



HBC Great Rides!

Boulder to Elk Park Gravel Grinder

Contributor: Bruce Newell

This is the rarest of Helena rides: No traffic, mostly easy pedaling, delightful scenery, and you ride along a wonderful river or creek much of the way.

Distance: 21.4 miles one-way
Elevation Gained (one-way): 1,628

Starting Elevation: 4,900 feet
Ending Elevation (one-way): 6,240 feet

Link: <http://ridewithgps.com/routes/5691158>

Difficulty: Easy—Moderate, due to its relative isolation, at times rough road surface, and a few steep hills.

Traffic: Near-non-existent

Terrain: This route follows first the Boulder River, then Bison Creek. While the route climbs all the way, mostly grades are moderate and much is rail grade. There are a few steep (but short) hills beyond Mile 13.

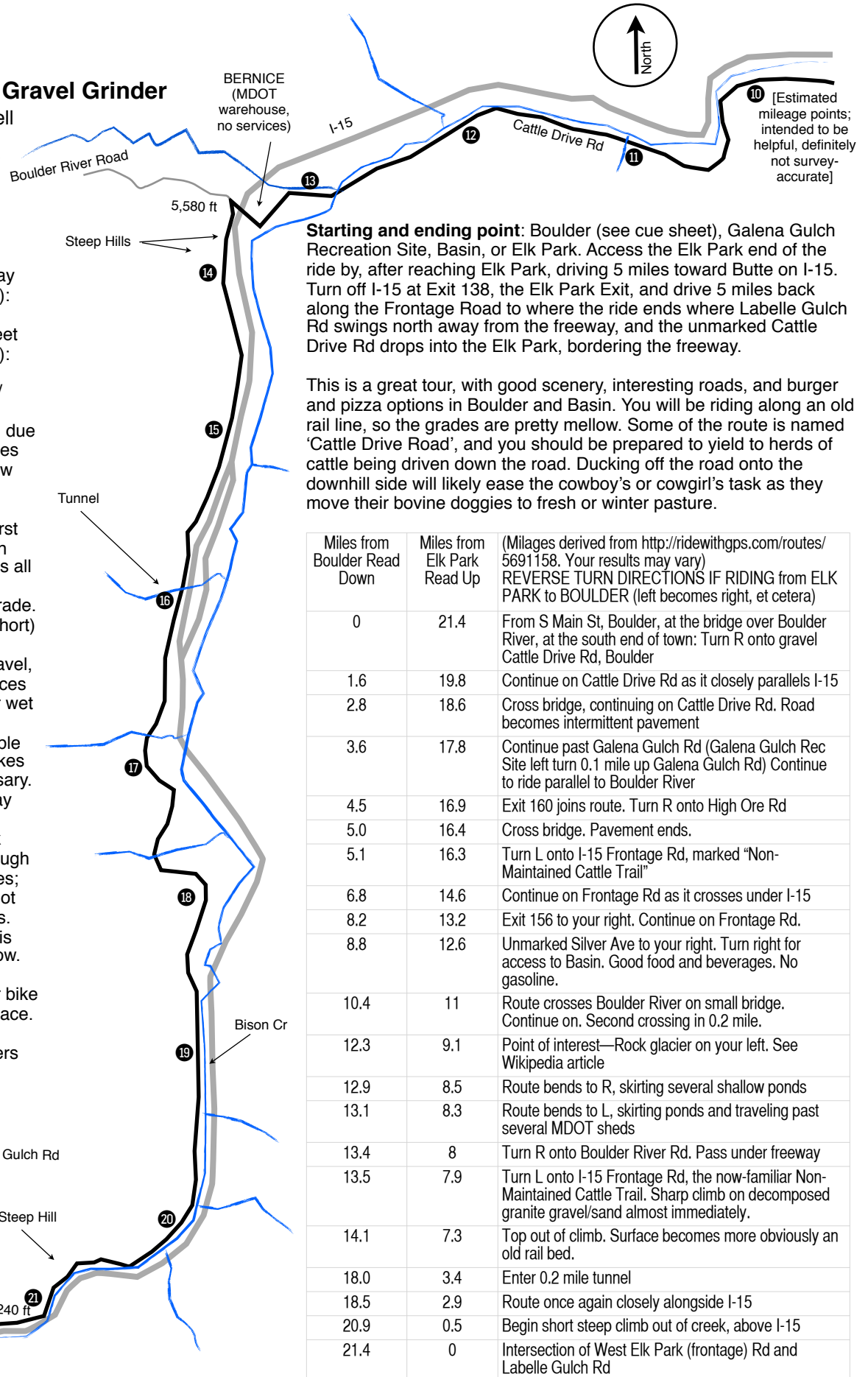
Surface: Gravel to rough gravel, some paved. The road surfaces can be very rough, sandy, or wet with canoe-able puddles.

Best Bike: Any gravel-capable all-road bicycle. Mountain bikes work fine, but are not necessary. With sub-30mm tires you may have to walk up a couple of sandy graveled hills, or work your way extra-carefully through rough sections; but no worries; you'll have fun. This ride is not suitable for skinny-tired bikes.

Best times: When the road is dry or dry-ish and free of snow.

Special hazards/features:

Tunnel at Mile 18. Walk your bike if you can't see the road surface. A light wouldn't hurt but isn't necessary. Early season riders should watch for ice.



Starting and ending point: Boulder (see cue sheet), Galena Gulch Recreation Site, Basin, or Elk Park. Access the Elk Park end of the ride by, after reaching Elk Park, driving 5 miles toward Butte on I-15. Turn off I-15 at Exit 138, the Elk Park Exit, and drive 5 miles back along the Frontage Road to where the ride ends where Labelle Gulch Rd swings north away from the freeway, and the unmarked Cattle Drive Rd drops into the Elk Park, bordering the freeway.

This is a great tour, with good scenery, interesting roads, and burger and pizza options in Boulder and Basin. You will be riding along an old rail line, so the grades are pretty mellow. Some of the route is named 'Cattle Drive Road', and you should be prepared to yield to herds of cattle being driven down the road. Ducking off the road onto the downhill side will likely ease the cowboy's or cowgirl's task as they move their bovine doggies to fresh or winter pasture.

Miles from Boulder Read Down	Miles from Elk Park Read Up	(Mileages derived from http://ridewithgps.com/routes/5691158 . Your results may vary) REVERSE TURN DIRECTIONS IF RIDING from ELK PARK to BOULDER (left becomes right, et cetera)
0	21.4	From S Main St, Boulder, at the bridge over Boulder River, at the south end of town: Turn R onto gravel Cattle Drive Rd, Boulder
1.6	19.8	Continue on Cattle Drive Rd as it closely parallels I-15
2.8	18.6	Cross bridge, continuing on Cattle Drive Rd. Road becomes intermittent pavement
3.6	17.8	Continue past Galena Gulch Rd (Galena Gulch Rec Site left turn 0.1 mile up Galena Gulch Rd) Continue to ride parallel to Boulder River
4.5	16.9	Exit 160 joins route. Turn R onto High Ore Rd
5.0	16.4	Cross bridge. Pavement ends.
5.1	16.3	Turn L onto I-15 Frontage Rd, marked "Non-Maintained Cattle Trail"
6.8	14.6	Continue on Frontage Rd as it crosses under I-15
8.2	13.2	Exit 156 to your right. Continue on Frontage Rd.
8.8	12.6	Unmarked Silver Ave to your right. Turn right for access to Basin. Good food and beverages. No gasoline.
10.4	11	Route crosses Boulder River on small bridge. Continue on. Second crossing in 0.2 mile.
12.3	9.1	Point of interest—Rock glacier on your left. See Wikipedia article
12.9	8.5	Route bends to R, skirting several shallow ponds
13.1	8.3	Route bends to L, skirting ponds and traveling past several MDOT sheds
13.4	8	Turn R onto Boulder River Rd. Pass under freeway
13.5	7.9	Turn L onto I-15 Frontage Rd, the now-familiar Non-Maintained Cattle Trail. Sharp climb on decomposed granite gravel/sand almost immediately.
14.1	7.3	Top out of climb. Surface becomes more obviously an old rail bed.
18.0	3.4	Enter 0.2 mile tunnel
18.5	2.9	Route once again closely alongside I-15
20.9	0.5	Begin short steep climb out of creek, above I-15
21.4	0	Intersection of West Elk Park (frontage) Rd and Labelle Gulch Rd

ELK PARK
(no services)

BASIN
5,350 ft
☒ ☒ ☒

Map Copyrighted 2014 by the Helena Bicycle Club using the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

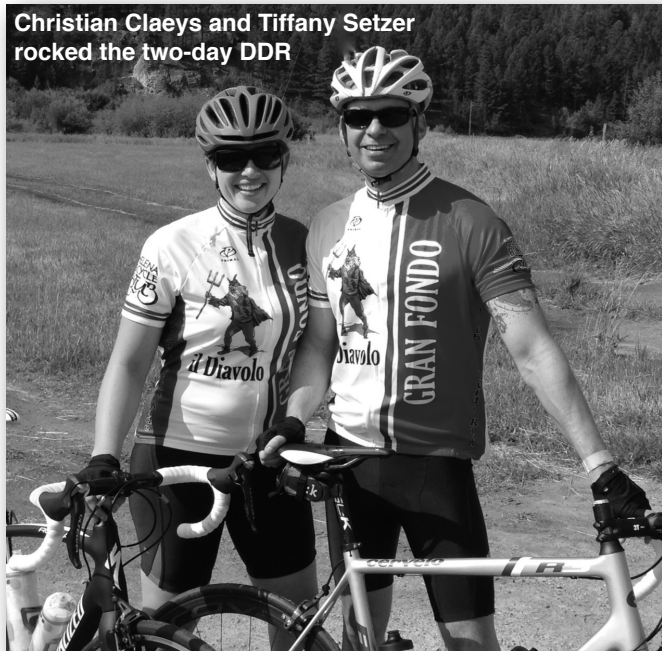
High Ore Rd
Exit 160, High Ore Rd
Galena Gulch Rd
Galena Gulch Rec Site

Please read: This ride is isolated and includes a tunnel and difficult riding surfaces. Be prepared and ride sensibly. 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. 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.

DDR DDR Ride--Continued from p.1

twenty-seven rode the traditional route of MacDonald and Flesher Passes. The food was good, as were the beverages and lively conversation in Lincoln's Hooper Park, and everyone I talked with reported having had a really great ride. Thanks to Don Harris, Wayne Chamberlin, and our other planners and volunteers who organized the ride, obtained donations, staffed aid stations, and did one or more the the myriad of things that make, to our lucky riders, this supported ride feel 'plush'.

We're waiting for final figures, but it appears that this year's ride will break even, thanks in large part to our our major donor, Valley Bank; the Club wouldn't be able to afford to put on this great ride without their assistance. Thanks also to a long list of local supporters, including: Bike Helena, Big Sky Cyclery and Fitness, First Security Bank, Great Divide Cyclery, Firetower Coffee, Base Camp, Real Food Store, Bill Schneider, The Panhandler, The Big Dipper, Hammer Nutrition, The Hub, Taco Del Sol, Montana Book and Toy Company, Capital Sports, The General Mercantile, Green & Green Realty, and The Vanilla Bean. My apologies if we've missed any of our supporters; please let us know and we'll post a notice in the next Newsletter.



Christian Claey and Tiffany Setzer rocked the two-day DDR

NON-MOTORIZED BALLOT

At HBC's August Board meeting, your Board discussed a request sent to us by City Commissioner Matt Elsaesser, asking that we encourage HBC members to support the creation of a Non-Motorized Transport District. While the Board did not take action to endorse or reject the proposed ballot measure, the Board did agree to encourage HBC members to vote on this initiative. If you are a property owner in the City of Helena, please send in your ballot.

HBC members should address their questions regarding this proposed new District to Commissioners Elsaesser, Haque-Hausrath, or Haladay.

DOGS AND CYCLISTS

While cycling on the Frontage Road, north of Clancy, early in the afternoon of August 2nd, HBC member Todd Jones crashed after colliding with an at-large attacking pit bull mix dog. According to Todd, the dog lives at "...875 Hwy 282 in Clancy. [This] is the first home on the right when you are going downhill south towards Clancy from Montana City."

Todd suffered a cracked pelvis, contusions, multiple abrasions, and a concussion. Todd reports: "My helmet is cracked in five places but held together, and probably saved my life." I wrote Todd, asking how he was doing, and he reports that he is recovering, that he is back on his bike and has enjoyed a short ride, and finally, that he really appreciates the Helena bike community's support.

There is extensive but often conflicting advice about what to do when, as you are cycling along, a dog rushes out at you. Every dog and each situation is unique, but here's a distillation of the (sometimes contradictory and likely in part bogus) advice I found online:

Continues on page four