

Sun City Festival Hiking Club
HIKE DESCRIPTION FORM

Hike Name: Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area

Location: 44000 North Spur Cross Rd., Cave Creek

Hike Description: The Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area encompasses 2,154 acres of diverse, rugged upper Sonoran Desert. It includes riparian areas along Cave Creek, which flows throughout the winter months, and remnants of early mining and ranching are still apparent in the park. The area offers over seven miles of trails for hiking, ranging in length from 1.2 miles to 4.6 miles and ranging in difficulty from easy to difficult. We have chosen to offer two hikes:

1.The Metate/Spur Cross Trail Loop is a 1.9-mile hike that weaves through the mesquite bosque past the former site of the Spur Cross Dude Ranch, solar oasis, and a bedrock metate. The loop crosses Cave creek twice. This loop hike is rated as easy to moderate due to the creek crossing, and the hike should take about an hour and a half. This hike will start at the Kiosk and go 0.8 miles North on the Spur Cross Trail, south for 0.9 miles on the Metate Trail, and then return 0.2 miles southeast to the kiosk on the Spur Cross Trail.

2.The Metate/Dragonfly loop is for those wanting a longer hike. After completing the Metate loop, hikers will continue northwest on the Spur Cross Trail for 1.2 miles and then head south on the Dragonfly trail. This trail features some of the largest saguaros in the conservation area. It goes through the Jewel of the Creek Preserve and the area is home to more than 25 species of dragonflies. After completing this hike, return to Spur Cross Road through the gate and walk left past stables to parking area. The longer hike is about 5 miles and will take about 2 ½ to 3 hours. It is considered a moderate hike.

Rating: Easy to Moderate

Type: Loop with connecting trails

Trail Name(s): Spur Cross Trail (0.9), Metate Trail (0.8), Spur Cross Trail (1.2), Dragon Fly Trail (1.6), Return to Spur Cross Rd. through gate, Walk to your left past Stables back to parking area (0.2).

Length – Miles and Time: Shorter hike is 1.9 Miles and takes about 1 hour. Longer hike is about 5 miles and take 2 ½ hours.

Trailhead Start and End: Information Kiosk/restrooms and return to parking area.

Elevation Change: Estimated 250'

Travel Directions: From SCF travel east on the Sun Valley Parkway to Highway 303 North to I 17 North. Drive 1.5 miles on I 17 to Exit 223A Carefree Highway. Drive 9.7 miles and take a left on to Cave Creek Rd. Travel 2.5 miles on Cave Creek Rd. and then turn left on to Spur Cross Rd. Spur Cross Rd. veers to the right into East Grapevine Rd. Go ½ block and turn left back onto Spur Cross Rd. Travel 2.7 miles and the rd. turns into a gravel rd. Use CAUTION for oncoming traffic. Following the signs to Spur Cross Ranch, drive 1.5 miles and take the right fork and drive 1 mile to the parking area.

Travel Time: 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Parking: Yes