

Lost Water Canyon Rim Hike

A hike into the Lost Water Canyon Wilderness Study Area – the deepest solitude in the Pryor Mountains.

This is a great 8 mile (round trip) day hike along the Lost Water Canyon rim to Peregrine Point. There is no trail after the first half-mile, but route finding is not difficult - follow the canyon rim. However the off-trail walking sometimes through downed timber, is more strenuous than on 8 miles of good trail. The highest elevation (8,500 feet) is at the trailhead, so the return hike is 1,400 feet uphill.

This hike also makes a good overnight backpack trip. That allows quiet enjoyment of the evening and morning light, and a night in the wild. There is no water source; you must carry all you will need. The advantage is that most of the water will be carried downhill – not uphill.



Looking north up Lost Water Canyon. (Dick Walton photos)

Lost Water Canyon is both a Wilderness Study Area and a designated [Research Natural Area](#) (RNA). Congress should designate this area as Wilderness and extend the designation east and west to include Cave Ridge, Commissary Ridge and Crooked Creek Canyon.

Beyond Peregrine Point:

Ambitious hikers, who are very comfortable with off-trail route finding in rugged and wild country, can extend the hike southwest to the spectacular cliffy area where Lost Water, Cave and Crooked Creek Canyons join. This adds about 5 miles and another 1,000 feet to the 8 mile (round trip) and 1,400 feet elevation gain of the hike to Peregrine Point. Be sure to take a topo map and compass.

Getting to the Trailhead:

From Bridger MT follow the Pryor Mountain Road driving directions¹ to Big Ice Cave (mile 34.4) and beyond toward Dry Head Vista. The *unmarked* trailhead is about 3.6 miles past the short spur to Big Ice Cave, and about 0.8 miles before the jackleg fence barrier near Dry Head Vista.

A helpful landmark is a small and isolated cluster of trees on the left (north) side of Pryor Mountain Road a couple hundred feet past the trailhead. You may need to stop and get out to see the old two-track trail dropping steeply from the road down the hill to the southeast. It is not legal for motor vehicles.

Pryor Mountain Road is seasonally closed until May 22 at the Crooked Creek Road junction (mile 30.3). This is 8 miles before the Lost Water trailhead. This closure might be extended in some heavy snow years.



Isolated cluster of trees near trailhead

¹ <http://www.pryormountains.org/welcome-to-the-pryors/pryor-mountain-road/>

The Hike:

0.0 miles: From the *unsigned* trailhead on Pryor Mountain Road follow the old and abandoned two-track trail down the hill to the southeast. (This track is not legal for motorized use.) This is mostly open grassland with abundant wildflowers in June and into July. The track crosses a small drainage then climbs gently and passes through a few trees. Soon the track descends gently into a second small drainage.

0.4 miles: Cross the second drainage. Look right (southwest) for a rocky limestone outcrop on the skyline just to the left of a thickly forested north facing slope. Leave the two-track trail and head for the limestone outcrop. Climb to the top.

0.6 miles: Top of the limestone outcrop. This is the north end of the limestone cliff rim of Lost Water Canyon. Follow the cliff/rim south with the canyon on your left (east). Although there is no “trail” the rim is your guide. It is 3 ½ miles south along the cliff top to Peregrine Point. (The view of Lost Water Canyon is continuous. Any point you chose could be your endpoint and a lunch stop before returning to your vehicle.)

4.1 miles: Peregrine Point. At this point Lost Water Canyon which has been draining fairly straight south turns sharply toward the southwest. It is a good destination for your hike. Relax and enjoy the wild view in all directions. And/or wander and explore the area. The elevation is 1,400 feet below the trailhead. The heavy timber on the canyon rim has thinned, there is more open grass, and you will notice changes in the species of wildflowers blooming.

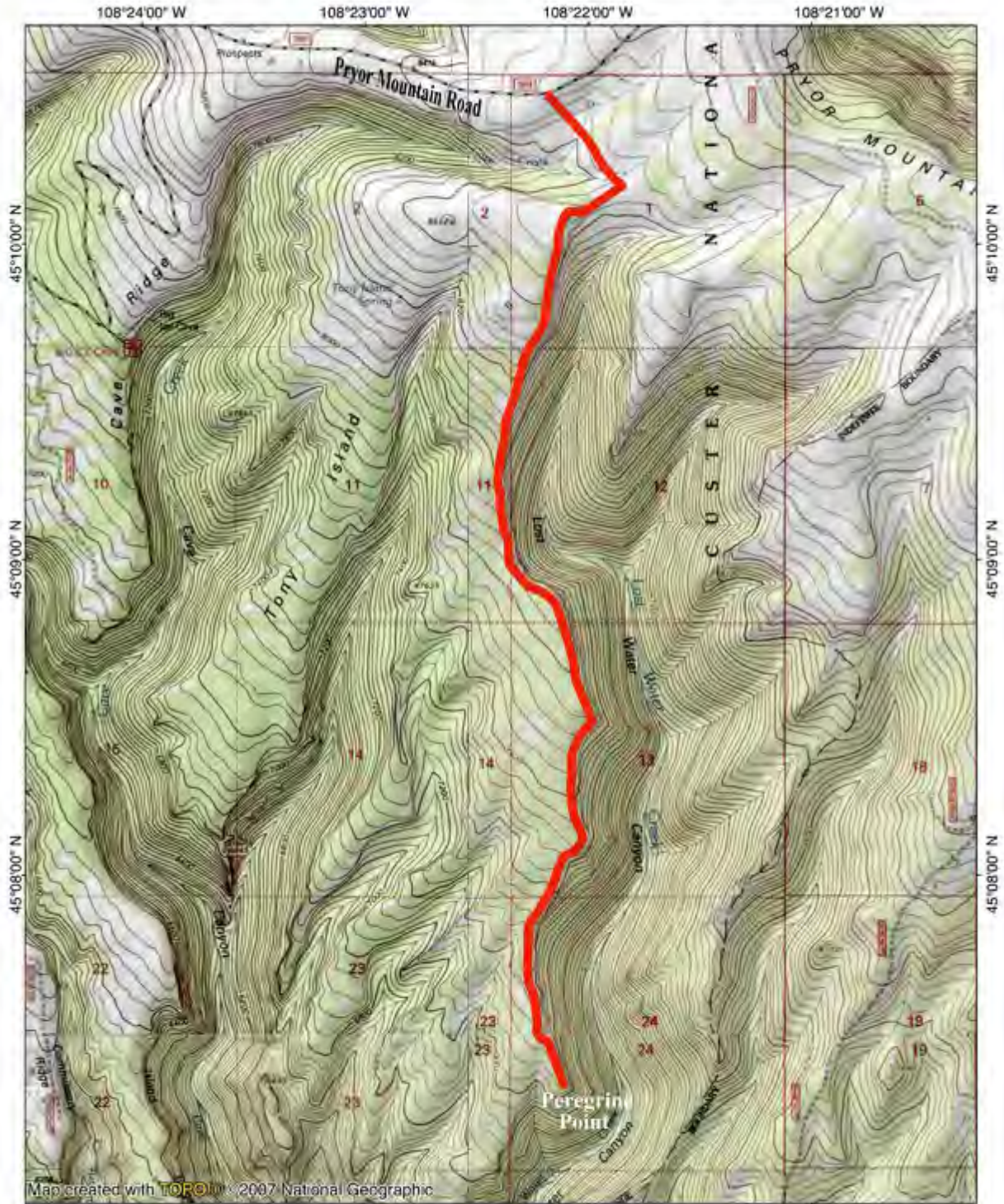


Lost Water canyon from Peregrine Point – looking north.

Camping beyond Peregrine Point



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Hike Route 



TN | MN
10.5°

South Lost Water Canyon

