

Byron - Nuclear Loop

Beginning at the Historic Oregon Depot, this loop takes you through Oregon and along the banks of the scenic Rock River to the nearby town of Byron. It should be noted that the Rock River Trail **1** is the newest member of the National Water Trails system, and is the only one with a triad of trails for paddlers, cyclists, and motor vehicles. The stretch through Ogle County is considered one of the most beautiful.

The Byron-Nuclear loop travels north along the wide shoulder of Rte. 2. Just north of town you will see the IDOT boat landing for recreational water sports. Across the road is the entrance to Stronghold Castle. **2** It was built as an authentic old world castle by Chicago newspaper magnate Walter Strong. It is now a retreat center for the Presbyterian Church.

The route to Byron holds scenic views of the Rock River and offers roadside pull-offs for fishing and picnicking. Byron itself has opportunities for shopping and refreshments. The Byron Historic Museum **3** is also along the route.

Across the Rock River bridge is the Byron Forest Preserve **4** - a nice side trip to enjoy first class interpretive displays of American Prairies as well as hikes through a restored grassland. Next, the bike loop briefly climbs through challenging hills until you arrive above the valley floor. You will be cruising level roads through farmland as you pass the twin cooling towers of the nuclear plant **5**.

You then return to Oregon, with its courthouse cupola rising above the city. A turn north on River Road just before the bridge will take you to Park East **6** and its view of the spillway.

Excursion: If you travel north on Daysville Road just east of Oregon, you will encounter a daunting climb to the top of the bluff. A turn to the left on Park Rd. leads you to Lowden State Park **7** overlooking the river valley. This is the site of the "Blackhawk" statue which the area is renowned for. From the overlook you can see the river below and the city laid out to the south; as well as the paddlewheel excursion boat across the river. There are many good hiking trails and points of interest to enjoy at Lowden Park. It is also home to Northern Illinois University's outdoor education campus.

★ Oregon Depot:
<http://www.oregondepot.org>

1 Rock River Trail:
<http://rockrivertrail.com/>

2 Stronghold Castle:
<http://www.strongholdcenter.org/castletours.html>

3 Byron Museum:
<http://www.byronmuseum.org/>

4 Byron Forest Preserve:
<http://www.byronforestpreserve.com/>

5 Byron Nuclear Plant
<http://www.exeloncorp.com/locations?energy=nuclear>

7 Lowden State Park
<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/r1/lowdensp.htm>

| Byron Nuclear - Rock River Loop | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Leg | Notes | Total Miles |
| | Turn left onto S 3rd St | 0.1 |
| 0.9 | Turn right onto W Washington St | 1 |
| 0.7 | Turn left onto N Daysville Rd | 1.7 |
| 0.5 | Turn right onto E Brick Rd | 2.2 |
| 2 | Turn left onto N German Church Rd | 4.2 |
| 4.5 | Turn right to stay on N German Church Rd | 8.7 |
| 3.2 | Continue straight onto IL-72 W | 11.9 |
| 0.4 | Continue onto N Union St | 12.2 |
| 0.1 | Turn left onto W 2nd St | 12.3 |
| 1 | Continue straight onto N Fox Run Ln | 13.3 |
| 0 | Turn right onto W Blackhawk Dr | 13.3 |
| 9 | Turn right onto Fair St | 22.4 |
| 0.1 | Turn left onto N 6th St | 22.4 |
| 1.1 | Turn left onto Webster St | 23.6 |
| 0.1 | Turn right onto S 5th St | 23.7 |
| 0.4 | S 5th St turns left and becomes Collins St | 24 |



Created by Ogle County GIS Partnership



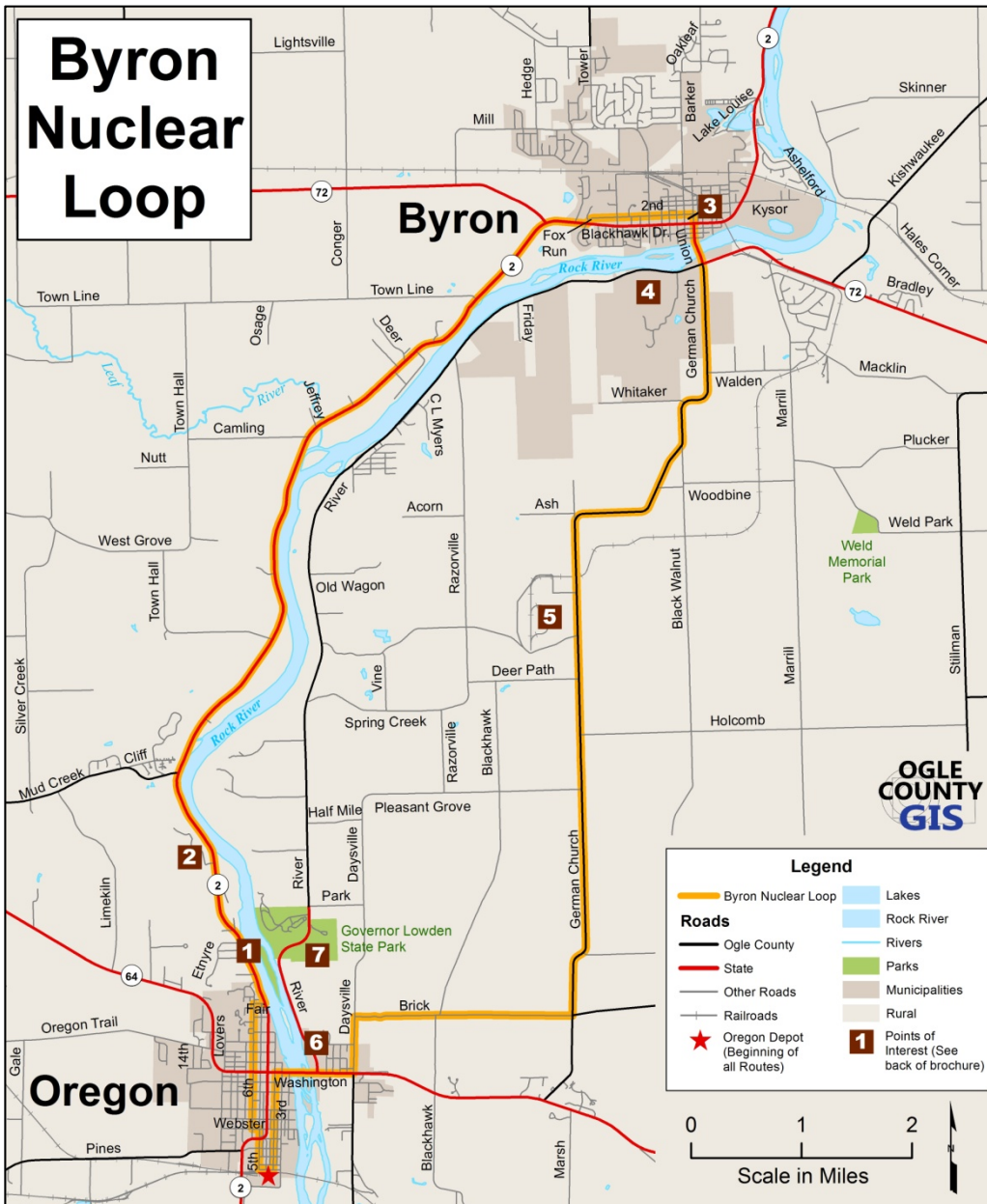
Bike Ogle County, Illinois



Byron - Nuclear Loop
Bike Route
(24 mi)



Bike, Eat, Sleep...Oregon, Illinois



To see all of our routes, and to download Garmin turn by turn instructions, go to: www.bikeogle.org.

All riders need to be familiar with bicycle safety and rules of the road. Cyclists are encouraged to visit <http://rideillinois.org/safety/adults/> for this information.