

# FERRY COUNTY CYCLING FEDERATION



Barstow Dispatch #4

July 2021

The KCT Teaser Issue

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Trail 13. Kettle Crest Trail. KCT. Boulder side. July 2021

**T**his is a quick and dirty Dispatch. We're at the peak of Kettle Crest Trail (KCT) season, so we've put together this issue to remind you that we're still alive and to provide a wee bite of the KCT for those of you who have not ridden it.

We hope to put together a more comprehensive Dispatch about the KCT this winter. For example, we would like to create a KCT-specific regional map that shows the trails, distances, elevation, services, camping, driving info, etc. Got map skills and wanna help? Let me know.

There's some history to cover too. There's work being done to revert to the Indigenous naming for many of the features on and around the KCT. We are all in on that. We hope to run down some of these names and history in the next few months. Got intel on that? Let me know.

Buddy Bill (see his arse gracing the cover of Dispatch #2) created the bitching new FCCF mast on the cover. I dig it. Thank you Bill. That's a 27.5 wheel flying off the page (obviously).

The photo on the cover was taken on the intersection of Taylor Ridge and the KCT in June, before the fires started. Dig that blue sky. Yowza.

## Contact us

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## KCT: what the hey?

The KCT is about 30 miles of single track that runs south from Hiway 20, north to Boulder Creek Road. It's all in Ferry County. It's all in the Colville National Forest. It's all open to bikes, hikers, and horses. No motors.

The KCT is a classic cross-country mountain bike trail. You want epic days? This is your trail. It's not super droppy or technical, though you're often surprised by tight switchbacks and lumpy bouldery sections on fast descents. The KCT is climbby. And those switchbacks and rocks that keep you on your toes as you go down, make for fun technical obstacles on the way up.



Ryan. Hazy view overlooking the metropolis of Malo, WA

You're on a crest. It's always hilly. The KCT works its way around nearly 20 peaks. A flat section of trail more than 20 feet is rare. Because of the significant climbing, it's not a great destination for beginners or most young children. The trail generally skirts around 5500 feet, but pops up to about 7100 as it traverses the peak over Copper Butte.

There are canopy forest sections. There are deep pine valleys. Cedar groves. Lots of rock and boulder outcropping. But the KCT is probably best known and appreciated for its epic sweeping views from ridges high above the surrounding mountains. Give yourself lots of time to ride these trails and enjoy the scenery. On some sections, like the climb around the back of Columbia Mountain, the views are huge, but fleeting. On others, like the miles-long section between Old Stage and Stickpin, the view only goes away for a few seconds as you ride through a stand of pine or aspen.

There's not a lot of water. It's an open cattle grazing area, so you'll run into springs that have been converted into water troughs. You definitely should filter these if you need water. Ideally, you're able to pack enough for your ride, because that cow situation can be gross. Later into the summer (after July), don't count on water being available.

As for crowds: compared to other destination trails, the KCT is empty. I've ridden Jungle Hill on Saturday at the height of the season and not seen anyone on the 15 mile loop. If you like to climb in meditative solitude, you can be in the flow uninterrupted for miles. This means you need to make sure that you've got your act together: you should have all the basics for trail repair and basic first aid. Plenty of water, food, etc, etc. A bear bell doesn't hurt either. Cell reception is spotty at best.

## Brass tacks: Jungle Hill and Taylor Ridge

If you have the time, by all means, take a week to explore the whole KCT. The 30-ish mile spine has at least a half-dozen feeder trails that come down from each side of the crest. But here are some tips for getting onto the KCT for the highlights.

If you want the easiest way onto the spine: Drive into Old Stage and climb about 1 mile/500 feet of elevation to Kettle Crest. Head north for huge views and moderate climbing along the ridge of Midnight and Lambert mountains. There are lots of loops you can investigate in this mid-section of the trail, but if you're visiting the first time and want the most bang for the buck and least climbing — an out and back on KCT from Old Stage is a good ride for a crew of varied fitness and experience levels.

If you want big huge climbs to the top of the world, go in at Wapaloosie and climb up to Copper Butte.

But in our opinion, if you want the best that KCT has to offer, ride the Jungle Hill loop and then ride Taylor Ridge.

Jungle Hill is at the southern side of the KCT right off of Hiway 20. It's a 15 mile loop with about 3500' of climbing. Start at Trail 82 where it meets with Albion Hill Road. Climb up to Trail 13 (this is the KCT proper). Trail 13 brings you around Columbia Mountain, down a twisty descent, then up Jungle Hill. Take a right at the Jungle Hill Trail 16 junction. Good luck taking in the incredible views on that descent. It's a super fun flowy switchbacky descent back to the trailhead where you parked. You just must do this ride. If you don't love it. You won't be into the KCT.



JT at the top of the climb on the first half of the Jungle Hill loop. For the record: JT is part mountain goat.

Second one you must ride: Taylor Ridge. Shuttled, this is about 19 miles and 3000' of climbing with about 4500' of descending. Officially, Taylor Ridge is not on the KCT, but it does cross it. Taylor Ridge is on the northern side of the KCT. The trailhead is at the top of Boulder Pass on Boulder Creek Road. Deer Creek Campground is across the road from the trailhead. If you shuttle this ride, you'll park a car on South Boulder Road, then drive up to the top of Boulder Pass (9 miles/2500'). At the top of Boulder, ride (or drive) up the south-bound forest road on the

south side of Boulder 1.5 miles to the trailhead. Then ride the trail (Trail 74) up the old double track. You'll cross Trail 13, and then climb up and over a fantastic ridge line view. You'll cross Bulldog Cabin Road to connect to the lower half of Taylor Ridge. This section is a bit more technical and includes some short climbs interspersed with the mostly-down trail.

\*If you ride the KCT, send us a letter with a picture of you on the KCT and we'll send you a KCT bumpersticker.\*



Bob standing in front of the 7-mile-sign. If you're driving from Albion-Hiway 20 side to Taylor Ridge side on the back roads — take a left when you see this sign — go up Bulldog Cabin Road to pop out on Boulder.

## The back way to Taylor Ridge

So we're saying that you should ride Taylor Ridge and you should ride Jungle Hill. Inconveniently, these trailheads are on opposite ends of the KCT.

If you are at Jungle Hill and want to drive to Taylor Ridge, you can take Hiway 20 down to Hiway 395, where you head north for 16 miles, then go west on Boulder Creek Road. That's legit. And it passes the famous Barstow Store, where you should totally go spend money and shoot the bull with whomever is working that day.

But if you want to stay in the dirt, you can take the back way from Jungle Hill by heading north on Albion Hill Road. The road turns into South Boulder/6100. Go until you see the 7 mile sign (that's the sign in the photo there). When you've seen that sign, you're at the Bulldog Cabin Road junction. Go left onto Bulldog Cabin Road and drive 17 miles, where you'll pop out on Boulder Creek Road about 5 miles from the Taylor Ridge trailhead. You probably won't save much time going this way, but it's rustic and pretty and the road is in pretty good shape.



Evergreen Kettlefest folks taking a dip in the Kettle River at the FCCF World HQ after riding Taylor Ridge. July 2021

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## Evergreen in the house

In early July, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance hosted “KettleFest” up at Jungle Hill. About 20 people came and camped and rode and did trail work. The crew put in a new crossing at the bottom of the Jungle Hill trail. Previously, the trail went through the creek.

Go check it out! It’s heavy duty. No more wet shoes at the end of the ride.

If you are able, join and donate to Evergreen. The org is not just trail work and ride-hosting. In addition to helping communities acquire and manage land for mountain biking, Evergreen does a lot to keep mountain biking in the minds of the policy people, rule makers, recreational land overlords, politicians, and bureaucracies who collectively control access to the places we ride. It’s essential work. It’s hard and thankless work. So if you can’t swing a donation, maybe send a card to them and thank them for doing that work.



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