Millville and Petroglyph Discovery Trail

The Millville and Petroglyph Discovery Trail provides visitors the chance to learn about two periods of San Pedro River Valley history. Millville was the site of two Tombstone-era silver mills. The trail also leads to petroglyphs (rock carvings) created by the Native Nations who once lived here. Interpretive displays tell the tale along the 2.5-mile roundtrip trail.

**History:** The Charleston Hills flank the San Pedro River at Millville, pinching the river in what is known as the Narrows. Water backs up below the surface to create a moist area and rich riparian habitat. Native Americans lived in the area for thousands of years and their remnants include petroglyphs on boulder outcrops.

The water attracted Richard Gird here in 1878 during Arizona’s Territorial period. Gird and his partner Ed Schieffelin founded Tombstone and started the first silver mines there. Their company, the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company, came to the Narrows to build a silver mill to process ore from their mines. They built the Gird mill on the side a hill and dammed the river upstream. A ditch and flues brought water from the dam to the mill for the steam boilers that powered its equipment. The Gird Mill was operational in 1879. Gird lived in a house next to the mill, that served as the company headquarters. A second mill soon joined the Gird Mill at the site, the Corbin Mill. A small town, Millville, grew up around the mills. A second town, Charleston, was established across the river. The two mills produced $1.4 million in silver bullion in 1881 in the short time they operated. In 1881 the mines in Tombstone reached the water table and flooded; pumping water out of the mines had the side-effect of providing water for mill operations in Tombstone proper, and the river mills (there were 6 of them) ceased operations. By 1889 both Millville and Charleston were ghost towns.

Ruins of the mills and tailings from ore processing are viewed up-close along an interpretive trail reached via the San Pedro Trail. An adjoining trail leads to the prehistoric petroglyphs. The townsites and remnants of structures and petroglyphs became part of the National Conservation Area in 1988. The round-trip distance of hiking these trails is 2.5 miles.

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**Plan Your Visit:** The Millville/petroglyph trail traverses hills and a loose sand wash; there is loose rock and steep slopes. Make sure you are able to handle this. Come prepared for the weather. Always carry adequate water. Let someone know where you are and what to do if you do not return on time.

**The trailhead and parking area** are graveled and accessible to horse trailers. There are no picnic tables.

**The San Pedro Trail** is open to hiking, equestrian riding, and bicycling. The interpretive trails are closed to bicycle riding and horses. Many different people use the trails - respect their rights.

**Pets** must be leashed in all developed facilities and in other posted areas. All dogs must be kept under direct control at all times. Clean up after your dog and pack out the waste.

**Camping** is not allowed at the trailhead, parking area, or interpretive trails. Backcountry camping is allowed 1/2 mile from the trailhead and public roads. A permit is required for camping, available from self-service stations located at most trailheads. There is a $2 per person per night fee.

**Dispose of Waste Properly:** Please pack out your trash. Use the waterless toilets provided.

**Leave What You Find:** Vegetation, archaeological, historical, and paleontological sites and artifacts are protected by federal law. It is illegal to damage, destroy or remove any artifacts or structures in the SPRNCA. Do not climb on or touch the petroglyphs. There is a great deal of historical debris in the area. THIS IS ALL PROTECTED BY FEDERAL LAW. LEAVE EVERYTHING WHERE IT IS. Metal detecting is not permitted.

**Watch Out for Hazards:** Potential hazards in this area may include hidden sink holes, unstable ground, and snakes. NOTE: The petroglyph trail is temporarily closed due to dangerous soil subsidence until remediation is completed.

**CAUTION:** Soil around the historic mill’s tailings and waste rock may be contaminated with heavy metals from historic mine ore processing. Keep out of areas posted closed or barricaded. Stay on trails.