

# New bicycle club promotes biking, safety

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The president of a Wallowa County bike club is getting the word out about the new nonprofit, and also promoting safety for a sport increasing in popularity in the region.

The Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club, which was formed about a year ago, gained its nonprofit status back in November 2020 and is awaiting its 501(c)3 tax-exempt status, club President Angela Mart said.

“We want to let people know that we are a legitimate bicycle club here in Wallowa County,” Mart said. “It’s an all-inclusive bicycle club, so it doesn’t matter if you ride mountain bikes, road bikes, BMX bikes, whatever type of bike. We include everybody.”

The club was the brainchild of Mart and Zeb Burke, who started talking about forming the club two years ago.

“I started seeing that people who move here ride bikes. We want to increase the cycling opportunities in Wallowa County for individuals and families who live in Wallowa County,” Mart said. “We have goals, also, of doing bike safety. We want to do education for bike safety in the county. We want to get more kids riding bikes. We want to get everybody riding bikes but we want to get kids on bikes. We want to work with the Forest Service in improving the trails that we have now in the mountains ... and possibly building more mountain bike trails as well as putting in some gravel biking routes.”

Mart said the board will be working with the U.S. Forest Service on planning for putting in trails. Currently, the only place with trails, Mart said, is 18 miles at Salt Creek Summit.

“But there is potential (for more),” she said.

The club is also exploring the possibility of seeing a portion of the East Moraine be set apart for biking use.

“I and other Wallowa

Mountains Bicycle Club members have provided feedback, and I actually participated in one of the initial focus groups,” she said. “We are encouraging WMBC members to complete the survey that is currently being circulated until Oct 2. We would love to be involved in the overall planning process and have mountain bikes and gravel bikes included in that plan.”

Mart said the cycling community is growing in Wallowa County, and with that, said there is a need for cyclists and drivers alike to be aware on the road.

“We really want to get the word out that it’s important to pay attention here in Wallowa County. We have a lot of people that drive big rigs, and when they come around a corner with a loaded horse trailer and there’s a biker in the middle of the road, and there’s a car coming the other direction, what do you do?” she said. “We really want to facilitate knowledge on both sides for cyclist and non-cyclist. We want to create an awareness so everyone’s safe on the roads and trails.”

Currently, there are between 40-45 members in the club, Mart said. Her intent with the club is to promote cycling among Wallowa County residents, but noted that out-of-town-ers can be a part, as well.

In the long term, in addition to working with the Forest Service on trails, Mart hopes to get a pump track installed in the county. She also looks to promote biking among youth.

“We may possibly start a race team,” she said. “Who knows? I’d like to get my mountain biking skills instructor certification and be able to instruct and maybe get a Wallowa County race team going.”

Annual club membership costs \$25 for an individual, \$10 for youths, and \$40 for a family of three or more.

For more information, email [wallowamountains-bicycleclub@gmail.com](mailto:wallowamountains-bicycleclub@gmail.com) or search for Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club on Instagram or Facebook.



Angela Mart/Contributed Photo

Shown is the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club Board at the first official membership meeting on May 26, 2021. From left to right are Vice President Zeb Burke, President Angela Mart, Secretary/Treasurer Rowan Cypher, Board Member Eric Makela and Board Member Sean Cariss. The board has added members since this picture was taken.

## RIDING SAFELY

Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club President Angela Mart said the club is letting people know how to be safe and smart when riding, and offer some tips.

### Road Riding Etiquette

The motorists living in Wallowa County are very courteous to bike riders which makes the roads safe and scenic for cyclists. The following recommendations will increase your safety and enjoyment when riding on our roads.

Ride defensively and stay alert at all times.

Motorists and farm equipment may not be expecting to see cyclists on our roads. Better to be safe than sorry.

Always wear a helmet. Riders of all ages should wear approved helmets anytime you are on a bike. Wearing a helmet reduces the risk of head injury during a crash by 60%. Riders under 16 years of age are required to wear an approved helmet under Oregon law.

Obey all Oregon traffic laws. A bicycle is a vehicle and you’re a driver. When you ride on the street, obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings. Always ride in the bike lane when one is available and signal when stopping, making turns, etc.

Go with the traffic flow. Ride in the same direction as other vehicles. Go with the flow – not against it. Remember there are a lot of big rigs in Wallowa County who may have difficulty slowing down or maneuvering around you because of their heavy loads. Stay to the right of the white line as much as possible when not riding in a bike lane.

Enjoy the scenery without music. Don’t wear headphones or devices that make it difficult to hear oncoming traffic.

Avoid riding on Main Street in Joseph. It is difficult for parked vehicles to see other vehicles or bikes when backing out into the street. Use Lake Street or Mill Street instead.

Avoid riding on sidewalks. Respect pedestrians by not riding bikes on sidewalks. The sidewalks in Wallowa County are narrow and do not allow adequate space for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Ride single file on Hurricane Creek Road, Imnaha Highway, and the North Highway.

Most of the roads are lightly traveled but the speed limits are 55 mph with traffic sometimes going faster.

Avoid riding on Highway 82 between Joseph and Enterprise, and use less heavily traveled roads (i.e. Hurricane Creek Road or Dobbins Road).

Plan your ride around Wallowa Lake. The Highway between Joseph and Wallowa Lake State Park is a beautiful ride. For your safety plan to ride during the mornings and ride single file.

Use caution on back roads. Many of the side roads east and west of Highway 82 are lightly traveled and allow cyclists to safely ride two abreast. The roads are used by farm traffic (trucks with livestock trailers or hauling hay, harvesters, etc.). Ride to the far right hand side of the road and always give these vehicles the right of way. Switch from two abreast to single file when you hear traffic coming. Alert others on group rides by saying, “Car up!” or “Car back!” so they can adjust as well.

Watch for and avoid road hazards. The pavement in Wallowa County is well maintained but there are potholes on some of the lesser traveled roads and rough pavement in some areas. Be alert for your own safety and signal these hazards to others during group rides.

### Mountain Bike Trail Etiquette

Descending Riders Stop For Uphill Riders. We all love the downhill, but skidding out of control is not cool. Expect some uphill riders and be ready to move to one side of the trail, stopping until your line is clear.

Tread On Trail. Thanks for yielding to other riders – but remember that riding off into the bushes widens and damages trails. Instead, put a foot down and feel good knowing that tread on the trail keeps singletrack narrow and fun.

As trail users, we rely on one another. Have fun, and keep your eyes and ears open. Smile and say hello!

Share the Trail. Stop for horses on the trail, dismount, and give them room to pass. Speak to the rider as they pass. Some horses may not be familiar with bikes.

Stop for hikers on the trail and give them room to pass.

—Information provided by Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club



ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

BRIANNA MICKA

Brianna Micka, a recent graduate of Joseph, brought home several medallions at the Oregon State Fair. Micka qualified in four out of five championship medallion classes: Dressage, English, Western, and Trail. She received medallion ribbons and brought home the gold in English Equitation and Western Equitation. Her efforts have garnered her the title of Athlete of the Week.

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## Light agenda awaits county commissioners

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — A light schedule awaits the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners as they

start the month, at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1. at the courthouse.

Also, the public is reminded that a public input session will be held

6-8 p.m. Wednesday at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise on the East Moraine Forest Management Plan.

Wednesday morning, Todd Rodgers is scheduled to speak on government-ordered mask mandates issued because of a surge in the number of coronavirus cases. In addition, county counsel Paige Sully will discuss training on mandatory reporting.

Also on the morning agenda agenda are three employee-related items:

- Wes Garth is being hired as a new Wallowa County deputy.
- Hailey Collier is

resigning from the 911 dispatch service.

- Amy Stangel is resigning from the county’s Department of Youth Services.

The public is invited to attend in person or via Zoom. To get Zoom’s browser client, visit <https://zoom.us/signup>.

Then enter the meeting ID 842 06009 7022 and the passcode 246617. If no microphone or camera is available, members of the public may participate by phone by calling 1-253-215-8782.

For more information, call 426-4543, x1130.

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