

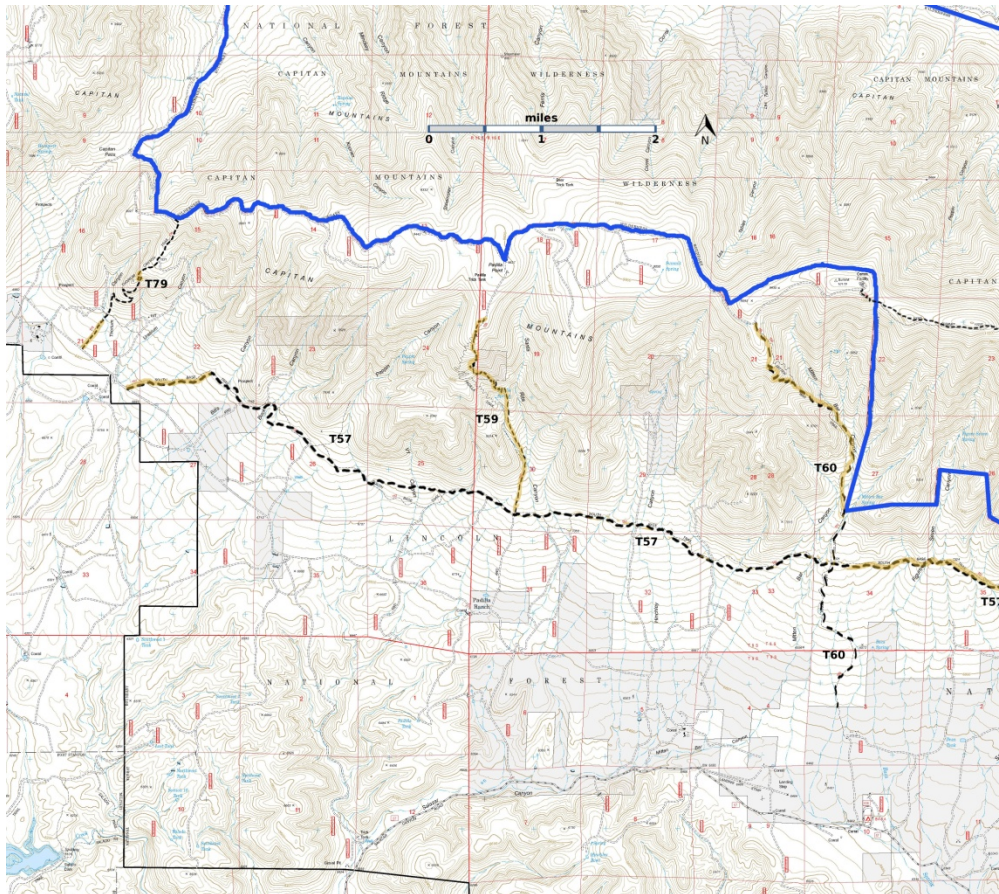
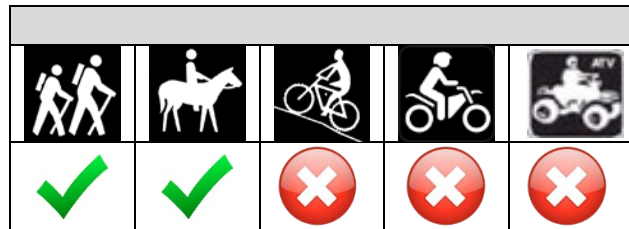
T79 Thorium Canyon Trail Smokey Bear Ranger District



T79
GPS Track (as .GPX)

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

LENGTH	ELEVATION	DIFFICULTY	SCENERY
1.90 miles	6840 - 8240 ft 1400 ft difference	Moderate	2



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

T57, T58, T59, T60, T61, T61A, T62, T63, T64, T65, T66 and T79 are shown as black dashed lines on the two maps. . 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.

T57 (partial), T59, and T79 are shown as black dashed lines on the map

DESCRIPTION: In spite of its name, T79 Thorium Canyon trail follows, for most of its length, a ridge and only enters Thorium Canyon at its lower end. From its upper trailhead at the short graded road, the wide path descends a steep, maximum 35% gradient, down the mountainside with no switchbacks. It follows an old mining road with somewhat unstable, small rocks, now grassing over, and goes through an abundance of young Ponderosa pine mixed with piñon. The key challenge is to connect this old mining road to a newer, much better mining road lower down. At mile 0.7 from the top (about 400 feet past a fallen “step under” tree) , the trail suddenly turns left and descends in 150 feet to the newer mining road. Both ends of this 150 foot segment are marked with cairns and lines of rocks across the “straight ahead” path. Turn left on the newer mining road and follow it, with its well-defined path and switchbacks with great views, passing junctions to small, old mine diggings. Gradient is 25% or less. Once this mining road heads straight downhill, follow it through the brush to the lower trailhead at FR388. A right turn at the lower end of the 150 foot segment leads, in 0.1 miles, to the end of the lower road at a mine pit.

The good news on this hike is that, if you hike T79 downhill, you cannot really get lost. You may get off the trail, but you can always aim for the Bible Camp and eventually reach FR338.

ACCESS: To access the upper trailhead, a high clearance, 4WD vehicle is necessary. Begin in Capitan at the US380 and NM48 intersection. Drive US380 east 2.0 miles to FR56, Capitan Pass Road, also known as County Road C001. Turn left on to FR56. At mile 5.4 from the junction of FR56 with US380, the maintained graveled road turns right and becomes FR338, County Road C003. *Do not turn right.* Instead, proceed straight ahead on a ratty set of tracks signed FR56. *Do not attempt if wet.* At mile 7.1 on Capitan Pass, turn right and go another 1.4 miles, following the increasingly rocky and steep road (up to 20% gradient) to the signed trailhead at mile 8.5, where a short graded spur veers off to the right [The carsonite sign is on the ground.]. Park along this short graded spur.

To reach the lower trailhead, turn right at mile 5.4 on FR56 (discussed above) and follow FR338 just 0.3 mile east to a gate on the right to Lone Tree Bible Camp. Continue another 0.4 miles to the T79 trailhead. T79 starts as an old, old road that has cut brush across it and which looks somewhat like a drainage wash. There is no visible trail through the brush, but there is an old, broken off T79 carsonite sign on the ground. Walk north from FR338 and you will find an old road leading toward the mountains. Follow it about 0.5 miles to a wooden T79 sign for the former lower trailhead.

GPS Coordinates for Key Points

NAD83	Lat/Lon hddd mm ss.s	UTM (13 S)
Trailhead (Upper)	N33 36 51.1 W105 27 46.4	457060 3719476
Trailhead (Lower)	N33 35 53.4 W105 28 37.9	455725 3717706

Links to Other Resources

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

[Capitan Pass Topo Map](#)

Last Hiked: 10/29/2016

1/14/2019