DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges
Waterfowl, White-tailed Deer, and Wild Turkey Hunt Plan

2019

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

National Wildlife Refuge
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I. Introduction

National wildlife refuges are guided by the mission and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), the purposes of an individual refuge, Service policy, and laws and international treaties. Relevant guidance includes the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, and selected portions of the Code of Federal Regulations and Fish and Wildlife Service Manual.


DeSoto Refuge’s other establishing authorities and related purposes include:

Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929
“…for use as an inviolate sanctuary or for other management purposes, for migratory birds.” 16 U.S.C. 715d

Refuge Recreation Act of 1962
“…suitable for - (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species” 16 U.S.C. 460k-460k-4


Boyer Chute Refuge’s other establishing authorities, related purposes and history include:

Emergency Wetland Resources Act of 1986 (U.S.C. 3901-3931). At that time, the Service agreed to accept long-term management responsibility for the Boyer Chute area and manage it as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service assumed management of a 2,000 acre area (the island and land adjacent to and west of the chute) in 1995 under a Memorandum of
Understanding with the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (NRD) which purchased the property under their Missouri River Corridor Project. On September 30, 1997, the NRD conveyed title to the tract via donation. Under Fiscal Year 1997 Congressional appropriations, the Service was directed to expand this original boundary to 9,912 acres as part of the Back to the River project, and given $2 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to begin acquisition.

DeSoto Refuge is located on the Missouri River floodplain between Blair, Nebraska and Missouri Valley, Iowa and encompasses 8,360 acres, with land in Harrison and Pottawattamie Counties, Iowa and Washington County, Nebraska. The climate is characteristic of mid-latitude, mid-continent areas, with annual rainfall of approximately 30 inches and wide variations in temperature. Winters are quite cold with sub-zero weather not unusual and average snowfall is 29.5 inches. The entire refuge lies within the meanders of the Missouri River floodplain, resulting in essentially flat topography and elevations ranging from 990 to 1,005 feet above mean sea level.

DeSoto serves as a seasonal resting area for waterfowl and many nongame migratory bird species. The refuge’s landscape is a mosaic of wetlands, grasslands and timber habitat. Cottonwood bottomlands characterize much of the forested area of the refuge. Cool and warm season native grasses have been re-established from reverted cropland, providing additional biological diversity.

Boyer Chute Refuge lies in the floodplain of the Missouri River. The refuge lies down river from DeSoto Refuge approximately three river miles. Its habitat is essentially the same as DeSoto’s.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as outlined by the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (NWRSAA), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), is to:

“... to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”

The NWRSAA mandates the Secretary of the Interior in administering the System to (16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(4):
- Provide for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants, and their habitats within the NWRS;
- Ensure that the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the NWRS are maintained for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans;
- Ensure that the mission of the NWRS described at 16 U.S.C. 668dd(a)(2) and the purposes of each refuge are carried out;
● Ensure effective coordination, interaction, and cooperation with owners of land adjoining refuges and the fish and wildlife agency of the States in which the units of the NWRS are located;
● Assist in the maintenance of adequate water quantity and water quality to fulfill the mission of the NWRS and the purposes of each refuge;
● Recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general public uses of the NWRS through which the American public can develop an appreciation for fish and wildlife;
● Ensure that opportunities are provided within the NWRS for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses; and
● Monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife, and plants in each refuge.

Therefore, it is a priority of the Service to provide for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, when those opportunities are compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

DeSoto and Boyer Chute Refuges developed this Hunt Plan to guide future hunting opportunities on the refuges in a manner that allows us to fulfill the purposes for which the refuges were established as well as provide wildlife-dependent recreation. Priority public-use opportunities will be provided and enhanced for the more than 180,000 annual visitors, in harmony with healthy habitats and sustainable wildlife populations.

II. Statement of Objectives

The objectives of the waterfowl, deer, and turkey hunting program on DeSoto and Boyer Chute Refuges are to:

1. To provide a way to manage the size of the wildlife populations on the refuges.
2. To provide the public with a high quality recreational experience on additional refuge lands and increase opportunities for hunters.
3. To allow wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service policy.

Hunting is consistent with the refuge’s Comprehensive Conservation Plan Objective 3.1 to:

Both refuges: As compared to current conditions, increase upland (wild turkey and ring-necked pheasant) hunting opportunities, big game (deer archery) hunting opportunities, and consider increased waterfowl hunting opportunities on the refuges through the development of a hunting step-down management plan that will be completed within one year of CCP approval.

III. Description of Hunting Program
A. Areas to be Opened to Hunting

This plan addresses hunting on DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges. Per the 2014 Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) DeSoto Refuge is divided into six units. See Appendix A for maps of both refuges.

The unit description and species to be hunted are:

- The West Dike Unit: 641 acres; deer and turkey hunting; bottomland forests and grasslands; 200 acres seasonal wetlands; bordered by the entrance road on the south and east side and the refuge boundary on the north and west; closed to the public except for hunting.
- The East Dike North Unit: 1,192 acres; deer and turkey hunting; bottomland forests, grasslands, and 470 acres of wetlands; unit encompasses the refuge headquarter, visitor center and three residences; bordered by highway 30 on the north, DeSoto Lake on the south, refuge boundary on the east and entrance road on the west; this unit is closed to the public except for hunting.
- East Dike South: 682 acres; deer and turkey hunting; bottomland timber, and grassland; bordered on the west by the lake, east and south by refuge boundary, and north by East Dike North Section; open to the public during the public use period.
- Center Island Unit: 2,120 acres; deer and turkey hunting; bottomland timber, 370 acres of wetlands, and grasslands; bordered on the west and south by the paved refuge road, the north and east by the gravel road; closed except for hunting.
- Public Use Unit: 1,528 acres; deer and turkey hunting; bottomland timber, 120 acres of wetlands, sandbar type habitat, and grasslands; bordered on the north and east by DeSoto Lake, south by the Missouri River and west by West Dike Unit; open to the public during the public use season and the road on the west side of the unit is open during the rest of the year; this unit holds the bulk of the infrastructure of the public use activities, i.e. nature trails, boat ramps, environmental education shelter, etc.
- West Side Unit: 1,037 acres; deer and turkey hunting; bottomland timber, 200 acres ephemeral wetlands, and grasslands; bordered on the northeast by the Missouri River, and the south west by refuge boundary; open to the public during the public use season.

Boyer Chute is divided into 11 units, see figure below. The unit description and species to be hunted are:

- Boyer Island Unit: 1,731 acres; deer (archery and muzzleloader), archery turkey and waterfowl hunting; bottomland timber, backwater sloughs, grasslands, and ephemeral wetlands; bordered on the north, east and south by the Missouri River, the west side is the chute; open to the public year round.
- Homestead Unit: 2 acres; archery deer and turkey; a few trees and grassland; this tiny square is surrounded by private cropland; closed to the public except for hunting.
- Horseshoe Unit: 895 acres; muzzleloader deer; bottomland forest, wetlands, and
grasslands; bordered on the north by paved road and private cropland on other three sides; open to the public during the public use season.

- Nathan’s Lake North Unit: 408 acres; archery deer and turkey, muzzleloader deer, and waterfowl; bottomland timber, grassland and ephemeral and managed wetlands; bordered on the northeast by Boyer Chute, the east by the Missouri River, west and north by private cropland, south by Nathan’s Lake South Unit; open to the public during the public use season.

- Nathan’s Lake South Unit: 237 acres; muzzleloader deer and waterfowl; bottomland timber, grassland and ephemeral and managed wetlands; bordered on the north by Nathan’s Lake North Unit, the east by the Missouri River, west and south by private cropland; closed to the public except for hunting.

- North Central Unit: 204 acres; deer (archery and muzzleloader), archery turkey and waterfowl; bottomland timber, grassland and backwater sloughs; bordered on the north by the river, south, east and west by private cropland; closed to the public except for hunting.

- Northwest Unit: 31 acres; archery deer and turkey; grasslands; this unit is bordered on the north by the Missouri River, west by a public road, and east and south by private cropland; open to the public during the public use season.

- Rail Unit: 68 acres; archery deer and turkey; grassland, and old homestead site with some trees; bordered on the west by public road, all other sides by private cropland; open to the public during the public use season.

- West Chute Unit: 206 acres; muzzleloader deer and waterfowl; bottomland timber and grassland; bordered on the northeast by Boyer Chute and southwest by private cropland; the public use road runs through this unit; open to the public year round.

- Wildflower Unit: 5 acres; archery deer and turkey; grassland; bordered on the west by public road and all other sides by private cropland; open to the public during public use season.

- Yellowlegs Unit: 186 acres; archery deer and turkey; grassland; bordered on the west by a public road, the east by the Missouri River and several river cabins, and the north and south by private cropland; open to the public during the public use season.
B. Species to be Taken, Hunting periods, Hunting Access

Deer Hunting

- Fall archery deer hunting will occur on West Side and East Dike South units of DeSoto and all units at Boyer Chute except Horseshoe Unit, West Chute Unit, and South Nathan’s Lake Unit. The archery season will be set so that they fall within the seasons of both the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IADNR) and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NEGPC) archery seasons for DeSoto Refuge and NEGPC for Boyer Chute Refuge. Archery hunting will be open to the public.

- Muzzleloader deer hunting will occur on all six units of DeSoto Refuge unless designated closed. Boyer Chute Refuge will include all units except the Northwest and Homestead units. The number of hunts and number of hunters will be set each year based on the deer population by the management staff.

Turkey Hunting

- Spring turkey shotgun hunting will occur on DeSoto Refuge on all units unless designated closed. This will be a managed hunt, limited to a set amount of hunters and days, based upon the number of acres that will be open to hunting.

- Spring turkey archery will occur on West Side and East Dike South units of DeSoto Refuge and all units at Boyer Chute Refuge except Horseshoe Unit, West Chute Unit, and South Nathan’s Lake Unit. The archery season will be set so that they fall within the seasons of both IADNR and NEGPC archery seasons for DeSoto Refuge and NEGPC for Boyer Chute Refuge. Archery
hunting will be open to the public.

- Fall archery turkey hunting will occur on DeSoto Refuge on the West Dike and East Dike South Units and all units at Boyer Chute Refuge except Horseshoe Unit, West Chute Unit, and South Nathan’s Lake Unit. The archery season will be set so that they fall within the seasons of both IADNR and NEGPC archery seasons for DeSoto Refuge and NEGPC for Boyer Chute Refuge. Archery hunting will be open to the public.

**Waterfowl Hunting**

- Fall waterfowl hunting will occur on Boyer Chute Refuge along the Missouri River boundary of the North-Central, Boyer Island, Nathan’s Lake and the West Chute Units. The season will be the same as the season for NEGPC season for that stretch of the river. Hunters will be allowed to access the areas by boat or limited access through the refuge. Hours, bag limits, etc. will be consistent with the states regulations.

**C. Hunter Permit Requirements (if applicable)**

There is one hunting access permit for all the hunting on DeSoto Refuge and one for Boyer Chute Refuge. The permits ensure that hunters know the specific regulations and hunt area for each refuge. The permit lists all the rules and requirements for each hunt and contains a map showing the hunt areas. Permits are available on the refuge websites, parking areas, by mail or at the visitor center. See Appendix A

**D. Consultation and Coordination with the State**

Management staff of DeSoto and Boyer Chute Refuges consults and coordinates with the IADNR and the NEGPC on refuge hunts. Hunter participation and harvest data are shared annually and law enforcement officers from the refuges and states work together to patrol the refuges, safeguarding hunters, visitors, and both game and nongame species. The state agencies were consulted during the CCP process and throughout the development of this hunt plan. Agency comments have been incorporated into this document.

DeSoto Refuge has had a reciprocity agreement with Iowa and Nebraska since 2003. Since the refuge is nearly equally divided between the two states, this has made it much easier to have refuge-wide hunts. As of 2018, all of Boyer Chute Refuge lies entirely within Nebraska.

**E. Law Enforcement**

Enforcement of refuge violations normally associated with management of a national wildlife refuge is the responsibility of commissioned refuge law enforcement officers. Other refuge
officers, special agents, state game wardens, and the local sheriff department often assist DeSoto and Boyer Chute Refuges’s full time law enforcement officer. The following methods are used to control and enforce hunting regulations:

- Refuge boundaries will be clearly posted.
- The Refuge Hunting Access Permit clearly list refuge specific regulations and provides a map that delineates the hunt areas.
- The Access Permit also shows the available hunting opportunities each year.
- The refuge’s law enforcement staff will randomly check hunters for compliance with Federal and state laws, as well as refuge-specific regulations pertinent to hunting, including compatibility stipulations.
- The law enforcement staff will coordinate with IADNR, NEGPC and other law enforcement agencies.
- Information will be made available at the DeSoto Refuge Visitor Center and the websites for both refuges. Procedures for obtaining local law enforcement assistance are based on legal jurisdiction, pending where the incident occurred. The refuge law enforcement officer has met with local law enforcement agencies in the counties that contain the refuges to develop good working relationships and coordinate appropriate strategies.

**F. Funding and Staffing Requirements**

The hunting program is designed to be administered with minimal refuge resources. The annual costs of refuge activities to attain the Hunting Program objectives are supported through the refuge operating budget. These costs include staff and operating expenses for refuge law enforcement and hunter assistance during the hunting season. The budget also includes refuge staff activities associated with evaluating resources available for hunting (e.g., biological assessments of target species) and preparing for the hunt(s) (e.g., special signage and access). The Recreational Fee Program is also utilized to cover costs associated with the hunt such as hunting brochures, blind maintenance, road maintenance, mowing, and other upkeep. It is anticipated that funding would continue to be sufficient to continue the hunting program at the refuges in the future.

**IV. Conduct of the Hunting Program**

**A. Hunter Permit Application, Selection, and/or Registration Procedures (if applicable)**

Application and registration for the refuges managed muzzleloader deer hunts is handled by
NEGPC for Nebraska hunters. Iowa hunters for DeSoto simply let the refuge know they want to participate in the hunts by calling, email or dropping off a card. The Refuge Access Permit is then mailed out to hunters.

Archery deer and turkey hunting is open to the public. The Refuge Access Permit is available in the archery parking lots, online, or at the refuge visitor center. Waterfowl hunting is also open to the public.

For the youth turkey hunt, interested hunters submit their name to the refuge and a drawing is held for the slots. Youth hunters must be 16 or under during the hunt. Youth hunters are notified if their name was drawn for the hunt.

The refuge accommodates physically challenged hunters. A hunter participating in a refuge-specific special hunt for physically challenged persons must have a verified statement of the disability by a licensed physician or must be participating in a program for physically challenged hunters sponsored by a nonprofit organization. These hunters will then be eligible to apply for refuge-specific authorization to participate in accessible hunting opportunities on the refuge.

Should the refuge implement other application/registration or harvest reporting procedures, it will use the Office of Management and Budget approved forms.

The refuge works in partnership with the Nebraska Game and Parks and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for the hunter selection process on the managed deer hunts at DeSoto Refuge. The managed deer hunts at DeSoto Refuge for Nebraska hunters is handled through the state’s website with a limit of 125 hunters. The permits are filled on a first-come/first-serve basis and hunters are notified through the state’s web-based system.

Iowa hunters interested in the managed deer hunts must apply directly through the refuge since the Iowa DNR does not have an online deer-permitting system. Hunter names and addresses are collected on an OMB approved form (FWS Form 3-2354) and turned into the refuge office with a limit of 50 hunters. The permits are filled on a first-come/first-serve basis. The refuge sends out letters to all Iowa hunters with instructions on where to purchase their managed deer hunt permit.

For the Spring Youth Turkey Hunt, youth hunters must submit their names directly to the refuge office. A limit of 25 youth hunters are permitted for the weekend hunt. A random drawing is held to select the participants and then all participants are notified by the refuge via a mailed letter.

For the Disabled Turkey Hunt, interested disabled hunters must apply directly with the refuge office. Typically, no more than five disabled hunters apply, but if more than five do apply then a random drawing would take place. Hunters are notified by the refuge via letter.

B. Refuge-Specific Hunting Regulations
Listed below are refuge-specific regulations that pertain to hunting on DeSoto and Boyer ChuteRefuges as of the date of this plan. These regulations may be modified as conditions change or ifrefuge expansion continues/occurs.

§32.34 Iowa.
The following refuge units are open for hunting and/or fishing in accordance with applicableFederal and State regulations, and listed in alphabetical order with additional refuge-specificregulations.

(a) De Soto National Wildlife Refuge.

(1) Migratory Game Bird Hunting. [Reserved]

(2) Upland Game Hunting. We allow youth hunting of ring-necked pheasant on designated areasof the refuge in accordance with the States of Iowa and Nebraska regulations. The refuge willannually determine and publish hunting seasons, dates, and designated areas and publish inrefuge hunting brochure.

(3) Big Game Hunting. We allow hunting of white-tailed deer and wild turkey on designatedareas of the refuge in accordance with States of Iowa and Nebraska regulations and subject to thefollowing conditions:
   (i) The refuge manager will annually determine and publish hunting seasons and dates,and will include them in the refuge hunting brochure.
   (ii) You must possess and carry a refuge access permit at all times while in the huntingarea. Hunters may enter the hunting areas only within the dates listed on the refugehunting brochure.
   (iii) All areas open to hunting may be accessed by hunters with a valid Iowa or Nebraskaresident hunting permit. Reciprocity exists, with both States allowing hunters with eitherresident permit to access refuge hunting land in either State.
   (iv) Hunters holding nonresident Nebraska or nonresident Iowa permits may hunt only onthe ground that lies within the State that issued the nonresident permit.
   (v) We allow hunters in the designated area from 2 hours before legal sunrise until 2hours after legal sunset.
   (vi) We prohibit the use of a crossbow as archery equipment unless the hunter hasobtained a State-issued disability crossbow permit.
   (vii) We prohibit shooting on or over any refuge road open to vehicle traffic within 30feet (9 meters (m)) of the centerline.
   (viii) We prohibit field dressing of any big game within 100 feet (30 m) of the centerlineof any refuge road.
(viii). You may possess only approved non-toxic shells (see §32.2(k)) when hunting wild
turkey
(x). We prohibit organized deer drives. We define a “drive” as an organized or planned
effort to pursue, drive, chase, or otherwise frighten or cause game to move in the
direction of any person(s) who is part of the organized or planned hunt and known to be
waiting for the game.
(xi) We allow two portable tree stands/blinds per hunter within the hunt area. Of those,
only one stand/blind can be left on the refuge from one week prior to the start of the
designated hunt season to one week after the end of the designated hunt season. Stands
must be labeled with name and state hunting license number.

(4) Sport Fishing. We allow sport fishing in DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge in accordance
with the States of Iowa and Nebraska regulations and subject to the following conditions:
(i) We allow ice fishing in DeSoto Lake from January 2 through the end of February.
(ii) We allow the use of pole and line or rod and reel fishing in DeSoto Lake from April
15 through October 14.
(iii) We allow the use of archery and spear fishing for nongame fish only from April 15
through October 14.
(iv) When the lake is open to ice fishing, we prohibit motor- or wind-driven conveyances
on the lake.
(v) We allow the use of portable ice fishing shelters on a daily basis from January 2
through the end of February.
(vi) Anglers may use no more than two lines and two hooks per line, including ice
fishing.
(vii) We prohibit the use of trotlines, float lines, bank lines, or setlines.
(viii) Anglers must adhere to minimum length and creel limits as posted.
(viii) We prohibit anglers leaving any personal property, litter, fish or any parts thereof,
on the banks, in the water, or on the ice.
(x) We prohibit digging or seining for bait.
(xi) We prohibit the taking of any mussel (clam), crayfish, frog, leech, and turtle
species by any method on the refuge (see §27.21 of this chapter).
(xii) We limit boating to “no-wake” speeds, not to exceed 5 miles per hour.[BD1][CTA2]
(xiii) We allow anglers on the refuge from ½ hour before legal sunrise to ½ hour after
legal sunset.

§32.46 Nebraska.

The following refuge units are open for hunting and/or fishing in accordance with applicable
Federal and State regulations, and listed in alphabetical order with additional refuge-specific
regulations.
(a) Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge.

(1) *Migratory Game Bird Hunting.* We allow hunting of ducks, geese, and coots on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:

   (i) Hunters may access the refuge from 2 hours before legal sunrise until 2 hour after legal sunset along the immediate shoreline and including the high bank of the Missouri River. You may access the hunting area by water or, if by land, only within the public use area of the Island Unit.
   
   (ii) You must remove all blinds and decoys at the conclusion of each day’s hunt (see §27.93 of this chapter).

(2) *Upland Game Hunting.* [Reserved]

(3) *Big Game Hunting.* We allow hunting of white-tailed deer and wild turkey on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:

   (i) The refuge will annually determine and publish hunting season and dates and include them in the refuge access permit (signed brochure).
   
   (ii) You must possess and carry a refuge access permit (signed brochure) at all times while in the hunting area.
   
   (iii) Hunters may enter the hunting areas only within the dates listed on the refuge access permit (signed brochure).
   
   (iv) We allow hunters in the designated areas from 2 hours before sunrise until 2 hours after sunset.
   
   (v) We allow two portable tree stands/blinds per hunter within the hunt area. Of those, only one stand/blind can be left on the refuge from one week prior to the start of the designated hunt season to one week after the end of the designated hunt season.
   
   (vi) Unattended stands and/or blinds must be plainly labeled with the full name and/or hunting license number of the owner. Labels must be visible from ground level.

(4) *Sport Fishing.* We allow fishing on designated areas of the refuge subject to the following conditions:

   (i) We allow personally attended hook and line fishing and archery fishing (rough fish only) from ½ hour before legal sunrise to ½ hour after legal sunset.
   
   (ii) We prohibit the use of trotlines, float lines, bank lines, or setlines.
   
   (iii) We prohibit digging or seining for bait.
   
   (iv) We prohibit the taking of any turtle, frog, leech, minnow, crayfish, and mussel (clam) species by any method on the refuge (see §27.21 of this chapter).
   
   (v) Anglers may use no more than two lines and two hooks per line.

Move to public use section
(i) We allow boating at no-wake speeds, not to exceed 5 miles per hour (8 kilometers per hour), on side or back channels. We prohibit all watercraft in the Boyer Chute waterway or other areas as posted.

C. Relevant State Regulations

Hunting is allowed consistent with all state regulations and within existing seasons.
D. Other Refuge Rules and Regulations for Hunting

Age and License - Hunting would be available to youth hunters who possess a valid state-issued youth or apprentice hunting license and their accompanying adult, and also available to all adults possessing a State-issued hunting license. Hunters who are eligible to hunt under Iowa or Nebraska law are allowed to hunt on DeSoto Refuge. At Boyer Chute Refuge, only hunters under Nebraska law are allowed to hunt.

Equipment - The refuge will permit the use of legal sporting arms in accordance with state regulations. An exception is at DeSoto Refuge, where crossbows for archery hunting is only permitted for hunters with a disability. This is based on the reciprocity agreement between Iowa and Nebraska where the stricter of the two states regulations are enforced. At Boyer Chute Refuge, crossbows would be legal archery equipment since the refuge is fully in Nebraska. Non-toxic shot ammunition for shotguns is required.

Fires on the Refuge – open fires are not permitted on the refuge

Permits – In addition to state required hunting permits, the refuge requires all hunters to have a refuge specific hunting regulations access permit. Hunter must read this access permit and carry it with them while hunting at either refuge. At DeSoto Refuge, an entrance permit is required to access the refuge.

Reporting Harvest – The refuge does not routinely require hunters to report on hunting activities or harvest separately from that already required by the State of Iowa or Nebraska. The states reporting requirements include the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP), and turkey and deer registration. Should an additional refuge-specific reporting program be implemented, the refuge will use the appropriate form approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

V. Public Engagement

A. Outreach for Announcing and Publicizing the Hunting Program

Information regarding refuge hunting opportunities is posted on both the refuge’s website, at the visitor centers, and in kiosks at entrances to the refuges. Single panel kiosks are also in hunter parking lots along with the Access Permit. Reminders of upcoming hunting seasons and instructions on where to find additional information are placed on the refuge website and facebook page. The refuges websites also contain detailed information about the hunts along with a printable access permit. The refuge maintains a mailing list, for news release purposes, to local newspapers, radio, and websites. Special announcements and articles may be released in conjunction with hunting seasons.
B. Anticipated Public Reaction to the Hunting Program

Based on the comments received during the CCP (2014) hunting has already been allowed on DeSoto and Boyer Chute Refuges for more than 15 years and little negative public reaction is expected. Hunting is an important economic and recreational use of Iowa and Nebraska’s’ natural resources. In addition, most of the non-hunting visitations occur from May through November for bird and wildlife observation and typically does not overlap with the peak of the hunting visits. Environmental education and interpretation occurs year round. DeSoto Refuge has over 160,000 visitors per year. Varied public uses have taken place on the refuge for 50 years and there have been few conflicts between hunters and non-consumptive users. The staff does a concerted effort to educate the non-consumptive public about hunting. Also, hunting is fairly common in this part of the country. Therefore, there should be minimal reaction to hunting on the refuges.

C. How Hunters Will Be Informed of Relevant Rules and Regulations

General information regarding hunting or other wildlife-dependent public uses can be obtained at DeSoto and Boyer Chute Refuges Visitor Center at 1434 316th Lane, Missouri Valley, IA 51555 or by calling (712) 388-4800. Dates, hunting access permit, forms, hunting unit directions, maps, and permit requirements about the hunt will be available on the station’s website at www.fws.gov/refuge/desoto/ for DeSoto Refuge and www.fws.gov/refuge/boyer_chute/ for Boyer Chute Refuge. All hunting forms and information can also be obtained at the DeSoto Visitor Center during business hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm daily). The hunting access permit (hunt brochure) are also available at all hunting parking lot kiosks. Information for managed muzzleloader deer hunts at both Boyer Chute and DeSoto are published in the Nebraska Big Game Guide by the NEGPC.

VI. Compatibility Determination

Hunting and all associated program activities proposed in this plan are compatible with the purposes of the refuge. See attached [Name of Compatibility Determination].