

## Historical Report on Mountain Biking in the Westfir Community January 26th, 2022

Westfir has been a home to mountain biking for over 30 years, with the first riders enjoying the Alpine, Tire Mountain, and Cloverpatch trail network as early as 1984. What mountain bikers considered the equivalent to finding gold, the Alpine Trail was discovered and immediately made a name for itself as THE TRAIL to ride in the Pacific Northwest. Alpine to this day continues to be the most ridden trail and trailhead in the Oakridge/Westfir area drawing riders from around the globe.

Due to the popularity of the Alpine Trail Network, and with demand for more trails on the rise, maintaining the trails became a challenge for the local forest service district. In response to this situation an inspired group of mountain bikers came together to create a non-profit organization in 1988 called the Disciples of Dirt. Their mission in part is to help local land managers maintain and build trails for mountain bikes in the Oakridge/Westfir area.

The Alpine Trail was making a name for itself and in 1995 Scott Taylor and friends started the Cascade Cream Puff Mountain Bike Race. The Cascade Cream Puff was the first mountain bike race on the Alpine Network and the first mountain bike race in the Oakridge/Westfir Area. For 25 years mountain bikers have migrated to Westfir to test themselves on a 50 and 100 mile race course.

By 2002, the economic impacts from the Alpine Trail were showing within the Oakridge community. Alpine was so commercially viable, it helped sprout a shuttle company (Oregon Adventures) and a bike shop (Willamette Mountain Mercantile). The Alpine Trail Shuttle today, is the anchor product for the various mountain bike shuttle companies in Oakridge/Westfir.

In 2008, Oakridge was designated one of 6 cities in the world with the title of Gold Level Ride Center from the International Mountain Biking Association. Alpine, Tire Mountain and Cloverpatch and the entire North Fork System of Mountain Bike Trails are all included in the Ride Center's list. It can't be overstated the importance of the Alpine trail network's popularity and influence in the "Ride Center" designation. Westfir is considered by most as the beating heart of the Oakridge/Westfir Trail Network.

In 2014 [Headwaters Economics](#) studied the impacts of mountain biking tourism in the Oakridge/Westfir area. The study found Mountain Bikers made up to 15,900 trips annually and spent up to 4.9 Million Dollars in Oakridge each year. It's estimated in 2021 that 20,000 mountain bikers visited the Westfir portal trailhead and another 20,000 outdoor recreationists came to enjoy the rivers, mountains and trails in Westfir's backyard. It's also estimated visitor spending has risen to 6.9 million dollars annually within the area. Since the Headwaters Economics publication, Cog Wild, Western Spirit, Trans Cascadia Excursions and Cascade Outdoor Center have all opened mountain bike specific businesses in the region. As it was clear Bicycle Tourism was on the rise in Oakridge/Westfir, Lane Country assembled a Steering Committee in 2017 to create a [Bicycle Tourism Strategy for East Lane](#)

[County](#) to better understand and create a plan for what it takes to support and increase rural tourism. The link above discusses trends, the local economy and strategies to increase bicycle tourism in East Lane County. The primary takeaways from this report include adding more Services, Lodging, Transportation and Bicycle Culture to the Oakridge/Westfir area which in turn will increase tourism spending, business development and employment within the local economy. The Trans Cascadia Excursions and Crows Feet Projects are in direct alignment with Oregon State's Tourism Commission and the findings from the Bicycle Tourism Strategy.

In addition to the popularity of the Alpine Trail System, Westfir over the years has seen a significant increase in Bike Packing, Gravel Riding and Road Riding. Gravel Riding is defined as a Road/Pavement Bike with larger volume tires that can ride on dirt roads. Bike packing is where riders load their bike with camping gear and supplies for multi-day adventures. It is estimated that 5,000 riders pass through the Westfir area annually for pavement or gravel riding. The Aufderheide Scenic Byway is the country's oldest national scenic byway in the Cascade Mountains and a bucket list item for pavement and gravel riders. In the springtime when the McKenzie Pass Scenic Bikeway is open only to bicycles, many riders migrate from Sisters to the McKenzie River and then to Westfir along the Aufderheide on this popular multi-day ride. The Aufderheide road has hosted many large organized group rides such as Cycle Oregon and Western Spirits. Cycle Oregon draws over 2000 thousand participants when they pass through town.

Today, Westfir is considered one of the world's premier mountain bike destinations. Some of the most popular cycling events in North America have taken place in Westfir's backyard. The most notable are all listed on the supported timeline that include Trans-Cascadia, MBO, and the Cream Puff. Travel Oregon, Oregon's Tourism Commission, and Eugene Cascade Sports Commission have dedicated sections on their websites promoting Oakridge and Westfir as mountain bike ride destinations.

It is without question, the fabric of the Westfir Community is composed of many different threads. With certainty, threads from mountain biking and outdoor recreation are a large part of what make Westfir such a special place today. The Trans Cascadia Excursions Campground and the Crows Feet Outpost will only build onto the deep rooted outdoor character that helps make Westfir the amazing community that it is today.

# Westfir Mountain Bike History

Westfir/Oakridge designated one of only six cities in the world by IMBA as a gold-level "Ride Center"

Mountain bikers spend an estimated \$2.4 to \$4.9 million in Oakridge/Westfir area each year

**Greater Oakridge Area Trail Stewards Founded**

**Disciples of Dirt Trail Stewards Founded**  
Sun 2/14

**Cream Puff Race YEAR 1**  
(From 1995 - 2019)  
Tue 7/2

**Mountain Bike Oregon Begins**

**ATCA Trail Stewardship Founded**

**Oregon Timber Trail**

**Sturdy Dirty Women's Race**

**1984**

Sat 5/5  
**Mountain Bikers Start Riding Alpine Trail**

**1988**

**1992**

**1996**

**2000**

**2004**

**2008**

**2012**

**2016**

**2020**

Tue 8/13  
**Oregon Adventures Begins Shuttles on Alpine**

**Trans-Cascadia Race**

**Cogwild Begins Operations on Alpine**

**Oregon Trail Gravel Grinder**

**Trans-Cascadia Excursions Opens in Westfir**

**Sasquatch Enduro**