

GREENWAYS

Silver City, NM

- * Hiking
- * Birding
- * Natural Beauty
- * Local History

Maps and information for enjoying Silver City's Greenways Walking Trails

La Capilla

BIG DITCH PARK

LACAPILLA WETLANDS

Big Ditch Park

SAN VICENTE CIENEGA

BOSTON HILL

Boston Hill trailhead
PATRICIA TABER PHOTOS



BIG DITCH PARK

The "Big Ditch" is testament to the damage caused by failure to protect our watershed. When the Historic Downtown Silver City district was created in the 1870s, Main Street was situated along the watercourse for natural water flows. As Silver City grew trees were cut down in the area just north of Silver City for lumber for buildings and mines and the shrubs were cut for fuel wood. Grazing further denuded the watershed. Annual monsoon floods replaced most of Main Street with a deep arroyo that by 1910 was down to bed-rock 50' below street level and nicknamed "The Big Ditch." The Civilian Conservation Corps stabilized the banks and additional improvements were made through collaborative efforts of local citizens, the Town

and Main Street Project. A primitive hiking trail is proposed to connect the Big Ditch Park with the San Vicente Trail. Birds that may be seen here are similar to those found along San Vicente.

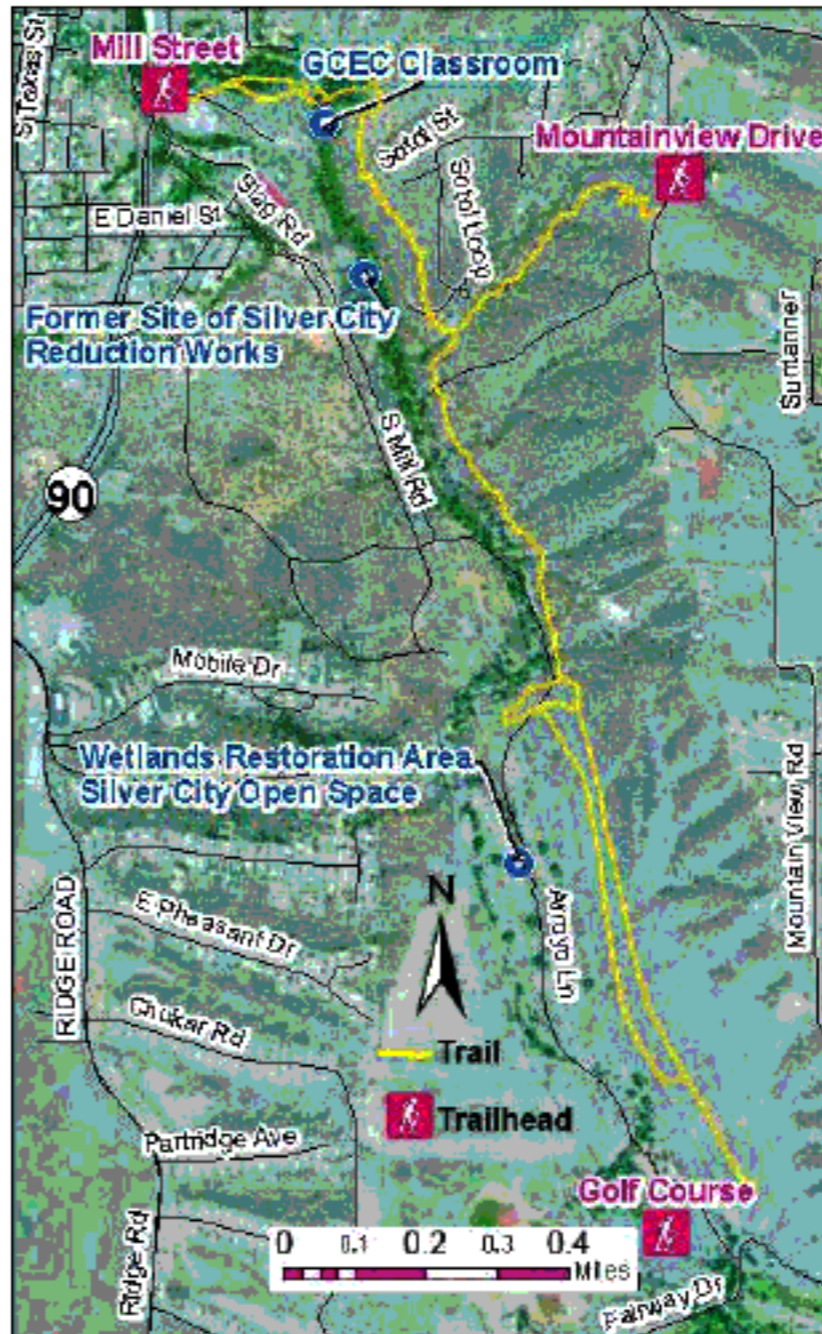
Map courtesy of Dr. Al Lawrence,
Town of Silver City Community Health Council

Funding provided to Southwestern NM Audubon by National Audubon Society through a Collaborative Grant, Gila Native Plant Society, Grant County Community Health Council Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities and the Silver City Arts and Cultural District with funding from Silver City Lodger's Tax. Assistance also provided by the Town of Silver City and Gila Resources Information Project. Contributors: Dan Hintz, Terry Timme, Karen Beckenback, Jerry Bird, David Beatty, and Keller Suberkropp. Graphics by Patricia Taber.



SAN VICENTE CIENEGA

San Vicente Creek is the main drainage for the 19 square mile Silver City watershed. It begins downtown at the confluence of Pinos Altos Creek (from the northeast) and Silva Creek (from the northwest). It flows south out of town where it ultimately recharges groundwater that Silver City uses for



Map courtesy of Al Lawrence, Grant County Community Health Council

municipal drinking water. San Vicente Creek provides a beautiful green and shaded riparian corridor in a landscape that is primarily dry, sunny and often brown. Historically, the creek has been the site of many mill sites. The largest was the Silver City Reduction Works that shut down in the 1940's.

The hazardous mine tailings remained contaminating groundwater until cleanup and restoration funding became available in 2013 from the Office of Natural Resources Trustee in a settlement with Freeport McMoRan for hazardous substance releases from the Chino, Cobre and Tyrone mines. Today the trail along the creek provides excellent birding and wildlife habitat, hiking, biking, interpretive signage and relief from the sun.

~ RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY ~

The Wildlife Corridor

of San Vicente Creek leads from Chihuahuan desert scrub lands to oak/pinyon/ponderosa forest via a northern extension of the creek through the Town of Silver City to the Gila National Forest border. The ready availability of water is an attractant to migrating and nesting bird species. Likely bird sightings along San Vicente Creek are:

- Gambel's quail
- Mourning dove
- White-winged dove
- Red-tailed hawk
- Ladder-backed woodpecker
- Northern flicker
- Black & Say's phoebe
- Western scrub jay
- Common raven
- Chihuahuan raven (more likely)
- Violet-green swallow
- Juniper titmouse
- Bridled titmouse
- Bush-tit
- Western bluebird
- Townsend's solitaire
- American robin
- Curve-billed thrasher
- Phainopepla
- Ruby-crowned kinglet
- Canyon towhee
- Spotted towhee
- Chipping sparrow

- White-crowned sparrow
- Dark-eyed junco
- Summer tanager
- Yellow warbler
- Yellow-rumped warbler
- Wilson's warbler
- Lesser goldfinch
- House finch
- House sparrow

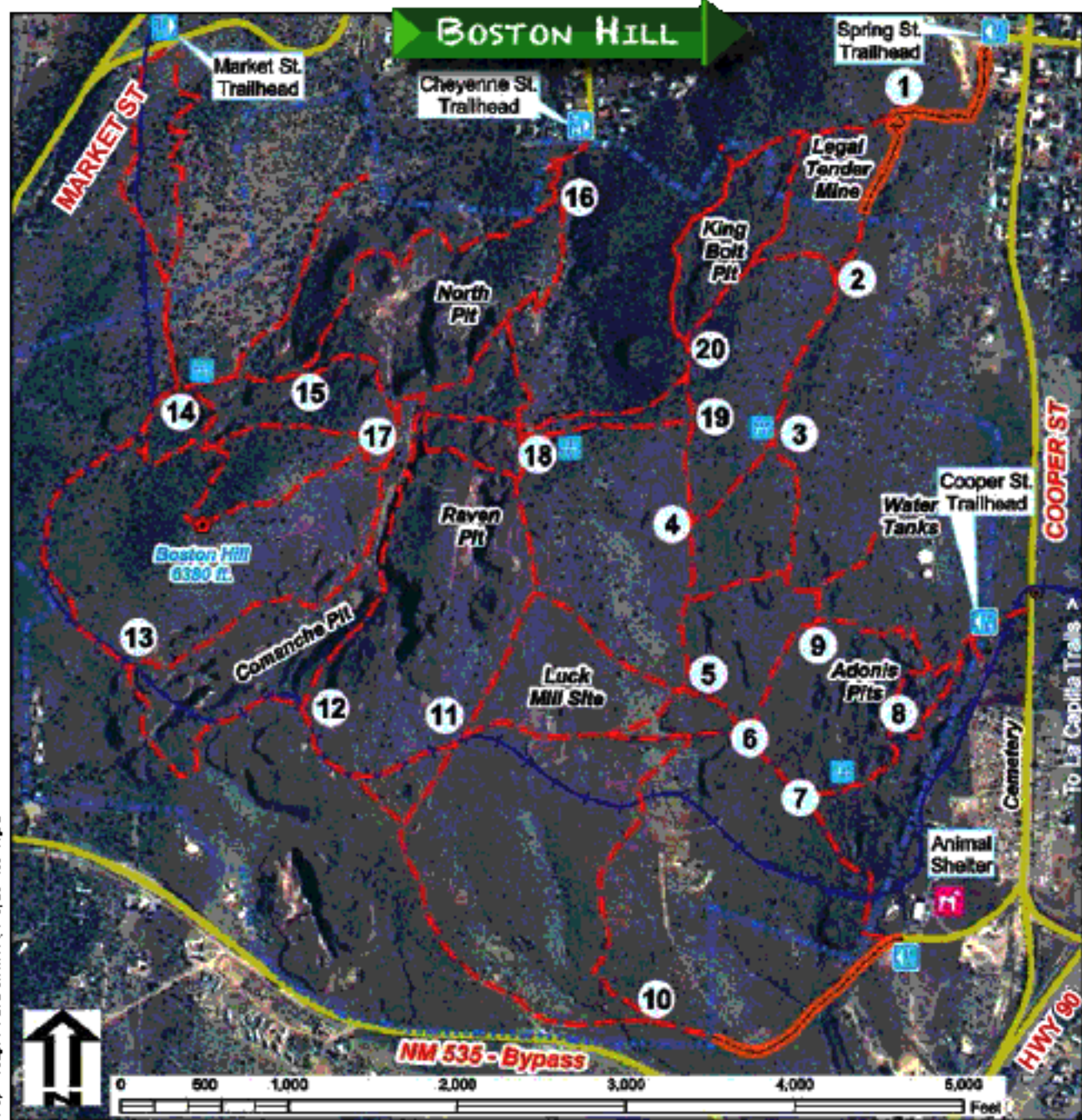


Ruby-throated Hummingbird
MELISSA LEWIS PHOTOS

Noteworthy sightings in the San Vicente Creek area: Common black-hawk, Montezuma quail, Belted Kingfisher, Western tanager.



San Vicente Creek
DAVE BERRY PHOTO



PLANTS of Silver City Greenways



Come Calla
LARRY LAMMA PHOTO

The vegetation on Boston Hill can be described as a piton-juniper woodland. A partial list of plants found on Boston Hill include:

- Two needle piton pine
- Alligator juniper
- One seed juniper
- Emory oak
- Gray oak
- Scrub live oak
- Desert willow
- Sosptree yucca
- Banana yucca
- Wheeler sotol
- Bear grass
- Englemann's prickly pear
- Brown-spined prickly pear
- Fendler's hedgehog cactus
- Walking stick cholla
- Apache plume
- Southwestern mountain mahogany
- Turpentine bush
- Snake weed
- Wait a bit
- Chamisa
- Wright's silktassel
- Gregg's buckbrush
- Wright's jimsonweed
- Southwestern prickly poppy
- Four O'Clock
- Southwestern Indian paintbrush
- Evening primrose
- Scarlet penstemon
- Toadflax penstemon
- Red stemmed filaree
- Globe mallow

Grasses

- Blue grama
- Sideoats grama
- Hairy grama
- Green sprangletop

Windmill grass, Fluffgrass
Cane bluestem, Plains bristlegrass
Longleaf squirreltail, Ring muley

Invasive trees

- Tree of heaven
- Salt cedar
- Siberian elm
- Russian olive

The drier upland portions of the trails in La Capilla and the San Vicente Cienega have vegetation similar to Boston Hill. As one moves toward the wetland in La Capilla, one encounters box elders and Fremont cottonwoods. In the wetland itself there are willows, seep willows, and cattails. The riparian area in the San Vicente Cienega is dominated by Fremont cottonwoods with willows and seep willows as well as Siberian elm and tree of heaven. The mid reaches of the Cienega have an abundance of Siberian elm.



Soaptree Yucca
LARRY LAMMA PHOTO

HISTORY of Boston Hill

Boston Hill is an abandoned mine lands property that was purchased by the Town of Silver City in 1999 to be preserved as open space. A series of three hills, ranging from 6,000 to 6,380 feet in elevation, Boston Hill got its name from the Massachusetts based "Boston Company" that made one of the first mining claims on the north face of the smallest hill in 1879. By 1883 the Boston Company sold the mine, but the name remains. Encompassing 550 acres, Boston Hill is part of the southernmost reach of the Silver City Range. It is a typical pinyon/juniper habitat that receives 18 inches of precipitation annually.

Silver ores were the primary focus of miners beginning in 1870 on Boston Hill. The completion of regional railroads in 1883 allowed for the construction of two on-site smelters that operated until 1907 and 1914 when the mining of silver ore tailed off in the area. In 1916 the attention turned to the mining of iron ore which was shipped to Pueblo, CO for smelting. Supply and demand for iron ore peaked during WWII and continued sporadically until mining on Boston Hill officially ended in the late 1970s. Today, according to an archeological study performed by the Town of Silver City, there are 13 vertical shafts, 55 open cuts, 383 prospects and 123 waste rock concentrations on Boston Hill.



Black-headed grosbeak
LARRY LAMMA PHOTO

BIRDS Boston Hill and La Capilla wetlands have many of the same species seen along San Vicente Creek but also have species that prefer the grassland environment. Some species which are possible to see here that you would less likely see at San Vicente Creek are: Great horned owl, White-throated swift, Rock wren, Canyon wren, Rufous-crowned sparrow, Black-throated sparrow, Black-headed grosbeak.

These listings are not meant to be comprehensive and some birds may be seen only seasonally.



The trails in this area follow the creek and are located between the San Vicente and Boston Hill Greenways areas. Trails are very easy walking along the brick-lined paths on almost level terrain. There are picnic tables & grills under shady trees.

HISTORY of LaCapilla

LaCapilla is a 23 acre heritage park with walking trails and wetlands just a few blocks south of historic downtown Silver City between San Vicente Creek and Boston Hill. It is open from sunrise to sunset. The modern capilla (Spanish for small chapel) and trails are part of ongoing development by Silver City and civic groups. The original capilla graced Silver City's skyline above Chihuahua Hill in the late 1800s and early 1900s.



Queen butterfly
LARRY LAMMA PHOTO

Check the Southwestern New Mexico Audubon website for more birding information, activities, downloadable maps, checklists and nearby birding spots: www.swnmaudubon.org

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