

A Great Place to Ride

The number one reason my husband

and I moved to Kendall County, instead of San Antonio where our jobs are located, is that we wanted to be able to roll our bicycles out of the garage and immediately be in a great place to ride. All three Kendall County parks lie in relatively remote areas with low-traffic roads and pretty scenery. The best park to bicycle from in our opinion is James Kiehl River Bend Park (JKRB Park). It's a good place to drive to and ride a bike from (or ride to and beyond from Boerne depending on fitness level). After the bike ride, it is also a nice place to jump into the Guadalupe River to cool off.

The bicycling from JKRB Park is fabulous for at least moderately fit adults and children over the age of ten. This area is part of the Hill Country for a reason and every route has some short and sometimes steep hills to tackle.

Below are a few suggestions for bike rides, all starting from JKRB Park. Please note: there is no drinking water at the park. Another note of caution: watch for loose gravel and potholes at all river crossings. FM473 has a modest amount of traffic with



Cycling from James Kiehl River Bend Park

by Kristen Scheller

River Bend Road has practically no traffic. If one turns left, one passes the Insall Family Cemetery and after approximately 0.7 miles from the park one reaches the Guadalupe River and the historic railroad bridge. If one turns right, stop at the well-kept Brownsboro Cemetery, founded in 1870, and notably has the remains of five Civil War veterans. Listen for the noisy peacocks across the street from the cemetery. Continue past the cemetery and turn left on North River Bend Road. From

there it is about 1.6 miles up to FM473. It is a modest climb with a few bumps up to FM473, but well worth the fabulous view of the Guadalupe River

valley (and from there it is practically all downhill back to the park).

Probably my favorite bike ride from JKRB Park (~21 miles in length) is to turn left from the park and ride up to FM473, turn right on FM473 (towards

Sisterdale) and ride for ~1.1 miles, where FM473 makes a sharp right and Old No. 9 road continues straight. Continue straight on Old No. 9 road (which roughly follows the former San Antonio, Fredericksburg & Northern Railroad Company railway.) The first three miles are gently up a pretty valley sometimes lined with stone fences

a speed limit of 60 mph, so is probably not the best choice for inexperienced riders. The other country roads are not much traveled and have speed limits of 45 mph.

The Rides

Two short and interesting rides are to turn either left or right

from the park entrance and ride towards FM473.

Continued.

and near the limestone cliffs of Black Creek. After that, the grade increases as one climbs to the top of the pass, approximately 7.9 miles from FM473.

At the top is Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area managed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. In 1913 a 920-foot



long railroad tunnel was built through the hill. After the trains stopped running in 1942, Mexican free-tail bats made the old tunnel their home. Between May and October one may watch the bats leave the tunnel during the evening. From Old Tunnel, have fun riding all the way back down to FM473, turn left at the intersection of Old No. 9 and FM473, continue east on FM473 for 0.7 miles and turn right on North River Bend Road. Continue downhill for another 1.6 miles, turn right at River Bend Road, pass the Brownsboro Cemetery, and cross the Guadalupe River to JKRB Park. For those who would like to cycle further from Old Tunnel WMA, Old No. 9 becomes Old San Antonio Road in Gillespie County and continues to Hwy 290, just east of Fredericksburg.

The Short Loop

A shorter loop ride (~16 miles) is to turn either left or right from the park, turning right (towards Sisterdale) on FM473. After about 3.5 miles on FM473, turn right on Zoeller Road and enjoy the long downhill. Zoeller makes a 90-degree turn to the right, and



shortly thereafter follows a shaded and gorgeous portion of road along the Guadalupe River. Turn right on Waring-Welfare Road and

cross the Guadalupe River. (If in need of refreshment, turn left on Waring-Welfare Road and stop in the historic town of Waring, 0.4 miles up-river). Now it is all back up-hill to FM473. Turn left (towards Comfort) on FM 473. After 0.3 miles, turn left on North River Bend Road, then right on River Bend Road back to JKRB Park.

To Sisterdale

Another option for those willing to brave FM473 is to ride bikes to Sisterdale, which is located 9.3 miles from JKRB Park. In Sisterdale, try one of my favorite Texas wines at Sister Creek Vineyards, or stop by the Trading Company for a drink.

The Big Loop

Or, for another ~22 mile loop from JKRB Park, start the 16-mile loop ride described above and after completing Zoeller Road, turn left on Waring-Welfare Road and ride up into Waring. Continue straight on FM1621 (60 mph speed limit and part of the Boerne Triathlon route) to the IH-10 frontage road, turn right (northwest) towards Comfort. Stay right at the Chevron Station (which by the way has yummy homemade tacos) and within a tenth of a mile, turn right on FM473. Continue on FM473 towards Sisterdale for 3.5 miles and turn right on River Bend Road towards JKRB Park.



Mix and Match

Any of these routes can be mixed and matched and they all show off the fun biking and scenery in Kendall County.