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hiking

Verde Valley & Sedona

A baker's dozen great local hiking trails

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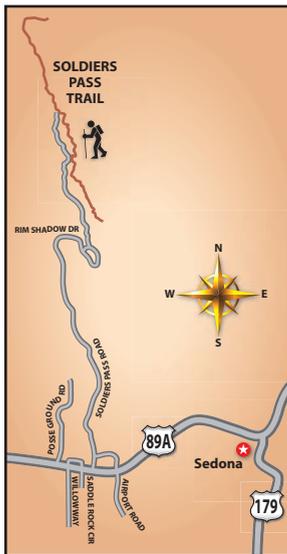
#Lucky 13 Wet Beaver Creek: An isolated paradise of 7 cliffs and 23 pools ... Page 36

#1 Soldier Pass Trail: four trails in one

By BILL HELM
Staff Reporter

SEDONA – A trek through Soldier Pass Trail can be like hiking four trails in one.

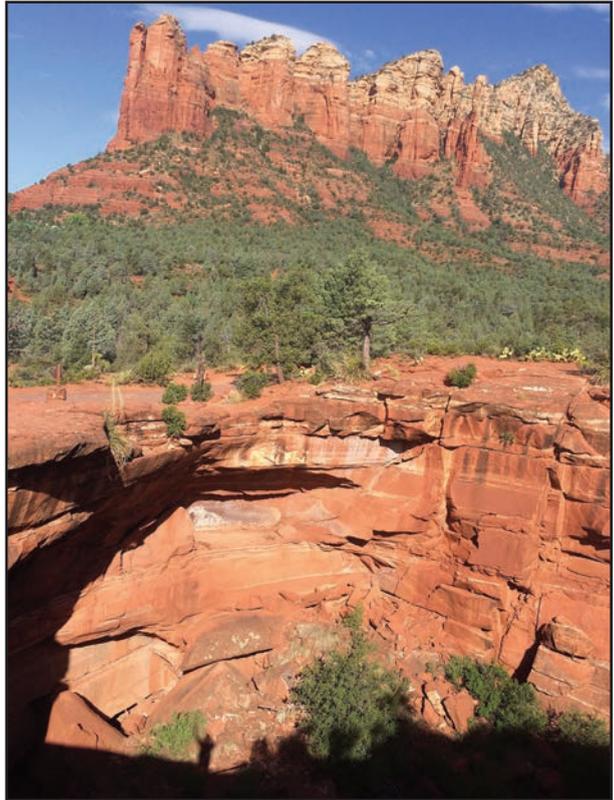
Because for anyone who enjoys a looping trail, Soldier Pass connects first with Brins Mesa Trail, then meets up with Cibola Pass Trail before it connects to Jordan Trail – and then finally back to the Soldier Pass Trailhead.



For those who find trail-to-trail hiking to be akin to taking multiple thoroughfares in the big city, well just stay on Soldier Pass Trail, do a 180 at the end, then return from whence you came.

The loop is a good five-mile jaunt, but staying on

6 • hiking Verde Valley & Sedona



The sights on Soldier Pass Trail are beautiful, especially on a summer morning before the sweat begins to drip from your brow. Colors are beautiful in the morning. (VVN/Bill Helm)

Soldier Pass cuts the hike down to four miles.

Either looping or going to-and-fro, the hike takes you both uphill and downhill, though it's quite easy to navigate and doesn't feel as moderate as the ratings say. Much of the trail is on relatively even ground.

The sights are beautiful, especially on a summer

morning before the sweat begins to drip from your brow. Colors are beautiful in the morning, and since this hike isn't terribly demanding, photography enthusiasts could feel comfortable taking more than the iPhone with them to snap some striking images

SEE **SOLDIER PASS** PAGE 8

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SOLDIER PASS

From page 6

-- while keeping their balance navigating the path.

Sites at the beginning are pretty spectacular. In the first quarter-mile you will see Sedona's largest sink-hole, Devil's Kitchen, as well as the Seven Sacred Pools and some impressive arches along the canyon wall for those who choose to stay on Soldier Pass.

Should you go from there to Brins Mesa, the views are pretty panoramic, including a shot of Steamboat Rock some will swear looks like a petrified boat.

If you are a fan of flora and fauna, then you will enjoy the pine trees, manzanita trees – and their berries, the agave bushes, some prickly pear cacti, and a good ways

along Soldier Pass, a Utah juniper covered in sap. Sadly, some anti-conservation type defaced the tree with his – or her 'D' into the tree.

We also saw some apache plume along the Soldier Pass Trail, as well as a rather diminutive barrel cactus that my wife says are “most-ly seen in stores.”

Though either trail can be hiked in about two hours, the trail's parking lot is open from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. So why be in a hurry?

How to get there

From the Y at state routes 89A and 179, take 89A west about 1.3 miles. Turn right on Soldiers Pass Road (this is where the Chase Bank is) and drive 1.5 miles before you turn right on Rim Shadows. Then drive 0.2 miles before you see a steel fence and a parking lot, both to your left.

Parking lot is gated and locked from 6 p.m. until 8 a.m. There's an alternate parking area accessible from the top of Jordan Road in Uptown Sedona.

What to bring?

Good hiking shoes – and water should both be at the top of everyone's list. A hiking stick would be a good idea for anyone not in the best of physical condition. There is a collective elevation gain of about 800 feet when taking the four-trail loop, and about 450 feet if you stay on Soldier Pass, but it's quite gradual and feels easier than you would think.

The views are beautiful, so if you are into photography, bring some sort of camera. If you plan to be out there for much of the day, bring energy-friendly snacks – and by all means, take your trash with you.



Sites at the beginning are pretty spectacular.

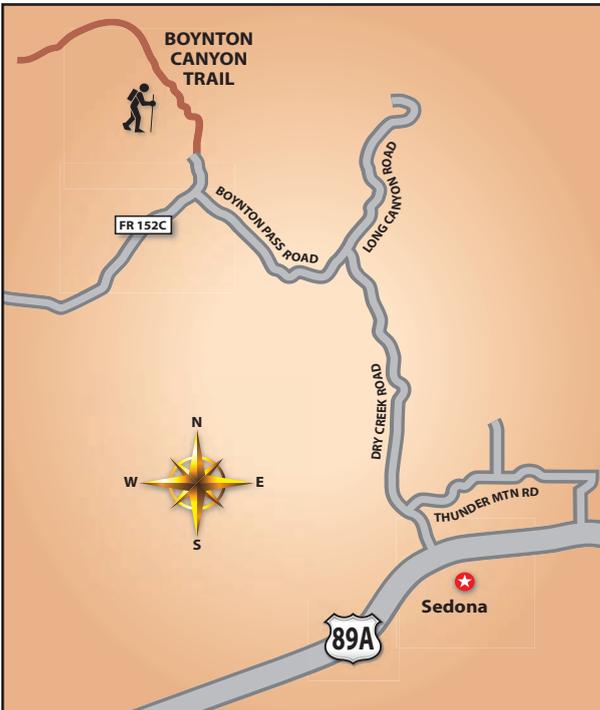
In the first quarter-mile you will see Sedona's largest sink-hole, Devil's Kitchen, as well as the Seven Sacred Pools and some impressive arches along the canyon wall for those who choose to stay on Soldier Pass.

#2 Boynton Canyon system offers triad of hiking choices

Some say the beauty of Boynton Canyon is not only seen, but felt as well. Along with crimson-tinged rock formations above and matching trails below, the canyon is said to contain an energy vortex. Hikers can choose from three



Boynton Canyon in Sedona offers spectacular red rock scenery and a variety of trails to choose from. (Photo by Tom Tracey)



connected trails: Boynton Canyon Trail (the longest, easiest and most picturesque); Vista Trail (a summit spire said to contain a vortex) and Deadman's Pass Trail (an open, panoramic trail with mountain views).

Boynton Canyon Trail is adjacent to the swank Enchantment Resort. Hikers are greeted with spectacular views of red-rock cliffs and canyons punctuated by high-desert flora and fauna. After strolling 250 yards into the trail, hikers are faced with a choice: To continue on Boynton Canyon Trail (left) or take Deadman's Pass (right). To stay on Boynton Canyon Trail, bear left and continue hiking. After 400 yards along the trail, another

SEE **BOYNTON** PAGE 10

BOYNTON

From page 9

fork in the trail appears. Hikers can either continue on Boynton Canyon Trail (left) or explore Vista Trail (right).

Those staying on Boynton Canyon Trail will find that, after crossing a wash, the trail eventually narrows and climbs, gaining 700 feet in elevation total from start to finish.

History

Boynton Canyon was named for pioneering homesteader John Boeington.

This area plays an important part in the creation story of the Yavapai and Apache people and the canyon's Kachina Woman rock formation is regarded by the Hopi as a guardian.

**Hiker
Terri
Tripp**
of Lake
Montezuma
explores
the
Boynton
Canyon
Trail in
Sedona.
(Photo
by Tom
Tracey)



Directions

Located about 20 miles east of Cottonwood and 8 miles west of downtown Sedona via SR 89A. From SR 89A, turn onto Dry Creek Road and continue 2 miles until reaching a "T" in the road. Turn left onto Boynton Pass Road and continue about 2.5 miles. Turn right onto Boynton Canyon Road and look to the right for the trail head parking lot. NOTE: Arrive early, as spaces go quickly. GPS (Map): 34°54'28.1"N 111°50'56.6"W

Admission:

A Red Rock Pass or America the Beautiful Pass is required to park at the trailhead. For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov.

What to take

Sedona can be dry, sunny and hot much of the year.

Bring more water than you think you will need and also an energy snack. Sturdy hiking shoes aid traction, support ankles and help protect from rocks, cactus and poisonous reptiles.

Miles

The three connected trails are in-and-out, with the following mileage roundtrip: 6 miles for Boynton Canyon; .4 mile for Vista Trail and 2.4 miles for Deadman's Pass.

Ranking

All trails start easily, then become moderate due to climbing. Vista Trail may become difficult at the end for some due to elevation changes and rock ledges. The trails are well-marked, maintained and offer shade in spots. For more information, call the Coconino National Forest at 928-527-3600.

#3 Long Canyon #122: gateway to Secret Mountain Wilderness

By BILL HELM
Staff Reporter

SEDONA - One of the most interesting - and most helpful things about Long Canyon Trail #122 is that it is a connector to Deadman's Pass, Chuckwagon and the Mescal trails.

To the east and the northeast of Boynton Canyon, Long Canyon Trail is a seven-mile round trip hike that is rated 3 of



SEE **LONG CANYON** PAGE 12

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LONG CANYON

From page 11

5 on the difficulty scale. The wide and nearly level trail leads through a forest with views of Sedona's red rock formations.

Long Canyon Trail starts out on an old, dirt road. Bear to the left when you come to a three-way junction when the trail closes to a foot path.

At the early part of the trail, there is a golf course on the right. Once you pass the course, it's time to enjoy the Cypress trees and the peace and quiet of the crimson canyon walls.

About 0.6 miles into the hike, Long Canyon Trail intersects with the Deadman's Pass trail head, which veers to the west. Another 0.5 miles on Deadman's Pass takes you to the Boynton Canyon Trail. If you stay on Long Canyon Trail, the trail becomes steeper at the 3.5-mile mark.

Long Canyon Trail provides great views of the area's buttes and cliffs, such as Steamboat Rock, Wilson Mountain, Maroon Mountain, as well as a plethora of unnamed arches, cliffs, spires and windows.

The trail has a total elevation gain of 828 feet as the elevation ranges from about 4,500 at the trailhead to more than 5,000 feet. The trail is clearly marked and it ends at a red sandstone cliff where there are a few small Indian ruins and some primitive rock pictographs.

Much of the trail is shaded – but not the first .75 miles. Once in the forest, the shade



Long Canyon Trail provides great views of the area's buttes and cliffs, such as Steamboat Rock, Wilson Mountain, Maroon Mountain, as well as a plethora of unnamed arches, cliffs, spires and windows. The trail has a total elevation gain of 828 feet as the elevation ranges from about 4,500 at the trailhead to more than 5,000 feet.

almost makes you remember how potent the sun is.

The shade also plays tricks with the photography-enthusiast. It looks dark, but actually, that shadow and the light make for some beautifully contrasted images.

It takes about four hours to hike the roughly seven-mile round-trip Long Canyon Trail.

How to get there

From SR 89A, turn left on Dry Creek Road and drive 1.5 miles before turning right on Long Canyon Road (FR 152D). From there it is about 0.5 miles to the Long Canyon Trailhead.

Though parking is easy to access, spaces are quite limited. If you end up at the entrance to the Enchantment Resort, you have gone too far.

For more information contact Red Rock Ranger District at 928-203-2900 or write P.O. Box 20429, Sedona AZ 86341.

What to bring?

Though the trail is rated as easy, hiking boots are better than sneakers because of the hot sand found in the first mile of the hike. Water should also both be at the top of everyone's list. And a hiking stick would be a good idea for anyone not in the best of physical condition.

The views are beautiful, so if you are into photography, bring some sort of camera. If you plan to be out there for much of the day, bring energy-friendly snacks – and by all means, take your trash with you.

Camping is not permitted in Long Canyon.

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#4 Bell Rock hike offers spectacular views of Red Rock Country



Bell Rock is a huge rock formation near the Village of Oak Creek and next to its neighbor rock formation, the Courthouse Butte and its sister Cathedral Rock. (VVN/Vyto Starinskas)

By VYTO STARINSKAS
Staff Reporter

The Bell Rock hike (or climb) is the quickest way to get some Red Rock “eye candy” in Sedona on a hiking trail

It’s only about a mile and half round-trip, but the steep trails marked by wired cairns exposes some of Sedona’s most wonderful views.

And it’s hot, as hikers are exposed in unshaded red rock.

Bell Rock is a huge rock formation near the Village of Oak

Creek and next to its neighbor rock formation, the Courthouse Butte and its sister Cathedral Rock.

So expect lots of other people on your hike as this is one of the more popular places in the area. And you will need a Red Rock Pass to park.

But the views are breathtaking.

The start of the hike seems innocent enough. Start from the Bell Rock parking lot along SR 179 closest to Sedona.

Interconnecting trails lead hikers up Bell Rock, but also to other trails including Bell

Rock Pathway Trail, a more moderate 3.6 mile hike that circles Bell Rock.

The base section of Bell Rock is easy and you interact with mountain bikers buzzing by and yogis in suspended animation stretching in the scenic vista.

As you get to the middle section of the huge rock face, trees and plants disappear and you begin climbing nothing but red rocks resembling the surface of a swimming pool. I prefer sneakers to hik-

SEE **BELL ROCK** PAGE 15

BELL ROCK

From page 14

ing boots here. And forget doing it in the rain as its gets too slippery, and small stream flow down the red rocks following natural flows in the rocks.

There are human-size cracks to follow in the mid-section and quicker paths have been carved out by hikers detouring the easier marked trail.

The top third of the hike is the most steep and strenuous as the rock becomes like the inside of a half-moon shaped drainpipe -about 50 yards wide - formed by thousands of years of flowing water.

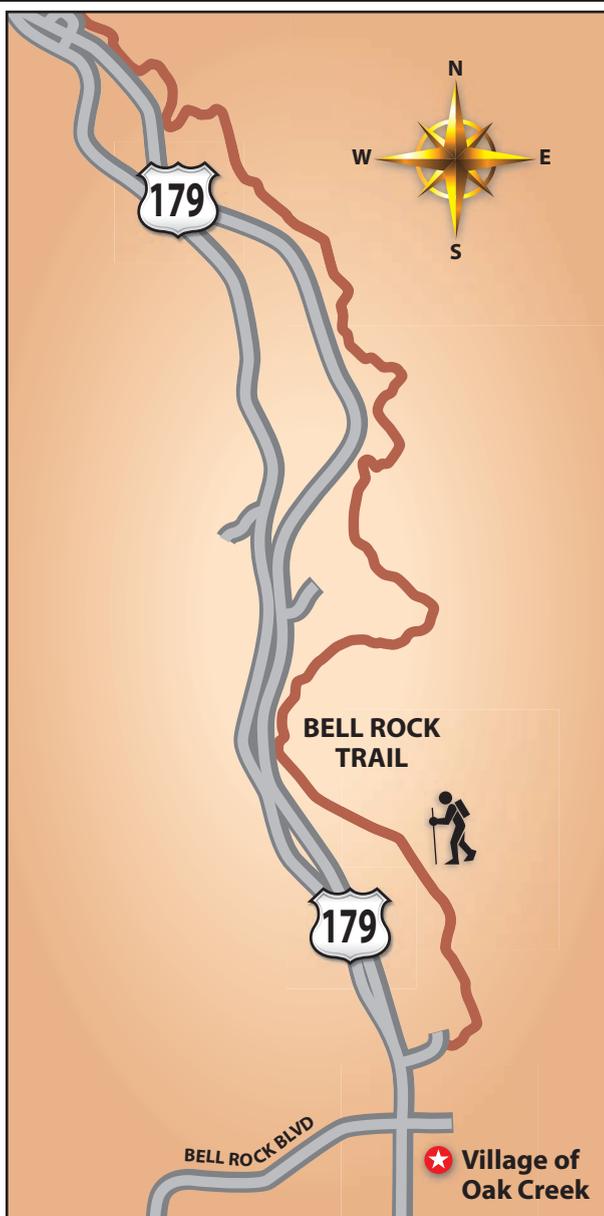
Here hikers walk upright up the steep red rocks while others prefer going up on "all-fours." Not for people with vertigo. Coming down, many people prefer turning their pants red and slowly sliding down on their butts and "all fours."

The view from the top of the ascent is almost as good as the mid-section, but this exposes hikers to interesting areas to hike among the spires atop Bell Rock.

The spires and top of Bell Rock are very difficult to climb and attempting to climb to the very top or completely circle the top of Bell Rock can lead to stranded hikers.

Even though it's so close to population, several hikers are plucked off by rescue workers each year after they get in trouble too high up.

The Bell Rock climb is a short hike with a big heart and delicious "eye candy."



Access: From the junction of Routes 89A and 179 in Sedona, take 179 south 3.6 miles to a paved turnout and trailhead parking on the left (east) at milepost 309.8.

For the southern trailhead, from the South Gateway Visitor Center, go 1 mile north to Bell Rock parking area on your right.



The Devil's Bridge arch that signifies the end of your hike. As well as taking in the sights from both on the bridge and off to the side, you can enjoy more sights off into the distance of Red Rock Country. (Photo by Greg Macafee/VVN)

#5 Devil's Bridge one of Sedona's most popular hiking trails

By GREG MACAFEE
Staff Reporter

SEDONA - Before telling you about one of my favorite hikes in Sedona, I want to give you a heads up. If you are looking for a peaceful hike where you might only see one or two people, the hike to the end of Devil's Bridge Trail might not be your best decision.



SEE **DEVIL'S BRIDGE** PAGE 18

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DEVIL'S BRIDGE

From page 16

It's known as one of the most popular trails in Sedona and often draws many travelers and tourists. That being said though, the shortness of the trail and the sites that it provides is well worth the high amount of traffic throughout the hike.

The hike to the top starts in a parking lot on the right hand side of Dry Creek Road. To get to Dry Creek Road from Cottonwood, follow 89A up into Sedona, past the Sedona Red Rock High School until you start to enter the town and turn left. Follow the road until you see the parking lot on your right hand side.

From here you can continue to drive on a rocky dirt road, but I only recommend that if you have a jeep, truck, or something elevated off the ground. FR 152, the dirt road that leads to the Devil's Bridge trailhead, can be found to the right of the parking lot, but you can also follow a hiking trail from the parking lot to the trailhead. This only extends the trail by about a mile both ways.

The trail provides plenty of views throughout the short hike. The first viewpoint is early on in the hike and provides great views of the greenery throughout and Sedona along with a great view of the Red Rocks. Plenty of people stop here for a great photo opportunity.

As you continue to climb of the trail, which has spots that are both very easy and somewhat difficult, there will



be another great viewpoint hidden behind a section of trees. There is a short path that leads out onto a grouping of rocks that provides a great location for lunch and photos.

You'll continue on after the viewpoint and when the trail starts to narrow and curve along a mountain you will notice the Devil's Bridge, which is a natural arch in the Red Rocks.

As you look out from behind the bridge you can see the great sights that the Red Rocks provide, along with a pretty cool experience. Many people will set on the edge

of the bridge while another takes a photo, just be sure not to fall off.

Before reaching the top of the trail though it does split into two. The left side of the fork is a trail that leads to underneath the arch so that you can see it from a different angle.

To completely enjoy this hike, I would recommend a bottle of water and maybe a couple snacks for the short hike. I would rank this trail as an easy hike but there are spots in which the terrain is a little more challenging.

#6 Majestic beauty of Cathedral Rock makes it a must-do hike



There are many ways to attack Cathedral Rock, but the most popular is form the primary parking lot on Back O'Beyond Road off SR179.

By **VYTO STARINSKAS**
Staff Reporter

Cathedral Rock may be the most photographed rock in the world. Climb it and find out why.

There are many ways to attack Cathedral Rock, but the most popular is form the primary parking lot on Back O'Beyond Road off SR179.

The trail head leads to a hike that is less than two-miles round-trip, but once you are hiking, there are many places you can divert and the

exploration is endless.

Being so popular, you can expect a lot of hikers especially on weekends.

But, hey, some people come to Sedona to be seen.

The trail starts up flat red rocks following a long line of cairns until it narrows half-way up Cathedral Rocks..

In the next section, hikers are faced with a long human-sized crack to ascend that only allows one row of people to go down or go up.

Dogs don't do well in this section and should not be

brought up anyway since the hike is unshaded and very hot.

However if you get an early start, the temperatures and people-factor goes down quite a bit.

After the crack, hikers ascent a series of switchbacks and then finally to the top of the saddle where the view is incredible.

Looking to one direction, you can see Bell Rock, Court-house Butt, and Sedona looking to the west you can watch

SEE **CATHEDRAL ROCK** PAGE 20

CATHEDRAL ROCK

From page 19

the sun set over Oak Creek and further you can see Jerome.

On the saddle, you are also staring at giant spires and huge red rock formations.

If life is an oyster, it's time to eat. Roaming the base of the spires and trying to find places to experience new views can be half the fun atop Cathedral Rocks.

Also fun is realizing that you are looking back at all the people taking pictures from their cars on the roadside and knowing you are in the "Zen" and not watching it.

I have hiked down this Cathedral Rock trail many times, but have also found other wash outs to descend, thus



avoiding the faces of struggling hikers still coming up

the trail.

I recommend this highly, as finding your own trail in life takes you away from the crowds and their issues.

When climbing down a wash from Cathedral Rock, it's pretty simple to keep your bearings with the huge rock face and spires behind you.

You will eventually run into other side-trails that will bring you back to the Cathedral Rock parking lot, civilization and people taking photos from

their cars.

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#7 Apache Maid Trail: the route to Casner Butte



Apache Maid Trail leads to a fire lookout atop Apache Maid Mountain. Because the trail is also difficult to follow, first-timers and folks not in tip-top shape may want to consider just hiking to this point, and tackling more of the trail on return trips.

By **BILL HELM**
Staff Reporter

SEDONA – There are two popular stories on how Apache Maid Trail got its name. Both involve troops from Camp Verde. Of course both involve an Apache female.

In the first story, circa 1873, same said Camp Verde soldiers fought Apaches, killed an Apache woman and took

her baby.

The other story takes place in 1874, when a young Apache girl accompanied Camp Verde troops – and they eventually named the mountain after her.

The trail now known as the Apache Maid Trail is one of Sedona's more demanding hikes, though pretty much each website on the trail gives a different length of hike.

Not splitting hairs, but tak-

ing the median of the trail's projected distances, it's hard to imagine that a 10-mile one-way hike with an elevation gain of 2,411 feet could be graded 2.5 in a five-point difficulty scale, as one site says.

To reach the trailhead, you will hike approximately 2.5 miles on the Bell Trail to the Apache Maid trail marker, which is on the left. At that

APACHE MAID

From page 22

point, Apache Maid Trail takes you near the Wet Beaver Creek Canyon rim, a most scenic and most beautiful red rock gorge.

There are also several switchbacks on the trail, as well as a view of the high desert flora, wildflowers and cacti. The trail appears to be less traveled because much of the path is clogged with overgrowth.

The trail leads to a fire lookout atop Apache Maid Mountain. Because the trail is also difficult to follow, first-timers and folks not in tip-top shape may want to consider just hiking to this point, and tackling more of the trail on return

trips.

Even if your first trek on this trail is relatively short, there are plenty of overlooks of the canyon, as well as a panoramic view of both the San Francisco Peaks and Casner Butte and the San Francisco Peaks.

If you do brave the entire trail, you can see what seems to be miles of lava walls covered in prickly pear cactus.

The Sedona Ranger District is the trail's managing agency. Call 928-282-4119 for more information. No motor vehicles allowed, and no mechanized vehicles in the wilderness. Though it is open year-round, the best time to use Apache Maid Trail is between April and November.

How to get there

From the I-17 SR 179 interchange, drive south on FR 618

1.5 miles southeast to the Old Beaver Creek Ranger Station turnoff.

Instead of turning in to the station, keep going straight (north) about 100 feet to the Bell Trailhead and parking lot.

Hike the Bell Trail for about three miles to the Apache Maid Trail.

What to bring?

Hiking boots or trail running shoes are a must; the trail is steep, though not particularly rocky. Of course also bring plenty of water.

The views are beautiful, so if you are into photography, bring some sort of camera. If you plan to be out there for much of the day, bring energy-friendly snacks – and by all means, don't leave your trash behind.





Not to be confused with the Bell Rock Trail off SR 179 north of the Village of Oak Creek, the Bell Trail plunges hikers into the Wet Beaver Creek Wilderness Area east of Interstate 17.

#8 Bell Trail the route to Wet Beaver Creek Wilderness Area

Looking for a trail that offers both easy and challenging stretches? One that wraps the senses with the sound of a rushing creek, a canopy of cottonwood trees and stunning sights of red rock scenery? If so, Bell Trail offers the best of both hiking worlds.

Not to be confused with the Bell Rock Trail off SR 179 north of the Village of Oak Creek, the Bell Trail plunges hikers into the Wet Beaver Creek Wilderness Area east of Interstate 17.

The trail begins easily enough, furrowing through meadows with the sound of nearby Wet Beaver Creek whispering in the background. Hikers can take



numerous detours down to the creek, where anglers and swimmers alike seek the deep waterholes. Hikers pass two other trails on

their journey: White Mesa, at about 1.5 miles into the trail and Apache Maid,

SEE **BELL TRAIL** PAGE 26

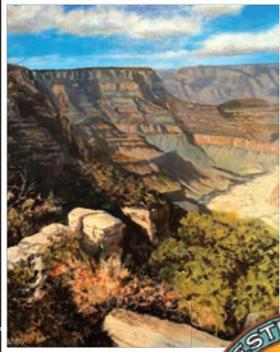
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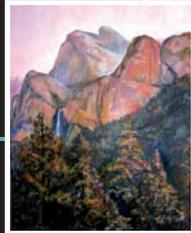
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BELL TRAIL

From page 24

about 1.75 miles into the trail.

Just after Apache Maid Trail, the Bell Trail veers right, eventually reaching Wet Beaver Creek crossing (3.3 miles from the trailhead). Here, the trail turns from moderate to difficult. Only experienced, properly-equipped hikers should attempt the climb. The trail snakes up the canyon wall until cresting the top, where spectacular views of Sedona Red Rock country and the San Francisco Peaks are visible.

History

Native American activity along the trail is evidenced by petroglyphs found on

a boulder facing the creek about 1.8 miles into the hike. The Bell Trail was named after Eastern-industrialist-turned-rancher Charles Bell, who is said to have blasted portions of the trail out of sheer cliffs in 1932 to allow cattle drives up the Mogollon Rim.

Directions

From Interstate 17, exit milepost 298 to Highway 179/FR 618. Take FR 618 eastbound about 1.5 miles, then turn left on FR 618A. After ¼ mile on FR 618A, look for the Bell Trail parking area and trailhead. Exit 298 is about 11 miles north of Camp Verde and 40 miles south of Flagstaff. GPS (Map): 34°40'26.0"N 111°42'50.0"W.

What to take

Due to predominate-

ly dry, sunny exposure on most of the trail, bring plenty of water and non-perishable snacks for energy. Sturdy hiking shoes aid traction, support ankles and provide protection from rocks. Beware of prickly pear cactus and rattlesnakes.

Miles

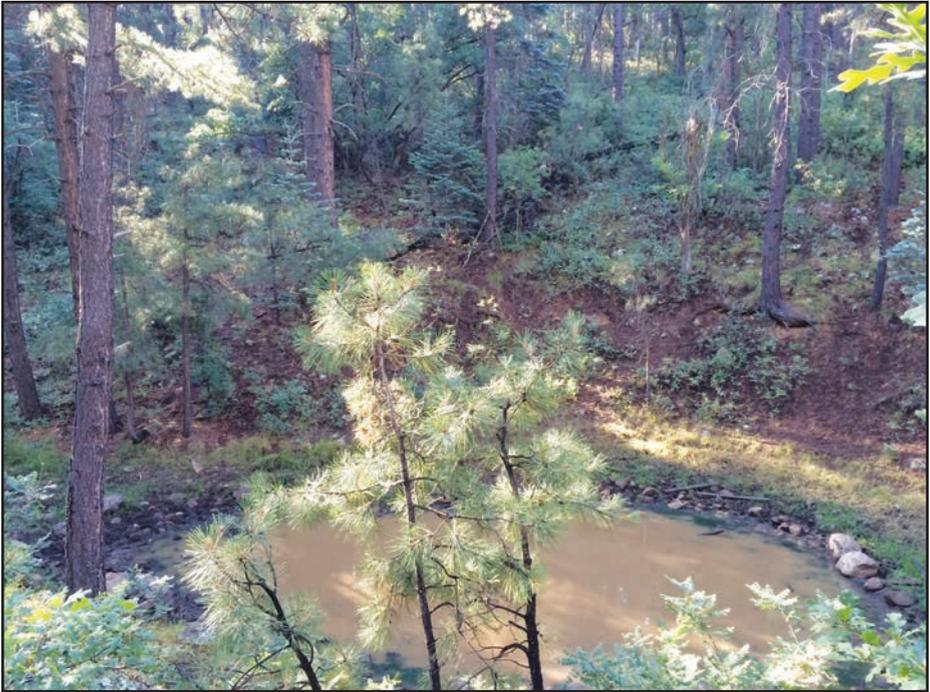
The first 3 miles are relatively easy, with most people opting to go in-and-back after reaching the creek crossing. After the crossing, the trail climbs rapidly and continues for a total of 11 miles from the trailhead.

Ranking

Mixed, from easy to strenuous. The trail narrows on loose shale rock as well travels over rocky areas. Contact the Coconino National Forest at 928-527-3600 for more information.



Just after Apache Maid Trail, the Bell Trail veers right, eventually reaching Wet Beaver Creek crossing (3.3 miles from the trailhead). Here, the trail turns from moderate to difficult. Only experienced, properly-equipped hikers should attempt the climb.



This jewel-like spring is one of many surprises awaiting hikers on the Butterfly Trail near the summit of Mingus Mountain. (Photo by Tom Tracey)

#9 Butterfly Trail leads to best-kept secrets on Mingus Mountain

Tucked-away 25 minutes north of Jerome is an oasis of water, forest and fun.

Butterfly Trail meanders through a Ponderosa pine forest and along a trickling spring that seasonally feeds Butterfly Spring and, further up the trail, Butterfly Tank. This 1.5-mile trail is named for the profusion of butterflies attracted to the cooling waters and abundant vege-

tation.

Your adventure begins by scrambling up a hard rock face leading to a decommissioned concrete dam (visible from FR 104). Once there, look for the narrow trail flanking the springs through thorny brush. Then pick your way up the forest towards the Mingus Mountain Summit.

Wildlife abounds, including elk, mule deer and

even bear, as evidenced by tracks surrounding the various pools of water. Seasonal wildflowers and migratory birds are a bonus in spring.

This trail attracts both hikers and mountain bikers.

History

Butterfly Trail got its start as a service road for loggers

SEE **BUTTERFLY** PAGE 28

hiking Verde Valley & Sedona - 27

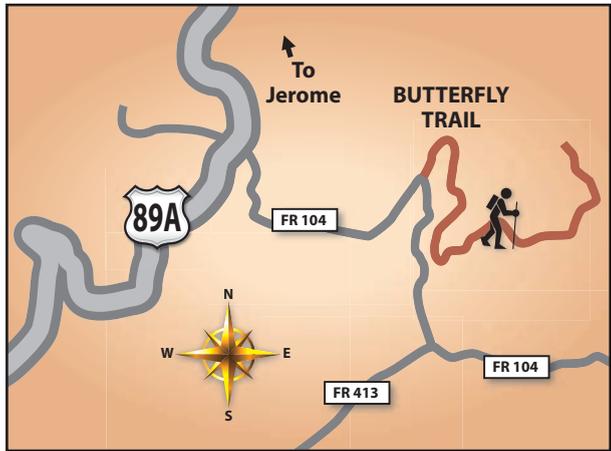
BUTTERFLY

From page 27

supplying timber for the mining boom of the late 1800's. Today, these abandoned logging roads serve as additional trail spurs off the Butterfly Trail, including Middle Trail #537 and West Rim Trail #538.

Directions

From Cottonwood, take SR 89A through the Town of Jerome. Continue north about 8 miles, then turn left at the Mings Mountain Summit sign (FR 104). Continue eastbound on FR 104 (usually passable by passenger vehicles) for about one mile and look for an abandoned dam to the left of a sharp bend in the road. There are only two designated parking spaces.



What to take

Long pants, long sleeves and over-ankle boots give hikers the best chance against thorny brush and biting insects.

The elevation can reach 7,000 feet so pack a light jacket.

Be aware of an occasional rattlesnake.

Miles

About 3 miles in-and-back.

Ranking

Starts out a bit strenuous, but overall a moderate, mostly shady climb. For more information, contact the Prescott National Forest Verde Ranger District at 928-567-4121.



Butterfly Trail got its start as a service road for loggers supplying timber for the mining boom of the late 1800's. Today, these abandoned logging roads serve as additional trail spurs off the Butterfly Trail, including Middle Trail #537 and West Rim Trail #538.

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Halfway up the Schnebly Hill Trail, giving you a perfect view of the surrounding areas. (Photo by Greg Macafee)

#10 Schnebly Hill Trail 'straight shot uphill' for unparalleled views

By GREG MACAFEE
Staff Reporter

SEDONA - There are plenty of hikes throughout the Sedona area that provide absolutely stunning sights and great photo opportunities. One of those viewpoints is Schnebly Hill Trail. I have crossed off many great trails over the

past year and a half and this trail is at the top of my list of sights to see.

When I crossed this trail off my list just a couple of months ago, I set out thinking I was only going for about a two-mile hike round trip. As I pulled up to where I thought the trail started I didn't realize that the actual trailhead was about six

miles up a dirt road.

To get to this dirt road from Cottonwood, follow SR89A into Sedona and take the roundabout exit onto 179. At the first roundabout heading toward I-17, take the exit leading to Schnebly Hill Road. Once you reach

SEE **SCHNEBLY HILL** PAGE 31

SCHNEBLY HILL

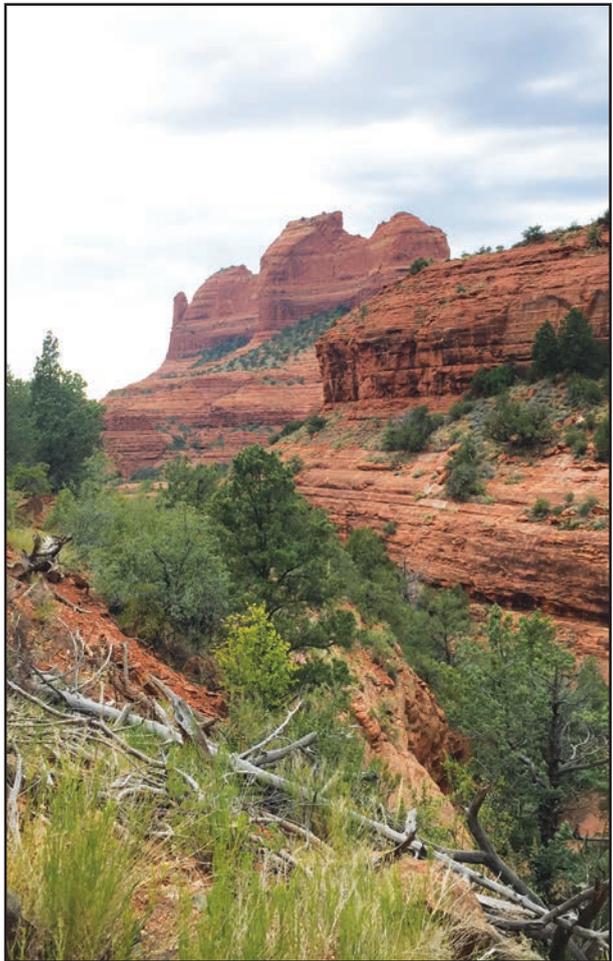
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this road it's a straight shot to the trailhead.

Schnebly Hill road turns into a dirt road after a mile or so. If you follow the dirt road you will reach the trailhead after six miles. As the road turns into dirt, there is a parking lot to your left for cars that might not be able to handle the terrain.

If you end up parking, it turns your hike into a 4.5-mile hike both ways. To begin your hike you start at the Munds Mountain trailhead, which will wind its way through the forest, while also providing a few sights. You are in shade most of the hike but I would still suggest bringing plenty of water, snacks and sunscreen for the long hike ahead.

Once you wind your way through the forest, you'll cross Schnebly Hill Road plenty of times until you actually reach the trailhead



at the top. When you reach the Schnebly Hill Trailhead, it's a straight shot up the side of the mountain that provides a great view of Red Rock Country.

The sight at the top is definitely worth the hike, just make sure if you decide to hike from the Munds Mountain trailhead, take plenty of water and food. I would rate the trail hard, as it took about 4-5 hours to complete.

#11 Hangover Trail promises intoxicating views

By VYTO STARINSKAS
Staff Reporter

The Hangover Trail is intoxicating with views of the red rocks.

Hiking this trail off Schnebly Hill Road Sedona, one can't help but spin around and marvel at the spires and cliffs of red sandstone and solid-rock granite.

To get to the trail, you have to pretty-much four-wheel drive up Schnebly Hill Road to the parking area near the Cow Pies.

Cross the road from the parking lot and look for the Hangover Trail. Walk through some woods and you'll come to an orange-reddish moonscape called the Cow Pies, which I assume were created from centuries of water erosion. It's like walking on a molded swimming pool surface.

At the top of the pies you will find the Hangover Trail, go left up some woods, and up some more red rock ascents. This trail is also popular among mountain bikers.

The trail switch-backs across a huge red rock face to the top of a summit. Looking to the right, a climber repels down a cliff



face as a friend watches below. A woman in yoga clothing stands on one leg as a photographer shoots her photo.

Behind the Yoga to the Northwest is a view of Wilson Mountain and Mingley Bridge. To the direct west is Sedona and the sunset. To the north are huge spires of red rocks. This is the best view on the trail but also the most crowded on a weekend. We were there once during a hard rainstorm and only other person we saw was one other couple!

The trail then descends into the woods to the west, back out to the red rocks

with more incredible up-close views of rock formations. This is a great place for a lunch or a break and tends to be away from most of the hikers.

The trail then goes back into the woods and follows Schnebly Hill Road in the shaded woods. This is a great relief if it's a hot day and sometimes there's water in the small creeks.

The trail makes a complete circle approximately eight miles around a big red rock formation, and ends up back at the parking lot on Schnebly Hill Road.

The hike is pretty moderate, and a lot of fun. But I would give yourself a lot of time, bring a lunch, lots of water if it's hot. There is a lot of open hiking in the sun, but there's lots of places to duck into the woods.

Dogs on leashes love this trail when there is water in the small creeks during the end of the hike.

So enjoy this Hangover, if you can.



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#12 Lime Kiln Trail #82: From Cottonwood to Sedona

By TOM TRACEY
Staff Reporter

Lime Kiln Trail #82 offers something for casual hikers as well as hardcore back-packer.

Stretching 15 miles from Cottonwood's Dead Horse Lake State Park to Sedona's Red Rock State Park, the trail was once an 1880's wagon route between Oak Creek and Jerome. It's named for a nearby rock kiln built to heat limestone into lime for making mortar.

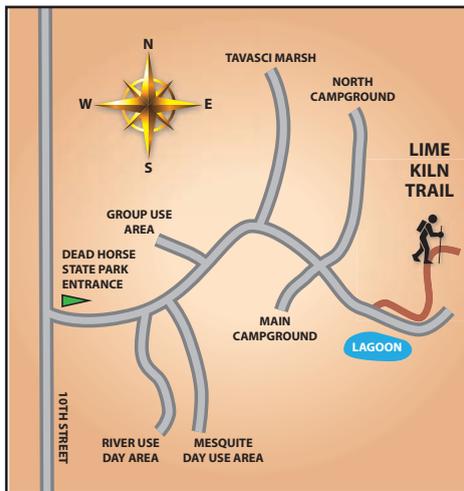
Casual hikers can begin at Dead Horse State Park (follow the signs at 10th St. and Main). Park at the first lagoon next to Heron Drive. A short-cut directly across the road leads to Lime Kiln Trail (GPS 34.754927, -112.014894).

The first mile of the moderately-strenuous hike takes-in high-desert vistas of Tuzigoot National Monument, as well as the towns of Clarkdale and Jerome. After about 30 minutes of hiking, the jagged trail meets a red rock mound - a good place for tourists to photograph and turn back.

Another option is off Lower Red Rock Loop Road in Sedona, east of SR 89A. A rusty sign on the left side of the road marks the trail head, which is 60 yards past



The Sedona leg of Lime Kiln Trail #82 offers spectacular red rock scenery. Entering the trail are Dr. David Verity and Jeanne Dockins. (Photo by Tom Tracey)



the entrance to Red Rock State Park (GPS 34.819296, -111.836469).

Those willing to make the moderate-to-strenuous climb are rewarded with red dirt trails, gnarled trees and views of red rock forma-

tions. Due to tricky footing, a one-mile out-and-back hike can take close to an hour.

Expect dry, sunny weather, with wide temperature swings. Wearing hiking boots and carrying plenty of water reduces regrets later.

The trail is open to hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders, with some sections designated for motorized vehicles.

Backpackers carrying adequate water and supplies may hike the length of the trail. Camping is allowed outside trailheads, but check first with the supervising jurisdiction.

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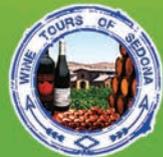
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#Lucky 13

Wet Beaver Creek: An isolated paradise of 7 cliffs and 23 pools

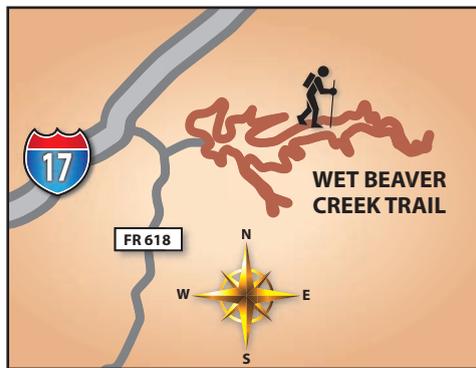
The smallest of the three creek/canyon wilderness areas that cut deep into the Colorado Plateau's along the Verde Valley's western edge, 6,700-acre Wet Beaver Creek Wilderness is also among the most challenging.

Most visitors seldom wander past Bell Crossing, a point just 3.3 miles up the very popular Bell Trail.

The trail begins just west of the Beaver Creek Ranger Station, about 1.5 miles east of the Interstate 17 and State Route 179 interchange.

The Bell Trail is a well-traveled path and the only developed trail in the wilderness area boundary. It runs along the creek bed with numerous side trails leading down to pristine pools, suitable for swimming and fishing.

The first European visitor to the Verde Valley, the Spanish fortune hunter Antonio Espejo, skirted the canyon's northern edge in 1583 on his way from the Hopi villages to see the an-



cient mines that would one day put Jerome on the map.

He named Beaver Creek, El Rio de las Parras (the river of vines).

A glimpse of Espejo's view is accessible by way of the Apache Maid Trail, which rises out of the creek bed, branching to the north off the Bell Trail, and wanders along the wilderness area's northern boundary before heading to the Apache Maid Lookout.

Keep in mind, the Apache Maid Trail does not access the upper end of Beaver Creek and quickly leaves the wilderness area boundary.

The only way to access the upper end is to travel the

creek itself, a notion that is only for the adventurous.

It is in the upper end, past Bell Crossing, that the stretch of seven cliff ascents and 23 pool crossings must be made. An inflatable raft and climbing ropes, as well as an understanding of, and

appreciation for, the dangers, is essential.

But you don't have to go to all that trouble to experience all the canyon has to offer.

The Beaver Creek watershed is among the most biologically diverse areas in the state, home to 114 species of birds, 12 amphibians, 54 mammals, 42 reptiles, 15 fish and 186 plants.

It was also once home to the Southern Sinagua culture whose former houses are scattered along the canyon walls.

Trail maps are available from the Prescott and Coconino National Forest.

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