

Middle Shadow Loop - 2011

Morgan Road Trailhead Broken Arrow

4.67 mi

920 ft. Cumulative Elevation Change

2 h 40 min travel time 3 h 45 min total

Traversing wooded and open terrain, ledges and washes, this route affords views of area between Munds Mountain, Snoopy, Twin Buttes, and Gibraltar. The loop starts at the Morgan Road trailhead "Broken Arrow," follows Marg's Draw trail north and then loops off the forest service trail east toward Munds Mountain, turns south through wooded and open country onto shelves with good long range area views, then drops down west past the Submarine to join the Broken Arrow trail that leads back to the trailhead.

Follow Marg's Draw trail north out of the parking lot for about 5-10 minutes, until you are almost at the top of a rise after traversing a wash. Turn right (Jct1) at a social trail that is the boundary between trails we will call the North and Middle Shadow Loops. Soon you will rise high enough to encounter 360 degree views of the surrounding red rocks. Your vista will include distant sights of Thunder Mountain, Chimney Rock and Cockscomb as well as closer views of Snoopy, Twin Buttes, and Submarine, not to mention the length of Munds Mountain which lies ahead of you.

The trail takes you east along almost level ground along a spit that gets narrower as you approach the mountain. Be sure to note the varied shaped chert along the trail in this area. About 40 min into the hike watch closely as the trail will turn a bit to the right and go between two large juniper trees. At the end of the spit the trail will start down, still traveling in the same direction, toward the wash in front of Munds Mountain. Some faint trails to the right can lead you astray. Keep going until you face a T junction (Jct2). The left fork continues the Shadow Loop North. Take the right fork. Continue to work your way down and soon you will see a trail heading off to the right down into the wash. Take this trail (Jct3). (If you go straight you will head into the Thin Man trail to the top of Munds Mt.)

Enter the wash and cross over large water-carved ledges. Work your way down these and continue in the wash over scabble for another couple of minutes or so. Look for a trail heading off to the left out of the wash (S1). There will be a dead tree on the right of the wash at your turn. Climb out of the wash through dense vegetation across sandy soils and follow the contours of Munds Mt. as vistas open up before you. You will cross deep creases in the soft soil but maintain your direction around the contours. Eventually you will see a large red rock shelf ahead of you through the trees. You may wish to head out on it to enjoy the view, but your trail turns down to the right just before the shelf (S3). (Trail may seem to be closed off with branches, but turn down anyway.) The trail travels through woods and eventually goes down a steep incline to another wash. Cross the wash and follow the path to the right on the other bank. Soon the trail heads up out of the wash on the left side (S4). This junction is marked with cairns and with a rock in a tree. You should be out of the wash before you hit a log jam of fallen trees that make further travel

in the wash difficult. If you get there, simply head to the left and find the trail. Continue along the trail along the contours of Munds Mt. Eventually you will reach some nice rock ledges (2.5 mi from start) that make for a good lunch spot (S5) or simply a rest spot with great views. Climb up the ledges at the far side. Get back on the trail and continue until you drop down and cross a small wash. Here there is another set of nice shelves, about 2 hours from the start of the trip (S6). From up on these shelves you will see a long wooded spit of Munds Mt. ahead of you to the left. Make a note of this spit because that is where you will find your way down for the third leg of the loop.

To get to the spit, continue along the trail and down a steep wash and back up again. Soon the Submarine Rock will come into view below you. At the point of the spit you will be closest to the Submarine and here you will turn right and follow a trail down a rocky area (Jct4). (The trail you were on continues and is part of the Shadow Loop South route.) Head for the Submarine, basically traveling down, angling a bit to the right as you make your way between the vegetation. Climb the Submarine or simply follow the trail near the bottom of the Submarine on the right back to the official trail that takes you back to the Broken Arrow trail. Turn right when you hit the Broken Arrow trail (Jct5) and that will take you back to the trailhead.