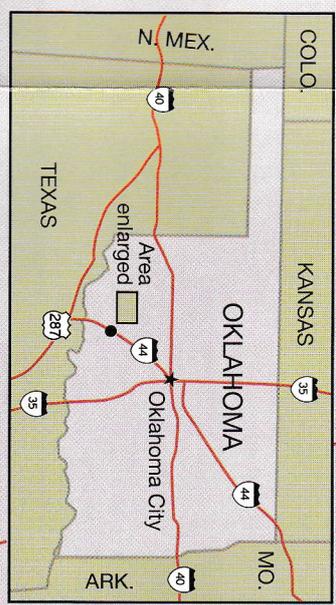
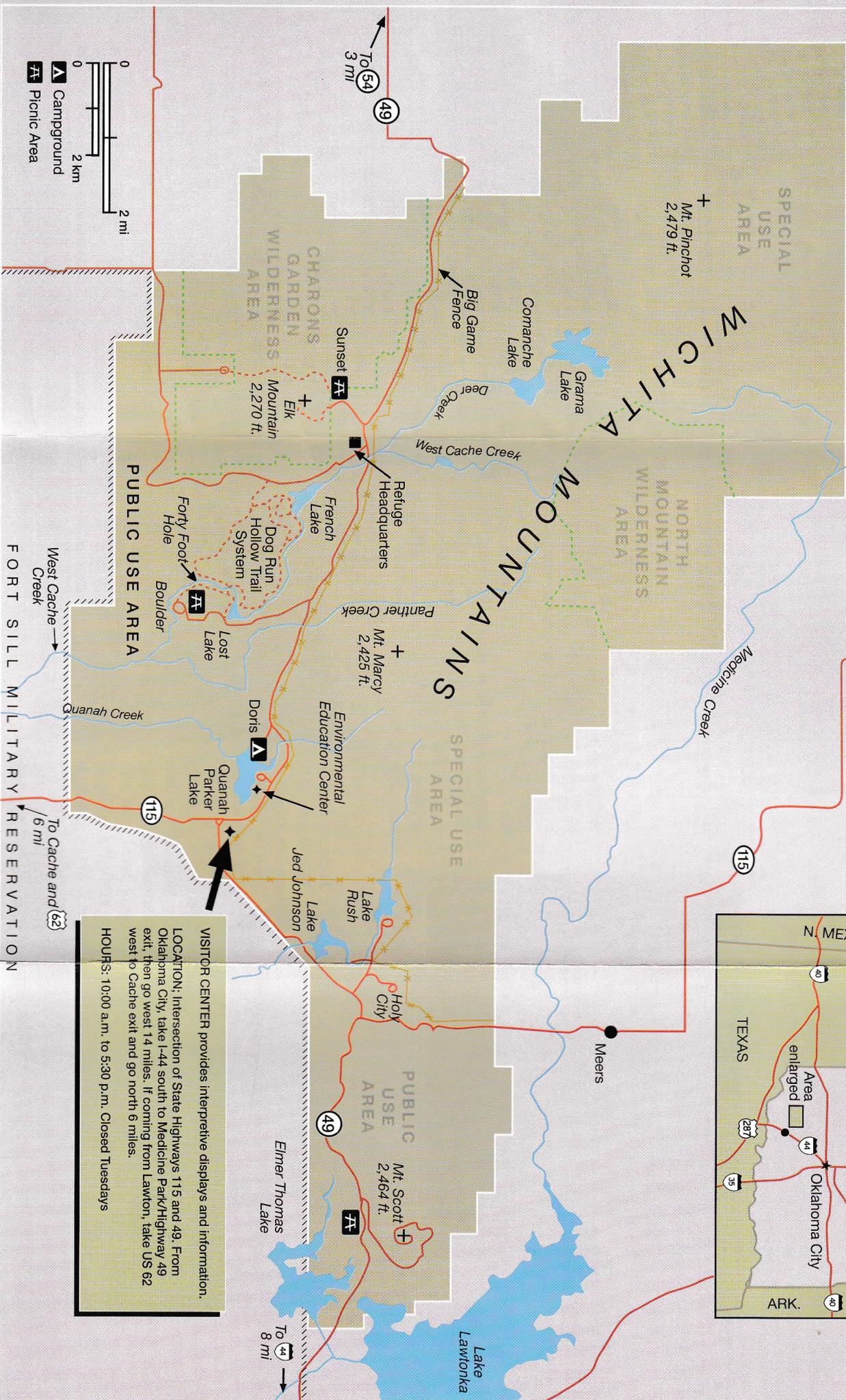
A photograph of a bison in a field with a rocky hillside in the background. The bison is in the foreground, facing right. The field is filled with tall, golden-brown grass. In the background, there is a rocky hillside with some trees and a cloudy sky.

Wichita
Mountains
Wildlife
Refuge

Oklahoma

WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE



VISITOR CENTER provides interpretive displays and information.

LOCATION: Intersection of State Highways 115 and 49. From Oklahoma City, take I-44 south to Medicine Park/Highway 49 exit, then go west 14 miles. If coming from Lawton, take US 62 west to Cache exit and go north 6 miles.

HOURS: 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Closed Tuesdays

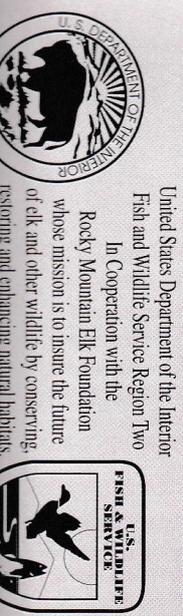
REFUGE HEADQUARTERS is located 6 miles west of the Visitor Center off Highway 49. Phone (405) 429-3222, or write Refuge Manager, RRI, Box 448, Indianola, OK 73552

HIKING is permitted in the Public Use Area from sunrise to sunset.

PICNIC AREAS are located at Mt. Scott, Lost Lake, Boulder and Sunset.

CAMPING at Doris Campground is first-come, first-served. A Youth Campground at Fawn Creek may be reserved by contacting Refuge Headquarters.

DETAILED REFUGE REGULATIONS AND INFORMATION on lodging, restaurants, and annual events are available from the Lawton Chamber of Commerce.



Why A Refuge?

From an estimated 60 million bison, no more than a thousand could be found on the Great Plains in 1900. The slaughter was not limited to bison alone. The Wichita's original subspecies of elk was hunted out in 1881. The giant bronze turkey no longer gobbled along the creek bottoms. With such alarming losses, new conservation ideas were needed to preserve America's wildlife heritage.

One idea was land protection. President William McKinley set aside these mountains as a Forest Reserve in 1901. Then Theodore Roosevelt renamed it a Game Preserve in 1905. It is the oldest managed wildlife preserve in the United States.

Another idea was to restock the animals. Fifteen bison were donated from the New York Zoological Society and arrived at the Preserve via the Cache railhead in October 1907. Merriam's elk was already extinct, but Rocky Mountain elk from Jackson Hole, Wyoming were later established here. After turkeys were transplanted from Missouri and Texas, the land once again resounded with gobbles, bugles and bellows.

Today the 59,020-acre Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge hosts a rare piece of the past – a remnant mixed grass prairie. This Refuge is an island where the natural carpet of grass escaped destruction because the rocks underfoot defeated the plow.



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Diverse and Abundant

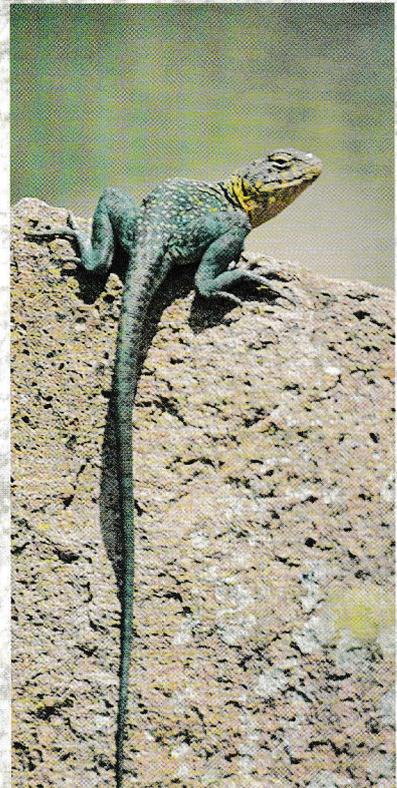
The prairie community hums with life. The Refuge provides habitat for large native grazing animals and Texas Longhorn cattle. Bison, elk, deer, coyotes, red-tailed hawks, prairie dogs, turkey, bunch grasses, postoaks and blackjacks – these are just a few. More than 50 mammal, 240 bird, 64 reptile and amphibian, 36 fish, and 806 plant species thrive on this vitally important Refuge.

National Wildlife Refuge System

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is one unit within a much larger National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Scattered throughout 50 states and 5 territories, national refuges are maintained for the preservation of balanced ecological communities and native wildlife species. The System protects all forms of wildlife in over 500 units totaling 92 million acres.



USFWS



Public Use Areas

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Enjoying Your Visit

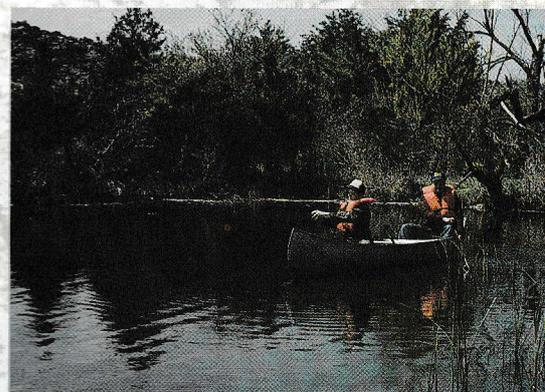
Bring your binoculars. Most wildlife are wary of humans. Binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto camera lenses will help you get a close-up view without disturbing the animals. If you are too close, the animals will either flee or fight, neither very helpful to viewing.

Wildlife activity is best observed early in the morning or at dusk. Field guides will help with identification of wildlife and wildflowers. When hiking, take drinking water, compass and a companion. Be aware of sunset times.

Respect people who may also be enjoying the Refuge. If you are too loud, you will ruin everyone's opportunity for natural, relaxed observations and photographs. Stewardship takes many forms, but in essence, it's an ethic. Respect your Refuge and the people and animals it hosts.



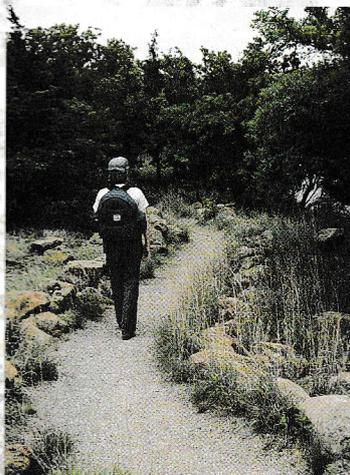
USFWS



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Public Use Area

There are over 22,400 acres of wildlife habitat open for hiking, observing wildlife, photography and other recreational uses. Picnicking is available at four locations, three hiking trails are established, and over 40 miles of paved roads will help you access the Public Use portion of the Refuge. Camping at Doris Campground includes primitive to electric hookup sites. A modern shower facility and clean restrooms are provided there. By reservation, your group can rent private picnic areas, group campsites, and youth camping areas.



USFWS

Respect Your Refuge

Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt did not know you or me, but they did know this Refuge would be a lasting part of each American's heritage. It is up to you to assure this precious national treasure remains as clean and wild as they had intended. For in past history, we learn of things yet to come. For our responsible actions today, a part of yesterday will be alive tomorrow.



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