

Gravel cycling takes people around Wallowa County

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — An online nonprofit group that promotes gravel bicycle routes is taking advantage of the many miles of gravel roads in Wallowa County, as well as the history and beauty of the county by establishing routes for gravel cycling.

The Bend-based Dirty Freehub maps out routes it shares with cyclists. The group has a guide to more than 8,000 miles of gravel bike routes across Oregon, Washington, California, Arizona and Tasmania.

So far, the group has mapped four five-star routes in the county, according to Executive Director Linda English.

“One will go through Zumwalt (Prairie) Preserve,” English said in a press release. “We will have one that starts in Enterprise and uses Hurricane Ridge, another that starts in Imnaha and another that uses logging/forest roads up toward Hells Canyon Lookout.”

Dirty Freehub's purpose

English said the group's goals are multiple.

“We've been providing five-star gravel bike route guides since 2014, but



Linda English/Dirty Freehub
Gravel cyclists, from left, Kevin English, Chris Kutach and Kelly Kutach traverse a route between Enterprise and Joseph recently.

becoming a nonprofit better reflects our mission,” English said. “While cyclists use our website to find routes, our real mission is to connect cyclists to the places they ride.”

The group also has other missions.

“We have a bunch of social missions: inspiring people to get outside and ride, utilizing existing roads but trying to keep cyclists off busier roads,” English said in an email. “Economic development for areas that depend

on tourism, inspiring cyclists to become donors, volunteers and advocates to organizations that preserve these areas.”

She said Wallowa County offers some unique opportunities for cyclists.

“To connect a cyclist to where they ride, we can use a variety of approaches,” she said. “The stories about the granges are fascinating. The history of Joseph, information about the fish hatchery and environmental info from organizations that work to

protect the beauty of the area, the ecosystems, etc.”

Dirty Freehub also is focused on how to utilize technology to help cyclists find the best routes.

“I'm so impressed with the range of technology they have implemented,” said Chuck Allen, a board member and retired Microsoft executive. “They offer downloadable routes with turn-by-turn directions, a searchable database and mapping overlays that let you look at multiple routes on a

map in one area. With media, they have pictures, videos, and now podcasts. They are really changing the game of route guides.”

Another board member, Mike Hobson, said the group's goals fit right into places like Wallowa County communities.

“Farming towns ... are just a blast to ride,” he said. “I love the big views of the mountains and quiet roads.”

He also noted that this means tourism dollars to communities that could really benefit.

And what about e-bikes? Dirty Freehub fully supports gravel e-bikes, with each route clearly tagged as e-bike friendly.

Dirty Freehub's past

Dirty Freehub has a long history with gravel cycling.

“Back in 2014, Dirty Freehub founders Linda and Kevin (English) were enthusiastically convincing me that gravel was going to be the next big thing in cycling, they were on the forefront of the gravel scene with a pointed vision to start creating routes for their community to enjoy,” said Nicola Cranmer, founder and general manager of TWENTY24 Women's Pro Cycling Team and Dirty Freehub adviser. “They were so passionate about riding gravel, who could have fore-

seen the explosion of events, culture and participation in the years that followed, they were such visionaries.”

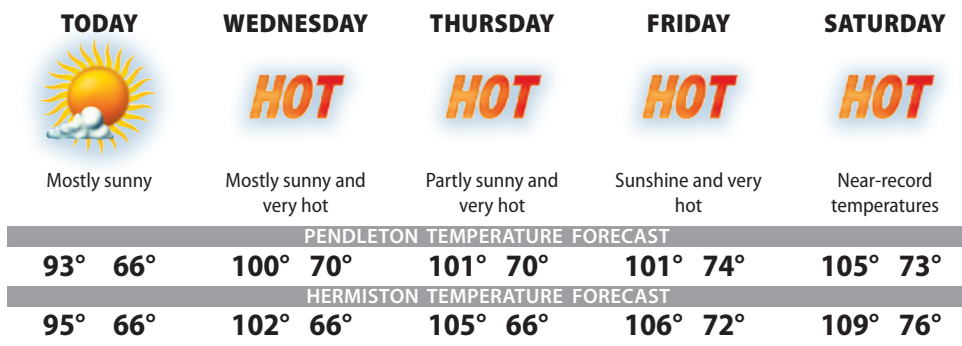
English said she's particularly eager to get cyclists around Wallowa County, with which she's become familiar.

“We also love to help with dispersing people; we worked on routes that used roads up toward Hells Canyon Overlook and saw absolutely nobody,” she said. “Same thing with the road up Zumwalt, which was spectacular. There are loads of great farming roads around Lostine and Enterprise. Same thing around Imnaha.”

Regarding the future of Dirty Freehub, Linda English said, “We will keep adding route guides. Right now we are focused on Oregon, California, Washington and Arizona. We are also adding information to the existing route guides including 2-minute videos that provide an amazing feel about the route and podcasts that tell stories about the history, culture, or environment of an area. We will add to our bike packing routes and continue to learn more about supporting e-bikes.”

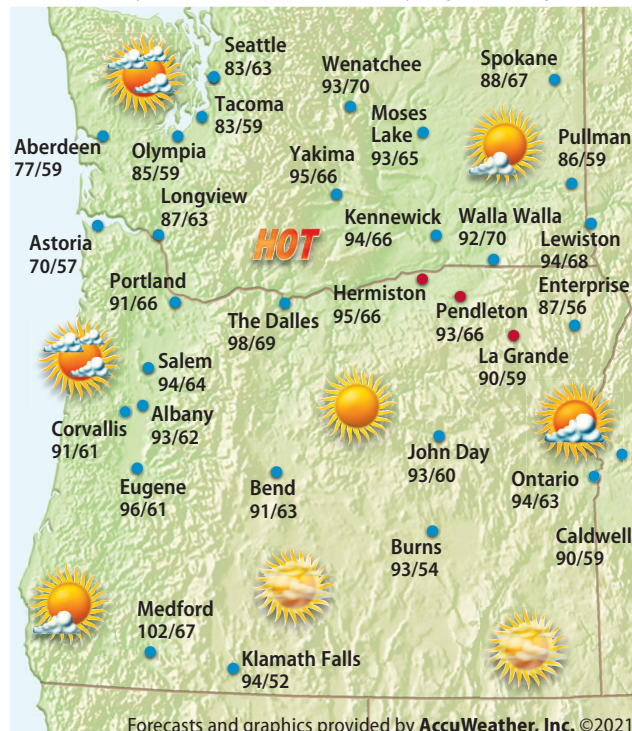
For more information about Dirty Freehub, go to www.dirtyfreehub.org, email info@dirtyfreehub.org or call English at 541-550-8930.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



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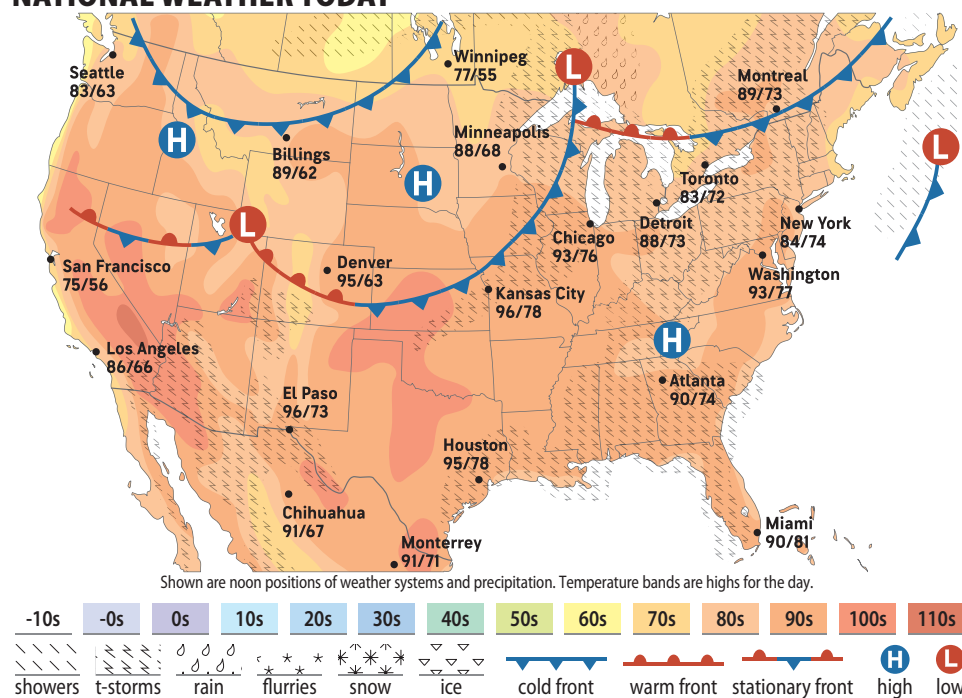
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	83°	50°	
Normals	90°	60°	
Records	111° (1898)	43° (1901)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.01"		
Normal month to date	0.09"		
Year to date	4.37"		
Last year to date	8.68"		
Normal year to date	8.40"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	84°	51°	
Normals	93°	59°	
Records	107° (1972)	43° (1931)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.00"		
Normal month to date	0.05"		
Year to date	1.93"		
Last year to date	1.66"		
Normal year to date	5.19"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	W 4-8	Wed. SSE 3-6	
Pendleton	NW 6-12	N 6-12	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	5:49 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	8:11 p.m.		
Moonrise today	7:59 a.m.		
Moonset today	9:43 p.m.		
First	Full	Last	New
Aug 15	Aug 22	Aug 29	Sep 6

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 107° in Needles, Calif. Low 29° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Commission approves purchase of new property for Minam River Wildlife Area

The Observer

SALEM — The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission on Friday, Aug. 6, approved the purchase of nearly 5,000 acres of land along the Minam River, according to a press release.

The purchase, the release said, is part of Phase I of a project that will eventually create the 15,000-acre Minam River Wildlife Area.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Hancock Natural Resource Group are partnering on the project to purchase property in Wallowa and Union counties along the Minam River. The move will permanently protect crucial big game winter range and provide habitat for salmon, bull trout and Oregon Conservation Strategy Species, including white-headed woodpecker, Rocky Mountain tailed frog and several priority bat species.

Located about 30 miles

northeast of La Grande, the Hancock Natural Resource Group manages the property, which has a recent appraised value of \$18.7 million. The final purchase price will be determined by updated appraisals, the release said. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has committed a minimum of \$5.15 million apportioned to both phases. Phase I funding came from RMEF and the Wildlife Restoration Program, a federal excise tax on guns and ammunition.

Completing Phase II is contingent on securing additional funding through a USDA Forest Legacy program grant, which will be matched with RMEF funds to purchase the remaining 10,964 acres. The Oregon Hunters Association, the Oregon chapter of Four North American Wild Sheep and other organizations are also contributing funds towards the purchase.

The properties will be added to ODFW's current 440-acre Minam River Wild-

life Area, turning it into one of the state's major wildlife areas providing wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities. Future management will be determined through the adoption of a Wildlife Area Management Plan.

Managers envision the property as a “working landscape” where livestock grazing and active forest management assist with habitat management goals. Fish and Wildlife will continue to pay fire protection and in-lieu of property taxes for parcels in each respective county.

Recreation opportunities on the new property could include hunting, fishing, kayaking and other activities. A footbridge over the Minam River is being considered to facilitate improved public access to the historic Minam River Trail, which travels for 6 miles through the property. The trail connects recreationists to the Wallowa Mountains and Eagle Cap Wilderness in the neighboring national forest.

IN BRIEF

Highway construction to make headway through Aug. 13

LA GRANDE — Construction on Interstate 84 outside of La Grande will continue on Monday, Aug. 9. Crews will be grinding and excavating the right lane westbound between milepoints 237.5 and 241.5 to repave the section.

This work is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's larger project to completely reconstruct the four-mile section. The eastbound portion was completed three weeks ago and the westbound will be finished by the end of October, according to Mike Remily, ODOT's resident engineer in La Grande.

Crews also will be working to install a drain system and bridge work at exit 238.

The speed limit through the work zone remains at 50 mph. There are no anticipated delays, Remily said.

On several sections of I-84, other workers will be repairing and installing linings in culverts underneath the interstate.

These lining repairs should be finished by Aug. 12, and will take place near milepoints 207.76 westbound and 228.29 westbound, according to an ODOT statement.

During construction near these mileposts, there will be intermittent shoulder closures.

Construction work on Highway 244 will continue through the week of Aug. 9, mainly on the new retaining wall 12 miles west of I-84 between milepoints 35.5 and 36.2.

The 300-foot-long wall should be finished by Aug. 13, according to Remily. After completing the wall, crews will install guardrails, repave and stripe the road, which has an expected completion date of Sept. 6.

Flaggers and temporary traffic signals will be controlling traffic, which can expect delays up to 15 minutes.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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