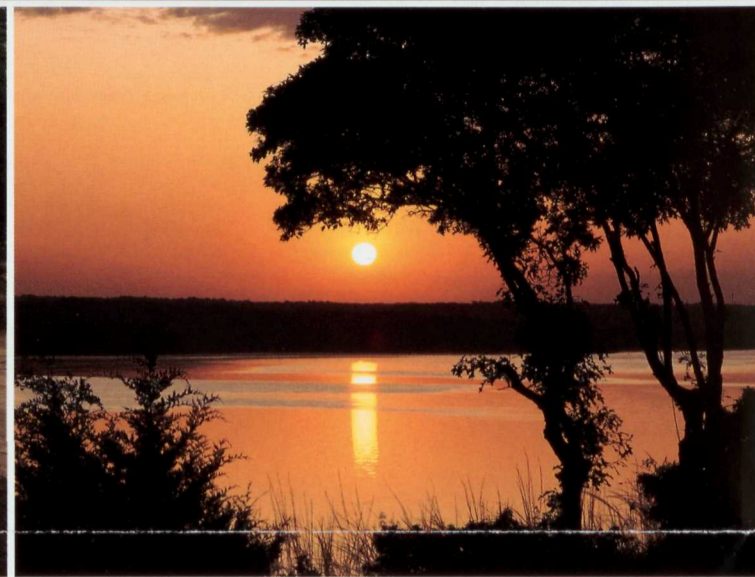




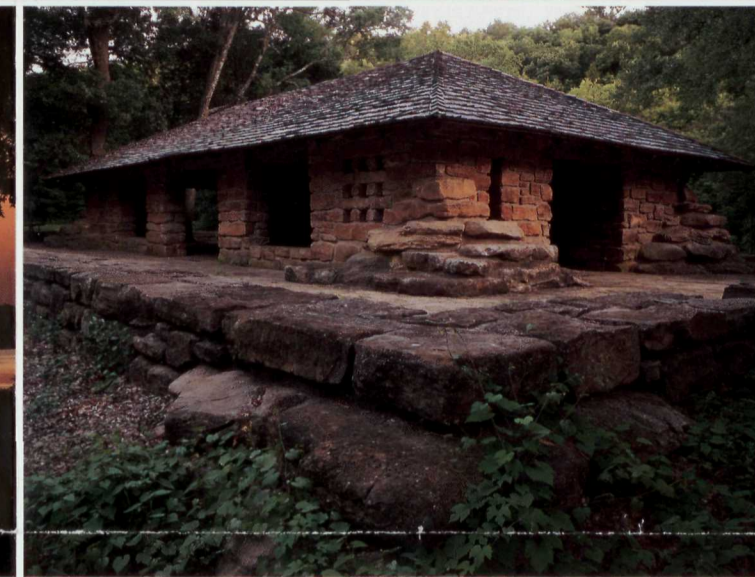
Buffalo Springs

©Laurence Parent



Sunset over Lake of the Arbuckles

©Laurence Parent



Bromide Spring Pavilion

©Laurence Parent



Travertine Creek

©Laurence Parent

Springs, streams, and lakes—whatever its form, water has always been the attraction at Chickasaw National Recreation Area. Fresh-water 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 anglers 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, becoming mineral water. Water passing through rock layers that do not contain these minerals remains fresh.

Archaeologists believe that people have lived here for thousands of years. Folklore says that the ancient people called this place "the Peaceful Valley of Rippling Waters." They believed in the healing power of the strong-smelling mineral water, and tribes such as the Wichita, Caddo, and others frequented the area. In the early

1800s the Federal Government began moving Choctaw, Chickasaw, and other tribes east of the Mississippi River to this area. In 1855 the land that is now part of the national recreation area came under the control of the Chickasaw Nation.

By the late 1890s settlers had built the town of Sulphur Springs around the fresh and mineral springs, with hotels and bath houses that promoted the medicinal qualities of the waters. The Chickasaw and Choctaw nations—fearing the waters would suffer from uncontrolled use—met with government officials to find ways to save the springs. In 1902 the Chickasaw ceded all of the springs

and 640 acres to the Department of the Interior for protection. The new area became Sulphur Springs Reservation. The area expanded and, in 1906, was renamed Platt National Park for Sen. Orville Hitchcock Platt, who backed the park's legislation. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps built pavilions, roads, trails, and waterfalls, and planted more than half a million trees and shrubs. In 1976 Platt National Park, Arbuckle Recreation Area, and additional lands were combined to create this nearly 10,000-acre recreation area. The foresight of the Chickasaw Nation in 1902 played a critical role in preserving the original springs and creeks. In their honor the park was named Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

Recreation Abounds

Chickasaw National Recreation Area offers activities all year. Streams and lakes cater to boaters, swimmers, and anglers, 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.

Travertine Nature Center has exhibits, an introductory movie, books, and information about the area's history, wildlife, geology, and activities. Programs include nature walks, history talks, and seasonal programs. The nature center is open daily except December 25 and January 1.

Park headquarters also has information about activities and programs. It is open weekdays except national holidays. Ranger stations are located near Rock Creek campground, at The Point, and at Buckhorn.

For More Information
Chickasaw National Recreation Area
1008 W. Second Street
Sulphur, OK 73086-4814
580-622-3165
www.nps.gov/chic

Activities Afloat



©Laurence Parent



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Swimming Streams are cold and clear all year. Rock Creek has a small beach. Please do not use soap or shampoo in streams. At the lakes, swim in boat exclusion areas. Never swim alone, near fishing docks, 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, the other to watch the skier. Skiers must wear an approved life preserver. Skiing is prohibited on Veterans Lake.

Fishing White bass, largemouth bass, crappie, sunfish, and catfish are popular catches. A state fishing license is required. Veterans Lake has a wheelchair-accessible fishing dock. Rods and reels only are allowed on Veterans Lake.

Boating Fishing, sail, and skiing boats and canoes all share the waves. Launch boats from designated 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. Be safe—alcohol, drugs, and boating do not mix. Always wear an approved life preserver. Boating permits

are required for Lake of the Arbuckles. Fee machines are at Buckhorn, The Point, and Guy Sandy launches.

Largemouth Bass This fish is often confused with smallmouth and spotted bass. The upper



NPS/Dan Feaser

jaw of the largemouth extends past its eye socket (*below left*).

White Crappie A favorite catch in winter, this stream fish is well-adapted to large lakes (*below*).



FWS/Duane Raver

Boating Safety Guide

Danger
Shallow water, rocks, and other hazards.



Restricted Area
Boats are prohibited from these waters.



Controlled Area
Speed limits, no skiing, no wake.



Activities Ashore



©Laurence Parent

Travertine Nature Center Experience nature up close. The nature center has activities, exhibits, dioramas, an interactive learning area, and live fish, reptiles, amphibians, and birds of prey. Check the bulletin boards or contact the

park for a list of daily programs, activities, and schedules.

Organized groups should make arrangements in advance from September through May. Contact the park.

Picnicking Picnic areas have tables and grills. Buckhorn and Veterans Lake Picnic Pavilions are available by reservation.

Hiking There are more than 30 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 in advance for group

campsites. Camping fees are charged; pay at the fee machines in the campgrounds. Buckhorn and The Point campgrounds are 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 spread fire. Fire weakens or kills trees, but most grasses can survive and as a result may grow better.

Although called "The Great American Desert," the 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 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.

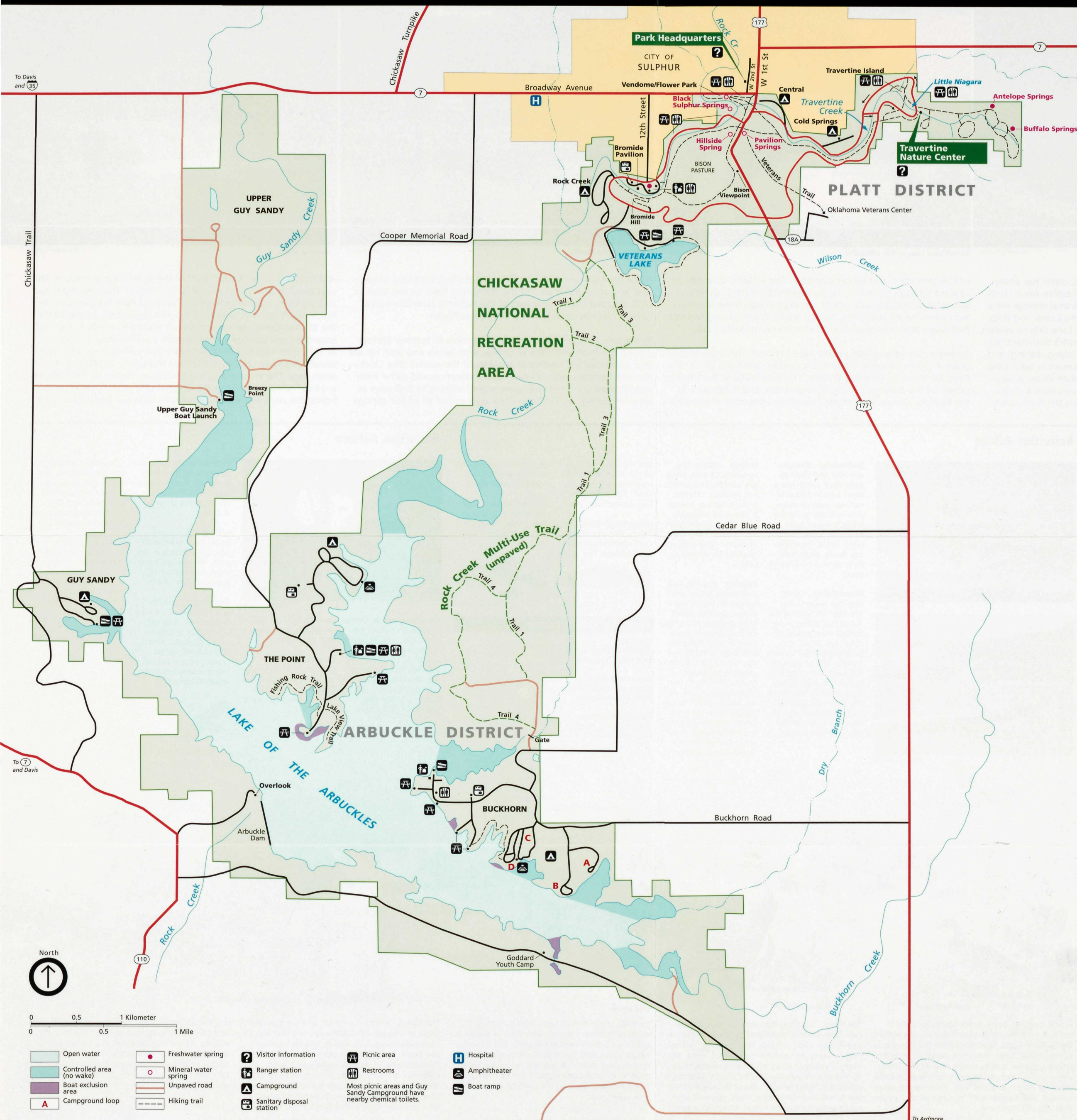
The Edge Traveling through the park, visitors pass from eastern woodland to prairie and back again. Biologists call this an "ecotone," where two or more life communities meet. Here, the many choices of food and shelter support an abundance of animals. This enhanced diversity is called the "edge effect." Along the edge where the forest and the prairie meet, you will find yucca growing amidst sumac and prickly pear

growing under an oak tree. Wild turkeys and white-tailed deer use the same trails as quail and bobcats. Cardinals and goldfinches share the sky with scissor-tailed flycatchers and meadowlarks. Where these different habitats meet, the juxtaposition of plants and wildlife can be dramatic. This is the best place to see wildlife. Keep your eyes open.

The Forest Mention a forest, and most people think of trees. At Chickasaw you will find many trees—sycamore, oak, pecan, hickory, walnut, and more. 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. Watch closely for tracks, owl pellets, and other evidence of nighttime activity. Armadillos appear in the early evening, shuffling alongside trails. You can see fungi on decaying leaves and tree trunks. Alert forest visitors may be rewarded with glimpses of beaver, gray fox, skunks, hawks, or raccoons.

Exploring Chickasaw



Orientation



Traveling in the Area
Chickasaw National Recreation Area is about 75 miles south of Oklahoma City, Okla., and 140 miles north of Dallas/Fort Worth, Tex.

Area Services
Food, lodging, gasoline, boating, fishing gear, and services are available at Sulphur and Davis. Check the Internet or contact these chambers of commerce for more information.

Climate
Summers are hot and humid. Temperatures above 100°F occur, and humidity often 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, leading to many springs. Rock Creek Multi-Use Trail (unpaved) is a network of hiking, biking, and horse trails that pass through a variety of ecosystems. Bicycles and pets are prohibited on trails east of Travertine Nature Center.

For Safety's Sake
Please be alert to potential hazards and avoid them. Watch your children. Report accidents to rangers immediately.

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. Wild animals will generally not harm you unless you annoy them. **DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE.**

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.

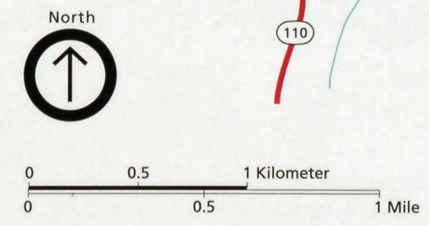
Firearms
Shooting a firearm is prohibited except when lawfully taking game in designated areas. Possessing a loaded weapon in a vehicle is prohibited.

Swimming and Wading
Know your limits! Don't swim if you are tired, chilled, or overheated. Glass bottles are prohibited in swimming areas. Wear shoes when wading, to prevent injuries. **DO NOT DIVE FROM WATERFALLS OR STREAM BANKS!** Swimming or wading is not allowed east of the Travertine Nature Center.

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

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

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