

# Madera Canyon Hiking Trail

EXPERIENCE THE GRANDEUR OF THE DAVIS MOUNTAINS



Davis Mountains Preserve © Lynn McBride.

Formed from volcanoes and sculpted by wind and water for more than 35 million years, the Davis Mountains of West Texas form a unique “sky island” surrounded by the Chihuahuan Desert. From the ancient pictographs that paint canyon walls to large, sprawling ranches that dot the landscape, the history and strength of the people of the Davis Mountains are tangible throughout the region.

Discover the rich natural history and majestic beauty of the Davis Mountains along the 2.5-mile Madera Canyon Hiking Trail, which opened to the public in 2007. The trail lies within The Nature Conservancy’s 33,000-acre Davis Mountains Preserve, which is typically only open to the public for special activities. But Madera Trail allows visitors to enjoy a portion of the preserve whenever they choose.

Despite its location in the arid and mountainous Trans-Pecos, the Davis Mountains, which climb more than 8,300 feet above sea level, are cool and forested. Animals and plants that live

above 5,000 feet are isolated from other similar mountain ranges by vast distances. These are true ecological islands, home to some animal and plant species found nowhere else on Earth.

## Details about Madera Canyon Trail

The trail is a loop, beginning and ending at the Lawrence E. Wood Picnic Area on Highway 118, about 24 miles northwest of Fort Davis. It was designed by a crew led by Big Bend National Park trails supervisor Don Sharlow and built by hand in order to have only a minimal impact on the surrounding landscape. The trail was made possible with support from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and General Motors, which also donated



Screech owl © Rich Kostecke.



Davis Mountains Preserve © Ian Shive.

## Wildlife:

Wildlife that may be present, particularly at dawn or dusk, includes:

- gray fox
- ringtail
- western scrub jay
- acorn woodpecker
- Montezuma quail
- golden eagles
- Davis Mountains cottontail
- javelina
- white-tailed and mule deer
- mountain short-horned lizard

funds to help the Conservancy add 10,000 acres to the Davis Mountains Preserve in 2004.

Madera Canyon Trail offers outdoor enthusiasts a moderately difficult hike and views of Madera Canyon and the upper watershed of Madera Creek, Pine Peak, Sawtooth Mountain, and Mount Livermore, the highest peak in the Davis Mountains. At one point, the trail drops down into Chico Canyon, where it follows the creek and takes hikers past an area frequented by a variety of wildlife species.

### Hours and Rules

The trail is open from dawn until dusk, every day of the week. Camping is not allowed. Due to the sensitive nature of the plants and animals found on the preserve, mountain bikes, all-terrain vehicles and pets are prohibited on the trail.

For more information about the Davis Mountains, visit [www.nature.org/texas](http://www.nature.org/texas) and click on 'Places We Protect.'



Left to right: Gray fox © Rich Kostecke; Volunteers at Davis Mountains Preserve © Ian Shive; Arizona sage © Rich Kostecke.