

White Peak Access Point

New Mexico State Trust Lands

Distance from Casa del Gavilan to trail head:

11 miles – 15 minutes

Trail length: 2¼ miles each way to top of Mesa – 4½ miles round trip

Elevation change: 650 feet

Difficulty: Moderate

Points of interest: Hike old road up to top of Ortega Mesa

Recreational access to State Trust Land is granted via the Recreational Access Permit purchased online at

<https://openforadventure.nmstatelands.org/>

\$35 for family up to 10. Valid for one year.

Permit takes several days to process.

From the New Mexico State Lands Office:

The White Peak area is one of northern New Mexico's most rugged regions and an ideal place to take in some of the state's picturesque landscapes.

Located primarily in Colfax and Mora counties, White Peak is a fantastic destination for hikers, mountain bikers, birdwatchers, wildlife enthusiasts, and shutterbugs.

Recent restoration efforts in the area have improved forest health and enhanced the area's habitat and scenery including iconic Sangre de Cristo Mountains vista as well as vibrant wildflower-laden meadows.

A word to the wise: recreational opportunities around White Peak are not for the faint of heart; visitors should be prepared for difficult road and terrain conditions when accessing the area. Covering ground in this area is a slow process. From the primary access points, permittees can expect a long hike to reach White Peak even when conditions are good. Access to the site (by vehicle) is restricted to high-clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles throughout and is at user's own risk.

Fast moving storms are known to inundate the area with heavy rain at times and vigilance is urged. Traditional hiking gear is recommended; wet and winter-weather gear is recommended for late fall, winter, and early spring months.

White Peak is interspersed with private land ownership and skilled use of map and/or GPS technology is recommended to avoid trespassing. Boundaries aren't always well marked and unless you're intimately familiar with the terrain, careful attention is necessary to avoid trespassing.

Located just 11 miles south of the Casa del Gavilan, New Mexico State Road 199 into the White Peak area offers a good opportunity to hike into some of the less-traveled areas around Cimarron. Although it's still called a "State Road", that's only in the abstract. In reality, it's best to leave your vehicle at the bottom and hike to the top on this very rocky road. If you're really into "off roading", and have a very sturdy 4-wheel drive vehicle you'd like to put through the paces, this is your road. You can drive the road to the top and beyond if you, and your vehicle, are up to the challenge.

To reach this road/trail, at the end of the drive to the Casa turn right (south) onto Highway 21. Proceed south 8 miles from the gate to where Highway 21 makes a sharp left turn to the east. Instead of making the left turn, proceed straight ahead onto the gravel road and through the white pipe gate with the "EX" on the left and "UU" on the right. It's the only gate you'll find in this area that is not kept closed. Highway 21 south of Cimarron overlays the original route of the Santa Fe Trail. This gravel road continues to follow the original route down through this beautiful little canyon. Follow this gravel road south almost 3 miles to a gate closed across the gravel road. The road/trail following State Road 199 turns off to the right. If you plan to hike the "road", park your vehicle well-away from all gates in the area. Large stock trailers require a lot of room to maneuver in and out of the gates.

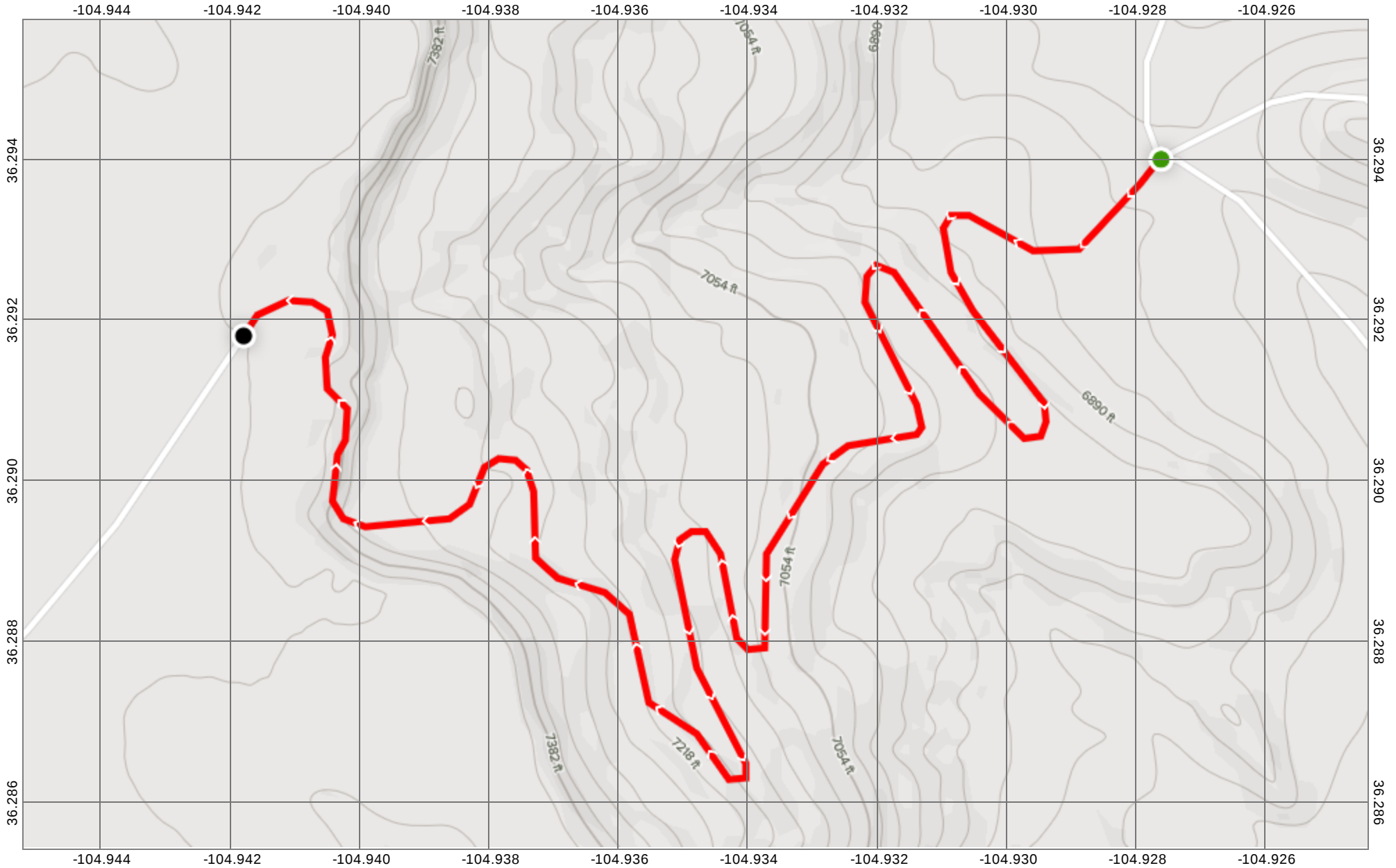
Proceed up the old road to the top of Ortega Mesa, a climb of about 650 feet in a little over two miles. The road continues on for another 6½ miles (total of 8 ½ miles each way) to the top of White Peak at an elevation of 8,754 feet--a total climb of 1,900 feet from where you parked. Even if you don't want to hike the trail, the drive to the trail is through a beautiful little canyon and no pass is required for the drive.

The White Peak Area is administered by the New Mexico State Lands Office. See <https://www.nmstatelands.org> for more information.

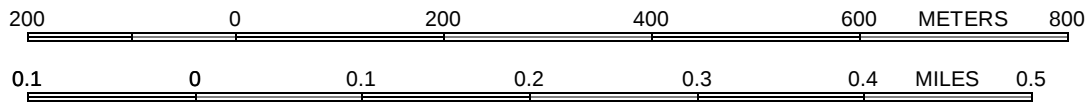
For additional information: <https://www.nmstatelands.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/White-Peak-final-profile.pdf>

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White Peak - State Road 199



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↑ 7.4°E
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