

T61

Pierce Canyon Trail

Smokey Bear Ranger District

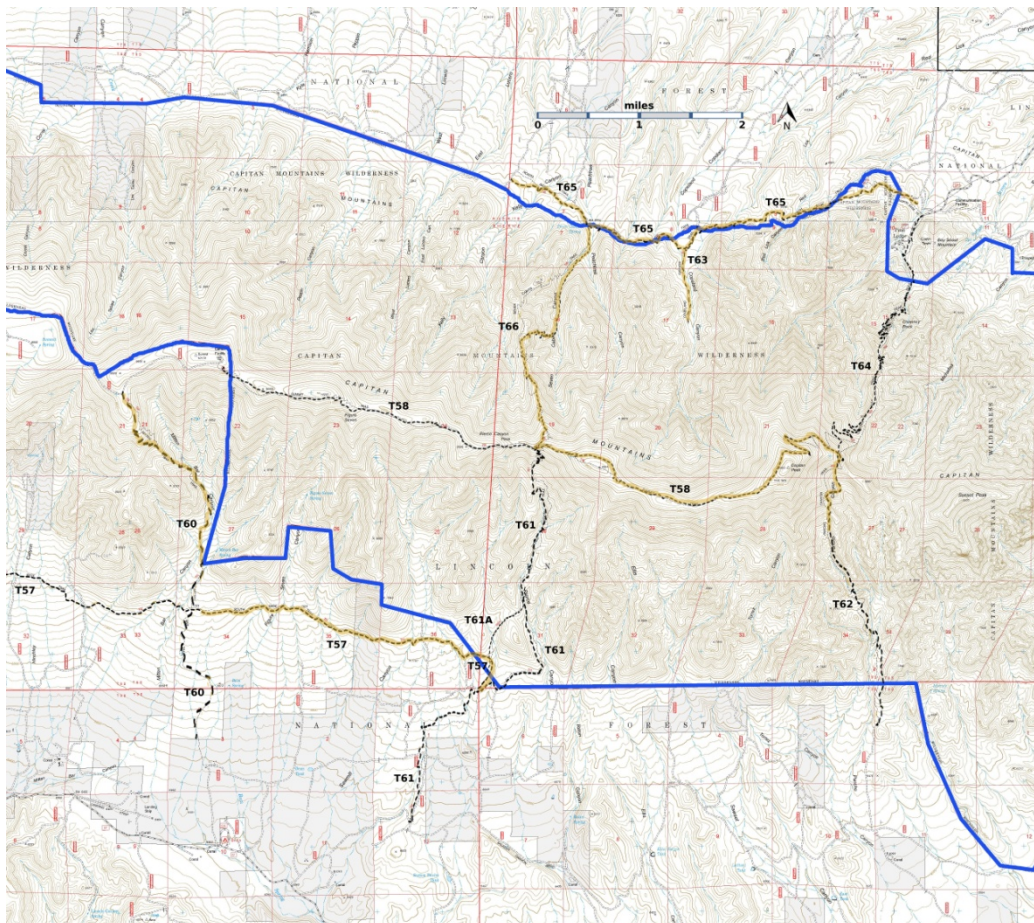


T61
GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
5.7 miles	6600 - 9260 ft 2660 ft difference	Difficult	3

Allowed Usage				



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

T57 (partial), T58, T60, T61, T61A, T62, T63, T64, T65, and T66 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: Portions of T61 are shown incorrectly on many Forest Service maps.

NOTE: The Forest Service worked on T61 and T61A in 2017. As a result, these trails are in pretty good shape.

DESCRIPTION: T61 provides a relatively moderate grade to the main ridge of the Capitan Mountains. In fact, on the south side of these mountains, this is the easiest climb along any trail. The path is obscure in a few locations. Maximum gradient reaches 30% infrequently, though usually it is much less.

T61 is open to horses, but there is a fence – no gate – about 0.6 miles from the lower trailhead that would impede horses.

The trail passes the eastern end of T57, South Base Trail, at mile 2.0 from its lower end at FR57. At mile 3.4 is a nice 20 foot high cascade, one of few water sources along the route, including the signed but minuscule and undependable Pierce Spring at mile 4.8. At mile 3.6, is the unsigned T61A junction --two cairns, one on each side of the trail. After mile 4.0 along T61, the mixed conifer forest takes on a mature appearance.

The best distant view is just off the trail at mile 4.9. To see it, carefully follow a narrow ridge to the left for 250 feet from the end of a switchback situated on a sharp ridge. Most other views are variously filtered. No meadows are present, although the trail passes a variety of landscapes, including another impressive, narrow ridge beginning at mile 5.0 for 0.2 mile.

If a round trip is made by ascending T61, one can take T61A on the return trip --- Look for two cairns – one on each side of the trail. Using unsigned T61A is 0.4 mile shorter but requires ascending then descending. The views along T61A are not worth the effort.

T61 and T66, Seven Cabins Trail, together make an ideal hiking route across the Capitan Mountains if transportation can be arranged at the lower end of T66. Try taking a two day hike, and camp on the ridge near the convergence of T61 and T66 at the intersection with T58, Summit Trail. Beware: T61 is in good shape and T66 is in terrible shape.

ACCESS: To reach the lower T61 trailhead, a high clearance vehicle is needed. Begin in Capitan at the intersection of US380 and NM246. Drive US380 east 8.4 miles to County Road C002, also signed as FR57. Note *two roads* going left within about ten feet of each other. The one on the right goes to a picnic area.

The one on the left, FR57, begins as a well-graveled road and at mile 5.3, passes Baca Campground. [Site of a 1930's CCC camp; some ruins are still visible.] At mile 6.3, county road maintenance ends. County Road C005 begins, and goes straight ahead; *but don't follow it*. Instead, turn left on FR57, an unmaintained road. Maximum speed here may be 10 mph. At mile 7.8, the signed T61 trailhead is to the left on a minor ridge, the highest point along this road.

To reach the upper trailhead for T61, hike T58 for 3.7 miles from its western trailhead off FR56, or hike 3.7 miles up T66, Seven Cabins Trail, from its lower trailhead. See the write-ups for T58 and T66 to access these trails.

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Junction of T58 and T61	N33 35 37.7 W105 18 26.7	471477 3717163
Junction of T61 and T61A	N33 34 23.0 W105 18 35.7	471237 3714861
Junction of T57 and T61	N33 33 36.0 W105 19 00.4	470596 3713415
Trailhead (South)	N33 32 31.0 W105 19 41.6	469527 3711418

Links to Other Resources

[Capitan Mountains Area-p2 \(14 MB\)](#)

[Capitan Peak Topo Map](#)

[My Life Outdoors – Pierce Canyon](#) [2012 information]

Last Hiked: 5/24/2017

1/14/2019