

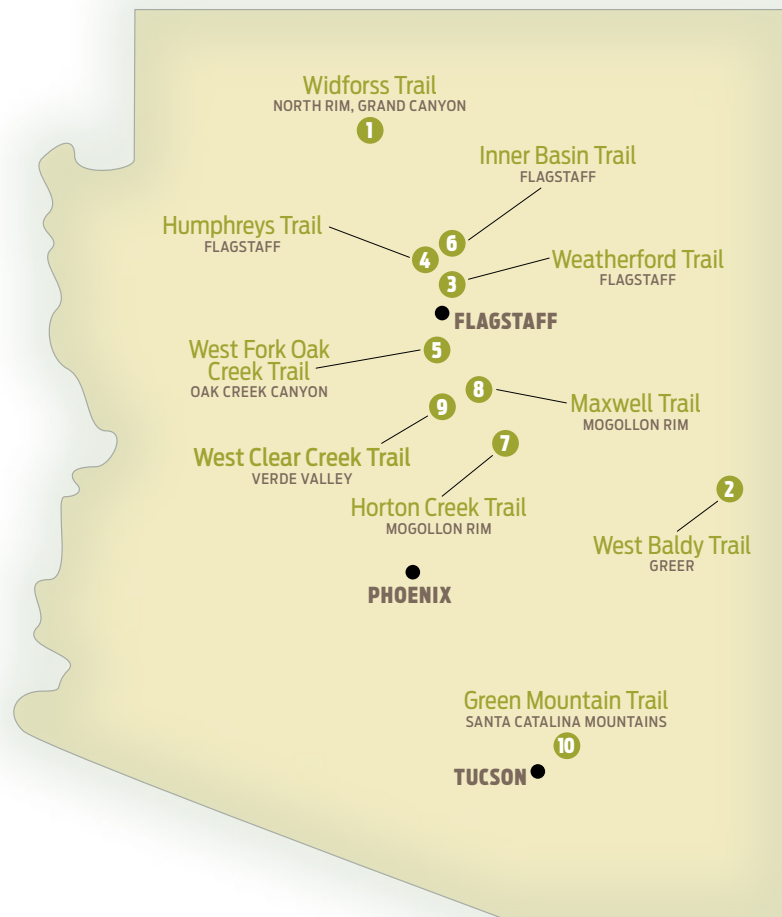
SUMMER HIKING GUIDE

Arizona is a dream state for hikers. There's a trail for everyone, and the weather allows for year-round hiking. Summer, however, is when most people hit the trail. Thus, our fifth-annual *Summer Hiking Guide*, which spotlights our top 10 trails, along with some bonus hikes in the White Mountains and five wheelchair-accessible trails that are just right this time of year.

BY ROBERT STIEVE

One of the most popular trails in the Coconino National Forest, the West Fork Oak Creek Trail requires several creek-crossings.

| PAUL MARKOW



Editor's Note: What follows is our take on the 10 best summer hikes in Arizona. The key word in that sentence is "summer." That's why Bright Angel and Seven Falls and Hellsgate and all the rest aren't on the list. It's too hot to hike those trails this time of year. You'll also notice that we haven't included any hikes in the vicinity of the Wallow Fire — Mount Baldy is as close as we get. Although most of the trails in the White Mountains have been reopened since the fire, they haven't been cleaned up, and therefore pose a higher threat to a hiker's safety. Even after a fire is out, many hazards still exist, including stump holes, falling trees and the potential for flash floods. In addition, some areas in the fire zone remain closed, so if you do plan to hike there this summer, keep in mind that any violation of a closure order is punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or six months in prison.

WHAT TO PACK IN YOUR BACKPACK

- Pen and paper
- Whistle
- Waterproof matches
- First-aid kit
- Pocketknife or multitool
- Extra clothing
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Water
- Compass (a GPS device does not replace a compass)
- GPS device
- Fire starter or tinder kit
- Pocket flashlight (with spare batteries)
- Extra food
- Space blanket (lightweight emergency shelter)
- Insect repellent



1 Widforss Trail NORTH RIM, GRAND CANYON

Named for Gunnar Widforss, an artist who painted landscapes in the national parks in the 1920s and 1930s, this relatively easy trail follows the rim of the Grand Canyon to Widforss Point. And getting there, you'll pass through an idyllic forest of Colorado blue spruce, Engelmann spruce, white firs, Douglas firs and aspens, the latter of which can be seen growing in droves where recent fires have burned. You'll be amazed at how quickly the aspens move in and shoot up when the sun isn't blocked by the towering evergreens. Moseying along, you'll catch glimpses of the Grand Canyon to your left. Then, after about 30 minutes, you'll come to a short side trail that leads right to the rim, from which you can see into Transept Canyon below. The scenery stays much the same as you chalk up the miles, and after about an hour, the trail angles away from the rim and eventually leads to a lush valley, which ranks as the best part of the trail — other than the stretches with Canyon views, of course. Not far from the lush valley is the approach to Widforss Point. Although the trail stops short of the actual point, the views from the approach are out of this world.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 10 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Easy
ELEVATION: 8,200 to 7,811 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 36°13.422', W 112°03.896'
DIRECTIONS: From the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim, drive 4 miles north and turn left onto the gravel road marked with a sign



The Widforss Trail follows the North Rim of the Grand Canyon to Widforss Point, where sweeping views of the Canyon, including Zoroaster Temple, abound. | PAUL GILL

for the trailhead.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: National Park Service fees apply.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

DOGS ALLOWED: No

USGS MAP: Bright Angel Point

INFORMATION: Backcountry Office, Grand Canyon National Park, 928-638-7875 or www.nps.gov/grca

Foot Note: At the height of Gunnar Widforss' career in 1929, just after his 50th birthday, the American stock market crashed, sending the artist into near obscurity and his paintings into the artistic abyss of the underappreciated. Although Widforss is considered one of the great painters of our national parks, he received limited exposure. Prior to an exhibit at the Museum of Northern Arizona in 2009-2010, there hadn't been a major Widforss exhibit since 1969. Widforss, whose obscurity remains a paradox, is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

2 West Baldy Trail GREER

For peak-baggers in Arizona, Mount Baldy is one leg of the Triple Crown — along with Humphreys Peak and Escudilla Mountain (which is currently closed because of the Wallow Fire). The first 2 miles of Baldy cut through a series of wide alpine meadows and follow the West Fork of the Little Colorado River, climbing gradually. This is the busiest stretch, but as the trail gets a little tougher, the crowds thin out — the hike won't kill you, but the altitude does have an effect. After the 2-mile mark, the trail enters a thick forest dominated by spruce, firs and aspens — other than a few small meadows, the trail won't break out of the timber until the top. From there, it climbs gradually to a series of steep switchbacks, eventually merging with the East Baldy Trail near the Fort Apache Reservation boundary. The summit of Mount Baldy is on the reservation, and it's closed to nontribal members. You'll be tempted to "sneak" to the top; however, this is sacred land, and it should be respected. Trespassers who ignore the boundary are subject to fines and could have their packs confiscated. If you're a peak-bagger, here's the good news: The highest point of the ridge isn't Mount Baldy (11,403 feet), but an unnamed area (11,420 feet) on Forest Service land to the north.



West Baldy Trail near Greer cuts through lush alpine meadows and follows the West Fork of the Little Colorado River. | PAUL GILL

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 14 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 9,287 to 11,200 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 33°57.888', W 109°30.071'
DIRECTIONS: From Eagar, drive west on State Route 260 for 18.7 miles to State Route 273. Turn left and drive south for 7.6 miles to the trailhead at Sheeps Crossing.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Mount Baldy
INFORMATION: Springerville Ranger District, 928-333-6200 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

Foot Note: The Sitgreaves National Forest was named for Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves, a topographical engineer for the government who conducted the first scientific expedition across Arizona in the early 1850s. Later, the U.S. Army established a series of forts in New Mexico and Arizona. To supply these forts and settlements, a military road was built linking Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Camp Verde, Arizona. Part of this road, called the General Crook Trail, runs almost the length of the Sitgreaves National Forest. The Apache National Forest is named for the Native Americans who live in this area. Together, the forests are home to Arizona's scenic White Mountains.



ARIZONA TRAIL TRIVIA

- The Arizona Trail is one of only 11 National Scenic Trails in the United States
- Southernmost point: U.S./Mexico border south of Sierra Vista in the Coronado National Memorial
- Northernmost point: Utah border 25 miles east of Fredonia at the BLM's State Line Campground
- High point: North Rim of the Grand Canyon (9,275 feet)
- Low point: Kelvin Bridge over the Gila River (1,768 feet)
- 93,000 feet of cumulative elevation gain from south to north
- Fastest crossing: Kurt Refsnider (7 days, 6 hours, 35 minutes) on a mountain bike
- Crosses 9 mountain ranges, the Grand Canyon and the Mogollon Rim
- Travels through 7 designated wilderness areas
- Traverses 4 national forests
- First section was dedicated on July 1, 1988
- Last section was dedicated on December 16, 2011
- 99% of the trail is located on public land
- Trail features 7 distinct bioregions
- Open 24 hours per day, 365 days per year

— Molly J. Smith

3

Weatherford Trail FLAGSTAFF

This easy-to-follow route, which was grazed by the devastating Schultz Fire in June 2010, begins at Schultz Tank and climbs gradually through an open grove of ponderosas, past the Kachina Trail, and into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. Just past the wilderness boundary, you'll skirt the ridge of a shaded canyon on your right. As you look across to the opposite slope, you'll see a kaleidoscope of greens. The colors of the trees are stunning. And so are the stately aspens you'll encounter along the trail. Moving on, the trail becomes a series of gradual switchbacks and the vegetation changes from ponderosas and aspens to alpine species including corkbark firs and Engelmann spruce. Eventually you'll get to a point where the forest opens up and views of the peaks steal the show. From there, it's a quick hop to the top of Doyle Saddle, the turnaround point for this hike. If it isn't stormy, settle in and enjoy the views of Northern Arizona.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 14.8 miles round-trip (to Doyle Saddle)
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,103 to 11,344 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 35°17.178', W 111°37.627'
DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 180 for 2 miles to Forest Road 420 (Schultz Pass Road). Turn right onto FR 420 and continue past the end of the pavement for approximately 5.5 miles to the trailhead, which is on the right side of the road.



The Weatherford Trail climbs amid ponderosa pines, aspens and Engelmann spruce, and into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. | TOM BEAN



VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Humphreys Peak
INFORMATION: Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: Beyond Doyle Saddle, the Weatherford Trail eventually leads to the Fremont-Agassiz Saddle. On the Doyle Saddle, you'll find the rusty remains of Allen Doyle's tourist camp, which are strewn about. Doyle was known as Arizona's foremost hunting guide in the early 19th century; however, there aren't many accounts of his colorful career. What we do know is that Doyle shared many adventures with famous author Zane Grey and, unknowingly, inspired many of the characters in Grey's Western novels.

4

Humphreys Trail FLAGSTAFF

Humphreys Peak is the king of the hills in Arizona. It's the pinnacle. The highest point in the state. If you can make it to the summit,

which tops out at 12,633 feet, you've conquered all there is to conquer — from a hiking perspective. The trail begins at the far end of the lower parking lot for Arizona Snowbowl ski resort. After a short climb through a lush meadow of grasses and wildflowers, you'll start to smell the evergreens as the trail enters the deep forest. About the time the sky disappears, you'll be crossing into the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. From there, the well-maintained trail climbs for several miles to the Fremont-Agassiz Saddle, which marks the beginning of Arizona's only tundra region. At that level, nothing but bristlecone pines can survive, and even those disappear before the peak. The last mile or so to the summit is the most challenging stretch of the hike, but it's worth the effort. From the top, you'll be able to see the Grand Canyon and the Hopi mesas to the north, the White Mountains to the east and Oak Creek Canyon to the south. Look up, too. Thunderstorms and lightning strikes can roll in without warning. Don't press your luck.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 9 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Strenuous
ELEVATION: 9,327 to 12,633 feet

At 12,633 feet, Humphreys Peak (shown above, at right) is the highest point in Arizona. | SHANE McDERMOTT

TRAILHEAD GPS: N 35°19.881', W 111°42.694'
DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 180 for 7 miles to Forest Road 516 (Snowbowl Road), turn right and continue another 6.3 miles to the lower parking lot. The trailhead is at the far end of the lot.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)
USGS MAP: Humphreys Peak
INFORMATION: Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: Humphreys Peak was named in 1870 for General Andrew A. Humphreys, a Union general during the Civil War. In 1911, when a General Land Office map from 1903 showed the name "San Francisco Peak" applied to what is now Humphreys Peak, the United States Board on Geographic Names approved the variant name. However, in 1933, the application was rectified and Humphreys Peak once again became Humphreys Peak.

Wheelchair-Accessible Trails

Especially in summer, hikers of all ages and abilities can enjoy these five accessible trails, which offer hard surfaces, minimal elevation changes and magnificent views:

1. Bunkhouse Trail Red Rock State Park

This scenic trail is one of the highlights of the park, which is a 286-acre nature preserve and environmental-education center that offers spectacular scenery.

LENGTH: 0.75 miles
INFORMATION: 928-282-6907 or www.azstateparks.com/parks/reo

2. Rim Lakes Vista Trail Mogollon Rim

This trail winds through the beautiful ponderosa-pine forests along the Mogollon Rim and offers panoramic vistas to the south. The main trailhead is located just off State Route 260 along Forest Road 300, immediately across from the Rim Visitor Center.

LENGTH: 2.5 miles
INFORMATION: 928-535-7300 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

3. Meadow Trail Woods Canyon Lake

This trail, which begins at Woods Canyon Lake Vista and ends at Woods Canyon Lake Store, offers some great views of the lake.

LENGTH: 1.6 miles
INFORMATION: 928-535-7300 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf

4. Lava Flow Trail Sunset Crater National Monument

This is a self-guided loop trail that offers an introduction to the volcanic landscape at the base of Sunset Crater Volcano.

LENGTH: 0.25 miles
INFORMATION: 928-526-0502 or www.nps.gov/sucr

5. Groom Creek Nature Trail Prescott

This short trail winds 1,500 feet through a forest of ponderosa pines, allowing visitors a chance to experience the sights and sounds of a quiet forest.

LENGTH: 0.3 miles
INFORMATION: 928-443-8000 or www.fs.usda.gov/prescott

White Mountains Trail System

One of the true hiking gems in Arizona is the White Mountains Trail System, which includes a series of loop trails and connector trails that vary in length and difficulty. The trails are open to mountain-bikers, horseback-riders and hikers. The trails are marked with blue diamonds (often bearing directional arrows), trail numbers or colored dots. Yellow dots indicate a short route back to the trailhead. Green dots indicate a connector trail. Red dots indicate a side trail to a point of interest or a particularly scenic vista. Here are three of our favorite trails in the system:

1. West Fork No. 94

LENGTH: 7 miles round-trip
RATING: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,500-9,000 feet

2. East Fork No. 95

LENGTH: 14 miles round-trip
RATING: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,200-9,300 feet

3. South Fork No. 97

LENGTH: 14 miles round-trip
RATING: Moderate
ELEVATION: 7,500-9,000 feet

• For more information, contact the Lakeside Ranger District at 928-368-2100 or www.fs.usda.gov/asnf.

5

West Fork Oak Creek Trail OAK CREEK CANYON

If you're looking for solitude, this hike won't deliver. On weekends and holidays, hundreds of people might be in your way. However, in the same way you don't avoid the Grand Canyon just because 5 million people a year visit the park, you don't want to leave the West Fork of Oak Creek off your summer-hiking hit list. There are many reasons why this is the most popular trail in the Coconino National Forest: the towering cliffs of Coconino sandstone, the Douglas firs and box elders and bigtooth maples, the perennial stream, the wild grapes, the mule deer and the list goes on. Another reason people flock to the West Fork is because it's easy to get to and easy to enjoy. That said, the trail does require some agility and a willingness to get your feet wet. There are steppingstones in most places, but there are no guarantees. The first 3 miles of the trail are well marked. After that, the last mile tends to be overgrown and even climbs out of the canyon at one point. The good news is that most people give up and head back before they get to this point. At the 4-mile mark, a decent-sized pool marks the end of the trail.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 8 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Easy
ELEVATION: 5,328 to 5,619 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34°59.434', W 111°44.587'
DIRECTIONS: From Sedona, drive north on State Route 89A for 9.5 miles to the Call of the



LEFT: A perennial stream feeds a multitude of grasses and ferns along the West Fork Oak Creek Trail.
| DEREK VON BRIESEN

RIGHT: The afternoon sun casts shadows among aspens along the Inner Basin Trail.
| SUZANNE MATHIA

Canyon parking area.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: The Forest Service requires a \$5 parking permit along the highway and a \$10-per-vehicle (up to five people) fee in the Call of the Canyon parking area.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

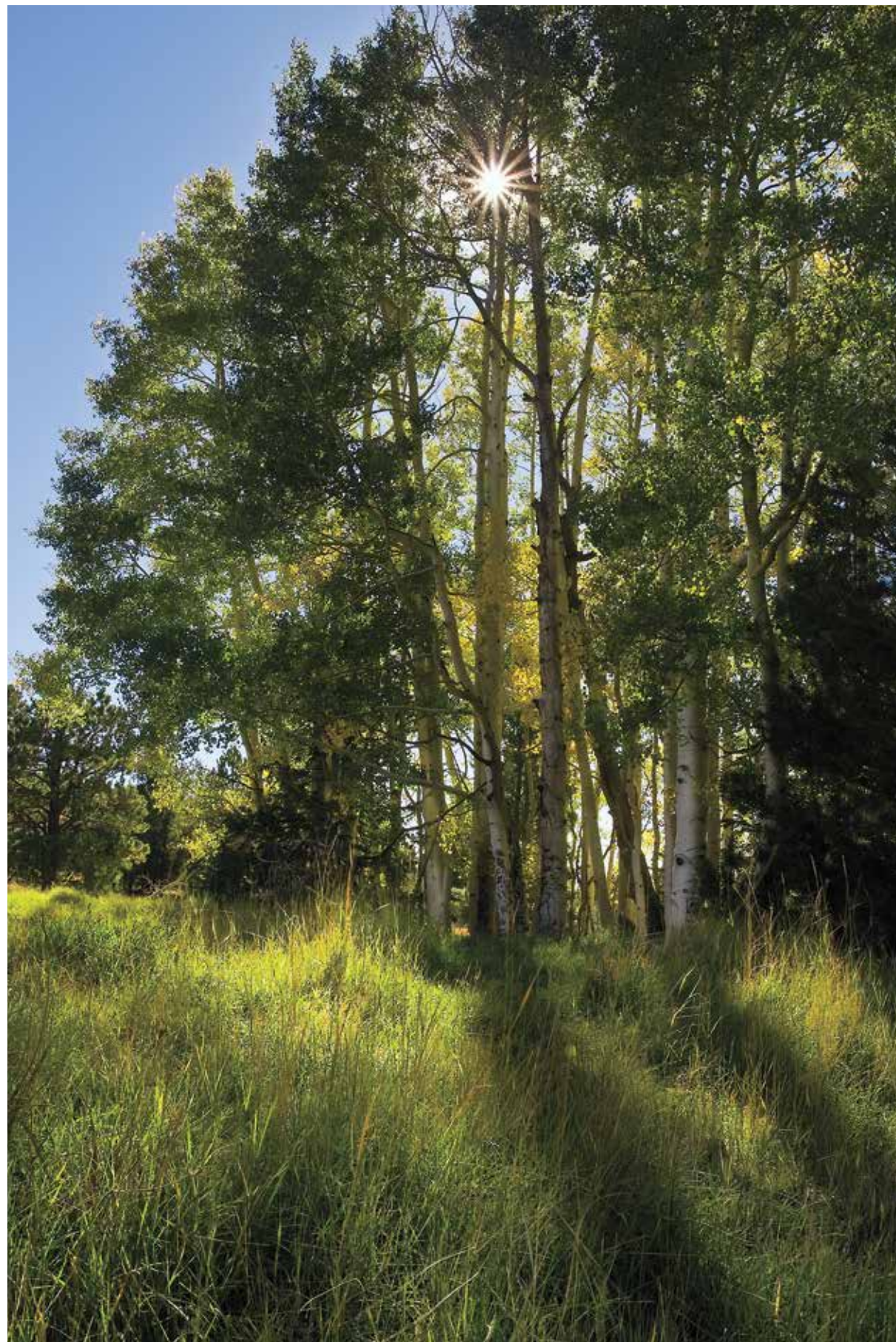
USGS MAPS: Dutton Hill, Mountainaire, Wilson Mountain, Munds Park

INFORMATION: Red Rock Ranger District, 928-282-4119 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: A few hundred yards past the foot-bridge that leads to the West Fork Trail, you'll pass an old settlement that includes remnants of fireplaces, stone floors and a cliff house. They're leftovers from the Mayhew Lodge, an early 20th century dwelling. The homestead is believed to have been the inspiration for Zane Grey's book Call of the Canyon. In its heyday, the lodge was a favorite getaway of movie stars, politicians and writers, including Lord Halifax, President Herbert Hoover, Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart and Walt Disney.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

On June 2, 2012, the American Hiking Society will celebrate its 20th annual National Trails Day. It's one more reason to get outside and experience the beauty of Arizona. To learn more about what's happening in your neck of the woods, contact John Michels, trail programs manager, at jmichels@americanhiking.org or visit www.americanhiking.org.



6

Inner Basin Trail FLAGSTAFF

This cool trail begins at Lockett Meadow, which is home to one of the best campgrounds in the state. From the campground, the route climbs gradually through a forest of ponderosa pines and aspens. Among the most impressive are the seven aspens you'll see clumped together about 30 minutes into the hike. They're off to the right, just past the gate you'll pass through. A few minutes later, you'll feel the forest open up a little, and you'll come to a major intersection. To the left is the route to Schultz Pass Road. To the right is an access road to the Bear Jaw and Abineau trails. From this point, the Inner Basin is less than a half-mile away. But before you get there, you'll pass a log pump house that shields a well that was drilled in 1971. Because the Inner Basin provides water for Flagstaff, there are several pump houses in the area. Beyond the well, the trail merges with an old jeep road that takes you the rest of the way. As you'll see, there's no place like the Inner Basin. With its lush meadows and the surrounding summits of the San Francisco Peaks, it's the perfect summer hike.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 4 miles round-trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
ELEVATION: 8,567 to 9,403 feet
TRAILHEAD GPS: N 35°21.464', W 111°37.118'
DIRECTIONS: From Flagstaff, drive north on U.S. Route 89 for 12 miles and turn left onto Forest Road 420, which is located across from the Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument entrance. Continue on FR 420 and follow the signs to Lockett Meadow Campground. The trailhead is well marked.
VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None
DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash), but only below the watershed cabin
USGS MAPS: Humphreys Peak, Sunset Crater West
INFORMATION: Peaks Ranger District, 928-526-0866 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: Aspen trees are clonal organisms, meaning that all of the trees sprout from a common, massive root system — they're genetically identical "clones." Although the trees live for only 80 to 120 years, their root systems can live for thousands of years, making them one of the longest-living organisms in the world.

“My grandmother started walking 5 miles a day when she was 60. She’s 95 now, and we don’t know where the hell she is.”

— ELLEN DEGENERES

7

Horton Creek Trail MOGOLLON RIM

Named for the creek that’s named for settler L.J. Horton, this trail begins at the foot of the Mogollon Rim, about 150 feet from the Upper Tonto Creek Campground, and follows an old logging road that parallels the stream. The first quarter-mile or so is an easy pine-needle-covered path that cuts through a grove of ponderosas and aspens. To this point, you won’t hear any water, but once you pass the Forest Service gate, you’ll start hearing the creek. For most of the hike, you’ll be within a few hundred yards of the water. Continuing uphill, past the lush colonies of roses, wild grapes, ferns and strawberries, you’ll come to a monstrous alligator juniper at the 1.5-mile mark. The surrounding maples and Douglas firs are impressive, as well. The nature of the trail stays about the same until it nears the top, where a series of switchbacks leads away from the creek. Don’t be fooled by that. At the 4-mile mark, the Horton Creek Trail intersects the Highline Trail and quickly arrives at Horton Spring, which pours out of the rocks about 30 feet above the stream and nurtures the lush surroundings made up of horsetails, mosses and grasses. These are the headwaters of the creek, and the turnaround point of the hike.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 8 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

ELEVATION: 5,360 to 6,700 feet

TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34° 20.394’, W 111° 05.732’

DIRECTIONS: From Payson, drive east on State Route 260 for 17 miles to Tonto Creek Road (Forest Road 289) near Kohls Ranch, turn left and drive 1 mile to the Upper Tonto



A small waterfall tumbles into a maze of branches along the Horton Creek Trail. | SUZANNE MATHIA

DID YOU KNOW?

The average male, weighing 190 pounds, burns 517 calories in an hour of hiking. A woman weighing 163 pounds burns 444. The calories burned per minute by an average-sized man are 9, while an average-sized woman burns 7.

Creek Campground. The trailhead is at the campground.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

USGS MAP: Promontory Butte

INFORMATION: Payson Ranger District, 928-474-7900 or www.fs.usda.gov/tonto

Foot Note: Located just 3 miles east of this trail is the place where Zane Grey’s cabin once stood. The cabin, which was built in the 1920s and destroyed by the Dude Fire in 1990, was a historic landmark of sorts. The acclaimed author of *Riders of the Purple Sage* and other famous Western novels penned many of his classics at the cabin. Today, a replica cabin is open for tours in nearby Payson.

8

Maxwell Trail MOGOLLON RIM

This trail, which is located at the upper end of the West Clear Creek Wilderness, begins with a series of steep switchbacks. Through the trees, you’ll catch a glimpse of the lush canyon below. Like many trails on the Mogollon Rim, this one is rocky and loose in places. It’s steep, too, so be careful. After about 25 minutes, you’ll catch the first sounds of the creek ... the highlight of the hike. In all, it’s about 45 minutes from top to bottom, and along the way you’ll go from a transition zone of ponderosas, Douglas firs and Gambel oaks to a riparian zone of red-osier dogwoods, ash, willows and box elders. The trail ends at the creek, which provides habitat

The Maxwell Trail ends at West Clear Creek, which attracts a variety of birds and other wildlife.

| DEREK VON BRIESEN



for bluegills, chubs and suckers. Dragonflies like the moisture, as well. And so will you. The sound of the creek, the sunlight dancing off the water, the grass, the shrubs, the trees surrounded by large rock walls ... that’s the climax of the Maxwell Trail.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 1.4 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

ELEVATION: 6,710 to 6,089 feet

TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34° 33.345’, W 111° 24.295’

DIRECTIONS: From Clints Well at the junction of State Route 87 and Forest Highway 3, drive north on FH 3 for approximately 7 miles to Forest Road 81. Turn left (west) onto FR 81 and continue approximately 4 miles to Forest Road 81E. Go left on FR 81E to the end of the road, which is where the trailhead is located.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: High-clearance vehicle

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

USGS MAP: Calloway Butte

INFORMATION: Mogollon Rim Ranger Station, 928-477-2255 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: The road to this trail takes you past a former horse ranch known as Poor Farm, which was homesteaded in 1908 by a young man from Kansas named Irvin Henry Walker. Walker and his cowboy cohorts constructed a very basic log cabin next to the pasture where they kept their horses. During a snowstorm, Walker, his partner Norvell Cherry and some fellow cowboys gathered around the cabin’s wood stove, trying to stay warm in their sadly constructed shelter. Cherry is said to have told Walker, “If you ask me, this is a damn poor farm.” That’s allegedly how Poor Farm got its name.

The 10 Commandments of Hiking

Never hike alone.

Tell someone where you’re hiking, the route you’ll be taking and when you’ll be home.

Carry identification (driver’s license, etc.) and the name and telephone number of whom to call in case of emergency.

Before you leave home, check the forecast, and pay attention to the weather while you’re on the trail.

Study the maps before you go, and always carry a compass, not just a GPS.

On the trail, know where you’re going and where you are in relation to the map you’re carrying.

Take plenty of food, and carry more water than you think you’ll need.

There’s no such thing as too much sunscreen.

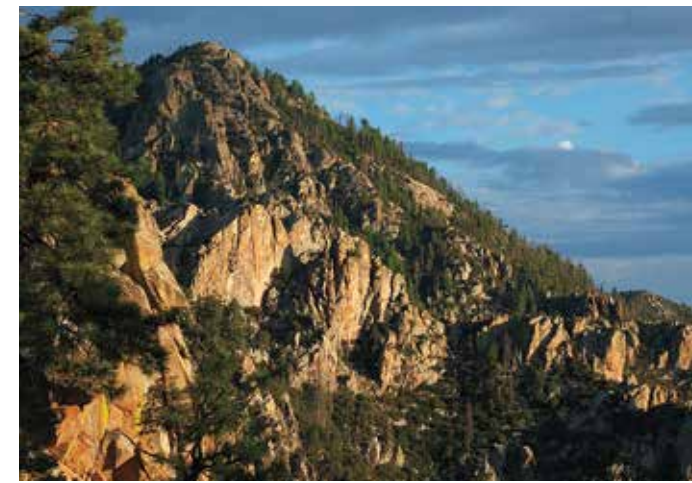
Don’t overestimate your abilities.

Adhere to the Leave No Trace principles (see below).

LEAVE-NO-TRACE PRINCIPLES:

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly and pack out all of your trash.
- Leave what you find.
- Respect wildlife and minimize impact.
- Be considerate of others.





LEFT: Alder leaves reflect in the waters of West Clear Creek. | NICK BEREZENKO

ABOVE: The Green Mountain Trail follows a series of switchbacks through a forest of ponderosa pines and Douglas firs. | RANDY PRENTICE

WHEN YOU'RE DONE HIKING

The first thing you'll want to do when you've finished your hike is call your friends or family and let them know you've made it safely back to your vehicle. Obviously, you might not have cell service in some of the more remote areas, but call as soon as you can. After the hike, you'll also want to put on some dry clothes and drink some water. Even if you're not thirsty, there's a good chance you'll be a little dehydrated at the end of your hike. Finally, drive carefully, download your photos when you get home, share them with your friends and encourage them to follow in your footsteps. As John Muir once wrote: "Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine trees. Their sermons on the mountains go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish." **AH**



RANDY PRENTICE

HYPOTHERMIA

Also known as exposure, hypothermia is the lowering of the body's core temperature, and it isn't just a cold-weather concern. In fact, most cases of hypothermia occur in the summertime, when the temperatures are well above freezing — usually between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

SYMPTOMS:

- Shivering (first warning sign)
- Goose bumps on skin
- Drowsiness
- 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)

9

West Clear Creek Trail VERDE VALLEY

The centerpiece of this hike, and the body of water for which it's named, is West Clear Creek, an idyllic stream that winds for nearly 40 miles through some of the most scenic and least-visited terrain in Arizona. From the trailhead, the route passes under a canopy of impressive sycamores — you'll also see cottonwoods, Arizona walnuts, willows and ash along the creek. Initially, the trail piggybacks an old ranch road on the north bank of the creek. Then, after about a mile, it cuts south for the first of four stream-crossings. Throughout most of the year, other than the wet season, it's a simple hop, skip and jump to the other side. Heading east on the south side of the perennial creek, the trail meanders through a lush riparian forest and quickly comes to the second creek-crossing, followed by the official boundary of the West Clear Creek Wilderness. Eventually, after 5.5 miles

and a third and fourth creek-crossing, you'll come to a point where the trail veers northward from the creek. This is the turnaround point.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 11 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Easy

ELEVATION: 3,700 to 4,100

TRAILHEAD GPS: N 34° 32.338', W 111° 41.510'

DIRECTIONS: From Camp Verde, go southeast on State Route 260 for 6 miles to Forest Road 618. Turn left onto FR 618 and drive 2.2 miles to Forest Road 215. Turn right onto FR 215 and continue approximately 3 miles to the Bull Pen Ranch Trailhead.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: High-clearance recommended

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

USGS MAPS: Walker Mountain, Buckhorn Mountain

INFORMATION: Red Rock Ranger District, 928-282-4119 or www.fs.usda.gov/coconino

Foot Note: Hundreds of years ago, the West Clear Creek drainage was also home to the Si-

nagan people, who left behind ruins, tools and other artifacts that are now scattered throughout the wilderness area. If you're lucky enough to stumble upon such a treasure, enjoy it with your eyes only — do not touch it, move it or remove it. Leave it as it is for the next lucky explorer.

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Green Mountain Trail SANTA CATALINA MOUNTAINS

Like other trails in the Catalinas, this one can be done as a one-way hike using a car-shuttle system, or as a round-tripper. The upper trailhead is located at the San Pedro Vista and the lower trailhead is at the General Hitchcock Campground. For this listing, the route begins up top at San Pedro, and within a few minutes, the trail intersects a side route that leads to the top of Green Mountain. Stay left and gear up for a series of steep switchbacks. At this point, the surrounding forest is primarily ponderosa pines and Douglas firs. It's lush and green. Moving on,

the evergreens are replaced by oaks, manzanitas, yuccas and beargrass. The views open up, as well. Thirty minutes later, the trail switchbacks uphill over some boulders and arrives at Bear Saddle, which sits at an elevation of 6,950 feet and serves as the head of Bear Canyon. From there, the trail follows Bear Canyon for just under 2 miles to the General Hitchcock Campground. This homestretch, which is probably the most beautiful part of the trail, takes you back into the ponderosas and Douglas firs, as well as Arizona cypress, before bottoming out at the campground.

TRAIL GUIDE

LENGTH: 7.8 miles round-trip

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

ELEVATION: 6,000 to 7,300 feet

TRAILHEAD GPS: N 32° 24.007', W 110° 41.404'

DIRECTIONS: From Tanque Verde Road in Tucson, drive 4.2 miles on Catalina Highway to the Forest Service boundary and continue 17.5 miles to the San Pedro Vista.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: A \$5 day pass (per vehicle) is required.

VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS: None

DOGS ALLOWED: Yes (on a leash)

USGS MAP: Mount Bigelow

INFORMATION: Santa Catalina Ranger District, 520-749-8700 or www.fs.usda.gov/coronado

Foot Note: Nearby Pusch Ridge was named for pioneer George Pusch, who came to Arizona from Germany in the 1870s. In 1874, he established the Steam Pump Ranch near the base of the ridge. At the time, it was one of the largest cattle ranches in the Arizona Territory. In 1978, the Pusch Ridge Wilderness was created to preserve and protect the dwindling desert bighorn sheep population in the area. However, due to increased residential and commercial development, the sheep population has decreased dramatically. The last documented sighting was in 2005.



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