General Information

Bike camps are simple accommodations that typically spring up around bicycle-friendly areas and travel routes. Unlike bike retreats, typically destinations unto themselves and more akin to a resort, bike camps are places where weary bicycle travelers can rest, recharge and get to know a community.

Bicycle tourists need few amenities—a place to sleep or camp, food, drink, a means to do laundry, and the open road. Bike camps satisfy these needs simply and with little upkeep. Bike camps also benefit their community by highlighting services and businesses that may otherwise go unnoticed. Perhaps most importantly, bike camps help create a lasting impression on passing visitors who tell others and often plan to return.

Specific Services Rendered

- Road-weary travelers are offered places to camp either free or for a small fee.
- Cyclists are given opportunities to meet, trade stories, and make connections between themselves and the community.
- Simple hygienic and laundry needs can be met within the community.
- Bike Camps can provide a list of targeted services and available restaurants and cafes to invite cyclists to explore downtown.
- The overall experience of comfort and sense of welcome helps entice tourists to extend their trip in order to stay for an extra day of respite.
- Potential for adaptive reuse allows a community to make assets of otherwise underutilized sites.

Considerations

- Bike Camps require a small initial investment and require little maintenance.
- Bike Camps are most successful when placed alongside popular bicycle routes.
- Bike camps need to be close enough to town services enabling the bicyclist to walk to get something to eat, drink, shop, shower, etc.
Communication is key

Bicycle tourists are a very social and dedicated lot. Consequently, one tourist's positive experience resting at a bike camp will be heard through the grapevine by friends, family, and fellow travelers. This is of particular importance to small, off-the-beaten-track communities that seek to bolster tourism revenue.

Even in a small town like Ovando, Montana, which has a population of around 70 people, very simple camps can have a positive effect on the whole town. In light of this, local businesses (like the Blackfoot Angler bait/tackle shop below) start to carry bike parts in order to accommodate tourists who may otherwise not be able to complete their journey.

Necessary amenities and features

- An area to set up a tent / camp—needs to be within walking distance of other services
- Shelter in case of inclement weather
- Sink for washing dishes
- Shower and restroom facilities
- Seating and table space
- Information boards: these indicate location of local restaurants, stores, laundry facilities. May include maps and other information

Optional Amenities and Features:

- Electrical outlets to recharge phone/devices
- Indoor camping / beds
- Bicycle repair area
- Donation box—many cyclists will donate something which can be put towards maintenance of the bike camp
- Guest book
- A hose to clean off their bike
- A refrigerator or cooler
- Cleaning Supplies

Ovando, MT