



Skyline Serenity



HIKE

4th SATURDAY
July 22nd, 2023

RAILROAD TUNNEL

From the 260 / 87 intersection in Payson go north on 87 a couple miles to the Houston Mesa turnoff on the right. Follow Houston Mesa 10.3 miles to Whispering Pines and turn left onto Control Road [FR64]. In 0.7 miles turn right onto FR32 and bear right at 3.3 miles to FR32A and travel 0.5 miles to the trailhead parking lot.

Drive slow on FR32 to minimize dust for the residents.
We will hike Col. Devin Trail #290 to the RR tunnel

Parking is \$0.- the hike is priceless.

Meet us There at the Trailhead @ 10:45 AM

Hike Starts at 11:00

It is suggested to leave Mesa by 8:30

Call to let us know you are coming:

Chuck H 480-236-4859

BRING:

Newcomer, Water, Snack, & PMA



We Will Find A Cozy Spot To Have an NA Meeting

www.arizona-na.org



Narcotics Anonymous

<https://hikephoenix.net/2019/06/14/railroad-tunnel-trail-tonto-national-forest-arizona-payson-hiking/>

This hike is 3-1/2 to 4 miles round trip with moderate elevation gain with a little bit of scrambling and is suggested for those in good, nimble, physical condition.

There's a piece of history that has been silently standing still for over 100 years that can be found in Payson, Arizona. The only way to reach this desolate area is by hiking toward it and exploring it for yourself.

In the late 1800s the entrepreneurs of the Arizona Mineral Belt were looking to build a railroad to transport ore from Globe, AZ to Flagstaff, AZ. Although by building this railroad it meant that over 3,000 feet would have to be tunneled through the Mogollon Rim — also known as the “backbone of Arizona.”

The Mogollon Rim is an uplifted cliff that rises 2,000 feet in places and spans 200 miles across Arizona. It begins in the Colorado Plateau and continues on to New Mexico. Needless to say, this was not going to be a small task.

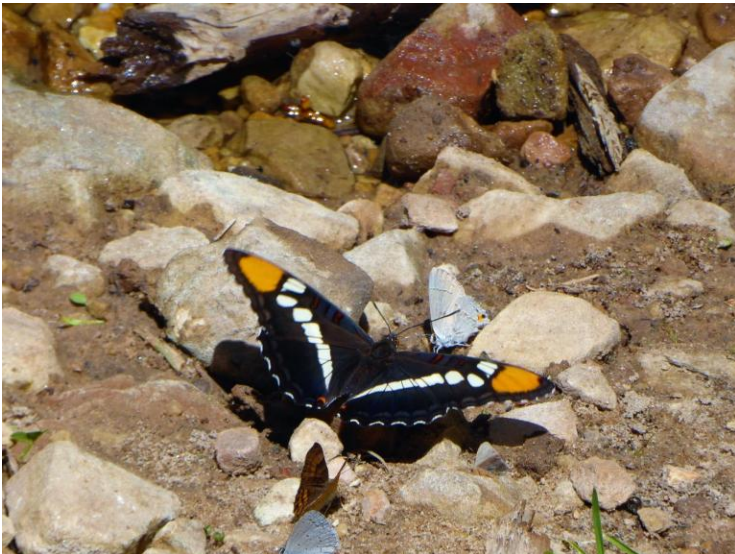
These ambitious businessmen began tunneling through the Rim, but during the construction, the company had various financial issues that cut funding for this project twice. Ultimately they went bankrupt in 1888, leaving the railroad tunnel unfinished and alone with just 70 feet tunneled through the Rim.

Luckily for us hikers, we can go visit.

The beginning part of this hike to the Railroad Tunnel begins on a dirt road known as the Colonel Devin Trail #290. This trail is named after Colonel Thomas C. Devin who had guarded this land against Apache raids. The trailhead is located in Washington Park.



Trail begins to the right of the AZ Trail sign. From the parking lot there are three trails that branch off and only one of them has a trail marker. The trail for Col. Devin is the dirt path to the right of the Arizona Trail Sign. This little dirt path meets up with a dirt road that you can see from the parking lot as well. This section remains straight and is steep in certain areas (but nothing too intense). It follows along Weber Creek, which you can hear nearby — making this a serene hike. In springtime, butterflies and wildflowers are on the trail and if you're lucky maybe a butterfly will hike with you for a while.



At the one mile mark, the dirt road forks and you can either go straight or turn right.

To get to the railroad tunnel, go right.

Heading east at the fork, the trail veers away from the creek and at around 1.4 miles you will come across a sign directing hikers to trail #390, the Railroad Trail.

From this point you leave the Jeep trail and enter the forest area surrounded by tall pine trees and mountain ridge line.

For a steep climb to FR300, continue straight. From there, one could cross over to the east near the power poles, and follow a trail to the Railroad Tunnel.

There is a sign directing hikers to go straight to the Tunnel - which is cross country, off trail, and unmarked. Head left at this sign.

The upper and lower route to the Tunnel meet here and the trail becomes switchbacks and is clear to see.

The trail continues to get steeper, the closer to the Tunnel.

Continue climbing to be rewarded with sight of the Powder House which is still standing.



At first, the tunnel looks a little haunting. One can feel the cool breeze coming from it and it looks like this dark tunnel goes in deep.

Entering the Tunnel, one discovers that those looks are deceiving. The Tunnel was only able to be built 70 feet in.

Feel the cool and damp mountain air emanating from walls carved out by workers of the past.

