
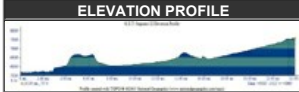


G.E.T. Guidebook

Segment 22: Middle & East Fork Gila River 24.8 miles

Segment Length	Segment Status	Season
24.8 mi.	finalized & accessible	spring, summer, fall
Resources		
OVERVIEW MAP 	ELEVATION PROFILE 	Additional maps: Gila National Forest (USFS) Gila Wilderness (USFS) Land management agencies: Gila NF Wilderness Ranger District
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ G.E.T. Topo Maps 60-62▶ Town Guide: Gila Hot Springs▶ Water Chart▶ Image Gallery: Album 7		

Beginning access point

NM 15 at Gila Cliff Dwellings contact station. From Silver City NM, follow NM 15 north (narrow and winding, with some steep grades*) 43 miles to t-junction and turn left, remaining on NM 15. Parking is available at TJ Corral trailhead on the right in 0.8 mi. (access to Seg 21 Highwater Bypass trail network). Otherwise continue additional 0.8 mi to Gila Cliff Dwellings contact station and parking for West Fork at start of Seg 22.

Alternate beginning access point avoiding 2.1 mi paved roadwalk at start of Seg 22, instead continue straight (north) at aforementioned t-junction, passing Gila Cliff Dwellings Visitors Center (water/restroom) to small lot at trailhead for Middle Fork Trail 157.

*Those wishing to avoid mountainous portions of NM 15 can instead use NM 35: turn north onto Highway 152 from Highway 180 at Santa Clara, NM. Follow 152 to the junction with 35 and follow 35 to the junction w/15.

Ending access point

FR 150 at Trail 707 trailhead. Join NM 35 north per Beginning Access Point "asterisked" directions. Follow NM 35 past community of Mimbres to Mimbres Ranger Station and continue ~5 miles to signed turnoff for FR 150 (North Star Road) on right. Follow graded dirt FR 150 (can be rough in places, with several long grades) approx. 24 miles to **Alternate ending access point** at trailhead for Trail 708 by old corral on left side of road, at MP 22.3 of this segment. Or continue on FR 150 1 mile farther via continuation of GET route in this segment, 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.

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

Brief encounters with scenic canyons of Middle and East Fork Gila River early in segment. Lightfeather Hot Spring en route. Six fords of Middle Fork, knee-thigh deep in spring, gentler/lower by autumn; convenient, short bypass route available during times of high water. Single ford of East Fork basically unavoidable - gentlest of three Gila forks, generally quite shallow, rarely problematic. Canyon of Diamond Creek beyond involves a few dozen fords of minor creek. Brief x-c to little-used pack trails in juniper-ponderosa parks - prime elk habitat - culminate in extended walk up mellow Tom Moore Canyon, often dry except for likely-perennial slot canyon portion of drainage below route. FR 150 divides Gila Wilderness and Aldo Leopold Wilderness - a quiet walk with no useful hitchhiking prospects except in an emergency (to NM 35 - Lake Roberts or Mimbres, etc).

ROUTE DETAILS

Upper & Lower Scorpion camp/picnic grounds along NM 15 within the first half mile of this segment intended mainly for car campers. Lower Scorpion has short interpretive trail leading to interesting pictographs, as well as a separate, small dwelling or granary in a side canyon.

Community of Gila Hot Springs is 3 mile walk S via NM 15 from MP 1.6. Doc Campbell's Post first business on left. Free camping available on FS land, S side of hwy before reaching town, along [Little Creek](#) - find use trail on E side of hwy bridge over creek.

Gila Cliff Dwellings NM visitor's center has [developed water](#), restrooms, pay phone, picnic table. Middle Fork Trail 157 trailhead at 2.1.

Middle Fork Highwater Bypass: If Middle Fork Trail 157 has problematic first ford, backtrack to trailhead and turn left, continuing up road into vehicle-restricted area. Unsigned trail begins at small horse corral on left - pass through corral. Climbs ridge to mesa, then turns north. (*Westbounders ignore left fork at unsigned junction before descending off mesa.*) Rejoin main route at trail sign at 4.4 (continue straight). (*Westbounders, watch for signed junction, and turn right to remain on main route, or keep straight to follow Highwater Bypass.*)

Six fords of [Middle Fork Gila River](#) on main route. Trail 157 flood-damaged 2012 but our brief section remains relatively easy-going. Way ahead is usually obvious / beaten down, and any flood debris easily circumvented. Lightfeather Hot Spring located at trailside. Signed trail to North Mesa and White Rocks at 3.5 (waypoint 22050). Initially steep, rough, then meadows on bench. Left at junction at 4.4 (Highwater Bypass ends here northbound). Rocky switchbacking ascent to North Mesa. Trail sign at 5.5; bear right at fork here onto Trail 804 (don't continue to White Rocks). North Tank is unreliable stock pond skirted by trail. Steep, rocky descent off mesa on cairned trail; [Adobe Spring](#) often dry where first encounter drainage, but pools sometimes present lower down. Trail here to waypoint 22100 features tread maintenance (2013?) and easily followable. Turn right (south) at junction (waypoint 22100) following de facto trail along W side of East Fork Gila River (continuation of Tr 804, not on route, unsigned, reaches cairn at Gila River, then vague). (*Westbounders turn left (west) up obvious drainage of Adobe Canyon at 8.8.*)

Single, easy ford of [East Fork Gila River](#). Nearby cottonwoods, camping. Trail becomes vague but bears east through wire fence opening in old corral (faint) near 9.2. Another trail may remain with East Fork, but beaten path usu. continues east with drainage of [Diamond Creek](#). (*Westbounders, don't continue with Diamond Creek all the way to confluence; bear west across open meadow to pass through old wire fence/corral.*) Social trail in Diamond Creek canyon, unnamed/unsigned but look for where any recent

pack animals have beaten down vegetation; sometimes overgrown with grasses by autumn and basically cross-country, but navigation remains obvious. Diamond Creek flow more reliable farther up drainage; travel easier; fords frequent but shallow/gentle. Good camping prospects.

After temporarily exiting Gila Wilderness at **12.5** (waypoint 068) (old fence across drainage now falling down; gate along N bank), watch for first flat-floored side drainage on right and turn up it, x-c, with short easy pour-offs/steps. Eventually becomes wide, sandy wash. At **14.1** or just before, note trail on right (south) leading up side drainage - unsigned Trail 713. Keep straight at next unmarked junction (waypoint 22155), ascending minor ridge. Bear right at next junction on ridge (waypoint 22160) and DO NOT follow the more obvious trail left (if you find yourself heading east at all, then you missed this junction and are on the wrong trail). Trail 713 now descends a little to the head of unnamed drainage, then turns left (southwest) down it at **15.3**. Reaches confluence of drainages at dry Long Canyon Tank at **16.2** (former stock impoundment). Continuation of Tr 713 per base map data unfollowable. Instead, keep right (west) of tank and follow down drainage with vague tread. Keep an eye out for trail that bears sharp left, crossing drainage to south side (waypoint 22190) and DO NOT continue straight toward another network of drainages. Our trail climbs southeast over grassy bench to Tom Moore Canyon. If no water in drainage just below trail, continue down it x-c somewhat roughly to start of slot portion within half mile for **likely pools**. Slot is non-technical but difficult farther down, esp. on return up canyon. *(Westbounders, after passing Middle Tom Moore Well/broken windmill, then old corral, look for vague trail, cairned in 2010, slabbing west-northwest out of canyon among grasses and don't continue on Trail 708 (you may note a 2010-installed signboard), nor in drainage except in search of water.)*

Trail 708 in Tom Moore Canyon easy and straightforward, with camping, but dry except for small **seasonal impoundment** (no cows) north side of trail, west of **21.8**. Exit Gila Wilderness for good at **22.4**, which is second of three fencelines/gates between the impoundment and trailhead. Trail becomes old 2-track approaching trailhead. FR 150 graded 2WD, but very light vehicle use. Turn right at road sign onto FR 61 to Me Own fire/helitack site. Ignore sign for Trail 707 at cattle guard and continue on road, clockwise around modular building / fire base (*westbounders counter-clockwise*). Vault toilet here by corral with **spigot**. Pass through gate and continue on 2-track road to Aldo Leopold Wilderness boundary at trailhead turnout.