

Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area

25-Five-Year Area Management Plan FY 2019-2043



Justine Gartner

Forestry Division Chief

4/3/2019

Date

Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area, #201711
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2017
- **Acreage:** 671 acres
- **County:** Dallas
- **Region:** Southwest
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. **Strategic Direction**

Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area (CA) is managed for healthy, sustainable, forest, woodland, and aquatic communities for future generations to use and enjoy. The area is managed to provide hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities and restore natural communities.
 - B. **Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Alfred Newton Gossett CA is forested uplands and a fully functional riparian corridor, with some open field/early successional habitat.
 - C. **Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** Area streams contain federally designated Critical Habitat. Area lies in the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Niangua River Stream Reach Conservation Opportunity Area and Upper Niangua Glade 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:** Yes, records kept with MDC natural history biologist. Managers should follow the Cave Management policy found in the MDC 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 MDC's White-nose Syndrome Action Plan that limits public access to protect bats.
- C. **Springs:** None

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Two parking lots

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: Dallas County Road Unks Trail and Pelican Road, telephone lines, and electric co-op lines

D. Cultural Resources Findings: No known cultural resources.

E. Endangered Species: Endangered species are known from this area. Area managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the natural history biologist.

F. Boundary Issues: Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Area management will focus on providing upland wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities, while protecting water quality. Area maintenance is provided by staff within Forestry Division.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage forest, open field, woodland, and glade natural communities.
- 2) Control invasive species.

Management Objective 1: Enhance, restore, and protect forest and woodland natural communities.

Strategy 1: Use even-aged and uneven-aged management practices to correct deficiencies in tree composition (species and age) and/or stand structure according to current structure, age, site index, and species composition. Maintain loose bark tree composition for bat habitat. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Complete forest compartment inventory to monitor stand composition and forest health every 20 years in accordance with the Forestry Division inventory schedule. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Manage or maintain woodland natural communities and open fields, utilizing prescribed fire, chemical and/or mechanical treatments. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Implement best management practices to prevent soil erosion when using heavy equipment during site preparation or timber harvesting, according to the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice Recommended Practices for Missouri Forests: 2014 Management Guidelines for Maintaining Forested Watershed to Protect Streams* (MDC, 2014). (Forestry)

Strategy 5: Area managers should consult the *Guidelines for Avoiding and Minimizing Impacts to Federally-Listed Bats on Missouri Department of Conservation Lands* (MDC, 2016) to assist staff in accomplishing management goals while reducing potential negative impacts on bats. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Enhance, restore, and protect glade natural communities.

Strategy 1: Manage glade natural communities by removing invasive woody plants and using prescribed fire to maintain an open condition and to enhance herbaceous and forb diversity. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Prevent soil erosion due to road infrastructure.

Strategy 1: Ensure roads and roadside drainages are maintained to reduce runoff, sedimentation, and erosion. (Forestry)

Management Objective 4: Control invasive species.

Strategy 1: Monitor area for invasive species periodically and use appropriate strategies for control, including, but not limited to, mechanical removal, herbicide application, or prescribed fire. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Management focuses on promoting watershed protection and preventing activities from compromising streambank integrity. Area maintenance is provided by staff within Forestry Division.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Prevent excessive streambank erosion.
- 2) Maintain high-quality riparian habitat along all streams.

Management Objective 1: Protect and enhance watershed and aquatic habitat.

Strategy 1: Employ appropriate best management practices associated with management and enhancement projects. (Forestry, Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Maintain riparian corridors, as specified in MDC's Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation (2009).

Strategy 1: Allow natural vegetative processes to continue. (Forestry, Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Maintain forested riparian buffers of at least 300 feet along all perennial streams through direct planting of woody species or natural regeneration. (Forestry, Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Keep the public informed of the opportunities available at this area.
- 2) Maintain the area in a desirable condition.
- 3) Maintain public access to the conservation area.

Management Objective 1: Continue to inform the public of the opportunities at this area.

Strategy 1: Maintain signage at Alfred Newton Gossett CA in accordance with MDC policy. (Forestry, Fisheries, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Work with local media specialist to highlight special opportunities on the area. (Forestry, Fisheries, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: Maintain up-to-date information about Alfred Newton Gossett CA on MDC's webpage. (Forestry, Fisheries, Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 2: Maintain suitable public access to the conservation area.

Strategy 1: Ensure existing parking lots and roads are maintained to MDC standards. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain existing public access along the Missouri Department of Transportation maintenance drive at the Highway K bridge over the Niangua River. Regularly mow the access road along the bridge to allow parking. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Provide recreational and educational opportunities for the public.

Strategy 1: Issue trapping permits through the Special Use Permitting process. (Forestry)

Management Objective 4: Establish and maintain clear area boundary lines.

Strategy 1: Unknown boundary lines should be established through surveying and clear marking. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Boundary lines should be clearly marked and maintained through signs and paint every five years. (Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Evaluate land acquisition opportunities, when available.

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 MDC priorities, as identified in the annual MDC land acquisition priorities, may be considered. Any expansion of this area should be considered only after review of the impacts to staff workloads and whether the area can be maintained using current staffing level.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

	Fiscal Year																									
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	
Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations																										
<i>Objective 1</i>																										
Strategy 2															X											
Public Use Management Considerations																										
<i>Objective 4</i>																										
Strategy 2			X						X					X					X						X	

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Alfred Newton Gossett CA was purchased by MDC to provide upland wildlife habitat for public use and watershed protection. There are 2.85 miles of perennial stream corridors on the area that will be managed to maintain high-quality water and watershed protection. Open field areas are managed to provide wildlife habitat through vegetative manipulation to maintain early successional habitats. Forest areas are managed through a combination of selective tree harvesting and pre-commercial thinning to produce wildlife habitat and maintain forest health.

Area Location: Located in Dallas County, approximately 16 miles east of Buffalo on Missouri State Route P and Route K (Figure 1).

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area	Miles
Forest	647	96	
Open Field	24	4	
Total	671	100	
Stream Frontage – Niangua River			2.2
Stream Frontage – Four-Mile Creek			0.4
Stream Frontage—Cave Creek			0.25

Public Input Summary:

The draft Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period Aug. 1–31, 2018. MDC received comments from six respondents (Appendix A). The Alfred Newton Gossett 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.

MDC responses to themes and issues identified through the Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

Terrestrial Resource Management

Suggests removing more brush.

Since this is a new area, staff have just begun to implement strategies to restore grown up open areas. A prescribed burn was conducted on the old field areas to begin opening them up and kill some of the invasive cedars. Future prescribed burns are planned to manage brush and vegetative succession.

Public Use Management

Has observed lots of litter at the area. Appreciates that litter was cleaned-up quickly.

MDC staff monitor all public areas on a regular basis to remove trash and look for maintenance issues.

Suggests providing managed dove hunts at this area.

The open areas on this tract are too small for effective dove management.

Suggests improving the river access at the Route K bridge.

Developing a river access would be a major project and will only be undertaken after careful consideration and input from neighboring landowners and area users. Good river access already exists a few miles upstream of this area at the Williams Ford CA.

Suggests adding a parking area.

Limited parking is available along the bridge maintenance road on the Missouri Department of Transportation right of way. Additional parking might be considered in the future, as need arises after input from area users and the neighboring community.

Suggests moving the fence back and concrete barriers apart to allow easier passage for cars and walkers.

The current road near the bridge is on Missouri Department of Transportation right of way and is intended for their use for bridge maintenance. We will study the possibility of moving the fence back to allow more parking along their right of way, but development in the floodplain will be minimal.

Administrative Considerations

Suggests marking property boundaries better. MDC boundary signs are posted on private property and property lines are not clearly marked. Area users often mistake neighboring private property for MDC property. Area users dump trash, camp, cut trees, and park on neighboring private property, thinking that they are on MDC property.

MDC is in the process of having the boundaries of this tract officially surveyed. As soon as surveys are completed, boundaries will be clearly marked with signs and blue paint blazes on trees along the boundary lines.

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: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2016). *Guidelines for avoiding and minimizing impacts to federally-listed bats on Missouri Department of Conservation lands*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Land Cover Map

Figure 3: Vicinity Map

Figure 4: Easement Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

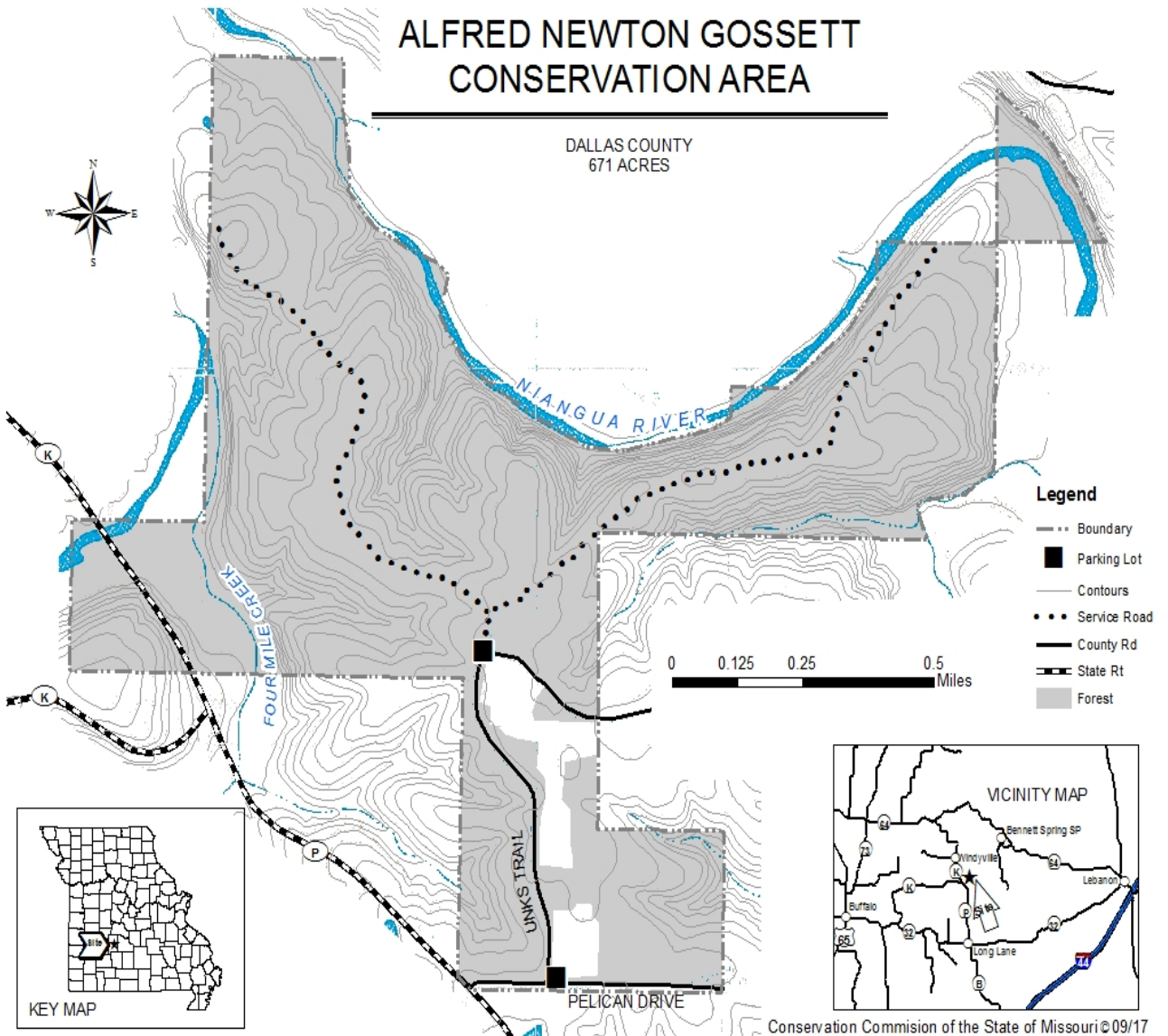


Figure 2: Land Cover Map

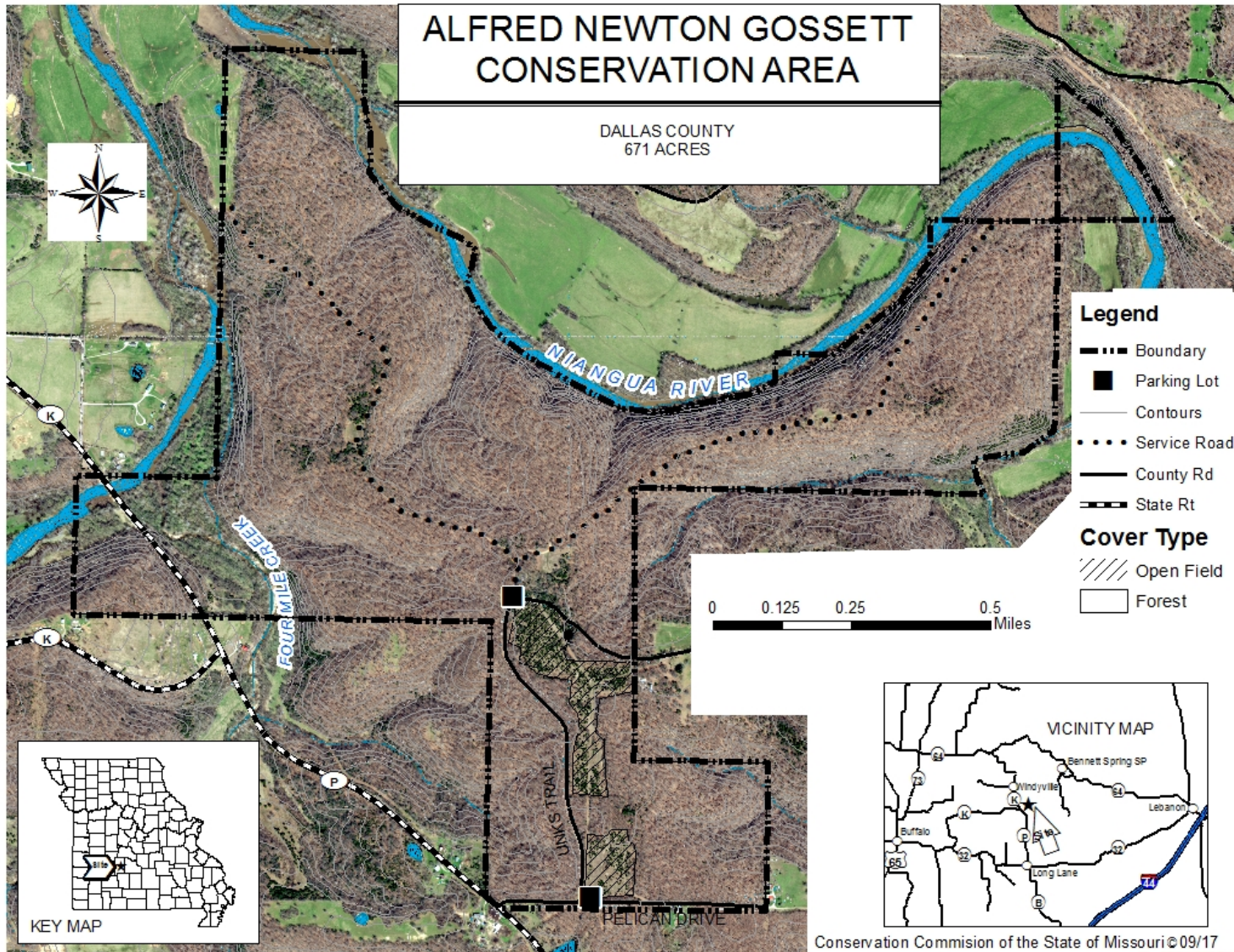


Figure 3: Vicinity Map

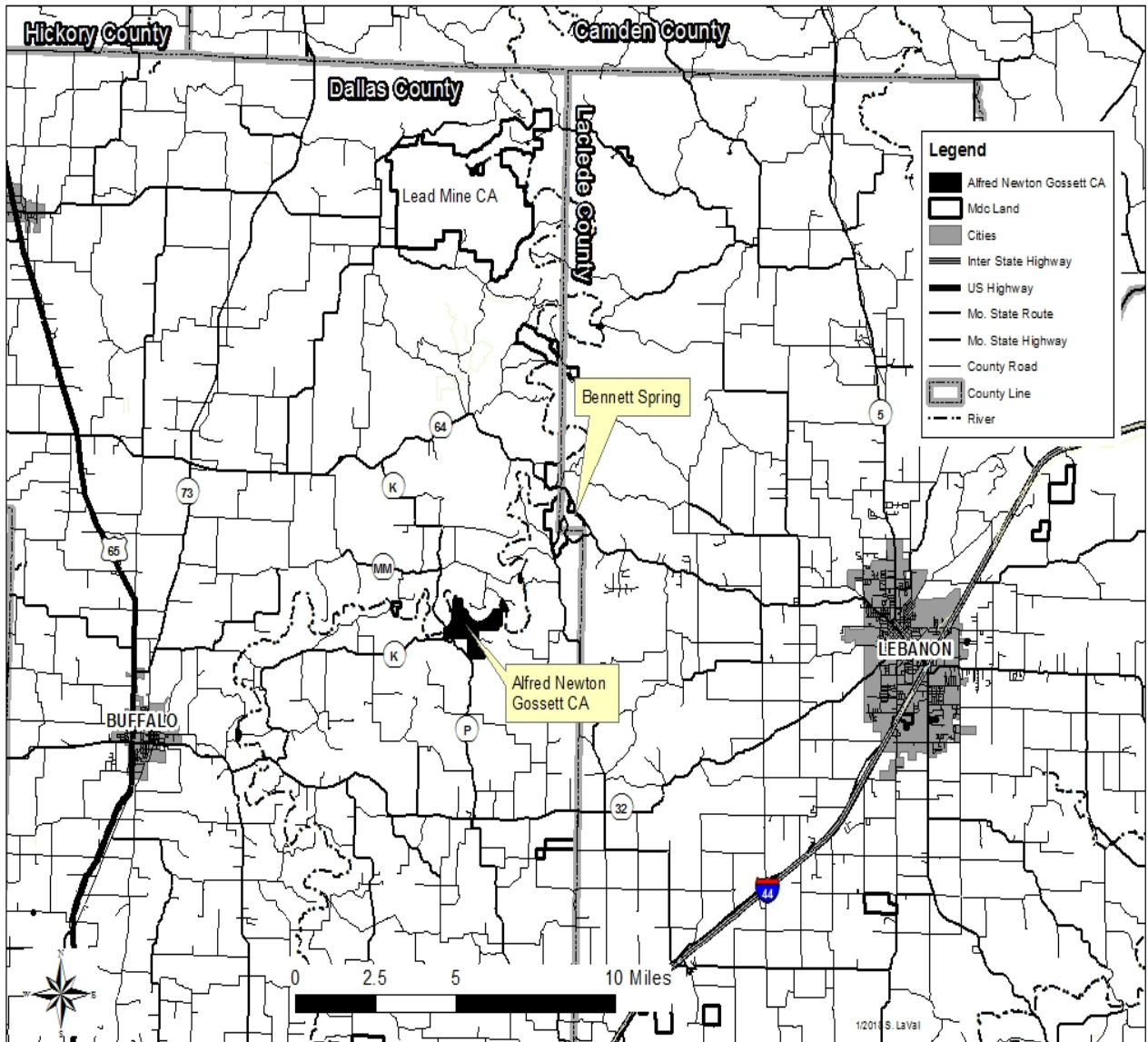
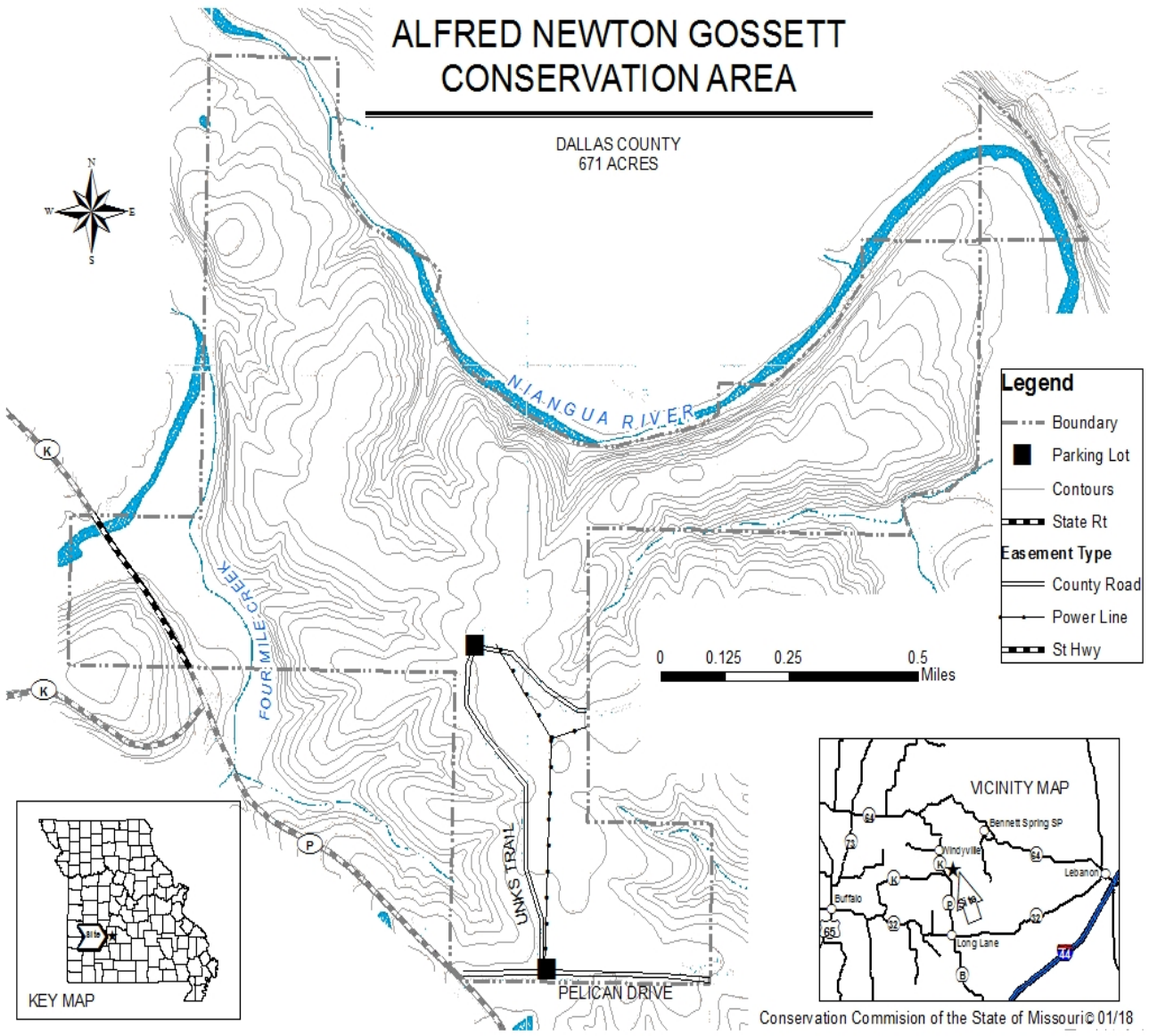


Figure 4: Easement Map



Appendix A: Alfred Newton Gossett Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Aug. 1–31, 2018):

<p>Hard copy comment received: People are dumping trash and parking in front of my gate! Camping for extended periods of time on private property, thinking they're on MDC. Also cutting trees, stumps, etc.</p>
<p>I am always interested in new conservation areas in the Springfield vicinity.</p>
<p>Hi, I live just up the road, less than a mile, from this area. I'm sure you have it in the plans to improve the river access at the State Road K bridge. A parking area and lots of brush removal would be a great improvement. Even the simple thing of moving back the fence to allow cars parked to bypass each other and moving the barrier concrete blocks 3 ft apart would allow passage on foot without having to climb over them. Thanks. *****</p>
<p>"Our biggest concern is the boundary lines. People coming to the area see the conservation signs and automatically think our property is the conservation. I have not been over there but have been told some of your signs are on our property. It would be nice to get with us this winter on a nice day and walk over to see what can be done about this.</p>
<p>Of course the trash and extra visitors are a problem but I don't know what you could do to enforce that. I will say the trash was cleaned up in a very timely manner I suppose by someone from the conservation down at the bridge. I do believe a clearer means of property lines would be appropriate. Thank you."</p>
<p>There are currently no places on Conservation areas in Dallas or Laclede County that offer managed dove hunts. It would be nice to develop an area in the region such as this for managed dove hunts.</p>