

# Springtime Riding in the Palouse

by Lee Gillie

It is springtime! Where are we going to ride? Longtime riders in the Spokane area will tell you to "Head south!" Why is that? Statistically, the temperature is going to be warmer. And it is generally safer as well. The roads in the gently rolling Palouse area will be the first to be clear of dreaded residual winter traction sand and gravel. For one, it is not used as heavily, and secondly it is typically not being applied as late in this area. Yet some northern routes can be two to six weeks behind this. With traction sand, appearances can be deceiving, and even highly experienced riders can be fooled, and go down. So this is worthy of consideration and caution when riding anywhere this time of year.



What is there to see in the Palouse? It is really far from boring. There are actually many great options available. One we always enjoy is through the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, which is located just south of Cheney. 2,300 acres of the 15,628 total acres in the refuge are designated for public use. During March through October there is an entrance fee of \$3. There is a 5-mile auto tour route which is open year round. Public restrooms are available.

From here there are a variety of directions one can take to head further south through places like St John, Endicott, Dusty, and so on. You should be warned that there are no attended gas stations available on Sundays through this area. So bring your credit card! Also, it is recommended that you get a current Whitman County Map. Our experience is that the Washington State Highway map is ambiguous and incomplete in this area. Central Ferry State Park on the Snake River is great destination for a day trip from Spokane.

We like to stop at Colfax on our return, as we make our way back, the quick way on 195. Colfax has a number of options for meals, and all the services.

Bundle up, be warm, be safe, and enjoy the riding opportunities the Palouse has to offer in the spring.