

April-June 2014 Area Plan Public Comment Summary



Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
August 2014



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Public Input Summary	4
Demographic Summary of Respondents	5
Themes and Issues Identified	7
Next Steps	8
Appendix A. Hi Ridge Grasslands Focus Area Plan Public Comments	9
Appendix B. Myron & Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	9
Appendix C. River 'Round Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	11
Appendix D. Toronto Springs Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	12
Appendix E. General Watkins Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	12
Appendix F. Upper Osage District Prairie Conservation Areas Plan Public Comments	12
Appendix G. J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & Julian Steyermark Woods Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	12
Appendix H. Bonanza Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	13
Appendix I. Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Plan Public Comments	13
Appendix J. Springfield Conservation Nature Center Plan Public Comments	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- For the period of April – June 2014, 13 area plans (covering 27 Conservation Areas, two Accesses and one Nature Center) 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 (April – June 2014), we received 35 comments on 10 area plans.
- Themes and issues identified for these plans included support for removing invasive species, native habitat restoration and enhanced trail systems; suggestions for additional equestrian trails and improved boat access; concern about declined fishing rates, blocked boat ramps, overpopulation of deer; and more.
- 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).
- The Missouri Department of Conservation also conducted a public involvement idea gathering stage for Peck Ranch Conservation Area in May 2014. Results from that effort can be found in the report, “Peck Ranch Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Public Input Summary” found online at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

For the period of April – June 2014, 13 area plans (covering 27 Conservation Areas, two Accesses and one Nature Center) 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 35 comments from 10 area plans (see Table 1). The Missouri Department of Conservation also conducted a public involvement idea gathering stage for Peck Ranch Conservation Area in May 2014. Results from that effort can be found in the report, “Peck Ranch Idea Gathering Stage Public Input Summary” found online at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

Table 1. Number of comments received by plan, April - June 2014

Comment Month	Area Plan	MDC Region	Comments Received
April 2014	Fiery Fork CA	Central	0
April 2014	Hi Ridge Grasslands Focus Area¹	Kansas City	2
April 2014	Boston Ferry CA	Southwest	0
April 2014	Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family CA	St. Louis	6
April 2014	River ‘Round CA	St. Louis	4
May 2014	Bourbeuse River Accesses ²	Central	0
May 2014	Toronto Springs CA	Central	2
May 2014	General Watkins CA	Southeast	1
June 2014	Upper Osage District Prairie CAs³	Kansas City	1
June 2014	J. Thad Ray Memorial WA & Julian Steyermark Woods CA	Northeast	2
June 2014	Bonanza CA	Northwest	1
June 2014	Ronald and Maude Hartell CA	Northwest	4
June 2014	Springfield Conservation Nature Center	Southwest	12
April-June TOTAL			35

¹Plan includes Bruns Tract, Bryson’s Hope CA, Drovers Prairie CA, Friendly Prairie CA, Grandfather Prairie CA, Hartwell CA, Hi Lonesome Prairie CA, Ionia Ridge CA, Mora CA, Paint Brush Prairie CA and WR Kearn Memorial CA.

²Plan includes Mint Spring Access and Tea Access.

³Plan includes Taberville Prairie CA, Wah’Kon-Tah Prairie CA, Monegaw Prairie CA, Gay Feather Prairie CA, Bristow CA, Osage Prairie CA and Little Osage Prairie CA.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

We received 35 comments from 31 respondents (Table 2). Several respondents submitted multiple comments; so the total number of comments is greater than the total number of respondents.

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

Organization Type	Count
Individual citizens	30
Nonprofit organization (Greater Ozarks Audubon Society)	1
TOTAL	31

How they responded:

Table 3. Total number of each response received

Response Type	Count	Percent
Web comment form	31	88.6%
Hard copy comment form	2	5.7%
Personal email	2	5.7%
TOTAL	35	100%

Where respondents are from:

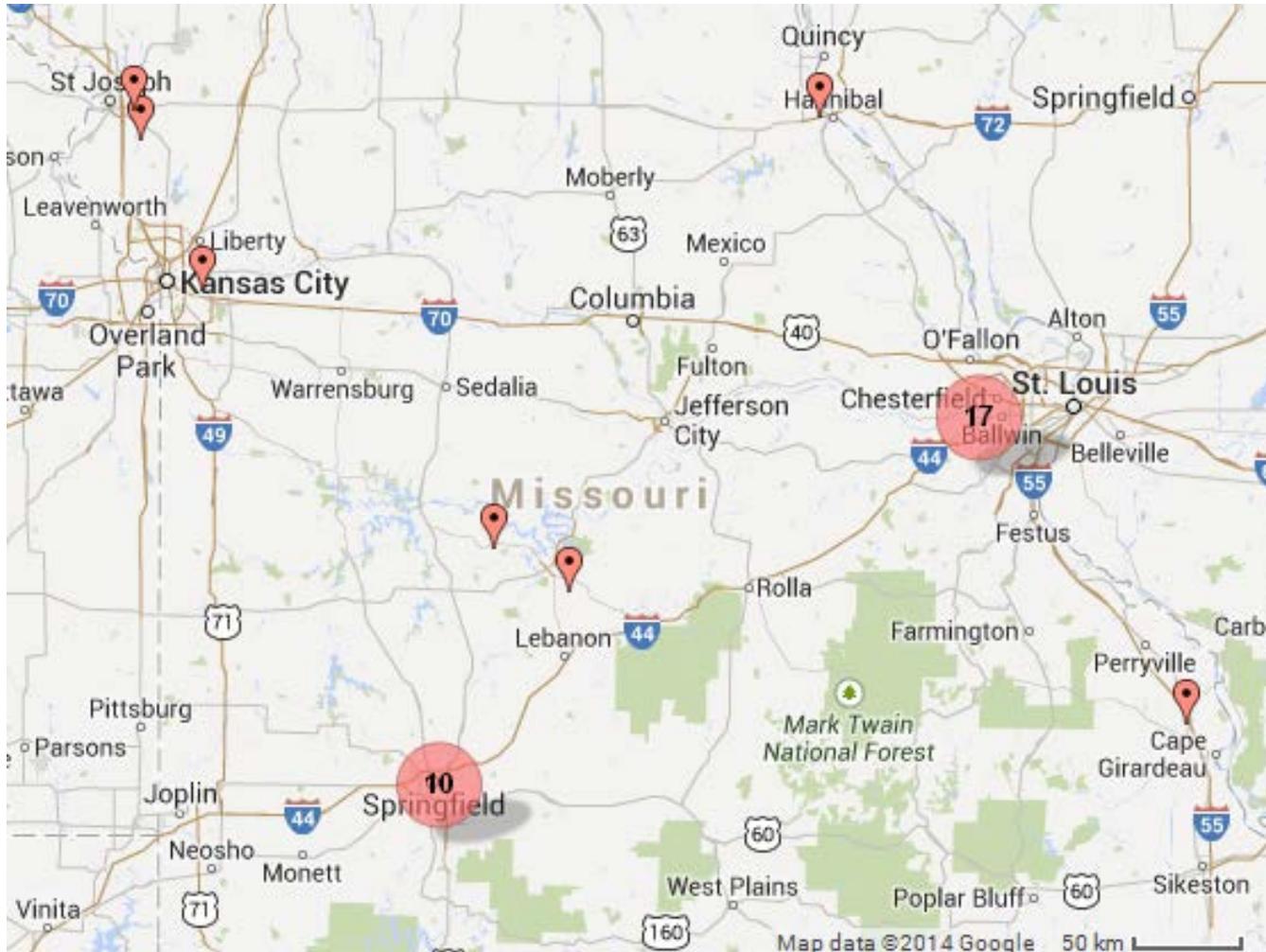
Table 4. Total number of respondents by location

State	Count	Percent
Missouri*	34	100%

*One respondent did not provide a postal address and is not included in the count.

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; so the total number of pinpoints is fewer than the number of comments received.



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 April-June 2014. 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

- Suggests woody cover (plum thickets) along waterways to improve quail habitat.
- Supports removal of invasive species.
- If harvesting trees, suggests donating branches to neighbors for firewood.
- Supports prairie and native habitat restoration.
- Concern about proliferation of cedars and honeysuckle.

Aquatic Resource Management

- Supports improving fishing opportunities.
- Concern about removing catch and release restrictions.
- Concern that fishing catch rates have declined due to increased fishing pressure.
- Concern about violations of fishing regulations.

Public Use Management

Trails

- Supports enhancing trail systems.
- Suggests development of equestrian trails.
- Suggests allowing bicycles on trails.
- Likes improvements made to an eroding trail along creek.
- Supports widening trails.
- Suggests adding railing to paved trails where there is a steep drop-off or water below.
- Interested in volunteering at this area (trail maintenance).

Amenities

- Appreciates the services provided by the nature center.
- Concern with visitors parking at the top of boat ramp (blocking use).
- Concern with float companies blocking boat ramp access and causing long wait times for other users.
- Suggests a separate canoe launch.
- Suggests improved boat access.

Hunting

- Concern with allowing hunting on area.
- Opposes proposal to allow archery hunting at area.
- Concern that white-tailed deer are overpopulated at the nature center. Supports allowing deer hunting.

Other

- Concern about allowing dogs on area.
- Supports keeping dogs and bikes off trails. Concern about safety and erosion from bicycles on trails.
- Concern that early morning runners disturb birders. Concern that runners are not abiding by the posted signs.
- Supports keeping existing times for runners. Most runners are not a disturbance to others.

Administrative Considerations

- Suggests sharing this plan with all neighboring landowners.
- Appreciation for acquiring this property and support for management as described in the area plan. Supports acquiring additional land.
- Concerned about boundary lines of new portion of 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. Hi Ridge Grasslands Focus Area Plan Public Comments

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

As a long time quail hunter I am really glad to hear you are working on improving our natural grasslands. Last year I spent a lot of time quail hunting some of the western prairie chicken focus area's and found quail on every one of them.(please do not share this information.ha ha) I have found when hunting these areas that to find quail there has to be some woody cover along the waterways such as plum thickets or such and hope these will be included in your plans.

Thanks

Excellent. Such goals as 're-establish tallgrass prairie' and other native/natural associations as with the Greater Prairie Chicken are desirable and commendable.

I would suggest that this management plan be intentionally directed to all owners of contiguous properties. Their comments and commitment to support these areas in view of the spraying and other normal ag practices will be crucial to the success of the plan.

So I'm telling you something you already know. Keep up the laudable intents and being a good neighbor.

Thanks

Appendix B. Myron & Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Glassberg CA is a beautiful addition to the conserved lands of the Le Barque Creek watershed. Just yesterday 18 participants with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society Botany group hiked the trails and delighted in the first signs of spring. I was unable to join this outing, and my comments are based on a visit last spring. At that time I saw a Spring Azure butterfly at the top of the hill, and reported it to the president of the local chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, who responded that it was the first butterfly sighting reported in our area.

From what I saw last spring, MDC is doing an excellent job managing this land and its unique assets. I am happy to see there will be a loop trail, and glad to see that management plans include removal of invasive honeysuckle and grasses.

My only other comment would be caution regarding off-leash dogs, that is, prominent signage of leash regulations, if not a complete dog ban for the safety of birds and wildlife.

Glassberg is wonderful piece of land. Thank you for acquiring it, and the superb management

you apply to this and all other Conservation Areas.

Kirkwood, Mo

I've been working on a trail to access a beautiful outcropping to the right of the end of trail A . I've rebuild several of Myrons old rock walls that has been washed out also . I work for a Parks Dept . and love to work at this Conservation area . I would like to be included on the working progress of this area . Please and thank you .

I had the opportunity to hike the Glassberg area yesterday with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. We were accompanied by the MDC area manager. This area and the other close by components of the LeBarque creek watershed are real gems. I agree with your plans to maintain and improve this area. However, what I found missing is any plan to inhibit the further growth of winter creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) in the area. There appeared to be minimal growth of bush honeysuckle compared to other areas, and I generally am worried about *Euonymus* in the area. There is already some problem with it in the LaBarque Creek Conservation area on Dr. Sargent Lane nearby.

Thanks for your work.

DEFINITELY SEEK TO PURCHASE SURROUNDING LAND. ADD TO AND ENHANCE TRAIL SYSTEM. CREATE TRAILS THAT WILL ALLOW HIKERS TO VISIT THE PONDS FOR POSSIBLE WILDLIFE VIEWING. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, BUILD OR CREATE ACCESS TO THE RIVER. CONSIDER BANNING HUNTING ON THIS AREA. WITH OTHER AREAS VERY CLOSE THIS AREA MIGHT BE A PLACE WHERE HIKERS CAN GO DURING HUNTING SEASON WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH HUNTERS.

Thank you for acquiring the land and maintaining the natural beauty of this area. Your plan to manage the area sounds great! I have removed every honeysuckle plant around my property and have turned half of my land into warm season grasses (less mowing). Eliminate fescue. Improve fishing (I have not been fishing...yet). My son (11) and I totally enjoy LaBarque Creek and the purity of its water. We go down there almost every weekend to catch frogs, crawdads and fish...and swim. It is awesome and we appreciate you protecting it.

If you do harvest trees, which I agree would be very beneficial to the ecosystem, can the branches be available to neighbors for firewood?

Thanks for your concern and commitment to the environment, the wildlife and the neighbors that are directly affected.

I own approximately 27 acres less than 1000 feet from the northwest boundary of this property. During the 20 years that I have enjoyed my property, I am constantly amazed at the diversity of plant life and the fantastic views of the Meramec River.

I have read the plan and am generally in favor of what is proposed. However, I am not in favor of VII Public Use Management Consideration, Objective 1, Strategy 2.

If you allow hunting with fire arms, it cuts out all other public use such as hiking and wildlife observation. There are plenty of hunting opportunities in the area but very few where hikers feel safe from stray bullets.

Please do not allow hunting on this beautiful piece of property.
Thank you

Appendix C. River 'Round Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Under VII. Public Use Management Considerations Challenges and Opportunities, I would request that the Department develop a sandy or gravel area adjacent to the boat ramp an area for paddle boats(Kayaks and canoe) to launch so as not to block or get in the way of motor boats.

I like the plan you have as it is , my concerns are with commercial use of the property. Last year there was a float company tying up the boat ramp and the grass area at the top of the ramp. If there is going to be that kind of use the access needs to be more than the boat ramp so the float company's are not blocking the entire access.

I would like to see a trail developed here for hiking and equine use. I would be very interested in a equine trail, the nearest trails are Sullivan, or Stanton. Thanks for your time.

I use this boat ramp nearly every weekend during nice weather. I have two issues I would like to see progress with. One is the no parking at the top of the ramp, I wish there was a way to I force this issue because nearly every time I am there people park the which makes it difficult to back down the ramp. Second is the use of ramp for commercial gain. Old cove uses the ramp to put in there floaters. Many times thru the day on weekends it can be 20-30 min wait because of this. People buying permits to fish and hunt are helping to pay for these areas and not the people partying on float trips!

Thank you for listening.

Appendix D. Toronto Springs Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (May 1-31, 2014)

The font on page 19 on the legend for the ecological site descriptions is very hard to read. For example, I can't tell what the first word on the first four (alfic?) is nor the first word of the last three - can't even guess on this one

thanks

We have requested written copy of plan from Paul Johnson and for him to meet with us and have had no response. Left email and phone messages. We have concerns about several issues in the plan but was only notified of new plan a few weeks ago and limited time to respond to. Concerns about boundaries with the states purchase of the ballinger place . Would appreciate a call from someone to address our concerns . As a landowner that borders Tronto springs I do not feel that we were given enough notice or attention regarding the new plan as well as several other neighbors I have spoke with. thank you

Appendix E. General Watkins Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (May 1-31, 2014)

Please Please Please provide better access to Lookout Mountain Lake #4. Preferably from Hwy 77 by vehicle. Have tried using the parking lot on Hwy 77 and walking up the trail, but once you get to the top of the hill and follow the signs that say "Lake" you will have to go through thick, dense wooded area. There is no maintained trail through the woods to the lake. This makes it nearly impossible to get a boat in. This is very disappointing...

Appendix F. Upper Osage District Prairie Conservation Areas Plan Public Comments

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

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

Appendix G. J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & Julian Steyermark Woods Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

I use both of these areas extensively. I believe that the public use of both areas should remain

"as is". I don't think you should pursue archery hunting at Steyermark Woods. I use these areas regularly for personal enjoyment and as hiking places for student and cub scout groups to study nature. I like the no hunting in Steyermark for the safety and enjoyment at all times. I also do not want to interrupt another person's hunting experience with my hiking.

As far as managing for public use; I would like to see the trails in both areas maintained for hiking and possible addition of biking. There are not many places in the Hannibal area for trail biking. I have noticed the erosion along the trail in Steyermark over the years making the steep hill along the creek more treacherous, but I like the improvements made last fall on the long eastern slope.

On a factual note, I know there is a spring in J. Thad Ray in the south portion just south of the pull out from 61. It has a very low output, but I have never seen it dry.

Appendix H. Bonanza Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

Appendix I. Ronald and Maude Hartell Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Hartell CA is a special hidden wonder . It is especially wonderful to have a place like this that doesn't get too much pressure. It's a great locale to take beginner fisherman and teach them fly fishing for large bass and bluegill. I would hate to see the population of large fish get desolated once the catch & release restrictions are lifted. Thank you for managing it so wonderfully to date. We have had special church fishing events up there and it went over great. By the way, when no one is watching folks will take fish they shouldn't have. I would put some trail cameras up to keep an eye on folks. I remember when you first opened the rules for happy holler lake and the big bas were gone in a year. Same thing with limp lake. Please consider only allowing catch and keep on half of the lakes and monitor folks to catch violators. Thanks for asking.

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

Needs more horse trail area.

I am 49 years old. My dad was a member of Clinton Co Sportsmans Club.

We had many family reunions here in the old barn.

There was a 2x12 diving board and swim beach on Quarry lake.

I fished here since conservation agency took over.

I am sure fishing pressure increased since and has not been as good as I remember.

Not sure that I really have any comments other than that catching fish has decreased probably from fishing pressure.

Appendix J. Springfield Conservation Nature Center Plan Public Comments

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

I would like to see railings added to the paved trails where there is a steep drop or water below. My children have taken a few scary tumbles in those places when they either fell or were knocked over by a passerby.

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

Plans like this are not my area of expertise. But I want to say I am pleased with what the Nature Center provides the Springfield area currently. And hope it continues in a similar fashion. Keep up the good work.

I would appreciate a trail/path connecting to the Galloway Creek trail that would allow bicycles. A connection between the neighborhoods to the west of the Nature Center to the Galloway trail more directly would make for a much safer connection across James River Freeway & to the rest of Springfield. A fairly direct path from Nature Center driveway entrance to the Galloway Trail that parallels James River Freeway would be ideal and wouldn't disturb the nature hikers on the other trails.

I support plan to widen trails, also allowing a whitetail season. I live near the nature center and have whitetail in the yard daily, they need to be thinned out, most are in breeds and create small deer and some never get bigger than a dog or cat. Thank you

I am disappointed that there is no new approach to managing runners. There are more trails available to runners than when the nature center first opened. Runners do NOT observe the posted signs. Simply maintaining the posted signs would not seem likely to result in a change in behavior by runners. In addition the early morning hours currently used by runners are also the best times for birders.

Plan is good but I hope you keep the running times. Most runners do not disturb walkers or classes.

The plan overall is good; it seems mostly to continue the status quo, which in most areas represents sound management that keeps the intended purposes of the nature center well in view. It has one significant deficiency, however, in my view. While acknowledging the problem of white-tailed deer overpopulation and damage, it provides no concrete recommendations for action. Instead, it says MDC will "explore management options." The deer overpopulation of the area has been a reality for years, and MDC should have finished its assessment and planning long ago. (Deer exclosures have been in place validating deer damage since the 1990s!) But if study still needs to be done, the Management Timetable presented in this document should include a series of deadlines for the completion of that study and the development of an action plan. The lack of such a timetable amounts to "kicking the can down the road." MDC needs to take definitive steps to solve this problem.

Please keep trails free of dogs and bikes!

We vote for NO DOGS or Bikes!!

Some people would like to ride bikes at the nature center. I am a biker, typically riding 1,000-1,500 miles a year. From my perspective as both a biker and a hiker, I would advise against allowing bikes at the nature center. One reason, the primary one, is safety. The nature center trails are simply too narrow to mix the two. On trails where mountain bikes in particular are mixed with hikers, serious injuries and even deaths have occurred, usually due to the biker going at high speed down a hill or around a blind curve and hitting a hiker. The second reason is damage to trails by the bikes, especially on hills. The bikes tend to make ruts on hills. When it rains the runoff follows the ruts and further erodes the trails. Thus much more trail maintenance would be required. Bikes are illegal on the Pacific Crest Trail, but outlaw bikers ride certain areas anyway. I have seen the damage they cause, which on some steep slopes is significant to make it dangerous for hikers. I may be beating a dead horse but thought I would put in my 2 cents worth.

This is in response to your recent 'neighborly' communication! We have owned our acre-and-a-half on the cove just west of the Nature Center since 1956 and have lived here since 1960. Things began to change dramatically about the time the Nature Center was established. Before that, we rarely saw deer. Now, they move through our area nine or ten at a time, eating our plants, settling down in our woods to chew the cud! My wife, coming home late one evening from a choir practice, was struck on the driver's side door by a big buck. The door was smashed so she could not get out. I confess we blamed all this on the Nature Center and the MO Department of Conservation! We figured they wanted the deer around because it made a visit to the area more interesting to visitors. But then we also came to realize that the increasing urbanization to the west of us probably has contributed to the influx of deer in our wooded area. We still feel a more concerted effort to control the deer population is necessary, and that wildlife management should not be so strongly slanted to please the outdoor sports people, but rather to maintain a reasonable balance between our undeniable wonderful natural heritage and the realities of urban life. We watch our patch of woods and the nearby cove with concern -- the cove is gradually filling in. Our oaks, most now close to a hundred years old or more, are showing their age. The cedars and honeysuckle proliferate! How you manage all this kind of stuff there at the Nature Center will be instructive. Especially if it gives attention to the facts of urban control -- no burning, no hunting, etc., etc. My wife and I are in our nineties, so we can no longer come over and walk the Nature Center trails. But we do think the Nature Center is a remarkable asset for the whole Springfield area and our overall attitude toward what you do and how you do it is positive, notwithstanding our comments above. We receive MDC publications and have learned much from them and appreciate their quality.