

T59 Padilla Trail

Smokey Bear Ranger District



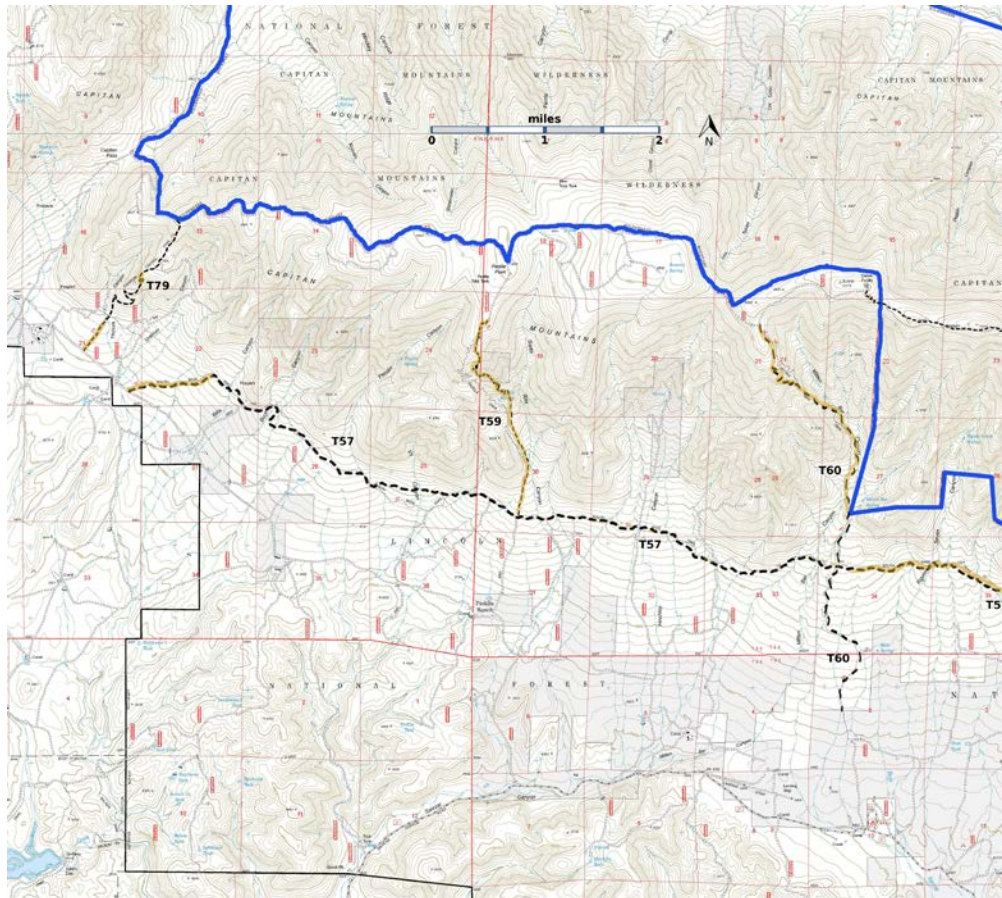
T59

GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
2.7 miles	7200 - 9440 ft 2240 ft difference	Difficult	3

Allowed Usage				



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

T57 (partial), T59, T60, and T79 are shown as black dashed lines on the map. . 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: T59 is shown incorrectly on many Forest Service maps. It is strongly recommended that hikers download the GPX track and use it to follow T59.

Caution: This is a tough hike; it is a faint tread and many fallen trees. Although T59 is open to horses, there are so many fallen trees across the trail that it is impassable for horses.

DESCRIPTION: T59 has great vegetational diversity and is one of two trails descending the south side of the Capitan Mountains that can be reasonably accessed by a suitable vehicle from both its upper and lower trailheads. At 0.8 mile from the junction of FR56 and FR9037D, the trail leaves the primitive road (which leads to a 10-acre mountain meadow) by angling left at a two foot high rock pile 20 feet ahead of a wooden T59 sign, just before the road turns right.

Although barely discernible for 200 feet, signed T59 soon becomes obvious when flanked by rocks, and heads down through thick forest. [Note: We are not sure that we found the first 0.1 mile of T59.] Distant views are few and usually highly filtered through trees. Between mile 0.2 and 1.5 gradients are generally steep, 25% to 35% being common, requiring at least 40 switchbacks.

At mile 1.5, near a campsite, is unique Padilla Spring, consisting of a multitude of seeps and small springs. Water issues from several locations along a horizontal rock layer for several tens of feet. A few of the resulting streamlets join together just above where the trail crosses the main stream. At this crossing is also the mouth of another stream, equal in volume to the others combined, emerging from a nearby depression caused by an uprooted tree that fell years ago. Output from these combined sources is estimated at 15 to 20 gallons per minute (1994).

Below Padilla Spring for 0.7 mile, the trail parallels the stream and passes several seeps. The lowest portion follows a primitive road, ending at the signed lower trail junction. Note: There are many fallen trees across this portion of T59.

It is strongly recommended that hikers descend the trail due to the path's general steepness. The one exception is if your destination is the Padilla Spring area just 0.8 mile up canyon from the lower trail end.

ACCESS: A high clearance vehicle is required for both trailheads; 4-wheel drive is strongly recommended for FR56. To reach the upper trailhead, begin in Capitan at the New Mexico NM48 and US380 intersection. Drive US380 east 2.0 miles to County Road C001, also known as FR56, Capitan Pass Road. At mile 5.4, the maintained road turns right and becomes FR338, also signed County Road C003. *Do not turn right.* Instead, proceed straight ahead on a ratty set of tracks signed as FR56 that gives way to a rough route. *Do not attempt if wet.* At mile 7.1 (on Capitan Pass), turn right and continue following FR56, which soon becomes steep and rocky until a ridge is reached at mile 9.3. Beyond here, the road is periodically rocky and rough to mile 12.2, and the largest meadow encountered on the Capitan Mountain ridge. There is a large sign for T59 and a sign for FR9037D, which leads to the right. The actual T59 trailhead is 0.8 miles

down FR9037D, which is rough in spots. You may decide to park along FR9037D and hike to the actual trailhead and its old wooden sign. Note: About 0.5 miles along FR9037D there is a 0.1 mile section of wind blown fallen trees, which requires effort to get through.

To reach the lower trail junction, turn right at mile 5.4 (above) off of FR56 and follow the graveled road FR338 (also County Road C003. The maintained section soon ends at mile 0.3 where it enters Lone Tree Bible Camp. *Do not enter the camp*, but continue straight ahead. This is unsigned FR338 and it is a dry weather road and is quite rough. Driving speed may be five miles per hours or less. At mile 4.2 from FR56, just after passing a draw labeled Peppin Canyon, [GPS coordinates for this hard-to-find junction are given below]. Follow FR 9796A, via an obscure double track, for 0.3 mile to a barbed wire gate. Continue straight ahead for another 0.3 miles, following vague eroded tracks to a cairn on the right. Do not drive past this point. Look northeast for an old, road, marked with occasional cairns, that leads in 0.4 miles to T57. This rough connecting trail may be tricky to follow, but T57 is signed when reached. At T57, turn right and hike 0.8 mile to the signed junction with T59. Warning: This section of FR338 contains many large rocks. A high clearance vehicle and substantial driving skill are required.

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Trailhead (North)	N33 36 06.3 W105 24 59.6	461354 3718079
Junction of T57 and T59	N33 34 38.7 W105 24 44.0	461745 3715379
Junction of FR338 and FR9796A	N33 34 10.3 W105 25 56.5	459872 3714512

Links to Other Resources

[Capitan Mountains Area-p1 \(10 MB\)](#)

[Capitan Pass Topo Map](#)

Last Hiked: 11/8/2017

1/14/2019