

Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway

Immerse yourself in the Apaches' history and the hot mineral springs used by Geronimo and his warriors. Visit the historic mining towns that flourished and died with the gold and silver fortunes. From desert lakes to forested mountains, the Geronimo Trail captures the spirit of freedom and independence.



Length: 154 miles / 246.4 km

Time 13 hours, including
to backtracking, to drive the
Allow: byway. Allow 2 or 3 days to
fully enjoy the byway.

Local Information

**Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway,
Inc.**

505-894-1968

Send E-mail

Visitor Services

Fees



There are no fees to drive the byway.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



Bicycle traffic is common along the byway. Due to the large distances between communities, pedestrian travel is rare, but there is sufficient room along the side of the pavement for pedestrians. Local bicyclists often take their bikes by car out to a section of the byway, leave the car safely parked along the side of the road and ride their bicycles for several miles and back to the car. There are bicycle endurance races held on NM-152 across the Black Range over Emory Pass on the byway. This road is also on the southern Bike Centennial route across the U.S. attracting bicyclists from all over the world.

Camping



Camping opportunities are available through the following forest and parks:

- Gila National Forest
- Caballo Lake State Park
- Elephant Butte Lake State Park

Food



Food services are unavailable from Winston north on NM-52 for 8 miles, on NM-59 to Beaverhead 31 miles and back the same distance to Winston.



Gasoline

No fuel is available from Hillsboro to San Lorenzo across NM-152, 36 miles. Neither fuel nor food is available from Winston north on NM-52 for 8 miles, on NM-59 to Beaverhead 31 miles and back the same distance to Winston

Gas is available in San Lorenzo, where the Geronimo Trail meets the Trail of the Mountain Spirits.



Information

The Geronimo Trail Visitors and Interpretive Center has displays on the communities along the byway, informational brochures on the byway, as well as maps and information on current festivals and special events taking place. Visitors Guides are available at the Museum. Information may also be obtained at the Pioneer Store Museum in Chloride, the General Store in Winston, the Hillsboro General Store Café, and the local Forest Service office.



Lodging

There is overnight lodging along this byway.



Phone

Public phones are available along this byway.



Restrooms

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

Along the byway, even in lower elevations and the mild winter, a coat is generally needed.

Enjoy the nature, history, and culture of southwest New Mexico - but don't disturb the natural, historical, and cultural sites. Do not remove, destroy, or deface anything on any site; strict laws protect artifacts on State, Federal, Indian, and private lands. Buying, selling, trading, or transporting these stolen items is also illegal.

Restrictions

Sections of NM-152, NM-52, and NM-59 may be closed in winter due to snow. Roads are not plowed nights and weekends, but they are normally clear and open for safe travel by the next working day after a snow.

Bridges between Caballo and Hillsboro bear twelve-foot, six-inch height restrictions.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

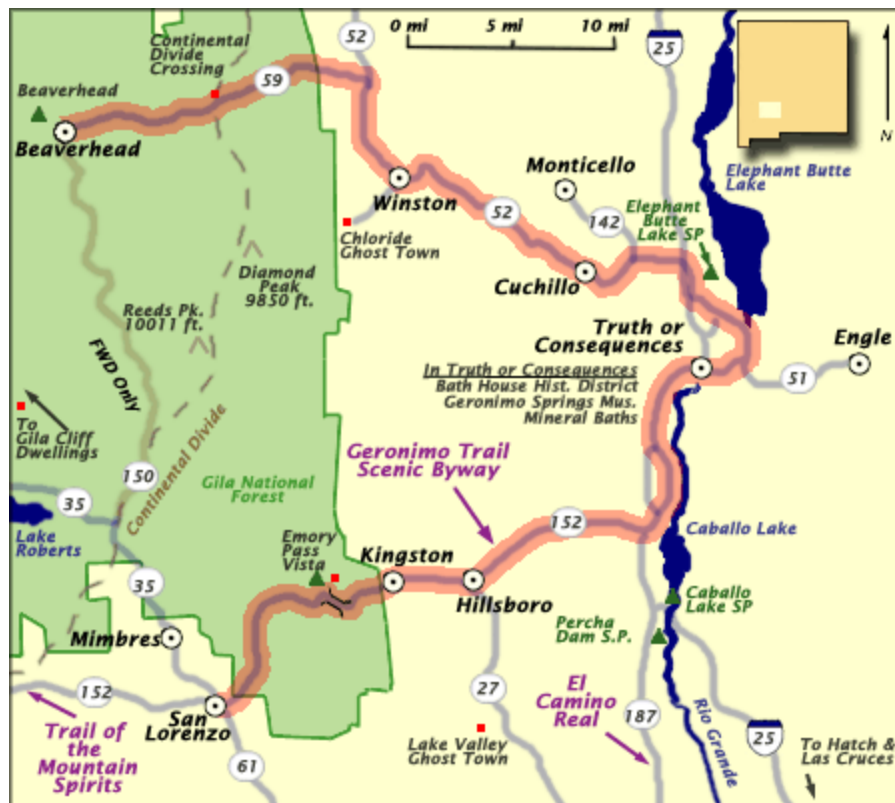
April and May or September and October are the best months to drive the byway because there is less traffic. Spring and fall provide the best weather for out-of-doors exploration of the historic sites along the byway.

High Season

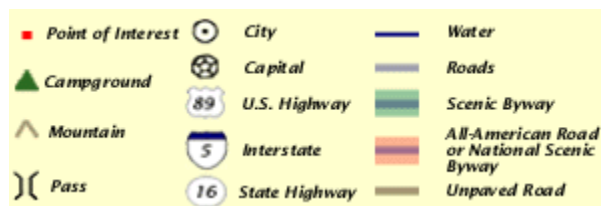
The highest crowds and traffic are during Memorial weekend, Fourth of July weekend and Labor Day weekend.

Map and Directions

Geronimo Trail Features Map



Legend:



Driving Directions

The byway begins in Truth or Consequences, NM. From there, you can explore the northern section of the byway or the southern. You may take a side trip that connects the two sections, however, a clearance vehicle is necessary for that.

Southern Section

- Begin at the Geronimo Trail Interpretive Center, and follow the main thoroughfare from the Interpretive Center through Truth or Consequences on Main Street and South Broadway to Williamsburg, approximately 3 miles.
- In Williamsburg, turn left onto NM-187 (the last intersection before entering the freeway). Travel south on NM-187 for 14 miles, following the Rio Grande to the junction with NM-152.
- An RV park overlooking Caballo Lake is at the junction with NM-152. Turn right on NM-152 and continue to the towns of Hillsboro and Kingston.
- NM-152 beyond Kingston climbs up the eastern slope of the Black Range Mountains and tops out at Emory Pass, elevation 8,828 feet.
- From Emory Pass the road winds down to the small village of San Lorenzo. It is 53 miles from the turnoff near Caballo Lake to San Lorenzo.
- The road has many twists, turns, and hairpin curves, so the driving time will be about one and one-half hours.
- You may return across the Black Range to Truth or Consequences along the byway, or take a side trip on the Trail of the Mountain Spirits Scenic Byway.

Northern Section

- The northern portion of the Geronimo Trail leaves the Interpretive Center in Truth or Consequences, and circles through the one-way streets of downtown to the corner of Third Street, at the only stop light in town.
- Turn right on Third, which is NM-51, and follow it for 4 miles to Elephant Butte Lake. You will pass Elephant Butte Dam on your left as you climb the hill. Continue for about a mile to the left hand turn leading to the Dam Site Recreation Area.
- Return on NM-51 for two miles, to the junction of NM-179, and turn right toward the City of Elephant Butte. It is an additional two miles to the junction of NM-195.
- Turn left to go to Elephant Butte State Park and the City of Elephant Butte. Follow NM-195 for 4.5 miles, through the City of Elephant Butte, northwest until it intersects with NM-181.
- Turn right on NM-181 and cross under the I-25 overpass. Travel 2.5 miles on NM-181, past the turnoff to the Municipal Airport.
- At the intersection of NM-52, turn left and travel away from the valley and toward the distant mountains. Cuchillo is 6 miles from the intersection, and Winston is 28 miles.
- At Winston, turn left, traveling through the town to Chloride, 2.5 miles away. After exploring Chloride, return to Winston by the same road.

Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway



- At the Winston Store, turn left on NM-52 and drive 9 miles to the junction of NM-59, leading directly toward the mountains.
- Turn left on NM-59 and follow it for 31 miles to the Beaverhead Ranger Station, where there is a work station, rest area, and large parking lot.
- It takes about two and a half hours to drive from Truth or Consequences to Beaverhead.

Road Trip: Follow the Spirit of Geronimo

Departure: Geronimo Springs Museum and Visitor and Interpretive Center

Destination: Beaverhead

Time to allow: 2 days

On the first day, visit Geronimo Springs Museum and Geronimo Trail Interpretive Center, the Lake Valley kiosk and Hillsboro. Have lunch in one of Hillsboro's cafés. Drive to Kingston, Emory Pass Vista, and San Lorenzo, with a brief stop to view the Kneeling Nun. In San Lorenzo, refresh yourself at the convenience store for your trip back. Return across the Black Range to Truth or Consequences, stopping at the Caballo Mountain Vista. Visit Ralph Edwards Park and Apache Rocks. At the end of the day, relax by soaking in a hot mineral bath.

On the second day, visit Elephant Butte Dam Site Recreation area and the overlook of the dam. Go to Cuchillo and Chloride, then have lunch in Winston. Continue to the site of the former Warm Springs Apache Reservation and on to Beaverhead. Return from Beaverhead to Truth or Consequences. If you're traveling between September and May, take a jacket or coat because it gets cool in the mountains.

Day 1

- **Start: Geronimo Springs Museum and Visitor and Interpretive Center**



Geronimo Trail Visitors & Interpretive Center is the focal point of information for the Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway. Displays tell about the communities along the route, the plants and animals that may be seen, and the geology of how the area was formed. Geronimo Springs Museum, in the same complex, is rated one of the best small-town museums in the country. From its world-class display of prehistoric pottery to its log cabin, chuck box, saloon, and windmill in the patio, the displays give you the feel of history. A life-size wax statue of Geronimo is the focus in the Apache room, with history of other Apache leaders. Fourteen rooms of intriguing displays have interesting stories attached, so you can see and understand the importance of seemingly insignificant items to a time and generation now gone.

• **Stop 1: Lake Valley Kiosk**

Directions from previous place: Take business route I-25 to Williamsburg about 3 miles to the junction of NM 187. Turn south on NM 187 before the on-ramp to I-25, and travel on NM 187 for 11.5 miles to the junction of NM 152. Turn west on NM 152 and travel for approximately 10 miles.

Distance from Previous Site: 17 miles / 27.2 km

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site: 20 minutes

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Suggested Time at This Site: 10 minutes

Suggested Time at This Site:

Suggested Time at This Site:

Look out over the sprawling terrain and feel the vastness of the land. It was this expansive openness that gave the Apache his spirit of freedom and independence, made him feel one with the land, one with nature. Miners living near here during the 1880s and ranchers moving into this area revered it for its great expanse of grasslands and wide open spaces. To the west is the former mining camp of Gold Dust. Later a copper mine was located here. Cattle still graze the land. NM 152 from the junction of NM 187 west is a popular bicycling route.

• **Stop 2: Hillsboro**

Directions from previous place: Continue west on NM 152 to Hillsboro.
Distance from Previous Site: 4.5 miles / 7.2 km
Travel Time from Previous Site: 20 minutes
Suggested Time at This Site: 1 hour 30 minutes



The community of Hillsboro has changed little in the last 100 years. Walk through the town and look at the 1880s architecture and style. A must-see are the two churches in the town. Union Church on the hill dates from the 1880s, with the splendor of stained glass windows and ornate interior fixtures. The Catholic Church on Main Street was rebuilt following the plans of the original structure after one of the devastating floods that hit Hillsboro. Be sure and visit the site of the original Sierra County Courthouse on the hill overlooking the town. The Black Range Museum, hours vary, is located in the old Ocean Grove Hotel building, owned and operated by Sadie Orchard, well known madam and pioneer business woman in Hillsboro. The General Store Café is located in a building that has been in continual use as a business for over 120 years. Many interesting artifacts of early times are on display. If some of the stores are not open, remember that Hillsboro residents have the independent nature of living in the "land of mañana". If something doesn't get done today, there is always tomorrow.

• **Stop 3: Kingston**

| | |
|--|---|
| Directions from previous place: | Continue west on NM 152 to Kingston. The road to the right is Kingston's main street. |
| Distance from Previous Site: | 8 miles / 12.8 km |
| Travel Time from Previous Site: | 15 minutes |
| Suggested Time at This Site: | 45 minutes |

Kingston, the domain of Apaches Victorio and Geronimo, became the "gem of the Black Range", the premier mining town of New Mexico. Frequenting this metropolis were the famous and infamous of the territory. Sadie Orchard started her first brothel on Virtue Avenue in Kingston. Ed Doheney and Albert Fall, later of Teapot Dome fame, got their starts here. Mark Twain visited and wrote of one of the local residents, Sheba Hurst, in his book "Roughin' It". McKenna wrote of the stories of Apaches, miners, outlaws and wild times in his book Black Range Tales. Eugene Manlove Rhodes used this town as the setting for some of his western books, and was said to be fond of getting into a card game here. The Victorio Hotel housed the well-to-do visitors. Lillian Russell's dance troupe performed at the local opera house. This former town of over 7,000 residents, 22 saloons, a bank, 3 hotels, 3 newspapers, an assay office and an opera house is only a ghostly shadow of its former self. The Black Range Lodge was a boarding house during mining days and is now a bed-and-breakfast. The large lobby added later was built from the materials dismantled from Pretty Sam's Casino. The Percha Bank Museum is owned by Cranberry Press next door, and will be opened on request. Regular hours will be posted on the door and may vary with the seasons. Both sites are worth a visit. NM 152 past Kingston and across Emory Pass is on the south route of the bike centennial cross country trail. Hiking, bicycling, bird watching and rock hounding are popular around Kingston.

• **Stop 4: Emory Pass Vista**

Directions from previous place: Continue west on NM 152 from Kingston for 8.2 miles. During this stretch of road you will climb 3,000 feet in elevation. The road has many twists, turns and hair-pin curves, and the speed limit of 25 miles per hour is advisable. One car magazine labeled this road as a supreme driving challenge.



Distance from Previous Site: 8.2 miles / 13.1 km

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site: 30 minutes

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site:

Suggested Time at This Site: 15 minutes

Suggested Time at This Site:

Suggested Time at This Site:

Emory Pass Vista is a must-experience view. From this vantage point, miles of rugged terrain can be seen. Feel the spirit of the Apaches moving through the mountains and valleys, across the distant mesas to the Rio Grande valley and the Caballo (Mescal) Mountains beyond. Just as the Apaches looked out over these mountains to rejuvenate their spirits in the wonder of the land, so will you feel the insignificance of humanity in the vast beauty of creation. This stop is also on the bird watchers' trail, and it is a popular location to find a variety of mountain species. Several hiking and backpacking trails leave from Emory Pass Vista. The road from Kingston across Emory Pass to San Lorenzo is used as a test run for handling prototype cars by automobile manufacturers.

• **Stop 5: San Lorenzo**

Directions Leave Emory Pass Vista and return to NM 152, continue the
from drive west down the mountain. The western slope is not as
previous steep and curvy as the eastern slope. Continue to the junction
place: with NM35/61.
Distance 19.5 miles / 31.2 km
from
Previous
Site:
Travel 40 minutes
Time
from
Previous
Site:
Suggested 20 minutes
Time at
This Site:

Ten miles beyond the Kneeling Nun vista is the village of San Lorenzo. This is the end of the Geronimo Trail at its southern point. At this point, the Geronimo Trail intersects the Trail of the Mountain Spirits, and from here you may return across the mountain. The Chiricahua Apache tribe was split into sub-tribes or family groups. The Red Paint People were concentrated on the west side of the Black Range, and the Warm Springs People were concentrated on the east side of the Black Range, although they intermingled and traversed each other's territory and banded together against common enemies. San Lorenzo is an early farming community in the Mimbres River valley.

• **Stop 6: Caballo Mountain Vista**

Directions from previous place: From San Lorenzo return east across the Black Range on NM 152 past Emory Pass, Kingston, through Hillsboro, and to the junction of NM 187. Proceed north on NM 187 for approximately 3.5 miles to the Caballo Mountain Vista.



Distance from Previous Site: 56.5 miles / 90.4 km

from

Previous

Site:

Travel Time from Previous Site: 1 hour 15 minutes

Time

from

Previous

Site:

Suggested Time at This Site: 10 minutes

Time at

This Site:

From the Caballo Mountain Vista, particularly in the afternoon with the sun behind you, the character of the cliffs, rocks and crevasses may be seen. The moving shadows of clouds passing overhead seem to make the mountain come alive and provide a constantly changing panorama of rugged majesty. It is easy to imagine Apaches hiding in the darkened recesses. The Apaches built a trail through Caballo Gap, and when the settlers needed to build a road across the mountain they used the old trail as a guide. There was mining activity in the area, and tales of lost mines and lost gold abound to this day.

• **Stop 7: Apache Rocks and Turtleback Mountain**

Directions from previous place: Continue north on NM 187 to Williamsburg. Take the 4-lane back toward downtown Truth or Consequences, until it divides on Broadway into one-way streets. Travel east on Broadway and continue straight east when the one-way curves north onto Date Street. Go 1 1/2 blocks to the parking lot at Ralph Edwards park. The rocks are on the north side of the fish pond, and the entrance to the path is located on the east side of the pond, across Cedar Street from the main part of the park.



Distance from Previous Site: 11 miles / 17.6 km

Travel Time from Previous Site: 20 minutes

Suggested Time at This Site: 30 minutes

In an unlikely spot in the middle of downtown Truth or Consequences, this Apache campsite from the past still endures. There are numerous very old grinding holes and blackened rocks from cook fires that testify to the use of these rocks as a sheltered campsite over a long period of time. Oral history tells that the Apaches made pilgrimages here to camp and take the baths through the 1940s. The rocks were still at the edge of town, and the ball park was located where Ralph Edwards Park is now situated. Groups of Apaches would set up their teepees and stay to bathe in the waters, as they had for generations. It was a period of rejuvenation and revitalization of their spirit to soak in the soothing mineral waters. After 1950 the town encroached too closely upon the location, and the Apaches stopped making their pilgrimages. Feel the majesty of Turtleback Mountain as it towers over the Rio Grande and adjacent town.

- **Stop 8: Historic Bath House District**

Directions From Ralph Edwards Park turn south to Austin Street. You
from are now in the Historic Bath House District. Several of the
previous bath house facilities are within two blocks of here, with three
place: others scattered over an area of a few blocks away.
Distance 0.1 miles / 0.2 km
from
Previous
Site:
Travel 3 minutes
Time
from
Previous
Site:
Suggested 30 minutes
Time at
This Site:

The mineral waters found here were used by the Apaches to soothe and relieve their battlewounds. As the settlers arrived they discovered the healing and soothing quality and rejuvenating powers of the local mineral waters. Today, you can relax in the soothing hot mineral waters. This is a "must-do" experience during your visit along the Geronimo Trail and a most relaxing form of recreation. Some facilities have open public pools. Other facilities have private enclosed tubs or pools with water flowing naturally through them. Massage and reflexology therapy are available at many facilities. Information on the bath house facilities can be obtained at Geronimo Springs Museum and the Visitor's Center.

- **Overnight Point: Truth or Consequences**

Lodging is available here in Truth or Consequences.

Total Distance Traveled in Day 1: 124.8 miles / 199.7 km

Day 2

• **Stop 1: Elephant Butte Dam and Lake**

Directions From Truth or Consequences turn onto NM 51 at the only
from stop light in town. Continue east on NM 51 until you reach
previous the sign reading Damsite Recreation area at the junction of
place: NM 177. Turn left and follow the road about 0.2 miles to the
parking area.

Distance 5 miles / 8.0 km

from

Previous

Site:

Travel 15 minutes

Time

from

Previous

Site:

Suggested 20 minutes

Time at

This Site:

Elephant Butte Lake is one of the most prominent man-made features in the southwestern United States. Besides being the largest lake in New Mexico, it is the location of the most popular State Park. With three full-service marinas, a wide variety of water sports are available. Camping, picnicking, and nature trails are popular. Enthusiasts enjoy birding along the river, below the dam, and along the shore line at the northern part of the lake.

• **Stop 2: Cuchillo**

Directions Leave the overlook at the dam and return to NM
from 52, a few feet to the south. Return on NM 52
previous west to the junction of NM 179, approximately
place: 3 miles. Turn north on NM 179 for 2 miles, then
west onto NM 195 past Elephant Butte Lake
State Park entrance, through the City of
Elephant Butte, and continue to the junction of
NM 181. Turn north on NM 181 for 2.5 miles to
the junction of NM 52. Turn west on NM 52 for
6 miles to the town of Cuchillo.



Distance 18 miles / 28.8 km

from

Previous

Site:

Travel 45 minutes

Time

from

Previous

Site:

Suggested 30 minutes

Time at

This Site:

Apaches farmed this land under Chief Cuchillo Negro before the white settlers arrived. It became a farming community of Hispanic settlers who lived in relative peace with their Apache neighbors. After the discovery of gold and silver, the town became a stagecoach stopover between the railroad at Engle and the mining camps of the northern Black Range. Some of the buildings remain from the stage coach days, but are not available to the public. If the pecan farm and candy shop are open, stop and try their delicious hand-made pecan confections. Tours may be had of the pecan orchard. Chili farms are also located nearby, and guide services are available for pack trips into the wilderness areas.

• **Stop 3: Chloride**

Directions from previous place: From Cuchillo continue west along NM 152 to the town of Winston. Turn left one block past the General Store, where the sign points to Chloride. Follow the paved road for 2.5 miles into Chloride.



Distance from Previous Site: 24.5 miles / 39.2 km

Travel Time from Previous Site: 1 hour

Suggested Time at This Site: 1 hour

Silver was discovered in Chloride creek in the 1870s by Harry Pye. He returned with two friends in 1879 to stake a claim. They were attacked by Apaches, Pye and one friend were killed, but the other friend escaped and returned. Word of the strike spread, and the town of Chloride was founded in 1880. The town almost folded when the silver prices dropped in the 1920s. Ed James locked up the Pioneer Store in 1923 and never came back. When it was purchased in 1989, everything still sat where it had been, covered with years of accumulated dirt. The new owners painstakingly cleaned everything, restored the building to its original grandeur and put all the contents back in place as a Museum. To enter the Pioneer Store today, you are truly stepping back in time. The remaining residents of Chloride are known for their spirit of freedom, strong will and determination to keep their peaceful little valley unaffected by the outside world.

• **Stop 4: Winston**

Directions from previous place: From Chloride, follow the paved road back to Winston and NM 52.

Distance from Previous Site: 2.5 miles / 4.0 km

Travel Time from Previous Site: 10 minutes

Suggested Time at This Site: 1 hour



Located in a beautiful valley lying between the Cuchillo and Black Range mountains, Winston was first known as Buena Vista, or Fairview. Until the discovery of silver nearby it was just grassland roamed by the Apaches, a few prospectors and open range cattle. Troops from Ojo Caliente Fort passed by on occasion and admired the view. After the discovery of silver and the establishment of Chloride as a mining town, miners and their families also settled in this valley, creating the town. At its peak, there were a hotel, drug store, meat market, sawmill, mercantile, and two town freighters. The stage line ran daily to the railroad at Engle, 50 miles away. The name of the town was changed in 1930 to honor Frank Winston, prominent local businessman and legislator. Today the "little town that refuses to die" has a post office, general store, café, and bar. There are several remaining stately old homes, and the architecture of the old carriage house is original. Enjoy lunch either the café or the general store. There are outfitters in the area to provide hunting guides and pack services into the wilderness areas during hunting season, or for a wilderness trek by horse or mule. The residents retain their spirit for a quality of life that they have maintained for several generations.

- **Stop 5: Former Warm Springs Apache Reservation Site**

Directions from previous place: Drive north from Winston on NM 52 to the junction of NM 59. Turn left and go approximately 3 miles to the boundary of the Gila National Forest, where the kiosk and pull out is located.

Distance from Previous Site: 17 miles / 27.2 km

Travel Time from Previous Site: 30 minutes

Suggested Time at This Site: 15 minutes

This view encompasses the Apache homelands in all directions and is not far from where the military had their headquarters and Geronimo was captured at one time. The information kiosks at this stop tell about the history of the area, the Forest Service, and Apache history. As you gaze about the landscape, it is understandable why the Apaches did not want to leave this land, and why they would leave some of their young behind to be raised as white men in the "new way". These children were not leaving their homeland.

• **End: Beaverhead**

Directions From the former Reservation overlook, continue
from west on NM 59 to Beaverhead. You will cross
previous the Continental Divide during this drive, at an
place: elevation of 7,670 feet.
Distance 30 miles / 48.0 km
from
Previous
Site:
Travel 1 hour
Time
from
Previous
Site:



Beaverhead is at the end of the pavement into the Gila National Forest, and the end of the northern leg of the Geronimo Trail. Geronimo was born near the headwaters of the Gila River, west of this location a few miles. This area was more of the Apaches homeland, and remains much as it looked then. The trip back along NM 59, 52, and 181 to Truth or Consequences will take about 2 1/2 hours.

Total Distance Traveled in Day 2: 97 miles / 155.2 km