



PHOTO PROVIDED
New signage warns that using trails when they are soft and muddy causes damage that requires hours of work to repair.

Trail advocates warn of muddy conditions

A mild winter and repeated freeze-thaw cycles have left Sisters-area trails soft and muddy.

Due to the conditions, Sisters Trails Alliance is asking trail users in Sisters to avoid using the pathways when conditions are muddy.

STA notes that riding, running or hiking on muddy trails creates tread damage that requires many hours of volunteer time to repair. Deep ruts created by mountain bike tires and footprints are unsightly and create low spots for melting snow or rain to settle.

To avoid these puddles, trail users tend to divert around the muddy patches and thereby inadvertently do even more damage to the delicate soils and plants adjacent to the trails.

“The resulting scarring and widening degrades both the quality of the tread and the aesthetics of the trail experience,” STA reports.

STA is asking users to keep in mind some tips for using the trails responsibly in the current conditions:

- Ride early in the day before the ground thaws.
- Turn around when you encounter soft trail conditions.
- If you encounter a section of soft trail, ride or walk through the middle of the trail tread rather than going around the soft spots.
- To some degree, fat tire bikes can be used in softer conditions. Use good judgement; if the trails are a muddy mess, find another place to ride.

Using a donation from Casey Meudt and Blazin Saddles Cycle N Style, STA volunteers purchased and posted signs with this information at key entry points to the Peterson Ridge Trail system and other area trails, notifying users to be aware of trail conditions.

For more information visit www.sisterstrails.org.

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DON'T MISS OUT
on this week's inserts in the Nugget:

Deschutes Public Libraries:
Take a look at all the happenings taking place for adults and youth at the *Sisters Library* – and all the branch libraries – in this week's **Events Calendar** insert!

Ray's Food Place: This week at Ray's the *Fantastic Friday One-day Deal* – February 2 only – is a meat lover's special. Don't miss out on the **Farmer John's California Natural Baby Back Ribs** offered at **\$2.49 per lb.!** (limit 6 packages)

BELGIUM: Students will raise funds for educational travel

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the polar regions. The students Skyped with students of Erik de Schrijver at a school in Belgium to discuss their experiences and experiments.

The students from Belgium had conducted similar experiments, and they enjoyed talking about their projects and what it's like to be a teenager in the U.S. and in Belgium. During this exchange, de Schrijver invited the SHS students to enter experiments in the competitive Asgard Project.

Last fall, the chemistry students submitted their projects. Dirk Frimout, who became Belgium's first astronaut in 1992, is president of the jury who selects the winners from the secondary school's experiments. Two groups from SHS entered their ideas, and one was selected.

Ferwalt, Hills, and Hull are busy building and refining their experiment, with their first reporting deadline on January 31. SHS science teacher Rima Givot is looking forward to helping

and watching the students progress.

Ferwalt had this to say about his experience: “I feel really lucky to be doing this Asgard project because it's a project of my own creation. It would have been easy to slack on the application, but I wanted to really challenge myself.

“So I devised the entire concept from scratch, drawing inspiration from other teams testing how certain life forms and viruses responded to a balloon launch. I thought, “Why can't I apply that idea to other topics, such as capacitors and resistors?” It seemed likely that certain circuitry would potentially “die” when exposed to space, and the idea was plenty cool and deep enough to roll with.

“Our team was said to be the only American team selected (out of around 20 applicants) and I consider that to be a high honor.”

Ferwalt will be using a unique computer, Arudino, to help him gather the data he's looking for in the experiment he and his team are conducting. Arduino is an open-source electronics platform based on easy-to-use hardware and software, used by anyone making interactive projects.

Hull said, “I expect to learn a lot about circuits and the components that go into how resistors and capacitors work. I also expect to learn some interesting and new facts from other contestants' projects as well.”

“Our team was said to be the only American team selected ... and I consider that to be a high honor.”
— Ethan Ferwalt

SHS junior Amy Hill is the third member of the team going to Belgium. She's hoping the Sisters community will step up to help her and her friends make the trip.

“When I get back,” she says, “I hope I will have collected enough of a science background to help me get accepted to a college with a wide variety of scientific interests. Right now I'm looking at electronics as a topic for study, but perhaps my experiences with other kids in Belgium will help me discover another area of science I'll fall for.”

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