

Winter is Coming...

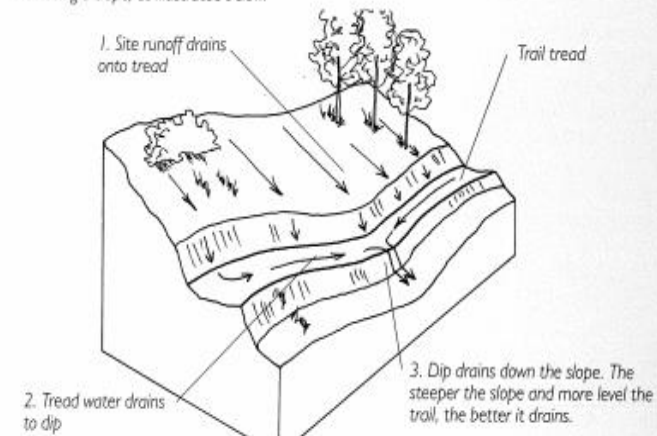
The air is getting cooler, the clouds are getting darker, and the leaves have all but left the trees. That can only mean one thing: winter is coming. With winter comes the rain here in the foothills of the Coast Range, so it is important to talk about winter trail use at the OSU Research Forests.

All winter long, visitors are welcome to recreate on the 114 miles of gravel roads and the majority of our trails, no matter what the weather conditions. Some of our trails are a little more sensitive however, with restrictions on wet weather use.

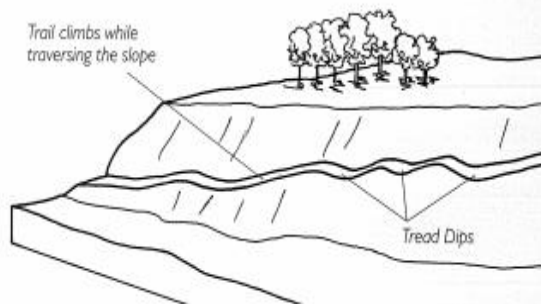
The goals of great trail design are to create a trail that effectively sheds water at all points, while providing the opportunity for a great visitor experience. Our newer trails, like Dave's and Vineyard Mountain Trails, are built with a more sustainable design, utilizing rolling grade dips (see diagram on the right). With this design, the trail traverses a slope to prevent erosion by allowing each drop of water to drain directly to the lowest point – off the trail. When used properly, the rolling grade dip system can prevent tread erosion and cut down on trail maintenance needs.²

(Continued on page 8)

TRaversing A Slope TO PREVENT EROSION
Every dip must drain to somewhere lower than itself. The most sustainable way to achieve this is by traversing a slope, as illustrated below.



A trail using rolling grade can still climb a hill as long as the climb is not continuous, as illustrated below.



How Soils Get Through the Winter

Trails are dynamic and change with the seasons and weather conditions. During most of the year, the mineral soils that make up good hardened trails are fairly stable. However, winter is the most sensitive time for our trails, making them vulnerable to erosion and long term damage. Using trails during this weak point in their cycle can cause soils to be churned up, allowing gravity and the sheeting action of rain to wash them away. If the trail is soft, mountain bike wheels may leave sunken tracks called ruts, which can become channels for rain to carry the soils away instead of allowing the water to flow off of the trail as intended. Horse hooves or even human shoes can dig deeply into trails and push soil down the hill when trails are in this sensitive condition.¹



Winter is Coming (cont. from page 7)

Dos and Don'ts for Winter Trail Use

- DO travel through puddles rather than around them to avoid widening the trail—that's what your waterproof shoes are for!
- DON'T cut switchbacks—stay on the main trail route
- DO travel single file unless the trail is wide enough so that neither person is walking on the trail edge
- DON'T ride (bikes or horses) or walk/run on a muddy trail*
- DON'T skid your tires! Loose powdery dirt from skidding tires, even in the drier months, is easily washed away during rain events
- When encountering a horse, DO announce your presence to the rider, then step off the trail to the downhill side
- When safe to do so, DO climb over obstacles like fallen trees, rather than traveling around them (and report fallen trees to Forest Staff)
- DO share friendly greetings with fellow trail users!

Winter Trail Restrictions

Seasonal Closures for bikes and horses

(11/1-4/14)

Calloway Creek

Extendo

Intensive Management

Closed for Winter 2016/2017 to all uses (new trails)

Dave's Trail

Newest (northern) segment of Vineyard Mountain Trail

*Closed When Wet

Vineyard Mountain Trail

Firehouse Trail

Beautiful Trail

*Use of trails in the "Closed When Wet" category is not allowed when travel will result in leaving a track in the mud, or when there is significant standing water on the trail. If trail damage occurs during winter months, seasonal restrictions will be implemented.

This is a new policy that relies on your judgment and cooperation to be successful. Help us try it out this winter to see if it works!

Stay informed about trail closures and forest updates!

- ⇒ "Like" us on [Facebook](#)
- ⇒ To receive e-mail updates, click [here](#) to join our **Constant Contact Listserv**
- ⇒ Visit our [Current Activities](#) webpage

Links used in this article:

- ⇒ ¹ ["Soil Genesis and Development: Processes of Weathering" Plant and Soil Sciences ELibrary](#)
- ⇒ ² [Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines. Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources, Trails and Waterways](#)
- ⇒ ³ ["Important Winter Trail Information" Friends of Off Road Cycling RSS](#)
- ⇒ ⁴ ["Rules for Rainy Season Riding" Hilltromper Santa Cruz](#)