

2024 RIDE THE WILLAPA RIDE GUIDE

ON BEHALF OF THE LEWIS COUNTY COMMUNITY TRAILS ASSOCIATION...

We warmly welcome you to Ride The Willapa 2024! Thank you for being such a big part of this event that is now celebrating its seventh year.

When Ride The Willapa began in 2016, we welcomed 200 riders who all made a massive journey from the Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis to the Pe Ell High School football field, where we all camped out overnight and rode back the next day. The event grew year by year, and in 2019 we celebrated 560 registered riders – the most on a ride originating in Lewis County since the 1996 Klein Classic, which welcomed 600.

In more recent years, we've had to modify Ride The Willapa due to significant ongoing trail work. Construction on a brand-new overpass that will carry trail users over SR 6 at Littell, three miles west of Chehalis, dictated that we move the ride temporarily further west, and we're grateful to have found a home at Owl & Olive for the past three years.

But this year, we're elated to bring the ride back to Chehalis where it all began, and also return to our two-day format. And for the first time ever, we're able to cross the Fern Creek trestles and head to Frances in the beautiful Willapa Valley of Pacific County!

We are excited for all the work that is happening along the trail, and we're proud to have been a part of it. By participating in RTW, you are a part of it as well! The Lewis County Community Trails Association has been able to provide grant matching funds for more than \$5 million worth of projects that Washington State Parks has been able to secure funding for.

We hope you will enjoy this year's edition of Ride The Willapa. Enjoy the beautiful scenery, and roll along at your own pace with friends and family! This ride is meant for your enjoyment, and if there's anything we can do to help you, please let our staff know.

Again, thank you so much for being part of RTW, and in turn, contributing to the ongoing construction of this beautiful recreational resource we know as the Willapa Hills Trail.

Please take some time to read this Ride Guide before you embark on your journey. This will help you understand what to expect, some regulations in place, and more to help keep you safe and the event incident-free.

Happy riding!

**Mark Dulin, Steve Ward, Mirinda Moriarty, Stacy Karnas,
Chris Brewer, Wayne VanWeerthuisen and Seth Sharp**
The Ride the Willapa 2024 Committee

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GETTING THERE

Directions to the ride start point

Ride the Willapa 2024 starts and ends at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis, WA. The address is 100 SW Veterans Way, Chehalis, WA 98532. [Here is a link to a Google map you can program into your phone.](#)

Directions: From Interstate 5, take Exit 77. If coming from the north, take an immediate right and then an immediate left onto Riverside Drive. If coming from the south, take a left, go over the overpass, then take a left onto Riverside for about ½ mile. Follow the signs and follow our parking staff's directions!

What to bring to Ride the Willapa 2024

- Your bike, tuned up and in good working condition
- Helmet (mandatory for the ride; more on this below)
- Water bottles (we are not providing cups in an effort to reduce garbage on the route)
- Sturdy shoes
- Things to fix a flat: Tire levers, spare tube or patch kit and pump
- Sunscreen
- Any prescription medications you may need during the event
- FOR OVERNIGHT CAMPERS: Tent, sleeping bag, ground pad, toiletries, and any accessories to make your stay at Rainbow Falls comfortable. Pack what you need but keep it light. (Don't worry about hauling your gear to the campground, we'll take care of that!)

Check-in procedure and details

Check-in begins at 7 a.m. and ends at 10 a.m. In an effort to get all riders on the trail as quickly as possible, we recommend you check in at least 20 minutes prior to the time you wish to start out on the trail.

Please have your registration ready to pull up on your phone or printed off to show our check-in staff. Once checked in, please proceed to the start point. The check-in area is a high-traffic area, so please ride slowly or walk your bike – whichever you feel safest doing – until you reach Hillburger Road.

You may start out on the route once your check-in is complete. While the trail is open between Chehalis and Frances for a total of 35.5 miles one direction, feel free to ride as much as you comfortably are able within the operating hours of our event (7 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

IMPORTANT: If you are riding the Chris's Challenge route, let our check-in staff know. There is a mandatory waiver to sign, and also you'll be directed to a mandatory control point at the summit of L-3000 where you'll need to check in. This ensures accountability for all riders on our most difficult route.

Riding a longer route? Start earlier!

If you are riding either the Tour de Frances (72 miles) or Chris's Challenge (up to 92 miles) routes, we recommend you check in as early as possible and set out on the course no later than 8:30 a.m. These routes take time, and we want to ensure you have as much support during our ride's operating hours as you need.

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RULES OF THE RIDE

Ride the Willapa has several easy-to-follow rules that govern our ride. Please keep them in mind during the event. These are in place to make the ride safe and to ensure we're respectful of everyone around us.

MANDATORY: Helmets are required for all riders

Ride the Willapa requires all riders to wear a helmet. This is put in place as a condition of our event insurance. Any rider not wearing a helmet will forfeit ride privileges. **There is no room for negotiation on this with anyone.** Wear a helmet!

Pay attention to the trail or road in front of you

Ride alert at all times, watch out for hazards, and alert other cyclists of hazards. There are areas where the gravel surface or depth will change. Please ensure you're in control of your bike and keeping a watchful eye for your surroundings.

Stay to the right when possible; pass on the left

Two riders abreast are allowed, but single-file it when faster riders need to pass. If you need to pass someone, please call out "on your left" courteously and allow someone ample time to move over to give you space to make a safe pass.

Be courteous to others at all times

One thing RTW is known for is the friendly nature of the ride. Keep that reputation going and communicate respectfully with riders around you when situations dictate.

Priority in tight spaces given to uphill riders

Westbound riders are given priority in areas of the trail that are flat that require single-file passage. On a climb, uphill riders have priority as they are working harder to ascend than you are descending.

Class 1 and 3 E-assist bikes allowed

In accordance with State Parks and DNR rules and regulations, Class 1 and Class 3 E-bikes are welcome. These are bikes that use pedal assist mode. E-bikes that use a throttle to increase speed are not allowed.

Obey all signage and look for flagging tape

Obey all posted signs along the trail in accordance with all applicable state laws. Also, be on alert for any hazards marked with flagging tape or any temporary signage that may exist. When you see flagging tape, slow down and use caution.

Be good neighbors to those along the trail

Respect the trail, the private property around it, and the community welcoming us. The Lewis County Community Trails Association prides itself on maintaining good relationships with neighbors of the Willapa Hills Trail and the communities the trail serves. Please join us in this effort.

Pack out your trash and leave no trace

We're very serious about keeping the trail clean. Please use the garbage bags provided at our aid stations along the route to properly dispose of your trash. If you litter, you lose your ride privileges on the spot. Please keep the trail clean!

It's not a race; enjoy the day!

Enjoy the ride at your own pace. Stop as often as you want for breaks or photos. If you want to hightail it at 15+ mph, you're welcome to do so. Same if you want to ramble along at 5-7 mph. Enjoy the ride as you see fit and enjoy the scenery and camaraderie of our event!

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SERVICES WE PROVIDE

Rest stops & aid stations

There will be three rest stops on the trail providing water and snacks between Ceres Hill and Frances. One aid station will be located at the L-3000 road summit for people doing the 2024 Chris's Challenge route.

Rest stops operate from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please be respectful of our volunteers' time, and choose your routes according to your cycling capabilities. We cannot guarantee support if you are riding beyond these times.

If you are biking all the way to Frances on either the Tour de Frances or Chris's Challenge routes, please try to arrive in Frances no later than 2 p.m. to ensure you are supported on the ride on your return leg of the trip.

Aid station notes

Rest stops along the trail are located at Ceres Hill (trail mile 10), Pe Ell (trail mile 22), and Frances (trail mile 34). One aid station will be available for riders doing the Chris's Challenge course at the summit of the L-3000 road. All stops will offer water to top up your bottle, as well as light snacks and fruit to keep you replenished. Portable restrooms will also be on site at each rest stop.

When at a rest stop or aid station, please keep the trail clear. Pull off to the side and help keep traffic moving. Once you have finished filling your water bottle and getting food, please find an open area to eat and drink, again with keeping the trail clear in mind. When finished, please dispose of your trash in provided bins or pack it out.

If you wish to ride through a rest stop, please stay on the opposite side of the trail from the stop and continue riding. If you encounter a rider coming from the opposite direction, give westbound riders priority to pass.

IMPORTANT: The L-3000 aid station is a mandatory check-in point for all riders on the Chris's Challenge route. Please stop and give your name and rider number to the on-site volunteers before proceeding.

Mechanical assistance

Some volunteers are able to assist with very minor mechanical repairs. Please ensure your bike is in good working condition before the event and bring a spare tube, tire levers, and CO2 or a pump. We will have minor repair tools at our aid stations for anyone needing quick help.

On-site mechanical support will be available at Rainbow Falls, thanks to our ride partners at the Hub City Bike Shop. Please donate if you need their services; they are a not-for-profit group and rely on donations to keep their shop running!

Course markings for Chris's Challenge riders

The L-3000 road is on Department of Natural Resources land, and has several roads that split off from it. Please keep an eye out for polka-dot flagging tape marking the route you should take. We highly recommend that you [download the course from here](#) onto your Garmin device or cell phone to assist in navigation as well.

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ABOUT THE TRAIL

Trail profile & conditions

The Willapa Hills Trail consists largely of finely crushed gravel. Conditions vary greatly along the route; please pay attention to the trail surface and your surroundings. Some areas of the trail have deeper gravel than others.

The farther west you go, the more conditions vary. Between Chehalis and Rainbow Falls State Park, a distance of 15.5 miles, the trail is in good condition and easily rideable by riders of all ages and all abilities. The trail becomes marginally more difficult between Rainbow Falls and Pe Ell. After Pe Ell, conditions get a bit more difficult, with trail miles 25 to 35 becoming more rugged – but this area has breathtaking scenery!

We recommend that experienced riders bring a bike with tires of width 700x32c or greater. Novice or intermediate riders will do better with dedicated gravel or mountain bikes, or at the very least, 700x38c or wider tires, especially if you're heading through Pluvius to Frances as there are several unimproved areas of the trail.

Hazards on the trail

There is a major rut in the trail at a driveway between miles 7.5 and 8 on the trail. Please slow down and ride safely in this area. Dismount if necessary. This section will be marked with flagging tape, which is a signal to slow down in this area.

Deep gravel has been laid between miles 9-10 and 19-21 on the trail. Use caution when riding here.

Loose, deep gravel exists at a site repaired after a rockslide hit in 2022. Be careful in the area of trail mile 11.5 to 12. Riders with thinner tires may want to dismount and walk bikes through the deep gravel here.

Other hazards may exist that are not identified here. Please pay attention to your surroundings. Remember that it is your responsibility to be aware of trail conditions and in good control of your bike at all times.

Ride boundaries

Our western boundary as of the time of this writing is just past mile 35 on the trail at Holy Family Catholic Church in Frances. There will be a marked turnaround point here. The trail will be **closed** to riders beyond this point due to unimproved trail conditions and upcoming construction. **Do not proceed past the turnaround point; doing so will disqualify you from the remainder of the ride. Please respect the boundaries set as part of our event.**

Please stay on the trail and designated roads as much as possible. Do not ride on private roads or private property. We strive to be respectful of landowners adjacent to the trail, and we ask you to join us in this.

Areas where riding off the trail as part of our event is permissible include Rainbow Falls State Park, Beam Road between the trail and Jones Creek Brewing, the shoulders of State Route 6 in Pe Ell while going to and from businesses and restaurants, and all routes marked for Chris's Challenge.

If you go to Jones Creek Brewing, you will need to cross State Route 6. Please note the speed limit in this section is 55, and no traffic control will be provided at this crossing. However, sight lines in both directions are good. Please stop and look before you cross, and ensure traffic is clear in both directions before venturing between Mauermann and Beam roads.

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OTHER NEED-TO-KNOW INFO

Ride as much or as little as you wish

The listed routes are guides to landmarks and areas that are good turnaround spots because they're easily findable. If you wish to ride further or shorter distances than your route, feel free to do so! The trail is hard to get lost on; simply turn around and head back east if you want to return to Chehalis.

A note on E-bikes

If you are riding an E-bike, we cannot guarantee places for you to recharge your batteries either along the trail or at Rainbow Falls State Park. Please be familiar with your bike's range and capabilities before setting out on the ride, and please view our Routes page on ridethewillapa.com to check routes and their associated mileages.

Cell phone reception

Cell phone reception has steadily been improving along the trail for the past couple of years. Reception varies based on your carrier and location on the trail. You may encounter several areas of no reception in the middle of the route you are on, particularly in the areas between Pe Ell and Pluvius.

If you need urgent help and cannot continue

The day-of-ride support number is (503) 395-5108. Please program this into your cell phone.

We will have ride staff riding the trail and driving marked roads on the course to aid in the event of any situations in which riders cannot continue. There will be a support vehicle available for non-emergent situations, to take riders back to the Veterans Museum. These situations include a major mechanical issue, or urgent yet non-emergency medical issue that prevents you from continuing.

If you have a situation in which you cannot continue due to injury or major mechanical issue, **please TEXT (do not call)** with your name, rider number, location on the trail, and what you're wearing, if you need help. We will respond as quickly as we are able. The more descriptive you are, the easier you will be to find.

Why text instead of call? Texting is easier to have a visual record of what to refer to during an ongoing situation. We can read text as many times as we need to. If we need to speak with you via phone, please let us do the calling.

IMPORTANT! In a critical medical emergency, call 911 first, then text the route support number.

SAG wagon: For riders who absolutely can't continue

The SAG wagon is strictly for riders who reasonably cannot continue, and as such functions as an emergency transport vehicle. **The SAG will not transport riders who are not experiencing mechanical trouble or injury.** Please know the capabilities and limitations of both you and your equipment prior to choosing a route on this ride. Help us keep the SAG wagon open for anyone who absolutely needs it.

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IF YOU'RE CAMPING OVERNIGHT AT RAINBOW FALLS...

Things you need to bring

Bring a tent, sleeping bag, ground pad, and any accessories to make your stay at Rainbow Falls comfortable. Pack what you need but keep it light.

Through a generous partnership, the great folks of the UPS Customer Center in Chehalis will bring your luggage to and from the campground — so you can ride and not worry about having to pack all your gear on your bike.

Luggage and tent check-in

Our check-in hosts on Saturday morning will show you where you need to go, and the luggage area will be marked and signed with attendants to assist you. All luggage will be delivered to a designated “drop zone” at Rainbow Falls where you will be able to pick it up when you arrive at the park on Saturday. Luggage will arrive in the early afternoon hours, and will be watched by our volunteer Camp Hosts. Check-in with them to pick up your luggage and tents.

Camp hosts: Here to help you

RTW Camp Hosts will be wearing red T-shirts with the ride logo on them, and available to help with anything you need. They can show you where to go if you need something, assist with information about the ride, and point you where to set up your tents. Our Camp Hosts are here to help you have a great experience!

Meal service for campers

Meal tickets are \$20 (this cost is separate from your ride and campout ticket). The ticket pays for two meals: a hot dog/sausage dinner with sides on Saturday night, and a pancake breakfast on Sunday morning. Please look for further information on meal service times, coming soon to your email address that you used to register.

Restrooms & shower availability

Full restrooms are available at the south end of the Day-Use area and in the main campground. Showers are available in the campground; shower tokens are available for purchase at the park office.

Quiet hours: Be respectful!

Quiet hours at Rainbow Falls State Park begin at 9 p.m. As a general rule, please treat everyone with respect!

Check-out and heading back

All riders should be packed and have your luggage to the marked drop zone no later than 10 a.m. Sunday morning. Please make every effort to be on the trail at 10 a.m. for the ride back to Chehalis.

Ride support on Sunday

The section between Rainbow Falls and the Veterans Museum will be the ONLY fully-supported section of the ride on Sunday. Lewis County CERT volunteers will help staff an aid station at Ceres Hill, 6 miles east of Rainbow Falls.

The Sunday portion of the ride is 16 miles, eastbound from Rainbow Falls to the Veterans Memorial Museum.

Route sweepers will leave Rainbow Falls at 10:30 a.m. and will move eastbound to ensure all riders make it back.

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SERVICES AND WAYPOINTS ALONG THE TRAIL

FOOD & DRINK

Jones Creek Brewing *173 Beam Rd, Pe Ell / jonescreekbrewing.com*

Directions: Head toward trail mile 21 and the intersection with Mauermann Road North. Take a left on Mauermann if coming from the east, right if coming from the west, and STOP at the stop sign before crossing Highway 6 safely. Slight left toward Beam Road, head down Beam Road about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mile, and the brewery will be on your left.

Evey's Cafe & Lounge *416 N Main St, Pe Ell*

Directions: Head to the Pe Ell Trailhead at trail mile 22, then exit the trailhead area and take a right on N Main St. Stay on the shoulder and continue four blocks, and Evey's will be on your right just before the intersection with Pe Ell Avenue. This is a great spot to grab lunch or dinner.

Pe Ell Pub *205 N Main St, Pe Ell*

Directions: Head to the Pe Ell Trailhead at trail mile 22, then exit the trailhead area and take a right on N Main St. Stay on the shoulder and continue two blocks, then turn left. The Pub is on your left, adjacent to the Post Office.

CONVENIENCE STORES

Doty General Store *212 Stevens Rd, Doty*

Directions: Head to the Stevens Road intersection between trail miles 17 and 18. If coming from the west, take a left; if coming from the east, take a right. Continue a half-mile down Stevens Road and you will see the store on the far right side, at the end of Stevens Road.

Pe Ell Country Market *103 N Main St, Pe Ell*

Directions: This one's pretty easy; head out from the Pe Ell Trailhead toward town and take a left at the flashing light. They stock Gatorade, Body Armor and many more refreshing drinks for cyclists!

IMPORTANT PLACES

Rainbow Falls State Park *633 Leudinghaus Rd, Dryad*

Here you'll find camping, restrooms and a great place to relax. Discover Pass required for vehicles. Signs are at trail mile 15.5, and from there the park is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away.

Pe Ell Trailhead *E 4th Ave & Front St, Pe Ell*

Restrooms and car parking can be found here. This is a great alternate pick-up location for riders who wish to meet family and friends for lunch or dinner in Pe Ell at the restaurants listed above.

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Thank you for being a part of Ride the Willapa 2024! If you have any concerns, questions or needs, please email us at ridethewillapa@gmail.com.

Our sincere appreciation goes out to our event partners, sponsors and dozens of volunteers. Without the people you see here, Ride the Willapa would not exist!

If you enjoy RTW this year, please consider dropping a note of appreciation to our fantastic sponsors and partners for their generous contributions and support.

RIDE PARTNERS

[Lewis County Community Trails Association](#)

[Washington State Parks](#)

[Hub City Bike Shop](#)

[Jones Creek Brewing](#)

[UPS - Chehalis Customer Center](#)

[Security State Bank](#)

[Pacific Pressurized Systems & Repair](#)

[Better Homes & Gardens - NorthWest Home Team](#)

AID STATION VOLUNTEERS

Ceres Hill Aid Station

[Lewis County CERT Volunteers](#)

Pe Ell Aid Station

[AgWest Farm Credit - Chehalis Branch](#)

Frances Aid Station

[Pacific County Community Trails Association](#)

L-3000 Aid Station

Hilmer Percell & Friends

WE APPRECIATE ALL OF YOU!
See you June 22 for Ride The Willapa 2024!