

NORTHERN ACCESS: Tonto National Forest–Ranch Gate

If you want to hit the trail from here, please follow the trail description in reverse order. The closest way to access the north end of Passage 16 is to hike in on Alamo Passage from either the Picketpost Trailhead (11.5 miles) or to drive in on FR 4 from Superior (Mary Road) for 7 miles. (Caution: FR 4 is extremely rocky and accessible only with a high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle and a very confident driver.) There is room to park and camp where the trail crosses FR 4. From this point, you still need to travel south for 4 miles to the ranch gate that divides the north end of Passage 16 from the south end of Passage 17.

PASSAGE 17

Alamo Canyon

KEY INFO

LOCATION Tonto National Forest boundary to Picketpost Trailhead

DISTANCE 11.5 miles one-way

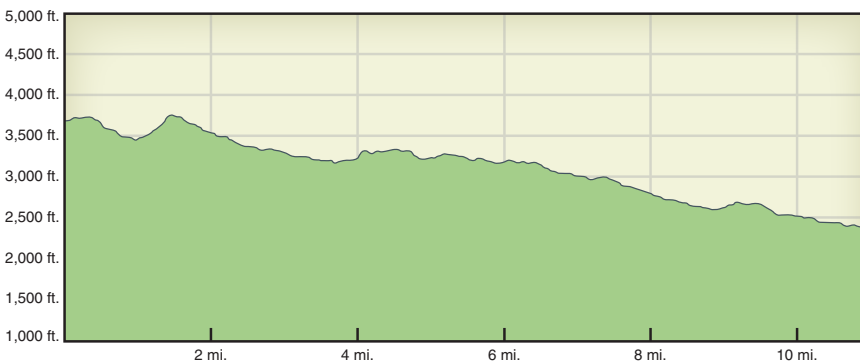
DAY-TRIP OPTION Not applicable

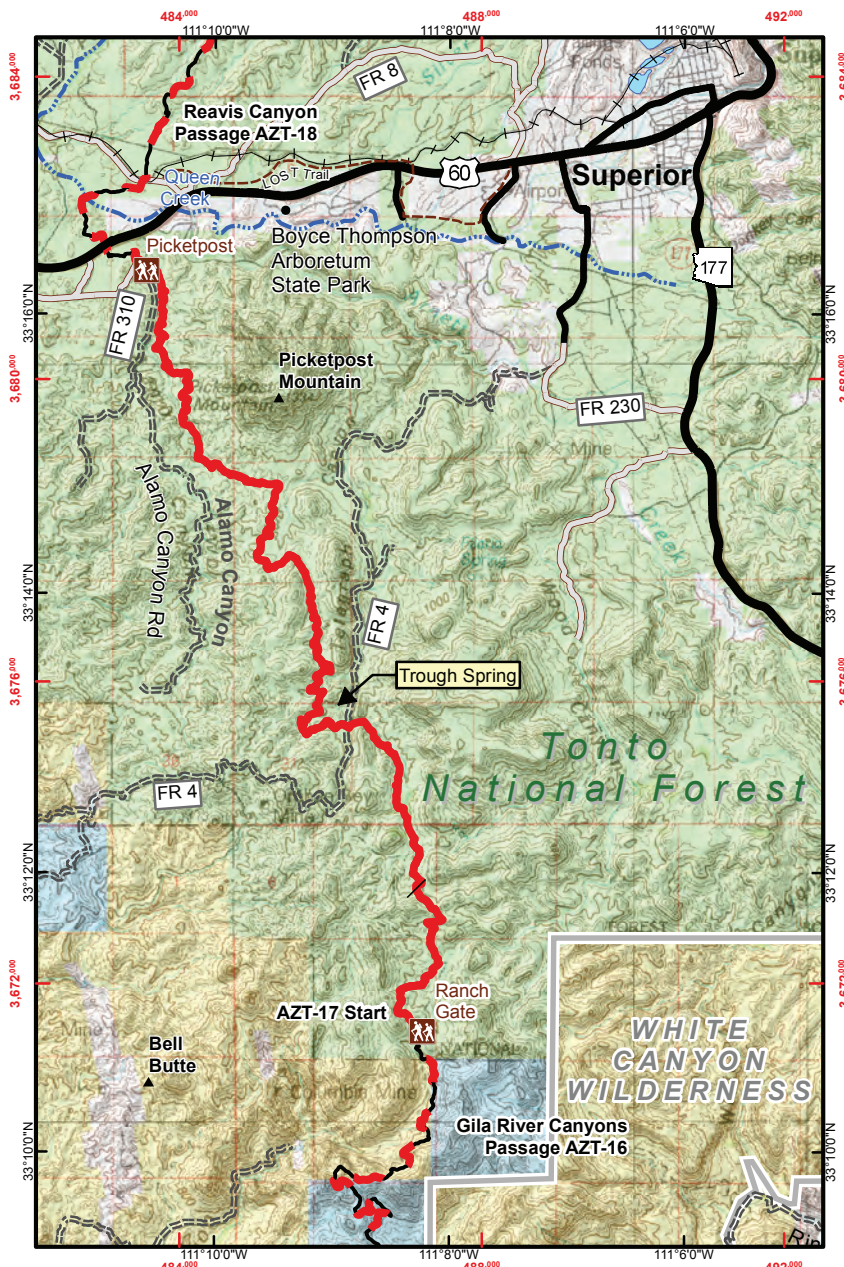
SHUTTLE RECOMMENDATION Not applicable


DIFFICULTY Moderate

LAND MANAGERS Tonto National Forest, Globe Ranger District,
www.fs.usda.gov/tonto, 928-402-6200,

RECOMMENDED MONTHS October–April



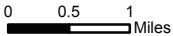





Passage 17
Alamo Canyon

A. Seifert v1.0
10/30/2013

Lat/Long WGS 84
UTM NAD 83 12N
Scale: 1:100,000



0 0.5 1
Miles



GATEWAY COMMUNITIES See Globe (page 319), Florence (page 321), and Superior (page 322).

GEOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS See “Supervolcanoes of the Superstition Mountains” (page 341).

OVERVIEW

The rugged desert, mountains, and canyons that characterize most of this passage are as isolated as they are beautiful. Because of its difficult access for day-trippers, this passage is, overall, most approachable by multiday adventurers or those willing to put in long miles between Passages 16 and 17. Springtime brings an abundance of wildflowers to this region, and seeing Alamo Canyon in full bloom is breathtaking.



Passage 17 has become one of Arizona's hot spots for mountain bikers with strong singletrack skills.

Photo: Matthew J. Nelson



Photo: Sierra Dufault

Horses forage on a springtime blanket of fresh greens near Picketpost Mountain.

The termination point, Picketpost Trailhead has become increasingly popular with day-hikers, trail runners, equestrians, and mountain bikers alike. And for good reason—it has ample parking, a bathroom, horse-trailer parking, and hitching rails, and it provides access to an amazing part of the Tonto National Forest.

ON THE TRAIL

This passage lies entirely within Tonto National Forest and begins at a ranch gate about 0.3 mile north of the national forest and BLM boundary. From this gate the trail heads north for 1 mile before dropping into an old narrow doubletrack drainage (once used as a trail) where signs lead toward Picketpost. A small seasonal earthen water tank sits only a few feet away on the southwest side at this location. Continue north (uphill) to a saddle; after crossing the saddle, the trail heads downhill across a few drainages and lush hillsides.

After passing through a ranch gate, the trail gently drops down close to the headwaters for Telegraph Canyon, which it parallels until it reaches FR 4. After crossing FR 4, the trail winds to the west and north through hills and valleys as you work your way toward Picketpost Mountain. Trough Spring, the only viable water source along this passage, is 0.25 mile down Telegraph Canyon. As you approach Picketpost, the trail wraps around on the west side and tends to parallel Alamo Canyon drainage, until it reaches the trailhead. This large trailhead has a bathroom and plenty of parking, but water is unavailable. Approximately 3.3 miles south of Picketpost, a connecting trail leads east to FR 4, which has become popular with equestrian groups that like to make a loop around Picketpost Mountain.

Additionally, the Legends of Superior Trail (LOST), a side trail, heads east to the town of Superior. This 5-mile trail connects the AZT and the Gateway Community of Superior, and it passes through the remains of the historic mining town of Pinal City.



Photo: Sue and Mark Johnson

Rhyolite hoodoos near Alamo Canyon are weathered remnants of Arizona's volcanic past. (See "Supervolcanoes of the Superstition Mountains," page 341, for more information.)

Currently the trail terminates at the Superior airport on the west end of town. To access the LOST from the AZT, you must continue north from the Picketpost Trailhead for 1.6 miles on Passage 18 to near the junction with Hewitt Station Road and follow the signage.

Mountain Bike Notes

The entire passage features high-quality singletrack. If you link Passages 16 and 17 as a long day trip or an overnight bikepacking trip, you'll ride some of the Arizona National Scenic Trail's (AZT) highest-quality miles for mountain bikers. *For more information about mountain biking along the Arizona National Scenic Trail, visit aztrail.org.*

SOUTHERN ACCESS: Tonto National Forest–Ranch Gate

The closest access to the south end of Passage 17 is to hike in on Alamo Passage from either Picketpost Trailhead (11.5 miles), or drive in on FR 4 from Superior (Mary Road) for 7 miles. (*Caution:* FR 4 is extremely rocky and accessible only with a high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle and a very confident driver.) There is room to park and camp where the trail crosses FR 4. From this point, you still need to travel south for 4 miles to a ranch gate that divides the Passages 16 and 17.

NORTHERN ACCESS: Picketpost Trailhead

If you want to hit the trail from here, please follow the trail description in reverse order. From Florence Junction, drive east on US 60 for 9 miles. After mile marker 221, continue 0.5 mile and turn right (south) onto FR 231. (This point is 4 miles west of the town of Superior, on US 60.) Drive 0.4 mile and turn left onto FR 310. Continue 0.6 mile, then turn right at a sign for Picketpost Trailhead. You'll see a large metal AZT sign marking the trailhead in 0.1 mile. There is no vehicle access to the Tonto National Forest boundary from here.