

RIDGWAY RIDE
Allegheny National Forest, Elk County

Description: This is a very demanding course. Some consider the Ridgway ride as one of the best races in the state. It begins with a long, hard, paved climb that is followed by 14 miles of difficult pipelines and forest roads.

Distance: 17.5 miles

Time: 3.5 hours

Trail Type: A little bit of everything

Comments: Those sections of the course not described here are on private property that is open to the public only during the race. Please respect property owner's rights. The ride begins with a long, steep uphill climb; fortunately it's on pavement. As soon as you leave the road, you're on a pipeline with exposed pipe and this is indicative of what to expect for the rest of the course. The ride follows Big Mill Creek and will require a knee to thigh deep fording. You probably won't want to take this ride in the winter.

Access: From Ridgway take State Route (SR) 3005 (Laurel Mill Road) past the Ridgway Country Club 3 miles west to Sandy Beach Park. Park here.

Mileage Log:

- 0 Start by continuing west on Laurel Mill Road (the same direction you've been going). The hill climb begins almost immediately.
 - 1.3 Pass the cross-country ski trail and warming hut.
 - 1.4 Turn right onto a single/double-track pipeline. Although the track itself is somewhat hard to see it's marked with orange arrows.
 - 2.1 A stream you probably can ride across.
 - 3.3 The pipeline emerges onto a power line where you'll turn right.
 - 4.5 At the top of the hill the trail Ys. Going straight is the 7-mile short loop and is well marked. You can follow it back to your vehicle at Sandy Beach if you're looking for a short ride. If you turn left and take the long loop you'll be going down "Widow Maker". Don't ask.
 - 6.7 Go straight at the crossroads.
 - 6.8 Turn left onto forest road and again go straight at the crossroads on Forest Road (FR) 300.
 - 7.9 Turn right off of FR300 onto a less-traveled road.
- RIDGWAY RIDE**
- 8.2 At a large rock marked with an orange blaze make a left onto single-track.
 - 8.7 Another creek crossing.
 - 8.8 Make a right at the Y in the trail.

9.7 Turn right onto a gravel road and go approximately 100 yards then make a left onto single-track, which is hard to see. You will come to another creek crossing.

9.8 The trail comes to a pipeline where you'll make a right onto the pipeline and get ready for another creek crossing. The pipeline will soon turn into an old road.

11.2 The road crosses another pipeline but you'll stay on the road.

11.7 At a gated road, pass the gate and turn right onto a gravel road. It's downhill from here to another stream. Until now you've been following the Ridgway Race Course but now you have to depart from the course to avoid going onto private property. The property owners open their land for the race but the rest of the year it is closed. Please respect the property owner's rights.

12.6 Climb the hill from the stream and you will see a gated road to the left. Turn here and ride around the gate.

12.9 Cross a pipeline but stay on the old road that follows the stream.

13.8 The road crosses a small stream and is intersected by several logging roads. Stay on the road you've been on and head up the hill.

14 At the top of the hill is a dirt road. Make a right and stay on this road for approximately 300 yards where you'll make a right turn and go down a hill. At the bottom of the hill, make this left on the gas line and continue for $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile.

14.6 You are now back on the racecourse. Turn to the left and head back the way you came earlier.

15.6 You will ride back up "Widow Maker" and come out on the power line where you'll turn left.

16.2 Start descending over this rocky single-track. You'll be overlooking the Ridgway reservoir. Approximately 30 yards from this pinnacle you'll see a double-track. Turn right and head back towards your car.

16.7 Turn left onto a double track and follow the reservoir.

RIDGWAY RIDE

17.3 The double-track comes out onto the paved road. Turn left and enjoy the ride back to the Sandy Beach Park.

17.5 Welcome back.

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