

T54

Tortolita Canyon Trail

Smokey Bear Ranger District













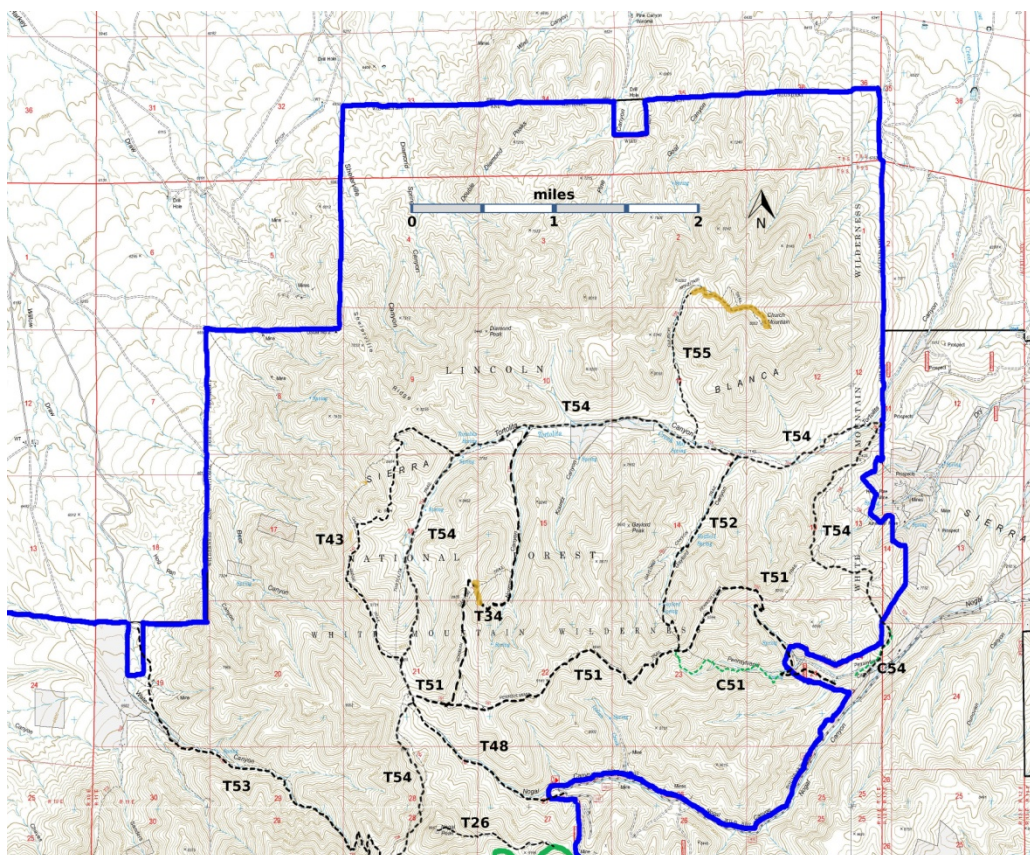
T54

GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
9.2 miles	7280 - 9160 ft 1880 ft difference (see text)	Difficult	2

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. 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.

CAUTION: T54 is shown incorrectly on many Forest Service maps.

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.

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.

Access to T54 is significantly restricted by private lands abutting the eastern edge of the White Mountain Wilderness Area. A connector trail, C54, now allows access from FR400 to the southeastern end of T54.

A Lovely Five Mile Loop: If you have two cars or a “designated driver”, start at the T25 trailhead just off FR108, hike 2.1 miles along T25 to its intersection with T54, turn right and hike 1.5 miles along T54 to its intersection with T48. Hike down T48 for 1.4 miles to its lower trailhead and your vehicle/driver. You will hike around Nogal peak and have many excellent views with relatively little uphill work. In August there were many types of wildflowers in bloom.

DESCRIPTION: On many maps, and in the 2002 Edition of Trail Guide: Lincoln National Forest, the southeast end of T54 is shown as crossing private property and terminating at FR400. There is no access across that strip of private property. However, the southeaster end of T54 can be accessed by use of the connector trail C54 shown as green dashed line).

To hike up T54, start at the end of C54 near the intersection of FR400 and FR5628 (also the access for T51 Pennsylvania Canyon Trail, follow C54, a single path trail well-defined by rows of rocks, for 0.4 miles to its intersection with T54. Turn left and hike T54, initially an old road and later a single path, for 2.4 miles up and over a 900 foot high ridge to its intersection with another old road that makes up most of T54. This initial section of T54 has few switchbacks was probably an old pack trail to the many mine pits on the ridge. Hike for 0.3 miles up the old road, to the remains of the quaint Aquayo Homestead, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This historic site is worth exploring!

[Link to National Register Form](#)

[Link to National Register Photographs](#)

In the remaining 6.5 miles T54 rises approximately 2000 feet, passes the trailheads for T52 Gaylord Canon Trail, T55 Church Mountain Trail, T34 Norman Canyon Trail, T43 Oak Ridge Trail (twice), T51 Pennsylvania Canyon Trail (upper), T48 Nogal Canyon Trail, and terminates at T25 Crest Trail.

A private house, a landmark in Tortolita Canyon, is located 0.3 mile down canyon from the T34 junction with T54.

0.8 miles up from the junction of T54 and T43, T54 appears to fork. The most attractive path is straight ahead. However, this path leads to a steep uphill climb, with no trail, scrub oak and loose dirt. [Please – tell me about the other fork!] The left fork leads up a rocky well-defined trail to the upper junction of T54 and T43. It is a much easier hike. This portion of T54 is shown incorrectly on most Forest Service maps.

To hike down T54, access the southwest end from T25. But remember, when you are ambling down the old road, feeling good about getting home, you still have to go up and over that 900 foot high ridge! On the good side, when you are down from the ridge and walking along the old road portion of T54, look for the row of rocks running diagonally across T54; they direct you to the unsigned entry to C54.

ACCESS: To reach the lower T54 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 park. Cross a small drainage just to the east of FR5628 and look to the left of the unsigned single path of C54.

The upper trailhead may be reached by hiking 1.9 miles from the northeaster trailhead of T25 Crest Trail. Another way to reach T54 near its highest point is to hike up T48 Nogal Canyon Trail for 1.4 miles to its junction with T54. See the write ups for T25 and T48 to access these trails.

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Junction of T25 and T54	N33 29 38.8 W105 48 35.1	424779 3706361
Junction of C54 and T54	N33 31 05.7 W105 44 36.6	430953 3708989
C54 Trailhead	N33 30 48.3 W105 44 46.4	430696 3708455

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]
[C54-LM.gpx](#)

Last Hiked: 10/11/2017

1/3/2020