

July - September 2016 Area Plan Public Comment Summary



A father and sons at Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
November 2016



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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 July 2016 – September 2016, 32 area plans (covering 26 conservation areas, 12 river accesses, five towersites, and two community lakes) 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 163 comments from 121 respondents on 29 area plans.
- Themes and issues identified for these plans included suggestions to increase dove fields, control invasive species, enhance fishing opportunities, maintain and add hiking trails, expand horseback riding trails, improve disabled access, increase enforcement, and acquire additional lands when available.
- 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 July 2016 – September 2016, 32 area plans (covering 24 conservation areas, 12 river accesses, five towersites, two community lakes, one park, and one state forest and wildlife area) 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 163 comments on 29 area plans (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of comments received by plan, July – September, 2016.

Comment Month	Area Plan	MDC Region	Comments Received
July 2016	Big Tavern Creek Accesses¹	Central	2
July 2016	Lower Osage River Accesses²	Central	1
July 2016	Hite Prairie Conservation Area	Central	0
July 2016	Robert M. White II Conservation Area	Central	3
July 2016	Montrose Conservation Area	Kansas City	3
July 2016	Settle’s Ford Conservation Area	Kansas City	6
July 2016	Ray County Community Lake	Northwest	4
July 2016	Warm Fork Conservation Area	Ozark	0
July 2016	Cross Timbers & Hermitage Accesses	Southwest	0
August 2016	Ben Branch Lake Conservation Area	Central	3
August 2016	Blue Lick Conservation Area	Central	4
August 2016	Central Region Towersites³	Central	6
August 2016	Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area	Central	23
August 2016	Marshall I. Diggs Conservation Area	Central	5
August 2016	St. Clair County Glades⁴	Kansas City	4
August 2016	Sugar Creek & Montgomery Woods Conservation Areas	Northeast	6
August 2016	Belcher Branch Lake Conservation Area	Northwest	4
August 2016	Sterling Price Community Lake	Northwest	1
August 2016	Franklin County River Accesses⁵	St. Louis	3
August 2016	Merrill Horse Access	St. Louis	4
September 2016	Dr. Frederick Marshall Conservation Area	Kansas City	4
September 2016	Kahrs-Boger Park Management Plan	Kansas City	1
September 2016	Anthony & Beatrice Kendzora Conservation Area	Kansas City	7
September 2016	Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area	Kansas City	3
September 2016	Little Compton Lake Conservation Area	Northwest	2

Comment Month	Area Plan	MDC Region	Comments Received
September 2016	Indian Trail Conservation Area	Ozark	10
September 2016	Current River Conservation Area	Southeast	10
September 2016	Busiek State Forest and Wildlife Area	Southwest	5
September 2016	B.K. Leach Memorial Conservation Area	St. Louis	5
September 2016	Forest 44 Conservation Area	St. Louis	10
September 2016	Long Ridge Conservation Area	St. Louis	9
September 2016	Weldon Spring Conservation Area	St. Louis	15
TOTAL			163

¹Plan includes Boeckman Bridge, Brays, Madden Ford, and Wilson Camp accesses.

²Plan includes Bagnell Dam, Bonnots Mill, Kings Bluff, Mari-Osa, Osage-Tavern, Pikes Camp, St. Thomas Ferry, and Tuscumbia accesses.

³Plan includes Branch Towersite, Camdenton Conservation Service Center, Freeburg Towersite, Proctor Towersite, and Rocky Mount Towersite.

⁴Plan includes Dave Rock Conservation Area and Lichen Glade Conservation Area.

⁵Plan includes Colter’s Landing Access, Mayers Landing Access, Redhorse Access, Reiker Ford Access, and Union Access.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

We received 163 comments from 121 respondents (Table 2). 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	Respondent Count	Comment Count
Individual citizens (no affiliation listed)	104	128
Equestrian groups (Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen, Trails End Stable LLC)	8	18
Non-Governmental Organizations (Audubon Society of Missouri, Columbia Audubon Society, St. Louis Audubon, Missouri Master Naturalists, Greenway Network, Stream Team, Boy Scouts, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)	6	6
University (University of Central Missouri)	1	9
Government (Westphalia Fire Protection District)	1	1
Business (Kansas City Power & Light)	1	1
TOTAL	121	163

How they responded:

Table 3. Total number of each response received

Response Type	Count	Percent
Web comment form	158	97
Email	3	2
Hard copy comment form	2	1
TOTAL	163	100

Where respondents are from:

Table 4. Total number of respondents by location

State	Count	Percent
Missouri	118	98
Illinois	2	1
Unknown	1	<1
TOTAL	121	100

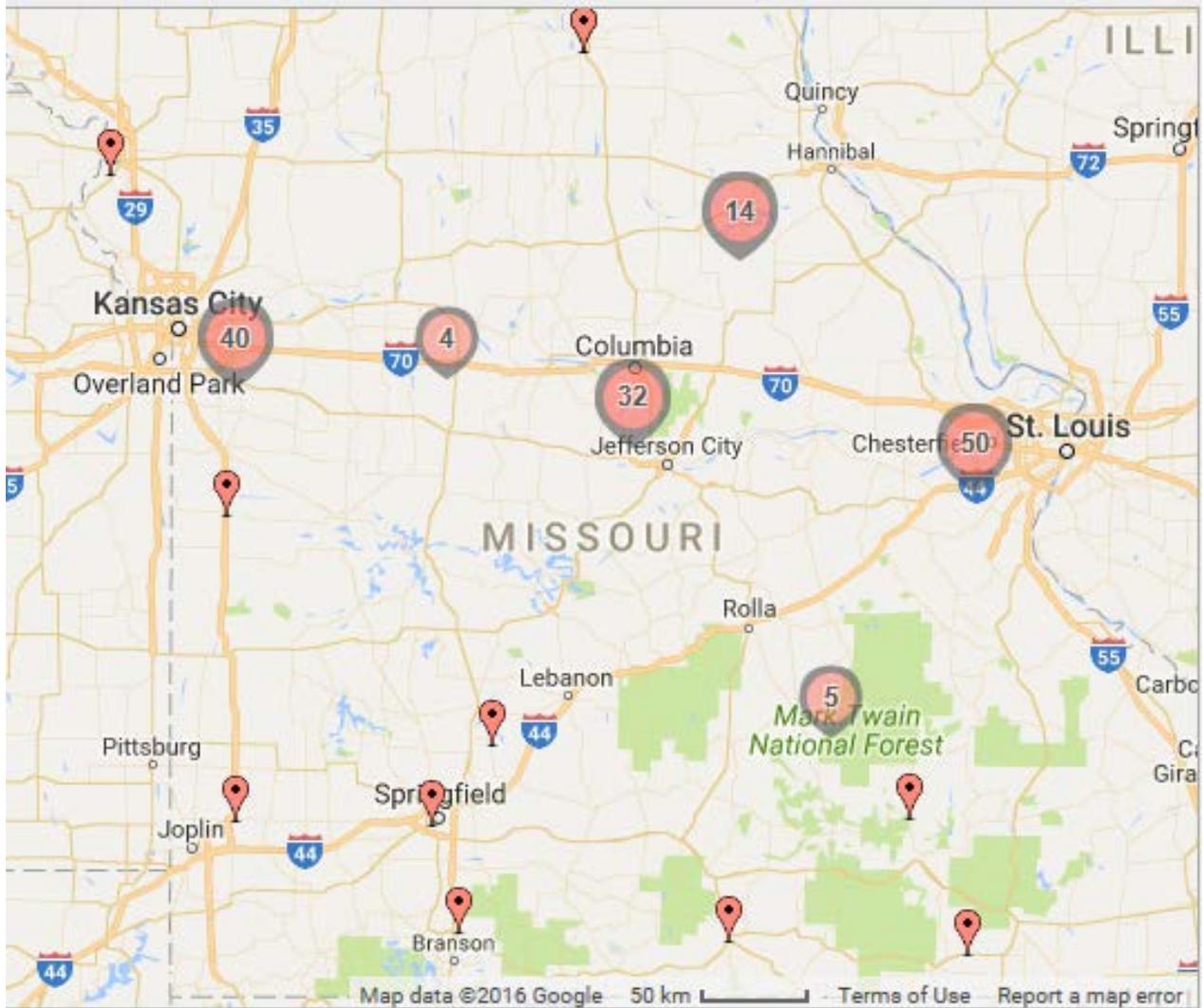
Figure 1. Map of Respondents by ZIP Code

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. Mapped using <http://batchgeo.com/>.



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. Mapped using <http://batchgeo.com/>.



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 July-September 2016. 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

Habitat/Wildlife Management

- Suggests adding dove management fields. Suggests planting wheat, sunflowers, and millet.
- Suggests partnering with local organizations to assist with planting, bird/bat house building, wood duck boxes, etc.
- Suggests adding wood duck nest boxes on fishless ponds and appropriate sites.
- Suggests adding managed fields for dove hunting.
- Suggests sowing millet in low areas to provide waterfowl food.
- Suggests increasing number and size of dove management areas.
- Suggests designating an area for monarch butterfly habitat.
- Suggests managing water levels more consistently throughout the waterfowl hunting season.
- Suggests adding wood duck nest boxes in appropriate locations.
- Suggest installing and maintaining wood duck nest boxes.
- Suggests attracting bobolinks to the area by planting alfalfa.
- Suggests building eagle perching structures since several large trees have fallen over the years.
- Appreciates waterfowl and dove hunting management on the area.
- Suggests adding dove fields.
- Suggests adding and maintaining wood duck boxes to the area.
- Concerned that the current burn schedule is disturbing young wildlife.
- Supports upland game habitat management. Wonders if focus is on quail, pheasants, or both.
- Suggests increasing deer, turkey, and rabbit populations.
- Suggests designating the area as a Quail Enhancement Area.
- Suggests adding a dove management area.
- Suggests planting milkweed along fencelines to support monarch butterfly populations.
- Suggests managing area for deer, turkey, and rabbit populations.
- Suggests adding more food plots to assist quail population.

- Suggests converting some of the bottomlands around the Grand River into wetland/marsh habitat for waterfowl.
- Suggests expanding elk herd to this area.
- Supports elk reintroduction to Current River CA.
- Suggests increasing use of prescribed fire to improve wildlife habitat south of Paint Rock Road.
- Suggests opening fields to improve wildlife habitat in lower Carr Creek area and Banker Hollow.
- Suggests planting agricultural crops outside the refuge area.
- Requests information on “tree thinning.” Wonders if this is accomplished by Department staff or by timber companies. Wonders where proceeds go from timber harvests and if timber harvests are being handled responsibly.

Invasive Species Removal

- Appreciates recent brush removal, but concerned with weed growth. Wonders if there are plans to plant forbs?
- Supports invasive species removal. Suggests washing mowing and farming equipment before moving to other areas.
- Concerned about invasive olive plants on area. Supports invasive species removal. Suggests washing mowing and farming equipment before moving to other areas.
- Supports removing non-native species from conservation areas. Suggests washing mowing and farming equipment before moving to other areas.
- Concern that invasive species (shield leaf, autumn olive) are not being controlled. Suggests addressing feral hogs in this plan.
- Concerned that aerial spraying of bush honeysuckle could be dangerous to native plant species, animals, and people.
- Concerned about removal of undesirable trees. Suggests replanting with native bird-friendly trees and bushes.

Natural Community Management

- Suggests restoring some of bottomland to mimic pre-development conditions.
- Suggests planting native plants instead of corn and soybeans. If crops are used, suggests using non-GMO seed and organic growing practices.
- Appreciates glade and savanna management.

Other

- Requests advice/assistance in managing nearby private property.
- Opposes conducting timber sales during wet conditions.
- Concerned about management activities on this area due to contaminated soils.

Aquatic Resource Management

Fishing/Fishing Pond Management

- Concerned that lake is overfished. Suggests managing some lakes for trophy bass fishing only.
- Suggests stocking more redear sunfish or bluegill to supplement existing panfish population.
- Suggests allowing unlimited take of spotted bass and an 18 inch limit on smallmouth bass.
- Suggests enhancing fishing opportunities on Kendzora Lake.
- Suggests enhancing fishing opportunities by adding more brush piles to Little Compton Lake and monitoring fish populations.
- Suggests adding fishing opportunities.
- Suggests improving fish habitat in Prairie Lake by adding more pole stumps, trees, and other structures.
- Suggests only allowing catch and release fishing on this area due to potential contaminants.

Fishless Pond Management

- Concerned that fishless ponds have increased midge fly population, hurting the deer population.

Habitat Management

- Concerned Wilson Camp Access management activities have caused increased erosion on neighboring property.

Public Use Management

Hunting

- Suggests ending hunting at 1 p.m.
- Suggests having a daily drawing for waterfowl hunts.
- Suggests allowing youth hunters to use Disabled Hunter Zone if not in use.
- Supports only limited access to wetland areas.
- Suggests allowing only archery on the north side of the area and only allowing alternative methods on the south side of the area.
- Suggests removing draw system for waterfowl hunting. Opposes Every Member Draws system.

- Appreciates Rocky Mount Towersite for archery deer hunting opportunities. Suggests changing regulations from archery and firearms turkey hunting to archery methods only turkey hunting for safety reasons.
- Suggests placing a greater emphasis on improving waterfowl hunting.
- Would like to see waterfowl hunting move towards lead-free shot.
- Concerned about “sky busting.” Suggests limiting the amount of shot a hunter may carry onto Eagle Bluffs CA. Educate hunters about the realistic capabilities of guns and ammo for waterfowl hunting.
- Suggests expanding “no hunting” area due to increased housing development in overlook trail area.
- Appreciates moveable blind for bird watching and waterfowl hunting.
- Wonders how to get to new blind towards south of property.
- Concerned that deer population on area appears to be declining. Suggests only allowing muzzleloader and archery methods on the area for at least five years.
- Suggests not allowing antlerless deer permits at Montgomery Woods CA.
- Supports current deer hunting regulations of archery hunting only at Kendzora CA.
- Concerned about the large number of waterfowl hunters on the area. Suggests limiting the number of hunting parties each day through a morning draw.
- Would like more firearms deer hunting opportunities in Platte County.
- Suggests implementing a four-point restriction for deer hunting on Indian Trail CA.
- Suggests allowing archery deer hunters access to the area after October 15th.
- Suggests providing more bowhunting opportunities.

Fishing/Boating Access

- Appreciates management of accesses.
- Suggests removing brush around Pond 5 to allow better fishing access. Appreciates fishing opportunity.
- Suggests adding a walking trail for canoe/kayak access to the South Grand River.
- Suggests providing better road access to Perche Creek for fishing opportunities. Concerned with road condition and width to reach Providence Access.
- Suggests planning for maintenance of current fishing docks. Suggests expanding fishing docks to avoid overcrowding.
- Suggests improvements to Mayers Landing Access to allow easier travel down the river.
- Suggests providing better access to the bank for fishing.

Birding/Wildlife Viewing

- Suggests allowing more access for bird watching during the waterfowl hunting season.

- Concerned about harassment of nesting eagles on the area. Suggests signage and gate to prevent visitors from getting too close. Suggests adding a nest camera for viewing eagle nests.
- Suggests having a wildlife-viewing blind available for birders during the waterfowl hunting season. Consider using a draw system for access with a fee.
- Appreciates ability for birders to access area from 1-3 p.m. during waterfowl hunting season.
- Suggests mowing roadside to water in several areas to allow for better viewing opportunities of shorebirds.

Trails

- Suggests adding 10-12 miles of multi-use trails to Robert M. White CA.
- Suggests restoring hiking trail on north side of Montrose CA.
- Suggests adding a hiking trail.
- Suggests more frequent maintenance on the river hiking trail.
- Suggests adding 10-12 miles of multi-use trails to Marshall Diggs CA.
- Appreciates 10 miles of multi-use trail on Sugar Creek CA. Suggests adding two more miles of multi-use trail to Sugar Creek CA.
- Suggests improving area access trail to the Grand River.
- Supports horseback riding on area roads.
- Suggests adding 12-15 miles of multi-use trails (hiking and horseback riding) to Indian Trail CA.
- Suggests expanding hiking trails.
- Suggests adding equestrian trails.
- Supports maintaining and improving equestrian trails.
- Appreciates the opportunity to ride horses on Busiek SF and WA trails. Offers volunteer assistance maintaining and marking trails.
- Suggests adding equestrian trails and allowing equestrian use during the off-waterfowl hunting season.
- Enjoys multi-use trails for equestrian use and supports maintenance of these trails. Appreciates the opportunity to horseback ride during the hunting season.
- Suggests gravelling more trails to prevent damage from equestrian use during wet conditions.
- Suggests improving trail markers to clearly lead back to the parking lot.
- Suggests closing trails if conditions are too wet.
- Concerned about trail conditions due to over use. Suggests adding more trails, issuing trail condition alerts, rerouting trails, and utilizing volunteers to maintain trails.

Amenities

- Suggests better informing area users about the parking lot on Warren School Road.
- Suggests adding paddle boats for rental/use at Belcher Branch Lake CA.
- Appreciates the shooting range.

Disabled Access

- Suggests improving access to Ray County Community Lake for users who are disabled. Concerned that disabled accessible fishing jetty is not maintained and far from the parking area.
- Appreciates ADA-accessible hunting blinds. Concerned with location of blind. Suggests moving blind or pumping more water to allow waterfowl to be in range.
- Suggests adding an ADA-accessible boardwalk.
- Suggests adding an ADA-accessible dock on Kendzora Lake with small boat only ramp.
- Suggests adding more ADA-accessible waterfowl blinds.
- Wonders how to get to ADA-accessible parking/hunting area?

Area Maintenance

- Concerned about the amount of dust created by gravel road.
- Interested in working with the Department to maintain stream crossing on neighboring landowner property.
- Appreciates preserving fire towers.
- Wonders if projects could be accomplished with volunteer assistance.
- Suggests adding more trash cans and covering them.
- Concerned about pest management in area privies.
- Concerned that Civilian Conservation Corps facilities are not mentioned in this plan. Wonders if these facilities will be maintained?
- Concerned about water management at B.K. Leach CA causing flooding on neighboring property.
- Offers volunteer service to maintain multi-use trails.

Communication/Education

- Suggests a website dedicated to Eagle Bluffs news, events, sightings, etc.
- Supports increased interactions with neighboring landowners, including offering seminars on improving properties for wildlife and glade restoration.
- Requests more details about plans to collaborate with adjacent private landowners.
- Wonders if volunteer opportunities or service projects are available for youth at Busiek.
- Suggests better informing area users about hunting seasons by posting signs weeks in advance.

Enforcement/Policy

- Supports allowing public to climb fire towers.
- Suggests adding signs that state activities allowed and not allowed during waterfowl season.
- Suggests increasing staff presence on the area to better enforce area regulations.
- Concerned about partying at Reiker Ford Access. Suggests increased patrols.
- Concerned motor boats may be disturbing wildlife and area users. Suggests allowing idle speed only.
- Opposes motorized boat access/use on the Current River.
- Suggests patrolling area on horse to enforce no “off-trail” riding.
- Concerned about unleashed dogs on the area.
- Suggests allowing horseback riding in Weldon Spring CA (even if by special use permit).
- Suggests allowing equestrian use on the Lost Valley Multi-Use Trail.
- Concerned that hikers and bicyclists aren’t staying on designated trails.
- Suggests not allowing waterfowl hunting, canoe use, or fishing in the Femme Osage Slough due to potential contaminants.
- Concerned that canoes and kayaks are not allowed on Prairie Lake.

Other

- Kansas City Power & Light appreciates the opportunity to provide a public recreation area by working with the Department.
- Enjoys Kendzora CA for recreational activities such as fishing and photography.
- Appreciates the area for recreational opportunities such as hunting. Suggests expanding this area, if feasible.
- Appreciates Current River. Concerned that floating groups have degraded the river.

Administrative Considerations

Land Acquisition

- Encourages acquisition of adjacent land to Dr. Frederick Marshall CA.
- Suggests acquiring adjacent land when available.
- Suggests purchasing nearby Opry House and developing that site for camping.
- Suggests acquiring additional land.
- Offers to sell adjacent land to the Department.

Infrastructure Development

- Suggests installing dry hydrants at Osage River accesses.
- Suggests building more lakes like Ben Branch Lake throughout Missouri.
- Suggests adding parking east of the pump house.

- Suggests improving access to waterfowl hunting pools and other hunting areas. Suggests adding more parking opportunities.
- Supports additional road access beyond Pool 14 to loop back to Pool 11 or Pool 12.
- Suggests building a road next to Perche Creek or the Missouri River to reduce vehicular harassment of waterfowl.
- Suggests adding stairs from boardwalk to overlook platform to prevent erosion.
- Suggests more access to Eagle Bluffs CA from adjacent Katy Trail State Park.
- Suggests adding a kayak/canoe launch other than the rocked bank that is difficult to use.
- Suggests adding boat launches on large pools.
- Supports adding interpretive signage to the area. Suggests adding signage at overlook platform.
- Suggests adding a pavilion for visiting groups.
- Suggests adding a pond.
- Suggests adding camp sites to Belcher Branch Lake CA.
- Suggests adding a trail from the parking lot to the north end of the Belcher Branch Lake.
- Concerned about any future development damaging cultural resources.
- Suggests adding youth soccer fields.
- Suggests renovating small ponds for fishing.
- Suggests adding a waterfowl refuge to the area.
- Suggests adding a boat ramp to access the Grand River.
- Suggests building a small museum to provide information about the area's rich history.
- Suggests adding privies, especially near campsites and shooting range.
- Suggests adding rain shelters and benches to area trails.
- Suggests adding a boat ramp near Stag Island.
- Suggests adding a skeet shooting range to Jay Henges Shooting Range.
- Suggests adding a privy to the area.
- Suggests adding separate trails for equestrian use.
- Suggests adding 1-3 miles to the existing multi-use trails on Long Ridge CA.
- Suggests adding more hiking trails.
- Suggests adding parking areas.
- Suggests adding land access to the Darst Bottom Tract.

Boundary Maintenance/Signage

- Appreciates boundary fence and requests additional boundary signage.
- Suggests improving trail signage. Suggests adding temporary signs about timing of hunting seasons.
- Concerned about area users trespassing on to neighboring property. Suggests adding signage and fencing to discourage trespassers.
- Suggests better marking of area boundaries.

- Wonders if it is possible to remove large trees that fall between neighboring property and Kahrs-boger Park?
- Suggest better marking area boundaries.
- Concerned about area users trespassing on to neighboring property. Suggests creating a refuge buffer along private property boundary.

Other

- Concerned about negative long-term effects from an oil, coal, and mineral lease.

Plan Content

- Suggests adding an easement map.
- Suggests adding a road map and including information about who is allowed to use each road and if there are plans to close these roads.
- Suggests adding more details to this area plan (cost of implementing plan, natural disaster plans, post-timber harvest protocols, timber management guidelines, area regulations, facility maintenance and inspections, improved maps, staffing needs, contingency plans, planning team members, etc.).
- Suggests adding information to the Area Background section about the Boone “Missouritown.”

General Comments

- Appreciates area for recreational opportunities such as fishing and hunting.
- Appreciates area for recreational opportunities such as wildlife viewing and hunting.
- Thanks Department staff for their upkeep of Eagle Bluffs CA
- Believes that the Department should focus more on conservation instead of attracting visitors.
- Appreciates Marshall Diggs CA.
- Supports area plan and appreciates area management.
- Appreciates Merrill Horse Access.
- Appreciates Forest 44 CA.
- Supports the Long Ridge CA management plan.
- Supports Weldon Spring CA management plan.

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. Big Tavern Creek Accesses Management Plan Public Comments

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

The issue of soil erosion is mentioned in several instances of the Tavern Creek Accesses Management Plan. I am a property owner with other of my family members that borders the Tavern Creek Wilson Camp Conservation area on both sides.

My concern is that soil erosion has increased on my property as a result of the rip-rap boulders used to control the erosion of the bridge and access point of Wilson Camp. Water flows at points of least resistance. The southeast side of the creek, (opposite of the Wilson Camp bank access that is heavily laden with rock) has taken a dramatic hit of erosion and now has a vertical bank from my property to the creek bed. The water that used to run on the north side of the creek bed, (adjacent to the Camp Access) has been deferred to the south side of the creek's bank.

As a property owner I would appreciate that I be included in your erosion plans discussion/activity concerning this area.

Respectfully,

First of all, I appreciate all the work you have provided. THANKS! I have one concern if you have control of this situation. The ***** Farm borders Southeast on the Big Tavern. There is a terrible erosion problem on the creek bank. It will eventually destroy the bottom field. We don't have the money or man power to stop this. We have tried in the past, helped, but failed. What I'm asking from you, is if someone could look at this on site to evaluate. I'm not asking for an elaborate excavation process, but just to kill the willows that are gathering gravel at the location where the creek bed once ran free. Once brush is dead, let mother nature do the rest. You can call me at ***-***-**** or email. Thanks

Appendix B. Lower Osage River Accesses Management Plan Public Comments

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

I would like to see dry hydrants put in at the Osage river accesses. This would be a huge benefit for the community. It would allow us to get water when conditions are bad.

Appendix C. Robert M. White Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Area should have several fields annually managed for dove hunting. Area farmers should be required to plant wheat, sunflowers, and millet and area personnel, burn, brush hog etc as appropriate. One field should be dedicated for a youth hunt on the first saturday of the season. Local clubs, groups etc should be contacted to participate in planting, bird/bat house building, wood duck boxes. etc.

<p>A shooting range should be considered. Camping should not be allowed.</p>
<p>In addition to my previous comments, I would add; Provide Wood Duck nest boxes on all fishless ponds and other sites as appropriate.</p>
<p>First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Robert M. White II CA Draft Management Plan. Equestrian trail riders in Audrain, Monroe, Montgomery, and Callaway Counties are underserved with respect to public land riding opportunities. To address this lack of opportunity Robert M. White II CA is on a priority list of Conservation Areas recommended for multi-use trail development in the 2015 “Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri” proposal by Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen. This is consistent with the purpose of providing outdoor recreation opportunities as stated in the draft plan Statement of Purpose, Strategic Direction. While not all equestrians are anglers, providing opportunity for equestrian users is also consistent with the Public Use Management Challenges and Opportunities number 2: “Provide accessibility to area users with mobility disabilities.”</p> <p>White CA exhibits most desirable characteristics for development of a multi-use trail system. The CA is of adequate size for development of a minimum of 10-12 miles of trails. Topography and landscape (predominantly upland), a variety of cover types, and a minimum of conflicting uses also represent positive features. The location, off Missouri Route ZZ, would provide safe and convenient access to the CA via hard surface roads.</p> <p>SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails. We further offer to assist the Area Manager to develop a partnership with local trail users to assist with development and maintenance with the trails and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.</p>

Appendix D. Montrose Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

<p>I am very disappointed that there isn't anything in the plan to restore the hiking trail on the north end of the area. The trail used to be maintained and made access to the forest area convenient for hunting squirrels, turkey, and deer. The area is so overgrown now that you can barely walk through it. Some of the old signs are still on the trail and the area looks horrible.</p>
<p>Area Management should include managed fields for dove hunting. Where possible low areas should be sowed with millet to provide waterfowl food.</p>
<p>Kansas City Power & Light Company (KCP&L) announced in January of 2015 our plan to cease combusting coal in 2021 at Montrose Generating Station to comply with pending environmental regulations. Currently, KCP&L is still considering its options on how to manage the site,</p>

including the lake, after that date.

KCP&L has appreciated the opportunity to provide a public recreation area for our customers by working with the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Appendix E. Settle's Ford Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Please consider: 1) Providing walking trail access to South Grand River for canoe/kayak access. 2) Increasing number/size of Dove Management Areas. Thank you for opportunity to comment.

this area should be targeted as an intensely managed waterfowl area with a HQ building and daily drawings, etc. If not available an accessible ADA blind should be added. Improved access to hunting pools is needed.

All hunting should end at 1pm.

Need to find a way to manage water levels more consistently. At this time the area depends on the Grand River to flood to provide water for the wetland areas. Unfortunately the Grand River does not flood on demand leaving the area with very little to no water during Teal season and the regular duck season.

Designate a small area for milkweed to allow for Monarch Butterfly reproduction.

Thank You

Hi. I recently discovered the fishing ponds at settlers ford and have been taking the kids quite a lot lately to ponds 4 and 5. I realize the idea is conservation, and helping provide a place in which natural habitat can thrive. The ponds appear to have been managed well. Hooking lots of fish. Just wondering about Pond 5, it is listed as .6 acres I believe, but is much larger. The brush is grown up so badly that very little access to the water is available. There is only one small area that is clear enough to gain access to fish. Just wondering about some brush removal to allow more access to the water. Also, the area where the bank is clear has an overabundance of plant growth in the water. Just wondering about making easier access to fish. Thanks for what you all are doing. I have a 9 year old daughter who lost her dad 3 years ago to cancer. She doesn't laugh a whole lot. Should have heard her this morning trying to land a bass that was nearly 17" long. She had a blast and is begging to go back this evening. Thank you.

I use the area mainly for dove, waterfowl and archery deer purposes. Most of the area is very difficult to access, and parking opportunities are very limited. Water control, or the lack thereof for pool needs to be improved along with potential pumping opportunities. Allowing row crops in more areas south of the Grand would help with access as these would provide "tractor" trails that would be required for Ag purposes. The increased accessibility would provide allow more opportunities for a wider variety of area use access.

Allow youth hunters to use the ADA blind pool when not in use by ADA hunters.

1. In my opinion, the inaccessibility of some of the area wetland units is a plus.
2. In my opinion, no boat accessibility to wetland units (with the exception of Unit 4) is a plus.
3. Implementing waterfowl hunting stop times would, in my opinion, improve the quality of waterfowl hunting at Settle's Ford.
4. Limiting the number of hunters allowed into each wetland unit per day would, in my opinion, improve the quality of waterfowl hunting at Settle's Ford.
5. It would be a plus, in my opinion, that some of the bottomland within the CA were restored to conditions that mimiced "pre-development" in terms of drainage patterns, landscape, etc. Meaning, contour manipulation so that wetland units reflected more of a natural setting vs. berming only the low end of the unit (field).

Appendix F. Ray County Community Lake Management Plan Public Comments

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

Nice that MDC cut alot of the brush back. However this year over growing in weeds. Need better access for those of us that are hanicapped. One dike that is accessable, that is not maintained, really. Parking closer to the lake would be a much better help. Thanks

We have lived immediatly north of Ray County Lake since 1988. A portion of the watershed draining into the lake is on our property.

We were impressed last year when a contractor came in to remove brush and cut trees to clean up portions of the property that had overgrown over more than 25 years. It was our understanding that the plan was to plant forbs. Instead, however, at least a portion of the newly mowed property is now overgrown again, now with weeds. We regret to say it looked better before. We recently corresponded with an MDC employee who indicated the department was experimenting with vegetation growth. The jury seems to still be out on the results of the experiment, and more aggressive action based on the terrestrial resource management strategies would appear to be more beneficial.

Also, with regard to the efforts to control the watershed and drainage area, we would be willing to consider proposals from MDC to help maintain the stream crossing our property.

DUST, DUST, DUST; Something needs to be done about the dusty road. Dust is on everything including the person trying to fish. When you come home in your very expensive vehicle, you have a mess. We need a walking trail for excersize or bird watching and just taking your children out in the country. We believe it would double the activity if the dust was taken care of.

Install and maintain Wood Duck nest boxes in appropriate locations.

Appendix G. Ben Branch Lake Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

Can we please build more lakes like Ben Branch in Missouri? This is a very nice lake but is over fished like many of these small public lakes. By the time a bass reaches 12" long it's already in someone's frying pan. Can we do a better job of policing what is taken out of these lakes? Can we regulate some of these lakes as trophy bass fishing only?

- 1; consider stocking red ear sunfish or hybrid bluegill to supplement existing panfish population.
- 2; Provide wood duck nest boxes and maintain in appropriate locations.

Appendix H. Blue Lick Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

This site is one of the best MDC CA (my professional opinion). This site is incredible with native species diversity. Reed Canary Grass must be prevented from the CA The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

I love this area, its a perfect place to take the kids fishing or I can get away and do some bow hunting with out have to many people walking around.

change the gun seasons methods to separate the north section from the south section. allow archery only method on the north and allow black powder and or pistol only on the south side. nobody hunts this conservation area since they have changed it to archery only.

Provide wood duck nest boxes and maintain in appropriate areas.

Appendix I. Central Region Towersites Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

Hello,

Thank you for your deliberate care and attention to keeping and preserving the towersites that we have remaining in Missouri (and especially those mentioned in the draft plan for the central region). The purpose that the fire towersites serve in telling the history of conservation across the country is very important and thank you for helping to keep that story alive here in Missouri. I just wish they were closer to where I lived and I would donate time and energy to help with their care and condition, whether it be by painting, replacing boards and steps, etc.

Thank you again, and keep up the great work!

Would love to see the tower off route 19 in Shannon county be open to the public again. I went there as a child several times and loved it. The view of the current river and the Ozark National Scenic Riverways was amazing. I hope I can take my child up there one day.

It would be nice if access to all of the towers would be provided. There very few towers and opportunities for the public to enjoy access to towers and to view the area from those elevations. The towers are part of our history most kids growing up in the 60s, 70s and 80s looked forward to climbing the towers and viewing the areas. It would be nice to pass that recreation on to our kids and grandkids

Over the years we have enjoyed stopping at these towers when and where they are open. A great travel break, always refreshing perspective changer, and they inspire a sense of adventure!

When our children were young these stops never failed to thrill them.

Climbing one is both physically and mentally challenging. My husband is a "recreation professional" and learned in his studies that most satisfying recreational experiences involve a level of perceived risk. These accomplish that!

It would please me if they were maintained, open to use, and the investment preserved for the future.

I have hunted Rocky Mount Towersite for the last 15 years for both deer and turkey, always with a bow. I love it that it is only archery for deer and it never gets too crowded. I hope that you keep the hunting regulations the same for this towersite except that I would like to see it go completely archery as I believe that during the turkey hunts you are allowed to use guns and I

have seen people come through the woods the last 2 years with guns when I have been deer hunting in the fall. I don't wear orange while deer hunting because it's archery only so it is nerve racking when I see the guns. Thanks for giving me a place to hunt for all these years.

Appendix J. Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Yes, birding can take place any day of the year. However, spring and fall migration are the very best times to spot uncommon or unusual migrants, as well as large numbers of birds of all sorts. I don't see why killing birds should take precedence over viewing and photographing them and educating others about the importance of birds in our lives.

I appreciate the department's commitment to reducing or eliminating the use of herbicides and other chemicals and exploring the use of non-GMO seeds for wildlife food and cover.

Get rid of the draw system for waterfowl.

Under Public Use Management Considerations, management objective #4, I would suggest a greater emphasis on improving the quality of the managed waterfowl hunts - in terms of hunter success, waterfowl population and the number of hunters able to access the area. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this comment.

Thanks for providing one of the best multi-use public access wildlife viewing/use area in the region! I am an ecologist working for a bird conservation organization and frequently share the great balance of consumptive/non-consumptive uses supported by Eagle Bluffs all combined with water treatment. The most common issue I hear is from the birding community to have more access during waterfowl hunting season, which is a very popular time to bird. I know birding is possible year round, but that time of year is a spectacular time to bird for the same reason it is a great time to hunt. As waterfowl hunters are supporting MDC and habitat conservation by purchasing hunting licenses there is a cost to reducing hunter access to increase access. Would it be possible to offer the same kind of draw system for a blind/area only open for birding at the same time the hunting is going on? It would be a fee system as well. I do believe it is time for birders to be willing to financially support the habitats they use and appreciate and believe many would. I honestly don't know what the birding would be like during active hunting. If a refuge area would be full of birds because it is safer or if the birds would just be gone. I think offering the option to the large birding community would open a dialog as to why hunters have more access during that period. There is a large community of them willing to pay for it, and pay for just the chance at a blind spot, not a guarantee. If birders could fill a blind with the same financial input would it be feasible?

I have been a frequent user of Eagle Bluffs CA since its opening. Overall, especially in the last 15-20 years, MDC has done a very good job of balancing access for hunters and wildlife viewers. The 1-3 p.m. opening for viewing is especially appreciated, and I wish this approach would be actively considered for other MDC properties.

The issue of eagle harassment is a serious one to me. Yes, staff "monitors" visitor activity, but those efforts are inadequate. I've often seen photographers walking to a point nearly under a nest. Signage would keep some at bay; closer monitoring and actively discouraging close approaches (even gate closing) would also help.

Maintenance on the River Trail is greatly appreciated, and the difficulty is understood. Still, a more frequent maintenance routine would be appreciated.

I would strongly support additional road access. Continuing the levee road beyond Pool 14 to loop back to the main road near Pool 11 or Pool 12 seems feasible. Opening the road to through traffic to make a loop going past Pool 7 would also be appreciated by wildlife viewers.

I've heard of a suggestion to construct a boardwalk. This is probably not the best use of funds, given the major flood events likely at Eagle Bluffs. The same or lower expenditure devoted to road continuation/opening would be a better use of funds.

Bobolinks would be easy to attract with a little effort. They were frequent spring visitors near the electrical transmission right-of-way before the area was disturbed and replanted. Alfalfa seed is cheap.

The moveable blind is a great addition.

My sincerest thanks to Tim James and the many other MDC employees for keeping Eagle Bluffs CA one of the gems in the system, for hunters and non-hunters, alike.

I applaud the efforts to maintain the hunting recreational opportunities at Eagle Bluffs. However, I would like to see the morning waterfowl drawing procedure changed to be fair for each hunting party. If the every-member draw continues, I will not likely ever introduce my two boys to waterfowling. I will not bring my son to the drawing to draw two pills when the party ahead of us may draw three or four. If you want today's teens be tomorrow's hunters, a discriminatory draw approach is not the right way to get them involved.

Suggests constructing an elevated viewing platform near mudflat areas: Adding to this, making this a boardwalk accessible to disabled folks would negate the need/worry of having motorized vehicles on the trails as people with disabilities would have the same access with new boardwalks/paths from parking areas out to wetlands and mudflats.

Suggests allowing rifle hunting: rifle hunting would require shutting the area entirely to non-hunters for safety reasons. I would see this as undesirable.

Suggests interpretive signage about the area: I would fully support this idea for people not too aware of nature and wanting to learn.

I'm a disabled military veteran who uses the ADA blinds. I want to thank you for the goals, objectives you have listed for the Eagle Bluff Conservation area, it's impressive. The only thing I have a problem with is of course with the ADA blinds. First off they are nice, don't get me wrong about that and it sure is GREAT for me and easier for my hunting partner (my youngest son), he along with his dog gets my birds for me. The main problem I see is the shooting distance from the blind to the area of ducks landing. 30-35 yards. Now that's a far way to shoot. I think it would be great if more water was pumped to the areas where land in front of the blinds was under water or move the blinds out more away from the bank. It's pretty upsetting to have to set in the blind watch the ducks land out of "range" and if you do shoot hope you get a killing shot in. I personally HATE to lose any game, rabbit, dove, quail, (in my non disabled days) etc. I consider that a waste of time and resources. Anyway if this area of my concern could be addressed I would appreciate it. Thanks Jim Cregger

Eagle Bluffs is an outstanding example of the Missouri Department of Conservation's management of our wetland resources. Our family has enjoyed the area for many years, mostly as waterfowl hunters, but also to watch the varied species of wetland wildlife. As the years pass, the careful management of the area has resulted in a truly unique place for outdoor enthusiasts to pursue their individual outdoor interests. Eagle Bluff's central location is especially important, as are the long-lasting partnerships with the University of Missouri, City of Columbia, and others. Please keep up the good work as I intend to take my grand daughter to Eagle Bluffs when she's old enough.

I discovered Eagles Bluffs this year, & have absolutely loved going out there & watching the Eagles & other wildlife. It is like a free therapy for me. We have also taken friends & family out there, even from other states & they have loved it. Thank you.

I fully support a primitive kayak/canoe launch as suggested on page 22. The rocky area below the parking lot next to the Missouri River is difficult for some to use. The proposed location allows access to the Missouri River at a spot popular to kayakers and canoeists, as this is near a big sandbar located upriver about a mile. This sandbar is popular for destination boating, fishing, camping, birding, and enjoying the natural area. Improvement at this area would allow those unable to navigate the large rocks access to the river and the sandbar.

Concerning this info

The Katy Trail State Park passes through a portion of the area and adds to the public's use and enjoyment of Eagle Bluffs CA. The parking lot located on Warren School Road provides walking access to the area's scenic overlook

I lived on Route K from 1979 to 2015. I am aware of when Eagle Bluffs CA was put into place. Where is this parking lot on Warren School Road? It needs to be more 'advertized' so visitors can have walking access to the scenery.

Also, you need to build some concrete and pipe trees or something, for eagles to sit in. All the trees that used to be in the McBaine Bottoms have died and fallen over because they do not do well sitting in water 365 days a year. A lot of eagles seem to like the area between Star School Road and Huntsdale - they sit in the tops of the big LIVE trees.

I am at eagle bluffs almost everyday enjoying the area in some capacity sometimes it is bow fishing, some time catfishing, some time just walking and other bird watching or hunting. I would like to see boat launches on the bigger pools nothing fancy just a gravel launch that way i can take my jon boat out by my self or my wife. Right now i have to go with someone that can help lift it and carry it to the water, i think with launches in the bigger polls more people would be able to bow fish in to the night and help clean up the silver carp problem there. I would also like to see more parking and more access to some of the pools east of the pump house on the levy. I would also think more river and creek access would be awesome, right now there is really only the one spot for the river and the creek to fish and the river access it to rocky and you just loose any tackle you throw out. On perche if there is already some one fishing that spot then you have wasted a lot of time and gas to drive all the way to the back because there is no where for more than 2 vehicles to park and not really room for more than 2-3 people to fish. it would also be nice to have a website or even a map at the station that shows what gates are open and how much for bow fishing and bait gathering purposes. The thing that NEEDs to be done the most with that area is the road to Providence access needs to be widened and repaired. It is getting bad and someone is going to get hurt, there are more and more big boat going down there that are as wide at the drive able part of the road in some spots, and when you meet them at the spots someone has to back up around the turns of the road with a boat.

I would like to see a couple of access points between the Katy Trail and the roads within the conservation area. Especially if there was an easier way to access the overlook off the trail from the conservation area.

Also explore possibility of setting up online cameras to watch the eagle nests.

I would like to see areas brush hogged from the road to the waterline. It would basically consist of backing a brush hog from the road down to the water, say 30 to 40 feet at most and 15 to 20 feet wide and repeat every 1/4 mile or so. This would allow viewing from roadway or car.

Is there a plan to build a roadway to the new blind that is towards the rear (south) of the property, or at least designate how to get there?

What about an exclusive website that would have regular news updates, such as MDC plans for Eagle Bluffs, animal sightings, upcoming events, etc.

We enjoy visiting at least 2 or 3 times a month.

Thanks for doing a great job at Eagle Bluffs and all other areas!

Is there a MDC volunteer coordinator? I wonder if a number of projects could be accomplished with volunteers.

For multiple environmental and safety reasons, I would like to see the waterfowl hunting move to a lead free alternative. Potentially a very basic covered structure to serve as a meeting place for visiting school groups would be a nice addition. Thanks for you hard work on the CA. I enjoy it thoroughly.

Keep up the great work with the waterfowl hunting program and dove hunting management as well.

(comment received after comment period in an email sent to Amy Buechler): Amy, Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments in this manner. There seem to be two primary human recreational uses of the area; bird watching and waterfowl hunting. Frequently during the waterfowl hunting season these two primary uses conflict with each other. The birders get in the way of the hunters and I imagine the birders feel the hunters are in their way. There are area regulations in place intended to mitigate this situation but the birders are routinely ignoring those. Not only are driving past the signs which should have stopped them from proceeding further but I've seen some exit their vehicles in the refuge area and walk or let their dog run. I hunted waterfowl at Eagle Bluffs quite frequently during the past two seasons. I saw such acts almost every time I was there. The problem is significant. I've watched "sky busting" grow in frequency. The result is the birds are conditioned to be much more wary and less "workable" and more birds are wounded and not recovered, dying days later. Such activity greatly diminishes the quality of the experience for the other hunters on the area witnessing it as well as future visits where we find decoy shy, call shy and blind shy birds.

So my comments are:

- 1) there needs to be more prevalent signage very clearly stating who is and is not allowed onto the area during waterfowl season. That boundary needs to be much further out of the area than the junction box building.
- 2) There needs to be a much more frequent presence (daily) of MDC personnel to enforce the existing regulations.
- 3) Move the main road that bisects the area to the Perche Creek side or the Missouri River side which would significantly reduce the vehicular harassment of waterfowl using the area.
- 4) Workshops teaching the realistic capabilities of guns and ammo for waterfowl hunting should be offered and successful completion should be required of those hunting on all MDC waterfowl areas. In lieu of this a limit of 15 shells each hunter may bring onto the area should be adopted; with rigorous enforcement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer comments. I also want to state that the staff at Eagle Bluffs are dedicated, hard working individuals who want to provide a quality experience

for the wildlife and the people using the area. Implementation of the above would greatly assist them in achieving that.

Jim Belcher

I wrote comments about the Eagle Bluff Conservation Area. Either I missed it or it was excluded I don't know. My concern was the Handicap duck hunting areas there. Once again I showed up for the teal hunting and went to the Acuff Handicap blind and to shoot a duck out of that blind would require shooting at least 50 yards . This is unexceptionable. I noticed in the No Hunting Area weeds had by mowed down for the ducks habitat. The Acuff Blind was I believe financed privately. Well what happened? The blind is very nice but TOTALLY unusable. Plus it is so overgrown with vines I was afraid to enter it. I plan to hunt again 9/14/16 at Pool #2 tomorrow if someone wants to contact me directly, face to face. Plus I couldn't find Eagle Bluff Area listed here.

Would like to see native plants used instead of corn and soybeans in wetlands. If corn and soybeans are used, would like to see organic practices used to protect soil and water quality, and use of cover crops to reduce runoff and improve soil. At minimum, use non-GMO crops. Look at latest research to detrimental effects of GMO crops (overuse of pesticides and other issues.)

Add steps from the top of bluff (boardwalk) to Overlook platform to prevent erosion. This area is steep and is eroding badly.

Report states there is signage at Overlook platform but there is no signage.

Take additional steps to notify neighbors about comment periods. We live on Warren School Rd but have never received notice of requests for input.

Improve education of public on how to behave in a conservation area. The parking lot at Eagle Bluff Overlook often contains trash left by visitors. We pick it up but people seem to have no sense of keeping the area clean. Monitor area more closely. People have cut lock to gate, and moved boulders ringing parking lot so they can drive into conservation area. Would like to make sure people aren't driving along overlook trail.

Hi again, Amy. We forgot to add one comment.

We would like to see the no hunting area expanded due to the tremendous amount of development occurring in the Overlook trail area. The habitat areas for wildlife are becoming more and more limited. In addition to several new developments, a 130+ house development was just approved in this area.

I greatly appreciate that as birders we at least have 2 hours in the afternoon during waterfowl season to look for the migrating birds. To educate the person who wrote the statement on page 20 regarding the time during waterfowl season for birdwatchers to view birds, waterfowl season is

the peak migration time! These birds often cannot be viewed in other seasons or habitats in this area! I would appreciate not being treated as inferior to the hunters. I understand they have an important role in the conservation process, but so do birders!

Appendix K. Marshall I. Diggs Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

I haven't been to Diggs for several years, I did enjoy it. Mo. conservation dept. is top drawer, and work hard to do what is best for Wildlife, land usage and the people that use it. That's a hard juggling act. Thanks

I have noticed the deer population has been declining at Diggs for the last few years and there have been fewer mature bucks on my cameras. I suggest making Diggs a archery/muzzle-loading only area for a period of 5 years then re-evaluate the deer herd. This area is in a quality area for growing mature bucks but the pressure from rifle hunting has severely hurt the quality of hunting offered at Diggs.

I. I believe the fishless ponds created for watering holes should be filled in, or otherwise removed, as they have been the cause of midge flies killing scores of deer during long hot dry spells.

II. I do not think the goal of attracting more visitors to the conservation areas is consonant with the MDC mission. The Parks Dept (M D N R) has the job of attracting visitors by adding conveniences, etc. MDC should stick with managing for conservation.

Thanks for the opportunity to express my opinions.

1; Provide at least 2 areas of over 5 acres for managed dove fields with sunflowers or other dove attracting plants.

2; Provide and maintain wood duck nest boxes in appropriate locations. It appears at least 20 could be effectively utilized.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Marshall I. Diggs CA Draft Management Plan. Equestrian trail riders in Audrain, Monroe, Montgomery, and Callaway Counties are underserved with respect to public land riding opportunities. To address this lack of opportunity Marshall Diggs CA is on a priority list of Conservation Areas recommended for multi-use trail development in the 2015 "Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri" proposal by Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen. This is consistent with the purpose of providing compatible recreation opportunities as stated in the draft plan Statement of Purpose, Strategic Direction. Providing opportunity for equestrian users is also consistent with the part of Public Use Management Objective 1: providing wildlife viewing opportunities; allowing equestrian use would also make those opportunities available to a number of persons with disabilities.

Diggs CA exhibits most desirable characteristics for development of a multi-use trail system.

The CA is of adequate size for development of a minimum of 10-12 miles of trails. Topography and landscape (predominantly upland), a variety of cover types, and a minimum of conflicting uses also represent positive features. Trails should be located to maintain adequate separation from the two fishing lakes, and they must be located carefully to minimize issues with erodible and seasonally saturated claypan soils—all quite easily done. The location, off Missouri Route ZZ and near Highways 19 and 54, would provide safe and convenient access to the CA via hard surface roads.

SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails. We further offer to assist the Area Manager to develop a partnership with local trail users to assist with development and maintenance with the trails and associated infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix L. St. Clair County Glades Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

I own 238 acres with two glades in St.Clair County for the last 12 years. I use it only for hunting and want to sell it in the next few years. I need help in maintaining but everybody only wants and poach and trespass. It is a beautiful place with all kind of wildlife. Black panthers live in the big glade with the honey badgers. I'm turning 71 real soon and I am going to have it logged real quick. There is a logging company down hy J and he has given me local people ! I love the place but I can't maintain it ! Help me quick or i'm going to burn it down ! I have paid hard earned money for a long and I have nothing to show ! Thanks,

My name is chester swan and I own 238 acres in st.clair county with 2 glades ! I am going to sell it real soon because I can't maintain it. I am turning 71 soon and am very unhappy about the place. People just want to hunt,poach,and trespass. I have been thinking about having it logged soon by some local people. The place is beautiful place with great wildlife but people just run over me and I can't stand it anymore. Comment me and help do what's best for the land. Thanks,

Your team has been very cooperative with me and my family over the last 6 years. I have installed a 2-wire fence provided by your team. Would love to see the introduction of a pond. I do however need to address the following. First -- please schedule controlled burns when the

bunnies are not young and can not flee from the fire. Second -- I need help with more (new) No trespass signs on our shared property line. Respectfully,

Appendix M. Sugar Creek & Montgomery Woods Conservation Areas Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

My property borders Montgomery Woods on the North end on the east side... Trespassing has been an issue ever since I have owned my place. I would like to see a little clearer markings on that end, as you did on the south end when similar issues arose. I have moved back to the area and should be around more. A little more signage and fencing would help. I would also like to see some restrictions on the doe killing. There have been as many as 15 people in there gun season opening blasting away. Lots of does and button bucks killed. With deer numbers as they are, a little restriction would be prudent.

The Management Plans for both Sugar Creek CA and Montgomery Woods CA are concise, specific, and outline an organized approach to the management of natural resources and areas users. I have been on Sugar Creek a few times and have found it managed to meet the needs of many area users. Please continue with your management as stated. Thank you for the ability to provide comments.

MDC does a great job.....other states wildlife/conservation Dept. can not even hang with you !!!!

Olive trees are really taken overjust a consideration. After many trees are cut for management the sprouts come and the area is solid underbrush.

I'm glad for the CAs and think they are a great resource to locals and tourists/hunters alike. I don't hunt but some of us local ladies like to walk the CA trails. Suggestions to make them easier to use for hikers and bikers: Need much better signage at trail heads - very hard to find some of them! Need much better trail markings and informational signs for those that are not familiar with the area - easy to get very lost. For example at each fork where is it going? Which parking lot or whatever. Or post the trail names consistently and put the names on maps so we can figure out how long each trail is. Post temp signs at each location where you can get on the trails with more info including what hunting season it is. I don't follow exactly when certain hunting seasons are and do not want to blunder around in the woods during deer or turkey

seasons. Anyway for hikers and out of town users your signage needs to be improved drastically to allow more use and enjoyment of the areas. Thanks

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Sugar Creek Conservation Area Draft Management Plan. Show Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen commends MDC for accommodating horseback riding on the multi-use trails on the area.

While greatly appreciated, the 10 miles of trails on Sugar Creek CA barely meet the minimum mileage needed to provide a quality outdoor experience while minimizing the likelihood of overuse and resource damage. In the 2015 proposal by SMMBCH, “Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri,” we recommend that at least two miles of additional trails be added to the multi-use network on Sugar Creek CA. For consideration a suggestion would be a new trail east of Route N that would follow the general contour and connect parking lot A with the Blue Trail just southwest of parking lot D. SMMBCH would offer, subject to available resources, to assist to layout and construct the new trails and to work with the Area Manager to organize a local group of trail users to maintain and improve the trail system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix N. Belcher Branch Lake Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will succumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

I think there should be camping sites but what I would love to see is paddle boats like at Pony Express we go there and use those 3-4 a week when they are available we'd love to be able to paddle around it

I think an upland bird area at Belcher is a GREAT idea. I believe the area is already setup well for an upland bird area. There are other conservation areas within a short distance that have good deer hunting on them. I am curious though if the thought is for quail or pheasant? I like both.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the plan. I use the lake often to fish. I'm glad to see the plans to manage the fish population. The lake is nice and gets a lot of use, from what I can tell.

A couple of suggestions:

- I think it would be nice to plan for upkeep of the current fishing docks, and also consider expanding the fishing docks. They are popular and often crowded. I did not see the upkeep or repairs mentioned in the draft plan?

- The plan does not mention trails. There seems to be some mowing around parts of the lake, but it would be nice if there were trails from the parking lot towards the north, past the first fishing dock, towards those coves in the north end. It's very hard to walk back in that area, and hard to walk to the fishing pond.

- The trash cans at the parking lot are always overflowing, and then the trash blows across the area. Please consider adding more trash cans, and having them covered so the wind does not spread the trash. Also please consider trash cans in more places, like maybe adding one at the west end of the parking lot and one by the north fishing dock.

- There needs to be some plan for management of pests in the restroom. I think the concrete privy is good, but there are often dead mice inside. Rustic is fine, but the dead mice are a bit too much.

Thanks again.

Appendix O. Sterling Price Community Lake Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

Appendix P. Franklin County River Accesses Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

(Hardcopy comment received 8/11/2016): My farm joins this (Reiker Ford Access) access on the north side. I use the access to farm ground on the other side of the river. At times it is impossible

to use because of the cars that are parked everywhere. This area is used by the young generation to party. If you want to use it for recreation you need to get there early and leave early. If this area is to be in the future for the public it needs to be patrol more regularly. There is a lot of driving of vehicles on private land and up Voss creek. It has come to be a pain for this area.

Thank you for listening,

At Mayers Landing the floods have going down the river difficult. Please work the access to make it easier going down the river. Also a 18 inch length limit on smallmouth. Unlimited on spotted bass.

Appendix Q. Merrill Horse Access Management Plan Public Comments

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

Some of the MDC lands are incredible with native species diversity while others are dominated by non-native species. The number one Management need is the control or reduction of non-native species. It is imperative that mowers and farmers wash their equipment before moving into a new area. There must be an active role in the control of exotic species. If there is not more of an active role then the remaining pristine sites will subcumb to exotic species and degrade ecological integrity.

Respectfully,

Is it possible to have a small area separate from the boat ramp where fishing from the bank is possible. The one time I tried fishing there, it seemed like you can't fish from anywhere but the boat ramp as far as bank fishing goes, unless the river is running real low. Everywhere else I tried it seemed like the drop-off from the bank to river, was too steep, and casting was real limited from the branches and shrubs there. A small clearing that permits a little casting, and which doesn't require fish to be chucked into the water from high up, to be released again, would be nice, as an alternative spot, for when someone else is already at the boat ramp.

used the take-out ramp just this week; easy access and parking. Old stories about an Indian painting of the sunface, somewhere on the bluffs across from this area, exact site lost. Maybe on the tall palisade just upstream from the access point. Any development should be cautious.

Sounds like all the bases are covered! Good looking out for all of Missouri's green spaces. I'm all about keeping our open green spaces ,open and green for as long as we can ,to be visited and enjoyed by all who love and respect our great and diverse outdoors. Thank You!

Appendix R. Dr. Frederick Marshall Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

1. I would encourage expansion thru acquisition of adjacent lands as soon as possible.
2. Seems to be more residential development near this CA. Please make sure boundaries are well marked.
- 3.. Whatever you can do to increase deer and turkey populations would be good. Rabbits too !! Seems like there should be more..

Designate the area a Quail Enhancement Area and if it can be done at the same time a Dove management area.

Any chance some of this area could be developed into youth soccer fields?

I would love to see this (all) conservation area devote areas for planting milkweed for our Monarchs struggling to survive. I thought along the fence lines would be the best place since you burn it off every year! Thanks,

Appendix S. Kahrs-Boger Park Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

I am not sure if this is the type of comment you are looking for but I have one comment if it is appropriate.

I have a question and I am not sure if this is the correct place to ask it.

Is it possible to remove the big trees that are continually fall on the fence between our property and Kahrs-Boger Park? This is the area on the south border of Kahrs-Boger Parks just east of Lake Creek.

I would like to pasture this field in the spring and fall. The falling of trees and limbs on the fence cause a lot of extra labor year around?

Appendix T. Kendzora Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

I think this area should be the first priority. It looks like it would provide the largest number of activities for the public to enjoy. And it looks like it can be done in only a couple of years.

I hope it will be possible to renovate the small ponds for fishing. I enjoy fishing small ponds on any site that has them. The farther from the parking lot the better.

I really enjoy the Kendzora area. It is a very lightly used and aside from fishing it allows for great access to the seasonal wetlands and excellent photo opportunities.

As a neighboring land owner, I encourage you to continue to limit deer hunting to archery method only. Our close proximity between two metropolitan areas would become problematic and dangerous for visitors to the area and landowners alike should firearms be allowed for deer season. Your management practices have proven to work on this area and thank you for the good work.

Some things I would like to see addressed read as following.

1. Management for the marsh and conservation for waterfowl. As it stands right now no rules regulate the problem that Kendzora has been having with a over abundance of people hunting. I think rules need to be established to allow only a certain amount of parties to hunt there each day and a area need to be marked as a waterfowl refuge to keep birds on the premises. 2 years ago I hunted here a few times and had great success but last year due to lack of crops and over hunting, I only hunted here once. I seen a grand total of 10-15 parties with people parking right on the side of the road and hunting less than 10 ft away. It was absolutely ridiculous. I think there should be a morning draw to hunt here so it doesn't burn species out of the area.

2. I think a rule need to be implemented about the use of boat motors. If there is one I think it needs to be enforced. Too many times I have seen people using 30 h.p or bigger and running them full throttle in the area. This I think also ruins a hunting area and creates too much noise and disturbance. I would like to see it as idle speeds only.

These are just my comments on what I would like to see along with management of water. I have begun to see and catch catfish in the field when it has been flooded but I would also like to see crops to grow so management of water intake and outflow would be great as well.

1. I encourage expansion thru land acquisition as soon as possible.

2. Enhance deer, turkey, rabbit populations.

3. Boundary markings need to be improved.

4. Enhance fish populations in Kendzora lake. Also, last time I was there bridge to lake was in poor shape. Would be hard to get myself let alone my kayak into the lake...

Design and implement a disabled dock on the lake part of the area with small boat only boat ramp. Develop a primitive camping area away from the major portions of the uses area. I suggest buying the old Opry building and develop that as the camping area.

Any chance this area could be used for youth soccer fields?

Appendix U. Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

You all need a place in Platte County where we can rifle hunt. Almost every county in Missouri has a place to rifle hunt. It's sad I have to go spend money out of county to hunt deer every year out of county.

Leave it just the way it is. I like the idea that it is little used and the wildlife also respond to that. It not that big of an area and I am afraid of anymore human encroachment will make it void of wildlife. If anything make purchases of bean lake itself and make that part of the big plan

Any chance this area could be developed for youth soccer fields?

Appendix V. Little Compton Lake Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

This area had a very good quail population 25 years ago when there were more food plots than now.

The lake sure needs more brush piles etc. to enhance the fishing. I hope you do follow through with the monitoring the fish population. Lots of small Crappie right now. Like to see a red-ear sunfish population. I like the idea of flat-head catfish. I presume a boat ramp into the Grand would be too much money or difficult to maintain. But I sure wish there was one there. If not a boat ramp just a quality walking area to the river. What is available right now is just dangerous.

Seems like some parts of the bottomland near grand river could be converted easily into seasonal wetland / marsh . This could increase waterfowl hunting opportunity. Also the silt basin above the lake could have some type stop log structure installed allowing it to increase pool size in fall for the same purpose . Lots of waterfowl fly the area and this would be a good investment for the returns it could produce with minimal intrusion on the property .

Appendix W. Indian Trail Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

I see no mention of plans for the facilities that were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. I am happy to see that the hatchery buildings and Blackwell Lake is being presently maintained but the plan does not address the future of the hatchery facilities. I realize that maintaining historical sites are not within the scope of MDC but isn't there some other organization that could maintain it for at least it's historical value? I can't find anywhere within the draft where any consideration is given to it's future. The CCC program helped make Indian Trail the fine area that it is today. Shouldn't the preservation of their fine work be preserved?

I really appreciate the work that you are presently doing to maintain the glades and savannahs. These area are very unique and help diversify an otherwise heavily forested area.

Thank you for allowing me to give my opinion about Indian Trail. By the way, when I worked at the hatchery, we referred to the hatchery ponds as pools not fish beds as you have referred to them in the plan. Pool #1 through #11.

Please keep allowing horseback riding. I love those beautiful pines!

We own 200 acres across Hwy 19 and use the area frequently mostly the shooting range. The range is great glad to se it will be maintained in plan for the future. It really looks like the plan just reinforces the past and not much new that we would rely notice. Not that this is a bad thing I really like just improving what you are already doing. More interaction with surrounding property owners would be good. Particularly classes and or seminars on improvement of our properties for wild life and glade restoration

bring from out of state I have to compliment the state of Missouri on its emphasis on its conservation areas. I hunt regularly near this region. this is a gorgeous area and needs to be preserved for the wildlife in it if not expanded if possible

Please consider adding hiking and equestrian trails. Fishing opportunities are also always appreciated.

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this conservation area.

Presently horses are allowed on public gravel roads open to vehicle traffic only. This is potentially dangerous for both horseback riders and vehicles, especially on hilly, crooked roads through the woods. Riding on gravel roads i hard on horses feet if they must stay on the gravel for long distances, and riding on the road does not offer a high quality outdoor experience. Indian Trail CA has over 13,000 acres; there is plenty of room for 12-15 miles of trails off the public roads. There are numerous access trails that could be used as part of a good trail network. Equestrians should offer to assist staff to maintain and improve trails and associated infrastructure. This comment falls withing your strategic direction of compatible recreational opportunity as mentioned in Article VII, item #2 which states to maintain and improve recreational opportunities.

Thank you again for asking for comments, and thank you very much for your consideration of this comment.

***** Co-Leader of the South Central Chapter of the Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen

Missouri equestrians depend on our home state for quality trail riding experiences. We want to ride off road in varied landscapes and with varied ability levels of horses and riders required. Although Indian Trail CA does allow "road" riding, this does not provide a safe opportunity for riders, nor does it provide the connection with nature most riders are expecting when we haul to a destination. Indian Trail CA, with excess of 13,000 acres forested acres would be a prime location for additional horse trails, perhaps 12 miles or so, so provide an experience worth hauling to. A single track trail or loop on sustainable surface is adequate, as again, this provides for a natural experience; additionally that type trail is not costly to create or maintain. As you know, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen works closely with land managers to maintain trails, and we would also offer our help at this area. I am appreciative of the opportunity to comment on this plan, on behalf of Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen, and of course this also reflects my individual views. Thank you for the opportunity to do so.
Mary K Church; President, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen

As the landowner of the 500 acre Tefenthaler Lake area that encroaches into Indian Trails (at the end of your 1022 road) I would like to see a 4 point per side restriction put on deer hunting. We saw a tremendous improvement in hunting on our Phelps county farm after this was instituted. Also, with the size of this area and the terraine, it would seem like the perfect place for expansion of another elk herd.

I would also consider selling my property to the conservation dept if an acceptable agreement could be reached.

Thank you for allow me to comment. The current plan only allows for horseback riding on the gravel roads. This is hard on horses feet and cause health problems for the horse and rider. It would be nice to take my grand daughter to an area where she can see something different than that from the car. The view is always much better from the forest. By having access to the woods, I can teach her the proper ways to treat the forest and preserve nature and wildlife. As a member of the South Central Chapter, located in Salem, we would be available to help maintain the trails. With over 13,000 acres, there should be plenty of room to create 12 to 15 miles or more of off road trails, with lots of access points.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Indian Trail CA Draft Management Plan. Presently horses are allowed on public roads open to vehicle traffic only; the map of the Area shows these roads as graveled which would indicate a probability of vehicle speeds exceeding 30 mph. This is potentially dangerous for both riders and vehicles, especially on hilly, crooked roads through the woods. In addition riding on gravel roads is painful on horses' feet when they must stay on the gravel for long distances—more than a few hundred yards at a time. Finally, riding on the road does not offer a high quality outdoor experience. Indian Trail CA has over 13,000 acres; there is plenty of room for 10-12 miles of trails off the public roads. There are numerous access trails that could be used as part of a good trail network. Safe multi-use trails that offer a quality outdoor experience for all users is needed on Indian Trail CA to serve the demand of hikers, bikers, and trail riders in Dent County and the surrounding area according to the 2015 SMMBCH proposal, "Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri."

SMMBCH offers our services, availability of volunteers permitting, to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails. We further offer to assist the Area Manager to develop a partnership with local trail users to assist with development and maintenance with the trails and associated infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix X. Current River Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

As long as the current plans did not make way for additional put-in spots to, or leading to the Current River that motorized boats could access, I think this would be excellent.

Over the last 20 years, I've seen the land around the river, and the river itself increasingly suffer due to the introduction of motor boats and the day-goers that use them. They have made paddling certain parts of the river quite a challenge and the people who use those motorized craft seem to have little concern for the preservation of the area.

Need a longer hiking trail.

Consider adding more hiking trails and adding equestrian trails - avoiding the most sensitive areas while allowing limited access to natural water features. It can be done.

I think the plan to reintroduce an elk herd is great. But, I'm wondering about the section stating M.A. Obrien having rights and privileges to execute leases for oil, gas, coal and minerals. Is there any worry this will cause negative long-term effects on the area?

All I ask is that you don't mess it up! I've been floating the upper sections of Current River since the early 80's and I believe it is just fine the way it is. My wife and I moved to the Salem area because of our love of the Current River after I retired in 1996 and we'd like for the river to stay just like we found it. I believe that, if it ain't broke, don't fix it! If something happens to change the river for the worse, we'll have no reason to stay in the area. So please don't mess anything up. And thanks for keeping it as lovely as it was when first we floated it back in 1983. Keep up the great work that you've been doing.

I'm a 62 year old outdoorsman and adventurer who has floated and camped on just about every river /stream south of I-70. (Much thanks to Oz Hawksley's book). I've been an outdoorsman since before high school. Very much a fan of MDC and most of your efforts over the years. I have cooperated with many projects over the years such as Missouri Stream Team, concerned citizen for Pettis and Benton Counties, etc. Also a member of the Cave Research Foundation for several years, mapping and doing biological inventory in Powder Mill Cave, mostly Hell Hole section.

I have not floated the Current in several years because of lack of control of invasive species to preserve the native integrity of the ecosystem. The species to which I refer is the drunken tubers and general density of people. Buildings have maximum occupancy regulations, so should the Current, Jacks Fork, Gasconade; all of our popular float streams. Can't imagine how this would be done, obviously the local outfitters and general economy of the areas will not agree to this type of regulation.

I can imagine how out of staters who used vacation time, money, etc. , to float the Current because of its reputation as an Ozark stream, feel after battling tubers and the mass of humanity while there. Not exactly the wilderness experience they were hoping for, and were led to believe existed.

I miss floating the Current, camping on the gravel bars, catching Smallmouth bass. Throw a lure in the stream now, more likely to snag a tuber or beer can.

Aesthetics along the river corridor? In my opinion, not for many years

For many years, my husband and I enjoyed canoeing the Current from Baptist to Two Rivers. We are in favor of any management plan and regulations that preserve the pristine nature of this valuable watershed. We think banning motorized boats would be ideal on this stretch, but if this is not possible, then only very small horsepower above Two Rivers. There are so few rivers left in the world where one can experience Nature without the noise and pollution of motors!!!! Limiting access to the river by roads through the forest is also important. In all, this area should be kept as pristine as possible. There are just not many areas left like this, and there are untold numbers of developed areas. Let's do the right thing!

I have a second residence near Fredericktown, Mo. My wife and I float the Current River frequently over the past 20 years. We believe that the Current River and Jacks Fork water system are the best kept secrets in the mid-west. It is our hope that those two rivers from their origin to the junction of Two Rivers and the Current River would always be motor-boat / or John-boat free! Power boats should be limited to the Current River BELOW the confluence of the Jack Forks and Current River.

The Strategic Direction mentions collaboration with adjacent private landowners, but there is no mention of how that will be accomplished in the plan.

I would like to see more prescribed fire to open up the forest and improve wildlife habitat, south of Paint Rock Road.

DNAP has a old replica of an older paddleboat that was used on Current River. I would like to see a small museum built to house the boat and provide information on the river and surrounding area. Our river is such an asset and our local Stream Team is helping to draw attention to the fact that people use it as a dumping ground. Perhaps a place that highlights the proud rich history in our area would give pause to those who unthinkingly destroy it.

Comments for MDC area plan – Current River Conservation Area The following are my comments and suggestions based upon the request for public input for the future updating of the Current River Conservation area plan for the period 2017-2026. What are the manpower needs to accomplish the major provisions of this plan? How much is it going to cost and how much staff and specialized equipment might be needed to accomplish the identified objectives and goals? Should not a plan also address some major problem that might occur? Such as that regarding timber removal after a bad wildfire or wind throw? What about addressing after harvesting? There should be something such as monitoring and meditations for soil erosion, skid trails rehab, monitoring and replanting in case of poor natural regeneration in an area? The plan addresses noxious weed control, however, problems have been seen and I have notified your office of problems several years ago through the website. So is action really going to be performed for this issue? Regarding Shield Leaf in several of the wildlife drinking ponds and a population of Autumn Oliver off MDC 15 near HH. Plants are expanding with no controls taken or actions put into place. If you are not dealing with it based on an identified issue in the old plan, why is the new plan going to be any different? The maps within the plan need to show zones of exclusions from harvest and other restrictive activities. However, there is no reason to show what feature(s)

has required the exclusion, but the area or zone should be shown on these planning maps in some color so restrictions are followed for all those coming after those who are already aware of the current restriction. The basic standards and guidelines for operations need to be presented in your planning document. Plans determine many standard and guidelines and there are many instances of standards and guides, which affect provisions of your plan. For they effect each other. For instance, a guideline has been established on how steep a slope for which a harvest can occur. This will have a cause to affect an area to be treated. Probably limit the amount of acreage in a proposed sale area to be harvested? Another guideline or standard, which I would like to see followed better is for a requirement for soil moisture content to limit damage from using heavy harvest equipment on the soil. So far timber sales (both on private and on MDC lands) that I have seen in this area have taken place no matter how wet the soil and damage doesn't appear to matter. It is a BMP and a standard and guide for the managers, but not being followed by harvesters or enforced properly with an MDC harvest inspector around sales here. Damage to private land is the business of the private owner, but I figure as a tax payer in Missouri, that I own MDC lands in part. Heavy equipment usage with harvests on wet soils need to stop. What about basic rules and regulations of the area? Shouldn't some of them be addressed within the plan also? Sure the Conservation Guides addresses wildlife and hunting rules, but what about rural camping? Allowed? Where? What about ATV use. Allowed? Where? What about off road vehicles? Open campfires, cutting downed wood, target practicing, etc. Allowed? Where? You get the idea. Some basic rules, regulations and restrictions should be addressed within an area planning document also and available for public comment. Either pro or con. Justifications for the regulations? Your plan identifies easements within the plan, but there are many permanent uses that do not have easements. Black River Electric Company has electrical lines through MDC lands in the Current River Conservation Area that are not identified within this document. Shouldn't they be identified? Their location might have an impact on work in the area. What about other roads found in the area? I know of roads that belong to MDC and used by MDC and harvesters, but they are not identified on the road overlay map. Shouldn't they be identified better? They don't need a number, but are still used by the public and occasionally by MDC personnel and even timber harvesters. The plan needs to address non-system roads and how do you plan on closing them? Or do you? Even if not identified as a numbered MDC road, can I still use them with a truck or ATV? How would I know that or not? A plan also needs to address the maintenance of facilities. I see nothing of any requirement being addressed with the maintenance or repair of any of facilities found in the area. Not only should there be an inventory (which appears provided), there should be identified maintenance needs, and perhaps most facilities need to have identified maintenance needs and even deferred maintenance in out-year planning. Part of this is also safety for the housing, offices, and public use facilities. How often are they inspected? How often are the steps and the rest of the lookout tower inspected? Is the dam inspected at Buford Pond? Or does it even have a dam? Are MDC road gates and barriers checked annually for reflective markers to keep the public from running into them after dark? Documentation? I'd rather my tax dollars are used to support your agency and not pay

structures need to be programmed in every year and identified in this plan. A plan also needs to address a future condition or goal that is trying to be achieved by an action within the plan. While there is a plan to do something, the plan needs to address the whys something is being done. i.e. burning an area to promote warm season grass growth as an enhancement to wildlife, or timber removal to change dominate species to Short-leaf Pine, or a controlled burn to remove and recycle timber slash, etc. You have broad objectives, but nothing much of detail. The maps are not detailed enough for the proper planning. Yet, they are the most important tool in planning. Shouldn't they be made correctly? Some are just bad photocopies or imports into the plan from other sources. Maps and the details provided are most important, but as presented in this plan, they appear to just be provided as an afterthought. Perhaps the Conservation Department needs to hire a GIS Specialist and have them produce much better maps for each area's plans? I see that there are several errors on the maps that you all are using for the base. Not all that important to the plan, but shouldn't there be a way for local MDC offices or the public to input for corrections to these public maps? Planning for area management also requires plans for funding. Funds are needed for everything. Timber layout, marking and cruising, field inspections, harvest inspection, road and skid trail layout, inspections, and perhaps restoration. Fire suppression takes workers away from all duties, shouldn't funding be addressed here? What about costs of boundary marking? The cost of a vehicle, people, and paint. Lots of MDC roads. Their maintenance isn't free or cheap. What about the cost to monitor, address, and apply herbicide to noxious weeds to keep them from spreading. That's not free or cheap either. How about building maintenance and repairs? Buildings here in Missouri need constant repairs. Does your office, equipment bays, shop, storage areas, or housing need any improvements? Shouldn't that also be addressed in the plan for funding? What about vandalism? I know that all resource agencies have some. It might be hard to plan, but maybe a statement of annual cost estimates should be provided in the plan. Planning for each area's funding requirement also allows managers to seek out and/or approve dollars that allow the requirements and details of the plan to be acted upon. This plan does not detail any costs at all. And what about manpower needs? Funding, as a part of this plan, will also determine staffing needs, equipment requirements/needs and priorities. I understand that the Ellington office also has oversight on a couple of other MDC areas, beside the Current River CA, so funding also needs to be addressed within those other area plans. Too much work, too little staff, poor tools and equipment, and too little funds. Where are the real costs of doing business and keeping things going? A timber sale also has a fiscal benefit to the harvester, their employees and the community as a whole. This should be addressed in the plan. While the local office might not have a lot of control on the receipts, this should still be identified. i.e. the receipts from each sale provides to: the state of Missouri, MDC, counties as "in-lieu of taxes," etc. This plan also needs to show where the incoming and outgoing dollars goes. As an example; how can local MDC managers ask for more dollars in support of their program where it's costs say \$10.00 to plan, layout, mark, advertise, hold a pre-work meeting, approve road and skid trails, and conduct a harvest inspection, when the timber receipts from the sale returns only a \$1.00 back to MDC (and then half of that is skimmed off the top by MDC

managers in Jefferson City for other priority projects before the remains are returned to the local office”? A planning document needs to contain all estimates of costs. For it also becomes a cost analysis. One doesn't paint a house if they can't figure out the costs to do that. How much does a sale cost? How do I, as a taxpayer, know that I am not subsidizing a timber harvest? Even if each sale is offered as a lost, have the goals of the timber management in that area been achieved? Plans for harvest are addressed with timeframes (years) of when the area or compartment will be entered for treatment(s). But you fail to state or list or show any modifiers. Old time foresters and silvaculturalists were trained that they could re-enter an area to conduct a harvest again after so many years. This was quantified by visits to an area after harvest and using various variables, such as the site index for growth potential. However, currently with major climatic variations, there may be very limited growth for an area to be re-harvested to maintain sustainable yield and growth. How “locked in” is the plan to year(s) for harvesting/treatment/etc? It may not be possible to keep a harvest rotational cycle of say 20 years now and still expect to maintain a sustained yield of timber. Some variation and/or deviation needs to be addressed in a planning document. It doesn't appear that your plan provides changes of the year of harvest or exception for poor growth performance of the timber. Why not? For the purpose of a plan is also to figure out contingencies. Who composed the plan. Was it MDC employees or was this document produced by an external contractor? Was it produced locally or did it come off of someone's desk in Jefferson City? How does one know? Those who produced it – were whom? What is their background or job title? Were any specialists asked to review or provide consultation on the plan? Identify. All kinds of mistakes are present on the inventory of non-MDC roads found to cut and/or transverse across the Current River Conservation Area. Reference map: The Conservation land of the Lower Ozarks, c.2010. Several county roads need to be added to your inventory and HH-555 – a Shannon County Road, it appears to me that this road is all in the NPS area? You also failed to address anything regarding the extensive network of MDC designated numbered roads in the area. Don't these have to be maintained? How often and at what costs? Does your office ever replace signs, gates, barriers, or reflectors? When needed or schedule? Inventory of each MDC designated road (with length and number) needs to be documented. Do trees have to be cut out of the road occasionally? Do any culverts have to be cleaned out? It all takes time, staff and needs to be a part of the planning process. Also MDC has to be able to make sure that enough use is present to continue to maintain them and then fund the necessary ongoing maintenance. A plan. There are many documents (10 count) referenced in the plan, but the plan provides too much generalization with no detail and just notes of those other documents. Too many references are given to many different documents that are listed as an accessory to this planning document. Documents that the reader doesn't have access to. A good plan needs to be all-encompassing in detail and while one can certainly reference other documents, the plan should provide a short paragraph or summary of the work referenced; i.e. the “Elk Restoration plan allows for the ongoing maintenance of old fields and even possible conversions of small overgrown woodlands areas to warm season or cool season grasses or a combination of both. This will be achieved through

timber and brush removal, disking, and controlled burns, or a combination of all methods. The goal being to provide enhanced habitat and food stock for the species.” What about fire suppression and fire support in/of the area? This needs to also be addressed in a planning document. It happens and when it does it can really take a toll on staff, funding, and project work. Yet, the plan doesn’t address anything at all. What about costs? How about a plan for controlled burns? Are you ever going to do any in this area? Where, when, why, and at what costs for personnel and equipment? Should timber be damaged enough in a wildfire, what about salvage sales? I see nothing in the plan regarding regeneration or field recon. Isn’t that one of the main goals of a timber harvest? To open up a closed canopy and provide for natural reseedling and enhanced growth. Shouldn’t one of the goals include field visits to a harvested area? And what about general field reconnaissance into an area before cutting? Do specialists walk the area to be treated and check adjacent boundaries looking for karst features, or cultural resources, or wildlife habitat? Does the area only get a visit by layout people and markers who might see something and might say something? Shouldn’t the plan address requirements to field survey an area before treatment and afterwards conduct and document area monitoring? There is an identified need to address what the procedure is when your layout people, timber markers, or other specialists conducting field work or receiving information from a timber harvest operator or their employees who discovers a significant item of either a natural or cultural feature when it has been discovered. Regarding wildlife needs and problems. Poor address in the plan. There are several fields by me that are really overgrown. MDC use to maintain, but not in many years now. Why not? Open fields are good for wildlife – including Elk. Put in a good perimeter line around them and burn them open on a scheduled basis. These are in lower Carr Creek and Banker Hollow. Perhaps other locations also have a need? Not identified in plan, nor action needs in the plan. And nothing addressed with the hog problem. Probably coming into this area, if not already here. Staff and all the associated costs for control needs to be addressed in the plan just in case. For it will take employees away from other duties. Of course MDC hasn’t dealt with noxious invasive plants in this area, so I have to wonder how well MDC will deal with an invasive mammal species. In Summary, I have to say that this plan is grossly inadequate and leaves me wondering why your office has even wasted the time to provide such a document? It appears to be little more than a recap of an older plan, which I have from the early 1990’s. Nothing has really changed in the modern plan, except the dates and timelines. Most items for action in the early plan still not addressed acted upon after 30 years. Why not? Why should I have any faith in proposed actions in this new plan? I also hoped that after 30 years, the planning process of MDC would have improved greatly. At least in production of this type of document. This plan, to me, isn’t a plan at all, but simply a guiding document of what needs to be done in the future. Just a quick summary being forced upon staff to produce. I found very little depth or scope of the work needed to be performed and accomplished. I found no plan regarding costs, funds, or staff needed to accomplished those goals and objectives. Since it appears that it has been at least 10 years since the last plan was produced, I would have thought in that decade of lapse, your office could have produced a better document? For it is just a poor

effort for a driving document for a 10 year time span. Rather disappointing in its detail. This document is worthy of the production from a first-year college forestry student, but not much better. Yet, I am aware the Missouri Department of Conservation is composed of many, very well-educated professional foresters and other specialists. What happened? It is my understanding that, unlike federal agencies, MDC has neither requirements, nor obligations to even make planning documents available to the general public unless requested? Further, that the state has no requirement to address any of my comments or remarks. But, I do thank you for letting the neighbors know of this plan's production and to ask for input. I hope that my comments are considered constructive and maybe in the next ten years, the future MDC staff or a private contractor can spend a little bit more time to produce an improved product? At least you did meet one of the management objectives of this new plan by trying to maintain a good working relationship with neighbors. Respectfully submitted,

Appendix Y. Busiek State Forest and Wildlife Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

My 11/12 year old Primary (Jr. Sunday School) class of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is looking for a service project, probably to be done in conjunction with an Eagle Scout Project or just scout service hours. My family has enjoyed the Busiek Conservation Area since we moved to the area 18 years ago. We appreciate the State maintaining it in its natural state. We have camped there (before there were official campsites), and I have taken approximately 150 12-16 year old girls for a day camp in preparation for girls camp at another location. Could you please contact me with volunteer opportunities that you feel would fit with your needs. Call or text and email. Thank you, ***** *****

Maintain and improve equestrian trails. Move them periodically as erosion becomes an issue. Consider purchasing / leasing horses for ranger patrols to ensure no "off trail" excursions.

A toilet is the big thing that is needed at Busiek. With all the people at the gun range for hours. The people hiking & biking and horse back riders for the day. And the big one is the overnight campers. We are talking more waste than a mid size dairy farm. The people hiking & biking and horseback are not all in one place. But people at the gun range, some can not walk any distance. The over night camper all are going in the same place. This is a waste problem that needs to have something done.

Know it would cost money to put anything on hill side but the government tells farmers everyday "Clean water is cheap". Think it is time for the government to step up.

Would like to suggest small, rustic rain shelters, 2 or 3 per trail, made of inexpensive materials with signs "not responsible for accidents." If budget would allow, rustic benches would offer a great place to stop and rest with water and snacks.

Also suggest cabin built and employment position opened for me to live on Busiek while I maintain trails and stuff. LOL! I know I am being funny, but it doesn't hurt to ask!

Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen would like to thank the Department for the opportunity to comment on the Busiek SF and WA Draft Management Plan, and we would like to express our appreciation to the management for making the trails on this wonderful area available to horseback riders.

Subject to available volunteers, SMMBCH offers to assist the Department in implementing needed maintenance and improvement measures described in Public Use Management Objectives 1 and 3 as well as installing the mounting block and kiosk. We also offer assistance and expertise with planning and marking needed rerouting and treatment of eroded trail segments.

We repeat a suggestion from our previous input: A vault toilet near the shooting range (above the flood zone) would be appreciated by all users.

We will continue our partnership with the Area Manager to maintain and improve the trails and associated infrastructure. Thank you again for the opportunity to make these comments.

Appendix Z. B.K. Leach Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

Plant some agricultural crops where possible in the area rather than just in the refuge itself. If an adjustment of wetland reserve agreement is needed to do so, that should be attempted. I am not talking huge fields, but some additional small crop plantings intermingled with the moist soil crops in the various hunting units, obviously not possible in all.

Thank you

Would like to see more ADA blind sites. With the aging population there are more and more of us needing this opportunity.

This area would be an excellent place to allow for equestrian use in the off-waterfowl hunting season(s). I would encourage the department to consider adding equestrian trails.

Thank you for the chance to make comments about this property that has meant so much to me over the years. I began use of this 25+years ago and have watched it transition into what it is today. I realize that it is primarily a waterfowl based area and its location is perfect for that reason. I do not waterfowl hunt though I love to watch the property transform each year to accommodate the migrating birds. My use of the property has been for archery hunting. I must say that I am disappointed every year that I am shut out of the area on October 15th and miss such a wonderful time in the woods. I remember when all of those trees were planted and the fields looked like a highway construction zone with all of those orange cones. Now those trees are starting to mature and I don't feel like I can fully experience the fruits of that endeavor. Also there used to be much better access to the Stag Island area. I realize flooding is always changing

the landscape. A river access in the Stag Island area, especially a boat ramp would be very beneficial. The expansion of the property has been fantastic. Keep up the good work. Please do not close the area for use during such a beautiful time of year.

Thank you for your consideration

I have a lot of concerns and questions about this plan. My biggest concern is how the water is managed by the area and the effect it has on us on the south end properties. The last year 6 years we have been flooded due to the untimely release of water through the south end. That water has no place to go but over our land if the river stage is above 25 feet due to the gates on the [neighboring] property. (Willing to discuss my findings for last 6 years) This was a good year because the water was released before the spring rains (early April I believe) and I believe is a great practice due to the food in the bottoms. (Kudos) I have concerns as well that my water flows north through the bottom of Bates Slough so trying to understand what your master plan is for that, we share a water gate. I still have large concerns about being a good neighbor. I had teal hunters on the Bates levee on Sunday (ruined my hunt) and I'm tired of having to call you or the risk of running them off as well as multiple trespassers throughout the years. Again the same question is why do you have to put a blind so close to the property line so nobody has a good hunt we all work the same ducks. I still think a refuge buffer around the property would help everyone even though you don't agree. I'll be honest with you, as your plan suggests, I would be willing to sell my property to the MDC due to the issues I have with BK Leach.

Appendix AA. Forest 44 Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

I think Forest 44 is a beautiful area that provides remote hikes in the city. I feel it is well managed overall. I would like to see more trails graveled so they are not damaged by the horses when wet. I would also like more opportunities to bowhunt. It seems like a lot of tags are available but few deer killed.

I'd like to suggest adding a skeet shooting range at Jay Henges if there's suitable space, to cut down on the travel required to go to an affordable skeet shooting location. Especially if the Busch conservation area range gets shut down again at some time for some sort of improvement. That way both Busch (whenever it gets completely renovated), and Jay Henges have the full assortment of rifle/pistol range, trap range, and skeet range. Staff at the Jay Henges range are very friendly by the way.

I horseback ride in Conservation 44 several times a week. My trail riding friends and I always stay on the marked trails and understand the importance of this effort for trail health and prevention of erosion. We are also courteous to hunters and hikers, fully understanding that this is a shared space to be enjoyed by all. I hope that a "few bad apple" trail riders will not negatively impact those of us who enjoy the trails immensely - and follow the rules! I would also like to add that the bird watching is terrific during migration season! I have seen many "firsts"

while trail riding. Thank you

I am aware that Forest 44 CA has over eleven miles of trails that are open to equestrians. This is a needed resource in St. Louis County, and Missouri Department of Conservation is COMMENDED for this multi-use designation that includes horses. Keep in mind that Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen (SMMBCH) is a service organization with the mission to keep equestrian trails open in Missouri. Please consider us a resource in the maintenance of, and education and advocacy for trails, on the Forest 44 CA. Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Forest 44 CA Management Plan. I comment as an interested individual and as a representative of SMMBCH. ***** ***, President, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen

About 2 years ago I walked on your horse trail next to Jay's Ranch. I was looking for my lost dog. There were no signs telling me the way out. I got lost for 2 & a half hours. It got dark and I couldn't find my way out. The only way I got out was by hearing the traffic on 44. The police had been called and we're trying to find me and I couldn't hear them. I'm 74 years old. I am the niece of Dorothy Aselman.

I am one of the horseback riders from Kraus Farms and I would like to complement the department on their work on maintaining the trails, especially after the storms and floods as they waste no time in removing dangerous obstacles, fallen trees and logs .

I am a horse back rider from Kraus Farms and I would like to complement the department on the timely maintenance of trails after storms and floods. Regarding hunting, first thank you for not considering closing trails for the whole hunting season as fall is the absolute prime time for horseback riding. Secondly, I have never met a hunter who was rude or uncooperative when met on the trail. They always stop and move to the side when approached which is a good thing for both them and us as some times the younger horses can be skittish when they see all the hunting paraphernalia going down the trail. I know that some riders are rude and disrespectful which is a shame. Jay Kraus always puts a blurb in the newsletter before hunting season to remind riders that we do not own the world. Not everyone gets it but I think, for the most part, everyone gets along.

Page 6 objective 1 strategy 1 discusses aerial spraying of bush honeysuckle to control the invasives more efficiently. We are concerned that aerial spraying could be dangerous to native plants and dormant native plant seeds. Is there danger to animals, plants or people?

Page 7 discusses removing non-native trees to make a path for the fire. This is not ideal from a climate change perspective, so please assure that significant tree planting occurs as soon as possible to replace the carbon absorption capability lost in the felled trees.

Please study the planned burned areas to assure no threatened or rare native plants are lost.

In general, the overall plan is very good because it increases native habitat and reduces erosion due to added riparian plantings. This area gets lots of tourists due to the KATY trail, and the improvements increase the educational value of their bike rides. When replanting, please be sure to plant bird friendly trees and bushes!

Thank you for providing horseback riding trails. I have used the area for 45 years. The beauty of the area is wonderful and provides a place to unwind from the stress of everyday living. Again, thank you for our trails.

My family and myself use the 44 area for a number of things. I ride, hike and enjoy the wildlife. We also enjoy the wildlife. My son has used it to improve his ornithology skills. We used to go to Castlewood, but have noticed a decrease in wildlife and have tired of being hypervigilant about being run down by bikers. At 44 there was a larger range of birdlife. I would like to mention that the folks who work down there have been great. They are friendly, hard working and will give information. They are very courteous to the riders. I know some people aren't as crazy about the horses, but from what I have observed, it has increased wildlife, grain in poop helps. Most of the hunters have been ok. I have observed bags of grain hidden which I try to bring to the rangers attention. One person had a tent next to a path which was creepy to the horses and women hiking. I would like to not see very young deer hunted. I also am concerned about people who let their dogs loose, some are field dogs. Others are just loose. My concern is for the dogs, the public and the horses. I have an older dog who enjoys short walks there and even a "friendly " dog charging up can injure her. Most dog folks are following the rules. I live close to the park and didn't even know it was there for years. It is a gem and we really enjoy our time there. Again, a shoutout to the folks who work there, it's tough to keep maintaining the washed out trails and downed trees.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Forest 44 CA Draft Management Plan. Forest 44 CA has 11.6 miles of trails open to horses. Trail riders commend MDC for making this valuable opportunity available for horseback riding.

Maintaining the multi-use trails is a significant burden on the limited area staff. SMMBCH offers our services, availability of volunteers permitting, to assist with rerouting and repair of trails damaged by erosion or overuse. We further offer to assist the Area Manager to develop a partnership with local trail users to assist with development and maintenance of the trails and associated infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix BB. Long Ridge Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

Please consider adding additional miles of equestrian trails on this property. Thank you.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) request for input from the public in the management of public owned lands is appreciated by me and the general public. One comment that seems to be in most of the surveys is the statement of "Tree Thinning". Exactly what does this mean? Does the staff of MDC perform the thinning out of selected trees themselves (especially ones with disease) or does it auction off the cutting of the trees to a timber company?

When a timber company does perform the work how is the MDC and the citizen of Missouri compensated for the timber that is harvested? Does the money go just to the MDC or into the Missouri General Revenue fund?

Is there an arborist from the Forestry Division that works with the timber company in selecting what trees are to be harvested that would benefit the long term conservation stability of the area or does the timber company get to choose what they want, even clear cut a section of the forest?

Are hollow trees left in place for habitat for the many species of wildlife that use hollow trees for shelter and nesting?

The following statement appears on many of the MDC publications “MDC conservation areas cover almost one million public acres for the purpose of restoring and conserving forest, fish and wildlife resources, and for providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources.” Is the timber cutting handled responsively and does it support MDC’s policy of conservation and protection first?

It would be extremely helpful to have some kind of restroom/facility as many of the other areas have available. Also, the handicap access listed in the area map doesn't seem to exist, as we have never been able to find it.

Thank you.

I wrote comments about the Eagle Bluff Conservation Area. Either I missed it or it was excluded I don't know. My concern was the Handicap duck hunting areas there. Once again I showed up for the teal hunting and went to the Acuff Handicap blind and to shoot a duck out of that blind would require shooting at least 50 yards . This is unexceptionable. I noticed in the No Hunting Area weeds had by mowed down for the ducks habitat. The Acuff Blind was I believe financed privately. Well what happened? The blind is very nice but TOTALLY unusable. Plus it is so overgrown with vines I was afraid to enter it. I plan to hunt again 9/14/16 at Pool #2 tomorrow if someone wants to contact me directly,face to face. Plus I couldn't find Eagle Bluff Area listed here.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Management Plan. I am interested in it, as it offers 8.6 miles of multi-use equestrian trails. It is commendable that horses are allowed on the trails, as equestrians are challenged to find enough riding without hauling a great distance in Long Ridge CA locale. Ideally, most of us need about 10-12 miles of trails for an afternoon of riding. Not only would additional trail mileage improve the sustainability of the trails, since the equestrian traffic would be more disbursed, it would improve the riding experience. For this added mileage, I would suggest a loop off an existing trail that could terminate at the truck and trailer parking lot. Realize that Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen (SMMBCH) is a service organization that works with several Conservation Area and other land managers and that the organization is a resource for assistance with trail and infrastructure maintenance, education,

and advocacy involving equestrian trails. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to comment, and I do so as an individual and on behalf of SMMBCH.

***** ***, President, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen

(an emailed comment to Mark Johanson received on 9/21/2016): Hi Mark, I have reviewed the plan you were kind enough to send.

I found it to be comprehensive but achievable.

Bravo to the agency for this important type of thing.

What is your availability in the next couple weeks?

Would you be able to go with me to see the land

On a nice cool day early in the week, any time between 10 and 2:00?

Thanks very much for everything,

Just wanting to stress the equine Multi use trail benefits and improvements like restrooms and water for horses would make this area a major equine Park

(Hardcopy comment received 9/27/2016): I have no complaints. You're using tax money wisely. The conservation tree program is the best. Using it over 40 years.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Long Ridge CA Draft Management Plan. Equestrians commend MDC for the 8.6 miles of multi-use trails open to horses on Long Ridge CA. Indications are that the trails see a lot of use. The 8.6 miles falls short of the 10-12 miles of trails needed to provide the best experience and meet the demand of multi-use trail users in Franklin County and the surrounding area; a few additional miles are needed. A recommendation would be an additional loop that would connect to the Blue Trail near the north end of the area; the trail would go northeast (roughly parallel to and west of the gravel road), cross the gravel road and come back south east of the road following an approximate contour and terminating at the horse trailer parking lot.

SMMBCH offers our services, availability of volunteers permitting, to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails. We further offer to assist the Area Manager to develop a partnership with local trail users to assist with development and maintenance with the trails and associated infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Appendix CC. Weldon Spring Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2016):

I wish that there was horse riding access to this beautiful conservation area. I have some ideas on how the area could provide a specified and/or limited amount of riders at a time to limit damage

to trails but still provide access. By providing a limited amount of access similar to the method for duck hunting (numbered pills) using the honor system so as to keep additional expenses and man power at a minimum.

Missouri has the 3rd highest horse population in the nation. It would be great for the state if we could accommodate this untapped potential, even possible revenue streams for the commission.

I want land access to the Darst bottom tract. Also more wetlands.

excellent and comprehensive study and plan.

add more hiking trails. lewis and clark are used a lot.

Please accept the below MY COMMENT: sugestions in the planning of this WLA.

DRAFT Weldon Spring Conservation Area
Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2017-2026

To submit a comment on this document,
click on the following link:

<https://mdc.mo.gov/node/10013?ap=13820>

Management Objective 1 p 8

Strategy 4: Inspect condition of Femme Osage Slough water control structure and propose repairs to increase connectivity with the Missouri River. (Wildlife)

MY COMMENT: I like this idea because it will remove the uranium, arsenic and by products including heavy metals from the Lower Femme Osage Slough and the entire alluvium. I do not think the crops produced in this bottom land unundated by residual contamination especially in the sloughs, Katy Trail and alluvium as well. There should be no long range plan to convert the area to a controlled wetland as well because of the public health concerns.

Management Objective 2

Strategy 4: Monitor Little Femme Osage Creek stream bank stability adjacent to the Katy Trail and consider setting back levees, if conditions change. (Fisheries)

MY COMMENT: This is may be misguided without consultation with the DOE and MoDNR and EPA due to the potential highly contaminated residual soils in this areas! This is especially

of concern below the Quarry . This area unfortunately will flood with a much higher frequency due to both weather extremes and our neighbor on the St. Louis County side building so called 500 plus 3- 6 feet.

5) Constructed pools adjacent to Lost Valley Spring may provide limited cold water habitat.

Strategy 2: Explore options for developing limited coldwater fisheries potential at Lost Valley Spring branch. (Fisheries)

MY COMMENT; Great idea! I would add that you develop the old grave site better for cultural appreciation of the hard times of the first historic settlers in the area based upon the age of death. It would be cool to stage a recreation of the early settlement here but you might need to work with other agencies on this.

Management Objective 1 p 9

Strategy 1: Maintain area signage (boundary, fishing regulation, trail signs, etc.) to inform the public and reduce violations. (Wildlife)

MY COMMENT; See other areas for additional health signage. Just because the DOE and some studies have implied that the fish are ok to eat I strongly feel that one should error on the safe side and simply change certain areas as “Catch and Release”. The strong potential exists for actual high contaminated clay substrate to become inadvertently digested adds to my concerns because the heavy metals and uranium adhere to these soils and kids like to play in the mud!

Management Objective 2: Provide adequate parking for area users. Strategy 1: Explore the feasibility of increasing the parking lot size at the Lewis and Clark Trail and the Weldon Spring boat ramp to accommodate increased area usage. (Wildlife) Strategy 2: Explore opportunities to purchase property from willing sellers adjacent to the Darst Bottom Tract that would allow the development of a public parking area to increase access to the area. (Wildlife)

MY COMMENT; This is great!!! Daniel Boone's only Spanish Land Grant is on the Darst Bottoms and now only assessable by boat. Boone himself designed “Missouritown” here. At this time the public cannot appreciate the historic tourism potential of this Boone Site. Also the public has no ability to see the changes from frequent flooding on the landscape. It is a perfect area for successional evaluation of Riperian areas . Greenway Network is working with the MoDOC, County Parks, local historians and local land owners to extend the access to the area near the Matson Trail Head and judgement Tree area to the Darst Bottoms. We will discuss this when historian Ken Kamper gives a Daniel Boone presentation at Big A's on Wed Sept 14 (see bigmuddyspeakers.org or greenwaynetwork.org)

Area Background:

Weldon Spring Conservation Area (CA) is in St. Charles County, near the town of Weldon Spring. The area is named after John Weldon, who came to this region in 1796 with a Spanish land grant for 425 acres. This acreage included the spring after which Weldon Spring is named.

MY COMMENT; These were all members of the Boone contingent.

From settlement until the early 1940s, the primary land use was small farms. During the 1940s, the U.S. Department of Army took control of 17,000 acres to construct the world's largest TNT (trinitrotoluene) munitions plant to serve the World War II effort. In addition, the Atomic Energy Commission (now the U.S. Department of Energy) operated a uranium feed materials plant on land adjacent to Weldon Spring CA in the 1960s. The affected portions were part of a federal environmental cleanup project and were required to meet certain environmental health and safety standards. The area is now considered safe for all recreational pursuits allowed on the area, as well as the wildlife found within the area. Most of this area is now the August A. Busch Memorial CA and Weldon Spring CA. Weldon Spring CA was given to the University of Missouri in 1948. The University of Missouri used the land as an agricultural experiment farm until it was sold to the Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) in 1978. The original tract of land was 7,356 acres.

MY COMMENT: I am glad you finally mentioned the TNT, DNT and later uranium and plutonium surface and ground water contamination issue here but would have preferred that it was mentioned earlier in the report especially regarding lake 34,35, and 36, the Upper and Lower Femme Osage Sloughs and Burgermeister Springs. I have concerns and a strong recommendation here. First please change Lake 34,35,36 to "catch and release". This area was and is the surface and ground water drainage area from the DOE site and the heavy metals, uranium and arsenic are present in the clay substrate where the bottom feeding oily fish find their food, This would reduce the potential for especially oily bottom feeding fish to bioaccumulate uranium, heavy metals and the by products. This is as a strong vector to poor public health! Please also install signs on both sides of the Femme Osage Sloughs at the road and parking lots stating that there is a marked increase in uranium, (years ago it was average 95 pico/lit on the upper and 45 on the lower sloughs) Question what is it now? Please also post no waterfowl hunting, canoe use or fishing. I have been strongly recommending this now for almost 30 years! The sloughs were said to magically grab all the uranium, adhering to the clays, I have always said they are a "source" of contamination to the drinking wells pumping nearby. I have seen children playing in the mud and canoes on the highly contaminated water way and that is totally unacceptable!

The Darst Bottom Tract is located south of Weldon Spring CA. The area is located in the Missouri River bottom, upstream from the bottomland portion of the conservation area. The area

is comprised of 1,056 acres in the floodplain. Two tracts totaling 839 acres were purchased in 1995 as a result of flood buyout opportunities. In 2002, St. Louis County and the Spirit of Saint Louis Airport donated 217 additional acres in the Darst Bottom Tract that connected the two existing tracts of land. This area is separate from the main portion of the Weldon Spring CA, but has been managed as part of the Weldon Spring CA. Public access to the Darst Bottom Tract is by boat via the Missouri River.

The Darst Bottom Tract received heavy damage due to flooding and levee breaks in the 1990s. As a result, large sections of the area have sand deposits of varying depth. Most of the area is protected from flooding by a Missouri River levee. Existing habitat on the area is composed of mature bottomland forest located outside of the levee; young (approximately 20 years) stands of bottomland forest located inside of the levee; open sandy areas with sporadic vegetation; idle fields; and crop fields.

To find out more about the history of the U.S. Army and U.S. Department of Energy activities on the area, you can visit the Weldon Spring Site Interpretive Center located at 7295 Highway 94 South, St. Charles, Missouri, 63304.

MY COMMENT: Please add info about the Boone “Missouritown” here and place this information after you discuss the Well Field areas and mention the residual contamination from surface and groundwater from both DOE chemical plant and the Quarry site. Also area libraries have additional information

Deer hunted area couple times.saw more hikers and bicyclists than deer. They don't stay on designated trails. Area has to many non hunters. It's not being managed for the people who pay for it.

This area definitely needs the addition of equestrian trails. In addition, certain trails should be designated for hiking or equestrian use only - NOT shared with bicycles or wheeled vehicles. I'm not against cyclists, but it is not satisfactory in most instances for either group to have to share a trail.

It's my understanding that currently no personal water craft, even if paddle powered, are permitted on Prairie Lake, for fishing purposes. I'm wondering if that can be changed, so that one can bring a kayak, canoe, or some other low impact, self-propelled watercraft there for fishing purposes since much of the lake is inaccessible otherwise, and yet the lake itself is large enough that it would be ideal for such modes of transportation on it.

Also, prairie lake, doesn't seem to have much fish holding structure in it from what I noticed (at least not where I was able to access it), so maybe putting a few more old telephone pole stumps, trees, or other forms of structure in it, that provide sanctuary, might be good for the fish population there.

One more thing, at least during the managed rifle hunts, other recreational users sometimes seem unaware what is planned for the area, and appear nervous to proceed with biking and such. My suggestion is that several weeks in advance, the parking lots be posted with signs that let's them know what to expect, so they don't arrive there on the days of the hunts, completely unaware.

This area is really short on equestrian trails so it would be awesome if we could have some additional trails for riding in the Weldon Spring CA. My thought is if we have more trails it would disperse the traffic amongst them so as to not have as much overuse. I am also a fan of "closing" the trail when conditions are too wet. As a person who has worked to maintain trails I fully understand the wear and tear when it is too wet.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Weldon Spring CA Draft Management Plan. St. Charles County is underserved with respect to available equestrian trails on public land as documented in the 2015 SMMBCH proposal, "Expanding Public Land Multi-Use Trails in Missouri." Busch CA receives heavy use by urban residents which presents opportunity for conflict between users; Weldon Spring offers an alternative to developing equestrian trails on Busch CA. Weldon Spring has an 11 mile trail, Lost Valley Trail, on the west part of the area. Currently Lost Valley Trail is open to hiking and bicycles only. Simply changing the designation to multi-use (hike, bike, horse) would address the need for additional equestrian access to trails in St. Charles County.

SMMBCH offers our services, availability of volunteers permitting, to assist the Area Manager with development and maintenance of the trails and associated infrastructure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Adequate parking for trails due to increased use is mentioned, and the need for maintenance. Is that enough? Erosion on the Clarke trail is significant at the first Missouri River overlook, and some weekends the trail has been so heavily used that the narrow trails are deep mud, tempting people to widen or skirt the trail to avoid the sucking mud. The condition has deteriorated so far, that I don't feel welcome to hike there anymore for fear of adding to the destruction of the trail. It's a good hike, I miss it, but it's being loved to the point of damage. Do we need another trail to thin the use, trail condition alerts at the trailhead, rerouted trails due to the erosion, trail volunteers?

As a member of Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen (SMMBCH), and familiar with the 2015 study "Expanding Public Multi-Use Trails in Missouri", I am aware that St. Charles County is underserved with respect to equestrian trails, per the number of riders in the area. The Lost Valley Trail on Weldon Spring CA could provide needed mileage to equestrians, and continue to be available to hikers and bicyclists to which it is now open. Although extremely heavy use can result in user conflict, I have ridden on many popular trails, specifically in Greensfelder Park, where there were bicyclists and hikers, and several national parks where backpackers and hikers far outnumbered equestrians in some areas. I experienced no conflict,

probably due to education at trailheads, resulting in general positive attitudes of trail users regarding shared trails. I believe that changing the designation of Lost Valley Trail to also include equestrians, and some basic education for those not familiar with horses, would address the issue of equestrian trails needed in that area. A more "local" trail for those living in that area is also going to keep money spent "local". Consider that access to trailheads requires maintenance and fuel for trucks and usually a meal while on a day outing. Be mindful also that Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen is a service organization with the mission of keeping trails open through service, education and advocacy. SMMBCH can be an available resource for the Weldon Spring CA land manager in the education of users and trail maintenance, should the Lost Valley Trail become open to equestrian use. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Weldon Spring CA Management Plan, as an individual rider, and on behalf of Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen. *****, President, Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen

The plan looks good and I believe you have covered all the bases. As a frequent user of the Weldon Springs CA I am glad to see the attention being paid.

As an equestrian, I would like to see more trails in this part of the state open to horses. This area is a convenient location for riders in 2 Back Country Horsemen of America Chapters. These riders would help maintain and improve the existing Lost Valley Trail that is currently designated for hiking and bicycles only. A change in designation to "multi use" for the Lost Valley Trail would provide the opportunity for local equestrians to enjoy this Conservation Area. Thank You for the chance to voice my opinion.

We appreciate very much all the resources managed in the Weldon Spring region by MDC. Plans seem to be well-thought out, and management techniques employed for long-term success. The areas seem to increase in public usage annually, so additional parking at the various facilities as indicated would be a good step. The development of trails and allowing of mountain bikes is greatly appreciated as well.
Thanks for all the good work!