



NEW LOCAL BIKE TOURING WEBSITE

We welcome this month's contributing author, Gregg Strong who moved, in 2015 to Courtenay and became a Coalition member in January of 2017. Gregg has been bicycle touring for many years in Canada, the Middle East, Africa and Central and SE Asia.

Most recently he has been exploring the back road routes criss-crossing Vancouver island. This is Gregg's first attempt at building a website & he plans to offer information on accessible rides "off the beaten path." He is learning how to enable website visitors to upload information about their own rides and allow them to download *.gpx tracks to use on their own GPS devices. For more information go to his website.

Now that spring is finally in the air (we surely hope!) do you find yourself thinking about trying a bike tour? Have you ever wondered where you can go find more information on self-supported bike touring on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast?

Well, check out this link to Backroads Bike Touring - Vancouver Island. Or google öbackroads bike touringö (<http://www.backroadsbiketouring.com>). Do not be



Rides off the beaten path are accessible to all levels of cyclists

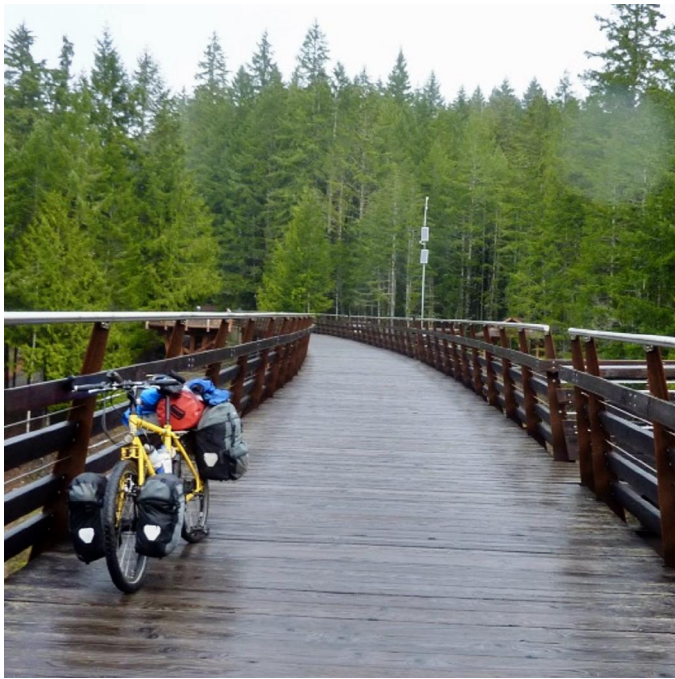
intimidated by the emphasis on back roads touring. The site indeed has a focus on getting off the beaten path, but it also includes heaps of information on my favourite rides and campsites along many of the most popular paved road routes on both Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast.

For example:

- * Ride Saltspring Island, or head further north to Quadra & Cortes
- * Head west to Tofino, or north from Powell River up the Malaspina Peninsula
- * Check out the Cowichan Valley Trail & world famous Kinsol Trestle

* For the more ambitious, there is always the option of the multi-day Vancouver Island - Sunshine Coast loop

The website has lots of basic information on cycle touring, including FAQs and gear discussions. There is a section on a variety of my favourite campgrounds, from full service sites with all the comforts, to remote, no service, wild camps. There is overviews of the main riding areas on the Island, including one highlighting Courtenay, with its central location, which links it to a variety of nearby ride possibilities. The site has been out there for two months now and contains many maps and striking photographs. It is attracting viewers from around the world, along with local communities, tourism offices and cycling groups. My hope is to entice cyclists to come and tour Vancouver Island & the Sunshine Coast, and to serve as a resource for those planning rides.



Riding over Kinsol Trestle, along the Cowichan Valley Trail (part of the Trans Canada Trail)



A little northern Island whimsy from Sointula, Malcolm Island

If you like to check out trip reports on Island rides, there is a blog, which includes recent trips to Denman and Hornby islands as well as and up to the North Island. Or, if you want something a little further a field, there is a world tour section with slide shows of cycle tours to some uncommon corners of the globe.

The site starts from the premise that we have some of the best cycle touring in the world right in our own backyard. So, check out the site, & spend a little time poking around as there are a lot of corners to explore. If you like some things, share the site with friends, leave a few words on the comments page, or share a photo with other visitors. Feedback is welcome. Happy riding. <http://www.backroadsbiketouring.com>



Seaside at Fillongley Campground on Denman Island, an easy ride south from Courtenay



In Spipyus Provincial Park, high above the Sechelt Inlet along the Sunshine Coast