

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Pacific Northwest—Skagit Valley and San Juan Islands

- Dates:** Orientation meeting Saturday, July 31, 2027. Riding Sunday, August 1–Sunday, August 8, with departure on Monday, August 9 (lodging last night included).
- Leaders:** Roger Sass, Peggy Halwachs;
SAGs: Kathleen Schindler, Mayoma Pendergast
- Distance/gain:** Approximately 340 miles with up to 18,000 elevation gain
- Rating:** Intermediate-Advanced, heartcycle.org/tour-ratings
- Riders:** 30 (not including leaders)
- Price:** \$2,900 (double occupancy). \$700 due at registration. Balance due by May 2, 2027. Single supplement +\$1,500.
- Cancellation:** [Standard cancellation policy](#)

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.



OVERVIEW

Join us as we unwind on Island Time! This trip explores some of the most beautiful spots Washington state has to offer. You will enjoy breathtaking views and charming historic towns. You might be lucky enough to spot orcas, porpoises, and bald eagles along the way. This tour is semi-fixed base with

two hotels. We will stay four nights in La Conner in Skagit Valley and five nights in Friday Harbor on San Juan Island.

Our journey begins in La Conner and ends at the ferry terminal in Anacortes. La Conner is located on the Salish Sea about 60 miles north of downtown Seattle and 90 miles south of the Canadian border. The center of town is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Here, you will find plenty of restaurants, museums, shops, and art galleries. Our La Conner hotel is in the center of town, just one block from the Swinomish Channel, which is perfect for an evening stroll along the water after sampling some of the excellent local seafood.



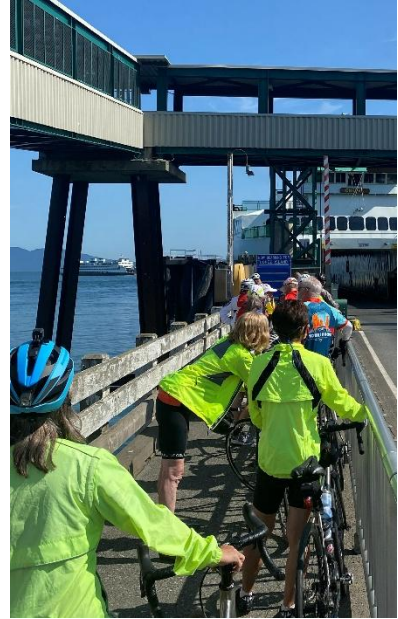
From our La Conner base, we will explore quiet farmland roads and small towns that offer award-winning cheese, locally made ice cream, and delicious bakeries. We will enjoy many spectacular views as we venture across Fidalgo Island and the iconic

Deception Pass Bridge. Chuckanut Drive is a challenging ride with more beautiful views of Padilla Bay and Bellingham Bay.

After we depart La Conner, we will travel across the Puget Sound via a Washington State Ferry to Friday Harbor. San Juan Island has something interesting around every bend. We will cycle past iconic lighthouses, Roche Harbor with its supersized yachts, a 20-acre sculpture park, and an alpaca ranch. You will have the opportunity to visit American Camp and English Camp and learn about the Pig War of 1859–1872. Our hotel in Friday Harbor is just outside the busy center and is located on park-like grounds that are stocked with plenty of outdoor games for those with extra energy.

Day trips from our Friday Harbor base will start with an early morning ferry. Orcas Island is known to cyclists as the hilliest of the islands and offers winding roads, stunning views, and a handful of charming villages where local artisans display their creations. We will visit Moran State Park and have the chance to climb Mount Constitution. The spectacular views of Mount Baker, the Cascades, and other islands make it worth the 5-mile climb!

Another day trip will be to Lopez Island. “The Friendly Isle” reveals pastoral farmlands, serene forests, and spectacular views with less traffic and easier cycling terrain.



Visiting the San Juan Islands offers a unique opportunity to get an up-close view of a variety of sea creatures including orcas, seals, and porpoises. We have added an “Adventure Day” to the tour so that you can have the time to explore what interests you. Possibilities include:

- ½-day sea kayaking tour – no experience necessary and no special equipment required. You may see orcas and other marine species as well as many interesting birds and creatures below the surface. Crystal Seas Kayaking www.crystalseas.com for photos and more information, approximately \$125, and reservations required well in advance.
- Whale-watching tour – larger boat and no paddling required. They have the flexibility to move to where the wildlife has been spotted. San Juan Excursions www.watchwhales.com, approximately \$125-\$150, and reservations required well in advance.
- Friday Harbor Jolly Trolley – small bus that has several stops at popular places around the island to facilitate getting to some wonderful hikes, lunch at Roche Harbor or Lime Kiln Park. Approximately \$40, no reservations accepted. www.fridayharborjollytrolley.com

Once you have been confirmed for the HeartCycle PNW Skagit Valley and San Juan Islands Tour, let us know which activity interests you, and we can try to

arrange for HeartCycle members to join the same kayaking or whale-watching excursion.



The tour includes snacks and lunch on daily rides; dinner is on your own except for one group dinner (included in price). Continental breakfast is included at the La Conner hotel. The Friday Harbor hotel does not offer breakfast, so this will be on your own.

Detailed route maps will be provided digitally via Ride with GPS files for all tour participants. Paper copies of route maps and cue sheets will be provided on request. Route miles and elevation gains are approximate.

Please note that some routes have narrow roads with minimal or no shoulder.

ITINERARY

Day 0: Saturday, July 31, 2027

We'll meet at the La Conner hotel's conference room for our orientation meeting at 5:00PM. After the meeting, you will have time to explore the waterfront and catch a beautiful sunset.

Day 1: Sunday, August 1

Skagit Valley Ramble

58 miles and 700 feet of elevation gain

We will travel along Padilla Bay, known for a large variety of birds, before exploring some quiet roads in the Skagit Valley. As we continue our loop, we will pass through the communities of Bow and Edison which boast award-winning cheese, delicious bakeries and blueberry farms. At the end of the day, there will be a short detour to the famous Snow Goose Produce which features local products and giant ice cream cones.

Day 2: Monday, August 2

Chuckanut Drive

61 miles and 1,900 feet of elevation gain

Today, we head farther north to ride around Lake Samish and on to Chuckanut Drive, a local favorite of cyclists. The twisty road cut into the rocky hillside provides fantastic views of the expansive bays and islands beyond. Please be aware that this very scenic road has minimal to no shoulder in places.

Day 3: Tuesday, August 3

Washington Park and Deception Pass

57 miles and 3,600 feet of elevation gain

Our route begins across Fidalgo Island as we move toward Washington Park and a scenic loop that shows off the Olympic Mountains and San Juan Islands. The next destination is the iconic Deception Pass Bridge with spectacular views before returning through the Swinomish Reservation.



Day 4: Wednesday, August 4

Transfer Day

21 miles and 825 feet of elevation gain

For those who have driven to the start in La Conner, you will move your car to the Anacortes Ferry Terminal and park in one of the lots designated for overnight parking. For those without a car, you will bike ride to the ferry. We will provide all registrants with tickets for you and your bike to Friday Harbor. All other ferry travel—inter-island travel and the return trip to Anacortes—does not require tickets. Upon our arrival in Friday Harbor, we will ride 0.8 mile to the hotel where the SAGs will deliver your luggage. You will have the rest of the day to explore the largest town in the San Juan Islands.

Day 5: Thursday, August 5

San Juan Island Exploration

51 miles and 3,600 ft of elevation gain

This scenic loop circumnavigates the island. We will cycle past lighthouses, Roche Harbor, the historical sites of American and English Camp, and Lime Kiln Park, known for orca sightings. The out-and-back to Cattle Point Park gives us a look at Lopez Island across the channel.

Day 6: Friday, August 6

Orcas Island and Mount Constitution

49 miles and 5,176 feet of elevation gain

This is the toughest day of the tour, but well worth the effort.

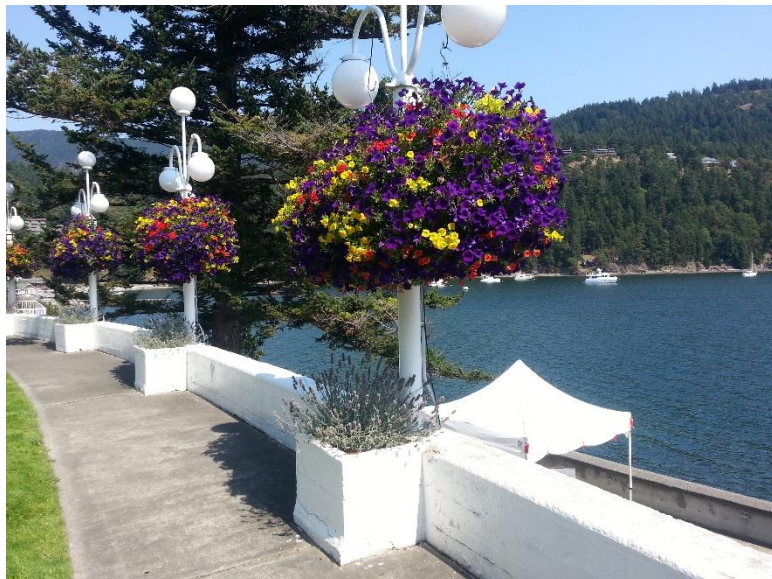
We take an early ferry to Orcas Island and start with quite a hill right off the ferry. After a short stretch of busy ferry traffic, we will get off the main road for a lovely ride out to West Beach and on



to the Deer Harbor Marina. After that, we cycle toward Moran State Park.

Here, you may choose the challenging option to climb Mount Constitution.

This is a 5-mile climb with 2,100 feet of elevation gain and an average gradient



of 6%. Don't be deterred by some short, steep grades of up to 13% early in the climb. The epic views of Mount Baker, the Cascades, and other San Juan islands from the top are spectacular. For those opting out of the climb, you will have time to explore the quaint village of Eastsound before the hilly return to the ferry.

Day 7: Saturday, August 8

Adventure Day

Pick your adventure. Sea kayaking, whale watching, hiking, or taking the hop-on/hop-off Friday Harbor Jolly Trolley to explore locations that we cycled past on Day 5. Please remember that the kayaking and whale-watching excursions are very popular and require reservations well in advance.



Day 8: Sunday, August 8

Lopez Island and Shark Reef Hike

45 miles and 2,300 feet of elevation gain

Today, we catch an early ferry to visit Lopez Island known as the “Friendly Isle.” Here, the roads are quiet and the grades gentler as we travel through farmlands and forests. We will visit Spencer Spit State Park, Mackaye Harbor, and stop on the return trip to do a short (0.8-mile) hike out to Shark Reef where you will find dozens of seals lounging on the rocks or cavorting in the channel. We return to Friday Harbor on the ferry for our last night’s stay, which is included in your registration. For those that don’t have their car waiting at Anacortes Ferry Terminal, you will need to get your bikes ready to store in the Sprinter or to transport on the Bellair Airporter Shuttle, which has a pickup at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal.

Day 9: Monday, August 9

Return to Anacortes

We all get on the early morning ferry to Anacortes to begin our journey home. Share your best photos, gather your favorite memories, and say goodbye to your new friends on the last ferry ride of the trip. When we arrive in Anacortes, you will be able to collect your luggage and take the Bellair Airporter Shuttle or pack up your car for the drive home.

FERRY TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Please bear in mind that certain tour routes are dependent upon the Washington State Ferry System and are subject to possible delays and/or cancellations of ferry routes on short notice. In the unlikely event that a ferry route for one of our day trips is significantly delayed or cancelled, the tour leaders may need to change plans for that day. We hope all goes as planned but appreciate your understanding if conditions beyond our control arise.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

For those driving to the tour:

Parking will be available for your vehicle at the La Conner accommodations. On Day 4, you will drive your car and park at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal in one of the four overnight parking lots. One is located east of the tollbooths and is accessible on the right side of Ferry Terminal Road before you get to the tollbooths. Two more lots are accessible on the left side of Ferry Terminal Road, after you drive past the tollbooths. The last parking lot is on the left side of Ferry Terminal Road past the tollbooths nearly all the way to the dock. The cost for parking in these lots is approximately \$60 for up to 7 days.

For those flying to SEA Airport for the tour:

After arrival at SEA, the easiest transportation to the start of the tour in La Conner is to make reservations with Bellair Charter and Airporter, 866-235-5247, www.airporter.com.

Cost is approximately \$60 for the one-way trip to the start of the tour. Bicycles in boxes will be charged an extra \$10 each way. When making reservations, your starting point is Sea-Tac Airport, and your destination is La Conner Whitney Shell stop. There is a transfer to a different vehicle in the town of Burlington. It will take approximately 2 hours to get from the airport to the La Conner Whitney Shell. From here, the Sprinter van will pick you up to deliver you to our hotel. Once you are on the shuttle, please text or call the tour leaders and SAGs to let us know your approximate arrival time.

For the trip home, you will need to make another one-way reservation for the shuttle. Your pickup point is the San Juan Island Ferry Terminal (in Anacortes), and your destination is Sea-Tac Airport. There is a transfer to a different vehicle in the town of Burlington. Again, the one-way fare is approximately \$60, plus an extra \$10 for a bicycle box. Do not book a roundtrip because the starting point differs on the way back.

SPECIAL NOTES

- For those traveling from the Denver metro area, the Sprinter will be available to transport bicycles for a fee of \$150. A lottery may be needed if the demand exceeds available space.
- For information regarding e-bikes and tandems, refer to the HeartCycle website FAQ: Are e-bikes and tandems allowed on HeartCycle tours? <https://www.heartcycle.org/frequently-asked-questions>
- Please be aware that some of the routes include narrow roads with minimal or no shoulder. Be prepared to ride single file at times to ensure safety for everyone.
- The intended routes are paved, but some roads are chipseal and rough. You may prefer 28-mm or wider tires.
- You should bring a lightweight cable bike lock if you plan to explore some of the many scenic areas along the way. Be ready to lock your bike overnight at the Friday Harbor hotel.

For more information contact:

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