Welcome to Brooky Bottom

From Brooky Bottom you will travel south of Goat Island en route to Clay County Park. Be cautious since this area may have frequent motor boat traffic.

The Missouri is a mile wide here, with equal amounts of river on either side of Goat Island. From here you see only half of the Mighty Mo'.

The Missouri River has served as a great transportation corridor from time immemorial. Bullboats, canoes, bateaux, pirogues, and keelboats all plied the waters in their time. The steamboat era began in this area in 1831 when the Yellowstone, a side wheeler steamboat, passed here enroute to the American Fur Company’s Fort Tecumseh (near modern-day Fort Pierre) and again on its return to St. Louis. Besides the major landings at Sioux City and at River-side Park in Yankton, other 19th century steamboat landings on this stretch of the Water Trail included St. James, St. Helena, Vermillion and Ponca.

The North Alabama stern wheel steamboat hit a snag and sank near the head of Goat Island on October 27, 1870, one of at least a dozen steamboats lost while navigating the Missouri River between Yankton, SD and Sioux City, IA.

The remains of the North Alabama were exposed in low water years of 1906 and 1934, then rediscovered in March, 2004.

University of South Dakota researchers took measurements and studied journals and historical river maps to confirm the boat’s identity, and many of the Water Trail partners worked together to document the wreck.

If water is low enough to view the wreck, please do not disturb this historic artifact. Watch for snags and other submerged and semi-submerged hazards along this stretch!

The Wiseman State Wildlife Management Area, with over 380 acres including steep wooded ravines and bluff-top native prairie, is adjacent to Brooky Bottom on the Nebraska side and is open to the public.

Goat Island is undeveloped public land, approximately 3.5 miles long and heavily forested with cottonwood and cedar trees.

Camping is permitted on Goat Island, but there are no facilities.

Please remember to Leave No Trace of your visit to the island.