



## Great Hudson Valley Pedal to spend 2 nights in Hyde Park, tour region

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A group of 150 bicyclists and 25 volunteers from 23 states will be riding through the area today through Thursday as part of the Great Hudson Valley Pedal, which begins in Albany today and finishes almost 200 miles away in New York City on Sunday.

"In the Hudson Valley there are so many interesting sites and interesting cultural centers," said Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks and Trails New York, the nonprofit group that organizes the annual tour.

The six-day tour includes camping in tent cities, or other accommodations if the tourists wish, and visits to popular Hudson Valley sites.

In addition to the cyclists, the group includes volunteers who help by driving follow-trucks to carry luggage, helping at rest stops and supervising the routes.

The tour also highlights the bike trails that have been created in the area.

Dropkin said the historic sites and trails in the area frequently get some of the highest

ratings from people who participate in the annual bike tour.

The tour also features five bridge crossings, which is "a very popular draw for people," Dropkin said. "We think bike tourism is a good potential tourism niche for New York State."

The tour's itinerary begins this morning after a stay in a tent city at Sage College in Albany. When they arrive in Hudson, Columbia County, tourists can visit the antique stores, ride across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, visit the Olana historic site and take a sunset cruise on the Hudson River. The Hudson tent city will be set up on the campus of Columbia-Greene Community College.

On Wednesday, the group will ride south into Dutchess County and stop to tour Rhinebeck including the Claremont Historic Site and local wineries and have lunch in the village.

The group will then ride to Regina Coeli

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School in Hyde Park that will host a tent city for two nights.

Dropkin said live music is planned for one of the evenings at Regina Coeli. Eileen Kerins, principal of Regina Coeli, did not return phone calls by press time.

The two nights are needed "because there is so much to do," Dropkin said.

The "vast majority" of participants want to see the three Roosevelt-era historic sites in Hyde Park, she said.

On Thursday, cyclists will tour the Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt and Vanderbilt national historic sites and the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park and the Samuel Morse house, Locust Grove, in Poughkeepsie.

The Walkway over the Hudson in Poughkeepsie will be a central part of this leg of the tour as the only bridge over the Hudson River that is free of motorized traffic and allows full access to walkers and bicyclists.

Touring cyclists will have an opportunity to cross the walkway on an optional 53-mile loop trip to New Paltz.

The group will cross the walkway again on Friday to continue the tour at the Mill House in Orange County, then back across the Newburg-Beacon Bridge to Cold Spring and Garrison for a tour of Boscobel House and Gardens.

The tent city will be set up at St. Basil

Academy in Garrison, Putnam County.

The tour continues Saturday with a tour of West Point Military Academy.

Cyclists will spend the final night in a tent city in Nyack Beach State Park, Rockland County.

On Sunday, the tour will cross the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan, then bike the Hudson River Trail on the west side to end in Battery Park.

"We try to give people a variety of experiences," Dropkin said. "People really love the Hudson Valley because there is so much variety, including farm country, mountains and history. There are very few places in the country where there is so much history in a small place."

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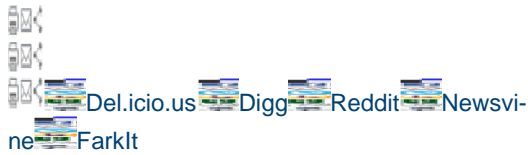
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