
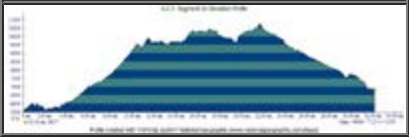


G.E.T. Guidebook

Segment 20: Mogollon Mountains 36.6 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
36.6 mi.	unfinalized but accessible	spring, summer, fall
Resources		
<div> <div>OVERVIEW MAP</div>  </div> <div> <div>ELEVATION PROFILE</div>  </div>		Additional maps: Gila National Forest (USFS) Gila Wilderness (USFS) Land management agencies: Gila NF Glenwood Ranger District (W of Mogollon Baldy) Gila NF Wilderness Ranger District (E of Mogollon Baldy)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G.E.T. Topo Maps 51-57 Water Chart Image Gallery: Album 6 		

Beginning 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.

Alternate access: NM 174 at The Catwalk NRT trailhead. From Glenwood, travel east on paved NM 174, 4.8 miles to the trailhead at road's end. Provides direct access to the Catwalk, which is currently being rebuilt, post-flood damage. At this time it is not possible to continue all the way to the GET via this route, but this should be a possibility in future seasons. (The Catwalk is open for about half a mile, where reconstruction efforts have been completed.)

SEGMENT OVERVIEW

The Grand Enchantment Trail here begins its extended tour of Gila Country, as this vast and diverse region of dark forested peaks, deep sinuous canyons, sunny ponderosa parks, and rolling desert grasslands is so well known. For the next 130 miles our route will follow an adventurous and truly spectacular course through the heart of this land, most of it on foot trails, a majority of which are located in National Forest Wilderness areas. The Gila Wilderness is first accessed in this segment, and the GET remains in its company through the end of Segment 22, a distance of some 70 miles. Designated the world's first wilderness area on June 3, 1924, the Gila Wilderness, along with the adjacent Aldo Leopold Wilderness, Blue Range Wilderness, and Blue Primitive Area, together form one of the larger intact wild landscapes remaining in the contiguous United States.

Ending access point

Trail 151 at White Creek Administrative Site. This segment ends within the Gila Wilderness, at a remote location accessible only on foot or horseback. For the nearest vehicle access to the east, see the Ending Access Point for Segment 21.

In this segment the GET makes passage over the Mogollon Mountains, actually the western rim of a giant caldera that once encompassed virtually the entire region eastward to the Black Range. Volcanic ash deposited over eons and carved by water has formed dramatic, steep-sided canyons such as Mineral Creek and, most notably, along the popular Catwalk Trail, currently accessible as a day-hiking excursion from the town of Glenwood. Beyond the canyons, our route climbs sharply to the 10,000-foot crest of the range, topping out at Mogollon Baldy (10,770'), the highest point on the GET.

Owing to its size and prominence, the Mogollon crest can harbor a considerable winter snowpack and often retains it well into spring. Mountain slopes tend to be steep, while forest trails, graded and marked for summer use, often contour across these slopes and can be exposed and difficult to follow when snowbound. Following an average winter's snowfall, and on a typical eastbound itinerary, spring thru-hikers can expect to encounter snow above 9,000 or 9,500 feet, or for as many as 12 miles of the main route in this segment. More than anywhere else along the route, the high crest of the Mogollon Mountains in springtime can be a place for the proficient alpine traveler only, one who possesses the ability to navigate trails hidden beneath rotten snow and marked only with occasional tree cuts and signed junctions. This is the reality of early season hiking atop this remote and rugged range. (For more on snow travel, here and elsewhere along the GET, see the related [Trek Planner chapter](#).)

For those disinterested in such challenges, the high Mogollons are clear of snow throughout the summer, and usually into October or November when the days here can be brisk and glorious. Or you can instead hike the so-called High Country Bypass in this segment, an extensive detour that circumvents the highest terrain, via Wilderness trails and the adjacent Bursum Road, a longer route than the main GET and perhaps harboring some spring snowpack along the road, but largely without the aforementioned difficulties. For a further description of the High Country Bypass, see the latter part of the Route Details info below.

Snowpack aside, trail conditions here tend to be better than what GET hikers have experienced in parts of Arizona. Trail tread is generally well defined, most junctions are signed, and any blowdowns cleared by dedicated Forest Service trail crews, if not one year then probably the next. Ruggedness is still standard fare, though, such as on the many short but unavoidable fords of Mineral Creek in the early miles. Perennial water is available along this creek as well as Silver Creek, and, toward segment's end, at White Creek and the West Fork Gila River. Several small but fairly reliable springs are also located along or near the trail corridor on the high crest traverse, or snow can be melted in early season, so that finding drinking water is generally not among this segment's pressing concerns. Established trailside campsites are encountered with some frequency, although most of the trails here are not so popular as to render these sites unattractive. Outside of summer vacation season, the backcountry here is surprisingly little-used, considering all that it has to offer.

SPECIAL NOTICE - WHITEWATER-BALDY FIRE IMPACTS ON SEGMENT 20:

Significant damage to trails caused by the [Whitewater-Baldy Complex Fire](#) of 2012 and subsequent flooding has led us to realign a large portion of this segment (whether temporarily or permanently we've yet to determine). The new alignment, described herein (below), avoids a majority of problematic trail damage along the prior Segment 20 main route. However the new main route does pass unavoidably through the heart of the burn area along the Mogollon Crest, or roughly from mile 13 through 30 of this segment, and blowdowns - while typically cleared seasonally along these particular trails - may be present in certain sections particularly in springtime. The High Country Bypass alternate route, now limited to the east side of Silver Creek Divide, features its share of unavoidable fire and flood damage, occasionally severe for shorter stretches at a time, however hikers who have used the Bypass indicate making safe passage, albeit at a slower than average pace. All route changes, both main and alternate, as well as trail conditions, are also described on the current version of the [GET Topo Map Set](#). For additional travel options as well as the big picture view, consult the [USFS Gila Wilderness topographic map](#), which shows all trails in this region at a detailed scale and is very navigation-friendly. We continue to closely monitor updates from the Forest Service and elsewhere on trail conditions as we decide whether to make additional changes to the suggested route layout.

Special note to those visiting the Catwalk Trail from Glenwood: Until further notice the Catwalk Trail is inaccessible as a thru-route due to flood damage, including to the trail's suspended metal walkway and stairs. This trail is currently being rebuilt (again) and is accessible (as of spring 2017) for approximately one half mile in from the trailhead, beyond which a USFS trail closure order is in effect.

Side Hike along the Catwalk Trail

During the region's late 19th century mining heyday, a water pipeline was built along the narrow canyon of lower Whitewater Creek to supply the ertswhile Graham Mill just downstream. Considered an engineering feat at the time, the suspended pipeline nonetheless needed constant maintenance, which required workers to shimmy precariously along its narrow length above the rockbound creek, hence the "Catwalk" nickname. In the 1930's the CCC developed the Catwalk into a recreation trail by installing a suspended walkway that followed the course of the pipeline. In 2005 the

Forest Service completed its most recent renovation of the Catwalk Trail, modernizing the walkway and making a portion of the trail barrier-free, but the uniqueness of the experience, along with its history, have been preserved.

ROUTE DETAILS

MP 0.0 From the trailhead kiosk for Mineral Creek Trail 201 (waypoint 20010, elev. 5420'), head east on Trail 201. The trail follows close by **Mineral Creek**, then within a half mile enters a colorful, steep-walled box canyon of ash-flow tuff, the primitive cairned trail winding past boulders and alongside small cascades.

MP 1.4 The forested trail enters Cooney Camp, historic mining area (late 1800's era silver and gold mine), with numerous artifacts and stone ruins on display at creekside. Trail continues to ford **Mineral Creek** at intervals, often rock-hoppable or ankle-deep. Beyond mile 2 the trail is increasingly eroded at the creek due to sporadic flooding, requiring you to clamber down and up during crossings.

MP 3.5 Signed junction with Red Canyon Trail 198 on the left (north) bank of the creek, with good camping prospects on the bench here. Stay on Mineral Creek Trail, which was essentially cross-country drainage walking at last check.

MP 4.3 Junction with Log Canyon Trail 808 (waypoint 20040). LOOK CAREFULLY for this junction along the right south bank of the **Mineral Creek**, as it may be obscured by flood debris. A cairn may be visible up the hill a short ways and there's an obvious side drainage coming in just before the junction. Follow Log Canyon Trail steeply uphill along the drainage, then as it contours and climbs toward a saddle.

MP 5.5 Saddle at head of Log Canyon. Cairns lead across open terrain, then trail descends obviously south.

MP 6.4 Signed Log Canyon trailhead along the Bursum Road, with likely perennial water in adjacent **Silver Creek**. Mogollon ghost town is about a mile west (see town guide). The GET instead turns east along the Bursum Road, a graded dirt road which was severely damaged by flooding in 2013 but has since been rebuilt and is seasonally open to vehicles again.

MP 7.5 Junction with Deloche Trail 179, which heads south into the Whitewater Creek drainage. The GET remains routed on the Bursum Rd for now, as unrepaired trail and flood damage begin just south of this junction, although plans may be afoot to reconstruct at least a portion of the trail network around Whitewater Creek in coming seasons.

MP 8.6 Last access to **Silver Creek** until 10.6, as Bursum Rd switchbacks out of the canyon.

MP 10.6 Junction with Redstone Trail 206, with access to **Silver Creek** (final opportunity). This trail is also damaged and probably unusable. The GET remains on the Bursum Rd, passing over Silver Creek Divide (9100') at **12.0**. You may begin to find snow along the road in springtime, and the route gradually enters the Whitewater-Baldy Fire burn area.

MP 13.7 Signed junction with Crest Trail 182 (waypoint 20075, elev. 9132') at Sandy Point. A vault toilet is located nearby. The main route of the GET joins the Crest Trail, passing through frequently burned terrain all the way to mile 30, although the trail itself has been reported in generally good condition in recent years. Aspen regrowth may be coming along nicely now in places, views are less restricted than before, and there are still safe places to camp in patches of living forest -- so it's not all bad news. Consider taking the main route except in a high snow year, when the **High Country Bypass**, with its noteworthy flood damage in a few places, is nonetheless preferable for its lower elevations and overall reduced exposure to snowpack. (The High Country Bypass continues east from Sandy Point along the Bursum Road. See details in the related section of this guidebook chapter.)

MP 15.2 Junction, just inside Gila Wilderness boundary, with short side trail heading east to **Bead Spring**, which has been reported in good condition despite the burn. An area of unburned forest is located less than half a mile before the junction -- a possible hazard tree-free camping opportunity.

MP 16.3 The Crest Trail enters another area of unburned forest, with trailside camping possible.

MP 18.5 Signed junction at Hummingbird Saddle. Likely-reliable **Hummingbird Spring** is located a couple tenths of a mile downhill to the west. Unburned forest here and for the next mile south along the Crest Trail. Best camping is here in an open area around 18.5. Long-lasting snow may be present in springtime as the trail contours around the east side of Whitewater Baldy.

MP 19.4 Signed junction with Iron Creek Trail 172. This trail is not recommended for use as a connector to the High Country Bypass, as trail conditions deteriorate heading east. Remain on the Crest Trail southward.

MP 21.1 Junction of Crest Trail 182 and Holt Apache Trail 181 at a prominent saddle. Eastbound hikers, take the left fork, remaining on Crest Trail. Living forest is just ahead, for a third of a mile or so, with flat camping opportunities.

MP 22.0 Be careful not to walk right by **Hobo Spring**, a small pool and trickle just below the trail (waypoint 20130). Nice and cold, but water quality may not be the best; nonetheless this is the first on-trail water source in almost 4 miles, and possibly the last for another six.

MP 23.1 Little Hobo Spring (waypoint 20140) is immediately trailside on eastbounder's left (not as reliable as Hobo Spring). Remain on Crest Trail 182 through a junction at West Fork Saddle (**23.4**), beyond which the trail gradually enters an older burn area that should present fewer hazards in terms of blowdowns and any trail damage.

MP 25.7 The Crest Trail contours, climbs, and then switchbacks up to the summit of Mogollon Baldy. Welcome to the highest point directly along the GET! (elev. 10,770') Built in 1923, the historic cabin is staffed during fire season, when no camping is allowed at the summit. The rest of the year the cabin is locked, but its sheltered porch would serve as a refuge in a storm. The nearby lookout tower is likewise off-limits, although it hardly matters, as the views from this open peak are unencumbered. Visible to the west on a clear day is distant Mount Graham, and to the east the San Mateo Mountains (still 150 trail miles away), beyond the long spine of the Black Range. Indeed, much of southwest New Mexico and southeast Arizona is on display here. Leaving the summit, Crest Trail #182 becomes Mogollon Baldy Trail #152. It heads east along the gentle crest of the forested ridge, then begins a gradual, switchbacking descent down the meadowy southeastern slope. When snowbound, the trail would be especially difficult to follow here, recommending a careful cross-country descent of the open, though not exceptionally exposed slope (toward waypoint 20190).

MP 27.5 Trail junction at south end of open Snow Park. (*Westbounders in autumn may find the meadow lavish with the summer's withered ferns, when the trail can be a little difficult to follow. It heads back into the woods at waypoint 20195.*) Signed side trail on eastbounder's left, leading to fairly reliable **Snow Park Spring**, 300 vertical feet downhill, in about a quarter mile. Camping is possible near the junction, although the area is often windswept. Beyond, pass junctions with Trail 221 and 169, remaining on Mogollon Baldy Trail 152.

MP 28.4 The trail, now back within the Whitewater-Baldy Fire burn zone, passes "**Dark Spring**" (waypoint 20209), a slow-moving puddle of moisture at trailside which only became evident after the fire, likely due to the removal of organic matter.

MP 29.0 The trail descends to cross a saddle (waypoint 20210). This portion of the trail, since re-entering the burn, had not received the same level of upkeep as the Crest Trail, for example, and was a little hard to follow / was somewhat rough going at times (2014).

MP 29.8 The Whitewater-Baldy Fire's major effects along the trail corridor end around here. Continuing east, Mogollon-Baldy Trail 152 enters an open ponderosa pine forest where crown-fire conditions did not occur. The ridge gradually broadens and the gradient slackens, making for a leisurely stroll, likely out of the snow zone for springtime eastbounders. Final good views of the Mogollon crest appear off to the south near **30.5**, beyond which the trail continues almost due east on a remarkably easy and steady grade, in stark contrast to the sharp western slope of the range - the rim of the ancient caldera.

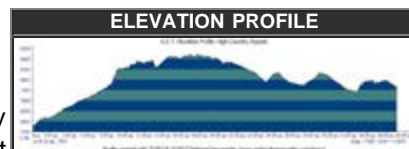
MP 33.5 Keep left at a signed junction with Trail 302 (waypoint 20220), staying on Trail 152, which switchbacks down into the little canyon of perennial **White Creek**, crossing it easily at **29.5**. Meadowy camp spots are off-trail, a short ways down the drainage. The rocky trail traverses up and out of the canyon, then turns northeast along Cub Mesa among a partially burned ponderosa forest.

MP 34.6 Signed junction with West Fork Trail #151 (waypoint 20330, elev. 7650'). This spot marks the eastern terminus of the **High Country Bypass**, which heads west (left) on Trail 151. (*Westbounders interested in avoiding the Mogollon crest would continue straight on Trail 151.*) Turning right (east) onto Trail 151, our route descends gradually off the mesa, crossing and then traversing downhill along the south side of a steep drainage, where you may find some trailside **seeps**.

MP 36.0 Leaving the burn zone, the trail levels out again in the wide, flat-bottomed canyon of the West Fork Gila River, turning right (southeast) at a junction with Trail 815. (*Westbounders note that this junction may be signed only for Trail 815, which remains in the canyon bottom, while Trail 151 forks left (west) and soon climbs away.*) At length Trail 151 fords the willow-lined **West Fork Gila River**, which is typically 5 yards wide here, shin deep and fairly gentle, and is the only required ford for those following the West Fork Highwater Bypass in Segment 21 (described in that guidebook chapter). This bypass actually begins here at the end of Segment 20, just beyond the ford, at **36.5**, where signed Trail 30 climbs out of the drainage, heading to Lilley Park.

MP 36.6 Forging the Gila once more, then immediately crossing now-familiar **White Creek**, just above the confluence, West Fork Trail #151 arrives at serene White Creek Flat, with ample grassy camping opportunities. The segment ends here by the Forest Service's White Creek Administrative Site, a rustic log cabin (locked) that is only very sporadically staffed. (waypoint 20360, elev. 6856').

High Country Bypass



The 23-mile High Country Bypass avoids the 10,000'+ crest of the Mogollon Mountains, in favor of an overall lower route that is less likely to harbor - though not certain to avoid - spring season snowpack. Most snowpack is confined to the first few miles of this alternate route located along the Bursum Road. The gently-graded dirt road, closed to vehicles in early season, may harbor snow on its shady bends, on and off, but without the potential for routefinding concerns of the Mogollon Crest trails encountered on the main GET route. The bypass route then reenters the Gila Wilderness to the east of the Mogollon Crest, where it trends south, following a network of foot trails, here at elevations sufficiently low to promise mostly snow-free walking. Small creeks along this stretch provide drinking water in spring.

West to east, the High Country Bypass diverges from the main GET route at milepoint 13.7, and rejoins it again at 34.6. Making use of the 23-mile Bypass thus adds about 2 miles to the total length of this segment as listed at the head of this page. Although the extra distance is negligible, there is currently a 4-mile section of this alternate route with considerable flood-related damage where the trail - albeit likely snow-free - may be hard to follow or requires some scrambling in eroded drainages, such that this route may be best suited for times when the main route across the Mogollon Crest is genuinely "snowed in," such as in a higher-snowpack spring.

MP 0.0 Sandy Point trailhead and junction with Crest Trail 180 (waypoint 20075, elev. 9132'). Head east on the Bursum Road. Snow may be present in springtime for the first several miles of this alternate route, particularly where the road crosses north-facing drainages. You might find occasional **snowmelt pools**, or could plan to melt any snow over a stove or fire.

MP 4.9 Pass the trailhead for South Fork Mineral Creek Trail #79, with decent camping prospects across the road, among the forest.

MP 5.3 Junction with FR 153 on the left (north). The ponderosa pine forest here was burned in the Bear Fire of 2006. Continue on Bursum Road.

MP 8.6 Leave the Bursum Road / NM 159 (waypoint 20270) and join the road heading south into sprawling Willow Creek Campground (closed in early season, but accessible). Keep to the main road, along the west side of reliable **Willow Creek**, then ford the shallow creek to find the signed trailhead for McKenzie Trail #151.

MP 8.9 McKenzie Trail #151 trailhead (waypoint 20280). (Note an outhouse nearby, perhaps the second one since entering the campground.) Trail 151 - which will later become West Fork Trail by the same route number (see Segment 21) - heads up along smaller **Turkey Creek**, then traverses into a neighboring dry gully. Here it enters the Gila Wilderness, climbing south onto Iron Creek Mesa, a sunny ponderosa park-type environment that typifies the rolling uplands east of the Mogollon Crest.

MP 10.3 Whitewater Baldy Trail #172 heads off at right (west), just before our Trail 151 passes shallow, murky (sometimes dry) **Iron Creek Lake**. A short ways beyond the lake, as the trail starts down off the mesa, reach a junction with Iron Creek Mesa Trail #171 (waypoint 20290). Remain on Trail 151, which heads south into a prominent gully. At the confluence with perennial **Iron Creek** it turns east, down-canyon. The Iron Creek drainage and beyond, particularly to MP 17.4, was impacted by the Whitewater Baldy Fire and subsequent flooding. As of 2017, trail tread was mostly good, although with a decent number of downed trees across the trail.

MP 12.8 Remain on Trail 151 where it fords Iron Creek (waypoint 20300), then turns south up **Cooper Canyon**, passing a turnoff on the left (east) for Trail 141. **Please note that due to severe flood damage, as of 2017, reportedly 90 percent of the trail is gone from 12.8 to Turkeyfeather Pass at 14.6.** Scrambling roughly in or near the drainage will therefore be necessary. Fire and flood damage are of more limited scope approaching the pass itself, where trail tread momentarily returns.

MP 14.6 Reach Turkeyfeather Pass, with Trail 102 at right (south), then Trails 175 and 164 on the left (east) in quick succession. Here our Trail 151 enters the canyon of **Turkeyfeather Creek** at its head. The likelihood of the creek flowing increases as you continue down the canyon, frequently crossing back and forth in the narrow, v-shaped drainage. As of 2017, the trail from the pass is initially vague but followable, then becomes better except for downed trees. However, **the last mile or so approaching the West Fork of the Gila River at 17.4 is quite narrow with no tread, and it may be very slippery to walk in the drainage. Some sketchy spots may exist for those not acclimated to rough scrambling /**

descending in canyon drainages.

MP 17.4 Turkeyfeather Creek pours into the [West Fork Gila River](#), normally a modest flow this close to its headwaters, and which the trail initially fords to gain its west bank.

MP 18.4 Trail 151 comes to a junction with Trail 815 (waypoint 20320), a primitive route which remains with the West Fork and involves fording. As hikers following the main route in Segment 21 will soon have plenty of experience with fording the West Fork, the recommended route here instead continues with Trail 151 as it heads toward higher ground. The trail winds briefly into the little drainage of [Cub Creek](#), then switchbacks up onto pleasant Cub Mesa, offering dry camping potential.

MP 20.9 Trail 151 dips to cross Packsaddle Canyon. The trail then bends east in partially burned, open ponderosa forest to a signed junction with Trail 152 and a rejoining of the main GET route at milepoint **23.0** (waypoint 20330, elev. 7650'). (This is milepoint 34.6 of the main route. Remain on Trail 151 eastbound.)