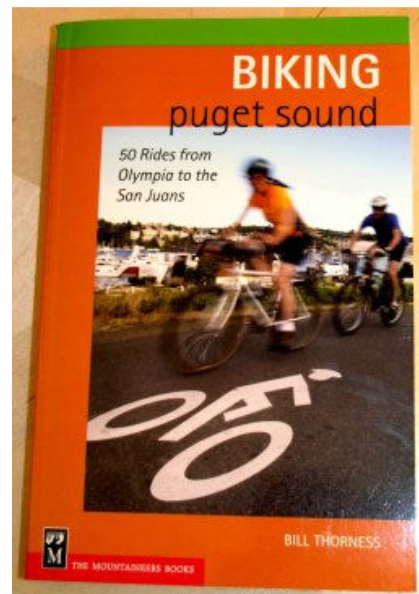


Bicycling Puget Sound Book Review

If I could take only one book along when cycling in the Puget Sound area, it would be *Biking Puget Sound – 50 rides from Olympia to the San Juans* by Bill Thorness. Most of the routes in the book are within an hour's drive of Seattle. Thorness did his "homework" when it comes to the routes. He notes where public restrooms are – a key issue for those on human-powered vehicles! At the front of the book, he has a handy chart of the 50 rides at a glance, detailing length, difficulty, elevation gain, average time to complete each ride and points of interest. He provides a good mix of rides between urban, suburban and rural.

My wife and I have used the book for rides from as far south as Tenino and as far north as Bellingham. The book was particularly useful when we toured Whidbey and the San Juan Islands. We went in mid-October. On days that precipitation was forecast, we paid extra attention to route alternatives in case we desired to find shelter.

While we have toured for years, I was pleased that Thorness was thorough in his explanation to newbies about gear/safety preparation – depending on length of a particular ride. For grizzled veterans, the information serves as a good review. Thorness reminds readers that helmets are a key safety element and in cities like Seattle, it's the law – for all riders. He cautions cyclists about potholes, railroad tracks, rain, oil, dogs and deer. He is accurate. Several deer lurked alongside the road when we pedaled to our bed and breakfast one evening on San Juan Island – after dark. We had sufficient illumination to spot the potential hazard. Thorness divided his information into equipping yourself, your bike plus checking with your local bike shop before departure. He also covered traffic laws (including lighting requirements) plus how to utilize buses and ferries.



I commend Thorness for discussing what routes are suitable for children – depending on their age/experience. Thorness, along with Trudy Bell (author of *Bicycling with Children*), emphasize that a child's first bicycle is not a toy but a child's "first vehicle" and that children should be taught the rules of the road – from hand signals to making visibility a priority.

Thorness gives history about the routes. He notes that the Burke-Gilman Trail was a train track more than a century ago. The paved path allows cyclists to pedal away from traffic from the north side of Seattle to the town of Bothell. The Green Lake Trail has separate lanes for walkers/bikers which makes it a good trail to take children to. Nearby eateries also add to the experience.

A number of parks are highlighted in the book. One of my favorites is Warren G. Magnuson Park along the Burke-Gilman Trail. During the Tour de France, the Cascade Cycling Club shows a tour stage on an inflatable screen while hundreds of bikers sit on a grassy knoll. Thorness also discusses Discovery Park – an expansive area that one can bike to and then hike or pedal out to the West Point Lighthouse.

The book helps cyclists find paved paths that are not always visible from the roadway. For instance, the Interurban Trail is about a half-mile east of roadways 167 and 181, the main roads north of Sumner, which is south of Seattle. The Interurban continues a few miles north of Tukwila. Another section of the Interurban can be found north of Seattle heading towards Edmonds. In rural Washington, another paved 14-mile path gives riders an option from Tenino to Yelm.