



## STATE OF NEBRASKA



Mike Johanns  
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
Roger K. Patterson  
Director

September 22, 2000

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Mr. Jim Salyer  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Southern Missouri Ascertainment Office  
24385 State Highway 51  
Puxico, Missouri 63960

Dear Mr. Salyer:

We have reviewed the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge. Our only comment is:

It is our understanding that a small tract of original Missouri River floodplain forest is located in the southern part of the Refuge. This area, about 10 acres in size, is somewhat hummocky and contains sycamore, black walnut, and Kentucky coffee tree. The tract is located east of the road approximately one half mile north of the old SCS wildlife habitat planting. Gene Solomon of Blair (426-2048) can provide more information about the tract. We did not find reference to this tract in the plan/EA. Upon verification it should be recognized and the management activities proposed for it included in the plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this excellent plan that will guide the future management of DeSoto Bend.

Sincerely,

Steve Gaul, Head  
Planning and Assistance Division

mh

Salyer-SGaul&Tom.doc

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*The Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs*

# STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

*Where past meets future*

September 23, 2000

**In reply refer to:  
 R&C#: 000800138**

American Gothic House  
 Eldon

Blood Run NHL  
 Larchwood

Centennial Building  
 Iowa City

Matthew Edell Blacksmith Shop  
 Marshalltown

Abbie Gardner Cabin  
 Arnolds Park

Iowa Historical Building  
 Des Moines

Montrose Governor's Home  
 Union Sunday School  
 Clermont Museum  
 Clermont

Plum Grove Governor's Home  
 Iowa City

Toolesboro Indian Mounds  
 Toolesboro

Western Historic Trails Center  
 Council Bluffs

Mr. Jim Salyer  
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Southern Missouri Ascertainment Office  
 24385 State Highway 51  
 Puxico, Missouri 63960

RE: FWS – USFWS – HARRISON & POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTIES – DESOTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE – AUGUST 2000 DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR PROPOSED MANAGEMENT OVER THE NEXT 15 YEARS.

Dear Mr. Salyer,

We have received the *August, 2000 Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan* for the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge and I have had the opportunity perform a cursory review of its content. It would appear that the long term management plan proposed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) for the *Bertrand* collection and other known and unknown cultural resources contained within the boundaries of the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is consistent with intention and spirit of sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations (36 CFR part 800).

The Iowa SHPO has no further comment at this time, but requests that you send a copy of the final draft for our further consideration. Please keep us apprised of any undertakings that may be in the early planning stages and that might warrant our consultation. We would be pleased to assist you in coordinating section 106 review for upcoming projects that would be covered under the proposed management plan.

Please reference R & C #000800138 in future correspondences relating to this document as it will be placed in our active project files under that number. Thank you for providing the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office with the opportunity to review and comment on this version of the *2000 Comprehensive Conservation Plan* for the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge. If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance please contact me at (515) 281-8744.

Sincerely,



Daniel K. Higginbottom, Archaeologist  
 Community Programs Bureau  
 State Historical Society of Iowa

Cc: Charles Wooley, Acting Regional Director, USFWS

**IOWA HISTORICAL BUILDING**

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SEP-25-00 MON 06:37 PM NE GAME & PARKS LINCOLN FAX NO. 4024715528 P. 01



## Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

2200 N. 33rd St. / P.O. Box 30370 / Lincoln, NE 68503-0370  
 Phone: 402-471-0641 / Fax: 402-471-5528 / <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/>

Mr. Jim Salyer/Ms. Judy McClendon  
 US Fish & Wildlife Service  
 Southern Missouri Ascertainment Office  
 24385 State Highway 51  
 Puxico, MO 63960

|                   |                           |         |                          |      |    |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------|------|----|
| Post-it* Fax Note | 7671                      | Date    | 9-28-00                  | Page | 2  |
| To                | Jim Salyer/Judy McClendon | From    | Scott Leachke            |      |    |
| Co./Dept          |                           |         | silv@tk@ngpc.state.ne.us |      |    |
| Phone #           | please confirm            | Phone # | 471-5561                 |      | us |
| Fax #             | receipt of fax.           | Fax #   | 471-5528                 |      |    |

Dear Mr. Salyer/Ms. McClendon,

Following are review comments for the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Desoto National Wildlife Refuge (DeSoto).

First, as an individual with training and experience in land management issues, especially wildlife management in public use situations, I can appreciate how "Alternative D" became the "preferred alternative." However, to "...seek the best or optimal balance between the competing ideals of wildlife conservation and public use.", is realistic, but may not attain DeSoto's Mission "To preserve and restore indigenous biological communities, ..." I believe we must all focus on that mission first, before we can truly support a preferred alternative.

To the credit of the CCP drafters, I believe the conversion of ~75% of the existing croplands is a step toward the DeSoto mission. The value of converting 1,140 acres of croplands into prairie habitats will be magnified, if the "prairie" mixes are high diversity mixtures. The level of diversity of the grass mixes was not apparent to me in my review and can be subjective. There are current efforts to establish high diversity prairie on other specific Missouri River sites. Given the Federal ownership of DeSoto and the 15 year implementation effort of the CCP, you may wish to pursue this option. Please contact me if you would like to talk with someone directly involved in this effort.

I was also pleased to see Objective 1.7.1: By 2005, conduct and complete an assessment of the hydrologic and habitat implications of partially or completely reconnecting DeSoto Lake with the Missouri River. Clearly, this is a pivotal issue for any planning effort at DeSoto, especially given the current climate surrounding Missouri River issues. This was not given adequate attention in the preferred alternatives discussion. Again, DeSoto's Mission "To preserve and restore indigenous biological communities, ..." must come first, with discussion of compatible uses secondary. Discussion on preferred alternatives focused on the management of sport fisheries within DeSoto Lake, with only minor attention paid to Federally listed Threatened & Endangered Species. On pages 33-34, you stated, "DeSoto Refuge staff have practically no opportunity to aid in the recovery of the Pallid Sturgeon short of re-connecting DeSoto Lake with the river." This statement implies the potential "...to aid in the recovery of the Pallid Sturgeon..." if the river is reconnected to DeSoto Lake. You also mentioned the "string-of-pearls" analogy.

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P. 02

for habitat restoration in the Lower Missouri River. Shouldn't DeSoto, as a USFWS holding along the Missouri River, be part of this string-of-pearls? Wouldn't this aid in meeting T & E Species habitat objectives defined by the USFWS in your 1994 and 2000 Biological Opinions?

Given potential modifications to inlet and outlet designs on DeSoto Lake, isn't it possible that an adaptive management plan could be created to manage for T & E Species, provide a sport fishery and resolve some of the nutrient loading problems being experienced within DeSoto Lake. There is significant dollars being put into lake management with limited results. There is discussion of routing waters away from DeSoto Lake, which will be complicated and expensive. There is the practical recognition that the current management system will not overcome these issues. It is imperative that we not squander opportunities for T & E species recovery, in one of the few places we have options, so that we can provide a "preferred" sport fishery.

On another issue, I saw no reference to allowing small game hunting, or why it would not be considered a compatible use. I can appreciate that the proximity to urban populations would create a high demand, but given the lack of public lands within the states of Iowa and Nebraska and the size of the area, this seems like a reasonable opportunity. It would be much easier to support limited small game hunting, then conversion of more area to parkland settings for additional camping, as I saw suggested. Increased development of public use facilities ultimately leads to reduced habitat management options.

Thank you for this opportunity to review the CCP. The Missouri River is a tremendous resource only partially realized and the DeSoto Bend NWR is an important component.

Sincerely,

*S. Scott Luedtke*

S. Scott Luedtke  
Southeast Programs Manager  
Wildlife Division

