

# OH Bike Mini-Newsletter – July 2022

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### Message from the President



ohbike.org

Dear OHBTC Members:

We had our monthly meeting Monday June 13. Our meetings are on Zoom which all our members can attend. Zoom meetings make it so easy to attend. I remember the “old days” when we had to travel to the library meeting room.

Our club is into the cycling season with a full schedule of rides. Barb H. has the ride leaders submitting rides to fill the calendar with rides of differing classes and lengths.

The Rural Legacy on June 11 was very well attended despite the threat of rain which turned out to be sprinkles most of the time and didn’t deter many of our riders.

Over a dozen of us are anticipating great weather the weekend of June 18-19 for our ride on the rail trail from Cockeysville MD to York PA. We will be riding 40+ miles on Saturday and 40+ miles for our return on Sunday.

Don’t forget Bob’s Watermelon Ride next month. Bob McMaster always hosted this ride on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, which will be on July 10<sup>th</sup> this year. The ride with watermelon was the way he celebrated his birth day. For those who don’t remember, Bob was our publicity chairman for many years and our resident bicycle mechanic.

Hope to see you on the road,  
Rabbi Randy, President

### Oxon Hill Bike and Trail Club Board Meeting Minutes

<b>Date/Time</b>	June 13, 2022
<b>Attendance</b>	Joan Oppel, Jim and Jane Hudnall, Nancy Avitabile, Randy and Jackie Schoch, Steve Palincsar, Leslie Tierstein, Jessica Hirschhorn, Carl Hattery, George Martin, Barbara Haney, Sherwood Byers, Walt Roscello, Diane Harris, Ellen Goodwin

## **Past Meeting Minutes**

President Schoch asked for board approval of the minutes from the May 9, 2022 board meeting. The minutes were approved.

## **Treasurer's Report – Nancy Avitabile**

The club continues to maintain a healthy savings balance of \$50,000. Expenses for the Rural Legacy totaled \$383 for snacks, water, signs, Gatorade and ice. Liability insurance is paid through October, when the next annual renewal will be due. The storage unit rent is paid for the quarter.

## **Membership Report – Jim Hudnall**

The club has gained 37 new members since April. 17 joined in order to do the Rural Legacy Ride.

## **Road Captain Report – Barb Haney**

All-Class rides were discussed for the months of July, August and September.

It was decided to hold the traditional Watermelon ride on Sunday, July 10, starting from the Accokeek fire station and ending at the shaded park across from the fire station for watermelon. Jackie and Randy will again take charge of getting the watermelon. Barb will recruit ride leaders, using the recent past Watermelon routes. Jane and Jim advised that no permission is needed to use the Accokeek Neighborhood Park for the after-ride watermelon.

For an August All-Class, several different ride starts were discussed, with access to a bathroom or porta-potty deemed important for the final choice. Steve Palincsar will do some research.

The board then discussed an All-Class ride for Labor Day with a picnic, from the town of Indian Head, as was done last year. Permission is required from the Indian Head town manager to use the lawn area. Jane advised that there were routes for 20, 40, 50 and 63 miles last year, and the ride was well attended.

Jane provided contact information. Karen Williams (Community Affairs Director for the town of Indian Head) is the person to contact about use of the green and the pavilion bathrooms. Randy will call her. Walter Huie has cooked hot dogs for OHBTC events for many years. Randy will also call him. Last year for this event, we also had cookies.

Jessica will promote All-Class rides on social media and to other area biking groups.

## **Overnight Report - Sherwood Byers**

The ride to York will take place on June 18-19, with Terre Simpson as co-leader. It is an overnight to York PA from north of Baltimore, 82 miles total for the trip.

## **Advocacy Report - Walt Roscello**

Walt is following the progress of a proposed southern Maryland cycling advocacy group and has suggested that we take part when it is formed.

## **Rural Legacy Report – Jessica Hirschhorn**

Despite the rain, our first attempt to do a mini-event since the start of the COVID pandemic was a success. While it rained only lightly and sporadically in the Rural Legacy area, rain fell in other locations in the metro area, and that kept attendance lower than expected. Of 89 registrants, 44 checked in, which was good considering the weather. No problems were reported other than a few flats and a

couple of briefly lost riders. Intermittent sprinkling, but no one got soaked. All aspects of the ride went smoothly, and the returning riders said they had a good time.

George Martin and Diane Harris staffed the Magruder's rest stop and reported no issues.

Carl Hattery was at Merkle with Rita Zeidner and Harold Datz. Carl reported: "My grandmother could have run the stop. It was too easy. One rider had to pump up a tire. People seemed to be happy."

Lou D'AlloRoso and Larry Poole handled Cedar Haven rest stop (near Eagle Harbor), and all went well there.

### **COVID Guidelines Discussion**

The board discussed the current COVID restrictions and whether to change them. Joan described the check boxes that are required to register for a ride. We currently have four check boxes that riders have to acknowledge when registering for a ride. Three of those relate to COVID. Those three were the subject of the discussion. The fourth is the standard release of liability, which has been used for many years and is unrelated to COVID.

Three checkboxes refer to documents:

- *Release and Waiver* – the standard waiver the club has been using for many years, it was not part of the discussion.
- *Guidelines During the Coronavirus Pandemic*
- *Informed Consent for COVID-19*, with 10 bullet points.
- The fourth checkbox states, "I have been fully vaccinated."

Using the Zoom "share screen" feature, the documents were displayed on everyone's screen so that all meeting participants had access to them.

(The documents are available on the Oxon Hill website home screen under the heading "Let's Ride", then scrolling down to the titles noted above.)

In general, the board decided to leave the *Informed Consent* document as is.

The *Guidelines During the Coronavirus Pandemic* document engendered a great deal of discussion. The guidelines include specific requirements for riders related to coronavirus prevention and notification. Diane asked, "How would the club enforce these rules, who would enforce them?" The board agreed those were valid questions but did not have answers.

Each of the numbered items on the COVID Guidelines was discussed. Regarding the requirement that only members are currently permitted on rides, substantial discussion occurred about permitting non-members to join rides. Joan pointed out that the club liability insurance covers non-members only for one ride, thereafter they are not covered and must join to continue riding with the club. This insurance requirement has been in place for many years. During further discussion of the other points in the Guidelines, there were divergent views regarding whether to revise or remove COVID restrictions; no consensus was achieved. Because the group was unable to reach consensus on the COVID restrictions, the board tabled the discussion until the next meeting.

### **Mid-Atlantic Bike Presidents' Meeting**

Leslie Tierstein advised that there is a coalition of the Mid-Atlantic Bike Club Presidents, which meets by conference call to discuss common issues affecting bike clubs. Leslie volunteered to represent Oxon Hill on this coalition and the board agreed.

## **OHBTC 50th Anniversary**

August is the 50th anniversary of the club. Board members decided that the Labor Day picnic/All- Class ride would be a good occasion to recognize the anniversary. Steve Palincsar suggested adding a “50th” banner to the website. Pete Ulrich is one of the founding members and Randy will contact him about writing a newsletter article about the founding and the early days of the club.

Barbara Haney suggested that we have a newsletter article about e-bikes and their impact on riding in the club.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.

**Next Meeting:** June 23, 2022, 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Goodwin

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## **Road Captain’s Report: Upcoming Rides**

*by Barb Haney*

This year’s Rural Legacy Ride was not yet back to its traditional open-to-all format, but it’s such a beloved ride that we decided to keep it in the schedule as a member-only ride. Despite those limitations, and thanks to the tireless work by your board members and generous volunteers, we managed to put on an excellent event, and generated some new members as well! Though it was cool and drizzly, 44 of 89 registered riders showed up and enjoyed the routes, rest stops and camaraderie. Let’s hope that next year the ride can be back to all its original glory.

Moving ahead to future events, which for this season will remain open to club members only, we have several “semi-supported” rides in the works. Of course, coming up first is our ever-popular Watermelon Ride All-Class event, July 10 from Accokeek Neighborhood Park. Fun, familiar routes, cold watermelon afterwards!

Next will be an NEW all-class ride on August 13 from Friendship Farm Park in Charles County. This ride was the brainchild of Steve Palincsar, so you know the routes will be meticulously planned and documented.

Then to round out the season we will present our Labor Day All-Class Ride, similar to last year’s event, from Indian Head Village Green. Although there will not be a full century route, there will be options from IHRT distances up to metric century.

Final details for all these rides are in the works, so check the OHBTC website for more info. If your non-member friends want to ride with you, get them to join for the low price of \$20/year. And as always, if you want to help out your club, we still have volunteer opportunities available for these events—just contact a board member and we’ll get you a spot.

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## **News from the Trails - by Ron Altemus, Trail Ride Coordinator**

*Mason Neck Trail and surrounding environs*

Mason Neck is a peninsula jutting into the Potomac River in the southeast corner of Fairfax County just south of Fort Belvoir. It is surrounded by Belmont Bay to the west, the Potomac River to the south and east, Gunston Cove to the northeast, and Pohick Bay to the north-northeast.

Relatively speaking for Fairfax County, this area is vastly underdeveloped. Currently, there is “city water” for the residents of Mason Neck but no “city sewer”, and the county has resisted efforts by

developers to bring in a municipal sewer. Hence, all homes are on septic systems necessitating large lots.

Additionally, large tracts of land on Mason Neck are owned by various government agencies:

- Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority oversees the Pohick Bay Golf Course and Pohick Bay Park
- Mason Neck State Park is owned by the state of Virginia
- the Elizabeth Hartwell National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) adjoins the state park
- the U.S. Department of Interior/Bureau of Land Management now has several properties on Mason Neck.

All of the above are open to the public for recreational purposes, including hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking trails; boating opportunities on Pohick and Belmont Bay; camping in Pohick Bay Park; and golf.

Gunston Hall, home of George Mason, is another large portion of land that will be preserved for the future. Mason was a founding father and writer of Virginia's Bill of Rights, which become the basis of the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution.



*1Gunston Hall*

Bicycling on Mason Neck is an enjoyable and easy way to see many of these sights, most of which are accessible by the Mason Neck bike trail. This trail runs parallel to Gunston Road from the Pohick Bay Golf Course to Mason Neck State Park. Along the way, it passes Pohick Bay Park and Gunston Hall. The trail is in fairly good shape until it crosses Gunston Road just east of Gunston Hall. At that point, there is a decent downhill (and strenuous uphill on the return!) to the entrance road to Mason Neck State Park. The trail then winds for approximately 3 miles alongside High Point Road, which takes vehicular traffic into the park. This part of the trail is much like the southern part of the Mount Vernon trail – winding through a mature forest with the resultant tree roots causing a less than ideal biking surface. Many riders use the road instead, but the trail does have its own peculiar charms. Midway between Gunston Road and the Mason Neck State Park visitor center is the parking lot for the Elizabeth Hartwell NWR. Hiking trails (sorry, no bikes) lead down to the Great Marsh on the Potomac River side of Mason Neck with the possibility of bald eagle sightings. Total Mason Neck bike trail length from the golf course to

the state park visitor center is about 6.5 miles, so roundtrip is 13 miles or so. Short excursions into Gunston Hall and Pohick Bay Park can increase the total ride to about 15 miles.

For riders who want to explore Mason Neck a bit farther, leaving the park entrance, turning right onto Gunston Road and venturing down to Hallowing Point can be an enjoyable excursion. Across the river from Hallowing Point on the Maryland side is Chapman State Park and **Mt Aventine**. When entering Hallowing Point, one turns onto Chapman Rd – the same Chapman family!

Returning on Gunston Road, a short visit to Gunston Manor also affords some excellent views upriver towards Mount Vernon. The original Gunston Manor subdivision probably dates back to the 1920s, the homes being small cottages for escaping the heat of Washington summers. Some of the older buildings still exist, but renovations and new construction have altered this community.

Whether you only bicycle down to the visitor center at the state park or continue on to Hallowing Point, the return does have the previously mentioned hill. Almost the entire ride is flat, so the hill, with its short stretch of 9% grade, can be disconcerting. Walking is allowed – think of it as cross training!

Riding the Mason Neck trail proper is easily done without cue sheets. A route that is occasionally offered as a ride for club members (<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/32681666>) includes a down and back on Belmont Boulevard with a view of Belmont Bay before retracing. Please note that this RWGPS route will use Gunston Road instead of the trail where they run parallel. The trail is a less stressful ride. Mason Neck is an area to experience in all seasons as the views and scenery change with the foliage and number of leaves on the trees.



*2Belmont Bay from Mason Neck State Park*

Have fun and enjoy.