









Cave Creek Canyon
The colorful cliffs and cool creek of this majestic canyon, nestled at 5,000 feet on the eastern slopes of the Chiricahua Mountains, invite you to experience the amazing beauty and biological diversity of southeastern Arizona any time of year.

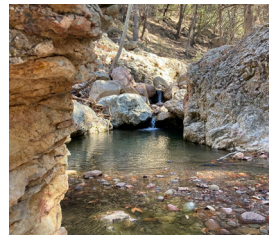
Know before you go

-  **SEASONS:** Year-round. FR 42 and 42B close for snow, floods, or fire danger. Contact ranger station for current conditions.
-  **CAMPING:** First come, first served. Pay with cash or check on site. Campgrounds fill quickly on weekends in spring and fall.
-  **CABIN RENTALS:** Rent the historic Portal Bunkhouse or Portal CCC House up to six months in advance at www.recreation.gov.
-  **ROAD INFO:** Vehicles are limited to 41 feet in length on FR 42. There are no gas stations in Portal, AZ or Rodeo, NM.
-  **WILDLIFE:** Enjoy watching wildlife from a distance for their safety and yours. Please keep pets on a leash.
-  **WATER:** Drinking water is available at Idlewilde and Stewart from May through October and at Sunny Flat year-round.

Attractions



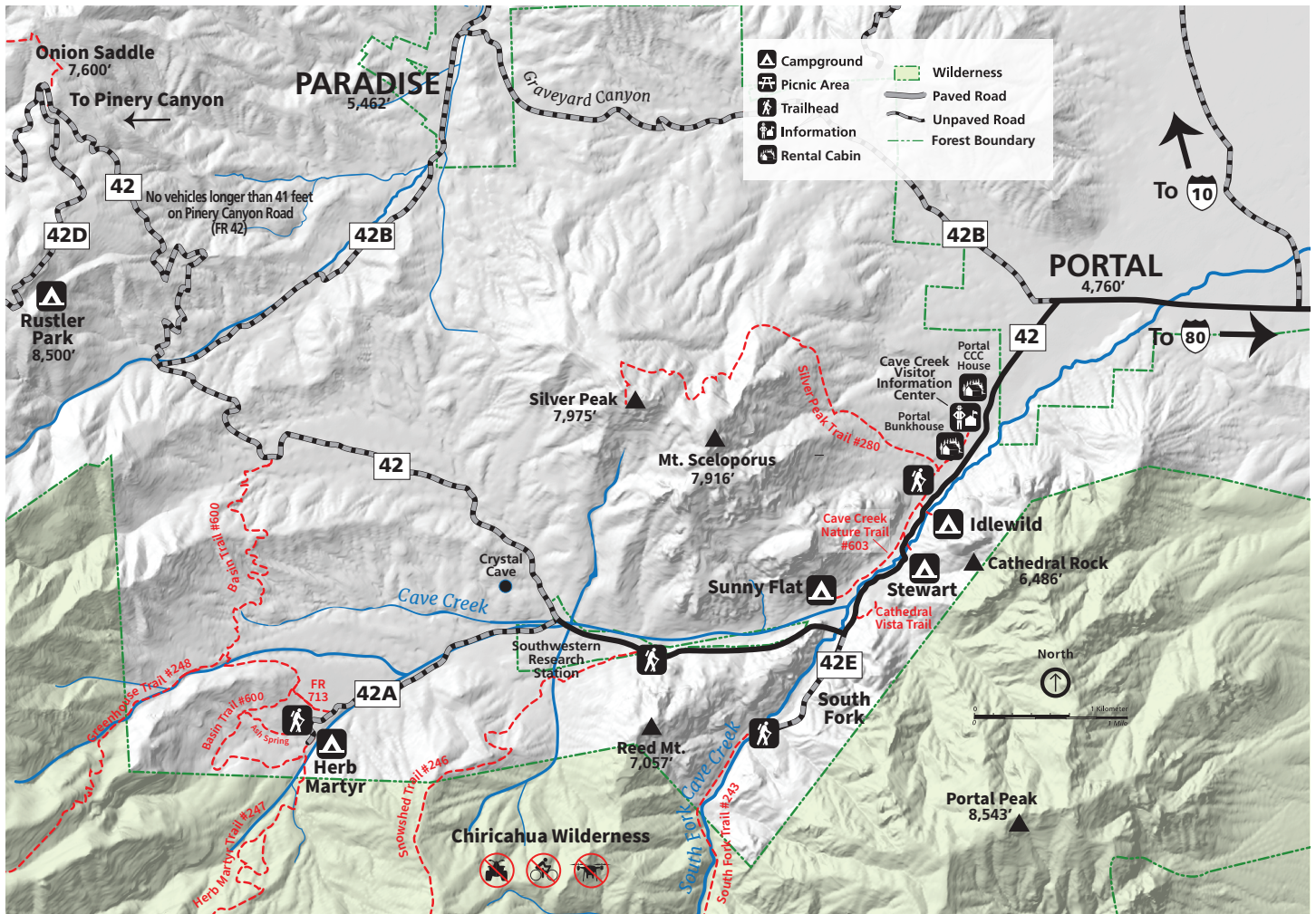
CAVE CREEK VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
Formerly a ranger residence, the Visitor Center offers exhibits, books, brochures, and maps about the area. Sitting areas and a native plant garden grace the grounds. Open year-round. For more information, current hours, and event schedule, visit www.friendsofcavecreekcanyon.com.



CAVE CREEK
Cave Creek drains the largest watershed in the Chiricahua Mountains. Springs, snowmelt, and rain feed this perennial creek that supports riparian habitat for myriad wildlife. Creekside trails, waterfalls, and swimming holes make it a fantastic year-round recreation destination.

Activities	
Hiking	Hiking is one of the best ways to experience the wonders of the canyon. Map and trail descriptions on next page.
Camping	Four first-come, first-served campgrounds offer shaded sites along Cave Creek. Please practice Leave No Trace principles. Idlewilde: Tent sites only. No trailers. Pay with cash or check on site. Water is available May-Oct. Closed Nov. 1 through Apr. 1. Stewart: Pull-in sites. No hookups. Trailers limited to 16 ft. Pay with cash or check on site. Water available May-Oct. Can close for flood risk. Sunny Flat: Trailers up to 28 ft. No hookups. Pay with cash or check on site. Water available year-round. Can close for flood risk. Herb Martyr: Tent sites only. No water. Vault toilet. Pay with cash or check on site. High-clearance recommended.
Wildlife viewing	Owing to the location, perennial water, and varied topography, Cave Creek Canyon is home to an incredible diversity of wildlife. The canyon is also a world-class birding destination with 370 bird species, including migratory species at the northern end of their range. Spring, summer, and fall are the best seasons to see trogons and hummingbirds. Winter is good for nesting raptors. Other common wildlife in the canyon year-round include Coues white-tailed deer, Gould's turkey, black bear, coati, and numerous species of bats, lizards, snakes, ants, beetles, and butterflies. Best Birding Spots: All campgrounds, South Fork Road, the first mile of South Fork Trail, and the Nature Trail.
Scenic driving	Cave Creek Loop: This 17-mi. loop takes you around Silver Peak and through the old mining town of Paradise. Follow FR 42 for about 9 mi. to the Paradise Turnoff (FR 42B). Take FR 42B for 3 mi. to Paradise. Turn right again (still FR 42B) to return to Portal. Great views. Pinery Canyon Road (FR 42): This 23-mi. route (one way from the Visitor Center to SR 181) climbs out of Cave Creek Canyon and up to Onion Saddle (12 mi.) and the junction for Rustler Park. Narrow, rugged, dirt road with many switchbacks. High-clearance recommended.

EMERGENCY OR FIRE: DIAL 911 **DOUGLAS RANGER STATION: (520) 364-3468**



About Cave Creek Canyon

The Chiricahua Mountains, known as *Dzit Kawa* (or Great Mountain) to the Chiricahua Apache, have been home to Indigenous people for thousands of years. Pictographs, pottery, and other evidence suggest that more people might have lived near this canyon 1,000 years ago than do now. The Apache were forcibly removed from the region in 1886, but maintain connections to this landscape today. The late 1800s brought an influx of ranchers and miners. Place names in the canyon recall these early settlers.

This mountain range, one of southern Arizona's *sky islands*, rises steeply out of the surrounding grasslands like a forested island in a desert sea. Wetter and cooler conditions at higher elevations simulate the variations in habitat encountered when traveling from Mexico to Canada. The proximity to neotropical Mexico, the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, the Great Plains, and the Rocky Mountains also contributes to the incredible diversity of plant and animal species found in the area.

The cliffs and pinnacles flanking the canyon are formed of rhyolite, a hardened volcanic ash that eroded over millennia into the unique shapes you see today. As the ash solidified, gas clouds created pockets, which turned into the caves that now give the canyon its name. Minerals in the rhyolite create the rosy hues of the rock. Colorful lichens colonize the surface.



Hiking Trails

Safety: Be prepared with plenty of water, sun protection, and extra layers. Watch for poison ivy. If it has leaves of three, let it be!



Cave Creek Nature Trail #603	1.25 mi. one way	Access this easy trail from the Visitor Information Center, Silver Peak Parking Area, or Sunny Flat Campground. The trail winds along Cave Creek and passes through oak-juniper and riparian woodland. Benches along the way offer places to sit and soak in the sights and sounds of the canyon. Great for birding.
Silver Peak Trail #280	4.5 mi. one way	This moderately difficult trail starts from the Visitor Information Center or the Silver Peak Parking Area. Experience stunning vistas as you climb through multiple habitat zones on the ascent to the summit. (3,000 ft. elevation gain)
Cathedral Vista Trail	0.3 mi. one way	This short, easy trail starts at the trailhead on the south side of the road between Stewart Campground and South Fork Road. The wooded path ends at a vista with a bench, viewing scope, and spectacular view. Not to miss!
South Fork Trail #243	7.2 mi. one way	Take this wooded trail along the South Fork of Cave Creek out and back any distance. Reach the Burro Trail junction at 2 mi. Stay right to continue on the South Fork Trail or turn left to take the Burro Trail 3 mi. to Horseshoe Saddle. Great for birding.
Ash Spring Loop (FR 713, #600, #247A, #247)	2.3 mi. loop	From the upper parking area at Herb Martyr Campground, walk back on FR 42A for 0.35 mi. to the Greenhouse Trail (FR 713). Follow this for 0.3 mi. to the Basin Trail. Turn left and continue for 0.77 mi. to the Ash Spring Trail. Turn left and after about 1 mi. turn left again on the Herb Martyr Trail. Drop down to Cima Creek and then veer right to climb up to the campground.

This site is managed in partnership with the Friends of Cave Creek Canyon.

www.friendsofcavecreekcanyon.com

Produced by the Public Lands Interpretive Association www.publiclands.org