



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
1 Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056

IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/NWRS-AP

JAN 24 2001

Dear Reader:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is pleased to provide this Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in Nebraska and Iowa. The plan was developed with input and assistance from a wide representation of the public, other government agencies, non-government conservation agencies, and Service employees.

This CCP presents goals, objectives, and strategies to manage the Refuge for the next 15 years. The EA (Appendix A.) was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act which involved public participation in the development of a set of four possible management alternatives (A through D). The alternatives ranged from a passive, minimal management approach, to a no-change from current management levels, to maximum management, staffing and development.

The Service's Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) provides for significant increases in Refuge management efforts that will lead to an optimal balance between the needs of fish and wildlife and their habitats and opportunities for the public to use and enjoy the Refuge and its natural ecosystems.

Several public use activities have been determined to be compatible with the purpose of the Refuge and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Documentation of these determinations are in Appendix D and are subject to public review and comment before they are finally implemented; therefore these determinations will not be implemented until 45 days after the date of this CCP. Comments on the public use compatibility determinations may be directed to the Service during this 45-day period at the following address:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
24385 State Highway 51
Puxico, Missouri 63960

We are grateful to all who participated during the planning process. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jim Salyer at 417-926-6273 or Ms. Judy McClendon at 573-222-6001.

Sincerely,



for William J. Hartwig
Regional Director