

Biking the cares away in Eugene/Springfield

Area offers rural tours, vineyard, forests, parks

With work, school and all of the social activities going on in Eugene this summer, it's easy to forget that there's another world beyond those surrounding hills.

But when the city gets hot, crowded and noisy, and claustrophobia sets in, it's nice to know that escape is just a short bicycle spin away. A cyclist with some time and a little energy can leave the city behind for quieter, more peaceful settings.

Bicycling is an ideal way to take in the rural areas. The pace is slow enough to enjoy the surroundings, while exercise, economy and energy efficiency are thrown into the package.

Eugene-Springfield is bordered in all four directions with rural landscape, which makes it an excellent stage for trips, from short day rides to extended tours. The coast lies only 60 miles to the west and the Cascade Mountains 50 miles to the east, with the Coast Range, forests and river valleys nestled between.

For those uninitiated to the delights of cycling outside the city, it can be difficult to gather the motivation to go exploring. One of the secrets to getting out

there is to have a destination in mind.

The best way to discover routes is to talk to other cyclists in the area. Several bicycle shops and groups (see related article) in Eugene are happy to make recommendations to cyclists unfamiliar with the area.

Buford Park

Buford Park, located 9 miles southeast of the University, offers hiking trails through an arboretum; a short hike to the top of Mt. Pisgah, with views of the valley, Cascade Mountains and Coast Range; and swimming holes in the coast fork of the Willamette River. It's an ideal place to waste away a lazy afternoon.

To get there from the University take Alder Street south to East 30th Avenue. Go east on 30th Avenue, up the only climb of the trip. Don't forget to take in the views of Eugene to the left. From the peak, it's a straight shot past Lane Community College and over Interstate 5 until turning left at an intersection — there is a sign posted for Buford Park. Then take an immediate right onto Franklin Boulevard, also mark-



The parks in Eugene and Springfield offer enjoyable scenery for group bike tours.

ed with a Buford-Park sign. Go left on Seavey Loop Road, located one-half mile down the road. Go straight for another two miles, crossing the Willamette River, and enter the park. A map explaining the various trails through the park is posted at the entrance.

Hinman Vineyards

The 34-mile loop past Hinman Vineyards is a little more strenuous but well worth the effort. The roads are generally quiet and the scenery is enjoyable. The vineyard, set in a quiet little valley, offers tours and wine tasting every afternoon from noon until 5 p.m.

To get there, take 29th Avenue west out to Lorane Highway. Follow Lorane Highway for five miles to the Bailey Hill Road intersection, and go straight ahead on Spencer Creek Road. Take Briggs Hill Road, two miles down on the left, up and over the hill. The climb is difficult, but the descent is a breeze. The vineyard is well marked and located about two miles from the peak on the left.

There are many vintage spots to take a nap there after tasting Hinman's offerings and before heading back. For an alternate route home, continue on Briggs Hill Road to Territorial Road. Go left there and proceed for three miles before picking up Lorane Highway again. It's not well marked, but there is a sign to Eugene. Lorane Highway winds its way through forests and pastures on its way back to Eugene.



When the sun is beating down hot and dry, there's nothing more cooling than hopping on your bike, snapping on the headphones and heading for the hills.

Story by Michael Kulaga
Photos by Michael Clapp

Biking resources

With more than 60 miles of bikeways, including three bridges across the Willamette River, Eugene is truly a cyclist's delight. The resources available here for the cycle tourist, racer and commuter are impressive.

But to use those facilities, cyclists have to know about them. The one essential guide to cycling in Eugene is the "Eugene Bicycle Map," published in part by the Eugene Public Works Department.

This map not only directs the cyclist through the city, but it also provides a wealth of information on points of interest in Eugene; bicycling safety; and bicycling groups and organizations in the area. It and the "Lane County Bicycle Map," a similar guide to Lane County, are available at the University Book Store.

The Eugene Parks and Recreation Department sponsors a variety of services for bicyclists, including a bicycle-tool lending library, courses in bicycle maintenance and group rides. For information on these programs, telephone the department at 687-5329, or go to the River House located at 301 N. Adams St.

With nearly a dozen bicycle shops in town, there is generally no shortage of service available for the ailing bike. In addition to offering the normal services of a repair shop, Pedal Power Bicycles, 245 E. 6th Ave., offers a selection of inexpensive maps for riding in the Eugene area.

The closest shops to the University are the Cycle Works, 663 E. 13th Ave., and the Recycled Bike Works, 774 E. 11th Ave.

For riders interested in racing and competitive riding, the Eugene Cycling Club offers regular training rides. For more information, telephone Nancy Craft at 343-7197.

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