

TRAIL *of the* MOUNTAIN SPIRITS



NATIONAL
SCENIC BYWAY

IMAGINE . . .

The spirits that walk these mountain trails, Ancient Mogollon, Mimbreno and Apache, Conquistadors, Mountain Men and Soldiers, The Miners and Cattlemen of the old west

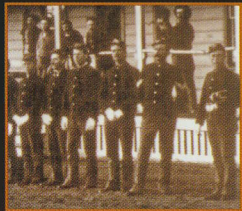


Photo: Ysabel Luecke

Foam excerpt from "Trail of the Mountain Spirits" by Diana Kendall-Dobbs

Photo: Chris Runoff



GILA CLIFF DWELLINGS

contain the ruins of interlinked cave dwellings built in five cliff alcoves by the Mogollon peoples, who lived in these cliff dwellings from between 1275 and 1300 CE. Archeologists have identified 46 rooms in the five caves, and believe they were occupied by 10 to 15 families. It is not known why the dwellings were abandoned. Hopi oral tradition says migrations occurred due to cycles of beliefs and in response to changing climate.

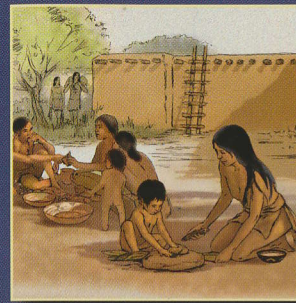


Illustration: Karen Carr

MIMBRES CULTURE HERITAGE SITE

and the Mattocks Ruin are a collection of large pit house and pueblo villages built upon one another as the Mimbres people rebuilt their homes from 550 to 1140 CE. The Mimbres were a sub-group of the "Mogollon" -

early Puebloans who lived in the southwest and northern Mexico. From hunting and gathering, they transitioned to farming and building villages. The site, located just off the Byway, is the only Mimbres archeological site open to the public. Another Mimbres village, the TJ Site, lies unexcavated near Gila Cliff Dwellings. A sister site to MCHS, it predates the Tularosa-Mogollon phase found at the cliff dwellings.



WILDLIFE OF THE GILA FOREST



Photo: Gary Webb



Photo: SaaranMedia



Photo: SaaranMedia



Photo: Jon Lowes



Photo: Dale A. Zimmerman, WNWU

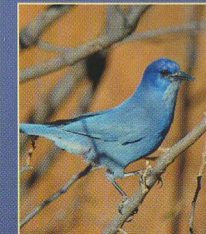


Photo: Bill Kramer

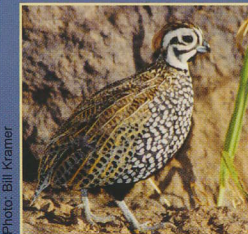


Photo: Sid & Shirley Rucker

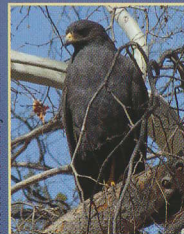


Photo: Dale A. Zimmerman, WNWU

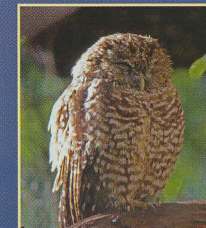


Photo: Rick Greenspan

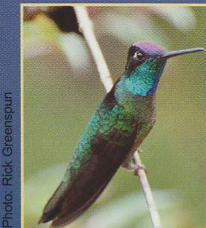


Photo: Don R. Faulkner

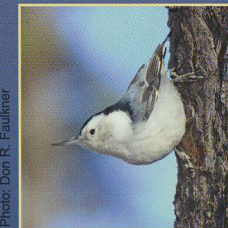
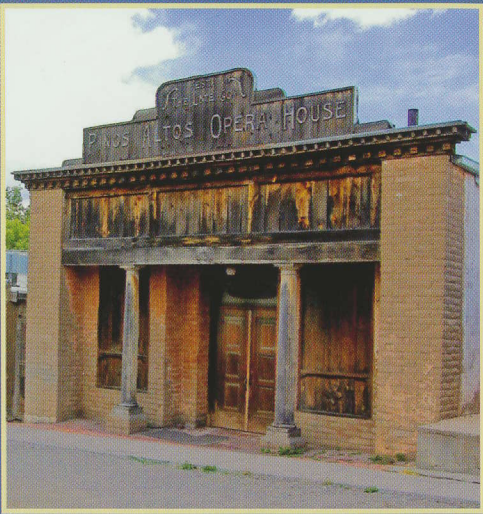


Photo: Ken Allen

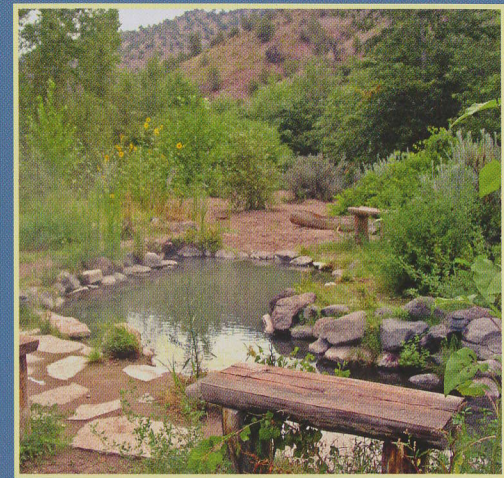
Excellent year-round birding can be found along the Byway. A variety of habitats attract 339 bird species - 9 of these, hummingbirds. A Forest Service Bird Checklist and copies of the SW NM Birding Trail Map are available. For an online map and local birding information, visit: www.swnmaudubon.com

TRAIL OF THE MOUNTAIN SPIRITS

NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY



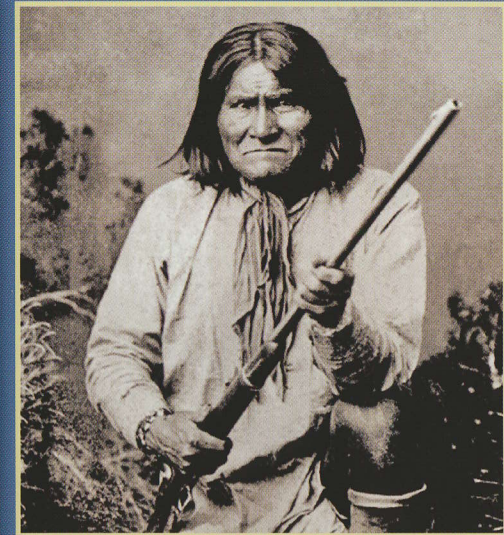
① PINOS ALTOS Founded as a mining settlement in 1860, it was once the county seat. The original courthouse, Hearst Church, Buckhorn Saloon and opera house still stand.



② GILA HOT SPRINGS Plentiful hot springs attracted early Paleo-Indians as well as Apaches and early settlers to this area.



⑩ FORT BAYARD Built in 1866 to protect mining and ranching interests from the threat of Apache, this US Army post was home to several companies of Buffalo Soldiers. It later became a TB sanatorium in 1900.



③ GERONIMO MEMORIAL The legendary Apache leader was born nearby at the Gila River headwaters in the early 1820s. His family band, Bedonkohe of the Chiricahua, consider the Gila their homeland.

Photo: Adell Kirsman

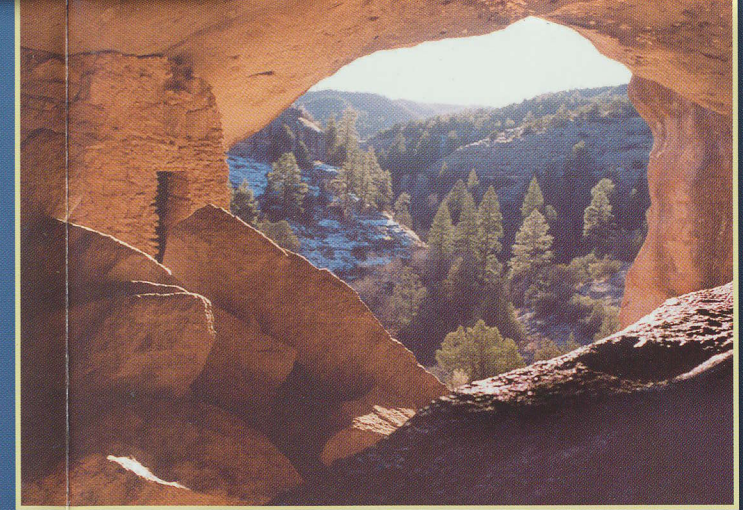


9 SANTA RITA OPEN PIT COPPER MINE The oldest continually operated copper mine in the US and one of the largest pit operations.

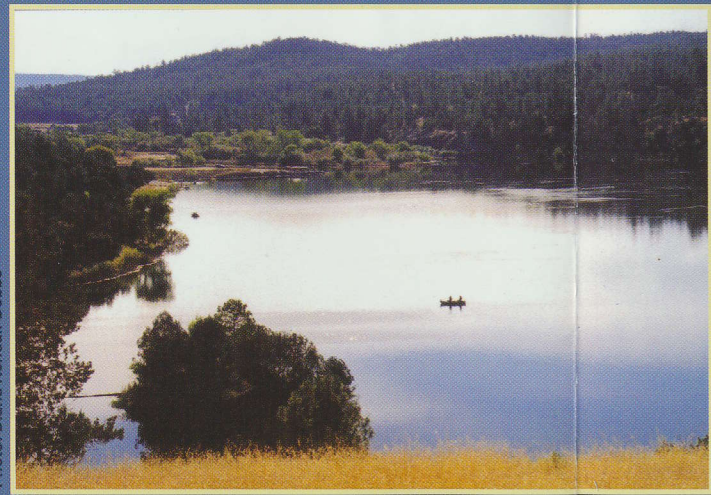


8 MIMBRES CULTURE HERITAGE SITE The world famous Mattocks Archeological Site is a collection of large pit houses and pueblo villages built upon one another as the Mimbres people rebuilt their homes. Open to the public.

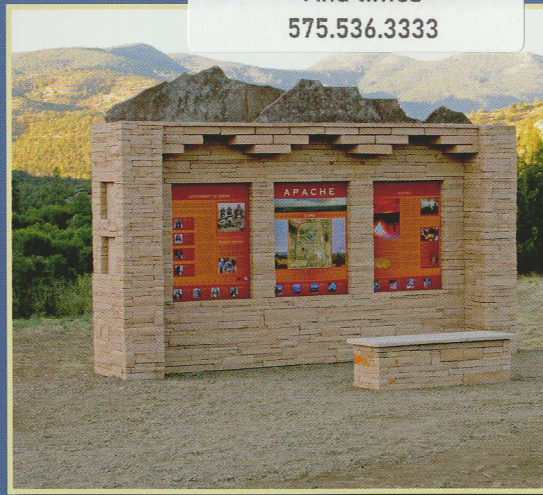
Call for OPEN dates
And times
575.536.3333



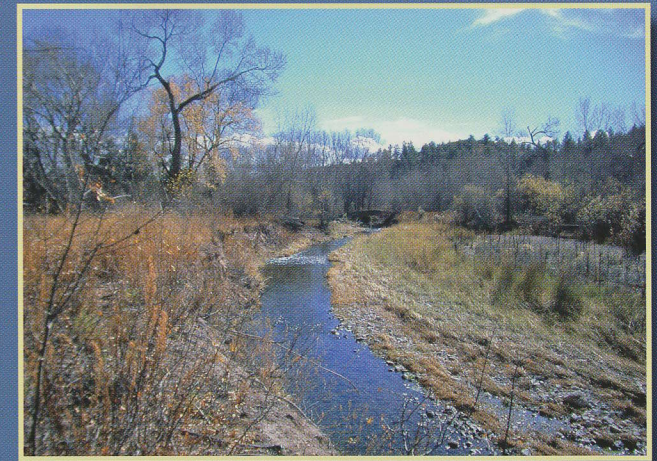
4 GILA CLIFF DWELLINGS NATIONAL MONUMENT Walk through the rooms of cliff dwellings built in the late 1200s. The monument, established in 1907, is the only national park to focus on the ancestral people of the Mimbres region and Mogollon area.



7 LAKE ROBERTS Boating, fishing and hiking opportunities abound at this serene mountain lake. Home to wildlife, hundreds of bird species, and seasonally, to thousands of hummingbirds.



6 APACHE WALL This hand-built monument to the Chiricahua Apache people tells of their culture, traditional territories and legendary leaders.



5 WEST FORK SITE Interpretive panels show how four distinct cultures dwelled here along the river for more than 2,000 years. The outline of several room blocks allows visitors to experience the size of living spaces from 1,000 years ago.

Photo: Diana Kendall-Dobbs



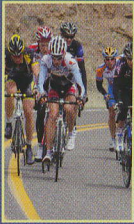
ANNUAL EVENTS



JANUARY (3rd Week)

RED PAINT POWWOW

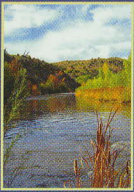
Competition Powwow featuring contestants from many tribes. Native American vendors, food, arts & crafts. In Silver City.
> www.redpaintpowwow.net



APRIL - MAY

TOUR OF THE GILA BICYCLE RACE

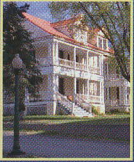
A multi-day stage race throughout the Gila National Forest and the National Scenic Byway in Grant and Catron Counties.
> www.tourofthegila.com



SEPTEMBER

GILA RIVER FESTIVAL

A three-day interpretive event focused on increasing awareness of the natural and cultural heritage of the Gila River and its watershed. > www.gilaconservation.org



SEPTEMBER (3rd Week)

FORT BAYARD DAYS

Learn about military life and medical care in the late 1800s and early 1900s. > www.fortbayardhistoricpreservationsociety.org



OCTOBER

MIMBRES VALLEY HARVEST FESTIVAL

Every fall, the families of the Mimbres Valley come together to share their love of the valley. A farmers market, craft fair, music and food are offered.
> www.mimbresharvestfest.com



OCTOBER (1st Week)

PINOS ALTOS OCTOBER FIESTA

Residents and businesses of historic Pinos Altos host family fun, with live music, great food, vendors and old west gunfights. > www.silvercity.org

Welcome to the Byway!

You are seeing the land Aldo Leopold saw in 1924 when he first visited the area. He successfully fought to preserve this wild beauty as the first wilderness area in the US.

Thirty-five million years ago, this area was a complex of super-volcanoes that erupted violently, changing the land and creating vast craters (calderas) and canyons where the rivers now run.

These dramatic geologic events left behind one of the richest mining areas in New Mexico, producing millions of dollars in gold, silver, copper and other minerals. The Santa Rita Open Pit Copper Mine, found along the Byway, has been continually mined since the early 1800s.

In 1866, Historic Fort Bayard was established to protect mining activities and early settlers from the Apache, who took violent exception to the exploitation of their lands. This period of conflict nearly destroyed the Chiricahua Apache, leaving few survivors in the area.

As you explore and enjoy the natural splendor in and around the Byway's 93 miles, please take a moment to reflect on the cultures and people who lived here, the sacrifices that were made and the beauty that has been preserved.

Good journey, wonderful memories...

Byway Committee

