

# Chapel View Prairie Conservation Area

## Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan FY 2018-2032



*Michael J. Schoen*

Wildlife Division Chief

*7/20/18*

Date

**Chapel View Prairie Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page**

**PLANNING TEAM**

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## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Chapel View Prairie Conservation Area, # 8739
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1987
- **Acreage:** 384 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 grassland habitat for grassland-dependent wildlife species, while offering the public compatible outdoor recreational opportunities.
  - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Chapel View Prairie Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy tallgrass prairie 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:** 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
  
- III. Existing Infrastructure**
  - Two parking lots
  - One deep well
  - Three cattle waterers below the fishable ponds
  - Five pond dams
  - Three fishing ponds (0.75 acres, 1.5 acres, 1.5 acres)
  - Two fishless ponds (0.75 acres, 1.5 acres)

**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:** An abandoned U.S. Air Force missile cable crosses the area, but 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**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The area contains 303 acres of native prairie. Approximately one-third of the native prairie located on the west is good quality prairie and only requires routine management and invasive species control. The remaining prairie on the east side of the prairie is degraded, but opportunities exist for restoration.
- 2) One of the big challenges on the prairie is invasive species control. Invasive species include sericia lespedeza, multi-flora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, tall fescue, Osage-orange, American elm, and eastern red cedar.
- 3) Grazing provides an opportunity to increase the structural diversity in the prairie, providing open areas and trails grassland birds can utilize.
- 4) The woodlands cover 75 acres of the area and are divided into two locations: one on the southwestern side, and the other along the eastern side of the area. Both sections have some undesirable species, such as American elm, Osage-orange, and eastern red cedar that need to be removed to improve the quality of the woodland community.
- 5) White-tailed deer, rabbits, bobwhite quail, turkey, and a variety of grassland birds use the area.

**Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy grasslands with a management emphasis on providing wildlife habitat.**

Strategy 1: Continue to vary prescribed fire timing to provide a variety of grassland habitat. Seek to burn a minimum of one-third of Chapel View Prairie CA each year. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to be aggressive with restoration efforts on the degraded prairie. Use hay mulch or direct seeding to aid in restoration efforts, as is appropriate. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 2: Control invasive species using an aggressive approach.**

Strategy 1: Spray serotia lespedeza in early June and continue until plants start to flower. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Spray tall fescue in fall after a hard freeze and in early spring prior to native plant green up. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Spray Japanese honeysuckle along field edges and riparian corridors. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Use prescribed fire, mechanical or chemical treatment methods to set back woody encroachment that continues to invade into the open prairie. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 3: Use grazing to increase structural diversity in the prairie and provide open areas and trails for wildlife.**

Strategy 1: Graze cattle May 1 through Sept. 1. Conduct grazing on a five-year rotation of two years grazing, one-year rest, and two years grazing. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to use six acres per animal unit stocking rate, unless conditions warrant a decrease or increase in stocking rates. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Continue to work with Fisheries to monitor area fencing and drainages for potential erosion issues. Follow the best management practices per the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (2009). (Wildlife, Fisheries)

**Management Objective 4: Maintain healthy woodlands and forested riparian corridors with a management emphasis on wildlife habitat.**

Strategy 1: Conduct woodland thinning on the south-west corner of the area. Remove undesirable tree species while retaining desirable oak species to promote open woodland condition. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Maintain forested riparian corridor while keeping woody encroachment on the prairie to a minimum. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Remove tree species from open prairie and protect patches of native shrubs when appropriate. (Wildlife)

## VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The area contains five ponds totaling 6 acres in size. Three of these ponds are fishable.
- 2) A third-order tributary to Marshall Creek bisects the eastern side of the area from south to north. A smaller intermittent tributary runs through the western portion of the area.

### **Management Objective 1: Maintain and improve water quality in area ponds.**

Strategy 1: Exclude livestock from area ponds. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Maintain freeze-proof waterers below ponds and use rock adjacent to watering tanks to minimize erosion. (Wildlife)

### **Management Objective 2: Maintain and protect healthy watersheds by implementing best management practices.**

Strategy 1: Follow the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (2009) and the Department's Resource Policy Manual, to ensure that all grazing plans and management activities adhere to best management practices. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

### **Management Objective 3: Maintain and restore stream corridors to protect and enhance water quality and aquatic habitat.**

Strategy 1: Protect, restore, and establish stream corridors using fencing in areas adjacent to managed and grazed areas and remove tree species as they develop. (Wildlife and Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Conduct pre- and post-grazing evaluations. Make adjustments as necessary. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

## VII. Public Use Management Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Chapel View Prairie CA has three fishable ponds. These ponds are accessed by foot only and are a fair distance from the parking lots.
- 2) The area provides hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. Fire lines traverse the prairie and offer ample travel lanes for area users that are willing to hike the prairie.

- 3) Chapel View Prairie CA has no all-weather roads that transect the area. This could pose a problem for educational purposes for various groups in the community.
- 4) Opportunities exist to build relationships with neighboring landowners and to promote sound stewardship.

**Management Objective 1: Provide quality public fishing opportunities.**

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

Strategy 2: Stock channel catfish with supplemental stocking as needed. (Fisheries)

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

**Management Objective 2: Provide public hunting and viewing opportunities.**

Strategy 1: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of grassland-dependent species. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 3: Improve educational and interpretive opportunities on Chapel View Prairie CA.**

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

Strategy 2: Communicate to teachers, students, scout groups, and youth groups 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 landowners.**

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass, or any other issues affecting Chapel View Prairie CA or private property. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Work with landowners that desire assistance in habitat management. (Wildlife)

**VIII. Administrative Considerations**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.
- 2) Consider land acquisition, when available, to expand the prairie.

**Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.**

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with the Department's guidelines and at currently identified maintenance level. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

**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 strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

	<b>FY18</b>	<b>FY19</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>	<b>FY29</b>	<b>FY30</b>	<b>FY31</b>	<b>FY32</b>
<b>Public Use Management Considerations</b>															
<i>Objective 1</i>															
Strategy 1					X					X					X

## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

Chapel View Prairie CA is 384 acres. It is in Henry County and about 5 miles southwest of Deepwater. The area is named for the church that is visible from the west parking lot.

The Department acquired this area in 1987 and manages it to preserve native prairie and habitat and to provide the public with opportunities for viewing, studying, and photographing grassland plants and animals.

The west side of the area contains 123 acres of good quality prairie. The eastern 180 acres were heavily grazed and abused when the Department purchased them. Hedge trees dominated the landscape on this section of the prairie. Since its purchase, the Department has spent many hours removing the hedge trees and other woody invaders. Restoration efforts have returned much of the degraded landscape to native tallgrass prairie.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Grassland	303		79
Woodland	75		20
Ponds	6		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream Frontage (Tributary of Marshalls Creek)		1.0	

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Chapel View Prairie Conservation Area was available for a public comment period June 1-30, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no comments during this time period.

### 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.

**Maps:**

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

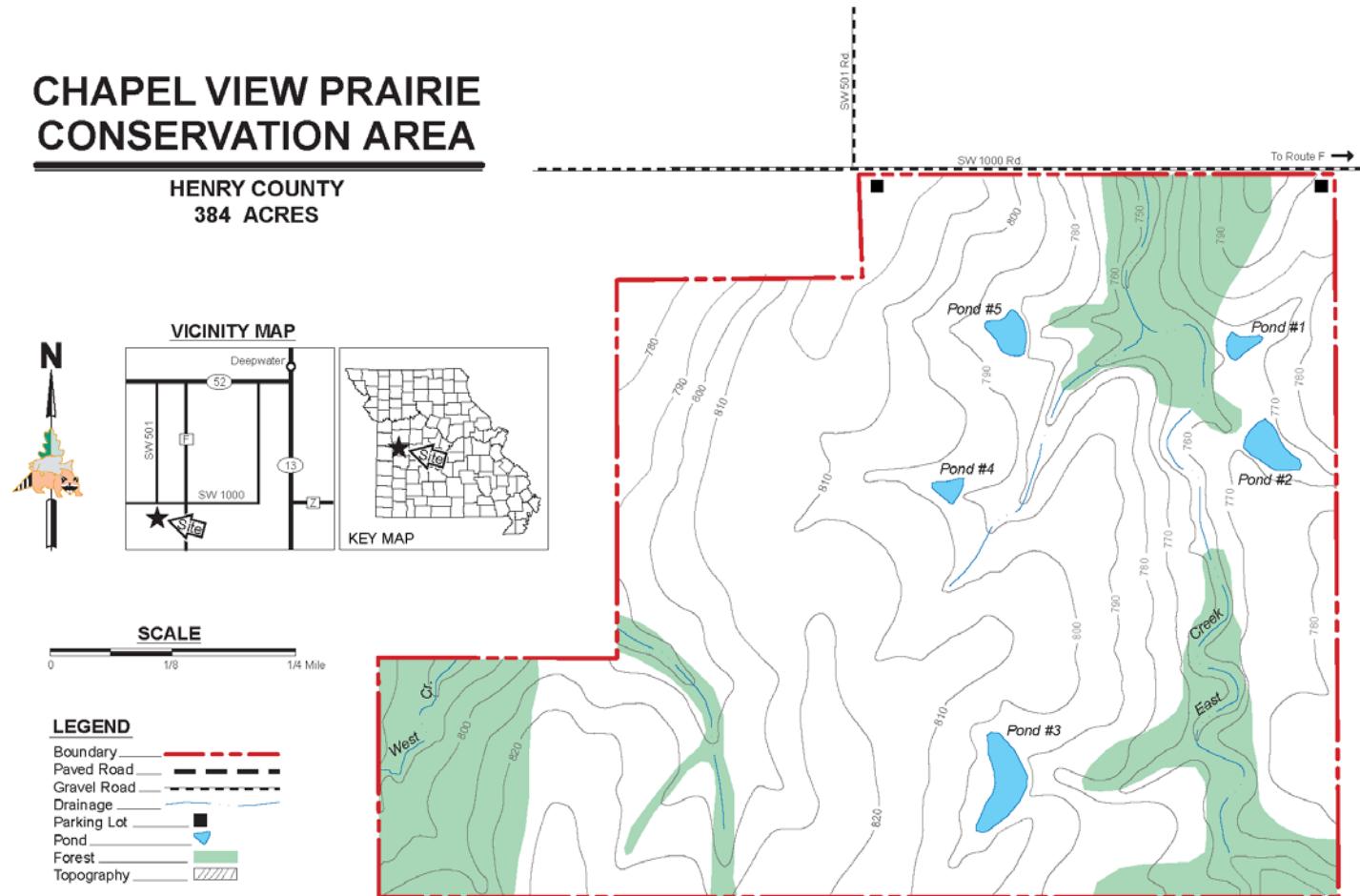
Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Grazing System Map

Figure 5: Current Vegetation Map

Figure 6: Easement Map

Figure 1: Area Map



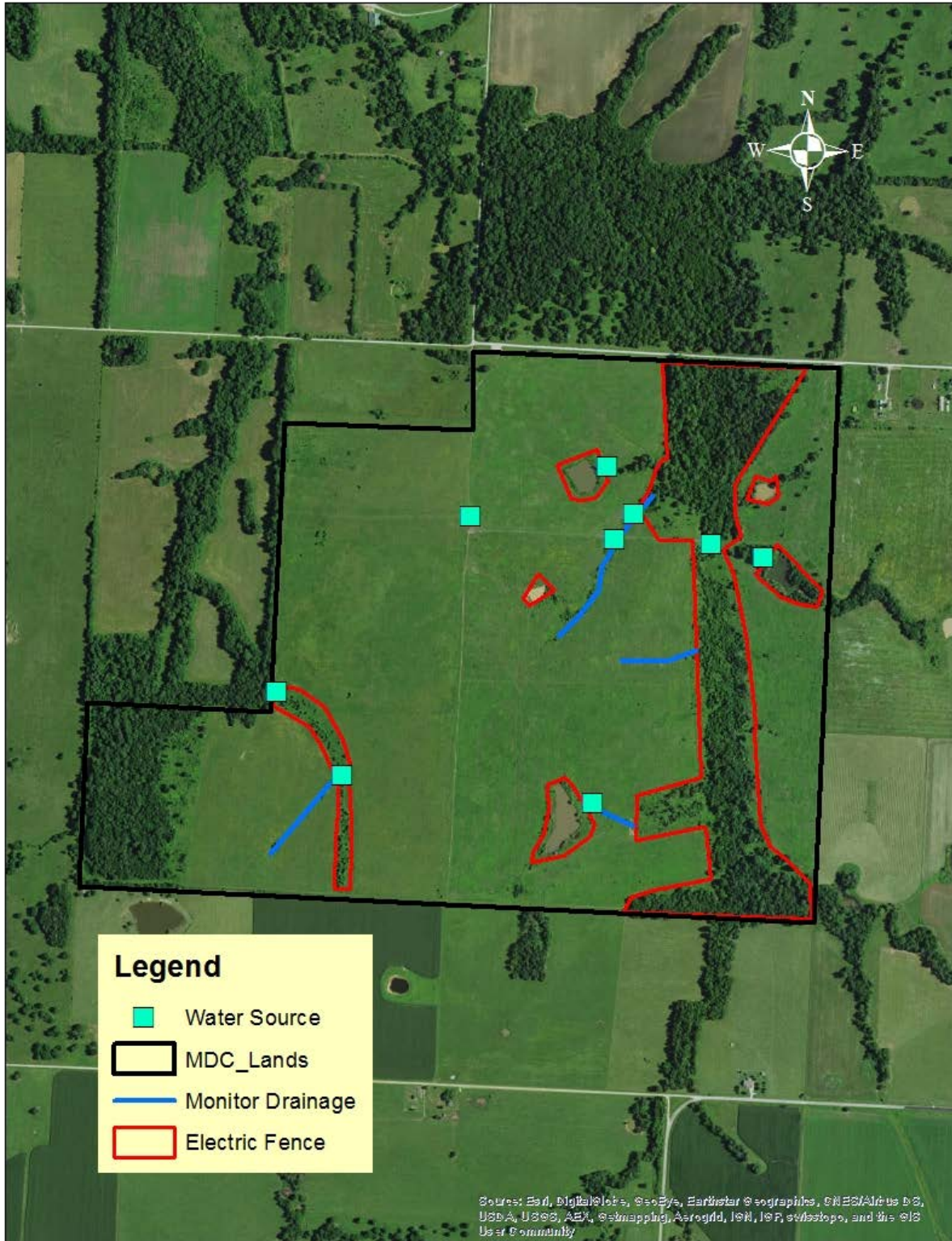
**Figure 2: Aerial Map**



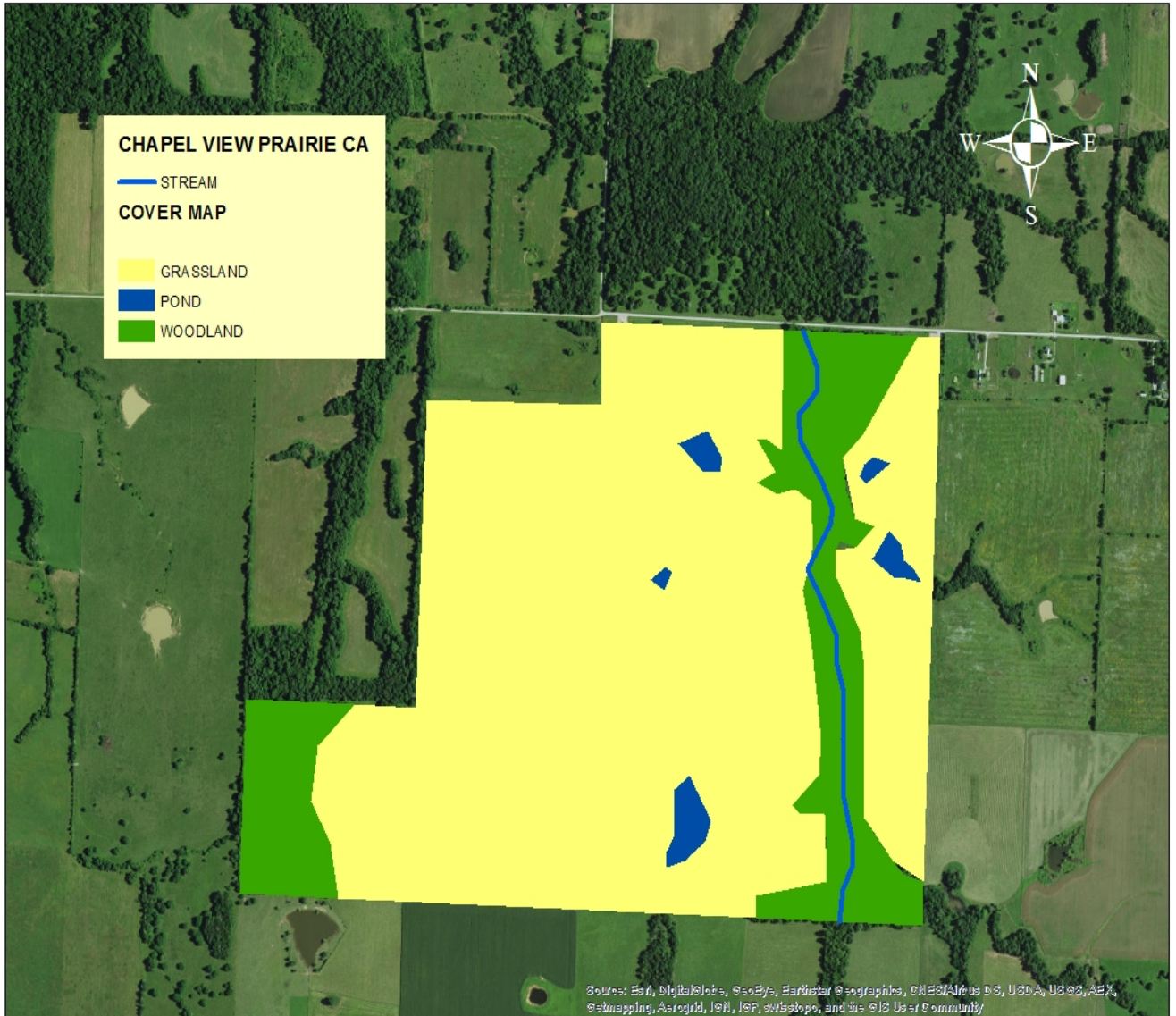
Figure 3: Topographic Map



Figure 4: Grazing System Map



**Figure 5: Current Vegetation Map**





**Figure 6: Easement Map**

