



## G.E.T. Guidebook

### Segment 19: Lower Mineral Creek 5.6 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
5.6 mi.	finalized & accessible	all year
<b>Resources</b>		
		<b>Additional maps:</b> Gila National Forest (USFS) <b>Land management agency:</b> Gila NF Glenwood Ranger District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <a href="#">G.E.T. Topo Maps 49-50</a></li><li>▶ <b>Town Guide:</b> <a href="#">Glenwood / Alma</a></li><li>▶ <a href="#">Water Chart</a></li><li>▶ <b>Image Gallery:</b> <a href="#">Album 6</a></li></ul>		

#### Beginning access point

**US 180 at Alma.** Short-term parking may be available in the village of Alma, located 4.6 miles north of Glenwood along US 180. Ask at the Alma Trading Company, a convenience store/gas station, the community's only storefront. (The GET crosses US 180 less than 0.1 mile south of the store.) Otherwise, consider parking at the Trail 307 Trailhead (the Beginning Access Point for Segment 18) and hiking segments 18 and 19 together.

#### Ending access point

**Mineral Creek Rd at Mineral Creek trailhead.** From Glenwood, travel north on US 180 ~4.5 mi., then just beyond bridge over Mineral Creek at Alma turn right onto graded dirt Mineral Creek Rd. In 3.9 mi. from Alma the road crosses Mineral Creek (usu low water or dry here). Pass Cooney Tomb 1 mile beyond. Continue 0.7 mi farther to one of two parking areas at road's end near trailhead signboard. The driving route from Alma to Mineral Creek trailhead follows GET Segment 19 in its entirety.

#### SEGMENT OVERVIEW

Along with Segment 18, this short segment offers a convenient link between the backcountry of Arizona's Blue Range and the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. US 180 serves as a natural dividing line between these segments. The 2-lane highway offers access to the village of [Alma](#), directly along our route, and also larger [Glenwood](#) a few miles to the south.

As in Segment 18, the route here follows lightly-used roads. In fact this entire segment is located on graded dirt Mineral Creek Road, providing a straight shot to trailhead access into Gila country at segment's end. Fittingly enough, the road runs adjacent to Mineral Creek, flowing seasonally in its lower reaches here (and perennially in Segment 20 just ahead). Also located along the way is the historical curiosity known as Cooney's Tomb, a gravesite hollowed out of a large boulder. Pioneer prospector James Cooney discovered silver and copper along Mineral Creek and later bragged publicly that he "had not seen a hostile Indian in this camp for three years," only to be scalped by Apaches two months later. His friends built the grave, using ore from Cooney's own mine to seal the entrance. (The so-called Alma Massacre, led by Chiricahua Apache Chief Victorio, ultimately claimed the lives of several dozen residents of the adjacent community, lending Cooney's Tomb a somber significance to this day - a small cemetery is located adjacent to the site.)

For hikers planning to resupply in Glenwood, several options exist to get to (or for westbounders, *from*) the start of Segment 20. From Glenwood, you can walk or hitchhike north on US 180 to Alma and from there hike all of Segment 19, as described in the Route Details below. Or you can go part of the way to Alma and then join NM 159 (aka the Bursum Road), reaching the GET at milepoint 1.6 of the segment, which all told would be about one and a half miles shorter. While in Glenwood you may also wish to visit the acclaimed [Catwalk National Recreation Trail](#); however while portions of the Catwalk may be open and accessible, this trail currently does not offer thru-access to or from the Gila Wilderness trail network due to heavy damage stemming from the Whitewater-Baldy Fire and subsequent flooding. GET'ers detouring to the Catwalk from Glenwood are advised to hitchhike out and back, which usually is not problematic whenever the Catwalk is open to the public.

#### ROUTE DETAILS

From the junction of US 180 and Mineral Creek Road in [Alma](#), (waypoint 18110, elev. 4900') proceed east on Mineral Creek Rd (C 007 / FR 701). (At the junction, this road is also signed for Cooney Tomb and Mineral Creek Tr 201.) The quiet, 2WD dirt road passes a few homes among farmland (private lands at roadside mean no public camping for most of this segment). Keep right at a turn-off to Alma Cemetery in **0.5** of a mile (waypoint 19010). Now the road comes close to Mineral Creek, passing Oaks RV Park on the left at about **1.2**, with camping, water and hook-ups for RV's only.

At **1.6** (waypoint 19020), signed C 046 (FR 714), on the right offers roadside access to [Mineral Creek](#), typically ankle-deep in wetter springs, but dry by autumn. The creekside setting here has changed considerably as a result of heavy flooding that occurred in September 2013, the channel now wide and bermed in order to accommodate the threat of similar future floods exacerbated by the Whitewater-Baldy Fire of 2012.

Continuing on Mineral Creek Road, our route itself eventually crosses the [creek](#) at **3.9**, then turns up the other side, now in a shady forested setting, where it enters the private Grove Ranch for a spell. A mile beyond reach Cooney's Tomb at right (**4.9**, waypoint 19040), which has been part of the Gila National Forest only since 2009 (previously the publicly-accessible site was located on private land). Unfortunately you may encounter concrete barricades in front of the tomb of late, a measure designed to protect this important cultural resource from flood damage. In any event, unless otherwise indicated it should still be possible to explore the area up close, including the small cemetery just behind it, enclosed by a wrought-iron fence.

An otherwise inviting creeklet that crosses the road near **5.2** actually seems to have an off-taste, potentially due to historical mining activity upstream. Thankfully Mineral Creek, even if dry in Segment 19, offers good water and is perennial just ahead in Segment 20. Continuing on, our road keeps left at a fork, possibly now signed as Forest Road "4239U," then more or less ends at a large dirt turnout by an old corral in mature riparian forest. From here a narrow high-clearance track continues a short distance to the end of Segment 19 by a trailhead signboard for Mineral Creek Trail 201 (**5.6**, waypoint 20010, elev. 5420').