THE
GREATER YELLOWSTONE
ADVENTURE SERIES

These Ain't No Pansy Ass City Races

The 10th Annual Tour de Gravelly

The Beast -------- The Animal

July 19, 2026

A Gravel Road Cycling Race Up and Over the Gravelly Range

Date and Time of Race

Sunday, July 19, 2026

All Cyclists Starting Time: 6:30 AM at Lion's Club Park in Ennis

Two Routes: **The Animal – 30 miles**
The Beast – 60 miles

Race Check In

Race Day Check-in: Sunday, July 19, 2026 – 5:30 to 6:15 AM
Lion's Club Park
Ennis, Montana

Race day sign up will be allowed. However, t-shirts and other SWAG may be delivered later depending on immediate availability and the number of late signups.

There are two choices for routes on the Tour de Gravelly. These are 'The Beast' which is around 55 miles and 'The Animal' which is about 20 miles shorter. Both routes go up and over the Gravelly Range Road. The races start at the same time and at the same place (6:30 AM at Lion's Club Park in Ennis). Both routes have the same finish line (Vigilante Station in the Ruby Valley). The routes are the same for the first 28 or so miles. The net elevation gain for The Beast is just over 6,000 feet. The net gain for The Animal is probably closer to 5,000 feet net gain though this has not yet been adequately measured. Please note that The Beast is the official route for the Tour de Gravelly in the sense of championship trophies. Those who complete The Animal will have smaller prizes since it's not the official route. We created the route to be able to include more cyclists who were a bit wary of the elevation, distance, and overall nature of The Beast.

Race Day Logistics

These Ain't No Pansy Ass City Races

The Greater Yellowstone Adventure Series (GYAS) slogan lives up to its reputation with this race. It's basically all uphill for 40 miles. There will be water jugs at roughly five-mile increments along the route. There will likely be huge gaps between yourself and other cyclists. There will be roving aid stations – volunteers in trucks – covering as much ground as possible, but we can't be everywhere at the same time. **Be sure to carry enough water bottles, gels, goo, and other nutrition as well as tire repair kits, tubes, pumps, and tools you may need for any repairs. It is highly advisable to carry bells on your bike and even bear spray in the event that you come busting around a corner and surprise a bear or other wildlife.**

The logistic picture is as follows:

The race begins in Ennis at Lion's Club Park. It ends at the US Forest Service Vigilante Station in the Ruby Valley. This is several miles south of Ruby Reservoir. The entire length of the original route (**The Beast**) is approximately 55 miles. It is more or less 40 miles up and 15 miles down with a net elevation gain of over 6,000 feet. The Beast route goes up to the highest point on the Gravelly Range (Monument Ridge at 9,587 feet) and then cyclists turn around and go down into the Ruby Valley by re-tracing part of the route and down Warms Springs Road to the floor of the Ruby Valley.

The Animal route is identical to The Beast route up to Warms Springs Road (NF 163 on Google Maps) which is about four miles north of Clover Meadows. At the intersection of the Gravelly Range Road and Warms Spring Road (NF 163 Road), the Animal cyclists turn right and go down

into the Ruby Valley. After about eight miles of very steep downhill, they run into Forest Service Road 100 which runs along the bottom of the Ruby Valley. Cyclists turn left and the finish line at Vigilante Station is about two miles away. The estimated distance is about 35 miles. This route is shorter by design to allow for cyclists who might not be too comfortable with so much uphill so they can also take part in the Tour.

The **Beast Route** is as follows: Start in Ennis, cycle to Varney Bridge Road, proceed onto the Gravelly Range Road through the Bar 7 ranch and into the National Forest. Cycle to Clover Meadows (The Animal route turns at Warms Spring Road) and retrace the route of the Madison Marathon up to Monument Ridge and the turn-around point on top of the ridge. The Beast cyclists then turn around and go back down the Gravelly Range Road to Warm Springs Road and the finish line at Vigilante Station.

The general description of race day and the route is as follows:

- All cyclists start at Lion's Club Park in Ennis and head out of town towards Virginia City on Montana Highway 287.

- Just two miles outside of Ennis, they turn left onto Varney Bridge Road which parallels the Madison River as it heads south.

- After about 12 miles, there is an intersection. If you go straight, you get to Varney Bridge and eventually Highway 287 (wrong way). If you turn right (which is what you will do), you head towards the intersection for the Ennis Fish Hatchery and the Bar 7 Ranch. Up to this point, the road is paved. Shortly after this point, it is gravel.

- Cyclists will keep to the left (**do not go to** Ennis Fish Hatchery) and eventually end up on the Call Road, which is gravel, and goes through the Bar 7 Ranch.

- The next destination is the Gravelly Range Road which enters the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest. There are a few intersections, but none are too confusing. You just need to remember that it's all uphill. You will eventually veer right and begin a very long climb up the Gravelly Range to get to the top. You'll see the incline of the road from a good distance away.

- The distance from the Ennis Fish Hatchery/Bar 7 intersection to the cattle guard for entering the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest is about 15 miles. It's all uphill.

- Upon entering the National Forest, cyclists stay on Road 290 (Gravelly Range Road) all the way through. Warms Spring Road intersection is about 10 miles away. Clover Meadows is about 14 miles from the gate. Monument Ridge is another eight or nine. The turn-off to Cottonwood Road is about 12 miles past Clover Meadows.

- For **The Animal** route, cyclists go down Warms Spring Road – about an eight-mile downhill – to Forest Service (FS) Road 100. Upon arriving to this road, go left and Vigilante Station (the finish line) is about two miles away.

- For **The Beast** route, the route is the same as the Madison Marathon up to the highest point on the race which is Monument Ridge at 9,587 feet. Since the starting line at Lion's Club Park is around 4,940, you're looking at over a 6,000-foot vertical climb with all the ups and downs over 40 miles. Yep, it's a 40-mile uphill for The Beast. It's about a 25-mile uphill for The Animal.

- The Beast Cyclists will then turn around and go back to Warms Springs Road all the way down to FS Road 100 which is in the Ruby Valley. Then, cyclists turn left and ride towards the Vigilante Guard Station which is about two miles away from this intersection.

- The finish line for both routes will be at the Vigilante Guard Station.

The awards ceremony will be at approximately 1:00 PM followed by a BBQ party for everyone, athletes and friends and family.

As far as getting people and bikes back to Ennis, we will develop a plan dependent on the number of cyclists. However, cyclists are encouraged to have a family member / friend waiting for you at the finish line if at all possible. We have a BBQ party at the end for everyone. Free beer and food!!

Level of Participant Support

The Tour de Gravelly is **a limited support race**. This cannot be emphasized enough.

The race starts in the town of Ennis so all pre-race needs (e.g. food, water, toilets, etc… are available within the town). There are various porta-johns and privies long the route at fishing access sites on the Madison River and at Clover Meadows on the Gravelly Range Road. That might be about it.

For fluids and nutrition, we will set out water jugs at approximately five mile distances apart along the route for cyclists to fill up their water bottles. These will be water only as we can't have flavored drinks such as Gatorade unless a volunteer is there due to bears.

The plan for volunteers and aid stations is to have roving stations in vehicles along the route. These vehicles will have Gatorade, water, ice, and some will be equipped with bicycle pumps for flats. However, we highly encourage everyone to bring small repair kits with you, including pumps or CO2 cartridges, if possible. If a bike breaks down on the route, we'll do our best to help, but you might be between roving volunteers and could end up waiting for some time.

Again, this is a limited support race. The race waiver will be extensive. Helmets will be required.

It is prudent to tell you about grizzly bears. There are grizzly bears on the Gravelly Range. They are becoming more and more common. In the 15 years of the Madison Marathon, only one runner has seen a bear – a black bear in this case – on the route during the race. The RD has seen bears several times during set up and touring on the Gravelly Range. The biggest concern is on Warms Springs Road which is remote, downhill, and has corners. It is feasible to come speeding around a corner and surprise wildlife – including a bear – on this section of the route. Bells on the bike are advised for this section. Bear spray is also advisable if it can be carried easily. The GYAS will do its best to

have volunteers in trucks on this portion of the route to honk their horns and otherwise make noise to scare any bears away.

Choice of Bike

The choice of bike will be entirely up to the cyclists, but you can only use one bike. The first 14 or so miles of the route is paved road. However, the rest of the route, perhaps around 45 miles, is gravel road. The road is in good condition normally. You will most likely not need a fat-tire mountain bike like you would on a trail race. However, a high-end racing bike that totally flies on a paved road would probably be the wrong choice. A sturdy touring bike could work. The best option is probably a cross bike with not too thin of tires.

The road condition is one thing. The other is the massive uphill that you will have to tackle. The elevation gain is going to be 6,000 feet over about 40 miles on The Beast route. The grade measurements are in the 10- to 15-degree range in several places.

We are personally more worried about safety on the downhills. Once you reach Monument Ridge, it will be all downhill, more or less, from that point. It could be easy to gain some serious speed on a gravel road that has loose gravel and rocks that could cause problems. Sliding out on loose gravel is a very real possibility.

Cautions

The biggest caution is that this is a limited support race. It's very rural and at its furthest point the route will be at least a two hours' drive to Ennis in the event that there is a problem. It's also at a very high elevation and on a road that is gravel and has lots of loose rocks. The volunteers will be roving along the route, but the route is 55 miles in distance. We simply won't be able to cover all the ground all the time. As noted above, grizzly bears are in the area.

This race is not intended for the timid, the unaware, and essentially the non-risk taker. Since it's only in its seventh year, it is perfect for someone who really wants to try something new, something very difficult, and in a place that is just absolutely beautiful. If you do slide out and get some road rash, that's part of the deal.

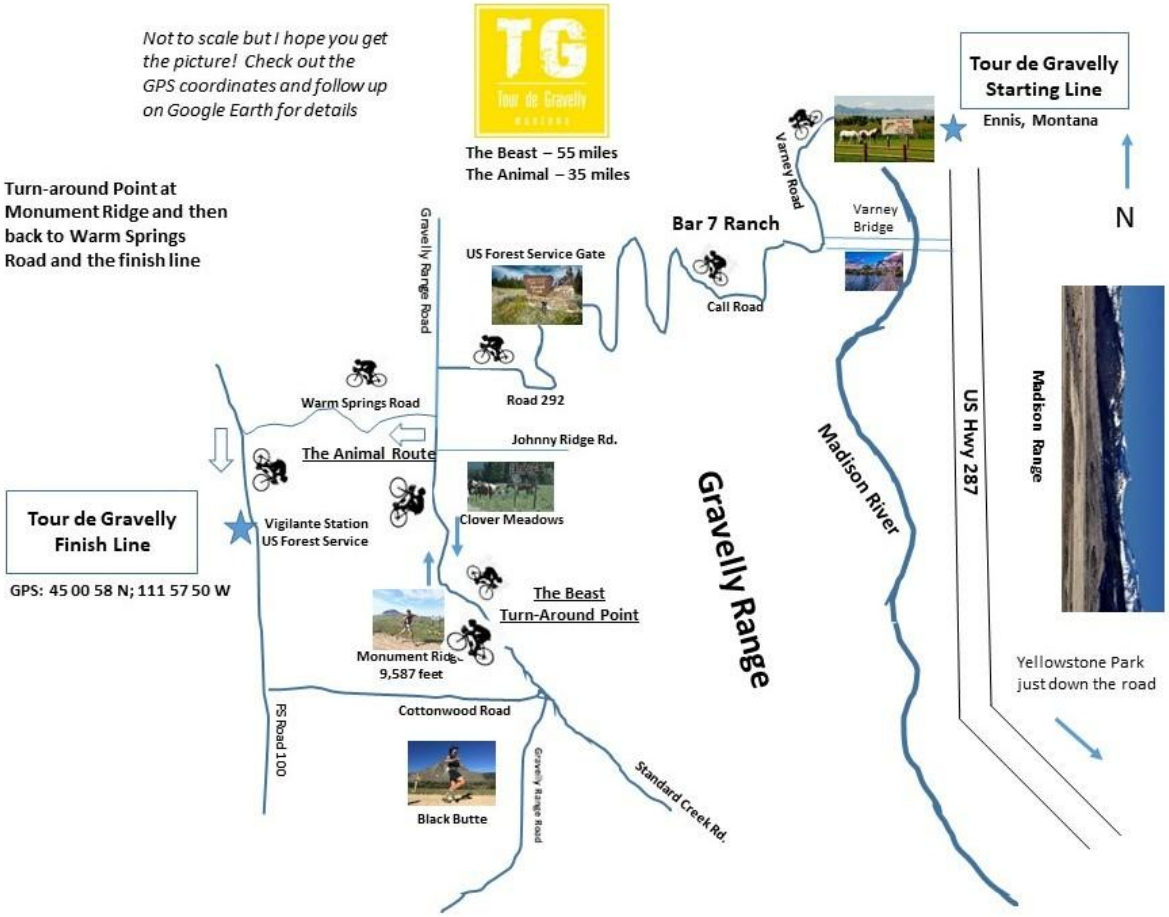
There will be few to no people watching you race. You'll likely be alone for long stretches of road unless you consciously decide to ride with someone. Perhaps this race will be the best example of the GYAS motto of '*These ain't no pansy ass city races*.' This one *definitely ain't*.

The Races

There is only an individual race category. However, there are two routes to choose from – The Beast and The Animal. They are identical routes for the first 25 or so miles. The finish line is the same. Essentially, The Animal does not go up to Monument Ridge. It's about 20 miles shorter and peaks out at around 8,500 feet instead of 9,587 feet in elevation.

The cyclists will all start at the same time from Lion's Club Park in Ennis. The finish line is the same. There is no team event. Anyone who wants to have a support crew follow them along, we are fine with that. We would only ask that this crew also help any other cyclist who is in trouble.

Route Map



Madison County Hotels and Restaurants

The home base for the Greater Yellowstone Adventure Series (GYAS) races is in Ennis, Montana. This is a small town on the Madison River. It is about 50 miles from Bozeman. The drive from Bozeman airport (BZN) to Ennis takes about an hour. Ennis is 70 miles from Yellowstone National Park (the west gate entrance).

Some of the Madison County hotels that we recommend are:

Red Bear Inn – www.redbearinn.com

El Western – www.elwestern.com

Sportman's Lodge – www.sportsmanslodgemt.com

McAllister Inn – www.mcallisterlodging.com

Lure Me Inn – www.luremeinn.com

Rainbow Valley Lodge – www.rainbowvalleylodge.com

Riverside Motel – www.riversidemotel-outfitters.com

Moriah Motel – www.moriahmotel.com

King's Motel – www.kingsmotelllc-mydirectorystay.com

Some of the nicer places to eat and drink include:

G Bar – 305 East Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-5553

Willies Distillery – 312 Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-4117

Alley Bistro – 59 MT Hwy 287, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-5695

Bynee's – 214 Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-3156

The Continental Divide – 47 Geyser Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-7600

Tavern 287 – 129 East Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-7287

Longbranch Saloon – 125 Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-7020

Yesterday's Soda Fountain – 124 Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-4246

The Pic A Nic Basket – 97 North 1st Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-7900

Ennis Sugar High – 170 North Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-7113

Nacho Mamma's Burrito – 111West Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-4006

McAllister Inn Steakhouse – 5566 Highway 287, McAllister Tel: (406) 682-5000

Sportman's Lodge – 310 North Main Street, Ennis Tel: (406) 682-4242

Wells Fargo Steak & Coffee House – 314 West Wallace Street, Virginia City Tel: (406) 843-5556

Mill Creek Inn – 102 Mill Street, Sheridan Tel: (406) 842-5565

The Shovel and Spoon – 108 North Main, Sheridan Tel: (406) 842-7999

The Old Hotel – 101 East 5th Avenue, Twin Bridges Tel: (406) 684-5959

The Shack – 301 North Main, Twin Bridges Tel: (406) 684-5050