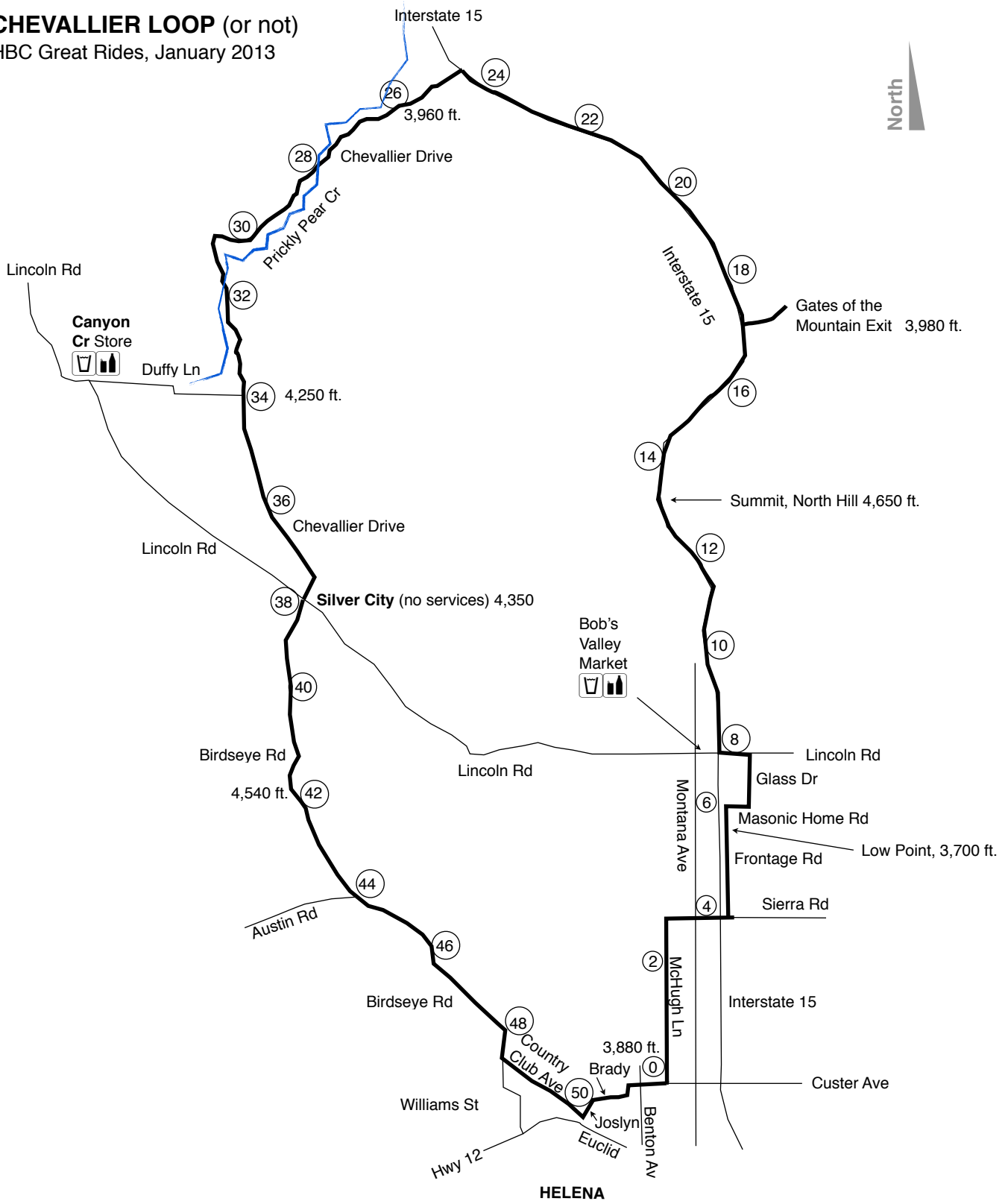


# CHEVALLIER LOOP (or not)

HBC Great Rides, January 2013



**Please read:** You are responsible for your own safety, so please ride safely. Wear a helmet, be visible and ride predictably. Control your speed on down hills. This ride includes rough road surfaces, and you will be exposed to varying amounts of traffic and potentially dangerous weather. Portions of this ride are remote, where timely help may be unavailable. 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 These directions and this map, like all maps and directions, may become outdated and inaccurate without warning. The Helena Bicycle Club (HBC), its officers, volunteers, or contributors of these rides, trip leaders, and others associated with this bicycle ride description and map cannot be held responsible for the conditions of this route, or for any aspect of your ride. HBC is not responsible for any injuries or damages sustained or occurring while riding this route.

## Chevallier Loop (or not)

Recommended by Steve Field (and others)

- <http://ridewithgps.com/routes/2044029>
- Length: 52 miles (variable)
- Surface: Paved (all but Chevallier Drive which is gravel)
- Hlgh Point: 4,650 ft. top of North Hill on the Interstate
- Low Point: 3,700 ft. on Frontage Road, near Masonic Home road
- Elevation gained: 2,500 ft. (whole loop)
- Traffic: Variable. Freeway can be busy but has generous shoulders. Birdseye can be busy.
- Best time of day: Avoid Birdseye or Country Club during morning, after school, and after work busier times.
- Best time of year: Whenever there's no snow on pavement, or mud on Chevallier Drive.
- Cautions: Few services. Subject to storms and wind. Ride the Interstate shoulder as far to the right as you can. Chevallier Dr. can be difficult riding immediately after its gravel is re-graded, or during wet weather.

This is a wonderful ride. It's close to town. It's scenic. It's historic. It's got great birding. It runs partly on the very lightly-traveled gravel-surfaced Chevallier Drive, which runs alongside the charming Little Prickly Pear Creek, through a remarkably pretty canyon. Best of all, you can ride as much of the route as you wish, turning this 52 mile loop into shorter bite-size pieces. Of course if you're feeling your oats, the whole loop offers a nice variety of terrain and surfaces, including flat valley pavement, a good steady climb up the Interstate shoulder to the top of North Hill, and the relatively flat gravel Chevallier Drive through the Prickly Pear Canyon.

Don't let the gravel stretch discourage you. Many hardcore Helena roadies, with their skinny taut tires, count this loop among their favorites. With (sturdy) 25mm tires you'll have to slow for the gravel, if just a little. With bigger tires (32—40mm) you'll wonder why you haven't forsaken the pave and just ride uber scenic quiet gravel roads all the time. A cyclo-cross or touring bike would be just about perfect for all the roads on this loop.

Recommended shorter rides:

- Park at Silver City, ride north on Chevallier Drive, turn around when you've had enough fun (Lincoln Rd to I-15 is 13.1 miles one-way)
- Park on Birdseye at Austin Road, then ride up to Silver City and follow Chevallier Drive through the canyon until you reach I-15. Turn around and return. 19.3 miles one-way.

Stop and look at the historic 101 foot long through-truss bridge crossing the Prickly Pear. This county-owned steel bridge has provided safe passage since 1905 for horseback riders, automobile drivers, and I dare say, even some happy bicyclists.

## Cue Sheet (see also shorter rides, listed to the left)

0.0	Begin at Four Georgians Elementary School, Custer and McHugh
0.1	Ride north on McHugh, continue to Sierra Road
3.0	Turn east on Sierra. Continue past Montana Avenue, cross under the Interstate and immediately turn north following the Frontage Road.
6.0	Turn east as Frontage Rd becomes Masonic Home Road
6.5	Turn north as Masonic Home Rd. becomes Glass Drive
7.5	Turn west on Lincoln Road
8.3	Turn north onto the Interstate (adequate shoulder); climb to the summit (Mile 13.5), descend, continue past the Gates of the Mountains exit at Mile 17.
24.5	Leave Interstate at Exit 216. Cross under the Interstate and head west on Chevallier Drive.
26.5	The road turns to gravel a little after the driveway heading north into the Rocking Z Ranch. Your ride stays alongside Prickly Pear Creek until Mile 33, where you leave the canyon and emerge in an open, flat sagebrush grassland. You'll enjoy the side-canyon views as your ride along, and the historic bridge near Mile 31.5. Watch for ranch traffic near the south end of the canyon. Chevallier Drive remains gravel until meeting the Lincoln Road at Mile 37.8.
37.8	Cross Lincoln Road, continuing on Birdseye Road.
41.8	Birdseye Road passes the Volunteer Fire Department at the top of a hill.
44.0	Pass Austin Road (informal parking spots)
45.5	Pass Whistle Stop Store (closed as of this writing)
46.0	Cross BNSF main tracks and Sevenmile Creek. Take special care to be visible and ride to the right on this busy stretch of Birdseye. The road is narrow and traffic is often heavy and fast.
48.5	Follow Country Club Avenue to the SE where Birdseye splits into Country Club Avenue and Williams Street.
50.1	Turn north on Joslyn Steet. Cross the railroad at Mile 50.5.
50.5	Follow Brady Street due east.
50.9	Cross Henderson, following Brady around the south side of Capital HS. Brady Street turns to Valley Drive.
51.3	Turn east Custer Avenue. Continue past Benton, the golf course, returning to where you began at Four Georgians Elementary School.