

# MONTANA SINGLETRACK

The Mountain Biker's Guide to Montana

This is Montana's mountain biking guidebook, created and published by Montana mountain bikers. It describes the state's very best mountain bike rides, from the borders of the premier biking towns to the most remote mountain ranges, from high alpine ridges to low desert canyons. Many of these rides are the established favorites of local bikers, while others are phenomenal rides which few locals know. Whether you are looking for a quick evening spin or an all day backcountry adventure, this book is all about Montana's finest singletrack.

CUSTOM MADE TOPO MAPS • COLOR PHOTOS • ELEVATION PROFILES



ALL THE INFO YOU NEED FOR YOUR RIDE • NO EXTRA BAGGAGE

\$16.95

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The Mountain Biker's  
Guide to Montana



**50** of Montana's Best  
Mountain Bike Rides

FIRST Edition



# 31 Big Snowys

<b>DISTANCE</b>	11.1 miles • 17.9 kilometers
<b>ELEVATION GAIN</b>	2500 feet • 760 meters
<b>RIDING TIME</b>	4 hours + 30 minutes for cave trip
<b>SEASON</b>	July to October
<b>NEAREST TOWN</b>	Lewistown
<b>VEGETATION</b>	Dense pine forest, alpine tundra on top
<b>ROUTEFINDING</b>	Lots of nice signs but you should still know how to read a map
<b>LAND MANAGEMENT</b>	Lewis & Clark Nat'l Forest, Judith Ranger Dist, 406-566-2292
<b>HOT TIP</b>	A five ounce swallow cannot carry a one pound coconut



## PHYSICAL DIFFICULTY

**DIFFICULT**

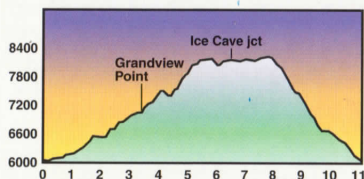
## RIDER ABILITY

**EXPERT** loop or **ADVANCED**

## SURFACES

out and back

**7 8 9**



## SUMMARY Epic adventure

We have heard a few bikers (only a few have ever been to the Big Snowy Range) say that this is one of their favorite rides in Montana. That's a bold statement, but we have to agree. This is old school adventure: a climb to the top of a remote island range, because it's there. You will work hard and be rewarded accordingly.

The first three miles of the climb are a steep grade, but not too bad considering the size of this ride. Keep it in a low gear and you'll be satisfied. The next two miles, after Grandview Point, include some steep and / or rocky sections where you will push. After about 2.5 hours of climbing (2100 vertical feet in the first 5.5 miles - yikes), the trail flattens out and reaches the Ice Cave Trail. Take a short hike down this trail (it becomes fairly unridable near the cave, so please don't erode it). The ice cave exceeded our expectations; do not skip it. Even in July there are large columns of ice from floor to ceiling.

Just after the ice cave side trip, the trail enters wide open tundra fields on the spine of the range. The trail disappears, but there are large cairns. Here the unbelievable views extend in all directions over the plains. The Judith Mountains are to the north, the Little Belts to the west, and to the south you can see the Beartooths 100 miles away. Truly, totally awesome.

If you felt that the technical level of the climb was about what you were looking for, then turn around after enjoying the views and do this ride as an out and back. The trail you climbed is a great **ADVANCED** descent. If you prefer a loop ride and a more difficult descent, continue on to Uhlhorn Trail. Uhlhorn is not the most extreme decent you have ever seen; it's just very (non stop) steep with constant roots, small loose rocks, or talus. Your hands will be tired at the end because they will be on the brakes the whole way down. Please respect the trail and be prepared to yield to hikers!

## DIRECTIONS Counter clockwise loop OR stop around mile 7 for out and back

**0.0** Ride back to the main road, turn left to the campground, then turn right (the direction of travel for cars through the campground) and begin on the trail on the right just after the bathroom. When you reach the lake, veer left.

- 0.5** Junction. Veer left.
- 0.6** Trails 495 and 493 to left. Keep right.
- 1.0** Promontory Point Trail to right. Go left (straight) on Grandview Trail 403.
- 1.4** VJ Spring Trail ahead. Turn right on Trail 403.
- 3.5** Grandview Point spur to left. Definitely walk out to the point (only a few yards to a great overlook) and then continue right toward Trail 490 and the Ice Cave.
- 5.8** Trail sign for Dry Pole Trail, but no obvious trail here. Continue straight toward Ice Cave.
- 6.5** Ice Cave Trail junction. Leave the bikes here and hike a quarter mile down to the cave.
- 8.0** After passing Devils Chute Cave and riding atop the range for a while (you've passed another trail sign, but no obvious trail), you arrive at a sign for Uhlhorn Trail 493 (also reads Crystal Lake 3 miles). Go straight on this trail. The ridge trail continues right.
- 9.8** Crystal Cascade Trail 445 to right. Go left and descend to the trailhead.

**TRAILHEAD** On Hwy 191, about 4 miles south of the Hwy 87 & 191 junction, turn east on a dirt road. This road is just north of mile marker 35 and there is a sign for Crystal Lake. Follow the signs to Crystal Lake for 20 miles (the road becomes paved at the national forest boundary) to the lake. At the lake you will pass boat launch and picnic sites on the right. Where the road veers right into the campground, veer left and park in a trailhead parking lot.

photos on pages 14, 61

