

Austin Community Lake

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2017-2026



Lisa D. Allen

Forestry Division Chief

8-08-16

Date

Austin Community Lake Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Travis Mills, Resource Forester

Mary Scott, Fisheries Management Biologist

Susan Farrington, Natural History Biologist

Justin Gailey, Wildlife Management Biologist

Larry Lindeman, Outdoor Skills Specialist

Jeff Crites, Conservation Agent

Chris Ely, Conservation Agent

Lesly Holt, Private Land Conservationist

Stephanie McKinney, Education Consultant

OZARK REGION

RCT Chair


Signature


Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forestry Management Chief


Signature


Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Austin Community Lake, # 5510
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1955
- **Acreage:** 57 acres
- **County:** Texas
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for a quality public lake fishery while providing other compatible recreational opportunities. Manage surrounding forest to protect area watershed.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Austin Community Lake (CL) is a healthy public fishery surrounded by a healthy forested watershed.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

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

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

Existing Infrastructure

- One parking lot, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible
- One concrete boat ramp
- Two privies, ADA accessible
- One fishing dock, ADA accessible
- One pavilion, ADA accessible
- Six picnic tables, ADA accessible
- Two sitting benches
- Austin fishing lake (22 acres)

III. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** None
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

IV. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

The lake is surrounded by pine and mixed hardwood forests. A residential area is present along the south boundary line.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain healthy forests to protect watershed.
- 2) Maintain muskrat and beaver populations at acceptable levels.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy forests.

Strategy 1: Monitor, at least annually, for priority invasive exotic species and control as needed. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Inspect, at least annually, for any forest insect or disease issues and develop strategies to control any issues that might arise. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Maintain muskrat and beaver populations at acceptable levels.

Strategy 1: Continue to utilize trappers to keep aquatic mammal populations at levels that minimize damage to the shoreline, dam and lakeside vegetation. (Forestry)

V. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Enhance fishing opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Enhance fishing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Install artificial fish habitat in the lake every three years.
(Fisheries and Forestry)

Strategy 2: Keep pond dam free of woody vegetation to minimize water level loss. (Forestry and Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Continue to sample fish populations every three years.
(Fisheries)

Strategy 4: Consider increasing annual channel catfish stocking levels to offset removal by fishermen. (Fisheries)

VI. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide for fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities.
- 2) Build and enhance relationships with neighboring landowners.

Management Objective 1: Provide for fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain/enhance suitable access to facilitate ease of bank-fishing opportunities. (Forestry and Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Explore the feasibility of building a hiking trail along the entire perimeter of the lake. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Install and maintain at least two wood duck boxes at the upper end of lake. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Build and enhance relationships with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Develop or maintain open dialogue with all adjacent landowners concerning area management and concerns. (all Divisions)

Strategy 2: Promote watershed protection practices with adjoining landowners. (all Divisions)

VII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Missouri Department of Conservation guidelines. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain boundary lines on a five year schedule. (Forestry)

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Aquatic Resource Management Considerations										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 1			X			X			X	
Strategy 3			X			X			X	
Administrative Considerations										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 2		X					X			

APPENDICES

Area Background:

This 57-acre area is primarily forested. Amenities include a concrete boat ramp, picnic areas, pavilion, fishing dock and a 22-acre fishing lake.

To access this area, go 4 miles west of Cabool on Highway 60, 0.75 miles north on Route MM and 0.5 miles east on Greenwood Road.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Forests and Woodland	29	51
Lake	22	39
Other (mowed area)	6	10
Total	57	100

Public Input Summary:

The draft Austin Community Lake Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period January 1–31, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from three respondents (Appendix A). The Austin Community Lake Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the Austin Community Lake Area public comment period

Suggests adding a hiking trail around the lake (possibly ADA accessible) with places for bank fishing.

The idea of looking into the feasibility of a hiking trail is a component of this area plan. We will continue with that intent and see what develops with our assessment. We currently provide ADA accessible parking, privies, fishing dock, and pavilion with picnic tables.

Suggests adding trash barrels to combat littering.

Littering is a constant issue with all our areas. We have learned over the years that trash barrels do not automatically relieve an area of littering. In fact, we have as much, if not

more, trash where we have trash barrels. With limited staff time, we have found it more efficient to encourage users to pack out what they pack in.

Concerned with loitering on area. Suggests greater surveillance.

We are very interested in taking care of any illegal activity that is taking place at Austin Lake CA. If you see or hear of inappropriate or illegal activity at any of our areas, we encourage you to contact the local conservation agent. Agent contact information can be found at mdc.mo.gov. If the incident deals with wildlife laws you may also call Operation Game Thief (1-800-392-1111).

Suggests a better entrance sign. Lake is difficult to find.

Thank you for the comment. We were not aware this was an issue. We will explore replacing the entrance sign with something larger.

Concern about fence along border needing repair.

We maintain boundary lines on a five-year rotation. The area manager and forestry regional supervisor are planning on looking at the boundary in question and will resolve any existing issues.

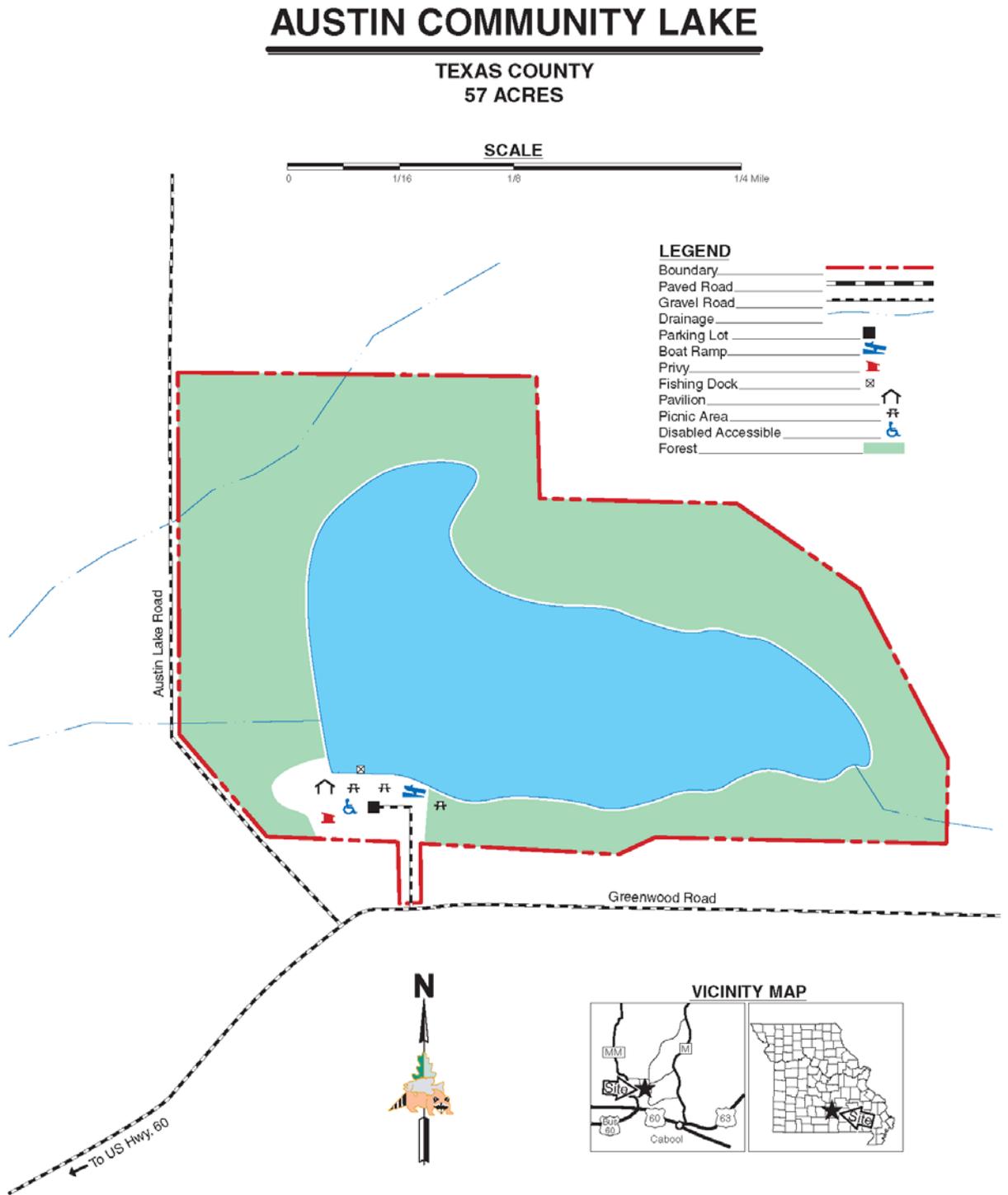
Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Austin Community Lake Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map



Appendix A: Austin Community Lake Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (January 1-31, 2016):

(Hardcopy comment received on 1/4/2016)The lake needs trash barrels. Littering and "loitering" is bad. More surveylance is needed.

(Hardcopy comment received on 1/11/2016): Austin Lake is a very well kept recreational area - many people from all of this area use it for picnics, fishing, family reunions and just a place to get away from the pressures of everyday life and relax -- MDC does a very good job of keeping it cleaned up and mowed! I wish there was a better sign showing the entrance. We live just north of the lake on Austin Lake Road. Our property joins the MDC property on the northside. During the spring & summer months several people stop and ask "Where is the lake"? Another thing - the fence between us is in bad shape, I have called several times over the years - 30 - asking for help. When I had cattle and they got out MDC was quick to tell me to get them off the property. I kept it mended as best I could but at times trees or limbs from both sides would fall across it.

Hiking/walking trail around perimeter of lake would be fantastic. With a little imagination and planning, the trail could be one full mile around the lake. Possibly even a footbridge or two, especially on the east side of lake. A concrete sidewalk could also be made around the lake to allow for those with physical disabilities to also enjoy the full area. Concrete pads can be placed for bank fishing.