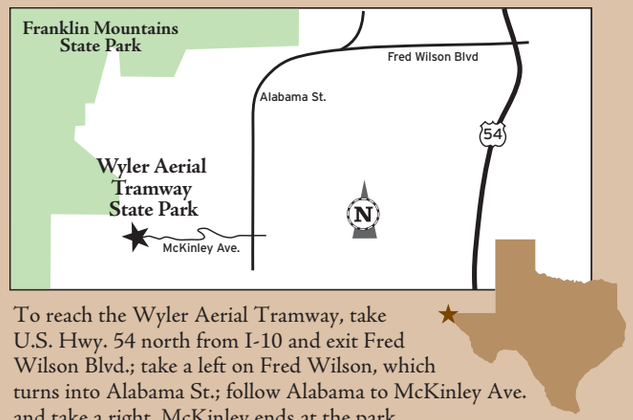
WYLER AERIAL TRAMWAY PROVIDES A TRULY UNIQUE EXPERIENCE: A FOUR-MINUTE GONDOLA RIDE TO THE TOP OF RANGER PEAK ON THE ONLY PUBLIC TRAMWAY IN TEXAS. THE SPECTACULAR MILE-HIGH VIEW FROM THE OBSERVATION PLATFORM—ENCOMPASSING TWO COUNTRIES, THREE STATES AND 7,000 SQUARE MILES—CONNECTS VISITORS TO THE VAST EXPANSE OF THE NORTHERN CHIHUAHUAN DESERT AND THE REGION'S MULTI-FACETED HISTORY. COME, TAKE A RIDE!

ENJOY YOUR VISIT!

Wyler Aerial Tramway comprises nearly 200 acres of El Paso's Franklin Mountains. At the lower terminal, enjoy a desert garden featuring local flora of the region and up-close looks at the main control room including the tramway's operating machinery. Topside, in addition to world-class views, refreshments and souvenirs await you at the park's gift shop. Or, dust off your boots and hike from the observation platform along a two-mile round-trip trail that curls its way around Ranger Peak. Hearty souls may choose to hike from the base station all the way to the summit, and back down again.



To reach the Wyler Aerial Tramway, take U.S. Hwy. 54 north from I-10 and exit Fred Wilson Blvd.; take a left on Fred Wilson, which turns into Alabama St.; follow Alabama to McKinley Ave. and take a right. McKinley ends at the park.

For additional information, contact:

Wyler Aerial Tramway State Park
1700 McKinley Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79930
(915) 566-6622 or (915) 562-9899
www.tpwd.texas.gov/wyleraerialtram

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Interpretive Guide to:

WYLER AERIAL TRAMWAY STATE PARK

THE MAN BEHIND THE DREAM

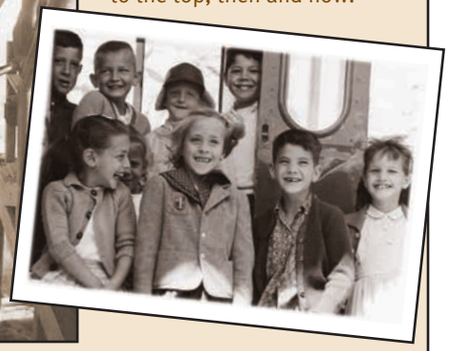
Wyler Aerial Tramway fulfills the dream of philanthropist Karl O. Wyler, who strongly believed that the lofty views from atop Ranger Peak should be available to the public. He included this wish in his final will. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department accepted donation of the tramway in 1997 and opened it to the public in 2001 following extensive renovation.

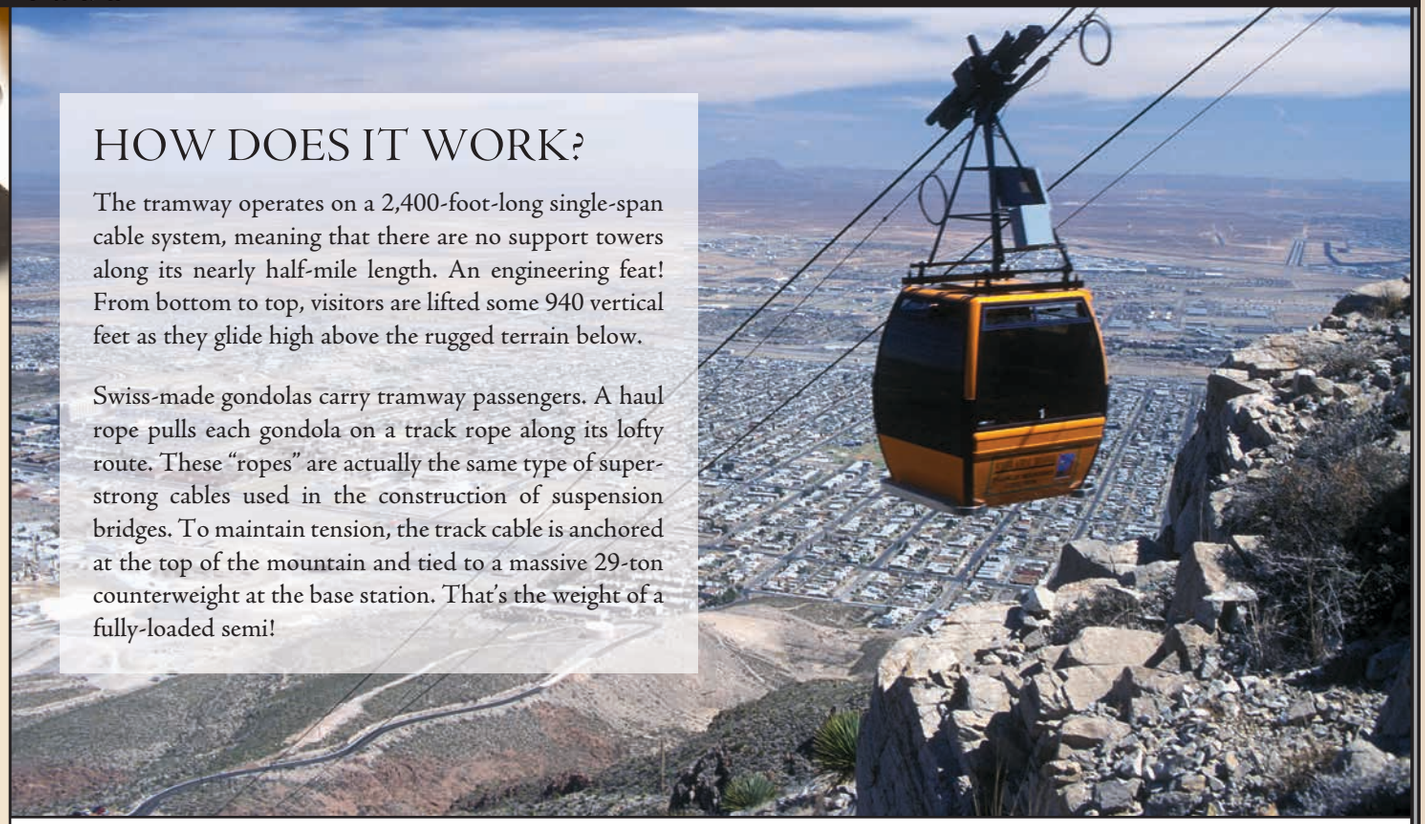
The story begins, however, in 1959 when NBC-affiliate KTSM Radio built the tramway to aid the construction of a transmitter antenna and service platform. A real workhorse in its early days, the tiny tram hauled concrete, water, heavy equipment, workers—even sections of the antenna itself—to the mountain summit. Wyler directed this ambitious construction project and, in the process, fell in love with Ranger Peak and its top-of-the-world view.

Privately owned and operated first as El Paso Aerial Tramway, the facility allowed public access from 1960 to 1986. Although it continued to provide access for maintenance of telecommunications equipment, high liability insurance costs caused the tramway to close to the public for some 15 years prior to its establishment as a Texas state park.

Tramway under construction in 1959.

School children enjoy the ride to the top, then and now.





HOW DOES IT WORK?

The tramway operates on a 2,400-foot-long single-span cable system, meaning that there are no support towers along its nearly half-mile length. An engineering feat! From bottom to top, visitors are lifted some 940 vertical feet as they glide high above the rugged terrain below.

Swiss-made gondolas carry tramway passengers. A haul rope pulls each gondola on a track rope along its lofty route. These "ropes" are actually the same type of super-strong cables used in the construction of suspension bridges. To maintain tension, the track cable is anchored at the top of the mountain and tied to a massive 29-ton counterweight at the base station. That's the weight of a fully-loaded semi!

THE VIEW

The four-minute narrated gondola ride to the tramway's observation platform provides a unique top-down look at the site's geology, including views of sequential rock layers ranging from ancient volcanic granite to more recently-deposited limestone. Passengers may also glimpse typical Chihuahuan Desert plants and animals along the route. Red-tailed hawks have nested on a high cliff very near the tramway's path, treating riders to a literal bird's-eye view.

Arrival atop Ranger Peak evokes a top-of-the-world feeling. From this pinnacle, visitors experience a 360-degree "living map" of some 7,000 square miles—an area nearly the size of Massachusetts. Included prominently in the view is the bustling international border community of El Paso/Ciudad Juarez, where the Rio Grande unassumingly marks the political boundary between the United States and Mexico.

Visitors can see several nearby peaks within the Franklin Mountains range, as well as vast Chihuahuan Desert basins that stretch outward in all directions. On clear days it is easy to spot the Samalayuca Sand Dunes to the south in Mexico, Sierra Blanca to the southeast in Texas, and the Florida Mountains to the west in New Mexico.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Wyler Aerial Tramway continues to play a working role in the telecommunications industry. Many radio and television broadcasts serving the Greater El Paso area are transmitted from Ranger Peak's massive towers. Maintenance technicians rely on the tramway for access to essential equipment.

Telecommunications tower atop Ranger Peak.