

Aravaipa East – Motel Trip

Updated 8-31-21dc

Background:

Aravaipa East offers amazing canyon views even beyond those at Aravaipa West (the traditional Aravaipa hike). However, to hike Aravaipa East there are logistical, lodging, and transportation issues to overcome:

- 1) It takes about four hours to drive from SCOV to the Aravaipa East trailhead, making an overnight(s) stay necessary.
- 2) The closest motel is about two hour's drive from where hiking starts (90 minutes to Klondyke).
- 3) It takes a 4x4 high clearance vehicle to drive the last 1 ½ miles to where hiking starts.

The Opportunity:

If a sufficient number of Members commit to staying in a motel and driving back and forth from Safford, the other issues most likely can be overcome.

The Trip Plan:

Day #1 = drive directly to Aravaipa East in morning; hike Turkey Creek (no permit required) in afternoon; drive to motel near or in Safford.

Day #2 = drive to start of Aravaipa Canyon; hike Aravaipa Canyon and Hell Hole side canyon; drive to motel.

Day #3 = return to SCOV.

Day #3 Options = a) hike more Aravaipa Canyon; or b) explore the deserted gold mining camp of Aravaipa; then return home on Day #4. Option a) requires additional permits.

Permits:

Permits may be purchased @ \$5/day/person (+ s/c) starting three months in advance and they go fast.

If the trip is in the first week of April, for example, the permits should be purchased by the first part of January.

Only 20 permits per day are issued for Aravaipa East (30 for West). See hiking club's website for details to purchase permits.

Items to Bring:

- After-hike items including: towel; plastic bags for wet hiking shoes & socks; second set of shoes & socks.
- After-hike refreshments (cooler provided in each vehicle).
- Hiking poles can be helpful but not mandatory.
- Shoes that drain well and do not allow the pebbles in; a good choice is low-cut hikers with venting mesh and cleats, not GTX, not WP, not over-ankle high; leather parts will dry without shrinking; tennis shoes will not provide traction compared to cleated shoes but will work; open sandal type shoes will work but you will be stopping often to get the pebbles out.
- Thick wool blend socks (not cotton) with shoe strings tightened will prevent pebbles from getting in.
- Salty snacks, lunch, minimum of 80 oz. of water/hiker (each hiker carries own water).
- If day is to be hot, additional electrolyte drink is recommended.

The Hike:

- The hiking is at a “C+” level and crosses the stream numerous times, similar to Aravaipa West
- Many stream crossings; water level is typically about 6 in. to 12 in. high; shoes are not removed for stream crossings.
- We pause for photo shoots, absorbing the beauty of the canyon, and snack breaks.
- Hike pace is a steady “B” level; we lunch at turn-around point after hiking about three hours; total time for hiking is about six hours (return is less time).

After-Hike:

Brief tailgate refreshments (bring your own) where vehicles are parked at start of canyon.

Closest Motel:

Comfort Inn & Suites, 2577 W Us Highway 70, Thatcher, AZ 85552 Tele. (928) 348-9500

This motel is located just west of Safford on Rt. 70.

For other motels in Safford: <http://www.yellowpages.com/safford-az/motels>

Camping Option:

Tent camping is available at Four Mile Canyon Campground located in Klondyke. Travel trailers and RV's are also permitted here. This campground is about 45 minutes from where hiking starts.

Other Important Details:

See tab for “Aravaipa East Details – Camping”. Be sure to read these.