

### Stop #5: Edge of Riparian Woodland

As you get to the edge of the riparian woodland and reenter the desert, you will notice the remains of an old road to the left of the trail. This road was used by the Smith Family and later the Kincaid Family to access Smith Spring. The spring provided opportunities for recreation, relaxation, picnicking, and exploration. The woodlands and the water provided for a convenient escape from the intense desert sun.

From here the trail will begin to traverse along the hillside. The broad canyon to the left of the trail once was filled with Apache campsites. The Mescalero Apaches used this area because of the water. They chose to camp well below the spring so as to not contaminate the water. Lookouts could be obtained from the top of the hill to your right. From this vantage point, military patrols could be easily spotted as they entered Guadalupe Pass.

The trail will eventually turn south, providing views of Frijole Ranch and later the cliff face of El Capitan. Watch for an area where there are lots of green colored rocks on the path. These green rocks are actually ash from a volcano that erupted approximately 265 million years ago. The ash fell into the sea that covered this area during the Permian Period, mixing with the sea water and forming the green colored clay that we see today. Please leave all rocks where they are so that others may enjoy them in the future.

### Stop #6: Junction with Frijole Trail

At this point the trail intersects with the Frijole Trail, which heads southwest to Bear Canyon and then back to Pine Springs Campground. Bear Canyon, the large canyon to the southwest, was once the location used to pump water to the high country before this was a national park. Since there was no water in the high country, ranchers built a pipeline and began pumping water up the canyon in the

1930's. This water would be stored in a large tank at the top of the canyon, and then gravity fed to other tanks throughout the area known as the Bowl. This water made ranching possible at the higher elevations of the park.

If you look from here to the top of the escarpment, you will notice the tall pines that grow on the ridge top. Forests of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir can grow at the higher elevations due to cooler temperatures and a bit more moisture.

From here the Smith Spring Trail continues to the left.



### Stop #7: Junction with Foothills Trail

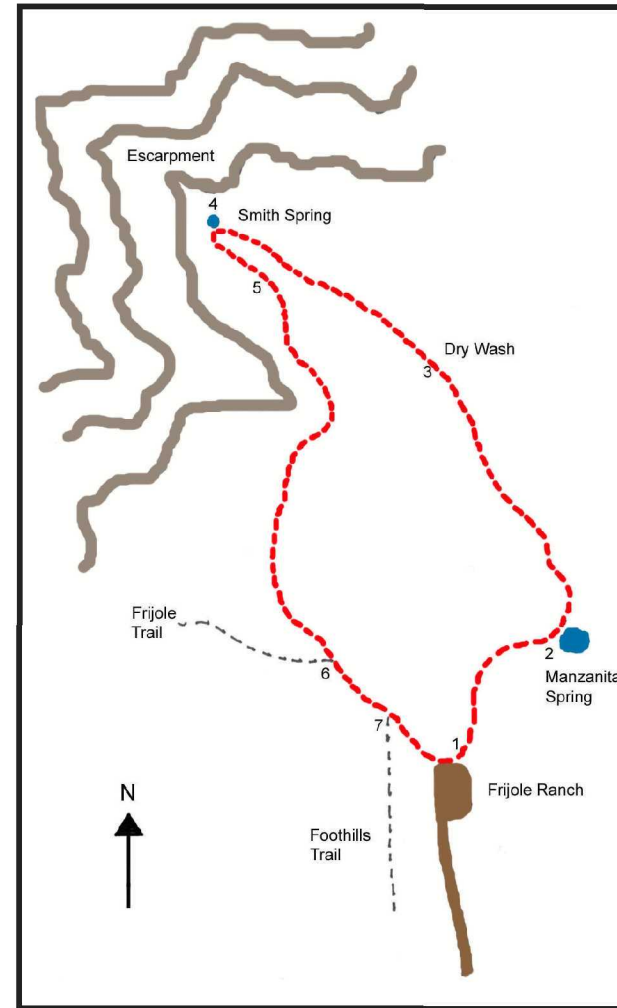
Here the trail intersects with the Foothills Trail, which runs parallel to the Frijole Ranch Road for 1/2 mile, before turning west and leading back to Pine Springs. This location affords great views of El Capitan and Guadalupe Peak to the southwest. At 8,749 feet, Guadalupe Peak is the highest point in the state of Texas.

Bear left at the junction, following the Smith Spring Trail back to Frijole Ranch.

On this short hike you have witnessed how water is the binding thread that holds together this fragile desert ecosystem. As you continue your explorations of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, look for further evidence of how water created and continues to create this unique landscape.

The Smith Springs Trail is just 2.3 miles of a trail system totaling nearly 85 miles. There are many more hikes in Guadalupe Mountains National Park for all levels of fitness and experience. Pick up a trail map and a day hikes brochure or talk to a park ranger to plan another hike in the park.

## Smith Spring Trail Map



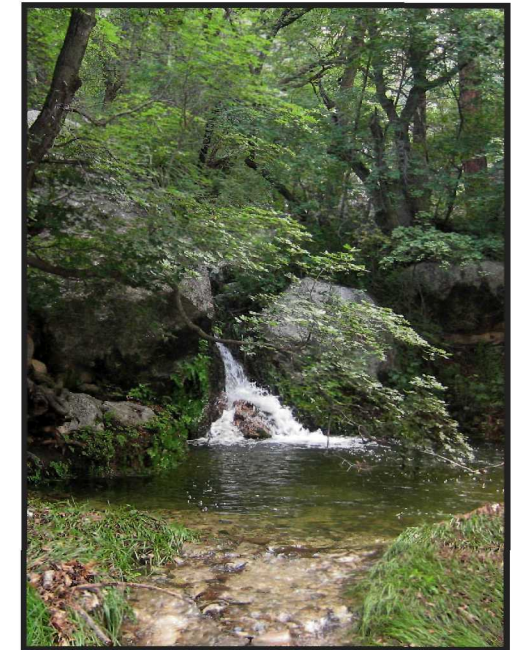
Keep this brochure if you would like, or return it for others to use.

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Guadalupe Mountains  
National Park

# SMITH SPRING TRAIL GUIDE



## Water: Sustainer of Life in a Parched Land

