

# Chickasaw

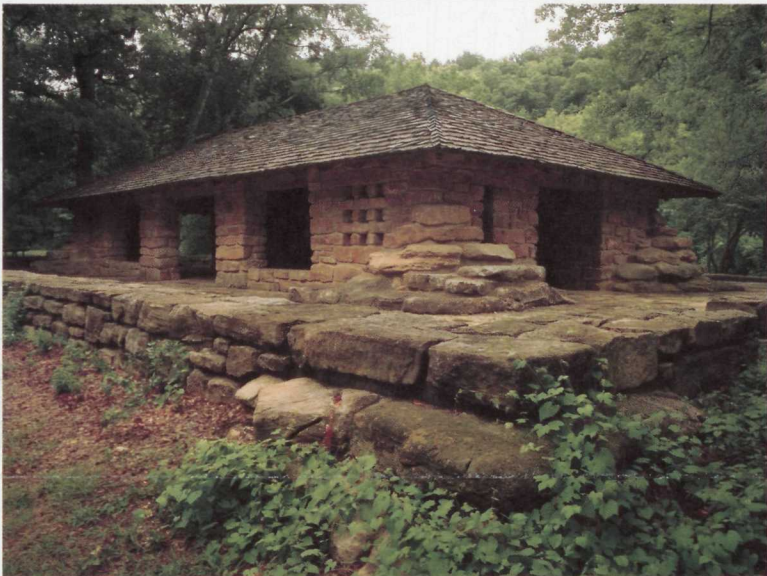
## Official Map and Guide



Buffalo Spring



Sailing on Lake of the Arbuckles



Bromide Spring Pavilion



Travertine Creek

All cover photos except the sailboat by Laurence Parent

Springs, streams, and lakes—whatever its form, water has always been the attraction at Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Freshwater springs attract a variety of wildlife. Mineral springs were once sought for medicinal qualities. Travertine Creek and Rock Creek beckon waders and swimmers. Veterans Lake calls to fishermen to test their skills. Lake of the Arbuckles, the park's dominant feature, provides excellent motorboating, skiing, sailing, fishing, and swimming. Relax in the coolness of a shaded stream or take a dip in a swimming hole. The springs are formed when water passes through underground rock formations. Rock

layers form a canoe-shaped structure called a syncline. Water enters the high point of this formation and travels downhill. The water is then forced upward through fissures in the rock layers. Some rock layers contain sulphur and bromine; water coming through these layers collects the minerals and becomes mineral water. Water passing through rock layers that do not contain these minerals remains fresh.

Archeologists believe that this area may have been inhabited for as long as 7,000 years. The ancient people called this place "the

Peaceful Valley of Rippling Waters." They believed in the healing power of the strong-smelling mineral water. The Caddos, Comanches, and Choctaws came later for the refreshing liquid. In 1855, the lands became part of the Chickasaw Nation.

White pioneers gradually drifted into the Chickasaw Nation and built a community in the late 1800s. A town formed around what is now Pavilion Springs and was named Sulphur. Fearing the springs might suffer from uncontrolled use, the Chickasaw Nation agreed with the Federal Government to create a national park. In

1902, 640 acres were transferred to the United States and given the name of Sulphur Springs Reservation. In 1906, the area was renamed Platt National Park in honor of Sen. Orville Hitchcock Platt. During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps built pavilions and roads, laid out trails, engineered waterfalls, and planted half a million trees and shrubs. In 1976 Platt National Park was combined with Arbuckle Recreation Area and additional lands to create a new national recreation area in honor of the land's longtime inhabitants: the Chickasaws.

## Recreation Abounds

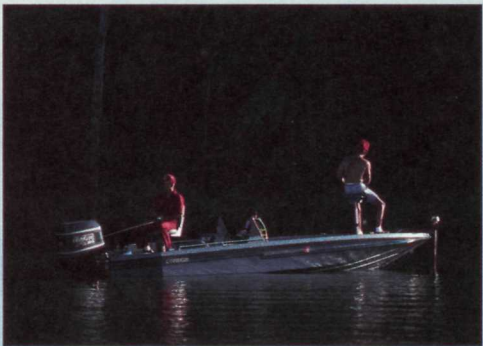
Chickasaw National Recreation Area offers a variety of activities all year. Its streams and lakes cater to boaters, swimmers, and fishermen while its forests and prairies reward hikers, wildlife photographers, and campers. The National Park Service manages the area, provides for recreational uses, and acts as caretaker of the natural and cultural features.

Information on the area's history, wildlife, geology, and activities is available at the Travertine Nature Center and at park headquarters. The nature center is open daily with the exception of some holidays. An introductory movie, exhibits, books, and brochures are available. Programs include nature walks, history talks, and seasonal programs. Headquarters is open weekdays except on national holidays. See the reverse side of this brochure for details on the park's recreational facilities. Ranger stations are located near Rock Creek campground, at The Point, and at Buckhorn. Ask park rangers for more information or write: Superintendent, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 201, Sulphur, OK 73086-0201; or call 405-622-3165. Find information at [www.nps.gov/chic/](http://www.nps.gov/chic/) on the Internet.

### Activities Afloat



Laurence Parent



Laurence Parent

#### Swimming

All waters are suitable for swimming. Stream water is cold and clear all year. A small beach is located on Rock Creek. Please do not use soap or shampoo in the streams. At the lakes, it is recommended that you swim in boat exclusion areas. Do not swim near fishing docks. Never swim alone, after dark, or from an unanchored boat.

#### Waterskiing

Conditions for waterskiing are ideal on Lake of the Arbuckles. Skiing is permitted from sunup to sundown. Skiers must be accompanied by two people, one to operate the boat and one to watch the skier. Skiers are required to wear an approved life preserver. Ski in a counterclockwise direction. Skiing is not permitted on Veterans Lake.

#### Fishing

White bass, largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish, walleye, channel catfish, blue catfish, bullhead catfish, and flathead catfish are all popular catches. A state fishing license is required. At Veterans Lake there is a fishing dock accessible to wheelchairs. Rod and reels only are allowed on Veterans Lake.

#### Boating

Fishing boats, sailboats, ski boats, and canoes share the waves. Launch boats from designated launch ramps. Boat operators must comply with federal and state laws. Do not overload boats. Keep safety equipment in good working order. Stop engines and do not smoke while refueling. Alcohol, drugs, and boating do not mix. Always wear an approved life preserver.



Dan Feaser



Duane Raver

#### Largemouth Bass

Oklahoma's most sought after game fish, largemouths, are often confused with smallmouth and spotted bass. The upper jaw in the largemouth extends past the eye socket.

#### White Crappie

A favorite winter fish in Oklahoma, the white crappie was originally a stream fish that has adapted to large lakes.

### Boating Safety Guide

#### Danger

Shallow water, rocks, and other hazards are present.

#### Restricted Area

Boats are prohibited from these waters.

#### Controlled Area

Circle shapes indicate speed limits, no skiing, no wake, etc.



### Activities Ashore



Laurence Parent

#### Nature Center

The Travertine Nature Center offers the chance to experience nature up close. Exhibits include live birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. Ranger-led activities are offered. Check bulletin boards, or write for a schedule.

Arrangements for organized groups may be made September through May. Contact the Division of Interpretation.

#### Picnicking

Picnic areas are equipped with tables and grills. Buckhorn and Veterans Lake Picnic Pavilions are available by reservation.

#### Hiking

There are about 18 miles of maintained trails in the park. They range from short, level strolls to steep, uneven climbs.

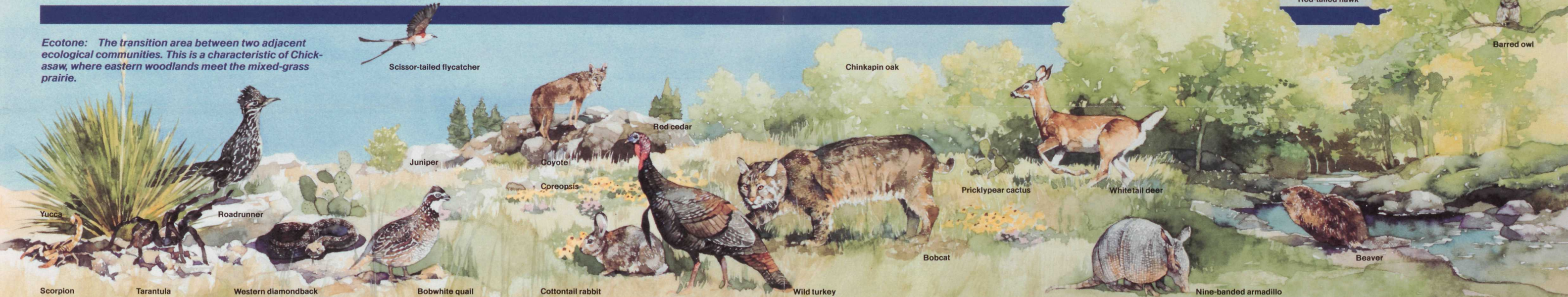
#### Camping

Six campgrounds offer a variety of places to stay. Individual sites are open on a first-come, first-served basis. Large, organized groups can make reservations for group campsites. A camping fee is charged. Buckhorn Campground is wheelchair accessible.

#### Hunting

Portions of the park are open seasonally for hunting. State licenses are required. Get hunting maps from park rangers. **TRAPPING IS PROHIBITED.**

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



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

Though called "The Great American Desert," the mixed-grass prairie once fed the large buffalo herds of the American West. Stretching from the Dakotas to north-central Texas, these grasslands have historically supported a wide range of wildlife. Today many animal and plant species continue to make this their home. Buffalo grass, Indian grass, roadrunners, and coyotes are just a few of the species that you will find here.

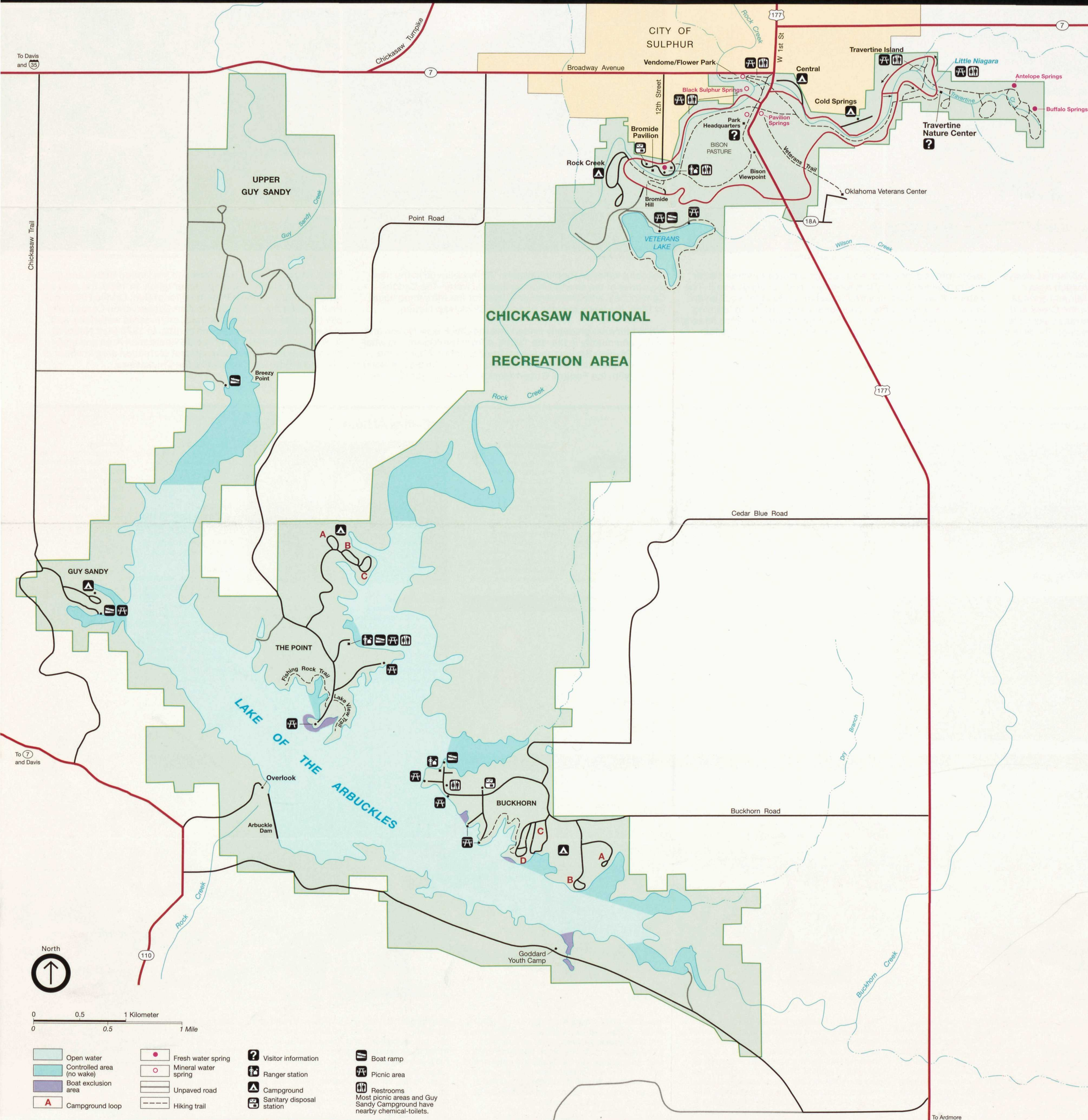
**The Edge** Traveling through the park, visitors pass from eastern woodland to prairie and back again. Biologists call this an "ecotone," where two or more life communities meet. It is here that visitors have the best chance to catch a glimpse of wildlife. The many choices of food and shelter available where two communities meet support an abundance of animals. This enhanced diversity is called the "edge effect."

Along the edge where the forest and the prairie meet, visitors find yucca growing amidst sumac and pricklypear growing under an oak. Wild turkeys and whitetail deer use the same trails as quail and bobcats. Cardinals and goldfinches share the sky with scissor-tailed flycatchers and meadowlarks. Where different habitats meet, the juxtaposition of plants and wildlife can be dramatic. Keep your eyes open.

**The Forest** Say the word forest and most people think of . . . trees. At Chickasaw, sycamore, oak, pecan, hickory, and walnut are found. But a forest is more than just trees. By looking carefully, you can discover other members of the forest ecosystem. Dead trees and the forest floor provide homes to a variety of wildlife. Trails through the park's forested area provide hikers with opportunities to see wildlife and their traces.

Tracks, owl pellets, and other evidence of nighttime activity can be seen. Armadillos appear in the early evening shuffling alongside trails. Fungi can be found on decaying leaves and tree trunks. Alert forest visitors can be rewarded with glimpses of beaver, gray fox, skunks, hawks, and raccoons.





Orientation



**Traveling in the Area**  
Chickasaw National Recreation Area is located approximately 75 miles south of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and 140 miles north of Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas.

**Area Services**  
Food, lodging, gasoline, boating, fishing gear, and other services are available at Sulphur and Davis. Write to the Sulphur Chamber of Commerce, 113 West Muskogee, Sulphur, OK 73086, or to the Davis Chamber of Commerce, 300 East Main, Davis, OK 73030.

**Climate**  
Summers are hot and humid. Temperatures above 100°F occur, and humidity frequently exceeds 50 percent. Winters are mild. Thunderstorms are common April through July.

Visitor Information

**Trails**  
Bromide Hill Trail provides hikers with a rewarding view. Buffalo Trail offers the chance to see a herd of American Bison. Trails follow Travertine Creek and Rock Creek and lead to two freshwater springs. Bicycles and pets are prohibited on trails east of the Travertine Nature Center.

**Park Wildlife and Other Protected Features**  
All animals, plants, and artifacts are protected; do not disturb, damage, or take them from the park. Climbing on rocks and ledges is prohibited. Copperheads, cottonmouths, and four rattlesnake species live here. They are natural and important members of the wildlife community and are protected by law. They are rarely seen in the daytime. Stay on the trails and carry a flashlight at night. Park wildlife will generally not harm you unless you annoy them. **DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE.**

**Springs**  
The abundant waters of Buffalo and Antelope springs form Travertine Creek. Black Sulphur, Pavilion, and Hillside springs, along with Vendome Well, produce mineral water. The park neither substantiates nor denies claims about the medicinal value of the water.

**Driving**  
Observe posted speed limits. Stay on established roads. Do not stop, park, or wash vehicles in low-water crossings. Do not drive through flooded creek crossings.

**Campgrounds**  
All campgrounds have tables, grills, restrooms, and water. Camp in designated campsites only. Limited electrical hookups and showers are available at Buckhorn Campground. Maximum length of stay is two weeks.

**Firearms**  
Shooting a firearm is prohibited except when lawfully taking game in designated areas. Possessing a loaded weapon in a vehicle is prohibited.

The Travertine District has three campgrounds: Cold Springs, Central, and Rock Creek. Rock Creek is best suited for trailers and other RVs. An RV dump station is located outside Rock Creek near Bromide Pavilion. Cold Springs can accommodate RVs up to 18 feet long. Group camping is available at Central Campground by reservation. Call 405-622-6677 for information.

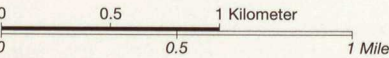
**Swimming and Wading**  
Know your limits! Don't swim if you are tired, chilled, or overheated. Alcohol is prohibited in swimming areas. Wear shoes when wading to prevent injuries. **DO NOT DIVE FROM WATERFALLS OR STREAM BANKS!** No swimming or wading is allowed east of the Travertine Nature Center.

The three campgrounds in the Lake District are Buckhorn, The Point, and Guy Sandy. Both The Point and Buckhorn offer some lakeside camping. An RV dump station is located at Buckhorn. Group camping is available at Buckhorn by reservation. Call 405-622-6677 for information.

**Pets**  
Pets must be leashed at all times. They are prohibited in swimming areas and public buildings. Please clean up after your pets.

**For Safety's Sake**  
The best trips to the park are those that are accident-free. Be alert to potential hazards and avoid them. Keep an eye on children. Report all accidents to park rangers immediately.

**Fires**  
Build fires in designated areas only. Extinguish them completely.



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|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Open water                | Fresh water spring   | Visitor information       | Boat ramp  |
| Controlled area (no wake) | Mineral water spring | Ranger station            | Picnic area  |
| Boat exclusion area       | Unpaved road         | Campground                | Restrooms  |
| Campground loop           | Hiking trail         | Sanitary disposal station | Most picnic areas and Guy Sandy Campground have nearby chemical-toilets. |