

Springerville Ranger District Trail Guide

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests



United States
Department of
Agriculture

PREPARED BY
Forest
Service

Southwestern
Region

Welcome . . . to the Springerville Ranger District Trail System

Partnerships

Some of the trails built on the Springerville Ranger District were planned and built in partnership with Apache County and where funded through grant monies from the Arizona Department of Transportation's ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) and Arizona State Parks Heritage Trail Funds.

Road Access

Access to trailheads is on forest maintained roads. During the winter these roads may be impassable or difficult to drive. Contact the Springerville Ranger District for road conditions.

Safety

Some of the trails in the lower elevations can be hot during the summer. Be prepared for rapid changes in the weather. Check on local fire regulations.

Difficulty Ratings

The difficulty rating is separated by mode of transportation. The rating takes into account:

- Length of the trail
- Change in elevation
- Type of terrain

Safety and Survival

National forests can offer such a pleasant experience and also offer the risk of injury or death to the unprepared or ignorant user. The most common hazards are hypothermia, altitude sickness, lightning, and getting lost.

Hypothermia – In the past, hypothermia was referred to as “freezing to death” or simply “exposure.” These terms are misleading because many cases of hypothermia occur during the summer and at temperatures well above freezing.

Hypothermia is the lowering of the temperature of the body's inner core. During summer, it most frequently strikes fatigued people who get wet and then are exposed to the wind. As air blows over the body, it removes heat very quickly, especially if the body is wet. As the body temperature decreases—even a few degrees—it is undergoing hypothermia, depriving the victim of judgment and reasoning power. If uncorrected, the inner core temperature continues to drop and the victim dies within a few hours.

The first symptom of hypothermia is shivering. Be aware of this sign and take immediate steps to correct it. Additional symptoms include lack of coordination and fatigue. Advanced symptoms include incoherence, listlessness, hallucinations, decreased shivering, and finally unconsciousness. When you detect or suspect hypothermia in yourself or others, immediate steps must be taken to restore normal body temperature. Get the victim out of the wind or rain. Remove wet clothing and replace it with dry garments. Keep the victim dry, and if the victim is conscious, give warm drinks and high-energy foods. In advanced cases, you'll have to warm the victim yourself by skin-to-skin contact inside a sleeping bag to retain the heat. Victims of hypothermia cannot produce enough heat of their own.

Prevention is the best cure. Avoid getting wet, beware of the wind, and dress warmly. Wool clothing will continue to insulate even when wet. Cotton next to the skin may keep the body damp. If you encounter foul weather, start a warming fire, set up camp as soon as possible while you still have a reserve of energy, and stay put. Even mild symptoms demand immediate treatment.

Altitude Sickness – The lack of oxygen at high elevations gives some people altitude sickness. Symptoms include loss of appetite, listlessness, nausea, and severe headaches. A person with altitude sickness should rest, breath deeply, and eat quick energy foods such as dried fruit, candy, or fruit juices. If symptoms persist, seek lower elevations. Continued exposure can make the victim too weak to travel and lead to serious complications. Be especially careful if you just arrived in the area from somewhere close to sea level. Take some time to acclimate before strenuous hiking.

Lightning – Get a weather report; fast-moving frontal systems can bring sudden and violent changes in mountain weather. Stay away from lakes, open areas (i.e. meadows), fence lines, and exposed ridgetops.

If You Get Lost – Stay calm and try to remember how you got to your present location. If you become confused, backtrack to a known landmark. Can you see any familiar landmarks, trails, or streams? Is your situation an emergency or just an inconvenience? When backpacking with children, be sure they stay with you near camp. A whistle can be the very thing a child needs to get “unlost” easily and quickly.

Back-Country Checklist

Make a last-minute check of your day or overnight pack before leaving home. The following items should be included:

- Map of the area
- Compass
- Flashlight
- Extra food and wool or synthetic clothing
- Candle
- Campact first-aid kit
- An elastic bandage
- Pocket knife
- Sunblock
- Waterproof matches
- Rain gear

- Hat
- Water bottle
- Camp stove
- Small piece of wire for emergency pack frame repair

One essential item you don't take with you: A note left with friends or relatives telling where you are going and when you will return.

Pack It In . . .

Bring trash bags to carry out all trash that cannot be completely burned such as aluminum foil, aluminum lined packages, egg shells, and orange peels.

Trash such as cigarette butts, pull tabs, and gum wrappers are the most common type of pollution due to their small size. Please do not overlook them when cleaning your campsite.



Never bury any trash. Animals will dig it up.

Please pick up trash left by others less thoughtful.

. . . Pack It Out

“Leave No Trace” Ethics

Planning and Packing

- Use lightweight equipment that blends with the environment.
- Visit less popular areas; obtain information from local agency offices.

On the Trail

- Stay on designated trails; do not cut switchbacks!
- Keep group size small and use a minimal number of pack animals.



The Campsite

- Select a hidden campsite 200 feet or more from trails, lakes, and streams.
- Avoid fragile areas easily damaged by people and livestock.
- Do not ditch around tents or cut live vegetation.

Sanitation

- Do all washing away from water sources.
- Dig “cat holes” 200 feet or more from camp, trails, and streams.



Campfires

- Use a lightweight stove rather than building a fire.
- If campfires are permitted, build fires away from trees, shrubs, rocks, and meadows.
- Use existing fire circles, burn only small sticks to assure complete combustion, and naturalize fire rings.
- Leave your campsite as clean or cleaner than you found it.

Horses

- Use hitchlines with tree straps, electric corrals, hobbles, and/or pickets to secure stock.

- Keep stock 200 feet or more from lakeshores and streams.
- Scatter manure and remove excess feed before you leave.
- Use certified weed free hay to reduce exotic weeds.

Trail Etiquette

All Trail Users

- Please leave plants and flowers where you find them so that others may enjoy them.
- Please be considerate of other trail users so that all may enjoy the experience.
- Avoid wet or muddy trails.
- Keep to the right side of the trail. Save the left for passing. Always announce your intentions when passing.
- When in a group, travel single file and don't block the trail. Allow room for other users.

- Leave all gates as you found them. If a sign says "Keep Gate Closed," always do so.
- Take only pictures, leave only footprints.
- All users yield to saddle stock.
- Do not harass wildlife or livestock.

Backpackers and Hikers

- Move off the trail wherever possible for less mobile trail users.
- When meeting horseback riders, step aside from the trail, preferably downhill, and talk in a normal voice to the riders. This calms the horses.
- When hiking cross-country, spread out, avoid paths, and walk on rocks or snow when possible.

Mountain Bikers

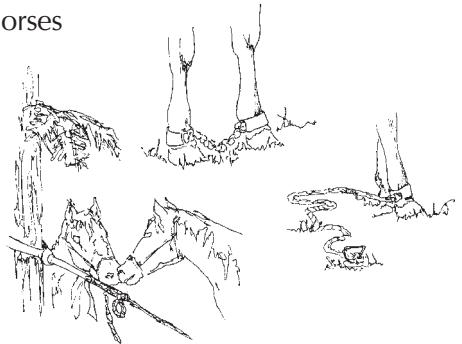
- Take the initiative and yield first to horses and hikers.

- Ride in small groups and in single file when passing.
- Ride in control and pass others slowly.
- Teach proper riding techniques to younger riders.
- When passing equestrians, ask for instructions and use caution.
- Know what areas are open for bicycling use and stay on designated trails or roads. Riding off trails damages resources and threatens wildlife.
- Never ride in designated wilderness areas. They are officially closed to bicycles.

Equestrians

- Stock tied directly to trees can destroy trees and turf and should never be done for more than short periods. Use tie lines.
- Clean up all horse manure or hay in camps, at trailheads, and in loading areas. Carry equipment to scatter it and smooth the areas.

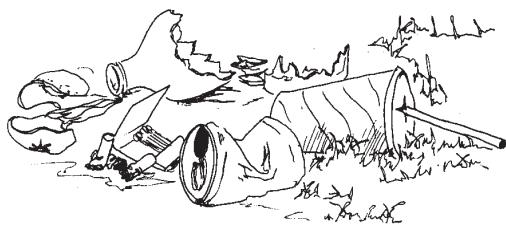
- Never tie horses within 200 feet of lakes, streams, or springs.
- Stock should not be left unattended for more than a few hours.
- Practice minimum impact techniques of tieing, grazing, and travel.
- Lead rather than herd unrestrained stock to help avoid erosion.
- Travel at a safe speed and be especially careful when visibility is limited.
- Remember that trail stock can be intimidating to other trail users, so communicate to those you meet.
- Do not ride too close to the horse in front of you.



Motorized Use (OHV's/Motorcycles)

Courtesy, Etiquette, and Safety Reminders

- Respect the rights of others. You will encounter other users sharing the same trail, including hikers and horseback riders. Please be courteous. Respect their right to be there and be aware of the potential of your vehicle frightening or endangering pets and horses.
- Protect the environment and outdoors. Please stay out of alpine meadows, streams, or other areas where your actions may leave lasting habitat damage.
- Please stay on existing roadways and designated trails.
- If you pack it in, pack it out. Please don't litter.



- When riding an OHV or dirt bike, you should always wear a helmet, eye protection, jacket or long-sleeved shirt, gloves and boots.
- Always supervise children while they are riding on OHV's and dirt bikes.
- Carry basic tools, water and a first-aid kit.
- Tell someone responsible where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Know the OHV laws for the areas that you enter. Obey posted signs. Respect closed areas.



Map Legend



Springerville Ranger District Boundary



Trail



State Highways



Streams



**Improved
Forest Road (FR)
Country Road (CR)**



**Mount Baldy
Wilderness Area**



Campground



Ranger Station



Trailhead



Lookout Tower



Lakes and Reservoirs



Private Land

Railroad Grade Trail • 601



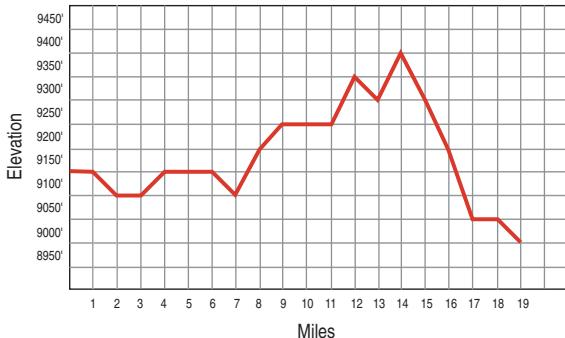
Distance: 19 miles

Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Mountain Biking — Moderate
Equestrian — Moderate

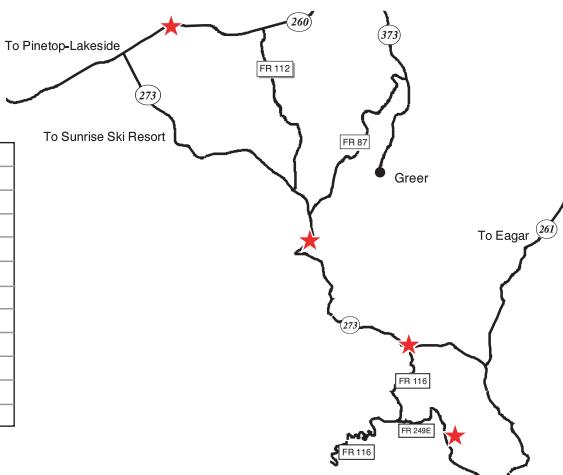
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers

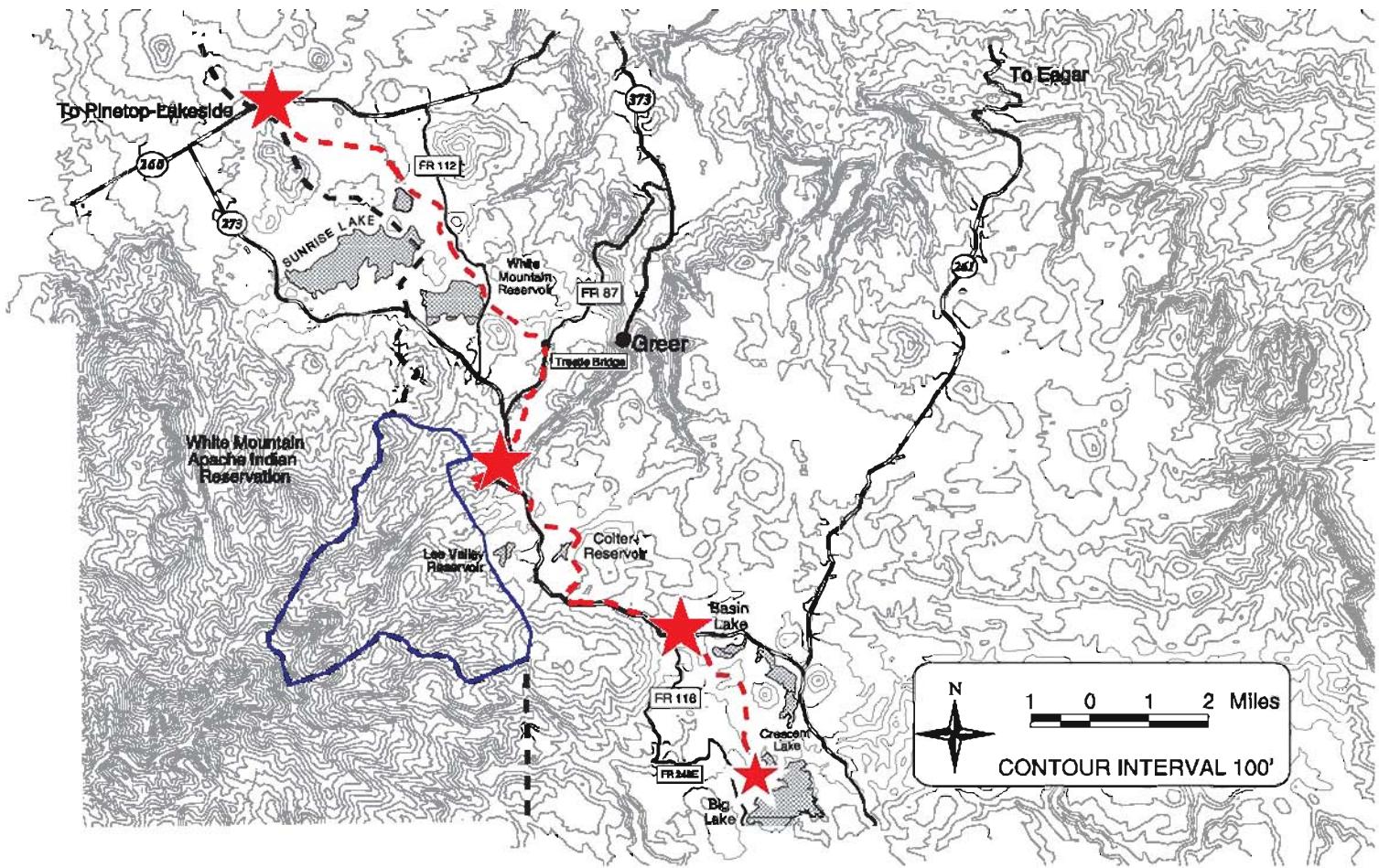
USGS Topo Maps: Big Lake North
Green Peak
Mount Baldy

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 15.7 miles. The trailhead is on the left.



Trail Description: The entire trail follows a historic railroad right-of-way offering gentle grades and beautiful scenery. A unique feature of this trail is the 80-foot long trestle bridge similar to bridges used at the turn of the century. A separate trail guide for this trail is available at the Springerville Ranger District office.





West Baldy Trail • 94



Distance: 7 miles

Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Equestrian — Moderate

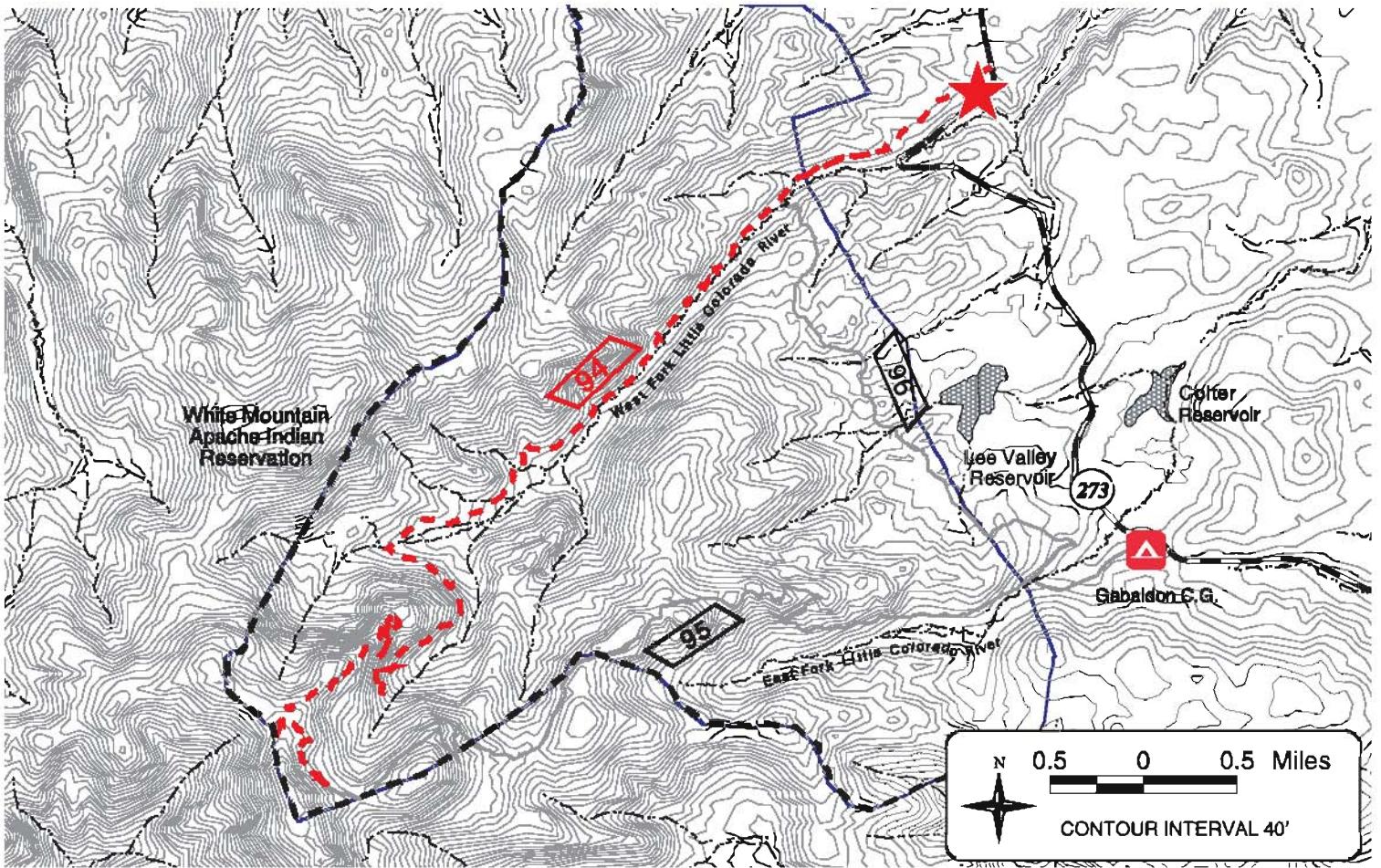
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers
Large Parking Area

USGS Topo Maps: Mount Baldy
Big Lake North

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 17.1 miles to AZ Highway 273. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 273 for 7.6 miles. The trailhead is on the right. You can also use this trailhead for the Railroad Grade Trail (Trail 601) and West Fork Trail (Trail 94).



Trail Description: The trail crosses meadows and winds through a thick forest setting dominated by spruce, fir, and aspen. As you work your way up, the trail becomes a series of switchbacks. West Baldy Trail merges with East Baldy Trail in a saddle near the Reservation boundary below Mt. Baldy. Mt. Baldy Wilderness maps are available at the Springerville Ranger District office. The last half of the trail to the summit of Mt. Baldy is on Fort Apache Indian Reservation land. This area has been closed to all non-tribal members by the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council. Group size is limited to 12 people.



East Baldy Trail • 95



Distance: 6 miles

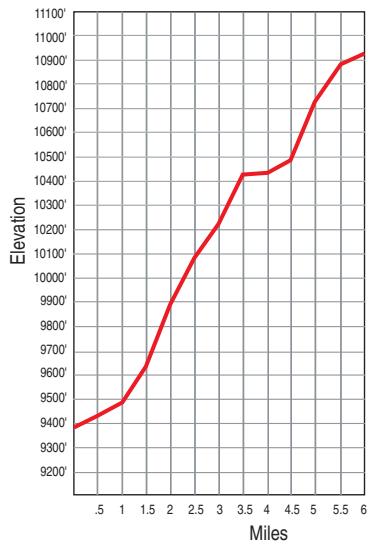
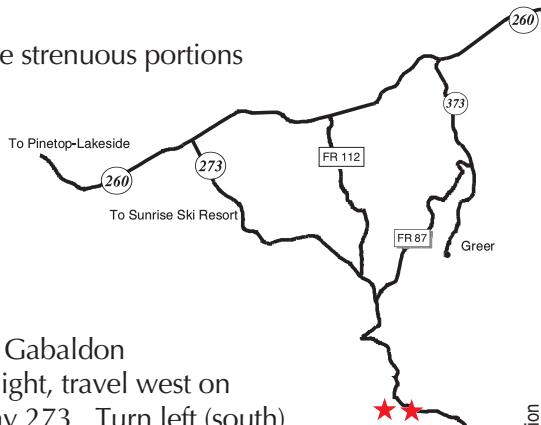
Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate with some strenuous portions
Equestrian — Moderate

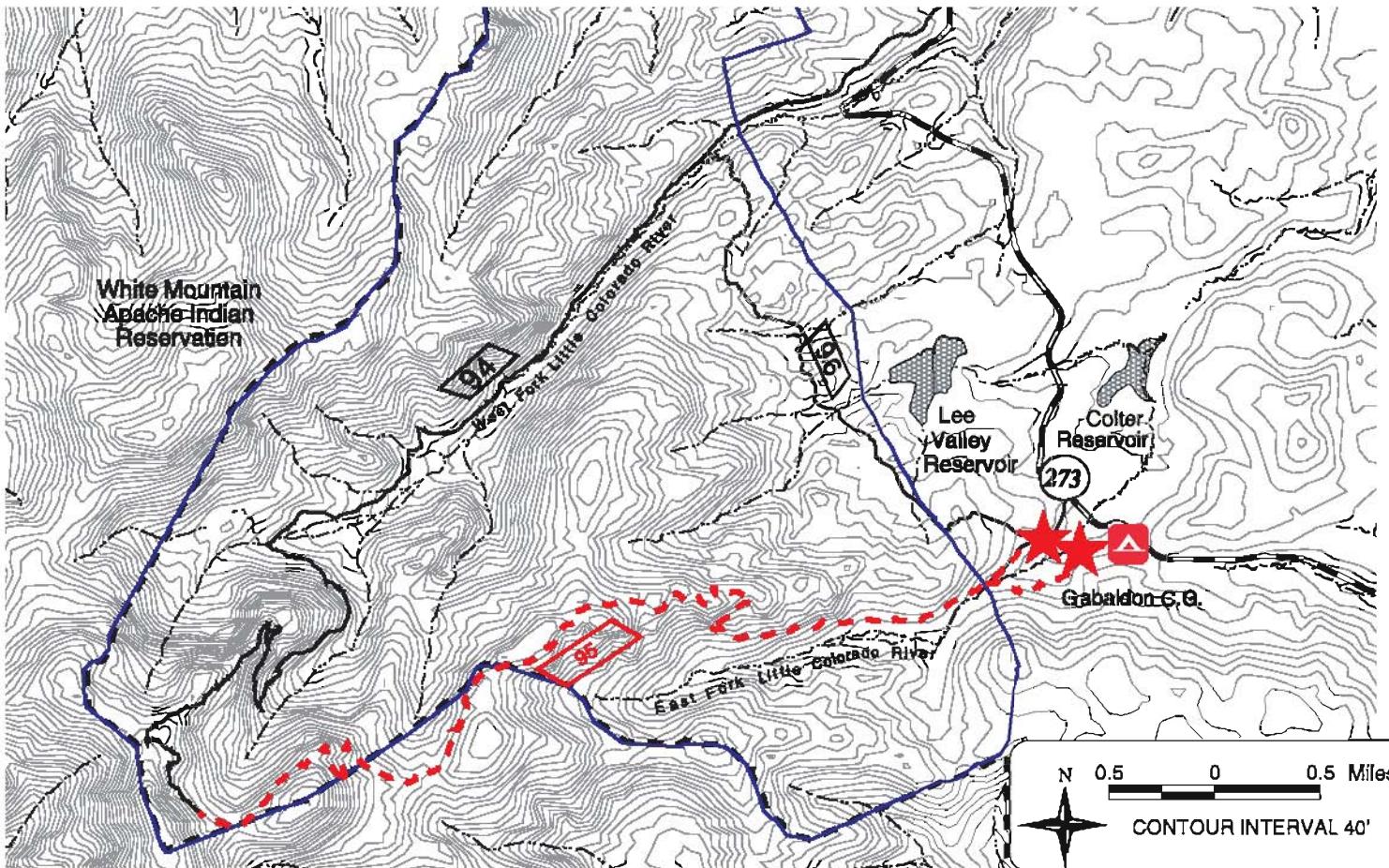
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers

USGS Topo Maps: Mount Baldy
Big Lake North

Trail Access: The best parking is at the rear of Gabaldon Campground (FR 113G). From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 17.1 miles to AZ Highway 273. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 273 for 10.9 miles. The trailhead is on the right.

Trail Description: This trail offers the opportunity to enjoy meadows, sandstone boulders, and stands of mixed conifer. There are some strenuous portions to this trail, making the panoramic views a true reward. This is a wilderness trail where rules pertaining to wilderness areas apply and are enforced. Mt. Baldy Wilderness maps are available at the Springerville Ranger District office. The summit of Mt. Baldy is on Fort Apache Indian Reservation land. This area has been closed to all non-tribal members by the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council. Group size is limited to 12 people.





Mt. Baldy Crossover Trail • 96

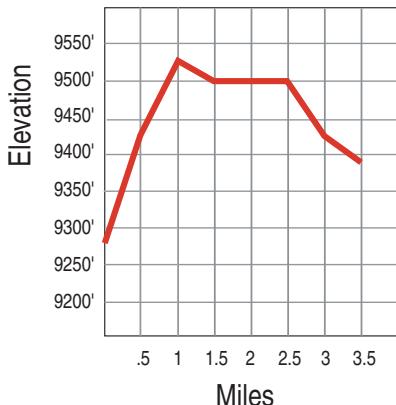


Distance: 3.5 miles

Difficulty: Hiking – Moderate to Difficult
Equestrian – Moderate to Difficult

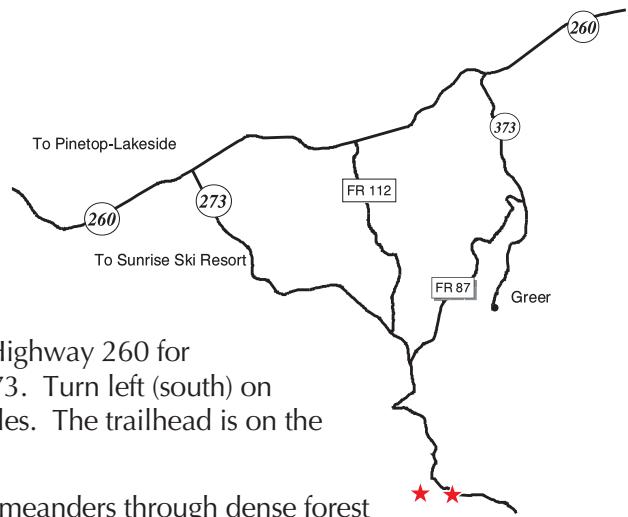
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers

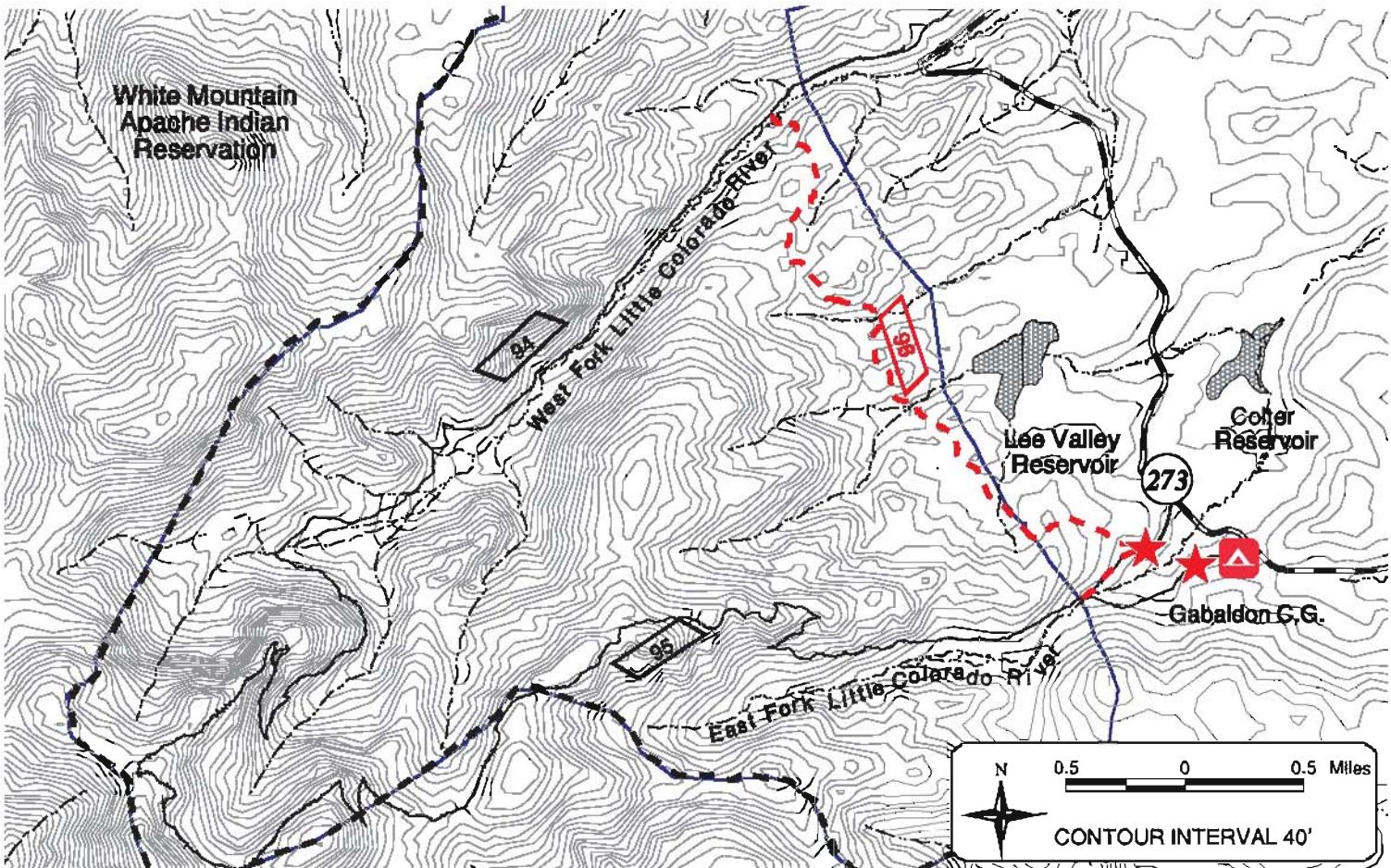
USGS Topo Maps: Mount Baldy
Big Lake North



Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 17.1 miles to AZ Highway 273. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 273 for 10.9 miles. The trailhead is on the right.

Trail Description: The trail meanders through dense forest with large, old ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and spruce. Portions cut through open meadows where it's a great place to watch wildlife nibbling on the tall grass. This trail connects West Baldy Trail to East Baldy Trail. Mt. Baldy Wilderness maps are available at the Springerville Ranger District office. Maximum group size is 12.





N 0.5 0 0.5 Miles

CONTOUR INTERVAL 40'

West Fork Trail • 94



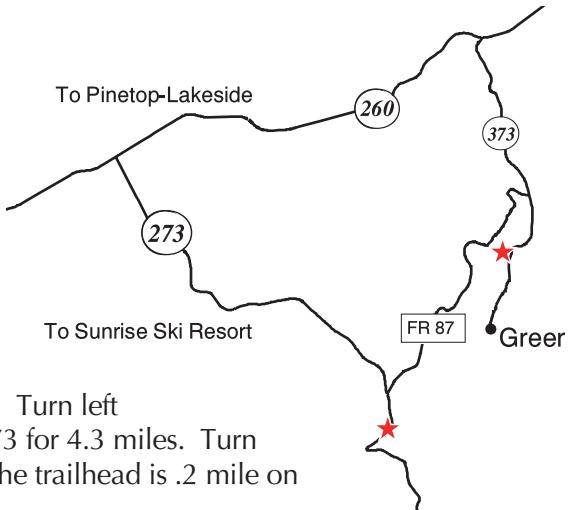
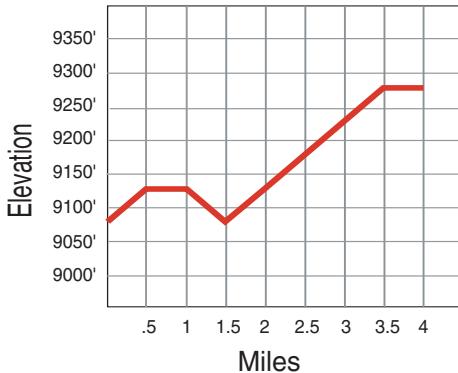
Distance: 4 miles

Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Mountain Biking — Moderate
Equestrian — Moderate

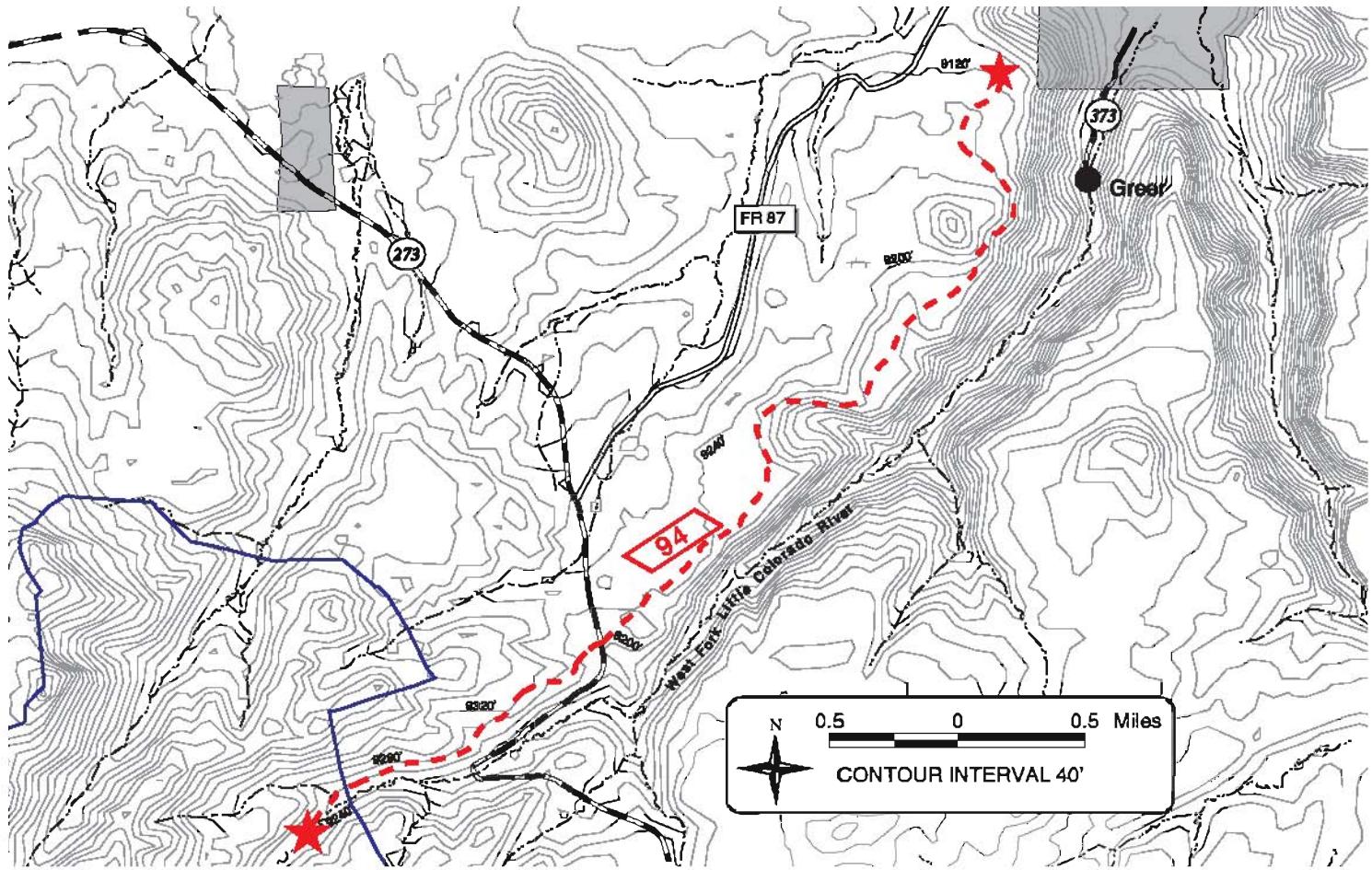
Trailhead Parking: Limited (1-2 cars)

USGS Topo Maps: Greer
Big Lake North

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 9.6 miles to AZ Highway 373. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 373 for 4.3 miles. Turn right on Osborne Road. The trailhead is .2 mile on the left.



Trail Description: West Fork Trail travels through a checkerboard of forest and meadows. Look for wildlife browsing at the forest edge. You can even enjoy the wild roses and raspberry bushes growing near the tank along the trail. West Fork Trail continues on into Mt. Baldy Wilderness where it becomes the West Baldy Trail.



East Fork Trail • 95



Distance: 7.5 miles

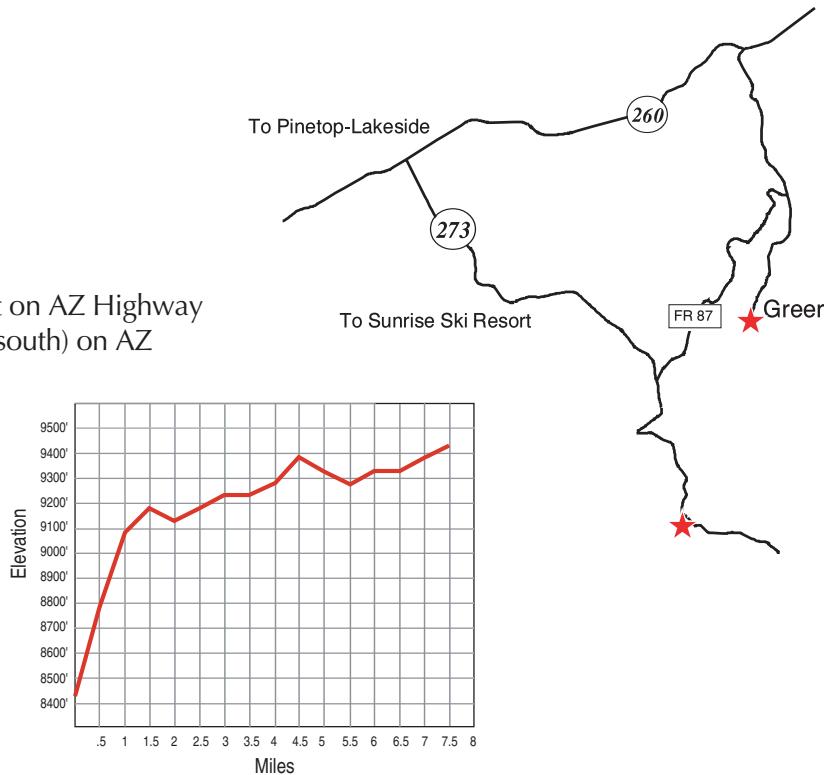
Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Equestrian — Moderate

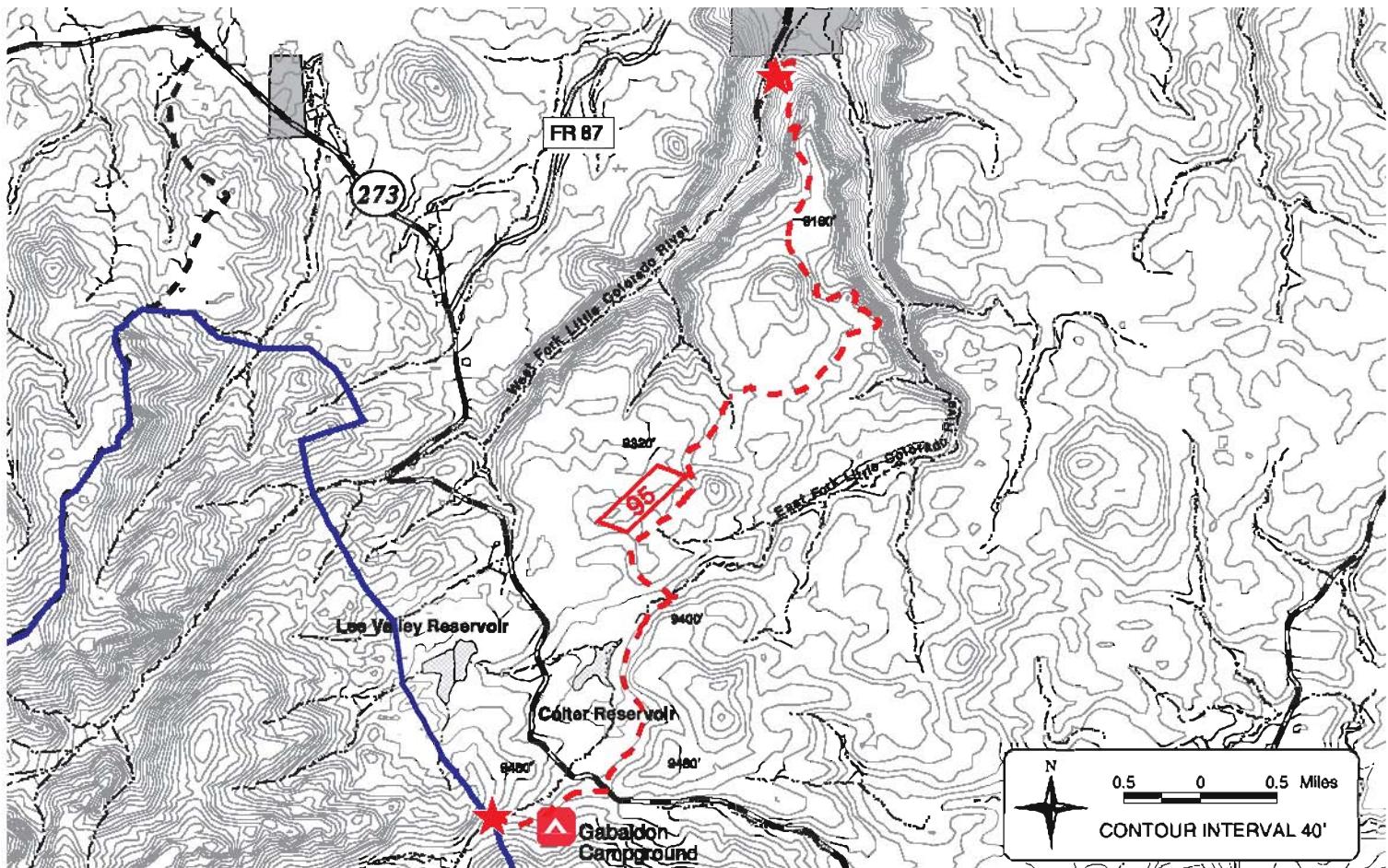
Trailhead Parking: Limited (5 cars)

USGS Topo Maps: Greer
Big Lake North

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 9.6 miles to AZ Highway 373. Turn Left (south) on AZ Highway 373 for 5.5 miles. The trailhead is on the left.

Trail Description: After crossing the West Fork of the Little Colorado River, the trail climbs steeply 600 feet in under an eighth of a mile toward Amberon Point. Once at Amberon Point, the trail continues on a more reasonable grade. This trail offers a variety of mixed conifer and open meadows, and continues past Gabaldon Campground into Mt. Baldy Wilderness.





Pole Knoll Recreation Area • 602



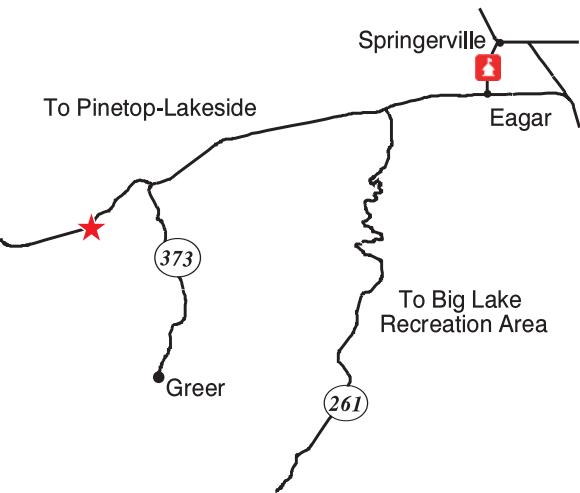
Distance: 18 miles for all trails
Trails vary in length, difficulty, and terrain

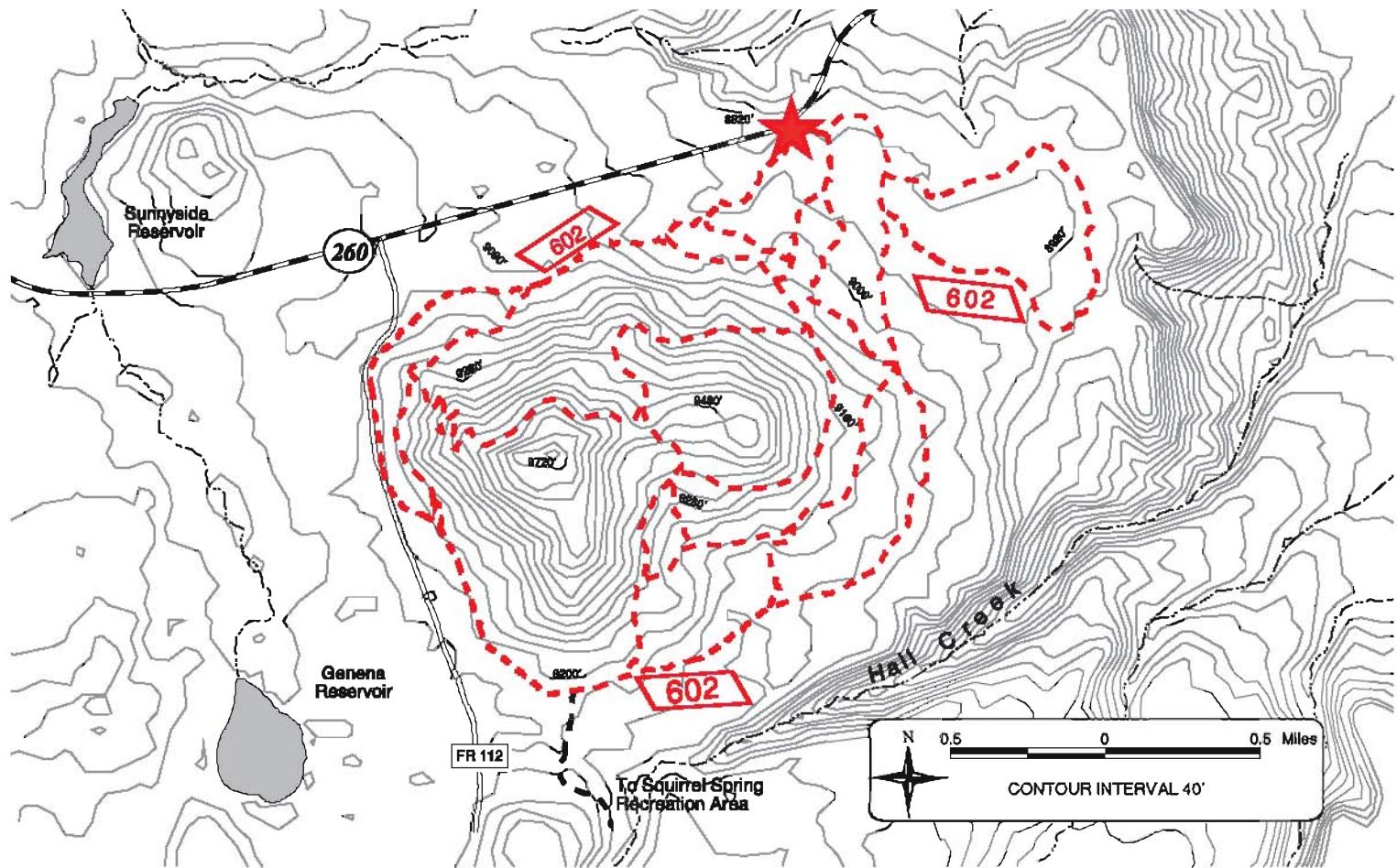
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers

USGS Topo Maps: Greer
Greens Peak

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 12 miles. The trailhead is on the left.

Trail Description: The majority of the trail system follows old logging roads. It is a wonderful maze of trails with a great mix of challenges. The elevation ranges from 8900' to 9600'. In the winter, the trails can be used for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. A more detailed trail map including trail name and length is available at the trailhead.





Squirrel Spring Recreation Area • 331



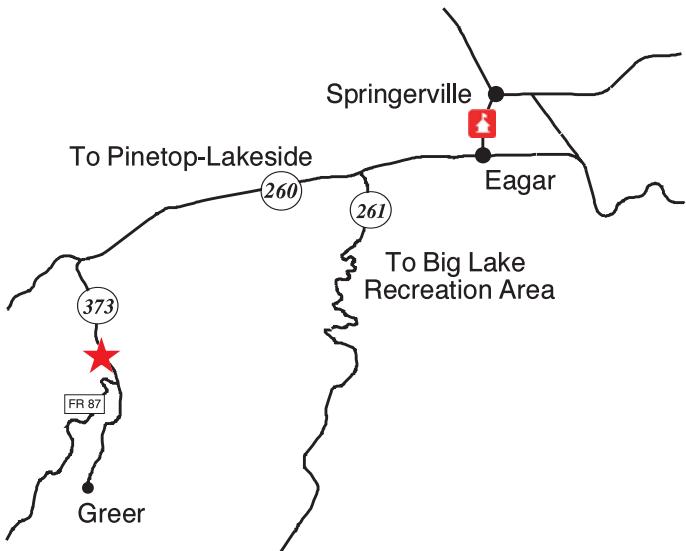
Distance: 14 miles for all trails
Trails vary in length, difficulty, and terrain

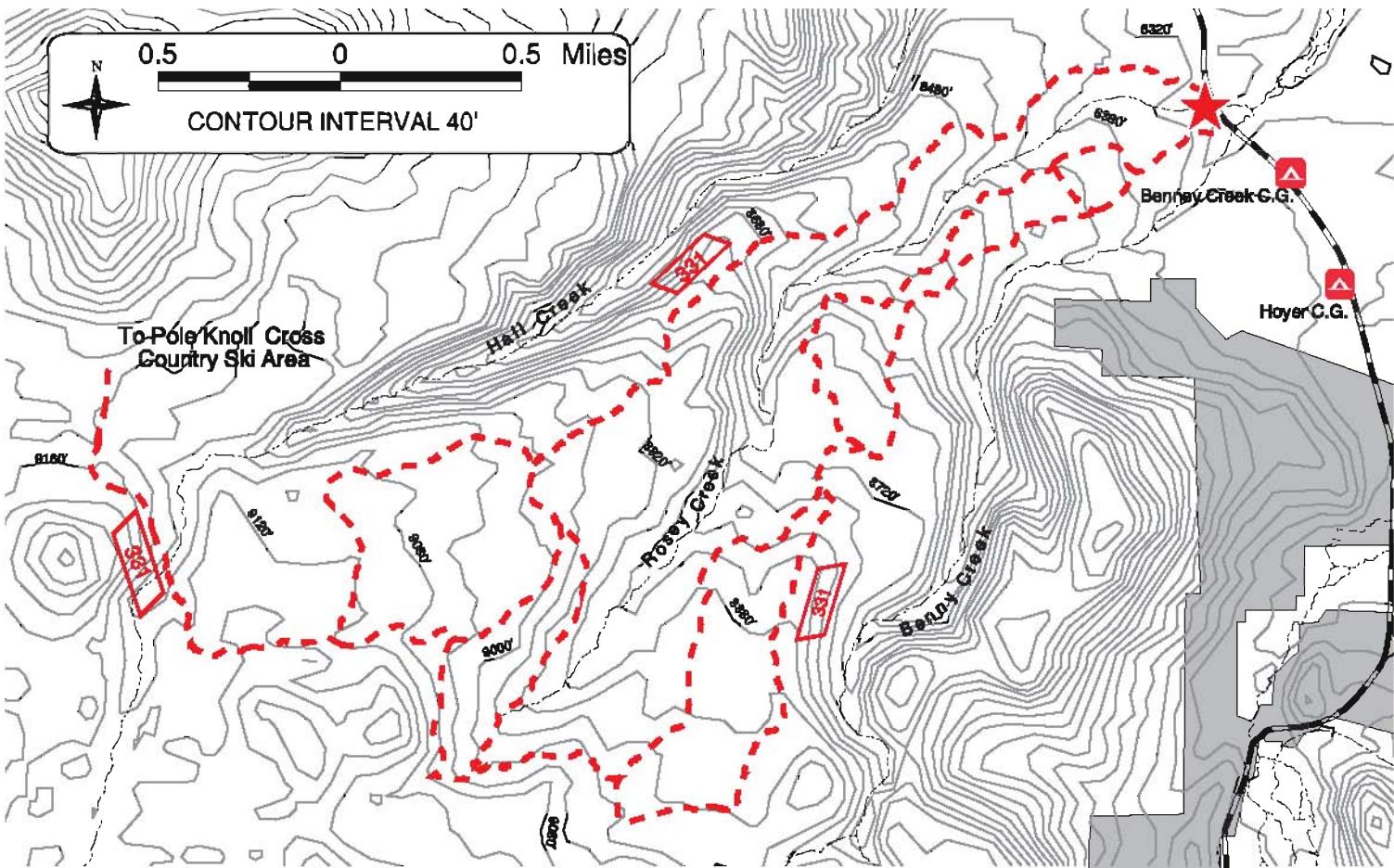
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers

USGS Topo Maps: Greer
Greens Peak

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 9.6 miles to AZ Highway 373. Turn Left (south) on AZ Highway 373 for 2.2 miles. The trailhead is on the right.

Trail Description: The majority of the trail system follows old logging roads. If you are staying at Hoyer or Benny Creek Campground, it would be a great place to take a quiet walk in the woods. In the winter, trails can be used for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.





Butler Canyon Trail • 98

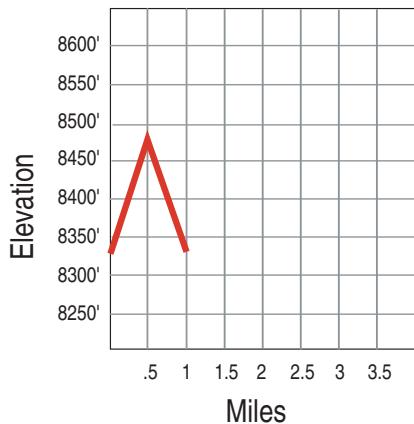


Distance: 1 mile

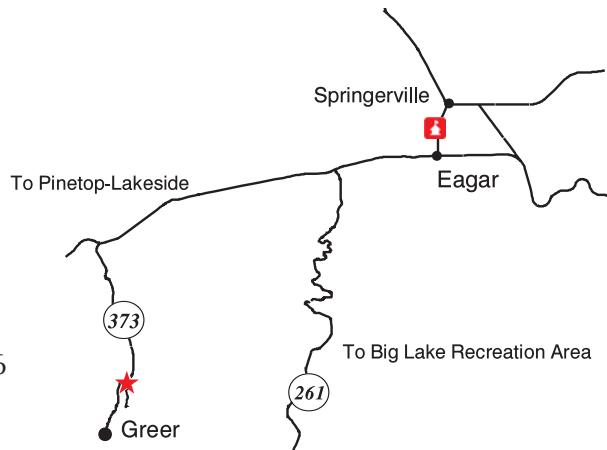
Difficulty: Hiking – Easy
Mountain Biking – Easy

Trailhead Parking: Limited (5-6 cars)

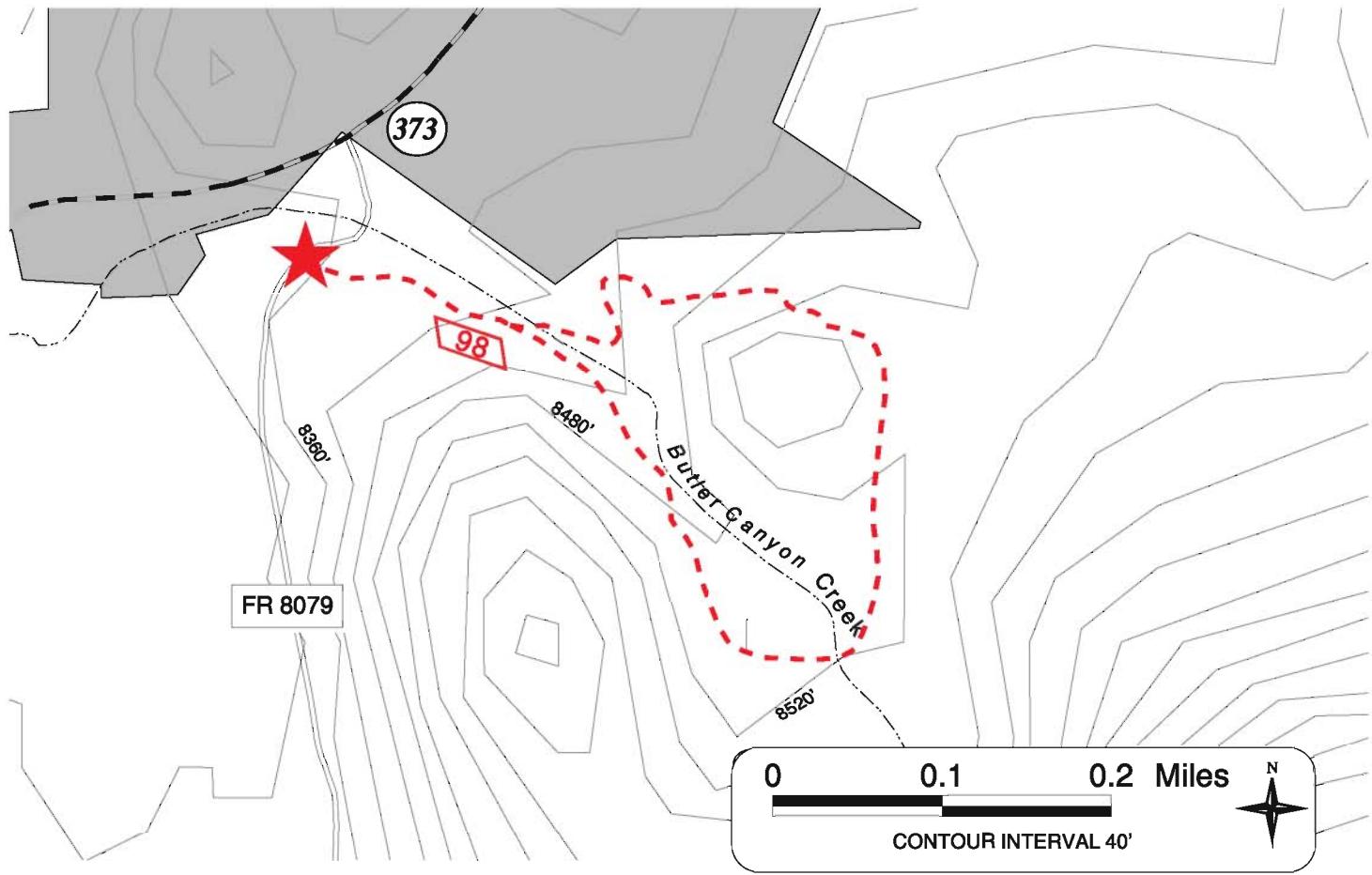
USGS Topo Maps: Greer



Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 9.6 miles to AZ Highway 373. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 373 for 4 miles. Turn left on County Road 1121 and the trailhead parking is on the right.



Trail Description: Butler Canyon Trail is a self-guided nature trail. Pamphlets are available at a sign-in station at the trailhead. The trail travels up Butler Canyon for about one half mile, then crosses a small stream before looping back.



Thompson Trail • 629



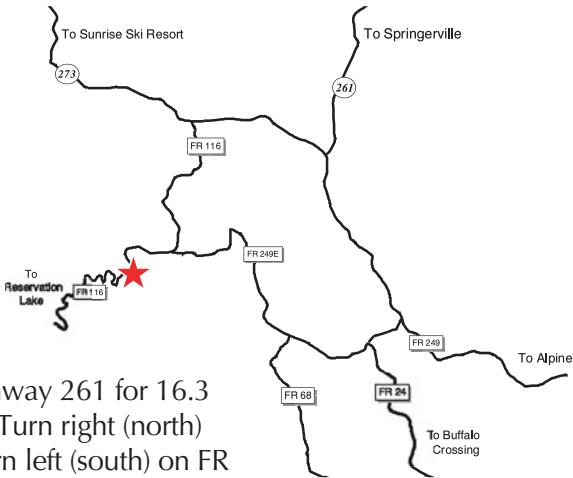
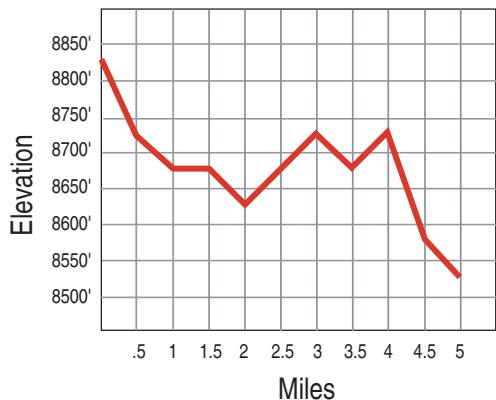
Distance: 5 miles (including Trail 630)

Difficulty: Hiking – Moderate

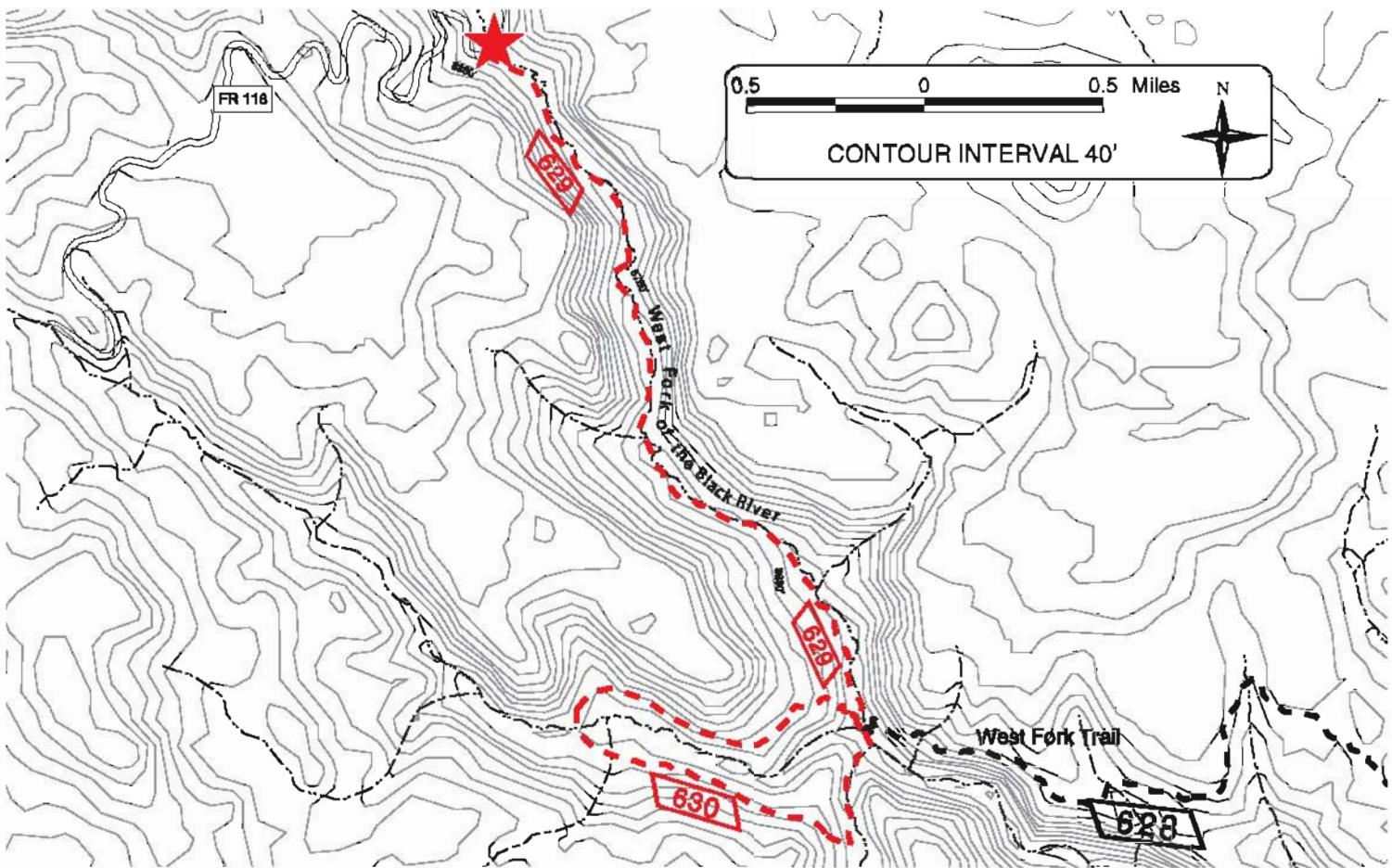
Trailhead Parking: Limited (5-6 cars)

USGS Topo Maps: Big Lake North
Big Lake South

Trail Access: From the stoplight in Eagar, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 2.8 miles to AZ Highway 261. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 261 for 16.3 miles to AZ Highway 273. Turn right (north) for 2.1 miles to FR 116. Turn left (south) on FR 116 for 3.5 miles. The trailhead is on the right.



Trail Description: Thompson Trail follows the West Fork of the Black River and passes through some of the most striking country to be seen on the district. This is high country; snowed in for nearly half the year and characterized by steep, timbered canyons and frequent meadows. Horses and bicycles are not allowed on this trail. Trail 630 can be accessed from Thompson Trail.



West Fork Trail • 628

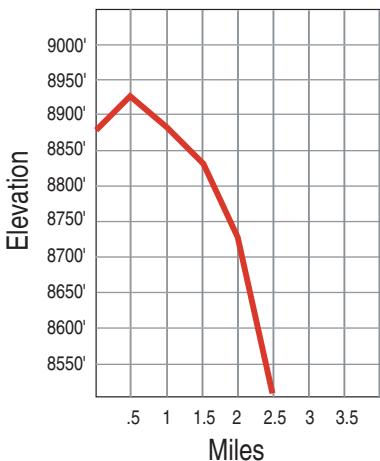


Distance: 2.5 miles

Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Mountain Biking — Moderate

Trailhead Parking: Limited (3-5 cars)

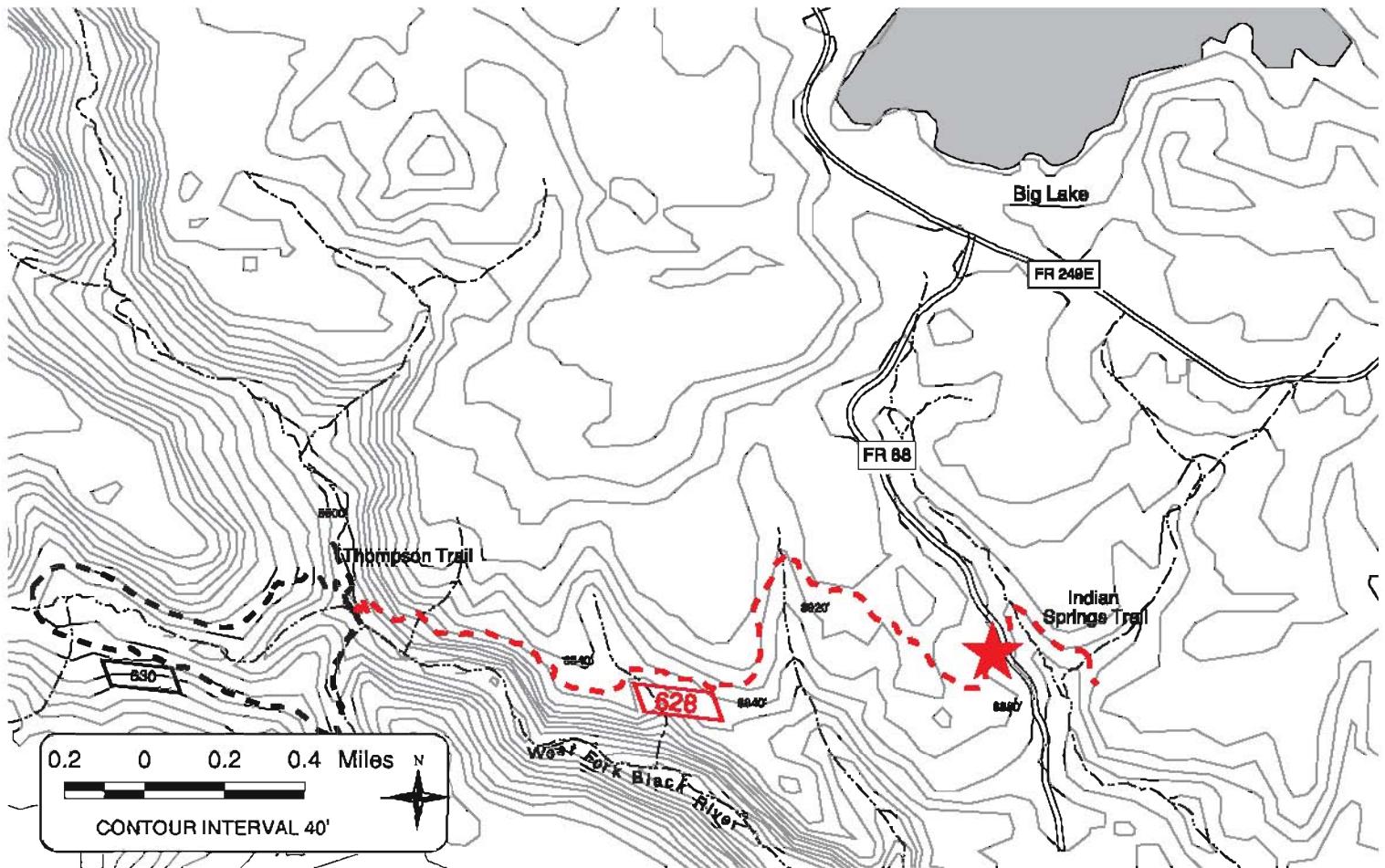
USGS Topo Maps: Big Lake South



Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 2.8 miles to AZ Highway 261. Turn left (southwest) on AZ Highway 261 for 16.3 miles to AZ Highway 273. Turn left (south) for 2.8 miles to FR 249E. Turn right (west) on FR 249E for 1.9 miles. Turn left (south) on FR 68 and the trailhead is 1.1 miles on the right.



Trail Description: The trail begins on a fairly level grade and takes you through stands of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and aspen, with some meadows thrown in for variety. This trail connects to Thompson Trail (630), and Indian Springs Trail (627). Horseback riding is not allowed on the West Fork Trail.



Indian Springs Trail • 627



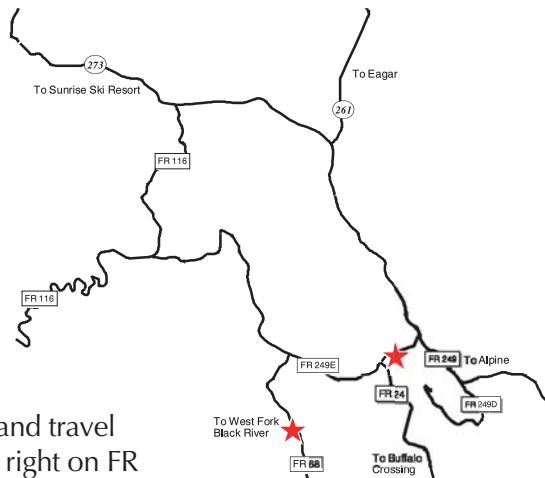
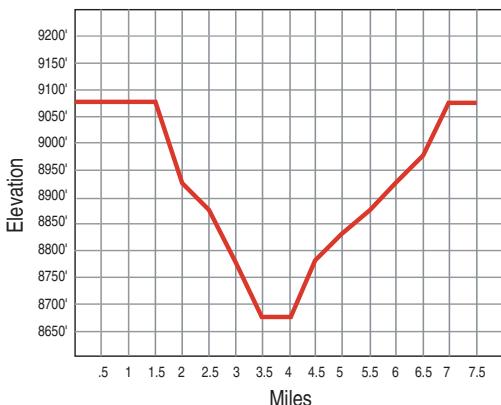
Distance: 7.5 miles

Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Mountain Biking — Moderate

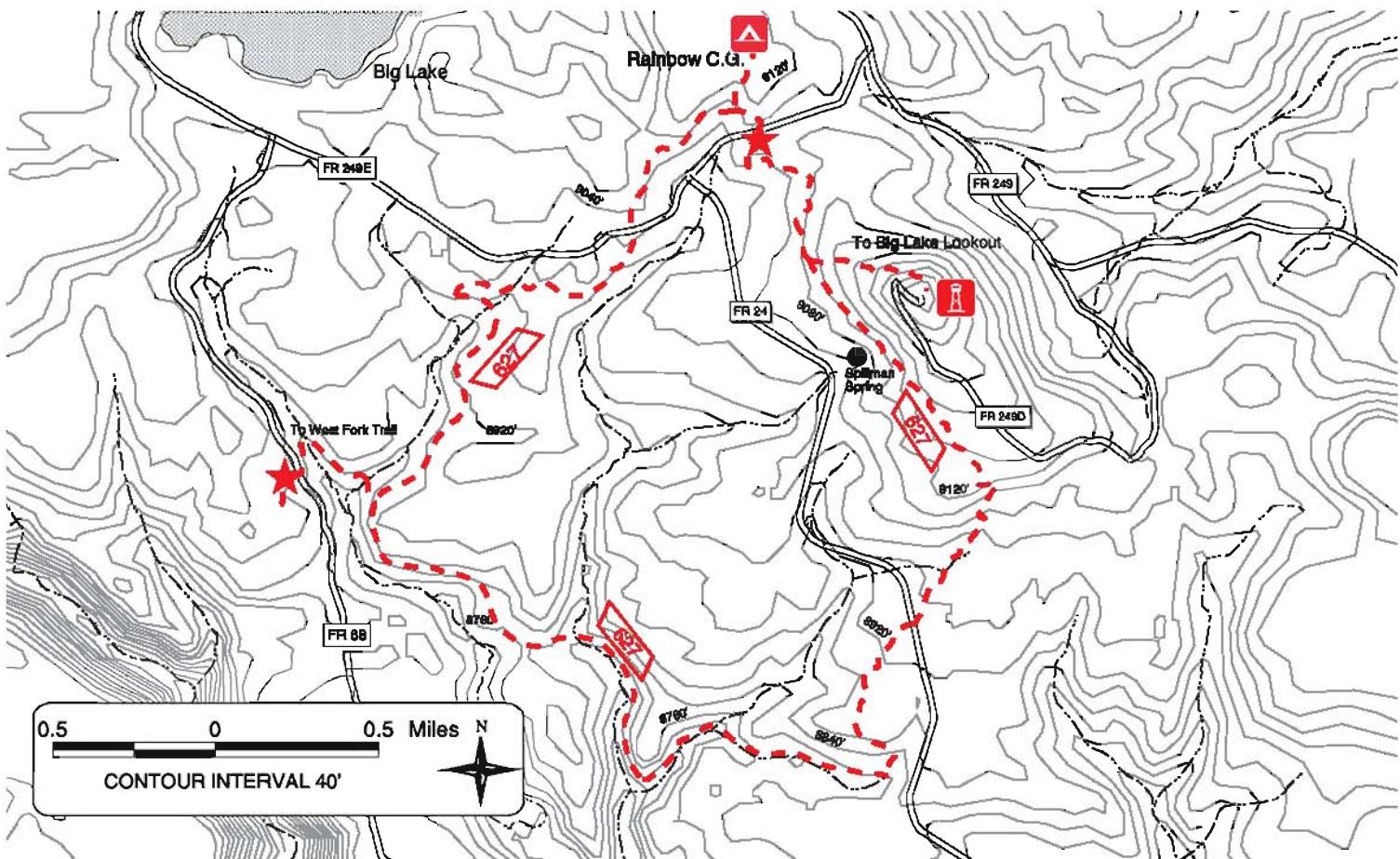
Trailhead Parking: Limited (5-6 cars)

USGS Topo Maps: Big Lake South

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 2.8 miles to AZ Highway 261. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 261 for 16.3 miles to AZ Highway 273 and turn left and travel 2.8 miles to FR 249E. Turn right on FR 249E and the trailhead is .3 mile on the left.



Trail Description: The trail is wide and graveled since part of the trail is the remnant of the Apache Railway Company's Maverick Line. Spur and connector trails lead to Big Lake Lookout, West Fork Trail, and Rainbow Campground. Look for the historic troughs by Spillman Springs. This trail is closed to horseback riding.



Big Lake Nature Trail • 603



Distance: .5 mile

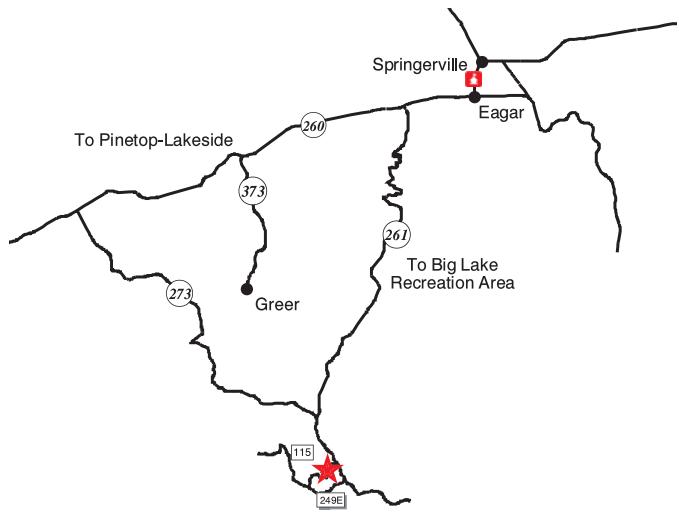
Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate

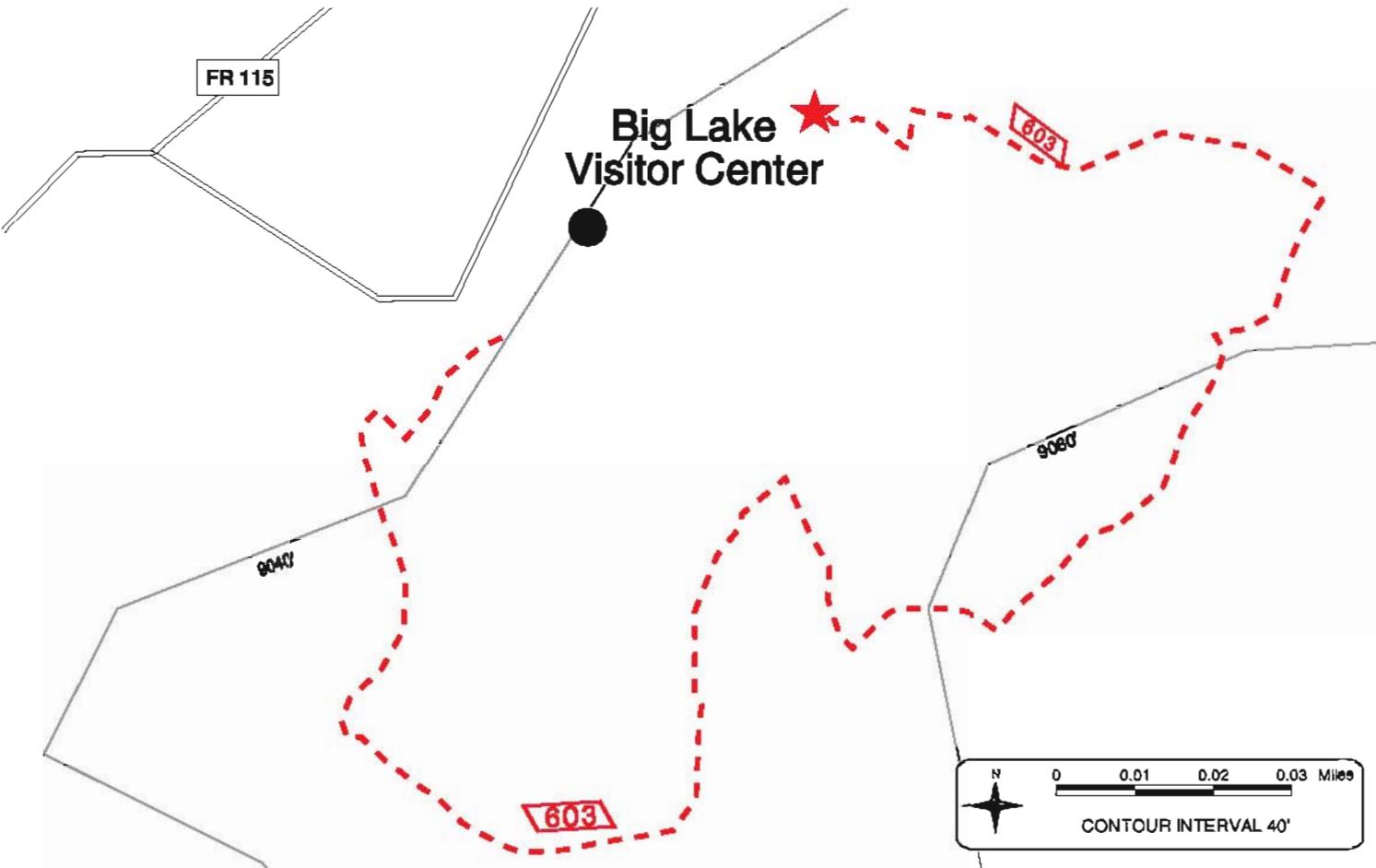
Trailhead Parking: Limited

USGS Topo Maps: Big Lake North

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 2.8 miles to AZ Highway 261. Turn left (south) on AZ Highway 261 for 16.3 miles to AZ Highway 273. Turn left for 2.2 miles to the Big Lake turnoff (FR 115). Turn right on FR 115 and travel a half mile. The visitor center is on the left. The trail starts there.

Trail Description: Big Lake Nature Trail is a self-guided trail. Pamphlets are available at the Big Lake Visitor Center. Many wonders of nature can be viewed in a short walk, making it a great place to take the family and view nature at its best. The first 300 feet of the trail is at a 10-15 percent grade. The last 100 feet of the trail goes through rock outcropping with some steep steps.





South Fork Trail • 97



Distance: 5.5 mile

Difficulty: Hiking — Moderate
Mountain Biking — Moderate
Equestrian — Moderate

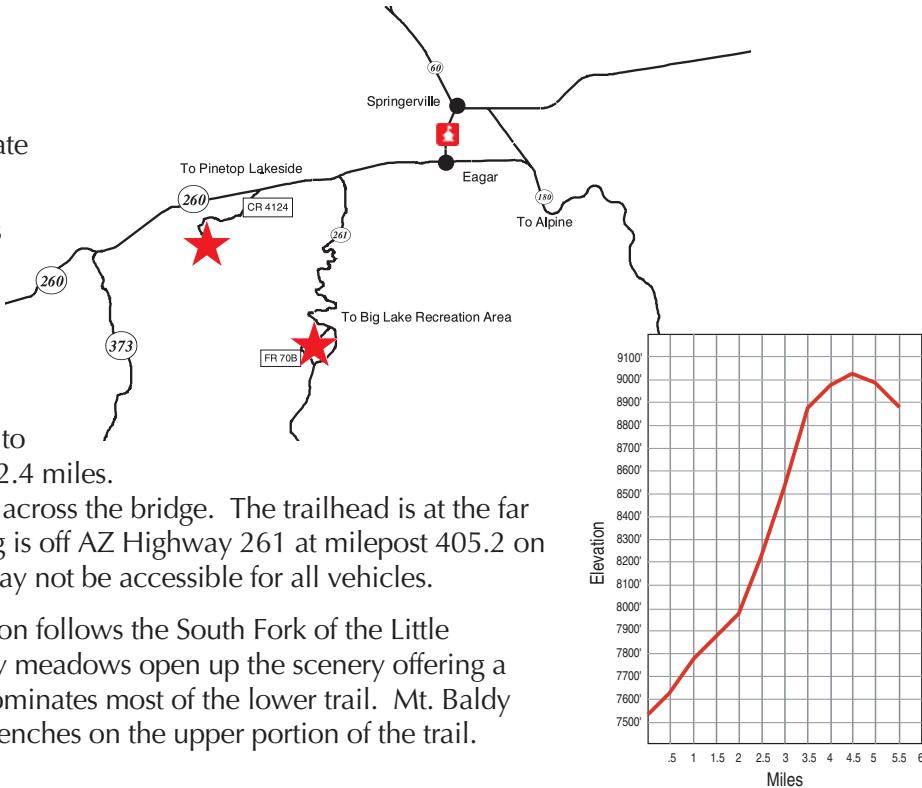
Trailhead Parking: Limited, No Trailers
(3 cars)

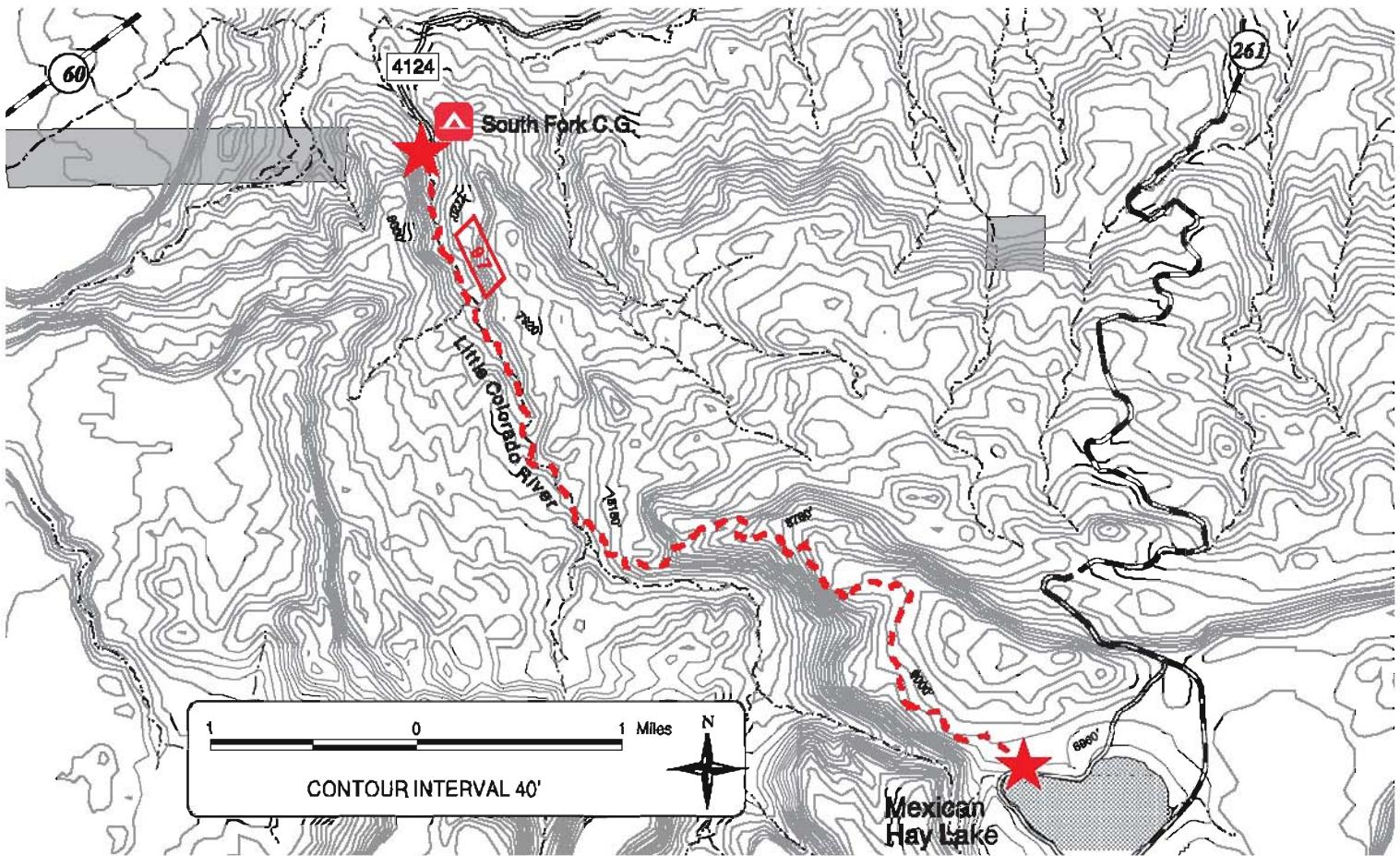
USGS Topo Maps: Greer
Eagar

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel west on AZ Highway 260 for 5 miles to CR 4124. Turn left (south) on CR 4124 for 2.4 miles.

Once in South Fork Campground turn right across the bridge. The trailhead is at the far end of the campground. Additional parking is off AZ Highway 261 at milepost 405.2 on FR 70B. This road is not maintained and may not be accessible for all vehicles.

Trail Description: The trail's northern portion follows the South Fork of the Little Colorado River for 3.5 miles. Several grassy meadows open up the scenery offering a change from the steep-sided canyon that dominates most of the lower trail. Mt. Baldy and Greens Peak can be viewed from the benches on the upper portion of the trail.





Saffel Canyon OHV Trail • 606



Distance: 25 miles

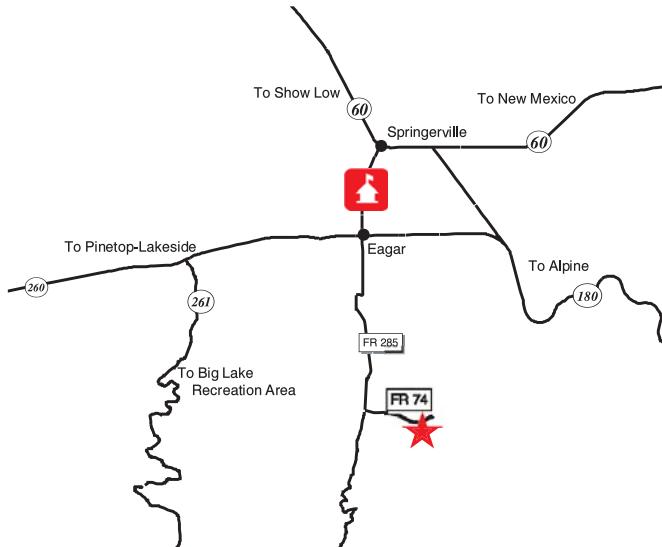
Difficulty: Moderate

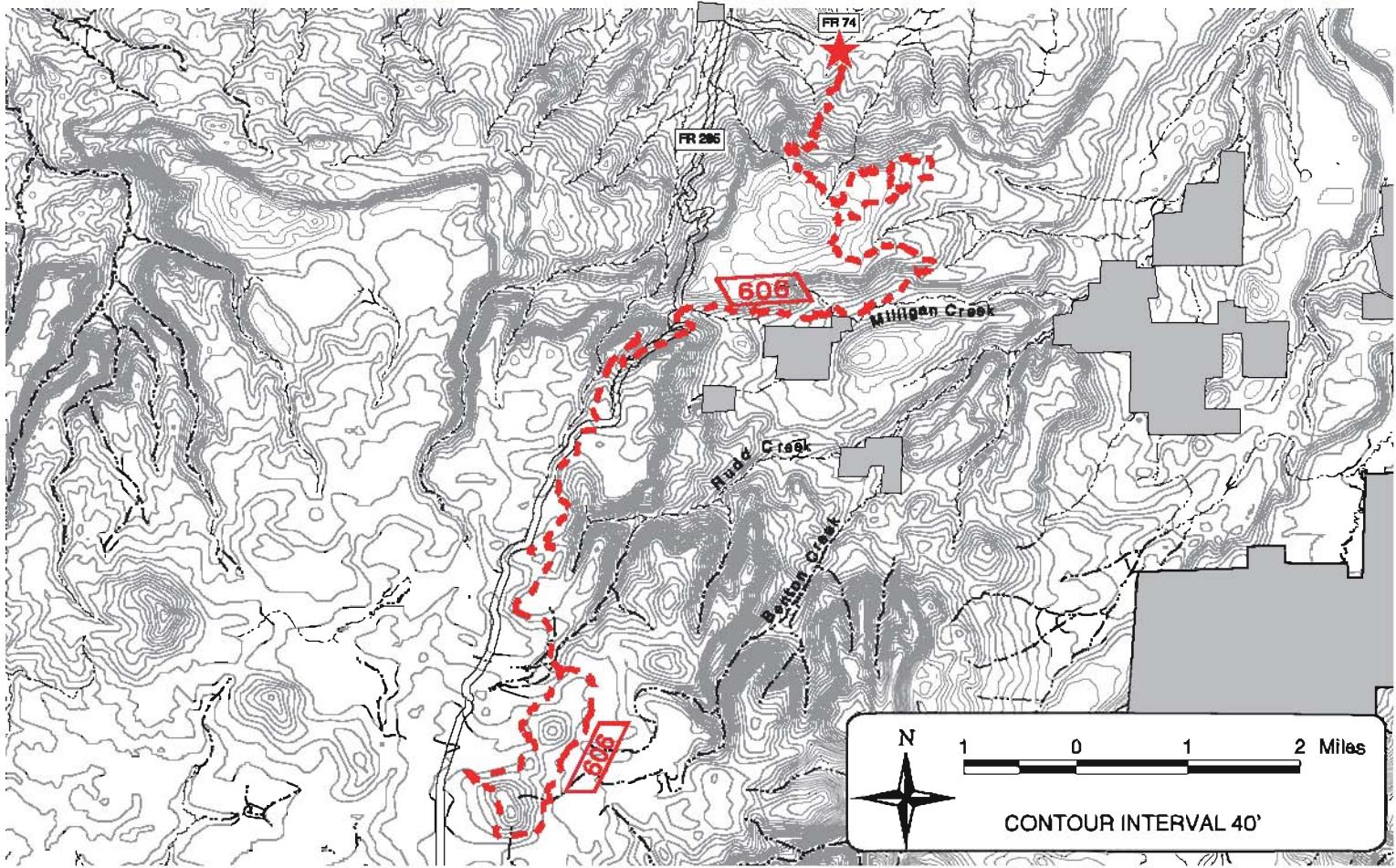
Trailhead Parking: Accommodates Trailers

USGS Topo Maps: Eagar
Rudd Knoll

Trail Access: From the Eagar stoplight, travel south on Mountain Avenue for 1 mile. Turn right (west) on Schoolbus Road for .1 mile. Turn left (south) on Water Canyon Road (FR 285) for 1.8 miles. Turn left (east) on FR 74 for .9 mile. Turn right (south) on FR 74D. The trailhead is on the right.

Trail Highlights: Saffel Canyon OHV Trail includes some of the most spectacular views in the White Mountains. The trail begins at an elevation of 7600 feet at Saffel Canyon and climbs to 9400 feet at Pat Knoll. The trail goes through three distinct vegetation zones: piñon-juniper, ponderosa pine, and mixed conifer.







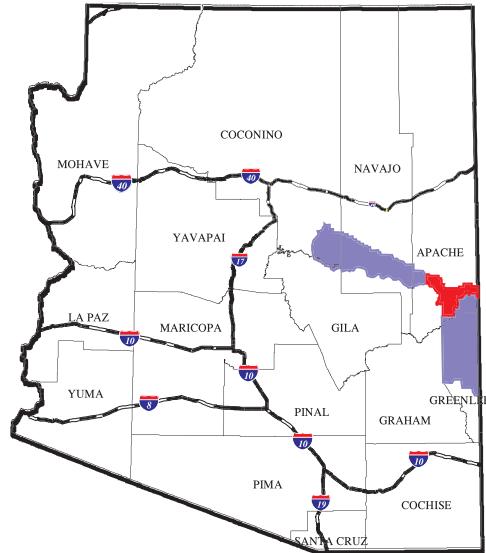
On Saffel Canyon OHV Trail looking east toward Escudilla Mountain.

Notes

For More Information . . .
about Springerville Ranger District
trails and other recreation
opportunities on National Forest
System lands, contact:

Springerville Ranger District
P.O. Box 760
Springerville, AZ 85938
Voice: (928) 333-4372
TTY: (928) 333-6335

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Supervisor's Office
P.O. Box 640
Springerville, AZ 85938
Voice: (928) 333-4301
TTY: (928) 333-6292



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