

T53

Water Canyon Trail

Smokey Bear Ranger District

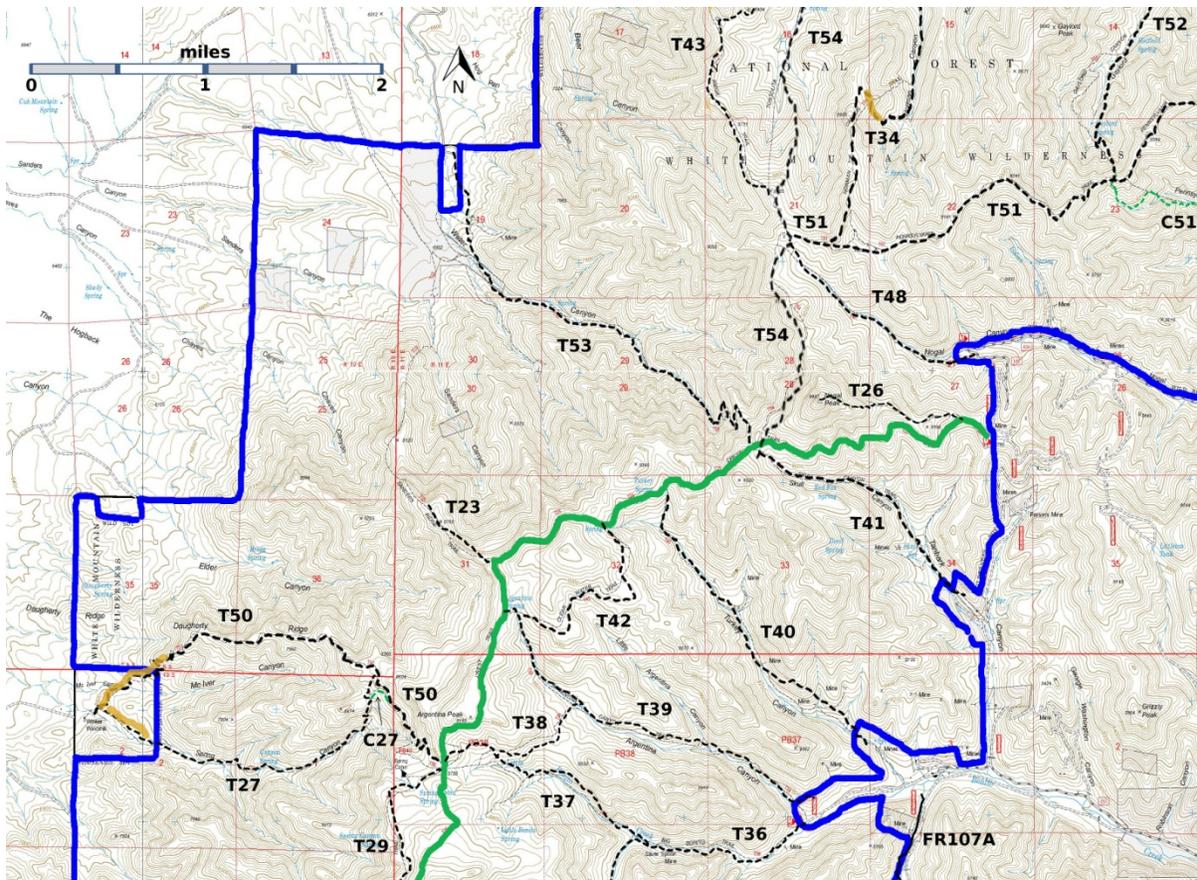


T53
GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
3.9 miles	6760 - 9160 ft 2400 ft difference	Moderate	3

Allowed Usage				



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

T23, T26, T27, T29, T34 (partial), T36 (partial), T37, T38, T39, T40, T41, T42, T48, T50, T51 (partial), T53, and T54 (partial) 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: Eight of the 10 miles of road accessing the lower T53 trailhead from Carrizozo are privately owned. A locked gate blocks access, but a key can be borrowed from the sheriff's office in Carrizozo. However, that key is not always available. Call the sheriff's office (575) 648-2341 about the key. In the Fall this gate is sometimes unlocked. You may want to check it before going to the Sheriff's office.

DESCRIPTION: Beginning at the lower trailhead, T 53 passes 1.0 mile through moderate stands of juniper and piñon.. At mile 1.0, the trail joins an old road in the bottom of Water Canyon at a wooden T 53 sign, just up road 50 feet from a large wooden White Mountain Wilderness sign.

If one comes from the upper trailhead, T53 provides spectacular distant views that include the town of Carrizozo, the Malpais lava fields, and if atmospheric conditions are good, the Manzano and Sandia Mountains to the north. Except for the first half mile, water flows intermittently through most of the remainder of the canyon. The stream is crossed repeatedly by the trail. The route becomes somewhat steep in places as it passes through a mixed conifer forest including stands of oak and maple. Few meadows are encountered.

ACCESS: To access the lower trailhead, a high clearance vehicle is mandatory. After getting the key (deposit required) at the sheriff's office, begin in Carrizozo at the US380 and US54 intersection. Drive US380 east 0.7 mile to a large Park Entrance sign on the right. Just beyond the sign, turn right on a narrow pavement. Just before an archway at mile 0.8, angle right 45 degrees on a graveled road. At mile 1.0, the next junction, again angle right 45 degrees and drive west. Shortly, at mile 1.1, turn left and drive south toward the mountains.

At mile 1.9 use the key to unlock/relock the gate. About three more gates are beyond, but have no locks; proceed through them and leave each opened/closed as found. Take the left fork at mile 6.9. Beyond here, the road (shown as Lincoln County C8 on the White Mountain Wilderness Map) occasionally becomes winding, severely rutted, and rough; average maximum speed is 15 mph. The forest boundary is reached at mile 9.9. At the large trail sign just inside the boundary, turn left and drive to the signed trailhead, at mile 10.0.

Note: Both times that I have driven to the lower T53 trailhead, I have done so in the middle-Fall, and the gate at mile 1.9 has been unlocked. No promises, but it is OK to check before going to the Sherriff's office in Carrizozo.

To access the upper trailhead, hike T25 about 1.5 miles from its northeastern trailhead. To access T25 from this trailhead, see its write-up.

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Junction of T25 and T53	N33 29 37.4 W105 48 38.1	424703 3706316
Lower Trailhead	N33 31 03.2 W105 50 35.1	421704 3708983

Links to Other Resources

[White Mountain Wilderness Trails-p3 \(8 MB\)](#)

[Church Mountain Topo Map](#)

[Nogal Peak Topo Map](#)

[WMW Forest Service Resource](#)

Last Hiked: 11/8/2014

1/8/2018