



AS VIEWED from the East Saddle of the Hangover Trail, Midgley Bridge is dwarfed by the Wilson Mountain ridge. (Photos by Rob Jones)

# A delightful Hangover

The new Hangover Trail in Sedona slithers along sandstone contours high above Midgley Bridge.

By **ROB JONES**

Special to the Daily Sun

**T**he Hangover Trail — so named for the overhanging rock that shelters part of this route from the sun — is a delight.

It involves traipsing through the

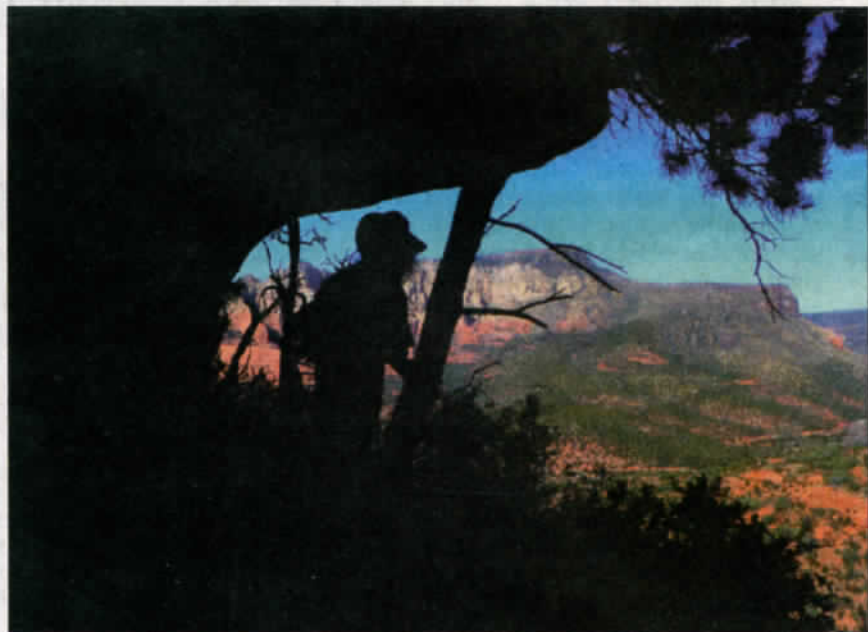
## Outdoors

broad saddle of salmon-colored sandstone,

passing from the Schnebly Hill vistas into a panorama of Oak Creek, ranging from Chimney Rock to Wilson Mountain. It's a place to lounge and eat lunch while enjoying the scene south and north, between towering sandstone buttresses.

This is an 8.6-mile loop visiting the Munds Wagon Trail and the Cow Pies. Counting all the ups and downs, there is 1,400 feet of cumulative elevation gain (and 1,400 feet of loss, imagine that) on the Hangover.

This hike has some of the most spectacular views in the Redrock Ranger District. It's also an intimate hike. Intimate because you hike under concave, overhanging sandstone high above Oak Creek Canyon, watching the ant-like visitors near Midgley Bridge after con-



A HIKER IS in deep shadows along the Hangover Trail.

the Cow Pies and Bear Wallow Canyon.

### HIKE COUNTER-CLOCKWISE

Don't hike this route when there is ice on the north side, the hangover part. The north-side trail from the saddle above the Cow Pies west to the east saddle is in the shade much of the winter. You can tell some about

taking a look at the route from near Midgley Bridge on Highway 89A.

The suggested direction of travel is counter-clockwise. In addition to fewer conflicts with other users, this direction lowers interruptions from the Pink Jeep bunch because in the morning they are less frequent on Schnebly Hill Road.

ARIZONA DAILY SUN

# OUTDOORS

from Page B1

The trail is narrow, allowing only one bike width along the traverse of the Hangover — the reason for the suggested direction of travel. I suggest you hike this route on a weekday because of its narrow nature.

Jennifer Burns, Red Rock District Recreation staff officer, reported that the Hangover Trail is now an official trail and that more signs will be appearing. She noted that hikers should observe "leave no trace" hiking etiquette, bring adequate equipment, be prepared for the intermediate nature of this hike and stay on the route, not cutting switchbacks because of the fragile nature of the soils.

The Verde Valley Cyclists Coalition and Friends of the Forest Sedona have contributed greatly to bringing this route up to standard and for signing it through the Forest Service Adopt A Trail program. Mountain bikers are strongly advised to check with local shops before attempting this ride. It is rated double black diamond — next to most-difficult of trail riding.

## WHITE PAINT HEXAGONS

Start this hike at the Huckaby-Munds Wagon Trail Trailhead on Schnebly Hill Road. Hike up the Munds Wagon Trail about 2.8 miles to a marked junction to Schnebly Hill Road). Turn left, cross the road for the fourth time and walk the Cow Pies route to its end abutting prominent Mitten Ridge.

You will begin to encounter white paint hexagons (representing bi-

directional arrows) marking the route across the slickrock as you traverse the Cow Pies. Modeled after the route markers in the Moab District, these marks will help guide you as you hang out on the Hangover. The Forest Service is experimenting with these markers on difficult-to-sign trails and routes.

At the north end of the Cow Pies (mile 3.4), the route turns left (west) and contours at the base of The Mittens to the large saddle separating the Bear Wallow and Oak Creek drainages. Stay on the white hexagon route as it sweeps past the saddle, then switchbacks up the slickrock to the opening (mile 4.5). There are a few 5-foot vertical friction walks on slickrock along this section, and again on the nose above the west saddle.

At the east saddle, drop off to the north (Oak Creek) side of the saddle, walking a short distance east, and watch carefully for a track heading back west just below the large buttress forming the east side of the saddle. This track drops you down into the bowl directly below the saddle, and about 40 feet below the saddle.

Cross this bowl, now heading west, to hang out on the Hangover. (Do not continue to the east, the route in this area is being removed to protect the Casner Research Natural Area, which hosts special stands of Arizona cypress.) This well-engineered route to the west traverses a ledge notched into the sandstone. Be aware of other users because it's a narrow trail and it slithers along the sandstone contours — so your view forward and back is often

## IF YOU GO ...

### HANGOVER TRAIL

Take Schnebly Hill Road at the Highway 179 roundabout on the east side of Oak Creek and continue 0.9 miles to the Huckaby/Marg's Draw trailhead (paved ends). Redrock Pass required. Follow the hiking directions in the main story.

To participate in the adopt a trail program, contact the Red Rock Ranger District at (928) 203-2900.

limited. Enjoy.

### PROBOSCIS ARCH

After approximately a mile of hanging out on the Hangover, you pop out above the west saddle, following the white hexagons as they route you to the north, and down the nose of the slickrock and back south above the saddle, to the saddle proper, where you are now 5.9 miles from the trailhead. Look up to the ridge fin, where you can see Proboscis Arch, one of five arches along this fin.

The exit trail begins at the low point on the south rim (Schnebly Hill side) of this west saddle and then hugs the terrain back to the Munds Wagon Trail, reaching this main trail at 6.9 miles on your trek.

Turn right (west) and follow the Munds Wagon Trail for 1.7 miles back to the trailhead (cumulative distance of 8.6 miles). Congratulations, you've hung out on the Hangover.

Rob Jones is Flagstaff-based outdoors writer. Visit his website at <http://wildernessvagabond.com/>

To see a map of this route, with important waypoints, visit: <http://www.trimbleoutdoors.com/ViewTrip/2094089>