

Southeast Towersites

Knob Lick Towersite

Gipsy Towersite

Perry Towersite

Fifteen-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2018-2032



Josie M. Allen

Forestry Division Chief

3-28-18

Date

Southeast Towersites Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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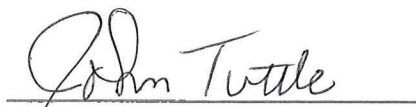
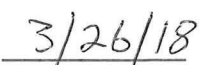
SOUTHEAST REGION

RCT Chair


Signature 
Date

FORESTRY DIVISION

Forest Management Chief


Signature 
Date

OVERVIEW

Area Name	Area Number	Year Acquired	Acreage	County	Administrative Responsibility	Maintenance Responsibility
Knob Lick Towersite	9120	1991	80	St. Francois	Forestry	Forestry
Gipsy Towersite	4713	1947	40	Bollinger	Forestry	Forestry
Perry Towersite	6324	1963	5	Perry	Forestry	Forestry

Statements of Purpose:

A. Strategic Direction

- **Knob Lick Towersite:** Historically this area was used for wildfire detection. Today, the purpose of the area is to provide the public with compatible outdoor recreational opportunities, to protect natural features, to ensure healthy, sustainable glades and woodlands, and to enhance wildlife habitat diversity.
- **Gipsy Towersite:** Historically this area was used for wildfire detection and establishment of a radio tower. Today the purpose of the area is to maintain the radio tower for communications and to manage the area for wildlife habitat and forest products.
- **Perry Towersite:** Historically this area was used for wildfire detection and establishment of a radio tower. Today the purpose of the area is to maintain the radio tower for communications and provide a picnic area with limited public use.

B. Desired Future Condition

Maintain structural integrity of these towers to ensure safety of the public and Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) personnel. Manage surrounding habitats to ensure healthy and diverse ecosystems.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

Area Name	Priority Areas	Natural Areas
Knob Lick Towersite	Part of the Lamotte sandy glades priority landscape.	None
Gipsy Towersite	None	None
Perry Towersite	None	None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

Area Name	Species of Conservation Concern	Caves	Springs	Other
Knob Lick Towersite	Yes ¹	None	None	Yes ²
Gipsy Towersite	None observed	None	None	Yes ³
Perry Towersite	None observed	None	None	Yes ⁴

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.

²Occurs in the Roselle Oak Woodland Upland Igneous Plain Landtype Association (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

³Occurs in the Wappappello Oak-Pine Woodland/Forest Hills Landtype Association (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

⁴Occurs in the Kinsey Oak Woodland/Forest Hills Landtype Association (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

III. Existing Infrastructure

Area Name	Parking Lots	Fire Tower	Radio Tower	Other
Knob Lick Towersite	1 ¹	1	1 ²	1 picnic table/overlook ¹
Gipsy Towersite	1	None	1	N/A
Perry Towersite	1	1	1	1 picnic table

¹Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible

²Lease with the Missouri State Highway Patrol for their radio tower and building on Knob Lick Towersite.

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

Area Name	Deed Restrictions	Federal Interest	Easements	Cultural Resources	Endangered Species	Boundary Issues
Knob Lick Towersite	None	Yes ¹	Yes ²	None	None observed	None
Gipsy Towersite	None	Yes ¹	Yes ³	None	None observed	None
Perry Towersite	None	Yes ¹	Yes ⁴	None	None observed	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.

²Black River Electric Easement

³Black River Electric Easement

⁴Citizens Electric Easement

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Knob Lick Towersite contains approximately 80 acres of glade and woodlands. The majority of wooded acres consist of upland oak, hickory, and shortleaf pine growing on shallow igneous soils. The open granite glades contain several unique plant species, such as prickly pear cactus. Wildlife habitat exists with scattered tree cavities, dead snags, and brushy areas for cover or nesting, and there are a variety of native food plants.

The Gypsy Towersite consists mainly of a stand of shortleaf pine trees in addition to the radio tower. The stand of shortleaf pine trees provides habitat for wildlife through seed production, roosting, nesting habitat, and snag and cavity trees.

Perry Towersite consists of 5 acres of woodland. Management considerations are limited due to the size of the tract.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Invasive plants are a concern on Knob Lick Towersite. Plants like sericea lespedeza and autumn olive are difficult to eradicate. Invasive plants are not as beneficial for area wildlife as the native plants that they displace.
- 2) Maintain a healthy glade/woodland ecosystem at Knob Lick Towersite while balancing the needs of providing recreational use at the area.
- 3) Conducting forest management at Gypsy Towersite can be challenging due to the area's small size and isolated nature.
- 4) The opportunity is still present to manage and improve Gypsy Towersite for the benefit of wildlife and area users through the use of sound forest and wildlife management practices.

Management Objective 1: Control and suppress invasive species at the towersites.

Strategy 1: Monitor the areas for invasive species. Suppress any infestations that may develop using appropriate methods. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Maintain healthy glade and woodland ecosystems at Knob Lick Towersite.

Strategy 1: Monitor species of conservation concern at Knob Lick Towersite and report any new findings. (Forestry, Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Use sound management practices to improve glade/woodland habitat, wildlife habitat, and native plant communities at Knob Lick Towersite. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Manage the forested area at Gipsy Towersite for wildlife habitat and timber production.

Strategy 1: Monitor the forest and implement the necessary forestry treatments to encourage mast production, provide cover for wildlife, and increase timber volume growth. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

These areas do not contain any aquatic resources to manage.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Public use on Knob Lick Towersite is increasing. This trend is likely to continue as the populations in the surrounding communities increase.
- 2) Maintain current infrastructure at the areas.
- 3) Control unlawful uses of the areas (vandalism, drug use, etc.). Gipsy Towersite is difficult to monitor due to its isolated location.
- 4) Provide a safe place for public recreational uses such as wildlife viewing or hunting.

Management Objective 1: Provide an inviting place for public recreation.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with the Department guidelines and at currently identified maintenance level. Monitor infrastructure for needed maintenance or safety concerns. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Work with Protection Staff to curtail vandalism and other illegal or unwanted use of the areas. (Forestry, Protection)

Strategy 3: Manage the areas for the benefit of wildlife to increase nature viewing and hunting opportunities (at Knob Lick and Gipsy Towersites). (Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area boundaries as needed and the area around the radio towers.
- 2) Consider land acquisition, when available.

Management Objective 1: Maintain clearly demarcated boundary lines around each area.

Strategy 1: Maintain area boundary lines by marking the boundary with blue paint on an established seven year rotational basis and posting signs. (Forestry)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land 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, protect the watershed, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Public Input Summary:

The draft Southeast Towersites Management Plan was available for a public comment period Oct. 1–31, 2017. The Missouri Department of Conservation received 11 comments from 10 respondents (Appendix A). The Southeast Towersites 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 the Southeast Towersites Management Plan public comment period.

Values the glades and unique geology at Knob Lick Towersite. Loves taking geology field trips here.

Knob Lick Towersite is indeed a unique and beautiful area, and the Department has worked to restore the surrounding glade to its natural state. The parking lot allows up-close viewing of this habitat, as well as access for nature viewing and other recreation. We are glad that geology classes from all over the state bring their students to look at the unusual geology. The Department is grateful for the support of its Missouri residents and all area visitors.

Would like more invasive species removed on the area.

The Department strives to promote healthy native plant communities. Invasive exotic species are a constant threat, and we work hard to remove these species where possible. This is a seemingly endless task as more exotic plants and animals are introduced into the native ecosystems. We appreciate the support of our area visitors in these endeavors.

Suggests planting more native acid-loving plant species.

Glade habitat, such as that found at Knob Lick Towersite, is unique and important. Habitat restoration efforts have allowed many of the native acid-loving plants to occur naturally. We will continue to monitor plant and animal species on this site to ensure a healthy glade community.

Appreciates that the Department maintains the fire towers and preserves their history for future generations.

Fire towers were once an important part of efforts to protect the land from harmful wildfires. Many have disappeared from the landscape as the need for towers diminished. Allowing public use for wildlife and landscape viewing is a new use for these historic icons. We hope to keep these towers in use for the future, but we need the public's help in discouraging inappropriate or dangerous use of these towers.

Suggests adding picnic tables and grills to Knob Lick Towersite.

Knob Lick tower does have one picnic table, but we will consider the possibility of adding another if there is need and budgets allow. Grills are not feasible at this time due to the geology and weather extremes that create fire danger.

Suggests providing information about Perry Tower and the Department at the site.

It is possible, but designing, developing, and maintaining something like an interpretive sign would be a costly investment. At this time it would not be worth it considering other needs of Perry County conservation areas. Signage would also be a target for vandalism.

Would like the Department to provide a bus tour of the southeastern Missouri area that would include the Perry Towersite.

We can make that a suggestion to make it a stop when the Nature Center at Cape Girardeau takes groups out for nature hikes.

Suggests repairing the Knob Lick Towersite access road.

The steepness of this road does create unique issues during wetter seasons of the year. The aggregate part of the road that the Department is responsible for maintenance of is graded minimum twice annually, road aggregate added when needed, and backslopes brush-cut as needed. We will look at any ways of improving or increasing maintenance cycles if necessary.

Supports clearly marking the area boundary lines with signs.

Area boundaries are marked to a Department standard, which includes signs and blue boundary paint. Area signs that are excessively faded will be replaced.

Supports maintaining Perry Tower.

Thank you for your support.

Supports maintaining Gipsy radio tower It is essential for firefighters and first responders.

The Department recognizes the importance of maintaining the radio tower for both our own use and the use of local emergency personnel. At this time, there are no plans to do away with the property or the radio tower.

Requests road maintenance for road leading to an adjacent landowner's gate.

The main service road leading to the radio tower is the only road that is still in active use and this road is well maintained. All other roads are decommissioned and are no longer used or maintained by the state.

References:

Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W. A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1. Knob Lick Towersite Area Background
- Appendix 2. Knob Lick Towersite Area Map
- Appendix 3. Knob Lick Towersite Land Cover Map
- Appendix 4. Knob Lick Towersite Easement Map
- Appendix 5. Gipsy Towersite Area Background
- Appendix 6. Gipsy Towersite Area Map
- Appendix 7: Gipsy Towersite Landcover Map
- Appendix 8: Gipsy Towersite Easement Map
- Appendix 9. Perry Towersite Area Background
- Appendix 10. Perry Towersite Area Map
- Appendix 11. Perry Towersite Land Aerial Map
- Appendix 12. Perry Towersite Easement Map
- Appendix 13. Southeast Towersites Management Plan Public Comments

Appendix 1. Knob Lick Towersite Area Background

Historically, the Knob Lick Towersite belonged to the U.S. Forest Service since the early 1930s. The fire tower was constructed in 1937. The Department began leasing the fire tower (and adjoining 5 acres) from the U.S. Forest Service and staffing it around 1961, following the formation of the Perryville Fire Protection District (which today is part of the Southeast Region). Back then, each fire tower had a permanently assigned tower man, whose job was to spot wildfires from the tower, and also to help put out fires.

Three permanent towermen were listed for Knob Lick Tower before these positions were phased out. The tower was named as a memorial to Glenn Skinner, who was the longest acting towerman for the area. He manned the tower from 1966 to 1977. The Knob Lick fire tower remained in use until 1995.

In 1991, the Department acquired total ownership of the fire tower and the adjoining 80 acres in a land swap with the U.S. Forest Service. In the late 1990s, a permanent viewing platform was built about 70 feet up the tower, and a rung of stairs above the platform was removed to restrict access to the cab and curtail vandalism. In 2002, disabled accessible parking, a disabled accessible overlook, and picnic area were added.

Knob Lick Towersite is located near the southern border of St. Francois County, approximately 10 miles south of the town of Farmington. The area consists of 80 acres of woodland and glade.

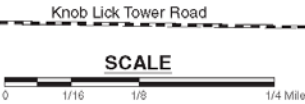
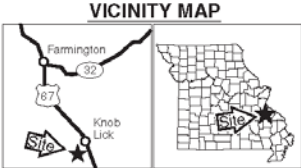
Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Forest/Woodland	65	81
Glades	15	19
Total	80	100

Appendix 2. Knob Lick Towersite Area Map

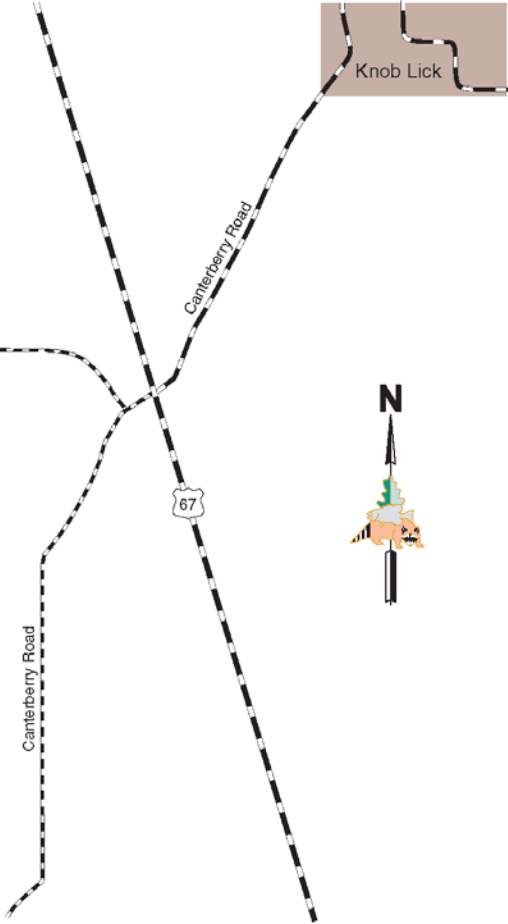
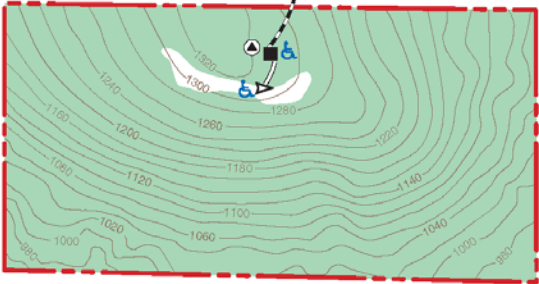
KNOB LICK TOWERSITE

ST. FRANCOIS COUNTY
80 ACRES

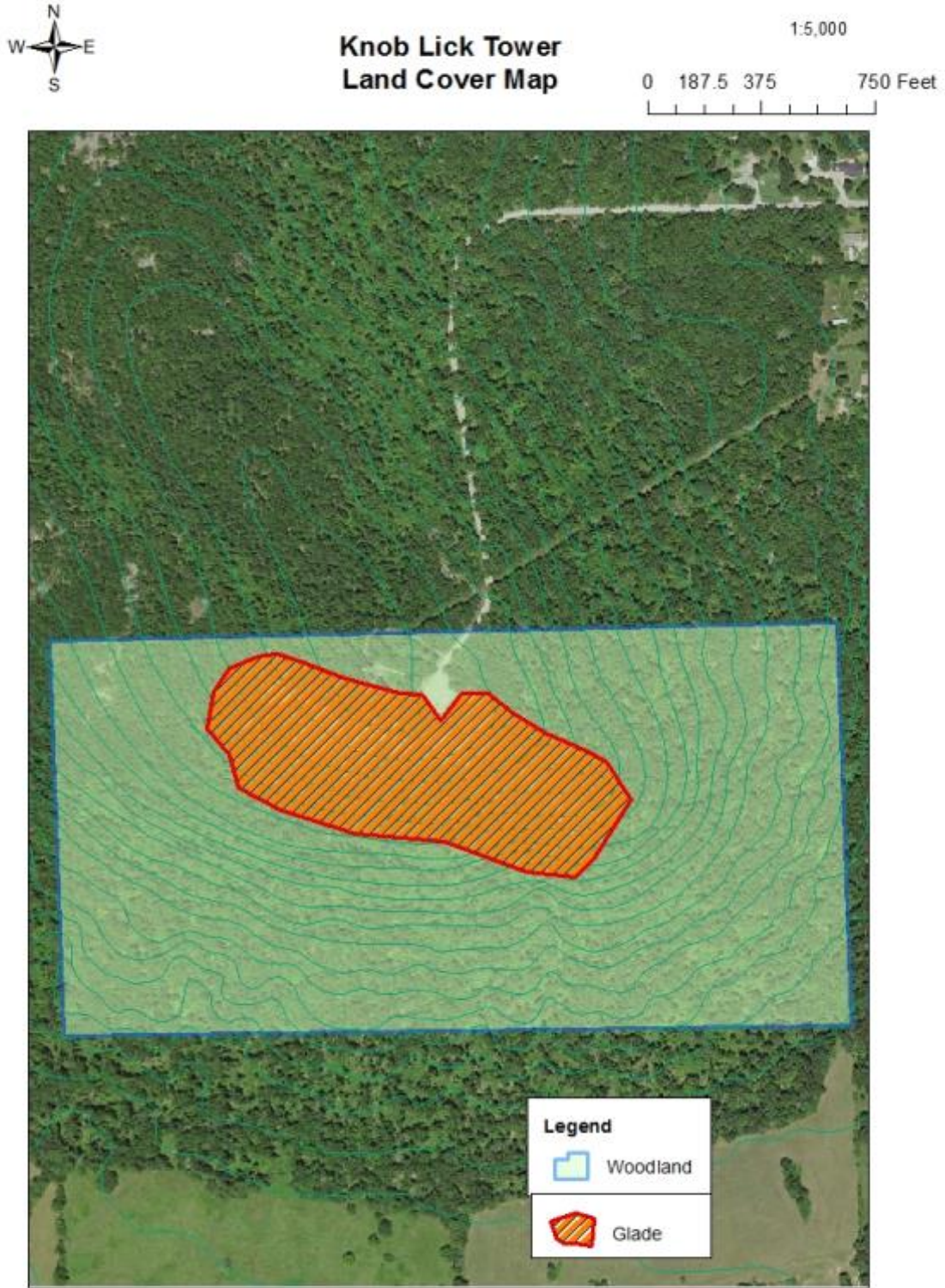


LEGEND

Boundary	
Paved Road	
Gravel Road	
Disabled Accessible Trail	
Parking Lot	
Fire Tower	
Glade Overlook	
Disabled Accessible	
Forest	
Topography	



Appendix 3. Knob Lick Towersite Land Cover Map



Appendix 4. Knob Lick Towersite Easement Map



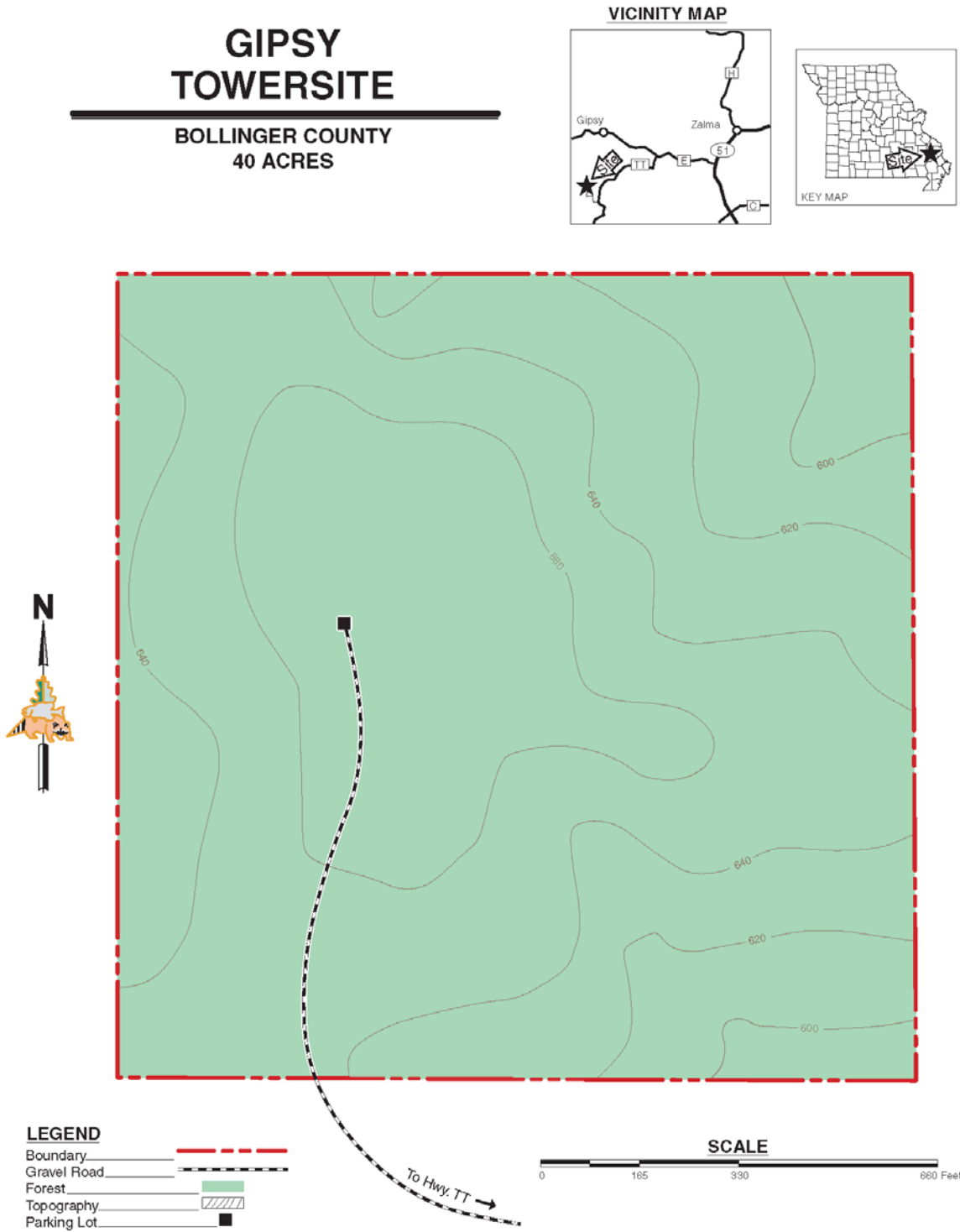
Appendix 5. Gipsy Towersite Area Background

The Gipsy Towersite was purchased in 1947 for the purpose of establishing a fire tower and a radio relay station. In 1989 the original radio relay station was removed and replaced by a new station. In 2006 the fire tower was moved offsite and erected on the Coldwater Conservation Area. The radio relay station is still on the area and in use to this day.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Forest/Woodland	39	98
Grassland	1	2
Total	40	100

Appendix 6. Gipsy Towersite Area Map



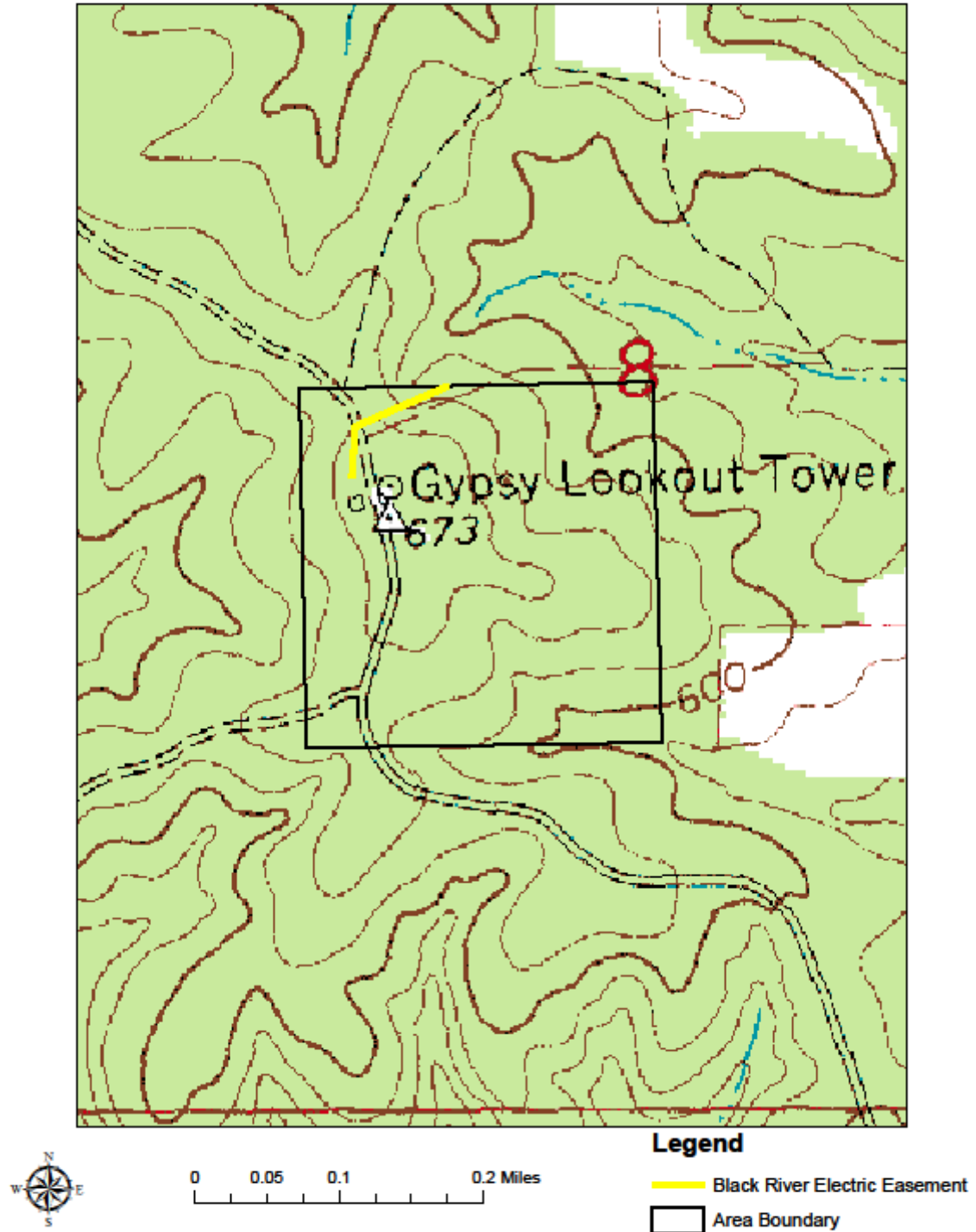
Appendix 7. Gypsy Towersite Land Cover Map

Gypsy Towersite Landcover Map



Appendix 8. Gypsy Towersite Easement Map

Gypsy Towersite Easement Map



Appendix 9. Perry Towersite Area Background

Perry Towersite was donated to the Department in 1963. This 5-acre woodland site was used to construct a fire tower and radio tower. The fire tower was in use till the 1990s when it was no longer efficient to do so. Since then, the are has been maintained for the radio tower and public use.

Current Land and Water Types:

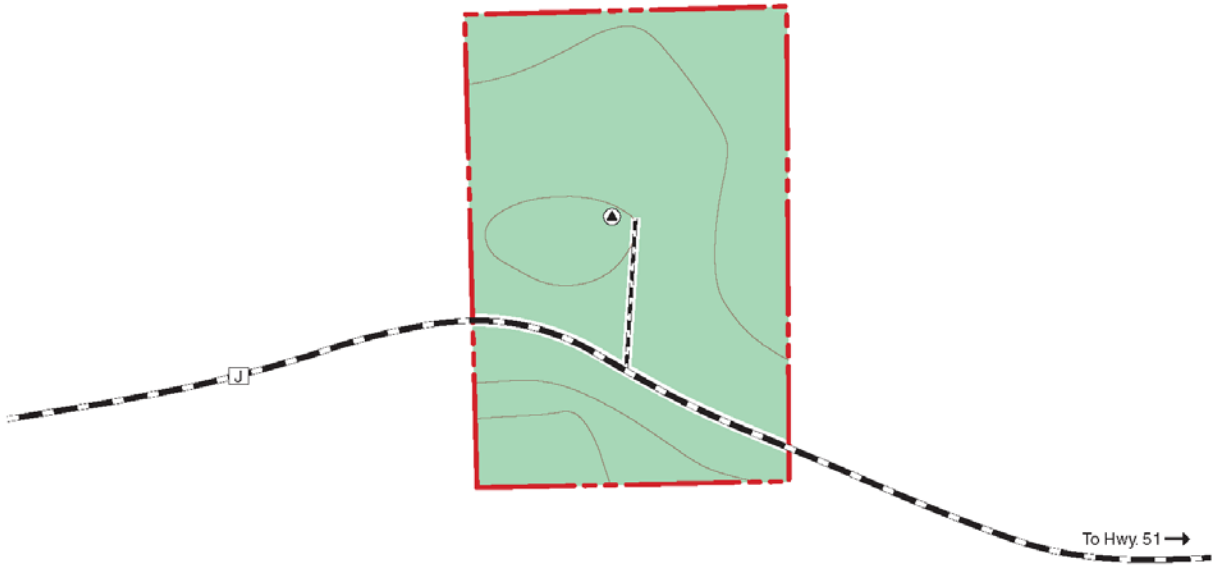
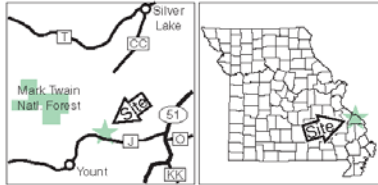
Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Forest/Woodland	5	100

Appendix 10. Perry Towersite Area Map







PERRY TOWERSITE

PERRY COUNTY
5 ACRES

VICINITY MAP



LEGEND

- Boundary 
- Paved Road 
- Gravel Road 
- Fire Tower 
- Forest 
- Topography 



SCALE




Appendix 11. Perry Towersite Aerial Map




Appendix 12. Perry Towersite Easement Map



 Perry Tower
 Citizens Electric Easement



0 20 40 80 120 160 Feet


Appendix 13. Southeast Towersites Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (Oct. 1–31, 2017):

<p>I'm glad that the MDC continues to not only provide upkeep on the firetowers on conservation land, but also to keep them preserved for future generations. Firetower sites have a unique and special place in the history of our state and I am thankful that they are continuing to be preserved. Thank you for all you do for conservation of our natural resources (and history!) here in Missouri!</p>
<p>It is greatly appreciated and keep up the good work!</p>
<p>I appreciate the plan for continued upkeep and maintenance especially for the Knob Lick Towersite. I have been stopping at that site since 1968 and did so again last week. Well maintained and a beautiful view.</p>
<p>Knob Lick Towersite is an important public access site for dozens of geology field trips from Missouri and surrounding states, as the granite glade looking out on "the Flatwoods" shows one of the very best viewpoints showing the remnants of the Ozark caldera, with the surrounding ridges and mountains being the edges of one of the two calderas forming the Ozark Mountains. There are places on this site where once can see the unusual sight of rhyolite placed directly on granite; both silicic bedrocks support acidic and glade ecosystems which are somewhat unusual in the region. MDC would do well to continue eliminating invasive species and replanting native acid-loving species. Knob Lick Towersite should be maintained just the way it is: a parking lot on a mountain top, and the wind, and the view and nothing more. It is one of my favorite conservation areas, because it shows how geology and biology work hand in hand on a mostly undeveloped landscape.</p>
<p>Knob lick tower site: Beautiful area with the glades and rock outcroppings. Please continue the current management plans.</p>
<p>The Knob Lick Towersite access road, from the Highway 67 exit to the actual tower, needs repair. People using the Knob Lick Towersite would benefit from the addition of picnic tables and bar-b-q grill(s). I have been enjoying the view and the glade for 40 years. Please keep this glade ecosystem protected and please keep this Towersite maintained and accessible to the public. Thanks,</p>
<p>We feel the Perry Tower is worth keeping in Perry County. Please do not dismantle it. Its value to our area is worthy of the time and maintenance spent to keep it.</p>
<p>Retired MDC Forestry-fire tower watchman. Lawrence does not have computer access therefore he is submitting his thoughts through my office.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perry Lookout Tower should remain as is with cab left on tower. 2) I pass by Perry Tower quite frequently and see people on the tower. Needs to have information there on the tower, history, purpose, MDC. 3) There needs to be a pamphlet made about Perry Tower explaining its start year and reason for being located where it is and its reason for being there. 4) MDC needs to have an annual bus tour of area and should include Perry Tower. Southeast region is big enough to have 4-6 tours to see its region.
<p>I own over 400 acres near the Gypsy fire tower site. We cross state land to access our property.</p>
<p>I have no suggestions on uses for the site, but I have a couple of request. Firstly whatever you</p>

end up doing with the site, please make sure the state property line is clearly marked with signs informing users that private property begins where state property ends. I know you keep the line well marked with blue paint, but the old state signs concerning regulations have deteriorated. Secondly please do some maintenance on the states portion of the road leading to our gate. The state use to be good about keeping it up, but in recent years large pot holes have developed, and it has become the worst section that we have to cross.

Thank you for your consideration,

We desperately need the Gipsy tower to remain at this site. It is the only source of radio communication for our Fire Fighters and First Responders. We are a very small department with no tax base Government funding.

This tower allows the Wayne County Sheriff Department to contact us for any emergency, including fires, Medical emergencies, water rescues, accidents, traffic control and lost persons. We do not have the money to purchase and install our own tower. This tower is a life and death issue for our community. Thank you.

While I understand that the Gipsy Towersite is remote and small, the tower itself is a very necessary piece of equipment for our rural volunteer fire department. Many departments are going to a digital radio service, but we do not have the funding for this. We are all volunteer and are funded solely through donations and fire tags. Without the tower and our repeater located on it we would be cut off from county Emergency Management, EMS & Law Enforcement. We do not have the money to build our own tower, or to move to digital equipment.

Thank you,