

Title:

America The Beautiful: Exploring The Roads (And Trails) Less Traveled

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Summary:

When you go off-roading, passenger and vehicle safety often rest on the toughness and durability of your tires.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Americans are known for seeking the roads less traveled and, in many cases, continuing to journey even after the road ends. More than 50 million Americans went off-roading in 2005, a 42 percent increase since 2000.

For fans of off-roading, there are two considerations when taking to the dirt and rocks of off-road driving: safety and ecology. Safety starts with having the right equipment—a vehicle that's designed for uneven, unpredictable terrain and tough, dependable tires that can take the punishment of dirt, rocks, ravines and more. And by following ecological guidelines, you can help ensure that trails will be enjoyable for other adventurers.

Safety Tips

1. Inform someone of where you are going and when you expect to return.
2. Make sure your vehicle has plenty of fuel.
3. Ride at safe speeds for existing conditions.
4. Travel straight up and down hills—never traverse the face of a hill; it may cause your vehicle to slip sideways or roll over.
5. Cross large rocks or other obstacles slowly, at an angle, one wheel at a time.
6. Cross ravines at a 45-degree angle.
7. Only cross streams at a designated fording point.

8. Never turn around on narrow roads, steep terrain or unstable ground.
9. Avoid stopping in tall grass or brush, which can be ignited by engine heat.
10. Reduce tire pressure to improve traction in tough off-road conditions.

It's the Ecology

1. Drive only where permitted.
2. Keep a trash bag in your vehicle and collect litter left by others.
3. Ride in the middle to minimize the widening of the trail.
4. Avoid slide slipping and wheel spin to prevent erosion.
5. Keep away from wildlife.
6. Steer clear of sensitive habitats: wetlands, meadows, tundra, etc.
7. Clean your vehicle after the ride to reduce the spread of noxious weeds.
8. Observe proper sanitary waste disposal.

Top Trails

To highlight some of the best off-road trails in the country, BFGoodrich Tires, in conjunction with Tread Lightly and United Four Wheel Drive Associations, has launched its Outstanding Trails program. The program is dedicated to the responsible use and preservation of these off-road trails and will aid in the effort to keep these trails sustainable.

"Last year, more than 50 million people sought adventure through recreational off-road driving; the sport is exploding in popularity," said Kaz Holley, brand director for BFGoodrich Tires. "Each one of the trails highlighted in this program is amazing, and embodies the very best in off-roading. BFGoodrich tires and these Outstanding Trails are very similar in nature-both are tough and both are fun to drive on."

The program identifies five of North America's best trails. From desolate desert stretches to towering peaks and rolling hillsides, these trails are unique in toughness and beauty.

After a careful selection process, five of North America's "outstanding" off-road trails were nominated for uniqueness, terrain type and enthusiast following:

• Black Bear Pass, near Ouray, Colo., is a picturesque trail nestled in the San Juan Mountains.

• Pyeatt Draw, a scenic and exciting trail situated in Payson, Ariz.

• Hell's Revenge, with its slick sandstone slopes, brings adventure to thrill seekers in Moab, Utah.

• Historic Naches Pass, also known as the Longmire Wagon Train, takes off-road drivers over the Cascade Mountains in Naches, Wash.

• Upper Tellico Trail, Trail #4, located in the Nantahala National Forest, is located in an area where Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia meet.

As a part of the program, BFGoodrich Tires will host several events at designated trails to highlight the uniqueness of each location as well as to educate off-roaders on the responsible use of each trail. The company will also give a grant to a selected off-road club to help with the costs associated with the trails' conservation.