

Input Sought For MDC Conservation Area Plans

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wants to know what Missourians think about its nearly 1,000 conservation areas around the state. MDC is in the multi-year process of updating management plans for conservation areas and invites public comments. Draft plans for several conservation areas in northwest Missouri will be available for public comment July 1 through July 30.

To preview draft management plans and share comments online, visit www.mdc.mo.gov/areaplans.

The plans now available for comment include:

- **Buchanan County Conservation Areas Management Plan** - The Buchanan County Conservation Areas contain grasslands and woodlands that are managed for game and non-game wildlife and their habitat. This plan includes the Agency, Arthur Dupree, Bee Creek, Wilfrid V. and Anna C. Kneib Memorial, Sunbridge Hills and Caroline Sheridan Logan Memorial Conservation Areas.
- **Elam Bend Conservation Area Management Plan** - The Elam Bend Conservation Area provides a river-oriented, multiple-use area for the public on an unchannelized portion of the upper Grand River. This 1,483-acre area contains habitat for game and non-game wildlife; a public shooting range; three fishable ponds and primitive camping.
- **Loess Hill Prairies Management Plan** - The Loess Hill Prairies are home to species of conservation concern that depend upon the loess hill prairie and its surrounding forests and woodlands. This plan includes Brickyard Hill, Jamerson C. McCormack and Star School Hill Prairie Conservation Areas. The areas provide the public with a 13-acre fishing lake, more than six miles of hiking trails and primitive camping.

Statewide, MDC conservation areas cover almost one million public acres for the purpose of restoring and conserving forest, fish and wildlife resources, and for providing opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources. Most Missourians are within a 30-minute drive of an MDC conservation area.

"Missourians care about conservation and use conservation areas for many different reasons," said MDC Director Bob Ziehmer. "These areas help people discover nature through various activities, and help make Missouri a great place to hunt, fish, and enjoy other outdoor activities. We want to know how conservation areas are important to Missourians. Encouraging public comments on Conservation Area Management Plans is part of MDC's ongoing efforts of working for and with Missourians to sustain healthy forests, fish and wildlife."

Conservation Area Management Plans focus on natural resource management and public use on conservation areas. The plans do not address regulations on hunting, fishing and other area uses, which are set by the Conservation Commission and enforced under the Wildlife Code of Missouri. MDC will consider all ideas received and will work to balance the issues and interests identified with the responsibility of managing areas for the present and future benefits to forest, fish, wildlife, and people. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into area plans and on how to best incorporate them will be based on the property's purpose, its physical and biological conditions and capabilities, the best roles of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of MDC staff.