

Cyclists Crest the Cascades in wet, chilly ride

By Andrew Loscutoff
Correspondent

The Mckenzie Pass on Highway 242 bridging Sisters to the Mckenzie River Recreation Area is not only a beautiful scene but a beacon for cyclists. The county typically keeps the road closed many months into spring, which means cyclists get to enjoy a closed road with a better experience and fewer nerves.

On Saturday, Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD) hosted a supported group ride with the intention of sharing the experience many in Sisters take advantage of all spring. Group rides are inspiring, and they're fun: a true feeling of kinship on two wheels. Sometimes, this sensibility can push a rider to new heights.

Last weekend, that sensibility was challenged by driving rains, steady winds, and temperatures falling into the 30s. The cyclists, many of whom were from the Portland area, didn't let this deter their ambition to get a ride in. Local cyclist and volunteer for the event Chuck Humphreys noted "many riders were from the 'wet' side of the Cascades and were prepared for the full-on downpour." Humphreys himself turned around at the East Gate — where it was only 38 degrees — with still around 1,500 feet of elevation to go. He said, "Warmth seemed like the sensible option after getting to the first gate (and) experiencing sideways sleet and 38-degree temperatures."

Another volunteer, Mark Reed, said, "Despite the discouraging weather, at least 125 of the riders made it to the top of the climb with smiles and a feeling of accomplishment."

These feelings were subdued shortly once the climbing was over and riders began to experience hypothermic shivers. Luckily, volunteers



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

It was a wet and wild ride on Saturday.

were prepared at the top with camper vehicles set up as warming shelters.

Reed said, "The aid-station crew started their engines, turned up the heat, and cleared space to house the riders to break the chill."

“...at least 125 of the riders made it to the top of the climb with smiles and a feeling of accomplishment.”
— Mark Reed

Patrick Eckford, a key race organizer, thanked the volunteers: "I don't know what we would have done if you guys hadn't been there and been so generous. The warm

shelter, the sturdy awnings, and the ability to heat up liquids, frankly saved the day. Undoubtedly, without the RVs, we'd have had some seriously sick people, and maybe worse!"

As June continues, it's important to remember that while sunshine and warmth is on everyone's mind, the Central Oregon Cascades can still produce some nasty weather. Sometimes it doesn't agree with the activity planned, and one must always be prepared.

With strong support from community volunteers, the ride was a success, despite tough conditions. Riders who braved the elements may have experienced some discomfort, but what no one can take away from them is the story of the ride. No complaints were heard as the camaraderie and fortitude was felt by all.

Sisters salutes...

The folks at Sisters Habitat for Humanity want to send their heartfelt gratitude to Rebecca Smith and the Harp3 Ensemble, Renaissance Sisters Recorder Ensemble, vocalists Marilyn Anthony and Julie Cash and harpist Laura Zaerr for hosting a benefit concert for Sisters Habitat.

We appreciate the use of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration. It was a beautiful location for such inspirational music. More than \$600 was raised to help families in Sisters own affordable homes.

Thanks for helping make a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

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