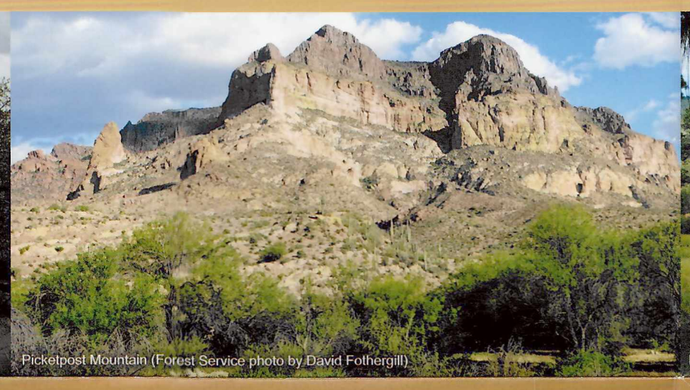
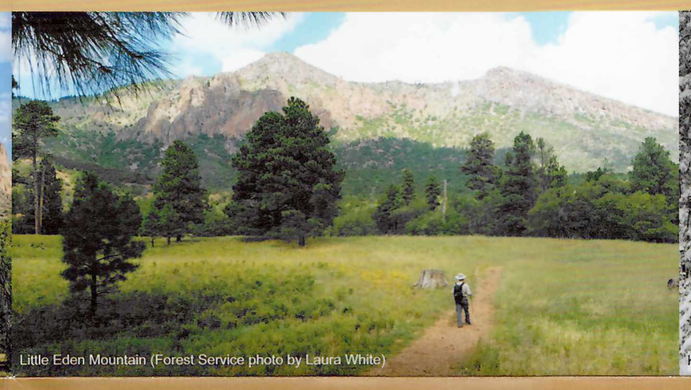
Arizona National Scenic Trail


View into Mexico (Photo courtesy Bob Luce)


Picketpost Mountain (Forest Service photo by David Fothergill)


Little Eden Mountain (Forest Service photo by Laura White)


Kaibab Plateau (Photo by USDA Forest Service)

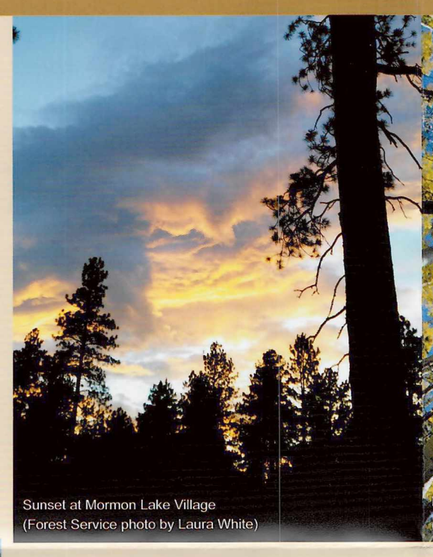
Welcome

The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZNST) stretches over 800 miles from the U.S. border with Mexico to Utah, connecting deserts, mountains, canyons, wilderness, history, communities, and people. The AZNST has something for everyone, from remote and challenging wilderness to easily accessible passages near many gateway communities. This trail showcases Arizona's diverse vegetation, wildlife, scenery, and cultures in a way that provides a unique and unparalleled Arizona experience.

Eighty-five percent of the AZNST is on federal land. The Trail crosses national monuments and memorials, national parks, national forests, Bureau of Land Management land, and state parks. Portions are on State Trust land where it is managed by county governments or the Bureau of Land Management. County and municipal governments also manage portions of the Trail on their own lands. A small amount crosses private land.

The Arizona Trail is divided into 43 passages beginning in the south with the Huachuca Mountain Passage and ending in northern Arizona with the Buckskin Mountain Passage. Descriptions of each passage, and access points, can be found on the Arizona Trail Association (ATA) website at aztrail.org.

Every year, more hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, and trail runners are discovering the AZNST. Some only travel a few miles, or do one passage at a time, while others complete the entire trail in one season.


Sunset at Mormon Lake Village
(Forest Service photo by Laura White)


Kaibab National Forest Fall Colors
(Photo by USDA Forest Service)



Grandview Tower, Kaibab National Forest
(Photo by USDA Forest Service)


Equestrians in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains (Photo courtesy Arizona Trail Association)

Trail History

On October 2, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the National Trails System Act, establishing the first national scenic trails. The Act defined national scenic trails as "… extended trails so located as to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which such trails may pass."

The AZNST was the dream of Dale Shewalter, known as the "Father of the Arizona Trail," and guiding spirit for the Arizona Trail Association. A Flagstaff schoolteacher, Dale envisioned a cross-state trail in the 1970s and, in 1985, he walked from Nogales, Arizona, to the Utah border to explore the feasibility of a trail traversing the length of the state. He then began traveling around the state giving presentations and building support among agencies and trails groups. A grass-roots effort to develop the trail blossomed.

The Arizona Trail was designated a national scenic trail by Congress in 2009 and is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. Other partners in the management and protection of the trail include the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, Arizona State Parks, the Arizona Trail Association, and several counties and municipalities.

For more information, contact:

Arizona Trail Program Manager
USDA Forest Service
Southwestern Regional Office
333 Broadway SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102

We Need Your Help!

From its inception, dedicated volunteers have played an important role in bringing the AZNST to life. Volunteers connect with other outdoor enthusiasts through the ATA, helping to build and maintain the Trail. For more information on how you can preserve the Trail for future generations, please contact the ATA.



Saguaro forest
(Photo courtesy Shannon Villegas)

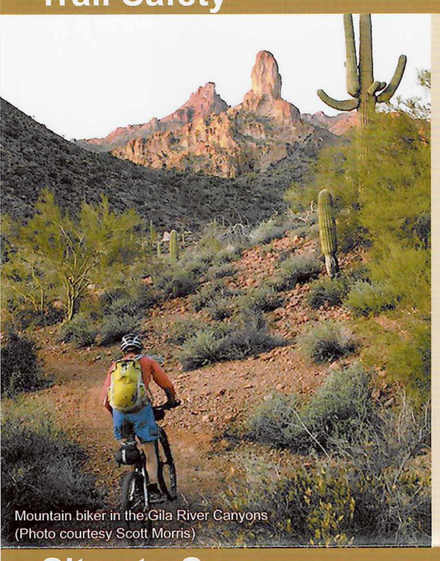
"Along the Arizona Trail "The Arizona
A reverence and peace you'll know
Through deserts, canyons, and mountains
From Utah to Old Mexico"

-A portion of a longer poem by Dale Shewalter, Father of the Arizona Trail

"The Arizona Trail is an incredible testament to choice, to life, and finding a way no matter what difficulties. I'm glad I walked the journey, I'll always remember how breathtaking the sights, how powerful the moments and how solemn the message. Because the reason for that message has allowed me to find that place, that center, that place deep inside--my soul where it brings me peace."

-Mike Buckley

Trail Safety


Mountain biker in the Gila River Canyons
(Photo courtesy Scott Morris)

Trail Safety

The AZNST traverses wild, rugged, and primitive parts of the state. Trail users may often find themselves miles from help and outside of cell phone service areas. A personal locator device is recommended. Carry paper maps for back up in case your electronic navigation system fails.

Plan Your Trip

Knowledge of the area, weather, terrain, and your limitations, plus a little common sense, can help ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.

- Leave a copy of your itinerary with a responsible person. Include where you are planning to travel, the equipment you're bringing, the weather you've anticipated, and when you plan to return.
- Travel with a companion.
- Be able to navigate without a GPS or phone app.
- Be aware of natural hazards in your environment.

Water

Think before you drink! No matter how clean or pure stream water looks, it's likely to contain water-borne parasites and microorganisms that can cause discomfort and sometimes serious illness. Pack your water in and filter water you find and/or purify it with mechanical, chemical or ultraviolet treatment. Carry more than you need. Always carry two water filters in case one fails.

Dehydration (losing more fluid than you take in causing your body functions to falter) will occur if you don't replace lost fluids and electrolytes, especially in hot weather.

Heat Exhaustion/Heat Stroke

Heat exhaustion is a condition whose symptoms may include heavy sweating, rapid pulse, nausea, and cramping, a result of your body overheating. Heat stroke is a more serious form of heat injury and can occur if your body temperature rises to 104 F (40 C) or higher. Heatstroke requires emergency treatment and can quickly damage your brain, heart, kidneys, and muscles. Know the symptoms and take preventative measures.

Storms

Forming quickly in the mountains, lightning storms are common in the summer. Snow can occur at higher elevations.

Flash Floods

Possible during the summer monsoon season, flash floods can happen when thunderstorms are occurring anywhere nearby. Avoid hiking or camping in washes (dry riverbeds), especially when thunderstorms are uphill from you. Do not try to cross a flooded wash in your vehicle under any circumstances. Check the weather before heading out at www.weather.gov.

Lightning

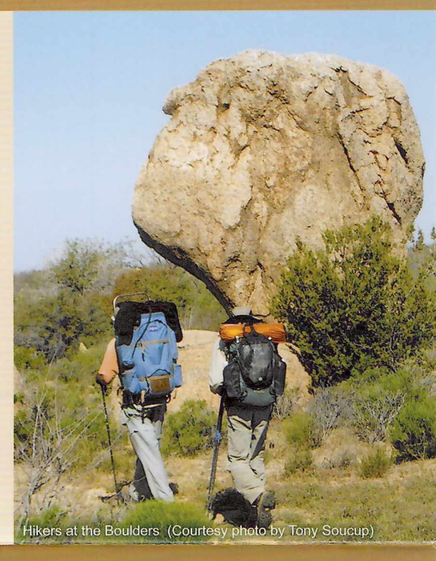
Stay low when outdoors – lightning hits the tallest object. Avoid elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges, or peaks. If caught in an open field, seek a low spot and crouch with your feet together and head low. Lightning is most like to occur during the afternoon in the summer monsoon season.

Hypothermia

Snow and cold rain are possible along the entire length of the AZNST. Hypothermia is most likely at very cold temperatures, but it can occur even at cool temperatures above 40 F if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water.

Wildlife

There is an abundance of wildlife along the AZNST. All wild animals need to be treated with caution and respect. Always enjoy wildlife from a distance, and secure all food so animals don't become habituated to human food.


Hikers at the Boulders (Courtesy photo by Tony Soucup)

Sites to See

Scenery and Nature

The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZNST) begins at the Coronado National Memorial on the U.S.-Mexico border and ends within the Bureau of Land Management's Arizona Strip District on the Utah border. In between, the Trail winds through some of the most rugged and spectacular scenery in the western United States. It is one of only three national scenic trails for which a connected route exists for the entire length of the trail.

Geology

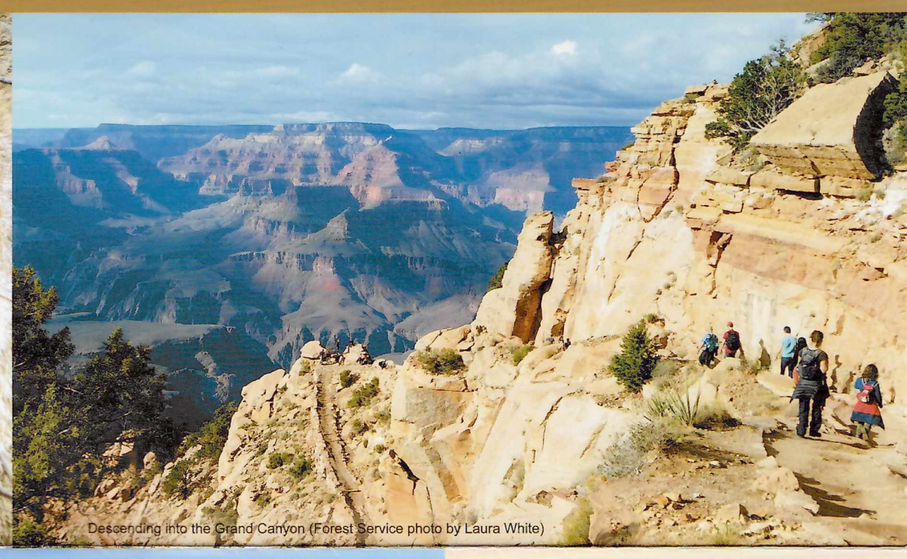
The diverse geology along the AZNST is complex and spans much of the range of geologic time. The scenery was created from environments ranging from warm shallow seas to windy desert dunes, and from violent volcanic eruptions to lazy lava flows.

Two very different types of landscapes occur in Arizona: the Basin and Range Province of southwestern Arizona and the Colorado Plateau Province of northern Arizona, with a third area called the Transition Zone between them.

The Basin and Range Province is undergoing extension, stretching to create uplifted mountain ranges and down-dropped basins. Beginning near the U.S.-Mexico border and extending into the central highlands, it is dominated by the Sky Islands and the Sonoran Desert. The Transition Zone is bordered by the Mogollon Rim and Colorado Plateau and includes Picketpost Mountain, the Superstition Mountains, and Goldfield Volcanic Zone. The Colorado Plateau Province stretches from the Mogollon Rim north to the border with Utah and takes in the Kaibab Plateau and the Grand Canyon with 2 billion years of geologic history and nine major geologic layers. In this province you will also find the San Francisco Peaks stratovolcano, the highest point in Arizona.


Gila woodpecker (Forest Service photo by Laura White)


Javelina (Saguaro National Park photo)


Descending into the Grand Canyon (Forest Service photo by Laura White)

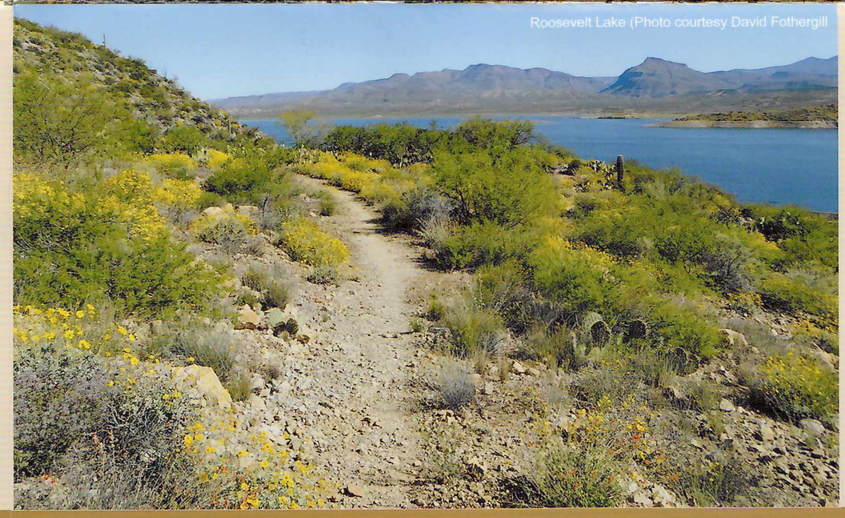


National Scenic Trails

Growing conservation ethics and a desire to access the nation's unparalleled outdoor spaces led Congress to pass the National Trails System Act in 1968. Today, this system consists of 11 national scenic trails, including the Arizona Trail. There are also 21 national historic trails and nearly 1,300 national recreation trails. For more information visit:

fs.usda.gov/managing-land/trails/

Information and publications as well as online maps, directions, and other resources are available from the Forest Service and the ATA. For more information on trailheads, passages, trail conditions, closures, and to purchase printed materials, such as guidebooks and maps, please visit the ATA website at aztrail.org.


Roosevelt Lake (Photo courtesy David Fothergill)

CONTACT
USDA Forest Service
Southwestern Region
333 Broadway SE
Albuquerque, NM 87102
520-388-8328
www.fs.usda.gov/azt

Arizona Trail Association
738 N. 5th Avenue
Suite 201
Tucson, AZ 85705
602-252-4794
aztrail.org

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National Scenic Trails

Arizona National Scenic Trail

Exploring the Trail

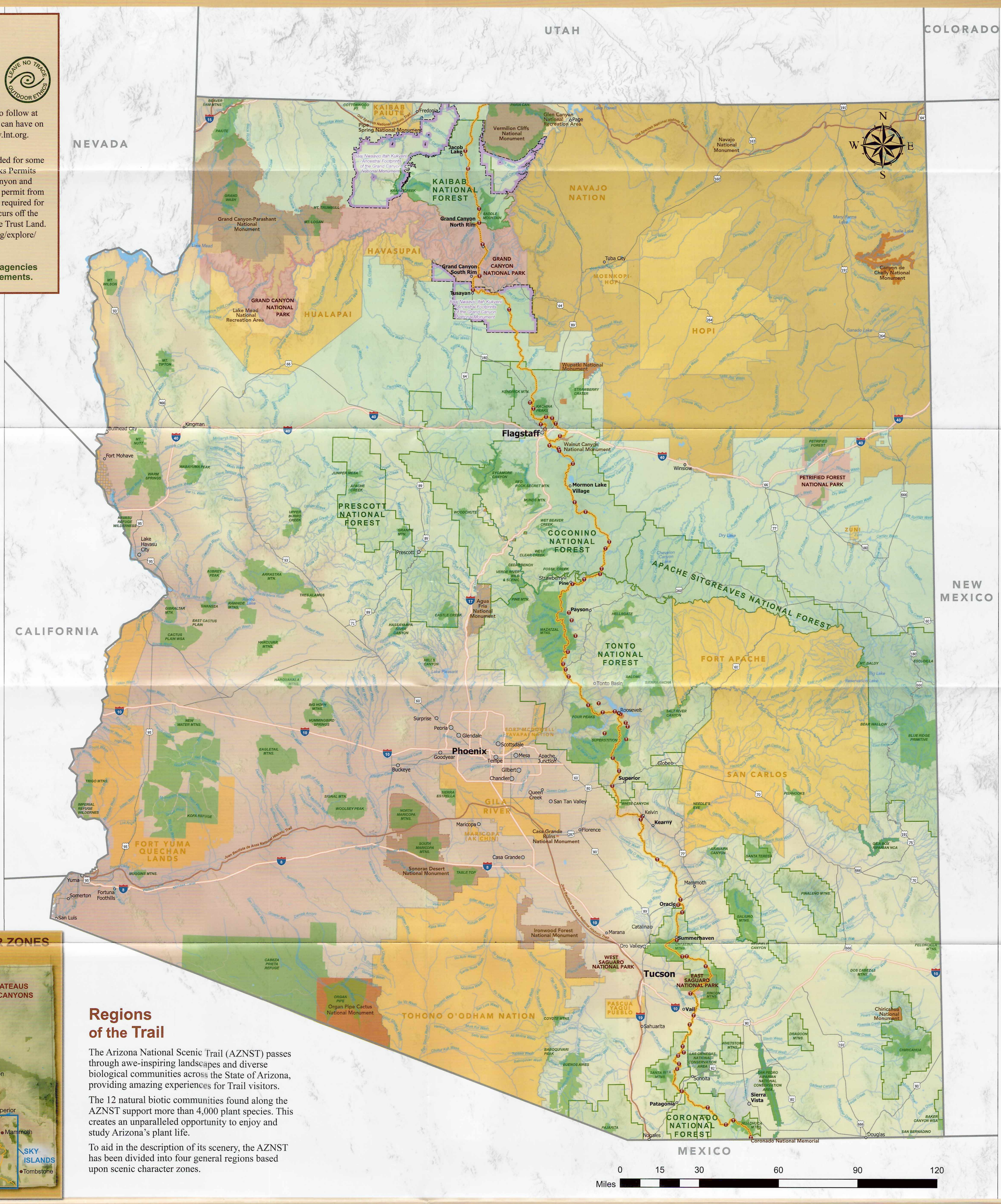
LEAVE NO TRACE

Leave No Trace (LNT) is a national education program developed to inform visitors on the use low impact practices when using public lands for recreation, especially wilderness areas. LNT principles are guidelines to follow at all times to reduce the impact visitors can have on natural resources. Learn more at www.lnt.org.

PASSES/PERMITS:

Recreation passes or fees may be needed for some Forest Service facilities. National Parks Permits are required for camping in Grand Canyon and Saguaro National Parks. A recreation permit from the Arizona State Land Department is required for any activity, such as camping, that occurs off the Arizona National Scenic Trail on State Trust Land. Learn more about permits at aztrail.org/explore/permits/

Always check with the local agencies for trail area specific requirements.



SCENIC CHARACTER ZONES

Regions of the Trail

The Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZNST) passes through awe-inspiring landscapes and diverse biological communities across the State of Arizona, providing amazing experiences for Trail visitors.

The 12 natural biotic communities found along the AZNST support more than 4,000 plant species. This creates an unparalleled opportunity to enjoy and study Arizona's plant life.

To aid in the description of its scenery, the AZNST has been divided into four general regions based upon scenic character zones.

Sky Islands

Found in southern Arizona, this area provides striking contrasts. Massive, pine-clad mountain ranges rise abruptly above an ocean of broad desert plains, forming an arid archipelago. You will encounter enormous diversity by climbing from the desert into mountains reaching 9,000 -10,000 feet in elevation. It is this mosaic of low deserts and high mountains that results in an incredible range of landscapes and plant and animal life.

Saguaros (Photo courtesy Arizona Trail Association)

Huachuca Mountains (Forest Service photo by Laura White)

Arizona Sonoran Uplands

This region provides a transition between the Sonoran Desert and the wetter, cooler high country to the north. It encompasses the heavily dissected mountainous areas between the Mogollon Rim and the Verde, Gila, and Salt River canyons. Landforms vary from desert plains and hills to forested plateaus and mountains. Several streams and rivers flow perennially. Major watercourses include the Verde and Salt rivers.

Claret cup cactus (Photo courtesy Larry Simkins)

Thunderhead over Roosevelt Lake (Forest Service photo by Laura White)

Volcanic Field & Ponderosa Pine Plateau

This region is defined by two zones: Plateau Country and the San Francisco Volcanic Field. The Ponderosa Pine Plateau extends from the Mogollon Rim to the southern edge of the volcanic field. The latter is dominated by the San Francisco Peaks, which reach a height of 12,633 feet and are held in the light of reverence by many Native American tribes. The volcanic field then extends north to the Coconino Plateau.

Aspen grove near Flagstaff (Photo courtesy Larry Simkins)

San Francisco Peaks (Photo courtesy Larry Simkins)

Plateaus and Canyons

This area of high forested plateaus is separated by the Grand Canyon, which ranges from 5 to 15 miles wide and 3,500 to 7,000 feet deep, and was formed by the Colorado River. The plateaus differ in elevation and ecology from the canyon. The Coconino Plateau, south of the Grand Canyon, has gently rolling terrain mostly between 6,500 to 7,000 feet in elevation. The Kaibab Plateau to the north reaches over 9,000 feet. This high block plateau is tilted and gradually declines over the course of 65 trail miles to the Vermilion Cliffs, which are at approximately 5,000 feet.

Spruce forest of the North Rim (Photo courtesy Arizona Trail Association)

Grand Canyon view (Photo courtesy Tony Soucup)