

**J. Thad Ray Memorial
Wildlife Area
&
Julian Steyermark Woods
Conservation Area**

**Ten Year Area Management Plan
FY 2014-2023**



Lisa M. Allen
Forestry Division Chief

1-13-15
Date

**J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & Julian Steyermark Woods
Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page**

PLANNING TEAM

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Jamie Ebbesmeyer, Private Land Conservationist

NORTHEAST REGION

Shawn Gruber, NE RCT Chair  12/10/14
Signature Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

John Tuttle, Unit Chief  1/12/15
Signature Date

OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
J. Thad Ray MWA	7217	1971	148	Marion	Forestry	Forestry
Julian Steyermark Woods CA	7934	1979	73	Marion	Forestry	Forestry

Statements of Purpose:

The primary management emphasis for J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area (MWA) and Julian Steyermark Woods Conservation Area (CA) is to conserve the natural resources and provide outdoor recreational opportunities to the public.

A. Strategic Direction

Because these areas are within the Hannibal city limits, primary use of the areas is for recreation. Management will focus on maintaining areas to allow for public use and conserving species of conservation concern.

B. Desired Future Condition

These two areas are both within the city limits of Hannibal and should remain primarily forested.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

Area	Priority Area	Natural Area
J. Thad Ray MWA	None	None
Julian Steyermark Woods CA	None	None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

Area	Species of Conservation Concern	Caves	Springs	Other
J. Thad Ray MWA	Yes ¹	None	None	None
Julian Steyermark Woods CA	Yes ¹	None	None	Yes ²

¹ 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.

² Mesic Loess/Glacial Till Forest: State Rank (S3). Mixed hardwood forest with multiple vertical layers.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- J. Thad Ray MWA contains one parking lot on the south side of the area off Palmyra Road, and a pull-off parking area along the north side of U.S. Highway 61. There is a six bay, fenced storage facility used by various divisions to store equipment. The archery range on the area consists of a static range with four targets and a woods trail range consisting of 10 targets.
- Julian Steyermark Woods CA has one pull-off parking area along County Road 410.

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

Area	Deed Restrictions	Federal Interest	Easements	Cultural Resources	Hazards	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues
J. Thad Ray MWA	None	None	Yes ¹	None observed	None observed	None observed	None
Julian Steyermark Woods CA	None	None	None	None observed	None observed	None observed	None

¹Hannibal Board of Public Works, 1999

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The open land on J. Thad Ray MWA is comprised of grassland and two small food plots. Challenges associated with open land management include the area being located within the city limits of Hannibal and the overall reduction of invasive plants. The proximity to residential areas and a major highway increase the complexity when using prescribed fire as a management tool. There is no open land on Julian Steyermark Woods CA.
- 2) Both areas are located within the city limits of Hannibal. This along with high public use limits the opportunity for forest management.

Management Objective 1: Use farming practices to provide food and cover for area wildlife and control or eliminate invasive plants.

Strategy 1: Use mechanical and chemical control methods to treat invasive plants.

Strategy 2: Use Department staff and equipment to plant and maintain food plots.

Strategy 3: Use mowing, disking, and spraying to maintain the grassland.

Management Objective 2: Actively manage open-land habitat for wildlife.

Strategy 1: Use edge feathering and herbicide treatment to enhance edge habitat.

Strategy 2: Use mechanical disturbance and herbicide to promote early successional habitat. Over-seed disturbed areas with wheat and legumes.

Strategy 3: Use prescribed fire to remove woody plant species and promote native grasslands.

Management Objective 1: Maintain forested areas as old growth forests.

Strategy 1: Manage trees as old growth using an unmanaged approach to allow for preservation of natural processes.

Strategy 2: Continue to reduce the presence of bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, winged euonymus, sericea lespedeza, autumn olive, Japanese honeysuckle and other exotic/invasive plants on the CA's via herbicide applications.

Strategy 3: Visually observe the health of the trees within the forest for insect and disease issues. If major insect or disease issues occur, consider treatments to slow the spread on the area.

Strategy 4: Evaluate annually the need to remove dead or dying trees along trails or public use areas for safety of area users.

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Both areas have small sections (0.5 on J. Thad Ray MWA and 0.4 miles on Julian Steyermark Woods CA) of first-order, unnamed tributaries to Clear Creek. While the streams are ephemeral, they do provide important ecosystem functions and seasonal habitat for aquatic organisms.

Management Objective 1: Maintain a forested corridor along all streams.

Strategy 1: Maintain a forested corridor with a minimum width of 50 feet from the top of the stream bank.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Allow compatible use between hunting, target practice, nature viewing and hiking on the area.
- 2) Hunting is prohibited on Julian Steyermark Woods CA.

Management Objective 1: Provide quality archery hunting opportunities for game species on the area(s) by maintaining area facilities to provide user access and safety on J. Thad Ray MWA and pursue Conservation Commission approval to allow archery hunting on Julian Steyermark Woods CA.

Strategy 1: Maintain existing parking lots, field roads, and bulletin boards to facilitate use.

Strategy 2: Develop a regulation proposal regarding archery hunting on Julian Steyermark Woods CA.

Management Objective 2: Provide archery practice opportunities to meet the public's needs and interest on J. Thad Ray MWA.

Strategy 1: Maintain existing static and woods trail range to provide archery practice opportunities to the public.

Management Objective 3: Provide convenient and safe access for area users on Julian Steyermark Woods CA.

Strategy 1: Maintain current access path and hiking trail.

Strategy 2: Develop a proposal to recommend changing the hiking trail to a hiking and biking trail.

Strategy 3: Re-route sections of existing trail to allow for sustainability by reducing soil erosion and providing a more enjoyable user experience.

APPENDICES

Public Input Summary:

The draft J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & J. Steyermark Woods Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment June 1-30, 2014. The Department received comments from two respondents (Appendix 7). The J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & J. Steyermark Woods 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.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through the J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & J. Steyermark Woods Conservation Areas public comment period

Supports prairie and native habitat restoration.

The limited access due to terrain and proximity within the city of Hannibal make it difficult to manage the open fields that once existed on the ridge tops at Julian Steyermark Woods CA. Succession has allowed the old fields to return to a natural forest, which provide many benefits. The Area Planning Team will continue to manage these areas as forest.

Opposes proposal to allow archery hunting at Julian Steyermark Woods Conservation Area.

When considering a regulation change to allow archery hunting at Julian Steyermark Woods CA, the Area Plan Team will evaluate the interaction among user groups as well as the wildlife resources.

Suggests allowing bicycles on trails.

The Area Plan Team is evaluating the addition of bicycling on the existing trail at Julian Steyermark Woods CA and the effects that it will have on the other user groups as well as the fish, forest, and wildlife resources.

Likes improvements made to an eroding trail along the creek.

The Area Plan Team appreciates the comment on the trail improvement and will continue to manage the area for Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife, as well as for people to enjoy these natural resources.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: J. Thad Ray MWA Background

Appendix 2: J. Thad Ray MWA Area Map

Appendix 3: J. Thad Ray Land Type Map

Appendix 4: Julian Steyermark Woods CA Background

Appendix 5: Julian Steyermark Woods CA Area Map

Appendix 6: Julian Steyermark Woods Land Type Map

Appendix 7: Draft J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area & J. Steyermark Woods Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

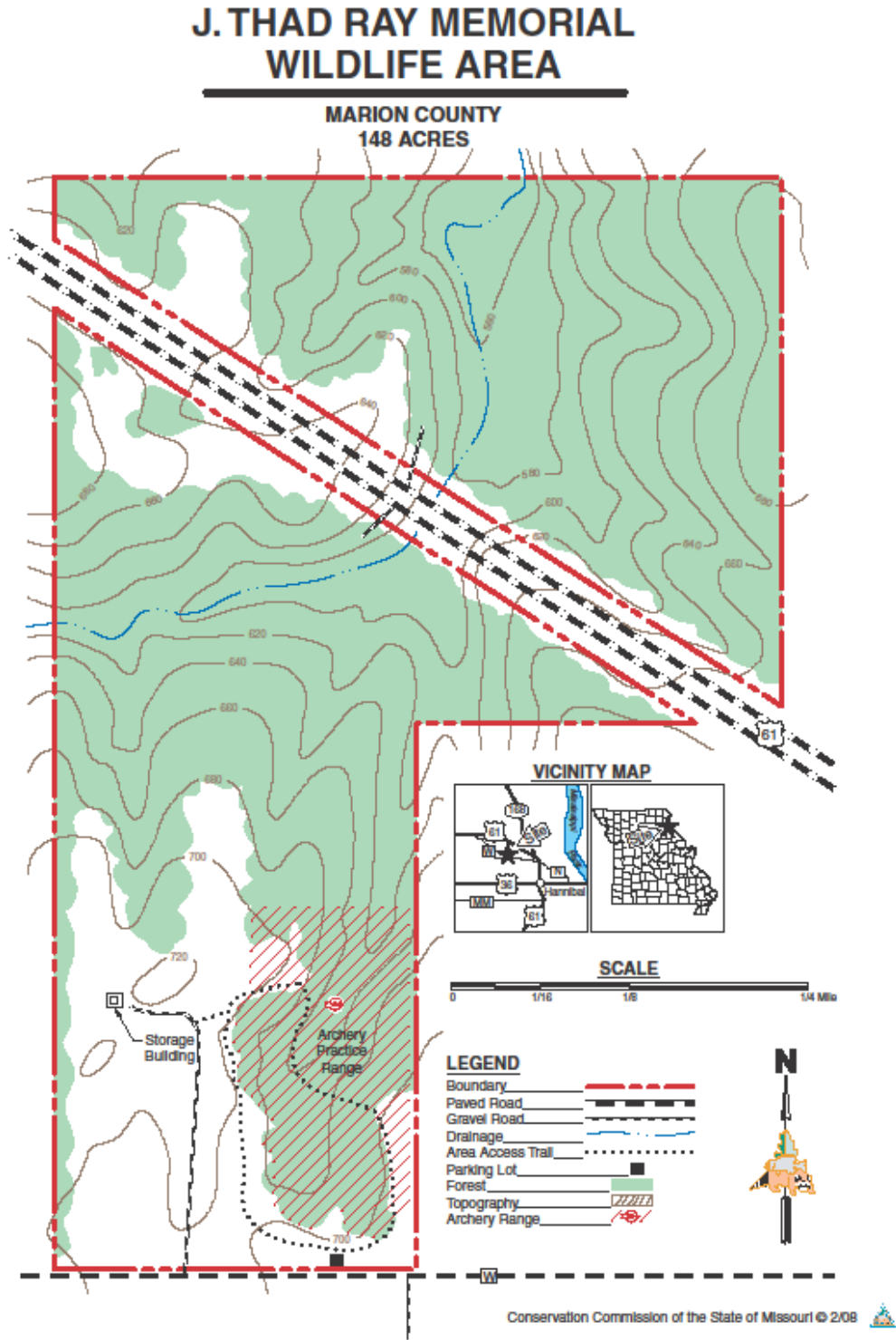
Appendix 1: J. Thad Ray MWA Background

In 1971, Kate Ray Kuhn donated 58 acres to the Department, in honor of her father, J. Thad Ray, a longtime Marion County farmer and county official. She willed an additional 90 acres to the Department upon her death in 1978 so that all might enjoy the outdoors. In 1991, a storage building was built on the area to serve the Hannibal Public Contact Office.

Current Land and Water Types

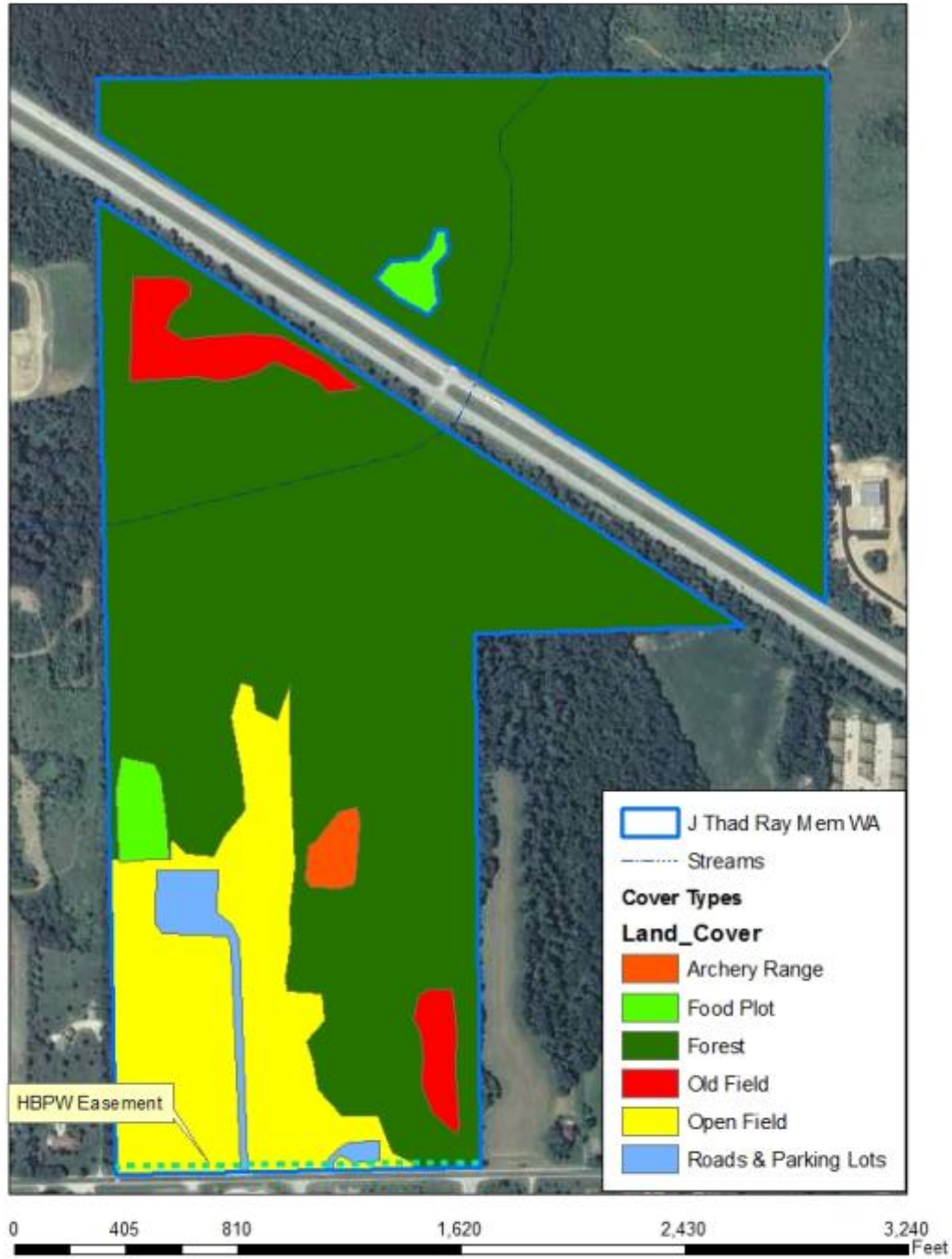
Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Upland Forest	117		79
Old Fields/Upland Fields	29		20
Roads/Administrative	2		1
Total	148		100
Stream Frontage		0.5	

Appendix 2: J. Thad Ray MWA Area Map



Appendix 3: J. Thad Ray Land Type Map

J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area Land Type Map



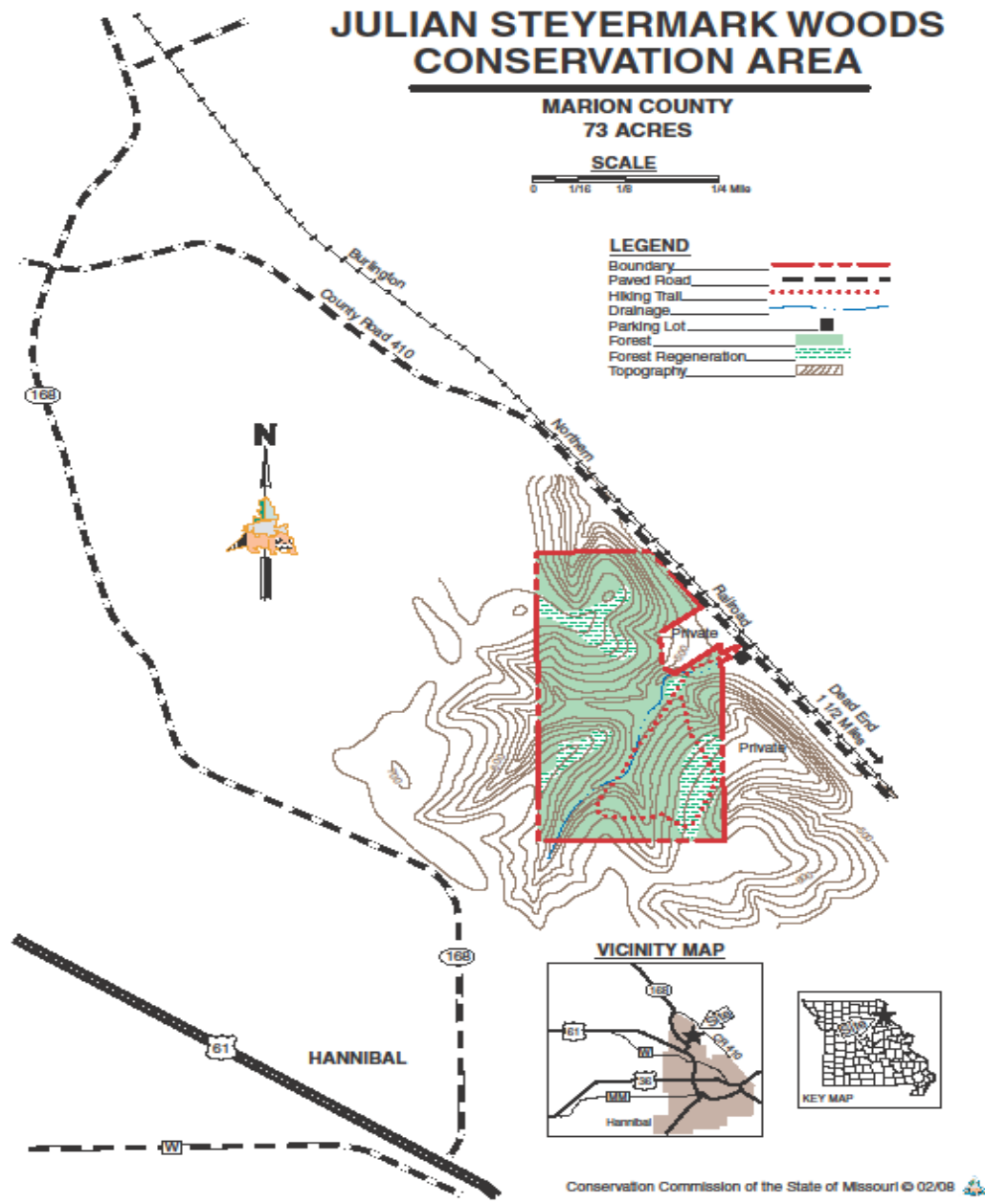
Appendix 4: Julian Steyermark Woods CA Background

In 1979, the Conservation Department bought a mostly wooded 73-acre tract within the city limits of Hannibal, from Mrs. H.J. Freiling. The area was named after Dr. Julian Steyermark, the noted botanist who wrote “Flora of Missouri,” the recognized guide of Missouri botanists and wildflower lovers.

Current Land and Water Types

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Upland Forest	73		100
Total	73		100
Stream Frontage		0.4	

Appendix 5: Julian Steyermark Woods CA Area Map



Appendix 6: Julian Steyermark Woods Land Type Map



Appendix 7. Draft J. Thad Ray Memorial Wildlife Area and Julian Steyermark Woods Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

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

Please manage any area that was originally prairie as prairie. Restore and reconstruct the original MO habitat as much as possible in all areas of the state.

I use both of these areas extensively. I believe that the public use of both areas should remain "as is". I don't think you should pursue archery hunting at Steyermark Woods. I use these areas regularly for personal enjoyment and as hiking places for student and cub scout groups to study nature. I like the no hunting in Steyermark for the safety and enjoyment at all times. I also do not want to interrupt another person's hunting experience with my hiking.

As far as managing for public use; I would like to see the trails in both areas maintained for hiking and possible addition of biking. There are not many places in the Hannibal area for trail biking. I have noticed the erosion along the trail in Steyermark over the years making the steep hill along the creek more treacherous, but I like the improvements made last fall on the long eastern slope.

On a factual note, I know there is a spring in J. Thad Ray in the south portion just south of the pullout from 61. It has a very low output, but I have never seen it dry.