

SANDIA CROSSING MARATHON

Date: Saturday, October 19, 2019
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Start: Canyon Estates trailhead Tijeras, NM
Finish: Tunnel Springs trailhead near Placitas, NM
Info: Tom4skis@aol.com or 505-967-5968

The *Sandia Crossing* is a wilderness run started by Dr. Otto Appenzeller in 1979 as a research run. It begins at the south side of the *Sandia Mountains* and crosses the entire *Sandia Mountain Range* on the Crest Trail #130.

The run starts at the *Canyon Estates Trailhead* and finishes at the north end of the *Crest Trail* at the *Tunnel Springs Trailhead* near *Placitas*. The course is just shy of 29 miles by Forest Service measurements and around 26.6 by GPS. The course includes many steep climbs and descents on a beautiful and challenging trail. The run is timed for 3 weeks after the *Mt Taylor 50K* for a great late fall run.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course starts at 6,560' with a 3,000 foot climb up to a flatter meadow at about 7.3 miles, then wanders about a mile through beautiful meadows, passing behind the *South Peak* around 7.7 miles. Then the trail winds through oak and aspen forests, dropping down slightly to the *Canyoncito Trail* intersection at around 9,200' and about 10.6 miles. Next is a short climb up and over another 9,500' high point at 11.6 miles, then down to the *Cienega/Pino Trail* intersection at 12.1 miles and 9,250'. The route proceeds for another 2+ miles to the *Tree Spring Trail* intersection. This point is 14.15 miles and 9,440'.

The course then goes uphill for the steepest mile of the run, climbing to 10,050' before turning south for a brief 0.3 mile while flattening somewhat. Swinging north again, runners then come out on a dirt service road leading to right below the *Aerial Tramway*. This point is approximately 15.9 miles and 10,250'. A short 300 yards going north, behind the tram and *NEW 10.3 Restaurant*, bring you back to the *Crest Trail* (turn left at the flags just past the furthest north chairlift). Then on to the *Crest*. There will be an aid station just as you enter the lower side of the *Crest Parking Lot*. After another 200 or so yards up the paved section you get to the *North Crest Trail*, 17.6 miles into the run. The high point of 10,660' (which is just 80 yards after rejoining the *North Crest Trail*) marks the end of the major climbing and now the course descends for 11.3 more miles to the finish. Some trail sections in the scrub oak are rocky and hard to see, so be careful. Finally, there is one tough 1/2 mile long climb starting roughly one mile from the finish, but then the final 1/2 mile is a gentle downhill.

It is an awesome run but very challenging, so plan to take around 50% longer than a flat marathon. Don't forget to bring at least 2 liters of fluid and plan to drink, eat, and refill at the top aid station for the final descent. There will also be more food and drinks at the finish. There is no entry fee because of the fact the run is in wilderness. The trail will be marked with forest service signs at most trail intersections and some flags around the areas close to the *Tramhouse* and *10.3 Restaurant*, but it is critically important to be familiar with the course.

The run will begin at 8:30 but don't forget to be a little early to fill out a search and rescue form. You can donate to help with the food and drinks and certificates of completion if you would like.

See you soon! – Tom Kirchgessner