

Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan FY 2019-2033



Joel W. Porath

Wildlife Division Chief

10/5/2018

Date

Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area, # 8037
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1980
- **Acreage:** 4,360 acres
- **County:** Lawrence
- **Region:** Southwest
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for wildlife, grassland, savanna, and woodland resources with emphasis on upland game and compatible recreational opportunities.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy complex of grassland and woodland natural communities.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. Priority Areas:** Spring River Fisheries Priority Watershed, Golden Grassland Conservation Opportunity Area, Spring River Stream Reach Conservation Opportunity Area, and Golden/Liberal Grasslands Quail Restoration 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:** None
- C. Springs:** None
- D. Other:** This area is located in the Ozark Highlands Section, Springfield Plateau Subsection, and the Spring River Prairie/Dissected Plains Landtype Association (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

II. Existing Infrastructure

- Twenty-two parking lots (including one Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] accessible lot near fishing jetty)
- Spring River Nature Trail (1.8-mile hiking trail)
- South hike/bike/horse trail (5.4 miles)
- North hike/bike/horse trail (5.8 miles)
- Privy (at headquarters)
- Fishing jetty (ADA accessible)
- Shop building (area headquarters)
- Two equipment storage facilities
- Chemical shed
- Designated camping area with eight sites (no amenities provided)
- Fishing lakes (7-acre lake and 4-acre lake)
- Wildlife watering ponds (31 ponds, total of 6.9 acres)
- Non-stocked ponds (shallow ponds with variable fishing opportunities, 10 ponds, total of 21 acres)

III. 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:** Electric and gas company easements exist on the property.
- 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

IV. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Robert E. Talbot CA has a long history of management focusing on early-successional habitats and the species that depend on these habitats, particularly bobwhite quail. Because of the abundant upland early-successional habitat on the

area, Robert E. Talbot CA has been designated a Department Quail Restoration Landscape. Habitat management efforts will continue to promote and enhance diverse early successional habitat that will improve long-term success of small game populations, particularly quail.

- 2) Robert E. Talbot CA has several well-developed woodland natural communities as well as areas of degraded woodland that are good candidates for restoration. The woodlands on the area are composed of post oak, black oak, and black jack oak overstory species. Those that have been managed also support a diverse herbaceous layer of grasses and forbs.
- 3) Robert E. Talbot CA has been important in providing opportunities for dove hunters in southwest Missouri through an extensive dove management program. This program produces excellent brood habitat for quail and turkeys.
- 4) Two small wetlands exist on the area. The larger of the two is 30 acres and is in the Spring River bottoms. This wetland area is flooded seasonally. The second wetland is opportunistic in nature but can provide an additional five acres of walk-in waterfowl hunting opportunities.
- 5) Any efforts taken to assess and reduce invasive species, such as sericea lespedeza, tall fescue, and Johnson grass, will be beneficial to a wide array of native plants and animals.

Management Objective 1: Enhance grassland, old field, and cropland habitat to maximize nesting, brood rearing, and escape cover for bobwhite quail.

Strategy 1: Use conservation grazing to achieve desired vegetation structure for quail. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Improve landscape composition to benefit quail nesting success and increase herbaceous diversity. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Evaluate and implement, when feasible, options for removing acres from crop production and replacing with quality native herbaceous cover. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Continue woodland restoration efforts.

Strategy 1: Evaluate and implement, when feasible, the expansion of woodland restoration. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Strategy 2: Evaluate and implement further thinning or altered burning schedule on restoration sites, as needed. (Wildlife, Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Maintain dove management efforts to promote hunting opportunity and provide good brood rearing habitat.

Strategy 1: Continue sunflower and wheat plantings in a manner that ensures high use by doves and provides early-successional brood cover. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 4: Maintain active quail population and harvest monitoring program.

Strategy 1: Continue participation in Southwest Quail Ecology Study through duration of project and evaluate other quail research opportunities. Lessons learned from the project will inform future quail management efforts, including the use of patch-burn grazing cattle to influence landscape plant composition and structure. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue quail population surveys. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 5: Continue wetland management.

Strategy 1: Use planted crops and/or moist soil management techniques to provide food and cover for migrating waterfowl. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to work with Fisheries Division to monitor water levels in the wetland area during waterfowl season. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Management Objective 6: Reduce invasive plant species on the area to improve wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Annually assess invasive plant occurrences and control using chemical, mechanical, or physical methods. (Wildlife)

V. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The area has more than 50 small impoundments. Many are shallow and are primarily used as wildlife watering holes and amphibian habitat. Many of the impoundments have poor water holding ability due to soil constraints.
- 2) There is excessive aquatic vegetation in some impoundments.
- 3) There are good largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish fishing opportunities in managed impoundments. Four small impoundments are managed for fishing. The larger two fishing ponds, Pond 1 and Pond 52, are easily accessible and receive heavy fishing pressure. Pond 1 is a 4-acre impoundment, located one mile south of the area headquarters building. Pond 52 is a 7-acre impoundment, located 0.5 miles south of Highway 96 on Lawrence 1077. The other two fishing ponds (Pond 29 and Pond 43) are smaller in size and provide

walk-in opportunities for anglers. Both are situated within 0.4 miles or less of a parking lot.

- 4) The area includes several miles of stream frontage and fishing opportunities. Spring River is the largest stream on the area. It has a wide floodplain with several high-flow channels, encompassing a large portion of the southern section of the area. Spring River's main channel provides over 2.3 miles of stream frontage and fishing opportunities. Stahl Creek and Dry Fork are smaller streams on the eastern side of the area and provide an additional 1.2 and 1.4 miles of stream frontage, respectively. Fishing potential in these two streams is mainly limited to the lower end of Stahl Creek.

Management Objective 1: Maintain and/or enhance functionality and quality of streams and ponds on the area.

Strategy 1: Continue to implement stream best management practices, as outlined in the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009). (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 2: If grazing is used as a management tool, Wildlife and Fisheries staffs will develop a grazing plan prior to introduction of livestock. (Wildlife, Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Address channel and streambank instability, as needed. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Maintain or enhance fishing opportunities in Ponds 1, 29, 43, and 52.

Strategy 1: Continue to monitor the largemouth bass and bluegill populations through periodic fish surveys and apply appropriate management techniques to maintain or enhance these populations. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Continue to stock supplemental channel catfish to maintain channel catfish populations. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Monitor the aquatic vegetation coverage and apply aquatic herbicides as needed. (Fisheries)

VI. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain a variety of public use opportunities, including hunting, fishing, camping, and wildlife viewing opportunities. The area offers an ADA-accessible fishing jetty on the 7-acre lake, and a primitive campground that is frequently used during deer and turkey seasons. Additional public use opportunities include field trails for pointing dogs and group camping (requests for these activities require a special use permit).

- 2) Maintain multi-use trails. There are 11.2 miles of hike/bike/horse trails.
- 3) Continue educational and interpretive opportunities.
- 4) Enforce area use regulations.

Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of species. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Consider managed hunts to provide additional opportunity and wildlife management options. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Patrol the area and enforce the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*. (Protection)

Management Objective 2: Maintain the area's 11.2 miles of multi-use trails.

Strategy 1: Provide routine maintenance on existing multi-use trails. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Monitor and close unauthorized trails as necessary. (Wildlife, Protection)

Management Objective 3: Continue educational and interpretive opportunities on the area.

Strategy 1: Communicate to groups, such as teachers, students, scout groups, and National FFA Organization, the uniqueness of the area to facilitate as possible destination for outdoor education, field experiences, and training. (Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 2: Promote recreational opportunities to the public (e.g., using brochures, Atlas Database, news releases). (Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Management Objective 4: Maintain a safe and inviting area for public use.

Strategy 1: Continue a diverse law enforcement presence through utilizing various types of law enforcement patrols and cooperative assistance from other law enforcement agencies. (Protection)

Strategy 2: Address resource and non-resource related violations on the area. (Protection)

VII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure.
- 2) Maintain area boundary lines.
- 3) Build relationships with neighboring landowners and maintain area boundary.
- 4) Consider acquisition of land, when available.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure.

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

Management Objective 2: Maintain clearly identified boundary lines.

Strategy 1: Maintain clearly identified boundary lines on a rotating five-year schedule.

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

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass or any other issues affecting Robert E. Talbot CA or private property. (Wildlife, Protection)

Strategy 2: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner properties. (Private Land Services)

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

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area (CA) is in Lawrence County, about five miles west of Miller. The area was named after a former Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) commissioner from Joplin. The initial acquisition was made in 1980 when the Department purchased 246 acres to restore and protect riparian habitat along the Spring River. Since 1983, an additional 4,114 acres have been purchased.

The Department manages this area to provide grassland, woodland, and early-successional habitats for a variety of small game and upland wildlife species. Bobwhite quail are emphasized in management and research efforts; however, many other species benefit from such management. Effort is also put into providing high-quality dove hunting opportunities and the area has robust deer and turkey numbers, which provide good hunting opportunities. A 25-acre wetland found in the Spring River bottoms portion of the area provides one of the few public managed wetlands in the Southwest Region.

The area provides opportunities for fishing with over two miles of Spring River and four managed fishing ponds. Anglers fishing Spring River within the conservation area can pursue black bass species such as smallmouth bass and spotted bass. Rock bass or “goggle eye” are also present in this stretch along with channel catfish and flathead catfish. The four managed fishing ponds provide opportunities for anglers to pursue largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Old Fields	1,481		34
Forest	630		14
Grassland	875		20
Open Land	695		16
Woodlands	617		14
Open Water	32		1
Wetlands	30		1
Total	4,360		100
Permanent Stream Frontage – Spring River		2.3	
Intermittent Stream Frontage – Stahl Creek		1.2	
Intermittent Stream Frontage – Dry Fork Creek		1.4	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period April 1–30, 2018. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from 17 respondents (Appendix A). The Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A 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 Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area Management Plan public comment period.

Terrestrial Resource Considerations

Opposes cattle grazing on public areas such as Robert E. Talbot CA.

Grazing with cattle is an important grassland management tool. Grazing provides a level of structural heterogeneity in our grasslands that no other management tool can, and research done on Talbot CA shows that quail prefer grazed grasslands over idle ones. Grasslands on the area are leased on a competitive bid basis to local producers. All areas where cattle are grazing are open to public access. Access has been improved to walk-in users. Horse trails that run through the grazing units are temporarily closed during the grazing season to prevent cattle from getting loose.

Suggests liming the area to reduce soil acidity.

Select fields are limed annually based on soil test recommendations.

Supports managing the area for upland birds.

Thank you for your comment. Current management on the area focuses on upland game and quail habitat.

Suggests planting more native trees (e.g., around parking lots) and conducting regular maintenance and pruning on them.

Management of the area emphasizes removing tall trees to reduce perches and den sites for small game predators thereby enhancing survival of quail and rabbit.

Aquatic Resources

Suggests more control over invasive aquatic vegetation. Suggests planting native aquatic vegetation.

We assess and monitor the aquatic plant growth in the fishing ponds annually. Herbicides and grass carp are used to help keep the vegetation at desirable levels. Having some vegetation is necessary for the lakes to support healthy fish communities. The current aquatic vegetation in the ponds are primarily native plants that are providing valuable habitat for the prey fish and macroinvertebrates.

Suggests labeling fishing ponds on the area map.

We will label the fishing ponds on our next map revision.

Public Use Considerations

Infrastructure/Trails

Appreciates the area trails because of the opportunities they provide for hiking, horse-riding, birdwatching, and observing wildflowers.

We appreciate our area users and we will continue to provide those opportunities.

Suggests providing more multi-use trails for horseback riding (e.g., 10-15 miles) to reduce overuse of nearby horse trails.

We will continue to maintain the current multi-use trail system as is. Additional trails for riding horses can be found at Fort Crowder CA in Newton County and Hulston Mill on Stockton Lake Managed Lands in Dade County.

Suggests more maintenance of area trails.

Trails are mowed periodically throughout the year with nesting seasons avoided.

Suggests providing/moving parking closer to waterfowl hunting areas.

Allowing hunters to park closer to the wetland would require additional infrastructure and result in increased pressure on an already limited wetland area.

Suggests providing more bicycle trails on the area.

The current trail system already allows for multi-use (biking/horseback riding/hiking).

Suggests enlarging the horse trailer parking at parking area 12.

Management staff will consider this as infrastructure expansion and budgets allow.

Suggest providing picnic area, trash can, and fishing line disposal station at parking lots next to fishing ponds.

Enhanced infrastructure is provided at local community parks and at Missouri State Parks. Conservation area users are encouraged to remove all trash, and other waste from recreational use.

Hunting

Appreciates dove hunting at the area.

We appreciate our area users and we will continue to provide those opportunities.

Suggests providing more opportunities for waterfowl hunting on the area (e.g., particularly on the south side). Suggests expanding wetland areas to accommodate more hunters.

Area management staff have investigated the possibility of increasing wetland acres in the Spring River bottoms but expanding wetland management efforts are not anticipated. Management on the area currently focuses on upland game and quail management. We appreciate being able to provide waterfowl hunting opportunities on the area; however, wetlands are not the primary focus of management activities.

Suggests regulating hunts on the area to prevent overcrowding.

Staffing does not allow for administering daily regulated hunting.

Suggests providing stationary blinds that are available on a first come, first served basis.

Management on the area currently focuses on upland game and quail management. We appreciate being able to provide waterfowl hunting opportunities on the area; however, wetlands are not the primary focus of management activities.

Would like to see waterfowl hunting pressure reduced. Suggestions include:

- **Instituting a 1 p.m. cutoff time for waterfowl hunting;**
- **Limiting waterfowl hunting to two days a week.**

Management on the area currently focuses on upland game and quail management. We appreciate being able to provide waterfowl hunting opportunities on the area; however, wetlands are not the primary focus of management activities. Waterfowl hunting will continue to follow statewide regulations.

Supports how the area is currently managed for hunting. Supports managing crop fields to benefit area wildlife.

We appreciate our area users and we will continue to provide those opportunities.

Suggests providing an archery-only zone or improved bow hunting habitat.

Management for white-tailed deer includes maximizing opportunities for all hunters. Current deer populations on the area are high and can withstand the current level of hunting pressure.

Accessibility

Suggests making a larger portion of the area ADA-accessible, or allowing small-vehicle use (e.g., all-terrain vehicles or electric carts) by area users with mobility disabilities.

Users needing motorized accessibility assistance can request a special use permit from the area manager.

Camping

Suggests allowing camping at the area.

The area currently has a designated campground that includes eight sites. A special use permit can be requested for parties of more than 10.

Administrative Considerations

Suggests that conservation agents check fishing permits, enforce violations, and enforce littering laws.

The area is patrolled on a routine basis including special group patrols. If a violation is witnessed, call Operation Game Thief (1-800-392-1111) or your local conservation agent.

Suggests enacting regulations that protect roosting waterfowl.

Regulations are already in effect to restrict disturbance of roosting waterfowl. If a violation is witnessed, call Operation Game Thief (1-800-392-1111) or your local conservation agent.

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.

Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W. A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Easement Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Land Cover Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Robert E. Talbot Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

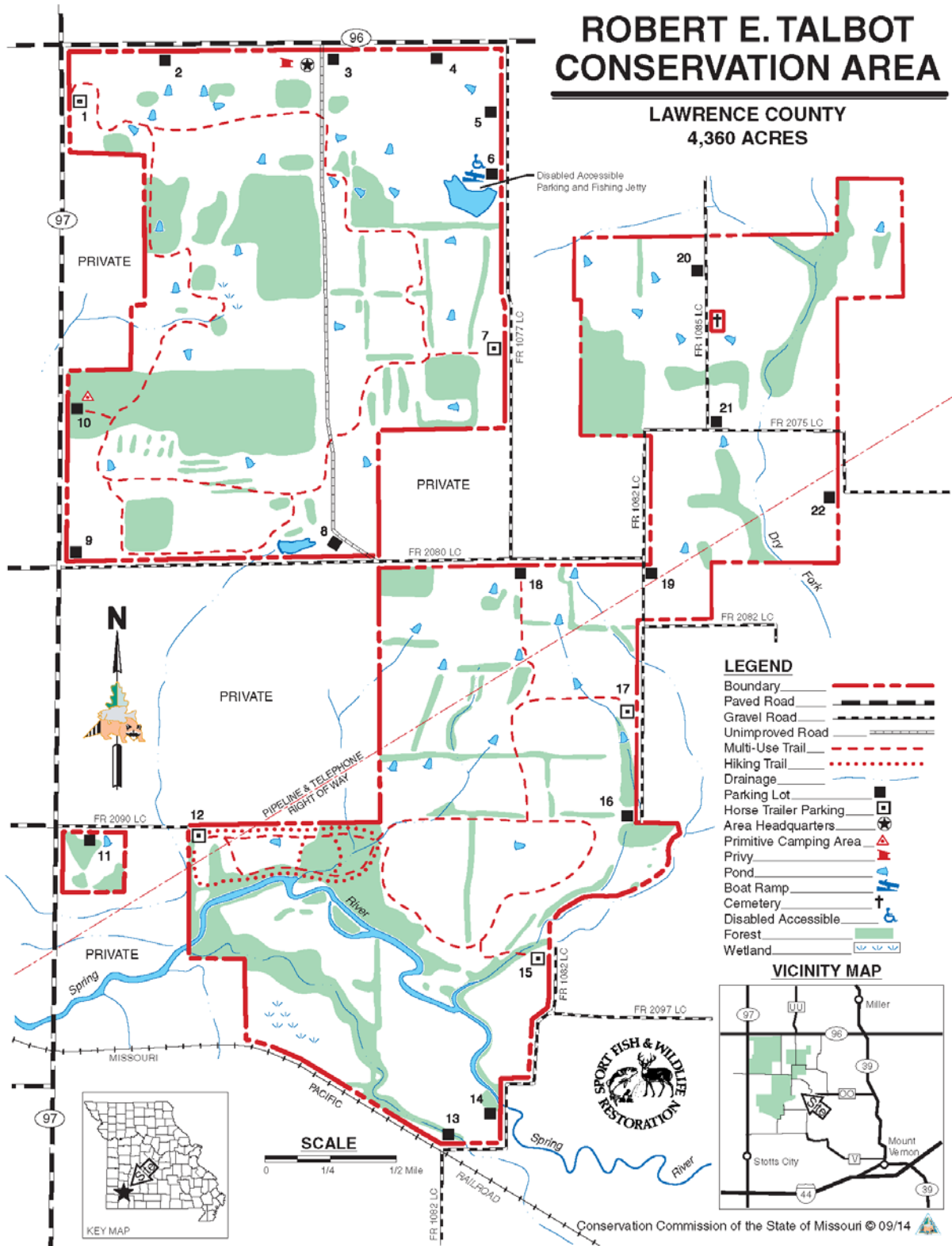


Figure 2: Easement Map

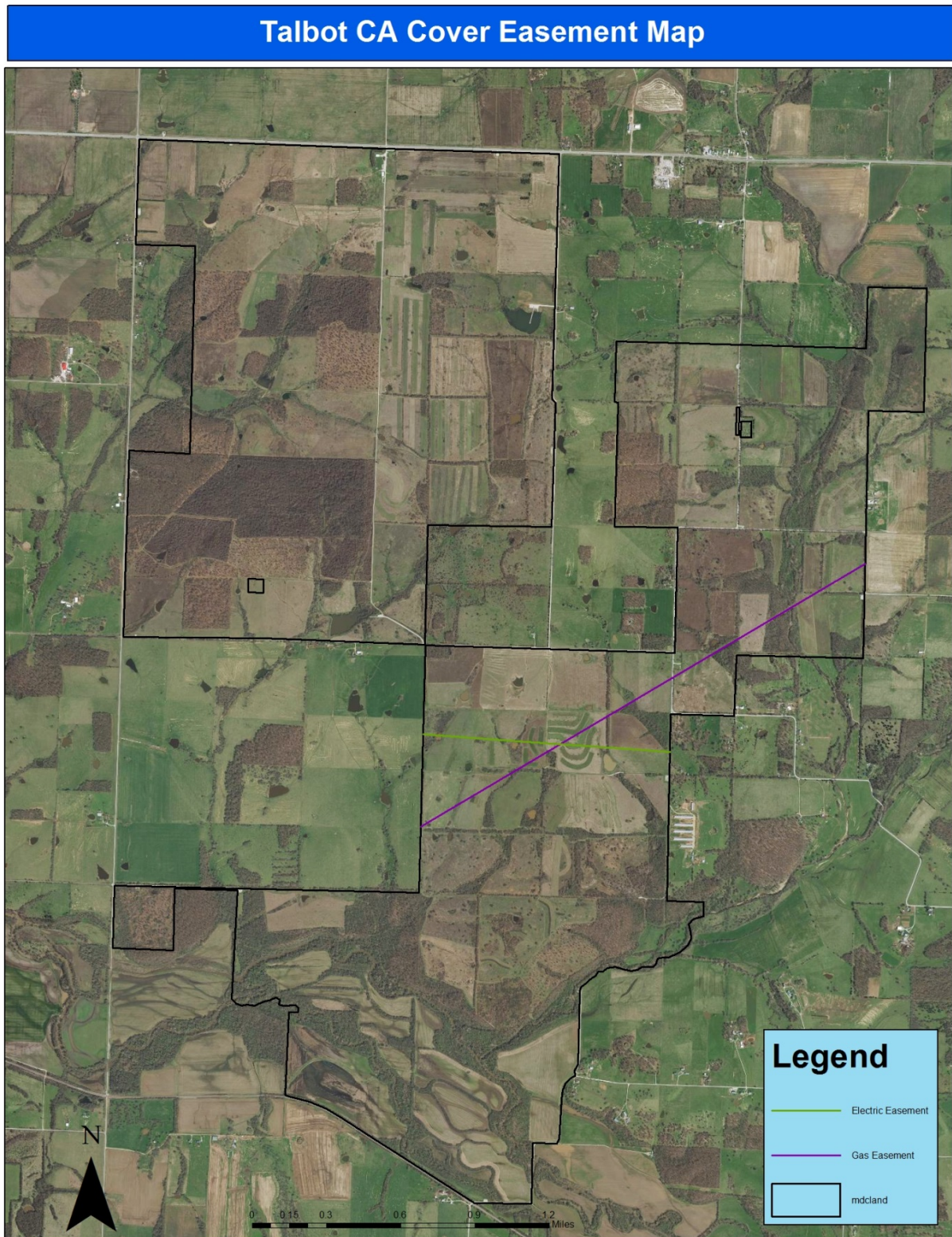


Figure 3: Topographic Map

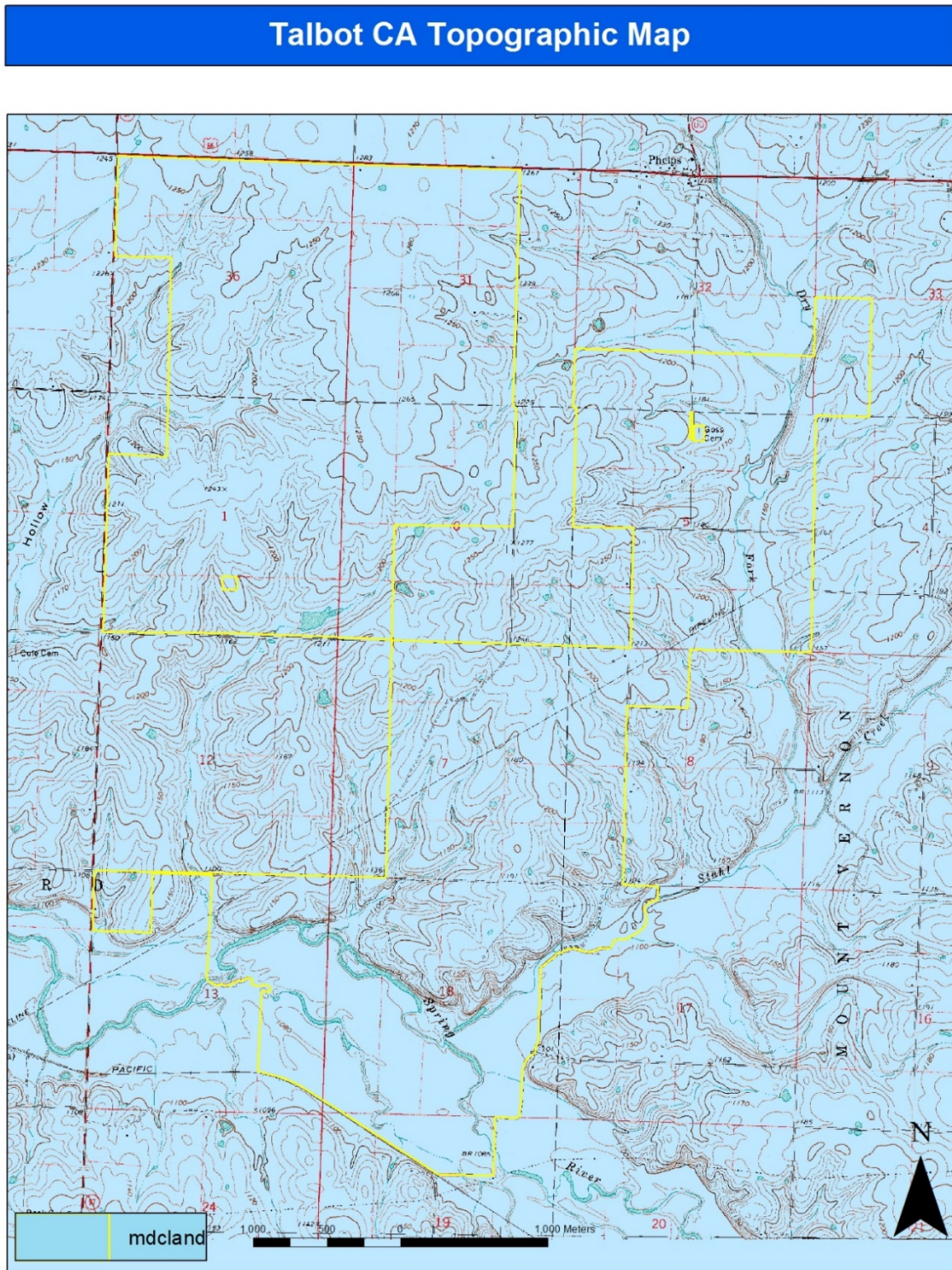
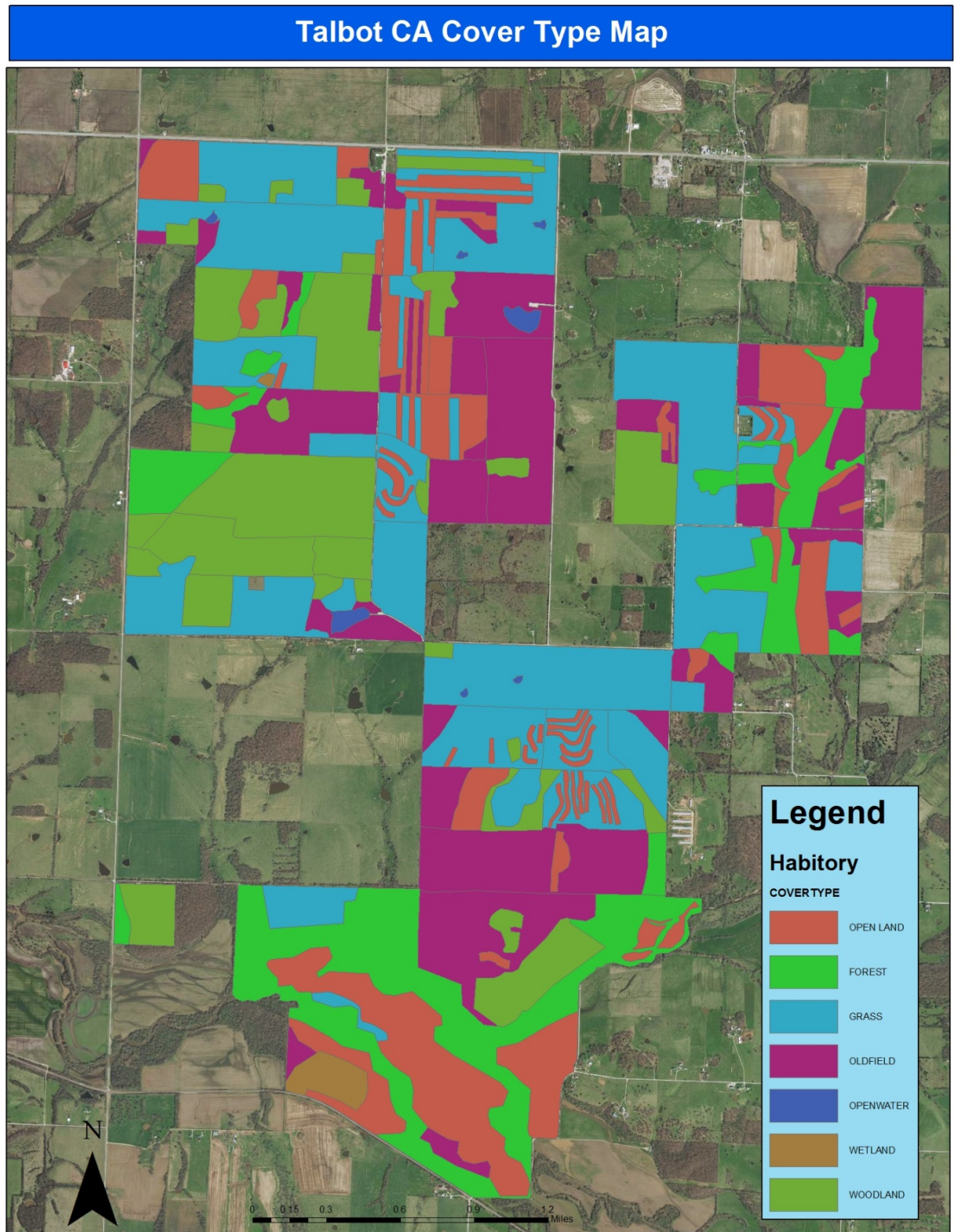


Figure 4: Land Cover Map



Appendix A: Robert E. Talbot Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1–30, 2018):

<p>I enjoy the nature trails at Talbot for birdwatching, wildflowers and hiking. When we were there , we saw a number of Great Blue Herons which makes me think there is a heron rookery on the Spring River. We could hear a lot of noise possibly from feeding activity by the herons, but could not see the nests. Please continue to maintain nature trails at Talbot as it is a very nice, quiet place to enjoy the beauty and wonder of nature.</p>
<p>this is a beautiful area with good conservation plans. I have ridden horses here several times and the land is beautiful. trails need more maintenance but were sufficient. everyone can benefit from this area. horse backing does not damage the land as much as 4-wheelers, but with designated areas all can be in harmony. horse backing does not damage the land and it would be a shame to lose this area. please consider leaving it open to all uses.</p>
<p>I like the area and it's dove hunting. I would like it if the ponds with fish were labeled on the map though.</p>
<p>In addition to the wetland management objects, additional consideration should be given to waterfowl management in this area. The department of conservation does a great deal for waterfowl in the middle zone but very little in the south zone. I would propose that the talbot wetland area be expanded in size to accommodate the number of waterfowl hunters that utilize the talbot area. It would also be a good idea to regulate hunts in this area to prevent crowding. A set number of Stationary blinds provided on a first come, first serve basis would be ideal for this area. A 1 pm cut off time would be beneficial for waterfowl as this area. Currently there is no regulations that protect roosting for waterfowl in the area. I would ask that parking provided to utilize the wetland be moved closer in proximity to the hunting area (current parking requires waterfowl hunters to walk 3/4 of a mile to get to the wetland area). This prevents some hunters from being able to use this area and creates unnecessary fatigue when hauling gear in waders (decoys, ammunition, firearms). This fatigue can be dangerous considering the icy water and cold temperatures waterfowl hunters endure. I would be happy to provide more information if you would like to reach me.</p>
<p>The leasing of land for cattle grazing should stop. It's not acceptable to close public land areas to the public while private individuals reap profit from cattle production. Also the wetland areas should only be open a limited number of days. Wednesday and Saturday until noon would help reduce waterfowl pressure.</p>
<p>I have been there many times the area has a of acid soil. it needs a massive liming program</p>
<p>I use the Talbot area for horseback riding on a regular basis. The mowed paths through and around the fields are great for open riding. I also really enjoy all the existing trails through the woods and by the river. I hope that none of the existing trails are closed with this new management plan!!</p>

When deer hunting at Talbot it is very difficult for a seventy year old to haul out a deer from the center of the site. If you would allow 4 wheel ATV's to go and get the deer, and bring it out it would be better for us old guys to hunt.

I along with other friends and family use the Talbot Area mostly for hunting. We have found it to be a great area as it is being managed at this time. I believe it has helped having the amount of crop fields that are currently available for wildlife and I am not sure the area that would be used for cattle grazing or its extent, but would be concerned with the loss of public use that would require. I would be concerned with this area going from good hunting to only fair as some other areas have gone.

Preserve this area for upland birds is very important. But with a large population within a short drive the need for more hiking trails is important. Also with the large number of horses and shortage of horse trails causing the over use of trails the need for more trails is a must. Look at nearby Busiek State Forest and the need to spread out the use of trails by horse.. The addition of 10-15-miles of horse trails would take a lot of the horse traffic from Busiek State Forest.

I shall put my two cents in but it never does any good.. I am 78 partial disability and most of all MDC areas are non-accessible for me . Oh yes you have the lil disabled area but i would like to be able to experience the back country of your areas, which seems to be for only the young and your agents driving their vehicles back in. Many of these trails and roads could used by me in OH SAY an electric cart... OK OK OK i know aint gonna happen but that's my input anyhow.. Thanks ??? *****

I HAVE BEEN A BOY SCOUT LEADER SINCE 1990 AND HAVE NEVER USED TALBOT . I WAS ASK ONE TIME ABOUT HELPING CLEAR A HIKING TRAIL . OK BUT WE WANTED SPECIAL CAMPING PRIVILEGES I WAS TOLD NO . IF YOU WANT TO TEACH KID ABOUT NATURE THEY NEED TO GET OUT IN IT WE NEED SOME PRIMITIVE CAMPING SITES OR JUST NEED TO BE ALLOWED TO HIKE IN AND GO CAMPING. BOY SCOUTS TEACH LEAVE NO TRACE

THANK YOU

I would like to express my sincere thanks at seeing the equestrian access continued, thus maintaining the multi use trail system. I am a strong proponent of multi use trails which promote the health and well being of all age groups providing local access to the outdoors along with the traditional hunting and fishing. As demographics change this variety keeps the area active and used. My area of concern is the horse trailer parking at 12 it small and enlargement would be helpful and the road does not allow one to see if any other vehicles are in this space with little area to turn around. Thank you

Robert E. Talbot C.A. with its acreage over 4,000 acres and within an underserved area for recreational horseback riding could improve its multiuse trail system. While quail and dove

habitat and support is one of the main objectives, the presence of horse on trails would not be a hindrance. The surrounding community of Lawrence County equestrians are required to drive long distances to other riding opportunities. With existing equestrian organizations willing and dedicated to helping maintain public multiuse trails, the maintenance would be minimal on the part of the MDC.

Put attention and expand on the topic of controlling invasive aquatic vegetation and plant native aquatic vegetation to increase overall biodiversity and beauty of the area.

Plant desirable native tree species such as tulip poplar and Shortleaf pines around parking lots and maintain and prune trees to prolonged asset investment.

Provide picnic area, trash can and fishing line disposal station around parking lots next to fishing ponds to increase desirable use of area, increase beautification and help decrease litter issues around fishing ponds.

Conservation agents need to check fishing permits, enforce violations and conduct enforcement of littering laws.

Plan looks to be more of the same. I really enjoy how you have been managing the area to this point (in there every September 1!). The only addition I would like to see is an expansion of bicycle trails. I enjoy the area and could really get some more use out of the wetland area if there were legal trails to ride through there.

I think it would be nice if we had an archery only zone. Or even improved bowhunting habitat. Right now there's only a few spots with a decent amount of timber for bowhunting