

The Sun Country Striders
Welcomes You to
Gila Cliffs National Monument
Catron County
AVA Sanctioned Year Round Event



This walk is composed of 2k and 6k loops at the Gila Cliffs Dwelling National Monument. This event will be available Apr 1 thru June 30, 2025 only and is in Catron County. The Gila Cliffs Dwelling National Monument is about 45 miles north of Silver City but takes about 1 ½ hours to drive due to narrow, twisting and very scenic road.

Walk Registration:

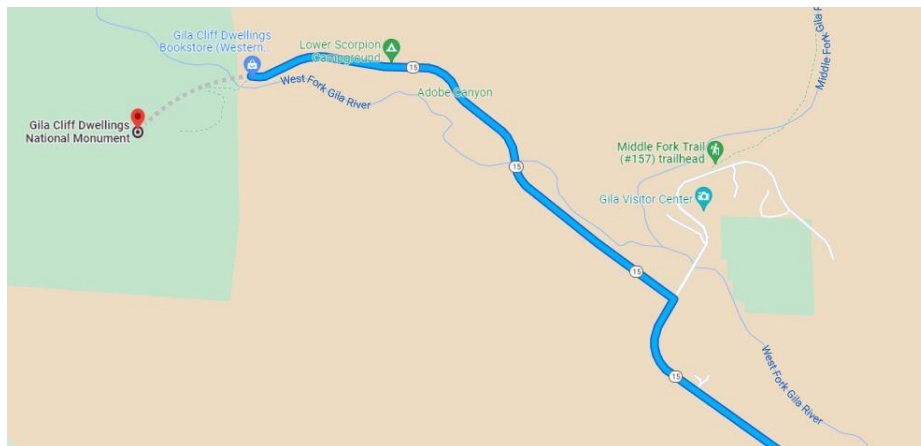
Please use the Online Start Box (OSB) to register and complete the event or contact the POC for remote registration. The directions and stamps will be available during the AVA Convention in Las Cruces from Mon, Apr 28 to Fri, May 2.

Walk Completion and Walk Credit:

Once you have completed the walk, please login to your Online Start Box account click on the "My Start Box" tab, then the "Finish Table" tab, then click on "Go to Finish Table" button for the event you have completed. Use the displayed entry form to submit the date and distance of your walk as well as select applicable AVA Special Programs to generate stamped "virtual" insert cards that you may choose to print out.

Driving Directions to Start Point:

The 2-8k walk is at the Gila Cliffs National Monument. From Silver City, take NM-15 north and follow the signs to the National Monument. Although it is only 45 miles north of Silver City, the road is narrow, winding, and will take about 1 ½ hours to drive. Admire the beautiful mountain scenery. As you approach the national monument, a sign indicates the Visitor Center as straight ahead (**stamp your passport book**) **GPS 33.22413 -108.24320**, while another sign to the left leads to the actual **Cliff dwelling trailhead GPS 33.22977 -108.26491**. Take the road to the left for a couple of miles to a second visitor center and book store for the cliff walk. Restrooms are available at both visitor centers. The road from Silver City is direct with only 1 road branching off from it. When you get to the end of the road, you are there.



Map data ©2025 United States

Silver City to Gila Cliffs Dwelling National Monument

Additional Trail(s) Information:

The National Monument offers many miles of trails, some more challenging than others. Our goal is to enjoy the walk and the national park. Check with rangers about other hiking opportunities in the park. Following is a list of several trails, distances, directions for the walks from the park's list of Day Hikes on their website. **Hiking boots and poles are recommended for balance and ankle support as all trails entail 200' or more of elevation gain.** Feel free to do whatever hike you wish and for whatever distance. Remember, although you might start out on a long hike, you can always turn around whenever you wish.

Gila Cliff Dwelling National Monument - Distance: 1 mile loop with an elevation rise of about 180 feet. The Monument trail is only open during the seasonal open hours. Access is prohibited otherwise. This is the premier walk at the monument and is the main attraction.

Stock Bypass Loop Distance (Bluff Trail) - 4 miles. Elevation gain: 210 feet. While originally used to keep horses and other stock out of the National Monument and off the road, this leisurely trail also provides an opportunity for hikers to get off the canyon bottom. At the first junction 0.25 miles (**Little Bear Canyon cutoff**) from the TJ Corral trailhead continue straight ahead. Cross the large dry wash (Adobe Canyon), turn left just inside the wooden wilderness boundary fence and follow the trail 2.8 miles to the next junction. Turn left onto the West Fork Trail and follow it for 0.5 miles and 2 river crossings to the Cliff Dwellings parking lot. (**Note the 2 river crossings which could be 1 foot or deeper, so you might want to turn around earlier**). Finish the loop with a .9 mile road hike back to the TJ Corral. This is the second trail recommended for this walk. **I turned around after 2 miles from TJ's. You may hike to/from the Cliffs parking lot for an additional 3k.**

Another option: Little Bear Canyon/ Middle Fork Loop - Distance: 9 miles to river junction and back/ or 11 mile loop. Elevation gain: 630 feet. This is an excellent hike to get a feel for both the open mesa tops and tight canyon bottoms in the Gila River Valley. At the first junction 0.25 miles from the TJ Corral trailhead turn right. At the second junction approximately 2.5 miles later continue straight ahead. The trail drops down into an increasingly narrow drainage (Little Bear Canyon). When the trail meets the Middle Fork trail, either return the same way back to the TJ Corral or turn right for 6 miles and dozens of river crossings to the Middle Fork Trailhead near the Visitor Center. Finish the loop with a 1 mile road hike back to the TJ Corral. (**I have not been on this trail, so I cannot recommend it.**)

Table of Contents:

Use the following table to guide what portion of this document you may wish to print out.

Section Contents	Pages
Introduction, Walk Registration/Completion, Driving Directions, and Table of Contents	1-2
Walk Directions - Gila Cliffs - 2-8km	3-4

GILA CLIFFS N'TL MONUMENT - CATRON COUNTY – 2-8K

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

1. **NOTE:** Cliff Dwelling Trail may be closed in winter due to snow/icy conditions. If closed, skip the Cliff Dwelling Trail and continue with the second trail.
2. From the Cliffs Trail Visitor Center and Book Store, follow the trail across the bridge and continue up to the ruins, about 2/3 mile.
3. Explore the ruins, then return to the trail.
4. **LEFT** on trail keeping the ruins on the left and return to the visitor center (1.1 miles)
5. **END** of 2k Dwelling loop trail.
6. **For second loop, West Fork Trail #151: Check with rangers about bridges near the start of the West Fork Trail. If the bridges are down, then skip to alternate directions.**
7. **At end of the parking lot**, look for sign for the access trail for the West Fork Trail, #151. Follow the trail to the first creek crossing, about ¼ mile. Rangers told me that there was a dry trail just before the creek on the right, but although I found a trail, it appeared to involve crawling up some rocks and then disappeared. So I'm not sure about this part of the trail. Check out the river and if no bridge, return to the parking lot. Then go to the alternate access. Or continue if you don't mind getting your feet wet.
8. Cross the creek and continue uphill on trail to connect to the West Fork Trail along the bluffs. **NOTE:** The West Fork Trail extends in both directions for 12 miles so be careful to follow markers. Veer **RIGHT (to the east toward TJ's Corral)** to continue along the bluffs.
9. **Continue** along trail for about 2½ miles keeping to the right and **IGNORING** the Little Bear Canyon Trail #729 on the left until it descends to TJ's Corral Trailhead.
10. **Exit** trail to the park road.
11. **RIGHT** on park road about .9 mile and return to your car. **End of 8k.**

ALTERNATE DIRECTIONS FOR 'NO BRIDGES'

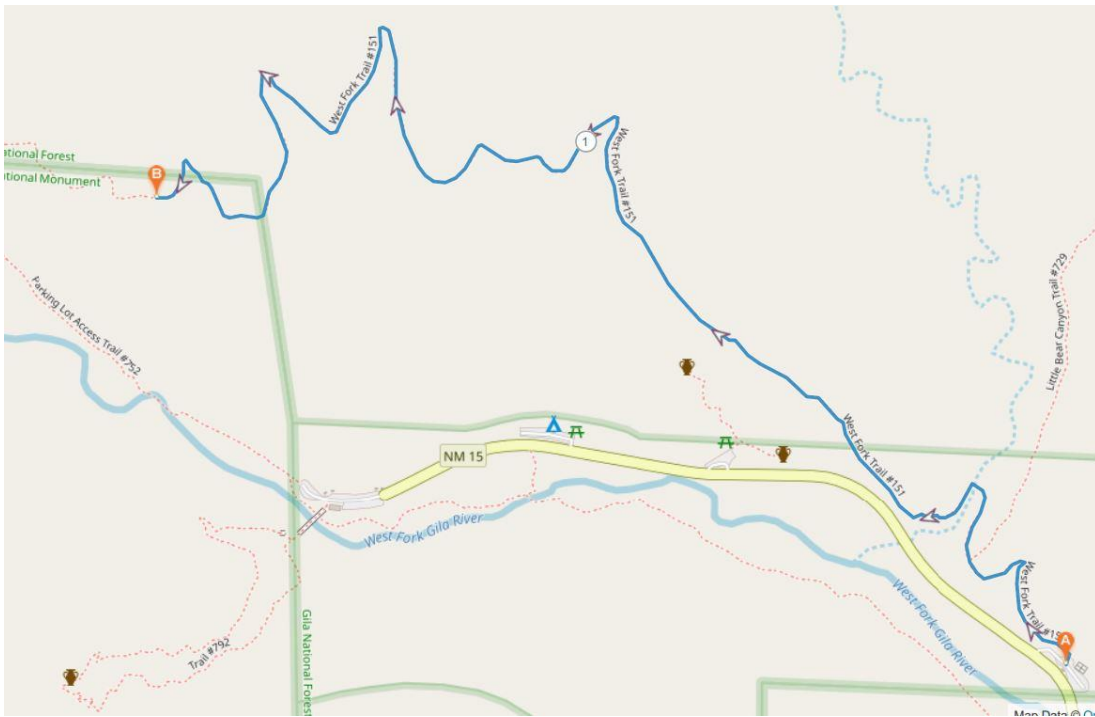
1. **Drive** .9 miles to **TJ's Corral** on the left and park. (Or walk to TJ's Corral to start the walk. If walking to/return to TJ's, then add 3k.)
2. Walk thru the parking lot toward the cliffs and the West Fork trailhead across from the toilets. This will be an in-out trail.
3. Follow trail (ignore the Little Bear Canyon #729 trail on the right) along the bluffs enjoying the views.
4. At .2 miles, ignore the Little Bear Canyon Trail intersection on the right. At .3 miles, cross a sandy arroyo and continue on the trail. At .5 miles, note fence on left side of trail. At 1 mile, there is a wooded draw making a sharp turn to the left. At 1.5 miles, you will be going uphill using some large rocks. At 2 miles, the trail makes another big turn to the left (trail appears white and is visible across the way as you approach. Go to the point where the trail turns right. This is as far as I went. U-turn back to TJ's **OR**
5. Or continue another ½ miles to the junction with the parking lot access trail (#752). You can turn left at this junction if you want to try to get back to the Dwellings parking lot.
6. **U-TURN** back to TJ's Corral. Distance based on how far you hike. Enjoy.

**Event related assistance:
Helen Hull: 972-530-1026**



Map Data © OpenStreetMap Contributors

Dwellings and to River Crossing Trail (Steps 1-7)



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Alternate Route - Bluff Trail from TJ's Corral