

# News Release

## *DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services*

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge Announces New Temporary Exhibit- Harvesting the Missouri River**

**Missouri Valley, Iowa** - Visitors to the DeSoto Visitor Center can now view a new temporary display called “Harvesting the Missouri River.” The exhibit tells the story of Missouri Valley native Clark Hodges and how he supplemented his farming income with hunting and fishing activities in and around the Missouri River valley and the land that became DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge.

Clark Hodges, of Missouri Valley, Iowa, married Ethil Fairchild in 1928, and soon afterward they bought a farm just east of what was then known as the DeSoto Bend. The timing proved to be unfortunate, as within a year the Great Depression struck. On a national scale one in four people lost their jobs. Locally, farm produce prices fell sharply, and thousands of Iowans had to face the very real prospect of losing their farms. Luckily, outdoorsmen like Clark Hodges, found a way to supplement their income and provide for their families by turning to commercial fishing and hunting.

Clark Hodges would load the back of the pick up with items for sale from his farm. The same sales method was used for decades – for fish and fowl. Clark would park his truck at a convenient place in Missouri Valley, and when customers had made their purchase he would clean the fish and deftly wrap it in newspaper for them.

After a lifetime observing wildlife along the Missouri River, Clark was interested in preserving the habitat that supported the fish and game he knew so well. In the late 1950s, as the time came to set boundaries for the new DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge and Wilson Island State Park, Hodges cooperated by willingly trading small sections of his farmland for inholdings of both agencies so that the boundaries would be easier to maintain.

Learn more about Clark Hodges, commercial fishing and hunting and see some of his equipment on display now at the DeSoto Visitor Center.

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is located 25 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska on U.S. Highway 30, between Missouri Valley, Iowa and Blair, Nebraska. The visitor center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, except federal holidays. For more information contact 712/388-4800 or look us up on the web at <http://midwest.fws.gov/desoto> or email the refuge at [desoto@fws.gov](mailto:desoto@fws.gov)

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