



WILD WEST ROUTE

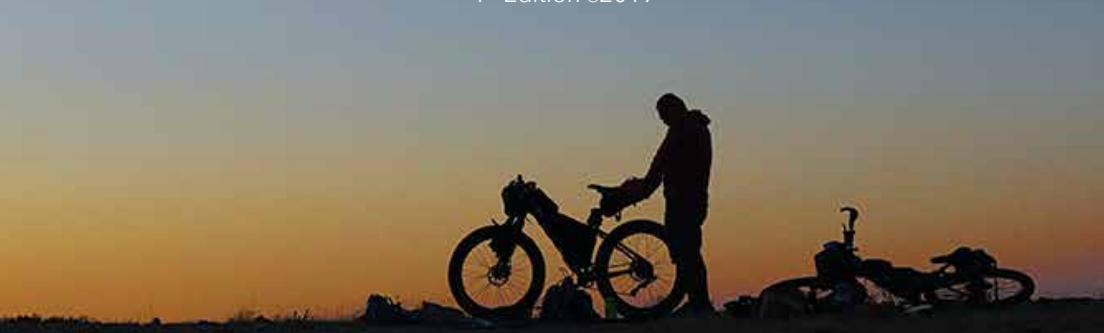
Showcasing The West's Wild and Public Lands

Kurt Refsnider, Kaitlyn Boyle and



BIKEPACKING ROOTS

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Disclaimer

This route and associated information is just a starting point for your preparation, and your safety is your own responsibility. Although this route, its GPS track and waypoints, route data, and the route guide were prepared after extensive research, their accuracy and reliability are not guaranteed. Check for current conditions, route updates, detours, use common sense, obey local laws and regulations, and travel with alternative means of navigation. Bikepacking Roots, its directors, employees, and volunteers will in no way be responsible for personal injury or damage to personal property arising in conjunction with following this route or utilizing any of the route resources provided by Bikepacking Roots.

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About Bikepacking Roots

Bikepacking Roots is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2017 by long-time bikepackers, cycling advocates, conservationists, and educators to support the growing bikepacking community through advocacy, education, and route development.

If you ride part or all the Wild West Route, enjoy it, and were glad to have the GPS data and route guide, please consider donating to Bikepacking Roots to support the continued maintenance and improvement of the Wild West Route and other future bikepacking route development and advocacy projects.

We want your feedback

If you have any feedback on this route or found areas where route updates may be necessary, we'd love to hear from you. Please send any comments to routes@bikpackingroots.org. However, we unfortunately are unable to respond to emails asking for trip planning advice.

Acknowledgements

We thank the host of individuals, organizations, and land managers who contributed to this project. A cadre of bikepackers envisioned a new Canada-to-Mexico route at various times - Matthew Lee, Scott Morris, Casey Greene, Kaitlyn Boyle, and Kurt Refsnider, all inspired by Adventure Cycling Association's iconic Great Divide Mountain Bike route. Identifying the best alignment for this new route involved extensive reconnaissance by Kurt Refsnider, recommendations from other mountain bikers, input from local residents along the route corridor, and suggestions from land managers with the Forest Service and BLM. We are deeply appreciative of and honored by the collaboration that formed with the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department and Tom Rigenbach of the Navajo Y.E.S. non-profit, as well as from all the individuals who provided input at the Navajo Nation Trails Conference in 2017 and 2018. We also thank the 40+ riders who test rode the route in 2018 and provided feedback for refinement, recommendations for bike-friendly services, and built awareness of the Wild West Route in communities along the way. Kurt Refsnider and Kaitlyn Boyle authored this guide with contributions from Gabriel Amadeus Tiller, Shannon Villegas, and Molly Sugar. All photos in this guide were taken by Kurt Refsnider unless otherwise noted. And finally, we thank all the members and financial supporters of Bikepacking Roots for enabling us to create such a substantial route.

This project was financed in part by a grant from the Federal Recreational Trails Program administered by Arizona State Parks and Trails. We also graciously thank the following business partners for supporting Bikepacking Roots, the bikepacking community, and the creation of this and other routes. We ask you to in return consider supporting the good work of these folks.



WILD WEST ROUTE SEGMENTS: MILEAGE AND CLIMBING

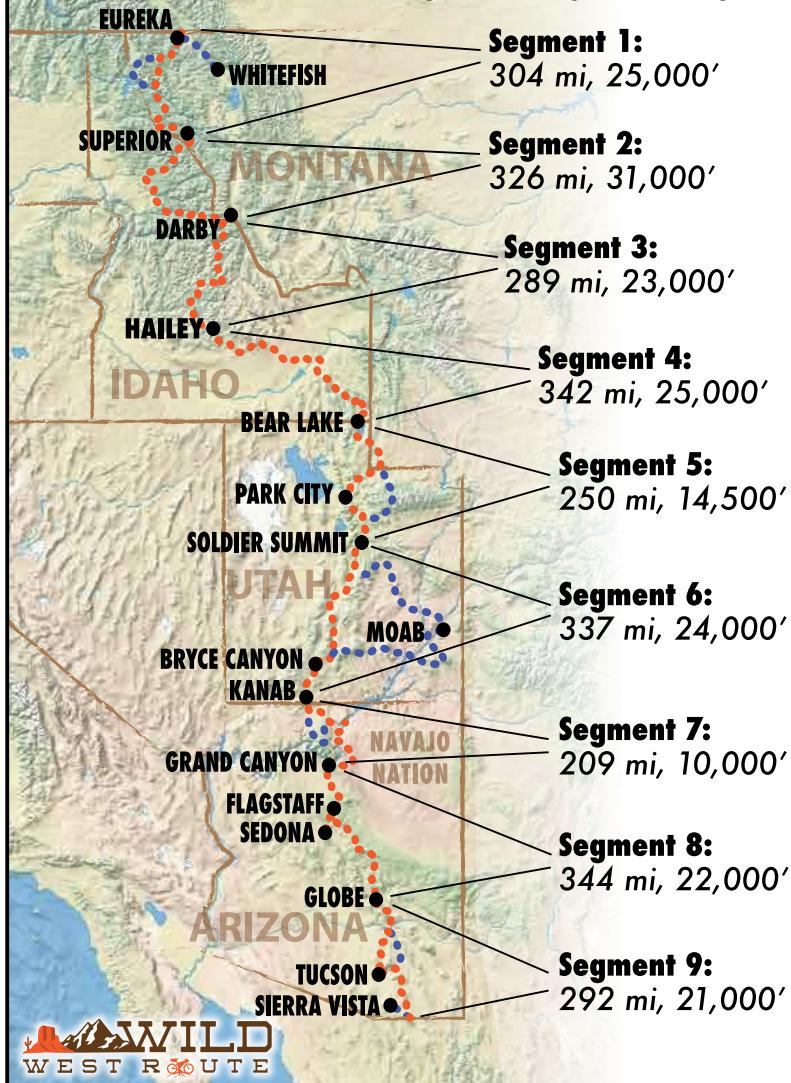




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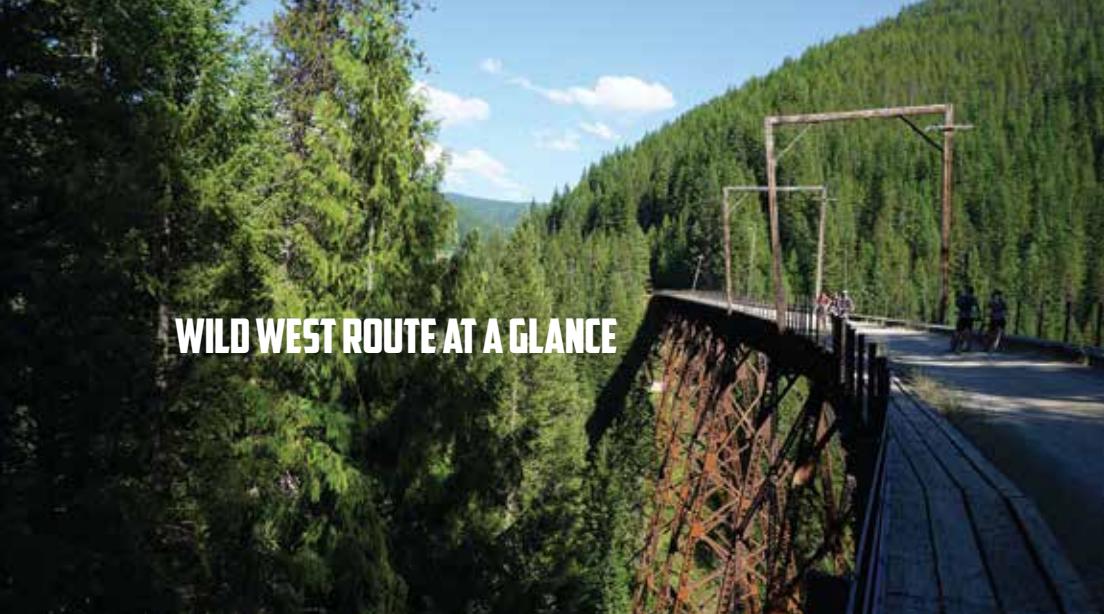
Overview of the Wild West Route

The 2,700-mile Wild West Route offers bikepackers a non-technical, expeditionary-scale riding experience that immerses one in the vast expanses of wild and public lands in the Intermountain West. Nearly 70% of the route is on public lands – 18 National Forests, 6 National Parks and Monuments, and 4 areas with Bureau of Land Management National Conservation Lands designation. Riders will experience the incredibly remote mountains of western Montana and central Idaho, the desolate beauty of southern Idaho's Snake River Plain, endless vistas from Utah's high plateaus at 10,000 feet elevation, the canyon country of Navajo Nation and Grand Canyon region, and the towering Sky Islands and low Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona.

The Wild West Route balances scenic, remote, and enjoyable dirt riding with regular resupply opportunities in small communities. The route is more than 80% off-pavement, following primarily dirt roads and 4x4 tracks. Mountain bikes are strongly recommended – the dirt and gravel roads in this part of the United States are rarely well-graded, smooth gravel ribbons. Expect steep, relentless climbs, rocky and loose surfaces, and intermittent stream crossings. The most wild sections offer 150+ miles of riding through rugged terrain and offer absolutely no services. For riders familiar with the iconic Great Divide Mountain Bike Route, the Wild West Route provides a more rugged, remote, and wild experience.

The geography, weather, and terrain are incredibly diverse along the route. Most of the nine segments of the Wild West Route include climbs with between 3,000 and 4,000 feet of elevation gain, and a few climbs approach 5,000 feet. The miles in Montana and most of Idaho are very mountainous, feature deep canyons, abundant water, have regularly-spaced resupply options in small communities, and are almost entirely on public lands. Southern Idaho and northern Utah traverse lower elevation landscapes with less demanding riding, less water, and notably more private land. The route climbs over a series of high plateaus in central and southern Utah, spending many miles near 10,000 feet elevation. Services and water become less frequent, and the route returns to being almost entirely on public lands. Many miles of the route in central and southern Utah also become impassible when wet.

Northern Arizona's canyon country is magnificent, remote, and water remains scarce. The terrain across Navajo Nation, past Grand Canyon, and beyond is less demanding than Utah's high plateaus, but shade is sparse in the grassland-dominated region. The route becomes rougher and more challenging in Arizona's forested Central Highlands. Southern Arizona's Sonoran Desert is extremely hot during summer months between 2,000 and 4,000 feet elevation, but water, resupply options, and communities become more frequent, and a few tall mountain ranges provide refuge from the heat.



WILD WEST ROUTE AT A GLANCE

Route length: 2,700 miles

Total climbing: 185,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 40-65 (~40-70 miles/day)

Recommended starting location/direction: Dependent on time of year – For SoBo riders, starting mid- to late summer is generally ideal. For NoBo riders, starting late Spring will work best in most years.

% Paved (approx.): 20%

% Dirt road (approx.): 55%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 25%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0.1%

% Rideable (approx.): 98%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 5

Average technical difficulty* (1-10): 4

Bikepacking challenges: Limited water, limited resupply options, remote, summer heat in southern and lower-elevation sections of the route, impassible in areas when wet

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 155 miles / ~3 days

(Segment 3); 90+ miles between towns occur on numerous segments

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 95 miles / 1-2 days
(Segment 7); stretches of ~50 miles between water occur on numerous segments

* See BPR route rating scale



THE BPR ROUTE RATING SCALE

For each of our published bikepacking routes and all individual segments thereof, we include descriptions of the difficulty and challenges experienced along the way. We break these apart into physical difficulty, technical difficulty, and other challenging elements of the route. The rating scales are defined as follows:

Physical difficulty

- **1-2** - Relatively level riding
- **3-4** - Regular rolling terrain with sustained climbing
- **5-6** - Rugged terrain with frequent climbs, some of which may be steep and unrelenting
- **7-8** - Very rugged terrain with abundant climbing, some of which is very steep and unrideable
- **9-10** - Numerous very steep, climbs requiring bike-pushing and/or carrying

Technical difficulty

- **1-2** - Smooth riding surface with few obstacles (e.g., well graded dirt roads, rail trails); suitable for novice mountain bikers
- **3-4** - Track has occasional obstacles and steep sections (e.g., maintained forest roads, mellow singletrack); suitable for beginner mountain bikers
- **5-6** - Continuous sections of track may be rocky, loose, and steep; (e.g., 4x4 roads or singletrack in rugged/rocky terrain) suitable for intermediate mountain bikers
- **7-8** - Narrow trail with regular obstacles, sustained steep grades; suitable for intermediate to advanced mountain bikers
- **9-10** - Very challenging riding with frequent large obstacles, exposure, very steep grades; suitable for advanced mountain bikers

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WILD WEST ROUTE

- Of the 2,700 mile-long-route, 2,200 miles are dirt and nearly 1,900 miles are through public lands managed primarily by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management
- National Parks, Monuments, and Conservation Lands – Craters of the Moon, Bryce Canyon, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Grand Canyon, and San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area
- Riding along rivers in all parts of the route – the Clark Fork, Clearwater, Salmon, Big Wood, Blackfoot, Bear, Colorado, and San Pedro
- Small communities with wide-ranging histories and friendly residents
- Following old trading and migration routes, trails, wagon roads, rail grades, and motorways
- The remote Magruder Corridor of central Idaho – 100+ miles sandwiched between two of the largest Wilderness areas in the contiguous U.S.
- Utah's incredibly scenic high plateaus and Skyline Drive's 100+ miles of riding near 10,000 feet elevation
- Crossing 100+ miles of Navajo Nation's powerful canyon country and high grasslands on remote roads adjacent to the upper reaches of Grand Canyon in Marble Canyon and Little Colorado River Gorge Tribal Parks
- Arizona's Central Highlands and Sky Islands – cooler pine-covered refuge above the Sonoran Desert heat



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What kind of bike should I ride?** The Wild West Route is a mountain bike route. Any other style of bike is not advised, and trailers are not recommended. See the “Recommended Bike Type” section of the route guide.
- **Can I ride the route in either direction?** Yes, most certainly so. However, the route guide is written for southbound (SoBo) riders.
- **What's the ideal time of year to start?** Generally, for SoBo riders, a mid- to late summer start is recommended. For NoBo riders, a late Spring departure is recommended. This, of course, depends significantly on a rider's anticipated pace.
- **How long will the WWR take to ride?** Plan on roughly 40-65 days of riding (40-70 miles per day). Don't underestimate how rugged this route is.
- **How does the WWR compare to the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route?** Based on feedback received from riders who have ridden both routes, the WWR is more remote, wild, rugged, and challenging with less frequent resupply locations.
- **Is there much water out there?** Surface water is generally readily available in Segments 1-3 and becomes sparser in southern Idaho and farther south. A minimum water capacity of 6 liters is recommended for Segments 4-9, and more may be required if traveling in summer heat. All surface water should be filtered, boiled, or treated chemically.
- **How far apart are resupplies and towns?** Generally spaced 1-4 days apart (40-155 miles).
- **What should I expect for weather?** Riders should be prepared for sub-freezing overnight lows at higher altitudes and temperatures of at least 100 °F at lower elevations. Generally, days in June and early July are clear and warm. From mid-July to mid-September, afternoon thunderstorms become more frequent. After mid-September, autumn sets in, and early season snowstorms can impact higher elevations of the route. See the “Riding Season Considerations” section of the route guide for more information.
- **How do I follow the route?** The route is not marked on the ground in any way. We recommend that riders utilize the GPS data downloadable from the Bikepacking Roots website and a GPS like the Garmin eTrex series. The GPS-enabled Wild West Route mobile app offers another navigation option. If riders want to carry paper maps, the best option for a route of this length is to photocopy pages from state gazetteers from DeLorme or Benchmark.
- **Is it easy to find places to camp?** With 70% of the route on public lands, dispersed/wild camping is readily available along most of the route. Official campgrounds are common in Segments 1-3 and are less common to the south. On Navajo Nation in northern Arizona, camping is restricted to a few designated locations.

- **Are there many established campgrounds along the route?** Yes, particularly in Montana and Idaho. These are all indicated in the waypoint data and in the segment logistics in this route guide. Potable water is commonly not available in established campgrounds on public lands, and in the segment logistics information in this guide, water availability (potable, surface, or none) is mentioned for these campgrounds. Private campgrounds always offer potable water.
- **What do you mean by "impassible mud"?** Long stretches of the route can become absolutely impassible when wet – a bike's wheels will not spin once clogged with this clay-rich mud. The individual segment descriptions identify most of these sections. Pay close attention to weather forecasts and carry extra food in case waiting for a road to dry out becomes necessary.
- **How do I get to either end of the route?** See the travel recommendations in the route guide for bike shops and services that can help make your trip a bit simpler.
- **Will there be bears?** Yes. The northern 250 miles is in grizzly bear territory, and most of the route is in black bear territory. See the "Bear Safety" section of the guide for more information.
- **Do I need any special permits?** Permits are required for the Arizona segments of the route – a State Land Department recreation permit for all of Arizona and an absolutely mandatory backcountry/camping permit for the Navajo Nation section. See the "Required Permits" section of the route guide for more information.
- **Are you going to organize a race on the route?** No. We also ask that until the route becomes well established that individuals refrain from any sort of racing. In particular, approvals granted for the route to cross private land and Navajo Nation could be jeopardized by riders pushing limits and getting into trouble or by disregarding special regulations for these sections of the route, both of which are far more likely in race scenarios.

RECOMMENDED BIKE TYPE

This route is designed for mountain bikes, and it is recommended that riders have 2.2" or wider tires (with ample sealant, particularly in Arizona) and low gearing sufficient for extended steep grades on a loaded bike. Tires wider than 2.5" are not necessary for any sections of the route. Long, steep, sustained descents (4,000 feet or more) will test brakes, and large brake rotors (at least 180 mm) are strongly recommended. Front suspension will be appreciated by many riders. Cyclocross and gravel bikes are not recommended for this route, nor are trailers. And with bike shops being few and far between along the Wild West Route, carrying an appropriate assortment of tools and spare parts is mandatory.

RIDING SEASON CONSIDERATIONS – HEAT, SNOW, AND SMOKE

Given the latitude and elevation range spanned by the WWR, choosing the time at which you decide to tackle the route (or sections of it) requires careful consideration of several factors. In Montana and Idaho from Ketchum north (Segments 1-2), winter snow remains at the higher elevations and on long sections of the Magruder Corridor through late June in most years, and winter returns by late September or early October. Wildfires and smoke often become common across the region in August and into September, and low elevations like the Salmon River Canyon are uncomfortably warm for most riders during the peak of summer. Southern Idaho (Segment 3) becomes rideable much earlier in the year, and the low-elevation Snake River Plain bakes during the heat of summer.

Much of Utah (Segments 4 and 5) is characterized by continuous miles on high plateaus at elevations of 9,000 feet or more. These high plateaus remain snowy into May or June in most years, and snowstorms are likely to resume by sometime in late October or November. Subfreezing overnight lows are frequent in June and after September. Many of these plateaus also become unrideable when wet due to their clay-rich soil, so as thunderstorms become more frequent in July and August, pay careful attention to weather forecasts.

Southern-most Utah and northern Arizona (Segment 6) across Navajo Nation to Grand Canyon are rideable between April and October, and in some years, even longer than that. Again, clay-rich soil becomes unrideable when wet, and thunderstorms are more common during July and August. Summer heat can also be oppressive in the shadeless miles of this segment.

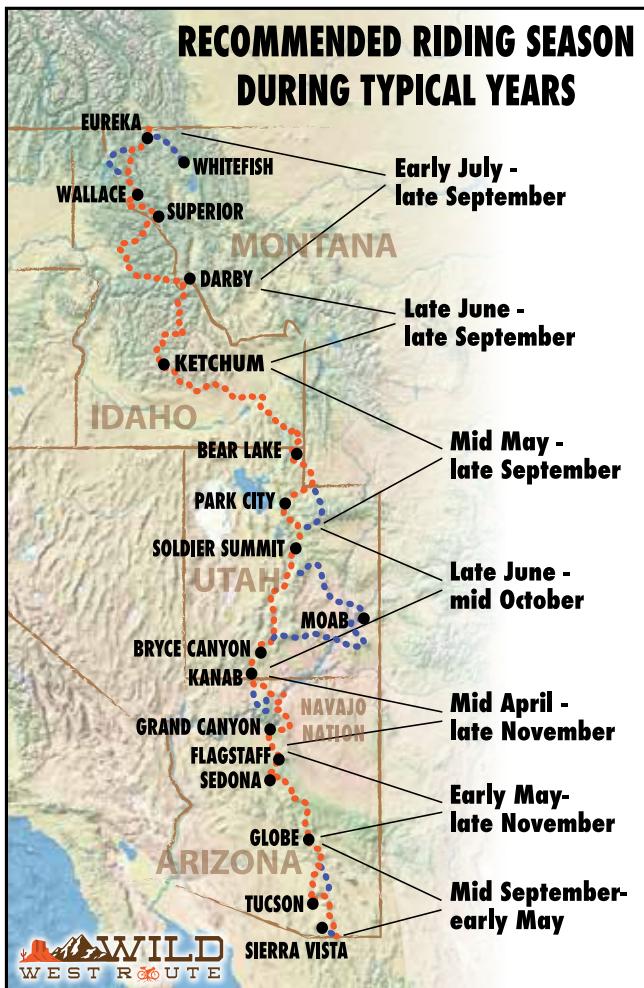
The highlands of central Arizona (southern Segment 7 and all of Segment 8) between Flagstaff and Globe generally become rideable in mid-April or early May as the snow melts and remain snow-free until November or later in most years. The higher elevations remain cool, but temperatures at the lower elevations consistently climb to 100 °F or higher in summer months. The northern half of Segment 8 also becomes unrideable when wet during summer thunderstorms (mid-July to early September).

Southern Arizona's Sonoran Desert (Segment 9) is most enjoyable to ride between mid-September and late April. During summer months, daytime temperatures in the valleys routinely top 105 °F, but cloud buildup during monsoon season (mid-July to early September) moderates afternoon temperatures a bit.

So what is the ideal starting date for riders looking to cover the entire route? It obviously depends on a rider's pace, but generally, southbound riders should plan on leaving the northern terminus of the WWR in mid- to late summer with enough time to make it south across Utah's high plateaus

before mid-October. Northbound riders should not plan on reaching central Arizona before early- to mid-April in most years, and the high plateaus of Utah will likely not be rideable until sometime in late May or June.

For maps of current modeled snowpack depth, visit the [Interactive Snow Information Map](#) from NOAA's National Operational Hydrological Remote Sensing Center (NOHRSC): <https://www.nohrsc.noaa.gov>.





WILD WEST ROUTE PLANNING AND NAVIGATION RESOURCES

To help empower riders to tackle some or all of the Wild West Route and to aid in trip planning, Bikepacking Roots has created the following:

- This route guide with detailed segment-by-segment logistical and planning information
- A GPS track for navigation. This can be downloaded at no cost from the Bikepacking Roots website (www.bikepackingroots.org) as a GPX file.
- A compilation of 1,500+ waypoints/points of interest that include water resources, resupply options, communities, service options within communities (lodging, markets, hardware stores, post offices, libraries, etc.), campgrounds, natural features, public lands boundaries, and other pertinent information. These can also be downloaded at no cost from the Bikepacking Roots website in GPX format.
- The Knobby Guides mobile app - this GPS-enabled app includes offline topographic maps and satellite imagery, elevation profiles, detailed waypoint information, and the ability for riders to post updates on water sources or other waypoints. Possible route detours may also be automatically downloaded when cell service is available. This app can be purchased as three discrete guides – Montana/Idaho, Utah, and Arizona. Visit www.bikepackingroots.org for details on how to purchase this app.

REQUIRED PERMITS FOR RIDING THE ROUTE

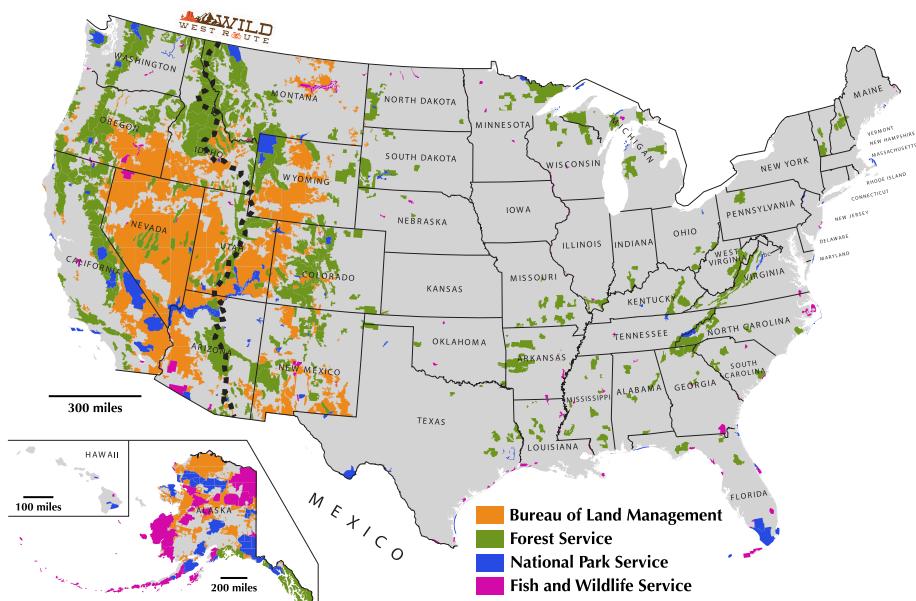
The only permits needed for the Wild West Route are specific to Arizona:

- A recreation permit from the Arizona State Land Department is required intermittently for each segment of the Wild West Route in Arizona. These permits can be purchased here <https://land.az.gov/natural-resources/recreational-permits>.
- A backcountry/camping permit is absolutely mandatory for the Navajo Nation section of Segment 7 – not obtaining a permit is considered trespassing and could jeopardize the permission Bikepacking Roots has been granted for the route to cross Navajo land. These permits cost \$30 per person for Wild West Route riders, and the funds are used to help improve infrastructure within tribal parks. See the section of this guide about Segment 7 and crossing Navajo Nation for more information on these permits.

PUBLIC LANDS AND DISPERSED CAMPING

Nearly 70% of the Wild West Route is on public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service (48%), the Bureau of Land Management (12%), and the National Park Service (1%). Another 5% of the route is on state lands that are not necessarily considered public, 4% crosses tribal lands, and 30% crosses private land on public roadways. These vast swaths of public lands are a defining feature of the American West, and later in this guide, you can read more about the history of the Forest Service and BLM lands and the roles these lands play in society today.

For bikepackers, it is important to recognize that responsible dispersed camping (also known in some parts of the world as wild or freedom camping) is permitted virtually anywhere on Forest Service and BLM lands. Camping is not limited to established campgrounds except in the most popular recreation areas and within the State and National Parks and Monuments through which the Wild West Route passes. Dispersed camping is also permitted on state lands along the route; on Navajo Nation, camping is restricted to one of several specific camping areas. Do not camp on private lands without permission from the landowner. Please see the “Minimizing your impact while bikepacking” section of the route guide for recommendations about responsible camping practices.



BEAR SAFETY ALONG THE WILD WEST ROUTE

Most of the Wild West Route is in black bear territory, and the northernmost 250 miles of the route traverse grizzly bear territory. Grizzly bears may be encountered anywhere south to central Idaho – the U.S. Forest Service has received occasional reports of grizzlies in the Bitterroot Range west of Darby, although that area is not currently considered part of their modern range. When traveling and camping in bear country, the following practices are recommended and are critically important in grizzly bear territory (courtesy of the National Park Service):



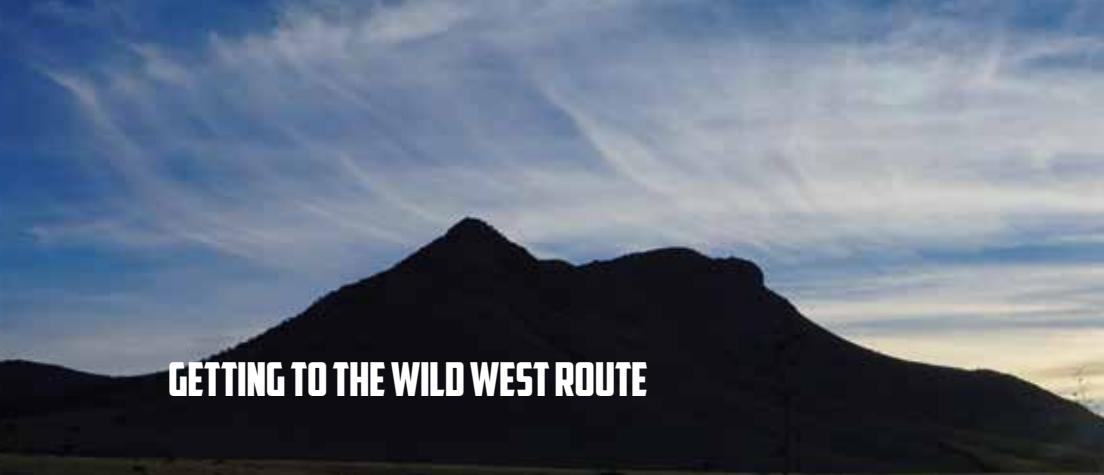
- Be alert for bears both on the trail and in camp. Make noise while riding on narrow tracks and keep bear spray handy at all times (one can per person).
- Never camp in an area that has obvious evidence of bear activity such as digging, tracks, or scat.
- Avoid bringing smelly foods into the backcountry.
- When not in use, secure all food and other smelly items (sunscreen, lip balm, trash, etc.) by hanging them, ideally 10 feet above ground and 4 feet away from tree trunks. Alternatively, an [Ursack](http://www.ursack.com) (<http://www.ursack.com>) or similar food storage bag can be used.
- Do not leave anything containing food unattended, even for a few minutes.
- If you see a bear approaching your camp, make noise to discourage the bear from entering your camp. Take any bags and food that aren't hung and slowly back away.
- Strain food particles from dishwater and pack out with trash. Scatter dishwater at least 100 yards from camping area.
- Sleep at least 100 yards, preferably upwind, from area where you cook, eat, hang your food, and leave your bikes.
- Keep your sleeping gear clean and free of food odors. Do not cook in your tent.

MINIMAL IMPACT TRAVEL GUIDELINES FOR BIKEPACKERS

Bikepacking Roots strives to inspire the conservation of the landscapes through which we ride and to promote a healthy and sustainable future for the bikepacking experience. As our community continues to grow as a relatively new user group, we ask that bikepackers actively use techniques to minimize our impact on the landscape and other land users.

The Center for Outdoor Ethics provides a set of backcountry guidelines for minimizing our impact while recreating in the outdoors - the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace (LNT). We encourage every bikepacker to become familiar with these (<https://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>). We ask that you abide by the following guidelines when bikepacking in order to minimize your own impact, whether that's on the land, flora and fauna, or other land users and owners.

- Respect all trail, route, and land users. Be courteous and remember that your interactions with non-bikepackers could likely be contributing to their first impression of bikepackers and bikepacking.
- Engage with locals in resupply towns with respect – you will again be contributing to their impression of the bikepacking community.
- Research and assess resupply and water needs and opportunities carefully, and carry extra food and water in particularly remote or unfamiliar areas.
- Be aware of the land ownership and management for where you are traveling and abide by the relevant regulations for cycling and camping.
- Carry backup navigation tools - paper maps, a tablet or smartphone with base maps and GPS data, a backup GPS, photos of maps on a phone, etc.
- Identify potential evacuation options along your route before launching into it.
- Camp in areas where you won't leave an obvious imprint when you leave. Look for already-established campsites, gravel surfaces, or bedrock on which to camp.
- In arid western landscapes, camp at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from isolated water sources. Camping closer can inhibit wildlife from coming in to drink. In many western states, camping within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of stock tanks is illegal.
- Only have campfires if permitted, keep them small, and scatter the cool ashes before leaving. In the arid West, keep apprised of potential fire bans, and do not use alcohol stoves when bans are in place.
- Be aware of the weather and how the route responds to rain. Avoid traveling on wet trails when your tires will leave ruts, and carry your bike over notable puddles. Do not ride around and contribute to creating a wider or new trail.
- Pack out all trash. Bury human waste 6-8" deep well away from water and trails, and pack any toilet paper out with your trash.



GETTING TO THE WILD WEST ROUTE

NORTHERN TERMINUS

The nearest transportation hub and larger town to the northern terminus of the WWR is Whitefish, Montana, 60 miles from the Canadian border. Whitefish is also a gateway to Glacier National Park. The town offers an airport, train service, shuttle options to reach the Canadian border, and numerous options for shipping bikes to or from town.

Public transportation options

- Glacier Park International Airport (just outside of town)
- Amtrak train station in downtown Whitefish (consult Amtrak about bringing a bike aboard for this specific line as their bike regulations vary significantly)

Bike shipping options

- Great Northern Cycle and Ski in Whitefish – (406) 862.5321; <http://www.gncycleski.com/>
- Glacier Cyclery in Whitefish – (406) 862-6446; <https://www.glaciercyclery.com/shipping>
- Whitefish Bike Retreat – (406) 260-0274; <http://www.whitefishbikeretreat.com/>

Shuttle options to Canadian border

- Pedal! The WWR Whitefish Extension to the northern terminus of the route is 85 miles of mostly dirt. See Segment 1 information in the route guide for more details.
- Whitefish Shuttle – (406) 212-0080; <https://whitefishshuttle.com>
- Whitefish Bike Retreat – (406) 260-0274; <http://www.whitefishbikeretreat.com/>



SOUTHERN TERMINUS

The nearest larger town to the southern terminus of the WWR is Sierra Vista, Arizona, 25 miles northwest of the end of the WWR. Sierra Vista is a city of 40,000 people adjacent to a military base. The nearest airport is in Tucson, 70 miles to the northwest by highway (or 140 miles via the WWR). Amtrak train depots are located in Tucson and Benson (35 miles by highway or 60 miles north via the WWR; note: Amtrak may not accept bicycles at the Benson station, so check with current Amtrak bike policies for this line).

Public transportation options

- Arizona Sunshine Tours Tucson Airport Shuttle – (520) 803-6713; <http://www.arizonasunshinetours.com/shuttle.html>
- Huachuca Shuttle – (520) 439-0439; <https://huachucashuttle.com/>
- Slicks Shuttle to Tucson – (520) 458-1888; <http://slicksshuttle.com/>

Bike shipping options

- Sun and Spokes Bicycle Shop – (520) 458-0685; <http://sunnspokes.com/>

Shuttle options to southern WWR terminus:

- Pedal! The WWR Sierra Vista Extension to the southern terminus of the route is 25 miles of mostly quiet pavement with a 4-mile out-and-back to the border. See Segment 9 information in the route guide for more details.
- Any of the Sierra Vista shuttle services listed above offer pick-ups and drop-offs by request. The easiest place to mention as a destination is the Morning Star Café in Palominas. The southern terminus of the WWR is 4 miles south of here, but vehicles cannot be driven closer than this.

Other easy-to-reach cities on or near the WWR

- Flagstaff, AZ: Major airport, Amtrak service, numerous bike shops
- Kanab, UT: Shuttles available to/from Las Vegas, NV
- Park City, UT: Close to the major transportation hub of Salt Lake City
- Ketchum/Sun Valley, ID: Major airport

RECOMMENDED SECTIONS FOR SHORTER TRIPS

Idaho and Montana's Bitterroot Country and Beyond – Canada to

Ketchum/Sun Valley, ID (entirety of Segments 1-3). At 900 miles with 56,000 feet of climbing, this rugged section takes riders through the heart of Idaho's mountains, along scenic rivers, across the remote Magruder Corridor, and through abandoned railroad tunnels. Riders should plan on 2-3 weeks between early July and late September. See the recommendations in the route guide for how to get to the northern terminus of the Wild West Route, and flights run daily out of the Sun Valley airport (Friedman Memorial Airport). Numerous bike shops are available in Hailey and Ketchum to assist with bike shipping.

Utah's High Plateaus – Park City to Kanab (parts of Segments 5-6).

Hopping from the top of one high plateau to the next, this section of the Wild West Route offers minimal low-elevation riding and instead spends much of its time between 8,500 and 10,000 feet elevation in pine forests and near treeline. Highlights include the 100+ mile Skyline Drive on the Wasatch Plateau, Fish Lake, and Bryce Canyon National Park. Riders should plan on 6-11 days to cover this section's 428 miles and 28,000 feet of climbing. Much of this route is impassible when wet, and snow typically hangs on at the higher elevations well into June. This section is best ridden in July or late September (afternoon thunderstorms are most frequent in August and early September). Numerous transportation options and bike shops are available in Park City. Kanab has shuttle options available to Las Vegas (see <https://www.visitsouthernutah.com>) and one bike shop (Knuckle Heads Bikes – 678-634-6689).

Arizona's Central Highlands – Tucson to Flagstaff (parts of Segments 8-9).

Diverse landscapes of low desert and high pine-covered mountains characterize this section of the Wild West Route. Riders will climb over Mount Lemmon and the smaller Pinal Mountains, pass monstrous copper mines, climb into the forested Mogollon Rim country, and pass through Sedona's redrock cliffs en route to Flagstaff. At roughly 425 miles with approximately 23,000 feet of climbing, this section will take most riders between 6 and 10 days. This section is best ridden in late spring (mid-April to early May) or fall (mid-September to mid-November). Both Flagstaff and Tucson offer bike shops, airports, and bus service.

Grand Canyon South Rim to Kaibab Plateau – Arizona Trail Grand Canyon mountain bike bypass (part of Segment 7). For Arizona Trail (AZT) riders who aren't excited about the prospect of carrying their bike across Grand Canyon or dealing with shuttles services, this section of the Wild West Route provides a new option. At 185 miles with 10,000 feet of climbing, this will add several days of riding to most AZT trips. Northbound AZT riders can leave the AZT at Grandview Lookout or continue to Desert View Overlook, cross Navajo Nation (with the required backcountry/camping permit), and follow the Kaibab Alternate to rejoin the AZT approximately 15 miles north of Grand Canyon at the Kaibab Lodge area.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR PUBLIC LANDS SYSTEM

Written by Kurt Refsnider for Overland Journal (published Spring 2019)

When following backroads across almost any state in the American West, you'll encounter a patchwork of public and private lands. "No trespassing" signs often adorn fence lines surrounding the latter, while more welcoming signs often announce your arrival onto federal public lands. These might read "Welcome to Sawtooth National Forest: Land of Many Uses" or "Now entering Your Public Lands, managed by the Arizona Strip Field Office." The country's federal public lands are managed for a broad array of uses including grazing, timber harvesting, mineral extraction, recreation, wildlife habitat, wilderness conservation, and more. And these lands are important in diverse ways to local residents, Native American groups, the public living at a distance, corporate interests, states' economies, and the federal government.

Public federal lands in the United States constitute approximately 25% of the country's land area and include a dizzying list of federal agencies, special designations, and acronyms. Most of this 25% is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM; 10%), U.S. Forest Service (USFS; 8%), the Fish and Wildlife Service (4%), and the National Park Service (3%). The majority of these lands are located in the contiguous states west of the Mississippi River and in Alaska. Many individual states also have extensive land holdings, but most state-owned lands are not considered public lands as they are generally managed to generate revenue through leasing and outright sale.

This article explores the origins of the two most extensive types of public lands – national forests and lesser-known BLM lands. USFS lands, totaling 193 million acres, were mostly established in a period of just 16 years spanning the turn of the last century. BLM lands, spanning 248 million acres, were not formally cemented as public lands until 1976. However, the history of how these millions of acres were set aside with the national interest in mind began more than two centuries ago when the federal government began selling and giving away its rapidly-growing territory.

Origins of Public Domain Lands

The lands that so many of us cherish today as our federal public lands (as well as all other lands in the United States) were traditionally the territories of hundreds of indigenous groups. Through relocation, forced assimilation, treaties, and genocide, lands were taken from these groups. Today, indigenous groups continue to fight to regain some of their ancestral lands – for the recognition and protection of sacred places, for water rights, for resources promised in treaties and court orders, for sovereignty, and for so much more.

The carving up of the United States' land holdings began shortly after the nation's inception, and literally thousands of Congressional acts and statutes

in the subsequent 200+ years dictated the fate of these lands. The gridded Public Land Survey System was initiated in 1785 to aid in the disposal of these as unreserved, unappropriated, or vacant “public domain” lands. As the fledgling United States expanded through subsequent territorial acquisitions, the acreage of public domain lands grew exponentially. With this growth, Congress initiated an era of doling out land grants – giving away public domain lands to private parties – to establish sovereignty over its new territories and promote economic growth through expansion, settlement, and industrialization.

The General Land Office was established in 1812 to oversee the continued disposal of public domain lands, and during the 19th century, a full 50% of the land area of the country was given away. An eighth of that land went to homesteaders, and another eighth went to railroad companies; agricultural, mining, and logging operations also received substantial grants.

Newly-formed states also received public domain lands, but extensive unappropriated lands remained within each state. The enabling acts agreed to by each fledgling state upon entering the Union articulated that the state would have no claim to or title over the remaining public domain lands within the state’s boundaries. In exchange, states were granted two one-square-mile sections within each 36-square-mile township across the state for schools. The 1841 Preemption Act also granted new states 500,000 acres of public domain land, and the 1862 Morrill Act granted additional acreage to aid in the establishment of state colleges. These state-owned lands have, in most cases, been subsequently managed to generate revenue either through leasing or outright sale.

By the 1890s, most territories had become states, railroads cross-crossed the nation, easy-to-access mineral deposits had been claimed, readily-arable lands were being farmed, and the enthusiasm of westward expansion began to subside. However, hundreds of millions of acres of unappropriated lands remained in the public domain, mostly west of the Mississippi. Use of these lands for grazing, timber harvesting, and mining by both local residents and burgeoning corporate interests was minimally regulated. Extensive overgrazing, clearcutting of forests, illegal timber sales, and the fraudulent exploitation of mining and other land disposal laws became widespread. Irrigation surveys of the West led to concerns related to flooding and soil degradation resulting from the logging of forested headwaters. Large forest fires occurred regularly, and fears of a coming “timber famine” were fueled by the nearly-complete harvesting of the once-great forests of the Great Lakes region.

An environmental movement grew in response, championed by influential sporting organizations and magazines such as the Boone and Crocket Club, Field and Stream, and American Angler calling for the preservation

of streams and forested areas. A new idea began to take hold – the concept that some of the public domain lands should be preserved by the federal government for the broader benefit of the public. Growing out of this movement were the first national monuments and the majority of the national forest lands. The lands that have subsequently become managed by the Bureau of Land Management, however, remained in limbo and available for disposal until the 1970s.

Creation of the National Forests

The majority of the United States' vast national forests were established in just 16 dramatic years following the 1891 "Forest Reserve Act." In response to mounting concerns over the clearcutting of forests and the need to protect stream headwaters for irrigation and flood-control, Congress passed a bill giving the President authority to set aside federal "forest reserves" from public domain lands, thus protecting these forested lands from disposal. In addition to also providing management of the country's important timber inventory, Interior Secretary Noble articulated that these forest reserves were to "preserve the fauna, fish, and flora of our country, and become resorts for the people seeking instruction and recreation" and preserve areas of "natural beauty, or remarkable features" and of "unique scientific interest."

Within days of the Act's passage, President Harrison declared the first forest reserve around the periphery of Yellowstone Park. General Land Office field agents labored to identify forested watersheds across the West suitable for forest reserve designation, and by the close of the century, dozens of Reserves encompassing millions of acres had been established. Reception of these forest reserves was not entirely positive, however. After initially being entirely closed to all public entry pending new use regulations, Congress responded to an uproar of discontentment by opening the forest reserves to grazing, mining, and logging in 1897 under rules that were yet to be established.

In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt named the charismatic conservationist Gifford Pinchot as head of the newly-created U.S. Forest Service. The mission statement of the agency stated "all land is to be devoted to its most productive use for the permanent good of the whole people, and not for the temporary benefit of individuals or companies . . . where conflicting interests must be reconciled the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run." The forest reserves were then renamed "national forests."

Pinchot lobbied Roosevelt to protect more of the forested West, and Roosevelt, an enthusiastic hunter and vocal conservationist himself, obliged. But western states protested, and in response, Congress passed an amendment within an appropriations bill stripping the President of his

authority to establish new national forests within 6 western states. Roosevelt deemed it politically unwise to veto the legislation, so he asked Pinchot to direct his USFS staff to promptly identify all remaining areas suitable for national forest designation. After these staff outlined proposed forest boundaries on detailed topographic maps of those 6 states, Roosevelt declared 16 million acres of new national forest immediately prior to signing the appropriations bill. This bill brought the short era of national forest creation in the West to a close.

The origins of the 25 million acres of national forests east of the Mississippi, from Minnesota to Alabama and Vermont to Florida, are starkly different. In most eastern states, these forests are the only significant areas of federal public lands, the vast majority of which were purchased by the federal government from private sellers with the explicit approval of the states. These forests were established to address both ecological and socio-economic concerns. Restoration of timber to clear-cut landscapes and abandoned farms, as well as protecting the watersheds of navigable streams, were the primary goals of these new national forests, and the USFS became the steward of a legacy of exploitative land use practices. During the Great Depression, federal funds also were directed to purchase lands in need of restoration across Texas and the South to help stimulate local economies and to create recreational opportunities for populations living in more distant urban areas.

Management goals for the national forests have evolved steadily over the last century. The initial focus on protection of forest resources transitioned to facilitating timber production beginning during World War I and continued well beyond World War II. In the 1950s, USFS support for outdoor recreation increased as the American public became more mobile and leisure-minded. Conservation of wilderness areas also became a priority at the time. In 1960, Congress passed the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act, deeming the major uses of national forests to be of equal importance – outdoor recreation, grazing, sustained-yield timber production, watershed protection, and preserving fish and wildlife habitat. Mineral extraction, however, remained elevated above all other uses, and fighting wildfires continued to be a priority of the USFS.

The leftovers – Bureau of Land Management lands

At the close of the 1920s, 235 million acres of unappropriated lands remained in the public domain, almost exclusively west of the Mississippi. Most of these predominantly unforested lands were overgrazed and brought no revenue to the federal government, but subsurface mineral deposits were of unknown value. Ultimately, these acres became BLM lands, but it was not until 1976 that it became clear that these lands would be permanently held by the federal government.

President Hoover, attempting to end the quandary of disposing of the remaining public domain lands, recommended to Congress in 1929 that these lands be given to the states. Congress agreed, but not wanting to give up potentially lucrative mineral deposits, articulated that the federal government retain ownership subsurface rights. Politicians from western states responded with dismay, insulted at being offered millions of acres of abused lands. States rejected the offer and instead insisted that the federal government rehabilitate those lands and begin managing grazing.

Congress reacted by passing the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934, creating the U.S. Grazing Service to manage the vast rangelands “pending final disposal” of the land. In 1946, the BLM was created by President Truman by merging the long-standing General Land Office and the U.S. Grazing Service. The new agency was given control of 400 million acres of federal lands and nearly a billion acres of subsurface mineral rights and primarily supported and managed the livestock and mining industries.

Multiple-use considerations and non-commodity land values like recreation, ecological characteristics, and scenic quality received recognition by the BLM in the 1960s and 70s, and the fate of these millions of acres finally became clear – the public did not want these lands sold off. Following a mandate from Congress, the BLM had inventoried and classified its holdings to identify which lands were best suited for federal retention and which should be disposed of. Extensive public input revealed that almost unanimously, individuals, ranchers, and timber and mining companies all preferred federal ownership of the land. All parties believed they stood to gain more from public ownership than by being locked out by private ownership.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 codified that the federal government would permanently retain of all remaining public domain lands managed by the BLM. The Act also repealed nearly 2,000 older land disposal policies and stated that “the public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources, and archeological values . . . preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural conditions . . . provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals . . . [and] provide for outdoor recreation.” BLM lands have since been managed for multiple uses beyond the traditional commodity-based industries. A growing emphasis has been placed on recreation, and conservation has been prioritized, highlighted by the designation of millions of acres of BLM-managed National Landscape Conservation System lands and National Monuments.

The fate of state-owned lands

What has become of the millions of acres of lands given to states upon

entering the Union? Often referred to simply as “trust lands,” these holdings have been administered with notable differences in each state. Some states, such as Nevada, rapidly sold off most of their holdings after being granted statehood. Others have held onto much more of their trust lands as a source of continuing revenue for schools and other public institutions through leasing parcels for agriculture, timber, and mining or through outright land sales. Some states also manage portions of their lands for recreation as another way to stimulate local economies. But states are careful to note that the majority of these state-owned lands are not considered public, and it is not uncommon for public access to be restricted. Over the past century, support for transferring federal public lands to individual states has ebbed and flowed, particularly in the West, but the idea conflicts starkly with the intended purposes of these lands and with the goals of most states’ current land holdings.

The Future of our Public Lands

For more than a century, expansive tracts of federal lands have been set aside for the benefit of the nation as a whole rather than the benefit of a few, for conservation and preservation, and in response to, at times, widespread support for continued public ownership. These public lands, managed by numerous agencies with a multitude of goals, set the United States apart from much of the rest of the world where private land ownership dominates most countries. The future of America’s public lands depends more than ever before on collaborative planning and management with both local and national priorities in mind, ideally carried out aside from politics, socio-political boundaries, and historical norms. These priorities are diverse, ambiguous, and at times conflicting – grazing, mineral extraction, timber harvesting, habitat and ecosystem restoration, wilderness preservation, supporting native fish and wildlife, outdoor recreation, and more. The preferences of local residents and communities and the desires of recreationalists and conservationists living at a distance must be balanced and considered in concert with broader values and issues of national interest. But all these interest groups must understand that should these lands be transferred or sold to states or private parties, the lands will be forever lost from our public lands system, a loss that will be felt by many but will benefit few.





SEGMENT 1: CANADA TO SUPERIOR, MT

Segment Description

Montana and northern Idaho's lush and densely forested mountains are steep and quiet, and this segment of the WWR meanders from one large valley to the next and through numerous small communities along the way. Leaving the Canadian border, Segment 1 follows a mix of paved and gravel roads through the Tobacco Valley before rolling through forests to a high bridge across Lake Koocanusa. From there, the route climbs into the remote Purcell Mountains on quiet 2-track, eventually tying into maintained forest roads to reach the town of Troy and the Kootenai River Valley. South of Troy, the main WWR follows pavement south to Noxon Reservoir with a jaunt on rougher forest roads over Snake Creek Pass. Mellower paved and gravel miles follow the broad Clark Fork Valley past scattered services. A 3,000-foot climb on rougher forest roads takes riders over the crest of the Bitterroot Mountains at Porcupine Pass and into Idaho. Smoother gravel and pavement bring riders to the rejuvenated mining town turned tourist destination of Wallace. Gravel roads over Moon Pass lead back into the more rugged Bitterroots, past blackened snags burned in the great fires of 1910, and to the popular Route of the Hiawatha Rail Trail. This stunning gravel path follows old trestles and tunnels up and through the Bitterroot crest and back into Montana. The final miles of the segment gradually descend a mix of forest roads, old rail grade, and pavement through small communities of the Clark Fork Valley. Public lands and water sources are abundant on this segment, resupply options are relatively frequent, and with the exception of the Purcell Mountains, this segment is not particularly remote.

Segment 1 Highlights

- Quiet 2-track riding through the Purcell Mountains between Lake Koocanusa and Troy, MT
- Big views into the Cabinet Mountains
- The rejuvenated historic mining town of Wallace, ID and the stories of the great fires of 1910 that burned through this region
- Long tunnels and trestles along the Route of the Hiawatha rail trail

Featured Public Lands: National Forests

Housed under the Department of Agriculture, the United States Forest Service manages 154 National Forests and 20 National Grasslands in 43 states and Puerto Rico. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Today the USFS is faced with balancing the pressures of fire management, resource extraction, livestock grazing, mining, and recreation. The WWR travels through 18 National Forests.





SEGMENT 1 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 304 miles

Total climbing: 25,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 5-7

% Paved (approx.): 30%

% Dirt road (approx.): 50%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 20%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 95+%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 5

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 4

Bikepacking challenges: Grizzly bear country between Canada and Wallace, ID (grizzly bears could also be encountered farther south)

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 90 miles / ~1.5 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 30 miles – water is abundant

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: Five relatively steep 1,000-1,500' climbs, one ~2,500' climb. Mostly relatively fast-rolling surfaces. More pavement than most segments of the WWR.

Public lands: Common throughout segment. Limited for 10 mi south of Canadian border. South of there, most of the route is in the Kootenai, Idaho Panhandle, and Lolo National Forests.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 10: Eureka (1 mile off route to east), SoBo mile 90: Troy, Mile 145: Noxon (limited), Mile 217: Wallace, Mile 270: Haugan, Mile 288: St. Regis, Mile 304: Superior

Fees/permits required: The Route of the Hiawatha Bike Path (southeast of Wallace) requires a ticket, available at the Whitefish Inn in Wallace, ID or at the eastern end of the bike path.

Water resources: Water is abundant along this section of the route. Treat all surface water appropriately.

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 11: Tobacco River Campground (1 mile off route to west; private), Mile 20: Small USFS campground (no potable water), Mile 60: Loon Lake USFS Campground (surface water available), Mile 80: Killbrennan Lake USFS campground (surface water available), Mile 140: Two Rivers RV Park & Campground (private), Mile 156: Marten Creek USFS campground (surface water available), Mile 184: Berlin Flats USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 216: City Limits RV Park and Pub (private), Mile 269: Silver Dollar Campground (private)

Bike shops: Libby, MT (15 miles off route to east at mile 94), Kellogg, ID (12 miles off route to west at mile 217), and Whitefish, MT (at southern end of Whitefish Extension)

Nearest medical facilities: Eureka (near mile 10), Troy (SoBo mile 90), Wallace (mile 271), St. Regis (mile 288), Superior (mile 304)

Alternate route options:





- **Whitefish Extension:** Connects Whitefish to WWR at Canadian border. Whitefish offers all services, numerous bike shops with bike shipping options, and train, bus, and flight options. Shuttle services for cyclists are also available. See "Getting to the Wild West Route" section of route guide. This alternate is 85 miles in length with 2,800' of climbing. Most of this alternate follows maintained dirt roads; public lands and water sources are abundant.
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Indigenous Territories: In segment 1, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Ktunaxa, Pend d'Oreille, Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene), and Kalispel nations.

Geography: Between the Canadian border and Superior, MT, the WWR travels through the Northern Rocky Mountains including the ranges of the Cabinet Mountains and Bitterroot Mountains. From the highest peaks in the Cabinets at roughly 8,700' to the low elevations of the Clark Fork River and where the Kootenai River flows into Canada at 1,862', the elevations are relatively low for Rocky Mountains, but the topographic relief is quite substantial.

Physiography: This region is characterized by a number of smaller mountain "ranges" that tend to lack clear linear delineation and are instead an undifferentiated mass of higher topography. These ranges are predominantly characterized by the homogenous Precambrian Belt Supergroup metasedimentary rocks and the igneous Idaho Batholith granitics.

Climate: The climate largely shapes the character of this landscape and its distinctness from the characteristics of the rest of the WWR. The modified pacific northwest climate here is defined by prevailing westerly winds carrying maritime air masses from the Pacific Ocean that bring warm and wet moisture to British Columbia and Northernmost Idaho. Temperatures are 15-25 °F warmer than continental and East Coast areas of similar latitude. This combination of moisture and relative warmth supports productive and lush forests.

Watershed: The Clark Fork and Kootenai Rivers flow into the Columbia River, the largest North American River to empty into the Pacific Ocean.

Plant Ecosystems: The forested landscape differs from the forests farther south along the WWR in that conifers typically found in the Pacific Northwest are abundant here – cedars, larch, and hemlock. At warmer and drier lower elevations, ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, grand fir, western larch, western red cedar, and western hemlock typify the forests. Climbing in elevation into the cooler and wetter mountains, western white pine, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, whitebark pine, and alpine larch (at timberline) typify the ascending progression of coniferous forests. Stands and mosaics of green alder also occur throughout the forests of northern Idaho where moist soils are prevalent.



Logging history

Gold mining in the late 1800s spurred logging in the region to construct infrastructure – towns, fuel smelters, stamp mills, and rail lines. Logging initially cleared valleys for agriculture and to develop the mining infrastructure. Once access was gained deeper into the mountains and to valuable timber stands, loggers floated log booms down the major rivers to mills. Later, logging flourished after World War II in the post-war economy. Prior to 1946, the largest cut was 18 million board ft (MM bd ft), but the annual cut jumped to 116.3 MM bd ft by 1959, and only once since then it has dropped below 100 MM bd ft. Pressure continues for harvesting old growth stands, and the advance of logging operation strategies now enables access to the most remote and difficult terrain for cutting. The Research Natural Areas program is preserving primarily old-growth areas, and National Forests are recognizing that certain wildlife species are dependent upon old growth forest. As such, many Forests are setting aside a certain percentage of the remaining old-growth stands.





SEGMENT 2: SUPERIOR, MT TO DARBY, MT

Segment Description

The Clearwater and Bitterroot country of central Idaho is particularly remote and rugged. Leaving the Clark Fork Valley from Superior heading south, a well-maintained gravel road climbs 3,000 feet back over the Bitterroot crest into Montana. A 25+ mile descent along the scenic Clearwater River leads to the tiny town of Pierce before 60 tough miles of exposed climbing on active and abandoned logging roads over the Clearwater Mountains before dropping steeply to the Selway River where limited services and numerous campgrounds are available. A 25-mile-long 4,700' climb with reasonable grades takes riders out of the Selway Valley and toward the incredibly secluded and welcoming community of Elk City. East of there, the infamous and stunning Magruder Corridor and another crossing of the Bitterroot Mountains begin – 90 miles of rough and taxing dirt and 4x4 roads sandwiched between two of the largest Wilderness areas in the Lower 48. Do not underestimate this section – it is demanding, exposed, incredibly wild, and is one of the most remote sections of the entire WWR. Leaving Elk City, it is 125 miles with a whopping 14,000' of climbing to the hopping and touristy town of Darby, MT. The final 35 miles of that are a paved descent to the end of the segment, some of which riders will retrace if continuing south on Segment 3.



Segment 2 Highlights

- Tens of miles of scenic forest road along the Clearwater River
- The welcoming and incredibly secluded community of Elk City, Idaho
- The Magruder Corridor – 100+ miles through some of the most remote, rugged, and wild country of the entire WWR.
- Wolves! They are common in the Bitterroot Mountains along the Magruder Corridor
- Darby, MT and its quirky nature





SEGMENT 2 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 326 miles

Total climbing: 31,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 6-8

% Paved (approx.): 20%

% Dirt road (approx.): 40%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 40%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 95%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 7

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 5

Bikepacking challenges: Limited resupply options, very remote, summer heat, grizzly bears are rare in this region.

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 125 miles / 2-3 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 40 miles / 1 day

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: Rugged. One 5,000' climb and four other 2,000'+ climbs. The Magruder Corridor is often steep, rough, and exposed in burned areas with 14,000' of climbing in 90 challenging miles.

Public lands: This route is almost entirely on public lands in the Lolo, Clearwater, Bitterroot, and Nez Perce National Forests. The southeastern end of the segment near Darby becomes mostly private.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 0: Superior, Mile 100: Pierce, Mile 147: Syringia (very limited), Mile 200: Elk City, Mile 236: Darby

Fees/permits required: None

Water resources: Water is less abundant than on Segment 1; streams become less frequent in higher terrain.

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 43: Hidden Creek USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 54: Kelly Fork USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 62: Noe Creek USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 68: Weitas Creek USFS Campground (surface water available), Mile 119: Lolo Creek USFS Campground (surface water available), Mile 161: Wild Goose USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 157: Johnson Bar USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 161: Ohara Bar USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 200: 2 private campgrounds in Elk City, Mile 236: Poet Creek USFS Campground (few sites with surface water available), Mile 271: Magruder Crossing USFS Campground (few sites with surface water available), Mile 275: Deep Creek USFS Campground (few sites with surface water available), Mile 325: Traveler's Rest RV park (private)

Bike shops: None on route; Hamilton, MT (13 miles off route to north at mile 326)

Nearest medical facilities: Elk City (mile 200) and Darby (mile 326)

Alternate route options: None



Indigenous Territories: In segment 2, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Ktunaxa, Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene), and Nimipuu (Nez Perce) nations.

Geography: From Superior, MT to Darby, MT the WWR continues in the Northern Rocky Mountains through the Clearwater Mountains, the Bitterroot Range, and the Salmon River Mountains. The Lochsa, Selway, Middle Fork of the Clearwater, and North Fork of the Clearwater Rivers transect these ranges, providing 5,000-6,000' of topographic relief from the river valleys to the mountain tops.

Physiography: The mountains of central and northern Idaho and northwestern Montana comprise the Northern Rocky Mountains physiographic province. Many smaller mountain ranges formed as result of the uplift and erosion of the Idaho Batholith, a mass of granitic rock that underlies much of central Idaho. The uplift was caused by the tectonic forces related to the subduction of the Farallon Plate beneath the west coast of North America 50-65 million years ago.

Climate: Here the route transitions from the modified Pacific Northwest climate to that of central Idaho's arid and continental-influenced climate. The maritime influence occurs during winter and spring, bringing warmer and wetter conditions while the drier continental influence dominates during summer and fall.

Watersheds: Crossing a number of sizeable rivers, this segment remains entirely within the Columbia River watershed. The Selway and Lochsa Rivers drain into the Middle Fork of the Clearwater River. The North and Middle Forks of the Clearwater River join to become the Clearwater River, flow into the Snake River, and the Snake ultimately drains into the Columbia River.

Plant Ecosystems: From Superior to the Salmon-Clearwater Divide is a transition between the maritime-influenced plant habitats of northern Idaho that include cedar, hemlock, and larch. South of that divide, the temperature, elevation, and moisture of the region create habitat characteristic of central Idaho that experience colder winters and hotter, drier summers. Ascending in elevation and moisture availability, ponderosa pine and/or limber pine forests transition to Douglas fir, grand fir, and then lodgepole pine forests. These can mix with Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir at higher elevations, transitioning at treeline to whitebark pine with alpine tundra at the highest elevations.



Canis lupus: The Gray Wolf

Prior to the westward expansion across North America by Euro-Americans, the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) roamed extensively, supported by a bison population of 30 to 60 million individuals. In fewer than 150 years, from the beginning of westward expansion until the bison were nearly killed off by the 1880s, livestock replaced the extirpated bison throughout the western United States. With few bison left as a primary food source, gray wolves resorted to preying on livestock. Wolves also faced habitat loss due to land development. Ultimately, wolves were eliminated from the western U.S. due to federal and local eradication programs, superstitious fear, and a lack of understanding of wolf ecology. The last wild wolf in the contiguous U.S. was shot in the Northern Rocky Mountains by 1940.

The behaviors and ideologies that led to the wolf extermination of the early 1900s began to transform when wildlife conservationist Aldo Leopold began advocating for wolf restoration. Subsequently, new research also presented objective information about wolves and wolf ecology. With the environmental movement of the 1970s came the ratification of the Endangered Species Act (1973) and the listing of the gray wolf as Endangered in 1974. In this action, the wolf took on antithetical symbolic roles. To some individuals, wolves represented the loss of wilderness, heritage, and intact ecosystems. To others, the wolf became the predatory embodiment an over-reach of federal land regulation and an infringement on American rights and freedom.

Owing to these opposing perspectives, wolf recovery in the West has been a protracted, tumultuous, and still-tenuous process. Under the Endangered Species Act, land management agencies were mandated to design and execute recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species, leading to the development of wolf recovery plans and programs. The goal in expanding wolf habitat throughout the West lies in the knowledge that top predators, such as the wolf, are required to complete an intact ecosystem.

Despite recovery plans being developed in the 1980s for the Northern Rocky Mountain regions of central Idaho, the Greater Yellowstone area, and northwest Montana, it was not until 1996 that wolves were reintroduced. The challenge posed by rancher conflicts with reintroduced wolves was alleviated by allowing for the killing of wolves when conflicts arose. This allows ranchers to remove wolves from grazing lands if wolves threaten cattle. Despite many wolves being killed by ranchers, the wolf populations have proven resilient, and their population continued to rise. In 2011 wolves were removed from the list of endangered species, and management was transferred to the states. Idaho wolf populations stabilized at 680-780 wolves between 2010 and 2015, but today, wolves occupy less than 10% of their historic range.

Featured Public Lands: The Wilderness Preservation System

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established an official definition of Wilderness in the United States, protected 9 million acres of land, and established the National Wilderness Preservation System. Wilderness designation provides the highest level of protection and preservation for lands to remain in their natural condition in the United States. The Wilderness Act defines "Wilderness" as "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Today nearly 110 million acres of federal land are designated as Wilderness across 757 Wilderness areas that are managed across the four primary land management agencies (National Park Service 56%, Forest Service 18%, Fish and Wildlife Service 22%, BLM 2%). On the WWR, the Magruder Corridor offers cyclists and motor vehicles a narrow corridor between two of the largest Wilderness areas in the Lower 48 states. To the north is the the 1.2-million-acre Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and to the south is the 2.3-million-acre Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the largest contiguous unit of Wilderness in the Lower 48.





SEGMENT 3: DARBY, MT TO HAILEY, ID

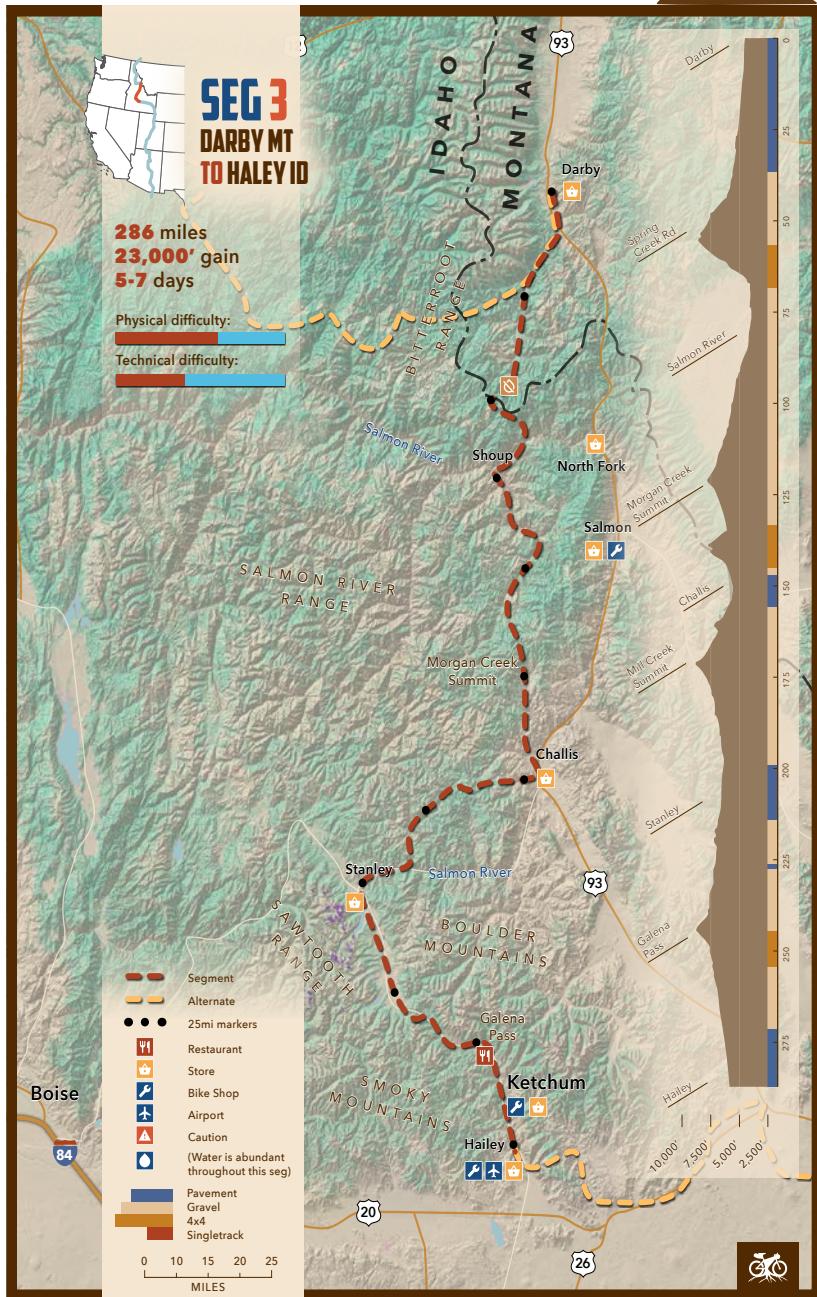
Segment Description

Segment 3 meanders through the diverse landscapes of central Idaho – the depths of the Salmon River Canyon, the Salmon River Mountains, the magnificent Sawtooth Valley, and along the Wood River Valley between the Boulder and Smoky Mountains. At the northern end of the segment, 35 miles of pavement takes riders out of Darby and onto well maintained dirt roads that climb high into the Salmon River Range before a precipitous 5,000' plunge on a rougher 4x4 track into the Salmon River Canyon. At just 3,000' elevation, the depths of this canyon can be blazing hot in summer. The route follows the gorgeous Salmon River Road for a few miles before gradually but steadily climbing south to Morgan Creek Summit on well-maintained gravel roads. Eventually, the coniferous forests give way to sage-covered hills en route to the friendly community of Challis. West of Challis, the old Custer Motorway, now a gravel road, climbs over Mill Creek Summit and then drops to the North Fork of the Salmon River. Here, riders can tour abandoned mining towns and an intact gold mining dredge. Continuing south, the gravel road again hits the Salmon River, and the route turns west on a busier paved road to reach the stunning Sawtooth Valley and the tiny tourist destination of Stanley. Riders will follow the ever-shrinking Salmon River toward its headwaters before climbing an old stagecoach road over Galena Pass and hop on the pleasant 2-track of the Herriman Trail along the Wood River. At the southern end of the segment, the ski resort town of Ketchum and the smaller and homier community of Hailey offer all services and bike shops.



Segment 3 Highlights

- Descending 5,000' to the wild and mighty Salmon River
- Rolling sage-covered foothills north of Challis
- Following the old “Custer Motorway” between Challis and the Stanley
- Touring the North Fork Gold Dredge
- Stanley, ID and its stunning views of the jagged Sawtooth Mountains
- Stopping in at the bike-friendly Galena Lodge
- Hailey, ID and its small mountain town vibe of the Wood River Valley





SEGMENT 3 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 289 miles

Total climbing: 23,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 5-7

% Paved (approx.): 20%

% Dirt road (approx.): 60%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 20%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 95+%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 6

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 4

Bikepacking challenges: Limited water, limited resupply options, remote, summer heat.

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 154 miles / 3-4 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 25 miles (north of the Salmon River; massive climb for NoBo riders)

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: Rugged. Several climbs of 4,000'+ are particularly taxing, but riding surfaces on this segment are general relatively smooth and fast (especially compared to Segment 2). For NoBo riders, the 5,000' climb from the Salmon River is likely the toughest ascent on the WWR.

Public lands: This route is almost entirely on the Bitterroot, Salmon-Challis, and Sawtooth National Forests and limited BLM lands. The southern 15 miles of the segment in the vicinity of Ketchum and Hailey is entirely private.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 0: Darby, Mile 67 (15 miles off route to east): North Fork, Mile 154: Challis, Mile 211: Stanley, Mile 278: Ketchum, Mile 289: Hailey

Fees/permits required: None

Water resources: Water sources are relatively abundant on this segment. NoBo riders, however, should carry ample water north out of the Salmon River Canyon since the seasonal creeks on the 5,000' climb are only reliable at wetter times of the year (the next reliable creek is ~10 miles beyond the top of the climb).

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 23: Rombo Creek Campground (potable water available), Mile 31: Painted Rock State Park Campground (potable water available), Mile 35: Alta USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 67: Spring Creek USFS Campground (few sites with potable water available), Mile 97: Deep Creek USFS Campground (few sites with surface water available), Mile 106: McDonald Flat USFS Campground (few sites with potable water available), Mile 144: several private campgrounds in Challis, Mile 169: Mill Creek USFS Campground (few sites with potable water available), Mile 183: Eight Mile USFS Campground (few sites with surface water available), Miles 195-215: many USFS campgrounds (potable or surface water available), Mile 262: Easley and Boulder View USFS Campgrounds (potable water available), Mile 267: Wood River USFS Campgrounds (potable water available)



Bike shops: Hamilton, MT (13 miles off route to north at SoBo mile 0), Salmon (35 miles off route to east at mile 67), Ketchum (mile 278), Hailey (mile 289)

Nearest medical facilities: Darby (mile 0), Salmon (35 miles off route to east at mile 67), Challis (mile 154), Stanley (mile 211), Ketchum (mile 278), and Hailey (mile 289)

Alternate route options: None



Indigenous Territories: In segment 3, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Shoshone-Bannock, Nimiipuu (Nez Perce), Lemhi-Shoshone, Eastern Shoshone, and Shoshone-Bannock nations.

Geography: From Darby, MT to Hailey, ID the WWR loosely follows the Salmon River drainage to its headwaters in the Sawtooth Mountains. The route then climbs over Galena Pass along the Boulder-Whitecloud Mountains, the Pioneer Range, and the Smoky Mountains.

Physiography: Segment 3 travels in the Northern Rocky Mountain physiographic province and across the Idaho Batholith. The route dances from 100-million-year-old rocks of the Idaho Batholith, across the ancient Belt Supergroup metamorphic rocks, and back onto the igneous rocks of the Idaho Batholith. In the Challis area, the route traverses 50-million-year-old volcanic rocks. The region is characterized by elevations ranging from 3,000-10,000 feet with scattered broad basins, rolling uplands, and particularly mountainous relief between 5,000 and 9,000 feet.

Climate: Central Idaho experiences a continental climate with cold winters and hot summers. Prevailing westerly winds bring low pressure systems and Pacific moisture that falls mostly during winter, spring, and occasional summer thunderstorms.

Watersheds: The Salmon River headwaters lie in the Sawtooth Mountains, and the longest free-flowing river in the contiguous U.S. heads north to North Fork, Idaho, where the river turns west for the remainder of its journey across the state and toward the Columbia River. Southeast of Galena Pass the WWR follows the Big Wood River to Hailey, Idaho. The Big Wood River flows into the Snake River, another of the major tributaries to the Columbia River.

Plant Ecosystems: The most prevalent progression of plant habitats in segment three transitions from sagebrush steppe at lower elevations to limber pine or ponderosa pine forests. At mid- to higher elevations, Douglas fir forest gives way to lodgepole pine, mixed spruce-fir forests, and ultimately whitebark pine at treeline.

Salmon and Steelhead

Idaho's salmon and steelhead migrate 900 miles and down 7,000 feet in elevation to the Pacific Ocean and back during their lifetimes. Salmon are anadromous, meaning that they spawn in freshwater, mature in the ocean, and return to their natal spawning freshwater streams. Because of this, salmon are a keystone species – more than 137 other species in the Columbia River watershed ecosystems depend on salmon. Should salmon populations decline dramatically, the species (and ecosystems) dependent on salmon would change dramatically and potentially face extinction. There are three species of Pacific salmon that run the Columbia, Snake, and Salmon Rivers: Sockeye, Chinook and Steelhead (aka anadromous rainbow trout).

Life cycle of the Salmon: Salmon eggs (laid in redds - shallow gravel nests) hatch into 1" sac fry. They feed on their yolk sacs, and fry emerge from the redds at 5-7 months to begin feeding by mouth. After 18 months in natal streams, smolts migrate downstream in river currents to the Pacific Ocean. During the journey, the fish imprint information that will enable their navigation upon return and undergo biological changes that enable adaptation to living in salt water. This journey can range from 500 to 900 miles. Salmon live and mature in the ocean for 1-4 years, potentially growing to upwards of 40 pounds and 4 feet in length.

Near the end of their lives, salmon return to the Columbia River and swim upstream to return to their natal freshwater streams. During the journey, the fish live off body fat and do not eat. The Snake and Salmon River salmon will travel 500-900 miles upstream, climbing 7,000' in elevation or more. The fish that survive the return run to their natal freshwater streams then spawn and die (except steelhead, which can survive spawning and may spawn multiple times). The fish carcasses provides nutrients (transported from the ocean) to the young, other fish, birds, and mammals. Ultimately, nutrients from salmon are distributed across the food chain and ecosystem, increasing the health of streams, fisheries, forests, and the entire ecosystem.

Historic Salmon returns: Historically, 10 to 16 million salmon and steelhead returned to the Columbia River from the ocean each year. Approximately 4 million were destined for the Snake River drainage.

Sockeye: 150,000 total returns. 30,000 returned to Redfish Lake, among the headwaters of the Salmon River. Sockeye depend on lakes for spawning, and thus must be able to run up main stems to tributaries or headwaters where a lake can be found. **Chinook:** Are the largest of the Pacific salmon, potentially growing to 100 lbs (though most often under 50 lbs). Chinook tend to spawn in the mainstem of rivers, as their size allows them to spawn in larger gravel. Two annual runs, fall and spring/summer. Historically the fall runs supported 150,000 returns and the spring/summer supported 2 million Chinook returns. 39% of spring Chinook and 45% of summer chinook in the entire Columbia River watershed chinook runs were from the Salmon River! **Steelhead:** Are anadromous rainbow trout; historically 1 million steelhead returned each summer, 55% of which were produced in the Snake river. Historically Coho Salmon also ran the Columbia and Snake rivers, but have been extinct since 1986.

Salmon and steelhead populations have been threatened and endangered since the completion of dams on the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers. Today, the four dams and reservoirs on the Columbia River and the four on the Lower Snake River pose challenges for upstream and downstream salmon migrations and are the greatest contributors to salmon being on the brink of extinction. Dams kill salmon and steelhead in their migrations because of increased water temperatures in reservoirs, challenges associated with fish ladders, and the still water of reservoirs both extend migration durations and impacts biological transformations. Nearly half of all fish die during their downstream migration, and many of the remainder die before reaching their natal freshwater streams on the return migration. The 2017 and 2018, salmon and steelhead returns were at record lows. The chinook returns were just 8,520 wild fish at Lower Granite Dam (on the Snake River in southeastern Washington) out of 40,984 total migrating individuals, far short of the recovery goal of 80,000 individual returning adults. Steelhead returns were 8,715 wild fish at Lower Granite Dam out of 49,812 total fish, far shy of the 90,000 individual goal. Sockeye returns were 13 wild fish to Stanley Basin in central Idaho out of 113 total, also well below their 2,500 goal.



Featured Public Lands: Wild and Scenic Rivers

In 1968 the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was enacted by Congress to protect certain free-flowing rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, or recreational value for current and future generations. Designated rivers are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational and are managed by the agency the river flows through. Wild River Areas are rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America. Scenic River Areas are rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. Recreational River Areas are rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. The Salmon River is the longest free-flowing river in the continental U.S. and has an 80-mile-long stretch designated as Wild & Scenic. This stretch begins a few miles downstream of where the WWR follows the Salmon River.



SEGMENT 4: HAILEY, ID TO IDAHO-UTAH BORDER

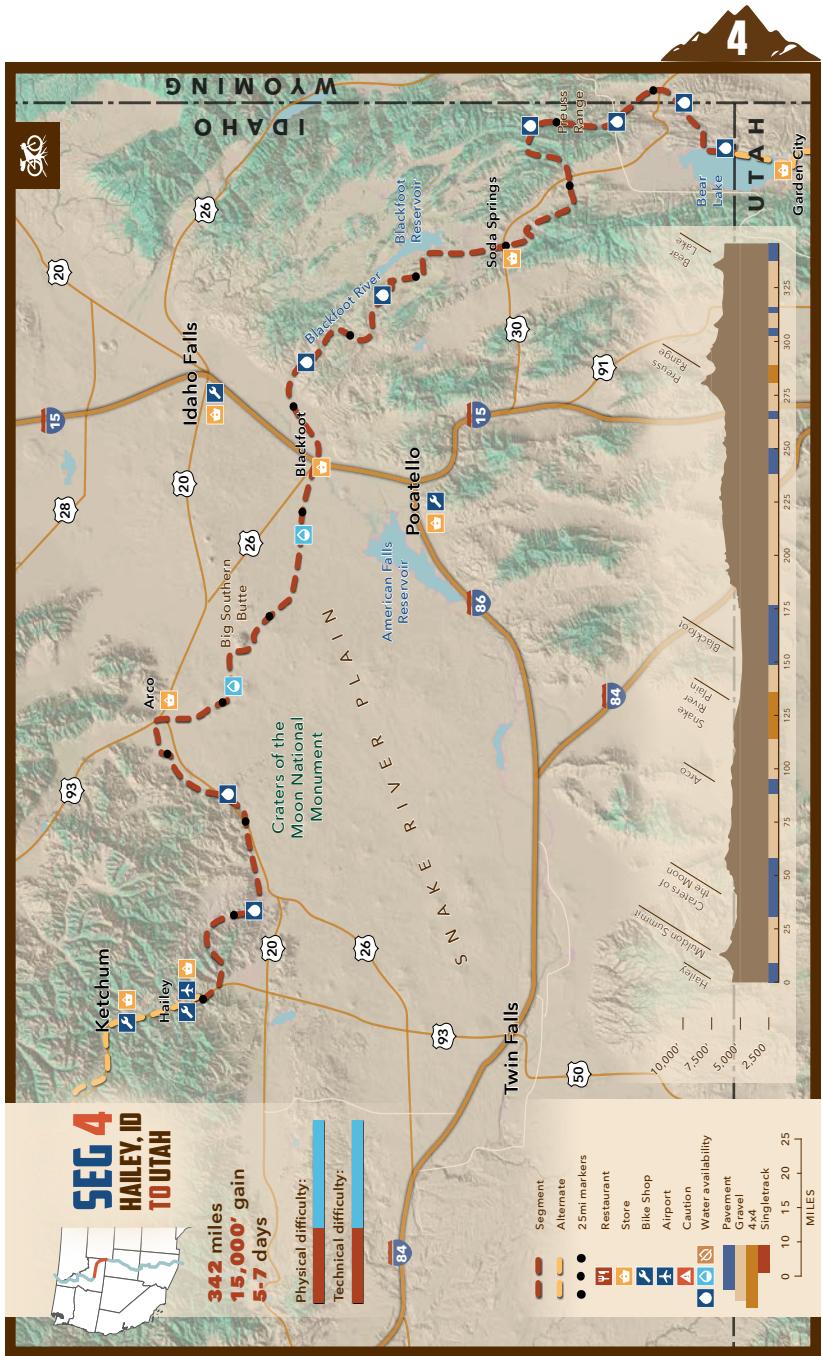
Segment Description

Segment 4 of the WWR has two distinct personalities – the flat, sunbaked Snake River Plain in the north and the small wrinkled mountain ranges near the Idaho-Utah border in the south. Water is scarcer than farther north in Idaho, and long sections of the segments from here south to central Arizona can become impassable when wet. The terrain is dramatically less taxing than the adjacent segments. After leaving Hailey and Bellevue, riders climb over Muldoon Summit and follow dirt roads south to the edge of the Snake River Plain. From there, a mix of gravel, paved backroads, and a bit of busier highway lead to Arco while tracing the northern edge of the arid plains. The blackened volcanic landscape at Craters of the Moon National Monument is well worth a stop. From Arco, the route strikes southeast toward the lone Big Southern Butte (the optional steep pedal/push to the top provides an unparalleled view of the region) and across the Snake River Plain to Blackfoot. In summer, temperatures can soar quite high on these shadeless plains, but miles of two-track and absolute solitude offer riders a very unique experience. After Blackfoot, the route leaves the Snake River Plain and climbs into hillier country along the Blackfoot River to Soda Springs and its carbonated springs and geyser. In the southernmost 100 miles of Idaho, the route climbs through the scenic Preuss Range before eventually descending to Bear River and the 20-mile-long Bear Lake. The segment ends at the Utah border, but no services are available there aside from a basic state park campground.



Segment 4 Highlights

- A blackened otherworldly volcanic landscape at Craters of the Moon National Monument
- The broad intermountain Snake River Plain and its desolate solitude
- The carbonated spring and man-made geyser at Soda Springs
- Pedaling along the Blackfoot River and the canyon through which it flows
- Meandering through the Preuss Range southeast of Soda Springs
- Descending to Bear Lake, a sprawling natural lake with beaches, campgrounds, and refreshingly cold water.





SEGMENT 4 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 342 miles

Total climbing: 15,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 5-7

% Paved (approx.): 30%

% Dirt road (approx.): 50%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 20%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 100%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 4

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 4

Bikepacking challenges: Summer heat, limited water, limited resupply options, remote, northern half and the southern third of segment are likely to be impassible when wet.

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 110 miles / ~2 days (Soda Springs to Laketown (~10 miles into Segment 5 south of the Utah border)

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 63 miles / ~1.5 days (Arco to Blackfoot; see water resources information below)

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: Mellow compared to the segments farther north! The southern half of the segment includes 4 climbs of 1,000 to 2,000' tall. The vast majority of the miles on this segment are fast-rolling if dry.

Public lands: Private land becomes more frequent in the vicinity of all the communities and nearing the Utah border. But the majority of the segment is on BLM lands with a bit on Caribou National Forest.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 0: Hailey, Mile 4: Bellevue, Mile 82: Arco, Mile 155: Blackfoot, Mile 244: Soda Springs, Laketown (12 miles beyond end of segment 4)

Fees/permits required: None

Water resources: Becoming scarcer. Numerous water sources are found in the first 80 and final 140 miles of the segment, but planning is more critical than farther north in Idaho and Montana. Generally reliable and clear(ish) water sources are found at miles 20, 26, 58, 82 (Arco), 178, 206, and 224 (Soda Springs); water becomes frequent (every 10-15 miles) for the remainder of the segment. The Snake River Plain between Arco (mile 82) and Blackfoot (mile 155) has 2-3 possible water sources (miles 100 and 128) generally kept filled for cattle; check the WWR mobile app for any updates on the reliability of those sources

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 5: Riverside RV Park & Campground (private), Mile 25: Little Wood Campground (surface water available), Mile 58: Craters of the Moon Nat'l Monument Campground (potable water available), Mile 83: 2 private campgrounds in Arco, Miles 201-207: 3 small undeveloped USFS campgrounds along Blackfoot River (surface water available), Mile 341: East Beach Campground (potable water available)

Bike shops: Hailey (mile 0)

Alternate route options: None

Indigenous Territories: In segment 4, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Eastern Shoshone and Shoshone-Bannock nations.

Geography: From Hailey, ID the WWR leaves the Northern Rocky Mountains and crosses the Snake River Plain, touching Craters of the Moon National Monument, crossing the Snake River at the town of Blackfoot, and weaving southeast into the Basin and Range province of southeastern Idaho.

Physiography: The WWR exits the Northern Rocky Mountain Province south from Hailey and descends gradually onto the Snake River Plain, the eastern extension of the Columbia Plateau. The Columbia Plateau is characterized as one of the world's largest accumulations of lava with over 300 high-volume lava flows and countless smaller ones that have all occurred in the last 17 million years. The Columbia Plateau extends from the Columbia River Basin in central Oregon and Washington east across the Snake River Plain to the Yellowstone region. The Snake River Plain is a long topographic depression that extends across southern Idaho. The plain's central formation resulted from the movement of North American Plate over a hotspot that is currently located beneath Yellowstone National Park. Volcanism resulting from this hot spot is what caused the massive and repeated lava flows. East of Blackfoot, the route traverses the northeastern-most extension of Basin and Range province. Basin and Range is characterized by broad valleys and parallel linear mountain ranges. The topography was formed by the stretching, thinning, and faulting of Earth's crust – mountain ranges were raised and valley floors dropped along faults. South of Soda Springs, the route tucks into the western edge of the Middle Rocky Mountain province in the Preuss and Caribou Ranges.

Climate: The Snake River Plain has a unique and dramatic influence on the local and regional climate. The plain connects to the gap between the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges to the west, creating a conduit for systems from the Pacific Ocean to travel far inland with minimal topographic impediment. Weather systems can thus transport moisture all the way across Idaho until they encounter orographic lift triggered by the Rocky Mountains and Yellowstone Plateau in easternmost Idaho. This creates an arid climate on the Snake River Plain and a wetter and cooler climate in the mountains of eastern Idaho. Because of this phenomenon, the Yellowstone Plateau, Teton Mountains, and adjacent ranges receive notably more moisture than is typical for the broader Rocky Mountain region.

Watersheds: The Snake River is the largest river in Idaho and the largest tributary to the Columbia River. The Snake's headwaters are in Yellowstone National Park. From there, the Snake flows south through Jackson Hole, Wyoming, into Alpine Canyon, then west through the Snake River Range and onto the Snake River Plain. From there, the Snake flows west across the state, turns north near the Oregon border, and ultimately cuts west into Washington to join the Columbia River after a 1,078-mile journey. Southeast of the town of Blackfoot, the WWR route exits the Columbia River watershed and enters the Great Basin watershed and the Bear River region. The Great Basin covers 210,000 square miles and is the largest interior drainage basin in North America. All precipitation and drainages converge into lakes and basins that are equilibrated through evaporation and seepage or into the ground. No waterways here drain into ocean-bound rivers. The Bear River is the largest in this watershed and ultimately flows into the Great Salt Lake.



Plant Ecosystems: Sagebrush grassland plant communities naturally inhabit the lowlands of the Snake River Plain and valleys of the Basin and Range province. Agriculture is prolific across the plain due to extensive irrigation infrastructure. The low elevation plains and the sagebrush grassland ecosystem are critical winter range for ungulates like elk and deer.

Featured Public Lands: BLM Lands

The Bureau of Land Management is an agency within the Department of the Interior that manages over 247.3 million acres of public lands primarily in 12 western states. The BLM also manages the Federal government's 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate. The current mission of the BLM is "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations." At the turn of the last century BLM lands were undesired lands passed up by homesteaders and slated for disposal by the General Land Office, but the lands eventually ended up being retained in perpetuity by the federal government. Today, the BLM issues 18,000 grazing leases to ranchers and energy companies responsible for over 63,000 oil and gas wells. 10% of BLM acreage is managed within the National Conservation Lands system as designated Wilderness Areas, National Conservation Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and National Monuments. These areas are identified as the jewels of the American West for their recreational value, scientific research opportunities and ecological and cultural significance.





SEGMENT 5: IDAHO-UTAH BORDER TO SOLDIER SUMMIT, UT

Segment Description

Northern Utah represents a major transition along the Wild West Route. To the north lie the rugged mountains and low plains of Idaho, to the east extend the High Plains of Wyoming, and to the south tower the Uinta Mountains and the high-elevation plateaus that stand atop the much larger Colorado Plateau. Segment 5 of the WWR leaves Bear Lake behind, generally following Bear River toward its headwaters in the Uinta Mountains on quiet gravel and paved backroads. A bit of highway riding leads into the bigger town of Evanston, and from there riders have two options for continuing south. The first option is the main WWR through bustling Park City, but most of that option traverses private land, some of which is rural and some quite developed. The second option is the Mirror Lake Highway Alternate which is entirely paved and climbs over the stunningly beautiful Uinta Mountains on almost entirely public lands past countless lakes, campgrounds, and hiking trails. South of where these two options rejoin, the mountain roads become rougher and steeper as Segment 5 climbs back into the mountains and up to 10,000 feet, past Strawberry Reservoir, and ultimately to the segment's end at Soldier Summit and its lone gas station.

Segment 5 Highlights

- Meandering along Bear River and lush riparian wetlands
- Sneaking out onto the high plains of westernmost Wyoming
- The stunning Uinta Mountains along the Mirror Lake Highway Alternate
- Climbing above treeline at nearly 10,000 feet before a long descent to Strawberry Reservoir







SEGMENT 5 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 250 miles

Total climbing: 14,500 feet

Recommended number of days: 4-6

% Paved (approx.): 50%

% Dirt road (approx.): 40%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 10%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 100%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 4

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 3

Bikepacking challenges: Summer heat, limited public lands for long sections; southern half of segment has sparse water and no resupply options and includes sections that become impassible when wet.

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 65 miles / 1-2 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 60 miles / 1 day (between Evanston and Coalville – access to the few streams is challenging due to fences and private land).

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: The northern 150 miles of this segment feature just three major climbs of <1,500 feet. South of Park City, the route becomes more arduous with a 4,000 foot climb and numerous smaller gains. Most of this segment is on fast-rolling dirt, gravel, or pavement.

Public lands: This segment passes through a considerable amount of private land; of particular note is the 100-mile section between Evanston (Sobo mile 82) and Kamas (mile 167) that is virtually entirely private, although a few private campgrounds are available near towns. Public lands north of Kamas along the route are entirely BLM, and south of Kamas is almost entirely within the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache and Ashley National Forests.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 12: Laketown, Mile 30: Randolph (2 miles off route), Mile 56: Woodruff, Mile 82: Evanston, Mile 120: Coalville, Mile 148: Park City (2 miles off route), Mile 167: Kamas, Mile 219: Strawberry Reservoir (limited), Mile 250: Solider Summit (limited – gas station only); Note: south of Soldier Summit, Segment 6 has no resupply options on route until mile SoBo 125, so plan accordingly.

Fees/permits required: None

Water resources: Surface water is encountered relatively frequently north of Evanston (SoBo mile 82), but access to water is extremely limited between Evanston and Coalville (mile 120). Water becomes much more abundant in the mountains southeast of Kamas (mile 167) until the southern end of the segment.

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 0: North Eden Campground (potable water available), Mile 5: South Eden Campground (potable water available), Mile 12: private campgrounds 2 miles west off route (potable water available), Mile 84: Phillips RV Park (private), Mile 129: 2 private RV parks near Coalville, Mile 137: Riverside Campground (1 mile south off route; potable water available), Mile 157:



Cottonwood Campground (1 mile north off route; potable water available), Mile 188: Mill Hollow USFS Campground (surface water available), Mile 219: Strawberry Bay Campground (potable water available), Mile 229: Renegade Campground (potable water available)

Bike shops: Park City (SoBo mile 148, 2 miles off route)

Nearest medical facilities: Evanston (SoBo mile 82), Park City (mile 148)

Alternate route options:

•**Mirror Lake Highway Alternate:** For riders seeking to avoid the more populated section of Segment 5 that passes through the private lands of the increasingly developed Park City region, Mirror Lake Highway climbs over the incredibly scenic Uinta Mountains between Evanston (SoBo mile 82) and Kamas (SoBo mile 167). This alternate is entirely paved 2-lane road that has relatively low-traffic, although the southwestern half is notably busier on weekends. This alternate is mostly on public lands of the Ashley National Forest, offers more than a dozen campground options, countless lakes, and easy access to spectacular alpine hiking trails. The Mirror Lake Highway Alternate is 22 miles shorter and has a similar amount of climbing to the main WWR. No services are available along this alternate. This alternate can be combined with the Soapstone Shortcut Alternate (near the southern end of the Mirror).

The sagebrush steppe and the greater sage-grouse

The sagebrush steppe is one of the lesser appreciated landscapes of the American West, and yet it supports over 350 animal species that rely on the shrubs, grasses and forbs of the ecosystem. The greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) has become an icon of the ecosystem and the effort to save its integrity. About the size of a chicken, the greater sage-grouse is the largest grouse species in North America and is identified by its size and spiky tail feathers. This grouse is known for the elaborate mating dances and calls that the males enact on the exact same mating grounds each Spring. The species' native habitat is across the sagebrush country of 13 western states and southern Canada. The greater sage grouse has declined from 16 million to approximately 200,000 individuals and is considered threatened or near threatened by numerous agencies. The population decline is attributed to habitat loss from energy development, range degradation due to ranching and over grazing, urbanization, and crop farming. Persistent drought, fire, and invasive species choking out critical food sources have also impacted the grouse populations. Conservationists and sportsmen recognize that saving the bird saves the habitat that also supports the valued mule deer, pronghorn, and elk.





Indigenous Territories: In segment 5, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Eastern Shoshone, Shoshone-Bannock, and Núu-agha-tuvtu-pʉ (Ute) nations.

Geography: The WWR in this segment passes through numerous small ranges of the eastern central Rocky Mountains, over the Uinta Mountains, and south along the eastern slope of the Wasatch Range. The Uintas are one of the only east-west trending ranges in the Rockies and stand as a high, broad plateau that averages 30-40 miles in width and 10,000-11,000' in elevation. Higher peaks rise from the plateau, one of which is Kings Peak, the highest point in Utah at 13,528'. The Uintas were extensively glaciated during the last ice age, but today only rock glaciers persist. But past glaciations were responsible for the creation of the dramatic alpine topography and the abundant alpine lakes that characterize the higher valleys.

Physiography: Although the route remains near the westernmost edge of the Middle Rocky Mountain province for the entirety of Segment 5, the WWR skirts two notable physiographic transitions. Just over the Wasatch Range to the west is the Basin and Range province that extends west to central California. And just to the southeast of the Uinta Mountains is the northernmost extent of the sprawling Colorado Plateau.

Climate: The mountains of northeastern Utah experience cooler temperatures due to their higher elevation and greater moisture due to orographic lift extracting moisture picked up by air masses that crossed the Great Salt Lake Basin.

Watersheds: From Bear Lake south to Soldier Summit, Segment 5 parallels the Great Basin and Colorado River watershed divide. The Great Basin is the largest interior drainage basin in North America, with all drainages converging into lakes and lowlands that are equilibrated through evaporation and seepage into the ground. No waterways drain into ocean-bound rivers. Bear Lake drains into Bear River, which skirts around the northern end of the Wasatch Range and then drains into the Great Salt Lake. The Weber River, flowing west off the Uintas, flows around the southern end of the Wasatch Range and into the Great Salt Lake. Anywhere to the east, streams head in the opposite direction, bound for the Green River in the massive Colorado River watershed. This drainage system historically drained into the Sea of Cortez and now hydrates the populous and thirsty Intermountain West and Southwest.

Plant Ecosystems: The lower forests in this segment are dominated by ponderosa pine, white fir, and Douglas fir. In areas of cooler temperature - north facing slopes and higher elevations - the plant habitats transition to a mixed conifer forest characterized by firs and spruce with aspen groves, and whitebark pine grows at treeline below the alpine tundra of the High Uintas.

SEGMENT 6: SOLDIER SUMMIT, UT TO KANAB, UT

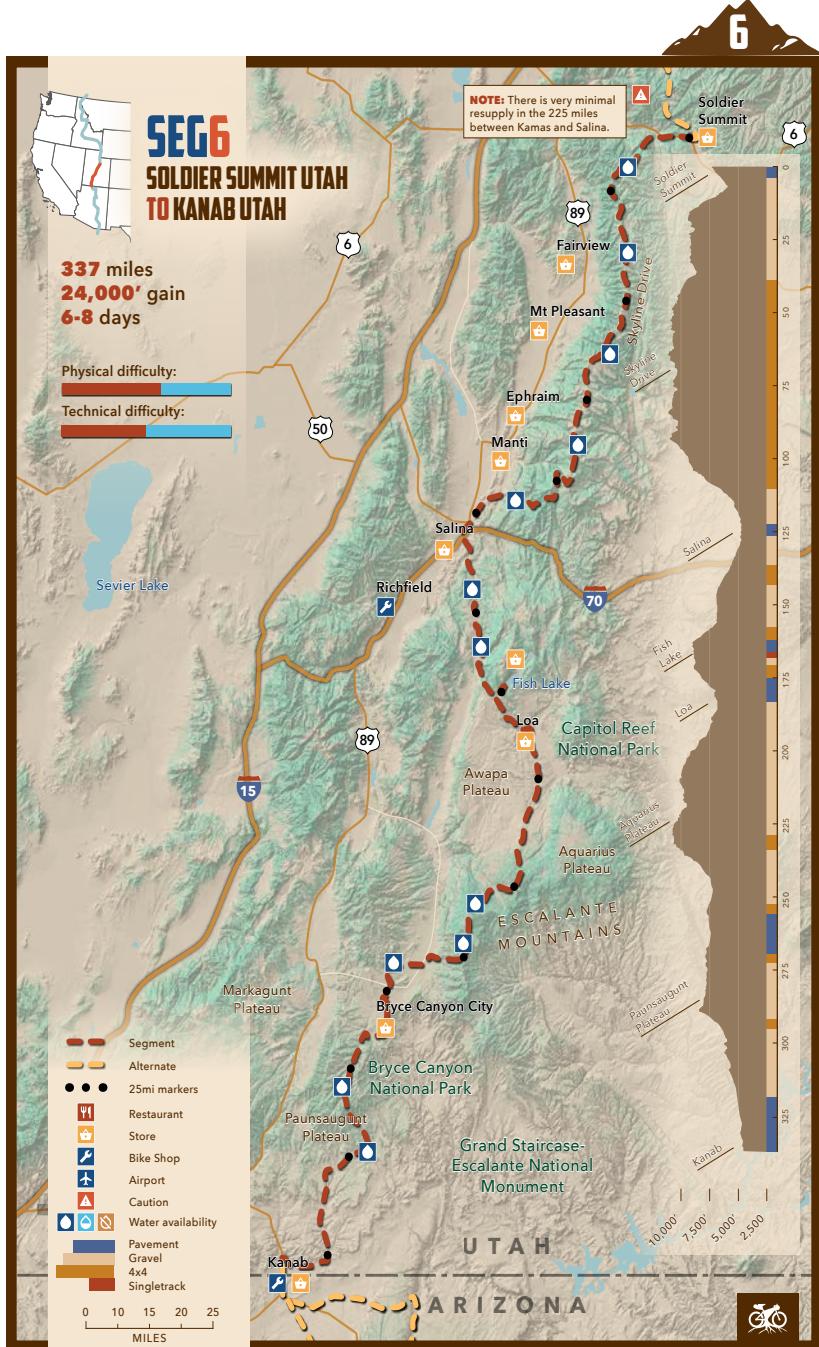
Segment Description

Segment 6 traverses along the western margin of the Colorado Plateau through Utah's high plateau country. The climbs and descents are long, the views from up high are absolutely massive, and the geology becomes vibrantly colorful. Elevations range from 5,000 feet in the lowest basins to well over 10,000 feet atop the highest plateaus. For southbound riders departing Soldier Summit, a few miles of highway riding leads to the northern end of Skyline Drive, a 100-mile-long rugged and rough 4x4 road that traverses the length of the Wasatch Plateau. 6,000 feet of climbing leads to the steeply rolling ridge crest and dozens of miles of near-treeline riding. The route plunges 5,500 feet to the town of Salina before climbing more gradually along creeks and through higher sage-covered valleys to the scenic Fish Lake and the Awapa Plateau. A descent leads to the small town of Loa before another 3,000-foot ascent takes riders back into the pines atop the sprawling Aquarius Plateau. Bryce Canyon National Park and its famous amphitheaters and towers come after another big descent into a high valley. The segment then gradually climbs to the southern end of the Paunsaugunt Plateau before dropping through a private ranch and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The southernmost 40 miles are the fastest of the segment on smooth dirt roads and pavement leading to the touristy town of Kanab. Water and resupply options are less frequent along this segment, so careful planning may be required. Long stretches of this segment are also impassable when wet, necessitating paying close attention to weather forecasts.



Segment 6 Highlights

- Traversing towering plateaus with sweeping views for countless miles amid cooler high-elevation riding
- Skyline Drive, the 100-mile-long rugged dirt road that takes riders to nearly 11,000 feet elevation and follows the scenic crest of the Wasatch Plateau for a full 75 miles
- Fish Lake, a relict of the last glaciation and the nearby Pando, the largest known aspen clone anywhere in the world
- Bryce Canyon National Park and its magnificent orange-pink hoodoos and towers





SEGMENT 6 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 337 miles

Total climbing: 24,500 feet

Recommended number of days: 6-8

% Paved (approx.): 15%

% Dirt road (approx.): 45%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 40%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 97%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 6

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 5

Bikepacking challenges: Limited resupply options, long sections absolutely impossible when wet, remote, limited water, early summer or early winter snow, summer heat, early summer snow cover at higher elevations.

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 124 miles / 2-3 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 40 miles in several places

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: High plateaus (i.e., big climbs and big descents), rougher roads, huge views, and impossible mud when wet are the themes. Skyline Drive (SoBo miles 7-107) is incredibly rugged – miles do not come easily after the 4,000'+ climb. Riding south of this gets faster, but several climbs of 2,000-3,000' negotiate the plateau country. Skyline Drive on the Wasatch Plateau (miles 7-107), the Aquarius Plateau (miles 185-246), and much of the Paunsaugunt Plateau (miles 269-297) become impossible when wet.

Public lands: Most of the segment traverses land of the Manti-La Sal, Fish Lake, and Dixie National Forests. Short sections also pass through Bryce Canyon National Park and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (camping permit required for the latter between miles 297 and 317). Private lands are generally limited to the vicinity of Salina (SoBo mile 124) and the southernmost 20 miles of the segment. Private land also continues for ~8 miles south into Segment 7.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 0: Soldier Summit (limited – gas station only), Mile 124: Salina, Mile 166: Fish Lake, Mile 183: Loa, Mile 265: Bryce Canyon City, Mile 269: Bryce Canyon National Park (limited), Mile 337: Kanab; several off-route resupply options are available in the first 125 miles of the segment, but each is 10-15 miles off route and 4,000' lower.

Fees/permits required: Bryce Canyon National Park entrance fee (SoBo mile 267), backcountry camping permit if opting to camp in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (miles 297-317; nearby camping options outside the Monument boundaries are available). Also note that for Deer Springs Ranch (SoBo miles 290-297), bikepackers have been granted access (per the ranch's Board of Directors) all season long, even in October when the gates are closed and locked.

Water resources: Somewhat limited in the northern 100 miles of Segment 6 as much of Skyline Drive follows ridge crests. South of Loa (SoBo mile 183), water is also limited on the Aquarius Plateau until mile 248. The southernmost 40 miles of the segment (south of Deer Springs Ranch at mile 297) likely will have no surface



water. Generally reliable and clear(ish) water sources are found at miles 14, 38, 53, 76, 110, 125 (Salina), regularly until mile 148 (Loa), 223, 229, and occasionally from 248-297.

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 125: Butch Cassidy Campground (private), Mile 167: Doctor Creek USFS Campground (potable water available), Miles 265-269: several private and National Park Service campgrounds in/near Bryce Canyon (potable water available), Mile 275: Kings Creek USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 298: Deer Spring Ranch HQ (camping permitted for fee with potable water available), Mile 336: several private RV parks in Kanab

Bike shops: Richfield (18 miles off route at SoBo mile 124), Kanab (mile 337)

Nearest medical facilities: Mount Pleasant (10 miles off route at SoBo mile 49), Salina (mile 124), Kanab (mile 337)

Alternate route options: None

Featured Public Lands: National Monuments

National Monuments (NMs) are designated by Presidential executive order to protect America's cultural, historical, and national heritage. NMs are managed by the federal agency in which the land exists. For example, a NM designated on BLM land will be managed by the BLM; some NMs have multiple-agency management. As of 2019, there are 117 NMs managed by 7 agencies, though the National Park Service is responsible for managing over half of the monuments. A 2017 review of NMs led to President Trump dramatically reducing protections of Grand Staircase Escalante NM from 1.9 million acres to 1 million acres and Bears Ears NM (both in Utah) from 1.3 million acres to 228,000 acres. This unprecedented reversal of NMs spurred a strong backlash of defense for public lands and advocacy to reinstate the protection of these monuments. The WWR travels through a corner of Grand Staircase-Escalante NM and the Moab Alternate passes through the original boundaries of Bears Ears NM.





Indigenous Territories: In segment 6, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Núu-ahga-tuvtu-pü (Ute), Southern Paiute, and Pueblo nations.

Geography: At Soldier Summit, the WWR begins to traverse the Colorado Plateau across remainder of Utah to the south. Many higher plateaus sit atop the broader Colorado Plateau, and the route climbs over the Wasatch, Sevier, Awapa, and Aquarius Plateaus, the Escalante Mountains, and the Paunsaugunt Plateau before following the Skutumpah and Wygaret Terraces. Bryce Canyon National Park sits on the Paunsaugunt Plateau, and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is to the south and east.

Physiography: The Colorado Plateau spans 48.5 million acres of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado that have an average elevation of more than a mile above sea level. Although dotted by laccolithic mountains (like the La Sal, Abajo, and Henry Mountains) and carved by twisting canyons, the Colorado Plateau is an otherwise relatively flat landscape compared to what surrounds it. To the west and south, the Plateau is bounded by the lower Basin and Range province. To the east, Colorado's San Juan Mountains transition from the Plateau to the southern Rocky Mountains, and the Central Rocky Mountains frame the northern boundary of the Plateau. The general northeast-to-southwest elevation gradient, from the Rockies across the Plateau to the Basin and Range lowlands, creates an ideal setting for draining one of the West's greatest watersheds: the Colorado River.

Climate: The climate of the Colorado Plateau is defined by a bi-annual precipitation regime. Winter storms bring moisture primarily in the form of snow from the Pacific Ocean and mid- to late summer monsoons produce thunderstorms from moisture drawn north from the Gulf of Mexico and the Sea of Cortez. The region is defined by aridity, the tenuous relationship between precipitation and evaporation. Temperature ranges on the plateau are extreme with cold winters and hot summers.

Watersheds: While following the western margin of the Colorado Plateau, the WWR traces the boundary between the Great Basin watershed to the west and the Colorado River watershed to the east. The eastward-flowing rivers join the Green and Colorado Rivers, and the westward-flowing rivers head toward their demise in the Great Basin.

Plant Ecosystems: With an average elevation of nearly 6,000 feet, the Colorado Plateau spans elevations from 3,000' at the bottom of Grand Canyon to over 12,000' at the tops of the different laccolithic mountains. Precipitation, temperature, and soil type vary dramatically with elevation, and this dictates the distinct ecosystems of the region. At the high elevations of the plateaus atop the Colorado Plateau, riders can expect to remain predominantly in forest. Pinyon-juniper woodlands are the lowest forests, tolerating the warmest temperatures and least amount of precipitation. Ponderosa pine appear at higher elevations with cooler temperature and more moisture, and Douglas fir and mixed spruce-fir-aspen forests dominate the highest elevations. Sagebrush grasslands are the native habitat across the valleys and basins, though prolific cattle grazing has highly impacted these areas and facilitated the replacement of native grasses, forbs, and shrubs with invasive and non-native plants, like cheat grass and Russian thistle.



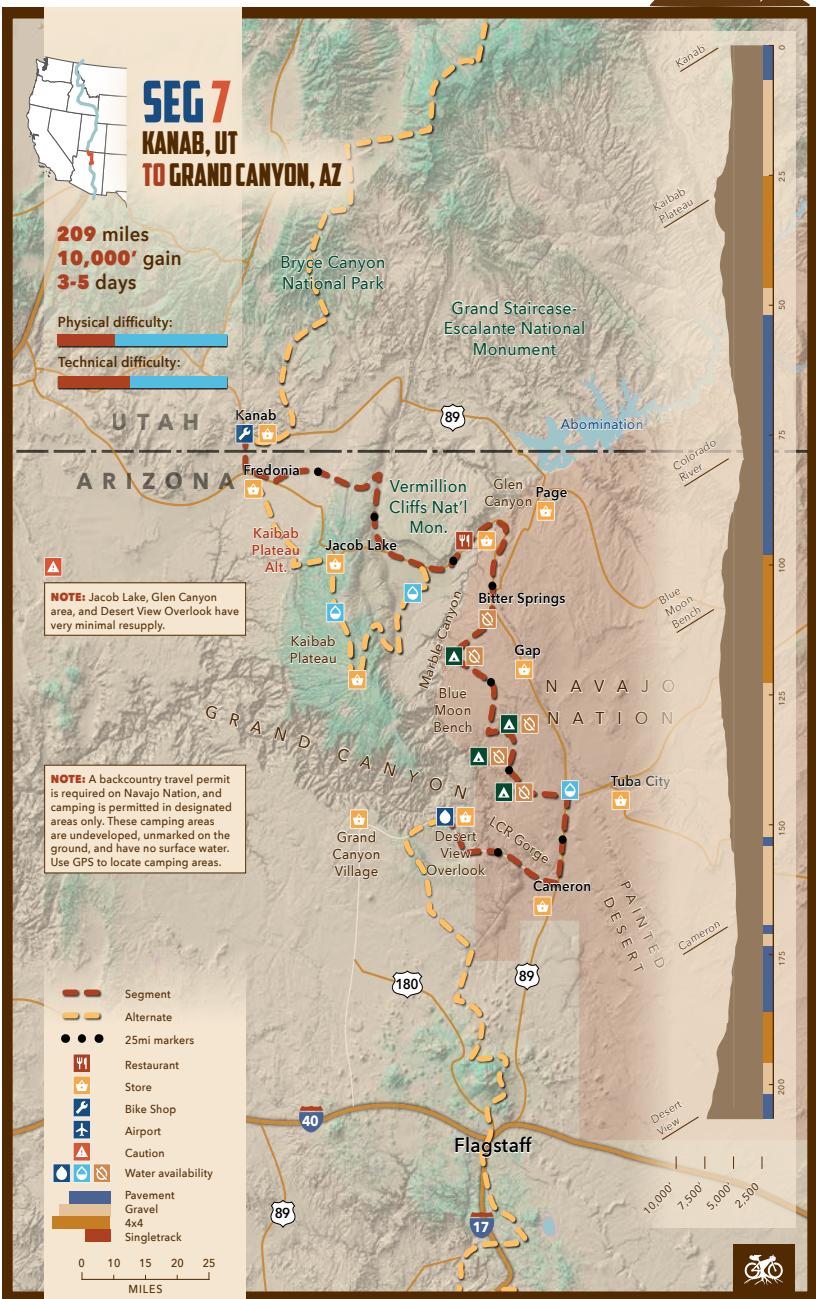
SEGMENT 7: KANAB, UT TO GRAND CANYON, AZ VIA NAVAJO NATION

Segment Description

Traversing northern Arizona, Segment 7 takes riders through a landscape of colorful sedimentary rocks, tall cliffs, deep canyons, and high-elevation grasslands. This segment also winds across 100+ dry miles of stunning Navajo Nation land in Marble Canyon and Little Colorado River Gorge Tribal Parks before reaching Grand Canyon National Park. For southbound riders, the route initially crosses a broad, treeless valley before climbing over the northern end of the Kaibab Plateau through juniper woodlands. The more challenging Kaibab Plateau Alternate dips farther south over the highest part of the Kaibab Plateau and through cool forests and meadows. East of the Kaibab Plateau, the dirt roads through House Rock Valley lead to a relatively quiet paved road that runs beneath the Vermillion Cliffs to Navajo Bridge and the Wild West Route's crossing of the mighty Colorado River. South of the river, pavement continues onto Navajo Nation, and at the small community of Bitter Springs, the route turns west onto rougher 4x4 tracks and dirt roads amid grasslands, badlands, and canyon rims. This section of the route requires a Navajo Nation backcountry permit, water is absent, shade is scarce, and camping is permitted only in a few specific locations. Reaching the Navajo community of Cameron, riders cross the Little Colorado River before climbing toward Grand Canyon National Park. This gradual ascent is a mix of pavement, trail through Little Colorado River Gorge Tribal Park, and abandoned road grades. Segment 7 ends at Desert View Overlook with an overwhelming view into the depths of Grand Canyon. Water and resupply options are infrequent along this segment, so careful planning may be required. Long stretches of this segment are also impassible when wet, necessitating paying close attention to weather forecasts.

Segment 7 Highlights

- Diving into the high Colorado Plateau desert and its colorful sedimentary rocks and landforms
- Passing below the striking Vermillion Cliffs and crossing the mighty Colorado River. Look for California condors sitting beneath the bridge!
- Traversing the western edge of Navajo Nation above Marble Canyon, across Blue Moon Bench, amid grasslands and pastel badlands. It's remote, quiet, and impactful. Bikepackers have been welcomed onto this land, and riders should feel grateful and privileged for this experience.
- The trail and canyon rim overlooks in Little Colorado River Gorge Tribal Park
- Pedaling up to the rim of Grand Canyon at Desert View in Grand Canyon National Park





SEGMENT 7 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 209 miles

Total climbing: 10,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 3-5

IMPORTANT: Navajo Nation backcountry permit *absolutely required*. Ample tire sealant also strongly recommended for this segment. Camping is only allowed in 4 specific locations on Navajo Nation, none of which are marked on the ground; a GPS and the segment's waypoints are required to locate these camping areas.

% Paved (approx.): 35%

% Dirt road (approx.): 45%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 20%

% Singletrack (approx.): <1%

% Rideable (approx.): 99%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 3

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 4

Bikepacking challenges: Very limited water, limited resupply options, very remote, summer heat, long sections impassible when wet.

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 95 miles / 1-2 days (across Navajo Nation between the Marble Canyon (SoBo mile 80) and Cameron (mile 175)

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 95 miles / 1-2 days (across Navajo Nation between the Marble Canyon (SoBo mile 80) and Cameron (mile 175))

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: Faster dirt roads, gently rolling 4x4 roads, and pavement characterize this segment. The few longer climbs (2,000-3,000) are gradual. The entire off-pavement stretch across Navajo Nation (SoBo miles 98-175) becomes absolutely impassible when wet – do not begin the off-pavement section of the segment across Navajo Nation if rain is likely. Riders can detour south to Cameron on Hwy 89A and 89, but it is very busy and narrow.

Public lands: Almost entirely BLM lands between SoBo miles 10 and 80. Miles 80 to 197 are Navajo Nation, private land on which camping is only permitted in several specific locations along the way (see Navajo Nation regulations for further details). Miles 197-205 are within Kaibab National Forest, and the segment ends in Grand Canyon National Park (camping is only permitted in designated areas in the park).

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 0: Kanab, Mile 80: Marble Canyon (limited – gas station and restaurant), Mile 175: Cameron, Mile 209: Grand Canyon Desert View Overlook (very limited)

Fees/permits required: *Navajo Nation backcountry permit absolutely required.* See Navajo Nation section in this guide about how to obtain permit; plan in advance since the process can take a few days. Grand Canyon National Park entrance fee also required. Arizona State Land Department recreation permit required.

Water resources: *Infrequent!* This segment has the longest stretch between water sources on the entire WWR, and water is rare along the entirety of the segment. Reliable water is found at Cliff Dwellers (mile 72), Lee's Ferry (mile 77), Marble Canyon (mile 80), Cameron (mile 175), and Grand Canyon Desert View Overlook



(mile 209). Water may also be found being sold by vendors at mile 160 during the day along Hwy 89 (0.25 miles off route to south)

Campgrounds: SoBo mile 6: 2 private RV parks in Fredonia, Mile 112: Rock Point undeveloped campsite (Navajo Nation; 3 miles northwest off route; no water available), Mile 131: Bekihatso Wash undeveloped campsite (Navajo Nation; 1 mile west off route; no water available), Mile 141: Big Canyon undeveloped campsite (Navajo Nation; 1/4 mile west off route; no water available), Mile 151: Painted Desert undeveloped campsite (Navajo Nation; 1/4 north off route; no water available), Mile 174: private campground (potable water available), Mile 209: Desert View Nat'l Park Service Campground (potable water available; open mid-April to mid-October)

Bike shops: Kanab (SoBo mile 0)

Nearest medical facilities: Kanab (SoBo mile 0); Tuba City (10 miles off route at mile 158)

Alternate route options:

- **Kaibab Plateau Alternate:** This option climbs over the tall, cool, forested Kaibab Plateau, reaching 9,000 feet at its high point. This alternate also serves as a link to the Arizona Trail and takes riders to within 13 miles of Grand Canyon National Park's North Rim facilities (open May 15 to October 15). This alternate is 20% paved, 35% dirt road, and 45% 4x4 track. Atop the plateau, the quiet 2-tracks hop between coniferous forest, aspen groves, and meadows. For NoBo riders, the climb up onto the plateau is remarkably steep, loose, exposed, and waterless – there will be hike-a-bike. For SoBo riders, the climb is much more gradual. Water options are limited (reliable water at SoBo miles 29 and 56), and resupply options are available just off route at Jacob Lake (limited; mile 29) and at mile 56 (lodge and store open between May 15 and October 15). This alternate is virtually entirely on public lands – BLM and Kaibab National Forest. Private and USFS Campgrounds with potable water are found at miles 29 and 56. This alternate is generally snow-free in the Spring by mid-May and is rideable until sometime in October in most years.

- **Arizona Trail Link Alternate:** This 14-mile rougher and steep forest road link directly connects Segment 7 to the Arizona Trail (AZT) at Grandview Lookout Tower. For AZT riders looking to detour around Grand Canyon without actually visiting Grand Canyon, this link connects more directly to Segment 7. The Kaibab Alternate offers an option to return to the AZT on the Kaibab Plateau north of Grand Canyon.



Indigenous Territories: In segment 7, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Núu-aghá-tvvt-pü (Ute), Pueblos, Southern Paiute, Diné (Navajo), Hopi, Yavapai, and Havasupai nations.

Geography: From Kanab, the WWR works its way east along the northern margin of the upwarped Kaibab Plateau and over the low Buckskin Mountains. The route then turns south and follows the fault line that traces the eastern margin of Kaibab Plateau and the western edge of the Vermillion Cliffs (and Vermillion Cliffs National Monument). The route crosses Marble Canyon and the Colorado River near Lee's Ferry before paralleling the East Rim of Grand Canyon south across the Painted Desert and Navajo Nation.

Physiography: Segment 7 offers a stunning visual display of the Colorado Plateau's geologic history as illustrated in the sedimentary layers exposed in the Kaibab Plateau, the Vermillion Cliffs, across the Painted Desert, and in the depths of Grand Canyon.

Climate: Due to the strong rain shadow effect of the Mogollon Rim to the south (the southern margin of the Colorado Plateau in central Arizona), the environment that Segment 7 travels across between Kanab and Grand Canyon National Park is classified as a cold desert. The region experiences cold, windy, and dry winters and hot, dry summers with minimal precipitation. Some areas of the Painted Desert receive less annual rainfall than the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona.

Watersheds: The entirety of this segment is within the Colorado River Watershed, and the WWR meets the mighty Colorado River at Navajo Bridge over Marble Canyon. Lee's Ferry and Glen Canyon Dam, just upstream of Navajo Bridge, is the point of delineation between the Upper and Lower Colorado River Basins. Water above is allocated for the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico. The Lower Basin states are Arizona, California, and Nevada. The legalities and politics of water allocation of the Colorado are embedded with complex history and remain highly contentious.

Plant Ecosystems: The arid landscape that mingles among the stark canyons of the Colorado Plateau is often associated with the characteristics of a true desert – dry, hot summers, cold winters, a desolate appearance to many outsiders, and unimpeded wind. The cold deserts at elevations higher than 4,500 feet experience greater seasonality than lower latitude/elevation deserts. Where water and nutrients are too sparse to support larger vegetation and soils are too saline for most plants, shrubs such as sagebrush, saltbrush, shadscale, greasewood, winterfat, and blackbrush dominate the vegetative cover. Although this environment is harsh, it provides critical habitat for birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.



Uranium Mining on Navajo Nation

The uranium rush that followed World War II changed Dinétah (the traditional Navajo homeland) and the lives of the Diné, the Navajo people. Mining companies and federal agencies working in disguise rushed to stake ground on Navajo Nation and quickly employed hundreds of Navajo men to dig out colorful and abundant but poisonous uranium ore. For the most part, the Navajos welcomed the steady stream of work. Their new wages bought plenty of food, a truck, and clothing. There was, of course, opposition. The excavation of Dinétah mesas symbolized unwarranted raping of the Earth, an act that would have long lasting repercussions. Unfortunately, those repercussions were poorly understood at the time, and then as the risks of uranium mining and exposure to radiation became clear among authorities in the United States, the message was not communicated to the Navajo.

By the time the dangers due to exposure to uranium ore and mining byproducts became apparent, the toxic substance had already infiltrated Navajo lives. Hundreds of men were employed in uranium mines across the reservation. The mines were not held to the developing standards of safety. The mines and mine tailings were not contained, even after mines were shut down in the 1970s after the end of the Cold War. Children played in the mineshafts and tailings. Descendants of the miners used uranium mine tailings to mix cement for house foundations, floors, walls, ovens, and chimneys. Collapsed mines filled with water and became "lakes" that people and livestock drank out of. Springs, the Diné's primary water source, were fouled by contaminated ground water. And contaminated groundwater was pumped from wells in numerous communities across Navajo Nation.

The Southwest's dry wind stripped rudimentary reclamation efforts away from the surface of the land, re-exposing acres of tailings. Garbage dumps revealed illegally buried mine tailings in the early 2000s, decades after the last mine was shut down. At the same time, Navajo homes were being tested for radiation and revealing radiation levels 1,000 times higher than deemed acceptable for human exposure.

All this while, from the 1970s to 2000s, the Diné were an afflicted people. Lung cancer. Navajo neuropathy. Miscarriages. Birth defects. Breast, bone, and reproductive cancers at 17 times the national average. Brain tumors. Diabetes. Blind, deformed, and dying livestock. Crop failures. These are the diseases that have plagued the Diné from the 1970s to today. The radiation exposure experienced by miners, their children, and younger generations have had and continue to have long, drawn-out, and painful consequences.

It wasn't until decades after the uranium mines closed that the Diné discovered the risk of radiation and the consequences of uranium mining. While the U.S. government scrambled to clean up uranium mines in Colorado, reclaim contaminated areas, and provide healthcare to the white miners exposed, the Diné continued to be ignored. Once Navajo began suspecting the relationship between their population's sudden increase in cancer and the sprouting of unprecedented disease with the history of mining in the affected regions, they



sought assistance. Decades of lawsuits, pleas to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Energy all swirled around in eddies of bureaucracy until in the mid-2000s. Since 2007, collaborative steps have been made to restoring Navajo Nation to a safe and healthy living space for residents. Houses have finally been replaced, new wells have been dug, and more water has been tested. More of the closed mines and tailings have been reclaimed and managed to modern standards. But still, the people of Navajo Nation are suffering the consequences of the uranium rush, and hundreds of mines remain to be remediated, groundwater remains contaminated, and the available funding for such projects is not nearly sufficient for what remains to be done.

Featured Public Lands: The National Park System

The National Park Service is an agency within the Department of the Interior that manages and oversees all land in the National Park System. National Parks are protected for their scenic, inspirational, educational and recreational value. The National Park System encompasses 419 units in over 85 million acres; there are over 19 naming designations that are commonly referred to as parks (National Historic Sites, National Monuments, National Scenic Trails, National Wild and Scenic Riverways, etc.). The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. In general, Congress designates new National Parks, and many National Monuments have been designated by executive order by the President under the Antiquities Act. The WWR passes through Bryce Canyon National Park and Grand Canyon National Park, as well as several National Monuments and National Conservation Areas.





BIKEPACKING PERMIT AND REGULATIONS FOR NAVAJO NATION

As you pedal across the Navajo Nation on Segment 7 of the Wild West Route, you will be primarily in Marble Canyon and Little Colorado River Gorge Tribal Parks. Within these large parks, Navajo families live on home sites and graze livestock, often in very remote areas. The roads through this area range from regularly-graded to rough and rarely maintained. Virtually all unpaved roads in the area are impassable when wet (and subject to flash flooding), and surface water is non-existent. Plan your travel carefully, carrying sufficient water and avoiding travel on these roads when rain is in the forecast. Please be respectful of the Navajo people and their land as you ride through this beautiful country.

The following rules and regulations apply to all bikepackers when riding the Wild West Route across Navajo Nation – our permission to cross these lands are contingent upon bikepackers strictly following these rules, purchasing the appropriate permit, and leaving behind no sign of your presence aside from tire tracks.

- **Pay the \$12/person/day backcountry permit fee (3 days are recommended) to the Little Colorado River Tribal Park before beginning your trip. Pending the development of an online payment system, follow these instructions:**

- Print out the permit form available at <https://navajonationparks.org/permits/backcountry-hiking-camping/>
- Fill out the permit form. Include dates when you estimate you will be reaching this section of the route, and your email address. Also write on the form that you will be cycling on the Wild West Bikepacking Route. Mail this form with a cashier's check or money order made out to Navajo Parks to the address on the form for the Little Colorado River Tribal Park; electronic payment is not currently possible.
- Once the payment and permit form are received, an original hard copy of your permit will be mailed to you, and a copy of the permit will be sent to you via email. Carry either the paper permit or an electronic copy of the permit with you while on the Navajo Nation. You may be asked by local residents to show this permit.
- **Remain on the designated route and existing roads. Straying onto untraveled areas damages fragile soil and vegetation.**
- **Camping is allowed only in the following designated areas along the route. Please use the provided GPS data or mobile app to locate these campsites – they are not marked in any way on the ground. Mileage refers to southbound distance along Segment 7 of the Wild West Route:**
 - Mile 156.6: At Rock Point, overlooking Marble Canyon – 3 miles northwest off route. This campsite offers an absolutely stunning view into Marble Canyon.
 - Mile 175.2: 0.9 miles west of the route above Bekihatso Wash
 - Mile 185.5: 0.5 miles southwest of the route on a point above Big Canyon
 - Mile 195.2: 0.3 miles north of the route at mile 195.2 amid the Painted Desert
 - Lodging and camping are also available in the community of Cameron

(see list of options at the end of this document)

- Prior to entering Navajo Nation from the north, dispersed camping is permitted on BLM land on the south side of Highway 89A, and lodging is available at the Marble Canyon Lodge. Reservations available at (928) 355-2225
- Immediately after leaving Navajo Nation west of Cameron (for southbound riders), dispersed camping is permitted on USFS land east of the Grand Canyon National Park boundary.
- Respect the privacy and customs of the Navajo people. Do not wander across residential areas or disturb property. Obtain permission before taking pictures of the Navajo people.
- Whatever you pack in, you must carry out – do not burn or bury any trash or food scraps. Do not leave behind any litter. Bury all human waste, and take any used toilet paper with you.
- Fires, firearms, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs are not permitted. Pets are allowed ONLY if on a leash at all times.
- Photographs or video taken for commercial use is prohibited unless accompanied by a valid permit issued by Navajo Parks & Recreation or Navajo Office of Broadcasting Services.
- Do not disturb or remove animals, plants, rocks, or artifacts. Tribal Antiquity and federal laws are in effect. Special permits are required from the Navajo Minerals Department and Natural Heritage Program to collect rocks or plants.
- The Navajo Nation is not responsible for any injuries, accidents, or thefts of personal property during your visit.
- The local Department of Parks and Recreation Office is in Cameron and is open from 9 to 5 Monday through Friday (the Navajo Nation observes Daylight Savings Time, unlike the rest of Arizona). They are also open on Saturdays during summer months. Their office is on the southwest corner of the Highways 89 and 64 intersection, and they can be reached by phone at (928) 698-2303
- Do not attempt to ride the dirt sections of Segment 7 in wet weather. In case of wet weather, riders can follow Highways 89A, 89, and 64 to bypass all unpaved roads in the region, but long stretches of 89A and 89 are narrow and heavily traveled. Avoid riding these roads in the dark, and exercise caution during daylight hours.

Lodging options available in Cameron, Arizona:

- Cameron Trading Post Lodge (at the north end of town) – (800) 338-7385
- Cameron Trading Post RV Park (at the north end of town) – (800) 338-7385
- Traditional male hogan rental just north of town (no electricity or running water, but water and an outhouse are provided). See <https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/18476808> for details and to make a reservation, or contact Shanna Yazzie at ExperiencehoganbytheRiver@gmail.com or (480) 818-0516 This Hogan is located approximately 3 miles east of town on Navajo Route 6730 (turn east off Hwy 89 immediately north of the bridge over the Little Colorado River).

Questions? Please call the Little Colorado River Tribal Park Office – (928) 698-2303.



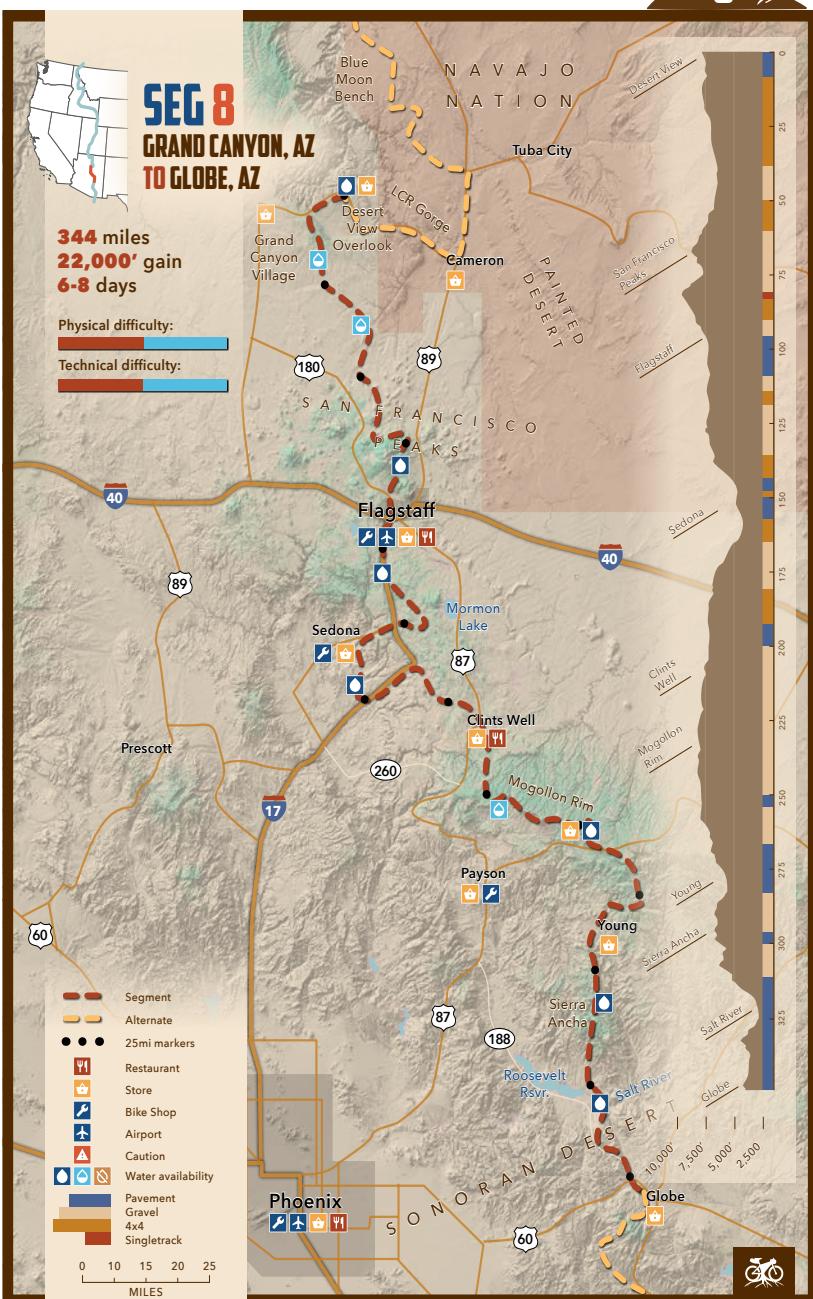
SEGMENT 8: GRAND CANYON, AZ TO GLOBE, AZ

Segment Description

Segment 8 is a grand tour of 350 miles of what most folks don't think of when they picture Arizona – grasslands, majestic peaks, endless pine forests, and broad views across seemingly endless mountain ranges. This segment also passes through classic Arizona destinations like Grand Canyon National Park, Flagstaff, and Sedona before ending among the iconic saguaros of the Sonoran Desert. After 10 miles of pavement along the Grand Canyon rim, gravel and relatively smooth 4x4 roads generally descend south and then gradually climb toward the San Francisco Peaks. A steep gravel climb and a bit of even steeper singletrack lead to mellower riding through aspen glades before descending to the city of Flagstaff. South of Flagstaff, abandoned railroad grades, 4x4 roads, and gravel roads through pine forests lead to a long descent through the red and yellow cliffs of the Mogollon Rim into very touristy towns of Sedona and Oak Creek Village. Beyond there, a 4,000' climb returns riders to the pine forests. A section of incredibly rocky 4x4 track and then a pavement reprieve takes riders southeast back to the top of the Mogollon Rim cliffs and 40 miles of rim-edge riding on the rugged gravel Rim Road (this can be rather busy and dusty with traffic on weekends). The route then cuts directly south to the very rural community of Young, quiet rolling dirt road through the Sierra Ancha Mountains, and then dropping precipitously into the Sonoran Desert and the Salt River (which is not actually salty). The final miles of the segment follow mostly paved roads into the copper mining town of Globe. Virtually all of this segment outside of communities is on public lands. Water sources are relatively infrequent for most of this segment, and many of the northern 200 miles of the segment can become impassible when wet.

Segment 8 Highlights

- Following the mellow paved road along the rim of Grand Canyon
- The grasslands, small cinder cones, magnificent San Francisco Peaks, and aspen glades above Flagstaff, all part of the San Francisco Volcanic Field
- Flagstaff's historic character, its vibrant outdoor community, and the surrounding cool pine forests
- Passing through the red and yellow Mogollon Rim cliffs above Sedona
- The winding gravel Rim Road and its sweeping views south into Arizona's Central Highlands
- The remote smooth dirt of the Globe-Young "Highway" and the relatively unknown Sierra Ancha Mountains along the way
- Descending into (or climbing out of) the Sonoran Desert to the Salt River and the realm of the saguaro cactus





SEGMENT 8 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 344 miles

Total climbing: 22,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 6-8

% Paved (approx.): 30%

% Dirt road (approx.): 50%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 20%

% Singletrack (approx.): <1%

% Rideable (approx.): 98%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 5

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 5

Bikepacking challenges: Limited water, summer heat at low elevations approaching Globe, long sections impassible when wet between Grand Canyon (SoBo mile 0) and Clint's Well (mile 200), late Spring snow cover at higher elevations

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 98 miles / ~2 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 52 miles / ~1 day

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: The terrain on Segment 8 has ample relief (7,000'+), and most of the climbing comes in ~2,000-4,000' increments. Most of the off-pavement riding on this route is on relatively smooth and fast surfaces, but a few short sections near Sedona and between SoBo miles 177 and 187 are particularly rough and slow. The southern end of the segment drops to just 2,200' elevation, the lowest (and possibly hottest) point on the route for SoBo riders since crossing the Selway River in central Idaho (Segment 2)!

Public lands: South of Grand Canyon, the segment enters Kaibab National Forest, followed by a checkerboard of state and private land in the grasslands to the south (public access to the Babbitt Ranch lands is graciously allowed). From the San Francisco Peaks south to the end of the segment, most of the segment is on Coconino, Apache-Sitgreaves, and Tonto National Forests. Note: Camping is not permitted in the Sedona area even on public lands.

Resupply locations: SoBo mile 0: Grand Canyon Desert View Overlook (very limited), Mile 98: Flagstaff, Mile 144: Sedona, Mile 152: Oak Creek Village, Mile 200: Clint's Well (limited – gas station), Mile 234: Woods Canyon Lake (limited), Mile 278: Young, Mile 344: Globe

Fees/permits required: Arizona State Land Department recreation permit required; Grand Canyon National Park entrance fee

Water resources: Somewhat limited. Between SoBo mile 0 and the high point of the route amid the San Francisco Peaks (mile 80), only two stock tanks provide generally reliable water (miles 20 and 33), and reliable surface water can be found at mile 80. Between Oak Creek Village (mile 152) and Clint's Well (gas station at mile 200), reliable water is only found during wetter times of year, as is also the case between Clint's Well and Woods Canyon Lake (mile 234). Between Young (mile 278) and Globe (mile 344), water is only reliably found in Workman Creek (mile 299, perhaps slightly off route upstream) and the Salt River (mile 320; possibly silty).



Campgrounds: SoBo Mile 0: Desert View Nat'l Park Service Campground (potable water available; open mid-April to mid-October), Mile 75: O'Leary USFS Campground (3 miles east off route; potable water available), Mile 77: Lockett Meadow USFS Campground (surface water available), Mile 98: private RV parks in Flagstaff, Mile 103: Fort Tuthill Campground (potable water available), Mile 197: Happy Jack RV Park (private), Mile 199: Clint's Well USFS Campground (no water available), Mile 246: Aspen and Woods Canyon Lake USFS Campgrounds (potable water available), Mile 300: several undeveloped USFS campgrounds in area (surface water in Workman Creek only), Mile 333: Holiday Hills RV Park (private), Mile 340: Gila County RV Park (private)

Bike shops: Flagstaff (mile 98), Sedona (mile 144), Oak Creek Village (mile 152)

Nearest medical facilities: Flagstaff (mile 98), Sedona (mile 144), Globe (mile 344)

Alternate route options: Arizona Trail Link Alternate: See Segment 7 information and logistics section





Indigenous Territories: In segment 8, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Pueblo, Yavapai, Havasupai, Hopi, Hohokam, Western Apache, Yavapai, Apache, and White Mountain Apache nations.

Geography: From Grand Canyon, the route travels south onto the Coconino Plateau and across the San Francisco Volcanic Field, where the Kachina Peaks (also called the San Francisco Peaks) rise from the plateau to Arizona's high point on Mt. Humphreys at 12,633'. From the Kachina Peaks, the WWR travels south to the Mogollon Rim cliffs and the southern margin of the Colorado Plateau in central Arizona. To the south stands the Transition Zone and Central Highlands where the stretching of the Earth's crust is causing Basin-and-Range-style faulting and erosion to eat into the Colorado Plateau. The Sierra Ancha, Tonto Basin, and Superstition Mountains are all part of Transition Zone geography.

Physiography: The creation of the Basin and Range landscape began just over 20 million years ago. At this time, the Earth's crust beneath what is now the western United States began stretching. Due to this extension, faulting occurred, causing the uplift of parallel linear mountains and lowering of valleys. The crust has continued to extend ever since, resulting in the extensive Basin and Range region today that dominates Nevada, eastern California, and western and southern Arizona. The Mogollon Rim generally demarcates the northernmost extent of the Basin-and-Range-style tectonics in Arizona.

Climate: The climate along the Mogollon Rim and mountains of the Central Highlands is defined by a bi-annual precipitation regime. The transition from the low and hot Sonoran Desert to the south to the much higher Colorado Plateau to the north causes moisture to be released from Pacific storm systems in the winter and summer monsoonal systems from the Sea of Cortez and Gulf of Mexico. The result is that the southernmost edge of the Colorado Plateau along the Mogollon Rim receives more precipitation than nearly anywhere else in Arizona.

Watersheds: Segment 8 remains in the Colorado River watershed but it crosses a notable drainage divide within the greater watershed. Drainages reverse at the Mogollon Rim - at the Mogollon Rim, north flowing drainages flow toward the Little Colorado River and the Colorado River near Grand Canyon. But south of the Mogollon Rim, drainages flow south toward the Salt River which historically flowed into the lower Colorado River but today generally runs dry due to pumping for agriculture and the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Plant Ecosystems: This segment encounters a broad variety of plant ecosystems. Ecologist C. Hart Merriam conceived the "life zone" concept for classifying plant communities based on temperature and elevation after studying a transect from the bottom of Grand Canyon to the top of Mt. Humphreys. While the life zone concept is now widely viewed as an oversimplification, it illustrates the dramatic biotic diversity that exists across short distances as temperature changes with elevation in the Southwest. Ecology enthusiasts should reference Brown and Lowe's map of the biotic communities of the Southwest for the most detailed representation of the plant communities in the region. From the high elevations of the Kachina Peaks down to the low elevation of the Sonoran Desert, riders on this segment will observe alpine tundra, mixed conifer forests, extensive ponderosa



pine forest, pinyon-juniper woodland, juniper-oak woodland, chaparral, and upper Sonoran Desert scrub.

Riparian Communities: Arizona's landscape is incised by countless drainages, large and small. The riparian areas along both perennial and seasonal streams host numerous species of specialized plants and animals that are characterized by high water needs. These communities represent <1% of all land area, but with the highest biodiversity in the region, riparian communities are integral to >30% of the total biodiversity in the Southwest.

What is the North American Monsoon?

Mid-summer becomes an anxious and exciting time in the Southwest. After months of cloudless skies, dry air, and high temperatures, one can imagine that every species begins to anticipate the onset of monsoon season. Generally sometime in July, moisture is drawn from the Gulf of Mexico and the Sea of Cortez. Blown from the south to north, the moisture moves easily, paralleling the mountain ranges along its journey. Monsoons begin at this time because the scorching summer heat has warmed the land surface sufficiently to cause widespread heating of the lower atmosphere. This warm air rises, drawing moist air from farther south northward. As this moist air arrives, more vigorous afternoon convection begins, and cumulous and cumulonimbus clouds begin to build. Once these clouds become sufficiently laden with moisture, they burst with intense precipitation and frequent thunder and lightning. Once storms have subsided (usually by late afternoon), the clouds dissipate, temperatures decline near sunset, and the skies clear. By morning, the sky is generally clear and the stage is set for another afternoon monsoon. The Central Highlands experience a particularly powerful monsoon because the Mogollon Rim's abrupt elevational gradient enhances the uplift of storm clouds. By early to mid-September, the strength of the monsoon pattern diminishes, and cloudless afternoon skies become common once again.

Featured Public Lands: National Trails System

The National Trails System, established in 1968, protects and manages trails designated as National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, National Recreation Trails, and Side and Connecting Trails. These trails can be administered by any of the four primary land management agencies, and some trails have dedicated support and maintenance organizations. National Scenic Trails are continuous, 100 miles or longer, primarily non-motorized, and offer outstanding recreational opportunity. Segment 8 of the WWR follows a double-track portion of the Arizona Trail, an 800-mile-long trail running the length of the state from Mexico to Utah that welcomes hikers, cyclists, and equestrians.



SEGMENT 9: GLOBE, AZ TO MEXICO

Segment Description

Southern Arizona's high, isolated mountain ranges stand high above the surrounding low landscapes and valleys of the Sonoran Desert. Segment 9 climbs over two of these ranges while also following long, low-relief drainage divides and the San Pedro Valley to the WWR's southern terminus at the Mexico border. The high elevations above 5,000' provide a cool, forested reprieve from the warm desert temperatures often experienced between 2,000 and 4,000' elevation. Riding this segment between late May and early September is not advised due to temperatures that exceed 100 °F on most days. For southbound riders leaving Globe, a steep climb immediately leads to the near the top of the Pinal Mountains before descending to the Gila River and San Pedro River Valleys and the copper mining town of Winkelman. Then the route climbs again to reach moderate-elevation dirt roads that lead to Oracle, home of Biosphere 2. South of Oracle is the Control Road that ascends 5,000' of steep dirt road to the top of Mount Lemmon, one of the magnificent Sky Islands, and the tiny community of Summerhaven. A long, paved descent delivers riders to the edge of the sprawling city of Tucson, and a much shorter climb out of town over Reddington Pass takes the route back to the San Pedro Valley. For riders wishing to skip Tucson and Mount Lemmon, a short alternate through San Manuel bypasses 7,000' of climbing.

The southernmost 115 miles of the route follow the San Pedro Valley upstream to the Mexico border, first on dirt and gravel roads to Benson and then on a mix of 2-track, 4x4 road, old railroad grades, and short sections of pavement past abandoned ranches, ghost towns, and touristy Tombstone. The final miles of the segment are through the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area among wetlands, cottonwood trees, and if riders are lucky, a flowing San Pedro River. These last miles are on the San Pedro Trail, a non-motorized trail that may be overgrown in places in late summer and fall; a 4-mile-long out-and-back jaunt is required to reach the Mexico border. The Sierra Vista Extension offers riders a route to connect to Sierra Vista, the nearest city to the southern terminus of the WWR. In the desert of southern Arizona, water is very scarce in most months, but water sources are generally regularly spaced along this segment. Resupply options are also regularly spaced, and although private land is prevalent along this segment, camping options on public lands remain readily available in most areas.



Segment 9 Highlights

- Sweeping views from the Pinal Mountains just south of Globe and along the smooth dirt roads north of Oracle
- Visiting Biosphere 2 just outside of Oracle
- A visit to Mount Lemmon – one of the Sky Islands that rises more than a mile above the surrounding desert (and requires that much climbing)
- Old mining towns and ghost towns near the Mexico border
- The riparian corridor of the San Pedro River, its wetlands, its abundant wildlife, and the diverse riding of the San Pedro Trail through the National Conservation Area
- Touching the border wall and seeing where the San Pedro River [sometimes] flows into the U.S. beneath that wall

Featured Public Lands: Natural Conservation Areas

The BLM manages 16 designated National Conservation Areas (NCAs) across the West. The goal of NCAs is to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance America's natural and cultural heritage. The San Pedro Riparian NCA holds 57,000 acres of land in Cochise County and protects the riparian area of ~40 miles of the upper San Pedro River. This NCA protects a rare desert riparian ecosystem that was once more prolific across the southwest. Today the San Pedro Riparian area is one of the most ecologically important desert riparian ecosystems in the country as it intersects the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, providing critical habitat for 80 species of mammals, two native species of fish, over 100 species of breeding birds, over 40 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 250 species of migrating and wintering birds. The area also contains archaeological sites that illustrate human inhabitants of the area over 13,000 years ago.





SEGMENT 9 INFORMATION AND LOGISTICS

Segment length: 292 miles

Total climbing: 21,000 feet

Recommended number of days: 5-7

% Paved (approx.): 20%

% Dirt road (approx.): 60%

% 4x4 road/2-track (approx.): 20%

% Singletrack (approx.): 0%

% Rideable (approx.): 98+%

Average physical difficulty* (1-10): 6

Average technical difficulty (1-10):** 5

Bikepacking challenges: Limited water, summer heat, numerous relatively short sections impassible when wet, rattlesnakes more common on this segment than any other

Longest stretch between resupply (miles/days): 72 miles / ~1-2 days

Longest stretch between water sources (miles/days): 53 miles / ~1 day

LOGISTICS:

Terrain: A mix of long climbs to high elevation and low-elevation valley riding on mostly fast gravel and some pavement. The Pinal Mountains (SoBo mile 11) south of Globe and the dirt "Control Road" (miles 92-124) are taxing and steep. San Pedro Valley riding between miles 177-292 is generally gravel and much easier (and warmer), although miles 268-292 are mostly on non-motorized 2-track and can be slow and overgrown in places.

Public lands: Segment 9 has notably more private land than Segment 8. More generally speaking, the valley bottoms are private and most areas up higher are public. Between Globe and Tucson, public lands are a mix of Tonto and Coronado National Forests and BLM lands. South of Tucson, most of the public lands are managed by the BLM.

Resupply locations: Globe (SoBo mile 0), Winkelman (mile 47), Oracle (mile 92), Summerhaven (mile 124 atop Mount Lemmon), Tucson (mile 150), Benson (mile 222), Tombstone (256), gas station in Miracle Valley (mile 286, 1.5 miles off route to west)

Fees/permits required: Backcountry camping permit (available at trailheads) required within San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (miles 268-292). Arizona State Land Department recreation permit required

Water resources: SoBo Mile 30: Wind Spirit Community, Mile 40: Gila River (may be silty), Mile 47: Winkelman, Mile 92: Oracle, Mile 103: Peppersauce USFS Campground, Mile 124: Summerhaven, Mile 126-131: several campgrounds along paved Mount Lemmon Highway (except during winter), Mile 150: Tucson, Mile 194: Cascabel Community Center, Mile 222: Benson, Mile 246: Fairbanks Ghost Town, Mile 256: Tombstone, Mile 272: San Pedro House, Mile 286: Miracle Valley (1.5 miles off route). No reliable water at southern terminus.

Campgrounds: Mile 29: Wind Spirit Community (private community – please call ahead (520) 201-1075), Mile 41: Riverside BLM Campground (surface water available



but may be silty), Mile 47: Winkelman Flats Park (potable water available), Mile 103: Peppersauce USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 126: Spencer Canyon USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 131: Rose Canyon USFS Campground (potable water available), Mile 136: General Hitchcock USFS Campground (no water available), Mile 141: Molino USFS Campground (no water available), Mile 223: several private RV parks in Benson, Mile 256: several private RV parks in Tombstone

Bike shops: Tucson (SoBo mile 150), Sierra Vista (at the northwestern end of the Sierra Vista Extension, 25 miles from the southern terminus of the WWR)

Nearest medical facilities: Globe (SoBo mile 0), Tucson (mile 150), Benson (mile 220), Sierra Vista (25 miles from southern terminus of WWR)

Alternate route options:

- **San Manuel Alternate:** For riders looking to bypass climbing over Mount Lemmon and visiting Tucson, this alternate sticks to the San Pedro Valley and is 76 miles shorter with 7,000' less climbing than the main route. The alternate is entirely smooth dirt and pavement. Food and water are available in the small copper mine town of San Manuel mid-way through the alternate.
- **Sierra Vista Extension:** This is a connection between the southern terminus of the WWR and Sierra Vista, the nearest city. All services, including two bike shops and shuttles to the Tucson airport, are available in Sierra Vista. This extension is 25 mostly paved miles with 700 feet of climbing virtually entirely flanked by private land. Camping options can be found 3-5 miles to the southwest off route at mile ~8 up Ramsey or Carr Canyon Roads (the latter includes a stout climb; water is available in Ramsey Canyon RV Park).





Indigenous Territories: In segment 9, the WWR travels on the traditional territories of the Hohokam, Western Apache, Pueblos, Hohokam, O'odham, Tohono O'odham (Papago), Sobaipuri, and Chiricahua Apache nations.

Geography: Segment 9 exits the Transition Zone and Central Highlands of Arizona and descends into the Basin and Range province and the Sonoran Desert. The largest mountain ranges of Basin and Range, referred to as sky islands, host isolated ecosystems that are supported by the cooler temperatures of these scattered mountains. The Pinal Mountains, Santa Catalina Mountains (Mount Lemmon), and Rincon Mountains are all sky island ecosystems along the WWR.

Physiography: Basin and Range topography is characterized by broad sweeping valleys and north-south trending linear mountain ranges formed by the stretching and faulting of the Earth's crust. The creation of the Basin and Range landscape began about 20 million years ago. At this time, the Earth's crust beneath what is now the western United States began stretching. Due to this extension, extensive faulting occurred, causing the uplift of mountains and lowering of valleys. The crust has continued to extend to this day, resulting in the extensive Basin and Range region that dominates Nevada, eastern California, and western and southern Arizona.

Climate: The climate of the Southwest is typified by a bi-annual precipitation pattern. The annual climate alternates between periods of precipitation and drought. From December to April, winter storms bring rain and snow to the Central Highlands. April through June is the driest and warmest period of the year. July through September sees the summer monsoons, bringing rain in short, powerful bursts. And by later in September, fall drought arrives with dry, cooler temperatures.

Watersheds: From Globe to the Mexico border, the WWR remains in the Colorado River watershed. The Gila River and the San Pedro River are the southernmost drainages on the WWR that would ultimately drain into the Colorado River if water use by Arizona's cities and agriculture didn't claim it first.

Plant Ecosystems: The WWR traverses swaths of Sonoran Desert scrub and riparian ecosystems across the low elevations of the route and climbs into the isolated forest ecosystems of a few sky island mountain ranges. In these higher habitat islands, cooler temperatures sustain forest ecosystems similar to those typically found at much higher latitudes. Climbing these sky islands generally demonstrates a progression from desert scrub to chaparral to juniper-oak-pinyon communities, and then into ponderosa pine forests that become interspersed with Douglas fir. Spruce-fir mixed conifer forests with scattered aspen stands are found at the tops of the highest sky islands like Mount Lemmon.





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