



**Building our trail. Connecting our communities.**

[www.fireflytrail.com](http://www.fireflytrail.com)

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## Road, gravel options, 12 miles of trail highlight Athens Physical Therapy Firefly Trail Ticket to Ride March 28

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Athens Physical Therapy Firefly Trail Ticket to Ride cycling event will roll out of Athens, Winterville and Union Point on March 28 to celebrate the 12 miles of trail already open and raise funds and support to complete the remaining 27 miles of the 39-mile rail-trail.

The cycling fun begins Saturday, March 28, with cyclists starting at 9 a.m. in Union Point and 10 a.m. in Athens and Winterville. Riders can choose a fully paved route using roads and portions of the Firefly Trail out of all three starting locations, or pick trail-and-gravel options out of Union Point. E-bikes are welcome.

The Athens Physical Therapy Firefly Trail Ticket to Ride is unique because the out-and-back route allows cyclists to tailor their ride to fit their fitness and goals, from riding a few miles on the trail to completing the full 82 miles on the trail and connecting roads. Riders can choose their distance by simply turning around at a designated rest stop or whenever they wish. Gravel riders can choose between a 27-mile loop from Union Point to Maxeys and back or a 66-mile loop to Crawford and back.

“We are passionate about the Firefly Trail because of the enormous health and economic benefits it will provide to our whole region,” said Dr. Chris Doerr, a physician and owner of Athens Physical Therapy. “My wife, Stephanie, and I love to ride rail-trails when we travel. We hope our involvement sparks even more support and helps speed construction of this trail to serve the communities we love and call home.”

### **New: Trailblazer 5K and Fun Run**

New this year is the inaugural Trailblazer 5K and Fun Run, presented by Piedmont Athens Regional. The runs start and end at Dudley Park in Athens and take place entirely on the Firefly Trail before the bike ride begins. All ages and abilities are welcome, with the 5K starting at 8 a.m. and the Fun Run starting at 9 a.m. Entry is \$30 for the 5K; the fun run is free for kids 12 and under and adults running with them. Day-of registration opens at 7 a.m.

The location and timing is ideal for runners, walkers and families, as well as for athletes who would like to turn the ride into a duathlon. For information and registration, visit

<https://runsignup.com/Race/GA/Athens/TrailblazerRunWalk5K>. The certified 5K course is a Peachtree qualifier. All run proceeds benefit youth programs at Aaron Heard Park/East Athens Community Center.

### **Food trucks, discounts and a free pour**

In Athens, the Café Racer food truck will be at Dudley Park from before the Trailblazer 5K begins until after all the cyclists have rolled out. In addition, participants who show their wristbands or bib numbers at the new Café Racer location adjacent to the Firefly Trail at Oak Street and Inglewood Avenue will receive a discount on food and drinks. The new location opens March 17.

Participants 21 and over can also show their wristband or bib number at Authentic Brewery at 108 Park Ave., Athens, for a free pour.

In Union Point, food trucks will be on-site downtown from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### **Ride details**

All riders in the non-competitive Ticket to Ride are treated to beautiful countryside, friendly towns, and fully paved roads and trails (unless they want to do one of the gravel routes). Rest stops with snacks, beverages and restrooms will be available every 8-15 miles, with on-road vehicle support, too. Day-of check-in and registration will open at 7 a.m. in Union Point and at 8 a.m. in Athens and Winterville. The course will remain open until 5 p.m. or the last rider finishes, whichever comes first.

In Athens, riders will start in Dudley Park at the Trail Flowers art installation and the Firefly Bridge over Trail Creek. Free parking will be available in the Chicopee/Greenway parking area off East Broad Street.

In Winterville, riders will start on the trail at the historic Winterville Depot. Free parking will be available behind the Depot, in the nearby Pittard Park overflow lot and at the Winterville Cultural Center.

In Union Point, road and gravel riders will roll out from the Union Pharmacy, 624 Sibley Ave., and will enjoy food trucks between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Free parking will be available downtown.

Pre-registration is now open at <https://www.bikereg.com/firefly-trail-ticket-to-ride>. Entry is \$55 for adults, \$35 for students through 11 p.m. March 20. After that, registration increases \$5. Team rates (5-12 members) are available. Day-of registration will open at 8 a.m. in Union Point, 9 a.m. in Athens and Winterville. Riders can also pre-register in person at Georgia Cycle Sport on Baxter Street in Athens. Riders will receive a 4-pack of ceramic coasters while supplies last.

Volunteers are needed and will receive coasters as a token of appreciation. Please email [fireflytrail@gmail.com](mailto:fireflytrail@gmail.com) for information or go to <https://www.fireflytrail.com/ticket-to-ride.html> And click on the “Volunteer” tab to sign up.

All ride proceeds benefit the work of Firefly Trail Inc., a 501(c) non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the completion of the flat, car-free multipurpose Firefly Trail.

When complete, the trail will connect Greene, Oglethorpe and Athens-Clarke counties as well as the towns of Athens, Winterville, Crawford, Stephens, Maxeys, Woodville and Union Point. The trail will be built on or close to the historic route of the Georgia Railroad Athens Branch, with the exact route determined by local communities.

For full details, please visit [www.fireflytrail.com](http://www.fireflytrail.com).

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Riders gather in Athens for the start of a past Firefly Trail Ticket to Ride. This year, riders who start in Athens will begin and end their ride at Dudley Park. The Café Racer food truck will be onsite for runners, walkers and cyclists from about 7 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.



Riders in a past Firefly Trail Ticket to Ride prepare to start from the Winterville Depot on the Firefly Trail. Winterville will again host a start/finish point and SAG stop adjacent to the Depot.



Crawford hosts a rest stop at the Lena Wise Community Center on Church Street. Crawford is a great out-and-back option for road riders starting in Athens, Winterville or Union Point who want a shorter ride. It's also the turn-around point for those doing the 68-mile gravel option out of Union Point.



Maxeys hosts a busy rest stop on the Firefly Trail just south of the historic Maxeys train depot. This year's ride will again feature the completed 1.4-mile section of the Firefly Trail in Maxeys. This stop also serves both gravel options.



Riders pedal into downtown Union Point during a past Ticket to Ride event. This year, Union Point will host its start, finish and SAG location at Union Pharmacy, 624 Sibley Ave., including food trucks from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.