



Santa Fe Trail Tour

70-mile loop tour

Start/Finish: 1111 Main St.

September 4, 2021 • Great Bend, KS

Day 1: Santa Fe Trail BAK Bicycle Rally

Mileage Cues

Great Bend to Pawnee Rock: 14

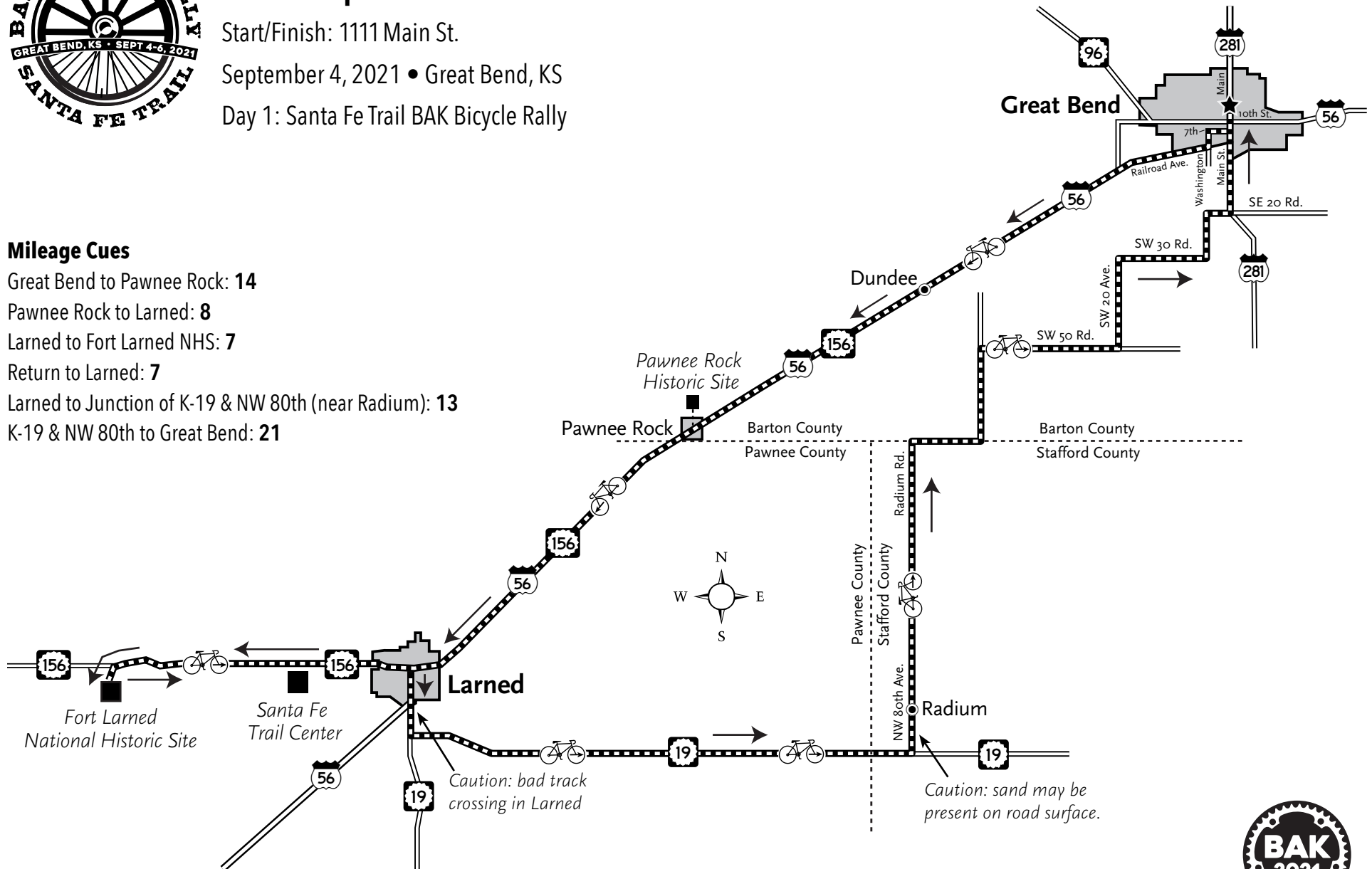
Pawnee Rock to Larned: 8

Larned to Fort Larned NHS: 7

Return to Larned: 7

Larned to Junction of K-19 & NW 80th (near Radium): 13

K-19 & NW 80th to Great Bend: 21



Saturday, September 4

Route Notes: Santa Fe Trail Tour

Route Map: <https://bit.ly/3zQ8jEz>

Barton County: pop. 25,779, Named for Clara Barton, it is the only county named in Kansas for a woman. The county was organized on May 16, 1872.

Great Bend: pop. 15,358. Named for its location at the "great bend" of the Arkansas River. It was incorporated around 1872 when the AT&SF Railways came through and after the Santa Fe Trail closed in this area. It was a shipping hub for cattle and the town grew into a rowdy cow town for a while.

Santa Fe Trail and Great Bend: On US 56 headed east into Great Bend, a DAR marker can be seen on the south side of the road, next to evergreen trees and adjacent to a motel. At the courthouse in Great Bend, a DAR marker is on the west side of the building.

Dundee: Unincorporated. Dundee was a shipping point and had a station along the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway.

Pawnee Rock: pop. 310. Founded in 1874.

Pawnee Rock State Historic Site (NRHP): Located One-half mile north of US 56, 631 Centre St in the town of Pawnee Rock. This is the most famous natural landmark along the Santa Fe Trail. Native Americans used the Rock as an observation point to look for buffalo as well as the wagons coming along the Santa Fe Trail. Some believed this spot to be the most dangerous along the Trail, while other travelers saw the rock as a welcomed sight as it was the halfway point on the Trail.

Pawnee Rock State Historical Marker and roadside park: Located on the western edge of the community of Pawnee Rock. CAUTION: Traveling towards Larned this is on the left (east) side of the road.

Pawnee County: pop. 6,629. Established in 1872, it was named for the Pawnee Indians.

Larned: pop. 3,813 (county seat). The city was built on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad at the confluence of the Pawnee and the Arkansas Rivers. It shares its name with the nearby Fort Larned and was laid out in 1873.

Fort Larned (NRHP): 6 miles W of Larned on K- 156. Part of the Dry Route of the Santa Fe Trail and built in 1859 three miles east of its current location, the fort was originally named "Camp Alert." Troops stationed there guarded the Santa Fe Trail and took part in many campaigns against the plains tribes. In 1860, the camp was moved and named Fort Larned after Col. Benjamin F. Larned. There it then served as an agency of the Indian Bureau, and distributed amenities, food, clothing, etc. to the Cheyenne, Apaches, Kiowas, and Comanches tribes. The Fort operated until 1878.

Santa Fe Trail Center Museum & Research Library.

Three miles west of Larned on K-156. Collections contain over 35,000 historical, archival, and archaeological artifacts related to the Santa Fe Trail era, early Pawnee County, and settlement in the early 1900s.

Radium: pop. 20. Originally named Wellsville in honor of the Wells family in 1904. When the Union Pacific Railroad came through in 1909, the name had to be changed since there was another town by that name on the line. The name Radium was chosen because it had just been discovered.

Great Bend and Barton County Historical Notes

Barton County on the Santa Fe Trail:

Walnut Creek Crossing: 2 miles east of Great Bend and south of US 56. In 1855, William Allison and Francis Boothe established a trading post along the Arkansas River and became known as Walnut Creek Crossing, an important milestone on the Santa Fe Trail. Wagons would often be forced to stop and set up camp along the river banks to wait out flooding. A toll bridge over Walnut Creek was established here in 1859-1860.

Fort Zarah: North of US 56, just east of Great Bend in a roadside park. Before the post was abandoned in 1869, its large stone building served as quarters for officers and troops and included kitchens, mess halls, storerooms, etc. Barton County Historical Society Museum: 85 S US Hwy 281, Great Bend. See artifacts from the Santa Fe Trail. It's an official Santa Fe Trail Interpretive Site. It contains displays of Fort Zarah and the Allison Boothe, or maybe another Walnut Creek Trading Post. In addition, its collections tell the story of this region from the Native Americans of the Paleo Period through the development of the trail to European settlement.

A.S. Allen Building (Nominated for NRHP): 1401 Main. One of the oldest buildings in Great Bend.

The Crest Theater (NRHP): 1905 Lakin. The theater opened in 1950 and has since become home to live comedies, dramas, concerts, etc.

Nagel House (NRHP): 1411 Wilson St. It's one of fewer than 100 extant Lustron houses in Kansas.