



A guzzler trick tank sits close to the Arizona Trail along the rim of Walnut Canyon.

Photos Courtesy/Rob Jones

Skirting the rim

The Arizona Trail segment above Walnut Canyon is scenic and easy.

ROB JONES

Special to the Daily Sun



IF YOU GO...

Skirting the rim

The Arizona Trail segment above Walnut Canyon is scenic and easy.

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Soaring turkey vultures and red-tailed hawks zoom past at eye level as we sit on smooth Kaibab limestone steps and

OUTDOORS

eat lunch overlooking the broad

triangle where Walnut Canyon constricts into a narrow notch. Below, we can see the transition from limestone to Coconino sandstone in the canyon walls, which forms more interesting cliffs.

There's a triangle of trail below too, where the Arizona Trail drops off the canyon rim and into Walnut Canyon, before heading south, below Vista Point, toward Mexico.

This 13-mile (round-trip) section is a portion of the Arizona Trail Walnut Canyon Passage No. 31, which is



Kathleen Jones at Fisher Point along the Arizona Trail above Walnut Canyon.

described by the Arizona Trail Association as the 18.5-mile segment from I-40 to Marshall Lake. Our segment is the 13-mile link from the Old

Walnut Canyon Road to Fisher Point and back.

From the trailhead, hike south then west on this section of the 800-mile-long Arizona

IF YOU GO...

Drive to the Walnut Canyon exit from I-40, exit 204, turn south toward Walnut Canyon National Monument. Drive 2.4 miles, then turn right onto dirt road FR303 (marked for the Arizona Trail), the Old Walnut Canyon Road, and drive 1.7 miles to the Arizona Trail trailhead on the left (south). From downtown Flagstaff, it's about 12 miles to the trailhead. For a map of the trip, visit: <http://www.trimbleoutdoors.com/ViewTrip/2760912>

Trail, which transects the state from Mexico to Utah. This hike sports good diversity, as it rolls from the trailhead past a game water collector and through a Walnut Canyon tributary.

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The water collector is a guzzler — technically, a guzzler trick tank — where sheets of corrugated metal roofing collect water into a cement holding tank for use by the local birds, animals and insects. There's a second guzzler toward Fisher Point. Both guzzlers are on the right side of and about 150 feet off the trail as you travel to Fisher Point.

Along the rim of Walnut Canyon, you hike through ponderosa forests and small parks, and mixed oak, pinyon and juniper woodlands. Agave and cactus punctuate the woodlands — and you, too, if you sit down



Kathleen Jones along the Arizona Trail above Walnut Canyon.

Courtesy/Rob Jones

without looking.

You pass two short side trails to canyon vistas while you lilt along, feeling that the canyon is just over the bump to your left. You hike along the edge of Walnut Canyon

during the last portion of your jaunt to the sweeping vista at Fisher Point.

After enjoying the view, return to the trailhead. You will accumulate about a thousand feet of elevation gain (and loss) on

this hike.

SIDE NOTES

— Wait two days after soaking rains to hike this trail — the gumbo mud will make passage difficult before then. Varying from about 6,500 to just over 7,000 feet, this is generally not a good winter hike because of snow and ice.

— If you stage a car at Canyon Vista Campground, or arrange a key exchange with friends, you can walk this hike one direction, dropping into the mouth of Walnut Canyon from Fisher Point, then hiking out to Canyon Vista Campground and the trailhead via the Sandys Canyon Trail. Total Distance, one-way, is about 9 miles.

Rob Jones is a Flagstaff-based outdoors writer. Read his trip reports at <http://wildernessvagabond.com/>