

Trail Ride Challenge Levels

Key: > is greater than, < is less than, ft. is feet

Characteristic	Level		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Time in saddle	Less than 2 hours	2-4 hours with break	Over 4 hours with break
Pace of ride	Mostly walk, with minimal trot	70% walk, 25% trot, 5% lope	Mixture of walk and trot, some lope, some gallop if terrain permits and group desires
Trail grade % / steepness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly flat • Short sections <10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent grade changes • Some grades up to 20% for <200 yards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent grade changes • Some steep grades up to 30% for <200 yards • Some steeper grades for few yards, as into stream or narrow gulch.
Trail tread condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly smooth dirt or gravel • Few tree roots or occasional small rocks (baseball size). • Normally does not contain significant mud holes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packed dirt or gravel, usually smooth • May have frequent tree roots or small rocks (baseball size) • May contain several mud holes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packed dirt or gravel, or dirt and rock mixture • May have erosion or irregular surface • May have frequent tree roots or small rocks. May have stone/rock surface in some parts.
Trail tread width	>4 ft	About 3 ft for most sections	Usually about 3 ft, but may have sections of 1 ft or off-trail
Immediate side slope by trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sheer drops • Side slopes <20 degrees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sheer drops >3 ft • Side slopes <40 degrees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sheer drops >10 ft for >50 ft length • Side slopes <60 degrees
Water crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Width <50 ft • Bottom sand or small rocks • Depth <2 ft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Width <60 ft • Bottom may contain slippery rocks- mostly <grapefruit size • Depth <3 ft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Width <150 ft • Bottom may contain slippery rocks of various size • Horses do not have to swim

(TrailRideLevels.doc)

Special Considerations:

Major mud hazards or frequent mud holes
Bridges or ledges with drops over 10 feet
Brushy/overgrown trail sections

Frequent trail encounters with joggers, hikers, mountain bikers, ATVs or motorcycles