

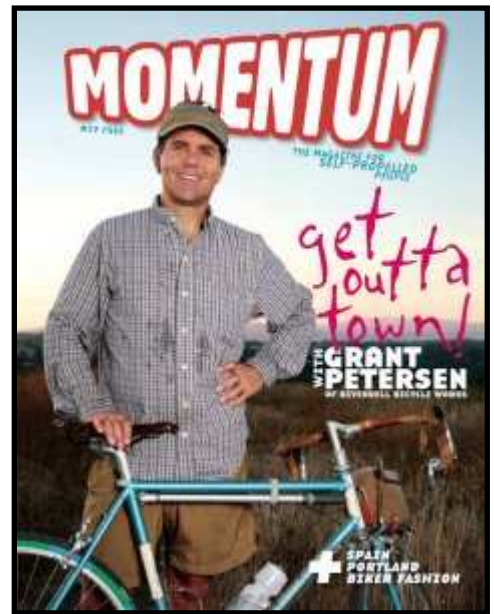
New Mountain Hut Route for Riders

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By [Paul Halychuk](#)

A new “hut-to-hut” system for mountain bike riders has opened this summer in Oregon’s Mount Hood range. The system is a series of cabins along a scenic wilderness route that enables riders to travel without carrying a heavy load of gear and supplies. The cabins are furnished with sleeping bunks for eight people, and are fully stocked with food, water, stoves, and other essentials.

Hiking clubs have long had systems of shelters for hikers to travel light in mountain areas, but this is only the second wilderness hut system in North America designed specifically for people traveling on mountain bikes. After James Koski and Don Bain rode the first such route in Colorado (the San Juan hut system), they brought the idea back with them to Oregon and developed it, negotiating permits with land management authorities and building the cabins.



The 220 kilometre route travels in a loop around Mount Hood, the highest mountain in Oregon. Travelling mainly on dirt forest service roads, riders start in the town of Hood River and pass through terrain that varies from the low arid valley of the Columbia River Gorge to mountain passes in the Mt. Hood National Forest. The trip takes four days, with riders spending each night in a different cabin. James Koski estimates that each day will involve five to eight hours of riding.

Asked whether the trip is suitable for people who are regular cyclists but not regular mountain bikers, Koski replied that he believes that it is. “There’s certainly a lot of climbing. The downhill sure are fun! But anybody in decent shape will be able to do it. There’s nothing that technical unless you choose to do some single-track. The whole loop can be done via Forest Service roads. For those looking for a bigger challenge there is about 30 miles of single-track.

“Don and I are 40 years old and while we’re in decent shape for middle-aged men, we aren’t Ironmen and didn’t do any special training to do the loop, besides a couple of hilly bike rides on a few of the weekends beforehand.”

For more information: www.cascadehuts.com

Paul Halychuk is passionate about sustainable practices. He kayaks, hikes, snowshoes, surfs, skis, and (of course) bikes. In his spare time, he creates fabulous giant flying creatures.