

DeSoto

National Wildlife Refuge



Educator Information

Location: DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is located along U.S. Highway 30 between Blair, Nebraska and Missouri Valley, Iowa.

Fees: Entry fees are waived for all school groups making an educational visit to the refuge.

Trip Planning: The refuge provides abundant opportunities for educational field trips. The refuge staff will help you plan your field trip when you call to make a reservation. The refuge has many resources to help you plan your trip.

DeSoto Visitor Center: The DeSoto Visitor Center is home to exhibits on the cultural and natural history of the area as well as the Steamboat *Bertrand* museum. The steamboat sank in 1865 and was excavated in 1968 and 1969. The museum is home to a vast collection of artifacts from the civil war era and provides a time capsule to what life was like in 1865.

Visitor Center Activity Sheets: With the input of area educators, the refuge has produced activity sheets to help groups get more out of their time at the refuge. These sheets guide the students through the visitor center engaging them in a variety of critical thinking questions to help foster learning. Two levels are available; upper elementary (4-6 grade) and middle school (7-8 grade). Plan 45-60 minutes for the activity sheets.

Picnicking: Food is not allowed inside the Visitor Center but there are several picnic areas available around the refuge.

Environmental Education Shelter: A shelter with picnic tables is available for school group use. This shelter is located at the Cottonwood/Grasslands Nature Trail and provides an excellent starting point for outdoor activities.

Nature Trails: The refuge has four trails. The Missouri Meander and Green Heron Trails, near the Visitor Center, is the most popular trail used by school groups. Two other trails (Cottonwood and Grasslands) are located near the environmental education shelter.

For more information or to make a reservation, call the refuge at (712) 388-4800 or email Ashley_danielson@fws.gov or barb_nielsen@fws.gov.

