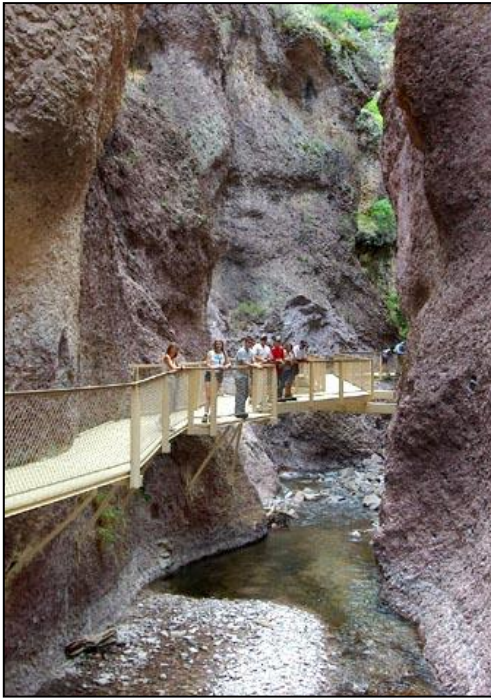


May 28 - 31, 2010

New Mexico's Gila Wilderness is an enormous tract of land encompassing high mountains, big trees, babbling streams, wildlife, and more. For several years, I've gone with a group of friends to the Gila Wilderness for a Memorial Day backpacking trip. This is your chance to see that wilderness for yourself.

## The Plan



We'll drive to New Mexico early on Friday morning, May 28th. Along the way, we'll stop at the Glenwood Ranger Station to check the weather, road, and water situation. From there, we'll drive to the Sheridan Trailhead, then run a shuttle vehicle back north 18 miles to the Catwalk Trailhead.

After the drivers get back, we have a four-point-seven mile hike to do, but we should still have plenty of time. We'll need it, too. That first climb is a real doozy, gaining 2,700 feet from the trailhead to our first night's stop at Holt Cabin!

On Saturday, we'll pack our stuff and head off to Holt Mountain, then head down through Camp Creek Saddle and on to our campsite at Tennessee Meadows. For those who want some extra hiking, you can take an alternate route up

through Spider Saddle and Grouse Mountain and meet the rest of the group at our Tennessee Meadows campsite. That'll add a couple of miles to the trip for those folks.

Sunday will dawn with just a short hike in front of us. We're going to move just over four miles down the South Fork of Whitewater Creek to whatever campsite we come across that appeals to the group. We'll probably stop near or at the junction with Whitewater Creek.

After a relaxing evening in camp, we'll arise early for the short hike through the Catwalk to our car shuttle trailhead and the drive home. We should be back in Tucson by late afternoon on Memorial Day.

This trip is planned for up to eight people. There is plenty of room available at each campsite, and it's all free!\*

You'll need food for three dinners, three breakfasts, and two lunches.

## Water and Weather

There should be water at each of our campsites in the Gila. There is definitely water in Whitewater Creek!

The weather in the Gila Wilderness is ever-changing. We've had very sunny weekends, and we've had very wet weekends. Place your bets and take your chances. Your best bet is to plan for anything. At best, daytime highs will be in the low 80s with lows in the low 50s. Remember, however, that one of our campsites is at 9,100 feet. That particular campsite can be cold. The other campsites are as low as 6,500 feet so will be much warmer. Plan accordingly.

One nice thing is that we are allowed to have a campfire at each campsite. That makes the evenings a bit more special. Perhaps we'll have s'mores!

## The Hike

| day      | miles      | elev gain            | destination                   |
|----------|------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Friday   | 0.0 / 0.0  | 0 ft / 0 ft          | Sheridan Corral Trailhead     |
| Friday   | 2.0 / 2.0  | 400 ft / 500 ft      | Skunk Johnson Cabin Trail jct |
| Friday   | 2.7 / 4.7  | 2,300 ft / 2,700 ft  | Holt Cabin and Spring         |
| Saturday | 1.1 / 5.8  | 600 ft / 3,300 ft    | Holt Mountain                 |
| Saturday | 2.7 / 8.5  | -1,300 ft / 3,300 ft | Camp Creek Saddle             |
| Saturday | 2.2 / 10.7 | -1,200 ft / 3,300 ft | Tennessee Meadows             |
| Sunday   | 3.3 / 13.9 | -800 ft / 3,300 ft   | Devil's Elbow                 |
| Sunday   | 1.8 / 15.7 | -800 ft / 3,300 ft   | Whitewater Creek Trail jct    |
| Monday   | 1.3 / 17.0 | -600 ft / 3,300 ft   | The Catwalk                   |
| Monday   | 1.0 / 18.0 | -300 ft / 3,300 ft   | Catwalk Trailhead             |

*\* There are no fees for camping in the National Forest. Participants are expected to pay their share of gas and all other group expenses.*