



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

Oklahoma's oldest national park area, Chickasaw National Recreation Area has been a refuge for outdoor traditions for over a century. Springs, streams, and lakes attract visitors to Chickasaw National Recreation Area, named for the Indian nation from whom the United States purchased the land for the park in 1902.

For more stories and information about the Chickasaw NRA, please turn to pages 2-3.

Oklahoma City National Memorial

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

For more stories and information about Oklahoma City National Memorial, please turn to pages 4-5.

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

The park preserves the site of the November 27, 1868, battle where the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer destroyed Peace Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village. Black Kettle and more than 100 Cheyenne were killed or captured. The controversial attack has been described as both a battle and a massacre.

For more stories and information about Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, please turn to pages 6-7.



Park Superintendent Bruce Noble and Chamber of Commerce Executive Shelly Sawatzky receive the Redbud Merit Award for Best partnership. (Sulphur Chamber of Commerce)

Chickasaw NRA Recognized With Two State Tourism Awards

Park Ranger Eric Leonard

Chickasaw National Recreation Area was honored with two awards recently at the Governor's Conference on Tourism. The park received Redbud Merit awards as Outstanding Attraction and for Best Partnership based on the park's work with the Sulphur Chamber of Commerce.

The partnership between Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the Sulphur Chamber of Commerce dates back many years. In 2005, the park began leasing a portion of the Chamber of Commerce building to serve as a Visitor Information Station. Today, the facility is staffed seven days a week to provide information to visitors about area attractions as well as convey park rules and regulations about Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department partners with the Oklahoma Travel Industry Association (OTIA) to present the annual Redbud Awards. Lt. Gov. Jari Askins and Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department Executive Director Hardy Watkins announced the winners during a special gala held on October 19th at the Renaissance Hotel in Tulsa.

"Redbud Awards represent the highest honor given in the Oklahoma tourism industry," said Watkins. Entries are evaluated by out-of-state judges based on criteria including customer service, marketing effectiveness, media relations, variety of audiences reached, value, and overall creativity.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

In Brief

Students Lend a Hand for Public Lands

On a sunny Saturday morning in early October, students from Sulphur High School (SHS), East Central University (ECU), and the University of the Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO) rolled up their sleeves to celebrate National Public Lands Day. Park Rangers led USAO students to a Civilian Conservation Corps-built bridge to remove vegetation from the historic structure. SHS and ECU students joined Park Rangers from Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the Oklahoma City National Memorial in collecting native grass seeds to be planted in other park locations for prairie restoration.

Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer Study Released

The release of the final results of the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer study in August, has focused renewed attention on the springs in the park. Park Guide Lynn Cartmell developed and led a special series of walks which explored the natural and cultural history of the springs found in the park in October and November.

Quarter-dollar coin to feature park in 2011

Park staff are presently working with the U.S. Mint to develop a series of alternative images for a new coin that will feature Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Scheduled for release at the end of 2011, it will be the tenth of 56 quarters issued in the America the Beautiful Quarters program.

Dallas PBS station produces park film

Oka' - a short film by native Oklahoma filmmaker Rick Thompson - focuses attention on the history of the unique freshwater and mineral springs in the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Produced to accompany the Ken Burns television documentary "The National Parks: America's Best Idea," the film tells the story of the former Platt National Park and can be viewed on the internet at <http://www.kera.org/oka/>

Camping fee increase proposed

The National Park Service is proposing an increase in camping fees at Chickasaw National Recreation Area. The proposed camping fees would be an increase of \$2.00 for individual sites and \$6.00 for group sites. Before implementing this proposed change to camping fees, the park is soliciting input from the public. Comments may be sent to chic_superintendent@nps.gov.

Planning Funds for new Visitor Center secured

Through the support of Congressman Cole, the park is receiving \$500,000 for planning and development for a visitor center.

Junior Ranger Station Has a Successful Summer Season

Park Ranger Eric Leonard

At the Cold Springs Campground, a part of the park's past was adapted to meet the needs of present park visitors. Once used as a ranger station, Cold Springs Campground Checking Station building was converted into a *Junior Ranger Station*. The Junior Ranger Station was opened to the public during a Junior Ranger Day event in April of 2009 and was staffed during regular hours on Friday and Saturday throughout the summer.

The park's SCA Junior Ranger Ambassador intern, Dakota Radford, developed and field-tested activities for a new activity booklet; these activities explore the park's resources in an age-appropriate fashion. Feedback received from visitors illustrate that participants achieved a far better understanding of the park's water resources as well as a deeper appreciation

of the severity of visitor impacts upon those resources.

In the four months that the Junior Ranger Station was active for the summer season, interpretive staff awarded 356 Junior Ranger badges, just over one half of the total number awarded for the year (635).

Seeing a ranger wave at passing visitors and vehicles from the open window of the Junior Ranger Station harkens back to an earlier time. It creates a living link from the park's past to the present. Likewise, children receiving Junior Ranger badges or completing a learning activity foretells the park's future. After Labor Day weekend the Junior Ranger Station closed for the season, but plans are already underway to expand the hours and staffing of this important new program in the summer of 2010.

Junior Ranger Ambassador Dakota Radford talking with a family about water resources at the Junior Ranger Station. (NPS/Amy Trenkle)



Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Wore Many Hats in 2009

Park Ranger Lauren Gurniewicz



Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Amy Trenkle conducting educator outreach at the Davis schools. (NPS/Lauren Gurniewicz)

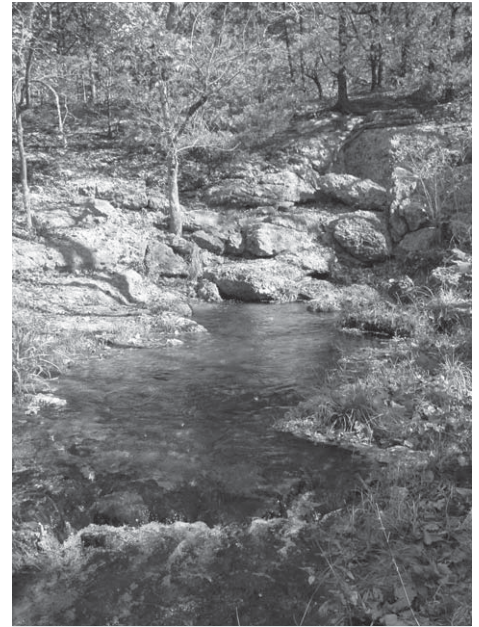
2009 marked Chickasaw National Recreation Area's second year participating in the National Park Service's Teacher-Ranger-Teacher (TRT) program. The TRT program provides educators with the opportunity to work as a National Park Ranger for the summer. TRT's wear the National Park Service uniform, conduct research, present interpretive programs, develop curriculum, and work on special projects. During the National Park Week following their summer as a TRT, the educators wear their uniform in their classroom, bringing the TRT experience full circle.

National Board certified 8th grade history teacher Amy Trenkle made the long trek to Chickasaw from Washington, DC in the summer of 2009. Amy has had a life-long interest in the National Parks and she brings these special places to life in her classroom throughout the school year. She created the innovative STAMPS (Students Teaching about Monumental Park Sites) program in partnership with Rangers on the National Mall to

give her students the opportunity to learn firsthand about their National Parks.

For Amy, the TRT experience was an adventure, whether she was working at the Travertine Nature Center or developing curriculum-based lesson plans. Amy's enthusiasm for life and education was contagious. She wore her uniform with pride and welcomed every opportunity to share park resources with visitors. She left the park with Oklahoma curriculum-based lessons that will allow park rangers to help local educators connect park resources to their curriculum.

Fortunately, we did not have to say goodbye to TRT Amy for long. She and her 8th grade students, along with Park Rangers from the National Mall and Memorial Parks, will be visiting Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the Oklahoma City National Memorial in March 2010 as part of a week-long STAMPS spring break trip. We cannot wait to welcome her back!



Antelope Springs (NPS/Eric Leonard)

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.

Superintendent

Bruce Noble

Chief of Interpretation

Ron Parker

Mailing Address

1008 West Second Street
Sulphur, Oklahoma 73086

On the Internet

<http://www.nps.gov/chic/>

Phone

580 622-7234

E-mail

chic_web_coordinator@nps.gov

Oklahoma City National Memorial

Park Rangers Participate in the Buddy Walk

Park Guide M. Tucker Blythe

On Saturday, September 19, staff from the Oklahoma City National Memorial (OKCI) participated in Oklahoma City's Buddy Walk at the Bricktown Ballpark, issuing America the Beautiful Access Passes and promoting the Junior Ranger program. Despite the rain that greeted walkers that morning, over 3,500 people participated in the local event, which promotes acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

The National Down Syndrome Society established the Buddy Walk in 1995. Seventeen communities participated in that first year, and by 2008 the event had grown to over 275 communities with over 230,000 participants. The local OKC Buddy Walk is sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma.

National Park Service participation in this year's Buddy Walk started with a simple conversation. Early in the summer, Monique Dodd came to the National Park Service offices in Oklahoma City in search of an Access Pass for her child with Down syndrome.

Part of the Interagency Pass Program authorized in 2004, the America the Beautiful Access Pass is a free, lifetime pass available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents with a permanent disability. The Pass allows holders access to and use of Federal recreation sites that charge an Entrance or Standard Amenity Fee.

OKCI Acting Chief of Interpretation Skip Wheeler and Secretary Tim McGuire struck up a conversation with Monique, and they learned about Buddy Walk. The proverbial light bulb came on in Skip and Tim's heads.

"We process a lot of the America the Beautiful passes in our office. So, in the course of our conversation, we thought it would be great to offer the Access Pass to the families participating in the Buddy Walk," Wheeler said.

"We have also been trying to find ways to promote the Junior Ranger program, ours and others Servicewide, so we figured this would be a great opportunity to do that as well."

Wheeler, McGuire, and Park Guide Tucker Blythe passed out brochures for the three National Park System sites – Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial – and contacted hundreds of Buddy Walk participants on that damp Saturday. In all, twenty Access Passes were issued and over 100 families received information about the Junior Ranger program.

From this initial relationship developed with Monique Dodd, OKCI rangers have started working towards a pilot school outreach program with Deer Creek Schools. Park Guides Mike Washington and Matt Whitney will be meeting members of the Deer Creek PTO in mid-January to promote the National Park Service and the development of a curriculum-based school program to highlight the resources of the National Park Service. Look for more information on this in a future edition of the *Oklahoma Update*.

Upper Right: Park Guide Tucker Blythe with a Buddy Walk participant.

Lower Right: Secretary Tim McGuire issuing an Access Pass to a Buddy Walk participant.

Interagency Passes

The Interagency Pass Program was authorized by Congress in 2004. These passes allow access to and use of Federal recreation sites that charge Entrance or Standard Amenity fees. The three kinds of passes are:

Annual Pass

Annual pass available to the general public, age 16 and over. Cost: \$80 per year.

Senior Pass

Lifetime pass available to U.S. citizens and permanent residents age 62 and over. Cost: \$10.

Access Pass

Lifetime pass available to U.S. citizens and permanent residents with permanent disabilities. Cost: Free.

The Interagency passes are available at Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the NPS office in the Oklahoma City Federal Building. For more information on the Interagency pass program go to www.nps.gov/fees_passes.htm.



From the Oklahoma State Coordinator

In 1993, the United States Congress passed a law called the Government Performance and Results Act. One of the act's purposes was to "improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results." One of the ways in which we hold ourselves accountable in the National Park Service is by conducting visitor satisfaction surveys every summer. I would like to share some results with you from the most recent survey conducted at Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

During June, we distributed 400 survey cards to a random sample of park visitors. 174 of those survey cards were returned to us for a response rate of nearly 45% (an extremely good response rate in the survey world). The survey results indicated that 90% of park visitors were satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities. While I am generally pleased when I score 90% on a test, let me give you a closer look at the visitor survey results and explain how we intend to do better in the future.

On the positive side, 92% of our visitors were satisfied with walkways, roads, and trails in the park. In addition, 91% of visitors were satisfied with the park's outdoor recreational opportunities. I think most everyone would agree that walkways, roads, trails, and outdoor recreational opportunities are among the most outstanding features of Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

However, I am disappointed to report that only 59% of visitors reported that they were satisfied with rest rooms in the park. The silver lining I see in the future is that the park's new Chief of Maintenance, Jackie Messer, is determined to improve upon this rating.

Fortunately, the park has received some Economic Stimulus money that will be invested in rest rooms and this will assist our efforts to raise this rating.

Other comments indicated that visitors wanted to see more utility sites for RV's in the park and many people desire to have showers in the campgrounds in the Platt District of the park. We are working on adding utility sites by reinvesting our camping revenue into upgrading campgrounds at the Lake of the Arbuckles. Our revenue level is such that these improvements will take place over a period of years, but I pledge that the public will see improvement on this front in the years to come. As for showers in the Platt District, we are acutely aware of the public's desire for showers and yet we have been unable to accumulate a revenue stream to make this happen. In the meantime, we continue to work on the issue and we are very open to Commercial Use Authorization proposals from businesses that might help the park meet this need.

The written comments that really hit home with me were many received like the following: "A wonderful family gathering spot that we have used for over 30 years" and "We plan on coming here forever. Keep up the good work." Last but not least, "Thank you all for taking such pride in our park." While we continue to strive to make improvements, comments such as these make me proud to see that the public recognizes the value of all the hard work being invested every day by park employees.

The winter months are still a great time of year to enjoy the sounds and sights of our parks. Please invite any out-of-town visitors you may have during the holidays to visit your national parks in Oklahoma.

Bruce Noble, Superintendent



The East Gate (NPS/Amy Trenkle)

Oklahoma City National Memorial

The Oklahoma City National Memorial was created to honor those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever by the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. 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.

Superintendent

Bruce Noble

Supervisory Park Ranger

Skip Wheeler

Mailing Address

PO Box 676
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101

On the Internet

<http://www.nps.gov/okci/>

Phone

405 609-8863

E-mail

okci_superintendent@nps.gov

Partnership Organization

Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum
620 N. Harvey
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
405 235-3313 or 888 542-HOPE
www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

What's Been Happening

July 14 – The park welcomed Michael Blake, Academy Award winning author of *Dances with Wolves*, on Tuesday, July 14th. Mr. Blake previewed his new documentary film, *Ft. Bowie to Chiricahua* to an enthusiastic audience at the Cheyenne High School Auditorium.

July 15 - Park Ranger Dick Zahm, took the park tipi to the Cheyenne Sun Dance Ceremony in Concho, Oklahoma where it received a special blessing from Cheyenne Chief Gordon Yellowman.

September 8 – Superintendent Lisa Conard Frost attended Tribal Consultation (Northern and Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho) at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

October 24 – Washita Battlefield was chosen as one of the stops on a Staff Ride sponsored by the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. These rides “represent unique and persuasive methods of conveying the lessons of the past to the present-day Army leadership for current application.” A total of eight Army Majors plus three civilian instructors took part in this three-day professional leadership development exercise as they followed the campaign from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Dodge, and on to Camp Supply, Washita and Soldier Springs.



Tuesdays in October – Acting Chief of Interpretation Kathryn Harrison, visited Lori Barnett's 3rd grade class at Cheyenne Elementary to introduce the children to the National Park Service and the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site. On the final visit, October 27th, Superintendent, Lisa Conard Frost, surprised the class by swearing in the fifteen third graders as new Junior Rangers!

November 7th – Dr. Paul A. Hutton, nationally renowned scholar and Professor of History at the University of New Mexico, spoke before approximately 60 people at the park's visitor center the evening of November 7th. His talk, “Sheridan, Custer, and the Washita,” was followed by a reception and a book signing.



October 15 – The National Trust for Historic Preservation presented the Northern and Southern Cheyenne Tribes of Oklahoma, Colorado, Montana and Wyoming with a 2009 National Preservation Honor Award for their assistance and support in establishing 3 national park units: Washita Battlefield NHS, Sand Creek Massacre NHS and Bent's Old Fort NHS. Washita Superintendent, Lisa Conard Frost represented the park at the National Preservation Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, along with Sand Creek Superintendent Alden Miller and Bent's Old Fort Superintendent Alexa Roberts. Representing the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes are Anthony Addison, Layla Spoonhunter, Harvey Spoonhunter, Chief Gordon Yellowman, Richard Williams and Joe Fox. (Cheyenne and Arapaho Culture and Heritage Program)



Author/filmmaker Dayton Duncan and producer Julie Dunfey [not pictured], pleasantly surprised park staff with an early morning visit on October 24. They were on their way to the panhandle of Oklahoma to begin work on a new project documenting areas affected by the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Both Mr. Duncan and Ms. Dunfey recently collaborated with documentary filmmaker, Ken Burns on *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*.

A Window on our World

Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison

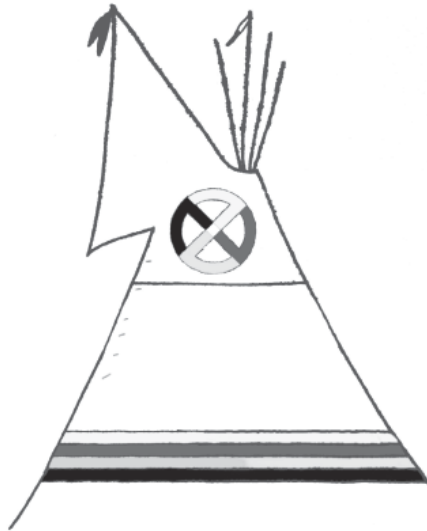
Washita Battlefield NHS welcomed twenty-two teachers from Oklahoma, Texas, Washington, D.C., and Wyoming to the park's inaugural Teacher's Workshop - A Window on our World - held on Saturday, July 25th. Included in the group were NPS staff members from Fort Larned NHS, Little Bighorn Battlefield NM and Sand Creek Massacre NHS. An additional bonus was having former Chief of Interpretation, Dave Schafer, return from Brown vs. Board of Education to give the walking tour of the site to the teachers.

Prior to this walking tour, Chief Lawrence Hart gave a blessing at the park overlook and the Red Moon Singers and drum group played the Chief's Song and the Veteran's Song. For many of the teachers, this was the first time that they had ever heard the Cheyenne language spoken, or the ancient beat of a drum group as it played traditional songs.

The all-day event focused on bringing Cheyenne and Arapaho perspectives into the classroom, and we were pleased that so many tribal representatives were on hand to break bread with the teachers at a traditional lunch of corn soup and fry bread, along with a raisin and rice desert.

Jennie Whiteman, Cheyenne and Arapaho Book Project Coordinator spoke on how teachers could use these four books in their classrooms. The park was able to give each teacher the set of books courtesy of the Western National Parks Association.

The Tsististas and Hinono'ei tribes present:
A Window on our World
Bringing Cheyenne and Arapaho Perspectives into the Classroom



We were honored to have Dr. Henrietta Mann President of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College in Weatherford, Oklahoma give an introduction to the film about life in Indian boarding schools, *In the White Man's Image*. A noted educator and lecturer, Dr. Mann also answered questions from the teachers, as well as sign her book, *Cheyenne-Arapaho Education 1871-1982*.

Southern Cheyenne Story Teller, Moses Starr, entertained the teachers with a segment on perceptions versus tradition using laughter, song and dance in equal measure - he was terrific! The conference ended with Park Guide, Minoma Littlehawk's remarks about her journey as a Cheyenne woman living in two worlds - the White and the Red.



The Washita River (NPS Photo)

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

The park commemorates the November 27, 1868, attack where the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer destroyed Peace Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village. Black Kettle and over 100 Cheyenne were captured or killed. The controversial attack has been described as both a battle and a massacre.

Superintendent

Lisa Conard Frost

Chief of Interpretation

Kathryn Harrison, *acting*

Mailing Address

Route 1 Box 55a
Cheyenne, Oklahoma 73628

On the Internet

<http://www.nps.gov/waba/>

Phone

580 497-2742

E-mail

chic_web_coordinator@nps.gov



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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

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The Oklahoma Update
Volume 1, Number 2 — January 2010

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

Oklahoma State Coordinator
 Bruce Noble

Editor / Public Information Officer
 Eric L. Leonard

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.™

Friends of Chickasaw NRA

The purpose of Friends of Chickasaw National Recreation Area is to promote public appreciation of and support for Chickasaw National Recreation Area. This support includes conducting interpretive programs, increasing public awareness regarding the park and its mission, fundraising, and other volunteer activities. The IRS has certified this group as a private non-profit organization (501c3) and membership fees for joining are tax deductible. Anyone interested in receiving a membership application can send an email to chic_superintendent@nps.gov, or call 580 622-7220.

Friends of Chickasaw NRA
 PO Box 199
 Sulphur, OK 73086

Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation

The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum is a private non-profit organization, and does not receive any annual operating funds from the federal, state or local government. Museum admissions, store sales, the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, earnings from an endowment and private fundraising allow the Memorial and Museum to be self-sustaining.

Valuable gifts of time, talent and treasure to the Memorial help change lives each and every day. Make your donation to the Memorial and volunteer your time. If you would like to help, write to P.O. Box 323, Oklahoma City, OK, 73101, or call toll-free at 1-888-542-HOPE.