

Wilson Island, named after former Governor George Wilson, came into existence as an island sand-bar around 1900 in the Missouri River.

The DeSoto Bend stretch of the Missouri River was cut off in 1959. Wilson Island was joined to adjacent land by the completion of an earthen dam and road. This construction was undertaken to impound a 750 acre lake in DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge.

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.

Today Wilson Island encompasses 577 acres of dense cottonwood stands. Located about 25 miles north of Council Bluffs, the park offers a variety of things to do for the week-end visitor and a good night's sleep for the camper passing through.

En route to Wilson Island, visitors will see the huge, wave-like loess hills which overlook the great Missouri River floodplain.

Seclusion is one of the area's greatest assets. Spacious and shady campsites provide a welcomed retreat.

Wildlife abounds in the park. It is not uncommon for a visitor to see deer grazing in the park's alfalfa fields or to be awakened by a huge flock of snow geese flying low overhead in the fall. Bald eagles are commonly seen perched in the tall cottonwoods during the winter, and mushroom hunters will find no better locations to fill their sacks in the spring.

## WILSON ISLAND RECREATION AREA

### CAMPING

Wilson Island will accommodate 175 camping units. Camp area 2 is classified as "modern" with showers and flush toilets. This area is open April 15th to October 15. Camp areas 1 and 3 are classified as "non-modern," with electrical sites and water available in area 3C year-round.

All campers must secure a camping permit during the posted hours at the check-in station. No reservations can be accepted. for rate information check insert.

### FISHING

An Iowa or Nebraska fishing license is required for fishing the Missouri River and backwater at Wilson Island. A half-mile trail along the shoreline of the river provides excellent access for the angler.

### TRAILS

Approximately 5 miles of trails are available for hiking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. A self-guided interpretive trail runs between camp areas 1 and 2.

### WINTER ACTIVITIES

Ice skating is available on the mile-long, shallow backwater at Wilson Island. Other activities include snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and camping.

### HUNTING

Approximately 50 acres of Wilson Island are under cultivation to provide supplemental food for game and non-game alike. The entire park outside the camp areas, is open for hunting. Archery deer hunting is the primary sport, along with duck hunting on the backwater area. Archery hunters are reminded not to build permanent blinds as this is injurious to trees.

### 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. - 10:00 p.m., April 15th to September 30th (entry after 9:00 p.m. is prohibited).

A 750 acre lake provides fishing, boating, swimming, water-skiing, picnicking, and wildlife observation. Two concession stands within the refuge offer fishing gear, boat rentals, fish bait, and refreshments.

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

### SURROUNDING TOWNS

Missouri Valley, six miles north and six miles east of the park has excellent restaurants, grocery stores, drug stores, churches, and a theater and hospital.

Council Bluffs, a city of over 60,000 is located about 25 miles south of Wilson Island. Council Bluffs and Omaha offer the visitor a large variety of things to do and see.

### CAMPING INFORMATION

Wilson Island will accommodate 238 camping units. There are electrical hook-ups available for those who prefer the modern touch. Wilson Island campsites are classified as "Modern" and "Non-modern." The modern sites have flush toilets and shower facilities available. All camping permits are issued by the park ranger. For camping rates, see the enclosed insert.

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## WILSON ISLAND



### PARK RANGER ADDRESS

Wilson Island  
R.R. 2  
Missouri Valley, Iowa 51555  
Telephone 712-642-2069

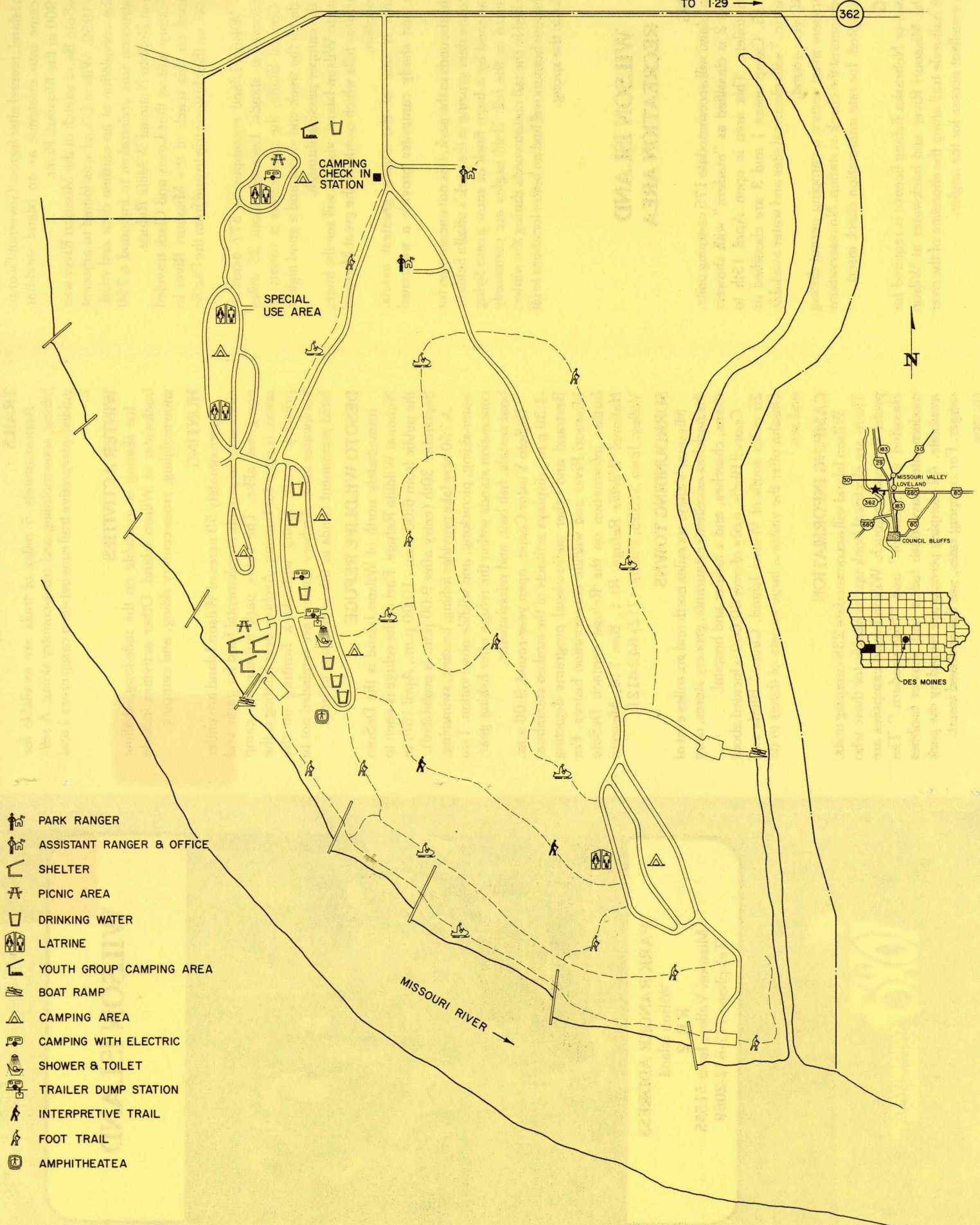
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CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION





- PARK RANGER
- ASSISTANT RANGER & OFFICE
- SHELTER
- PICNIC AREA
- DRINKING WATER
- LATRINE
- YOUTH GROUP CAMPING AREA
- BOAT RAMP
- CAMPING AREA
- CAMPING WITH ELECTRIC
- SHOWER & TOILET
- TRAILER DUMP STATION
- INTERPRETIVE TRAIL
- FOOT TRAIL
- AMPHITHEATEA

