White Ridge Bike Trails



BLM

New Mexico · Albuquerque District

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RULES OF THE TRAIL

The International Mountain Bicycling Association IMBA (www.imba.com) and Tread Lightly! (www.treadlightly.org) both offer rules of the trail. Most bicyclists know the rules of the trail. The following are offered as a reminder:

- **Physically prepare for your trip.** Don't take a route that's beyond your capabilities. There are some narrow areas of the gypsum trail (less than 3 feet) with exposed 100-foot drop-offs.

- **Properly equip yourself.** Wear helmet and gloves. Gypsum in the summer reaches soaring temperatures. Bring sunglasses, sunscreen, and double the amount of water you would normally bring. Equip your bike with proper tools, spare tube, patch kit, and air pump. Bring essential survival items—first aid kit, maps, compass, matches, and pocket knife. Biking during the cooler parts of the day, especially in the early mornings, is recommended.

- **Ride only where bicycles are permitted.** The trails at White Ridge are well signed; comply with signs and barriers. Rights-of-way across State of New Mexico and Pueblo of Zia lands apply only to the trails. A recreation permit is required if leaving the trail on State lands. Bicycles and other mechanical conveyances are not allowed in the Ojito Wilderness.

- **Ride safely.** Stay in control, check speed on descents, and use caution when approaching turns; anticipate someone around the bend.

- **Protect yourself.** Always travel with a friend; wear a helmet, proper shoes, and gloves. Don't drink untreated water.

- **Protect the environment.** Stay on designated trails, avoid trampling vegetation, and don't short-cut switchbacks. Cross-country riding is destructive and leaves an obvious path that tempts others to follow. Avoid skidding and wheel spinning. Avoid riding in muddy conditions. Ride only on open trails; if trails are closed, do not proceed.

- **Littering is unacceptable.** Pack out more than you take in.

White Ridge's vast landscape is varied with both rugged and mild terrain, making it perfect for bike-riders of different levels.



Photos by Chris Pyle

BLM/NM/GI-06-10-1220

For further information:
Bureau of Land Management
Albuquerque District
Rio Puerco Field Office
435 Montaño Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107
505/761-8700
or
visit www.nm.blm.gov

Welcome to the White Ridge Bike Trails Area!

Tucked away in rugged and scenic country southwest of the community of San Ysidro, New Mexico, is the White Ridge Bike Trails Area. To the west is the designated Ojito Wilderness. Both sites are a short distance from U.S. 550. This region is known for its geological, cultural and paleontological resources, as well as for its scenic qualities. The bike trail crosses a landscape of spectacular beauty and exceptional geology, meandering through the Pueblo of Zia, State of New Mexico, and public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM has obtained rights-of-way from the Pueblo and the State to provide this biking experience. Although the Trails have been developed primarily for mountain biking, hikers are welcome on the entire trail system, and one segment is also open to equestrian use.



Photo by Matt Turgeon

White Ridge is named for the color of the gypsum that forms much of the mesa and the majority of the bike trails. Gypsum is a white mineral consisting of hydrated calcium sulfate and is commonly used in cement, plaster and fertilizer. This gypsum formed as a chemical reaction from evaporation of an ancient water body. In other words, the Ojito area was once covered with water! At the western edge of White Ridge, the Tierra Amarilla Anticline forms high, narrow mesa ridges. This classic example of a plunging anticline is visited by several university field schools each year.

THE TRAILS

Within this unique geological landscape are 15 miles of bike trails designed for both beginning and expert riders. The trails consist of two concentric loops. The west leg of the inner loop (the Dragon's Back) and the east leg of the outer loop offer a thrilling ride on the high, narrow gypsum mesa ridges of the Tierra Amarilla Anticline. Both hikers and riders are rewarded with incredible 360-degree views of the New Mexico landscape from atop the gypsum trails. The less extreme (but still challenging) east leg of the inner loop traverses a central valley composed of red-brown Triassic period rocks and a surrounding rimrock composed of gray-white Jurassic period gypsum. The western leg of the outer loop crosses rolling alluvial fill, skirting tilted beds of sandstone and mudstone.



Photo by Matt Turgeon

The trail system is labeled with numbered "Junction" signs. For more experienced riders, there are several segments of narrow trails with steep drop-offs and numerous obstacles that provide challenges. In particular, the following segments require advanced riding skills and endurance:

- Junction 3 to Junction 4 to Junction 6 (known as the "Dragons Back")

- Junction 4 to Junction 6 (the portion of the Dragon's Back called "Hike a Bike")

- Trailhead at Cabezon Road to Junction 17

The remaining trail segments can be enjoyed by relatively inexperienced riders. While characterized by easier terrain than the trails listed above, these trails still provide a scenic and challenging ride. Equestrian use is allowed only along Junction 24 to Junction 6 because this segment does not cross the gypsum. Unlike the tracks made by mountain bikes and hikers, horses' hooves break down the gypsum, thereby increasing erosion.



Photo by Matt Turgeon

The FooMTB (Friends of Otero Mountain Biking), a local Albuquerque bike club, has adopted the White Ridge Bike Trails Area and is responsible for the signing and much of the trail work in the area. All work is completed and monitored under a volunteer agreement with the BLM.

OF OTHER INTEREST

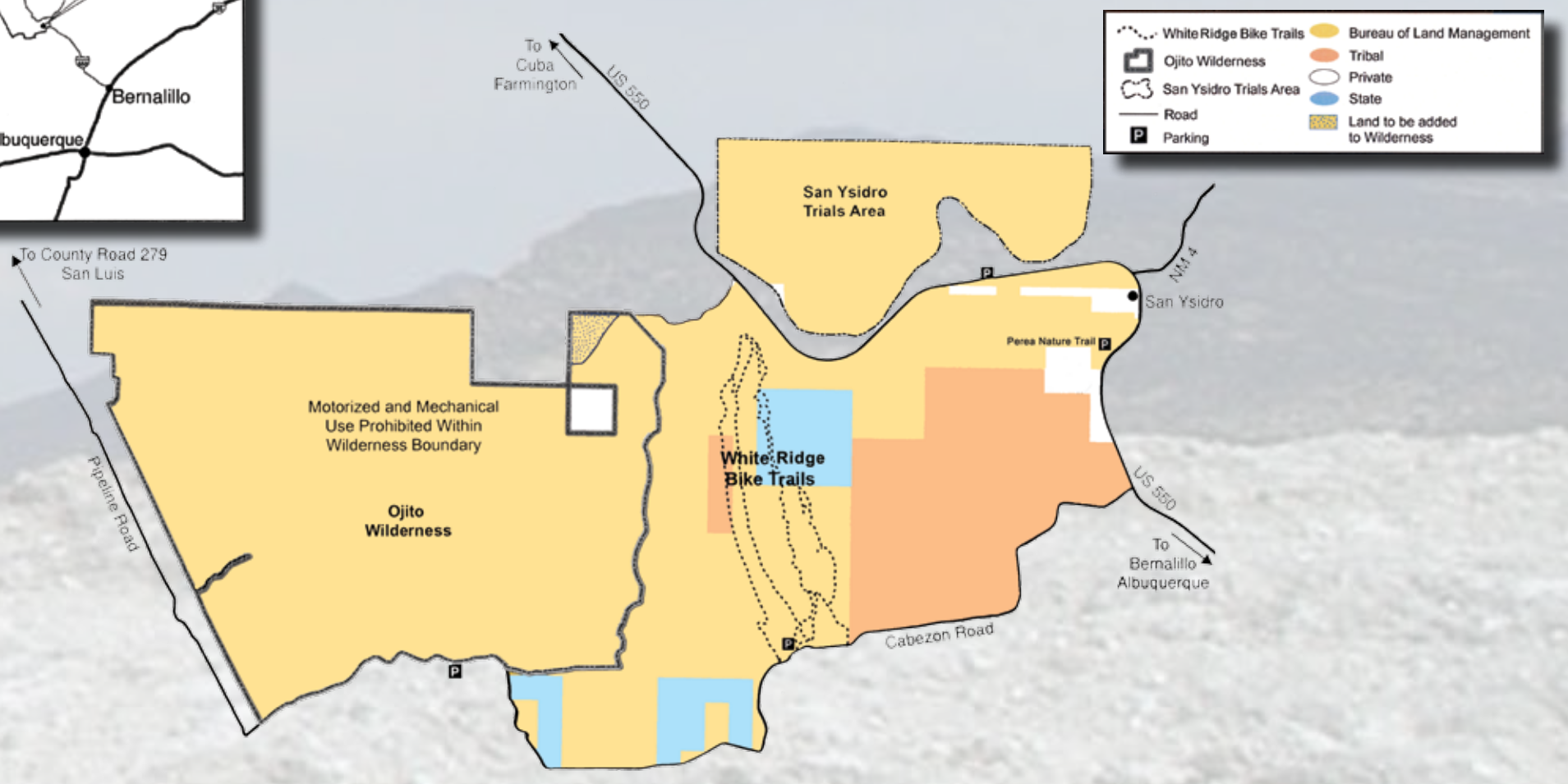
Fossil remains of rare dinosaurs, plants, and trees from the Jurassic period are located in the Morrison Formation. Natural erosion processes have exposed the bones of huge dinosaurs and large segments of petrified trees. These fossils are approximately 150 million years old! The longest dinosaur ever recovered, Seismosaurus, was discovered only a few miles west of the bike trails area in what is now the Ojito Wilderness. Paleontologists and geologists use this great variety of life to construct geologic timelines and interpret climate changes over the earth's history. **Please leave these objects in place.**



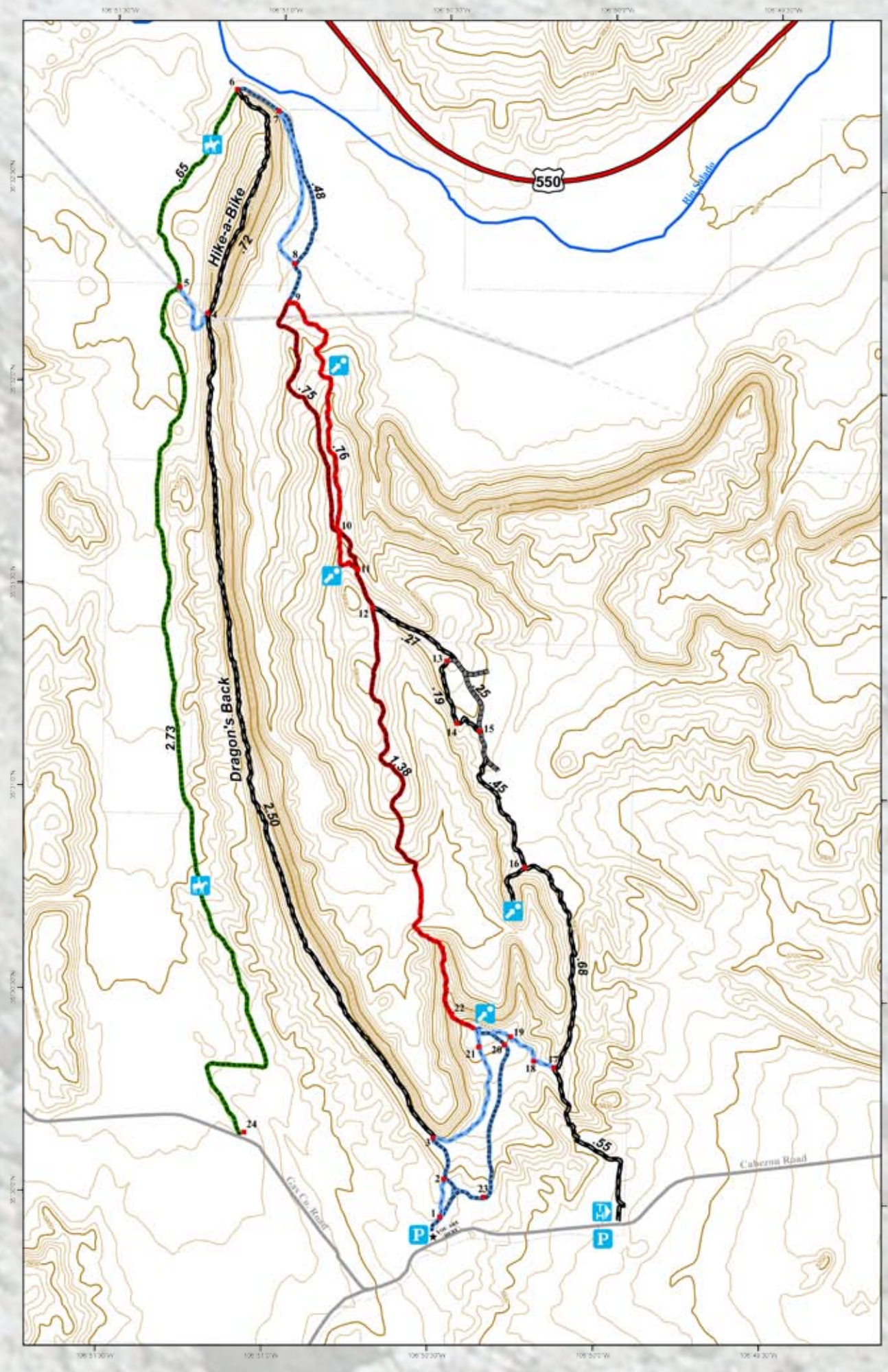
Photo by Chris Pyle

Cover photo by Matt Turgeon





White Ridge Bike Trail Area



Produced by the Bureau of Land Management

All trails are for mountain bikes and hikers.
Equestrians may use double track trail from marker post 24 to 6.

Trails cross ownership boundaries; please respect the land, stay on designated trails, and enjoy your visit.

Immediate Emergency - 911
BLM Rio Puerco Law Enforcement - 505-761-8700
BLM 24-hour Santa Fe Law Enforcement - 505-827-9377

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83) Projection UTM Zone 13N

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Leave No Trace: Plan ahead and prepare - Travel and camp on durable surfaces - Dispose of waste properly - Leave what you find - Minimize campfire impacts - Respect wildlife - Be considerate of other visitors.