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# Alpine Ranger District Trail Guide

## Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests



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# Welcome to the Alpine Ranger District Trail System!

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The Alpine Ranger District offers a variety of trail opportunities both in scenic beauty and trail skill levels. On the following pages, you will find general information regarding access, safety, wildlife, “Leave No Trace” ethics and fishing information, such as lakes, rivers, reservoirs and fish species. Then you will find specific information about 10 hiking trails, 6 mountain biking trails, and 2 winter recreation areas. As always, additional information on the recreational opportunities and resources of the Alpine Ranger District can be obtained by contacting the district office in Alpine at (928) 339-5000.

## Road Access

Access to trailheads is by way of maintained forest roads. During the winter and periods of heavy rainfall, these roads may be impassable or difficult to drive. Some higher elevation roads in the Alpine district may not be passable until May, depending on the winter snowfall and soft muddy roads following snowmelt. Avoid getting stranded and causing resource damage to these roads by waiting until the road surface has hardened. Contact the Alpine Ranger District at (928) 339-5000 for more information on road conditions.

## Safety

The Alpine Ranger District trail system includes trails from 3,500 feet in elevation to nearly 11,000 feet at the top of Escudilla Mountain, Arizona’s third highest peak. Most trailheads are above 6,000 feet.

Weather conditions are variable throughout the year. Be prepared for changing conditions. Packing a rain and wind shell is a good idea at higher elevations during the summer. Thunderstorms often develop during summer afternoons. High elevation trails are often quite cool, especially when shaded. Lower elevation trails may be quite hot.

Be alert to your condition, stay hydrated, and know the signs of both heat illness and hypothermia.

Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back. Use trail registers when available.

Know your own ability and the abilities of those in your group. Go at the pace of the slowest member of the group to prevent illness or injury.

## Altitude Sickness

The air is thinner at higher elevations, meaning that due to reduced pressure, the air at higher elevations is less oxygen rich than at lower elevations. This means you may feel differently at high elevations than at the elevation to which you are accustomed. Be alert to how your body responds to altitude change. Altitude sickness—also known as acute mountain sickness (AMS)—is most often encountered beginning around 8,000 feet (the town of Alpine is just over 8,000 feet). Altitude sickness can affect anyone, regardless of fitness level. If you feel you are experiencing the symptoms of AMS, the best treatment is to stop and rest. While resting, breathe deeply and consume quick energy foods such as fruit juice, dried fruit, energy bars or candy. It is also important to stay hydrated. If your symptoms do not subside, start back down to lower elevations, being careful to breathe deeply and not exert yourself. At elevations higher than found in the Alpine district, altitude sickness can become very severe and even be life threatening. If symptoms continue to persist once you've reached lower elevations, consider medical attention.

**Symptoms of Altitude Sickness:** headache, often severe (this is the most common and often the first symptom of AMS, but often is also a sign of dehydration from breathing thin, dry air at high elevations) combined with:

- listlessness, drowsiness, and fatigue
- lightheaded feeling or dizziness
- loss of appetite
- nausea or vomiting

## Hypothermia

Hypothermia is not just a cold weather concern and should not be dismissed, even during the summer season. Most cases of hypothermia occur during summertime and with temperatures well above freezing. Hypothermia is the lowering of the body's core temperature. It often strikes summer hikers who are exposed to wet and/or windy conditions, both of which rob the body's core of heat. Fatigue plays a major role in robbing the body of warmth during these conditions as well. If you are growing tired from your hike and are hiking in windy conditions, you may be at risk, especially if you are wet from rain, snow, or sweat. Avoid cotton clothing except in warm, dry environments. Cotton, when wet, does not insulate. In fact, it can rob the body of vital warmth. Choose wool or synthetic materials for base layers in most conditions.

### Symptoms of Hypothermia

- shivering (first and warning sign)
- fatigue
- loss of coordination
- incoherence, mumbling, stammering
- hallucinations (advanced symptom)
- pale appearance
- a warming sensation (can be a sign of very serious hypothermia, check other symptoms carefully)
- goose bumps on skin
- drowsiness



**Treatment for Hypothermia:** If you detect or suspect hypothermia, several quick steps are essential. A drop of 1 or 2 degrees of core body temperature can be very serious. Body temperature decreases of 3 degrees or more can be fatal. Recognizing the onset of hypothermia quickly and treating it effectively may save a life. Warming a hypothermia victim is crucial, since they cannot produce enough heat on their own. Get the victim out of the cold, wind and/or rain quickly. Give warm nonalcoholic drinks and high energy foods to the victim. Get the victim out of any wet clothes and into dry clothes. Direct skin-to-skin body contact is an effective technique for re-warming a hypothermia victim. Blankets, winter clothing and sleeping bags are good tools to employ as well, but remember, these items are designed to trap body heat, not produce heat of their own for re-warming. The best treatment is prevention. Wear a hat, as 40 percent of your body heat is lost through the head. Be prepared for the conditions and try to stay dry.

## Lightning

Afternoon thunderstorms producing lightning strikes are common in the high elevations of the White Mountains. These storms can develop and move fast. Get a local weather report before you go. You can access weather reports and forecasts from the Apache-Sitgreaves Web site ([www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf)) and click on “current conditions.” During threatening weather avoid lakes, meadows or open areas, exposed ridgelines, fence lines and peaks. Do not stand near a large tree or other tall feature. Avoid standing in wet areas. If caught in a lightning storm, assume a crouch position with

your feet flat on the ground. If you have a camping mattress or are carrying a pack, put that on the ground below you and assume the crouch position on top of the item. These items can insulate you from a nearby strike.

## The “Ten Essentials” for Venturing into the Back Country

The “ten essentials” have expanded to include more than 10 items and is found in various forms. Consider bringing these items that can be essential to getting through a difficult situation in the back country.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ map                                     | ✓ compass (a GPS does not replace a compass)    |
| ✓ whistle                                 |   |
| ✓ waterproof matches                      | ✓ fire starter or tinder kit                    |
| ✓ first aid kit                           | ✓ flashlight (with spare batteries)             |
| ✓ pocket knife or multi-tool              | ✓ extra food (such as energy bars)              |
| ✓ extra clothing (lightweight rain shell) | ✓ space blanket (lightweight emergency shelter) |
| ✓ sunscreen and sunglasses                | ✓ insect repellent                              |
| ✓ water (or purification method)          |   |

## If You Get Lost . . .

Stay calm. The most important thing you can do is to keep calm, take a few deep breaths, and stay positive. Remember the acronym “STOP” (stop, think, observe, and plan). Sit down, have something to eat or drink, and assess the situation. Think back to when you last knew your location . . . what have you done since? Backtrack to that last known location. Look for landmarks. Use your map and compass if you have them and don’t second guess your compass. Blow a whistle if you have one and others may be in the area. If you are still lost, think about staying put and waiting for help. Most lost hikers are found within 24 hours. Think about shelter, staying warm and dry, and staying hydrated. Keep your energy up by snacking. Let others know where you are going and when you’ll return before you leave so they will know where to look if you are lost. Use trail registers and stick to your planned route.

## Trail Ratings

Trail ratings take into account the length of trail, terrain, and elevation change. What may be rated as a moderate hike at lower elevations may be more challenging here in the Alpine district at higher elevations. Know your limits and ability.

## Seasonal Considerations

Most of the trails in the Alpine district are available May through October for those hiking or riding a bicycle trail. In winter, cross-country skiers should consider local weather and inquire locally at the Alpine Ranger District by calling (928) 339-5000 or checking our Web site at [www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf). Links to current weather conditions, road conditions, trail information, and general recreational information can be found there.

Be aware that many forest roads are not passable until late April or early May as winter snowmelt makes the roads very soft and muddy. Use common sense when traveling to trailheads. Call ahead for more information. Getting lost, getting stuck and being stranded on a forest road in early spring is not a pleasant experience. Many cell phones do not work in the area, and those that do often have spotty reception deep within the national forest.

Highway 191 south of Alpine, also known as the Coronado Trail, is not plowed during storms or nights and weekends. Use caution traveling during winter in this area.

## Wildlife

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests are home to abundant wildlife. Species include elk, mule deer, wild turkeys, and javalina. Black bears, mountain lions, and Mexican gray wolves are found in the area as well. While conflicts are generally rare, these animals

can be dangerous if startled, surprised, or if they feel you are a threat to their young or their food. Hike with a partner and make some noise to avoid surprising wildlife. Conversational voices work well. If you do have an encounter with wildlife, keep a few things in mind. Keep children close at all times. Stay together in a group. Do not run. Running may trigger a chase instinct in some predators. Make noise to scare the animal off. In the rare instance of being attacked by a predatory animal, fight back. If you are hiking with a dog, keep in mind that you must maintain control of your pet at all times in the national forest and that pets may attract wildlife, including large carnivores.

## Leave No Trace Principles

### Plan Ahead and Prepare

Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you will visit.

Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.

Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.

Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.

Repackage food to minimize waste.

Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

### Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams. Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

**In popular areas**, concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.

Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.

Keep campsites small.

Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

**In pristine areas**, disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.

Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

### Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and personal hygiene products.

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

## **Pack it In . . Pack it Out**

Bring plastic bags with you to pack out trash. Carry out things that cannot be burned completely if you have burned your trash.

Eggshells, orange peels, and aluminum foil should be packed out. Don't forget the little things such as gum, wrappers, cigarette butts and fishing line. These are often found around campsites and popular hiking areas. Don't bury any trash in the ground or place it in vault toilets. Animals will dig these items up, possibly causing a safety problem for the next visitor to that site. Always leave your site cleaner than when you found it.



## **Leave What You Find**

Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.

Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

Avoid introducing or transporting nonnative species.

Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

## **Minimize Campfire Impacts**

Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the back country. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.

Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.

Keep fires small.

Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.

Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, and then scatter cool ashes.

## **Respect Wildlife**

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.

Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

## **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering horses and pack stock.

Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.

Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

## **Trail Etiquette**

### **All Trail Users**

Please leave plants and flowers where you find them so that others may enjoy them.

Please be considerate of other trail users so that all may enjoy the experience.

Avoid wet or muddy trails.

Keep to the right side of the trail. Save the left for passing. Always announce your intentions when passing.

When in a group, travel single file and don't block the trail. Allow room for other users.

Leave all gates as you found them. If a sign says "Keep Gate Closed," always do so.

Take only pictures, leave only footprints.

All users yield to saddle stock.

Do not harass wildlife or livestock.

## **Backpackers and Hikers**

Move off the trail wherever possible for less mobile trail users.

When meeting horseback riders, step aside from the trail, preferably downhill, and talk in a normal voice to the riders. This calms the horses.

When hiking cross-country, spread out, avoid paths, and walk on rocks or snow when possible.

## **Mountain Bikers**

Take the initiative and yield first to horses and hikers.

Ride in small groups and in single file when passing.

Ride in control and pass others slowly.

Teach proper riding techniques to younger riders.

When passing equestrians, ask for instructions and use caution.

Know what areas are open for bicycling use and stay on designated trails or roads. Riding off trails damages resources and threatens wildlife.

Never ride in designated wilderness areas. They are officially closed to bicycles.

## Equestrians

Stock tied directly to trees can destroy trees and turf and should never be done for more than short periods. Use tie lines.

Clean up all horse manure or hay in camps, at trailheads, and in loading areas. Carry equipment to scatter it and smooth the areas.

Never tie horses within 200 feet of lakes, streams, or springs.

Stock should not be left unattended for more than a few hours.

Practice minimum impact techniques of tying, grazing, and travel.

Lead rather than herd unrestrained stock to help avoid erosion.

Travel at a safe speed and be especially careful when visibility is limited.

Remember that trail stock can be intimidating to other trail users, so communicate to those you meet.

Do not ride too close to the horse in front of you.

## Fishing Information

### Fish Species

#### Apache Trout

Apache trout, along with the threatened Gila trout, are Arizona's only native trout. Efforts are underway to help restore viable Apache trout populations in the White Mountains. These golden colored trout often have dark spots and a "cutthroat" slash of red under their lower jaw. Fishing techniques to catch Apache trout are similar to those that work best for rainbow trout. Streams will be made available for sport fishing as populations recover in each area to allow for fishing of Apache trout. Portions of the East and West Forks of the Black River hold Apache trout. If populations are not sufficient to support fishing, the recovery stream area may be closed until the population recovers to fishable levels. Check with Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) regulations regarding Apache trout.

#### Arctic Grayling

These nonnative fish were introduced to the White Mountains in 1940. The Arctic grayling's prominent dorsal fin easily distinguishes it from other species. Grayling are usually between 12 and 16 inches in length. They are found in just a few small lakes in the White Mountains and are better associated with northern mountain fisheries so they are unique to find in Arizona. Arctic grayling feed on aquatic insects and insect larvae. Wet and dry

flies work well for these fish. Woolly buggers, woolly worms, and coachmans often work well.

### **Rainbow Trout**

Nonnative rainbow trout were introduced just prior to 1900. Rainbows are stocked in many White Mountain area lakes and streams. They are olive colored on their backs, and silvery with a pinkish band and dark spots on their sides. They can range from under 8" to over 30" for record size rainbows. Their fight makes them enjoyable to catch. Rainbow trout feed on aquatic and terrestrial insects primarily, but larger rainbows can feed on small fish. Flies work very well, as do small spinners or even worms. Remember, think small with your offerings to trout and use light lines.

### **Brown Trout**

These exotic European imports are not stocked, but do reproduce naturally in some White Mountain lakes and streams. They have olive-brown backs and yellowish-brown sides with spots on their back and sides. Brown trout are voracious eaters and will eat insects, larvae and smaller fish, including smaller trout. Fish for brown trout as you would rainbow trout. They can range from 6" to over 28" and are more easily caught during fall spawning.

### **Brook Trout**

Brook trout are nonnative and were introduced in the early 1900s. Like brown trout, they are fall spawning and most easily caught

near shore during this time. The brook trout is a grayish-green fish with irregular wavy markings changing to pinkish spots in a bluish ring lower on its sides. "Brookies" feed on terrestrial and aquatic insects and are fairly easily caught on flies, small spinners, or worms. Brook trout are usually 6" to 20" in length.

### **Cutthroat Trout**

Cutthroats are also nonnative fish introduced around 1900. They often look quite similar to rainbow trout but have a distinctive red or orange slash mark under their lower jaw.

The fins on the cutthroat are heavy with dark spots that continue down the sides of the fish. Cutthroats are generally 6" to 22" in length and, while not found often in area streams, the AZGFD stocks cutthroats in several White Mountain lakes. They feed on both aquatic and terrestrial insects primarily and can be caught using typical rainbow trout fishing tactics. A variety of artificial flies works best, but small spinners or worms on a small hook work well also. Remember; think small offerings when going for trout.

## **Luna Lake**

**Boat Access:** Concrete boat ramp, large parking area

**Restrictions:** 10 horsepower limit

**Access:** Drive approximately 3 miles east of Alpine on Hwy. 180 toward New Mexico. Luna Lake is easily visible just north of the highway.

**Description:** Luna Lake was originally created in 1896 and expanded in 1955 for area irrigation use. Today this open, high country lake is enjoyed by visitors who are attracted to the nearby Forest Service campground, hiking and biking trails, as well as wildlife viewing opportunities. Bald eagles are seen frequently in this area as well as many waterfowl species. Elk can often be seen in the area surrounding the lake in mornings and evenings.

Luna Lake is approximately 154 surface acres at its fullest point and is stocked with rainbow trout beginning in May. Brook trout and cutthroat trout are stocked by the Arizona Game and Fish Department once each year. Especially hot and dry summers may prevent stocking or cause stocking efforts to cease early as Luna Lake warms and its levels drop. Luna Lake has an average depth of 8 feet and is 21 feet at its deepest point. The lake can become quite weedy during summer so you may see Arizona Game and Fish harvesting weeds at times. Luna Lake also is susceptible to algae growth due to its shallow waters warming in midsummer. Luna Lake can freeze over in the winter allowing for ice fishing opportunities. Check ice conditions before venturing out.

Luna Lake has an aquatic invasive plant, Eurasian milfoil, that should not be transferred to other water bodies. Any piece of the plant can resprout and invade new waters. Please clean your boats and fishing equipment to reduce risk of transportation. Enjoy Luna Lake's pleasant rural setting but be careful of windy conditions on the lake. The area is open on three sides and winds can be gusty at times. Boat rental is available along with a bait shop near the boat

launch area. Just a few miles away in Alpine one can find lodging, restaurants and a tackle shop. A short distance from the boat launch is Luna Lake Campground with over 50 shady campsites near the lake.

## Nelson Reservoir

**Boat Access:** Concrete boat ramp, large parking area

**Restrictions:** 10 horsepower limit

**Access:** Nelson Reservoir is located 7 miles south of Eagar on Hwy. 191/180 and about 18 miles north of Alpine.

**Description:** Nelson Reservoir is located just within the Springerville Ranger District, but serves as a boundary marker between the Springerville and Alpine districts and has easy access from Alpine. Nelson Reservoir has a large parking area with a paved boat launch and a second parking area without access to the launch. It is a good place to try for rainbow trout, which are stocked until Labor Day. Stocking begins in the spring once the reservoir stops spilling over the dam. Illegally introduced sunfish and crappies are occasionally caught. Please do not transfer bait or live fish (bucket transfer) between lakes and/or streams. Introduction of new fish species can impact the recreational fishery and native fish species. The south end of the reservoir can become especially weedy by midsummer and harder to fish. You may notice Arizona Game and Fish using a large floating weed mower during the summer in the reservoir. Nelson Reservoir is susceptible



to algae growth in the warmer summer months and may ice over at times during the winter but it is often fishable year-round.

Best fishing methods include flies with a casting bubble and small spinners. Some anglers have luck with night crawlers and bobber fishing. Directly following spring stocking, fish are much less choosy and many methods can have success. At around 90 acres, the average depth of Nelson Reservoir runs only around 8 feet and it is 25 feet at its deepest point.

Nelson Reservoir is also a good area for wildlife viewing. Often seen in this area are elk, bald eagles, kestrels, and several types of waterfowl. Northern harriers can be spotted flying low above the willows looking for small mammals at the south end of the reservoir.

## Hulsey Lake

**Boat Access:** None (requires carrying a few hundred feet)

**Restrictions:** Single electric motors only. Canoes or float tubes are more appropriate.

**Access:** Drive 6 miles north of Alpine on Hwy. 180 toward Springerville and turn right on FR 56 for 2 miles. This is also the road to Escudilla Mountain and Terry Flats so watch for traffic, including bicycles, on FR 56.

**Description:** Hulsey Lake is a small, 5-acre manmade lake near Escudilla Mountain. The lake was created for irrigation and owned by the Hulsey family until the early 1960s when it was given to the Forest Service due to maintenance problems with the dam. In 1975 the Forest Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) cooperated to rebuild the dam and make the lake better suited to recreational users. They also renamed the lake in honor of its creator, Marcellus Hulsey.

Hulsey Lake is susceptible to algae buildup in the fall and frequent winter fish kills. Summer stocking of rainbow trout provide for sporadic, but sometimes very good, fishing success especially in late spring and early summer. This lake averages only about 10 feet in depth and becomes weedy by middle to late summer. Check with the AZGFD for fishing reports. This lake is best suited for canoes, float tubes, or other hand-propelled watercraft. While electric motors are permitted, remember you must carry your boat to the water. There is no boat launch. A small parking area and a vault toilet are available at the lake. This is a very popular lake on summer weekends; however, weekday fishing can be very peaceful.

Fly fishing is difficult here due to the dense tree cover along the shore, although you may have luck with a fly and a casting bubble. Bobber fishing generally works well here, as does casting small spinners once trout have been stocked.

## Aker Lake

**Boat Access:** None (requires carrying)

**Restrictions:** Single electric motors only. Canoes or float tubes are more appropriate. Check your regulations; Aker Lake is generally catch and release only.

**Access:** Drive 23 miles south of Alpine on Hwy. 191 to Hannagan Meadow Lodge. Look for a dirt road to the west (right) 2 miles south of Hannagan Meadow. Turn right and follow this road 1 mile to the parking area just south of the lake.

**Description:** Named for an old settler who long ago homesteaded in the area, both Apache trout and Arctic grayling make their homes in this small, secluded lake. Arctic graylings are usually found in more northern environments, but Aker Lake's elevation helps make the lake cold enough to support grayling and Apache trout stocked by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Aker Lake is only about 2 acres so while boating is legal, few choose to carry a boat to launch in this small lake. Artificial lures are required on this lake. No live bait is allowed in order to protect this sensitive fish population. Please do your part to keep this pristine area clean and enjoyable for future visitors. Further information about Aker Lake can be obtained from nearby Hannagan Lodge.

## Sierra Blanca Lake

**Boat Access:** None (requires carrying)

**Restrictions:** Single electric motors only. Canoes or float tubes are more appropriate.

**Access:** Drive 2 miles north of Alpine on Hwy. 191/180 to Forest Road (FR) 249 and turn left on FR 249. Follow FR 249 through Williams Valley for 7 miles to Sierra Blanca Lake.

**Description:** Sierra Blanca Lake is a shallow, 40-acre lake that ranks as the second largest surface body of water in the Alpine Ranger District. In Spanish, Sierra Blanca means "White Mountain," but this lake is not a typical cold, mountain lake. Instead, this lake was created sometime prior to World War II by construction of a dam to fill this shallow draw. Due to its lack of depth, the water warms quickly, and fishing is generally poor. There are better fishing choices in the Alpine district. While the entire lakeshore is national forest land, private land is nearby. Please respect their privacy and property.

## Black River

The Black River divides into the East Fork and West Fork in the Alpine district. They and their tributaries are popular areas to try your luck for trout while enjoying some of the most scenic waters in the area. These areas are popular with anglers, hikers, campers and wildlife watchers. The popularity of this area adds to its

frailty as overuse can lead to resource damage. Remember to tread especially lightly in streamside areas and near streambanks.

Anglers can find several trout species in these waters, some of which are frequently stocked by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Apache trout is also found in some areas of the Black River. See the following section relating to Apache trout and Apache trout restoration for more information. As fishable sections near the roadside attract the most anglers, ambitious anglers may want to try to hike in to find quieter stretches to fish while enjoying beautiful stretches of pine shaded mountain streams. Do your best to not tread on the fragile streambanks and move up away from the stream while you search for the right water to fish.

## **Blue River**

While the Blue River and its tributaries hold some promise for fishing, most of the Blue River in the Alpine district is sporadic at best and fishable pools can be hard to find. Following a wet winter and snowmelt, fishing conditions can improve.

At lower elevations, the Blue River becomes too warm for most trout, especially during summer. In the Clifton Ranger District, some areas of the Blue can produce opportunities for warmer water fish including catfish and smallmouth bass. Fishing the Blue River in the Alpine district is unlikely to produce any large or frequent catches, but a little leg work can put you in some beautiful areas to try to wet a line while enjoying near-wilderness surroundings.

## **Apache Trout Restoration**

Apache trout and Gila trout are the only two trout species native to Arizona. Apache trout were once very plentiful in the White Mountains in the early 1900s. Introduction of nonnative trout reduced the Apache trout population significantly. Today, after long recovery efforts, Apache trout again swim the waters it first called home. Threats to Apache trout remain, so some streams in the White Mountains are managed to keep nonnative trout from mixing with Apache trout. You may notice fish barriers in some areas or area restrictions where Apache trout are just beginning to be restored.

Apache trout are found nowhere else in the world, and now once again, anglers can fish for them in designated state waters or on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation with proper licenses. It was the White Mountain Apache Tribe who took the first steps to preserve the Apache trout in the mid-1950s by restricting fishing for the species. Later the Apache trout was federally listed as an endangered species, and in 1975 multiagency restoration efforts led to the Apache trout being downgraded to threatened status. Through the efforts of many agencies, organizations, concerned citizens and anglers, Apache trout are nearing the recovery goal of 30 distinct populations, and may be on the way to becoming the first federally listed fish species to come off the endangered species list by means of recovery. Anglers can play an important role in the recovery of the Apache trout by treading lightly on streambanks to prevent sedimentation and erosion in these sensitive habitats.

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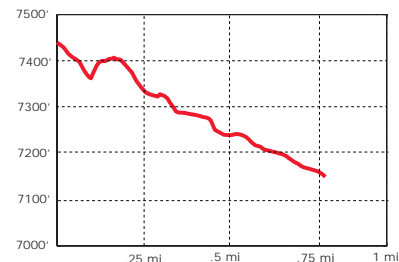
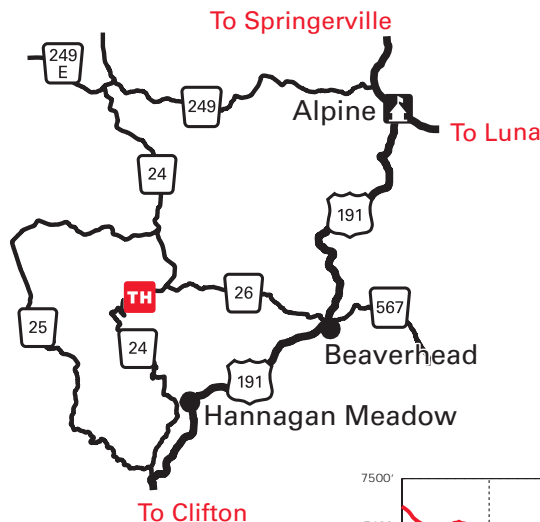
<b>Length:</b>	About .75 mile
<b>Use:</b>	Moderate to Heavy
<b>Rating:</b>	Easy to Moderate
<b>Elevation:</b>	7,600 feet
<b>USGS Maps:</b>	Hoodoo Knoll

## Access

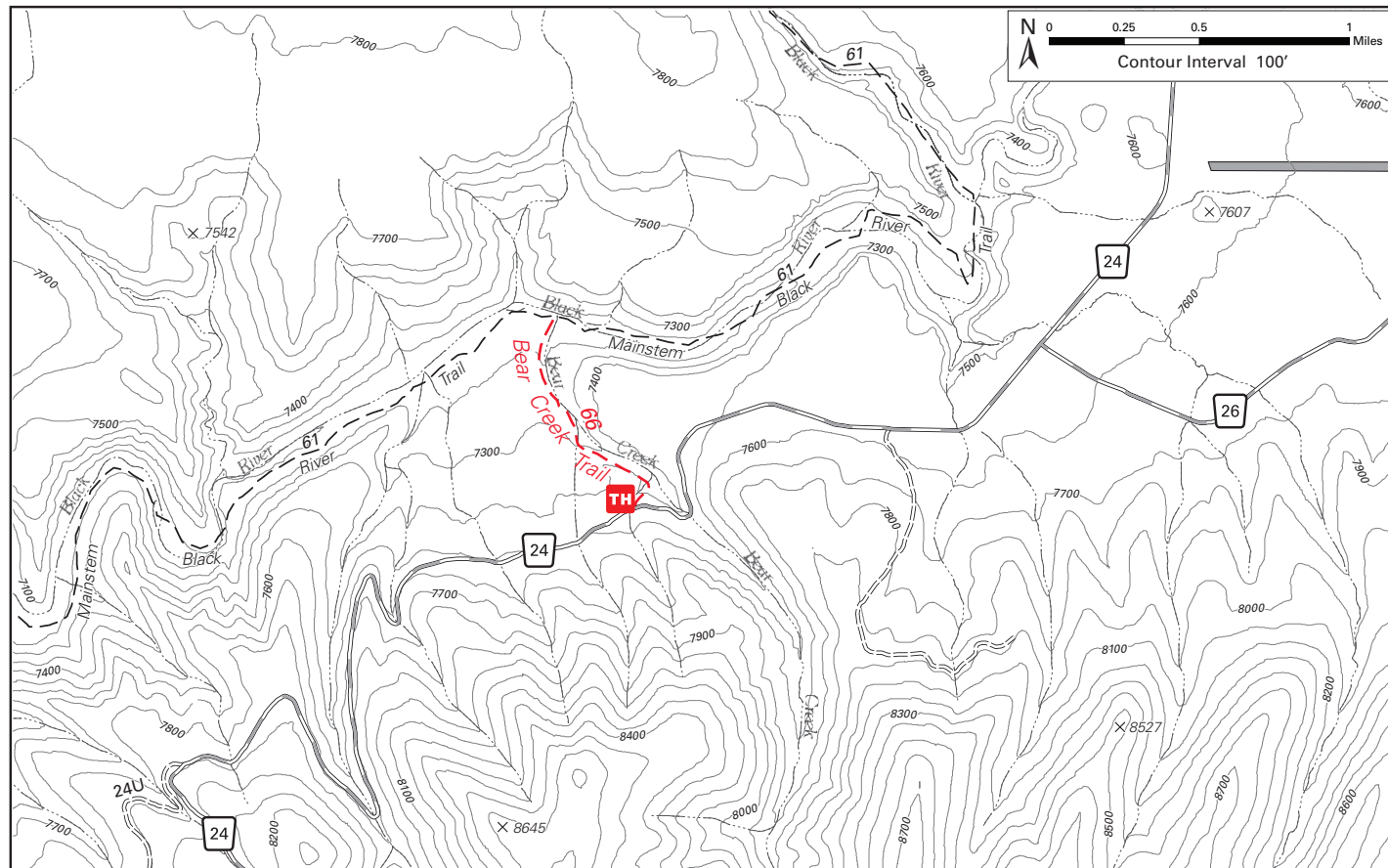
From Alpine, drive south on Hwy. 191 to Forest Road (FR) 26, then follow FR 26 to FR 24 and turn left. Follow FR 24 one-quarter mile past Bear Creek and turn right at the old corrals. Look for an information kiosk marking the trailhead.

## Trail Highlights

Bear Creek Trail is a short trail with a trailhead located just off FR 24 near the intersection of FR 24 and Bear Creek. This short trail brings you to a scenic area of the Black River popular with anglers during part of the season. The trail takes you through tall ponderosa and Douglas-fir trees to the willows along the banks of the cool, clear Black River. Remember to tread lightly near streambanks to prevent erosion and sedimentation of the sensitive stream environment. This trail is only 1.5 miles round trip and is over moderate terrain. Be careful as poison ivy is abundant along many parts of the trail.



# Bear Creek Trail • 66



## Gobbler Point Trail • 59 • Bear Wallow Wilderness



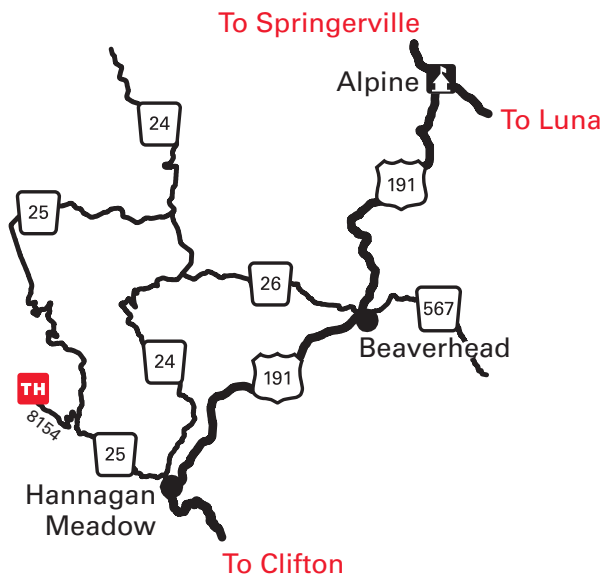
**Length:** 2.7 miles  
**Use:** Light  
**Rating:** Strenuous  
**Elevation:** 8,770 to 6,700 feet  
**USGS Map:** Hoodoo Knoll

### Access

Drive south on Hwy. 191 approximately 28 miles to Forest Road (FR) 25. Head west on FR 25 about 7 miles to Gobbler Point Road (8154) on the left (south) side of FR 25. Follow this road left at the first fork and right at the second fork 3 miles to the end of the road. The trail begins at the trailhead poster board.

### Trail Highlights

Good views of the Black River drainage and San Carlos Indian Reservation provide a scenic sendoff for this trail into Bear Wallow Wilderness. From the trailhead, views stretch all the way to Mount Graham in the Pinaleno Mountain Range 80 miles to the southwest. This striking panorama accompanies you a good portion of the way down the steep switchbacks that begins the trail's descent into a side drainage of Bear Wallow Creek and eventually to the canyon floor. Gobbler Point is the steepest trail leading into the wilderness. It also provides the shortest route to the creek's downstream reaches, which could be important to those interested in fishing the stream's pools and riffles for the native Apache trout stocked there.



In addition to panoramic views, a mixed stand of conifers, ponderosa pine, and aspen provides a scenic setting for the trail's upper reaches. These tall upland species gradually give way to clumps of Gambel oak, red-osier dogwood, and bracken fern as the trail loses altitude. At the junction with Bear Wallow Trail on the canyon floor, the trail is set in a park-like community of ponderosa pines and canyon hardwoods, including Arizona ash, alder, and box elder. A sprinkling of wildflowers usually adds a splash of color.

The humble fence that marks the boundary of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation is just a half mile downstream from the point where Gobbler Point Trail meets Bear Wallow Trail. Bear Wallow Creek flows into the Black River another 1.5 miles downstream from that. If you would like to complete your tour of Bear Wallow Creek and take a look at this remote section of the Black River, be sure to get a permit in advance from the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

## Notes

No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) are permitted in wilderness.

The trail is steep, exposed to direct sun, and drops 2,100 feet in 2.7 miles.

Be sure to carry enough water.

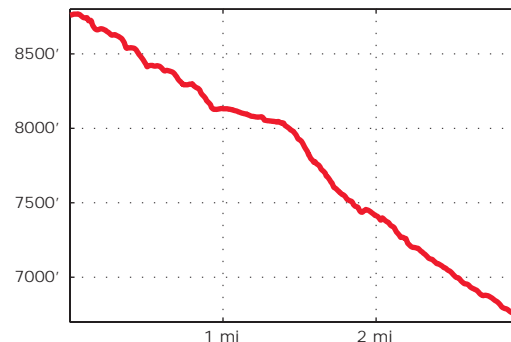
A special use permit from the tribe is required for entry onto San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.

## Trail Log

0.0 mile: The trail heads west from the parking lot at the end of Gobbler Point Road (Forest Road 8154)

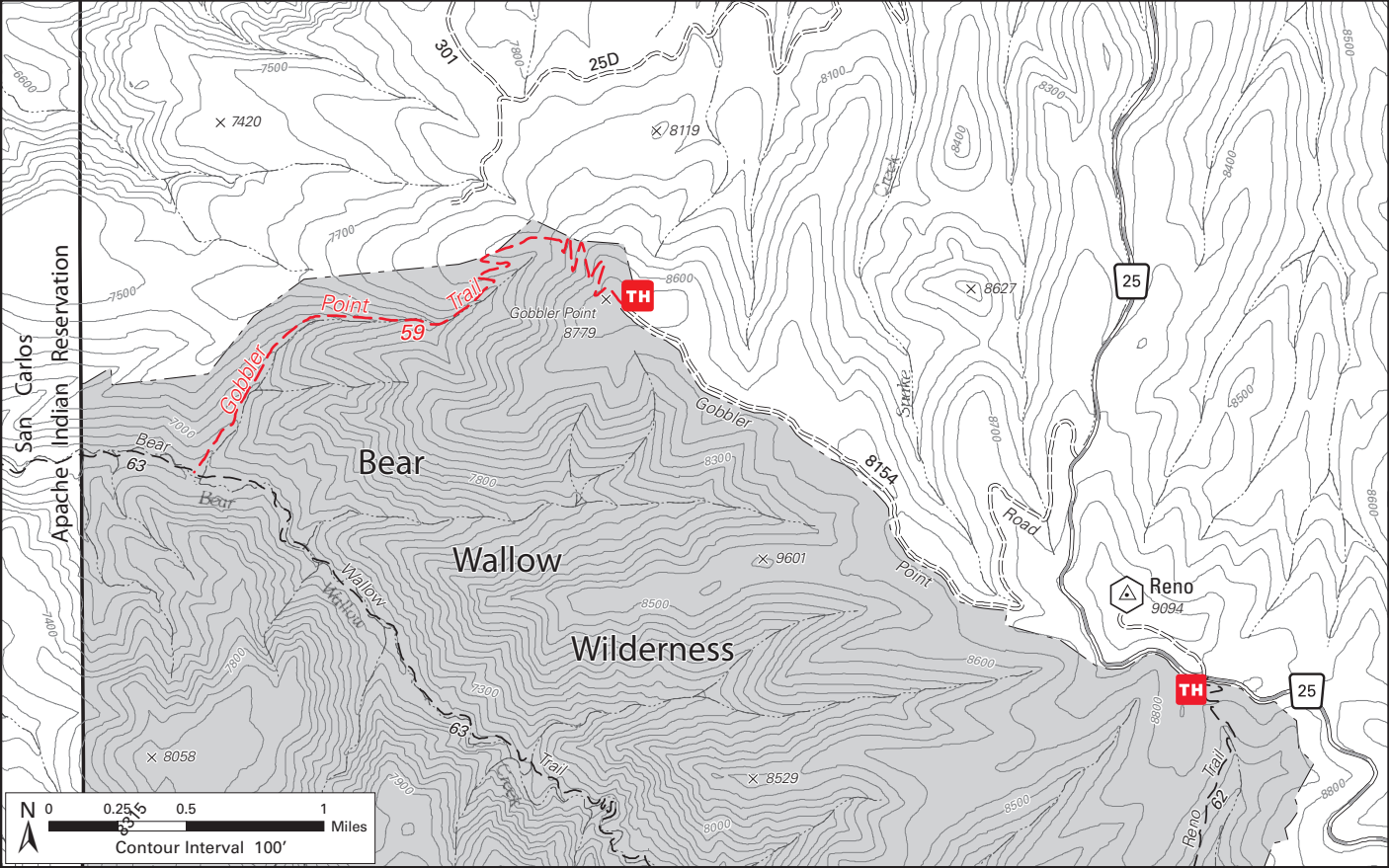
0.9 mile: Drops into drainage and continues descent to Bear Wallow Creek and trail.

2.7 miles: Junction with Bear Wallow Trail 63.





Gobbler Point Trail • 59 • Bear Wallow Wilderness



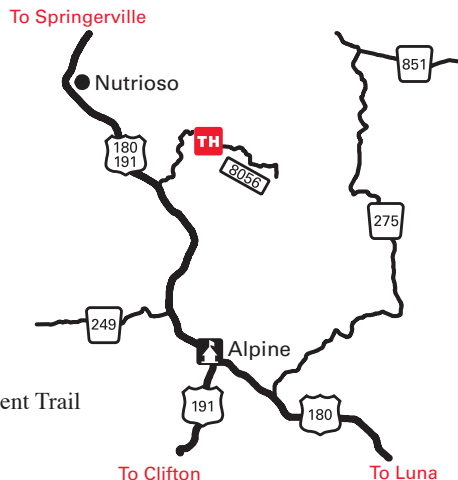
## Government Trail • 119 • Escudilla Wilderness



<b>Length:</b>	2.9 miles
<b>Use:</b>	Light
<b>Rating:</b>	Strenuous
<b>Season of Use:</b>	May through October
<b>Elevation:</b>	9,200 to 10,877 feet
<b>USGS Map:</b>	Nutrioso

### Access

Drive north from Alpine approximately 6 miles to Forest Road 8056. Turn right (east) and continue up this dirt road for 1.6 miles to a road which branches to the left and is closed by a “Wildlife Area” sign. Park here and follow the closed road 1.9 miles to the point where Government Trail branches off and heads up the mountain.



### Trail Highlights

For those who want to get to know Escudilla Mountain from the bottom to the top, hiking Government Trail 119 is the way to do it. Although this historic trail is seldom maintained, people still seek it out for a hike all the way to the mountain summit. Its steep, talus covered switchbacks once provided Forest Service workers an access route to the lookout on the mountain summit. Today those same obstacles help the trail live up to its strenuous rating.

Government Trail ascends Escudilla’s western slopes. Because of its steepness and exposure, this route offers excellent views to the west for most of the hike. Mount Baldy (Arizona’s second highest peak), Mt. Ord, and the Black River drainage form some of the more prominent landmarks in the panorama.

On Profanity Ridge, Government Trail joins Escudilla Trail for the last 1 mile or so of the hike to the top. Having come this far, you will most likely want to continue to the summit. The fire tower located there has views that stretch from the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff to the mountains and canyons of New Mexico.

## Notes

No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) permitted in wilderness.

Extensive groves of aspen provide magnificent fall colors around the first week in October.

The area near the fire tower is best suited to day use because of the lack of water.

No camping at Bead Springs.

This trail attracts the highest use on holidays and weekends.

Part of the area accessed by the trail has been designated a research natural area.

## Trail Log

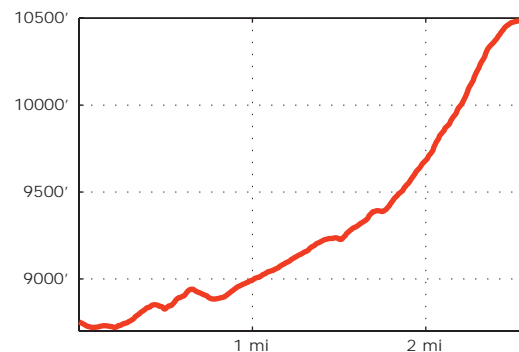
0.0 mile: Road closure (parking here)

4.4 miles: Take right fork

1.3 miles: Continue straight at the fork

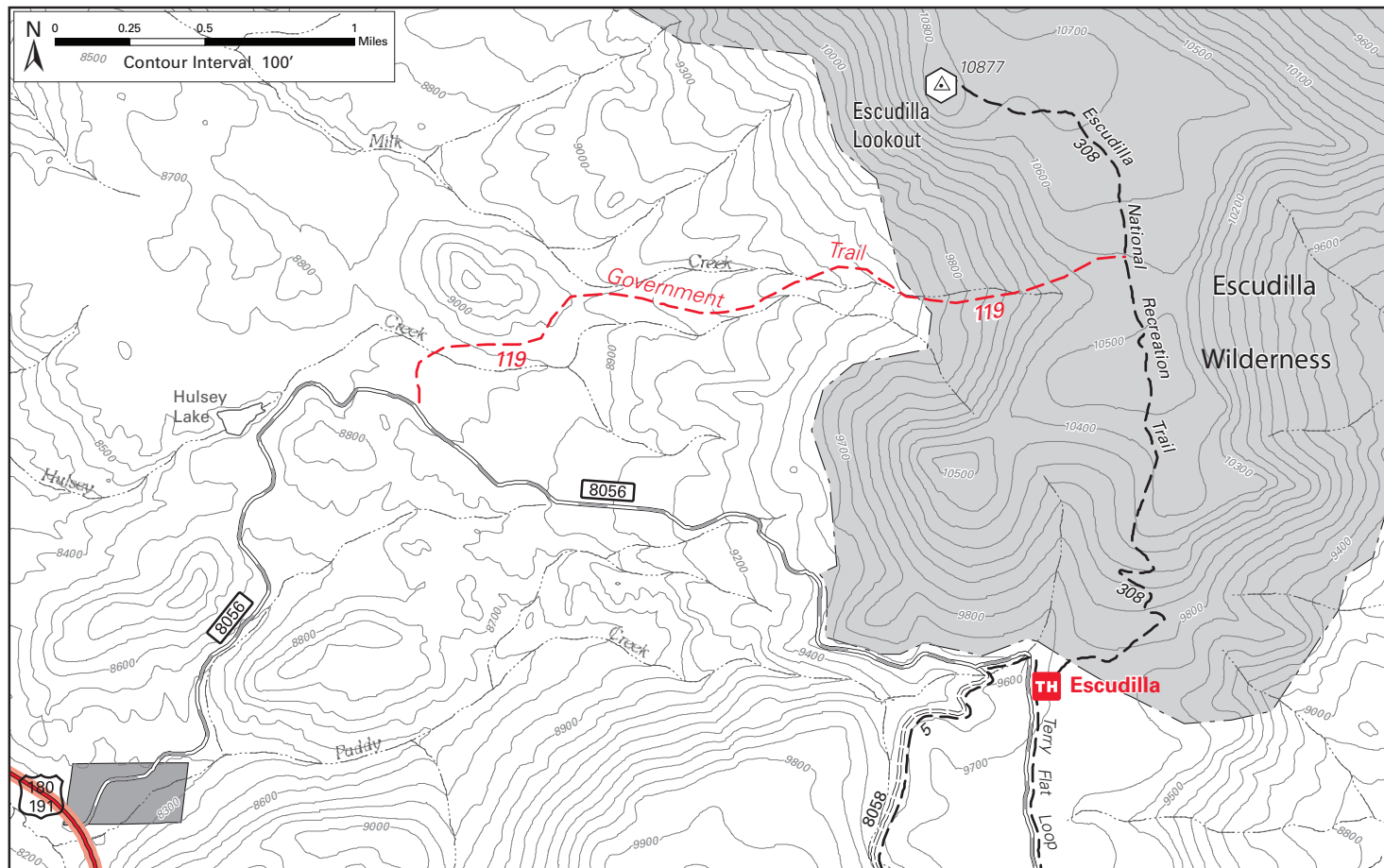
1.9 miles: Sharp left in road, trail begins here and goes straight

2.9 miles: Junction with Escudilla Trail (1.1 miles to summit from this point)



# Government Trail • 119 • Escudilla Wilderness

22



## Fish Creek Access Trail • 320 and Fish Creek Trail • 60

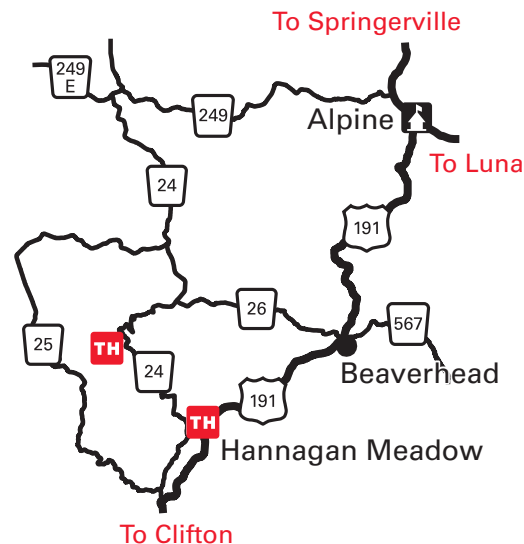


<b>Length:</b>	5.5 miles
<b>Use:</b>	Moderate
<b>Rating:</b>	Moderate
<b>Season of Use:</b>	May through October
<b>Elevation:</b>	8,400 to 6,800 feet
<b>USGS Map:</b>	Hoodoo Knoll

### Access

From Buffalo Crossing, follow Forest Road (FR) 24 to FR 24U. Or follow FR 24 from Hannagan Meadow. From either direction, it is about 3 miles to FR 24U which turns right about 2.4 miles to a lesser dirt road which then forks left. Follow this road about .5 mile past an old corral to the trailhead for Fish Creek Access Trail 320. From here it is .6 mile to Fish Creek.

Another access alternative is to hike down Fish Creek from the point where FR 24 crosses it 1.5 miles west of Hannagan Meadow to its intersection with Fish Creek Access Trail 320, 6.2 miles downstream.



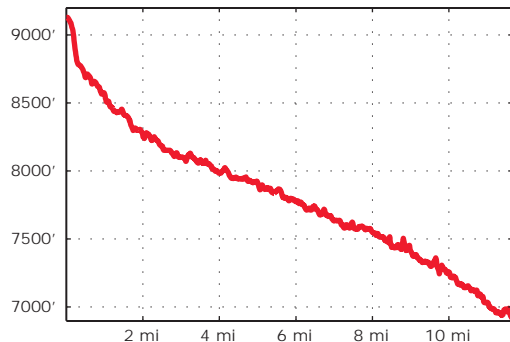
## Trail Highlights

Fish Creek Access Trail drops into the narrow forested canyon from the Fish Bench that overlooks both the Black River and Fish Creek drainages. Once on the canyon floor it wanders downstream along Fish Creek past pools, riffles, and stepping-stone stream crossings to where this tributary and the Black River join.

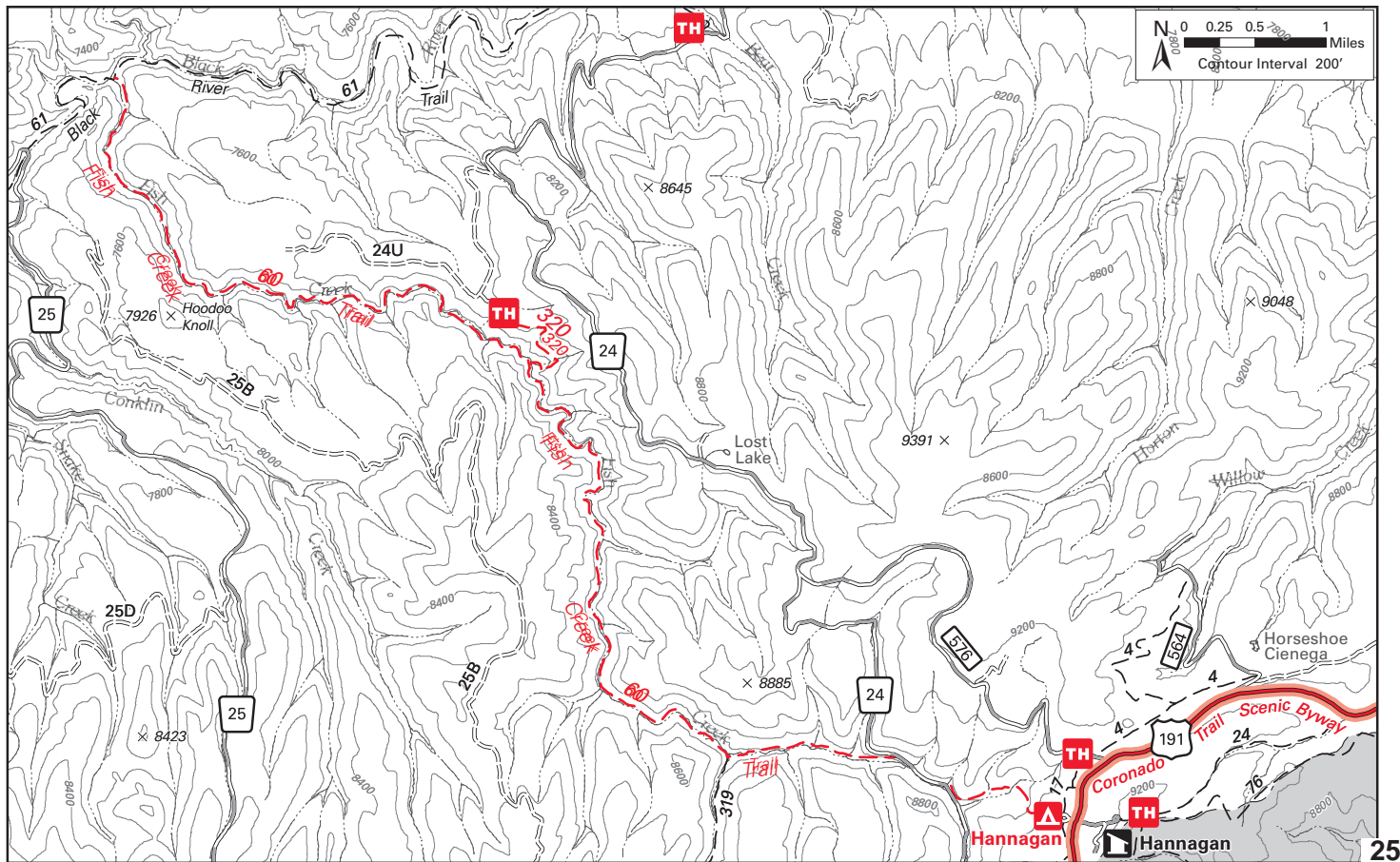
Travelers should know that thanks go to the Arizona Chapter of the Sierra Club for the considerable sections of this trail in good to excellent condition. Although Fish Creek Access Trail has been used by the Forest Service for over 50 years for moving fire fighters and other personnel through the back country, it fell into disrepair after 1970 when maintenance was discontinued for lack of funds and interest. At that point, the task of keeping the trail open was left to ranchers who continued to use it to move cattle between the Fish Bench and Fish Creek drainage. The trail stayed open but became quite rough in a number of places. During the summers of 1990 and 1991, three volunteer work groups, from the Sierra Club and American Hiking Society, were successful in restoring and reconstructing the entire 5.5 miles from Fish Creek Access Trail to the Black River.

## Trail Log

- 0.0 mile: From the trailhead poster board, follow the trail across a flat rocky area to where it drops down a rocky point into the canyon.
- 0.6 mile: Junction with Fish Creek and Fish Creek Trail.
- 3.6 miles: Tornado damage.
- 4.4 miles: Old cattle camp.
- 5.5 miles: Confluence of Fish Creek and Black River.



## Fish Creek Access Trail • 320 and Fish Creek Trail • 60



# Schell Canyon Trail • 316

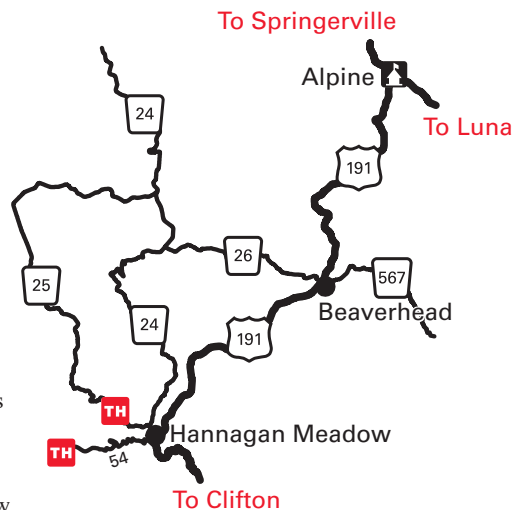


<b>Length:</b>	.8 mile
<b>Use:</b>	Light
<b>Rating:</b>	Moderate to Strenuous
<b>Season of Use:</b>	May through October
<b>Elevation:</b>	8,620 to 7,500 feet
<b>USGS Map:</b>	Baldy Bill

## Access

Drive south on Hwy. 191 approximately 29 miles to Forest Road (FR) 54. Head 5.9 miles west on FR 54 to a fork in the road. Proceed through the gate along the right fork about 0.6 mile to the end of the road at the Rose Springs Trailhead. Rose Spring Trail begins 20 yards below the parking area at a signed gate in the fence. Follow this trail about 3 miles to the junction marked by a sign where Schell Canyon Trail branches off to the north.

Schell Canyon Trail is also accessible from Bear Wallow Trail at the bottom of Bear Wallow Canyon. Campers along that stream use the trail for a scenic day hike to the Mogollon Rim and back.



## Trail Highlights

This hike provides marvelous woodland scenery early on followed by delightful views of the Mogollon Rim and some streamside hiking. Of course, the attractive views come with a tradeoff of sometimes strenuous elevation changes along the route. First, you will pass some marvelous scenery along the access route to the trailhead. Then there is the rugged canyon, native trout fishing and picturesque campsites that Schell Canyon Trail provides access to in Bear Wallow Wilderness.



To get to Schell Canyon Trailhead you must travel about 3 miles of Rose Spring Trail 309. That trail follows the dramatic 1,500-foot escarpment that forms the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau. The view that this prodigious dropoff offers of canyons and mountains to the south is one of the most expansive in Arizona.

After thrilling you with those magnificent overlooks, Schell Canyon Trail takes you into the heart of Bear Wallow Wilderness. Within this 11,000-acre area you will pass through an alpine forest of mixed conifers and aspens as the trail leaves the rim and begins dropping into Bear Wallow drainage. Tall ponderosa pines and canyon hardwoods shade the South Fork of Bear Wallow Creek, which the trail crisscrosses on its way to the main canyon floor. Schell Canyon Trail ends at its junction with Bear Wallow Trail where you can return the way you came (and get another look at those views) or continue down Bear Wallow Creek where a number of streamside campsites provide excellent prospects for an overnight camp or an extended stay. A little used and unmaintained spur of Schell Canyon Trail leads up the South Fork of Bear Wallow Creek providing opportunities for further exploration.

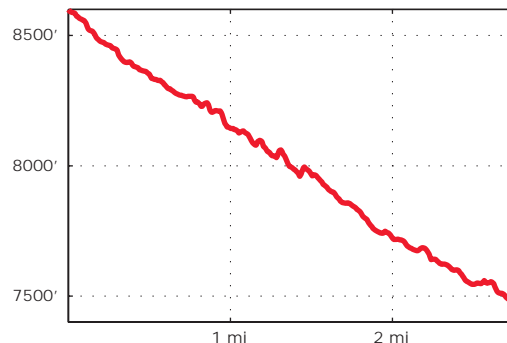
Even more variations on this same hike are possible if you set up a shuttle at either the Bear Wallow, Reno, or Gobbler Trailheads. Then you can return by way of those trails to put together a loop hike of about the same length as a down and back hike along Schell Canyon Trail. The ride between Rose Spring Trailhead and Bear Wallow Trail is 10 miles.

## Notes

No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) are permitted in wilderness.

Water runs year-round in both the South Fork and the mainstem of Bear Wallow Creek.

This trail was completely reconstructed in 1988 and 1989 by two Sierra Club service trips and one American Hiking Society volunteer vacation trip.



## Trail Log

0.0 mile: Junction with Rose Spring Trail, passes through gate.

0.6 mile: Drops into Schell Canyon drainage.

2.3 miles: Confluence of Schell Canyon and South Fork of Bear Wallow Creek.

2.8 miles: Junction with Bear Wallow Trail 63 at confluence of the north and south forks of Bear Wallow Creek.

This topographic map depicts the Bear, Wallow, and Schell Canyons area. The map features contour lines indicating elevation, with a contour interval of 200 feet. Key geographical features include the Bear, Wallow, and Schell Canyons, the Alpine Gliffon, and the Highline. The map is labeled with 'San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation' and 'District Ranger District'. A scale bar indicates 0 to 1 mile, and a north arrow is present. The map is titled 'Bear, Wallow, Schell Canyons'.

## Reno Trail • 62



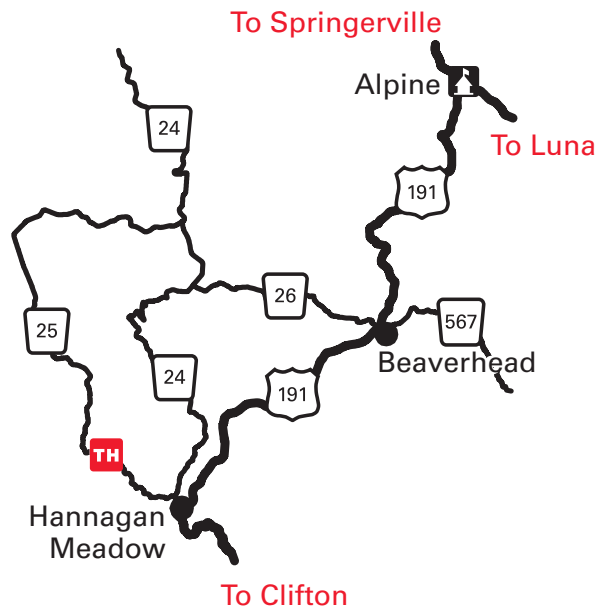
<b>Length:</b>	1.9 miles
<b>Use:</b>	Light
<b>Rating:</b>	Moderate
<b>Elevation:</b>	8,880 to 7,760 feet
<b>USGS Map:</b>	Baldy Bill

### Access

Drive south on Hwy. 191 from Alpine to Forest Road (FR) 25 and turn right on FR 25. Follow FR 25 approximately 5 miles to the trailhead.

### Trail Highlights

If you are looking for a day hike into the rich streamside habitat and tall forests of Bear Wallow Wilderness, you may be interested in a couple of loop hikes that begin with this trail. You could start out on Reno Trail, and return to Forest Road 25 by way of the more moderate gradient of Bear Wallow Trail. That means you will be taking the easiest route up and won't have to climb back up the steep switchbacks of Reno Trail as it descends into the Bear Wallow drainage. Or, if you arrange a shuttle in advance, you could hike out of the canyon via Schell Canyon Trail and take advantage of some of the great views that trail offers from atop the Mogollon Rim.



The loop around Reno and Bear Wallow is of moderate length (7 miles including a 2.5-mile hike or shuttle between trailheads). The Schell Canyon loop is a bit longer (8.3 miles). If you start early, you will have time to enjoy the rich plant and animal communities that make a home in the habitat nourished by this secluded wilderness brook. If you like to fish, you may be interested in continuing down Bear Wallow Creek to try your luck at catching some of the native trout that make a home there. Reno Trail is also a well used primary access route in Bear Wallow Wilderness. Some forest visitors choose it because it provides the shortest route to the creek and, therefore, might be the quickest route as well.

Mixed conifers and aspens border the trail along its upper reaches. As the trail drops into the side canyon it follows to Bear Wallow Creek, clumps of Gambel oak appear more frequently. Tall ponderosa pines and spruces, canyon hardwoods, and associated riparian species mark the junction with Bear Wallow Trail in North Fork Canyon.

## Notes

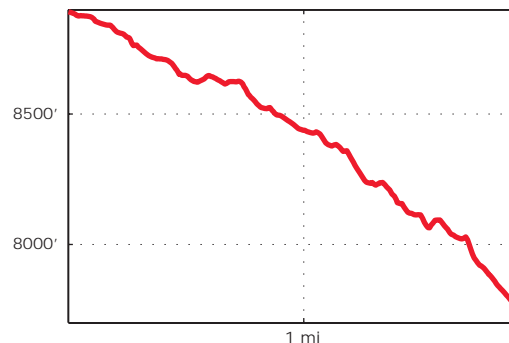
No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) are permitted in wilderness.

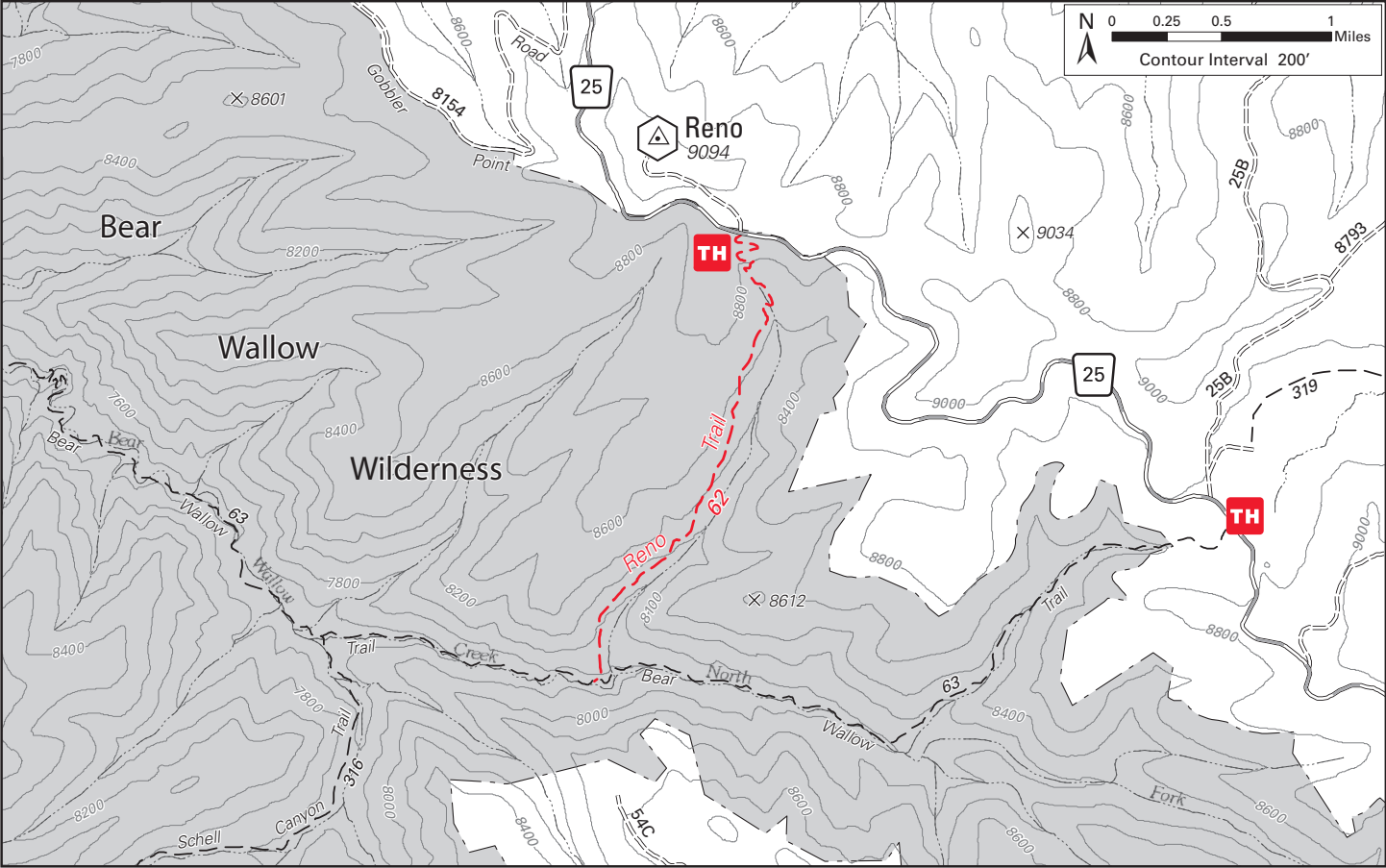
The trail drops 1,120 feet from the trailhead to the junction with Bear Wallow Trail.

## Trail Log

0.0 mile: Reno Trailhead on FR 25 across from Reno Lookout road. Take the foot trail, not the old logging road to the south.

1.9 miles: Junction with Bear Wallow Trail 63 on the canyon floor. Schell Canyon Trail 316 is 1.1 miles downstream.





## Bear Wallow Trail • 63



<b>Length:</b>	7.6 miles
<b>Use:</b>	Moderate
<b>Rating:</b>	Moderate to Strenuous
<b>Elevation:</b>	9,700 to 6,700 feet
<b>USGS Map:</b>	Baldy Bill

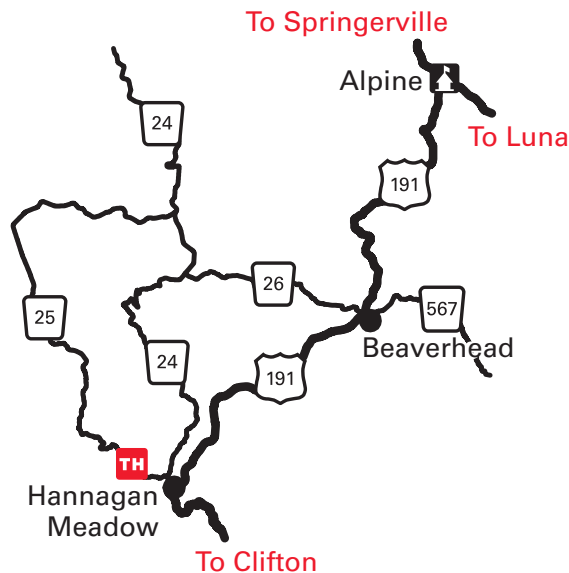
### Access

Drive south on Hwy. 191 about 28 miles from Alpine to Forest Road (FR) 25. Head west on FR 25 about 2.8 miles to Bear Wallow Trailhead and parking area (on the left). Bear Wallow Trail is also accessible by hiking Reno Trail (62), Gobbler Trail (59), Schell Canyon Trail (316) or Rose Spring Trail (309).

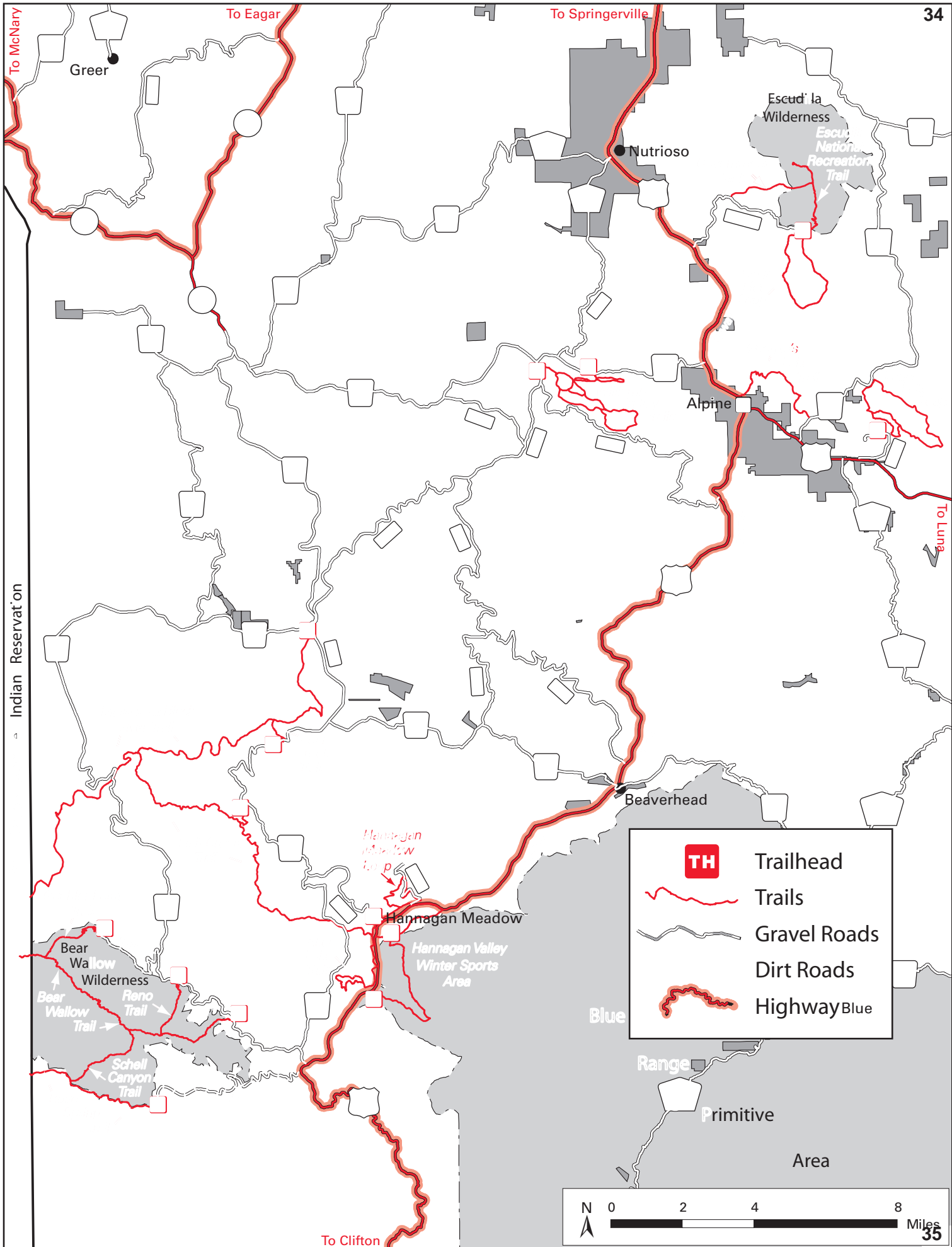
### Trail Highlights

This trail follows the Bear Wallow Creek riparian area, dropping to the creek's confluence with the Black River. Anglers are among this trail's most frequent users. Native Apache trout were re-established in Bear Wallow Creek in the early to middle 1990s.

This trail offers a unique opportunity to experience high country, streamside wilderness hiking and camping. Several excellent sites can be found near the creek to make camp. Enjoy the variety of lush vegetation not commonly found in most of Arizona as you travel along this creek bottom. You will encounter alder, ash, fern and Mexican locust along this trail, with pine and spruce serving as a towering backdrop. This is a great trail



*Continued on page 36*





to travel with a guidebook, as you will likely encounter a score of both wildflowers and songbirds in the spring and summer. Poison ivy is also something you may encounter on this trail, so be careful and know how to identify its “leaves of three.” Black bears are frequently seen in this area as well, but usually from a distance.

It is important to consider both gaitors and waterproof footwear on this trail as it crosses the creek several times alternating between rocks (sometimes quite slippery) and muddy or bog-like footing.

## Notes

No mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) are permitted in wilderness.

Snow may linger until May in shady areas and canyon bottoms.

This trail is rocky, and wet and boggy in places, but generally easy to follow.

A special use permit is required to enter the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.

## Trail Log

0.0 mile: Trailhead on FR 25 (across from Double Cienega). Trail drops into the drainage between two logging roads.

1.5 miles: Trail joins Bear Wallow Creek at a large rock cairn and heads downstream.

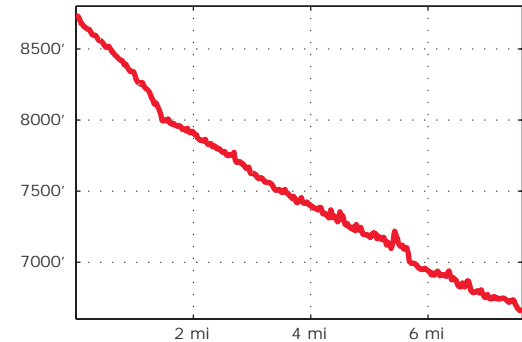
2.6 miles: Junction with Reno Trail 62

3.5 miles: Junction with Schell Canyon Trail 316

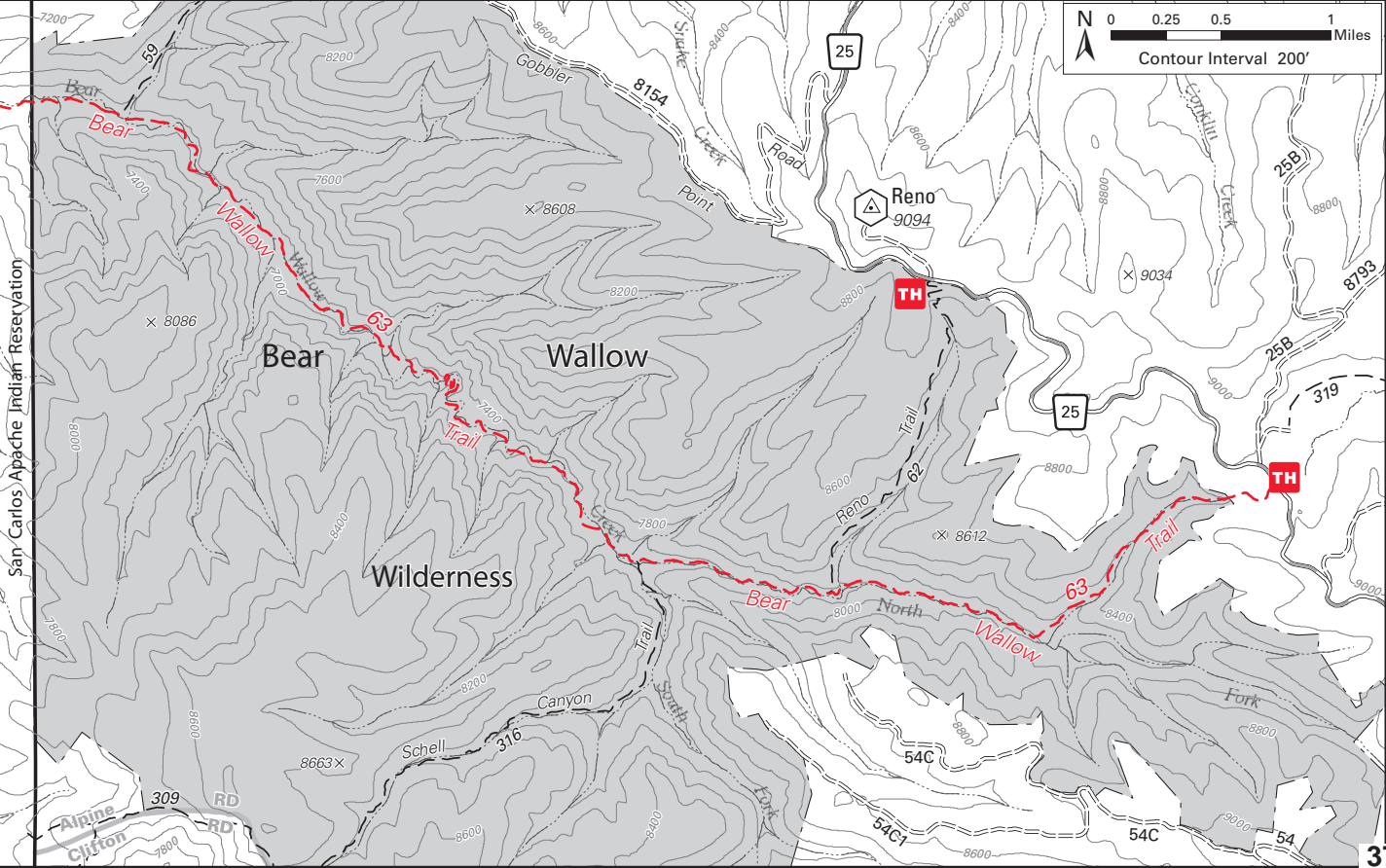
6.6 miles: Fish barrier

7.1 miles: Junction with Gobbler Point Trail 59

7.6 miles: Fence line marks San Carlos Apache Reservation boundary. Permit required to continue onto the reservation.



# Bear Wallow Trail • 63



## Escudilla National Recreation Trail • 308



**Length:** 3 miles  
**Use:** Moderate to Heavy  
**Rating:** Moderate  
**Elevation:** 9,500 to 10,900 feet  
**USGS Map:** Escudilla

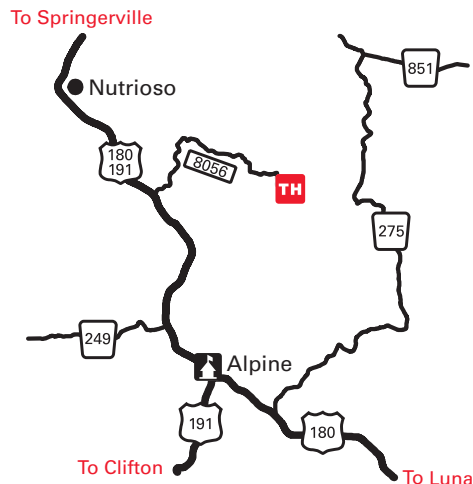
### Access

Drive 5.5 miles north from Alpine on Hwy. 180/191 to Forest Road (FR) 8056. Turn right on FR 8056 and follow it 3.6 miles to Terry Flat. Take the left fork past Toolbox Draw, 0.5 mile to the trailhead.

### Trail Highlights

This 3-mile walk to the top of Arizona's third highest mountain is such an outstanding trail that it has been given recognition by Congress as a national recreational trail. The scenery is magnificent, the surroundings are picturesque, and the walking is comparatively easy considering the heights to which you are headed. Escudilla holds the distinction of being the only designated wilderness that also is home to a designated national recreation trail. Escudilla earned the national recreation trail tag prior to becoming a designated wilderness in 1984.

The climb up Escudilla starts out through an area burned by a huge wildfire in 1951. Evidence of that fire is apparent along the trail in the form of large Douglas-fir stumps left from trees killed by the blaze. Those blackened snags were cut in an effort to salvage what wood could be recovered in the aftermath of the fire. Today, late season hikers can enjoy the dramatic display of gold from aspen trees that have increased since



the fire. Escudilla Mountain's natural history includes it once was home to one of Arizona's last grizzly bears. Aldo Leopold gives an account of how that bruin met his end on Escudilla in "The Sand County Almanac." There have been no grizzly bears in the Southwest for many years. Of the lower 48, grizzly bears remain only in 4 states: Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and one small population in Washington.

After leaving the first aspen grove, the trail passes through stands of spruce, fir, and more aspen alternating with large open meadows as it continues the climb to the top. Along that climb, various overlooks provide awe-inspiring views of the countryside over which this sky island towers. The first views to the south and west occur about a mile from the trailhead at the top of Tool Box Draw. They are almost as good as those at the top of the mountain. If it's views you are after, you don't have to walk all the way to the top.

When you reach the summit, there is a Forest Service fire tower which offers an even higher vantage point. On a clear day, you can see the high peaks and deep canyons of Blue Range Primitive Area from the tower. The Gila Wilderness, Mt. Graham and Pinaleno Mountains are usually visible to the south.

## Notes

No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) permitted in wilderness.

Extensive groves of aspen provide magnificent fall colors around the first week in October.

The area near the fire tower is best suited to day use because of the lack of water.

No camping at Bead Springs Meadow.

This trail experiences the highest use on holidays and weekends.

Much of the area accessed by the trail has been designated a research natural area.

## Trail Log

0.0 mile: Trailhead parking area.

0.1 mile: Enter Escudilla Mountain Wilderness.

0.7 mile: Aspen trees have been cut to increase browse for deer (wildlife habitat improvement project).

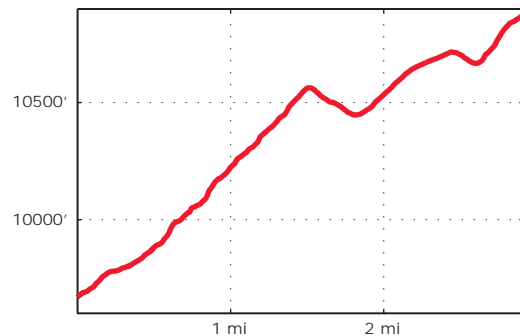
1.3 miles: Tool Box Meadow panoramic views.

1.9 miles: Junction with Government Trail.

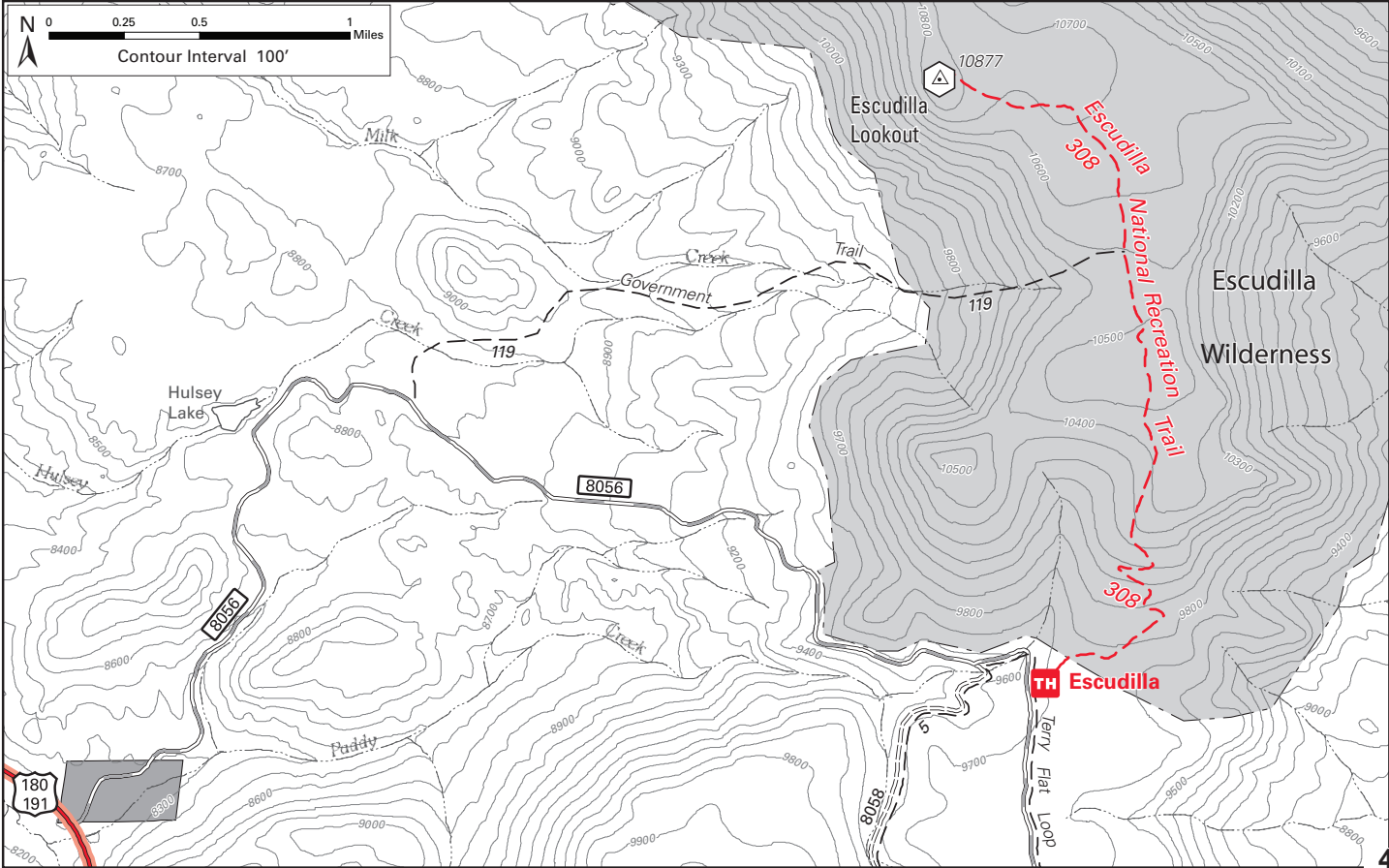
2.8 miles: Spur trail to left, continue right on old roadbed.

2.9 miles: Spur trail on right leads to Bead Springs Meadow (no camping).

3.0 miles: Escudilla Lookout



# Escudilla National Recreation Trail • 308



## Mainstem Black River Trail • 61

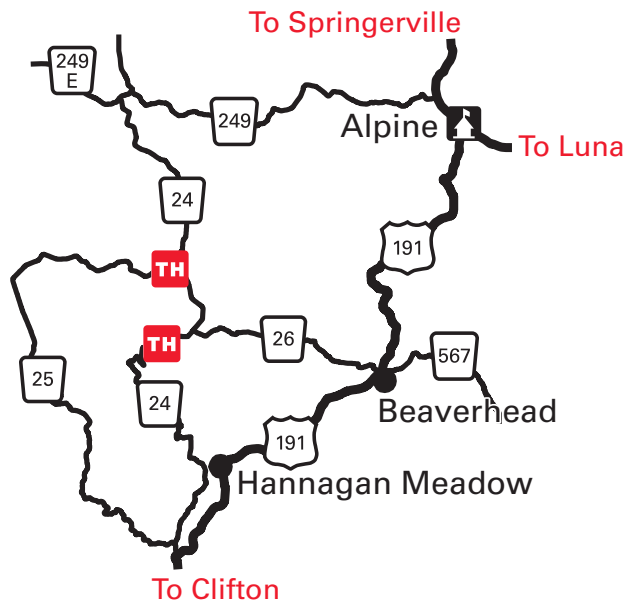


<b>Length:</b>	19 miles
<b>Use:</b>	Light
<b>Rating:</b>	Easy
<b>Season of Use:</b>	May through October
<b>Elevation:</b>	7,500 to 6,600 feet
<b>USGS Maps:</b>	Buffalo Crossing, Hannagan, Hoodoo

### Access

Drive south from Alpine 14.5 miles on Hwy. 191 to Forest Road (FR) 26 and turn west, then about 9.5 miles to FR 24. From this point you can turn left (southwest) about 1.5 miles to Bear Creek for that access route, or turn right (northwest) 3 miles to FR 25 where you will travel to Buffalo Crossing and access the unmaintained trail that follows the river downstream. FR 25 continues west 12.8 miles to Wildcat Bridge.

The only road that leads directly to the river in this out-of-the-way area is Forest Road 25, which crosses the mainstem of the Black at Wildcat Bridge. Fish Creek Access Trail serves as the sole developed and maintained trail into the area, but there are a number of unmarked and unmaintained paths used regularly by trout anglers and other riverside recreationists that provide additional access.



Streamside paths extend downriver from Buffalo Crossing and both up and downstream from Wildcat Bridge. These trails are more regularly used and easier to find near their departure points. Farther from those points, the canyon floor defines the route. Shorter access to areas deep within the canyon is provided by paths leading from points where forest roads come reasonably close to the canyon's inner reaches. One such path follows Bear Creek from Forest Road (FR) 24 about a mile to a point on the Black about 5 miles downstream from Buffalo Crossing. Additional access from the south is provided by Fish Creek Access Trail 320, from the end of FR 25B and McKibbons Trail off McKibbons Pond Road off FR 25. From the north side of the river, access is available via a trail from the end of FR 25G, the road to the Kettle Holes area. This mile-long route follows the Centerfire Creek drainage to the river. All except Fish Creek and Fish Creek Access Trails are better described as routes rather than established trails.

## **Trail Highlights**

Below Buffalo Crossing, the Black River and the road part company as the stream begins to drop more steeply toward its confluence with the White River, deep within the Fort Apache and San Carlos Apache Indian Reservations. The river enters a large canyon here, and the streambed becomes more rocky with fewer pools and longer riffles. Forested slopes close in to narrow the streamside riparian zone and access becomes more limited.

This area is popular with trout anglers trying to find better fishing along more remote stretches of the stream, but it also attracts other forest recreationists as well. The scenery is great and there is a good chance you will see some interesting wildlife, including black bear which are relatively plentiful here.

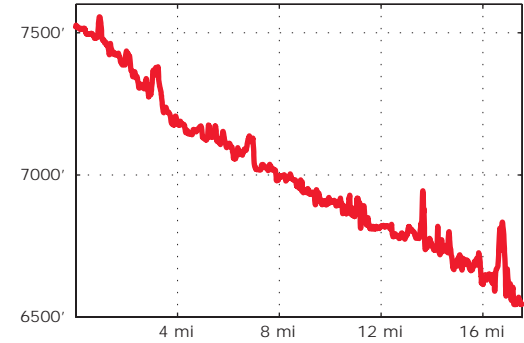
## **Notes**

This section encompasses the East Fork below Buffalo Crossing and the mainstem of the river from the confluence of the east and west forks to the reservation boundary.

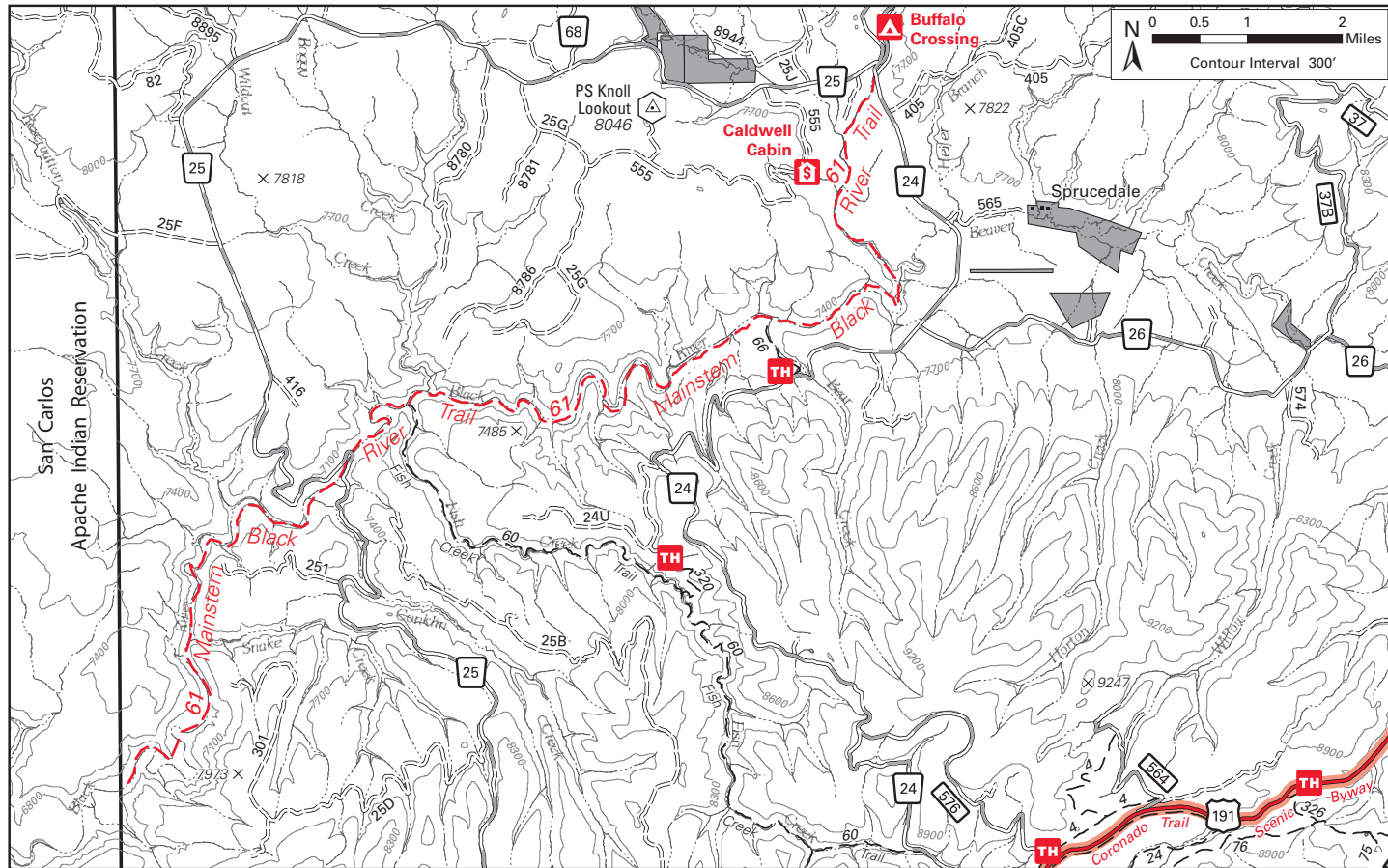


## Trail Log

- 0.0 mile: Buffalo Crossing, trail heads downstream.
- 5.0 miles: Bear Creek confluence.
- 11.0 miles: Centerfire Creek confluence.
- 11.4 miles: Junction with Fish Creek and Fish Creek Trail.
- 12.9 miles: Wildcat Bridge
- 15.0 miles: Junction with McKibbons Pond route.
- 19.0 miles: San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation Boundary.



## Mainstem Black River Trail • 61



## Rose Spring Trail • 309



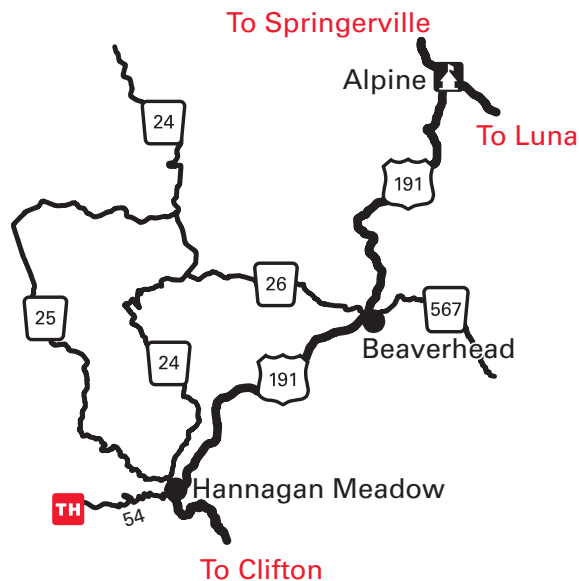
<b>Length:</b>	5.4 miles
<b>Use:</b>	Light
<b>Rating:</b>	Moderate to Strenuous
<b>Elevation:</b>	8,700 to 6,700 feet
<b>USGS Map:</b>	Baldy Bill

### Access

Drive south on Hwy. 191 approximately 29 miles to Forest Road (FR) 54. Head west on FR 54 approximately 6 miles to a fork in the road. Proceed through the gate along the right fork about 0.6 mile to the end of the road. The trail begins 50 yards below the parking area at a signed gate on the fence.

### Trail Highlights

You will enjoy some of the Alpine district's most outstanding vistas as you travel this relatively easy walk with its moderate gradient and pleasantly forested surroundings. The magnificent views are yours courtesy of the Mogollon Rim, a 1,500-foot dropoff that forms the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau and provides the high perspective for the panorama. This prodigious escarpment towers over the forested canyons of Eagle Creek, Rose Peak, Maple Mountain, and far in the distance, Mount Graham and the Pinalenos. Rose Spring Trail, also called the Rim Trail, follows a fence line along the southern boundary of Bear Wallow Wilderness as it hugs the rim. About 3 miles from the trailhead, Schell Canyon Trail branches off on a course that leads to the South Fork of Bear Wallow Creek and into the heart of the wilderness.



From the junction with Schell Canyon Trail, Rose Spring Trail continues through another mile and a half of conifers and ponderosa to the San Carlos Indian Reservation boundary. That boundary is marked by a standard stock fence. At this point, a road from the reservation side of the fence crosses onto the forest side and cuts back to Rose Springs, an intermittent water source. This trail is also the boundary between the Clifton and Alpine Ranger Districts.

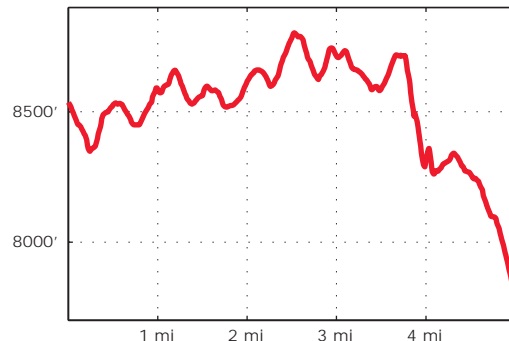
## Notes

No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including mountain bikes) are permitted in wilderness.

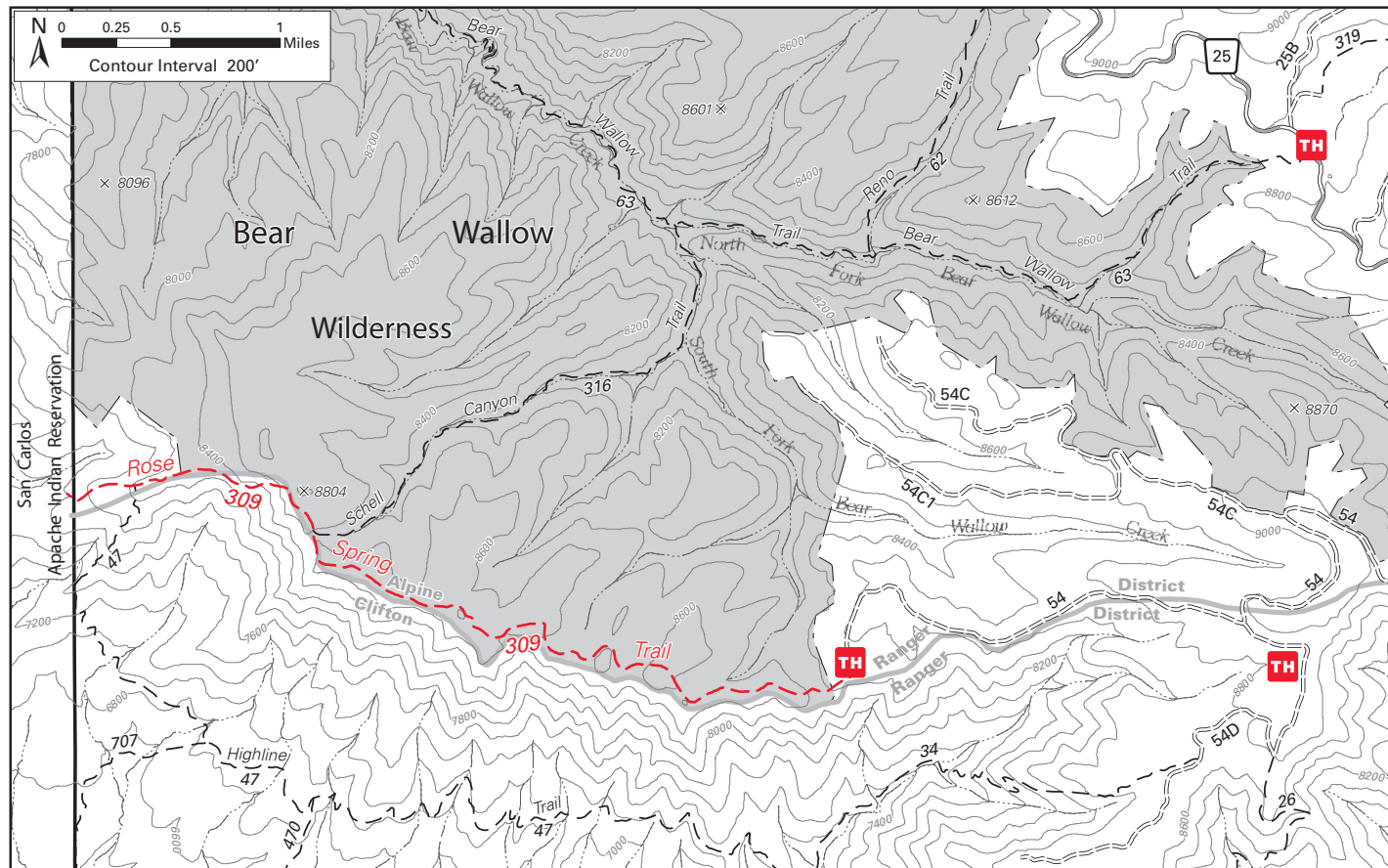
A special use permit from the tribe is required for entry onto the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation.

## Trail Log

- 0.0 mile: Trailhead, trail proceeds through a gate in the fence 50 yards below (north) the parking lot.
- 0.9 mile: Open saddle. Good view to the south.
- 1.8 miles: Trail goes through second gate.
- 2.7 miles: More good views.
- 3.4 miles: Schell Canyon Trail 316.
- 4.1 miles: Old trail to right through fence, continue left
- 4.5 miles: Unsigned junction with Highline Trail to left, continue straight.
- 4.9 miles: San Carlos Apache Reservation boundary fence. Turn sharp right and proceed on road to Rose Spring.
- 5.2 miles: Rose Spring.



# Rose Spring Trail • 309



## Aker Lake Trail • 17



**Length:** 3.5 miles

**Use:** Moderate

**Rating:** Easy

**Elevation:** 9,100 to 8,700 feet

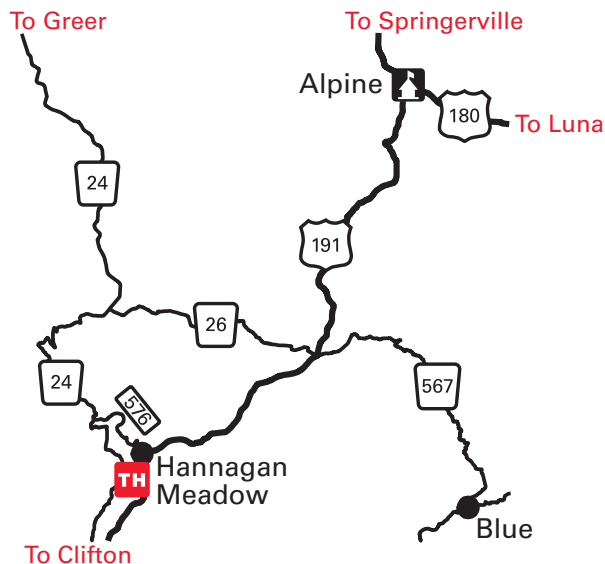
**USGS Maps:** Hannagan Meadow, Strayhorse

### Access

The main trailhead for Aker Lake Trail is just south of Hannagan Meadow Campground on Hwy. 191 south of Alpine. Those camping in the campground can access the trail between campsites 6 and 7. The trail is marked with blue diamonds.

### Trail Highlights

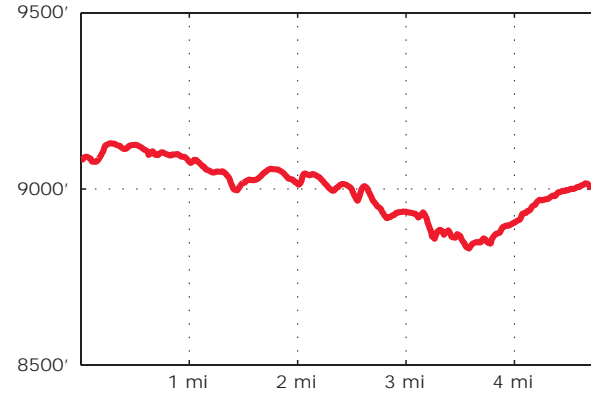
Aker Lake Trail drops gradually 400 feet over its 3.5-mile span to Aker Lake. The trail passes through a mixed forest area of aspens and conifers. Songbirds can often be heard when riding quietly and slowly. As you continue your ride, you'll come to a meadow called Butterfly Cienega and once you ride along the meadow, you will re-enter the forest. This may also allow a rider to catch a glimpse of the area's wildlife including elk, mule deer, or even black bears. From the forest, you will re-enter the valley and follow the trail as it brings you to Aker Lake where you will cross a log bridge across the dam. You can loop this trail by following Aker Lake Road (FR 8312) back to Butterfly Cienega and retracing your route from the meadow.



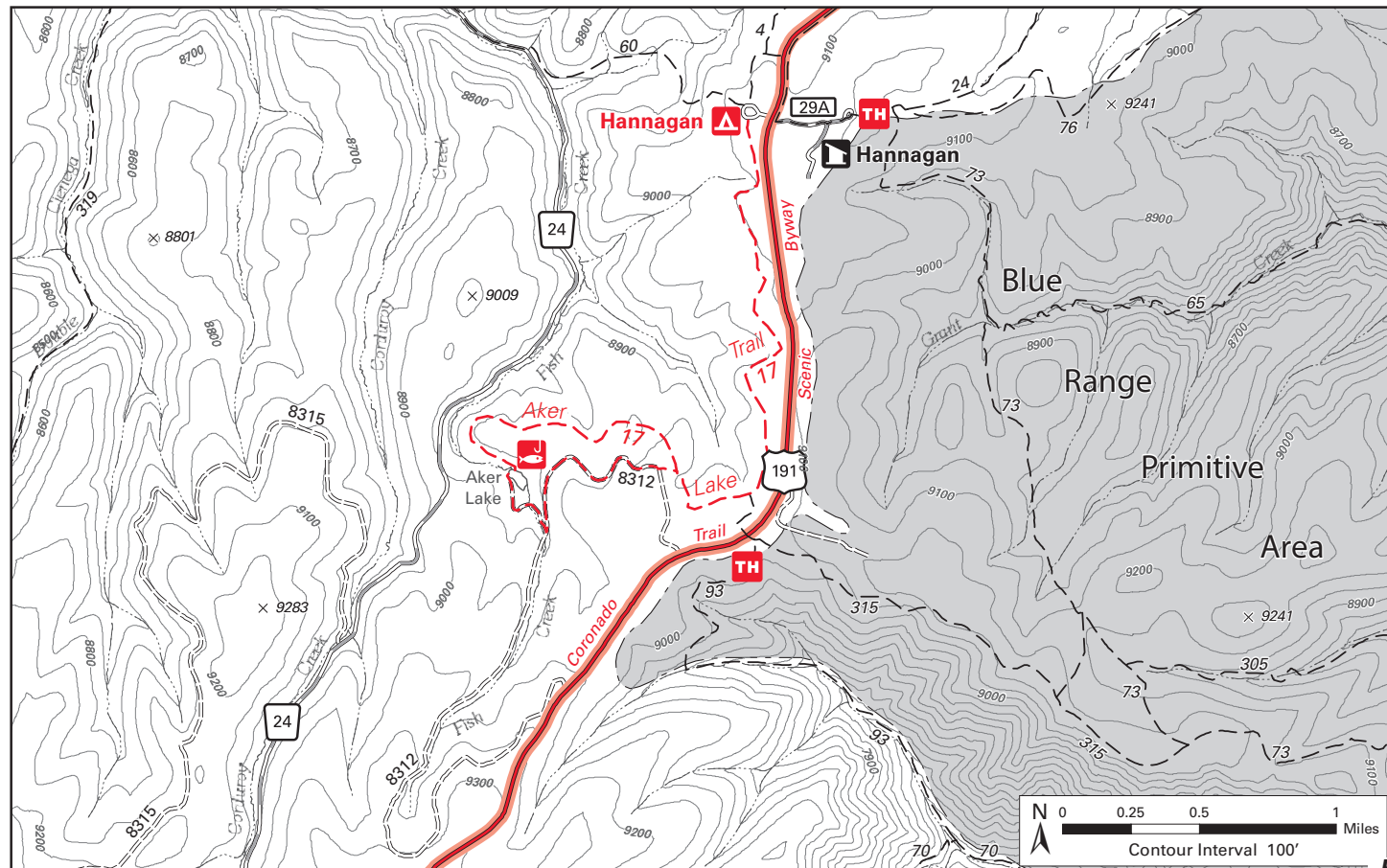
This trail is here for your enjoyment due in large part to volunteer Don Yates. Yates worked as a campground host at the nearby campground and planned and constructed this trail over a 3-year period.

## Ride Log

- 0.0 mile: Start at Hannagan Meadow Campground trailhead.
- 1.8 miles: Junction to KP Rim Trailhead
- 2.0 miles: Butterfly Cienega
- 3.5 miles: Aker Lake
- 4.8 miles: From Aker Lake by road to Butterfly Cienega



# Aker Lake Trail • 17





## George's Lake Trail • 3



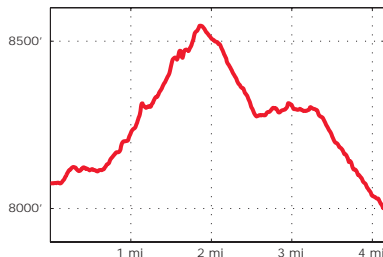
**Length:** 4.5 miles (7.5 miles without a shuttle)

**Use:** Moderate

**Rating:** Moderate

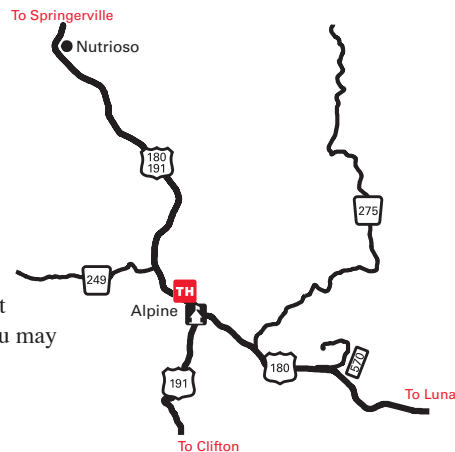
**Elevation:** 8,000 to 8,500 feet

**USGS Maps:** Alpine, Luna



### Access

This loop begins just west of the Alpine Ranger Station on Hwy. 191 and ends to the east at Forest Road (FR) 275. Follow FR 275 to Hwy. 180 and head back west to the Alpine Ranger Station. You may choose to connect to the Luna Lake Loop to make a longer ride from FR 275.



### Trail Highlights

This route will bring you through a variety of surroundings ranging from the wide road shoulders in Alpine to rocky forest roads. If the season and conditions are right, you may have an opportunity to observe waterfowl at tiny George's Lake. This can make for a scenic lunch spot if you've taken your lunch along. This short ride has an option to connect to the scenic Luna Lake Loop for a longer ride for those who prefer.

Follow the trail marked by blue diamonds and by bicycle symbols and please respect private property. You will need to open and pass through a gate about 2 miles into the route. Please close the gate behind you. You will come to the intersection of FR 275 2.5 miles later, where you will need to choose to return to Alpine or continue on to Luna Lake Loop.

This route is close to the amenities of Alpine, yet quiet and an often welcome escape. There is a campground nearby at Luna Lake. No water is available on this loop.

This topographic map depicts the Alpine region, featuring the Luna Lake Group and Luna Dam. Key elements include:

- Trails:** A red line traces a trail route through the area, with points 1, 2, 3, and 4 marked. Other trails shown include the Coronado Trail, Scenic Byway, and the Luna Lake Loop.
- Water Features:** Luna Lake, George's Lake, Judd Lake, and the Luna River are prominent. Luna Dam is also indicated.
- Topography:** Contour lines show elevation, with a contour interval of 100 feet. Peaks are marked with elevations such as 9917, 9907, 8679, and 7981.
- Infrastructure:** Roads are labeled with numbers including 180, 191, 2311, 275, 2117, 2104, 2266, 5172, 180A, 408, and 570. The town of Alpine is shown with various buildings and a school.
- Other Landmarks:** The Luna Lake Group is marked with a red triangle, and the Luna Dam is marked with a red square. The area is also labeled with 'Luna Lake' and 'Luna River'.
- Scale and Orientation:** A scale bar at the bottom right indicates distances from 0 to 1 mile. A north arrow is also present.

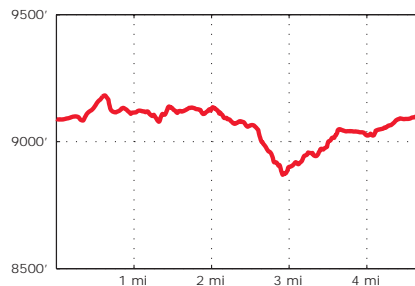
# Hannagan Meadow Loop • 4



**Length:** 5.5 miles  
**Use:** Moderate  
**Rating:** Easy to Moderate  
**Elevation:** 8,900 to 9,300 feet  
**USGS Map:** Hannagan Meadow

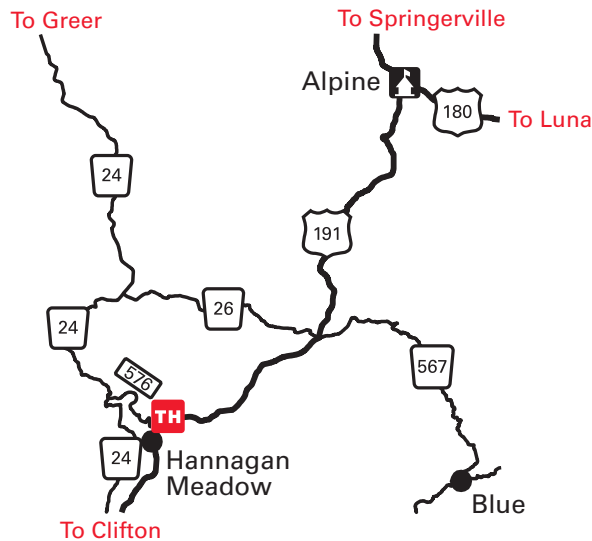
## Access

Drive south on Hwy. 191 from Alpine for 23 miles to Forest Road (FR) 576 (¼ mile north of Hannagan Lodge). The trail begins here, takes a turn to the right and follows the power lines.

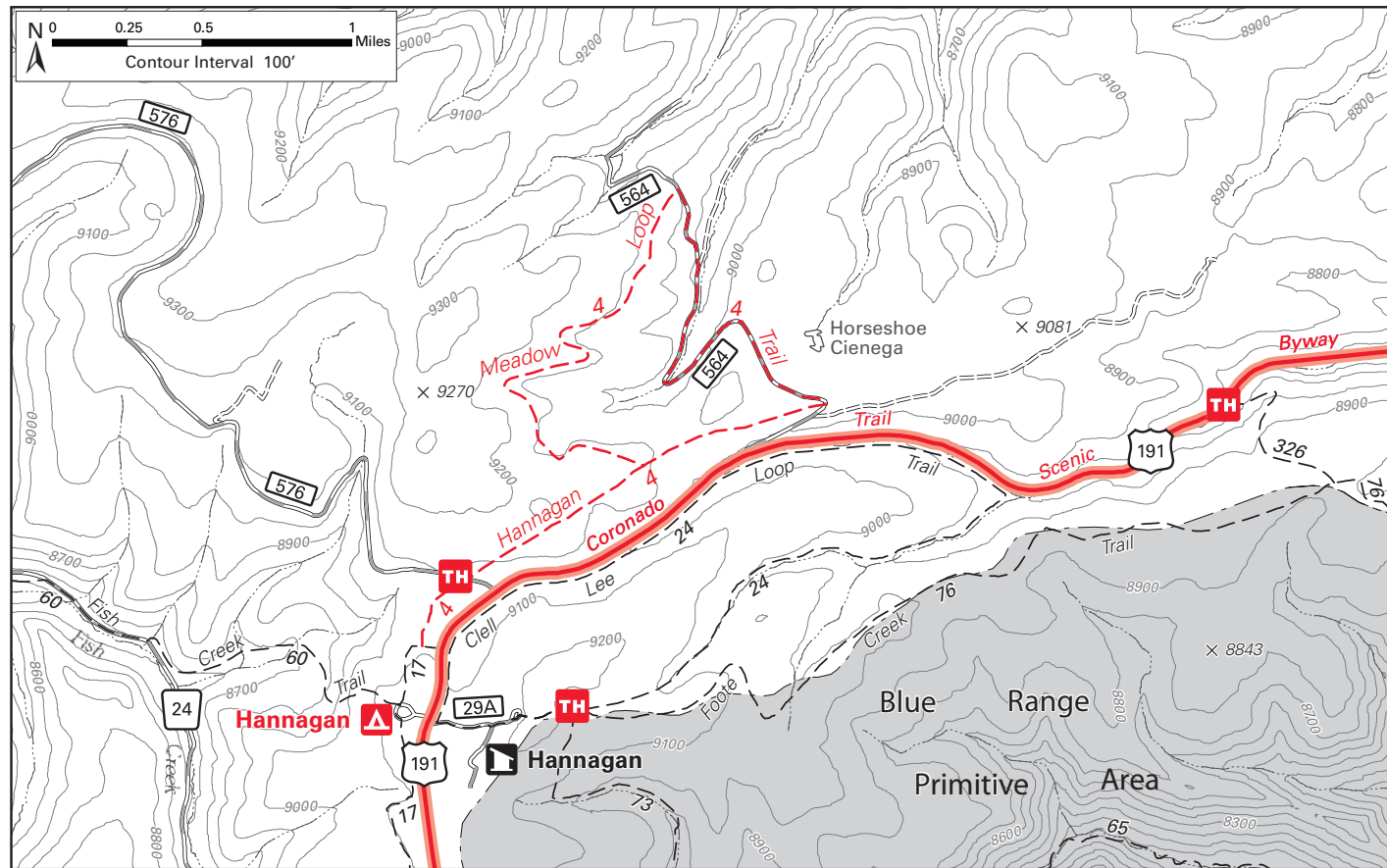


## Trail Highlights

Diverse terrain and alpine scenes are the setting for this mild ride. Tall conifers and high meadows frame the remains of historic cabins as you ride. The mixed forest here is majestic when the leaves change during the cool days of fall. The brilliant gold of aspen trees is remarkable if you happen to catch them at their peak. You will share the area with resident wildlife including wild turkey, elk, deer, coyotes and black bears.



# Hannagan Meadow Loop • 4



# Luna Lake Loop 2 and 2A



**Length:** 2.5-mile loop or 8-mile loop

**Use:** Moderate

**Rating:** Easy to Moderate

**Elevation:** 7,900 to 8,300 feet

**USGS Map:** Luna Lake

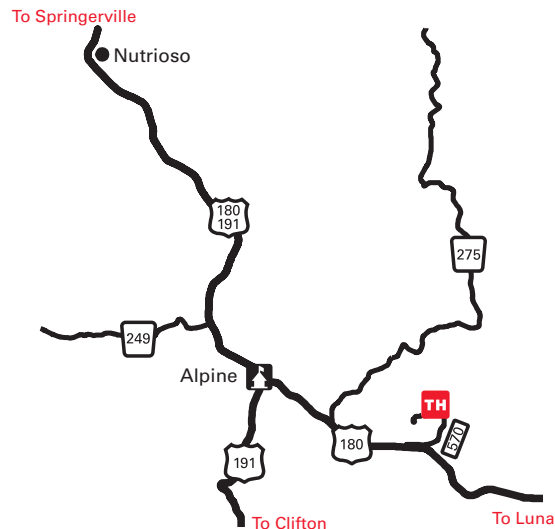
## Access

Drive 5 miles east from Alpine on Hwy. 180 and turn left (north) on Luna Lake Entrance Road (FR 570), just east of the lake. This gravel, all-weather road leads 1 mile to the bike trailhead marked by an international bike symbol near the campground entrance.

## Trail Highlights

The moderate length and easy rating make this trail a popular pastime for campers at Luna Lake Campground. In fact, campers can ride directly from their campsites and start enjoying this scenic trail.

Luna Lake Loop consists of an easy, 2.5-mile, small loop and a more difficult large loop. Both loops are well marked. If riding both loops isn't enough, you can add to your ride by taking Forest Road 275 and joining up with the George's Lake Loop.



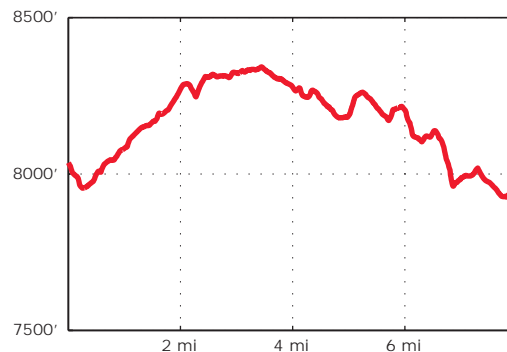
## Ride Log

### Short Loop 2A (2.5 miles)

From the trailhead, follow the blue diamonds north through the gate to a signed junction where the words “easiest” mark the right fork. Follow this fork for 1 mile to a second signed junction. At this junction, the Lower Loop (right fork) will return you to Luna Lake Road, 100 yards south of the trailhead.

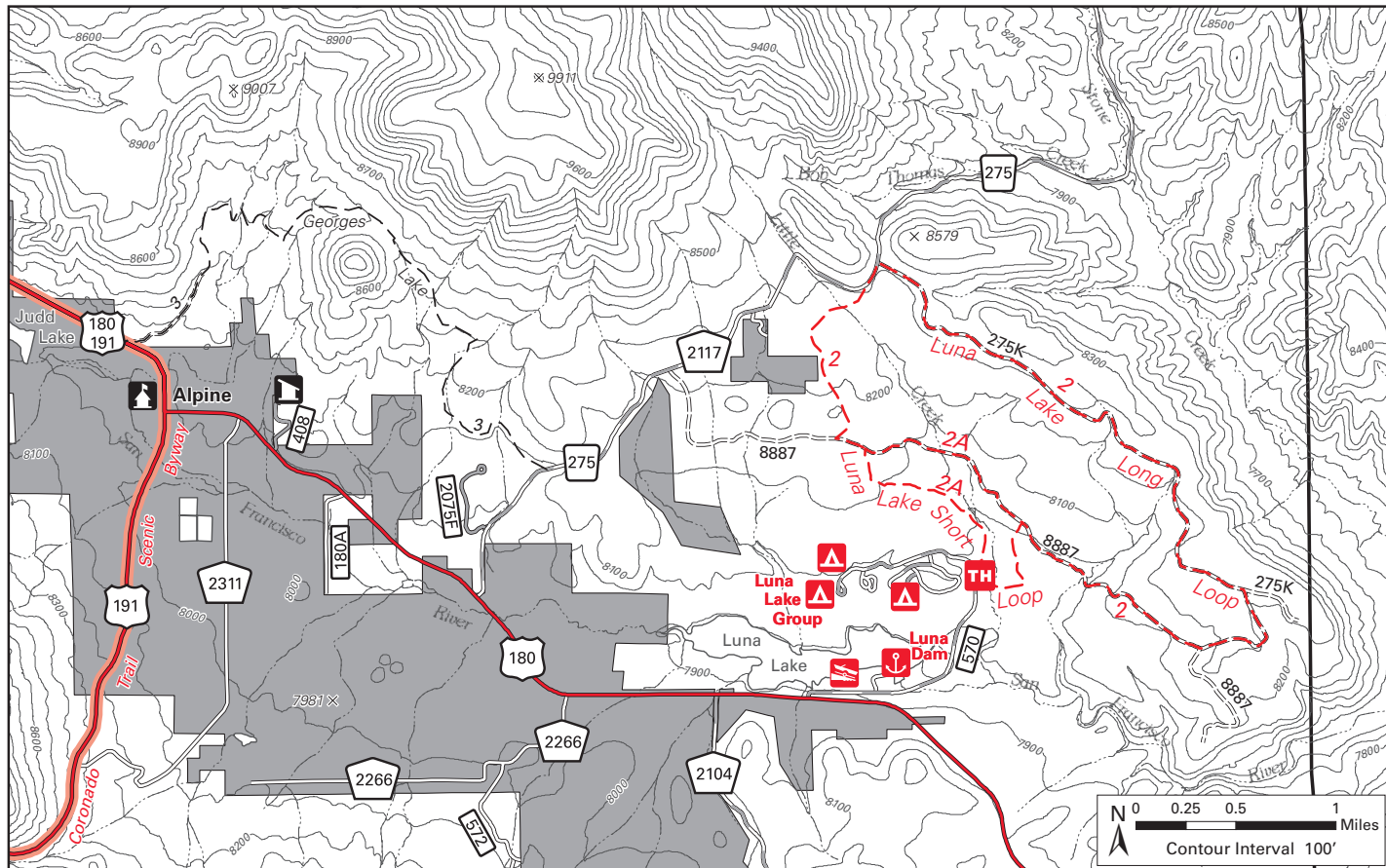
### Long Loop 2 (8 miles)

Follow the same route as above to the first signed junction. Take the left-hand fork, marked “more difficult,” and continue 1 mile through the gate across Little Creek, a cattle guard, and down the main road about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to a signed road and gate on the right. Go through this gate and enjoy relatively flat riding for 2.5 miles. A series of short climbs and drops leads back to a signed junction. The right fork marked “easiest” will take you back to the trail system, while the left fork will bring you back to Luna Lake Campground in a half mile.



# Luna Lake Loop 2 and 2A

58



# Terry Flat Loop • 5



**Length:** 6 miles  
**Use:** Moderate  
**Rating:** Easy  
**Elevation:** 9,600 to 9,900 feet  
**USGS Maps:** Nutrioso, Escudilla Mountain

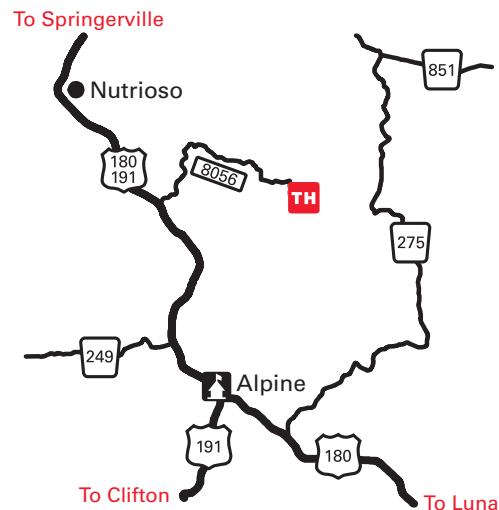
## Access

Drive 5.5 miles north from Alpine on Hwy. 180/191 to Forest Road (FR) 8056. Turn right on FR 8056 and follow it 4.5 miles to Terry Flat. Take the left fork past Toolbox Draw .5 mile to a parking area at the Escudilla National Recreation Trail Trailhead.

## Trail Highlights

Terry Flat is a large meadow in the shadow of Escudilla Mountain, Arizona's third highest peak at nearly 11,000 feet. This is a very scenic and quiet ride on a little used forest road. Once you depart the parking area that also serves the Escudilla Trailhead, you will likely have the trail to yourself. These high meadows offer a wonderfully scenic ride without any fierce climbs, making it great for riders of all levels.

Elk, mule deer, coyotes and black bear can be seen in this area occasionally. The bordering Escudilla Wilderness was home to Arizona's last grizzly bear as well. But don't worry; no grizzly bears have lived in Arizona since "Big Foot,"—the moniker for the last bear holding out on Escudilla—was shot in 1939. Aldo Leopold gives a famous account of the big bear on Escudilla in "A Sand County Almanac." Upon your ride's end, you can impress your friends with your story of riding through "Big Foot's" former territory.

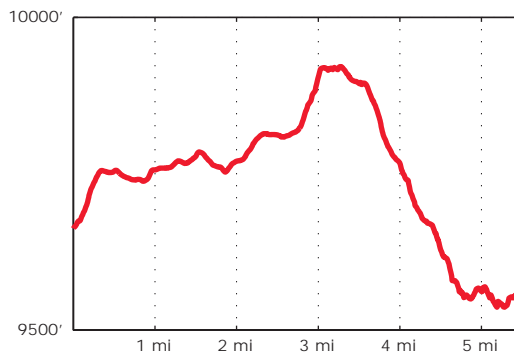




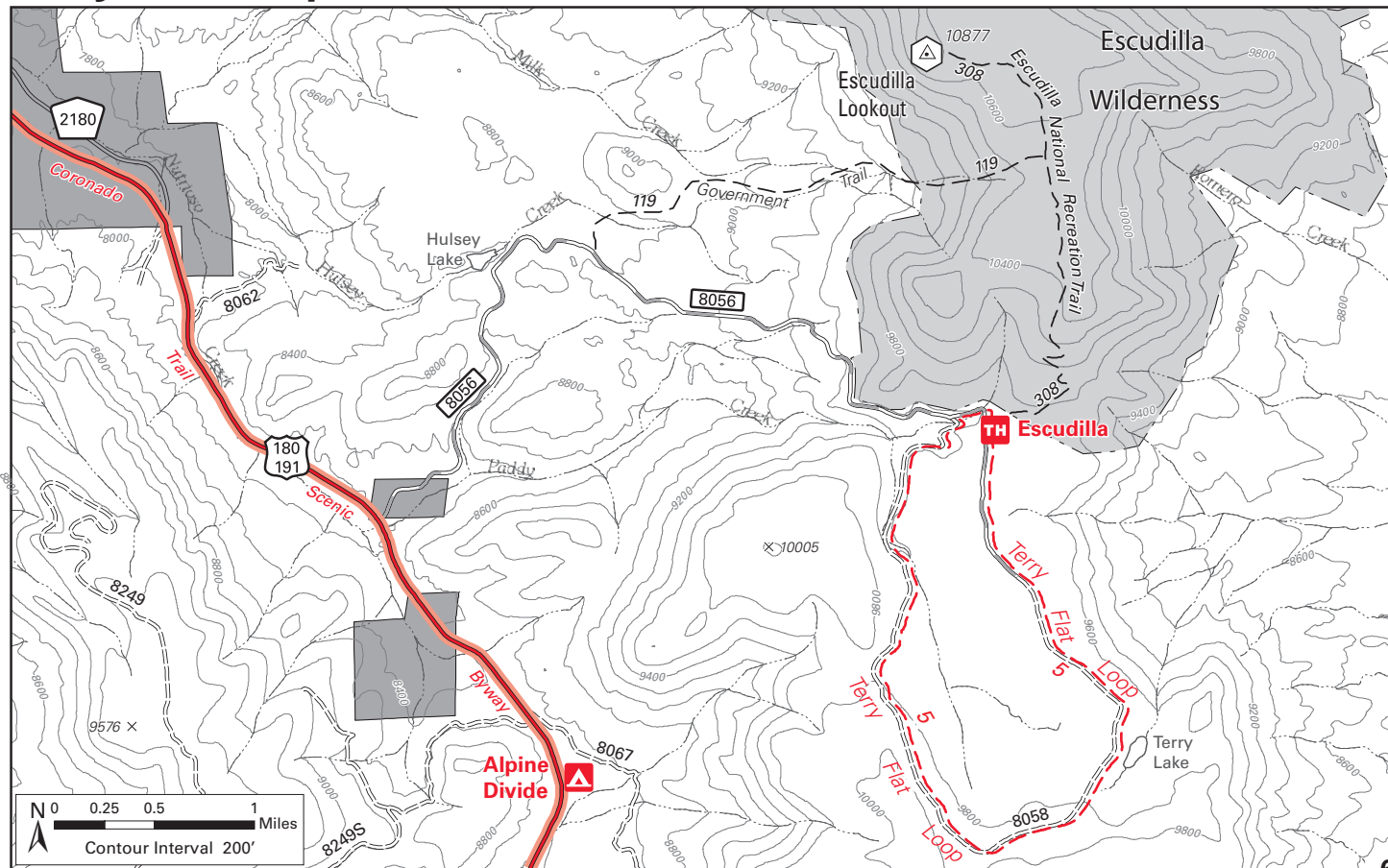
## Ride Log

Terry Flat Loop begins as the road forks to circle the large meadow of Terry Flat. Most riders start to the left. Watch for several spur trails that lead to scenic views off the plateau rim. These are great places to take a break for lunch, a rest, or just to take in the sights.

To add miles to your ride or to feel your lungs a little more, consider riding Forest Road (FR) 8056 from the highway. You'll be climbing 1,400 feet from the highway to the elevation of Terry Flat where you can ride the loop and then bomb your way back down FR 8056 to Hwy. 180/191. Be careful though, Escudilla is one of the most popular trails for hikers and there is likely going to be automotive traffic on the road. Be alert and especially cautious around curves where visibility is limited. Drivers are not always expecting to see a bicycle on the road.



## Terry Flat Loop • 5



# Williams Valley Trails



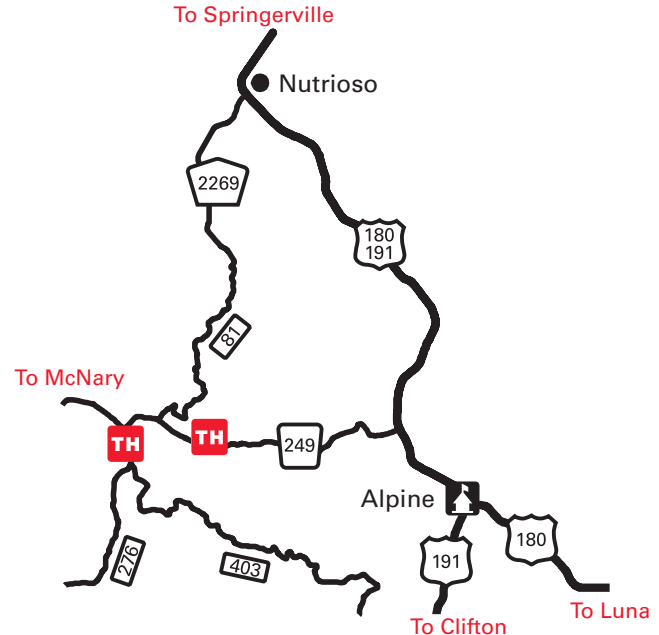
## Access

Follow Hwy. 180/191 northwest from Alpine 1.5 miles and turn west on FR 249 for approximately 4.5 miles to Williams Valley. Use either the parking area at the crest of the divide between the San Francisco and Black River drainages or the parking area on the south side of the road on the west end of the valley.

## Trail Highlights

Williams Valley is considered one of the premier year-round recreation areas in the White Mountains, offering hiking, mountain biking, cross-country ski trails, snowshoeing and snow sledding opportunities to visitors. Since 1991 a large portion of Williams Valley has been managed by the Forest Service as a year-round non-motorized recreation area. The wide, open meadows and mixed forest areas are interlaced with nearly 5 miles of hiking, mountain biking and cross-country ski trails. Williams Valley is one of the most promising endeavors the district has undertaken in its efforts to increase recreational access to the forest while minimizing conflicts between user groups.

Most of the area trails follow the edge of the meadows or run parallel to them just inside the forest edge. The biking and cross-country ski trails are moderate and well suited to most ages and abilities. Gently rolling hills and wide trails provide opportunities for mountain bikers of all levels in the summer season. The trails are well marked and generally well maintained year round as many trails serve skiers in the winter and bicyclists during the summer.





# Williams Valley Winter Recreation Area



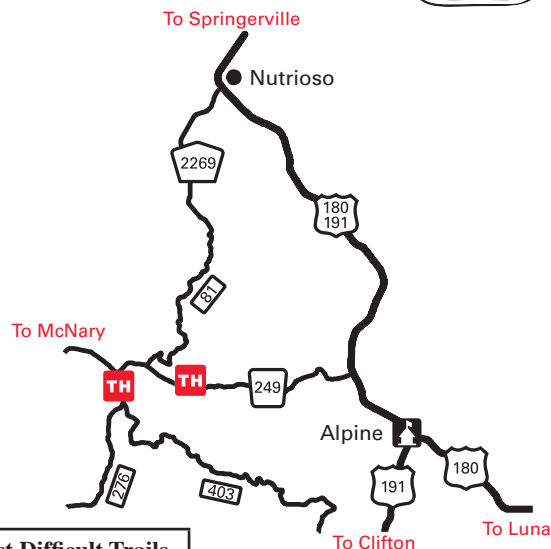
## Access

Follow Hwy. 191 northwest from Alpine 1.5 miles and turn west on Forest Road (FR) 249 for about 4.5 miles to Williams Valley. Use either the parking area at the crest of the divide between the San Francisco and Black River drainages or the parking area south of the road on the west end of the valley. Please note that FR 249 is often not plowed on evenings and weekends or during snowstorms. Grooming operations may be delayed following winter storms.

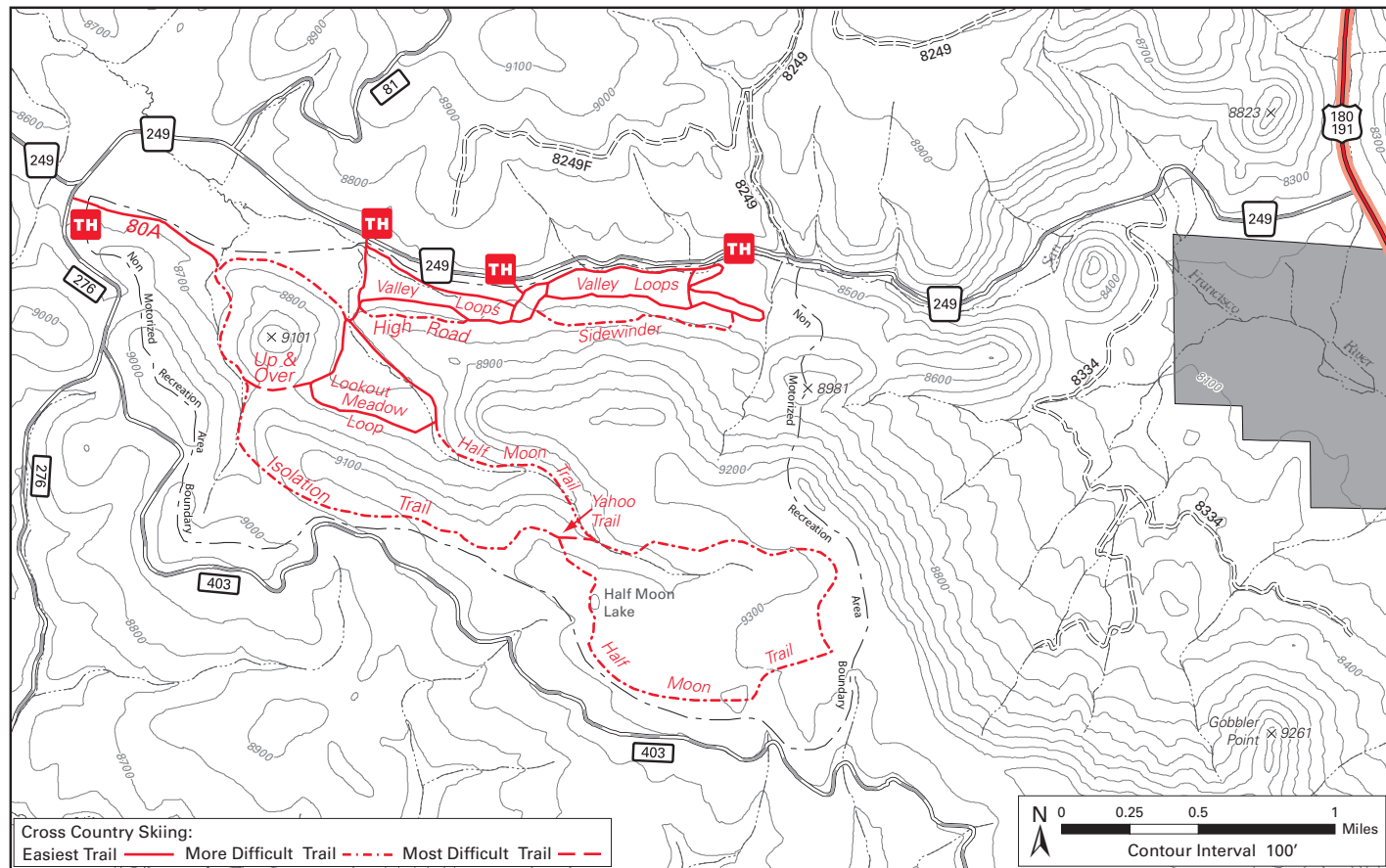
## Trail Highlights

Because of the variety of terrain and conditions, both novice and more experienced skiers will find plenty to enjoy here. Slopes are moderate to gentle and turns are gradual on most of the ski trails, which wind through trees and across open meadows. Powder conditions persist through most of the winter, during which 20 kilometers of trails are maintained for both striding and skate skiing by the Alpine Ranger District. As early spring comes (usually late March), the snow tends to form a hard crust, making off-trail exploring very appealing. The whole area becomes a giant cross-country ski/skating rink, and you are free to fly across the meadows.

Easiest Trails	More Difficult Trails	Most Difficult Trails
Valley Loops Lookout Meadow Loop	Isolation Trail Half Moon Trail Sidewinder High Road	Up and Over Yahoo



# Williams Valley Winter Recreation Area



# Hannagan Meadow Winter Recreation Area



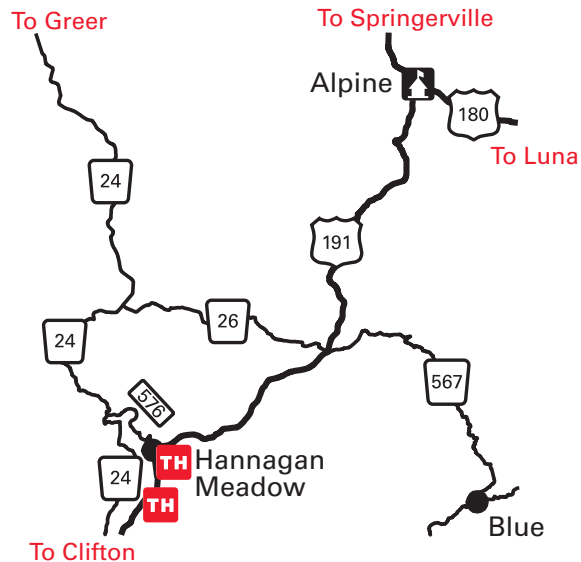
## Access

Drive 23 miles south of Alpine on Hwy. 191. Trailheads are both north and south of Hannagan Lodge on either side of the highway. Please note that Hwy. 191 south of Alpine may not be plowed on evenings, weekends, holidays or during snowstorms. Trail grooming is likely to be delayed following winter storms.

## Trail Highlights

The groomed ski trails at Hannagan Meadow are narrower and generally more challenging than those at Williams Valley. However, all levels of skiers are likely to find suitable skiing from the 14 kilometers of groomed trails.

For those in search of solitude, the back-country trails leading into upper elevations of Blue Range Primitive Area provide some of the best remote skiing in the Southwest. Skiers who possess advanced skiing abilities and snow camping experience should find this area very rewarding. It is recommended that skiers in this area obtain the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests' visitor map from any Forest Service office.



Easiest Trail	More Difficult Trail	Most Difficult Trails
Clell Lee Loop	Aker Lake Trail	KP Rim Loop KP Rim Trail



**Cross Country Skiing:**  
 Easiest Trail ——— More Difficult Trail - - - - - Most Difficult Trail . . . . .



**Notes . . .**

**Notes . . .**

## For more information . . .

About the Alpine Ranger District trails and other recreation opportunities on national forest land, contact:

Alpine Ranger Station  
P.O. Box 469  
42634 Hwy. 180/191  
Alpine, AZ 85920  
Voice: (928) 339-5000  
TTY: (928) 339-4566

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests  
Supervisor's Office  
P.O. Box 640  
30 South Chiricahua Drive  
Springerville, AZ 85938  
Voice: (928) 333-4301  
TTY: (928) 333-6292

