

Keysville Towersite

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan FY 2019-2033



John Tuttle

Forestry Division Chief

12/7/2018

Date

Keysville Towersite Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Keyssville Towersite, # 4708
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1947
- **Acreage:** 80 acres
- **County:** Crawford
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction:**

Keyssville Towersite was purchased by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to help with the detection and suppression of wildfires. The location of the Keyssville Towersite was specifically selected due to its location south of Steelville and north of the fire tower at Indian Trail. The area has an elevation of 1,140 feet and the entire surrounding area is visible from atop the tower.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

Maintain the structural integrity and general upkeep of the tower to ensure safety of the fire lookout personnel. Manage surrounding woodlands and pine plantations to provide wildlife habitat and compatible public use.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** Huzzah Creek Fisheries Priority Watershed, Middle Meramec River Fisheries Priority Watershed, Priority Forest Landscape
 - B. Natural Areas:** None

- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None observed.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
 - D. Other:** Keyssville Towersite occurs in the Cherryville Oak Savanna/Woodland Plain Landtype Association. Historically this upland site was oak savanna and woodland (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002). Ridgetop soils have root-restricting fragipans, resulting in stunted tree growth, especially for hardwoods. Side slopes do not have the root restricting fragipan; however, the soils are developed from sandstone parent material and are extremely acidic.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- One fire tower
- One fishless pond

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:** Ingress/egress for adjoining landowner to access their property, railroad, and Crawford Electric easements
- 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) Manage woodlands on the 80 acres surrounding the fire tower.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy trees and woodlands.

Strategy 1: Monitor pine plantations and oak woodlands for insect and disease issues and address with forest management activities such as noncommercial thinning or commercial timber harvest. Conduct a forest inventory of the affected areas prior to the implementation of any forest management activities. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Monitor the area for invasive plants and control as necessary. Methods of control include mechanical, chemical, and natural processes such as prescribed fire. Some invasive plants that threaten this site include bush honeysuckle, Japanese honeysuckle, burning bush, winter creeper, spotted knap weed, and sericea lespedeza. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Use prescribed fire to enhance the native grasses and forbs within the woodland as time and resources permit. A forest inventory and burn plan will be developed prior to the implementation of prescribed fire. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) There is an opportunity to convert the existing pond into reptile and amphibian habitat.

Management Objective 1: Improve reptile and amphibian habitat of the existing pond.

Strategy 1: Create woody structure in pond. (Forestry, Private Lands)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Deter vandalism to the tower structure and observation platform.
- 2) Conduct periodic and routine maintenance.
- 3) Provide for hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Minimize vandalism of the tower.

Strategy 1: Periodically inspect the tower structure and observation platform for vandalism and increase enforcement on the area if vandalism becomes frequent. (Forestry, Protection)

Management Objective 2: Maintain the appearance and general upkeep of the area.

Strategy 1: Continue routine area maintenance on the site according to policy and need. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain clearly marked boundaries and repaint the boundaries as needed. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Explore the feasibility of providing better public access to the area by considering the construction of a small parking lot. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Management Objective 3: Provide hunting, wildlife viewing, and other compatible outdoor recreational activities on the area.

Strategy 1: Continue to provide hunting opportunities for a variety of wildlife species. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain the small service road network (as trails) through the area to provide area users walk-in access to the property for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreational activities. (Forestry)

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Keysville Towersite was purchased by MDC in 1947 to provide a location for a wildfire detection tower in the area south of Steelville and north of the Indian Trail Tower. The tower was constructed in the early 1950s. The lookout tower is still used for wildfire detection during times of high wildfire danger.

Keysville Towersite contains 80 acres of mostly wooded habitat. Of the 80 acres, 25 acres include a shortleaf pine plantation that was established in the 1950s by the Keysville towerman. The remaining 55 acres are second-growth oak/hickory upland woodland.

Fire history helped shape the plant community in this area. The high and flat landscape position supported a fire frequency of three to five years. These periodic fires kept the woodland open, removed leaf litter, and stimulated the growth of native grasses and forbs. Trees would recolonize the area during fire-free periods. Characteristic trees include post oak, black hickory, blackjack oak, black oak, and sassafras. Native prairie plants, such as little bluestem, big bluestem, goats rue, goldenrods, and asters, can be found on the area.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Oak Woodlands	55		69
Pine Plantation	25		31
Total	80		100
Stream Frontage		0	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Keysville Towersite Management Plan was available for a public comment period March 1–31, 2017. MDC received comments from two respondents (Appendix A). The Keysville Towersite 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.

MDC responses to themes and issues identified through the Keysville Towersite Management Plan public comment period.

Supports creating a small parking lot for area users.

The construction of a parking lot will be investigated upon approval of the area plan.

Wonders if selling the area and using the money to buy property adjacent to a larger tract would be an option?

MDC periodically considers properties for disposal. Currently, the Keysville Towersite is not among the properties being considered for disposal. The Keysville Tower still functions as a fire lookout tower and is utilized for that purpose on occasion and the area offers public outdoor recreational opportunities.

Supports the continued maintenance of towersites with their connection to conservation and wildfire prevention.

We agree that it is important to maintain the Keysville Fire Tower in good repair. The tower is occasionally used for fire detection.

References:

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: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map

Figure 5: Easement Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Keysville Towersite Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

KEYSVILLE TOWERSITE

CRAWFORD COUNTY
80 ACRES

VICINITY MAP

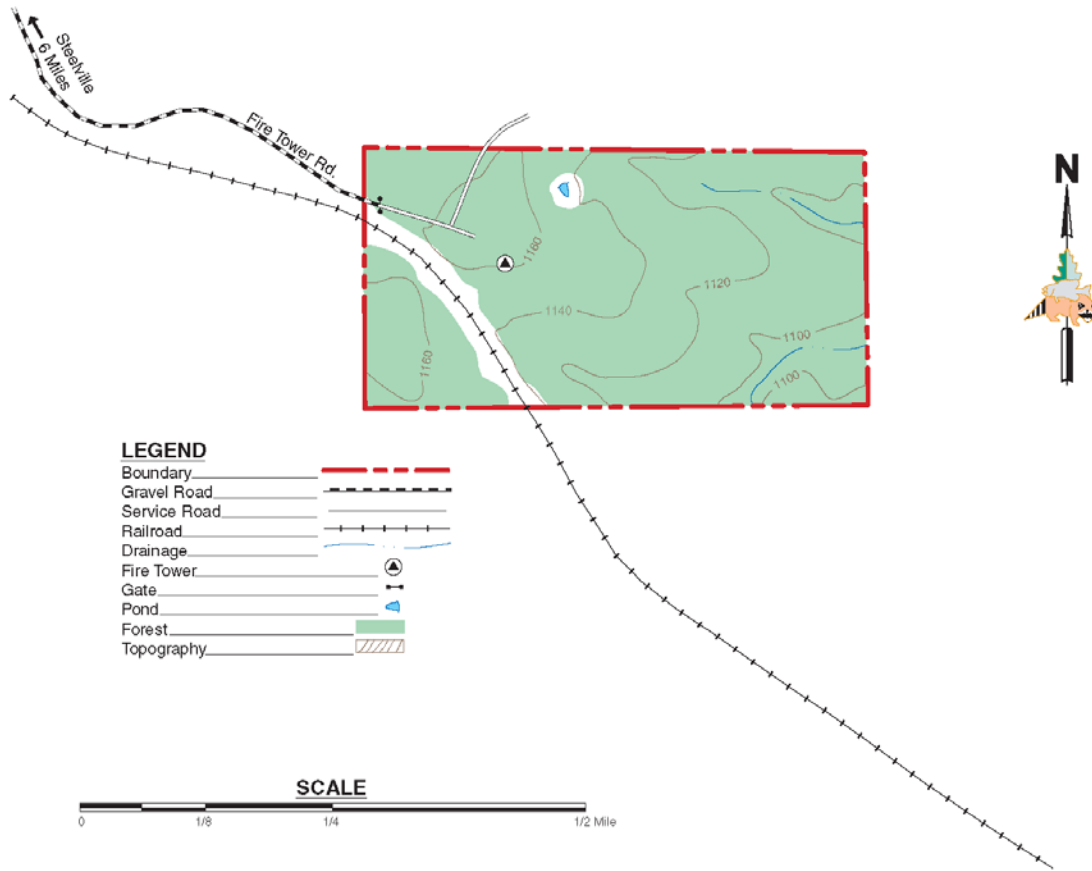
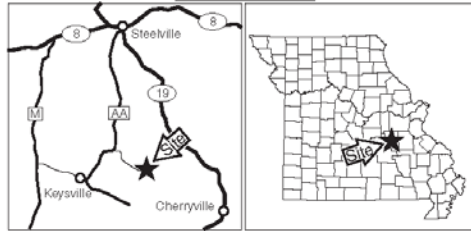


Figure 2: Aerial Map



Figure 3: Topographic Map

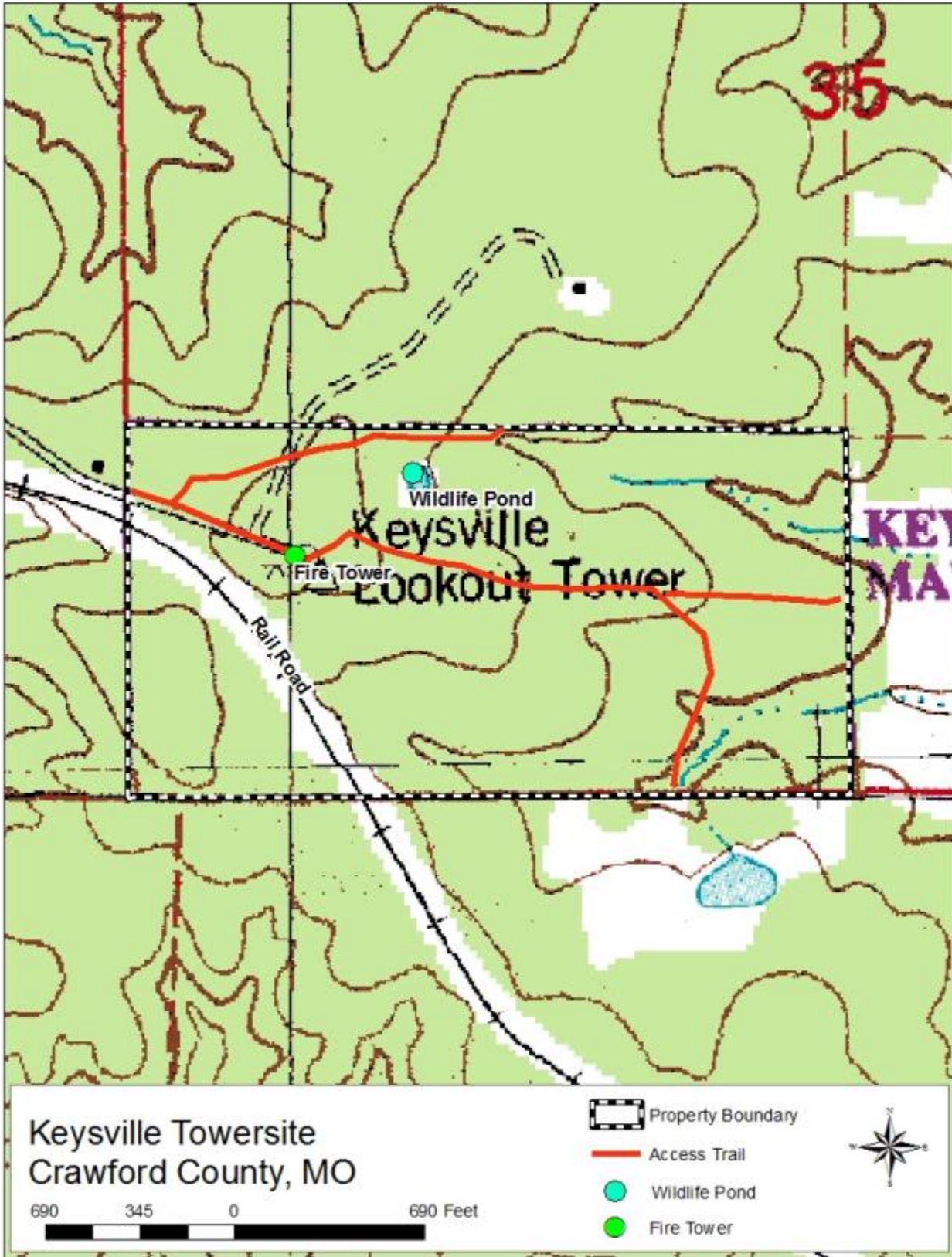


Figure 4: Current Vegetation Map



Figure 5: Easement Map



Appendix A: Keysville Towersite Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1–31, 2017):

Your idea of making a small parking lot for area users is a great idea. It is such a small area I wonder of selling it and using the money to purchase land adjacent to a larger tract might be an option.

Hello,

I love getting the reports of the management plans - especially for those involving fire towersites. I applaud your efforts in not only preserving and managing the woodland, prairie, glade and wetland areas of Missouri and the wildlife contained in them, but also your efforts in preserving the fire towersites in our great state. Please continue to maintain and preserve these important structures --- they represent an important part of conservation and wildfire prevention all across the country. Keep up the good work!