Mogollon Baldy from Sandy Point

Total Mileage: 12 miles one way to Mogollon Baldy – Trail #182
Apache Cabin Side Trip: +1.75 miles each way
Elevation: 9,000 – 11,000 ft
Map: https://caltopo.com/m/TQQ2C9B

The trail to Mogollon Baldy is awe-inspiring, yet it can be depressing and hazardous if not approached correctly. Before we overview the route, here are key things to consider when planning your timing:

- **Wind & Falling Trees:** Although many dead trees from the 2012 fire have fallen, numerous snags remain overhead and could come down. Always stay aware.
- **Lightning Storms:** Most of this trail is high exposed terrain. Due to the burn zone, off-trail travel is extremely difficult and slow. Dropping to lower elevation during a storm is rarely an option. Check the spot weather before leaving for the trip.
- **Water Scarcity:** Due to below-average snowpack over the last two winters, water sources are minimal. While conditions may change, please plan carefully and carry enough water for the day. Always have a backup water plan.
- **Camping**: If you plan to camp along the trail, be sure to pick a safe spot away from snags. There are some areas at Hummingbird Saddle that are "safe" – choose your spot carefully. However, there are not many options beyond that. Camp on the saddle below Mogollon Baldy is also an option since there are no trees (alive or dead) there. But it may be extra windy there and there is no water. Black Tail Spring has been dry for years.
- **Trees on the trail**: Although a lot less trees are falling on the trail, expect to climb over trees on your way to Mogollon Baldy. If your trip is soon after the trail/fire crews clear the trail to pack in or out the lookouts, then you are less likely to deal with logs on the trail. In general, weather permitting, they clear the trail in May and August/Sept.
- **Elevation**: The high elevation can slow down walking speed and some need more water.



The Journey: The starting point is Sandy Point Trailhead which has great views, a Forest Service bathroom, but no shade. Road access is narrow from either direction; large horse trailers or RVs are not recommended.



Starting up the trail, a canopy of aspen provides dappled shade. Watch out for occasional locust branches that catch clothing; fortunately, this thorny stretch lasts only about a mile. In autumn, these aspen groves offer a stunning display of fall colors. While the green canopy signals recovery from the 2012 fire, look closely overhead—you'll spot standing dead trees whistling eerily in the wind, a reminder of the forest's ongoing struggle.





As you continue, the terrain varies between lush aspen stands and open areas dotted with dead standing timber and expansive views.

At 1.5 miles, there is a sign on the ground for Bead Springs. If you need water, this is the most reliable water source. To get to the spring, follow the side trail a minute to the flowing water. Note: There aren't any good camping options here because of the angle of the hill and the dead-standing trees.



From Bead Springs, the trail continues through similar terrain to Hummingbird Saddle. There are a few camp spots away from dead standing at Hummingbird although the ground is lumpy. A thicker sleeping pad helps with this issue. There is a spring about 5 minutes down the Whitewater Trail. The spring is currently very shallow, requiring the right cup and a steady hand to get clear water. While this spring has been reliable, with the drought, there is no guarantee.





From the Saddle, #182 continues into newly growing mixed conifer. This area did not burn as hot in the 2012 fire, but the respite is short lived. In less than a mile, you will pass the signed junction with #172 on the left. Note: #172, which climbs up from Willow Creek, is another access option for #182 and getting to Mogollon Baldy but it currently has a pile up of logs and a thick locust patch to navigate through. Hopefully this issue can be addressed soon.



After the junction, the trail passes through a long section of standing dead trees.

At about 2.6 miles past Hummingbird Saddle, you will see unsigned junction. The trail to the right leads to Apache Cabin; the trail to the left takes you toward Mogollon Baldy. (See the Apache Cabin section below for details on that detour). Past this junction, the trail stays mostly within aspen groves with limited views for several miles. Standing dead trees remain overhead.



Hobo Springs (33.30089, -108.62101), a little over a mile past the junction, currently has a shallow pool below the trail and wet spots on the trail. Reliability is uncertain. During our recent hike, it was a clear pool on the

ascent, but by the return trip, it had turned murky—clear evidence a bear had decided it needed a bath!

There is no good camping in this area due to the steep hillside and the dead-standing trees. Little Hobo Spring is much less reliable and is currently dry.

About 1.5 miles before the lookout, the aspen gives way to more rugged country with expanded views. Enjoy the scenery as you climb higher toward the peak. The rugged country unfolds.



The lookout is generally staffed from May to August. This is essentially their home so please be respectful of their space. There is no water available for the public at the tower/cabin. Some years the lookouts barely have enough for themselves.

It is often windy on top so come prepared.

Sadly, the Snow Park Spring is currently dry so dropping off the east side of Mogollon Baldy for water is not an option this year. Hopefully next year.







Then enjoy your return journey!

Apache Cabin

If you want to also go to Apache Cabin while you are up there, it will require more effort but leads to healthy mixed conifer forests that escaped the burn. This side trail is 1.75 miles to the cabin. Sadly, it does not receive the yearly maintenance like #182. The trail saw maintenance in the fall of 2024, but as

of June 2026, roughly 80 logs now block the path. Because this section winds through dead aspen stands on a steep sidehill, the trees fall diagonally across the slope rather than breaking upon impact. Every tree requires you to either step over or duck under it. This route is mostly open (no aspens) traveling through dead standing aspens with occasional periods of live trees.



There is a nice view of Mogollon Baldy in the distance along the way. You can also see Sacaton Mountain, where trail # 180 traverses from Apache Cabin to Simmons Saddle to Little Dry. This trail is in severe disrepair due to thousands of logs on the trail and locust. Hopefully one day this trail will be reopened.

0.1 miles before the cabin is a junction sign on the ground indicating # 181 and 208 heading up the hill. One can follow the cleared trail to the saddle but not much past that since the trail crew stopped around there in 2024. To get to the cabin, continue straight (left) at this junction sign.



There is a spring just before the cabin. It was low and shallow. At the cabin, which is perched on a steep hillside much like Holt Springs old cabin site, it is fun to imagine what it was like for the FS trail crews that passed by here and stayed back in the day before mega fires and mega budget cuts to trails.

There are not many flat spots around the cabin and the current rat residents in the cabin make it unappealing. If one continues on a trail past the cabin for a minute, there is another flatish area for a camp. Continuing down this trail for about 10 minutes, one can find the headwaters of Big Dry. The trail is faint in places and not on the map so be sure to pay attention. The creek was low but flowing (33.29645, -108.66441). It is wonderful to hike and sit in the unburned mixed conifer. Then return the way you came.



