

# Horton Farm Conservation Area

## Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2017-2026



Judi M. Allen  
Forestry Division Chief

5-23-17  
Date

## Horton Farm Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

### PLANNING TEAM

Becky Fletcher, Resource Forester

Bruce Henry, Natural History Biologist

Dave Knuth, Fisheries Management Biologist

Bridget Jackson, Conservation Education Consultant

Rob Sulkowski, Conservation Agent

Jan Dellamano, Private Land Conservationist

Ryan Dirnberger, Wildlife Management Biologist

### SOUTHEAST REGION

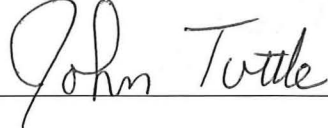
RCT Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

4-27-17  
*Date*

### FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

5-22-17  
*Date*

## OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Horton Farm Conservation Area, # 201009
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2010
- **Acreage:** 640 acres
- **County:** Sainte Genevieve
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
  - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for wildlife and forest resources with emphasis on upland game species such as whitetail deer, eastern wild turkey, and bobwhite quail while providing compatible outdoor recreational opportunities.
  - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Horton Farm Conservation Area (CA) is healthy forest, woodland, glade, riparian and open land ecosystem that provides a variety of public use opportunities.
  - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. **Special Considerations**
  - A. **Priority Areas:** Hawn State Park/Pickle Springs Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area
  - 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 (the Department) natural history biologist.
  - D. **Other:** Dry Sandstone Glade and Woodland, Dry-Mesic Sandstone Woodland and Glade, Dry Sandstone Woodland, Dry Chert or Sandstone Woodland, Riverfront Forest, Dry-Mesic Igneous Woodland, Dry-Igneous Woodland
- III. **Existing Infrastructure**
  - One parking lot

- Two stocked ponds (0.5 acres, 1.0 acres)
- One wildlife watering hole

#### IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** Restricts selling the property until 10 years after the death of the previous owner. Must keep area “wild” or in ag production.
- 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:** Easement road for the neighbor to the east. It cuts off the northern third of the property. Ameren UE transmission line.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with department environmental compliance specialist. Managers should follow best management practices for cultural resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Endangered Species:** Endangered species are not known from this site, but are found in the surrounding area. Area managers should consult annually with the natural history biologist.
- F. Boundary Issues:** None

### MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

#### V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Horton Farm CA contains approximately 520 acres of forest and woodlands, 15 acres of glade and 105 acres of open land. Land management will focus on maintaining healthy natural communities and provide for diverse wildlife use.

#### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Maintaining the open lands on Horton Farm CA in early vegetative successional stages, to benefit wildlife and recreation.
- 2) Controlling invasive species such as autumn olive, sericea lespedeza, fescue, tree-of-heaven, mimosa, and multi-flora rose. Invasive exotic species are not as good for wildlife as the native plants that they displace.
- 3) Managing the forest and woodland communities.

**Management Objective 1:** Create bare ground by annually disturbing 20-30 percent of existing open land.

**Strategy 1:** Prescribe burn a portion of the open lands annually at different times of the year. (Forestry, Wildlife)

**Strategy 2:** Disc and spray approximately 40 percent of the open lands. (Forestry, Private Lands)

**Management Objective 2:** Create and enhance shrub and edge cover.

**Strategy 1:** Disturb overgrown shrub groups, fence rows, and brushy draws to create better wildlife habitat. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Edge-feather wooded transition zones around open land to create more wildlife cover. (Forestry)

**Management Objective 3:** Manage some open land fields for annual crops.

**Strategy 1:** Have staff plant and manage food plots. (Forestry, Wildlife)

**Management Objective 4:** Control invasive species.

**Strategy 1:** Monitor the area for potential invasive species such as sericea lespedeza, autumn olive, and tall fescue. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Use appropriate management methods to control any invasive species outbreaks. (Forestry)

**Management Objective 5:** Improve and maintain healthy forest, woodland, and glade natural communities.

**Strategy 1:** Delineate forest compartments and devise a forest inventory schedule. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Utilize sound forest management practices. (Forestry)

**Strategy 3:** Utilize best management practices to maintain soil, water and visual integrity according to the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practices: 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watersheds to Protect Streams*. (Forestry)

**Strategy 4:** Improve woodland communities, using various management methods such as prescribed burns and woody control. This will promote better plant growth, which will benefit some wildlife species. (Forestry)

**Strategy 5:** Maintain glade with periodic prescribed burns and woody control. (Forestry)

## VI. Aquatic Resources Management Considerations

Jonca Creek flows 0.25 miles through Horton Farm CA. There are also two fishing ponds and one wildlife watering hole on the area.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Managing fish populations in the fishing ponds can be complicated as angler use, fish health, and aquatic habitat must be balanced.
- 2) Maintaining other area ponds for wildlife watering and semi-aquatic wildlife use.
- 3) Controlling nuisance aquatic plants in ponds designated for fishing.
- 4) Maintaining/enhancing the forested riparian corridor along all streams on the area.

**Management Objective 1:** Manage fish populations and provide public fishing opportunities in ponds large enough to support fishing.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain fish habitat structures in fishing ponds to enhance the fishery and fishing. (Fisheries)

**Strategy 2:** Maintain public access to fishing ponds through terrestrial vegetation management around ponds. (Forestry)

**Management Objective 2:** Manage all fishless waters on the area for amphibian and wildlife benefits.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain ponds incapable of supporting quality fisheries for amphibians, reptiles, and other wildlife. (Forestry, Fisheries)

**Management Objective 3:** Treat nuisance aquatic plants in fishing ponds as needed.

**Strategy 1:** Use chemical, biological, or mechanical methods appropriate for the plant coverage and species being controlled. (Fisheries)

**Management Objective 4:** Establish and maintain a riparian corridor of trees along stream drainages.

**Strategy 1:** Plant bottomland tree species where needed along riparian corridors. Establish a minimum riparian corridor width of 50 feet on first- and second-order streams. Establish a minimum riparian corridor width of 100 feet for larger streams. (Forestry)

**VII. Public Use Management Considerations**

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Providing hunting and viewing opportunities for the public.
- 2) Encouraging educational and interpretive opportunities.
- 3) Building relationships with neighboring landowners is important.
- 4) Controlling vandalism and litter is a challenge on any public area.

**Management Objective 1:** Provide public hunting and viewing opportunities.

**Strategy 1:** Manage the area habitats to provide for a diversity of species.

(Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Maintain parking lot and service roads. Service roads can be used for hiking. (Forestry)

**Management Objective 2:** Improve educational and interpretive opportunities on Horton Farm CA.

**Strategy 1:** Communicate recreational opportunities to the general public (e.g., using brochures, Atlas database). (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Communicate the unique qualities of the area to teachers, students, scout groups, and youth groups as a possible destination for ecology classes, school programs, and workshops. (Forestry, Outreach & Education)

**Management Objective 3:** Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners.

**Strategy 1:** Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass or other issues affecting Horton Farm CA or private property. (Forestry)

## VIII. Administrative Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 1) Maintaining area infrastructure at current levels.
- 2) The road easement causes management and public use challenges.
- 3) Consider acquisition of land, when available.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

**Strategy 1:** Maintain area infrastructure and boundary lines in accordance with Department guidelines. (Forestry)

**Strategy 2:** Inspect area infrastructure regularly, and work to resolve any issues. (Forestry, Design & Development)

### **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, protect the watershed, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

## MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
<b>Terrestrial Resource Management</b>										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 2		X		X		X		X		X
<i>Objective 2</i>										
Strategy 1	X	X								
Strategy 2	X		X		X					
<i>Objective 5</i>										
Strategy 1		X								
Strategy 5	X			X			X			X
<b>Aquatic Resource Management</b>										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 1	X		X		X		X		X	
<i>Objective 4</i>										
Strategy 1		X	X		X					
<b>Administrative Considerations</b>										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 1				X						



## APPENDICES

### Area Background:

The Horton Farm CA was donated to the Department in 2010 by Antje Horton. This property had been in the family of her late husband (William “Bill” Horton) for over 100 years. Mrs. Horton’s father-in-law, William McKinnley “Mack” Horton had farmed the property for many years. Mack acquired the property from his oldest brother “Pine Tree” Jim Horton. Pine Tree Jim lived on the property for many years raising crops, running cattle, planting pine trees and harvesting timber. An old barn, built from lumber originally sawn from the Horton Farm, was dismantled in 2013, and the wood was sold to be recycled.

After Mrs. Horton’s husband died, she continued to have a farmer run cattle on the property. In 2009, the Department assisted Mrs. Horton with some forest management activities. She liked the results, but being an absentee landowner, she could not enjoy the property as she wanted. Subsequently, she approached the Department about donating the property. The Department accepted the donation and has been working to turn the area into a premiere conservation area, focusing on upland wildlife management.

### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Forest and Woodland	520		81
Open Land	105		16
Glade	15		2
Ponds	1.75		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream Frontage		1,702	

### Public Input Summary:

The draft Horton Farm Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period December 1–31, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from four respondents (Appendix A). The Horton Farm 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 Horton Farm Conservation Area public comment period

**Appreciates habitat management to benefit bobwhite quail.**

The Department works hard to protect and enhance wildlife habitat on our conservation areas. Quail habitat has been on the decline statewide, but thanks to help from concerned citizens and landowners, we are improving the chances of all upland game birds, as well as other wildlife. The Horton Farm CA is just one area where a little effort has brought better habitat. We are glad the efforts are appreciated by our area visitors.

**Concern that northern portion of area is not accessible to public users. Suggests prioritizing gaining access to the restricted portion.**

This is a legal issue that the Department will continue to look into.

**Provides correction to Area Background that “Pine Tree” Jim Martin was the older brother (not father) of William McKinney Horton.**

Thank you for the updated information. Knowing an area’s history gives us a better understanding of the land and how local culture evolved. The corrections have been made to the area plan.

**References:**

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri watershed protection practices: 2014 management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. 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

**Additional Appendices:**

Appendix A. Horton Farm Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

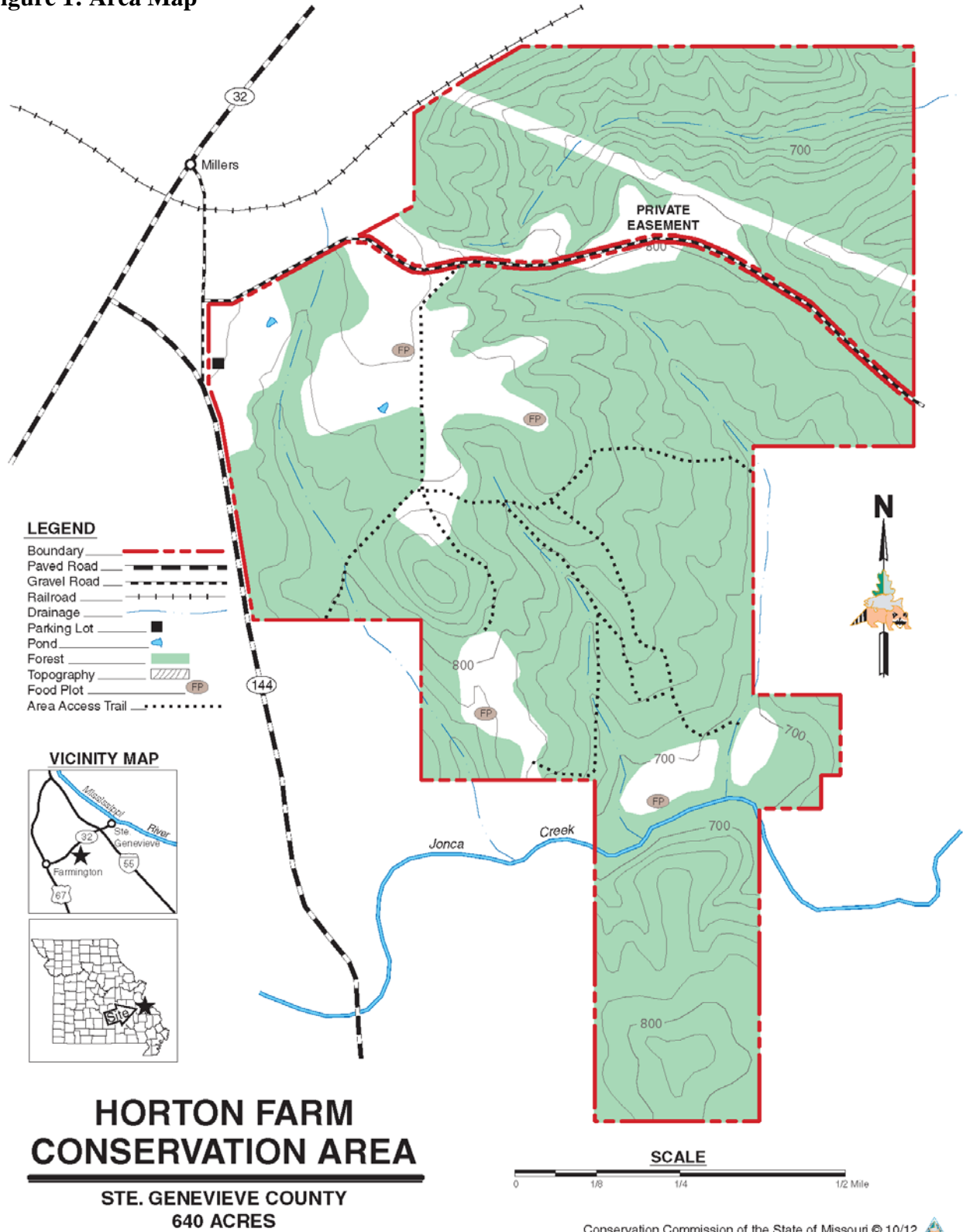


Figure 2: Aerial Map



## Horton Farm Conservation Area Aerial Map

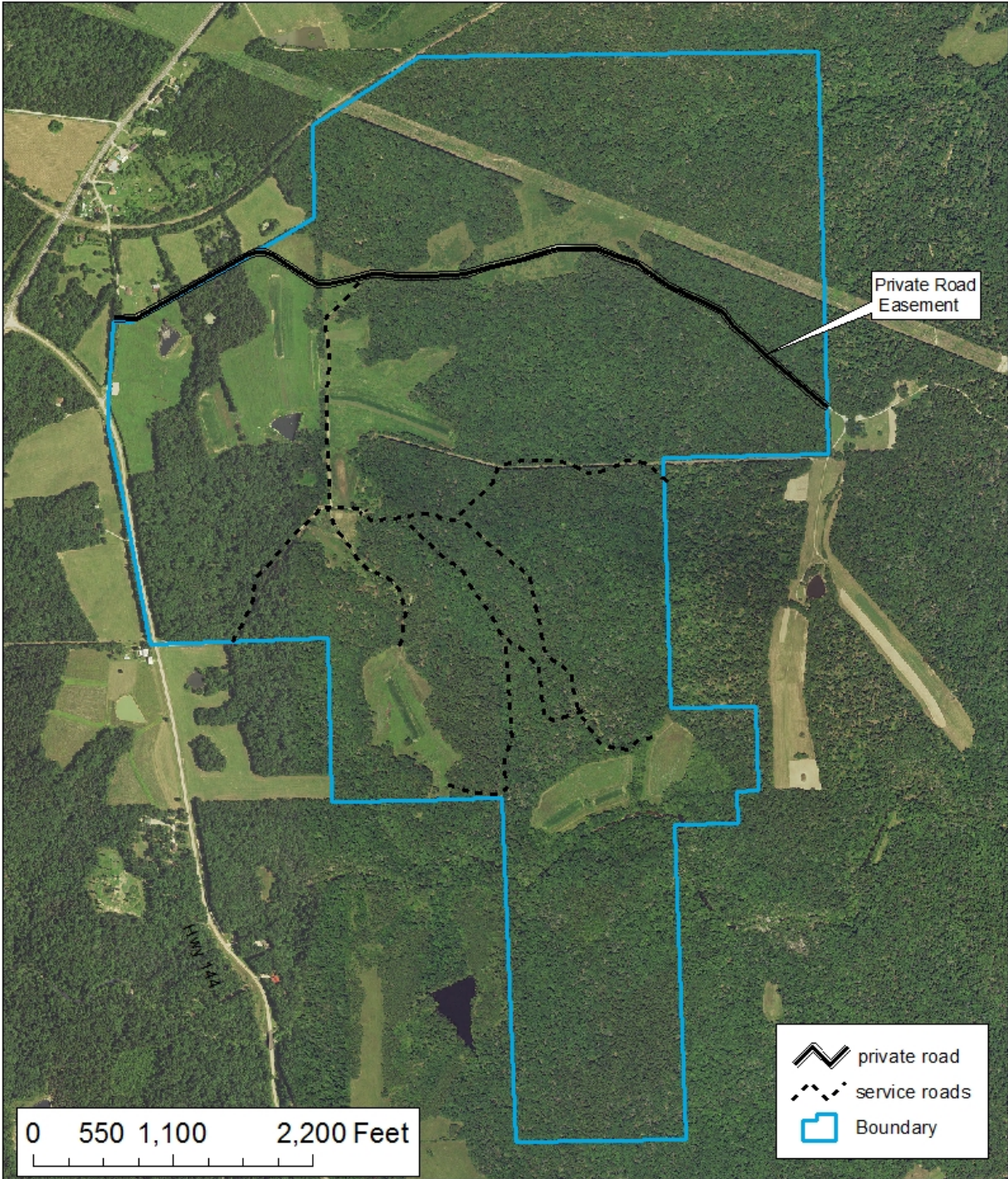


Figure 3: Topographic Map

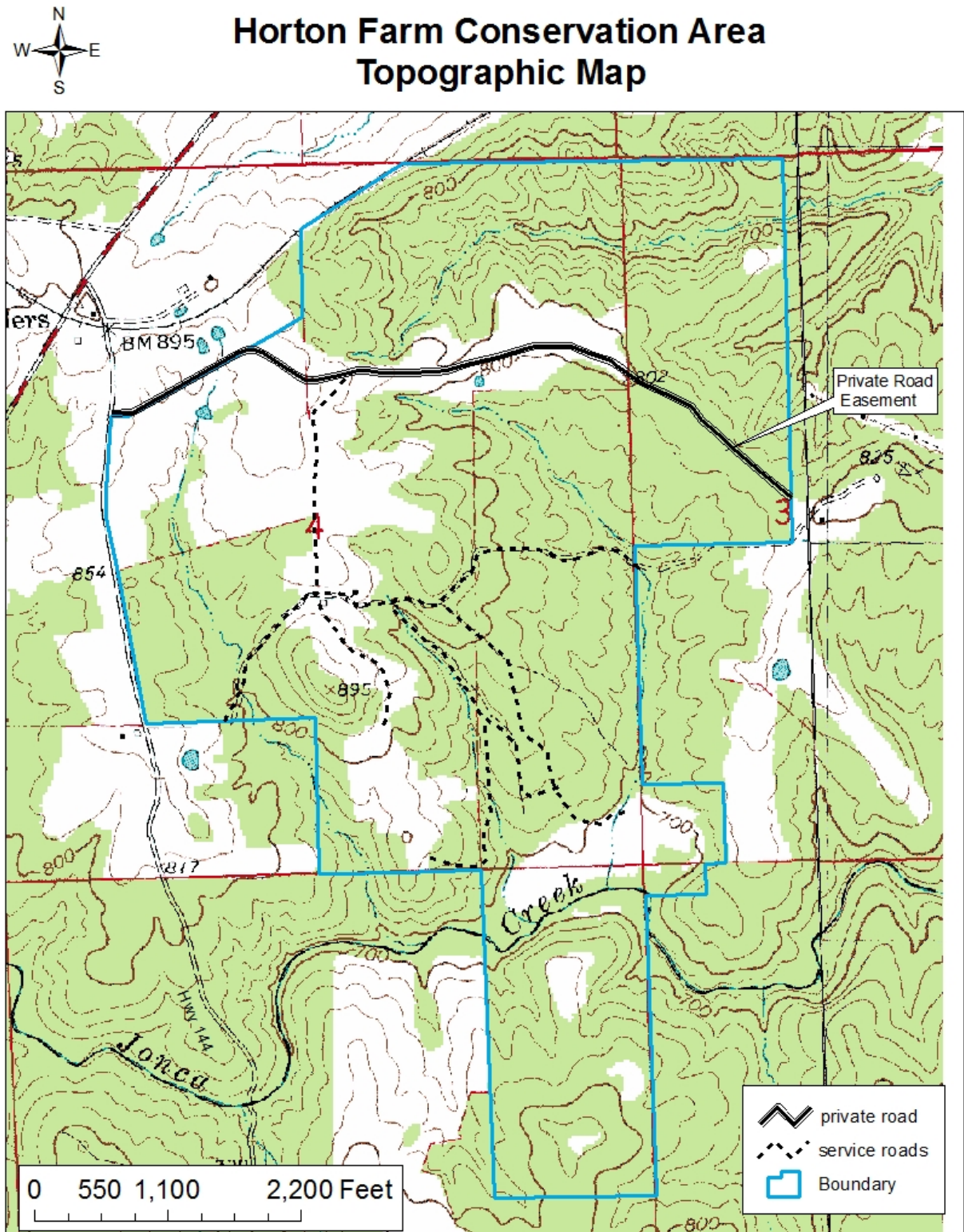
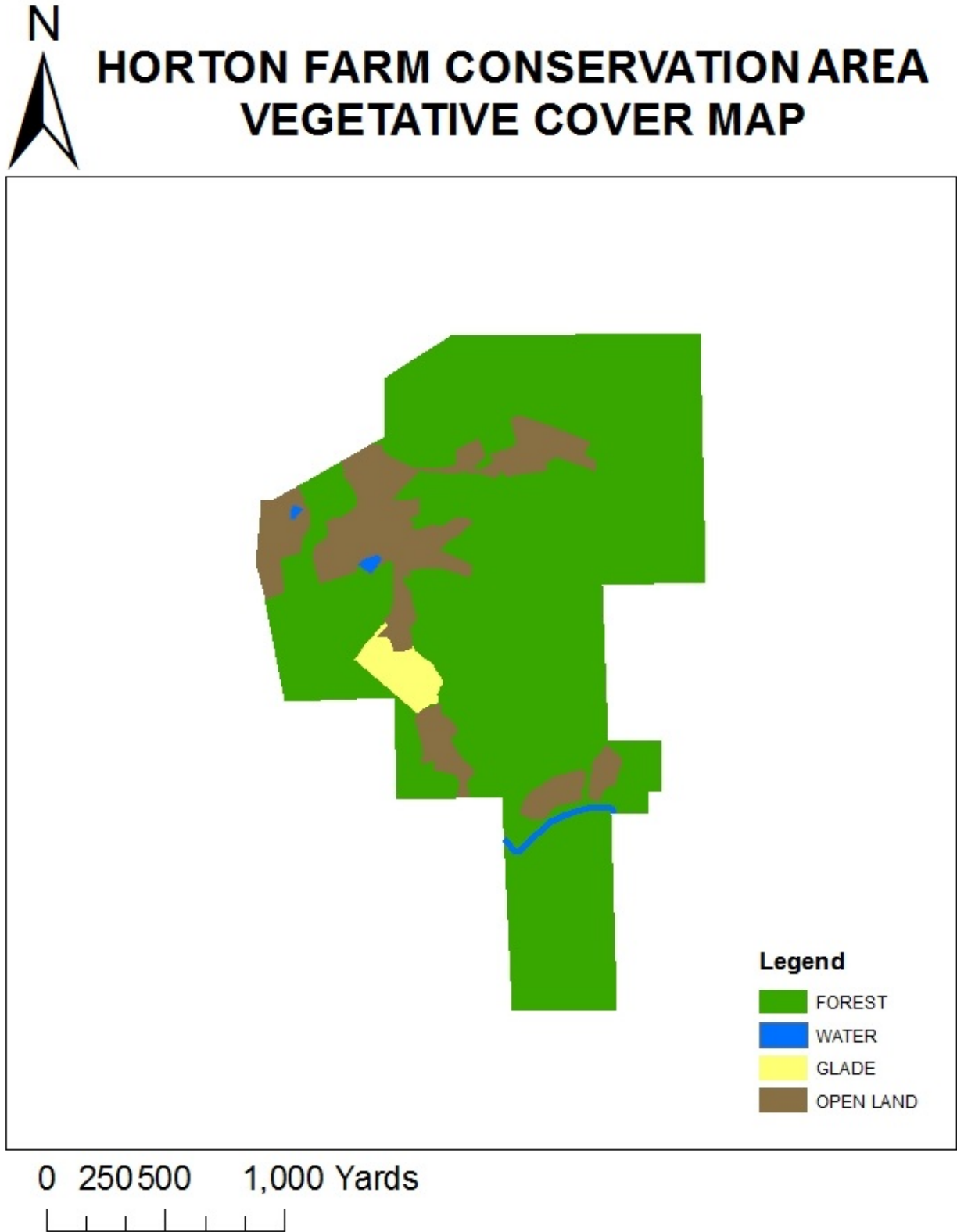


Figure 4: Current Vegetative Map



## Appendix A. Horton Farm Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (December 1-31, 2015):

Thank you for including bobwhite quail in your management plan. The burning, spraying and discing plan reads almost like a perfect "how to" in promoting bobwhite quail populations. In addition turkeys and deer are also benefited. Missouri is in an environment where quail habitat is steadily decreasing and exotic invasive are rapidly increasing. It is in my opinion a very responsible activity for a steward of the land to reduce exotics and attempt to increase small game populations.

It is a travesty that the northern portion of this area cannot be accessed by public users of this area. It should be a priority to gain access to this portion of the property. Public land is limited in this county. If access is not allowed by the public then MDC needs to insure that the private landowner who has the easement road is not allowed to access or use this property as well. Any trespass rules that apply to the public should be applied to all.

(In an email to David McAllister): I just wanted to bring to your attention, that the MDC's Draft Horton Farm Conservation Area Management Plan (page 8) is not quite correct. Mack Horton (my father-law) did not acquire the property from his father, but from his oldest brother who was known as "Pine Tree Jim Horton"

Pine tree Jim Horton , was the oldest brother of William McKinney Horton, Mack. This area was the original home place for them and they're father, Robert and brothers George< Jack, and Robert. 40 acres of this area was Jim's 40 of Pine trees, a few which are still standing on the area.

William Horton, "Bill", Anjie's husband was the son of William McKinney "Mack" Horton. Jim was the oldest brother of Mack, the youngest off 5 brothers.