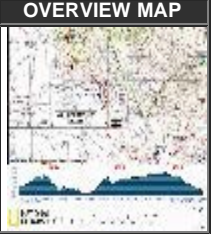
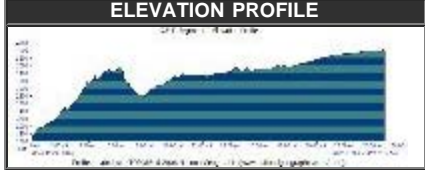


G.E.T. Guidebook

Segment 4: Tortilla Mountains 27.6 miles

| Segment Length | Segment Status | Season |
|---|---|--|
| 27.6 mi. | finalized & accessible | fall, winter, spring |
| Resources | | |
|  OVERVIEW MAP |  ELEVATION PROFILE | Additional maps: Mesa 1:100K Quad (BLM)* Globe 1:100K Quad (BLM)* Casa Grande 1:100K (BLM)* Mammoth 1:100K (BLM) *limited coverage shown Trail managing agency: Arizona Trail Association |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ G.E.T. Topo Maps 9-12▶ Water Chart▶ Image Gallery: Album 2 | | |

Beginning access point

Florence-Kelvin Road at Kelvin-Riverside bridge. Take AZ 177 south from Superior or north from Winkelman. Turn off at sign for the village of Kelvin onto Florence-Kelvin Road. Follow this paved 2-lane road 1.3 miles, through Kelvin (no services) to Kelvin-Riverside bridge over the Gila River. A dirt turnout is south of the bridge at a junction with Riverside Rd on the left. **Alternate parking:** For longer term parking, instead continue south on Florence-Kelvin Road for ~2mi to a large Arizona Trail parking lot on the left. The AZT / GET crosses the parking lot here, at MP 2.0 along the GET in Segment 4.

Ending access point

Arizona Trail at Freeman Road. From AZ 77 at Dudleyville, head west on dirt 2WD Freeman Road 12 miles, crossing a cattle guard just before Arizona Trail tread meets the road at right by a carsonite post. Park here off the road, or turn right (north) onto a rough track that leads about 0.3 mi. to an impromptu, more secluded parking/camping area at left.

SEGMENT OVERVIEW

The remote Tortilla Mountains extend south from the Gila River toward the distant Santa Catalina sky island range, and we follow their lead in this segment, winding among Sonoran desert foothills and mesquite-lined washes, and encountering few if any people. Except for the first 8 miles or so, the terrain here is fairly mellow. Navigation is also relatively straightforward, though the Arizona Trail route that you'll follow changes surfaces frequently - from singletrack to 4WD road and back - so be alert at junctions and look for cairns, posts, and flagging leading the way through this interesting rolling country. You'll likely find some stock trough water in the first half of this segment, and particularly in springtime a pair of public water caches are typically maintained for AZ Trail hikers, one located 2 miles into the segment and one at the very end. Otherwise the terrain is likely to be dry. (For the most recent status of Arizona Trail water caches, see the aztrail.org website "Water Sources" links.)

ROUTE DETAILS

The segment begins just south of the Kelvin-Riverside bridge over the Gila River. (The Gila is generally unpotable here, but developed water is available in the community of Kelvin to the north. See Chapter 3 for more information.) 2011-built Arizona Trail tread leaves the road at right beyond the bridge. The trail climbs above the Gila River, then meanders west through Sonoran desert scrub, crossing a prominent wash at **0.9** (waypoint 04020). At **2.0** miles, it reaches Florence-Kelvin Road again (now graded dirt), crossing it at a large Arizona Trail parking area. In recent years an Arizona Trail Association-provided **metal cache box** has been available, located alongside the trail just below the parking area, and typically stocked in springtime.

The trail heads south from the parking lot at Florence-Kelvin Rd, passes beneath power transmission lines, then through a gate at **3.8** (waypoint 04060). Beyond the trail climbs moderately with the aid of switchbacks to crest a gravelly ridge, where occasional large cairns guide the way along the meandering height of land. The town of Kearny comes into view off to the east, well below, along the banks of the Gila. Trail tread may disappear momentarily on the approach to the "Big Hill," (as the trail community has unofficially named the little conical peak) but the way ahead is straightforward enough. Soon rejoin constructed trail near **7.3** (elev. 3526') and begin a well-graded descent toward the west via switchbacks. The views here are commanding, with the White Canyon Wilderness visible to the north, the Tortilla Mountains toward the south (including the gumdrop profile of Antelope Peak, approached in Segment 5), and the Santa Catalina Mountains' skyline far beyond. Even Picacho Peak is visible, the oft-climbed volcanic plug charging skyward on the western horizon.

Foot trail continues into a minor canyon (waypoint 04110) then reaches a wider wash by a metal gate at **8.8**. Walk southeast down the wash, watching for a large (but somewhat hidden) cairn on the left (waypoint 04130). Trail tread leaves the wash here, continuing to a cairned crossing of wide Ripsey Wash at **9.3** (elev. 2821'). Turning left (south) along the west side of Ripsey Wash leads to a **spring-fed trough** in under 0.2 of a mile (waypoint 04150). The trough often contains some water, although its float valve doesn't work well of late and may be producing only a trickle of fresh water - if any; otherwise you can follow the PVC pipe to the spring source in the cliff above, sometimes quite shallow and hard to collect from. Camping is possible in the vicinity, but avoid the main branch of the sandy wash itself in case of vehicles.

Crossing the wash, our AZT/GET route continues as foot trail once more, climbing a minor ridge to a 4WD road junction by a powerline at **10.1**. Continue straight on the road, which descends west to cross a drainage at **10.4**. Just beyond, the trail veers left off the road onto constructed trail again (but first you may want to continue west along the road another 0.1 mile or so, possibly following a black water line, to a float-valve-controlled **metal trough**, good in recent years - in fact more reliable than the next source another 0.4 mile along the trail). The shared AZT/GET singletrack trail now undulates rather moronically in and out of the wash. (*Superior-bound hikers: the Arizona Trail joins the road, then stays right at an unsigned junction with another road, and climbs to a signed junction atop a ridge, where foot trail soon resumes.*) At the trail's 4th crossing of this wash, 40 yards to the west, is a "**100 gallon stock trough**," near **10.8** (waypoint 04180). One or two metal troughs are often found here and sometimes with water in one or both, but they may also contain sand and debris at other times; the PVC inlet pipe can produce a trickle of water that you can collect from directly.

Climb to reach a gate on a viewful ridge at **11.7**, where constructed trail ends. Turn right and follow a 2-track road, which bends south to soon reach a better 2-track (waypoint 04200). Turn left onto this road, watching for helpful flagging and/or cairns. A tenth of a mile beyond, bear right at a 3-way road junction. Take the left fork at **12.5**, continuing southeast.

Pass through a gate at **13.7**, and turn right, west, along the fenceline on a old 2-track. Turn left where foot trail resumes in a tenth of a mile (waypoint 04240). The trail wanders through an intriguing upper-Sonoran desert landscape, crossing a couple of old 2-tracks (and a number of confusing stock paths) along the way. Constructed trail may end at a 2-track crossing at **15.3**. If so, turn right here, following the 2-track a short distance over to a powerline service road. Here bend left and follow the rough road south. (*Westbounders: the turnoff of the powerline road may be marked by a cairn.*) The road climbs to the left of a low hill, then reaches an unsigned t-junction in a drainage at **16.2**. Turn right here on the road that heads down the drainage.

Reach a better road at **16.8**. Heading right (west) here would lead to the Old Ripsey Ranch corral, with a **windmill and possible trough**, in a half mile, a potential detour if you're low on water. (Camping is not allowed at the corral.) Our route instead follows the road left to cross beneath the powerline twice, then at **17.2** reaches a cairn at constructed AZ Trail tread (waypoint 04300). Turn right onto the trail. The tread can sometimes be overgrown and indistinct here, but is blazed with occasional cairns and reflective aluminum markers tied to brush.

Reach a well-defined wash at **18.2**. Cross 2WD dirt Old Florence Road at **19.1**, then pass through a metal gate and traverse around a viewful knoll. The Ninety-Six Hills stand low toward the southwest, while southeast beyond nearby private Tecolote Ranch rises the tawny cone of Antelope Peak. The Santa Catalina "sky island" range inches closer on the southern horizon above Oracle.

Descend from the knoll to cross a wash. More recently-built trail begins within a half mile, cruising easily southward among agave, yucca, and mesquite. Although the terrain is fairly flat, small ridges and washes add enjoyable texture. Cross a 4WD road at **20.8**, and then a pair of shady washes offering camping prospects. Beyond, soon skirt "the Boulders" - an assortment of weathered granitic outcrops similar in composition to the rocks atop Mount Lemmon in the Catalinas. Pass through a gate at **21.9**, then cross a hackberry-lined wash a couple of times to reach a gas pipeline service road at **23.6**.

Signed trail continues beyond the pipeline road, crossing a pair of 2-tracks - the second set just after descending beneath the powerline once again. At **25.3** (waypoint 04430) meet graded, 2WD Hayden Ranch Rd, and another road of similar quality shortly beyond. Constructed trail ends at another gas pipeline road at **25.8**. Turn right, south, following the undulating, arrow-straight track (ignoring any turnoffs) to **27.0**, where singletrack trail resumes at left (east). The AZT/GET rambles pleasantly once more among upper-Sonoran vegetation, passing an official **public water cache box** just off the trail at right, less than 0.1 of a mile before arriving at graded 2WD dirt Freeman Road at **27.6** (waypoint 05010; elev. 4012'). When stocked and maintained, the public cache for Arizona Trail hikers is generally obvious - a metal box containing (and/or surrounded by) as many as a couple dozen (although often fewer) plastic gallon jugs of water, sometimes with an Arizona Trail hiker register.