



"When you see people out walking...  
we have an increased sense of community."

~ Cuba Community Member



# Walking and Hiking

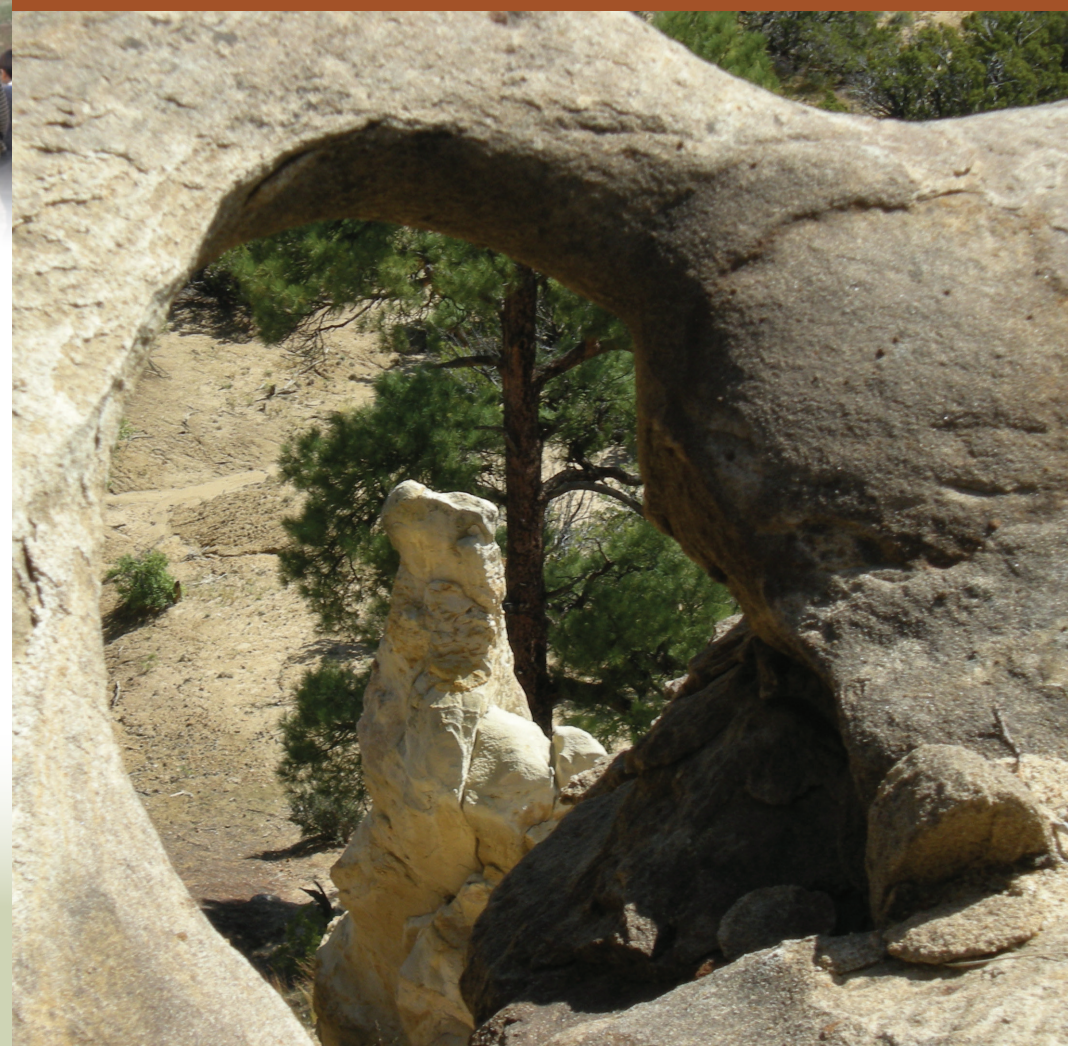
A guide to places near Cuba, New Mexico

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This Walking Guide is sponsored by the Nacimiento Community Foundation Step Into Cuba Program with support from:



For more information visit: <http://www.stepintocuba.org>



## About Step Into Cuba

Step Into Cuba is a program to promote healthy lifestyles by increasing walking and hiking in Cuba and on nearby public lands. Walking and hiking have been shown to increase the length and quality of our lives. Step Into Cuba is operated by the Nacimiento Community Foundation and supported by an Alliance of partners and volunteers. We advocate for walkable streets and highways. We develop and maintain trails. We promote use of trails on public lands. We organize and support walking groups. We sponsor walking campaigns and events. We sponsor and support enhancement of our walking places. For more information about Step Into Cuba activities, visit <http://www.stepintocuba.org>

## About This Guide

We hope this guide will provide all the information you need to enjoy walking and hiking near Cuba. We have included maps and descriptions of nine walking places that vary in distance and variety of landscape. For each you will find information on parking, distance, difficulty, suitability for dogs, and what you may expect to see. If a medical practitioner or other health professional has recommended walking for your health, you may wish to view your prescription on the inside of the front cover. We have also provided a checklist of things to take with you on the back cover. Enjoy your walks!



**"I think we encourage each other when we walk."**

~ Cuba Community Member

## Building Your Endurance

If you have not been walking regularly, you may wish to start with short distances at a slow pace on level surfaces such as sidewalks and trails in flat places such as the Library, Park, Rito San Jose and Cuba School Trails. Talk to your doctor or other practitioner before beginning to walk regularly, if you are concerned about any health problems. You could start with 10 to 15 minutes of slow walking at a time with gradual increase in speed and time. You can count your steps with a simple pedometer. When walking vigorously you will cover 1 mile – or approximately 2000 steps – in 15 to 20 minutes. When you can do this comfortably, you may wish to move to trails with uphill climbs such as the Fisher Community Trail, Cuba School Trail, North Continental Divide (Los Pinos) Trail or South Continental Divide Trail. Consider walking or hiking regularly with a friend or group and encourage each other.

## National Physical Activity Recommendations

The United States Department of Health and Human Services has established guidelines for physical activity for all Americans. By walking regularly you can meet these guidelines and experience important health benefits such as living longer, maintaining or losing weight, and preventing or controlling chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and depression. Walking regularly will also improve balance and function, important for us as we age.

**Adults:** Walk regularly 2½ hours a week for periods of 10 minutes or more.

**Children and Adolescents:** Walk regularly for 1 hour a day.

## Walking Safely Around Cuba – General Suggestions

- Pay attention to what is around you
- Walk on a sidewalk, trail, or quiet residential street
- If you have to walk on the road, be sure to face traffic
- Wear bright colors so drivers can see you
- Keep your dog on a leash and bring bags for clean up
- Walk with a companion especially on longer hikes
- Let someone know where you are and when you will be back

## Crossing Streets and Highways

- Stop at the curb or edge of the street before crossing
- Look left, right, behind, and in front of you for traffic
- Wait until there is no traffic or a large gap in traffic to cross
- At a crosswalk, make eye contact with drivers before crossing
- Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing
- Walk, don't run, across the street
- Children under age 10 should not cross alone

## For Parents

- Walk, hike, work and play outdoors with your children
- Encourage your child to walk and play in safe places  
Take them there whenever possible
- Walk your dog together with your child



## 1. South U.S. Highway 550 – The New Sidewalk



**Distance:** 0.6 mile (1200 steps) round trip

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Description:** The new sidewalk is four feet wide, smooth, set back from the curb, and has handicap access ramps from Cordova Ave. (Nacimientos Community Foundation/Public Health Office) to just above the NM Highway 197 junction (“Torreon Road”). You can cross U.S. 550 carefully at either end to make a loop or walk back and forth on one side. There are beautiful open views of the Nacimientos Mountains and Cuba Mesa from both sides of the road.

**Nearby Destinations:** Dollar Store, Public Health Office, Post Office, Cuba Health Center, Cuba Credit Union, Magistrate Court, Baptist Church, Power Saw Shop, Cuban Cafe, Forest Service Office.



## 2. Village Office, Community Garden and Saveway Market

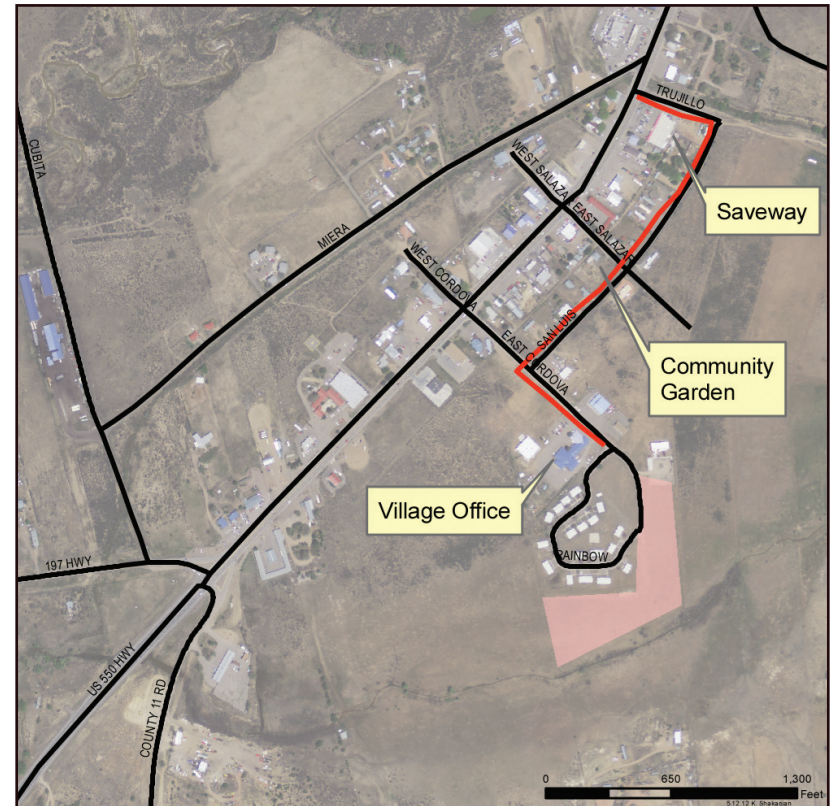


**Distance:** 0.8 mile (1600 steps) round trip

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Description:** This route begins at the Village Office/Senior Center on Cordova Avenue sidewalk and turns north on San Luis Avenue, a quiet residential street. There are no sidewalks on San Luis Avenue, but traffic is light and there are frequent street humps. A stop can be made at the Cuba Community Garden and Veterans of Foreign War Building, about halfway. It ends behind the Saveway Market at the Rito Leche. You can return the same way.

**Nearby Destinations:** Village Office/Senior Center, Village Housing, Cuba Library, Saveway Market, Community Garden, Veterans of Foreign War, Del Prado Cafe, U.S. Post Office.



### 3. Library Loop Trail

**Distance:** 0.5 mile (1000 steps)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Description:** This trail begins at the entrance of the Cuba Library and circles open land to the south of the Library and behind village housing. You can stay on the outside of the fenced Village property or cut across the property about halfway to shorten the walk. There is a bench with shade on the east side of the trail. There are beautiful views of the Nacimiento Mountains and Cuba Mesa.

**Nearby Destinations:** Village Office/Senior Center, Village Housing, Cuba Library, Dialysis Center, Police Offices.



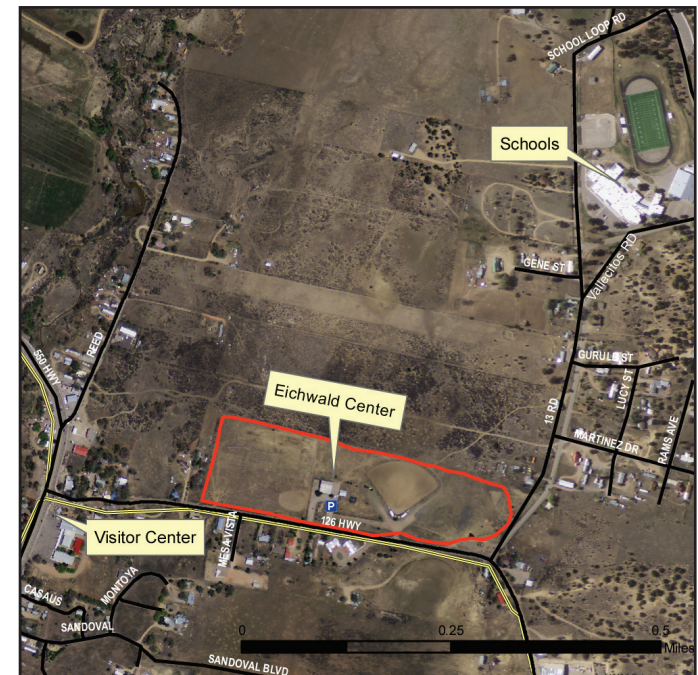
### 4. St. Francis of Assisi Park Trail

**Distance:** 1.0 mile (2000 steps)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Description:** The trail circles the outside of the park along NM Highway 126, Country Road 13 (to Cuba Schools) and the fenced north and west sides. Parking is available at the Eichwald Recreation Center and playground. Volunteers have planted new trees, shrubs and flowers, and placed boulders on the east and west ends of the park. The park trail can be easily accessed on foot from the south and east sides of the park as well as a fence break at the northwest corner. There are benches at a kiosk at the southwest corner with information about the Continental Divide Trail and other walking activities.

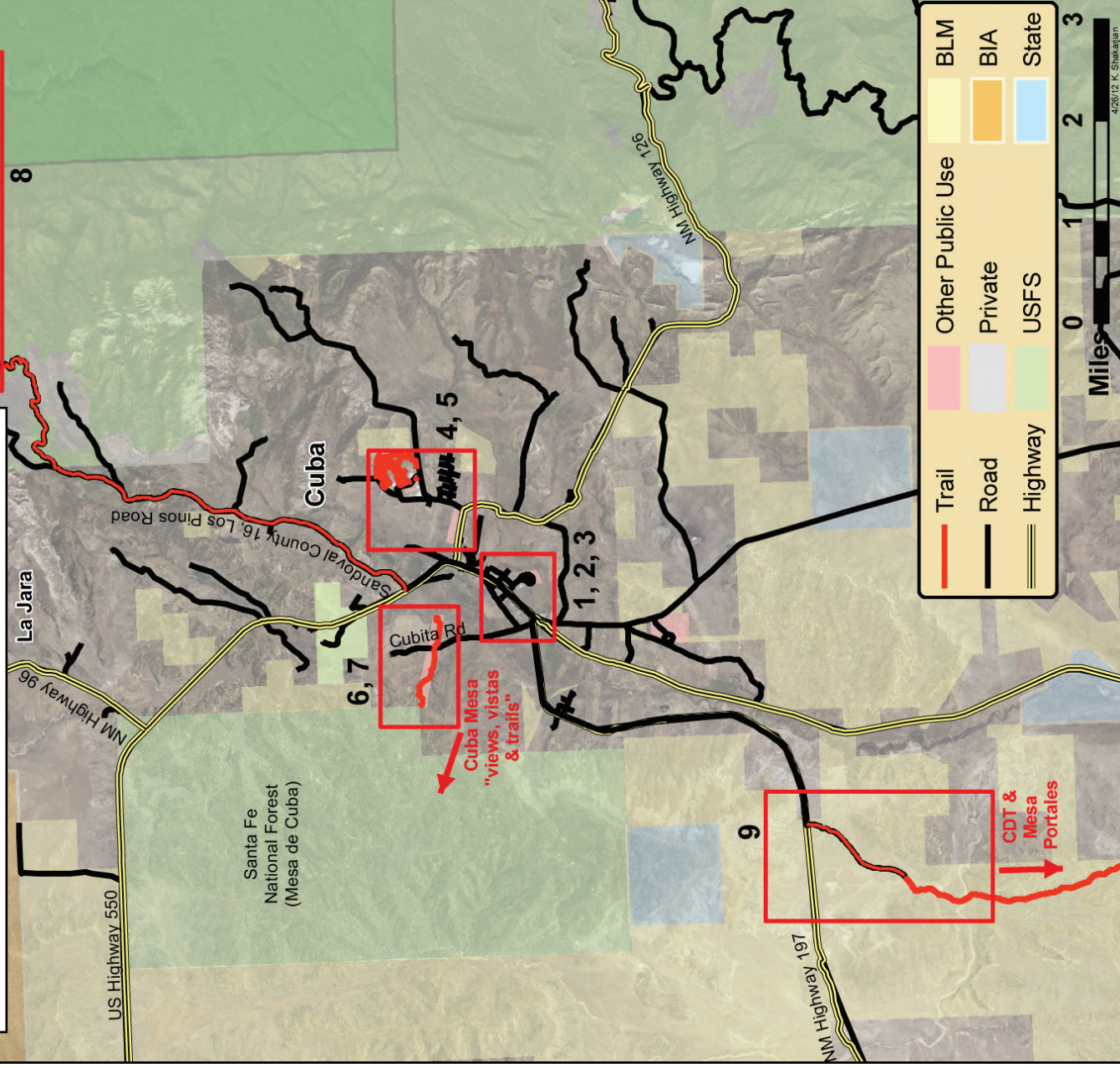
**Nearby Destinations:** Cuba Visitor Center, Cuba Schools, Catholic Church, Jemez Mountain Electric Cooperative Office, El Bruno's Restaurant, Presciliano's Restaurant, Subway.



# Walking and Hiking Places near Cuba, New Mexico

## Cuba Area Walking Places

On this map below you will see the five general areas in or near Cuba where walking and hiking is easily available. Each of nine places is indicated by number on the map. In this guide you will find descriptions and maps for each of them. Choose a place and enjoy your walk or hike!



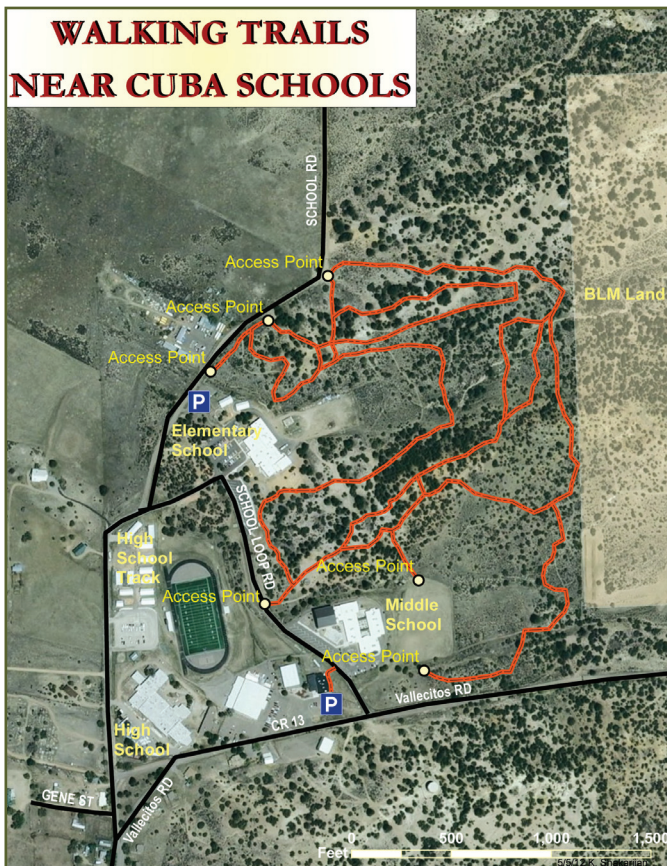
## 5. Cuba School Trails



**Distance:** 0.25 to 5 miles (500 to 10,000 steps)

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderately difficult

**Description:** The network of school cross-country trails provides many options for a short or more extended walk or hike. These trails can be entered at all hours from the access points shown. Paved parking is located outside the school fence as indicated. Loops of 0.5 miles (pink dots), 1.8 miles (orange dots) and 2.5 miles (green dots) are signed. There are many lovely piñon, juniper, ponderosa and oak trees. There are beautiful views of the Nacimiento Mountains, Cuba Mesa and nearby sandstone cliffs. Bring water and a snack for extended hikes.



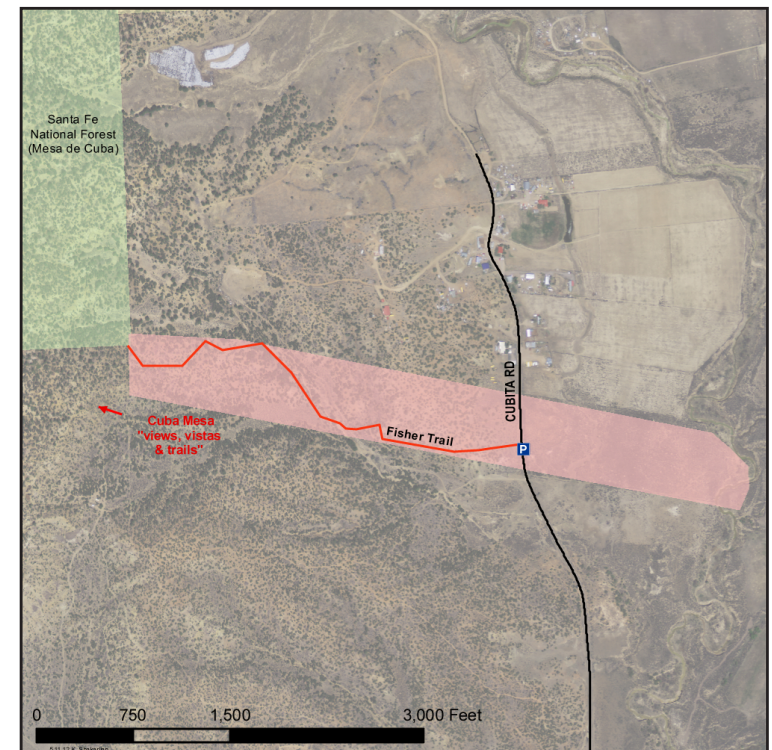
## 6. Fisher Community Trail



**Distance:** 1.8 miles (3600 steps) round trip

**Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult

**Description:** The Fisher Trail provides a beautiful location for walkers who want a wilderness experience within walking distance of the center of Cuba. It begins at a parking area on the Cubita Road 1 mile north of the NM 197 junction. The trail follows contours of the side of a tree-covered mesa uphill and downhill until it crosses a large arroyo. It then climbs to a ridge that leads to the nearest corner of Santa Fe National Forest. Cairns (large rock pile markers) end at this point. Ambitious hikers can continue through a break in the cliff to the top of Cuba Mesa. The trail crosses from the piñon-juniper woodland to ponderosa-oak forest and provides striking views of sandstone cliffs, the Nacimiento Mountains and the Village of Cuba. Wildlife sightings are frequent here. Bring water.



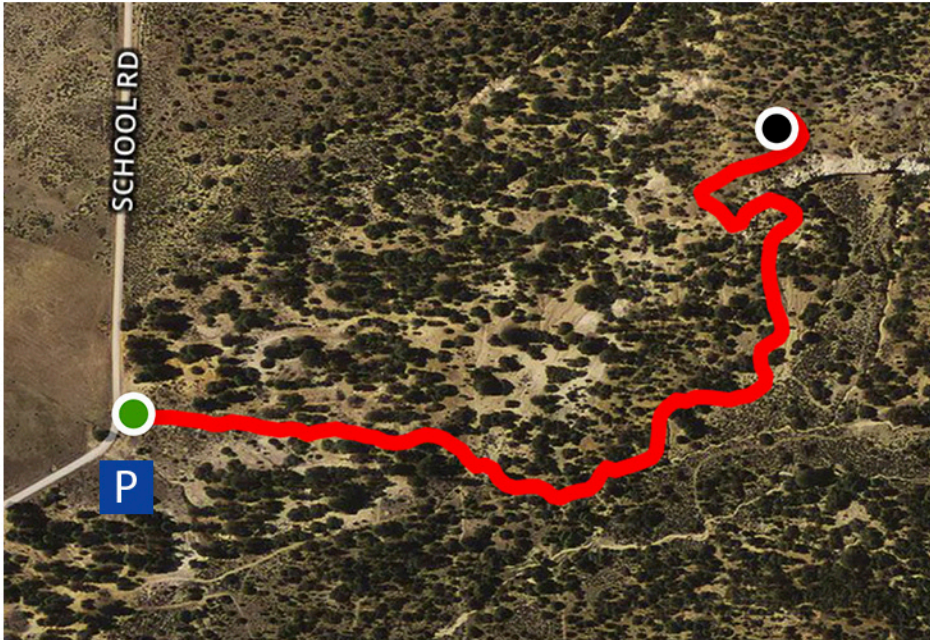
## 5.1 School Overlook Trail

**Distance:** 0.5 mile



**Difficulty:** Easy to moderately difficult

**Description:** The network of school cross-country trails provides access to a spur trail on BLM land that leads to a scenic overlook of the Cuba valley. The entrance to the trail can be found along the green loop near the northeast corner of the cross country trails network. Look along the fence line for the v-gate entrance to the trail. The trail leads you across some small arroyos and up a sandstone ridge to a high point where there are beautiful views of the Nacimiento Mountains, Cuba Mesa and nearby sandstone cliffs. Bring water and a snack for extended hikes.



## 7.1 Sandoval County Fairgrounds Trails



**Distance:** 0.25-1.25 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate

**Description:** The network of Sandoval County Fairgrounds trails provides many options for a short or more extended walk or hike. These trails can be entered during daytime fairgrounds times, which can vary by season. There is no entry fee except during the annual fair, Thursday - Sunday the first week of August. Parking and access points are located outside the Sandoval County Fairgrounds Community Center as indicated. The trail loops through piñon-juniper woodland and affords many beautiful views of Cuba Mesa to the west. Bring water.





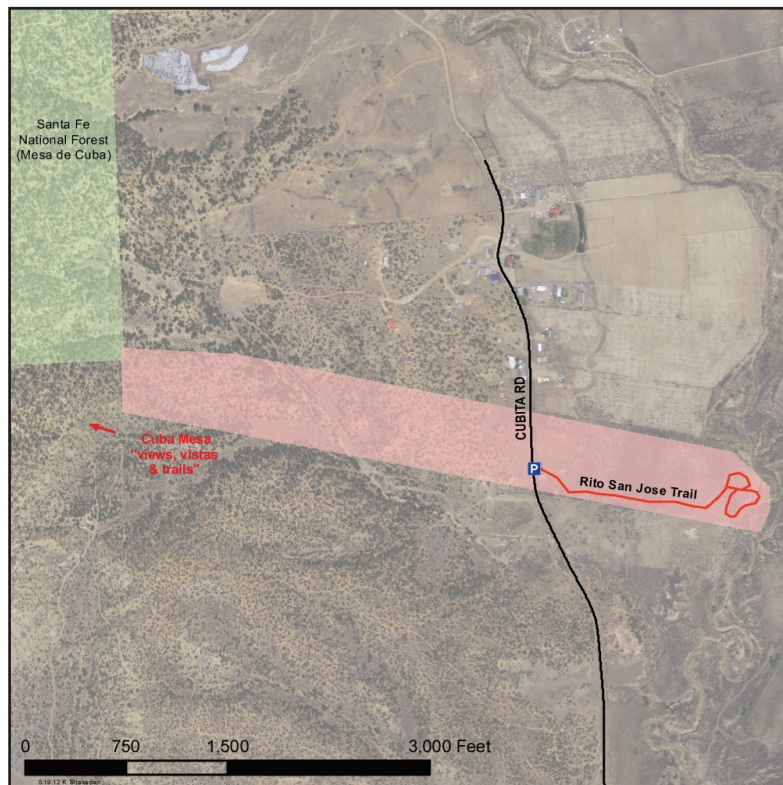
## 7. Rito San Jose Trail



**Distance:** 1.0 mile (2000 steps) round trip

**Difficulty:** Easy to moderate

**Description:** The Rito San Jose Trail provides a nice location for walkers who want a natural river terrace experience within walking distance of the center of Cuba. It begins at a parking area on the Cubita Road 1 mile north of the NM 197 junction and across from the Fisher Community Trail parking area. The trail runs east over a sage covered flat across a small drainage and then to the rim of a small canyon. Hikers can continue down a slope to a figure-of-eight loop along the willow-covered river terrace. The trail provides beautiful views of Cuba Mesa and the Nacimiento Mountains. The river terrace is a great place for early morning and late afternoon birdwatching. Bring water and a snack.



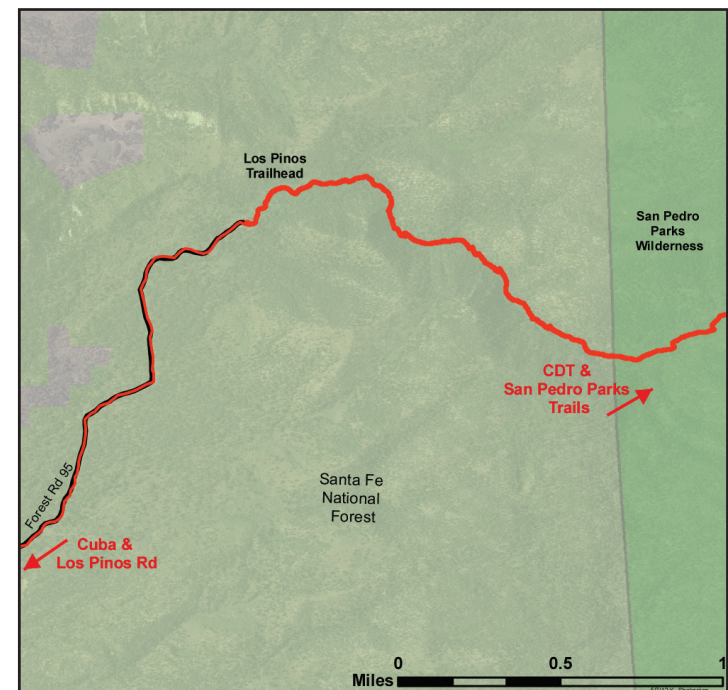
## 8. Continental Divide Trail North / Los Pinos Trail



**Distance:** 6.2 miles (12,400 steps) round trip

**Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult

**Description:** The Continental Divide Trail North / Los Pinos Trail climbs through Santa Fe National Forest from the Nacimiento Mountain foothills to the top of the mountains in the San Pedro Parks wilderness. It begins 6 miles northeast of Cuba at the end of Forest Road #95 where a parking area and kiosk are located. The trail follows the Rito Los Pinos for 3.1 miles and ascends almost 2000 vertical feet. It continues gently uphill and is shady along its entire course. Once on top of the mountain you can turn around, follow it several more miles to the center of the San Pedro Parks, choose a number of loop trails, or walk 2700 more miles to the Canadian border. Vegetation along the trail is lush and amazingly diverse. Views are limited until you reach the top of the mountain. Water in the Rito Los Pinos must be filtered and/or treated. Bring adequate water and food for the length of your planned hike.



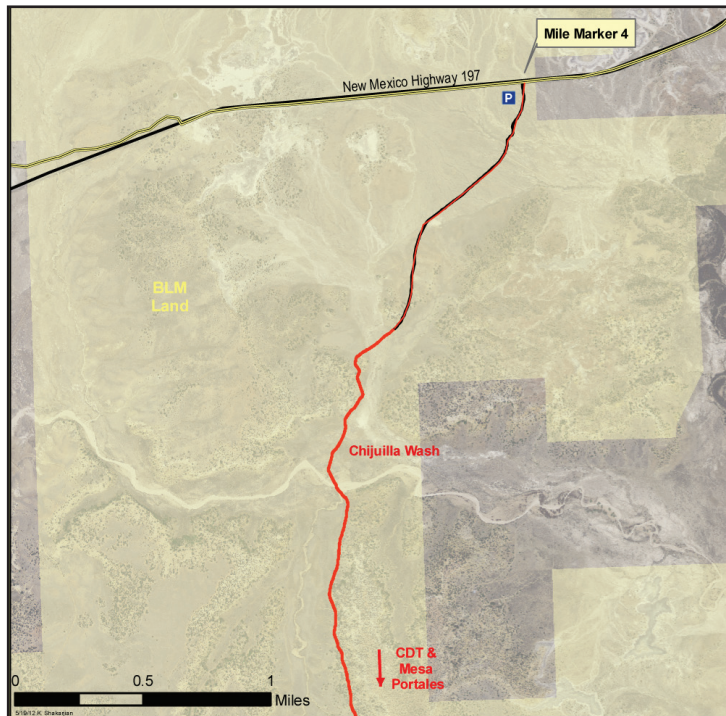
## 9. Continental Divide Trail South



**Distance:** 7.0 miles (14,000 steps) round trip

**Difficulty:** Moderate to difficult

**Description:** The Continental Divide Trail South begins 4 miles southwest of Cuba on a dirt road that runs south from mile marker 4 on NM 197. It follows the roadway approximately 1½ miles until – after passing sandstone cliffs – it crosses the wide Chijuilla Wash. It then follows posts and cairns (large rock pile markers) through a wide arroyo to the top of Mesa Portales. The trail takes you south along the Mesa rim for another 2 miles before descending from the Mesa and heading to La Ventana Mesa, Mount Taylor and the Mexican border, 400 miles away. You can turn around or continue at this point. There are scenic vistas along the entire route including badlands, sandstone cliffs, and mountain and mesa views from the Mesa Portales rim. You stay in piñon-juniper woodland, but shade can be scarce. Bring plenty of food and water for extended hikes.



## Other Nearby Santa Fe National Forest Trails to San Pedro Parks Wilderness

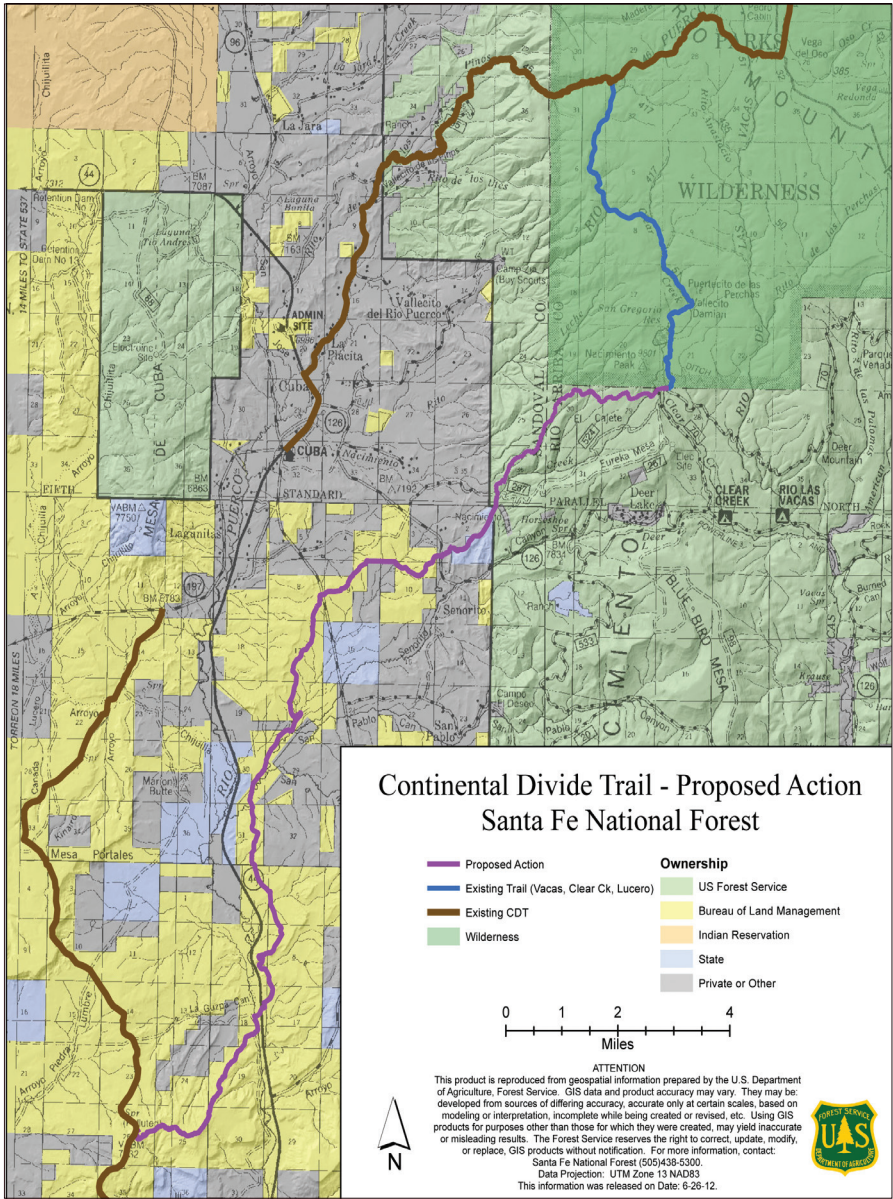
- Vacas /San Gregorio Lake Trail – 13 miles east of Cuba on NM 126 and Forest Road #70
- Palomas Trail – 20 miles east of Cuba on NM 126 and Forest Road #70
- San Jose Trail – 18 miles northeast of Cuba on U.S. 550, NM 96 and Forest Road #96

## Future Continental Divide Trail

As shown on the map (next page) the Santa Fe National Forest and Rio Puerco Bureau of Land Management Offices have announced a proposed action to re-route the Continental Divide Trail from its present route (brown line) to a new route (pink and blue lines). This route will soon provide new walking and hiking opportunities that will be accessed south of Cuba on County Road 11 and east of Cuba on the Eureka Mesa County Road/Forest Road 267 and NM 126.

Sandoval County is planning Continental Divide Trail parking at its Cuba Fairgrounds facility. Other trailheads may be available as well.





## Your Walking Prescription

This section is for your doctor or health practitioner to complete when you seek advice on starting a walking program. You may wish to refer to it before planning your walks or hikes.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons to start walking:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Begin walking:

minutes at a time \_\_\_\_\_

minutes/day \_\_\_\_\_

minutes/week \_\_\_\_\_

### Slowly increase to:

minutes at a time \_\_\_\_\_

minutes/day \_\_\_\_\_

minutes/week \_\_\_\_\_

**Other suggestions for level of difficulty and medical conditions:**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
*Doctor or Health Practitioner*

## Checklist – Things to Take on Your Walk or Hike

- Cap, Visor or Hat
- Walking Shoes, Trail Runners or Hiking Boots
- Windbreaker or Rain Jacket
- Sweater or Fleece for Cold Weather
- Small Pack
- Cell Phone
- Medications and Small First Aid Kit
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, Lip Balm
- Digital Camera
- Adequate Water – Up to 1 Quart for each 2 Hours
- Snacks or Meals
- Small Flashlight or Head Lamp
- Walking Stick or Hiking Poles



**“People say, “How do you make the time? And I say I have made (walking) part of my everyday life.”**

~ Cuba Community Member