

Big Sugar Classic Bike Race October 18, 2025

The October 18, 2025, Big Sugar Classic biking race was scheduled to be composed of a fifty-mile and a one-hundred-mile race.

Big Sugar Classic fifty-mile course and one-hundred-mile course both were to begin on the “square” in Bentonville Arkansas, travel into McDonald County Missouri, and predominantly travel across McDonald County, Missouri roadways before exiting the County and State returning back into Benton County, Arkansas. The fifty-mile course route had a small section where it entered into Barry County, Missouri and then quickly traveled into McDonald County.

The October 18, 2025, Big Sugar Creek Classic Bike Race had a total of approximately 2,000 cyclists that traveled on McDonald County roadways.

In the past bike race events within McDonald County, citizens along the race routes voiced concerns and encountered issues with the cyclists participating in the event. Due to these issues, the McDonald County Commission passed and adopted “Special Events Permit Ordinance 2025-003” (see attached Ordinance No. 2025-003) on August 25th, 2025. The purpose of this Ordinance was to ensure the safety of the public and participants during organized outdoor non-motorized events occurring within McDonald County, Missouri. This Ordinance also required a Special Event Permit Application to be completed and approved for any Special Event’s taking place in McDonald County (see attached Special Event Permit Application).

The coordinators of the Big Sugar Classic Bike Race scheduled for October 18, 2025, completed the required Special Event Permit Application and their event was approved with the guidelines set and established in the Special Events Permit Ordinance 2025-003.

The Special Events Permit Ordinance 2025-003 required that Event Coordinators agreed to pay Law Enforcement assisting with the Special Event \$75 an hour. The McDonald County Sheriff’s Office arranged 6 Deputies to assist with the bike race. Deputies that assisted with the Big Sugar Classic Bike Race on October 18, 2025, were as follows:

- Capt. Christopher Allison
- Deputy Travis Sheppard
- Deputy Justin Shepherd
- Deputy John Langert
- Deputy Michael Miller
- Reserve Deputy Camille Graves

Big Sugar Creek Classic organizers also contacted Missouri State Highway Patrol to get assistance with the October 18, 2025, event. Missouri State Highway Patrol assigned two troopers to assist.

Change to Bike Race Route Due to Weather

On the morning of October 18, 2025, I was in contact with Big Sugar Classic Bike Race coordinator Sean Thurman and Sean advised me that due to the threat of severe thunder storms and lighting in the area, they had made the decision to not to have the cyclists race the 100-mile race route due to safety

concerns for the race participants and staff. Sean advised that they had made the decision to allow all 2,000 cyclists to race the 50-mile race route that started on the Bentonville Arkansas square, traveling the roadways and entering Missouri in Barry County. The cyclists would travel a small section of roadways in Barry County and enter the Southeast portion of McDonald County. The cyclists would travel roadways in the Southeast portion of McDonald County (see attached race route map) and exit McDonald County back into Benton County Arkansas where the cyclists would travel to the race's end location in Pea Ridge, Arkansas. Due to the change of race route I had to coordinate with the 6 Deputies assisted to the Special Event Detail and make changes to their duties and tasks for the duration of the race. Changes were made and the McDonald County Deputies traveled to their newly assigned locations.

Law Enforcement Actions relating to the 2025 Big Sugar Classic Bike Race

- Incident #1: 0817 hours Reserve Deputy Graves received call for service at Fletcher Ridge Rd. and Whistling Springs Ln. in reference to persons parking on the shoulder and the middle of the roadway, causing an intense traffic backup with the large number of cyclists entering the same intersection at the time of the call. Due to the route change, the much larger number cyclist entered this intersection at this time. Deputy Graves and Deputy Langert responded and were able to resolve the issue in a timely manner and keep the flow of traffic as it should be even with the large number of cyclists traveling through the intersection.
- Incident #2: 0849 hours Capt. Chris Allison received call for service at 188 Tredwell Rd. in reference to a helicopter flying very low scaring the reporting party's livestock. The reporting party was concerned her livestock would be pushed through the fence. I contacted race coordinator Sean Thurman and advised him of the complaint. I was also contacted by Sheriff Robert Evenson who advised he had also contacted Sean Thurman to advise him of the complaint about the low flying helicopter. Sean Thurman very quickly addressed the situation and the helicopter left the area. I contacted the reporting party and she advised the helicopter had left briefly after she had called to make the report. The reporting party expressed to me she was very frustrated that her live stock was disturbed by the helicopter and that she would be contacting the McDonald County Commission on Monday to express her concerns.
- Incident #3: 0905hours Deputies received call for service in reference to traffic violation complaint on Fletcher Ridge Rd. near Whistling Springs Ln. Reporting Party advised there were two motorcycles stopping regular vehicle traffic and allowing the cyclists to continue to travel when they should have been yielding the right of way to vehicles that were being stopped. The reporting party advised he wanted to speak to a Deputy because he was confused why the motorcycles were being allowed to stop traffic. Deputy John Langert contacted the two motorcyclists blocking the roadway. The motorcyclists stated they were with a film crew getting video footage of the race. Deputy Langert advised the motorcyclist they could not block traffic. The two motorcyclists became slightly argumentative with Deputy Langert and Deputy Langert instructed them to not block traffic any further. After Deputy Langert's instruction, the two motorcyclists unblocked the roadway and left the area. I, Capt. Allison, contacted the reporting party and advised him Deputies contacted the motorcyclists and they were no longer blocking traffic.

- Incident #4: 1010hours Deputy Travis Sheppard and Deputy Langert responded to Whistling Springs Ln. near the Brewery in reference to a cyclist that had crashed and was injured. Deputy Sheppard located the cyclists and provided basic first aid while waiting for Pea Ridge Ambulance Service to arrive. The cyclists was transported by Pea Ridge Ambulance Service to a hospital in Northwest Arkansas to be treated for their injuries.

No other incidents related to the 2025 Sugar Creek Classic Bike Race. Only one cyclist injury was reported. All other cyclist entered McDonald County, traveled the designated roadways, and exited McDonald County Missouri into Benton County Arkansas.

Conclusion

In my option, the 2025 Big Sugar Creek Classic Bike Race event was successful with very few incidents / problems. I believe this was due to the race organizers having great communication with County Officials as well as the organizers adhering to the rules and guidelines set by the Special Events Permit Ordinance 2025-003. It appeared also this year the race organizers considered the past issues with bike race events and made the effort to better planned, organize, and prepare. Even with the stress of changing the bike race route for all 2,000 cyclists less than an hour prior to starting due to the weather, the 2025 Big Sugar Creek Classic Bike Race seemed to be smooth, less troubled, and uncomplicated as previous bike races.

With everything said, organizers should still consider the incidents that occurred with this years Big Sugar Creek Classic Bike Race and continue to make improvement for future events within McDonald County, Missouri.

Respectfully,



Captain Christopher Allison

McDonald County Sheriff s Office



October 18, 2025

Big Sugar Creek Bike Race

Race will start on Bentonville Square @ 0725hours.

6 McDonald County Deputies & 4 MSHP Troopers assisting.

Two Race Routes Through McDonald County

- 100 Mile
 - Enters McDonald County on Deer Creek Rd. Noel area and travels east across the county via primarily county roadways.
 - Exits the county on White Oak Rd.
 - 900 total bikes
 - Estimated time of arrival for Bike to enter McDonald County is 0825hrs.
 - 2 Check Points
 - #1 Pineville Square
 - #2 Rockford Grange (Compound at E State Highway 90 and Route KK)
 - Stella Fire Department will be sit up @ Pinelog Rd. and Horton Rd. providing water and medical if needed.
- 50 Mile
 - Enters County on Jacket Rd. @ estimated time
 - Travels to Whistling Springs. Check Point for water & medical.
 - After Check point travels Mountain Rd. to White Oak rd.
 - Exits same as 100 mile route on White Oak Rd.

Our Tasks

- They have asked us to help with traffic at two locations:
 - W State Highway 90 and Goodin Hollow Rd. One Deputy will sit with lights active at intersection as a warning for traffic along W State Highway 90 as bikers cross the roadway from Upper Mill Creek Rd. to Goodin Hollow Rd. We will not stop vehicle traffic on 90 Highway. Bikers must obey Missouri state laws, stop at the stop sign, and yield to oncoming traffic.
 - Route KK and Mountain Rd. One Deputy will sit with lights active at intersection as a warning for traffic along Route KK as bikers travel off Mountain Rd. onto Route KK. We will not stop vehicle traffic on Route KK. Bikers must obey Missouri state laws, stop at the stop sign, and yield to oncoming traffic.
- Ensure the road ways are not blocked. In the past, spectators, families, and helpers would park along the roadways, blocking main traffic from traveling. They have been warned not to do this. Event planners have parking areas for this that is not on the roadway.
- Ensure bikers obeyed by Missouri State Laws.
- Respond to calls pertaining to cyclist.
- Respond to medical calls pertaining to cyclist.
- Address past concerns with the races:
 - Roadway blockage
 - Public Urination
 - Littering
 - Safety of the riders upon the curvy roadways

There is another event scheduled for Saturday in the Powell area: Utility Vehicle Color Run to benefit Stella Fire Department. UTV's, ATV's, and off road vehicles driving county roads. Starts 1030 (unknown routes or times).

There is QR Code posted at the State Line as the bikers enter Missouri that they can scan to get the Missouri State Laws pertaining to Bicycling on the roadways.

Possible problem areas:

- Goodin Hollow Rd. Female called event coordinator and told him they were having a cattle drive at the time the bikers would be coming thru. Last year, this same person supposedly dumped large amount of manure across Goodin Hollow that the bikers had to ride through.
- Creek Side Rd. Karla Jones is very vocal and unhappy about the bike race. Years past the riders went past her home. This year they rerouted around her house to try and appease her. However, few days ago she went to social media and posted that she was blocked in her home now from both directions and could not leave. She also messaged our Presiding Commissioner and told him that she is "pinned in", can not leave her house, and "may they piss in your yard".
- Whistling Springs area. Resident there, Doug Fletcher, has been very vocal about his unhappiness over the bike race. He calls the Commissioners repeatably complaining as well as post on social media.

