

Warm Fork Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan
FY 2017-2026





Wildlife Division Chief

9 August 2017

Date

Warm Fork Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Justin Gailey, Wildlife Management Biologist

Blake Stephens, Fisheries Management Biologist

Susan Farrington, Natural History Biologist


Paul Veatch, Conservation Agent

Steve Paes, Forester

Marcus Asher, Private Land Conservationist

OZARK REGION

RCT Chair


Signature 6/30/2017
Date

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Wildlife Management Chief


Signature 07/07/2017
Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Warm Fork Conservation Area, #9628
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1996
- **Acreage:** 185 acres
- **County:** Oregon
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

The Warm Fork Conservation Area (CA) was purchased to provide fishing and upland game recreational opportunities; and to protect the riparian corridor of the Warm Fork of the Spring River.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Warm Fork CA is a diverse grassland with native warm season grasses and forbs and a protected riparian corridor
 - C. Federal Aid Statement:**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** Riparian corridor of the Warm Fork of the Spring River (Warm Fork Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area)
 - B. Natural Areas:** None

- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** None known.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None

- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - One parking lot

- 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: None

D. Cultural Resources Findings: Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) environmental compliance specialist. Managers should follow best management practices for cultural resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.

E. Endangered Species: None observed.

F. Boundary Issues: None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Warm Fork CA is comprised of grassland and forest landscapes. The grassland landscape is managed to provide early successional habitat. The forest landscapes are managed for late successional habitat.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage all grasslands in the early successional stage while providing bare ground for grassland species.
- 2) Keep warm-season grass density at a level that is useable and beneficial for multiple species.
- 3) Control invasive species as they appear.

Management Objective 1: Manage the grassland landscape throughout Warm Fork CA in multiple successional stages to provide food and cover for multiple species.

Strategy 1: Divide the grassland landscape into multiple burn units to allow for variety of early successional habitat. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Burn using larger burn units on a minimum three-year rotation. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Rotate burn frequency and season to favor either grasses or forbs, depending on the limiting factor in each burn unit. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Control or eliminate invasive species in grasslands and woodlands.

Strategy 1: Rotate burn seasons and apply the appropriate management technique including but not limited to the use of herbicide to reduce fescue in grasslands. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Use a broadleaf-specific herbicide to effectively treat sericia lespedeza and spotted knapweed. Continue to spot-spray herbicides seasonally, when it is most detrimental to these species. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Protect and restore the riparian corridor of the Warm Fork of the Spring River.

Strategy 1: Identify areas within the riparian corridor that do not have adequate forest cover. (Wildlife, Forestry, Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Plant suitable vegetation or make plans to allow for natural regeneration, in the portions of the riparian corridor that had been identified as not having adequate forest cover by June 30, 2017. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Manage the forest south of the river and within the riparian corridor as old growth according to the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice Recommended Practices for Missouri Forests* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014). (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

The Warm Fork of the Spring River flows across approximately 4,700 linear feet of this area and is the primary aquatic resource on the property. Other area aquatic resources include about 425 linear feet of a second-order stream that flows into the Warm Fork and a 0.15-acre small impoundment that occasionally goes dry during periods of low precipitation.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Protect and enhance riparian areas.
- 2) Manage area pond as a wildlife watering impoundment.

Management Objective 1: Continue to protect and enhance riparian areas along the Warm Fork of the Spring River and the second-order tributary.

Strategy 1: Maintain a buffered riparian corridor with a minimum of 100 feet from the top of the bank on each side for Warm Fork of the Spring River (a third-order stream), per the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Maintain a riparian corridor with a minimum of 50 feet from the top of the bank on each side for the tributary of Warm Fork of the Spring River (a second-order stream), per *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009).

Management Objective 2: Manage the small 0.15-acre pond as a wildlife watering pond to provide habitat for amphibians, reptiles, and aquatic invertebrate communities.

Strategy 1: Maintain the 0.15-acre pond in a fishless condition. (Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Increase public use of the area for educational opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Increase the awareness and success of habitat management on public lands and promote outdoor education.

Strategy 1: Work with the Outreach and Education Division to promote outdoor skills activities while working with the Discover Nature Schools Program, when appropriate. (Wildlife)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Ensure that area boundaries are marked and visible to public users.

Management Objective 1: Keep current Warm Fork CA boundary signs visible and presentable to the public.

Strategy 1: Annually conduct a visual survey of all boundary signs. Replace any damaged or missing signs. (Wildlife)

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The Warm Fork Conservation Area was purchased in 1985 to provide recreational opportunities and to protect the riparian corridor of the Warm Fork of the Spring River.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Grassland (non-prairie)	160		87
Forest	25		13
Total	185		100
Stream – Intermittent (Warm Fork)		1	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Warm Fork Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period July 1-31, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no public 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.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *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*. Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Land Cover Map

Figure 1: Area Map

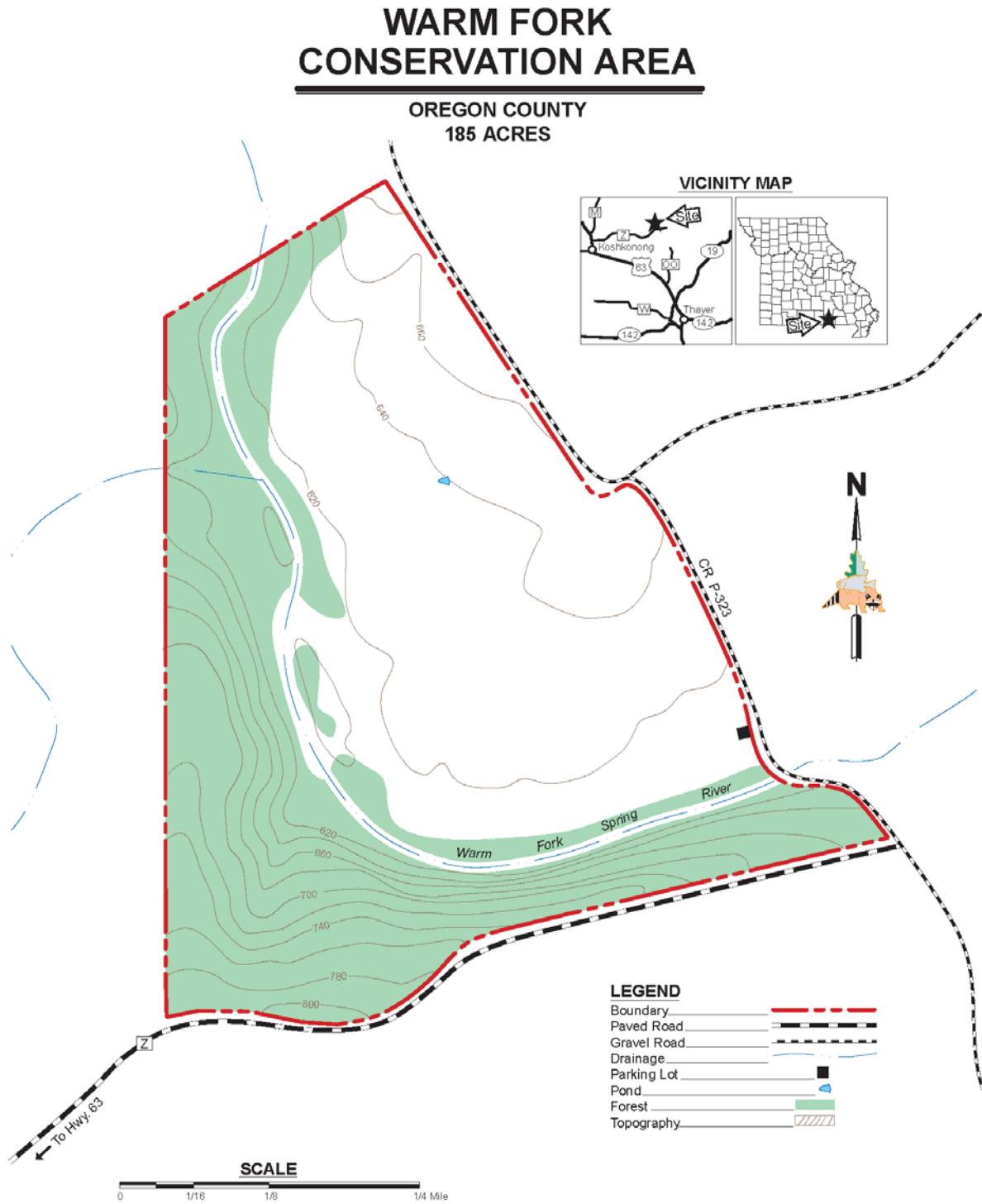


Figure 2: Aerial Map

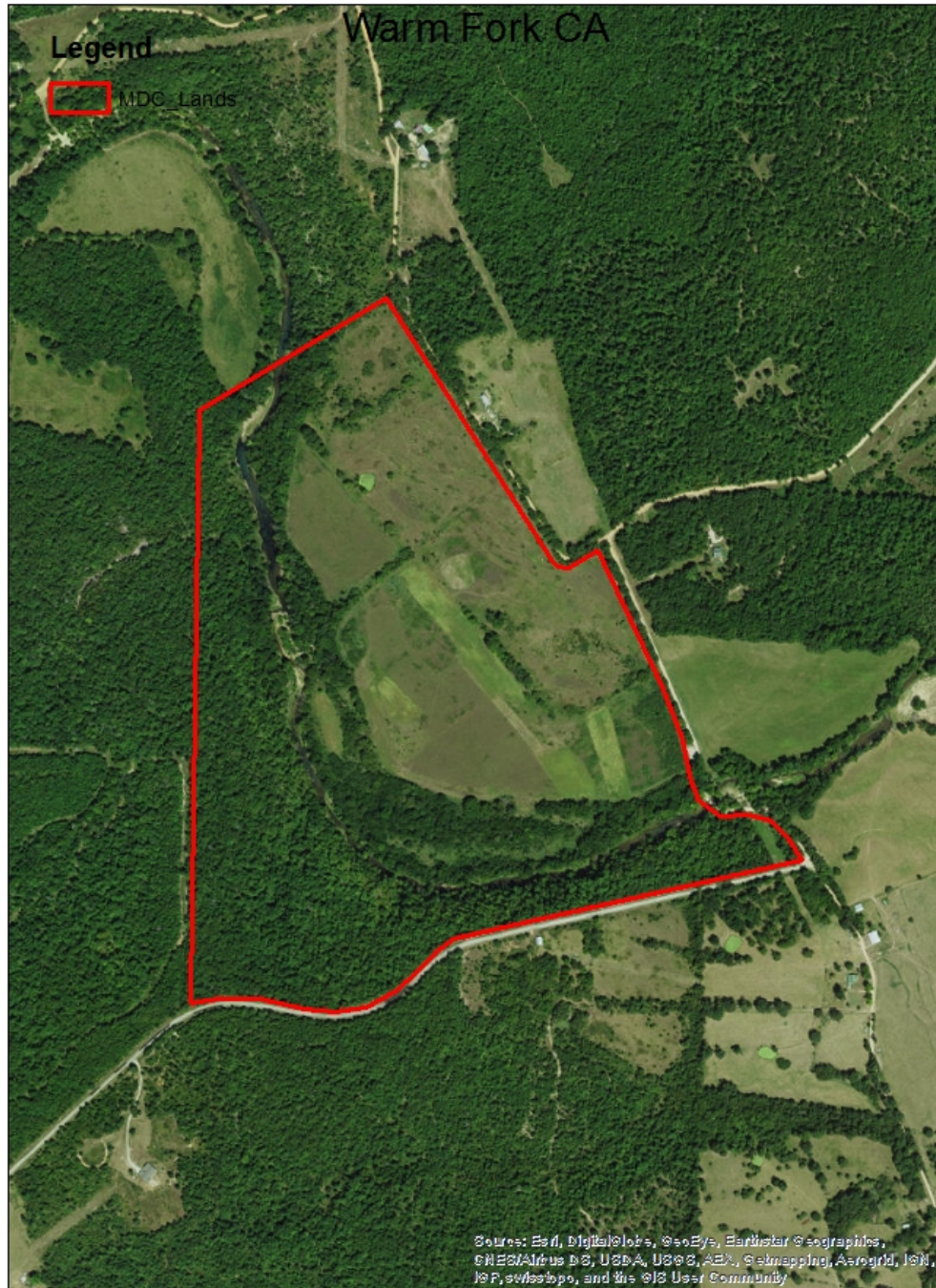


Figure 3: Topographic Map

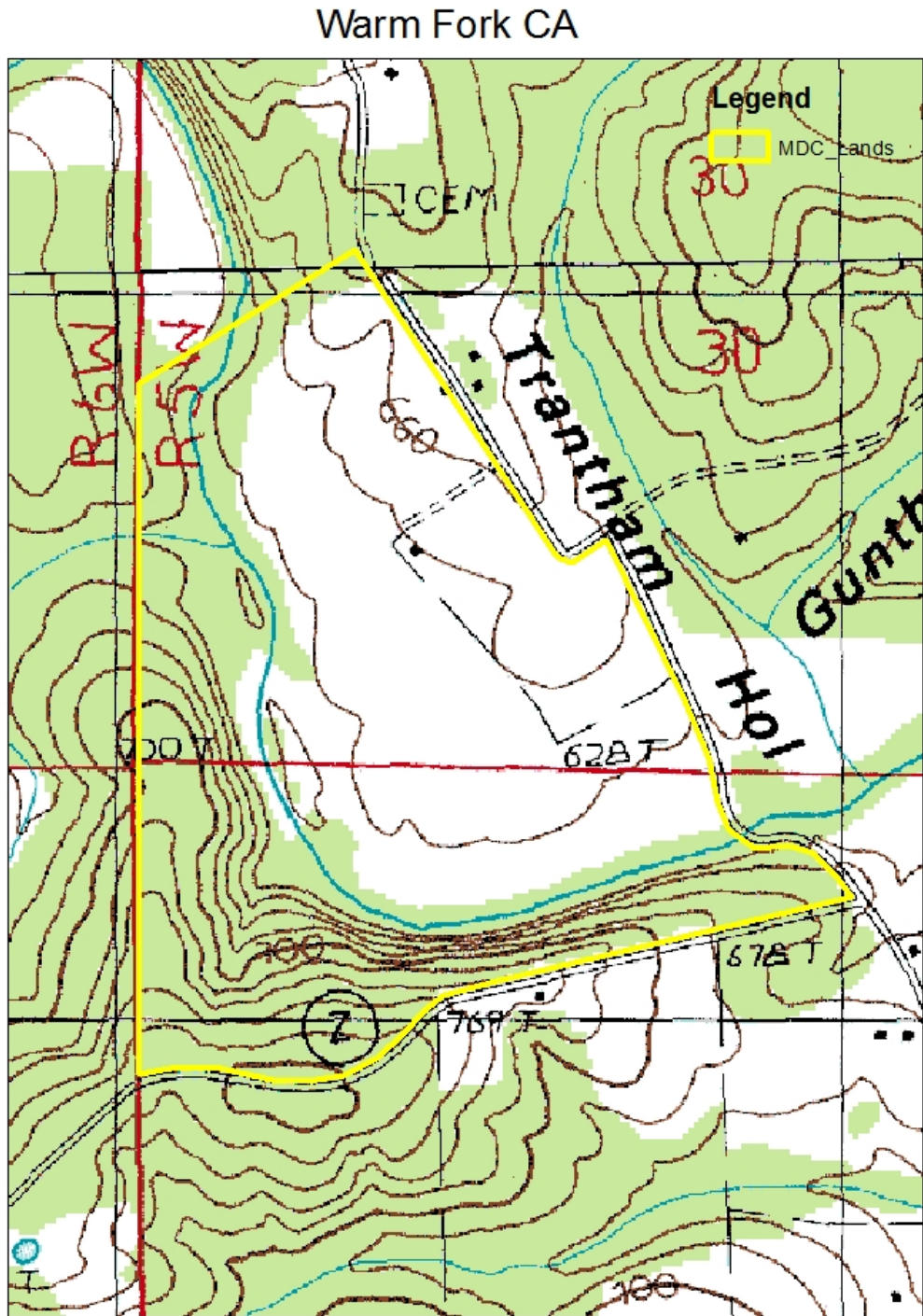


Figure 4: Land Cover Map

