

Sabino Canyon History

During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corporation) and the WPA (Works Progress Administration) built the nine bridges that crossed Sabino Creek. They originally planned to continue the road to Mt. Lemmon, but due to the lack of funds, the road building ended in a loop drive on a flat area, which later was called tram Stop 9. An outdoor restroom was built in this area. The unfinished road continued behind this restroom and to the right. At the end of the unfinished road, a small game trail continued up the mountain and connected with the main trail, called the Telephone Line Trail (Phone Line Trail).

In the 1960's (the same time period Brother Branham visited the canyon), people were allowed to drive their own vehicles up the entire 3.7 miles of the Sabino Canyon road. Later, they closed the roads to personal vehicle traffic. In the late 1970's they began to allow a tram to take visitors up the canyon. Visitors pay a fee to ride the tram. (To hike in the canyon, visitors should bring water in plastic containers, and wear good shoes and a hat.)

On July 31, 2006, Sabino Canyon experienced extremely heavy rains, which caused major flooding and rockslides in the canyon. According to a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, the majority of the damage to the canyon most likely occurred between seven and nine o'clock on Monday morning, July 31. Flooding like the canyon experienced in July has not been recorded since the flood gauge was placed in the canyon in 1933. When there is much rainfall in the canyon and the surrounding areas, the bridges may have water flowing over them; otherwise, the bridges are normally dry, and Sabino Creek runs underground part of the year. A comparison of the peak water flow on July 31 versus the usual water flow that can occur with a heavier rainfall is as follows: When the water flows at a rate of 110 cubic feet per second, about six inches of water flows over the bridges. On July 31, 2006, the peak water flow was measured at a rate of 16,500 cubic feet per second.

These heavy rains caused flooding and rockslides within the canyon. Several rockslides were about 50 feet wide and hundreds of feet long. The heavy rains, flooding, and rockslides severely damaged the Phone Line Trail and much of the road. Areas of the Phone Line Trail were washed down to the bedrock. The last 1.5 miles of the road, from the tram's Stop 6 to Stop 9, had the most damage; however, the entire road incurred severe damage. At Stop 1, Rattlesnake Creek cut a section out of the road that was about 30 feet wide and 6 feet deep. The bridge was left high and dry about 20 feet from the new streambed. All of the nine bridges remained in tact after the flooding, but the road leading to and from several of the bridges was washed away. Many areas of the road were covered with boulders of various sizes (including car-sized boulders) and hundreds of yards of the road were covered in several feet of sand and rocks. The road was washed out, leaving gaps in the road as wide as 50 feet in some areas. Many areas of the road were undercut or severely undercut. Where the sand was washed out from underneath the pavement, the boulders beneath the road stuck up as bumps in the pavement.

Stop 9 had at least one major rockslide that covered the loop in the road with several feet of boulders. The restroom roof was removed and the restroom was buried by boulders. In some places, the boulders measured about ten feet deep. At the overlook area, the decorative railing (where people stood and viewed Sabino Creek in the canyon below) held back many boulders, some measuring up to six feet in diameter. Hundreds of other boulders cascaded off the road and piled in the canyon below. The overlook area was also undercut by the water flow.

The canyon roads and trails were not open to the public for many months while they assessed the damages and made plans for repairs. After repairing the trails, visitors were allowed access to them. After the tram was able to run to Stop 4 and walking traffic access on the road was available, visitors were allowed to walk the road to Stop 9. By the end of 2008, the road repair was completed and the trams were running the full route to Stop 9.



Sabino Canyon

The Sabino Canyon Visitor Center houses a gift shop, map displays, and videos of the area.

Below is a map of the Sabino Canyon area and various other information concerning it.



Note: This work may be used and distributed only if it is copied entirely, it is not modified, and it is distributed free of charge.

Tucson Tabernacle, 2555 N Stone Ave, Tucson, Arizona 85705 USA

Sabino Canyon ticket booth and shuttle



Visitors purchase a ticket to ride the shuttle at this ticket booth.

There are shuttles that run to Sabino Canyon and shuttles that run a short run to Bear Canyon. The shuttle ticket is required to initially board the shuttle at the base, as well as to board the shuttle at any of the stops in the canyons. Visitors may ride the tram often throughout the day as long as they stay between Stop 1 and Stop 9.



Note: This work may be used and distributed only if it is copied entirely, it is not modified, and it is distributed free of charge.

Tucson Tabernacle, 2555 N Stone Ave, Tucson, Arizona 85705 USA

Sabino Canyon



During the Great Depression of the 1930's, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corporation) built the nine bridges that cross Sabino Creek.

Sabino Creek



Thimble Peak



Sabino Canyon is known for this peak, which they call “Thimble Peak.”

Thimble Peak can be seen from a distance; it is part of what identifies Sabino Canyon. Below is a photo taken as the sun set on Thimble Peak in Sabino Canyon after a snowfall.

