



Aerial shot of Boyer Chute NWR before the flood.



Aerial shot of Boyer Chute NWR during the flood in July 2011.



FWS Photo by Ken Block

While it was surrounded by water, floodwater never breached the main floor of the DeSoto Visitor Center.

Over the next several years, refuge staff will be restoring native floodplain habitats including wetlands, grasslands and forests. Native floodplain habitats will contain species tolerant to flooding, resulting in less damage during high water events. These areas will provide the habitat requirements needed for resident and migratory wildlife.

Refuge staff will also evaluate how to best offer visitor services to enhance the visitor experience while limiting impacts to refuge infrastructure due to flooding.



FWS Photo by Peter Rea

**DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge** is located 25 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska on U.S. Highway 30, between Missouri Valley, Iowa and Blair, Nebraska.

**Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge** is located on the west side of the Missouri River, 3 miles east of Fort Calhoun, Nebraska and 15 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska.



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DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges

## Flood Impacts at DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges

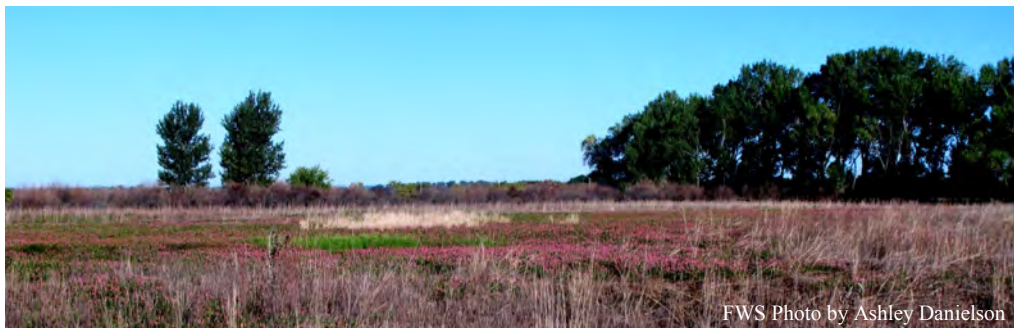


FWS Photo by Peter Rea



DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges sustained considerable flooding during the summers of 2010 and 2011. At DeSoto Refuge, levee breaks allowed floodwaters to enter the refuge and the DeSoto Lake. The aerial photograph above shows the location of the levee breaks.

The floodplain habitats of the refuges evolved from flooding; however, no major flooding has occurred on the refuge for the past 60 years. Significant habitat changes will be seen due to this flood event but many of those changes will be positive.



FWS Photo by Ashley Danielson

Wetland plants such as smartweed are emerging as the floodwaters recede. Clues from nature such as what plants return after the flood help managers decide what type of habitat to restore in what location.

Habitats at the refuges will see more floodplain species. Frog numbers have increased during the flood. Cottonwood trees will regenerate. Prairie cord grass will replace other species such as little blue stem. There will be an influx of river fish species into DeSoto Lake. Many of the popular fish species including blue gill, crappie and bass will be abundant due to excellent spawning conditions brought by the flood.



FWS Photo by Ken Block

For more information about DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges, find us on Facebook or visit our websites at [www.fws.gov/midwest/Desoto/](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Desoto/) and [www.fws.gov/midwest/boyerchute/](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/boyerchute/)

**U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE**

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