

## Essential Information



**Fees:** There is a \$\_\_\_\_\_ per vehicle parking fee collected at the Catwalk through a self-pay fee station. America the Beautiful Pass Program provides discounts to fees; Glenwood Ranger Station offers a \$\_\_\_\_\_ annual Catwalk Pass.



**Accessibility:** The universal design trail (0.5 mile) is designed with fewer barriers to aid trail accessibility. The trail has a hard asphalt surface. A relatively long section of the trail is uphill (maximum grade is 8 percent). Visitors using wheelchairs may require assistance.



**Quick Answers:**

- » The Catwalk Trail is 1.10 miles in length (one way) and should take an average of 1 to 1.5 hours to hike round trip.
- » The large trees with white trunks in the picnic area are Arizona sycamore.
- » The pipeline was put in the canyon to transport water down to the mill and townsite.
- » The furthest iron bridge was flown into the canyon by helicopter in three separate sections in the 1980s.
- » Wildlife that lives in Whitewater Canyon includes: Mule Deer, bighorn sheep, javelina, coati, snakes, lizards, birds and fox.
- » Dogs are allowed on the Catwalk Trail if they are on a leash.
- » Volcanic rhyolite (known as "Cooney Tuff") are the rocks that make up the canyon walls.

### For More Information...

Gila National Forest  
 Glenwood Ranger District  
 P.O. Box 8  
 Glenwood, NM 88039  
 Voice & TTY: (505) 539-2481  
 Web Site: [www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila)

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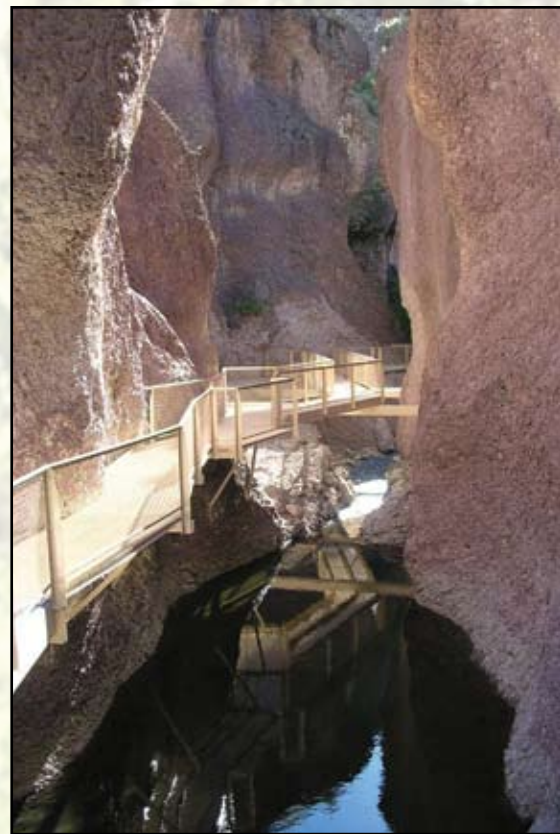
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**United States Department of Agriculture**  
 Forest Service  
 Southwestern Region  
 RG-R3-06-02

## Whitewater Picnic Area And Catwalk National Recreation Trail

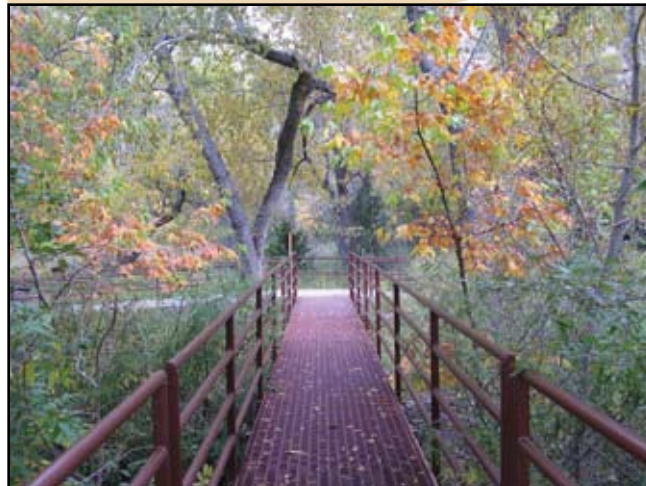
### A Unique Universal Design Trail Winding Through A Water Filled Canyon



## A Canyon of Treasure

Many Glenwood, NM, residents call the Catwalk of Whitewater Canyon a jewel, their precious and valuable gem. They see it as representative of historical and cultural events occurring between its walls over a century ago. They appreciate its value as a high desert riparian area that provides a home to diverse flora and fauna. For them, the canyon's massive volcanic walls hold stories of mining, of hidden treasures from Old West outlaws, of the lure of gold and silver. The Arizona sycamore and narrow leaf cottonwood trees massed along the creek tell their own stories of struggle and success in the life of this gem of an ecosystem. Whitewater Canyon provides pleasures for everyone, from hiking, swimming, picnicking and fishing to contemplation of Nature's grandeur.

The Catwalk's history began with the discovery of gold and silver in the rugged Mogollon Mountains (muggy-own) above Whitewater Canyon. In 1893, the small town of Graham (also called Whitewater) grew up around a mill, located on the west hillside near the present day parking area. Ore was dropped from Whitewater Mesa into a chute and funneled down to the mill where it was crushed to separate gold and silver from rock. The mill needed water to run its electrical generators. A pipeline was constructed to channel water from a water collection point 3 miles upstream in Whitewater Creek down to the mill at the mouth of Whitewater Canyon. Brace holes were drilled into the solid rock canyon walls to hold timbers and iron bars that supported a 4-inch pipeline. The hand-wrought pipe was packed in sawdust, then encased in wood to prevent

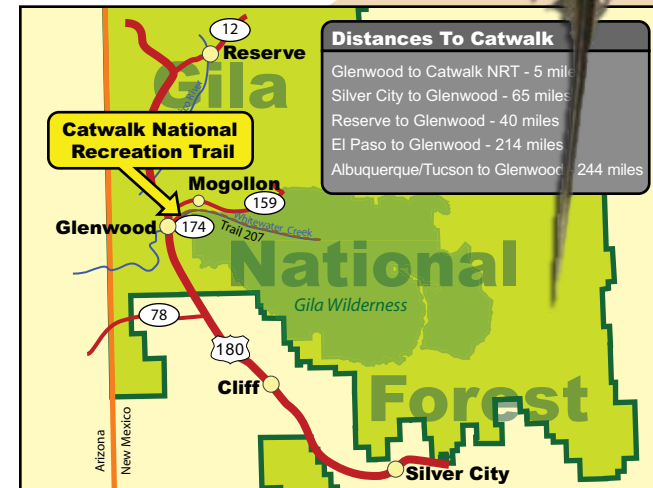


View across the second bridge through sycamore trees in fall

freezing in the winter. In 1897, a bigger generator was purchased; it was so heavy that a 40-horse team had to haul it to the mill site. The new generator required more water, so an 18-inch pipeline was installed parallel to the original 4-inch one. Because the pipeline needed constant maintenance, the workers who walked it dubbed it the "Catwalk".

The mill lasted only about 10 years. About 1908 the mill and pipeline were dismantled and the materials were sold. For the next several years, Whitewater Canyon was left undisturbed. Then, in the mid-1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) rebuilt the Catwalk as a recreation attraction for the Gila National Forest. The Forest Service has rebuilt the Catwalk Trail several times after devastating floods have taken their toll. In 1978, 1 mile of the historic Catwalk pipeline route was designated a National Recreation Trail (NRT). Now, from the suspension bridge that denotes the end of the Catwalk National Recreation Trail, the backpacker can connect to 325 miles of interlocking trails high in the Mogollon Mountains.

Wild Turkey Feather →



Location of Catwalk National Recreation Trail

40 - 20 Million Years Ago	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	Present Day		
<p><b>Significant Historical Dates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>34 million - Cooney Tuff</li> <li>2 million - Canyon Cutting</li> <li>Widespread volcanic activity in Mogollon Region</li> </ul>	<p>1553 - Apache Territory until military forts were established</p>	<p>1848 - Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo</p> <p>1870 - Cooney discovers gold and silver in Mogollon Mtns.</p> <p>1893 - Graham Mill built</p> <p>1897 - 18-inch pipeline replaced 4-inch pipeline</p>	<p>1917 - Population of Mogollon, NM - 2000</p> <p>1930 - CCC assigned to build Catwalk Trail</p> <p>1961 - Forest Service built metal Catwalk</p> <p>1978 - Catwalk declared "National Recreation Trail"</p>	<p>2002 - Universal Design Trail project begins</p> <p>2005 - Opening of Universal Design Trail</p>	<p><b>American Dipper (Cinclus mexicanus)</b></p> <p>This species inhabits the canyon and are a medium size gray bird that "dips" as it walks in and alongside the water. It is the only songbird that regularly swims and is found along fast-flowing rocky streams. Voice: Song of high, whistled or trilled phrases repeated two to four times in thrasher-like pattern. Has steady rhythm and is much higher and clearer than any thrasher.</p> <p>the Catwalk National Recreation Trail.</p> <p>American Dipper - a bird commonly seen along the Catwalk National Recreation Trail.</p>	<p>Entrance to the Catwalk National Recreation Trail and picnic area. Arizona sycamore trees provide shade in summer and colorful winter foliage.</p>	<p>A section of the metal walkway suspended above Whitewater Creek. The walkway provides spectacular views as it winds through the canyon.</p>	<p>A natural swimming hole found about 0.7 mile along the Catwalk National Recreation Trail. Stairs lead down to the pool from the trail.</p>	<p>Rock bolts used to stabilize the cliff face above a portion of the "universal design trail" toward the top of the slope.</p>



## WELCOME 1

Past the native plant garden and upon entrance to the picnic area, you will find a map of the Whitewater Recreation Area. This map depicts the canyon and provides specific information about each trail. The Catwalk National Recreation Trail starts to the left. At the first bridge, two trails diverge. Across the bridge to the east is the "universal design trail" (maximum grade of 8 percent, 48" wide trailbed with a hardened surface). Capital Improvement Project Funds from 2002 financed this trail and other improvements. The trail on the west side is better known as the "old trail." It is maintained to a standard for moderate difficulty. The trail has varying degrees of grade, natural surface, and some steps. Both trails meet up again at the metal walkway (catwalk) that is suspended about 10 feet (depending on water levels) above Whitewater Creek.

Visitor safety in the canyon and recreation area is of great importance to the Forest Service.

- » Appropriate footwear is advised. Sandals and flip-flops are not suitable for hiking the trail.
- » Rattlesnakes, coati, squirrels and other animals are found in the canyon. Do not feed the animals – they may bite.
- » Poison ivy is present in some areas along the trail.
- » Watch for falling rocks especially after heavy rain.

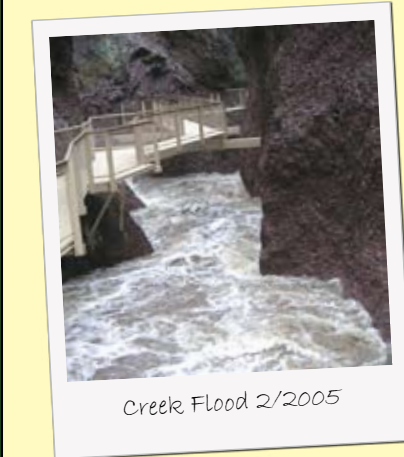
## PIPE DREAMS 2

There is little to remind today's visitors that a century or so ago life in this part of New Mexico was full of danger and uncertainty. Struggles raged between the resident Apaches and the newcomers. This part of the territory grew slowly until the middle of the 1800s when military forts were established to protect the folks streaming through this area on their way to the California gold rush. The forts brought many soldiers into the area. Gold and silver were discovered here by James C. Cooney, a soldier stationed at Fort Bayard, just east of Silver City, NM. Cooney could do nothing to develop his discoveries until he was discharged from the service in 1875. He then organized a party to prospect the district. Among them was John Lambert who found rich gold and silver ore just above Whitewater Creek. The mines that Lambert developed include the Confidence, Bluebird, Blackbird and Redbird which fed the mill at Graham.



## WHEN IT RAINS 3

During rains or snowmelt, massive flows of water funnel through the narrow gorge from atop the Mogollon Mountain peaks. The watershed starts high on top of the Mogollon Mountains and runs down Whitewater Creek past Redstone Park, Deloche Trail, and the Powerhouse Trail and comes crashing through the mouth of the canyon. The narrow, confined canyon is susceptible to flash flooding. You will see a high water marker along the trail as you walk along the metal walkway there have been more than 15 major floods in the canyon in the last 40 years. When visiting in the monsoon season (July – September) please be aware of weather conditions and the possibility of heavy rain both in the canyon and in the upper watershed. Whitewater Creek can rise suddenly during heavy rainstorms. Canyon walls crumble with normal weathering. Be aware of your surroundings.



## THE RICH LIFE 4

In contrast to much of the dry Southwest, the Catwalk is an area of unusual biological diversity. One reason for this diversity is the perennial flow of Whitewater Creek. Another reason is the Catwalk's geographic position where the northern fingers of the Sierra Madrean flora and fauna reach up and overlap with the southernmost extent of the Rocky Mountain species. The creek supports a lush corridor of green that is striking against the browns and grays of the surrounding desert land. The elevation change from the creek bottom to the tops of the canyon cliffs also adds to the diversity. The diversity in plant life brings with it a diversity of animal and bird life. Watch for dippers and bighorn sheep. The natural diversity and cultural history aspects found in the area are both important and intimately connected.



## SUSPENDED IN TIME 5

Visitors to the Catwalk can see many hints of the cultural past. Most of the hints are from the late 1800s gold and silver mining and processing... the rock walls and wooden remains of the mill; the metal catwalk hanging on the walls of the canyon; pieces of the pipe and hand forged hardware; the durability and attractiveness of the rock work from the times of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the mid-1930s, as well as the efforts over the years of the Forest Service. Evidence of the indigenous past of the canyon is more difficult to discern. The Mogollon and Apache people made their homes around Whitewater Canyon. The Chiricahua Apache's knowledge of the rivers, canyons and springs in the mountains and their ability to travel without leaving traces of their passage, enabled them to elude capture for a long time. It also enabled them to live in the area without leaving evidence of their time here.



## A CANYON IS BORN 6

About 34 million years ago violent volcanic eruptions caused pyroclastic (pyro = fire, clastic = fragment) flows. Instead of a tall mountain with one eruption chamber, there were several magma chambers spread over many miles. The volcanoes collapsed to form the Bursum caldera — a large, bowl shaped depression that stretches from here to the Gila Cliff Dwellings, some 30 miles away. The pyroclastic flows that make up the rocks in Whitewater Canyon are called Cooney Tuff. This basic igneous rock was changed by pressure and heat from volcano action, earthquakes and movement of land. Faults formed in the rock masses. Water, seeking to flow down to the river from the highlands followed the weak point of the rock mass, the fault. The erosive power of water working on a weak point between very hard masses of rock resulted in the narrow, slot canyon.

