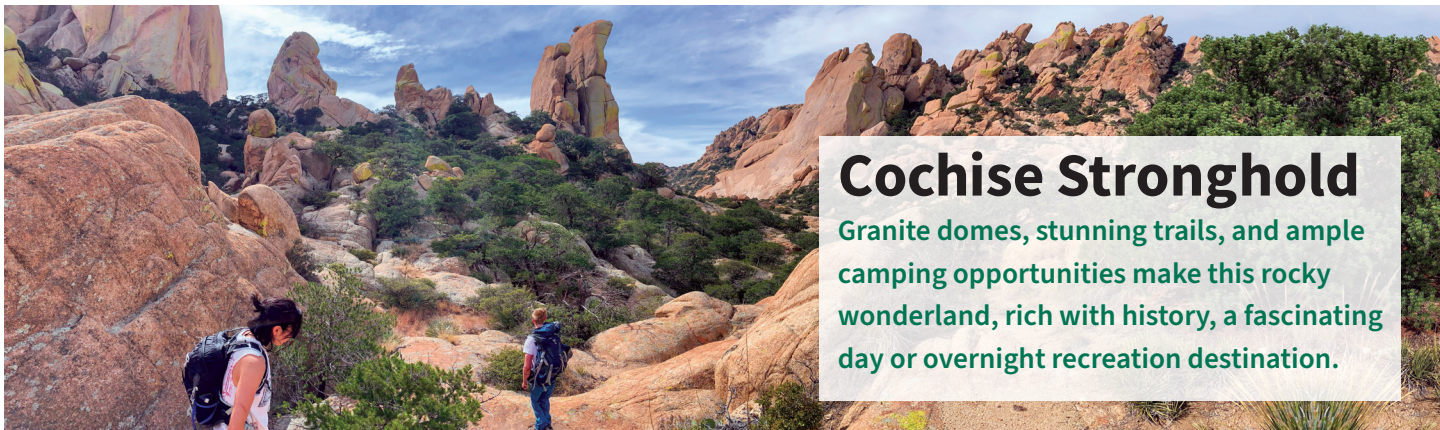




# Forest Service

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Coronado National Forest, Douglas Ranger District | RG-R3-05-30 | November 2023



## Cochise Stronghold

Granite domes, stunning trails, and ample camping opportunities make this rocky wonderland, rich with history, a fascinating day or overnight recreation destination.

### Know before you go



#### DAY USE FEE AREA (EAST STRONGHOLD):

Scan the QR code or visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) to buy a digital pass for day use in East Cochise Stronghold, or buy one on site with cash or check.



**CAMPING:** Campground and dispersed sites are first come, first served. Fee required at Cochise Stronghold Campground.



**CABIN RENTALS:** Rent the historic [Shaw House](#) or [Half Moon Ranch](#). Reserve up to 6 months in advance at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov).



**SEASONS:** Fall through spring. Extreme heat in summer. Cochise Stronghold Campground is closed June 1 through August 31.



**WATER:** No drinking water is available. Bring plenty with you. Natural water sources must be purified before use.



**ROAD SAFETY:** Dirt roads are passable for most vehicles in good weather; a high-clearance vehicle is recommended.



**CULTURAL AWARENESS:** This area has profound cultural history and significance. Please visit with respect.

### Attractions



#### COCHISE TRAIL #279

This stunning trail climbs through wooded canyons, past natural springs, and into the rocky wonderland of Cochise Stronghold. As you hike, pedal, or ride horseback on this trail, history resonates in the rocks, and you might consider what life was like

for the Chiricahua Apache, who traveled this route and sought refuge amid these rugged cliffs and canyons. The trail starts at the campground. Trailer parking and equestrian access are available 1 mile north of the campground. See the map and trail description on the following pages.



#### ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Experience history firsthand by spending a night at one of the restored, historic cabins available for rent in the East Stronghold. Originally built of adobe in 1896, the Shaw House was expanded with stone masonry in the 1920s to

accommodate the Shaw family, who planted fruit and nut trees here. The brick-masonry Half Moon Ranch was built in the early 1970s. A pond on the property makes for excellent wildlife viewing. Both cabins hold up to 10 people. Half Moon Ranch has a corral for up to 8 horses. Make reservations up to 6 months in advance at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov).

### About Cochise Stronghold

For hundreds of years, the Chiricahua Apache migrated seasonally across southeastern Arizona, hunting and gathering in the mountains. In 1852, the Gadsden Purchase added much of what is now Coronado National Forest to the United States, opening the area to settlement. This led to conflict with the Apache and many battles ensued, inciting an era known as the Apache Wars, which lasted into the 1870s.

This fortress of hidden canyons and rocky outcrops served as a stronghold for Chief Cochise and the Chokonen Band of Chiricahua Apache during these years. In 1872, Cochise

negotiated an end to the wars with General Howard of the US Army. The agreement included [a large reservation](#) for the Chiricahua Apache, encompassing the Chiricahua and Dragoon Mountains and the valleys in between. After Cochise died of illness in 1874, peace failed and international pressures led to their removal.

Once gold was discovered in the area in the 1880s, more settlers moved into the region. Ranchers, prospectors, and homesteaders all tried to make a living in and around the Dragoon Mountains. Homesteaders tended small nut and fruit orchards—smaller in scale than the

orchards along the roads leading into the East Stronghold today. Vestiges of old mines and homesteads can still be seen in the area.

Cochise Stronghold bisects the Dragoon Mountains, one of southeastern Arizona's Sky Island mountain ranges that rise like forested islands out of a sea of desert. The varied habitats of the range, from desert grassland to oak and pine woodland on the north-facing slopes of 7,532-ft. Mt. Glenn, support diverse wildlife. Many canyons, with intermittent creeks fed by hidden springs, cut through the range and offer a welcome respite to wildlife and hikers alike.

**EMERGENCY OR FIRE: DIAL 911**

**DOUGLAS RANGER STATION: 520-364-3468**

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## Recreation Opportunities



### HIKING, BIKING, and HORSEBACK RIDING

A variety of nonmotorized, multiuse trails offer options for visitors of all ages and abilities. The Cochise Trail traverses the Stronghold and can be accessed from the east or west side. Other trails in the area offer excellent scenery and opportunities for solitude. See map and trail descriptions on the next page.



### SCENIC DRIVING

Middlemarch Road and the dirt roads along the West Stronghold offer excellent vistas and wildlife viewing. See maps on the following pages. While the main dirt roads are usually passable for most vehicles, high clearance is recommended. Some routes (marked on map) require four-wheel drive. Rain or snow can make roads impassable.



### ROCK CLIMBING

Towering pink granite domes, covered with colorful lichen, create a backcountry playground that challenges climbers on its cracks, slabs, and steep plates and faces. Year-round sunshine makes this a perfect winter destination for climbers looking for remote traditional and sport multi-pitch routes. **Please avoid areas with nesting raptors.**

Photo © Cochise Stronghold author Tanya Bok



### WILDLIFE VIEWING

The watered canyons that weave through this rocky wonderland support excellent habitat for wildlife. Mule deer, white-tailed deer, black bear, coati mundi, mountain lions, and javelina are common. Cochise Stronghold, especially near the campground, also offers excellent birding without the crowds that flock to nearby birding hotspots.

## Camping



First come, first served. 14-day stay limit per 60-day period. Store and dispose of all food in bear-safe containers and trash bins or keep it locked in your vehicle. Private residences and ranches exist along FR 687 and the East Stronghold entrance road. Please respect private property.

### WEST and EAST STRONGHOLD DISPERSED (FREE)

Camping is allowed anywhere in Cochise Stronghold except on private property, within 0.5 mi. of the campground, or within 200 ft. of any water source, including stock tanks. See maps on the following pages and refer to the [Douglas Ranger District Motor Vehicle Use Map](#) for designated vehicle routes and dispersed camping corridors. Please follow the [best practices for dispersed camping](#).

**Amenities:** None. Bring plenty of water.



### EAST STRONGHOLD DEVELOPED (FEE REQUIRED)

The Cochise Stronghold Campground is tucked among a grove of oaks at 5,000 ft. Enjoy access to the Nature Trail, History Trail, and Cochise Trail. There are 11 individual sites for up to 10 people and 2 vehicles and 2 group sites for up to 20 people. Trailers limited to 16 ft. No hookups. No drinking water. Pay on site with cash or check. Closed June through August.

**Amenities:** Grills, fire pits, picnic tables, and vault toilets. No water; bring plenty with you.



## DISPERSED CAMPING BEST PRACTICES

CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST

### BE PREPARED

Plan ahead for no amenities and no cell service. Pack accordingly and bring plenty of water. Visit [www.fs.usda.gov/coronado](http://www.fs.usda.gov/coronado) for alerts and notices. **You are responsible for your own safety.**

### SELECT A GOOD SPOT

The best sites are found, not made! Look for established sites with a well-worn area for your vehicle and tent. Avoid trampling or cutting vegetation. Be sure to look up. Never set up your camp beneath dead trees or branches.

### PLAN FOR HUMAN WASTE

Bring a portable toilet or bag system to pack out solid human waste, especially in high-use areas and with large groups. Alternatively, dig a hole 6–8 in. deep (at least 200 ft. from camp, trails, and water) to bury solid human waste. **Always pack out toilet paper; never burn or bury it.**

### BRING TRASH BAGS

**Pack it in, pack it out!** Contain all garbage, including food scraps, where it won't blow around or attract animals. Take all garbage home with you to dispose of properly. Never leave garbage in a fire ring. Always leave sites better than you find them.

### USE A STOVE

Campfires can cause wildfires. Camp stoves that let you turn the flame on and off are the best and safest way to cook when camping.

### BE FIRE WISE

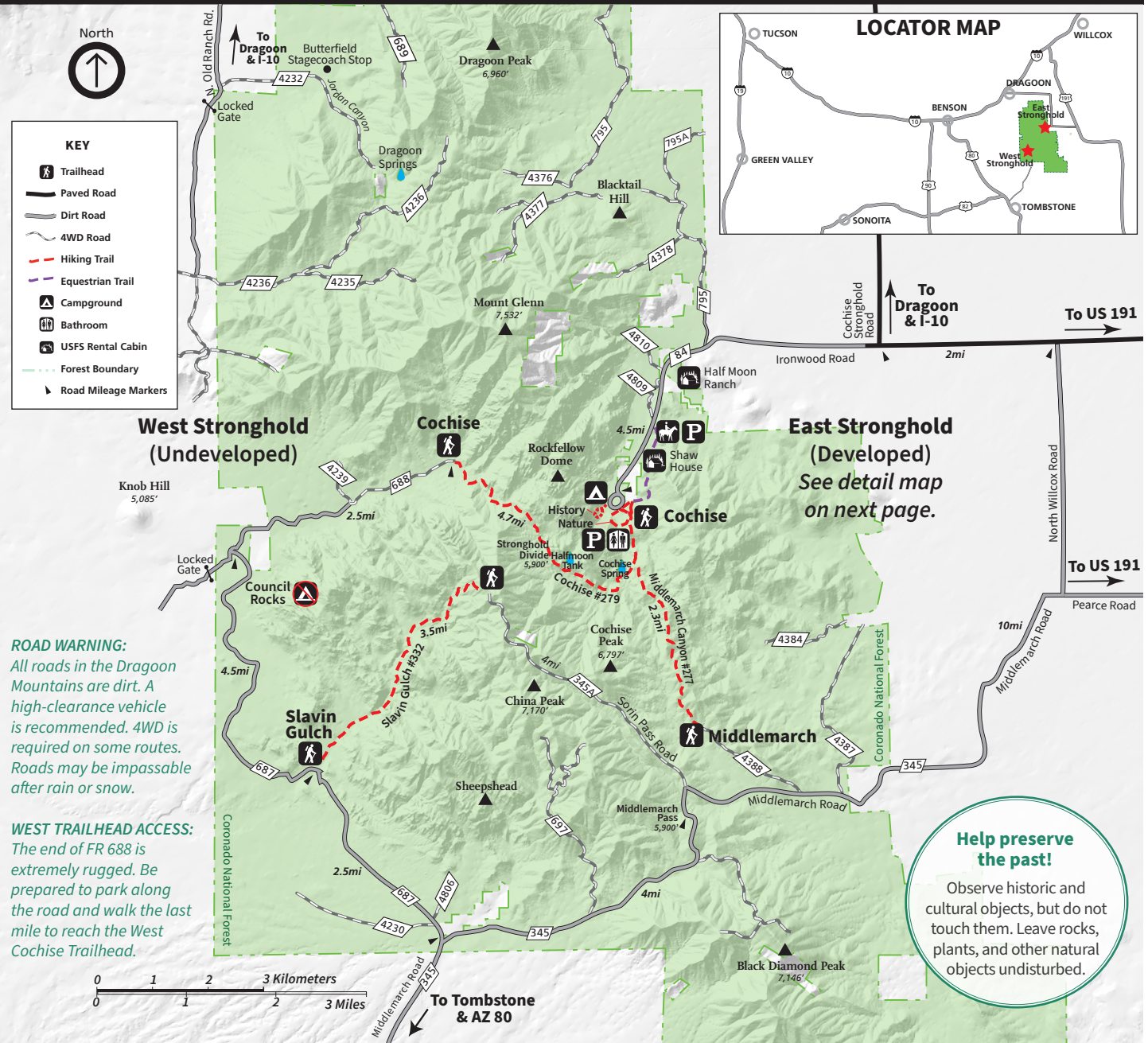
Check for fire restrictions. If fires are allowed, use only existing fire rings. **Never leave a fire unattended.** Use a shovel and water to be sure a fire is **OUT COLD** before you leave.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING CARE FOR YOUR PUBLIC LANDS

Produced by the Public Lands Interpretive Association [www.publiclands.org](http://www.publiclands.org)



## DRAGOON MOUNTAINS and COCHISE STRONGHOLD



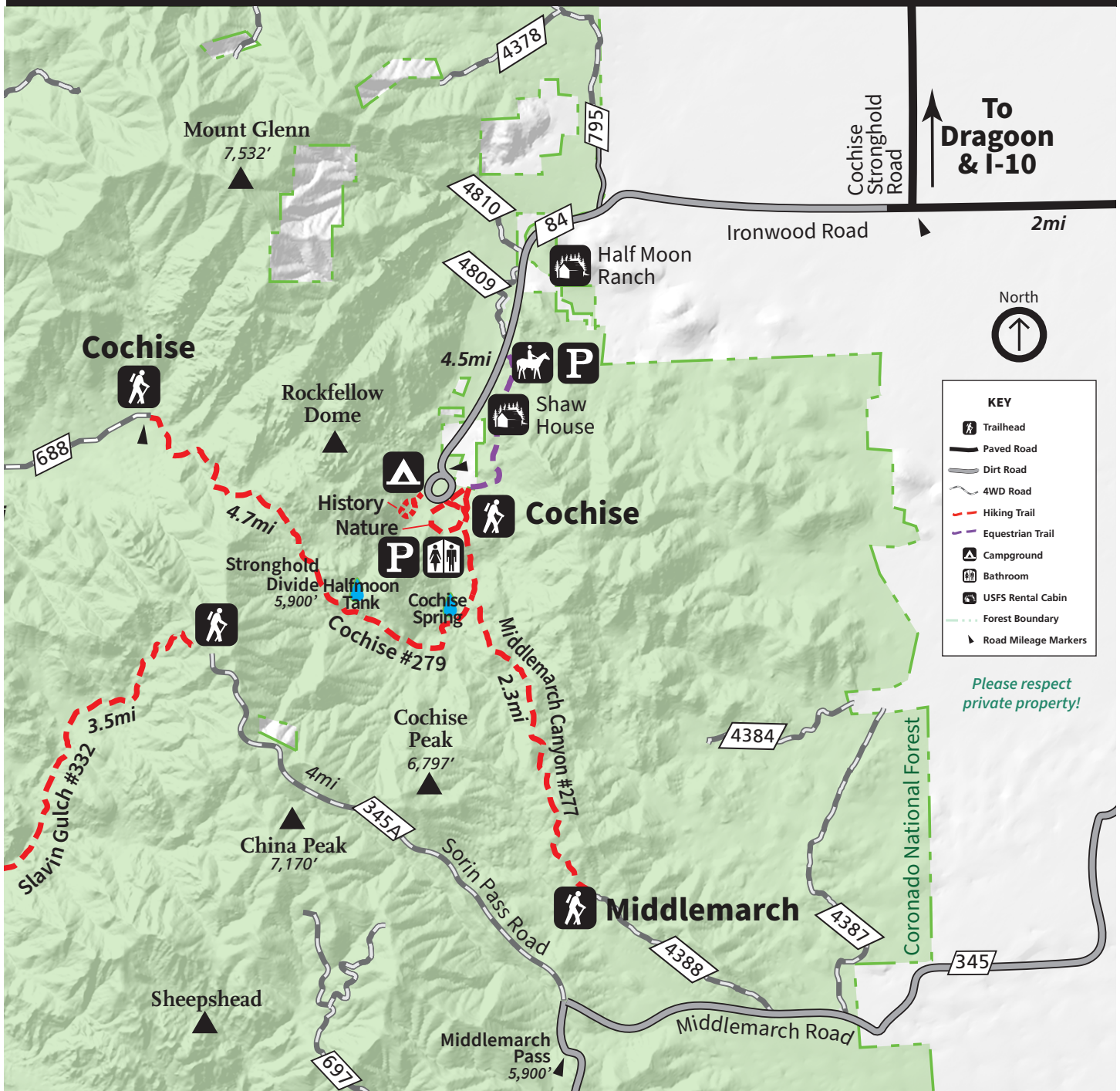
## Cochise Stronghold Multiuse Routes

**H - Hike B - Bike E - Equestrian MV - Motor Vehicle**  
**Share the trail. Communicate and be courteous with other users.**

<b>FR 687 and 688</b> (H, B, E, MV)	This dirt road contours around the West Stronghold, rolling in and out of washes until it ends at the west trailhead of Cochise Trail. Dispersed camping and climbing access are available along the route. FR 687 is navigable for most passenger vehicles to Slavin Gulch. High-clearance required to reach FR 688 and 4WD required for rest of route. The last mile of FR 688 is extremely rocky.
<b>Slavin Gulch Trail #332</b> (H, E)	This lightly-used, 3.5-mi. (one way), moderately difficult trail starts from FR 687. High-clearance required to cross gulch, or park on south side of gulch and walk the road to reach the trail. The trail ascends Slavin Gulch, passing through riparian areas shaded by tall trees and beautiful rock formations below China Peak. East trail access is from FR 345A (4WD required) off Middlemarch Road.
<b>Cochise Trail #279 (West Trailhead)</b> (H, B, E)	This 4.7-mi. (one way), moderate trail starts amid lush riparian woodland of Arizona cypress and sycamore along an intermittent creek with seasonal water. It quickly climbs into the rocky Stronghold and reaches the highpoint at Stronghold Divide in 1.7 mi. Turn around here or continue another 0.5 mi. to Half Moon Tank or another 3 mi. to the East Trailhead at Cochise Stronghold Campground.
<b>Middlemarch Canyon Trail #277</b> (H, B, E)	This 2.3-mi. (one way), moderate trail connects East Cochise Stronghold with FR 4388 and Middlemarch Road. The steep and rugged route ascends through forests of oak and pinyon and offers a different perspective of the Stronghold and some nice views of the surrounding landscape.
<b>Middlemarch Road Scenic Drive FR 345</b> (H, B, E, MV)	This 20.5-mi. (one way) dirt road follows a historic route used by the US Cavalry in the late 1800s to travel between Fort Bowie and Fort Huachuca. Enjoy views of the surrounding mountains and valleys from the high point near Middlemarch Pass. Allow 1 hour to drive between the East and West Stronghold. Allow 3–4 hours to make a 100-mile loop from Benson. High-clearance recommended.



# EAST COCHISE STRONGHOLD DETAIL



## East Stronghold Trails

H - Hike B - Bike E - Equestrian \* - Accessible

Share the trail. Communicate and be courteous with other users.

<b>Cochise Trail #279 (Main Trailhead)</b> (H, B, E)	This 4.7-mi. (one way), moderate trail starts amid oaks and junipers at the Cochise Stronghold Campground. The trail follows the seasonal creek for over a mile as it climbs into the rocky wonderland of the Stronghold. Reach Half Moon Tank in 2.5 mi. and Stronghold Divide in 3 mi. (1,000 ft. of elevation gain). Turn around here or continue 1.7 mi. to the West Stronghold Trailhead.
<b>Middlemarch Canyon Trail #277</b> (H, B, E)	This 2.3-mi. (one way), moderate trail connects East Cochise Stronghold with FR 4388 and Middlemarch Road. The steep and rugged route ascends through forests of oak and pinyon and offers a different perspective of the Stronghold and some nice views of the surrounding landscape.
<b>Stronghold Nature Trail</b> (H)	This 0.4-mi., easy loop starts at the campground and passes through the surrounding oak woodland. Signs along the path offer information about the unique plant life of the area. Loop back to the campground or link to the Cochise Trail.
<b>History Trail*</b> (H)	This 400-ft. paved loop trail starts near the restrooms at Cochise Stronghold Campground. Numerous interpretive signs along the path provide information about the cultural history of the area. <b>Accessibility:</b> Sidewalk-style paved path