

Name: _____ Date: _____

Scavenger Hunt for the road trip down Hwy 60 West to the Very Large Array



The fifty mile trip from Socorro to the Very Large Array along Hwy 60 west is a beautiful, scenic by-way. This activity is designed to be a personal log of your trip with a combination of suggested points of interest and your own observations. Write or draw your observations that document your experience. On your mark, get set, GO!

1.) Begin your personal log by recording the first green mile marker you spot along the way. Green mile markers look this...



2.) The suggested points of interest in this activity begin with mile marker 137. Once you pass mile marker 137, look for a green highway sign. How many miles to the VLA? _____

Please notice that the mile marker numbers get smaller as you get closer to the VLA.

Along your trip to the VLA you'll be able to spot the white dome of the Magdalena Ridge Observatory (MRO). The observatory seems to play hide and seek as you travel past this beautiful mountain range; *The Magdalena's*. Watch carefully and record the mile markers as you are able to catch a glimpse of MRO. "Now you see it now you don't."

This is a picture of the MRO dome as seen from Mile Marker 136:



3.) Watch for an outcrop of beautiful red rock hills on both side of the highway beginning around mile marker 133. Draw this outcrop:



4.) Look for mile marker 132. Look carefully for a sign, on the South (left) side of the highway that tells the name of this canyon.



Fill in the name of this canyon:



5.) Look to the South (left) at the Magdalena Mountains. Between mile marker 129 - 128, what do you see? _____



(hint: the black arrow is pointing to ...?)

6.) Around mile marker 126 you'll find beautiful, open country. Look for cattle, horses, antelope, cowboys and cowgirls! Draw or write a description of what you see:

7.) Make a note of the time day, the month and season, and weather conditions happening right now during your trip. How might these factors impact what you are seeing?

8.) At mile marker 124 start looking for a green sign for Water Canyon. How many miles does the sign say it is to Water Canyon? Fill in the number on this picture of the sign.



9.) At mile marker 120 start looking on the North (right) side of the road for a large pile of rubble. What do you think that pile of rubble used to be? Maybe a farm house or a hotel for tired cowboys?



Draw what you think this structure might have looked like when it was new.

10.) Notice how you have been traveling going up hill? At this point in your trip what mile marker is the start of yet another uphill climb on your journey?



11.) Between mile markers 116 and 112 you will be traveling through the beautiful town of Magdalena. What do you see?

12.) At mile marker 112, start looking for the green VLA sign.
How many miles to the VLA?



13.) At mile marker 109 there is a windmill on the South (left) side of the road. Look out the side window of your vehicle to the South and see if you can spot the MRO on top of the mountain! Draw what you see.

14.) Notice you are still going up hill headed toward the Plains of San Augustine. Record the next mile marker that marks yet another climb:

Watch for mile marker 103. As you pass it watch for your first view of the Plains of San Augustine. You are now at about 7,000 feet in elevation! Are your ears popping yet?

The turn off to the VLA Site is just after mile marker 93. Have a great time at the VLA Visitor's Center and on the self-guided walking tour. Don't forget to buy a souvenir at the VLA Gift Shop!



15.) Draw or write about your experience at the VLA. You might want to consider including drawing the Radio Telescopes, wildlife, and listing what you learned and what you questions you may have.

Visit www.nrao.edu for more information. Consider submitting a question to our "Ask an Astronomer" section and sending the favorite photo you took while at the VLA to be posted in our "Visitor Photo Gallery" at jstanley@nrao.edu.

THANKS FOR VISITING THE VERY LARGE ARRAY!