The Gravelly range is one of the great riding areas in Montana and being way down on the southwest end of the state many riders have not yet experienced the great roads and scenery in this area. Gallatin members, Jay Cowan and Mike Kreikemeier, have generously volunteered to organize a gravel road ride in the Gravellys for MTBMWRiders this summer. Picking a time and place for these events is always difficult as no one place or time can accommodate everyone wishing to participate. It was concluded that July would be the best time to hold this ride in order to not compete with other months’ events, late enough in the summer to have the snow off and roads open, meadows green and full of wildflowers, and hopefully prior to a smoke season when views would be obscured.

They settled on the weekend in July of Fri 19- Sun 21. The ride would end on Sunday when we meet other members at our monthly lunch in Ennis, which also allows us to gather up and ensure that everyone has made it out of the mountains. Initially we were planning on staying at the Elk Lake Resort. However, they have not yet returned calls, and although this would have been a great site, after further consideration decided that this location, which is way at the southern end of the range, with one way in and out, would limit the ability to maximize our riding opportunities for the rest of the range. It is now felt that camping at Cottonwood Campground along the Rudy River, central to the range, would provide enhanced opportunity to experience the Gravellys. This campground is located along the main Rudy River-Centennial Divide road which is ‘Winnebago rated’ and is about 37 miles south of Alder, MT. The location also offers an opportunity for less adventurous riders to ride good gravel roads through the Ruby and to explore the Red Rock Lakes area.

This is a popular campground and, with the good road in, is perfectly suitable for those wishing to arrive in their camper or motor home. There are ten designated campsites and many overflow sites nearby. The campground has outhouses but no potable water and therefore no fees. It is my intention to trailer my bike up on Thursday and claim a site and to haul in extra fuel, water, firewood, coolers, etc. on my trailer or in my camper. I have created a form on our website that those interested in participating can complete and submit electronically so we can get a head count and contact information for future coordination and planning. Just open up the website <mtbmwriders.org>, navigate to the Events page, and scroll down to the Gravelly Ride and form button. I’m confident you can handle it from there. If you have troubles give me a call, 406-521-0468.

Jay and Mike guided me through the Gravellys last year (my first time) and I loved it. This will be a come-camp-and-ride type event…very low key. If you desire to be pampered and have all things provided, like in a guest ranch scenario, you should probably look elsewhere. But if you are looking for a fun time (and I’ve ridden with these two often and we always have a great time) click that form button and come join us. Once we have received an idea of who is interested I will then create a contact email list and we can finalize details with those participating. Let’s try to get the responses back in January (although there is no cutoff deadline for participation) so we can gauge interest and finalize plans this winter.

Thanks, Lance Lerum