

Welcome to the inaugural Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder!

In just under two weeks, on Sunday, June 9th, you and several hundred other cyclists will embark on a scenic and epic bike ride along historic gravel roads in Northern Virginia. Located east of the Blue Ridge, in lush Loudoun Valley, these crushed rock roadways meander through awe inspiring beauty, past stone walls, grand estates, horse farms, wineries, bubbling creeks, tiny hamlets, and significant historical sites. Riding these roads is a sublime experience – like stepping back in time and cycling through history.

With over 300 miles of gravel road dating back to the early 1700s, Loudoun County Virginia boasts the largest and oldest intact network of gravel roads in the United States. When settlement in this area officially began in the year 1725, these roads were first used by mills and farms to get goods to market and by settlers to get to town and church. Today these special routes are used by residents, farmers, visitors, equestrians, and cyclists.

Inspired by the growing effort to save these historic gravel roads and by a thirst in the cycling community for unique events, EX2 Adventures created this ride to showcase this dwindling, priceless treasure and to raise funds and awareness for [America's Routes](#), a group that is advocating to save these historic rural roads from being paved over by development. To that end, 5% of gross funds will be donated to this cause.

THANK YOU for participating in Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder. We at EX2 Adventures are super excited for ride weekend and we hope you feel the same way!

Below are details for the day of the ride. This email is long and will take a few minutes to read but we promise, this information should be helpful and answer most of your questions.

Schedule of Events:

Sunday, June 9, 2019

- 6:30am-9:00am – Check-In Open
- 7:30am-8:30am – 80 Mile Starting Window
- 7:30am-9:00am – 60 Mile Starting Window
- 7:30am-9:30am – 40 Mile Starting Window
- 11:00am-6:00pm – Post-ride Food/Beer, Massage, Music, Giveaways

Staging Area and Ride Start and Finish: The staging area will be located in the front lawn of the [Salamander Resort](#) (500 N. Pendleton Street, Middleburg, VA

20117). The staging area will serve as the hub of most non-riding activity. All routes will start and finish here.

Parking: Parking will be available in the huge grassy fields of Salamander Resort. This parking area is adjacent to the staging area. There is plenty of parking available but we always advocate carpooling if possible.

Restrooms: Porta-johns or restrooms will be available at the staging area and at all aid stations.

Check-In and Packet Pickup: Check-in will be open from 6:30am-9am and take place at the large tent in the staging area. At check-in, you will receive your t-shirt and ride packet. Ride packets include bike number/twist ties, bib number/safety pins, route map, cue sheets, and tips on riding safety/etiquette. You must check-in at least 30 minutes before the close of your starting window. See *Start Times in the Schedule of Events*.

Weather / Rain or Shine Event: Early June weather in Northern Virginia generally ranges from mild mornings in the 60s to hot afternoons in the 90s. Please check the forecast the day before the ride and come prepared with appropriate gear. This ride will take place rain or shine.

Sunscreen / Hydrate: Be smart and protect yourself, **WEAR SUNSCREEN and HYDRATE WELL BEFORE and DURING THE RIDE.**

Safety and Riding Etiquette: Please be respectful of motorists and residents that live along the route. If we prove to the residents of this area that the cycling community is worthy of their respect, they will be much more likely to continue embracing this event and any other gravel riding in the area. **FOR YOUR SAFETY AND**

TO PROTECT GRAVEL CYCLING IN LOUDOUN COUNTY, PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION AND FOLLOW THESE RULES:

- **OPEN ROAD RIDE:** The Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder is an open-road ride. Route marshals will monitor some of the intersections along the course but the roads along the route will remain open to vehicular traffic. Riders must abide by local traffic laws. Buckled bicycle helmets are required.
- **THIS IS NOT A RACE.** Remember, **THIS IS NOT A RACE.** Please take your time and enjoy the roads, the camaraderie of your fellow cyclists, and the scenery of this beautiful part of the country.
- **STOP and LET VEHICLES PASS YOU ON GRAVEL.** Many of these gravel roads are narrow, with little or no shoulder. For your safety and as a show of courtesy, when you see a vehicle, either in front or behind you, **PLEASE PULL OVER AT A SAFE SPOT AND LET THEM PASS YOU.** Again, this is **NOT A**

RACE. Also, don't forget to smile and wave. This is their backyard, folks. You will not see many vehicles on your ride so when you do, let's show the residents of this area that we are grateful visitors.

- **SINGLE-FILE ON PAVEMENT.** The routes of the Loudoun 1725 are comprised mostly of gravel roads but there are several sections of pavement that connect the gravel. For your safety, please ride single-file when riding on the pavement.
- **SAFETY LIGHTS AND BRIGHT CLOTHING.** While not required, using safety lights and wearing bright colored clothing will make you more visible on the roads.
- **DON'T PEE ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD** (i.e., someone's yard). We should not even have to say this but here it is. There are portajohns at every aid station. Please hold it until then. Thank you.

Special Note about Horses: It's not uncommon to see horses on the gravel roads you will be traveling on. The most important thing is to **COMMUNICATE** and make the rider aware of your presence. If approaching from behind, horses have a very large blind spot and won't see you until you're practically level with their heads. It's vital therefore to let the riders know you're there with a clear "good morning" or similar. Don't shout overly loudly but don't be too tentative either. A horse is far less likely to be spooked by the sound of your voice than by being suddenly surprised by you appearing next to them. Wait until they've acknowledged your presence and follow any instructions they may give you for passing. Whether approaching horses from behind or head on, **slow down and be prepared to stop.** Allow plenty of time and distance for the horse and rider to become aware of your presence, and pass widely when it's appropriate to do so. Remember, this is a ride not a race.

Photos: The pros from [Bruce Buckley Photography](#) will be out on the route taking amazing photos of you on your bike. There will be one area on the route where you can get off you bike and get a scenic photo taken of you and/or your group. Remember, this is not a race. Stop and smell the roses (as the saying goes) and take advantage of this great keepsake opportunity. All photos will be available for FREE download the week after the event.

Start Times / Start Protocol: All 80 mile riders must start between 7:30am-8:30am, 60 mile riders must start between 7:30am-9am, and all 40 mile riders must start between 7:30am-9:30am. To prevent overcrowding on the roads, we will start no more than five riders at any given time and space riders out by at least one minute between starting groups. If you intend to start early, we suggest arriving and lining up early.

80 Mile – Route Specs: The 80 mile route starts and finishes at Salamander

Resort in Middleburg, VA, measures 80.6 miles, includes 4951' of elevation gain, and features 62.0 miles of gravel and 18.6 miles of rural paved backroads. In order, this ride travels through or near the towns and hamlets of Middleburg, St. Louis, Unison, Willisville, Trapp, Bloomfield, Bluemont, Airmont, Unison, Philomont, White Pump, Lincoln, Philomont, St. Louis, and returns to Middleburg. 80 Mile riders may start at any time during the 7:30am-8:30am start window and it will take most riders 4 ½ - 10 hours to complete. 80 mile riders that want the maximum time on the course (10 hours), should start at 7:30am.

[80M GPS Track, Course Map, Elevation Profile, and Cue Sheet](#)

60 Mile – Route Specs: The 60 mile route starts and finishes at Salamander Resort in Middleburg, VA, measures 59.6 miles, includes 3390' of elevation gain, and features 47.3 miles of gravel and 12.3 miles of rural paved backroads. In order, this ride travels through or near the towns and hamlets of Middleburg, St. Louis, Unison, Willisville, Trapp, Bloomfield, Bluemont, Airmont, Unison, Philomont, White Pump, Lincoln, Woodburn, Philomont, St. Louis, and returns to Middleburg. 60 Mile riders may start at any time during the 7:30am-9:00am start window and it will take most riders 3 ½ - 7 ½ hours to complete.

[60M GPS Track, Course Map, Elevation Profile, and Cue Sheet](#)

40 Mile – Route Specs: The 40 mile route starts and finishes at Salamander Resort in Middleburg, VA, measures 41.3 miles, includes 2168' of elevation gain, and features 31.1 miles of gravel and 10.2 miles of rural paved backroads. In order, this ride travels through or near the towns and hamlets of Middleburg, St. Louis, Unison, Willisville, Trapp, Bloomfield, Bluemont, Airmont, Unison, St. Louis, and returns to Middleburg. 40 Mile riders may start at any time during the 7:30am-9:30am start window and it will take most riders 2 ½ - 5 hours to complete.

[40M GPS Track, Course Map, Elevation Profile, and Cue Sheet](#)

Following the Route / Route Marking: There are several ways that riders will be able to follow the route (80M, 60M, and 40M) but the most popular way will be to follow the route markings. We are using 18"x24" coroplast signs and most of the signage have a white background, the ride logo, and blue arrows/text. At all turns on the route, riders will see a turn arrow about 25-50 meters before the turn, a turn arrow at the turn, and a straight arrow after the turn. When crossing major intersections, straight arrows will be positioned on the other side of the intersection. It is not practical or needed to mark every single side street that comes into the course. So, if you do not see an arrow, then just continue going straight. AGAIN, ALL TURNS WILL BE MARKED.

In addition to arrow signage, we will have yellow 'Caution – Bike Event Ahead' signs to alert vehicle traffic that our event is taking place. Other white

background and blue text signs we will use include: Aid Station Ahead, 80 Mile Only Arrows (to direct 80 mile only riders), 40 Mile Only Arrows (to direct 40 mile only riders), Single File

Please, and Wrong Way (placed at a few intersections to confirm that riders should not travel down this road) . A sample of all signage will be on display at the check-in area.

Following the Route / Route Marshals: Volunteer route marshals will monitor several busy and/or tricky intersections throughout the course.

Following the Route / Maps and Cue Sheets: Maps and cue sheets, with written turn-by-turn directions, will be included in your ride packet.

Following the Route / Ride with GPS: Download the [ridewithgps](#) app, download the route from our website, and follow the audible cues from your phone. Viewing the route on the app is free but if you want to navigate with the app, you will be required to pay a small fee. SAFETY TIP – VA law allows one earbud only to be used when riding your bike.

Aid Stations: Aid stations stocked with water, Gatorade, and sugary/salty snacks will be positioned along the route. Food will include such items as sandwiches, apple pie, watermelon, oranges, bananas, bars, chips, pretzels, pickles, hummus/veggies/crackers, M&Ms, cookies, and soda. First aid kits, mechanical support, and porta-johns/restroom facilities will be available at all aid stations. The 80M riders will have 5 opportunities for aid (spaced 9.2-20.4 miles apart). The 60M riders will have 4 opportunities for aid (spaced 9.2-16.6 mile apart). The 40M riders will have 3 opportunities for aid (spaced 7.5-13.4 miles apart). Mechanical support will be provided from our bike shop sponsors. A huge THANK YOU to [Bikenetic](#), [Plum Grove Cyclery](#), and [The Bike Lane](#) for their amazing support at the aid stations and along the route!

SAG (Support and Gear): Athletes will also be supported with SAG (Support and Gear) vehicles along the route. SAG vehicles will have a bike pump, basic first aid kit, and the ability to transport a rider and bike should the need arise. SAGs will transport athletes needing major mechanical service or those that miss cut-off times. Additionally, several volunteer SAG teams will travel on bike in the opposite direction along the route. SAGs will be wearing safety vests and will keep an eye out for riders in need of assistance. If you need SAG assistance, call the number on the back of your bib or bike number and a SAG will be dispatched to your location.

Cut-Off Times: Cut-off times will be used to ensure all riders have finished by 5:30pm. Cut-off times will apply mostly to 80 mile riders. All 80 mile riders must

start between 7:30am-8:30am and it will take most riders from 4 ½ - 10 hours to complete. 80 miler riders will have up to 10 hours to finish their ride, which is a minimum average speed of 8 mph. 80 mile riders that want the maximum time on the route (10 hours), should start at 7:30am. Cut-off times will not affect 40 mile and 60 mile riders if a minimum average speed of 8 mph is maintained. Cut-off times will be enforced at aid stations and at the beginning of side loops for the 80 mile route. Those missing cut-off times will be directed to skip a portion of the route or will be transported by SAG to the next aid station or back to the finish. If you stop along the route and return after the 8 mph minimum average speed (i.e., behind our sweep), you may find that the route has already been demarked and the aid stations have been closed. Please do not do this. If you choose to leave the route, please call our ride POC so we know.

- Unison Aid Station #3 cut off time is 2pm. All riders missing this cut-off time will be directed to follow the 40 mile route to the finish or will be transported by SAG to the finish.
- Hughesville Rd / Foundry Rd intersection cut-off time is 1:45pm. 80 mile riders missing this cut-off will skip the Lincoln side loop and continue along the 80 mile route.
- Oakland Green Rd / Shelburne Glebe Rd intersection cut-off time 2:30pm. 80 mile riders missing this cut-off will skip the Zephaniah Loop and continue along the 80 mile route
- Zephaniah Winery Aid Station (#4 for 80M) cut-off time is 3pm. 80 mile riders missing this cut-off will be transported by SAG to the finish.
- Philomont Aid Station (#4 for 60M and #5 for 80M) cut-off time is 4:30pm. 60 mile and 80 mile riders missing this cut-off will be transported by SAG to the finish.

Bike Numbers / Bib Numbers and Emergencies: Each rider will be provided a small bike number that should be affixed with twist ties to the handlebars of your bike and a bib number that should be attached with safety pins to the back of your jersey or on the back of your hydration pack, should you use one. These numbers are important so the photographers, SAG vehicles, aid stations, and roving medical can identify you. Your name and ride POC phone number will be on the back of both these numbers. Should you need non-emergency medical assistance or mechanical assistance while on the route, please call the ride POC number and we will activate the appropriate response. In case of medical emergency, call 911 first and then call the ride POC number.

Finish Aid: Water and Gatorade will be available at the finish area.

Pint Glass and Bottle Opener: Cross the finish line and grab your commemorative pint glass and bottle opener. Both are very cool and useful items that will help you remember the awesome time you had on the

amazing gravel roads of Loudoun County. A big THANK YOU to [Jan Feuchtner, owner of Bikenetic](#), and longtime EX2 racer and sponsor, [Erik Scudder of Integrated Financial Partners](#), for providing these very nice giveaways.

Post-Ride Food and Beverage: Salamander resort is providing tasty post-race food, soft drinks, and craft microbrew. If you purchased a meal during registration, you will receive a meal ticket in your ride packet. The meal includes a sandwich (pulled pork BBQ, pulled chicken BBQ, Bratwurst, or Veggie), two sides, and your beverage of choice. Salamander will also be selling food and beer to spectators and to those that did not pre-purchase. All volunteers will receive a meal ticket.

Post-Ride Massage: Stop by the Recovery tent after the event to take advantage of free massage, chiropractic, and ART services from the incredible healer, [Dr. Cheryl of Pow-HER Chiropractic](#).

Recovery/Medical: First aid supplies and services will be available at our recovery tent in the staging area. We will also have medical support on the course.

Giveaways: Stick around after the ride to enjoy a meal, frothy beverage, great music, excellent comradery, and to chat with ride sponsors and the folks from America's Routes about their efforts to save Loudoun's network of gravel roads. Also, we will be randomly giving away great swag throughout the day.

Volunteers: We need a crew of close to 40 volunteers to help at check-in, aid stations, and with route marshaling. If any of your friends or family can volunteer, [please ask them to sign up on the EX2 website](#). Times vary from 7am-5pm and shifts are usually 3-5 hours. Volunteers receive free food, a cool ride t-shirt, and our sincere appreciation. Plus, volunteering at the ride is going to be tons of fun!!!

Sponsors: THANK YOU to all our generous sponsors. Their financial and in-kind support is crucial to the current and future sustainability of this event. Please show your love and support our sponsors in any way you can. Our sponsors include: [Bikenetic Full Service Bike Shop](#), [Erik Scudder from Integrated Financial Partners](#), [Dr. Cheryl Lee Pow from Pow-HER Chiropractic](#), [Plum Grove Cyclery](#), [The Bike Lane](#), and [Drink More Water](#).

THANK YOU to our Supporters: Last but not least, please join us in extending a HUGE THANK YOU to our wonderful ride supporters. Thank you [Salamander Resort](#) for your wonderful support and for allowing us to stage our event on your beautiful grounds. Thank you to amazing photographer and huge cycling

advocate [Bruce Buckley](#) for your fantastic photos and for planting the seed of this event early on. Thank you to ABC7 news journalist and longtime EX2 racer Jay Korff and to [America's Routes](#) representative Doug Graham for your incredible story [The Long Road Home](#). This Grammy nominated documentary helped inspire us to start this ride. We would also like to thank the following people and organizations for their support and advocacy of this event: Mitch Diamond and all the great folks at America's Routes, Supervisor Buffington, Loudoun County, the Town of Middleburg Police, the Town of Middleburg, Bill Hatch from [Zephaniah Winery](#), Drew Bishop from the [Philomont General Store](#), the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department, all of the gracious and energetic volunteers, and the professional and talented EX2 Adventures staff. Lastly, we would like to thank the communities of SW Loudoun County for embracing this event and for allowing us to play in their beautiful backyard.

Whew, that was a lot – thank you for taking the time to read this message!

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN for participating in the inaugural Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder and prepare for an awesome day of bike riding!

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch. See you all on June 9th.

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