
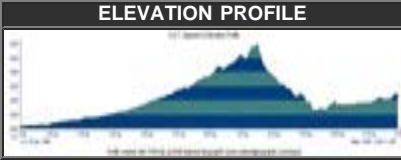


G.E.T. Guidebook

Segment 6: Brandenburg Mtn 11.9 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
11.9 mi.	finalized & accessible	fall, winter, spring
Resources		
 <p>OVERVIEW MAP</p>	 <p>ELEVATION PROFILE</p>	<p>Additional maps: Mammoth 1:100K (BLM)</p> <p>Land management agency: (Aravaipa Canyon permits) BLM Safford Field Office / Brandenburg Ranger Station</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ G.E.T. Topo Maps 14-19 ▶ Town Guide: Mammoth ▶ Water Chart ▶ Image Gallery: Album 3 		

Beginning access point

AZ Hwy 77 at Aravaipa Road. The GET crosses the highway without vehicle parking amenities nearby. Instead follow Aravaipa Road 0.5 mi. east to the small [Central AZ College Aravaipa Campus](#), where short-term parking should be permissible (note the entrance gate may be closed at night & on weekends / holidays - inquire within). For alternative parking, continue on Aravaipa Rd (via the GET in Seg 6) an additional 1.8 mi. and turn left at a "no dumping" sign onto a primitive dirt road (cars ok with care). This road passes through a clearing then shortly reaches a gate. Park off the road before the gate.

Ending access point

Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness west trailhead. (NOTE: An Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness use permit must be obtained *before* arrival here if entering the Wilderness in Segment 7. See Chapter 7 of this guide for more info.) Turn east off AZ Hwy 77 onto paved Aravaipa Road, which becomes dirt 2WD in ~4 mi. The GET route in Segment 6 rejoins the road near the BLM Brandenburg Ranger Station (free campsite & parking available here, first come first served). Continue past the Ranger Station 3 miles to the large dirt lot at the end of Aravaipa Rd., 12 miles from the AZ 77 turnoff. No camping allowed at the trailhead or surrounding Nature Conservancy land.

SEGMENT OVERVIEW

The main purpose of this segment is to connect the San Pedro River valley with Segment 7's Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness, which eastbound thru-hikers have no doubt been anticipating. Section hikers arriving by vehicle may be tempted to drive straight to the Wilderness trailhead at the east end of this segment, bypassing Segment 6 entirely. Aravaipa Road heads directly there, after all, and with only a few bumps in the track. Look a little closer, though, and one discovers that this segment has a good deal more to offer than at first meets the eye. Formerly routed rather awkwardly in the wide, sandy flood plain of lower Aravaipa Creek's wash, this portion of Seg 6 has since been realigned to provide more efficient and aesthetic-minded travel, much of it on the opposite (north) side of Aravaipa Road and located some miles away from it. Here the route follows a rugged yet straightforward network of little-used dirt tracks leading into surprisingly desert-verdant foothills of the Galiuro Mountains. Primitive camping opportunities, as well as seasonal water, are encountered along the way. Climbing higher, the fiery-hued volcanic cliffs of Brandenburg Mountain, a prominent local landmark, loom near as we transit its western shoulder, while views north and south down the spine of the 50-mile-long Galiuros prove extensive. Here the route briefly joins foot trail - albeit humble in character - on return to Aravaipa Road, then soon passes the ranger station for Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness (see Segment 7 description regarding permit requirements for that segment). An hour's ramble along this quiet unpaved portion of the road, often within sight and sound of adjacent Aravaipa Creek, leads to the Wilderness trailhead and the conclusion of Segment 6.

After completing this segment - let it be noted - you'll arrive at this trailhead from Highway 77 having accrued nearly identical mileage on your backpack's trip odometer as would any passenger car confined to the main drag. How's that for an efficient hiking route... with an adventurous twist.

TRAVEL ALERT: Because this segment (6) ends at the west entrance of Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness, hikers intending to continue eastbound through and beyond the wilderness, and who are unable to obtain the requisite permit to enter this area, **MUST** detour around the main route in Segment 7. There are two ways to do this: either follow the **Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness bypass route**, (described at the end of this chapter and beginning at waypoint 05155), which detours widely around Aravaipa Canyon and runs through the resupply town of Mammoth en route, or use the **Aravaipa Bypass North** route (described in Chapter 7 and beginning at waypoint 06080), which stays closer to the canyon on its north side and does NOT run through Mammoth, meaning you would need to get a ride into town if intending to resupply.

ROUTE DETAILS

The main GET route begins at the 4-way junction of AZ Highway 77, Old Camp Grant Place (to the west) and Aravaipa Road (to the east) (waypoint 06010, elev. 2224'). Proceed east on paved, 2-lane Aravaipa Road. Compared to Hwy 77, just crossed by hikers arriving from Segment 5, this road is low-speed and traffic is light. A wide dirt shoulder serves as an informal 2-track road for local ATV'ers, and should make for a decent walk, away from the blacktop. An RV Park on the south side of Aravaipa Rd is posted private property but in a pinch you could try asking nicely for water at the host's residence. (*South of the RV Park, close to the highway, lie the mostly-vanished and otherwise hard-to-discern ruins of the pioneer-era [Camp Grant](#) military installation, now all but buried along with any promise it held prior to the infamous Camp Grant Massacre for which it's mainly remembered.*)

Otherwise continue on to the tiny Central Arizona College's Aravaipa Campus, on the left at **0.5** of a mile, with a public restroom and **faucets** around the back side of the middle building. The campus cafeteria may be open to the general public at certain times - inquire within. (CAC facilities may be off-limits whenever the main gate is closed, typically at night, on weekends and holidays.)

The wide dirt shoulder persists until **1.3** (waypoint 06020), where a dirt gas-line corridor crosses the road. *One could optionally leave Aravaipa Road here, heading north initially along the gasline track, then turning northeast and eventually east, all the while keeping a fence line on your left. The terrain is rather barren but the walking should be quiet.* Otherwise press on via Aravaipa Road to **2.3** (waypoint 06030) and turn left at a "no dumping" sign onto a dirt road. This road passes through a clearing, narrows to a proper road, then arrives at a gate and register at **2.5**. Beyond the gate our route enters state trust land (not for the first time nor the last), but here the road eventually passes through private lands, thus the required sign-in. Although we won't be entering private, it's probably a good idea for GET users to comply, but just write "hiking on state land" rather than making any GET-specific references. (A trail name along with your real name should tip off any GET'ers behind you.)

Beyond the gate at 2.5, the quiet jeep track ascends ever-so-gradually along the volcanic pediment of the Galiuro Mountains, an expansive sky-island-like range with which the GET dabbles just ahead, before passing straight through it in cross-section via Aravaipa Canyon. The surroundings are classic lower Sonoran desert, becoming increasingly lush as you go -- some of the palo verde trees are large enough to offer welcome shade from the high spring sun. Along the way, pass a water cistern and various ranching improvements, but no access to drinking water at last check. At **4.9** reach a road junction by another cistern and turn right (east) onto the lesser track. This track descends into a rugged wash at **5.3** (waypoint 06060) where the route then continues northeast in the wash itself. (*Westbounders be on the lookout for the dirt track leaving the right side of the wash at this waypoint.*)

The wash soon boxes up, with colorful, saguaro-studded hillsides above you -- a beautiful setting, and a possible camp in dry times, along the banks here or there. You may note the track exiting the wash briefly, then returning. Soon beyond, reach a gate in a wire fence at **5.9**. The suggested route of the GET heads through the gate (which is posted as open for non-motorized use), or you could continue up the box canyon a short ways in search of **pools**. (*At last check AZ Game & Fish had placed a wildlife camera a ways up the wash, which was obvious. For the sake of their work, we're suggesting that GET'ers not walk past the motion-activated camera. Return to the gate instead, beyond which our route soon crosses the wash again, with another chance to find water, above the camera area.*)

A rough track proceeds beyond the gate at 5.9, climbing sharply. Pass a lesser track on the left, then keep right, descending steeply again on the abandoned roadbed back into the box canyon. A lone cottonwood tree and tamarix bushes herald the likely presence of water in this drainage -- for best odds, scout below the road crossing to a little **bedrock pour-off**. (The named spring shown on the topo map is higher in this same drainage, probably inaccessible.) The abandoned road climbs steeply up the opposite side -- use care negotiating the sharp cut where it first leaves the drainage. (An easier route out of the wash exists around the back side to your right, hidden from here, soon meeting the main track again.)

This segment's namesake Brandenburg Mountain dominates the scene ahead of you. A well-known local landmark, this peak will become ever more impressive the nearer it draws. Meanwhile, the old road passes some long-forgotten ranching improvements, then descends sharply into another wash. Beyond this wash it climbs to a little flat and a junction -- ignore the track on your sharp right heading out to a point. (*Westbounders, keep right.*) Reach a more definitive T-junction at **6.8** and turn right (east). (*Westbounders, turn left.*) (The **Aravaipa Canyon Bypass North** route, described in Chapter 7, leaves the main route of the GET here, for those without a valid permit to enter the Wilderness in the next segment.)

After dropping into yet another wash, the road climbs steadily to a second T-junction, this one atop a viewful ridge (waypoint 06090, elev. 3400'). Pause here to soak in the scene before you, with the sheer volcanic escarpment of Brandenburg Mountain rising above peaceful, tree-lined Aravaipa Creek, and an alluring maze of peaks and canyons to the south culminating in prominent flat-topped Table Mountain. From this postcard vantage your destination is Aravaipa Road once more, and from there a short, pleasant 3 mile dirt road walk to the Wilderness trailhead at segment's end. We'll reach the road via foot trail, in fact.

From the ridgeline T-junction turn left (east) a short distance to a modest saddle at **7.4** and look for a cairn marking the start of foot trail at right. (*The road continues along the Brandenburg escarpment, affording a peakbagging opportunity, but the final push is reported to be a rough, cross-country affair.*)

The unsigned trail is little-used but obvious enough to follow with care, as it does a commendable job of descending through some very rough terrain. At **7.8** it reaches a wash, which it follows downhill. (*Westbounders look for a cairn on your right indicating where constructed foot trail leaves the wash: waypoint 06120.*) From here, one simply follows the path of least resistance in the drainage, which eventually widens into a washy thoroughfare of sorts -- watch for the tracks of any recent hikers, especially birders in springtime, who access the lower wash from the nearby ranger station. The wash reaches Aravaipa Road at a sharp turn in the road at **8.7** (waypoint 06130, elev. 2700'). (*Westbounders note the obvious, wide wash on your right beyond the ranger station, possibly with a carsonite post signed "no vehicles."*)

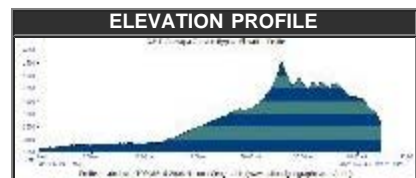
Turn left onto the wide, graded dirt road, soon arriving at the BLM Brandenburg Ranger Station, at **8.9** (waypoint 06140). The small station, which is only sporadically staffed, can issue last-minute permits for Aravaipa Canyon when vacancies are available. A single, free campsite is nearby (first-come, first-served), the only legal place to camp until entering BLM Wilderness about 4 miles ahead. The campsite might squeeze 2 or 3 small parties in a pinch. Year-round **drinking water** is available from a faucet on the side of the ranger station building, with a vault toilet located near the campsite.

At **9.8** cross a scenic steel-truss vehicle bridge in the shadow of dramatic redrock Brandenburg Mountain. The cactus-strewn cliffs contrast intriguingly with the cottonwoods and exotic palm trees at quaint little ranches beside the road. The creek is close by, though with the exception of one point of roadside access near 10.5 it generally remains inaccessible on private land.

At length, the dusty road climbs to reach the trailhead parking lot for Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness, at **11.9**, the end of this segment. A sign-in register, vault toilet, and self-service pay station are located here. Refer to Segment 7 of the guidebook for more information about Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness permits and fees. Camping at the trailhead is not permitted.

ALTERNATE ROUTE: ARAVAIPA CANYON WILDERNESS BYPASS

Hikers who find it necessary to bypass Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness - for instance, to avoid dealing with the permit system, or when permits happen to be unavailable or you're off-schedule - can instead follow this bypass route. But please note: Because Aravaipa Canyon cuts deeply into a rugged mountain range - the Galiuros - which otherwise presents a barrier to east-west progress, few roads or trails cross the range nearby. So this detour - also like the "North Detour" described in Chapter 7 - is fairly out-of-the-way, and is therefore lengthier than the main route by about 12 miles. This detour is mostly on primitive roads, generally little-travelled graded dirt or rough 4WD tracks, and is by and large a scenic and attractive alternative, even if it lacks the erstwhile charm of Aravaipa Canyon. The route also passes through the town of Mammoth along the way, so is fairly convenient for hikers already planning a layover there.



This alternate route bypasses all of the main route in Segment 6, as well as the first 10 miles of Segment 7 in Aravaipa Canyon. It begins on the west near AZ Highway 77 and ends near the east entrance of Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness at Turkey Creek.

From the offset 4-way road junction at mile 13.8 in Segment 5, (waypoint 05155) eastbound hikers follow the southbound dirt road, paralleling the railroad grade. This road continues all the way to the outskirts of Mammoth, generally near the old railroad and outside the San Pedro River's riparian zone. Approaching the outskirts of **Mammoth**, the graded dirt road reaches a t-junction by a cattle guard; turn left here (east) onto paved Camino Rio, then right onto AZ 77 at **8.1** (waypoint 06300). (One could also hitchhike down AZ 77 from the main GET crossing into Mammoth, but would not be advised to hike along this winding 2-lane highway.)

Follow AZ 77 into town. The Lodge motel is on the right, with Tortillas Mi Pueblito (Mexican restaurant) just next door. Here, at **8.6**, our detour turns left at the fork onto Main Street. Pass Main Market and then the laundromat (**both out of business as of 2012**) on the left. At **9.5** (elev. 2300') turn left (east) onto Copper Creek Rd, crossing the wide wash of the San Pedro River at the edge of town. (Be sure to pick up water before proceeding.) Stealth camping may be possible in the mesquite thickets beyond the wash. At **10.3**, turn left (north) onto paved River Road. Continue to signed 2WD unpaved Cowboy Miller Rd at **11.6** and turn right, east.

Cowboy Miller Rd proceeds 8.1 straightforward miles into the foothills of the Galiuros. It becomes a 4WD track as it approaches Dry Camp Canyon. Keep right at **19.7**, (waypoint 06340) bypassing the road to Dry Camp itself, as shown on maps. Where the track crosses the canyon's wash at **20.1** (waypoint 06350), leave it and head east up the wash itself. In less than 0.1 mile, a lesser drainage enters from the left. **Take this drainage.** Despite a few scrambles over the bedrock bottom, you may well find some pools of water, including an improved **spring** in a shady setting at **21.3** (waypoint 06360). Secluded camping is possible in the vicinity.

Three ATV tracks converge upon the spring. Take the right-most track, immediately leaving the drainage on its south bank. The 2-track climbs sharply among the final saguaro-cloaked hillsides of an eastbound hiker's journey, ending at a t-junction with a wider, rockier 4WD road at **22.1** (06370). This is informally known as the Rug Road, and is a cult favorite of off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, due to its rough, steep, and scenic qualities. The Rug Road takes its name from pieces of carpet that motorists have used to fill washed out sections of the road. Yep - it's that rough. Outside of weekends, though, the Rug Road is fairly quiet, and the high-desert scenery it traverses is outstanding. You'll follow it the rest of the way to Turkey Creek at the east end of the detour.

Turn left (north), climbing to reach a saddle at **23.0** (elev. 5400'). The Rug Road becomes a roller-coaster ride as it now descends and climbs steeply through several prominent canyons that drain north into Aravaipa Canyon. You'll wonder how any vehicle could manage this road, with its perpetual fare of loose, softball-and-basketball-size volcanic rocks, wash-outs, and long, steep grades. The Rug Road crosses lateral tracks in Virgus and Parsons canyons, and in **Parsons**, possible water in the creekbed near a former homestead - a good shady camping spot.

Views eastward open dramatically after passing an old corral at **29.2**, with the rugged Santa Teresa Mountains prominent on the horizon. Now begin a long descent into Turkey Creek, as the road bravely cuts through a "slickrock" sedimentary layer in the company of colorful cliffs. Breathe a hearty sigh of relief as the road finally bottoms out in the riparian zone of Turkey Creek at **32.2** (waypoint 07510, elev. 3300'). (Westbounders look carefully for the Rug Road as it switchbacks away through a cliff cut on the west bank of Turkey Creek.) The creek is normally dry here.

Eastbounders now have two options for travel. One is to turn left and walk north down Turkey Creek to its confluence with perennial **Aravaipa Creek** and a resumption of the main route in 2.6 miles. This point is at mile 10.8 of Segment 7, just east of the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness boundary. .

The other travel option from the Rug Road is to turn right in Turkey Creek, heading south. Walking south up Turkey Creek and beyond via the **Turkey Creek alternate**, described in Segment 8, leads to the community of Klondyke in 10 miles. This alternate can be a good option for hikers planning to resupply or layover in the Klondyke area. Turkey Creek sometimes has water up-canyon. See Segment 8 for more information.