











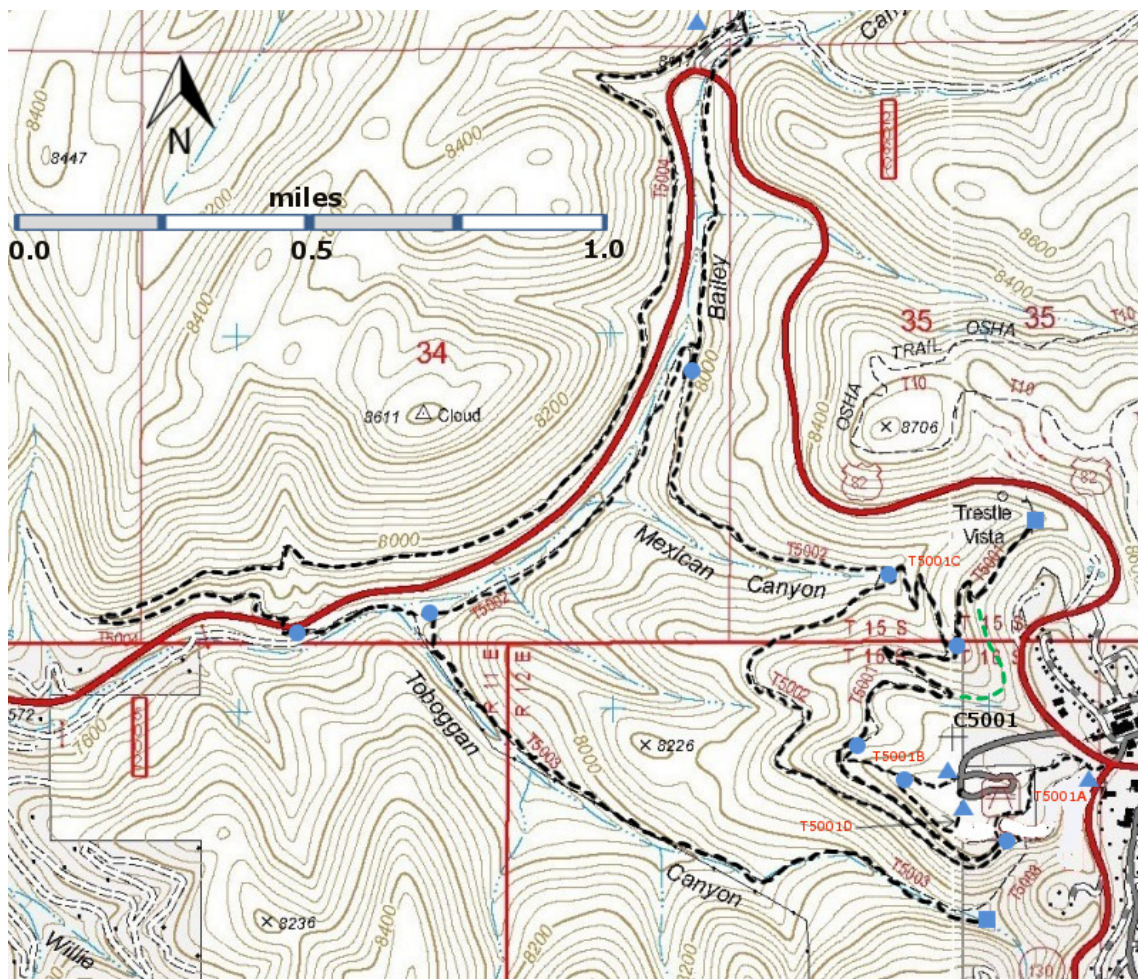
## Sacramento Ranger District



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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
1.2 miles	8430 - 8630 ft 200 ft difference	Moderate	4

Allowed Usage				
				
				



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

5001, T5001A, T5001B, T5001C, T5001D, T5002, T5003, and T5004 are shown as black dashed lines on the map.

**NOTE:** Local members of the New Mexico RailstoTrails Association have volunteered many hours of labor to help open these trails. T5001 follows part of the original Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountains railroad that connected Alamogordo and Cloudcroft.

A small portion of the upper end of T5001 crosses private land, and the owner could close it at any time.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Trestle Recreation Area was opened to the public in 1995 and contains trails and a picnic area. In 1994, a replica of the exterior of Cloudcroft's first railroad depot was built here; the site of the original depot was 100 yards down NM130 from the intersection of NM130 and US82. A volunteer may be on duty during the summer.

T5001 is the key trail in this area and has several interesting highlights. The path follows a portion of the long abandoned Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railroad grade, where logging and excursion trains operated between 1900 and 1947. For best scenery, hike T5001 from its eastern terminus via T5001A. Near the beginning are fabulous views of the canyons and foothills between here and Alamogordo. Beyond lies the Tularosa Basin, including the White Sands, and the San Andres Mountains rise on the far side of the basin. The trail passes through a large railroad cut known as the Devil's Elbow, excavated in 1899 largely with hand labor (and dynamite). An informative exhibit describes this interesting cut from an overlook above the cut, just off T5001B.

From the cut you can follow a level, narrow old road for about 550 feet before rejoining the railroad grade. Or, you may continue straight ahead on a steep descending path (up to 40% gradient) that soon levels out and passes the ruins of the 338 foot long, S-curved wooden railroad trestle. Note the large timbers, some more than a foot square! The original S-Trestle had one more tier above the current highest structures. An interesting exhibit describing the S-Trestle is located where the railroad grade resumes at the other end of the ruins. If the old road is selected instead of this path, the collapsed trestle can be glimpsed through the trees.

At 0.2 mile past this exhibit, T5001 avoids private property by abruptly leaving the railroad grade via a switchback. [See Special Note at the end of the Description Section.] Trees of vastly different ages and sizes become visible, including several white fir more than three feet in diameter. Aspen appear to be losing out as white fir takes its place, a sign that fire roared through here nearly a century ago. Fire scars within large vertical gashes on several white fir trunks also confirm this. The trail reaches the T5001C junction in 0.3 mile after leaving the railroad grade; this is the lowest elevation point along T5001.

In another 0.2 mile, the path returns to the railroad grade and ends at the famed Mexican Canyon Trestle. This huge wooden structure, built in 1899, is 330 feet long and 60 feet above the midpoint of the drainage. The public is forbidden to walk or climb on it.

The Overlook deck at the end of T5001 provides a fine view of the Mexican Canyon Trestle. It is a popular picnic site. In 2009 and 2010, a major restoration replaced rotted timbers, and gave the Mexican Canyon Trestle new life. Pictures taken during the restoration may be accessed from the home page of [lincoln-nf-trails.org](http://lincoln-nf-trails.org).

The return trip to the Depot Replica and picnic area can be enhanced by taking a loop route that includes T5001C and T5002 as discussed above; or by using a combination of trails involving T5001B, T5001, and T5001A. See the map for more information.

**Special Note:** The section of railbed held as private property has now been deeded to the New Mexico Rails to Trails Association. It is shown on the map as a green dashed line, a connector trail labeled C5001. It is not open for routine hiking, but it probably will be open to for hiking on special days, primarily in the summer. Check with the campground host or the New Mexico Rails to Trails website. The hiking experience for T5001 changes dramatically when one can hike along the 3% gradient of the old railbed all the way to the Mexican Canyon Trestle!

**ACCESS:** In Cloudcroft from the intersection of NM130 and US82, go 150 feet west along US82. T5001A begins here and ends in 0.3 mile at a tee where T5001 (right) and T5002(left)begin..

To reach other trailheads and the picnic area, which is open during the summer, proceed a few hundred feet further west along US82 from the T5001A trailhead to the first paved road on the left. Turn and drive to the parking and picnic areas at the railroad depot replica.

T5001 can also be accessed by starting at the replica and walking along T5001B 0.3 mile to T5001.

T5001C connects T5001 with T5002 and makes possible a loop walk of 2.8 miles (maximum) involving these three trails plus either or both T5001A and T5001B. To reach the upper T5001C terminus, begin at the replica and follow T5001B to T5001. Turn right and hike T5001 0.5 miles to the signed T5001C junction at the lowest point on T5001. See the write-up for T5002 to access the lower end of T5001C.

**DISTANCES AND ALTITUDES:** T5001, 1.2 miles long, descends 290 feet to the intersection with T5001C and then ascends 90 feet to its end at the Mexican Canyon Trestle Overlook

#### GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Upper Trailhead	N32 57 21.2 W105 44 55.2	430027 3646644
Trestle Overlook	N32 57 48.1 W105 44 51.5	430129 3647474

#### Links to Other Resources

[Link to map of Cloudcroft Area](#)

[High Rolls Topo Map](#)

[Cloudcroft Topo Map](#)

[Forest Service Resource](#)

Last Hiked: 7/3/2014

Updated 1/17/2016