

Signal Peak Challenge Mountain Bike Race. This mountainous pine and aspen forested county has moderate to difficult trails and forest roads. Best for riding in the summer and fall. Map available.

Directions to trailhead: Go north from Silver City on NM 15. Between mile marker 15 and 16 there is a graded gravel road on the right and plenty of room to park. From here you can follow the road or the single tracks both of which will link to other roads and trails.

Road Bike Rides

Lightly traveled roads and good pavement make Silver City and Grant County a great place for road bikes. The Tour of the Gila, an annual 5-day, pro road race takes place here. Our area is a winter training destination for pro teams and a great year-around destination for fitness and recreational cyclists. In this guide mileages are approximate and ride numbers are keyed to the map on the other side. There are no maps specifically for these rides. You can get an area map from the Silver City—Grant County Chamber of Commerce or use a New Mexico highway map.

1. US Highway 180 West (NM Bike Route 18): A light to moderately traveled road with shoulders. After a couple miles ascent from Silver City to the Continental Divide there's a 9 mile descent to Mangas Valley. The terrain then becomes valleys and small hills with open country and scenic mountain vistas. You can continue on 180 as far as you want or you can do a loop (1A) through the towns of Cliff and Gila and back to Silver City which will give you about 60 miles.

Directions: Go west from Silver City on 180.

2. NM 90: A light to moderately traveled road with shoulders. The road has some long moderate grades and rolling hills up to the Continental Divide between mile markers 22 and 21, about 22 miles from Silver City. After the Divide the hills descend into the low desert to the town of Lordsburg 44 miles from Silver City.

Directions: Go south from Silver City on 90.

3. NM 15 to Sapillo Creek: This is a local favorite. Traffic is light with moderate traffic on the weekends. From Silver City to Pinos Altos, about 7 miles, the road is 2-lane with shoulders.

North of Pinos Altos the road becomes a narrow 2-way with no lane markings or shoulders. It winds through the ponderosa pine forest with many blind curves so you need to stay in your lane and look out for oncoming traffic. It's 18 miles from Pinos Altos to the junction with NM 35. There are several good turn-around points if you don't want to go all the way. The last 3-mile descent into Sapillo Creek is steep with blind hair-pin curves.

Directions: Go north from Silver City on 15.

3a. NM 15 to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. From the junction of NM 15 & 35 it's about 19 miles to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. This section of NM 15 is a good paved 2-lane with continuous curves and long, steep climbs. It's about a 6-mile climb to the Clinton P. Anderson Vista after which the road descends steeply for about 9 miles to the Gila River Valley. It's 4 miles further to the end of the road and the Cliff Dwellings. The climb back out is tough especially on a summer afternoon. This is a ride for experienced riders and a great training ride for racers.

Directions: Go north from Silver City on 15.

4. NM 152 to the Mimbres River Valley: This ride takes you east of Silver City into the Mimbres River Valley. Hwy 180 East leaving Silver City is a busy 4-lane with shoulders that junctions with NM 152 five miles east of town. 152 is a lightly traveled 2-lane with shoulders. This road has many good climbs and goes past a vista where you can view the Chino Copper Mine. A couple miles past the mine the road descends into the Mimbres River Valley. In the valley, about 20 miles from Silver City, NM 152 junctions with NM 35 between mile marker 14 and 15. This is a good turn-around point.

Directions: Go east from Silver City on Hwy 180 than turn right onto NM 152 at the junction between mile marker 121 and 122.

Ride options in the Mimbres River Valley: In the Mimbres River Valley you have three options:

Note: If you don't want to ride to the Mimbres River Valley from town you can drive out and park in the gravel parking area at the junction of NM 152 and 61 at mile marker 15 and ride from there.

4a. Emory Pass: NM 152 continues across the valley and then climbs 17 miles into the Black Range to 8,000 ft. Emory Pass. This great mountain climb takes you into pine and aspen forest and is for experienced riders. The first 6 miles of the ascent is

a wide 2-lane with shoulders but after the National Forest boundary becomes a narrow 2-lane with blind curves and some steep climbs. Traffic is light.

Directions: Continue east across the Mimbres River Valley on NM 152.

4b. Mimbres River Valley north on NM 35: NM 35 is an easy ride up the valley along the Mimbres River to the Continental Divide between mile marker 15 and 16. It's a short hill climb up to the Divide. On the west side of the Divide is a short descent into the Sapillo Creek valley. The next 8 miles to Lake Roberts is a beautiful, easy ride through meadows and stands of ponderosa pine. There are some short, steep climbs around Lake Roberts. River Vista, a picnic area overlooking the lake, has a toilet. A half mile further is Lake Roberts store. About 3 miles further is the junction of NM 35 and NM 15. The road is a narrow 2-lane with light traffic.

Directions: From the junction of NM 152 and NM 35 go north on 35 up the Mimbres River Valley.

4c. Mimbres River Valley south on NM 61: NM 61 is an easy ride that follows the lower Mimbres River Valley through high-desert hills. There isn't a turn-around destination so go as far as you want. It's about 26 miles to the junction with Hwy 180. If you want to make a big loop you can continue down NM 61 and return to Silver City on Hwy 180. It's about a 75 mile loop. NM 61 is a narrow 2-lane with a course asphalt surface and light traffic. Hwy 180 is a heavy traffic two-lane with shoulders.

Directions: From the junction of NM 152 and NM 61 go south on 61 down the river valley.

5. Trail of the Mountain Spirits National Scenic Byway: NM 15, 35, 152 and Hwy 180 connect to form the 74-mile loop through the mountains of the Gila National Forest. The roads have been described in 3 and 4 above.

Directions: From Silver City you can do this loop by going north on NM 15 or east on Hwy 180 and linking up with NM 152 and 35.

Guide, photo & map copyright 2008 by Jackie Blurton. No part of this guide may be reprinted or used without the written permission of the author. The author bears no responsibility for accidents, injuries, or loss from any cause from anyone using this guide. Users of this guide shall assume responsibility for their own safety, well being, riding skills, and should wear a bike helmet at all times.

Southwest New Mexico Bicycling Guide

**A guide to the best bicycling
in Silver City and Grant County**

By Jackie Blurton



**Kamgrounds of America
Silver City KOA**

11824 Hwy 180 E.

Silver City, NM 88061

(575) 388-3351

sckoa@campsilvercity.com

www.silvercitykoa.com

www.campsilvercity.com

Your hosts, Jim & Jackie Blurton



Southwest New Mexico Bicycling guide

Silver City and Grant County are getting a reputation as a great destination for year-around bicycling. Silver City is located along the Continental Divide in the foothills of the Gila National Forest. The winter months cooperate with stretches of great weather and bountiful sunshine. Summer months have consistently good weather and moderate temperatures offering incredible riding in the mountains as well as at the lower elevations. Altitudes for our trails and roads range from about 6,000 to over 8,000 feet.

This guide is your introduction to some of our favorite mountain and road rides. More information, mountain bike trail maps, bike gear, sales and service are available at:

Gila Hike & Bike 103 College St, Silver City, NM 88061. E-mail: brennan5231@comcast.net or jhemp_00@yahoo.com. 575-388-3222.

Twin Sisters Cycling & Fitness 303 N Bullard, Silver City, NM 88061, 575-538-3388.

Website: twinsisterscycling.com

Information and mountain bike trail maps are also available at:

Gila National Forest Supervisors Office

3005 E Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061, 575-388-8201. Their website has detailed information on mountain bike trails including mileages and times. Go to www2.srs.fs.fed.us/r3/gila. Click on Recreational Activities, Biking.

Mountain Bike Rides

Following is a description of rides in and around Silver City. The letters are keyed to the map to show you the general location of these trails from town. There are other trail users so use good trail etiquette.

A. Boston Hill: This large city park in the hills overlooking Silver City has great trails and easy access from town. Silver City was founded when silver was discovered in these hills in the 1860's. The mines played out and were abandoned leaving the hills scored with deep cuts. The trails loop around the mines giving riders interesting views into the digs. Stay on the trails, and use caution when near the digs. The rides are moderate with some steep slopes. Map available.

Directions to trailhead: The best trailheads are

the Market Street Trailhead at the junction of Hwy 180 W and Market Street on the west side of town, the Cooper Street Trailhead on south Cooper Street.

B. Burro CDT South, south of Silver City: This is a new segment of the Continental Divide Trail in the Gila National Forest. It winds through rolling high-desert hills. A mile from the trailhead is a one mile section of old mining roads and the route is confusing. Look for cairns, trail markers, and follow forest roads 4050Q and 4090Q which take you around the hill, not away from the hill. These will become single track again. It's about 8 miles from the trailhead to where it intersects NM 90. It's a moderate to difficult trail. Map available.

Directions to trailhead: South from Silver City on NM 90 between mile marker 22 & 21. Turn right after the Continental Divide Trail sign onto Forest Road 282. The road becomes a loop drive and going either direction will take you to the parking area. Park near the trailhead sign for Jacks Peak. Across the grassy clearing to the south is a large cairn and CDT marker that mark the trailhead.

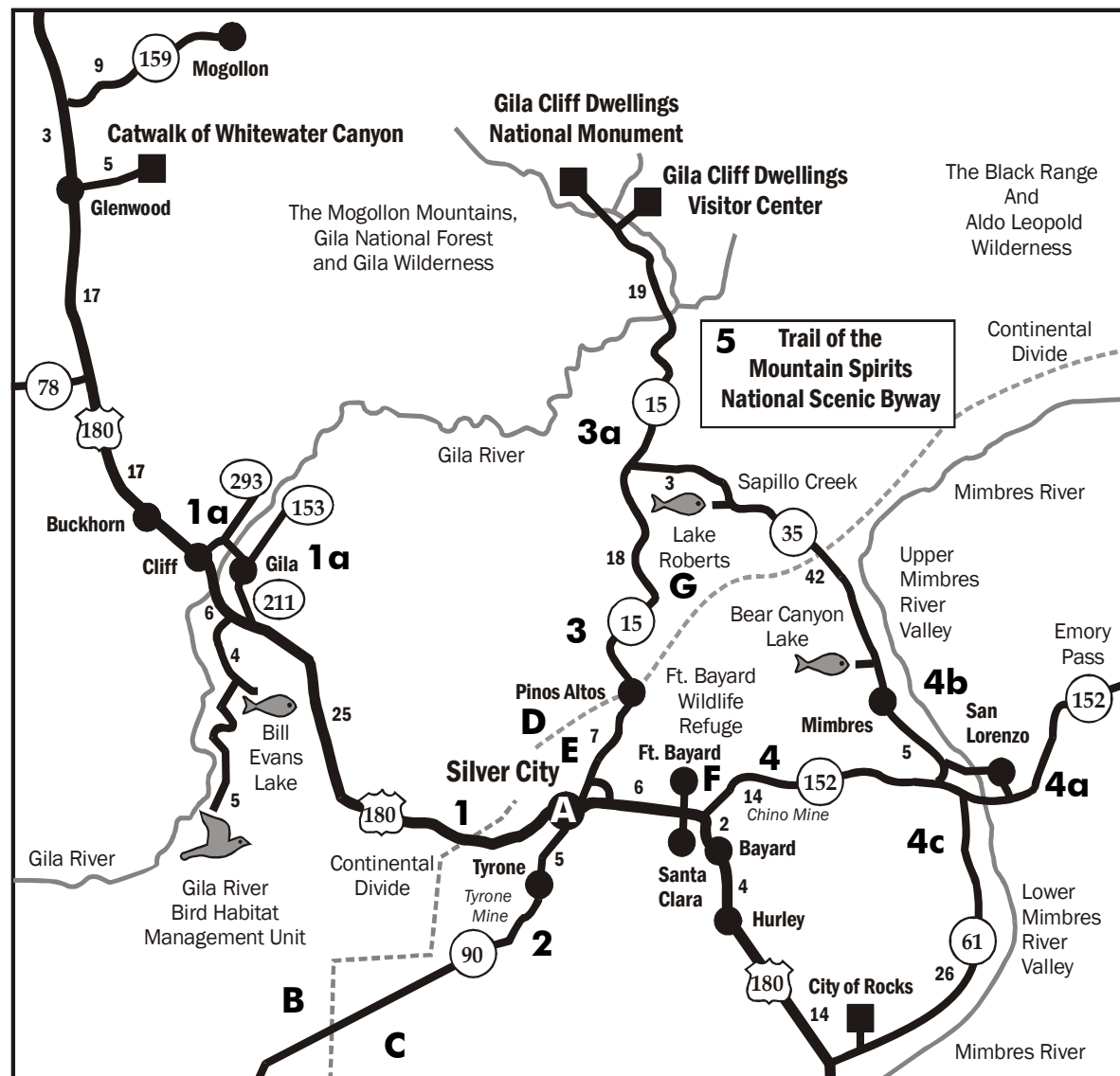
C. Separ Road south of Silver City: This road is the designated Great Divide road route that parallels the CDT and is an easy ride for beginners. There's no destination as a turn around point so keep track of your mileage and don't ride further than you want to ride back.

Directions to Separ Road: South from Silver City on NM 90. There is a street sign on the left at mile marker 25. Park on pull-offs along the road.

D. Continental Divide Trail north of Silver City: The CDT crosses Forest Road 506 in the Gila National Forest north of Silver City. From this trailhead you can go either south or north. Going south will link up with the Gomez Peak trails described below. Going north the trail ascends into higher mountains and is rocky and technical. This north segment comes out where the CDT crosses NM 15 north of Pinos Altos.

Directions to trailhead: Go north from Silver City on Little Walnut Road about 5 miles to the Little Walnut Picnic area and then about 3 miles further on Forest Road 506 to the trailhead.

E. Little Walnut Picnic Area/Gomez Peak Trail System: There is a great system of trails that begin at the Little Walnut Picnic Area in the Gila National Forest. These moderate to difficult trails are



loops that circumvent several peaks and link up with the CDT. Map available.

Directions to trailhead: Go north from Silver City on Little Walnut Road about 5 miles to the Little Walnut Picnic area.

F. Fort Bayard Wildlife Refuge: This is part of the Gila National Forest and has a great system of National Recreation Trails. The trails in the foothills are smoother and fast. As you get closer to the mountains they're rockier and more technical.

Directions to trailhead: There are two trailheads.

For the first one go east from Silver City on Hwy 180 and between mile marker 118 and 119 turn left onto the Old Arenas Valley Road, then go 1 mile to the parking area. For the second trailhead continue east to the stop light between mile marker 121 and 122 and turn left into Ft. Bayard. When you enter Ft. Bayard bear to the right at the "Y" intersection and follow the signs for Forest Road 536. When the road becomes dirt it is about 3 miles to the trailhead parking area.

G. Signal Peak: This is the location of the