

My Shameful Secret

I don't know about you but when winter rolls in, I feel a slight sense of gloom. It could be the propensity for the skies to be gray, the streets to be clogged with snow, or the almost certainly muddied trails. You know it is winter when you hear that Hulls Gulch is frozen solid and you salivate at the thought of riding it next weekend. Truth be told, winter is one of the best times to ride Hulls but the sad thing is that you are not the only one who thinks so—you have to deftly negotiate the myriad of other outdoor pilgrims that are either dragging their dog, horse or themselves up and down that trail.



As I park my car in the garage each day, I walk past my Specialized Pitch hanging on the wall. We stare at each other with the same sense of longing. I glance up at my road bike on the rack above her. I rationalize that I could get some road miles in with the argument that at least I am on the bike. But then I glance back at my Pitch and she gives me that knowing look. We both know that road miles don't add years back to your life quite like trail miles do—it is simply not the same.

Anyone that rides with me knows that I climb so that I can descend. I don't mind earning the ups but let's just say I sorta helplessly lean against the elevation in hopes of a gain. The thought of pounding out a climb does not even enter my consciousness let alone my sub-consciousness. That I actually climb for climbing sake would shock my riding comrades—especially since I whine like a bent rotor up most hills.

So here is the shame of my secret—some winter days I actually do intervals at the Eagle Bike Park. In fact, I do them whenever I can during short ride windows. To be sure, the park is mostly muddy in the winter unless you ride early in the morning. Where do I ride, you ask? On the gravel road that wanders up to the top of the water tower. I can hear you now— how boring, how lame? I used to think the same thing but somehow slowly climbing up and bombing down is therapeutic during those long wintery days. To mix it up, I try to descend as close as I can to the myriad of doggie piles strategically pooped up the hill by our canine friends without actually embedding them into my tires. Sometimes I even try to roll down without hitting my brakes...which I fear is doomed to catch up with me at some point.



As long as I am confessing a sinful predilection for climbing, I should share another somewhat sordid portion of my past. As you know, when the park trails are frozen, all of the trails are usually rideable. I know it will violate some tenet of the *Bros of the Rotating Mass* to say it but I actually prefer hiking the trails when the white stuff covers them. Try it next time and see if you don't see the park from a different perspective as you slowly traverse the trails on foot. This is especially true on cold winter nights when the skies are clear and the stars illuminate the path in front of you.

So next time you want to get out on a winter day, grab your ride and try riding up and down the gravel gauntlet ten times or scamper across a frozen trail—then maybe we can both share a shameful secret.