

## In Memory

This year's hikes are dedicated to three members who passed away since our last event. The West Texas Trail Walkers lost Heidi Silkworth, Margaret Foerster and Susan Medlin. All three ladies were long-term club members. Heidi Silkworth was an avid trail walker and volunteered at every WTTW event for nearly twenty years. Susan Medlin served on the WTTW Board and was a walk director for 5 years. Margaret Foerster chaired our merchandizing committee and created our T-shirts. Join us on these hikes to keep their memory alive!



### Smokey Bear Ranger District Lincoln National Forest

The Smokey Bear legend is true. In 1950, an orphaned bear cub became trapped in the Capitan Gap Fire in Lincoln National Forest. The cub climbed a tree to survive, but was badly burned. Firefighters who found him were moved by his bravery and named him Smokey. Smokey lived at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. for 26 years and died in 1976. His body was returned to Capitan, New Mexico, for burial in the Smokey Bear Historical Park. Smokey Bear is now universally recognized as a symbol for the US Forest Service's Wildfire Prevention Campaign.



## West Texas Trail Walkers Lincoln National Forest Ruidoso, New Mexico October 10-12, 2025



### Lincoln National Forest

**Sawmill Trail**  
**"Heidi Silkworth Memorial Hike"**  
October 10, 2025  
129507 - 6k, 10k

**Argentina/Big Bonito Trails**  
**"Susan Medlin Memorial Hike"**  
October 11, 2025  
129508 - 4k, 7k, 10k, 20k

**Grindstone Lake Trail**  
**"Margaret Foerster Memorial Hike"**  
October 12, 2025  
129509 - 6k, 11k

**Three Fun Shorties**  
October 8—October 12, 2025  
129510 - Up to 18k



*"Hike with an Altitude"*

AVA 60, TX 19

[www.westtexastrailwalkers.org](http://www.westtexastrailwalkers.org)

**West Texas Trail Walkers (WTTW) is a club dedicated to holding a yearly event in the scenic areas of West Texas which are off-road and challenging.**

**Eligibility:** All persons and ages are welcome. Children under legal age must be accompanied by an adult. None of the events are suitable for strollers or wheelchairs

**Volunteer:** Volunteers are always needed! We need volunteers to be checkpoints or work at the start/finish point. Please check the registration form to indicate the days you are available and what activities you want to volunteer for.

**Fees:** Event fee is \$5.00 per walk. There are no fees for the Lincoln National Forest. Fees cannot be collected on National Forest land so you must pre-register.

**Safety:** Please do not hike alone. Hiking boots, broad rimmed hats and hiking sticks are highly recommended. Wear sunscreen. Carry plenty of water and snacks. A good rule of thumb is to carry one 12-oz. bottle of water per mile you plan to hike. No smoking on the trails. Carry a hardcopy map of the area. There is no cell phone coverage on the Big Bonito trails.

**Pets:** Dogs are allowed (but are discouraged) because of the rocky trails and high heat. Don't forget to carry extra water for your dog. Dogs must be on a leash.

Registration forms can be found at  
[www.westtexastrailwalkers.org](http://www.westtexastrailwalkers.org). Contact  
[susan.noonan@gmail.com](mailto:susan.noonan@gmail.com) with questions.

## Lodging Options

Host Hotel: La Quinta Inn & Suites, 26147 US Highway 70, Ruidoso Downs, NM 88346. The negotiated rate is \$99 per night (before taxes). Call 575-378-3514 and select option #3 followed by option 0, by September 24, 2025 to secure this special rate.

Reserve camping sites in the Lincoln National Forest through [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov).

**Registration, Thursday, October 9:** Pickup nametags between 5:30-7:00 pm in La Quinta lobby. Or pickup nametags at the start point of every hike. Walkups welcome!

**Happy Hour:** October 10, 3:00 to 5:00 pm. Downshift Brewing Company—Riverside, 2704 Sudderth Dr., Ruidoso, NM. Downshift offers craft beers, mixed drinks, wine, and pub food for purchase. The dinner menu offers something for everyone's taste. There are views of the Rio Ruidoso from multiple patios and decks nestled in the towering pines. Live music starts after 5:00 pm.

**Annual Awards Dinner:** October 11, 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Ruidoso Community Center, 501 Sudderth Dr., Ruidoso, NM. The cost is \$38 for genuine New Mexico cuisine. On the buffet is red beef enchiladas, Hatch green chili chicken enchiladas, and red cheese enchiladas. Sides include rice, beans, salad, chips/salsa, queso, guacamole, sour cream, and corn/wheat tortillas. Dessert: sopapillas with honey. Drinks are iced tea, lemonade. A short awards ceremony/business meeting will be held after the dinner.

**Directions:** From La Quinta, head south toward US-70W/Billy the Kid Trail. Follow US-70 W. Slight right onto Sudderth Drive. Turn left onto Junction Rd. Ruidoso Community Center is on the right. Enter door with WTTW banner.







**Sawmill Trail**  
**“Heidi Silkworth Memorial Hike”**  
**Ruidoso, New Mexico**  
**October 10, 2025**

**Trail Start:** Sawmill Trailhead is at the end of Bewley lane off Carrizo Canyon Road

**Walk Director:** Randy Baker

**Distance/Rating:** 6k is rated 3C. 10k is rated 4C.

**Start/End Time:** Start 8-9 am. End by 1 pm.

**Highlights:** The 6k passes through a meadow and forests on a trail that has gradual inclines in long, swooping switchbacks. The 10k walk takes you to a viewpoint of the Inn of the Mountain Gods and Mescalero Lake.

**Trail Description:** The trail surface is dirt, rocks and roots. There is quite a bit of sun on this hike. The 6k has an elevation gain of 525' while the 10k has a gain of 715'. Hiking boots, broad rimmed hats and hiking sticks are recommended. Pack plenty of water and snacks.

**Restrooms:** Port-a-potty at trailhead

**Parking:** Trailhead parking is in poor condition. Entrance to parking area is very rutted. Please carpool. Overflow parking is along Bewley Lane.

**Directions:** Please follow our directions, not GPS. Sawmill Trailhead, Bewley Lane, Ruidoso, NM. From La Quinta, turn right onto US70/Billy the Kid. In 0.3 miles, make a slight right on NM48 -N/Sudderth Dr. Drive 1.7 miles and turn left onto Carrizo Canyon Rd. In 1.4 miles, turn right onto Bewley Lane. Go straight ahead to Sawmill Trailhead.

**Workers Walks—Volunteers Needed!**

October 8: Meet at 8:30 am at Sawmill trailhead to volunteer for the Sawmill hike.

October 8: Meet at 8:30 am at Grindstone Lake trailhead to volunteer for the Grindstone Lake trails.

October 9: Meet at 8:00 am at Big Bonito Trailhead to volunteer for the Bonito trails. This drive is at least 50 minutes.

Come early to Ruidoso and make it an extra long weekend. Volunteer to be a checkpoint or at the start/end table. Enjoy the worker’s walk, bask in the cool fall weather, and spend more time in the scenic mountains of Southern New Mexico.



**Big Bonito Trail**  
**“Susan Medlin Memorial Hike”**  
**Ruidoso, New Mexico**  
**October 11, 2025**

**Trail Start:** Argentina/Big Bonito Trailhead

**Walk Director:** Will Robinson

**Distance/Rating:** 4k has 217' elevation gain and is rated 3C.

7k has 759' elevation gain and is rated 3C. 10k rated 4C with 1260' elevation gain. 20k rated 4C with 1575' elevation gain.

**Start/End Time:** Start 8-9 am for 4k, 7k and 10k. Start 8 am-8:30 am for 20k. Finish by 4pm.

**Highlights:** The hike features beautiful views of the White Mountain Wilderness. October is a good time to see fall colors. You will cross Rio Bonito creek many times. Views from the crest are exceptional.

**Trail Description:** Dirt trails with very rocky surfaces and switchbacks. This is a rugged, advanced, high-altitude hike. Hiking boots, wide brim hat and walking sticks recommended. Pack plenty of water and snacks to give you energy throughout the hike.

**Restrooms:** Located at trailhead

**Directions/Parking:** From La Quinta Inn, Ruidoso Downs head south toward US-70 W/Billy the Kid Trail. Turn right onto US-70 W/Billy the Kid Trail for .3 mi. Sharp right onto Gavilan Canyon Rd. for 4.2 mi. Slight right onto Hull Rd. for 2.5 mi. Turn right onto NM-48 N/Billy the Kid Trail 4.7 miles. Turn left onto NM-37 N for 1.3 mi. Turn Left onto Bonita Lake Rd (gravel) for 3.5 mi. Slight left onto Forest Service Rd. 107 for 1.2 mi. Big Bonito Trailhead is at the end of the road. Passenger vehicles should have no problems with the gravel road. There is ample parking. Driving time is 50 minutes.

**Safety/Fitness Alert**

The Bonito Trails are challenging and the trails are rocky and steep. Do not attempt the 10k or 20k unless you are in good condition. You will be at a high elevation on all the trails, exceeding 9400 feet on the 20k option. Give yourself time to get acclimated, arrive a day or two early to adjust to the thin air. Carry plenty of water, wear hiking boots and use hiking poles. There is no cell phone coverage. Choose the easier 4k option if in doubt about your fitness. The 4k is an out and back on the Big Bonito trail and still allows you to experience the beauty of the White Mountain Wilderness area. It's a 3C but not so long as the other options.



**Grindstone Lake Trail**  
**“Margaret Foerster Memorial Hike”**  
**Ruidoso, New Mexico**  
**October 12, 2025**

**Trail Start:** Grindstone Lake Trailhead, upper parking lot

**Walk Director:** David Ramsey

**Distance/Rating:** 6k is rated 1C. 11k is rated 2C.

**Start/End Time:** Start 8-9 am. End by 1 pm.

**Highlights:** Grindstone Lake trails are very popular. The hike offers scenic views of the lake and Ruidoso. The 11k is a loop while the 6k is an out and back that follows the shoreline. Keep an eye out for wildlife. The lake trails are also good for bird watching.

**Trail Description:** The trail surface is dirt, rocks and roots. Most of the hike is in shade. The 6k has an elevation gain of 297' while the 11k has a gain of 715'. Hiking boots, broad-rimmed hats and hiking sticks are recommended. Pack plenty of water and snacks.

**Restrooms:** Located at the trailhead.

**Parking:** There is a nice-sized parking area at the trailhead.

**Directions:** From La Quinta, head south toward US-70 W/Billy the Kid Trail. Turn right onto US-70 W/Billy the Kid Trail for .3 mi. Slight right onto NM-48N/Sudderth Dr. for 1.7 mi. Turn left onto Carrizo Canyon Rd for .8 mi. Turn right onto Grindstone Canyon Rd. fir .4 m. Turn left onto Resort Dr. for 0.5 mi. Turn left onto Wiggins Way for .2 mi. Park in the upper parking lot.

**Year-Round Walk**

Enjoy the Sun County Striders Year-Round– Walk of Ruidoso! The shorter 5k option walk starts along the Rio River while the 10k includes a walk through a neighborhood. Elk are often seen along this trail especially early in the morning. You can register for this walk with the On-Line Start Box located on the AVA website.



**Three Fun Shorties**  
**Ruidoso, New Mexico**  
**October 8-12, 2025**

Back by popular demand are the “Shorties” walks. These walks are ideal for getting acclimated to the higher altitudes. They are easier walks on well-groomed or paved trails in Ruidoso or Inn of the Mountain Gods.

**Walk Director:** Susan Noonan

**Distance/Rating:** Distances accumulate to 18k and are rated between 1A to 2A in difficulty

**Start/End Time:** Walk these trails during daylight hours anytime over the event weekend. Register using the WTTW registration form and get your books stamped at the start/end points, October 10-12. Or these walks can be accessed through a start box located in the LaQuinta Inn lobby.

**The Links Trail:** White Mountain Sports Complex, 687 Hull Rd. #659, Ruidoso, NM 88345. This 5k trail circles the Links Golf Course. The trail is paved and is fairly level with minor climbs. It is possible to see elk especially early morning. Restrooms are in the Sports Complex

**Inn of the Mountain Gods:**

1)Carrizo Trail, a fitness trail off Route 4 across the street from the Inn of the Mountain Gods Golf Clubhouse. The trail is paved and meanders through a forested area. You might see wild horses or elk along this path. The pathway has some steeper inclines. Choose to hike any distance out and back up to 10k. Restrooms are in the casino or clubhouse. 2) Mescalero Lake path behind the Inn of the Mountain Gods Casino. Start this walk on the sidewalk between the golf pro shop and the casino hotel. Walk towards the lake and turn right once you reach the lake. Follow the pathway along the lake enjoying the lake views and casino amenities (i.e., zipline, snack shack ,boat rentals, public restrooms). Turn left onto the dam and walk until the end of the dam. Turn around and return to the start. 3k. Be sure to stop into the casino to see the native artwork and perhaps enjoy a snack. Restrooms in the golf pro shop.