

# Urban Wild Acres of the Kansas City Region

Liberty Bend Conservation Area  
Lipton Conservation Area  
Maple Woods Natural Area  
Rush Creek Conservation Area  
Saeger Woods Conservation Area  
Walnut Woods Conservation Area  
White Alloe Creek Conservation Area

## Ten Year Area Management Plan FY2014–FY2023



*Jusi B. Allen*

Forestry Division Chief

*7-18-14*

Date

*Battson Warren*

Wildlife Division Chief

*7/31/14*

Date

## Metro Conservation Areas Management Plan Approval Page

### PLANNING TEAM

Charles Conner, Urban Forester

Jake Allman, Fisheries Management Biologist

Joe DeBold, Urban Wildlife Biologist

Larry Rizzo, Natural History Biologist

Brian Bartlett, Conservation Agent

Stacey Davis, Discovery Center Manager

Paul Lowry, Private Land Conservationist

Paul Whitsell, Resource Forester

### KANSAS CITY REGION

RCT Chair

  
Signature

  
Date

### MISSOURI RIVER UNIT

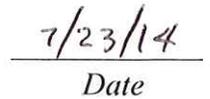
Forestry Unit Chief

  
Signature

  
Date

Wildlife Unit Chief

  
Signature

  
Date

## OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
Liberty Bend CA	9726	1997	140	Clay	Forestry	Forestry
Lipton CA	9713	1997	34	Jackson	Forestry	Leased to City of Independence
Maple Woods NA	7909	1978	39	Clay	Forestry	Leased to City of Gladstone
Rush Creek CA	7834	2000	42	Clay	Wildlife	Leased to Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary
Saeger Woods CA	7915	1979	20	Jackson	Wildlife	Wildlife Division
Walnut Woods CA	8040	1980	65	Clay	Forestry	Forestry and volunteer agreement with Earth Riders Trail Association (ERTA) for multi-use trail maintenance
White Alloe Creek CA	9730	1997	66	Platte	Forestry	Leased to City of Parkville

### Statements of Purpose:

#### A. Strategy Direction

The Urban Wild Acres of the Kansas City Region will be managed to provide areas of nature enjoyment for urban residents, provide places to pursue conservation education, provide urban wildlife habitat, and conserve open space in partnership with local governing bodies.

#### B. Desired Future Conditions

Manage Urban Wild Acres for healthy natural communities, functioning stream corridors, and stable wildlife populations. Create opportunities for quality experiences for area users that are compatible with resource management strategies.

**C. Federal Aid Statement**

Maple Woods Natural Area was acquired with Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars to provide land or facilities for public outdoor recreation.

**GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS**

**I. Special Considerations**

Area	Priority Area	Natural Area	Other
Liberty Bend CA	None	None	None
Lipton CA	None	None	None
Maple Woods NA	None	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Rush Creek CA	None	None	None
Saeger Woods CA	Yes <sup>1</sup>	None	None
Walnut Woods CA	None	None	None
White Alloe Creek CA	None	None	None

<sup>1</sup> In Upper Blue River Conservation Opportunity Area

<sup>2</sup> Maple Woods Natural Area (18 acres)

<sup>3</sup> Maple Woods NA is a registered National Natural Landmark.

**II. Important Natural Features and Resources**

Area	Species of Conservation Concern	Caves	Springs
Liberty Bend CA	None	None	None
Lipton CA	None	None	None
Maple Woods NA	None	None	None
Rush Creek CA	None	None	None
Saeger Woods CA	Yes <sup>1</sup>	None	None
Walnut Woods CA	None	None	None
White Alloe Creek CA	None	None	None

<sup>1</sup> 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.

**III. Existing Infrastructure**

Area	Parking Lots	Trails	Other
Liberty Bend	0	1 mile natural surface	0.75 mile mowed boundary service
Lipton	0	0.5 mile gravel	None
Maple Woods	1	1.4 mile natural surface	None

Rush Creek	0	0.3 mile ADA; 1.4 mile natural surface	Parking via Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary
Saeger Woods	0	0	None
Walnut Woods	0	3 mile multi-use (hiking & biking)	None
White Alloe Creek	0	3 mile hiking (Shared with Parkville)	Parking via city lot

**IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**

Area	Deed Restrictions	Federal Interest	Easements	Cultural Resources	Hazards Hazardous Material	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues
Liberty Bend	Area access and parking on La Benite Park, owned by Sugar Creek	Yes <sup>1</sup>	None	None	None	None	None
Lipton	None	Yes <sup>1</sup>	2 overhead electric transmission, 1 sewer to Independence	Yes <sup>3</sup>	None	None	Establishing accurate, identifiable boundary markers is a priority.
Maple Woods	None	Yes <sup>2</sup>	1 Sewer to Gladstone, 1 electric transmission to KCP&L	None	None	None	None
Rush Creek	None	Yes <sup>1</sup>	1 overhead electric transmission, 1 sewer to Liberty	Yes <sup>3</sup>	None	None	None
Saeger Woods	None	Yes <sup>1</sup>	None	Yes <sup>3</sup>	None	Yes <sup>4</sup>	None
Walnut Woods	None	Yes <sup>1</sup>	None	Yes <sup>3</sup>	None	None	None
White Alloe Creek	None	Yes <sup>1</sup>	None	None	None	None	None

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> This land must provide land/facilities for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity. Federal funds may also 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 purposes for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

<sup>3</sup> Records kept with MDC Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the MDC Resource Policy Manual.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

The Urban Wild Acres areas are mostly a forest/woodland natural community, but a few contain grassland, old field, and shrubland components. All the Urban Wild Acres have invasive species issues including shrub honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and *Sericia lespedeza*. Five of these areas are managed through partnerships which can limit the type of management that can be done based on restrictions as well as limited time, staff, and funds.

#### **Challenges and Opportunities**

- 1) Managing the continued threat of invasive species on all areas.
- 2) Maintaining ongoing efforts to assess and manage dead and dying trees on areas.
- 3) Active management is limited due to constraints imposed by urbanization.
- 4) Restricted access to areas, including Walnut Woods, Rush Creek, Saeger Woods, White Alloe Creek CAs.
- 5) Maintaining the existing natural communities occurring on all areas.

**Management Objective 1:** Invasive species control or suppression.

**Strategy 1:** Use available management techniques to control/suppress invasive or exotic species where practical on all areas.

**Strategy 2:** Look for grant, partnership, or volunteer opportunities to increase the amount of invasive species control measures on the Urban Wild Acres areas.

**Management Objective 2:** Assess and manage dead and dying trees on area.

**Strategy 1:** Staff and partners will periodically inspect wooded portions along trails for dead and dying trees and remove those that have the potential to impact area infrastructure.

**Management Objective 3:** Set back woody succession on open lands on the prairie portion of Saeger Woods CA and throughout Rush Creek CA.

**Strategy 1:** Use available management techniques to set back woody succession.

**Management Objective 4:** Encourage woody succession on Lipton and Liberty Bend Conservation Areas.

**Strategy 1:** Use available management techniques to encourage vegetative succession.

## VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

### Challenges and Opportunities

- 1) The increase in storm water runoff due to urbanization negatively impacts stream resources and requires proper management of lands beyond conservation area boundaries.

**Management Objective 1:** Maintain healthy riparian corridors.

**Strategy 1:** Limit soil disturbance in riparian corridors on all areas.

**Strategy 2:** Coordinate with MDC Community Conservation program to work with surrounding communities to improve storm water runoff and promote conservation development.

## VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Many of these areas are used for walking, hiking, or wildlife viewing given their trail systems and proximity to residential areas and their connectivity to adjacent city or county parks. Rush Creek CA and White Alloe Creek CA are used as conservation education sites for school or youth groups by the managing partner. Hunting is allowed on Liberty Bend CA and a managed deer hunt occurs on Saeger Woods, but hunting is prohibited on the other four areas.

### Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Potential for expanding and/or improving existing trail systems.
- 2) Opportunities for consumptive use are limited due to impacts of urbanization that limit or prevent the harvest of game species.
- 3) Challenge: Public use is constrained by limited direct access to Walnut Woods, Rush Creek, Saeger Woods, and White Alloe Creek CA's

**Management Objective 1:** Evaluate current trail system for potential improvements and expansion.

**Strategy 1:** Create a multi-purpose use trail on Saeger Woods CA allowing horseback riding.

**Strategy 2:** Develop partnership with local riding club to provide trail maintenance.

**Strategy 3:** Partner with City of Independence to pave existing trail and new through-trail at Lipton CA.

**Management Objective 2:** Explore opportunities to expand consumptive use opportunities.

**Strategy 1:** Assess harvestable wildlife populations on these areas to determine the feasibility for hunting.

**Strategy 2:** Work with partners and neighbors to identify opportunities that permit and enhance consumptive recreation activities.

**Management Objective 3:** Explore opportunities to improve area access.

**Strategy 1:** Work with existing partners to expand area access where practical and seek new partners where available to augment existing access.

## VIII. Administrative Considerations

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

- 1) Partnerships enhance MDC management capabilities by facilitating management and access for public use.
- 2) Boundary encroachment from neighboring landowners requires constant monitoring.

**Management Objective 1:** Explore opportunities to transfer ownership to current partners.

**Strategy 1:** Investigate transfer of Rush Creek CA to Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary.

**Strategy 2:** Investigate transfer of Lipton CA to City of Independence.

**Management Objective 2:** Maintain agreements with partners that facilitate access to all areas and provide area maintenance and resource management.

**Management Objective 3:** Monitor boundary encroachment as needed and requests land surveys when necessary and appropriate to resolve disputes.

**Lands Proposed for Acquisition:** None

## **MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE**

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

## **APPENDICES**

Public Input Summary

Draft Urban Wild Acres of Kansas City Public Comments

### **Maps:**

Appendix 1: Liberty Bend Conservation Area Background

Appendix 2: Liberty Bend Conservation Area Map

Appendix 3: Lipton Conservation Area Background

Appendix 4: Lipton Conservation Area Map

Appendix 5: Maple Woods Natural Area Background

Appendix 6: Maple Woods Natural Area Map

Appendix 7: Rush Creek Conservation Area Background

Appendix 8: Rush Creek Conservation Area Map

Appendix 9: Saeger Woods Conservation Area Background

Appendix 10: Saeger Woods Conservation Area Map

Appendix 11: Walnut Woods Conservation Area Background

Appendix 12: Walnut Woods Conservation Area Map

Appendix 13: Walnut Woods Mt. Biking and Hiking Trails Map

Appendix 14: White Alloe Creek Conservation Area Background

Appendix 15: White Alloe Creek Conservation Area Map

### **Public Input Summary:**

The draft Urban Wild Acres of Kansas City Management Plan was available for a public comment period February 1 – 28, 2014. The Missouri Department of Conservation received comments from three respondents (Appendix A). The Urban Wild Acres of Kansas City 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 Urban Wild Acres of Kansas City public comment period

### **Suggests improving camping areas on conservation areas.**

MDC provides primitive camping on some conservation areas to facilitate overnight use of our areas. It is not our intention to provide full service camping areas as such opportunities are provided at Missouri State Parks and some Federally managed recreation areas. Nor, do we wish to compete with privately owned and operated campgrounds.

**Supports adding to and improving trails, including having horseback riders involved in maintaining trails.**

This trail is not yet developed and will be developed with the cooperation of Saddle & Sirloin equestrian club nearby, who will also provide maintenance assistance. Horseback riders already use Saeger Woods Conservation Area and adjoining city and county park lands. The purpose of the trail will be to direct usage to one specific path and keep use away from sensitive areas such as the prairie on the conservation area.

**Supports prairie restoration at any site that was formerly prairie.**

MDC also supports prairie restoration whenever and wherever possible, including on both conservation areas and private land. Major efforts have been conducted and are ongoing to restore, preserve, and enhance natural prairie ecosystems throughout the State, and several large prairie complexes in the Kansas City Region receive high priority management emphasis.

**Appendix A. Draft Urban Wild Acres of Kansas City Management Plan Public Comments**

Received during public comment period (February 1 - 28, 2014)

Please improve designated camping areas on conservation lands. Using Harmony Mission as an example, the designated camping area is no more than a small gravel lot in an open field. It seems that most of the designated camping areas I have noted are very stark and not aesthetically pleasing at all. I understand the concept of not making them too attractive, thus encouraging long-term camping, but the present camping sites at most areas are what I consider very sub-standard.

I realize that the K.C. areas probably will not have camping areas because of size, location, and area-use, but I ask that you please submit my comments to appropriate parties that have the power to address the issue of improving camping areas, if just slightly, on conservation areas.

Thank you for your concern.

The most important thing in all of these areas is the trail system. Adding to and improving trails is a great idea for all involved. If there is to be a multi-use trail involving horseback riders, be certain they will help maintain the trail. Horses cause damage and increase erosion problems and most hikers do not enjoy sharing a trail with them. If possible allow them to have their own trails.

Thank you for all your conservation efforts. Please include Prairie restoration if any sites were historically a prairie. Prairies are not specifically listed in the mission of the Conservation Department. Prairies should have equal status with woodlands since they were a significant part of our landscape.

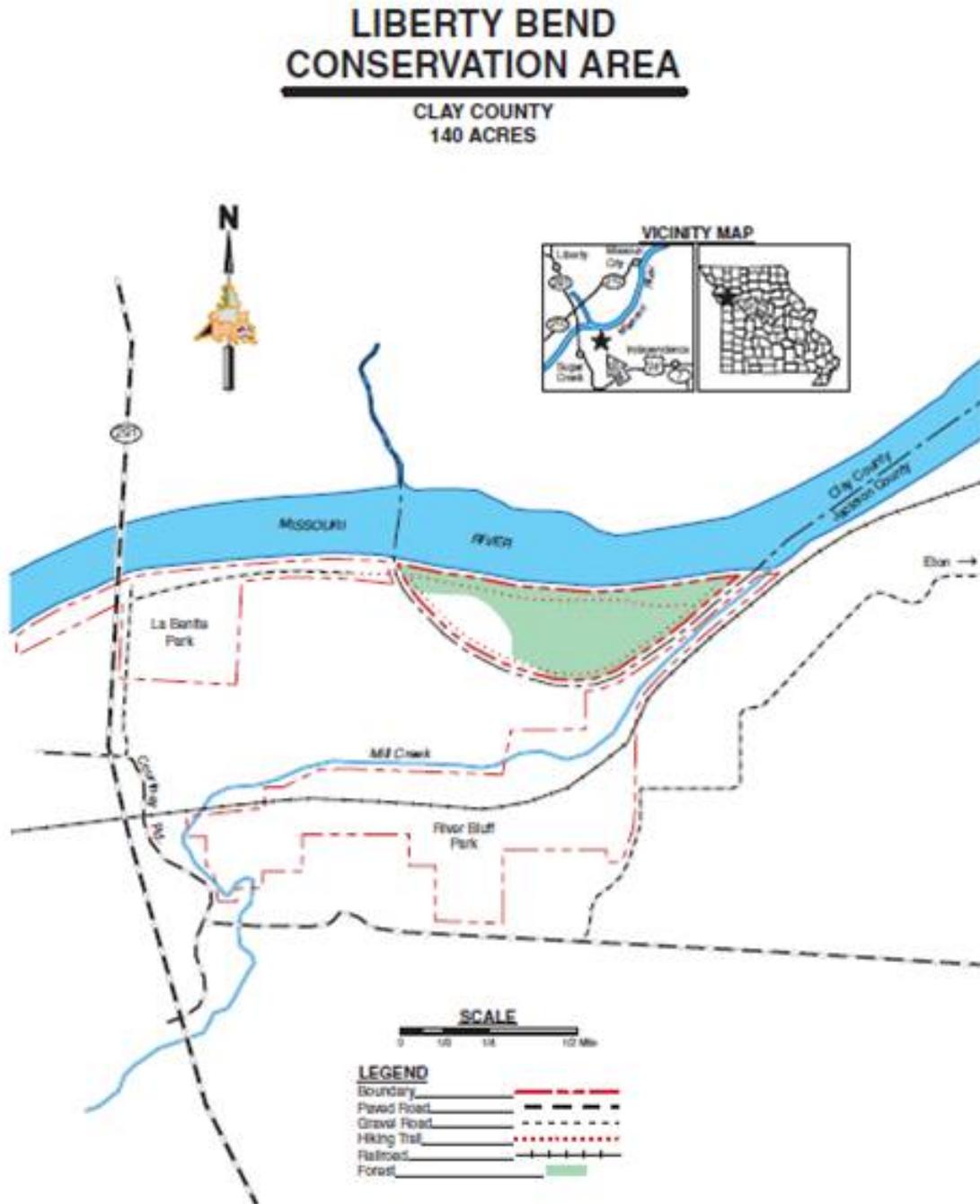
**Appendix 1: Liberty Bend CA Area Background**

Liberty Bend Conservation Area was acquired in in 1997. This 140 acre tract is located in Clay County near the bridge on Hwy 291 that goes over the Missouri River. The area is located in the portion of Clay County that is south of the Missouri River. Access to the area is from La Benite Park in Sugar Creek on the east side of Highway 291. Forestry Division is responsible for the administration, maintenance, and natural resource management of the area. The majority of the area is bottomland forest with a 20-acre old field that is regenerating back to forest. The management focus is to preserve this bottomland forest and maintain a trail so area users can visit the area to enjoy activities such as hiking, bird viewing, mushroom hunting, fishing, trapping, and hunting.

**Current Land and Water Types**

<b>Land/Water Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Feet</b>	<b>% of Area</b>
Bottomland/Riparian Forest	114		81
Old Field	26		19
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream Frontage		5280	

## Appendix 2: Liberty Bend CA Area Map



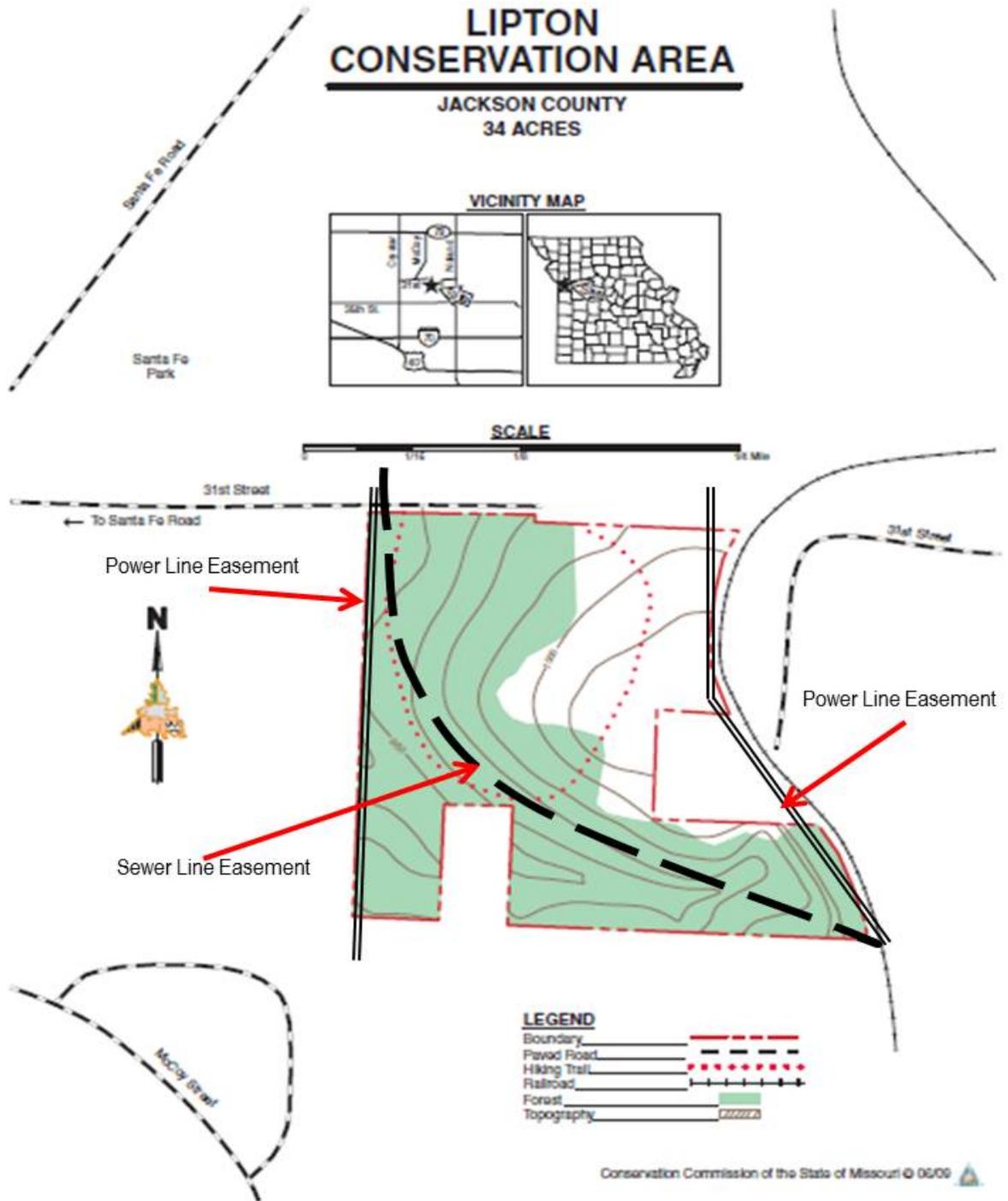
### Appendix 3: Lipton CA Area Background

These 34 acres were acquired by the Conservation Department in 1997 from the Thomas J. Lipton Company, which donated half the appraised value of the land. The area adjoins Independence Parks & Recreation Department’s Santa Fe Park. The City of Independence maintains the area through a lease agreement with the Department. The area is managed for outdoor recreation activities and wildlife habitat, with the majority of efforts spent on invasive species suppression.

#### Current Land and Water Types

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Woodland	20		59
Old Field	14		41
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream Frontage		<b>0</b>	

### Appendix 4: Lipton CA Area Map



**Appendix 5: Maple Woods Natural Area Background**

The 39-acre Maple Woods Natural Area was acquired by the Conservation Department in 1978 and is maintained by the City of Gladstone through a lease agreement. Half of the purchase price was funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund of the National Park Service. Eighteen acres of the Area are a designated Natural Area and a registered National Natural Landmark by the National Park Service. The area is managed to maintain the integrity of the Natural Area with emphasis on forest species and compatible recreational opportunities.

**Current Land and Water Types**

<b>Land/Water Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Feet</b>	<b>% of Area</b>
Woodland	36		92
Old Field	3		8
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream frontage		845	



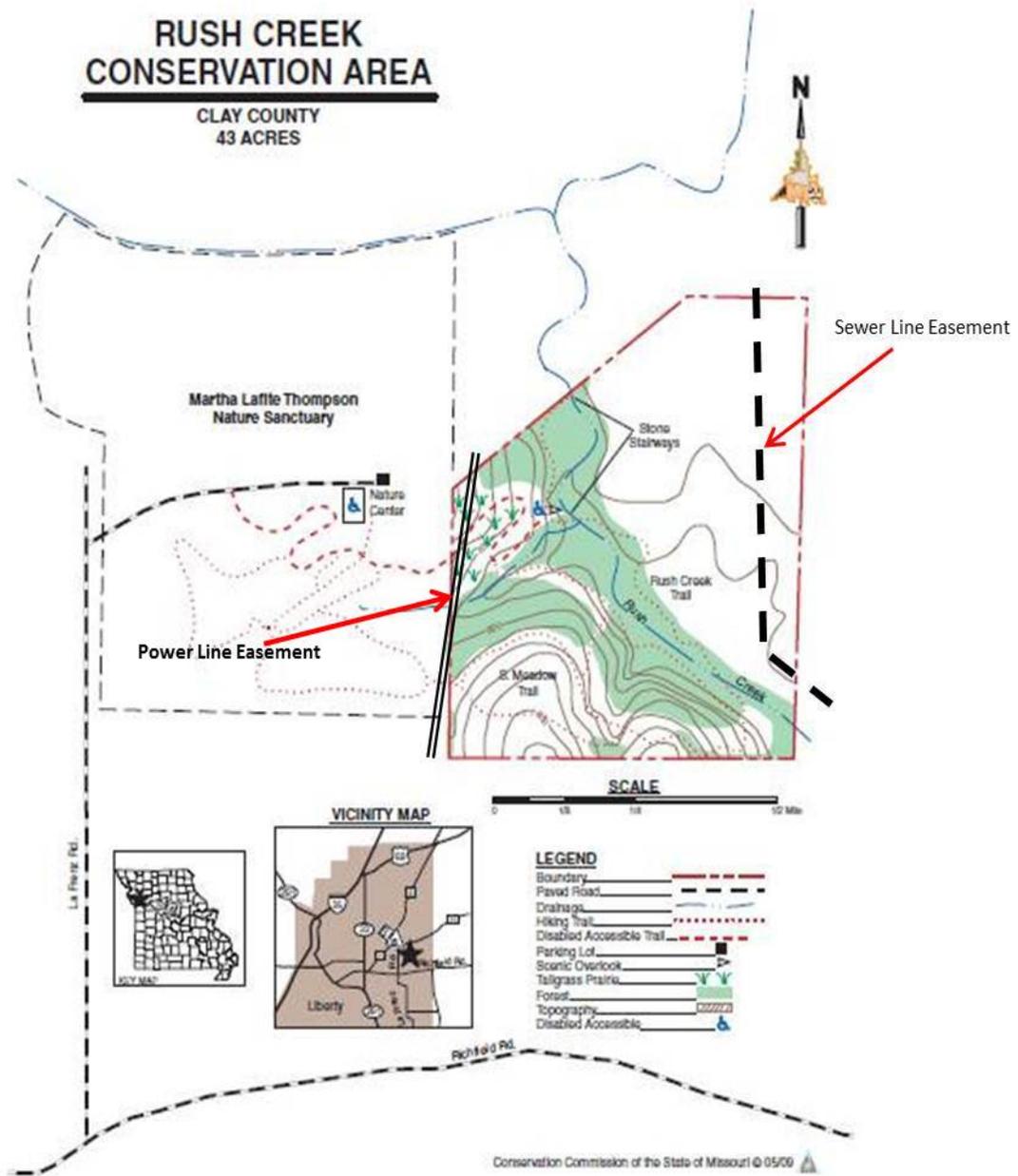
## Appendix 7: Rush Creek Conservation Area Background

This 42-acre area located in Liberty, Missouri, was acquired by the Conservation Department in 2000. The Rush Creek CA adjoins the Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary and is managed by the Nature Center's staff for maintenance and management protocols. The area is managed primarily for woodland habitat, but also some grassland wildlife habitat. Most area efforts have been dedicated to the suppression and eradication of invasive species. Outdoor recreation opportunities include hiking, walking, birding, youth education and outdoor/indoor public workshops provided by the Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary. Paved trails are also present and meet ADA specifications.

### Current Land and Water Types

<b>Land/Water Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Feet</b>	<b>% of Area</b>
Woodland	22		52
Old Field	20		48
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream frontage		0	

### Appendix 8: Rush Creek Conservation Area Map



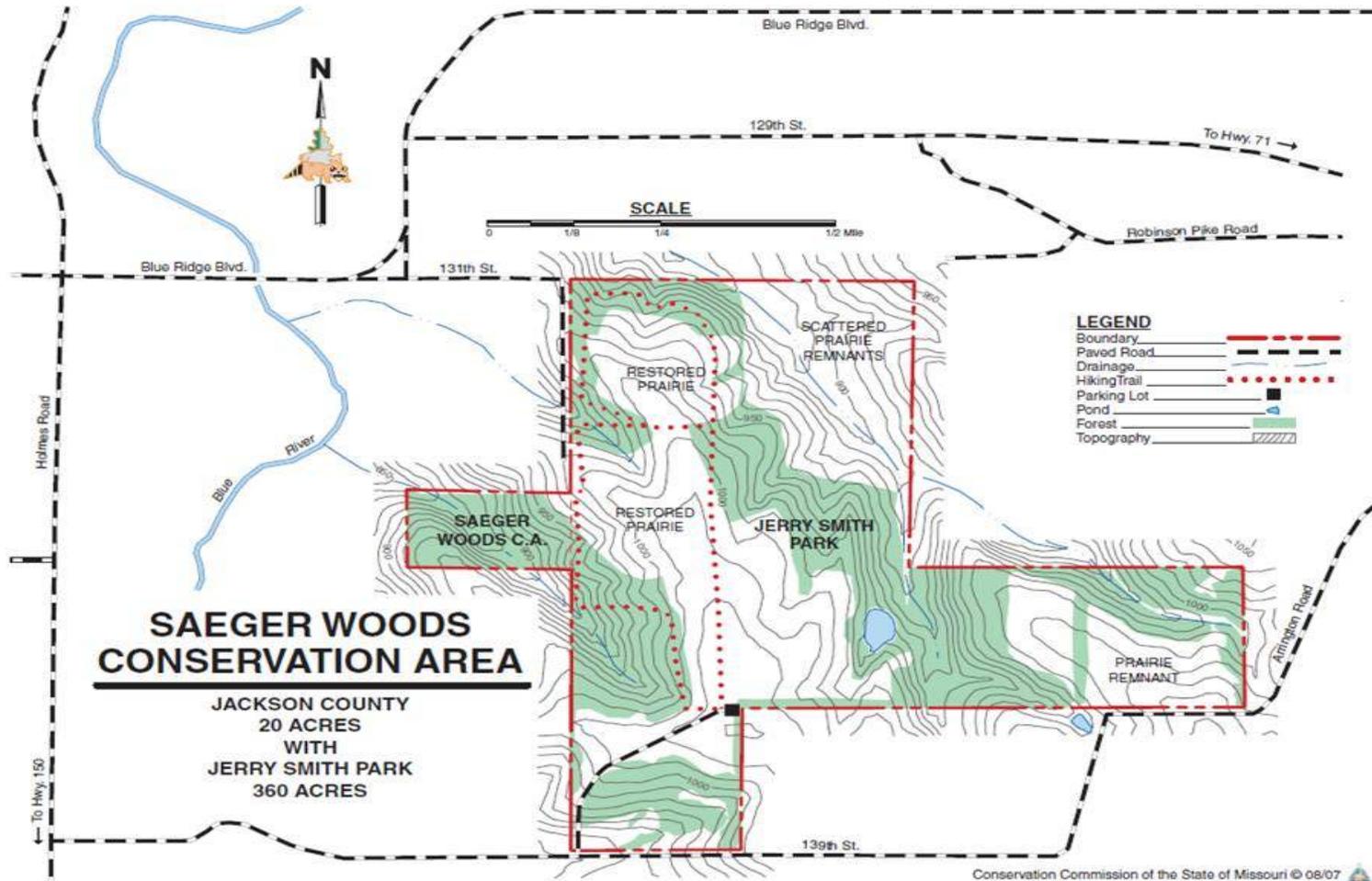
**Appendix 9: Saeger Woods Conservation Area Background**

This 20-acre area was acquired by the Department of Conservation in 1979. Saeger Woods adjoins Jackson County Park’s Blue River Parkway to the west and Kansas City Park’s Jerry Smith Park to the east. Creating a public land bridge between these entities was an important factor in the acquisition of this property along with protecting a small remnant prairie in the northeast corner of the area. Aside from the approximately two acres of prairie, the remainder of the area is forested.

**Current Land and Water Types**

<b>Land/Water Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Feet</b>	<b>% of Area</b>
Woodland/ Forest	18		90
Grassland/ Prairie	2		10
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>100</b>
Stream Frontage		<b>0</b>	

# Appendix 10: Saeger Woods Conservation Area Map



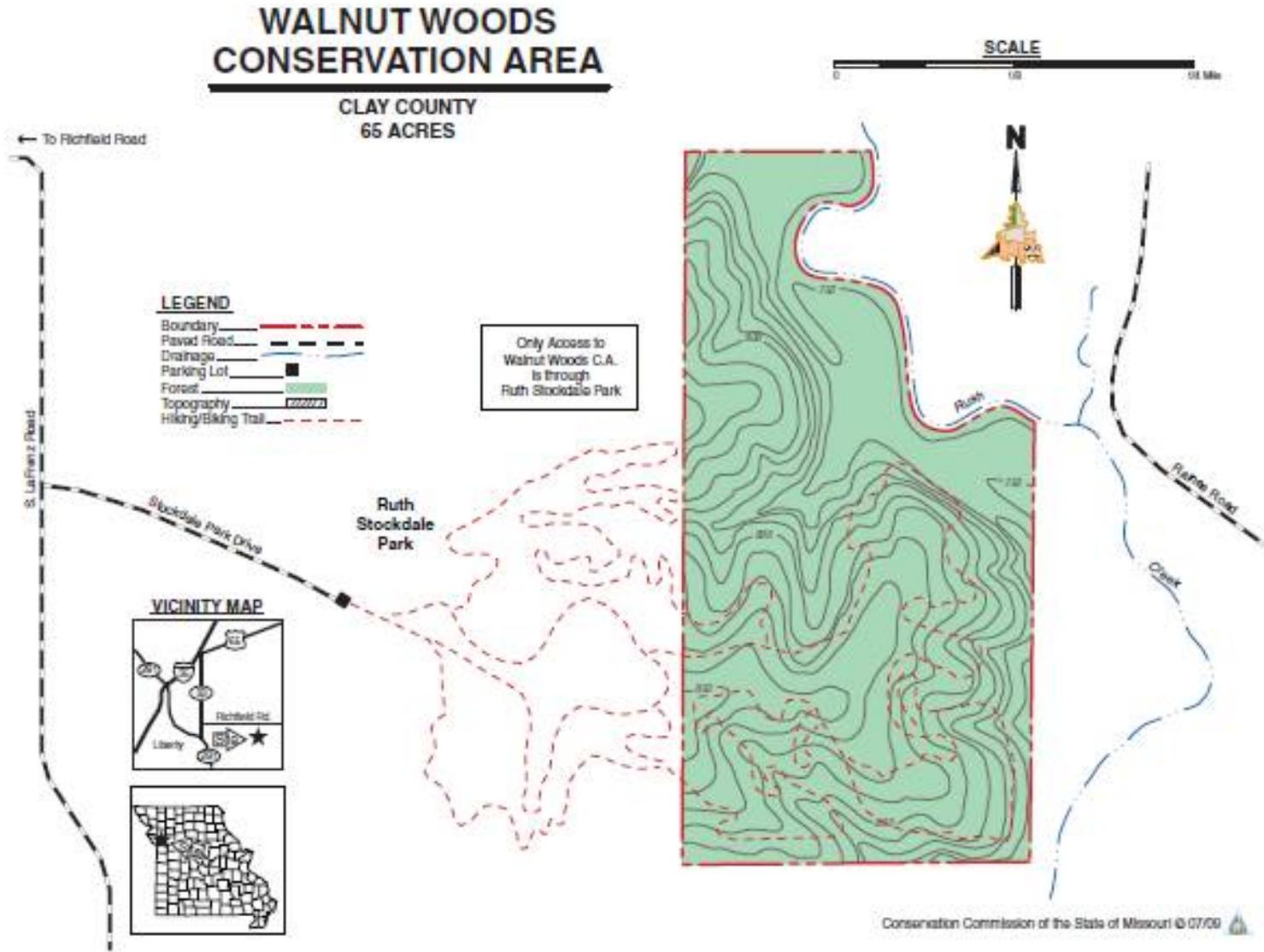
## Appendix 11: Walnut Woods Conservation Area Background

This 65-acre area was purchased by the Conservation Department in 1980. The Area adjoins and is accessed through the City of Liberty Parks Department's Ruth Stockdale Park. Trails are maintained through an agreement with Earth Riders Trail Association (ERTA). The Area is entirely wooded and managed for wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation activities.

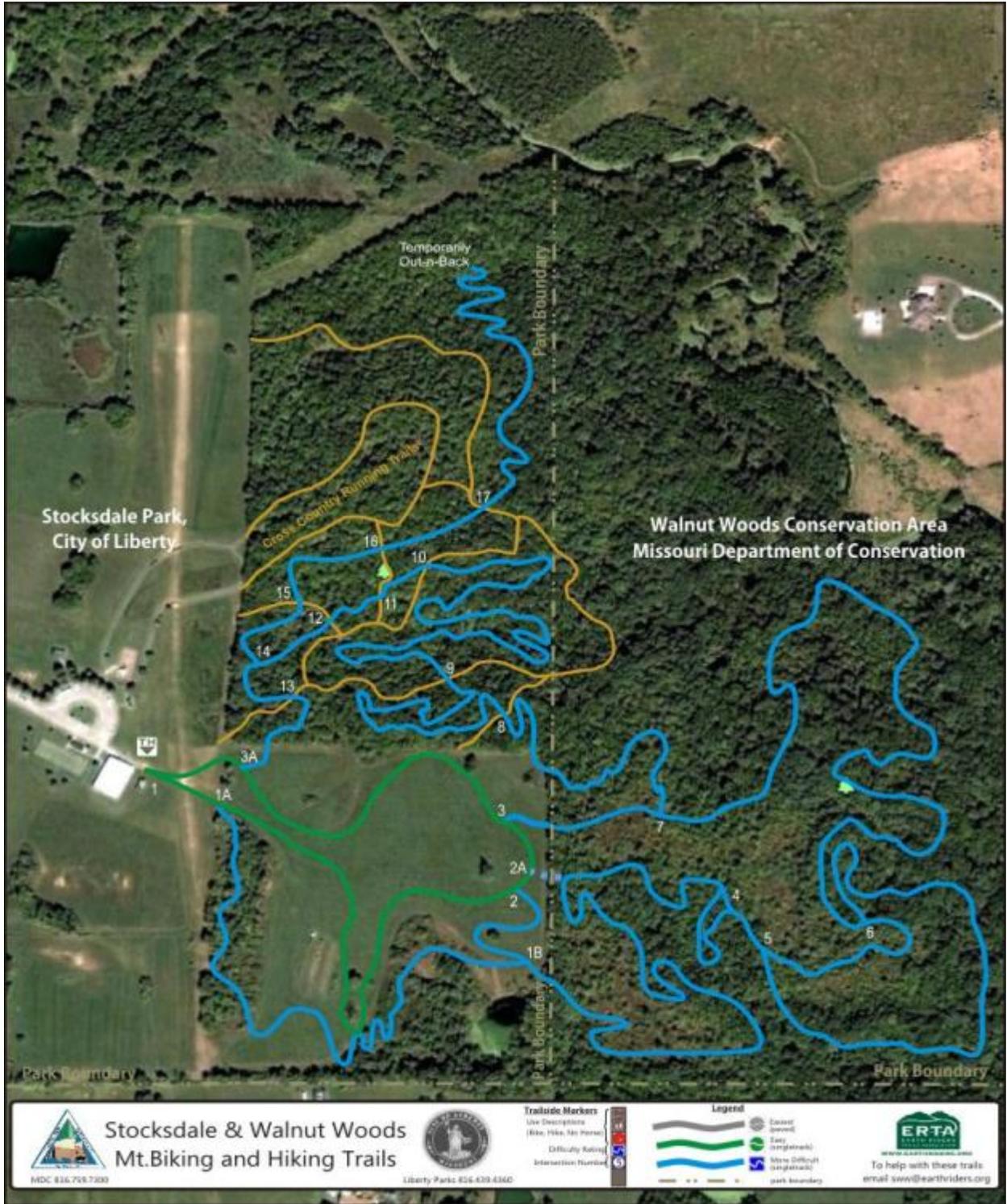
### Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Feet	% of Area
Woodland	65		100
Stream frontage		2112	

# Appendix 12: Walnut Woods Conservation Area Map



**Appendix 13: Walnut Woods Mt. Biking and Hiking Trails Map**



**Appendix 14: White Alloe Creek Conservation Area Background**

This 66-acre area was acquired by the Conservation department in 1997. It adjoins the City of Parkville’s Parkville Nature Sanctuary and is managed by the city through a lease agreement. The area is completely wooded and is managed for woodland wildlife habitat and compatible outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Current Land and Water Types**

<b>Land/Water Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Feet</b>	<b>% of Area</b>
Woodland	66		100
Stream Frontage		0	

Appendix 15: White Alloe Creek Conservation Area Map

