

# Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area

## Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2017-2026





Wildlife Division Chief

14 APRIL 2017

Date

## Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

### PLANNING TEAM

Chris Blunk, Wildlife Management Biologist

Jake Allman, Fisheries Management Biologist

Wendy Sangster, Community Forester

Randy Keeran, Private Land Conservationist

Doug Yeager, Conservation Agent

Nathan Woodland, Outdoor Education Center Supervisor

Larry Rizzo, Natural History Biologist

### KANSAS CITY REGION

KC RCT Chair



*Signature*

3/31/2017

*Date*

### WILDLIFE DIVISION

Wildlife Management Chief



*Signature*

4/7/17

*Date*

## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area, # 7936
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1979
- **Acreage:** 440 acres
- **County:** Platte
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
  - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for an emergent marsh natural community and its associated wildlife and aquatic resources while providing compatible public recreational opportunities.
  - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy emergent marsh natural community and its associated bottomland forest and old field sites.
  - C. Federal Aid Statement**

This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired with federal funds and donated to the State to provide fish and wildlife benefits and land conservation.

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

### I. Special Considerations

**A. Priority Areas:** None

**B. Natural Areas:** Little Bean Marsh Natural Area (416 acres) is one of the few remaining examples of the once vast wetland complex that existed along the upper Missouri River. It is the only freshwater marsh in the Upper Missouri section of the Missouri River Alluvial Plain Ecoregion to be represented in the natural areas system and one of few marshes so designated in northern Missouri. This area conserves a variety of wetland-dependent plant and animal species which are rare in the surrounding Missouri River floodplain.

### 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**

- One parking lot with concrete pad (Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] accessible)
- One viewing blind (ADA accessible)
- One viewing deck (ADA accessible)
- One privy (ADA accessible)
- Overlook Trail, 0.7 miles of asphalt ADA-accessible hiking trail

**IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**

**A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None

**B. Federal Interest:** Uses of land acquired with federal funds may not interfere with the purpose for which it was acquired. 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:** None

**D. Cultural Resources 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) Invasive plants continue to be a threat. *Sericea lespedeza*, reed canary grass, and Japanese hops are well established. Small populations of phragmites have been located and will pose a problem in the future.
- 2) Although the integrity of this wetland has been highly altered by sedimentation and disrupted hydrology, opportunities exist to restore some of its natural characteristics and create a wetland complex that will support abundant wetland-dependent species.
- 3) Management of bottomland forest areas is limited by periodic and severe flooding and the lack of accessibility to much of the area. Subsequently, there are few opportunities for the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) to maintain and enhance the forest health and wildlife habitat through sustainable forest management practices.
- 4) Open fields provide food and cover for various wildlife species, including bobwhite quail, white-tailed deer, turkey, rabbits, and song birds. Little Bean

Marsh CA has open fields that periodically flood, changing the soil and vegetation structure. Management is periodically needed to maintain plant diversity to maximize quality habitat.

**Management Objective 1:** Restore and maintain the natural communities in the marsh.

**Strategy 1:** Periodically monitor and suppress invasive species. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Explore options to restore more water inputs to this marsh which (according to U.S. Geological Survey studies) historically received more water inputs. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

**Strategy 3:** During natural dry periods, create a disturbance with appropriate management techniques to diversify the plant community. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 4:** During major drought years, investigate excess sediment removal possibilities to increase water depth levels and heterogeneity. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

**Management Objective 2:** On appropriate sites, manage bottomland forest areas to improve overall natural community health while improving habitat for wildlife.

**Strategy 1:** Periodically monitor and suppress invasive species. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Conduct a forest inventory and utilize sustainable forest management practices to promote healthy forest communities. Practices may include, but are not limited to, timber harvesting, forest thinning, tree planting, seeding, and prescribed burning. (Wildlife, Forestry)

**Management Objective 3:** Maintain early successional vegetation in the open fields for a variety of wildlife species.

**Strategy 1:** Manage early successional old fields and existing stands of grasses and forbs to maintain diverse vegetative habitats. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Control/suppress invasive species. (Wildlife)

## **VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations:**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) The water level in the marsh is strictly opportunistic, which makes it difficult to manage important characteristics.
- 2) Aquatic vegetation can become invasive leaving little open water in the deeper pools.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain important marsh characteristics.

**Strategy 1:** Monitor aquatic vegetation and maintain a good interspersed of emergent vegetation and water in the deeper pools. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

**Strategy 2:** Control invasive plants with appropriate management techniques.  
(Wildlife, Fisheries)

## **VII. Public Use Management Considerations**

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Management opportunities exist for a diversity of habitats and wildlife species to provide opportunities for hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing near a major metropolitan area.
- 2) Opportunities exist to maintain and improve public access to the area.
- 3) Opportunities exist to build relationships with neighboring landowners.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain a diversity of habitat types on the area to provide public users with quality hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Strategy 1:** Implement annual management activities targeting improvement of wetland wildlife populations to promote waterfowl hunting and bird watching opportunities. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Implement annual management activities targeting improvement of early successional and forested portions of the area to provide opportunities for hunting and viewing a variety of species, including deer and small game species such as squirrel, rabbit, and quail. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 3:** Maintain adequate access to area habitats through the existing network of parking lots, service roads, trails, and viewing blinds. Take advantage of opportunities to improve access to area resources, when feasible to do so. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

**Strategy 4:** Continue to allow trapping on the area, as appropriate, through the special use permits. (Wildlife)

**Management Objective 2:** Promote the use of the area.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain the existing network of ADA-accessible trails and wildlife viewing stations. (Wildlife, Design and Development)

**Strategy 2:** Increase promotional efforts to encourage area use and explore opportunities to partner with outside organizations to help raise awareness of area opportunities, as area resources and staffing will allow. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

**Management Objective 3:** Promote the use of the area by school and civic groups through the special use permit guidelines.

**Strategy 1:** Allow group use requests that do not interfere with area management priorities according to special use permit guidelines. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Promote educational opportunities and school field trips, as area resources and staffing will allow. (Outreach and Education, Wildlife)

**Management Objective 4:** Promote a positive working relationship with neighboring landowners.

**Strategy 1:** Respond to neighbors with requests for shared fencing, boundary or trespass issues. (Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Respond to neighboring landowners with interest in habitat management on their private property. (Wildlife, Private Land Services)

**VIII. Administrative Considerations**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Maintaining area infrastructure.
- 2) Consider land acquisition, when available.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain area infrastructure.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain area infrastructure according to Department guidelines and at currently identified maintenance levels. (Design and Development, Wildlife)

**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, should be considered.

**MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE**

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
<b>Terrestrial Resource Management</b>										
<i>Objective 2</i>										
Strategy 2			X							

## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

On July 4, 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition passed by what is now Little Bean Marsh Natural Area. At that time, the marsh was part of an oxbow lake that was connected to the Missouri River and hardly worthy of a footnote in a vast riverine landscape of marshes, oxbows, wet prairies, and bottomland forest.

The highly altered Missouri River of today would be unrecognizable to Lewis and Clark, and the once vast complex of wetlands, associated with the river are largely gone. Little Bean Marsh Natural Area contains one of the last remnants of this system still present along the Missouri River flood plain.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Bottomland Forest	180	41
Wetland	167	38
Old Field	93	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>100</b>

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Sept. 1–30, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from three respondents (Appendix A). The Little Bean Marsh 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 Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

#### **Would like more firearms deer hunting opportunities in Platte County.**

Platte County currently has five areas owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Because of their acreage, location, surrounding human population, hunting pressure, and/or deer population we do not anticipate, the Department changing the regulations to allow firearms deer hunting. Although not in Platte County, firearms deer hunters have opportunities in close proximity, including Bluffwoods CA in Buchanan County and Smithville Lake (U.S. Army Corp of Engineers property) in Clay County.



**Suggests developing youth soccer fields.**

The mission of the Missouri Department of Conservation is to protect and manage the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state; to facilitate and provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources. Youth soccer fields do not fit within that mission.

**Suggests acquiring additional land.**

The area planning team agrees it would be beneficial to acquire additional land when it becomes available 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 will be considered.

**Maps:**

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Current Vegetation Map

Figure 3: Aerial Map

Figure 4: Topographic Map

**Additional Appendices:**

Appendix A. Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

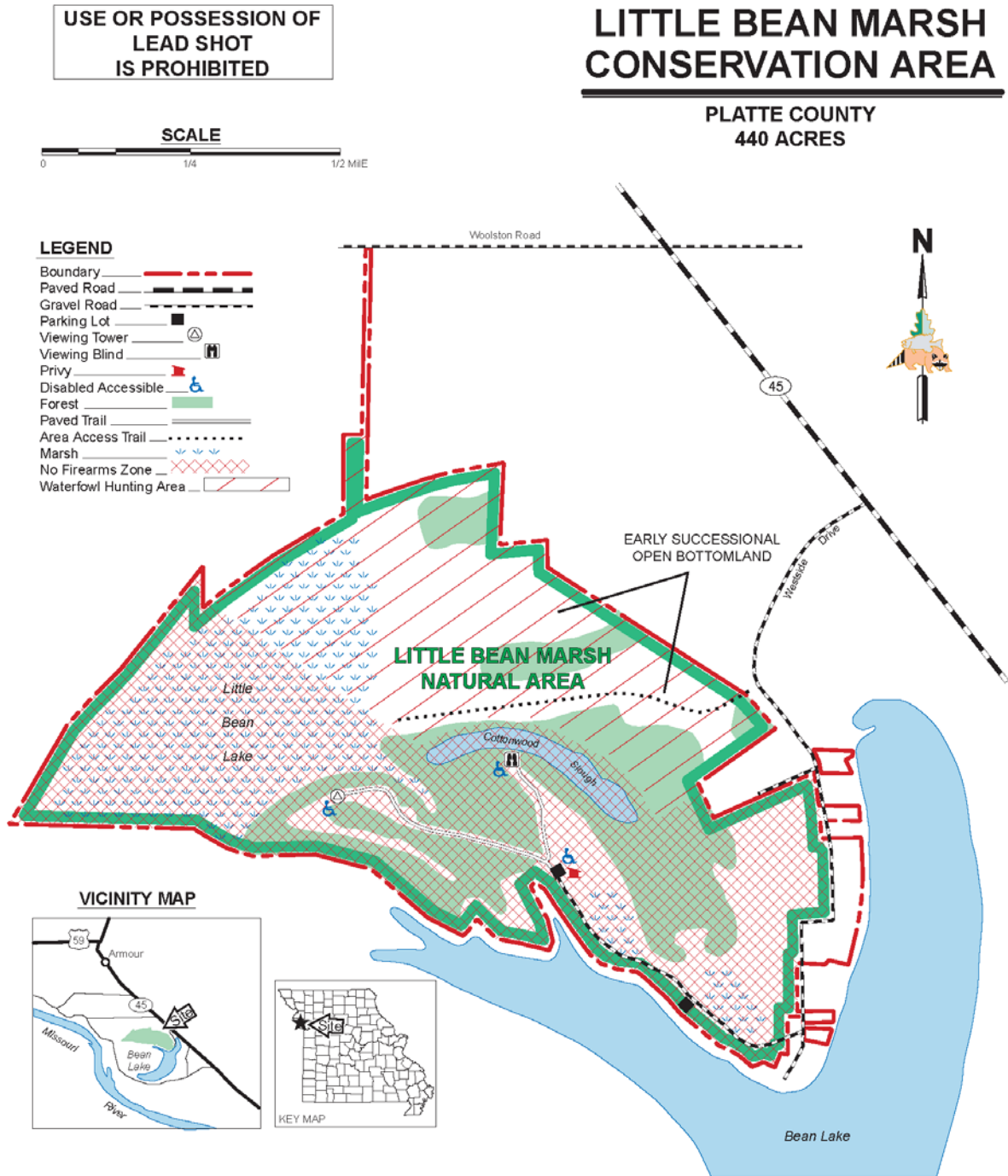
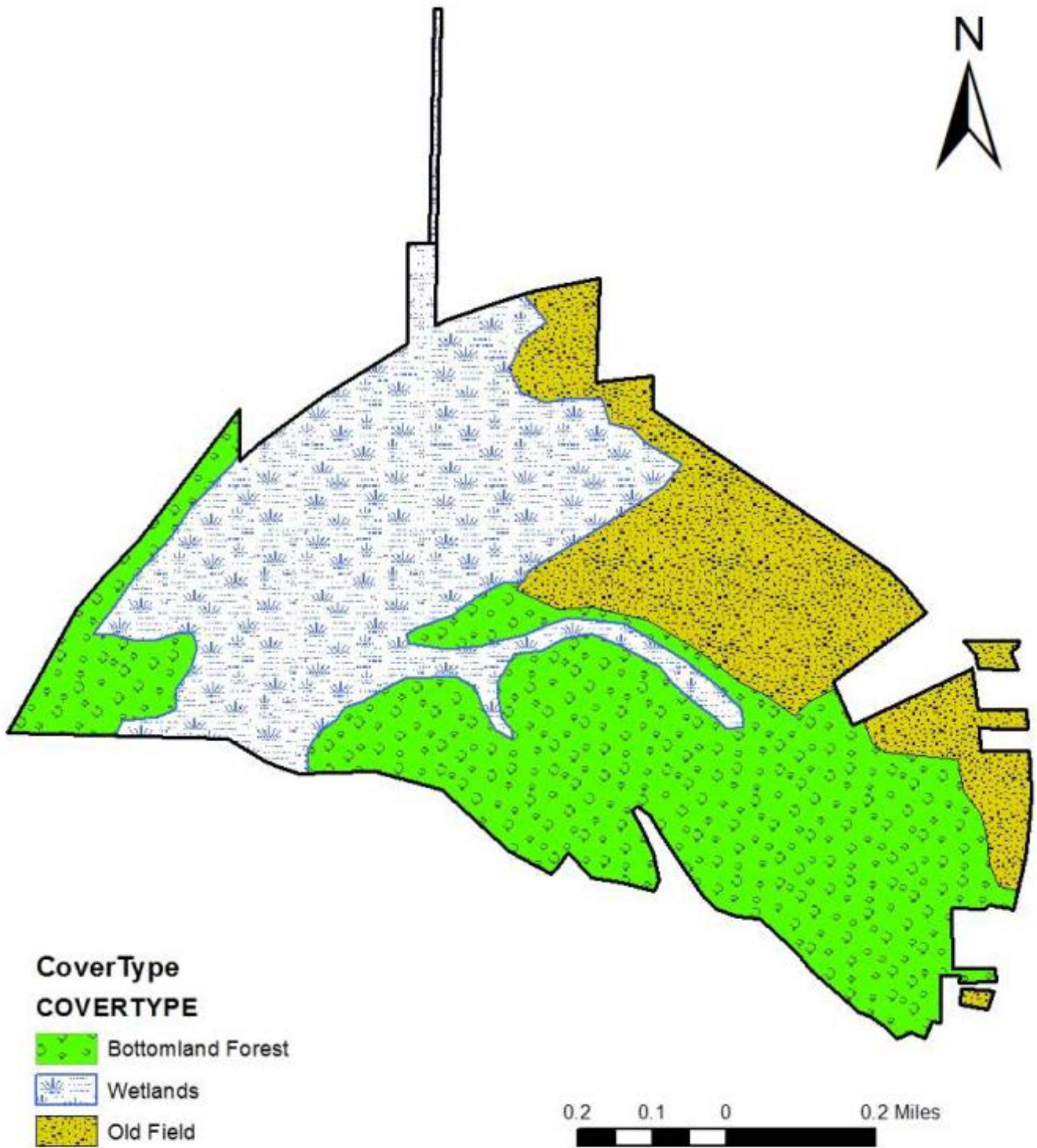


Figure 2: Current Vegetation Map



**Figure 3: Aerial Map**

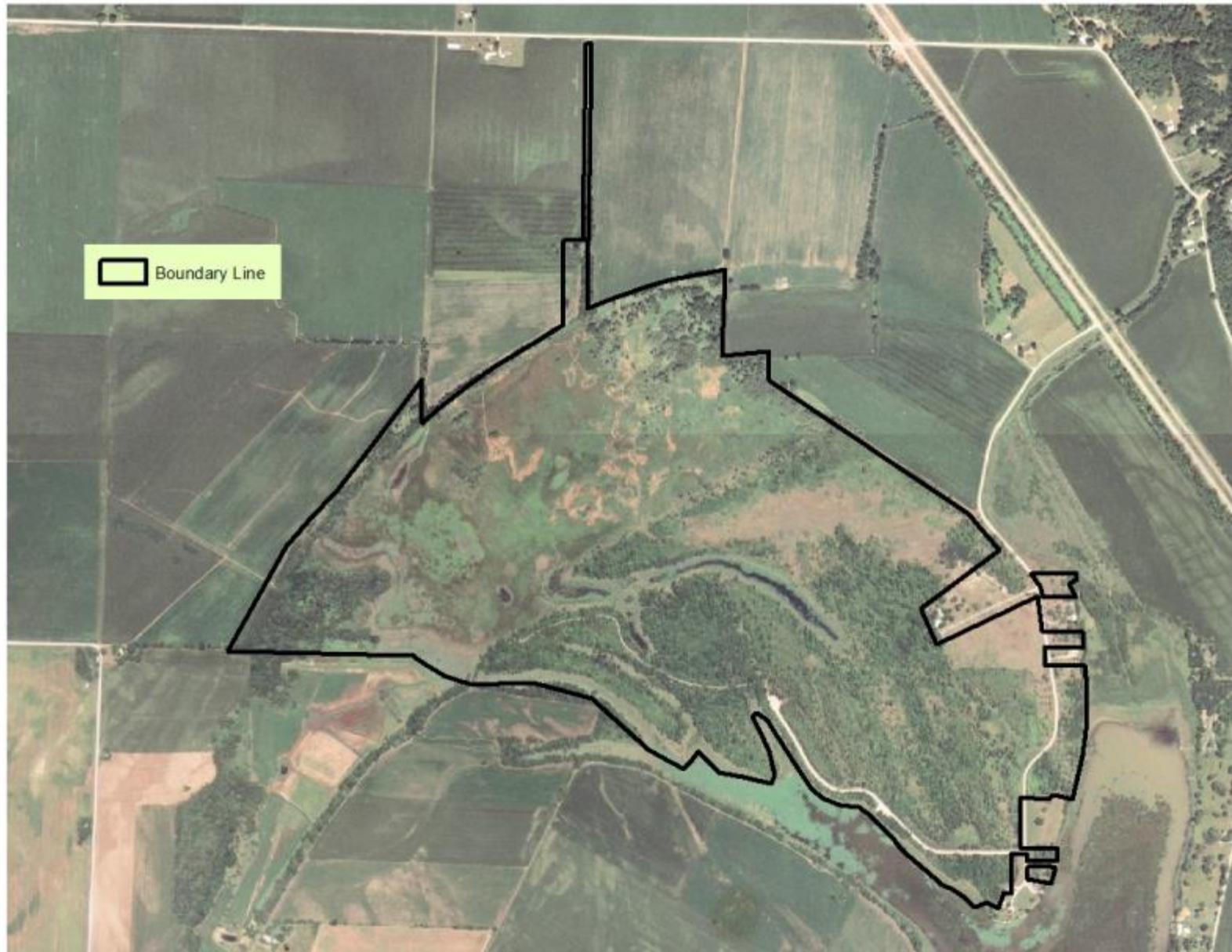
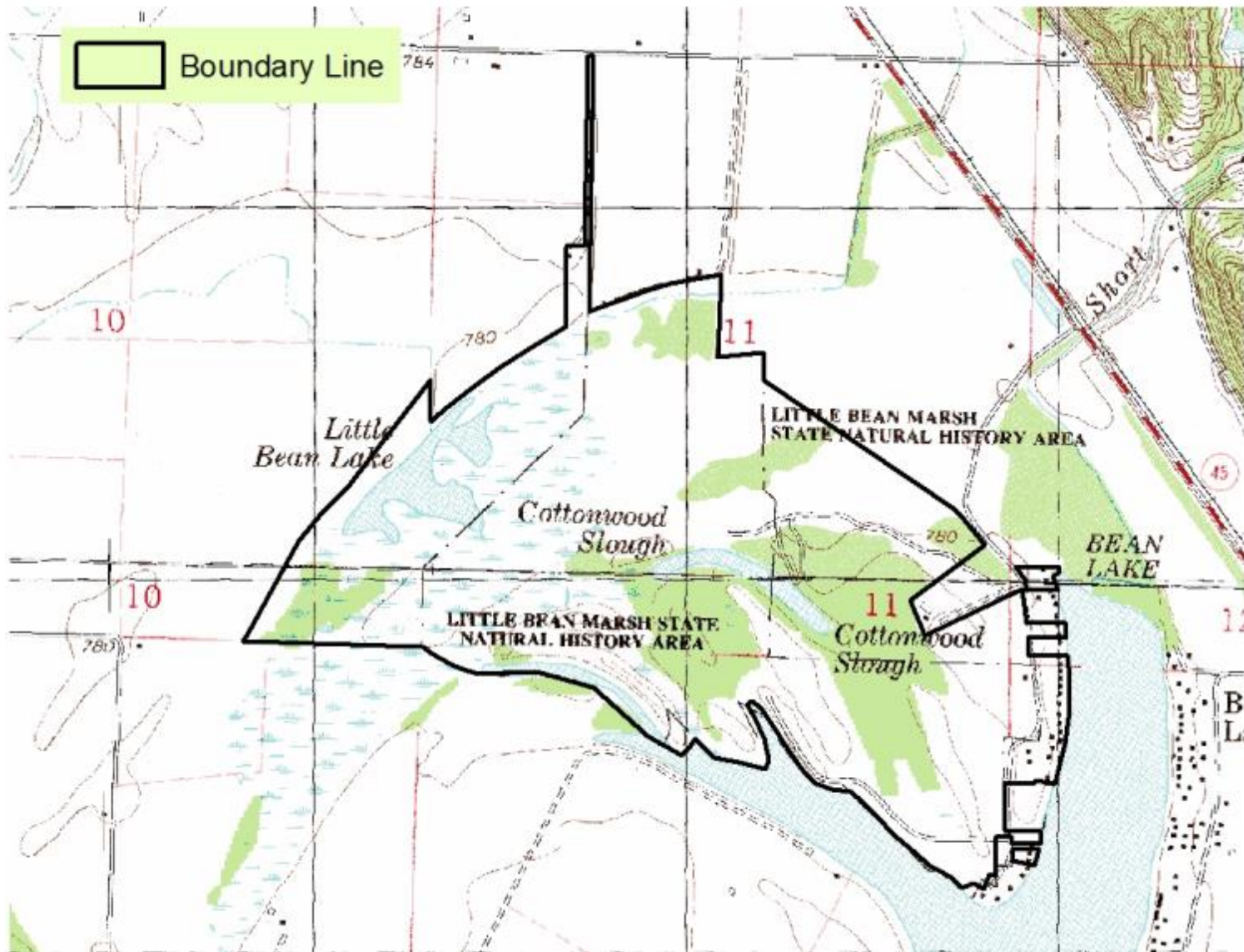


Figure 4: Topographic Map



**Appendix A. Little Bean Marsh Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments**

Received during public comment period (Sept. 1-30, 2016):

You all need a place in Platte County where we can rifle hunt. Almost every county in Missouri has a place to rifle hunt. It's sad I have to go spend money out of county to hunt deer every year out of county.
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Leave it just the way it is. I like the idea that it is little used and the wildlife also respond to that. It not that big of an area and I am afraid of anymore human encroachment will make it void of wildlife. If anything make purchases of bean lake itself and make that part of the big plan
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Any chance this area could be developed for youth soccer fields?
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