

# HELENA BICYCLE CLUB

HBC MAY 2012 NEWSLETTER

## May Meeting

Getting Ready for the Kettle Valley Rail Trail

Slides and Sound General Packing Advice

Mark & Dee Dee Cress

Thurs. May 24  
7:00 p.m.  
UM—Helena  
Room 207



## May is National Bicycle Month

A brief sample of May events in Helena includes:

- Recycle Your Cycle, Lazy Green Park, Helena Ave/Rodney Ave, May 5
- National Bike to School Day, May 9
- Ales for Trails (benefit Helena's Centennial Trail, at the Fairgrounds), May 11
- Bike to Work Week, May 14-18
- TAWSE (Take Another Way State Employees) Bike To Work, May 16
- Commuter Challenge, May 1 thru 31 — Ride or walk early and often throughout May! Sign up individually or as a team, and log your miles, compete for prizes, and enjoy other's stories of their epic, and sometimes not-so-epic, travels between home and work.

**Bike Walk Helena's** calendar of all May's Bike Month events can be viewed at: <http://www.bikewalkhelena.org/events/2012-05>

### May Meeting, Getting Ready for the Kettle Valley Rail Trail UM-Helena, May 24, 7 pm

At May's program you will learn about BC's wonderful Kettle Valley Rail Trail, and as a bonus, learn how to pack for a tour on the KVRT or any multi-day bicycle tour, be it a fully supported tour like HBC's Double Divide Ride, a credit card tour on Idaho's Trail of the Coeur d'Alene, or on an epic trans-America, summer-long tour.

Mark and Dee Dee Cress will show slides and demonstrate packing strategies.

### 2012 HBC Club Rides

*York Burger Boogie*, June 9, 9:00 a.m., ride to York and return. Meet at the Dive Bakery

*One Helena Hundred*, Cascade, July 14 <https://www.bikereg.com/Net/15451>

*Double Divide Ride*, Lincoln, Aug 11—12 <https://www.bikereg.com/Net/15998>

*Vigilante Overnight*, near York, July 7—8  
A two-day self-supported overnight trip to Vigilante Campground. 33 miles each way, 700 ft climb. A mandatory pre-trip meeting is scheduled for Sunday, July 1, 7 p.m., 101 Pine Street. Contact [bruce.newell@gmail.com](mailto:bruce.newell@gmail.com).

Self-supported (pack your tent) and self-catered trip (bring your own food). Our route takes us on a mixture of quiet and traveled paved and gravel roads.

### Spring-Summer-Fall Evening Rides *Mosey Mondays*

Helena Bicycle Club's really fun, pretty darned easy ride Mondays, 6:00 p.m. through the fall. Meet at Four Georgians School parking lot, 555 West Custer.

### Volunteers Needed:

Help count cyclists and pedestrians, 4—6 p.m., various Helena locations, Thursday May 17. Call Laura Erikson at 431-4674 for more information.

*Evening Rides, continued from Page One*

[Mosey Mondays, continued] Join us for an easy, relaxed bike ride around town. Mountain bikes and cycle-cross bikes (bicycles with a little bigger tires) are recommended in case we ride on gravel roads or the Centennial Trail. This ride is fun for everyone and for all ages!

*Tuesday Ride, Intermediate*

Meet at the Cupola in Reber Park, just south of the Montana Board of Investments building: 2401 Colonial Drive. The ride leaves the Park at 6 p.m. It's a 90+ minute ride at about 12-15 mph. Rides begin May 1st, and extend through September.

*Thursday Ride, Intermediate-to-Advanced*

The ride begins at the Four Georgians School parking lot at 6 p.m. Thursday rides begin May 3 and run through the end of September. This 90+ minute ride is a little bit faster than the Tuesday night ride, typically averaging 15-18 mph.

**Club Briefs: Glass on Streets**

The HBC Board has written the City's Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council, asking that the ground glass cullet/sand traction mixture not be reused on City streets next year. We have a meeting with NMTAC in early May, and we will report back to the membership.

**Club Briefs: 501(c)3 Tax Exempt Status**

HBC has not established a tax-exempt status with the IRS. We are a Montana non-profit corporation. We have been advised

to seek federal tax-exempt status. This isn't a hair-on-fire emergency, but it is something we need to get done. In April, after careful study and consultations, the Board voted to pursue tax-exempt status. This will likely be a long road with many necessary decisions.

**Club Briefs: HBC Joining MNA**

The Board voted to join the Montana Nonprofit Association, to gain help with issues such as non-taxable status. "The Montana Nonprofit Association is a membership organization that promotes a stronger nonprofit sector in Montana through public policy, affordable products and services, organizational development, research and information sharing, and network building." MNA

**Club Briefs: Bike Walk Montana (BWM)**

BWM will advocate for more convenient, safer, walking and bicycling in Montana. BWM held its founding summit meeting in Helena, April 20-21. HBC is supporting this effort. We will feature a report on BWM, as details coalesce, in a future HBC Newsletter.

**Board of Directors**

See HBC's **Website** <http://helenabicycleclub.org>

**E-Mail List, Learn about rides, get news, see pictures**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe>

# West Pioneer Mountains Loop

Contributed by Bruce Newell, May 2012

- Length: 120 miles round trip
- Starts: Wise River (Travel clockwise to enjoy for prevailing winds; no guarantees!)
- Ends: Same
- Parking: Wise River Ranger District, call for permission (406) 832-3178
- Elevation: Starting and low point: Wise River 5,715  
High point: Near Crystal Park, 7,800
- Duration: Three-day tour (could be done in 1—3 days)
- Difficulty: Moderate, two high passes
- Attractions: This wonderful three-day tour routes you through some of the prettiest scenery in Montana. The Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway is gorgeous, especially in the early summer when flowers are blooming. The Big Hole Valley, with the Bitterroot Mountains in the background, is stunningly beautiful and sometimes dotted with 'lakes' of delicate sky-blue Camas.

This is probably best a credit-card tour, staying in motel rooms or cabins first at Elkhorn Hot Springs, and then a second night in Jackson. Call for reservations. Lodging options are varied and sometimes quite rustic; make sure you know what kind of room you are renting. There are reasonable camping options, decent restaurants, and several small grocery stores along your way. Enjoy the two terrific hot springs; bring your bathing suit and a towel. This is an astonishingly scenic ride and ideal for a relatively easy, very enjoyable, three-day tour.

- Picnic: There are oodles of prime picnic spots
- Camping: See map, many campgrounds. Water from pumps in campgrounds may be rusty-tasting, bring a filter
- Lodging: At Elkhorn Hot Springs, in Jackson, in Wisdom
- Surface: Paved road. Variable surface, generally very good. Variable shoulders.
- Terrain: Two big climbs, to Crystal Park in the Pioneers, and Big Hole Pass/Carroll Hill on MT278. Otherwise, level to moderate rollers along the Big Hole River
- Best time: The Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway typically opens mid-May, and closes in the fall. Check with the Ranger District (406) 832-3178
- Traffic: Moderate to light. Recreational traffic along the Big Hole River (pickups towing drift boats).
- Cautions: Riders are exposed to potentially severe mountain weather. Pack for cold, wet and strong winds. Bring warm clothes and consider bringing a light tarp/shelter in the event of thunderstorms. Water from campground pumps may taste rusty. Until the fall freeze, mosquitos are likely present and voracious.

**Did You Know?** Adventure Cycling Assn's (ACA) Great Divide Mountain Bike Route travels from Wise River through Bannack. ACA's Trans Am and Lewis & Clark routes travel over Big Hole Pass, through Jackson, and turn west at Wisdom headed toward Missoula. Dillon's famous one-day RATPOD ride circles the eastern loop. This is prime bike-touring country!

**Big Hole National Battlefield**, 9.6 miles W of Wisdom on MT43

**Resources**  
USFS guide to Scenic Byway  
[http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5052331.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5052331.pdf)

State of Montana guide to Scenic Byway, including campground info  
<http://goldwest.visitmt.com/listings/11885.htm>

**Fine Print — Please read**

You are responsible for your own safety. Wear a helmet, be visible, and ride single-file and predictably. Prepare yourself and your bicycle for this tour. This ride is very rural, it travels over variable road surfaces, and you will be exposed to varying amounts of traffic and potentially very dangerous weather. Conditions change for reasons too numerous to foretell or specify. These directions, the cue sheet and this map may become out-dated and inaccurate over time and without warning. The Helena Bicycle Club, its officers, volunteers, trip leaders, and others associated with these Great Rides! descriptions 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. Ride smart, ride safely, and ride well.

Sportsman CG (private), 13 miles to Wise River  
Fishing Access, restroom, 104 miles

Prevailing Winds (No guarantees)

**Wisdom**  
81.5 miles, 6,050 ft  
Gas, Limited groceries, Restaurants, Limited Lodging

Grasshopper CG  
33 miles, 6,900 ft

**Jackson**  
63.5 miles, 6,548 ft  
Jackson Hot Springs  
<http://www.jacksonhotsprings.com/>  
Limited groceries, Restaurants, Lodging, Camping at Hot Springs

## Cue Sheet

- 1.3 Wise River Ranger District
  - 0 Wise River, head south along the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway
  - 12 Fourth of July Campground (USFS)
  - 13 Lodgepole Campground (USFS)
  - 14 Willow Campground (USFS)
  - 20.5 Grand Vista Scenic Overlook (USFS)
  - 21 Little Joe Campground (USFS)
  - 22 Climb begins
  - 26 Meadows at top of climb
  - 27 Crystal Park
  - 32.2 Climb gravel side road to Elkhorn Hot Springs, 0.4 miles *up* gravel side road. Swimming, restaurant, various lodging offers, call for info: 800-722-8978, 406-834-3434 (Side trip distances not included in cue sheet tally)
  - 33 Grasshopper Campground (USFS)
  - 35.3 Optionally, turn E toward Ma Barnes Country store, 0.4 miles along gravel side road
  - 38.6 Polaris (no services)
  - 45.3 Turn E on MT 278
  - 52.7 Top of Big Hole Pass, see exhibit west of summit
  - 63.5 Jackson, limited groceries, lodging, restaurants, call Jackson Hot Springs Lodge, 406-834-3151 for info
  - 81.5 Wisdom, groceries, gas, restaurant, limited lodging
  - 104 Fishing Access, restroom
  - 107 Sportsman Campground (private)
  - 112 East Bank Campground (BLM)
  - 113 Dickie Bridge Campground (BLM)
  - 120 Town of Wise River
  - 121.3 Wise River Ranger District
- Note:** Mileages from GoogleMaps, not double-checked by bike or car; Elevations are estimates

