



Forest Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Coronado National Forest, Sierra Vista Ranger District | RG-R3-05-38 | May 2025

Patagonia Mountains and the San Rafael Valley

Forest roads traverse this unique mountain range and grassland, inviting you to explore one of southern Arizona's most stunning landscapes—rich with beauty, history, and recreation opportunities.



Know before you go



LOCATION: Approximately 1 hour south of Tucson, just east of Patagonia, AZ at 5,000 ft. elevation. See map on next page.



WATER: No drinking water is available; bring plenty with you. The nearest place to purchase water is in Patagonia, AZ.



BE SELF-SUFFICIENT: This is a remote area with no amenities and limited cell service; be prepared with plenty of fuel, tools, a spare tire, first aid kit, food, and plenty of water.



SEASONS: Year-round. Be prepared for extreme heat and monsoon storms during summer and cold weather in winter.



MINING: People have mined the Patagonia Mountains for hundreds of years. Historic mine sites and current mining activity occur here.



ROAD INFO: Dirt roads are suitable for most vehicles, but high clearance is recommended. Roads may be impassable after rain or snow. Please stay on designated motor vehicle routes!

Attractions



A SONORAN SAVANNA

Ringed by mountain ranges, this sprawling valley at the headwaters of the Santa Cruz River is home to an amazing diversity of flora and fauna, including rare species found nowhere else on Earth. Seasonal changes transform the landscape from a vibrant sea of green to a golden grassy prairie. The valley provides a travel corridor and nesting habitat for many migratory species.



GRAVEL TRAVEL

Desolate dirt roads cut across this vast grassland, inviting you to take a scenic drive or long-distance pedal through this cultural and biological crossroads. In addition to stunning scenery, routes pass historic and active mines and ranches and historical monuments, as well as creeks, springs, and wooded canyons that harbor unique species of this border region.

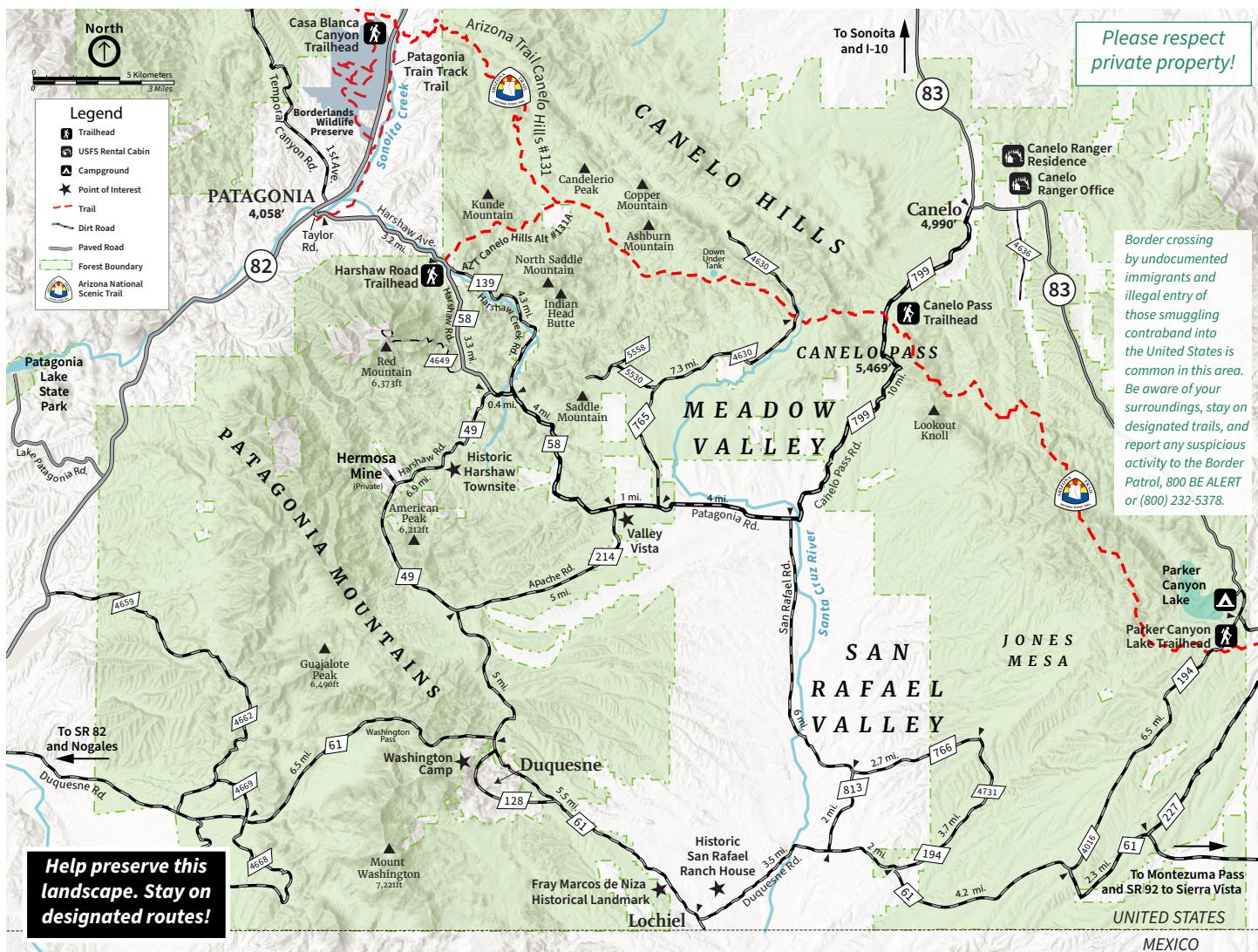
Recreation opportunities

Scenic Driving	Dirt roads wind through the valley and surrounding mountains, leading to historic sites, ghost towns, and abandoned mines, along with incredible views and abundant wildlife. Find the Sierra Vista Ranger District Motor Vehicle Use Map on the Coronado National Forest website or pick up a hard copy at any ranger station. Find suggested routes and a map on the next page. Please stay on designated routes!
Cycling	The Forest Roads that loop through this area offer endless biking opportunities for gravel bikes, e-bikes, and mountain bikes. The Arizona National Scenic Trail, along with more primitive Forest Roads, provide additional options for mountain bikes. Note that e-bikes are not permitted on the Arizona National Scenic Trail . Find suggested routes, guides, and bike rentals online or in Patagonia, AZ.
Exploring the Arizona Trail	Passage 3 of the Arizona National Scenic Trail (Canelo Hills West #131) starts at Canelo Pass, climbs over the Canelo Hills, and rolls across Meadow Valley before reaching SR 82 and the Casa Blanca Canyons Trailhead . See map on next page. Find details at www.aztrail.org .
Camping & Cabins	Dispersed Camping: Dispersed camping is allowed along National Forest System Roads in the Patagonia Mountains and the Meadow and San Rafael Valleys. There are no amenities. Pack out all trash. Locate routes and dispersed camping corridors on the Sierra Vista Ranger District Motor Vehicle Use Map . Please follow the Dispersed Camping Best Practices found on the Coronado National Forest website. Rooms with a View Rental Cabins: Two restored, historic US Forest Service cabins, the Canelo Ranger Residence and the Canelo Ranger Office, are available for rent. Find more information and make reservations up to 6 months in advance at www.recreation.gov .
Wildlife Viewing	This unique area of riparian forest, oak woodland, and native grass prairie provides habitat for an amazing diversity of species, including pronghorn, Coues' white-tailed deer, mule deer, Montezuma quail, wintering raptors, migratory sparrows, and the rare yellow-billed cuckoo.

EMERGENCY OR FIRE: DIAL 911

SIERRA VISTA RANGER STATION: (520) 378-0311

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Multiuse Routes

SAFETY: Expect mining traffic between the Town of Patagonia and the South32 Hermosa Mine. Drive and ride with caution. Minimize dust. High-visibility clothing is recommended for cyclists. Ride alert and single file.

Canelo Hills West #131 Arizona Trail Passage 3 17.7 miles one way	From Canelo Pass, this 17.7-mile stretch of singletrack trail heads west through the Canelo Hills and rolls across Meadow Valley to SR 82 and the Casa Blanca Canyons Trailhead 4 miles north of Patagonia. Open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Motorized vehicles, including e-bikes, are prohibited. Hike or ride out and back, or make a loop with Forest Roads. Find a detailed map of the trail and up-to-date route information on the Arizona Trail Association website .
Patagonia Mountains & Harshaw Scenic Loop FR 58, 49, 61, and SR 82 45-mile loop	Get a close-up look at historic and active mines on this 45-mile loop that skirts the eastern flanks of the mineral-rich Patagonia Mountains. See the modern mining infrastructure of the Hermosa Mine and visit the remnants of the historic Harshaw Townsite and Washington Camp while enjoying views of the expansive San Rafael Valley and the steep, wooded hillsides along Washington Pass. Some paved and some dirt roads. High-clearance recommended.
Canelo Pass Scenic Route FR 58 and 799 25 miles one way	This 25-mile (one-way) route starts in Patagonia and winds through wooded hills, crossing Harshaw Creek a few times, as it climbs to an incredible vista overlooking the broad, grassy expanse of the Meadow and San Rafael Valleys. Continue across the valley to the Santa Cruz River and then up and over Canelo Pass. Dirt road suitable for most vehicles. *Fantastic views!
San Rafael Scenic Loop FR 58, 61, and SR 82 60-mile loop	From Patagonia, this route climbs along Harshaw Creek to the Valley Vista and then turns south following the Santa Cruz River through the San Rafael Valley. Along the route, you pass historic and active ranches. Don't miss the historic San Rafael House (closed to the public) and the Fray Marcos Landmark. Enjoy views of the Huachuca and Patagonia Mountains and distant ranges in Mexico.
Meadow Valley Scenic Route FR 765 10 miles one way	*NEW* Travel the newly opened and realigned FR 765 to explore the endless vistas and scenic wonders of Meadow Valley. The Bog Hole Cienega and other natural water sources make this an excellent area for wildlife viewing. Travel out and back any distance, or mountain bikers can make loops using sections of the Arizona Trail (Canelo Hills West #131). Be aware that Trail #131 has steep, rocky sections interspersed with smooth, flowing singletrack. Some hike-a-bike is possible.

This Arizona National Scenic Trail is managed in partnership with the Arizona Trail Association.

www.aztrail.org