

HBC GREAT RIDES  
**FLESHER PASS**

**Link:** <http://ridewithgps.com/routes/3991936>

**Length:** 67 miles

**Cumulative elevation gained and lost:** 3,905 feet

**Begins:** Spring Meadow Lake State Park (see Alternate Starts)

**Ends:** Spring Meadow Lake State Park (see Alternate Starts)

**Difficulty:** This is a *hard* ride. It is longer than many HBC GREAT RIDES, and includes a stiff climb. Traffic can sometimes be relatively heavy, especially close to town, and for long stretches the pavement is rough and broken-up. Frequently the road lacks good shoulders.

**Highest Point:** Flesher Pass, 6,130

**Low Point:** 3,920, Spring Meadow Lake

**Surface:** All surfaces are paved, generally narrow shoulders

**Traffic:** Variable, very light to moderately busy; Birdseye Road is busy during commute hours

**Best time of year:** After the snow is off the road, and the gravel has been swept

**Cautions:** While this is a great ride, it also presents a few real hazards, so you need to ride smart.

1. At times portions of this route are heavily traveled by fast-moving cars. The general lack of shoulders, and sometimes rough or raggedy-edged pavement, combined with intermittently busy traffic, are potentially dangerous. Please, if there's any traffic at all, ride single-file and as far to the right as you safely are able.
2. There's often loose gravel on the last three miles of Flesher Pass itself. This is one of the area's great downhill runs, and it's tempting to let your bike run and plummet joyfully towards the valley floor. If you do so, please be mindful of this loose gravel, as it would be easy to dump at speed.
3. It should go without saying that you should descend in your lane, and ride at a speed that will allow you to dodge or stop in the event that Bambi strolls out in front of you, or a car drifts into your lane.
4. Ride defensively. If you were to collide with the pavement, Bullwinkle, or the grill of an F-150, the force of your collision is proportionate to how fast you (or you and the moose) are moving. The damage to your lycra-clad body increases as a square function (not a linear increase) of your velocity, since it is your impact kinetic energy ( $1/2 mv^2$ ) which traumatically makes itself known. Translation: A doubling of speed doesn't equal crashing twice as hard, it equals a squaring of your impact force. Smashing into a moose at 10 mph would be bad; at 20 mph you'd be lucky to walk away from your too close encounter with Rocky's best friend. Enjoy your zoom down Flesher Pass, but don't ride like an idiot.

**Description:**

This rural ride begins at Spring Meadow Lake State Park, leaving town via Country Club and Birdseye roads. The best part of this ride begins on the Lincoln Road as you traverse most of the open length of the Little Prickly Pear Valley. This dry (sometimes windy) valley features expansive vistas, scattered ranches, and the Canyon Creek Store, a place to stop for Huckleberry ice cream and a well-deserved rest if the

wind's been blowing in your face for the last half-dozen miles. Please thank them for making a restroom available, and consider making a small donation for TP. Shortly after the Canyon Creek store, you'll enter the narrow Canyon Creek valley and progress gently towards the Pass paralleling a pretty stream. The road continues ascending gently as it passes the turnoff to Stemple Pass, and then in several miles, begins a climb steeply to Flesher Pass and the Continental Divide. While this is a beautiful ride, it can be a challenging one — especially on a windy day. It's not unusual to struggle out through the valley, and then get blown back across the wide open valley at 20 mph. It's not unheard of to be confronted with a headwind in both directions. Check the forecast.

**Alternate Start and Finish Points**

This out-and-back ride can be shortened by driving onto the route before jumping on your bike. Please ask for permission if you park on private land. If you park along the road, make sure you are completely off the highway.

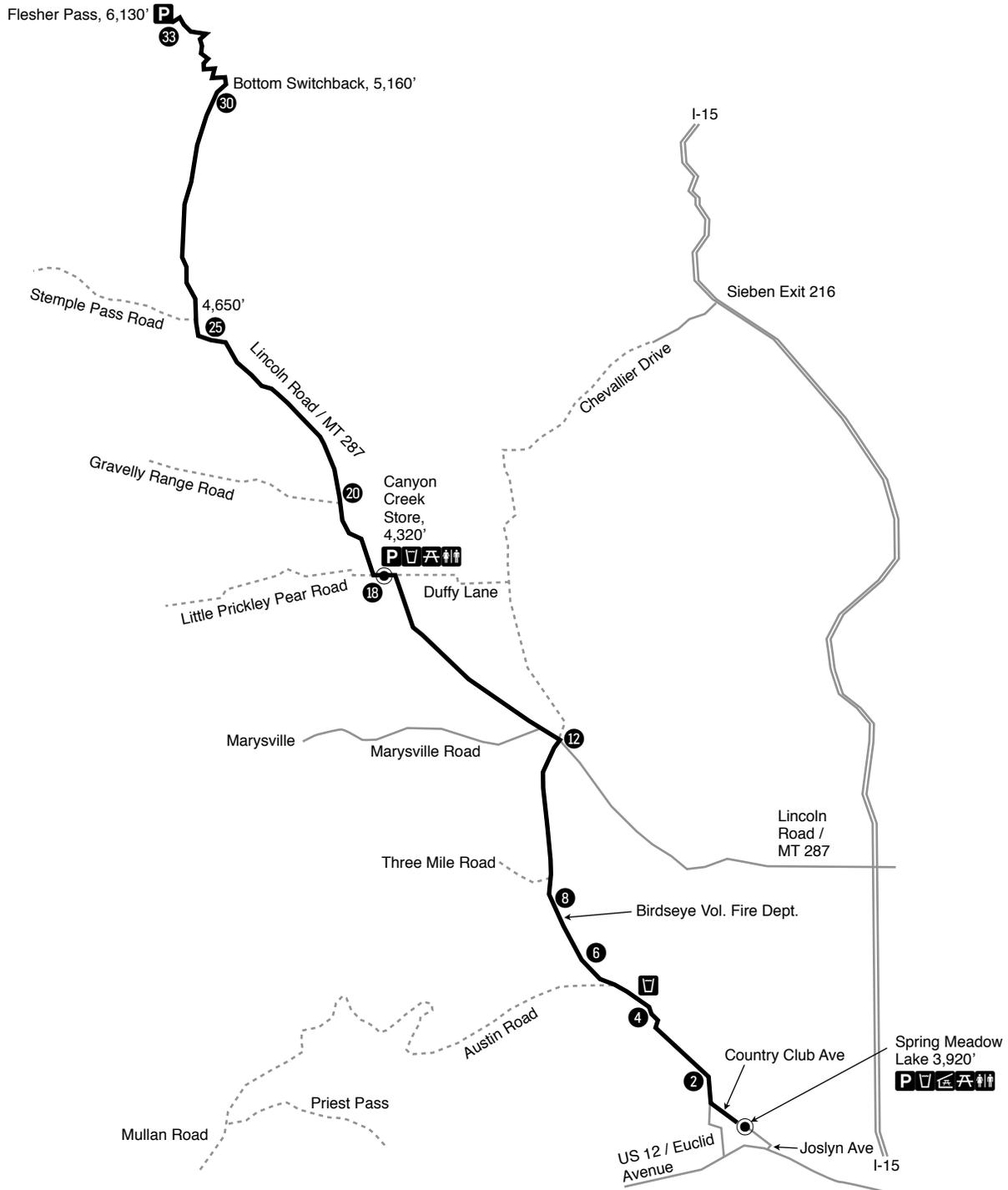
1. At the intersection of Austin Road and Birdseye. 56 miles, 3,480 feet net elevation gain
2. Near the intersection of the Lincoln and Marysville Roads. 42 miles, 2,590 feet net elevation gain
3. Near Canyon Creek Store. 31 miles, 2,370 feet net elevation gain
4. Drive to the top of the Pass, park, ride back down the hill toward Canyon Creek, turn around at the bottom switchback, and climb back to your car. 6 miles, 1,000 feet net elevation gain

**Flesher Pass Cue Sheet, One Way**

Mile	Description
0	Leave Spring Meadow State Park, 3,920 ft. Turn left onto Country Club Avenue
1.4	Bear right, Country Club becomes Williams Street
1.9	Bear left, Williams becomes Birdseye Road
3.7	Cross over rails and Sevenmile Creek
4.2	Convenience store on right, irregular hours
5.7	Austin Road on left
12.0	Turn left onto Lincoln Road
18.0	Canyon Creek Store on right
25.3	Stemple Pass Road on left
30.6	Bottom switchback, steeper climb begins, 5,160 ft
33.5	Attain Flesher Pass, 6,130 ft

# FLESHER PASS OUT-AND-BACK

HBC Great Rides, February 2014



**Please read:** You are responsible for your own safety, so please ride safely. Wear a helmet, be visible and ride predictably. Control your speed on descents. This ride includes rough road surfaces, and you will be exposed to varying amounts of traffic and potentially dangerous weather. Portions of this ride are remote, where timely help may be unavailable. Conditions change due to alternations in routes, uncertain weather, changes in traffic, deteriorated road surfaces, construction activities, and other hazards or inconveniences too numerous to foretell or specify. These directions and this map, like all maps and directions, may become outdated and inaccurate without warning. The Helena Bicycle Club (HBC), its officers, volunteers, or contributors of these rides, trip leaders, and others associated with this bicycle ride description and map cannot be held responsible for the conditions of this route, or for any aspect of your ride. HBC is not responsible for any injuries or damages sustained or occurring while riding this route.