



Forest Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Coronado National Forest, Douglas Ranger District | RG-R3-05-35 | May 2024

West Turkey Creek

Perennial water flows through this wooded canyon, supporting a riparian forest and creating a lush year-round recreation destination on the edge of the Chiricahua Wilderness.

Know Before You Go



LOCATION: Located about 2 hours southeast of Tucson on the west side of the Chiricahua Mountains at 6,000 ft. elevation.



SEASONS: Year-round. Be prepared for extreme heat and monsoon storms during summer and cold weather in winter.



CAMPING: First come, first served. Dispersed and developed sites. Fee required at Sycamore Campground. Pay with cash or check.



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



BEAR SAFETY: Store and dispose of all food in bear-safe containers and trash receptacles, or keep it locked in your vehicle.



ROAD CONDITIONS: 10-mile dirt road. High-clearance vehicle recommended. Road may be impassable after heavy rains.

Attractions



A HUB FOR HIKING

Six trails start from FR 41 along West Turkey Creek and connect with the network of trails that traverses the Chiricahua Mountains. Trails follow drainages and ridges and vary in length and difficulty, but are constant in their

beauty, both in the natural features found along the trail and the incredible vistas in all directions. Out-and-back, thru hikes, and loop options available. See trail descriptions below and map on next page.



CREEKSIDE CAMPING

DEVELOPED (Fee required):

Perched on the bank of Turkey Creek, this well-shaded campground has 8 sites for tents or trailers (under 16 ft.) with picnic tables, fire rings, and vault toilets.

UNDEVELOPED (Free):

Established areas for dispersed camping exist along FR 41. Camp at least 200 ft. from the water. There are no amenities at these sites. Plan accordingly and please follow the [best practices for dispersed camping](#).

Trail Descriptions

Safety: Be prepared with plenty of water, sun protection, and extra layers. Watch for poison ivy. If it has leaves of three, let it be!

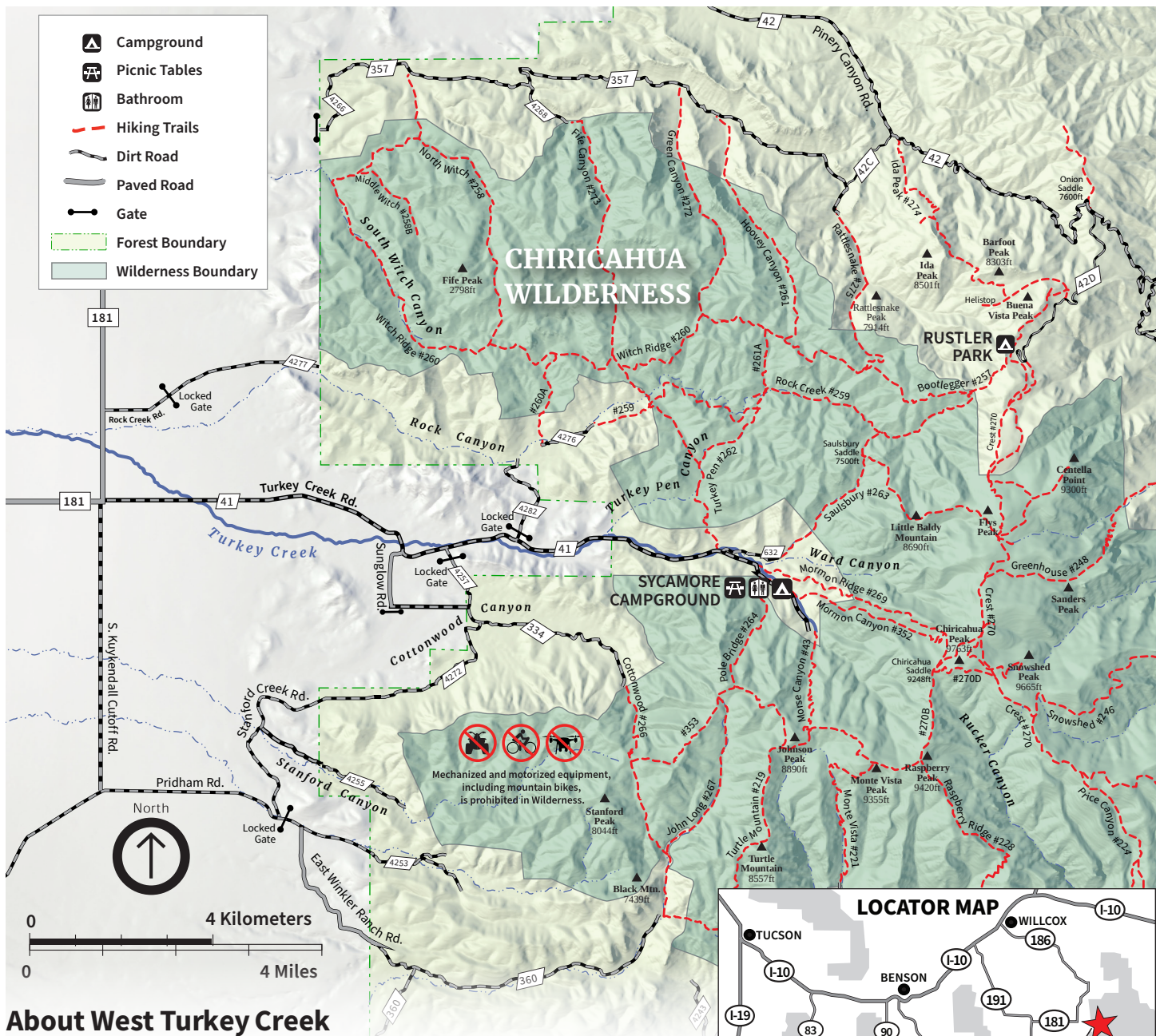


Turkey Pen #262	3.3 mi. one way 5,640 ft.–8,320 ft.	This moderate trail starts at an old Forest Service administrative site. From there, it climbs over a saddle into Turkey Pen Canyon and continues climbing into the upper reaches of Rock Creek Canyon.
Saulsbury #263	4.4 mi. one way 6,180 ft.–9,240 ft.	This difficult trail climbs from FR 41 up Saulsbury Canyon to a saddle. It then veers southeast and climbs to Little Bull Mountain on its way to join the Crest Trail (#270) and many loop hike possibilities (see map).
Mormon Ridge #269	4.5 mi. one way 6,180 ft.–9,240 ft.	This steep trail climbs out of the canyon, offering sweeping views of the mountains, West Turkey Creek Canyon, and the Sulphur Springs Valley beyond. Hike out and back, or link with other trails to make a loop.
Pole Bridge #264	3.8 mi. one way 6,200 ft.–8,600 ft.	This trail starts on the south side of FR 41 just west of the campground. It climbs the forested, north-facing slopes of the canyon to the junction with Trail #219. Hike out and back or make a loop with Morse Canyon #43.
Mormon Canyon #352	3.4 mi. one way 6,180 ft.–9,240 ft.	This difficult trail passes through the sun-dappled riparian forest along Turkey Creek. The trail crosses the creek many times as it climbs up the canyon, paralleling Mormon Ridge #269 on the way to Mormon Saddle.
Morse Canyon #43	2.4 mi. one way 6,200 ft.–8,600 ft.	From the trailhead at the end of FR 41, this trail skirts the east slope of the canyon as it switchbacks through a mixed-conifer forest. Climb to Monte Vista Peak, or make a loop with Pole Bridge #264.

EMERGENCY OR FIRE: DIAL 911

DOUGLAS RANGER STATION: (520) 364-3468

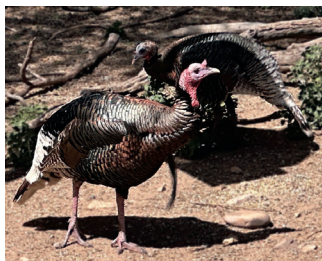
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About West Turkey Creek

Imagine walking from Mexico to Canada in one day! The Chiricahua Mountains are one of southeastern Arizona's *sky islands*—isolated mountain ranges separated by a sea of desert and grassland. Here you can hike from around 6,000 ft. in the canyon to over 9,700 ft. on Chiricahua Peak. The ascent traverses multiple life zones, simulating the biotic communities found between Mexico and Canada.

Year-round water, combined with the location



and topography of this range, make this wooded canyon home to an incredible diversity of

plants and animals. Many of the species found here are more common to Mexico than the United States. Experience a variety of habitats as you drive into the canyon, from semidesert grassland, to oak and juniper woodlands, and up into a unique forest of ponderosa, Chiricahua, and Apache pines, all along a riparian forest of Fremont cottonwood, velvet ash, and Arizona cypress and sycamore.

The many trails that branch out from this corridor lead into the 87,700-acre **Chiricahua Wilderness** and a 200-mile network of trails. Wilderness areas are managed in a way that retains their natural, untrammled, and undeveloped characteristics. Enjoy the natural sounds and solitude of this primitive recreation experience. Remember to take only memories and leave only footprints.

While people now come here to recreate and connect with nature, this resource-rich area has been inhabited for more than 1,000 years. Known to some as *Dził Kawa*, these mountains are part of the vast homeland of the Chiricahua Apache, who, along with other tribes, retain strong ties to this landscape.

(Left) The Gould's turkey, for which this and other area canyons are named, was nearly hunted to extinction in the early 1900s. Reintroduction efforts have allowed these wild turkeys to flourish once again in their native habitat. Watch for flocks of them foraging throughout the canyon, and listen for their repetitive, squeaking calls.