



# White Ridge Bike Trails

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management



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BLM/NM/G-06-10-1220



Photos by Chris Pyle

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

## 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 three 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.
- **Protect yourself.** Always travel with a friend and don't drink untreated water.

- **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 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.

## 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

Photo by Matt Turgeon



cross the gypsum. Unlike the tracks made by mountain bikes and hikers, horses' hooves break down the gypsum, thereby increasing erosion.

### 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.**

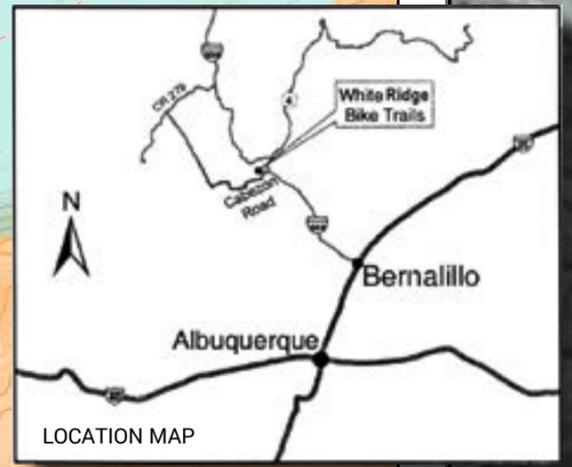
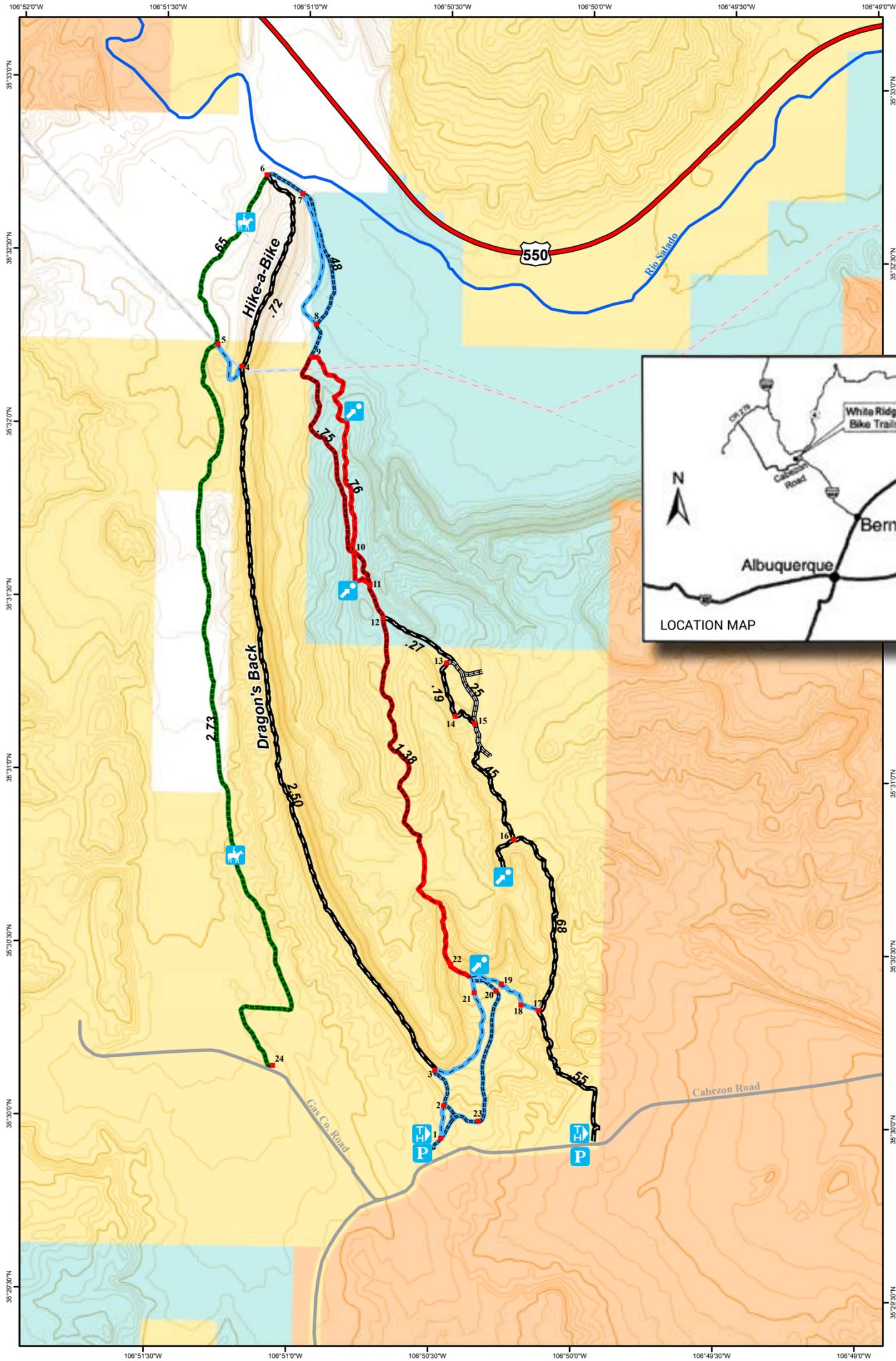
Photo by Chris Pyle



Cover photo by Matt Turgeon



# White Ridge Bike Trails Area



	Marker Posts		Beginner, Double Track
	Parking		Moderate, Single Track
	Trailhead		Moderate, Double Track
	Vista or Unique Geology		Difficult, Single Track
	Equestrian Trail		Difficult, Double Track
	Power Line		Severe, Single Track
	Underground Pipeline		Severe, Double Track
	BLM		
	Private		
	State		
	Tribal		

1:16,439  
 0 0.275 0.55 1.1 Kilometer  
 0 0.3 0.6 Mile

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.**

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

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