

Hannagan Meadow Lodge

Hannagan Meadow Lodge in the White Mountains in far-eastern Arizona is an idyllic spot for winter and outdoor enthusiasts.

Hannagan Meadow Lodge hosts a winter wonderland

By Brent Miles
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With snow season approaching, there is an abundance of outdoor activities for desert dwellers who want to get away from the big city and head into the hills.

Hannagan Meadow Lodge, founded in 1926 as a resting place for travelers along the ruggedly scenic Coronado Trail, is perfect for winter and outdoor enthusiasts.

At 9,100 feet in the White Mountains of far-eastern Arizona, the lodge boasts eight rooms furnished with antiques and brass beds, and eight charmingly rustic cabins.

The lodge, which was renovated in 1996, serves breakfast and dinner daily. Also on site are a country store, where lunch is served, and a gas station.

Activities in the area include horseback riding, hiking, backpacking, fishing, mountain biking, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. The lodge rents skis and

snowmobiles. The nearby Blue Range Primitive Area contains 173,762 acres of wilderness that is home to Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, bald eagles and Mexican gray wolves.

The trip can take up to seven hours each way, so it may be more convenient for a three-day weekend getaway. Road conditions in Hannagan Meadow and the surrounding area can be slippery during the snow season. The road south from Alpine to Hannagan Meadow is not plowed when it snows. For current road conditions, call ADOT at 1-888-411-ROAD.

Getting there: About 270 miles from Phoenix. Take U.S. 60 east through Globe and Show Low to Springerville, then U.S. 191 south to Hannagan Meadow. Or take Arizona 87 north to Payson, Arizona 260 east to Show Low, U.S. 60 east to Springerville and U.S. 191 south to Hannagan Meadow.

Details: 1-(928)-428-2225, www.hannaganmeadow.com.

Sandstone arch rewards hikers at end of Devil's Bridge Trail

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parking area on the eastern side of the road. The Devil's Bridge Trail (a.k.a. Trail 120) is designated for hikers only, so leave your mountain bikes and horses home for this one.

The first part of the route is an abandoned jeep trail, wide and fairly level. As you walk deeper through the high-desert forest of scrub oak and piñon, juniper and manzanita, the sandy, orangy trail begins to work its way uphill, slowly at first, then a little more steeply. Great views to the north and west open up as you climb, but the bridge itself remains hidden for most of the hike.

About three-quarters of a mile from the parking area, the trail splits. The left-hand path goes down through the brush to the underside of the bridge, looming about 50 feet overhead. Look for weirdly shaped hollows and crevices on the rock wall to the east.

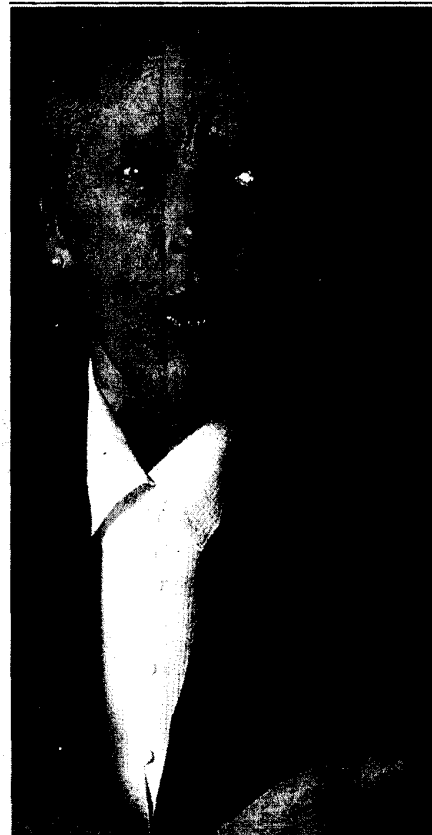
azcentral.com

To view streaming video of this trail, click on Outdoors: Hiking at travel.azcentral.com.

Rock climbers might be tempted to scramble up to the top of the bridge from below, but the rest of us should return to the junction and follow the other trail up a steep, natural rock staircase to an open area offering splendid views. An even steeper climb leads to a higher level, where rock cairns lead to the bridge, about 100 yards east.

Although the bridge looks narrow and forbidding from afar, as you approach the east you'll find it's not a difficult walk across. But be careful: There are no guardrails and it's a long way down.

It takes only an hour or so for the round-trip hike to the bridge, but allow yourself plenty of extra time for taking photos and soaking up the wonderful views.



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Recreation Cycling

Group Bike Rides: Mondays, Saturdays. Riders of all skill levels are invited to join experts on group rides to develop their cycling skills on- and off-road. Trailhead Bicycle Exchange, 15454 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd., Scottsdale. Free. (480) 614-8300.

Cruz, McCormick Ranch Golf Club, 7505 E. McCormick Parkway, Scottsdale. Call for prices. (602) 224-0068.

"Putting for Paws" Charity Golf Tournament: 12:30 p.m. Nov. 13. Golf, dinner and auction. Hole-in-one prize is a Jaguar automobile. Proceeds benefit R.E.S.C.U.E, a local non-profit animal rescue organization. ASU Karsten Golf Course, 1125 E. Rio Salado