

# Pine Trail Run 50K

## Detailed Course Description

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### Introduction

Welcome to the Pine Trail Run 50K! This race, along with 10-mile and 5K runs, is produced by volunteers from Pine Strawberry Fuel Reduction, Inc. (PSFR), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to help thin the forest surrounding our communities to make them defensible against wildfire. The "trails in the fuel break" that you will be running on in the Pine Trail Run races were partially built by and are maintained by a PSFR volunteer trail work crew as part of the effort to protect our forest and towns.

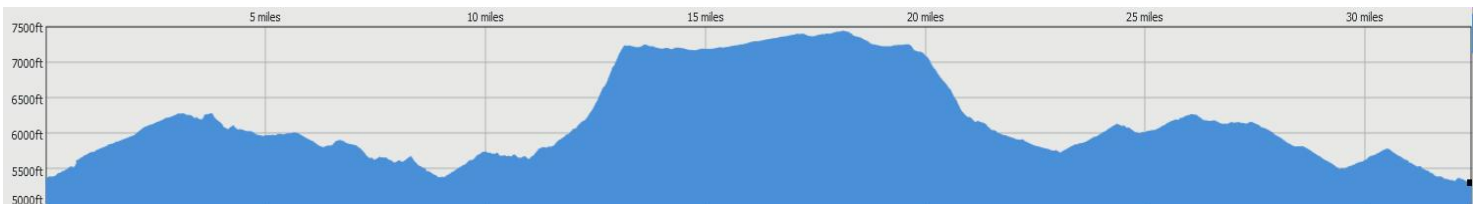
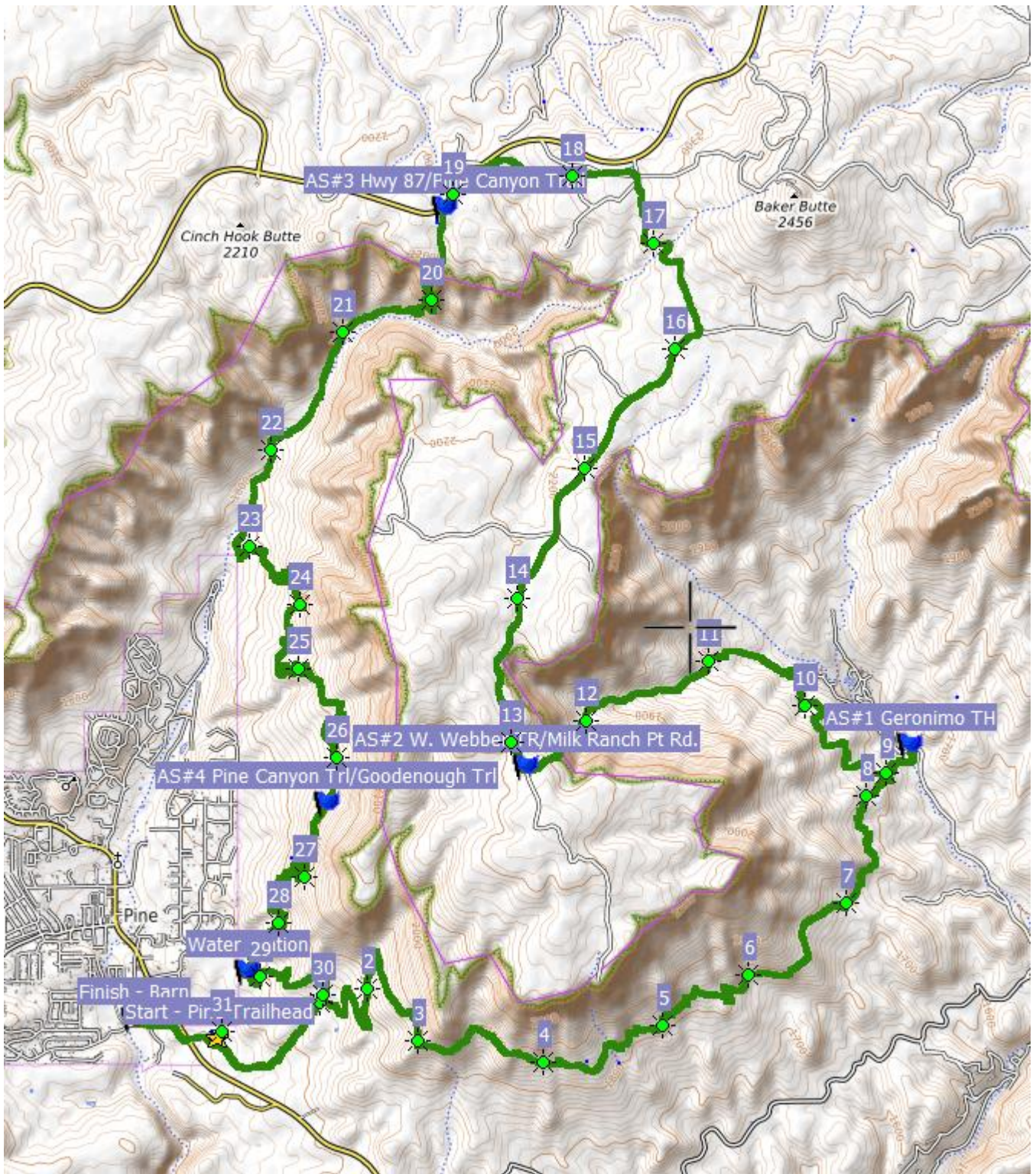
The Pine Trail Run 50K course is actually about 52.1K, is a "lollipop loop" consisting of 1.0 mile outbound from the Start at the Pine Trailhead, then around a 30.4-mile loop, and then back through the Pine Trailhead to the PSFR barn in Pine. The course has approximately 6,750 feet of elevation gain, and 6800 feet of descent. Elevations range from 5,320 feet above sea level at the Finish, to 7,450 feet at the highest point on the course at about 17.6 miles. The course lies mostly in the Tonto and Coconino National Forests.

A map of the Pine-Strawberry area including the 50K course, and an elevation profile of the 50K, are shown on the next page. The map shows the roads that go to Aid Stations #1 and #3, where runners' crews may meet their runners during the race.

This will be a challenging course, with many miles of remote, rugged, rocky, and technical single-track trail that include a steep ascent and descent of the Mogollon Rim, with trail gradients up to about 1,500 feet per mile.

In the days before the race, **the course will be marked using yellow ribbons and yellow marker-flags.** We will place marker ribbons or flags approximately every 0.1 mile along the course, with more frequent markers at junctions. We will place **blue-and-white striped ribbon on adjacent trails that are NOT part of the course.** However, despite our best efforts to thoroughly mark the course, sometimes markers get moved or removed by wind, animals, or people before the race is completed. It is the runner's responsibility to follow the correct course, even if markers are not all in place during the race, so please familiarize yourself with the course description before the race, and carry a course map and description during the race.

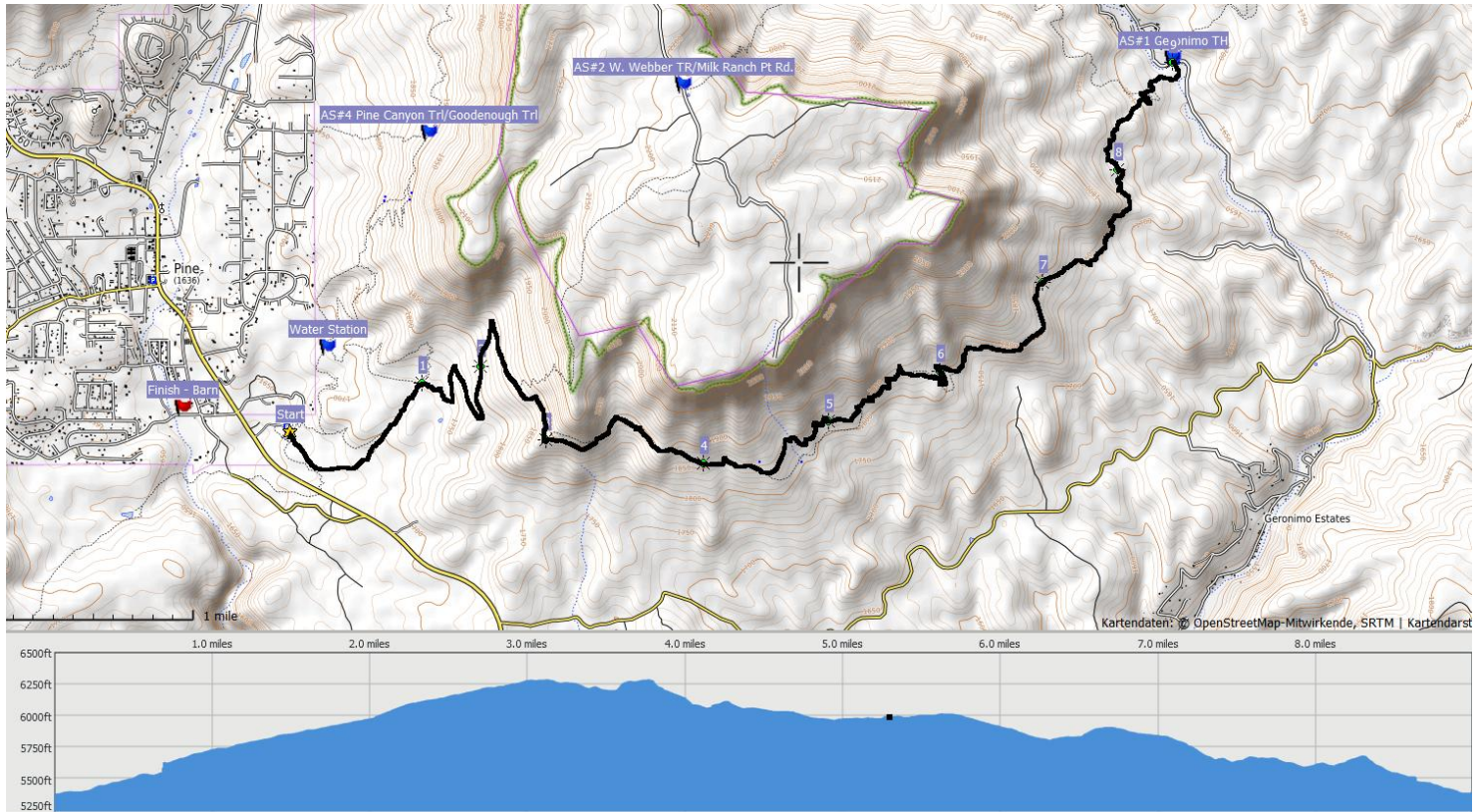
After the map on the next page, the following five sections of this document give distances, approximate elevation changes, maps, elevation profiles, photographs, and detailed descriptions of each of the five segments of the course, from the start at the Pine Trailhead, around the course to each of the four Aid Stations in order, and to the finish at the Pine Strawberry Fuel Reduction barn. In addition to this detailed course description, we also have a one-page summary of the course in tabular format, that is available for downloading from our website. Runners are advised to carefully read the full-length description, and to carry the one-page course summary and course map (also downloadable from our website) during the race. A one-page course map will be available at the registration/check-in desk.



50K Course with Elevation Profile

## Segment 1: Start at Pine Trailhead to Aid Station #1 at Geronimo Trailhead

Segment distance: 9.0 miles; Elevation gain: 1,463 ft; Descent: 1,440 ft; Total distance at Aid Station #1: 9.0 mi.



Pine Trailhead to Geronimo Trailhead

From the Pine trailhead, the course starts near the parking area and goes eastward on the Highline trail, which is Trail #31. The Highline trail is a National Recreation Trail which is about 57 miles long. The Pine Trailhead is the western terminus of the Highline trail. The part of the Highline trail that you will be on is also a part of the 800-mile-long Arizona National Scenic Trail, which crosses the entire State of Arizona from Mexico to Utah.

Leaving the starting area, you will quickly be in the Old Highline. The trail goes gradually uphill, joining the newer Highline at 0.7 mile from the Start. Continue straight on Trail #31. At 1.0 mile from the Start, you come to a four-way junction with the Pineview and Lower Pineview trails. Turn sharply right at the wooden trail sign, staying on the Highline/Arizona Trail #31. At this sign, you can see a metallic diamond-shaped marker nailed to a tree on the Highline trail just after the right turn. These markers are characteristic markers for the Highline trail; you will probably see many of them along the Highline trail between the Pine and Geronimo trailheads. You may also see some Arizona Trail markers, which are small emblems shaped like the State of Arizona.

You will pass through this same trail junction again, going in a different direction, when you are 1.6 miles from the Finish.



**Junction of Highline/Arizona Trail #31 and Pineview Trail #28, at miles 1.0 and 30.8 in the 50K.  
At 1 mile into the race you will turn right and cross the creek bed.**

After this junction, Trail #31 immediately drops steeply down into a rocky wash and up the other side. The trail then climbs steadily and has several switchbacks. At about 2.5 miles from the Start, you pass the junction with the Donahue trail, which goes to the left and goes steeply up the Rim. Do not go that way! Stay on Trail #31, which continues climbing for about another 0.5 miles until it tops out at an elevation of about 6,300 feet, after nearly 1,000 feet of climb since the Start. There are nice views looking off to the south (right) from this high part of the Highline trail.

When you have gone about 4.3 miles from the Start, you will pass by Red Rock Spring where, off to the right of the trail, there is a concrete trough which may have some water in it. Shortly after the water trough, you come to the junction with Red Rock Springs trail #294. Be sure to bear slightly left at this junction, staying on the Highline/Arizona trail #31. After this junction, Trail #31 meanders northeasterly for the next four miles while gradually dropping in elevation, with frequent dips steeply down into small canyons and climbs up the other side.



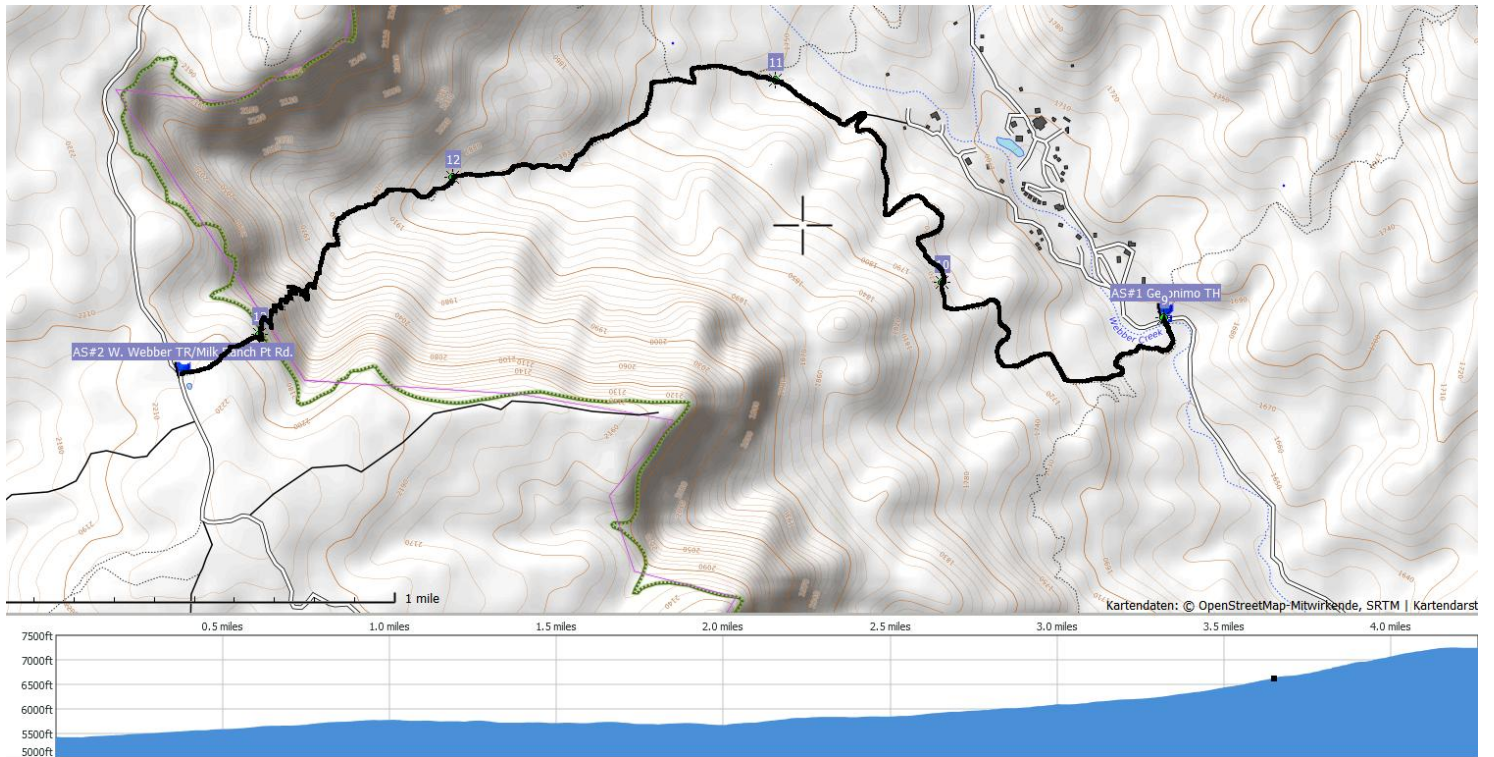
**The water trough near Red Rock Spring, along the Highline Trail at about mile 4.2 in the 50K.**

About 4.4 miles after the Red Rock Springs trail junction (8.6 miles from the Start), you will come to the Geronimo trail #240 junction. Descend the short hill and follow the yellow flags to the right another 0.4 miles to Aid Station #1 at mile 9.0 from the Start. You will cross Webber Creek on some rocks just before climbing a short embankment from the creek up to a dirt road where the Aid Station is located.

Be sure to have your bib number recorded both when you arrive at the Aid Station and when you depart, at this and every Aid Station. Race volunteers will record your times into and out of each Aid Station so that we can track each runner's progress, and to help with search for lost runners if needed.

## Segment 2: Aid Station #1 at Geronimo Trailhead to Aid Station #2 at W. Webber Trail/Milk Ranch Point Road

Segment distance: 4.3 miles; Elevation gain: 2,064 ft; Descent: 246 ft; Total distance at Aid Station #2: 13.3 mi.



Geronimo Trailhead to Milk Ranch Point Rd.

Leave the Geronimo trailhead on Trail #31, going back across Webber Creek the way you came into this aid station on Trail #31. Go for 0.3 miles from the Geronimo trailhead, and keep right onto the Geronimo trail #240. The Geronimo trail is mostly an old dirt road, now closed to motorized vehicles. It meanders northwesterly while skirting around the west side of Camp Geronimo, a Boy Scout camping site on private property.



Geronimo Trail #240, at approximately mile 10 in the 50K.

You will follow the Geronimo trail for 2.0 miles. Approximately 1.75 miles after leaving Aid Station #1, the Geronimo trail takes a sharp left turn at a wooden sign. Be sure to not turn right at this junction. The road to the right enters private property at a closed gate only about 100 feet from this junction. Turn left and continue westward on the Geronimo trail. Within about another 0.3 miles, (just after 2.0 miles from Aid Station #1) the Geronimo trail turns right at a sign pointing to the East Webber trail; do not go that way! Continue straight ahead at this junction, which puts you onto the Turkey Springs trail #217. Continue westward for about another 0.25 mile to the junction of Turkey Springs trail #217 and West Webber trail #228. Turn left onto West Webber trail #228. This junction is about 2.3 miles after Aid Station #1.

The West Webber trail goes uphill, relatively gently at first but steeper as you go up the face of the Mogollon Rim. The trail winds through an old-growth forest of huge conifers. The forest here is greener and more moist than most of the surrounding area because it is on a northeast-facing slope high on the wall of the Rim. The West Webber trail is only about 2.0 miles long, but it climbs 1,400 feet in that distance; at its steepest it ascends at a 1,500 foot-per-mile slope (28% grade) for a short stretch. This is the most challenging climb on the 50K course. For many runners, this will be the steepest trail climb you have ever done! Take your time and enjoy the lush forest environment.

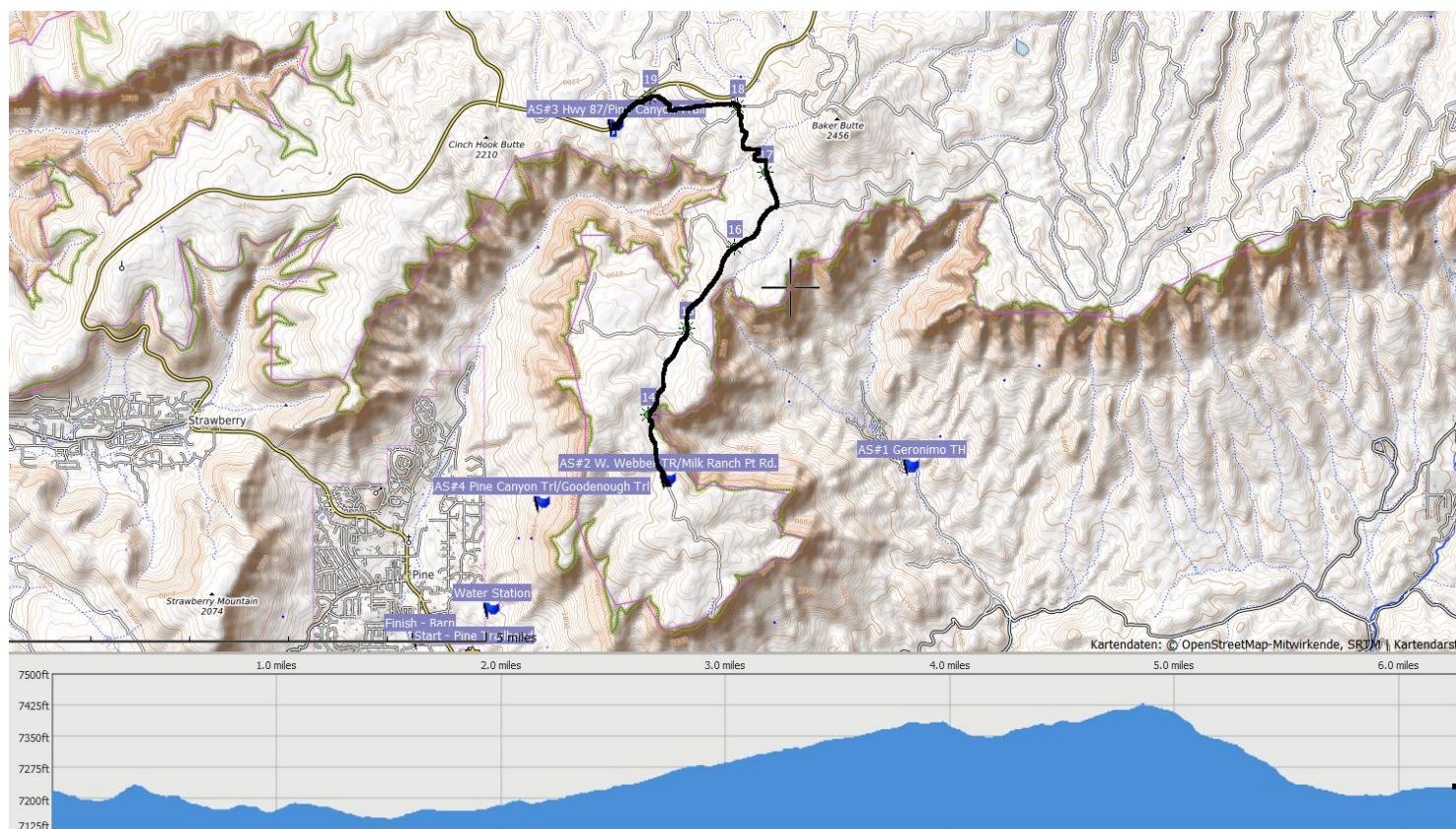


**West Webber Trail #228, at approximately mile 11 in the 50K.**

After about 1.7 miles on the West Webber trail, the climb becomes less steep as you reach the upper edge of the Rim, and continues gently uphill for about another 0.3 miles through a pine forest. After 4.3 miles from Aid Station #1, you will reach Aid Station 2 at Milk Ranch Point Road (FR #218), where the West Webber trail ends, at an elevation of 7,220 feet above sea level. This is a total of 13.3 miles after the start of the race.



**Segment 3: Aid Station #2 at W. Webber Trail/Milk Ranch Point Rd. to Aid Station #3 at the General Crook Trailhead.** Segment distance: 6.3 miles; Elevation gain: 460 ft; Descent: 450 ft; Total distance at Aid Station #3: 19.5 mi.



### W. Webber Trail/Milk Ranch Point Rd. to General Crook Trailhead

After checking out of Aid Station #2, turn right on Milk Ranch Point Road and follow it another 1.3 miles to aid station 2. This is a graded dirt road which usually has very little traffic, but there may be occasional vehicles including trucks, camper trailers, and ATVs. Please run on the left-hand side of the road, and be prepared to get off the roadbed if needed to allow vehicle traffic to pass. We do not allow runners' crews to drive on Milk Ranch Point in order to minimize traffic and dust. Between 0.6 and 0.9 miles after leaving the West Webber trail, the road passes very near to the edge of the Rim on the right. As you pass, you can get glimpses of distant views to the east (right) off the edge of the Rim.



### **FR #218 passes through Ponderosa pines**

About .4 miles past Aid Station #2, you pass an interesting feature in the big Dickenson Flat meadow, about 200 feet off the road on the left. There are white-painted rocks in the meadow which, when viewed from above from low-flying airplanes, spell out "PHX → 75" with an arrow of lined-up white rocks pointing toward the Phoenix airport, 75 miles away! This artifact is at least 60 years old and the rocks are periodically repainted and re-aligned by Boy Scouts. A Google satellite image is shown below. You will be running by on the road (red line) to the right of the meadow. If you are not in too big a hurry, you can go over to the meadow to see the rocks closer up.



**Google satellite image of white-painted rocks in Dickenson Flat showing the distance and direction to Phoenix.**

When you have gone 3.3 miles on FR #218, you will come to a road junction, where you turn left onto FR #218A. This road is still called Milk Ranch Point Road, but it is now #218A. Follow FR #218A for 1.4 miles, where you cross a steel cattle-guard. Be careful as you step across the metal rails that extend across the road. About 100 feet after the cattle-guard, turn left onto a small dirt road with a post showing that it is FR #9385S. Just after that sign bear right through the trees, following a line of yellow markers for about 200 feet where you emerge into a meadow with a pond, shown on maps as Baker Lake. Follow the markers to the left, heading west, and you are now on the General George Crook National Recreation Trail #130. This point is about 4.75 miles after leaving Aid Station #2.

You will follow the General Crook trail (GCT) for about 1.5 miles to Aid Station #3. This trail was developed in the 1870s under the direction of US Army General George Crook. It was used as a military supply route and wagon road between Army forts near modern-day cities of Prescott, Camp Verde, and Fort Apache, Arizona. The original route was about 200 miles long. In 1976-77, the Boy Scouts marked the route from Camp Verde to Clay Springs with metal chevron markers nailed to trees along the old trail. The GCT was designated a National Recreation Trail in 1979. The 1.5-mile piece of it that you will run on includes some parts of the old 1870s trail. You can see that rocks were moved to the sides of the trail, and the trail is a slight depression in the ground. In other parts that you will be on, the chevron-marked route is along more modern dirt roads that are now closed to motorized travel. You can see many of the metal chevrons along this part of the 50K course, and it will also be marked for the race with yellow ribbons and yellow pin-flags.

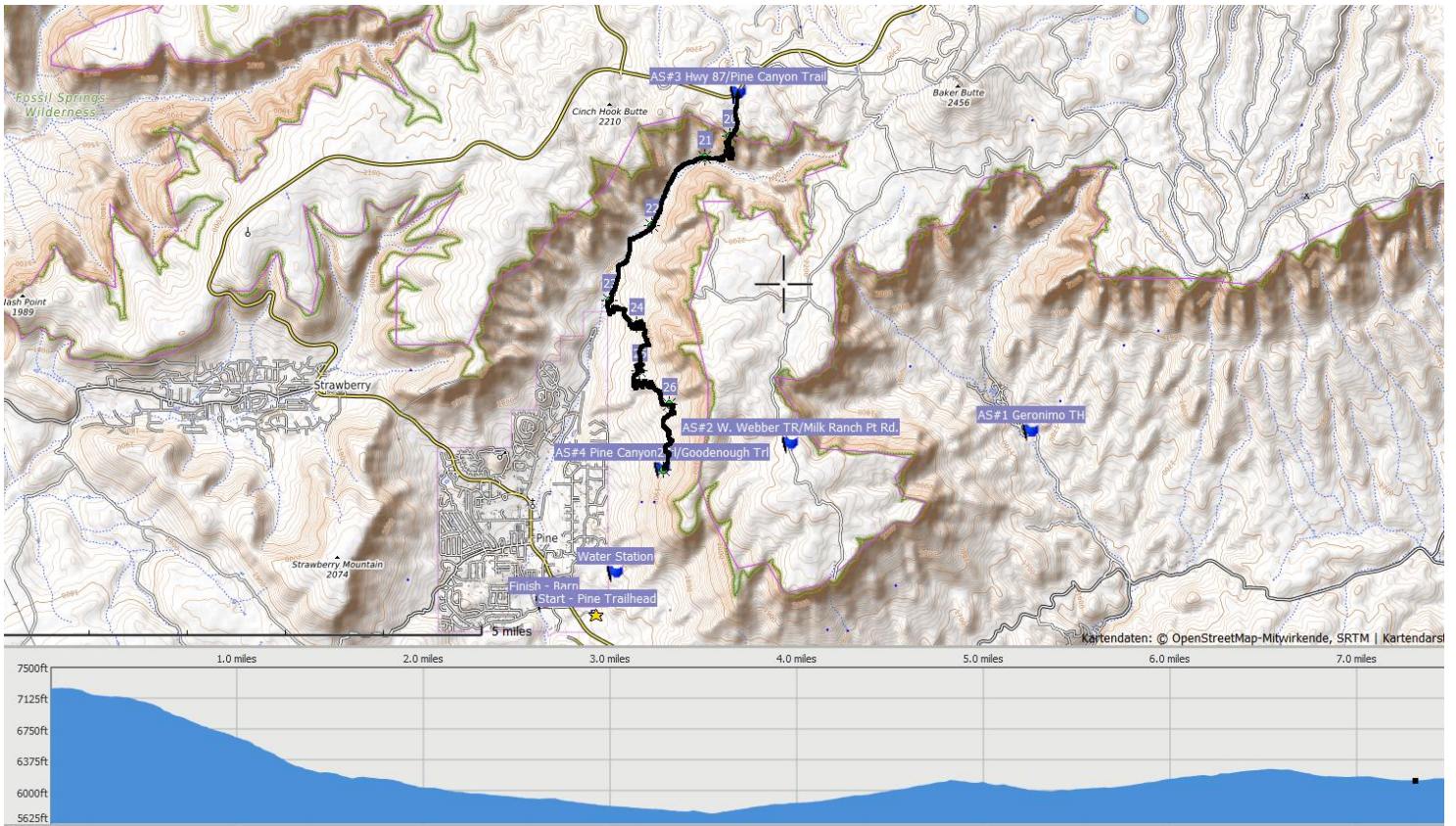


**The General Crook Trail at approximately mile 18 in the 50K.  
Note the chevron trail-marker on the center tree.**

After getting onto the Crook trail near Baker Lake, you go westward up a gentle hill, and pass through a wire gate, which should be open for the race. This point is near the highest elevation on the 50K course, at 7,450 feet above sea level. It is a net elevation loss of 2,130 feet from here to the finish! About 0.3 mile after Baker Lake, the GCT crosses a dirt road and continues westerly on the other side of the road. Then about 0.6 miles from Baker Lake, the Crook trail merges onto a dirt road and follows it for several more tenths of a mile, until it passes through another wire gate and brings you near Highway 87. Pass through the gate and take a left, and continue following the GCT along the fence paralleling the highway. You will continue to see both our yellow course markers, and the metal chevrons on trees. The path you follow through here is about 50 feet from the paved highway, which is to the right, and just a few feet from a barbed-wire fence paralleling the trail on the left. After about 0.35 miles of this part along the fence and highway, you come to a dirt road to the left, which is FR #6038. Turn left (south), pass through the gate, and Aid Station #3 is directly in front of you. This location is 19.5 miles into the 32.4-mile race.

## Segment 4: Aid Station #3 at the General Crook TH to Aid Station #4 at Good Enough Trail Jct.

Segment distance: 7.5 miles; Elev. gain: 804 ft; Descent: 1886 ft; Total distance at Aid Station #4: 27.0 mi.



### General Crook Trailhead to Goodenough Trail Junction

You will leave Aid Station #3 by continuing south on FR #6038 for less than 0.1 mile where that dirt road merges onto the Pine Canyon trail #26, at a wooden sign pointing ahead to the "SWITCHBACKS" of Trail #26. You will follow Trail #26 for the entire 7.5 miles of Segment 4 of the 50K course. The Pine Canyon trail drops steeply off the Mogollon Rim into Pine Creek Canyon, where it then follows the canyon bottom along Pine Creek southwesterly toward the town of Pine. This route has an old history, going back to the 1800s as did the General Crook trail. One map of old military routes in this area shows a trail going down into Pine Creek Canyon and along Pine Creek to and beyond the current location of the town of Pine. This map refers to the switchback part of the trail as "Devin's Jump-off and trail" and to the trail as "Devin's Trail 1868." Colonel Devin was, like General Crook, an Army officer in the Arizona Territory in the 1800s, and he apparently led a group of soldiers down the Pine Creek Canyon over 150 years ago! Now we will follow Devin's approximate route down toward our 50K finish near Pine.

For the first 0.4 mile, this trail is an old dirt road, but then it becomes single-track trail as it goes downhill and southward. Just after 0.5 mile from Aid Station #3, the trail makes a sharp right turn and starts descending at a much steeper slope. Over the next 0.7 miles, there are 12 switchbacks as the trail descends 640 feet. Be careful on this steep section, some of which is on sandstone surfaces which can be slippery.



**The view into Pine Creek Canyon from the Pine Canyon Trail #26 at the top of the switchbacks, at approximately mile 20.5 in the 50K.**



**Approaching a switchback on Pine Canyon Trail #26, at approximately mile 21 in the 50K.**

When the switchbacks end, the trail has dropped into Pine Creek Canyon. It continues downhill with Pine Creek to the left for another 1.0 mile, where it then crosses Pine Creek. The approach to this creek crossing is very rocky, as is the crossing itself. Depending on the water level, you may or may not be able to cross the creek on rocks without getting your feet wet.

After crossing, you will follow the yellow course markers up a steep embankment on the otherside. The trail then continues southwesterly downhill with Pine Creek now to the right. For another 1.3 miles, the trail continues in the bottom of Pine Creek Canyon. This 2.3-mile stretch in Pine Creek Canyon passes through old-growth forest that includes many very large Ponderosa pine and fir trees. In season, the ground here is covered in ferns. It is a beautiful and lush environment with the perennial Pine Creek flowing through it.

About a mile after crossing Pine Creek, you come to a trail junction where the Bearfoot trail #13 goes off to the right. Continue going straight ahead on the Pine Canyon trail #26. However, if you look to the right at this junction, you can see the Bearfoot Bridge in a grove of huge old Ponderosa pines about 100 feet to the right, where the Bearfoot trail crosses Pine Creek. This bridge was installed by Pine-Strawberry Fuel Reduction, Inc. and other volunteer organizations in 2015.



**The Bearfoot Bridge crossing Pine Creek to the right of Trail #26  
at approximately mile 23 in the 50K.**

About 0.2 mile after passing the Bearfoot trail junction, when you have gone 3.6 miles since Aid Station #3, you will come to a wooden trail sign in the middle of the trail, pointing to the left. Take this left turn, continuing on Trail #26. If you were to go straight past this sign, you would soon be on private property at Camp LoMia, a youth camping facility. Please don't go that way.





**Pine Canyon Trail #26 where it turns left near Camp Lo Mia, at approximately mile 23 in the 50K.**

After turning left at the sign, staying on Pine Canyon trail #26, the trail starts climbing uphill through a series of about 18 switchbacks over the next 1.0 mile. These switchbacks are much more gentle than those that you came down on the upper part of the Pine Canyon trail; the trail gains about 340 feet over this 1.0-mile climb. After that, the trail rolls up and down for another 1.0 mile, then climbs another set of switchbacks, then does more rolling until you come to Aid Station #4 after traveling 7.3 miles on the Pine Canyon trail, and 27 miles into the 50K.

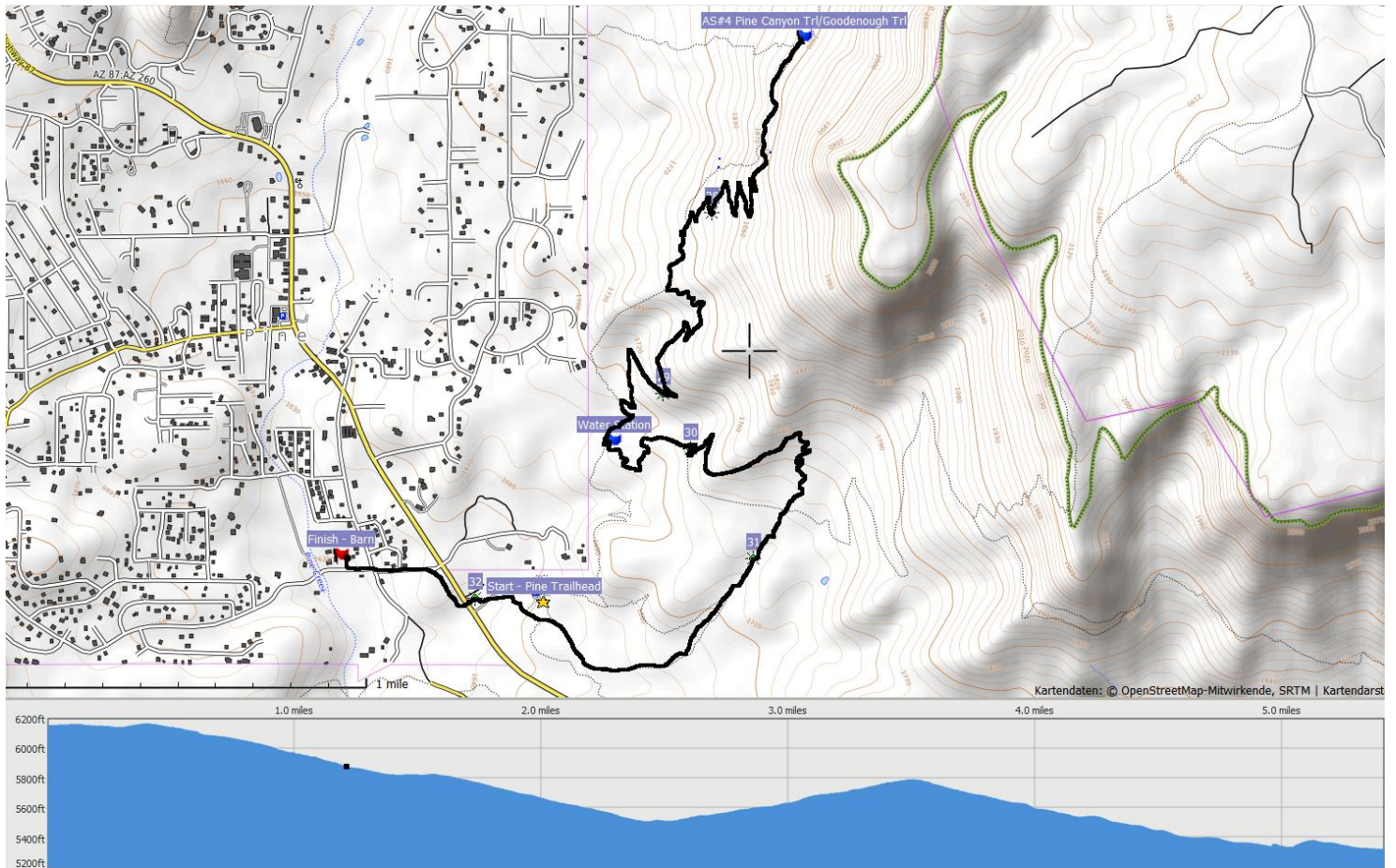
Along this part of the trail and the remainder of the course, the vegetation includes Ponderosa pine, Alligator Juniper, live (evergreen) Oak, and red-skinned Manzanita trees as well as many smaller bushes. There are occasional scenic views overlooking the town of Pine downhill to the right. This latter 3.7 miles of Segment 4 is etched into the eastern side of the canyon carved by Pine Creek as it flows south-southwesterly. It is similar to the part of the Highline trail where you ran the first segment of this course, in that both trails follow benches that were cut into the sloping wall of the Mogollon Rim. Since the water drainage off the Rim flows perpendicular to the general directions of the trails, these trails have many small, short, and sometimes steep dips into valleys and ascents up out of those valleys. The result is a lot of cumulative elevation gain and loss. Segment 4 has a net descent of 1,080 feet, but it also has 800 feet of ascent, so it can be deceptively difficult.



**Pine Canyon Trail #26, at approximately mile 26 in the 50K.**

## Segment 5: Aid Station #4 at Good Enough Trail Junction to the Finish at the Barn

Segment distance: 5.4 miles; Elevation gain: 410 ft; Descent: 1,240 ft; Total distance at Finish: 32.4 mi.



### Goodenough Junction to Finish

After checking out of Aid Station #4, continue southward on the Pine Canyon trail #26 for another 2.3 miles. During this stretch, the trail drops about 670 feet, including about 16 switchbacks. You will pass a couple of other trails going off to the right. Be sure to stay on Trail #26, which will be well-marked through these junctions.

This 2.3-mile stretch of the Pine Canyon trail #26, together with the latter 3.7-mile part of the previous Segment, are mostly new trail which was built in 2015-2017 by Pine-Strawberry Fuel Reduction Inc. (PSFR), the Pine Trail Run host organization. Approximately \$100,000 and many days of volunteer effort were spent on the construction of the new trail, which replaced a much older trail that was badly eroded.



**Pine Canyon Trail #26, at approximately mile 28 in the 50K.**

After 2.3 miles from Aid Station #4, you arrive at the junction with the Pineview trail #28. Turn left on Trail #28, which heads uphill in an easterly direction. You will follow Trail #28 for its full length, which is 1.3 miles. This is the newest trail in the Pine-Strawberry trail network. Most of Trail #28 was built in 2017-2018, using a combination of paid contractors and the local PSFR volunteer trail crew.



**Pineview Trail #28, at approximately mile 30 in the 50K.**

Trail #28 climbs nearly 300 feet in its first 0.9 miles. On the way up this climb, after about 0.4 mile, you will pass a trail junction where an older trail, now called the Lower Pineview trail, goes off to the right. Be sure to go straight ahead at this junction, staying on Trail #28.

There are very nice panoramic views from the higher parts of this trail, looking off to the right, toward the south. You will be happy to know that this is the last significant climb on the 50K course! When you reach the crest of the Pineview trail, it is about another 0.3 miles downhill on the Pineview trail to its junction with the Highline trail #31. When you get to this junction, continue straight ahead onto Trail #31, bearing to the right of the wooden trail sign. This will put you onto the Highline trail in the westbound direction. This is the junction that you passed through 1.0 mile after the start of the race. You now have 1.0 miles westward on Trail #31, back to the Pine trailhead, which descends 300 feet!

Just before the Pine trailhead parking lot, you will make a left onto the PSFR interpretive trail, which is .5 mile from the finish at the PSFR barn. The trail bypasses the parking lot and goes under Hwy 87 through a culvert, parallels Hwy 87 for a short distance before turning left on Bradshaw Dr. to the barn.

The recent work on Trails #26 and #28, and the Bearfoot bridge, all mentioned above, are examples of the trail building projects that are managed and funded by PSFR. Net revenues from the Pine Trail Run and from the

Fire on the Rim mountain bike race held in Pine-Strawberry in September, go into the fund that pays for building these trails. PSFR appreciates the support of the entrants of the Pine Trail Run and Fire on the Rim Bike Race. We hope our event participants enjoy the trails!