

Mountain Biking

Policies and Best Practices

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**Purpose and Mission**

Telluride Academy’s mountain biking programs are designed and implemented to offer bike instruction and opportunity to children of all ages and ability. Our purpose is to introduce and expand riding skills, knowledge, and safety for all students. Getting kids on the trail at a young age will encourage them to try more biking programs in future programs and later in life. Through experiential education, students will learn about: riding techniques, basic maintenance, trail etiquette and safety considerations. Our mountain bike program is a program of solid progression. Students will be taught on beginner trails and will gradually proceed onto longer, steeper or more technical terrain. Our mission is to provide a fun and safe riding experience and an inspiring love of bikes and peddling.

**Important Information and Guidelines**

* All campers and instructors must wear appropriate safety gear; helmets and closed toed shoes. Gloves are recommended.
* All camp counselors and campers must be respectful of all user sites and understand the rules of our permits.
* Misuse of gear by camper or instructor is not tolerated.
* Fully stocked first aid kits, extra tubes and essential maintenance tools must be carried with instructors on all rides.
* Mountain bike programs should be staffed by three instructors \*when possible. There may only be two instructors depending on group size or ability level. For groups of three, there should be one instructor in the front, one in the middle, and one in the back. At no time should students be leading the group!
* At least two instructors in the group should be carrying easily accessible radios to communicate.
* It is a good idea to download “MTB Project” on your phone. This app tells you exactly where you are on trail systems and can often help you understand where to go and the quickest way to get out if necessary. This is especially helpful at trail systems like Phil’s World and Boggy Draw, where there are many intersecting trails and it’s easy to get confused.

**Contacts**

Telluride Academy: 970-728-5311

Sophie Fabrizio: 978-587-1637

Luke Brown: 970-708-0578

Larry Rosen: 970-729-0085

Kelly Sheedy: 970-708-5043

**Hospitals and Emergency Care: 911 in case of real-time emergency!**

Basin Medical Clinic (Naturita): 970-865-2665

Colorado Canyons Hospital & Medical Center (Fruita): (970) 858-3900

Mercy Regional Medical Center (Durango): 970-247-4311

Montrose Memorial Hospital: 970-249-2211

Mountain Village Police/Fire: 970-728-9281

Norwood/Naturita Police: 970-327-4244

Poison Control: 800-222-1222

Southwest Health System (Cortez): 970- 565-6666

Telluride Medical Center: 970-728-3848

Telluride Police: 970-728-3818

Uncompaghre Medical Center (Norwood): (970) 327-4233

**Academy Gear**

At least one instructor should carry a “bike kit” with them during all bike rides. The “bike kits” should include replacement tubes specific to the wheel sizes and styles of student and instructor bikes, patch kit, two tire levers, hand pump, quicklink and multi-tool. Bike kits should be returned to the gear shed after each ride or overnight. Let the Logistics Coordinator know what gear need to be restocked so the kid is ready for the next group.

An important part of bike maintenance is keeping your bike clean. Every bike program should teach their students to properly clean and maintain their bike. Academy has a bike stand, hoses and brushes to wash bikes after messy rides. Please also use the chain lube and rags to maintain a properly working chain.

Any loaner bikes provided to students should be properly maintained and cleaned by instructors after each program. They should be locked in Academy bike rack when unattended.

**Student Gear**

Each child should provide their own bike and helmet for Academy bike programs. If a bike or helmet does not fit the child properly and the instructor deems it unsafe, please inform the child’s parents of the admin staff. Children must have safe, properly fitting gear in order to participate in bike programs. Academy has some loaner gear that can be loaned to local students if necessary- please coordinate with Logistics Coordinator. Children are also required to wear closed toed shoes while riding. It is recommended that children bring gloves to protect their hands and a hydration pack to prevent dehydration on bike rides.

**Mountain Bike Permitted Locations**

**Town of Telluride (and local surroundings)**:

*Medical emergencies:* Telluride Medical Center: 500 W Pacific Ave, Telluride, CO. The medical center is open from 8am-5pm. Please call 9-1-1 for urgent emergencies or any medical emergency outside these hours. Phone: (970) 728-3848.

*Bike repairs:* If a major bike repair is needed in the town of Telluride, please utilize Paragon Sports on Main Street. Contact Academy admin before bringing the bike in for any repairs.

River Trail: Town of Telluride. The Telluride river trail runs from the Shandoka parking lot all the way to Bridal Veil Falls. This is a dirt path that is mostly flat, but has some small hills and picks up elevation towards the East end of town. Most of the trail is free of technical features. There are a lot of walkers, runners and bikers on this trail in the summer. Before getting on this trail with your students, make sure they know proper trail etiquette. They should know to stay in a single file line, let groups know when they are passing and stop when necessary. At all street crossings, lead instructor should stop and make sure the group crosses the street safely. Utilize local medical care if there is a serious injury on the trail.

Pump Track/ Town Park:Town of Telluride.Town park is a great place for groups to practice skill building. You can set up obstacle courses or use the large open spaces for drills. The pump track on the West side of the park (near the skate park) is a great place for students to get a feel for changing terrain and understand the importance of pressure control. Space out kids appropriately so they don’t ride into each other. Please be conscious of other people using these town park areas- this is a highly utilized space and needs to be respectfully shared.

Bike Path:Town of Telluride.The bike path can be ridden from town to Society Turn and back. It is mostly flat and is paved. This is a great ride to get an idea for how your students handle mileage and to just get their legs moving. Many groups choose to ride the Valley Floor trail to Society Turn, and ride the bike path back to town to give them a break in technical riding.

Valley Floor:Town of Telluride. The Valley Floor trail starts at the Shandoka Parking Lot and goes all the way to Society Turn (about 3 miles one-way). Though this trail is relatively flat, there are some technical spots with rocks and roots. Some of these areas will be walked by beginner riders. However, much of this trail can be ridden by beginners and is a great intro ride. There are some technical side trails that more advanced riders will enjoy. There is a “beach” at the end of the trail where kids can enjoy a snack before riding back to town. There is an alternate trail that runs through the middle of the Valley Floor, but should only be ridden if water levels are LOW and students are comfortable on narrow single-track.

Galloping Goose:USFS.The Galloping Goose is a beginner-to-intermediate trail that can be shuttled as a mostly downhill ride. Groups can start at the Galloping Goose trailhead on Lizard Head Pass and ride all the way back to Telluride. The section from Illium to Telluride is all up-hill and many groups choose to get picked up at Sunshine Road in Illium to avoid this. The ride from Lizard Head to Trout Lake is a great beginner ride and is an entirely downhill double-track trail. From there, the trail will become single-track and have some small uphill sections. The sections from Trout Lake to Illium do have some very steep drop-offs, and it is asked that Instructors keep a close eye on students at these sections and have less skilled riders walk their bikes. The entire trail is about 18 miles long but can be split up in many different ways to give groups the options of shorter rides. If you would like a shuttle for this ride, let Program Director know ASAP to set up logistics. There are MANY trail merges on the Galloping Goose. Always stop at junctions to ensure the entire group is together. There is limited service on this trail. Please bring an in-reach device if available and always have a fully stocked First Aid and bike maintenance kit. If there is a medical emergency on the trail, call 9-1-1 and try to get the students to the nearest road. If the situation is not urgent, call an admin staff and we will work with you to put together an evacuation plan.

Remine/Aldasoro/ Penelope’s: Town of Telluride. This group of trails can be utilized two ways. You can ride out to the trail, up the trail and back down it… OR you can get shuttled to the top and ride it all the way downhill back to town. For the full ride, groups can take the Valley Floor trail to Society Turn, cross the road, and continue to the single track on the other side. Follow signage to the Remine trail. About half a mile after the road crossing, you will go through a gate, cross HWY 145, go through another gate and be on the Remine Trail. This is a single-track trail that gradually climbs two miles up. It is pretty smooth and does not have many technical sections, aside from some moderate switchbacks. The top of the Remine Trail can be connected to the Aldasoro trail, which is about one mile of gradual, non-technical incline. The top of Aldasoro trail can be connected with Penelope’s, which is another one mile of gradual incline before descending. From here, you can finish the Penelope’s trail, eventually bringing you back to Last Dollar Road . Ride the road/ bike path back to town. Or, once you hit the peak of Penelope’s, you can turn around and ride Penelope’s, Aldasoro, and Remine (the system you just rode up) back to Society Turn. If your group does not want to do any uphill travel, arrange a shuttle with the Program Director to drop you off at the Penelope’s or Aldasoro trailhead for an entirely downhill/flat ride back to town. Though relatively close to home, instructors should still be equipped with a full First Aid and bike maintenance kit. Call 9-1-1 if there is a serious medical emergency on the trail. If the medical situation is not urgent, please call Program Director or other admin staff for next steps.

Camping options: Church Camp, Whipple Meadows

**Thunder Trails (Norwood)**

*Medical Emergencies:* Uncompaghre Medical Center: 1350 S Aspen St. Norwood, CO. The medical center is open from 7:30am-5:00pm. Please call 9-1-1 for urgent emergencies or any medical emergency outside these hours. The medical center is not open on the weekends. Phone: (970) 327-4233

*Bike Repairs:* High Country Bicycles (1525 Grand Ave) in the town of Norwood can be utilized if there are any major bike repairs that can’t be done by an instructor.

*Directions to Thunder Trails:* From Norwood’s Main Street (Grand Avenue): Travel to the far west end of Grand Avenue. Turn left on Aspen Street (CR 42ZS) and travel south 1 mile. (See large brown “National Forest Access” sign). Turn right onto Y43 Road, travel 1/2 mile. Turn left on CR 41.5Y Road, travel south 1.7 miles. Turn right onto FSR 609, travel 1.2 miles to the Thunder Trails Trailhead parking area.

*Camping options:* Dispersed camping at Thunder trails, Old Sawmill Ranch (check with Program Director first)

Thunder Trails Description:USFS. The Thunder Trails is a great beginner to intermediate trail system with some optional advanced routes. There is a logging road that runs down the center of the trail system, with single-track on both sides. The trails are set up to be ridden in figure 8 formations, crossing the road between each loop. However, many Academy groups choose to shuttle the ride and bike down only one side. If driving up the road, the trails on the right are more technical, while the trails on the left are meant more for beginners. From the top of the trail system, groups can bike all the way down Goshorn, Naturita Rim, and Portis Loops. After Portis loop, you can exit onto the logging road and ride the road back down to the campsites. If the group is advanced, you can continue from Portis to Thunder Loop and it will bring you to the campsites. There are designated campsites at the beginning of the trail system, and a portable toiled in the parking lot. There are also some dispersed camping areas along the entire system, but please only camp in spots that you can see have already been camped in, to abide by LNT practices. If there are cattle in the area, do not camp in the dispersed sites and instead camp at the base of the system.

**Ridgway Area Trails (Ridgway)**

*Medical Emergencies:* Montrose Memorial Hospital: 800 S 3rd St, Montrose, CO. The Montrose Memorial Hospital is about 20 minutes from the RAT trailhead if there is a medical emergency. The medical center is open 24 hours. Please call 9-1-1 for urgent medical emergencies. Phone: (970) 249-2211

*Bike Repairs:* Ridgway Wrench (380 Sherman St #3) in Ridgway can be utilized if there are any major bike repairs that can’t be done by an instructor.

*Directions to Ridgway Area Trails:* The RAT is located on County Road 10 in Ridgway. The trailhead is on your left about a mile down the road once you turn off Hwy 550.

*Camping options:* Top of the Pines, Pa-co-chu-puk

RAT Description: BLM. The RAT is a fairly new trail system that offers riding for intermediate and advanced riders. Though there is some beginner terrain here, it’s not fit for a completely intro group of riders. From the RAT parking lot, groups should ride the Big Cheese up to the “4 Corners,” or the top of the trail system. This is a mellow-to-moderate 1.5 mile climb. Once you reach the top, there are multiple options for descending. The route you choose to take down is entirely based on your group’s ability level. There are many tight switchbacks and surprise obstacles in this trail system- make sure you let kids know ahead of time where these are, and set a pace so that students don’t take them too fast. Also note that there are lots of cacti along these trails- be prepared with tweezers in your fist aid kit. There is no camping at the RAT. According to the RAT website, here are the best options for your groups:

***Beginner:*** Start near the top of the gravel pit road where Rattus, the Maze and Squeeker all meet—CLIMB RATTUS MAXIMUS TO 4 corners>RATICAL>DOUBLE CROSSER>RATTUS MAXIMUS Descent (~6 miles).

***Intermediate:*** Starting at the trailhead in the parking lot—BIG CHEESE to 4 Corners>SPEEDY GONZALES>SPLINTER>BIG CHEESE (only the top 1/3) back to 4 Corners>SPEEDY>RATICAL>PLAGUEROUND >LOWER DOUBLE CROSSER>RATTUS (climb)>RAT TRAP (descent)>LOWER RAT TRAP>SQUEEKER>THE MAZE (~12 miles) *\*\* You can cut out sections of this to make it shorter.*

***Expert:*** Starting at the trailhead in the parking lot—BIG CHEESE>EXTERMINATOR>RATTUS MAXIMUS>DOUBLE CROSSER>THE PLAGUEGROUND>LOWER DOUBLE CROSSER>RATTUS CLIMB to 4 Corners>SPEEDY GONZALES>SPLINTER>BIG CHEESE descent (~ 15 miles).

**Boggy Draw (Dolores)**

*Medical Emergencies:* Southwest Health System: 1311 N Mildred Rd, Cortez. The Southwest Health System is about 15 minutes from the town of Dolores and about 35 minutes from the Boggy Draw trail system if there is a medical emergency. The medical center is open 24 hours. Please call 9-1-1 for urgent medical emergencies. Phone: (970) 565-6666

*Bike Repairs:* Lizardhead Cyclery (350 Railroad Ave, Dolores) can be utilized if there are any major bike repairs that can’t be done by instructors.

*Directions:* When coming from Telluride, head South into the town of Dolores. When you hit town, take your first right after Basecamp Food & Fuel onto S 11th Street. Continue .2 miles onto CO Rd 31/FS Rd 526. After about two miles, turn right onto County Rd W. Travel about one mile down Country Rd W and the main trailhead will be on your left.

*Camping options:* Dispersed camping at Boggy Draw

Boggy Draw: USFS. Boggy Draw is a great trail system for any level rider. There are great beginner and intermediate loops as well as advanced trails. In the middle of the summer, Boggy Draw stays relatively shady and cool. There are many campsites along the road that offer plenty of space and privacy. Be aware of cacti and have tweezers in your first aid kit. The “Boggy Draw Loop” is the most utilized trail and is great for all ability levels. There are a couple technical sections that students can walk if they don’t feel comfortable riding. It offers a good combination of climbing and descending, but nothing too steep. The single-track is fun and flowy. It is about 8.5 miles and is rated as intermediate. If you get on this loop, there are many options to make the loop shorter or cut into other trails- both beginner and advanced. Many Academy groups choose to ride this loop as it offers access to a variety of adventures. Here are some examples of trails that can be ridden for different skill levels:

Beginner: Speedy’s Loop, Grayson’s Loop, Crimson Slide Loop

Intermediate: Boggy Draw Loop

Intermediate/Advanced: Little Bean Canyon, Italian Canyon

**Phil’s World (Cortez)**

*Medical Emergencies:*. Southwest Health System: 1311 N Mildred Rd, Cortez. The Southwest Health is located in the city of Cortez and is about 20 minutes from the Phil’s World trail system if there is a medical emergency. The medical center is open 24 hours. Please call 9-1-1 for urgent medical emergencies. Phone: (970) 565-6666.

*Bike Repairs:* Kokopelli Bike & Board (130 W Main St, Cortez) can be utilized if there are any major bike repairs that can’t be done by instructors.

*Directions:* From the Dolores Market, head West for 9.8 miles down CO-145 S. Turn left after the Fiesta Mexican Restaurant onto US-160 East/ E Main Street. After about 3 miles, turn left onto Road 30.1 (across from Montezuma County Fairgrounds). The trailhead will be on your right.

*Camping options:* Dispersed camping at Boggy Draw

Phil’s World: (BLM, CO State Land Trust) Phil’s World is a great trail system for all levels of mountain bikers. Famous for the “Rib Cage” flow trail, many students get very excited to see this system on their itineraries! Most trails are flowy with easy-to-moderate technical sections that can be walked if a student is nervous. There is no shuttle capability here, however, it offers a good combination of mellow ascents and descents. For more beginner riders, Trust Loop and Hippie House can be accessed by the side trailhead in the parking lot, and connect as a 6 mile loop. For intermediate riders, stick to the “main loop.” It allows ample intermediate riding that can be connected many different ways- including with the Rib Cage flow trail, which many groups will lap a few times. Keep in mind there is still some uphill to knock out when riding back to the van from Rib Cage… you don’t want your kids to completely exhaust themselves in the middle of the trail system. For advanced riders, you can add on the Stinking Springs loop, which is an additional 5.4 miles of riding from the top of the main loops. Phil’s World should ALWAYS be riding clockwise. Consult the wooden signs on the trails to confirm you are riding in the right direction.

**Kokopelli Trail System (Fruita)**

*Medical Emergencies:* Colorado Canyons Hospital & Medical Center: 300 W Ottley Ave, Fruita. This hospital is located about 10 minutes from the Kokopelli Trailhead if there is a medical emergency. The medical center is open 24 hours. Please call 9-1-1 for urgent medical emergencies. Phone: (970) 858-3900.

*Bike Repairs:*

*Directions:*

*Camping options:* Rabbit Valley or Saddlehorn Campground in the CO National Monument (fee must be taken out of budget)

Kokopelli Trails:

**Mountain Bike Teaching Progression**

The first thing to focus on with new students is their equipment. Always make sure their helmets fit them properly and are not too big or too small. The helmet straps should be fastened and adjusted to fit snug under their chin. The helmet should sit level on their head (not tilted back), and should not sit more than an inch above the eyebrow to make sure forehead is protected.

Students should learn how to do a pre-ride bike check. Make sure their seat is adjusted to an appropriate level. Check tire pressure and ensure that they are pumped up to suggested PSI. Make sure all quick releases are tight! Test breaks to ensure they are working efficiently. You should also do a bike check after a major fall to make sure all parts are still functioning properly.

Next, it is important to go over trail etiquette and group riding rules. Groups should always ride in a single file line, with plenty of space in between and instructors in the front, middle and back. When riding on a two-way trail, the group should always stay on the right side. Uphill riders always have the right of way if the trail is narrow and someone needs to move to the side. When passing, always let the person know “on your left/right!”

**Beginners:** Students should start with practicing skills on a smooth, flat surface like the bike path or river trail. Town park is an appropriate place to do riding drills and practice on the pump track. Beginner skills include neutral position, pedal strokes, turning, shifting slowing down and breaking.

*Neutral position:* Pedals level, flat and evenly weighted. Back straight (but not upright). Keep knees apart to help with balancing. Slight bend in knees and elbows (your arms and legs work a extra suspension). Lower your upper body towards the bars with your elbows out for steering control. Brakes covered with index fingers. Head up and looking forward.

*Pedal strokes:* Hip, knee and ankle should be aligned through pedal stroke. Equal power distribution in each leg. Push the pedal down, and pull it back up.

*Turning:* Pull on handlebars, turn hips and rotate bike more than body.

*Slowing down/breaking:* “Progressive breaking”- slowing down and then coming to a stop. Always have one finger resting on each break. Use both your front and back break to ensure an efficient and smooth slow or stop. Don’t just use front break- you will flip. Don’t just use back break- you won’t have enough stopping power because a majority of your weight is over the front tire.

*Shifting:* Shift early and often! Shift down to go uphill and shift up when transitioning to flat or downhill terrain. Always shift to the gear you will need before you get on the steep terrain. Always keep pedaling while you shift! Prevent cross-chaining.

For more advanced riders, attack position, cornering, pressure control, climbing and steeper descending are important skills to learn. These are especially necessary if planning to ride the RAT trails, Phil’s World, or the Thunder Loop at Thunder Trails.

*Attack Position:* Level pedals or heels dropped slightly below pedal axel, weighted evenly. Heavy bend in the knees and elbows. Hips shifted back over the seat. Back straight (but not upright) and chest over handlebars. Knees out. Head up and looking forward.

*Cornering:* Lean the bike, not the body. Weight centered. Inside pedal up, outside pedal down. Keep outside elbow up. Slow down before the corner, not in the corner. If you do need to slow down in the corner, use only your rear break so the front tire doesn’t lock up. Turn your head, shoulders and hips towards the inside of the turn and aim your belly button where you want to go.

*Pressure control:* Move your body vertically over the bike to make it lighter or heavier as required by the trail. Lighten the bike to ride over short rough sections of trail or weight it up for extra grip.

*Technical Climbs:* Look ahead, choose lines and anticipate your moves. If you are seating, sit at the top of your saddle and keep weight forward. For really steep ascents, stand tall, drive all the weight into your feet and keep your hands light. Shift weight forward to prevent accidental “wheelies.” When trying to ascend over obstacles, lift your front tire and then take weight off your back tire so bike can roll over it.

*Steep descents:* Knees forward, hips back, elbows bent but extended depending on steepness, heels down, head up and standing centered over the bike. Look down the trail and anticipate your line in advance.

**Safety Considerations**

* When loading bikes, make sure trailer is in a safe spot away from traffic. NO loading bikes on the side of the school- pull the van around front.
* Before crossing a street, make sure both lanes of traffic are fully stopped before group crosses. Groups should WALK their bikes across the street.
* Instructors should only choose lines their students can follow. Do not hit side jumps or take small technical side paths if your students do not have the skills to ride them. Your students WILL follow you.
* Instructors should always have a bike repair kit and full first aid kid on rides.
* Instructors should carry radios to communicate with each other, and bring in reach devices if riding in an area with no cell reception.







