



Foundation Document Overview

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Oklahoma



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of CHICKASAW NATIONAL RECREATION AREA is to protect its springs and waters; preserve areas of archeological and ethnological interests; provide outdoor recreation; allow for hunting and fishing; protect scenic, scientific, natural, and historic values; and memorialize the Chickasaw Nation.



Significance

Significance statements express why Chickasaw National Recreation Area resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Chickasaw National Recreation Area is renowned for its unique concentration of freshwater and mineral springs and creeks that originate in the highly faulted and folded rocks of the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer and have a long history of recreational and medicinal use.
- Chickasaw National Recreation Area is home to a transition zone where the western prairies meet the eastern woodlands. This ecotone supports a richness and diversity of plant and animal species unique to the south-central part of the United States.
- The nationally significant Platt National Park Historic District includes many historic structures and is one of the most intact cultural landscapes from the CCC primary era of significance (1933–1940) and exemplifies implementation of the National Park Service “rustic” designs.
- Chickasaw National Recreation Area has provided a wide range of high-quality land- and water-based recreational opportunities for generations in a national park setting between Dallas-Fort Worth and Oklahoma City.
- The transition from Sulphur Springs Reservation to Platt National Park to Chickasaw National Recreation Area (1902 to present) reflects the progressive changes in the national park system and how the American conservation movement continues to evolve.
- The significance of renaming the area “Chickasaw” memorializes the Chickasaw Nation’s foresight to protect the freshwater and mineral springs through government versus private ownership.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Water Resources and Geology**
- **Historic Landscape and Structures**
- **Park History**
- **Recreational Opportunities**
- **Western Prairie / Eastern Woodlands Transition Zone**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Chickasaw National Recreation Area's 500-million-year record of sedimentary deposition, complex hydrogeological system, and diverse flora and fauna foster enriched connections with the dynamic relationships among geology, water, and life.
- The attractive and intimate scale of the landscape, the wide range of recreational opportunities, the history of the freshwater and mineral springs, and the comfortable, rustic-built environment of Chickasaw National Recreation Area invite an exploration of the concepts of personal and societal health and well-being.
 - The transition from Sulphur Springs Reservation to Platt National Park to Chickasaw National Recreation Area (1902 to present) reflects the progressive changes in the national park system and how the American conservation movement continues to evolve and encourages investigation of man's relationship with the environment.
 - The use of the name "Chickasaw" memorializes the Chickasaw Nation's connection to the creation of the park and invites a study of history as it profoundly influences contemporary America.
- The eastern woodlands–western plains ecotone at Chickasaw National Recreation Area offers outstanding opportunities to appreciate the rich ecological relationships that nurture and sustain our civilization.

Description

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is in south-central Oklahoma, between Dallas, Texas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The recreation area was originally authorized in 1902 as Sulphur Springs Reservation and was renamed and redesignated as Platt National Park in 1906. In 1976, Platt National Park, Arbuckle National Recreation Area, and additional lands were combined to establish Chickasaw National Recreation Area (Public Law 94-235).

The recreation area is named after the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma. Originally inhabitants of western Kentucky and Tennessee and northern Mississippi and Alabama, the Chickasaw Nation was forced to move to Oklahoma Territory as part of the “Great Removal” of 1837. In 1902, the nation ceded portions of its land to the federal government. These lands became the Platt National Park and eventually Chickasaw National Recreation Area. The tribe continues to have traditional ties to these lands.

The springs and streams in Chickasaw National Recreation Area originate in a region of Oklahoma defined by complex geology. Intense faulting, folding, and deformation associated with major uplift and subsequent erosion has combined to form a land surface characterized by gently rolling hills dissected by streams. The springs and streams have had cultural, economic, and environmental importance throughout the region’s history.

The recreation area also contains iconic historic structures and infrastructure. Dating from the public works era of the 1930s, classic examples of NPS design and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) work can be found in the Platt National Park Historic District (Platt Historic District) of the recreation area. This area is a unique and fascinating piece of CCC development that has kept its integrity. The site work and landscape structures are elaborate and of high quality. The national historic landmark nomination for the Platt Historic District notes that the district contains one of the finest examples of CCC work in terms of rustic design, the number and variety of structures, and construction techniques and materials.

At Chickasaw National Recreation Area, eastern deciduous forests transition to western prairie grasslands, resulting in a diversity of natural resources. The recreation area supports flora and fauna from both environments, as well as some specific to transition areas. These distinctive flora, fauna, waters, and geological formations have withstood the external pressures of human impacts and natural changes. The combination of these resources has created an area unlike any in the surrounding region.

Chickasaw National Recreation Area provides opportunities to experience a wide range of outdoor experiences—swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, observing nature and scenery, hunting, camping, and picnicking. These outdoor experiences add immeasurably to the quality of life for visitors and area residents.

