

Monkey Mountain Conservation Area

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan 2018-2032





Wildlife Division Chief

12 OCT 2017
Date

Monkey Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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NORTHWEST REGION

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Signature

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Monkey Mountain Conservation Area, #7805
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1978
- **Acreage:** 1,580 acres
- **County:** Holt, Andrew
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction:**

Provide quality sport fishing and provide deer, turkey, and non-game woodland species through sound management of woodland, forest, grassland, and savanna habitats.
 - B. Desired Future Condition:**

Maintain a healthy and sustainable forest, woodland, savanna, open lands, and grassland complex while providing compatible recreational opportunities.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** Missouri River Stream Reach Conservation Opportunity Area, Loess Hills Prairie Complex – Grassland/Prairie/Savanna Conservation Opportunity Area
 - B. Natural Areas:** None

- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are not known from this site, but are found in the surrounding area. Area managers should consult annually with the natural history biologist.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
 - D. Other:** 0.75 miles Nodaway River frontage, 2 miles Missouri River frontage

- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - Camping areas at three designated primitive locations
 - Six fishless ponds (7 acres total)
 - Six parking lots

- Interior field access roads suitable for hiking (5 miles)
- Maintained gravel public access roads (2 miles)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** The Olivia Hare Tract (Figure 5) is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) under a contractual agreement.
- 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:** Public water supply pipeline, power line, railroad easements and Holt County #7 Levee District (Figure 3)
- D. Cultural Resource Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Enhance quality deer and turkey populations on area.
- 2) Enhance the diverse mixture of quality native and agricultural vegetation.
- 3) Enhance the woodland and forest habitats on area.

Management Objective 1: Manage for quality deer and turkey populations on area.

Strategy 1: Manage and monitor area for a diverse mixture of native vegetation and agricultural food sources. (Wildlife)

Strategy 1: Implement agricultural practices for disturbance to provide brood rearing habitat and high quality green browse and winter forage. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Treat invasive vegetation with herbicides, mechanical treatments, and prescribed fire. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Manage area using annual disturbances including, but not limited to, chemical disturbance, mechanical disturbance, and prescribed fire. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Manage for a healthy and sustainable mixture of woodland and forest habitats on area.

Strategy 1: Conduct scheduled forest inventory in 2029. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage riparian corridors.

Management Objective 1: Manage healthy and sustainable riparian corridors along 0.75 miles of the Nodaway River and 2 miles of the Missouri River.

Strategy 1: Maintain current riparian buffer on the Nodaway and Missouri Rivers, with a goal of retaining the existing 100 foot corridors. (Wildlife)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide quality infrastructure and regulations to maintain outdoor public recreational opportunities, including hunting, camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Maintain infrastructure, regulations, and Atlas database to provide access and reflect resources and recreational opportunities.

Strategy 1: Monitor and evaluate infrastructure, Atlas database, and regulations annually. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Maintain access to recreational opportunities on area. (Wildlife)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

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

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines. (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

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Terrestrial Resource Management															
<i>Objective 2</i>															
Strategy 1												X			

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Monkey Mountain Conservation Area (CA) is in Holt County, northwest of St. Joseph. The Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) purchased this area in 1978 to provide public land for outdoor activities in northwest Missouri. In 2005 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers purchased the additional 560 acres (Olivia Hare Tract), (Figure 5), adjoining the Department's area, as part of the Missouri River Mitigation Project. The mitigation project was designed to enhance fish and wildlife habitat along the Missouri River. The area is managed through a contractual agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department.

This area was called "Monkey Mountains," because early settlers deemed the river bluffs too steep for even monkeys to climb.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition opened up this portion of the state for settlement, when it passed along the southern portion of the area July 8, 1804. Settlement began on a large scale in 1836. At that time about 20 percent of the county, primarily the steep slopes, was in upland forest cover, consisting mainly of bur oak, white oak, red oak, black walnut, American elm, hickory, and basswood. The remainder of the land, mostly ridge tops and rounded knolls, was either grassland or open timber with an understory of native grass.

Monkey Mountain CA is managed for a wide range of game and non-game wildlife species. The area is available to the public for a variety of outdoor activities, including hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and hiking. Management of the area includes grassland and woodland management, prescribed burning, and development of wildlife habitat (by tree and grass plantings and selective timber harvest).

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Forest/woodland	500		32
Open Land	420		27
Old field	300		19
Grassland	275		17
Other (roads and parking lots)	45		3
Savanna	40		2
Total	1,580		100
Stream Frontage – Nodaway River		3,960	
Stream Frontage – Missouri River		10,460	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Monkey Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Dec. 1–31, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from seven respondents (Appendix A). The Monkey Mountain 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 Monkey Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

Suggests improving quail and pheasant hunting opportunities on the area. Suggests removing woody growth in bottomlands and managing for quail and pheasants.

The Monkey Mountain Area Planning Team agrees with working to improve quail habitat. Due to the small amount of agricultural land on Monkey Mountain CA, it is not practical to manage for pheasants. Currently, the management team is managing the open uplands on Monkey Mountain CA for warm-season grasses and forbs. The bottomlands soils are prone to flooding and are less conducive for successful year-round quail habitat.

Suggests adding wetland habitat to Monkey Mountain CA.

There are currently some borrow pits on the west side of the Hare Tract and a low private levee that allows water in when the river is up. These sites provide some seasonal wetland habitat during wet periods. The east side of the Hare Tract is protected by a federally maintained levee (Holt County #7) and part of a levee district. There are no plans to artificially add wetland habitat to this portion of the Hare Tract.

Suggests hosting educational events and guided hikes at Monkey Mountain CA.

The Monkey Mountain Area Planning Team will convey this interest to Department Outreach and Education staff for consideration of including Monkey Mountain CA for educational events.

Suggests improving and adding parking areas to allow more access points to area bluffs.

There are currently three parking lots along County Road 340, providing adequate walk-in access to the river bluffs.

The Holt County Levee #7 should be acknowledged as an easement in this plan.

The Holt County Levee District #7 is now listed as one of the easements on the Monkey Mountain Area Plan.

Concerned with any increase in traffic on Holt County Levee #7 other than limited Department traffic.

There are no plans to increase or add vehicle access to Holt County Levee #7. The Monkey Mountain Area Planning Team agrees that the current walk-in access is adequate for the Monkey Mountain CA Hare Tract.

Holt County should be listed with Andrew County as the area county.

Holt County is now listed in the county designation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Land Cover Map

Figure 3: Easement Map

Figure 4: 1999 Forest Resource Management Stands Map

Figure 5: Monkey Mountain CA and Olivia Hare Tract Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A. Monkey Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

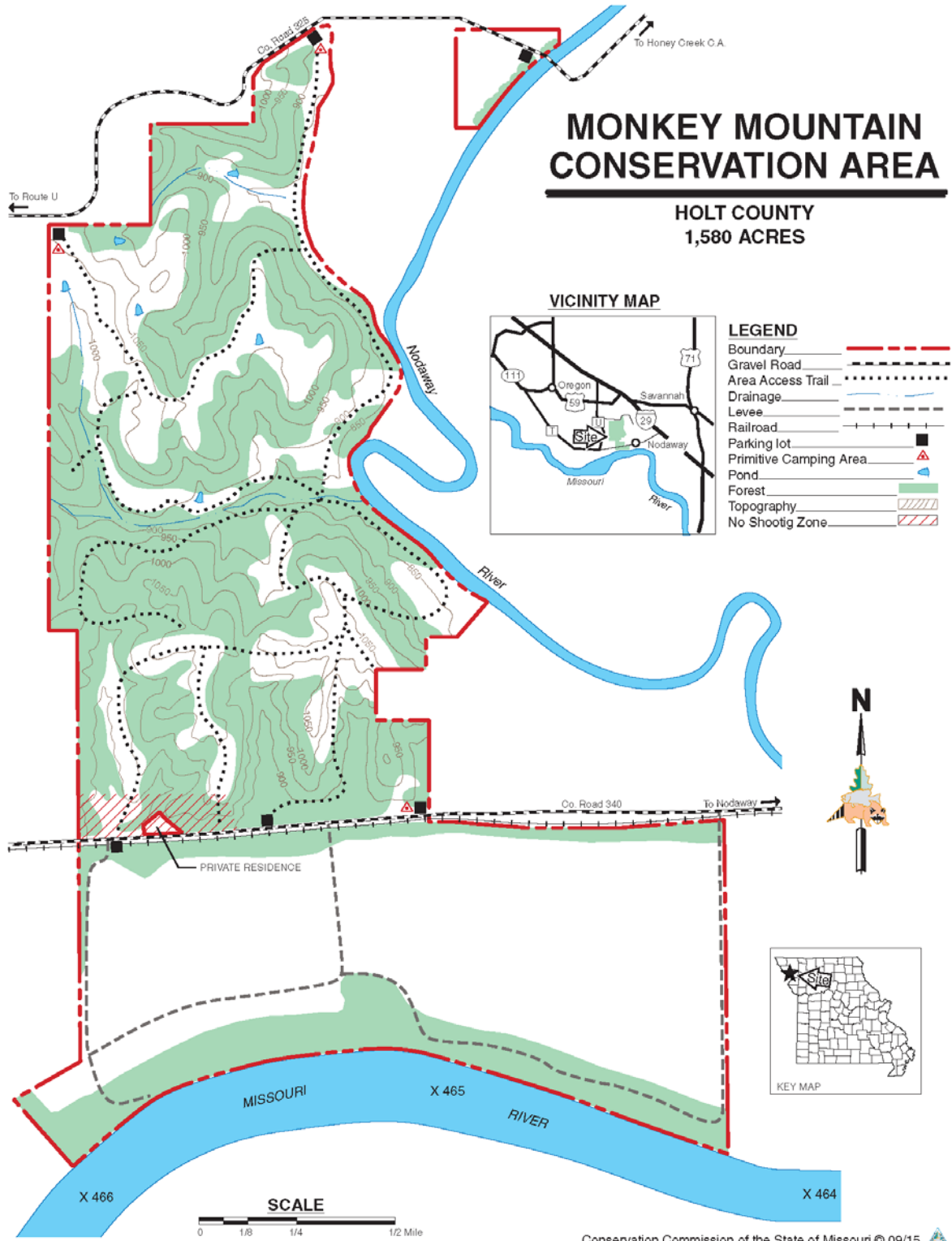


Figure 2: Land Cover Map

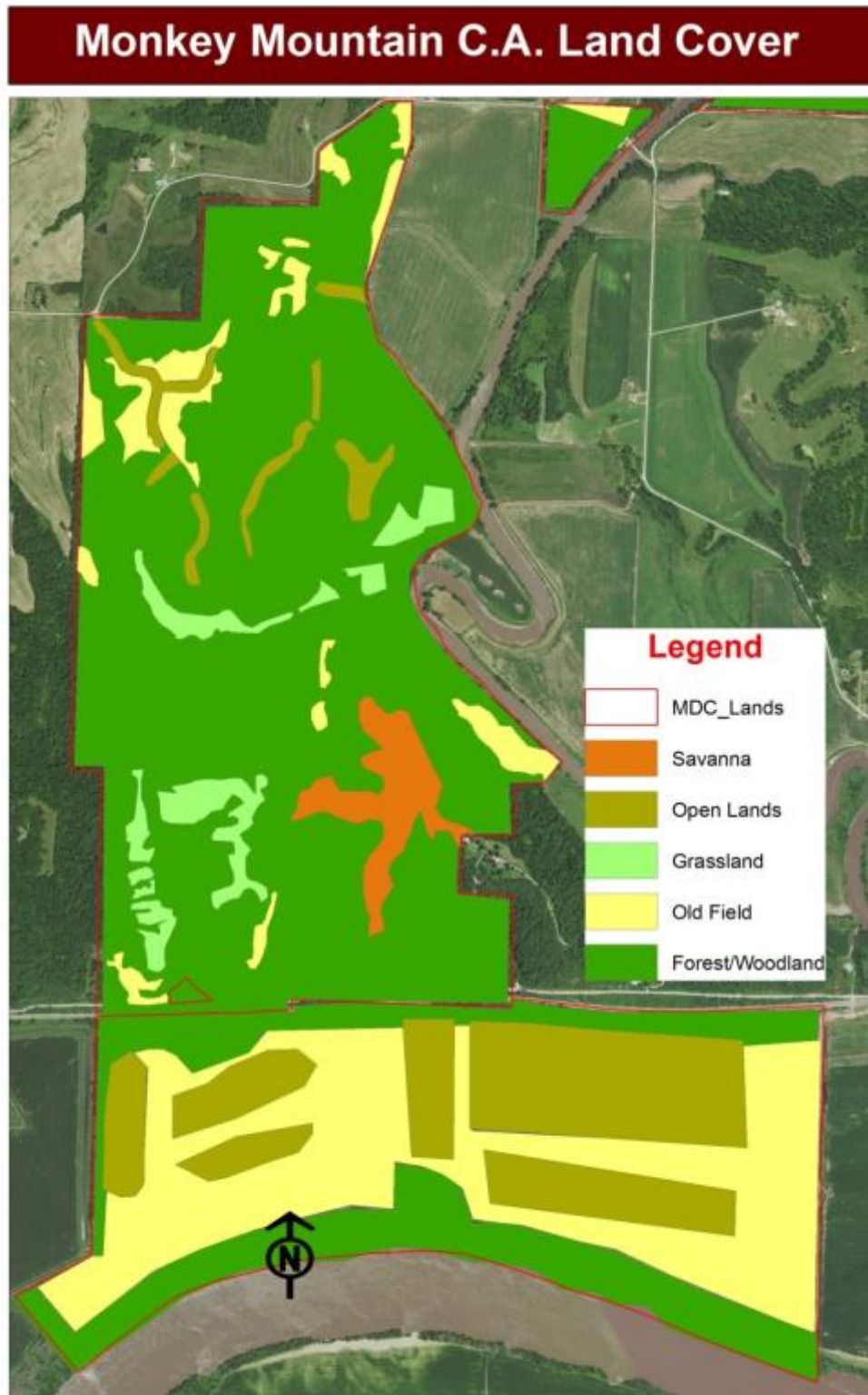


Figure 3: Easement Map

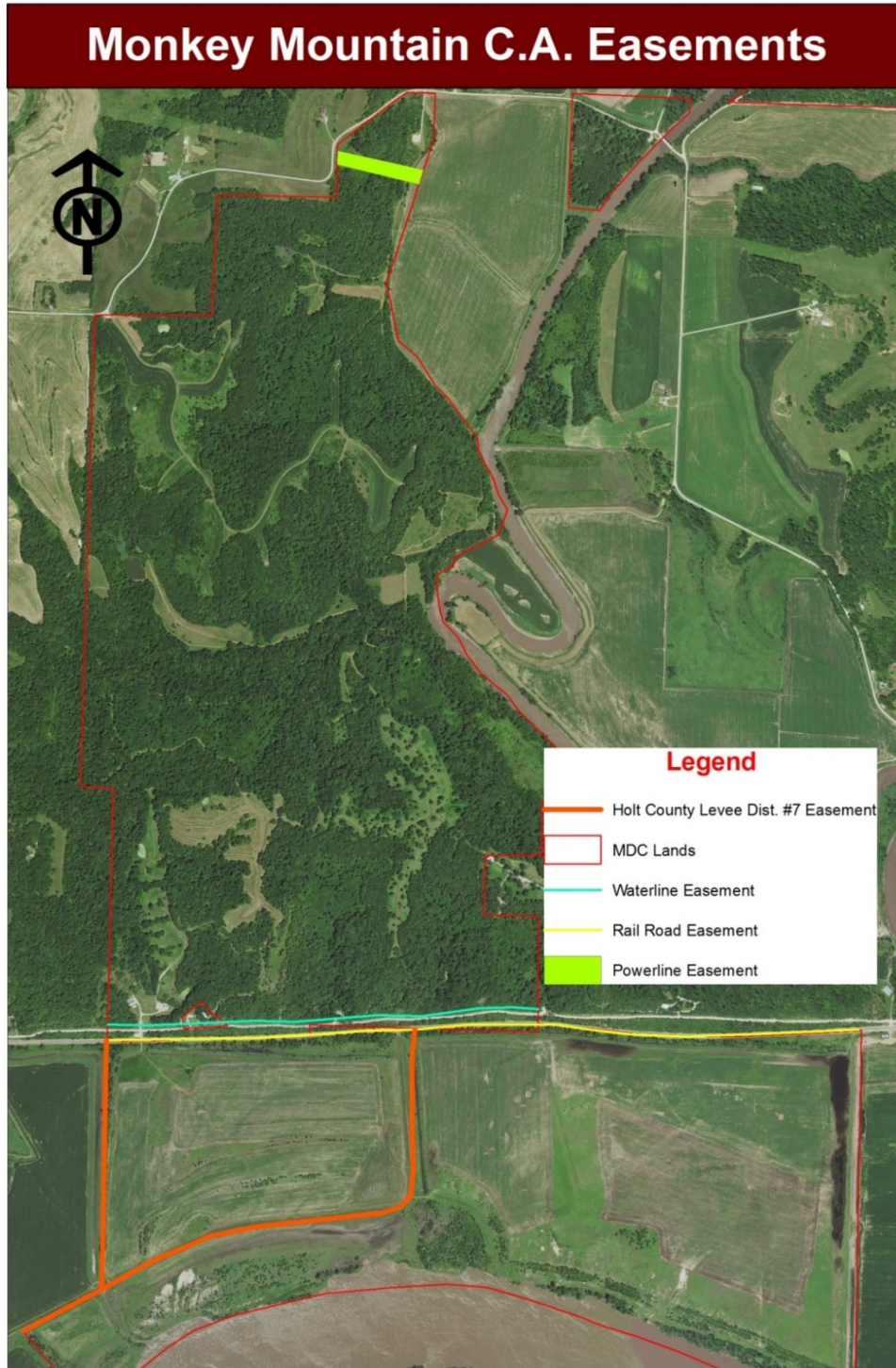


Figure 4: 1999 Forest Management Plan Stands Map

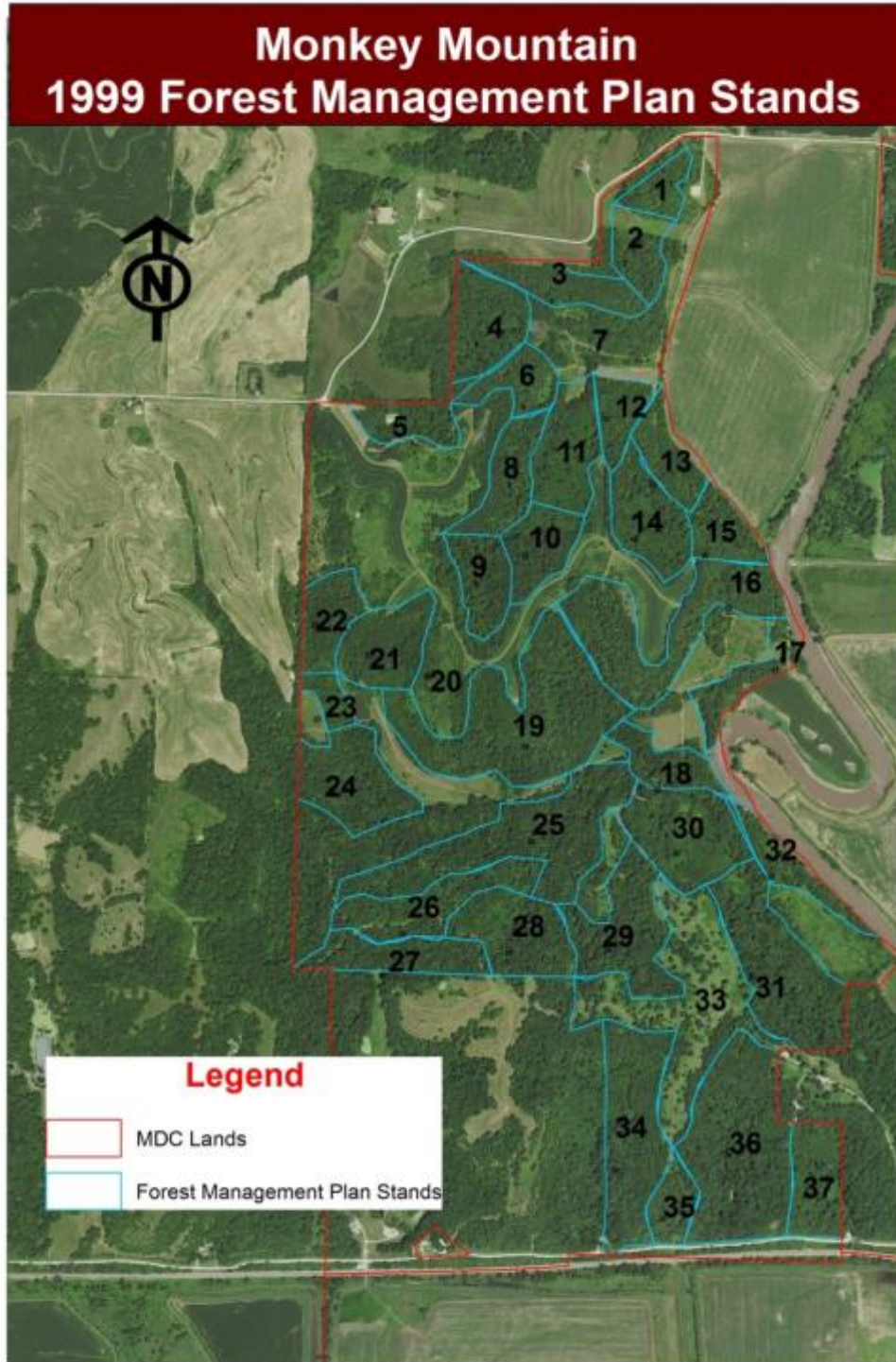


Figure 5: Monkey Mountain CA and Olivia Hare Tract Map



Appendix A. Monkey Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Dec. 1-31, 2016):

<p>Needs better or more parking on the perimeter allowing more access points into the bluffs.</p>
<p>I think this is a great plan to open more public hunting land and improving wildlife.</p>
<p>The bottom ground should be set up for Pheasants and Quail. Right now its growing up in honeylocust-cottonwood and Johnson Grass (Maybe good cover but its on the noxious weed list in MO) . Right now it could be fixed up for bird hunting but in a few years it will be to far along with unwanted trees and to fix. We have enough Deer hunting areas and practically no Pheasant or Quail areas.</p> <p>My option would be hooking up with Pheasants and Quail Forever organizations and get their input on getting it started.</p>
<p>I believe not only at Monkey Mountain, but all MDC lands could use more wetland areas. In fact there is no wetlands at Monkey Mountain. I am unfamiliar with the soil type along the bottom land, however I would think a wetland would be possible. We are losing more and more wetlands every year and I believe MDC's properties could sustain new wetland areas.</p>
<p>I have lived in Andrew County my whole life and didn't know this area existed. As a mom of 3 boys I am always looking for activities to get my sons involved in nature. I would love for local areas to have more fishing and also instructional events such as the fly tying class you had, ice fishing, etc. Guided hikes would also be of interest to us. There is so much to explore!</p>
<p>The Board of Directors of Holt County Levee #7 would like to make 2 comments concerning this plan.</p> <p>Section IV: Gen Info & Conditions; Subset C: Easements:</p> <p>Holt County Levee #7 has an easement of record for the agricultural levee, which should be acknowledged. Also MDC is required to control noxious weeds and brushy plant growth on Holt County Levee #7 easement.</p> <p>Section VII: Public Use & Mgt. Considerations: Subset: Mgt. Objectives #1</p> <p>MDC is currently using Holt County Levee #7 on a Limited Access basis to the Hare site. We are concerned with an increase in traffic for any reason we will be obligated to change from limited access to no access unless other arrangements are made.</p> <p>Holt Co. Levee #7 is a Corps of Engineers Levee, not a public nor a county road, which questions why access has not been established over the existing railroad crossing.</p>
<p>(Emailed comment to Amy Buechler 12/24/2016):Amy,</p> <p>I believe the information provided regarding the location of Monkey Mountain CA is mostly incorrect and misleading. All of the MDC tract (north of the railroad) and all but the east 60 acres (approx.) of the Hare Tract (between the railroad and the MO River) are in Holt County.</p> <p>Incidentally, there was a huge ice jam on the Missouri River in '79 or '80 just upstream of the</p>

Hare Tract. That caused the River to flood unexpectedly and very suddenly (a matter of a few minutes). The flow ran across the Hare Tract. There was a stand of large cottonwoods near the river; the ice chunks literally sheared off trees over a foot in diameter, and larger trees had the bark stripped off the upstream side 10-12 feet up. Those ice jams often break up as suddenly as they form; the field was left strewn with huge ice chunks, some as big as pickup trucks!