

## NEW BIKE TOUR BIZ GETS YOU OFF THE BEATEN PATH

# A Two-Wheeled Tour

New company hopes get tourists and locals pedaling through Fort Collins' streets and trails

*By Andra Coberly of the Fort Collins Weekly*

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“What would you do if you knew you could not fail?”

Joe Bagley's girlfriend posed that question to him one night not long ago. The answer seemed obvious given his history, his talent and his love.

Bagley grew up in Colorado and has lived in Fort Collins since he was 12. He's been in the saddle of a mountain bike since the first moment he saw one. He now spends hours a day riding, training for vicious 24-hour ultra-marathons and 50-mile races.

That's how New World Sports came to be. Bagley and his girlfriend Lisa Peterson have created a business that serves as a school for wannabe mountain bikers, a sightseeing opportunity for tourists and an adventure in nature for anyone with two feet.

“Basically, our mission statement is to provide the community and visitors a safe and affordable resource for adventure and mountain biking education,” he says.

With New World Sports, the couple will offer instruction and skills courses for beginner and intermediate mountain bikers. They will also rent out bikes and offer about-town trips to local hot spots, breweries and cafes and along the paved paths in and around town. It's an opportunity, Bagley says, to drive tourism utilizing the thriving bicycling community and paths that Fort Collins has cultivated over the years.

“Well, in last 22 years I've seen the cycling community just grow immensely. I've seen the trails expand, the awareness grow, the number of festivals increase,” he says. “I can see people coming to Fort Collins just to ride their bikes. I can see residents continuing to take part in the biking activities.”

Beyond the city's paths, Bagley says that many of the trails that wind through the mountains outside of town are underutilized. While training for his races, Bagley has discovered a new world on his bike, one that many people have yet to see.

Taking on the role as pathfinder, Bagley will take bikers on personal guided mountain biking tours through some of the area's expansive but rarely seen single-track trails.

“I don't want to just tell the world about these trails. They are my own little playgrounds. So, I'm really excited about taking them on private tours that they will not see any other time,” he says. “They get out there and see real wilderness. You go out on these trails and you won't see anyone else. You will see deer and wild turkeys and view homesteads and all this Colorado history.”

With more than 300 miles of mountain biking trails within a 20-mile radius of Fort Collins, Bagley says potential abound for seeing the great outdoors of Northern Colorado. And where an average person will



Lisa Peterson and Joe Bagley want you to hit the road.

take a five-mile hike on the near-by paths, a mountain biker can cover 20 miles during a one-day ride.

Despite the potential for beautiful scenery and incredible exercise, it's an experience that some people shy away from, he says.

"I think most people view (mountain biking) as an extreme sport," he says. "But it doesn't need to be that way. It's not nearly as threatening as what you see in extreme-sports videos. And if it's done right with the same precautions, it's no more dangerous than walking briskly on a trail."

For those who might not like the idea of climbing a mountain atop two wheels, New World Sports also offers hiking tours and off-road vehicle tours.

But Bagley, with mountain biking close to his heart, hopes to teach locals and tourists alike that the sport is not something to fear. His classes include lessons on safety, technique and preparation.

With courses for kids, teens and adults, he says that biking is a life-long skill that encourages activity and healthfulness.

"You go to a bike race and half the people in the race are over 30 years old," he says. "Lance Armstrong was in his mid 30s when he won his last tour. I can see this helping tourism in the big picture but also helping residents develop some healthy habits for the rest of their life."

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