

# Highline Trails Guide

Tonto National Forest



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

PREPARED BY  
Forest  
Service

Southwestern  
Region  
RG-R3-12-2

PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH  
Payson Chamber of Commerce





## Plan Ahead

Before your trip, plan ahead and become familiar with potential hazards. For safety reasons, travel with a companion, and notify a responsible person where you are going and when you plan to return. Come prepared with adequate clothing and equipment.

It is advisable to carry plenty of water—up to 3 to 4 quarts per person per day. Backcountry water should be treated! A survival bag should always be with you. Its size should be appropriate to the time, weather, and area involved.

## Wildlife

Conflicts occasionally arise when wildlife must share their habitat with people. This includes wild “critters” such as bears, skunks, snakes, wasps, scorpions and bats. It is essential for you to take every precaution to reduce conflicts. Please be especially wary of warm-blooded animals; there have been as many as 100 confirmed cases of rabies in animals in Arizona in one year. Don't feed, pet or touch wild animals.

## Weather

Weather along the Rim varies greatly from fall through spring (-10° F to 80° F). Storms during this period can drop temperatures significantly. Summer days can go from cool to hot (40° F to 90° F). Severe thunderstorms during July and August bring heavy rains as well as quick temperature changes. Being struck by lightning is a possibility near the Rim. During lightning storms, safer places to be are between rocks in a boulder field, in a forested area away from tall trees, or in your car.

## Without a Trace

Enjoying wild lands requires a commitment to preserve them. The NO TRACE ethic is based on techniques that help to reduce the impact of your presence on the land and on other visitors. Your help is needed:

- ❑ Bury human waste and toilet paper in soil at least 4 to 6 inches deep, a minimum of 100 feet from water, and not in drainage bottoms.
- ❑ Pack out all garbage (animals will dig it up).
- ❑ Do all washing at least 100 feet from water sources.
- ❑ Stay on the trail. Cutting across switchbacks causes erosion.
- ❑ Utilize existing fire rings whenever possible and erase all signs of your campfire.
- ❑ Please be careful with matches, cigarettes, and campfires. Check with the Payson Ranger Station regarding possible fire restrictions.
- ❑ Tie horses to a picket line; tying directly to trees removes bark and damages roots.
- ❑ Step aside when encountering riders and refrain from making quick moves.
- ❑ Hikers and horses have the right-of-way over mountain bikes.

## In case of emergency, contact:

**Search and Rescue**  
Gila County Sheriff  
(928) 474-2208  
1-866-866-4452

**Forest Fire Emergency**  
Tonto National Forest  
(602) 225-5355

**Payson Ranger District**  
1009 E. Highway 260  
Payson, AZ 85541  
(928) 474-7900



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Revised and printed on recycled paper • September 2004

# Area of the Highline National Recreation Trail



## Legend

- Highline Trail
- Trail with Number
- Forest Service Road
- State Highway
- Spring
- Intermittent Stream
- Stream
- Trailhead (TH)
- Private Land

**West Webber Trail 228**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 2 miles  
 A shady, little-used trail with many switchbacks and beautiful fall foliage. The trail takes off from Turkey Trail (TR 217), 1/8 mile east of TR 240. See Trails 240 and 217 for access. It may also be reached 3.5 miles south of the FR 218/218A junction on FR 218 (see "Milk Ranch Point" for access to FR 218).

**Turkey Trail 217**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 2.5 miles  
 A seldom-used trail with beautiful views of the Rim. This trail starts 2 miles north of Highline Trail on Trail 240. Alternate access is 2 miles south of the FR 218/218A junction on FR 218 (see "Milk Ranch Point" for access to FR 218).

**Pine Canyon Trail 26**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 8 miles  
 From the Rim, this trail offers beautiful views followed by a cool hike along Pine Creek and past Dripping Springs before ending near Pine Trailhead. Above the Rim, access is from Hwy. 87, 1.2 miles north of the Camp Verde intersection. Turn south on FR 6038 and travel for .1 mile to the trailhead. Below the Rim, the trail starts from Pine Trailhead.

**Geronimo Trail 240**  
**Rating:** Easiest  
**Length:** 3 miles  
 Provides access to Trails 217, 228 & 289. From Hwy. 87, take FR 64 6 miles east to FR 440 and travel north on FR 440 for 2 miles to Geronimo Trailhead. Trail 240 starts 1/4 mile west of the trailhead on Highline Trail.

**Col. Devin Trail 290**  
**Railroad Tunnel Trail 390**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** Trail 290 = 2 miles; Trail 390 = .25 mile  
 Lots of history here! Indian and Army skirmishes and an attempted railroad tunnel. Take FR 300, 12.2 miles east of Hwy. 87 to Battle Monument on the north side of FR 300. The trail starts south of the road. Be sure to stay on the trail east of the powerlines. Trail 390 starts 1/2 mile down TR 290 and goes for another 1/4 mile up to the tunnel. Alternate access is 100 yards east of Washington Park Trailhead on Highline Trail (see "Washington Park Trailhead" for access).

**Babe Haight Trail 143**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 3 miles  
 Built by pioneer "Babe" Haight to pack supplies over the Rim from Winslow. Easiest access is from Hatchery Trailhead (see "Hatchery Trailhead" for access).

**East Webber Trail 289**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 3 miles  
 This beautiful, little-used trail follows Webber Creek ending at a spring which flows from under the Rim. The trail starts from TR 240, 3 miles north of Highline Trail (see "Geronimo Trail" for access).

**Myrtle Trail 30**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 1 mile  
 Dude Fire burned through this area. Easiest access is on FR 300, 19.3 miles east of Hwy. 87. The trail sign is on the south side of the road.

**Horton Springs Trail 292**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 1.5 miles  
 The lower half of this trail is a steep, rocky sidehill with switchbacks. Not recommended for horses. Easiest access is from FR 300, 15.7 miles west of Hwy. 260. The trail sign is on the south side of the road.

**See Canyon Trail 184**  
**See Spring Trail 185**  
**Rating:** Trail 184 = Most Difficult; Trail 185 = More Difficult  
**Length:** Trail 184 = 3.5 miles; Trail 185 = .5 mile  
 Trail 184 is a challenging hike and particularly scenic in the fall. Trail 185 starts on TR 184 approximately 1/2 mile north of the junction with Highline Trail. Access is from FR 300 on top of the Rim, 12.3 miles west from Hwy. 260 or from See Canyon Trailhead. The trail starts 1/8 mile northeast of the trailhead on Highline Trail (see "See Canyon Trailhead" for access).

**Drew Trail 291**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 1 mile  
 An old pioneer trail built prior to 1909, easiest access is from Hwy. 260 to FR 300. Turn west on FR 300 and travel 5.4 miles to FR 9350. Turn south on FR 9350 and travel 1 mile. The trail sign is on the south side of the road.

**Donahue Trail 27**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 1.75 miles  
 A challenging trail with steep, short, switchbacks and loose rocks. Access is from Highline Trail, 1.4 miles east of Pine Trailhead.

**Pump Station Trail 296**  
**Rating:** Easiest  
**Length:** 1 mile  
 This trail starts near the Phelps Dodge Pump Station and ends at Highline Trail. Access is from FR 32A, 1/8 mile north of FR 32 (see "Washington Park Trailhead" for access).

**Redrock Trail 294**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 1.5 miles  
 The spring at this trail's end was used as a watering hole by Apaches and settlers. Access is from FR 64, 2.4 miles east of Highway 87 on the north side of the road. Parking is limited.

**Highline Trail 31**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 51 miles  
 See introduction for description.

**Pine View Trail 28**  
**Rating:** Easiest  
**Length:** 1 mile  
 This is a connecting trail between TR 26 and Highline Trail.

**Oak Trail 16**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 3.2 miles  
 This trail goes into Oak Springs Canyon and Oak Springs. Easiest access is from Pine Trailhead.

**Horton Creek Trail 285**  
**Rating:** Easiest  
**Length:** 4 miles  
 Probably the most popular trail on the Payson Ranger District, this trail starts from Upper Tonto Creek Campground (see "Derrick Trail" for access).

**Derrick Spur Trail 32**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 1 mile  
 This spur trail winds easily through the pines joining with Derrick Trail (TR 33). From Hwy. 260, turn north on FR 289. The trail starts just past the cattleguard on the east side of the road. This trail may be used with TR 33 and a trail along FR 289 to form a loop.

**Derrick Trail 33**  
**Rating:** More Difficult  
**Length:** 2.5 miles  
 This trail, in conjunction with Trails 31 and 285, forms an all-day loop hike. Take FR 289 1 mile to Upper Tonto Creek Campground. The trail starts from the back of the campground. Parking is available across the bridge at Horton Creek Picnic Site.

**Sinkhole Trail 179**  
**Rating:** Most Difficult  
**Length:** 2.5 miles  
 The trail starts on the Rim near the military road built by Gen. George Crook. Access is from either Two-Sixty Trailhead or FR 300; 1.9 miles west of Hwy. 260 (at the scenic vista parking lot).

**Note:** All trail distances are one-way only. All trails (TR) in this guide are open to mountain bikes but closed to motorized vehicles. Certain trails not recommended for horses are also not suitable for mountain bikes. Complete descriptions for each trail are available at Payson Ranger Station.

