

Lake Paho Conservation Area

Ten Year Area Management Plan FY 2014-2023




Wildlife Division Chief


Date

Lake Paho Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Lake Paho Conservation Area, # 4702
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1947
- **Acreage:** 2,350 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 Lake Paho Conservation Area (CA) was to provide north Missouri residents with a place to fish and hunt. As the CA moves into its 66th year of existence, management emphasis is being placed on developing habitat that supports early-successional grassland and open woodland wildlife species, while also improving water quality and the lake fishery. Terrestrial species of priority concern include bobwhite quail and grassland songbirds such as dickcissel, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow and Bell's vireo. Aquatic species of priority concern include largemouth bass and channel catfish. Other species of management consideration include white-tailed deer, eastern wild turkey, mourning dove, ring-necked pheasant and eastern cottontail rabbit.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Lake Paho CA is to return existing non-cropped open lands to a diverse native grassland/shrubland complex; and forested areas to diverse woodland communities. Cropped open lands will remain in a cropped/fallow rotation to benefit wildlife. High-quality fishing for a variety of sport fishes is also desired in Lake Paho. This will require the removal of nuisance fish species, and the restoration of a diverse and productive littoral zone.

C. Federal Aid Statement

This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired with Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration funds to restore and manage sport fish, conserve and restore sport fish habitat (or a buffer to protect that habitat) and provide public access for sport fishing.

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:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. **Caves:** None
- C. **Springs:** None
- D. **Other:** In Nigh and Schroeder (2002), Lake Paho CA is classified as being in the Central Dissected Till Plains Section, Grand River Hills Subsection, Weldon River Woodland/Forest Hills Landtype Association (LTA). Nigh notes about this LTA, in part, on Page 38, that “Historically, upland ridges were in narrow strips of prairie that graded into oak woodlands on upper valley slopes and into forest on wetter, lower slopes.” Past land use practices have greatly altered the landscape from Nigh’s historical description.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- 16 parking lots
- 5 privies (1 ADA accessible)
- 1 ADA accessible fishing jetty
- 273 acre lake
- 14 fishable ponds
- 3 leveed wetlands below dam
- 2 boat ramps
- 3 primitive campgrounds with 40 individual campsites
- approximately 6 miles of field access trails

IV. Area Restrictions and Limitations

- A. **Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None
- B. **Federal Interest Conditions/Restrictions:** Uses of land acquired with federal funds may not interfere with the purpose for which it was acquired. Closures to sport fishing must be based on the recommendations of the state fish and wildlife agency for fish and wildlife management purposes. Federal funds may also 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:** No known easements other than public utilities along road rights of way and high-voltage power lines running through the middle of the CA.
- D. **Cultural Resources:** No known cultural resources.
- E. **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.

F. Endangered Species: None known.

G. Boundary Issues: None.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Over the past 80 years, much of the open land cover has become dominated by non-native cool-season grasses and legumes, such as orchard grass, timothy, smooth brome, clover and tall fescue. Tall fescue has greatly reduced cover suitability for early-successional ground-dwelling wildlife species. In addition to the invasion of tall fescue, undesirable woody vegetation such as honey locust, autumn olive and Osage orange have encroached upon crop field borders and old fields, reducing the value of these areas to wildlife. Most of the forested area is confined to drainages, field borders and a buffer along the shore of the lake. Forest and woodland management has not been a priority due to a high concentration of undesirable species, including honey locust, shingle oak, elm and Osage orange in many of these wooded areas. A forest inventory is needed to evaluate potential management opportunities.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The primary methods of managing herbaceous and forested cover on the Lake Paho CA is prescribed fire, herbicide application, native seedings, mechanical tree removal and the Missouri Department of Conservation's (the Department's) agricultural crop permit program. Creating quality habitat will take several years due to the amount of non-native plants located on the area.

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

Strategy 1: Decrease undesirable herbaceous cover.

Strategy 2: Decrease undesirable woody cover.

Strategy 3: Increase nesting and brood-rearing cover for bobwhite quail.

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

Management recommendations for all forested stands will be developed in cooperation with the Department's Forestry Division.

Strategy 1: Complete forest inventory by fiscal year (FY) 2017.

Strategy 2: Identify tracts best suited for long term, quality woodland management after forest inventory is complete.

Strategy 3: Manage forest stands using both even and uneven-aged silviculture.

Management Objective 3: Improve habitat for white-tailed deer.

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

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Lake Paho currently offers good fishing opportunities for largemouth bass and channel catfish; however, the panfishery (bluegill and crappie) remains poor due to a combination of factors, including an overabundance of panfish (due to low densities of largemouth bass), competition with gizzard shad, impacts from common carp and a history of limited production in littoral areas. Walleye were successfully established and became a popular fishery during the 1980s and 1990s.

Low productivity in the shallow littoral areas of Lake Paho is a result of fluctuations in water levels from past water releases required to manage the catfish rearing ponds below the dam. Production is also suppressed by an abundance of common carp, which remove aquatic vegetation and increase turbidity.

Lake Paho is ranked seventh out of 42 small Missouri impoundments for its need for lake renovations, as identified by the Department Fisheries staff (Lake Prioritization Summary, August 2011). Most of the Lake Paho watershed (68%) is owned by the Department. Subsequently, land uses and conservation practices in the watershed have contributed to lower inputs of sediment and nutrients to the lake; improved water quality; suitable depths; and better fish habitat. This also helps to justify lake renovation.

Pond resources may be placed in two groups for management purposes: fishable ponds and wildlife water holes. Nuisance aquatic vegetation is common in fishable ponds; extensive control methods are often not cost-effective, given the relatively low potential for angler use in remote ponds. A focused effort on ponds, with easy access and better fish habitat, provides potential for high-quality fisheries. Wildlife water holes are generally unable to support sportfish populations, yet serve as important areas for amphibians, reptiles, aquatic invertebrates and wetland plants. In addition, they provide dispersed water sources for terrestrial wildlife species. Many were created as grade controls for soil erosion issues; while others are simply old ponds which have become shallow and overgrown with trees.

Stream resources on the area are mainly limited to small intermittent drainages, which extend from the two upper arms of the lake. There are no fisheries maintained in them, but like the wildlife water holes, they serve as habitat for amphibians, reptiles, aquatic invertebrates and wetland plants. Riparian corridors are mostly contiguous and of sufficient

width to provide good bank stability, flood abatement, diverse wildlife habitat and travel corridors.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Excessive numbers of small white crappie have led to chronic poor condition of this species and periodic die-offs.
- 2) No angler surveys have been completed at Lake Paho for many years; however, it is obvious that angling pressure is very low relative to similar fisheries in the region. Restrictions on the use of private boats and outboard motors from 2008-2010 likely contributed to reduced angling use.
- 3) The recent (2010) retirement of the catfish rearing ponds will promote stable water levels and a more productive littoral zone.
- 4) Walleye stocking was discontinued during the late 1900s and the fishery is now almost non-existent.
- 5) Hybrid striped bass were stocked on an experimental basis for three years (2007, 2008 and 2010) to take advantage of the abundant food source with gizzard shad. Survival and growth of these hybrids are believed to have been good, but few anglers appeared to take advantage of this fishery.
- 6) Species supported by the wetlands have not been formally inventoried.

Management Objective 1: Promote the positive aspects of the current fishery at Lake Paho, including the high potential for larger largemouth bass and channel catfish.

Strategy 1: Highlight these attributes in the Department's annual Fishing Prospects publication.

Strategy 2: Periodically provide local media with information on fishing success and effective strategies.

Strategy 3: Continue to construct fish attractors (i.e., brush piles and artificial structures) to concentrate sportfish, and provide information on their locations (i.e., lake maps, GPS coordinates, buoys) to focus angling effort.

Management Objective 2: Enhance the existing fishery in Lake Paho through restoration of high-quality panfishing and establishment of specialty fisheries.

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a plan to remove gizzard shad and common carp through lake renovation.

Strategy 2: Minimize water withdrawals from the lake to promote more productive and stable littoral areas.

Management Objective 3: Stream corridors will be protected and enhanced to improve water quality, promote stable streambanks, provide flood abatement and increase habitat diversity.

Strategy 1: Fisheries staff will evaluate buffer widths and conditions and provide recommendations to the area manager. Additional evaluations should be repeated every five years to account for changes in land management and area boundaries.

Strategy 2: Maintain and/or establish 100-foot or wider vegetated buffers (pursuant to Department guidelines) on both sides of permanent and intermittent streams by 2015. A diversity of suitable trees and shrub species will be used if buffers need to be established or increased. Herbaceous vegetation is suitable for buffers along streams with channels that are not deeply incised.

Management Objective 4: Ponds capable of supporting fish will be managed to promote angling through a combination of stocking, vegetation management and maintained access. Emphasis will be placed on ponds with easy access and better fish habitat.

Strategy 1: Stock channel catfish every three to five years in ponds managed for fishing. Higher stocking rates (i.e., 30+ fish/acre) may be applied to ponds with easy access and heavy angling pressure.

Strategy 2: Manage aquatic and pond-side vegetation to allow reasonable shore angling by limiting sediment and nutrient inputs, mowing, and, when needed, targeted aquatic-herbicide applications. Promotion of beneficial aquatic plants will be accomplished, where appropriate and when possible, through seeding and transplants.

Strategy 3: Regularly mow and maintain pond dams to be devoid of trees and shrubs to minimize potential for leaking and associated negative impacts to fish habitat.

Strategy 4: Control muskrat and beaver in fish ponds, where burrowing creates significant threat to the integrity of the dam or safety hazards for mowers on the dam.

Strategy 5: Add at least one brush pile to each manageable pond, where cover is limited (i.e., no other brush piles or very limited submerged vegetation). Brush piles should be replaced, as needed, due to natural breakdown and loss of effectiveness over time.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The Lake Paho CA is managed for upland game and non-game wildlife species. The majority of public use is from deer and turkey hunters, anglers and campers during

the summer holidays. Area ponds receive low fishing pressure with the exception of those close to parking lots.

- 2) Primitive camping is allowed at three campgrounds on the area. These areas are used heavily during summer holidays with lighter use during deer and turkey seasons.
- 3) The Lake Paho CA deer regulations were changed from statewide regulations to archery and muzzleloader in 2005. The change in area deer regulations was primarily driven by concerns of the proximity of campgrounds and neighboring residences to the core of the CA. In addition, this provided an opportunity to diversify public land hunting regulations in northwest Missouri. Lake Paho is also within the boundaries of the four-point antler restrictions. Currently, the CA's deer population is fair-to-good. As deer harvest regulations are evaluated for all CAs, additional deer harvest strategies may be considered to further enhance public use opportunities and improve the quality of the deer population.

Management Objective 1: Monitor use of area by deer hunters.

Strategy 1: Continue parking lot surveys on opening weekend of firearms deer season to track trends in hunter numbers.

Management Objective 2: Manage Lake Paho CA to provide quality lake fishing and hunting opportunities for white-tailed deer, Eastern wild turkey and small-game wildlife (rabbits, quail, squirrels, etc.). This will be accomplished while maintaining public use opportunities for other activities, such as mushroom hunting, bird watching, camping and sightseeing.

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

Strategy 2: Maintain interior service roads to provide easy and unrestricted foot traffic by area users.

Strategy 3: Work with Fisheries staff to monitor angler use of the lake fishery.

Management Objective 3: Manage campgrounds to invite public use.

Strategy 1: Conduct routine litter patrols to keep the campgrounds clean.

Strategy 2: Work with other Department staff to ensure the gravel camping slips are kept in good repair.

Strategy 3: Work with other Department staff to establish fire rings at campsites where practical.

VIII. Administrative Considerations

The Lake Paho CA is bordered by approximately 2.9 miles of state highway and approximately 2.3 miles of county roads. Additional administrative duties may result from working with State and local Mercer County governments in maintaining these road rights of way.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) There is approximately 1 mile of Department-owned gravel roads on the Lake Paho CA. Continued maintenance of these graveled access roads is important to providing quality public access.
- 2) There are approximately 12 miles of shared boundaries between the Department and neighboring landowners.

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

Strategy 1: Work with state and county authorities as need arises.

Management Objective 2: Maintain Department-owned graveled public access roads.

Strategy 1: Work with other Department staff to ensure maintenance of Department-owned graveled public access roads.

Management Objective 3: Maintain adequate boundary fencing.

Strategy 1: Work with neighboring landowners as need arises.

Management Objective 4: Acquisition of land

Strategy 1: 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:

	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Terrestrial Resources Management										
Objective 2										
Strategy 1	X	X	X	X						
Strategy 2					X					
Aquatic Resources Management										
Objective 3										
Strategy 1		X					X			
Objective 4										
Strategy 1		X			X			X		

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The Department initially purchased property for the Lake Paho Conservation Area with a financial commitment from residents of Mercer and surrounding counties in 1947. Lake Paho was the first lake constructed by the Department. The area is rich in Native American history and the lake was appropriately named Lake Paho from an Indian word, “Paho,” meaning first or number one. The lake was opened to fishing in 1951. Since the initial land acquisition in 1947, Lake Paho has undergone many changes, but constant throughout this time was the importance of providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities and creating and maintaining fish, forest and wildlife habitats (and their associated fauna) representative of the Central Dissected Till Plains Physiographic Area.

In the late 1950s, the Department constructed nine fish rearing pools below the dam to provide various warm water fish species for stocking public waters around the state. From 1961 to 2010, the facility served as a channel catfish rearing station, raising nearly 100,000 9-inch catfish annually that were harvested and transported to public lakes throughout the state.

Because of its size and diversity, Lake Paho Conservation Area is managed for a wide range of game and non-game wildlife species. Management activities on the area include, but are not limited to, farming, prescribed burning, edge feathering and food plots.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Old Field	765		33
Grassland (non-prairie)	495		21
Forest and Woodland	480		20
Lakes/Ponds	280		12
Cropland	230		10
Native Prairie	100		4
Total	2350		100
Stream Frontage		1500	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Lake Paho Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period August 1–31, 2014. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 11 respondents (Appendix A). The Lake Paho 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 Lake Paho Conservation Areas public comment period

Suggests stocking lake with walleye, bass and channel catfish.

Walleye stocking by MDC is directed by a statewide management plan for the species. That plan does not currently recommend walleye to be stocked in Lake Paho.

Supplemental stocking of largemouth would not improve the fishery. Natural reproduction and survival rates of largemouth bass appear to have improved with more stable and generally higher water levels after the catfish rearing ponds were decommissioned in 2010. Future lake renovation (if approved and funded) will lead to significant additional improvements in bass densities with the removal of carp and subsequent increased levels of submerged aquatic vegetation. Abundance of bass will increase naturally as habitat improves.

Channel catfish are currently stocked in Lake Paho every two years at a rate of 10 fish/acre (2730 catfish). Regular catfish stocking is needed to sustain a high-quality fishery due to high predation rates by bass.

Requests more information on plans to remove “junk fish” (e.g., carp, shad).

There are currently no approved plans to remove common carp and gizzard shad; however, Paho is ranked relatively high on a statewide list of public lakes in which renovation is warranted. If funded, renovation would include the removal of nuisance fish and habitat improvements. Typical removal of these nuisance species will include a combination of water level “drawdowns” and the use of a registered piscicide.

Suggests alternative methods for improving fish habitat.

Increased levels of aquatic vegetation would greatly improve fish habitat. Removal of common carp through lake renovation would be one effective method. Improvements in fish habitat have been ongoing for many years and have included placements of brush piles and artificial structures which attract and concentrate sport fish for anglers.

Suggests managing this area similar to a state park with modern campsites, swim area, playground, and fish dressing station.

The Missouri Department of Conservation’s mission is “To protect and manage the forest, fish, and wildlife resources of the state; to facilitate and provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and

learn about these resources.” It is the position of the Department that providing primitive (no water, sewer or electrical hookups) camping opportunities on conservation areas offers the public added opportunities to enjoy the outdoors without significantly shifting staff time and funding away from managing forest, fish and wildlife resources on conservation areas to development and maintenance of full hook-up campgrounds.

A fish cleaning station has not been promoted at Lake Paho due to the nature of the fishery where fish harvest is relatively low due to less fishing pressure, a poor panfish population, and high release rates on bass over 18 inches (minimum size). The utility of a cleaning station would be much higher in the event that the lake is renovated as proposed. Expected benefits of renovation would include high-quality panfishing (where harvest rates are high) and more angler use.

Suggests allowing private boats with motors on Lake Paho and providing boats for rent.

The use of private boats and motors has been allowed on Lake Paho since 2011. The boat rental program at Lake Paho was discontinued in approximately 2008. In 2008, we started focusing more of our time on aggressively managing the upland habitat on the Lake Paho. This required us to evaluate all of our existing efforts so that we could dedicate more time to habitat management. The use of rental boats by area users was low, making it hard to justify staff time spent on boat maintenance, storage and replacement.

Suggests more stable dock by headquarters.

Will check on the situation and see what may be able to be done.

Suggests multi-use trail (hike/bike/horse) with side-trails to reach underutilized smaller fishing ponds.

The area planning team considered the suggestion of developing a multi-use trail on the Lake Paho Conservation Area (CA). There are currently five CA's in the Northwest Region that have multi-use trails allowing bike and equestrian use. In addition, Mozingo Lake, owned by the City of Maryville, has horse trails open to public use.

The size of the Lake Paho Conservation Area does not lend itself well to developing a multi-use trail of any significant length. The establishment of a multi-use trail would increase area maintenance and enforcement requirements such as erosion control, litter patrols, unauthorized trail use and the potential spread and/or introduction of invasive plant species. Given that there are currently six other public multi-use trails allowing bike and equestrian use within the Northwest Region, the planning team does not recommend developing a multi-use trail on the Lake Paho CA.

Supports current deer hunting regulations on area.

Other area users have expressed support for the current deer regulation on Lake Paho. This information is important and will be considered as we evaluate CA deer regulations in the future.

Requests information on waterfowl hunting regulations at Lake Paho.

Currently waterfowl hunting is prohibited on Lake Paho CA. This is actually something that the Wildlife Management Biologist for this district is looking into to change. Providing waterfowl hunting opportunities on the CA would be somewhat limited, due to the size of the lake and the CA as a whole, but nonetheless, an additional opportunity for area users.

Suggests adding a shooting/archery range.

Mercer County is located in one of a handful of locations around the state that is approximately 1-hour drive time from the nearest range. This is something the Department is aware of and is currently partnering with 4-H to conduct a year-long area use study of the state's unstaffed shooting ranges. The results of this study will be used to help improve the ranges for area users and possibly identify additional range opportunities.

There is an unstaffed rifle/shotgun range located at Elam Bend CA and an archery range at Seat (Emmett and Leah) Memorial CA which could accommodate Lake Paho users. Currently there are 62 Conservation Areas across Missouri that provide various unstaffed ranges. Missouri is a national leader in providing free, publicly-owned shooting ranges. Nearly one-third of all such ranges nationwide are located in Missouri and provided by MDC. MDC has worked hard to ensure that there are adequate numbers of ranges statewide. Although these shooting ranges are unstaffed, they still require necessary upkeep and maintenance which contributes to a significant annual cost. Additionally, there are a lot of factors that contribute to the selection of an area for a shooting range (e.g. proximity to dwellings, noise disturbance, applicable backstops, etc.). Today's shooting ranges are designed and engineered to ensure the utmost safety for area users and CA neighbors, and as such, are much more expensive than just pushing up a couple dirt berms. At this point in time we cannot consider adding a rifle and/or archery range at Lake Paho CA.

Appreciates the employees at Lake Paho CA. They are hardworking and friendly.

The staff at Lake Paho appreciates the compliment and work hard to provide area users an enjoyable outdoor experience.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation Fisheries Staff. (2011). *Lake prioritization summary*.

Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W.A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Cover Types

Figure 3: Land Uses in Watershed

Figure 4: Brush Pile Locations and Water Depths of Lake Paho

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Lake Paho Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

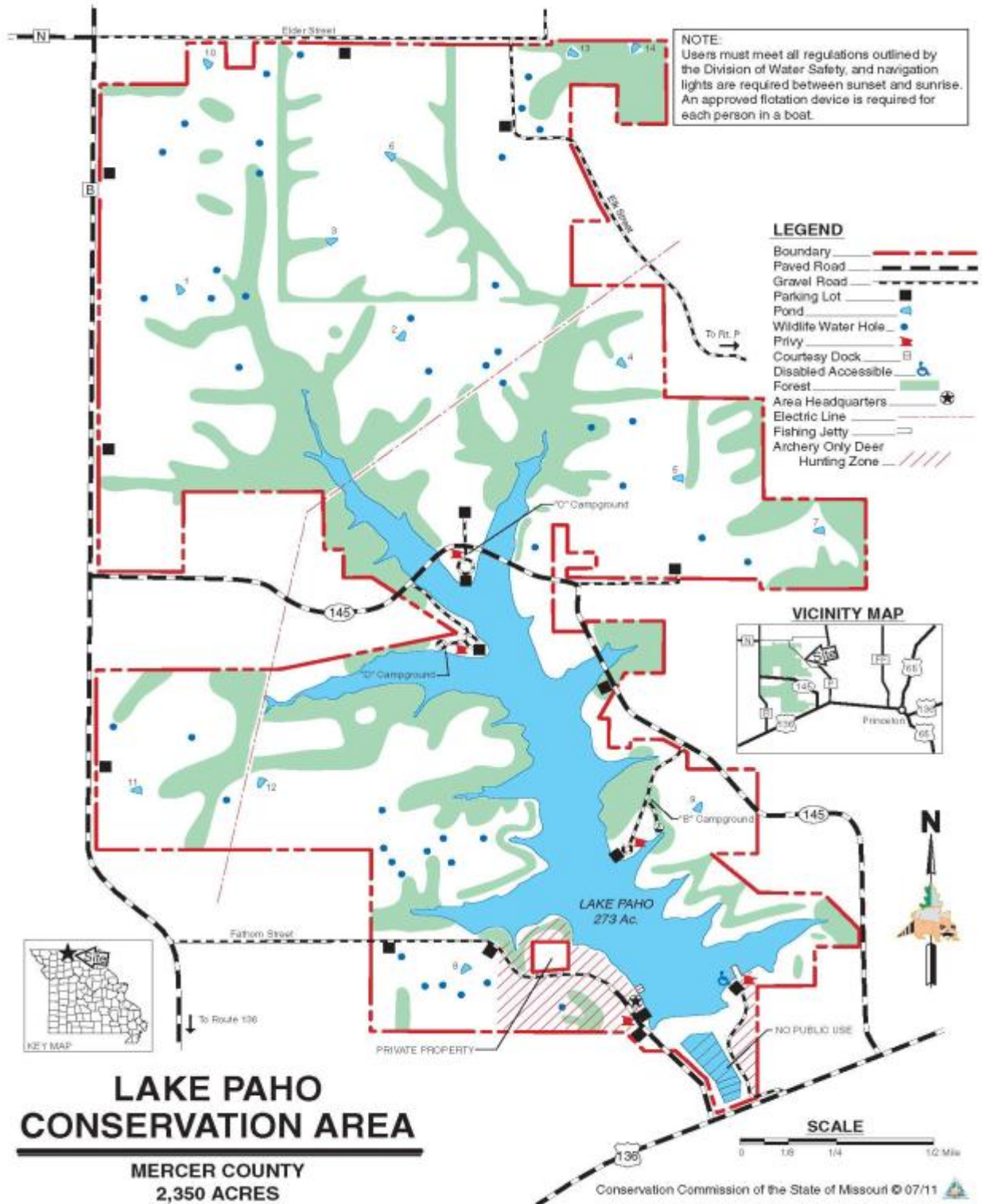
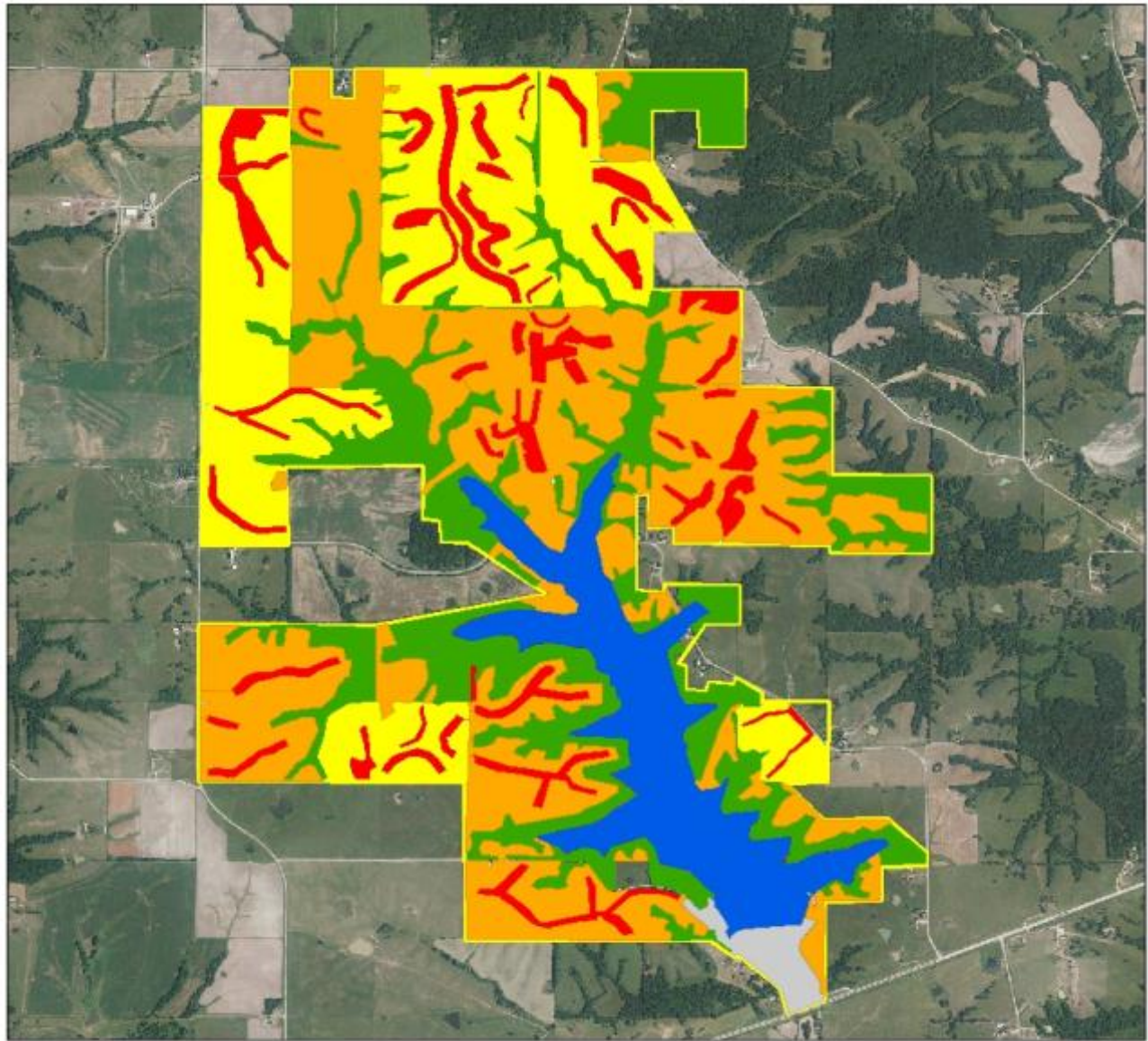


Figure 2: Cover Types



- Legend**
- Cover type_Paho
- Cover_type
- Crop
 - Forested
 - Grassland
 - Headquarters
 - Lake
 - Old field

2,600 1,300 0 2,600 Feet

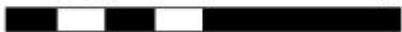
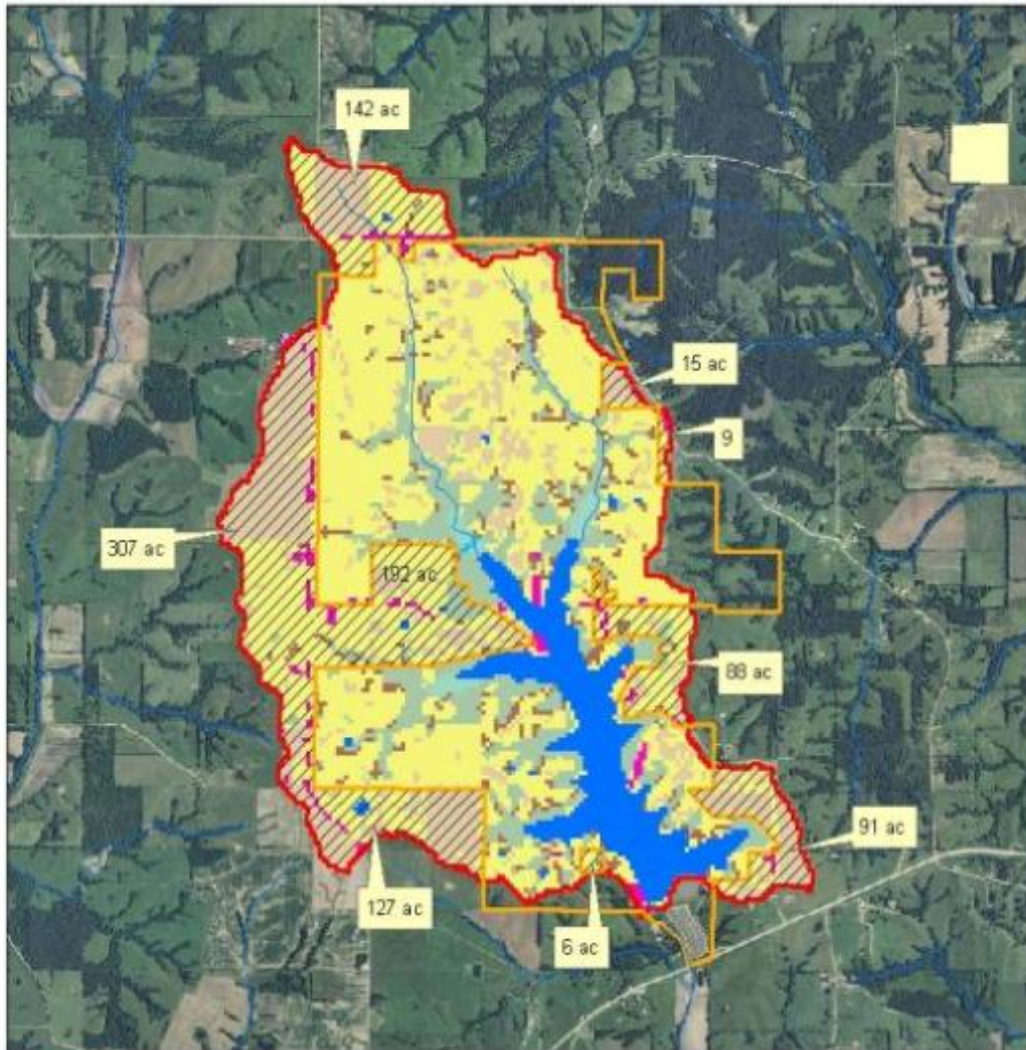


Figure 3: Land Uses in Watershed



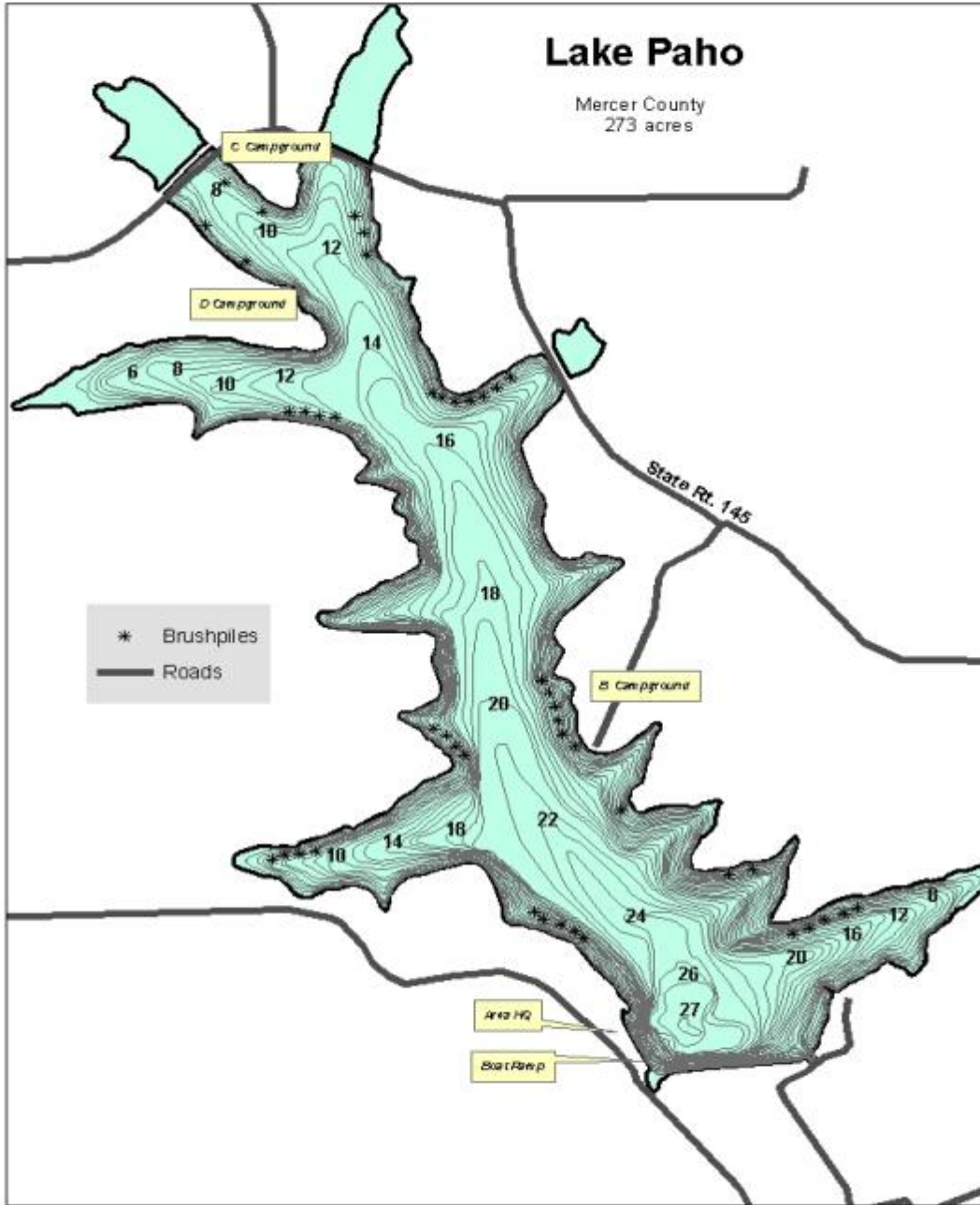
- Lake Paho Watershed
- MDC Land
- Impervious
- Cropland
- Grassland
- Deciduous Forest
- Deciduous Woody/Herbaceous
- Woody-Dominated Wetland
- Herbaceous-Dominated Wetland
- Open Water

Lake Paho Watershed

Total Acres = 3034
 MDC Owned = 2057 acres (68%)
 Private Land = 977 acres (32%)

LULC_CODE1	PERCENT	ACRES
Impervious	2	64.47
Cropland	19	565.75
Grassland	51	1558.77
Deciduous Forest	13	399.25
Deciduous Woody/Herbaceous	4	129.6
Woody-Dominated Wetland	1	28.45
Herbaceous-Dominated Wetland	0	1.33
Open Water	9	286.32

Figure 4: Brush Pile Locations and Water Depths of Lake Paho



Appendix A. Draft Lake Paho Conservation Areas Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (August 1-31, 2014)

Lake Paho sadly continues to be an extremely under- utilized facility. While it is a beautiful place, our tax dollars are serving a select few. Like many rural areas, Mercer County struggles to attract its share of tourist trade and retail business. It would seem that Lake Paho would be something we could expand on with modern campsites and allowing private boats with motors. I think this facility is like having brand new clothes in the closet and always saving them for a special occasion. Wildlife and fishing are abundant in northern Missouri; one only needs to drive down the road to see this. We need expanded facilities that draw more people out there. Now they are driving past Paho to Nine Eagles State Park to swim, boat and camp. I know that this changes the whole concept from Conservation Area to "park" and that would be staffed by entirely a different branch of the DNR. Some do not welcome this change as it would be more work for them. Instead of a quiet little spot that only needs mowed and drove through during busy holiday week-ends, everyday management would need to happen. I would like to see my tax dollars at work and being used to attract people to Mercer County instead of watching them drive out of the county and the state. It's time to make the most of what Mercer County has instead of making it a "best kept secret"

As an adjoining land owner, we have seen a need for several improvements including:

1. A swim at your own risk swimming area
2. A children's playground
3. A decent fish dressing station similar to the ones at Mark Twain Lake
4. Electrical and water hookups for campers
5. A return of the boats for rent

I realize that Lake Paho is considered primarily as a fishing lake, but to promote fishing, other amenities need to be added to draw in families to visit the area. By focusing on improving other family and children's activities, the use of the fishing lake will go up. Please consider improving the facility to make it more family friendly.

i would like to see the deer hunting regulations stay the same it provides for a better hunting experience for those who choose to hunt with these methods

I am happy to see plans for the lake area. I was hoping for plans to start stocking with walleye again. But was very glad to hear of the plans for improving the crappie in the lake. I fish the lake a couple times a year and enjoy the area. Looking forward to the improvements.

I have had the opportunity to fish Lake Paho more than anyone I know. I average at least 3 trips per week on the lake. I am a little confused as to what the fix will be for removing the junk fish (carp, shad). I was told that the lake must be drained in order to do this. Is this still in the works, or is there another plan?

Having spent so many hours on the lake, I would make the following observations.

1. The use of Cedar trees for fish habitat might be good for the fish, but it makes it all but impossible to fish. I believe that large trees with branches could be set upright in buckets of concrete which would create habitat with the ability to actually fish it.
2. Large rock piles could be sunk to offer another fishable habitat.
3. A dedicated stocking program with both bass and channel catfish is needed

As I said, I fish the lake about three times a week. Many days I am the only one out there. I on a regular basis catch many quality fish, but it takes a lot of work and intimate knowledge of the lake in order to do this. Many people come to the lake and don't catch anything, so they don't return, and tell their friends that the fishing is terrible. This lake has the potential to be a great place to camp and fish, but it needs a lot of work. I read the report, and look forward to a better fishery in the future. And before I go, I want to say the guys that work at Lake Paho are a great asset to the lake. They are hardworking and friendly, and very helpful. Thank you for listening to me.

What are the regs on waterfowl hunting on Lake Paho? Could a blind or two be built for a daily drawing? Can boat blinds for waterfowl hunting be used on the lake? If so how many? Thanks

The Wiper fishing is great. I have caught several over 25 inches. They really pull on your reel's drag. However, the fish is an oily tasting fish. My Hummingbird graph shows an overabundance of shad with the Wipers dispersed among them. Please, Please, Please, put Walleye (2.5 million fingerling) back into Lake Paho CA. Walleye were once put in Paho but not replenished. I believe walleye will take care of the over population of shad. The mayor of Princeton agrees. It would be great to not have to go Little River Lake, Leon, IA to fish for great tasting Walleye. Thanks.

I would like to see the walleyes reintroduced. It was exciting to fish for something different in north Missouri.

My wife and I would fish from our boat more often if you had a more stable dock down by the headquarters so that I can launch the boat, she can park the truck and trailer, and then come back and get in the boat. We are in our 70's and cannot get in or out of the boat by running it into the shore line. The dock need not be any longer than the present unstable dock, just wider and more stable. You can prohibit fishing from the dock as it's easily observed from the headquarters office. My wife cannot back the boat down the ramp, so I have to use the dock for loading and unloading. We would really appreciate this improvement and believe it would promote more fishing on the lake, which appears to be your goal. You may contact me, if you wish.

Thank you to the Department for the opportunity to comment on the Lake Paho Conservation Area Management Plan. The area encompasses over 2,300 acres; over half that area is very seldom used by the public, the largest user group being deer and turkey hunters. Several good fishing ponds on the area see little use because of access. We recommend the existing field access roads be opened to public multi-use—all non-motorized use including hiking, biking, bird watching, fishing and equestrian use. In addition we recommend that the existing field road network be supplemented by single-file, unpaved trails that would lead near those underutilized fishing ponds. Location and alignment of the trails should carefully consider topography to minimize erosion and mud problems. Trail location could avoid riparian corridors except to cross watercourses at select locations. Other sensitive areas could be avoided as well. Show Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen would offer to partner with the Department to locate, install and maintain trails and associated multi-use infrastructure, subject to the availability of volunteers. Thank you again for the chance to comment.

I feel that there is a lot more you could do with this area. This county has nothing, besides hunting and fishing to offer travelers. It would help if you would make a place to sight in rifles, an archery target place, maybe have some electricity at some of the camp sites, a playground for kids, maybe even a sandy beach for the kids. Right now there is nothing for kids to do at Paho...I have been to a lot of other lakes in Mo. and this one has the least to offer.....