

## Wichita Mountains orienteering event notes

Participants should be advanced orienteers who are comfortable with Brown, Green and Red courses.

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Preserve covers 60,000 acres of mixed grass prairie, ancient granite mountains, and fresh water streams. Quanah Parker, the great Comanche leader, lived in Cache, OK and is buried on Ft Sill, just south of the preserve. Many of the features in the area this event takes place are named in his honor. The CCC built several dams on the creeks during the 1930s creating the lakes throughout the preserve.



### Topography:

The primary feature of the Wichita Mountains is the granite. Much of the Red route will be navigating granite slabs and boulders, while the Green route primarily covers open forest. Between the granite will be a mix of prairie grasses, shrub oak, and the occasional stand of trees. It's not uncommon to encounter steep gullies and cliffs that are impassable. Most of the vegetation is cut by game trail making it easier to get through the thickest areas. There are sparse areas of very thick vegetation and green briar but can usually be avoided. The forested areas, marked as green on the map, are generally very open and runnable.

## Wildlife

This is a wildlife refuge. There's a chance you'll encounter bison, elk, long horn cattle, deer. Give them their space. Bison and longhorn are usually in the grassy prairie areas, not where this event is held. However I did see several elk and deer while setting the course.

## Map

This event uses USGS maps, not orienteering maps. Some key differences include:

- Contours- 10ft
- Green shading - means tall trees. Forested areas here are often relatively open. Green shading is often very runnable.
- White shading - not trees. Could be granite slabs, prairie, thicket etc. white shading is often not runnable at all.
- Details: these maps lack the rich details we're used to with orienteering maps. There are too many boulders to map, but the largest boulders will form their own contour line that looks like a knoll. There are very few man-made trails in this area to map, and game trails are not mapped. Cliffs are not mapped, but can usually be identified from the close contours. The numerous smaller cliffs and rock faces are not mapped.
- Labels: Lakes, creeks, and some of the more prominent peaks are named on this map.
- Declination: these maps are oriented to true north, magnetic north has about a 4 degree declination. I will overlay grid lines for magnetic north.

## Safety

**Participants should take their own water.** There is no drinking water placed on the course. Running through unfamiliar terrain is always dangerous. Be careful of cliffs, loose rocks, cactus, cedar branches, shrub oak branches, deep water, wild animals, and all other hazards. Cell phone service is spotty. On the high points there's limited reception. In the canyons and gullies there is usually no reception. All participants should carry a whistle.

## Map boundaries

- East - Quanah Creek
- South - dirt service road on southern boundary of the refuge. South of the refuge is Fort Sill. Don't cross the huge metal fence into the army base.
- West - road

Cache Ck runs right down the middle of the map. For the most part this creek is lined by 150ft+ canyon walls. The Red course crosses the creek. Please use the suggested crossing spot marked on the map.

Two events:

- Green - 4.8km 120m (400ft) gain. 8 controls.
- Red - 7.0km. 220m (730ft) gain. 15 controls.

Green is primarily in forested terrain. The red course is in a mix of forest and the mountains with rocky outcroppings and granite slabs.

Time limit: 4 hours.

Registration: 9:30am

Start: 10:00am.

No classes, no awards.

Getting There

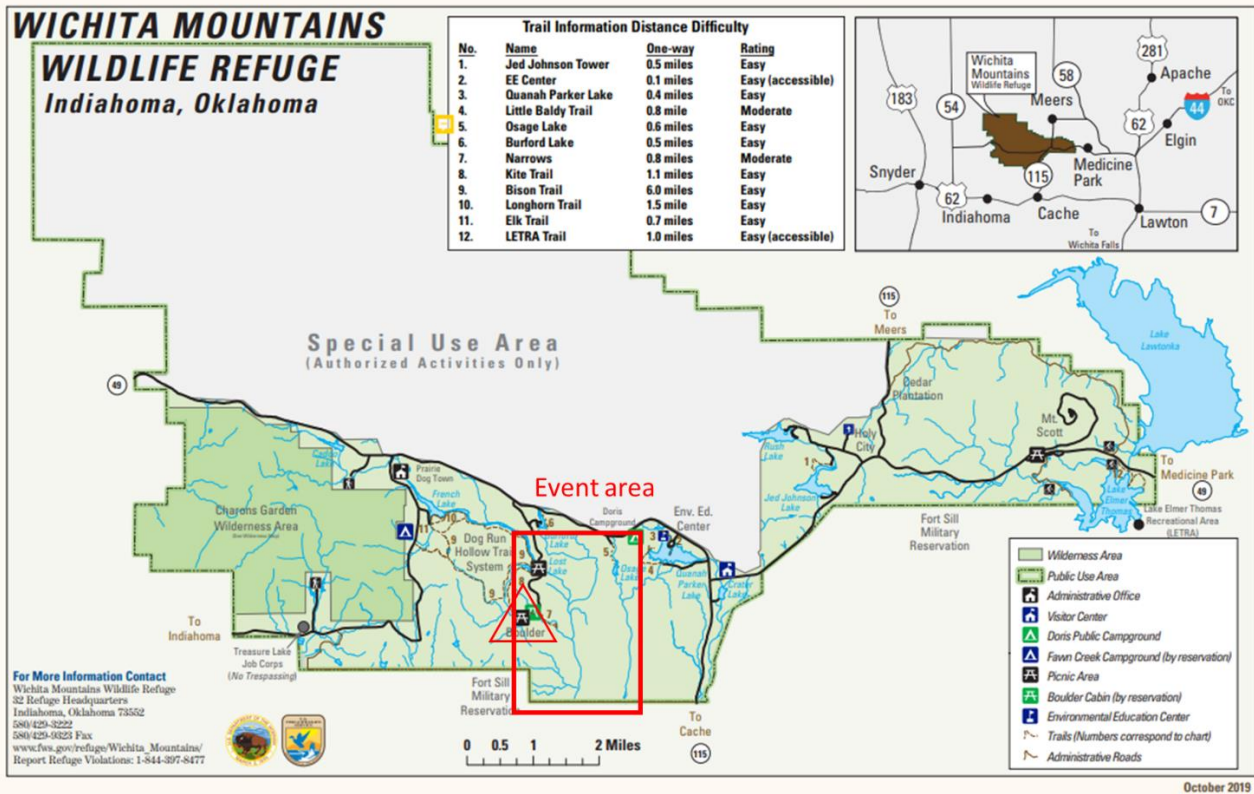
Wichita Mountains WR is located just west of Lawton, OK, about 3-4 hour drive from DFW.

The event starts and finishes at the Boulder Picnic area. There are toilets and picnic tables here.

From the junction of highways 115 and 49 (near the Visitor Center) continue west on highway 49 for 3.5 miles. Turn left (south) onto the road towards Lost Lake / Boulder Picnic Area. This road is between the prairie dog viewing area to the west, and Doris Campground to the east. Continue 2.5 miles to the end of the road.

“Boulder picnic area, cache OK” is tagged in Google Maps.

<https://goo.gl/maps/nijxUBxLma6i2L318>



### Accommodations:

- Doris Campground is located in the WMWR, make reservations through recreation.gov
- Great Plains State Park has camping, located about 15 minutes west of WMWR
- Hotels are available in Lawton, OK about 30 minutes east of the WMWR.
- Airbnb etc are available in Medicine Park, just outside the WMWR

### Other things to do. While you're there, check out

- Charons Garden. Great hiking exploring the Boulder fields or granite slabs.
- The Holy City. Jerusalem recreated from local rocks.
- Mt Scott, you can drive to the top.
- Quanah Parker Lake Dam.