

# T66

## Seven Cabins Trail

### Smokey Bear Ranger District



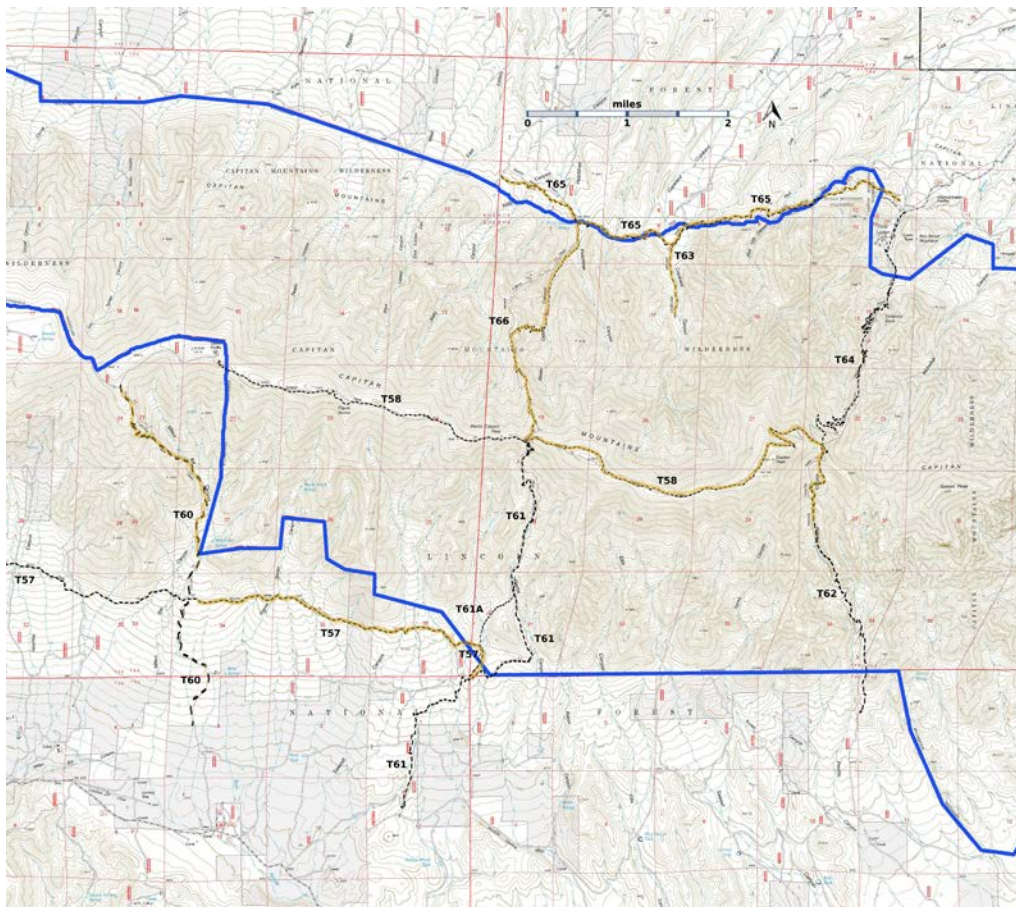
### T66

GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
3.7 miles	6960 - 9240 ft 2280 ft difference	Challenge	4?

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:** T66 is shown incorrectly on many Forest Service maps. This is particularly true to T66 where Forest Service maps direct hikers up the wrong hill.

**DESCRIPTION:** The canyon name, Seven Cabins, extends back to the 1850s when pioneers moved into the area and noted the foundations of seven burned cabins.

The 2004 Peppin Fire burned parts of T63, T65, and T66. Seven Cabins Trail went from being one of the loveliest trails in all of New Mexico to being a fire-scarred tree-laden challenge. In 2002, John Stocker wrote

“T66 is the most interesting and easiest-to-follow ascending trail in the Capitans, where forest fire has had only marginal effect. Splendid views of every sort are abundant, especially beyond mile 1.3, the first switchback. Until this point, the excellent path parallels an intermittent stream. As a result of an average maximum gradient of 20%, more than 20 switchbacks are encountered. A few, short 30% grades and poor trail sections exist beyond mile 1.0. The path passes through an open forest of mixed conifers and aspens.”

**No more.** Think of T66 in thirds. The lower third is now tree-strewn, and one searches for the tread by looking for fallen trees with hatchet blaze marks on them. Near the end of the canyon, where one looks for a large cairn and access to the switchbacks of the middle third, the trail is completely brushed over, and one must fight through brush for the final 40 yards. The middle third, with well-constructed switchbacks and crossings of rock fields, has some big trees across it, but is generally not a problem. The upper third has many trees across it and steep side slopes. When we descended, after we had found the trail, it took us 1.7 hours to traverse the 1.3 miles of the upper third of T666. Rating = Challenge.

Once one is up high, there are very good distant views to the north, no blocked by living, standing trees.

There are indefinite plans to rehabilitate T66. Check with the Forest Service office in Ruidoso so get the latest information on the rehabilitation.

The upper trailheads for T66 and T61, Pierce Canyon Trail, merge on T58, Summit Trail, at a pass on the ridge of the Capitan Mountains. T61, which climbs the southern slope of the Capitans for 5.7 miles, is the easiest southern slope trail; its lower trailhead is accessed from FR57, a public road. The two trails make an ideal hike across the Capitans, if transportation at the other end is available [and if you want to endure a hike of T66 – LAM.]

**ACCESS:** To reach the lower T66 trailhead, a high clearance vehicle is mandatory; 4-wheel drive is preferable. Start in Capitan at the NM246 and US380 intersection and drive NM 246 north and east 27 miles to milepost 27. Go another 0.2 mile and turn right on signed Seven

Cabins Road, also signed FR256 after making the turn. Beyond here, it continues to be a primitive, unmaintained, dry weather, ruddy road. At mile 3.9, FR 256 angles left; follow it to its end at mile 5.5 at the signed and interesting Seven Cabins Spring area, trailhead for T66. This is a nice place to camp.

The upper trailhead can be accessed by hiking T58, Summit Trail, east 3.7 miles from its western trailhead near the end of FR56, or hiking T58 west 4.4 miles from the common trailhead for T58, T64, and T62. An alternative route is T61, Pierce Canyon Trail; see its write-up.

#### GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Junction of T58 and T66	N33 35 37.7 W105 18 26.7	471477 3717163
Trailhead	N33 37 27.8 W105 17 55.7	472286 3720549

#### Links to Other Resources

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

[Capitan Peak Topo Map](#)

[Kyle Harrison Topo Map](#)

Last Hiked: 6/14/2017

1/14/2019