

T51

Pennsylvania Canyon Trail

Smokey Bear Ranger District



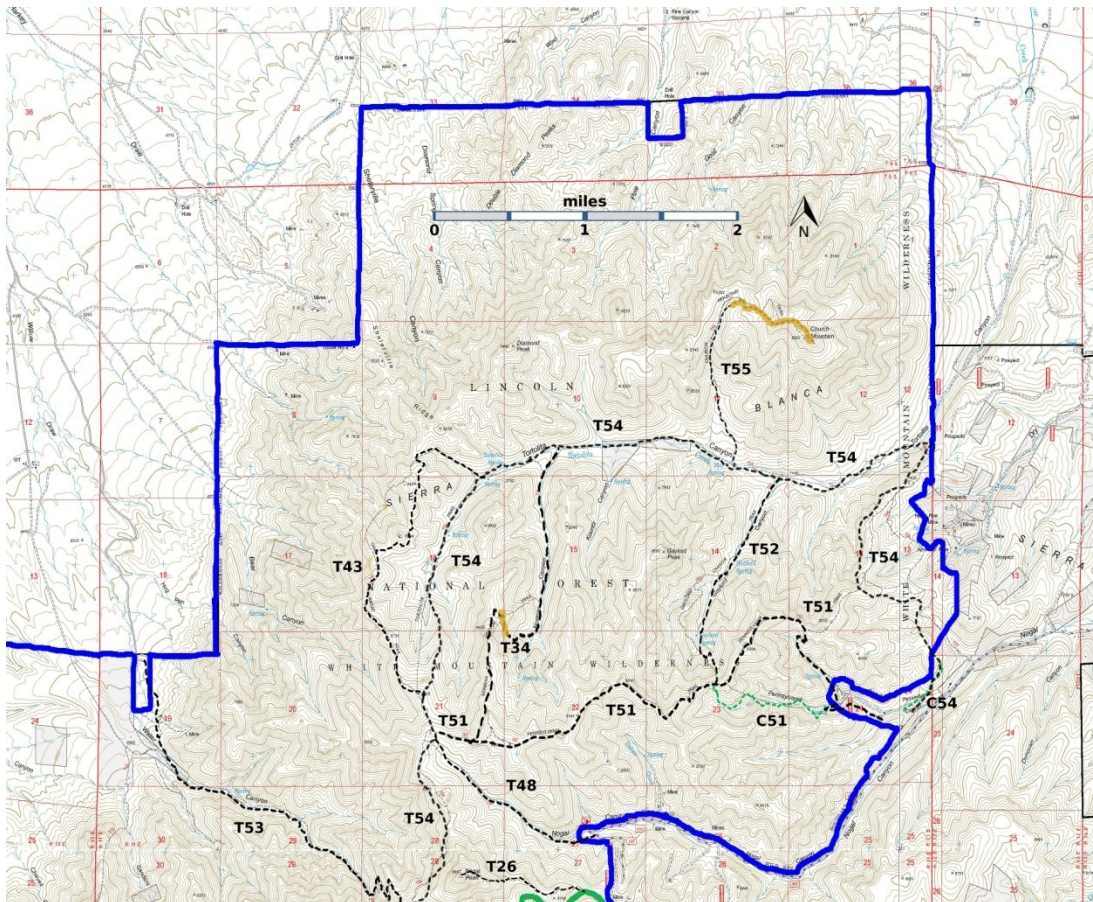
T51

GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
4.0 miles	7520 - 9360ft 1840ft difference	Difficult	4

Allowed Usage				



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

T26, T34, T43, T48, T51, T52, T53 (partial), T54, and T55 are shown as labeled, black dashed lines on the map. The solid blue line is the border of the White Mountain Wilderness. The solid green line is T25 Crest Trail. T26, T34, T43, T48, T51, T52, T54, and T55 are shown as labeled black dashed lines on the map. The solid blue line is the border of the White Mountain Wilderness. The solid green line is T25 Crest Trail. . Yellow over a trail indicates that that portion of the trail is intermittent or hard to follow. The map image may be downloaded through the White Mountain Wilderness link below. The image can then be expanded and/or manipulated at high resolution.

NOTE: Almost all of the trails in the southern and middle sections of the White Mountain Wilderness Area connect to or provide access to T25 Crest Trail. In the north section of the White Mountain Wilderness T25 is of little importance and access to the trails is provided by T51 Pennsylvania Canyon Trail and T54 Tortolita Canyon Trail. Since the 2002 Edition of Trail Guide: Lincoln National Forest, significant changes have affected both these trails

The four primitive trails -- T34, T52, T54, and T55 -- provide the only means for experiencing large and fascinating Tortolita Canyon. The upper ends of T34 and T52 access T51, Pennsylvania Trail that, in turn, follows the long, open, beautiful ridge separating Tortolita Canyon from Nogal Canyon.

DESCRIPTION: The lower part of T51 has been rerouted away from the private property, and the description in the 2002 edition of Trail Guide: Lincoln National Forest is not accurate. The lower trailhead is well signed. About 0.4 miles up canyon from the trailhead, T51 makes a sharp right turn and proceeds uphill. The sign at this point is ambiguous. In the 2002 edition of Trail Guide: Lincoln National Forest, this section is described as having gradients of up to 50%. Once T51 reaches the ridge, 1.6 miles from the trailhead, a long series of hogbacks begins.

T51 provides more diversity than most trails, and is therefore quite interesting, despite its general steepness. Ponderosa pine and piñon are common among scattered shrubbery.

At the sharp right turn described above, one can continue straight on an unofficial trail, C51 on the map shown as a green dashed line). C51 follows the canyon bottom until it climbs through a series of switchbacks to rejoin T51 at the ridge. T51 approaches the ridge at an acute angle and one must make a sharp left turn to continue on T51 up the ridge. There is no sign at this point. The signed intersection of T51 and T52 Gaylord Canyon Trail is about 30 yards east of this point.

Along the ridge, T51 generally follows a barbed wire fence in disrepair. *Keep this fence in mind* when trail evidence is sometimes hard to find. . Grades along the ridge average as high as 30% with 45% as maximum. Vistas are variously filtered and infrequent, but on the whole, they increase as the trail nears its high point. Distant views, including some with 360-degrees, become common as one approaches the upper end of the trail. T51 ends at an intersection with T54 Tortolita Canyon trail.

T51 has several “hogbacks” that sap a hiker’s energy – coming down or going up.

ACCESS: To reach the lower T51 trailhead from Smokey Bear Ranger District Office in Ruidoso, drive New Mexico NM48 north 8.3 miles to NM37. Turn left and follow NM37 northwest 9 miles to milepost 9. Go another 0.5 mile; turn left on FR400, (same as County Road C015), and follow the graveled road 4.0 miles to just beyond the wooden Pennsylvania Canyon sign. Turn right on FR5628 and drive 0.4 mile to the trailhead at an “island” surrounded by road. Portions of FR5628 may be quite muddy in wet seasons.

To reach the upper trailhead for T51, the shortest approach is to hike 1.4 miles up T48, Nogal Trail, to its signed upper trail end at T54, Tortolita Canyon Trail, on the ridge. (See the write-up for T48 to reach its lower end.) Turn right and follow T54 less than 0.1 miles to its signed junction with the upper end of T51. The hiking distance from the lower end of T48 to the beginning of T51 is about 1.5 miles. By starting at the lower trailhead of T48, one saves over 800 feet elevation gain compared to starting at the lower T51 trailhead. Four miles of good gravel road connect the lower end of T48 with the lower end of T51.

Note: At one time, the upper end of T34 intersected T54 and the upper end of T51 branched off of T34. Now T51 intersects T54 and T34 branches off of T51.

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Junction of T51 and T54	N33 30 39.7 W105 48 22.7	425114 3708234
“Acute Angle” at ridge	N33 30 56.2 W105 46 22.9	428210 3708718
Lower Trailhead	N33 30 48.8 W105 45 26.9	430151 3708339

Links to Other Resources

[White Mountain Wilderness Trails-p4 \(7 MB\)](#)

[Church Mountain Topo Map](#)

[Nogal Topo Map](#)

[WMW Forest Service Resource](#)

[Nogal Canyon Trailhead](#) [1996 Information]

[C51-LM.gpx](#)

Last Hiked: 9/27/2014

1/3/2020