

Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2017-2026



Lisa M. Allen

Forestry Division Chief

3-24-16

Date

**Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas Management Plan Approval
Page**

PLANNING TEAM

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FORESTRY DIVISION

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OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
Gist Ranch CA	9729	1997	11,240	Texas	Forestry	Forestry
Midvale CA	4613	1946	80	Texas	Forestry	Forestry

Statements of Purpose:

A. Strategic Direction

The primary purpose of acquiring the Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas (CAs) was to protect the upper portion of the Jack’s Fork River watershed and create a public multi-use outdoor recreation area. The Midvale tract was originally used for a tower site. The Gist Ranch and Midvale CAs will continue to be developed and managed for the protection and enhancement of the area’s natural resources and outdoor recreation.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Gist Ranch and Midvale CAs is a woodland/forest landscape with glades.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

Area Name	Priority Area	Natural Areas
Gist Ranch CA	Gist Ranch Savanna Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), Priority Forest Landscape, The Nature Conservancy Portfolio Site	None
Midvale CA	Gist Ranch Savanna COA, The Nature Conservancy Portfolio Site	None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

Area Name	Species of Conservation Concern	Caves	Springs
Gist Ranch CA	Yes ¹	Yes ²	None
Midvale CA	No	No	None

¹Species 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.

²Records kept with the Missouri Department of Conservation (the Department) Natural History Biologist. Managers should follow the Cave Management policy found in the Department’s *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 for the protection of bats.

III. Existing Infrastructure

Area	Parking Lots	Roads	Privy	Ponds	Camping Areas	Other
Gist Ranch CA	14 ¹	8.7 mi improved, 57.3 unimproved	1 ¹	25 fishless, 2 fishing (1.5, 3.5 acres)	4 ²	Summersville Fire Tower (87ft), hunting blinds ¹ , unmanned firing (25, 50, 100, 300 yard) and shotgun range ¹ , 16 target walkthrough archery range
Midvale CA	1	None	None	None	None	None

¹American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible

²Fire rings at each; no other amenities

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

Area	Deed Restrictions	Federal Interest	Easements	Cultural Resources	Hazards	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues	Other
Gist Ranch CA	None	Yes ¹	power line (~2 mi), Smith Flooring property ²	Yes ³	None	None	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁵
Midvale CA	None	Yes ¹	power line (~0.3 mi), private property (~0.1 mi),	No known	None	None	No	none

¹Federal 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.

²The Department shares an easement (2.6 miles) on Smith Flooring property along the southeast property line.

³The Summerville Fire Tower located on Gist Ranch is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Place and may, therefore, be considered historic. Records on cultural resources are kept with the Department Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the Department *Resource Policy Manual*.

⁴Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

⁵A portion of road located in T29N, R8W Section 16 needs to be re-routed around approximately 0.25 miles of private property that the current road passes through.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Monitor and control invasive species.
- 2) Improve and restore forests, woodlands, glades, old fields and food plots.

Management Objective 1: Monitor and control invasive species.

Strategy 1: Conduct continuous monitoring of all invasive species. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Control invasive species using the latest and successful methods that may include the use of chemicals, prescribed fire and mechanical methods. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Improve and restore forests, woodlands, glades, old fields and food plots.

Strategy 1: Identify natural communities and opportunities for specific management through scheduled forest compartment inventories. Management practices may include, but are not limited to, timber harvest, timber stand improvement and prescribed fire. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Evaluate the need and possible implementation of adding additional green browse food plots throughout Gist Ranch CA for wildlife habitat balance. (Forestry and Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain riparian buffers on Peters Creek (2.75 miles), Sanders Branch (2.5 miles) and Padalong Creek (2.1 miles).
- 2) Maintain current put-and-take fisheries (1.5- and 3.5-acre fishing lakes).

Management Objective 1: Maintain riparian buffers.

Strategy 1: Minimize sedimentation to the creeks, tributaries, lakes and fens during management and road maintenance activities by following the *Missouri Watershed Protection Practice* guidelines (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014). (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Maintain current put-and-take fisheries.

Strategy 1: Stock channel catfish annually. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Manage aquatic vegetation at levels beneficial to fish populations and that will accommodate shoreline fishing opportunities. (Forestry)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Encourage and increase outdoor recreational use and opportunities.
- 2) Enforce the Wildlife Code and other State Statutes.
- 3) Assess opportunities to increase or restrict access to parts of Gist Ranch CA.
- 4) Maintain management goals while supporting public demands.

Management Objective 1: Encourage and increase recreational use on the area.

Strategy 1: Investigate the need and possibility of constructing a small pavilion at the existing firearms shooting range. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Investigate the need and possibility of developing gravel boat ramps at both existing fishing lakes and expanding the existing parking lots at these lakes. (Forestry, Fisheries, Design and Development)

Management Objective 2: Enforce the Wildlife Code and other state statutes.

Strategy 1: Determine areas of illegal activity and initiate routine and/or group patrols to address these problems as they arise. (Forestry and Protection)

Strategy 2: Initiate proactive law enforcement measures to eliminate potential areas of regulation and/or state law violations. (Forestry and Protection)

Strategy 3: Improve, maintain, or develop natural barriers between roadways and food plot/field areas to curtail road hunting activities. (Forestry and Protection)

Management Objective 3: Assess opportunities to increase or restrict access to parts of Gist Ranch CA.

Strategy 1: Identify sensitive areas, such as, fens, creek crossings and glades to avoid unnecessary disturbance from vehicular traffic. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Investigate the possibility of improving select roads. In the meantime, continue to brush-out and maintain roads utilizing mechanical and chemical methods to aid in safe vehicle access. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Strategy 3: Identify and map unimproved area roads to evaluate the feasibility of a multi-use trail by taking into consideration resource protection concerns, public need, and type of use. (Forestry)

Management Objective 4: Maintain management goals while supporting public demands.

Strategy 1: Continue to inform the public concerning wildlife and forestry management practices conducted on Gist Ranch CA via media outlets and one-on-one contacts. (Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Mark boundary lines.
- 2) Obtain easements.

Management Objective 1: Maintain boundary lines.

Strategy 1: Continue to mark and post boundary lines using a strategic approach of every five years. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Request boundary surveys as needed. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Obtain easements and work to solve issues pertaining to existing area roads that cross neighboring property.

Strategy 1: Identify an alternate route for a road through the woods (that currently tracks through private property). (Forestry, Design and Development)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition or Disposal:

- When available, adjacent properties 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. (Forestry)

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas are located in southeast Texas County, approximately 5 miles west of Summersville and 14 miles east of Houston. The primary attraction to the areas includes deer and turkey hunting, firearms target shooting and fishing. The area is mostly forested with a large component of woodland and glade communities. Due to heavy logging in the early 1990s, tree size classes are comprised primarily of pole and small saw timber. Old logging roads can be found on nearly every ridge and hollow.

The Summersville Tower site is located in Gist Ranch CA. The tower is currently maintained and manned during high fire danger days by the Department.

The topography of the area is generally hilly with long, broad ridges dissected by steep hollows. Seventy-six percent of the area drains into tributaries of the North Prong of the Jack's Fork River. The remaining 24 percent, in the northeast portion of the area, has flat ridge tops with more gently sloping areas that drain into Spring Valley, and eventually into the Current River. Elevations range from 1,000 to 1,500 feet.

Gist Ranch CA was purchased in March 1997 from Smith Flooring Company in Mountain View, Missouri. The area is known locally as the Gist Ranch, the Kinnard Ranch and the Stoner Ranch. The area had several owners in the past, but always remained in one large block. At the time of the Department's purchase, extensive logging had recently occurred over the entire tract.

During the 1940s, the area was leased and used as a "game refuge" by the Department, not unlike more well-known conservation areas that were used to protect the last remaining populations of deer and turkey, such as Caney Mountain and Peck Ranch. According to records, the area was one of the few places where deer and turkey were still present in the state. At least one adjacent landowner found a sign indicating the area as a game refuge boundary.

Current Land and Water Types: Gist Ranch CA

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Woodland	8,721		78.0
Upland Forest	1,268		11.3
Bottomland/ Riparian Forest	780		7.0
Glade	387		3.4
Old Fields/ Upland Fields	60		<1
Cropland/ Hay Land	15		<1
Impounded Water	5		<1
Warm-Season Grass Fields	4		<1
Total	11,240		100
Stream Frontage		37,000	

Current Land and Water Types: Midvale CA

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Upland Forest	80		100
Total	80		100
Stream Frontage		0	

Public Input Summary:

The draft Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas Management Plan was available for a public comment period March 1–31, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received 15 comments from 14 respondents (Appendix A). The Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas 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 Gist Ranch & Midvale Conservation Areas public comment period

Terrestrial Resource Management

Suggests adding food plots on south slopes to attract small game (quail and grouse).

Creating additional green browse is identified as a strategy of the area plan. The area plan calls for green browse plots to be developed and maintained throughout the Gist Ranch property

subject to annual budgets and work plans. Management practices are being used to enhance upland game management (e.g., prescribed burns and forest management practices).

Supports current timber management.

Thank you for the positive comment.

Suggests taking extra consideration of the needs of turkeys and their poults when conducting prescribed burns.

Most of our prescribed burns are conducted before turkeys lay their eggs, and all of our spring burns are timed to occur before poults hatch. Adult turkeys are minimally impacted by fire – they will easily fly or run from the activity. Prescribed fire improves the habitat for turkeys overall and the National Wild Turkey Federation strongly supports prescribed burning, even providing grants to help fund burning. Burning results in more wildflowers and grasses, which provides habitat for bugs for turkeys to feed on. Newly established herbaceous cover provides brooding cover to support young poults. Your comment about considering the needs of turkeys is valid and we will take that into consideration when planning burns.

Aquatic Resource Management

Suggests the addition of a large fishing lake.

The Gist Ranch Area Planning Team understands the desire for a large water impoundment. At this time, the Missouri Department of Conservation has no plans for impoundment construction. The Gist Ranch Area Planning Team will continue to look for ways to expand fishing opportunities on the area in the future.

Concern the two fishing ponds are “fished-out” and choked with branches. Suggests regularly stocking fish (including catfish).

The Gist Ranch fishing ponds are stocked annually with catfish every fall. Catfish stocking rates have increased beginning with the fall 2015 stocking. The increased stocking rate will continue unless negative impacts are seen in the catfish population. The area biologist plans to evaluate the population and continue to make stocking improvements as needed. Regarding branches; woody structure is intentionally left in the lake for improved fish habitat. Such woody cover will continue to decompose throughout time and will become less in years to come. Vegetation in the lake is treated annually as needed so to help improve fishing access to the lake.

Public Use Management

Trails

Suggests developing 10 to 12 miles of multi-use (hike/bike/horse) trails at Gist Ranch CA.

Persuant to the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*, hiking, biking, and horseback riding are also allowed on Gist Ranch CA's public roads. We are currently evaluating the feasibility of a multi-use trail at Gist Ranch by taking into consideration resource protection concerns, public need, and type of use.

Opposes the use of bicycles at the area / Supports the use of bicycles at the area.

These two comments obviously contradict one another. We provide recreation for diverse user groups. Persuant to the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*, bicycles, hiking, and horseback riding are allowed on these roads as well. From present staff observation, we have not witnessed a major interest for biking in the Texas County area, nor Gist Ranch specifically.

Hunting

Concern the area is over-crowded with hunters and has observed unsafe hunting practices.

Suggests increased and more visible enforcement activities.

Gist Ranch CA is 11,240 acres. Hunter distribution can be an issue on public hunting areas. Texas County has 754,560 acres that are covered by two conservation enforcement officers. Enforcement activities are primarily directed in the county by reports from the public. Any reports of illegal hunting activity or area regulation violations should be forwarded to local conservation agents or Operation Game Thief (1-800-392-1111) at the time the violations are observed.

Camping

Suggests adding camping areas to Gist Ranch.

Thank you for your comment. We will consider your request during infrastructure planning.

Shooting Range

Supports the addition of a pavilion at the shooting range.

Thank you for your comment and it will be considered in the future along with other infrastructure requests.

Appreciates the shooting range. It's clean and well-maintained.

Thank you for the compliment regarding the range. We take pride in our conservation areas and will continue to strive for excellence in keeping the area neat and orderly.

Other

Would like greater ADA accessibility at the area (specifically to off-road ponds/lakes).

We would like more specific information regarding your needs and locations for better accessibility.

Suggests adding gates or other methods to block vehicular access to unimproved logging roads and make-shift trails.

All roads on Gist Ranch are considered public roadways, unless otherwise posted.

Suggests allowing all-terrain vehicles on area roads outside of hunting season.

ATV use is restricted on the area. At this time, due to potential area user conflicts, there are no plans to allow ATVs on area roads.

Administrative Considerations

Chat roads are too prevalent at the area.

Some chat roads are necessary for resource management and public access. Area managers strive to meet the varied types of use needs from the public while maintaining a quality experience on the area for all users. Currently, there are no plans to reduce or expand the amount of chat roads on the area.

Suggests wider roads and more turnaround areas at parking and camping areas for vehicles with campers or trailers.

Road dimensions are established using standards developed for the type of road and it's primary use on the area. We will look at the number and dimensions of pull-offs along main roads to determine the feasibility of your request and if it is found to be inadequate, we will consider adding or expanding areas that will provide enough size to back a trailer into from the main road.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri watershed protection practice: 2014 Management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. Jefferson City, Missouri: The Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Nigh, T.A. et al. (December 2010 draft). *Ecological land types of Missouri: The interior Ozarks*.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

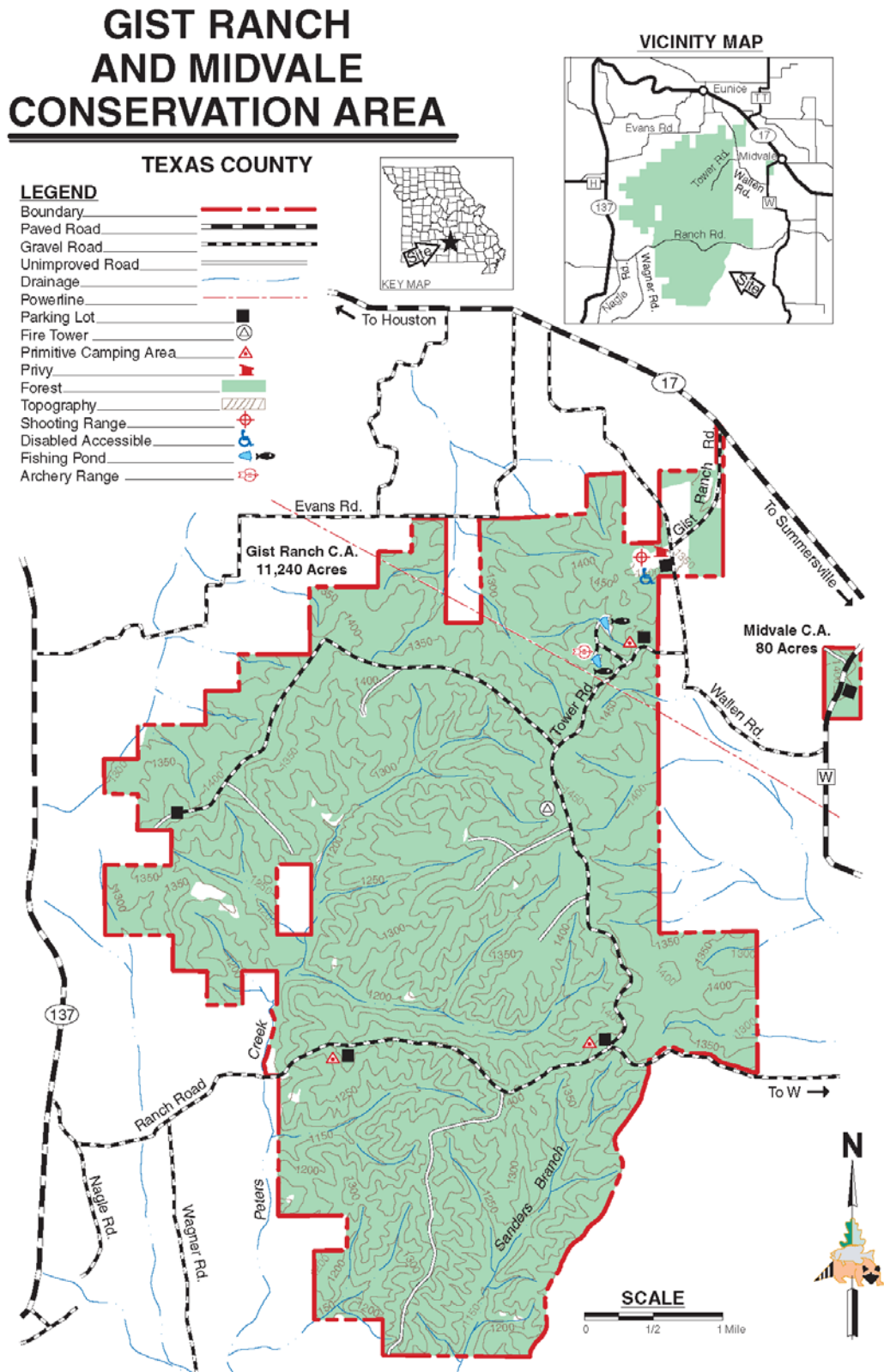


Figure 2: Aerial Map

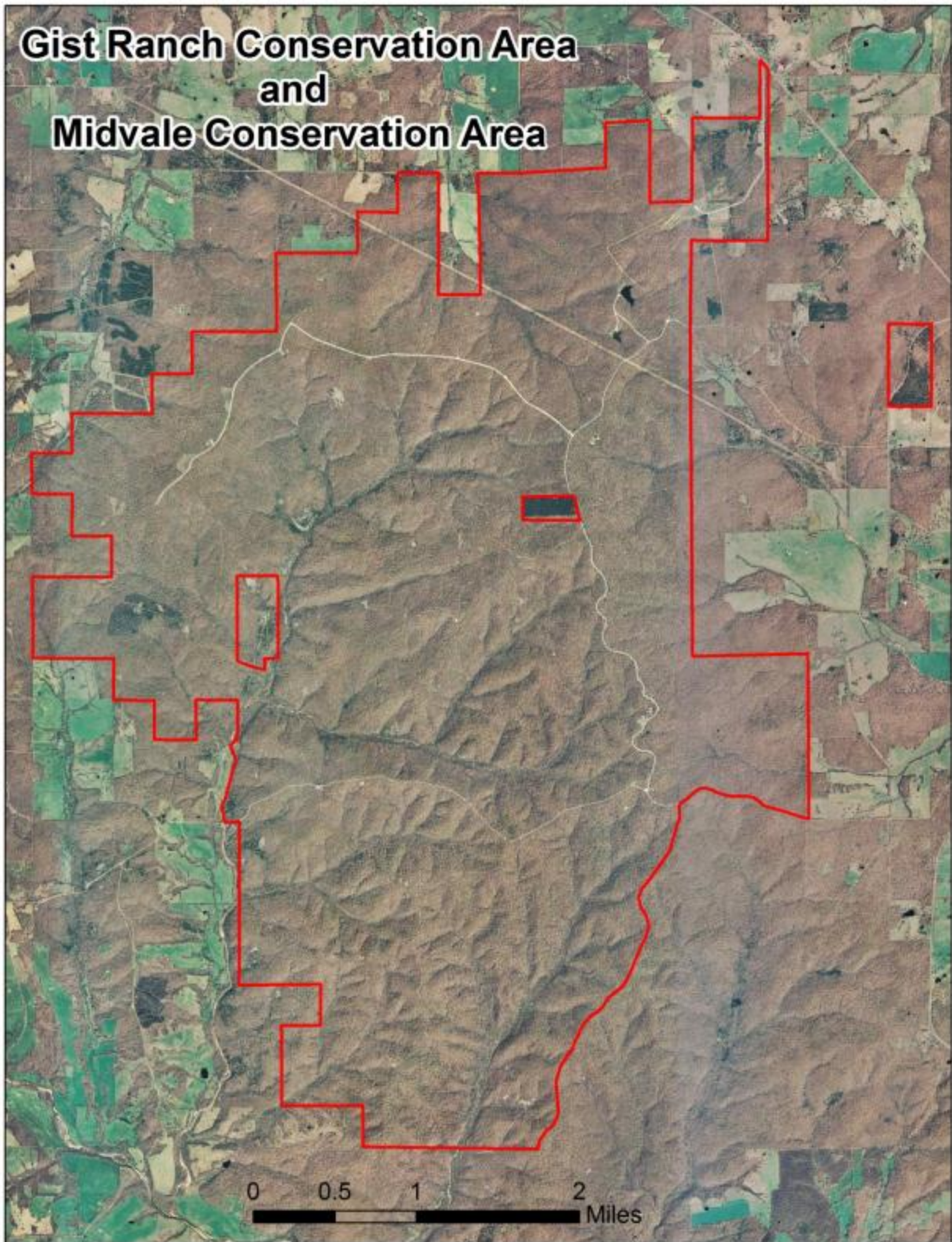
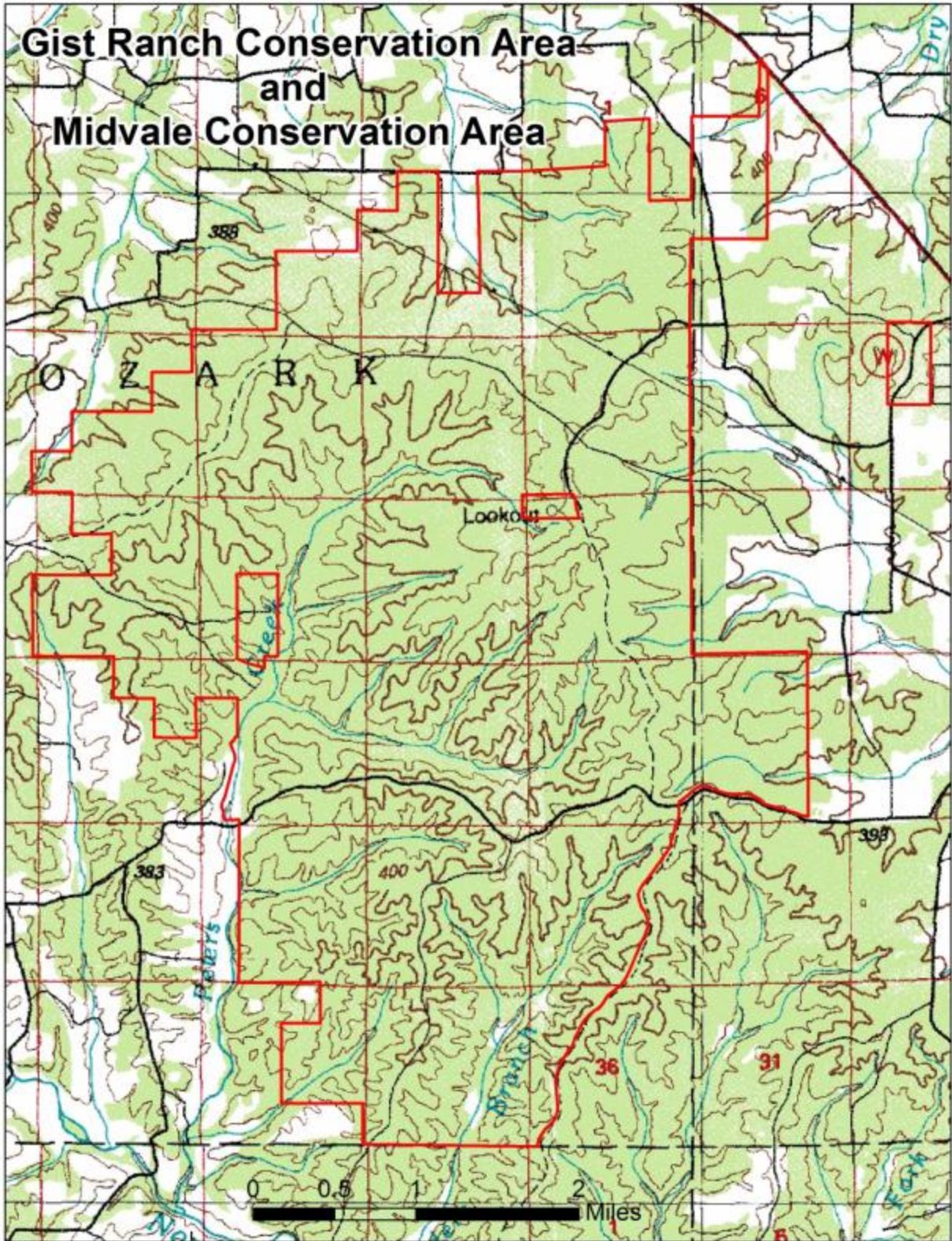


Figure 3: Topographic Map



Appendix A: Gist Ranch and Midvale Conservation Areas Management Plan Public Comments

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

<p>I like the idea of a large lake stocked annually. This along with the excellent hunting would make this a great draw. It might be worthwhile to have a camping area, maybe on both sides of the area.</p>
<p>Hard copy comment received 3/16/2015: This area was purchased with tax payer money but more of it is opened up with chat roads for the city hunter that's to lazy to walk. These roads are cutting through good hunting areas. The biggest thing I have a problem with is the stoppage of riding 4-wheelers on the trails that are already there. Trucks and Jeeps do more damage on soft ground because of their weight. I would like to be able to ride on all trails where other vehicles can go. The local hunter is having to take a back seat to the out of state and city people. U send out those fancy flyers all over pushing the local out.</p>
<p>I have carefully read the draft plan and am in full agreement with it. The addition of a large fishing lake will greatly improve the area as will improvement of access to more areas within the CA. I currently use the shooting range and a small pavilion would be a welcome enhancement. I don't currently hunt there because of over crowding of the easier access areas and observed careless and dangerous activities of some of the hunters. Enhanced and more visible enforcement of the wildlife code would be welcome. Thank you for the opportunity to view and comment on the draft plan.</p>
<p>Texas County is an underserved county in terms of equestrian trail riding opportunities on public land; it is part of the top priority area for equestrian trail development—ten counties in Southwest Central Missouri—in Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen's 2015 proposal for expanding public land trails. The Gist Ranch CA possesses many important desirable characteristics for multi-use trail development with permitted equestrian use. The soils, topography, and the area's huge size are conducive to trail development; access can be gained easily off hard-surface roads—Highways 17 and 137, and the shooting range is confined to the northeast corner making assurance of safety easily accomplished.</p> <p>SMMBCH recommends the development of 10-12 miles of multi-use trails on the Gist Ranch CA. SMMBCH offers our services (availability of volunteers permitting) to help decide on the best location and then clear and mark the trails.</p> <p>Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.</p>
<p>When the main road off of hwy 17 was put in it was wide enough for 2 lanes and graveled. Then someone(?) graded ditches on both sides making a high one lane road in the middle. At least it's one lane to me. Hunters with campers, family campers, riders with horsetrailer have a very,</p>

very hard time crossing one another without falling off the road. The road going North doesn't offer enough room to pull over campers or turn arounds. The only nice area is the site on the West end going to hwy 137, however the county road is so rough trailers have a hard time getting in. I would like to see more riding/walking/bike trails marked. A group of us at one time were wondering if the park manager would let us mark horse riding trails. (There are also Trail riding groups that I'm sure would help). Riders used the park years ago but it's probably overgrown by now. So, I would like to see wider roads, turn around spots, and parking/camping areas. The campfire rings at the West end are nice.

Thank you for letting me respond.

When the main road off of hwy 17 was put in it was wide enough for 2 lanes and graveled. Then someone(?) graded ditches on both sides making a high one lane road in the middle. At least it's one lane to me. Hunters with campers, family campers, riders with horsetrailers have a very, very hard time crossing one another without falling off the road. The road going North doesn't offer enough room to pull over campers or turn arounds. The only nice area is the site on the West end going to hwy 137, however the county road is so rough trailers have a hard time getting in. I would like to see more riding/walking/bike trails marked. A group of us at one time were wondering if the park manager would let us mark horse riding trails. (There are also Trail riding groups that I'm sure would help). Riders used the park years ago but it's probably overgrown by now. So, I would like to see wider roads, turn around spots, and parking/camping areas. The campfire rings at the West end are nice.

Thank you for letting me respond.

P.S. A fishing lake! That would be great! I haven't fished in years.

This would apply to any area...I am 75 with minor disability that leaves me unable to use much of any area because I cant get to it....like the off road ponds and lakes only the conservation trucks get to.

I really enjoy using the shooting range at Gist. It is always clean and in good repair. I have been very disappointed with the two fishing lakes at Gist though. I have fished there several times and sometimes don't even get a nibble using worms fishing from the shore. I have not caught a catfish there despite effort. Another fisherman told me that he had the same experiences. He said that he thought both lakes were "fished out" and he wondered if there were still any fish, to speak of, in these two lakes. I don't know if these two lakes are being stocked, and I have given up on taking my grandson fishing there. I was very hopeful that I would have a good fishing lake nearby, especially where we could fish for catfish. It also seems that these two lakes are choked with branches. I have trouble reeling in line without snagging so bad that I usually end up with the line breaking. I would love for these two fishing lakes to be evaluated, improved and regularly stocked. Thank you for allowing me to comment on this. Our department is the best anywhere! Sincerely,

Shortly after MDC purchased Gist Ranch, it was closed to ATV's. I was told by the local MDC office in Houston the reason was during deer and turkey season the ATV's were a nuisance to hunters which I can understand. However, after deer and turkey season why can't ATV's be allowed on the roads inside Gist Ranch. Local people are deprived of enjoying the ranch's beauty on ATV's. 99.9% of ATVers do not destroy the property. My fathers land joined the ranch south of Eunice and I enjoy traveling the roads within it's boundaries and would enjoy it better if allowed to travel the roads on my ATV. Please consider changing the ATV policy by allowing ATV's on Gist Ranch except during deer firearm season and turkey firearm season.

Thank you

Handwritten comment (Received 3/23/2015): The areas provide a great resource to the public. The Gist Shooting Range is a huge benefit as well. I feel larger bodies of water (for fishing) would be welcome by the general public. Glad to see MDC managing this piece of real estate for wildlife. Keep up the good work.

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking....

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous:

http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

Regarding Management Objective 2 to enforce Wildlife Code and other state statutes:

I encourage MDC to block unimproved logging roads and make-shift trails into the Gist Ranch to vehicular traffic. By blocking or gating these access points, allow better management and control of recreational activities and help limit opportunities for Wildlife Code violations and trespass onto private lands.

Handwritten comment (Received 3/20/2015): On the south slopes maybe we could put some small game plots to get quail and maybe some grouse started.

Handwritten comment (Received 3/26/2015): I have done Forestry improvement work for Mark Twain Forest Department Fort Wood Forestry Department and MO Conservation Department. Several thousand acres all together the timber management is fine they seem to know what their doing. On the wildlife side I would be careful with fire a setting turkey needs cover water close by she can find enough insects to feed the poults. If digging a pond in oak timber you need to clear a strip around the pond set it in pine to catch the leaves from going in the pond. Also I would cut when the leaves were out. They make good cover for nesting turkeys the deer and other wildlife seem to be doing OK. The quail I have no complaints with the MDC staff they are doing fine. I voted for the MDC tax and would do so again.

You all have a good day

Sincerely

I applaud your plan. I have known this area for 40 years. The plan for a fishing lake 20 acres is super. Somewhere in Pad-a-long hollow?

Perhaps in the future some hiking/horseback trails along old logging roads. This will keep all the interesting areas accessible.

Thank you