

CENTRAL OREGON CYCLING

MT. BATCHELOR, ELK LAKE, SOUTH CENTURY ROAD, PAULINA PEAK, BEND, EAGLE CREST

Central Oregon is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. In summer, activities like hiking, road cycling, mountain biking, kayaking, fishing, and relaxing by the river beckon visitors. In winter, skiing, cross-country skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling take center stage. This write-up highlights several bike rides



we enjoyed, showcasing stunning views of Mount Bachelor, the Three Sisters, Paulina Peak, volcanic buttes, lava fields, lakes, and the Deschutes River.



The rides start at the Sunriver Resort (except the Eagle Crest loop). Check road conditions in advance, as maintenance often occurs during summer months.

Drivers in the area are generally courteous and cyclist-aware, though passing logging trucks can feel daunting due to their size.

Fortunately, truck drivers are typically considerate. Rides begin at

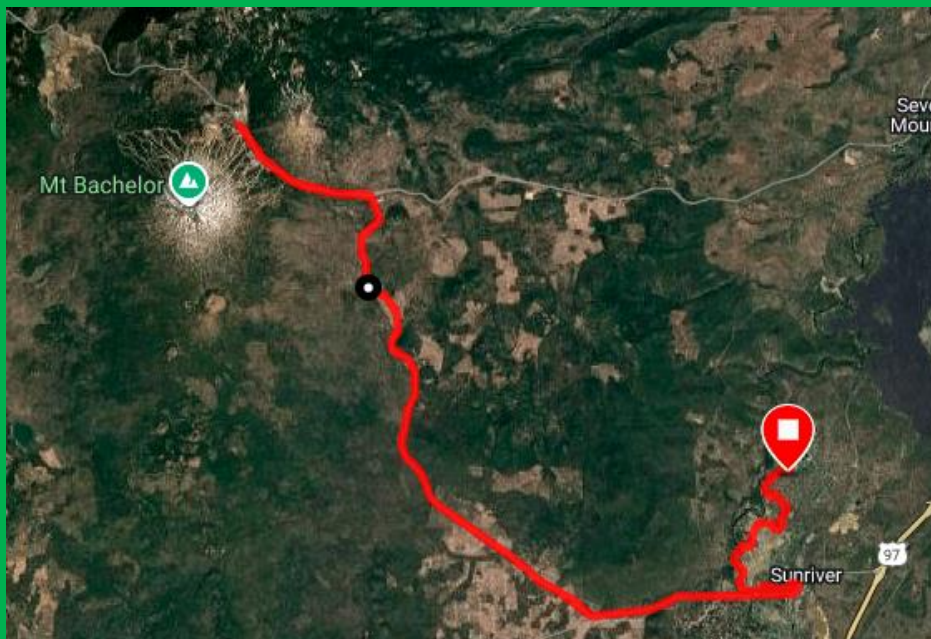
around 4,000 feet elevation, with some climbing to 6,400 feet. The high altitude is manageable, but the intense sun requires precautions. Bring at least two water bottles, sunscreen, and bug repellent for a comfortable experience.

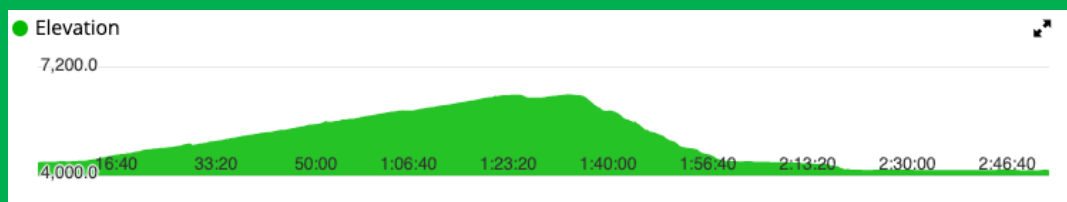


A popular route for experienced riders, the Cascade Lakes Loop features significant elevation changes and offers stunning views of sparkling lakes, towering peaks, and lush forests.

These rides below can be tailored to various skill levels, with options to shorten or extend the route depending on your preference.

SUNRIVER TO MT. BATCHELOR AND BACK





Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
50.6 miles out and back, Total ascent 2,415 feet
4,161 to 6,406. 2884

Riding to Mt. Bachelor and back was a long-anticipated adventure that my son and I were eager to conquer. Starting from Sunriver in the early morning, we enjoyed the smooth, quiet trails of the resort,



nearly free of pedestrians and other cyclists. We followed Spring River Road, continuing straight onto Edison Cave Road (NF 45) where it intersects Upper Deschutes Road (NF 40). The elevation gain was gradual

until Edison Butte Sno-Park, where the climb became more challenging. I struggled to keep up, while my son, young and fit, surged ahead. He kindly waited for me at the intersection of NF 45 and SW Century Road near Kapka Butte Sno-Park. Together, we tackled the final, strenuous climb to the Village Lodge at Mt. Bachelor, reaching 6,406 feet from our starting elevation of 4,100 feet at Sunriver. After exploring the lodge area, we began the descent back to Sunriver, a thrilling, mostly downhill ride where we had to manage our speed. The 50.6-mile round trip was my longest ride to date, an incredibly satisfying



achievement. (**Note:** I later surpassed this personal best on the Katy Trail with rides of 52.28 miles and 64.76 miles.)

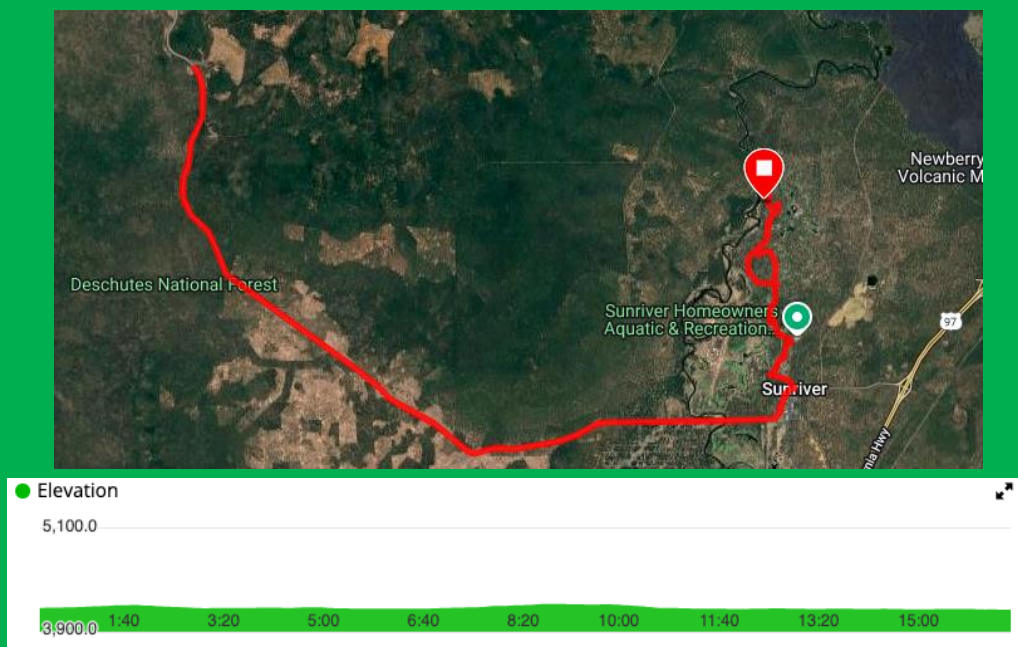
EDISON BUTTE SNO-PARK

For a less demanding alternative to the Mt. Bachelor ride, the 32-mile round-trip from Sunriver to Edison Butte Sno-Park is perfect. This route avoids strenuous climbs while offering stunning views of Mt. Bachelor, the Three Sisters, Paulina Peak, and towering pine forests.

Starting from Sunriver's smooth trails, the ride follows a gentle ascent to Edison Butte Sno-Park, making it accessible for cyclists seeking a moderate challenge with

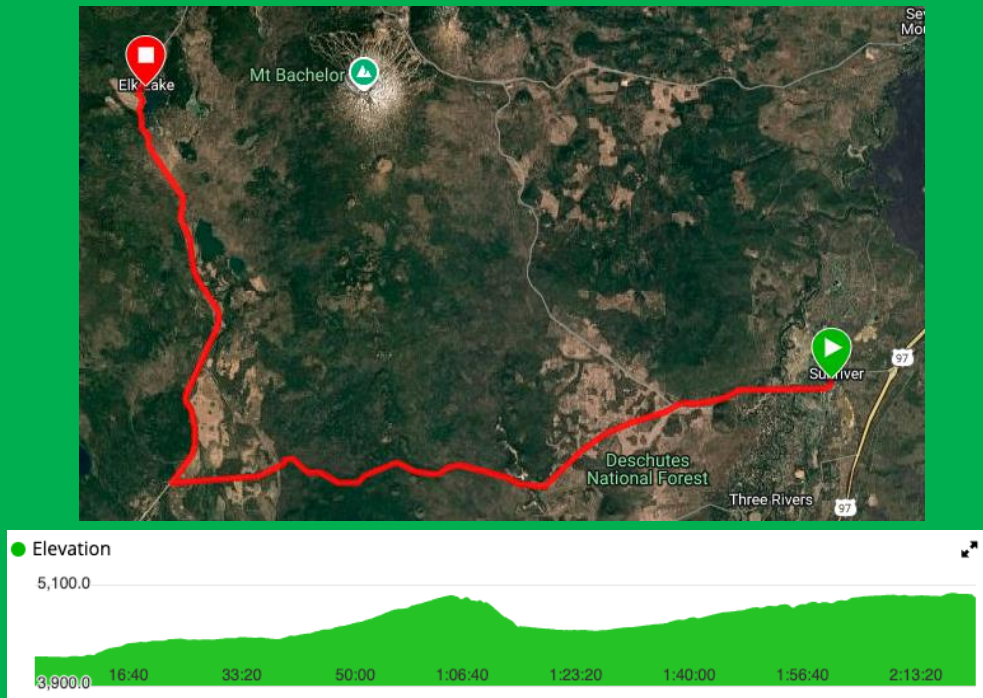


breathtaking scenery. The return trip is a relaxing descent, ensuring a rewarding and enjoyable experience.



Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
31.52 miles out and back, Total ascent 1,039 feet

ELK LAKE

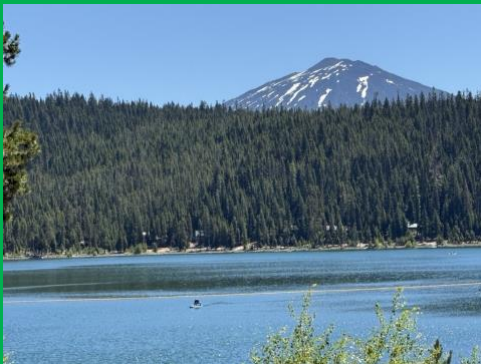


Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
31.74 miles out and back, Total ascent 1,418 feet

Biking from Sunriver to Elk Lake, a sparkling gem along the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway southwest of Mt. Bachelor, was a memorable 31-mile round-trip adventure my son and I shared. Starting on Sunriver's smooth trails, we followed the same route as our Mt. Bachelor ride, turning right onto Upper Deschutes (NF 40) instead of continuing to Edison Cave Road (NF 45). The scenery was spectacular, with Mt. Bachelor, volcanic buttes, and towering



pine forests lining the way. We passed Pistol Butte, a hike we added to our list. The route featured a few moderate climbs before reaching the Cascade Lakes Byway, where the ascent to Elk Lake (5,016 feet from Sunriver's 4,100 feet) felt relentless. Passing access points for the Pacific Crest Trail, we spotted hikers taking a break. This time, I waited for my son as the climbs tested his stamina. At Elk Lake Resort, we



joined our family for a delicious lunch, appreciating the stunning lake views with Mt. Bachelor as a majestic backdrop. Kayakers glided across the water, and the relaxed

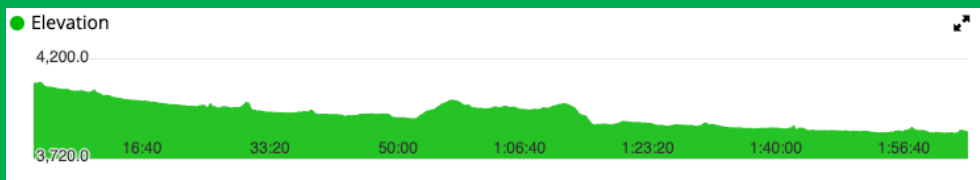
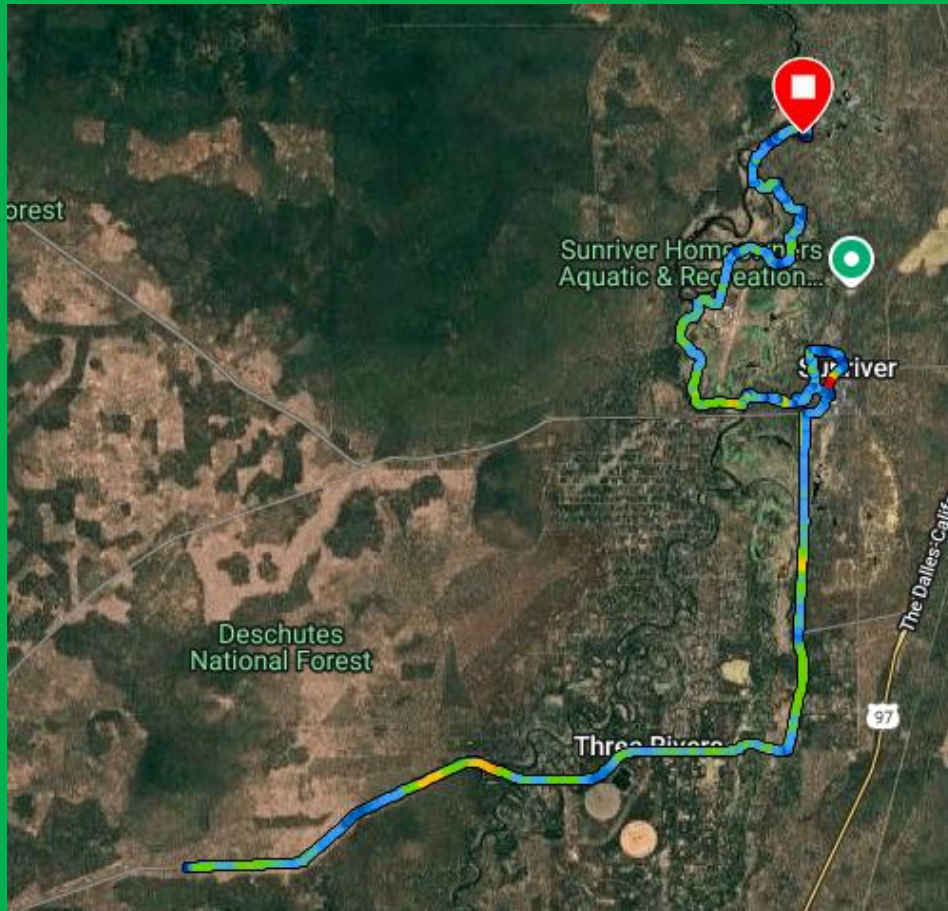
atmosphere was the perfect reward for our efforts.

SOUTH OF SUNRIVER

For a change of pace from the challenging climbs of Central Oregon's high-elevation rides, the routes south of Sunriver offer relaxed, scenic cycling with minimal elevation changes. Starting from Sunriver's smooth trails, as with my previous rides, I head out and turn right onto South Century Drive instead of continuing straight on Huntington Road. South Century Drive is an easy, beginner-friendly route paralleling the tranquil Fall River. A worthwhile detour is the Fall River Falls Trailhead, perfect for a short hike to stretch your legs.

These flat, scenic loops are ideal for cyclists seeking a leisurely adventure amidst Central Oregon's natural beauty.

SUNRIVER S. CENTURY DR. TOWARDS CASCADES LAKE HIGHWAY

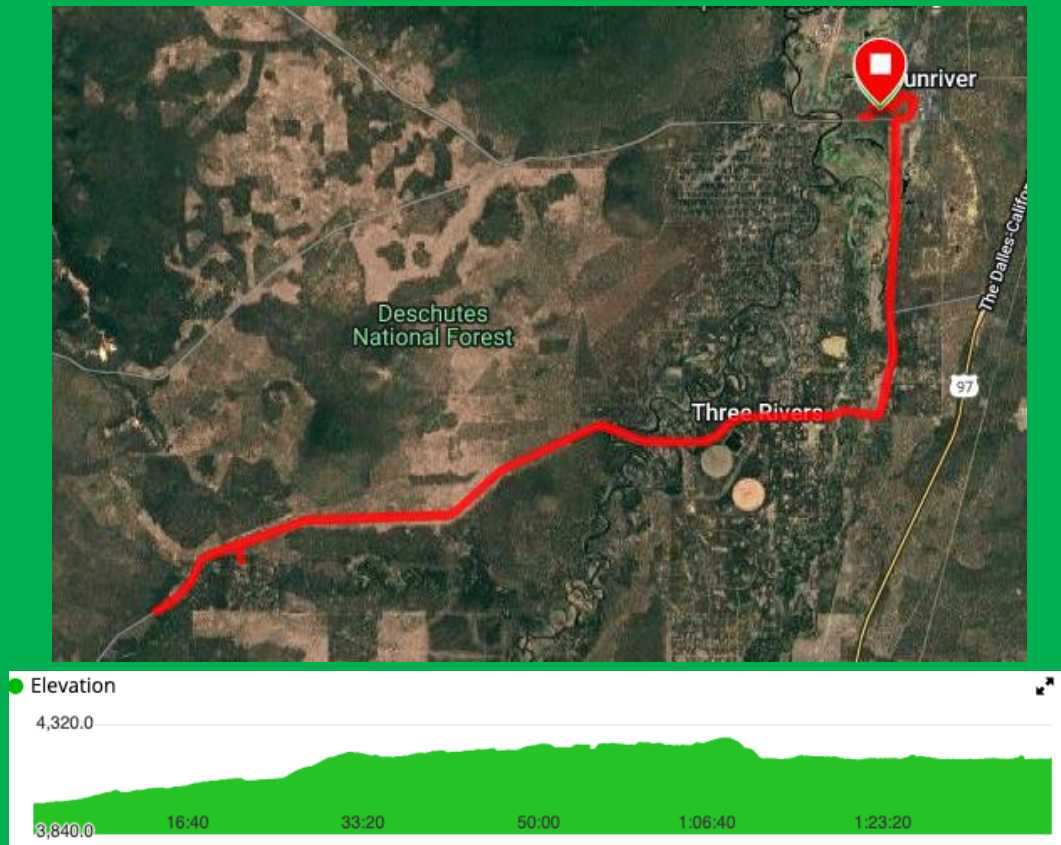


31.31 miles out and back, Total ascent 118 feet



View from South Century Drive looking towards Mt. Batchelor,
Broken Top and Three Sisters

SOUTH CENTURY DRIVE PAST FALL RIVER TRAILHEAD

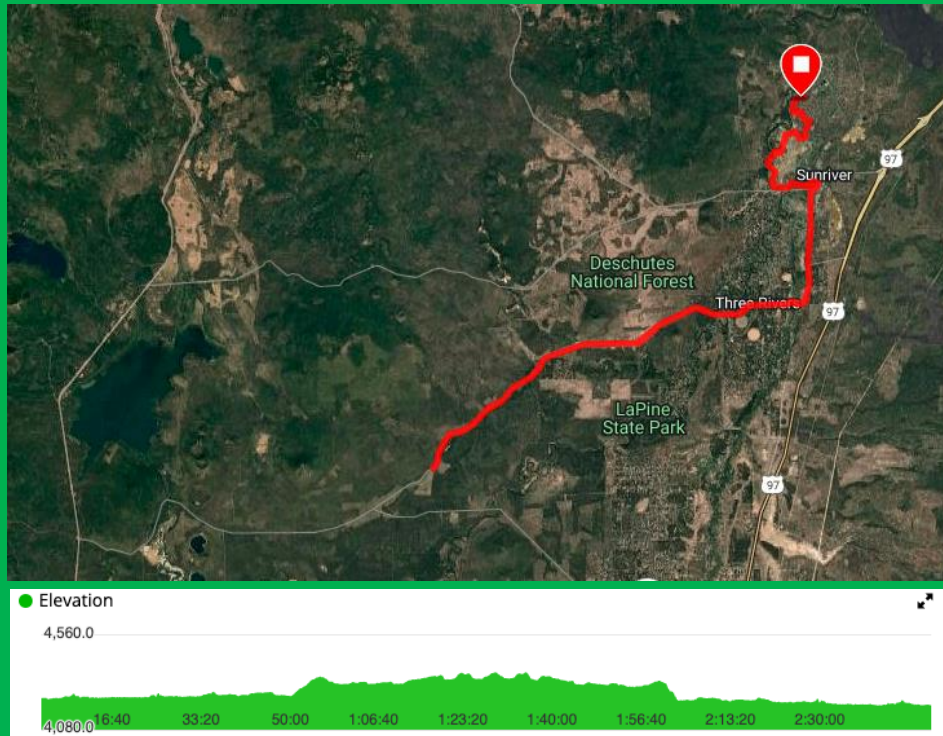


Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
25.50 miles out and back, Total ascent 521 feet



Fall River Fish Hatchery

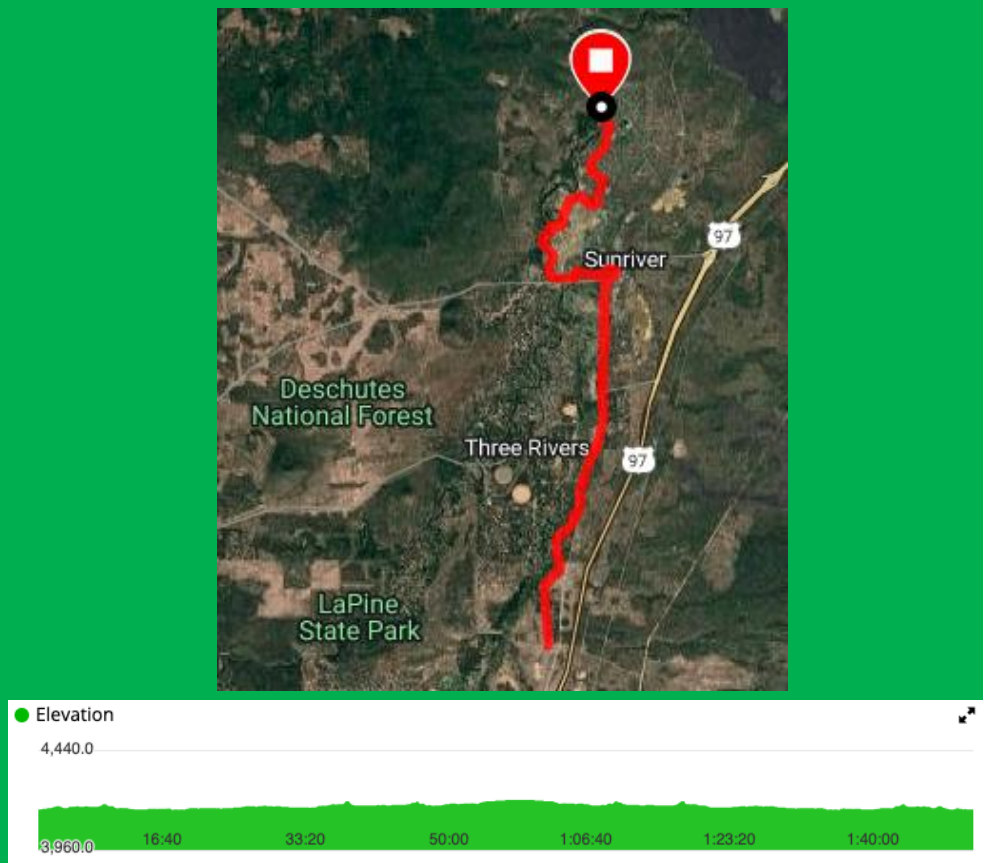
SOUTH CENTURY DR. TO MILE MARKER 17



Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
41.34 miles out and back, Total ascent 607 feet

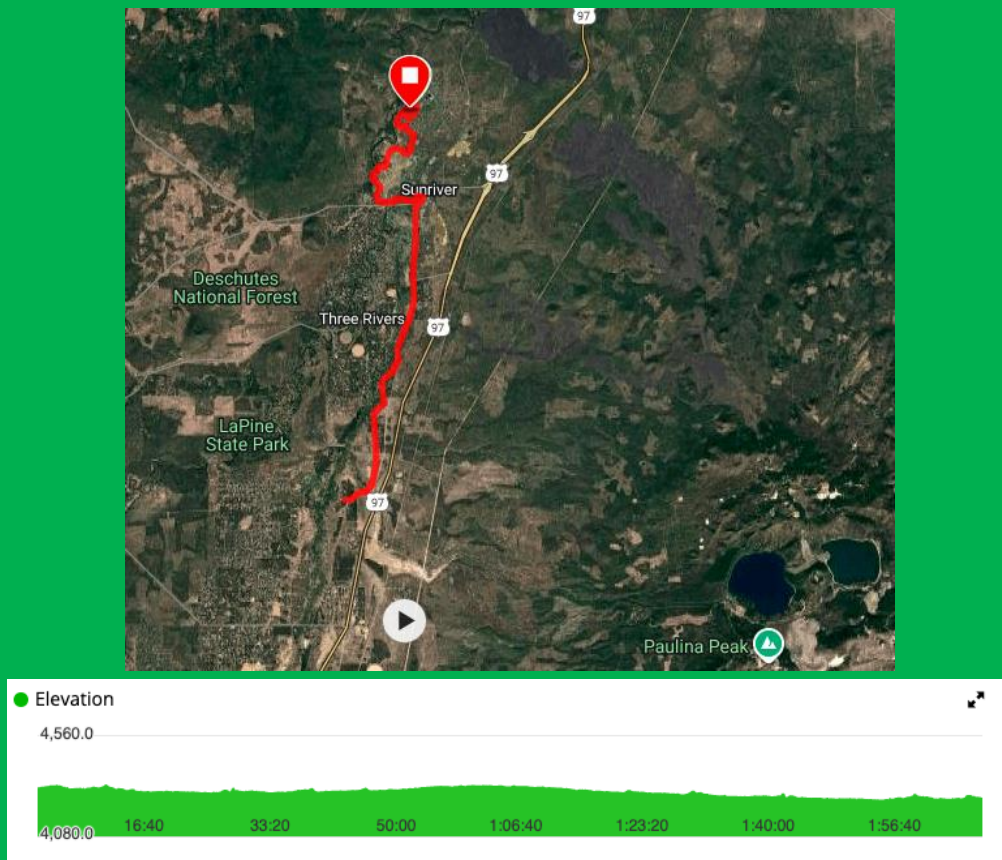
Alternatively, I continue from South Century Drive onto Huntington Road toward La Pine and La Pine State Park, where the Little Deschutes River meanders alongside quiet residential streets. These flat, scenic loops are ideal for cyclists seeking a leisurely adventure amidst Central Oregon's natural beauty. With minimal elevation changes, both routes provide a relaxed pace, perfect for enjoying the views of pine forests and distant volcanic buttes.

SUNRIVER TOWARDS LA PINE



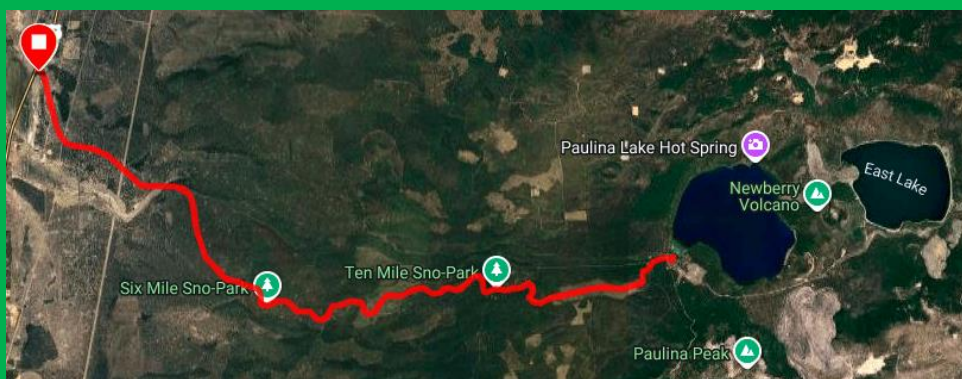
Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
27.3 miles out and back, Total ascent 87 feet

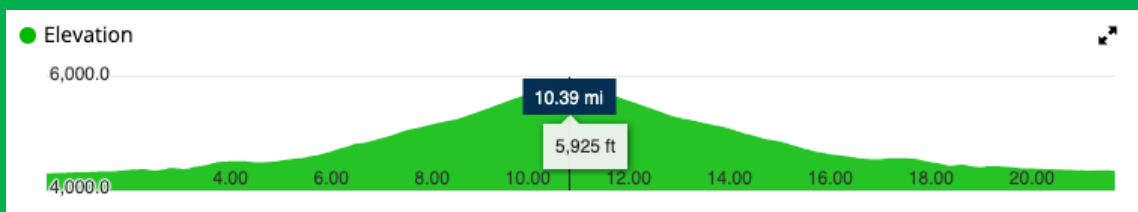
TOWARDS LA PINE – RIVERVIEW DRIVE



Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
30.3 miles out and back, Total ascent 190 feet

PAULINA LAKE





Map Route's source: Google map - Garmin Edge 705, Software 3.30
21.20 miles out and back, Total ascent 1,702 feet

The ride to Paulina Lake, a 10.39-mile ascent with a steady 1,630-foot climb, is an iconic challenge my son and I couldn't resist. Eager to test our climbing prowess, we jokingly competed for the "Polka Dot Jersey" from the Tour de France, crowning the "King of the Mountain." Dropped off at the parking lot on Paulina-East Lake Road off U.S. 97, we raced competitively for the first six miles until my son surged ahead, claiming the jersey. Passing sno-parks, he'd pause at scenic lookouts with stunning views of Mt. Bachelor and the Deschutes River, waiting for me to catch up. At the Paulina Lake entrance, a lighthearted chat with the park ranger who waived our fee, amused by our cycling grit, added to the fun.

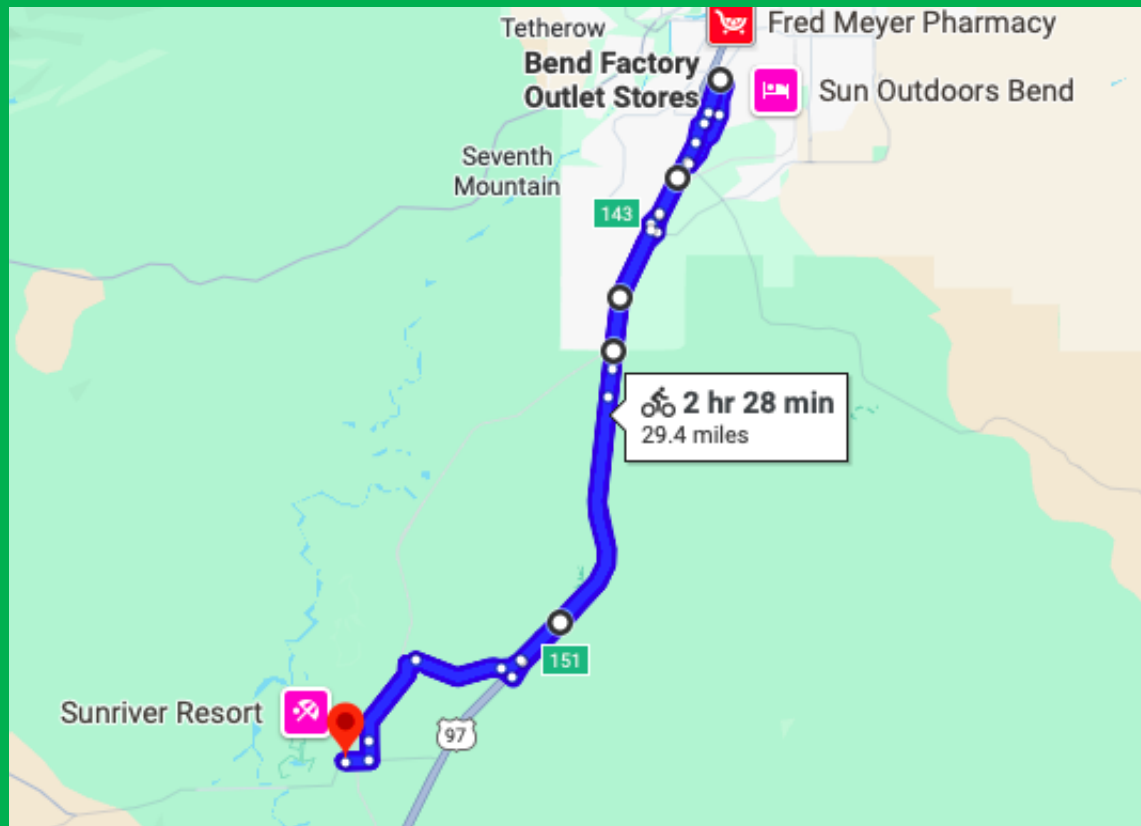
Beyond the entrance, we passed Paulina Falls and the Newberry National Monument Vista before reaching Paulina Lake Lodge and the shimmering lake. We took in the views, dodging pesky flies, before the exhilarating descent, hitting speeds over 30 mph with thrilling yet nerve-wracking moments. Returning to our pickup spot, we joined our family and on to lunch we went, cherishing another unforgettable ride together.





Topo map of Paulina Lake – Lava Land Visitor Center

SUNRIVER TO BEND FACTORY OUTLET



Source: Google Maps

29.13 miles out and back, Total ascent 1,274 feet

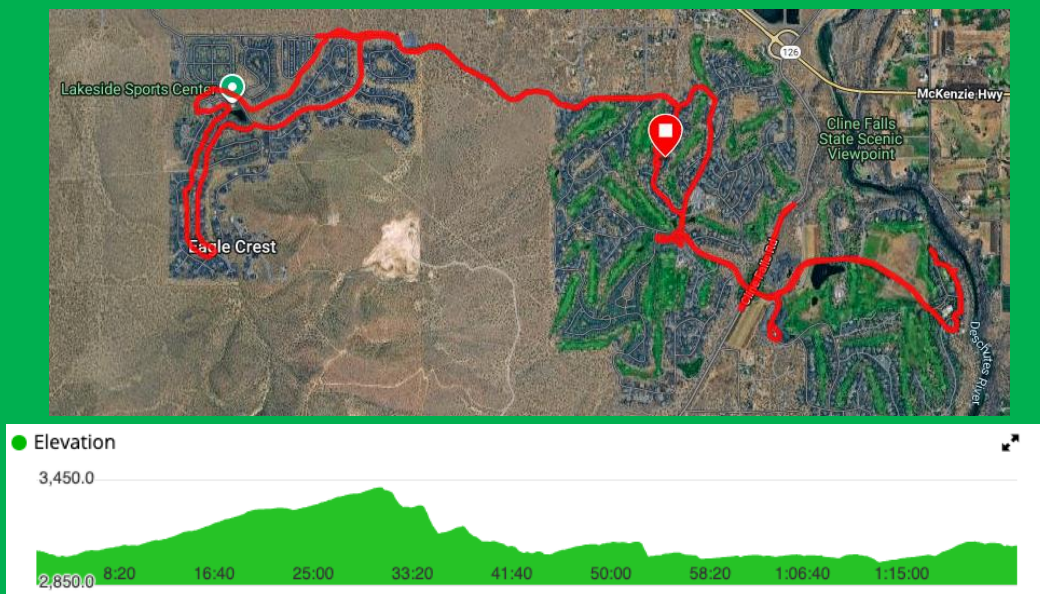
The ride from Sunriver to the Bend Outlet Mall, a scenic yet challenging journey along U.S. 97, remains a memorable venture. Years ago, when I rode this route, the highway lacked a central divider for much of its length, making cycling more straightforward and easier to turn around. Recent improvements for motorists, like added dividers, have made it trickier for cyclists, requiring extra

caution as traffic speeds have increased. The route dazzles with sights like the Lava Lands Visitor Center, Lava River Cave, Newberry National Volcanic Monument, and



the High Desert Museum. From Sunriver, the descent into Bend was a breeze, but the return climb tested my stamina. After a breather at the outlet mall, I navigated heavier traffic on U.S. 97 before turning onto Cottonwood Road, a welcome relief, to reenter Sunriver's quiet trails. This ride blends stunning Central Oregon scenery with a rewarding challenge.

EAGLE CREST



Zippering around Eagle Crest Resort (west of Redmond and north of Bend) on a bike is a vibrant adventure bursting with stunning views

and varied terrain. Kicking off on the west side of Cline Falls Highway, I tackled the hilly landscape weaving through quiet residential streets and alongside a lush golf course. Crossing the highway, I looped through the resort's heart, passing a retail center and the other half of the golf course. The route led me to Blue Heron Drive, where the River



Run Lodge overlooks the Deschutes River, a breathtaking panorama that stopped me in my tracks. Continuing to Swallow Lane, I paused where the road ends, appreciating the manicured fairways and the majestic Mt. Washington and Three Finger Jack glowing to the west. The return was a breezy flat stretch until a quick climb back over Cline Falls Highway to my starting

point at 3,412 feet elevation. This lively ride blends scenic splendor with just the right dose of challenge!



Golf Course and View of Mt. Washington