

Tuesday Night Mountain Bike Rides

By: Doug Burnside

These rides will take place every Tuesday evening throughout the summer, rain or shine, and will be hosted by long-time Fairbanks cyclist Doug Burnside. The group will meet at 7:00 PM and start riding as soon after that as everybody is ready.

These rides will most definitely be rides, NOT races, and hammerhead riding will be discouraged. To me, the fun part of a group ride is riding in a group, socializing, meeting new people, and seeing trails I haven't ridden on before. My plan is to have slower riders (such as myself) lead the group and I will be dictatorial about keeping the group together. It's almost easier to define what these rides aren't than what they are. They are *not* races. They are *not* training rides. They are *not* rides for people whose idea of a good time is to push the limits, get a hard workout, or see how fast they can go on a trail. They are *not* highly organized rides. They *are* rides that will be fun even for novice riders with limited off-road experience, and there will be experienced riders to offer advice, riding hints and mechanical help. There are no entry fees for these rides, but for insurance reasons, all riders must be Fairbanks Cycle Club members. Rates are \$30 for the season, or you can have a one-day membership for just \$5.

Rides are rated in both skill required and overall difficulty. Skill refers to bike handling ability. Rides that aren't technically challenging require little skill, and receive a low rating. Challenging trails like "Moose Mountain" are almost impossible to ride from one end to the other without coming off the pedals or falling over. These trails receive a high skill rating. The difficulty scale pertains to total energy and effort required by the cyclist. Difficulty ranges from easy ("Backdoor Trail") to difficult (Colorado Creek) to exceptionally hard ("Pipeline Viewpoint"). Easy rides are scheduled early in the season, longer rides when there is maximum daylight. A difficulty level of 1 would be equivalent to riding your mountain bike on a gravel road with rolling hills for a half an hour. A level of 10 would be like riding from Ann's Greenhouse to the top of Ester Dome and back—three times.

5/2/06 "Back Door Trail" 8 miles, 2.0 hours, 800' elevation gain Skill Low Difficulty 4

Meet at 7 PM at Ester Community Park, located next to the Fire Station on Old Nenana Highway just before the turnoff into Ester. We'll ride up Henderson Road to the Mine, then turn left onto the Marathon Trail. About a half-mile into this trail we'll bear left and take what I call the Back Door Trail back into Ester. This trail is down hill for 90% of the distance (about 4 miles) and is my favorite trail I have ever ridden. This early in the season it may be muddy and not as much fun as it will be later, and there will be three puddles to ride through that could be as deep as 18--24 inches.

5/9/06 "University Ski Trails" 15 miles, 2.5 hours, 1500' elevation gain Skill Med. Difficulty 6

Meet at the Ski Hut (by the geophysical building) and explore the ski trails until we get tired of them. Full suspension is a really, really good thing to have on these trails. One of the most fun short trails in Fairbanks is the Bicycle Bumps trail, and we'll probably do it twice.

5/16/06 "Rosie Creek" 20 Miles, 3 hours, 1800' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 6

Meet at the intersection of Cripple Creek Road on the Parks Highway, about two miles past Ester. We'll do a boring five mile ride up the Parks Highway to the Rosie Creek wood cutting road, just past the intersection with Old Nenana Highway. This will take about an hour, but it is a gentle climb. Then the fun begins: six miles of downhill riding, some of it on very fast wood cutting roads, some of it on fun and technical single track. We'll come out on subdivision roads at the very bottom of the hill, at the Quist farm. From there it's about five incredibly long miles back to the cars. Nearly all of our serious crashes have occurred on this ride, so it gets a skill rating of "High". Be careful.

5/23/06 "Skyline Ridge" 19 miles, 3 hours, 2100' elevation gain Skill Med. Difficulty 4

Meet at the Dog Musher's Hall on Farmer's Loop where Liam Wescott will lead us up Skyline Ridge. We'll go out on the Farmer's Loop bike path over to Ski Boot Hill Rd, go up to the powerline, then over to the ridge trail. We'll follow the trail to an intersection with the Skarland Ski Trail system, which will put us at the intersection of Ballaine and Eldorado. We'll climb up Eldorado and Moose Trail and take the ridge trail past the KUAC transmitter, down a saddle in the ridge and up again, and ultimately come out on subdivision roads at the top of the ridge. Then it's a short trip over Skyline Drive to Summit where we take a fast, technical downhill trail that puts us at the bottom of the hill where Summit intersects with Farmer's Loop.

5/30/06 "Ester Mine Trail" 10.5 Miles, 3 hours, 2310' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 6

Meet at Ester Community Park. We'll take the Ester Mine Road all the way to the top of Ester Dome. This is an arduous climb, but since we won't be racing, there's no reason to thrash yourself doing it. Taking an extra 20 minutes up the hill makes it a fun experience. We'll go down the Alder Chute, then pick up the Back Door Trail back into Ester. You'll spend about 40 minutes pushing your bike up the steepest part, but when you get there, you have a seven or eight mile ride that is at least 90% downhill. Note: Riding down the Alder Chute is not a good idea for the faint of heart. If you are not fully confident of your abilities, you should walk your bike down this hill -- about 3/10 of a mile.

6/06/06 "Treasure Creek" 16 miles, 2 hours, 2400' elevation gain Skill Med. + Difficulty 7

Meet at the intersection of Old Murphy Dome Road and the Elliot Highway, about 3.5 miles north of Fox. Ride west on Old Murphy Dome for about six miles or so, turning right onto a double track trail that leads us along a ridge. There are two forks and we need to go right, then left. After six miles of this trail, we'll connect with the pipeline corridor, which we'll follow back to Old Murphy Dome Road.

6/13/06 "Birch Hill Ski Trails" 12 miles, 3 hours, 2000' elevation gain Skill Med. Difficulty 6

Follow the leader. 2 hours, as hard or easy as we want to make it. These trails are a LOT of fun. They are safe, fast, challenging and entertaining, particularly if I can find some cross-country skier who knows the trails to lead us. There are trails up there that are NOT part of the ski trail system that we can explore as well.

6/20/06 "Death Ride" 21 Miles, 4 hours, 2900' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 8

Start at 5 mile Chena Hot Springs Road and ride the Death Ride Course. We'll put out the course markers for the Death Ride race which happens the following Sunday. Be prepared for a LOT of elevation gain (nearly 3000 feet), two stream crossings and a mile long swamp that can run thigh deep in places. What with laying out the course markers, this will be a four-hour ride.

- 6/27/06 "Amanita Climb" 16 Miles, 3 hours, 2300' elevation gain Skill Med. + Difficulty 6**
 This ride will start at 5 mile Chena Hot Springs Road, at Steele Creek Road. We'll ride out Chena Hot Springs Road for a mile, take Esro for about half a mile, and take a trail to Amanita. We follow Amanita clear to the end and beyond, an amazing continuous climb, riding the trails and section lines until we hit Gilmore Trail. We'll follow Gilmore trail to West Hubernite road, and follow the Death Ride course back to the start. This is a challenging course with a lot of elevation gain and technical riding.
- 7/04/06 "Clifden to Moose" 23 Miles, 4 hours, 2400' elevation gain Skill Med. + Difficulty 7**
 Start at Ivory Jacks on Goldstream Road. We'll go out Goldstream road a few miles and up Clifden to a really good trail that takes us to the Pipeline and Old Murphy Dome Road. We'll follow that west the top of O'Connor Creek trail. There is an option to split the group up at this point. Technical mud lovers can go down O'Connor Creek, back to the start. Others can take the longer but speedier route along the power line to Moose Mountain ski area, down the road bypass trail and section line trail down to subdivision roads, returning to Ivory Jacks. It's interesting to see who gets back first.
- 7/11/06 "Colorado Creek" 21 Miles, 4 hours, 2100' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 8**
Endurance Alert: *This is a taxing ride. Be sure to bring food and water - you will burn a lot of calories!*
 Start at 31.9 mile Chena Hot Springs Road at the Colorado Creek turnout. We start on the Colorado Creek trail, but a few miles in we leave it and take the Four Mile Ridge trail which puts us back out on Chena Hot Springs Road about 5 miles from where we started. This is the best ride of the whole season from the point of view of challenging riding, fun trails, great scenery, and two exciting descents. You'll be out in the boonies on this ride. If you only do one ride all season, make it this one, provided you are in reasonably good condition. **DO THIS RIDE!**
- 7/18/06 "Lincoln – Cache Creek" 18 Miles, 3-4 hours, 2600' elevation gain Skill Med. Difficulty 7**
Endurance Alert: *Wet conditions can turn this one into a very taxing and... interesting ride.*
 Meet at about 7 mile Murphy Dome Road, at the gravel pit before the end of the pavement. Ride up Murphy Dome Road about three miles (it's mostly dirt) and turn left onto Abraham which takes us into Lincoln Creek subdivision. We follow Abraham, which is a good dirt road, out to its end. It turns into a lovely double-track trail that ends up doing a two-mile descent down to Cache Creek Rd. From there, we have about nine miles of rolling dirt road back to the cars. This was the Standard Creek Ride, but we got sick of shuttling cars to both ends of the ride.
- 7/25/06 "Pipeline Viewpoint" 30 Miles, 4 hours, 3000' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 9**
Endurance Alert: *This is a taxing ride. Be sure to bring food and water - you will burn a lot of calories!*
 Start at the Pipeline Viewpoint on the Steese Highway near Goldstream Road. We'll go up the pipeline corridor to Gilmore Trail, (quite a climb), take Gilmore Trail to the Trapper Trail which goes along the ridges to Cleary Summit, then up past the radar site. We can take the wicked descent down to the Pedro Monument, or take Silver Fox trail all the way to the Elliot (more excellent descent) for less pavement.
- 8/1/06 "Behind the Vallata" 20 miles, 4 hours, 2500' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 8**
Endurance Alert: *This is a taxing ride. Be sure to bring food and water - you will burn a lot of calories!*
 Up the hill behind the Vallata on Goldstream Road. We'll follow an old ski trail over to Old Murphy Dome road, go to the pipeline corridor and take the **second** downhill to Goldstream road and back to the cars. This is a very bumpy trail requiring a high skill level: suspension is a good thing to have for this ride.
- 8/8/06 "Ester Fireplug" 20 Miles, 3 hours, 2500' elevation gain Skill Med. Difficulty 7**
Endurance Alert: *This is a taxing ride. Be sure to bring food and water - you will burn a lot of calories!*
 Meet at Ester Community Park, ride up the Backdoor trail through the mine and find a fun uphill single-track that connects with Ester Dome Road. Then, ride out to almost the turnaround point of the Marathon trail, veer left, and enjoy some fun downhill and single-track all the way to the Fireplug snowmachine race trail, where we will turn right and look for a section-line trail on our left. This will take us to the Old Nenana highway, which we will follow towards town. At Old Wood Road, we take a brilliant descent down to Quartz road and back to the cars.
- 8/15/06 "Burgundy Drive" 23 miles, 4 hours, 1980' elevation gain Skill Med. + Difficulty 7**
 We'll meet at Valley Center, about 24 mile Chena Hot Springs Road. From there we'll go up Burgundy Drive, a ferocious climb that is rideable, but granny-gear low all the way up. From there, we take the left fork at the top of the hill and eventually end up back on Chena Hot Springs Road near the Old Grange Road about four miles from where we started. We'll ride a loop around Jenny M hill, then take dog mushing trails back to Valley Center. This ride has a higher than average fun factor.
- 8/22/06 "Two Rivers Ski Trails" 10 miles, 2 hours, 1000' elevation gain Skill Low Difficulty 4**
 Meet at Two Rivers School at about 18 mile Chena Hot Springs Road. We'll play follow the leader on the ski trails behind the school. There are some really excellent trails there and this is not a ride you'll want to miss. We'll ride for two hours, and the difficulty level will be as easy or hard as you want to make it.
- 8/29/06 "Kramer's Chena Ridge" 15 miles, 3 hours, 1500' elevation gain Skill Med. Difficulty 5**
Lighting Alert: *You might not need them, but lights would be a good thing to have on this ride.*
 Meet at Dave Kramer's house on Knightsbridge off Chena Ridge Road. We'll explore a lot of really good trails up on Chena Ridge.
- 9/05/06 "Moose Mountain" 15 miles, 3 hours, 1980' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 7**
Lighting Alert: *You will really want lights on this ride.*
 We'll meet up at the gravel pit at 2 mile Murphy Dome road. From there we'll go over to the Moose Mountain Ski Lodge and take a "forgotten" access road most of the way up to the top, the regular roads/trails the rest of the way up. At that point, we'll have done 10% of the distance, and maybe 65% of the work. We'll take the power lines over to Old Murphy Dome Road, follow it west on a long, shallow descent that can be ridden really fast, go through a few really big puddles, looking for a tiny trail to the left (the "rabbit trail"). This is an immensely technical and challenging downhill all the way back to the ski lodge. Rocky's Mountain Bike Stage Race uses this downhill.
- 9/12/06 "Marathon Back Door" 16 miles, 3 hours, 2140' elevation gain Skill High Difficulty 6**
Lighting Alert: *You will really, truly need your lights on this ride.*
 We'll meet at the Ester Community Park, then ride out through trails and through the mine to Henderson Road, then up Ester Dome. We'll follow the Marathon Trail down the hill to St. Patrick's Road. We'll ride St. Patrick's Road over to Henderson Road, up Henderson to the mine, and ride the Back-Door trail back to Ester. If you have lights for your bicycle, bring them for this ride. You really, truly will need them. By general consensus, this was the second-most fun ride (after Colorado Creek) that we did last year.