

Backpacking on the Red Rock Ranger District

FOLLOW THE “A, B, C’s” OF BACK COUNTRY TRAVEL

A. ALWAYS TELL SOMEONE WHERE YOU ARE GOING (SPECIFICALLY WHERE) AND WHEN YOU WILL RETURN.

B. BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED.

C. CARRY A SURVIVAL KIT.

In addition, when backpacking in the Red Rock Area, please be aware of the following:

- **ALWAYS** be aware of local fire restrictions and danger level.
- There are very few permanent water sources – when backpacking anticipate on using **AT LEAST 1 gallon/day/person**.
- Poison Ivy is present in many of the riparian areas – watch out!!
- Hang your food!!! Local wildlife includes: black bear, raccoons, ringtail, javelina, mountain lion and more!!
- Many of our wilderness trails are unmarked, bring a compass and good map and know how to use them!!



PLEASE FOLLOW THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF “LEAVE NO TRACE”

- 1. PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**—Check with a Forest Service visitor center for updates and information. Use maps and be prepared for extreme weather, hazards and emergencies
- 2. TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**—Creating new trails destroys the fragile vegetation and soil. If you must travel off-trail, please hike on rock, gravel or sand surfaces.
- 3. DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**- Pack out what you bring into the forest. If you see trash left by others, pick it up too. Dispose of human waste responsibly—bury it six inches deep and at least 200 feet from water and trails. Use toilet paper sparingly and pack it out. Cigarette butts are trash too!
- 4. LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**—Plants, flowers, animals, rocks, pottery shards and other natural and cultural treasures need to stay where you find them.
- 5. MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS**—When camping, a stove is better than a fire. Trees and shrubs grow slowly. Minimizing campfires keeps the area more natural. It also helps keep the air cleaner as well as reducing the risk of wildfires.
- 6. RESPECT WILDLIFE**—THIS IS THEIR HOME—Watch wildlife from a distance. Never approach, feed or follow a wild animal
- 7. BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS**—Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous.

The above are only recommendations. It is ultimately up to the recreationalist, through their own preparedness and outdoor etiquette, to ensure a fun, safe and successful trip!

Multiple Day Hikes

All lengths are the total trip length (round trip)

Dogie/Sycamore Pass/ Taylor Cabin/Casner Mt. Loop

Sycamore Canyon Wilderness

Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous

Length: 22 miles

Recommended map: Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Map

Access: To Dogie Trailhead: Drive 30 miles south from Flagstaff through Sedona on US 89A. Five miles past Sedona turn north on FR 525 and follow the signs to Sycamore Pass. Turn west on FR 525C and continue for nine miles to the parking area. Hike road up to the saddle.

Water: Scarce-seasonal (only when there is runoff from recent rains)

The Dogie trail descends into the heart of the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness. For those who long for rugged beauty unspoiled and untamed by man, Sycamore is one of the few places in the southwest that can lay claim to such a lack of man's accomplishments. This loop requires crossing Sycamore Creek. Sycamore creek can be difficult to impossible to cross in the spring. The Casner Mountain trail follows an old jeep road which still provides access to the power lines. The Taylor Cabin Trail is very steep. Make sure you take lots of water for this hike especially during late spring to early fall months. Temperatures quite often exceed 110 degrees in the canyon bottom.

Fee: None

Secret Canyon Trail

Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness

Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 11 miles

(Can combine with David Miller and Bear Sign trails for a 6.4 mile loop)

Recommended map: Wilson Mt. USGS quad or Sedona Beartooth Map

Access: Drive 27 miles south from Flagstaff to Sedona on US 89A. Continue through Sedona to Dry Creek Road (152C) at the west end of town. Turn right on Dry Creek Road and drive for two miles to Forest Road 152. This road is rough, and a high clearance vehicle is required. It is not recommended during wet weather. About 3 miles up this road on the left (west) side of the road is a two-track road. Turn onto this road. There is a trailhead sign at the junction of these two roads. The parking area is approximately 200 feet behind the sign.

Water: Scarce-seasonal (only when there is runoff from recent rains)

NOTE: Hikers must be at least one mile from the trailhead before camping.

Description: Beautiful hike in a Red Rock Canyon. The Secret Canyon trail starts out wide and flat with little shade, but climbs for the next three miles, with increasing shade and nice views of red rock formations. At 5 ½ miles there is a deep ravine with a series of pools in the solid rock streambed. An unmaintained trail continues on. Return the same route for an 11 mile hike.

Fee: None

West Clear Creek Trail

West Clear Creek Wilderness

Difficulty: Easy-Strenuous

Length: 15 miles

Recommended map: Walker Mtn. & Buckhorn Mtn. USGS quads

Access: Bullpen: (West) Drive 40 miles south of Flagstaff on Interstate 17. Leave the highway at the AZ 179 exit and turn east under the freeway. Drive about 9 miles on FR 618 to FR 215 and turn east about 3 miles to the Bullpen Ranch trailhead.

Bald Hill (East): turn east off FR 618 on FR 214 about 8 miles from the highway and turn east 4.7 miles to the Bald Hill Road (FR214A). Follow this primitive road about 1 mile to a rock-pile cairn that marks the trailhead.

Water: year round.

Description: This trail provides the only marked and maintained access to the lower reaches of West Clear Creek Canyon Wilderness. From its western terminus at Bull Pen Ranch at the canyon mouth, the trail leads upstream into the deep,

narrow gorge which medium-sized West Clear Creek has cut into the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau. The trail is fairly level for the first 2 miles as it follows West Clear Creek. The last stretch is very steep at the trail makes its way up to the Mogollon Rim. There are several creek crossings which may be difficult during periods of high water. In the middle of a hot desert summer you'll appreciate the opportunity to cool off.

Fee: None

Bell Trail

Wet Beaver Wilderness

Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 22 miles round trip

Recommended map: Walker Mtn. & Casner Butte USGS quads

Access: Drive 40 miles south from Flagstaff on Interstate 17. Leave the interstate at the AZ 179 interchange. Turn east under the highway and drive about 1.5 miles east to the old (now closed) Beaver Creek Ranger Station turnoff. Turn north about a quarter mile to the parking lot and trailhead.

This area is **day use only** for the first four miles of the trail, **camping and campfires are prohibited** within ¼ mile of the creek on either side and the prohibition continues ½ mile beyond the Bell trail crossing of Wet Beaver Creek (4 miles from the trailhead) per Forest Order (04-10-12-R).

Water: Year round

Description: This trail is the only developed route into Wet Beaver Creek Canyon and the Wilderness Area it shelters. It is a very popular trail with hikers and anglers who come to enjoy the solitude and other rewards offered by a clear cool stream flowing through a scenic desert canyon. For the most part, the trail follows a route along a bench well above the streambed. At one point the trail leaves the canyon bottom to wind high along an escarpment of red sandstone and offer scenic views of the riparian area, the canyon and the surrounding mountains and valleys.

Most people who come to this trail hike only the first 3.3 miles to Bell Crossing, taking advantage any one of several access paths that branch off the main trail and lead down to the stream. After crossing the Wet Beaver Creek, the Bell Trail climbs the canyon's south wall to a high, grassy plateau, offering views that stretch all the way to the Sedona Red Rocks Country and the San Francisco Peaks. Eleven miles from the Beaver Creek trailhead, the Bell Trail ends at Forest Road 24.

Fee: None

West Fork Oak Creek Trail

Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness

Difficulty: Easy-Strenuous

Length: 6 miles round trip up (day hike) OR 14 miles ONE WAY (backpack)

Recommended map: Wilson Mt. & Dutton Hill USGS quads

Access: Oak Creek(East): Drive south 17.5 miles south from Flagstaff or north 9.5 miles from Sedona to about halfway between milepost 385 and 384. The trailhead is on the west side of the highway down a paved lane that leads behind a few creek side houses. The best place to park is at the Call O' The Canyon day area about a quarter mile north of the trailhead.

Fee: \$9.00 per vehicle/day Weekly (\$18) and Annual (\$40) Passes available through Recreation *Resource Management 928-203-0624 **Inform concessionaire (at booth) of how many days your trip is.

FR231 (West): From Flagstaff take Route 66 west to Woody Mountain Road (FR231)the trailhead is on the left hand side approximately 19 miles from the turn from Route 66

Fee: None

Water: Year round

NOTE: Hikers must be 6 miles or more from West Fork trailhead before camping.

Description: There are a number of reasons why West Fork is the most popular trail on the Coconino National Forest. It is a beautiful, mostly shaded hike, with sheer canyon walls on either side. The first three miles is easy, though it involves SEVERAL stream crossings. The trail is marked for the first three miles; however, many hikers continue beyond that. Eventually the developed trail ends and you will be forced to hike in the stream bed as you continue into the Secret Mountain/Red Rocks Wilderness.

If you choose to travel all 14 miles from one end of the canyon to the other, plan to do a lot of wading and boulder hopping, and even some swimming. Swimming is REQUIRED. The trail becomes very difficult with miles of boulder hopping. Due to the nature of the canyon, being shaded and requiring swimming in several areas, extra dry clothes are a must. Though it is only 14 miles, it is difficult and slow going. Hikers should be prepared for an overnight trip.

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Loy Canyon

Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness

Difficulty: Moderate-Strenuous

Length: 10 miles

Recommended map: Loy Butte USGS quad

Access: Drive 35 miles south from Flagstaff through Sedona on US 89A. 5 miles past Sedona turn north on FR 525 and follow the signs toward Loy Butte 9.3 miles to the trailhead. Watch for signs on your right and a parking area on your left just before crossing a cattleguard into the Hancock Ranch.

Water: None

NOTE: Hikers must be at least one mile from trailhead before camping.

Description: This trail leads up a desert wilderness canyon offering excellent views not only at trail's end, but all along the way as well. The trail starts out by skirting the fence line of the Hancock Ranch. Sheer cliffs of vermilion and buff sandstone form a colorful backdrop for the desert garden of manzanita, catclaw, cholla and prickly pear that carpets the canyon floor. Natural rock sculptures carved by flash floods and spring runoff that seasonally course down this normally dry streambed provide scenic settings for lunch stops along the way. Near the end of the canyon, the trail becomes very steep, ascending a 1680 foot climb to a high saddle that leads to the top of a mesa called Secret Mountain. Here you can continue along the Secret Mountain trail.

Fee: None

Parsons Trail #144

Sycamore Canyon Wilderness

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

Season: All Year

Use: Heavy

Length: 9 miles Round Trip

Hiking time: 5 hours to parson springs (roundtrip)

Elevation Change: 250 Ft.

Recommended map: Clarkdale SE, Sycamore Basin USGS quads

Access: Drive 30 miles south from Sedona through Cottonwood, follow signs for Tuzigoot National Monument on Historic 89A turn right toward Tuzigoot from Historic 89A then, After crossing the Verde River bridge turn left on FR 131 continue 11 miles to the trailhead

Water: Year round upstream to Parson Springs seasonal beyond the springs

Description: The hike up to Parson Springs is a pleasant stroll along a cool clear desert stream set in a magnificent red rock canyon. Sycamore Canyon is a place sufficiently unique to have been one of the first areas protected as a wilderness in Arizona. The trail leads through the lower reaches of this wilderness through a riparian area rich in plant and animal life. Colorful cliffs that are a unique mix of dark columnar basalt, red sandstone and buff colored limestone enclose the lush green of the oasis. The trail leads four miles to a large pool called Parson Spring where this considerable stream springs to the surface from the underground course it has followed through the majority of the canyon. Up canyon from this point surface flow only occurs during snowmelt and after summer monsoons. Camping is not permitted for the first 4 miles of the trail to the springs, continue up canyon for another 200 feet where camping is permitted.

Notes: No motorized vehicles in Wilderness. Camping is not permitted for the first 4 miles of the trail to the springs, continue up canyon for another 200 feet where camping is permitted. The trail to parson Springs can be difficult to follow in some places and a few washed out sections require some boulder hopping.

Fee: None

For further information:

www.redrockcountry.org

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/>

South Gateway Visitor Center

8375 State Route 179

(928)203-2900

Hours: 8:00-5:00 Seven days/week