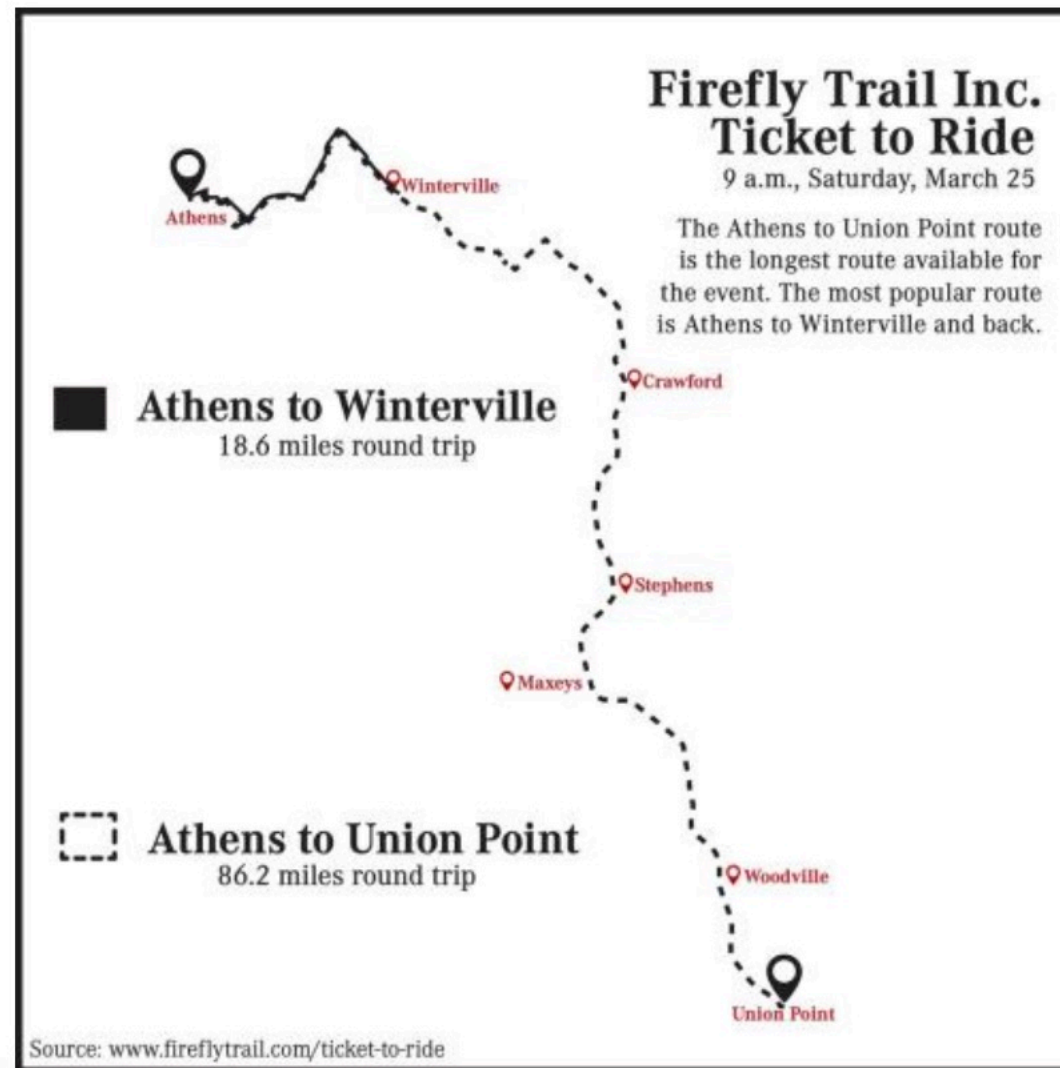


Get ready to ride: Firefly Trail Inc. hosts annual Ticket to Ride event

By Olivia Shapiro and Molly Linder on Wednesday, March 22, 2023

The Firefly Committee is looking for volunteers to assist at several rest and refreshment stations. A sign up link is at fireflytrail.com/ticket-to-ride.



Seasoned cyclists and folks looking for an outdoor activity are welcome at the annual Ticket to Ride event this Saturday.

The event is a fundraiser for the Firefly Trail, a proposed 39-mile multipurpose trail through Oglethorpe County that would connect Athens with Union Point.

“We hope it will attract diverse types of populations and uses, not just for recreational cycling, but also for actual alternative transportation, commuting to jobs,” said John Kissane, trail coordinator. “There's already some of that here in Clarke County. People are getting on the trail to bike to work, actually.”

Last year's Ticket to Ride event drew around 200 riders.

“Although it was an extremely windy day, and that made the riding pretty difficult for those who came out, we still had about 200 participants, which was pretty good,” Kissane said.

The Ticket to Ride will be 86.2 miles round trip from Athens to Union Point. There are also shorter, less leg-burning routes available.

Many people ride from Athens to Winterville and back, which is about 18.6 miles, Kissane said. The three starting points are Creature Comforts Brewery in Athens, Winterville Depot in Winterville and Union Theatre in Union Point.

Dr. Chris Doerr and his wife Stephanie, owners of Athens Physical Therapy, are avid cyclists. Their business returns as the presenting sponsor.

“All our vacations have been spent going and riding rail trails in other states, and we've been in 38 states so far,” Doerr said. “This 39-mile trail and round trip (are) almost 80 miles. I just see that as being a recreational driver.”

Registration is \$35 for individuals and \$70 for families, and all proceeds go toward the development and maintenance of the Firefly Trail.

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The on-road ride takes place on the lowest-traffic paved roads organizers could find, according to the Firefly Trail [website](http://fireflytrail.com) (fireflytrail.com). A rider's guide with GPS routes are also available on the website.

“Really, the primary purpose is just getting people excited about Firefly Trail and kind of envisioning the day when this whole 39-mile corridor is an off-road and safe rail trail,” Kissane said.