



Heart-to-Heart

HEARTCYCLE BICYCLE TOURING CLUB

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President's Spin

By HeartCycle President
Mark Lestikow

Last month's "President's Spin" clearly struck a chord. I was both humbled and energized by the many kind notes I received from members. One rider shared that after years with other cycling clubs, "the vibe was so different from HC—whatever HC is doing, keep it up." Another member said the photos and words "moved me to tears," recalling more than 50 HeartCycle rides and friendships that became some of the most cherished of their life.

Those reflections remind me why our club is so special. HeartCycle tours give us the chance to experience both solitude on the road and the joy of camaraderie off the bike. They create memories that stay with us long after the miles are logged.

That spirit of shared memories and looking forward comes together beautifully at our Annual Meeting & Luncheon on Saturday, October 18 at Mt. Vernon Canyon Club. This gathering is more than a meal—it's



our chance to celebrate the highlights of 2025, to reconnect with friends, and to get excited for the lineup of tours we're offering in 2026.

If you haven't signed up yet, I encourage you to do so ([Click to register!](#)). Bring your stories, your photos, and your enthusiasm—we'll share laughs, relive adventures, and look ahead to the next great rides together.

See you on the road... and hopefully at the luncheon!

Joined a tour this year? We want your best photos!

At the Annual Luncheon we like to have a slideshow displaying your favorite tour photos. So, if you have photos that capture the spirit of your favorite tour, email them to Cody Ensanian at heartcyclecody@gmail.com to be part of the slideshow.





From the Tour Director's Saddle

By HeartCycle Tour Director Janet Slate

The HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon on Saturday, October 18th, at the Mt. Vernon Canyon Club are right around the corner. We hope to see you there! <https://www.heartcycle.org/2025-annual-luncheon>

Good fortune if you missed signing up for some of the 2026 foreign tours. Some slots are left:

- Several openings have become available for the [Vietnam tour](#). Check out [last month's newsletter](#) for a great article on Vietnam; it's going to make you want to go there.
- The [Patagonia \(Argentina\) tour](#) is filled, but the waitlist is open.
- We only have three openings left on the [Moselle River, Germany, Luxembourg, and France \(bike and barge\) tour](#)—one for a woman to share, the other two in a shared room.
- We still have an opening for a woman to share on the [Puglia \(Italy\) tour](#).

Like I mentioned last month, getting on the waitlist is worth it, because sometimes people cancel. (Your deposit will be fully refunded if you don't clear the waitlist.) Please see my message in the [August newsletter](#) about insurance.

We are excited about the 2026 domestic tour lineup. To whet your appetite, here's a preview of what we'll be opening for registration after the annual meeting and luncheon. The tour leaders will be on hand to answer your questions:

<i>Death Valley, CA</i>	<i>March</i>
<i>Napa-Sonoma-Marin, CA</i>	<i>May</i>
<i>Tug Hill & Thousand Islands, NY</i>	<i>May</i>
<i>Katy Trail, MO</i>	<i>May-June</i>
<i>Acadia National Park, ME</i>	<i>June</i>
<i>Los Alamos-Santa Fe, NM</i>	<i>June</i>
<i>Jackson Hole, WY (2 tours)</i>	<i>July</i>
<i>Montreal to Quebec, Canada</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Underground Railroad (yr-3), KY-NY</i>	<i>September</i>
<i>Southwestern Wisconsin</i>	<i>October</i>

Thank you for being a HeartCycle member!

-Janet Slate jslate@ultrasys.net



//// 2025 Tour Facts to Date ////

Tours completed:

11

Total riding days:

89

Total tour miles:

~4,468

Total tour climbing:

~214,992'

Tours remaining:

2

Tours with availability:

0

Anticipated number of tours in 2026:

14 total...

N. America: 10

S. America: 1

Europe: 2

Asia: 1



HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Mt. Vernon Canyon Club, 24933 Club House Circle, Golden, Colorado
Cash Bar Opens @ 11:30 AM | Buffet Begins @ 12:00 Noon
\$35 per person (Members & Guests Welcome!)

***Registration is filling
up! Sign up today!***

Join us for a memorable day at the HeartCycle Annual Meeting and Luncheon on **Saturday, October 18th**, at the stunning **Mt. Vernon Canyon Club**. This event is packed with great food, inspiring conversations, treasured memories from the past year's tours, and the opportunity to learn more about next year's tours.

What's on the agenda?

- **Gourmet Buffet:** Enjoy a delicious spread while catching up with old friends and meeting new ones.
- **2025 Tour Highlights:** Relive the best moments of this year's rides with a continuous slideshow featuring photos submitted by YOU! If you have 5-10 photos that capture the spirit of your favorite tour, send them to **Cody Ensanian** at heartcyclecody@gmail.com to be part of the slideshow.
- **2026 Tour Preview:** HeartCycle Tour Director, **Janet Slate**, along with 2026 tour leaders will share details and answer any questions you may have about next year's tours.

This is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate another successful year, connect with fellow cycling enthusiasts, and get psyched for what's coming in 2026!

Register now!

Sign up today on the **HeartCycle website** at www.heartcycle.org. Click on the "2025 Annual Luncheon" link in the green toolbar on the homepage, then hit the "Register" button. **Spots are limited to 125 attendees**, and registration closes by **Saturday, October 11th**—or sooner if we sell out! Please note, **all payments must be made online**—no payments will be accepted at the door.

For questions, feel free to contact **Mark Lestikow** at: mark.lestikow@closetfactory.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Steamboat Springs NextGen Tour Report

By HeartCycle Member Merry Vander Linden

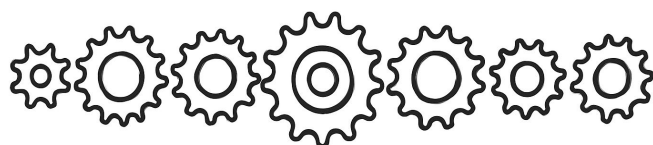
This tour was HeartCycle's first iteration of the NextGen concept. Though all were welcome to register, first consideration was given to those under the age of 45 or to small groups with at least one member under 45, all with the goal of attracting a new generation of cyclists to our club.

Meet the NextGen...

Greg and Ruthie Lestikow

For years, Greg watched his parents, Mark and Polly, go off to the far corners of the Earth on bike-touring vacations. He found it interesting, but never felt compelled to join them. Then in 2022, he accepted his father's invitation to ride HeartCycle's Lands End to John O'Groats tour. For three weeks, they shared the challenges and rewards cycling that region's terrain, and for Greg, the hook was set.

Ruthie had always been a mountain biker until Mark suggested she was capable of finishing a road century. With family support, Ruthie met that goal, and she, too, went over to the dark side.



Matt Siel

A resident of Eugene, Matt joined Barry and Judy for a 90-mile day on their Oregon Coast bike tour. That day he bested his previous distance PR by a factor of 2. When asked why he accepted their invitation to the Steamboat Springs event, he answered simply, "I wanted to spend more time with my uncle." Pulling a teardrop camper, he, his wife, Mandy, and their 3-year-old daughter, Maddie made a family road trip of it with en route stops at Moab, the Colorado Monument, Boise, and Park City.



Sabrina Pak, Anita Vashi, and Matt Seiler

Her love of whitewater kayaking, scuba diving, and skiing have taken Sabrina Pak around the globe. She uses cyclo-touring to “stay sane” between these excursions and has been a regular HeartCycle participant for a decade. A NextGen-er herself, she embraced the concept of the tour by inviting her friends, Anita Vashi and Matt Seiler. Both ER physicians, Anita and Sabrina met as co-workers who became friends and then travelling companions. Though they now live 1000 miles apart, they continue to reunite at least annually for active travel adventures. Though San Francisco native Matt considers himself more of a skier than a cyclist, he gamely tackled the week’s mileage, elevation, and gravel... with only a little moaning on the steepest grades.



Harmony Linden

Harmony was only 14 when she joined her aunt and uncle for RAGBRAI, Iowa’s week-long, trans-state ride. A tour of the west Michigan shoreline, ambitious one-day rides, and even some endurance racing followed before college, career, and children put such shenanigans on hold. Now with her family’s increasing independence, she makes her return to cyclo-touring.



The Ride...

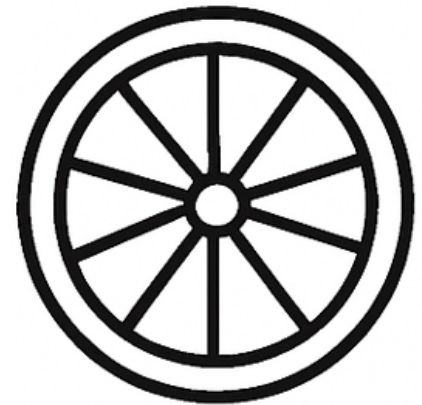
Day #1 - The Three Witches:

We began our tour by riding southwest out of Steamboat Springs past beautiful ranch land and rimrock to our first SAG at mile 19, where we rested and refueled for what was to come. The Three Witches are 3 hills, each coming fast on the heels of the previous, each steeper and longer than the previous. The Witches seemed to be stirring their caldrons as temps soared into the upper 80s, but at last we crested the third summit, rolling down to lunch in Oak Creek. Post lunch, we enjoyed a 23-mile downhill cruise past Stagecoach Reservoir with sandhill crane and osprey sightings along the way.



Day #2 - Catamount Lake:

Our second day's route took us straight south of town past Catamount Lake. As we continued to our SAG stop near Stagecoach Reservoir, some riders experienced the adventure that riding through open range might afford—sharing the road with some fairly hefty bovines.



After the SAG, things got spicy as about half of us took to the first gravel sector of the tour. With rocks, ruts and potholes, it was gnarly—think Outbound Gravel gnarly. Yet, coursing along the verdant banks of the Yampa River with only a handful of solitude-seeking anglers for company, it was also spectacularly bucolic. All riders survived, and all declared it to be their favorite part of the route.

Astonishingly, by way of lending support, Mayoma negotiated the treacherous trail in the Sprinter van. Dismissing accolades, she insisted it wasn't that bad but advised against opening the carbonated beverages she was carrying for an hour or two.



On this short mileage day, Mark and Greg filled our afternoon by arranging a visit to the nearby Moots bicycle factory. There, our engaging and articulate guide, Heather, started our tour with a history of the company, then walked us through the building process from raw materials to detailing the finished product.



Day #3 - Steamboat Lake:

The third day was our longest, travelling north out of town and reaching elevations of over 8000 feet. After the morning SAG stop, we were once again given the option of continuing on paved surfaces or taking an unpaved back road. This day's gravel was much more civilized. Hard-packed and nicely graded, it led us up and up through forest, peaceful ranchlands, and mountain peaks before depositing us at our lunch stop—the Visitor Center on the shores of stunning Steamboat Lake. With full bellies and tired legs, we all enjoyed the 27-mile, post-lunch descent back to town.



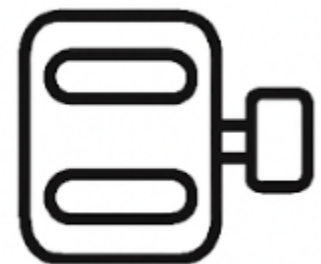


That evening, we gathered for our group dinner, a sumptuous buffet at the elegant riverside Aarum restaurant.



Day #4 - Miner Gravel to Two Witches

Our final day's route took us west of town to Milner, then south, where all riders tackled a 7-mile gravel sector. These roads were also hard-packed and easily navigable, allowing us to enjoy sweeping views of horse farms and distant peaks. At mile 20, we were once more given a choice: ride back into town on a 33-mile loop or continue south for an additional 17 miles—7 of which were gravel and 1500 extra feet of climbing. Both routes eventually deposited us onto the second Witch, then over the first Witch before heading for the barn.



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Thank you to Kathleen and Mayoma for once again delivering world-class SAG support, protesting all the while that if we haven't gained weight by trip's end, they haven't done their job.



And massive thanks to our leaders Mark and Greg, as well as to Polly and Ruthie, for bringing a warm and welcoming atmosphere, designing safe and scenic routes, and providing stellar communication.





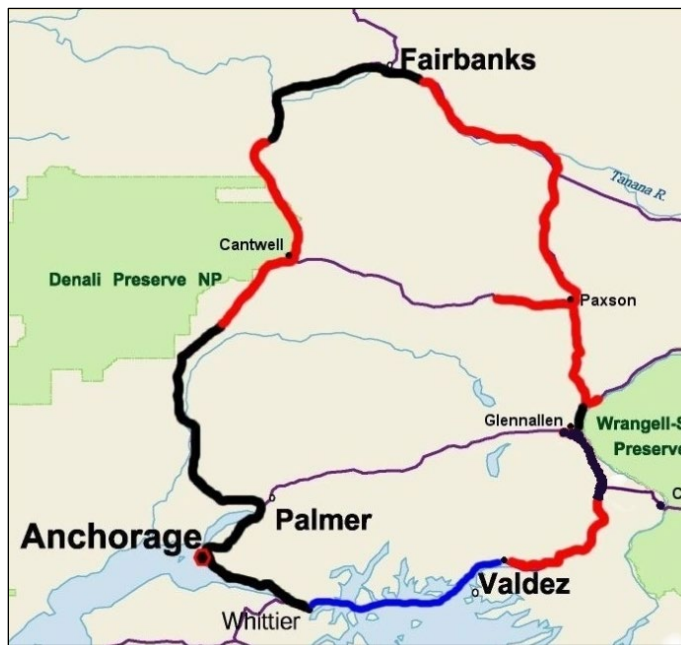
Alaska Tour Report

By HeartCycle Member Cassie Klump

Photo edits by S. MacCormack



The HeartCycle Alaska Bike Tour covered 1,000 miles from Anchorage to Fairbanks, and then from Fairbanks to Valdez.



The route took us from Fairbanks through Big Delta, then along the Tok Cutoff to Tok and on to Glennallen. From Glennallen, we traveled south on the Richardson Highway to Valdez. Of the full distance, we rode about 320 miles on our bikes.



Day 1 – Anchorage to Denali Park

We loaded up the vans in Anchorage and traveled north on the Denali Highway past Wasilla, Alaska. Upon arrival, our ride coordinators Greg and Walt Rowland, along with several HeartCycle members, helped adjust everyone's bikes.



/// Greg Rowland



/// Walt Rowland



Once ready, cyclists rode north toward Denali Park, covering about 40 miles to the Denali Perch Cabins.

The day ended with a lively dinner at the Panorama Pizza Pub, where everyone celebrated the first leg of the journey.



Day 2 – Denali Park to Fairbanks

From Denali Park, we drove about 135 miles to Fairbanks and rode approximately 50 miles.

Along the way, one of the more unusual and memorable sights was an igloo cabin rental listed on Airbnb.



Our lodging for the night was the Sophie Inn in Fairbanks. Riders experienced nearly every type of weather imaginable on Day 2, from heavy rain showers to bursts of sunshine.

We arrived late in Fairbanks, wrapping up the day with much-needed dinners and hot showers after another beautiful ride.

Day 3 – Fairbanks to Tok

We drove south out of Fairbanks past Big Delta and the Tanana River and took the Tok cutoff to Tok, Alaska. We rode about 60 miles.

Moose were sighted on this part of the ride, and once again, we also experienced highly variable weather conditions.



We arrived at the Tok Cabins and the famous restaurant known as Fast Eddy's. Everyone enjoyed delicious dinners and breakfasts at Fast Eddy's.



Day 4 – Tok to Glenallen

The next day we drove 138 miles from Tok to Glennallen and rode another 70 miles along the way. In Glennallen, we stayed at the Caribou Lodge.

One of the most memorable experiences of the entire trip came at Ernesto's Mexican Restaurant. After a long day in the vans, we were shown to a lean-to shack adjacent to the main restaurant—with no heat (it was cold!). Ernesto himself appeared with a case of beer, and the "heating system" consisted of a box fan and the food-service heat lamps.



Despite the unusual setting, everyone ordered off the menu, and Ernesto personally prepared delicious homemade Mexican food. The next morning, we returned for an equally delicious breakfast before continuing on our way.

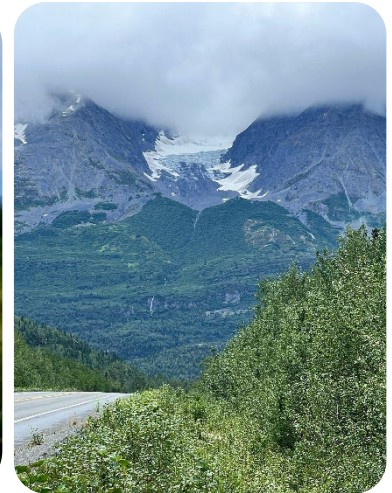
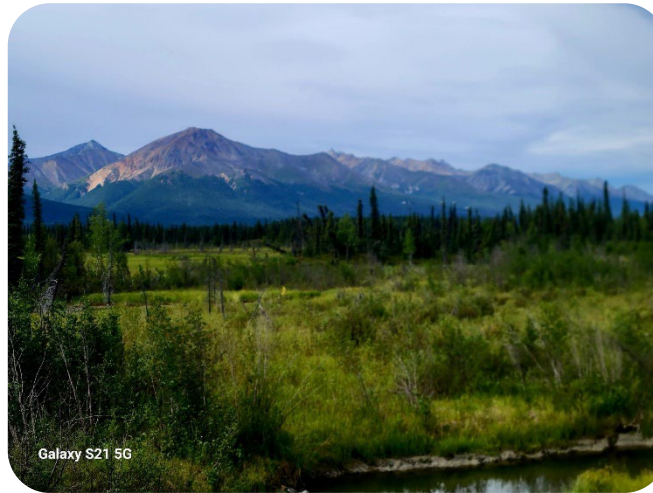
Day 5 – Glenallen to Valdez

We drove 120 miles and rode about 50 miles over Thompson Pass—our final riding day and the queen stage of the tour. Along the way to Valdez, we visited the Alaska Pipeline where Walter Rowland shared stories and a summary of its construction having worked on it himself when he was younger. From there, we left the vans and cycled up Thompson Pass, starting about 30 miles from the summit. Riders passed wildflowers, glaciers, and waterfalls, all set against dramatic mountain scenery.



Day 5 continued...

Though the ride was rainy, it was also one of the most breathtaking sections of the entire journey. After the exhilarating downhill, we drove the final stretch into Valdez, a picturesque coastal town on Prince William Sound. That evening, we gathered for a delicious dinner and shared our appreciation with the Alaska Bike Staff for an unforgettable adventure.



Day 6 – Ferry from Valdez to Whittier (90 miles) and 50-mile van ride back to Anchorage

Our initial ferry ride across Prince William Sound was not interesting because of low clouds and limited visibility. As the ferry continued toward Whittier, the skies gradually cleared, revealing glimpses of the area's beauty.

Upon arrival in Whittier, the vans lined up to pass through the Whittier Tunnel, a unique single-lane passage shared by both vehicles and trains. Whittier tunnel was built in the 1940s for military purposes. Finally, we made it back to BikeAlaska's office in Anchorage, removed our saddles and pedals, and said our goodbyes as we went our separate ways and spent our last evening in Anchorage where many of us watched, for the last time, the late-night Alaska sunset.





About HeartCycle Bicycle Tours

HeartCycle offers a number of exciting tours each year.

2025 tours that are currently scheduled or planned are highlighted on the next few pages. Tour details are also available on the [HeartCycle website](#).

To read and observe the procedures for announcing new and planned tours please review the [Tour Announcement and Registration Policy](#).

Links to tour policies (illness, conduct, wait list, etc.) can be found at the bottom of the [HeartCycle Tours](#) web page.

March

South Island, New Zealand Christchurch, New Zealand

Dates: March 6-22, 2025

Days: 16

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$5,100

Link: [New Zealand Trip Details](#)

Contact: Janet Slate

jslate@totalspeed.com

April

Shikoku Pilgrimage, Japan Koyasan, Japan

Dates: April 6-18, 2025

Days: 12

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$4,500

Link: [Japan Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tina Vessels

tina.vessels@gmail.com

Springtime in Solvang Solvang, CA, USA

Dates: April 12-19, 2025

Days: 6

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$1,660

Link: [Solvang Trip Details](#)

Contact: Mark Lestikow

mark.lestikow@closetfactory-colorado.com

May

Underground Railroad Year 2 Memphis, TN, USA

Dates: May 10-25, 2025

Days: 14

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,500

Link: [Railroad Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Schroeder

jimmyschweb@gmail.com

June

Randonnée en Dordogne, France Bordeaux, France

Dates: June 1-13, 2025

Days: 12

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$3,500

Link: [Randonee Trip Details](#)

Contact: Fred Yu

frederickyu@comcast.net

Le Monastere in Southern France Limoux, France

Dates: June 21-28, 2025

Days: 7

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,350

Link: [Le Monastere Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tom Kissinger

tom_k@pipeline.com



June cont...

MN-WI: Mississippi River Weave

Minneapolis, MN, USA

Dates: June 21-30, 2025

Days: 9

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,000

Link: [Mississippi Trip Details](#)

Contact: Jim Schroeder

jimmyschweb@gmail.com

July

Central Colorado Rockies

Frisco, CO, USA

Dates: July 9-17, 2025

Days: 8

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,160

Link: [Rockies Trip Details](#)

Contact: Guy Kelley

guy.kelley@comcast.net

Jackson Hole Wyoming

Jackson, WY, USA

Dates: ~~July 24-29, 2025~~

Days: 5

Rating: Easy

Cost: \$1,800

Link: [Jackson Hole Trip Details](#)

Contact: Clare Bena

cbvamoots@gmail.com

CANCELLED

**Look for this trip in 2026!*

August

Alaska – The Last Frontier

Anchorage, AK, USA

Dates: August 2-9, 2025

Days: 7

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$4,280

Link: [Alaska Trip Details](#)

Contact: Scott MacCormack

SAMacCormack@gmail.com

Steamboat Springs NextGen Tour

Steamboat Springs, CO, USA

Dates: August 17-22, 2025

Days: 5

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$1,350

Link: [Steamboat Trip Details](#)

Contact: Mark Lestikow

mark.lestikow@closetfactory-colorado.com

September

Acadia: Rocky Coastal Maine

Bar Harbor, ME, USA

Dates: Sept 8-16, 2025

Days: 8

Rating: Intermediate

Cost: \$2,700

Link: [Acadia Trip Details](#)

Contact: Patty Menz

pattymenz@verizon.net

**HeartCycle
Bicycle Tours**

Send a message to tourdirector@heartcycle.org to let us know (1) where you'd like to go on a future tour and (2) if you have an interest in leading or co-leading a tour.



October

Le Monastere in Southern France

Limoux, France

Dates: October 4-11, 2025

Days: 7

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$3,350

Link: [Le Monastere Trip Details](#)

Contact: Tom Kissinger

tom_k@pipeline.com

**June trip also available*

Paso Robles Wine Country

Paso Robles, CA, USA

Dates: October 18-26, 2025

Days: 8

Rating: Inter / Adv

Cost: \$2,450

Link: [Paso Robles Trip Details](#)

Contact: Cindy Alvarez

sindelou2@gmail.com

HeartCycle Bicycle Tours

Send a message to tourdirector@heartcycle.org to let us know (1) where you'd like to go on a future tour and (2) if you have an interest in leading or co-leading a tour.

/// Tour Ratings ///

Rating	Approx Daily Mileage	Approx Daily Elevation Gain (feet)
Easy	< 40	< 1,500
Intermediate	40–60	1,500–3,500
Advanced	50–70	2,500–4,500
Expert	> 65	> 4,000



HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Contacts

Please feel free to contact any of the members listed to the right with questions, comments, or concerns. We are more than happy to field your questions and get you in touch with the appropriate club contact.

Board of Directors

- **Mark Lestikow (2026) | 303-919-0426**
President - president@heartcycle.org
- **Tom Kissinger (2026) | 303-475-8669**
Vice President
- **Janet Slate (2025) | 303-683-6128**
Tour Director - tourdiretor@heartcycle.org
- **Alan Church (2026) | 303-489-1789**
Treasurer
- **Laura Davis (2026) | 970-581-1361**
Secretary
- **Ron Finch (2025) | 303-656-5573**
Safety Coordinator & Insurance
- **Rita Kurelja (2025) | 970-231-7163**
Registrar - registrar@heartcycle.org
- **Richard Crocker (2025) | 520-539-8019**
Asst. Registrar - registrar@heartcycle.org
- **Scott MacCormack (2025) | 720-939-6099**
Web Master - webmaster@heartcycle.org

Working Members

- **Jim Bethell | 518-466-8490**
Asst. Webmaster
- **Graham Hollis | 720-323-6479**
Asst. Treasurer
- **Jeff Messerschmidt | 303-904-0573**
SAG Supply Manager
- **Dan Palmquist | 303-638-2535**
SAG Vehicles
- **Jimmy Schroeder | 260-450-2007**
Ride-with-GPS Coordinator
- **Judy Siel | 720-519-9401**
Asst. Tour Director
- **Cody Ensanian | 570-419-9453**
Newsletter Editor - newsletter@heartcycle.org

/// About HeartCycle ///

The HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club is a not-for-profit Colorado corporation that began providing bicycle tours in 1978. The club is organized and run by volunteers who enjoy the challenge and the fun of cycle touring and want to share their enthusiasm.

HeartCycle has the unique distinction of having originally been formed as a cardiac research project (hence the name), but has long since become simply a not-for-profit bicycling club that promotes multi-day, SAG-supported tours. A volunteer Board of Directors meets monthly and welcomes member attendance and participation in planning and running events. HeartCycle also has many other volunteers working to assist the Board.

