



Superstition Wilderness Trails

The Superstition Wilderness area just east of Apache Junction, famous for the Lost Dutchman's Mine and other legends, offers hiking/backpacking adventures never to be forgotten but warrants a few words of warning before you take a Scouting unit into the wilderness. Even though just a few short miles from a bustling metropolitan area, the Superstitions comprise a rugged and unforgiving wilderness.

A wilderness area should be enjoyed, not just endured. Summer hiking here is a test of survival and is not recommended for Scout units. Reliable water sources are scarce. The two most consistent are Charlebois Spring and La Barge Spring and they can be counted on year round. The other frequently mentioned water sources may be unreliable depending on season. Water needs must be carefully planned.

For each hike the most useful Topo map is mentioned as well as the best trailhead. The Tonto national forest also puts out a great Superstition Wilderness map. Also see the trailhead map in the appendix. The unit is ultimately responsible for planning a safe trip. Don't forget Tour Permits. More than one Troop has been rescued from this area by the National Guard!

FREMONT SADDLE: This area is most accessible from the Peralta Trailhead. It follows Peralta canyon for about 2.5 miles while climbing nearly 1400 feet to offer one of the finest views of Weaver's Needle and a western desert vista. A return leg could be via the Cave Trail as it passes Geronimo's Cave making a good day hike. No water is available. (Topo: Weaver's Needle Quadrangle).

SECOND WATER: Accessible from either First Water Trailhead or Canyon Lake Trailhead, this trail provides a variety of desert scenery from the beauty of Garden Valley to the rocky ruggedness of Boulder Canyon and the Second Water Springs area itself. This makes a fine day hike of 4 to 6 miles dependent on choice of route with minimal elevation changes. (Topo: Goldfield Quad). An overnight backpacking trip starting at the First Water Trailhead, campsite at Second Water Springs area and ending at Canyon Lake Trailhead make a very good first backpacking trip for younger scouts.

CHARLEBOIS SPRING: Of this true desert oasis, an old miner once said, "There is no finer water in the Superstitions." Seven to nine miles of hiking are required depending on selection of several trailheads and 1000 feet change in elevation is encountered regardless of choice. This hike is recommended as an overnight trek and camping space is available near the spring. (Topo: Weaver's Needle Quad).

LA BARGE CANYON: A narrow winding canyon with many sheer drops ends in a beautiful area known as Upper La Barge Box. This challenging hike can begin at Peralta Trailhead or even Tortilla Flat Trailhead. The canyon has a spring at either end with La Barge Spring most reliable. Camping space is available and this 20 miler is best done as an overnight trek. (Topo: Weaver's Needle Quad).

MINER'S NEEDLE: One of the most interesting rock formations in the Superstition Wilderness, Miner's Needle actually resembles a sewing needle. From the Miner's Summit, Coffee Flat and its mountains create a panoramic view. Some legends say Miner's Needle is the site of the infamous Lost Dutchman's Mine. This area is most accessible from Peralta Trailhead. There is no water near Miner's Needle, but this needle makes a great highlight in a loop through Bluff Spring or even La Barge Spring. Miner's Summit is 1000 feet higher than all surrounding areas. Bluff Spring loop is 9 miles and La Barge Spring loop is 15 miles. (Topo: Weaver's Needle Quad).

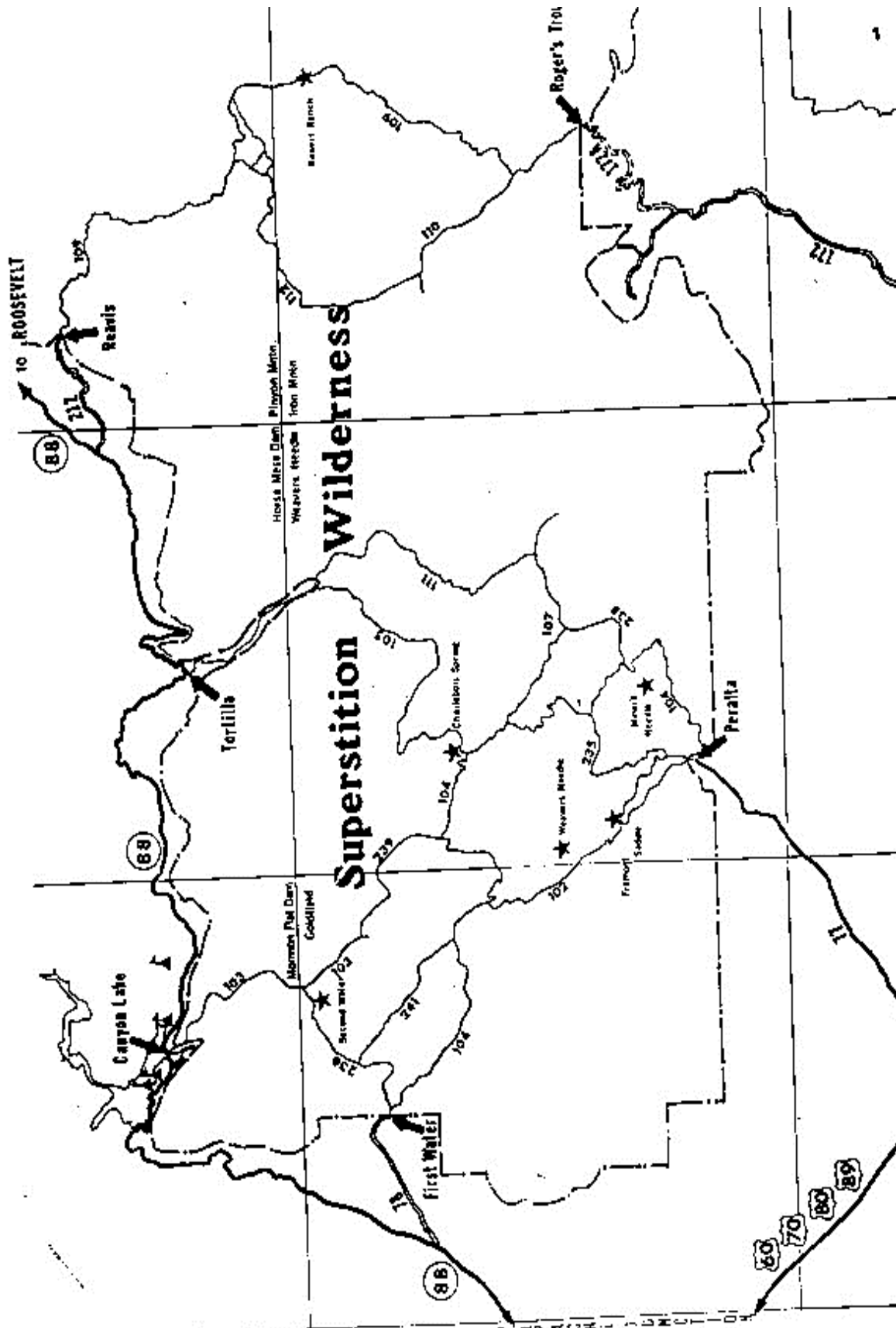
REEVIS RANCH: The best trailhead to this site of an early territorial ranch is Reevis Ranch Trailhead although the Rogers Trough Trailhead will work. Reevis Creek usually supplies water and in September apples can be harvested from the old orchard trees. From the Reevis Ranch Trailhead this challenging hike takes you up 1000 feet before you drop into the ranch area. This is a 16 mile overnight hike. For the Reevis Ranch trailhead, take Highway 60/70/80 to Apache Junction then north on State Highway 88 (Apache Trail) approx. 30 miles to the Reevis Road #212 Turn-off (Approximately 1 mile past The ADOT maintenance yard). Follow this approx. 3 miles to top of ridge overlooking Apache Lake to parking lot.(Topos: Pinyon Canyon and Iron Mountain Quads).

ROGERS CANYON: Accessible by Rogers Trough Trailhead, this canyon is a major drainage for the wilderness and is greener with more forms of vegetation than most other areas. Another attraction is accessible prehistoric ruins on the canyon walls at the west end. Water is usually available in the creek. This 6 or 7 mile trip could be a day hike but difficult trailhead accessibility makes an overnight trip a more pleasant outing.

To get to Roger's Trough, go east on U.S. Highway 60/70/80 through Florence Junction to Queen Valley Road. Follow this north 1.7 miles to Forest Road 357. Turn right following 357 for 3 miles to Forest Road 172. Turn left and follow 172 approx. 8 miles north to Forest Road 172a. Turn right onto 172A and follow it for 4 miles to the end at trail head parking lot. This is a difficult trail head to reach, especially the last 4 miles. A high clearance 4WD vehicle is necessary.

(Topo: Iron Mountain Quad)

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