

WILSON ISLAND STATE RECREATION AREA

Wilson Island, named after former Governor George Wilson, came into existence as an island sandbar around 1900. Today, Wilson Island State Recreation Area encompasses 577 acres of dense cottonwood stands. Seclusion is one of the area's greatest assets and spacious shady campsites, hiking trails and picnic spots provide a welcome retreat. Wildlife is abundant in the park and a visitor may see deer grazing in the park's alfalfa fields or be awakened by a huge flock of snow geese flying low overhead in the fall. Bald eagles are often perched in the tall cottonwoods during the winter and mushroom hunters will find no better place in the spring.

FISHING

A half-mile trail along the shoreline of the Missouri River, and two boat ramps provide excellent access to the river. An Iowa or Nebraska fishing license is required for fishing the Missouri River and backwater at Wilson Island.

TRAILS

Approximately five miles of trails are used for hiking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. The mile long shallow backwater at Wilson Island is perfect for ice skating. A self-guided nature trail runs between the camp areas and offers hikers an excellent opportunity to learn about many of the plants found in the area.

CAMPING

Camping is very popular at Wilson Island and there are 150 campsites. Campground #2 is modern with showers, flush toilets and electricity. Campgrounds #1 and #3 are non-modern. Two portions of Campground #3 are set aside for organized youth group camping. Camping permits are obtained by self-registration at the campgrounds.

CABIN

A non-modern cabin is available year-round. The cabin has electricity, two bunk beds, a table and benches. No cooking, water, or sanitary facilities are furnished. The cabin is located near the campground shower and toilet building. Advance reservations are accepted

starting the first working day in January. The cabin may be rented for shorter periods (two nights minimum) on a first-come, first-serve basis.

HUNTING

Approximately 50 acres of Wilson Island are under cultivation to provide supplemental food for game and non-game species. The entire area, except for the campgrounds and other developed sites, is open for public hunting. Archery deer hunting and duck hunting in the backwater area are the primary sports. Archers are reminded not to build permanent blinds because they are injurious to the trees.

HISTORY

Enroute to Wilson Island, visitors will see the unique wave-like loess hills which overlook the great Missouri River flood plain. These rugged hills are found along the Missouri River Valley in Iowa and Missouri. Early history tells us that Lewis and Clark traveled and camped on this reach of the Missouri River in 1804 - 1806 on their historic trip to and from the Pacific Coast.

DESOTO WILDLIFE REFUGE

Immediately north of Wilson Island is the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge. Part of the refuge is open to the public from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., April 15 to September 30 (entry after 9:00 p.m. is prohibited).

The DeSoto Visitor Center, open year-round 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., displays artifacts of the sunken steamboat Bertrand and audio-visual programs depicting Missouri River and wildlife conservation history. For further information on the refuge, contact DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Box 114, Missouri Valley, Iowa 51555, telephone (712)642-4121.

NEIGHBORING TOWNS

Missouri Valley, Iowa is located 6 miles east of Wilson Island.

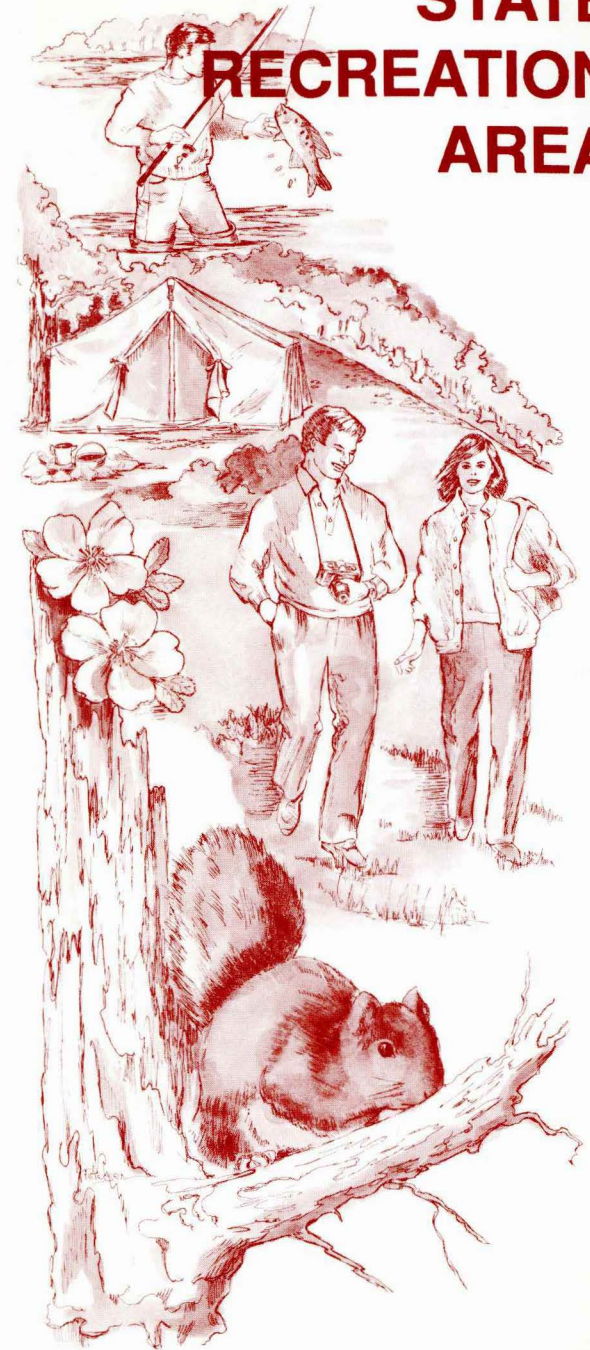
The **Omaha-Council Bluffs** metropolitan area is located 25 miles south of the park.

EQUAL RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

All persons are entitled to full and equal enjoyment of the recreational opportunities, privileges and advantages available in Iowa's great outdoors.

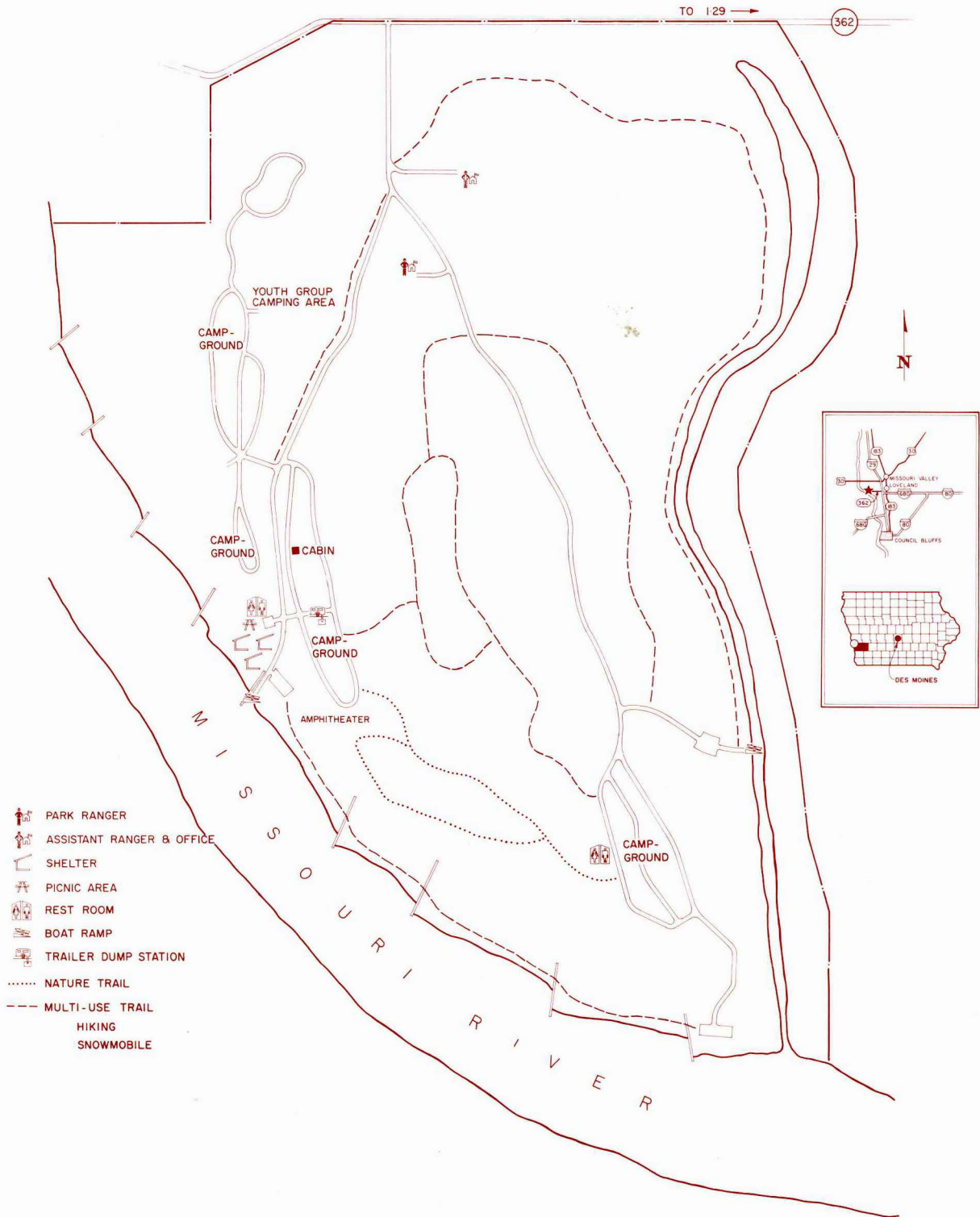
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034

WILSON ISLAND STATE RECREATION AREA



Missouri Valley, Iowa 5155
Telephone 712/642-2069

DESOTO REFUGE



A Park User Permit is required. Annual permits are available at the park office or at county recorders' offices. Daily permits are available at posted locations in the park.