

Hi -

Welcome to the 3rd annual Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder!

In just under a week, on Sunday, June 13th, you 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.

THANK YOU for participating in the [Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder](#). We are super excited for the ride 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.

Call for Volunteers

We could really use a few more 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](#). 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!!! [Sign up to volunteer here](#).

COVID PROTOCOLS: Before we dive into the logistical details of the ride, we would like to address the current COVID mitigating safety guidance and how that

pertains to this event. The Commonwealth of Virginia has lifted restrictions on social distancing and gathering limits. VA and CDC guidance suggests fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks in outdoor or indoor settings. In accordance with this new guidance, we ask all riders to participate appropriately and in a manner in which they are comfortable. Mask wearing will be optional for participants. There will be plenty of room to remain socially distanced throughout the event. We will provide contactless check-in with designated check-in times for athletes and extended staggered starting times over 3 hrs. Staggered start times are important for the normal flow of rider traffic, but this will also prevent overcrowding during the day and enable participants to practice social distancing throughout the event.

Logistics and Schedule for Ride Day on Sunday, June 13th, 2021

Venue Address

Salamander Resort - [500 N. Pendleton Street, Middleburg, VA 20117](#)

You are registered for: check website

Your check in window is: check website

Please arrive at the Salamander Resort **20-30 min before your check-in window**. This will give you time to park, get your bike ready, and ride to the check-in location before your check-in window. This year the check-in area is ¼ mile away from where you will park. There is a nice gravel path connecting our parking area to check-in.

Again, your check in window is: check website Please arrive at Salamander 20-30 min before your 15-minute check-in window.

The ride is **SOLD OUT** and registration or transfers are no longer available.

Arrival and Parking

Parking will take place in a large field on the right as you enter the Salamander Resort. *This is in a different location than the past two years.* Parking is about ¼ mile from the staging area. Again, please arrive at Salamander 20-30 minutes before your check-in window. This will provide you with enough time to park, prep for your ride, use the porta-john, and ride to the staging area for your 15-minute check-in window. We advocate and encourage carpooling.

Remember...please **ONLY** arrive at the check-in area **DURING** your 15-minute check-in window. **YOU SHOULD HEAD TO CHECK-IN READY TO RIDE.** In other words, please do not return to your vehicle after checking-in.

Check-in and Ride Start

The check-in and start/finish areas are located adjacent to the front lawn of the Salamander Resort. All routes will start and finish here. You will ride your bike the ¼ mile from parking to the check-in location on a nice gravel path. Signs will direct you on where to go.

When you arrive at check-in, you will get your ride bike number and twist ties.

The number goes on the front of your bike attached to your handlebars. The ride T-shirt (if you ordered one) and swag can be picked up after the ride. After you get your bike number, you should use the bathroom if needed and then head right into the start corral. We are starting small groups of about 10 riders every two minutes.

Why Have Staggered Check-in and Staggered Starts?

Staggering the check-in and starting times is our best tool to ensure an even flow of rider traffic on the routes. One of our goals is to limit the impact on everyday life along the routes. If we start 600 riders at once along these roads, we would absolutely impact the local community. Therefore, we are staggering the check in times over 3 hours and starting small groups of 10 riders at a time. We've done this each year of the ride and it's worked well. We discuss more about limiting our impact below in the rider safety and etiquette section.

Porta-johns

Porta-johns will be available at the parking area, at the staging area near the start chute, and at all aid stations. Hand sanitizer will be available at the porta-johns.

Weather / Rain or Shine Event

Mid-June weather in Loudoun County generally ranges from cool mornings in the 50s to hot afternoons in the 80s. Please check the forecast the day before the ride and come prepared with appropriate gear. This ride will take place rain or shine. Don't forget sunscreen!

Hydrate

Be smart and protect yourself, hydrate well before, during, and after the ride.

Ride Safety and Riding Etiquette

Please be respectful of motorists and residents that live along the route. 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 history, 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.
- **HAZARD SIGNAGE.** Keep your eyes open for hazard signage while riding. Generally, these are posted at the top of technical or rutted out downhill sections. Heed extra caution after seeing one of these signs.
- **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 porta-johns 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. All photos will be available for FREE download the week after the event. Check out the photos from the [2020](#) and [2019](#) rides.

80 Mile – Route Information

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 will check-in from 7:30am-8:15am. It will take most riders 5 - 9 hours to complete.

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

60 Mile – Route Information

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 will check-in from 8:15am-9:30am. It will take most riders 3.5 - 7 hours to complete.

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

40 Mile – Route Information

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 will check-in from 9:30am-10:45pm. It will take most riders 2.5 – 4.5 hours to complete

- [40 Mile 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, Photo Stop Ahead, **80 Mile Only Arrows (to direct 80 mile only riders), 60 Mile Only**

Arrows (to direct 60 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).

Red **HAZARD** signs will be posted at the top of technical or rutted out downhill sections. Heed extra caution after seeing one of these signs. 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 / Cue Sheets

Cue sheets, with written turn-by-turn directions, will be available at check-in. You may also print them ([40 mile cue sheet](#), [60 mile cue sheet](#), [80 mile cue sheet](#))

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. We STRONGLY recommend you do NOT wear any headphones while riding.

Aid Stations

The goal at aid stations is to provide hydration, nutrition, restroom breaks, and mechanical support. A huge THANK YOU to [Bikenetic](#), [Maverick Bikes](#), and [The Bike Lane](#) for their amazing support at the aid stations and along the route!

- Hand sanitizer will be available at all aid stations. Please use liberally before taking any food or filling up your water bottle or hydration pack.
- Aid stations will include individually wrapped, pre-packaged foods such as chips, cookies, trail bars, sliders, bananas, sodas, etc.
- ALL aid stations will have water available to refill your water bottle or hydration pack.
- ALL aid stations will have at least one portajohn available.
- ALL aid stations will have a mechanic to perform basic bike maintenance, if needed.
- 80M riders will have 5 opportunities for aid (spaced 9.2-20.4 miles apart).
- 60M riders will have 4 opportunities for aid (spaced 9.2-16.6 mile apart).
- 40M riders will have 3 opportunities for aid (spaced 7.5-13.4 miles apart).

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 along the route. SAGs will keep an eye out for riders in need of assistance. If you need SAG assistance, call the number on the back of your 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 6pm. Cut-off times will apply mostly to 80-mile riders. Cut-off times will not affect riders who maintain a 9mph pace (including stops). We advise all riders, especially 80 milers who are in the last 80 mile check-in group or those who would like a little extra time, to start as soon as possible after they check-in. 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 9 mph minimum average speed (ie 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.

- Hughesville Rd / Foundry Rd intersection cut-off time is 2:15pm. 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 3pm. 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 4pm. 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 5pm. 60-mile and 80-mile riders missing this cut-off will be transported by SAG to the finish.

Bike 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. This number is important so the photographers, SAG vehicles, aid stations, and roving medical can identify you.

Ride POC phone number is on the back of the bike number. 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 will be available at the finish area.

Finisher Awards (Pint Glass and Hat)

Cross the finish line and grab your commemorative pint glass and hat. Both are

very cool 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 IFP Financial](#), for providing these awesome giveaways.

T-Shirts

If you ordered a t-shirt, you may pick it up after the ride near the swag table. We ordered some extra tees and those will be available for purchase for \$15. Obviously, sizes are limited.

Post-Ride Food and Beverage

Salamander resort is providing tasty post-ride food, soft drinks, and craft microbrew. **If you purchased a meal during registration, your name will be on a list of riders that pre-ordered meals.** The meal includes a sandwich (pulled pork BBQ, chicken salad, Bratwurst, or Veggie), two sides, and a choice of beverage (beer, soft drink, juice, or water). Salamander will also be selling food and beer. Beer must be consumed at the staging area. You may enjoy your meal in the dining tent or take it to-go.

Recovery/Medical

First aid supplies and services will be available at the staging area. We will also have medical support on the course.

Volunteers

We could use a few more 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 online. 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!!! [Sign up to volunteer here.](#)

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 IFP Financial](#), [Maverick Bikes and Cafe](#), [The Bike Lane](#), and [Baird Automotive](#).

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, Kari Bowman, Andre LeTendre, Jose Curci, and the fine folks from Salamander Resort for providing access to their beautiful property and for the uncompromising attention to detail. Thank you to amazing photographer and huge cycling advocate Bruce Buckley for his fantastic photos

and for planting the seed of this event early on. Thank you to ABC news journalist and longtime EX2 racer Jay Korff and America's Routes photojournalist Doug Graham for their incredible story The Long Road Home. This Emmy Award winning 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: all the great folks at America's Routes (Doug Graham, Mitch Diamond, Jane Covington, Emily Houston, and Danielle Nadler), Mark Elie and Jessica Shugars from Loudoun County, Chief AJ Panebianco from the Town of Middleburg Police, Danny Davis from the Town of Middleburg, Bill Hatch from Zephaniah Winery, Drew Bishop from the Philomont General Store, Rick Pearsall from the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department, Ron Lincoln, Angie Lane, and Kim Hart from Austin Grove Methodist Church, Tara Connell and Steve Chase from the Unison Preservation Society, all the gracious and energetic volunteers, and the professional and talented EX2 staff. Lastly, we would like to thank the communities of southwestern Loudoun County for embracing this event and for allowing us to play in their beautiful backyard.

Whew, we know that was a lot – thank you for taking the time to read this message and THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN for participating in the 3rd annual Loudoun 1725 Gravel Grinder. Prepare for an awesome day of bike riding!

If you have any questions, feel free to call or email us.

I'll see you at the starting line on Sunday morning!

- Andy

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