

3 THE 80-MILE MURDERERS CREEK ROUTE

Begins at Strawberry Ridge, 15 miles south of John Day. The tour provides a mainly remote ride through ponderosa forestland, along a beautiful creek valley and unique rock outcroppings as well as high desert meadows. The paved ride passes through wildhorse range.

More information: www.rideoregonride.com

4 THE 14-MILE PRAIRIE VALLEY LOOP

A pleasant, easy ride which includes 10 miles of paved road and 4 miles of very smooth-packed gravel. The Riverside School House Bed & Breakfast is located about halfway through the ride.

More information: www.prairiecityoregon.com

5 THE 11-MILE MARYSVILLE LOOP

Riders see breathtaking views of Canyon Mountain and the John Day Valley. Starting in John Day, cyclists head east on Highway 26 for 3 miles, turning right onto Dog Creek Road. After a little over a mile, the paved road takes a 90-degree right turn onto Marysville Road/County Road 52. Riders descend into Canyon City and take a right turn, heading north on Highway 395 back into John Day.



RUSS COMER

Whether he's running in a triathlon, snowshoeing a trail or earning a second-degree taekwondo black belt, Russ Comer of Canyon City keeps an active lifestyle.

Mountain biking is one of his favorite Grant County outdoor sports.

Comer and his wife Sheila have lived in the area for 22 years, and are raising two daughters.

He works as director of Grant County Safe Communities Coalition and volunteers with the Strawberry Mountain Outdoor Club, helping area youth learn bike safety.

And he and friend Joe Hittle are set to open a bicycle repair and accessories shop called Fossil Shift Bikes and Active Gear in March.

The shop is conveniently located in downtown John Day at the back of the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, 301 W. Main St.

Comer said he's ridden bicycles since he was a boy, but gained an interest in mountain biking 20 years ago when he realized its similarities to another favorite sport, off-road motorcycling.

"I wanted that same rush, but also wanted to get fit at the same time," he said.

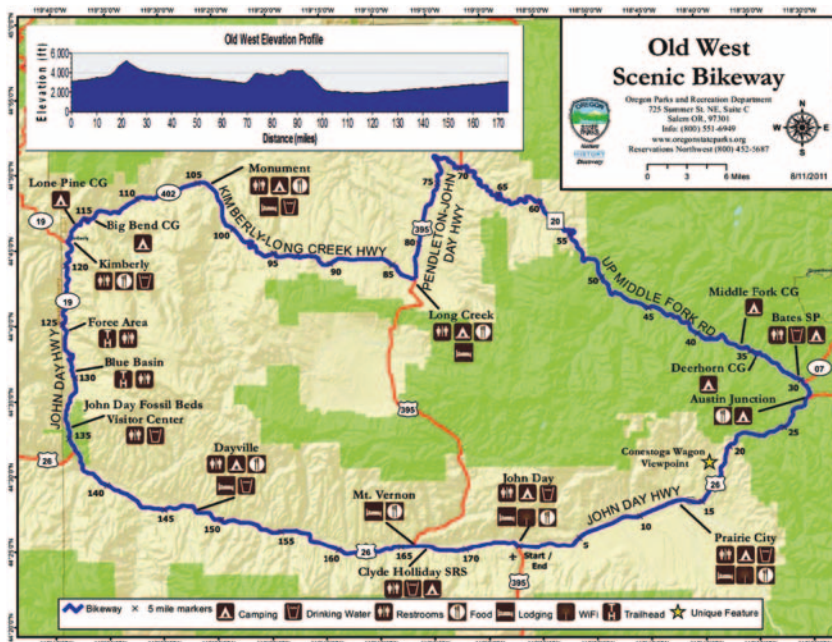
Last summer, Comer rode his Ventana El Rey 29er bike on a Silver Mountain downhill ski run in Idaho.

"Riding alone, I had a blast, but I more often ride with somebody to get me motivated to get out and do it," he said.

When he and Sheila ride with their daughters, they'll try a mild trail.

When friends visit, he said he's likely to take them to mountain bike trails at Magone Lake or the North Fork Malheur Trail just south of Logan Valley.

"The trails here are serene," he said. "You can ride all day and not encounter another person – it has a different vibe."



DRIVER TIPS

- When you pass cyclists, give them a wide berth and make sure you have a good clearance to pull back into your lane without endangering other riders who may be farther ahead.
- If you pull off and stop your vehicle any where on the riding route, always look behind you before opening the car door and getting out. A cyclist who gets "doored" can be seriously injured.
- Be alert to changes in rider activity or position. Riders have the same rules and rights on the road as drivers. They will be directed to ride to the right, but could be jolted by various surprises – such as a blown tire or a jackrabbit darting into their path.
- Slow down in riding areas.