

Wilbur Allen Conservation Area

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan FY 2015-2029



Lesai B. Allen

Forestry Division Chief

11-13-15

Date

Wilbur Allen Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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OZARK REGION

Ozark RCT Chair

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Signature Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Unit Chief

John Tuttle 11/10/15
Signature Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Wilbur Allen Memorial Conservation Area, # 8112
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1981
- **Acreage:** 380 acres
- **County:** Wright
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry, Design and Development
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for multiple resource uses with an emphasis on forest, associated species, wildlife, watershed protection and compatible recreational opportunities.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Wilbur Allen Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy forest/woodland and diverse old field/grassland habitat.
 - 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:** Species of conservation concern are known on 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:** Gasconade River (1.39 miles)

- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - 2 parking lots
 - Concrete boat ramp (at Gasconade River)
 - Privy
 - 2 campsites (no amenities provided)
 - 2 picnic tables and grills

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** Deer hunting limited to archery methods only. (Other wildlife species may be taken with firearms during the prescribed season as outlined by regulations).
- 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:** Laclede Electric Cooperative (1957)
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- G. Boundary Issues:** Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Improving and restoring forest and woodland landscapes.
- 2) Improving habitat for deer and other game species.
- 3) Improving habitat and natural diversity by limiting the spread of invasive plant species.

Management Objective 1: Maintain, enhance and restore forest/woodland natural communities. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Implement management recommendations as outlined in the 2013 forest inventory. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Implement Best Management Practices to prevent erosion when conducting timber harvesting activities according to guidelines.

Management Objective 2: Maintain and enhance deer and other game habitats. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Implement active field management to reduce woody encroachment and encourage old field structure. (Forestry and Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Improve forest wildlife habitat with forest and openland management practices that may include timber harvesting, timber stand improvement, use of herbicides or prescribed fire . (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Reduce the impact of invasive plant species on natural communities. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Continue to control invasive species including fescue, sericea lespedeza, Johnson grass and autumn olive with mechanical, prescribed fire and chemical methods. (Forestry, Wildlife).

Strategy 2: Monitor the area for invasive species. Suppress any infestations that may develop using appropriate methods. (Forestry, Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

Managing and protecting karst land features and the Gasconade River Watershed.

Management Objective 1: Protect and enhance the riparian corridor and karst features on the area. (Forestry and Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Minimize sedimentation within the area from land management practices and/or road systems which will affect biodiversity of unique habitats by following the practices recommended in the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (2009). (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain a riparian corridor with a minimum of 100 feet from the top of the bank on each side for third-order streams and larger, as recommended in the *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009).

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Providing for hunting and viewing opportunities.
- 2) Providing public use access and balancing area use by stakeholders.

Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting and viewing opportunities. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diverse set of species. These include prescribed fire, herbicide application, annual green browse and small grain food plots. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to monitor area use and limit special use permits that could impact use by other stakeholders. (Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Resolving any boundary line disputes with adjoining landowners.
- 2) Acquisition of land.

Management Objective 1: Resolve boundary line disputes if and when they arise.

(Forestry)

Strategy 1: As needed, Forestry Division will request surveys to better determine boundary locations. (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. (Forestry)

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Land Acquisition History: The area was named in honor of Mr. Wilbur Allen, the inventor of the compound bow. To commemorate Mr. Allen's contribution to archery, his family, in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation, established the conservation area in 1981. Its purpose is to promote the sport of bow hunting by providing a place where deer are hunted exclusively by bow. (Other wildlife species may be taken with firearms during the prescribed season.)

The property has a distant history of high-grade timber harvest and wildfire.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Upland Forests/Woodlands	253		66
Old Fields	61		16
Grasslands (non-prairie)	35		10
Crop Lands	10		2
Roads	3		1
Stream Frontage (first-order and above)	18	7,385	5
Total	380		100%

Public Input Summary:

The draft Wilbur Allen Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period March 1–31, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from two respondents (Appendix A). The Wilbur Allen 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 Wilbur Allen Conservation Area public comment period

Opposes the use of bicycles at the area.

There are no bicycle trails on Wilbur Allen CA and none are currently planned.

Suggests improvements to the area east of the river (incorporating strip farming and maintaining cleared areas with native grasses for wildlife habitat). Appreciates maintenance work and additional amenities that were recently added to the area and would like to see more acres in agricultural crops.

Currently 28% of Wilbur Allen is in openland habitat, all east of the Gasconade river. The Department manages these acres with a variety of management tools: crop permits, food plots, and prescribed fire. Current management is providing a variety of habitat types to meet the needs of deer and other associated species.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: County Location Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Aerial Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendice A: Draft Wilbur Allen Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

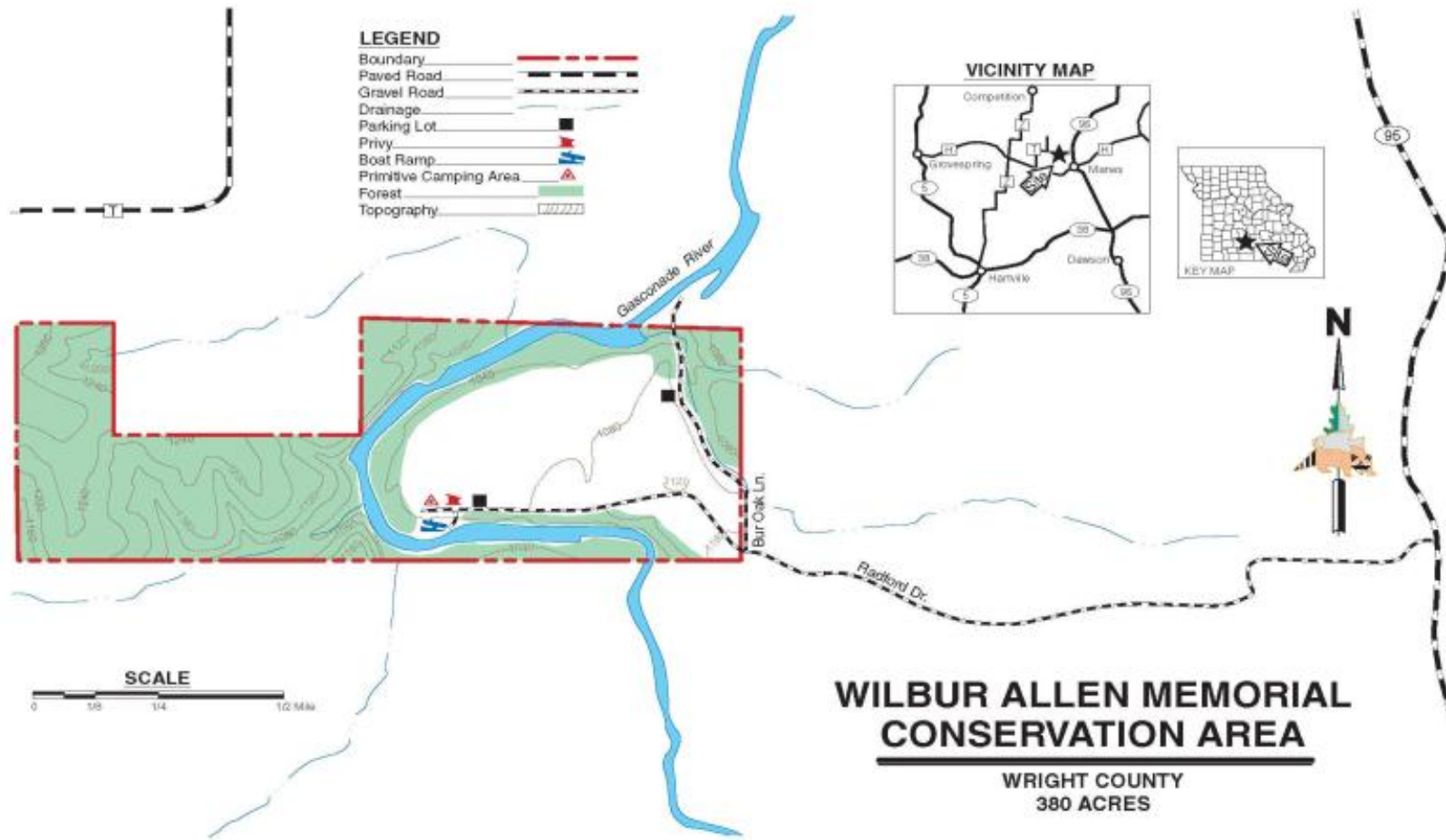


Figure 2: County Location Map

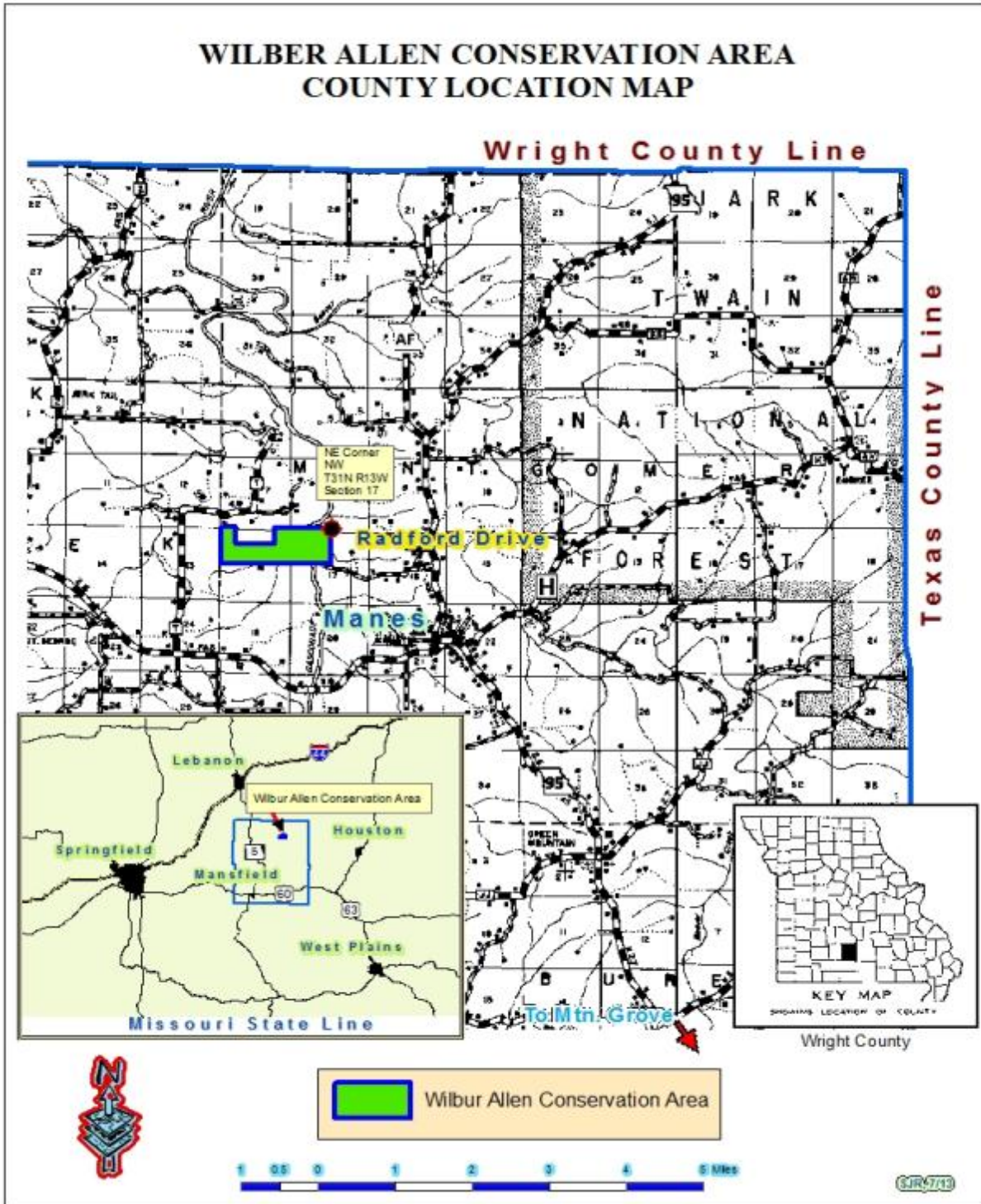


Figure 3: Topographic Map

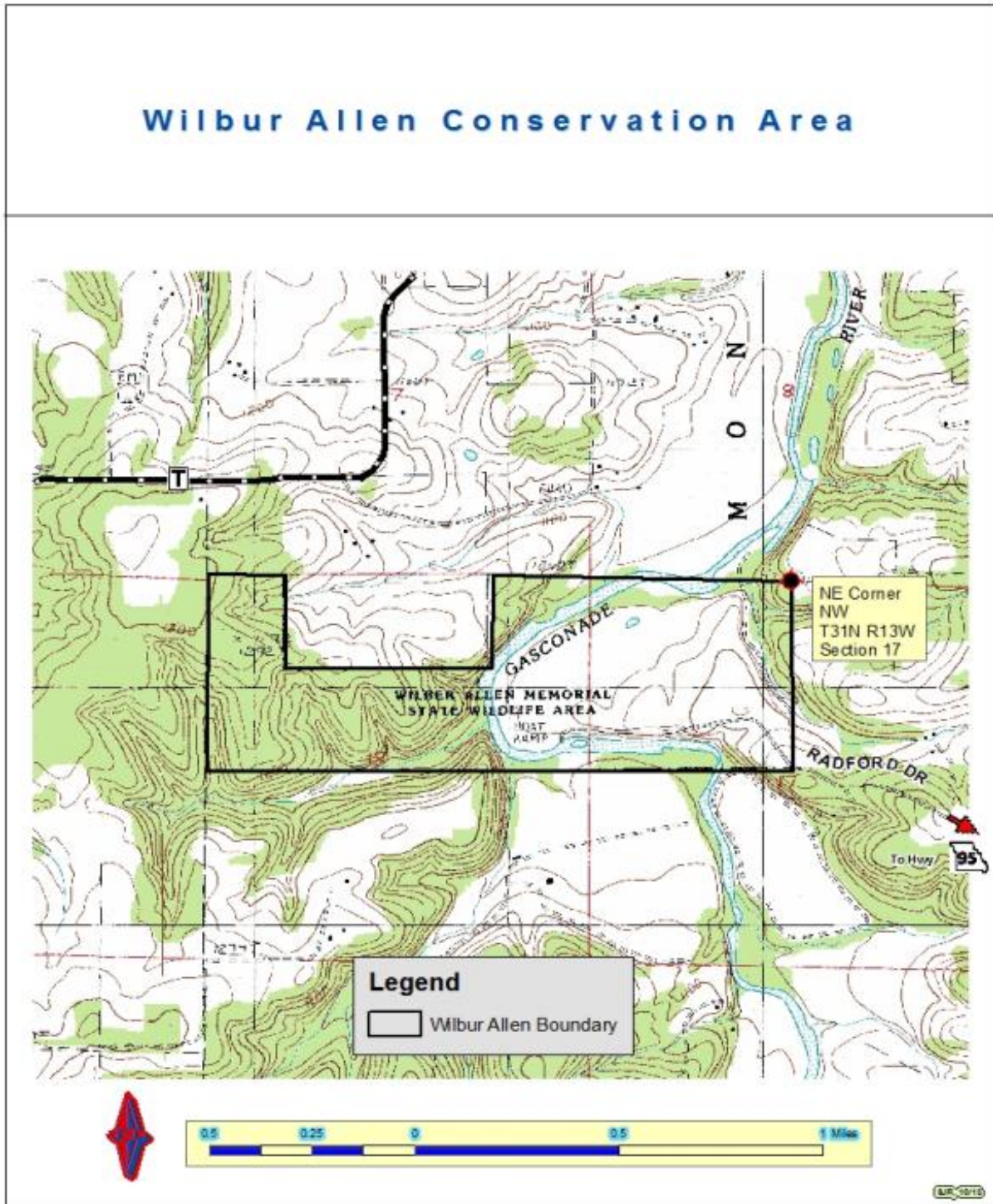
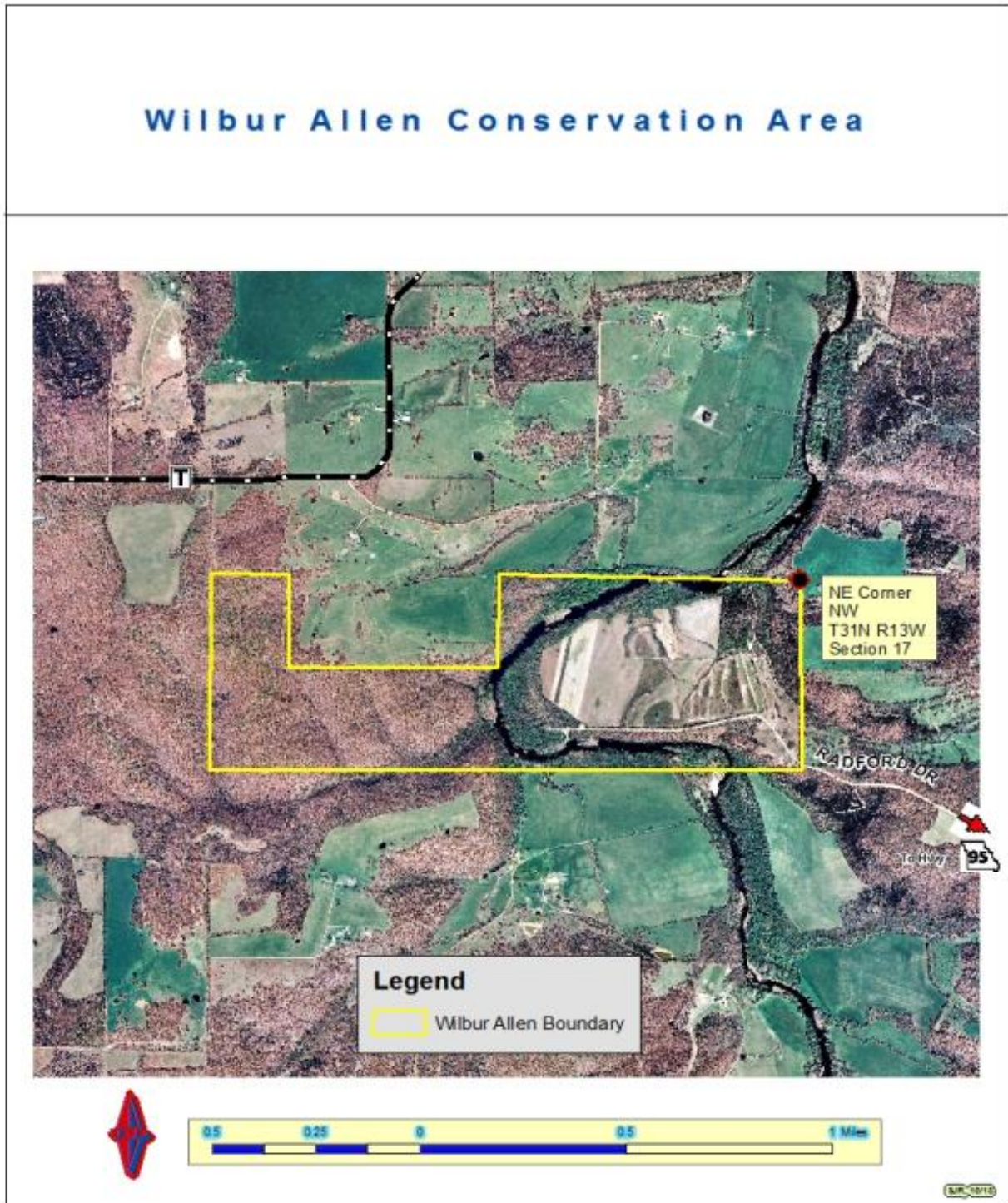


Figure 4: Aerial Map



Appendix A: Draft Wilbur Allen Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

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 favored. 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.

Refer. To the Wilbur Allen Wildlife Area.

I'm a landowner bordering the area by about one fourth of a mile on the east side; the farm next to the Conservation area on the north side of the road at the end of Radford Drive.

I've worked with the Conservation personnel for the past 2 years, mainly disking, plowing, brush hogging and haying.

There has been this last 2 years: A boat launch for fishermen, new bathroom facilities, 2 picnic tables, and a lot of foundation and gravel road work. I'm sure this was greatly appreciated by the community as a whole.

I feel like as a citizen, conservationist, landowner and admirer of wildlife, that there could be some improvements and endeavors made in the area on the east side of the river. I am referring to approximately 90 acres of land.

I have a plan. By strip farming at first, using strips about 300 to 500 yards wide, a quarter mile long, by using the south entrance road by the cattle guard and using the north road as a border, with circle fields, mainly 2 or 3 acres to themselves, with a grown up fence row. Also, terraces should go with fence rows, making wildlife protection areas. The cleared areas could and should be maintained with native grass, with areas for quail, deer, turkeys and other assorted wildlife. Plus, I feel with the help of the local community, with very little money spent by the conservations department, this could be a good example of a community working together; a wonderful place for wildlife, hunters, and community respect.