DRAFT
McGee Family
Conservation Area
Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan
FY 2018-2032

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** McGee Family Conservation Area, #201120
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2011
- **Acreage:** 1033 acres
- **County:** Clinton
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
  A. **Strategic Direction**
     Manage for native grassland that supports a wide range of game and non-game wildlife species, with emphasis on small game, grassland birds, and compatible recreational opportunities.
  B. **Desired Future Condition**
     The desired future condition for McGee Family Conservation Area (CA) is a restored, diverse native grassland and woodland complex providing outdoor recreation.
  C. **Federal Aid Statement**
     N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. **Special Considerations**
   A. **Priority Areas:** Little Platte River Fisheries Priority Watershed, Castille Creek Fisheries Priority Watershed, Scearces Prairie Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area.
   B. **Natural Areas:** None

II. **Important Natural Features and Resources**
   A. **Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the natural history biologist.
   B. **Caves:** None
   C. **Springs:** None

III. **Existing Infrastructure**
   - Four gravel parking lots (Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] accessible)
   - One primitive camping site
   - Storage building
   - Three pond dams
   - Three silos
• One well and windmill
• Two fishing ponds (11.7 acres total)

IV. **Area Restrictions or Limitations**

A. **Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:**

- The Trustee’s Deed lists the following covenant: “The Trustees shall distribute the farm property identified in Part Two to the STATE OF MISSOURI for use as a fish, forest, and wildlife resource for the people of the State of Missouri. This property shall be managed by the Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri or its successor, for the greatest good of all foregoing, provided however, that if in the future it becomes clearly apparent to the Conservation Commission that it is not feasible to maintain the area for the foregoing, the Conservation Commission shall have the prerogative of disposing of the property with the proceeds from the disposition to be used by the Conservation Commission to purchase and develop the new wildlife, forest, and fish area in the state. These lands, or lands substituted therefore, shall be known as the ‘McGee Family Conservation Area.’”

- Missouri Power and Light owns an inholding in the southwest corner of T55N, R31W, Sec. 30.

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:** Known public easements (Figure 3)

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<th>Lessor</th>
<th>Type of Easement</th>
<th>Location/Tract</th>
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a. Two other easements include a gas line and powerline.

D. **Cultural Resources:** No known cultural resources.

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

G. **Boundary Issues:** None
MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

The McGee Family CA was historically a cattle operation that was sparsely vegetated with an undesirable cool-season grass mix. Since removal of the cattle in 2014, undesirable woody vegetation has begun to sprout in the open fields. Approximately 8 percent area is forest and woodland habitats. The majority of the forested habitats are riparian communities, consisting of early successional species (mainly hackberry and honey locust). Very little potential exists to manage for or restore oak-hickory forest/woodland habitats. Riparian areas are managed to maximize benefits to soil, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Challenges and Opportunities:
1) The open landscape provides opportunity to convert the cool-season grass fields to native grassland.
2) Honey locust is the dominant tree species across the area. New saplings quickly sprout in undisturbed areas.
3) Maintain riparian habitats and expand where practical.

Management Objective 1: Enhance open land management to provide a diverse grassland habitat.

Strategy 1: Utilize agricultural crops and herbicide applications to remove cool-season grasses from fields historically used as cattle pasture to create favorable conditions for planting native grasses and forbs. Phase out large agricultural crop fields as fields are converted to native species, while retaining some open ground for disturbance, wildlife food, and cover. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Renovate fields of fescue and smooth brome with native grasses/forbs to restore habitat for grassland birds, species of conservation concern, and small game. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Reduce undesirable woody vegetation and invasive species using treatments appropriate for management and control of selected species, as needed. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Manage old fields, grassland, and woodland habitats using a combination of management techniques, including, but not limited to, prescribed burning, mechanical and chemical treatment to woody vegetation, disking, mowing, and over-seeding. (Wildlife)

Strategy 5: Consider using grazing to manage grasslands when a sustainable amount of native grassland has been established. (Wildlife)
Management Objective 2: Maintain riparian habitats and expand where practical.

Strategy 1: Maintain or establish a minimum of 100-foot riparian buffers along waterways. (Fisheries, Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Monitor for invasive vegetation and replace with native plantings as necessary. (Forestry, Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

1) Provide the public with quality sport fish populations on area ponds.
2) Manage for native aquatic vegetation on area fisheries.
3) Increase aquatic habitat in area fisheries.
4) Manage riparian corridors.

Management Objective 1: Manage for quality angling opportunities on area ponds.

Strategy 1: Perform fish population surveys to monitor for quality sport fish populations, e.g., largemouth bass proportional stock density (12) values of 40-70, and bluegill proportional stock density (6) values of 20-40. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Conduct supplemental stocking of fish (channel catfish and hybrid bluegill) when needed to maintain quality angling opportunities. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Implement appropriate harvest restrictions in order to maintain quality fish populations. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Manage for native aquatic vegetation on area.

Strategy 1: Maintain and plant native aquatic vegetation in all area ponds to enhance sport fish recruitment and add fish holding structure in strategic locations in ponds. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Use aquatic herbicide to treat nuisance species when necessary. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 3: Improve habitat in area ponds.

Strategy 1: Install brush piles to enhance sport fish recruitment and add fish holding structure in strategic locations in ponds as natural fish structure deteriorates. (Fisheries)
VII. **Public Use Management Considerations**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**
1) Enhance hunting, fishing, trapping, and other recreational opportunities.
2) Build relationships with neighboring landowners.

**Management Objective 1:** Provide public hunting, fishing, trapping, and other recreational opportunities.
- **Strategy 1:** Implement annual management activities targeting improvement of terrestrial and aquatic habitat to improve fish and wildlife populations. (Fisheries, Wildlife)
- **Strategy 2:** Provide access points and mowed service roads for all users. (Wildlife)
- **Strategy 3:** Issue special use permits to allow trapping on area. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 2:** Promote a positive working relationship with neighboring landowners.
- **Strategy 1:** Respond to neighbors regarding shared fencing, boundary issues or trespass problems. (Wildlife)
- **Strategy 2:** Respond to neighboring landowners with interest in habitat management improvements on their private property. (Wildlife, Private Land Services)

VIII. **Administrative Considerations**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**
1) Three silos remain on the property. These structures give the property a historical perspective of land use prior to Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) ownership; however, these structures should be considered for removal to avoid potential safety issues.
2) The northeast corner of the area is currently landlocked by private property and the Little Platte River.
3) Consider land acquisition, when available.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain area infrastructure at level established by policy.
- **Strategy 1:** Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines. (Wildlife, Design and Development)
- **Strategy 2:** Develop a plan to safely remove the tree silos. (Wildlife, Design and Development)
Lands Proposed for Acquisition:
When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities may be considered.
## MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

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APPENDICES

Area Background:
The 1033-acre McGee Family Conservation Area is south of Plattsburg and can be accessed off Route C or County Road 240. The area opened for public use, Sept. 15, 2011, providing additional hunting, fishing and hiking opportunities in northwest Missouri.

Throughout most of the 1900s, this area was owned and operated as a cattle feeding business by the Newby family of Plattsburg. Their cattle operation covered 12,000 acres and fed as many as 9,000 Herford cattle around 1960. Later, the business downsized and only grazed cattle for other farmers. The area's rolling hills were primarily in pasture for this reason.

The Newbys eventually sold the farm to another owner and then a few years later was purchased by Kansas City businessman Thomas F. McGee, Jr. Mr. McGee, who died in 2010, donated his farm in Clinton County to the Missouri Department of Conservation so others could enjoy the area. A formal dedication of the area was held September 2011 with McGee family members, conservation leaders, and community members. The ceremony was held in appreciation for the generous gift made by Thomas F. McGee, Jr. and to all Missourians who enjoy the outdoors.

The Cecil Tract was purchased in 2016 and contains 35 acres of unplowed prairie, the only prairie located in Clinton County.

Current Land and Water Types:

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<th>Land/Water Type</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Miles</th>
<th>% of Area</th>
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<td>Grassland (non-prairie)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Old Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (roads and parking lots)</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>100</td>
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References:

Maps:
Figure 1: Area Map
Figure 2: Aerial Map
Figure 3: Aerial Map (Cecil Tract)
Figure 4: Easement Map
Figure 5: Land Cover Map
Figure 6: Land Cover Map (Cecil Tract)
Figure 7: Ecological Site Description Map
Figure 8: Ecological Site Description Map (Cecil Tract)
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