

Bull Springs Road 74

Location: South of Tucson between Arivaca Junction and Patagonia.

Difficulty: Moderate. Narrow, rocky shelf road at higher elevations. Suitable for high clearance stock SUVs. Remote location.

Features: Little-used mining road crosses Santa Rita Mountains from Interstate 19 to Hwy. 82 south of Patagonia. See mines along the route and adobe ruins at Alto Camp, once a community of several hundred people. The post office was active until 1933.

Time & Distance: About 24 miles. Allow 3 to 4 hours plus travel time.

To Get There: Get off Interstate 19 at Arivaca Junction Exit 48 south of rest area. Cross under freeway and take Frontage Road north less than 2 miles to Elephant Head Road. Head east 1.5 miles and turn right on Mt. Hopkins Road towards Whipple Observatory. Continue another 4.8 miles southeast and turn right at sign for Bull Springs Road.

Trail Description: Reset your odometer at the start of Bull Springs Road [01]. Bear right at 2.1 miles. Continue straight through wash at 3.1. At 3.7 cross cattle guard into National Forest. This starts F.S. 143. Pass mines at 4.4 and 4.5. Stay right on F.S. 143 at 4.8 miles [02]. Road gradually worsens as you pass corral at 5.5. Mileage sign at 6.1 conflicts with one at start. Neither is correct. Cross creek and climb hill at 6.4. Bear right uphill at 7.1 where F.S. 4079 goes left. Climb over 5,000 feet, the highest point on the trail at 8.1 miles [03]. Some say abandoned vehicles, seen as you come down the other side, were dumped by illegal drug runners from Mexico. Bear right through complex intersection at 10.8. Note mine on left at 11.0. Stay left at 11.4. See Alto Camp on right at 12.5 miles [04]. Leave National Forest at 13.1. Do not stray from main road as you cross private ranch. Bear right at 18.8 miles [05] where Squaw Gulch Road goes left. Bear right at 23.7. Cross Patagonia River (water depth varies) before reaching Hwy. 82 at 24.1 miles [06].

Return Trip: Left to Patagonia, Sonoita and Tucson; right to Nogales.

Services: Public toilets at town park in Patagonia. Gas in Sonoita. Full services in Tucson and Nogales.

Maps: Coronado National Forest (Nogales R.D.), USGS 100,000 scale map Fort Huachuca, AZ, 31110-E1-TM-100, Arizona Atlas & Gazetteer.



Trail climbs over 5,000 feet across the Santa Rita Mountains.



Adobe ruins of post office at Alto Camp.



Boulder partially blocks road.

