

T253D

Elk Canyon Trail

Sacramento Ranger District



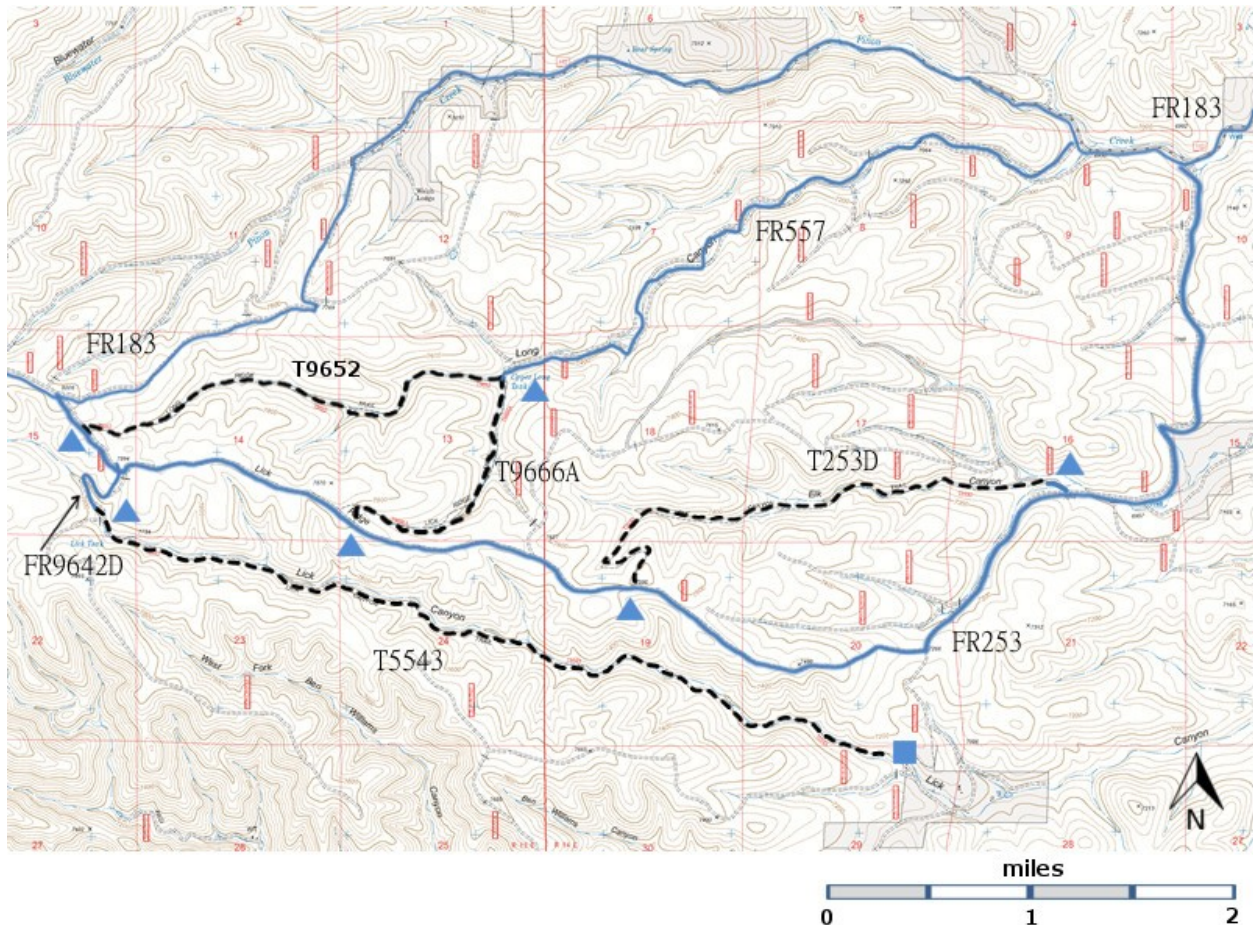
T253D

GPS Track (as .GPX)

Left click to open in your browser; then save from browser.

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
2.8 miles	7050 - 7600 ft 550 ft difference	Moderate	2

Allowed Usage				
				
				



[Link to map color/symbol codes](#)

T253D, T5543, T9646F, T9652, and T9666A are shown as black dashed lines on the map.

DESCRIPTION: From the lower end, the trail follows an old timber road, beginning in a serene Ponderosa pine forest with open understory, and often crisscrosses a dry creek. At mile 1.0 the grade approaches 15% and leaves the canyon bottom. If trail signs haven't been installed, the route may sometimes be in question. Stay in the main canyon. At mile 2.4 the trail comes to a tee, which should be signed. Resist a tendency to take the right fork; take the left fork instead. For a short time the trail seems to be going in the wrong direction, but soon it angles to the right, and eventually reaches FR 253 at mile 2.8.

CAUTION: FR253 can be a really tough drive. There are large rocks and/or ledges. In the wet season it can be soft and muddy. Even when it is dry, there may be deep ruts. In recent years many dead trees have fallen across FR253, and they may block the road.

ACCESS: You may wish to hike more than one trail when you make the drive to the (remote) Piñon Draw area. The write up for T253D contains a table giving distances between the trailheads and a table giving trail lengths and altitude changes. The eastern intersection of FR183 and FR253 is 6.0 miles from NM 24.

A high centered vehicle is mandatory, and 4WD may be needed. Begin in Cloudcroft at the intersection of US82 and NM130. Drive south on NM130 16 miles to milepost 16. Go 0.7 mile beyond this milepost, and turn right on NM24. Follow this paved highway 18 miles to the turnoff for FR83 -- the sign reads "Piñon Draw Road" -- just before milepost 18. Follow FR183, (same as County E017), 6.0 miles to the *unsigned*, somewhat hidden eastern end of FR253. *Make a very sharp left turn* onto FR253. After making the left turn, a carsonite FR253 sign should be visible. FR183 and FR253 intersect twice, once at the eastern end of the Piñon Draw Trails area and again at the western end of the area.

West of the eastern intersection of FR183 and FR253, portions of both FR183 and FR253 are rough, with large rocks protruding, and have occasional mud holes. Access to the trails along FR253 is described first. Following these paragraphs, an alternate route that makes use of FR183 is described.

Lower Trailhead: From the eastern intersection of FR183 and FR253, follow FR253 2.4 miles to the unsigned turnoff on the right to FR253X. Drive FR253X for 0.1 miles across a draw to the Forest Service gate at the signed T253D lower trailhead. This first 0.1 mile of FR253X may be so terrible that you may choose to park and walk to the trailhead.

Upper Trailhead: Return to the FR253 and FR253X intersection just mentioned. Turn right, and follow FR253 for 2.7 miles to the signed upper T253D trailhead. En route, FR253 becomes *extremely rough* -- and sometimes muddy.

Alternate Route: A second route from another direction can reach the upper trailhead, although it includes a road segment that is not passable when wet. Return to the east end of FR253 at FR183. *Zero your trip odometer here.* Continue west along FR183 to mile 4.3, site of a well-kept former ranger station, now privately owned. The graveled road ends here (end of county maintenance), and a short, rough, often muddy segment begins straight ahead, and continues to about mile 4.5. Stay on FR83 to mile 6.6 at an intersection with FR253 where two large water storage tanks are on the left. In the following paragraphs this point is referred to as the western intersection of FR183 and FR253. Turn left onto FR253. *Zero your trip odometer again.*

Lower Trailhead: From the western intersection of FR183 and FR253, follow FR253 for 5.9 miles to the signed turnoff on the left to FR253X. Drive FR253X for 0.1 miles across a draw to the Forest Service

gate at the signed T253D lower trailhead. This first 0.1 mile of FR253X may be so terrible that you may choose to park and walk to the trailhead.

Upper Trailhead: From the western intersection of FR183 and FR253, follow FR23 for 3.2 miles to the signed upper T 253D trailhead. At the triangular junction with FR 9642D, take the left fork for FR253.

DISTANCES AND ALTITUDES: Table 1 contains the distances between key points along FR253. In planning hikes of more than one trail, these distances may be useful. Table 2 contains the one way distances and the altitude gain for each of the four trails.

TABLE 1	
Point (along FR253)	Distance to next point (miles)
Eastern Intersection of FR183 and FR253	
	2.5
FR253X	
	1.1
FR253A	
	1.6
T253D (upper)	
	1.6
T9666A (upper)	
	1.1
FR9642D	
	0.5
Western Intersection of FR183 and FR253	

TABLE 2		
Trail	Distance (miles)	Altitude Gain (feet)
T253D	2.8	550
T5543	4.3	700
T9652	2.1	400
T9666A	1.4	400

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Upper Trailhead	N32 38 37.4 W105 33 06.8	448240 3611925
Lower Trailhead	N32 39 04.1 W105 31 04.1	451438 3612733

Links to Other Resources

[Link to Full Topo Map](#)

Last Hiked: 2021

Updated 2/5/2022