

Graves Mountain Conservation Area

Fifteen-Year Area Plan
FY 2018-2032



Lisa B. Allen
Forestry Division Chief

3-28-18
Date

Graves Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Alan Lamb, Conservation Agent

Mark McLain, Wildlife Management Biologist

Jeremy Pulley, Private Land Conservationist

Dave Knuth, Fisheries Management Biologist

Bruce Henry, Natural History Biologist

Pat Holloway, Conservation Education Consultant

Shane Botard, Resource Forester

SOUTHEAST REGION

RCT Chair

Rocky Hayes 3/16/2018
Signature Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief

John Tuttle 3/26/18
Signature Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Graves Mountain Conservation Area, #4621
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1939 through 1983
- **Acreage:** 3,027 acres
- **County:** Wayne, Iron
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The primary purpose of the Graves Mountain Conservation Area (CA) is to provide hiking, hunting, nature viewing, and other recreational opportunities for the public; and to produce timber products for the local economy. The area's forest and woodland resources are managed for the benefit of wildlife and timber production.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired condition of the area is healthy and productive forest, woodland, and glade areas that provide habitat for wildlife and timber products.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** Big Creek Fisheries Priority Watershed, Priority Forest Landscape
- 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:** Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) natural history biologist. Managers should follow the Cave Management policy found in the Department Resource Policy Manual. All caves on this and other conservation areas are closed or restricted to public access. The fungus that causes White-nose Syndrome in bats has been documented in Missouri, resulting in the Department's White-nose Syndrome Action Plan that limits public access to protect bats.
- C. **Springs:** None

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Approximately 2.25 miles of roads
- Two parking lots
- Fourteen permanent wildlife watering holes (2 acres total)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

A. Deed Restrictions: 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: Two right-of-way easements with the Missouri Department of Transportation along Highways 143 and N, one easement with Black River Electric Cooperative.

D. Cultural Resource 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) This area has some issues with invasive species such as beefsteak plant, sericea lespedeza, and feral hogs.
- 2) The conservation area provides a variety of uses due to its large size. The area provides quality wildlife habitat, timber harvesting opportunities for loggers, and hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities for the public.

Management Objective 1: Maintain, enhance, and restore woodlands and glades for ecological and wildlife habitat purposes.

Strategy 1: Continue to implement prescribed burning as needed. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Create a new woodland/glade burn unit on Compartment #3. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Manage the forested area for wildlife habitat and timber production.

Strategy 1: Conduct forest inventories and implement forest inventory prescriptions. Implement the necessary forestry treatments based on completed forest inventories, such as intermediate thinning, timber stand improvement, etc.,

to encourage mast production, provide cover for wildlife, and increase timber volume growth. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Control invasive plant species.

Strategy 1: Monitor area for invasive species and control using appropriate measures. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain the integrity of the intermittent streams that cross the conservation area to protect the Big Creek Fisheries Priority Watershed.
- 2) Maintain the riparian buffer zones along the intermittent stream banks to aid in protecting water quality and to provide benefits for aquatic species.

Management Objective 1: Maintain a 50 foot minimum riparian buffer zone along the intermittent streams on the area.

Strategy 1: Follow the Department's *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice Recommended Practices for Missouri Forests: 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watersheds to Protect Streams* (2014) when maintaining and constructing roadways and conducting timber harvests. (Forestry)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The greatest public use challenge is keeping the area free of litter and maintaining area signs, roads, parking lots and boundaries, given the areas size and rugged terrain.
- 2) The area's sizable acreage provides an abundance of hunting, hiking, and nature viewing opportunities for the public.
- 3) The area provides an opportunity for the Department to demonstrate multiple types of habitat management.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area signs, parking lots, roads, and information boards.

Strategy 1: Post and maintain signs, roads, and area parking lots as necessary. (Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations:

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The greatest challenge to the area is that some of the smaller parcels of Graves Mountain CA are landlocked and currently do not allow access for Department staff to conduct habitat management and boundary line maintenance. As well, the public does not have access to these parcels and does not have the opportunity to pursue recreational activities on these parcels.
- 2) Sell or trade land-locked properties; acquire a permanent easement; or purchase additional properties to access the landlocked parcels.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the area's boundary.

Strategy 1: Paint area boundary lines with blue paint on an established seven-year rotational basis. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Address issue of landlocked parcels.

Strategy 1: Pursue the sale or trade of landlocked parcels, if in the best interest of the natural resources. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Pursue acquisition of a permanent easement or additional property to allow access to the landlocked parcels, if in the best interest of the natural resources. (Forestry)

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

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
Terrestrial Resource Management															
<i>Objective 1</i>															
Strategy 2	X														
<i>Objective 2</i>															
Strategy 1	X			X		X				X		X			

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The Missouri Department of Conservation purchased some of the first acreage of the Graves Mountain Conservation Area in 1939. Additional tracts of land were purchased during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, with the final tract being purchased in 1983.

Managers have worked to protect the forest from wildfires and to improve the timber quality through forest thinning practices and timber harvests. The first burn units were established on the area in 1997 and now the area contains six different woodland, and glade complex burn units. Managers have also constructed several permanent wildlife watering holes.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Upland Forest	2,306		76
Woodland	607		20
Glade	60		2
Savanna	50		<2
Impounded Water	3		<1
Total	3,027		100
Stream Frontage – Intermittent Streams		4.8	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Graves Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period February 1–28, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from three respondents (Appendix A). The Graves Mountain 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 Graves Mountain Conservation Areas Management Plan public comment period.

Suggests adding multiple use (hiking and horseback riding) trails on larger parcels of Graves Mountain CA.

There are already a number of established multi-use trails in the area around Graves Mountain CA that provide equestrian opportunities. Multi-use trails are present on Sam A. Baker State Park, Castor River CA, University Forest CA, Wappapello Corps of Engineer land and the Mark Twain National Forest. Creating a multi-use trail on Graves Mountain CA would cause

additional land disturbance, and the establishment and maintenance of the trail would cause an increased work load on the staff that manages the area. Graves Mountain CA also allows horseback riding on its roads that are open to vehicular traffic. The three largest tracts of Graves Mountain CA has approximately 3 miles of roads that can be used for horseback riding.

Appreciates the efforts made by the Department to conserve natural spaces and offer recreational opportunities for Missourians.

The area planning team appreciates the compliments and the opportunity to serve. We will continue to strive to manage our natural resources and to provide recreational opportunities to our area users.

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: Topographic Map

Figure 3: Compartment Map

Figure 4: Easement Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A. Graves Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

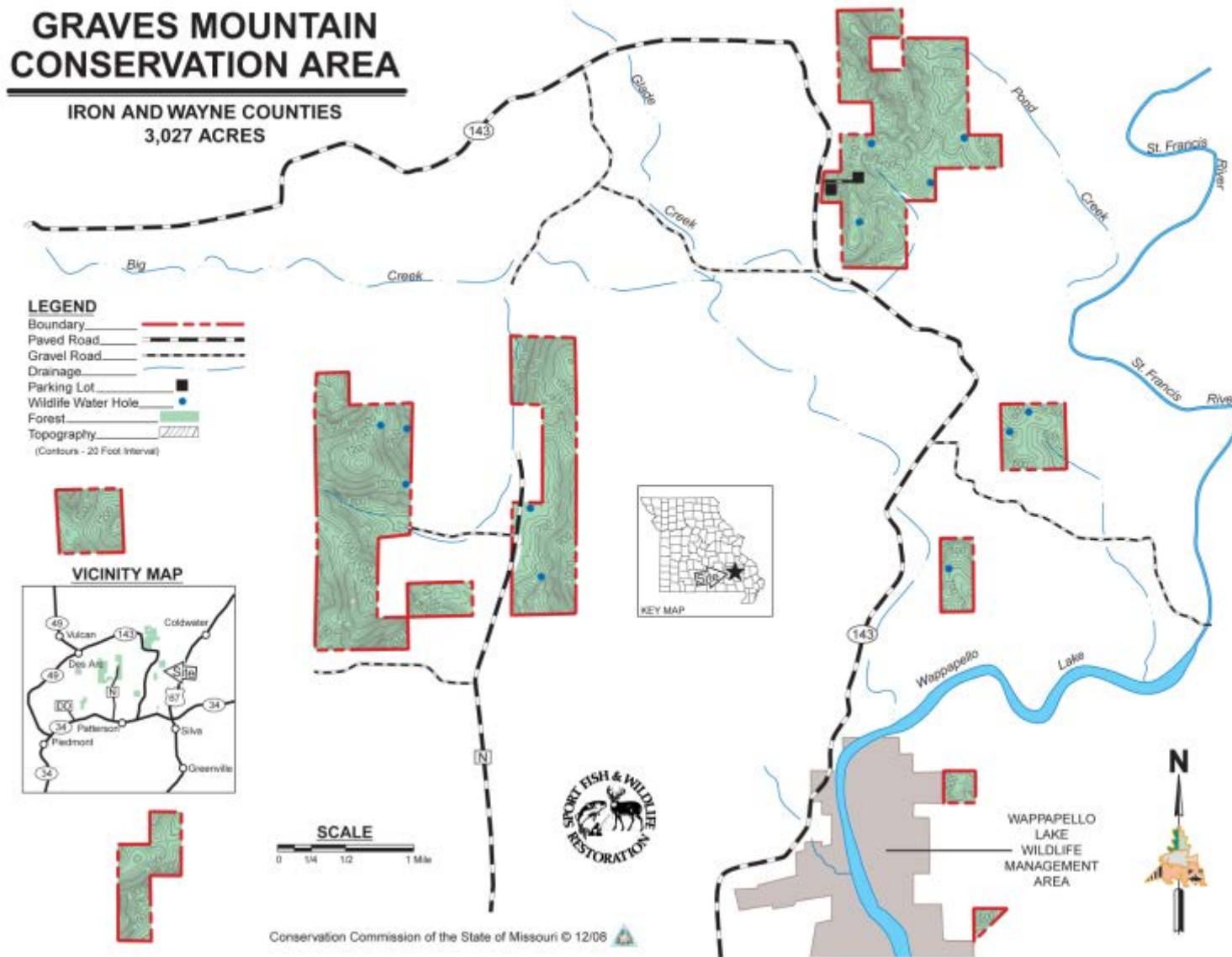


Figure 2: Topographic Map

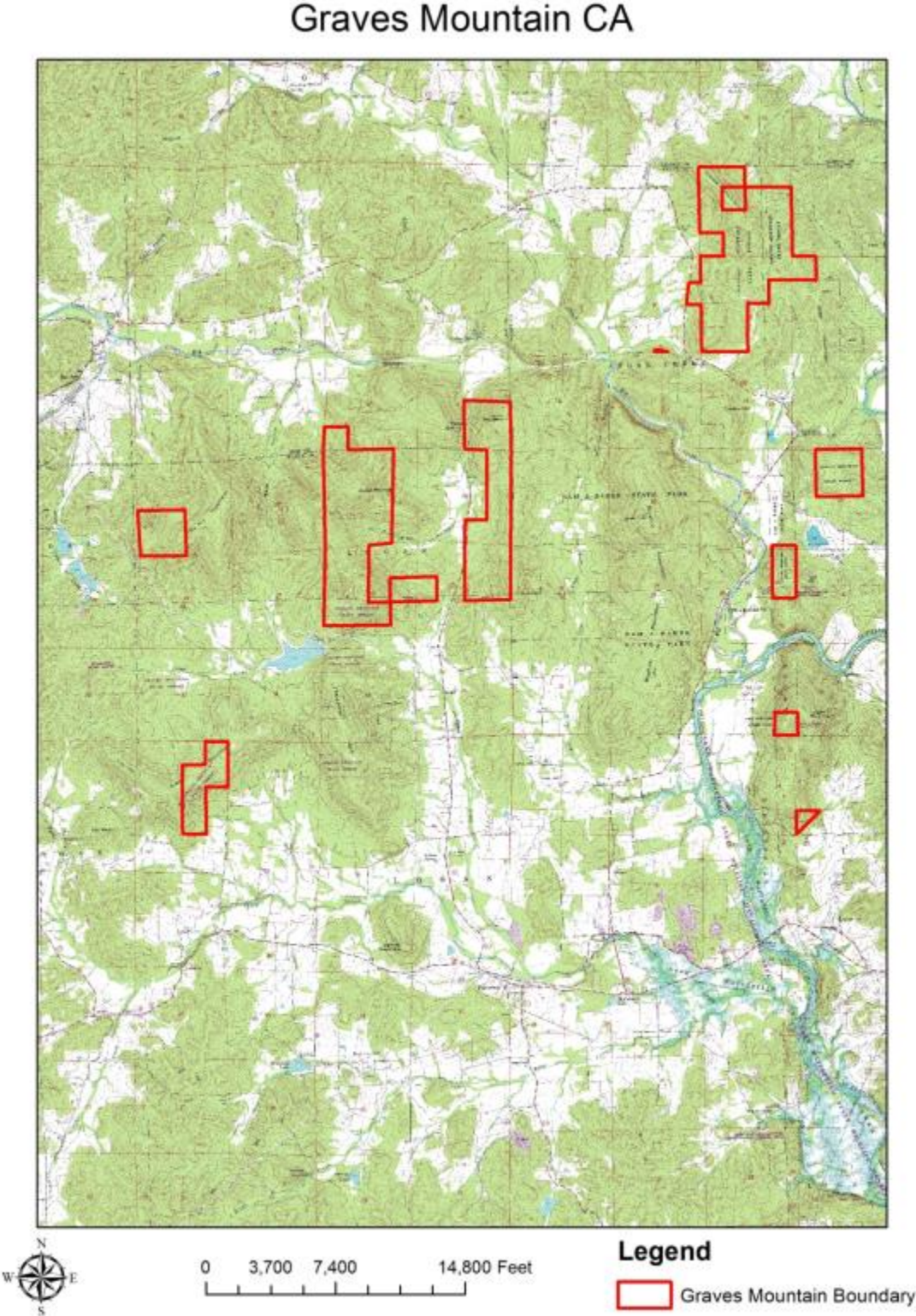


Figure 3: Compartment Map

Graves Mountain CA Compartments

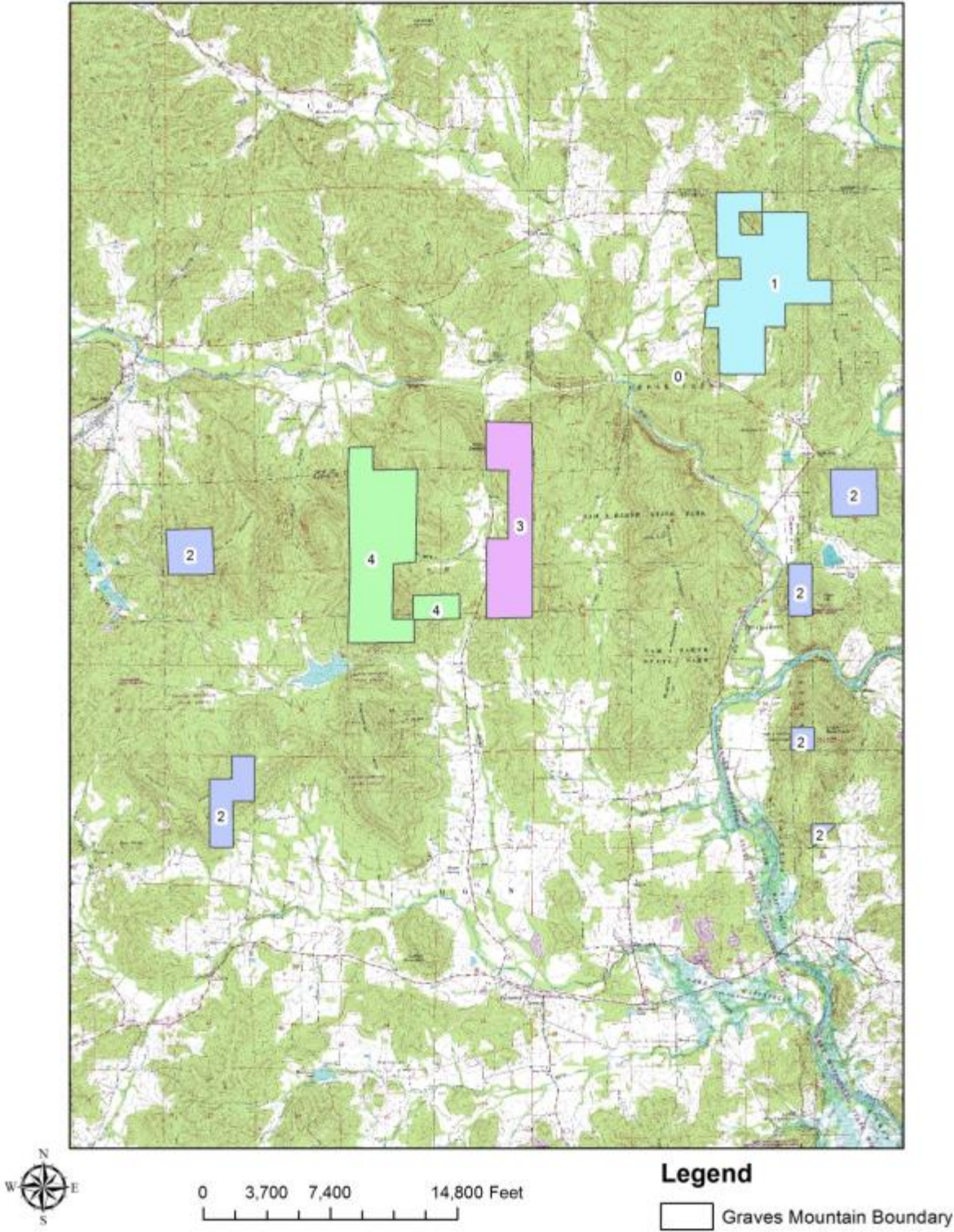
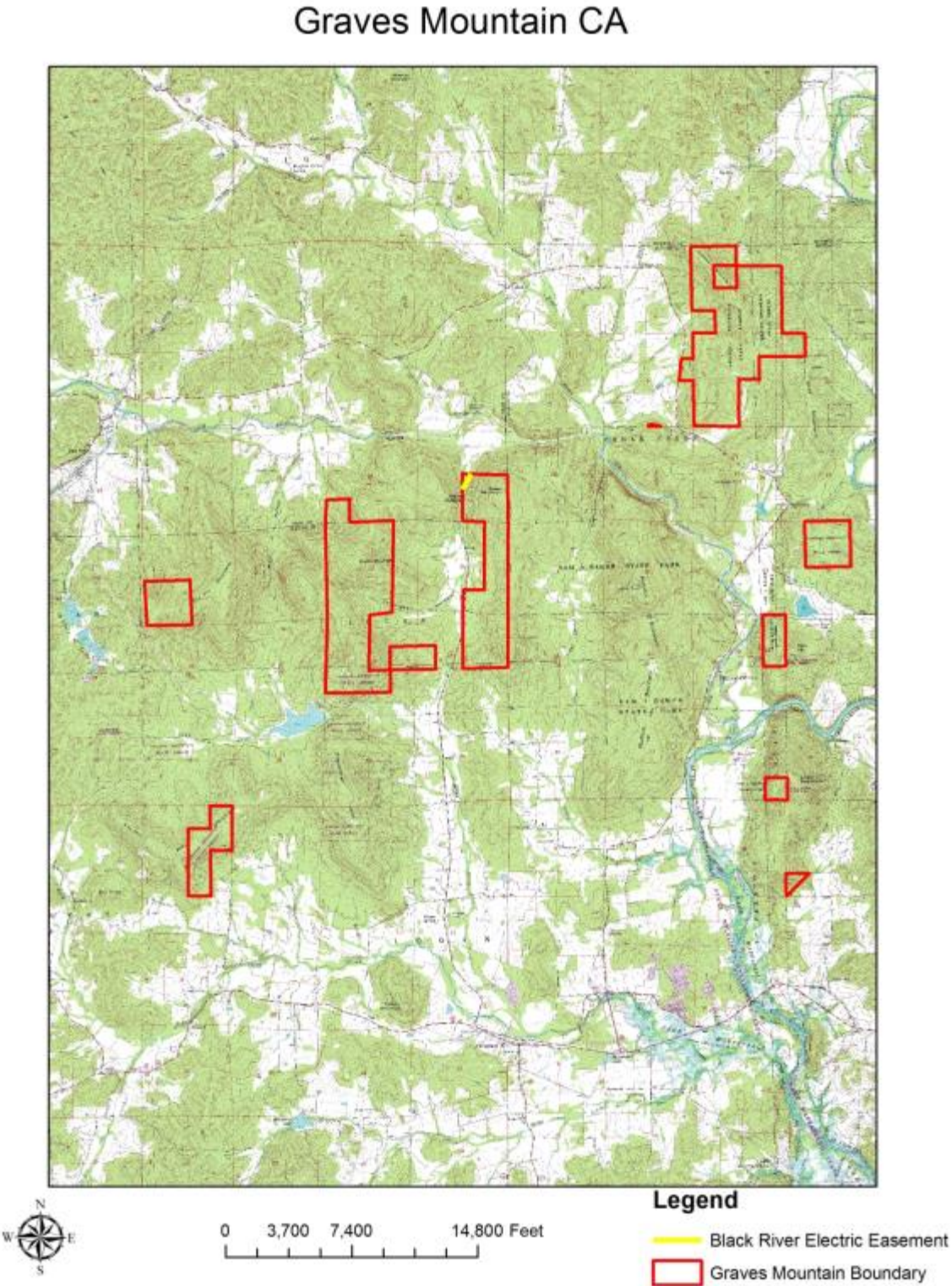


Figure 4: Easement Map



Appendix A. Graves Mountain Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (February 1-28, 2017):

This is great, as a lifelong Missouri resident I've always appreciated the care and planning that goes in to making our natural spaces last forever. Thank you for continuing your efforts on behalf of mine and future generations. Cheers.
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Thank you for being an entity that is good for Missouri and all the folks who love the outdoors. Keep up the good work!!
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Please consider adding equestrian trails on the larger portions not landlocked. Parcel sizes are conducive to providing equestrian trail use.
