

## **Merced College to Yosemite Lake – 4.25 miles from College to Lake Entrance via Bellevue Road. 4.45 miles from College to back of Lake via Old Lake Road**

Merced College provides a pleasant, tree-lined campus from which to begin any number of bicycle rides. The grounds, laid out in the early '60s, are at the north-central end of town, the edge of a built-up area of Merced. Beyond this beautiful collection of lawns, trees, and low-rise buildings lie open fields and pastures, riparian habitats beside creeks and canals, and soaring groves of the ubiquitous eucalyptus trees, which give character and variety, not to mention shade, to so much of the countryside.

Follow the campus lanes north and east, by the agricultural buildings, until you come to the athletic practice fields. This portion of road is usually gated off to motorized traffic on two ends. It is a short, but fun stretch to try your acceleration capabilities without worrying about side traffic. Just keep your head up so you don't run into the gate at the other end.

Take a left on the Tri-College access road to the stop light at G Street. When you start north on G Street (left) you will immediately find yourself in the countryside on a wide strip of bicycle lane. G Street, or Snelling Road as it is called further on, has one of the best bike lanes in the area and is a very popular ride. We will proceed north on our way to Lake Yosemite.

There is a four-way stop at Bellevue Road where you may turn right heading east. There is a very gradual slope up for a couple of miles, which is hardly noticeable and ends at Lake Road. Turn left here and continue the short distance to the entrance of Yosemite Lake Park. I stay on the road rather than taking the bike path here because of the superior surface of the road and the prevalence of tire-killing "goat heads" (those sharp leftovers from roadside weeds) on the bike path during the summer and fall.

Once inside the park you may peddle a mile or so until you find your favorite spot beside the lake to rest and relax.

Yosemite Lake is either a huge pond or a small lake, depending on your point of view. There is a lot of water in it in the summer season and it is always very cold. The level is allowed to drop in the winter so that much of the shoreline is exposed and you may walk out some distance to the waterline. It is a lovely place in all seasons though. Birds of all types frequent this oasis all year and the view towards the Sierra Nevada from here is gorgeous. There is something magical about being next to the water whether it's a creek or the ocean. This unexpected gem is no exception.

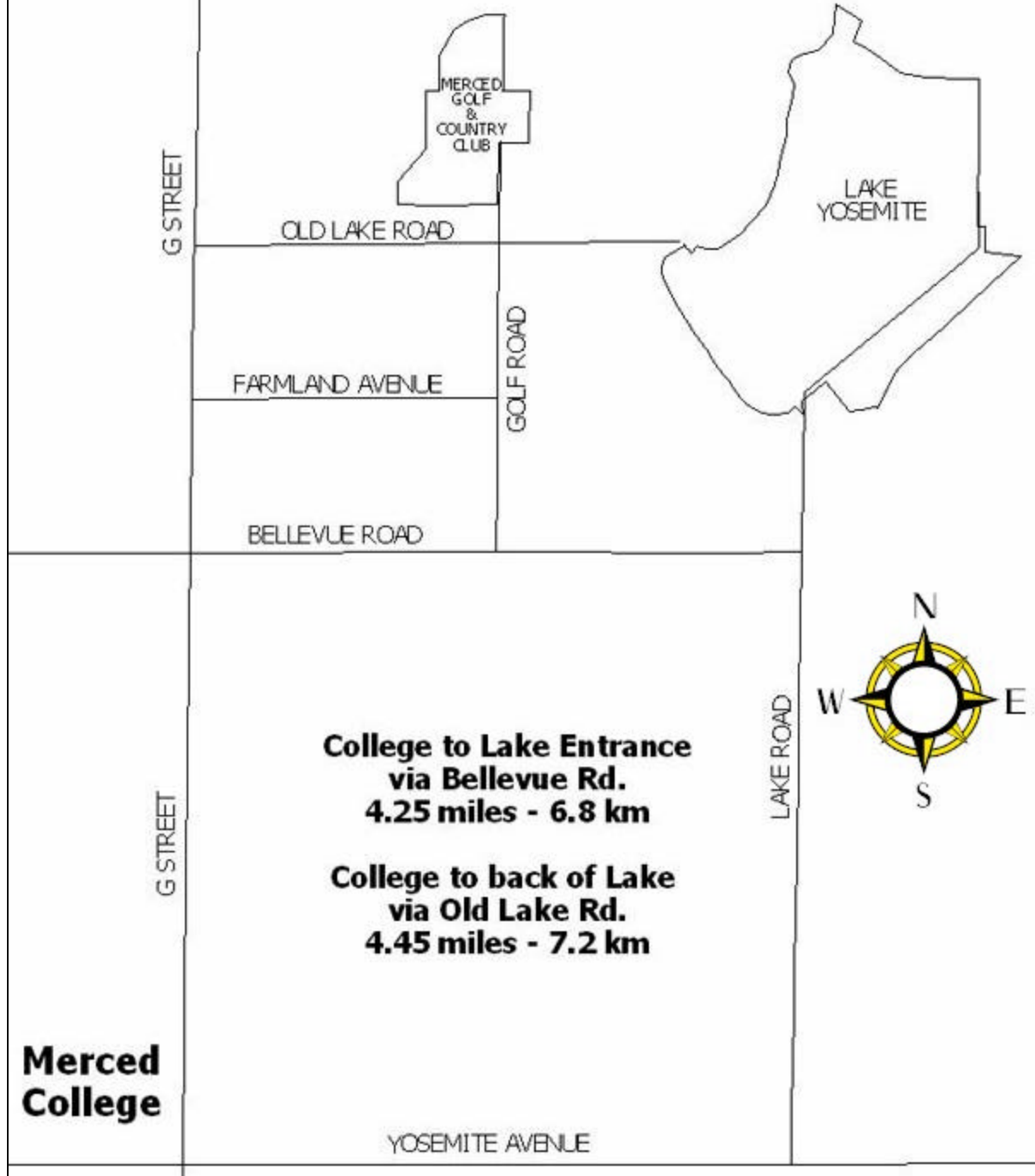
There is a little treat in store for you on your way back to the college. Take Lake Road out of the park and turn right on Bellevue Road (the road you approached Lake Road on). On your way west take the first right turn on Golf Road. Your next right (on Old Lake) takes you to the back-side of the lake where the serious fishermen (and women) are engaged and, if so inclined, you can actually walk, or ride (if you are on a mountain bike) on the dirt dam which holds the water in the lake.

Back to the intersection. If you were to go straight ahead on Golf Road you would end up at Merced Country Club which has one of the finest golf courses in the region. The treat I mentioned (remember?) is when you turn left and head west on Old Lake Road. Almost immediately you find yourself at the crest of one of the few real hills in this local area. It is steep enough to get going really fast for a short distance and is well worth the energy it takes to get there. You may bask in the glow of this bit of fun until you come to the stop sign at G Street. Take a left, but be careful. Cross-traffic does not stop here as it does at Bellevue Road. Continue down G Street until you reach the college again and your circuit is complete.

There are a few other routes you may want to try around here to vary your experience. Farmland Road runs parallel to Bellevue and Old Lake and is in between them going from G Street to Golf Road. There is also a pretty neighborhood between Old Lake and Farmland, which is worth riding through for its sloping hills and nice houses.

by Edward Blanchard

**Merced College to Yosemite Lake**



**Merced College**

**College to Lake Entrance  
via Bellevue Rd.  
4.25 miles - 6.8 km**

**College to back of Lake  
via Old Lake Rd.  
4.45 miles - 7.2 km**

YOSEMITE AVENUE

