

DESCRIPTION:

HIKE: A Challenge Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Skull Mesa Summit Crossing and Cottonwood Loop from Spur Cross.

REASON FOR CHALLENGE: Advanced route finding skills required for the overgrown eastern part of the Skull Mesa Loop.

DESCRIPTION: This hike is an 18.5 mile lollipop hike with an elevation gain of 4092 feet. From Spur Cross Trailhead, take the Maricopa Trail 2 miles to park boundary. Continue north on forestry road 48 for another 2 miles. At junction with Cave Creek Park route 4 turn right then right again onto trail #247 (Cottonwood Trail). In 2 miles at the junction with #248 (Skull Mesa Trail) turn left and climb 1 mile steeply up to the summit of Skull Mesa. Continue east on #248 1.5 miles over the summit of Skull Mesa and steeply down to the junction with the Quien Sabe Trail (enjoy the views of the trailless Quien Sabe Peak to the north). Continue to follow #248 south another 1.5 miles to the junction with #247 (Cottonwood Trail). Turn right (west) and walk 2 miles back to the Skull Mesa Trail junction. Return 4 miles to the parking lot following the path described above.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: All trails. Long Mileage approximately 16 miles. Allow 10 hours for this hike. Stream crossings may be required along the Maricopa Trail High elevation gain. Steep uphill to the top of Skull Mesa (over 1000 feet in one mile). Remote setting so possible overgrown vegetation may make navigation difficult at times especially on east side of Skull Mesa. Approximately 1.5 miles of wash hiking on the cottonwood trail. Good chance of seeing wildlife. Recommend bringing extra water and electrolytes on this hike.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross #4, National Forest Trails #247, # 248, #247, Spur Cross #4
FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: to Cave Creek Spur Cross Trailhead Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I 17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking

HIKE: B Challenge Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Skull Mesa Summit from Spur Cross.

REASON FOR CHALLENGE: B hike rating exceeded: Mileage, Elevation.

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 14 mile lollipop hike with an elevation gain of 3200 feet. Take the Maricopa Trail about 2 miles to the park boundary. At the junction of Cave Creek Park #4, turn right, then right again onto trail #247 (Cottonwood Trail), at about 2 miles at the junction of #248 (Skull Mesa Trail) turn left and climb steeply up to the summit of Skull Mesa. Return to the parking lot along the same route. Stream crossings may be required along the Maricopa Trail, remoted setting, possible overgrown vegetation may make navigation ifficult at times, good chance of seeing wildlife. Steep uphill to the Skull Mesa, over 1000 in one mile. Be aware of loose stones on the descent. Panoramic views from Skull Mesa

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Bring extra water and electrolytes on this hike

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross,#4, #247, #248, Cottonwood, Skull Mesa

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Skull-MesafromSpurCross>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/>

URL GPX: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AgywFpJqBF4al0aAvK9ks1nih8N5>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 202

DESCRIPTION:

HIKE: B Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Elephant Mountain via Lime Kiln Trail.

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 10 mile counter clockwise loop hike with an elevation gain of 1800 feet. The hike starts out on the Spur Cross trail leading into the North Road #48 trail at the crossing into the Tonto national forest. Turn left onto the Limestone Trail #252 and follow the trail past Limestone Spring and Page Spring. Continue past the Tortuga trail junction and then join the Elephant Mountain loop and climb to the Elephant Mountain saddle. At the saddle there is an optional trail to the left leading steeply up to native american ruins (the walls of the settlement are visible from the saddle). Additionally above the saddle there is a rock formation that looks like a Buffalo. Continue on the Elephant Mountain Trail downhill to the junction with Spur Cross Trail and follow back to the starting point of the hike.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross #4, National Forest Trails #48, Limestone Trail #252, Elephant Mountain Trail, Spur Cross Trail #4

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: to Cave Creek Spur Cross Trailhead Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I 17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <http://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Elephant-Mountain-Trail>

URL GPX: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AgywFpJqBF4amRnCc1HxxtwfAVCC>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 49

HIKE: B Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Skull Mesa Approach from Spur Cross (No Summit).

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 10.3 mile in and out hike with an elevation gain of 1400 feet. Take the Maricopa Trail about 2 miles to the park boundary. At the junction of Cave Creek Park #4, turn right, then right again onto trail #247 (Cottonwood Trail. At about 2 miles stop at the gate at the junction of #248 (Skull Mesa Trail). Return to the parking lot along the same route. Stream crossings may be required along the Maricopa Trail, remoted setting, possible overgrown vegetation may make navigation ifficult at times, good chance of seeing wildlife.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Bring extra water and electrolytes on this hike

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross,#4, #247, #248, Cottonwood

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Skull-MesafromSpurCross>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 703

DESCRIPTION:

HIKE: B Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Spur Cross to Maricopa Trail .

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 10 mile clockwise loop hike with an elevation gain of 500 feet. The hike starts out heading West on the Spur Cross Trail and travels through typical desert terrain. On the return, turn right on the Dragonfly Trail. On the Dragonfly Trail you pass through a saguaro forest with very tall saguaro cactus. You then descend into a riparian area, which contains permanent pools of water and lots of vegetation. The trail then makes a loop around the Jewel of the Creek Preserve, which contains many different bird species and up to 20 different dragonfly species.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross, Dragonfly, Maricopa Trail

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Spur-Cross-Loop>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 200

HIKE: C Challenge Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Elephant Mountain trail.

REASON FOR CHALLENGE: C hike rating exceeded: Elevation.

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 7 mile lollipop hike with an elevation gain of 1600 feet. The hike starts out on the Spur Cross and Tortuga Trails. Most of the early trail is very rocky. Besides the view of Elephant Mountain, there is a rock formation that looks like a Buffalo. There are many saguaro cacti along the trail.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross, Tortuga

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Elephant-Mountain-Trail>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/>

URL GPX: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AgywFpJqBF4anBz5h1kNZkUBIbBW>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 198

DESCRIPTION:

HIKE: C Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Metate, Spur Cross, Fairy Duster, Dragonfly.

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 7.5 mile double loop hike with an elevation gain of 1000 feet. The trail crosses Cave Creek a few times (using wooden planks or rock hopping). The Metate Trail goes through a forest of very large saguaros. The Spur Cross Trail goes for a couple of miles through typical desert terrain. The Dragonfly Trail goes through a riparian area known for its many bird species. Trail condition: overall an average hiking trail with a couple of stony creek crossings.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Metate Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross, Metate, Fairy Duster, Dragonfly

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Metate-Dragonfly-Trails>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/i-WF3FhVd/A>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 199

HIKE: C Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Spur Cross to Maricopa Trail .

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 6 mile in and out hike with an elevation gain of 500 feet. The hike starts out heading West on the Spur Cross Trail and travels through typical desert terrain. On the return, turn right on the Dragonfly Trail. On the Dragonfly Trail you pass through a saguaro forest with very tall saguaro cactus. You then descend into a riparian area, which contains permanent pools of water and lots of vegetation. The trail then makes a loop around the Jewel of the Creek Preserve, which contains many different bird species and up to 20 different dragonfly species.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Spur Cross Trailhead **TRAILS:** Spur Cross, Maricopa Trail

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Spur-Cross-Loop>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 201

DESCRIPTION:

HIKE: D Hike - Spur Cross Ranch CA - Dragonfly Trail, Metate Trails .

DESCRIPTION: This hike is a 4.8 mile lollipop hike with an elevation gain of 540 feet. The hike starts out going back up the road for a quarter mile, then turns right on a slant. At the bottom of the hill, turn right. You will cross the creek and travel through a saguaro forest with very tall saguaro cactus. The whole area along the creek is a riparian area, which contains permanent pools of water and lots of vegetation. The trail makes a loop around the Jewel of the Creek Preserve, which contains many different bird species and up to 20 different dragonfly species. We then go in the other direction on the Spur Cross Trail to the Metate Trail. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on the trail is a forest of very large saguaros. This is our turn around point.

TRAILHEAD NAME: Dragonfly Trailhead **TRAILS:** Dragonfly Trail, Metate Trails, Spur Cross Recreation Area

FEES AND FACILITIES: Park fee is \$3 per person or free with a Maricopa Park Pass (up to five hikers per pass). Portajohns .25 mile from trailhead on spur cross trail.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: Head north on PebbleCreek Parkway to Indian School Road, turn west (left) and take Loop 303 North following it until it ends at I17. Go north on I17 to second exit Highway 74. Turn right on Highway 74 (Carefree Highway). Turn left (north) on Cave Creek Road (approximately 9.5 miles watch for road after 53rd). Turn left (north) on Spur Cross Road (main road veers left). Go 4.5 miles (1.5 is gravel) to the parking area on the right. Walk down the road .1 miles and pay. **DRIVING DISTANCE:** 110 miles

URL PHOTOS: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/SpurCrossRanchConservationArea/Metate-Dragonfly-Trails>

URL MAP: <https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Spur-Cross-Conservation-Area/>

PCHC TRAIL ID: 203