



2017 Tour of The White Mountains

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On the first Saturday in October, 700+ mountain bikers will come to the White Mountains to participate in the 22nd annual Tour of the White Mountains (TWM). This annual mountain bike event, which is now a significant economic benefit to the White Mountains, was started by our regional medical center and, when it rapidly grew, management was turned over to Epic Rides of Tucson (www.epicrides.com). Riders choose routes of nine, 35 or 50 miles on the White Mountains Trail System or a 30-mile forest road ride in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests around Show Low, Pinetop-Lakeside and Vernon. The TWM is a great community event with support from many regional non-profit organizations including: TRACKS (www.trackswhitemountains.org the volunteer group that builds and maintains the non-motorized White Mountains Trail System); White Mountains Open Trails Association (WMOTA, the volunteer group that builds and maintains the motorized trail system); Kachina Radio Club (providing the communication network for the TWM); Navajo County Sheriff's Auxiliary (providing safe road crossings); Pinetop Fire Department & Southern Arizona Rescue Association (providing medical assistance) and Summit Regional Medical Center volunteers (helping at a major aid station offering nutrition and liquids for TWM participants). Unused aid

station supplies are donated to the Love Kitchen following the event. Shortly before the event, TRACKS volunteers pinflag the routes and then, on event day, serve at aid stations and major turns on the routes, recording rider finishing times and supporting a ride for kids in the start/finish area. From the venue, the Pinetop Lakes Equestrian Center (PLACES) on Buck Springs Road in Pinetop, the 50-mile riders start at 7am on Saturday, October 7. After a brief distance on Mark Twain Road, they turn left onto a short segment of railroad grade trail, turn right onto the White Mountains Trail System Iron Horse Connector Trail, right onto the Country Club Trail, right on the Chipmunk Connector Trail for an 8-mile ride up to the Los Burros Trail; then right on the Vernon/McNary Road for 5 miles, left on Forest Road 5, left on the Land of Pioneers Trail, left for 8 miles on the 4 Springs Trail, right on the remaining portion of the Los Burros Trail, right on the Chipmunk Connector Trail and will finish the remaining portion of the Country Club Trail, right on the Iron Horse Connector Trail back to the start/finish area. All TWM route maps are available on Epic Rides' website. Some locations for community members who would like to watch and cheer on the riders include: a) the Pinetop Lakes Equestrian Center start/finish area, b) across Sky High Road from the Springs Trailhead in Pinetop where the railroad trail connects with the Iron Horse Connector Trail and c) at the boundary between the National Forest and the White Mountains Apache lands where the Chipmunk Trail crosses the Vernon/McNary Road about six miles east of McNary. Food and beverages are available and an awards ceremony will be held in the Pinetop Lakes Equestrian Center on Saturday afternoon.