



The Oklahoma *Update*

What's Happening in the Parks

National park areas are more than just pretty places; they are reflections of America as a whole, with a wide range of stories, experiences, and opportunities. Below are a few items of interest that reflect what's happening in Oklahoma national park areas. For more information on these topics or to plan a trip, please visit our official park websites at www.nps.gov/chic, www.nps.gov/okci, and www.nps.gov/waba

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Buffalo and Antelope springs, the source of Travertine Creek, had been dry since the beginning of the year. These freshwater springs normally produce a daily average flow of five million gallons. The springs were dry because the water table in the aquifer was low. A few good soaking rains finally recharged the aquifer sufficiently for the springs to flow again on May 3, 2009.

A full slate of programs and activities are planned for the summer. Commercial opportunities, such as firewood sales, are being implemented within the park for the first time. A new Junior Ranger Station at the Cold Springs Campground is open on summer weekends.

Oklahoma City National Memorial

Sunday, April 19, the 14th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, rangers led three scheduled programs on the Memorial grounds, including one in Spanish.

A Spanish-language version of the Junior Ranger activity booklet is has been recently under development.

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

In February, Lisa Conard Frost, supervisory park ranger at the Oklahoma City National Memorial transferred to the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site as superintendent. She arrived at the memorial in April 2000, serving as a member of the team that launched the Memorial's operations.



Park Superintendent Bruce Noble addresses the audience at the Lincoln Bridge during the rededication ceremony on February 12. (NPS/Chris Barrows)

Rededicating a Landmark

Park Ranger Lauren Gurniewicz

One hundred years ago, on a cold February day, residents of Sulphur and park officials gathered to celebrate the completion of the first permanent improvement in Platt National Park. The rock arch foot-bridge was christened "The Lincoln Bridge," in honor of the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth on February 12, 1909.

This Gothic Revival structure has stood for one hundred years as a treasured part of Platt National Park and today's Platt Historic District in the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Representatives of the Platt National Park American Legion post #148 honor guard and Girl Scout Troop 144 presented American flags and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members of 2008 Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Tammie Canada's Third Grade class read the Gettysburg Address, and Superintendent Bruce Noble and Sulphur City Council member Mike Crews spoke to the role the bridge has served in the park and the community for the last century.

A new dedication plaque for the bridge was revealed, and the bridge was re-christened with mineral water, as was done in 1909.

More information about the Lincoln Bridge and its role in park history can be found on the park website at www.nps.gov/chic/historyculture/lincoln-bridge.htm



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

The park is named to honor the Chickasaw Indian Nation, original occupants of this land. The partially forested hills of southcentral Oklahoma and its springs, streams, and lakes provide swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, hunting, and hiking.

Address

1008 West Second Street
Sulphur, Oklahoma 73086
<http://www.nps.gov/chic/>

Phone

580 622-3165

E-mail

chic_web_coordinator@nps.gov

Oklahoma City National Memorial

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, killed 168 people, including 19 children, and injured more than 650. The memorial is a public/private partnership established so that the American public can honor the memory of the victims, their families, the survivors, and their rescuers.

Address

PO Box 676
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101
<http://www.nps.gov/okci/>
www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org

Phone

405 609-8863

E-mail

okci_superintendent@nps.gov

The Oklahoma Update is the official newsletter of the national park units in the State of Oklahoma.

Superintendent

Bruce Noble

Editor / Public Information Officer

Eric L. Leonard

Chief of Interpretation, Chickasaw NRA

Ron Parker

Comments? Write to:

Newsletter Editor
Chickasaw National Recreation Area
1008 West Second Street
Sulphur, Oklahoma 73086

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

From the Superintendent

As I write these words near the end of March, Sulphur's first snow of the year is falling outside my window. Since we desperately need moisture, I think everybody will take the precipitation whether it falls as snow or rain. However, this unusual weather does not change the fact that many signs of spring grace Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Redbuds and Chickasaw plums are blooming in the park, leaves are popping out on the hard wood trees, and the water is getting warmer in the Lake of the Arbuckles. The change of seasons brings hope that summer is not far away.

Other changes are in progress in the park as well. One of these changes you are now holding in your hands, Chickasaw National Recreation Area's first newsletter. We are launching this newsletter as an experiment to communicate more effectively with interested members of the public. Our plan is to issue this newsletter twice a year as a means of keeping you posted about events and activities in the park. If you know others who would like to receive this newsletter, please let us know by calling 580 622-7220 or by sending an email to chic_web_coordinator@nps.gov. By the same token, please help us conserve paper by letting us know if you would prefer not to receive this newsletter. (Another source of great information about the park is our website, www.nps.gov/chic/.)

Other changes involve personnel. Tim Jarrell recently departed after 13 years at Chickasaw National Recreation Area to accept the position of Facility Manager at Grand Canyon National Park. Tim has served this park very well and we wish him the best in his important new assignment. Another change involves the recent retirement of Administrative Officer Gail McCurry after serving the park for an amazing 36 years. We miss Gail's knowledge and corporate memory dating back to Platt National Park days, but also wish her the very best in retirement.

While we will miss both Gail and Tim, we also look forward to hiring new people to fill their positions. I am pleased to announce that Sharyl Cyphers, currently the Administrative Officer at Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska, has accepted the Administrative Officer position at Chickasaw NRA. Sharyl hails from Kansas and looks forward to settling in Oklahoma in mid-June where she will be closer to family and friends. The park's Facility Manager position has not been advertised yet, but that will happen within the next few weeks. (Park vacancy announcements are listed on www.usajobs.gov.)

Another important change involves the formation of a park friends group. With the help of some local park supporters, most notably Kevin Howard of Ardmore, the "Friends of Chickasaw National Recreation Area" was recently incorporated by the Oklahoma Secretary of State's office. This group will be working toward achieving 501c3 (ie., non-profit) status and we look forward to what the group will offer as a means of private, non-governmental support for the park. Please stay tuned for more information about membership opportunities in the friends group in the weeks to come.

Changes also bring challenges as we say goodbye to trusted former employees and embark upon new ways of doing business, but I hope you will join me in welcoming these changes to the park. All of these changes are being undertaken with an eye toward fulfilling the vision that our partners and citizens have in mind for Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Please help us to achieve this vision by spreading the word about our new newsletter and by joining the park friends group when the opportunity presents itself. In the meantime, enjoy the arrival of warmer weather by getting outdoors and experiencing the wonders of Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

Bruce Noble, Superintendent

Sounds of Healing

Park Guides Leslie Blythe & David Albert

On morning of April 19, 1995, the sun was shining in Oklahoma City, and people were just beginning their work day when a bomb ripped through the calm. That bomb, hidden in the back of a Ryder rental truck, ultimately killed 168 people. As the investigation into the bombing ensued, law enforcement traced the origin of that truck to Elliott's Body Shop in Junction City, Kansas.

Junction City—a city forever tied to the events of April 19th and to Oklahoma City—became a victim of circumstance that day. The spotlight turned on the city and its role in the worst act of domestic terrorism. And, as NPS and Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum staff discovered in a September 2008 research trip, people still come to this city because of the connection to the bombing.

While Junction City played an unwitting role in this bombing, it is more than this one event in history. As visitors to the memorial learned on December 30, the spirit of this Kansas town shines in its youth. The 150 members of the Junction City High School Blue Jay Marching Band, under the direction of Mr. T.J. Taylor, performed their “Tour of Duty” show under the Survivor Tree during a stop on their way to perform in the 2009 Cotton Bowl half-time show and the Cotton Bowl Parade in Texas.

The sound of the musical instruments reverberated around the site as a tribute to the 168 victims of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing—a much different sound than that of April 19th.



Members of the Junction City High School Band play under the Survivor Tree. (NPS Photograph)

The band performed a variety of songs, including “Stars and Stripes Salute,” “Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy,” “America the Beautiful,” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” They concluded with the state songs of Kansas and Oklahoma—“Home on the Range” and “Oklahoma” by Rogers and Hammerstein. The music drew visitors and staff to the Survivor Tree and made all stop to reflect on the events of April 19, 1995 and the time since.

“The song ‘Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy’ conjured up memories of a simpler time when we thought little about the threat of domestic terrorism,” Ranger David Albert said. “Many of these kids are too young to remember this bombing, but, through their music, they are helping the healing process.”

National Park Rangers discussed the impact of violence with the students before their performance. Students walked around the site in an effort to comprehend this senseless act of terrorism.

As Chief of Interpretation Lisa Conard-Frost said, “We in the National Park Service hold this site in our hearts and hope that these students will as well.”

With the patriotic sounds emanating from under the Survivor Tree on December 30th, the connection between Junction City and Oklahoma City strengthened. The healing continues.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chickasaw National Recreation Area
1008 West Second Street
Sulphur, Oklahoma 73086

Oklahoma City National Memorial
PO Box 676
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Summer programs

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Ranger-led programs

Travertine Traverse — Get to know Chickasaw with a park ranger on a walk along Travertine Creek to Antelope and Buffalo Springs or Little Niagara. Meet at the Travertine Nature Center. 1-1 ½ miles roundtrip, 9:30 a.m. Friday through Sunday.

Beat The Heat — Join a park ranger to explore the natural resources and stories of Chickasaw National Recreation Area at the Travertine Nature Center. 3:00 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

Campground Amphitheater Programs/Ranger Talks — Enjoy an evening of relaxation and education. Join us at the Buckhorn, and Point campground amphitheaters. 9:00 pm Fridays and Saturdays.

Friday Nights at Cold Springs — Families are invited to join park rangers for evening programs designed for children of all ages. Bring the kids to the Cold Springs campground amphitheater at 8:00 p.m. every Friday.

Summer Hours

From Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend the Travertine Nature Center will be open from 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., daily.

The Visitor Information Station, in the Chamber of Commerce Building at 717 West Broadway, is open 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., daily. Annual boat permits and federal passes are available only when NPS staff is present.

The Buckhorn Ranger Station will be open Thursday and Friday, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Closed for lunch.

Junior Ranger Station

Located at the entrance to the Cold Springs Campground, the Junior Ranger Station is a central location for children visiting the park to begin their Junior Ranger experience. Open Fridays; 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays; 10:00 p.m. - 12:00 noon and 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Oklahoma City National Memorial

Extended Hours

From Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, Park Rangers will be available on the Memorial grounds from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Monday through Wednesday rangers are available from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Ranger-led programs

Park rangers lead programs on the Memorial grounds at 11:00 a.m. and at 2:00 p.m. daily. Thursday through Sunday, evening programs are conducted at 6:15 and 8:15 p.m.

These program schedules are subject to change.