

...SPOKIN' WORDS...
COUNTRY ROADS CYCLISTS NEWSLETTER
Serving North Central West Virginia Cyclists
July-August 2019 Issue 3

Summer Cycling Fun!

We have a full ride schedule for July and August! Every weekend there is a scheduled Road Ride, starting from the parking lot at Wendy's in Sabraton or from Mt. Morris, usually. Most weekends there is a trail ride as well, usually starting from Wendy's. We cannot predict the weather, and most of us do not like to bike in the cold, or rain (heat?). But, if the weather is OK, come out and join us for some bike riding in West Virginia! Note that many rides will begin early due to expected heat during the summer months.

Now that summer is finally here, many of our club members have been having biking adventures. Here is a sampling of their adventures:

Great Riding Stories from May and June

Marrieta, by Frank:

Marietta: The Marietta River Rendezvous is the best 2-day cycling event. Two days of great road routes generally following the Muskingum River from Duncan Falls, OH to Marietta and back. Most of the roads you can ride comfortably two-abreast chatting. It's not all flat though with a few respectable hills. But they yield wonderful views.

Our group stuck together throughout the ride so we didn't lose anybody this year. For much of the ride, we were joined by big Ron from Pittsburgh who like a locomotive kept us chugging along. This year some mud slides on the way to the first snack stop diverted us onto high speed narrow Rt. 60. On the return trip, a few of us wondered if we might be able to hike over the mud and discovered the best new just-laid

pavement of the whole ride:)



Last year, we could see that Rt. 266 was being reconstructed because it was falling into the river. Having moved the road up the hill, there's now a new big climb but ODOT installed 2 climbing travel lanes and a wide shoulder so it's comfortable while climbing to look around at the best views of the ride - and the descent is a hoot.

The people are the best part of the ride and the ride is organized in a way that gives you many opportunities to get to know your fellow cyclists as well as the MRR staff. The first day has 4 snack stops and 1 full-on lunch. All-you-can-eat fresh picked strawberries and ice cream upon arrival at the Marietta College dorm. Comfortable dorm rooms. The Marietta Brewery and some good restaurants all within walking distance and finally the Valley Gem sternwheeler cruise on the Ohio River. Sunday's ride has 4 snack stops. We usually make it back to Duncan Falls, get a hot shower at the high school athletic facility and meet for lunch at the Subway a block away. All for \$100 except for the Subway. Hopefully, many of us will do it again next year!

Opening Weekend Ride

Sunday, April 8. It was freezin' and blowin' to the state line, but an intrepid

group of CR cyclists made it! Ella Belling of Mon River Trails Consortium (MRTC) sent us off from Wendy's armed with the realization that it was the opening weekend for the trail. We avoided mud at mile 12 by turning north at Ruby McQuain park. Riders include ride leader Lisa, Marilyn, Jennifer, Kelly, Mark, Joe, Dana, Jack, Steve, and a new rider, Luke, who joined us for 6 miles of this 24 mile jaunt.

Gene Vance Memorial Day Ride, by Marilyn:

Today there were 10 cyclists to ride up the trail to Masontown in honor of Gene Vance. Thank you Gunnar for getting this organized. The riders were: Gunnar, Jack Barker, Frank G., Mark Rosso, Marco, Dave Phillips, Tim White, Jeff Bolte (Clarksburg), Mike Caruso (Morgantown), and myself. We enjoyed a slow-paced ride and a nice memory speech of Gene from Gunnar. After replacing a few weathered flags and some new flowers, we headed back down the trail. It was a nice ride of some old friends that I haven't ridden with in a while. Nice to see and ride with you.

Horsey Hundred Ride, by Dana King:

"Beautiful day, gorgeous scenery, sunny after the first few minutes, nice snack stops, terrific lunch, 50 miles. And, horses."



Cycling back roads of Mon and Tucker County, by Phil Slates

I first want to say I probably first learned of some of these routes and others in the region from the website www.wvbike.org and have communicated some with the person who created that site who is in the Morgantown area. That is an excellent site and also gave me info for cycling some in Pocahontas County.

I first tested my rather new Salsa Journeyman 650b drop bar gravel bike on a WV State Forest Service Road in what is known as the WVU Forest just north of Cooper's Rock. I drove to Chestnut Ridge Park and parked by the first lake. The road starts up a small hill from there and is gated part of the year. This road is known as Goodspeed Highway and ends up paralleling the interstate to where it meets Quarry Run Road and is mainly downhill from East to West. From there I actually road some pavement checking out a neighborhood because I had not ridden there in years. Then I continued on the Johnson Hollow Trail which is mainly a road but from experience XC skiing it years ago during a very snowing winter where I ended up losing and then happening to meet the trail again knew it got bad at some point. The old road gets really bad where it meets a stream and from there I had to walk my bike a long way to just a little before where it meets back to the Goodspeed Highway where from there it is down a hill back to the Chestnut Park so this route does make a circle. This was only a distance of 10.17 miles but because of part of the road being very rough it took me 2 hours and 27 minutes averaging 4.9 mph and my App lists me as pausing for 22 minutes. On the

rough part of the trail I spent a lot of time needing to stop and learned that roads like this are not good for my new Wahoo Element because it starts and stops audibly so often it gets quite annoying so have mounted my old standard bike computer to this bike and never plan to use the Element again on these rough rides.

On the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend I planned to go to Blackwater Falls Park to park at their lodge and cycle the Canaan Loop Road which I had walked parts of months before on two occasions. On that ride I packed gear for camping overnight somewhere along the road and used a rear rack and panniers because I had them from previous years rides. I first took a stop to hike a short way out to Lindy Point overlook to see the view of the Blackwater Canyon. I had been there a few times before and certainly recommend. Just after that the road enters the Monongahela National Forest but for at least a mile the road is not maintained and it a very muddy wet mess with some very large puddles and two streams to wade and a steep nothing but rock area I walked. I knew of this from websites and from walking it twice before so came prepared with some water wading shoes since I planned on staying overnight. That part of the road is in such bad shape some special vehicles love to drive through and I met a few of them and it is not possible for them to yield to me so I had to move off the road in thick brush. At least that is only about a mile and from there for the next 19 miles the road is in good shape just like most of these just enough for vehicles. The road does end up going down to a valley of a stream and then back up ending toward the top of Canaan Mountain at what is known as Canaan Heights at Route 32. I planned to camp somewhere so I just

turned around and road the same road back but since I had started the day early as usual and it was only mid-afternoon and I was tired and had nothing to do for the rest of the day I just drove home after washing off the mud from doing the very bad part of the road again. There are multiple campsites along that road but most are on the top of the mountain and taken by car campers. My idea of the best campsites are away from most people in the secluded areas and on this road that is right next to the very bad part. I did not stay overnight but because I was carrying my rear panniers and gear for that purpose I had a good trip test ride and was able to pedal all but the extreme part of the bad road and up and down the hills just fine. I recommend this road but would advise starting on top of the mountain and there is a small lot just a little way off route 32 and then the extremely muddy wet area can be avoided.

My latest trip was riding the Blackwater Canyon trail from just outside Thomas, WV coasting down the trail to Hendricks and then back to my car the same route. I was familiar with that trail from walking it the previous year and doing some cycling from Hendricks on the Allegheny Highlands Trail last fall. I like the history of the area because that was certainly the shortest route to carry coal form the mines in the Thomas area. By the northern part of the trail are two very nice waterfalls and toward the southern side an example of a very nicely built tunnel to carry a stream under the tracks. Overall I did not care for the ride because most of the view is simply leaves on trees. The trail is good to do at least once but I would plan on also doing something else in the area. The trail is very overgrown and in no way maintained as a trail except by use on it because the land is owned by a logging

company and the National Forest is technically just off to the side. Part of the trail is along a Forest Service Road but not much to see along there. I believe the ride simply down and back is fine but it only took me about two hours. I actually did this ride after earlier that day hiking across Dolly Sods where I then returned to camp in my car hoping to ride the road on top the mountain at Dolly Sods the next day but I woke up to a chilly drizzle and in a cloud so I just drove home.

I have plans to return to the area with my bike to do the Dolly Sods Forest Service Road 75 and possibly others at Dolly and also the Camp 70 road out of Davis which is not that long so would need to plan riding other roads also. If you are ever in the area I would also recommend going to the old Olson fire tower toward the southern end of Backbone Mountain about 2 miles off Route 219 6.5 miles south of Thomas. There is a sign at the turn off. I also plan to visit the area with my kayak and do some of the Blackwater River. I always find it interesting that the river starts in Canaan Valley which is commonly odd for a stream to start in a valley but as most of you probably know that valley is at a high elevation. All the water in that area also happens to flow to the Cheat River or toward Morgantown which is also interesting. I have plans to return to the area with my bike to do the Dolly Sods Forest Service Road 75 and possibly others at Dolly and also the Camp 70 road out of Davis which is not that long so would need to plan riding other roads also. If you are ever in the area I would also recommend going to the old Olson fire tower toward the southern end of Backbone Mountain about 2 miles off Route 219 6.5 miles south of Thomas. I also plan to visit the area with my kayak and do some of the

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Waterfalls on back roads of Mon and Tucker Counties

Greenbrier River Trail, by Kelly Williams

On Wednesday, June 12, Marilyn Newcome, Bruce Summers, Joe Super, and I headed south, to ride on the Greenbrier River Trail. We drove south to the trail and upon arriving we all rode on the northern part of the trail. Marilyn and I biked across the Greenbrier River and through Sharp's Tunnel, before returning to the trailhead. (This is the bridge that has been photographed for the cover of the trail map.) We then drove to the Watoga State Park, where we will be camping for two days, and checked in. However, after registering, we were told that the main road through the park was closed, and to

get to our camp ground, all the way over to the other side of West Virginia's largest state park, we had to take a scenic, but curvy and narrow road to the camp ground. (Luckily we found a another road that we could take back and forth from the camp ground to Marlinton that was flat.)

Our camp ground, the Beaver Creek camp ground, was way out in the woods. After arriving at the camp ground, each of us set up our tent, except for the one person who drove his mobile home to the camp ground.

Settling in for the night at Beaver Creek, it was cold that night, in the 40s, and most of us had trouble sleeping because of the cold and the rain; periodically it would rain or sprinkle through the night, testing whether the tent is actually waterproof.

The next morning, bright and early, we drove to Marlinton and had breakfast at the Dirt Bean. The Dirt Bean is a very cute place, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And the Dirt Bean is also a coffee bar and bakery. And a bike sales and repair shop. Very popular with the locals and the cyclists. We encountered there a couple with their two young kids who were biking and camping on the trail. They were at the Dirt Bean to rest and entertain the kids, before heading out on the trail.

On the second day, we all went south on the trail, starting from the trail head in Marlinton. The whole trail is in good shape, nice scenery along the river, with many bridges and two tunnels.

At one point, after biking south for a while, we decided to turn around and find a place for lunch. Three of us headed to a pizza/sandwich shop right along the trail in Seebert, but Bruce decided to get a few extra miles. While we were eating a hard but brief rain storm past through. We waited the storm out at the cafe and stayed dry,

while Bruce got soaked out on the trail. He shortly joined us for lunch and then the four of us returned to Marlinton, biking around the town and then visiting first the opera house and next the art gallery.

The second night in the camp ground was even colder than the first. Plus, we had strong high winds, I spend most of the night wondering if it was a good idea to sleep under a tree.

Friday was our day to return. We drove Route 28 North on our return trip, through Green Bank. Returning north, we found a good restaurant in Durbin that served a hearty breakfast. We had decided to check out the Elkins to Parsons trail on the way back to Morgantown. We rode a few miles out and back on that trail. It turns out the city of Elkins is presently adding an extension to the trail that will directly connect the Davis and Elkins campus with the trail.

Overall, We all had a good time on the Greenbrier River Trail. and a pleasant visit to Marlinton and Pocahontas County.

UPCOMING REGIONAL RIDES:

The **Mt. Davis Challenge Road Race** is a 40/56 mile race that traverses the highest point in Pennsylvania. The course is lollipop style that starts in Confluence, PA and utilizes the hilly back roads of the Mt. Davis area and climbs to an elevation of 3213 ft. Once over the top it descends on the eastern side and climbs back up on Savage Road before returning to Confluence. Prolonged climbs, fast descents and some rough road surfaces make this a true challenge. Men's Cat 1/2/3 will do 2 laps of the upper loop. This will be the seventh year for the race, which is promoted by the

Confluence Tourism Association. www.visitconfluence.info For more information or questions contact race director Jim Sota at mtdavischallenge@gmail.com or call (814) 926-2840

Mountain Mama Road Bike

Challenge participants enjoy some of the most beautiful rural countryside east of the Mississippi River. Grueling ascents, thrilling descents, rolling valley roads, and breathtaking views from high atop the Allegheny mountains guarantee a challenge for all cycling skill levels. Water and food stops are located every 15-20 miles. SAG support is provided, and a post-ride meal is included.

Choose your challenge from one of the following (distances are approximate):

Blue Grass Valley Ride — 27 miles of rolling valley hills

Two-State Short Ride — 53 miles and 4 mountains to climb

Two-State Long Ride — Follow the century route for about 54 miles. Then, add the Blue Grass Valley ride for a total of 67 miles with 4 mountains to climb

Century — 2 states, 3 counties, 9 mountains, over 100 miles and 13,720 feet of climb!!

For more information on the **Mountain Mama Road Bike Challenge**, visit our [website](#) or check us out on [Facebook](#)!

The Lancaster Covered Bridge Classic

Sunday August 19, 2018 (formerly the Covered Bridge Metric Century) is a classic Pennsylvania ride now in its 40th year. It offers beautiful routes of 100 miles, 65 miles, 33 miles, and 16 miles, covering some of the most scenic cycling terrain anywhere. Each route traverses

through covered bridges and past Amish farms. The routes all cover rolling terrain with only moderate climbing with the exception of the 100-mile route. The 100-mile option is a challenging ride that includes a hilly 38-mile loop that starts and ends at the lunch rest stop in Stevens, PA. There are no official rest stops on the 38-mile loop, so please stock up at the lunch stop.

Mon Valley Century Annual Bicycle Run on August 12th

This ride starts in Elizabeth, PA. The 100 Mile is back. As long as the road stays open (according to Penn Dot) there is no road closures for this year 2018. Further info will be following along with a registration form for you to fill out.

REGIONAL EVENTS

GRAVEL RACE UP SPRUCE KNOB (GRUSK)

July 6, 2019, Circleville, WV <https://www.facebook.com/spruceknobcycling/>

Overview <http://www.cyclingscenicwv.com/Rides/SpruceKnobClimb/SpruceKnobClimb.html>

THE TOUR DE FRANCE

July 6 – 28, Brussels, Belgium – Paris, France <https://www.letour.fr/en/>

MT. DAVIS CHALLENGE

July 28, Confluence, PA, 11 AM, <https://www.bikereg.com/40434>

SCENIC MOUNTAIN TRIATHLON 0.5mi.swim/17.1mi.bike/6.2mi.run, \$75, +options

July 14, Richwood, WV richwoodwv.com/triathlon

PEDAL PITTSBURGH 10/25/40/62 miles \$40+\$5 after May 1, other options

August 25, Pittsburgh, PA <https://www.bikepgh.org/sites/pedal-pittsburgh/>

HANCOCK HORIZONTAL HUNDRED 20/34/50/68/100 \$15/28, +\$5 after 8-17, options

September 9, Findlay, OH <http://www.hancockhorizontalhundred.com/company.html>

SEAGULL CENTURY registration opens May 15 65/100miles \$75, + options

October 5, Salisbury, MD <http://seagullcentury.org/>

SHENANDOAH FALL FOLIAGE BIKE FESTIVAL 10-101 miles (\$90 in 2018)

October 18-20, Staunton, VA <http://shenandoahbike.org/>