

GERONIMO TRAIL NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

This Scenic Byway ties together Sierra County's many charming locales and offers sweeping panoramas, breathtaking vistas and intimate corners of beauty. Jagged peaks give way to tranquil valleys and small villages left back in time. The byway traverses a landscape rising to more than 8,200 feet in the Black Range Mountains. Emory Pass Vista in the Black Range Scenic Area reveals a magnificent view for more than 40 miles. One area of interest along the byway is the Gila National Forest's tree-covered peaks. The Gila Wilderness and the Aldo Leopold Wilderness offer three million acres of wild nature in which to camp, hike and enjoy the silence and clean air of this scenic territory. Starting point for the byway is 70 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 in Truth or Consequences. 575-894-1968, 800-831-9487.

CABALLO LAKE & PERCHA DAM STATE PARKS

Located 20 miles downstream from Elephant Butte, Caballo Lake and Percha Dam include facilities for camping, RVs, boating, fishing, swimming and hiking. 50 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25. 575-743-3942. truthorconsequencesnm.net

Living Ghost Towns

The Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway meanders through several living ghost towns that are home to old-timers and newcomers alike who are restoring and revitalizing these historic locales with shops, museums, eateries and other enterprises. The starting point for the byway is 70 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 in Truth or Consequences.

MONTICELLO

Monticello was founded by ranchers and farmers in 1856 as Canada Alamosa (Cottonwood Canyon). In 1881, its first postmaster, Aristide Bourget, renamed the town that was located not far from the headquarters for the Warm Springs Apache Agency. The town features old adobe homes that have been restored by new residents. Head 72 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 to T or C, then take NM 142 north for 25 miles.

CUCHILLO

Established by ranchers and farmers in the 1850s, Cuchillo was named for a nearby creek and a local Apache chief, Cuchillo Negro (Black Knife). Midway between the mines at Chloride and Winston and the railroad at Engle, it flourished as a stage stop and trade center from the 1880s to the 1930s. Charming original buildings still stand, including the Cuchillo Bar and Store and San Jose Catholic Church, built in 1907. Head 72 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 to T or C, then take NM 52 north for 15 miles.

CHLORIDE

Founded in 1881 after Englishman Harry Pye discovered silver ore nearby. In its heyday, it had eight saloons, three general stores, restaurants, butcher shops, a candy store, a lawyer, a doctor, a Chinese laundry and a hotel. There were twelve producing mines and nearly 500 prospector holes in and around Chloride. 72 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 to T or C, take Forest Rd. 226 for 30 miles.

WINSTON (FIRST CALLED FAIRVIEW)

Winston was settled in 1881 by miners who found nearby Chloride "too rowdy." It had a school, bars, a newspaper, horse races and featured plays and songfests at Cloudman Hall (named for the local butcher). Miner, businessman, and future state legislator Frank H. Winston, who came to town in 1882, owned several businesses and generously gave credit to customers in hard times. When he died in 1929, the town was renamed in his honor. Head 72 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 to T or C, then take NM 52 for 38 miles.

HILLSBORO

This ghost town was born in 1877 when gold was found at the nearby Opportunity and Ready Pay mines. The town grew, becoming the county seat in 1884. Area mines produced more than \$6 million in gold and silver, and by 1907 the town had a population of 1,200. Today, the town of fewer than 100 residents has flower-filled yards and old cottonwoods lining the main street. Hillsboro offers many enticements, including gift shops, restaurants, a bed and breakfast, artist studios, galleries and a restaurant. Head 63 miles north of Las Cruces on I-25 towards T or C, then take NM 152 north for 32 miles.

Deming

ROCKHOUND STATE PARK

Twelve miles to the southeast of Deming is Rockhound State Park. There are camping/picnicking units, a water system, a playground and sanitary facilities. Rocks and semiprecious gem stones are yours for the taking, such as quartz crystals, translucent chalcedony of white, bluish-grey, orange and red hues. Head 65 miles west of Las Cruces on I-10 to Deming, take NM 11 south for five miles, then take NM 141 east for nine miles. 1-888-NMPARKS. friendsofrockhound.org

CITY OF ROCKS STATE PARK

North of Deming is the City of Rocks State Park. Over the last 30 million years, these mysterious rocks were wind-carved and rain-worn, sculpted into outlandish streets and houses, temples and towers. Shards of pottery and arrowheads have been found and continue to be found today. Spanish conquistadores carved mysterious crosses on the rocks – signs, some say, which may point to a long buried treasure. 65 miles west of Las Cruces on I-10 to Deming, take US 180 northwest for 24 miles, then take NM 61 northeast for four miles. 1-888-NMPARKS

Silver City

Silver City is a historic mining town that has since become a thriving artist community with many unique shops and restaurants. It sits in the Gila Wilderness and serves as a launch point for many historic drives and hikes. Head 65 miles west of Las Cruces on I-10 to Deming, then take Hwy. 180 northeast for 52 miles. 575-538-3785. silvercity.org

CATWALK NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

Not far from Silver City, the catwalk offers a fascinating glimpse into the geologic and historic foundations of southwest New Mexico. The first portion of the trail is relatively easy and leads to hidden pools and splashing waterfalls – magical spots in our high desert environment. Beyond the developed trail, more rigorous trails lead into the Gila Wilderness. Consult with the Forest Service before venturing beyond the Catwalk trail area. The Catwalk Recreation Area is a day-use area and is open from sunrise to sunset. 65 miles west of Las Cruces on I-10 to Deming, then take Hwy. 180 northeast for 112 miles. 575-538-3785, 800-548-9378. silvercity.org

GILA CLIFF DWELLINGS NATIONAL MONUMENT

This monument, located in the beautiful Gila Wilderness, offers a glimpse of the homes and lives of the people of the Mogollon culture who lived there from the 1280s through the early 1300s. Activities in the monument include bird watching, fishing, hiking, interpretive programs, nature walks, stargazing, and wildlife viewing. Activities in the wilderness include backpacking, bird watching, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, stargazing, and wildlife viewing. There are several popular hot springs in the area. 65 miles west of Las Cruces on I-10 to Deming, take Hwy. 180 northeast for 52 miles, then take Hwy. 15 north for 44 miles. 575-536-9461. nps.gov/gjcl