

CYCLING

2013 . GRAND JUNCTION . FRUITA . PALISADE

A GUIDE TO

ROAD & MOUNTAIN BIKING

IN MESA COUNTY, COLORADO

MY LUCKY 7:

The best trails to try if you are new to riding the area

EPIC LOOPS:

For riders who have some time and tenacity

TRAIL & CYCLING MAPS:

Pick your pleasure or have it both ways



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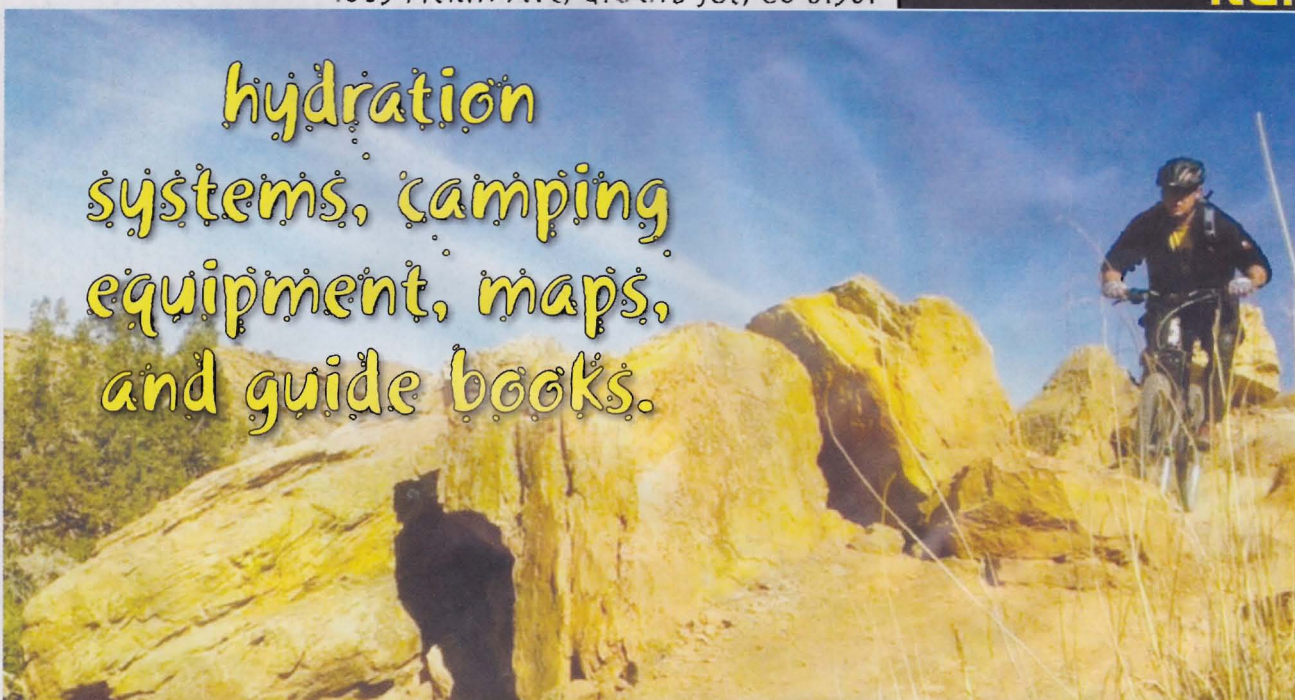
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ON THE COVER:
Australian Abigail Slingsby, a snowboard/ski instructor at Steamboat, tearing up the local trails.
Photo by Sarah Mah Withers

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Blazing new singletrack trails



COURTESY PHOTO

The COPMOBA gang getting ready to do some trailbuilding in Palisade.

BY SCOTT WINANS

We build trails, and we maintain them. COPMOBA is the “we” that I’m referring to — Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association.

If you ride a bike on trails in western Colorado, you’ve likely bumped into our funny acronym a time or two. We’ve been here nearly 30 years, and we’re focused on these trails.

Over the past couple of years, COPMOBA has been working on a new project. It’s sort of a super trail, one that you can’t believe you found on that sunny day, with tacky dirt beneath your tires, and legs and lungs feeling strong. The one that just a few minutes into it, you’re thinking to yourself “this rocks” as you carve turns and feather speed and pop off the cool feature you didn’t know was there a second ago.

COPMOBA did a few things: We worked

out, practiced skills and improved our core strength so we could lay down a better ride. But instead of a trail, we’re talking about a group of people here. We reached out, opened the doors wide, made calls, and invited a whole bunch of riders to get involved. We believe that the results are better when more people have a stake in the trails being made. More gets done, and it should best reflect the varied interests that exist in the group of riders in the area.

I think we’re blazing a neat new trail here.

The response has been good. We have a lot of new faces showing up at meetings and trail construction events, helping to plan and to envision and build the future of trails in the Grand Valley. More people are becoming involved, first hand, in the process. And that is so great. I say welcome, and thank you for sharing your time and enthusiasm to work at this process on this new “trail.”

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2012 was a busy year at Lake Wobegon.... wait a minute, wrong little idyllic hamlet. 2012 was a busy year in the Grand

Valley, as far as trail projects go. The highlights of local area projects for the year look something like this:

- Trail work wrapped up on the Palisade Rim trail on the bench above and east of Palisade. Thanks to the Town of Palisade for much work on many aspects including the parking area, and the Grand Junction Junior Service League for a great donation to create signage for the route.

- Work began on the planning and actual trails at the recently acquired Three Sisters property in the Tabeguache trailhead area. A huge thank you goes to the Mesa Land Trust for organizing and acquiring the property, and to Community Hospital for their over-the-top generous contribution of \$10,000 toward trails and development of the property.

- Work began and was not quite completed on a great new trail in the North Fruita Desert (NFD), with the support from the City of Fruita, REI, and involvement by a large number of new trail planners and builders (many from the local Endoholics organization). This trail will be completed this year, so look for an opening party soon!

- New mileage was added to the Mesa Top trail, high atop the Grand Mesa. This route is several years in the making, and work days are a lot of fun — a mix of trail work, camping, riding, good food, and friends. We’re near completion on this trail, thanks to the long-term efforts of several committed members and a lot of trail builders.

- The Mack Ridge trail at the Kokopelli area was extended & completed with a rocking route and a technical riding portion. Thanks to the rock-work crew for their expertise and vision.

- Trail maintenance occurred throughout the trail network. This is a critical aspect of maintaining the health of our trails — they can be loved/ridden to death without a lot of careful maintenance.

There were more projects, several in the



Montrose and Ridgway areas, that are great additions to the trail networks in those regions. The Ridgway Area Trails (RAT) chapter attained a significant step with the release of a proposal for a trail network near the town. Look for new trails there in the not-too-distant future.

FOCUS OF 2013

For 2013, our major focus will be on just a few items.

- Critically important is a comment period on the recently released BLM Resource Management Plan. This comment period ends June 24, and it is the opportunity for the trails community to provide comment on the BLM's baseline management policy choices for the coming two decades for our local field office. COPMOBA is holding several meetings to help bikers and trail users consider the RMP process and proposals, and to provide important feedback to the BLM. Please see the COPMOBA webpage for further details and attend at least one meeting.

- Trail maintenance will be a big job this year. Large user numbers are impacting our trails, and we need to make some headway on this part of the process.

- Grand Valley area new trail work will continue at Three Sisters, NFD, and the Mesa Top. New trail planning for future work is always ongoing!

One consistent theme that you'll notice in most of the above activities is the strong theme of cooperation among COPMOBA and many other organizations. That's important, and chief among those partners is the BLM and the National Forest Service where many of these trails reside on public lands. We appreciate their efforts and partnership in developing these valuable trails.

COPMOBA lives and breathes by the volunteer time and energy of its members. If you're a trail user, please get involved and donate your efforts to the process. There are MANY ways to be involved, and many do not include digging in the dirt. Attend a local chapter meeting to find out how you can take part, and help to create and maintain the trails in your area that we all rely on and



COURTESY PHOTO | COPMOBA.ORG
Volunteers with COPMOBA spent a day building and improving the new Mesa Top trail on the Grand Mesa.

value so highly. Help make COPMOBA a stronger and more focused organization, to plan, build, and maintain the world class trails that we have in our community. ☉

Thank you & see you on the trail!

Scott Winans is president of the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association.

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My Lucky 7

The best of the best in area trails,
according to longtime local rider

BY KEITH KITCHEN

Every trail in the Grand Valley needs to be ridden, some more than once. While I try to vary my rides, I've got it down to seven trails which are my favorites. Whether it's with friends or solo, here is a list of my "Lucky 7" trails:

HOLY CROSS (LUNCH LOOPS)

Many people consider Holy Cross to be the top in the valley. Holy Cross is a very challenging trail built with drops, ledges, rock obstacles and steep sections that will test you both on and off the bike. While every obstacle or move is doable, few riders ever clear the whole trail on a single ride. Access is usually from Pet-e-Kes and Tabeguache Trail.

BUTTERKNIFE (LUNCH LOOPS)

Head up Little Park Road to the first parking area past the Gunny Loop trailhead. An awesome combination of ATV-width trail, single-track and fire road awaits. At the trailhead, start with Twist and Shout; it's flowing, fast and fun. Once you hit the fence, singletrack and painted lines on open rock rule the day. When you get to the road, you have a choice to make. Ride up the old BLM road back to the trailhead or (my favorite) turn around and go back the way you came.

PALISADE RIM TRAIL

Just to the east of Palisade is some fun singletrack and awesome views of the Grand Valley and a bunch of petroglyphs. Even though this is one of the newest trails in the valley, it is also one of the best. Starting at the bottom of Rapid Creek, the trail goes up around the spillway and winds its way to the top. The first couple of miles are steep and technical climbing, but remember you get to descend this on the way out. Once on top there are two loops to ride. The short loop has the petroglyphs on it. This is also where the long loop connects. Both loops can be ridden either direction.

ZIPPITY-DO-DA (18 ROAD)

A trail for people who love fast, flowing trails with steep pitches and lots of exposure. Start from the lower parking area to Primecut to Frontside to Zippity-do-da for an awesome ride. Once on Frontside, be ready for fast, swoopy roller coaster-style singletrack. If you think it has been fun so far, Zippity has more exposure with faster, steeper roller coaster-style singletrack. Make sure to have your game face on for this trail.



COURTESY PHOTO | KEITH KITCHEN

Nick Bierman of Grand Junction riding somewhere at the Lunch Loops.

PRIME CUT TO KESSEL RUN (18 ROAD)

These two trails are some of the area's firsts. They are short rides, but worth several trips per visit. Prime Cut is a fun, winding way up, full of mild obstacles and flowing singletrack. Once to the top, you go down Kessel Run. This trail is a cross between singletrack and a slalom course. It's a winding, twisting trail full of jumps and fast turns. This trail is good for riders of all levels. It's a trail to help riders learn the fine art of descents.

HORSETHIEF BENCH (KOKOPELLI)

This is quite possibly one of the finest trails anywhere. Start up Mary's Loop to the Horsethief drop-in. At this point get off your bike and look over the drop-in. The first two-thirds is rideable for advanced riders. The bottom one-third is double black diamond. The trade off for walking is some of the sweetest singletrack anywhere. This is a fast, flowing, bermed trail with plenty of challenging obstacles. It's mainly a blue-rated trail with sections of black thrown in for fun. It's well worth the trip.

MOORE FUN (KOKOPELLI)

Once done with Horsethief Bench, continue up Mary's Loop to Moore Fun. This trail is one of the best of the best, many locals say. The toughest of the entire Kokopelli Loops, Moore Fun offers tight lines stretched out along the ridgeline. If you love rocks, ledges, climbing, scary descents and heart-pounding fun, then Moore Fun is for you. ☉

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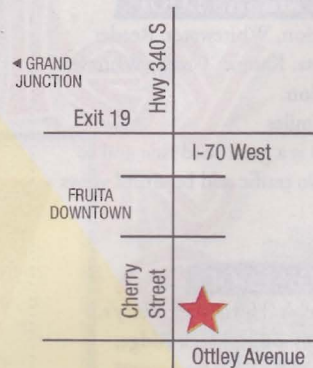
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Epic loops *from your front door*

BY CHRIS BROWN

The latest craze in cycling is the dreaded "Gravel Grinder" ride — a combination of road and dirt cycling for a longer time period than anybody should be on the seat of a bike.

The following is a list of loops originating in Mesa County that you could ride from your front doorstep should you decide to roll the road less traveled. I will give you the highlights and let you connect the dots and the water stops. All of these rides could be done on a mountain bike, but some are also suited for road or cross bikes.

Epic rides are for those who have to conquer despair before they can respect companionship. Is it for bragging rights or low self-esteem? I don't know. Perhaps it's a genetic mutation; regardless, they must let the monster out. Smoke 'em if you got 'em.

THE LITTLE MESAS LOOP

• Grand Junction, Whitewater, Reeder Mesa, Purdy Mesa, Kannah Creek, Whitewater, Grand Junction.

Distance: 32 miles

My take: This is a great road ride and so close to home. No traffic and beautiful views of the Mesa.

MARY'S LOOP LOOP

• Rustlers, Mary's, Horsethief, Mary's, Steve's, Lions, Troy Built, Mack Ridge, Moore Fun.

Distance: 30.95 miles

My take: Formerly the Ruby Canyon Loopy 50, take the ride through all the mountain bike trails at Mary's Loop in the Kokopelli Trails system. If you ride them in this order, they all connect.

SUNDAY-MORNING-MEET-ME-FOR-LUNCH RIDE

• Grand Junction, Palisade, Horse Mountain, Lands End, Whitewater, Tabeguache Trail, Bangs Canyon, Lunch Loop

ending at Dos Hombres on the Redlands

Distance: 43 miles

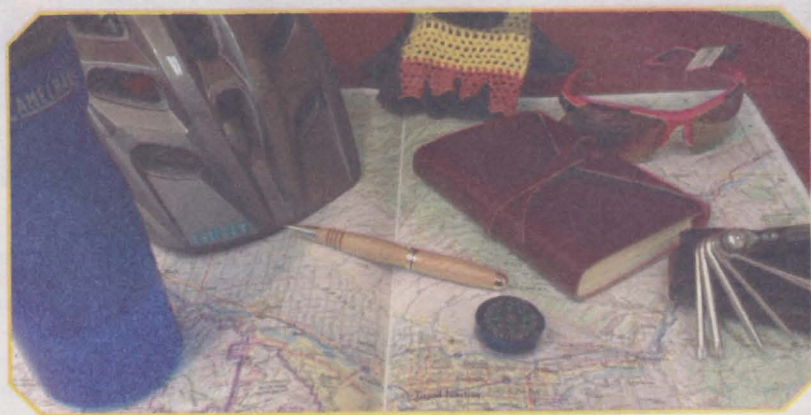
My take: You'll notice that every great ride ends with a big eat. It's nice to meet up with the family there and share your adventure stories. We made a rule in our family. No dinners out unless you have done something great that day. Big adventures make for great dinner fodder conversation.

Road to Fruita, up the Monument (west side), down the east side of the Monument to Dos Hombres, Up Little Park Road, Glade Park Store, down the east side of the Monument, Lunch Loop parking lot.

Distance: 61 Miles

BOOKCLIFF/COLLBRAN LOOP

• Downtown Main Street, 25 Road to the top of the Book Cliffs, V 2/10 Road,



COURTESY PHOTOS | CHRIS BROWN

Map out your epic loop before you pedal off.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.

— Robert Frost, 1920

THE DIRTY MONUMENT LOOP

• Grand Junction, Colorado National Monument, Glade Park, North on 16.5 Rd to the high point of the Monument, down the hill, Fruita, bike path, Grand Junction.

Distance: 54 miles

My take: Don't have one.

DeBeque, I-70, V Road, Collbran, Plateau Canyon, Palisade, Grand Junction, Downtown Main Street.

Distance: 102 miles.

My take: I have done pieces of this ride. I'm looking forward to putting this one in the can this summer.

MONUMENT/GLADE PARK FIGURE 8 LOOP

• Lunch Loop parking lot, South Camp

THE THIS-RIDE-SUCKS LOOP

• Grand Junction, Whitewater, Lands End, Town of Mesa, Plateau Canyon, Palisade, Dos Hombres in Clifton.

Distance: 108 miles

My take: I have made two attempts at this ride in 2012. I have yet to complete it. Some tips for success: Don't start at 11 a.m. Don't attempt it with a fever. Don't ride it on a 102 degree day. And don't do any combination of the aforementioned three blunders.

GARBLANCSA

• Mesa Mall, Fruita, walk Pollock Bench, Black Ridge, Monument, Tabeguache Trail, Whitewater, Lands End, Grand Mesa down into Palisade, Stage Coach, Book Cliffs, Mesa Mall.

Distance: 127 miles

My take: Garblanca, or the circumference of the Grand Valley, was invented by local cyclist Nate Wilson. Three years ago after Wilson completed this ride, he got home and immediately went to a baby shower. Nate puts the "man" in a Manwich meal. So good.

TCT LOOP

• Grand Junction, Rangely, Meeker, Grand Junction.

Distance: 249 miles

My take: Rangely offers Douglas Pass and between Rangely and Meeker is a huge



lake that lasts for miles with no support and relentless wind. Meeker offers a historic hotel and steakhouse. After Meeker, it's all downhill back to Grand Junction — easy!

This ride terrified me on paper, so I went and drove it to feel better about it. Now I'm horrified.

For the first time in my life, I can hear my lips whispering: "I don't know if you can do that." This seems to be all the more reason to

actually ride it.

You've heard of the Triple Bypass in Denver. This is a Triple Coronary Thrombosis Ride — a double century into the wind. ☹️

For more details and/or directions for the epic rides listed, contact Chris Brown, of Brown Cycles, 549 Main St., at 970-245-7939.

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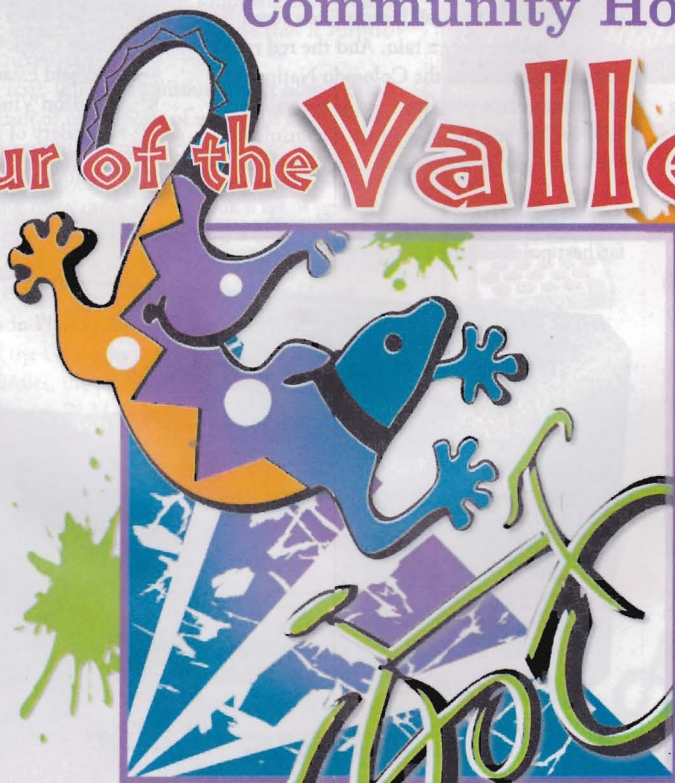
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PALISADE SINGLETRACK

Ride and discover the RIM

BY SCOTT WINANS

The Palisade Rim Trail has quickly become a favorite of many riders in the Grand Valley. The final sections of trail were completed in 2012, and a few remaining details will be completed in 2013. The trail itself is an engaging and rewarding ride that quickly takes riders off of the valley floor and up to the two benches that not only overlook the town of Palisade and the colorful orchards and vineyards below, but also offer a broad view of the entire valley and the Bookcliff range.

When you ride in Palisade, many trails begin with a climb, and the Palisade Rim Trail does exactly that. From the banks of the Colorado River, a series of climbing meanders and switchbacks will get your heart pumping and expose you to some hidden hoodoos as you climb to the level of the first bench.

When you finally approach the rim, the expansive views of the valley below, the meandering river, and the southward face of the Bookcliffs are impressive. The route flirts with the edge of the Rim briefly before offering up its first junction. This bench holds the first loop of the route, and it provides riding both along the rim and inland. Riding either direction on this lower loop offers up great trail experiences, though with a different tempo and feel based on your chosen direction.

At the apex of the lower loop, you can experience several panels of ancient petroglyphs on a typically sunny south-facing rock wall. I imagine the common person documenting their experience here ages ago, enjoying the warm sun on their back as they worked.

From this point, you can depart to the outer loop, which begins with a climb to the second bench. This loop is longer, and it has some great Rim exposure. Poking along the Rim edge with its fractured rock features,

lichen-covered monoliths, sheer drop-offs, and views worth pausing for, it is a sublime experience if you take the time to enjoy it. And again, this loop also rides nicely in either direction, so make a couple of trips to try it out each way.

Departing the Rim area, the route entices riders to the base of the steeper ridgeline to the East. Traversing its way along the base of the ridge and continuing to climb, you'll eventually reach the high-point of the entire Palisade Rim Trail. Pause for a moment to digest the view. You look down on the top of the Bookcliff range and Horse Mountain. Facing you, a few miles away, the slickrock face of the Ribbon Trail gleams like a jewel in the sunshine after a rain. And the red rock terrain and spires of the Colorado National Monument face you from across the valley. And the prominent nose of the peninsula of the Rim right above the town of Palisade is a striking feature.

As you begin your return trip from the farthest points of the route, it's generally a



COURTESY PHOTO | SCOTT WINANS
Sights and scenes from the Palisade Rim Trail.

PALISADE POST-RIDE STOPS

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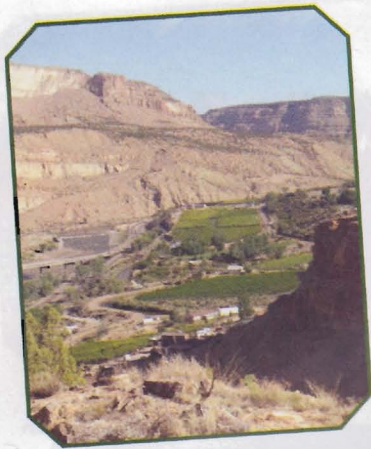
- Inari's Bistro
- The Palisade Café
- Mumzels Crumpets & Coffee Shop
- The Red Rose Café
- The Palisade Brewery
- Diorio's Pizza

LIBATIONS:

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- The Palisade Brewery
- Peach Street Distillers

WINERIES:

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- DeBeque Canyon Winery
- Varaison Vineyards & Winery
- Grand River Vineyards
- Plum Creek Winery
- Garfield Estates Vineyards & Winery
- Carlson Vineyards
- Meadery of the Rockies



COURTESY PHOTO | TRACY DVORAK
Spectacular view atop the Palisade Rim Trail.

downhill grade. You worked for it, so enjoy the mix of groovy, flowy trail and some technical sections, and don't get too distracted by the precipice that's beside you at times. Some short sections have exposure that could be dangerous if you don't mind your manners.

Like most riders and hikers, I've enjoyed this trail mostly in the spring through fall seasons, when one can experience anything from hot and

dry conditions to a step or two cooler than the valley below. Seldom will you come across many other riders or hikers, so the solitude can be one of the very enjoyable aspects of the outing. While the dry times of year are certainly the most common periods of use, and wet periods are a definite NO-GO time due to mud and trail damage, it's the winter season that offers a real departure from the normal experience on this trail. Most likely you'll find footprints as someone has blazed the trail since the last snowfall, but not always. It's fun to put down first tracks on new snow on one of your favorite routes. Some of the sections of trail are pretty steep, so some carrying might be expected, but the rewards are awesome. Lines that seem so apparent as you ride a dry trail dissolve into faint pattern through trees and rock outcroppings under a snowfall. But following the route is possible, and it yields a perspective on the landscape that is surprising and rewarding in its newness.

As you enjoy this new trail, think for a minute about how it came to be. This route is the result of many years of work and effort by numerous people and organizations. An old social trail that was in place for many years was the genesis for the Palisade Rim Trail as you hike or ride it today. But getting from there to here took a lot of perseverance, cooperation, investment, creativity, and hard work.

The local bike shop, Rapid Creek Cycles, pushed the plan forward, along with partners in the Town of Palisade, the Bureau of Land Management, the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), REI, and the Grand Junction Junior Service League. Over several years and hurdles, the plan and the trail came together. Many COPMOBA volunteers, BLM employees, and the Western Colorado Conservation Corps moved dirt and rock and created fun with their hands as they built this route. Please enjoy it, respect it as you use it, and make time to help out with trail maintenance and construction around the area.

There are many ways to help out, and you can find information about trail projects at the COPMOBA website: www.copmoba.org. For the inside trail information on the Palisade Rim Trail and other trails in the area, visit Rapid Creek Cycles in downtown Palisade. The Palisade Rim Trail is one of the few trails in the valley that are a quick ride from a town center, so enjoy the opportunity. A nice meal and a relaxing time at one of the local Palisade venues is a great way to end the day. ●

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What's up with the Sisters?

BY KRISTINA KITTELSON

In case you haven't heard of us, Singletrack and Skinny Tire Sisters of Western Colorado is nonprofit cycling group for women who love to mountain and road bike in Western Colorado. Local women riders formed the group about two years ago. Our mission is to encourage women of ALL abilities — from novice to expert — to participate in the sport of cycling and to connect the community of female cyclists in western Colorado.

We have been busy this winter with many activities to support our mission and goals! One of our goals is to educate women through skill, bike maintenance, and bike health-related clinics. Over the winter we held a Wenches, Wrenches & Wine bike repair series. Several local bike shops hosted the events, including Brown Cycles, Rapid Creek Cycles and Sports, Grassroots Cycles, Ruby Canyon Cycles and The Bike Shop. We appreciate their support!

Pat Kennedy served Talon Winery and St. Kathryn Cellars wines as we focused on different skills each clinic, such as fixing a flat tire or repairing a broken chain. James Wilson of MTB Strength Training Systems presented a class on maintaining winter bike fitness. John Weirath of The Bicycle Studio hosted a road bike fit clinic and will be doing another for mountain bikes in April. Nancy Williams Rizzo organized a "Pilates for the Cyclist" class with Jona Bollinger, a physical therapist, certified Pilates instructor, and former road and mountain bike

racers. Because we also like to be social and have fun, the group held a women's mountain bike movie fundraiser at Cavalcade in Fruita premiering two films highlighting women in mountain biking as well as two videos of local female riders produced by Singletrack Sisters Krissy Steele and Sarah Mah Withers. Member Brittany Markert organized an evening at the Palette in Grand Junction in February, where we created a painting of a rustic cruiser bike. It was such

"I personally was never really that confident mountain biking. Going with the girls on a few weekly rides helped me build my confidence to ride any level of trail."

— Singletrack Sister Brittany Markert



COURTESY PHOTOS | KRISTINA KITTELSON
If you see a gang of lady riders barreling down the trail, it might be the Sisters so step aside.



Singletrack Sisters and area bike shops host monthly bike clinics called "Wenches, Wrenches & Wine" for members.



The Sisters also host weekly "no drop" road rides. Check your local Sisters listings for times and dates at www.singletracksisters.com.

a success; we did it again in early March!

If you missed out on any of these awesome events, not to worry! The group has lots planned for the 2013 ride season. Our weekly group mountain bike rides began in late March and rotate between Kokopelli, Lunch Loop and 18 Road trails. We also have several group road rides for all abilities including a monthly "Earn Your Jersey" road ride series focusing on different skills. Another of our goals is to provide an entry point for the beginner rider, and new this

CONTACT THE SISTERS

For dates, times, locations and details for all the above activities and other throughout the year, join our group on Facebook or go to www.singletracksisters.com. For more information, call Kristina Kittelson at 970-210-0389.

year we will offer a monthly beginner mountain bike skills clinic as well as a monthly beginner mountain bike ride. Because the downhill/freeride session was such a hit last year, we are bringing it back the first Tuesday of the month beginning in April. Desert Rat Tours will provide the shuttle.

The Wenches, Wrenches & Wine clinics will continue through the summer at Rapid Creek Cycles and Sports in Palisade. New this year includes plans for destination trips to Moab and Crested Butte and high country rides in July. Another group goal is to support local trail and bicycle advocacy initiatives. This year we will be helping with a trail development weekend on the Grand Mesa to support our local trail advocacy

group, the Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Association (COPMOBA). And if that wasn't enough, Singletrack and Skinny Tire Sisters jerseys will be available soon! We'd like to thank our jersey sponsors including Community Hospital, Bicycle Outfitters, Rocky Mountain Orthopaedic Associates, The Bicycle Studio, Antonelli's Advanced Automotive, The Bike Shop, Julie M. Gillis, DDS, Singletrack Trails, Melinda McCaw Media, Hot Tomato Cafe, and Copper Club Brewery!

We will have many other events scheduled throughout the year as well. And don't forget:

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KNOW BEFORE YOU RIDE

- Stay on the trail. Singletrack is singletrack; it's not meant to be 5-feet wide.
- Yield to pedestrians (hikers) and equestrians (those on horseback). Also, yield to uphill cycling traffic if you are going downhill. They have a harder time starting up if they have to stop.
- Be nice to animals and wildlife. Don't run over anything, chase anything, taunt anything or give anything the finger. They were here first.
- Don't make a mess on the trails or at the trailhead. Take "Leave No Trace" one step further and "Make it nicer than before you came."
- Be friendly. Spread good vibes on the trail or don't bother to ride. Everyone is here to have a good time.

SOURCE:
bouldermountainbike.com



COURTESY PHOTO | SARAH MAH WITHERS
Please observe trail etiquette when riding the trails.

Trail etiquette in the desert

BY SARAH MAH WITHERS

Trail etiquette is important; it keeps the trails in good shape and provides a pleasurable experience for everyone. Soil on and around many Grand Valley trails is fragile, and when there's a lack of moisture, they become even more fragile.

These fragile soils in the desert are actually growing organisms, called cryptobiotic soils. They consist of algae and lichen and essentially stabilize the soil for plant life to take seed. Without it, much of the sand and soil would blow away. There are simple actions that all trail users can do to help preserve the trails and great outdoor experience.

First of all, one of the biggest trail-widening issues is the passing and yielding practices of the trail users. Mountain bikers are to yield to all other trail users and the rider headed downhill yields to the rider climbing. When passing or yielding, the object is to stay on the trail; to yield one must only move the tires to the outside portion of the trail tread and lean the bike to the outside of the trail, so that the handle bars are well away from blocking the trail.

To pass, please stay on the trail, while it might seem "courteous" to cut

out and around the hiker/biker to allow for a lot of space, it widens the trail and disturbs the fragile soils. And remember, when encountering horses, communicating with the riders is important to know; you will need to dismount or simply ride slowly. Either way, talking also lets the animal know that you are a person and not a predator.

Widening of the trails also happens when hikers and bikers cut the corners or go around an obstacle. Trail in this area has been built and planned to be sustainable and to offer different experiences. Sustainable trails are those that are built in such a way that they can withstand years of use and rain with minimal maintenance. Cutting the corners will create detours that can create water damage with the next rain, making the trail unsustainable. Going around obstacles is another way to widen the trail, but it also changes the nature of the trail itself. Think of it this way, if a black diamond mogul ski hill is groomed to a green, the experience for the expert skier has been destroyed. Of course, the next year or storm offers the chance for the moguls to resurface, but it's not the case of the black-diamond features of mountain bike trails. Once they are gone, they're gone. If you cannot ride an obstacle, it is far more noble to walk it than to ride around it. You are keeping the integrity of the trail intact and preserving the fragile soils.

Finally, a smile or wave to other trail users is a great way to keep our trails friendly. We all use the trails to escape the hustle and bustle of the world, and if we keep that in mind then we can keep the stress at the trailhead and off the trails. ☺

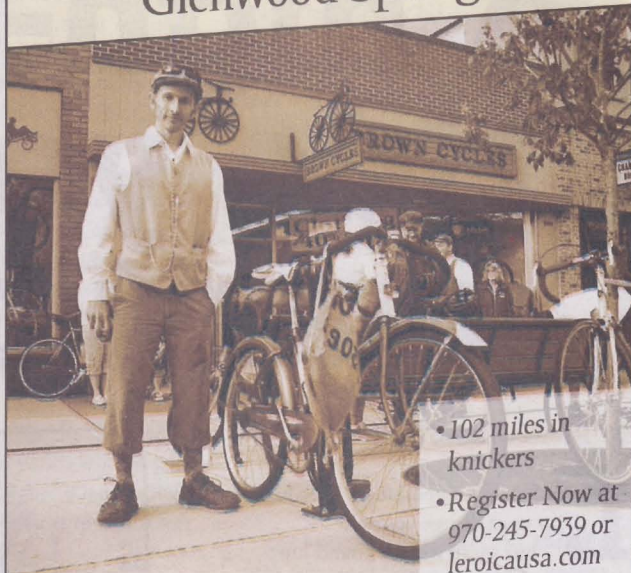
Local blogroll & favorite biking-related websites

This is a list of sites we're lovin' that embrace, embody and embolden our local cycling scene, not to mention provide help and resources.

- bicyclestudiogj.com
- bikeabout.net
- bikejames.com
- boardandbuckle.com
- browncycles.com
- commandonlondon.blogspot.com
- copmoba.org
- cyclingjunction.com
- desertrattours.com
- dirtanddogs.blogspot.com
- fruitasingletrack.com
- fruitamountainbike.com
- gjbicycles.com
- gjcyclists.blogspot.com
- gjjunkride.com
- grandvalleybmx.com
- grandvalleyyouthcycling.blogspot.com
- grassroots-cycles.com
- gvtrails.com
- hottomatocafe.com
- livetrainrace.com
- ltrsports.com
- otesports.com
- rapidcreekcycles.com
- rossschnell.com
- rubycanyoncycles.com
- single-tracks.com
- singletracksisters.com
- thebikeshopgj.com
- threesisterspark.org

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TURKEY FLATS

A high-altitude ride you don't want to miss

BY RYAN CRANSTON

Looking for something a little higher up to challenge yourself?

Just south west of Grand Junction, high above the Colorado National Monument, exists such a place and it's only a 45 minute drive from Downtown Grand Junction.

Turkey Flats Trail is located on Piñon Mesa (known as Glade Park to many). It's one of my favorite trails, and it's surprisingly close to town.

The trailhead is at about 9,000 feet of elevation, and it tops out at nearly 10,000 feet. You'll be riding in Spruce, Douglas Fir, and Aspen forest the whole time. It's usually about 20 degrees cooler than the valley.

There is ample (free!) dispersed camping available in close proximity to the trails, so it makes a great overnight riding/camping destination.

TO GET THERE

Take Monument Road up the east entrance to the Colorado National Monument (you don't have to pay if you tell them you're heading to Glade Park) and turn left after Cold Shivers Point to Glade Park. At the Glade Park Store, head south on 16 road. The pavement will turn into a dirt road. Pass Mud Springs Campground and stay right at the fork. Continue beyond Fruita Res #2. Park across from Turkey Flats trailhead. The parking area is about 10.4 miles from the Glade Park Store.

GET STARTED

Climb up Turkey Flats until it meets Haypress Trail in a pretty meadow. Turn left and



COURTESY PHOTO | RYAN CRANSTON

continue down Turkey Flats to Forest Road 400.2c (Reservoir 1 Road). Turn right, and climb up to Fruita Reservoir #1 on the road. Singletrack begins again at the dam of the lake, and you will skirt the west side of the reservoir on Reservoir 1 Trail (663). Climb up this short, and in some places steep, mountain singletrack. You will top out on a high ridge at an intersection with the Ridge ATV Trail (646).

SHORT RIDE OPTION

Turn right (west). Pedal a couple of miles until you see Haypress Trail (662) on your right. This is where you will begin the descent back down to your car. But before you do, pass the trail and continue up the Ridge Trail for another 1/4 mile. You will be rewarded with a huge view of the La Sal Mountains, Uncompahgre Plateau, Gateway, and on a clear day even some of the San Juans. This is a great place for a snack before descending Haypress. Blast down Haypress and numerous creek crossings to the intersection with Turkey Flats. Take a left, and after the short climb out of the meadow, enjoy the wonderful two-mile descent back to your car. This loop is about

10 miles and 1,000 feet of climbing.

LONG RIDE OPTION

Go directly across the Ridge Trail and take the Black Pine Trail (647). This trail is less often used, but it's a fantastic addition to make a longer ride possible. You will drop into a canyon on the south side of the ridge and then follow it down stream (east) to Black Pine Reservoir. At this point, the trail joins an old ATV trail. Continue east until you intersect with South 18 Road. Turn left (North) and climb a couple miles up 18 road back to the top of the ridge.

Turn left (west) on the Ridge ATV Trail (646) and take it all the way back past the Reservoir 1/Black Pine intersection, until you see Haypress Trail (662) on your right. Head down Haypress to the intersection with Turkey Flats (just like the short ride option) and take a left, which will get you back to your car. This figure 8 loop will give you about 17 miles and close to 2,300 feet of climbing.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

High elevation: 9,000-10,000 feet. Make sure you are prepared for rapidly changing

weather, take plenty of water and all emergency tools/supplies you might need.

This is a multi-use trail often used by hikers and horseback riders. Be respectful of other trail users and give them the right of way. When encountering horseback riders, please dismount your bike, talk to the horseback rider, and try to stand on the downhill side of the trail if possible. Bug spray and sunscreen are both needed here! ☉

For more information on this and other high mountain rides near Grand Junction, come down and see us at Ruby Canyon Cycles, 301 Main St., GJ; call 970-241-0141; or visit rubycanyoncycles.com. We are happy to point you in the right direction!

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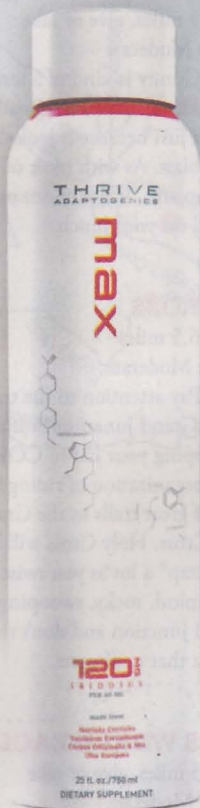
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LUNCH LOOP TRAILS AREA

GETTING THERE

At the intersection of First Street and Grand Avenue in downtown Grand Junction, head west for about one mile on Grand (aka Hwy. 340), following the signs directing you to the Colorado National Monument. Cross the bridge and you'll come to Monument Road; hang a left, and it will take you toward Colorado National Monument. Follow that road for two miles. You'll see the parking lot for Lunch Loop on the left.

TRAIL TALK

It's a technical system of trails that locals love, particularly Grand Junction residents who can walk out the front door, jump on their bikes and ride a few miles to the trailhead. It's called the Lunch Loops because locals can easily jump on for a quick lunchtime ride.

If you're from outside the area, throw the bikes on top of the car after your ride and take a drive through the Colorado National Monument. Or better yet, cruise through it on your road bike. It's a special place, complete with a pump park and jumps; you want to make sure you check it out.

One more note, if you ride up Widowmaker Hill without clipping out or hiking a bike, make sure you let folks know at whichever downtown Grand Junction bar you happen to be at after the ride. Such an accomplish might score you a free beer or two.

KID'S MEAL/PUMP TRACK

Distance: 1-2 miles

Difficulty: Easy

The Dirt: A one-of-a-kind bike skills park and pump track with dirt jump lines and more. And then warm up your riding skills on Kid's Meal singletrack trail that circumnavigates the Lunch Loop trailhead area.

ANDY'S LOOP

Distance: About 7 miles, or a lot more, depending on how you ride it

Difficulty: Moderate to tough

The Dirt: Andy's is a great technical ride with lots of climbing and lots of challenges. Don't be ashamed to hop out of the saddle on portions, because it gets pretty steep. As we mentioned earlier, there are a lot of rocks in this system of trails, and they don't give much when you land on them.

GUNNY LOOP

Distance: 5 miles, give or take

Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: Gunny is kind of a loner off by itself on the other side of Little Park Road, but don't cast off this ride just because it looks like a castaway. Gunny's a blast. As with most of the trails in the Lunch Loop area, if you're not on your A-game, Gunny will eat your lunch.

HOLY CROSS

Distance: 6.5 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: Pay attention to the trail system long enough in Grand Junction/Fruita, and you'll find yourself tipping your hat to COPMOBA — a lot. This local organization of riding fanatics gets credit for a ton of great trails in the Grand Valley, including Holy Cross. Holy Cross will have you screaming "holy crap" a lot as you twist your way through sweet, technical, rocky, swooping singletrack. If you visit Grand Junction and don't ride this trail, please don't admit that to anyone.

EAGLE'S WING & EAGLE'S TAIL

Distance: 5 miles, give or take

Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: The Eagles are at the heart of the Lunch

Loop trail area. If you ride into the Lunch Loop area not knowing where you're going, there's a good chance you'll land on a Wing or a Tail. That's no bad thing. Get to the top of Eagle's Wing, take a few minutes to soak up the view, and gain an understanding of why it was named what it was. As with most of the rides in this area, there are more rocks than you can shake a punctured tube at.

PET-E-KES

Distance: Mile or so

Difficulty: Moderate, strenuous

The Dirt: This trail was built by community members in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management. It's named for Pete Larson, a former teacher and BLM employee. This trail is a great way to get to higher ground — tight singletrack with lots of switchbacks. It's a good way to hone your technical skills. Beware, fall the wrong way in some areas and you won't stop sliding for 10 or 12 feet and three or four cactuses.

FREE LUNCH

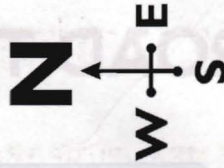
Distance: 1 mile

Difficulty: Depends on how fast your burn down

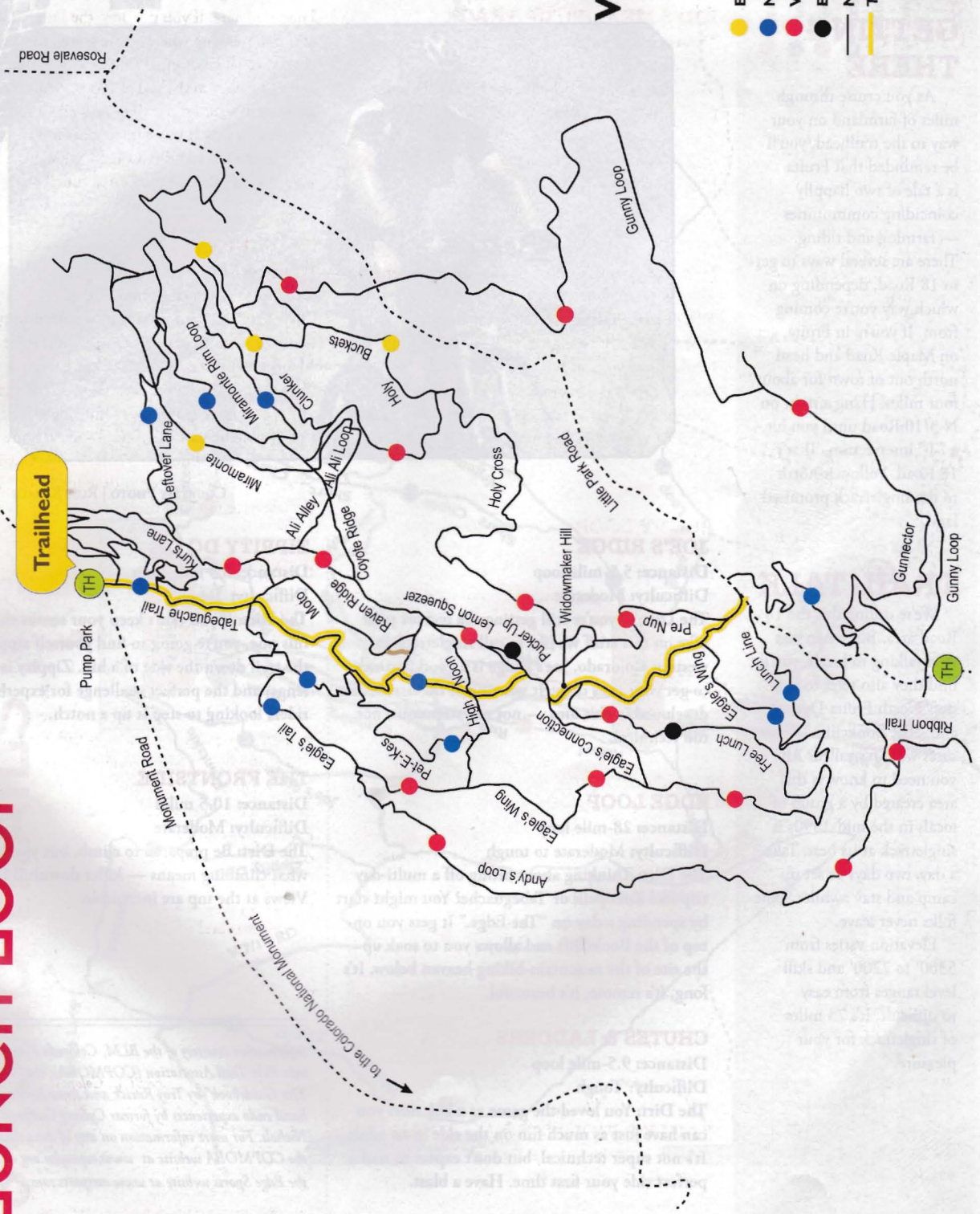
The Dirt: This black diamond freeride was dedicated in November 2007. Free Lunch is the first officially sanctioned freeride trail on BLM land to minimize conflicts with other trail users, the trail is open to mountain bikes only and is restricted downhill travel. If the last jump you did on a bike was over your buddy in the driveway as a kid using a propped up piece of plywood, it's in your best interest to avoid the jumps, drops and rocks on this trail. But make sure you watch the people who have the ability — it's an incredible spectacle. Pucker-Up is also a designated downhill MTB trail — one-way and no hiking.

Information courtesy of the BLM, Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), the "Fruita 100 Mile Tire Guidebook" by Troy Rarick and Anne Keller, and first-hand endo experiences by former Cycling Guide editor John Nichols. For more information on any of these rides, check the COPMOBA website at www.copmoba.org or the Colorado Edge Sports website at www.otesports.com.

LUNCH LOOP



- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Very Difficult
- Extremely Difficult
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Tabeguache Trail



MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

18 ROAD TRAILS AREA

GETTING THERE

As you cruise through miles of farmland on your way to the trailhead, you'll be reminded that Fruita is a tale of two happily coinciding communities — farming and riding. There are several ways to get to 18 Road, depending on which way you're coming from. If you're in Fruita, get on Maple Road and head north out of town for about four miles. Hang a right on N 3/10 Road until you hit a "T" intersection. That's 18 Road. Follow it north to the singletrack promised land.

TRAIL TALK

We're calling this the 18 Road area. But when you start talking to locals, you'll find they also refer to it as the "North Fruita Desert" and "The Bookcliffs." Who cares what it's called? All you need to know is this area created by a group of locals in the mid-1990s is singletrack at its best. Take a day, two days or set up camp and stay awhile. Some folks never leave.

Elevation varies from 5300' to 7200' and skill level ranges from easy to difficult. It's 73 miles of singletrack for your pleasure.



COURTESY PHOTO | RUSS KARAU

JOE'S RIDGE

Distance: 5.5-mile loop

Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: If you're still getting the feel for your bike on this stuff we like to call singletrack in western Colorado, Joe's Ridge is a good first ride to get your tires dirty. It was one of the first trails developed in this area — not too strenuous, not too technical.

EDGE LOOP

Distance: 28-mile loop

Difficulty: Moderate to tough

The Dirt: Thinking about biting off a multi-day trip like Kokopelli or Tabeguache? You might start by spending a day on "The Edge." It gets you on top of the Bookcliffs and allows you to soak up the site of the mountain-biking heaven below. It's long, it's remote, it's beautiful.

CHUTES & LADDERS

Distance: 9.5-mile loop

Difficulty: Tough

The Dirt: You loved the game as a kid, now you can have just as much fun on the ride as an adult. It's not super technical, but don't expect to nail a perfect ride your first time. Have a blast.

ZIPPITY DO DA

Distance: 6.3 mile-loop

Difficulty: Tough

The Dirt: If you don't keep your senses sharp on this one, you're going to find yourself zipping off the trail down the side of a hill. Zippity is a challenge, and the perfect challenge for experienced riders looking to step it up a notch.

THE FRONTSIDE

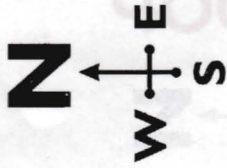
Distance: 10.5 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

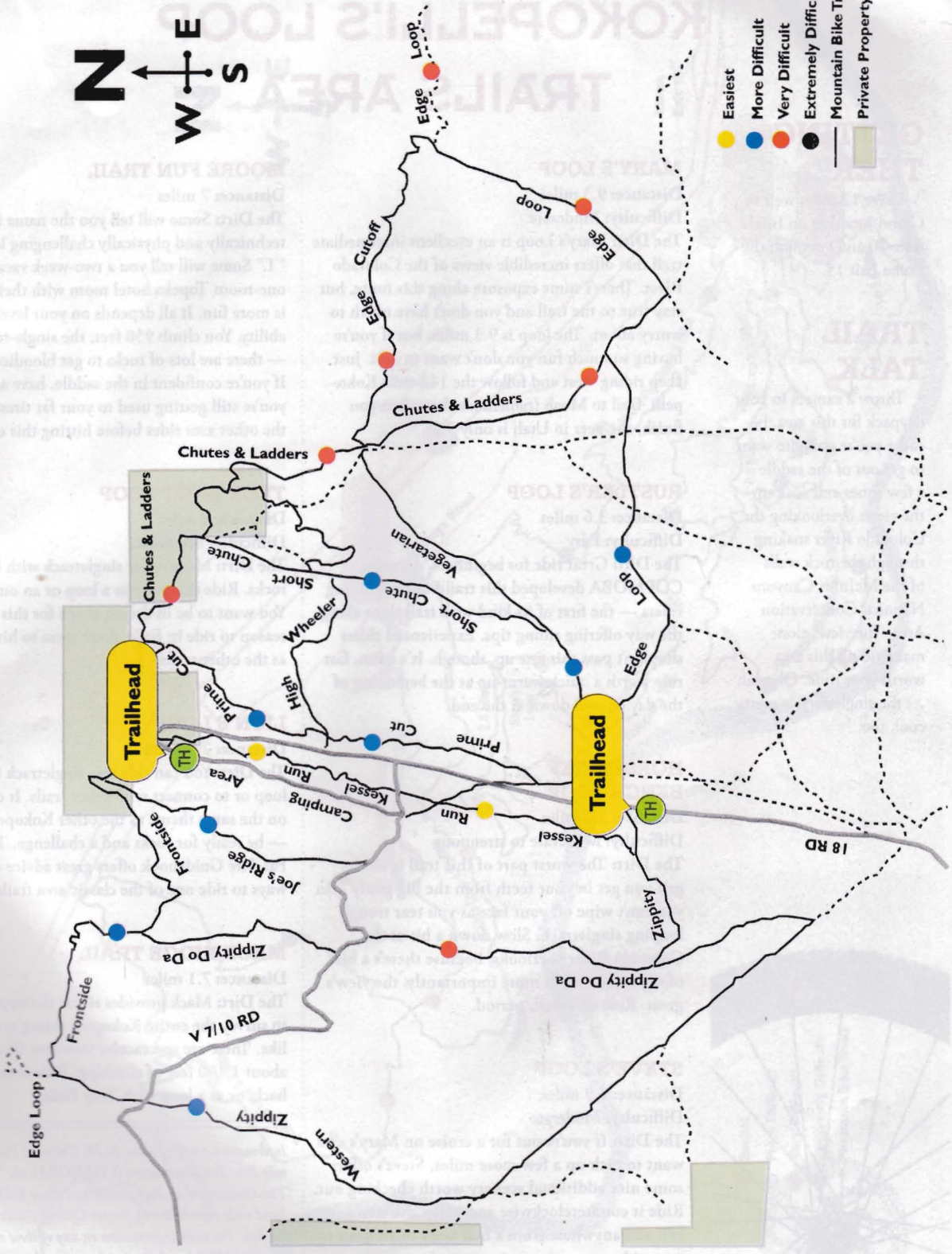
The Dirt: Be prepared to climb, but you know what climbing means — killer downhill fun. Views at the top are incredible.

Information courtesy of the BLM, Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), the "Fruita Fat Tire Guidebook" by Troy Rarick and Anne Keller, and first-hand endo experiences by former Cycling Guide editor Josh Nichols. For more information on any of these rides, check the COPMOBA website at www.copmoba.org or the Over the Edge Sports website at www.otesports.com.

18 ROAD TRAILS



- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Very Difficult
- Extremely Difficult
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Private Property



KOKOPELLI'S LOOP TRAILS AREA

GETTING THERE

Drive 12 miles west of Grand Junction on Interstate 70 and get off at the Loma Exit 15.

TRAIL TALK

Throw a camera in your daypack for this area, because you're going to want to get out of the saddle a few times and soak up the views overlooking the Colorado River snaking through the rock walls of the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area. The views alone make riding this area worth your time. Oh yeah ... the singletrack is pretty cool, too.



MARY'S LOOP

Distance: 9.3 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: Mary's Loop is an excellent intermediate trail that offers incredible views of the Colorado River. There's some exposure along this route, but stay true to the trail and you don't have much to worry about. The loop is 9.3 miles, but if you're having so much fun you don't want to quit. Just keep riding west and follow the 142-mile Kokopelli Trail to Moab (remember that when you finish, the beer in Utah is only 3.2).

RUSTLER'S LOOP

Distance: 3.6 miles

Difficulty: Easy

The Dirt: Great ride for beginners. Actually, COPMOBA developed this trail FOR beginning riders — the first of its kind with trail signs along the way offering riding tips. Experienced riders shouldn't pass this one up, though. It's a fun, fast ride worth a quick warm-up at the beginning of the day or cool down at the end.

HORSETHIEF BENCH LOOP

Distance: 3.6 miles

Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous

The Dirt: The worst part of this trail is all the grit you get in your teeth from the big goofy grin you can't wipe off your face as you tear through looping singletrack. Slow down a bit at the Colorado River overlooks, because there's a bit of exposure — but more importantly, the view's great. Ride this trail, period.

STEVE'S LOOP

Distance: 2.9 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: If you're out for a cruise on Mary's and want to pick up a few more miles, Steve's offers some nice additional scenery worth checking out. Ride it counterclockwise and enjoy the views. It'll add anywhere from a half hour to an hour to your ride.

MOORE FUN TRAIL

Distance: 7 miles

The Dirt: Some will tell you the name fits this technically and physically challenging loop to a "T." Some will tell you a two-week vacation in a one-room Topeka hotel room with their in-laws is more fun. It all depends on your level of riding ability. You climb 950 feet, the single-track's tight — there are lots of rocks to get bloodied up on. If you're confident in the saddle, have a blast. If you're still getting used to your fat tires, check out the other area rides before hitting this one.

TROY BUILT LOOP

Distance: 8 miles

Difficulty: Strenuous

The Dirt: More sweet singletrack with lots of rocks. Ride this baby as a loop or an out-and-back. You want to be in decent shape for this area. One reason to ride it: Folks don't seem to hit it as much as the other trails.

LION'S LOOP

Distance: 7.8 miles

The Dirt: You can ride this singletrack fun as a loop or to connect with other trails. It continues on the same theme as the other Kokopelli rides — be ready for rocks and a challenge. The Fruita Fat Tire Guidebook offers great advice on different ways to ride one of the classic area trails.

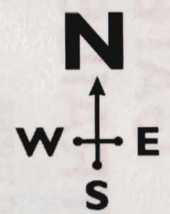
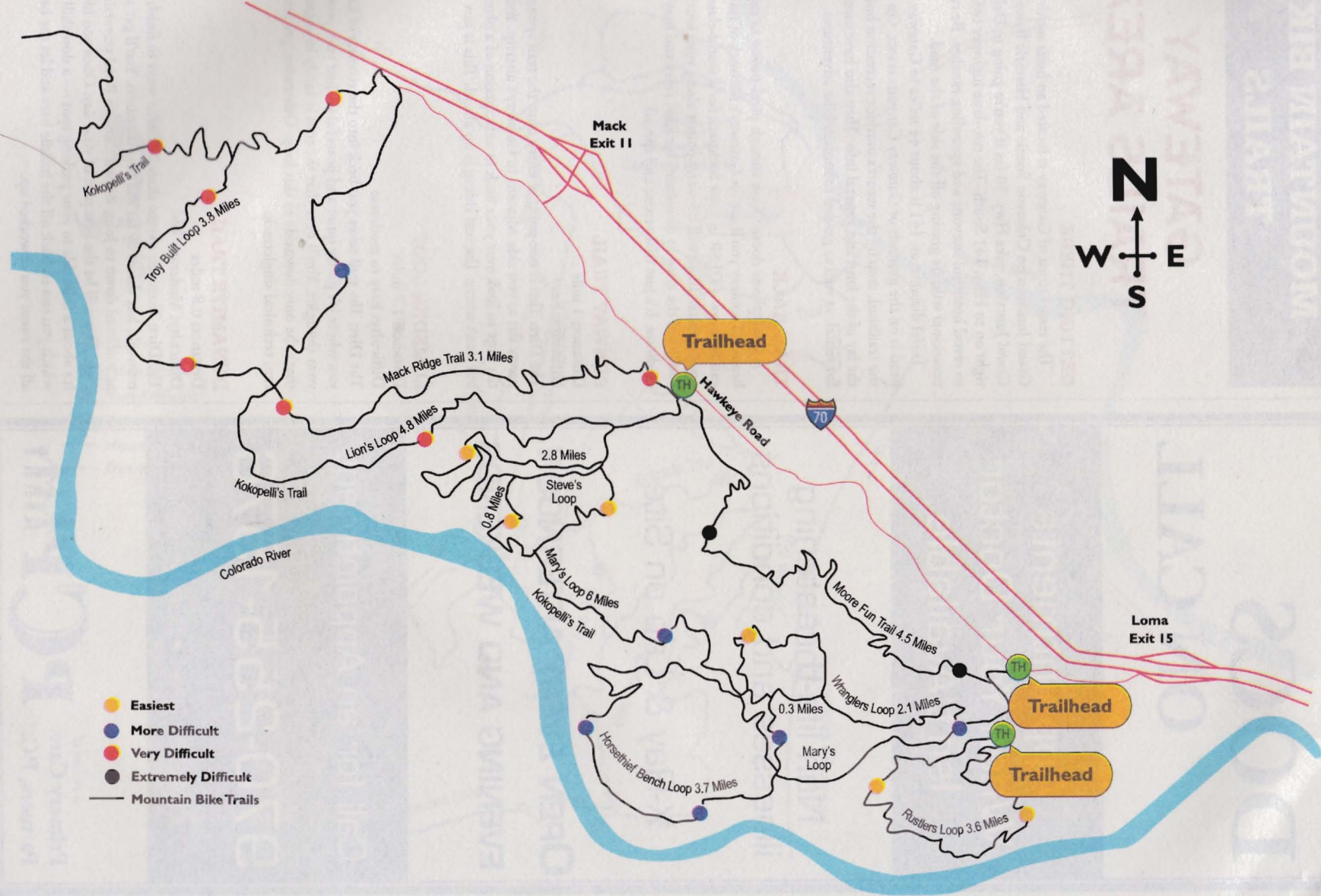
MACK RIDGE TRAIL

Distance: 7.1 miles

The Dirt: Mack provides riders the opportunity to survey the entire Kokopelli riding area if they'd like. There are spectacular views on this one and about 1,100 feet of climbing. Ride it out and back, or as a loop with Troy Built.

Information courtesy of the BLM, Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association (COPMOBA), the "Fruita Fat Tire Guidebook" by Troy Rarick and Anne Keller, and firsthand endo experiences by former Cycling Guide editor Josh Nichols. For more information on any of these rides, check the COPMOBA website at www.copmoba.org or the Over the Edge Sports website at www.otesports.com.

KOKOPELLI'S LOOP



- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Very Difficult
- Extremely Difficult
- Mountain Bike Trails

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MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

GATEWAY TRAILS AREA

GETTING THERE

The resort town of Gateway is located an hour southwest of Grand Junction on Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway 141. From Grand Junction, take Hwy. 50 (as if you're going to Delta) and turn right on to Hwy. 141 South. The two-lane highway twists and turns to reveal beautiful canyons and sprawling ranches. Be careful of the occasional wildlife grazing off the side of the road.

Travel distance on 141 is about 44 miles to Gateway. The trailhead is on the grounds of Gateway Canyons resort. On the way to the trailhead, stop by the resort's outdoor recreation building to get the lay of the land and general info. They also have mountain bikes for rental, as well as guided mountain bike adventures.

TRAIL TALK

A smartphone doesn't have enough pixel-power to capture the beautiful scenery you'll see on Gateway's network of trails. If you're game, throw a DSLR in your backpack for a world-class photo opportunity. There will be many points along your journey where you'll feel the need to dismount, breathe, relax and maybe even meditate. It's just that serene and special.

RUNWAY TRAIL

Distance: 1 mile

Difficulty: Easy

The Dirt: This is one point of entry onto the trail system, and it's pretty flat as you ride adjacent to Gateway's airstrip. You may have the urge to look over your back in anticipation of a plane landing, but don't worry. The real riding is up ahead. This is just a warm up.

LUMSDEN LOOP

Distance: 1.7 miles

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

The Dirt: The trail takes you back into the recesses of Lumsden Canyon where it's pretty quiet and peaceful — just you, your bike, and your thoughts. You'll note that the trail is sandy in some sections; that's the only downside to this loop. Otherwise, get ready for some fun, technical singletrack.

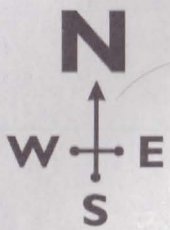
DYNAMITE TRAIL

Distance: 0.8 miles

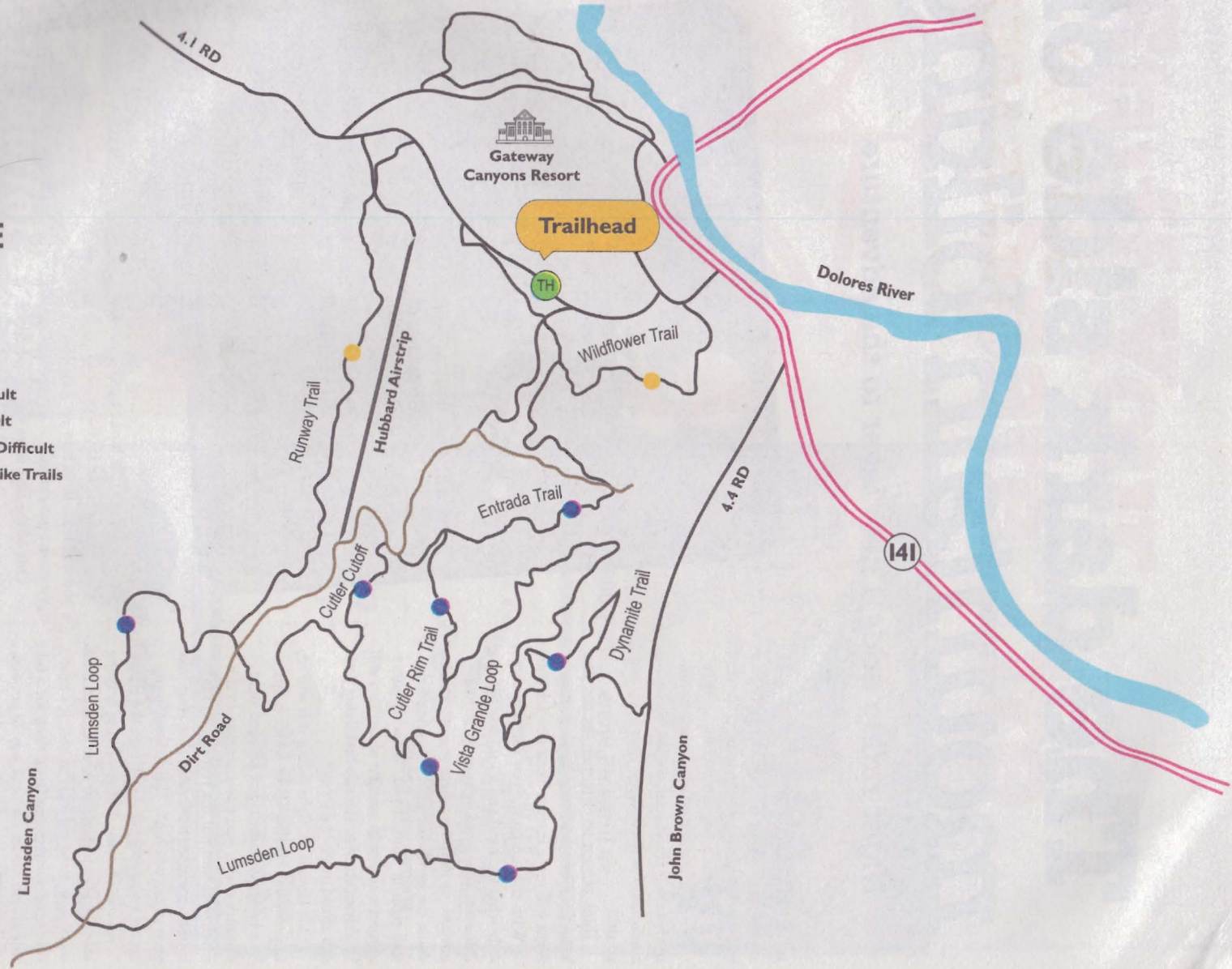
Difficulty: Moderate

The Dirt: There are two to three different ways to finish this trail network, but this is by far the best terminus. You'll get some speed as you head down to John Brown Canyon Road traversing slick rock. This will be the best part of your day. Once you hit the road, it's about a mile ride to your parking spot — a downhill grade in which you can sit back off the handle bars and let the breeze dry off all the sweat you've worked up.

GATEWAY



- Easiest
- More Difficult
- Very Difficult
- Extremely Difficult
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Dirt Road



The dark side of mountain biking

Night riding adds a new layer to the adventure

BY KEITH KITCHEN

Whether it's the long, cold winter or a hot summer night, that doesn't mean it's time to put the bike away. Find your friends, throw on a headlamp and a light on your bike, and go ride.

Think of your favorite trail; the one you know by the back of your hand. Riding at night will make it seem like a new adventure.

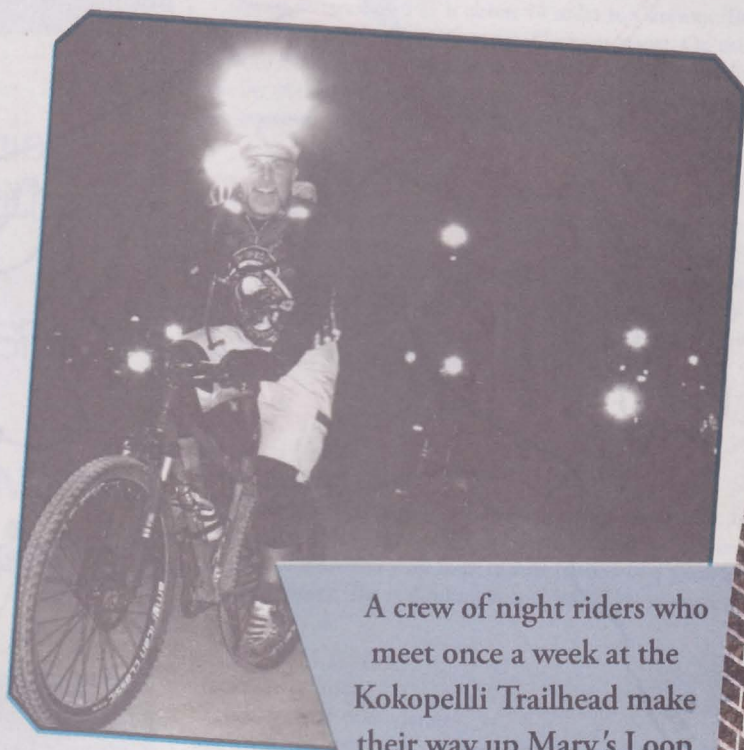
With the sun gone, your world becomes only what the head and handlebar lights shine on. Your head light is the most important, as it shines where you are looking, while the handlebar light helps flood the trail right in front of you. Whether going around a corner or straight ahead you will be able to see. So, buy the best lights you can afford.

One benefit of night riding is it will improve your riding skills, which helps you be a better daytime rider. Limited sight distance makes you pay attention to the singletrack and not the scenery. At night, it becomes more noticeable that your bike goes where you look. This helps you to become smoother and faster on the trail.

Another benefit of night riding is being able to ride more often. After dinner, homework or putting the kids to bed, it's now ride time. Giving up a little sleep for a bike ride is sometimes the only way to get out, spouse willing.

With any cold-weather activity, dressing warm means using layers to regulate your body temperature. Most sports doctors recommend covering your joints once the temperature drops below 50 degrees.

Dressing for night riding, for me, means one extra piece of clothing — a dry, warm coat in my CamelBak for after the ride.



A crew of night riders who meet once a week at the Kokopelli Trailhead make their way up Mary's Loop on a March night.

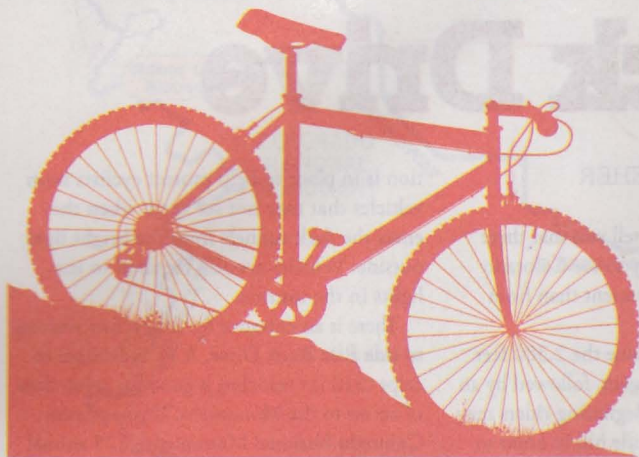
This makes the ride home much more comfortable. If you drive to the trailhead, have it in your vehicle so you don't get chilled.

One of the best ways to get started is to join one of the local bike shops' weekly rides. That way you will have experienced riders helping out. Whenever you decide to try night riding, remember to be safe and let someone know where you are going and when you are expected to be back.

Contact The Bike Shop, located at 10th and North Avenue, at 970-243-0807 to inquire about the next night ride. ●

FILE PHOTO

Stuff Your Spare Tire



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Cycling Colorado National Monument's Rim Rock Drive

BY JANET M. KELLEHER

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Off-road mountain biking is not permitted at Colorado National Monument. Head to nearby Lunch Loops if you need your MTB fix.

- Cyclists are required to obey all traffic laws including speed limits, passing zones, stop signs, and staying on roads.

- Always ride as far to the right as is safely possible. And allow vehicles to pass you.

- Do not pass vehicles in the tunnels.

- Bicycles or riders must be equipped with lights visible from the front and rear for safe passage through the tunnels. Cyclists must use a white light that is visible from at least 500 feet to the front and a red light that is seen from at least 200 feet from the rear.

- Cyclists are required to stop at "Stop" signs when entrance stations are staffed.

- Cyclists are required to pay entrance fees. (\$5 if on a bicycle)

- On the east side of the monument, cyclists may encounter large trucks that use four miles of the monument's roadway to access the community of Glade Park.

SOURCE: nps.gov

Many locals will tell you that there is no better way to see Colorado National Monument than from the seat of a bicycle.

More advanced riders value the 2,300 feet of lung-burning elevation gain, followed by an equally thrilling descent. Beginning riders may choose to drive up the 4-mile hill in order to take a more leisurely ride across the top.

On its own, the gate-to-gate distance is just 23 miles, but many cyclists choose to use connecting roads to make a 33-mile grand loop. Cyclists of any ability will appreciate the stunning vistas of red rock canyons, and the spectacular panoramas of the Grand Valley framed by distant views of the Bookcliffs and Grand Mesa.

Whether you're a first-time rider or an old pro, there are things you need to know about biking the Monument. Unpredictable weather in the desert can lead to environmental emergencies such as heat exhaustion or hypothermia. Always bring extra layers (even if it's warm) and plenty of water. Once you reach the top, the weather patterns can be very different than in the valley, especially if a sudden storm blows through. Strong winds along the exposed upper road can also make cycling risky. There is no bike lane on historic Rim Rock Drive, which means cyclists share the road with everyone from Glade Park commuters to foreign tourists. Mutual respect and awareness are critical to everyone's safety.

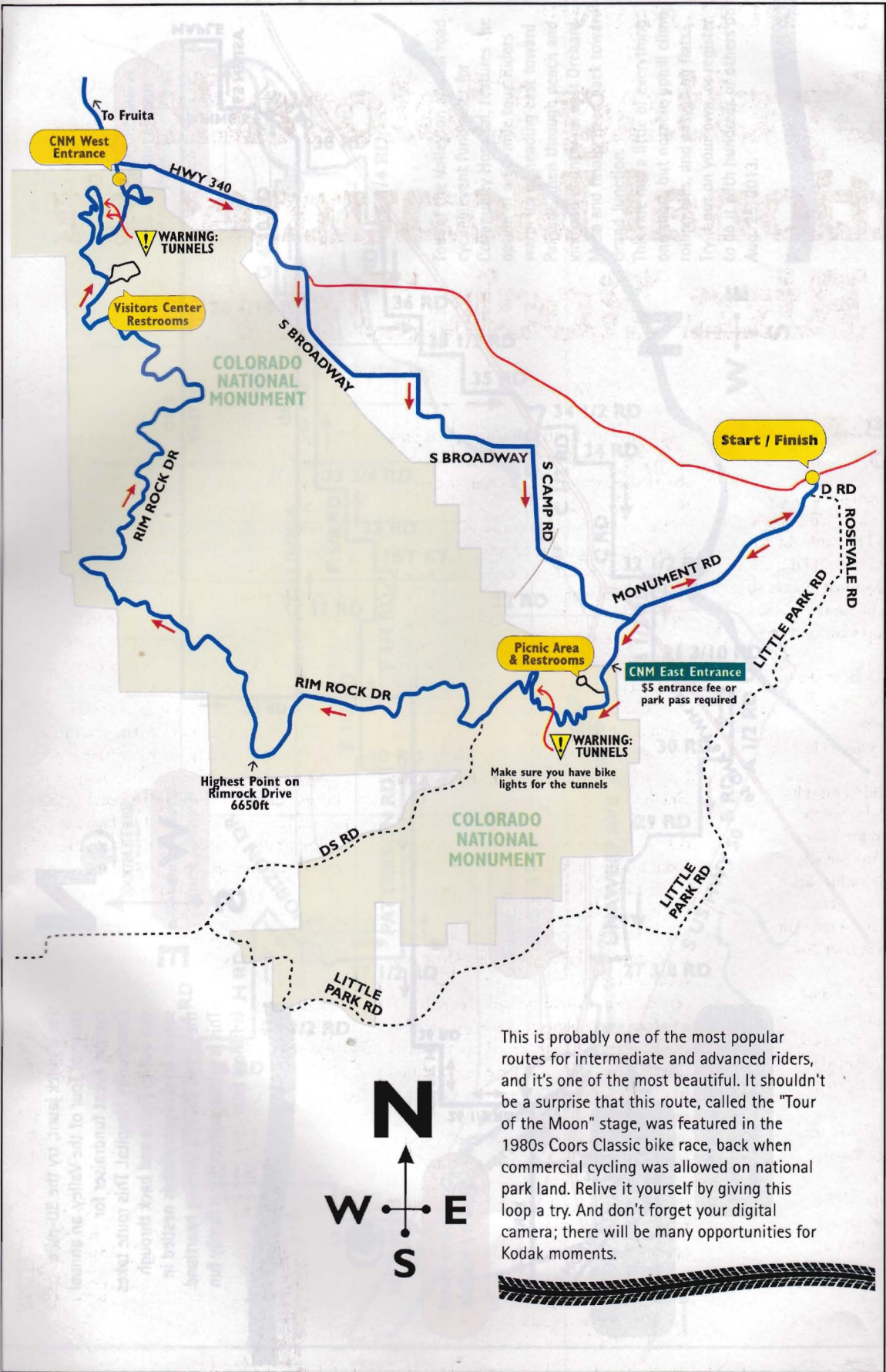
The East hill on the Grand Junction side has one long tunnel. The West hill on the Fruita side has two shorter tunnels. When operating a bicycle in a tunnel, cyclists are required by law to use a white light that is visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the front and a red light that is visible from at least 200 feet from the rear. This regula-

tion is in place to help protect cyclists from vehicles that may not see them when they enter the dark tunnels from the bright light outside. Vehicles are also required to use lights in the tunnels.

There is an entrance fee for cyclists wishing to ride Rim Rock Drive. A \$5 individual receipt (\$10 for vehicles) is good for seven days of access to the Monument. If you possess Colorado National Monument's \$25 annual pass, or any of the other Federal Recreation passes we issue, you may bring up to three other cyclists in with you for free. If you're using an annual pass, please remember to bring a valid photo ID with you on your ride. You need to stop at the entrance station on your way in to show your pass or purchase a receipt.

Mid-ride, take the time to stop at some of the spectacular overlooks or explore the visitor center. Keep your eyes peeled for bighorn sheep, coyotes, golden eagles, collared lizards and any of the other creatures that call the Monument home. The rugged solitude and stunning views may take your breath away as much as the climb! At the end of the day, whether it's a once-in-a-lifetime ride, your weekly escape, or a training ride, cycling Rim Rock Drive is a great way to visit the Colorado National Monument. ☉

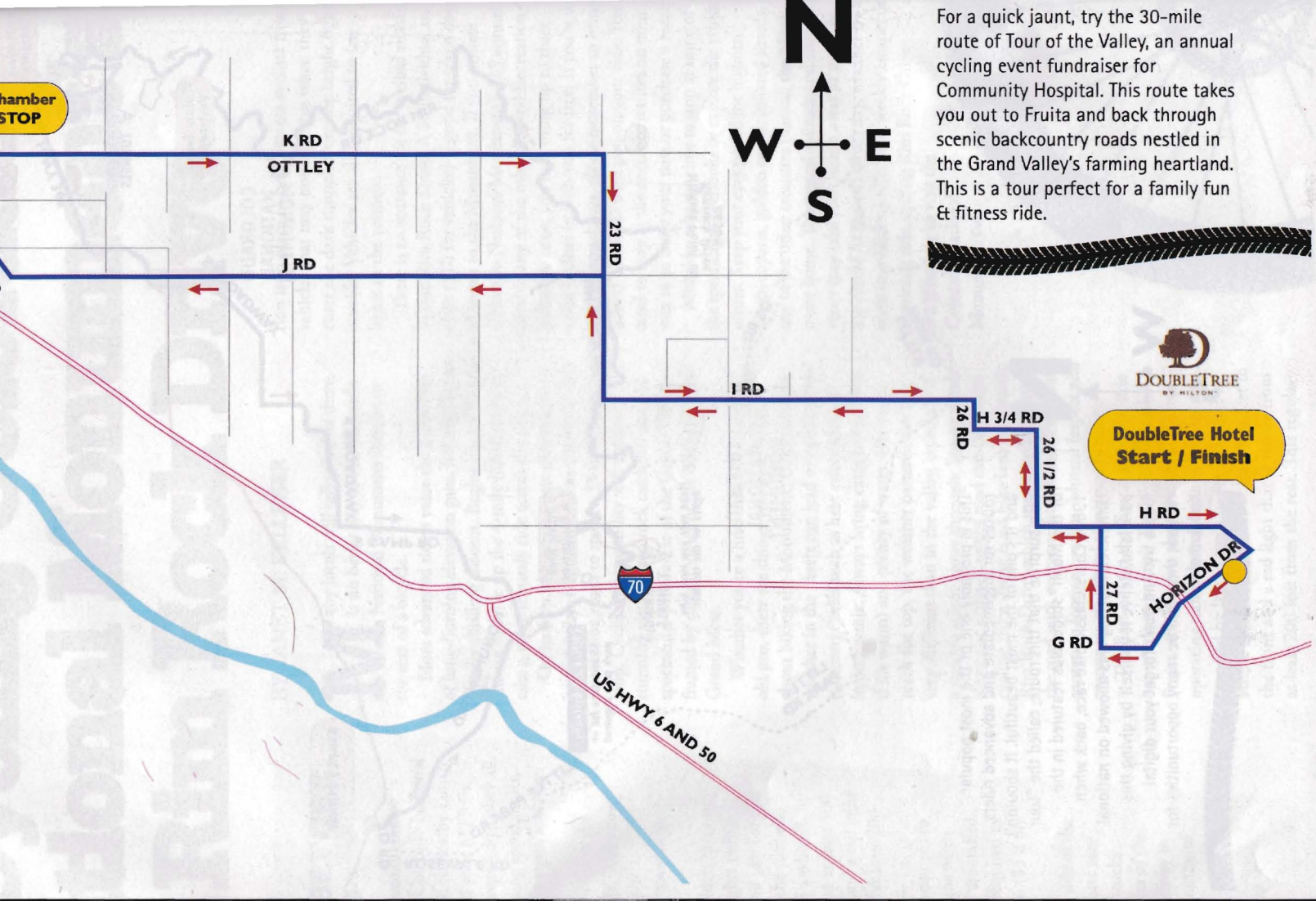




This is probably one of the most popular routes for intermediate and advanced riders, and it's one of the most beautiful. It shouldn't be a surprise that this route, called the "Tour of the Moon" stage, was featured in the 1980s Coors Classic bike race, back when commercial cycling was allowed on national park land. Relive it yourself by giving this loop a try. And don't forget your digital camera; there will be many opportunities for Kodak moments.

COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT

hamber
STOP



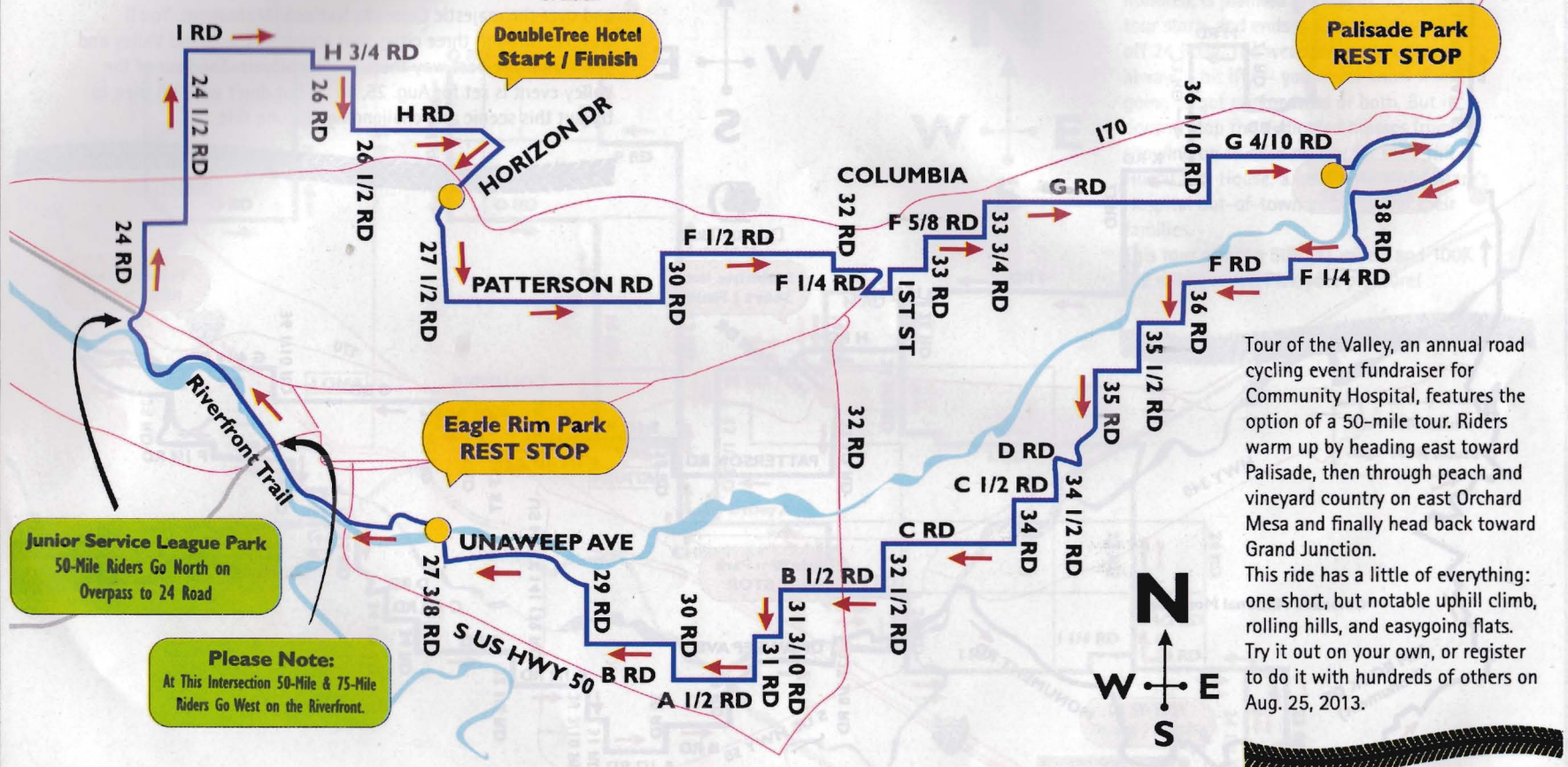
For a quick jaunt, try the 30-mile route of Tour of the Valley, an annual cycling event fundraiser for Community Hospital. This route takes you out to Fruita and back through scenic backcountry roads nestled in the Grand Valley's farming heartland. This is a tour perfect for a family fun & fitness ride.



**DoubleTree Hotel
Start / Finish**

RIDE MAPS

TOUR OF THE VALLEY • 30-MILE ROUTE



**DoubleTree Hotel
Start / Finish**

**Palisade Park
REST STOP**

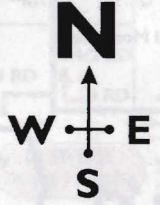
**Eagle Rim Park
REST STOP**

Junior Service League Park
50-Mile Riders Go North on
Overpass to 24 Road

Please Note:
At This Intersection 50-Mile & 75-Mile
Riders Go West on the Riverfront.

Tour of the Valley, an annual road cycling event fundraiser for Community Hospital, features the option of a 50-mile tour. Riders warm up by heading east toward Palisade, then through peach and vineyard country on east Orchard Mesa and finally head back toward Grand Junction.

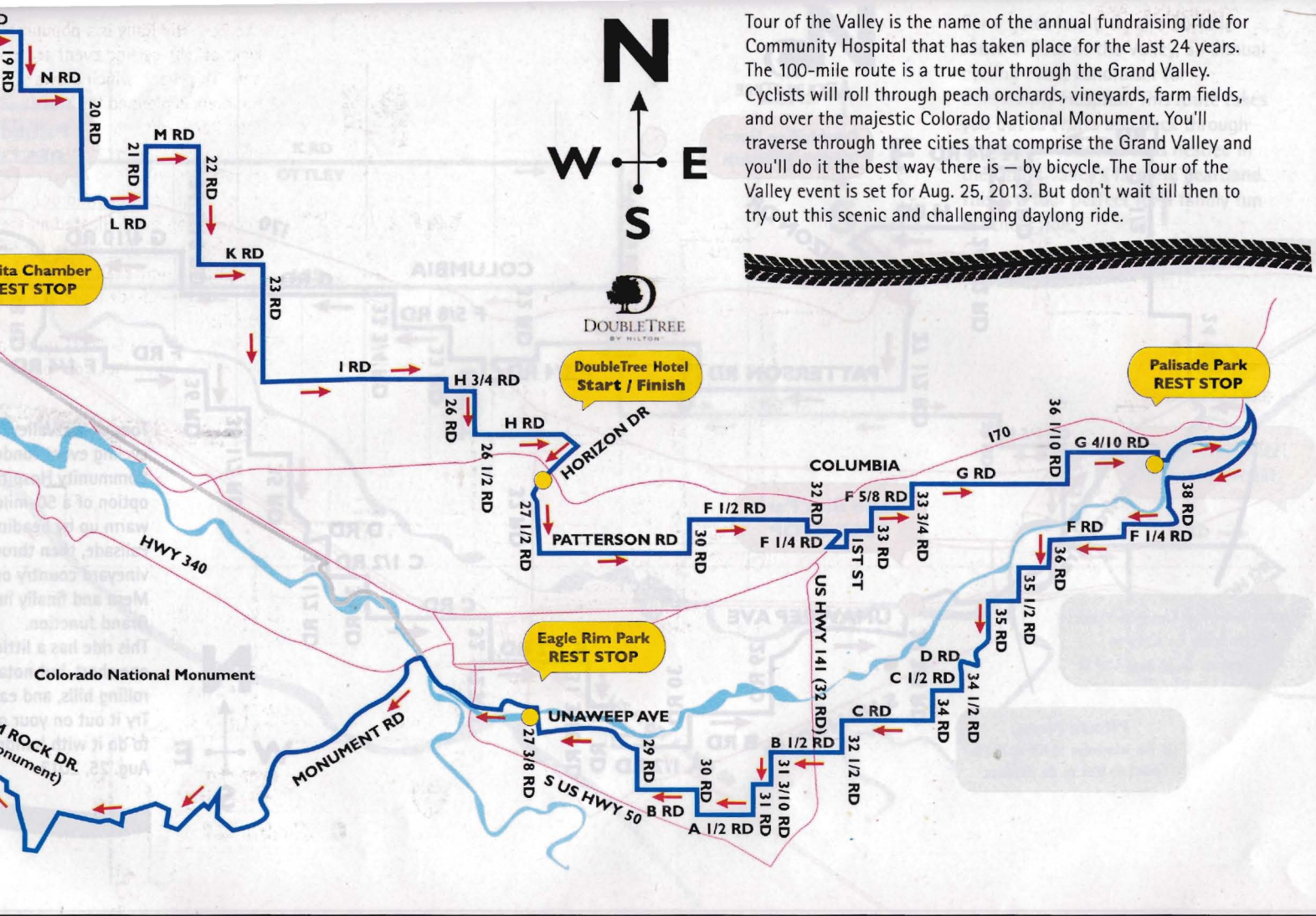
This ride has a little of everything: one short, but notable uphill climb, rolling hills, and easygoing flats. Try it out on your own, or register to do it with hundreds of others on Aug. 25, 2013.



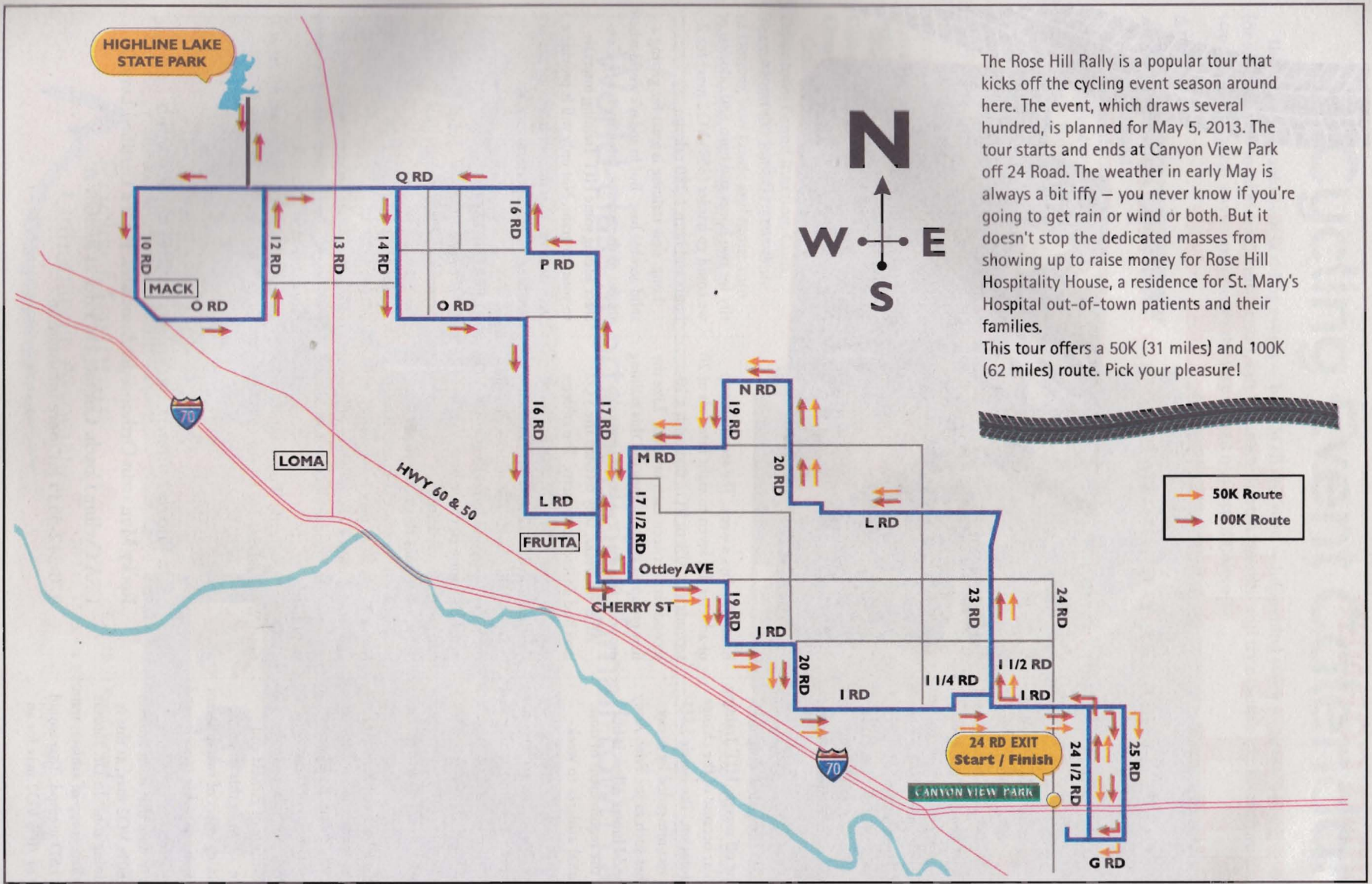
TOUR OF THE VALLEY • 50-MILE ROUTE

ROAD RIDE MAPS

Tour of the Valley is the name of the annual fundraising ride for Community Hospital that has taken place for the last 24 years. The 100-mile route is a true tour through the Grand Valley. Cyclists will roll through peach orchards, vineyards, farm fields, and over the majestic Colorado National Monument. You'll traverse through three cities that comprise the Grand Valley and you'll do it the best way there is — by bicycle. The Tour of the Valley event is set for Aug. 25, 2013. But don't wait till then to try out this scenic and challenging daylong ride.



TOUR OF THE VALLEY • 100-MILE ROUTE



The Rose Hill Rally is a popular tour that kicks off the cycling event season around here. The event, which draws several hundred, is planned for May 5, 2013. The tour starts and ends at Canyon View Park off 24 Road. The weather in early May is always a bit iffy – you never know if you're going to get rain or wind or both. But it doesn't stop the dedicated masses from showing up to raise money for Rose Hill Hospitality House, a residence for St. Mary's Hospital out-of-town patients and their families. This tour offers a 50K (31 miles) and 100K (62 miles) route. Pick your pleasure!



 50K Route
 100K Route

ROSE HILL RALLY – 50K & 100K ROUTE

'HIT' it hard

The case for HIT training to improve cycling performance

BY RICHARD PRICE, M.D.



I would like to build a case for an innovative type of training that you may consider during this cycling season. That type of training is "High Intensity Interval

Training," commonly referred to as HIT Training. HIT Training has resulted in some very impressive results for professional and amateur athletes alike.

While many athletes follow the time-honored method of LSD (long slow duration) training during the off season, HIT Training is becoming popular because of the change in intensity and duration. The classic LSD Training method recommended by many well-known coaches such as Joe Friel, Andy Coggan, Ph.D., and Hunter Allen, is burdened because of the requirement of time.

From professional athletes to weekend warriors, time in today's world is a significant limiter. Not many athletes have the luxury of training 4-5 hours a day and resting and recovering the rest of the time. Many athletes find it a challenge to juggle between family responsibilities, jobs and training. That's where HIT Training comes in.

Many studies have been done on HIT training. This is the foundation of famous workouts such as P90X and the Insanity workout. The most famous of these articles was written by Dr. Izumi Tabata, et al., at the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Tokyo in 1996. In this study, he compared the training effect of two different training programs on anaerobic capacity and VO2 max over a six-week period.

It is important to note that most athletes train at less than 80% VO2 max, as this is a comfortable training zone. In Dr. Tabata's study, he had the first group of athletes train in the traditional LSD method. That would be at an intensity of 70% VO2 max for an



COURTESY PHOTO | THINKSTOCK

hour, five days a week. The second group of athletes did seven to eight intervals of 20 seconds at 170% of VO2 max with a 10-second rest between each interval. Like the first group of athletes, they did this training program five days a week for six weeks.

After six weeks, they retested the VO2 max and anaerobic capacity. The athletes that trained at 70% VO2 max improved their measured VO2 max but not their anaerobic threshold. The athletes that did the short 20-second intervals at 170% VO2 max had improvement in both VO2 max and anaerobic capacity.

So, what does this mean for us "real" people? Don't try this at home! Exercising at 170% VO2 max is incredibly hard, and should not be taken lightly unless you are an experienced athlete. But we should train hard.

Why? Simple math. Work = intensity X time. We could ride our bike at 65% inten-

sity for two hours and burn 880 calories. We could go harder (85% VO2 max) for one hour and burn 1,280 calories.

Long, slow training is great for getting a solid aerobic base. But in today's world, time is of the essence, intensity is key. Consider adding some HIT Training intervals to your program. Not only will it provide a fresh new way to train, but it may be the key to a breakthrough performance. ●

REFERENCES:

1. "The Time-Crunched Cyclist" by Chris Carmichael, Jim Rutberg
2. *Med Sci Sports Exerc.* 1996 Oct; 28(10):1327-30. Effects of moderate-intensity endurance and high-intensity intermittent training on anaerobic capacity and VO2max. Tabata I, Nishimura K, Kouzaki M, Hirata M, Ogita F, Miyachi M, Yamamoto K.

Dr. Price is a primary care sports medicine physician with Rocky Mountain Orthopaedic Associates. He is a Certified Level 2 USA Cycling Coach. Contact Dr. Price at RMOA at 970-242-3535 for more information.

Cycling Event Calendar

There is a wide selection of riding events — both MTB and road — happening every weekend through September. Ride (or spectate) the local Mesa County events, but be sure to stretch yourself and try a couple of out-of-towners. Touring on two wheels is a great way to experience the beauty and majesty of Colorado.

April

13-14

Rumble at 18 Road

A cross-country and short track cross-country MTB race at the 18 Road trails in Fruita hosted by LTR Sports. Top 10 riders in each class and category qualify to compete in USA Cycling National Championships! Visit LTRsports.com for more information. Medals for top 3 finishes. No day-of registration. Open to ages from 8 to 108, pros and amateurs.

20

Colorado Mesa University Maverick Classic Downtown Criterium

College racers temporarily take over Downtown Grand Junction, Colo., Teams from CU Boulder, CSU, Univ. of Denver, Fort Lewis and more. Info: coloradomesa.edu/maverickclassic



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25-28

New Belgium Fruita Fat Tire Festival

Sunshine, singletrack, products displayed from the best in the bike industry, beer garden, the Clunker Crit and more are what you can expect from the 18th annual Fruita Fat Tire Festival. Info: fruitamountainbike.com

May

3-4

9th annual 18 Hours of Fruita

One of the most loved endurance events in the West. Six-mile loop race starts at midnight Friday night. Event takes place at Highline Lake State Park, 1800 11 8/10 Road, in Fruita, Colo. Event is capped at 100 teams. Info: fruitamountainbike.com. Register at active.com

5

17th annual Rose Hill Rally

This popular 50K or 100K ride benefits St. Mary's Rose Hill Hospitality House in Grand Junction, Colo., a place where families and patients who live out of town can stay. \$35/adult, \$20/youth. Add \$5 for day of event. Info: <http://www.stmarygj.com/rosehillrally>

11

Desert RATS Classic 100K Endurance Mountain Bike Race (Kokopelli Trails)

This endurance mountain bike race

is a challenging out-and-back test of stamina and a great early season test of fitness and a great reason to keep training over the winter and early spring. The course is equally well suited for geared bikes and single speeds and covers a wide variety of terrain including challenging technical terrain, grueling climbs, fast flats and tricky descents. Register: geminiadventures.com

18

Moonshadows in Moab

Watch the full moon rise briskly above the La Sal mountains; take in the sweet sage of the desert as you make your way to the Earth's edge overlooking the Colorado River a thousand feet below. Enjoy this fully supported 44 mile out-and-back ride by the light of the full moon. Info: skinnytireevents.com

TBA

10th annual Mission To Ride (Montrose)

Non-competitive bicycling tour for riders of all abilities in Montrose. Road and mountain routes offered. A century ride and 30-, 40-, 60-mile routes takes you through the Black Canyon of Gunnison National Forest. Proceeds benefit Montrose Medical Mission, a free clinic. Info: missiontoride.com

18

L'Eroica Historic Race

A re-enactment of an old race that used to take place from Grand Junction to Glenwood Springs, Colo. — 90 miles of pavement and 12 miles of dirt. Riders earn points for best simulating the costumes and bike of that era, so one doesn't necessarily have to finish across the finish line first to win. Info/register: Chris Brown, Brown Cycles, 970-245-7939, info@browncycles.com

18-19

Aspen Cycling Festival (Aspen)

Featuring the Ride for the Pass charity fun ride (May 18) and Aspen Cycling Criterium (May 19), a fast-paced, energetic packed bicycle race held in the heart of Aspen. Info: aspenrecreation.com. Info: 970-429-2093.

24-26

BetterRide Women's Mountain Bike Skills Camp (Fruita)

Taught by Gene Hamilton and his trained professionals. This comprehensive 3-day camp will help you with both the mental and physical sides of mountain biking. The goal is to help you reach your potential by teaching you the core skills of mountain biking and the drills to master these skills. Cost: \$618. Register at betterride.net



COURTESY PHOTO | GJVCB



COURTESY PHOTO | SARAH MAH WITHERS

24-27

Iron Horse Bicycle Classic (Durango)

One of the classic bicycle events in the West takes place every year in Durango. A 50-mile tour which starts with the whistle of the train. Outside magazine named this ride #33 out of 50 on its "Life List" of things to do. Info: ironhorsebicycleclassic.com

25-26

The 2013 Original Growler (Gunnison)

Saturday's half growler 32-miler is sold out, but you can still get in on the full growler. The well-marked, clockwise course contains loads of classic and challenging Gunnison singletrack - trails like Skull Pass, Top of the World, Rattlesnake, Ridge Trail and Joshos. Info: gunnisontrails.com. Register: bikereg.com

June

6-9

2013 GoPro Mountain Games (Vail)

Held in Vail, the GoPro Mountain Games are the nation's largest celebration of mountain sport, lifestyle and music featuring top professional and amateur athletes from around the world. Events include kayaking, rafting, stand-up paddling, mountain biking, road cycling, World Cup bouldering, climbing, fly-fishing, trail running, a half-marathon and a photography competition.

8

Grand Mesa Grind (Palisade)

The race takes you high onto the flanks of the Grand Mesa, with a 4,800 ft. elevation gain. In 34 miles, you do that, then descend a rough route down to the desert floor on the south end of Horse Mountain area. Info: rapidcreekcycles.com

8

Highline Hustle Sprint Triathlon (Fruita)

Swim, bike and run - Sprint Triathlon. A 500-meter swim in Highline Lake, a 16-mile bike road race, and a 3-mile trail run. Info: gcity.org or 970-254-3864.

8-15

2013 Ride the Rockies

An annual bicycle tour that takes 2,000 cyclists on a 7-day, 513-mile ride on paved roads through Colorado's Rocky Mountains. This year's event starts in Telluride and ends in Colorado Springs. Along the way, you'll climb three scenic mountain passes. Info: ridetherockies.com

16-22

Desert RATS MTB Expedition

Ride the 148-mile Kokopelli Trail from GJ to Moab, Utah. Fully supported ride with guides. Limited to 50 participants. Register: gemiadventures.com

23-29

19th annual Bicycle Tour of Colorado

An annual 7-day, fully-supported bicycle tour in the wide-open valleys and the majestic peaks of Colorado's Rocky Mountains. The ride starts and ends in Canon City with stops in between in Buena Vista, Carbondale, Paonia, Crested Butte and Salida. Limited to 1,500 cyclists. Info: bicycletourcolorado.com

23-30

Crested Butte Bike Week

Long known as "The Birthplace of the Mountain Bike," this is the oldest mountain biking festival in the country, so come celebrate the annual celebration of the Fat Tire in beautiful Crested Butte, Colo.

26

Bike to Work Day (Grand Junction)

This is the day to get on your bike and commute to work. No excuses, just do it.

July

13

Leadville Silver Rush 50-mile Mountain Bike Race

Set 13,000 feet up in the treacherous Colorado Rocky terrain, the strong may survive, but only a few will leave with their pride. All finishers will receive a "Leadville Silver Rush" silver bracelet and finishing medal. There are also great age group awards. Capped at 1,000 riders.

20-22

2013 Courage Classic (Copper Mountain)

A renowned cycling event in Colorado, the Courage Classic is a three-day journey fueled by individual

and team fundraising efforts that benefit The Children's Hospital. The course begins and ends in Leadville, whose stunning views will motivate riders' 157-mile trek through Summit County. Register: couragetours.com or call 720-777-7499.

August

3

Copper Triangle (Copper Mountain)

Enjoy 78-miles of breathtaking scenery, gorgeous roads and three challenging climbs on one of Colorado's classic alpine road rides. Registration includes commemorative event jersey, post-ride lunch/party, aid stations, road support, door prizes, live music. Rain or shine, it's on! Info: coppertriangle.com

TBA

Steamboat Springs Ride 4 Yellow

Fourth annual mountain bike ride held at the base of Steamboat Ski Mountain - a 26-mile epic MTB ride only open to the first 200 riders who register online, so get on it. Must, however, pledge to raise \$250. Benefits Livestrong. Info: ride4yellow.com or info@ride4yellow.com

4-10

7th annual Colorado Rocky Mountain Bicycle Tour

This fully-supported tour starts and ends in Steamboat Springs and takes riders through Walden, Fort Collins, Estes Park, Golden, Fraser and more. It's 473 miles of challenging riding, beautiful scenery and loads of fun. Cost is \$450 per rider, and is capped at 500 riders. Info: crmbt.com

10

Leadville Trail 100 Mountain Bike Race

The race of all races. 100-miles across high altitude, extreme terrain. It'll take your breath away, literally. Info: leadvillerraceseries.com

17

Aspen/Snowmass Ride For the Cure

A fundraiser first, a bike ride second. Route begins at Snowmass Village and travels through Aspen, Woody Creek and Old Snowmass. Each rider commits to raising \$500. 10-, 30-, 50-, 100-mile routes; fully supported ride. Info: komenaspen.org

18

Palisade Pedal-Paddle-Pedal Race

This three-stage race is part of the Palisade Peach Festival. The first leg is



a 24-mile mountain bike race around Horse Mountain. Then you paddle an 8-mile stretch of the Colorado River followed by an 18-mile road ride along the Palisade Fruit and Wine Trail. There is a serious class and not-so-serious class. The race is followed by a BBQ with beer and awards. After the race, you can go to the Palisade Peach Festival. Info: ridepalisade.org or rapidcreekcycles.com, or singletracks.com.

19-25

2013 USA Pro Challenge

Stage 1 - Aspen/Snowmass. Stage 2 - Aspen to Breckenridge. Stage 3 - Breckenridge to Steamboat Springs. Stage 4 - Steamboat Springs to Beaver Creek. Stage 5 - Vail. Stage 6 - Loveland to Fort Collins. Stage 7 - Denver. This event was created to "reinvigorate the legacy of the Colorado-based Coors International Bicycle Classic, which took place from 1979 until 1988," according to CyclingNews.com. Get off your bike on one of these days, and become a spectator. It's a day-trip away.

25

25th Tour of the Valley (Grand Junction)

Starting at the DoubleTree Hotel in Grand Junction, riders from all over will be in town for a century ride with the option of three shorter routes. Event includes: massages, pre-ride breakfast, post-ride party and more. Info/registration: yourcommunityhospital.com

30- Sept. 1

Inaugural Grand Junction Off-Road Endurance Mountain Bike Event

Hosted by Epic Rides. Featuring the world class Lunch Loops and neighboring trail systems, the "Grand" courses will start and finish riders on Main Street in downtown Grand Junction and take them through some of the most technically challenging and visually stunning landscapes in the country, while traversing the Tabeguache trail system to the distant reaches of the Magellan loop. \$20,000 pro cash purse.

September

15-20

Vines and Vistas Tour

Six-day, 280-mile biking tour of Western Colorado including Colo. National Monument, Palisade, Grand Mesa, Paonia, McClure Pass, Redstone, and more. Info: timbertours.com

21

20th annual Tour of the Vineyards Bicycle Tour (Palisade)

The 25-mile bike tour through vineyards, wineries and orchards in Palisade, Colo. Runs in conjunction with the Colorado Mountain Winefest. Info: tourdevineyards.com. Register: emgcolorado.com

20-22

Moab Century Tour

A three-day road cycling event suitable for all skill levels, taking riders through the red rock canyons of Moab, along the Colorado River and up into the La Sal Mountains. All routes begin and end at Aarchway Inn. Info: skinnytireevents.com

21

10th annual Mountains to the Desert Bike Ride (Telluride & Gateway)

Start in either Telluride or Norwood and ride to Gateway Canyons for the finish and post-ride bash and feast at the resort. 100+ mile rides. Info: active.com

October

5

ICONLASIK Tour of the Moon (Grand Junction)

Attend the 2nd annual Tour of the Moon, Grand Cycling Classic. Named after the famous stage of Coors Classic Bike Race, the stage takes you up and over Colorado National Monument and back in a 38-mile loop. Short distance, but very challenging. Capped at 2,000 riders. Funds will go to the Colorado Riverfront Commission. Info: tourofthemoon.com

LOCAL EVENT

ENDOHOLICS

This local ridin' crew welcome all types of riders and skill sets attend each week's Thursday Night Throw Down. The group traverses the valley riding in Fruita, Grand Junction and Palisade areas. Check them out on Facebook at: [/group/Endoholics](http://group/Endoholics).

GJ JUNK RIDE

Riders gather the last Thursday of each month at 5 p.m. at the Community Garden, 10th & Main. Costumes are encouraged. Routes change every month. All ages and all skill levels.

KAFM "BIKE RADIO" SHOW

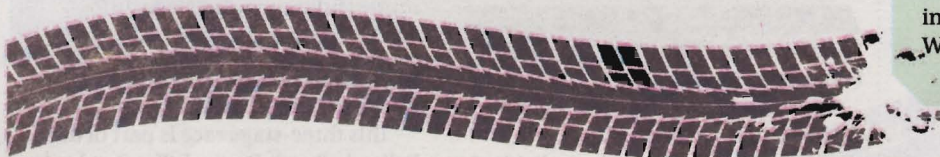
Chris Brown, owner of Brown Cycles, hosts Bike Radio the Thursday of each month from 12:30-1 p.m. on KAFM Radio 8. Listen in for all the latest in local cycling and mountain biking.

RED ROCK RIDERS

This group of local mountain bikers of all ages and skills gets together Wednesday evenings for group rides. For a ride schedule and locations, email redrockriders@gmail.com or check them out on Facebook /RedRockRiders. Or Board & Buckle Ski & Cyclery at 970-242-9285 or Tom at 970-260-9043.

SINGLETRACK & SKINNY TIRE SISTERS OF W. COLO.

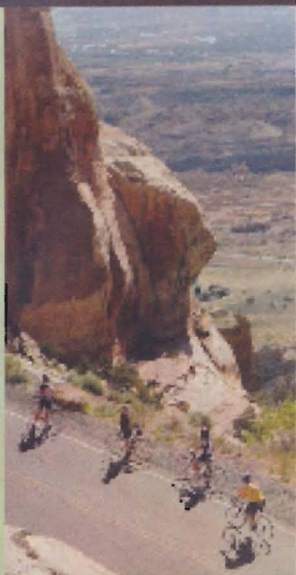
The mission of this active group of lady riders is to encourage women of all abilities — from novice to expert — to participate in the sport of cycling and mountain bike riding and to create a supportive community of women cyclists in Western Colorado. Check them out on Facebook or visit singletracksisters.com. Organized MTB rides take place in the evenings every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.



Colorado National Monument



Rim Rock Drive offers sweeping vistas, plenty of fresh air, and varied grades. It has challenged many of the world's strongest riders, but yields to the most casual of recreational bicyclists. The 23 mile gate-to-gate ride provides access to the Saddlehorn Visitor Center and Campground, 19 signed viewpoints, and 14 hiking trails. The park entrance fee for an individual bicyclist is \$5 and \$10 per vehicle.



<http://www.nps.gov/colm/>

Share the Road

Bicyclists and motorists are required to obey all traffic laws including speed limits, passing zones, and stop signs. Bicycles or riders must be equipped with lights visible from the front and rear for safe passage

through the tunnels. Bicyclists must use a white light that is visible from at least 500 feet to the front and a red light that is seen from at least 200 feet from the rear.

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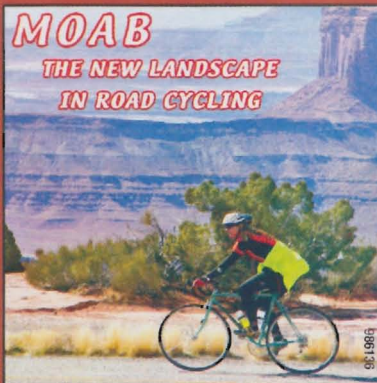
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