
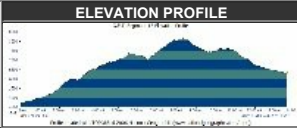


G.E.T. Guidebook

Segment 17: Maple Peak 13.7 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
13.7 mi.	finalized & accessible	spring, summer, fall
Resources		
		Additional maps: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (USFS) Clifton 1:100K Topographic (BLM) Land management agency: Apache NF Clifton Ranger District
G.E.T. Topo Maps 47-48 Water Chart Image Gallery: Album 5		

Beginning access point

FR 475 at Wild Bunch Trailhead. From Clifton take US 191 (Coronado Blvd) north ~3.5 mi to the town of Morenci. Continue on US 191 - a winding, 2-lane mountain highway - north approx. 27 miles (or south 65 miles from Alpine) and turn east onto signed, graded 2WD FR 475 / Juan Miller Rd. Pass the Beginning Access Point for Segment 16 in 5 miles. Continue straight at the junction with signed FR 475C, and reach a crossing of the Blue River, ~14 mi. from the highway. The ford often requires a high clearance 4WD vehicle. (A parking area is on the right, just before the crossing.) FR 475 continues another 2 miles to the signed trailhead for Wild Bunch Trail #7 on the left. Please note that FR 475, in its entirety, is narrow, with mountain curves and grades, and may be impassable to passenger cars when wet.

Ending access point

FR 712 at Trail 307 Trailhead. 4.5 miles north of Glenwood NM, just south of where the highway crosses Mineral Creek in Alma, (at signed Mile 46) turn west off US 180 onto a graded dirt road. The road crosses the San Francisco River - often shallow or dry here, otherwise requiring a high-clearance vehicle. (An alternate bridged crossing via County Route 004 is accessed 1.2 mi. S on US 180 from mile marker 46. See the GET mapset for an overview.) Keep left at the first junction beyond the ford, then right at the next junction, here joining County Route 004. In 2.4 mi. from US 180, keep straight at a t-junction with a road at left. In about 6 mi. from US 180, past a power transmission line, turn right (onto FR 712, which may require 4WD when wet). A sign here says "Sunflower Mesa." Continue 3.8 mi. to the AZ/NM boundary at a fence line. Primitive parking is available on either side of the fence near the signed trailhead for Charlie Moore Trail #307.

SEGMENT OVERVIEW

Climbing over the southernmost ridges of the Blue Range toward New Mexico, our route changes character in this segment. For the borderlands here reveal native elements of both Arizona and New Mexico, as though the political boundary were drawn on nature's own terms. Eastbounders will find the familiar trail full of volcanic rocks, the weathered volcanic and sedimentary cliffs, and westward views toward a chaotic and colorful Arizona geography. But a closer inspection also reveals the presence of elk here, as well as turkey, both common to the higher country of New Mexico. And eastward views toward the Land of Enchantment are just as one might imagine, with open, rolling valleys of grassland and juniper rising fluidly toward the high, forested crests at the gateway to Gila country. Our route borders as well on the Blue Range Primitive Area, one of two sites (along with the Gila National Forest in 1998) selected for their remote, wild character for the reintroduction of the once-extirpated Mexican gray wolf. Although the population of wolves is not expanding under current management practices, these majestic predators are undeniably here, perhaps for the very fortunate hiker to hear or even glimpse firsthand.

For most of this segment the GET follows foot trails, remote and little-used other than by hunters in fall, although for the most part followable without a routefinding ordeal. Leaving Wild Bunch Canyon, the route climbs sharply into a complex of narrow, forested ridges - reaching a high point at Maple Peak (8200') - then begins an undulating traverse before descending more moderately toward Sunflower Mesa on the Arizona-New Mexico state line. Water is usually available at one or more small springs in addition to an earthen wildlife tank of fair quality. Finding smooth ground for camping may be a little tricky in this rocky terrain, though one promising location is at Snare Canyon about halfway along.

ROUTE DETAILS

An information board at the trailhead for Wild Bunch Trail #7 (waypoint 16110, elev. 4700') sometimes has leaflets available highlighting the trail, which was reconstructed by the Forest Service in 1997 (and saw additional work in 2009). The trail heads east into Wild Bunch Canyon, initially climbing over (or around) the dirt impoundment of dry Wild Bunch Tank. "Wild Bunch," as one might assume, pays homage to the legendary Old West outlaws who robbed trains and stole horses, although some say the canyon's name was actually inspired by a herd of wayward cattle that refused to come out for branding.

The trail, somewhat washed-out here, follows the left side of the drainage initially, then meanders back and forth across it with occasional cairns. Walk among live oak, pinyon pine, and alligator juniper, entering a narrow portion of the canyon at **0.9** of a mile. About 0.1 farther, pass an interesting wooden feed trough with aluminum a-frame "roof." The drainage here and ahead may contain pools of water or sometimes a flowing creek, emanating from the [spring](#) shown on maps. At **1.3**, pass through a wire gate, with one of the more reliable pools not far beyond. Here the trail regains the left bank, continuing through an old corral at **1.7** (waypoint 17010). Just ahead, look carefully for tree blazes and cairns as the trail dips to cross the main drainage, switchbacking briefly west (right) along the opposite bank.

After an earnest climb out of the canyon, reach a secluded ridgetop saddle at **2.2** (waypoint 17020). Here the trail turns left (east), climbing and contouring around the north side of the ridge. At **2.9** reach an open flat near waypoint 17025, and look for occasional cairns leading east. Descend somewhat into a pleasant swale, contouring among ponderosa and pinyon pine to cross a minor drainage. Beyond, the trail switchbacks a couple of times, then climbs more steeply, with rugged, rocky footing, to reach Morris Day Gap at **4.4** (waypoint 17030). A scenic camp could be made in the vicinity of the old corral here, with Coalson Peak prominent toward the south.

The trail heads northeast from the corral, vaguely at first, then settling on an ascending traverse along the east side of the ridge. A [rockbound pool](#) on the left, 100 yards from the corral, sometimes contains a bit of algae-coated water. The large cistern nearby also has a small trough alongside of it, which is typically of better quality than the open spring pool. In 0.2 of a mile reach another possible source, an [improved spring](#) in an alcove uphill of the trail, fenced to keep out livestock (waypoint 17040). (The cistern and trough at Morris Day Gap are fed via pipe from this source.) Continue along the rocky slope to cross the head of a little drainage. The trail climbs to a ridgeline fence, passing somewhat inconspicuously through an old gate (open). It then ascends east through forest cover via several switchbacks, arriving again at the fence by a (functional) gate at **5.6** (waypoint 17050, elev. 7350'). Pass through the gate and turn left. *(The trail appears to fork here. Westbounders turn right just before a large cairn and old signpost, and*

pass through the gate.)

Sweeping views down Bullard Canyon extend toward the Chihuahuan Desert of southwest New Mexico, as well as to distant Cook's Peak and the Florida Mountains. Descend to another saddle at **6.2** and turn left (north), passing through a wire gate. Beyond the gate the trail descends northwest to a signed 4-way trail junction at the head of Snare Canyon. Here, at **6.6** (waypoint 17070, elev. 7000') the GET leaves Wildbunch Trail #7 (which continues east down Snare Canyon) and instead joins Horse Canyon Trail #36 heading north. But first, you may want to investigate a potential water source in Snare Canyon; an **earthen tank** lies 0.4 mi east via the trail, a little silty but fairly reliable and infrequented by cattle. A forested camp could be made back up the drainage a short ways, where you may also find evidence of elk and turkey. **Eastbounders note that the tank in Snare Canyon could be your last water source until the vicinity of Alma - nearly 17 miles ahead, in Segment 18.**

Trail 36 ascends north, keeping east of the fenceline. It negotiates the broad south-facing flank of Maple Peak, climbing through a series of short, vague switchbacks, then (at waypoint 17090) enters a long eastward traverse. The open, scrubby terrain here tends to be somewhat overgrown. As you climb, note the views behind you toward the Morenci mine, as well as the distant Pinalenos. *(Westbounders, here and beyond in this segment, please use caution when descending the slippery volcanic scree frequently encountered along the trail.)* The trail curves north to enter a ponderosa forest, where it briefly becomes vague. At waypoint 17100 it turns left (northwest) and climbs the slope, as indicated by occasional tree blaze cuts and cairns. Be careful not to wander northeast along the fenceline. Keep the fence on your right, following trail (what there is of it) along the open forested ridge to a gate and sign at **8.5** (waypoint 17110, elev. 8170'). Pass through the gate to the east side of the fence and continue northwest. The trail does not ascend to the summit of Maple Peak, but instead contours along its steep east face, affording the first definitive views of the Mogollon Mountains farther ahead on the GET. Like Maple Peak itself, the trail is flanked - not with maple - but primarily scrub oak and spiky New Mexico locust, which tend to crowd into the trail corridor. *If you'd like to reach the summit of Maple Peak, which is one of Arizona's 50 highest peaks by prominence and features a summit register, leave the trail around 8.65 and ascend cross-country (you may note some semblance of a beaten swath initially). Reaching the ridgeline fence, head north generally along it, as dictated by the terrain and brush. Just below the summit proper you'll need to negotiate the fence. The views from atop the 8294-foot summit are unrestricted.*

Descend to a wire fence (at about 33 20.976N 109 6.103W), where the trail continues downhill along a burned slope via several switchbacks. The fence may be down in places - do not cross it by mistake. The somewhat eroded switchbacks return to the fence, but if you can't follow them then simply descend along the fenceline, northeast to **9.4** (waypoint 17120). Here, at a cairn, the trail turns east, dipping slightly to round a knoll on the ridge (peak 7543). It then turns north in sporadically burned terrain and comes close to the fenceline once more, climbing along the ridge to reach the broad summit of Charlie Moore Mountain. This mountain is named for a pioneer-era rancher who lived nearby, at "Charlie Moore Place" as shown on maps. One story has it that the ranch, located at a favorable crossing point of the Blue Range, was a popular stop along the horse rustling routes, with Charlie accepting bribes from the outlaws in exchange for his silence whenever the sheriff's posse came calling.

Reach a signed trail junction at **10.6** (waypoint 17130). Here Trail 36 turns left (north) and continues to Baseline Trail 310, **while our route turns right (southeast) on Charlie Moore Trail 307.** *(Westbounders turn left here onto Horse Canyon Trail 36.)* Trail 307 descends east along the ridge and may be occasionally confused by cow paths. At **11.6** (waypoint 17150) our foot trail reaches a primitive 4WD track, and joins it heading east, continuing down the ridge. *(Westbounders look for a cairn where foot trail leaves the road on a bend.)* The cobble-strewn road, still known as Trail 307, reaches a junction with a road heading northwest into Banjo Canyon at **12.5. Banjo Tank**, an earthen impoundment to the north as shown on maps, is often dry, but according to satellite images it may hold water with greater frequency than other nearby tanks in this segment. As of 2015 a new **tank and trough** is found directly on route at around **13.0**, full and clear upon first observation, but should not be relied on based on the historically come-and-go nature of developed rancher water in this area. (Also see Pit Tank in Segment 18 for best reliability in terms of naturally collecting surface water between here and Alma.)

A road joins from the right at waypoint 17170 *(westbounders keep right at the fork)*. Continue east among scattered junipers a short ways to the Trail 307 trailhead, here at the western edge of Sunflower Mesa, just inside the Arizona border. (**13.7**, waypoint 17180, elev. 6300') A dry camp could perhaps be made nearby among the junipers. *(Westbounders, Trail 307 begins to the left of the information board, following the old 4WD track west.)*