

Jefferson City Frontage Road, Montana Highway 282

Contributed by Jim Barnes, April 2012

Length: 41.4 miles round trip
 This ride can be shortened by turning around before the top of Boulder Hill, or by starting south of Helena. There are parking options in Montana City, at Mile 6 where the Frontage Road ducks under the Interstate, at Clancy, or seasonally at the I-15 Rest Area.

Starts: Reber Park Cupola, on Colonial Dr.
Ends: Same
Parking: On Colonial or in adjacent parking lot
Elevation: Starting and low point: Reber Park Cupola, approximately 4,500 feet
 High point: Boulder Hill, 5,600 feet

Duration: 2–5 hours at 8–20 mph
Difficulty: Moderate, avoidable climb to Boulder Pass
Attractions: Prickly Pear Creek, Alhambra Hot Springs (on Warm Springs Creek), and the historic mining districts of Montana City, Clancy, and Jefferson City. There are usually good birds along Prickly Pear Creek, and it feels good to reach the top of Boulder Pass on the old (low traffic) highway. Beautiful Tizer Gardens is off-route, just 1.2 miles east of the Interstate (includes a short segment of gravel road).

Picnic: I-15 Rest Area, use cyclists' gate, just short of Jefferson City at mile 13.9

Surface: Paved road. Variable shoulders. In particular, ride cautiously between Montana City and the underpass half-way to Clancy at Mile 6. Watch the very rough pavement near the top of Boulder Hill. Alternate A–B route along Prickly Pear is gravel surfaced.

Terrain: Rolling hills with final (avoidable) steep climb on old frontage to Boulder Hill

Best time: Anytime, but avoid rush hour commuter traffic morning or evening. Ridable all year, depending upon snow and ice coverage

Traffic: Moderate to light. Busier closer to Helena, quieter beyond Clancy.

This is a nice out-and-back ride, featuring moderate rolling hills with relatively little traffic after Mile 6. Riding south, the biggest rollers are found between Helena and Clancy. Ride carefully between Montana City and Mile 7.8; this stretch has a narrow shoulder and often fast traffic.

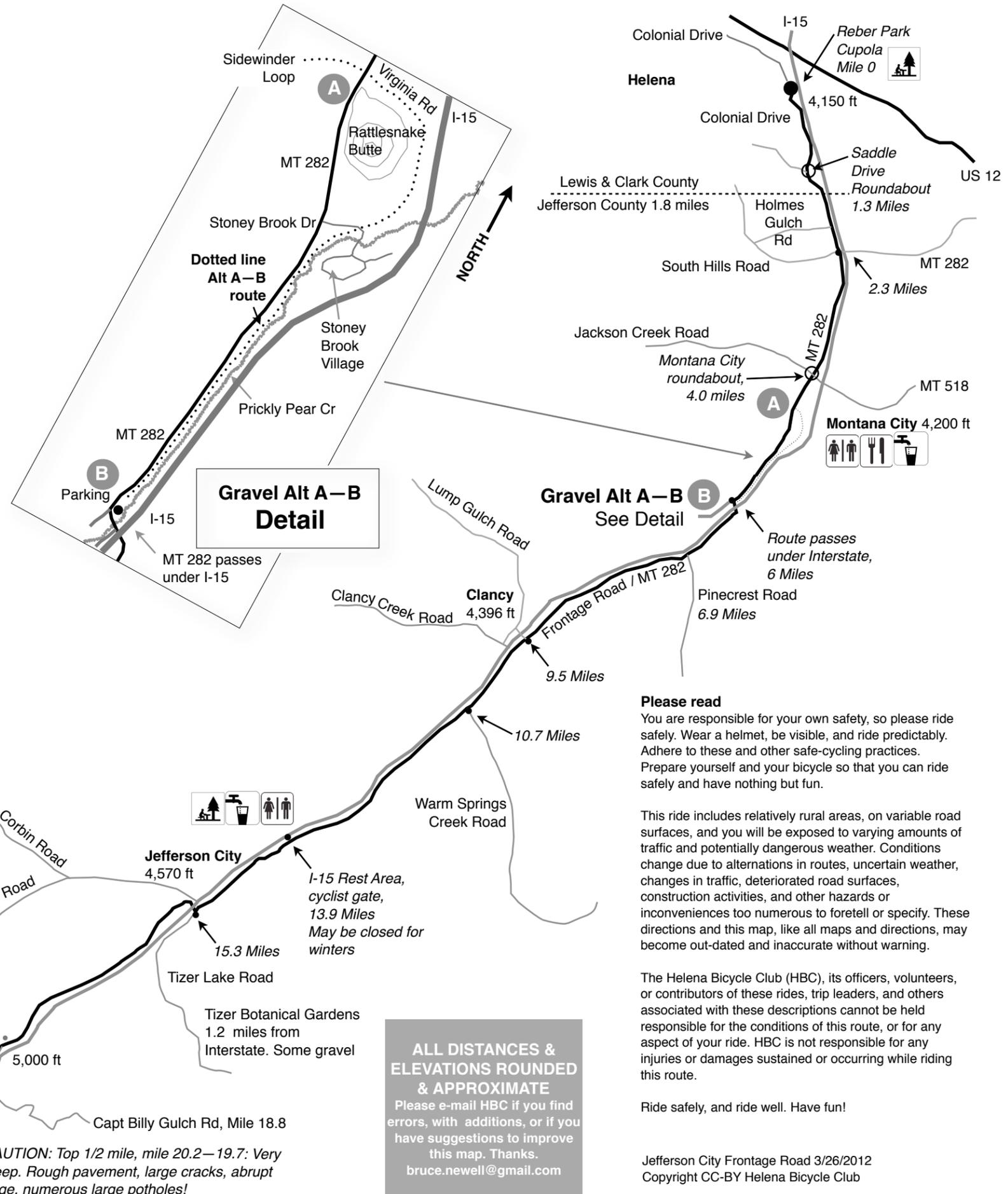
This ride includes one fairly steep but avoidable 600 foot climb to the top of Boulder Hill at the mid-point of this route. You can forego this steep climb by simply turning around before you start climbing steeply.

Off-road Alternative: A zero-traffic, quite pleasant alternate gravel route for those with bigger tires, is detailed at Alt A—B. From the north the riding surface is first asphalt, then quickly turns into a gravel, often deeply rutted two-track as the route drops down around Rattlesnake Butte. At the bottom of the hill the track heads away from the Interstate bridge and the creek, veering back toward MT 282. It crosses the narrow, paved Stoney Brook Drive (ride through log railings) and becomes easy dirt single-track. After pinching between Prickly Pear Creek and MT 282, and after dodging around some boulders placed to stymy motorized vehicles, the surface soon changes into an abandoned railroad grade. Watch for large, deep potholes. This short alternate route ends in a gravel parking area just before MT 282 ducks under I-90. This quiet alternative route can be traveled north to south, or south to north.

There are restaurants serving all day in Montana City, and of course, upon your return to Helena.

- 0.0 Begin at the Reber Park Cupola, south of the buildings at 2401 Colonial Drive. Picnic tables and parking are available.
- 1.3 Pass Saddle Drive roundabout, continuing along Colonial Dr
- 2.3 Continue on the Frontage Rd, aka Colonial Drive, passing South Hills Rd (and MT 282 to the east)
- 4.0 Continue through the Montana City roundabout on MT 282 (if taking Alt A—B, turn east onto Virginia Rd at mile 4.3)
- 6.0 Continue on MT 282 as it ducks under Interstate; Alt A—B ends in gravel parking area
- 6.9 Pass Pinecrest Rd
- 8.9 Pass the underpass to Lump Gulch Rd
- 9.5 Pass the underpass into Clancy. Clancy Store offers irregular hours; located next to Post Office.
- 10.7 Pass Warm Springs Rd.
- 13.9 Cyclist gate to I-15 rest area. Water and restrooms available. Rest area closed in winter.
- 15.3 Cross over Interstate into Jefferson City (no services). Turn south following S Main to Boulder Pass.
- 18.3 Road tilts upwards more steeply
- 18.8 Pass private Capt. Billy Gulch Road
- 20.7 Top Boulder Hill. Turn around and descend. Ride cautiously especially in the top 1/2 mile, watch out for rough pavement, tire-grabbing cracks, loose gravel, and large potholes.

Watch for forthcoming HBC Great Rides!, including several fun and sometimes challenging add-ons to *this* ride



Please read
 You are responsible for your own safety, so please ride safely. Wear a helmet, be visible, and ride predictably. Adhere to these and other safe-cycling practices. Prepare yourself and your bicycle so that you can ride safely and have nothing but fun.

This ride includes relatively rural areas, on variable road surfaces, and you will be exposed to varying amounts of traffic and potentially dangerous weather. Conditions change due to alternations in routes, uncertain weather, changes in traffic, deteriorated road surfaces, construction activities, and other hazards or inconveniences too numerous to foretell or specify. These directions and this map, like all maps and directions, may become out-dated and inaccurate without warning.

The Helena Bicycle Club (HBC), its officers, volunteers, or contributors of these rides, trip leaders, and others associated with these descriptions cannot be held responsible for the conditions of this route, or for any injuries or damages sustained or occurring while riding this route.

Ride safely, and ride well. Have fun!

Jefferson City Frontage Road 3/26/2012
 Copyright CC-BY Helena Bicycle Club

ALL DISTANCES & ELEVATIONS ROUNDED & APPROXIMATE
 Please e-mail HBC if you find errors, with additions, or if you have suggestions to improve this map. Thanks.
 bruce.newell@gmail.com

CAUTION: Top 1/2 mile, mile 20.2–19.7: Very steep. Rough pavement, large cracks, abrupt edge, numerous large potholes!