

*“When snow falls,  
nature listens.”*





*“Skiing is a dance,  
and the mountain  
always leads.”*

[Page One: Over one hundred inches or more of snow fall annually in the White Mountains of Arizona. In the winter there are unlimited opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing. Above: A restful winter scene in the White Mountains of Arizona, near Springerville and Wenima Valley.]

**ARIZONA’S PREMIER SKI DESTINATION**, Sunrise Park Resort, is located near 11,400-foot Mt. Baldy and is only a thirty-minute ride from Wenima Valley. The Ski and Recreational area features ten lifts and two T-Bars, serving 65 trails on a variety of slopes. Ski school and equipment rental, childcare facility and funland area for small children are also available. The Resort also features Three Lodges, several restaurants and a cafeteria.

The complex is owned and operated by the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Nearby is the Sunrise General Store, which features 13 miles of groomed trails for cross-country skiing.

Also included at this recreational area: snowmobile tours, ice fishing, sledding, snowshoeing, and horse-drawn sleigh rides.



[Above: Sunrise Ski Area consists of three peaks: Sunrise, Apache, and Cyclone Circle. Forty percent of the Sunrise ski trails are engineered for the novice, and another forty percent are for intermediate skiers. The remaining twenty percent are for advanced and expert skiers. A map of the Sunrise Trails follows.]





[Above: Snow Tubing in the White Mountains. A National Forest snow tubing and sledding hill is only twenty minutes from Wenima Valley. They offer a public parking lot and restrooms.]

*“Snowflakes are winter’s butterflies.”*

all motorized use year round. There is a snowmobile trailhead for winter access just beyond the boundary to the non-motorized area.

**POLE KNOLL TRAIL:** In the winter, Pole Knoll is known for having some of the best cross-country skiing trails in the area. Whether you’re a beginner or an experienced cross country skier looking for a challenge, Pole Knoll offers cross country trails for every level. The knoll is a spectacular scene during winter. With its snow-covered meadows and glistening ice covered branches, it is truly a winter wonderland.

**HANNAGAN MEADOW:** The groomed ski trails at Hannagan Meadow are narrower and challenging. However, all levels of skiers can find suitable skiing from the fourteen kilometers of groomed trails.

**SQUIRREL SPRINGS TRAIL:** Squirrel Springs offers numerous trails of varying length and difficulty. Winter snow under the powdered ponderosa pines provides a magnificent setting for cross country skiers and snowshoers of all experience levels. For the most ambitious, continuing northwest to the trail’s end will lead you to the Pole Knoll trails, providing many more miles of enjoyment and exploration.



[Above: Horseback Riding in the White Mountains.]

**HORSEBACK RIDING,** once a traditional mode of travel through backcountry terrain, is a recreational pastime for many in the White Mountains of Arizona. Featuring a bounty of trails with diverse ecology, you can experience trail rides through the pine, aspen, and oak tree covered mountains of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. You will also be able to view various varieties of wildlife: deer, elk, antelope, and wild turkey. Many horseback riders are avid photographers.

Spring and fall are best for horse riding in the cooler weather. Venture into the alpine areas for summer rides, which are best in the morning. Watch for storms, especially lightning. To encourage the implementation of proper horse handling, some horse use etiquette tips are included as follows:

Riding on trails and not short cutting will reduce erosion problems and unwanted paralleling of trails.

Refrain from riding in wet conditions or on muddy trails as the weight of the horses badly damages the trail.

*“It is spring again.  
The earth is like a child that  
knows poems by heart.”*

Select camping areas off main trails to prevent overuse of an area and reduce congestion with stock and people.

Hay and grain for horses must be provided by each rider in order that no infringement be made on grazing rights of local cattle grazing permittees or wildlife.

Camping spots should be located a minimum of 200 yards from water sources to help prevent water contamination and allow for cattle and wildlife to come in for water.

When confining horses, do not tie them to live trees for extended periods of time. Use a pole or rope hitch rail and select a site where horses cannot trample tree roots or plants. Rocky ground is best.

Before breaking camp, be sure you have left your campsite in better condition than you found it. The Pack-it-in/Pack-it-out rule applies.



*"I hold no preference among flowers, so long as they are wild, free, spontaneous."*

[Left: Wildflowers erupt throughout the White Mountains from spring and continue throughout the summer. Below: Bottom: Purple wildflower. Next: Buttercups. Top: Indian Paintbrush.]





[Above: *Dusky Grouse*. Bird watching in the White Mountains is best in the spring and fall.]

## BIRDING IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

(From the Springerville-Eagar Chamber of Commerce)

There is no end to the activities in the White Mountains during the summer months. Hiking, camping, fishing, exploring, and deck-chair lounging are popular—and the list goes on. Now there is something new! The White Mountains are slowly becoming known as a birding destination. The prime season for birding is June through September. June and July are the breeding months and the birds are more vocal and easier to spot. August and

September is when you can catch glimpses of migratory birds, as well as local varieties.

Expert birders were kind enough to share with us some of the species and their locations. Species in the White Mountains are: dusky grouse, pinyon jays, Lewis's woodpecker, American three-toed woodpecker, gray jay, Clarks nutcrackers, and American dippers—to name a few.

For Grouse, look in knolls such as Green's Peak and Big Lake Lookout; all around Nutrioso for Lewis's woodpecker, and the west



[Above: *Wild Oyster Mushroom*. Foraging for wild mushrooms in the White Mountains is best in the spring or during seasonal monsoon.]

fork of the Little Colorado in Greer is a good place to find Dippers. The south fork, Sunrise Lake and campground, Grasslands Wildlife Area, Becker Lake, Luna Lake in Alpine, Terry

Flats on Escudilla Mountain, Sipes Wildlife Area, and Wenema Riparian Area have other species and are within easy driving distance of Springerville-Eagar.

[Right: *Lyman Lake* is just twenty minutes north from the Wenima Valley. In the summer Lyman Lake is a popular location for swimming and watersports, including water skiing and jetskis. Below: Spend a lazy summer afternoon at Lyman Lake. Anglers here pursue bass, catfish, and walleye.]

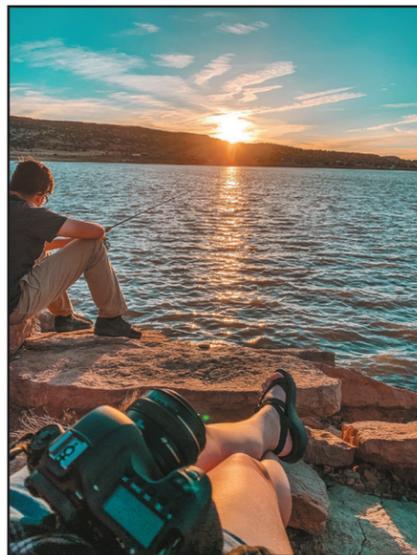


## LYMAN LAKE

*(From Arizona State Parks)*

Created as an irrigation reservoir by damming the Little Colorado River, Lyman Lake State Park is a 1,200-acre park that encompasses the shoreline of a 1,500-acre reservoir at an elevation of 6,000 feet. It is fed by snowmelt from the slopes of Mount Baldy and Escudilla Mountain, the second and third highest mountains in Arizona. Water is channeled into this river valley from a 790-square-mile watershed extending into New Mexico.

Lyman Lake is one of the few bodies of water in northeastern Arizona with no size restrictions on boats. The west end of the lake is buoyed off and restricted as a no wake area (5 mph). This allows the angler a chance at a variety of fish without the proximity of speedboats and water-skiers. The fishery consists of walleye, channel catfish and largemouth bass. The large remainder of the lake is open for all other types of water sports.



Lyman Lake really comes into its own during the spring, summer, and fall. Summer days, with temperature highs in the 80s to low 90s, are perfect for fishing, swimming, leisure boating, water-skiing, hiking or just relaxing. Big Lake is located about 25 miles south of Springerville, Arizona in the Arizona White Mountains. It sits at an elevation of about 9,000 feet. The temperatures are cool and refreshing during late spring, summer and early fall. Boat and kayak rental are available onsite, as well as camping and picnicing areas and a tackle and supply store.



[Above: *Kyaking in the White Mountains*. The White Mountains are home to many mountain lakes that are well known for boating, kyaking and fishing: Big Lake, Crescent Lake, and Luna Lake.]

[Right: The view from the mountaintop at Sunrise Park Resort is spectacular. Below: Railroad Grade Mountain Bike and Hiking Trail is a twenty-mile trail and located approximately fifteen minutes from Wenima Valley and Springerville.]



## SUNRISE BIKE TRAILS

On summer weekends, mountain bikers can take the lift up to the top of Sunrise Mountain and ride the trails down. The chairs are fitted with special carriers for the bikes. Mountain bikes, helmets and accessories are available for rent. Sunrise Ski Resort is located 20-mins from Wenima Valley. You'll find pine forests with aspens, along with spectacular views. The



trails at Sunrise are rugged with lots of rocks, roots and drops.

## RAILROAD GRADE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

This twenty mile trail used to be a railroad line servicing the logging activities in the area. After it's closure, it was converted into a gently graded hiking and mountain biking trail. From the signed trailhead, walk along the easy to follow trail. The trail stays in the meadow, but you can see the edge of the forest here. Since there are no trees to restrict your views, this is an excellent hike to spot wildlife. There is very little elevation change on this hike, which makes it a good mountain biking trail.

## HIKING TRAILS

(From the US Forest Service)

The Apache and Sitgreaves National Forests have hundreds of miles of trails for hikers. From a smooth path through the deep forest



[Above: The Apache-Sitgreaves Forest has literally hundreds of miles of trails for a summer hike with friends and family.]

to a challenging ascent towards a breathtaking summit, there are opportunities for all experience levels.

Hiking as a means of recreation enjoyment is a modern day development. Walking used to be the primary mode of transportation for the majority of people in this country, and trails were designed to get from one place to another. These early day trails often went straight uphill because a straight line was the quickest way between two points.

Today trails are built to provide a variety of users a chance to experience the unique settings that are offered in a forest environment. It's the journey as much as the destination that counts. The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests offer almost 1,000 miles of trails across a variety of terrain. These trails are built to different standards depending upon

*"Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language."*



[Above: Pack a picnic for an impromptu lunch along the trail.]

who is the intended user and the difficulty level.

Opportunities abound for horseback riding, mountain biking, and hiking. Trails within the wilderness and primitive areas are designed for hikers and horses. Trails outside these areas can include a broad spectrum of users.

The Forest has four National Recreation Trails: Eagle, Blue Ridge, Escudilla, and General George Crook.

### MOUNT BALDY TRAIL

(From *Hike Arizona*)

Start at the East Baldy trailhead located about midway between Sunrise Ski Area and Big Lake on State Road 273. At the sign-in kiosk, the trail divides with the left fork leading directly up the mountain. I usually take the right fork, which is the connector. This is a pleasant three-mile amble through heavy, mixed timber, including some very nice old-growth fir. The elevation stays between 9,400 and 9,600 feet.

After about two and a half miles, the trail descends rapidly and emerges from the woods on the bank of the west fork of the Little Colorado River. It crosses the stream and intersects the West Baldy Trail about a mile and a half from its trailhead. For the next couple miles the trace parallels the creek through long meadows, but gradually moves farther away from the streambed and higher up the canyon side, and eventually reenters the forest, now predominantly spruce.

The trail switchbacks and ascends steeply to the ridge top, and here affords the first long views of the hike, first looking north down the canyon one was recently hiking up, and then east to Escudilla and beyond. From here its another mile slog on to the top—or the highest point of the route. But the top isn't really the



[Above: Along the Mount Baldy Trail in the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest.]

top, because at the intersection of the West and East Trails a sign announces one's arrival at the boundary of the White Mountain Apache Reservation, and nontribal members are invited to venture no farther. The summit lies somewhere beyond that sign. I was able to obtain permission from the White Mountain Apache Tribe to travel to the summit. I was asked to submit a polite letter declaring the day, the purpose, and the location of my intended travel, along with my name and some personal information. The permission is granted on a case-by-case basis, and it's guaranteed. Call the Chairman's office at (928) 338-4346. They were very helpful.



[Above: Escudilla Mountain, just minutes from Wenima Valley, ablaze in autumn color.]

### FALL FOLIAGE DRIVE TOUR

(From *Travel Awaits*)

Truthfully, every season is gorgeous in the White Mountains of eastern Arizona. In the spring and summer, the banks of babbling creeks erupt with wildflowers, and in the winter, the rugged peaks and sloping meadows are blanketed in sparkling white.

But it is perhaps in autumn that the White Mountains are at their brightest. Interspersed with the mountains' pine and fir trees are lovely stands of white-barked aspens and thickets of Gambel oaks.

In late September and early October, the changing colors of the aspens and oaks alternate with the evergreen pines, creating a striking green-and-gold patchwork landscape.

*"Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than all the other seasons."*

Fall is also a time of glorious weather in Arizona's high country. Owing to its altitudes that soar to the 6,500-to-9,000-foot-plus range, the White Mountains are always considerably cooler than the lowland deserts of the Phoenix and Tucson areas.

Average high temperatures in White Mountain communities such as Greer and Show Low are in the 70s and 80s in the summer and in the 60s and 70s in the fall. Prime leaf-peeping typically occurs during the first three



[Above: A male elk in the White Mountains of Arizona. The male's bugling sound calls the females out of the forest.]

weeks of October. The September shoulder season, although it might be too early to see the full range of fall colors, is still a wonderful time to visit the White Mountains.

Encompassing a broad region that takes in the Mogollon Rim communities of Pine and Strawberry in the west and continuing 150 miles east to the towns of Springerville and Eager near the Arizona-New Mexico border, the White Mountains area includes countless scenic stretches of road.

Among the most eye-catching is the 40-mile drive on Highway 260 between the Hon-Dah Resort Casino in Pinetop and Springerville/Eager. For even more spectacular terrain, add in a 20-mile detour southeast on the White Mountains Scenic Drive on Highway 273 toward Big Lake and the area's ski resort, Sunrise Park Resort. Along the way, you'll pass by immense meadows speckled with ponderosa pines and Douglas firs and bisected by lovely creeks.

In the fall, expect the meadows to be transitioning from vivid green to mellow yellows and browns and the distant peaks to be changing to gold. Plan to take 3 to 4 hours driving the route and stopping at the various overlooks and trailheads along the way.

### ELK BUGLING

*(From Destination Wildlife)*

In fall, the forests surrounding Hannagan Meadow and the nearby town of Alpine come alive with the sounds of bugling elk. The annual fall elk rut is a spectacle to behold as the



[Above: Dynamic fall colors in the forests of the White Mountains.]

*“Autumn... the year's last, loveliest smile.”*

big bulls compete for breeding rights with the female cows.

Best places to find and photograph them around the trail are large meadows during dusk and dawn. The White Mountains are a good breeding ground as the local elk bulls grow to be some of the largest in the world!

[Right: The Springerville Airport is a ten minute drive from Wenima Valley.]



## TRAVELING TO SPRINGERVILLE, ARIZONA

Located within 10 minutes from the Wenima Valley, Springerville Municipal Field has two lighted and paved runways (8,400- foot and 4,600-foot) with radio and non-directional beacon, a 4,000-square-foot terminal, 14,000-square-foot hanger with complete pilot facilities and lounge.

Springerville is a 3-1/2 to 4-hour drive from Phoenix and Tucson and slightly longer from Albuquerque. Driving from central and southern Arizona offers the breathtaking scenery of the Mogollon Rim or the Salt River Canyon. If you're driving from New Mexico, you'll pass through the splendor of the Datil Mountains or the unique volcanic landforms of El Malpais National Monument.

*Boutique Air* flies from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport to Show Low Airport. The flight is approximately 50 minutes, and the airport is 35 minutes from Wenima Valley and Springerville.

For commuter flight information and availability go to: <http://www.boutiqueair.com>

### **From North Phoenix/Scottsdale Area to Springerville – Mogollon Rim Route**

1. Travel east on Shea Blvd. through Fountain Hills to the Beeline Hwy. (Hwy. 87), then turn left/ north and proceed to Payson.
2. In Payson, turn right/east onto Hwy. 260 east to Show Low.
3. When you reach Show Low, Hwy. 260 east comes to a three-way stop at a traffic signal where there is a Victorian-style house on the left corner. Turn left at this intersection onto Hwy. 60.
4. Continue to drive east on Hwy. 60 to Springerville.

### **From East Valley Area – Salt River Canyon Route**

1. Travel east on Superstition Freeway (Hwy. 60) through the Salt River Canyon to Show Low, continue straight on Hwy. 60.
2. Continue to drive east on Hwy. 60 to Springerville.

### **From Tucson to Show Low**

1. Travel north/northeast on North Oracle Road/AZ 77 North through Oracle and Winkelman toward Globe.
2. Just before Globe, turn right/northeast onto Hwy. 60, which will continue through the Salt River Canyon to Show Low.
3. When you reach Show Low on Hwy. 60, continue straight on Hwy. 60.

### **From Albuquerque to Springerville, Arizona**

1. Drive south on Interstate 25 to Socorro.
2. Proceed west on US Hwy. 60 to Springerville, Arizona.