

Upper Osage Accesses

Balltown Access
Cephas Ford Access
Old Town Access
Taberville Access

Twenty-Year Area Management Plan FY 2018-2037





Wildlife Division Chief

21 MARCH 2018
Date

OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
Balltown Access	9502	1995	194	Vernon	Wildlife	Wildlife
Cephas Ford Access	8322	1983	107	Vernon	Wildlife	Wildlife
Old Town Access	8416	1984	310	Bates	Wildlife	Wildlife
Taberville Access	8309	Leased 1984 ¹	5	St. Clair	Wildlife	Wildlife

¹Owned by Missouri Department of Transportation and leased to the Missouri Department of Conservation since 1984.

Statements of Purpose:

A. Strategic Direction

Protect, restore, and manage fish, forest and wildlife habitats and their associated fauna, while providing public use opportunities for stream fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of these areas is a complex of bottomland forests, wetlands, and old fields that provides quality wildlife habitat and protects adjacent streams.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

Area Name	Priority Areas	Natural Areas
Balltown Access	Yes ¹	None
Cephas Ford Access	Yes ¹	None
Old Town Access	Yes ¹	None
Taberville Access	Yes ²	None

¹Four Rivers Wetland and Prairie Complex – Grassland Prairie Savanna Conservation Opportunity Area; Four Rivers Wetland and Wet Prairie Complex Wetland Conservation Opportunity Area

²Upper Osage Grasslands – Grassland Prairie Savanna Conservation Opportunity Area; Upper Osage Grasslands Priority Geography; Prairie Chicken Focus Area

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

Area Name	Species of Conservation Concern	Caves	Springs
Balltown Access	None observed	None	None
Cephas Ford Access	None observed	None	None
Old Town Access	None observed	None	None
Taberville Access	None observed	None	None

III. Existing Infrastructure

Area Name	Parking Area	Concrete Boat Ramp	Privy	Other
Balltown Access	1	No	None	None
Cephas Ford Access	1	Yes	1	2 fishless ponds (1.3 acres total)
Old Town Access	2	Yes	None	1 campsite, 1 fishing lake (3 acres), 2 fishless ponds (2 acres total)
Taberville Access	1	Yes	None	5 campsites, shoreline fishing at Osage River arm of Truman Reservoir (0.01 miles)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

Area Name	Deed Restrictions	Federal Interest	Easements	Cultural Resources	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues
Balltown Access	None	Yes ²	None	None known	None observed	None
Cephas Ford Access	None	Yes ²	Yes ^{4,5}	None known	None observed	None
Old Town Access	None	Yes ²	Yes ^{6,7}	None known	None observed	None
Taberville Access	Yes ¹	Yes ³	Yes ⁴	None known	None observed	None

¹Taberville Access is leased from the Missouri Department of Transportation and subject to lease agreement.

²Federal 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.

³Federal funds were used in the development of this area, or a portion thereof. The Missouri Department of Conservation must maintain the developed project throughout its useful life. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreation 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.

⁴A portion of this area is located in the Harry S. Truman Dam and Reservoir flowage easement (742 mean sea level and below).

⁵Two easements granted to Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, 1969 (April 28 and May 5).

⁶Osage Valley Electric Cooperative holds a right of way easement.

⁷Conveyance for state highway purposes.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Habitat management is focused on maintaining, protecting, and restoring (where possible) habitat that supports species primarily associated with bottomland forest in the Osage Plains Section of Missouri (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Balltown Access is an excellent example of wet bottomland forest. Portions of the area have been farmed before, and during Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) ownership. Farming practices have been largely unsuccessful due to seasonal flooding. Bottomland forest reconstruction and management is a priority.
- 2) Old Town Access contains scattered examples of wet bottomland forest with open portions of the area farmed before, and during Department ownership. Bottomland forest reconstruction and management is a priority on areas not suitable for farming and/or expansion of riparian areas along the old Marais des Cygnes channel.
- 3) Cephas Ford Access contains bottomland forest, but management is limited as most of the area is affected by the Harry S. Truman Dam and Reservoir flowage easement. The area is susceptible to extended durations of flooding.

Management Objective 1: Manage reconstructed bottomland forest on Balltown Access.

Strategy 1: Replant reconstructed areas affected by mortality. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Actively manage competition in the fields planted with trees in rows spaced 18 feet apart. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Allow natural regeneration and competition to occur in the heavily stocked fields, but monitor and treat invasive species as needed. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Reconstruct bottomland forest on portions of Old Town Access, where farming previously occurred, but is no longer desired.

Strategy 1: Plant areas to native, bottomland hardwood tree species in FY21. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Explore feasibility of converting current open lands into natural cover types requiring minimal management including, but not limited to reforestation, wetlands, and wet prairie in FY21. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Maintain and/or develop adequate riparian corridors.

Strategy 1: Plant native tree species, where riparian corridor expansion is desired, according to *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Row cropping and stream channelization have affected all of these areas. Landscape-scale alterations have changed the hydrology and habitat conditions in streams and threaten aquatic biodiversity on the areas and throughout the watersheds. Rivers served by Cephas Ford and Balltown accesses are listed as impaired due to low dissolved oxygen conditions.

Management Objective 1: Maintain riparian corridors to maintain or improve habitat conditions in the streams.

Strategy 1: Maintain forested riparian corridors at least 100-foot wide along stream frontages, according to *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Evaluate pond on Cephas Ford Access.

Strategy 1: Evaluate the pond to determine suitability for management as a fishing pond in FY18. Depth, flooding potential, and fish species composition will be evaluated. (Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Public access is somewhat limited along the rivers of the upper Osage, including the Little Osage, Marais des Cygnes (Bates County Drainage Ditch), Marmaton, and Osage. Maintaining and/or improving parking lots and boat ramps is a priority for providing opportunities for fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.
- 2) Boat access to the Marmaton River at Cephas Ford can be challenging for several reasons. Stream flow in the Marmaton River along the access is often insufficient to operate a powered-boat. The boat ramp is also below grade, so silt deposition

on the ramp is a frequent problem following river fluctuations. Major flood events can also limit access to the ramp.

- 3) Balltown Access lacks a boat ramp, and therefore does not provide boater access to the Little Osage River. A ramp has not been constructed due to frequent low-flow conditions in the stream. Seasonal flooding also inundates the adjacent county road temporarily, which prevents vehicle access to the area.
- 4) The Taberville Access privy was destroyed by vandalism and has not been replaced. This access experiences high levels of public use, but is also susceptible to deep flooding; privy maintenance was previously an issue.
- 5) Educational and interpretive opportunities are limited on these areas.
- 6) Opportunities for disabled-user access are limited.

Management Objective 1: Provide for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain parking lots, trails (mowed field roads), and stream access throughout the areas. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of game and non-game species. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Minimize maintenance needs and costs associated with sediment deposition on the Cephas Ford Access boat ramp and improve public use opportunities if possible.

Strategy 1: Evaluate boat ramp options for the Marmaton River and make recommendations that balance area user needs with cost-effective maintenance. (Wildlife, Fisheries, Design and Development)

Management Objective 3: Maintain, and improve where possible, educational and interpretive opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain signage in accordance with Missouri Department of Conservation policy. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Update maps and information to inform the public of area use opportunities through the Atlas Database. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Communicate to teachers and other youth leaders the possibilities for educational programs on the areas as opportunities arise. (Outreach and Education)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain positive relationships with neighboring landowners.

- 2) Evaluate land offered as additions to these areas.

Management Objective 1: Foster positive relationships with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to prevent boundary and trespass issues.

(Wildlife, Protection)

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.

APPENDICES

Public Input Summary:

The draft Upper Osage Accesses Management Plan was available for a public comment period Sept. 1-30, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no comments during this time period.

References:

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.

Nelson, P. W. (2010). *The terrestrial natural communities of Missouri*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

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

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Appendix 1. Vicinity Map



Appendix 2. Balltown Access Background

This 194-acre property was acquired in 1995. The area is mostly bottomland forest and provides access to the Little Osage River, although there is no boat ramp. The area is susceptible to flooding and can provide excellent waterfowl hunting opportunity under flood conditions. Deer, turkey, and squirrel hunting opportunities are good under normal conditions. The area is managed primarily for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

The area lies within the Cherokee Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section; the landtype association is Four Rivers Alluvial Plains (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002). The area is dominated by wet bottomland tree species, most notably pin oak and pecan (Nelson, 2010).

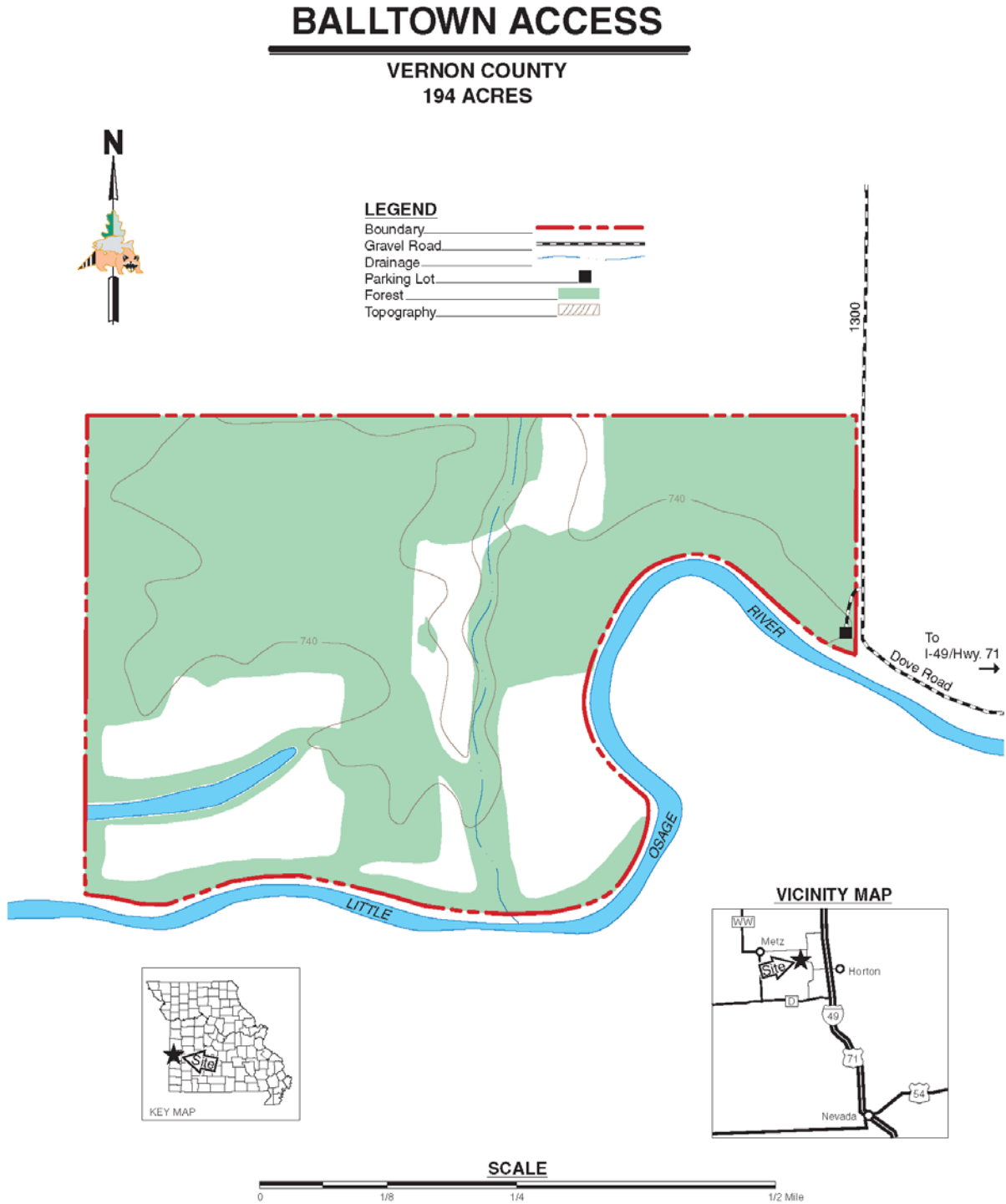
Legal Description: Township 37N, Range 32W, Section 13.

Area Location: From Nevada, take I-49 north 9 miles, take the Horton exit, follow Earp Road west 1.50 miles, then Vernon County Road 1325 north. This road veers left, becoming Dove Road for 0.30 mile, then turns north becoming 1300.

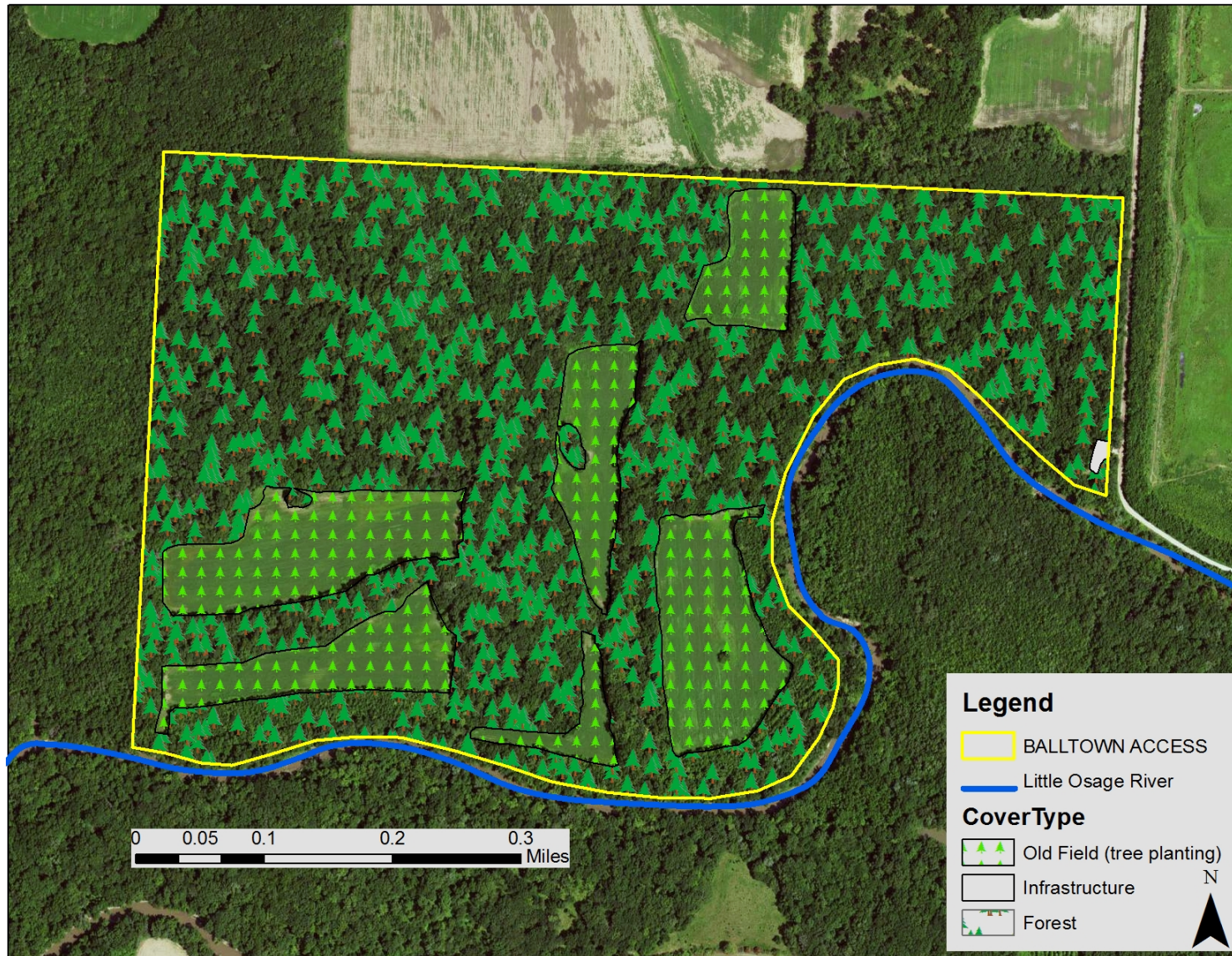
Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Forest	157		81
Old Field	37		19
Infrastructure	<1		<1
Total	194		100
Stream Frontage – Little Osage River		1.1	

Appendix 3. Balltown Access Area Map



Appendix 4. Balltown Access Cover Map



Appendix 5. Cephas Ford Access Background

This 107-acre area was acquired in 1983 primarily to provide access to the Marmaton River. There is a concrete boat ramp available for year-round use, except that the river is not navigable by powered-boat during low flow periods. A large portion of the area lies within the flowage easement of the Harry S. Truman Reservoir, so access can be affected. Management on Cephas Ford Access has been limited due to flooding and small size. With its close proximity to Nevada and immediate access to Highway I-49, the area offers convenient access to the Marmaton River.

Cephas Ford Access lies within the Cherokee Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section; the landtype association is Four Rivers Alluvial Plains (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002). It contains mostly wet bottomland forest and old fields (Nelson, 2010).

This area has been designated by Audubon Missouri as an Important Bird Area. Important Bird Areas are sites that have been identified by Audubon as those that are the most crucial for bird populations, due to their abundance and/or diversity of birds present.

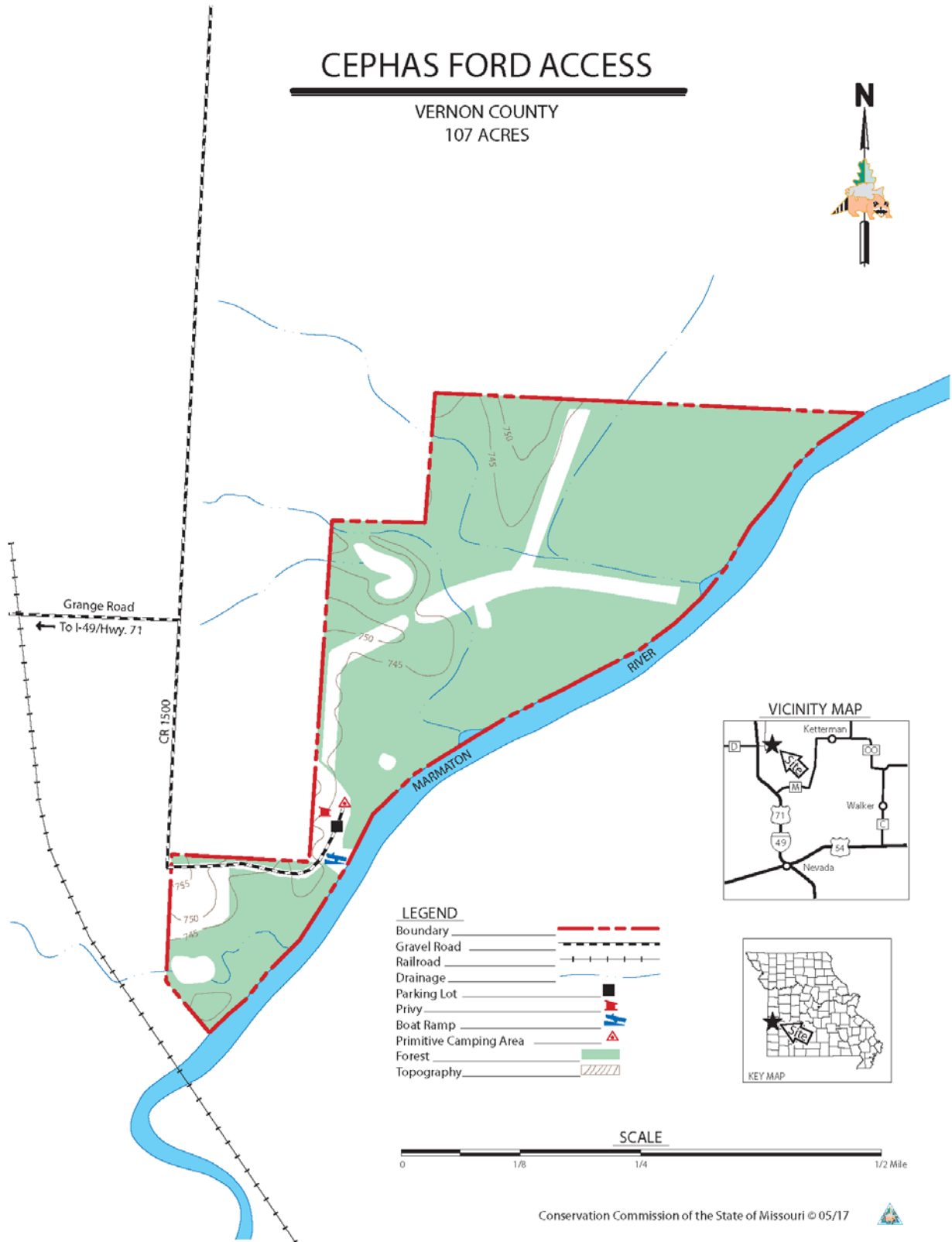
Legal Description: Township 37N, Range 31W, Section 28 and 33.

Area Location: From Nevada, take I-49 north 7 miles and exit at Route D. Turn east on the exit and travel to Vernon County Road 1500. Turn south and go 0.25 miles to the Marmaton River.

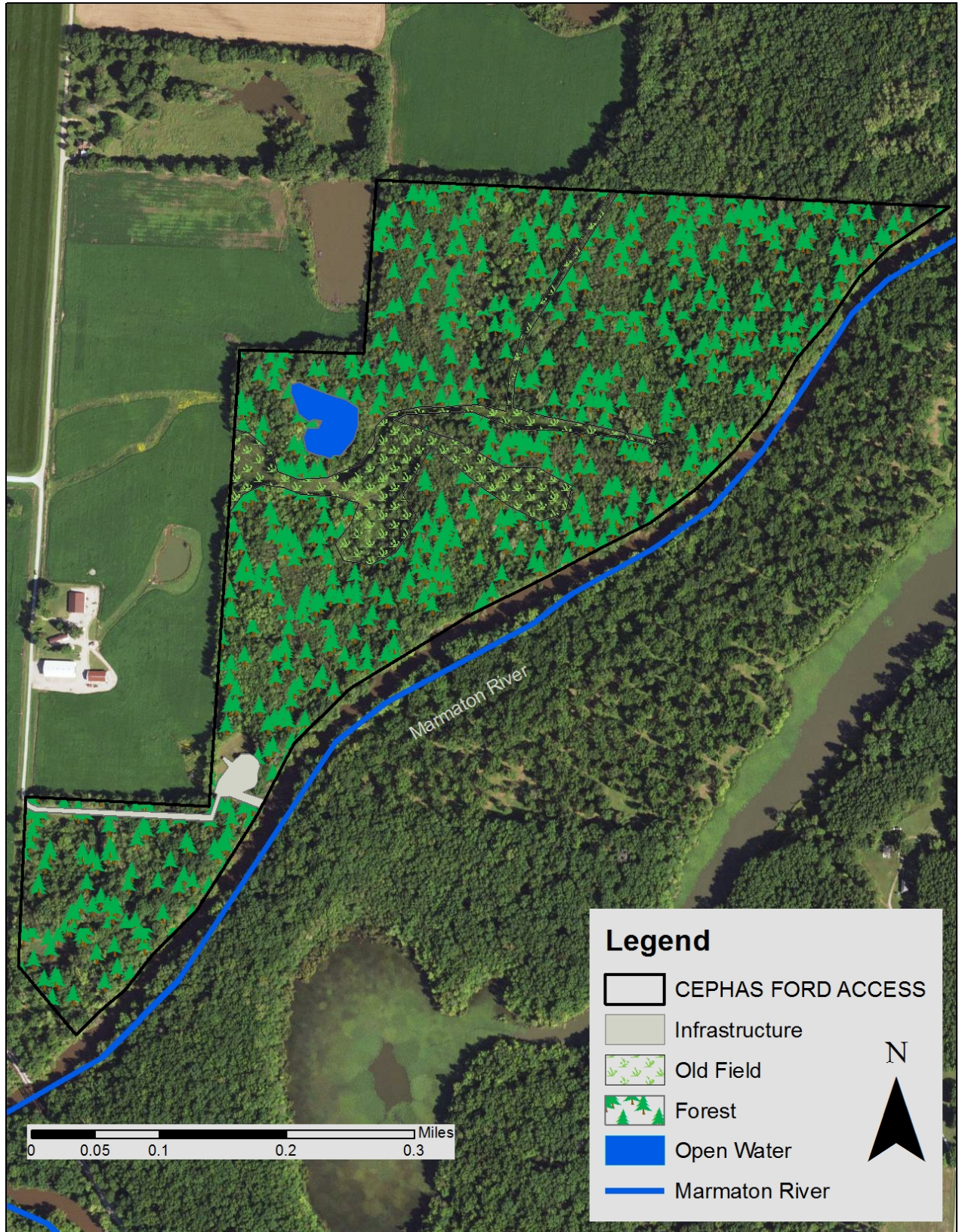
Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Forest	97		91
Old Field	8		7
Pond	1.3		1
Infrastructure	<1		1
Total	107		100
Stream Frontage		0.8	

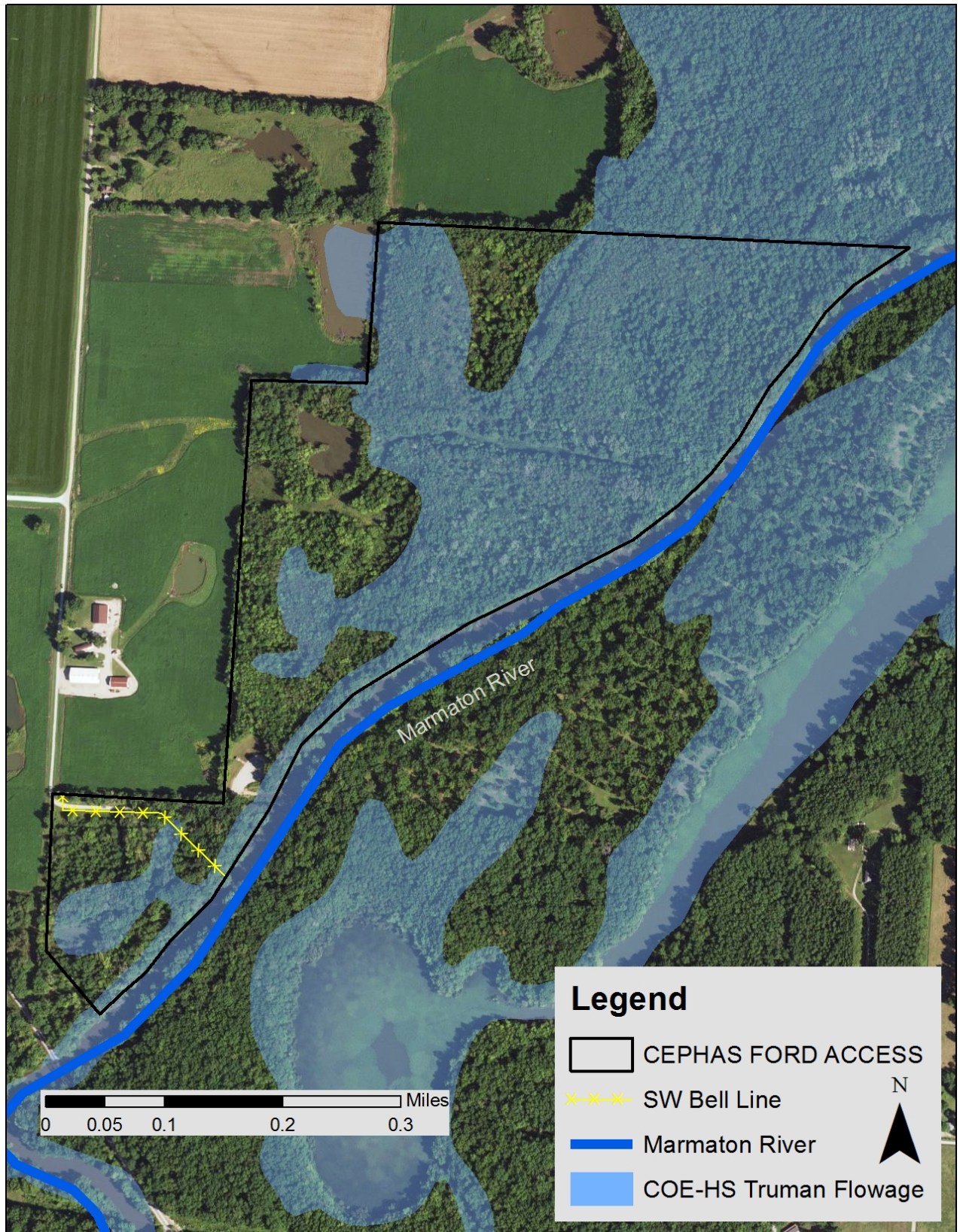
Appendix 6. Cephas Ford Access Area Map



Appendix 7. Cephas Ford Access Cover Map



Appendix 8. Cephas Ford Access Easement Map



Appendix 9. Old Town Access Background

Purchased in 1984, the 310-acre tract of land is mostly bottomland forest. The area contains a boat ramp, primitive camping, two streams (Marais Des Cygnes River and Bates County Drainage Ditch), “borrow pits,” and an oxbow lake. Old Town Access is managed to provide a range of recreational opportunities including fishing, hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing. The area’s greatest public use attraction is the boat ramp to the Bates County Drainage Ditch. The ditch is the result of relocating and channelizing the Marais des Cygnes River, which occurred in the early 1900s.

Old Town Access lies within the Scarped Osage Plains Subsection of the Osage Plains Section; the landtype association of the area is Scarped Osage Plains Alluvial Plains (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002). This area contains wet bottomland forest and is dominated by pin oak and pecan (Nelson, 2010).

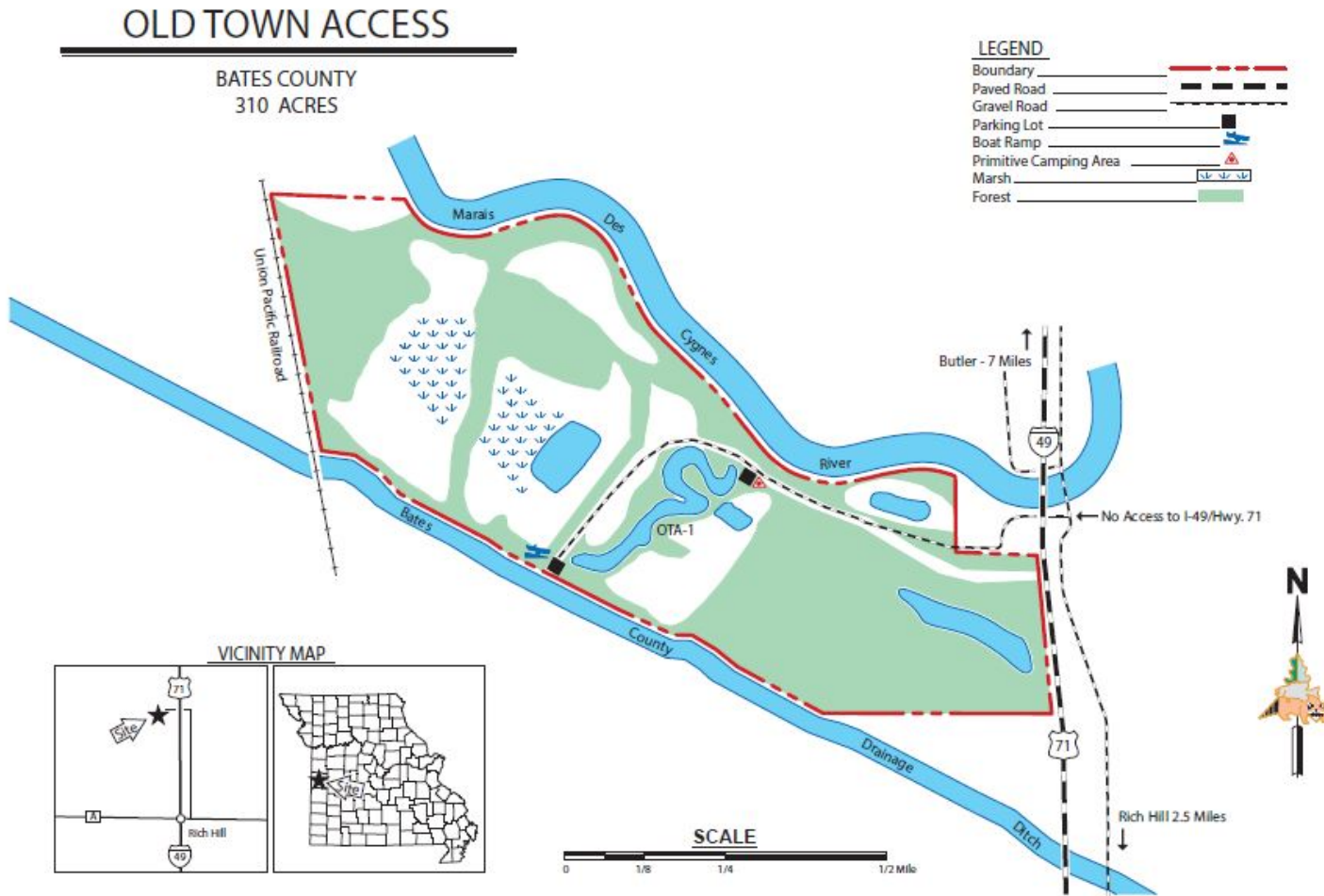
Legal Description: Township 39N, Range 31W, Section 19, 20, 29.

Area Location: From Rich Hill, take the east outer road north 2.5 miles along Highway I-49, then under the Interstate west to the area.

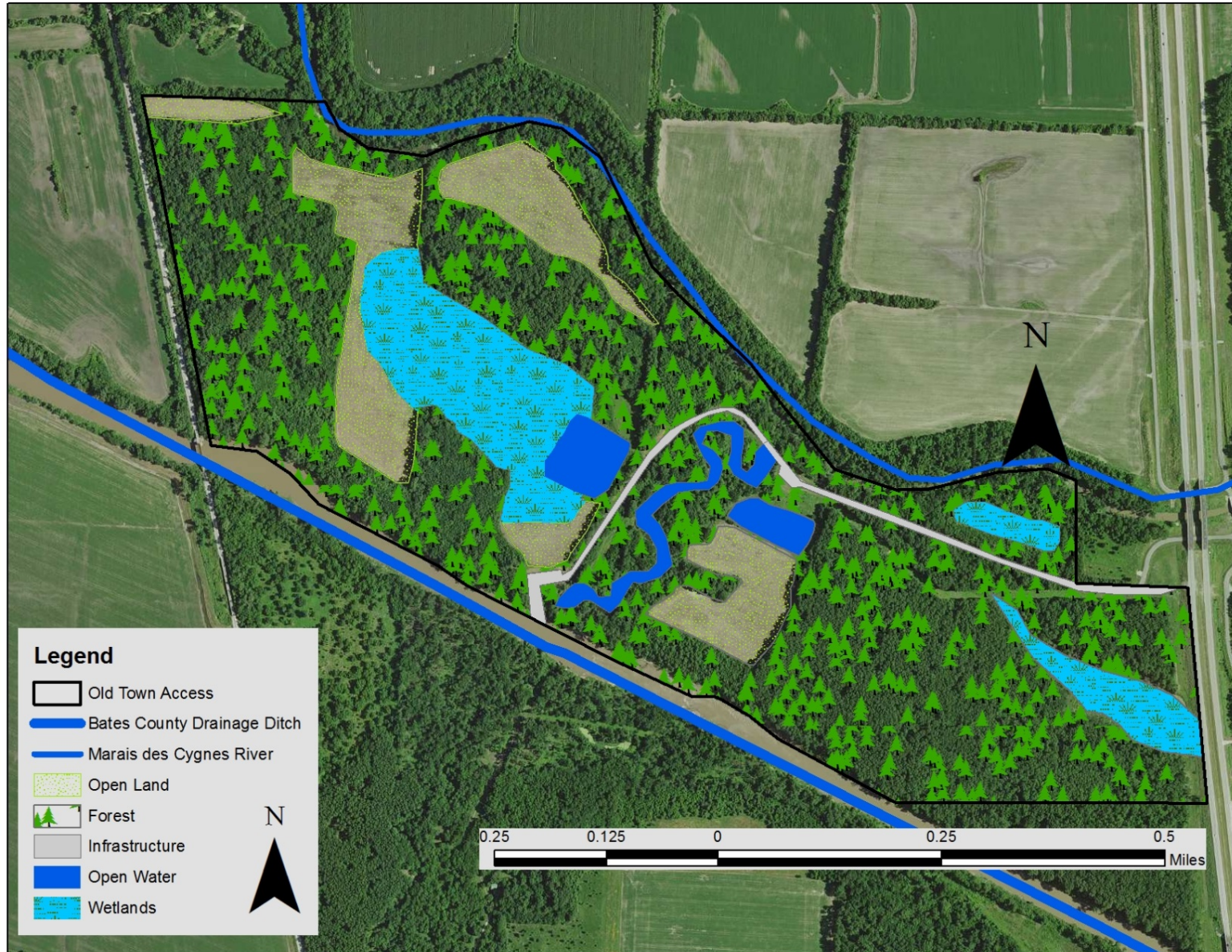
Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Forest	231		74
Open Land	37		12
Wetland	28		9
Lakes/Ponds	10		4
Infrastructure	4		1
Total	310		100
Stream Frontage – Marais des Cygnes		1.0	
Stream Frontage – Bates County Drainage Ditch		1.0	

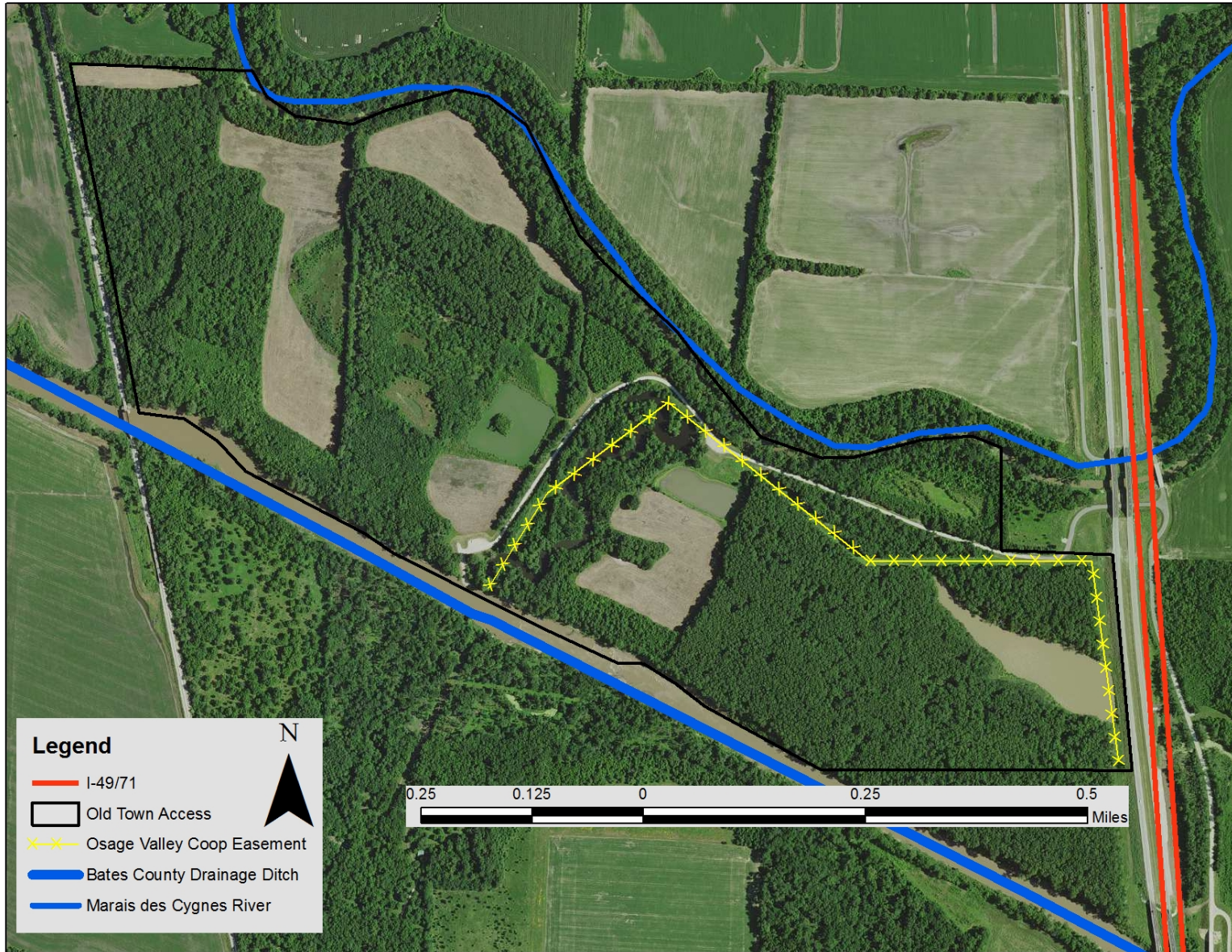
Appendix 10. Old Town Access Area Map



Appendix 11. Old Town Access Cover Map



Appendix 12. Old Town Access Easement Map



Appendix 13. Taberville Access Background

This 5-acre property is leased to the Missouri Department of Conservation from Missouri Department of Transportation since 1983 to provide access to the Osage River arm of Truman Reservoir. There is a concrete boat ramp and five designated camping spots. The area lies within the flowage easement of the reservoir; so access to the boat ramp and camping can be affected.

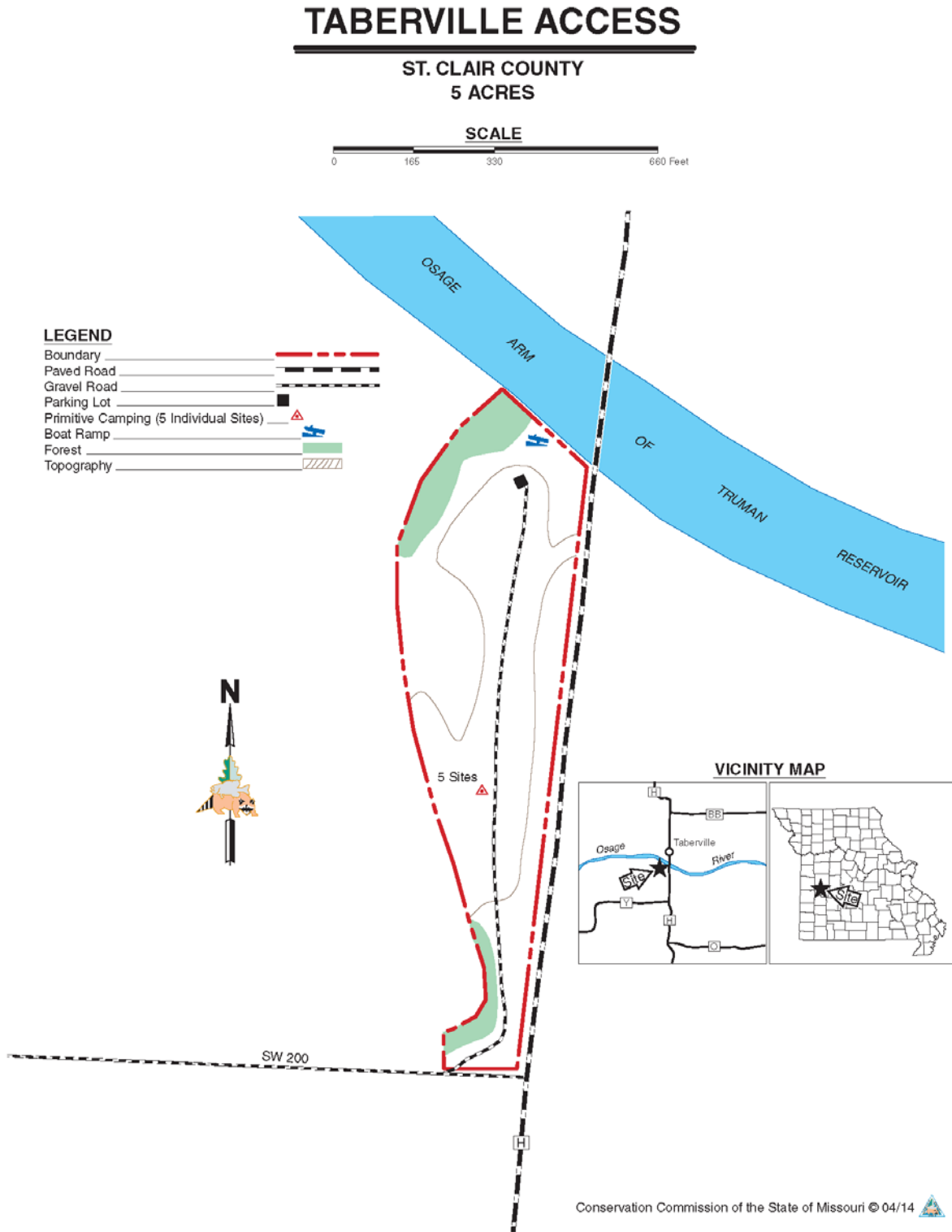
Legal Description: Township 37N, Range 28W, Section 3.

Area Location: From El Dorado Springs, take Route H north 10 miles.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Infrastructure	3		60
Grassland	1.5		30
Forest	0.5		10
Total	5		100
Stream Frontage – Osage River Arm of Truman Reservoir		0.01	

Appendix 14. Taberville Access Area Map



Appendix 15. Taberville Access Easement Map

