



New Mexico, USA

@CityofAztec

### Zuni Mountains (Hilso Mountain) Trails

Zuni Mountain System (aka Hilso Mountain Bike Trailhead) is located off State Highway 400 south of Fort Wingate. There are 57 miles of non-motorized single track trails. An interpretive kiosk at the Hilso Mountain Trailhead provides information on the history of this area and a map of the trails. The trail system was made possible by the Zuni Mountain Trail Partnership. Please stay on the trail, be courteous to other trail users, and pay attention to private land boundaries.

Trail Name	Miles	Kilometers	Trail Difficulty	Rating	MTB Project Ranking		
					System	New Mexico	National
Berma Trail	2.6	4.2	Intermediate	4.2	5	123	4,873
Quaking Aspen Trail	3.4	5.5	Intermediate	3.7	7	157	5,924
Smokin' Handlebar Trail	2.4	3.9	Intermediate	4	6	153	5,840
Stuck Truck Trail	2.8	4.5	Intermediate	3	15	420	14,949
Y2K Trail	3.2	5.2	Intermediate	3.5	12	272	11,078
<b>McCaffey Trails</b>							
Lost Lake Trail	5.7	9.2	Intermediate	3.5	13	291	11,517
Malcom Tank Trail	1.7	2.7	Intermediate	4	11	239	9,623
Mike's Rippin' Trail	2.0	3.2	Easy/Intermediate	3	16	437	15,252
Plush Trail	5.7	9.2	Intermediate/Difficult	5	1	24	828
Tampico Trail	3.4	5.4	Intermediate	3.3	14	317	12,310
Torreon Trail	1.9	3.1	Intermediate	5	3	52	1,669
<b>Milk Ranch Trails</b>							
Milk Ranch Canyon Trail	6.5	10.4	Difficult	4.5	4	96	3,910
Purple Haze Trail	4.1	6.7	Intermediate	4	9	173	6,312

Trail Name	Miles	Kilometers	Trail Difficulty	Rating	MTB Project Ranking		
					System	New Mexico	National
Quasimodo Trail	4.6	7.4	◆ Difficult	5	2	39	1,371
Sawmill Trail	5.1	8.1	■ Intermediate	4	10	208	7,884
<b>Strawberry Canyon</b>							
Strawberry Canyon Trail	2.5	4.0	● Easy	4	8	160	6,045

**Trail Difficulty Key**

- Easy                    5% grade; 2 inch obstacles
- Intermediate        10% grade; 8 inch obstacles
- ◆ Difficult                15% grade; 15 inch obstacles, occasional harder sections
- ◈ Extreme Difficulty    20% grade, 15+ inch obstacles, many harder sections

Trail Difficulty, Rating, and Ranking based on the MTB Project ([www.mtbproject.com](http://www.mtbproject.com))

**Land Manager**

Cibola National Forest & National Grasslands  
 Mt. Taylor Ranger District  
 1800 Lobo Canyon Rd.  
 Grants, NM 87020  
 (505) 287-8833  
[www.fs.usda.gov/cibola](http://www.fs.usda.gov/cibola)

**Trails Maintenance**

Gallup Trails  
 PO Box 4095  
 Gallup, New Mexico 87305  
[www.galluptrails.com](http://www.galluptrails.com)

## MTB Project Trail Comments

<b>Berma Trail</b>	This trail is a great little downhill run. Lots of built up earthen berms to rollover or jump off of. It starts out seeming like a jeep road but narrows down quickly. There are a few tight turns to keep you on your toes, then a final right turn and a couple of short sharp climbs deposit you on a gravel road, FR 381, just a short way from the trailhead parking.
<b>Quaking Aspen Trail</b>	One of the first singletrack routes in the Zuni Mountains, the trail follows a small drainage up to Sheetrock Tank, which usually contains water. The route features an intimate glide through the aspens, followed by some slick rock sections, including an interesting grazing fence crossing "cattle guard" feature. The grades are gentle for the most part, with short tech sections that challenge beginner-level riders to develop their skills. The trail terminates at a signed four way intersection at Sheetrock Tank, offering several route choices, including a fun downhill return to the trailhead via Turkey Nest Trail and Y2K Trail, or continuing on to a loop of Lost Lake Rim Trail and Smokin' Handlebar Trail. Quaking Aspen Trail is part of the Zuni Mountain 100 Route, which offers ~50 continuous miles of singletrack through a variety of beautiful and challenging terrain.
<b>Smokin' Handlebar Trail</b>	Smokin' Handlebar is a fast connector trail that runs through open Ponderosa forest and three challenging rocky drainages between Sheetrock Tank, Quaking Aspen Trail, Lost Lake Rim Trail, Stuck Truck Trail, and Berma Trail. It offers creative stacked loop options for the upper Hilso Trailhead area.
<b>Stuck Truck Trail</b>	Stuck Truck, as it's name implies, is an old doubletrack road scar that was obliterated. Quite a few years later, the Youth Conservation Corps trail crews built a singletrack trail through the old corridor. The trail is still a work in refinement, but proves delightful as a fast downhill thrill run. It also serves as an alternative climb up to Smokin' Handlebar Trail, Berma Trail, and Quasimodo Trail. From the trailhead it starts up a pleasant and intimate green drainage, then ascends into open Ponderosa forest.
<b>Y2K Trail</b>	This trail cuts off from the Quaking Aspen Trail just past a small meadow with a metal structure. It first parallels the road then turns right to follow a fence line. The trail then turns right again to follow another fence line along the edge of a meadow before dropping down through the edge of the meadow and joining up with the Turkey Nest Trail. At this point you are also very close again to the Quaking Aspen Trail. The vast majority of the trail is gradual climbing with some descents through the ponderosa pines, though there are a couple of rocky sections as you ride past the meadow.
<b>McGaffey Trails</b>	
<b>Lost Lake Trail</b>	This trail has a nice gradual climb before a short somewhat rocky descent to the overlook. Enjoy the views, have a snack, then climb back up the rocky spur trail. It's mostly flat singletrack to start your way back, but then gradually descending until you meet up with the Smoking Handlebar Trail.

- Malcom Tank Trail** A great alternative for bikers with dogs during hot weather, Malcom Tank is a dependable cool down stop. The trail descends from upper Plush Trail through Ponderosa forest and then down an intimate little drainage to connect with lower Plush Trail again. Look for delicate purple iris flowers in late spring and early summer.
- Mike's Rippin' Trail** Mike's Rippin' begins at the Historic McGaffey Fire Tower and returns to the McGaffey Trailhead. It is part of a popular figure-8 loop which includes the Strawberry Canyon Trail, the Tampico Trail, and Mikes Rippin' Trail.
- This trail is situated in high rolling hills covered with open Ponderosa forest and Gambel Oak groves. When reversed, Mikes Rippin' Trail is a challenging climb. A faint two track crosses this trail about a half mile down from the Tower, take care to stay on the singletrack trail. Note that when the tower is crewed, polite visitors have been invited "aboard" for a viewing. Otherwise, please stay away from the tower.
- Plush Trail** The Plush forks off Lost Lake Rim Trail and flows through open ponderosa forest, negotiates some interesting surface rock on the way to a small drainage, then continues with more fast flowy forest fun. Enough tight twisty to keep you snappy and happy. The trail crosses a gravel road at 0.5 mi. and intersects the Malcom Tank Trail at 0.9 mi. and again at 4.1 mi, then crosses the gravel road again at 4.5 mi., and ends at the Turkey Nest Trail intersection.
- Tampico Trail** This trail goes south from the McGaffey Lookout and then winds down through an open area with views to the west. It then heads back north through big trees. Approaching the excellent Strawberry Canyon Trail, there is a bit of a cross slope and a sharp turn into a valley or two. This loop can be added to Mike's Rippin' Trail if you want to add a little bit more mileage before hitting Strawberry Canyon Trail.
- Torreon Trail** One of two singletracks that connect McGaffey Campground to the the rest of the trail system. Torreon rolls through intimate Ponderosa forest from the Plush Trail down to the McGaffey Campground. After crossing a few minor forest drainages, the trail rockets down to the south end of the Campground, paralleling the fence at the south end of Torreon Meadow for the last 1/2 mile. When done in reverse, it's a steady climb with a few spicy rollers for excitement.

## Milk Ranch Trails

- Milk Ranch Canyon Trail** Starts at NM400 pavement and heads 1.5 mi. west through rolling meadow to Milk Ranch Canyon. After crossing the rippled rock bottom, follow the trail to the right along the south canyon rim, then up a side canyon with a few challenging step ledges and finally a large cave where the trail leaves the drainage and starts to climb up the ridge. After the extended climb finally levels out there is an intersection with Quasimodo Trail on the right, then a short distance farther a view point spur on the right. The trail heads down soon after and returns to Milk Ranch Trailhead via a lollypop loop down a long abandoned road corridor.

**Purple Haze Trail**

This trail meanders across a big open meadow to the foothills and drainages of a high ridge. There are lots of short rollers to keep things interesting. It intersects the Sawmill Trail at 0.6 mi, and has a viewpoint spur trail on the right at 3 mi. with a challenging climb and spectacular distant views to the north and west.

**Quasimodo Trail**

This singletrack runs from the Milk Ranch Trail intersection, across open Ponderosa hills, drainages, and canyons, sometimes doubling back for another round through the rollers, to Berma Trail Intersection. There are many short intense climbs broken up by swoopy downs, with some fast flow thrown in for variety. Never a dull moment!

**Sawmill Trail**

The singletrack starts on the left side of Train Canyon Road (FR547) at 0.42 mi. from the McGaffey Lake Road (FR50) intersection. After a swoop down from Train Canyon Rd. the trail climbs over the ridge, then turns right and runs along the foothills. There is a road crossing at 2 mi. and a fence crossing at 3 mi. Turn left at the Purple Haze Trail intersection to go to Hilso Trailhead.

**Strawberry Canyon****Strawberry Canyon Trail**

Originally built in the 1930's by Civilian Conservation Corps crews, this classic old trail is still in use and has been well maintained over the last 75 years. It starts at the McGaffey Campground Trailhead, runs along the back of the Campground, crosses a small footbridge, and then winds up to the historic McGaffey Fire Lookout Tower. This is a wide smooth multi-use trail with a gentle switch backing climb up to the top of the ridge. Beginners will appreciate the confidence building climb to the top and the exhilarating swoop back down again. Intersects the Tampico Trail at 1.6 mi.