Department's watershed and stream management guidelines (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Fisheries and Forestry)

Strategy 4: Roadway will be managed according to appropriate best management practices to minimize runoff and sedimentation into stream resources. (Forestry Division)

Management Objective 2: Manage the spread of exotic and/or invasive aquatic life.

Strategy 1: Educate users, through signage, about the hazards and prevention of spreading aquatic invasive species. (Fisheries and Outreach and Education)

VII. <u>Public Use Management Considerations</u>

Management Objective 1: Ensure proper use of the area by all users.

Strategy 1: Periodically patrol the access area to ensure compliance with area regulations. (Protection Division)

Management Objective 2: Invite anglers and boaters to use the access.

Strategy 1: Maintain infrastructure and facilities at the access. (Fisheries and Forestry)

Strategy 2: Monitor boat ramp for scour development and make any needed repairs. (Forestry Division)

Strategy 3: Clean flood debris from parking lot and boat ramp as soon as practical, but within one month of the water receding. (Forestry Division)

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Area Background:
Sunset Park Access was both purchased from and donated by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Fisher and family in 1971. Mr. Fred Fisher was an avid fisherman and outdoorsman who had always wanted to provide an area for people to fish and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. The covenant that accompanied the donation of the property included the agreement that the land would not be sold or leased in the future. Shortly after being acquired, the area was developed using Sport Fish Restoration funds to provide boating access and fishing opportunities on the Pomme de Terre River. The access is located on the Pomme de Terre River, 2 miles south of Bolivar on Highway 13, 3.5 miles east on Route Y, and 1.5 miles north on County Road 480 (Figure 1).

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Bottomland/Riparian Forest	21.10		100
Total	**21.10**		**100**
Stream Frontage (first order and above)		0.25	

Public Input Summary:
The draft Sunset Park Access Management Plan was available for a public comment period September 1–30, 2014. The Missouri Department of Conservation received 5 comments from 4 respondents (Appendix A). The Sunset Park Access Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

<u>Department responses to themes and issues identified through Sunset Park Access public comment period</u>

Suggests adding flood-tolerant picnic tables/benches and a restroom.
A pit toilet was decided to be unnecessary due to low overall use to this area. A privy requires a large amount of maintenance and upkeep, which was determined not feasible for the amount of use expected. The addition of flood-tolerant picnic tables/benches would not be wise given the large amount of maintenance and upkeep associated with this type of infrastructure.

Suggests addressing vegetation management without herbicides under the power line easement.
Vegetation management along power line easements is many times the responsibility of the power company which operates the lines and other equipment found in these right-of-ways. The

area manager will do his/her best to be aware of the practices used to maintain the right-of-way or easement at Sunset Park Access and to ensure that alternative methods of vegetation management are considered and implemented by the power company. This will be addressed through each of the objectives in both the terrestrial and aquatic resource management considerations.

Suggests more frequent mowing.
The area is currently mowed on a reasonable time schedule which allows personnel to also maintain the many other conservation areas in the district. Any periods of higher vegetation are a result of unexpected interruptions in the schedule of maintenance personnel.

Suggests allowing water baptisms at the area.
Users need to contact the area manager in the Bolivar Office to request a special use permit and approval for a specific activity or event. The area manager must be notified at least 30 days prior to the requested activity or event.

Suggests clarifying plan to state that the land was both donated and sold to the Department.
This information can now be found in the "Area Background" section.

Recommends including covenants that were agreed upon in the land donation/sale for this property in the area management plan.
This information can now be found in the "Area Background" section.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri watershed protection practice manual: 2014 management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri. http://mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2010/07/mdc_mo_watershed.pdf

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for land and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation.* http://forestkeepers.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Watershed-and-Stream-Management-Guidelines-for-MDC-Land1.pdf

Maps:
Figure 1: Sunset Park Access Area Map
Figure 2: Sunset Park Access Vicinity Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Sunset Park Access Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Sunset Park Access Area Map

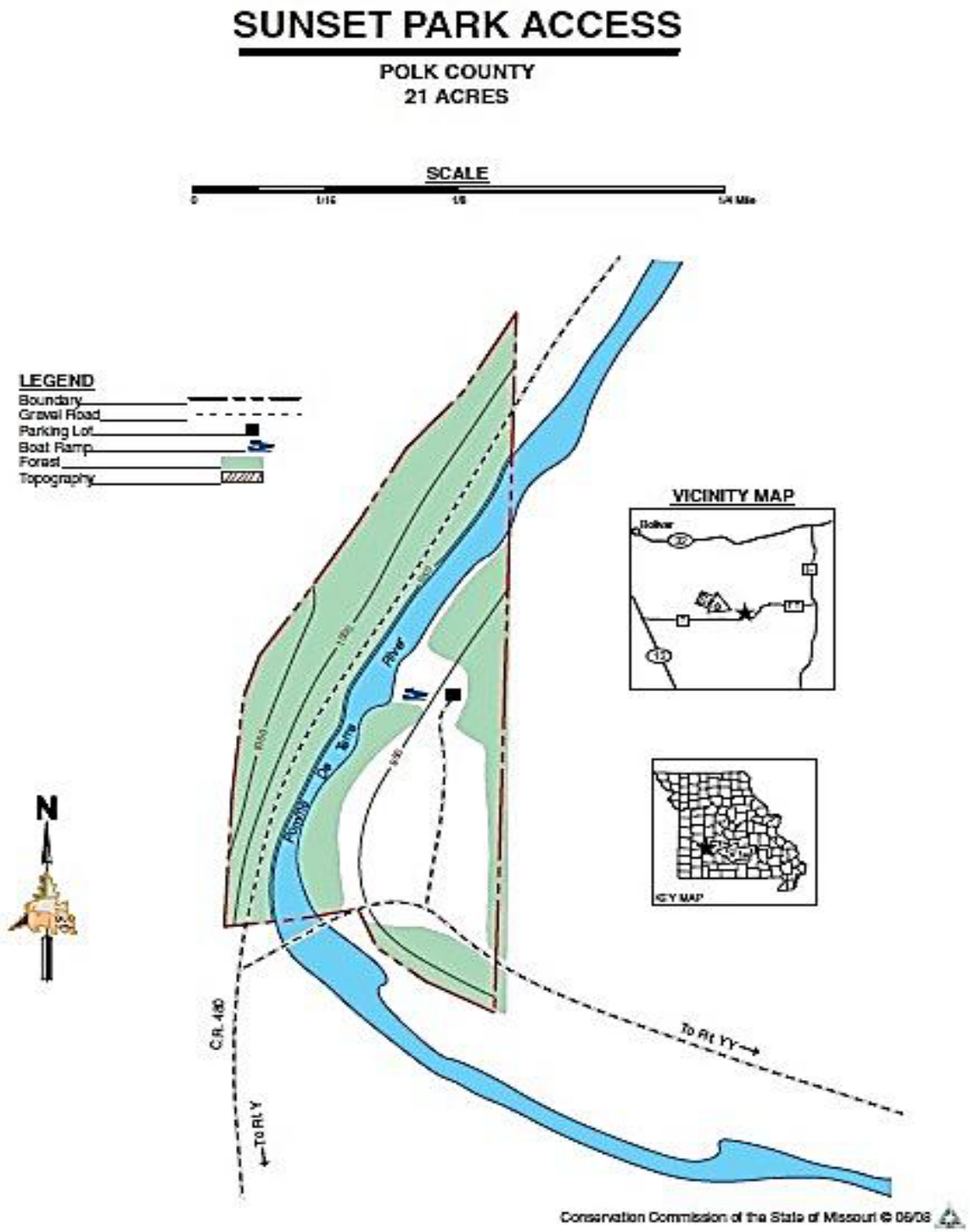
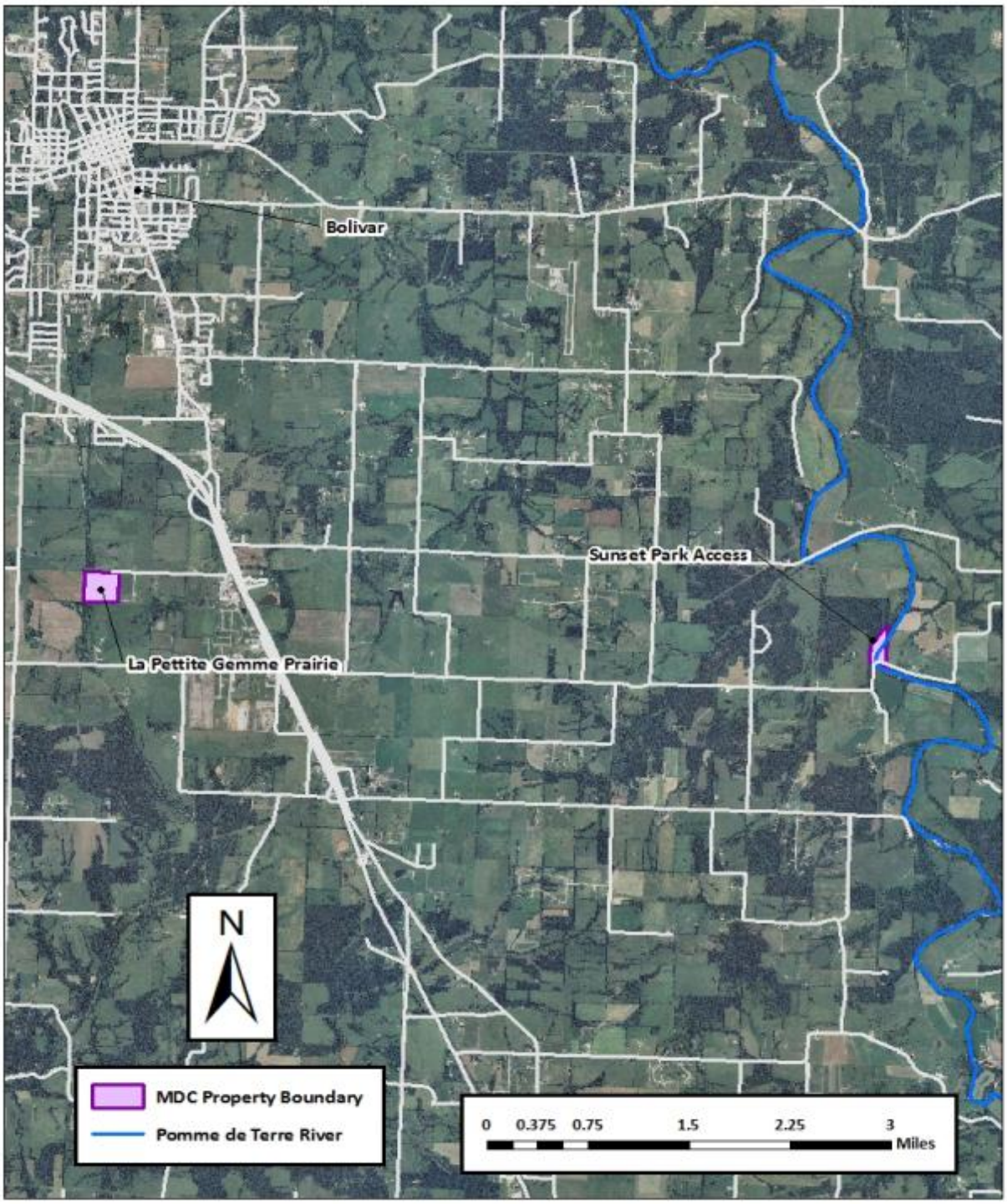


Figure 2: Sunset Park Access Vicinity Map



Appendix A: Draft Sunset Park Access Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2014)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan. My wife and I made the arrangements for the donation/sale of the land for this park on behalf of her parents Mr. and Mrs. Fred Fisher. The sale/donation document for this land contained three covenants. 1. The land would be used for a park to be named Sunset River Access 2. A sign would commemorate the contribution of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Fisher and family. 3. The land would never be sold or rented. These items have always been observed but should be identified in the park management plan. The Empire Power Line easement has always been a problem due to the need for spraying and the resulting dead vegetation. Would like to see a vegetation plan that would provide for low growth river line plants or perhaps some more mowing under the easement right of way. This part of the management plan for the park needs improvement, but an easy solution isn't evident. Vandalism as been a periodic problem in the park. In the early days there were picnic tables available for day users of the park. Would still like to see some tables and benches for the day users. Would it possible to consider floodplain type outdoor furnishings to accommodate day users in the park. A heavy concrete material of construction would inhibit vandals as well as survive the low level of river flooding that occasionally occurs in a portion of the park. Thank you for your consideration.
I am the person that originally donated the land for the Sunset Park Access area. Your Management Plan states that Sunset Park Access was purchased and developed in 1971. Most of this 21.1 acres was donated to the Missouri Conservation Commission in memory of my father Mr. Fred Fisher. He was an avid fisherman and outdoorsman. He passed away in 1969 and had always wanted to provide an area for people to fish and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. The MCD purchased the small acreage where the road is now located because that tract was highly productive farm land and we didn't want to donate it at that time. The compromise was to sell the arable tract and donate the remainder. Acreage wise the remainder was much larger than the tract purchased.

There were three conditions to the donation/sale of the land: 1. The name would be Sunset Park-named for the small village of Sunset that was settled there in 1864. 2. A sign would be maintained there with the name and information that it was donated by Mr. & Mrs. Fred Fisher and family. 3. It could never be rented or sold. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this management plan. The continued viability of this park is very important to me and my family.
Sunset Park Access was not purchased, but was donated by The Fisher Family in memory of Fred and Bertha Fisher. My father Fred Fisher was an avid hunter and fisherman and did not want the river access to be sold to anyone who would restrict its use of allowing fishing etc. So, my brothers, sisters and I donated the access to MDC to honor his wishes. Thank you for your plans for Sunset Park Access!
Phone conversation with Brice Kelso (Area Manager), 9/8/2014 – 1) Area needs to be mowed more often because several churches use area for water baptisms and many times the weeds are too high and it doesn't look good. 2) The area needs restrooms and potentially a picnic table or two - I understand that this may not be possible due to vandalism, but it would be nice.
Phone conversation with Brice Kelso (Area Manager), 9/25/2014 – A citizen called the Bolivar office to clarify what he might need to comment on. I explained to him that we were taking public comments on the Sunset Park Access Area Plan. He asked what the plan entailed and I explained how we had planned on managing the access, vegetation, powerline easement, and illicit activities and he said that it sounded fine. We got into a conversation about how he used the area and said that he and others used the area for water baptisms and said he would like for us to continue allowing it.