

Crooked Creek Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2017-2026



Lisa B Allen

Forestry Division Chief

7-10-17

Date

Crooked Creek Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Jeff Dierking, Private Land Conservationist

Sam Faith, Conservation Education Consultant

Mark Johanson, Resource Forester

John Peine, Lead Carpenter

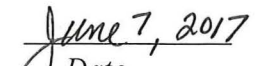
Alex Ruff, Wildlife Biologist

Tim Tallent, Protection Agent

ST. LOUIS REGION

RCT Chair


Signature


Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief


Signature


Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Crooked Creek Conservation Area, # 7224
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1972
- **Acreage:** 337 acres
- **County:** Crawford
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for wildlife and woodland resources with emphasis on woodland species and compatible recreational opportunities.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Crooked Creek Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy forest and woodland system for people to use and enjoy.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** Meramec River Hills Priority Forest Landscape, Meramec River Watershed Important Bird Area, Middle Meramec Fisheries Priority Watershed
 - B. Natural Areas:** None

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

- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - Hiking trail, 0.5-miles

- 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:** 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 the area to maintain healthy forests and woodlands.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy forests and woodlands.

Strategy 1: Monitor forests and woodlands for invasive species and implement control measures as needed. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Utilize non-commercial thinning, prescribed fire, timber harvests, and other land management techniques to improve tree density, species composition, herbaceous vegetation, and wildlife habitat in woodlands and forest. A forest inventory will be conducted prior to the implementation of any forest management activities. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Follow best management practices to prevent soil erosion after timber harvesting activities. Follow the best management practices listed in the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practices – 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watersheds to Protect Streams* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014). (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

No aquatic resources exist on this area. Land management activities occurring on this area will use appropriate best management practices to minimize soil loss and erosion. These best management practices will ensure aquatic resources in adjacent streams remain healthy.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide hunting, hiking, and compatible recreational opportunities.

Management Objective 1: Provide hunting, hiking and compatible recreational opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain standard Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) signs pertaining to hunting and public use regulations. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Conduct patrols to enforce area regulations. (Protection)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Paint the boundary lines in FY2017 and FY2024. (Forestry)

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Administrative Considerations										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 2	X							X		

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Crooked Creek Conservation Area (CA) is located in southwest Crawford County, approximately 8 miles southwest of Steelville. Crooked Creek CA was donated to the Department in 1972 through the estate of the Reifsnider family. The Department purchased an adjacent property in 1989 bringing the area to its current size of 337 acres.

Crooked Creek is nearly 100 percent forested, consisting mainly of oak-hickory and shortleaf pine forest types. The geology of Crooked Creek CA is unique due to a major meteor impact that occurred thousands of years ago. Crooked Creek CA is on an impact outcrop just to the northwest of the central uplift zone that was created during this meteor impact.

The area is open to the public from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily and provides opportunities for hunting deer and turkey, bird watching, and hiking.

Current Land and Water Types

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Upland Forest/Woodland	281	83
Shortleaf Pine Plantation	56	17
Total	337	100

Public Input Summary:

The draft Crooked Creek Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period April 1–30, 2016. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from seven respondents (Appendix A). The Crooked Creek 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 Crooked Creek Conservation Area public comment period

Supports managing shortleaf pine on area.

We will continue to manage the shortleaf pine plantations on the area. We are currently thinning the stand on the south side of Highway VV and plan to thin the stand north of VV in the near future.

Suggests cleaning out pond and developing fishing area.

The small wildlife pond on the area is only 1/20th of an acre. Its main purpose is to provide a water source for wildlife and to serve as a breeding location for amphibians and reptiles. While the pond may provide limited fishing opportunities, we have no plans to renovate, stock, and manage it as a fishing pond.

Opposes modern firearms deer hunting on Crooked Creek CA due to small size. Suggests allowing archery hunting only.

We routinely evaluate our hunting regulations on all of our areas and make changes when they are needed. Our past observations of Crooked Creek CA indicate that this area is lightly used, even during the modern firearms deer season. We will continue to observe the public hunting pressure during all hunting seasons and will recommend appropriate hunting regulations changes as needed.

Appreciates the parking lot.

We are always looking for ways to make our conservation areas more welcoming to the public. We are glad you appreciate the new parking lot and hope it makes this area more accessible.

Appreciates cleaning up litter on area.

We try to keep our areas clean and inviting to the public. We will let staff know their hard work on this area is appreciated.

Concerned with area users trespassing, discharging firearms, and dumping trash on neighboring property.

The Department takes trespassing seriously and works hard to discourage this unlawful activity. While our conservation agents routinely patrol and enforce the rules on our areas, we rely on our neighbors to report these types of violations so they can be properly investigated.

Requests a survey of the western boundary line.

The Department will contact the commenter directly to learn more about this issue.

Provided information that this area has geological interest due to a meteor impact thousands of years ago.

We appreciate the information that was provided concerning the Crooked Creek meteor impact and understand its role in shaping the local geology. Crooked Creek Conservation Area is on the northwest edge of the impacted area of this geological event. We will incorporate some of the details of this event into the “Area Background” section in the final version of this plan.

References:

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.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Current Land Cover Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Crooked Creek Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

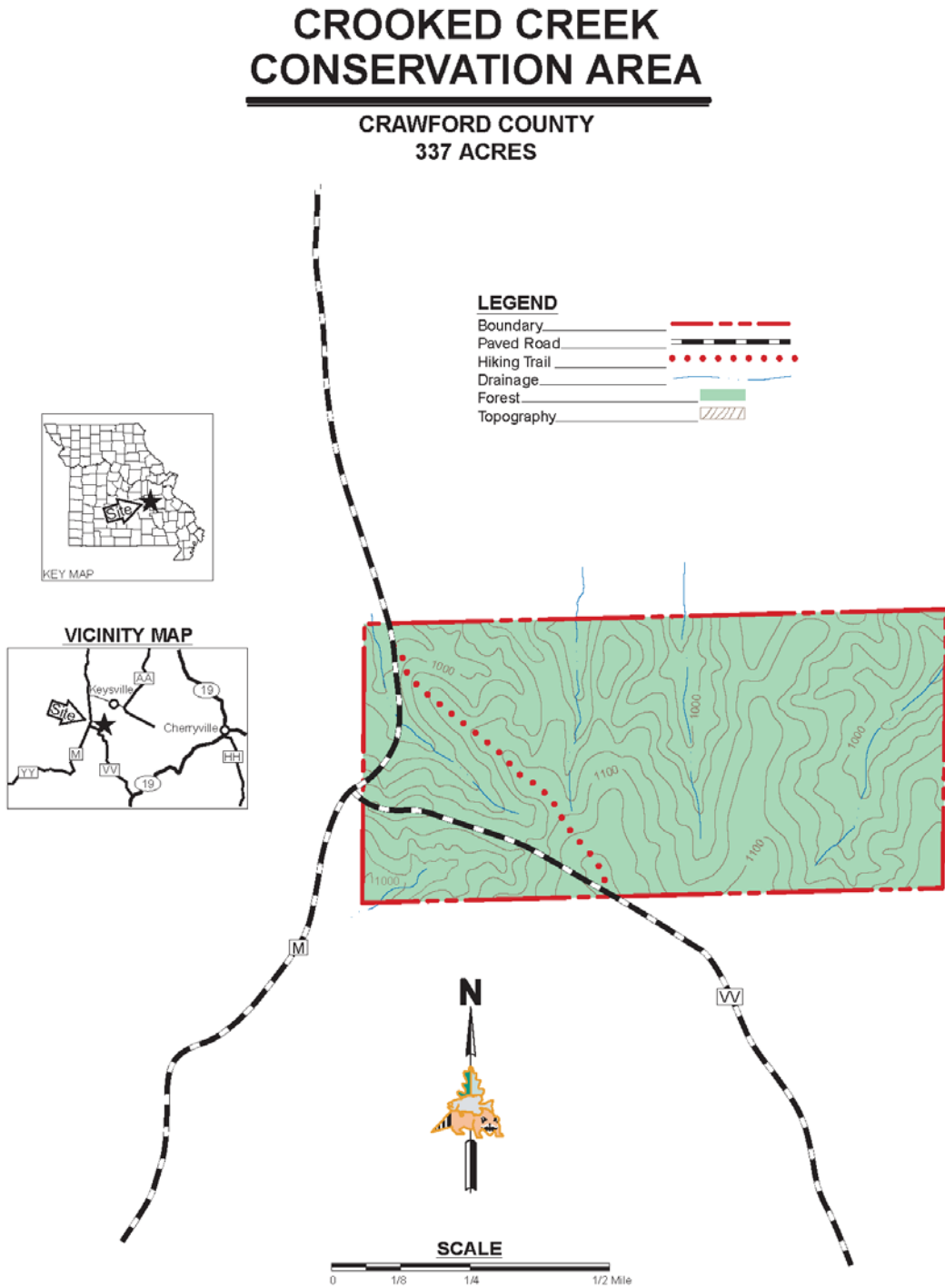


Figure 2: Current Land Cover Map



Appendix A: Crooked Creek Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Dear MDC,
Within minutes of each other, many thousands of years ago, parts of Missouri and Oklahoma were impacted by a string of large bolides - one of which 'flattened' the area which would someday be known as Crooked Creek CA. It would have been an extremely bad day to live anywhere near Cherryville, MO - where my wife and I are currently retired.

As a direct result of that impact, Crooked Creek CA is today blessed with some of the most fascinating geology of any place in the state of Missouri. There's a multicolored 'bulls-eye' subterranean rendering of the impact site that unfortunately, I'm currently unable to find - but I believe the division of geology and land survey of MO's DNR may have originally published it.

Respectfully folks, any updated Area Management Plan for Crooked Creek CA should take into account this single most important event ever to happen to it. Not sure however, how that might be accomplished. Some information on its crater tectonic structures may be found here.....

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crooked_Creek_Crater_tectonic_structures_v4.svg

Enjoy the weather while it lasts....

Thank you for putting in the parking lot.

We own the land adjacent to Crooked Creek CA on the west side, south of VV.

We recently agreed to donate a small piece of land to the Steelville ambulance service for an emergency helicopter pad at the jct. of M and VV.

Is the MDC aware of the survey discrepancy of your western line?

Would you be willing to help with another survey to confirm or deny this discrepancy?

The main intent is to actively manage this area for hunting opportunities as the boundary permits. The management of shortleaf pine should be given priority as this is a dwindling resource. Other activities should not interfere with the entitled purpose of hunting. However, this is a rather small area and I do not believe that modern firearms be permitted for deer hunting. Thank you.

Why not clean out pond fix dam and make a little catfish bluegill pond. Thank you for cleaning up the trash it was looking bad

I am a land owner that has property which borders the Crooked Creek Conservation area. I have experienced multiple problems in the past six years I have owned my farm that have stemmed from the Conservation area. These issues have been with multiple people trespassing while

hunting, discharging firearms onto my property and trash dumping. While I understand this is an area approved for firearms hunting, due to its small acreage and the volume of hunting, it causes safety issues. I have spoken to other surrounding land owners who have experienced these same issues and safety concerns. I appreciate your concern and willingness to accept feedback regarding this area. I ask on my behalf and other surrounding land owners that this area be considered for an archery only hunting area to minimize the most important issue of injury to a person. This could also help to reduce the amount of trespassing and firearms activity experienced by myself and surrounding land owners. With the high volume of hunters in this small area, we have encountered countless hunters who access private property through this area. I personally have been involved in confrontations with hunters using the Conservation area to trespass on my property and harvest deer. Thank you for the opportunity to address this Conservation area and please consider this feedback in your future plans.

Owning and leasing property surrounding the Conservation area for several years has created several problems. The Conservation area is too small a piece of land to facilitate the amount of firearms hunters. In addition to all the hunters is the fact that being a small piece of land, many of the hunters find their way onto the adjoining private properties to hunt. If the hunters are not trespassing onto private property they are hunting the fence lines and shooting onto private property. A hunter myself as well as my children and family members, this has caused many safety concerns. It's not if in this situation it is when someone is going to get shot. This is a big liability that I think the Conservation Dept needs to consider. If someone trespasses onto my property and is injured by the multiple surrounding hunters, who is liable? It certainly shouldn't be the land owner who has posted their property according to the law. I'm a supporter of the Conservation and everyone's right to hunt, but the amount of firearms and bullets flying around is a major concern of all the land owners in this area. I think this area could be better utilized as a wildlife refuge/sanctuary or an archery only area. Thank you for your consideration on this area.