



PLATT
NATIONAL PARK

Oklahoma



Platt National Park nestles in the foothills of the ancient Arbuckle Mountains near the heart of the old Chickasaw Nation. The park is small, a little less than 1.5 square miles; and yet its mineral and freshwater springs, sparkling streams, and gently rolling, wooded hills impart to it a quiet beauty. It is a memorial to a landmark in the preservation of our heritage, for here the first Americans, the Indians, independently evolved a national park concept.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Summer is the busiest season, but the park is open throughout the year. Especially interesting periods for visiting are the first 2 weeks in April, when the redbud is in bloom, and the late autumn, when the park's heavily wooded sections display their colors.

There are no hotels or cabins in the park; however, they are available in the town of Sulphur, where you will also find medical facilities, groceries, garages, and service stations. Camping equipment can be bought or rented from several Sulphur merchants.

You should make your first stop at the museum. It contains exhibits, photographs, and interpretive data that will give you a better understanding and appreciation of the area and will help you to recognize the various park features. Free informational material can be obtained at the museum or at the ranger station (see map).

If you are just passing through and have little time to spend in the park, you can take the 8-mile Perimeter Drive (guide leaflets available in museum). This drive will give you a scenic view of the primary features. We suggest that you spend at least an hour making this drive; and be sure to stop at the various marked points of interest.

Remember, the park's personnel are here to help you enjoy your visit. Talk to them at any time you are in need of help or information.

WHAT TO SEE

The wooded valleys and rolling hills of Platt National Park, together with the nearby Arbuckle Mountains, offer a pleasant relief from the comparatively level and barren surrounding country. Travertine Creek, which flows through the eastern end of the park, is a picturesque stream of clear, sparkling water, fed by many springs. Rock Creek enters from the north and winds its way through the western half of the park. To the south of Rock Creek is Bromide Hill, a steep wooded bluff rising 140 feet above Bromide Pavilion.

There's a charm here, where the western plains meet the wooded hills of the east. Quiet groves, paths, springs, and streams . . . an oasis in the prairie, where birds and small creatures live.

And the famous "doctor" waters, bubbling from their hidden source . . . known to the Indians and the early settlers, who drank from these springs as many people do today.

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From the hill's summit, easily reached by road or trail, there is a fine panoramic view of the countryside. Along the horizon to the southwest lie the highlands of the Arbuckle Mountains and the lowland of the Washita River valley; to the east, for a distance of 3 miles, most of the park can be seen stretching along the courses of Rock and Travertine Creeks.

MINERAL SPRINGS. Of the many cold mineral-water springs in the park, most can be classed broadly as sulphur springs; three, as bromide springs. Pavilion Springs, Hillside Spring, and Black Sulphur Spring are in the central part of the park near the main entrance. Nearby, in Flower Park, are sulphur-water pools, the mud of which is reputed to be beneficial in the treatment of certain skin diseases. Bromide Spring and Medicine Spring are in the western part of the park, issuing from the base of Bromide Hill. Waters of these springs are dispensed at Bromide Pavilion.

While the spring waters are for the use of all visitors, they should not be taken in quantity except on the advice of a competent physician. The National Park Service facilitates the use of the springs only by protecting and maintaining them according to the best possible standards; it makes no claim as to the medicinal value of the mineral waters. There are no provisions in the park, or in the town of Sulphur, for free consultation of physicians or free treatment of the sick. One commercial bathhouse is in the town of Sulphur.

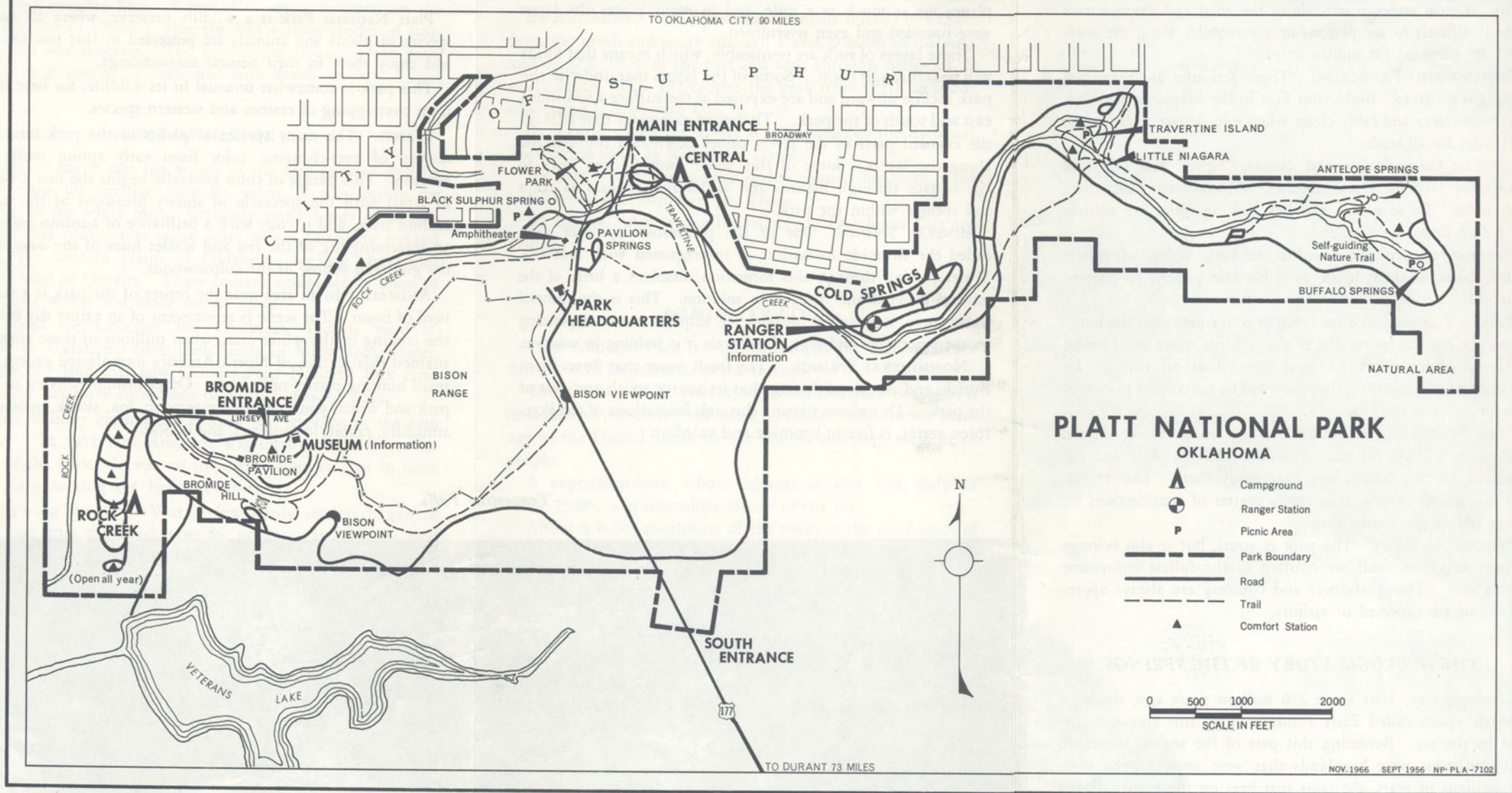
FRESH-WATER SPRINGS. In the eastern end of the park, two large fresh-water springs combine their flows to form the sources of Travertine Creek. These springs, called Buffalo and Antelope, were so named because herds of these animals came from the surrounding prairies to drink. Normally these springs have a combined flow of several million gallons of water a day; but during unusually dry periods, they may stop flowing. At such times, Travertine Creek will also be dry.

THINGS TO DO

PICNICKING. Many tables and fireplaces are provided for those who wish to picnic. Areas that accommodate large groups are at Travertine Island and Buffalo Springs.

CAMPING. Two large campgrounds provide nearly 200 well-prepared campsites for those who wish to enjoy the out of doors in this manner. Rock Creek Campground is located in the extreme western end of the park, and Cold Springs Campground is in the east-central section. A smaller facility, Central Campground, is located near the main entrance.

Camping is limited to 30 days per calendar year and to 14 days during the period of heavy visitation in summer. Reservations cannot be made.



HIKING. More than 8 miles of trails provide access to all points of interest within the park. It is along the trails that you will have the best opportunity to observe the wildlife, to become most closely acquainted with all the natural attractions.

WADING. Many natural pools along Travertine Creek are suitable for wading. The usual safety precautions should be observed. Water temperature at the springs is about 66° F.

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

THE MUSEUM. The museum contains interesting exhibits that tell of the history and natural history of the park. A park

naturalist is on duty from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily to answer your questions and explain the features of the area. The museum is open every day throughout the year. In winter, the hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

During the summer, the following interpretive activities—designed to help you understand the park—are conducted:

NATURE WALKS. Mornings except Saturday, a park naturalist leads walks from the museum to the top of Bromide Hill, identifying plants and wildlife and pointing out objects of special interest. Afternoon guided walks go from Little Niagara to Antelope Springs and back. The Buffalo-Antelope Springs Trail is self-guiding; features along this trail are marked and keyed to leaflets, which are available at Buffalo and Antelope Springs.

CAMPFIRE PROGRAMS. At the campfire programs, held in the amphitheater near the main entrance, park naturalists present illustrated talks about the park. Weekly schedules, showing times and subjects, are posted at the museum, Bromide Pavilion, ranger station, and campgrounds.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS. Every Saturday morning, a park naturalist conducts a nature program for children.

REMINDERS

Please remember that you are in a National Park. Regulations, enforced to protect the park and the visitor, are posted in campgrounds, but here are a few reminders:

YOUR CAR. Wherever you drive, observe posted speed limits. Dense undergrowth along the road and sharp curves make it difficult to see persons or automobiles along the roadside. Be prepared for sudden stops.

CAMPING AND PICNICKING. These activities are permitted in designated areas. Build your fires in the fireplaces provided. Leave your area and table clean when you depart. Use refuse receptacles for all trash.

FIRES are the park's greatest danger. Never leave campfires unattended even for a few minutes. Always extinguish them with water. Be sure that matches and cigarettes are entirely out before disposing of them.

FIREARMS are prohibited within the park, unless adequately sealed, cased, broken down, or otherwise packed to prevent their use.

PETS. You may take your dog or other pets into the park. However, for the protection of the wildlife, they must be on leash or under other physical control at all times. In the interest of sanitation, they may not be taken into pavilions or near pools or springs.

PARK FEATURES. All things in the park—flowers, trees, animals, rocks, and minerals—are to be left in place and undisturbed, so that others, too, may enjoy them. This protection is a matter of law; it is also a matter of consideration for others and of good citizenship.

ORDERLY CONDUCT. The park is yours, but it also belongs to your neighbor. All are entitled to the fullest enjoyment of this area. Thoughtfulness and courtesy are always appreciated and are expected of visitors.

THE GEOLOGIC STORY OF THE SPRINGS

Geologists say that some 230 million years ago, during a geologic epoch called Early Pennsylvanian, this area was covered by the sea. Bordering this part of the sea on the south and southwest were highlands that were ancient even then. For millions of years, the rains that beat on the highlands and the waves that lashed at the shores loosened and carried earth material down into the sea, where it settled to the bottom. As much as 12,000 feet of sediments was deposited at the bottom of the sea, and the sediments hardened into rock.

Later, a series of earth movements pushed the deposits upward and out of the water and elevated them to form a mountain mass, remnants of which are known as the Arbuckle Mountains. As the mountains were raised above the sea, they were exposed to the wearing-away processes of erosion—processes that involved rain, wind, heat, frost, and chemical agents.

The mighty earth movements, which took place slowly and over a long period of time, fractured and folded the layers of sedimentary rock, so that in many places the original sequence

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Platt National Park is a wildlife preserve, where all native species of plants and animals are protected so that you can see and enjoy them in their natural surroundings.

This park is somewhat unusual in its wildlife, for here there is an overlapping of eastern and western species.

PLANTS. The many species of plants in the park furnish a display of ever-changing color from early spring until late autumn. This parade of color generally begins the first 2 weeks in April with the spectacle of showy blossoms of the many redbud trees, and it ends with a brilliance of autumn leaves—an intermingling of the red and scarlet hues of the oaks with the gold and yellow of the cottonwoods.

ANIMALS. In an area near the center of the park is a small herd of bison. The scene is reminiscent of an earlier day before the coming of the white man, when millions of these animals roamed this section of North America unmolested except for small hunting parties of Indians. Other mammals living in the park and which you may see are raccoon, fox, skunk, opossum, armadillo, rabbit, fox squirrel, and bobcat.

of the layers was altered. Rocks were thrust along fault planes for as much as a mile, and in many places the layers were upended and even overturned.

These layers of rock are permeable, which means that fluids will pass through them. Some of the layers that underlie the park incline upward and are exposed at the surface a few miles east and south of the park. Therefore, rainwater that falls on the exposed parts of the layers passes downward through and along the layers. Some of this water finds its way back to the surface through fissures and faults and appears as seeps and springs within the park.

MINERAL SPRINGS. One of the permeable layers of rock, called the Bromide formation, is impregnated with minerals. Water passing through this formation dissolves a little of the mineral material and holds it in solution. This is the mineral water; here, it is called bromide or sulphur water, depending on the percentage and type of minerals it is holding in solution.

NONMINERAL SPRINGS. The fresh water that flows from Buffalo and Antelope Springs has its source south and east of the park. This water, passing through formations of the Pontotoc series, is free of bromide and sulphur.

Travertine Falls.



The park is a bird sanctuary, and more than 100 species have been recorded here. A few of the most common are the cardinal, eastern bluebird, blue jay, and various species of sparrows and woodpeckers. The roadrunner frequents the park, though it is commonly associated with desert country.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Tradition has it that the waters of the springs were used by the Indians for curative purposes many decades before the coming of the white man. Certainly small bands of Indians roamed this countryside many years before Coronado trekked across the western plains of Oklahoma seeking the fabled golden land of Quivira. These Indians undoubtedly knew of the spring waters and made use of them.

In 1820 the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians were removed to Oklahoma from their lands in Mississippi. Later, in 1855, the land that now includes Platt National Park came under the exclusive ownership of the Chickasaw Tribe.

Many military expeditions entered the territory in the 19th century. In 1851 Fort Arbuckle was established a few miles west of the park. It was an important frontier post in these early days, serving the Indian country.

Following the Civil War, a few hardy settlers began to lease land from the Chickasaws for grazing. In 1878 the land now included in the park became part of the ranch of Noah Lael, who built his ranchhouse near the present headquarters building.

This was also the beginning of the present town of Sulphur. By 1900 it was a thriving little settlement surrounding the present Pavilion Springs.

This area had been the Indians' summer camping and hunting ground before the coming of the white man who also thought the springs beneficial in treating diseases. With the development of the town of Sulphur around the principal springs, the Indians became concerned that they might not be able to use them. Therefore, wishing to preserve these springs for all time for the use of all people, they conveyed to the United States lands that included some 30 springs. On July 1, 1902, Congress established Sulphur Springs Reservation.

Overnight, Sulphur became a town on wheels—the entire population moving from the area around Pavilion Springs. Unfortunately, most of the town was relocated on land that was later added to the reservation. When this occurred in 1904, Sulphur once again had to be moved, this time to its present location.

In 1906, the name was changed to Platt National Park in honor of Senator Orville Hitchcock Platt of Connecticut, who, as a member of the Committee on Indian Affairs, had performed distinguished service for the Indians.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

BY AUTOMOBILE. The park may be easily reached by U.S. 77 from the north and south through Davis, 9 miles to the west, and by U.S. 70 from the east and west through Ardmore, 23 miles south. U.S. 177 crosses the park from north to south, connecting U.S. 66 with U.S. 70.

BY TRAIN. Railroad service is maintained by the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway to Davis.

BY BUS. Local bus service makes connections with major bus lines at Ada, Ardmore, and Davis.

BY PLANE. Air service is available at Oklahoma City and Dallas.

ADMINISTRATION

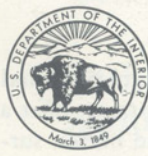
Platt National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

A superintendent, whose address is Box 539, Sulphur Okla. 73086, is in immediate charge of the park.

About 8 miles southwest of the park, at the confluence of Rock, Guy Sandy, and Buckhorn Creeks, is Arbuckle Dam, recently completed by the Bureau of Reclamation, also of the Department of the Interior. The Service is developing and administering the recreational facilities in the newly authorized Arbuckle National Recreation Area. The dam will form a scenic three-armed lake that will provide excellent water-oriented recreational opportunities.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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