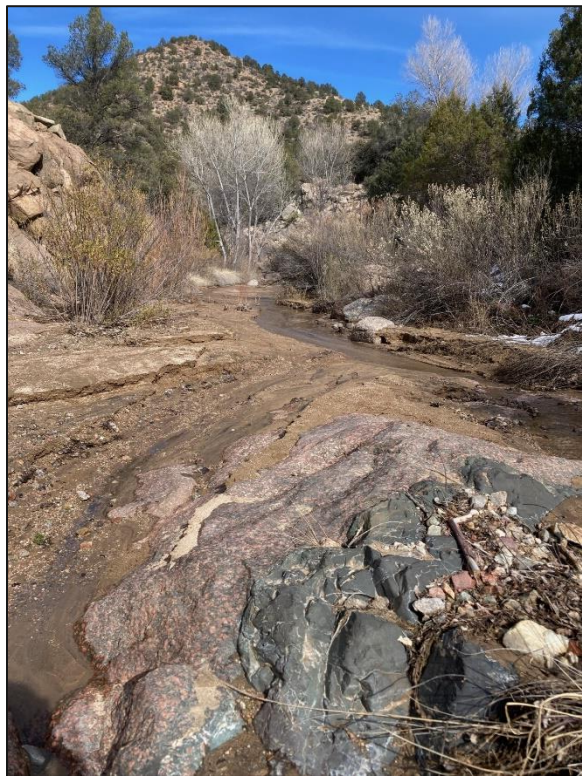


CDT Trail No. 74, Saddle Rock Canyon/Goat Canyon Loop



*Saddle Rock Canyon Narrows
- Photo Credit Mary Barrett*

8.6-mile loop

Map: [Saddle Rock/Goat Canyon Loop - CalTopo](#)

Diversity defines this hike. There are narrow canyons and broad washes, springs, outstanding mountain views, good trail tread, a diversity of vegetation and wildlife, and a chance to hike a segment of the Continental Divide Trail.

Winter, Spring, and Fall are the best times. Summer can be hot hiking in the sun. There is about 500 feet of overall elevation gain with only a few steep pitches. Note: Equestrians, see route description below.

This loop begins at the gate in Saddle Rock Canyon. See description in “Getting to the trailhead”. At the start the canyon narrows and colorful granite walls channel the sandy bottom. In about 2 tenths of a mile, Goat Canyon comes in from on the right, which you’ll be coming down at the end of the loop.

Saddle Rock Canyon is a designated Gila National Forest riparian habitat. There are 2 rock check dams and a perennial flow of water. Thick stands of Seep Willow and False Indigo provide excellent bird habitat and a jungle for hikers to push through. Rock out crops at the upper end of the narrows create small pour-offs and pools. At about 8-tenths of a mile, the canyon opens into a wide, sandy wash. A fence crosses the wash, and there is a gate on the left. At this point, Forest Road 811 descends from a ridge on the left and continues up the wash.

Follow 811 up the wash for 3 miles. In the last half mile, the road will climb out of the wash and junction with Continental Divide Trail 74. Look for CDT markers on both sides of the road when it levels off at the saddle, so you don’t walk past the trail.

Go to the right and follow CDT 74 north for 3.6 miles to its junction with Forest Road 810. The trail is mostly dirt tread that contours below the east slopes of the ridge. There are great views of Bullard



*A check dam in Saddle Rock Canyon narrows.
Photo Credit: Jackie Blurton*



CDT 74 with views of Tadpole Ridge. Photo Credit Jackie Blurton

Peak to the south and the skyline of the Mogollon Mountains to the north. Tadpole Ridge and Bear Mountain dominate the eastern horizon. The trail meanders through pinion, juniper, mountain mahogany, oaks, and a few stands of Ponderosa.

At FR 810, go right and follow the road .5 mile down to Goat Canyon. At the bottom there's a cairn on the left that marks a short trail through a gate to the canyon and the beginning of the Goat Canyon narrows. It's a pleasant .7 mile walk down through the narrows and back to the start.

Equestrians Route: From the parking area at the Gila National Forest boundary, follow Forest Road 118. The road stays to the left and goes up Black Hawk Canyon. In 3.6 miles from the parking area the road leaves Black Hawk, climbs over a ridge, and descends into Saddle Rock Canyon in 1.4 miles to rejoin the hiking description part of this loop. Horses must take this route because they can't get through the Saddle Rock Canyon narrows. There is also a trail that parallels the road between Black Hawk and Saddle Rock, but I haven't been on it.

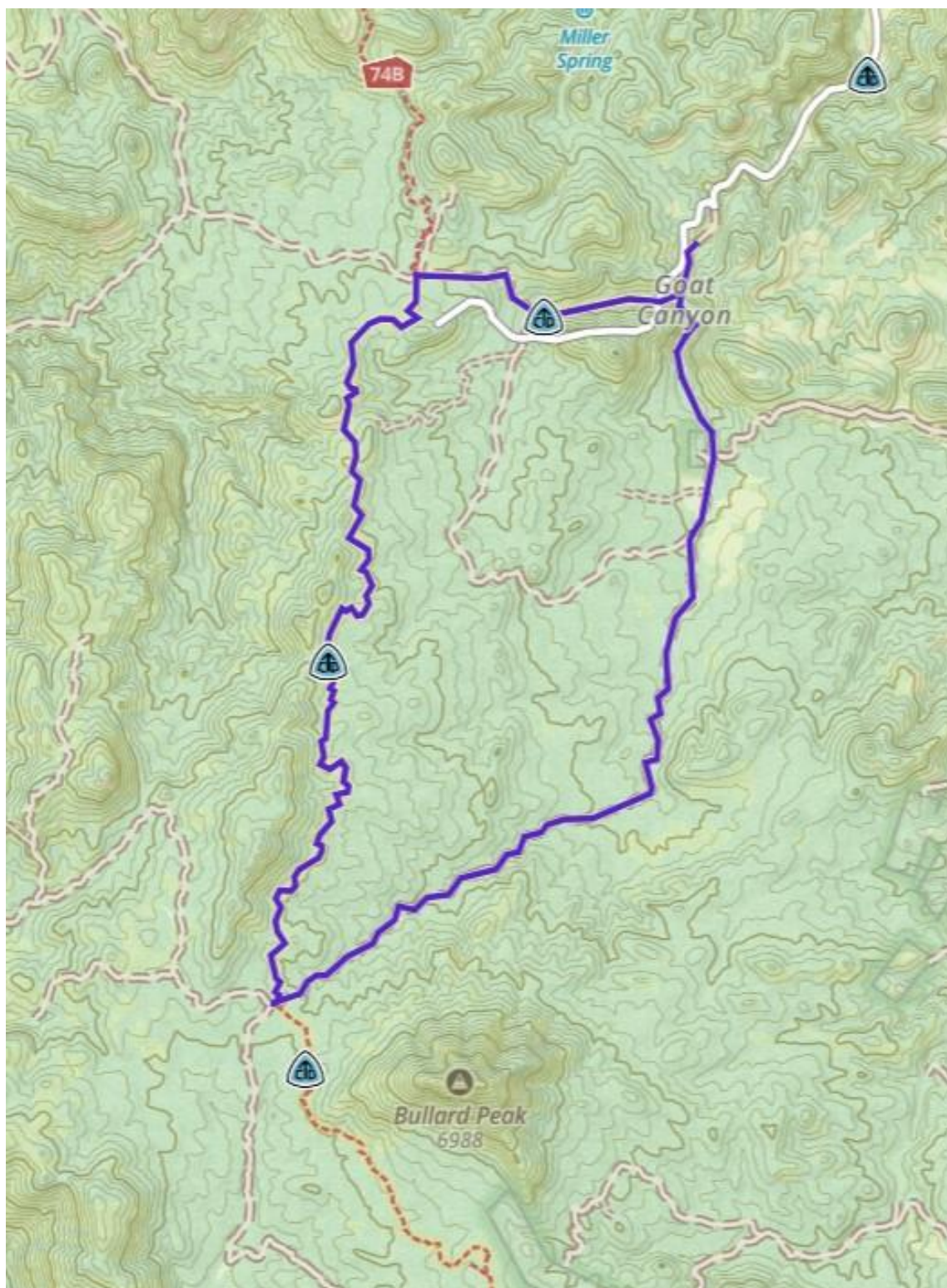
Getting to the trailhead. From junctions 180 & 90 in Silver City, go west 13.5 miles, turn left onto Saddle Rock Road, then 1.3 miles to the cattle guard at the Gila National Forest boundary. There is a large parking area for horse trailers where equestrians can park to unload. This is also a parking option for those who don't want to drive up the sandy wash.

Vehicles continue on Forest Road 810 and go 3.6 miles up Saddle Rock Canyon to the fence across the canyon. Park at the gate to begin the hike.



A view of Bullard Peak from CDT 74. Photo Credit Jackie Blurton

The canyon narrows at this point and vehicles should not proceed further. Note: Stay to the right in the main wash as you drive up Saddle Rock Canyon. The road to the left will go into Black Hawk Canyon. Keep following the main road in the sandy wash and don't take any of the little dead-end sidetracks. All-wheel drive is recommended to negotiate the sandy road in Saddle Rock Canyon. There can be some deep sand in places.



Map of hiker loop described – does not include the equine alternate portion.

Thanks to Jackie Blurton for this trail write-up