

Dan and Maureen Cover Memorial Wildlife Area Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2017-2026



Lisa B. Allen
Forestry Division Chief

12-14-16
Date

Cover Wildlife Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Steve Paes, Resource Forester

Blake Stephens, Fisheries Management Biologist

Marcus Asher, Private Land Conservationist

Paul Veatch, Conservation Agent

Justin Gailey, Wildlife Management Biologist

OZARK REGION

RCT Chair


Signature


Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief


Signature


Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Dan and Maureen Cover Memorial Wildlife Area, # 8610
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1986
- **Acreage:** 282 acres
- **County:** Oregon
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Restore and manage for a mosaic of grassland, woodland, and forest natural communities to provide a diversity of wildlife habitats. Provide public recreation to the extent compatible with the natural resources.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Dan and Maureen Cover Memorial Wildlife Area (Cover WA) is a healthy forest/woodland/grassland complex.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. **Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** The western portion of the area is within the Warm Fork Spring River Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area. (Figure 3)
 - B. Natural Areas:** None

- II. **Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
 - D. Other:** Occurs in the Howell-Oregon Counties Oak Woodland Dissected Plain Landtype Association. This land type association consists of moderately dissected upland plain, where it is mostly associated with the upper reaches of the Spring River Basin. Historically, the land type association was timbered in mixed oak woodland with occasional prairie and savanna openings (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

III. Existing Infrastructure

- One parking lot
- Cover Lake (1 acre)
- Three fishless ponds
- One dam

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** There are two deed restrictions imposed by the donor, Dan Cover: 1) the property will be named the “Dan and Maureen Cover Memorial Wildlife Area,” and 2) the property will be retained by the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) in perpetuity.
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** None
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Cover WA has 190 acres of forest/woodland, 13 acres of glade, and 78 acres of fields. The Cover WA forested area is predominantly (75 percent) the post oak/blackjack oak forest type. The remainder is the black oak forest type (15 percent), white oak (9 percent), and shortleaf pine (1 percent). Most of the forested acreage supports a two-aged forest/woodland of mature trees with an understory approximately 45 years old.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide a diversity of habitats.
- 2) Control invasive species.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the diversity of forest/woodland/open/grassland habitats.

Strategy 1: Continue to use periodic controlled burns and timber thinning, as needed, in areas that have been designated for woodland restoration. The frequency of controlled burns will vary, but should strive to be done every three to eight years. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Continue to use controlled burns and bush hogging, as needed, to maintain open acreage as grassland/shrub habitats. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Conduct a forest inventory of the area in FY24. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Implement management recommendations, as outlined in approved inventory. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Control invasive species.

Strategy 1: Monitor the area for invasive species. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Suppress any infestations of invasive species that may develop. (Forestry/Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

The primary aquatic resource on the property is a small 1-acre lake (Cover Lake) with a maximum depth of 10 feet. It is located in the north-central part of the area, about a third of a mile walk from the only area parking lot. The other aquatic resources on the area include four first-order stream drainages that traverse approximately 5,700 feet and a few small wildlife watering ponds, less than an acre in size, collectively.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage Cover Lake for fishing opportunities.
- 2) Cover Lake contains a large amount of nuisance vegetation, primarily water shield (*Brasenia schreberi*), over the water surface.
- 3) Protect and enhance riparian corridors.
- 4) Maintain fishless ponds for wildlife habitat.

Management Objective 1: Manage the 1-acre lake for fishing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Implement appropriate aquatic vegetation management to improve fishing opportunities. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Prevent leaks in the dam by controlling growth of woody vegetation along the dam and removing any muskrats that attempt to burrow along the dam. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Evaluate and stock fish populations, as necessary, to enhance fishing opportunities. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Continue to protect and enhance riparian corridors along first-order tributaries that traverse the property.

Strategy 1: Maintain buffered riparian corridors with a minimum of 50 feet from the top of the bank on each side for all first-order streams, per *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Manage the area's fishless ponds as wildlife watering ponds that can provide habitat for amphibians, reptiles, or aquatic invertebrate communities.

Strategy 1: Maintain these ponds in a fishless condition. (Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Increase public use for a wide variety of outdoor recreational activities.

Management Objective 1: Provide compatible recreational activities for the public.

Strategy 1: Enforce statewide hunting and fishing regulations. (Protection)

Strategy 2: Maintain an area map at the parking lot. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Increase the awareness of habitat management.

Strategy 1: Maintain educational signs identifying restoration practices.
(Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.
- 2) Consider acquisition of land, when available.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines. (Forestry)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The Dan and Maureen Cover Memorial Wildlife Area (Cover WA) is located in Oregon County, approximately 6 miles west of Alton. The area appears to have had a history of frequent fires until around 1970. The frequent fires were responsible for the forest’s present mixture of fire-scarred mature trees and dense understory of trees that are approximately 45 years old.

The property was acquired by Dan and Maureen Cover of Thayer for quail management. They donated the property to the Department in 1986 after determining it was not well suited for quail and bought a larger tract in Howell County. The Howell County tract was eventually also donated to the Department (Cover Prairie CA).

The Department has maintained the existing open lands, planted 15 acres of warm-season grass, and conducted woodland restoration. Open land management has consisted of controlled burning and bush hogging. The woodland management has been a combination of controlled burning and timber thinning.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Forest/Woodland	190	67
Grassland/Old Field	63	22
Warm-Season Grass Field	15	5
Glade	13	5
Open Water	1	<1
Total	282	100

Public Input Summary:

The draft Dan and Maureen Cover Memorial Wildlife Area was available for a public comment period June 1-30, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no comments during this time period.

References:

- Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.
- Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W. A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Cover Type Map

Figure 3: Woodland Restoration Area Map

Figure 1: Area Map

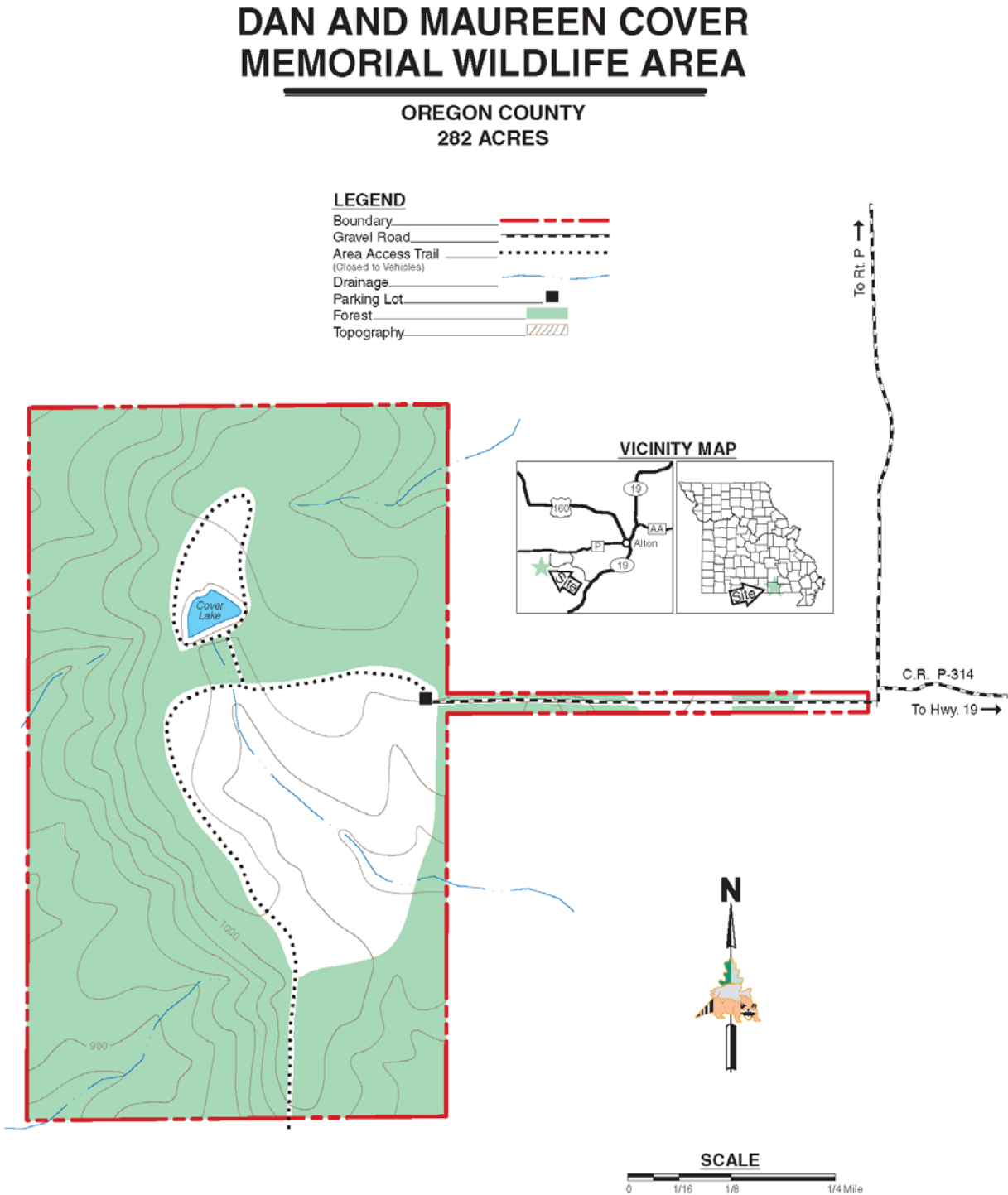


Figure 2: Cover Type Map



Figure 3: Woodland Restoration Area Map

