



SADDLEBROOKE

HIKING CLUB NEWSLETTER

<http://saddlebrookehikingclub.com>

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

2012-5

White Mountain Camping/Hiking Trip September 12 - September 15

Ready to hike out of the heat? This 4 day trip to the Big Lake/Greer area of the White Mountains will be your opportunity. Hikers will camp at Rainbow Campground at Big Lake or stay in a cabin at Greer for 3 nights. Hikes will be scheduled each day with the featured hike being Mt. Baldy. Other hikes will be the Railroad Grade Trail, East Fork Trail of the Little Colorado and the West Fork of the Black River. Mt. Baldy is an A hike; the others are C hikes.

A meeting will be held to provide additional information. Contact Elisabeth Wheeler [818-1547](tel:818-1547) or Roy Carter [818-3137](tel:818-3137) to be included in this trip.

Southwest Flora and Fauna with Jan Wilson Wednesday, October 17, 3 p.m. SB HOA1 Activity Center

The southwest area of Arizona is an amazing place to capture plants and animals on your camera. Jan and Dean Wilson have lived in SaddleBrooke for 14 years. Jan has taken photos on the many hikes she has led for our club. Some of the "fauna" she has captured on camera may be your fellow hikers. Come and be surprised at what you might see through the eyes of Jan's camera.

A social hour will follow in the SaddleBrooke Clubhouse Agave Lounge at 4 p.m.

Hiking Club Picnic October 19, Catalina State Park

The Hiking Club fall picnic will be held at Catalina State Park on **Friday, October 19, 2012** at the small group area. There will be signs in the park directing you to the picnic area. Entrance fee for the park is \$7 per car (max 4 persons) or a State Park Pass.

If you are interested in hiking before lunch check the newsletter for hike descriptions and contact the

hiking guide. A brief business meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. followed by a pot luck meal. The Club will provide fried and baked chicken, all paper goods and eating utensils. Bring a side dish to share and your own beverage. If you have a name tag please wear it.

RSVP to Beaver Simpson by **October 15th @ 818-7839 or mjsimp0328@aol.com**. Tell Beaver what side dish you will bring and the number of people attending. We look forward to seeing you at the picnic.

News You Can Use

Social Hour	9/19	4:00 p.m.
Board Meeting	10/3	2:45 p.m.
Guide Meeting	10/3	4:00 p.m.
SBHS Program	10/17	3:00. p.m.
Social Hour	10/17	4:00 p.m.
SBHC Picnic	10/19	11:30 a.m.

Hard copies of the Newsletter are available at the SaddleBrooke and Desert View Fitness Centers

Board Members

President	Larry Allen 825-7864, allenlw70@gmail.com
Vice-President	Bob Kolenda 825-9972; rlkslt4@gmail.com
Secretary	Dave Sorenson 777-1994 iowaboy1950@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Virginia Brier 818-0493; virginiabrier@gmail.com
Chief Hiking Guides	Larry Linderman 303-6564; LLinderman13@gmail.com Walt Shields 818-3439 waltshields@mac.com

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Catalina Hills Cleanup	Bill Leightenheimer, 825-5756; wmhlaz@gmail.com
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Work Days	Jim Strickler, 825-8735; sherabjim@wbhsi.net

General Information

Reservations: Call the guide to make a reservation for a hike. Let the guide know if you would be available to drive and whether or not you have a 'park entry pass' for the area. If you are unable to go on the hike after making a reservation, call the guide to cancel. The guide will call if a hike is canceled.

Arrival Time and Departure Area: The time listed for the hike is the departure time. It is important to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before departure time. All hikes leave from the left front parking lot of the MountainView Clubhouse (just east of the tennis courts) unless otherwise noted.

Medical Conditions: Prior to starting the hike, inform the guide of any special medical conditions or medications you may need.

Voluntary Driver Donations: Voluntary driver donations are shown in the table of Hikes Offered. If there are two entries under driver donation, for example \$7 + \$2, the first is for the driver and the second for any required entry and/or parking fee. If a state park pass is used for entry, the second amount should be given to the pass holder (whether he/she is the driver or not). Other persons in the vehicle who also hold park passes would not be responsible for the second amount. Note, that some hikes may require additional fees. Guides may also wish to split costs between drivers for drop-offs and/or unequal passenger loads. Small bills are appreciated. Since a driver may not have change, we would ask that, if you see two entries for the driver donation, you try to have the amounts for each. Due to automobile insurance coverage considerations, it is recommended that any payment to the driver be made upon return to MountainView.

Items to Bring: Every hiker should carry identification and any medical alerts in a waterproof container. Always bring ample water (this can vary from a pint on a winter fitness walk to 3 or 4 quarts on a summer hike). On strenuous hikes or in very hot weather you may need to replace electrolytes (eat salty snacks, add electrolyte mix to water, or use sport drinks). A wide brim hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and hiking stick or trekking poles are recommended in Arizona. Other suggested items include comfortable hiking boots, whistle, map, compass, tweezers, first-aid kit, and moleskin. Layered clothing works well due to possible changes in weather conditions. In addition, you should bring a snack or lunch depending upon the hike. High complex carbohydrates (nuts, trail mix, and etc.) are good.

Choosing Hikes: Hikes are more difficult than walks in SaddleBrooke because of the elevation change and our Arizona terrain. It is not unusual to encounter rocks, unsteady ground, and steep inclines. It is your responsibility to choose an appropriate hike that matches your physical abilities. The hike description is a great tool. Look closely at the length, elevation change, and comments in the description to determine if a hike is within your physical ability. If you aren't feeling "up to snuff" on the day of the hike, don't hesitate to cancel until a better day.

Assumption of Risk: When you joined the club, you were asked to sign a "Release of Liability". **We want to reinforce the fact that by signing the release you acknowledge that participation in the club's activities involves an inherent risk of physical**

injury and that you assume all such risks. Accidents can happen. Learn about the risks and how to avoid them. Take an active part in protecting yourself and fellow hikers. We are an organization of volunteers who share their skills and love for the wilderness with one another.

Hike Elevation, Ratings & Pace

Elevation Change: Three indicators are used in the hike descriptions to convey hike difficulty as it relates to elevation change.

- **Net Elevation Change** is the change in elevation obtained by subtracting the starting elevation from the highest (or lowest) point reached during the course of the hike, in feet. This estimate may be obtained from USGS maps or a global positioning system (GPS).
- **Accumulated Gain** is the sum of all upward stretches of a hike as recorded by a GPS device over the course of the entire hike. Accumulated elevation gain is generally a more accurate indicator of hike difficulty than net change in elevation.
- **Accumulated Loss**, another measure of hike difficulty, is the sum of all downward stretches of a hike. Accumulated elevation loss is useful for some downhill hikes and is usually obtained with a GPS device

Ratings: Ratings are based on the following round trip distances and accumulated gains in elevation over the course of the hike. The hike rating is determined by one (or both) of the two values being exceeded. For example, if a hike exceeds the criterion for distance but not for corresponding elevation, the rating would be set for distance.

<u>Hike Rating</u>	<u>Distance (Mi.)</u>	<u>Accumulated Gain in Elevation (Ft.)</u>
A	>14	>3000
B	8 to 14	1500 to 3000
C	4 to 8	500 to 1500
D	<4	< 500

Pace: Pace is described in terms of average speed in miles per hour (MPH) over the course of a hike from start to finish (excluding lunch). Average speed is affected by speed and length of stride, number of rest

stops, incline, type of terrain, and trail conditions. The following four categories are used to describe pace in the hike descriptions:

<u>Pace</u>	<u>Average Speed (MPH)</u>
Leisurely	<1.5
Slow	1.5 to 2.0
Moderate	2.0 to 2.5
Fast	>2.5

Fitness Walks Five Days A Week

Maintain your fitness or get into better shape by joining us for a morning fitness walk. Enjoy the company of other hikers while perusing SaddleBrooke. The sessions last about one hour and are suitable for walkers of all ability levels. No advanced signup is required to participate in these walks. Please view the chart below for the start times for all the walking groups led by Bill Leightenheimer, Martha Hackworth, and Dean Wilson.

Monday thru Friday fitness walks will start at the parking lot just west of the SaddleBrooke HOA #1 Fitness Center. If you have any questions please contact Martha at: 818-2573, or Bill at: 825-5756.

Slower walks around SaddleBrooke two days a week (days are negotiable) are led by Dean Wilson. If interested in participating in these walks, please call Dean at: 818-0299.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Start Time</u>
September 1st	6:30 a.m.
November 1 st	7:00 a.m.
April 1st	6:30 a.m.
June 1st	6:00 a.m.

Hikes Offered

Date	Day of Week	Name of Hike	Hike Rating	Pace	Leave Time A.M.	Leader(s)	Phone Number	Driver Donation
9/4	Tue	Linda Vista Loop	D		7:00	Bob Kolenda	825-9972	\$2
9/5	Wed	Extended Fitness Walk	C/B	Fast	6:30	Dave Hydeman	289-5546	\$0
9/8	Sat	Tanque Verde Ridge Trail	B		6:00	Don Taylor	825-5303	\$6
9/12	Wed	Camping Trip in White Mts - Big Lake RR Grade Trail #601 *	C		2:00 p.m.	Elisabeth Wheeler Roy Carter	818-1547 818-3137	TBA
9/13	Thurs	Camping Trip Mt. Baldy Loop	A		8:00	Elisabeth Wheeler Roy Carter	818-1547 818-3137	TBA
9/13	Thurs	Camping Trip Mt. Baldy East Fork Trail	C		8:00	Elisabeth Wheeler Roy Carter	818-1547 818-3137	TBA
9/14	Fri	Camping Trip East Fork Trail #95 + Butler Canyon Trail	C		9:00	Elisabeth Wheeler Roy Carter	818-1547 818-3137	TBA
9/15	Sat	West Fork-Black River	C		TBA	Elisabeth Wheeler Roy Carter	818-1547 818-3137	TBA
9/18	Tue	Romero Pools	C		7:00	Bob Kolenda	825-9972	\$2+\$2
9/19	Wed	SBHC Social Hour SB Agave Lounge			4:00 p.m.			
9/21	Fri	Window Rock	A		6:30	Elisabeth Wheeler	818-1547	\$4
9/24	Mon	Ventana Canyon	D	Slow	630	Dave Sorenson	777 1994	\$4
9/26	Wed	AZ Trail: Work Session	C		7:00	Jim Strickler	825-8735	\$0
9/28	Fri	Mt Hopkins	A		7:00	Frank Brier	818-0493	\$10
10/2	Tue	Blackett's Ridge	B		7:00	Bob Kolenda	825-9972	\$4
10/3	Wed	SBHC Board Meeting HOA1 Activity Center			2:45 p.m.	Larry Allen		
10/3	Wed	SBHC Guide Meeting HOA1 Activity Center			4:00 p.m.	Larry Linderman		
10/3	Wed	Extended Fitness Walk	C/B	Fast	7:00	Dave Hydeman	289-5546	\$0
10/6	Sat	Mule Ears via Charouleau Gap	A!		6:30	Don Taylor	825-5303	\$1
10/8	Mon	Peralta Trail	C		630	Dave Sorenson	777 1994	\$14
10/10	Wed	Romero Springs	B		8:00	Frank Brier	818-0495	\$2+\$2
10/15	Mon	Pima Canyon to 2 nd Dam	C		7:30	Laura Ruxer	812-630-2550	\$3
10/17	Wed	SBHC Program: SW AZ Flora and Fauna by Jan Wilson			3:00 p.m.	Elisabeth Wheeler	818-1547	
10/17	Wed	SBHC Social Hour HOA1 Activity Center			4:00 p.m.			
10/17	Wed	Wasson Peak via Sendero Esperanza and Hugh Norris Trails	B		7:00	Elaine & Howie Fagan	818-9555	\$6
10/18	Thurs	Bear Canyon/Sabino Canyon Loop	A		7:00	Elisabeth Wheeler	818-1547	\$4

Date	Day of Week	Name of Hike	Hike Rating	Pace	Leave Time A.M.	Leader(s)	Phone Number	Driver Donation
10/19	Fri	SBHC Picnic			11:30			
10/22	Mon	Marshall Gulch/Aspen Loop	C		7:30	Laura Ruxer	812-630-2550	\$10
10/24	Wed	Bridal Wreath Falls Loop	C		7:00	Elaine & Howie Fagan	818-9555	\$6
10/25	Thurs	Deer Camp Loop	C		8:00	Walt Shields	404-8998	\$2
10/26	Fri	Picketpost Mountain + Explore Pinal City Ruins	B!		7:00	Elisabeth Wheeler	818-1547	\$11
10/29	Mon	Phone Line Tr-RT	B		7:30	Laura Ruxer	812-630-2550	\$4
10/31	Wed	Romero Springs	B		7:30	Bob Kolenda	825-9972	\$2+\$2

a– New hikes not yet included in the Hike Database are indicated with “***”.

b – Hike ratings are based on round trip distance and accumulated elevation gain, where available. Ratings flagged with a “!” indicate special trail conditions that might be of concern to some hikers. Please read the hike descriptions before deciding whether to sign up.

Ratings flagged with a “☺” indicate an easier, smoother trail than normal at that rating.

c – Pace is moderate unless otherwise stated.

Hike Descriptions

Arizona Trail: Work Session. Rating C. This is one of the Hiking Club work days. Come join the fun - it's nice to work side by side with other hiking club members, as we help maintain and report conditions for the section of the Arizona Trail called, "Black Hills/South," for which our club is responsible. This 6-mile section starts on Tiger Mine Road, off Hwy # 77, just north of the Oracle State Park. Generally, the work is light, and involves clipping, brushing, raking, and pruning, and for some, repairing cairns, adding erosion control devices and other trail work (depending on rains). Bring along gloves, hat, and hand clippers. Other tools, if needed, will be provided. The session usually lasts about 4 hours, with a return to Saddlebrooke by 12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Bring water and snacks. Hike 3 to 6 miles; RTD 50 miles (dirt). The club will pay drivers' expenses.

Bear Canyon to Sabino Canyon Loop. Rating A. The hike begins at the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center parking lot and proceeds up scenic Bear Canyon to Sycamore Canyon. At Sycamore Canyon, we turn northwest on the East Fork Trail, and then southwest on the Sabino Canyon Trail to its intersection with the Phone Line Trail. The return to the Visitor Center is via the Phone Line Trail. Hike 18 miles; trailhead elevation 2700 feet; net elevation change 2100 feet; accumulated gain 4310 feet; RTD 56 miles.

Blackett's Ridge. Rating B. The hike begins at the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center, and follows relatively level, well-used trails east to the Phone Line Trailhead. After 0.4 miles along the Phone Line Trail, the Blackett's Ridge Trail branches right and continues up the ridge between Sabino and Bear Canyons. There are spectacular views of Tucson and the canyons to either side of the trail. The ridge part of the trail has several steep switchbacks mixed in with some level areas. There are three false summits before reaching the end of the trail, a point where it is not possible to continue because the terrain drops precipitously. Hike 6 miles; trailhead elevation 2720 feet; net elevation change 1689 feet; accumulated gain >1735 feet; RTD 56 miles.

Bridal Wreath Falls. Rating C. The Douglas Spring Trailhead is located at the east end of Speedway Blvd. The hike involves some relatively steep climbing up the Douglas Spring Trail for the

first 2.5 miles, before turning off on the 0.3 miles spur leading to the falls. The trail is well used and easy to follow. Bring sun protection. Water may be flowing over the falls if there has been sufficient rainfall. Hike 5.6 miles; trailhead elevation 2720 feet; net elevation change 1120 feet; accumulated gain ___ feet; RTD 80 miles.

Deer Camp Loop. Rating C. The hike begins in the Fifty-Year Trail Area. We hike east up and out of Sutherland Wash to Deer Camp, and then head southwest down a winding trail to connect with a trail that proceeds to a lookout on an arm of Samaniego Ridge. The trail affords good views of SaddleBrooke, the Sutherland Wash, the Biosphere, the Tortolita Mountains, and Pusch Ridge. We will follow this trail back down over slick rock, past an ancient cholla tree, then through an ocotillo grove. It continues down a dry creek bed (watch for those cairns) and intersects with the Baby Jesus Trail. The trail passes through a grove of 100-year old saguaros on the way back to the trailhead. Hike 5.7 miles, trailhead elevation 3200 feet; net elevation change 1400 feet; accumulated gain ___ feet.

Extended Fitness Walk. Rating C/B. The walk begins at the SaddleBrooke parking lot and travels one of several routes in and around SaddleBrooke. Carry at least one quart of water. Hike 7.5 to 10 miles; elevation change 500 to 600 feet. Hike duration is 2.5 to 3 hours. Optional breakfast at the Road Runner Grill (need credit card as cash is not accepted).

Linda Vista Loop. Rating D. The Linda Vista Trailhead and parking lot is one block east of Oracle Road on Linda Vista Blvd. The hike proceeds into the foothills of Pusch Ridge and is an excellent introduction to desert hiking. The trail gradually ascends to provide excellent views of Oro Valley. Hiking sticks may be helpful for rocky steps-up and steps-down. The trail passes through a riparian area and ascends to a rocky outcropping which is a good place for a snack break. There are magnificent saguaros throughout the drainage from Pusch Ridge. Hike 3 miles (mileage may be extended by doing an extra loop – ask the guide); trailhead elevation 2720 feet; net elevation change 400 feet; accumulated gain ___ feet; RTD 28 miles.

Marshall Gulch / Aspen Loop. Rating C. The hike starts at the Marshall Gulch Picnic Area and goes up the Marshall Gulch Trail to the Marshall Saddle. From the Saddle, we turn left down the Aspen Trail and head back to the picnic area. After about 0.25 miles on the Aspen Trail, there is a large rock that provides a great spot for a break or lunch. Hike may be done in reverse. Hike 3.7 miles; trailhead elevation 7440 feet; net elevation change __ feet; accumulated gain 830 feet; RTD 130 miles.

Mt. Hopkins. Rating A. Mount Hopkins in the Santa Ritas is the home of the Whipple Observatory. The hike starts from the Madera Canyon Trail parking area (upper). The hike goes up numerous steep switchbacks via the Vault Mine Trail to the Aqua Caliente Saddle, and then continues up a faint "lung bursting" route through pine forest that hugs the ridgeline to the top. The views include mountain ranges in all directions. We will lunch at the top then hike part way down the road, drop down a steep decent to Josephine Saddle and finally down Old Baldy Trail. This is a tough hike due to route conditions and steepness. Hike 8 miles; trailhead elevation 5400 feet; net elevation change 3185 feet; accumulated gain __ feet; RTD 130 miles.

Mule Ears via Charouleau Gap. Rating A!. This is a difficult hike to a prominent point on the Samaniego Ridge with outstanding views in all directions. The hike starts from the Rocking Horse Ranch parking area near Unit 21, crosses the CDO Wash and proceeds along Charouleau Gap Road, FR # 736 (a 4WD jeep road) to the gap. The group will turn right (south) onto the trail and climb up a steep hill for 1.5 miles. Eventually, the trail levels off and continues along the ridge with moderate up/down hiking over to Mule Ears. This section was devastated by fire and is sometimes overgrown with sticker bushes. Dress defensively. Route finding skills are needed. We lunch at a spot on the edge of cliffs just north of Mule Ears which affords a view of the Reef of Rocks. The return is via the same route. Hike 17.5 miles; trailhead elevation 3170 feet; net elevation change 3891 feet; accumulated gain 4210 feet; RTD 5 miles.

Phone Line Trail - Round Trip. Rating B. The hike begins in the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center parking lot. After crossing Sabino Creek there is a moderate climb to the Phone Line Trail, which is above and generally parallels the tram road. The trail offers outstanding views of the canyon. There are three options for the return: the tram road, the same

trail, or back part way on the same to trail to a connecting trail that takes us down to the creek and dam and back to the parking lot. There are extended stretches of exposed trail. Hike 10.4 miles; trailhead elevation 2720 feet; net elevation change 1035 feet; accumulated gain 1375 feet; RTD 56 miles.

Picketpost Mountain. Rating B!. The daunting angular shape of Picketpost Mountain intrigues all who drive along US Hwy # 60 between Phoenix and Superior. This is a short, steep hike to the summit of Picketpost Mountain. From the Arizona Trail parking lot south of Hwy # 60 and west of the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, the group will hike south on the Arizona Trail to a prominent drainage. Look for a cairned path which branches up the foothills of the mountain. The Picketpost Trail splits into two routes which eventually meet before the last cleft. Both routes have steep rocky sections which require sure-footedness. Once the rim is reached the route continues SE to the summit which has a mailbox for registering. 360-degree views are spectacular. Hike 4.3 miles; trailhead elevation 2400 feet; net elevation change 2000 feet; accumulated gain __ feet; RTD 165 miles.

Pima Canyon to 2nd Dam. Rating C. The Pima Canyon Trailhead is at the east end of Magee Road. The first mile or so is across open desert along the south side of Pusch Peak. We pass the small first dam as we enter the beautiful, rugged canyon. The rocky trail passes through a grove of large trees providing welcome shade before emerging again in the open. The trail then leads to a rocky open area in the canyon beyond a small dam near several Indian grinding holes. The return is via the same route. Hike 6.2 miles; trailhead elevation 2960 feet; net elevation change __ feet; accumulated gain 977 feet; RTD 42 miles.

Romero Pools. Rating C. The hike begins in Catalina State Park at the easternmost trailhead and follows Romero Canyon Trail into the foothills. The trail crosses open desert then climbs steeply until it reaches a saddle and then down into the canyon area where several pools are located. There are excellent views of Romero and Montrose Canyons along the way. The well-maintained trail is rocky and rough in places, but is not overly difficult for most hikers. An option is a 0.75 miles round-trip, relatively level hike to the upper pools. We will have lunch at the lower or upper pools. The return is via the same route. Hike 5.6 miles; trailhead elevation 2700 feet; net

elevation change 980 feet; accumulated gain 1500 feet; RTD 24 miles.

Romero Springs. Rating B. The hike begins in Catalina State Park at the easternmost trailhead and follows Romero Canyon Trail into the foothills. The trail crosses open desert then climbs steeply until it reaches a saddle and then down into the canyon area where several pools are located. The spring is located about 2 miles past the Romero pools in a very scenic section of the canyon. It has been known to have quite a bit of wildlife. There are excellent views of Romero and Montrose Canyons along the way. Lunch will be at the spring. The return is via the same route. Hike 10.4 miles; trailhead elevation 2700 feet; net elevation change 1960 feet; accumulated gain 2720 feet; RTD 24 miles.

Superstitions: Peralta Trail. Rating C. The hike follows the Peralta Trail to Fremont Saddle in the Superstition Mountains. There are excellent views of Weavers Needle at the Saddle. This may be the area's most beautiful canyon. Legend has it that a loner named Jacob Waltz (The Dutchman) found a fortune in gold somewhere within the Superstition Mountains. Dominating the legends and the landscape is Weavers Needle. The canyon bottom is a jumble of huge boulders that have tumbled from the cliffs above. The trail is steep and rocky for most of the way. Hike 5.0 miles; trailhead elevation 2410 feet; net elevation change 1360 feet; accumulated gain 1410 feet; RTD 154 miles (dirt).

Tanque Verde Ridge Trail. Rating B. The hike begins at the Javalina Picnic Area in Saguaro National Park – East off the Cactus Forest Drive loop road, and is a picturesque hike in the Rincon Mountains with tremendous views of Tucson and the surrounding area. The hike is somewhat steep in parts as it proceeds up Tanque Verde Ridge. At three miles into the hike, we will view a crested saguaro, but continue on another mile to lunch on a mesa with great views. There are some great photo stops along the way. Hike 8 miles; trailhead elevation 3120 feet; net elevation change 1900 feet; accumulated gain __ feet; RTD 82 miles.

Ventana Canyon - Lower Level. Rating D. The hike begins from a parking lot at the Ventana Canyon Resort and proceeds gradually up Ventana Canyon for a mile or so. Several stream crossings are involved and there may be water depending on recent rains which require some boulder hopping. At the turnaround point, the trail starts a steep climb through the beautiful canyon which leads eventually to

Maiden Pools and, much further along, Window Rock. The trail passes through massive cliffs of metamorphic stone slanting skyward to sharp points above the canyon floor. Hike 3 miles; trailhead elevation 3040 feet; net elevation change 400 feet; accumulated gain 400 feet; RTD 54 miles.

Wasson Peak via Sendero Esperanza and Hugh Norris Trails. Rating B. The hike begins at Sendero Esperanza Trailhead off Golden Gate Road. The route follows the Esperanza Trail (1.8 miles) to the Hugh Norris Trail and on to Wasson Peak (2.2 miles). The climb is gradual and the Hugh Norris section is primarily a ridge trail with spectacular views. The 360-degree views from Wasson Peak include Tucson and Santa Catalinas to the east, Green Valley/Santa Ritas to the south, Sells to the west, and Picacho to the north. We will lunch on top of the Peak and return the same way. Hike 8 miles; trailhead elevation 2960 feet; net elevation change 1727 feet; accumulated gain __ feet; RTD 73 miles (dirt).

Window Rock. Rating A. The hike follows the most direct route up Ventana Canyon. The hike is difficult and steep, and involves lots of difficult climbing. The hike begins at the Ventana Canyon Resort parking lot past the employees' parking lot. It follows that trail past Maiden Pools until it reaches the Esperero Trail # 25, which is used for two miles to reach the Window. Ventana Canyon offers some of the best canyon views in southern Arizona. Views from the Window are fantastic, including such landmarks at Mt. Kimball, Cathedral Rock, and the Montrose Canyon drainage area. Hike 13 miles; trailhead elevation 3040 feet; net elevation change 3840 feet; accumulated gain 4200 feet; RTD 54 miles.

White Mountain Hiking Trip

East Fork Trail: Little Colorado River. Rating C. After crossing the West Fork of the Little Colorado River, the trail climbs steeply 600 feet in under an eighth of a mile toward Amberon Point. Once at Amberon Point, the trail continues on a more reasonable grade. This trail offers a variety of mixed conifer and open meadows, and continues past Gabaldon Campground into the Mt. Baldy Wilderness. Hike 7.5 miles; trailhead elevation 8,200 ft; net elevation change 1100 ft; RTD about 480 miles.

West Fork of the Black River. Rating C. One of the most beautiful areas in the White Mountains is the West Fork of the Black River. The trail begins on a fairly level grade and takes you through stands of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and aspen. The line of trees form an avenue to guide you toward spectacular vistas far above the river. There are expansive mountain meadows filled with wildflowers and tall grasses. Hike 6 miles RT; trailhead elevation 9,000 ft.; RTD about 480 miles.

Mt. Baldy Loop. Rating A. Mt. Baldy is actually an extinct volcano that last erupted 10 million years ago. Located on the western edge of the Apache National Forest, this hike goes through some of the most spectacular terrain in the state. The lovely trail passes through old growth forest with some of the biggest examples of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, blue spruce and aspen in the state and through meadows blanketed with wildflowers. Hikers will view the remains of an Army plane that crashed into the mountain back in the late 1940's or early 1950's. We will begin at the trailhead for the West Fork Trail of the Little Colorado River and climb to the ridge to merge with the East Fork Trail near the wilderness boundary. We top out a mile away from the actual summit of Mt. Baldy which is sacred to the Apache Indians and off limits.

However, the views are just as good on the ridgeline and include portions of the White Mountain Apache Reservation, Big Lake, Crescent Lake, a sizable chunk of the Black River Valley, Escudilla Mountain, the Blue Range and the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. Bring a light jacket as it can be pretty cold at the top. Hike 15 miles; trailhead elevation 9200 feet; net elevation change 1800 feet, accumulated gain ___ feet; RTD 480 miles.

Mt. Baldy East Fork Trail, part way up. Rating C. The trailhead is on Hwy # 273, 3 miles east of Sheep's Crossing in the White Mountains. The trail initially climbs easily through some large meadows where deer, elk and antelope can sometimes be seen early or late in the day. After that, the trail climbs steadily through virgin timber of mixed Douglas fir, white and blue spruce, and ponderosa pine. After 2 miles, a summit is reached from which views of Mt. Baldy and other White Mountain peaks can be enjoyed. Hike 4 miles; trailhead elevation 9700 feet; net elevation change 1000 feet; accumulated gain ___ feet; RTD 486 miles.

Railroad Grade Trail. Rating C to A (depending on distance). The entire trail follows a historic railroad right-of-way offering gentle grades and beautiful scenery. A unique feature of this trail is the 80 foot-long trestle bridge similar to bridges used at the turn of the century. Hike 6-19 miles; trailhead elevation 9100 ft; RTD about 480 miles.