



# Oklahoma *Update*

## National Parks in Oklahoma

National park areas are more than just pretty places, they are reflections of America as a whole, with a wide range of stories, experiences, and opportunities.

For more information or to plan a trip, please visit our official park websites at [www.nps.gov/chic](http://www.nps.gov/chic), [www.nps.gov/okci](http://www.nps.gov/okci), and [www.nps.gov/waba](http://www.nps.gov/waba)

## Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Oklahoma's oldest national park unit, Chickasaw National Recreation Area has been a refuge for outdoor traditions for over a century. Springs, streams, and lakes attract visitors to the park, named for the Indian nation from whom the United States purchased the land for the park in 1902.

For more stories and information about Chickasaw National Recreation Area, please turn to pages 2-3.

## Oklahoma City National Memorial

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995, killed 168 people, and injured more than 650. The Memorial is a public/private partnership established to honor the memory of the victims, their families, the survivors, and their rescuers.

For more stories and information about the Oklahoma City National Memorial, please turn to pages 4-5.

## Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

The park preserves the site of the November 27, 1868, battle where the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer destroyed Peace Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village. Black Kettle and more than 100 Cheyenne were killed or captured. The controversial attack has been described as both a battle and a massacre.

For more stories and information about Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, please turn to pages 6-7.



Platt Trail Blazers walking the Flower Park trail

## “Platt Trail Blazers” Program Begins at Chickasaw NRA

Chickasaw National Recreation Area recently launched the “Platt Trail Blazers” program. This initiative is a partnership between the Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the Arbuckle Memorial Hospital, Sulphur, Oklahoma, and is funded with a grant from the National Park Foundation. The program began June 1, 2013 and continues through December 31, 2013. The purpose of this program is to promote the use of several park trails which are ideal locations for exercise, as well as their recognized uses of nature study and recreation.

Upon initial entry into the program, visitors received a promotional t-shirt

and an “activity log sheet”. As visitors participate in the program, they will receive incentive rewards for their efforts. After logging 100 miles on park trails, participants will receive a water bottle and then after 200 miles, they can receive a pedometer.

The initial kick-off event was in conjunction with the Artesian Chamber Chase 5K/10K Run held on June 1, 2013. The first seventy-five participants in the program also received a certificate from the Arbuckle Memorial Hospital which can be exchanged at the hospital for a free blood pressure check and lipid panel.

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# Chickasaw National Recreation Area

## New Pedestrian Bridge Proposed for Chickasaw NRA

Top regional officials of the National Park Service (NPS) met with leaders of the Chickasaw Nation in late June to explore new forms of collaboration between the tribe and Chickasaw National Recreation Area, which the Park Service manages and oversees.

During the June 26-27 meetings, NPS and tribal leaders discussed proposals to link national park and tribal interests at the Chickasaw Nation's facilities near the national park. One topic of interest included construction of a proposed bridge over Rock Creek from the tribe's Chickasaw Cultural Center "campus" to the park.

"Given that the relationship between the park and the Chickasaw Nation is more than a century old, the concept of close cooperation between the park and the tribe is just a natural thing," said John Wessels, director of the NPS's Intermountain Region (IMR), whose eight states include Oklahoma. "On behalf of the National Park Service, I look forward to deepening and continuing the long and fruitful relationship we have enjoyed with the Chickasaw Nation."

Close relations between the national park and the Chickasaw Nation pre-date even the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916. On July 1, 1902, the U.S. Congress approved a supplement to the Atoka Agreement with the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations authorizing creation of a protected area that included some of Sulphur's natural springs and streams. This allowed the federal government to purchase land from the tribes for what became known as the "Sulphur Springs Reservation."

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This program supports the National Park Service's, "Healthy Parks Healthy People Challenge". The intent is for visitors to make the most of the park and get more out of life through healthy recreation. Chickasaw National Recreation Area offers trails suitable for the beginner as well as the seasoned hiker. Both the physical exercise, which will help develop muscle tone and cardiovascular fitness, and the enjoyment of the natural scenery, can promote overall wellness. So "Take the Trail to Wellness" and become a Platt Trail Blazer!

For more information please contact the Travertine Nature Center at 580-622-7234.

## Be Aware, It's Coming!

The 1st Annual National Park Service in Oklahoma Photo Contest

We are proud to announce the 1st Annual National Park Service in Oklahoma Photo Contest. We want to know about your experiences in Oklahoma's National Parks, National Historic Landmarks, National Natural Landmarks, National Historic Trails, and affiliated sites.

Purpose:

The 1st Annual National Park Service in Oklahoma Photo Contest is a free photography contest held by the Office of the Oklahoma State Coordinator of the National Park Service. The purpose of the contest is to raise awareness and appreciation for our National Parks, National Historic Landmarks, National Natural Landmarks, National Historic Trails, and affiliated sites. Our hope is that, as more people are inspired by the significance of these natural and cultural treasures, future generations of stewards are created.

Where:

For a list of designated sites in Oklahoma, visit:

Chickasaw National Recreation Area:  
[www.nps.gov/chic/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/chic/index.htm)

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site:  
[www.nps.gov/waba/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/waba/index.htm)

Oklahoma City National Memorial:  
[www.nps.gov/okci/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/okci/index.htm)

Oklahoma National Historic Landmarks:  
[www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/Lists/OK01.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/Lists/OK01.pdf)

Trail of Tears National Historic Trail:  
[www.nps.gov/trte/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/trte/index.htm)  
Santa Fe National Historic Trail:  
[www.nps.gov/safe/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/safe/index.htm)

Oklahoma National Natural Landmarks:  
[www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/state.cfm?State=OK](http://www.nature.nps.gov/nnl/state.cfm?State=OK)

Route 66:  
[www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/route66/index.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/route66/index.html)

Fort Smith National Historic Site:  
[www.nps.gov/fosm/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/fosm/index.htm)

When and How:

We will begin accepting entries sometime in late spring 2014. Further information on exactly when, where, and how to submit photos will be provided in the near future. Contest rules will also following in these updates.

However, for now dust off those camera lenses, charge your batteries, and pack a lunch. Get out there and see through your viewfinder what the National Park Service is doing in Oklahoma! Remember: "Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints."

# From the Oklahoma State Coordinator

I recently attended the Red River Valley Association conference in Durant. Oklahoma State Senator Mike Schultz was one of the speakers and he captured my attention by describing Oklahoma as the “antelope to alligators” state. I think that description nicely encapsulates the diverse scenery and landscapes that one sees when driving across Oklahoma.

In a world of such diversity, one of the obvious constants is change. We certainly see that among our National Park Service workforce here in Oklahoma. Earlier this year, we bid farewell to Lisa Conard Frost who did an outstanding job serving as the Superintendent of Washita Battlefield National Historic Site for the previous four years. Prior to that, she had spent many years at the Oklahoma

City National Memorial. We wish Lisa the best in her new assignment as Superintendent of Fort Smith National Historic Site and thank her for her distinguished service to the National Park Service here in Oklahoma.

At the same time, we prepare to welcome Matthew Tucker Blythe as the new Superintendent at Washita Battlefield. Most recently, Tucker has served as the Supervisory Park Ranger at the Oklahoma City National Memorial, but he has extensive experience as a park interpreter and has great expertise in working in historical programs for the National Park Service. Tucker’s background makes him an excellent fit for the Superintendent’s position at Washita Battlefield and we look forward to formally welcoming him into his new position sometime this fall. Tucker’s Supervisory Park Ranger position at the Oklahoma City National Memorial will be temporarily filled by Washita Battlefield Chief of Interpretation Frank Torres until a permanent selection can be made for the position.

We were saddened by the departure of Precious Braggs from our staff at Chickasaw National Recreational Area at the end of August. Precious had served the park for over seven years, starting as park biologist and then rising to the position of Chief of Resources Management. Precious had the unique ability to do many things well, whether it was NEPA compliance, GIS, curatorial & cultural resource work, wildlife management, prescribed fire—the list goes on and on! More importantly, Precious was a diplomat, always cheerful, and somebody that everyone on the park staff considered a friend. We will miss her, but wish her well in her new position with the Bureau of Reclamation in Oklahoma City. I am excited to announce that Noel Osborn has accepted the position of Chief of

Resource Management at Chickasaw National Recreation Area and started her new position in early October. Noel spent eighteen years with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) and has worked for the last two years with the US Geological Survey’s Water Science Center in Oklahoma City. She is well known in the Sulphur area for the work she did with OWRB in coordinating the Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology Study from its inception in 2003 until its completion in 2009. Her experience working in the hydrology field across the entire state will serve this park well as we focus even more intently on safeguarding our springs and streams.

Noel’s arrival is timely because water continues to be a hot topic in Oklahoma. One important goal was achieved when the OWRB Board approved an Equal Proportionate Share level of .20 acre-feet per acre per year for the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer at their October 23 board meeting. While the park will seek additional protections for its water resources through the rule making process that will implement the Board’s Equal Proportionate Share determination, adoption of the .20 level represents an important conservation achievement. At the same time, the level of water usage approved by the Board will still allow sufficient water for agriculture, domestic use, recreation, and all the other quality of life issues that we hold dear in this part of Oklahoma.

Finally, please enjoy the typically beautiful fall weather in Oklahoma by visiting Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, or the Oklahoma City National Memorial. We will be delighted to see you, your family, and your friends!

Bruce Noble  
Superintendent & Oklahoma State  
Coordinator



**National Park Service**  
U.S. Department of the Interior

A park named to honor the Chickasaw Indian Nation, the partially forested hills of southcentral Oklahoma and its springs, streams, and lakes that provide swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, hunting, and hiking.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

# Oklahoma City National Memorial

## Evolution of a Memorial

Melanie Sander

Many of us can remember experiencing a significant historic event. The memory, so vivid, that years later it seems etched into our minds forever. For some, it's the learning of Neil Armstrong's first step on the moon, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, or the plane hitting the World Trade Center. The Oklahoma City bombing is no exception. Visitors to the Oklahoma City National Memorial are often surprised at their reaction upon entering the symbolic memorial grounds. Standing on the footprint of the building evokes remembered anger, deep sadness or confusion felt in the moments following their learning of the attack.

While working at the site of the Oklahoma City bombing on April 15, 2013, I learned of the Boston Marathon Bombings. I will forever be included in the story of many visitors' memory of the Boston Marathon Bombings. Together, we learned of the attack. We expressed our fears and disbelief, but quickly the conversation moved to the irony of our location. The topic of the day didn't distract from the events that had occurred at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. It actually created an openness, greater understanding and connection between the two events. I soon found myself alone in the Field of Empty Chairs. For the first time, since coming to the Oklahoma City National Memorial, I felt vulnerable and insecure. As I stood in the open field, I realized how little control I have.

Having just experienced the "loss of innocence" symbolically reflected by the Memorial's 9:01 Gate, I realized the universality of this symbolism.

There are both past and future events which will require us to reconsider our safety and security. As broken as we may feel in the moment, the 9:03 Gate reminds us of the strength and courage of others.

In the days following, I realized that the Oklahoma City National Memorial became a place of healing and memory for other tragic events. Instantly, our society motivates to assist those whose lives have been impacted by hardships. Sometimes, being involved in the healing process can be simply visiting a place like the Oklahoma City National Memorial. As interpretive park guides, we assist visitors in making their own connections with the sense of loss and the powerful message of hope.

The Oklahoma City National Memorial encourages us to participate in our visit. We can leave items on the Memorial Fence, put our handprints on the Gates, or leave messages in the Children's Area. Visitors will find gifts on the fence in memory of the children at Sandyhook, and a t-shirt, left by the OKC rowing team, in support of the people of Boston. Runners in the memorial marathon showed their support by wearing red socks, and those who were unable to finish the Boston Marathon were allowed to register free of charge. This gift allowed the runners to finish what they had started.

The World seems to shrink in times of tragedy. Processing events like the Oklahoma City bombing or the Boston Marathon Bombings together creates a sense of unity and civic duty. Imagine the future of a country that could capture

such deliberate support? Potentially, a country that would not have the need to create memorials of hope out of acts of violence.

## Memorial Security Guard Passes Away

Mike Washington

On 7 July 2013, Memorial Security Officer Richard Anderson passed away in his home during the night. With his passing, National Park Service staff lost not only a coworker but also a friend. Captain Rick, as he was known on site, retired from the U.S. Air Force with over 20 years of service. After retiring, he worked as a Security Officer at several different posts. His last assignment was to the Oklahoma City National Memorial where he became the supervisor of security officers assigned to the Memorial.



Chairs with flowers



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Oklahoma City National Memorial was created to honor those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever by the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The memorial is a public/private partnership established so that the American public can honor the memory of the victims, their families, the survivors, and their rescuers.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

# The Spread of the “Oklahoma Standard”

Paul Wenzl

Deep into the month of July, I am sure no one can forget the heat we experienced from last year’s July. We have been fortunate to see much cooler days as opposed to last year. I have to say after recently completing the five year visitation trend analysis on the Oklahoma City National Memorial (271K visitors a year), I have noticed that the number of visitors has grown recently. As I talk to more folks, I have found what may be the reason for the spike in visitor numbers. I am saddened to say that it seems to be due to the May tornados.

Given the number of tornados in May, it is no surprise that the month wreaked havoc on the state of Oklahoma. We were saddened by the destruction of an elementary school, the lives lost to include all injured with the tornado(s) that went through Moore, Oklahoma. Many tornados struck throughout the Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Tornados outside the city were noted in places such as Shawnee and El Reno that took many homes. We witnessed weather records being broken that we all did not want to hear about or be a part of, such as El Reno being the location for the widest tornado reaching 2.6 miles wide! I can only sum up the month of May as a very sad time for Oklahomans.

On the flip side of my sad/happy coin, I was happy to see the outreach from folks pouring in across the nation, coming to Oklahoma’s aid. It reminds me how our nation poured in to help during the Oklahoma City bombing crisis. Help came from as far away as Alaska during that time. Many of us know how the sled dogs in Alaska endure cold temperatures.

These dogs are known to wear booties on their paws for protection from that frigid cold in the North. If you could imagine, the OKC rescue dogs working here after the bombing were challenged with broken glass everywhere and were sustaining cuts that day on their paws. A special team from Alaska tailored booties for the OKC dogs. They were hand delivered within 24 hours by the owner’s daughter. Truly amazing!

I have to say that Oklahoma has a strong reputation for extending helping hands. It has become a concept embodied by the term the “Oklahoma Standard” during the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building. That standard is reflected daily. I myself explain it from time to time in my talks to the visitors. I am sure it has contributed to our city being ranked the third friendliest in the nation, as noted recently by the news media.

For us as individuals, we are all put to the test at one point or another. We find ourselves leaning on others willing to help. I would like to believe that we are infecting the entire nation with the Oklahoma Standard. But anyway you spin it or anyway you look at it, I am very grateful to see the nation coming to Oklahoma’s aid. It is a true direction I would like to see our nation going. . . Folks helping folk’s nationwide!

# Washita Battlefield National Historic Site



New Highway 47 signs

## New Signs on Highway 47

Travelers are greeted with new directional signs to Washita Battlefield National Historic Site and Visitor Center and Black Kettle National Grassland District Office. The signs were recently installed by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation on Highway 47 east and west bound lanes as you approach the entrance to the federal offices.

## Night Sky Program Established at Washita

“The stars are the street lights of eternity.”  
-author unknown

As we gain momentum in the establishment of a Night Sky Program here at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, Chief of Interpretation Frank Torres extended an invitation to the “Dark Rangers” from Chickasaw NRA to share their knowledge, enthusiasm and stories about their own journey to offer park visitors those all-important emotional and intellectual connections to a sky “scattered thick with stars.”

On July 31st, Chickasaw NRA Chief of Interpretation Ron Parker and Dark Rangers Don Yates and Vickie Skidmore offered Washita’s Dark Rangers, Teresa

Ezersky, Frank Torres and Kathryn Harrison a wealth of information covering Night Sky Resources and strategies to give park visitors in western Oklahoma the best opportunities for viewing the stars.

Chief of Interpretation Frank Torres summed it up best: “We will offer our visitors all manner of opportunities when we set up the park’s Celestron telescope to see Saturn, participate in a Messier Marathon, sponsor Star Parties or watch the International Space Station passing overhead; we are ready to go.”



Park Guide Don Yates demonstrating using a telescope to view sun spots.

# Washita NHS Hosts 2013 Teacher Workshop

On Saturday, July 27th, the teacher workshop, "A Window on our world: Bringing Cheyenne and Arapaho Perspectives into the Classroom", welcomed over 60 participants to Washita Battlefield National Historic Site on a beautiful summer day with temperatures hovering in the mid-80s, and not in the triple digits as has been the norm for past workshops.

Beginning in 2009, the workshop has seen the growth of a strong partnership between the park, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Department of Education (CADOE), and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College (CATC) for the benefit of Oklahoma teachers and

students.

This year a lively Challenge Bowl was held between the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Youth Program and the Cheyenne and Arapaho State and Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) program. The questions ranged from C&A tribal history past and present, and covered aspects of the tribal constitution. It was a very competitive affair.

In the Focus on the Classroom segment, Cheyenne Chief Gordon Yellowman discussed strategies of using the Cheyenne and Arapaho language for elementary classrooms and presented each teacher with a set of three books plus a CD, Na-tsehestahe (I am Cheyenne) to help teach language basics. Janiece Felton, STEP specialist, had a



2013 Teachers Workshop

fun moccasin sewing activity which the teachers enjoyed and which they could introduce into their classrooms this year. Dr. Henrietta Mann, President of the CATC, and an expert on Indian education, spoke eloquently and frankly about the Native child and their culture and learning styles.

It was a great day!



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

The park commemorates the November 27, 1868, attack where the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lt. Col. George A. Custer destroyed Peace Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne village. Black Kettle and over 100 Cheyenne were captured or killed. The controversial attack has been described as both a battle and a massacre.

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## Welcome to Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

Michael M. Bell from McCloud, Oklahoma, served as Washita Battlefield National Historic Site's 2013 Teacher Ranger Teacher. Michael is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe and teaches high school math classes at Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Oklahoma.

While Michael worked here, he delivered the keynote speech at the traditional lunch during the Fifth Annual Teacher workshop on Saturday, July 27th. As a classroom teacher and Southern Arapaho, Michael offered to the teachers his unique insights into Native American learning styles and how to better understand the Native students in their classrooms.



Teacher Ranger Michael M. Bell with Park Ranger Kathryn Harrison.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Chickasaw National Recreation Area  
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

#### The Oklahoma Update Volume 4, Number 2

*The Oklahoma Update* is the official newsletter of the units of the national park system located in the State of Oklahoma.

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## Support your parks

### Friends of Chickasaw NRA

The purpose of the Friends of Chickasaw National Recreation Area is to promote public appreciation of and support for Chickasaw National Recreation Area. This support includes conducting interpretive programs, increasing public awareness regarding the park and its mission, fundraising, and other volunteer activities. The IRS has certified this group as a private non-profit organization (501c3) and membership fees for joining are tax deductible. Anyone interested in receiving a membership application can send an email to [chic\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:chic_superintendent@nps.gov), or call 580 622-7220.

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### Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum

The Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum is a private non-profit organization, and does not receive any annual operating funds from the federal, state or local government. Museum admissions, store sales, the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, earnings from an endowment and private fundraising allow the Memorial and Museum to be self-sustaining.

Valuable gifts of time, talent and treasure to the Memorial help change lives each and every day. Make your donation to the Memorial and volunteer your time. If you would like to help, write to PO Box 323, Oklahoma City, OK, 73101, or call toll-free at 1-888-542-HOPE.