

April-June 2015 Area Plan Public Comment Summary



Niawathe Prairie Natural Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
July 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 April – June 2015, 30 area plans (covering 32 conservation areas, 10 accesses, and one towersite) 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 126 comments from 116 respondents on 20 area plans.
- Themes and issues identified for these plans included suggestions to add fishing lakes, control invasive species, add/expand multi-use trails, update privies, improve accessibility for people with mobility disabilities, increase enforcement, and support for acquiring additional land.
- 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 April – June 2015, 30 area plans (covering 32 conservation areas, 10 accesses, and one towersite) 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 126 comments from 20 area plans (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of comments received by plan, April - June 2015

Comment Month	Area Plan	MDC Region	Comments Received
April 2015	Lamine River Basin Accesses ¹	Central	0
April 2015	Rose Pond CA	Northeast	1
April 2015	Peck Ranch CA	Ozark	32
April 2015	White River Trace CA	Ozark	5
April 2015	Brush Creek CA	Southwest	0
April 2015	Sentinel CA	Southwest	1
April 2015	Tipton Ford Access	Southwest	0
April 2015	Anderson and Sizemore Memorial CAs	St. Louis	1
April 2015	Valley View Glades NA	St. Louis	3
May 2015	Manito Lake CA	Central	3
May 2015	Guy B. Park CA	Kansas City	4
May 2015	Lone Jack Lake CA	Kansas City	35
May 2015	Frost Island CA	Northeast	1
May 2015	Jamesport Community Lake	Northwest	0
May 2015	Little Prairie CA	Ozark	6
May 2015	Buford Mountain CA	Southeast	3
May 2015	August A. Busch Memorial CA	St. Louis	11
June 2015	Neeper CA	Northeast	4
June 2015	Spring Creek Watershed Priority Geography Public Land²	Northeast	4
June 2015	Bluffwoods CA	Northwest	1
June 2015	Poosey CA	Northwest	4
June 2015	Wappapello Lake and Clearwater Lake Management Lands	Southeast	2
June 2015	Hollister Towersite	Southwest	0
June 2015	Jessie Hollow CA	Southwest	3
June 2015	La Petite Gemme Prairie CA	Southwest	0
June 2015	Lower Flat Creek and Stubblefield Accesses	Southwest	2
June 2015	Southwest Region – The Nature Conservancy Prairies ³	Southwest	0
June 2015	Victoria Glades CA	St. Louis	0
April-June TOTAL			126

¹Plan includes Blackwater Bridge, De Bourmont, Harriman Hill, McAllister Springs, Robert’s Bluff and Swinging Bridge Accesses.

²Plan includes the Dark Hollow Natural Area, Morris Prairie CA, Shoemaker CA and Union Ridge CA.

³Plan includes Niawathe, Mount Vernon, Wah-Sha-She and Pawhuska Prairies.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

We received 126 comments from 116 respondents. 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. Respondents may not represent the view of the organization.

Organization Type	Count
Individual citizens	90
Equestrian groups ¹	18
Non-profit groups ²	8
TOTAL	116

¹Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen, Blue and Gray Trailriders

²Phesants Forever/Quail Forever, Ozark Trail Association, Gateway Off-Road Cyclists, Ozark Rivers Audubon, Golden Retriever Club of Greater St. Louis, 4-H

How they responded:

Table 3. Total number of each response received

Response Type	Count	Percent
Web comment form	120	95.2
Hard copy form	5	4
Phone call	1	0.8
TOTAL	126	100

Where respondents are from:

Table 4. Total number of respondents by location

State	Count	Percent
Missouri	110	94.8
Kansas	3	2.6
Illinois	1	0.9
Texas	1	0.9
Florida	1	0.9
TOTAL	116	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 region.

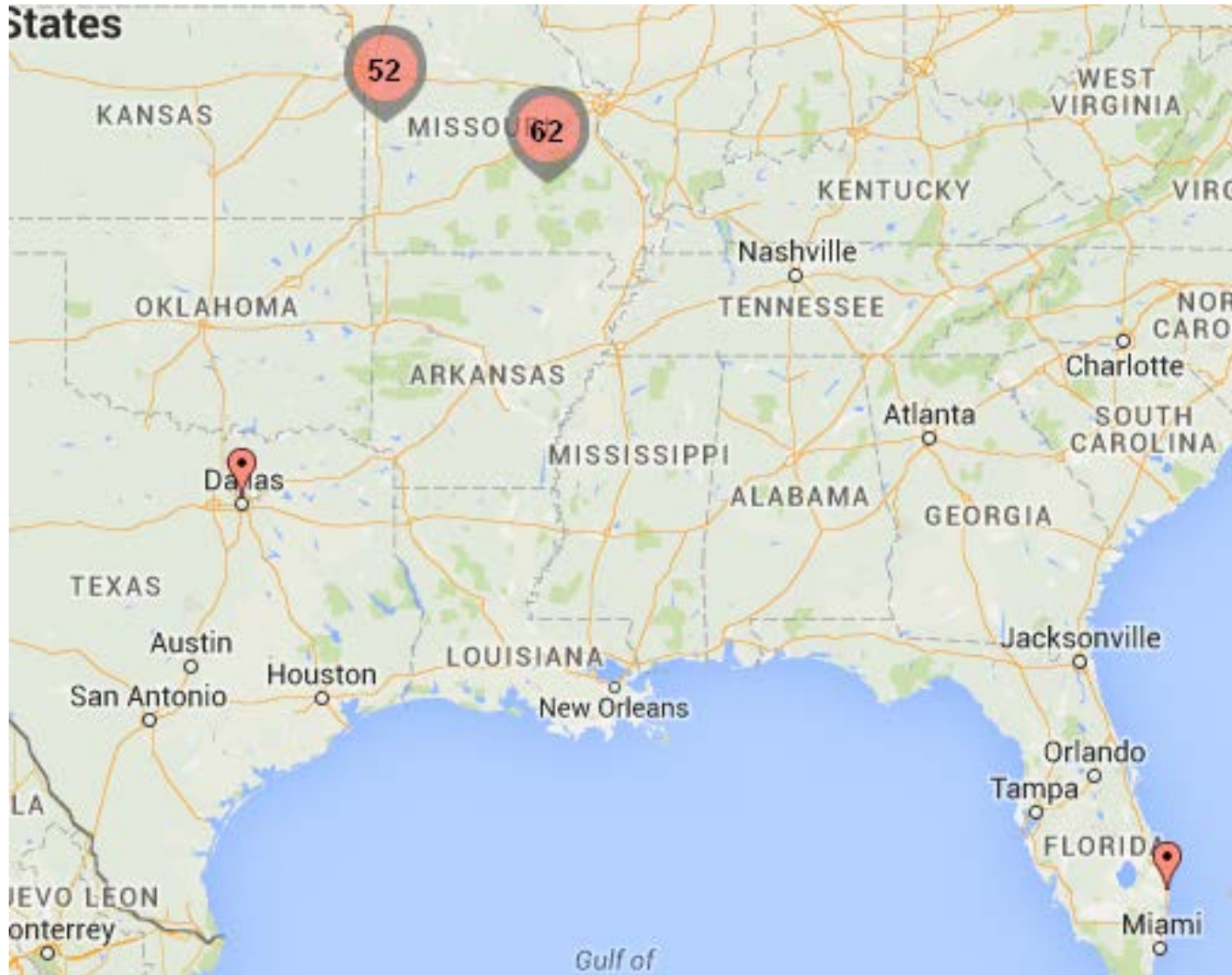


Figure 2. Map of Missouri Respondents by ZIP Code

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 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 April-June 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 about whether area can support elk dietary needs without infringing on the needs of white-tail deer.
- Supports elk restoration and current management.
- Favors limiting the area's use in order to support elk reintroduction.
- Supports management to create bobwhite quail habitat. Values that the area is a designated Quail Emphasis Area.
- Appreciates upland game management.
- Impressed with habitat restoration on this area. Suggests replacing food plots with native grasses and forbs.
- Suggests increasing amount of agricultural fields to benefit wildlife.
- Concern with too many crop fields. Suggests small food plots instead.
- Suggests planting winter wheat or soybeans to attract more deer and turkey.
- Suggests that tenant farmers should primarily plant small grain crops and leave 30 percent of their crop.
- Suggests focusing on native grassland restoration. Suggests utilizing prescribed burns and mowing.
- Suggests controlling woody overgrowth in old field areas to benefit wildlife.
- Suggests monitoring area for feral hogs and eliminating them immediately.
- Appreciates efforts to control feral hogs.
- Suggests prioritizing prairie and savanna restoration.
- Suggests more mowing or burning of fields before July.

Forestry

- Suggests incorporating timber stand improvement and timber harvest to benefit wildlife.
- Concern that lake areas have been overgrown with trees.
- Suggests better control of cedar trees on area.

Other

- Suggests public notification when chemicals are applied around lakes and roadsides.
- Concern with invasive honeysuckle on western part of area. Suggests prioritizing eradication of honeysuckle.
- Concern with using herbicides on area. Instead suggests planting desired plants, mowing, cultivation, biological control.
- Opposes use of herbicides on area.
- Suggests partnering with local non-profit groups to conduct habitat management.
- Concern about impact of proposed Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (on Highway W in Grundy County) on area.

Aquatic Resource Management

- Suggests adding a stocked fishing lake.
- Suggests a large lake and wetlands on the area to attract ducks, geese and shorebirds.
- Supports continuing management of fisheries. Concern that fishing is declining.
- Suggests working to increase average size of largemouth bass in Lone Jack Lake. Suggests implementing a slot limit.
- Suggests more intense stocking of bass and crappie.
- Supports controlling milfoil on a regular basis.
- Suggests dredging far south end of lake.
- Concern that creek is shifting course and boat ramp may no longer be at water's edge.
- Suggests adding more ponds/lakes for fishing.

Public Use Management

Trails

- Suggests adding hiking trails.
- Suggests allowing horseback and mountain bike riding on area's 11-mile portion of the Ozark Trail. Groups are willing to help maintain trails.
- Supports not allowing horses on the Ozark Trail. Concern with horses damaging trails and spreading invasive species.
- Suggests adding a multi-use trail system along refuge fence if the Ozark Trail portion is not an option.
- Requests that trails be open year-round. Suggests developing a plan that would allow hikers and outdoor enthusiasts an alternate route around the refuge during seasonal closures.
- Suggests extending hiking trail.
- Recommends developing 10-12 miles of multi-use (hike/bike/horse) trails on the area.

- Suggests allowing horseback riding. Suggests developing a multi-use trail in the northwest portion of the area. Volunteers to help with trail maintenance. Recognizes that trails may need to be closed during certain hunting seasons.
- Suggests allowing horseback riding on trails.
- Suggests allowing horseback riding.
- Suggests allowing horseback riding. Suggests improved horse camping sites. Willing to assist with trail development and maintenance.
- Opposes allowing horseback riding on area.
- Suggests allowing horseback riding and adding trailer parking, hitching rails and camping for equestrian riders.
- Suggests improving/expanding existing trails.
- Offers assistance in developing partnerships with local equestrian groups to maintain and improve multi-use trails.
- Suggests adding 10-12 miles of multi-use trails (loop trails preferred) and allowing horseback riding without a special use permit.
- Concern about limiting horseback riding to field roads north of Highway D. Concern about not allowing horseback riding (even with special use permit) on natural area.
- Appreciates allowing horseback riding on the portion of the Ozark Trail. Suggests developing additional multi-use trails west of St. Francis River to create a 10 mile loop with the Ozark Trail.
- Suggests adding ADA paved trail around lake shore.

Hunting

- Would like to see waterfowl hunting restricted at this area.
- Suggests stricter regulations on harvesting quail on this area to avoid over harvest. Concern with number of quail currently on area.
- Concern that best retriever lakes have been taken away and current retriever lake is not useable.
- Concern that area is too small to allow for safe hunting.
- Concern that area is too small for firearms deer hunting. Suggests changing area regulations to allow archery hunting only.
- Suggests changing area regulations to not allow use of antlerless permits.
- Suggests requiring small game harvest surveys to be completed at each parking lot.

Camping

- Suggests additional campsites and making drinking water available.
- Suggests adding accessible camping areas. Suggests developing an equestrian camping area.

Amenities

- Appreciates clean restrooms.
- Suggests updating lakeside privies.
- Suggests adding permanent restroom facilities. Suggests instillation of low maintenance toilets.
- Would like to see improved privies at Union Ridge CA.
- Suggests adding a dock at Lake 35.
- Suggests developing south fishing jetty similar to the ADA jetty or at a minimum, placing concrete bollards to block vehicles from accessing jetty.
- Area seems to be underutilized. Suggests adding picnic area, shooting range, camping area, water faucet at boat ramp.
- Suggests providing better accessibility at the shooting range (e.g., allow vehicles up to the shooting benches).
- Suggests constructing several shelter areas for hikers, picnickers, educational events, etc.
- Suggests more trash containers at all lakes.
- Suggests adding trash cans near lake.

Roads/Parking Areas

- Concern with dust on road to Lake 33. Suggests paving road or providing an additional entrance to redistribute traffic. Suggests opening additional roads currently closed to public to reduce traffic.
- Concern with limited parking away from lakes.
- Suggests increased access and parking for people with mobility disabilities.
- Suggests improving parking area.
- Suggests improved parking for trucks with boat trailers.
- Appreciates this fishing area for people with mobility disabilities. Suggests additional roads and parking areas around the lake to relieve fishing pressure near fishing dock.
- Opposes allowing hunters to drive farther into area during hunting season.

Area Maintenance

- Suggests mowing around lakes.
- Concern that bushes are covering up area signs.
- Suggests mowing path around Cave Pond to allow better fishing access. Suggests utilizing volunteers or community service workers if needed to keep mowed.
- Suggests mowing path to dam and maintaining grass heights between dam and ADA jetty.
- Suggests continuing to mow southern access trail 2-3 weeks prior to archery season.
- Suggests picking up trash regularly along area roads.

- Suggests a higher priority for litter control.
- Suggests repairing or replacing some of area signs.

Enforcement/Policy

- Concern with illegal activities (poaching, dogging deer, etc.) on area.
- Suggests increased enforcement of poachers. Suggests adding signs at the parking lot to deter poachers (e.g., “Reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of poachers.”).
- Appreciates well patrolled area.
- Concern with dumping of dead animals and trash on this area.
- Concern about late night partying at parking area. Suggests closing this parking lot.

Other

- Suggests adding signage that identifies plants and animals and indicates where invasive species are being controlled.
- Questions what plans for providing public access might mean for local landowners.
- Suggests offering more educational programs at Union Ridge CA (e.g., bird watching, hiking, plant/tree identification, fish days, etc.).
- Suggests more directional signs within and outside of Union Ridge CA. Suggests adding interpretive signs within Union Ridge CA.
- Suggests developing and seeking out more partnerships with local groups (e.g, nature clubs, gardening groups, 4-H, etc.).
- Suggests providing regular forums or mailings for area neighbors to voice their opinion on area use, plans, management, etc.

Administrative Considerations

- Suggests acquiring additional land within the area and more glade areas.
- Concern with potential hazards from Weldon Spring munitions site.
- Supports acquiring additional adjacent land.
- Supports partnering with school groups and Scouting groups on service projects.
- Suggests naming the parking lot the Andrew and Katrina Wolf Parking Lot to recognize the late 19th century owners of this area.
- Supports acquiring more land to expand the conservation area.
- Suggests creating a visitor’s center at that would be open year-round. The center would provide outdoor education, promote conservation and attract out-of-state visitors.

General Comments

- General support for the management and of the area.
- Would like to know whether there will be any major changes.
- Supports area management plan.
- Supports caring for the Andrew Wolf Bur Oak Tree.
- Appreciates management of this area.
- Landowner supports area management and is pleased to have increased deer and turkey sightings over the past 20 years.

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).

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Rose Pond Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2015)

Phone call to Area Manager: Caller's parents donated a portion of Rose Pond to MDC and requested that waterfowl hunting not be allowed on that portion of the pond. Caller's mother is still alive. She is upset that we allow waterfowl hunting on the rest of the area. Caller feels that his parents' intention was to have no waterfowl hunting throughout the whole area.

Appendix B. Peck Ranch Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2015)

Missouri can use all the Eco tourism it can get and long range off road trails are the answer to bring economy to small rural towns.

Please keep the horses off the Ozark Trail through Peck Ranch. Horses are hard on the trail and tend to spread invasive plants.

Please keep the trails open to equestrian enthusiasts.

- The Ozark Trail runs across Peck Ranch; permission to ride across Peck Ranch is key to making the OT a long distance trail riding and camping opportunity.
- The Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry Equestrian Trail parallels the Ozark Trail as it crosses the Roger Prior Pioneer Backcountry; this trail represents a hard-fought victory for SMMBCH efforts to make the OT open to equestrian use over its entire length. Without permission to cross Peck Ranch the Roger Prior Trail is effectively the end of the line.
- The chance to view elk in a natural setting is an attraction for many visitors to Peck Ranch. This opportunity should not be denied trail riders; indeed, for many very young, elderly and physically challenged persons horseback is about the only way they can enjoy nature. Public land trails in Western states pass through elk home range with few problems for riders or wildlife.

Thank you.

Please allow mountain biking on the Ozark Trail within the Peck Ranch Conservation Area. Studies have shown that there is no statistically significant difference between the impacts of hikers and mountain bike riders to trail surfaces - Thurston, E. and R. J. Reader (2001). Impacts of experimentally applied mountain biking and hiking on vegetation and soil of a deciduous forest. *Environmental Management* 27(3): 397-409.

Allowing mountain bikers access to this area would allow riders to enjoy a continuous 220+ mile through trail in the same way that hikers currently can. Because they are not motorized, mountain bikes offer a great opportunity to enjoy nature while remaining quiet and non-disturbing of the surrounding fauna and flora. Many other conservation areas in Missouri allow mountain bike access, such as Walnut Woods, Sugar Creek, Poosey, and University Forest. Mountain bikers are also one of the most active volunteer groups for maintaining trail that they can use. I think it would be a win-win for mountain bikers to be allowed access to the beautiful Peck Ranch.

I would like to add my vote for mountain bike use on the OT through Peck Ranch. Mountain bike use has had a positive effect on other sections of the OT. Mountain bikers were used directly to help maintain over 100 miles of the trail in a manner never seen before just last year from Highway 72 to Bass River Resort. Areas in Peck Ranch get overgrown from lack of use every year. Allowing the use of MTBs would open up the area to be more easily accessible for all trail users. Please consider allowing mountain biking in this area.

It is my understanding that it is very important to be able to ride through the Peck Ranch which links horseback riding trails together. As an avid trail rider, I do hope you will Draft the Peck Ranch Conservation Area Management Plan. Thank you. You do a wonderful job in maintaining our trails

Please consider allowing mountain bike access thru the area, as requested by Jim Davis of the OTA. We will work with MDOC on alternate access around sensitive areas and also during the Elk mating season.

Thanks!

I would like to see this area open to mountain biking.

Comment mailed to Peck Ranch: I have nothing but praise for the effort's put forth and the personal implementing those plans at the Peck Ranch (PR) Conservation Area. Since 1975 I've owned property (200 hundred acres) on Rogers Creek (RC) less than a mile from the PR boundary. My land now borders for 3/4 mi. the recently acquired MDC land on RC. I also border, on my North side, for 3/4 mi., with the Nature Cons. (TNC). My interest for the Wildlife and Nature of the area in general mirrors both. I'm totally involved with the Elk restoration effort and the Peck Ranch personal. Preston Mabry in particular has been very helpful. This included the planting of grasses and a prescribed burn on our jointed properties. I will be seeking his guidance to insure that what ever I can do , on an onging bases, to benefit the overall Elk project is carried out. All Wildlife benefits from this effort. In so far as suggestions to improving the ongoing work at PR, all I can say, is continue doing the same. The PRCA is a valuable asset to the MDC, the State, and the surrounding area it serves. My hope and suggestion to the State of Missouri is that The PR Conservation Area programs should continue to be supported and funded. Thank You.

I think your draft plan is spot on. It is critical to limit use of this area to enhance the reintroduction elk project.

It would be wonderful to be able the ride bikes via the Ozark Trail through the Peck Ranch Conservation Area. To have the chance to see the elk and other wildlife would be amazing. The goal always is to tread lightly and respect the land.

ON YOUR LAST PAGES IT IS STATED THAT DEPT POLICY IS FOR NO HOUSING TYPE RESIDENCE ON DEPT PROPERTY...I WONDER IF THAT SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED DUE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR ELK RE-INTRODUCTION AS WELL AS THIS MAY REDUCE LIKELIHOOD OF POACHING, DOGGING DEER, AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITY. PECK IS ONE OF OUR STATES BIGGEST JEWELS. HOPEFULLY YOU HAVE HIDDEN GAME CAMERAS TO THWART THESE ACTIVITIES?

Now is the time for MDC to make good on the words used to bring Elk into Missouri. "Bring Tourist to Peck Ranch" ! With the success of Elk and horse trails in Arkansas and other states. With the help that Show-Me Backcountry Horsemen have in knowledge and man- power. Plus getting grants for parking makes this a great time for MDC to be a state department that keeps its word. The department web page states "drive county roads to see Elk". I know of NO ONE that has got this to work. Ozark trail people & SMMBHC people will work together for the best trail and/or trails across the Peck Ranch if MDC will let them.

You 're doing great! The area is a wonderful example of what conservation, re-establishment and reintroduction of native flora and fauna is all about.

Please don't ban mountain bikes from this portion of the Ozark Trail. Mountain bikers create and maintain the best trails in the state. Bicycle toting volunteers love maintaining there favorite trails and the ozark trail is no different. You will lose valuable resources if this portion of the trail is closed to bicycles.

Plus riding on the ozark trail is a lot of fun and great exercise!

Sincerely,

I understand there are areas on the Ozark Trail that are not good for a horse trail, however, I would like to see a horse trail be routed around these areas. I feel the more horse trails that we can have the more the horse traffic will be spread out so that the trails are not abused and over used.

To whom it may concern - I would like to see a viable bicycle connection for the Ozark Trail. If the Conservation Area road system is available to bicycles, Is there an option to connect the northern and southern connections to the OT? Currently, Peck Ranch sits in the middle of a potential contiguous backcountry bicycle route on the Ozark Trail from the Meremac River to the Eleven Point River. Due to the recent changes by the NPS to the ONSR management plan, the opportunity (...with cooperation from MDC and LAD) will soon be available for the Ozark Trail to offer a thru bicycle route, which when complete can provide over 220 mile point to point backcountry route .

If a connection for the OT through Peck is not an option, is it possible to create a trail system

along the perimeter fence using MDC property. Without first hand on the ground knowledge I imagine an opportunity to allow for a trail along the fence with zero to extremely minimal impact the the Elk program as well as other MDC programs or sensitive areas.

Thanks for your consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Peck Ranch Conservation Area Management Plan. Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen strongly encourages the Department to permit multi-use, including equestrian, of the 11 mile section of the Ozark Trail that crosses the area. We respectfully contend that the reasons for not doing so, as stated in the draft plan, do not adequately justify the decision to restrict biking and horseback riding to public roads.

It may be true that horseback riding is not allowed on portions of the Ozark Trail immediately adjacent to Peck Ranch at the present time. That does not negate the value to the equestrian community of the opportunity to ride on Peck Ranch. Indeed, considered entirely as a stand-alone trail, the 11 miles of trail crossing the CA represent a high-quality riding and biking opportunity. It is the goal of SMMBCH to secure permission to ride the entire Ozark Trail providing a long-distance trail riding and camping opportunity unique to the Midwest; toward that end we have already had productive, positive conversations with managers of the land adjacent to Peck Ranch that are crossed by the OT. We recognize that in some places, for numerous reasons, it is prudent to establish a parallel trail to avoid sensitive features, resource degradation, unsafe trail sections, and trail maintenance problems. Recent completion of the equestrian trail across the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry shows how cooperation between landowners/managers and trail users can implement a solution that accommodates everyone. The Department has the opportunity to continue setting a positive example of cooperation on Peck Ranch.

One such example of a place where deviation from the Ozark Trail would be wise exists where the OT goes up and over the east part of Stegall Mountain; it would appear that going around the east side of the mountain would be a better location for an equestrian trail. Due consideration of the impact of a trail on sensitive portions of designated natural areas would allow key trail segments to be located in a way that did not diminish the integrity of the natural area.

The draft plan states that the 31 miles of public roads provide ample horseback riding and mountain biking opportunity. Public roads do not provide for a quality outdoor experience and are no substitute for decent trails. A review of the equestrian usage of public lands where riding is restricted to public roads, such as Indian Trail CA in Dent County, will show that riders simply won't bother. No trail rider is going to load his horse on a trailer, drive some distance on public roads and ride on public roads in a conservation area where setting foot off the road surface is prohibited. Not only is riding on public roads unattractive as recreation for both bikers and

equestrians, it also poses a safety hazard for everyone including vehicles; the hilly and curvy roads found in most CAs, including Peck, make it especially so. A key point of trail riding and biking is to get off the roads. Restricting equestrian and bike use to public roads is little different, from a quality of experience standpoint, than complete prohibition.

The Department's gathering of public input prior to elk reintroduction showed common public support of this effort and a desire to be able to view elk in natural habitat. This support and desire is represented in the equestrian community. Many trail riders are unable to access backcountry areas on foot because of age and other disabilities; their horses give them the only opportunity for a regular, quality outdoor experience. Permitting equestrian use of trails on Peck Ranch would, in fact, constitute accommodation of disabilities to give a substantial public segment the opportunity to view the elk. As for conflicts between trail users and wildlife, I'm sure there are many urban legends and horror stories, but thousands of horseback riders ride through elk country in the west with very little or no issues for either the riders or the elk. I, myself, have ridden past a large herd of elk in Wyoming and consider it a highlight of over 50 years of riding. Experience in nearby states, for example Arkansas, demonstrates that horse/elk conflicts are extremely rare.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and thank you for appropriate consideration of our recommendations.

I would ask that you support efforts to work with Show Me MO Back Country Horsemen, the state representative of the national Backcountry Horsemen of America, to develop equestrian usage through Peck Ranch similar to what is currently being done in the Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry just north of Peck Ranch. Equestrian trails parallel to the OT have been developed as well as two trailhead parking areas. Careful attention has been made to protect all natural and cultural resources. Other usage within the Roger Pryor are not being infringed upon. Trails are being maintained by equestrians which includes trash removal and communication is positive with land managers.

I would also ask that Peck Ranch trails remain open throughout the year. I understand the elk restoration is necessary, however the elk should not be being disturbed on the OT or on any of the gravel roads through Peck Ranch.

SMMBCH is making a serious effort to make the Ozark Trail open to equestrian use over its entire length. Being able to cross the Peck Ranch would certainly make for easier and full use of the OT.

Peck Ranch is one of the Crown Jewels so to speak of the MDC system. The right to ride a horse across Peck Ranch is currently denied to us. The Ozark Trail across Peck Ranch needs to be opened to equestrians. Where the trail crosses sensitive ecological areas that section could be rerouted for horses. MDC does not have a very good reputation for being sensitive to the needs of equestrians. This is your chance to change that perception.

My family and I really enjoy visiting Peck Ranch. We enjoy driving the food plot areas and the elk tour route. I also use the firearm and archery shooting range. I love seeing reptiles and we visit Steagal Mountain, especially in the hopes of seeing collared lizards. I would love it if MDC would put in a fishing lake. It would be wonderful to have a stocked MDC lake in the Eminence/Winona area.

I am interested as a person who loves to trail ride to express my opinion on making trails available for those who love to ride horses at Peck ranch. It is a beautiful area and so many beautiful places to see that can only be done on horseback . I am hoping that in the near future that this will be possible . Thanks you

Peck Ranch is key for equestrians to be able use the entire Ozark Trail it would be shameful if we were left out.

I was raised in that area and horses and equestrian activities have always been a big boost to the area economy.

We are the trail state and the trails should be equestrian friendly. Thanks for the chance to comment.

Thank you for considering the public's interest and needs as pertaining to Peck Ranch CA. I would like to experience the beauty and unique features of this area but being a senior can best do this by horseback. I am unable to hike long distances but am able to enjoy and maintain a healthy life through the activity of horseback riding. Peck Ranch has natural areas but also having the history of being an old ranch, can support equestrian presence without damage to resources. If the area can support elk without resource damage, horseback riding would be easily managed. The opportunity to view elk would be a great experience and with the proven history of horses and elk co-existence in the western states, there is precedent of few problems.

A long distance packing and equestrian experience is something that has been long needed in our state. With the existence of the Ozark Trail and parallel equestrian trail through Roger Pryor Backcountry, this long distance trail can become a reality and a great tourism opportunity for Missouri. Without access through Peck Ranch CA, it is blocked. All other public land managers, both state and federal, are supportive of this long distance multiuse trail. Horseback access through Peck Ranch needs to be a safe and experience worthy of the area - not county roads.

I am requesting and asking as a Missouri citizen for your Department to open Peck Ranch CA as multiuse allowing equestrians. Maintaining any trails would be of interest to those organizations whose mission is to promote and protect trails. The OTA and Show-Me MO Back Country Horsemen would be good organizations to partner with to help maintain and protect the trails.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Peck Ranch CA.

Thank you for the opportunity to express myself on the planning for this important piece of public lands in Missouri. It is important that horse riding across Peck Ranch be permitted as it is key to making the Ozark Trail a long distance trail riding and camping opportunity. This would result in making the Ozark Trail open for an extended length, thus enhancing the riding experience on the Roger Pryor Back Country Trail. Additionally, I hope that it will be possible to reroute from the OT, where needed to keep the trail sustainable and safe for horse riding. I would love the opportunity to see elk in a natural setting, and riding would be my only way to view them, . Please consider that I spend a large amount of money to support my horses and riding--feed, vets, property, truck, trailers, fuel, tack, insurance, tires, and on and on, much of which is returned to MDC to support these public lands. I deserve the opportunity to use the public lands in a manner that is environmentally friendly. My chosen method is on a horse. Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

My wife and I are avid outdoors people and also long distance hikers. We've recently had to cancel a long distance hike on the Ozark trail due to Peck Ranch closure from April-July. The dates of these closures encumber usage of the Ozark Trail during a prime season to be outdoors. The management plan states "... and to provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities for the public." Closures of the ranch conflict with this but I do understand this closure is due to the elk calving season and is necessary.

I would like to see the Peck Ranch Management team work with the Ozark Trail Association to develop a plan that would allow hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts an alternate route around the ranch during closures. Whether this is merely allowing users to road walk through the ranch or to develop an alternate trail that can be used.

Peck Ranch is of particular interest to me because of the Ozark Trail connections. To elaborate:

1. The Ozark Trail runs across Peck Ranch, and permission to ride across Peck Ranch is key to making the OT a long distance trail riding and camping opportunity.
2. Without permission to cross Peck Ranch, the Roger Prior Trail is effectively the end of the line.
3. The chance to view elk in a natural setting in Missouri from horseback would be appealing to many people.
4. The OT route through Peck Ranch is not always user friendly for equestrians, in these cases I would recommend that an alternate section be established.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft plan.

Having a "through" option for human powered off road bicycles is vital to creating a complete Ozark Trail. I've been riding off road for nearly 30 years and believe the limited number of

mountain bikes that would travel in this remote area if accessible, would have little to no impact. The image mountain bikes have had with the MDC has long, long ago vanished and needs to be rethought. A simple evaluation of other highly used sections of the Ozark Trail would reveal the positive impact mtbs have on tread quality, often repairing damage done by hikers and equestrians, also the large percentage of volunteer work done by mtbers. There is no other method of experiencing the beautiful outdoors Missouri has to offer that can compare to a mountain bike because of its ability to quietly take the user on longer adventures with almost no impact on the land, its wildlife or other users.

I applaud the conservation exercised in this plan and believe some sacrifice is necessary to keep the amazing features the Ozark region hides from all but those willing to blaze the path less traveled.

After many years of admiring from afar, this plan for Peck Ranch would be heaven sent for horsemen (and women) from not only the state of Missouri, but from ALL Over the USA... This would be an important trail link to other very popular areas , and a junction in which to camp and ride while traveling across the state, and beyond.

I am glad to that that you are considering adding Equestrian Trails to the Peck Ranch portion of the Ozark Trail. The OT has the potential to become a national level equine destination for people to discover the back country of the Ozarks. My understanding is that there are portions of the OT through the Peck Ranch that are not suitable for Equine use, and new trails bypassing those areas would need to be made. You can count on Missouri horse and mule riders to help with that task. Another public benefit from equine use in the Peck Ranch area is to help monitor poaching and other illegal activities, as well as for search and rescue needs. We come to that area to ride on the OT several times a year, and have brought people from Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, and Wisconsin with us. They were all impressed by the area. Adding Peck Ranch to the Equine use list would help make it a legendary trail.. Thank You

i think it is great to have the elk back in mo. my concern i have is, will our system support there diet and not take away from the white tail deer. i'm sure you will have a season on them if they get too large. also, i own some land off 49 and county road 118. i hope that the elk will be able to expand over time and even inhabit my property. i know i won't see it in my lifetime, but my children are talking about it and are hoping that someday they will be able to hunt elk on our property along with deer and other wildlife they now hunt. keep up the good work.

Appendix C. White River Trace Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2015)

Very good plan. Please consider more campsites and make available drinking water outlet.

My wife and I visited White River Trace" CA for the first time over the weekend. She and I both loved it. We are interested/supportive of the work being done to create good habitat for Bobwhite Quail. As a kid many years ago, my father and brothers hunted quail in and around Rolla area. I have and always have a fondness for quail. In addition, we plan to return to the CA to view wildlife such as deer, turkey and bird life. (Noteworthy is we saw two wild turkeys, not inside the CA, but on our way to and from the site, during our weekend trip). We also want to pass along that we appreciate the restrooms maintained in a clean manner. On our Sunday trip, we brought along our dogs to hike along with us. They got some much needed exercise and really enjoyed it too. I look forward to fishing in some of the ponds that are big enough for fishing. I did notice many of the ponds are very low and are not big enough to support fishing, yet I realize they will serve as a water source for wildlife. Speaking of, during our hike near one of those ponds, on what I refer to as the northern (burned area), we notice a bird with some sort of prey in it's claws near one of the ponds. Overall we dearly enjoy all of the CA's. My wife did comment that White River Trace is unique in that it is not all about just forestry. It's open vista's and view lanes offer a person (with binoculars if I remember to bring them along) long lines of site. Another trip I hope to fit into my busy schedule is to mushroom hunt along the creek, again running thru the north 1/2 of the CA. We have noticed Dent county has a wide assortment of CA's. We plan to visit them all as time allows.

I do think there is anyone who has walked the birded the trace more than me. I have walked every acre of the trace over the years and as much as I am impressed with the habitat restoration and on going habitat work I am concerned by two things.

1. Food plots. I am not a big fan, they are for hunters and others who do not understand or appreciate native plants and their value. I would like to see all food plots eliminated and native grasses and forbs back where they belong. Wildlife will benefit greatly as will the soil.
2. I have always been concerned by the lack of a large lake and wetlands. I see and hear all species of ducks and geese fly overhead as well as shore birds. There is a need for this diversity on the trace and it would also open up another area for duck hunting.

Thank you

I appreciate the designation of WRT as a Quail Emphasis Area. More emphasis on quail should be directed throughout the Ozark Region. With the QEA label, WRT will undoubtedly receive additonal attention from upland hunters. My concern is increased hunting pressure causing an overharvest of quail, or at the very least, a disproportionate percent of the quail harvest going to a very few local groups of hunters. Please consider regulatory measures to equitably distribute the harvest or reducing the daily limit of quail on WRT.

FYI I have hunted WRT with my dogs and with friends that have dogs every year and have yet to see the number of birds expected to be on a Quail Emphasis Area.

Thank you

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the White River Trace CA Management Plan. White River Trace offers something quite rarely found on public lands in the Ozarks—a predominance of open land. This presents a unique outdoor experience opportunity for this region, and the CA is large enough to be conducive to developing a quality trail network. While open vistas are the rule in the Cherokee Prairie and much of North Missouri nearly all of the public land in the Ozarks is forested. There is an extensive network of “area access trails” already designated on the CA; the trails provide interconnection with most of the open land. The access trails could be supplemented with trails (mostly through the woods) to form additional loops. This system would provide a very pleasant multi-use trail system for hikers, bikers, and riders that would combine forest and open land experiences on the same outing. That would be a great combination anywhere, rare in the Ozarks. White River Trace CA is listed as a highest priority area for implementation of multi-use trails in Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen’s 2015 proposal, “Expanding Public Land Multi-use Trails in Missouri.” White River Trace would provide multi-use trails for the greatly underserved ten-county Southwest Central Area.

Trail riders and off-road bikers in Dent County and the surrounding area are, in theory, provided the opportunity to pursue their hobby on public land on the Indian Trail CA northeast of Salem. Indian Trail sees very little use, however, because riders and bikers are confined to public roads. Riding public roads is most unappealing and sometimes dangerous for bikers, riders, and automobiles. In addition to the diversity of the combination of open land and forest, trails on White River Trace would offer a quality multi-use riding and biking experience which is currently lacking in the Dent County area.

SMMBCH recommends the development of 10-12 miles of multi-use trails on the White River Trace CA by adding planned trails to the existing area access trails. 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 D. Sentinel Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2015)

Hard copy comment (received 4/1/2015): I'm just making certain no major changes will come about.

Appendix E. Anderson and Sizemore Memorial Conservation Areas Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2015)

Even though the focus seems to be on hunting for these two areas, hiking trails should be added. If nothing else it would give hunters a clear path from the parking lot, but it may also encourage other visitors.

Appendix F. Valley View Glades Natural Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2015)

Acquire larger tracts of land that border the natural area and occur within the Valley View Glade Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area. if possible this is a must. all conservation areas should be expanded whenever possible. Increase the length of the trail. Add signage to identify flora and fauna and to indicate the control of invasive and non glade plants.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Valley View Glades 10-Year Management Plan. Valley View is an important biological resource greatly appreciated by local naturalists, and thank you to MDC for the land acquisition and ongoing maintenance.

There is an impressive amount of flora diversity at Valley View. My primary concern is the fauna. In all the times I've been there, I've never seen one lizard, snake, tarantula or scorpion, though I've heard they were originally quite numerous there, with populations in recent decline due to poaching. I understand some poach to sell on the pet market, some poach for private collections. It is very disturbing. Objective 1, Strategy 1 of the Management Plan indicates ongoing protection against poaching. I'd like to see that stepped up significantly for both Valley View and Victoria Glades.

I understand it is impossible to patrol Valley View and Victoria Glades every day. So please consider signs at the parking lots offering "reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction" of poachers. This might help. As is, without animal life, these beautiful and well-maintained glades seem a bit bereft.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment,

I have been visiting Valley View Glades for many years during all seasons.

It is a good example of a glade.

Over the years we were happy to see the cedar trees come down. We were sad to see the holes on the glade where it looked like someone had dug up plants. We have seen the overturned rocks.

Generally I agree with your plan.

I would wish you all could expand the area or buy additional glades.

My husband joked you should write "this side up" on the rocks that get overturned.

Appendix G. Manito Lake Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

"A bur oak tree was planted in 1874 by 9-year-old Andrew Wolfe and is marked by a carved wood sign on the east side of the area."

Is year of 1874 correct? There is a burr oak that is 141 years old there on site? Wow!

If you are to place a hatchery there, what species of fish will be bred?

Are there plans to put a shooting range there for firearms and archery?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Manito Lake Area 10 year plan. I own land across the road on the east side of Old Five Hwy and south of Manito Lake Road. In the thirty four years MDC has owned the land I have never been approached by or contacted by anyone associated with the area.

The area seems to be under utilized as little activity is seen on my casual observations on my trips to my farm. Maybe a review of the objectives of the plan need to be revisited.

A few thing to improve the relations with neighbors would be to pick up trash regularly along the road around the area and along the roads to the area. In addition control of the Cedar trees is badly needed. They are spreading like wildfire and impacting farms around the Manito Lake Area.

Some additions that could be considered to promote the area's use:

Add a picnic area and shelter house

Add a target range

Add RV overnight parking

Add water faucet at boat ramp to wash boats and trailers before and after usage to help control Zebra Mussels

Add Boy/Girl Scout camping area

Some concerns about the area: monitor for feral hogs in the area and eliminate them immediately if detected.

Monitor and care for the Andrew Wolf Burr Oak Tree for it is a treasure to the Manito Lake Conservation Area. By the way Andrew Wolf and Katrina Ott Wolf owned the farm where the Burr Oak is. Andrew and his son Valentine Andrew Wolf planted the tree in 1875 when Valentine was nine years old. There was probably help from the other kids in the family.

Final suggestion: name the parking lot the Andrew and Katrina Wolf Parking lot to recognize a Civil War Veteran and the Wolf family's contribution to homesteading the area.

Thank you for your consideration.

We don't see much change in the plans on what has been in the past. The area has been very well managed by Kent Korthus for many years. He does a very job of working with all area neighbors, of which we are. If all agencies were managed as well as the Conservation Commission, our State would be in much better condition.

Appendix H. Guy B. Park Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Provide some mowing of fields so lake can be more accessible in other areas around it. So it gets more use than just the dock and ramp areas. Keep up the fish management. Seems fishing is getting poorer there.

As a 70 year old with certain disabilities, I enjoy the fishing experience at the area, close to home, park within a few feet of the water, ideal. It would relieve the pressure of too many folks in such a small area if there was a road and parking in additional areas such as at the dam. Unable to walk far, I have not used the pond, another area that people could use. I appreciate the fact that the lake (and entire area) is well patrolled by conservation and the County Sheriff's officers.

It would be great if there were a couple of trash cans available so perhaps there will be less trash left on the ground and in the lake. Maybe a fishing club could take on the task of emptying the cans. Also, if there was a paved path around the inside part of the lake shore would allow more of us handicapped anglers access to the lake. I would like to fish from the dam but it is too far for me to walk. [Mobility problems] I have met some really nice people at Tobacco Hill Lake. Great sunsets.

parking at the boat ramp needs to be improved to provide parking for trucks with boat trailers

Appendix I. Lone Jack Lake Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

I would like to see a plan to increase the average size of largemouth bass in the main lake. I fished there occasionally from the mid 1990s until recently and somewhere near 90% of the bass I caught were 6-10" in length.

I would also like to see better access to Cave Pond. I have fished it before and it is challenging to get up to reach the pond. A mowed path to and around the lake would greatly increase its fishability and would encourage more people to use it. If funds are not available to keep it mowed then maybe the MDC could suggest it as a Boy Scout work day project or it could be a community service project for those sentenced to do community service in court. I'd mow it myself if that was an option.

First let me say that I've been coming to LJ CA for about 18 years now and have seen positive and negative changes. A few years back I was VERY impressed with the response from the MDC to a suggestion I had about re-stripping the parking lot in front of the boat ramp so that people would not park there. Thank you.

1) The ADA jetty is fantastic and I would suggest doing the same with the south jetty. This would add more opportunities for people with disabilities to fish and, more importantly, it would keep people from driving and parking on the jetty. At the very minimum, please place concrete bollards which would block vehicles from accessing the jetty.

2) I see it is in the proposal, but I will reiterate that control of millfoin in the lake needs to take place on a regular basis. The lake is very clear which allows for this invasive grass to grow rampant during the heat of the summer.

3) Litter control should be a higher priority. Due to the remote location, it is easy for irresponsible people dump their trash here. This is not only unsightly but also potentially harmful to the wildlife.

4) Winter wheat or soybeans should be considered as a crop planting to attract more deer and

turkey. The area around the CA is ripe with both but more plentiful food can be found on the Mormon land to the southwest and on the Jackson Co. park land to the west.

5) Replacement or repairs need to be made to some of the signage on the area. Unfortunately some people don't know how to respect property.

6) It would be wonderful if the MDC could acquire some of the Jackson Co. parks and Mormon land immediately to the west and southwest of the current area. These areas are primarily croplands and forested areas that go unused. This would NOT include the group camping area that is frequently utilized by Scout groups or the equestrian areas to the north and northwest.

7) A slot limit needs to be placed on largemouth bass in the area. There is an over abundance of 10"-14" bass and a quite a few less than 15"+.

8) Maintaining a clear cut path to the dam would be very beneficial to those fishermen who would like to fish that area. As well, maintaining the grass heights between the dam and the north ADA jetty would do the same.

9) Consideration should be given to dredging the far south end of the lake due to ongoing silt in over the years. At this time, the south cove averages 3'-4' deep in the last 1/3.

8) It is mentioned that more emphasis should be placed on educating school and Scout groups about the area. Some of the above mentioned items could be accomplished/completed with the assistance of these groups with things such as service projects or Eagle Scout projects. If necessary, I could be a point of contact to the BSA for this.

This property would provide additional horseback riding opportunities in this area. The Blue and Gray Park is often crowded and the trails suffer from overuse. This would be an excellent place to enjoy a quiet ride. Thank you.

Would love to see improved sites for horse camping and trail riding. Thanks.

I would like to see horse back riding in the conservation area on designated trails. Other areas allow this like James A Reed. Thank you PS I love riding in Blue and Grey Park and plan to camp/ride there about May 15.

Would be nice to have more trail riding around Blue Grey Park. And it would generate more people the Lake is Beautiful to ride to and even more to ride around. Would also Benifit to run Water to the Campsites. Would Generate more income if was a Nice place to Camp., WOULD NOT HAVE TO DRIVE 2 hrs away & give other Parks my money.

I board my horse at Sitter Downs which adjoins the conservation area. We would love to develop and help maintain trails for horse back riding in the area.

Please open this up to horse back riding.

I enjoy Lone Jack Lake CA. It is a great place to fish, canoe, exercise my retriever dog, and forage for wild edibles. But I would really like to see the addition of an equestrian trail/trails. I ride my horse often at Blue and Gray Park across Brown Road, and I would love to be able to ride my horse around the lake.

As of now, it is unclear whether horseback riding is permitted at LJLCA. I have been told no, not allowed. I have also been told yes, if you stay on the shoulder of the road.

There are many of us who enjoy nature from the back of a horse, so how about accommodating riders? A designated horse trail would be wonderful!

Thank you!

P.S. There are riders who are willing to donate their time and energy to accomplish this, myself included :-)

Open up the area to horseback riders so that people that ride Blue and Grey park could enjoy the Lone Jack lake area.

Please open up this area to horse use.

Thank you!

I think it would be wonderful if we were allowed to ride our horses there. Those of us who board at Sitter Downs are responsible and eco friendly. We pick up trash left behind by others and always do our best not to disturb the natural beauty of the park.

I would like an Equestrian/Hiking trail around the lake with camping sites, possibly water/electric hook ups at it and the lower campground. Also, replace the permant bathrooms. The portal toilets are often vandalized, plus they are too small and smell terrible, the bigger stone/concrete restrooms were cooler and more convenient.

As you are aware, Blue & Gray Equine Park is across the road from LJConservation area. B&G is over 1700 acres.

We would like to ask that the conservation area allow horseback riding.

We have made tremendous improvements (all volunteer) at B&G Equine Park. We have added routes, trail signs, picnic tables, hitching posts, maps, nets for trash and there are many neighbors, friends of the park, and B&G trail riders that maintain the park. The trash is picked up and trails are pruned.

We could do the same for the LJConservation area; we would limit how many trails are created, a loop around the lake and a few in the woods that are north of the lake. It could be done, labor

intensive and put on the tick spray, but it would definitely enhance the conservation area plus the hunters' experience as well. Another thought is to allow primitive camping at the lake.

Can you imagine waking up to the morning fog over the lake?

We have Blue & Gray Park Cleanup, which the county has allowed us to use 4-wheelers and chainsaws in order to clear trees/brush, etc from the trails. Many people walk around the parameter of the park to pick up the cans, bottles, plastics & such in the ditch. We have flagged many fences in the park as well as taking out old fencing that horses have been caught in.

I am the administrator of the Blue and Gray Trail Riders facebook page and there is a document that contains information about the maps/routes, trail signs, picnic areas and such for people to download. It is periodically updated.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/185449843275/>

We know that shotgun season is permitted at LJConservation, however, no horseback riding is allowed. Lead Mine Conservation area allows horseback riding and I am assuming that they also allow hunting. Our question is why does LJConservation not allow horseback riding?

Feel free to contact me direct, rsitter131@aol.com or send a request to join the fun at Blue and Gray Trail Riders facebook page.

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to comment.

The Blue and Gray Trail Riders

Friends of the Park

Neighbors of the Park

I board my horse at Sitter Downs located on Drinkwater across from the Blue and Gray Park. It would be such an asset to the Blue and Gray park to allow riding trails on the Lone Jack Lake area. As riders we constantly clean up trash left carelessly by other riders and keep the trails natural and cleared. I hope that the Lone Jack Lake will open up as additional space for us to ride. Thanks

This would be great to open this up to equine riding and camping with elec water pens.

Just adding my opinion to the Lone Jack management plan. I know there is a lot of interest and pressure to open the conservation area to horse back riding but I don't think that would be a beneficial activity for that particular CA. I am a horseback rider, a hunter, and fisherman. The horsemen in that area already have a large park to ride and I think it would encroach upon the

ability of hunters and wildlife to enjoy a more peaceful and natural environment if horse riding was allowed in that area.

The group of riders near Lone Jack are not interested in following typical MDC area rules. They believe, and have plans, to blaze trails where they please, cut down trees, utilize ATVs, place picnic tables and fire pits, and drill hitch rails to trees. It amazes me that the county parks department allows private citizens to engage in such activities and I feel that because this has been the standard in that area the Department of Conservation would not be able to employ it's standard area rules without numerous instances of damage and removal of natural habitat. I believe the department would have to increase control efforts and personnel to enforce regulations and increased maintenance issues. Allowing horseback riding at this particular area is not necessary because there is currently a balance of hunting, nature, and equine access in this county and I believe the department's efforts and finances could be better utilized in another part of the state.

as a env. sci. grad , father and boy scout dad, I enjoy and appreciate what our Cons. Dept. had done and does. The info provided was concise and easy to peruse.

If I had any recommendations, they would be: (1.) install restrooms of the type often used at remote parks, those which only require chemical servicing by the staff and low maintenance and (2.) the more intense stocking of fish- particularly crappie and bass; it's location saves long trips to lakes w/ those species and I think would draw more users w/ more intense fishing populations.

We fish in Lone Jack Lake several times a year.

Our favorite recreation is horseback riding individually or with a group. Retha and George Sitter have done a lot to improve the trails around Blue and Gray and would be involved in Lone Jack project too. They are building a good base of volunteers for trail upkeep.

Trail riding gives me a way to enjoy nature at close range without infringing on private property. Most riders are able to work with bike riders when they are aware of the need for safety around horses. ATVs and horses don't mix but a separate area is feasible.

Let's enjoy all the conservation areas and keep them maintained for the future.

Please note that I have been using the Lone Jack Conservation Area (LJCA) since it first opened. I live in Lee's Summit so the LJCA proximity is very convenient. Sometimes I fish from the bank and other times I bring my small two-man boat, which only has a trolling motor. The fishing is just average, because as noted within the above report, the LJCA receives a lot of pressure. However, it's still nice to just get out and enjoy the outdoors. With that said there is still one item that is sorely missing from the above noted "existing infrastructure." That one item is a "RESTROOM." When LJCA first opened, there was very nice cinder block restroom on the premises. If I remember correctly, the restroom was the recipient of a few bullet holes and was

later set on fire. Yes, that was a really stupid act by few idiots, but that was also well over 20 years ago. The MDC should not indefinitely punish "fisherman," both young and old, for something that happened so long ago. It seems the MDC expects everyone to just go in the woods. I'm sorry, but that should not be the MDC solution. Hopefully, the MDC will add a restroom to the LJCA "management plan." A porta potty would be just fine. Without a restroom, the MDC is sending a message that says..."enjoy the area, but don't stay very long."

Please continue to maintain (Mow) the S-SE, border fire line / access trail on a annual basis at least 2-3 weeks prior to the opening day of archery deer season so it can be much more easier to retrieve game from that side of the property. Thank you

Would love to see some equestrian trails, and a trailhead with some campsites. I don't see too many CA's that have equestrian trails, trailheads or camping. Seems like us horse people are losing out! Please consider it. I promise I for one will respect the wildlife, their habitat and work to preserve all that while we also enjoy it from our saddles. For the most part, us horsey people are good folk. It's not all about hunting and fishing!!

Think about it!

We really need showers, electrical setups. It is a great park and this really will bring more equine riders. More revenues for the county

This would be enjoyed by many equestrian riders

Any expansion in this area for equestrian use will a huge boom for equestrians coming from a long way away to ride in this area. Plus a boost for the economy in the immediate area.

We r allowed to ride in a lot of conservation areas in Missouri and it would be wonderful to be able to ride around a lake close to home.

It would be nice to be able to enjoy a view of a lake as we ride on beautiful days.

Much of the "oldfield" area is now overgrown with very thick woody low brush and is not suitable for hunting although the populations of rabbit and raccoon have increased to nuisance levels here. This is particularly true of the open area immediately south of the paved road from Brown Rd to the parking lot at Lone Jack Lake. Control of the dense woody overgrowth in this area is needed. Possibly chipping and spraying or burning would do much to help manage the wildlife populations here and improve hunting.

i am a hunter and a horseback rider and I think it would be a great idea to open this up for horse trails during the off season for hunting.

Everyone can work together on this project .

It would be nice to add horse trails with this being so close to Blue and Gray Park.

I think that lone jack lake should be opened up to horseback riding it is right across the road from Blue and Grey park and there is a group of riders that work really hard to keep B&G clean so it wouldn't be so costly for the state to maintain.

I frequently ride my horses at Blue and Grey and wish this area would also be opened up for riding.

It would be wise to open this area up to horse trail riders giving people more access to the hidden beauties of Missouri and our parks.

Thank you for your fine work in maintaining this area and keeping it as close to nature as you do! I was wondering if the area around the lake could also be tied into Blue & Gray Park for equine trails?

Please support the local friends by keeping Blue and Gray equestrian friendly.

Appendix J. Frost Island Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

During the late 1950's and early 1960's my family lived on a farm located on sand ridge just outside the Conservation Area boundary where the Des Moines/Mississippi Levee District levee terminates at the intersection with sand ridge. This area was where I learned to hunt and fish as a youth. The memories I have of all the things I learned from my Dad about caring for the land and protecting what God gave us with the natural wonders of His creation are priceless to me. I think your draft plan for management of this area is great. Go for it!!!

Appendix K. Little Prairie Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

During last years Christmas Bird Count, I noticed that the very western part of the area along CR 2170 has one of the worst cases of invasive honeysuckle I have ever seen. Your plan does mention controlling invasives, and you have a LOT of work to do on this part of the area. I understand that this may be complicated by perhaps being limited on the amount of prescribed burning you can do due to some neighbors near this side, as well as not wanting any runoff of chemicals into the upper part of the lake, but I hope some priority can be given to eradicating the honeysuckle. Some years ago, I regularly saw a covey of quail in this area, but I don't see how any could survive there now.

I received a packet in the mail with the area plans for the little prairie lake conservation area and we thought it would be a perfect opportunity to comment on this area. I also used the number from this packet and left a message for Justin Gailey to please return my phone call. I recently built a new home which is next to the little prairie conservation area on CR 2170. I have noticed alot of dumping in this area of dead animals. Just a few weeks ago I noticed a rolla animal control truck dumping dead animals there. A few weeks ago I thought I would take a nature walk in that area and look for mushrooms and you would have thought I was in a bone yard. I live less than a 1/4 of a mile from this area and I can't even sit on my front porch due to the horrific smell. There are dogs,cats,deer, trash,old mattresses. I'm not the only house on this road that has been complaining of the smell and the trash that has been dumped there. This area is really grown up

and looks terrible from the road. The bushes are growing over the signs. You would think you could find a human way to dispose of these dead animals. I have taken photos and plan to contact the county. There are many houses on this road and is well traveled and there needs to be a halt to dumping these animals and it maintained properly. I know this area was donated and is for wildlife but some of the state funds need to be put toward cleaning this area up and keeping it clean from rotten animals and trash.

Bravo for the plan. Sadly the absence of fire for ten years plus has turned prairie maintenance into a prairie restoration project following the takeover of exotic invasive species. I hope MDC focuses on native grassland restoration. Climax oak-hickory forest, disturbed soil, cover, and a variety of successional stages of other habitat are abundant on nearby private lands. However, few land owners promote warm season grasses though I have about 25 acres. If there is truly a fear that hot air from a fire can reach HWY 44 and sink back down, please simply burn with a wind from the south. I am the only proximal resident to the north and I would have no problem with smoke or the threat of a breakout. I think it will take a very aggressive burn program and considerable chain saw or heavy equipment labor to restore the degradation of the last 10-15 years. I hope the plan proceeds. It contains a lot of good ideas. I have burned regularly for about 25 years and would be happy to co-operate with the timing to preserve nesting etc. and happy to listen to any advice a MDC agent might have on my management efforts. Thank you, I look forward to some fire and smoke.

I would like to see Little Prairie opened up to horseback riding. Even if it would be by permit. Also, you have a parking area on 2170 opposite my property and it nothing more than a part place at night. I would really appreciate it if you would close that area and make everyone access from the lake side.

Thank you for listening.

I understand Little Prairie Lake will continue to be developed and managed for the protection and enhancement of the area's natural and cultural resources; grassland and woodland wildlife species; the protection and sustainability of aquatic species; and public recreation, to the extent compatible with natural resource management.

With this in mind, I question what are the Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources?

- Ostensibly, prescribed fire will be used, when practical. Other methods to provide early successional habitat will be considered, when prescribed fire is not practical.
- Effectively spray the fescue with a cool-season grass-specific herbicide, when tall fescue is more susceptible.
- Use a broadleaf specific herbicide on exotic or invasive species, particularly, sericea lespedeza and spotted knapweed. Seasonally spot spray these herbicides, when it is most effective.

- Use appropriate herbicides when controlling invasive species in the riparian zones and around the lake.

There are NO environmentally safe herbicides available to control the invasive species. Using said herbicides on all the riparian zones is extremely dangerous to all aquatic life. The primary use of this area is fishing, so that makes NO sense to me.

Fire is not always safe, but can be safe more times than not. A single, low-intensity fire does not control spotted knapweeds.

It seems the better choices for controlling invasive vegetation would include:

- planting competitive desired plants, which slow knapweed encroachment,
- mowing can prevent seed production and reduce carbohydrate reserves,
- cultivation to depths of 7 inches (18 cm) or more will control spotted and diffuse knapweed,
- long-term control of knapweeds is unlikely without revegetation,
- thirteen insects have been introduced into Montana for biological control of spotted and diffuse knapweed. Perhaps a similar plan could be used in Missouri?

I know that years ago, the prairie sections were mowed at least once per year. I do not see that happening now. I effectively maintain our ten acres without use of herbicides. I have abundant wildlife here. I also manage several bee colonies and I cannot afford to have them wiped out when foraging bees bring back herbicides into their hives. This poisons wax foundation, honey, brood, and pollen stores, essentially killing the colonies.

I urge you to stop using herbicides as the faster, easier way to maintain healthy prairie systems at Little Prairie Lake CA and all MCD CA's.

I urge you to truly enhance and protect the land and water for people and wildlife's sake.

Appendix L. Buford Mountain Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

Would like equestrian trails included in this area.

I advocate allowing equine use of the trail. If parking can be improved it would allow for enough parking for shared equine and hiker use.

I am against opening the gate and allowing hunters to drive deeper into the conservation area. If they want to hunt in a conservation area they should walk in.

I contacted Matt Jones and was pleased with our discussion. He was professional and sensitive to landowners. He represented MDC well. I look forward to interacting with him in the future.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Buford Mountain CA Draft Management Plan. Equestrian trail riders in Iron and Washington Counties are fortunate to be well served by trails on the Mark Twain National Forest. Buford Mountain CA is not listed as a high priority candidate for multi-use trail installation in "Expanding Public Land Multi-use Trails in Missouri," a 2015 proposal by Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen. That being said, Buford Mountain CA could provide a high quality outdoor experience opportunity for multi-use trail users and help to meet perceived demand for equestrian trails by riders in nearby Crawford County which is underserved.

Buford Mountain CA offers nearly ideal characteristics for a multi-use trail network. The 3,823 acres of forested upland offers more than ample space for 10-12 (or more) miles of trails. The soils and geology are conducive to trails requiring a minimum of maintenance, providing the trails are properly installed. MO Rt. 21 and MO Rt. U offer safe access for large horse trailers. The absence of a shooting range, public fishing and camping facilities, or other amenities that might attract large numbers of users would minimize any opportunity for conflict between different user groups. No sensitive areas are listed unless one counts the glade on Bald Knob. Some parts of the existing hiking trail could be designated for multi-use, but some segments are too steep and prone to erosion. There is plenty of room on the CA to develop a wonderful trail network totally separate from the existing hiking trail. The only infrastructure needed is a large parking lot; it appears the relatively gently sloping land near Rt. U would permit such an installation. 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 M. Busch Memorial Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

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

(computer shut down while I was making a comment yesterday). Re:Dust mitigation-long term. The dust generated by traffic on the road to lake 33, particularly on a week-end or holiday, during a dry period is not only a health issue, but is a driving hazard. Get behind a couple of pick up trucks on the way to lake 33, on a dry day, and only blind luck will prevent an accident. The dust generated during dry periods also can cause auto maintenance problems, like damaging gaskets, and water pumps, and seeps into everything on a car. Columbia Bottom CA has a long road, and it is paved, and only gravel on a small portion. It makes a big difference in enjoying the use of the area. Re:My suggestion of an additional entrance being built, to redistribute some traffic and thus reduce the dust on the main roads, instead of paving the road to 33, or the road to 34&35, I can't help but think something could be worked out with DOT. The service road connecting to highway 94, which goes by lake 11,(on the east side of Busch), or one of the service roads which connects to highway D (on the west/NW side of Busch) could be turned into an additional entrance to redistribute traffic and thus reduce the dust. I just don't buy the reasoning that there would be problems with DOT, or maintenace costs would be too high, to enact one of these suggestions.

It appears there is a reduction in agricultural fields. I believe more agriculture would be of benefit to the wildlife. In addition to burning woodlands it would be beneficial to do a timber harvest and some timber stand improvement.

Permitting horse back riding would expand public usage of the park.

Would be great if there were some trails for horse riding there

August A. Busch Memorial CA is, in many ways, the premier facility for residents of the St. Louis Area to experience the outdoors. While there are several public areas in the Greater St. Louis Area that offer equestrian opportunities there are also many horses and avid trail riders—riders willing to help install and maintain trails and associated infrastructure. Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen want to encourage MDC to develop a multi-use trail network on Busch utilizing a combination of existing access routes and constructed trails in the relatively undeveloped northwest portion of the 6,987 acre CA.

“We recognize the high use of Busch by the public for hunting, fishing, outdoor education, and other nature activities. It is important, for safety reasons, to insulate the urban public from horses and riders. The relative concentration of the developed portion in the central, eastern and southern portions of the CA lends well to maintaining separation by placing most multi-use trails in the northwest portion—north of Dardenne Creek and north and west of Kraut Run Creek.”

“We also recognize and appreciate the heavy use of Busch by urban hunters during some seasons, so we recognize that it may be prudent to close the area to multi-use during parts of the

hunting seasons.”

“Thank you for the opportunity to comment

I am a trail rider from the Troy area and frequently ride at Cuivre River State Park and Indian Camp Creek Park. I work with the Superintendent at CRSP to help maintain the trails there. I would love to have another area to ride nearby in St. Charles County and fully support, as a participating member, the statement by SMMBCH, as follows: “August A. Busch Memorial CA is, in many ways, the premier facility for residents of the St. Louis Area to experience the outdoors. While there are several public areas in the Greater St. Louis Area that offer equestrian opportunities there are also many horses and avid trail riders—riders willing to help install and maintain trails and associated infrastructure. Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen want to encourage MDC to develop a multi-use trail network on Busch utilizing a combination of existing access routes and constructed trails in the relatively undeveloped northwest portion of the 6,987 acre CA. SMMBCH offers to partner with the Department to plan, layout, install and maintain a trail network.”

“We also recognize and appreciate the heavy use of Busch by urban hunters during some seasons, so we recognize that it may be prudent to close the area to multi-use during parts of the hunting seasons.”

Please allow for equestrian multi-use trails as described by SMMBCH proposal “Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri.” Not only would this server the public in that sector but I also believe that exposure and opportunity to horses by our youth is important in their growth and well roundness just like hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. I ride most of the St. Louis area trails including 66 park and Queeny and have had many positive interactions with non-riders some will hopefully become riders themselves.

I feel the Busch Area is ideally suited for horseback trail riding. There is not only ample parking, a barn with tie stalls and a restroom facility, but a very good and large trail system in place. The bunker roads are ideal for trails and with a little clean up there would be miles of trails to use that would have no effect on the farming operation already in place out there. I feel certain it would be a great asset to the local area as well as a outstanding use of our state conservation area.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the August A. Busch Memorial CA Draft Management Plan. Busch Memorial CA is, in many ways, the premier facility for residents of the St. Louis Area to experience the outdoors. While there are several public areas in the Greater St. Louis Area that offer equestrian trail opportunities there are also many horses and avid trail riders—riders willing to help install and maintain trails and associated infrastructure. The Busch Memorial CA is listed as a viable option for trail development in the 2015 SMMBCH proposal, “Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri;” it would provide a needed riding opportunity in underserved St. Charles County. Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen want to encourage MDC to develop a multi-use trail network on Busch utilizing a combination of existing access routes and marked primitive trails with a mineral soil tread surface in the relatively undeveloped, northwest portion of the 6,987 acre CA. SMMBCH offers to partner with

the Department to plan, layout, install and maintain such a trail network.

We recognize the high use of Busch by the public for hunting, fishing, outdoor education, and other nature activities. It is important, for safety reasons, to insulate the urban public from horses and riders. The relative concentration of the developed portion in the central, eastern and southern portions of the CA lends well to maintaining separation by placing most multi-use trails in the northwest portion—north of Dardenne Creek, north and west of Kraut Run Creek, and along the west side of the CA. Access trailheads for the multi-use trails could be located off Routes D and DD, maintaining separation from other users and minimizing chances of conflict.

We also recognize and appreciate the heavy use of Busch by urban hunters during some seasons, so we recognize that it may be prudent to close the area to multi-use during parts of the hunting seasons.

Finally we would like to make the point that thousands of Missouri citizens and taxpayers endure physical challenges that make hiking and biking impossible. Their only means of getting off the road—without a motorized vehicle—is on a horse or mule. Many such members of the equestrian community treasure their ability to enjoy Missouri's rich outdoors in this way. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and thank you for your consideration.

I thank those responsible for the efforts by those within the MDC that have helped in making the Busch area a better place for all.

The Department acknowledges increasing use and traffic, yet continues to keep approximately 1/2 of the roads at the Busch Area closed to the general public. This was not always the case at Busch and this only increases potential for conflict.

MDC area Managers have been told to "de-infrastructure" their respective areas to help reduce costs to maintain. How narrow and short sighted. \$10.5 million dollars for a classroom and a few more trap/skeet fields and MDC feels the answer is to close even more roads?

Lake "improvements" have little to no input from end users. Fisheries biologists and other staff make uninformed decisions about how best to "improve" lakes. These improvements often make lakes unusable or of little value to certain interests such as for Retriever use.

MDC has taken away many of the best Retriever lakes and has altered in a negative manner many if not most of the remaining lakes of any value for Retriever use. Lakes that once were "adopted" by Retriever groups have been taken away by MDC without regard to the Retriever community.

In place, MDC has given the Retriever users a lake of virtually no use in its current

configuration. Last summer MDC assured us that this "new" lake would be made better relatively soon and that it could be "lowered" during winter of 2014-15. Now we are being told to wait and it "should" happen in 2015-16.

I liken this to how the Government told a special interest group aka Native Americans to "not worry, the Government was here to help and take care of them", and then moved them into the Desert. Lake 8 is our Desert.

Not allowing other uses on key lakes such as 1, 2, 15 when not being used by group fishing activities is under-utilization of a valued resource.

Lake 5 at one time was a Retriever Priority lake. Now it is not even open to Retrievers for much of the year. The list goes on and on.

Remaining lakes have unsafe shorelines, large amounts of trash, fishhooks and line. They also have had "fish structure" dumped in areas and locations that ruin their "Retriever Appeal".

Most MDC areas around the state have ample parking lots. The Busch area has them almost exclusively at lakes. Parking on roadsides puts vehicles and their contents in possible harms way. Any vehicles left open so that dogs don't overheat are overwhelmed with road dust. Conservation agents also have harassed Retriever trainers for not parking in parking lots. How far is too far?

MDC generates a considerable amount of revenue from contracts with farmers to grow row crops on MDC lands. This allows MDC to use less labor to "manage" these fields while netting a nice profit. The state of Missouri does not need MDC to grow large fields of row crops planted in soybeans, wheat and corn to benefit wildlife. Enough already exists around the state. Small food plots should be sufficient.

Likewise trees. The Busch area is already predominantly covered in trees. Many fields and lakes have been overgrown with trees that have not been kept in check and are now out of control and have "taken over" many areas making them less usable by Retriever groups, fisherman, hikers and other interests.

An inadequate number of fields are allowed to be left in grasses or natural native cover. These are too often allowed to grow too tall as to be of little to no value for Retriever use. Currently almost all grass fields are too tall as to be of any value to Retriever users, yet there are no plans to cut, mow, burn or otherwise reduce cover height until after July.

MDC and the farmers involved in planting row crops continue to apply chemicals around lakes

and roadsides as well as in fields with no notification of general public. This is unacceptable.

MDC has too many areas such as Weldon Spring that are not allowed for Retriever events while others that are not suitable are considered as "field trial" areas. Why?

When MDC speaks of the history of the Busch area the conveniently neglect to mention why Mrs. Busch contributed so much to the original purchase and the families ties to and significance of (Retriever) field trials.

Sorry for the quick rambling rant. Very frustrated as I am in another state judging a Retriever event on superior Retriever grounds that are state owned in a neighboring state. With MDCs budget I find this a shame. Did I mention \$10.5 million for a classroom and a few more trap fields? No money? Really?

I would like to see the area reviewed and equestrian trails developed. I feel that with the large amount of acreage at Busch that trails could be shared or constructed for equestrian use. There are miles of gravel road that would be perfect to ride in wet weather. Some of these roads could be designated for equestrian use especially on the northwest side of the area. I realize that there could be a need to close the trails during hunting season. I would be happy to help with the construction of the trails if notified or even with the planning process.

Any ideas toward development of this area should take into consideration the likelihood construction and recreation on or near Weldon Spring radioactive and toxic munitions waste. These lakes and the creek connecting them from the Weldon Spring site should be tested fully and the data made available for public information to determine exposure risks for consumption of wildlife and recreational use by children, adults, and high risk groups. Any discussion about MO public lands that were formerly contaminated or near such property should include environmental testing and risk assessment. Surely this is within the parameters of our state conservation and natural resources oversight officials.

Health has kept me from venturing out for a few years but more handicap access and parking at those those areas was needed when I was last there. The boats at that time were small. When you landed a fish it felt like water would come in over the side. I literally have had nightmares about sinking in one of your jon boats. The cover at the lake 34 dock was overdone so you were unable to even fish the hole. A dock on lake 35 would be nice. I know animal have some cause for this but there is inadequate trash containers at all lakes. The lakeside rest rooms could use some improvements as well. Thanks for listening. Hope to get out sometime

Our family would like equestrian trails added.

As a horseback rider, I would like to see equestrian trails created. There are a lot of horses in this area and another riding outlet would help preserve the trails in other areas (Cuivre River State Park, Indian Camp Creek Park, Bormmelsiek Park, Babler and Greensfelder) These could be multi use trails for hiking, cycling AND horseback riding. Thank you for the opportunity to make a comment.

I spend a great deal of time at Busch during the winter Urban Trout Season and Summer Fishing Seasons. I am appalled at the accessibility and condition of the Restroom Facilities. That's my first gripe. If you walk around the various Lakes, just travel to the tree fringe and you will see excessive trash, toilet paper, and human waste due to the poor location of these facilities. Additionally, if you try to get into the Restroom facilities at the Main Building, they are normally closed.

Secondly, I believe that access to the various sections of the Area can be improved. The roads are horrible and if additional access points are opened, this may actually reduce some of the road maintenance issues. Just travel to Lake 28 or Lake 3 and then check your front-end alignment. I take a lot of Out-Of-Town guests into Busch to do a little angling. Everyone complains about how horrible the roads are on such a nice area. Maybe if more money is spent on the roads and less on the Shooting Range a happy balance can be reached. Many of my friends refuse to fish Busch or go hiking on the many trails after any weather incident (rain, sleet, snow) because they have to spend considerable hours removing the road dust and silt from their vehicles. I understand that some of the MDC Area's need to remain a bit Primitive in their road infrastructures. Not Busch, this out to be a premier CA and the proper road infrastructure and maintenance should be implemented. Even if it requires a little more pavement and opening many of the access gates that are locked today.

Improve access and facilities. Those are my critical comments. Otherwise, it is an excellent area and provides a great deal of recreational opportunity for Outdoor Enthusiasts - beyond the Hunters and Anglers.

Appendix N. Neepaw Conservaion Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

I would love the plan to include access for equestrians, with appropriate parking for trailers. Hitching rails would be nice, too. And it would be fantastic to have equestrian camping, similar to Iowa's Brushy Creek State Recreation Area. This could be run by concession.

When possible always acquire more land. Continue to improve and enhance the trail.

Hard Copy Comment-I believe this area is too confined for firearms (single projectile) deer hunting.

Hard Copy Comment-I think the area is too small for deer hunting with firearms. It should be archery only or at least during firearms season, bucks only. The population of deer in the area has dwindled.

Appendix O. Spring Creek Watershed Priority Geography Public Land Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

<p>Would like to see prairie and savanna restoration as priorities.</p>
<p>Hard copy comment for Union Ridge Conservation Area (received June 19, 2015): In an area this size, there should be several small lakes and large ponds with access and camping. Walking is great if you are young; but the people who have the time to camp and fish are not young. Don't waste our money on areas you don't intend to make assessable.</p>
<p>We have a unique opportunity to draw people from near and far if we can provide camping and fishing areas. Surely that much area should attract more than hunters.</p>
<p>Also, I don't believe horseback riding should be by permit only. The trails could be marked and I believe people would honor the confines. I have been lost in those hills horseback and it is nothing to aspire to. Horseback riding is something you do when the weather is perfect, friends drop in on a weekend or maybe you just received bad news. Not usually situations you can plan for ahead.</p>
<p>SPRING CREEK WATERSHED PRIORITY PUBLIC LAND TEN-YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN</p> <p>Recommendations and Feedback</p> <p>June 15, 2015</p> <p>A group of ten passionate volunteers for the betterment of Green Castle, the surrounding communities, and the Union Ridge Conservation Area met on Monday, June 15, 2015, with MDC staff Ryan Jones, Kevin Powell, and Yvette Amerman to discuss the management plan for Union Ridge Conservation Area. After an hour of discussion and questions with the staff, the group met another hour to form recommendations for MDC related to the management of the people's Union Ridge Conservation Area.</p> <p>The following recommendations may also have merit for the additional conservation areas within the Spring Creek Watershed.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significantly increase the number and diversity of MDC sponsored/supported/advertised programs in Union Ridge. Some may be bird-watching, hiking, plant/tree identification, fish days, nature trails, etc. The audience for these sponsored programs would include, but not limited to, school groups, youth clubs, seniors, gardening groups, nature lovers, etc. 2. Construct and provide horse pens allowing for overnight stays for trail riders. 3. Significantly increase the number of directional signs both within and external to Union Ridge so that a public awareness of this resource on state highways and county roads is evident. For example, on Highway 6 (and other roads surrounding the park), there is no sign to turn on Highway D to access Union Ridge areas. Within the Conservation Area, there should be more way-finding signs identifying mowed trails, ponds, unique features, horse trails, etc. 4. Establish a history-marker system and waysides that discuss Union Ridge history, unique

nature features, plant/tree identification, horse trails, etc.

5. Develop several shelter areas that encourage recreation, trail-hiking, picnicking, educational seminars, gathering points, etc. A good start would be at the small lake.
6. Construct several new lakes/smaller ponds within the park that offer fishing, aquatic species, etc.
7. Wherever possible, trails should loop and not be dead ends.
8. Union Ridge Conservation Area is an ideal site for a visitor's center focused on education, promotion of conservation, and a destination point for Missouri and out-of-state visitors. Therefore, a philosophical and programmatic move from seasonal use for hunting and conservation studies to a year-round active people's area is desirable and an expected outcome.
9. Identify and construct quality privy throughout Union Ridge.
10. Develop "themed" trail heads/areas for individuals or groups having interests in birds, aquatic plants, stands of trees, prairie grasses, etc.
11. Develop productive partnerships/relationships with businesses or community groups, such as youth nature clubs, master gardeners, 4-H, etc. Advertise the process whereby they can become involved with MDC programs/activities and contribute to public awareness of conservation goals and objectives. Suggested partnership/relationship organizations:
 - Grow Native: <http://grownative.org/resource-guide/seed-supplies/>
 - Hartzell Hardwoods Kelly Hostetter, General Manager
<http://www.hartzellhardwoods.com/timeline.htm>
(and those who may harvest hardwood from Union Ridge)
12. Provide a list of property owners adjoining Union Ridge so that they can be included (if they wish) in the mailing of information like this and future meetings. Sponsor an annual "users" forum inviting comment on the use, plans, and management of the conservation area.
13. Advertise the Great Missouri Birding Trail and the efforts of Wallis Companies (Wallis Simpson) <https://www.facebook.com/greatmissouribirdingtrail> . How can we help?
14. Explore funding opportunities through:
 - the Missouri Department of Economic Development
<http://www.ded.mo.gov/Ded/ContactUs.aspx>
 - the Missouri Foundation for Health
<https://www.mffh.org>(Dr. Janet Gooch is currently serving on the board for 2015-17.)

Final comments:

In summary, we wish to see MDC invest much greater resources in developing and promoting the Union Ridge Conservation Area to Missouri and the nation. We wish to see it become a destination point for educators, youth, recreation enthusiasts, nature lovers, seniors, scouts, researchers, etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Spring Creek Watershed Priority Geography Public Land Management Plan. My comments apply specifically to Union Ridge Conservation Area.

Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen commends the Department for allowing equestrian use on Union Ridge CA, and we appreciate the intent to continue allowing that activity.

We are concerned, however, with the apparent intent to further restrict equestrian activity on the CA. At present the CSR, Div. 10, Ch. 11 states that equestrian use may be authorized by special use permit excluding the (1,769 acre) Spring Creek Ranch NA. The Area Regulations echo the first part—that equestrian use may be authorized by special use permit—but makes no mention of the exclusion of Spring Creek Ranch NA. The brochure for Union Ridge makes no mention of any equestrian use opportunity in the list of recreational opportunities or in the lead paragraph under that section; the seventh bullet point of 13 states that there are “No horseback riding opportunities except on public roadways or by special use permit.” There is no mention of the exclusion of Spring Creek Ranch NA. The Area Summary in the online Conservation Atlas makes no mention at all of permitted equestrian use.

The Draft Management Plan states that future intent is to allow horseback riding according to the Wildlife Code on field roads north of Highway D by special use permit only. There are significant inconsistencies in the statements from the various sources that specify current equestrian use opportunities and restrictions; one would assume the Wildlife Code from the CSR is the authoritative source. None of the current sources restrict equestrian use to field roads or to the somewhat ambiguous “area north of Highway D.” Consequently it seems apparent that the intent is to reduce the area offering equestrian use opportunity to less than half its current level. On a CA of 8,111 acres located over 100 miles from any substantial population center it seems unnecessary to restrict horseback riding to less than 3,000 acres.

The special use permit requirement places an undue burden on riders; hunters, fishermen, hikers, birdwatchers are not required to obtain such a permit. The permit application and approval process imposes a cost in time and resources and provides the Department with no appreciable useful information to guide management. The special use permit requirement should be suspended.

The 1,769 acre Spring Creek Ranch NA exists to showcase prairie and savanna land cover types—rare in Missouri, unfortunately. A single-file horse path through a prairie or savanna would make no significant damage to the ecological system and would offer a significant public segment the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate these rare landscapes. Exclusion of the NA from equestrian use is not biologically necessary and should not be part of the restrictions. Riding on field roads is much more desirable than being prohibited from riding on the CA altogether, but being confined to these field roads offers a mediocre riding experience. The rider is not able to see, enjoy, and appreciate many of the natural wonders and pleasing vistas that public land jewels such as Union Ridge CA have to offer. Carefully, properly located single-file multi-use trails on natural surface need not be causes of erosion or cause environmental degradation. SMMBCH recommends that the Department designate 10-12 miles of multi-use trails on Union Ridge. This CA is listed as a priority for trail designation in the 2015 SMMBCH Proposal to Expand Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri. Our organization offers, subject to availability of volunteers, to assist the Department to lay out and mark trails and install or

improve supporting infrastructure.
Thank you for your due consideration.

Appendix P. Bluffwoods Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

I support the proposed plan. As an overall whole mdc does a very good job managing the MO conservation areas. Keep up the good work. As a landowner adjoining the Goodall annex of bluffwoods CA for 20+ years, we are having sightings of more turkey and deer now than 20 years ago. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more detailed comment or assistance with your management goals.

Appendix Q. Poosey Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

I request the shooting range be updated to allow vehicles up to the shooting benches. It is much too long of a climb when carrying shooting equipment, especially if one is physically challenged. If this is not possible, consider building a new shooting range. The excellent shooting range near Gallatin, MO is too far for Chillicothe, Trenton and surrounding area shooters to drive to.

The proposed CAFO located on Highway W, Section 19, Township 60 North, Range 24 West in Grundy County would negatively impact the Poosey Conservation Area. Hopefully the different departments in the state government are communicating and assessing the impact that this operation would have on the Poosey Conservation Area.

1) All tenant farmers plant majority small grain crops with more strict enforcement of leaving 30% of their crop.

2) Partner with local NGO groups (Quail Forever, NWTF, DU, etc) for habitat management days. Each group can assist area managers in habitat management practices that need to be completed. Having multiple people there volunteering to help would help achieve management goals more quickly.

3) Require (at all parking lots) that small game harvest surveys be completed. This will help with fall covey counts and give more transparency to the public on what small game populations actually are. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Poosey Conservation Area Management Plan.

Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen commends the Department for allowing equestrian use of the multi-use trails on the north part of Poosey CA, and we appreciate the intent to continue that permission.

We agree that portions of some existing trails are eroding excessively and have other issues affecting sustainability. We offer, subject to availability of volunteers, to assist the Department to assess such trail segments, determine appropriate remediation or corrective action, and assist to mark and clear rerouted trails and other corrective measures as needed.

We also support the development of partnerships with local groups of horsemen for the purpose of maintaining and improving equestrian trails and supporting infrastructure. We offer to assist in identifying willing riders in the area, whether or not they are currently organized, who would partner with the Department for this purpose, and we would advise and assist such a group to become an effective ally.

Appendix R. Wappapello Lake and Clearwater Lake Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

I realize that you all are looking for very general info regarding these mgmt plans and on that note I am thankful for the upland game management on the Clearwater area. My family has owned land on this area or joining this area from 1867 up until this present day. Deer and Turkey populations have increased in the last several years.. We had priority leases on part of this corp property prior to MoCom taking over the management responsibility in 1979. We continue to work with the conservation biologists even today. I believe both parties have benefited. MoCom has a permittee who follows rules and regs and treats the land like they would if it was their own. We are able to utilize machinery on a larger acreage in a narrowing profit potential. The we is myself the grandson of Lee Mann who much of the property was bought from and now my son and grandson who help with farming chores. I also appreciate the effort that your people made in trying to control feral Hogs...

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Wappapello Lake and Clearwater Lake Management Lands Management Plan. My comments pertain to the Wappapello Lake Management Lands.

Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen commends the Department for allowing equestrian use on the 4.2 mile segment of the Ozark Trail that crosses the CA generally following the west property boundary. Although the Draft Management Plan lists no intent we hope and trust that that permission will continue.

The 2015 SMMBCH “Proposal to Increase Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri” recognizes the recreational opportunity that the OT crossing Wappapello Management Lands offers to equestrians in Wayne County and the surrounding community. The Proposal recommends that additional trails be marked and designated to enhance this opportunity—specifically a trail roughly parallel to the east property boundary on the west side of the St. Francis River. This would create a trail loop between Highway 34 and Sam A. Baker State Park that should be around 10 miles in length—a good half-day ride.

SMMBCH offers, subject to availability of volunteers, to assist in laying out, cutting, and marking the new trail.

Thank you for your due consideration.

Appendix S. Jessie Hollow Conservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

As adjacent property owners to this area we appreciate the notice and the level of detail furnished.

We especially like the idea of well defined boundaries.

Perhaps we could adopt many of the professional ideas presented here for our own 80 acre tract?

Please stay in contact at this e-mail address or by telephone

Thanks for asking

We share a 1/4 mile boundary with Jesse Hollow Conservation area

We seek security, safety and look forward to working with you on preservation -- 120 acres seems too small to allow hunting with safety -we really liked hearing about the credentials of your team members-- perhaps you can advise us on our 80 acres?

Time permitting please give us a call and we can elaborate on our recommendations

No Herbicide sprays on our conservation land.....it kills the bees...

Appendix T. Lower Flat Creek and Stubblefield Accesses Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1-30, 2015)

I own the land across Flat Creek from Stubblefield Access. I am well pleased with the way it's being managed. The creek though is hard to manage. The creek is moving east below the boat ramp because of driftwood buildup and if it continues the ramp may not be at the waters edge.

Section VII.

Challenges & Opportunities

1. Provide public access along Flat Creek. What does this mean for us local landowners?