

Bringing Nature into Focus: The Travertine Nature Center at Platt National Park



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The Travertine Nature Center, now located in the Chickasaw National Recreation Area but originally part of the Platt National Park, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 2011 for its association with environmental education efforts of the 1960s and as an excellent example of a federally sponsored nature center. Constructed from 1968 to 1969, the Travertine Nature Center is a fine example of the federal response to the environmental movement of the 1960s at the local level, particularly the effort to educate the public while also providing a means of back-to-nature entertainment and recreation. The Travertine Nature Center was constructed with the expressed intent "to put people in direct contact with nature, to show how tampering with nature may lead to human disaster, and to show that man's survival depended on the survival of the

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

natural environment.”¹ The Travertine Nature Center was the first nature center constructed west of the Mississippi River by the National Park Service (NPS). The building is also the second of just two nature centers erected by the NPS in the 1960s. The Rock Creek Park Nature Center, located in Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC, was dedicated in January 1960 and, thus, was the first nature center constructed by the NPS. Unlike the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, the Travertine Nature Center represents a wholly new construction effort from the building site to the infrastructure to the building. This allowed the Travertine Nature Center greater flexibility in its design that is represented by the shift in the original concept of a building with a nearby bridge over Travertine Creek to the final executed design of a building that itself spans the creek.

For centuries the unique mineral springs and fresh water on the north edge of the geological formation called the Arbuckle Uplift in what is now southcentral Oklahoma has been recognized as an area of public interest and use. The area contains fresh water streams and numerous mineral springs of various compositions. The desire to “preserve, protect and develop the waters for the use and enjoyment of the people” is what led to the establishment of the Sulphur Springs Reservation in 1902 through a supplemental agreement to the Atoka Agreement between the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations and the federal government. At that time the reservation consisted of 640 acres. In 1904 the park officially opened to the public and expanded its boundaries to encompass 858 acres. Two years later the reservation was designated a national park with the name changed to Platt in honor of Senator Orville Hitchcock Platt of Connecticut.²

The park was not the only resource renamed in 1906. Upon the suggestion of University of Oklahoma Professor Charles Gould, an eminent Oklahoma geologist who was surveying the springs in the park for the second time, Sulphur Creek was renamed Travertine Creek for the “great deal of travertine rock and formations” in the creek. As part of his study and recommendation, Gould established that all the springs located along Sulphur Creek were fresh water with no sulphur springs flowing into the creek. Primarily fed by Antelope Springs and Buffalo Springs within the park, Travertine Creek was also fed by drainage from the large area of hills and valleys east of the park. The creek winds through the park for about one and one-half miles from the springs in the park to its confluence with Rock Creek. The creek drops 135 feet in elevation between Buffalo Springs and Rock Creek. Points of interest along Travertine Creek that have been significant in the park’s more than one hundred years of use include Antelope Springs,

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Buffalo Springs, Lake Placid, Grand Rapids, Little Niagara, Cave Island, the crossing at Sycamore Falls, Bear Falls, Lost Falls, Ole Swimming Hole, Pebble Falls, Sylvan Cove, Panther Falls, Lover's Tryst, Travertine Falls, Ripple Lake, the Punch Bowl, and Council Rocks.³

Although one of the smallest parks in the National Park system, Platt National Park continued to develop throughout the first half of the twentieth century. By 1913, 36,000 patrons visited Platt National Park with the number jumping to 173,318 visitors in 1920. Various facilities and attractions were constructed during these years. However, the primary period of development during the park's first fifty years was the otherwise trying decade of the 1930s. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Tree Army," also known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), thoroughly redesigned Platt National Park from 1933 to 1940. This included creation of or improvement to a variety of spring pavilions, creek dams, swimming holes, wooded picnic grounds, hiking trails, and campgrounds, as well as development of a cohesive landscape, including plantings and shaping of the land, that revealed the

Little Niagra in Platt National Park, photo by Leslie H. Butts (20242.46, Leslie H. Butts Collection, OHS Research Division).



TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER



Platt National Park postcard labeled "Fishing Scene," published by Seeton Drug Company in Sulphur, OK, August 7, 1924 (22564.8, Allan Stoddard Collection, OHS Research Division).

park's "natural, geological, and aqueous marvels, yet also provid[ed] for visitor recreation in and enjoyment of nature."⁴

Among the resources at Platt National Park that the CCC augmented were Antelope Springs and Buffalo Springs on the far east side of the park. As indicated above, these springs, along with the creek that they fed, had long been important natural elements of the park. The spring sites were also popular with the public from the park's founding at the turn of the twentieth century. To further build upon the public interest, the CCC made improvements to both sites. The CCC work at Buffalo Springs is more obvious with the construction of a magnificent, circular masonry structure around the springs. The CCC work at Antelope Springs was more naturalistic in appearance, consisting of reconstruction of the springs including development of three earth and boulder dams, a constructed stream, and a series of scenic ponds. Other CCC work in the area included extending the park perimeter road around both springs and constructing various amenities, including two large picnic areas with parking lots.⁵

CCC work at Platt National Park came to an end in June 1940 when Company 808 was reassigned to Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. The CCC itself lasted only three more years before being terminated as the country turned its attention and resources to World War II. During the following two decades little physical change occurred

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA



Platt National Park, c. 1930s (21201.0GP.8, Works Progress Administration Collection, OHS Research Division).

within the park due to a dearth in funding compounded by the status of the park as one of the smallest in the Park Service system. By the mid-1950s, as the NPS embarked upon the ambitious Mission 66 program, the available facilities at Platt National Park were deemed inadequate for the 350,000 visitors to the park in 1940, let alone the more than 1.1 million park visitors during the year 1955.⁶

Conceptualized in early 1955 and given presidential administrative approval in January 1956, the Park Service's Mission 66 program was a comprehensive, nationwide ten-year program of park improvement to address the ever-increasing deficiencies in park development and maintenance during the war and post-war eras, as well as the problems related to the explosive growth in visitation fueled by post-war automotive and recreation trends. Requiring more than \$670 million, the program "would allow the Park Service to repair and build roads, bridges and trails, hire additional employees, construct new facilities ranging from campsites to administration buildings, improve employee housing, and obtain land for future parks." The program was designed

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

to terminate in 1966 to coincide with the golden anniversary of the Park Service's 1916 founding.⁷

Platt National Park's first Mission 66 plan was developed in spring 1955 by Park Superintendent William Supernaugh. Although well received by the Park Service's regional office, the prospectus was rejected by the NPS office in Washington, DC, in February 1956. In addition to citing the abundant development of Platt National Park during the 1930s, the regulators also indicated that the ultimate goal should be the transfer of the park from federal control to that of the state of Oklahoma. Superintendent Supernaugh's successor, William Branch, immediately responded with a flurry of letters to senators and the regional office sufficient to cause the powers-that-be to reconsider their stance and include Platt National Park in the Mission 66 program.⁸

Because it was "obviously impracticable" to address Platt National Park's underlying size issue, park authorities in 1957 determined that the park "must seek a stepped up visitor service to care for the ever increasing crowds, at the same time affording protection for the natural features of the park." To accomplish this goal, the park developed a five-step, multiyear Mission 66 program. The primary step was to "build a carefully planned, well equipped and centrally located Visitor Use Center." The benefit of the new visitor center would allow the park contact with the numerous visitors not reached by the current facilities. This, in turn, would allow the masses to "receive proper orientation and information which [would] assist them materially in enjoying the park and leaving it unmolested for succeeding generations." Other steps included rehabilitation and expansion of the park's utility systems; improvement by realignment and resurfacing of roads and trails, including improving stream crossings and augmenting parking availability; rehabilitating existing buildings that ranged in age from twenty to sixty years; and increasing staff in the fields of protection, maintenance, and interpretation "to the degree consistent with actual needs." The total estimated cost for this program was \$386,200, minus the cost of additional park staff, with \$83,800 to be expended on the roads and trails, \$152,400 on rehabilitation of existing buildings and utilities, and \$150,000 for the construction of the new visitor center.⁹

In 1958 a Mission 66 Master Plan for Platt National Park was developed. The plan included a new visitor center with a commodious ninety-car parking area to be situated near the park's Administration Building located to the west of Highway 177 as well as various realignments and augmentation of parking areas. Overall, however, almost no work occurred in the park under the Mission 66 Master Plan. The only identified exception was the expansion of the Rock Creek Campground

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

done as part of “the first construction done at Platt National Park in many years.” At the campground forty new camping units, additional picnic facilities, and four new comfort stations were erected. The work was completed in 1966 as the Mission 66 program came to an end.¹⁰

“Parkscape U.S.A.” was the successor program to Mission 66. The Parkscape program, also a multiyear plan, clearly reflected the growing environmental movement as it was “designed to mobilize the resources and capabilities of the National Park Service in support of the new conservation.” This new conservation was “beyond the traditional concepts of conservation” as it spoke “not of nature alone, but of man’s total relationship with the world in which he lives.” The Parkscape program grew out of the 1965 White House Conference on Natural Beauty and sought to sustain the vitality of the national park idea through the pledge “to make the beauty and history of the land a richer and more meaningful part of the daily life of every American; to renew beauty where it has already been destroyed, and to seek out and protect the surviving landmarks of national heritage.” Similar to the Mission 66 program, Parkscape was designed to terminate in 1972 to mark another major NPS milestone, the centennial of Yellowstone, the first national park. While the seed for the Travertine Nature Center was established during the Mission 66 years through the clear definition of the need for improved visitor facilities, the actual development and construction of the nature center occurred during the Parkscape, U.S.A. years of the mid- to late 1960s.¹¹

As early as 1963 consideration was given to construction of a nature center at Platt National Park. With roots in the conservation movement of the previous decades, the development of nature centers came into prominence in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s as the modern environmental movement took hold. In general the 1960s was a decade of unprecedented societal change as the civil rights, women’s rights, and anti-Vietnam movements resulted in redefinition of acceptable social norms. As an intrinsic part of this societal evolution, “issues of environmental quality came to the forefront of public concern.” Although the conservation movement extended back to the eighteenth century, the birth of the modern environmental movement is generally credited to the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962. This book brought to the public’s attention the issues of pesticide use upon nature, including humans and the ecosystem. This, in turn, gave rise to other environmental quality issues onto which the public latched with alacrity. Within the National Park Service, the 1962 report by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, the 1962 establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and the formation



Bathing scene at Platt National Park, Sulphur (19200.71, Works Progress Administration Collection, OHS Research Division).

of the Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1964 were the beginning of “the drastically enlarged scope of the conservation movement which took shape during the 1960s.”¹²

Adding to the prominence of the 1960s as the founding decade of the modern environmental movement was the passage of various federal environmental laws. These included the Clean Air Act of 1963, the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Water Quality Control Act of 1965, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which President Richard Nixon signed into law on January 1, 1970. These laws provided a new legal framework of federal involvement in the myriad of environmental issues that continues to the present day.¹³

A known key to the success of the environmental movement of the 1960s from the very beginning was an informed and engaged public. Education was a fundamental tenant of the conservation movement throughout the twentieth century. Even more pressing than in previous decades, the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s required interpretive and educational programs that were sufficiently

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

advanced so as “to effect a greater understanding of our environmental problems and what must be done to correct them.” As such, “the need for outdoor interpretive programs, nature centers, laboratories, and outdoor training for teachers and youth leaders [was] urgent.”¹⁴

The fundamental purpose of a nature center was “to provide an area of undeveloped land where facilities and services [made] possible outdoor programs in nature and environmental education.” Every nature center was to be innovative, exemplary, and illustrative for its region. The associated nature center program was to provide the means and opportunity for education, research, conservation, and culture. The intended audience of the nature center from the late 1960s forward was to be all ages, from the youngest to the oldest. According to Byron Asbaugh in his article “Nature Center Purposes and Values,” the intent of a nature center was:

[to acquaint] young children with the mysteries and wonders of nature, a task that is becoming more difficult with the relentless destruction of native habitats. It affords teenagers an opportunity to engage in wholesome activities that are both constructive and educational. It also provides a training ground for youths who wish to become scientists. The land can be a significant outdoor laboratory for college students. Adults can utilize the center facilities and resources for serious study and the pursuit of hobby interests. A nature center is also a place where a man can take his family for a walk to see a meadow, a swamp, a stand of native trees, or to explore the shores of a secluded lake.¹⁵

In 1963 Platt National Park Superintendent Paul Steel contacted the National Capital Region about the Rock Creek Nature Center, the Park Service’s only nature center. Steel indicated that Platt National Park had under consideration development of a visitor center similar to the Rock Creek Nature Center, and he asked for plans, layouts, and other information about the existing nature center.¹⁶ The Rock Creek Nature Center in Washington, DC’s Rock Creek Park was developed in the 1950s as a pilot project for the NPS. The nature center project originally centered around the park’s Peirce/Klingling Mansion, which had become rundown due to a lack of maintenance. With the concept of a nature center being new, “the Peirce/Klingling mansion’s nature center served as a sort of experiment to give the park the experience needed to decide what to include in a permanent nature center.” In June 1957 it was determined that a new nature center facility at Rock Creek would be located on the site of an existing caretaker’s residence that was no

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

longer deemed necessary. William M. Haussmann, the chief architect for the National Capital Parks system, designed the new nature center building, which incorporated the salvageable portions of the caretaker's house. Cee Bee Contractors of Coral Hills, Maryland, received the construction contract for the Rock Creek Nature Center in June 1959. Due to delays in materials the building's original completion date of December 1959 was pushed to mid-1960. At a total cost of \$333,500, the Rock Creek Nature Center opened to the public on June 4, 1960, and continues to operate to the present day. Notably, the nature center was designed to appeal to society's youngest learners, and as such, the dedication ceremony was entirely conducted by children.¹⁷

In January 1965 NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., of Washington, DC, spoke at the annual Sulphur Chamber of Commerce banquet in Sulphur, Oklahoma. Hartzog was accompanied by Bill Newbold, information officer, and Roger Allin, assistant regional director for cooperation activity at Santa Fe, New Mexico. During this speech Hartzog disclosed that the Park Service would develop a nature center for Platt National Park in the near future. At a press conference prior to the program Hartzog indicated work was already being done in planning for the nature center, including determining a suitable location in the park for a new building in which to house the proposed nature center. One of the issues being studied was the architectural theme of the anticipated building. Hartzog also announced that he foresaw a single unit of management for both Platt National Park and the new Lake of the Arbuckles Recreation Area, as well as future expansion for both areas. Anticipated areas to be included in Platt National Park were part of the Arbuckle Uplift, which Hartzog described as "one of the most outstanding geological formations in the country," and Sulphur's Veteran's Lake.¹⁸

The Western Office of Design and Construction developed plans for a visitor center in the park's Flower Park in 1965; however, Superintendent Steel countered with a proposal to develop a nature center at the Travertine Island site. Steel contended that "the Travertine Island site offers a great deal of opportunity for architectural ingenuity and . . . that a compatible design to the Travertine Island site could afford an excellent opportunity for an architect to utilize some of the more modern approaches to interpretive endeavor." Despite extremely dry conditions during the years from 1963 through 1965 that had "cast a damper on the Travertine Creek areas of the park," 1.5 million visitors experienced Platt National Park in 1965. It was estimated in early January 1966 that there were thirty-eight million folks living in a six-hundred-mile radius of the park that were prospective visitors. This

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA



Platt National Park postcard labeled "Vendome Artesian Well," published by Seeton Drug Company in Sulphur, OK, August 7, 1924 (22564.5, Allan Stoddard Collection, OHS Research Division).

caused the local newspaper to make note of the reality that "sometime [sic] we can live too close to a national park. We are prone to take its assets, its beauties and its attractions for granted. But while we are doing this, thousands of other people are taking advantage of its attractions and recreation."¹⁹

Shortly after this at the end of January 1966 Congressman Carl Albert sent a telegram informing the community that the new federal budget just submitted to Congress included a project to construct a \$314,000 nature center at Platt National Park. If the funds were approved by Congress, the project would consist of the "erection of the building and necessary utilities for a stepped up program of interpretation and visitor orientation for the entire Platt National Park and Arbuckle region." The 9,250-square-foot native stone building was to be situated in the wooded area east of Little Niagara in the eastern end of the park. Trails from the proposed nature center would lead to Antelope Springs and Buffalo Springs. In addition to the typical park exhibits that explained the area to visitors, the building as conceived would include space for an audiovisual program that would facilitate better understanding of the area's natural resources, as well as space for visiting schoolchildren to pursue the study of nature. The ability to accommodate the students from the Sulphur schools, as well as visit-

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

ing school groups, would be new to the park according to Superintendent Don Spalding.²⁰

On August 1, 1966, the Department of the Interior awarded a \$14,250 contract to the Houston, Texas, architectural firm of Mackie and Kamrath for design and construction drawings for a nature center building and a small bridge in Platt National Park. US Senators Mike Monroney and Fred Harris joined Congressman Albert in making the announcement to the local community. Typical of NPS construction, the building was designed to be compatible with its natural surroundings. The building was to contain meeting rooms, demonstration rooms, an auditorium that would offer a continuous interpretation program about the park, and an office for the park naturalist. The project also called for a bridge over Travertine Creek to be located near the building. NPS officials hoped to have construction of the building underway by April 1, 1967; however, the plans for the building were not completed until February 1967.²¹

Travertine Creek, Platt National Park, photo by Leslie H. Butts (20242.66, Leslie H. Butts Collection).



THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

The NPS began taking bids on the Travertine Nature Center project during the last week of May 1967 with a bid opening set for two o'clock in the afternoon on June 15, 1967. The project was "expected to give Platt National Park one of it's [*sic*] most substantial boosts in many years." In a notable shift from the original conception, which called for a bridge spanning Travertine Creek near the building, the final building plans called for the exhibit room to "span the streambed and . . . provide an excellent view of the surrounding woodland and stream areas." According to the announcement made by Acting Superintendent Robert W. Peters, the new nature center would "be the second one of its type in the National Park System."²²

In mid-July 1967 Park Superintendent Jack Stark reported that "a Nature Center [would] be established in the east end of the park, somewhere in the region of Buffalo and Antelope springs." The building was described as being along the lines of a museum. In the same issue of the local newspaper another article announced that the new visitor center that was to be constructed in the eastern portion of the park was delayed. Bids had been received on the proposed building several weeks before; however, all bids were higher than anticipated. As such, the building was "currently being redesigned to bring it within funds available for the project." Although the name of the building was not consistent between the two articles, that the second article about the new visitor center was in actuality referring to the Travertine Nature Center is clear in the statement that the building was to be built "astride Travertine Creek, above Little Niagara and will give visitors to Platt National Park a very comprehensive interpretive picture of what Platt offers the visitor, botanically, zoologically and in order [*sic*] fields." In addition to exhibits the building would offer slides and motion pictures with sound to "provide a complete educational program on the park."²³

Plans and specifications for the Travertine Nature Center roads and parking area were made available for bid in August 1967. In addition to the Travertine Loop Road and four parking areas, the project also involved the laying of a sewer line to support the new building. Approximately 1,500 feet of paved roadway, parking areas, and walks were planned and 4,715 feet of sewer line. Bids on the road, parking, and sewer project were to be sent to the NPS's regional office in Santa Fe with a bid opening date of August 31, 1967. This was the first step in the nature center program that was anticipated to "bring substantial improvements to the upper portions of Travertine Creek in Platt National Park." As part of the road project, the existing perimeter drive above the building site was to be changed into a footpath and

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

bicycle trail. Nature walk trails would also tie the building with Antelope Springs and Buffalo Springs, along with other areas in the eastern part of the park. The second step in the program, of course, was the construction of the building. At the end of August 1967 it was anticipated that bids on the building would be opened in October 1967. As indicated by Superintendent Stark, some changes had been made in the building design. The building was to be built of glass, native stone, and rough-sawn siding, which would allow the building "to blend into the natural surroundings of the area." The exhibit room was to be largely of glass, and the audiovisual room was to provide a continuous interpretive program.²⁴

It was announced in the first week of September 1967 that the Nelson Construction Company of Sulphur was the apparent low bidder on the road, parking, and sewer project. The Park Service received a total of three bids on the project with the Nelson bid coming in lowest at \$66,530. The other bidders were the Dodson Construction Company of Sulphur and the Evans Construction Company of Temple, Oklahoma. At that time it was noted that when the nature center was finished, "the upper end of the park will be devoted to nature trails and bicycle paths." The contract for grading, drainage, concrete curbs and gutters, and plant mix surfacing of the loop road and parking areas, as well as

Platt National Park, published by McGinnis Drug Company, August 18, 1913 (21673.4, Derek Haworth Collection, OHS Research Division).



THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

nature trail construction and sewer work, was formally awarded to the Nelson Construction Company on September 20, 1967, for the amount of \$66,545.51.²⁵

Bids for the building were advertised in late September 1967 with an opening set for October 26, 1967. As with the road, parking, and sewer project, the plans, specifications, and bid documents were available without charge from the Santa Fe regional office. However, in late October 1967 it was announced that the bid opening had been postponed. The project got "caught up in the budget cutting campaign in Congress with a moratorium declared on many projects until the matter is settled." By mid-January 1968 the bid opening had been rescheduled for the end of the month. It was hoped that work on the building would begin as quickly as late March or early April. It was also noted that "the Nature Center will be the first of its kind developed by the National Park Service west of the Mississippi, and will provide basic facilities for educational study in the conservation field." The building was anticipated to "serve as the focal point for conservation education in the State of Oklahoma and adjoining states." In addition to having extensive audiovisual equipment, the building was to feature nature exhibits and a library. To further the program, "the east end of Platt National Park will be converted to a system of nature trails and eventually access to this portion of the park will be by trail only."²⁶

With a total of six bidders, the NPS announced by the first of February 1968 the Nelson Construction Company as low bidder for the building project with a bid of around \$240,000. In mid-March 1968 a drawing of the new building was published in the local newspaper with the statement that the facility was a "certainty," as the Nelson Construction Company already had the project under contract. This same drawing of the building appeared in the *Daily Oklahoman*, the state's daily newspaper, ten days later. It was anticipated that construction would take about a year. The building was to have ninety-five hundred square feet of floor space, which was to include a "central lobby with exhibits, an audio visual room where a continuous movie or slide program will be in progress, a library specializing in conservation education, and a demonstration room." Also noteworthy was the integration of indoor and outdoor activities. This concept allowed the nature trails and outside interpretive facilities to serve the nature center as an outdoor classroom. The blending of indoor and outdoor environments was intrinsic to the overall nature center concept.²⁷

Construction on the building was underway by early April 1968. Automobile traffic east of the building site in the park was prohibited after April 1, 1968. By mid-June it was reported that "conservation

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

will be one of the principal themes to be expounded in films and sounds when the new Nature Center is opened.” The anticipated impact of the nature center was also expanded from the state of Oklahoma to visitors from all over the Midwest through the development and implementation of an interpretative program on conservation. Also at that time it was announced that the cost of the building had risen from \$240,000 to \$310,000 due to problems related to constructing the foundation in the spongy soil. The building was to have seventy-two concrete pilings, some as large as five feet in diameter and running to depths of thirty-four feet. The Hackett sandstone for the building was being acquired from a quarry near Hackett, Arkansas, on the Oklahoma-Arkansas state line. This same stone was used in the construction of the late US Senator from Oklahoma Robert S. Kerr’s mountaintop mansion near Poteau. Fortunately, the construction activity had not reduced visitation in the park with 639,157 visitors to the park reported by the middle of June 1968 and an additional 179,988 to the adjacent recreation area.²⁸

Travertine Nature Center in Platt National Park, 1970, photo by Leslie H. Butts (20242.22, OHS Research Division).



THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

In mid-July 1968 the walking trails east of the nature center were opened to the public. The perimeter road had been completely removed with the asphalt surfacing torn up and taken away. Park personnel were readying to replant the roadway to blend with the surrounding environs. Work on the building continued with the foundation problems still slowing the work. With subtle humor, the *Ada Weekly News* pointed out that the preservation of native wildlife was, and had been since the park's origination, one of the fundamental functions of the park. According to the Ada paper, this was to now include not only the raccoon, the fox, the bobcat, and the bison but also another endangered species: pedestrians. As explained in the article:

A special preserve is being set aside at the extreme east end of the park for the protection of these quaint creatures. And automobiles, which prey devastatingly upon the species, are strictly forbidden here. . . . Anybody who wants to explore the eastern end of the park, the area including Antelope Springs and Buffalo Springs, from now on will have to hoof it.²⁹

Work quietly continued on the Travertine Nature Center through the rest of 1968 into January 1969. By mid-January the concrete foundation work had been completed, along with work on the flagstone walks, ramp area, and walls. The raising of the building's framework and partition was underway as the first month of the new year came to an end. All work on the building was slated to be finished in time to allow for a spring opening. The spring opening was still projected to occur in late March 1969. Also highly anticipated was that the new nature center would "provide a broad education on the natural features of the park" that would conceivably answer the longstanding question as to why Platt was a national park, particularly as noted in the March 27, 1969, article in the *Sulphur Times-Democrat* for even those who had lived in Sulphur for more than half a century.³⁰

The building was nearing completion in early April 1969, contributing to the expectation of a banner year for visitation to the park. More than 2.5 million visitors were expected in 1969, making it "the best travel year in the history of the Platt National Park here." Although the building was not yet complete, the Tulip Garden Club kicked off its April 1969 meeting at the new nature center. As part of the meeting the group took a comprehensive tour of the building. The room-by-room tour was led by W. P. Fairchild, construction engineer. Fairchild explained in detail the function and purpose of each room. The following month Platt National Park was featured in an article written by

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

Oklahoma newsman Kent Ruth that was published in the magazine section of the *New York Times*. Ruth highlighted, among other features of the park, the new nature center, which was again touted as “the first park service facility of its kind west of the Mississippi.”³¹

By early June 1969 the building’s opening was pushed to July 1969. Although the long Fourth of July weekend brought a swamp of visitors to the park, the Travertine Nature Center was not yet ready for its grand opening. In mid-July 1969 it was announced that the opening would likely occur in September 1969. Exhibits for the building were then under construction by the NPS Museum Division in Washington, DC. The exhibits were to be transported to Oklahoma by the end of the month. At a final cost of nearly \$325,000, the building was to be used in the summertime to “give visitors both visual and verbal lectures on film of the parks [sic] natural and human history.” To maintain activity levels during the slower winter months, the building was to offer “conservation education programs for youth and adults of the state as well as for other cultural programs” such as the NPS’s National Environmental Education Development (NEED) program. The NEED program was “designed to be a cooperative venture with the public schools to acquaint children with resource problems currently facing the nation.” The issues considered by the NEED program included “land, air and water pollution, overcrowding, and man’s reshaping of his own habitat into an environmental trap.” The NEED program was developed by Dr. Mario M. Menesini, research specialist in education at the University of California. Along with the equipment and facilities of the Travertine Nature Center, the accompanying trails and springs in the Environmental Study Area (ESA) were also part of the nature center’s advertised attractions.³²

At the end of July 1969 it was announced that the Travertine Nature Center would be formally dedicated on September 20, 1969. Congressman Albert was scheduled to give the dedicatory address to the anticipated thousands of witnesses. It was also noted that the nature center was one of only two nature centers operated by the NPS and that it would “make a tremendous contribution to the understanding and appreciation of people for Platt National Park” through the use of visual aids that would allow “visitors and tourists to assimilate information about the park” better than ever before. Critically, it was believed that “this program is in line with the concepts which brought about the establishment of the park in the first place.” While Platt National Park had been thoroughly enjoyed over the years for its camping and picnicking, the Travertine Nature Center would increase awareness and “appreciation of the true natural resources of the park.”³³

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

One month before the building's dedication the local paper explained more about the Travertine Nature Center:

The Nature Center is more than just a building with exhibits and programs. It is also a developing idea of new emphasis in the use of a portion of the park. About 140 acres east of the new building will be maintained in a natural state to be used in connection with the Nature Center as an Environmental Study Area. Guided nature walks will be conducted in the area. Teachers will be encouraged to bring their students to use it as an outdoor nature study laboratory, as a place of inspiration for art or writing assignments and just as a place to sit quietly and think. While positive encouragement will be given to organized educational use, the Nature Center and Environmental Study Area is by no means limited to that use. The facilities are for the use of all park visitors for nature study, and to receive information about the local area. The term "nature center" is new in the National Park System. The only other designated Nature Center in the National Park System at present is located in Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. The idea behind a Nature Center has been developing for a long time. Such organizations as the National Audubon Society and other conservations [*sic*] have been operating nature centers for many years.³⁴

At the end of August 1969 it was announced that the old museum at Platt National Park would close following the last scheduled Labor Day activities on the first. Beginning on September 2, 1969, the exhibits and equipment from the old museum would be transferred to the nature center. Following the opening of the Travertine Nature Center, all activities previously held at the museum would be at the new facility.³⁵

After the Labor Day weekend plans continued to pick up speed for the Travertine Nature Center's opening with the number of dignitaries attending the dedication also increasing. In addition to Congressman Albert, the names of notable attendees included US Senator Henry Bellmon of Oklahoma, NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., and Don Greve, president of the Sequoyah Carpet Company. The newspaper also noted that the new building was "the only structure of this size in the state that is built over a free flowing stream." As an "introduction and invitation to get outside into the true exhibit area," the building was to contain live exhibits of snakes, frogs, lizards, insects, plants, and fish native to the area. Additionally, a beehive and nocturnal ani-

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

mal exhibit were designed for the building. Within the demonstration room, live animal handling was to be demonstrated. In sum, "the nature center thus provides a kind of point of departure to give the visitors some idea of what there is to be seen in the park" with the visitor then able to "go out and see the real thing."³⁶

As part of the dedication Congressman Albert presented an American flag that had flown over the Capitol Building in Washington, DC. In addition to providing a history of the flag, Albert discussed the government's efforts to serve the American people through conservation and recreation programs. According to Albert, "We are literally expending millions upon millions of dollars to provide for the saving of our wildlife, for the establishment and maintenance of National Parks for the benefit of our people." Albert estimated that total outlay for recreational resources in 1970 would equal \$372 million, a \$52 million increase over 1969. In justifying this expense, Albert explained, "After all, we inherited all of these natural riches from our ancestors, and it is certainly our duty and our obligation to preserve them for generations of future Americans." Albert also lauded the Chickasaw Nation for its foresight in securing the public title of the land for the benefit of all. In discussing the building, Albert noted that "the Nature Center will be the first of its kind developed by the National Park Service west of the Mississippi, and will provide basic facilities for educational study in the conservation field." Albert went on to say, "It can be easily seen that all of this equipment will extend and enlarge not only the recreational opportunities of our people, not only here but throughout the state, not to mention the increased and invaluable educational advance occurring from their use." Of particular significance to Albert was the building's library, which he judged to be of immeasurable worth. According to Albert, "A library is like a river which flows out into the sea spreading enlightenment and progress over a vast expanse."³⁷

Also attending the dedication of the building was Karl Kamrath, architect for the building. As indicated by the original architectural contract, the first nature center concept involved a building with a bridge to span Travertine Creek. At the dedication Kamrath stated, "When I made the first visit to the site I knew the building should span the creek with windows to bring the outside in." Kamrath was born in Enid, Oklahoma, on April 25, 1911, to G. A. and Martha Kamrath. When Kamrath was a young child the family relocated from Oklahoma to Texas. Kamrath, a graduate of the University of Texas, spent three years in Chicago working for Pereira and Pereira, the interior studios of Marshall Field and Company, and the Architectural Decorating Company during the mid-1930s. Returning to Texas in 1937,

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Kamrath joined forces with fellow University of Texas graduate and Architectural Decorating Company staff member Fred MacKie to open the firm MacKie and Kamrath in Houston. As was typical with many architectural firms, MacKie took primary responsibility for the planning and business aspects of the firm while Kamrath was in charge of design for the firm. Kamrath became a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1939 and was elected to a fellowship in 1955. Along with MacKie, Kamrath served in the US Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, attaining the rank of captain. The firm of MacKie and Kamrath reopened in Houston following the war in 1946. Also in 1946 Kamrath met nationally acclaimed architect Frank Lloyd Wright at Wright's home Taliesin in Wisconsin. This opportunity "had a profound effect on Kamrath's architectural designs as he committed himself to creating organic architecture following Wright's Usonian principles." The firm of MacKie and Kamrath "were among the first Houston architects to design modernist buildings and they swiftly obtained national recognition" for their buildings. As exemplified in the Travertine Nature Center, the firm's buildings were "consistently Wrightian in character; they displayed a predilection for horizontal alignment, dramatic structural engineering, and finely executed material and ornamental detailing." While MacKie and Kamrath's work in Houston has been identified as significant, their contribution to Oklahoma's built environment is relatively unknown. As far as has been identified to date, the only building designed by the firm in Oklahoma is the Travertine Nature Center.³⁸

The dedication ceremonies were held outside the building with the weather cooperating perfectly. An estimated crowd of one thousand people toured the building after the ribbon cutting ceremony. Park service workers parked nearly 270 automobiles that day, nearly 100 more than the capacity of the adjacent parking area. After inspecting the building, many of the visitors made the trek along the nature trails to Buffalo Springs and Antelope Springs. All in all the Travertine Nature Center had an auspicious opening that was enjoyed by many.³⁹

During the last week of September 1969 visitation within the park increased by nearly ten thousand persons as compared to the same time period in 1968. It was undetermined if it was the weather, the new nature center, or other factors that caused the substantial increase. By the first of October 1969 the Travertine Nature Center was open for daily use. In late October 1969 the Sulphur Business and Professional Women's Club held its meeting in the nature center. The meeting included watching the film *Matter of Time*, which was described as being about nature. The club members were encouraged by Miss

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

Carlotte Muth, Platt National Park staff member, to “get out on the nature trails in the Park and find out about nature first hand” following the movie. Showing that “the Travertine Nature Center is growing more popular by the day with civic, study and other type organizations and groups” was the meeting of the Sulphur Sorosis Club in November 1969. At this meeting Park Naturalist E. Macdougall Palmer showed two films, *A River Must Live* and *Why Man Creates*. The first film, classified as a conservation show, addressed how lakes and rivers are polluted. The second film was an award-winning movie that focused on man’s creative abilities through the centuries. While Palmer did not provide the club members with a detailed interpretation of the films, he did encourage discussion that was to his and the club members’ benefit.⁴⁰

In mid-January 1970 the first of many environmental film festivals was held at the nature center. The public was invited to watch the free movies, which were shown continuously throughout the afternoon. The movies focused on “some of the environmental problems we face today and how we might solve them.” Park staff would also be on hand to answer questions. In February 1970 visitation at Platt National Park continued to be above average despite cold weather that had dropped visitation numbers at the Lake of the Arbuckles. At the end of March *The Mayflower Story* was shown at the nature center. This film told the story of the voyage of the *Mayflower II*, a history-making trip in 1957 that recreated the original 1620 journey of the *Mayflower* from Brixham, England, to Plymouth, Massachusetts. Park officials reported in early August 1970 that large crowds were attending the evening programs that were held nightly at the Travertine Nature Center. The slightly less-than-an-hour-long programs were given by different members of the park staff and covered a variety of topics related to the environment, ecology, wildlife, history, insects, and plants of the area. The public programs were “designed to be informative and educational as well as entertaining.” This type of public activity continued at the Travertine Nature Center for years, making the nature center an invaluable element of the park. In 1975 it was noted that “in addition to those who visit the park primarily for rest and relaxation, recent years have seen an increase in the number of visitors who come to participate in a wide range of environmental and nature programs which are conducted by the naturalists of the park’s Travertine Nature Center.”⁴¹

The Travertine Nature Center was architecturally and historically significant at the local level as an excellent example of a federally sponsored nature center constructed in the 1960s as part of the government’s response to the need for education on nature and environmental issues for

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

the public, as well as for entertainment and recreation purposes related to encouraging public use and interest in the site. The 1960s represented a watershed period for the environmental movement both in terms of public awareness and federal involvement. While the conservation movement had been of specialized interest to various individuals for decades going back as far as the eighteenth century, the 1960s sparked an unprecedented public awareness that continued to build through the ensuing decades. Also new to the 1960s movement was the growing public awareness of the damage done by man to nature and the potential that the damage was irreversible.

That the 1960s were a defining decade in the environmental movement has been well established through scholarly study. Numerous books, articles, and websites on the subject conclude that the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was the tipping point for the emergence of the modern environmental effort. Among the scholarly works of particular interest concerning the national parks is Richard West Sellars's *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (1997). While encompassing the entirety of the history of National Parks from designation of Yellowstone to near the end of the twentieth century, the book includes a chapter on the period of 1963 to 1981 in which the modern environmental movement is addressed. Of particular note is Sellars's conclusion that "much of National Park Service history since 1963 may be viewed as a continuing struggle by scientists and others in the environmental movement to change the direction of national park management, particularly as it affects natural resources." The Travertine Nature Center represents the effort to provide the visitor to Platt National Park with a more scientific understanding of the site, as well as other environmental issues that were, or should have been, of concern to all.⁴²

As indicated above, the Travertine Nature Center building was only one, albeit central, element of the entire nature center concept. The adjoining ESA contributed the outdoor classroom that complimented the indoor conservation education program provided in the building. The designation of an ESA was not unique to Platt National Park. By 1975 eighty parks had one or more ESAs. While visible effort was made to make Platt National Park's ESA a natural environment in the late 1960s through the development of pedestrian trails and the removal of the CCC-era perimeter road and two picnic areas, it was never completed. Many of the CCC elements, which at that time were thirty years old, remained in place. Notably, the restoration of the area to its native conditions was an already-acknowledged unattainable goal. That "restoration of the parks to their primitive conditions required

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

skills and knowledge not now in existence” was a finding of the 1963 Leopold Report, an NPS wildlife management study performed at the behest of Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall by A. Starker Leopold, professor of biology at the University of California, Berkeley.⁴³

Overall, the complete obliteration of the CCC resources would not have restored the ESA to its true natural conditions and would probably have resulted in reduced visitation to the area because the CCC amenities were undeniably attractive to the public and remain so to this day. Additionally, over the passage of time the CCC elements have gained historic significance of their own.

While less than fifty years old, the Travertine Nature Center is exceptionally significant for its unique contribution to Platt National Park’s inventory of property types. When the Travertine Nature Center was constructed, it was the second nature center erected at a national park. However, it was the first nature center built west of the Mississippi and the first nature center building erected entirely from scratch. As noted previously, the Rock Creek Park Nature Center in Washington, D.C., was the first NPS nature center; however, it utilized portions of an existing caretaker’s residence and, thus, an existing building site.

Also differentiating the buildings are their stylistic expressions, as well as the fact that the Travertine Nature Center was designed by a private architectural firm and the Rock Creek Nature Center was designed by NPS personnel. The Travertine Nature Center is stylistically classified as being overall in the Park Service Modern style. More specifically, the one-story building clearly expresses the popular mid-century Wrightian architectural style. In contrast, the two-story Rock Creek Nature Center is noted as being derived from the International style with stylistic characteristics that include a low overall mass, flat roof, and cantilevered porch. Both buildings utilized stone and wood paneling for materials, allowing them to be “an updated version of the modern rustic design aesthetic” that the NPS effectively utilized for decades. Although both buildings were also integrated into their settings, this took very different forms, resulting in distinct building attributes. The Travertine Nature Center was constructed spanning Travertine Creek; as such, the free-flowing water became a defining characteristic of the building as well as a major stylistic attribution. In contrast, the Rock Creek Nature Center was banked into a hill, thus incorporating itself into the terrain but without the aquatic element.⁴⁴

It is unknown exactly why the private architectural firm of MacKie and Kamrath was selected to design the Travertine Nature Center.

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

There was no indication in the research conducted for the National Register nomination that a design competition was held or if MacKie and Kamrath did other work for the NPS. The selection of this firm from Houston, Texas, may have rested on a regional basis with the chosen architect having at least one, albeit small, Oklahoma tie. As noted above, Karl Kamrath was born in Enid, Oklahoma. Notably, unlike Rock Creek Park, which had an on-staff architect available to design the building, Platt National Park did not have the resources to design the building in-house. While subtle, the familiarity of the architects with each park, its history and its natural and cultural environments, as well as their work experience in the private and public sectors, undoubtedly had an influence upon the finished product of both nature centers.

The Travertine Nature Center and the Rock Creek Park Nature Center were the only two nature centers opened by the NPS in the 1960s. Significantly, the two nature centers opened at opposite ends of this critical environmental decade— Rock Creek Park Nature Center in 1960 and Travertine Nature Center in 1969. Another defining difference between the two original NPS nature centers is that the Rock Creek Nature Center was aimed at the younger audience while the Travertine Nature Center was designed to attract and educate a broader audience of all ages. This represents an important evolution in NPS nature center construction because it recognized that environmental education was needed for all ages, not just the youth. This, in turn, related to the broader application of environmental concerns to man in general that was endemic in the post-1962 environmental movement.

Significantly, the Travertine Nature Center at Oklahoma's only national park represents another aspect of the federal response to the pressing environmental issues of the period. The environmental legislation enacted during the 1960s has long been recognized for its impact on the American way of life and business. Although arguably more regional in application than federal law, the construction of the Travertine Nature Center represents a kinder and gentler effort to address environmental issues by providing a firsthand opportunity directly to the public to experience and learn about nature and environmental issues.

As acknowledged in publicity materials provided at the time the Travertine Nature Center was constructed:

For many years now, man has been moving away from the land.
Not so many years ago people knew what it was like to see a deer,

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

walk in a meadow, hear a bird's flute-like song, feel the dew on the grass . . . be alone. Today a man can be born, grow to manhood and die without once knowing nature and believe, as many do, that man and nature are separable. With few exceptions the original landscape of America, and indeed the entire planet Earth, is disappearing; giving way to asphalt and concrete.⁴⁵

The Travertine Nature Center represents a tangible, historically significant element of the federal response to that growing crisis. The nature center, in short, was "a place to bring the people and the land together on intimate terms under the guidance of trained naturalists, so that together they might develop the conscience to preserve this land and to impart aesthetic and emotional, as well as scientific values of the natural science, as we place man in the natural scheme of things." That the Travertine Nature Center was locally successful in its effort was attested to in 1974 when the *Ada Weekly News* touted the nature center's achievement in being "an authoritative presentation of the wonder and science of nature in this area." As planned, the Travertine Nature Center continued to offer lectures and motion pictures, as well as live exhibits of local reptiles, insects, fish, large and small plants, and other natural history. Overall, in addition to being the first nature center constructed by the NPS west of the Mississippi, the second of only two nature centers erected by the NPS in the pivotal environmental decade of the 1960s, and the first NPS nature center that did not utilize an existing building, the Travertine Nature Center is historically significant for its contribution to conservation education of the 1960s as well as to nature-inspired entertainment and recreation.⁴⁶

Endnotes

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¹ *Sulphur (OK) Times-Democrat*, September 18, 1969.

² National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, "Mission 66 for Platt National Park," 1957, box 8, folder 10, Robert S. Kerr Collection, Conservation Series, Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives, University of Oklahoma, Norman. See also Dennis Muncrief, *A History of Platt National Park: A Century of Progress* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2007), 18, 26.

³ Muncrief, *A History of Platt National Park*, 99-102.

⁴ Heidi Hohmann, draft National Historic Landmark nomination "Platt National Park," August 2008, 4, 33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42. See also "Mission 66 for Platt National Park."

⁷ Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnership, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Pro-

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

gram, 2000), 2-3.

⁸ Heidi Hohmann and Katarzyna Grala, "Cultural Landscape Report: Platt Historic District, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Oklahoma," Iowa State University and National Park Service, 2004, 129-30.

⁹ "Mission 66 for Platt National Park."

¹⁰ Hohmann and Grala, "Cultural Landscape Report," 130-131. See also US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "1966 Calendar Year Activities," February 1, 1967, box 64, folder 6, Carl Albert Collection, Departmental Series, Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives, University of Oklahoma, Norman (hereafter cited as CAC, DS, CACCA).

¹¹ National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, "1967 NPS Briefing Book," 1967, box 64, folder 6, CAC, DS, CACCA, 25. See also National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, "NPS Criteria for Parklands," box 64, folder 6, CAC, DS, CACCA, foreword and introduction.

¹² "1967 NPS Briefing Book," 157. See also Carolyn Merchant, *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 174-79 and Ronald F. Lee, *Family Tree of the National Park System*, Part VI, (Philadelphia: Eastern National Parks: 1972), available http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/lee2/lee6.htm, 1.

¹³ Merchant, *The Columbia Guide*, 179-181.

¹⁴ Byron L. Ashbaugh, "Nature Center Purposes and Values," *Environmental Education* 2, no. 3 (Spring 1971): 4-5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶ Hohmann and Grala, "Cultural Landscape Report," 157.

¹⁷ "Rock Creek Park Nature Center and Planetarium," US National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/rocr/planyourvisit/naturecenter.htm>. See also Barry Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, DC: History Division, National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1985), available <http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online-books/rocr/adhi/adhi.htm>.

¹⁸ *Daily Oklahoman*, (Oklahoma City, OK), January 12, 1965.

¹⁹ Hohmann and Grala, "Cultural Landscape Report," 157. See also *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, January 6, 1966.

²⁰ *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, January 27, 1966.

²¹ "Contract Award," July 29, 1966, box 58, folder 14, CAC, DS, CACCA. See also *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, February 17, 1967, and Hohmann and Grala, "Cultural Landscape Report," 157.

²² *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, June 1, 1967.

²³ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1967.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1967; *ibid.*, August 31, 1967.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, September 7, 1967. See also "Contract Award," September 19, 1967, box 64, folder 6, CAC, DS, CACCA.

²⁶ *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, September 28, 1967; *ibid.*, October 26, 1967; *ibid.*, January 18, 1968.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, February 1, 1968; *ibid.*, March 14, 1968. See also *Daily Oklahoman*, March 24, 1968.

²⁸ *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, June 13, 1968. See also *Daily Oklahoman*, June 21, 1968.

²⁹ *Ada (OK) Weekly News*, July 18, 1968.

³⁰ *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, January 23, 1969; *ibid.*, March 27, 1969.

³¹ *Ibid.*, April 3, 1969; *ibid.*, April 10, 1969; *ibid.*, July 3, 1969.

³² *Ibid.*, June 5, 1969; *ibid.*, July 10, 1969; *ibid.*, July 17, 1969; *ibid.*, September 4, 1969.

³³ *Ibid.*, July 31, 1969.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, August 21, 1969.

TRAVERTINE NATURE CENTER

³⁵ Ibid., August 28, 1969.

³⁶ Ibid., September 4, 1969; *ibid.*, September 11, 1969; *ibid.*, September 18, 1969. See also *Ada Weekly News*, September 18, 1969.

³⁷ "Dedication Speech of the Travertine Nature Center and Presentation of American Flag," September 19, 1967, box 11, folder 27, Carl Alber Collection, Speeches Series, Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives (hereafter cited as CAC, SS, CACCA).

³⁸ *Daily Ardmore*, (Ardmore, OK), September 21, 1969. See also "Karl Kamrath: An Inventory of His Collection, 1918-2004," University of Texas Library, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00065/aaa00065.html>; and Stephen Fox, "Karl Fred Kamrath," in *New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 1028.

³⁹ *Sulphur Times-Democrat*, September 25, 1969.

⁴⁰ Ibid., October 2, 1969; *ibid.*, October 30, 1969; *ibid.*, November 20, 1969.

⁴¹ Ibid., January 15, 1970; *ibid.*, February 19, 1970, 26; *ibid.*, March 1970; *ibid.*, August 6, 1970. See also Ballard M. Barker and William Carl Jameson, *Platt National Park: Environment and Ecology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/chic/barkerjameson/chap1.htm, 1.

⁴² Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 217.

⁴³ Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective*, "Environmental Interpretation," (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/mackintosh2/directions_environmental.htm, 3. See also Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, 200-201, 216.

⁴⁴ William Bushong, *Historic Resource Study*, (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990), 149.

⁴⁵ "Fact Sheet: Travertine Nature Center," n.d., box 11, folder 27, CAC, SS, CACCA.

⁴⁶ Ibid. See also *Ada Weekly News*, April 18, 1974.