Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area

Ten Year Area Management Plan

FY 2014-2023

Lisa G. Allen
Forestry Division Chief

8-13-14
Date

Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area

Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

John Vogel, Wildlife Regional Supervisor

Kevin Meneau, Fisheries Management Biologist

Mike Arduser, Natural History Biologist

Jeff Breuer, Conservation Agent

Jason Villwock, Resource Forester

Jen Porcelli, Private Land Conservationist

ST LOUIS REGION

RCT Chair

Signature 6/30/14 *Date*

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief

Signature 8-12-14 *Date*

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area, # 201201
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 2012
- **Acreage:** 428.74 acres
- **County:** Jefferson
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Primary Purpose:**
  - **A. Strategic Direction**
    Provide opportunities for diverse public use as well as manage the natural communities and other habitats which balance fish, forest, and wildlife goals and help to maintain the integrity of the LaBarque Creek Watershed.
  - **B. Desired Future Condition**
    The desired future condition of Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family Area (CA) is a healthy, diverse and sustainable mosaic of woodland and forest communities along with a network of high quality hiking trails that provides excellent opportunities for the public to enjoy conservation activities.
  - **C. Federal Aid Statement**
    This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired with Forest Legacy Program funds with a purpose to protect important working forest areas.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. <u>Special Considerations</u>

A. Priority Areas:

1) LaBarque Creek Conservation Opportunity Area
2) Lower Meramec/Missouri River Priority Forest Landscape
3) LaBarque Creek Fisheries Priority Watershed
4) LaBarque Creek Fisheries Aquatic GAP Watershed
5) LaBarque Creek Wildlife Priority Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy area
6) The Nature Conservancy's Meramec River Project

B. Natural Area: None

II. <u>Important Natural Features and Resources</u>

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

D. Pond/Lake: One three-acre fishing lake and five fishless ponds.

E. Other: There is 2300 feet of river frontage along the Meramec River. This area occurs in the Meramec Highlands Oak Woodland/Forest Rugged Hills Land type Association (LTA). This LTA consists of very rugged hills with narrow ridges, steep slopes, and narrow valleys. Historically, this area was timbered with oak and mixed-hardwood woodland, forest, and scattered glades (Nigh 2002).

III. Existing Infrastructure

- 1 parking lot
- Monument recognizing the family that helped acquire the area
- Buder Lake Hiking Trail (0.5 mile around Buder Lake)
- Hiking Trail (1.5 miles)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

A. Deed restrictions or ownership considerations: Memorandum of agreement that places conditions on acquisition and management of property. See files in area manager's office for details. Conservation Restriction Agreement; see files in area manager's office for details.

B. Federal Interest: This land must protect a forested landscape in perpetuity. Prohibits conversion of land into non-forest uses; a periodic inspection is required to verify this. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Natural resource agencies may not allow activities or development of 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 transmission and distribution line (Ameren Missouri). Private landowner ingress/egress easement.

D. Cultural resources findings: Yes, records kept with MDC Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the MDC Resource Policy Manual.

E. Hazards and hazardous materials: None observed.

F. Endangered species: None observed.

G. Boundary Issues: None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

1) Early infestations of invasive plants currently found on the area (e.g. bush honeysuckle), and the threat of future invasive plant infestations.
2) Impacts of removal of wildfire from natural communities.
   - Overstocked woodlands (too many trees per acre).
   - Tree species composition shift to shade tolerant, fire intolerant species (away from oaks and hickories towards primarily sugar maple).
   - Major loss of diversity and abundance of ground layer herbaceous vegetation and tree regeneration.
3) Maintaining healthy, sustainable, and diverse forests and woodlands which are approaching biological maturity and are mostly even-aged.
4) Enhance wildlife habitat by converting fescue and sericea dominated old fields to native vegetation by treating and then reforesting open lands or establishing native vegetation.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy forests and woodlands with management emphasis on wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Reduce invasive plant species populations (predominantly bush honeysuckle garlic mustard, tree of heaven and wintercreeper) to levels which will have negligible impact to natural communities and can be easily kept in check via routine scouting and minor control efforts.

Strategy 2: Reduce tree stocking in forests and woodlands to desired stocking levels and to desired tree species mixes via non-commercial and commercial thinning. This work will be completed using MDC staff and/or contractors.

Strategy 3: Utilize prescribed fire to stimulate herbaceous vegetation in woodlands, to increase oak regeneration in forests and woodlands, and to discourage bush honeysuckle. This work will be completed using MDC staff.

Management Objective 2: Manage old field openings to enhance wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Reduce invasive plant species populations (predominantly autumn olive, fescue, and sericea lespedeza) to levels which will have negligible impact to natural communities and can be easily kept in check via routine scouting and minor control efforts. This work will be completed using MDC staff.

Strategy 2: Remove fire intolerant tree species growing in and around open areas via commercial and non-commercial thinning. This work will be completed using MDC staff and/or contractors.

Strategy 3: Establish warm season grasses and other native herbaceous vegetation in open areas to provide diverse wildlife habitat. This work will be completed using MDC staff.

Strategy 4: Utilize prescribed fire to stimulate herbaceous vegetation in open areas and to discourage exotic species. This work will be completed using MDC staff.

Strategy 5: Perform edge feathering (selectively thinning trees along field edges) around open areas to provide diverse habitat for wildlife. This work will be completed using MDC staff.

Management Objective 3: Reforest open lands to reduce forest fragmentation, improve wildlife habitat, and decrease maintenance costs.

Strategy 1: Apply herbicide to cool season grasses in open fields and allow these fields to re-forest through a combination of natural regeneration and mechanical or hand planting tree species which are valuable to wildlife and well suited to the growing site.

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

1) Recreational fishing opportunities are available in 3-acre Buder Lake.
2) Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family CA helps provide valuable protection and aquatic biodiversity in the LaBarque Creek Watershed.
3) The Buder Lake dam is currently leaking in several places and leaks need to be investigated and a plan developed to address them.

Management Objective 1: Maintain recreational fishing opportunities in Buder Lake.

Strategy 1: Maintain largemouth bass and bluegill fishery through electrofishing surveys (once/3 years) and manipulation of populations, as needed.

Strategy 2: Maintain current fishing regulations.

Strategy 3: Maintain dam and shoreline fishing access.

Strategy 4: Improve fish cover with native aquatic vegetation and woody cover, as needed.

Management Objective 2: Conserve LaBarque Creek Watershed's aquatic biodiversity.

Strategy 1: Implement watershed conservation strategies consistent with the *LaBarque Creek Watershed Conservation Plan* (2009) including maintaining 100-foot wide riparian corridors on all CA stream channels, minimizing the number of stream channel crossings, and utilizing appropriate stream crossing BMPs.

Strategy 2: Monitor LaBarque Creek fish community biodiversity through periodic RAM surveys (every 3-5 years).
Strategy 3: With the exception of Buder Lake, ensure all CA ponds are fishless to enhance native amphibian and reptile populations.
Strategy 4: Consider establishing native aquatic plants in at least one fishless pond.

Management Objective 3: Take necessary steps to repair Buder Lake dam.
Strategy 1: Area manager will work with Design and Development and Fisheries to develop a plan and budget for repairs through the Capital Improvements (CI) process.
Strategy 2: Restore aquatic vegetation, fish cover, and restock fish population if necessary.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

1) Variety and intensity of public use requires regular area maintenance.
2) Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family CA offers valuable recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting and fishing close to an urban population center.
3) Area offers opportunity to build relationships with neighboring land owners and the Friends of LaBarque Creek.

Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities.
Strategy 1: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of species.
Strategy 2: Ensure that public hunting opportunities are advertised in the annual hunting regulation booklets.
Strategy 3: Explore potential MDC Outreach and Education programs to offer to the public.

Management Objective 2: Maintain parking lot and maintain/enhance the trail system to provide aesthetics, utility, and high quality hiking opportunities to the public.
Strategy 1: Perform routine maintenance on trails.
Strategy 2: Develop overlook viewing platform and spur trail over the Meramec River Valley as approved and budgeted.
Strategy 3: Extend existing trail system to create a loop trail on the area.
Strategy 4: Perform routine trash pickup, painting, mowing, and other maintenance activities.

Strategy 5: When budget and time allow, convert asphalt covered sections of trail to gravel or natural trail surface.

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

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors and other groups interested in the watershed to occasionally host volunteer projects on the area according to MDC volunteer policy.

Strategy 2: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner's properties.

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

1) Communicate with Ameren Missouri regarding access through area to maintain transmission and distribution lines.
2) Larger tracts of land (100+ acres) border the area and occur within the LaBarque Creek Watershed.

Management Objective 1: Ensure requirements of easements are met.

Strategy 1: Regularly communicate with Ameren Missouri Staff to know what activities are planned along transmission and distribution line easements.

Strategy 2: Consider new requests for easements and grant access in accordance with easements and MDC policy. See files in area managers' office.

Management Objective 2: Explore neighboring land acquisition opportunities from willing sellers.

Strategy 1: When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition. Though the highest priority will be given to larger tracts (>100 acres), 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 during the LaBarque Creek Watershed conservation process may be considered.

Strategy 2: Work with the Friends of LaBarque Creek to identify when priority opportunities become available.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Terrestrial Resources Management										
Objective 2										
Strategy 3		X	X	X						
Aquatic Resource Management										
Objective 1										
Strategy 1	X			X			X			X
Objective 2										
Strategy 2	X					X				
Objective 3										
Strategy 1			X							
Public Use Management										
Objective 2										
Strategy 2		X								
Strategy 3		X	X							

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The 429-acre Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family Conservation Area is located in north-central Jefferson County, about six miles south of Eureka. The area was acquired in 2011 through a donation from the Myron and Sonya Glassberg Family (Myson Foundation) and the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and was opened to the public on October 30, 2012.

This property helps to maintain and enhance the ecological and recreational values of the LaBarque Creek Watershed (Meneau 2009), which supports a high quality stream system and diverse plant communities. The watershed lies in northwest Jefferson County and consists of 13 square miles of land with 44% being publicly owned and over 86% of the area remaining forested. As a result of the low level of development in the watershed and the protection efforts, the creek continues to support 52 species of fish, which is a diverse population that can be found no closer to the St. Louis area.

The area lies in the Ozark border region with soils derived from limestone and dolomite on the upper slopes and St. Peter sandstone in the valleys. As a result, there is a variety of plant communities, including upland dolomite/limestone woodlands, limestone/dolomite and sandstone forests, and bottomland forests along with old fields on the lower slopes. The woods are dominated by oaks, hickory, maple, and cedar with an understory of flowering dogwood and redbud.

The area is mostly forested and there are several intermittent streams, a three acre fishing lake and five small fishless ponds. This property is bordered by the Meramec River to the north but there is not a developed access to the river due to the steep terrain along the river.

Limestone bluffs afford a scenic view of the river valley below. Currently, there are 1.5 miles of trail/service road open to hiking through much of the area. A 0.5 mile loop trail takes hikers around the scenic Buder Lake. Additional improvements to the trail system will be made.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Woodland	228.67		53.4
Forest	139.4		32.5
Old Field	55.35		12.9
Lakes	3.53		0.8
Fishless Ponds	1.52		0.3
Other	0.27		0.1
Total	**428.74**		**100**
Tributaries to LaBarque Creek		2400	
Frontage along Meramec River		2300	

Public Input Summary:
The draft Myron and Sonya Glassberg Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period April 1 – 30, 2014. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from six respondents (Appendix A). The Glassberg 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.

<u>MDC responses to themes and issues identified through Glassberg Conservation Area public comment period</u>

Supports removal of invasive species. Concern about invasive wintercreeper on this area.
As indicated in the plan, we will control populations of invasive species on the area to maintain plant diversity and wildlife habitat. Wintercreeper is one of those species and we have added it to the plan specifically along with tree of heaven. Our efforts to control invasives will include additional ones as necessary to maintain or improve plant diversity and wildlife habitat.

If harvesting trees, suggests donating branches to neighbors for firewood.
We currently do not have any timber harvests planned but may in the future if they meet multiple objectives to improve forest health and wildlife habitat. Firewood cutting permits are sometimes offered to the public after a timber harvest or a non-commercial thinning that benefits wildlife habitat, but not always, due to limitations with public vehicle access. If interested in cutting firewood from one of our conservation areas, you should contact the area manager for more information.

Supports enhancing trail system, including trail access to ponds and river, if possible.
As mentioned in this plan, we will be installing an overlook viewing platform of the Meramec River Valley and adding to the trail system to develop it into a loop. A trail to access the Meramec River is not planned at this time as the steepness of the terrain would make installation and maintenance of a trail too difficult. However, off trail use is allowed on this area. Trails will be considered on Department areas as needed to enhance access and recreational and educational opportunities for area users. We have limited staff and resources so trails are not built to access every part of the area. Trail proposals must undergo a review process before being installed that may limit where the trail can be placed. The public is not allowed to install or develop trails on any conservation area without approval from the area manager.

Concern about allowing dogs on area.
Multiple uses of our areas is critical to our mission to provide Missourians with opportunities to hunt, fish, and enjoy the outdoors. We currently feel that permitting dogs while on leash on the area or the use of hunting dogs as permitted by the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* on this area is possible without degrading the populations of plants and wildlife on this area.

Concern with allowing hunting on this area. Opposes hunting with firearms at Glassberg CA.
We work for and with Missourians to sustain healthy forests, fish, and wildlife. We enforce the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* to provide current outdoor opportunities and to ensure future generations will have those same opportunities to hunt, fish, and enjoy the outdoors. The Department uses research and citizen input to manage the health of Missouri's forest, fish, and wildlife resources. Hunting is permitted on most Conservation Areas as long as it meets multiple use objectives, maintains healthy plant and animal populations, and provides additional opportunities for Missourians to enjoy the outdoors. We currently feel the hunting methods and seasons allowed on this area meets these objectives. There are state parks and local parks available in the area that are not regularly open to the public for hunting.

Supports improving fishing opportunities.
As mentioned in this plan, fishing opportunities on Buder Lake will be monitored and maintained over time. Since the initial drafting of this plan, we became aware of leaks in the dam that need to be addressed in order to maintain fishing opportunities. Under Aquatic Resources a challenge and Objective 3 with Strategies 1-2 were added to address this.

Interested in volunteering at this area (trail maintenance).
MDC welcomes help from volunteers. If interested in volunteering to help maintain the area you must contact the area manager located at the Rockwoods Reservation Office to identify priority projects and to get further guidance and approval.

Appreciation for acquiring this property and support for management as described in the area plan. Supports acquiring additional land.

MDC would like to thank the Mysun Foundation for their donation and the USDA Forest Service for funding through the Forest Legacy Program. Without their funding support, this acquisition would not have been possible. Additional land in the LaBarque Creek Watershed and surrounding area will be considered when offered and as funding is available. If a landowner is interested in selling or donating their property, please contact MDC for more information. Also, if anyone is interested in donating money to help fund management of this property or others in the LaBarque Watershed they can make a tax-deductible donation to the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation. To get more information please visit http://mochf.org/content/ways_of_giving.php.

References:

Meneau, Kevin J. 2009. LaBarque Creek Watershed Conservation Plan. Missouri Department of Conservation.

Nigh, Timothy A. and Walter A. Schroeder. 2002. *Atlas of Missouri Ecoregions*. Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map
Figure 2: Aerial Map
Figure 3: Topographical Map
Figure 4: Vegetative Cover Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Myron and Sonya Glassberg Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

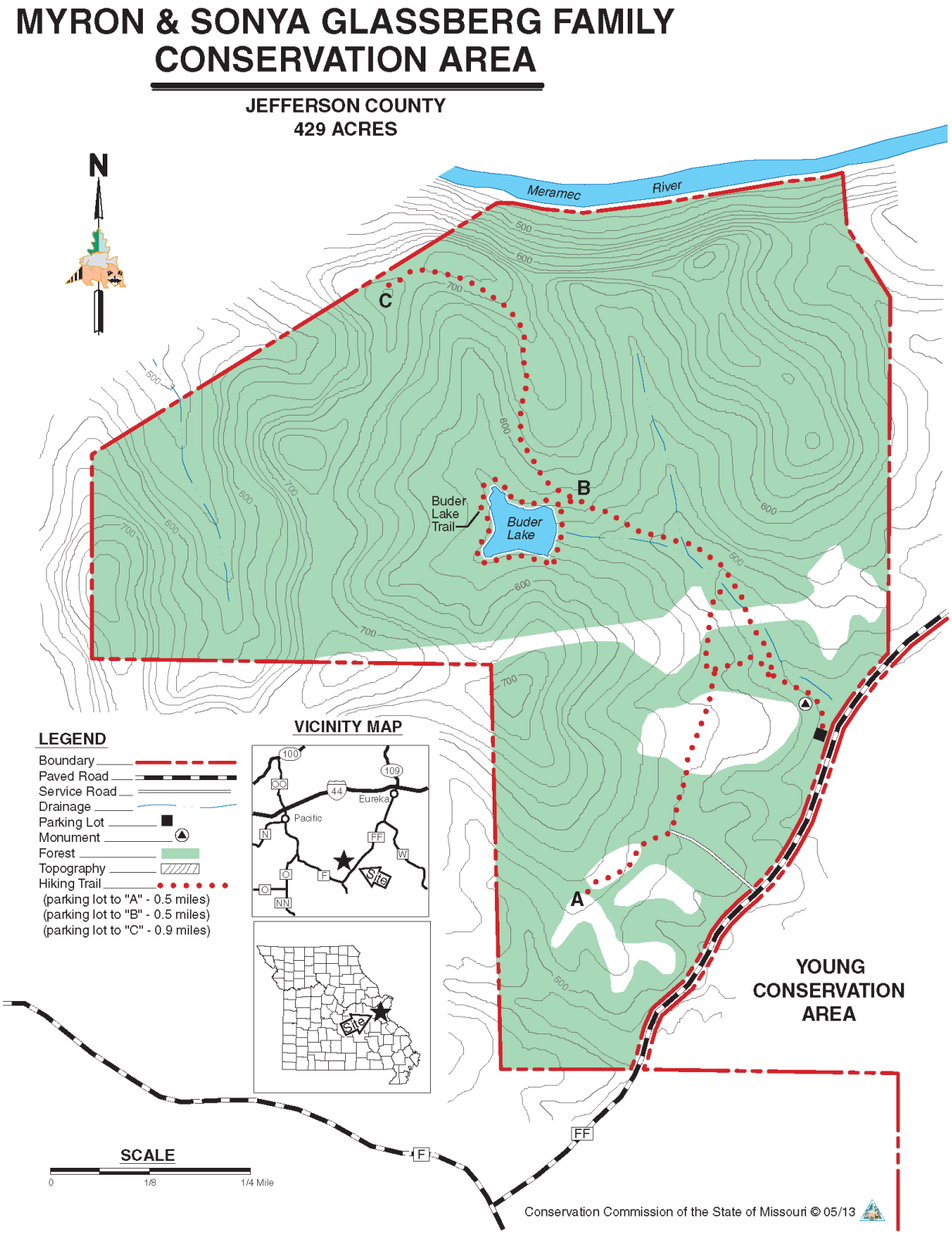


Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographical Map

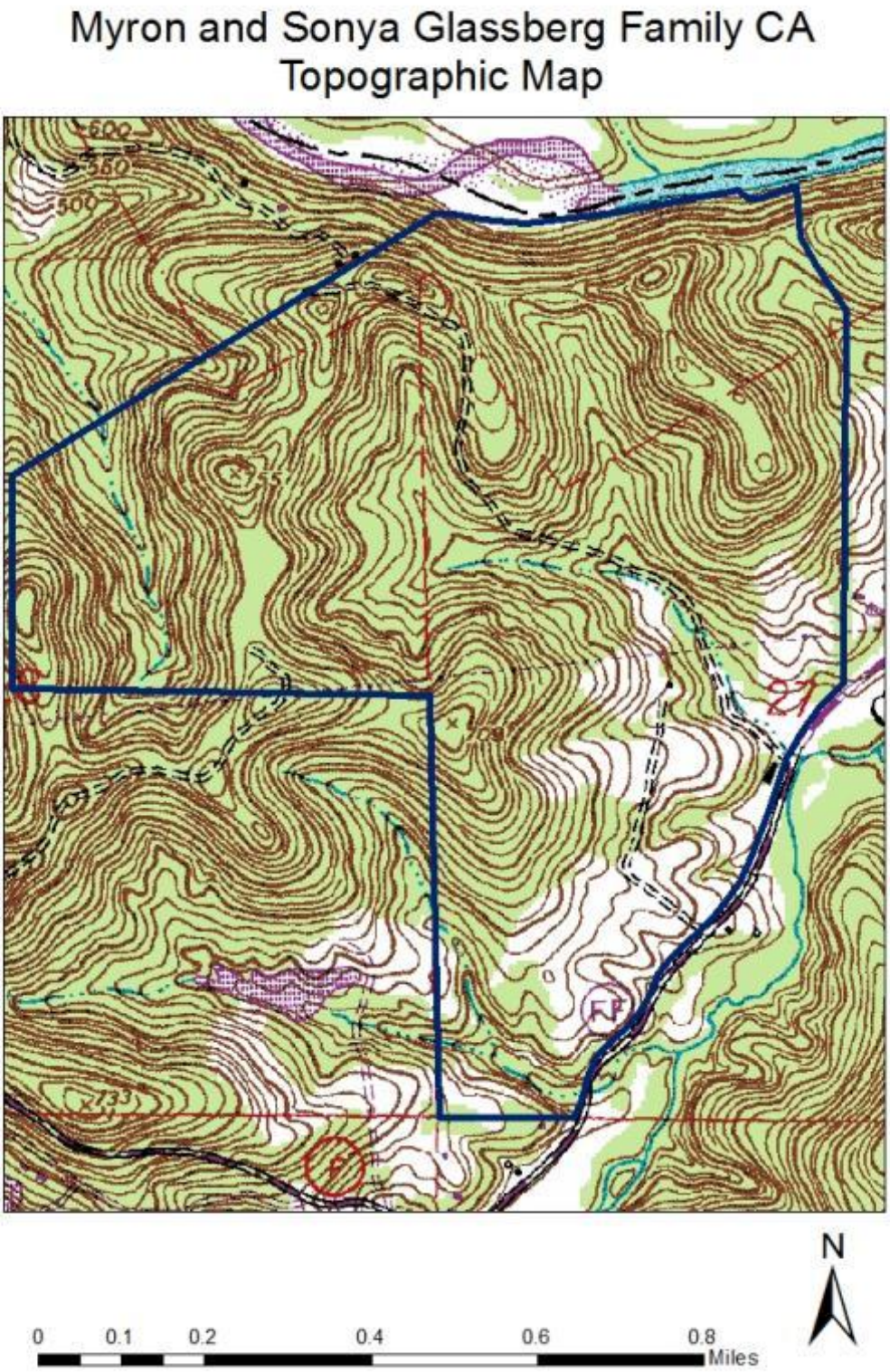
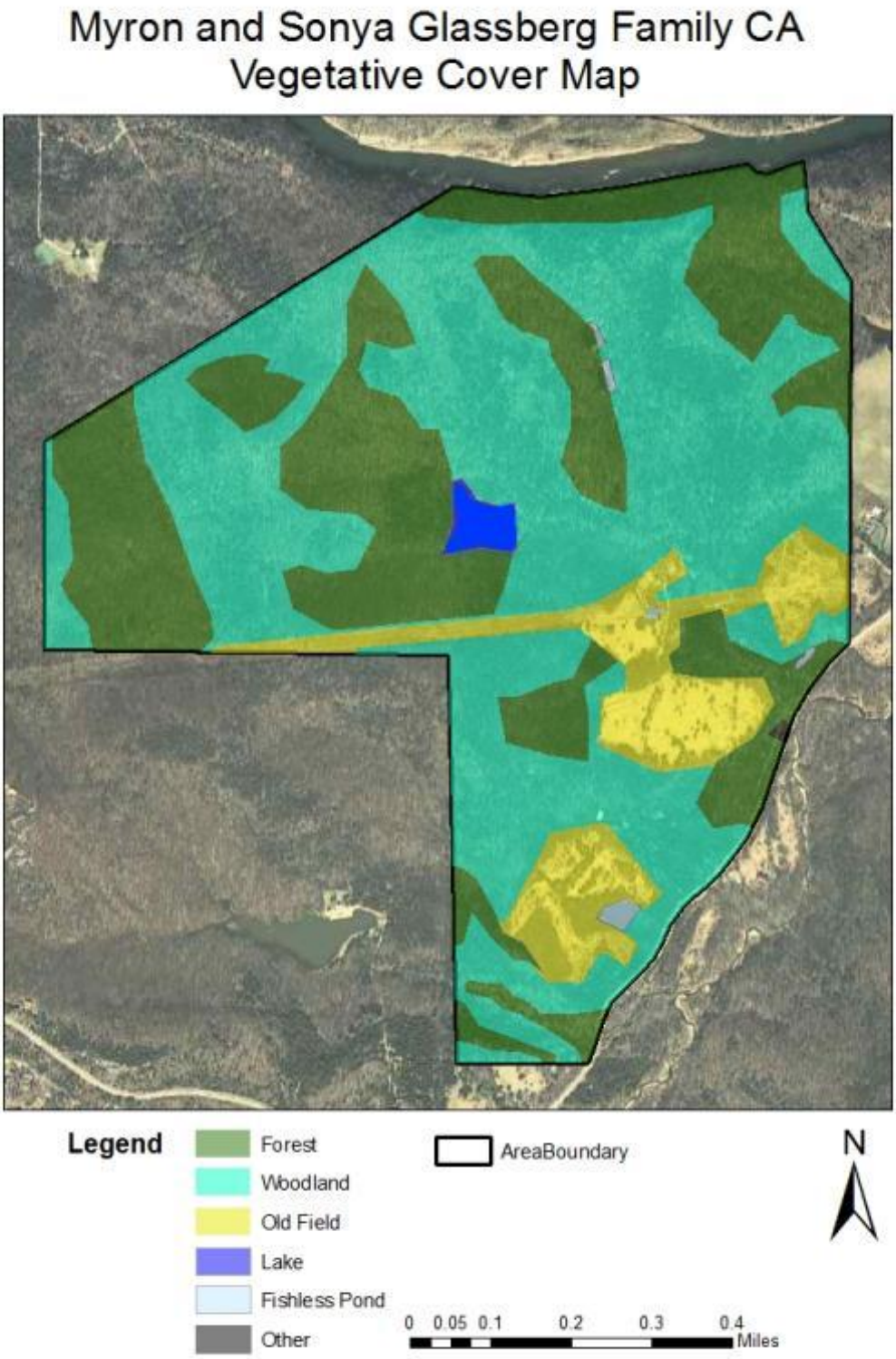


Figure 4: Vegetative Cover Map



Appendix A. Draft Myron and Sonya Glassberg Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (April 1-30, 2014)

Glassberg CA is a beautiful addition to the conserved lands of the Le Barque Creek watershed. Just yesterday 18 participants with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society Botany group hiked the trails and delighted in the first signs of spring. I was unable to join this outing, and my comments are based on a visit last spring. At that time I saw a Spring Azure butterfly at the top of the hill, and reported it to the president of the local chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, who responded that it was the first butterfly sighting reported in our area. From what I saw last spring, MDC is doing an excellent job managing this land and its unique assets. I am happy to see there will be a loop trail, and glad to see that management plans include removal of invasive honeysuckle and grasses. My only other comment would be caution regarding off-leash dogs, that is, prominent signage of leash regulations, if not a complete dog ban for the safety of birds and wildlife. Glassberg is wonderful piece of land. Thank you for acquiring it, and the superb management you apply to this and all other Conservation Areas. Kirkwood, Mo
I've been working on a trail to access a beautiful out croping to the right of the end of trail A . I've rebuild sevral of Myrons old rock walls that has been washed out also . I work for a Parks Dept . and love to work at this Consevation area . I would like to be included on the working proggress of this area . Please and thank you .
I had the opportunity to hike the Glassberg area yesterday with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. We were accompanied by the MDC area manager. This area and the other close by components of the3 LeBarque creek water shed are real gems. I agree with your plans to maintain and improve this area. However, what I found missing is any plan to inhibit the further growth of winter creeper (Euonymus fortunei) in the area. There appeared to be minimal growth of bush honeysuckle compared to other areas, and I generally am worried about Euonymus in the area. There is already some problem with it in the LaBarque Creek Conservation area on Dr. Sargent Lane nearby. Thanks for your work.
DEFINITELY SEEK TO PURCHASE SURROUNDING LAND. ADD TO AND ENHANCE TRAIL SYSTEM. CREATE TRAILS THAT WILL ALLOW HIKERS TO VISIT THE PONDS FOR POSSIBLE WILDLIFE VIEWING. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, BUILD OR CREATE ACCESS TO THE RIVER. CONSIDER BANNING HUNTING ON THIS AREA. WITH OTHER AREAS VERY CLOSE THIS AREA MIGHT BE A PLACE WHERE HIKERS CAN GO DURING HUNTING SEASON WITHOUT INTERFERREING WITH HUNTERS.

Thank you for acquiring the land and maintaining the natural beauty of this area. Your plan to manage the area sounds great! I have removed every honeysuckle plant around my property and have turned half of my land into warm season grasses (less mowing). Eliminate fescue. Improve fishing (I have not been fishing…yet). My son (11) and I totally enjoy LaBarque Creek and the purity of its water. We go down there almost every weekend to catch frogs, crawdads and fish…and swim. It is awesome and we appreciate you protecting it. If you do harvest trees, which I agree would be very beneficial to the ecosystem, can the branches be available to neighbors for firewood? Thanks for your concern and commitment to the environment, the wildlife and the neighbors that are directly effected.
I own approximately 27 acres less than 1000 feet from the northwest boundary of this property. During the 20 years that I have enjoyed my property, I am constantly amazed at the diversity of plant life and the fantastic views of the Meramec River. I have read the plan and am generally in favor of what is proposed. However, I am not in favor of VII Public Use Management Consideration, Objective 1, Strategy 2. If you allow hunting with fire arms, it cuts out all other public use such as hiking and wildlife observation. There are plenty of hunting opportunities in the area but very few where hikers feel safe from stray bullets. Please do not allow hunting on this beautiful piece of property. Thank you,