

Ways to fight the enemy — rust



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

What an evil word, rust. Nothing destroys outdoor equipment faster than rust. Everything metal, guns, fishing reels, bikes, tools, knives, and everything in between, can be destroyed by this silent enemy of all things expensive. My first experience with the heartbreak of oxidation occurred when I was around 12 years old. I had saved enough money from working a paper route and assorted farm chores to purchase a single shot 20-gauge shotgun. That shotgun was my pride and joy, a declaration of independence, so to speak. With gun in hand, I could go forth into the wilds, and bring home sustenance for the family, usually in the shape of a rabbit, duck, or the occasional pheasant. My grandmother would not sneer at me as much as



There are hundreds of products to prevent rust, you just need to remember to use them. (Mark Rackay/Special to the MDP)

usual, when I clomped into the kitchen displaying a pheasant for dinner. When I was not hunting with that little shotgun, I was cleaning it, meticulously. I kept every part of it cleaned, polished, and well lubricated. Except once. Once was all it took. An afternoon hunt after-school. I was walking a tree line, hoping to jump a rabbit, when the snow-

storm hit. The temperature dropped 20 degrees and the wind whipped a torrent of wet snow. It took me an hour to navigate my way back to the house, whereupon my arrival, I was greeted with “you’re late for dinner, wash up and get back down here,” by an angry grandmother. The beloved shotgun was hastily placed in a case and put under my bed. I had every intention

of cleaning and oiling the gun immediately after a bite of supper. Life got in the way and it was a full three weeks before I opened that case. What I discovered was a total rust job, complete with pitting, all over my beloved shotgun. Rust is hydrated iron oxide and is caused when iron reacts with oxygen and water, the chemical reaction being lovingly called oxidizing. Rust isn’t

particularly harmful to humans, aside from seeing it ruin a beloved piece of outdoor equipment. It can add a bad taste to a cooking utensil, but a small amount probably won’t make you sick. As a kid, we were warned about stepping on rusty nails, causing a puncture wound and leading to tetanus. While you can get tetanus from a rusty object, it’s not the rust that causes it.

Instead, it is the bacteria that may be on the rusty object that makes you sick. Many people use stainless steel equipment, firmly believing that stainless will not rust. These good minded folks have obviously never lived near the sea. Ask any boater or saltwater angler how well stainless holds up. You will probably have to cover nearby children’s ears when you get the answer. In the saltwater world, you don’t own anything. The salt just lets you hang onto it for a while. Rust has two enemies that I know of: oil and dry air. Both inhibit oxidizing but must be used and applied properly. Let’s start with dry air. Fortunately for us, Colorado’s is a reasonably dry climate. When your equipment spends a day with you out in the elements, like rain and snow, be certain to dry it completely before stowing it away. Wet equipment stored in cases, duffel bags, gun cases or tackle boxes, is an open invitation for rust. The rust will begin to form almost immediately. If possible, store equipment in open air always, or if it must be packed away, be sure it is fully dried first.

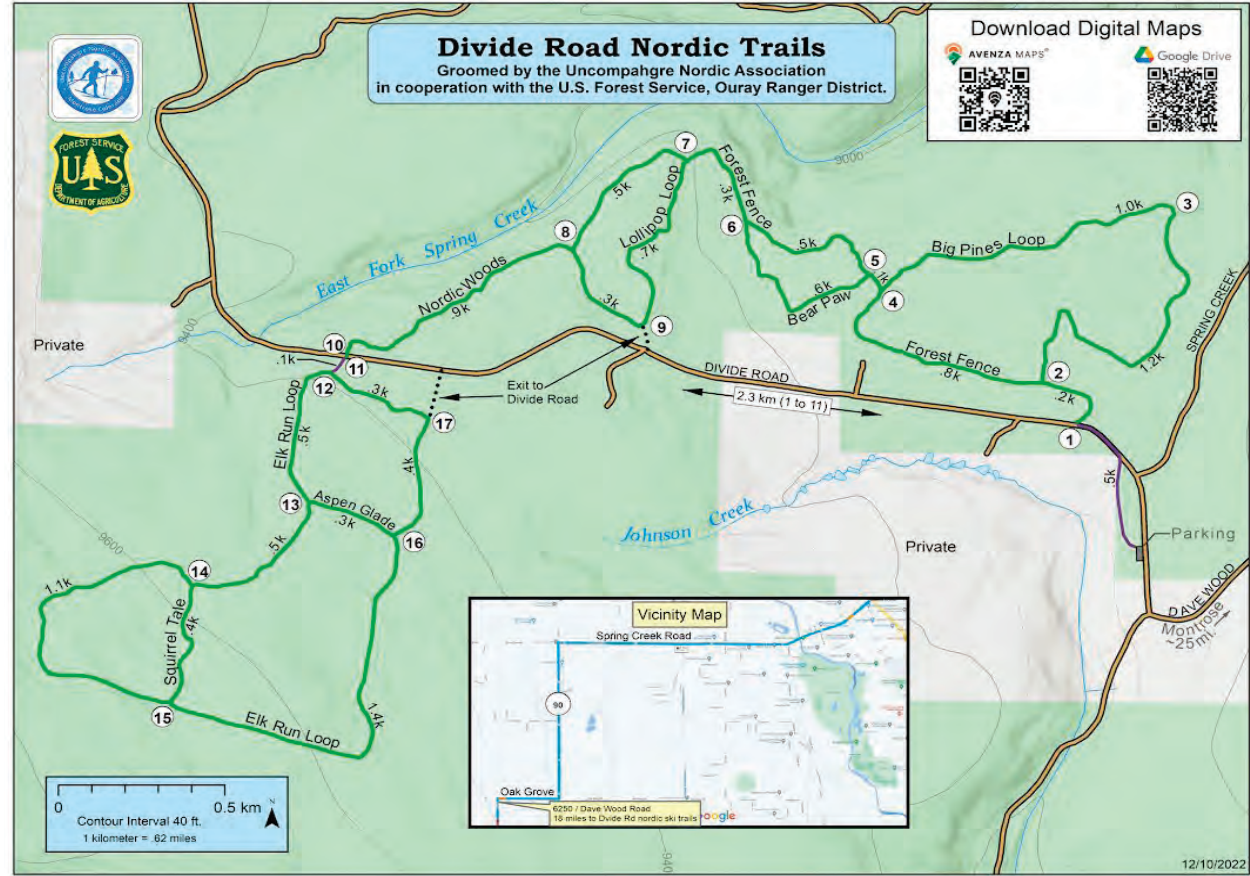
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Ski trails in your backyard

By ANNE JANIK
UNCOMPAHGRE NORDIC ASSOCIATION

Imagine gliding along a quiet, snowy trail winding through spruce and aspen trees, so peaceful. Are you looking for an afternoon work escape, a winter morning workout or a weekend outdoor family outing? The Divide Road Ski trails offer just that! Since the official opening of the trail system with a ribbon-cutting event in early January, these trails have grown in popularity. The draw? Divide Road offers great snow conditions at the 9,000-foot elevation, 12 kilometers of groomed trails and proximity to Montrose. The Uncompahgre Nordic Association (UNA) is the nonprofit managing the ski trails through a volunteer agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. The all-volunteer board has worked closely with the Ouray Ranger District staff to get the approvals for this

non-motorized, winter, over-snow recreation opportunity. “We have received a lot of positive feedback from the Montrose Community members who are using this trail system and people have shown their appreciation with donations to help us manage the area with grooming, snowplowing, a toilet and signs,” said Gary Shellhorn, UNA president. “This is an all-volunteer operation and we are moving forward hoping to partner with the Forest Service and maybe Montrose County to provide a better parking area and help with snow plowing. At this point, we are just taking small steps and excited to have the trails designed, marked and groomed.” UNA has hosted two moonlight ski nights with freshly groomed trails, bonfires, and refreshments and they are hosting a beginner classic and skate ski clinic Feb. 11 at 9 a.m. Although the classic clinic is full, the UNA board is



considering another clinic in late February if there is interest. Please email UNAXski@gmail.com to receive weekly grooming/trail

condition updates and to indicate your interest in a ski clinic. You can also follow UNA on Facebook at https://www.facebook.

com/MontroseNordic. If you don’t have skis, but want to try this winter sport, there are three places in Montrose where one can rent a Classic Ski

package (\$20-25/day): Montrose Surf and Cycle, The Great Outdoors Store, and Sports Rewind.

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Water is today’s gold



The Gunnison River within the Black Canyon National Park is a tremendous natural resource and economic generator. Water is key to that remaining true, not only for the fisherman, but for all western Colorado residents. (Joel Evans/Special to the MDP)



Outdoors

By Joel L. Evans

Foreword from the author:
 I wrote this article in 1997 for a different publication, long before today’s drought conversation in the western United States, particularly regarding the current low flows of the Colorado River and the resulting depletion of reservoirs. I think timely to repeat the article without changes.

We place great value on natural resources. Whole nations have been built around a single resource. Cultures have been dramatically altered in days with the discovery of new resources. Wars have been fought to gain control of resources.

The perceived value of some resources has changed over the centuries as mankind has changed. One such example is water.

Water has historically been perceived to be abundant and free. Certainly there are specific locations on our planet that have minimal water resources, some even void of water.

But overall, other natural resources, such as hard rock minerals, have been valued higher by mankind. But only because water was indeed abundant and free. But things change.

Today’s water is yesterday’s gold.

More and more, especially in our arid western United States, land values are tied to water. Western Colorado is no exception. We take abundant, clean water for granted. There will come a day when great wealth is made by trading water rights no different than Colorado gold miners traded gold dust.

And of course, water is of great interest to the fisherman, not to mention the fish themselves! With a computer and the internet, I discovered some interesting facts and trivia about water I thought fun to share. Consider these water related thoughts:

What is the largest reservoir in Colorado?

Blue Mesa.

What is the second-largest reservoir in Colorado?

Lake Granby.

What percent of the water treated by public water systems is used for drinking and cooking?

Less than 1%.

What river in Colorado used to be called the Grand River?

The Colorado River.

Anglers at the turn-of-the-century used mice, birds, and small rabbits as bait for the now-endangered Colorado squawfish!

Kentucky bluegrass uses 18 gallons of water per square foot each year. Tall fescue and wheatgrasses use 10 and 7 gallons of water per square foot each year, respectively.

Riparian habitat makes up less than 3% of the land in Colorado, but is used by over 90% of the wildlife in the state.

87% of the water leaving Colorado flows out of the Colorado river basin toward the Pacific Ocean. The remaining 13% of the water leaving Colorado flows out of the Missouri, Arkansas, and Rio Grande river basins toward the Atlantic Ocean.

Producing a typical lunch — hamburger, fries, and a soft drink — uses 1500 gallons of water. This includes the water needed to raise the potatoes, the grain for the bun and the grain needed to feed the cattle, and the production of the soda.

The natural rotation of the Earth has been altered slightly by the 10 trillion tons of water stored in reservoirs over the past 40 years.

The hottest spring water in the state (82 degrees Celsius, 180 degrees Fahrenheit) is found in Hortense Hot Springs in

Chaffee County. The largest hot spring in Colorado is Big Spring in Glenwood Springs with a maximum discharge greater than 2,200 gallons per minute.

In May 1935, 10 miles south of Kiowa, 24 inches of rain fell in 6 hours.

Grand Lake is 265 feet deep — the deepest natural lake in Colorado.

89 % of Colorado’s naturally occurring lakes are found at altitudes above 9,000 feet.

The average humidity for Colorado, measured at noon, is 38%.

There are more than 9,000 miles of streams and 2,000 lakes and reservoirs open to fishing in Colorado.

The maximum 24-hour snowfall in the United States is 75.8 inches at Silver Lake near Boulder in 1921.

Graupel is snowflakes that have become small rounded pellets (usually two to five millimeters in diameter). It is sometimes mistaken for hail.

Fresh, uncompacted snow is usually 90-95% trapped air.

Denver has an average annual snowfall of 60.7 inches. The snowiest season on record occurred in 1908-1909, with 118.7 inches of snow.

Once evaporated, a water molecule spends 10 days in the air.

These interesting water facts were discovered at the internet web site www.cnr.colostate.edu/CWK called “Colorado Water Knowledge”, sponsored by Colorado State University. (Update note: This website has been updated since this article was first published, but you can still search for “Colorado Water Knowledge.”) Visit this page and you will find more interesting water information and numerous links to other water related web pages.

In the meantime, remember to go prospecting for fish in the golden waters of Colorado.

Joel L. Evans is an avid fisherman, outdoor writer and photographer, who has explored Western Colorado for decades.

RUST

FROM PAGE A10

Swamp coolers are especially detrimental to prized outdoor equipment. Ask anyone who has ever left a cased shotgun in a dark closet during the summer months. Coolers add moisture to the air, somewhat stoking the fires of rusting. Again, store objects uncased and away from cooler vents.

Lots of people think good old WD40 is the answer for rusting, but it is not. WD40 helps displace water from an object, like a fishing reel or the action of a gun, but it does nothing to lubricate or prevent rust. Petroleum based solvents will not prevent rust either, it takes a coating of good old oil.

Once you have dried your equipment, make sure the surfaces are free of dirt, dust and other contaminants left over from your excursion. The surfaces should be clean, paying attention to any hidden nooks and crannies. At this point, a light coat of oil can be applied.

There are lubricants that can be sprayed, but I

usually wind up getting the oil spray everywhere else, like the floor and kitchen table. This “mess” usually leads to an interruption in marital bliss, so it is best to avoid the situation. If it is a spray, shoot it into a paper towel or rag and wipe the equipment down.

I have found that synthetic oils do not evaporate nearly as fast as regular oil. This is important for items that may be stored for longer periods.

If something is to be stored for a very long time, consider a coating of grease. Unlike oil, grease has a thicker consistency and tends to stay where you put it. Tools, jacks, and other equipment stored in truck boxes are perfect candidates for the protection of grease. Remember that you are going to have to clean the grease off the equipment before using it, lest a mess be made.

A preventative measure I have had success with is a coating of wax.

Before I head out on a trip where I know the elements will be harsh, such as a late season elk hunt, I coat my rifle, knife blades, optics, and other suscepti-

ble equipment with a coat of wax. I have found that Renaissance Wax, or Rejex from Corrosion Technologies Corp. work really well in this area. Be sure to not wax too much on surfaces where you need to hold onto, or it may be slippery.

Cleaning, drying, and lubricating your equipment is not really preventative maintenance, more like cleanup after a fun day outdoors. If you destroy a prized piece of equipment with rust, like I did with my first shotgun, the lesson will stick. Better to prevent than learn the lesson the hard way, which is my usual way of learning.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff’s Posse. For information about the posse, call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

TRAILS

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The Divide Road Nordic trails are about 21 miles from Montrose off the Dave Wood road. From Townsend and Main in Montrose head west on Main, left onto Hwy 90, right on Oak Grove (Hwy

90), and left onto Dave Wood Road.

The ski area is about 7 miles beyond the forest boundary at the intersection of Dave Wood and Divide Roads. You must access this area via Dave Wood Road. There is no access from Government Springs Road due to locked gates.

The ski area has 12 km of relatively flat, groomed trails. The trails closer to the trailhead off Divide Road (Forest Fence and Big Pines) are perfect for the beginner skier.

Want to beat the winter doldrums? Rent a set of skis, drive up to Divide Road and explore the winter landscape of the Uncompahgre Plateau.



A skier checks the trail map on the Divide Road Trail, managed by the Uncompahgre Nordic Association, through a volunteer agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. (Anne Janik/Special to the MDP)

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