

## MDC Seeks Public Input

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 the Belcher Branch Lake Conservation Area in Buchanan County. Plans for the areas will be available for public comment through Aug. 31.

To preview draft management plans and share comments online, visit [www.mdc.mo.gov/areaplans](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

The 55-acre Belcher Branch Lake is the centerpiece for the area and offers fishing including a boat ramp. A restroom, fishing dock and parking lot are disabled accessible. The 405-acre conservation area also includes forest, old fields, grassland and crop fields. Hunting is allowed on the area.

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.

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.