

# HIKING

## IN CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT

Each year thousands of hikers, nature lovers, and bird watchers enjoy the solitude of Chiricahua's pristine wilderness. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge set this area aside

as a national monument, preserving 11,000 acres of pinnacles, spires, columns and balanced rocks. The 1984 Arizona wilderness bill added an additional 850 acres to Chiricahua,

bringing the acreage to roughly 12,000. Today, miles of maintained day-use trails provide an enjoyable close-up opportunity to experience the "wonderland of rocks."

### SOME PRECAUTIONS

- Overnight camping or backpacking is not allowed on any monument trail.
- Creek crossings can be hazardous during flash floods or snow melt.
- Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes with good soles.
- Carry drinking water and a snack with you.
- Allow horses the right-of-way and stand quietly to the side of the trail.
- Carry rain gear or a poncho during the summer monsoon season.
- If you're caught in a thunderstorm, stay low, avoid open areas, and retreat to your vehicle as

quickly as possible.

- Plan to return before dark and set an easy pace. Most people can walk two miles per hour. The warm summer sun and higher elevations can be exhausting. **If you have shortness of breath or heart problems, it's not advisable to take any of the longer hikes.**
- Watch for rattlesnakes. During the warm, wet months of July and August, be careful where you put your hands, where you sit, and where you walk. If you encounter a rattlesnake, give it a wide berth and a chance to escape. **Remember, all snakes are protected by law!**

- Dogs **on a leash** are permitted on the Bonita Creek Loop, Bonita Creek Trail, Faraway Ranch Trail, and the connecting trails from Silver Spur Meadow to the Campground and Visitor Center.
- Dogs are **not** permitted on any wilderness trails. This is for their protection as well as for the safety of the wildlife in the park.
- Keep the trails enjoyable for yourself and others, carry out all trash and take care not to disturb or injure the monument's natural features. **All aspects of the monument are protected, including plants, animals, and mineral resources.**

### THE TRAILS

*The following descriptions are intended to help you decide which trail is best suited to your interest and enjoyment.*

#### BONITA CREEK LOOP

LENGTH: .2 mile (round trip)

GRADE: A

ACCESS: The Bonita Creek parking lot.

TRAIL: This short level loop around the picnic area takes you along the intermittent stream of Bonita Creek. Watch for Apache plume and prickly poppy blooms in the spring and early summer. Whitetail deer are frequently seen in the lower portion of Bonita Canyon. This is a good birding trail.

#### BONITA CREEK TRAIL

LENGTH: .5 mile (one way)

GRADE: A

ACCESS: The Bonita Creek parking lot or Faraway Ranch parking lot.

TRAIL: Winding along Bonita Creek, this level trail connects the Faraway Ranch and Bonita Creek Picnic Area. Look for quail, migrating birds, deer and an occasional coatimundi or javelina.

#### CAMPGROUND TO SILVER SPUR MEADOW TRAIL / VISITOR CENTER TO SILVER SPUR MEADOW TRAIL

LENGTH: .2 mile (each)

GRADE: A

ACCESS: By the Group Campsite in the campground or the west end of the Visitor Center.

TRAIL: This offers an alternate route to the Visitor Center through excellent birding habitat and riparian forest with a short side trip to Silver Spur Meadow and the site of the Civilian Conservation Corps camp.

#### FARAWAY RANCH HISTORIC TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.2 miles (one way)

GRADE: A

ACCESS: The Faraway Ranch parking area.

TRAIL: This trail takes you to the historic ranch that was homesteaded by Neil and Emma Erickson. It continues past the Stafford Cabin, one of the original structures in Bonita Canyon and Silver Spur Meadow, and splits either northeast to the campground or southeast to the Visitor Center. There are several stream crossings. Use caution when water is flowing. Crossing may not be possible when the water level is high.

#### ECHO CANYON LOOP TRAIL

LENGTH: 3.5 miles (includes Hailstone Trail)

GRADE: C

ACCESS: Near the end of Bonita Canyon scenic drive at Echo Canyon parking area.

TRAIL: The trail winds through spectacular rock formations to a dense wooded area called Echo Park and returns via the Hailstone Trail. This short loop provides one of the most scenic experiences in the park.

#### HAILSTONE TRAIL

LENGTH: .8 mile

GRADE: B

ACCESS: The junction of the Echo Canyon trail and the Upper Rhyolite trail, or the junction of the Massai Point connection trail.

TRAIL: Because it is mostly level on the sunny south-facing slope, it gets very hot in the summer. Look for volcanic hailstones about half way between the trail junctions.

#### HEART OF ROCKS TRAIL

LENGTH: 7.3 miles via Hailstone or 7.2 miles via Sarah Deming

GRADE: D

ACCESS: The Echo Canyon or Massai Point parking areas at the end of the 8-mile scenic drive.

TRAIL: The trail descends through cool pine and fir forests with excellent views of the Totem Pole, Big Balanced Rock, and many other well-known rock features. Leave the main trail just beyond Big Balanced Rock for a short side trip (.9 mile loop) into the Heart of Rocks area. The return trip may be made via Sarah Deming Canyon, the Hailstone Trail, or back to Massai Point.

#### INSPIRATION POINT TRAIL

LENGTH: 1 mile (round trip)

GRADE: B

ACCESS: Heart of Rocks trail, approximately two miles from the Echo Canyon or Massai Point parking areas.

TRAIL: A short side trip through pine and juniper forests offering spectacular views down the full length of Rhyolite Canyon.

#### MASSAI POINT NATURE TRAIL

LENGTH: .5 miles

GRADE: A

ACCESS: Near the exhibit building at Massai Point.

TRAIL: A balanced rock, lookout point, views across Rhyolite Canyon to the west, and a description of the park's geologic story, are a few of the highlights along this self-guided nature trail.

#### NATURAL BRIDGE TRAIL

LENGTH: 2.4 miles (one way)

GRADE: C

ACCESS: The trail head on the Bonita Canyon scenic drive, approximately 1.25 miles beyond the Visitor Center.

TRAIL: Featuring a small natural rock bridge at the end of the trail, it climbs through oak and juniper woodlands to an Apache pine forest in Picket Park. The return trip is along the same route.

#### RHYOLITE CANYON TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.5 miles (one way)

GRADE: C

ACCESS: The Visitor Center parking area.

TRAIL: The trail climbs out of lower Bonita Canyon into the upper segments of Rhyolite Canyon and offers access to Heart of Rocks and Echo Canyon areas whenever inclement weather or rock slides temporarily close the scenic drive. From the junction at Sarah Deming Canyon, the left fork will lead into upper Rhyolite Canyon and access Echo Park. The right fork leads into Sarah Deming Canyon towards the Heart of Rocks area.

#### SARAH DEMING TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.5 miles (one way)

GRADE: D

ACCESS: The Heart of Rocks trail or Rhyolite Canyon trail.

TRAIL: Mostly shaded with lots of oak and pine, this is a strenuous climb, gaining almost 1,200 feet in one and one-half miles.

#### SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN TRAIL

LENGTH: .9 miles (one way)

GRADE: B

ACCESS: The parking area off Bonita Canyon scenic drive near the base of Sugarloaf Mountain.

TRAIL: One of the highest elevation areas in the park, it offers exciting views in all directions. The return trip is along the same route. During the summer months, lightning activity is monitored from the fire lookout.

#### UPPER RHYOLITE TRAIL

LENGTH: 1.1 miles (one way)

GRADE: B

ACCESS: The junction of the Echo Canyon and Hailstone trails, or the junction of the Rhyolite and Sarah Deming trails.

TRAIL: Mostly downhill from Echo Canyon with one uphill portion after the last stream crossing, this pleasant connecting trail crosses Rhyolite Creek in several places. It winds through shaded oak and pine woodland, and is a great place to see seasonal birds.

#### GRADES

*A= Easy. Fairly level terrain with very little change in elevation.*

*B=Moderate. Well maintained trails with elevation changes of approximately 500 feet.*

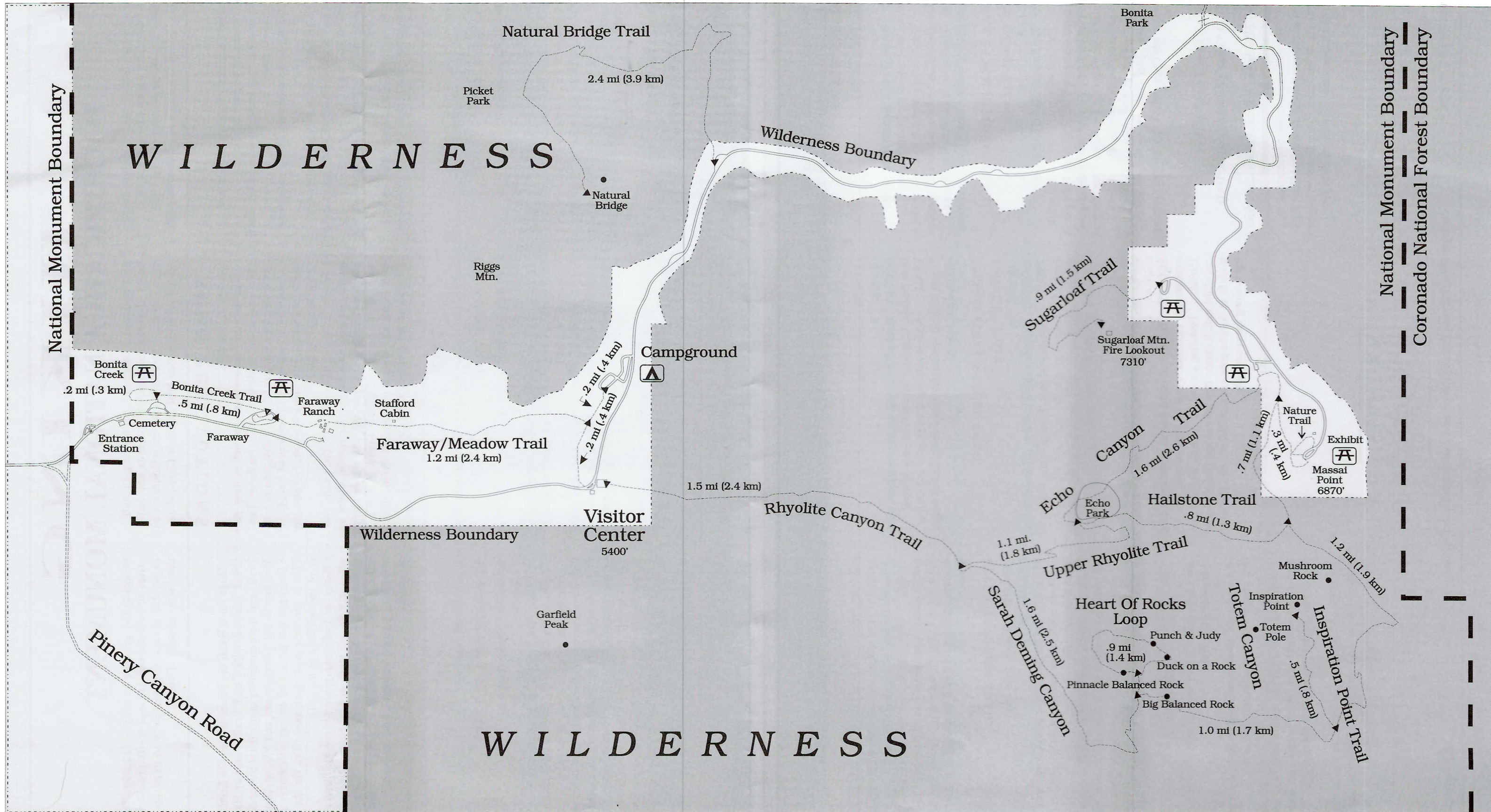
*C=Moderate to difficult. Well maintained trails with steep switchbacks. Most people can hike two to four miles per hour on these trails.*

*D=Difficult. Most people can hike one to three miles per hour on these trails. Elevation changes of approximately 500 to 1,000 feet.*



# CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



**LEGEND**

- Hiking Trails
- Roads
- Wilderness Boundary
- Picnic Area
- Beginning & End of Trail

*\*Map includes only a portion of the entire monument. Revised 1/18/94.*

### TRAIL MAP

