

TONTO NATIONAL FOREST 6-19-20

Maps of various segments in the Tonto National Forest

<https://pchikingclub.smugmug.com/Trail-Maps/Tonto-National-Forest/>

Barnhardt Trail (Mazatzal Wilderness). Rating B/C. This is a 6.4–12.2 mile in and out hike with an elevation change of up to 1,900 ft. The trailhead elevation is 4,200 ft, the elevation gain and descent is 2,100 ft. The trail out is mostly up to the Mazatzal Divide. There are some nice views of the valley around you as you climb to the top. With luck and timing, you may come across some waterfalls as you make the climb (around the 3 mile point). Trail is very rocky in many spots and goes along an open edge of the hillside several times. There is no park entrance fee and no facilities at the trailhead. Driving distance is 208 miles RT.

Directions to Barnhardt Trail: From Pebble Creek take I-10 east to Route 202. Continue east of Route 202 to Gilbert Ave (exit 14).

Turn left on Gilbert Ave and proceed to AZ 87 toward Payson.

The turnoff (FR 419) is 4 miles beyond the junction with AZ 188 (rest stop).

Turn left at FR 419 and follow it for 5 miles to the end.

The parking area is fairly large.

Barnhardt trailhead is located at the west end of the parking area.

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

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.