

# Fewel (Connor O.) Conservation Area

## Twenty-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2019-2038



*Joel W. Pruthi*

Wildlife Division Chief

*6/8/2018*

Date

## Fewel (Connor O.) Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

### PLANNING TEAM

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Signature

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6/5/18  
Date

## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Fewel (Connor O.) Conservation Area, #7803
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1978
- **Acreage:** 320 acres
- **County:** Henry
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
  - A. Strategic Direction**

The management emphasis is to maintain a functional woodland and upland habitat for game and non-game species while offering the public compatible outdoor recreational opportunities.
  - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Fewel (Connor O.) Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy woodland and upland ecosystem with a diversity of native plants and animals.
  - 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:** Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) natural history biologist.
  
- III. Existing Infrastructure**
  - Three parking lots
  - Two fishing lakes (4 acres, 5 acres)
  - Six fishless ponds (2.0 acres total)
  - One fishable strip pit (8 acres)
  - Hiking trail (0.5 miles)

**IV. Area Restrictions or 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:** KAMO Power has an easement for a powerline that dissects the north section of the area. The easement does not limit management options.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) environmental compliance specialist. Managers should follow best management practices for cultural resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

**MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

**V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations**

Terrestrial resources at Fewel (Connor O.) CA include 115 acres of woodlands, 130 acres of upland habitat, and 56 acres of cool-season grasses. The hardwood timber is a mix of white oak, black oak, shingle oak, and hickory. The upland mix is a variety of native grasses, forbs, and shrub and cedar thickets with a small percentage of mixed oaks and elms. The cool-grass plantings are located on reclaimed mine spoilage.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The upland community provides habitat for white-tailed deer, turkey, rabbits, bobwhite quail, and a wide variety of grassland-obligate birds.
- 2) The predominant invasive species on the area is sercia lespedeza, followed by woody encroachment in the old fields.
- 3) The northern section of the area is dominated by an oak hickory forest and provides a prime example of older age class of timber. The area provides habitat for turkey, white-tailed deer, fox, and gray squirrels. The timber on the other sections of the area are poorer quality, but provide a gradual transition to the upland units.

**Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy grassland, with emphasis on early successional habitat for upland wildlife.**

Strategy 1: Vary prescribed fire timing to provide a diversity of grassland habitat and woody control as time and priorities allow. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Use chemical, mechanical, and prescribed fire to manage the area's upland areas and maintain these habitats in an early successional stage as time and priorities allow. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Convert cool-season grass to native grasses and forbs. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 2: Monitor for invasive species. If found, take action to control them.**

Strategy 1: Spray seresia lespedeza in early June and continue spraying until plants start to flower as time and priorities allow. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Spray tall fescue in autumn after a hard freeze and in early spring prior to native grass green-up as time and priorities allow. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Spray Japanese honeysuckle along field edges and old fields as time and priorities allow. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Use prescribed fire, mechanical, and chemical treatment to reduce woody encroachment in old fields as time and priorities allow. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 3: Maintain healthy forest and woodland communities, with management emphasis on wildlife habitat.**

Strategy 1: Monitor woodland and forest communities for invasive vegetation, disease outbreaks, and insect infestation. Take appropriate control actions, as needed. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Allow forest and woodlands to mature toward an old growth condition. (Wildlife, Forestry)

**VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The area contains eight ponds and one strip pit. Two ponds and the strip pit are fishable. The primary access is via trails.

**Management Objective 1: Maintain infrastructure to allow access to fishing opportunities.**

Strategy 1: Monitor dam spillways for erosion and repair as necessary. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Periodically mow trails to ponds and pond dams and spray excessive woody vegetation. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Explore options for improved boat access. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

## **VII. Public Use Management Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Provide opportunities for hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing.
- 2) Provide quality public fishing opportunities.
- 3) Provide educational opportunities for various groups in the community.
- 4) Continue to build relationships with neighboring landowners.

### **Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting and viewing opportunities.**

Strategy 1: Vary management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of species. (Wildlife)

### **Management Objective 2: Provide quality public fishing opportunities.**

Strategy 1: Monitor fish populations with periodic sampling and make any necessary adjustments. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Stock channel catfish supplementally as needed. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Manage aquatic vegetation to provide fish habitat, while controlling nuisance vegetation. (Fisheries)

### **Management Objective 3: Improve educational and interpretive opportunities on Fewel (Connor O.) CA.**

Strategy 1: Communicate to the public about recreational opportunities (e.g., using brochures, Atlas database). (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Communicate to teachers, students, scout groups, and youth groups about the uniqueness of the area to facilitate as a possible destination for ecology classes, school programs, and workshops. (Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

### **Management Objective 4: Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring land owners.**

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass or any other issues affecting Fewel (Connor O.) CA or private property. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner properties. (Wildlife, Private Land Services)

## **VIII. Administrative Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure so that it is inviting for public use.
- 2) Consider land acquisition, when available.

**Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with the Department guidelines and at currently identified maintenance level.**

Strategy 1: Make sure all parking lots are clean, and bulletin boards are posted with area maps and regulations on a regular basis. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Inspect exterior boundary signs every five years and replace as needed to minimize any trespass issues with neighboring landowners. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Mow hiking trails through the growing season and remove hazard trees. (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**

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	FY 32	FY 33	FY 34	FY 35	FY 36	FY 37	FY 38
<b>Aquatic Resource Management Considerations</b>																				
<i>Objective 1</i>																				
Strategy 3					X															
<b>Public Use Management Considerations</b>																				
<i>Objective 2</i>																				
Strategy 1					X					X					X					X
<b>Administrative Considerations</b>																				
<i>Objective 1</i>																				
Strategy 2					X					X					X					X



## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

Fewel (Connor O.) Conservation Area (CA) is in Henry County, about 5 miles southwest of Calhoun. The Department acquired this area in 1978 and manages it to preserve woodland and upland habitat and provide the public with opportunities for hunting, fishing, viewing, studying, and photographing woodland and upland plants and animals.

The area has a rich and varied history. An Osage Indian trail once ran by the springs, connecting Kansas City to Warsaw. Settlers also used the area as a community meeting place and the outlaw Jesse James and the Younger Gang reportedly hid out near the area and a tree near the springs was said to be a "hanging tree" during those lawless times.

The conservation area is divided into northern and southern units by a block of privately-owned land. The southern unit is characterized by crop fields, brushy draws, and reclaimed mine spoils. The northern unit primarily consists of mature oak and hickory timber on rolling hills. The area features a wide variety of habitat and wildlife.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Woodland	115		36
Old Field/Grassland	107		33
Cool Season Grass	56		18
Openland	23		7
Ponds	19		6
<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream Frontage		0	

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Connor O. Fewel Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period June 1–30, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from two respondents (Appendix A). The Connor O. Fewel 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 Connor O. Fewel Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

**Suggests extending road to allow easier access for fishing in the strip pit and pond.**

We will explore providing better access to the strip pit. We have some fishing options available that provide easy access; examples include Haysler A. Poague CA located west of Clinton off 7 Hwy, and Farrington Park Lake in Windsor. Both these locations provide easy access and a variety of fish species. For the other ponds on the area, we maintain a mowed path to provide better access, and we will continue to keep these paths mowed.

**Supports the draft management plan and current regulations for Connor O. Fewel CA.**

Thank you for taking time to review this plan and for your support.

**References:**

Missouri Department of Conservation. (n.d.). *Natural Heritage database [Arc Geographic Information System datafiles]*. Retrieved from Missouri Department of Conservation shape files.

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.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2013). *Resource policy manual*. Intranet: 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: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

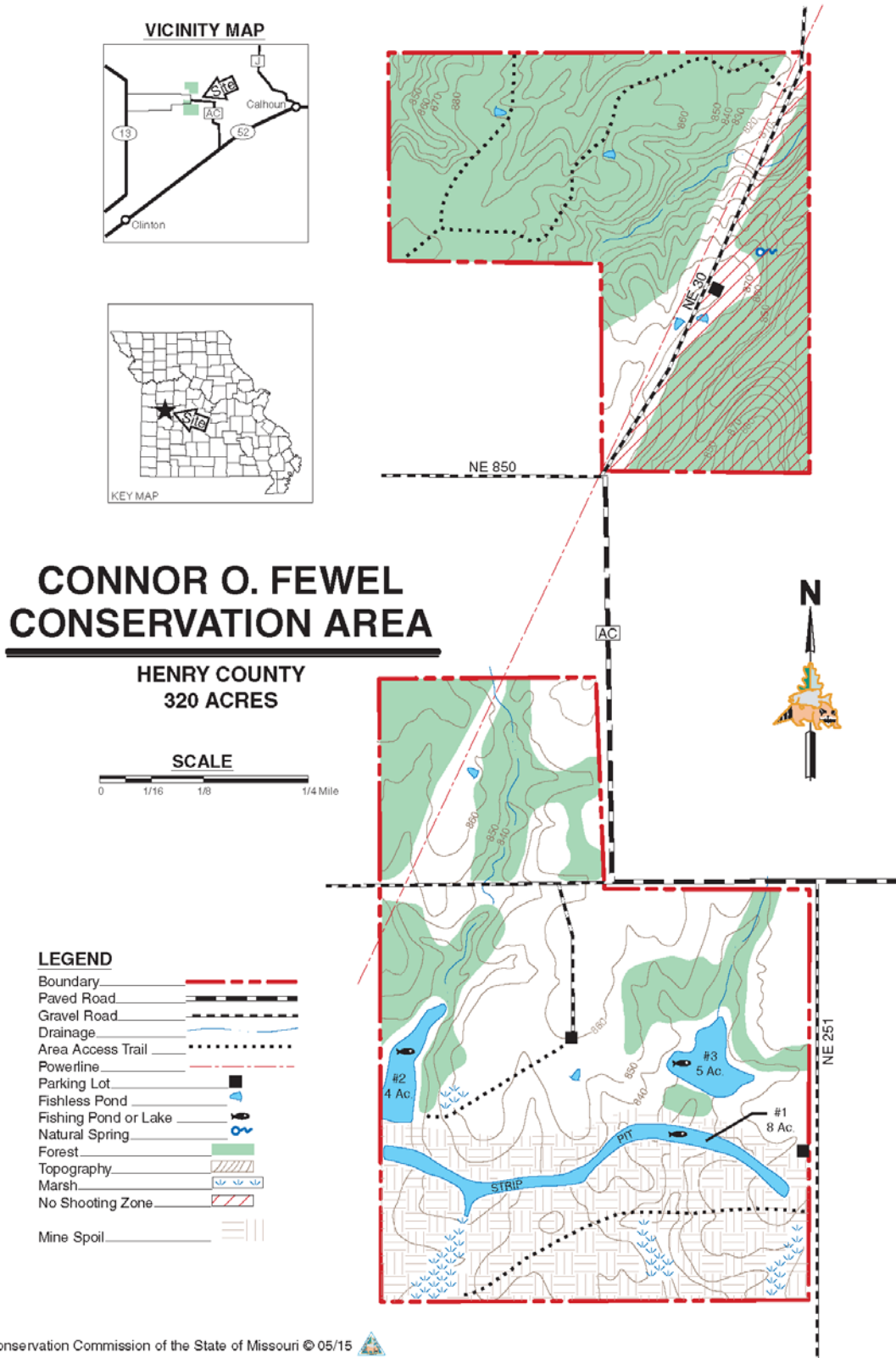
Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map

Figure 5: Easement Map

**Additional Appendices:**

Appendix A: Connor O. Fewel Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map



**Figure 2: Aerial Map**

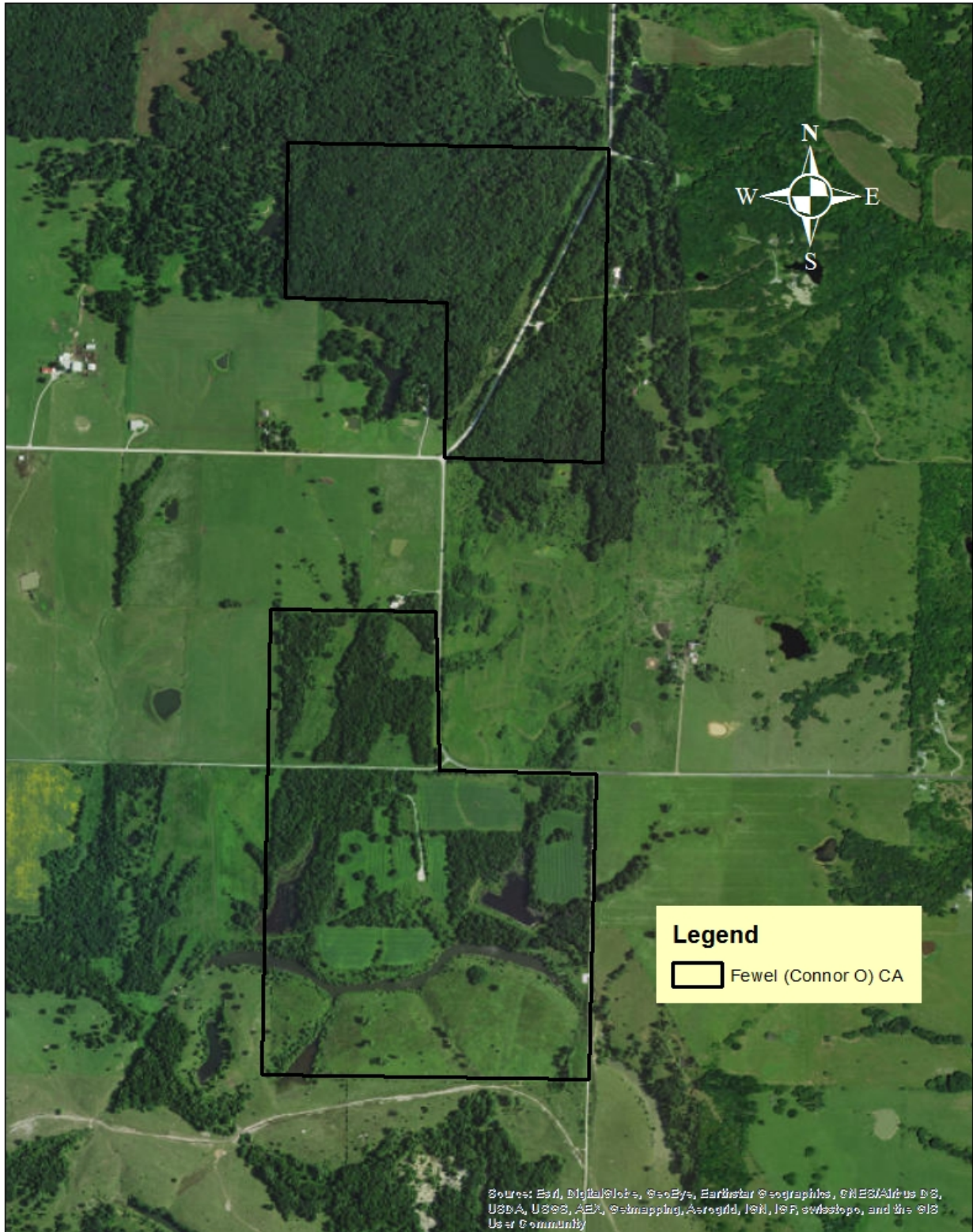
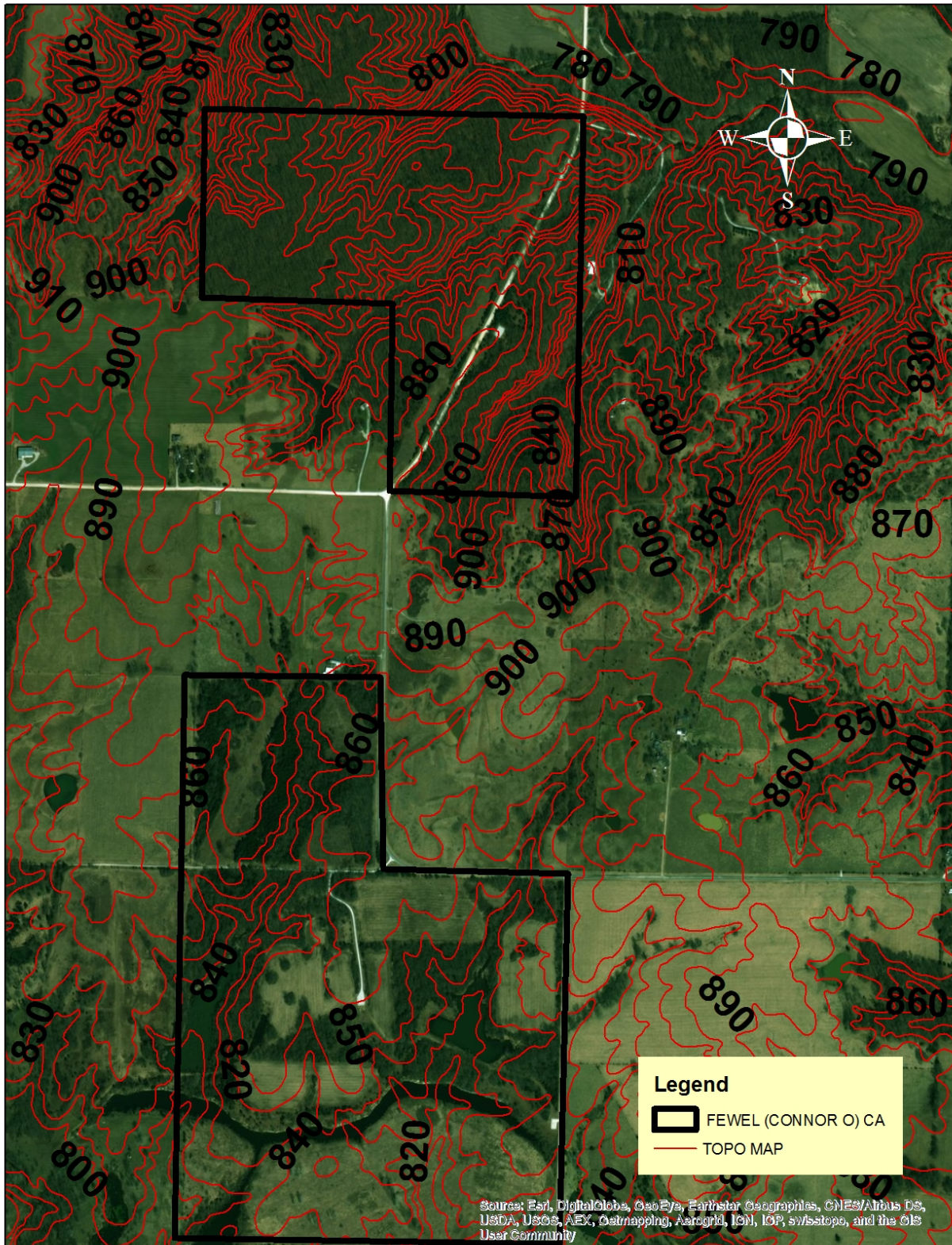




Figure 3: Topographic Map





**Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map**

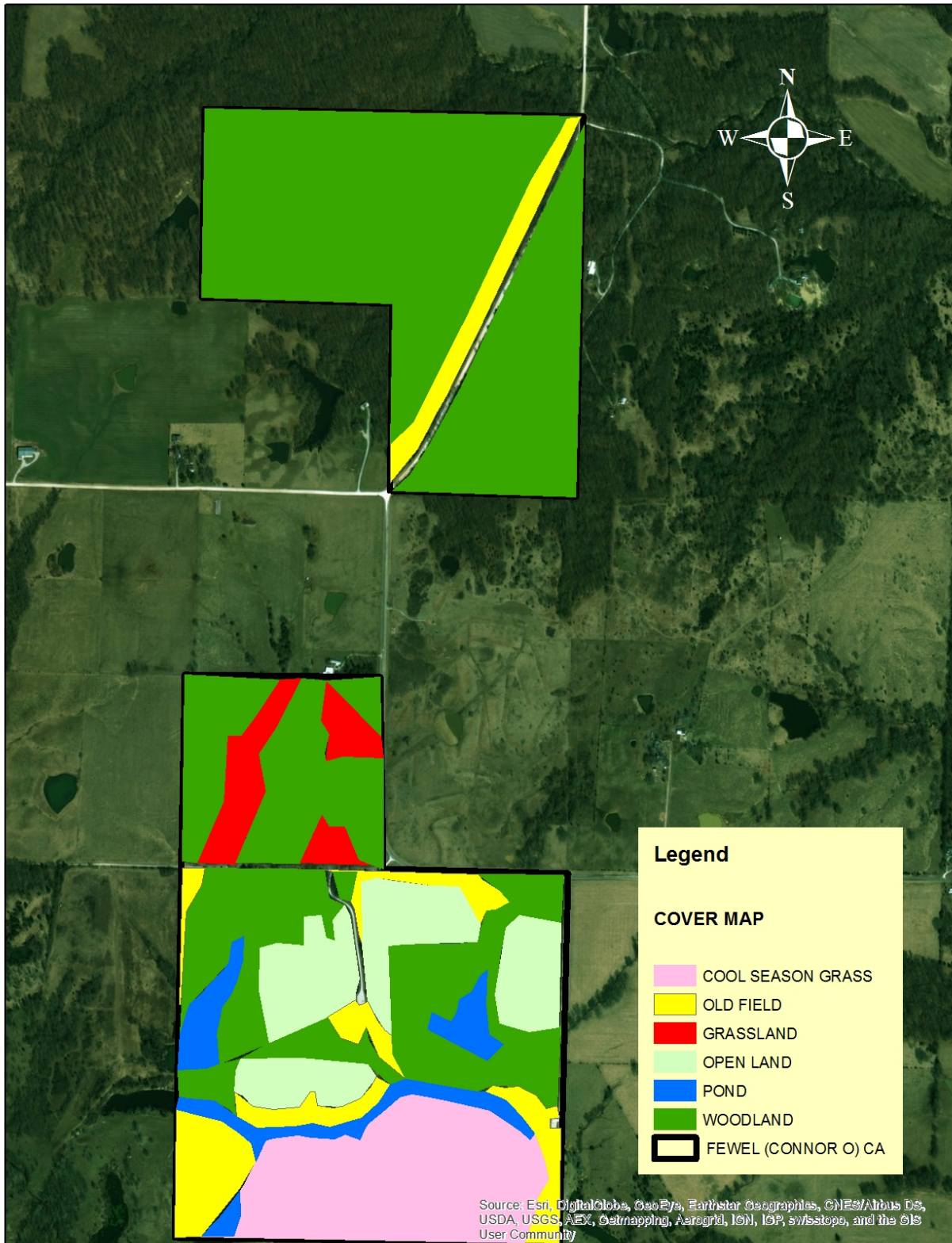




Figure 5: Easement Map



## Appendix A: Connor O. Fewel Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (June 1–30, 2017):

We have lived near Fewel CA for 10 years, drive by it almost daily. We are 77 years old with a life time of hunting and fishing experiences. We see the strip pit from the road and know the location of the pond, can we get to them to fish, NO. We have our own land to hunt, our interest is not to hunt Fewel but we do know how often it is hunted.

The Fewel is not very heavily used. Opening week of bow season there are a few folks who hunt there, we never see anyone there during gun season, probably because rifles are not allowed. On one occasion we met some rabbit hunters from out of state who hunted with dogs, that was the first and last time we saw any rabbit hunters. When it's time to look for mushrooms there are a number of people who drive the roads around the area looking from their cars. There have only been an occasion or two that we saw any fishermen using the strip pit and or the pond. Other than these occasions we never see anybody using the area. In short Connor O Fewel CA gets very little use.

We would really enjoy fishing the strip pit and pond but it would be easier to climb Mt. Everest that it would be to just walk to the pit and or pond. For a couple of old people fishing that CA is out of the question. No more use that we see at Fewel we don't understand why you can't make the fishing more accessible.

We know if you give the public an inch they will take a mile, allowing vehicles on the area to go anywhere will probably lead to mud runs with ATV's. You can put a road in so people can fish there, limit the vehicles to the road, you know how to handle abusers that your business. If you come back to us and tell us it cost too much to build a road we won't buy into that, the MDC is one of the most affluent government organizations in the state of Missouri.

We see video's on Youtube of people using CA in Missouri, the fishermen are packing all their equipment on their backs to the remote ponds and lakes that they are going to fish. They're young and strong and don't know any better, we can't do that any more. If you put roads in these CA's for better accessible you would really be helping a lot of folks enjoy the out doors. Not all of us are going to abuse and/or ruin the wildlife habitat.

We see regularly how little this particular CA is used because we drive through it almost daily, it's a beautiful area but nobody uses it. If you made the fishing area's more accessible we think it would be wonderful and it would be a place we, and other folks our age, would use with a great deal of enjoyment. Not only that, if you made it more accessible maybe more hunters would take advantage of a great deer and turkey hunting spot. We see deer and turkeys in the area all the time.



Thanks for your time and thank you for asking us to comment on your CA Plans.

I read through the plan and it sounds like excellent approach. I'm a landowner with land that borders Fewel CA. I just wanted to add that I appreciate MDC efforts to keep this CA area managed and thriving. I also appreciate the MDC regulations limiting the use of centerfire rifles in this conservation area. I support the regulation. Keep up the great work!