

chapter 3

heritage themes and related resources

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HERITAGE THEMES

The seven heritage themes in this chapter emerged directly from public input. During Meeting Two of the series of four Working Group meetings described in Chapter 1, participants were divided into small groups and given large maps of the Little Colorado watershed. They were then asked a series of four questions designed to elicit responses that would describe the heritage of the region.

- ◆ If you had a two-week dream vacation in the Little Colorado River watershed, where would you go?
- ◆ If you had to describe this area to someone who had never been here, what would you say?
- ◆ When friends or family come to visit, where do you take them?
- ◆ If “something” were to leave this area forever, what would you miss most?

Participants drew or wrote their responses on the maps. In most cases, the maps were completely covered with sites, references to historical

events, notes about the current diversity of cultures found in the watershed, and lists of activities related to outdoor recreation or local festivals. Continuing in their small groups, participants reviewed all of the items placed on the maps and devised between four and six themes that would capture all of the items. Each small group then reported its themes to the whole group. The whole group then worked all of themes suggested by each smaller group into one set of between four and six themes. This process took place at five meetings in five different locations across the watershed and resulted in a total of 25 heritage themes being suggested. Many of the themes from a Working Group in one meeting location were virtually the same as themes suggested by one or more Working Groups in other meeting locations, thus giving evidence that particular themes indeed identified prevalent, consistent, and over-arching characteristics of the region. The Heritage Programs Coordinator reviewed all 25 suggestions and found seven common themes that united the most frequently suggested themes by the Working Groups. Those seven unifying themes became the seven

heritage themes described in this chapter:

- ◆ Sacred and Enchanted Landscapes
- ◆ Trails, Roads, and Rails of the West
- ◆ Native Nations
- ◆ Living from the Land
- ◆ Archaeology
- ◆ Expressions of Art and Life
- ◆ Outdoor Recreation

After establishing the seven heritage themes, the next round of Working Group meetings focused on identifying resources within the watershed that reflected, interpreted, or embodied one or more themes. The seven themes

were written on large pieces of paper and participants wrote down the name of the resource (a site, event, organization, business, etc.) and its general location on the paper of the particular theme the resource fit. Participants were asked to identify resources that related to tourism as well as those that served local communities, although often a single resource fulfilled both functions. Often, too, a single resource reflected more than one theme. The related resources sections that appear in each heritage theme chapter are a direct result of data generated during these Working Group meetings.

Theme 7

Outdoor Recreation

SUMMARY OF THEME

The spectacular natural and scenic resources within the proposed Little Colorado River Valley National Heritage Area provide the context for a wide range of outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities. The diverse topography, vegetation, and climate of the area play a vital role in shaping the outdoor leisure pursuits enjoyed by regional, national, and international visitors. The breathtaking beauty of the towering peaks, picturesque canyons, and wide open spaces express dramatic topographic variability. A variety of plant communities populate the landscape ranging from extensive grasslands to the largest Ponderosa Pine forest on the continent. Research has shown that the quality of a recreational experience is largely a function of the environment in which it occurs. Thus, the high quality environment of the Little Colorado River Valley provides an excellent backdrop for a multitude of meaningful recreational experiences.

Outdoor recreation and natural resources are intricately linked. A healthy environment is essential to the continued availability of diverse recreational opportunities in the Little Colorado River Valley. National Heritage Area designation would enhance existing efforts to protect and conserve the rich natural and scenic integrity of the region. Compatible economic development such as interpretive facilities and recreational trail development could boost local economies and increase awareness of the region's significant natural and scenic wonders. Resource protection

and conservation programs would help sustain these valuable landscapes so they may be enjoyed by future generations of outdoor recreationists.

DESCRIPTION OF THEME

The prevalence of public land within the Little Colorado River Valley provides easy access to an abundant array of outstanding natural, scenic, and cultural resources. Three national forests offer opportunities for hunting, fishing, camping, backpacking, climbing, horseback riding, and off highway vehicle (OHV) use. Four national monuments and one national park, with a total area of 136,645 acres, afford access to remarkable natural features and cultural sites. Four state parks (more than 7,000 acres) and eight wildlife viewing areas (19,858 acres) provide excellent opportunities for camping, hiking, fishing, boating, and wildlife observation.

The numerous recreational resources within the Little Colorado River Valley serve a broad spectrum of visitors and local residents. From solitude to social interaction to fitness, outdoor recreation provides physical and psychological benefits to a wide variety of demographic groups. These benefits are significant given that more than 75 percent of Americans participate in some form of outdoor recreation.

Camping and Backpacking

Although some campers relish the rustic tradition of sleeping in a tent, others prefer the comfort and

convenience of pop-up trailers or recreational vehicles. Campgrounds within the proposed National Heritage Area accommodate a variety of visitor needs and expectations. Hundreds of designated campsites, ranging from primitive sites to developed sites with electrical and water hook-ups, exist on state and federal lands within the Little Colorado River Valley. Campgrounds such as Little Elden Springs Horse Camp and Cinder Hill OHV Area cater to campers with specific needs and interests.

Campers and backpackers seek a wide range of experiences. For some, spending time with family and friends in a group campground is a desirable outcome of their outdoor recreation experience. Others seek the solitude and quietude of backpacking in undeveloped wilderness areas where no mechanized travel is allowed and a leave no trace ethic prevails. Public lands within the proposed National Heritage Area easily accommodate the wide range of experiences sought by these outdoor recreationists.

In our increasingly industrialized and hectic world, wild places where humans can reconnect with the natural environment and seek inspiration are of major importance. The Little Colorado River Valley is home to five such areas: Kachina Peaks Wilderness, Strawberry Crater Wilderness, Mount Baldy Wilderness, Escudilla Wilderness Area, and Petrified Forest National Wilderness. These sites include more than 91,000 acres of land set aside in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 to “secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

Backpackers and day hikers are attracted to the astounding scenic

beauty and interesting geologic features of these wilderness areas. At Strawberry Crater Wilderness, unusual geologic wonders abound. It was here that Strawberry Crater, the youngest volcano on the Colorado Plateau, erupted less than 1,000 years ago. Wilderness visitors can hike along the volcanic cinder cone and molten lava flows that appear frozen in time. Strawberry Crater is one of more than 600 craters and cones that make up the San Francisco Peaks volcanic field, the second largest volcanic field of its type in the United States. (Springerville Volcanic Field is the third largest of its type in the nation.)

Recreational Trails

Recreational trails within the Little Colorado River Valley are used by backpackers, hikers, bikers, runners, walkers, and horseback riders. Hundreds of trail miles span the gamut from rugged backcountry settings to easily accessible resources such as the Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) and the community trails near the city of Gallup. A wide range of trails, many of which are multi-use, accommodate nearly every skill level. Some trails, particularly those in developed areas, are universally accessible.

Recreational trails often lead to scenic vistas or areas of natural or cultural significance. Hikers that reach the summit of Mount Humphreys, the highest peak in Arizona (12,633 feet), are rewarded with amazing views of the Painted Desert and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. En route to the top of this extinct volcano, hikers pass through several distinct biotic communities called *Life Zones*: piñon-juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, aspen, spruce-fir, and the only true alpine tundra in the state.

The slopes of the San Francisco Peaks are known as the place where C. Hart Merriam developed the concept of *Life Zones* in the late 19th century. The concept is based on the similarity of plant and animal distributions observed with increases in elevation and corresponding increases in latitude.

The proposed National Heritage Area includes and is adjacent to several major recreational trails. The eastern portion features the Arizona Trail, which traverses the state from Mexico to Utah, linking deserts, mountains, canyons, and communities. The intent of this trail is to highlight the state's topographic, biologic, historic, and cultural diversity. Advocates are engaged in ongoing efforts to gain National Scenic Trail status for the Arizona Trail. Attaining this prestigious status would increase trail recognition and provide access to technical assistance and funding.

The eastern portion of the Little Colorado River Valley is bordered by the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. This scenic trail includes the Chain of Craters Area, located within the El Malpais National Conservation Area. The Chain of Craters, a unique geological oddity, was formed when an underground lava flow reached a weak area and created a rift at the surface flanked by 30 cinder cones.

To the south, the General Crook Trail follows the route of one of the first major roads in Arizona. Original blazes can still be seen on the ponderosa pines adjacent to this trail, which is popular with hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders.

Strikingly beautiful trails within the Little Colorado River Valley include Gallup's High Desert Trail, McGaffey

Trails (Pyramid Rock and Church Rock), and the White Mountain trail system. The High Desert Trail is a newly developed 23-mile system that is frequented by mountain biking enthusiasts. Pyramid Rock and Church Rock trails near McGaffey provide stunning views of sandstone spires and other red rock formations. The White Mountain trail system consists of a series of multi-use loop trails and connectors. A collaborative effort of the National Forest Service, Pinetop/Lakeside TRACKS, and the Arizona State Parks Heritage Trails helped create the White Mountain trail system, much of which was built by dedicated volunteers.

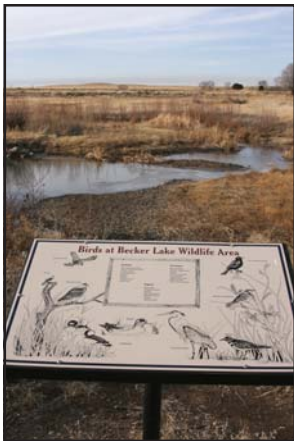
Wildlife Viewing

Wildlife viewing is the fastest growing recreational activity in the United States. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director, H. Dale Hall, "Wildlife related recreation rejuvenates our spirit, connects us with nature and gets us outside pursuing healthy activities." The popularity of this outdoor recreation activity can have significant positive impacts on the local economies of small towns and rural areas. Preliminary data from the 2006 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* indicate that 71 million Americans spent \$43 billion on some form of wildlife viewing in 2006.

Outstanding opportunities for wildlife observation are available at eight Wildlife Viewing Areas within the Little Colorado River Valley. These Wildlife Viewing Areas, which are managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, preserve a range of habitat that includes grasslands, woodlands, and riparian areas. A diversity of large and small mammals, birds, and reptiles can be readily

observed at these sites. For example, at Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area, visitors may observe elk, pronghorn, mule deer, coyotes, and up to seven species of bats. The astute visitor may even hear the howl of the reintroduced Mexican gray wolf or the wailing bugle of an elk.

Exceptional waterfowl habitat has been developed at Allen Severson Wildlife Area. The city of Show Low, in cooperation with Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, became the first community in Arizona, and one of the first in the nation, to create artificial wetlands using wastewater effluent. The 370-acre marsh serves the dual purpose of increasing waterfowl nesting habitat and providing wastewater disposal for the city. In addition to wildlife observation, these viewing areas also provide opportunities for camping and hiking, with some trails leading to prehistoric ruins and petroglyphs.



Signs at Becker Lake Wildlife Area help visitors identify and appreciate the birds that frequent the lake.

The Audubon Society has identified three Important Bird Areas (IBAs) within the proposed National Heritage Area: Blackrock and Nutria Lakes, Anderson Mesa, and the Upper Little Colorado River Watershed. To be identified as an IBA, a site must meet objective, standardized, science-based criteria. In addition to protecting vital avian habitat for species such as the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, these sites are popular destinations for bird watchers. IBAs can serve as the catalyst that brings people together to protect birds and the diverse habitats they occupy. According to Frank Gill, Senior Ornithologist for the National Audubon Society, “IBAs have the unique power to unite people, communities, and organizations in proactive bird conservation, one place at a time.”

Boating and Fishing

Plentiful boat launches and well-stocked reservoirs set the stage for exceptional boating and fishing in the White Mountains. Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Fool Hollow Lake Recreation Area, and Lyman Lake State Park offer abundant opportunities to spend time on or near the water. (Lyman Lake State Park has the distinction of being the first recreational state park in Arizona.) Becker Lake, the oldest artificial lake in Arizona, is managed as a quality trout fishery. As such, the lake has special regulations including possession limits, restricted methods of take, motor restrictions, and seasonal closures. The Arizona Game and Fish Department’s fish hatchery system stocks more than 90 percent of the brook, brown, cutthroat, and rainbow trout in many lakes in the White Mountains. Although the majority of fish in these lakes are trout, other species such as bass, crappie, northern pike, walleye, and catfish can also be caught.

Anglers have the unique opportunity to fish for Apache trout, a native species that is found nowhere else in the world. After many years of protection and recovery efforts, Apache trout have been restored to much their historic range in the White Mountains. Fishing is now allowed in designated state waters or on the Fort Apache Reservation. This trout species, which was once threatened with extinction, is now an important recreational and economic asset to the state of Arizona.

Fishing is a year around pursuit and ice fishing has quickly gained popularity as a winter recreation activity in Northern Arizona. To accommodate winter anglers, select roads remain open during the winter months allowing access to reservoirs. In

addition, some resorts and local merchants remain open for business during the prime ice fishing months. Nelson Reservoir, a popular ice fishing location, is easily accessible by road. Lakes without road access may be reached by snowmobile or, for the adventurous, with snowshoes.

McGaffey Lake Recreation Area, Ramah Lake, and Quemado Lake Recreation area are popular trout fisheries stocked by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. McGaffey Lake, situated at an elevation of 7,600 feet, is a scenic destination for boating and fishing. Ramah Lake, also recognized for its spectacular scenery, is surrounded by some of the most beautiful mesa country in New Mexico. Quemado Lake Recreation Area is a picturesque 130-acre lake bordered by piñon-juniper woodlands and pines. Two boat ramps, two universally accessible fishing piers, eight campgrounds, and seven miles of hiking trails are among the amenities available at Quemado Lake.

Hunting

The diverse habitat within the Little Colorado River Valley supports numerous large and small game species. Hunters can engage in the challenge of harvesting large game animals such as elk, bear, mountain lion, mule deer, pronghorn, and even buffalo. Small game species include cottontail rabbits, tree squirrels, mourning doves, and various waterfowl. Hunters use archery, firearms, muzzle loading rifles, and trapping to harvest wildlife. Hunting is allowed on National Forest lands with appropriate licenses and permits. Raymond Ranch, Becker Lake, and Sipe White Mountain wildlife viewing areas provide additional opportunities for

hunting. With permission, hunting is allowed on private land and may also be arranged on Indian Lands in agreement with the Tribal Game & Fish Departments.

Winter Sports

The variable elevation and climate of the Little Colorado River Valley provide recreational opportunities for all seasons—including winter. Higher elevations receive significant snowfall, which creates a winter sport haven for skiing, snowshoeing, snowboarding, skijoring, and sledding. Numerous cross-country skiing and snow play areas are available in both, the Coconino and Apache-Sitgreaves national forests.

Additional opportunities for winter recreation are available through private enterprises. The Flagstaff Nordic Center features more than 40 kilometers of groomed skate/classic ski trails. At Mormon Lake, the largest natural lake in Arizona, the ski touring center grooms over 30 kilometers of trails for novice, intermediate, and advanced skiers. At the Arizona Snowbowl, one of the oldest continually run ski areas in the country, skiers and snowboarders enjoy over 2,300 feet of vertical drop on 32 scenic trails covering 777 acres. This is the only ski slope where skiers and snowboarders can catch a glimpse of the North Rim of the Grand Canyon while hitting the slopes.

Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Use

Rapidly increasing numbers of recreationists are using OHVs to access and enjoy the outdoors. In 2004, OHV use accounted for between 11 and 12 million visits to national grasslands

Table 3.4. Recreational opportunities on public lands within the proposed Little Colorado River Valley National Heritage Area.

	Camping	Backpacking	Interpretive trails	Hiking	Biking	Horseback riding	Wildlife viewing	Boating	Fishing	Hunting	Winter sports	Off highway vehicle use	Climbing	Archaeological sites
NATIONAL FORESTS														
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Cibola National Forest	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
Coconino National Forest	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS														
El Morro National Monument	◆		◆	◆			◆							◆
Petrified Forest National Park		◆	◆	◆		◆	◆							◆
Sunset Crater National Monument			◆	◆			◆							
Walnut Canyon National Monument			◆	◆			◆							◆
Wupatki National Monument			◆	◆			◆							◆
STATE PARK LANDS														
Homolovi Ruins State Park	◆		◆	◆			◆							◆
Fool Hollow Lake Recreation Area	◆		◆				◆	◆	◆					
Lyman Lake State Park	◆		◆	◆			◆	◆	◆					◆
Red Rock State Park	◆													◆
ARIZONA GAME & FISH WILDLIFE AREAS														
Allen Severson Wildlife Area			◆				◆							
Becker Lake Wildlife Area	◆			◆			◆	◆	◆	◆				
Jacques Marsh Wildlife Area							◆							
Lamar Haines Memorial Wildlife Area				◆			◆							
Raymond Ranch Wildlife Area	◆		◆	◆			◆			◆				
Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area			◆	◆			◆			◆				◆
Wenima Wildlife Area			◆	◆			◆							◆
White Mountains Grassland Wildlife Area			◆	◆			◆							

and forests. OHVs, which include motorized all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) dirt bikes, and snowmobiles, are generally allowed on designated roads, trails, and areas on federal lands. OHV users are responsible for understanding the specific rules and regulations of the lands on which they are recreating. Coconino National Forest manages Cinder Hills OHV Area near Flagstaff

specifically for this group of outdoor enthusiasts.

The OHV trails in the White Mountains near the town of Eagar are considered by some to be the best high country trails in Arizona. Saffel Canyon Trail offers spectacular views along the 25-mile round trip trail that passes through piñon-juniper, ponderosa pine,

and mixed conifer vegetation zones. OHV use is not limited by the seasons. After the snow falls, the Sunrise to Big Lake route is open for snowmobile use. This trail traverses mountains and meadows and passes through beautiful coniferous forests.

Climbing

Several rock climbing and bouldering locations exist within the Little Colorado River Valley. Jack's Canyon camping and climbing area, about 30 miles south of Winslow, is situated in a picturesque isolated canyon with steep limestone/sandstone cliffs. Nearly 300 routes offer what some consider some of the best sport climbing in the United States. The Pit, located in a scenic shallow canyon about 15 minutes from Flagstaff, is bordered by ponderosa pines. The Pit features about 100 routes that range from 35 to 80 feet in length and 5.9 through 5.13+ in difficulty. Mentmore Rock climbing area near Gallup has more than 50 bolted top rope climbs and 31 sport climbs. These climbs range in height from 25 to 45 feet and have difficulty levels ranging from 5.0 to 5.13.

Astronomy and Star Gazing

The spectacular dark night skies of the Little Colorado River Valley provide excellent opportunities for star gazing, making the region a desirable location for amateur astronomers. Efforts to maintain dark skies around Flagstaff, the largest municipality within the proposed Area, have been ongoing for decades. In 1958, the Flagstaff City Council passed the world's first lighting ordinance, signifying the start of the dark skies movement. 2008 marks the 50th anniversary of that historic occasion. In 2001, Flagstaff was

recognized as the world's first International Dark Sky City.

The city of Flagstaff has a long association with astronomy and is considered one of the premier deep space research sites in the world. The area is home to Lowell Observatory, Braeside Observatory, U.S. Naval Observatory's Flagstaff Station, and the Navy Prototype Optical Interferometer. Lowell Observatory, known for the discovery of Pluto in 1930, holds regular astronomy programs (with indoor and outdoor viewing opportunities) for the public.

Hot Air Ballooning

The Red Rock Balloon Rally in Gallup, New Mexico takes place against the magnificent and vibrant bluffs and canyons of Red Rock State Park. From a show of four balloons in 1981, participation today is by invitation only and limited to 200—and there is a waiting list. This makes the Rally the second-largest balloon festival in the world. Each year during the first weekend of December, balloonists and their chase crews descend on Gallup. Thousands of spectators gather to watch and enjoy the mass ascensions, competitive events, evening balloon glows, Native American dances, and the holiday Christmas parade. Willing spectators can even become participants by joining chase crews, and thereby possibly get a balloon ride out of the deal. But whatever role the spectator takes, the blue sky, red rocks, and two hundred colorful balloons create a photographic paradise.

DISTINCTIVENESS OF THEME

The distinctiveness of the outdoor recreation theme is directly linked to

the outstanding natural and scenic resources of the Little Colorado River Valley. Because the relationship between landscapes and outdoor recreation are so intricately intertwined, the diversity of natural and scenic resources support a vast array of recreational opportunities during all seasons. Collectively, these recreational resources provide outstanding opportunities for recreationists to seek and attain a wide spectrum of desirable experiences and benefits. Large tracts of public land allow individuals and groups easy access to these extraordinary recreational resources.

Clearly, the Little Colorado River Valley includes a multitude of unique resources. Soaring peaks, immense lava fields, colorful concentrations of petrified wood, native Apache trout, the first international dark sky community, and an abundance of archaeological sites contribute to the area's rich natural and cultural history. These places hold significant value at both a local and national level. According to Ibrahim and Cordes, "the outdoors has special meaning, because it is deeply imbedded in our history and culture." For many, outdoor recreation strengthens their affinity for protecting those resources that create the context for meaningful experiences.

RELATED RESOURCES

In addition to the vast array of public lands within the Little Colorado River Valley, local city and county parks contribute to the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities. Navajo County Park, McHood Park on the banks of Clear Creek Reservoir in Winslow, Hidden Cove Golf course in Holbrook, and Woodland Lake Park in Pinetop-Lakeside are excellent

examples of local commitment to providing outdoor recreation opportunities and open spaces. Outfitters, guides, and tour companies offer valuable services to both experienced and novice outdoor recreationists. Riding stables near Greer, Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low, and Flagstaff lead guided trail rides through remarkable landscapes. Trail guides share valuable information about the natural and cultural history of the area, enhancing the outdoor recreation experience. Outfitter and guide services are a particularly valuable resource for visitors from areas outside the Little Colorado River Valley.

RELATED RESOURCES LIST

- ♦ **Adventure Gallup, Gallup:** A non-profit organization established to promote adventure tourism.
- ♦ **American Cancer Society's Annual Climb to Conquer Cancer, Flagstaff:** Both a fundraiser and an awareness raiser, thousands of people participate in this annual seven-mile walk up Snowbowl Road on the southwest side of the San Francisco Peaks.
- ♦ **Arizona ATV Outlaw Trail Jamboree, Eagar:** A three-day event where beginning and experienced riders have the opportunity to choose from more than twenty guided trail rides. The event also includes an ATV rodeo, a parade, and fireworks.
- ♦ **Becker Lake Wildlife Area, Springerville:** This 100-acre lace is part of a more than 600-acre wildlife area owned and managed by the Arizona Game & Fish Department. It features a walking trail, excellent wildlife viewing, and trout fishing.



Outdoor Recreation

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Adventure Gallup | 8 Fischer Canyon | 15 Northern Arizona Trail Runners |
| 2 American Cancer Society's Annual Climb | 9 Flagstaff Biking Organization | 16 Northern Arizona University hiking club |
| 3 Arizona ATV Outlaw Trail Jamboree | 10 Flagstaff Festival of Science | 17 Red Rock Balloon Rally |
| 4 Becker Lake Wildlife Area | 11 Gallup Trails 2010 | 18 Red Rock State Park |
| 5 Chain of Craters Backcountry Byway | 12 Hart Prairie | 19 Winterfest Flagstaff |
| 6 Continental Divide Trail | 13 McHood Park and Clear Creek Canyon | 20 Woodland Wild Country Expo |
| 7 Escudilla National Recreation Trail | 14 Northern Arizona Audubon Society | |

♦ **Chain of Craters Backcountry Byway, Cibola County:** One terminus of this Bureau of Land Management designated Backcountry Byway lies just inside the Little Colorado River watershed and leads

travelers through incredible volcanic landscape.

♦ **Continental Divide Trail:** The eastern boundary of the proposed Little Colorado River Watershed is

the natural geologic feature of the Continental Divide. The Continental Divide Trail was officially designated by the Congressional Oversight Committee of the National Trails System in 1978. The trail occurs in a corridor of up to 50 miles to one side or the other of the actual Continental Divide and El Morro National Monument and Pie Town are specifically mentioned as sites of interest along the route.

- ◆ **Escudilla National Recreation Trail, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest:** A three-mile trail up Arizona's third tallest peak takes hikers through aspen, spruce, and fir forests and mountain meadows before opening to stunning panoramic views of the landscape. From the fire tower on top of the mountain, people can see the dramatic changes in the land as it rises from dry desert through deep canyons to mountain peaks. On a clear day, the San Francisco Peaks, 200 miles to the northwest, are visible.
- ◆ **Fischer Canyon, Flagstaff:** Fischer Canyon is an easily accessible and popular place for hiking as well as bouldering and climbing.
- ◆ **Flagstaff Biking Organization:** A local nonprofit dedicated to increasing the use of bicycles for recreation and transportation. The group sponsors bike safety classes, an annual Bike to Work Week, special bike day-trips for kids, weekly road rides, has a trained trail crew that assists the Forest Service with trail maintenance, and is involved in many other bicycle-related endeavors.
- ◆ **Flagstaff Festival of Science, Flagstaff:** Brings together multiple resources to organize fascinating lectures, hikes, and hands-on activities. Many nearby natural and cultural attractions offer free admissions during the festival.
- ◆ **Gallup Trails 2010, Gallup:** This is a vision and a plan to develop a comprehensive multi-use trail system in and around the town of Gallup. Two mountain biking groups and a running crew meet regularly to participate in biking and running activities.
- ◆ **Hart Prairie (Nature Conservancy interpretive hikes):** Free, guided nature walks and hikes aid in peoples' understanding and appreciation of the geological and ecological features of the San Francisco Peaks.
- ◆ **McHood Park and Clear Creek Canyon, Winslow:** Boat launches in McHood Park allow for easy access to Clear Creek Canyon. The canyon is popular with canoers, boaters, sunbathers, and those who like to climb, and dive from, its impressive rock walls. The canyon also has a few petroglyph sites visible from the water.
- ◆ **Northern Arizona Audubon Society, Flagstaff:** Members lead regular bird walks at The Arboretum at Flagstaff and other locations.
- ◆ **Northern Arizona Trail Runners Association, Flagstaff:** An organization that promotes of-road running on forest trails and sponsors other running events for people of all abilities.
- ◆ **Northern Arizona University (NAU) hiking club, Flagstaff:** A free, student organization that seeks to bring students together to experience the outdoors.

- ♦ **Red Rock Balloon Rally:** New Mexico is famous for its great hot air ballooning climate, and Gallup is no exception. Since 1981, the city has hosted the Red Rock Balloon Rally which features 200 balloons by invitation only and Native American arts and crafts as prizes for the various competitions.
- ♦ **Red Rock State Park, Gallup:** Known for its stunning sandstone cliffs, canyons, and buttes, Red Rock State Park is a hiker's and a mountain biker's paradise. It has also hosted the Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial every August since 1975 and provides a picturesque backdrop to the Red Rock Balloon Rally every December.
- ♦ **Woodland Wild Country Expo, Pinetop-Lakeside:** Fly fishing demonstrations, star gazing, and information about hiking in the White Mountains.
- ♦ **Winterfest Flagstaff, Flagstaff:** An annual event for more than 20 years, the festival features nearly 100 events including ski competitions, sled dog races, and other winter activities.

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