

COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST 9-16-19

Flume Trail (Strawberry area). Rating B-C. Three trails access Fossil Springs. We will hike one of these, the **Flume** Trail. Round trip is 7.4 miles or 3-4 hours. The elevation gain is 494 ft with an average grade of 12 degrees. From the trailhead follow the trail left of the trailhead signage. Fossil Creek is reached immediately. Will have to skip over a few rocks to clear creek in normal runoff. The trail zips up the other side of the creek. Stay on the trail. Next pass thru a gate. All happens in 10 minutes from parking area. Up a 360 ft. ascent to the service road that runs parallel to the historic **Flume**. Only possible trail question arises when you come to the pipe in the ground where trail forks. Take trail to the left. Once on service road go to the right. Just before topping out on the service road there is a sign-in register. Coming around the first corner in the road the **Flume** comes into view. Great views from here up and down the canyon. You will be walking alongside the **Flume** for a while and then cross it. Stay off of the **Flume**. You will be able to see inside the **Flume** when we cross it. We will continue hiking from here to Fossil Springs. A nice, level but long hike. The Springs pumps out 275 gallons/second at a constant temperature of 72 degrees. We will have lunch at or near the springs and then return to our vehicles. Driving distance is approx 268 miles

RT. <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/CoconinoNationalForest/Fossil-Springs-Trail>

Directions to Lower Fossil Springs

Take I-10 east

Take Route 202 east

Turn left (North) on Gilbert Road.

Turn right on Route 87.

Stay on 87 and go through Payson to Strawberry.

Turn left (west) on Route 708 (also known as Fossil Creek Road). The road is paved for 2.5 miles then becomes unpaved.

Stay on FR 708 as it twists and turns down along a ridge.

Fossil Springs Creek will be on your right as you get to the bottom.

The parking area will be on the right near the bottom.

No restroom at the trailhead.

(We usually stop at the McDonalds on the right in Payson).

Fossil Springs Trail (Strawberry area). Rating B. Three trails access **Fossil** Springs. We will hike one of these, the **Fossil** Springs Trail. Round trip is 8 to 9 miles with an elevation gain of 1,500 ft. Average grade is 13%. The trail down to the springs is wide and very easy, as it once was an old road. The beginning of the trail is desert but on the descent changes to tall sycamores, oak trees, fern grottos and wild blackberry bushes. At the bottom of the canyon the trail becomes a footpath along a stream. It is about 3.6 miles to **Fossil** Springs. The spring pumps out 275 gallons/second at a constant temperature of 72 degrees. We will have lunch at or near the springs and then return to our vehicles. Also, it is rattle snake territory around the springs. A lot of campers use the area so just be alert. For a longer hike we can continue on the trail past the springs and towards the Irving Power Plant. The footpath will lead to a roadway used to service the flume that provides water to the power plant. This road way meanders alongside a wide valley above **Fossil** Creek and on to the power plant. It is about 5 miles from the springs. Be sure to take plenty of water, as the climb out is difficult. A restroom is at the trailhead. No park fee. Driving distance is 268 miles

RT. [SCG=8.0/2100/4.6].<http://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/CoconinoNationalForest/Fossil-Springs-Trail>

Directions to Upper Fossil Springs

(134 miles this way or 150 miles if you take I-17 to AZ 280 to Rt 87)

Take I-10 east

Take Route 202 east

Turn left (North) on Gilbert Road.

Turn right on Route 87.

Stay on 87 and go through Payson to Strawberry.

Turn left (west) on Route 708 (also known as Fossil Creek Road). The road is paved for 2.5 miles then becomes unpaved. Stay on FR 708 another 2.5 miles, where you will see the signed road to the trailhead to your right.

A restroom is located at the trailhead.

Directions to Lower Fossil Springs

Take I-10 east

Take Route 202 east

Turn left (North) on Gilbert Road.

Turn right on Route 87.

Stay on 87 and go through Payson to Strawberry.

Turn left (west) on Route 708 (also known as Fossil Creek Road). The road is paved for 2.5 miles then becomes unpaved.

Stay on FR 708 as it twists and turns down along a ridge.

Fossil Springs Creek will be on your right as you get to the bottom.

The parking area will be on the right near the bottom.

No restroom at the trailhead.

(We usually stop at the McDonalds on the right in Payson).

Horton Creek (Payson). Rating B. This is an 8 mile hike with a 1,060 ft. elevation change.

The hike starts right outside of Payson. We will hike down to Horton Spring. The first 3 miles is pretty straight forward with the last ½ mile being a set of switchbacks away from the creek. The elevation change is gradual and is hardly noticed. Restrooms at the trailhead. No park fee.

Driving distance is 220 miles RT. [SCG=8.0/1200/3.7].

<http://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Payson/Horton-Creek-Trail>

Directions to Horton Creek Trail #285

Out main gate, south to I-10.

I-10 east to Route 202 east exit onto Gilbert Road.

Turn left on Gilbert Road to Route 87.

Turn right on Route 87 to Payson.

From Payson take 260 East for 16 miles to FR289 which is Tonto Creek Road – just past Kohl’s Ranch.

Turn left on to FR289 and follow a mile to the Upper Tonto Creek campgrounds.

The trailhead is near the slope up into the campgrounds. The parking is actually past the campgrounds across a bridge in a small lot.

Park at the picnic area, cross back over the bridge then follow the road to the left that goes to the campground for about 150 feet where the trail to Horton Creek starts.

Horton Creek Trail leads to the creek in 3.5 miles. The long way back is to take the Highline Trail #31 to the right for 3.0 miles, and then the Derrick Trail #33 for 2.5 miles back to the Upper Tonto Creek Campground. The Highline Trail has some climbing for 1 – 1.5 miles and the Derrick Trail is rocky. Total 9.0 miles

Pine Canyon Trail (Strawberry). Rating C/B. A 5.5 to 8.0 mile out and back hike with an elevation change of 970 ft. It’s a steady uphill hike for the first 2.5 miles through a pine forest. At the top are interesting views of the valley below. Restrooms are at the trailhead. There is no park fee. Driving distance is approx 260 miles RT.

<https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/CoconinoNationalForest>

Directions to Pine Canyon Trail

Out main gate, south to I-10.

I-10 east to Route 202 east exit onto Gilbert Road.

Turn left on Gilbert Road to Route 87.

Turn right on Route 87 to just south of Pine.

Just before entering the town of Pine you will see a HUGE sign indicating "Pine Trailhead" on the right.

Restrooms located at the trailhead.

Tonto Natural Bridge + Fossil Creek Trail (Strawberry), Rating C. A pair of short hikes totaling about 5 miles (under 3 for NB and 2.4 for FC) with an elevation gain of about 600 ft. The bridge is a beautiful 180' high, 150' wide, 400' long natural travertine bridge with lots of colors in the rocks. With a little climbing, you can cross right under it, or go up and around to see it from the opposite side. There are several places where you have to scamper over large boulders, but it's more hiking than climbing. Fossil Creek trail has little elevation change, but lots of boulder hopping that provides great views of many rapids and waterfalls. We will stop at a beautiful 15' waterfall. Porta-johns are at both trailheads. \$5.00 entry fee per person. Driving distance is approx 280 miles RT

<http://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Payson/Tonto-Natural-Bridge-State-Par>

Directions to Tonto Natural Bridge

Take I-10 east

Take Route 202 east

Turn left (North) on Gilbert Road

Turn right on Route 87

Stay on 87 and go through Payson.

Tonto Natural Bridge State Park will be a turn to the left.

Pay the entrance fee at the office.

Then proceed to the trailhead.

A restroom is located at the trailhead.