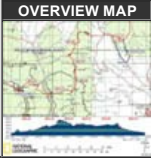



## G.E.T. Guidebook

### Segment 23: South Diamond Creek 11.5 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
11.5 mi.	finalized & accessible	spring, summer, fall
<b>Resources</b>		
		<b>Additional maps:</b> Gila National Forest (USFS) <b>Land management agencies:</b> Gila NF Wilderness Ranger District
<a href="#">G.E.T. Topo Maps 62-64</a> <a href="#">Water Chart</a> <a href="#">Image Gallery: Album 7</a>		

#### Beginning access point

**FR 150 at Trail 707 trailhead.** Join NM 35 north per Seg 22 Beginning Access Point "asterisked" directions. Follow NM 35 past community of Mimbres to Mimbres Ranger Station and continue ~5 miles to signed turnout for FR 150 (North Star Road) on right. Follow graded dirt FR 150 (can be rough in places, with several long grades) approx. 25 miles and turn right on signed 2WD FR 61 to Me Own fire/helitack site. Follow road clockwise around admin. site building and pass through gate by corral (toilet and water spigot nearby). Continue via 2-track 0.25 mi. to small turnout by Aldo Leopold Wilderness boundary at Trail 707.

#### Ending access point

**Trail 69 at CDT (Trail 74).** This segment ends within the Aldo Leopold Wilderness atop the Black Range Crest (Continental Divide), at a remote location accessible only on foot or horseback. For the nearest vehicle access to the east (north), see the Ending Access Point for Segment 24.

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS CHAPTER REMAINS UNFINISHED. SEGMENT OVERVIEW AND ROUTE DETAILS INFO BELOW ARE IN DRAFT FORM AND HIGHLIGHT ONLY THE ESSENTIALS NEEDED FOR NAVIGATING THIS SEGMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TOPO MAP SET.**

#### SEGMENT OVERVIEW

Our mellow tour of Middle Gila country concludes in this segment with a final push to the Continental Divide atop the Black Range, the culmination of an extended walk up the secluded canyon of perennial South Diamond Creek and its tributary. The trail in fact drops a sharp ~500 feet initially, leaving a pinyon-juniper-ponderosa mesa to switchback down to the bottom of South Diamond, whereupon it heads up the gentle canyon grade to regain lost elevation. The creekside environment harbors mixed riparian and conifer forest, with stately Douglas fir and Englemann spruce present farther up-canyon, as well as beautiful wildflower meadows by mid-summer. Bear and elk are common, if elusive, visitors.

The walking here consists of the now-standard occasional crossings of a minor creek, typically dry in places, reliable in others. Per usual in this type of environment, the trail tread is occasionally vague due to limited use and sporadic flooding, or becomes divergent in open meadows. Nevertheless the trail remains generally in the flat-floored drainage and on adjacent benches, and the terrain is relatively open so forward progress comes easily. Aptly-named Burnt Canyon farther east presents a marked contrast to the luxuriance of South Diamond Creek, having burned over within the last two decades along with upper South Diamond proper. Although navigation here is no more challenging than elsewhere in the segment, and the trail in Burnt Canyon has seen a work crew in recent years, nevertheless some timber continues to drop across the corridor, and thorny New Mexico locust can make for unpleasant going in a few spots (all very minor at last check). Rewards include wide-open views and a chance to witness fire's restorative role in forest health (despite the burn's severity, the forest is clearly on the rebound, ultimately the stronger for it). Finally the trail leaves the burned terrain behind as it climbs in earnest the final mile to the Continental Divide, with forested camping prospects available along the way.

#### ROUTE DETAILS

Me Own Trail 707 begins as several parallel tracks, proceeds east in pinyon-juniper. (*Cairned but unsigned jct at 1.7 potentially confusing for westbounders, who should continue straight, avoiding left fork.*) East of Me Own Hill, Tr 707 bends more northeast, but another trail - less obvious at first but possible to take by mistake - goes to Me Own Tank (stock pond). If inadvertently sidetracked, head north from tank to rejoin Tr 707 above mesa drop. Reasonably well-graded descent via short switchbacks reaches Tr 68 along south side of **South Diamond Creek** at **3.9**. (*Westbounders, watch carefully for junction with Tr 707, marked by a wooden signpost on left, and be sure to collect water before starting ascent.*)

Straightforward navigation east along Trail 68. Usually close to creek on one side or the other, but occasionally climbs above briefly to shortcut bends or narrows in first half of canyon walk. A few good established campsites en route, but possibilities are many. Don't despair if drainage dry at a particular crossing; some further crossing likely to be wet, or in Burnt Canyon. (Don't camp in Burnt Canyon due to potential hazards from falling trees.)

Entrance to Burnt Canyon / Trail 69 at **8.6** (waypoint 23070) is obvious due to severe burn terminating literally right at confluence with South Diamond Creek Canyon & Tr 68. Trail sign, nailed to nearby tree, less obvious. In any case, head up Burnt Canyon to find trail within a few hundred yards. Navigation again straightforward, though canyon narrower, v-shaped, with some awkward crossings of **small creekllet** (excellent water despite burn), and just very sporadic blowdowns to negotiate at last check. (Continuation of Tr 68 toward Divide also encounters burned terrain, as well as missing Diamond Creek and fine views in vicinity.)

Burn mostly ends where trail leaves Burnt Canyon drainage at **10.5** (waypoint 23080), begins easterly climb to Divide (last water before Diamond Peak Spring in segment 24). Ascent is well graded through mixed conifer forest. Possible camp on flat portion of ridge on eastbounder's right at waypoint 23085. Last 30 yards to Divide and junction with CDT sometimes obscure, overgrown. (*Westbounders, immediately upon reaching low point / flat saddle south of Diamond Peak at waypoint 732, hopefully note trail sign/post on right. Turn right (west) to find good Trail 69 within 30 yards or so.*)