

Billy the Kid Trail

Follow this byway through the rugged beauty of the million-acre Lincoln National Forest. From grassy plains to dense pine forests, the region is known for its stunning views and cool mountain climate. Visit historic Lincoln, once home to outlaw Billy the Kid and lawman Pat Garrett.



Length: 84 miles / 134.4 km

Time to Allow: Two hours to drive the byway

Local Information

New Mexico Department of Tourism

800-545-2070

575-827-7400

Send E-mail

Ruidoso Visitor Center/Chamber of Commerce

575-257-7395

877-784-3676

Visitor Services

Fees



There are no fees to drive the byway.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



Sidewalks and bicycle trails are available in some of the communities along the byway. Some areas of the roadway also have shoulders for pedestrians.

Camping



There are places to camp along this byway.

Food



There are places to buy food along this byway.

Gasoline



Gasoline is available.



Information

Visitor information is available at the Billy the Kid Visitor Center located at 791 Hwy-70 West in Ruidoso Downs. Visitors can call 575-378-5318 for more information.



Lodging

There is overnight lodging along this byway.



Phone

Public phones are available along this byway.



Restrooms

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

The altitude along this byway ranges from 6,500-7,000 feet above sea level. There are few, if any, seasonal limitations. All of the roadways are paved, and snow is cleared in the wintertime if there is significant accumulation.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Summer and fall are the best times to drive the byway because of the fall color in the forests and the cooler mountain temperatures in the summer.

High Season

July and August are the high seasons on the byway.

Map and Directions



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

- Begin in Ruidoso and follow NM-48 to Hwy 70.
- Take Hwy 70 northeast to Hwy 380.

- Travel on Hwy 380 northwest to junction with NM-220.
- At the junction, take a small detour south through Fort Stanton and end up at the junction with NM-48.
- Return to junction of Hwy 380 and NM-220.
- Continue on Hwy 380 northwest to Capitan.
- At the junction of Hwy 380 and NM-48, take a left onto NM-48 and continue south through Angus.
- Continue on NM-48 south until you reach Ruidoso, the end of the byway loop.


Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities

Albuquerque, NM (170 miles / 273.59 km, 2 hours 45 minutes)


Start:

-  I-25 southbound, Albuquerque, NM
[N 35.076° W 106.639°](#) [?]

- Take I-25 south to San Antonio.
- Get on US-380 and go east to Capitan where you enter the byway.

Directions:

Junction with byway:

-  Intersection of 1st St. and Lincoln Ave.
[N 33.546° W 105.573°](#) [?]



Las Cruces, NM (111 miles / 178.64 km, 2 hours 10 minutes)

Start:

-  US-80/82 northeast bound, La Cruces, NM
[N 32.351° W 106.766°](#) [?]

- Take US-70/82 northeast to Alamogordo.
- Get on US-54 and go north to Tularosa.
- Take US-70 northeast to Hollywood where you enter the byway.

Directions:

Junction with byway:

-  US-70 in Hollywood, NM
[N 33.324° W 105.627°](#) [?]



Road Trip: Tour of Billy the Kid Trail

Departure: Byway Visitor Center, New Mexico

Destination: Fort Stanton Reservation, New Mexico

Time to allow: 1 day

Travel the Billy the Kid Trail and catch a glimpse into history. Step foot in the places that the infamous outlaw Billy the Kid once visited. Experience first-hand the exciting places along this byway.

Day 1

- **Start: Byway Visitor Center**

Your first stop along Billy the Kid Trail should be at the byway Visitor Center in Ruidoso Downs. A trove of information, the gallery features a fun mini-tour of the byway. The gallery floor has been painted with a map of the Byway and neighboring communities, and the mountains are three-dimensional.



- **Stop 1: Hubbard Museum of the American West**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.1 mi (0.2 km)

Directions: The museum is next to the byway visitor center, on the center's west side.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Come to the Hubbard Museum of the American West and see the many ways the horse has played a dramatic role in the exploration and expansion of the cultures of the world. Here you'll find more than just a collection of wagons and photos; the museum houses a diverse collection of fine art, family heirlooms, and western memorabilia. Note the museum's entrance, which features Dave McGary's famous equine sculpture "Free Spirits at Noisy Water."

- **Stop 2: Lincoln State Monument**

The Original
Courthouse in
Lincoln, New
Mexico

From previous stop: 41 minutes / 33.3 mi (53.3 km)

Directions: Leaving the museum, take US-70 east for 22.1 miles. Turn left (north) onto US-380 and drive for 11.2 miles until you come to the Lincoln State Monument.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

At the Lincoln State Monument, you'll enter a place kept much like it was in the late 1800s. Visit the museums for a fascinating glimpse into history. Be sure to see the Lincoln County Courthouse – the place that Billy the Kid made his last escape in 1881.

- **Stop 3: Smokey Bear Museum and Park**



From previous stop: 15 minutes / 11.3 mi (18.1 km)

Directions: Leaving the monument, take US-380 northwest for 11.1 miles. Turn right (North) onto SR-246 (N Lincoln Ave) and drive for 0.1 miles. Turn left (west) onto East Creek Road and drive for 0.1 miles, then turn left (south) and you'll be at the museum and park.

Suggested time at this stop: 2 hours

From Lincoln State Monument, travel to the Smokey Bear Museum and Park and pay tribute to the courageous little bear that has become the nation's symbol for fighting and preventing forest fires. Visit the park where the real Smokey Bear's body is buried, then explore the museum. Leaving, note the wonderful view of the Capitan Mountains.

- **End: Fort Stanton Reservation**



From previous stop: 12 minutes / 6.9 mi (11.0 km)

Directions: Leaving the museum, turn right (east) onto East Creek Road, then immediately turn right (south) onto SR-246 (N Lincoln Ave) and drive for 0.1 miles. Turn left (east) onto US-380 (1st Street) and drive for 4.3 miles. Turn right (southwest) onto SR-220 and drive for 2.5 miles until you come to Fort Stanton Reservation.

End the tour and the day at Fort Stanton Reservation, a place where many famous western icons, including Billy the Kid, once set foot. Recreation abounds here, so go hiking or horseback riding. Be sure to explore the caves, particularly Fort Stanton Cave. At the end of the day, camp out under the stars.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 51.6 miles / 82.6 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 9 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 4 hours