Dust and Blood: Adventures in our Backyard

Off-trail hiking and peak-bagging along the western slopes of the Sandias

Presentation Synopsis

1. Introduction
   - Who is this guy?
   - Purpose
   - Why off-trail?

2. Getting Started
   - Off-Trail Challenges
   - Safety and tips
   - Recommended Gear

Presentation Synopsis (continued)

3. Western Sandia Mountain Routes

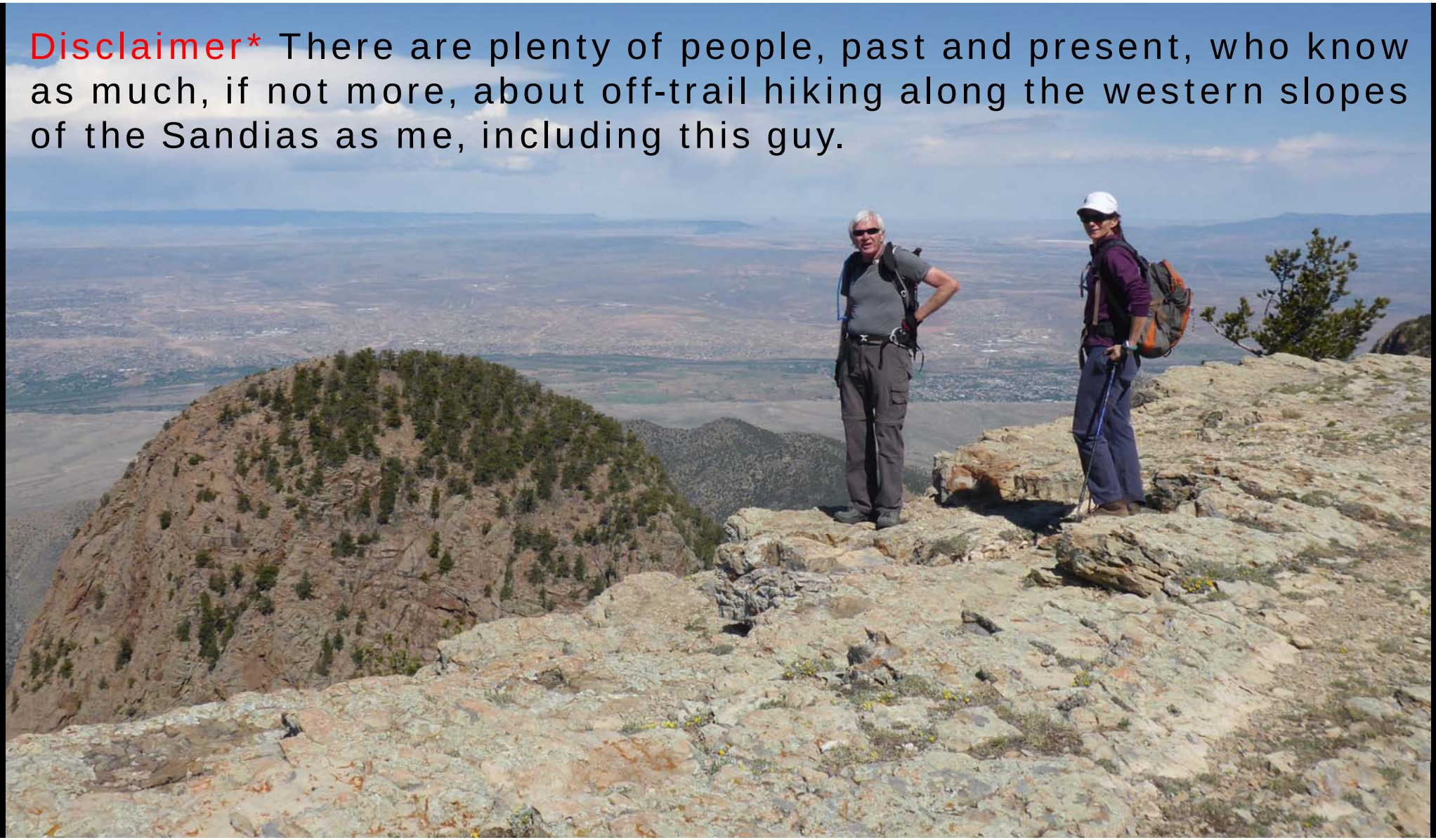
4. No Trace Ethics, cairns, markers, public GPX files

5. Resources

6. Q & A + Hike recommendations

A brief introduction

Beginnings, etc….


Disclaimer* There are plenty of people, past and present, who know as much, if not more, about off-trail hiking along the western slopes of the Sandias as me, including this guy.

Early Adventures

Hike led by Aaron Greenwood to the Needle and Fifth Avenue.

WHY?

Challenging + Fun

It’s in our backyard

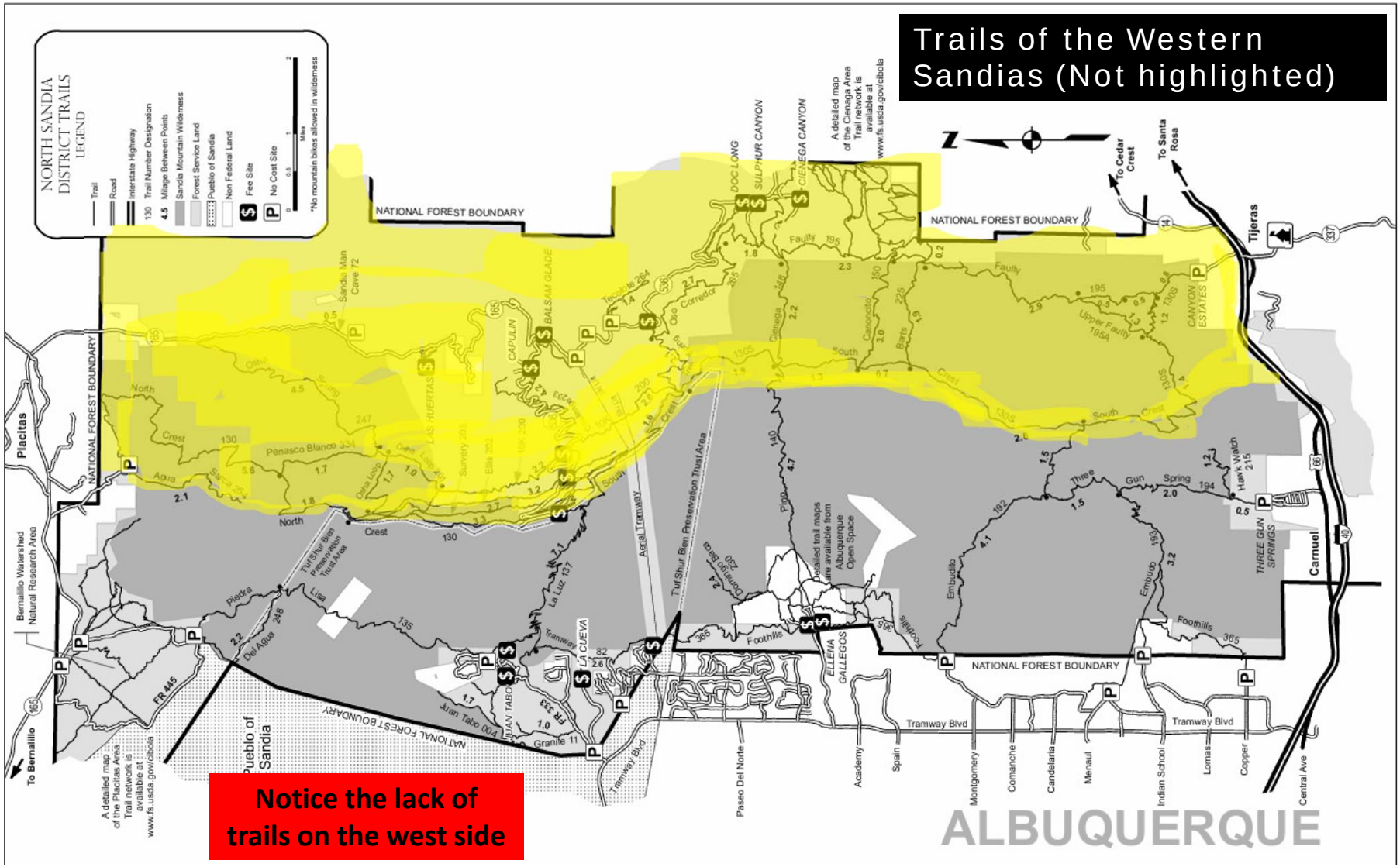
To get away from people

Experience and skill transfers

Amazing scenery seldom seen by hikers

Because it is there

Trails of the Western Sandias (Not highlighted)



Presentation Purpose

To provide information for those interested in off-trail hiking in the western slopes of the Sandia Mountains with a visual presentation of areas off the beaten path.

BUSHWHACKING*

Generally, the biggest challenge

Bushwhacking Tips and Gear

Poles
Flesh Protection
Eye Protection
Cactus Aid: Tweezers + Tape
Inexpensive, durable clothing
Look ahead, game and use paths
Learn how to identify brush from a distance
Attitude: flexibility + patience
Tolerance for pain and suffering

Rock Scrambling Safety*
Slabs
Boulders
Brush and Cacti
Hand and foot holds
3-Point contact
Stay focused
Identify how to
Y.D.S. Class 3-5 Rock

Terrain Challenges
Steep often loose slopes
Scree and talus
Deadfall
Wet surfaces
Cliff edges and exposure

Weather Safety

Rain gear

Snow and Ice Traction

Wind

Gear(layers)

Common Sense: Temperature gradient
change 5 degrees p/1,000 feet

From this…

…to this in a matter of minutes

A reminder to always be prepared

Beware of critters too

Be careful around mines!
They are a good place to contract the hantavirus

Clockwise from top left
La Luz Mine
Mine near Crest below the spur trail
Lower Juan Tabo Canyon
Near Hawk Watch Open Space Parking Area

Safety: Gear and tips

PREPERATION

Be prepared for whatever the weather could throw at you (check the weather forecast)

Tracking device and batteries

Phone or SAR device

Electrolytes, fluids, and fuel

Let someone know where you are going

GEAR

Poles

Traction Aide

Garden or leather work gloves

Minimal to advanced Medical kit

Eye protection

Helmet

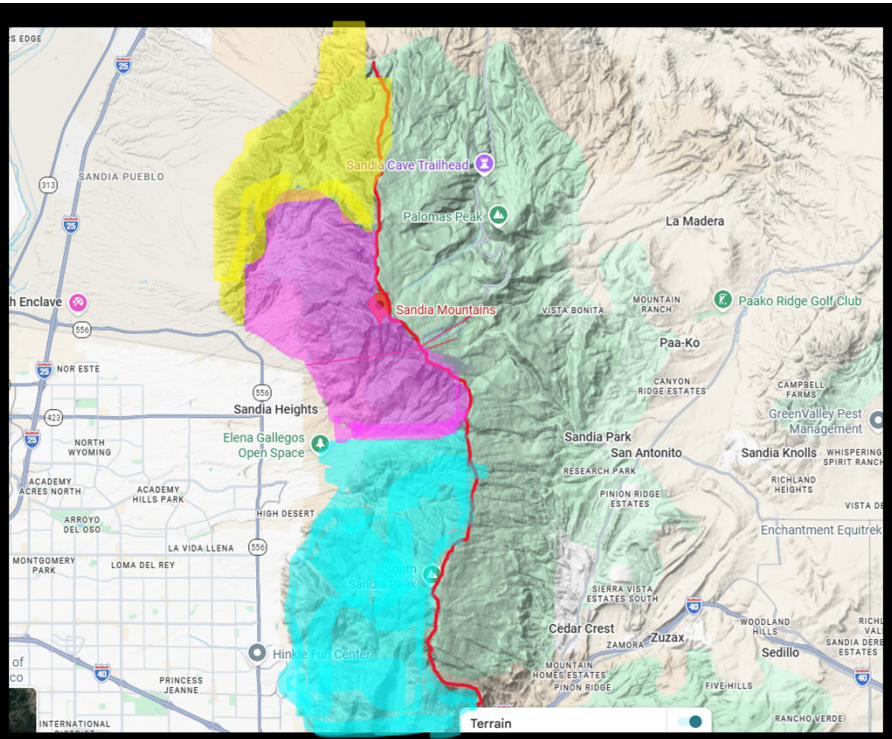
Headlamp

COMMON SENSE

Avoid hiking on days and with extreme or dangerous weather

Know your limits

Have a turn around time: avoid off-trail hiking in the dark.

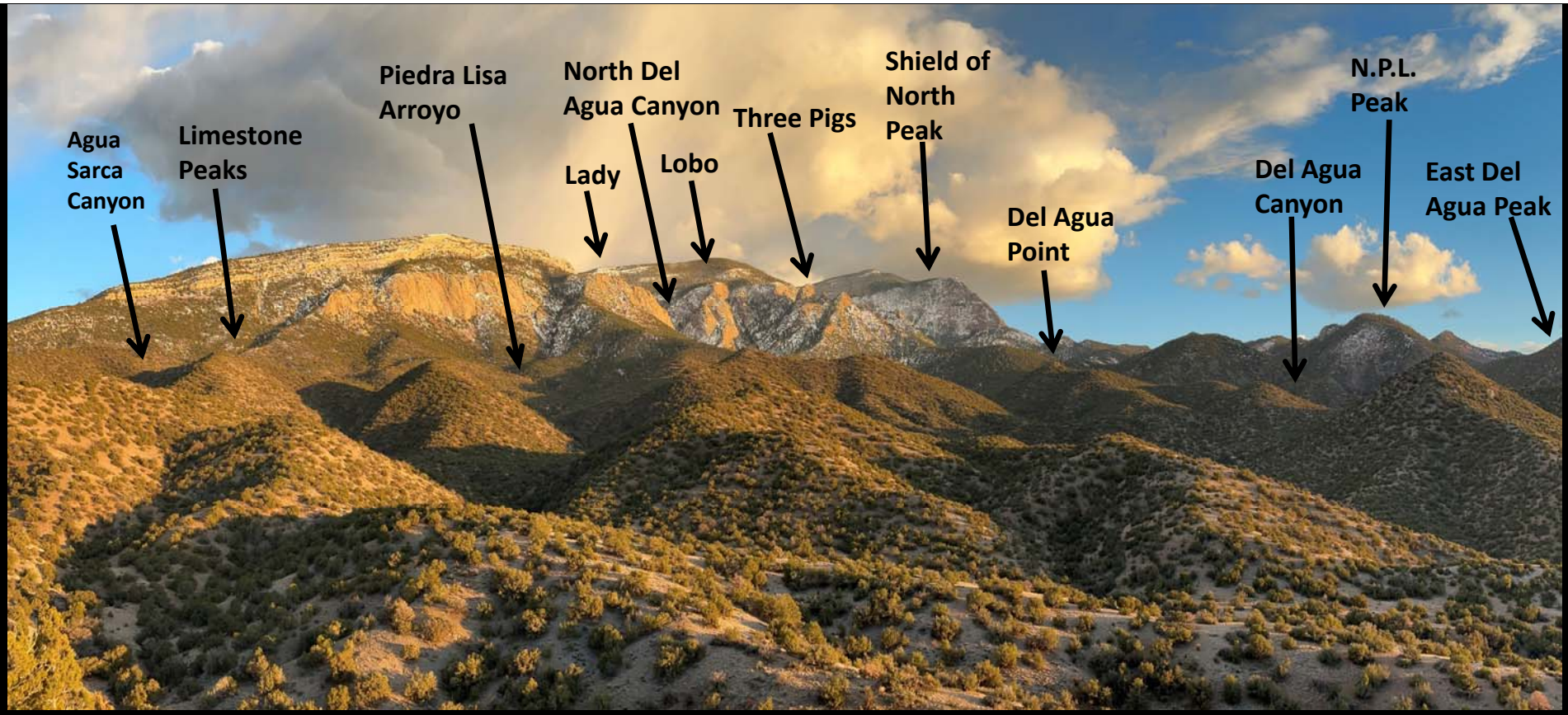


Routes

North, central, and south

14 named Canyons:

Agua Sarca	Waterfall	La Cueva	Tram	Three Gun
Pino Arroyo	Pinnacle Valley	Rozamiento w/2 forks	Pino	Rock Spring
North Del Agua	Mummy	Big Valley	Bear	
Del Agua	Jaral	Domingo Baca	Embudito	
Juan Tabo	Chimney	Echo	Embudo	



Northern Sandias*

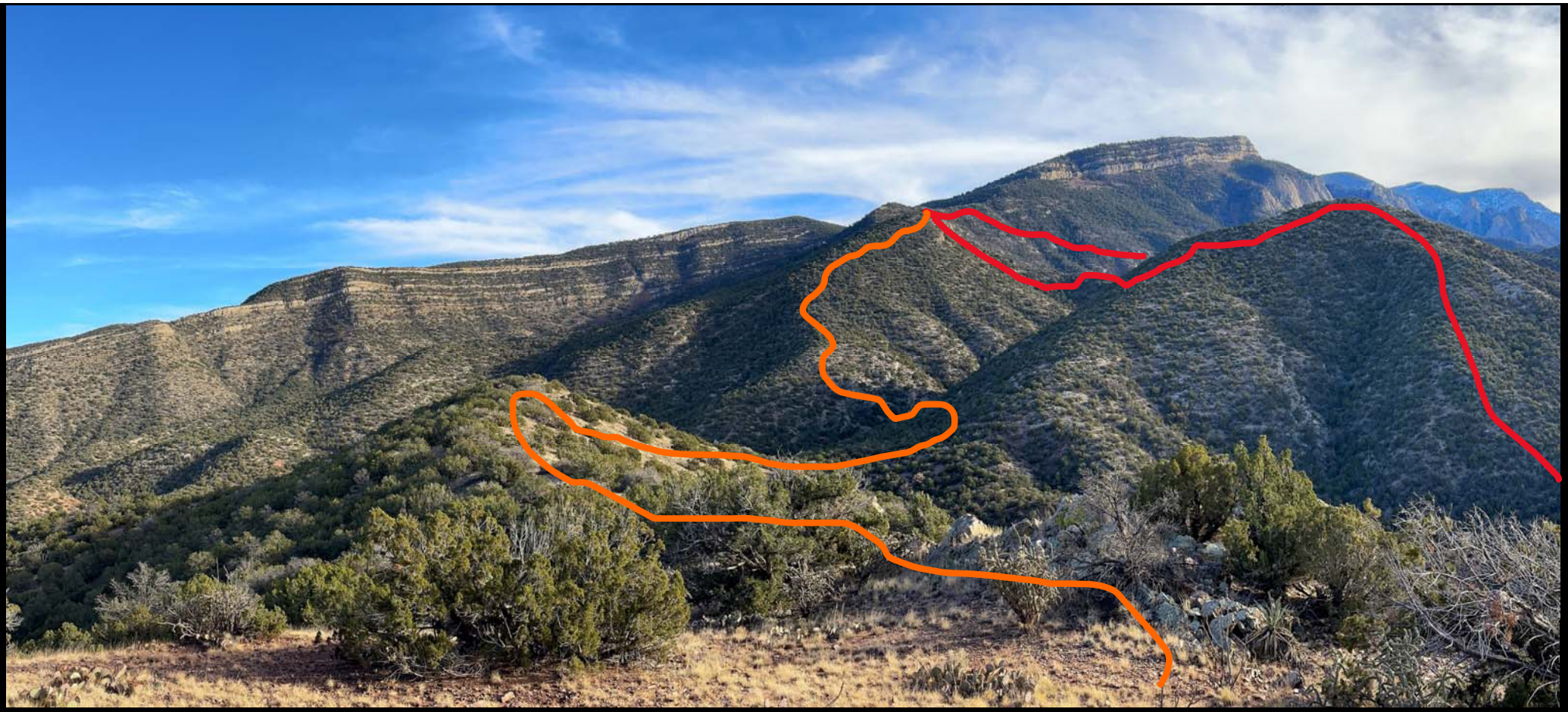
Many use and game trails on ridges and canyons, most with easy to moderate bushwhacking
Great place for Loops combing ridges and canyons
Winter hiking
Lots of minor peaks and ridges with unique views and loop potentials
Interesting geology plus mines

Canyons
Agua Sarca
Pino Arroyo
North Del Agua
Del Agua
Many unnamed valleys

Highlights
Least visited: solitude + quiet
Del Agua Divide
Colorful Geology
Fall Colors

Features
Three Pigs
Lobo Point
Del Agua Rim and Cliffs
Sandia Arch

Agua Sarca Canyon Limestone Peaks Route



Limestone Peaks Loop located on the south rim of Agua Sarca Canyon

- Multiple access points
- Easy bushwhacking
- Short but fun Class 3 on the summit blocks of both peaks
- Use Trails and route finding with possibility of continuing on the ridge to Sandia Crest
- Unusual geology with metamorphic and sedimentary rocks and mining activity

Limestone Peaks

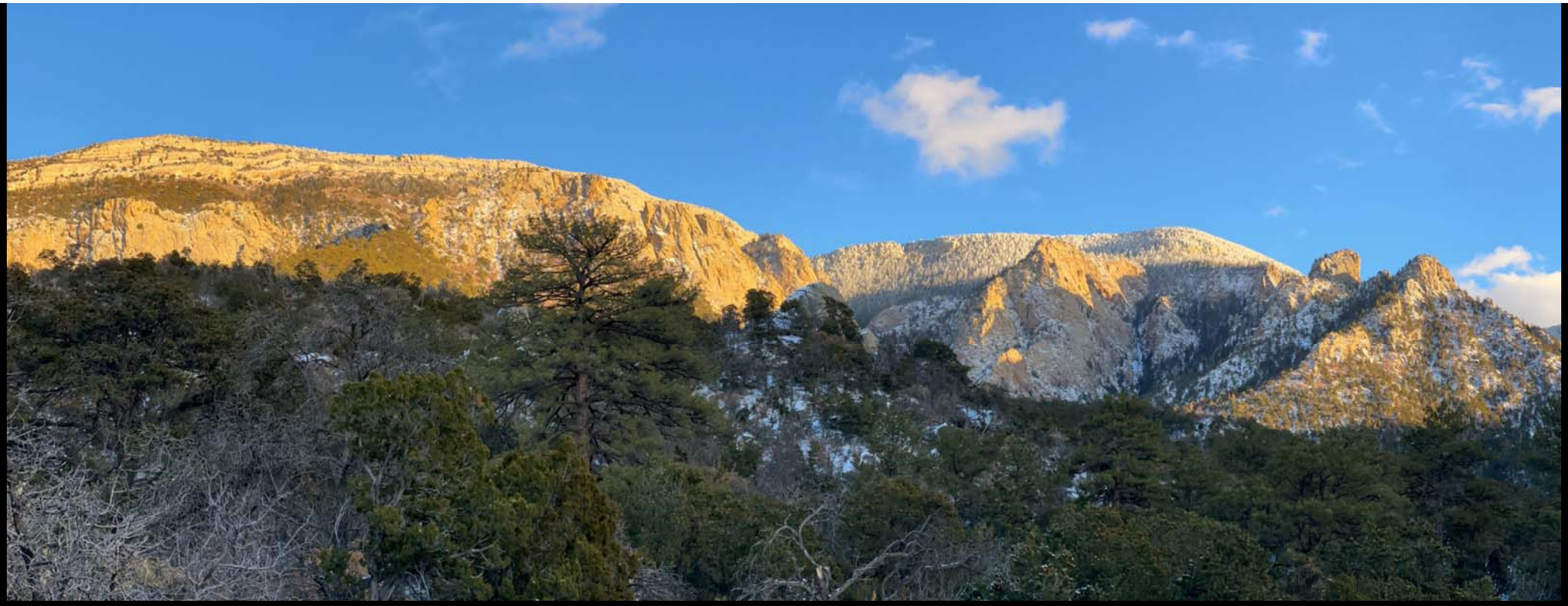
One of many possible Limestone Peaks loop routes

North Del Agua Canyon Routes

Lady

Lobo

Three Pigs Pass



North Del Agua Canyon Routes

Park at the North Piedra Lisa Trail parking area – Routes begin off the NPL Trail
Moderate to horrid bushwhacking – Some of the worst in the Sandias
Rugged scenery with granite spires, buttresses, pinnacles
Very steep terrain in upper canyons
Difficult hiking and routes with challenging route-finding
Sights few hikers ever see

North Del Agua Canyon Routes

Lobo and 3 Pigs Overlook

Lobo and Lady

3 Pigs Pass

Lobo and 3 Pigs Overlook
Del Agua Rim Loop
-Much easier route

Lady

Via Lady Ridge - Moderate

Lady

Lady Ridge/Pino Arroyo Route

Lady

Pino Arroyo Wall viewed from Lady

Lady

The difficult route

Lady Route from North Del Agua

Dust and Blood bushwhacking

Lady

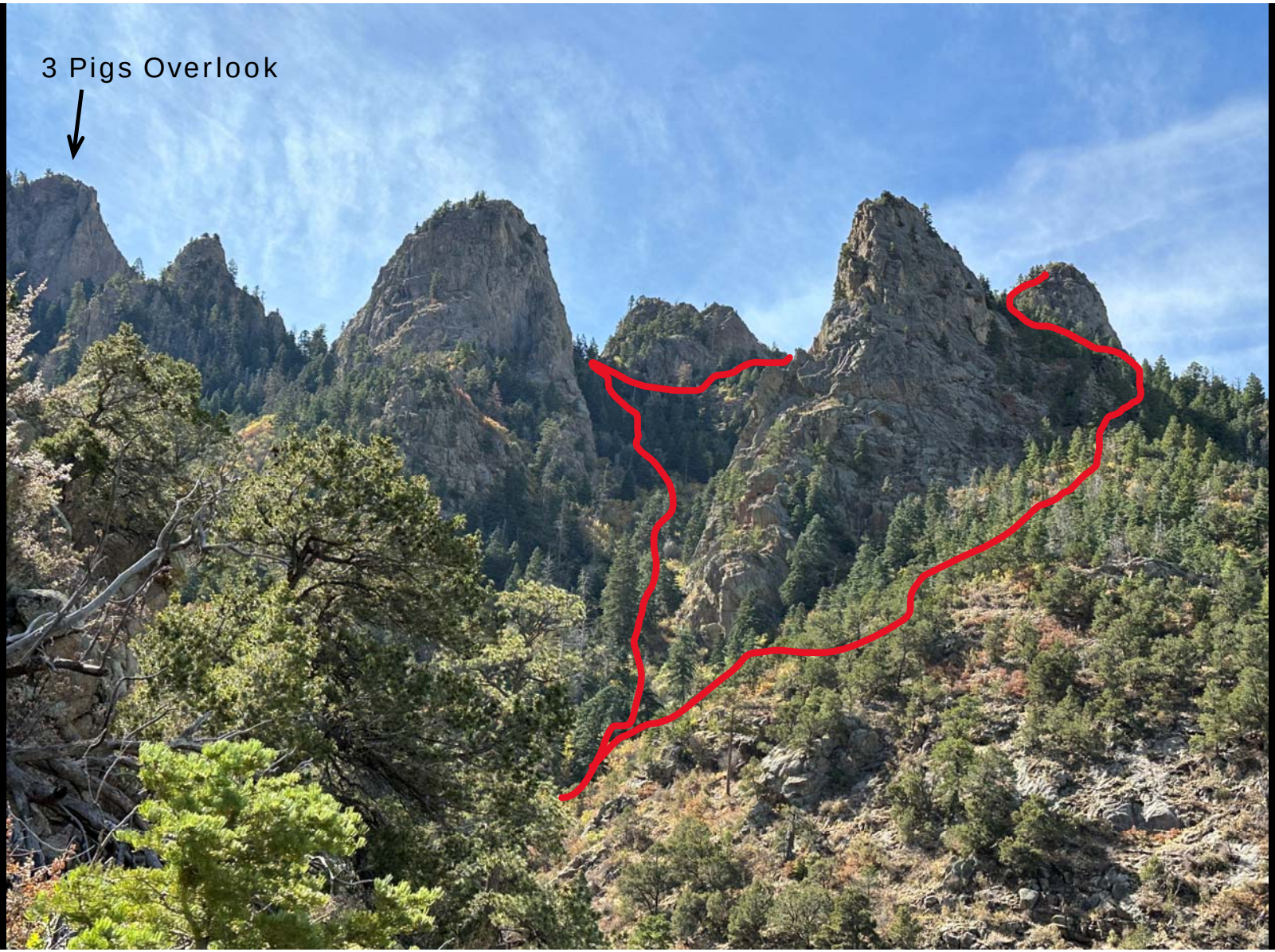
The difficult route

Left to right:
Lady and Beastie

Left to right

Beastie and Lobo

*Three Pigs Pass Routes



Lobo

The difficult route

Big Pig Pass

Big Pig Pass and Del Agua Canyon

Del Agua Canyon Routes:

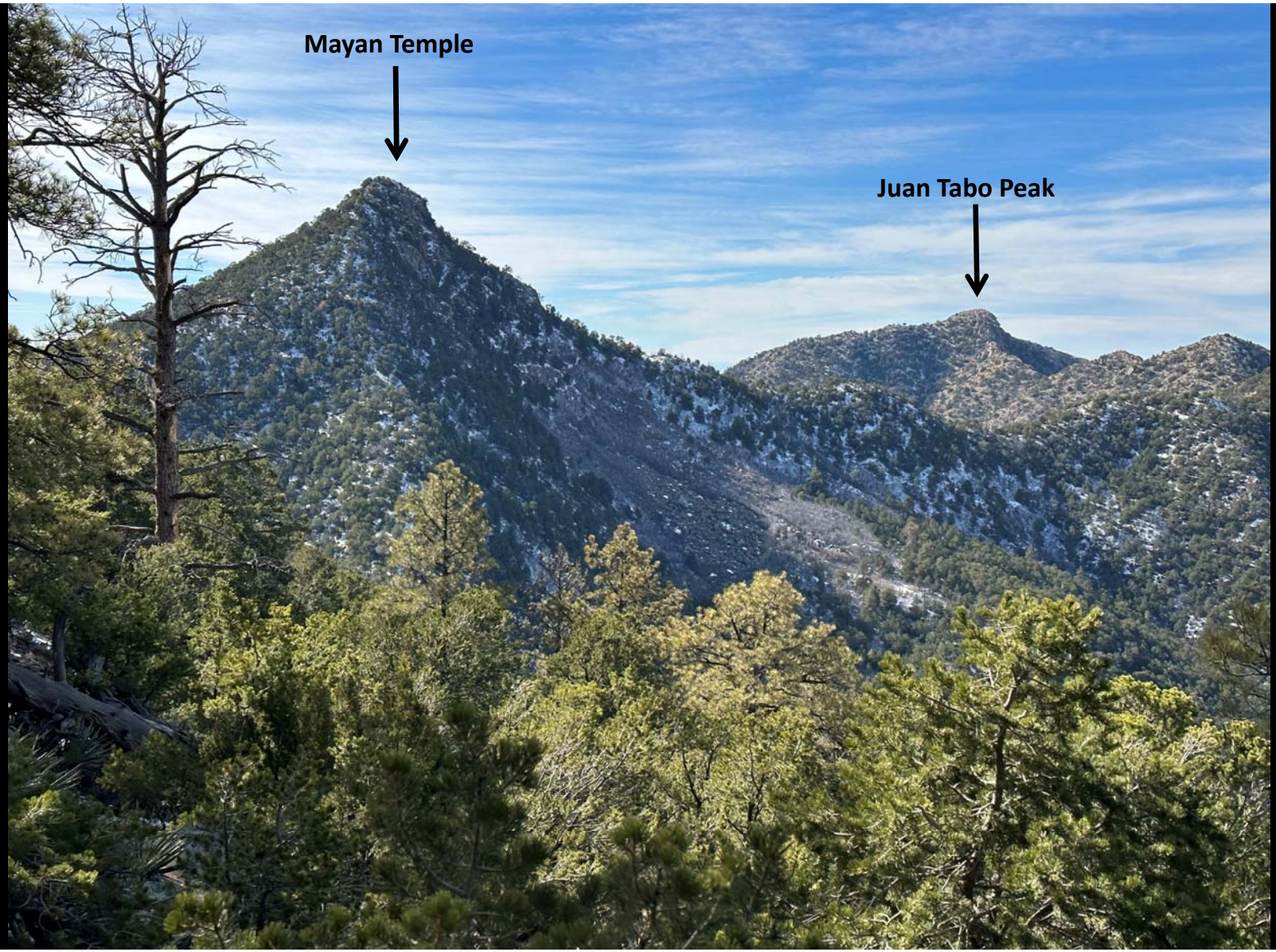
Del Agua Peaks Loop

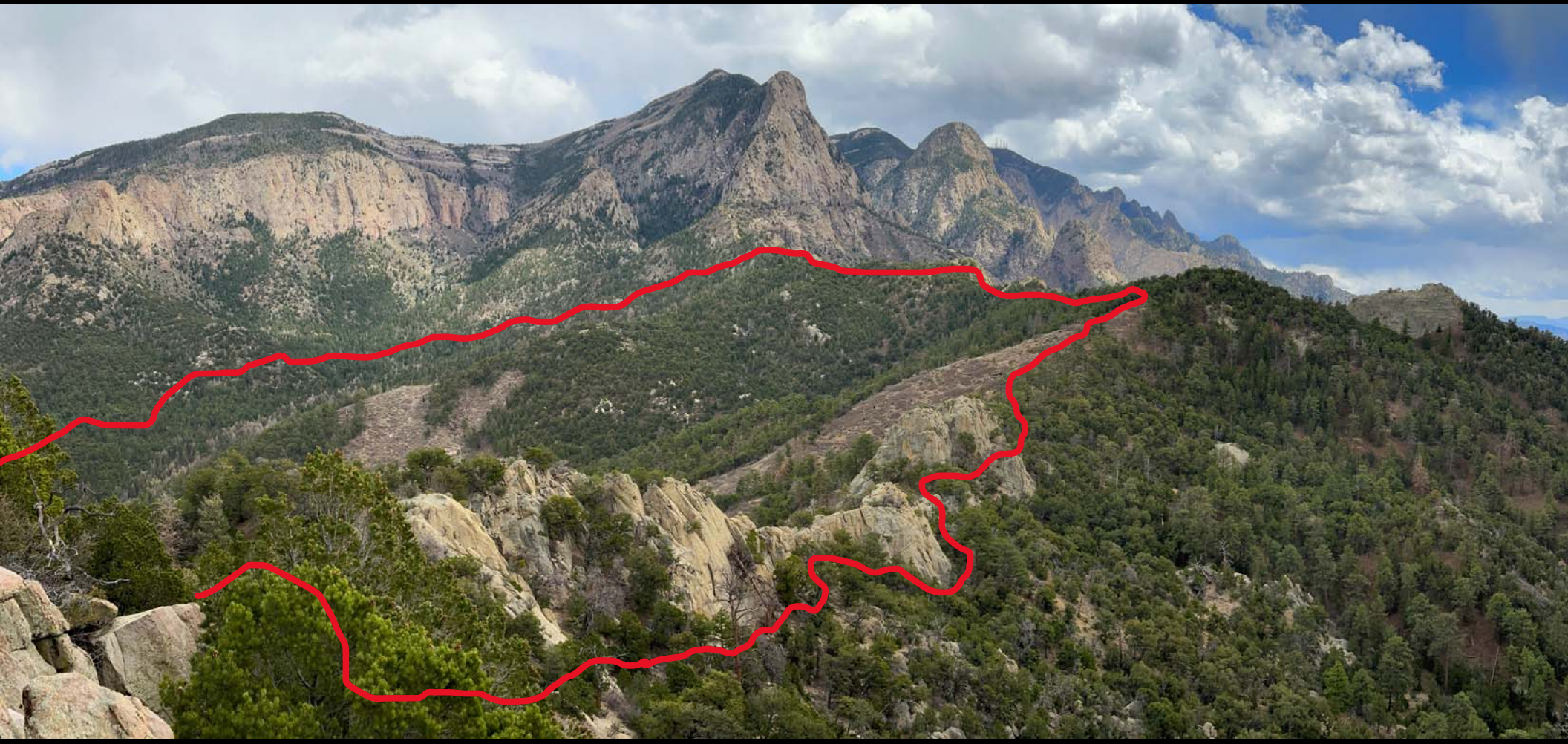
Lobo/Three Pigs Overlook

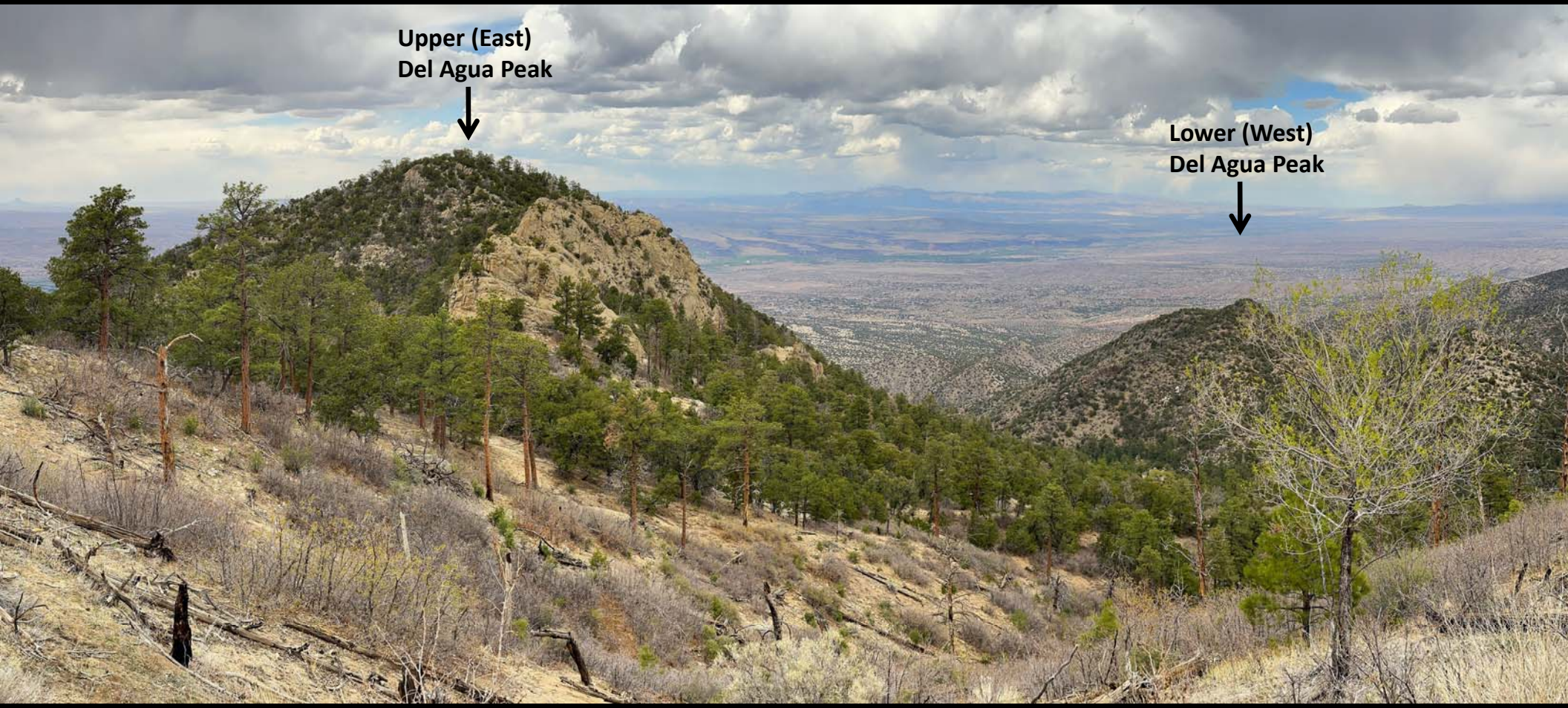
Del Agua Peaks Loop

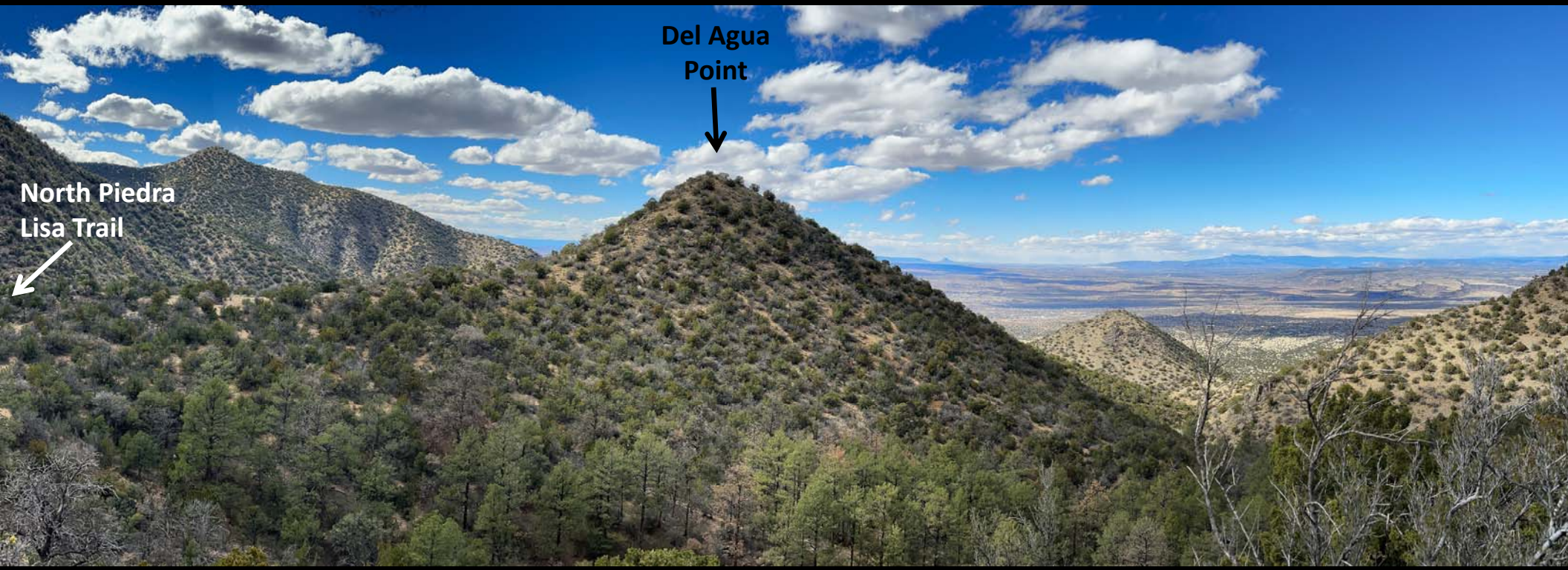
Starts at the North Piedra Lisa – Route begins where the Del Agua Trail enters the bottom of the lower canyon
4-7 peak loop with significant elevation gain
Easy bushwhacking – Moderate scrambling on one short ridge – Challenging with Crag-X and the Tooth
Terrific views of the Del Agua drainages, north Sandias, and Rincon Range
My favorite hike in the north Sandias

Mayan Temple and Juan Tabo Peak

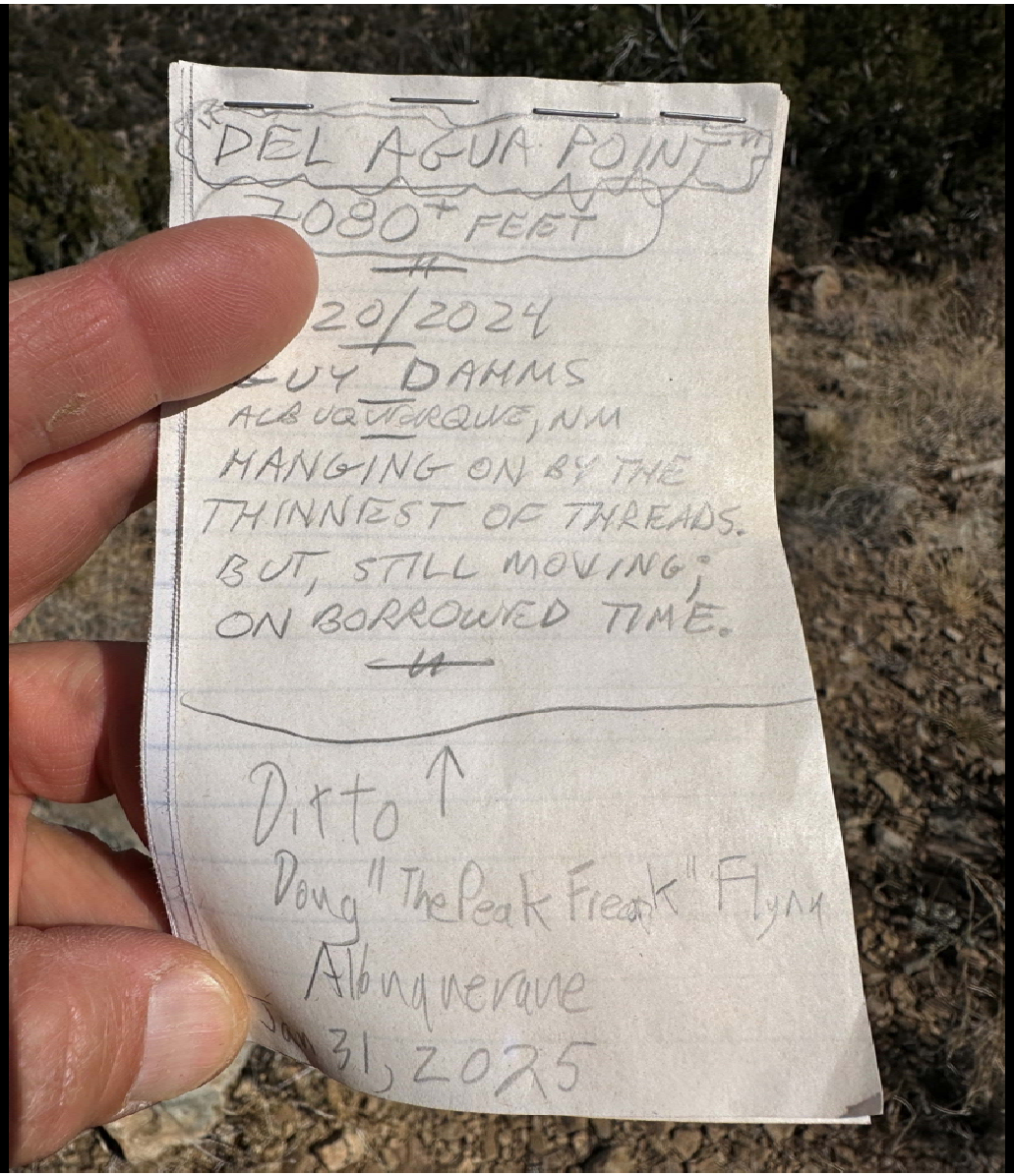





Upper (East)
Del Agua Peak
Lower (West)
Del Agua Peak



Del Agua Point/Lower North Piedra Lisa Peaks Loop



Summit Register courtesy of Guy Dahms

Big views

Ridge traverse from Del Agua Point to the peak above the parking
NPL Trail parking area

Lobo/Three Pigs Overlook Loop

-Easy to Moderate bushwhacking
-Much easier from Sandia Crest
-Outstanding viewpoints w/great fall colors
-Up close views of the Three Pigs
-Off-trail route begins at the Del Agua Overlook

-Route from the Del Agua Overlook follows the north rim to a northwest corner directly above the Three Pigs before descending towards Lobo

Route from Lobo to the Three Pigs Overlook

View atop Lobo

Route from Sandia Crest to Lobo and the Three Pigs Overlook

Three Pigs Overlook

Three Pigs Overlook

Del Agua Rim Walk route from the Three Pigs Overlook back to Sandia Crest

Sandia Arch

North Peak Route

-Easier route finding and route IMO
-Easy bushwhacking with a horrid short stretch of deadfall
-Class 3 to gain the arch ridge
-Opportunity to check out the top of the Knife Edge of the Shield
-Located on top of a ridge in the middle of Del Agua Canyon, about 1,000 feet below the Crest

One of many overlooks off the North Peak Trail

View of the Needle along the North Peak Trail

Canyon Del Agua Overlook below North Peak

Top of the Knife Edge of the Shield

Top of the Knife Edge of the Shield

Deadfall along the Forest Traverse

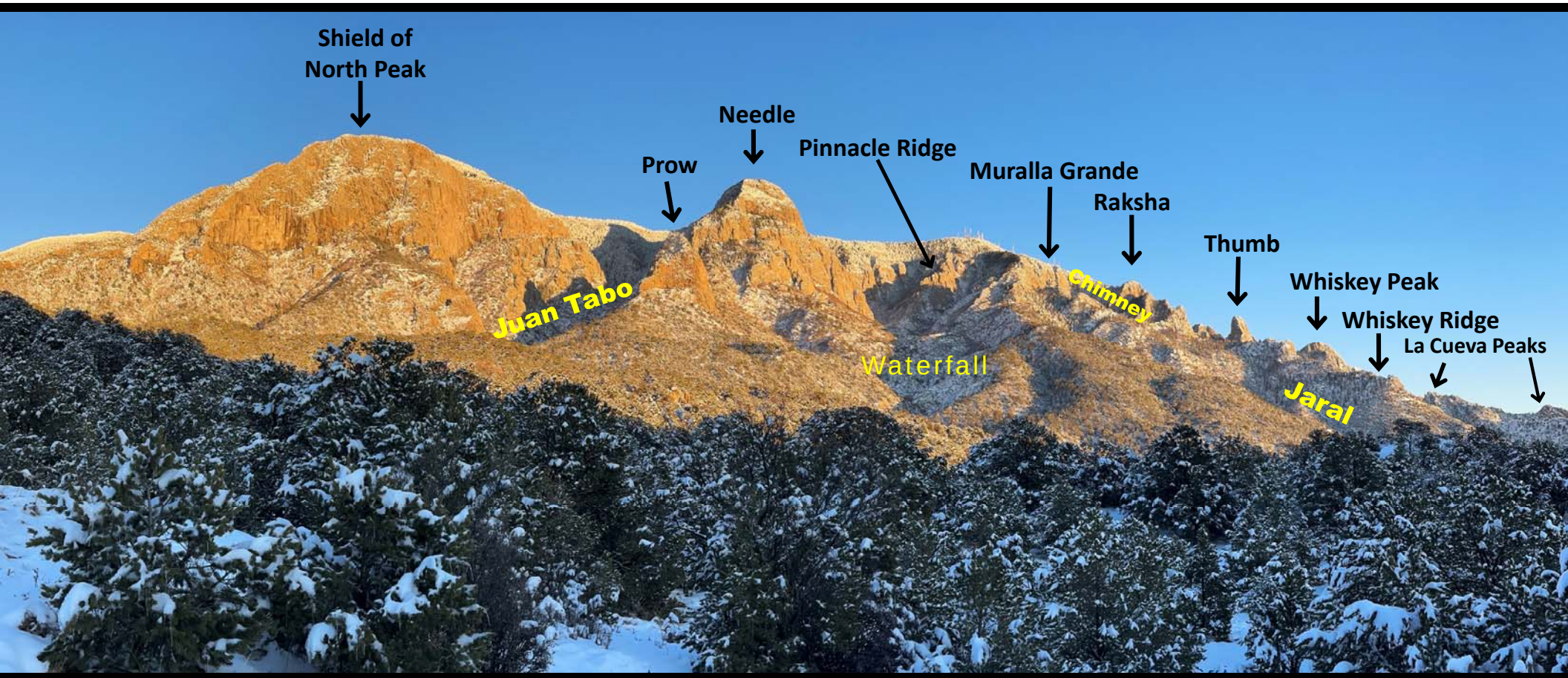
Aim for the grove of aspen

*Sandia Arch Ridge – Class 3 ramp

Route from North Peak and the Knife Edge Trail to Sandia Arch

Central Sandias: Rincon Spur to Pino Canyon

Spectacular scenery that includes granite lined slickrock canyons, streams, waterfalls, and ridges with dramatic views
Section with the most routes to the crest that aren't a nightmare
Lots of scrambling opportunities and potentials for loops
Bushwhacking is easy to frustratingly difficult
Highest density of rock formations
Most routes from Sandia Crest



Prominent Features of the Central Sandias between the Rincon Spur and Whiskey Ridge

Shield of North Peak	Muralla Grande	Whiskey Peak
Prow	Raksha	Whiskey Ridge
Needle	Thumb	La Cueva Peaks

Juan Tabo Canyon Route

Ramp of the Shield

Ramp of the Shield Route
Outstanding scrambling Class 3-4
Minimal Brush

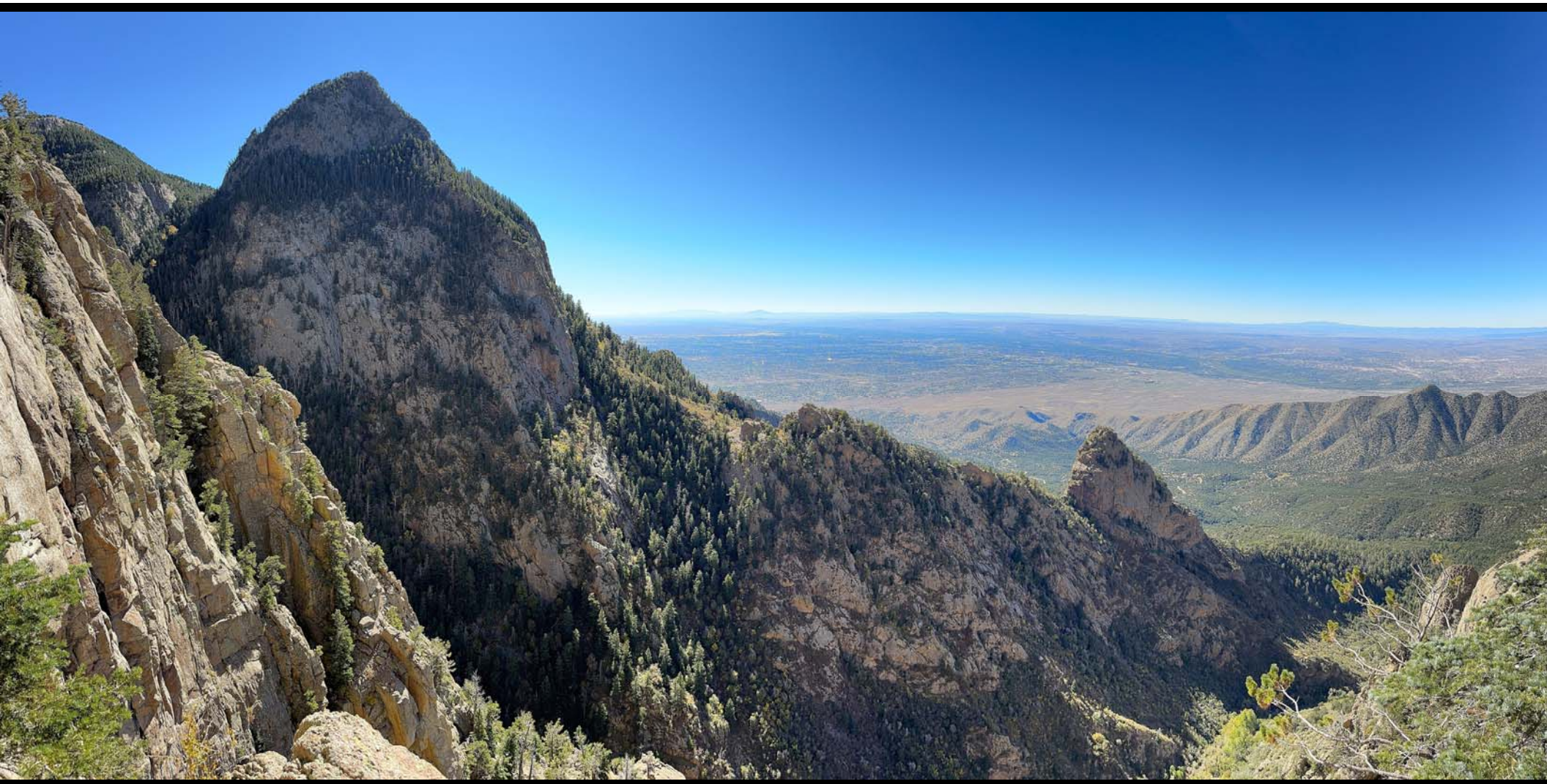
Difficult
Begins at the end of the Fletcher Trail
Great views of the Prow and Needle and Juan Tabo Canyon

Fletcher Trail Ramp of the Shield Route

The Prow

Ray V. and the Shield

View from the non-technical highpoint



End of the line, around 9,400 feet

Juan Tabo/Waterfall Canyon Divide

Prow/Needle Ridge

Prow and Needle Ridge

Easy to difficult bushwhacking
Incredible views of the Shield, Prow, and Needle

Area that few hikers see
Best approached from the Movie Trail
Loop via Waterfall or Juan Tabo Canyon

Steep scree slope
Cactus dodging
Challenging

Route from Waterfall Canyon

East face of the Prow

Needle seen along the South Ridge of Juan Tabo Canyon.

Needle Ridge Crags

Waterfall Canyon Route

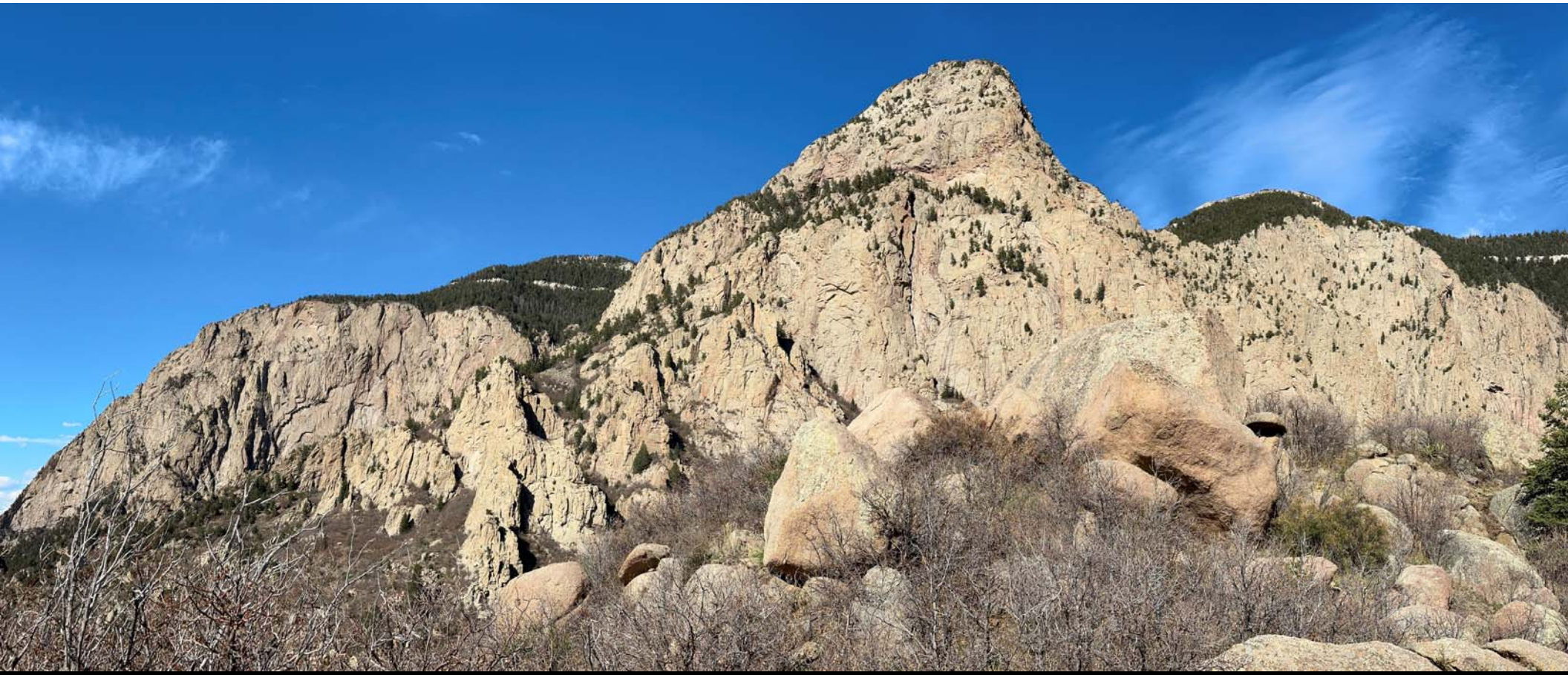
South Ridge to Waterfall Canyon Peak

Waterfall Canyon Loop *Route to get past the Waterfall

Spectacular views of the Prow, Shield, and especially the Needle
Mostly easy to moderate bushwhacking with some Class 3-4 to gain ridge and past Waterfall Canyon Peak
Short or long options: Up until you have had enough or down the south rim
Possible to continue up to Waterfall Canyon Peak and Sandia Crest
Loop can be combined with the Jaral/Chimney Canyon Ridge

Slabs above the waterfall

Slabs above the waterfall with route to the south ridge of the canyon



Waterfall Canyon Ridge Loop

Outrageous views of the Needle

Waterfall Canyon Ridge to Waterfall Canyon Peak - Class 3 beyond the peak to Sandia Crest

Waterfall Canyon Peak Route

Waterfall Canyon Peak

View into Chimney Canyon from Waterfall Canyon Peak

Pinnacle Valley and Mummy Canyon Overlooks

-Spectacular areas to view fall colors and rugged scenery
-Popular climbing areas with access off of use trails
-Opportunity to view numerous overlooks
-Mild bushwhacking/virtually no scrambling
-Caution near edge of cliffs

Needle Overlook

Bushwhacking and exploring along the base of the limestone cliffs between the Tombstone and Needle

Tombstone Overlook

Tombstone

Mummy Canyon on the left and Pinnacle Valley on the right

Pinnacle Valley

Mummy Canyon

Jaral Canyon

Jaral/Chimney Ridge Loop

Jaral/Chimney Ridge Loop

Challenging route beginning at the La Luz Parking area with fun scrambling, route-finding, and bushwhacking along the most scenic ridge in the Sandias with 2 loop options:

#1 Descend into Chimney Canyon and take La Luz. Park at La Luz

#2 Traverse over to the Waterfall Canyon ridge and descend along ridge. Extend by summiting Waterfall Canyon Peak. Park at the South Piedra Lisa

Jaral/Chimney Canyon Divide

Jaral/Chimney Canyon Divide

Crossover loop route to Waterfall Canyon Ridge and/or to summit Waterfall Peak
Loop to the Chimney Canyon Trail

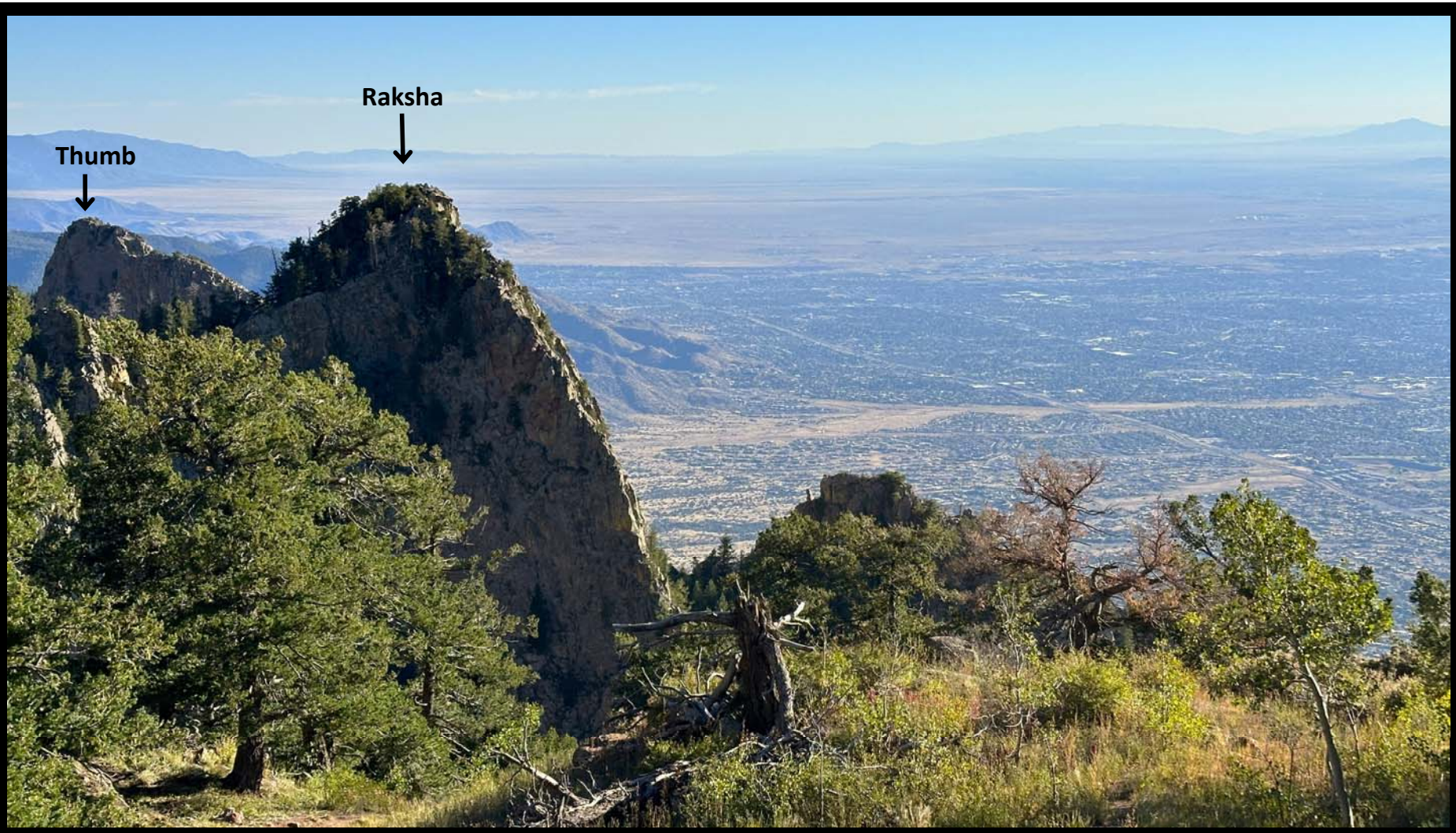
Chimney Canyon

Muralla Grande Route

-Easy from Sandia Crest and the Chimney Canyon plateau
-Spectactular viewpoint with room to explore

Muralla Grande

Trail begins at the top of the exit gully from Chimney Canyon

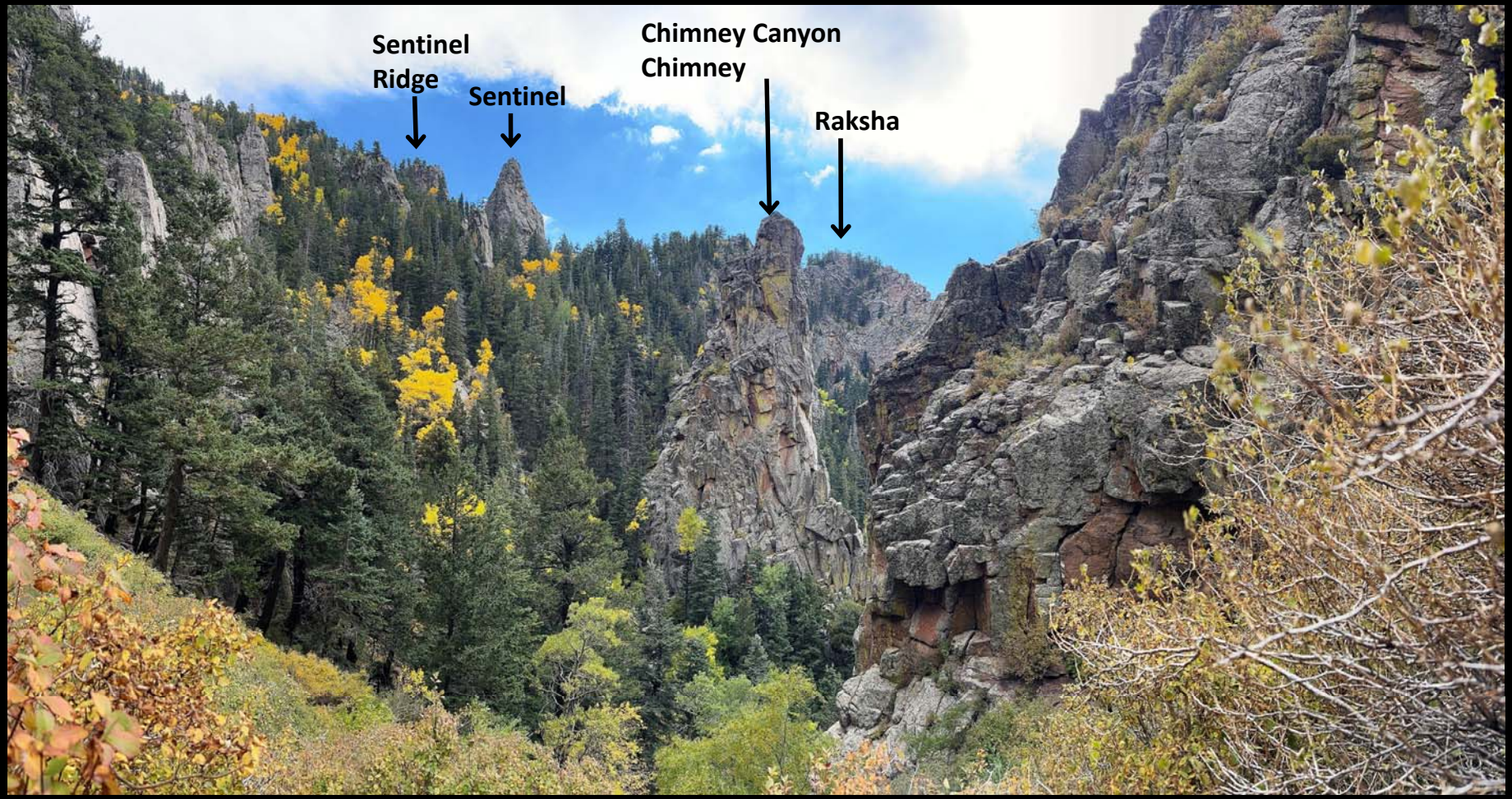


Muralla Grande Overlook

Muralla Grande Overlook

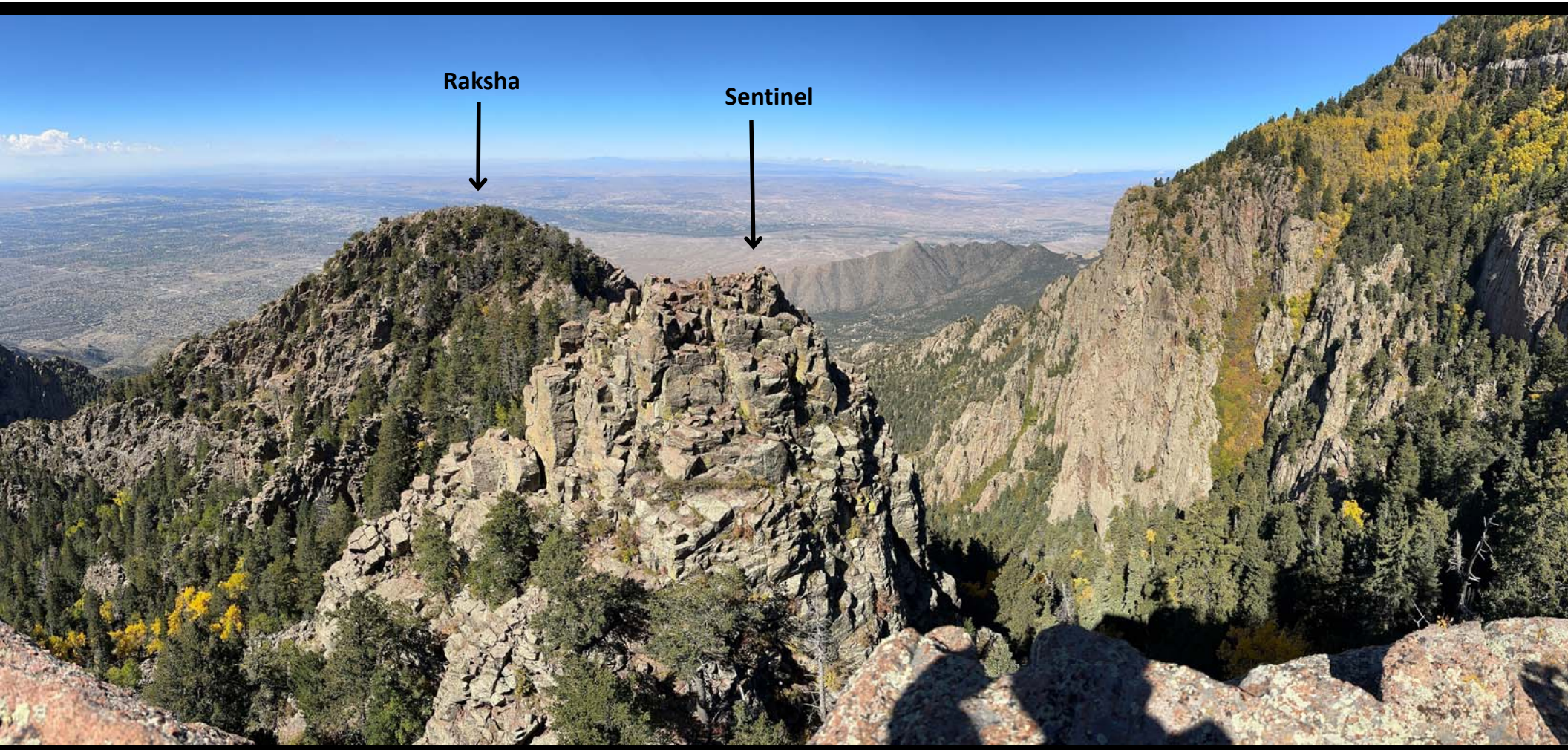
Upper Chimney/La Cueva Divide

Raksha



Raksha

-Located on the La Cueva/Chimney Canyon Divide below the Sentinel
-One of the best viewpoints in the Sandia
-Minimal bushwhacking with steep hiking, a bit of scrambling (Class 3), and exposure
-Out and back or loop options (Chimney or La Cueva Canyon)



View from Sentinel Ridge

Raksha/Sentinel Ridge Saddle. Route goes down a rockfall to this saddle that begins on the north side of Sentinel Ridge

Chimney Canyon Loop Option

Raksha

Left to right: Trident, Thumb, Whiskey Peak

Raksha

Lower La Cueva Canyon

La Cueva Canyon to La Cueva Falls

La Cueva Canyon

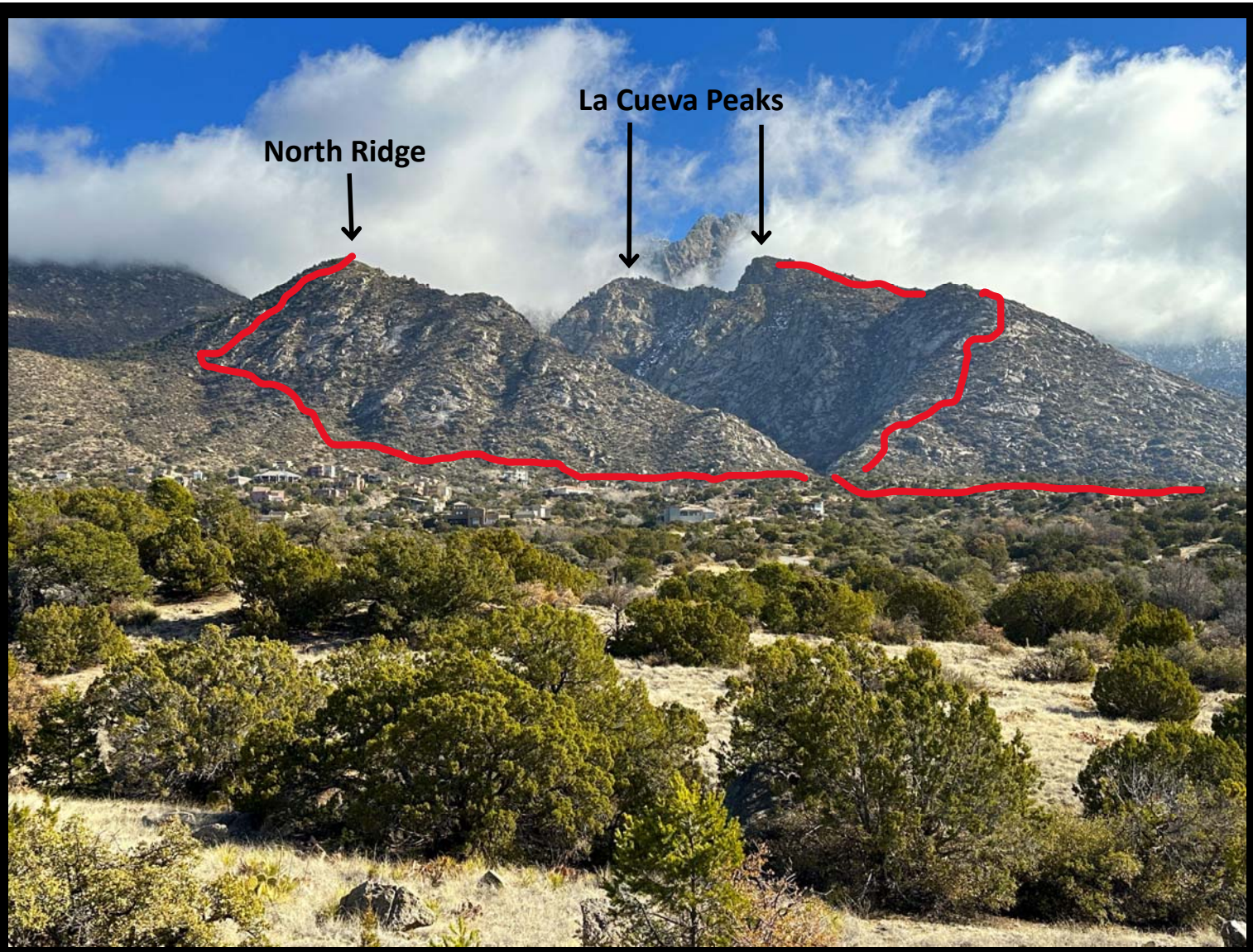
Highlights include streams, intermittent waterfalls, short granite narrows, fun slab and rock scrambling, route-finding, and easy to difficult brush and deadfall.

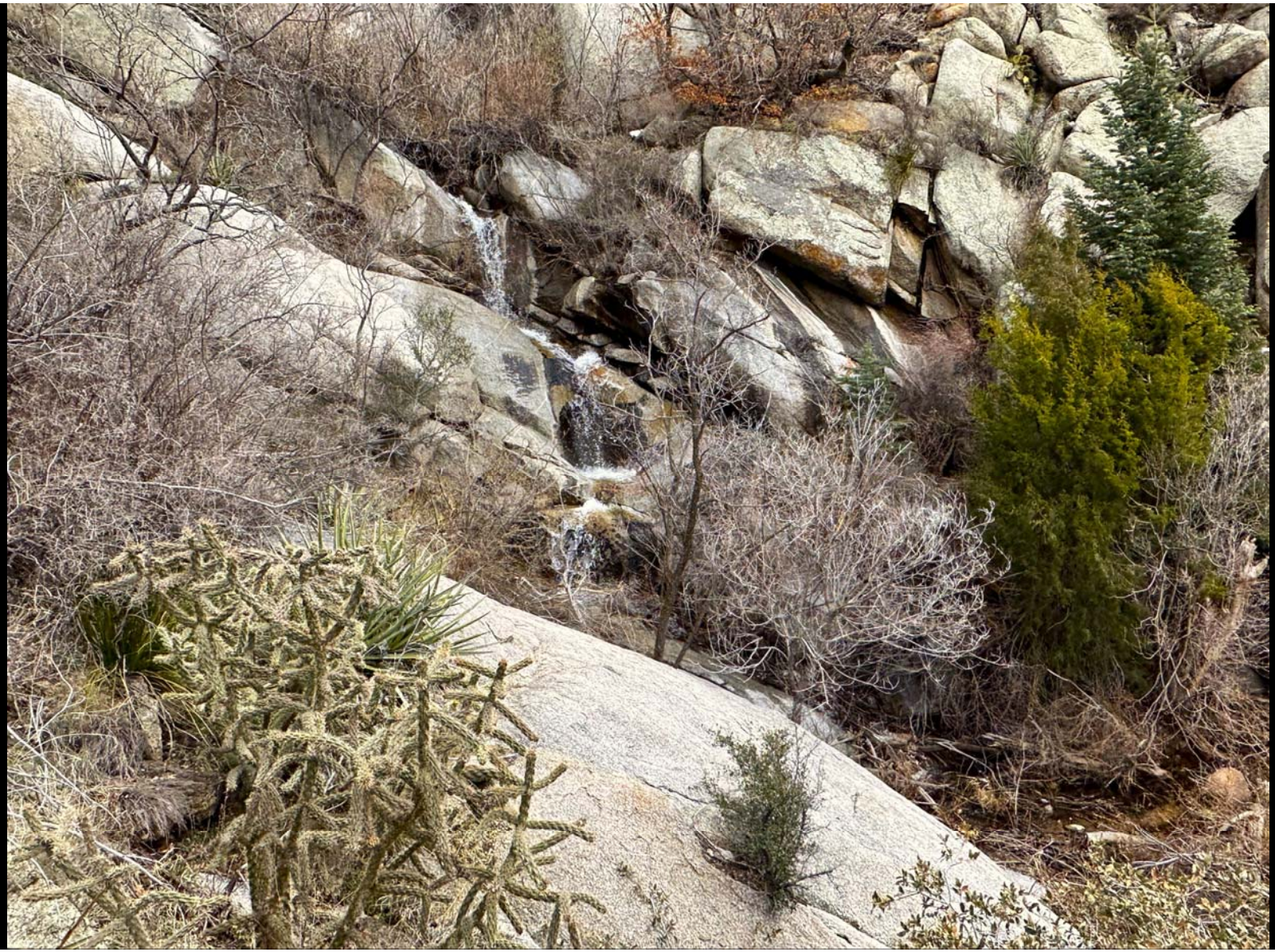
Some class 3-4 with exposure to avoid cactus and obstacles. Moderate to difficult bushwhacking.

Upper Canyon Routes easier Approached from Sandia Crest.

Best when gate is opened but make sure to exit before it closes.

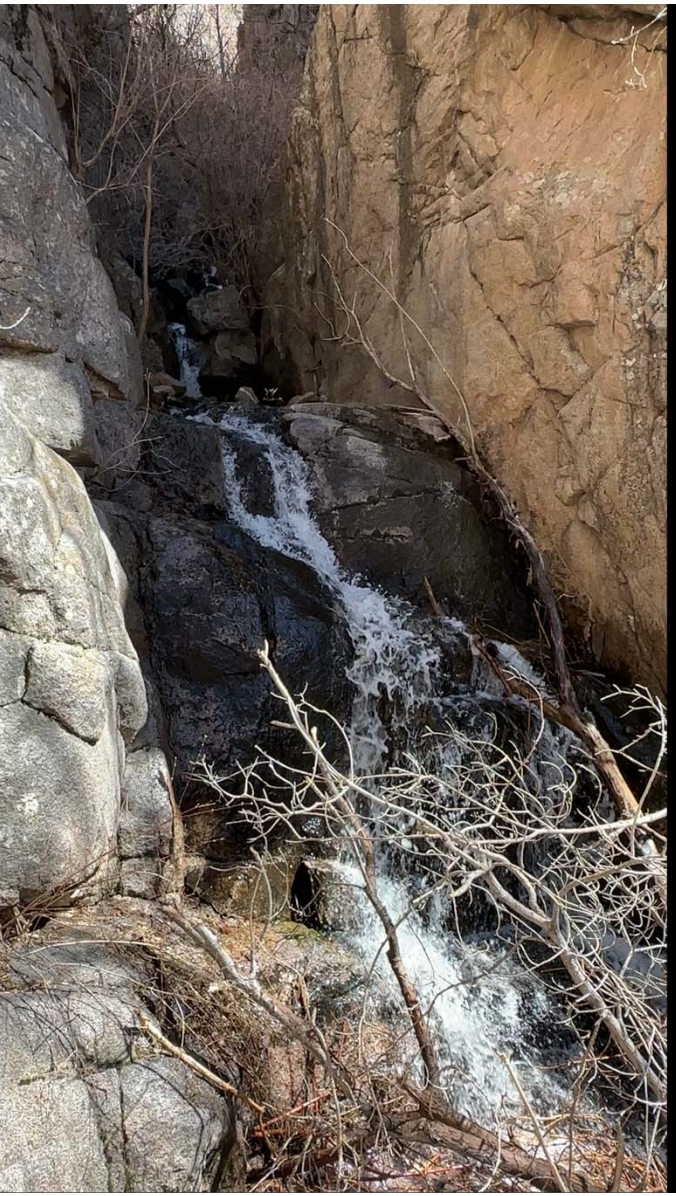
Routes on south ridge (La Cueva Peaks) best approached via Rozamiento Canyon





Chimney Falls

Only flowing like this during a spring melt with a good snowpack or during or after a very strong downpour.



The Narrows

Narrows exit

La Cueva Falls

View of the La Cueva Peaks and Tombstone on the La Cueva/Rozamiento Canyon Divide

Accessed from the first north fork of Rozamineto Canyon

Upper La Cueva Canyon Routes

The Point

Dragon’s Tail

South Ridge of La Cueva Canyon Routes

The Point from the Crest Spur/La Luz Trail Junction From the La Luz boulder field
Dragon's Tail
Thumb
Whiskey Peak

The Point

The Point

The Point

Dragon’s Tail

Dragon’s Tail Route

Spectacular views of the backsides of the Thumb, Trident, Whiskey Peak, and features of Big Valley and the Domingo Baca Canyon Minimal bushwhacking with good route-finding

Moderate hike from Sandia Crest and La Luz Rockfall – Difficult from Big Valley

The Dragon’s Tail

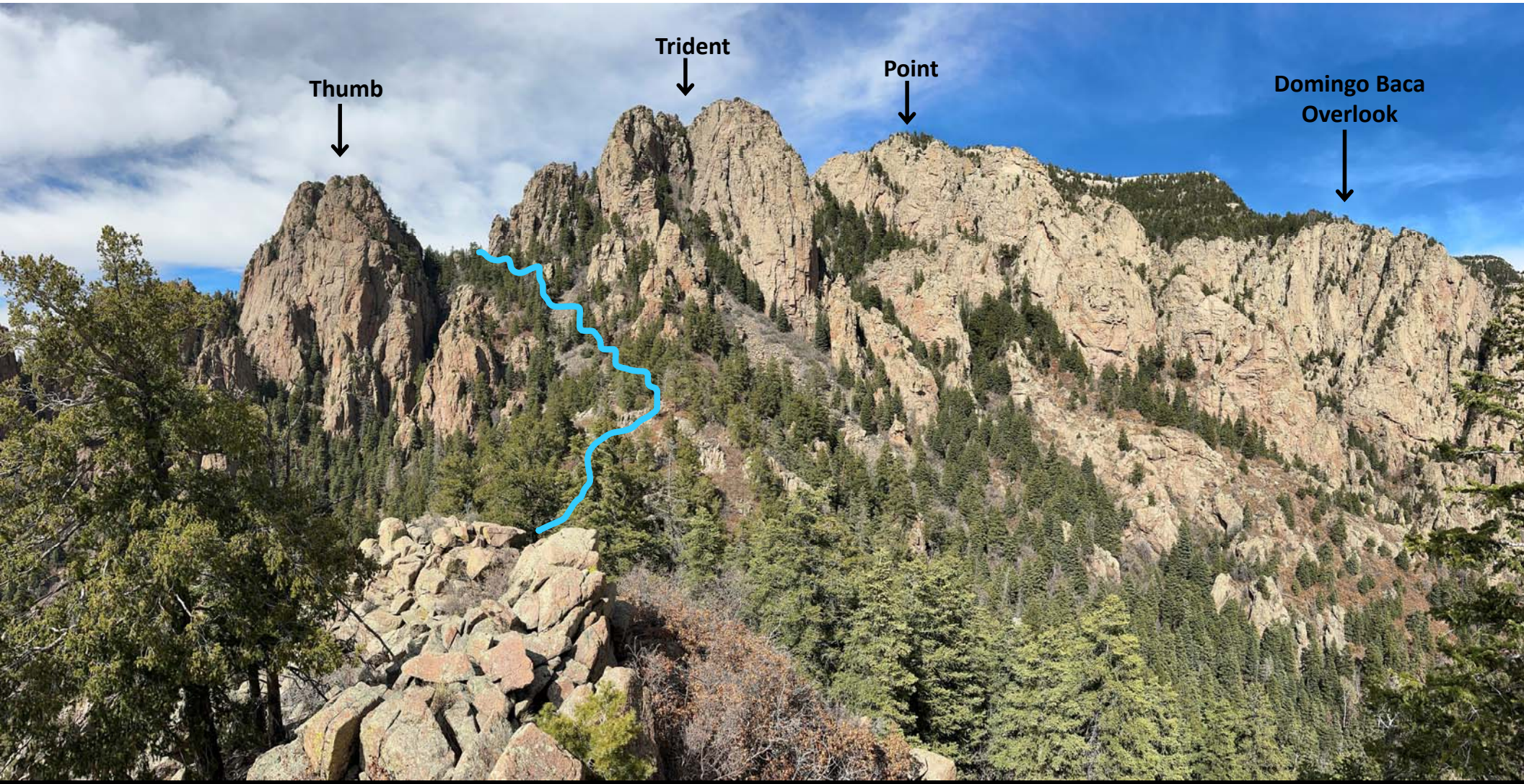
Y.D.S. Class 2

Dragon’s Tail

Dragon’s Tail – Echo Canyon on the left and Big Valley and Whiskey Ridge on the right.

Whiskey Peak and the Thumb

Dragon’s Tail



Dragon’s Tail route from the Thumb/Trident saddle

Upper La Luz Overlooks south of the Crest Spur Junction

-Easy access via climber’s trails from La Luz

-Spectacular mountain scenery

Tower above Echo Canyon accessed via a climber's trail below the La Luz

Domingo Baca Overlook – Unmaintained Trail below the La Luz

Exploring below the Domingo Baca Overlook

Exploring below the Domingo Baca Overlook

Exploring below the Domingo Baca Overlook

Rozamiento Canyon Routes

La Cueva Peaks
Whiskey Peak
Tower 1 Loop

Rozamiento Canyon (first canyon north of the lower tram)

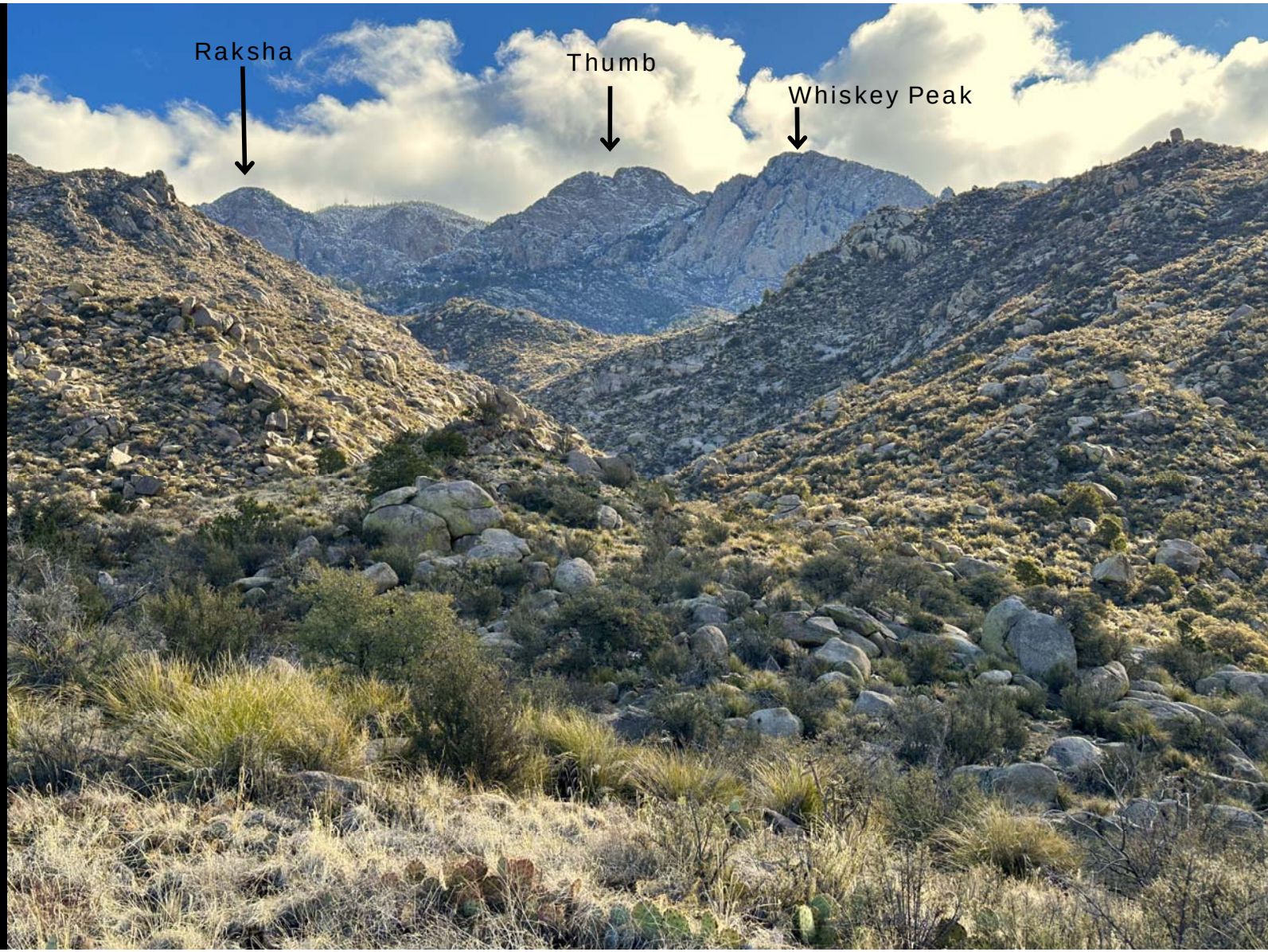
Flowing water most of the year
Sustained granite slab scrambling
Great scenery

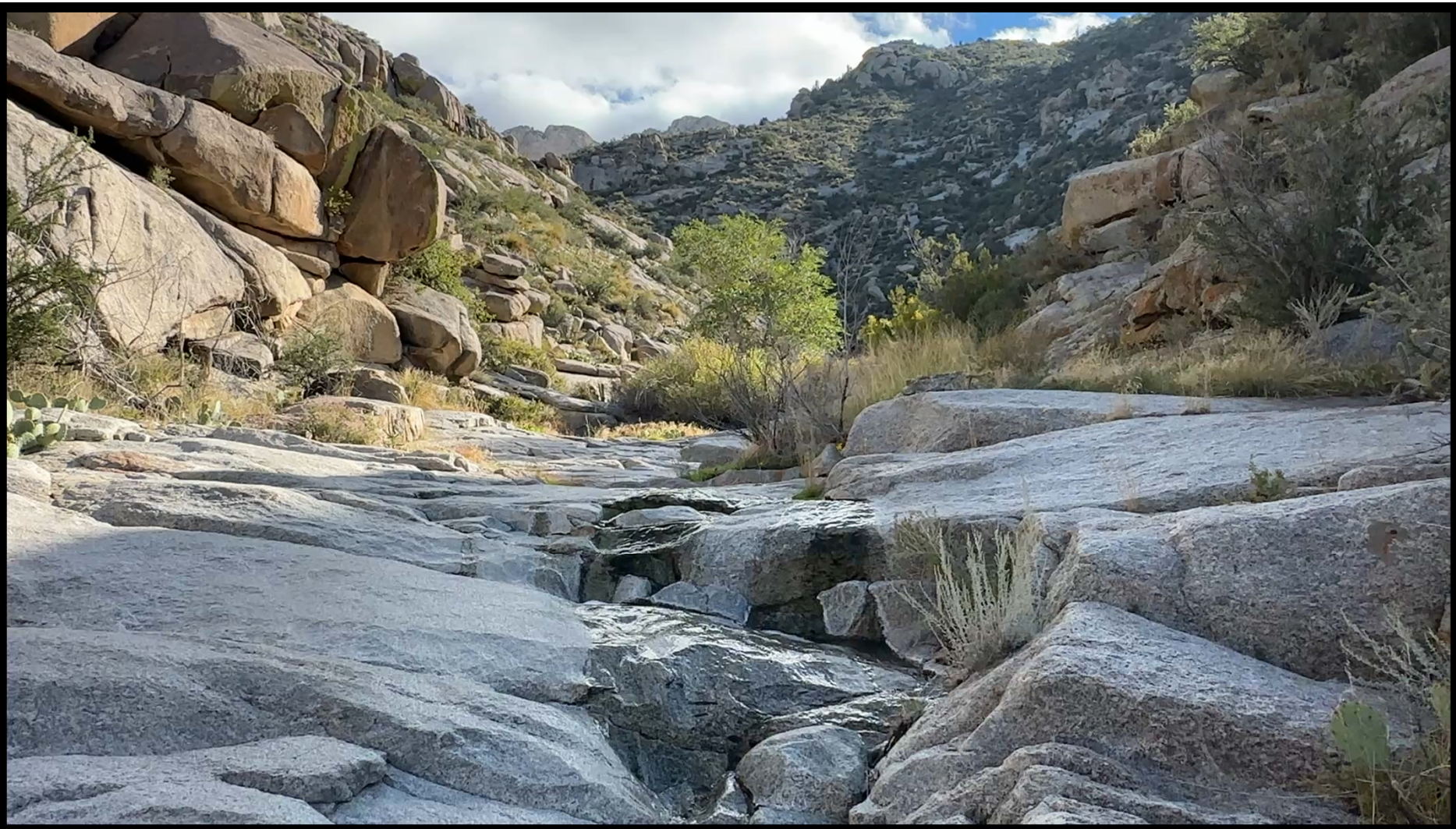
Very little bushwhacking on the slickrock
Catus Dodging and easy to difficult bushwhacking
Easy to combine canyon and ridge loops

ROUTES*

Tower 1 Loop + Tower 2 Peak (Right Fork)
Whiskey Peak (Middle Fork)
La Cueva Peaks (Left Fork)

Canyon Entrance via Tramway Trail Connector





Rozamiento, La Cueva, and Waterfall Canyon almost always have water

Left Fork

Left Fork slabs

La Cueva Peaks

Top of the Left Fork Slabs

Tombstones

La Cueva Peaks Tombstones

Upper La Cueva Peak

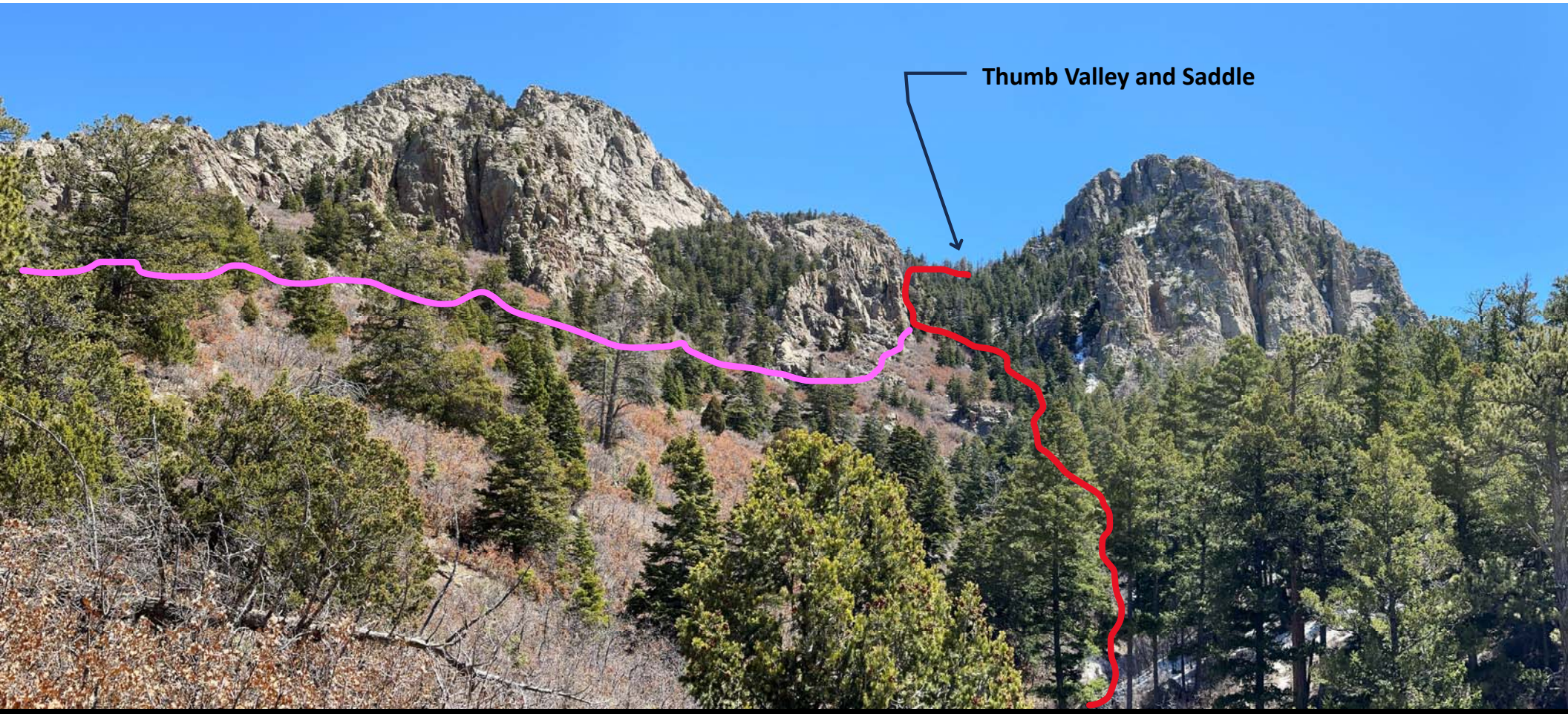
View across La Cueva Canyon towards the La Luz Trail

The big slab in the South Fork (Class 2-5 routes)

Middle Fork of Rozamiento entrance
Whiskey Peak Route

Middle Fork
Whiskey Peak
Route

Middle Fork
Whiskey Peak
Route



2 of 3 Approach Routes to Whiskey Peak

Rozamiento Canyon, Old La Luz (easiest) from the top or bottom, and Big Valley (not seen)

-Spectacular views of the southwest face of the Thumb and features surrounding Big Valley

-Class 2 with some exposure from the Old La Luz - Challenging slab scrambling Class 3-4 up Rozamiento Class 3 from Big Valley

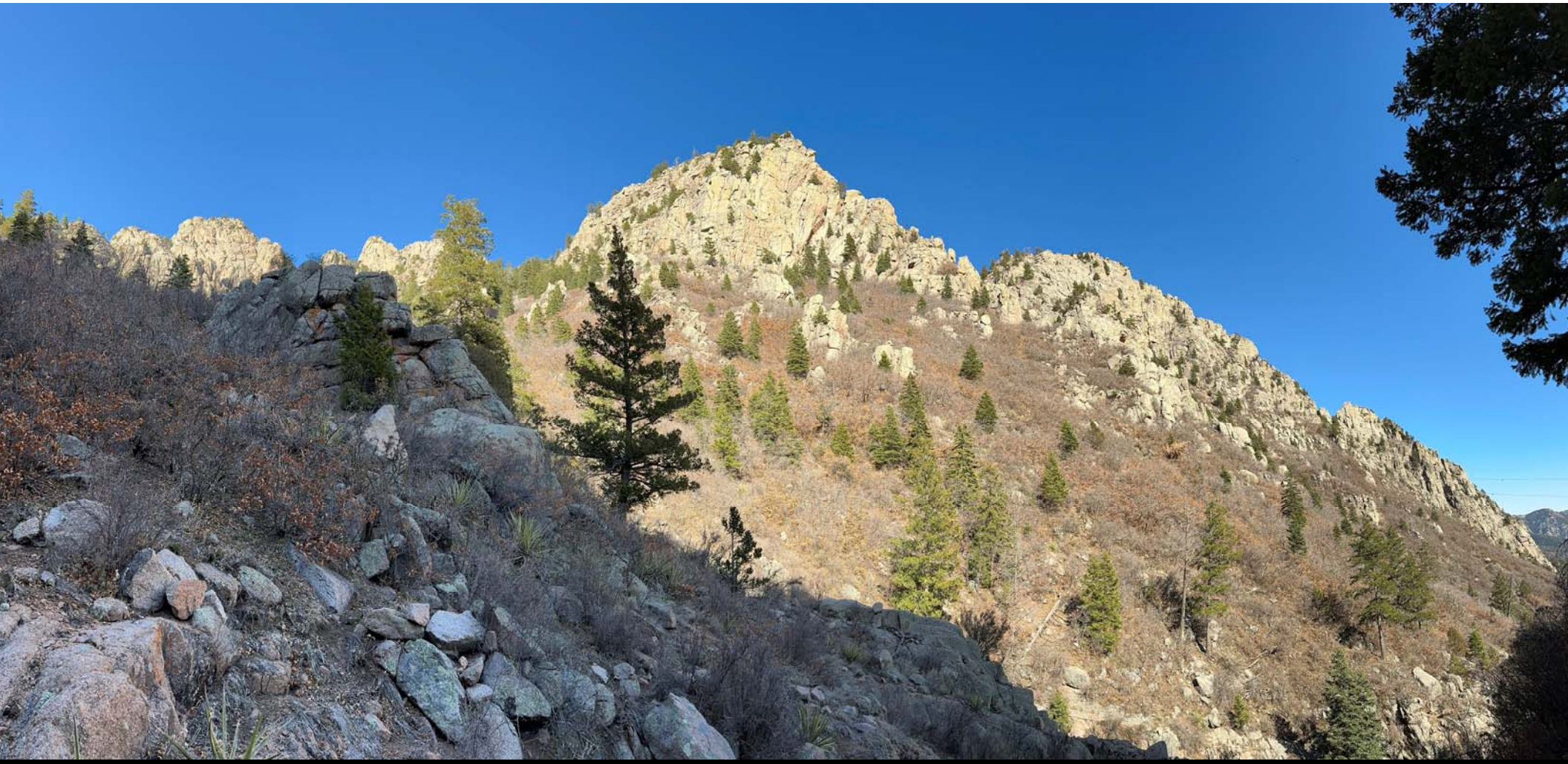
-Loop up Rozamiento and down Big Valley makes for a long but amazing day

Whiskey Peak

Whiskey Peak

Whiskey Peak

Whiskey Peak route from Big Valley



Whiskey Peak route to Big Valley Dragon’s Tail above

Upper South Fork

Tower 1 Ridge (South Ridge of Rozamiento Canyon)

Tower 1 Ridge

Finger - Tower 1 Ridge

Cannon Rock - Tower 1 Ridge

Whiskey Ridge

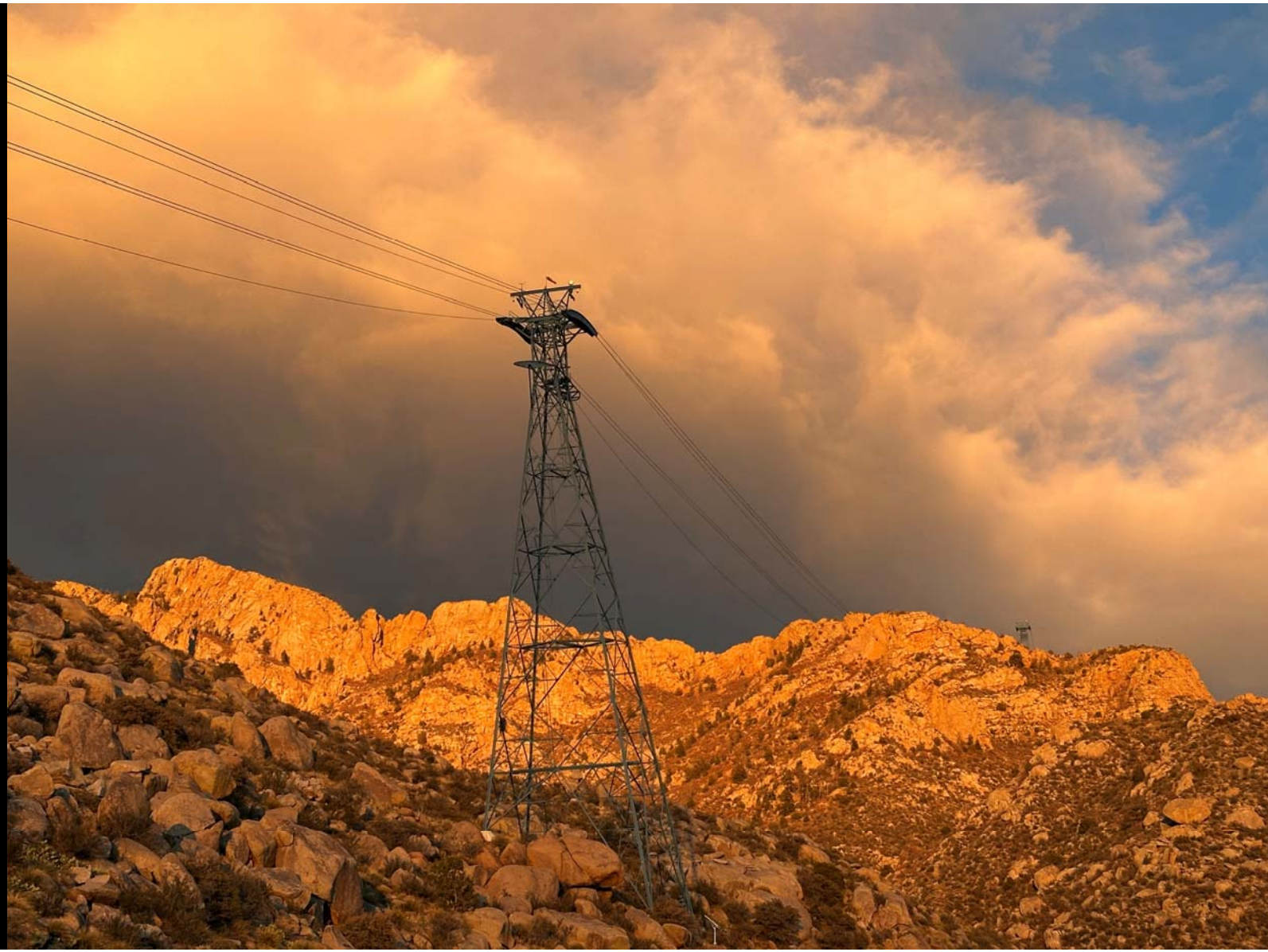
Tram Tower 2 Routes

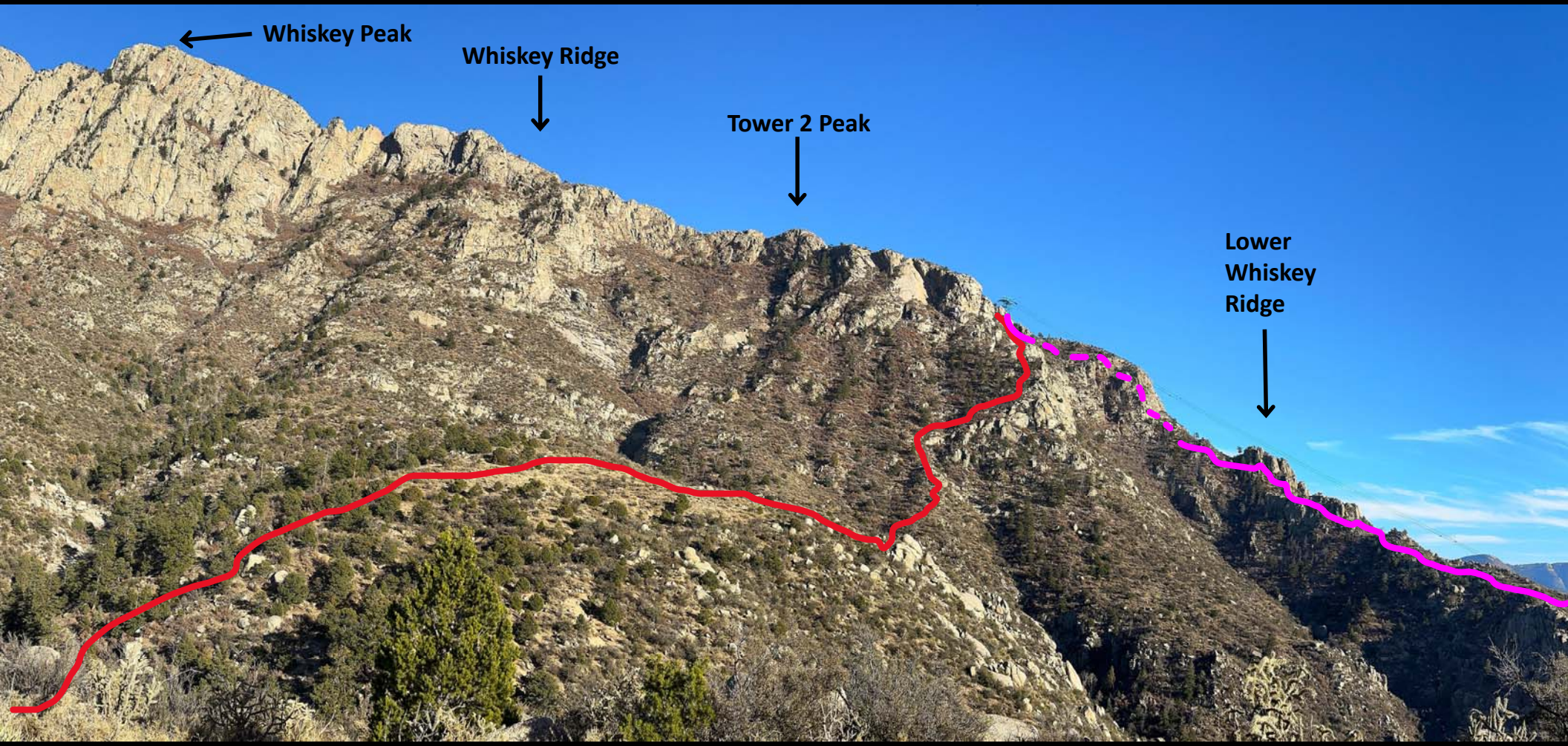
Tower 2 Routes
3 route Options

Lower Whiskey Ridge(easiest)

Big Valley

Rozamiento - Tower 1 Ridge



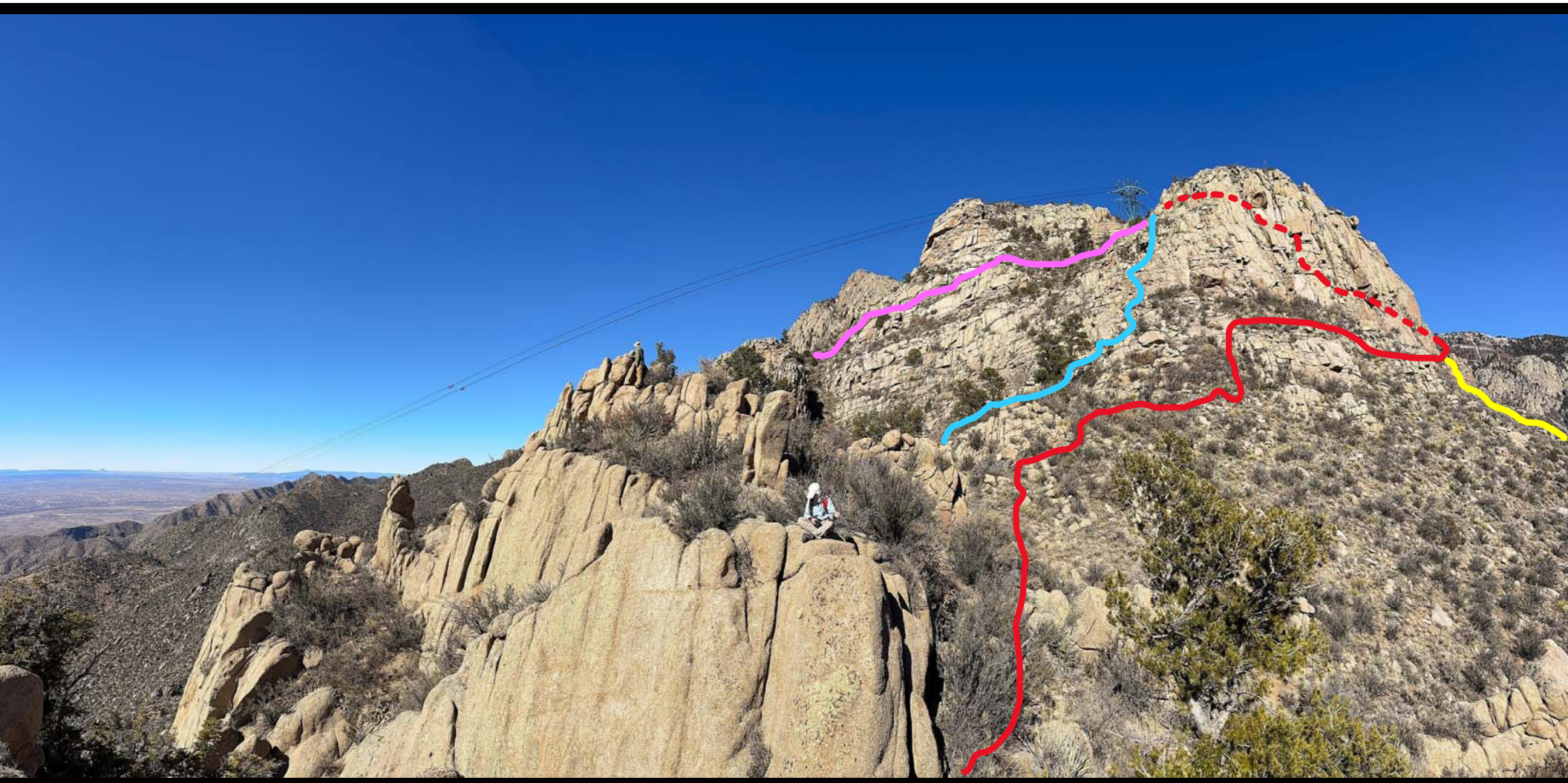


Tower 2 Routes

Tower 1 Ridge + Lower Whiskey Ridge

Lower Whiskey Ridge Route

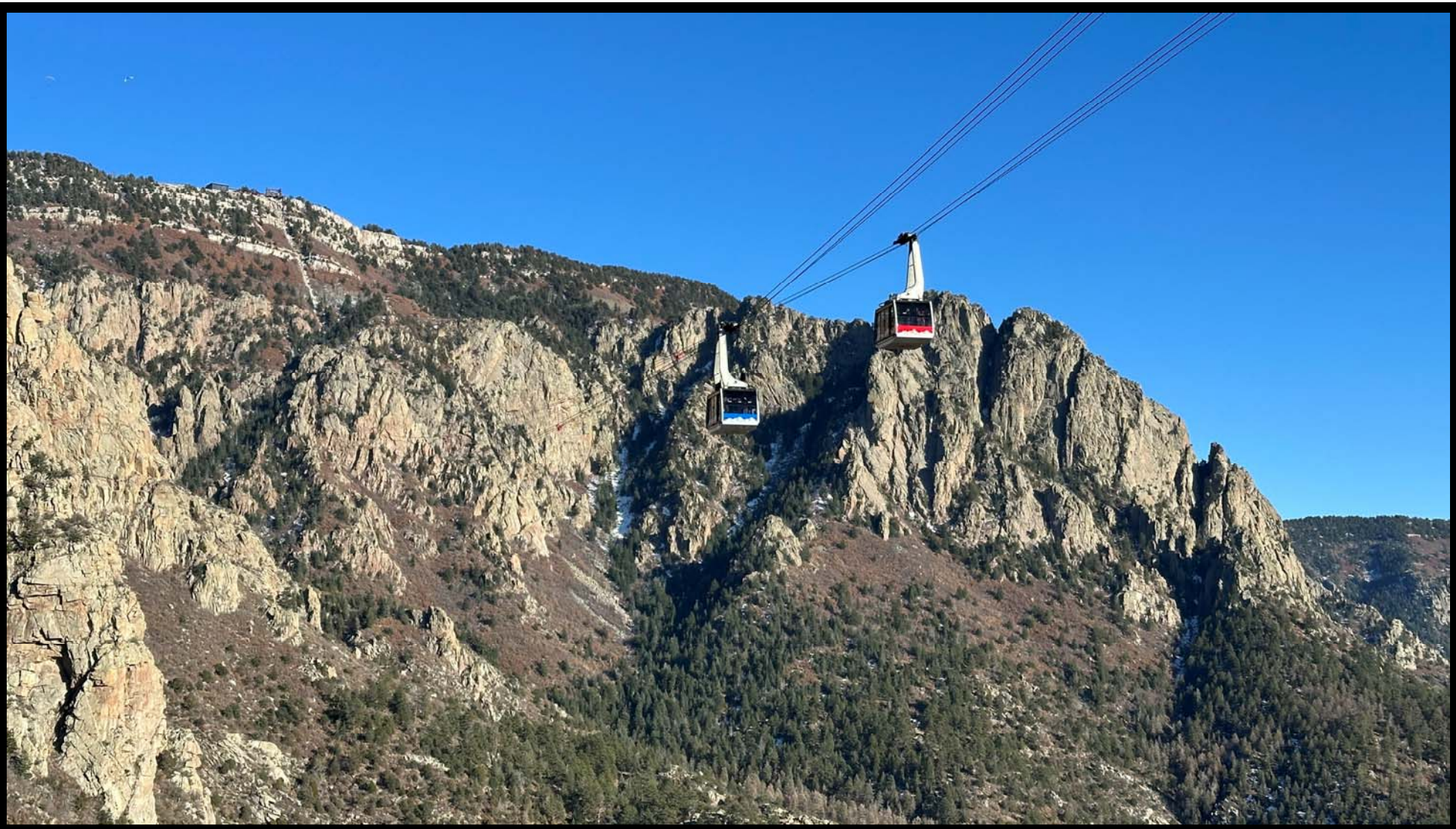
Lower Whiskey Ridge



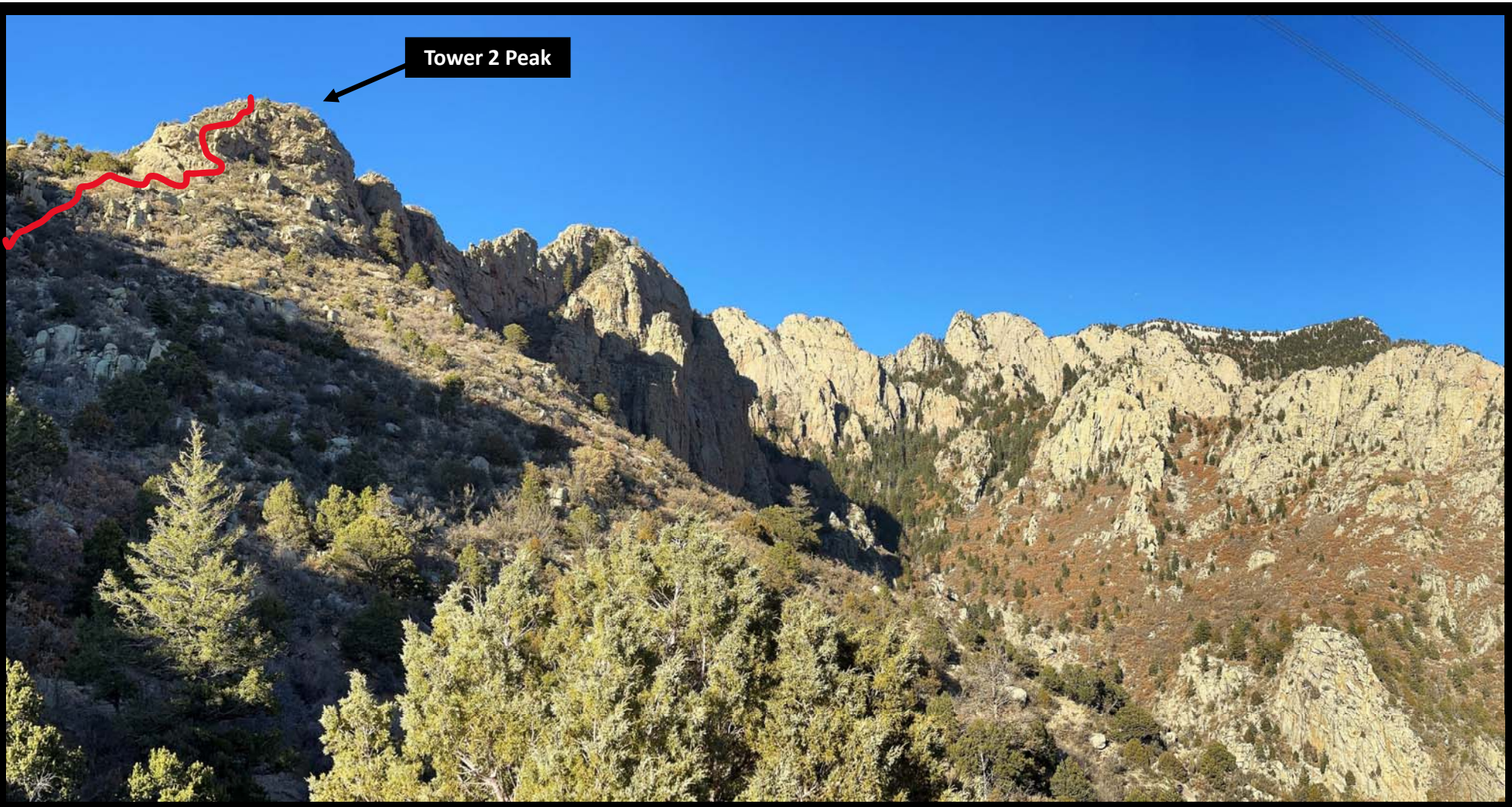
Tower 2 Routes

Lower Whiskey Ridge (Easiest) Big Valley (Moderate) Direct (Class 3-5) Tower 1 Ridge (Difficult)

Tower 2



Tower 2



Tower 2 Peak Route (Class 3-4)

Big Valley

Big Valley Loop Route

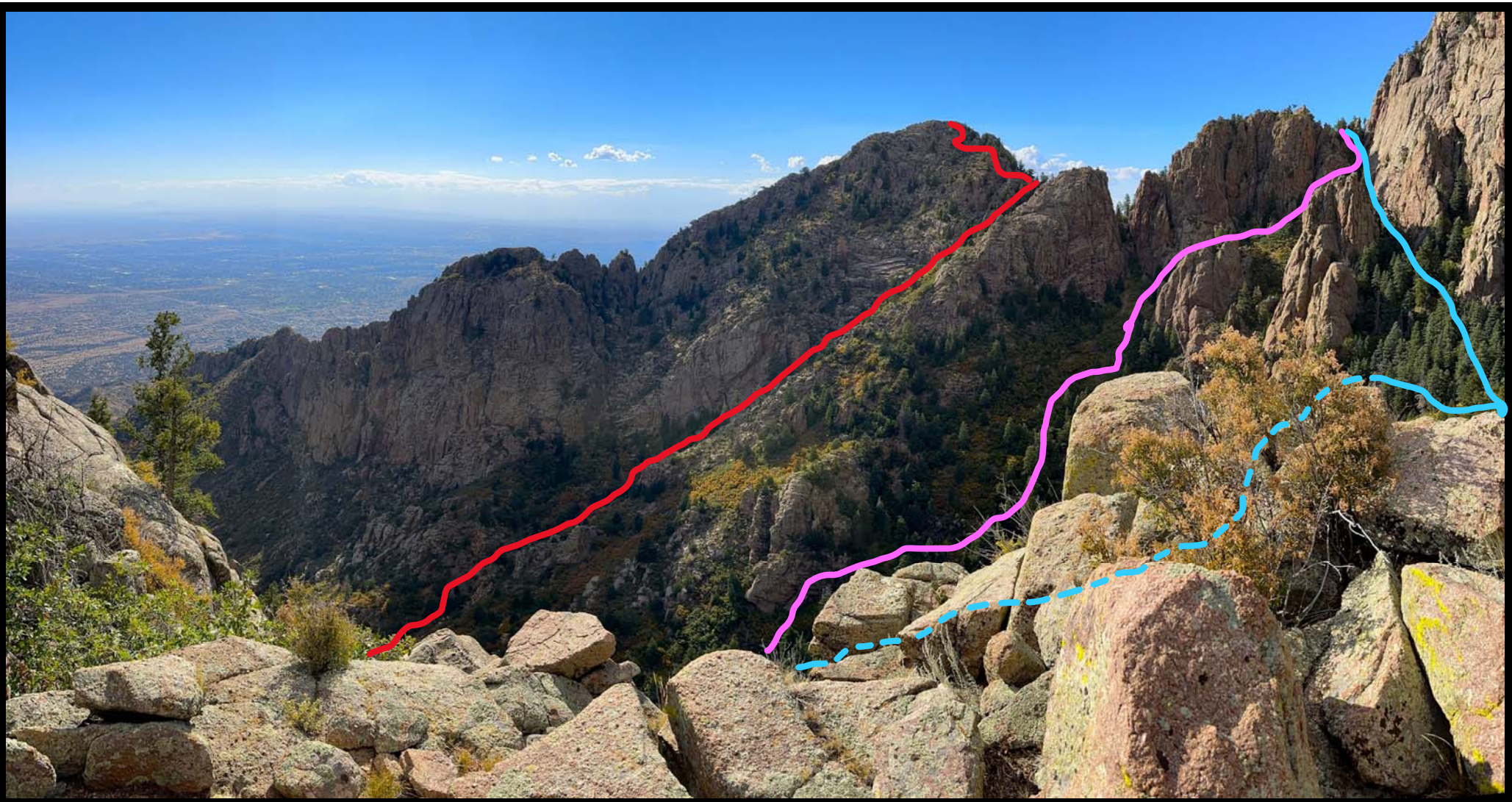
-Most scenic canyon in the Sandias
-Lots of water and waterfalls during a normal spring snowmelt
-Terrific slab scrambling
-Bushwhacking is easy until the upper canyon
-Ends at the Thumb/Trident Saddle
-Alternative and harder routes to Whiskey Peak and the Dragon's Tail

Big Valley Route

Begins at the lower section of the Domingo Baca Trail

Big Valley

Big Valley



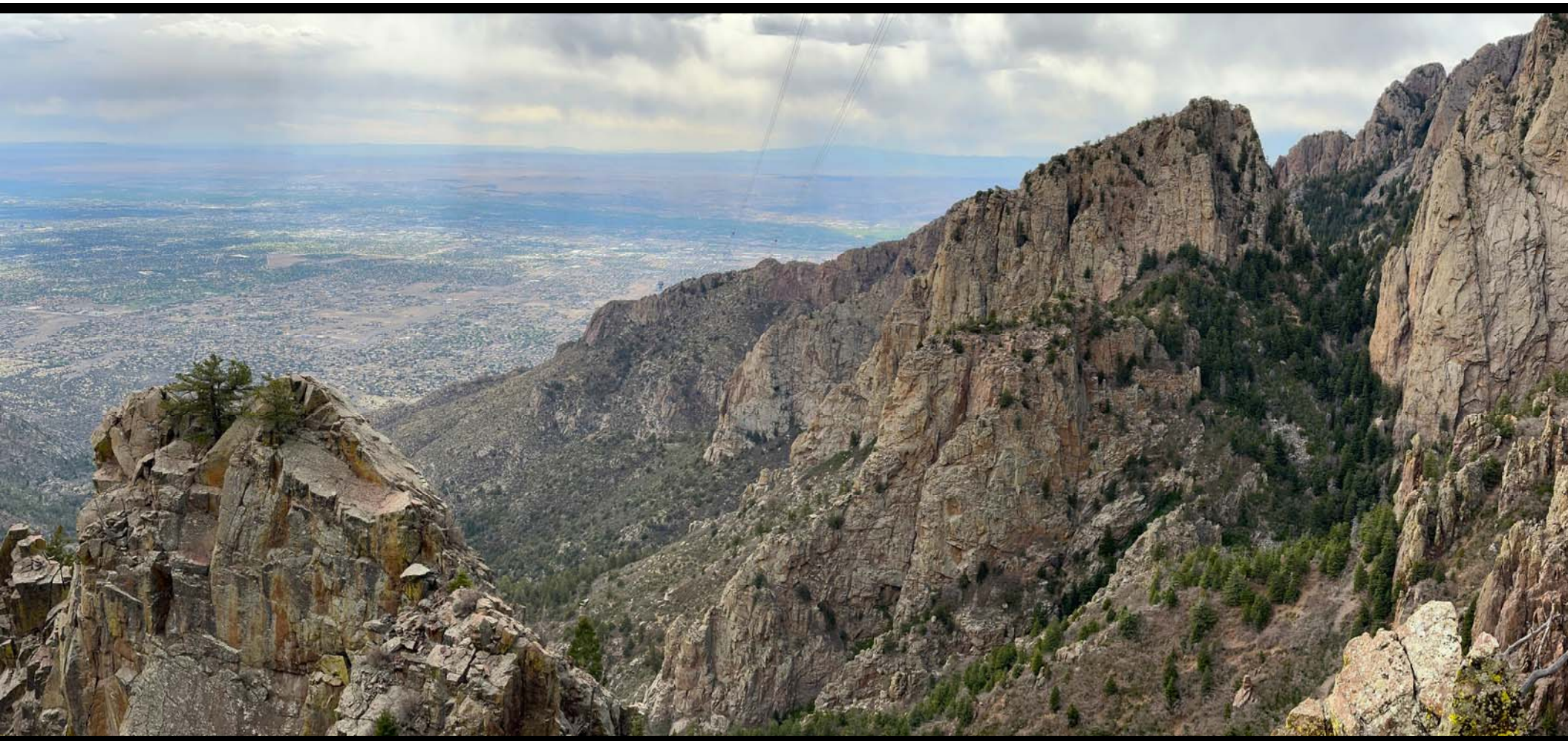
Big Valley/Whiskey Peak Route Big Valley to Thumb/Trident Saddle Big Valley to Dragon Tail

Tram Canyon Route

-Spectacular viewpoints
-Mostly easy to moderate bushwhacking with short sections of nasty brush
-Class 3-4 through the limestone cliff-band
-Difficult
-Accessed off of the Domingo Baca Trail

Tram Canyon Route from the Domingo Baca Trail

Tram Canyon Route



View topping out of Tram Canyon.

The Jawbone Overlook at the top of the granite.

Best to avoid the scree run

Class 3 through the limestone cliffs

Southern Sandias

Jawbone

-Prominet Feature south of the upper tram terminal
-Easy bushwhacking
-Class 3 with fatal exposure
-Short hike from tram or Ellis Trail via the South Crest Trail

Southern Sandias: Pino Canyon to Tijeras Canyon

Many unmaintained use trails

Except for the very south end, my area of least exploration

Forested areas often have some downright nasty bushwhacking

Most peaks are in areas along the crest and ridges south of the Embudito Canyon

South end of the range is a great place for winter hiking, peak-bagging, scrambling, and exploration

Pino Canyon Routes

Pino Baca Ridge and Pino Bear Ridge Easy to difficult depending on your route finding and how far you go

Pino Loop (Difficult)

Peaks 9,627 and 9,579 (Moderate to difficult depending on your approach)

Pino Wall (Easy route from Sandia Crest)

Chato and Gitana (Challenging routes from Sandia Crest)

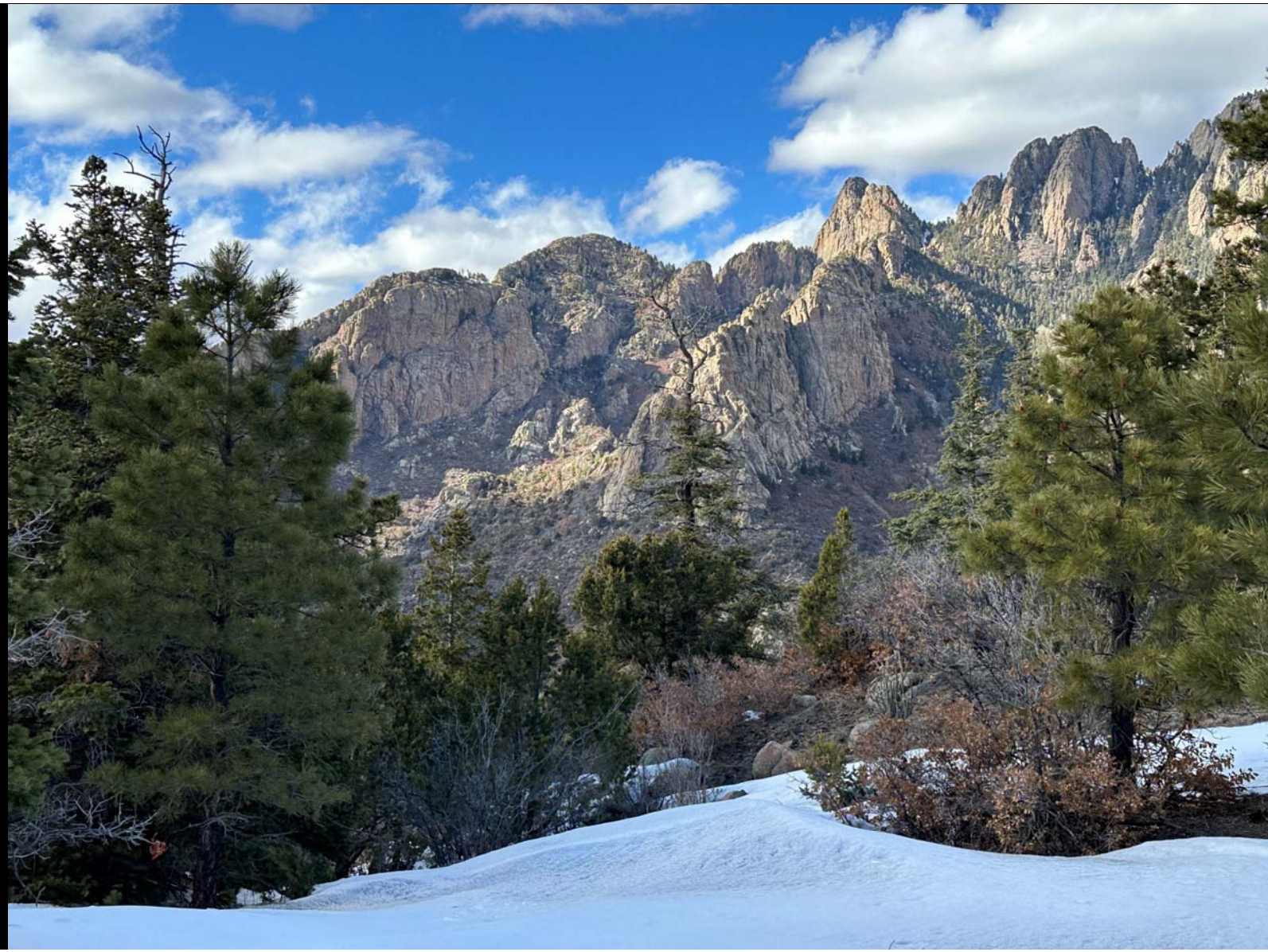
Pino-Baca Ridge
and
Pino-Bear Ridge

Pino/Baca Ridge Loop

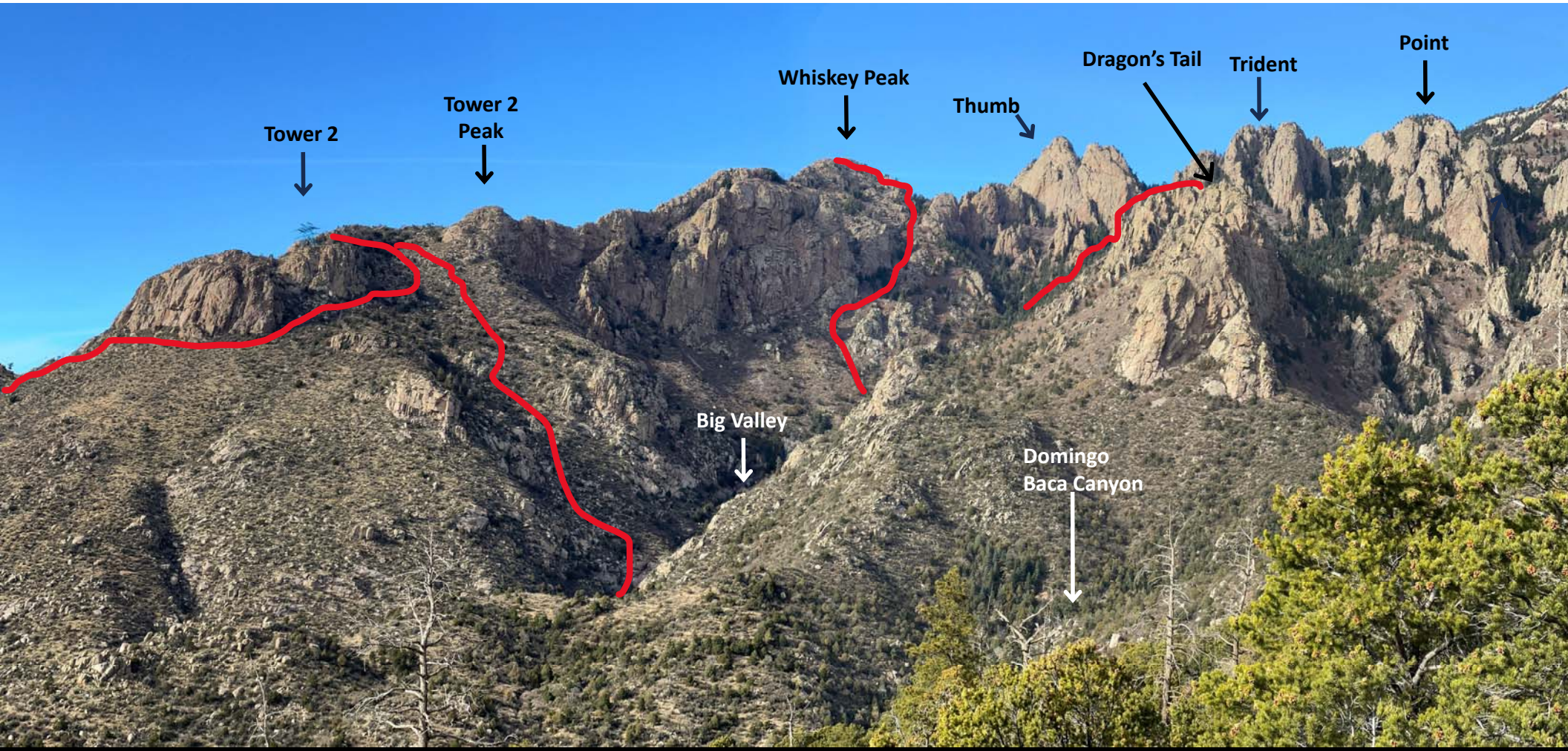
Great views of the central and southern Sandias

Easy to difficult bushwhacking, cactus dodging and route finding

Whimsical rock formations

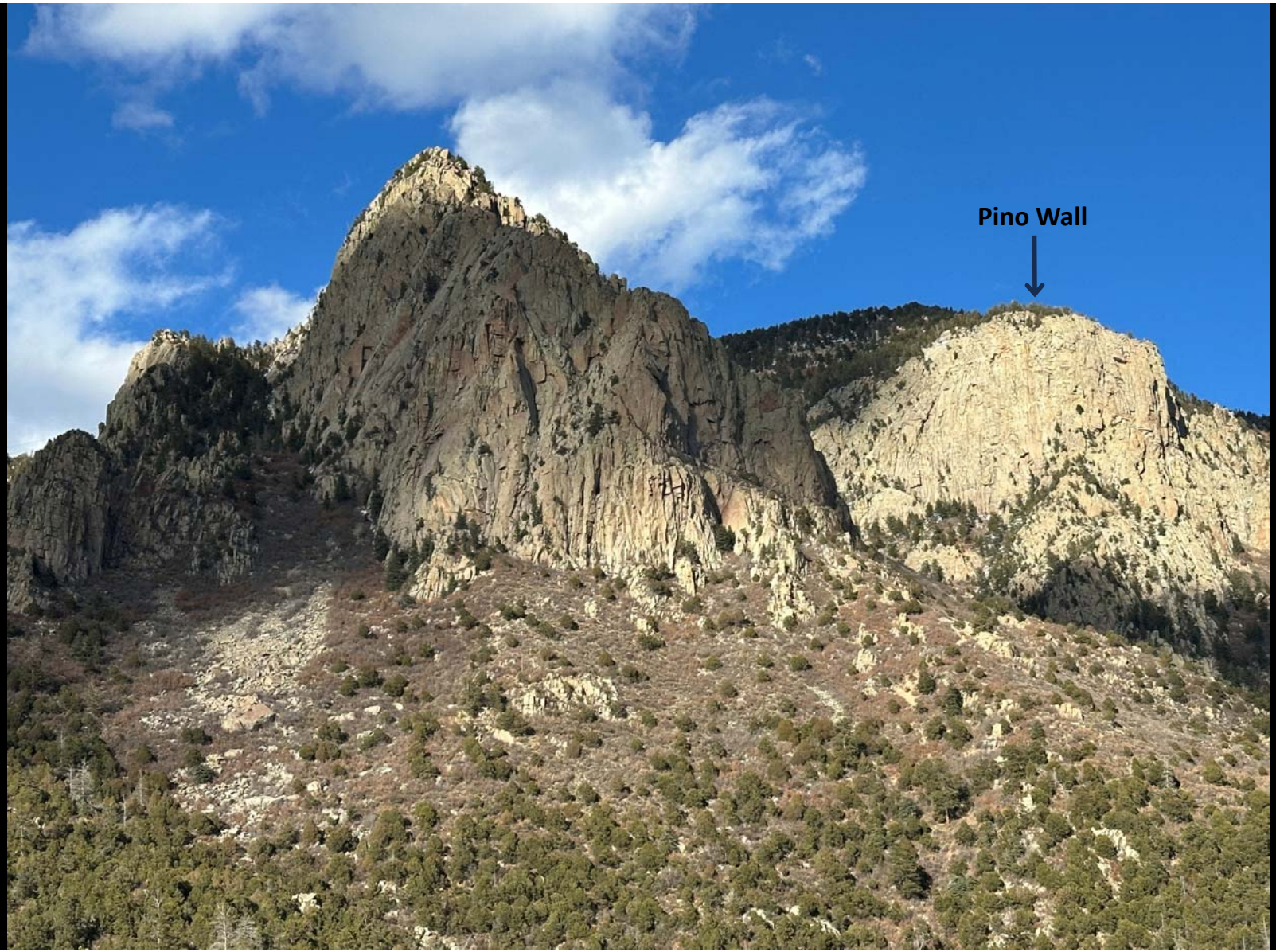


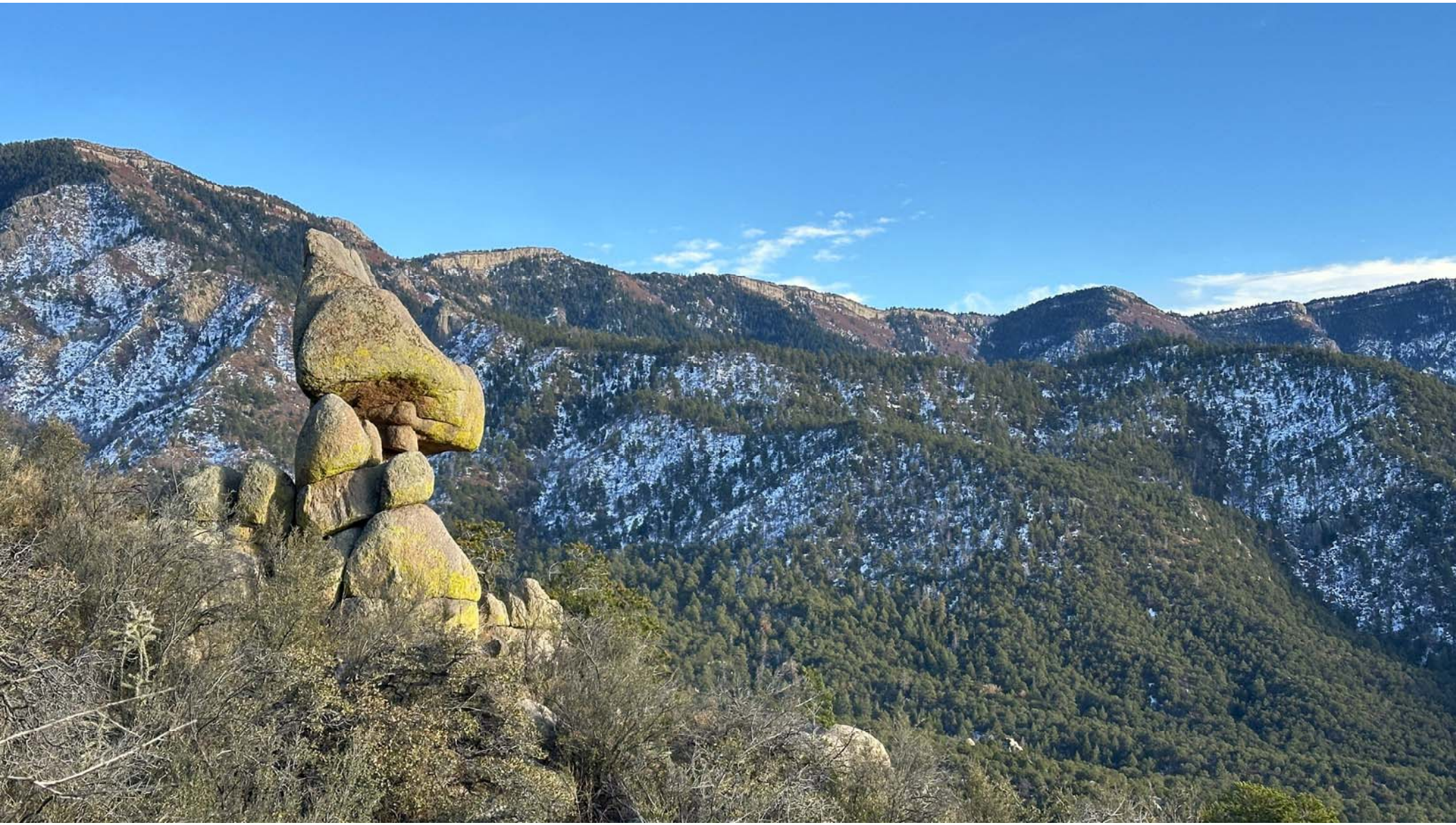
View from Pino Knoll



Great place to observe and scout routes from Big Valley or Domingo Baca Canyon

The Jawbone and Pino Wall





Pino/Bear Canyon Divide

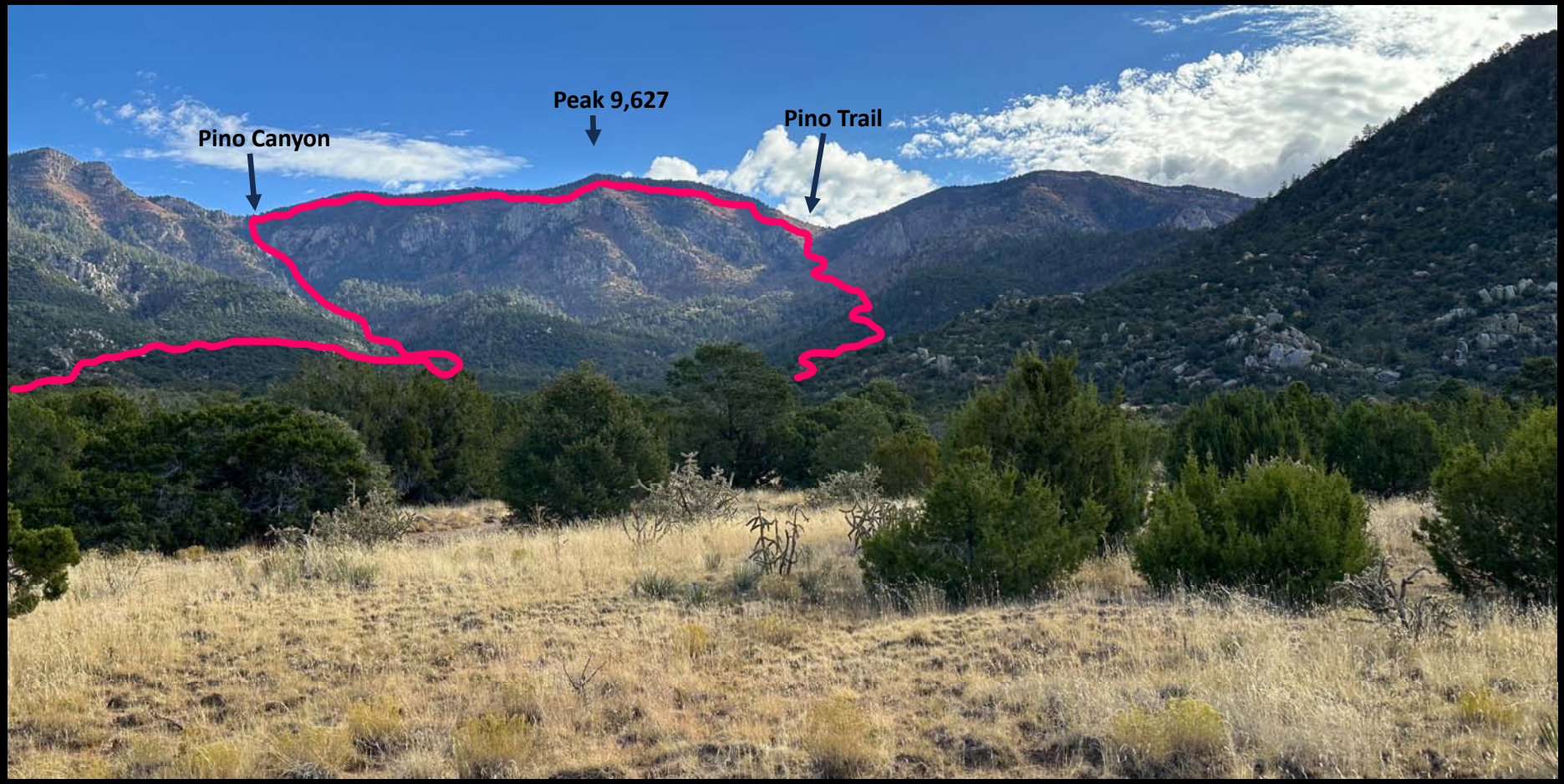
Possible to hike up all the way to Sandia Crest and Peak 9,579

Pino/Bear Canyon Divide

Pino/Bear Canyon Divide

Pino/Bear Canyon Divide

Pino/Bear Canyon Divide

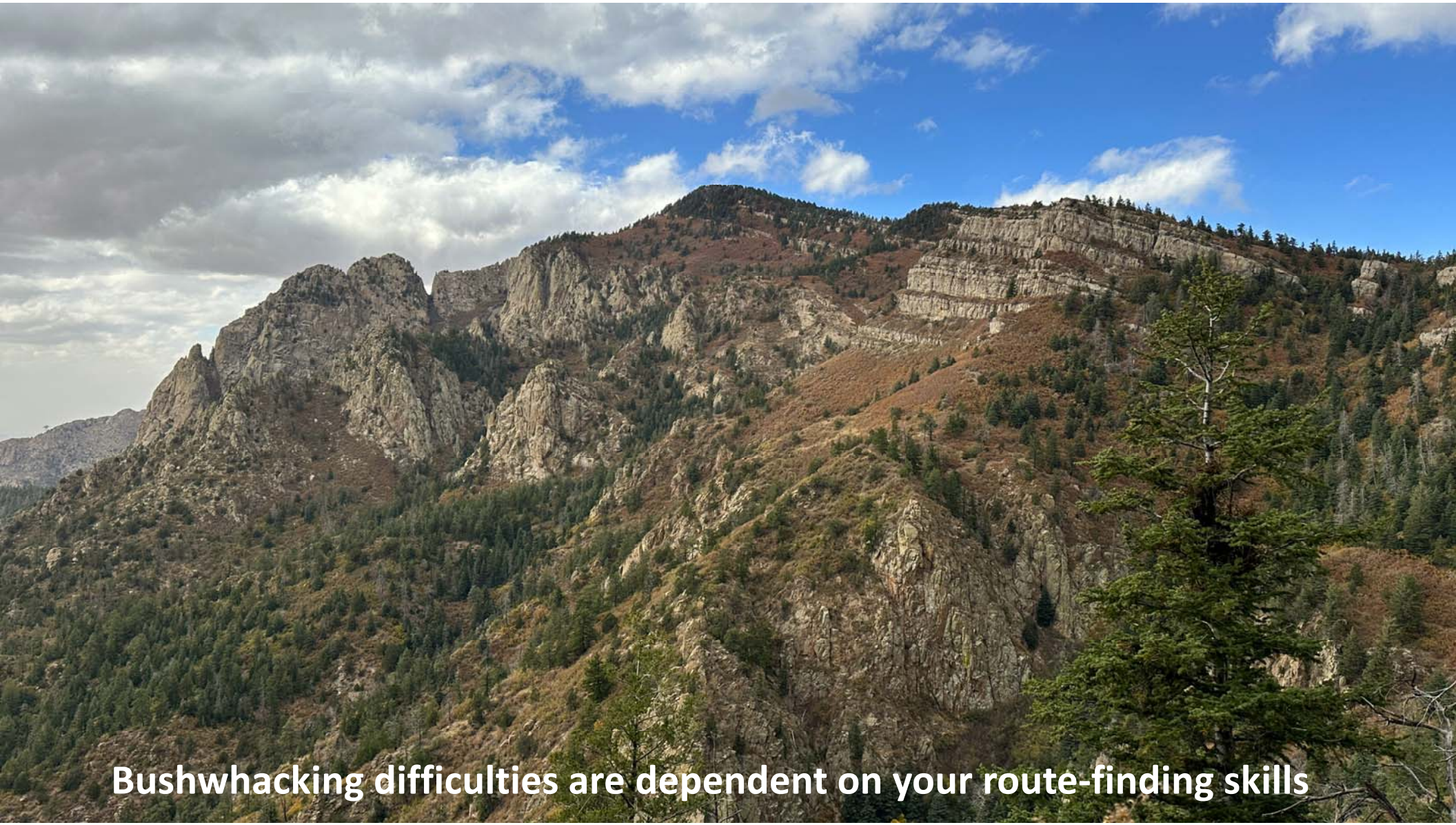


Pino Canyon Loop with option to tag Peak 9,627’

A good use trail parallels Pino Trail and eventually veers northeast into Pino Canyon – Bushwhacking can be tough
Easy to rough bushwhacking to Sandia Crest and Peak 9,627’. Peak is optional with the South Crest Trail as a connector.
Nice views of the crags and cliffs near and below the Pino Wall
12-mile loop with 4,000 feet of gain.

The Pino Canyon Use Trail

Pino Canyon Use Trail


Bushwhacking difficulties are dependent on your route-finding skills

Pino Loop - North saddle of Peak 9,627

Peak 9,627

Peak 9,627

Or hike down to Crest Trail to connect with the Pino Trail.

Pino Trail

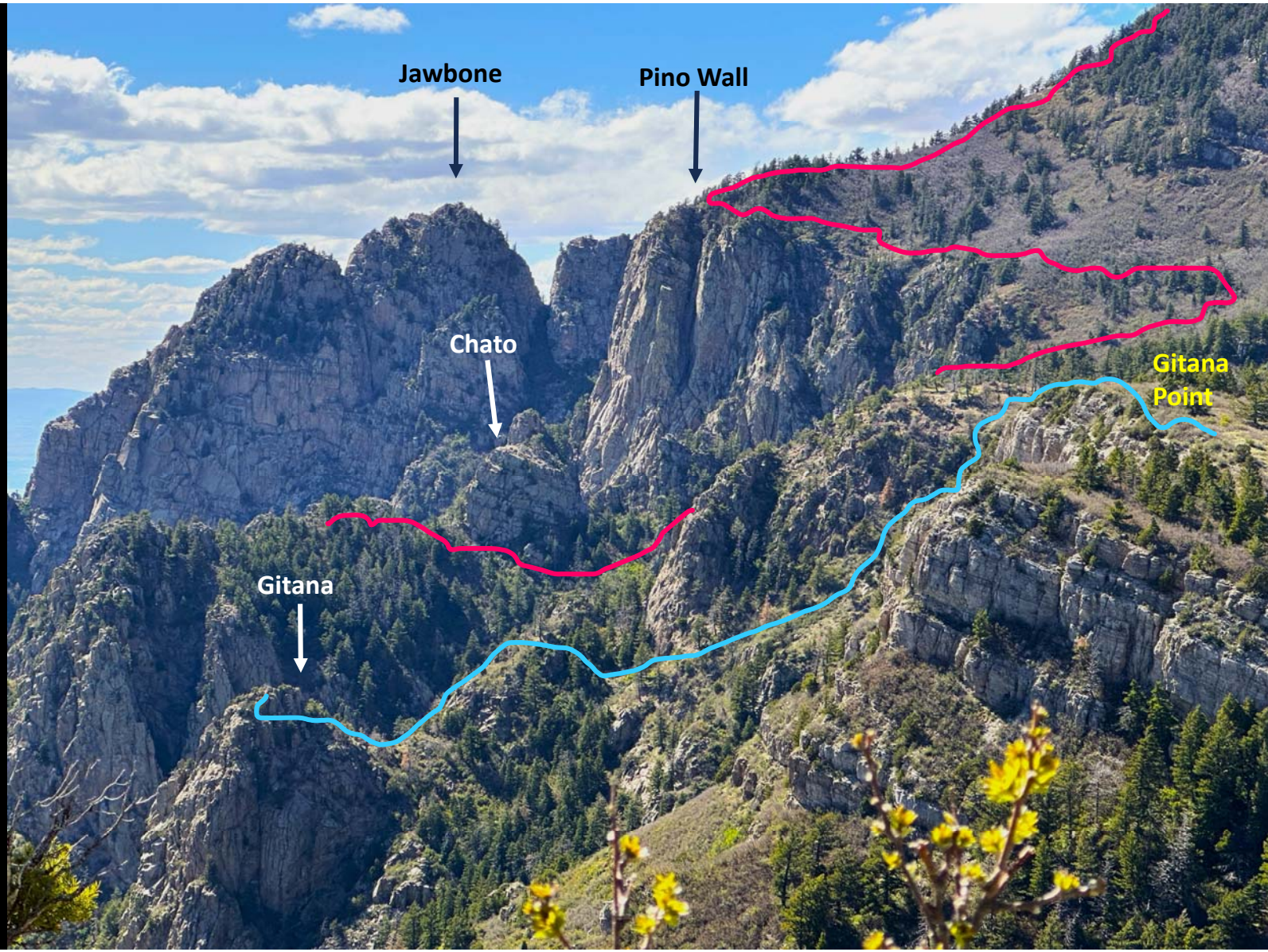
Pino Wall, Chato, and Gitana

Outstanding overlooks with great views of the Jawbone and southern Sandias

Accessed via a good climber's trail on Sandia Crest at the lookout north of the Tram before the Crest takes a steep dive

Route to Chato is difficult

Route to Gitana is difficult and begins on the crest about a quarter of a mile south of the Pino Wall Trail



Use trail along Sandia Crest above the Jawbone

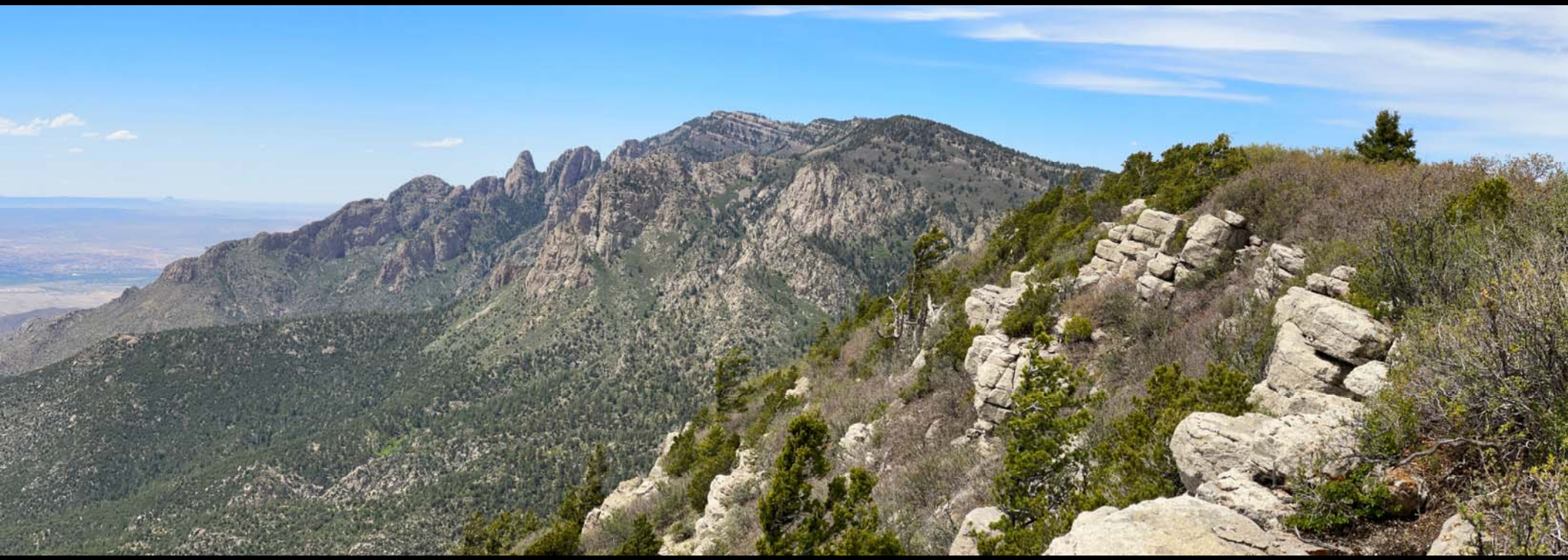
Pino Wall Trail Tip-Off. It is cairned and begins next to three cement pilons.

View form the Pino Wall of the SE face of the Jawbone

On the way to Chato
Beautiful Oak Forest
with surprisingly
easy bushwhacking

Chato

This is what crappy bushwhacking looks like.



Sandia Crest Peaks south of Tree Spring

Easy access off of the Crest Trail
Short but often rough bushwhacking often with New Mexico Locust
Great views along the Crest

Sandia Crest Peaks south of Tree Spring

Sandia Crest Peaks south of Tree Spring

Embudito and Embudo Canyons

Many use trails along ridges and canyons

Peaks limited to the main ridges: Whitewash, Embudito, and Embudo.

Easy access to most of them via unmaintained use trails.

Multiple side canyons

Generally easy bushwhacking. It gets tougher the higher you get.

My least favorite areas

Views are often obstructed by forests

The Embudito Ridges has numerous peaks that are right off of the Paul Pirttinen Routes and trails to South Peak

Whitewash Ridge Peaks

Whitewash Ridge Peaks

Whitewash Ridge Peaks

South End Destinations

Great cool weather hiking

Whimsical rock formations

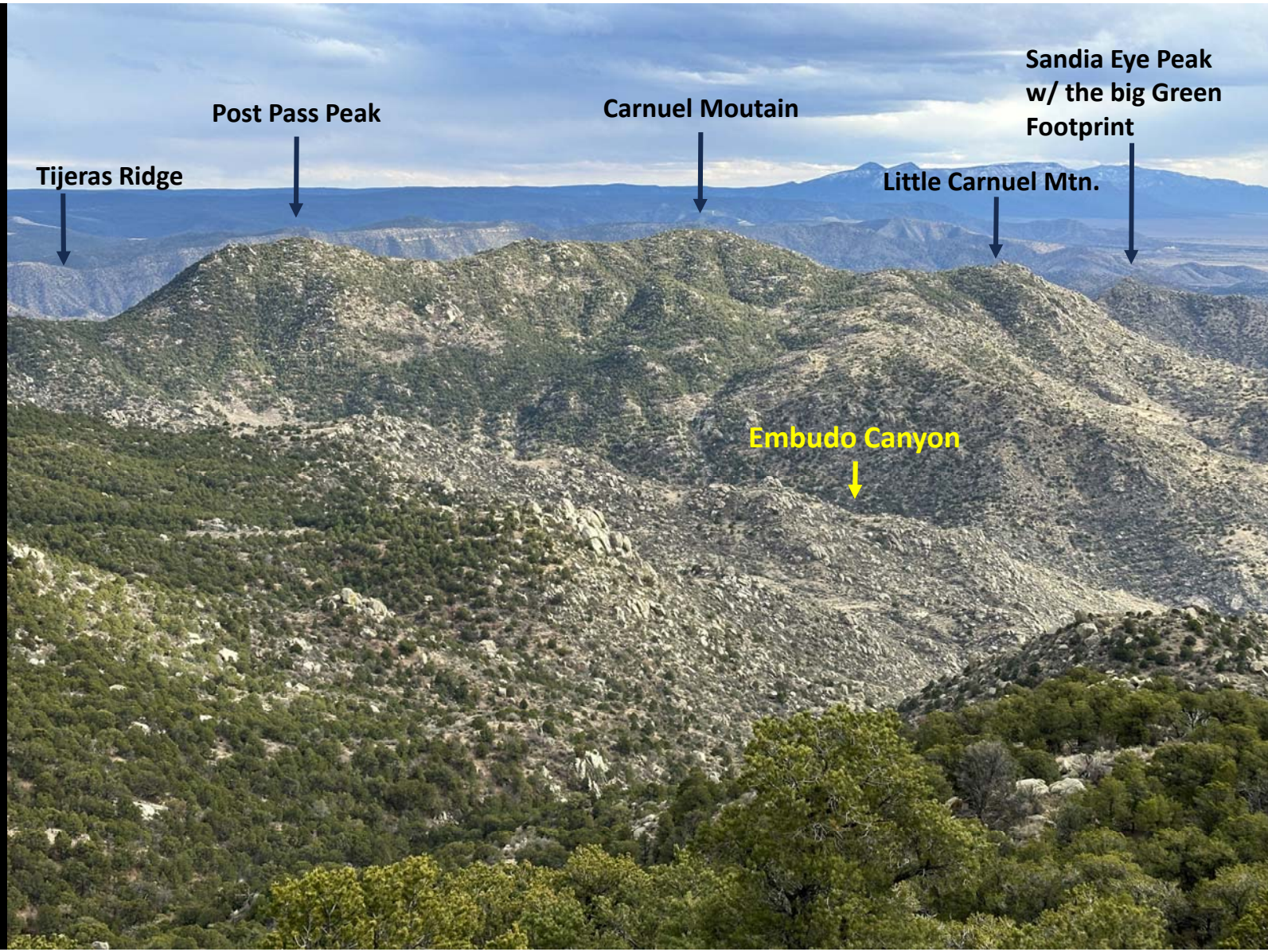
Easy to moderate bushwhacking with some places that are horrid.

Granite boulder and rock scrambling

Short to long routes and loops limited to your imagination.

Parking and Access

- Hildale
- Carnuel Crags
- Three Gun Springs
- Hawk Watch Open Space
- Culverts along Route 66



West Tijeras Canyon Peaks

***Ridges and arroyos between the Steel Yucca and Echo Canyon Subdivision of Carnuel**

Hilldale/Eye of the Sandia connector trail

Noisy at lower elevations

Park at Carnuel Crags

Steel Yucca to Echo Canyon Ridges and Canyons The "Bird"

Boot Shaped Chickenhead

Quartz outcrop

Dike

Black Rock Gully

Depiction of an Avanyu, one of several spotted in the area

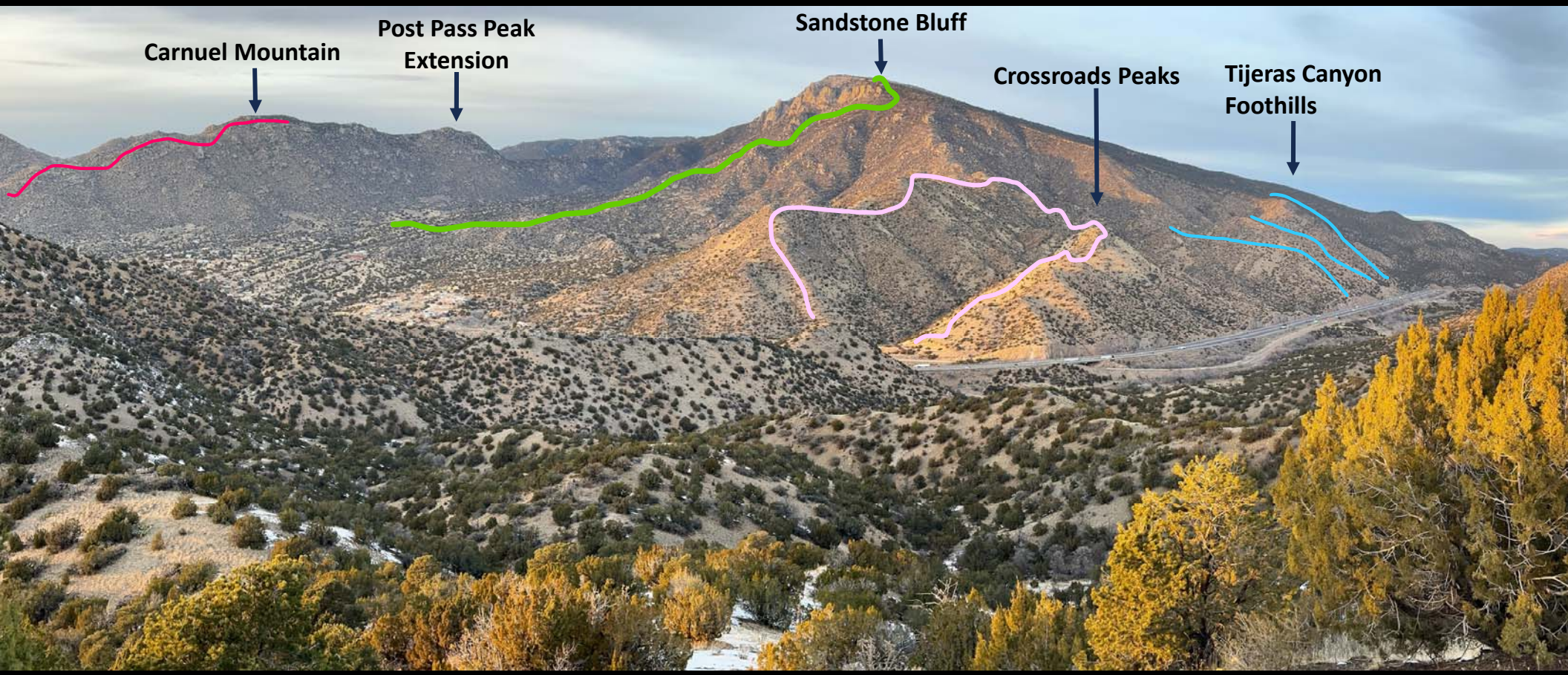
View near the top of a ridge

Big views for little effort

Ridgetop Sentinels

Viper head

Hilldale/Eye of the Sandias ridgetop connector trail



Middle Tijeras Canyon Peak Routes (Three Gun Springs Canyon and Route 66)

Carnuel Mountain South Ridge Route Park @ Carnuel Crags*
Sandstone Bluff @ Three Gun Springs Trailhead
Crossroads Peaks @Hawk Watch Open Space Pull out on Route 66
Tijeras Canyon Foothills Accessed via culverts on Route 66; less ideal on the side of westbound I-40

Carnuel Mountain

West Side Loop

-Favorite cool weather hike in the southern Sandias

-Easy to difficult route-finding, scrambling, cactus dodging, and bushwhacking problems

-Park at the Carnuel Crags

Carnuel Crag Ridge and parking area

Carnuel Mountain
Echo Canyon Start

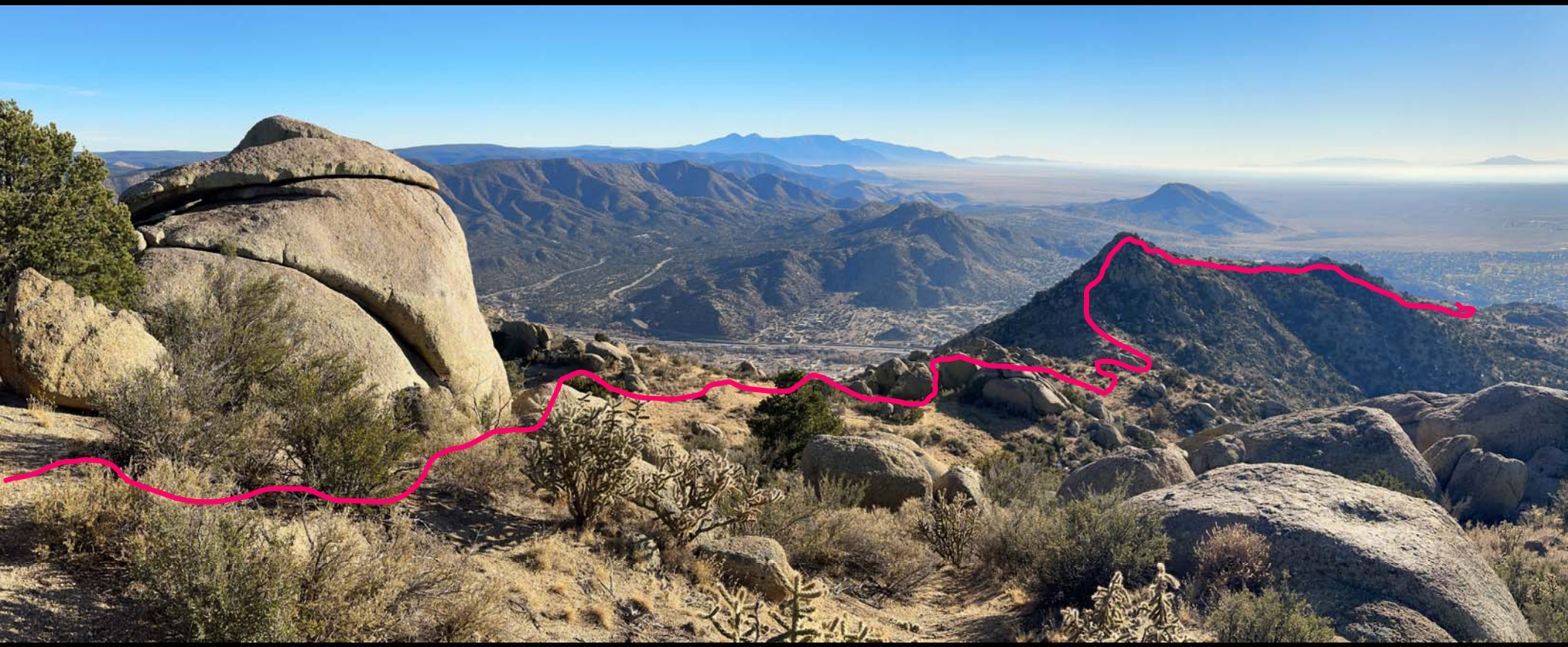
Monticello Ridge Start

Sandia Obelisk

Carnuel Mountain Loop

Typical terrain

Summit



Route from Little Carnuel Peak

Sandia Eye Peak (summit with the giant green footprints)

Pass the Eye of the Sandias and continue down the Hilldale Trail to the Carnuel Crag Ridge

Rock colony seen on the bump where the Carnel Crag Ridge begins.

Sandstone Bluffs

-One of the more beautiful places along south Sandia Crest with a short but spectacular hike along the rim
-Rare outcrop of orange sandstone on the western slopes.
-Short and easy access off the end of the Hawk Watch Route to Sandia Crest

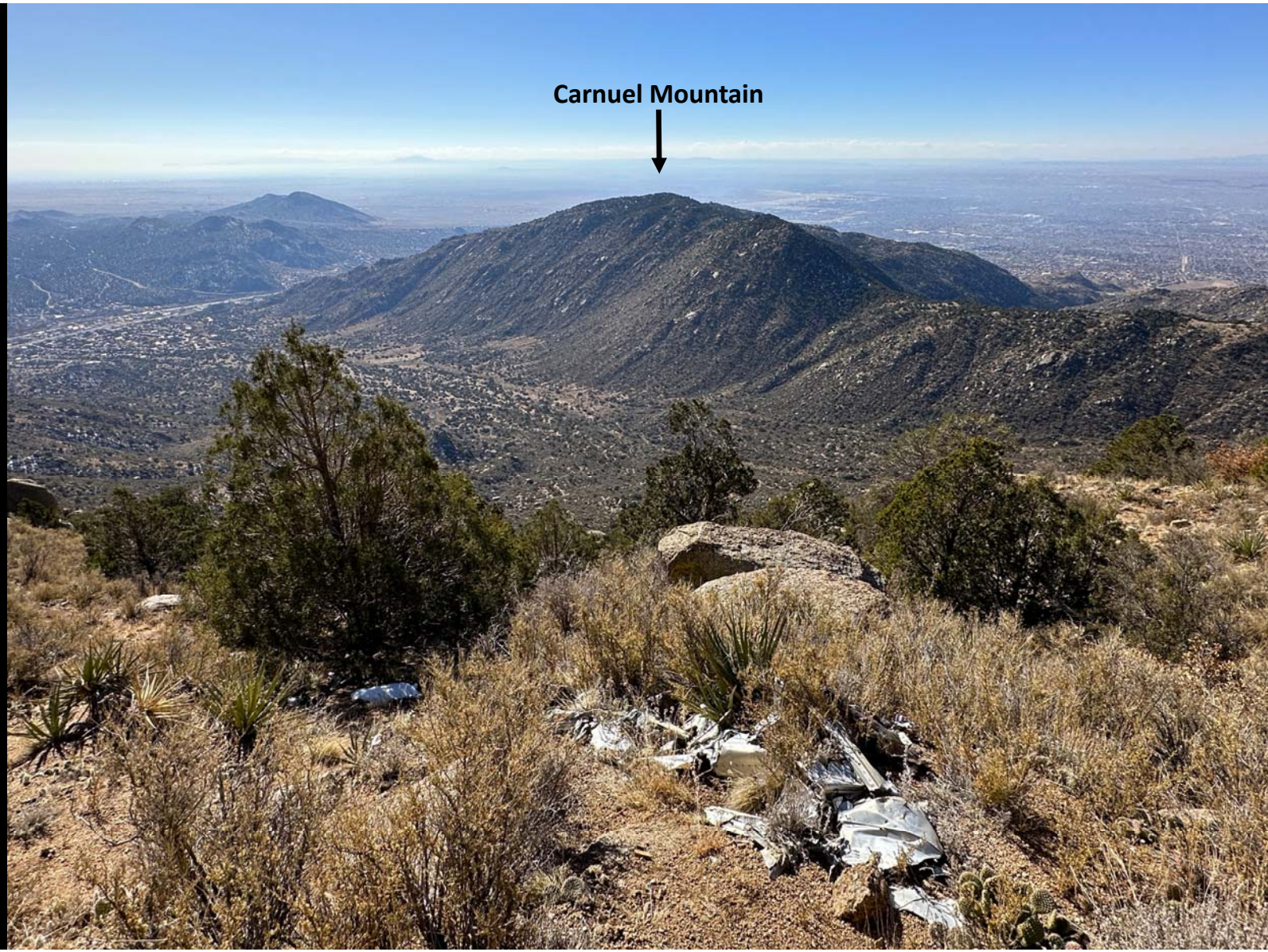
Sandstone Bluff

Sandstone Bluff

Sandstone Bluff

South Peak Buttresses

Plane wreck remains below the South Peak buttresses.



Crossroads Peaks

-Great cool or cold weather short-day peak-bagging loop
-Big views for little effort.
-Shift in rock geology
-Loop tags 3-4 Peaks
-Lots cactus dodging along steep terrain

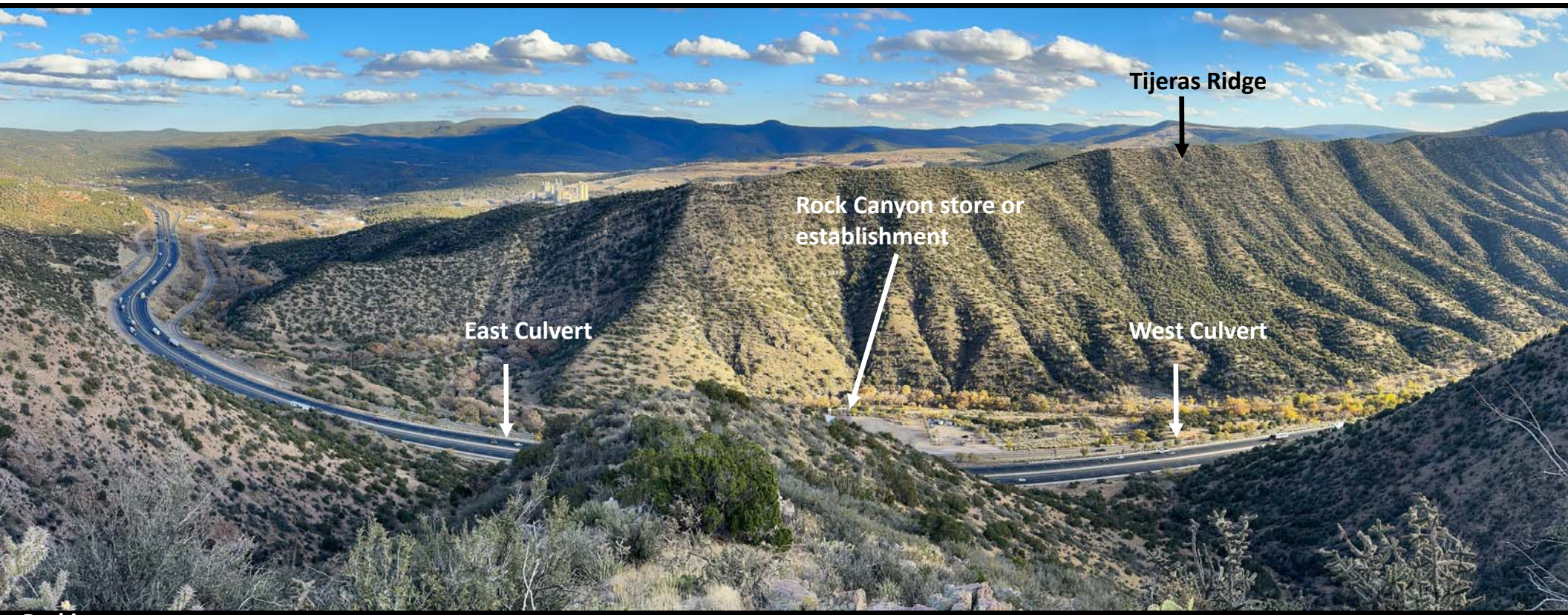
Park at the pullout along the north side of Route 66 right before it goes under I-40

Crossroads Peaks

Crossroads Peaks

Great place to observe winter sunsets

East Tijeras Canyon Peaks



Parking at:

- **-Culverts on Route 66 that cut underneath Route 66 and I-40, and on the East and west culverts under the roads are about 100 yards before and after the Rock Canyon Liquor and groceries**
- **-Shoulder of I-40 (less than ideal)**
- **-Hawk Watch Open Space Parking Area**

Rock Canyon (East Tijeras Canyon)

Rock Canyon

East Tijeras Canyon Peaks

East Tijeras Canyon Peaks

Tijeras Canyon Peaks

East Tijeras Canyon Peaks

Manzanita and Rincon Mountains

Not the Sandias but worth mentioning: Tijeras Ridge (Manzanita Mountains) and Rincon Ridge

Tijeras Ridge

Tricky access

Get permission from land owners or use culvert under freeway accessed at the Hawk Watch Open Space parking

Follow the red line route to the National Forest to avoid trespassing. Alternatively, take your chances through the rock quarry (blue line).

Ridge Features

-Little to no human traffic
-Class 3 near the top
-Epic views
-Two named peaks plus many unnamed summits.

A large depiction of an Avanyu painted on the culvert walls.

Choose a route to Tijeras Ridge and gain it. Easy going till nearing the top.
Possible Class 3-5 with cactus dodging up limestone cliff-bands.

Tijeras Ridge

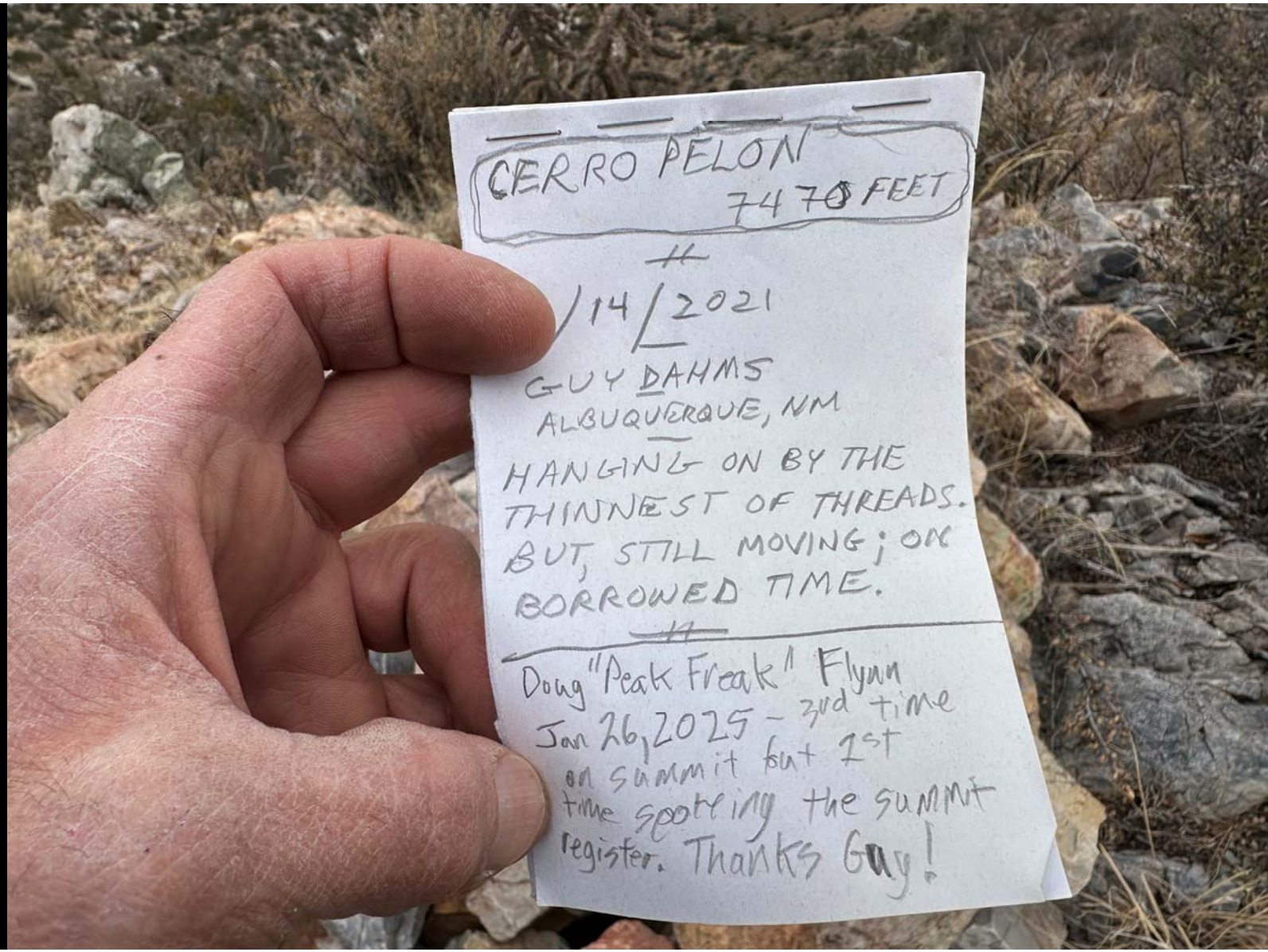
View from Manzano Mountain

Ridge leading to Manzano Mountain on the right, the highpoint of Tijeras Ridge

Cerro Pelon

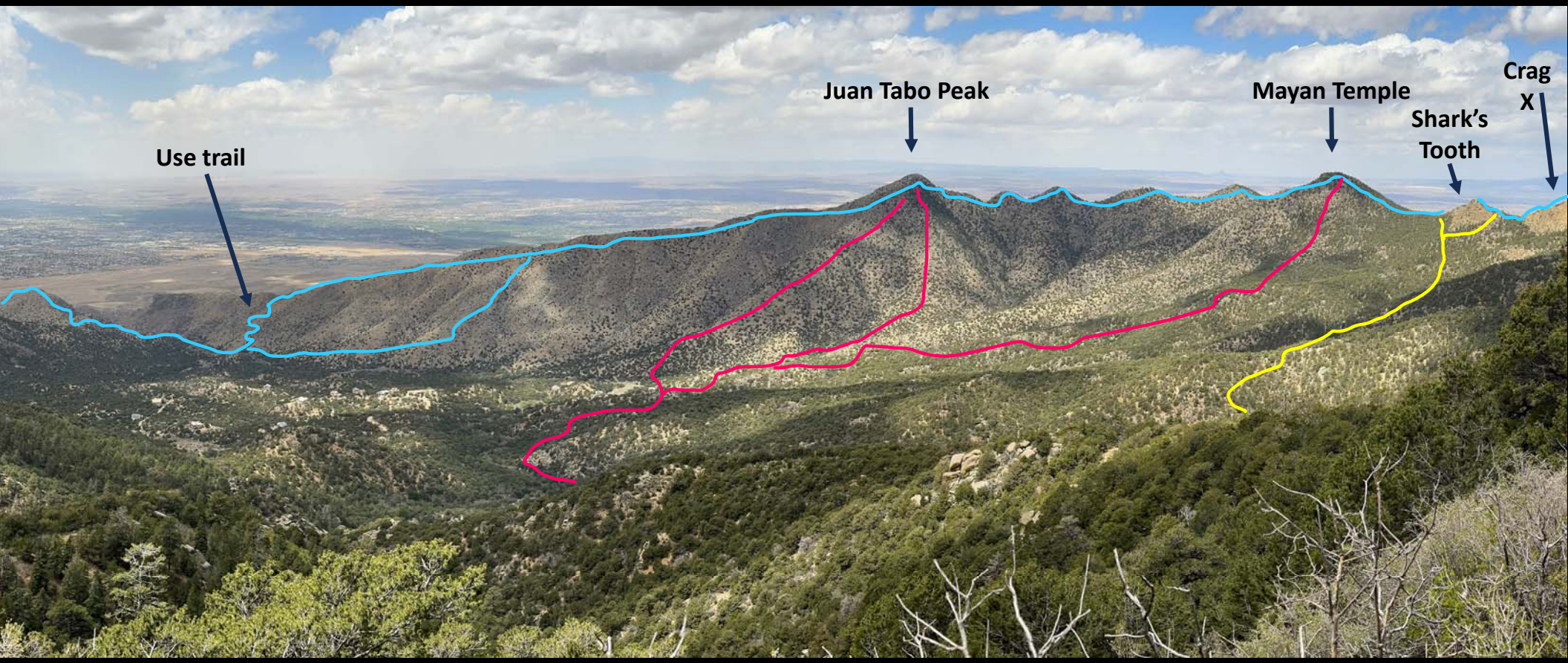
Cerro Pelon

Seen only by Guy Dahm's and myself since 2021



Rincon Ridge Peaks and Crags

Multiple access points
Minimal bushwhacking
Easy navigation
Scramble up Crags (Class 2-5)
Great place to begin off-trail exploration with use trails
Depending on route and start, up to 9 peaks can be summited with 4,000 feet gained



Possible routes of many to ridge

From the wilderness gate on FR 333 near Tramway Blvd or Piedra Lisa

From the Forest Road 333 and La Luz Trail Road junction and pull out

From the South Piedra Lisa

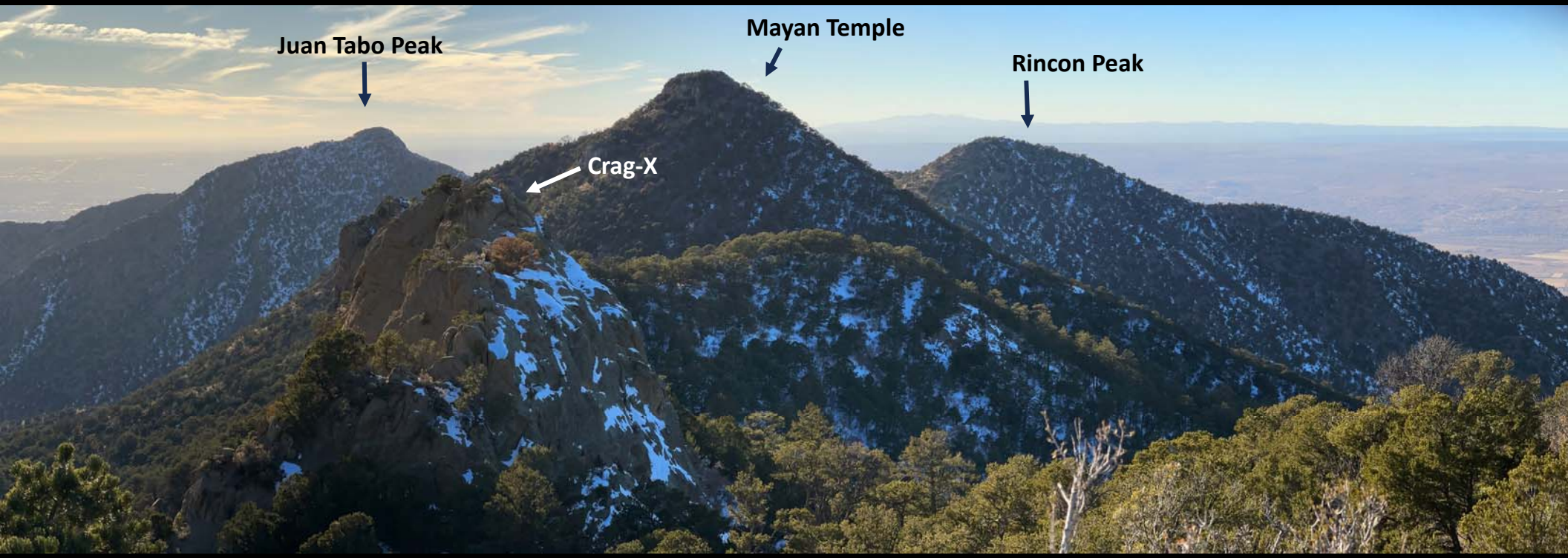
Routes to the ridge are limited to your imagination*

Traditional Route from Juan Tabo Ridge to the Rincon Spur and South Piedra Lisa Trail

View atop Juan Tabo Peak

View atop Juan Tabo Peak

View of Juan Tabo Peak



View along the Rincon Spur
Class 3 to tag Crag-X
Class 2-5 to summit the Mayan Temple

From the Piedra Lisa Trail/Rincon Spur Junction head east on the Knife Edge of the Shield Use Trail to tag 1-4 crags with great views.

Knife Edge Trail Crags

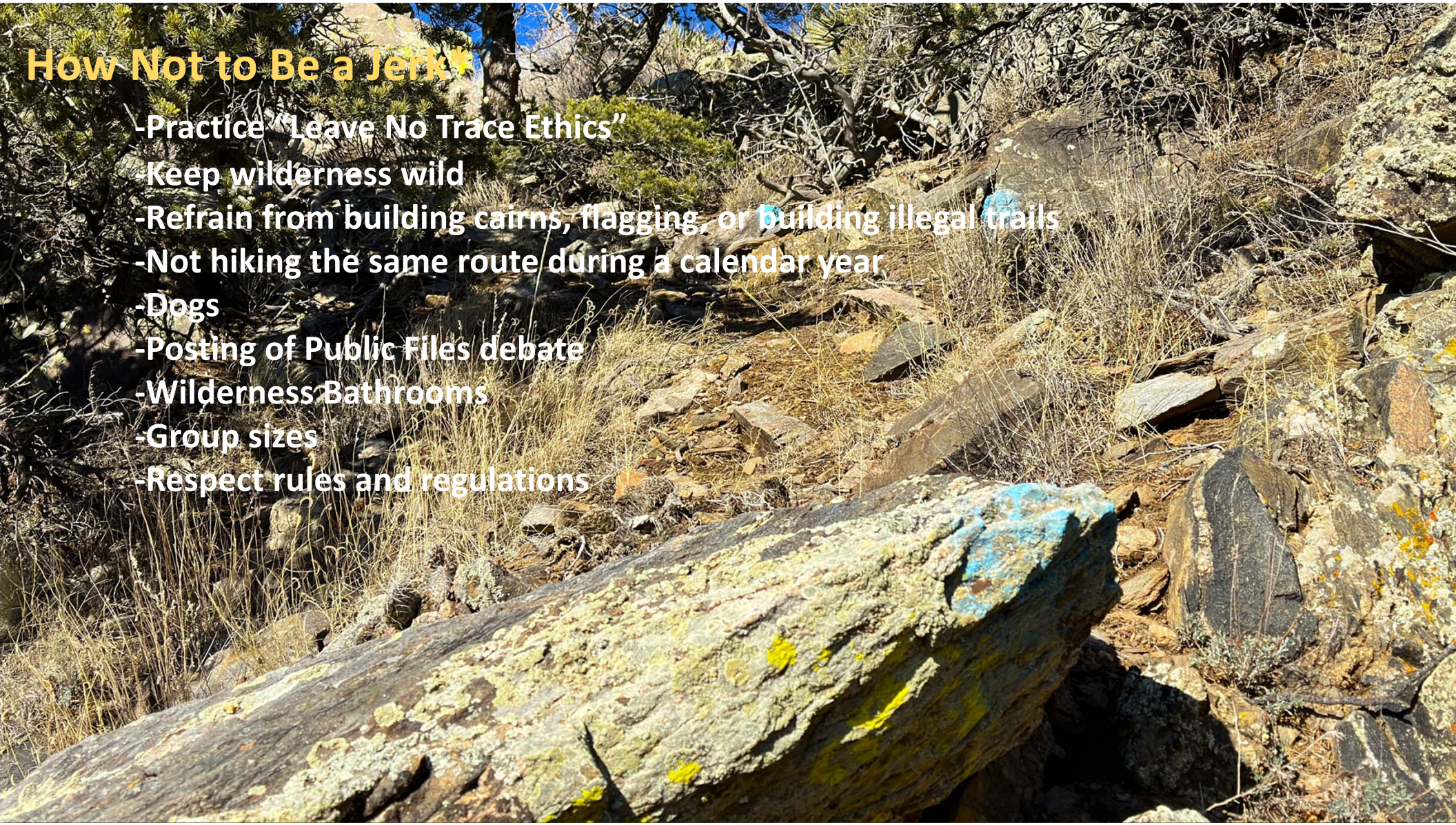
Knife Edge of the Shield use trail
Stunning views of the Shield

Lower Juan Tabo Canyon Mine

View atop the west rim of Lower Juan Tabo Canyon

View atop the east rim of Lower Juan Tabo Canyon

A quick reminder regarding wilderness ethics

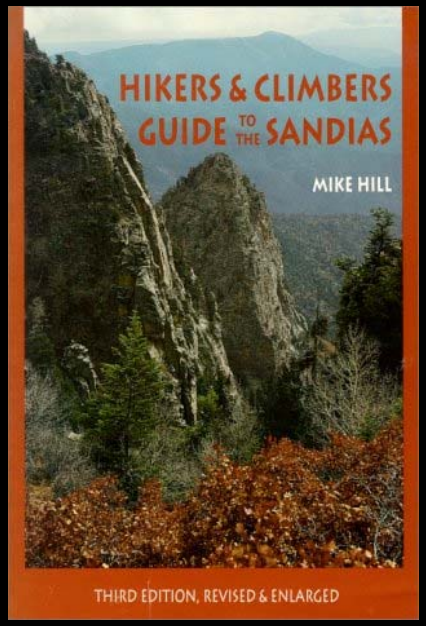


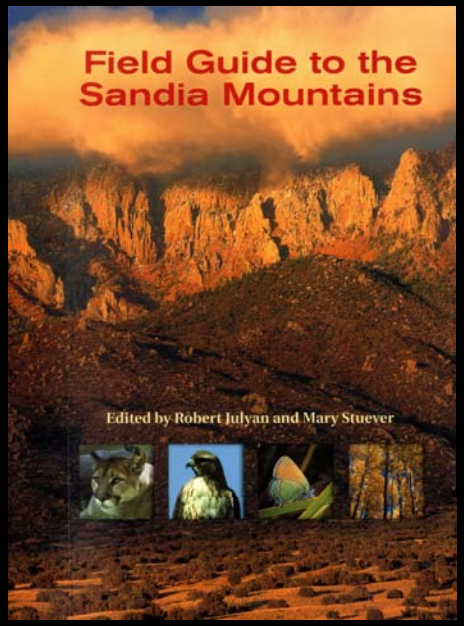
How Not to Be a Jerk*

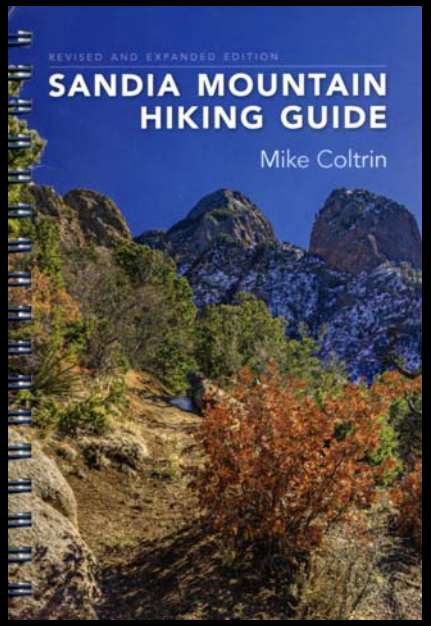
-Practice "Leave No Trace Ethics"
-Keep wilderness wild
-Refrain from building cairns, flagging, or building illegal trails
-Not hiking the same route during a calendar year
-Dogs
-Posting of Public Files debate
-Wilderness Bathrooms
-Group sizes
-Respect rules and regulations

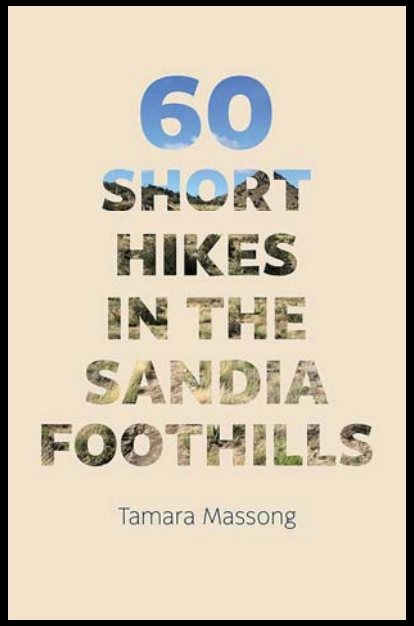
WTH?

Resources:


HIKERS & CLIMBERS GUIDE TO THE SANDIAS
MIKE HILL
THIRD EDITION, REVISED & ENLARGED


Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains
Edited by Robert Julyan and Mary Stuever


REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION
SANDIA MOUNTAIN HIKING GUIDE
Mike Coltrin


60 SHORT HIKES IN THE SANDIA FOOTHILLS
Tamara Massong

Online resources: List of John

Custom Lists

Manage/Create Lists

List "Sandia Mountain Peaks" By davebobk47 View Map of this List Add to Favorite Lists

# in list	Name	Elevation	Saddle	Prominence	Line Parent	Isolation	Proximate Parent	State	Counties	Quadrangle	LiDAR
1	Sandia Crest	10,679'	6,564'	4,115'	Lake Peak	46.20	Redonde Peak	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
2	Sandia Mountain Wilderness HP	10,622'	10,622'	0'	Sandia Crest	0.53	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo & Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
3	North Sandia Peak	10,445'	10,215'	230'	Sandia Crest	1.77	Sandia Crest	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
4	"Sentinel"	10,273'	10,197'	76'	Sandia Crest	0.23	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
5	"The Needle"	10,257'	9,857'	400'	Sandia Crest	1.28	Sandia Crest	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
6	"Torreon"	10,241'	10,184'	57'	Sandia Crest	0.18	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
7	"Raksha"	10,237'	10,079'	158'	Sandia Crest	0.32	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
8	"Tridents"	10,171'	9,952'	219'	Sandia Crest	0.45	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
9	"The Thumb"	10,109'	9,781'	328'	Sandia Crest	0.48	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
10	"Aloth"	9,916'	9,829'	87'	Sandia Crest	0.72	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
11	"The Jawbone"	9,887'	9,740'	147'	Sandia Crest	1.47	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
12	"Yataghan"	9,860'	9,780'	80'	Sandia Crest	0.40	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
13	"Chaos Crag"	9,783'	9,612'	171'	Sandia Crest	0.29	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
14	South Sandia Peak	9,782'	9,140'	642'	Sandia Crest	5.97	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Tijeras - Map	
15	"Hail Peak"	9,753'	9,368'	385'	Sandia Crest	0.69	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
16	"Whiskey Peak"	9,740'	9,580'	160'	"The Thumb"	0.24	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
17	9627	9,627'	9,260'	367'	Sandia Crest	2.33	"Hail Peak"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
18	"Frog"	9,580'	9,500'	80'	Sandia Crest	0.34	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
19	9579	9,579'	9,220'	359'	9627	0.71	9627	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
20	"Chato"	9,460'	9,380'	80'	Sandia Crest	1.16	"Hail Peak"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
21	"Pulpit"	9,380'	9,340'	40'	Sandia Crest	0.51	Sandia Crest	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
22	"Gitana"	9,220'	9,140'	80'	Sandia Crest	0.93	9627	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
23	"Totem Pole"	9,180'	9,140'	40'	Sandia Crest	1.08	9627	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
24	"Lost Spectacle"	9,140'	9,100'	40'	Sandia Crest	0.36	"The Thumb"	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
25	"Big Pig"	9,048'	8,870'	178'	Sandia Crest	1.62	"The Needle"	NM	Sandoval	Placitas - Map	
26	"Beastie"	9,010'	8,890'	120'	Sandia Crest	1.95	"The Needle"	NM	Sandoval	Placitas - Map	
27	"The Prow"	8,986'	8,747'	239'	"The Needle"	0.50	"The Needle"	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
28	Capulin Peak	8,929'	8,780'	149'	Sandia Crest	2.37	Sandia Crest	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	
29	"Middle Pig"	8,890'	8,850'	40'	Sandia Crest	1.64	"The Needle"	NM	Sandoval	Placitas - Map	
30	Tecolote Peak	8,837'	8,660'	177'	Sandia Crest	1.90	9627	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	
31	"Little Pig"	8,810'	8,750'	60'	Sandia Crest	1.68	"The Needle"	NM	Sandoval	Placitas - Map	
32	Palomas Peak	8,685'	8,100'	585'	Sandia Crest	3.01	Sandia Crest	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	
33	8313	8,313'	8,006'	307'	Sandia Crest	2.04	"The Needle"	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
34	Rincon Ridge	8,277'	7,973'	304'	8313	0.79	8313	NM	Sandoval	Sandia Crest - Map	yes
35	7860	7,860'	7,420'	440'	South Sandia Peak	2.77	South Sandia Peak	NM	Bernalillo	Tijeras - Map	
36	7437	7,437'	7,147'	290'	7860	0.74	7860	NM	Bernalillo	Tijeras - Map	yes
37	7094	7,094'	6,795'	299'	Sandia Crest	1.65	Rincon Ridge	NM	Bernalillo	Sandia Crest - Map	yes

Back to Custom Lists

Manage/Create Lists

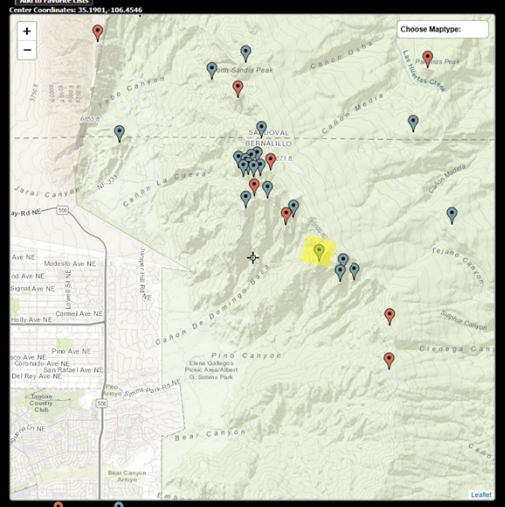
Home Index

Choose Member: Display Uncompleted Only? View Member Progress

Custom List Sandia Mountain Peaks by davebobk47

Add to Favorite Lists

Center Coordinates: 35.1901, 106.4546



>299' rise: < 300' rise:

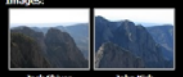
"The Jawbone" NM Source

Elevation: 9,887'
County: Bernalillo
Quad: Sandia Crest
Coords: 35.1892°N, 106.4359°W Notice
Rise: 147'
Saddle: 9,740'
Line Parent: Sandia Crest
Parent Lineage
Proximate Parent: "The Thumb"
Isolation: 1.47 miles
Sandia Mountain Wilderness
Cibola National Forest
YDS Class: 5.3 Discussion Disclaimer
Weather Link
Snow Depth
CalTopo
Custom List Entries
Trip Reports:
Submit a Trip Report
Ascents:
0 Members have reported ascents...
Donate

Add to Your Completed List | Add to a Custom List

Click on map to view full-screen map

Images:



Jack Shiver 10-01-2009 | John Kirk 06-12-2017

Submit another image for this peak

Click on icons for info/definitions

Home Index

how can add an arrow to an anima | mountain project - Search | Rock Climbing in Sandia Mountain

https://www.mountainproject.com/area/105788177/sandia-mountains-west-side

Climbing Area Map

Areas in Sandia Mountains (We...

Show All Routes

- Cañon Del Agua 2
- Juan Tabo Canyon 25
- Pinnacle Valley 40
- TV Station Bouldering 6
- Mummy Canyon 1
- Chimney Canyon 45
- La Cueva Canyon (Upper) 119
- La Cueva Canyon (Lower) 31
- Echo Canyon 35
- Domingo Baca Canyon (Upper) 4
- Domingo Baca Canyon (Lower) 11
- Hail Peak 5
- TWA Canyon 6
- Pino Wall & Jawbone 9
- South Sandia Peak 1

All Photos Within Sandia Mountains (West Side)

All Locations > New Mexico > Albuquerque Area

Sandia Mountains (West Side) Rock Climbing

Improve This Page

Add To Page

Elevation: 10,651 ft

GPS: 35.2106, -106.44995

Google Map · Climbing Area Map

Page Views: 785,419 total · 3,167/month

Shared By: Anthony Stout on Jan 20, 2006 · Updates

Admins: Jason Halladay, Mike Hoskins, Anna Brown

Explore this area in 3D

Today	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
20%				30 %	
68°F · 47°F	68°F · 48°F	69°F · 50°F	69°F · 49°F	74°F · 48°F	75°F · 48°F

Access Issue: SANDIA CREST CLOSURE ALERT - Beginning APRIL 30, 2026, 140 acres at the top of the Sandia Mountains is under a closure order. Details

Description

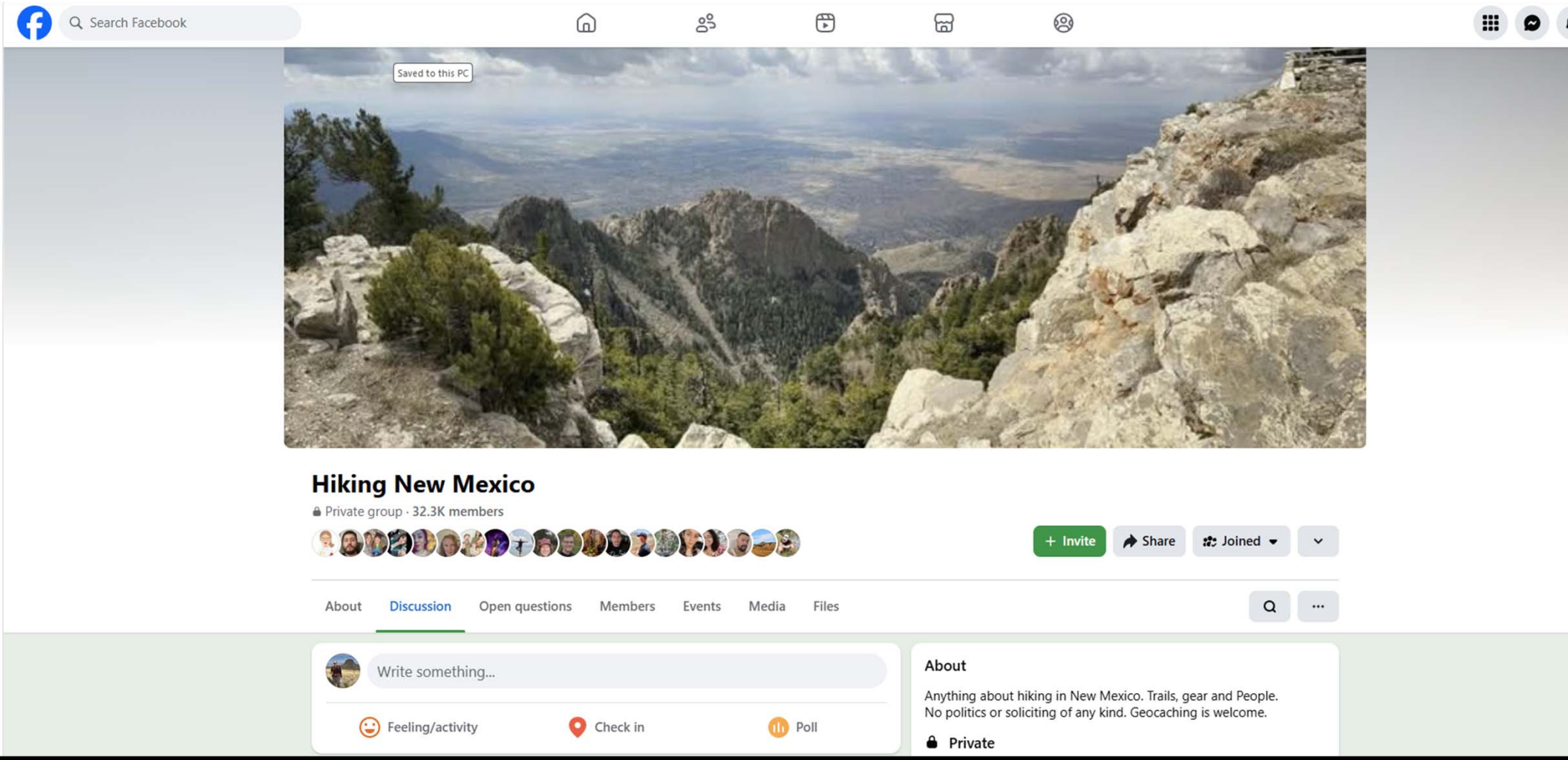
The Sandia Mountains top out at 10,650ft and most of the climbs involve a drive to the top of the mountain and a hike down to your climb. This means a hike up/out at the end of the day.

The mountain is comprised of roughly 1.5 billion year old granite with a 300 million year old limestone band on top.

Because of longer approaches to the climbing areas, you'll typically find solitude while climbing in the Sandias. Due to high elevation and the alpine nature of these mountains, weather conditions are always changing. While one can climb any time of the year (there is snow all winter through May at the top), Sandia season seems to be May through October. West and Southwest facing walls, such as Muralla Grande, can be warm and dry even on winter days. Lots of the west facing formations get sun starting about 11:30am in the summer.

4:32 PM
6/5/2026

Mountain Project



Hiking New Mexico Facebook Group where I post photos and trip reports

The NMMC

+

other hiking groups

THE END

Thank you for coming!

Q & A

Recommendations

Good Places to begin exploring
Rincon Ridge and Peaks
South Sandia Foothills
Rozamiento Canyon
Waterfall Canyon
Ridges in northern Sandias
Overlooks off of Sandia Crest

Water and waterfalls
Waterfall Canyon
Big Valley
La Cueva Canyon
Rozamineto Canyon

Slab Scrambling
All branches of Rozamineto Canyon
Waterfall Canyon
La Cueva Canyon
Big Valley
Ramp of the Shield

Favorite Scramble Routes
-North Fork of Rozamineto Canyon to the La Cueva Peaks
-Middle Fork of Rozamiento Canyon to Whiskey Peak
-Lower La Cueva Canyon to La Cueva Falls
-Ramp of the Shield

Best Scenic Overlooks (IMO)
Raksha
Overlooks off of the North Peak Trail
Overlooks by the Tombstone
Lobo
Lady
Dragon's Tail
Chato
Point
Sandstone Bluff

Best Scenery (Ridges)
Jaral /Chimney Divide
Waterfall/Jaral Divide

Best Full Day Difficult Hikes
-Whiskey Peak Loop via Rozamiento Canyon and Big Valley
-Waterfall Canyon Peak Loop

Best Half Day Loops
Rozamiento/Tower 1
Waterfall Canyon Loop
Tijeras Canyon Ridges and Peaks