

MARSHALL MESA / MARSHALL VALLEY TRAIL

Revised 12/8/2011

Rating:	Difficult
Distance:	0.25 mile
Surface:	crusher fines, gravel, dirt, clay
Width:	Avg: 4' Min: 3'
Cross Slope:	Avg: 1% Max: 10%
Grade:	Avg: 5% Max: 13% for 10'
Picnic:	3 tables (easy)
Other users:	horses, dogs (voice and sight control), bikes
Parking:	2 designated spots plus general parking
Structures:	1 gate, 2 bridges
Restrooms:	1 set (easy)
Shade:	a couple of trees at end.
Location:	Just east of Highway 93 and Marshall Road.

Description

This difficult 0.25-mile trail is appropriate for wheelchair users who are looking for an extra challenge. Historically a coal mining area, the trail lacks cover and shade. It can be extremely hot during a summer afternoon hike. From the trailhead, you can get a pretty good idea of what's ahead of you on the trail.

A 75-foot access path with a 5% average slope takes you to a gate (no tension, 48"). The accessible crusher fine trail (4' wide, 5%) is immediately to the left. This goes for about 250 feet. The surface then turns to large dispersed pieces of rock and gravel on top of hard packed dirt. Picking your way through the rocks with a maximum grade of 9% for approximately 100 feet you'll reach the first bridge close to 300 feet from the first crusher fines. This 4-foot wide crusher fine bridge crosses a 30-foot wide swale.

The trail continues down another 250 feet to the next crusher fine bridge (L.30', W.4'). Before reaching this bridge the trail goes through a trough with a maximum grade of 13% for around 10 feet. After the bridge the trail flattens out for a bit and the gravel and dirt become easier to maneuver through. Prairie dogs pepper the fields to both sides of the trail. After 400 feet, the trail ascends another 100 feet to a white rock sandstone outcropping. This ascent has a 9% slope for about 20 feet with a few 2-inch rock obstacles to negotiate. Another 50 feet of trail around the sandstone takes you to the end of the accessible section of the trail.

The sandstone outcropping is ideal for adventurous wheelchair types to play around and test their skills or just rest and enjoy the view. Birdwatchers can peruse the skies for a solitary red-tailed hawk floating the thermals. Several junipers hunker here providing shade for weary hikers.

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