

Erosion trail maintenance work in Placitas 11-04-2025

The Handle is a user-created in the Northwest Sector of the Placitas Area Trail System. It was adopted by the USFS as part of the 2019 Sandia Trails Improvement Plan. After the monsoon rains the entire area had suffered severe erosion in numerous sections. The Handle is a popular trail as evidenced by the numerous hikers and bikers that passed by during the day.

This work was a cooperative effort between PATA founding member, Chris Casey, Luis Cuadros and FOSM members Cai Reil, John Braley, Roland Strumpf, Rich Fagioli, and Lester Gyongyosi. All except Lester were from the Thursday Trail Crew. On prior outings, Chris and I had scouted the entire Placitas trail system and found these three areas of critical concern:

The first section .. 169 ft) descended a moderately steep fall line crossing a narrow drainage. The large central erosion channel was filled with rock and dirt; junipers were cut back and the trail widened. The outer berms were taken down and used to fill the tread. Additional dirt was harvested from a borrow pit. A cactus garden was planted by Chris to divert users to the more stable outside line. A causeway across the narrow drainage was built.

The second section (106 ft) was along a steep sideslope where the trail climbs out of the Del Agua Wash. The trail violated the 50% rule and will certainly require a reroute. The rocks were cleared, the outer berm was taken down and used to backfill the erosion channel. The trail was benched. Junipers were cut back at either end.

The third smaller section (28 ft) crossed a narrow drainage. It was cleared of rocks and dirt from the sides brought down.

A variety of tools were used including rock bars, canvas bags, and buckets. A wheel barrow provided by Rich was especially helpful.

SUMMARY:

area 1 - 169 ft

area 2 - 106 ft

area 3 - 28 ft

Total 303 ft.

It was apparent to all of us that this was merely a temporizing measure until proper reroutes could be built. It would suffice for now making this a safer and more enjoyable trail.

PLACITAS NORTHWEST SECTOR



PRIVATE LAND

TO BERNALILLO/F-25



SANDIA PUEBLO
NO ENTRY





BEFORE



AFTER





BEFORE



AFTER