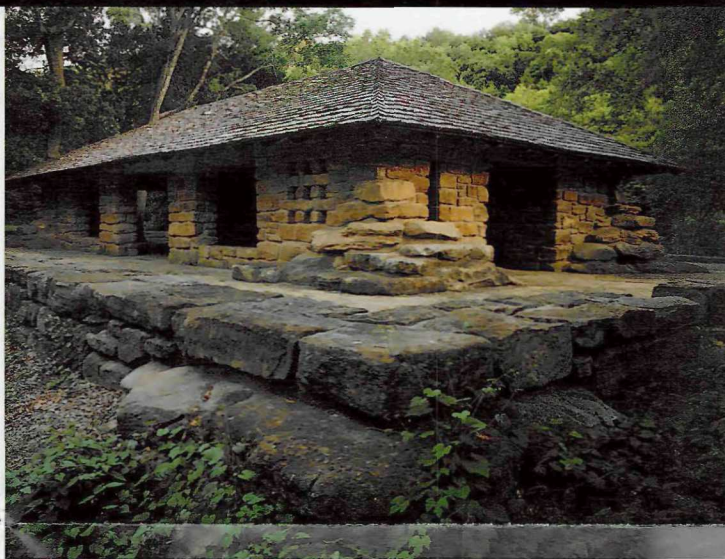




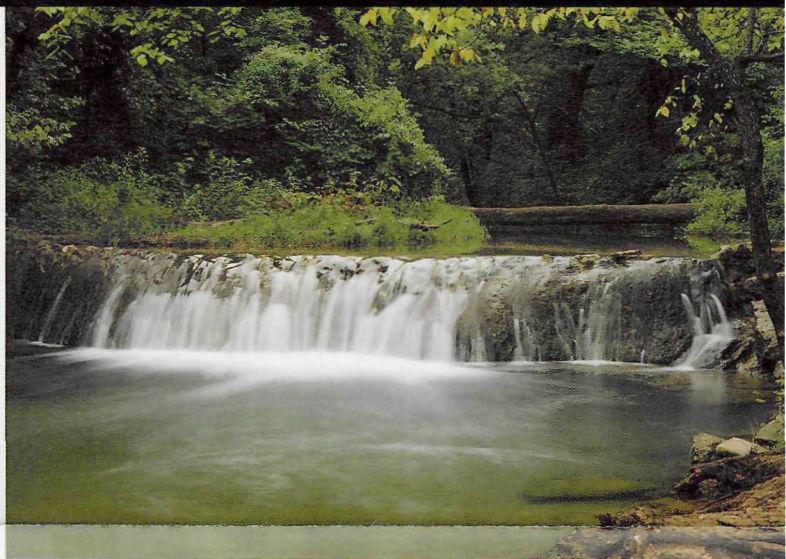
Buffalo Springs



Sunset over Lake of the Arbuckles



Bromide Pavilion



Travertine Creek

Water is the attraction at Chickasaw National Recreation Area, whether it takes the form of springs, streams, or lakes. At Little Niagara and Rock Creek, shaded streams beckon waders and swimmers. Veterans Lake calls anglers to test their skills. Lake of the Arbuckles provides excellent motorboating, skiing, sailing, fishing, and swimming.

Chickasaw’s mineral springs result from water passing through underground rock layers that form a canoe-shaped structure called a syncline. Water enters the high point of this formation and travels downhill. Pressure then forces the water up through

fissures in the rock layers. Some rock layers contain sulphur and bromine; water coming through these layers collects the minerals, becoming mineral water. Water passing through rock layers without these minerals is considered fresh water.

Folklore tells of ancient people who called this place “Peaceful Valley of Rippling Waters.” Many believed that the waters had healing powers.

In the early 1800s the federal government began to move American Indians—Choctaw, Chickasaw, and others—from east of the

Mississippi River to this area. In 1855, land that is now part of the national recreation area was deeded to the Chickasaw Nation.

By the late 1890s settlers had built a town at Sulphur Springs. Its hotels and bathhouses promoted the waters’ medicinal qualities. Concerned that overuse would deplete the area’s unique natural resource, local residents sought to preserve the springs. To that end, in 1902 the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations sold the springs and a 640-acre buffer to the Department of the Interior. Senator Orville Hitchcock Platt of Connecticut sponsored the legislation establishing it as Sulphur Springs Reservation. Senator

Platt died in 1905; in 1906 the reservation boundaries were expanded and the name changed to Platt National Park. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps built pavilions, roads, trails, and waterfalls and planted over 500,000 trees in the park. In 1976 Platt National Park, Arbuckle Recreation Area, and additional lands were combined to create this nearly 10,000-acre recreation area. The legislation creating the new area stipulated that it be named Chickasaw National Recreation Area to commemorate the Chickasaw Nation’s cooperation in establishing the park in 1902.

About Your Visit

Chickasaw National Recreation Area has activities all year. Stop at the **Travertine Nature Center** for exhibits, a park film, books, and information about the area’s history, wildlife, and geology. Activities include nature walks, ranger talks, and seasonal programs. Check the website for current hours.

**Park Administration** The National Park Service manages the area, provides for recreational uses, and cares for the park’s natural and cultural features. Open weekdays except federal holidays. National Park Service ranger stations are in the Platt Historic District and at Lake of the Arbuckles (at The Point and Buckhorn).

Chickasaw National Recreation Area is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

Recreation Abounds



Activities Afloat

**Swimming** Streams are cold and clear all year. Do not use soap or shampoo in streams. At lakes, swim in boat exclusion areas. Never swim alone, near fishing docks, near boat ramps, after dark, or from an unanchored boat.

**Watersports** Personal watercraft (PWC) are permitted from sunup to sundown on Lake of the Arbuckles. Waterskiers must be accompanied by two people: the boat operator and a spotter. Wear an approved life preserver (PFD) at all times.

**Fishing** Lake of the Arbuckles and Veterans Lake have wheelchair-accessible docks. Rods and reels only on Veterans Lake; state license required.

**Boating** Boats and canoes all share the waves. Use designated ramps. Federal and state laws apply. Do not overload boats. Keep safety equipment in good working order. Do not refuel craft when on the water. Be safe—alcohol, drugs, and boating do not mix. Wear an approved PFD. Launch permits are required to use boat ramps (fee).

**Largemouth Bass** This popular catch is often confused with smallmouth and spotted bass. The largemouth’s upper jaw extends past its eye socket.



**White Crappie** A favorite catch in winter, the crappie is a stream fish also well-adapted to large lakes.



Boating Safety Guide

**Danger** Shallow water, rocks, other hazards.



**Restricted Area** Boats prohibited.



**Controlled Area** Speed limits, no skiing, no wake.



**Regulations** [www.nps.gov/chic/parkmgmt/watercraft-regulations.htm](http://www.nps.gov/chic/parkmgmt/watercraft-regulations.htm)

Ranger-Led Programs



For ranger-led program schedules ask a ranger or check bulletin boards.

Organized groups need advance reservations year-round.

Activities Ashore

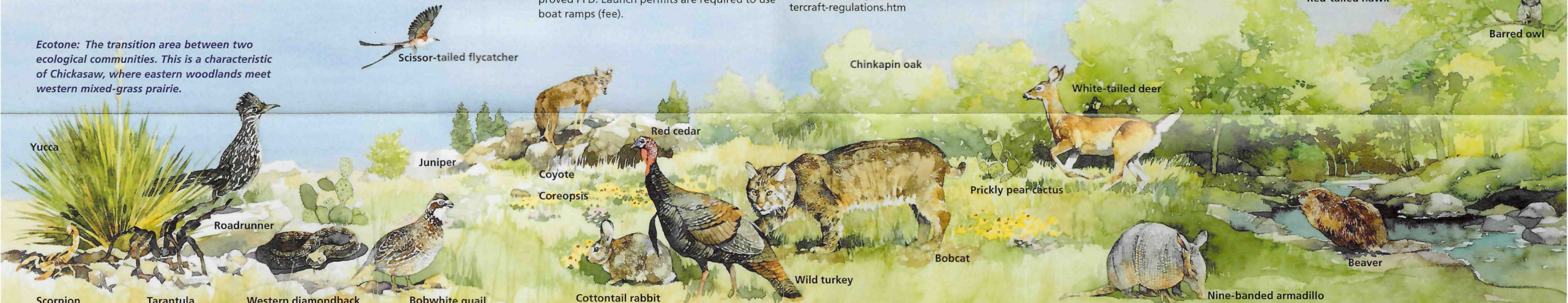
**Picnicking** Picnic areas have tables and grills. You can reserve Buckhorn and Veterans Lake picnic pavilions at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

Buckhorn and The Point have wheelchair-accessible sites.

**Camping** Most campsites are first-come, first-served (fee). Register and pay at the campground. Some campsites may be reserved; call 877-444-6777 or go to [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

**Hiking** The park maintains over 20 miles of trails, from short, level strolls to steep, uneven climbs.

*Ecotone: The transition area between two ecological communities. This is a characteristic of Chickasaw, where eastern woodlands meet western mixed-grass prairie.*



**The Prairie** All prairies have common traits. They exist on flat or rolling terrain. Rainfall averages between 10 and 40 inches per year and is concentrated, so every year has both wet and dry periods. Constant winds evaporate moisture and contribute to the dryness—and winds spread fire. A natural force, fire weakens or kills trees, but most grasses survive and as a result may

grow better. Although called “The Great American Desert,” this mixed-grass prairie once fed the large buffalo herds of the West. Stretching from the Dakotas to north-central Texas, these grasslands have historically supported a variety of wildlife. Today many plant and animal species live here, including buffalo grass, Indian grass, roadrunners, and coyotes.

**The Edge** As you travel through Chickasaw watch how habitats change from eastern woodland to prairie and back to woodland again. Where these habitats meet (see Ecotone, above left) there are more plant and animal species than in either woodland or prairie habitat alone. Known as the “edge effect,” this increase in species results from the increased food and

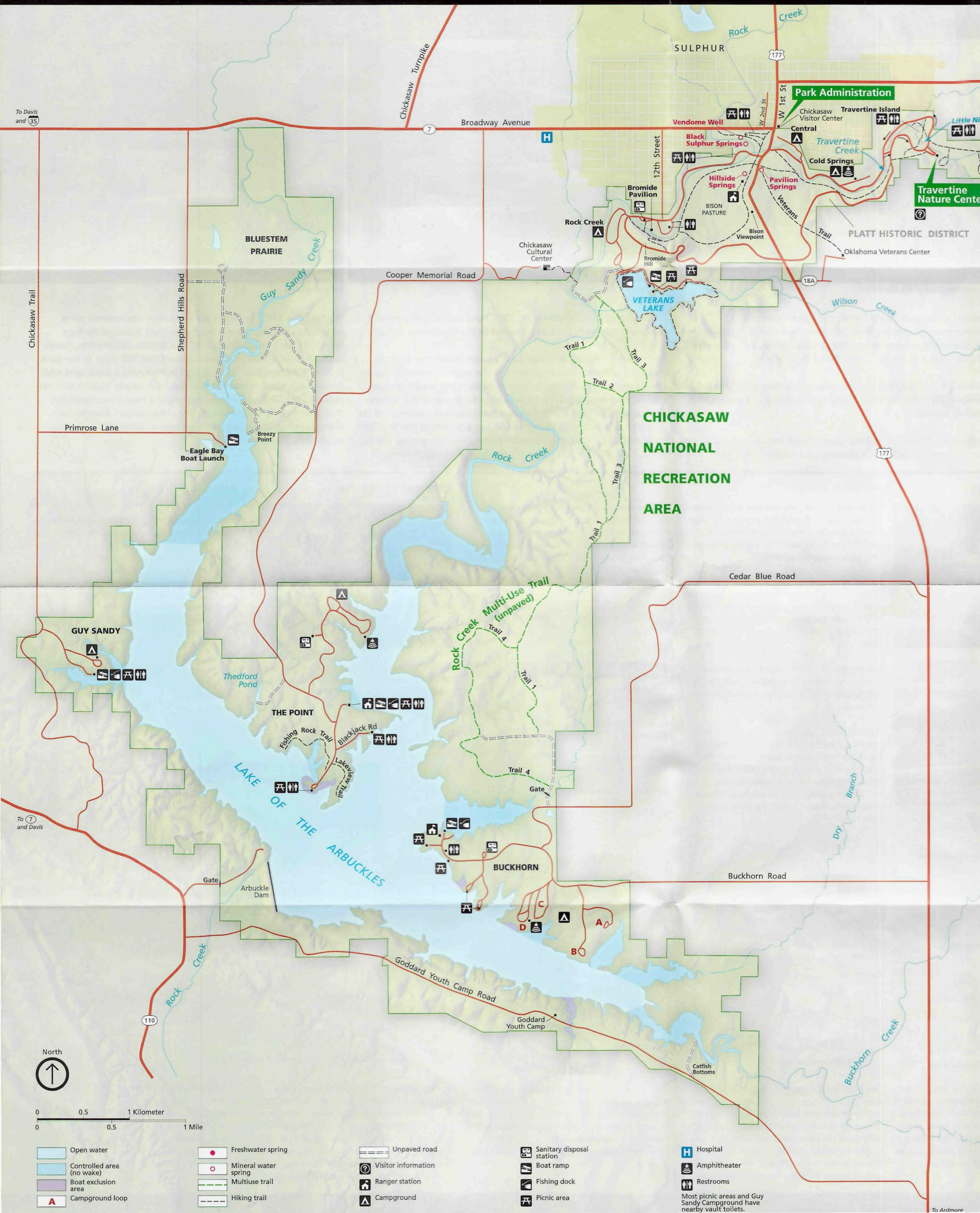
shelter choices where habitats overlap. At the edges woodland sumac and wild turkeys live amid prairie yucca and bobwhite quail. The cardinal’s eastern range overlaps the scissor-tailed flycatcher’s mid-continent range. These woodland and prairie edges are the best places to see wildlife.

**The Woodland** In Chickasaw’s forests you will find many trees—sycamore, oak, hickory, walnut, pecan, and more. But a forest is more than trees. By looking carefully you can discover other residents of the forest habitat. Dead trees and the forest floor provide homes to many species. You can see fungi on decaying leaves and tree trunks. Trails through the park’s forested area

give hikers a chance to see wildlife and their traces. Watch for tracks left by nocturnal animals, owl pellets, and other signs of nighttime activity. Armadillos appear in the early evening, shuffling alongside trails. Alert forest visitors may be rewarded with glimpses of beaver, gray fox, skunks, hawks, or raccoons.



# Exploring Chickasaw



Chickasaw National Recreation Area is 90 miles south of Oklahoma City, OK, and 140 miles north of Dallas/Fort Worth, TX.

## Planning Your Visit

**Things To See and Do** Outdoors or in, you'll find activities here that are right for you. Streams and lakes attract boaters, swimmers, and anglers. Forests and prairies reward hikers, photographers, and campers. At Travertine Nature Center you can see live animals and experience nature up close.

**Food, Lodging, Services** Food, lodging, gasoline, rentals, and services are available at Sulphur and Davis.

**Climate** Summers are hot and humid; winters mild. Thunderstorms are common April through July.

**Springs** *Fresh Water* Antelope and Buffalo springs, with a daily combined flow of about 5 million gallons, feed Travertine Creek. *Mineral Water* Hillside, Pavilion, Black Sulphur, and other springs produce mineral water. The National Park Service neither substantiates nor denies claims about the water's therapeutic values.

**Swimming/Wading** Know your limits. Don't swim if you're tired, chilled, or overheated. Glass containers are prohibited along creeks. Wear shoes when wading. Don't dive from waterfalls or stream banks. Swimming and wading are prohibited east of Little Niagara. Don't place rope swings in trees.

**Park Trails Highlights** Trails vary in difficulty and length. Bicycles and pets are prohibited east of Travertine Nature Center.

**Antelope and Buffalo Springs** *Easy: 1.2 miles, roundtrip.* Follow Travertine Creek's gentle, rippling waters to the springs.

**Travertine Creek** *Easy: 1.5 miles, one-way.* This trail follows the creek between Pavilion Springs and the Travertine Nature Center.

**Bison Pasture** *Moderate: 1.9 miles, loop.* Watch for bison (buffalo). Do not enter fenced area.

**Rock Creek Multiuse** *Four trails, 2.1 to 4.4 miles, one-way.* This network of hiking, bicycling, and horse trails passes through an area where eastern deciduous forest meets western mixed-grass prairie.

**Veterans Lake** *Easy: 2.9 miles, loop.* Upland prairie and riparian areas surround Veterans Lake. This trail is concrete-paved. Enjoy a hardwood forest, mixed-grass prairie, and beaches.

**Campgrounds** The park has six campgrounds with over 400 campsites. All campgrounds have tables, grills, restrooms, and water. Camp in designated sites only. Maximum stay is two weeks. A limited number of individual and group sites can be reserved: 877-444-6777; [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

Platt Historic District has three campgrounds: Cold Springs, Central, and Rock Creek. All three are suited for tent camping and small campers. No electric hookups. A sanitary disposal station is outside Rock Creek near Bromide Pavilion.

Lake of the Arbuckles has three campgrounds: Buckhorn, The Point, and Guy Sandy. Buckhorn and The Point have lakeside campsites, limited electric hookups, showers, and a sanitary disposal station.

**Accessibility** We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all; call or check our website for details.

**Safety and Regulations** *Stay alert. Your safety is your responsibility.* Observe posted speed limits. Stay on roads. Don't stop, park, or wash vehicles in low-water crossings. Never drive through flooded creek crossings. • Pets must be leashed and attended. Pets are prohibited in buildings and swimming areas. • Campfires are allowed only in designated areas; extinguish fires completely. • Copperheads, cottonmouths, and rattlesnakes live here. Watch where you put your hands and feet. • Do not feed or approach wildlife. • Federal law protects all natural and cultural features. • Hunt and fish only in designated areas in season. Federal and state laws apply. State licenses required. Trapping is prohibited. For hunting, fishing, and firearms regulations see [www.nps.gov/chic](http://www.nps.gov/chic). • More safety information at [www.nps.gov/chic/playourvisit/your\\_safety.htm](http://www.nps.gov/chic/playourvisit/your_safety.htm).

**Emergencies call 911**

**More Information**  
National Park Service  
901 W. 1st St.  
Sulphur, OK 73086  
580-622-7234  
[www.nps.gov/chic](http://www.nps.gov/chic)

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