

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Bird Watching — Fishing — Hiking
Hunting — Wildlife Viewing — Bicycling

Conservation areas are closed from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. except for authorized camping, fishing and hunting activities.

- No littering.
- No fireworks.
- No open fires except in designated areas.
- No free-running pets. Dogs must be leashed or confined when not being trained or used for hunting.
- Nuts, berries, fruits, mushrooms and wild greens may be taken for personal use only. The taking of wild greens is prohibited on areas designated as Natural Areas. Cutting or removing other vegetation is prohibited.
- Motor vehicles are restricted to roadways and parking areas. ATVs may be used on roads and trails open to regular vehicle use only.
- Bicycles allowed on designated service roads year-round. Service roads can be located at <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places>. Bicycles are prohibited on the Blue Spring Outlet Trail.
- Camping is primitive, on a first come first serve basis and allowed in aggregate covered openings along the area's main access roads. Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days in a 30-day period. Groups of 10 campers or more must obtain a special use permit.
- Target shooting is permitted only on designated public shooting ranges or by special use permit. No alcoholic beverages are permitted at the range.

Fishing and Boating:

Fishing and frogging are allowed under statewide regulations with the following exceptions on impoundments:

- Fish may be taken only by pole and line and not more than 3 poles may be used by any person.
- Daily limit is 6 black bass, 4 catfish (channel, blue and flathead combined) and 30 crappie. Total number of all other fish may not exceed 20.

- Black bass between 12 and 15 inches must be returned to the water unharmed immediately after being caught.

- Channel catfish less than 16" in total length must be returned to the water unharmed immediately after being caught.
- Salvage seining of non-game fish for personal use is permitted only with written authorization.

Hunting and Trapping:

Hunting is allowed under statewide seasons and limits with the following exceptions:

- Deer hunting is permitted under statewide seasons and limits.
- Only portable tree stands may be used and only between Sept. 1 and Jan. 31. Each stand must be identified with the name and address, or conservation number of the user and must be removed from the area by Feb. 1. Use of nails, screw-in steps or other materials that would damage the tree is prohibited.
- Furbearer trapping is permitted by special use permit.

**For local information, contact:
Missouri Department of Conservation
2929 County Rd 618
Ellington, MO 63638
(573) 663-7130**

Additional area information is posted on bulletin boards located in parking areas and area offices.

2/2022

(Regulations are from the Wildlife Code of Missouri and selected statutes of the State of Missouri. Special area regulations are in Chapter 11 of the Wildlife Code. A free printed copy of the Wildlife Code, which lists most area regulations, is available from the Conservation Department. Chapter 11 in its entirety is available at www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/current/3csr/3csr.asp.) Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

Current River

CONSERVATION AREA



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

About This Area

Current River Conservation Area was created by combining Deer Run, Carrs Creek, Cardareva and Paint Rock state forests. The entire area encompasses approximately 28,000 acres. The Current River Conservation Area is the home of the Missouri Ozark Forest Ecosystem Project (MOFEP). MOFEP is one of the most comprehensive forest management studies in North America. MOFEP is a 100 year project assigned to monitor the long-term effects of different forest management regimes covering 9,000 acres of Ozark forest and its associated plant and animal life.

Deer Run Unit

The Deer Run Unit began as a game refuge and state park in 1925 with 6,625 acres. In 1926 the state's first fire tower was erected to help protect Missouri's forest land from fire. Many of the area's roads, ponds and food plots are the result of the CCC whose Camp was located here in 1935. This area helped to re-establish Missouri's deer population. Deer Run contributed 323 white-tailed deer used to restock other areas of the state at a time when Missouri's deer herd was badly depleted. The quality of the area's forest and its abundance of wildlife are the products of sound forest management. Deer Run has been protected from fire and grazing damage longer than any other forested tract in southern Missouri. Some 66 wildlife food plots are seeded, fertilized and mowed as needed. Water holes have been built in about 40 locations. Buford Pond provides three acres of fishing water. Picnic tables are kept at the lake for your use. A nature trail also connects Buford Pond with the Deer Run fire tower. The Deer Run Unit has both an archery and firearms shooting range. The unstaffed shooting range is handicapped-accessible and provides shooters with a 25-, 50- and 100-yard shooting station, in addition to a shotgun range. The archery range is comprised of a "static" range with targets set at various distances. It also contains a field range, which provides hunters the opportunity to shoot under more realistic hunting conditions. The Deer Run Unit also contains what

Civil War historians believe to be a fort. The fort has been named after the town of Ellington, which was known as Barnesville at that time. It was believed to have been built by the Union's 13th Illinois Cavalry between January and April of 1863. The purpose of the fort was probably to protect the military trail and telegraph wire running from Pilot Knob to Pochontas, Ark. The fortification, a type of earthen redan, is shaped like a horseshoe and occupies a high ridge approximately one mile southwest of Ellington. The fort contains a powder magazine and built-up berm of dirt, which may have been designed for field artillery. The redan measures 150 feet in length, 135 feet in width and is 330 feet around the top of the berm. Today, the fort is barely noticeable. Nature has covered the inside of the fort and berm with trees and the powder magazine is filled with water, which provides wildlife with a permanent water source. It's easy to imagine how the fort might have appeared, however. In 1998, the Civil War fortification was accepted into the National Register of Historic Places.

Carr Creek Unit

The Carr Creek Unit is located in Shannon County in the Current River hills just north of the river. The forest is located halfway between Eminence and Ellington off Highway 106 and HH. The area was expanded during the early 1990s with the acquisition of former Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation property. Blue Springs Natural Area is part of this unit. This is the sixth largest spring in Missouri with an average daily flow of 90 million gallons. It is also the deepest spring in Missouri. Native cane, blue mist flower and cardinal flower grow along its banks. Resurrection ferns and mistletoe are found in the trees. This is near the northern limit of the range of these two southern species.

Cardareva Unit

The Cardareva Unit was named after Cardareva Mountain, which lies in the middle of the unit. The forest lies north of the Current River, and south of Highway 106. It is a large block of land that connects the Carr Creek and Deer Run units. This area was significantly expanded with the acquisition of a tract

of land formerly owned by Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation in the early 1990s. The Cardareva Unit also contains the 80-acre Cardareva Bluff Natural Area. Legend has it that Chief Cardareva's grave-site is located on Cardareva Bluff, a west-facing dolomite bluff rising about 550 feet above the Current River. The natural area includes the shoreline and gravel bars of the Current River, backwater sloughs, flood plain forest, upland forest, dolomite glades and tall slopes. The forest offers excellent hunting opportunities for deer, wild turkey and squirrels.

Paint Rock Unit

The Paint Rock Unit was named after the landmark dolomite bluff located on the beautiful Current River. Other natural features of the area include dolomite glades, two dolomite pinnacles, a dry forested sinkhole, and an old second growth wet-mesic bottomland forest. The forest itself lies north and east of the Current River and west of Highway 21. Access to most of the area can be from off Highway D near Ellington. There are several logging trails in the area that provide good access to anyone with a 4-wheel-drive vehicle or by foot. Paint Rock Creek is a sinking creek with permanent pools of water. Turkey and deer hunting opportunities are excellent. The purchase of Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation properties in the 1990s helped consolidate the once scattered tracts of the Paint Rock Unit. During your visit to the area, you may view various forest improvement practices designed to improve tree growth, tree quality, diversity and species composition. Forest management practices also enhance wildlife habitat, help maintain watershed quality and sustain forest health. Any physical disturbance is temporary. Wildlife habitat management includes the creation of watering ponds and the manipulation of fields with the forest to provide for added food sources. Wildlife watering holes are scattered throughout the larger tracts and provide much needed water on the dry ridges. Timber harvests are also an important element in habitat management. They produce forage and cover for forest wildlife.