



## G.E.T. Guidebook

### Segment 9: Underwood Canyon 9.8 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
9.8 mi.	finalized & accessible	fall, winter, spring
Resources		
		<b>Additional maps:</b> Coronado N.F. Safford & Santa Catalina Ranger Districts (USFS)
<a href="#">G.E.T. Topo Maps 28-29</a>		<b>Land management agency:</b> Coronado National Forest Safford Ranger District
<a href="#">Water Chart</a>		
<a href="#">Image Gallery: Album 3</a>		

#### Beginning access point

**Off of Klondyke Road.** From Safford, take US 70 west past Pima and turn left on Klondyke Road (signed Aravaipa Rd). Follow this graded dirt road approx. 18 mi. where a white metal sign and adjacent road sign "Lazy JM Ranch Rd" indicates a side road at right (waypoint 09010). This is the start of Segment 9. Follow the dirt side road half a mile N and park off the road, beside the wash. (Don't park near or block the gate to the east.)

#### Ending access point

**FR 286 at FR 675.** From Safford, take US 70 west to Pima and turn left at sign for Tripp Canyon Road / FR 286. Reach an intersection with Patterson Mesa Rd within a half mile and turn left. FR 286 resumes at right within a quarter mile, marked by metal signs (brief easement through private land). A large swinging gate soon encountered should be left as it was found. Proceed southwest on dirt 2WD FR 286. In ~15 miles from Pima reach a junction with 4WD FR 351. Keep straight on FR 286, heading up Tripp Canyon. A dirt lot and car camping area is on the right at ~19 mi. from Pima, at a signed junction with FR 675. (A 4WD vehicle could also get here via Klondyke Rd by following the directions for the "beginning access point," but turning off at FR 351, taking this 4WD road to the junction with FR 286, and continuing as described above.)

#### SEGMENT OVERVIEW

The Santa Teresa and Pinaleno sky islands serve as prominent landmarks, while our route charts the rolling high desert sea between them in this short but interesting segment. Eastbound hikers begin in the wide east-draining valley separating the two ranges and trend south, meandering along adventurous dirt roads, across hackberry-lined Underwood Wash, and on toward well-ensconced Two Troughs Canyon at road's end. Here ensues a challenging, mile-long stretch of cross-country travel, as the route ascends an outlier ridge of the Pinaleno Mountains, before joining descending track into Tripp Canyon at the base of the range proper. Basic routefinding skills are recommended for the trackless portion, which climbs an open, grassy slope at a 20% grade. As one progresses in this segment, the plant community transitions from spare juniper and mesquite near Klondyke Road, to chaparral and grassland - as on our climb - and finally to shady pine-oak woodland in the upper reaches of Tripp Canyon, a noteworthy change given the segment's minimal net elevation gain.

Surface water here is generally limited to a single, impermanent spring and a few stock sources, one of which (Holdout Canyon Tank) features a solar-powered well. In addition, a fairly reliable source is located in the main drainage of Tripp Canyon, a short walk beyond the end of this segment, in Segment 10, near the junctions of FR 286 (Tripp Canyon Rd) and FR 675. And speaking of moisture, if you're heading eastbound in early spring of a high mountain snow year, then you may have already noted the white stuff high atop the Pinalenos ahead. Should you opt to avoid the range altogether, one possible though not particularly salient detour follows Tripp Canyon Road east about 19 miles to US 70 at Pima, then south to Safford (the above Ending Access Point directions in reverse).

#### ROUTE DETAILS

This segment begins where Klondyke Road meets a lesser 2WD dirt road, the junction marked by a white, metal, symbolic ranch-type sign and adjacent road sign along Klondyke Rd indicating Lazy JM Ranch (waypoint 09010, elev.4800') Proceed northeast along wide, graded Klondyke Rd. Although still far-flung by modern standards, Klondyke Road is nonetheless the main travel route between US 70 north of Safford and the Klondyke area. As such, it's quite possible you'll see an occasional vehicle along this stretch, particularly on weekends during hunting season.

Within 100 yards of the segment's start, pass a lesser dirt road that heads right (south), just opposite a track that returns to the JM Ranch road. Farther along, at **0.7** of a mile, FR 672 takes off at right, the graded dirt road marked prominently at the junction by a yellow road sign. An adventurous hiker could follow this road for less than 0.2 mi., where it is crossed by Hackberry Wash, and follow the secluded drainage east, cross-country to Register Tank along the main route ahead, but the drainage is occasionally choked with low-hanging junipers. Otherwise, continue east on Klondyke Road. At **1.2** a road heads left, entering private property en route to Upper Falls Spring environs (reliability unknown). Finally, leave Klondyke Road at **1.9** (waypoint 09020) by turning right (south) onto a narrow, unsigned 4WD track. (This junction is located just beyond a little turnout on the right, and before Klondyke Rd begins a descent into Cottonwood Canyon.) The track bends around toward the southwest, with the low knob of Juan Hill just to the east, and soon crosses the impoundment of **Register Tank**, an earthen stock pond that seems to hold some water except in particularly dry times.

Beyond the tank the rough 4WD turns south, coming to a fork at **2.4** (waypoint 09025). Take the left option (southeast), remaining on the somewhat better track. The landscape of scattered juniper, live oak, and agave is sufficiently flat for camping in the vicinity of the junction. At **3.3**, the road jogs briefly west by a fence line, then crosses the wide sandy wash of Water Canyon. Just north of the wash a wide opening in the fence leads to a dry impoundment and offers access to **Indian Spring** farther down the drainage. To reach it, head around the left side of the impoundment and back down into the main drainage. Continue to an area of bedrock in the wash, reached in 0.2 mi. Here, below a negotiable pour-off, you may find pools and sometimes flowing water. The likelihood of encountering water again diminishes soon beyond the bedrock portion, 0.1 mi. farther along, so don't spend too much time scouting here if the rock potholes happen to be dry.

Now our road leaves Water Canyon, dips sharply into a narrow drainage just beyond, then passes a 2-track on the left, which despite appearances does *not* go to Indian Spring. Goat Peak, to the north in the Santa Teresas, slinks ever farther away on the skyline as our rough 4WD road undulates on to Underwood Wash, at **4.0**. Turn left (east) down the wash, where shady camping is possible among the bordering hackberries, then in 100 yards follow the road out of the main wash on its opposite side. (Westbounders turn left up the wash and look for the road as it leaves at right.)

Climb to an obvious 3-way junction at **4.8** (waypoint 09030). For those genuinely disinterested in the steep and somewhat brushy cross-country travel required farther along the

main route, a workable detour heads left here - the black dashed line on the map set. This detour, located entirely on dirt roads, passes a couple of potential water sources, and returns to the route at the end of the segment in 11.6 miles, thus making it 6.8 miles longer than the main route.

The main route turns right on the road at **4.8**, reaching a corral by a wire gate at **5.3**. The 4WD road soon resumes its gentle southward climb, increasingly among granite outcrops not unlike those encountered in the Santa Teresa Mountains. A pair of metal gates appears by a road junction at **6.0** - pass through the one on the left, remaining on the wider road. The gates mark our return to Coronado National Forest land (in spite of any ranch-type signage you might find to the contrary). Ahead, appropriately-named Brushy Tank is hardly discernable now, more dry brush than stock tank. The grade steepens ahead as the road trends east to top a saddle at **7.2**. A lesser track (not ours) heads south along the saddle, a soon-murderously steep swath that dead-ends at an old quarry.

Continuing east from the saddle, pass the small earthen bowl of **Deer Tank**, sometimes holding good water in wetter times. As the road nears the bottom of the next descent, at **7.7**, a large metal tank appears at left alongside a trough with float valve. Previously fed by a gas-powered pump, a solar array now provides more reliable water to both. (This source is unofficially called **Holdout Canyon Tank** on the water chart, not to be confused with an earthen pond of unknown reliability, farther down the drainage as shown on the map. And by the way, plan *not* to camp in this vicinity, as it seems to be very popular with the bovine crowd whenever water is present.) The elevation lost on the descent is recovered in short order on the road's climb to the next saddle, reached at **8.1** (waypoint 09110). Long-abandoned corral workings creak in the wind, amplifying the solitude. Perhaps fittingly, the road ends here, petering out among the high-desert grasses just south of the corral.

The goal now is to reach the crest of the long ridge to the southeast, and the cross-country route to that crest is entirely visible here, so get your bearings before proceeding. (See [illustration](#).) First note the high point along the ridge, labelled Dick Peak (el. 6250'), a survey benchmark on the topo map. To its right along the ridge is a broad saddle with two separate low points, left and right. Your destination is the low point to the right, the lower of the two. To reach it, you'll follow the main ascending ridge that "supports" the saddle, the slope with a prominent hump about half-way up it.

From the old corral, continue east downhill into Two Troughs Canyon, keeping left of a minor tributary drainage en route. Reach small, earthen, normally dry Pipeline Tank in the main drainage (waypoint 09120). Now cut across the little side drainage coming in from the south, and start up the rise beyond it. You'll follow this slope south-southeast all the way up to the crest, 850 feet above. Navigation is straightforward on the open slope, and the vegetation is initially sparse. Keep near the backbone of the grade approaching the hump, scouted earlier, as the sides are steep with outcrops. An old metal post or two just beyond the hump suggest evidence of a former pack route along this ridge, and the path of least resistance beyond certainly seems to hint at relict use of this corridor. The upper part of the climb does become brushy, and care must be taken to avoid the occasional agave and catclaw. Nearing the crest (but not too soon), angle your climb over to the right, more at contour now, aiming for the low point above the drainage there. A fenceline gate and old, dry stock trough welcome you to the little pass and the end of the cross-country climb (**9.2**, waypoint 09130, elev. 5624'). Pause to admire the view of distant Pinnacle Ridge behind you in the Santa Teresas, and, deeply forested, the dark prominence of Blue Jay Ridge high in the Pinaleños ahead. *(Westbounders, passing through the gate at the notch in the ridge at 9.2, proceed north at contour out along the hillside to your right (the right side of the drainage that drops away here). Remain generally at contour as the vague trail peters out, and work your way round the hillside to the fall line along the buttressing ridge, then descend this directly, heading over a prominent hump about half way down. Veer left (west) near the bottom of the ridge to enter the drainage of Two Troughs Canyon near Pipeline Tank (waypoint 09120). Proceed west up Two Troughs Canyon a short ways, then climb out on its right bank, heading west up the slope to the saddle and corral at 8.1 (waypoint 09110).)*

Start down the other side of the ridge on a vague stock path. The rough path soon jogs right to descend along the west side of the drainage, steeply at times. Ignore occasional diverging tracks that veer well away to the right, or that drop into the drainage bottom itself. The path becomes a 2-track road at a turnout (waypoint 09140) and continues down the slope, soon passing a small, viewful campsite. More camping is available ahead, where the track heads through a broad clearing at the base of the slope. A side track to the east here heads over to an historic grave plot atop a low rise. The headstone or memorial is set in pure quartz stone fragments from the surrounding area and is worth a look. Our unnamed 2-track now crosses the pinyon & juniper-lined drainage of Tripp Canyon, where it reaches FR 675 (**9.8**, waypoint 09160) at segment's end. Additional "car camping" sites persist along the braided dirt track of FR 675 for some distance to the east, many of them well shaded. Water often flows not far to the east in the **main drainage of Tripp Canyon**, just beyond the junction of FR 675 and FR 286 (waypoint 09155), where you may also find water in a stock trough located within a corral at the far end of a large dirt parking area. (Refer to the FR 286 Alternate Route description in Segment 10.)