

McClure Conservation Area

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan FY 2018-2032





Wildlife Division Chief

20 APRIL 2018
Date

McClure Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** McClure Conservation Area, #200813
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2007
- **Acreage:** 239 acres
- **County:** Mercer
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The primary purpose for acquiring the McClure Conservation Area (CA) is to provide a river-oriented, multiple-use area for the public on an unchannelized portion of the Weldon Fork of the Grand River. In addition, management efforts are focused on creating and maintaining fish, forest, and wildlife habitats (and their associated fauna) representative of the Central Dissected Till Plains Physiographic Area. Management emphasis is placed on developing habitat that supports open woodland wildlife species. Species of priority concern include eastern wild turkey and white-tailed deer. Other species of management consideration include bobwhite quail, eastern wood-pewee, red-headed woodpecker, and blue grosbeak.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of McClure CA is to return existing non-cropped open lands to diverse native prairie, and forested areas to diverse woodland communities.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** None
- 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:** The McClure CA is in the Central Dissected Till Plains Section, Grand River Hills Subsection, and Weldon River Woodland/Forest Hills Landtype Association. This landtype association historically contained upland ridges in narrow strips that graded into oak woodlands on upper valley slopes and into

forest on wetter, lower slopes (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002). Past land use practices have greatly altered the landscape from its historical condition.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Two parking lots
- Approximately 2 miles of field access trails

IV. Area Restrictions and Limitations

A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations: None

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: No known cultural resources.

E. Endangered Species: None observed.

F. Boundary Issues: Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Over the past 80 years, much of the open land cover was converted to non-native cool-season grasses and legumes, such as orchard grass, timothy, smooth brome, clover, and more recently, tall fescue (Figure 2). Tall fescue has greatly reduced cover suitability for early-successional ground-dwelling wildlife species. Much of the forested area has been logged and/or grazed in the past, leaving it in a degraded condition. Undesirable species, including honey locust, Osage orange, elm, and shingle oak, occur throughout the area. Other species present include red oak, black oak, bur oak, white oak, shagbark hickory, green ash, hackberry, Kentucky coffeetree, black walnut, cottonwood, and silver maple.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The primary methods of managing herbaceous and forested cover on McClure CA are mechanical tree removal, herbicide application, and the permittee agriculture crop program.

Management Objective 1: Improve open lands for wildlife species dependent upon early-successional habitat.

Strategy 1: Decrease undesirable herbaceous and woody cover using techniques such as spraying herbicide, prescribed fire, disking, and mowing. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Manage currently cropped open land using a combination of permittee farming, planting food plots, fallowing, and replanting to native grass and forbs or to bottomland trees and shrubs. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Create and maintain open woodland plant communities.

Strategy 1: Opportunistically manage woodland units for low basal area (< 60 ft²/acre) and a diverse native herbaceous component. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Forested stands not identified for woodland restoration will be managed using both even and uneven-aged forest management. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Provide high-quality, year-round forage for deer.

Management efforts in Objectives 1 and 2 should provide and maintain a quality natural forage base. However, planted supplemental forages will help to ensure adequate nutrition given the higher deer densities on managed public lands.

Strategy 1: Create and maintain quality year-round forage for deer. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

The area includes approximately 1 mile of the Weldon Fork of the Grand River, which flows along a portion of the north boundary and through the middle of the conservation area (Figure 1). There are no ponds on the McClure CA. Aquatic resources management opportunities are very limited on the McClure CA.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

McClure CA is managed for upland game and non-game wildlife species. The majority of public use is from deer and turkey hunters.

Access to the Weldon Fork of the Grand River is very limited since there is not a boat ramp and severe erosion along much of the riverbank restricts access from the river to the conservation area. The main recreational activity on the river is angling. There are no area ponds; fishing is restricted to the Weldon Fork of the Grand River.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) McClure CA does not provide easy access to the Weldon Fork of the Grand River.

Management Objective 1: Manage McClure CA to provide quality hunting opportunities for deer and turkey, while maintaining public use opportunities for other activities, such as mushroom hunting, bird watching, and sightseeing.

Strategy 1: Annually review area regulations, particularly as they relate to deer hunting. (Wildlife, Protection)

Strategy 2: Maintain interior field access trails to accommodate foot traffic by area users. (Wildlife)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) McClure CA is bordered by approximately 0.5 miles of county roads. Additional administrative duties may result from working with the local Mercer County governments in maintaining these road rights of ways.

Management Objective 1: Maintain county rights of ways bordering Department areas.

Strategy 1: Work with county authorities as the need arises. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Maintain adequate boundary fencing.

Strategy 1: Work with neighboring landowners to maintain adequate fencing and signage. (Wildlife)

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.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All management strategies for this area are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The original 232-acre tract was donated to the Missouri Department of Conservation by the late Leafa McClure in 1984. After the death of her last surviving heir, son J.W. McClure of Trenton, MO, the area was officially transferred to the Department in November 2007. An additional 6.7 acres on the west side of the area was purchased from Charles Girdner of Iowa in 2008, expanding the size of the area to its current size (Figure 1).

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Forest	169		71
Open Land	32		14
Old Field (non-prairie)	26		11
Riverine	12		5
Total	239		100
Stream Frontage – Grand River		4,875	

Public Input Summary:

The draft McClure Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Aug. 1–31, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from one respondent (Appendix A). The McClure Conservation Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the McClure Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

Suggests adding a new road and parking area for launching canoes and kayaks.

Due to the property’s remote location, the distance across the property to the river, coupled with the volatility and high sediment load of the Weldon Branch, construction and maintenance of a road, parking lot, and boat launch would be logistically and fiscally prohibitive.

References:

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 Types Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: McClure Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

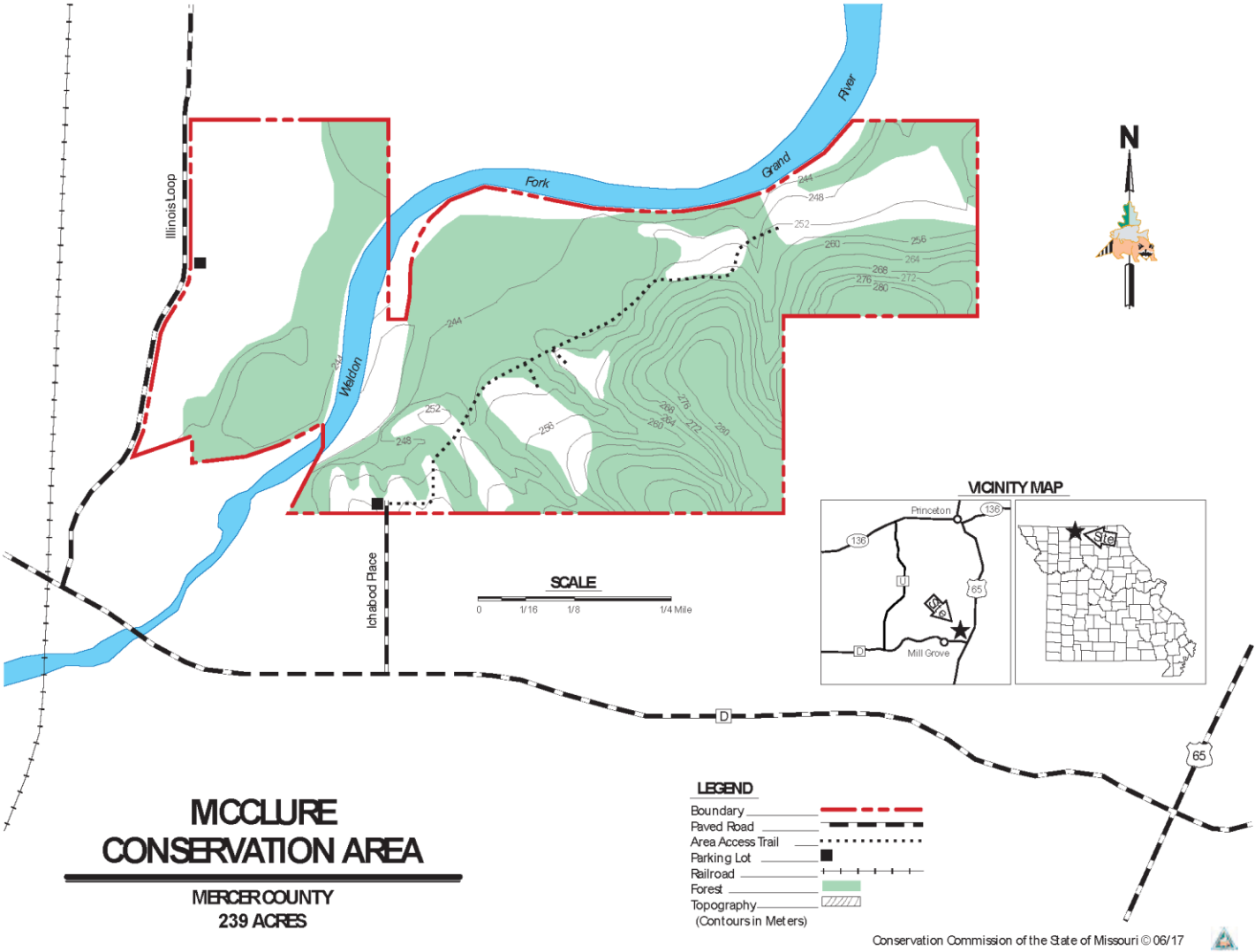


Figure 2: Cover Types Map



Appendix A: McClure Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Aug. 1–31, 2017):

Plan to construct a new road and parking area for launching canoes or kayaks in the river.
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