



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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