



Outdoor Pursuits



TOSRV's Future

- COP Board of Directors President - Jerry Rampelt
- COP Staff / TOSRV Director – Jeff Stephens
- Questions & comments welcomed via “chat”
- office@outdoor-pursuits.org (both Jerry & Jeff)



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Tonight's Objectives

- Realistic understanding of how TOSRV performs in current bicycle tour environment.
- What are the PROBLEMS?
- TOSRV Founder & greatest historian, Greg Siple's analysis
- TOSRV Director(s) analysis
- TOSRV Participants' comments & feedback
- Next steps – Board decision
- Possible Alternatives to the “traditional” format



- Open Letter to TOSRV Fans –realistic trends & current challenges

The screenshot shows a web browser at outdoor-pursuits.org/inspiration/. The navigation menu includes 'Event Calendar', 'About Us', 'Shop', 'Donate', 'Contact us', and 'News and Updates'. The 'News and Updates' link is circled in red. Below the navigation, the page title is 'Inspiration (Including Past Newsletters!)'. The main content area features a blog post titled 'Open Letter to TOSRV Fans' by Jeff Stephens, dated October 23, 2023. The post text reads: 'This letter is intended to convey TOSRV's challenges in the current bicycle tour environment and correct misinformation that has spread about our beloved event. Ownership TOSRV has been managed by...'. A 'Continue Reading >' button is circled in red. Below the post is another article titled 'We're Hiring! - Event & Office Assistant' by Jeff Stephens, dated February 10, 2023. The text for this post reads: 'Event & Office Assistant - part time Thanks to the response and support from our donors in the Annual Appeal, we're posting a part time job to assist the Director...'. On the right side, there is a search bar and sections for 'Post Tags' (BIKING, HIKING, OUTDOORS, TRAVEL) and 'Post Categories' (Newsletters (4), Biking (2), Backpacking (1), Paddling (2), Women (1)). A red arrow points from the 'News and Updates' menu item to the 'Open Letter to TOSRV Fans' post title.

15,000+ Participant experiences! (348 TOSRV, 2.3%)
35,000 “Event Days” (~550 TOSRV, 1.5%)
TOSRV accounted for 6% of COP revenue



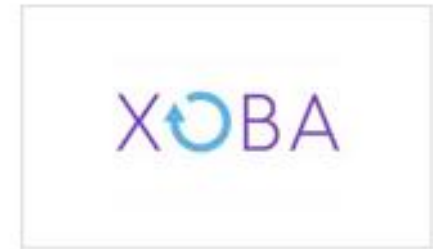
TOSRV



GOBA



OETA



XOBA



Cycling Series



Weekly Training Rides



Boating



Backpack & Hike



- Open Letter to TOSRV Fans –realistic trends & current challenges
- Steady decline for 20+ years
- Event date (Mother’s Day) & Statehouse start & Portsmouth finish
- Rider Demographics – 2023 – 67% were aged 55+
- Rider Experience – Route dangerous & uninspiring. Better choices elsewhere.
- Marketing TOSRV
- Volunteer Leadership gone
- Financial sustainability – currently subsidized by other COP activities

TOSRV Participants:

1990	– 6,456
2000	– 3,570 <45%>
2010	– 2,539 <30%>
2015	– 1,256 <51%>
2021	– 432 <65%>
2023	– 348 <20%>



14.

TOSRV: How a 1962 Father-and-Son Outing Became an American Bicycling Phenomenon

By Greg Siple, Missoula, Montana, USA

Shoulder to shoulder. Dad and I rode down our driveway in Columbus, Ohio on July 7, 1962, intent on cycling to Portsmouth, Ohio 105 miles to the south. We didn't know a single soul who would want to ride a bicycle 210 miles in two days or be capable of it. In the U.S. the bicycle was considered a toy for children, so adults simply didn't ride bicycles. What we were doing was inconceivable to the average person. Why would anyone consider doing that? When we returned home on July 8, we took each other's photo on the driveway and I recorded the trip in my journal. [Figure 1]. Our ride went unnoticed except for Mom and my two younger brothers, Bruce and Doug, who were just happy that we returned safely.



and women, young and old. What had been unbelievable became a sought-after experience. The Tour of the Scioto River Valley [TOSRV] grew steadily: from two in 1962 to four in 1963, six riders in 1964, 45 in 1966, 400 in 1968, 1,000 in 1970, 2,200 in 1972, 3,000 in 1975, 3,500 in 1980, and 4,600 in 1986. In the 1990s the ride drew 6,000 cyclists from 30 different states [Figures 3 & 4] [See TOSRV by the Numbers, Page 101]. TOSRV received a lot of attention from newspapers, including a story with two photos in the *New York Times*. The May, 1973 issue of *National Geographic* published a full-page photo of TOSRV. *Sports Illustrated* ran a photo. Riders carried the TOSRV concept home and created their own versions of mass rides. And the ride endures. TOSRV celebrated its 61st run in 2022.

Yet this quiet beginning became a spark. As the years rolled by, more cyclists emerged to take on the TOSRV challenge. These riders were not athletes, but every day people—men

These years of rapid growth preceded the era of computers and the internet. People learned about TOSRV through newspapers, bicycle magazines, and bike club newsletters from an emerg-



Figure 2. Charles Siple, circa 1938, after having discovered serious cycling.

ing national bicycle community—part of the 1970s bike boom in the U.S. TOSRV also benefited from the revival of the *League of American Wheelman* and its *National L.A.W. Bulletin*, as well as *American Cycling* magazine and its successor *Bicycling* magazine (late in 1968). Also, pivotal publicity came from *National American Youth Hostels'* council newsletters across the U.S., in particular *The Buckeye Hosteler* in Columbus, Ohio.

But TOSRV was not just a revelation to Americans. J. B. Wadley, a seasoned British cycling journalist, covered the Tour de France 21 times (starting in the 1930s) during his career, and visited North America in 1972. During his three week visit he rode a variety of events including TOSRV. In his article in the July 15, 1972 issue of *Cycling*, a British magazine, he had this to say:

So there I was at the start of this TOSRV I had heard so much about, and I was looking for Mike Barry, who had come down from Canada to take part again. 'You should try this one,' he told me on his Christmas trip home [to England] last year. 'There's nothing like it anywhere else in the world.' I couldn't find Mike, which wasn't surprising since the entry for TOSRV72 was 2,250.

During the last few years I've been thinking about how our father-and-

My thanks to Paul Robinson who presented my paper at the Indianapolis conference when I was unable to attend and to Jane J. Siple who provided a thorough and essential editing of the paper. GS



Figures 1. Greg and Charles Siple, July 8, 1962, in the driveway of their Columbus, Ohio home, where they took each others picture at the end of the first TOSRV.

- Greg Siple – Founder & Historian - Pillars of Success
- The Baby Boomers who brought their new attitudes and enthusiasm have "aged-out" with no demographic to replace them.
- The route itself is compromised by increased traffic.
- That wonderful Statehouse start/finish is no longer in the picture. Roads into Portsmouth are dangerous.
- The weather that I pointed out as being an unlikely draw no longer has an appeal, especially for older riders.
- Of course, Charlie is gone, but even when he was in charge a decline in numbers was underway. (80% decline over Charlie's last 25 years)
- The hundred mile distance no longer has the allure it had when adult cycling first emerged in the US. And older riders have already proven themselves.



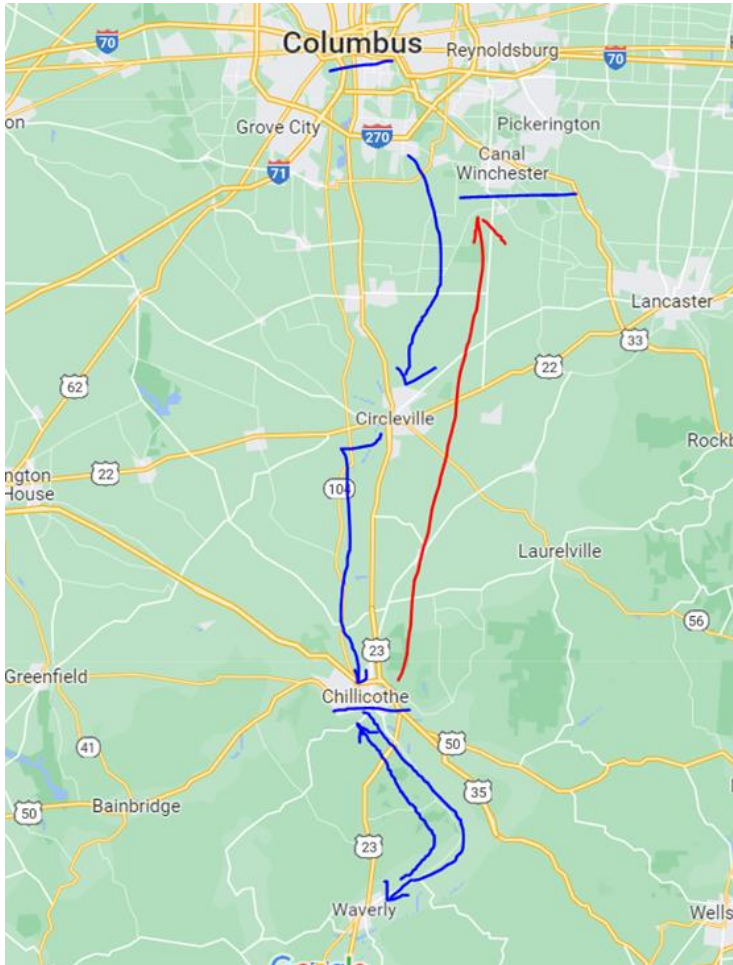
What are our choices?

- Cancel TOSRV
- Continue traditional TOSRV

- Modify TOSRV to maintain legacy & make more attractive to today's (moderate) cyclists



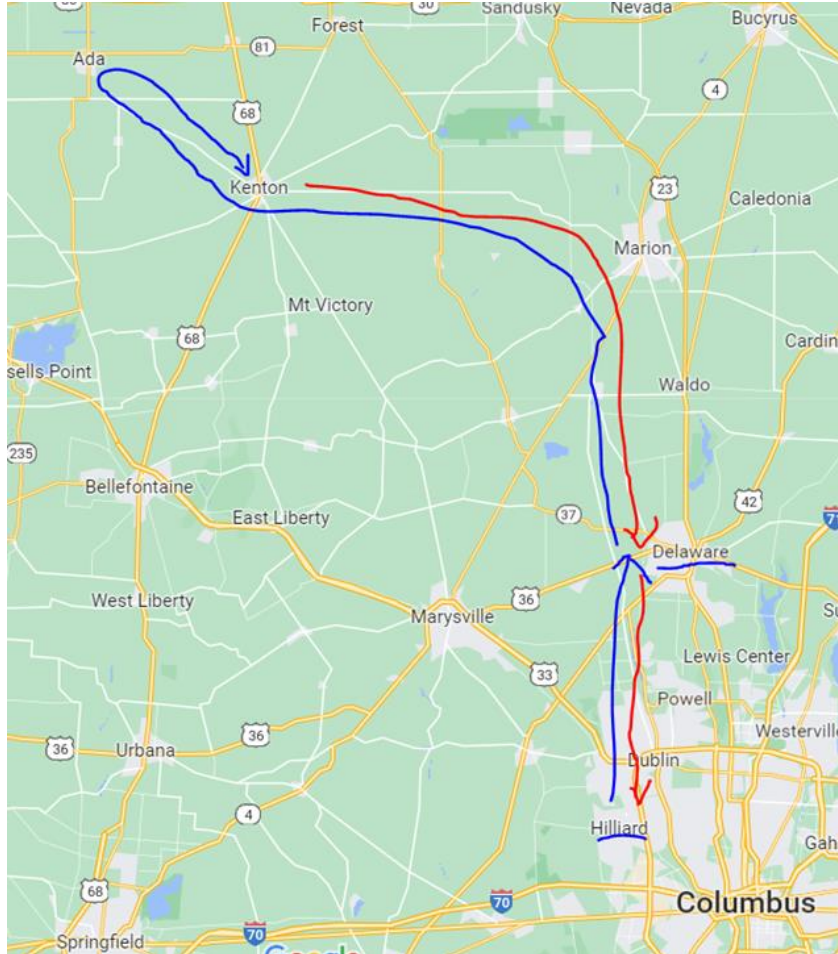
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- Variation of Traditional Format (TOSRV2.0)
- Remove most dangerous section of route to Portsmouth
- Saturday night in Chillicothe
- Still offer 1 & 2 day options
- Columbus or Chillicothe starts
- Statehouse again someday?
- Cons – still a lot of unfavorable roads



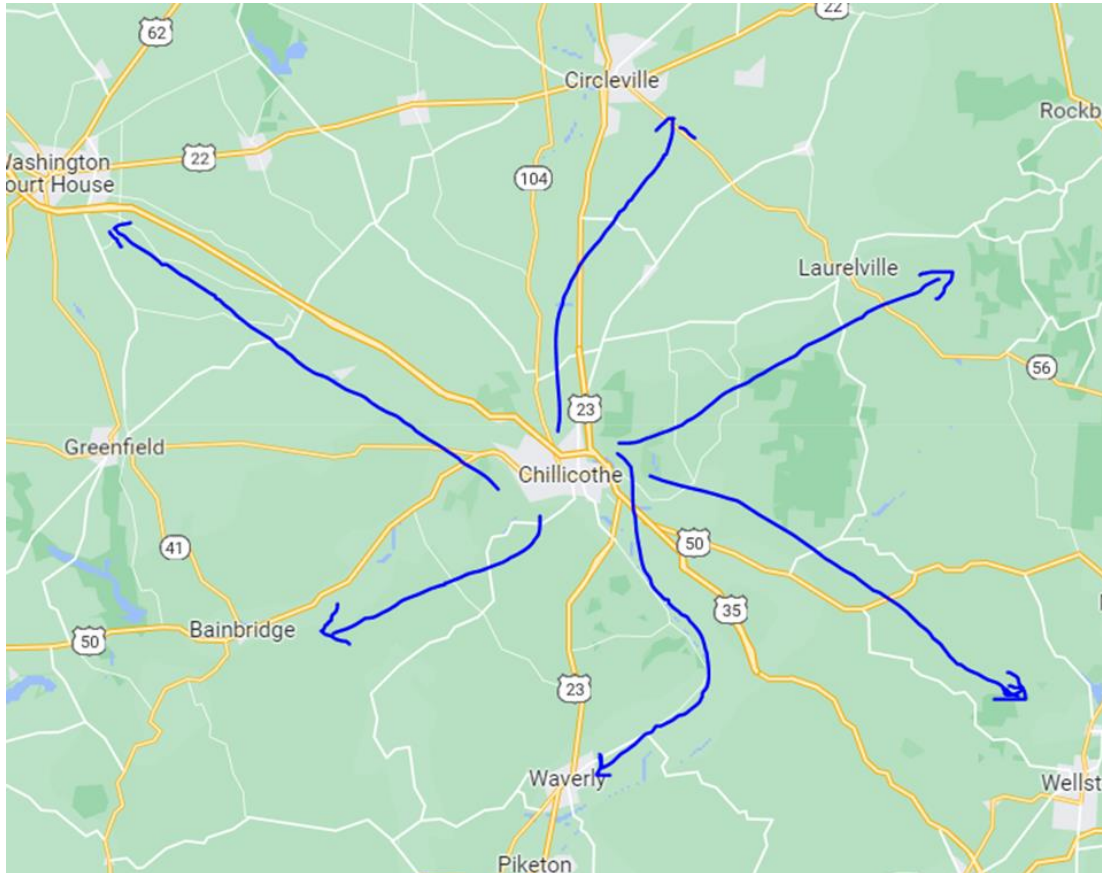
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- TOSRV NORTH
- Start in Delaware or Hilliard or Dublin
- Friendly & familiar roads through Prospect, LaRue, Kenton
- Optional loop to the headwaters of the Scioto near Ada.
- Saturday night in Kenton (fairgrounds?)
- Still offer 1 & 2 day options
- Delaware/Kenton/Delaware loop = 100 miles
- Cons – Disconnect from traditional event & region



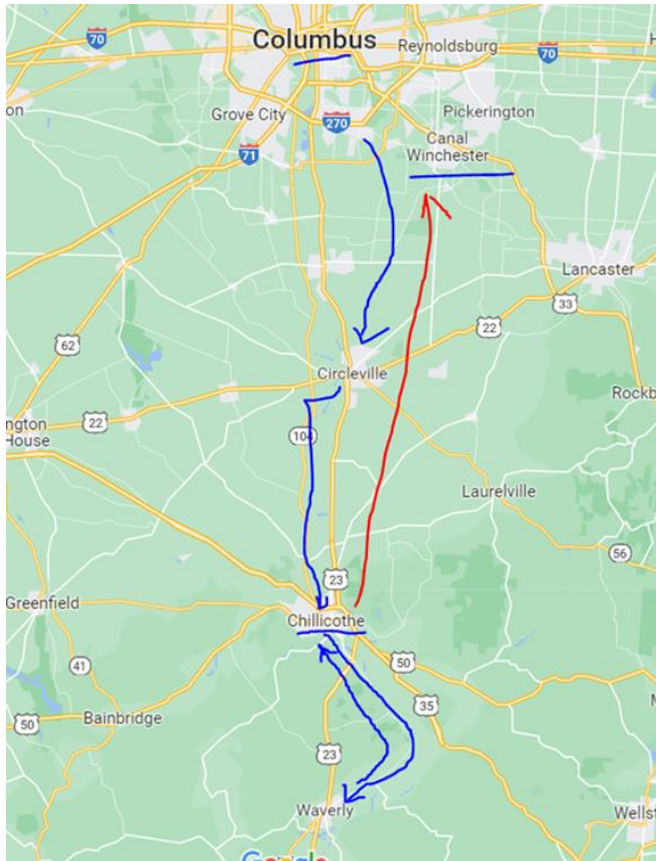
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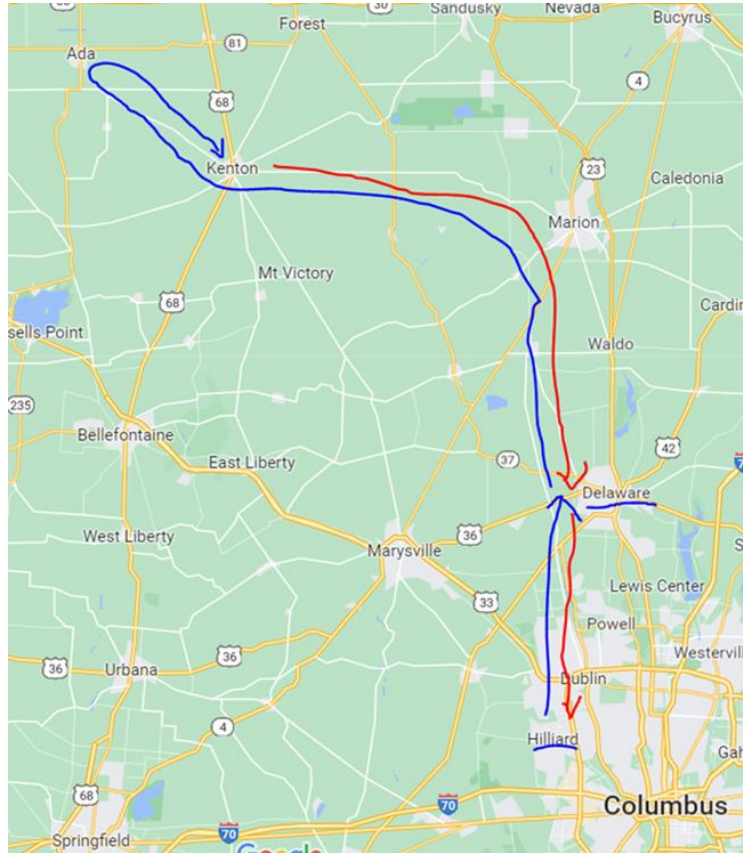
- TOSRV Festival in Chillicothe
- Numerous route options – All would be loops that return to Chillicothe
- Traditional Three Locks Road to/from Waverly
- Bike trail to Washington Court House
- Hills, hills, hills to the east & west!
- Friday & Saturday night in Chillicothe
- Possible Spring Training weekend?
- Festival add-ons? (races, gravel, etc)
- Cons - ??



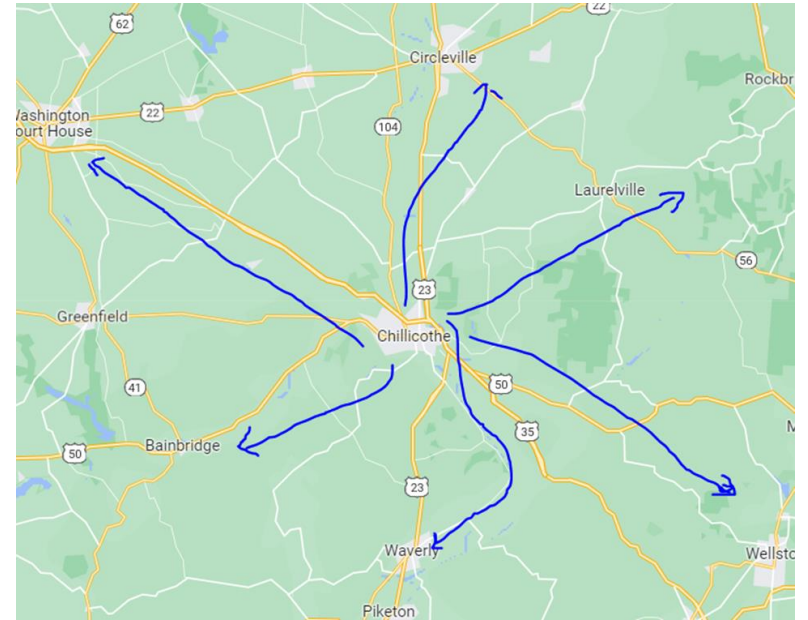
TOSRV 2.0



TOSRV North



TOSRV Festival





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TOSRV's Future – Your Help??

- Questions & comments welcomed via “chat”
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- Planning Committee ?? tosrv@outdoor-pursuits.org