

Nine days • Seven stages • 400+ miles • 32,000'

In 2007, the club ran the original Northern Oregon Tour. It was an epic adventure but also a long, hard tour. It averaged 90 miles a day, with the final two stages 95 and 98 miles. 630 miles in all. No doubt there are still some club members who would relish the idea of banging out 90 frequently hilly miles a day for seven days straight. But the feedback we hear from most of our recent tour participants is that folks no longer want to work quite that hard on their cycling vacations.

That brings us to this tour: the Northern Oregon Tour Redux. “Redux” means “to bring back or revive” and that is certainly accurate for this reprise of the previous tour. But taking a spin on its Latin root—*reducere*—we can also propose that it means “to reduce.” We’ve put the old, hardcore tour on a diet. Or if you prefer a more radical take on the changes, we’ve performed a major surgery here, lopping off the southernmost third of the loop. Now, instead of those grueling 90-mile days, the stages run 64, 56, 60, 59, 59, 52, and 52 miles. (There are bonus miles available on a couple of stages but nothing too extreme.)

The marquee attraction remains the trek along the Historic Columbia River Highway (and its associated bike trails) in the Columbia River Gorge (above). The start/finish moves from near Eugene to Silver Falls State Park, east of Salem (photo of park on page 2). This was our overnight at the end of the very hard 95-mile Stage 6 on the prior tour. For a variety of reasons, we are now running the loop in the clockwise direction, rather than counterclockwise, as it was run in 2007.

What had been that long Stage 6 heading north to south is now split into two stages heading south to north, with some nice new roads added. What had been one long day doing the entire Historic Highway in the gorge is now also divided into two stages, more or less. After the gorge, Stages 5 and 6 nip off the southern section of the old tour by cutting across to the west, up and over the shoulder of 11,217' Mount Hood, cycling on remote roads through the vast national forests.

Having shorter stages isn’t only about making them easier. Shorter stages allow more time for sightseeing and this tour has sights to see in abundance. Hammering out the miles without taking time to explore all the wayside attractions would be just plain dumb. (As we have often pointed out before, no one gets a prize for being first into camp, except for getting to help unload the luggage truck and set up camp.) This tour will beg its participants to take it all slowly; to savor the wonders along the way.

This tour is returning—mostly—to our traditional format of using campgrounds for our overnights. There is one night in lodgings on this tour, a Comfort Inn near Troutdale (end of Stage 2). Going back to our traditional way of doing things—after a couple of tours loaded with motels—means going back to our traditional logistics and budget, at least in broad outline. This tour also moves every day. No more hubs. We appreciate that many people have said they like both hubs and hotels. When those options are

available to us on other tours we may put them into play. They aren't a part of this package though, except for the night at the Comfort Inn. Cost for the motel and a restaurant dinner that night are not included in the camp budget.

How hard is this tour? The miles certainly won't tax a moderate rider. But there is a fair amount of climbing. It falls somewhere in the mid-range of all club tours in terms of total elevation gain...not the flattest, easiest tour ever but also not one of our leg-breaking sufferfests. The first two days present that classic "nibbled to death by ducks" challenge: many small ups and downs, sometimes steep, in the rugged foothills along the eastern flank of the Willamette Valley...rather like riding in the hills of Sonoma County. The two days in the gorge have a few climbs but are generally fairly benign. Stage 5 has the most elevation gain—over 6000'—as it chugs uphill from near the river into the heart of the Cascades. Never steep climbing but lots of it. Stage 6 also offers some substantial climbing but overall has considerably more descending as it heads out of the mountains and back toward the western valleys. The final stage is fairly easy, although its harder, hillier miles come near the end of the day.

This tour follows the format of most past club tours: what we call cooperative touring: all participants share in the chores associated with keeping our little village moving along the roads. Now, with mostly camp overnights, we are mostly back to how we have usually done things. Veterans know the drill on this and we will assist any new participants in getting up to speed. Two small trucks will haul our luggage each day, as well as all the food, supplies, and cooking equipment. We provide (and cooperatively prepare) all the dinners and breakfasts on our camp days, as well as providing pocket food for the rides every day and snacks and drinks for after-ride relaxing. Our tours are always BYOB.

In addition to our luggage and food/equipment trucks, we will be accompanied each day by one sag wagon. This will mean one rest stop around the mid-point of each relatively short stage. If we can, we'll squeeze in two stops.



Google says it takes 9:50 to drive from Santa Rosa to Silver Falls State Park. Add an hour for a lunch break and call it 11 hours. Leave at 7:00 and arrive at 6:00? We will be organized into a car pool fleet. Most luggage and many bikes can travel in the trucks. Excess car pool vehicles will be left at the start for the week in a relatively secure, gated parking lot in the state park. All participants will share the gas costs to the start and back for the vehicle in which they make the trip.

Once our roster is set, participants will receive further e-mail updates about tour logistics, including sorting out the car pools and motel reservations. We will provide additional information and more detailed maps for each of our overnight sites.

Because the stages along the Columbia River are so packed with scenic and historic attractions, our previews of those sections may run longer than usual. Even so, we won't come close to covering everything in exhaustive detail. If you're interested, you can do your own googling to flesh out the back story. Whatever information we do provide will be aimed at helping you understand how to engage with this unique environment from the front row seat of a bicycle.

We'll do our best to provide maps, including detail insets, that make the routes clear and unambiguous. Whether you print out this entire preview book for the tour or not, please print those maps and have them with you on the tour! Or load all the data into your Garmin thingies. You will need it out on the roads.

CHANGES! This tour was originally scheduled for August of 2020. We all know what happened in that year. The tour had to be canceled because of COVID. To have tried to reschedule it for 2021 would have meant making reservations in the fall of 2020, before we had vaccines and before we had any certainty that life would be normal enough for a tour. But here we are in 2022, finally ready to give it another go.

The delays have produced some changes for us. The group site at our first camp is now closed so we have moved to the main camp-

ground, making the stage a bit longer. We also lost our group site on Stage 6, moving instead to the main camp nearby. Also, there were serious wildfires along parts of Stages 6 and 7 in 2020. Two years will have softened the scars a bit but we can still expect to see some wounded and recovering landscapes. Finally, one road on Stage 7 that was open in 2020 has since been closed. We do have a good alternate route in that case. Okay...onward to the rides!



we encountered on Stage 1 of 2019's Northwest Oregon Tour, riding north along the other side of this same fertile valley. This side of the valley, however, butting up against the much larger Cascade Mountain Range, tends to be hillier and a bit more rugged.

What that means for a cyclist is a constantly topsy turvy terrain: lots of mostly small climbs and descents. As the finish is about 800' lower than the start, we'll actually have more descending than climbing, and at least a couple of those descents are wild... fairly long and over 10%.

These first stages are a bit like riding in the West County hills out beyond Sebastopol, and that also goes for their Hobbit-like hodge podge of settlement. All of these hills and valleys are within commuting distance of Salem, the state capitol, and a busy array of nearby suburbs. So rural-residential zoning and building are the standard here. Although it is

Stage 1: Silver Falls SP to Estacada

62 miles, 4700' up, 5700' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30790476>

We will have more to say about Silver Falls State Park (above)—where we're starting the tour—when we return here at the end of the tour. Probably, after an 11-hour drive to get here at the start, we will barely have enough time for happy hour and dinner before we lose the daylight, leaving no time to appreciate this special place. Our hope is that after the relatively short final stage, we will have plenty of afternoon for exploring the park more thoroughly. It is definitely worth exploring, but not now.

Stages 1 and 2 of this tour are both quite complex for navigation. Each has over two dozen road changes... one every two or three miles on average. As noted in the introduction, these stages follow the route of the much longer, much harder Stage 6 from the original Northern Oregon Tour but traveling in the opposite direction. Stage 2 varies significantly from the original route but this stage follows it almost exactly, except for two minor revisions.

We are starting from the main campground in the center of the park. North of the park we enter a landscape comprised mainly of either woods or farm fields, and that will pretty much be the bill of fare for the rest of the day. It's similar to what

pleasantly rural, no one would every mistake this region for a wilderness. There are houses and small farms tucked into the woods all over the place. When I was a kid growing up near Portland, we thought of the small towns out here—Estacada, Silverton, Molalla—as hick towns...hayseed central. Now the folks living here are quite frequently going to be more sophisticated...high-tech, artists, writers, artisan farmers, vintners, brewers... It may be rural and woodsy but hayseed it's not.

The photo below was taken along Maple Grove Road, about a third of the way through the stage. It's typical of the scenery today: the little home that is not a farm house and yet is plunked down in the middle of a woods-and-farms environment, and a sleepy road meandering through that world.





corner says Trout Creek. Whatever it's called it soon tips downhill in a hurry. This is the biggest and baddest of the descents today, and as you can see from the photo, it's a narrow, rather primitive road but with decent pavement. It begins with two small uphill bumps and then launches off into the big drop: almost two slinky, twisty miles at up to 12%.

This dizzy little downhill plunges into the canyon of the wild and scenic Mollala River. We ride along the river for about three miles and then head uphill, out of the canyon on the other side. This begins another lumpy run of ups and downs—too many to count or describe—that will continue almost to the end of the stage. Finally, at around mile 58, we get one last downhill of two-plus miles on Day Hill Road (below).

At the bottom of that descent, Day Hill tees into Hwy 211. We cross the Estacada River on the highway and roll into the town of Estacada. The nice folks at Estacada High School have graciously agreed to allow us to camp on a back lawn on the school campus and to provide access to showers and rest rooms. This is very important for us because there are no campgrounds anywhere nearby. Without the hospitality of the school staff, we wouldn't be able to make this route work.



Maple Grove Road deserves a bit more of a mention than that. It's a nice road with pleasant scenery, decent pavement, and next-to-no traffic. (That's actually true of most of the roads today.) But we might not love it quite as much going this direction as we did going the other way on the previous tour because it's mostly uphill the way we're going. It's 7.4 miles long and the summit at the end is about 1150' higher than where we turn onto it. But there's actually more gain than that because there are eight distinct uphill pitches and each is followed by a little dip. Those dinky downhill dips may break up the ascent but they all eventually add to the climbing. That's how it goes today.

The end of Maple Grove is a fairly clear summit. We turn left there onto Sawtell Road (top photo) and in less than two miles, right onto Trout Creek Road (middle photo). Note that both Ride With GPS and the old hard copy AAA county maps show this road as Guernsey. But the sign on the





The avoidance of busy highways begins right at the start with a meandering route east out of Estacada... east and then bending around to the north on little lanes like Tracy Road (left). I ask you: would you rather be on a road like this or on a busy highway? I rest my case.

All these little lanes—ten roads in the first 16 miles—begin our biggest “detour” of the day, a jog well to the east of the town of Sandy. It’s hard to miss it on the map. Downtown Sandy is a jumble of fast food joints and other commercial clutter. We had to put up with it on the last tour as we tried to get from A to B by the shortest route possible. But we don’t have to now. We’re giving it a wide berth.

Stage 2: Estacada to Troutdale

56 miles, 4850' up, 5250' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29372026>

On the first stage we burned through 64 of the 95 miles that made up Stage 6 on the original tour (from Troutdale to Silver Falls State Park). In theory, that only leaves a balance of 30+ miles to be ridden today. While we are all for softening up the stages a bit, that would be a little too wimpy. But consider this: on the prior tour, we were faced with the challenge of getting from the Columbia River to Eugene in just two stages...a distance of almost 200 miles. We had to make route choices that yielded the shortest stages. No room for meandering. Now, splitting that 95-mile day in two, we have the luxury of being able to take a more roundabout route to get from the start to the finish.

That allows us to use a bunch of little back roads today to steer clear of major highways and suburban clutter. There is a dense network of minor roads through these hills and we can cherry pick some nice ones to get where we’re going. You might say we’re just gratuitously padding the miles but I would assert that most of these roads serve the purpose of staying off main drags and out of messy towns. That’s my story and I’m sticking to it! However, having made my case that this roundabout route enables us to dodge most of the busy highways (and towns), I have to concede that it does include two sections of one of the busiest highways in the area. But it has huge shoulders so the experience isn’t really all that bad.

Some of the little roads employed in this section are classic rural-residential and some are deep in pretty woods. This is also where we have to be on Hwy 26—the Mount Hood Highway—for those two sections. It would be one long run of six-plus miles on the highway shoulder but there is a nice side road—Cherryville Drive—midway along that section where we can escape from the main road for two-plus miles of quiet back road riding. So we end up with a first section on the highway of less than two miles, then the two-plus on the bypass, and finally another two-plus back on the highway. This is all between miles 16 and 22.5.

When we finally put the highway behind us, we do so on a pretty little road called Sleepy Hollow Drive. At the eastern end of this nice road we turn left on a little bridge over the Sandy River and then left again on Marmot Road (below) and head back west. After that maze of many tiny roads tangled together, Marmot makes a change: almost ten miles on just this one road. All of it is as nice as what you see in this photo. There are two chunky half-mile





climbs halfway along Marmot and after that, a rolling descent that eventually adds up to about six and a half miles. The downhill begins on Marmot, continues as we bear right on little Shipley Road, then right again on pretty Ten Eyck Road, and finally right again onto Bull Run Road, which plunges down to a bridge across the Bull Run River.

Dropping to a bridge over a little river usually means just one thing: climbing out of the canyon on the other side. This climb carries on for about two miles. Somewhere in there, as the climb tapers off, Bull Run Road turns into Gordon Creek Road without any signs or junctions. Gordon Creek bounces along through meadows and woods for a while and then starts tipping downhill, first gradually and then in a real screamer. The entire downhill is about five miles but it's the last half-mile that will get your attention: a steep drop on the high side of 10%, including two hairpin corners (photo of the second one above).

There is a brief level run along the bank of the Sandy River after that big downhill. That takes us to about mile 45, or about 11 miles from the finish.

The next nine miles are on more nice little back roads, all of them doing that same up-and-down dance that has occupied us for most of the first two days of this tour. One of the nicer roads in that batch is Chamberlain (right). That photo is a pretty good sample of what all these later miles today will be like. We're up on a ridge above the Columbia River on Chamberlain. It may be possible to catch a first glance of the big river off to the north, through the trees.



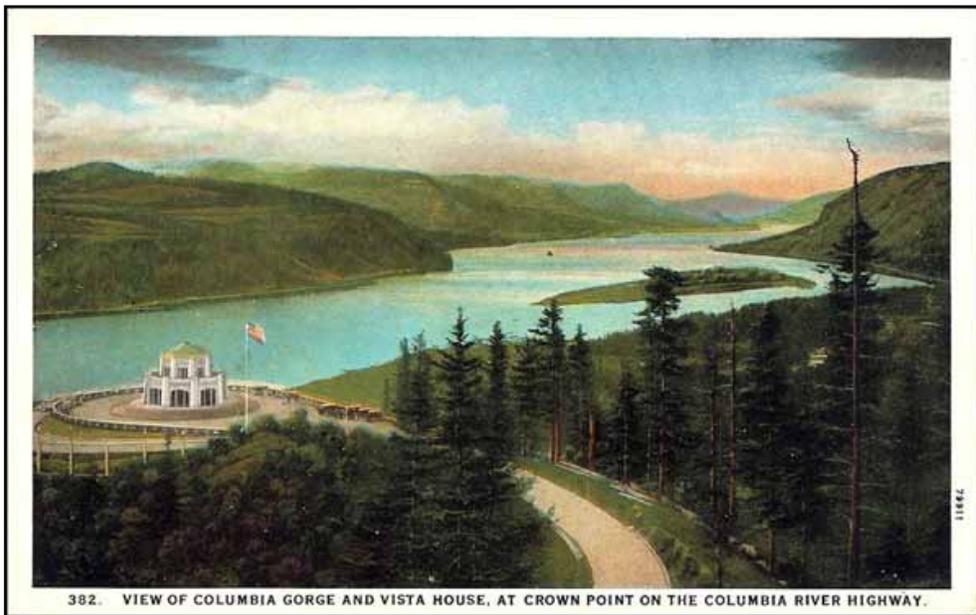
When this last section of up-and-down finally ends (with a nice little downhill), we spill out onto the Historic Columbia River Highway. We're not all of a sudden in the middle of the famous gorge. This is the tail end of the road, where it feeds into the northeastern suburbs of Portland. As you can see if you look at today's map, just to the west of our route is a busy tracery of roads. Those many roads represent the last, eastern suburbs of the big city of Portland. We are just skating around the edge of them.

We turn right on the highway, then follow it left as it crosses the Sandy River and rolls into the town of Troutdale. This was a sleepy country village until the suburbs on the eastern edge of Portland sprawled out to embrace it. But the locals have done a good job of retaining some small town charm and

the old main street at least still looks approximately quaint. The town styles itself as the gateway to the historic gorge and so most of the storefronts along main street are now aimed at the tourists, including several nice restaurants with fare ranging from pub grub to sushi.

Our route turns right on Graham Road in the middle of downtown and heads north, over the railroad lines and I-84, to the Comfort Inn, our only night in a motel on this tour. It's a good motel with all the usual amenities, including a hearty breakfast.

We'll be foraging for dinner back in Troutdale. I will create a document for those who sign up detailing the most likely restaurants in the immediate downtown area. But if you want to hop on your bike and ride four miles (round trip), I can also recommend the large and quirky establishment known as McMenamin's Edgefield Resort, shown on our Troutdale detail, a ways east of downtown. To describe it as unique and colorful would be a howling understatement. It's quite a place, with better-than-average food and brews and all kinds of crazy sights to see.



officially designated as a National Scenic Area in 1986, and the only odd thing about that is why it took them so long to make it official. The old highway itself has had all sorts of official accolades bestowed upon it: All-American Road; National Scenic Byway; National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark; National Historic Landmark. All of those honors and the protections and pampering that come with them arrived just in the nick of time. For years, the old road was just that: old. Not that many people appreciated it for what it was. The implacable bulldozer of progress was always nearby, nibbling away at the quaint curves and artisan-built walls. Interstate-84, running parallel to Hwy 30, wiped substantial chunks of the old road off the map back in the 1960s. Other sections fell into disrepair. But Oregonians have a history of being moderately enlightened about the environment and about parks and natural

Stage 3: Troutdale to Hood River

Basic route: 60 miles, 4200' up, 3600' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30779219>

Bonus miles route: 67 miles, 4500' up, 3800' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30779879>

If this tour were a stage race, today would be dubbed the Queen Stage: the most important, exciting stage of all. It's not that the other stages are not scenic or worthwhile, but this one...this is something special. We have arrived at the Columbia River Gorge and the Historic Columbia River Highway. We'll do the eastern end of the highway tomorrow, and while that section is wonderful as well, today's section is the most famous part and justifiably so. The Queen Stage on what they call the "King of Roads."

Doing the famous Historic Columbia River Highway (also known as Hwy 30 or just HCRH) was the keystone in putting this tour together. Growing up near Portland, Sunday drives out into the Gorge were a staple of my childhood. We visited the many waterfalls and played on the river beaches and hiked up the green, mossy side canyons. And we drove the old road. Even as a kid, I could appreciate that this road was unique and impressive. As the years have gone by and so many other old roads have been "improved" by widening and straightening and grading, the fact that this little highway has remained mostly in its original form just makes it all that much more precious. ("Mostly" is the key word here. Browsing the internet to come up with the old postcards on this page was a bittersweet reminder of all the wonderful sections that have been lost. They're documented in the old images but otherwise are gone. Fortunately, the greater part of the original is still here and still in tiptop condition.)

It doesn't hurt that the road is running through the Columbia River Gorge, one of the most dramatic and iconic landscapes in America. The Gorge was

aesthetics. Finally, enough people made enough of a fuss that the road came under all sorts of protections and had loads of creative energy and money thrown at the challenge of preserving it.

One of the key components in its rehabilitation has been the bicycle. There are sections we will ride today and tomorrow that are closed to cars. They were considered too old-fashioned for modern motoring, so were simply turned into bike trails. What a concept! *Brrrrilliant!* Or, in some places, bike trails have been built to replace sections of the old road that had been destroyed. Now a whole niche market in the local tourism industry is built around biking the old highway.

Before we actually roll out onto the highway, let's put a foot down for a moment and absorb a little background about the region and the road. In simplest terms, this is the classic story of rock vs water. We all learned in school that the Cascades are part of the Ring of Fire, that line of volcanos erupting out of rifts between tectonic plates, all around the Pacific Rim. 20 million years ago, massive volcanic activity generated a 2000' thick mantle of lava that spread over much of Oregon and eventually became basalt.





The more recent volcanos we know so well—from Lassen and Shasta in California, all the way up through Oregon and on into Washington—have added their own latter-day lava layering, and as we know from Mt St Helens, they are still at it; still sputtering and spewing and laying down more lava and ash.

Through it all the river has continued to drain a vast watershed stretching far up into British Columbia and Montana and encompassing large chunks of Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. Many a time a lava flow or debris flow has blocked the river channel. But the river never sleeps. Those billions of cubic feet of water never stop looking for a way to head downstream. So effective has this mighty river been in carving a channel for itself, down through that rocky crust, that it has far outpaced its little tributary streams, leaving them plunging down the sheer sides of the basalt cliffs and giving us the magnificent waterfalls that are such an integral part of the gorge.

That's a quick thumbnail on the region's geology and on the river and its consort waterfalls. Now, what about the old road?

A scenic highway up the gorge from Portland was first planned in 1909, but only a few miles were built before the project ran out of steam. Then a wealthy and rather eccentric Seattle lawyer and railroad tycoon named Sam Hill took it on as his personal crusade to see things completed. He spent years lobbying and promoting and barnstorming to make it happen, and between 1913 and 1922, most of the highway was completed.

From the very beginning the goal was to make this “the most beautiful highway in the world.” Chief Engineer on the project was a man named Sam Lancaster. He put his heart and soul and every waking moment into getting it all just right. He had been inspired by roads he'd seen in Switzerland and Germany and was especially taken with their fine old masonry walls. He vowed to replicate that style here. But he also vowed to harm as few

trees and ferns and creeks as possible with the construction. To an astonishing degree, he succeeded. This was the first paved highway in the western United States...a marvel in its day and still a marvel today.

Is that enough background for you? Okay then, let's roll...

We leave the motel by way of a nifty bike path along the Sandy River that steers us up onto a bike lane along the shoulder of I-84, east over the river. Past the river, the path peels away from the interstate and curls down to a junction with Crown Point Highway, which feeds into the Historic Columbia River Highway. Right away we can see examples of either the white-painted wooden railings or the stone walls that

are the hallmarks of the highway.

The level run along the Sandy River ends around mile 5 and we tackle the biggest climb of the day: a little over 800' up in 6.4 miles. Do the math on that and you'll come up with an average grade of 2.4%. But it's not quite that simple. There is a nearly flat section two-thirds of the way up, then a short, steeper pitch, and finally an almost false-flat roll-out to the summit at mile 11. Any way you slice it, it's not that hard a climb.

Although it may seem too early for a rest stop, this summit is still a spot where we all have to turn off into the roadside vista point, get off our bikes, and take in the view. Officially, this wayside is called the Portland Women's Forum Vista Point. Unofficially, it is the gateway to the Gorge. It offers up the panorama seen in the photo on page 1 of this preview. It is by far the most photographed view in a region packed with spectacular photo-ops. The whole Gorge is laid out at our feet—we're now at our highest





elevation above it—with Crown Point and its little jewel-box Vista House off in the very picturesque middle distance. This is the view you are most likely to have seen ten or a hundred times on everything from jigsaw puzzles to posters, from coffee table books to calendars. It is the essential Columbia Gorge image, and when you stand there and take it all in, you may have that strange, *deja vu* feeling we get when we see something in real life that has been a part of our cultural heritage forever, rather like seeing Yosemite Valley or Niagara Falls for the first time.

This grand vista point being a summit, that means there is a downhill off the other side, and in this case it's a good one: almost three miles, losing almost all of the elevation we gained on a climb of over twice that distance. In other words, it's a kinky, slinky ripper, and on some of the silkiest black pavement you could ever wish for.

However—a big however—there are wayside attractions along the way and you will have to seek counsel with your inner downhill demon to decide whether bombing this admittedly tasty descent is more important than stopping to take in the sights. Almost all of the wayside attractions over the next few miles will be waterfalls. They're all nice. On any other day, any single one of them would be occasion for stopping and even hiking some distance to see it up close. But here? There are so many! It's the proverbial embarrassment of riches. Rather than bog this ride preview down with an endless recital of all the waterfalls passing in review, I'm supplying a glossary of waterfalls at the end of the preview, with photos and details about each of them, including how difficult it may be to get to them while keeping track of your bike.

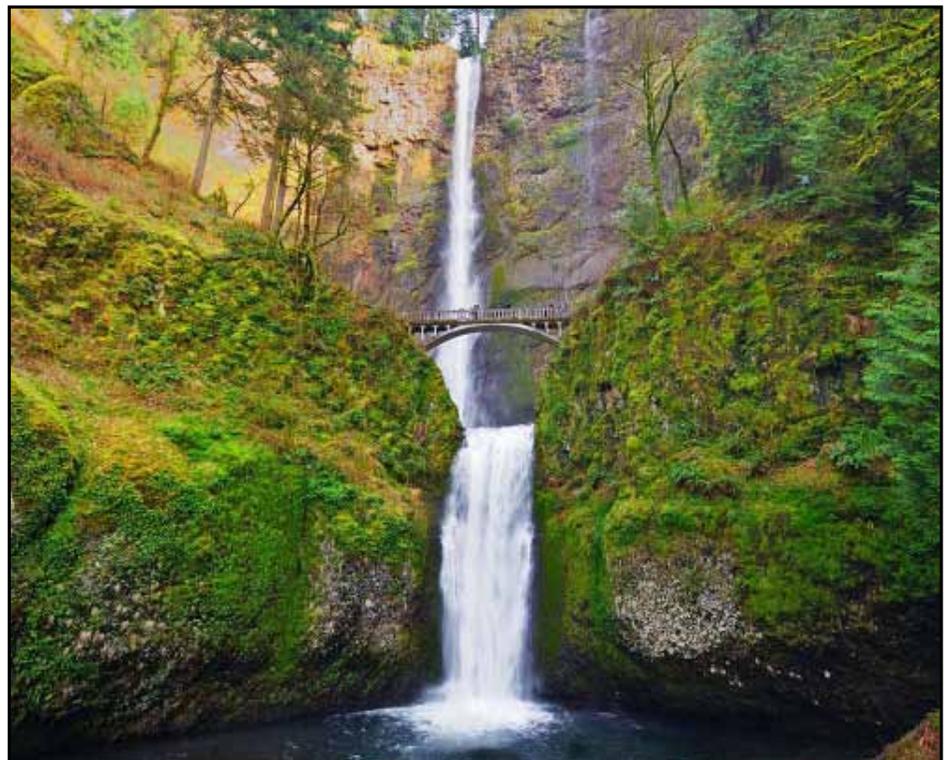
The first wayside attraction on this descent is not a waterfall though. It's the famous Vista House (above) and I'm pretty sure most of you are going to want to park your bikes and give it at least a brief look. It comes up less than half a mile below the summit, so you can glide through that first bit of downhill as a lazy

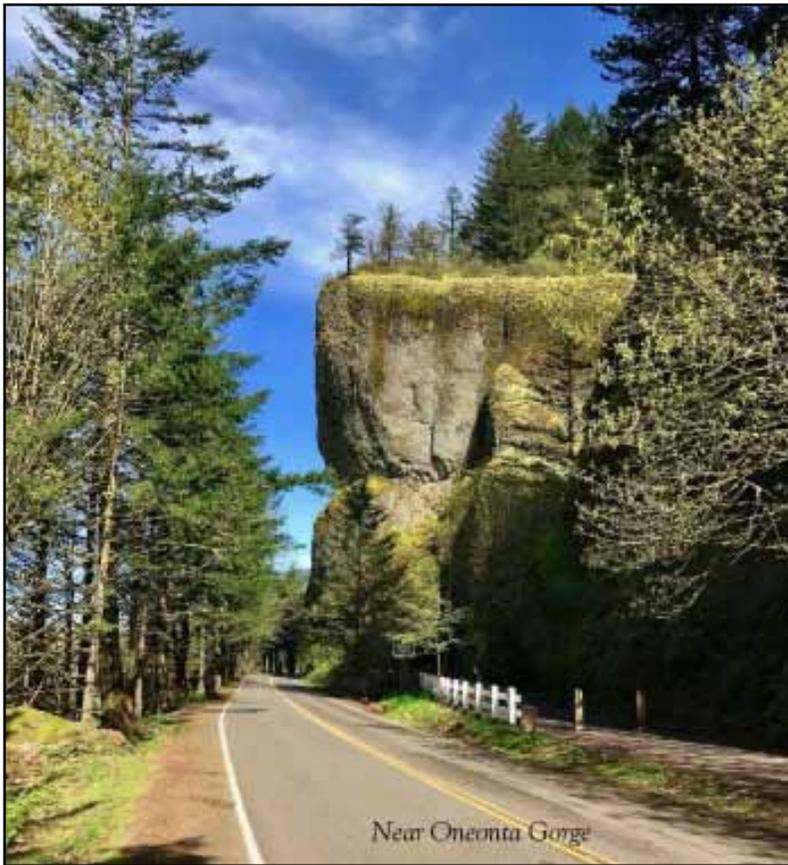
cruise, then hit the brakes and do the off-the-bike thing for a few minutes.

This little art deco pavilion has been here as long as the road has. It was here that the highway was officially opened in 1916, with Woodrow Wilson pushing a button in Washington that unfurled a flag on the pole here. Like much of the highway, it had fallen on hard times in the waning years of the 20th century, but dedicated volunteers and skilled workers have restored it to its original glory. It now looks as it must have on that bright day of promise in 1916.

Once the Vista House has been thoroughly explored, we can resume that slinky downhill. The descent ends around mile 14 and is followed by a couple of hefty rollers and then an approximately level section. Latourell Falls comes up right near the bottom of the descent. Shepperd's Dell—another waterfall—and Bridal Veil Falls go whizzing by during what I can imagine would be the speedy roll-out after the descent has petered out. The approximately level run continues until about mile 26, where we run out of HCRH for a while and have to resort to some sections of bike path where the old road got rubbed out by I-84. More about the trails later.

There is one waterfall that should be mentioned here, in the main copy block, as well as in the waterfall glossary. That is Multnomah Falls (below), and it comes up around mile 19. It's the granddaddy of all the waterfalls in this region. It's the highest waterfall in the state and a truly majestic sight. That's a good news, bad news deal: it is really impressive but it is also the strongest tourist magnet in the whole gorge. The place is constantly teeming with day trippers. In addition to the falls there is also the grand old lodge, just off the road. Taken all together, it adds up to a





madhouse of activity. For sure, you should at least stop for a few minutes to take it all in, but I don't recommend trying to hike up to the bridge or do much else besides look it over and check it off your bucket list: been there, done that.

That brings up the general topic of tourists. This western end of the Gorge, with most of the big waterfalls—especially this one and its handsome old lodge—is a mecca for tourists. They have the potential to muck up our biking lives a bit. There are a few factors in our favor though. First off, we'll be here on a Tuesday. Second, we should be through the busiest of the tourist spots before midday...that is, before most folks have rolled their land yachts out of the garage and hit the road. Third, some fairly significant percentage of all the tourists will not choose to drive on the old, narrow, twisty road. They'll make a bee-line to Multnomah Falls on I-84. None of these factors is a slam dunk in our favor, but collectively they may tilt the odds our way a bit. For whatever it's worth, on our previous tour through here, starting from The Dalles and heading west, we didn't hit this potentially busy section until mid-afternoon, and aside from the expected crowds at Multnomah Falls, I don't think we were really bothered by too much traffic.

One place we won't be bothered by tourist traffic is along the various sections of the Historic Columbia River State Trail. In general, paved trails exist in places where the old road was destroyed by the interstate. The ultimate goal is to have either the old road or paved trails connecting all the way from a beginning in Troutdale to the end in the city of The Dalles (midway through tomorrow's stage). Once completed, it will be an almost 80-mile linear park, a wonderful place to visit and to ride. Several new sections have been added in recent years. One, including the McCord Creek

Bridge (below) opened in 2013. The fact that they made that new bridge look like something from the original period of construction tells you a lot about the care and skill going into every aspect of this huge project, not to mention the willingness to spend whatever it takes to do the job right.

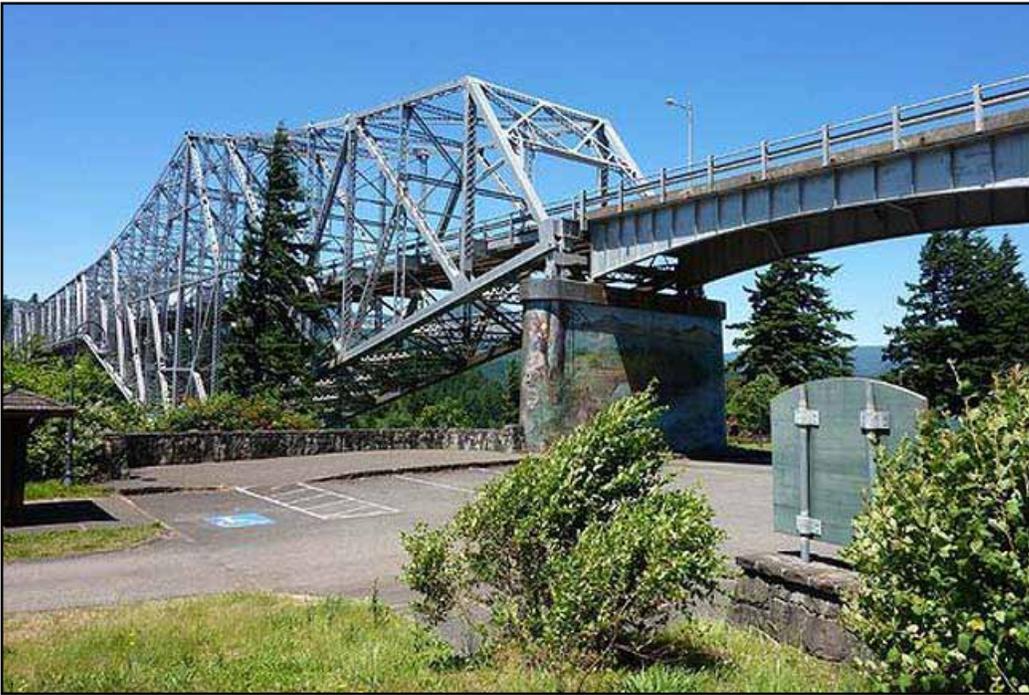
The actual road—the one open to cars—ends at mile 25.5. The first section of trail begins there, running along next to I-84 and occasionally wandering off into the woods, up and down over some medium-size rollers. That section of trail takes us all the way to the town of Cascade Locks, just before mile 33...seven heavenly miles of car-free riding.

The trail intersects assorted junctions and spur roads along the way. Some of those junctions may cause us to pause and puzzle out where to get to the next leg of the trail. But it's usually well marked. At mile 29, the trail passes through a junction where a road crosses under I-84 and funnels down into the huge complex around Bonneville Dam. This stage offers an alternate route that adds in three optional diversions, all of them collectively plumping the miles from 60 to 67. Turning off and exploring the dam and its nearby fish hatchery is the first of the three optional excursions.

Before European settlers brought their busy industry to the Pacific Northwest, the flow of the Columbia River was broken up by many large and turbulent rapids...cascades. These are what inspired early explorer and naturalist David Douglas—he of the Douglas fir—to name the entire mountain range The Cascades. Many efforts were made to tame the river

in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but things didn't get serious until Bonneville Dam was constructed as one of the most massive projects pushed along by Roosevelt's New Deal, making work for many during the Great Depression. The first and largest phase of the project was completed in 1937. The dam was the largest of its kind at the time and its ship lock was the highest single-lift lock in the country—in the world?—at that time as well. Aside from making the river navigable further upstream, the dam and its spillways and turbines generate a huge amount of electricity. There is also a vast fish hatchery associated with the dam, plus fish ladders for salmon and steelhead and lamprey.





might consider a lunch break at Thunder Island Brewing, just off our route on the way through town (shown on the Cascade Locks detail map). I've never tried their beer so can't offer a review on that front, but they have seating right smack on the riverbank, just upstream from the big bridge. You could hardly dream up a prettier spot for lunch. This could add a good chunk of time to your day—same as hiking to waterfalls—but that's okay. Who's in a hurry?

It takes a little over a mile to roll through the commercial and suburban clutter of Cascade Locks and then we're out into the pretty countryside again. We've been on the river side of I-84 for a while but now we cross under the interstate and continue east on the inland side. We're on a pleasant but not spectacular frontage road next to the

There are all sorts of fascinating things to see around this sprawling compound. If you're interested, do your own browsing on the 'net and figure out if a stop here will fit into your day. Our alternate route plots out one path through the huge compound but it is by no means the only way to access and explore this site.

Now back to the basic route, which in this case means back to the State Trail (bottom photo). What can we say about this trail? It's wonderful. That much is a given. It goes through all sorts of changes and twists and wiggles as it winds its way through the forest. It crosses under I-84 and over it as well, when the eastbound freeway lanes go through a tunnel. It is seldom level for long: three or four jumbo "rollers" hump up and down to the tune of 100' or 200' each. There is even an old stairway where we have to get off our bikes and walk to a lower level (middle photo). Sometimes the river is on view and sometimes we're lost in the dappled shade of the woods. There are more waterfalls along these miles too, ones only accessible to cyclists or hikers, except in some cases where the trail crosses car-accessible trailheads.



One of those intersections is with the road that leads to the Eagle Creek trailhead. Of all the creeks that flow into the Columbia, Eagle Creek is the most famous because it is home to at least a dozen spectacular waterfalls stretching up into the backcountry. This trailhead, which offers restrooms, comes up around mile 30. It will be the site of our rest stop. Read the section on Punchbowl Falls in the Waterfall Glossary to learn why we're making this our rest stop site.

This peaceful, no-cars interlude ends when we hit the trailhead in the town of Cascade Locks, just under the imposing Bridge of the Gods (above) at mile 33.4.

The second of our optional add-ons—after Bonneville Dam—is in Cascade Locks. You





on Herman Creek Road (aka Wyeth Road or Wyeth Bench Road). This climb is the little spike sticking up in the middle of the elevation profile. It gains 500' in a little over a mile with pitches that exceed 10%. There is some nice payback for that work: a descent off the far side of a mile and a half that is both fun and pretty (above).

When Herman Creek Road ends around mile 40, we come to the next and newest section of HCRH State Trail. On our tour in 2007, we had to ride all the way from Hood River to this point on the shoulder of the interstate...over 11 miles. It wasn't terrible but it wasn't all that great either. Sometimes the shoulder was wide enough and sometimes not so much, and an ill-advised rumble strip didn't improve things. But that was the only option for thousands of cyclists down the years: I-84 or nothing.

Since our previous tour, good people have been working hard to complete the trail that would allow riders to do the run to Hood River without venturing onto the interstate. While doing research for this preview, I latched onto the "State Trail Plan," the master planning document prepared in 2010 for this section of trail. It's a gold mine of interesting information. They break the design and construction for the 11+ miles into eight distinct sectors, each with its own challenges and its own budget.

Collectively, the whole project was estimated to cost 52 million dollars or a bit less than five million per mile. That is somewhat skewed by the whopping 14.4 million allocated for just the Mitchell Point Tunnel section of less than one mile. (Google "Mitchell Point Tunnel" and you will get dozens of images of the amazing original tunnel: one of those crazy balcony-gallery roads we see in Provence and the Alps. There is also a good 2015 YouTube video about the work on the new tunnel.) However you parse it out, that is big money and represents a huge commitment from all the stakeholders... Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Parks and Rec, Hood River County, federal involvement, etc. From having been a neglected and sometimes abused old road in the latter half of the 20th century, this venerable highway and its trails have become almost a holy grail for all involved.

What really jumped out at me in reading the report is the total commitment to getting it right...to replicating, as much as possible, the look and feel of the original road. In their introduction, the authors praise the original engineer, Sam Lancaster, for the great job he did. As they moved through the planning process, they would often ask themselves: "What would Lancaster do?" Their planning and design work involves an element of archeology as well because they have unearthed many half-buried sections of the old road and those lovely stone walls, and almost always have found ways to incorporate these relics into the new trail.

All of the trail is done now except for the Mitchell Point Tunnel section, the most expensive and most complex part of the project. They weren't even scheduled to begin that bit until Spring of 2020. So that means we will still have one section to do along the shoulder of I-84. But at least it will be a much shorter section than what we did on our prior tour. And in place of those freeway miles we will now get to discover how faithful the contemporary planners and engineers and contractors have stayed to Sam Lancaster's original vision.

In early August of 2019, after our Northwest Oregon Tour, I made a scouting run around this course, including riding along the newest section of trail. I didn't realize just how new that section was until I got there: they had just had its grand opening ceremony a couple of hours before I arrived. As part of the festivities they had a promenade of a couple of dozen classic cars from the era when the highway was first opened. They putt-putted along this newest 6-mile section, out to the end and back (below), lending some color and historical context to the moment. As for the question of how close the new crews have stayed to Sam Lancaster's original vision, this photo says it all. All that fancy masonry? It may look like something from 1919 but it was just completed in 2019. This is what spending five million dollars a mile on a bike





Our camp at the Hood River County Fairgrounds is a few miles outside of town, uphill above the little river that gives the town its name. Our basic route for getting there bypasses the center of town on some rural-residential side roads. It takes about eight miles to ride from the point where we leave the interstate to the finish. The roads are all a pleasant blend of that landscape we know well by now: rural-residential, woods, and—this may be new for us—many orchards. Perhaps the most notable element in these last miles is the topography: we have some climbing to do as we head away from the big river and up into the nearby hills. Never brutal but little chain rings will be called for. It's mostly uphill between miles 52 and 56...some of it steeper, some not so much. After those mostly uphill miles, a descent of about two miles takes us down to a bridge crossing the Hood River, and then we head uphill again on the Odell Highway for about two miles, finally rolling out on the flats just before the fairgrounds.

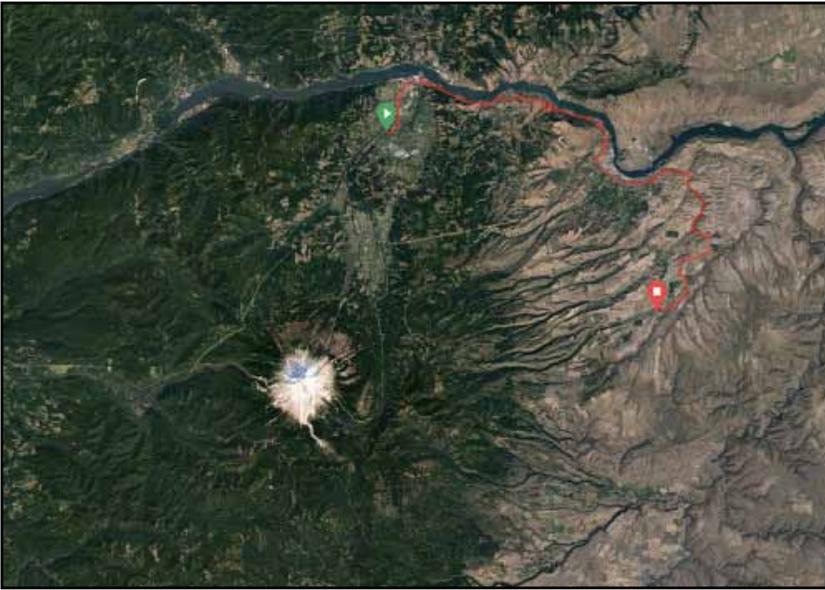
trail looks like. Other photos of the trail in the gallery at the back and above.

By trail or side road or interstate, we eventually fetch up in the town of Hood River, approximately but not quite our destination today. This is a charming and attractive town (bottom photo). The land rises abruptly from the river, so that the streets and structures scramble steeply up and up, rather like a tiny, wooded slice of San Francisco. (Nearly every home has a splendid view of the river, at least in the older part of town.) The place is crammed with lovely Victorian houses and old-town buildings which have been nicely restored. Add in the fact that it's only an hour's drive from Portland, that hotbed of trendy new urbanism, and that the town is surrounded on all sides by opportunities for all sorts of outdoor pursuits, from cycling to skiing to wind-surfing. It all adds up, and back in the '80s and '90s, folks looking for the next new thing were all over it. What had been for generations a rather sleepy town built around its agricultural enterprise—mostly apple and cherry orchards—has been reinvented as one of the cooler places to live in the Northwest. Chic shops and edgy restaurants; brew pubs and bistros; surf shops and bike stores...it's all happening in Hood River.

That said, we are actually giving the chic, trendy downtown a miss today. It may be a nice place to live and a hot spot for shopping and dining, but it isn't all that great for cycling or at least for a cycle-touring route. Aside from sometimes being wickedly hilly, it's a complicated maze of busy city streets. So, as we often do with towns, we're dodging around it. However, the third of our three optional diversions today, after Bonneville Dam and Thunder Island Brewing, is an alternate route that does go through downtown, right past the huge world headquarters of Full Sail Brewing and a couple of other breweries and the standard brewpubs that go with them. If you haven't been to the town before and have a hankering to explore it, today's option #3 will get you there. There is a big detail inset for Hood River on the map, including up-close mapping for the end of Stage 3, the start of Stage 4, and the downtown detour.

The Hood River County Fairgrounds (middle photo) is not a regular campground, but as is the case with most fairgrounds, they provide for camping that is associated with "events" being held on the premises: rodeos and fairs and so forth. We appealed to them and made the case that our bike tour constituted an event...and they agreed. There was no compelling reason why they should but they did, and hooray for that! In addition to providing us with a big lawn for tents, they offer our favorite amenity: showers.





Stage 4: Hood River to Dufur

59 miles, 4000' up, 3450' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29324370>

Before we set out on our next stage, heading east, let's talk a little

about the region's climate...its weather. Check out the satellite view above, including today's route. The green dot is Hood River, north and just slightly to the east of the snow cap of Mount Hood, pretty much along the north-south line of the Cascade Mountain Range. Notice the dramatic change in vegetation from the west side of the Cascades to the east side—from green to brown—and consider these numbers: Cascade Locks, midway through yesterday's stage, records over 77 inches of rainfall a year; Hood River, just east of the Cascades rain fence, only 31; The Dalles, further east and midway through today's stage, a rather arid 14 inches. Yesterday's miles were notable for their green and moist environment. That will change today. For the first few miles we'll still be seeing trees and shade and even some babbling brooks. But as we move east, the vegetation (and the water that sustains it) eventually fade away or at least become more sparse. Once we get past the Cascades we're in Central Oregon, and there are some sections not far from here that are dry enough to warrant the name desert. Maybe not right here, next to the big, wet river, but everything still feels and looks a bit parched.

That's our meteorology lesson for today. Let's hit the road.

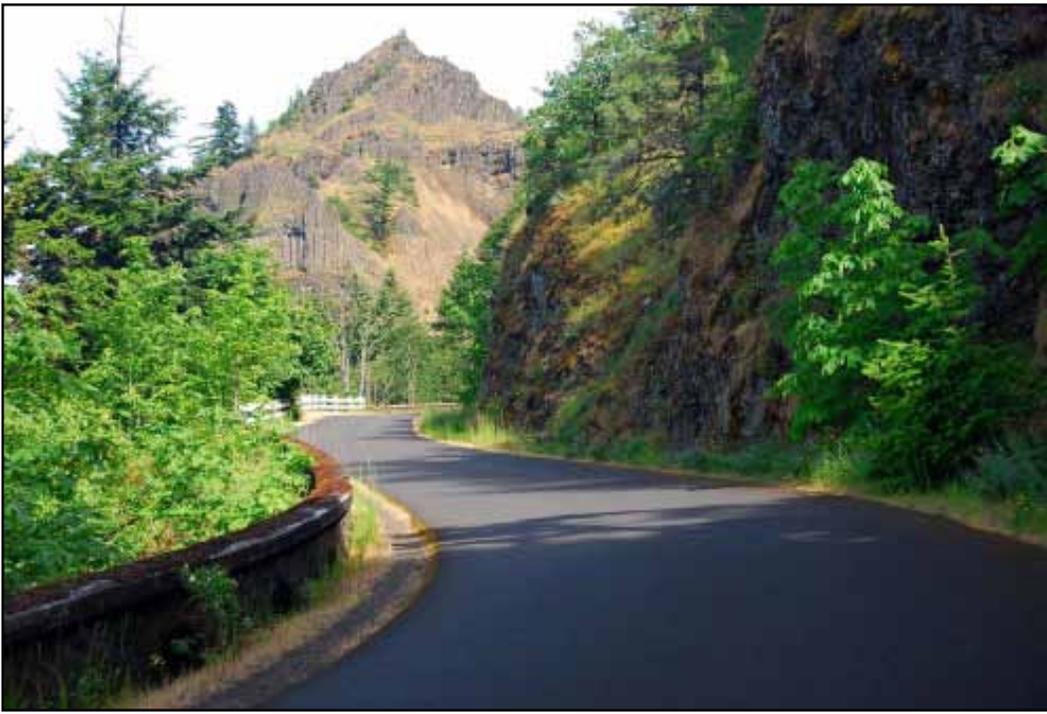
One of the best things about staying at the fair-grounds is what it does for our routes. First of all, it splits the stages up fairly evenly: 60 miles yesterday and 59 today. But more importantly, being up here above the town of Hood River means not having to plow through the heart of downtown to get out onto today's stage...back to the bal-

ance of the Historic Columbia River Highway. Instead, we head east at the start and work our way through the region's celebrated apple orchards, which are as thick on the ground here as vineyards are in Sonoma County. We may have signed up for this tour for the famous historic highway but these early miles through the orchards are a pleasant reminder that there are more nice miles to be had on this tour than just that one legendary road. These Hood River Valley lanes are as sweet and crisp as an apple right off the tree.

It doesn't take long before we're rolling along on pretty little roads like Fir Mountain (middle photo) and Wells Drive (bottom photo). The former is approximately level but the latter presents us with a little kicker of a climb, with the summit right about where that photo was taken. Then we're treated to a snappy descent that peters out just about the time we hit Eastside Road. If you want to dodge around the climb on Wells Drive, there is a handy little shortcut that bypasses it. But Wells is really a nice road so we hope you won't skip it.

The up-close scenery is lovely here—the orchards and meadows—but above and beyond that, literally, are magnificent views of 11,217' Mt Hood to the southwest and 12,280' Mt Adams to the north, across the river in Washington.





Eastside Road is the key to making this Hood River bypass work. If it weren't here, we'd be down in town. As its name implies, it runs north above the east side of the Hood River.

Eastside Road (and Highline Road after it) head downstream and downhill (more or less) for five miles to a junction with the Historic Highway just before mile 10. We turn right, east, on the highway and head uphill briefly before fetching up at a vista point and a gate (and restrooms). This is the trailhead for the next section of the HCRH State Trail. It's called a trail because it's for bikers and hikers only for the next five miles, but it's actually as

wide as the old highway. In fact, it *is* the old highway. I'm guessing the only reason it's a no-car zone is because of the narrow tunnels midway along this stretch...the Mosier Twin Tunnels (photo in the gallery at the back).

This is another wonderful bike road (both photos). The fact that it's car-free is a bonus, but even if it were open to cars it would still be a dream road. It's well paved, the up-close scenery is delightful, and the vistas out across the big river are breathtaking. The first three-plus miles roll across the hillside in a mildly up-and-down traverse. Then the next two-plus miles tilt downhill, dropping about 400', scooting around the gate at the eastern end of the closed section, and finally rolling out near the village of Mosier. Somewhere in the middle of

all that are the tunnels.

Mosier comes up at around mile 15. It straggles along the road for about half a mile, offering a few services—kind of cute and trendy—for the cycle-tourists on the trail. A rustic old bridge over Mosier Creek at the east end of town serves as a reminder that although we are now on a public road again, sharing it with cars, it is still the beautiful Historic Columbia River Highway, with all its decorative touches. It might not be quite as dreamlike and perfect as the no-cars section but it is still delightful.





It is also uphill at this point, coming out of Mosier: a little over 500' up over 3.5 miles, then a mile of flat up on the butte and finally two half-mile climbs with a dip in between. All of that medium-hard effort brings us to Rowena Crest, a very special vista point. We have to turn off the highway and ride into the vista point to take it all in. This is not optional. It's part of the basic route. Please don't even think of zipping past this spot without stopping. If the awe-inspiring panorama at the Portland Women's Forum overlook near the start of yesterday's stage was the first really big thing on this grand old highway, Rowena Crest might be the last big thing. We'll put a photo of the Rowena Crest panorama in the gallery at the back.

While this vista point might be the last tourist stopping spot on the highway, it is not the last of the biking fun. Take a look at the photo above: those are the Rowena Curves. They're a small portion of the tangled downhill that begins when we leave the vista point. It's nearly 600' down in a little over two miles and almost all of it wiggles and slithers around like what you see here. All it needs is a peloton of racers snaking around the corners

to look like one of those classic Graham Watson photos from a Tour de France. On this day, we'll be those cyclists.

When this delicious little downhill ends, down near the river again (below), we still have about five more miles of HCRH to do, and they're all nice miles, approximately level, rolling along toward the city of The Dalles, which is where the Historic Highway finally ends and becomes simply Hwy 30.





pretty spot, off the highway, with nice things to see and explore nearby, and at almost exactly halfway through the stage, it makes a perfect spot for our sag and rest stop before doing the trail miles.

From the parking area, we head down the slope around two switchbacks and into the Crates Point Wildlife Area. This is a nice trail but fairly typical of its kind: it's not overly wide and has many turns and road furniture scaled more for the pace of walkers than faster cyclists (note the lethal bollards in the trail by the bridge, middle photo). It is not the kind of wide, straight trail made for hammering. After meandering through a more or less wild landscape we hit a section where the trail borders the river near the Port of The Dalles industrial district..a visual mix: factories and offices on one side and the

broad sweep of river on the other (bottom photo)



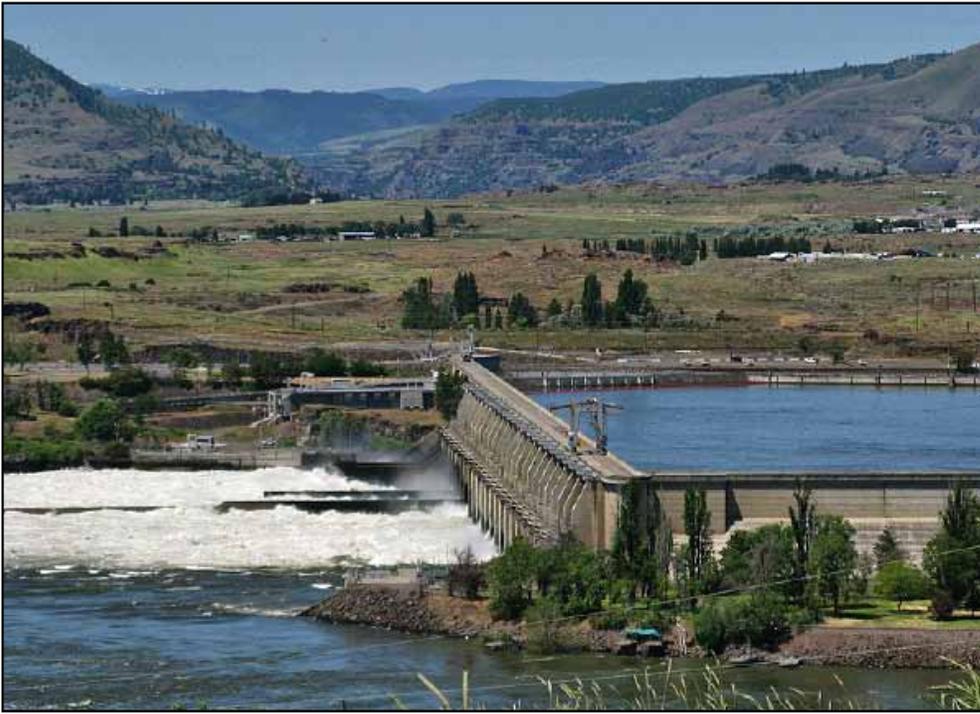
Just before mile 33, the trail tees into public roads, with the trail represented by a wide shoulder on the left side of the road. The trail—even this “shoulder” section—is paved better than the adjacent roads, so stay on the trail and keep an eye out for the trail markers stenciled on the pavement. Just before mile 35, the road next to the trail, bends inland, under I-84, away from the river and into the bustle of downtown. But we’re not going there; we get to ride another nice section of trail, straight ahead along the river. It pops out at its eastern end in a parking lot above a marina. Out the far side of the parking lot, we turn left on a long overpass crossing both I-84 and a large railroad switching yard.

We haven’t mentioned the railroad so far. On our maps, between the fat line for our route and the fat line for I-84, there simply isn’t room to include another line for the Union Pacific tracks along the river. But the line is here, all the way up the gorge, and a very busy line it is.

The Dalles stretches for several rather messy miles along our path ahead. It’s not as quaint and charming (nor as trendy) as Hood River but it is making a concerted effort to be a place tourists want to visit, including cycle-tourists. One of their best efforts, at least with respect to cycling, is the fairly recent—and ongoing—construction of the Riverfront Trail, which runs, in one form or another, almost all the way through or around the town, usually living up to its name by bumping along right next to the big river (both lower photos). We hope our detail inset for the town does an adequate job of showing how to navigate this trail. It looks pretty complicated on the map but is probably easier to figure out when you’re actually rolling along it.

We get onto the trail by turning left off the highway at about mile 29, following the sign to the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center (top photo). This is an impressive and relatively new natural and cultural history museum up on a bluff overlooking the river. This is





Huge freight trains rumble along here almost constantly, day and night, and over on the Washington side as well.

When that long overpass ends, we tee into 2nd Street and turn left. This is also Hwy 30 and is a rather busy highway, although it has decent shoulders. We're on it for about a mile and a half and then bear slightly left onto State Road before passing under Hwy 197. Most of the traffic goes away at that point and the road starts to feel more rural and quiet. From here on, we've pretty much put The Dalles behind us.

As we roll along this now mostly country road, we can look to the left and see the huge complex spanning the river that is The Dalles Dam (above). This is another of the many dams on the Columbia. It's upstream from Bonneville Dam and downstream from John Day Dam. I read somewhere there are or have been no fewer than 192 dams on the Columbia River drainage. As noted yesterday in discussing Bonneville Dam, the Columbia used to be broken up by many wild cascades and rapids. Now, with the slackwater impoundment for one dam backing up all the way to the next dam upstream, the mighty river is really just a series of long lakes.

Construction began on the Dalles Dam in 1952 and was completed in 1957. The water behind the dam flooded an immense cascade of whitewater known as Celilo Falls (right). This vast tract of wild water was a gauntlet that spawning salmon had to negotiate, and that salmon run was the life's blood of the Cascade and Chinook tribes for thousands of years. In fact, such a bountiful,

reliable harvest of fish made this spot a very stable community and it is thought that this may be the longest continuously occupied village in America. Carbon dating of midden heaps indicates people have lived here steadily for at least 10,000 years, and possibly 2000 more than that.

It was the same at every cascade, all the way upstream and downstream through the gorge: villages where the salmon was the mainstay of the economy, and a very good, durable economy at that. What wasn't eaten fresh was smoked, and that commodity was traded with tribes from elsewhere around the northwest.

The salmon would rest in vast, dense schools in the eddies and pools below the falls, gathering strength for the next set of rapids. A fisherman could pretty much throw in his spear without aiming and pull out a 20-pound fish. One man in a day could catch a huge number of salmon. And yet their numbers were never

seriously depleted. Think about that: for over 10,000 years, the tribes all along the Columbia made it their main occupation to catch salmon and yet somehow the salmon population remained stable and the harvest sustainable. But in just over 100 years, the European "immigrants"—with their industrial fish factories, dams, and logging—managed to drive the salmon to the brink of extinction. The white men called the natives lazy because, after catching enough fish for the day, they would take the rest of the day off to attend to village life...to family and arts and crafts. Makes you wonder which was the more advanced society.

My parents brought me here to see Celilo Falls before the dam





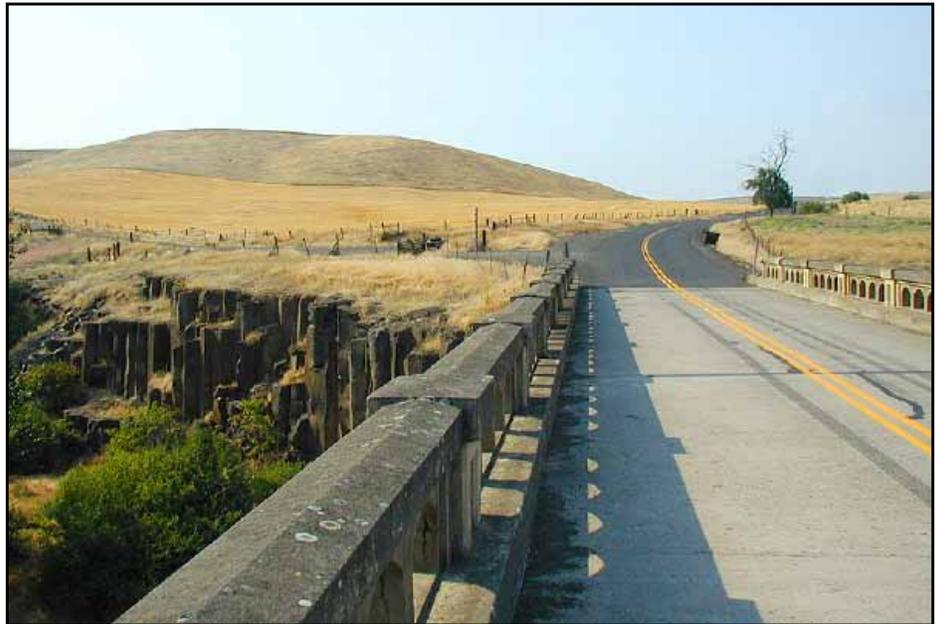
with skipping this fairly hilly detour by simply staying on Hwy 197 all the way to Dufur.

Emerson Loop Road and Ward Road loop back around to Hwy 197 and we have to ride on it briefly before diving off onto another smaller, more bike-friendly road: Boyd Loop Road or Boyd Market Road (middle photo).

Dufur is a tiny town in the middle of empty, rolling fields of wheat. I found a postcard for the place with this cheerful slogan: “What can we Dufur you?” What they can do is provide us with a spot in their nice little campground: Friends of Dufur Park. (It’s run by the town.) It may be little but it has showers and shady lawns and a good kitchen gazebo (bottom photo)...and even a large swimming pool. If it’s hot, which is likely, that might look pretty good at the end of the day.

was completed; to see the men of the tribe balancing precariously over the raging waters on flimsy wooden catwalks, hauling in the fish. All that is gone now. The falls no longer fall, the riverside tribal villages are underwater and their people have been relocated to modern government-built subdivisions. As for the salmon, they’re not quite gone yet, but it will take a lot more work and a lot less greed to bring them back.

Well. That’s going to do it for my disquisitions on the Columbia River. We’re outta here, heading inland and mildly uphill. State Road morphs seamlessly into Fifteen Mile Road. Then, a couple of miles later, Fifteen Mile Road turns left and we continue straight ahead onto Eight Mile Road (above). We will be on this pleasant byway for several miles, always working slightly uphill. For a good chunk of this run it snuggles along next to Eight Mile Creek, which means there are plants and shrubs and even trees nearby. Eventually it climbs away from the creek and rolls out amidst the wide open wheat fields that dominate the landscape near our destination town of Dufur.



If we stayed on Eight Mile Road to its end, we would tee into Hwy 197, the somewhat busier main highway coming up from The Dalles. But I’m proposing a slightly longer, more roundabout way to arrive at the town. I’m throwing in a hilly detour on Emerson Loop Road and Ward Road. Note: we encounter two possible left turns onto Emerson Loop Road. The first is around mile 42. We want the second one at mile 47. This extra loop ups the total mileage from 57 to 59. There are more little roads out there and it is possible to pad the miles even more with other loops. But I thought this was a good compromise: a little extra but not too much. However, it could be quite hot at the end of this stage and if you’re dragging a little, there is nothing at all wrong





might flirt with 7% but those are balanced out with 2% and 3% sections to arrive at the 4% standard. There are even some flats and slightly downhill bits mixed in along the way, affording occasional breaks from the steady diet of uphill. You've heard this before in these preview books: although it looks daunting on paper it's actually *Not That Bad!* And as the photo below documents, this route has been done by all the troops on Cycle Oregon, which means lots of people ranging in fitness from moderate to advanced. If those moderate riders can do it, so can we!

Assuming each of us has enough baseline fitness to be doing this tour comfortably, the biggest challenge with this big climb might be more mental than physical. Once we leave Dufur Valley, with its open spaces and rolling terrain, the scenery passing in review becomes rather monotonous: fir forest on both sides

Stage 5: Dufur to Clackamas Lake

59 miles, 6200' up, 4200' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/31923300>

It's fortunate today's route slip is short and doesn't take up much room. We need most of the space on that page for the big bruiser of an elevation profile. Moly moly...look at that thing! After four days of many little climbs and descents—those “nibbled to death by ducks” pitches—we now finally arrive in the real mountains. Our clever strategy for shortening the old Northern Oregon Tour by cutting off the bottom third of the loop comes with a price: our short cut scrambles up and over the shoulder of Mt Hood. (For the record, there is no easy pass through the Cascades. On the original Northern Oregon Tour we went over 4800' Santiam Pass and on the Central Oregon Tour over 5325' McKenzie Pass. Either one of those passes is higher and harder than what we're doing today.)

Once we leave Dufur, our only, lonely road for the longest time—over 20 miles—is Dufur Valley Road. It may start out in Dufur Valley (above) but it doesn't stay there for long. At about mile 7, it starts to tilt uphill and it keeps doing that for the next 13 miles, accumulating about 3000' along the way. That's an average of 4% and the average is a pretty good take on what this big boy is going to give us. There are a few spots that

of the road, on and on and on. Not all that many curves in the road either...just a long, steady grade through a vast, remote wilderness. We may deplore Ronald Reagan's old line, “If you've seen one redwood tree, you've seen them all!” But by the time we get done with this endless corridor of forest, we might be forgiven for thinking along the same lines about doug firs.

On the bright side, it should be very quiet. There is a whole lot of nothing out here. Some sprawling ranches down in the valley—as well as some big pot farms—and then the wilderness of the Mount Hood National Forest. No homes, no farms, no summer





three-mile descent follows and then there is a little climb to 4157' Barlow Pass... and then something a bit different. After all the miles on the boring shoulder of the highway, we get almost three miles, mostly downhill, on little Barlow Road. I'm guessing this is a remnant of an older road, left over when the modern highways were built. History: the Barlow Trail was one of the first wagon trails through the Cascades. The name pops up all over this region. Could this be a bit of the actual wagon road? It's a classic back road with little in the way of modern improvements. A nice break from the highway.

Right after turning back onto Hwy 35 from Barlow Road, we hit the junction with Hwy 26. Remember being on it on Stage 2? Here it is again, heading for Bend. The map has a good detail of how to get through the junction, an almost freeway-worthy cloverleaf. It's called Hwy 26 E but is heading almost due south at this point.

vacation cabins or ski cabins. No stores. No service stations. No billboards. No street signs. No nothing. It is out there. Things are quiet on the navigation front as well: there are only six different roads all day and two of those changes are in name only, with no real junctions.

The summit comes up around mile 20. I don't know if it has an official name. I called it Bottle Prairie summit because the area around the high point is called Bottle Prairie. Don't repeat that name to a local and expect them to know what you're talking about. And for that matter, I don't see any prairie up there either. Just trees, trees, and more trees.

Things will get a bit more exciting off the far side of this pass. Most of the next seven miles are downhill, except for a single half-mile climb. The grade is in the 2% to 6% range. Not all that steep but better than climbing! And while the road on the climb was approximately straight approximately forever, this descent is twisted up into a bunch of wiggly-worm curves...good fun.

When that downhill ends, it does so at a junction with Hwy 35 (above), a main highway coming up from Hood River. (We crossed it early on Stage 4.) That puts an end to the quiet, remote, backcountry riding for a few miles. Now we're on the shoulder of this potentially busier highway. I don't think the traffic will be all that bad...it just looks like a main highway and in particular a highway through snow country: wide lanes and wide shoulders, with lots of room off the sides for the snow plows to push the snow out of the way.

Turning onto the main highway means getting back into our climbing groove. We're heading uphill for about seven miles, up to 4665' Bennett Pass (20' higher than our last summit). This grade is a little under 4% and is pretty constant, aside from one flat spot. Not hard but perhaps a bit tedious. A flying

We'll be on it for nine miles, including yet another pass, this one with a shorter climb to a lower summit.

Finally, at exactly mile 50, we bail off the highway and return to little roads through the forest primeval. This is National Forest Service Road 42, also called Oregon Skyline Road. Follow the sign to Timothy Lake when turning off Hwy 26. After crossing 3980' Blue Box Pass on Hwy 26, the final nine miles of the stage are either mildly downhill or lumping along over modest rollers, almost always on excellent pavement. At mile 58.3 we arrive at a fork in the road. Timothy Lake is down the right fork but we bear left, staying on Road 42, and in another quarter-mile, left again toward Clackamas Lake Campground. This is our destination: a semi-primitive USFS camp on Clackamas Lake (below). It has running water but no showers and only vault toilets. This is deep wilderness: we're lucky to find any campgrounds at all.



Stage 6: Clackamas Lake to Detroit Lake

52 miles, 3100' up, 4800' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30770083>

In contrast to some of the more complex routes we've had on other stages, this one is about as simple as it can be. After we leave camp and turn onto our first main road, I think there is only one stop sign and one real junction for the next 48 miles, almost to the end of the stage. The scenery is uncomplicated too, with even less variety than yesterday: trees, trees, and then more trees. In the write-up on yesterday's stage, I did some mild grouching about the endless corridors of trees...“if you've seen one douglas fir, you've seen them all”...but really, if this is the worst place you ever have to ride then you've died and gone to bike heaven. And as was the case yesterday, it's probably going to be light on traffic except for a couple of miles late in the day.

In broad outline, the topography of the stage is simple as well: two climbs and two descents. There will be a sampler pack of rollers and false flats scattered throughout the stage—ups and downs—but the two modestly challenging climbs and the longer descents that follow them make up the bulk of the stage.

We leave our camp and turn left, south, on US Forest Service Road 42, also known as Oregon Skyline Road. That's our route for the next 10+ miles. Actually, it's going to seem as if we're on the same remote Forest Service road for over 20 miles but the numerical designation changes out there in the middle of nowhere (to USFS Road 200).

The road tilts uphill right from the start, if only as a false flat. But just shy of mile 3 we encounter a real climb: 650' up in two miles (6%). That represents the first of our two “big” climbs today. Over the unmarked summit at mile 5, we get about seven miles of mixed up stuff: some little climbs and some bigger descents and some flats. Nothing too extreme.

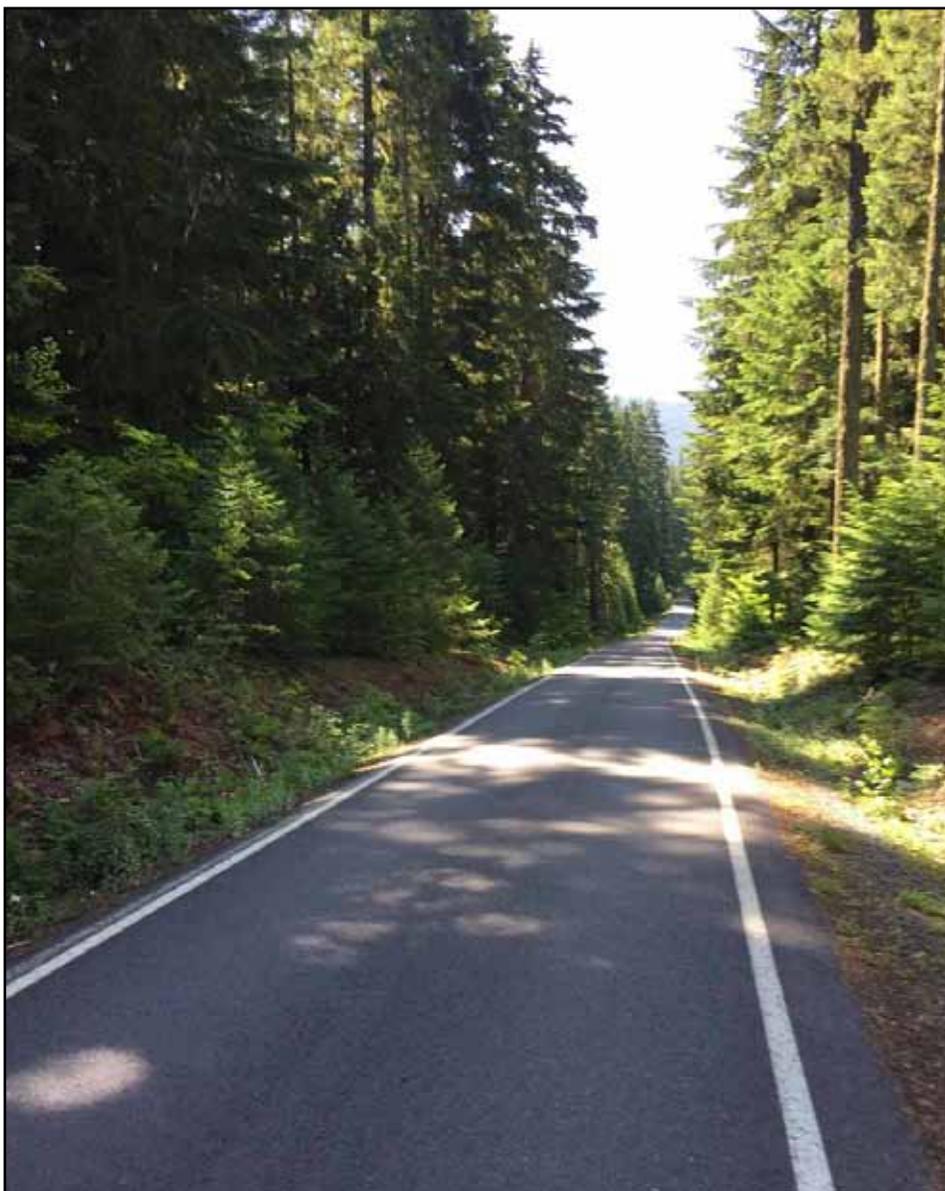
There is an interesting change around mile 10. Up to that point our road has been a more-or-less conventional two-lane highway, with standard lanes and stripes down the middle. Now the road narrows considerably, down to just a hair over one lane wide. The center stripes go away and instead there are small turnouts every so often where cars that meet can get past one another. The photo at right shows a typical section of this road. But it's deceptive. Looks like it might be a fat lane and a half or more, right? It's not. Check out another photo of the same road in the gallery at the back with cyclists on it (page 47). They put the size of the road in scale. It really is a skinny ribbon. This could be tricky for us because most of this narrow section is downhill for us in the nicest sort of way: smooth pavement and slinky bends and almost no traffic. But “almost” no traffic is not NO traffic. (When we drove it on our scouting trip we encountered two cars in 12 miles.)

We'll be heading downhill on a Friday while all the weekenders are heading uphill toward the lakes. If you have a straightaway, as in this photo, fine...let 'er rip. But just about the time you start feeling comfortable taking your half out of the middle in the blind corners, that's when you're going to end up nose to nose with an RV or a big truck pulling a boat. We are going to have to rein in our wildest downhill craziness and leave a little margin for error on this one.

Another thing to watch out for... When this narrow but otherwise dandy descent finally peters out just beyond mile 17, it does so over a little wooden bridge with rough planks running the same way our skinny bike tires are running. Most of the joints between the timbers are tight enough not to grab a wheel but here and there the gaps widen. Even with downhill speed held in check a little bit, we could still hit this plank bridge going fast enough to cause all kinds of mayhem if a wheel gets caught.

There is an itty bitty uphill after that bridge, then another little downhill, together adding up to a mile. At that point we tee into Breitenbush Road (photo at the top of next page), also known as Forest Service Road 46.

This nice road is going to be our home for the next 30 miles. As



the photo shows, we are back to two lanes and all the usual striping on this road. But traffic is going to remain scarce. The headwaters of the Clackamas River are on the right side of the road, usually out of sight but maybe visible now and then. The river is flowing in the opposite direction from the way we're heading and that means we'll soon be climbing again.

We're approaching our second big climb of the day. First we have three short climbs of half a mile apiece, each paired with a little descent. After the third one, we get three miles that are as close to flat as one can ever expect to find in the mountains. And after that little lull, we get onto the main ascent. It gains about 900' in about three miles (6% again). However, that delivers us only to the end of the main climb, not the summit. We still have a mile and a half of false flats and little bumps before we get to the highest point (3490'). And even that is not the final summit. Three more miles of modest downs and ups bring us to another summit at almost exactly the same elevation as the previous one.

Now, near mile 32, we can finally put the climbing behind us and look forward to some really nice descending on smooth pavement and with lanes wide enough to let it run. The first two miles are pretty intense, with some bits up around 10%. After that, there are around 14 miles of mild downhill with a few flats and even one or two slightly uphill bumps mixed in. Altogether we lose almost 2000' over 16 miles. You can hammer it and carry some serious speed through the rest of your day. Or you can sit up and do it in cruise mode, devoting more of your attention to the scenery, which is lovely.

Over the summit, we left the drainage of the Clackamas behind and dropped into the watershed of the Breitenbush River, and as we come down out of the higher mountains, our forest makes a transition from firs and pines to more of a broadleaf mix. Unfortunately, this once lovely forest is where we expect to find the ravages of the fires that swept through here in 2020. We'll be seeing evidence of the fires through the rest of this stage and through perhaps the first half of tomorrow's stage.

At mile 48—almost done with the stage—our dreamy downhill run along Breitenbush comes to an end. We pop out into the little resort town of Detroit along the shore of Detroit Lake, a large reservoir. Breitenbush tees into Hwy 22, the Santiam Highway. We will have to ride a little of this highway today and a lot more of it tomorrow. (I will have more



to say about Hwy 22 in tomorrow's write-up.) It's a busy highway and its shoulders come and go. Not ideal but unfortunately unavoidable. I did have a bypass off part of the highway through the neighborhood streets of the town of Detroit but the entire town was burnt out in the fires and I doubt that little detour would be too attractive now. So we stay mostly on the highway.

We had originally planned to spend the night at Detroit Lake State Park but we decided to give it a miss after our scouting visit. It is the ultimate camping factory, with hundreds of tiny sites mashed together. No peace and no elbow room. Instead we booked campsites at the remote Hoover Forest Service camp around the shore of the lake a little bit (below). It has running water but no showers. They are dealing with the same drought conditions up here that we have at home...the lake used to come right up to camp but now it's far away. We'll rig our portable shower for getting clean.





Stage 7: Detroit Lake to Silver Falls SP

52 miles, 2600' up, 2800' down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30771195>

Our last stage begins on a less-than-ideal road: Hwy 22 or the Santiam Highway (above). We're on it for 21 early miles of the ride. You may recall I mentioned our Northern Oregon Tour going over Santiam Pass (due to a detour). That is this same road further east, only that section is even busier. Over the pass it's carrying all the traffic from Bend and Sisters heading for the Willamette Valley. But east of here it splits and half the traffic heads off to the south, to Eugene. This section only carries the traffic for Salem and maybe south Portland. Anyway...we did it then and we can do it again. There is usually a modest shoulder, as seen in the photo. It's wider than that some of the time but almost disappears in a few tight spots. For whatever it's worth, it's mildly downhill in our direction, so we'll be able to move through it quickly. And we'll be on it early in the morning, before the traffic really picks up.

Aside from the potential for traffic and the slim shoulders, there is nothing wrong with this road. The scenery is as you see it in the photo at the top, first along the shore of Detroit Lake and then tootling along next to the Santiam River through the woods. Down at this elevation—now out of the higher mountains—the forest is no longer all firs all the time. Now there are leafy trees mixed in. It's a pleasant landscape, similar to our Stages 1 and 2.

There is a nice highway rest stop around mile 19 and we'll probably put our sag there. Just

Two miles later we leave Hwy 22 for quieter back roads. We originally had longer and shorter options where we turned off the highway. Or more to the point, hillier and flatter options, with a wickedly steep climb over Gates Hill Road for those who wanted it and an almost level run for those who didn't. However, when we scouted the route most recently—in March, 2022—we discovered that Gates Hill Road is now closed. They've put up a substantial gate, given the few residents along the road a gate code, and closed it to

everyone else. We called the Marion County Public Works folks to see if we could be allowed through. They looked into it—were quite helpful—but in the end decided it just wasn't feasible.

Fortunately, we already had our "flatland option" on the map and that now becomes the route for all of us. It's not entirely flat. There are a few rollers. But compared to Gates Hill, it's a breeze.

Turn left off 22 into the little town of Gates, head out the other side of town, cross the main branch of the Santiam River and bear right, west, on Kingwood Avenue (below). Kingwood and Lyons-Mill City Drive comprise the bulk of this "flatland" route. Most of the time they're meandering through woods and meadows but they also pass through or near the three small towns of Gates, Mill City, and Lyons and each of these features a smattering of rural-residential homes and some commercial activity, from lumber mills to markets. None of these hallmarks of settlement is unpleasant and at no point along the way would anyone feel





stressed by too much traffic or congestion. It's not as spectacular as the scenery along the hilly route but it's all enjoyable.

Out the far side of Lyons we jog across Hwy 22 and pick up Fern Ridge Road, at which point we have another 20 miles to go. There are seven roads in those 20 miles. Most are quiet, although the last one, leading into the popular park on a summer Saturday, will almost certainly be busier. Topography is lumpy here, with more up than down: only about six miles of down and the rest up, usually gently but occasionally with enough steepness to make us work, probably in the hot afternoon sun. Sometimes the roads are in the woods but more often out on open hillsides, as seen in the photo above. All of it is nice.

Around mile 50 we top out on our last real summit of the day and of the tour. This is the spot where they put the big, hunky sign announcing the entrance to the park. A nice little descent of about a mile and a half takes us right down into the heart of the park, where the headquarters and the rustic old lodge are, and where the main campground is (where the showers and our campsites are).

That's our destination today. This is also near Lot F, the parking lot where our car-pool vehicles will be stored. You can zip into the lot and grab your car first or ride on around to our camp and come back for your car later. We can't have all our cars in the campsites overnight though... there is a limit of one car per site.

Silver Falls State Park is here because of ten beautiful waterfalls along Silver Creek and its tributaries. This is more of the same geology and hydrology

we saw in the gorge: water flowing over and carving through the basalt crust. There are trails connecting all the falls. One of the coolest things about them is that hikers can walk behind some of the waterfalls (below). That is cool not only as an amazing visual treat but also literally cool. It can be quite hot here in the summer. Standing under the misty falls is a great way to beat the heat.

We have included a detail map of the park showing most of the waterfalls and the trails that pass them. No doubt the state park can provide even better maps to all visitors.

Our master plan has been to knock off this relatively short stage with plenty of afternoon (and energy) still available. Get our tents and camp set up and

perhaps have a few refresher munchies and drinks...then drive or ride to a trailhead and do some manner of hike to at least a few of these falls. Showers after that. Something along those lines. It would be a pity to come here and not check out at least a few of the waterworks. They call this the crown jewel of the Oregon State parks system and it's easy to see why. See the Waterfall Glossary for more information on the locations and natures of the assorted falls in the park.

These lovely falls plunging off basalt cliffs and splashing into their grottos will serve as a reminder of the water-vs-rock extravaganza we encountered up along the Columbia River Gorge...not that we would be likely to be forgetting those days already. Now all we have to do is rustle up some dinner. Chow down and raise our glasses high: a toast to this wonderful week of good roads and great scenery; to good company and good times.



Waterfall Glossary, Stage 3

Aside from the grand Columbia River and the charming historic highway and trails, these many magnificent waterfalls are what make the gorge so spectacular and such a destination for tourists and trekkers, both the two-legged and two-wheeled sorts.

Our bikes give us a magical entrée to this world, as we arrive under our own power, green and lean and not imposing on the landscape too much. But they can also hold us back, for instance when we may want to leave our bikes to hike a bit to see some of these falls. At least part of the purpose of this glossary is to provide you with a little information to help you decide which falls are the most easily accessible and which ones you can visit without having to worry about leaving your bike unattended.



Latourell Falls

Photo above.

Mile 13.4

A single fall of 224'

The falls can be seen from the road, although a telephoto lens makes this view of it seem closer than it is. A round trip hike from the trailhead to the grotto below the falls is 2.4 miles and not something one would undertake in bike shoes. This is probably one to view at a distance...from the road.



Shepperds Dell

Photo below left.

Mile 14.6

A series of cascades totaling about 220'

Most of the upper falls is hard to see from near the road. The last, smaller cascade next to the highway is worth a look though, partly because of the falls but more because of the view of the pretty old bridge and the beautiful masonry employed in creating the little vista point where this photo was taken. It's just a few yards off the road. The name of the falls has nothing to do with herding sheep. It is named after George Shepperd, who presented the land to the state in 1915.



Bridal Veil Falls

Mile 15.6

Two back-to-back falls totaling 120'

This is the only significant falls on the downhill (left) side of the old highway. The brave guy in his little green kayak (above) should give some scale to the size of the falls. It's possible to peer over the edge of the bridge above the creek and see the falls from above—I did it on our scouting trip—but the view is not really that wonderful. Probably not worth it, and as it comes up in the middle of a fast downhill run, maybe one to miss. Unless you're really into waterfalls, in which case you can hike down a fairly short dirt path and see this view of the falls.



Wahkeena Falls

Mile 18.8

A series of falls totaling 242'

This is a gorgeous falls. (Aren't they all?) It's not a single, free-fall spill like Latourell but rather a series of cascades in a deep defile. It is theoretically possible to see the bulk of the falls from the viewing area just above the road—easy access—but in summer the view will be somewhat obscured by mossy big leaf maples. For a better view, follow a paved trail for about a quarter-mile uphill to a beautiful old stone bridge over the creek. The bridge is just visible at the bottom of the photo (above). A longer, steeper, harder trail leads up to the top of the falls but that is almost certainly beyond what we can do in bike shoes or would choose to do on this day, with so many other places to be and things to see.

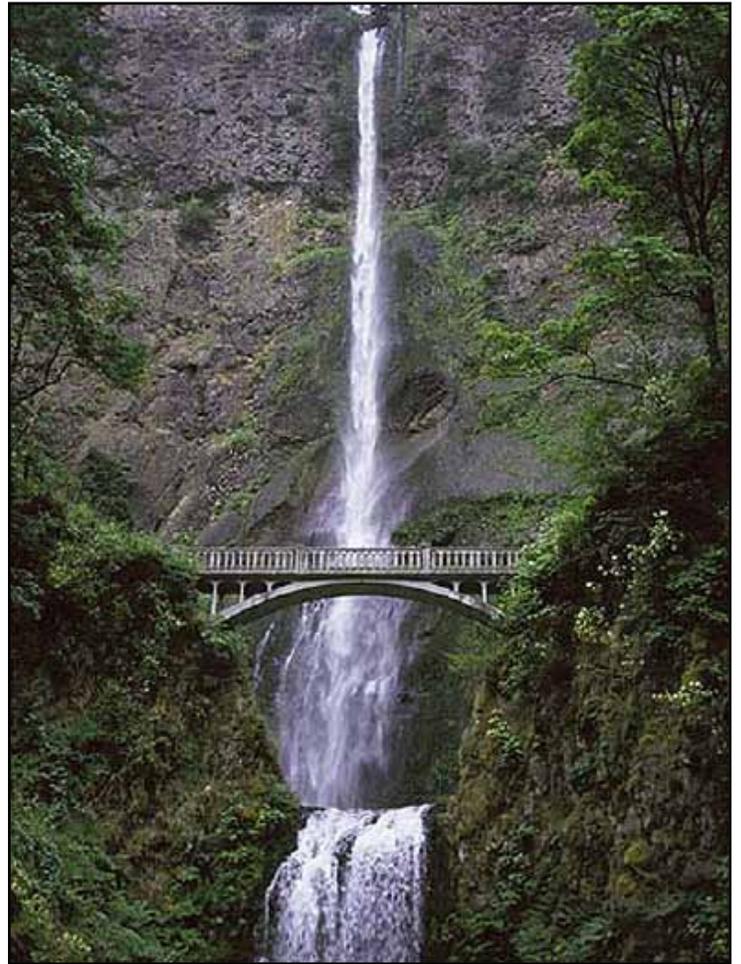
Multnomah Falls

Photos at right.

Mile 19.4

Upper falls: 542'; lower falls: 70'

Without a doubt the greatest of the falls along the gorge. It



ranks as one of the world's great spills of water, not because of its height or the volume of its flow, but simply because of the beauty of the falls and their larger setting.

The falls can easily be seen from the highway, as can the grand old lodge nearby (below). As noted in the Stage 3 copy, the place will probably be crawling with tourists, even on a weekday. It is, after all, the most visited scenic attraction in the state! But in spite of that, it's still a really special place. If you want to explore more and can figure out what to do with your bike, there is a nice viewing spot just off the road and the hike up to the famous Benson Bridge is not all that difficult.





Oneonta Gorge and Falls

Mile 21.4

Lower Oneonta Falls: 100'

This is a case where getting there—to the falls—is most of what the attraction is. The narrow, mossy gorge is the best part of it all. However, the only way to get into and through the gorge is by hiking in the creek in water up to waist deep and also clambering over some challenging log jams. Yet in spite of all those difficulties, the place is overrun with day trippers. It's sort of a greener, smaller version of hiking in The Narrows of the Virgin River in Zion. If one were to come here early in the morning in late summer or early fall, when the water is at its lowest and the tourists haven't gotten going on their days yet, it would be wonderful. But that won't be the case on our tour. In spite of its charms, this isn't a realistic option for us. Come back and do it another time.

Update: There was a very bad wildfire in the Gorge a few years ago—started by a kid playing with fireworks—and a few places along the way still look a bit burnt over. When we visited here in 2019, Oneonta Gorge was entirely closed to the public because of the fire damage.

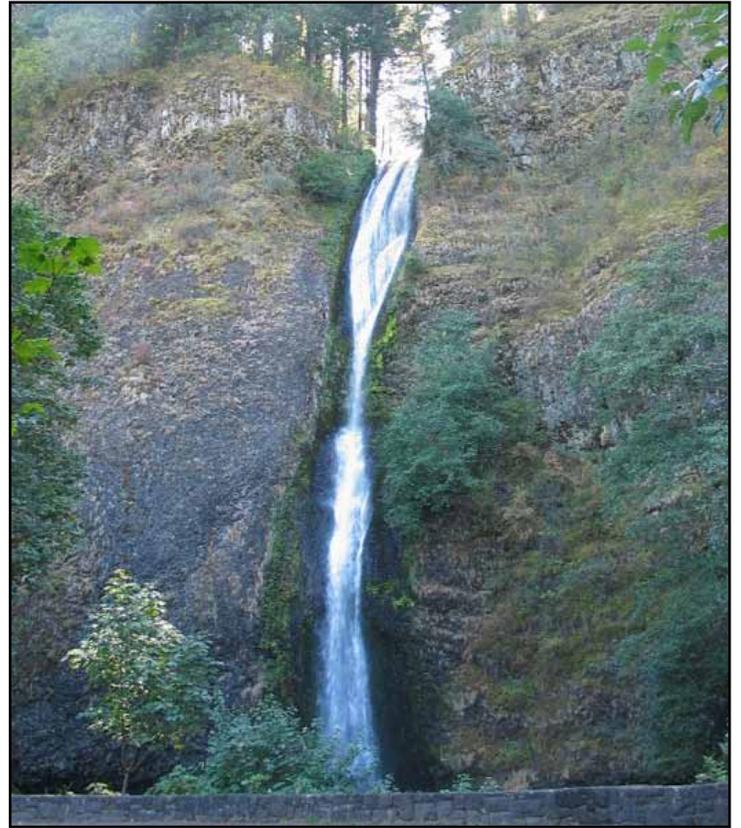
Horsetail Falls

Photo above right.

Mile 21.9

Main falls: 176'

This has to be the most accessible of the big falls for cyclists. You can ride right up to the stone wall seen in the bottom of the photo. This is also the final waterfall on the main part of the highway. All of the remaining ones are accessible only—or at least more easily—from the assorted sections of bike path ahead: the Historic Columbia River State Trail.

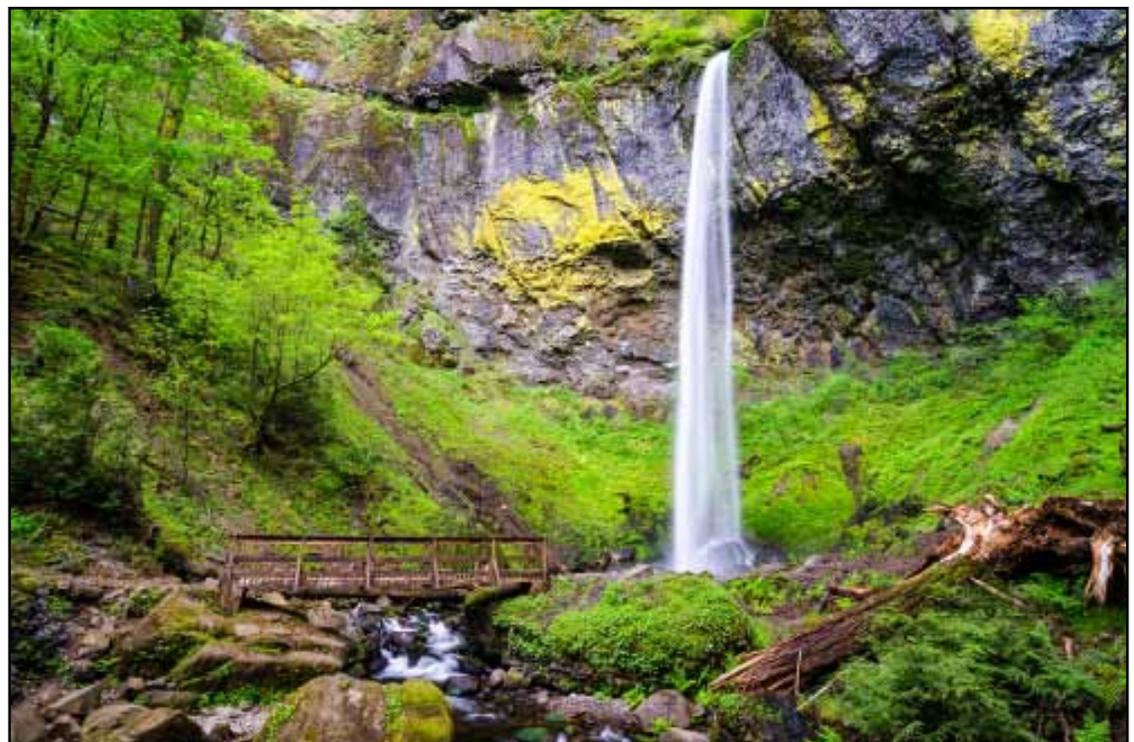


Elowah Falls

Mile 25.9

A single fall of 289'

Magnificent and yet delicate...one long spill into an undercut grotto (below). Taller than it looks in the photo: second highest of all the falls today after Multnomah. A 1.6-mile round trip on an easy dirt trail from the car-accessible trailhead.





Punchbowl Falls

Mile 30.2

One single spill: 35'

Obviously not the biggest waterfall in the gorge, but after Multnomah Falls, perhaps the most beloved of hikers and photographers alike...both photos, this column.

It's possible to hike to either the grotto below the falls or to the overlook above it. Round trip is something like 3.8 miles, although I'm a little hazy on that. Clearly too long to do in bike shoes, but wait...we have a plan!

Seeing as how this comes up at around mile 30, or just about halfway on the day, and seeing as how our sag can meet us at the Eagle Creek trailhead, we are thinking of making this our official rest stop on the day. We can arrange to have our usual tub full of Texas in the sag so you can swap out your bike shoes if you want to make the trek to this exquisitely beautiful grotto.



Wahclella Falls and Munra Falls

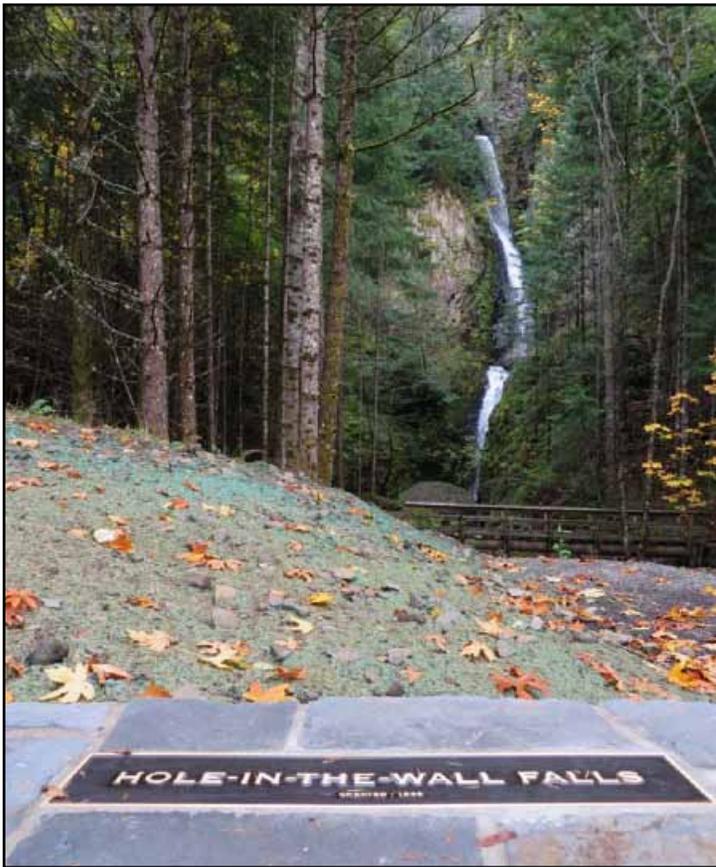
Mile 28.6

Munra Falls: 35'

Wahclella Falls: 120'

Two falls for the price of one! Wahclella Falls (lower photo) is the main attraction but is quite a way up Tanner Creek on a footpath... not for bikes or bike shoes (2-mile round trip). Little Munra Falls is much more accessible: up a paved park road, through a gate and just a short distance up a nicely compacted gravel road. Yes, it is little, but it's right next to the bridge. However... it does say, "No vehicles beyond this point!" at that gate. Do bicycles count as vehicles in this context? Ride to the gate, stash the bikes in the bushes and hike?





Hole-in-the-Wall Falls

Mile 43.3

Multiple spills totaling 120'

Most of the falls in the gorge have been here time out of mind. This one hasn't. The creek that feeds it used to be some ways away but apparently caused destructive flooding every year. So in 1938, engineers blasted out a tunnel and rerouted the flow to this spot, where it gushes out of a hole in the cliff face. Hence the name. As you can see from the photo, it is visible and easily accessible from the new bike trail (above).

Starvation Creek Falls

Mile 44

Multiple spills totaling 220'

Photo at right.

Easily accessible from the State Trail via a short, uphill paved trail of a hundred yards. Just beyond the Starvation Creek State Park trailhead.

But wait! There's more...

There are several more waterfalls along this new stretch of trail, between miles 40 and 44. I'm a little uncertain as to the specifics on all of them, but here's what I do know...

Gorton Creek Falls and Emerald Falls are both on Gorton Creek at about mile 39.6. Gorton Creek Falls is a two tier spill of about 115' while Emerald Falls is a modest but pretty grotto downstream from the main falls.

Lindsey Creek Falls at about mile 42.6 is a smaller spill of a bit

over 50'. It is visible from the trail if you know where to look but is quite a way upstream and hard to get to.

Lancaster Falls is near Hole-in-the-Wall Falls. A tiny lower portion of the falls spills almost directly onto the trail but the larger portion is hidden in the trees and hard to see.

Cabin Creek Falls—220' high—at mile 43.5 is just a few yards from the trail. However, a couple of huge boulders block the view of the falls to some degree.

So there you go: 18 waterfalls in 30 miles, or about one every mile and a half. This glossary has missed several others, but these at least are the most famous ones, plus a few more modest, obscure ones. It would be borderline obsessive to stop at every one but also seriously nuts to zip past all of them without stopping anywhere.

Read on for information about the waterfalls in Silver Falls State Park, where we will be on our final day.



Silver Falls State Park

As noted in the main copy, this beautiful park is here because of the many waterfalls clustered fairly closely together along Silver Creek. A trail of 7.5 miles connects all ten falls. That's probably more than most people are going to want to tackle after a bike ride, with beer and munchies calling to them from camp. But visiting the park without seeing any of the falls would be a crime.

Fortunately, there are shorter, easier options. Easiest of all is visiting South Falls, at 177', the tallest and most spectacular of the park's big spills (below and on page 26).



It's also the closest to park headquarters and to our campsites... and to Lot F, where our car pool fleet will be parked. From Lot F to the falls—literally, to walking behind the falls—is only a quarter of a mile, or a half-mile, round trip. Just a bit more than that if you hike downstream from the falls to see it from below (photo on page 2).

This shortest of all possible hikes assumes you've started from Lot F, which is possible if you've gone there to visit your car... if you have a car. But our camp is a bit further away. From our cluster of campsites in the main camp to South Falls is just under a mile or about two miles, round trip, if all you do is hike over from camp and doodle around this one waterfall.

The one knock on South Falls is that it's so accessible in the center of the park, and on a Saturday afternoon in August, it will be thronged with tourists. Think Multnomah Falls. If you're hoping to have some mystical epiphany with Mother Nature today, you may have to hike a bit

further away from the crowds...and that can be done. Or drive or ride to a more remote trailhead such as the one for North Falls.

If you're up for something a bit more ambitious and perhaps less teeming with tourists, there is a 2.3-mile loop from Lot F (or the nearby public parking lot) that takes in both South Falls and Lower South Falls. This second waterfall is just under 100' in height but is much wider than South Falls, so when you walk behind it, you are lost behind the veil of falling water to a greater degree. It's more of a sensory overload. If you were to hike from camp, you'd be looking at 4.5 miles to close this loop.

On such a prime-time weekend in one of the most popular parks in Oregon, it's almost impossible to avoid all the people all the time. Can't be done. But the farther you hike away from the center of things, the better your chances will be of finding a peaceful spot to commune with the wild world. To that end, our final option is a 4.7-mile hike from Lot F that takes in seven out of the ten waterfalls and rewards the effort with smaller crowds and possibly even some solitude.

Included in that loop are Double Falls, 177', just off the trail on a side spur, Middle North Falls (below), 106' and similar to Lower South Falls, and Winter Falls, 134', as well as some smaller cascades and a lot of great scenery.

This hike has been plotted in Ride With GPS. Open it in OSM

format and it will show the locations of the falls around the loop.

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/38501126>





Typical back roads along Stage 1





Snuffin Road

Stage 2

Cherryville Drive





Ten Eyck Road

Stage 2

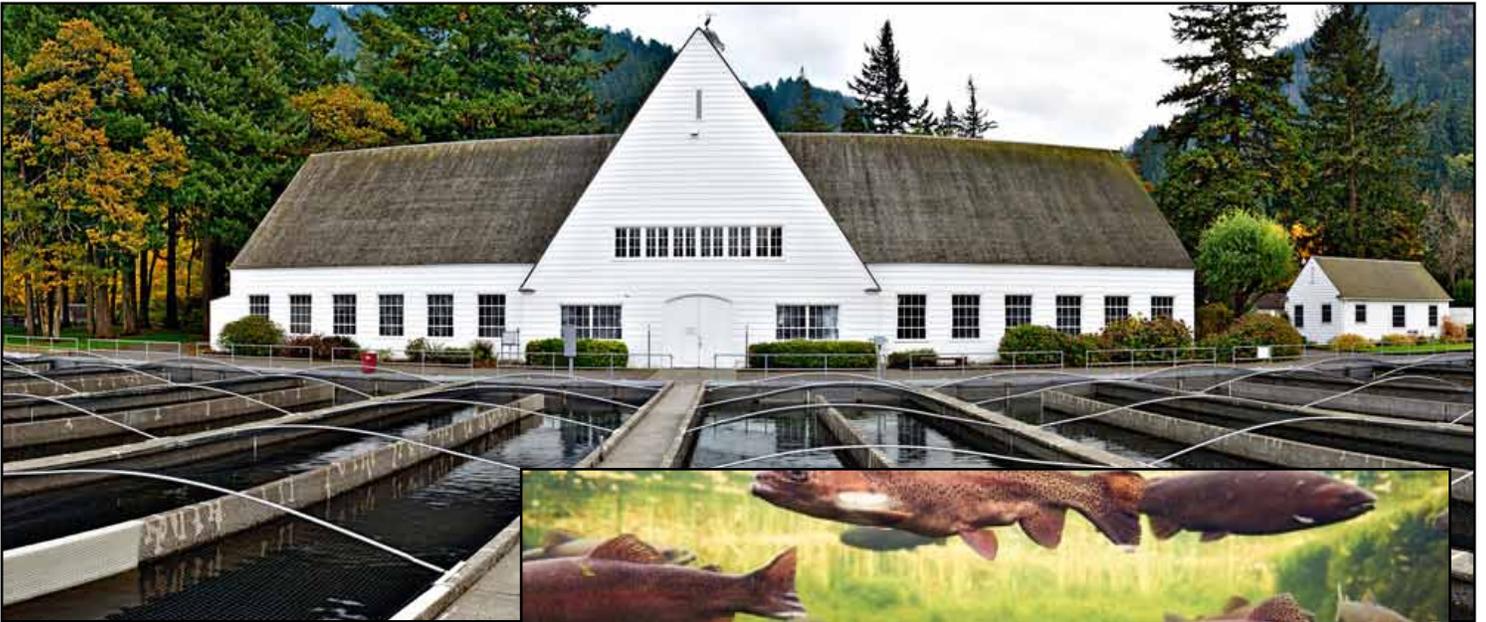
Chamberlain Road





*Stage 3:
Historic Columbia
River Highway*

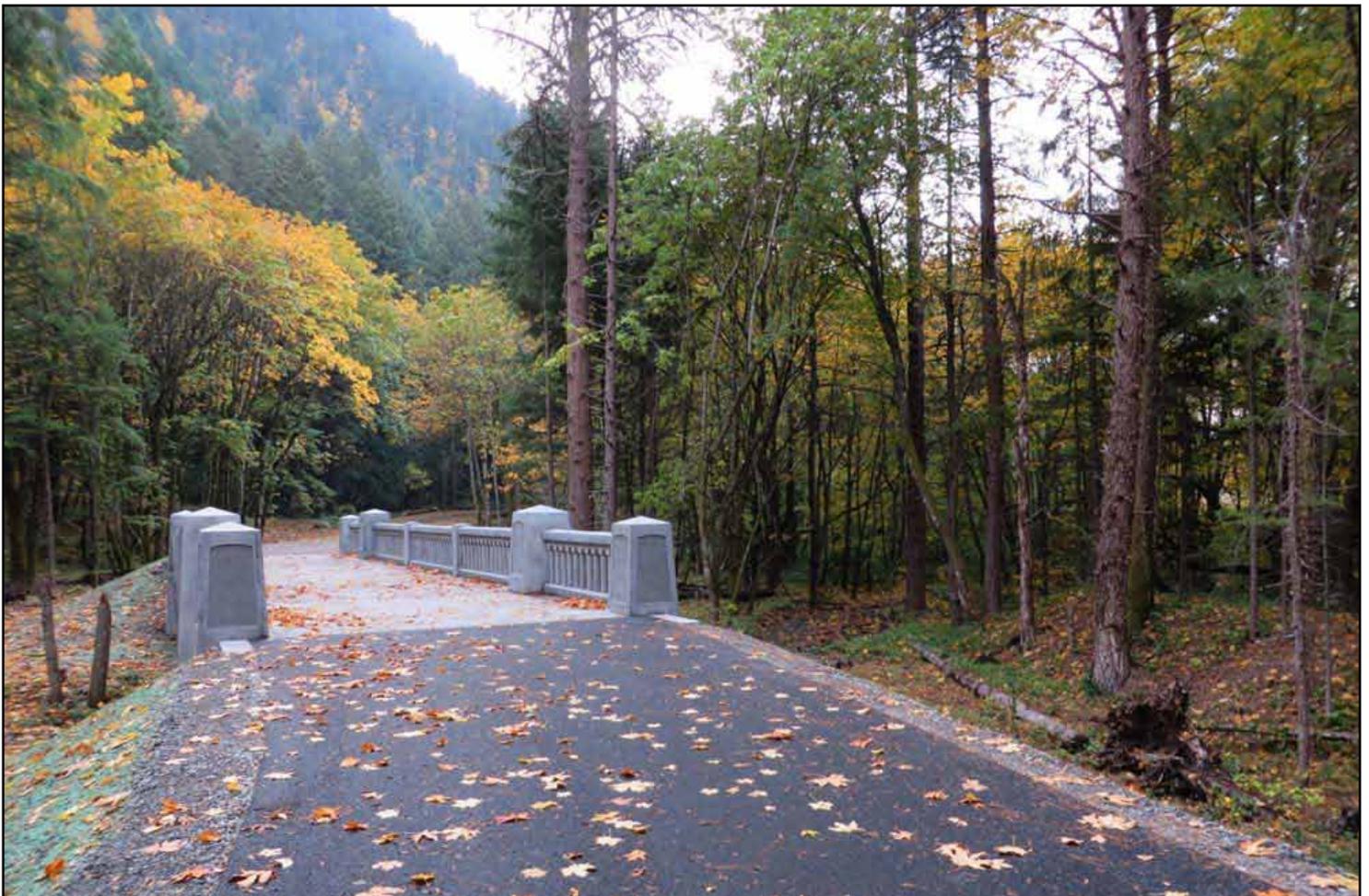




*Stage 3:
Salmon hatchery at Bonneville Dam*



Stage 3: Warren Creek Bridge, Historic Columbia River State Trail





Old highway

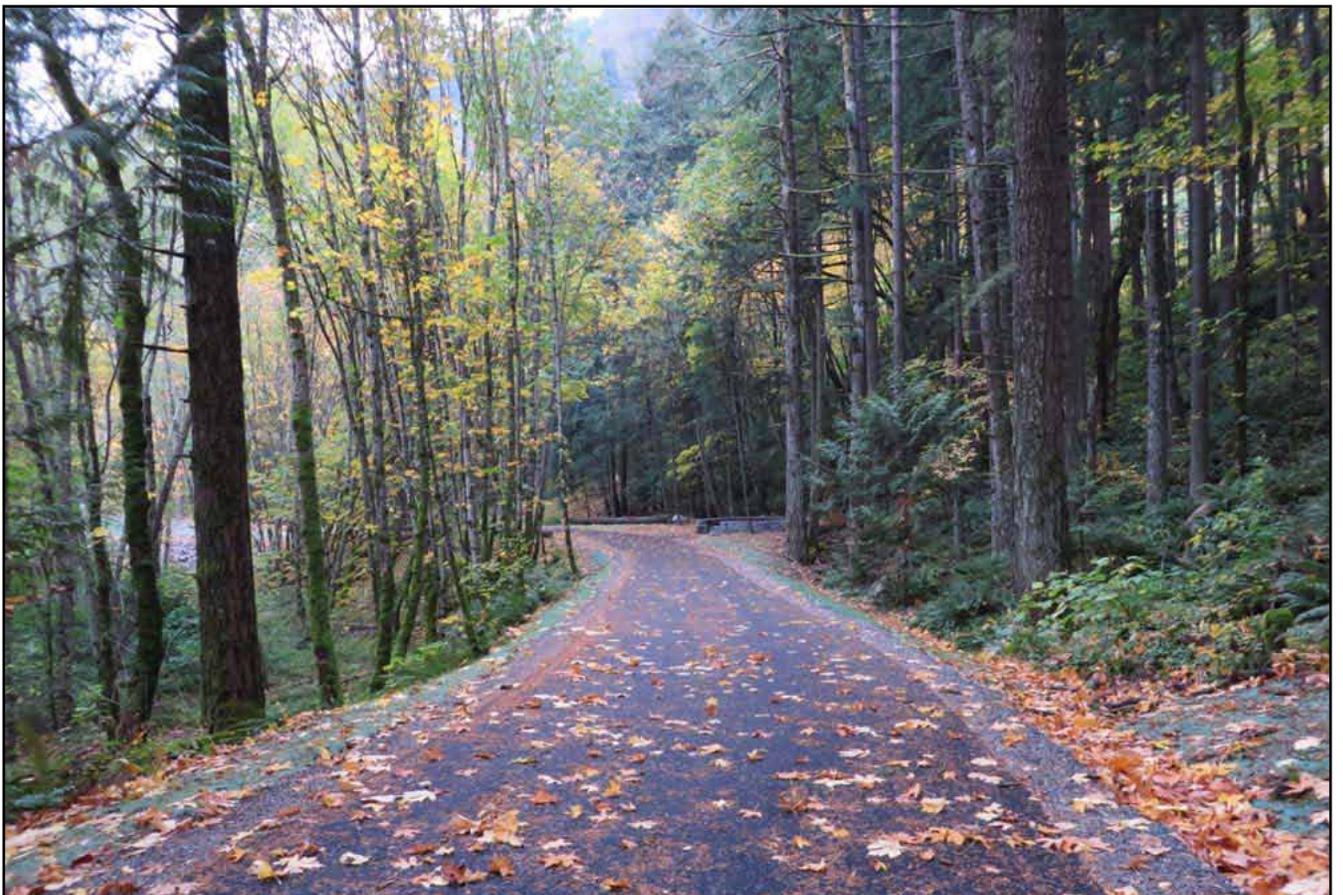
Stage 3

New bike trail





Stage 3: Historic Columbia River State Trail





To the southwest: Mt Hood

Stage 4: Early miles in the hills above Hood River

To the north: Mt Adams





Stage 4: Historic Columbia River State Trail between Hood River and The Dalles





Mosier Tunnels

Stage 4

HCRH near Rowena Crest





View from Rowena Crest

Stage 4

Below Rowena Crest





Stage 4: Riverfront Trail near The Dalles





Climbing along Eight Mile Creek

Stage 4

Approaching Dufur





Dufur Valley

Stage 5

On the 13-mile climb





Barlow Road

Stage 5

Oregon Skyline Road





Single-lane US Forest Service Road

Stage 6

Riding near the Clackamas River





Stage 6:



*Breitenbush Road
(probably fire-damaged now...not everywhere but at least in a few areas)*



Kingwood Avenue

Stage 7

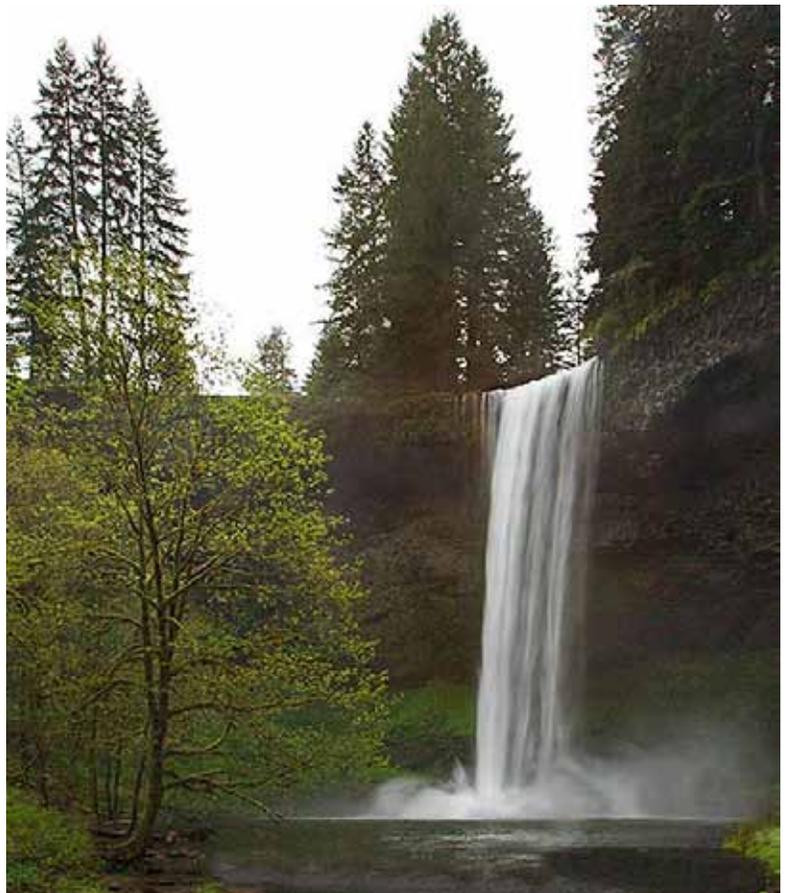
Lyons-Mill City Drive





Stage 7: Fern Ridge Road

After the stage, hiking to the waterfalls near camp



NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX

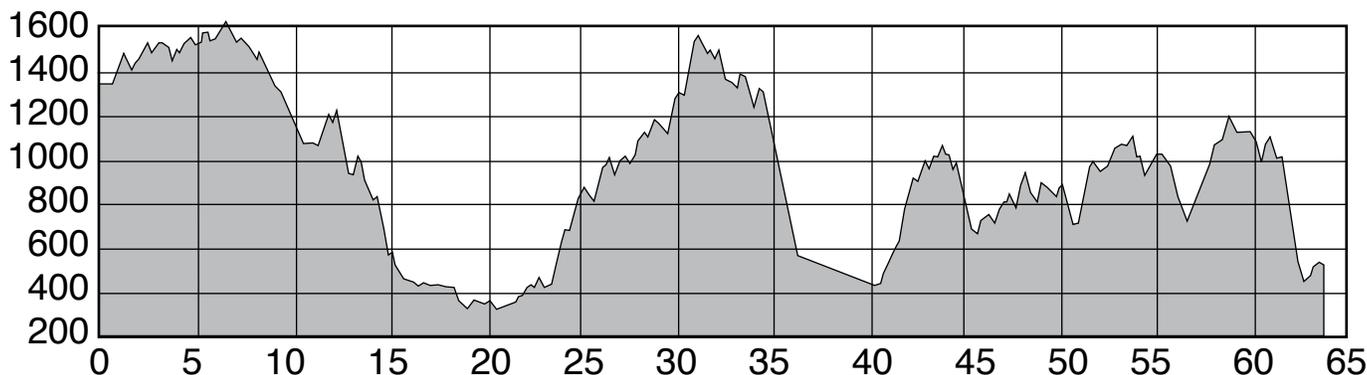


Stage 1: Silver Falls State Park to Estacada

64 miles, 5100' up, 5900' down

Leave Silver Falls Camp	0.0
(We have sites 45, 46, 49, 63, 73, 99)	
L on park road.....	0.1
R on Hwy 214 (Silver Falls Hwy).....	0.4
<i>Do not take first R on Powers Creek Loop Road at mile 6.6...that part is gravel.</i>	
R on Powers Creek Loop Road	11.5
L on Timber Trail Road.....	13.0
R on South Abiqua Road (cross creek)	15.5
L on Abiqua Road	15.7
R on Hwy 213	19.1
R on Mt Angel-Scotts Mills Road.....	20.8
L on Nowlens Bridge Road.....	23.5
<i>Village of Scotts Mills.</i>	
R on Maple Grove Road	23.6
L on Sawtell Road	31.0
R on Trout Creek Road (aka Guernsey Rd)....	32.9
L on Mollala Forest Road	36.0
R over Glen Avon Bridge.....	36.4
L on Dickey Prairie Road.....	36.7

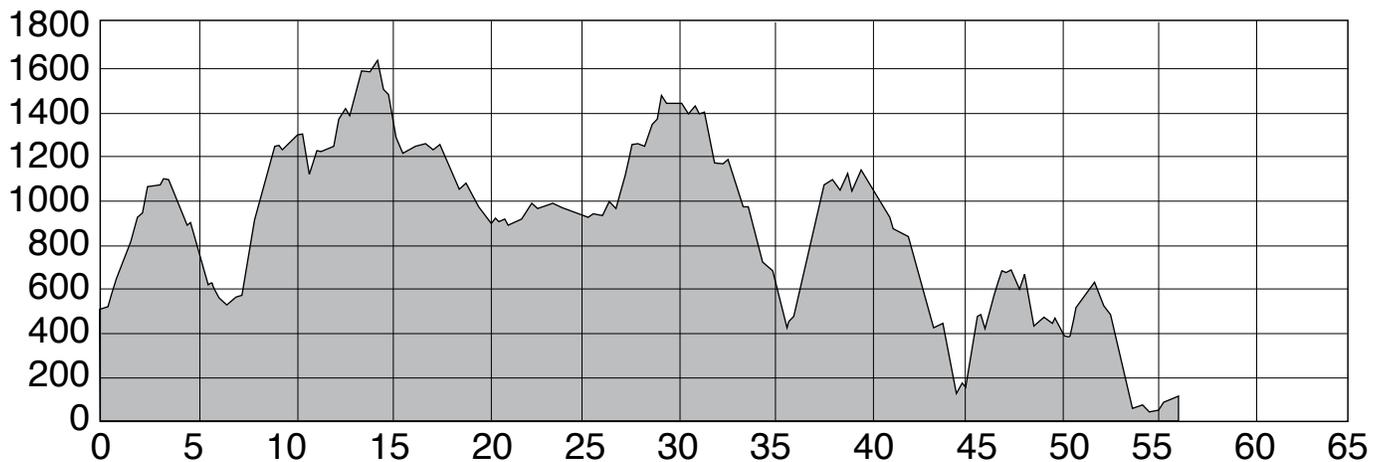
R on Ramsby Road	40.3
Bear L on Callahan Road (aka Fernwood Rd)	40.5
Becomes Dhooghe Road.....	44.0
R on Green Mountain Road.....	45.8
L on Grays Hill Road	48.4
L on Hwy 211 S	50.5
R on Baurer Road	50.7
R on Unger Road	52.4
L on Hwy 211 N	54.2
L on Springwater Road	57.7
L to stay on Springwater Road.....	58.6
R to stay on Springwater Road	59.1
R on Day Hill Road.....	60.0
Cross Hwy 211 to stay on Day Hill Road.....	60.7
Bear L to stay on Day Hill Road.....	60.7
R on Hwy 211 N (cross Clackamas River)	62.3
L on Hwys 211/224.....	62.7
<i>Enter city of Estacada.</i>	
R on Currin Street	62.8
R on 4th Street.....	62.9
L on Shafford Street.....	63.0
Cross 6th Ave to Estacada High School	63.5
Finish behind tennis courts.....	63.7



Stage 2: Estacada to Troutdale

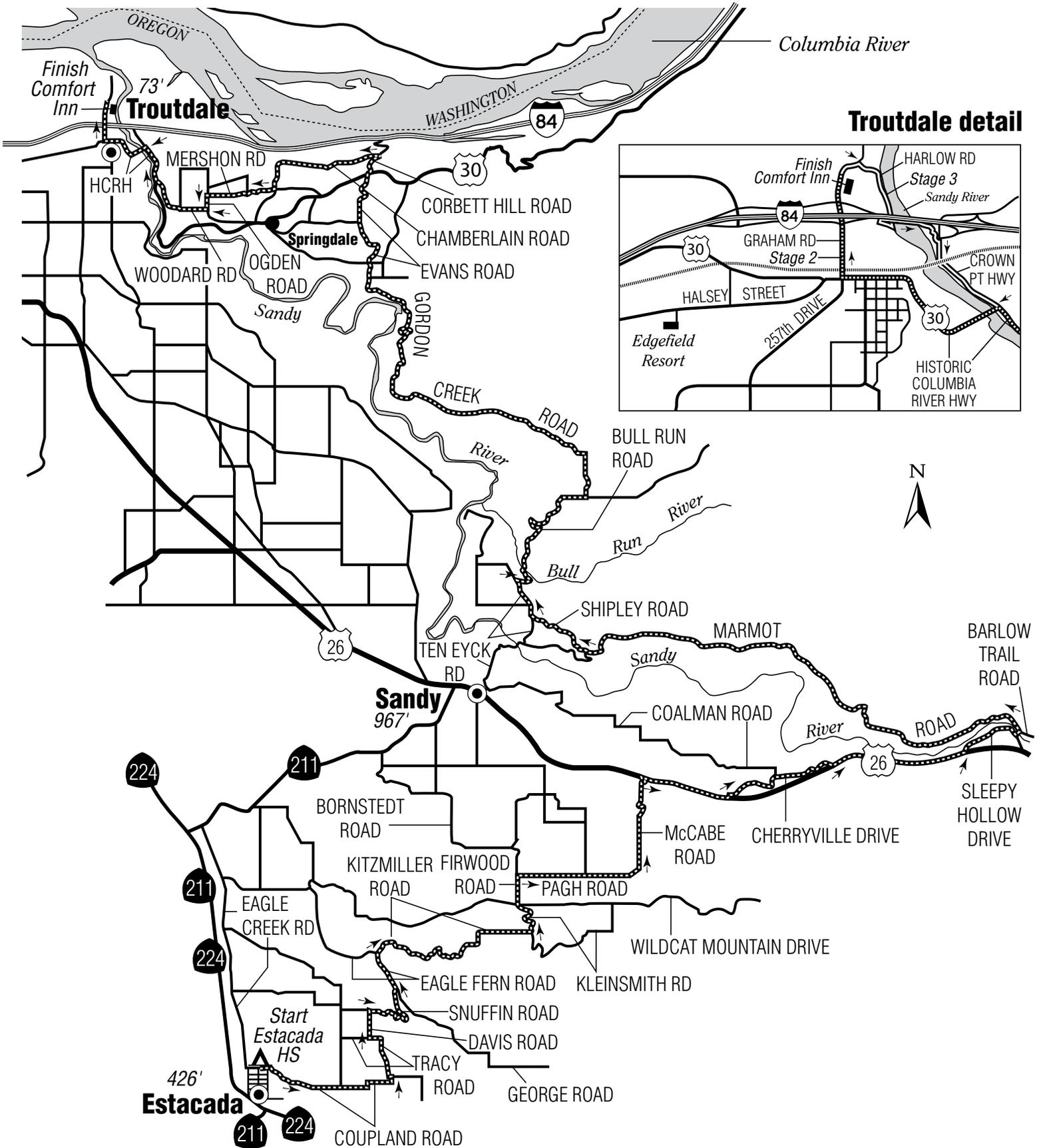
56 miles, 4850' up, 5250' down

Leave Estacada High School	0.0	L on Barlow Trail Road (cross Sandy River)..	23.8
L on 6th Avenue	0.3	L on Marmot Road	23.9
Becomes Coupland Road	0.5	R on Shipley Road	33.4
L on Tracy Road	3.0	R on Ten Eyck Road	34.7
R on Davis Road	4.0	R on Bull Run Road	35.4
R on Snuffin Road.....	4.5	Becomes Gordon Creek Road	39.7
L on Eagle Fern Road	6.0	Cross Hurlburt Road to Evans Road	46.4
R on Kitzmiller Road	6.8	Jog R on Hwy 30 (Historic Columbia River Hwy)	
L on Kleinsmith Road.....	10.5	to bear L on Corbett Hill Road.....	48.4
Cross Wildcat Mtn Dr to Firwood Road.....	11.4	L on Chamberlain Road (sharp hairpin)	48.9
R on Pagh Road	11.9	R on Mershon Road.....	51.3
Becomes McCabe Road	14.1	L on Ogden Road	52.6
R on Hwy 26 (Mt Hood Hwy)	16.1	R on Woodard Road	52.8
L on Cherryville Drive.....	17.8	R on Hwy 30 (Historic Columbia River Hwy)	54.1
L on Hwy 26.....	20.1	L on Hwy 30 on bridge over Sandy River.....	54.8
L on Sleepy Hollow Drive	22.6	Enter town of Troutdale.	
		R on Graham Road in Troutdale	55.6
		R into Comfort Inn	56.1
		Finish	56.2



NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX + STAGE 2

Estacada to Troutdale • 56 miles • 4850' up, 5250' down



Stage 3: Troutdale to Hood River

60 miles, 4300' up, 3600' down

67 miles, 4500' up, 3800' down

Leave Comfort Inn	0.0
R on Graham Road to R on Harlow Road.....	0.1
Harlow Road becomes bike path, looping under I-84 and then continuing on bike lane alongside eastbound I-84; cross Sandy River	0.6
R from path onto Crown Point Hwy	0.9
Becomes Historic Columbia River Hwy	1.3
L into Portland Women's Forum vista point....	9.4
Return to eastbound HCRH.....	9.6
<i>Vista House</i>	11.0
<i>Multnomah Falls and Lodge</i>	19.4
R on Frontage Road (next to I-84)	23.4
R on HCRH State Trail.....	25.5
Junction for Bonneville Dam side trip	28.6
Eagle Creek Loop... <i>Cascade Fish Hatchery, Eagle Creek trailhead (rest stop?)</i>	30.1
Continue east on HCRH State Trail	31.0
Straight on Wa-Na-Pa Street.....	32.4
<i>Town of Cascade Locks; Bridge of the Gods.</i>	
Optional side trip to Thunder Island Brewing	33.0
Bear R under I-84	33.7
Bear L on Frontage Road	33.9
R on Herman Creek Road (aka Wyeth Road)	36.2
R on HCRH State Trail	39.6
L on access road toward I-84	45.2
<i>End of trail.</i>	
R on shoulder of I-84.....	45.3
R off I-84 at Exit 62 (first Hood River exit)....	51.1
R on Hwy 30	51.3
<i>Optional tour of downtown Hood River turns L</i>	

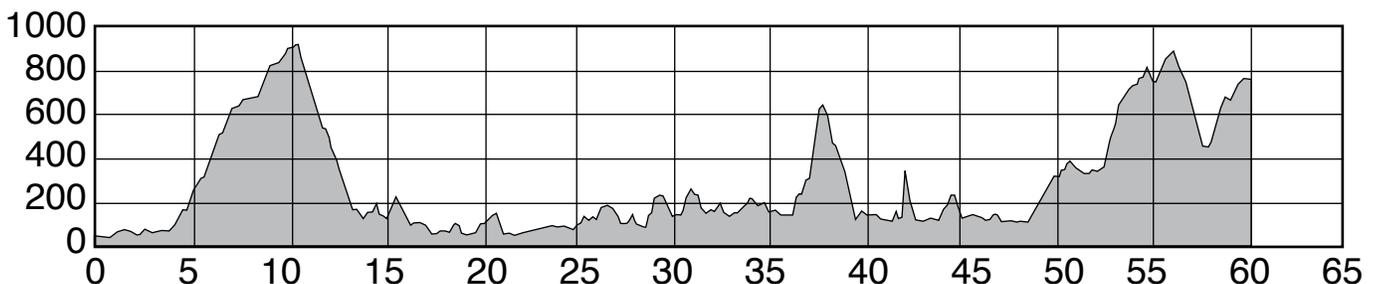
over I-84 (see below for route).

R on Mt Adams Avenue	51.5
Becomes (briefly) Wine Country Avenue.	
Becomes Country Club Road	51.8
L on Barrett Drive.....	54.6
R on Markham Road	54.9
L on Portland Drive	55.9
R on Hwy 281 (Tucker Road)	56.9
Bear L on Odell Hwy.....	57.9
R on Wyeast Road	58.5
R into Hood River County Fairgrounds	59.8
Finish	59.9

Optional tour of downtown Hood River

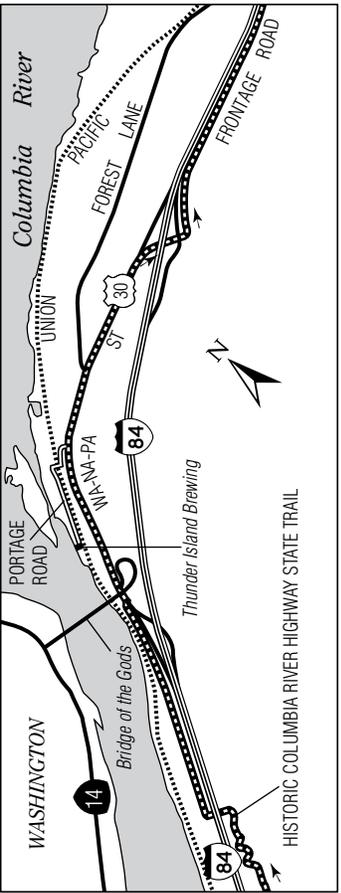
Mileage numbers include all additional miles for Bonneville Dam and Thunder Island options.

From off-ramp 62, L on Hwy 30 over I-84	55.3
L on Westcliff Drive.....	55.4
L on Wasco Street into Hood River	56.6
L on Columbia Street (Full Sail Brewing)	57.3
R on 4th Street.....	57.5
R on State Street.....	57.6
L on 6th Street/Serpentine Road	57.7
Becomes Eugene Street	58.1
Bear L on 4th Street	58.2
R on May Street	58.3
L on Frankton Road.....	60.3
L on Belmont Drive	61.0
R on Alameda Road	61.3
L on Barrett Drive.....	62.4
R on Hwy 281	62.7
Bear L on Odell Hwy.....	64.7
R on Wyeast Road	65.4
R into Hood River County Fairgrounds	66.7
Finish	66.8

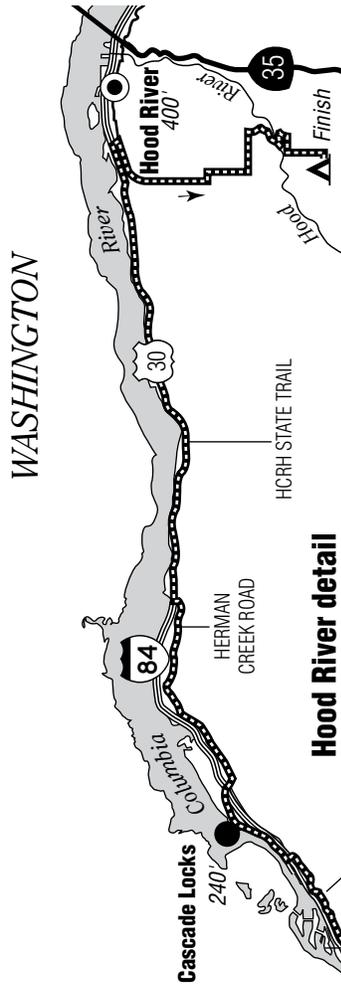


NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX + STAGE 3

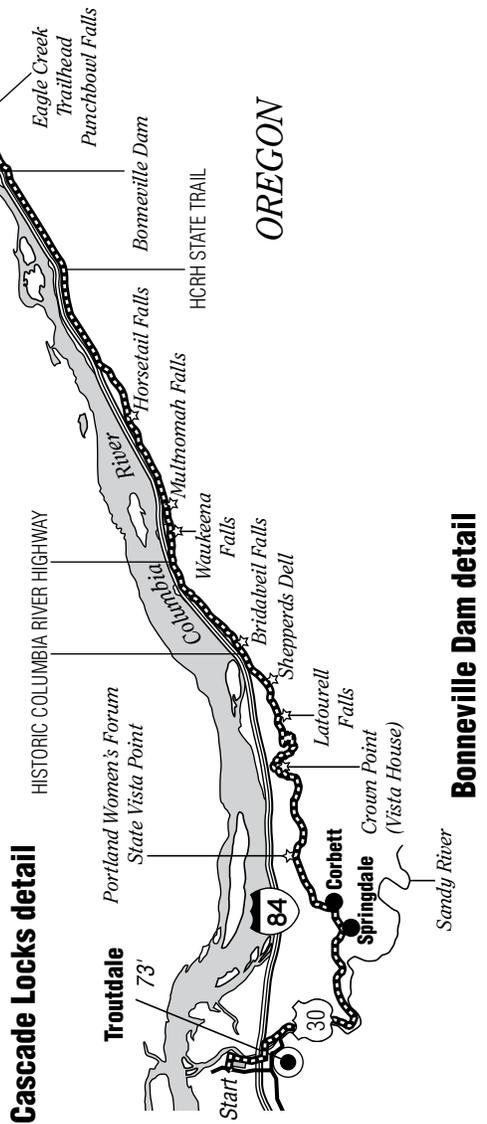
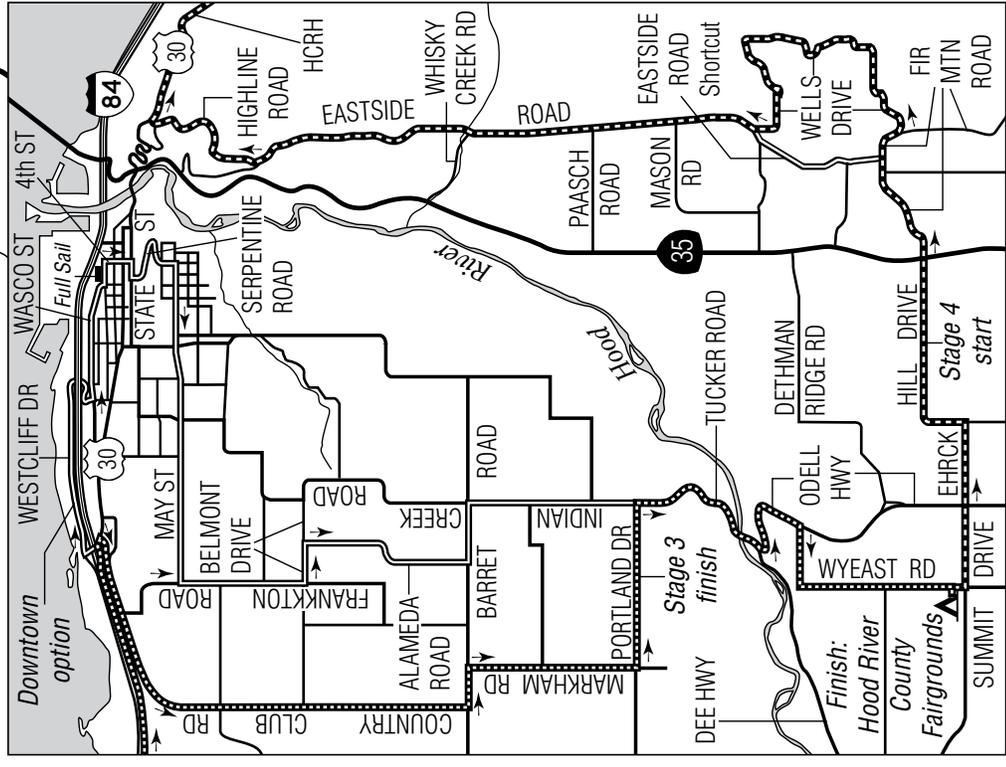
Troutdale to Hood River County Fairgrounds • 60 miles • 4300' up, 3600' down



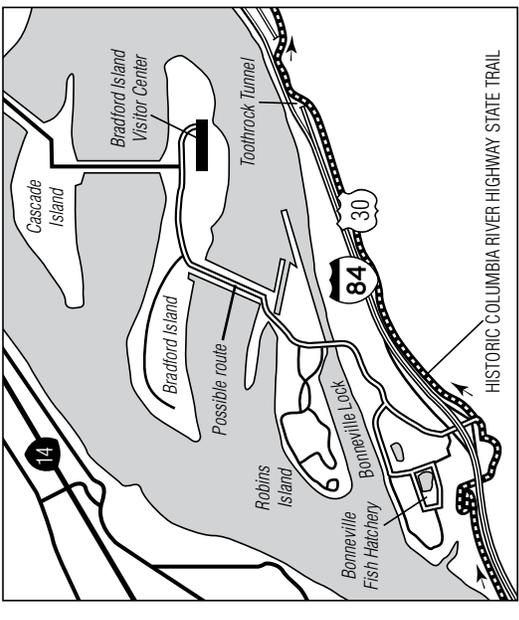
Cascade Locks detail



Hood River detail



Bonneville Dam detail



Three bonus-miles options...

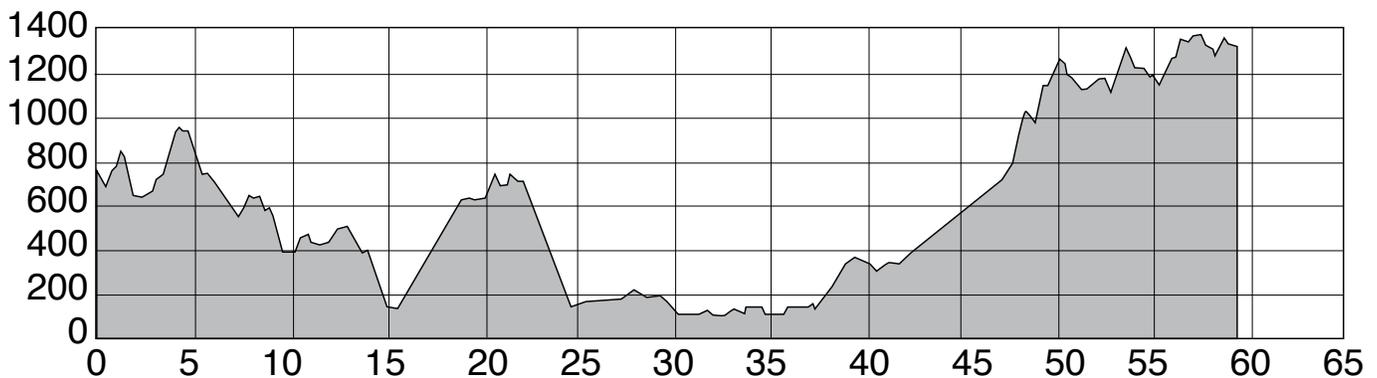
1. Bonneville Dam & Fish Hatchery
Add 3 miles.
 2. Thunder Island Brewing (lunch?)
Add 1 mile.
 3. Downtown Hood River
Add 3 miles.
- Total gain of 7 miles.

Stage 4: Hood River to Dufur

59 miles, 4000' up, 3450' down

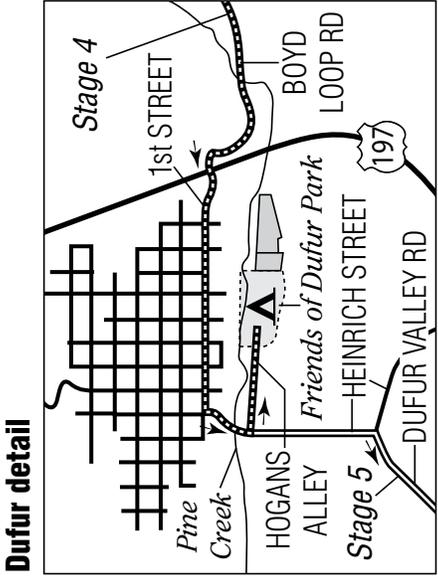
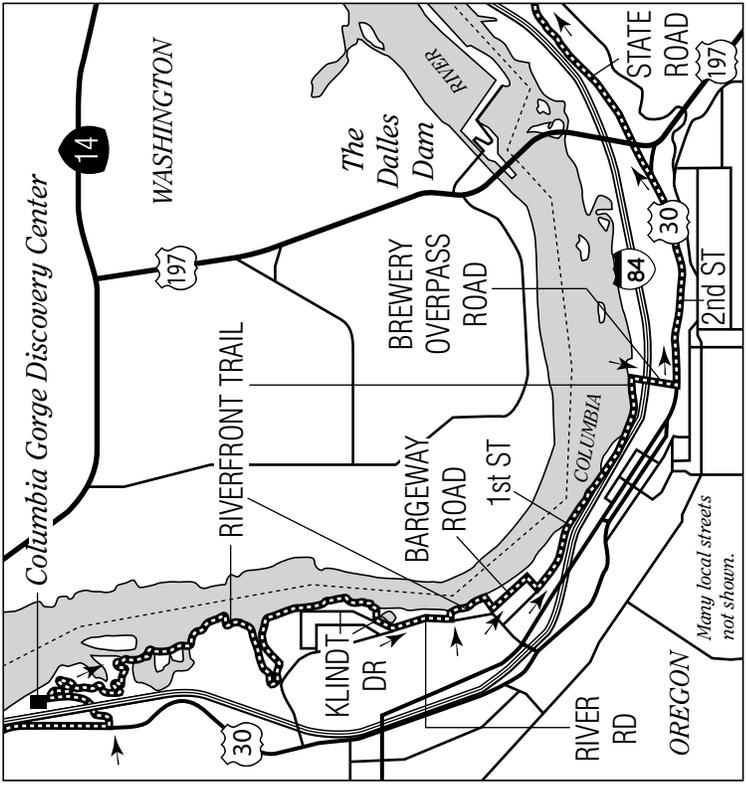
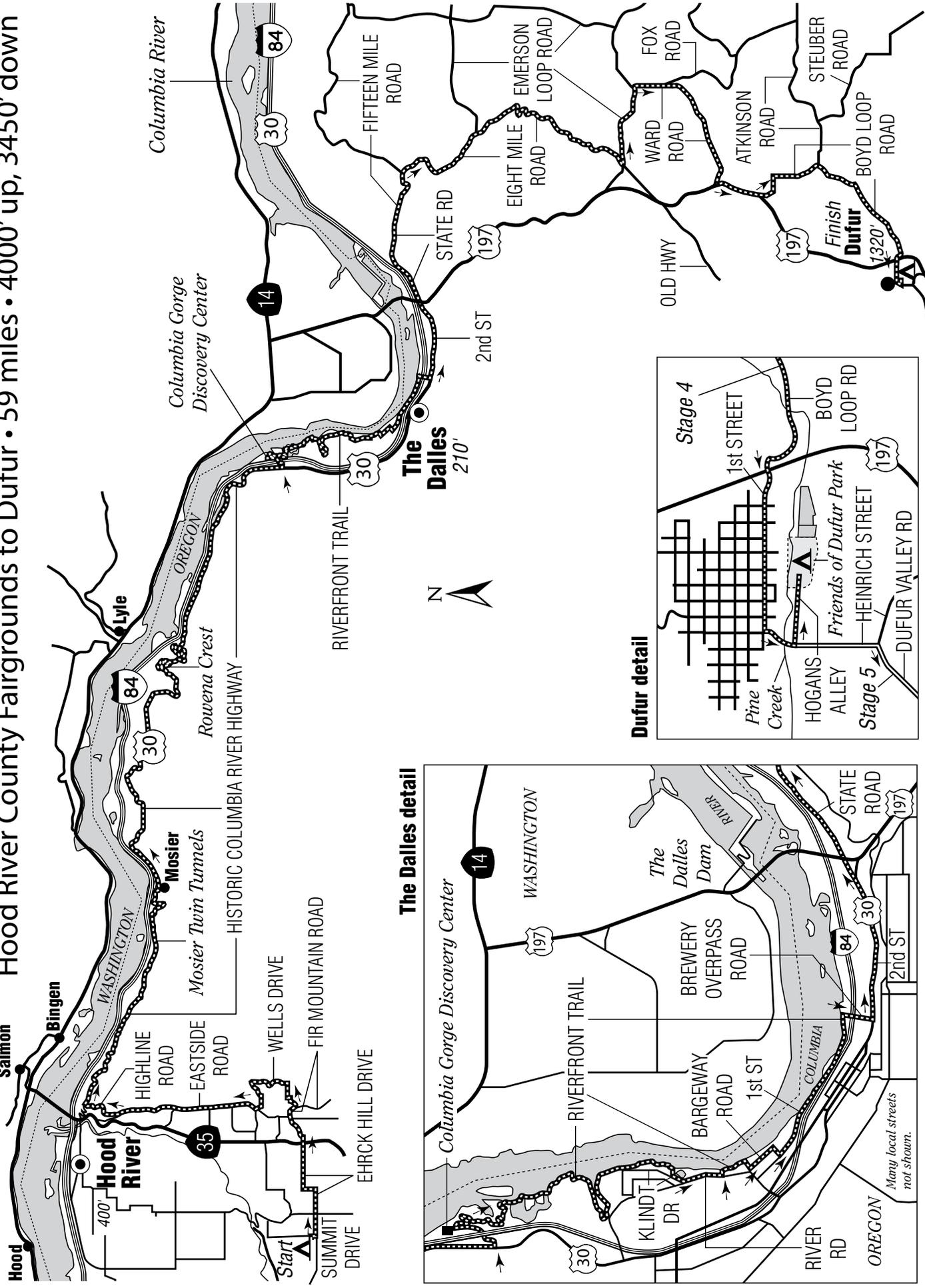
Leave Hood River County Fairgrounds.....	0.0
R on Wyeast Road	0.1
L on Summit Drive.....	0.2
Straight on Ehrick Hill Drive	0.6
Cross Hwy 35 to Fir Mountain Road	2.3
<i>2-mile shortcut: L on Eastside Road.....</i>	<i>3.0</i>
<i>Basic route continues on Fir Mtn Rd.</i>	
L on Wells Drive.....	3.3
R on Eastside Road.....	5.6
Bear R slightly on Highline Road.....	8.6
R on Columbia River Drive.....	9.6
Gate: becomes HCRH State Trail	10.1
<i>Mosier Twin Tunnels</i>	<i>13.6</i>
Gate: return to public road (still HCRH)	14.6
<i>Also known as Rock Creek Road.</i>	
L from Rock Creek Rd to Hwy 30 (HCRH)	15.2
<i>Town of Mosier.</i>	
R into Rowena Crest vista point.....	21.6
R on Hwy 30 (HCRH) (leave vista point)	21.9
L on Taylor-Frantz Road	28.9
<i>Follow sign to Columbia Gorge Discovery Center.</i>	
R on Riverfront Trail.....	29.3

L on Klindt Drive	32.8
L on River Road	32.9
L on Riverfront Trail	33.3
L on Bargeway Road	33.6
Bear R to stay on Bargeway Road	33.9
L on 1st Street	34.0
Straight on Riverfront Trail.....	34.7
<i>Road turns R under I-84.</i>	
Trail dumps out into marina parking lot	35.3
Thru lot to R on Brewery Overpass Road.....	35.5
L on 2nd Street (also Hwy 30)	35.8
Bear L slightly on State Road	37.0
State Road becomes Fifteen Mile Road.....	38.8
Straight on Eight Mile Road	40.3
<i>Fifteen Mile Road turns left.</i>	
<i>Do NOT take first L on Emerson Loop Rd</i>	<i>42.2</i>
L on Emerson Loop Road	47.0
R on Ward Road	48.9
L on Hwy 197.....	52.3
L on Boyd Loop Road (aka Boyd Market Rd)	52.4
Cross Hwy 197 to 1st Street	57.9
<i>Town of Dufur.</i>	
L on Main Street; becomes Heinrich Street...	58.4
L on Hogans Alley	58.5
Finish at Friends of Dufur Park.....	58.9



NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX + STAGE 4

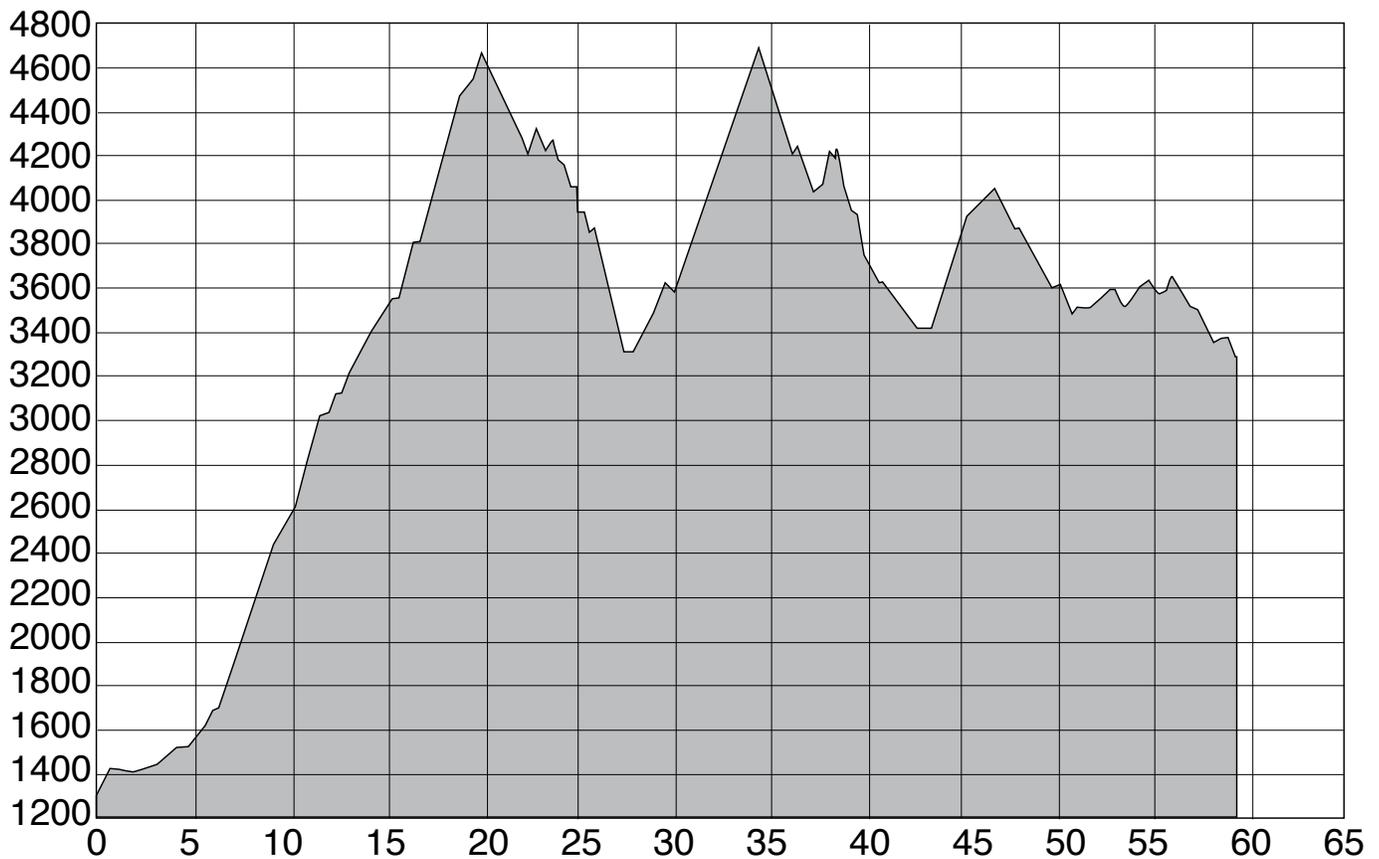
Hood River County Fairgrounds to Dufur • 59 miles • 4000' up, 3450' down



Stage 5: Dufur to Clackamas Lake

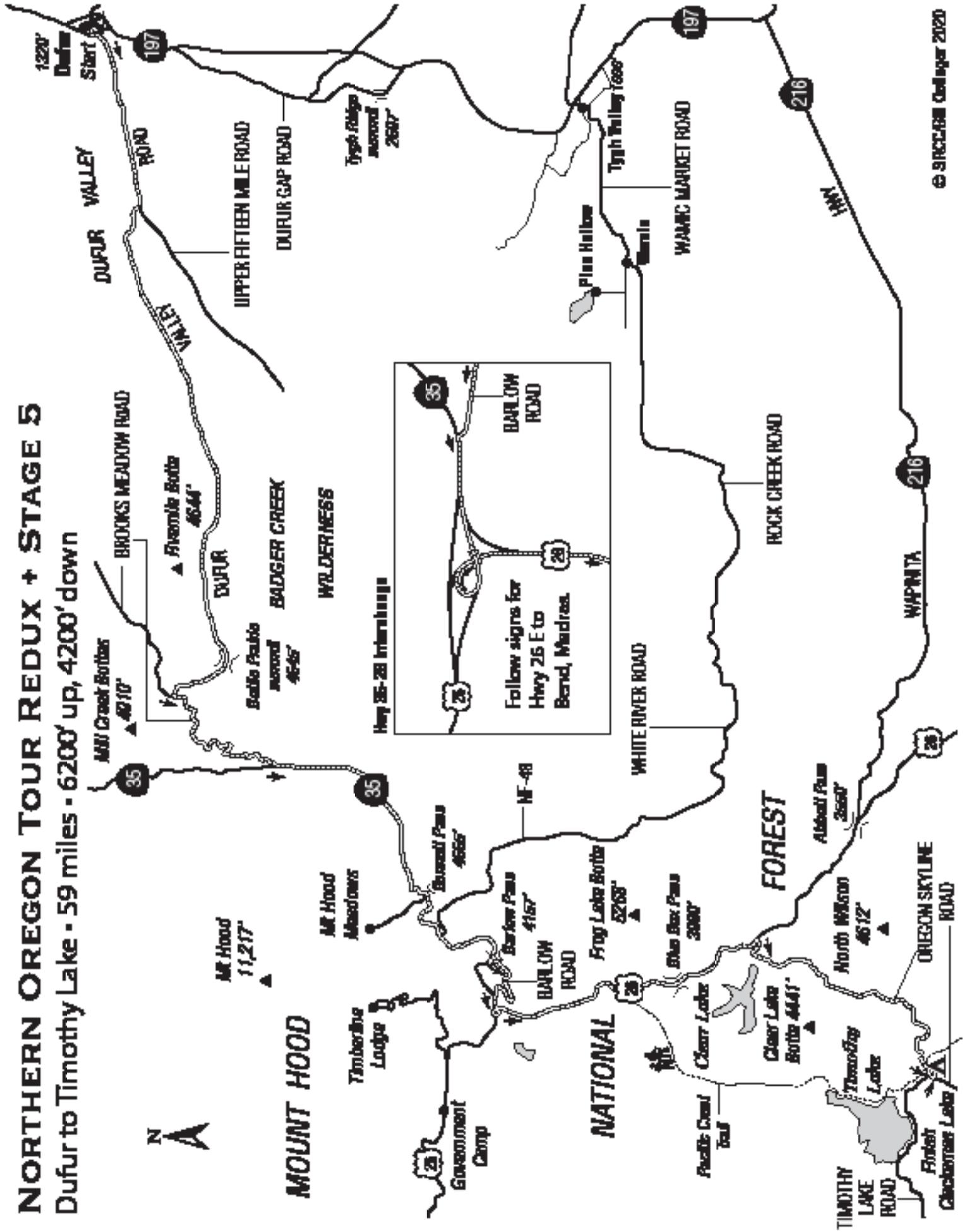
59 miles, 6200' up, 4200' down

Leave Dufur City Park	0.0
L on Heinrich Street	0.2
R on Dufur Valley Road.....	0.4
Bottle Prairie summit (4645').....	20.1
Bear L on Brooks Meadow Road.....	21.9
L on Hwy 35.....	27.1
Bennett Pass (4665')	34.1
Barlow Pass (4157')	37.8
L on Barlow Road (short bypass off hwy).....	38.0
L on Hwy 35.....	40.6
Follow cloverleaf merge onto Hwy 26 E	41.0
<i>Follow sign to Madras, Bend.</i>	
Blue Box Pass (3980')	47.0
R on NF-42 (Oregon Skyline Road).....	50.0
<i>Follow sign to Timothy Lake.</i>	
Bear L on NF-42 (Oregon Skyline Road)	58.3
L on Wilson Road	58.6
L into Clackamas Lake Campground.....	58.8
Finish at sites 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.	



NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX + STAGE 5

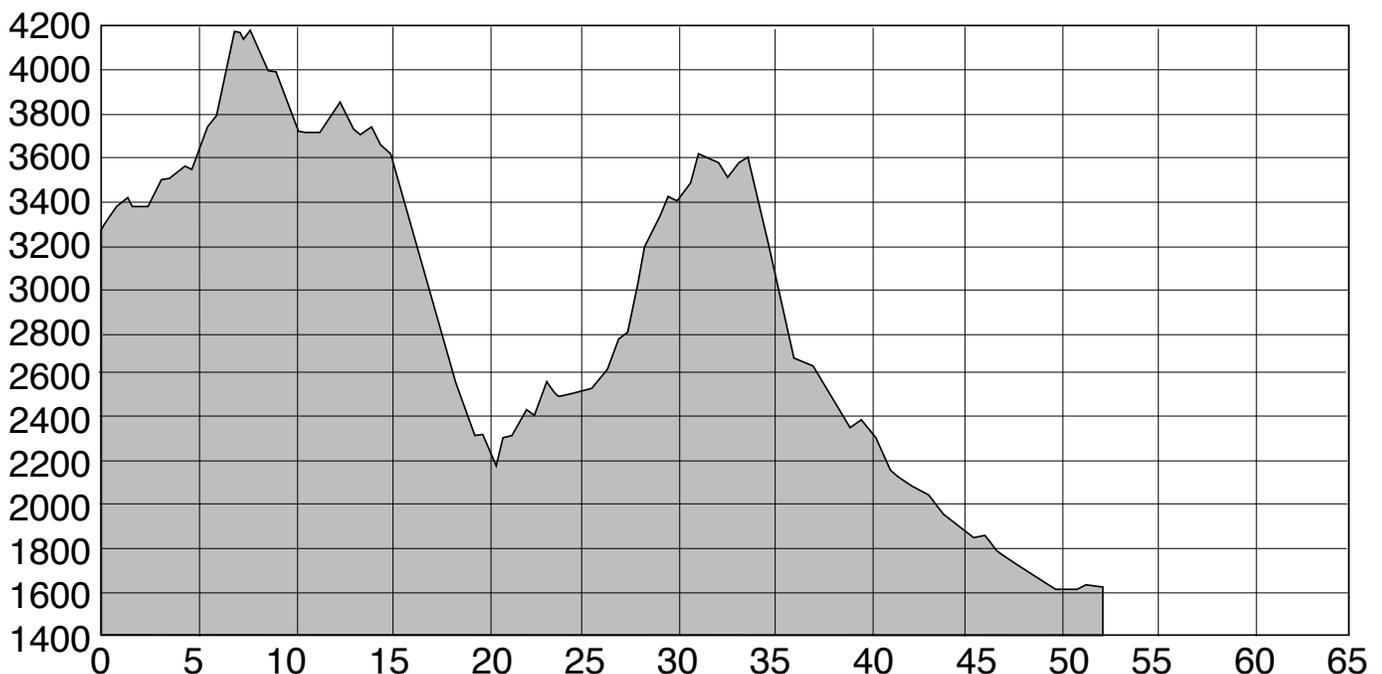
Dufur to Timothy Lake - 59 miles - 6200' up, 4200' down



Stage 6: Clackamas Lake to Detroit Lake

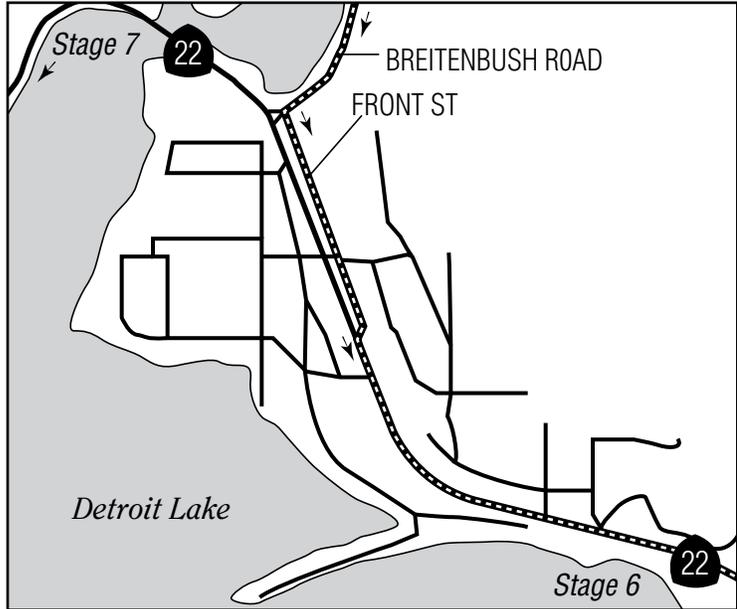
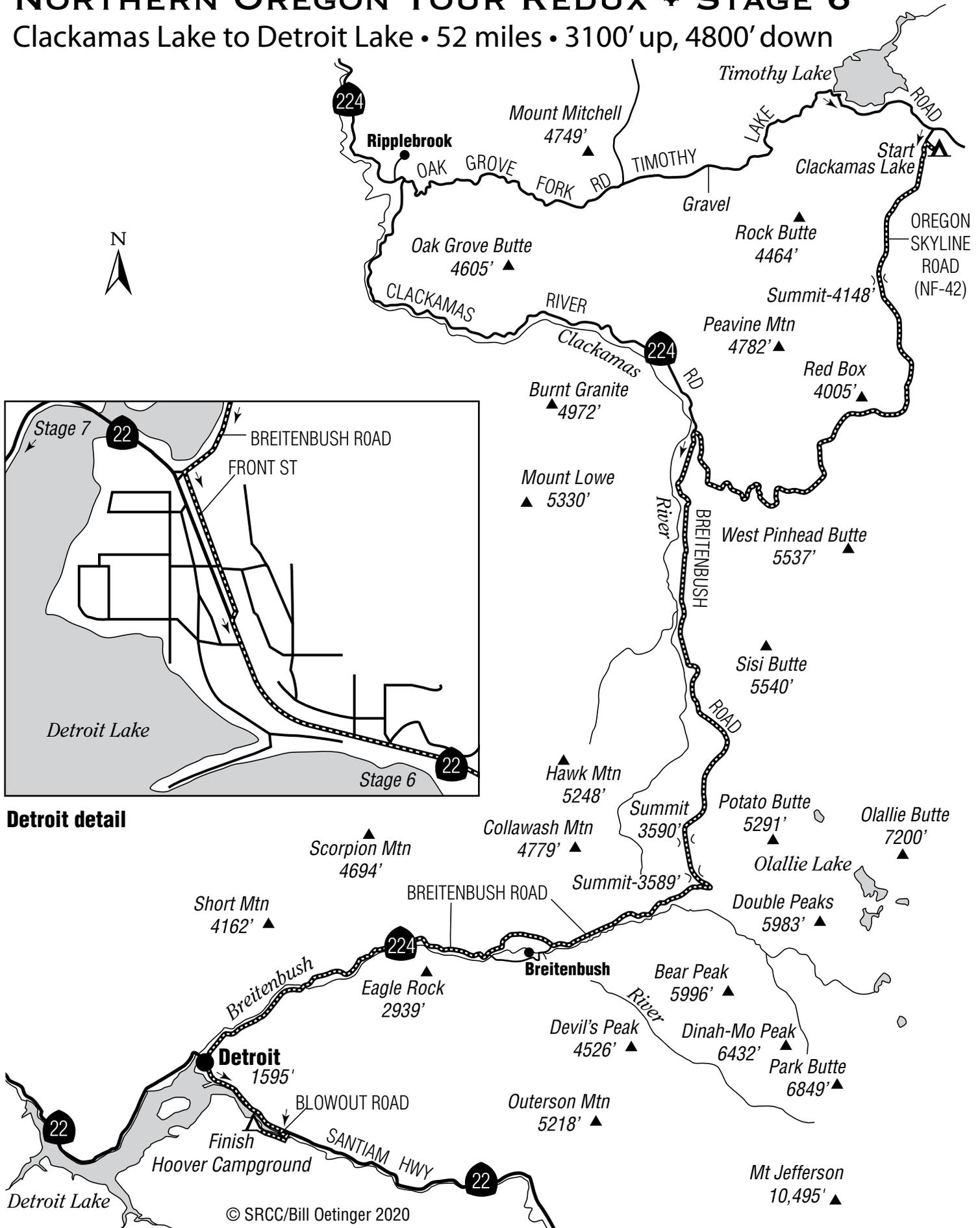
52 miles, 3100' up, 4800' down

Leave Clackamas Lake Campground..... 0.0
 R on Wilson Road 0.3
 L on National Forest Service Road 42 0.4
 Also known as Oregon Skyline Road.
 Summit (4162') 4.9
 Road narrows to single lane..... 10.0
 Bear L on NFS Road 200..... 10.5
 NFS Road 42 goes right and turns to gravel.
 CAUTION: wooden plank bridge with some wide
 gaps between boards at bottom of descent .. 17.3
 L on NFS Road 46, aka Breitenbush Road 18.2
 Summit (3590') 29.0
 Summit (3589') 31.3
 Big descent ahead...
 L on Front Street in town of Detroit..... 48.1
 L on Hwy 22 (Santiam Highway)..... 48.5
 R on Blowout Road 51.0
 R into Hoover USFS Camp 52.0
 Sites 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13.



NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX ★ STAGE 6

Clackamas Lake to Detroit Lake • 52 miles • 3100' up, 4800' down



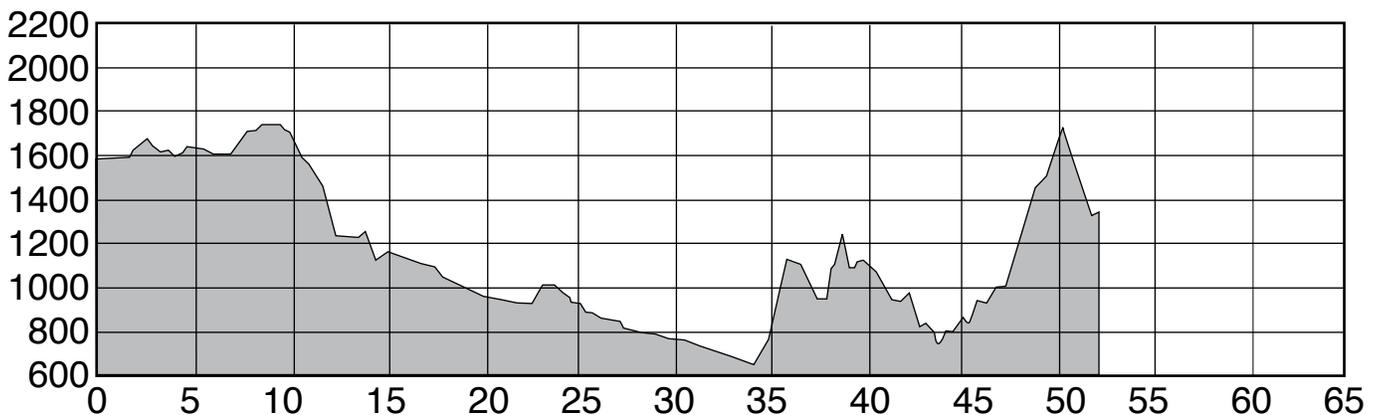
Detroit detail

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Stage 7: Detroit Lake to Silver Falls SP

52 miles, 2600' up, 2800' down

Leave Hoover Group Camp	0.0
L on Blowout Road	0.1
L on Hwy 22 (Santiam Hwy)	0.9
L on Horeb Road; town of Gates	20.8
Bear L on Sorbin Street.....	20.9
R on Gates School Road	21.2
<i>Follow sign to Mill City.</i>	
Bear R on Kingwood Avenue.....	21.9
Town of Mill City	25.1
L on Lyons-Mill City Drive.....	26.1
Town of Lyons.....	32.4
L on Hwy 22.....	33.7
R on Fern Ridge Road.....	33.7
R on Basl Hill Road	38.0
L on Coon Hollow Road	39.6
R on 170th Avenue	41.1
L on Triumph Road	41.8
R on Carter Road	43.1
R on Hwy 214 (Silver Falls Hwy).....	44.6
Enter Silver Falls State Park	59.6
R on road to Overnight Facilities	51.3
R into main park campground	51.6
Finish at campground	51.8
Sites 58, 59, 61, 65, 66, 82, 83, 84, 86, 90.	



NORTHERN OREGON TOUR REDUX + STAGE 7

Hoover Camp (Detroit Lake) to Silver Falls State Park

52 miles • 2600' up, 2800' down

