

Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Public Input Summary



Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
June 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- Eagle Bluffs is a 4,431 acre wetland conservation area in Boone County at the southwest edge of Columbia, near McBaine. It is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Conservation areas support the Department's mission by offering places to restore and conserve fish, forest and wildlife resources, and providing opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources. Conservation areas are different from state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on team sports, recreational activities or social gatherings.
- MDC conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (May 1-31, 2015) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 10-year management plan for Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area.
- During this time period, we received comments from 23 respondents.
- Common themes heard during this idea gathering stage included suggestions for increased water management and shorebird viewing opportunities, construction of an elevated viewing platform, increasing road access, and general support for the area.
- The Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year area management plan. The draft plan will be available online (likely fall 2015) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

INTRODUCTION

Public Comment on Conservation Area Management Plans

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. MDC is in the multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments. To preview draft management plans and share comments online, visit mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

MDC conservation areas cover almost 1 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. Most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of an MDC conservation area.

Missourians care about conservation and use conservation areas for many different reasons. These areas help people discover nature through various activities, and help make Missouri a great place to hunt, fish and enjoy other outdoor activities. We want to know how conservation areas are important to Missourians. Encouraging public comments on Conservation Area Management Plans is part of MDC's ongoing efforts of working for and with Missourians to sustain healthy forests, fish and wildlife.

Conservation Area Management Plans focus on natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. The plans do not address regulations on hunting, fishing and other area uses, which are set by the Conservation Commission and enforced under the Wildlife Code of Missouri. MDC will consider all ideas received and will work to balance the issues and interests identified with the responsibility of managing areas for the present and future benefits to forest, fish, wildlife, and people. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and statewide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff.

Questions? Please contact MDC Public Involvement Coordinator Amy Buechler at 573-522-4115 x3252, or amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov.

Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area is in Boone County at the southwest edge of Columbia, near McBaine. The Missouri River and Perche Creek provide over 10 miles of stream frontage on Eagle Bluffs. Through the years, the Missouri River has changed its course many times. The town of Providence, across Perche Creek from Eagle Bluffs, was once on the bank of the Missouri, before the river changed its course in the late 1800's. Providence is now almost a mile north of the river. The Missouri once flowed through what is now Eagle Bluffs and sunk the steamship "Plowboy," which is now believed to be buried under sand and silt on the area.

The Conservation Department purchased and developed this 4,431-acre area to help offset the loss of nearly 90 percent of Missouri's historical wetlands. The area's wetlands have been restored by creating 17 shallow pools. The wetland management infrastructure includes 30 miles of levees, 61 water control structures, river water supply pumps, a water supply junction box, pump-out facilities, and a pipeline linking the area to the City of Columbia's wastewater treatment wetlands. The City of Columbia and the Department of Conservation entered into a cooperative agreement that allows the Department to use treated wastewater from the city as a primary water source for the wetlands. The city's "recycled" wastewater provides a near constant source of water, but river pumps can supplement the water supply when the area's needs exceed the flow from the city.

The area's 17 wetland pools allow the flooding of 1,100 acres of moist soil marshes, emergent marshes, and crop fields. These marshes provide year-round habitat for migrating and wintering birds and permanent wildlife and excellent wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities.

In the fall, the area's beauty is enhanced by colorful foliage along the bordering limestone bluffs. The KATY Trail State Park passes through a portion of the area and adds to the public's use and enjoyment of Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area. The parking lot located on Warren School Road provides walking access to the area's scenic overlook.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) conducted a public involvement idea gathering phase (May 1-31, 2015) to gather input as staff begins to develop a 10-year management plan for Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area. The plan, once drafted, will be posted online (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans) for further public comment.

Public Involvement

The idea gathering phase for development of the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Management Plan ran from May 1-31, 2015. The objective of this phase was to inform stakeholders about the area planning process and ask them to share their ideas. To communicate about this comment period, staff:

- Posted online comment form available at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.
- Sent news release to local media outlets in early May and posted to Missouri Department of Conservation Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Sent announcement to area plan email list (4,000+ recipients).
- Personal visits, mail, and email to: neighboring landowners, NGOs and local government offices.
- Made personal contacts with visitors to the area.

Next steps

The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year management plan for Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely fall 2015) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Who responded?

From May 1-31, 2015, we received comments from 23 respondents for the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage.

Table 1. Total number of respondents commenting during the idea gathering phase (September 1-November 30, 2014) by respondent category.

Organization Type	Respondents
Individual citizens	23
Non-governmental Organizations	0*
TOTAL	23

*No comments received represented the views of an organization. Several respondents mentioned affiliation with an organization or institution (Audubon Society of Missouri, Columbia Audubon Society, Missouri Master Naturalists, University of Missouri).

How they responded

Table 2. Total number of each response type received.

Response Type	Comments
Web Comment Form	23
Hard Copy Comment Form	0
TOTAL	23

Where respondents are from

Table 3. Total number of responses categorized by each respondent's location.

State	Respondents	Percent
Missouri	22	96%
California	1	4%
TOTAL	23	100%

Map of all respondent locations by ZIP code.

★ = Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

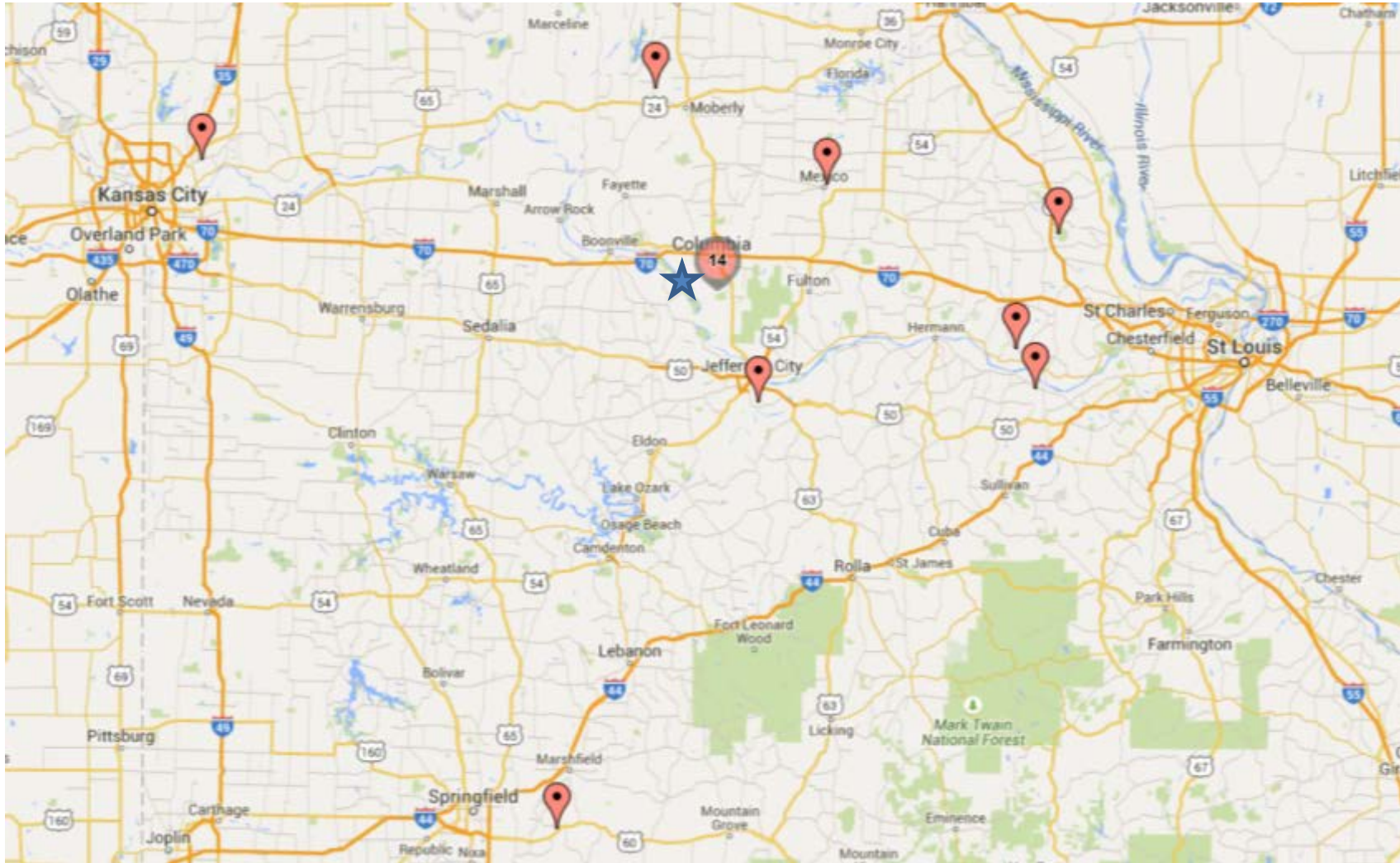
The pinpoint locations below represent the central point of ZIP codes from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers show multiple responses from a geographic area.



Map of Missouri respondent locations by ZIP code.

★ = Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

The pinpoints below represent the central point of ZIP codes from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Shaded circles with numbers show multiple responses from a geographic area.



THEMES AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH EAGLE BLUFFS CONSERVATION AREA IDEA GATHERING PHASE (May 1-31, 2015)

The Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage was available for a public idea gathering period May 1-31, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 23 respondents. A brief summary of public input themes can be found below. The area planning team will take comments into consideration as they draft a 10-year management plan for Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area. The draft area management plan will be available online (likely fall 2015) for a month-long comment period at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After that comment period, the plan will be finalized, and the final plan posted online.

Terrestrial Resource Management

- Suggests increasing marshy areas and manipulating pool levels in spring/fall to create mudflats for shorebirds.
- Concern that cover is too thick in dove hunting areas.
- Suggests more native plants in wetlands and fewer corn fields. Focus on native habitat conservation.
- Suggests planting more trees along the water.
- Forest management should not occur during peak migration season.
- Opposes use of pesticides, fertilizers, and genetically modified organism (GMO) seed on the area.
- Suggests adding an alfalfa field to attract bobolinks, three-awn grass to attract Smith's longspurs, native grasslands for Henslow's sparrows.

Aquatic Resource Management

- Concern with limited water in pools during hunting season. Suggests making pools more level to flood more evenly. Suggests adding small levees to reach more desirable water levels.
- Suggests keeping water behind water control structures rather than annually releases.
- Consider lowering a small portion of downstream levee to allow for back-river flooding.

Public Use Management

Birding/Wildlife Watching

- Suggests constructing an elevated viewing platform near mudflat areas.
- Concern about eagle harassment by public (getting too close) at nest sites. Suggests educational campaign/signs asking people to stay a certain distance away.
- Suggests a hotline to call to get updates about which birds are migrating through the area.

- Suggests maintaining clear viewing opportunities along area roads.
- Suggests allowing access for birders to some pools during hunting season.
- Appreciates ability for birders to access area from 1:00-3:00 p.m. during waterfowl hunting season.

Trails

- Suggests allowing low-impact ATVs for people with mobility disabilities on area trails.
- Suggests improvements to walking/hiking trail.
- Suggests developing mown trails along levee tops.
- Opposes mountain biking on conservation areas.
- Suggests allowing horseback riding.

Roads

- Suggests posting speed limit signs. Concern about speed of vehicles on area.
- Suggests making the Sapp Tract extension into a loop road. Suggests adding two additional one-way loops to the road system for additional viewing opportunities. Suggests allowing public access to area behind the disabled hunting blind.

Fishing

- Suggests a primitive boat launch for canoes/kayaks along the Missouri River or Perche Creek.

Hunting

- Suggests allowing rifle hunting.
- Concern that waterfowl hunters are still hunting after 1:00 p.m.
- Suggests banning hunting on this area. Concerned with lead shot on area.

Other

- Suggests continuing turtle monitoring program.
- Supports continued focus on both nature viewing and hunting/fishing.
- Suggests holding more public seminars/trainings on conservation topics at Eagle Bluffs CA.
- Suggests interpretive signage about the area.
- Suggests encouraging field trips by school groups to Eagle Bluffs.

Administrative Considerations

- Suggests having area blog similar to Duck Creek Conservation Area.
- Suggests naming wetland units after nearby communities.

APPENDICES

SHARE YOUR Comments

How are conservation areas important to you?

The Missouri Department of Conservation is updating management plans for our almost 1,000 conservation areas and we want your comments.

Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

Staff at the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area are beginning to develop an area management plan for the next 10 years. To help inform this effort, we welcome your ideas about the management of Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area!

This spring, we are working to gather ideas to help inform us when developing our draft area management plan. The DRAFT Eagle Bluffs Area Management Plan will be available for an additional public comment period in coming months.

Comment period closes

May 31, 2015



Take a look at management plans and share your comments online at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans, or get a copy of plans and comment forms at your local MDC office.

Appendix 2. Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Press Release



MDC seeks public input for Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

The public comment period for the draft plan is May 1-31.

COLUMBIA, Mo.— The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area (CA) in Boone County is among the areas under review.

MDC is inviting the public to provide comments about Eagle Bluffs CA to aid staff in developing a 10-year management plan for the conservation area. Interested persons or groups can share ideas online May 1-31 at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. People can also stop by Eagle Bluffs CA in May to pick up a comment card.

“Eagle Bluffs CA offers tremendous opportunity for people to discover and enjoy nature whether you are a birder, photographer, waterfowl hunter, or just an outdoors enthusiast,” said MDC Wildlife Biologist Clayton Light. “The public input and planning process we have underway will help ensure that Eagle Bluffs CA will meet the diverse interests of Missouri citizens who utilize the area today and in the future. Although we won’t be able to advance all ideas, we greatly appreciate feedback and will give all comments careful consideration.”

MDC staff will review comments as they develop a draft Eagle Bluffs CA management plan later this summer. The plan will be posted online this fall for an additional comment period and will be available for viewing at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans. After considering all public comments, the final plan will be drafted, approved, and posted online.

Eagle Bluffs CA is located at the southwest edge of Columbia, near McBaine. The MDC purchased and developed this 4,431-acre area to help offset the loss of nearly 90 percent of Missouri's historical wetlands. The area's wetlands have been restored by creating 17 shallow pools. The wetland management infrastructure includes 30 miles of levees, 61 water control structures, river water supply pumps, a water supply junction box, pump-out facilities, and a pipeline linking the area to the City of Columbia's wastewater treatment wetlands.

The area's 17 wetland pools allow the flooding of 1,100 acres of moist soil marshes, emergent marshes, and crop fields. These marshes provide year-round habitat for migrating and wintering birds and permanent wildlife, and excellent wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities.

For more information about Eagle Bluffs CA, visit tinyurl.com/ya37rfv



A group of pelicans in one of the wetland pools at Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area in Boone County.

Appendix 3. Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Info Sheet

Share your ideas about Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area

Staff at the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area are beginning to develop an area management plan for the next 10 years. We welcome your comments!



This 4,431 acre wetland conservation area is in Boone County at the southwest edge of Columbia, near McBaine.

It is one of nearly 1,000 conservation areas owned or managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Conservation areas support the Department's mission by offering places to restore and conserve fish, forest, and wildlife resources, and providing opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Conservation areas are different than state or local parks that may place a greater emphasis on team sports, recreational activities, or social gatherings.

What's a Conservation Area Management Plan?

These plans document strategies for natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. Conservation area plans also help communicate an area's purpose and management direction to staff and interested citizens. Area management plans serve as a management plan for the property with a focus on terrestrial and aquatic resource management, public use management, and administrative considerations.

Missouri Department of Conservation staff will begin drafting the 10-year Eagle Bluffs Area Management Plan later this year, which will be available for an additional public comment period in coming months.

Why do you want my ideas now?

This spring, we are working to gather ideas to help inform us when developing our draft area management plan. We would love to hear from visitors who care about and use the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area.

Questions? Contact Amy Buechler, amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov, 573-522-4115 x3252.

Comment online at mdc.mo.gov/areaplans or mail comments to: Amy Buechler, MDC, Policy Coordination, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Comment period closes May 31.

Appendix 4. Eagle Bluffs Hard Copy Comment Form



How is the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area important to you?

Personal Information

Name: _____

Organization (if any): _____

E-mail: _____

- Yes, I want to receive e-mail updates about the Eagle Bluffs Area Plan.
- Yes, I want to receive e-mail updates about other conservation area plans.

Zip code: _____



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Your ideas

Staff at the Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area are beginning to develop an area management plan for the next 10 years. To help inform this effort, we welcome your ideas about the management of Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area!

(Continued on back)

Appendix 5. Comments received during Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area Idea Gathering Phase (May 1-31, 2015).

Thanks for including birders in with the management plan for Eagle Bluffs. I have three main ideas:

1. I would love to see management for both waterfowl and other non-game wetland birds. It would be great in the spring to manipulate the pool levels for mudflats for shorebirds and have non-game species a priority as well as waterfowl hunting opportunities.
2. Perhaps consider the construction of viewing platforms similar to other wetland areas to provide an elevated view of some of the mudflat areas. A good area would be out at pool 14 at the turn around just past the 2nd one-way loop. Consider consulting with Columbia Audubon for locating these platforms.
3. Concern about eagle harassment by the public at nest sites, especially the one close to the road. Perhaps education signs asking people to stay a minimum distance away. I've seen people in lawn chairs within 100 feet of nesting eagles. Columbia Audubon might be able to assist with this public education campaign also.

I love Eagle Bluffs for birding and bird photography, so my concerns are that everything be done to make the area attractive to migratory birds. This would probably increasing the marshy areas and water in some of the dry pools. I also worry about hunters making the birds too skittish for photographers, but I'm not sure how you would address this, perhaps restricting to bow-hunting wherever possible.

I really think that most conservation areas need at least one trail that allows horse riding. I also don't know why this area doesn't allow rifle hunting. It really should.

I am disabled and have difficulty accessing some of the trails in the conservation areas system. I have a quite low impact ATV that I use on my property and the very few conservation areas that allow motorized vehicles.

I would like to see more trails and areas open to disabled citizens via motorized vehicles (wheel chairs, "golf" carts, and ATVs) that meet appropriate standards and restrictions.

Thank you for listening to my suggestions.

Eagle Bluffs is a lovely area as it is for migrating birds of all kinds. We are excited about the higher number of eagles this year too! Overall, if there is any way to improve the walking/hiking trail situation, and/or signage on what there is, that would be helpful. Much of the flat, open, wet land does not lend itself to hiking, of course. We have considered dove hunting there, but it looks to us as if in the areas where dead birds would land, the cover is too thick to make retrieving dead birds possible; we won't shoot if the bird would be wasted. Thirdly, I enjoyed very much being involved, and bringing the grand-boys, with Vic Bogosian's turtle-trapping project. Realizing that Vic was a very special person, with unique interests and abilities to

communicate in person and online, we know that replacing this part of his efforts might be difficult. However this project really helped to put Eagle Bluffs, Conservation, MDC, and turtles on the map. It would be a shame to let his longitudinal study become outdated/neglected. Further, I've heard that Vic's replacement would consider letting volunteers only handle the project. That, in our opinion, would be a joke. Only with your staff supervising would teaching take place, proper care of turtles, accuracy of the database, etc. MDC could not grant access to the warehouse, equipment, and vehicles to volunteers, either. PLEASE consider, and publicize, continuation of the turtle-trapping/documentation project.

Thank you for this opportunity. We were shocked, the day I went to the Capitol as a Sierra Club lobbyist, to hear firsthand "our" MO legislators saying unthinking, uninformed, and ridiculous things about MDC to justify their attacks on the important aspects of what MDC does and will do for Missourians.

I realize hunting is important but when hunting season is occurring it would be nice to also have some pools or areas that are available for birders. Eagle Bluffs is a treasure.

My main interest at Eagle Bluffs is waterfowl hunting.

Every year Eagle Bluffs has plenty of food but seems to be short on water.

One thing that would help would be to make each pool more level. This would help the pool to flood more evenly and not leave massive amounts of dry land within each pool. Each year it seems there are a few small puddles to hunt from and 75% of the pool is dry ground. More water means more ducks. Pool 5 has many dry spots which leaves a lot of standing corn that the ducks can't get too. Pool 8 is also mostly dry in the better habitat and leaves you to hunt the ditches. Pool 10 has a flat lay out and floods fairly even, I wish more pools were like this.

Another way to help this problem is put in additional levees. Ex) A small levees going through the middle of pool 3 would allow both the north and south ends of the pools have more desirable water levels. At full pool the water in the south end is over your waist and north end is really shallow. This may result in being more expensive with more pumps/water control structures.

I believe that EB Is an excellent location and has great potential. It just lacks the capability to flood all of its wetland pools. I think it would also be nice if you guys kept the public updated on the improvements with a blog similar to what Duck Creek does.

Thanks for your time!!

Love this area. Continue the multiple use aspects of the area allowing for nature viewing and limited hunting and fishing as part of the management plan.

I discovered Eagle Bluffs a couple years or so ago when I started coming back to Columbia to take care of aging parents. I still come back regularly and it is my favorite place to go birding when I am in the area. It has an incredible diversity of birds and it is where I've been going to breathe, bird, and enjoy the natural beauty of the area. I do hope that it continues to be managed

to continue to provide excellent habitat for migratory birds, especially shorebirds. [I currently live in Seattle/98103 but I have been spending a significant fraction of my time in Columbia/65203.]

I would like to more seminars/training for the general public pertaining to natural world held at EBCA.

I just wanted to say that I really love this CA. I started going this January for birdwatching, and have been about once a week ever since. It attracts a wide variety of birds, and I was very pleased and impressed to find this area just outside of Columbia. Thanks for all you are doing! Now that spring is here, I was a little surprised that more of the pools aren't flooded. I don't see very much waterfowl here at all. It looks like it would be a good place to breed, and there are a ton of wood duck boxes, but I've only seen about 2 or 3 pairs. Maybe more wetlands and fewer corn fields in the spring? Otherwise, it's all great. Thank you for this feedback opportunity.

Continue to return the conservation area to native big river and riparian habitats

Conserve native habitats along a controlled big river with every increasing impacts from man must be addressed. Long-term conservation of native habitats is most important in that regard. Cropping programs are “unnatural” and not required, because grain crops are non-native for our ecosystem conservation. (See USFWS documentation below *)

Help by not annually lowering/dumping natural runoff and rainwater from behind water control structures. In other words, leave the majority of stoplogs in place and collect water to benefit and maintain aquatic natural resources for more native flora and fauna. *

If possible, think about improving wetlands by slightly lowering a small portion of a downstream levee to collect any future “river floodwater.” *

Think about naming individual wetland units after nearby communities so there is more mutual relationship and support. Community names may mean more to nearby residents and possibly visitors.

Continue your long-term conservation and maintenance of river and riparian native habitats especially wetlands and marshes. *

Continue to recognize strong trends toward non-consumptive usage. Consumptive activities are needed but not at exclusion of non-consumptive public usages unless there are certain conflicting use. **

Concentrate on native habitat “conservation” in lieu of pure "wildlife management" activities. Word play but important in my opinion.

In 15 years, anticipate non-consumptive activities to far exceed consumptive demand. **

Anticipate objections of long-term conservation and restoration of “native habitats” as being

visually unacceptable in some of local farming elements. But early stage restoration from former cropping programs requires a commitment and needed conservation effort and direction

Best of luck and thanks for the opportunity, Ron Berry, Liberty MO

* Measuring Marsh Richness

A Comparison of Marsh, Cornfield, and Lawn - USFWS Documentation

In terms of capturing and converting sunlight to stored energy, the freshwater marsh is one of the most productive of all systems on earth, equal to a tropical rainforest. Not only is the marsh more productive than a cornfield or lawn, but it offers a far greater variety of wildlife.

Calories in one square meter for each ecosystem:

Marsh 8,000

Cornfield 2,700

Lawn 2,600

** 2006 Release: About 82 percent of total expenditures came from non-consumptive recreation (activities other than hunting and fishing) on National Wildlife Refuges. Fishing accounted for 12 percent of total expenditures, while hunting accounted for 6 percent. For the first time, birding as an activity, both for area residents and non-residents, was separated out in the "Banking on Nature" report for at least 66 of the 80 sample refuges that received specific examination.

I am a regular visitor of Eagle Bluffs and would like to see many more trees along the water. Many trees have been lost or destroyed during the many years I have been going there.

I love the peacefulness of eagle bluffs and the opportunity to see such a glorious diversity of resident and migratory birds. It is my sanctuary if I am troubled and my respite when I'm feeling overwhelmed. It would be nice to have a number to call to get updates about which birds are migrating at any particular time. Perhaps a bit of signage about the area and why it is so important for various birds and other creatures, how it was developed and how it is maintained. Encouraging field trips by school groups would educate children about conservation and what we are doing in our community to care for the Earth.

i visit EBCA a couple times a week to take photos, look for birds & wildlife. I do this in all seasons.

First, I hope to see the continuance of management for all areas of interest. I do think that hunters get priority and I am not sure why because far and away, the majority of users are BIRDERS & photographers, such as myself. People who fish or hunt are a user minority so perhaps you should begin to manage EBCA 12 mos. of the year with that in mind. get the duck hunters out of

there by 2! Last winter pretty certain there were some hunters in 12 still hunting after the 1pm cut off so better regulation of hunters would be good.

Second...if you have to bulldoze down trees, use some environmental sense and do it AFTER or BEFORE bird migration! Do not do it after species are here and using those trees! MDC should know habitat destruction is one of the main causes of species decline so does MDC have to participate in that??

Third.. Any chance of some nature trails or paths via the levee tops? I walked lots of miles doing bird counts for Vic and thru tall grasses etc. a few cleared paths mowed would be nice!

Fourth... EDUCATION when you have an eagles nest so close to the road, there needs to be a sign telling people to stay back or block the area off!!

Fifth....put up speed limit signs! Enforce the speed limit! More times than I can count I have nearly been ran over by young guys in their trucks speeding in to bow fish. And I wasn't poking either. Make the speed limit 25 max! No need to go faster! Yes I am getting picky!

And finally and definitely one of the most important, you allow farming at EBCA, I am very concerned about any and all fertilizer, pesticides and insecticides as well as GMO seeds utilized there. A place this fragile with hundreds of thousands of birds needs to adopt a ZERO TOLERANCE for all those things. Go organic on every field and it needs to be that way on every MDC area but especially wetlands.

MDC is the nations leader when it comes to conservation departments, so take the lead again by demanding the usage of all pesticides, fertilizers & GMO seed is stopped on MDC land. It's best for Missouri & the environment.

Thank you for this opportunity.

1. Hunting is obsolete and environmentally destructive and should be banned. Lead shot poisons animals.

2. Mountain biking should be banned. Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they

avored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video:
<http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous:
http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

As an avid Birder and nature watcher, I have always wondered if it would be possible to have a viewing platform/blind built at Eagle Bluffs. It would be wonderful to be able to get a higher view of some of the pools.

I am an avid canoeist/fisherman and I wish to present the idea of a primitive landing/launching site for a canoe or kayak into either the Missouri River or Perche Creek. This would not have to be an elaborate boat launching area, just a small path from an existing parking area to carry a canoe or kayak to a reasonably accessible spot on the stream. There really is not an area for that except at Providence Access which is primarily for motor boats or the bridge at McBaine which does not have a good parking area. Anyway, this is an idea I wished to toss out for those of us who enjoy the increasing popularity of fishing kayaks or canoes to access the area when you

have such a great asset on the property of the Missouri River and Perche Creek.

Thank-you for any consideration of the above and keep up the great work. I love visiting Eagle Bluffs.

I'm just a birder, not a scientist, and I would like to make sure there are:

- pond/ channel viewing opportunities from the main road - make sure there are cleared areas here and there.
- more mudflats for shorebirds during spring migration?
- maybe make the Sapp Tract extension into a loop road?
- And I don't know if elevated 6' high viewing stands were deemed too hazardous/ expensive/ a liability.

Thanks for this lovely spot. We saw scissor-tailed flycatchers and lark sparrow last week; eared grebe, pelicans and ruddy ducks last month.

- Where can we find the expected spring migrant list so we know when to start looking for pintails, bufflehead, rose-breasted grosbeaks and black-bellied plovers?

Being so close to an urban area you have many non-consumptive users at EBCA, most of whom are retired or visiting during a limited window of time. Not all are able or willing to walk off-road areas of the refuge for birding, photography or general viewing of wildlife. There is also increasing traffic, with many cars on the refuge daily. I would like to see two additional one-way loops added to the accessible roads. One would be located around the distribution channel below the water distribution box, going past the handicapped blind (which would be opened for photography and wildlife viewing during the non-hunting season), and returning to the main road on the first cross levee. The other new one-way would run between pool 8 and pool 10. This route was the original farm road through the area and it should have a solid base, decreasing the cost of investment to create "new" a road. Parking lots for stopping and viewing would need to be created along both new roads.

I would also like to see increased management for shorebirds. The ability to have a steady source of water at EBCA (at no/low cost) makes it unique among the CA in our state. You should maximize that capability by creating/maintaining wetlands, mud flats, and moist soil units.

I appreciate pools 14 & 15 being kept as a true refuge for the birds during hunting season and that non-hunters are allowed access down to the second one-way loop between 1-3 pm during hunting season. Please maintain those things.

I am a birder so would like more habitat for birds. Such as:

An alfalfa field to attract migrating Bobolinks. They might even nest there. Maybe an acre of 2

would be enough.

Small field of 3-awn grass for Smith Longspurs. There was a small field at Bradford Farm, but it has become overgrown with other grasses. This field was maybe an acre or less.

More prairie area, so some could be left unburned and unmowed for several years to attract Henslow's Sparrows.

More shorebird habitat for migrating shorebirds, Spring and Fall.

We enjoy bird watching and would like more areas improved for those purposes.

There should be more areas of the refuge for birding, photography or general viewing of wildlife that are now off-road, limiting access to individuals with limited mobility (though not disabled per se) or limited time. Road access to the area behind the current disabled blind and the allowance for non-disabled individuals to use this blind would be welcomed when not occupied by disabled persons or during hunting season. Another road addition would run between pool 8 and pool 10. Because it was originally a farm road it should have a solid base. Parking lots for stopping and viewing would along both new roads would be very helpful.

The creation of mudflats and other areas during shorebird migrations would be especially helpful for birders and students in university and other ornithology classes (they would also benefit from the additional road accesses described above).

In general, I find the management of EBCA to be admirable and appreciate the limited access during hunting season.