

Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area

25-Year Area Management Plan FY 2019-2043



Justine Gartner

Forestry Division Chief

6/7/2019

Date

Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

David Doyle, Resource Forester

Lisa LaCombe, Nature Center Manager

Claudine Lamb, O&E Regional Supervisor (Area Plan Facilitator)

Blake Asher, Maintenance Supervisor

Debra Burns, Wildlife Regional Supervisor

Andy Carmack, Private Land Conservationist

Derek Cole, Conservation Agent

Joe DeBold, Urban Wildlife Biologist

Jake Colehour, Fisheries Management Biologist

KANSAS CITY REGION

RCT Chair

NA LaPosha

5/17/2019

Signature

Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief

Justine Gartner

6/7/2019

Signature

Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area, #7812
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1977
- **Acreage:** 1,071 acres
- **County:** Jackson
- **Region:** Kansas City
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The purpose of Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area (CA) is to conserve and enhance fish, forest, and wildlife resources as well as provide public education and nature appreciation opportunities.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Burr Oak Woods CA is a healthy forest and woodland complex with open grasslands, providing improved habitat for a wide range of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species.

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:** Yes. Records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) natural history biologist.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Nature Center Building (American with Disabilities Act [ADA] accessible), including
 - Paved parking lot (ADA accessible)
- Maintenance shop compound, including
 - Shop building

- Storage building
- Gravel parking lot
- W. Robert Aylward Education Pond (scheduled educational fishing programs only; not open to the public), including:
 - Fishing Pond (1.5 acres)
 - Fishing Dock (ADA accessible)
 - Gravel parking lot (ADA accessible with concrete pads)
 - Pavilion (ADA accessible)
 - Storage building
 - Privy (ADA accessible)
- Bethany Falls Trail (1.3-mile gravel hiking trail), including
 - Privy (ADA accessible)
 - Pavilion (ADA accessible)
 - Paved parking lot (ADA accessible)
- J. Ernest Dunn Jr. Discovery Trail (0.5-mile paved hiking trail), including
 - Viewing deck/tower
- Wildlife Habitat Trail (1.5-mile gravel hiking trail, 0.9 miles on short loop)
- Missouri Tree Trail (0.75-mile concrete hiking trail, ADA accessible), including
 - Viewing blind, ADA accessible
 - Viewing deck/tower, ADA accessible
- Hickory Grove Trail (1.15-mile gravel hiking trail)
- Prairie Connector Trail (0.5-miles natural surface hiking trail)
- Fishless Ponds: 14 (totaling 4 acres)
- Four privies
- Four additional parking lots (three paved, one graveled)
- Automated security gate at the front entrance, which is closed nightly
- Picnic tables (25 total, ADA accessible)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

A. Deed Restrictions or Limitations: 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: There are two right of way easements held by Sinclair Oil.

D. Cultural Resources: No known cultural resources.

E. Endangered Species: Endangered species are not known on this area, but are found in the surrounding area. Area managers should consult annually with the natural history biologist.

F. 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) The forests and woodlands are approaching or past maturity. The oldest trees are beginning to decline and die. There are pockets of oak wilt disease and there is a lack of desirable tree regeneration. Resource management techniques and options are limited because of high public use.
- 2) The woodlands, savannas, and glades are generally overstocked with trees. Invasive species are increasing in abundance and there is a major loss of diversity and abundance of ground layer herbaceous vegetation and tree regeneration.
- 3) Emerald ash borer, which attacks and kills all ash species, was first identified on Burr Oak Woods CA in 2015 and is well-established on the area. Many ash trees have succumbed already, and the rest of the ash population will be lost within a few years. There is no treatment for this pest.
- 4) The area includes approximately 228 acres of old-fields, grasslands, and prairie plantings. Invading woody vegetation, invasive species, and deer browse threaten native plant and structural diversity that provides habitat and nesting opportunities for a wide variety of species.
- 5) Invasive plants are an ongoing problem on the area. Johnson grass, tall fescue, sericea lespedeza, autumn olive, callery pear, and bush honeysuckle have established populations on different parts of the area. There are small populations of garlic mustard, burning bush, wild parsnip, and teasel as well.
- 6) A large population of white-tailed deer threatens ecosystem health and diversity. Burr Oak Woods CA is nearly surrounded by commercial and residential development, which cause deer to seek refuge on the area and increases the pressure on native plants and tree plantings.
- 7) The stands of non-native white pine and scotch pine at the front entrance are popular with the area users. However, they were planted over the only known prairie remnant on Burr Oak Woods CA, and the trees are beginning to decline and die.
- 8) Many of the soils on Burr Oak Woods CA are at risk of erosion, especially near creeks and streams.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy, sustainable, and diverse forests and woodlands with management emphasis on wildlife habitat, public education, and recreation.

Strategy 1: Monitor forest for invasive vegetation, diseases, and insects. Suppress any infestations that may develop. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Retain and protect existing den trees while accounting for public safety. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Monitor understory growth in woodland restoration project areas. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Increase forested acres through tree plantings and natural regeneration to widen riparian corridors and reclaim old fields. (Forestry)

Strategy 5: Restore and maintain healthy woodland/savanna/glade complexes through mechanical, chemical, and fire treatments. (Forestry)

Strategy 6: Monitor the decline of pine stands at the front entrance. Remove trees that pose a hazard to area users, and do not replace those that die. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Mitigate excessive runoff and soil erosion.

Strategy 1: Monitor erodible soils regularly and take steps to minimize loss. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Utilize best management practices, as described in *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice Recommended Practices for Missouri Forests: 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watersheds to Protect Streams* (MDC, 2014b) and the *Missouri Forest Management Guidelines: Voluntary Recommendations for Well-Managed Forests* (MDC, 2014a). (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Establish and maintain grasslands and old fields to enhance wildlife habitat, public education, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

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

Strategy 2: Annually monitor and control invasive species, where possible, using management techniques, including, but not limited to, prescribed fire, mechanical, and chemical treatments. (Forestry)

Management Objective 4: Maintain a healthy deer population that allows regrowth of native plants and tree seedlings on the area.

Strategy 1: Monitor the deer population by conducting ground and aerial surveys. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Conduct managed deer hunts to facilitate a healthy herd at a level that will minimize excessive damage from deer browse on native plants and minimize deer-human conflicts. (Forestry, Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Plant food plots annually in areas to provide safe hunting practices and to relieve pressure on native plants and trees. A portion of these acres will be fallowed each year to provide early successional habitat acres for wildlife. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Burr Oak Creek is a predominantly second-order stream that runs for 1.76 miles along the southern and western parts of Burr Oak Woods CA. Extensive residential and commercial development in the upper watershed has drastically altered the hydrology of the stream. Head cutting of drainages has eroded trails, undermined bridges, and overlooks.
- 2) The 1.5-acre Aquatic Resource Education Pond provides learning opportunities for thousands of children each year. Activities in, on, and around the pond include fishing, canoeing, water quality monitoring, and water safety education.
- 3) The area has 13 fishless ponds, which are used as wildlife watering and breeding locations for amphibians.

Management Objective 1: Manage Burr Oak Woods CA to provide for healthy watersheds and streams.

Strategy 1: Along first-order streams, maintain riparian corridors of at least 50 feet in width, per MDC's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (MDC, 2009). Along second- to fourth-order streams (based on topographic map blue-line streams), maintain corridors of at least 100 feet in width. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Continue to manage riparian areas for streambank stability, which will promote quality in-stream habitats for fish and other aquatic organisms in accordance with MDC's stream management guidelines (MDC, 2009). (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Manage Aquatic Resource Education Pond for quality fishing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Monitor fish population as needed. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Stock each year with channel catfish and hybrid sunfish for fishing clinics. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Monitor and manage vegetation. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 3: Manage non-fishing ponds for reptiles and amphibians.

Strategy 1: Evaluate non-fishing ponds and consider potential as amphibian ponds. (Fisheries, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Remove unwanted fish populations. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Do physical renovations as needed to improve habitat. (Forestry)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Burr Oak Woods CA is located within the jurisdictions of the cities of Blue Springs and Independence, just 20 minutes from downtown Kansas City. The greater Kansas City metropolitan area has an estimated population of 2 million people with easy access to the area from Interstate-70. The area receives heavy public use that is estimated to be in excess of ¼ million visitations annually. This heavy use creates challenges to meet different user group goals, as well as achieve resource and maintenance management objectives.
- 2) Burr Oak Woods CA has approximately 6 miles of hiking trails, which are popular with the public for walking and running, while enjoying unique wildlife viewing opportunities. Area users frequently walk along the main road (Park Road), creating potential hazards for pedestrians because of the high volume of vehicular traffic.
- 3) Maintaining, promoting, and enhancing public recreational, educational, and interpretive opportunities will increase area use.
- 4) The portion of the area north of Pink Hill Road is accessible only by foot from a parking lot on the northern boundary of the area from Strode Road. Area users occasionally request that additional parking be constructed along Pink Hill Road, which doesn't have shoulders and prevents off-road parking.
- 5) Burr Oak Woods CA is surrounded by sizable residential developments that makes building relationships with neighboring homeowners and neighborhoods a challenge. Neighboring landowners and homeowners generally have a high interest in the area and its management.

Management Objective 1: Properly maintain designated trails and area access trails.

Strategy 1: Keep roadside and area access trails open by mowing according to levels, as specified in MDC policy maintenance standards. (Design and Development, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain directional signs along roadway and trails. (Design and Development, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Provide adequate resting opportunities along trails. (Design and Development, Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Provide deer and turkey hunting opportunities.

Strategy 1: Annually offer managed hunt opportunities at Burr Oak Woods CA. (Forestry, Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Increase forested areas to provide more forest habitat and cover for wildlife. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Build good relationships with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors, home associations, and city, county and state governments concerning boundary, water flow, or other issues. (Forestry, Fisheries, Private Lands)

Strategy 2: Maintain communication and an understanding of maintenance responsibilities with easement holders. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner properties. (Forestry, Private Land Services)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The variety and intensity of public use on the area requires a high degree of attention for area maintenance and management.
- 2) Consider for acquisition parcels that border this area and provide additional recreational opportunities to the public.
- 3) Since the area is surrounded by residential housing developments and any open land along the area boundary will continue to be developed, working with neighbors, homeowners, home associations, and city organizations is necessary to maintain working relations with the area boundary.

Management Objective 1: Maintain and/or improve area infrastructure in accordance with MDC guidelines.

Strategy 1: Annually inspect bridges and overlooks. Make repairs as needed. (Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Annually inspect pavilions and picnic tables and benches. Paint and repair as needed. (Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Annually inspect and maintain all roadway surfaces and parking lots. (Design and Development, Forestry)

Strategy 4: Annually inspect and maintain electronic main entrance gate. The gate has been damaged and repaired several times. The electronics are more than 10 years old and are out of date, making compatible parts hard to find. Replace gate when fiscally possible. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Strategy 5: Replace privy at the education pond with a prefab concrete privy once funding allows. (Design and Development)

Management Objective 2: Provide enjoyable, safe recreational and natural experiences for area users.

Strategy 1: Explore ways to move pedestrians off the main road to improve safety. (Design and Development, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Develop a small parking lot off Pink Hill Road to enhance public access and use on the northern portion of the area, once funding allows. (Design and Development, Forestry)

Strategy 3: Annually assess and address potentially hazardous trees along trails and areas that receive concentrated public use. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Strategy 4: Work with local law enforcement agencies to create and enhance partnerships to provide for public safety. (Forestry, Protection)

Strategy 5: Provide a staff presence on the area and trails during working hours. (Forestry, Design and Development, Outreach and Education, Protection)

Management Objective 3: Maintain well-marked, accurate boundary lines.

Strategy 1: Maintain area boundary signage on a semiannual rotation to keep signage to MDC standards. (Forestry)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers or through donations. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other MDC priorities, as identified in the annual MDC land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Most of the 1,071-acre Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area (CA) lies in the northwest portion of the City of Blue Springs. The acreage north of Pink Hill Road is in the City of Independence. The area is in a rapidly developing section with numerous subdivisions and commercial developments. Before acquisition, the property was to be developed into a large residential complex with an accompanying lake. Open lands were farmed for row crops and the western portion was heavily grazed. While in private ownership, the property was closed to hunting and fishing.

The initial 775 acres of the Burr Oak Woods CA was purchased in the fall of 1977. Construction started on the Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center in June 1981 and the facility was dedicated Oct. 14, 1982, the first nature center in Missouri. The nature center was updated in February 2016 with new interactive exhibits. Natural features on the area include steep forested hillsides along Burr Oak Creek (the namesake of the property), large limestone boulders and outcrops, restored prairies and woodlands, and a trail complex that guides visitors through many of the listed features.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Forest and Woodland	828		77
Old Field	113		11
Grassland	110		10
Glade	10		1
Ponds	5		<1
Other (roads and parking lots)	5		<1
Total	1,071		100
Stream Frontage – Permanent Streams		4	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Aug. 1–31, 2018. MDC received comments from seven respondents (Appendix A). The Burr Oak Woods 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.

Before writing this draft area management plan, MDC conducted a public input process (the Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage) from March 1–May 31, 2017. During this “idea gathering” stage, MDC received input from 23 respondents (see “Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage Public Input Summary” at <https://tinyurl.com/y7yn9gya>). The area management planning team took comments into consideration as they drafted this ten-year management plan for Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area. MDC responses to comments received during the idea gathering stage can be found in the report, *Missouri Department of Conservation Responses to Public Comments – Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Idea Gathering Stage*. This report is available upon request by contacting Amy Buechler (amy.buechler@mdc.mo.gov).

MDC responses to themes and issues identified through the Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

Terrestrial Resource Management

Appreciates the work that MDC is doing to manage the area for its plants, animals, and habitat. The wildlife and plants seem well-managed at this area.

Thank you for comments. We take great pride in providing the public with a large variety of landscapes for education and enjoyment purposes at Burr Oak Woods CA.

Suggests reducing the number of deer on the area.

MDC will continue managed deer hunts in order to control the deer population on Burr Oak Woods CA.

Supports having managed hunts on the area.

MDC will continue managed hunts to create opportunity and serve urban deer management objectives.

Suggests replacing the trees that were removed from the nature center parking lot.

The parking lot is in the planning stages for major repairs. Upon the completion of the project, we plan to replant medians with wildlife-friendly trees, grasses, and shrubs.

Public Use Management

Trails

Suggests developing more trails and better access at the area north of Pink Hill Road.

Suggest adding a connector between the north and south areas across Pink Hill Road.

Thank you for your comments. Currently there are several service roads that provide walking access across the northern portion of the property. These service roads are already connected to

the south property at the west gates on Pink Hill Road. We encourage visitors to explore Burr Oak Woods CA in its entirety on and off the designated hiking trails. However, for public safety we do not allow parking at the gates on Pink Hill Road.

Suggests marking trails more clearly with signs and on area map (particularly, the “crisscrossing informal” trails).

Thank you for your comments. The staff at Burr Oak Woods CA have discussed adding arrows that would direct visitors to the parking areas on the natural surface trails.

Suggests removing the barbed wire by the area north of Pink Hill Road.

Thank you for your comments. The fence referenced is our boundary fence that demarcates the property line for the area. They need to be retained.

Supports adding a trail for walkers that runs along the main road.

Thank you for your comments. The staff at Burr Oak Woods CA have discussed this idea for a few years, but funding has not been available.

Suggests adding signage to every trailhead that encourages hikers to take precautions to avoid ticks.

Area signage is already at each parking lot on the regulations bulletin boards. Additional signage does not comply with MDC policy.

Enjoys hiking the access trail on the northeast side of area.

Thank you for your comments. Our staff takes pride in providing the public with additional hiking opportunities that also aid in area management goals, such as the prescribed fire line that doubles as a trail.

Cautions about overdoing signage and benches on the trails

Thank you for your comments. We always consider the possibility of congestion when we make any additions to our trail system.

Suggests that MDC partner with Independence and Blue Springs cities to provide a sidewalk/trail along Pink Hill Road.

There is no current plan to implement this at this time.

Suggests adding a volunteer presence to the trails to discourage unauthorized behavior.

There are teams in place that have adopted each trail. The goal is to hike the trail on a regular basis and report findings to staff. For information about becoming a staff volunteer please contact the Burr Oak Woods Nature Center at 816-228-3766.

Education

Suggests improving tree identification to make it more informative.

Thank you for your comment. The Missouri Tree Trail has placards attached to many of the native trees to aid in identification. We will take your suggestion into consideration next time the placards are updated.

Appreciates the educational programs provided at Burr Oak Woods CA.

Thank you for your comments. If you have additional suggestions or requests, you are encouraged to call or utilize the comment box in the nature center.

Administrative Considerations

Suggests posting a link to access the area management plan. Suggests providing an assessment of how objectives have been met.

Thank you for your comment. The Burr Oak Woods CA Plan will be available to the public once the plan is finalized. Objectives are considered ongoing, unless otherwise listed in the management timetable. The table provides the anticipated year of completion for tasks that are not ongoing. Contact the area manager if you have any specific questions pertaining to the area plan.

Supports not allowing pets or bikes on the area trails. Suggests providing area users who have pets/bikes with information about nearby areas that they can use.

Thank you for your comments. Our staff has a brochure available that highlights where a person could take their dogs.

Supports increasing the size of the conservation area if there are opportunities.

Thank you for your comments. MDC has actively looked for ways to increase specific properties that provide additional benefits to the public.

General Comments

Loves coming to Burr Oak Woods CA and appreciates the staff at the area. (2 comments)

Thank you for your comments. Our staff always strives to provide the best experience for our visitors.

Appreciates the work that MDC does to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the public.

Thank you for your comments.

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.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014a). *Missouri forest management guidelines: Voluntary recommendations for well-managed forests*. Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014b). *Missouri watershed protection practice recommended practices for Missouri forests: 2014 management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

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

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Easement Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Soils Map

Figure 5: Land Cover Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

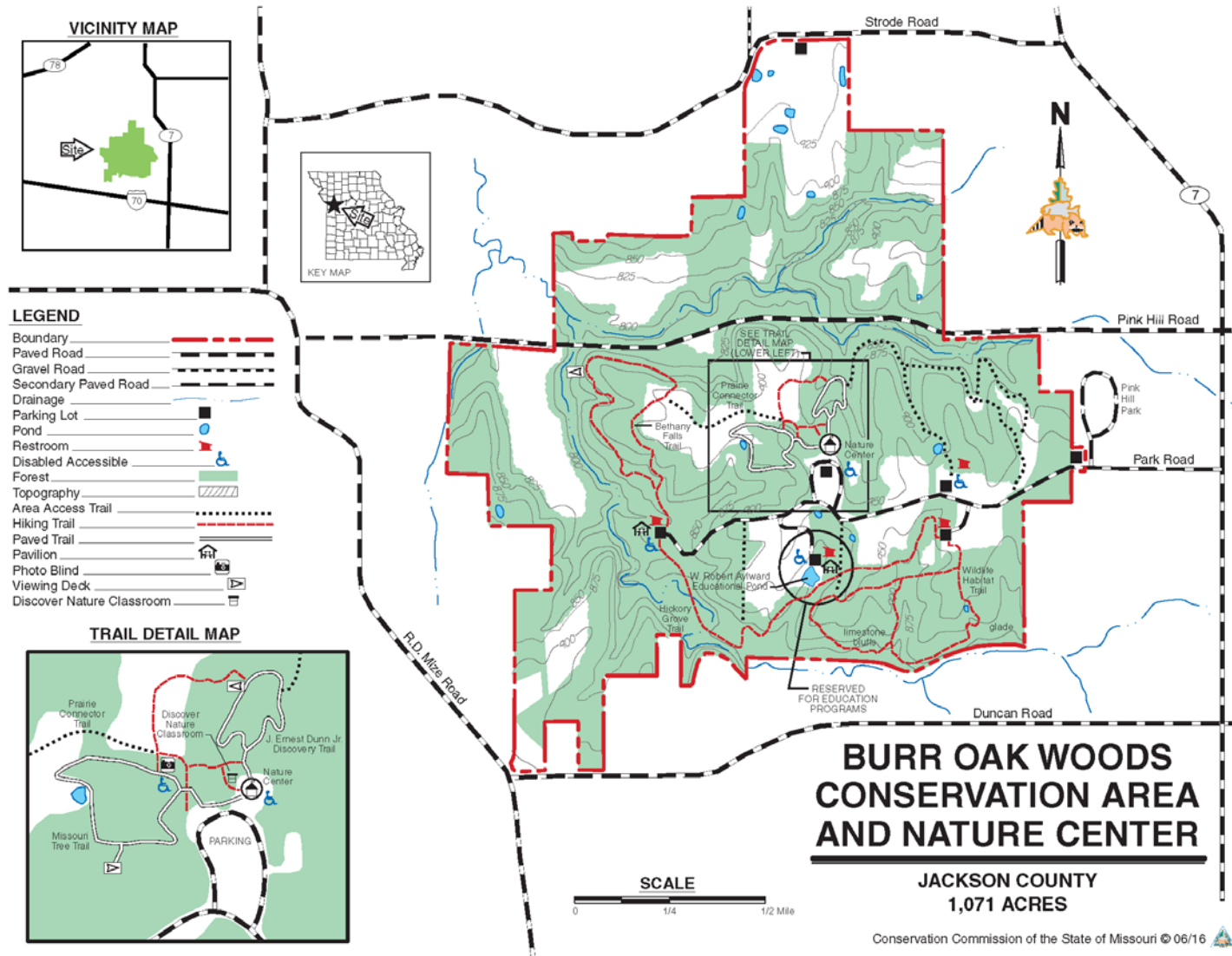


Figure 2: Easement Map

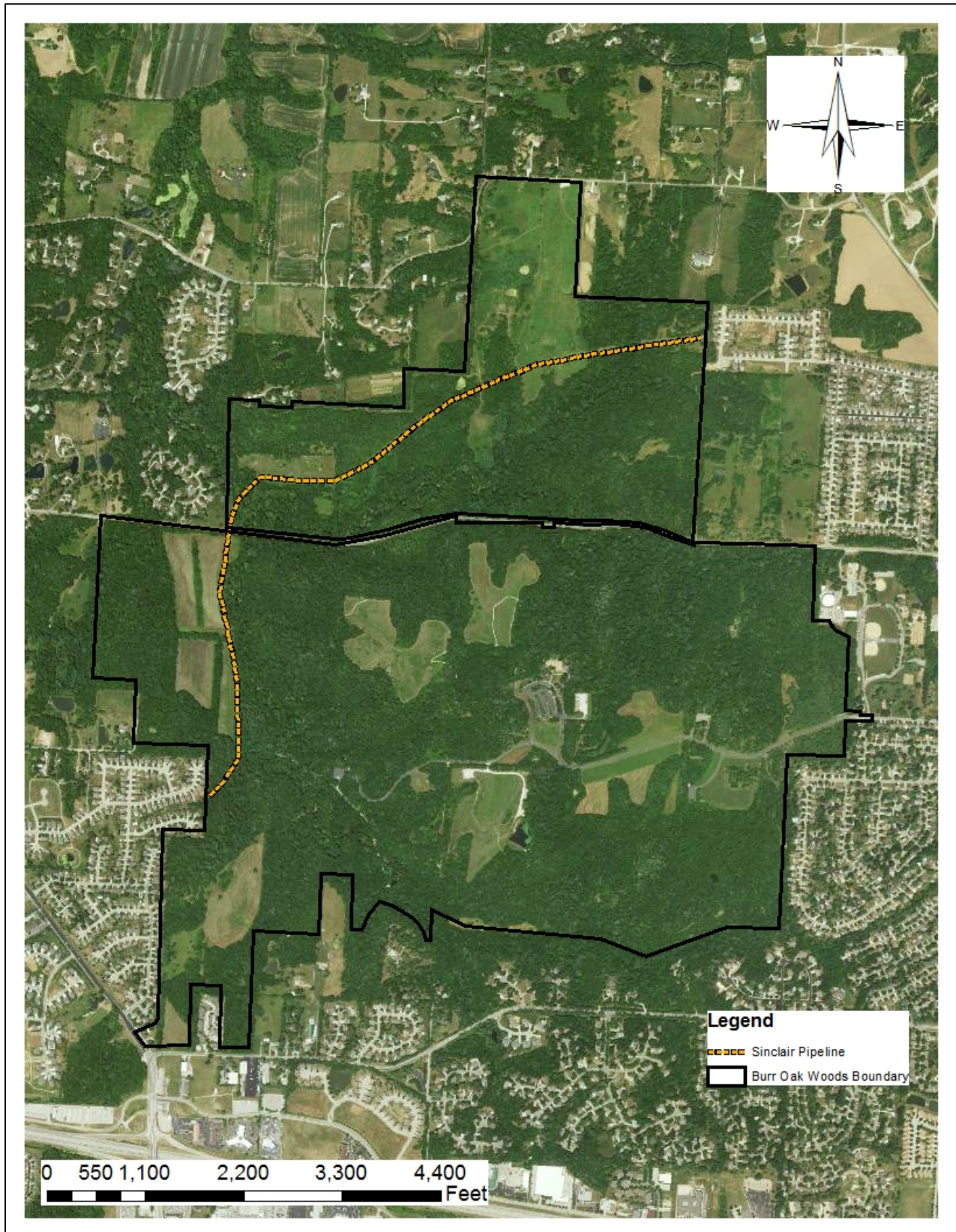


Figure 3: Topographic Map

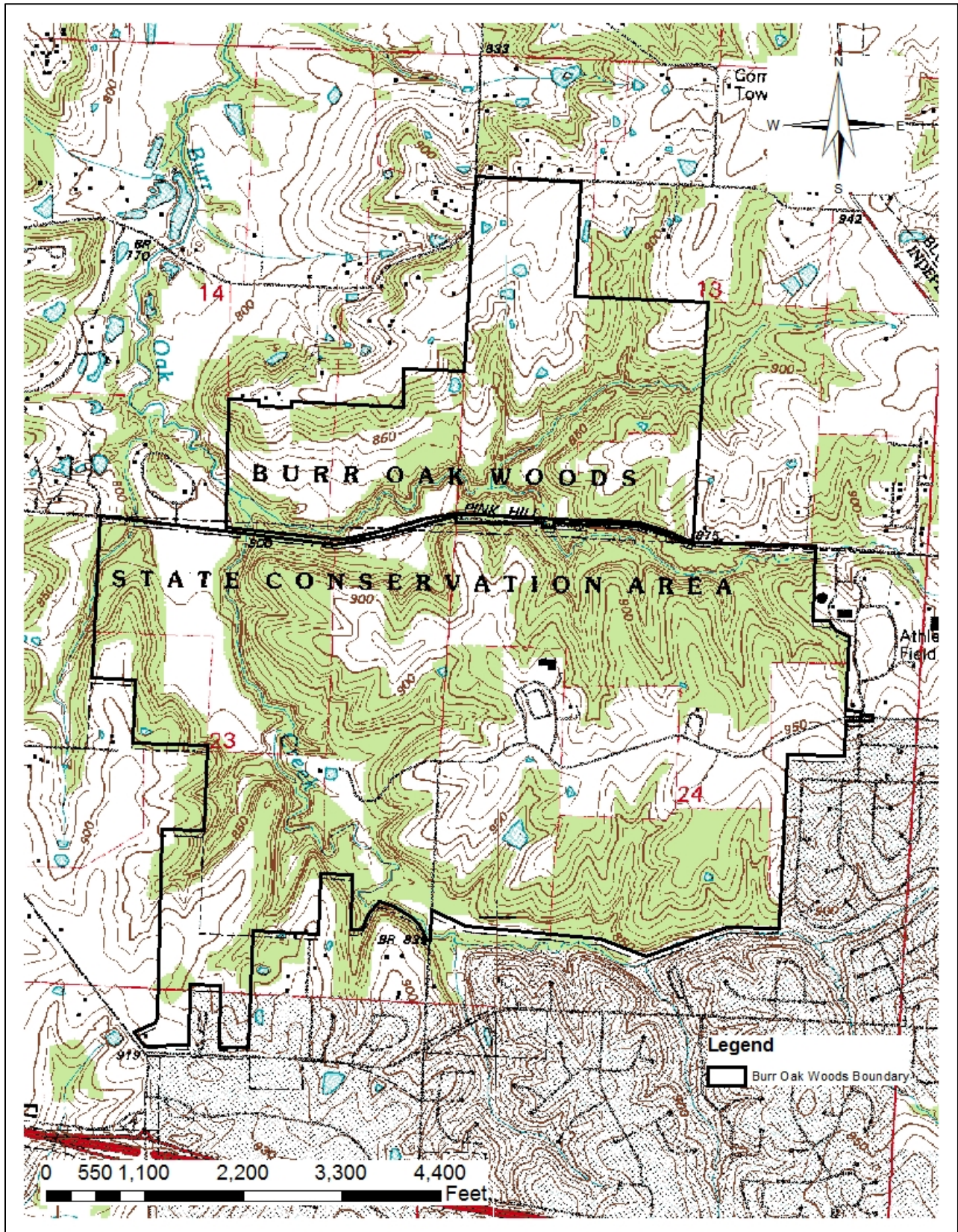


Figure 4: Soils Map

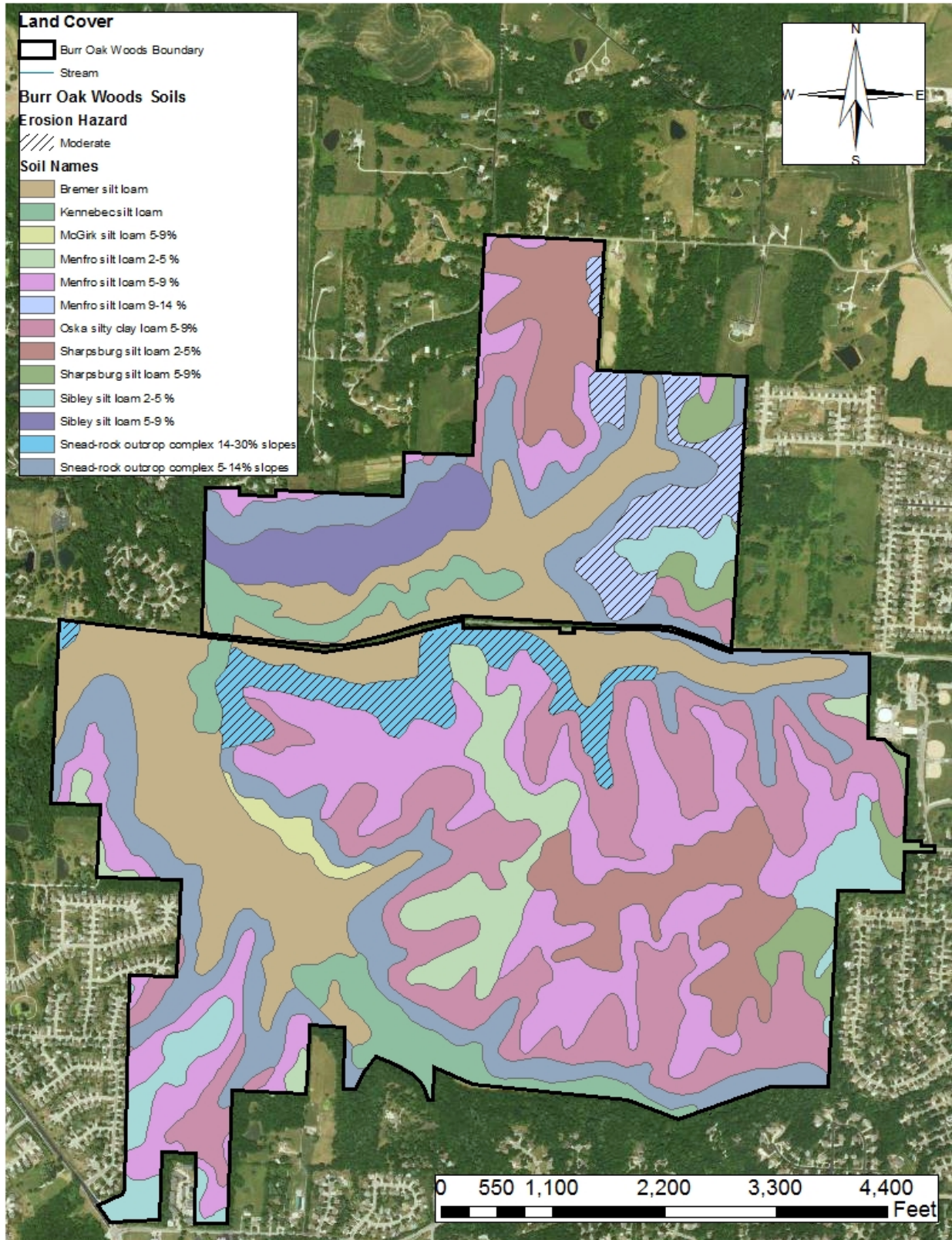
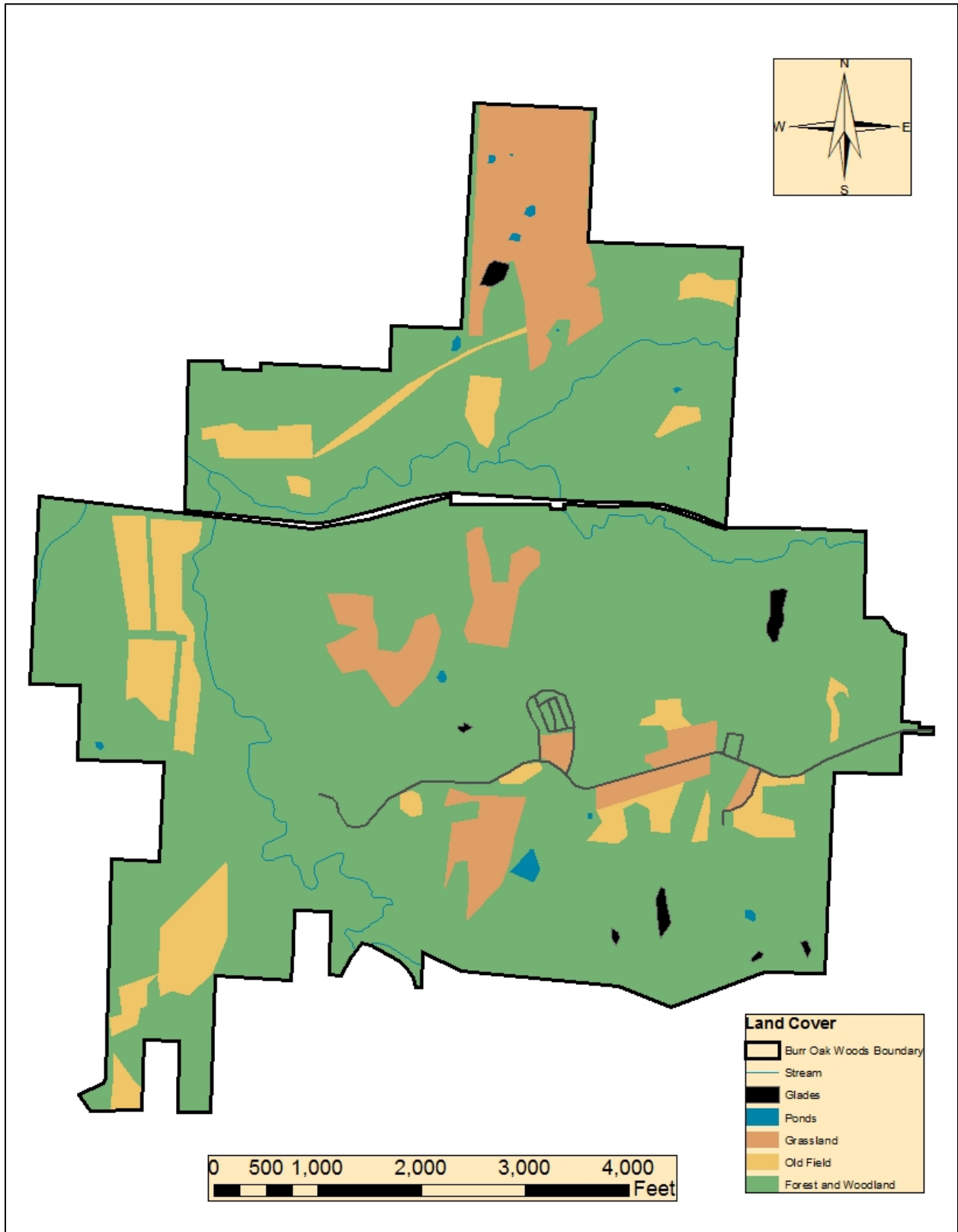


Figure 5: Land Cover Map



Appendix A: Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Aug. 1–31, 2018):

Please work on accurate signage and a paper map which will allow hiking further than the very short Bethany Trail which is nice but can be walked in 2 minutes. You have a lot of criss-crossing informal trails which should be made clear. The tree id needs work. It could be way, way more helpful and instructive.

No additional suggestions/comments other than to thank MDC for keeping its focus on the mission for Burr Oak Woods. There are so many other places people can fish and walk their dogs and trail ride and reserve shelters, etc, etc, and very few that focus on maintaining habitat for native flora and fauna.

A few points, please.

I have enjoyed your many excellent programs over the years. Thanks!

I have hiked (bushwhacked, best in the winter) the area north of Pink Hill some time ago. I am more inclined to ask:

Remove old barbed wire.

Connect North with South by trail across Pink Hill Road. A parking lot can create many problems as well as expense. It also affects traffic along that well used 2-lane road.

Keep North largely undeveloped as a natural area. Maybe connect the North parking lot to the proposed spur trail across Pink Hill Rd.

Post warnings and educational material for ticks at all trail heads.

Thin the deer population by sedation and removal. State biologist to monitor health of those relocated.

Excellent presentation of the proposed management plan with maps and aerial photos. Could you also post a link to the existing plan and, maybe an assessment of how objectives were met by that plan?

Thanks again!

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is one of the most amazing managers of natural resources in all of America. The MDC is the gold standard of what proper conservation looks like. Knowing that this area is under management by the MDC, and will be developed by the incredible people at the MDC, is to know that it will be a haven for wildlife and a beautiful natural area on the landscape. This will provide area residents with outdoor recreation opportunities and it will provide wildlife with a good habitat. Keep up the great work! Keep the natural areas and outdoor rec opportunities coming! They are what make this state so incredible.

I very much support the idea to construct a parallel trail for walkers and bicycles along the main road. The road currently has no shoulder with very limited visibility and is used by tons of hikers and bikers. Every time I go there, I worry about them. Also, I really enjoy the area access trail on the north east side of the main area. They are very rugged and pretty challenging. Please keep

them that way, but you may want to add some trail markers.

I love Burr Oaks, so thanks for your work!!!!

My family enjoys the Burr Oak Conservation Area very much and the staff that provides for its use. I believe the wildlife and plants are well managed and approve of the managed hunts. I think more use should be made of the area north of Pink Hill road by creating access and minor trail development. I agree with the current no pets. As a biker I enjoy use of the roadway but believe trails should not include bikes. Trail riders have a great resource at Landall Park. A brochure that multiple agencies could use could state contact numbers for dog parks and bike trails. Volunteers could be utilized on the trails, minimally, to offer a presence of staff being aware of trail use and behavior. I would love to see the area size increased if land acquisition could take place. I would like to see the trees replaced that were taken out in the nature centers parking lot. I would not overdo signage or benches on the trails. Considerate walkers/runners should move onto the grass shoulders of the main road. Thanks very much, *****

I would like to see MDC discuss the possibility of a protected sidewalk/trail along Pink Hill Rd. with the cities of Independence and Blue Springs. MDC shouldn't have to fund that trail, as I believe both cities would greatly benefit from being able to tie their other trails into Burr Oak. If MDC expressed interest in providing whatever easements would be necessary for this project, perhaps the cities would be inclined to fund it.