

Self Guided Driving Tours

Self Guided Driving / Hiking Tour - Route #1 Off Hwy 260

Turn north off US Highway 260 at Apache Road #4128. (Look for the sign for “Refuse Transfer Station”). The road curves to the left. Turn left at the first dirt road at .3 miles, and follow this into the volcanic field. At 1.3 miles you will see a footpath (Foot access only) on the left that will lead you to the top of a volcanic hill for some stunning views. Looking west you can see Mt. Baldy, one of the highest mountains in Arizona (over 11,000 feet) and Green’s Peak, both formed by volcanoes. Continuing on this road .6 miles you will come to the Grasslands Wilderness Area. Here you can enjoy a moderate 2 1/2 mile hike through volcanic grasslands.

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Self Guided Driving/ Hiking Tour—Route #3 Off Hwy 180/191

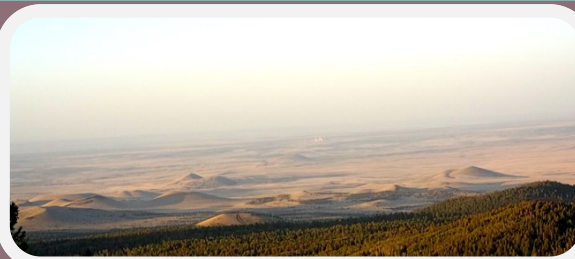
From the junction of U.S. Routes 60 & 180 travel north approximately 6 miles and stop at Hall Ranch Road. The flow here is one of several flows erupted from the “Twin Knolls” vent complex one mile to the west, the youngest of the flows of the Springerville Field. This double volcano erupted twice, about 700,000 years ago. A small lava flow erupted from the southern of the two overlapping cones and spread out at its base about 300,000 years ago. Follow the dirt road, stopping before you get to the no-trespassing sign where you may

Map to Springerville Volcanic Fields



Self Guided Driving Tour—Route #2 Off Hwy 260

Turn north off US Highway 260 at Forest Road 117 and follow a dirt road 4 miles. Keep an eye out for skid marks that show on the sides of some volcanic hills—created from pioneer’s harrowing experiences skidding logs off timbered and sometimes icy slopes. Turn right on Road 61, drive 1 mile to the Green’s Peak road turnoff. The road to the top may be rough, but it is possible to (carefully) follow the road to the top of the peak which is an elevation of about 10,000 ft. There is a fire tower lookout and restrooms at the top. Green’s Peak is a relatively young cinder cone, and the topographic high point of the Springerville Field. It provides a great view of the center of the highest concentration of vents, and the size of the volcanic field. The Green’s Peak flow contains one of the few lava tubes in the field, it’s opening identified by Harris Cave. Younger flows can be seen to the northeast. Surrounding the central concentration of vents, older sheet-like flows extend as much as 20 miles east, their source vents probably lie buried under the stack of younger flows. logs off its timbered and sometimes icy slopes.



Springerville Volcanic Field

The Springerville Volcanic Field has fired the imaginations of visitors and inhabitants of the White Mountain area since prehistoric times.

Extinct volcanic cinder cones surround Round Valley, and the remains of lava flows can still be seen today, creating interesting shapes and rivers of rock and lava rock structures. The impressive Casa Malpais Archeological Site was built by early inhabitants over basalt fissures from part of the Coyote Hills lava flow. Ancient rock art pecked into this hard stone is a reminder to us that there were many who explored this land before us, and they are still revered as sacred by some clans of modern day Pueblo tribes. The basalt (lava) rock ranges were called “Malpais” by early Spanish settlers, which means “bad feet” or “bad lands,” a reference to the rough abrasive quality of the rock which wore on the feet and crippled man and beast. Still, practical settlers laboriously built homes and miles of rock fence from the lava. In more recent times, the volcanoes have provided an abundant supply of cinders for paving area highways.



Springerville Volcanic Field

The Springerville Volcanic Field is the third largest young volcanic field in the continental United States, surpassed only by the San Francisco Field near Flagstaff, Arizona and the Medicine Lake Field in California. The SVF is one of a series of relatively young volcanic fields that rim the geographic area called the “Colorado Plateau” that covers NE Arizona, NW New Mexico, SW Colorado and SE Utah. The Colorado Plateau is a unique area of high elevation plains. One of the few other places on earth that is similar is the Tibetan Plateau.



When first erupted from a volcano vent, lava is a liquid at temperatures from 1,300 °F to 2,200 °F and flows like water. When it has stopped moving, lava solidifies to form igneous rock which is very hard and heavy.



Twin Knolls Cinder Cone

The Springerville Field is the late Pliocene to Pleistocene age. The earliest eruption was about three million years ago. The youngest flows are from the Twin Knolls northwest of Springerville. This field is noted for both its size and volume and for its “classic cinder cone field morphology”.



Mt. Baldy

The whole area south of Greer is called the White Mountain Volcanic Field. It is the result of a different type of volcanism. In the center of this field is Mount Baldy, sacred to the Apache people. It is a complex volcano with a lofty elevation of 11,403 feet, about ten times larger than Mt. St. Helens.

Mount Baldy erupted about eight million years ago and continued to erupt for a period of about 1/2 million years. Since then, Mt. Baldy has been eroded by rain, wind and mountain glaciers, and the profile you see today is primarily due to this erosion.