

However, this all changed in the summer of 2011 when DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges were threatened by unprecedented flooding. When the Missouri River reached record levels the decision was made to evacuate the collection.



Refuge staff and volunteers toiled to move the Bertrand collection to safety, and after a week of long hours and hard work each and every object had been packed and transported to a secure off-site facility.



Two Reasons for Delay in Returning Steamboat Bertrand Collection to the DeSoto Visitor Center

1. Restoration of the DeSoto Visitor Center/ Steamboat Bertrand Museum climate control, security and fire suppression systems.
2. Time for inventory and inspection of a collection carefully cared for and curated over a 40 year period that was removed in a hurry in 2011 in 9 days.



DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge is located 25 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska on U.S. Highway 30, between Missouri Valley, Iowa and Blair, Nebraska.

Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge is located on the west side of the Missouri River, 3 miles east of Fort Calhoun, Nebraska and 15 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska.



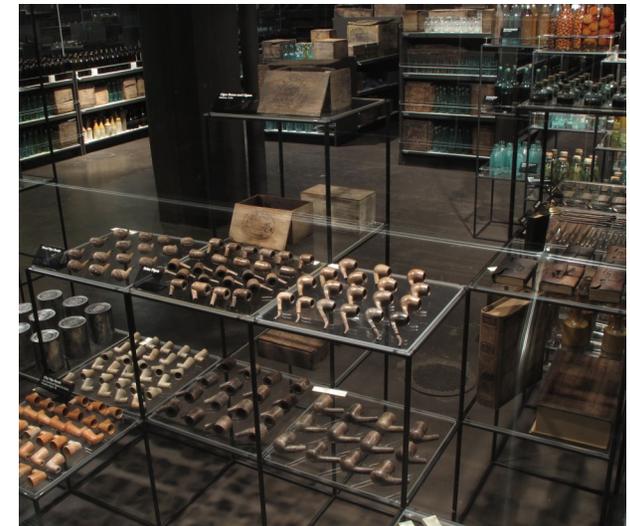
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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DeSoto & Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges

Where is the Steamboat Bertrand Collection?



Since 1981 visitors to DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge have been able to view thousands of unique objects recovered from a steamboat which sank on the Missouri River in the waning days of the Civil War.



This dramatic image, taken in August of 2011 shows the visitor center complex after the flood waters engulfed the refuge. For several months the building was only accessible by boat. While the upper floor stayed dry, the building's climate control system was severely damaged.



Until the environmental, fire suppression and security systems can be made operational again, the collection must be kept safe and secure in its temporary warehouse home.

The Bertrand collection is a nationally significant archeological find and is very popular with the general public. The Department of the Interior and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to preserving the collection and returning it to public display at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge.



In the meantime, the museum staff is conducting a complete inventory and upgrading our cataloging information. We are also documenting each object by using digital photography and providing up to date written descriptions.

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge
1434 316th Lane
Missouri Valley, IA 51555
Phone: 712-388-3800



The delay in returning the Bertrand collection to public display is regrettable, but when it does come back to DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge the collection will be better organized and documented than it was before the floods of 2011.



For more information about DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges, find us on Facebook (search DeSoto and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges) or visit our websites at www.fws.gov/refuge/Desoto/ and www.fws.gov/midwest/boyerchute/