



THE VIEWS FROM THE NATURAL ARCH ARE SPECTACULAR

The Mitchell Trail offers access to some of Los Alamos' most popular trail destinations. Hikers can choose an easy trip up Rendija Canyon, the challenging climb to the Natural Arch, or the daylong excursion along the spectacular Guaje Ridge. Although the trailhead is located on county open space, most of the trails accessed from this point are on the Santa Fe National Forest. Common rules and recommendations for both the county and the Forest Service are found on the back of this brochure.

FINDING THE MITCHELL TRAILHEAD

From 15th Street and Central Avenue in downtown Los Alamos, head west (towards the Jemez Mountains) on Central. In 0.8 miles, past Ashley Pond and the Aquatic Center, turn right onto Diamond Drive. Pass the Los Alamos High School and in a half mile, the road swings to the east. Continue 0.1 mile past the traffic signal at the Diamond/Arkansas/38th Street intersection, turn left onto 35th Street. Climb to a T-intersection and turn left onto Arizona Avenue. The trailhead is about 0.5 miles west on Arizona, with a parking area for two vehicles and additional parking along the street.



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

A 58-mile network of trails links the foothills, canyons, and mesas in and around Los Alamos. Hikers, runners, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and other trail users delight in the variety of trails from which to choose. The trails offer a quick escape from the hectic pace in town; a route to commute to work, an easy stroll or a physical challenge, the chance to observe wildlife, or simply soaking in the impressive views. The County Trail Network connects over 100 miles of trails on the surrounding Santa Fe National Forest and the adjacent Valles Caldera National Preserve.



ROCK CLIMBERS ENJOY A CRAG CLOSE TO THE TRAILHEAD



GAMBEL OAK RECOVERED WELL, AFTER THE CERRO GRANDE FIRE



RED TAILED HAWK



THE VIEW OF UPPER GUAJE CANYON FROM THE GUAJE RIDGE TRAIL



PLAQUE DETAILING THE ORIGINS OF THE MITCHELL TRAIL AT THE GUAJE SADDLE

USING LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

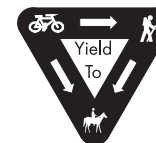
The Los Alamos County Trail Network is open to non-motorized use only.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

All cultural resources such as Ancestral Pueblo room blocks, pot shards, petroglyphs, and historical artifacts are protected by Federal and State law. Let all cultural resources lie undisturbed.

SHARE THE TRAIL

These are multi-use trails for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. Bicyclists should yield to all other users.



DOGS IN LOS ALAMOS COUNTY OPEN SPACE

All dogs must be on a leash when within 100 yards of a trailhead. Dogs must be under voice and sight control at all times.

SAFETY

When exploring, please stay on marked trails. Always carry water, sunscreen, a hat, extra clothing, a flashlight, and a navigational aid.

Trailhead guides are available at major trailheads, the Los Alamos County Customer Care Center in the Municipal Building, the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and online.

For more information, visit www.losalamosnm.us, then follow the links to Open Space and Trails.



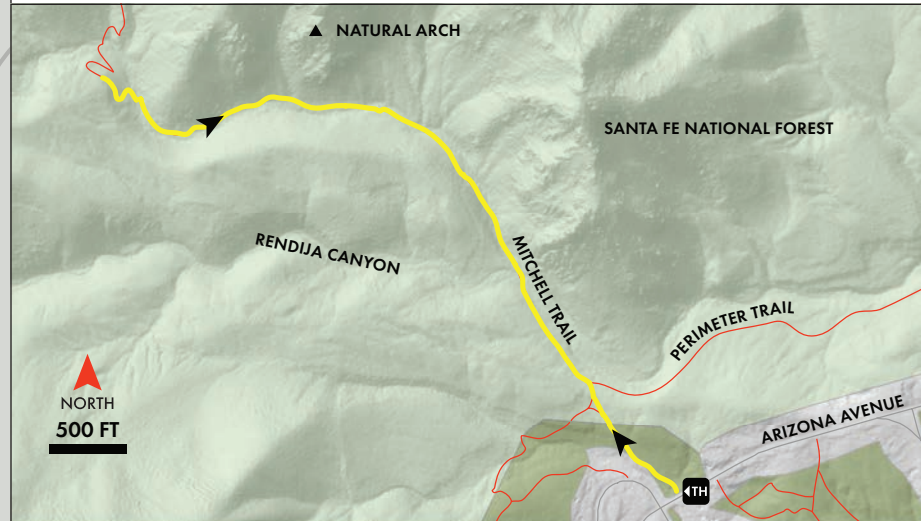
MITCHELL TRAIL ●



LENGTH: 2.4 MILES	ELEVATION GAIN: 400 FEET
FITNESS LEVEL: EASY	FEATURES: WILDFIRE RECOVERY, VIEWS
TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT, ROCK	FIELD NOTES: RECOMMENDED FOOT TRAFFIC ONLY

The Mitchell Trail, resident David Mitchell's Eagle Scout project in 1974, connects Los Alamos with Guaje Canyon. The trail ascends 1,500 feet in 2.4 miles to reach the top of Guaje Ridge, but there is an easier journey of the same distance that doesn't require making the entire climb to Guaje Ridge. The trail ascends Rendija Canyon through the Cerro Grande burn scar where vegetative recovery is healing the landscape. The return leg climbs then descends along a low ridge with 360-degree views. The trip makes a nice winter hike or a perfect after dinner stroll.

Starting from the trailhead, travel up hill along the Mitchell Trail. Meet the Perimeter Trail coming in from the left, go over a low ridge, and continue straight when the Perimeter Trail heads to the right. Skirt below a water tank and make a crossing of a dry stream channel. From here, it is a mile-long ascent, climb several switchbacks to reach the ridgetop. Return to the trailhead by the same route.



THE LOWER SECTION OF MITCHELL TRAIL AT SUNRISE



LOOKING EAST TO THE SANGRE DE CRISTOS FROM GUAJE RIDGE



LOOKING WEST INTO THE UPPER REACHES OF GUAJE CANYON FROM GUAJE RIDGE

THINK SAFETY: Keep your high desert hike safe & enjoyable! Stay on marked trails, know your limitations and your route. Avoid hiking in the heat of the day, drink plenty of water, use sunscreen, bring snacks, wear a hat and appropriate footwear. Remember that cell phone coverage may not be available for navigation or summoning help—consider other options and carry a map.

GUAJE RIDGE/PERIMETER LOOP ◆



LENGTH: 10.5 MILES	ELEVATION GAIN: 1,800 FEET
FITNESS LEVEL: DIFFICULT	FEATURES: 360 DEGREE VIEWS
TRAIL SURFACE: PACKED DIRT	FIELD NOTES: RECOMMENDED FOOT TRAFFIC ONLY

Guaje Ridge dominates the northern skyline of Los Alamos. Combined with the Perimeter and other trails, the ridge offers one of the premier trips in the area, a long but rewarding loop through the Cerro Grande burn scar. The loop uses the Mitchell Trail to gain 1,500 feet in the first 2.5 miles, and then gradually loses that elevation along 3.5 miles of Guaje Ridge. Almost the entire route is in the Cerro Grande burn scar, and some of it was reburned by the Las Conchas fire.

Head up the Mitchell Trail. The first section is a gentle climb along a low ridge. In one mile the trail crosses Rendija Canyon and ascends steeply to the first saddle. The climb isn't over here, as Guaje Ridge, hidden until now, is still ahead. Gain another 400 feet over the next half-mile to reach the ridge. Near a plaque honoring trail builder David Mitchell, turn right onto the Guaje Ridge Trail. Most of the next three miles offer stunning views in all directions.

Reach the Upper Guaje Road (Forest Trail 802) about 6 miles from the start. Turn left and head down the steep road for a quarter mile. At a small saddle, turn right onto the unmarked Cabra Loop Trail. Wind over mesas and through canyons to meet the Rendija Trail in the bottom of Rendija Canyon. Bear right and in a few minutes continue straight to head through the Rendija Crack. On the west side of the crack, stay in the canyon bottom. In a tenth mile, bear left out of the canyon bottom and reach Forest Trail 802. Turn left onto the road and then pick up the Perimeter Trail on the right. Follow this trail 2 miles to the Mitchell Trail, and turn left to return to the trailhead.

