



## YORK 38 SPECIAL

By Lacey Middlestead  
For the Independent Record

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**B**urgers, beer and bike riding. Could there be a more perfect combo on a hot August day?

Every summer, bicyclists converge on a dusty dirt road just behind the renowned York Bark for a scenic mountain bike ride through the Belt Mountains that tests their will and endurance. This year, the 12th Annual York 38 Special Mountain Bike Ride will be held on Saturday, Aug. 22.

The 38 Special was started in 2004 by a member of the York community as a fundraiser for the York Volunteer Fire Department. According to Rita Naylor, coordinator for the 38 Special, about 50 riders showed up that first year to strap on their helmets and brave the course. Since then, the ride has only grown in popularity and participants. In 2013, there was a total of 256 riders!

While it is called the 38 Special, the event actually consists of 3 different rides. There is the namesake 38 Special, which is 38 miles long. There is the Spirit of 76 for those riders who didn't have enough fun on their first go-round and choose to ride the 38-mile loop twice. And there is also the

Lucky 13 ride, which is 13 miles long and is geared toward youth and families.

The main 38 Special course is a grueling ride to say the least. The first eight miles include a steady two-mile climb up York Hill, a slight drop into Soup Creek, then a strenuous climb again to Eldorado Heights. This is followed by a downhill reprieve into Nelson. A long, gradual incline picks up in Nelson and works its way past Refrigerator Canyon and onto the switchbacks that lead up to Hogback Mountain to Indian

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Flats — the highest point of the ride. From that point, it's all downhill. The route descends on gravel roads until it hits a three-mile stretch of single track along trout creek. The single track follows the side of the hill before dropping riders into the Vigilante Campground. From there, they head back to York on the gravel road.

The ride typically takes about four hours but has been completed as quickly as one hour and 40 minutes and as long as six hours. Upon completing the ride, participants can refuel themselves on a famous York burger and beverage, which is included in the registration fee.

The ride's logo is a mountain goat riding a bicycle and is featured on the jerseys each participant receives. Upon finishing the grueling ride, many of the riders no doubt associate with the determined and fearless nature of the goats. But the riders aren't the only committed ones at the ride each year. There are upwards of 20 volunteers from the York community that staff six different aid stations along the ride. The stations offer EMS services, mechanical assistance, water and Gatorade and even homemade baked goods.

"The more volunteers we have, the better the ride," said Naylor.

Last year's ride, to the dismay of many, brought with it rain, wind, and chilly temperatures. Despite this, riders and volunteers alike still showed up.

"I was totally humbled by last year's ride," said Naylor. "All of the volunteers still showed up. We all froze together."

Fingers are crossed that this year's ride will be accompanied by sunshine and mild temperatures. Whether you think you and your bike are up for the challenge or are interested in volunteering, it's an event outdoor enthusiasts won't want to miss. Register for this year's ride at [york38special.org](http://york38special.org). Proceeds benefit the York Volunteer Fire Department.



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