

Introduction

“Tours are the best part of the club experience. I rode countless numbers of tours...great times, all. Thank you!!!”

— *Doug Simon*

“Those tours were the best thing on two wheels and I can’t thank you enough, even fifteen years later, for all the great experiences and memories they afforded me.”

— *Greg Durbin*

The idea for club-sponsored, multi-day tours was first proposed by club member Joseph Antaree in the early 1990’s. He had recently moved to Santa Rosa from Sacramento, where he had been a member of the Sacramento Wheelmen. He described how that club had been staging “cooperative tours” for years and how much fun they were. (There were unofficial tours within the SRCC family prior to this but none promoted and sponsored by the club. See *Unofficial Tours*.)

I understood the basic idea of multi-day touring but it had never occurred to me that our club could take that on. I was at the time the Ride Director and newsletter editor for the club, so this was an area where I might take a leadership role. I was cautiously interested. I wanted to know more...

The cooperative element was central to the original concept: that all the participants would share in the responsibilities and chores associated with keeping the tour moving, day to day. This not only meant helping with preparing meals in camps and cleaning up after them, but helping with loading or unloading the small mountain of luggage and equipment each day; helping organize things ahead of the tour and tidying up afterward...many hands making light work. For more details on how cooperative touring works, SRCC style, read our four-page touring primer, included here (pages 7-10).

Camping for most of the overnights was also seen as fundamental in the early vision of club tours. With no fancy catering and no expensive motel rooms, we would be able to keep costs low and offer relatively inexpensive tours to the members. There was also the fact that, along some of the more remote back roads we hoped to explore, there might not be any motels nearby. Conversely, there have been routes that left us with no viable campgrounds where we needed them and in those cases we have used motels. Quite a few motel nights have popped up in recent tours but camping is still the default setting, even if some of us are aging and becoming less excited about roughing it.

This would not be “fully-loaded” touring, hauling around panniers stuffed with gear. We wanted our bikes light. So we would need to figure out some way to move all our camp and cooking gear each day. Joseph took me out to Concord to



meet Byron Feldhake, a funny old guy who had an ancient Greyhound bus customized to support bike tours. I believe he was supporting both the Wheelmen tours and Super-Tours, another group mounting summer trips. Byron and his decrepit bus supported us on several of our early tours. (The bus can be seen in the distance in the photo above, taken in the first night's camp on the first Three Parks Tour, 1998.)

In September of 1994, Joseph and I organized a small tour to give the concept a test drive. Six of us rode or drove in support along the Oregon coast, north to south, from the Columbia River to the California border. Five days at about 80 miles a day. We had a good time and were hooked on the idea. That little tour is not included here as an official club event. The club had no role in it. But for me, it still seems like the proto-tour, where it all started.

In July of 1995, we staged our first official club tour. We borrowed the route from the Wheelmen: six stages from Mt Shasta to the outskirts of Sacramento. We called it the Sierra '95 Bike Tour. Since then, different members of the club have organized at least one week-long tour every year and sometimes two or three. This history is an attempt to document all of them, one way or another.

Our tours have always been for SRCC members only, although the membership fees are so low, quite a few people from a long way away have become members simply to be able to sign up for the tours. Which we think is fine. We've met a lot of really nice people that way.

Documentation for the earliest tours can be a bit thin. Maps and route slips were relatively crude and there were no preview booklets back then. Many of those early,

bare-bones documents have been lost as computers have been upgraded and old apps have ceased to be supported. What we do have however are the reports on each tour that appeared in the club newsletters, at least as long as the club was publishing a newsletter (through June, 2014).

From 2008 through 2014, the newsletter was digital, so we can copy and paste those reports right into this history. For 1995 through 2007, we have to use scans of the reports from the old hard-copy newsletters, which we have in our archives. There are some exceptions. There were four "club" tours between 2003 and 2006 that were unofficial so no reports appeared in the newsletter. (More about how that happened when we get to 2003.) We'll add whatever additional observations seem appropriate in 20-20 hindsight, all these years later. For tours from 2014 on, we'll do our best to cover them from memory.

The preview booklets for each tour were introduced with the third tour, the Central Coast Tour of 1997. Published as pdfs and ranging in size from 20 pages to over 60, these include maps, elevation profiles, and routes slips, plus descriptive copy about each stage, illustrated with a few photos per stage. Not all of our tours have had preview booklets prepared for them but if we have the docs online, we will provide links to them.

Preview booklets are exactly that: put together ahead of time, they provide a preview of what the tour ought to be and look like. They don't always reflect what actually happened on the tour. They provide a lot of detail but the after-tour reports tell us what really went down out there on the roads and in the camps. Some of our previews have been revised after a tour, incorporating changes we made and lessons we learned along the way.





Club support

As is the case with any volunteer-driven organization, a bike club is only as good as the folks who help to keep it pointed in the right direction; who step up to do whatever needs to be done. The Santa Rosa Cycling Club has been fortunate to have a strong corps of smart and skilled members who keep it going. The names and faces change over the years but there are always enough people ready and willing to pitch in. This is true for the summer tours as well: always a healthy handful happy to roll up their sleeves and tackle the chores. These tours don't organize themselves. Countless hours of planning and plain old hard work go into getting them on the road.

None of our tours would happen without the support provided by the club. We have a huge inventory of equipment in our warehouse, there primarily to support the Wine Country Century, the Terrible Two, club picnics, and other non-club but important events: the Gran Fondo, Tour de Fuzz, Giro Bello, etc. We use much of that on the tours: ice chests, water coolers, tables, canopies, and so on. But over the years the club has also acquired a collection of kitchen gear especially for the tours: pots and pans and colanders, utensils, propane stoves, salad bowls and plates and flatware. So...much...stuff! And all of that stuff has to be taken care of by the dedicated and sometimes underappreciated warehouse crew. Indeed, the warehouse itself has to be taken care of so that all the materiel and equipment within can be stored and accessed easily. It is a gargantuan undertaking...a process that never ends.

Living rough in campgrounds for a week can be hard on the equipment and it's not uncommon for things to be returned after a tour in pretty sad shape. For many years, tour budgets have allocated \$25 per tour participant to go toward

warehouse maintenance. This money does not go into some dedicated warehouse fund but we still like to have it as a line item in our budgets so we know the tours are paying their own way.

Sags and Wranglers

We haven't kept really accurate records of who our sag drivers and food wranglers have been. Many of them are thanked in the newsletter reports or at least mentioned in the rosters (if such documents survive). But some are buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Wrangler.

Our whole approach to these support roles was a bit lazy and hazy in the early years. We were figuring out how to organize tours as we went along. We know Byron and his crazy old bus supported us on seven out of eight of the first tours (except for Central Coast, where we rented a truck). We know Rich and Ron Stout provided a sag wagon on the first tour and perhaps on more than just that one. Marty Powell also got involved. We know Tera Antaree was overseeing the food service at least through the Central Coast Tour (tour #3), at which point she had new baby Tim to keep track of amidst all her other tasks. After that, it becomes a little fuzzy. We always had at least one sag and often two. We usually had someone in charge of the food and the menus but this was often one of the riders and not a non-riding food service person. Full-time, paid food coordinators was a concept that we grew into over the years. The term "food wrangler" doesn't enter our vocabulary until much later.

When we stopped using Byron's bus, we had to rent a transport truck and it eventually became the responsibility of the food wrangler to move the truck each day. At first we used one big truck but then Doug Simon suggested the two-small-trucks system: one for all the food and kitchen supplies (below, loaded up and ready to roll) and one for all the private luggage. (It's just one of the many brilliant innovations Doug has come up with, making our touring



lives so much more efficient and manageable.) By then we had evolved from one food coordinator to a team of two, so each one of them drove one of the trucks.

The old bus not only carried all our gear, it carried all of us, or at least everyone who did not travel in our sag wagons. After we stopped using the bus, travel to and from the tours required carpool caravans...and that required a site where the cars could be left for the week. Or, if the tour did not loop back at the end to where it started, we had to come up with some clever way to shuttle the cars along the route. without missing out on our riding. We've solved that tricky puzzle several ways over the years, depending on the geography of any particular tour.

In 1998, we began using Emilio Castelli's VW Eurovan as one of our sags. In 1999, Gary and Linda Grayson's big white Ford sleeper van, known as Vanna White, joined our sag crew. Linda drove their van every day and served as a full time sag driver. Martha Barton and Robin Dean took turns riding one day and then driving Emilio's van the next day (most years). This worked great for everyone involved and the arrangement lasted for several years. The vehicles were a relatively moderate expense in the tour budgets (compared to the very expensive rented vans we had to use in later years). Linda, Robin, and Martha were all excellent in their roles as sags.

An added bonus was how E's van earned its nickname, the Party Van. Every evening, several people would gather in and around the van. With the front seats turned to the back, with three people on the bench seat in back and three or four more in camp chairs by the open side door, it was party time. Jazz on the sound system, wine and beer, grappa and cannabis. Espresso on the cook top. Good conversation, good friends, good times.

Emilio's last tour was Three Parks in 2008, so we lost his Eurovan at that point. Linda and Gary did their last tour around 2015. Doug's big Green van Buellah was used for a few years. Darren Jenkns' Honda Odyssey. Gary Wysocky's Eurovan. Others I can't recall. Eventually we began renting 12-passenger vans to transport riders to the tours and then to be used as sags. These are incredibly expensive to rent, over twice the price of the trucks. And their big V-10 engines get terrible gas mileage. So when we can, we try to find member participants who have a van or big SUV we can use for the week.

Various arrangements have been made for reimbursing members for the use of their private vehicles as sag wagons. It might hinge on whether it's a camper van the member can sleep in or is instead just a passenger van or SUV. In all cases,

some amount will be allocated for "wear and tear" on the vehicle.

Many people have worked as sags or half of a two-person, every-other-day sag team. Too many good folks to mention but Robin Dean has probably done it the most and has been very good at it. It's not an easy job...the care and feeding of hungry, sometimes exhausted cyclists.

In 2006, Matt Parks took over as head food wrangler. Matt at the time owned a catering company called An Affair to Remember. He knew his way around prepping the food service for large groups and he set a standard for our food wrangling that we are still trying to match. Over the years he worked the tours with various members of his catering crew, leading or assisting on at least nine tours. Even after he stopped doing them himself, other members of his catering team continued as wranglers.

Compensation

Because of the work they put in on planning and managing the tours, tour leaders receive free entries to the tour they're leading. Full-time sag drivers are paid the equivalent of an entry fee. (If the fee was \$400, the full-time sag was paid \$400.) Half-time sags, riding one day and sagging the next, are halfway between a paying participant and a paid full-time sag, so they end up at zero: no pay but a free tour entry. The food wranglers are paid a fee agreed upon before the tour. They may also receive a gratuity from the participants at the end of the tour. (This is the way we usually handle these matters; they may have been handled differently on tours run by other leaders.)

Note: this history of Santa Rosa Cycling Club tours has been compiled by Bill Oetinger, a frequent tour leader. He is responsible for most of the copy, either new or dating back to the times of earlier tours. If others have contributed copy for some tours, their names are noted.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1-4	2010: Alpine Road Trip.....	77-78
Table of Contents	5	2011: Southern Utah Tour-2.....	79-82
SRCC Tours Map.....	6	2011: Wild Rivers Tour-2	83-85
SRCC Touring Primer.....	7-10	2012: Wild Rivers Tour-3	86
Unofficial Tours.....	11	2012: Northwest Oregon Tour-1.....	87-90
Gourmet Tours (1984-2016)	12-13	2013: Central Coast Tour-2	91-94
Northern Italy Tour (2001)	14	2013, 2014: Wild Rivers Tours 4 & 5	95
Provence-Alpes Tour (2009)	15	2014: Southern Oregon Tour-2	96-98
Mountain Goats Tours (2017-2022).....	16-17	2014: Eastern Sierra Challenge	99
1995: Sierra '95 Bike Tour.....	18-20	2015: High Sierra Tour.....	100
1996: Crater To Coast	21-23	2015: Central Oregon Tour	101-103
1997: Central Coast Tour-1	24-26	2015: Santa Cruz Tour	104-107
1998: Three Parks Tour-1.....	27-29	2016: Eastern Sierra Tour-2	108
1999: Gold Country Tour.....	30-32	2016: North Coast Tour.....	109-112
2000: Bigfoot Tour	33-35	2017: Sierra Loop Tour	113-114
2001: Condor Country Tour	36-38	2017: Shasta-Plumas Tour.....	115-118
2002: Northern Peaks Tour	39-41	2017: Three Parks Tour-3.....	119-120
2003: Eastern Sierra Tour	42-43	2017: Southern California Coast Tour-1 ..	121-123
2004: Southern Utah Tour-1.....	44-45	2018: El Camino Real Tour.....	124-127
2005: Southern Oregon Tour-1	46-47	2018: Oregon Coast Tour	128-131
2006: Southern Peaks Tour.....	48-49	2018: Southern California Coast Tour-2	132
2006: Wild Rivers Tour-1	50-52	2019: Wild Rivers Tour-6	133
2007: Mid-State Tour	53-55	2019: Northwest Oregon Tour-2.....	134-137
2007: Northern Oregon Tour.....	56-58	2021: Rogue-Deschutes Tour.....	138-139
2008: Plumas-Lassen-Shasta Tour	59-62	2021: Mendocino-Lake Tour	140-143
2008: Three Parks Tour-2.....	63-66	2022: Northern Oregon Tour Redux.....	144-147
2009: Blue Wallowa Tour	67-70	2023: High Desert Tour	148-149
2009: Santa Cruzin' Tour.....	71-72		
2010: Mother Lode Tour	73-76		

TOURS

Most SRCC tours in chronological order



- 1 Sierra '95 Bike Tour (1995)
- 2 Crater to Coast (1996)
- 3 Central Coast Tour-1 (1997)
- 4 Three Parks Tour-1 (1998)
- 5 Gold Country Tour (1999)
- 6 Bigfoot Tour (2000)
- 7 Condor Country Tour (2001)
- 8 Northern Peaks Tour (2002)
- 9 Eastern Sierra Tour (2003)
- 10 Southern Utah Tour-1 (2004)
- 11 Southern Oregon Tour-1 (2005)
- 12 Wild Rivers Tour-1 (2006)
- 13 Southern Peaks Tour (2006)
- 14 Mid-State Tour (2007)
- 15 Northern Oregon Tour (2007)
- 16 Plumas-Lassen-Shasta (2008)
- 17 Three Parks Tour-2 (2008)
- 18 Blue-Wallowa Tour (2009)
- 19 Mother Lode Tour (2010)
- 20 Southern Utah Tour-2 (2011)
- 21 Wild Rivers Tour-2 (2011)
- 22 Wild Rivers Tour-3 (2012)
- 23 NW Oregon Tour-1 (2012)
- 24 Central Coast Tour-2 (2013)
- 25 Wild Rivers Tour-4 (2014)
- 26 Southern Oregon Tour-2 (2014)
- 27 Eastern Sierra Challenge (2014)
- 28 High Sierra Tour (2015)
- 29 Central Oregon Tour (2015)
- 30 Santa Cruz Tour (2015)
- 31 North Coast Tour (2016)
- 32 Sierra Loop Tour (2017)
- 33 Shasta-Plumas Tour (2017)
- 34 Three Parks Tour-3 (2017)
- 35 So-Cal Coast Tour-1 (2017)
- 36 El Camino Real Tour (2018)
- 37 Oregon Coast Tour (2018)
- 38 So-Cal Coast Tour-2 (2018)
- 39 Wild Rivers Tour-6 (2019)
- 40 NW Oregon Tour-2 (2019)
- 41 Rogue-Deschutes Tour (2021)
- 42 Mendocino-Lake Tour (2021)
- 43 Nor. Oregon Tour Redux (2022)
- 44 High Desert Tour (2023)



Touring with the Santa Rosa Cycling Club

This is an introduction to the world of Santa Rosa Cycling Club tours. It is intended in particular for those new to our tours who might be unfamiliar with how we do things.

Our tours are designed to be cooperative efforts, with all participants taking a hand in all of the chores that need to be done each day...in particular the loading and unloading of luggage and general clean-up around camp. These tours are a dynamic embodiment of the old adage, "Many hands make light work."

Most of our tours are laid out as point-to-point progressions, moving from one campground or inn to another. Where there is more than one good ride in a given region, we may stay in the same camp--or motel--for more than one day and do loop rides from that base camp. Usually though, most tours will involve moving at least a few times during the tour. These are typically camping tours, but occasionally, when viable camps can't be found where we need them, we will stay in motels or inns. In most cases, the cost of the motels is not included in the entry fee, although there have been exceptions to that. Also not included in the fee will be any restaurant dinners associated with the nights in lodgings.

TRANSPORT: All of our luggage is moved from camp to camp by truck. A truck also carries all of our communal camp equipment and supplies and food. Riders do not need to carry anything on their rides except pocket food. In past years, we used one large truck to carry everything. Now we are using two smaller trucks. One hauls personal luggage and odds and ends; the other is devoted entirely to kitchen needs, carrying all our food and cooking equipment. This truck is off-limits to everyone except the hired food staff and the cook crew on duty on any given day.

We sometimes have two sag wagons supporting the riders on each stage, although on some tours with shorter, easier stages, we may run only one sag. Sags provide water and cold drinks and an

assortment of munchies. They also run errands and assist with emergencies. They will station themselves along the routes where the riders will be looking for a break. Their placement is usually discussed in a meeting before the stage.

We handle the sags differently on each tour, depending on who signs up and what they want to do. We have had folks who have come along as full-time sags...no riding at all or almost none. More common lately has been "half-&-half" crews: two participants who share one sag, taking turns riding one day and driving the sag the next. Sag drivers are rewarded for their work by a reduction in their entry fee. (If you're interested in this, talk to one of the tour leaders and we'll explain it in more detail.)

Moving participants to and from the tours is a car pool venture. This will be coordinated ahead of time, and you will receive e-mail communiqués from the tour leaders about this as the event draws near. Different routes dictate different strategies for dealing with our car pool fleet.

On a loop route that ends where it began, we can store the cars for the week at a site arranged in advance where there is some hope of security (never a sure thing, but we do our best). This is our most common scenario.

If the route is not a loop, we devise a plan for shuttling the car pool vehicles from start to finish. In some cases, it is possible that a few tour participants may be needed to move the cars on a given day. It almost always turns out that someone wants a rest day off the bike and offers to do this. So far, in all of our tours, no one has ever had to drive a car when they would rather have been riding. It may happen some day, but it hasn't happened yet.

FOOD: The tour organizers will provide all food and utensils, except for personal coffee mugs or wine glasses. We will serve a simple, hearty breakfast, including dry cereals and oatmeal and possibly pastries and fruit, and always good coffee and hot chocolate. After breakfast, provisions





are laid out for pocket food for the ride: fruit, cookies, sandwich fixings, etc. Snacks and drinks are always available in camp. We serve excellent dinners each evening. We will serve meat with most dinners, with vegetarian options available. We also attempt to provide dietary alternatives such as lactose-free milk substitutes, per the requests of the participants. However, hardcore dietary regimens may be considered in the same category as the needs, for instance, of a diabetic: you will have to provide for your own special needs.

The tour usually has a paid staff of two "food wranglers" who oversee most of the cooking. A volunteer crew does a major shopping ahead of the tour, as well as setting up our rental trucks and vans for the trip. (Help with this project is always welcome. Also, there is usually a day of cleaning chores after the tour, sometimes immediately upon our return—that afternoon—or else as soon as possible in the following week. Participation is not required but is much appreciated and we couldn't do the tours without that help.) The food wranglers do the balance of the shopping during the tour while moving the transport trucks from camp to camp.

All participants are organized into cook crews. For example, if we have 42 people on a seven-day tour, we divide them into seven crews of six people. Each crew will be responsible for one day's worth of meals, but we don't count that as breakfast-lunch-dinner. We do it dinner-breakfast-lunch, with the lunch (pocket food) available during and after breakfast.

The nice thing about this system is that each cook crew discharges its entire culinary obligation for the week between the end of one ride and the beginning of the next...dinner after one ride and breakfast/lunch before the next. If things function as they're supposed to, your KP chores should never interfere with your riding.

The food wranglers will assist each cook crew

by helping them find the tools and supplies they need to prepare their dinners. Each entrée comes with a simple recipe, easy to follow. Tour menus are planned ahead of time by a few of the tour leaders. Over the years, we have developed a nice repertoire of dinner entrées that are not only good to eat but also easy to prepare.

We will organize these crews ahead of time with certain goals in mind. We will try to mix faster and slower riders on crews, so that at least some members of each crew will be in camp early enough to help with unloading the luggage and setting out snacks before most of the other riders arrive. (Usually, the fastest riders—the first ones into camp—will help with unloading the luggage truck, whether they're "on duty" that day or not.) Ideally, each crew will contain a balanced mix of experienced cooks and those who claim to be clueless around a kitchen. We will try to put veterans of past tours on each crew, folks who know the routine and can show the newbies the ropes.

We always want to reassure the new folks about their KP tasks: relax! Don't worry about it. There are always tour veterans around to show you how we do things, and there are always helpful folks around to lend a hand. Most importantly, all of the tour participants are predisposed to have a good time. They're easy to please.

Over the years, the club has acquired an impressive inventory of camp cooking equipment, including large propane stoves and a huge assortment of industrial-size pots, pans, and utensils. Cooking in our camps is not like cooking in the wilderness. We make it easy to do.

There are always early risers on every tour, and often these early birds will take on the task of getting the coffee service up and running every morning, whether they're on that day's designated cook crew or not.





DINING OUT: Occasionally, we dine out in restaurants instead of cooking our own chow. This usually happens when we spend an overnight in lodgings instead of in a campground, but sometimes we simply elect to do so to make a change from camp food, assuming we know of a good restaurant nearby. As noted earlier, restaurant meals are not included in the tour budget.

BYOB: the tour budget does not provide for alcoholic drinks. If they choose to, participants may bring their own supplies of wine and beer to the tour, which will be stored on the luggage truck. All bottles—both beer and wine—should be marked with the name of whoever brought them. You may see bottles of wine and beer in the coolers in camp, along with the fruit drinks and sodas the tour provides. But if you did not purchase that bottle of wine or beer yourself, don't take it. Many participants will offer to share their beer or wine, but don't assume that to be the case without invitation.

TIMING: Breakfast will be served from 7:00-8:30 am, with the coffee already hot at the beginning of that time window. Rides start between 8:30 and 9:30, after the camp is tidied up. All of this is fairly flexible. If the day's ride is short and easy, we may be a little more relaxed about getting going in the morning. If the day looks to be long or exceedingly hot, we may try to get folks moving earlier.

Snacks and drinks will be available in camp after the rides. Dinner will be around 6:00 pm. After the dinner dishes have been cleaned up, we usually have an informal meeting to discuss the next day's route. If dinner and clean-up have run too long and it's too dark for a ride briefing that evening, we may defer the meeting until after breakfast, in which case it will be a very quick meeting.

In general, we frown on some riders leaving on the day's ride before the camp has been tidied up. This inevitably leads to the same small handful of hard-

core volunteers doing all the cleaning chores every day. We like to see everyone involved in the process of tidying up the "kitchen" and the main camp before anyone leaves. However, there are exceptions to this, for instance when the day's stage promises to be very long or challenging. In those cases, we may grant a dispensation to some riders who are slower to allow them a little head start on the day.

MAPS, ROUTE SLIPS, PREVIEW: Detailed maps and route slips for each stage will be provided. We used to print out full sets of maps/slips for all tour participants. In recent years however, we have been providing a tour preview packet as a pdf (same format as this primer). It contains not only the maps, but an expanded preview

write-up for the tour. Most who receive this preview packet are printing out their own sets of maps. The preview booklet also provides links to Ride With GPS maps that can be downloaded to cyclometers or phones.

However you acquire your maps, you must begin the tour with a full set. We will have a few spare sets of maps available, in case you lose or damage some of your pages, but at least try to start with your full set.

TOURING GEAR CHECK LIST

The following is a fairly comprehensive list intended to jog your memory while you're packing for the trip. You may not choose to bring all these items. Then again, you may add to this list. But PLEASE try to limit what you bring as much as possible. We have to hump all the luggage in and out of the truck every time we move, and the less of it we





have to lift and toss around the better all of our backs will feel. Also, there is a real limit to what the transport truck can carry in terms of total weight. All those bags add up...

We will have floor pumps and tools for most repairs, so don't bring those items. We will also have an inventory of all the more breakable bike parts, from wheels to derail-leurs, cables to tires and tubes. These will be available at cost. Anything you use you must pay for.

Personal items: day pack or kit bag (for short hikes or for heading to the showers), sleeping bag, sleeping pad or cot, tent (small, easy to put up and take down), ground cloth, light rope (for clothes line), clothes pins, flashlight, camera, books, wallet & money, small laundry bag, Swiss Army knife (or similar), coffee mug, wine glass (unbreakable), folding camp chair, phone.

Camp clothes: jacket (or down vest, etc.), warm shirt(s), sweater or sweatshirt or turtleneck, long pants, shorts, underwear, socks, swim suit, shoes (suitable for short hikes as well as for relaxing in camp), shower thongs, hat, reading glasses, sun glasses, bandana, rain poncho.

Toiletries, bath stuff: towel, wash cloth, soap, shampoo, hair brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving kit, deodorant, sun screen, bug repellent, aspirin, ibuprofin, nail clippers, feminine products, contact lens gear, q-tips, decongestants, ear plugs, Chamois Butt'r or similar, etc. (The tour will bring first aid kits, so you don't need to bring much in the way of medical supplies.)

Riding clothes: helmet (required), sweatband or bandana, jerseys, shorts, windbreaker/rain jacket, long tights, arm & knee warmers, undershirts, socks, gloves, shoes, cleat covers.

(Some people just take a couple of changes of shorts and jerseys and wash them. Others take a fresh set for every day. When doing laundry, you can combine

clothes with other riders—without mixing up your stuff— by washing your things inside a small, mesh laundry sack.)

Riding gear: bike, water bottles, frame pump, tubes (2), patch kit (is the glue still good?), tools for changing a flat and doing minor repairs, handlebar or seat bag, bike lock, plastic bike cover (a big plastic bag or your rain poncho will do), rear-view mirror, cyclometer. (Please make sure your bike is in good mechanical shape before leaving on the tour.)

Luggage: soft-sided luggage or duffel bags only. Please: no hard-sided suitcases or external-frame backpacks. Camping in general and loading and unloading our truck in particular is a rough-and-tumble adventure. Make sure your luggage is durable.

Toys: If we have room, we may include extra recreational stuff: frisbees, playing cards, board games, inner tubes, kites, etc. If you want to bring something in this line, feel free to do so, with the understanding that space constraints may eventually force us to leave it behind at the start. The club will not assume responsibility for any personal items of this sort, should they be damaged or lost during a tour.

Electronics: Smart phones, advanced cyclometers, or kindles may need to be recharged during the tour. We provide a charging station that runs off the truck's battery or—better—off nearby power sources in the camps.

Ahead of the tour, participants will receive occasional updates on tour planning. covering everything from campsites to motel reservations to car pools to cook crews. If this primer or the tour preview packet don't answer all your questions, those assorted updates probably will. That said, tour leaders are always willing to answer your questions.





Unofficial Club Tours

If we only covered the official, club-sponsored tours in this history, we wouldn't be telling the whole story. There have been quite a few other tours that were planned and staged by and for SRCC members but, for a variety of reasons, weren't promoted by the club and were not mentioned in the newsletter.

Official or not, these tours are still a part of what makes the club such a great support matrix for so many people's cycling lives. It's inevitable—and a good thing—that friendships will form within the larger club; that smaller groups will bond together, ride together, socialize together...and, occasionally, figure out ways to tour together. Many of us have joined club mates on tours where we paid money to a bike-touring caterer and let them squire us around some distant land. We're not counting those. But we do want to make note of tours where a group of SRCC friends pooled their energy and smarts and organized a tour of their own: figured out the routes, arranged the travel, booked the overnights, and so forth. These would have been significant tours, great adventures in the lives of those fortunate to have been on board for them.

In many cases these tours made use of the equipment and supplies in the club warehouse (or storage lockers, as it used to be before the warehouse). They looked, in many respects, exactly like the other tours in this history. Other tours may have been put together far from home: in Europe in a few cases, with no club support, aside from the key factor that those involved were all members and came together through their activities in the club.

The fact that these unofficial tours were not promoted by the club and were not accessible to every member is certainly an important factor but not to the point that this history should ignore them or pretend they didn't happen. We won't give them as much space as we will the official club tours but they're still worthy of our attention.

In some cases, events were mentioned in the newsletter but were not full tours. Marty and Sue Powell's extended weekends at Clear Lake would be a good example of this. Or

Dick Cantor's Avenue of the Giants weekends. Or the Grizzly Century weekends Wendy Page introduced. These were times when folks put the effort into imagining and implementing fun adventures for their fellow members, some distance away from our everyday rides and lives. There are probably too many in this category (and so many of them lost down the rabbit hole of history) to be able to itemize them all in this space. But we can at least tip our hats to the folks who took the time to make them happen.

Most of these rogue tours have flown under the radar to some extent. Because of that low profile, we're not sure we know about all the tours that might merit mention here. We're doing our best to track them all down.

I've chosen to gang most of the unofficial tours together in this one chapter near the front of the "book" rather than burying them deep in the back. We'll try to get their story told and then move on to the club-supported tours. The one exception to this is the four tours between 2003 and 2006. My only justification for their placement is that, as I scan through this as a comprehensive history, they seem to fit into the chronology better where they are.

I was involved with two of the tours in this chapter. The others I only know about second-hand, from what those who were there have shared with me. Those would be the Gourmet Tours and the Mountain Goats Tours. Both of those groups have organized many tours, an amazing record of energetic activity down the years. Reading about them and browsing the photos, you just know these folks were having a great time. Those who dreamed up these tours and got them on the road did a wonderful thing for everyone involved. (If there are more self-contained groups like these within the club, we'd love to know about them.)

Linda Grayson, one of the many leaders of the Gourmet Tours over the years, provided the photos and commentary for those events. Dennis Prior, founder of the Mountain Goats gang, shared his observations and photos for at least some of their tours. There are so many of these tours: over 30 Gourmet Tours and at least 10 Mountain Goats Tours. We will do what we can to illustrate the scope and character of these events...their philosophies and *esprit de corps*.



• The Gourmet Bicycle Tours •



The first Gourmet Bicycle Tours go all the way back to 1965 but those were not associated with the SRCC. Our story begins in 1984. Linda Grayson picks up the tale...

Various people became the official organizers of the tours for several years at a time. I think the last bunch of us ran it for about five years each. I was the last. Maps were provided for each day's ride, in the beginning just simple, hand-drawn, point A to point B. They became more elaborate as technology provided us with more options. We did not usually have sag support on the rides, but cell phones provided backup in case anyone needed help. (An exception was when Judy Dumm and I both had broken arms and drove along providing encouragement to all our riders). I don't remember hearing of any serious incidents, although we did have to head out at dinner time to haul in some totally lost riders up in Oregon one time.

We generally rode from one campground to the next each day, often with one layover day in the middle. Near the end, we even came up with a trip to one location (Corvallis/Albany), with plenty of ride options for the whole week... (especially with a rainout day... it IS Oregon, you know).

We usually had about 15-25 riders, enough for 3-4 on a cook crew. "Gourmet" meals were key, and people really stepped up. Great dinners, great breakfasts, but always with oatmeal, too, for those diehards. And "Dunch", appetizers and energy replacers after the rides. We cooked seven days and then had a banquet dinner at a nice restaurant on the last night out, and it was always a no-holds barred, anything you want to eat and drink, all paid for by the tour. The last morning we divided up all the leftover food by drawing numbers and then, in rotation, choosing some leftover item on the picnic tables to take home with us.

One tradition every year was Dave Allen's salmon. No matter where we were, he would always manage to tag a very large, fresh salmon somewhere. That was his traditional specialty, and everyone always looked forward to that dinner. Another big tradition was homemade ice cream. The deal was you had to churn the ice cream or you didn't get to eat it, so you can be sure everybody took their turn. More

often than not we'd be find some wonderful wild berries to add to the ice cream, using Linda Allen's special recipe.

After dinner we would always gather around the fire, sometimes for s'mores, but always for music and songs. Dave Allen always played his violin...he could play anything, from Irish jigs to classical. He would be joined by others with guitars, or a ukulele occasionally, and a few times by a classical violinist who could also play anything. It was always lovely, and brought curious and appreciative campground neighbors to enjoy it as well.

On the last evening around the campfire, we would exchange gag gifts for a secret pal whose name we had drawn at the beginning of the trip. The gifts were hilarious and creative and provided loads of laughter.

We started using a trailer in 2005, bought by a couple of the group members and rented back to the group on an annual basis. Rose Mello became our official champion trailer loader/packer. No one could pack that thing like she could. After we added shelves to it, it became an efficient kitchen storage area and really helped us organize our food and meals, and then load up all the many ice chests we carried as we moved from one campground to the next. The owners agreed to donate it to SRCC after the 2017 fires. The timing of that was perfect. Our group was getting older. No one wanted to sleep on the ground anymore and no one wanted to be responsible for organizing it anymore. It felt good to be able to donate our remaining money and everything in the trailer where it would be appreciated and well used. A win-win for everyone.

1984: Lake Almanor, Burney Falls, Mt. Lassen

1985: Sonoma, Marin Coast

1985: Monterey to San Luis Obispo; back by train

1986: Santa Rosa to Ft Bragg; return along Sonoma Coast

1987: Cloverdale, Ft Bragg; return by coast to Russian River

1988: Willets, Hwy 1, Ft Bragg return via Manchester

1989: Monterey, Hearst Castle, SLO: train to Monterey

1991: Hostels from Marin, Montera Lighthouse, Pigeon Point Lighthouse and return

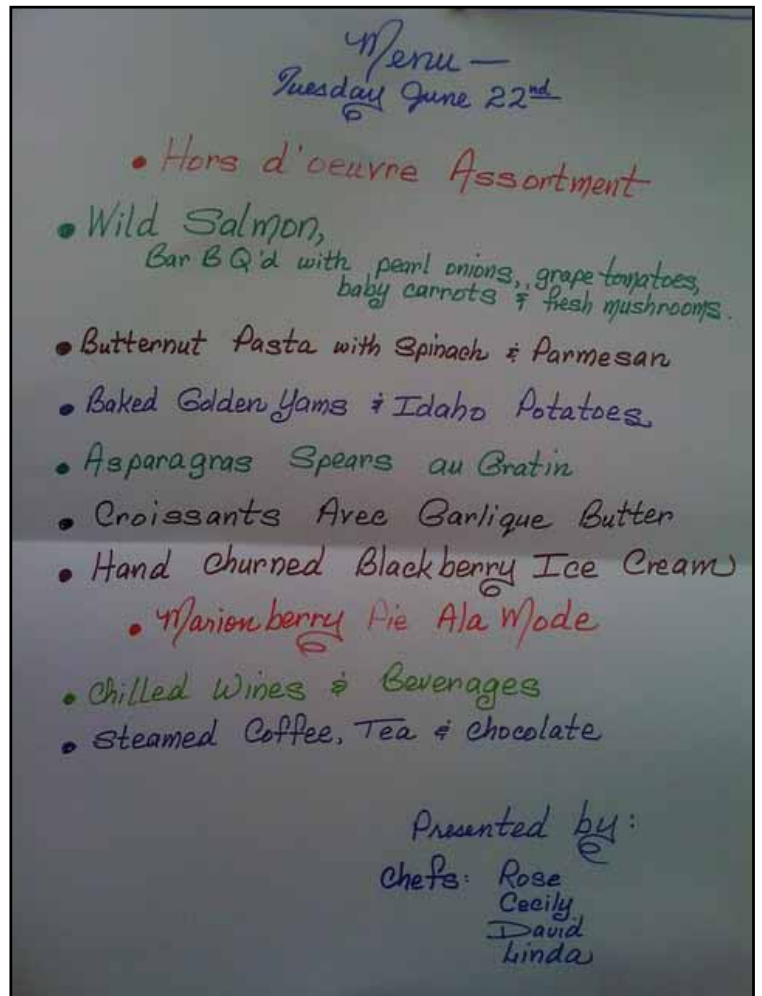
1992. Same as 1991

1993: Ashland, Salem, Lincoln City, Crescent City



1994: Redwood Hostel in Crescent City to Manchester KOA
 1995: Salem, Astoria, Salem
 1996: Train to Salt Lake City, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons
 1997: Monterey to San Luis Obispo; return by train
 1998: Ashland, Crater Lake, Applegate Trail, Jacksonville,
 1999: Same as 1991 and 1992
 2000: Grants Pass, Glendale, Powers, Gold Beach
 2001: San Juan Islands
 2002: Bend, Mt. Bachelor and vicinity
 2003: Florence, Eugene, Corvallis, Oregon Coast
 2004: San Juan Islands
 2005: Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo, Buellton, Solvang
 2006: Graeagle and Taylorsville areas
 2007: Taylorsville and Almanor areas
 2008: Bend area
 2009: Buellton, Solvang, Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo
 2010: Florence, Eugene, Corvallis
 2011: Taylorsville, Lake Almanor, Loyalton, Graeagle
 2012: Pismo Beach and Monterey areas
 2013: Burney Falls, Rogue River
 2014: Albany, Corvallis...one campground all week!
 2015: Buellton, Solvang, Pismo Beach, Avila Beach
 2016: Bend area

What a run of tours! What an amazingly vibrant and generous band of brothers and sisters.





• Northern Italy Tour •

This unofficial “club” tour—July 21-August 5, 2001—was one of the best bike vacations ever. It was dreamed up and organized by and for Santa Rosa Cycling Club members. Emilio Castelli was the driving force behind the tour. He lives in Sebastopol but his family owns two homes on the eastern shore of Lake Como in the town of Bellano. It’s where he grew up. He dreamed up the tour and invited us to join him. Altogether, there were over 20 participants, most of whom were SRCC members. On some rides, we were joined by friends of Emilio from *Pedale Bellanese*, the local cycling club (above). Hooking up with the locals made us feel much more at home than we would have as anonymous tourists. The locals, both cyclists and neighbors, could not have been more welcoming and hospitable.

We flew into Milano and made the villas our base of operations for our first week. We left our bike boxes at Emilio’s office in Milano. He scrounged up some vans to move us around. Over our first week, in and around hiking and sightseeing and just kicking back by the lake, we knocked off five rides ranging in length from 27 miles to 112 miles and including climbs over some of the most famous Giro d’Italia summits: Mortirolo, Gavia, Stelvio, Julier (below, left) Spluga, Mur di Sormano, Madonna del Ghisallo (below, right...the famous chapel at the summit that serves as a shrine and de facto hall of fame for bicycle racing).

For our second week, we essentially rode to Rome. We shuttled past the urban sprawl of Milano and hopped on our bikes near Bettolo, heading south through Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna and finally Lazio. We rolled out another five stages. Passo del Bocco, Cinque Terra, Carrara, Passo del Vestito, San Pellegrino in Alpe, Bagni di Lucca, Florence, Siena, Montalcino, Pitigliano and on into Rome. In between the rides were days off for sightseeing and simply wallowing in *la Dolce Vita*, fueled with *Cucina Italiana*. I did ten stages adding up to 600 miles and 60,000’ of gain. Some of the other riders did more, some less. It was cycle-touring at its best.

Article about the tour at BikeCal.com: <http://bikecal.com/asp/columns-detail.asp?w=B&offset=240&bRecNo=55>





● Provence-Alpes Tour ●

This unofficial “club” tour—September 6-21, 2009—was planned and organized by me for a group of Santa Rosa Cycling Club members. It was 16 days in all, 14 riding stages and two rest days. Over those 14 stages I logged 905 miles and 103,000' of climbing. I expect most of the other riders did about the same. We rode all the routes as I had drawn them up ahead of time, except for shorting one day when rain was predicted. (It only drizzled on us that day but we were hammered by rain on two other stages.) There were three stages under 50 miles and three over 80. It was hilly every day, usually on a grand scale. We rented a van and had one mostly non-cycling spouse moving our luggage each day.

The tour was a dream of mine for years. I called it “Provence-Alpes,” which is an accurate description of where we were. But my subtitle for the tour was, “Colossal Cols and Gorgeous Gorges.” That pretty well sums it up. We climbed many huge cols made famous in the Tour de France: Cayolle (above, right), Vars, Izoard, Lauteret, Galibier, Telegraphe, Mollard, Croix de Fer, l'Alpe du Huez, Sarennes, Ornon, Saint Nizier, Rousset, Allos, Champs, and many more. As for the Gorges, we found quite a few of those as well: Gorges du Loup, Clue de Gréolieres (above, left), Clue de Saint Auban, Grand Canyon du Verdon, Gorges de Daluis, Gorges du Bachelard, Combe de Queyras, Gorges de la Bourne, Combe Laval (below, left), Gorges du Cians (below, right), Clue de Riolan, Clue d'Aiglun. It was a scenic extravaganza beyond our wildest fantasies.

I have a page about the tour at my Adventure Velo website. There are links at the page to two articles I wrote at BikeCal.com about the tour (one a straightforward description of our stages and another a collection of observations about the experience). There are also links to two photo galleries packed with eye candy from the tour.

Web page about the tour at Adventure Velo: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/other-tours/provence-alpes-tour/>



• The Mountain Goats Tours •



The Goats are a little club within the club. You've seen them out there in their matching jerseys. Dennis Prior got the group going and can flesh out the story of how they came to be and about where they've been touring...

The Sonoma County Mountain Goats idea had its beginnings on Bill Oetinger's Apple Cider Century ride in 2014. Paul Musson and I were climbing Fort Ross Road out of Cazadero and I suggested to Paul that we should get a jersey made up of a goat on a bike climbing a hill, with all the names of the toughest climbs in Sonoma County on the jersey. Paul gave me the name of a company that makes jerseys and I had the design drawn up and we were on our way. We have grown from that point, with an emphasis on riding safely, following all the rules of the road, never leaving anyone behind on a ride, and being a good example of what courteous cycling can look like.



The past six years we've been going to the Eastern Sierra to ride the amazing climbs up there. We started down in Lone Pine and over the years made our way to the passes we did in 2022. Seven of the Goats did Sonora Pass, Tioga Pass, and the loop around Tahoe in June of 2022. Of all the passes in the Eastern Sierra, I found Sonora Pass to be the

toughest. It has the steepest pitches and gets up to 9624' of elevation. If you go over the top from 395 and then down a good seven miles and back, it makes for a very tough ride indeed. The Tahoe loop is always a beautiful ride.



In 2017, when I was visiting Paul and Elisa Musson at their home in St. Paul de Vence, Paul offered to plan a Provence tour for the Mountain Goats in 2018. I immediately said "what a great idea!" Paul, with the help of his friend Tony Pitman, rode all the routes and picked the towns where we would stay and even found all our dinner spots.

We spent four nights in Mazan and rode to Vain, Dentelles, Entrechaux, Le Barroux, Chateauneuf, Mount Ventoux, and the Gorge de la Nesque, all amazing rides, with the big climb being our ascent of Mount Ventoux. (We got lucky with the weather: no wind and the sun was shining.) We then spent three nights in Gordes and rode to Roussillon, Apt, Rustre, Murs, Pernes, Abbaye, Fontaine de Vaucluse, and Bonnieux. These rides were also gorgeous and on almost every ride you could see Ventoux out in the distance. Many of us followed Paul and Tony back to St Paul de Vence and did two more rides. We went down this beautiful gorge road, took a hard left turn and went up to an beautiful mountain-top village...up there the views were amazing. The next day we took a trip down to Nice and Antibes. Ev-





In September of 2022, 22 of the Mountain Goats did a fantastic tour in the Pyrenees with 11 nights of lodging and nine rides. I set up the tour to have two different rides each day. One tier would be rides between 50-70 miles and up to 7500' of climbing and the others were 25-40 miles with a max of around 3500'...so there was something for everyone. If folks got tired of doing the harder rides, the next day or two they could drop down to the easier routes. I believe we had four riders do all of the hardest routes with a bunch of us doing seven or eight of the hard rides.

We stayed in Lourdes for four nights and climbed Aubisque, Col du Soulor, Col de Borderes, Tourmalet, Col du Lingous, Luz Ardiden, Hautacam, Aspin. Then four nights in Arreau, climbing Port de Bales, Peyresourde, Cote de Lancon, Lac Cap-de-Long, Col de la Coupe and Tilhouse, Col de Portet, and Azet. Then we took a 5-hour bus ride to Girona for three nights.

Everything folks say about riding in Europe is absolutely true. If you get a chance, take that opportunity while you can!

In 2018, 15 of the Goats went to Maui to climb Haleakala, which is rated the second most difficult climb in the United States. We started by dipping our toes in the ocean and then made the 35.6 mile and 10,023' continuous climb (5.3%) to the top of the volcano! Twelve of us made it to the summit and three made it to the visitor center at 7,000'.

With the seemingly mild grade, you might think this would be an easy climb but it becomes relentless once you hit 7000'...and then there is the lack of oxygen, which made the last six miles take a while, because with every added 1000' of elevation your speed drops at least 1 mph. We had sag vehicles for the ride and they packed a bunch of extra clothing for us to wear on the way back down to the visitor center. Without that, we would have frozen our butts off! We stopped at the visitor center and luckily the sun was out...we lay out on the cement retaining walls like a bunch of lizards, trying to thaw out. The ride back down to the beach from the visitor center was magical! We did two other rides out of the Lahaina area to West Maui and for a few of the other days we just hung around at the beach.

In 2022, 12 of the Mountain Goats toured around Crater Lake and in the Mount Shasta area. We caught a beautiful day for our loop around Crater Lake. About 2/3rds of the way around the lake the back side still wasn't open to car traffic, so that worked out great for us. This is a must-do ride: at every turn there is another drop-dead gorgeous view. One of the most beautiful rides I've ever done. We spent two nights in the area and then moved over to Shasta, where we did a ride up Mt Shasta one day and another up to Castle Lake and a good ways up W A Barr Road on the south fork of the Sacramento River.

We did a 61-mile loop out to the ocean town of Tossa de Mar and climbed Ermita Sant Grau and Hourquette. For our last ride we did the Hincapie loop climbing Els Angels and Santa Pelleia.





• Sierra '95 Bike Tour •

July 16-21, 1995

Very little remains in our files from that first tour. But I did find this photo of the crew, apparently taken at the finish near Lake Natoma. Looks like we've all had after-ride showers and are ready for either lunch or for the drive home.

I count 26 people in this photo. Joseph's report on the tour (below) says we started with 31. We lost Sandy and Roger Karaker on the first day when Sandy crashed and they had to head home (in what would have been one of our sag wagons). But that leaves three people missing from this picture. One would be Rich Stout, who I believe took the photo. The other two who I think should be here would be Marty and Sue Powell.

I can make an attempt at identifying everyone here, the club tour pioneers, but I know I'm going to miss a few. Working from left to right, first up is Vin Hoagland in the white and blue tee (we left all our cars for the week at his ranch on Petaluma Hill Road). Rich Fuglewicz just behind in the blue shirt and shades. Back in front, to Vin's left are Tera and Joseph Antaree, our first food wrangler and first tour leader, respectively. Way in the back in the maroon shirt is Abe Bakst and just over Joseph's shoulder, Bob Stolzman. Susan Edmunds in the fuschia shirt and back in front, on Joseph's left, in the tie-dye, Trent Norlund. Again, way in back, right over Joseph's head, in the hat: Herb Greenberg. Over Trent's left shoulder: Rich Winegarner. Sorry to say I cannot recall the guy directly over Trent's head. The guy in the back saluting is Bill Osburn, the club's first webmaster. To his left in the blue tee is Frank Hamlin, who was our money manager on the tour. Right in front of Frank are Sid and Linda Fluhrer and right in front of them are Pilar and Robert Rand. Way up in back is Ron Stout, brother of Rich Stout, our two sag drivers. I'm right behind Robert Rand and next to me in the aqua shirt is Wes Hoffschildt. To the left of Wes, in the black shirt, is Byron Feldhake, owner/operator of the magic bus. Right up in front is Ernie Von Raesfield. Next to Sid Fluhrer and behind me is Bill Dunn. I do not remember the guy in the blue shirt behind me and Wes. Peeking out behind Wes and Byron is Betty Verse and to her left, Alan Bloom. If you can ID the folks whose names I've lost or correct any mistakes, let me know!

I've always remembered this as the "Northern Sierra Tour" but the header on the newsletter report calls it the "Sierra '95 Bike Tour." So we're going with that. Another thing I don't recall exactly: the entry fee. I think it was \$100.

SIERRA '95 BIKE TOUR

—Joseph Antaree, Tour Director

It was a clear, warm Saturday morning on July 15 when the Sierra '95 bike tour departed from Vin Hoagland's ranch near Santa Rosa, all 31 participants present and accounted for. Spirits were high in anticipation of a week of cycling in the Sierras: from Mt Shasta to Lake Natoma (25 miles east of Sacramento). Most of us were settled in Byron Feldhake's converted Greyhound bus, with assorted outriders escorting us in two vans and a car. All the planning and logistical preparation was finished. We were on the road...our adventure had begun. And what an adventure it turned out to be!

The trip north gave everyone a chance to become acquainted, and a bus ride we had feared would be hot and tedious actually breezed by in a pleasant haze of conversation and laughter. We reached our campground by 2:30 pm, ahead of the heat building up back in the Central Valley. A few folks hopped on their bikes to explore the quiet, hilly countryside west of Mt Shasta, while the rest of us settled into camp, and our first cooking crew went to work on dinner...barbecued shishka-bob. Later, we realized the campground was on the main north-south rail line, which made for several thunderous interludes to our night's sleep.

No matter though. We were all up early, eager to hit the road for Burney Falls, 64 miles to the east on Hwy 89 (84 miles if you chose the long option). A relaxed beginning, with group photos and then the whole group starting together, led to a 5-mile climb just out of town, where the moderate and brisk riders separated. By the time we'd reached the bottom of the 5-mile downhill on the other side, we had a pretty good idea who the hottest climbers (and descenders) would be.

Most of us made a short detour to visit Fowler Falls, tumbling through a sheer-walled gorge on the McCloud River. Unfortunately, Sue Edmonds and Sandy Karraker both took low speed spills on the same patch of gravel leaving the road near the falls. Sandy landed heavily on her elbow and sustained enough damage to her arm to require a trip to the hospital. Sadly, her tour was over, almost before it began, as was husband Roger's, who drove her home in their van. We missed them for the rest of the tour. Sue rode on and finished the whole tour, her road rash and bruises healing enroute. These were the only accidents all week. Some of the more intrepid riders followed several miles of gravel road in search of two more beautiful waterfalls further upstream. Those who chose the 84-mile loop were treated to a great downhill into the quiet Fall River Valley, followed by a long, hot climb along the cliffs above the Pit River gorge. Back on 89, and after somewhat more climbing than anticipated, riders arrived at Burney Falls State Park on what had become a very hot afternoon. Many found their way to a delightful creek near camp for a refreshing dip before dinner.

The next day was a short—46 miles—but beautiful run up to Lassen Park. Once again the lead group was putting some serious hurt on anyone who wanted to play, especially on the final 14-mile, 2000' climb. Most of us just kicked back and spun our way up to the Park. The reward of cooling off in Manzanita Lake just inside the park entrance shifted into satisfaction overdrive when Tera, our tireless food coordinator, arrived with cold watermelon for the assembled troops.

It rained gently that evening and through the night, but cleared in the morning just as the sun came up. The misty light shining through the huge pine trees was magical as we ate breakfast and struck camp. To our disappointment, the much anticipated trek up and over Lassen Summit had to be scuttled, as the high country was still buried in snow.

Instead, we backtracked out of the park (yesterday's 14-mile climb now becoming a deliciously fast downhill), and rode east around the park on Hwy 44...first up a 3-mile climb and then across an open prairie into an increasingly blustery headwind (accompanied by too much truck traffic). The following section of our detour—a small county road called A21—was an unknown quantity, but soon we were all grinning beyond words at what we had lucked into: 25 miles of silky, car-free, slightly downhill heaven that delivered our smoothly rotating pacelines to the finish on Lake Almanor as if we'd been on a magic-carpet ride. A swim in the lake, *pasta al pesto* for dinner, ice cream for dessert, and over the lake, the most spectacular, technicolor sunset behind Mt Lassen...what could top that?

Day Four could and did. After beginning the ride with nine wild miles of downhill from Canyon Dam to Greenville, we left 89 for North Valley Road, a scenic byway featuring exceptionally beautiful, rolling miles skirting the edge of the serene, pastoral valley. Back on the main highway, a windless day and a 4% downgrade along the rushing rapids of Indian Creek leant wings to our heels on a mad dash down to the junction of Hwy 70, followed by a long, steady climb up Spanish Creek canyon and a quick descent into the charming town of Quincy. There we had our only restaurant meal of the trip: a *huge*, delicious lunch at the Morning Thunder Cafe. It took us about half of the remaining 30 miles to digest it...just in time for that night's Mexican feed. Exactly the thing to reload the tanks of a pack of ravenous cyclists.

Major climbs and big descents arrived on Day Five, as we swarmed up and over Gold Lake Summit, topping out at 6700' before another high speed descent to Bassetts and then an endless downhill cruise on Hwy 49. Those who could tear their eyes away from the road at 35-45 mph were beguiled by the beauty of the snowcapped Sierra Buttes and by numerous streams spilling into the Yuba river, our roadside companion for most of the day. The picturesque town of Downieville captured everyone's attention for quite awhile, to their subsequent dismay when the final 35 miles turned quite strenuous in the wilting afternoon heat. That evening, after our hardest day of riding, we rested at Ananda Village, a peaceful yoga community outside of Nevada City.

The final day dawned clear, sunny, and still, and after a good night's rest, we departed early—as usual—rolling out as a group before 8:30 am. We began with a wild 7-mile plunge down to the Yuba river, before chugging back up an equal distance into Nevada City. Once we left this lovely Gold Rush town, we settled into a series of rock 'n rollers, more down than up, all the way to our final destination: a picnic barbecue and swimming at Lake Natoma.

Depending on how many scenic detours one took, it all added up to 400-500 miles and 20-25,000' of climbing in six days. The weather all week was close to perfect, only occasionally on the hot side, and with only a touch of rain, and that during the night. Beyond the riding, food, and exceptional mountain scenery though, it was the *esprit* of the whole group that made the tour special. Everyone, with no exceptions, was willing to lend a hand preparing food, cleaning up, striking camp, or doing whatever was needed. My thanks to all of the participants. I also want to publicly thank Frank Hamlin, Bill Oetinger and Marty Powell for their superb assistance in producing this event. Thanks also to Byron Feldhake and his super tour bus, to Rich and Ron Stout for supplying and operating the principle sag vehicle, and last but definitely not least, to my wife Tera for coordinating the food service, paying all the bills enroute, and generally being a *soigneur par excellence*. Together I feel we have launched a new tradition that will be a worthy addition to our club's portfolio of cycling adventures.

How does a week in Southern Oregon sound for next year?!



Stage 1, start: Shasta

Stage 1, finish: Burney Falls



Stage 2: Lassen Volcanic National Park

Stage 4: sunset over Lake Almanor



Stage 5: Sierra Buttes



August 10-17, 1996

• Crater to Coast •

Our records for the second tour are as sketchy as those for the first tour. But the report filed by tour participant Dan Gurney does a good job of summarizing what was an excellent week of bike touring and club socializing. We can add a few items to flesh out that narrative. This was another tour where we had the services of Byron and his bus. That allowed us to drive all the way up to a start site at Howard Prairie Lake, in the hills above Ashland, to begin the tour. Having the bus to transport most of the people and gear made it easy to create tours that could end a long way from where they started...no need to loop back and retrieve a car pool fleet. In later years—2005 and 2014—we offered approximately this same tour but without the bus, so instead of ending the tour way over by Crescent City, we had to return to Ashland, not 20-plus miles up into the hills at Howard Prairie Lake. (One of the challenges with trying to remember details about this tour is that it's all mixed up with the memories from the other two tours along mostly the same route.)

One thing that we've lost is the number of participants. Can't find that anywhere. In the hazy fog of my memory banks, I can see many of the same folks who were on the previous year's tour. But I can also recall others for whom this was their first tour: Donna Younger, Dave Deitz, Douwe Drayer, Robin Dean, Dave Silzle, Dan Gurney, Mike DeMicco, Allen Armstrong, John Kozero, Jacques Daniel, Sally Homs...probably more.

Reading Dan's copy primes the pump for me and pulls up any number of anecdotes. Bob Stolzman drafting three feet behind Byron's bus on the long, long downhill off the rim of Crater Lake. The heavy thunderstorm that pelted us overnight at Horseshoe Bend? Douwe thought he could do the camping without a tent and on this wet night he ended up sleeping on the floor in the restroom. The secluded group site Dan mentions at the end of Stage 4? See the photo above, right: the busy main camp is behind the photographer; the group site is up on that bluff in the distance, way, way off by itself...one of the most amazing group sites anywhere. The brisk tailwind he mentions on Stage 5? It was so brisk we had a little paceline maxxed out at 39 mph, mile after mile, with big Dave Deitz on the front, me next, and a handful of other riders tucked in behind. We could have gone faster but we ran out of gears. Getting lost in the maze of little roads in the Coquille River Valley? True enough but it barely begins to describe what a major clusterbleep that was, with several people getting seriously off-course, logging many extra miles, and finally straggling into camp very late and very grumpy. I don't even want to commit to print some of the things that happened that afternoon.

We had a different person in charge of the menus and cooking that year and he fancied himself a wizard chef. His recipes and prep work were way too complex. Thinking of our wonderful night in that Sunset Bay group site, I can remember the cook crew struggling endlessly to shell and devein about a million prawns. No doubt the dinner was great but with several dozen very hungry riders after a long day in the saddle, jumbo bags of frozen, tail-off prawns would have sufficed. We learn these little lessons as we go along.

Another lesson learned the hard way on this tour was about reserving campsites. They have a very special group site at Jedediah Smith State Park along the Smith River (last night of the tour). In contrast, the main camp is nothing special. I tried to book that group site within one second of the booking window opening, only to find it had already been booked several days previously. Grrrr! Booking campsites is never easy and never a sure thing. It's one of those little behind-the-scenes tasks that most of the participants never think about. But reserving the sites you need—or not getting them—can literally make or break a tour.

CRATER *to* COAST

Dan Gurney shares his impressions of the SRCC Southern Oregon Tour

Day 1. Moments after leaving Howard Prairie Lake (near Ashland), I found companions going my speed. We rode and talked for miles, three abreast, spinning down empty roads that snaked through shady forests along the wild eastern border of the Rogue River National Forest. A little before noon we emerged from the forests onto Seven Mile Road, north of Upper Klamath Lake...two lanes of straight, smooth, rolling blacktop that stretched across a sunny plain, brilliant green and treeless. We admired the rim of Crater Lake far to the north. To the east and south we could see more distant mountains across a wide sweep of prairie and lake. That day, other than bicycles and sag wagons, Seven Mile Road carried no traffic, and, except fencing along the road and one dairy, we passed no structures made by man. We were as close to the middle of nowhere as one can get and still be on immaculate pavement.

And yet, as we approached that one lonesome dairy, we saw a yellow highway sign warning us of **CONGESTION**. We had to stop. I parked my bike in the road and took a picture of my friends standing on the center stripe, shrugging their shoulders, arms out, palms up, asking, "This is congestion?" I could have remained in the road framing the photo for half an hour, except for the danger of being hit by another bicyclist. We figured the Oregon Highway Department put up the sign just for us.

We ate lunch that day in Fort Klamath, a town a tenth the size of Tomales, but still the biggest settlement we would see in two and a half days of riding. Chewing peanut butter and/or avocado sandwiches, we contemplated the hour-long ascent of Mount Mazama that lay ahead. It turned out to be a lovely, gradual climb with spectacular views into Annie Creek Canyon. At the end of the day, as we turned into Mazama Village Campground, it was clear to me that Mr. Bill had put together the kind of tour cyclists dream of.

Day 2. I thought viewing Crater Lake and riding around the crater's rim would be the most memorable events of Day 2. Crater Lake is the deepest lake in North America and is the only large lake in America with water pure enough to drink. That depth and purity are what give the lake its famous deep blue color. Wizard Island, a little volcanic cone poking up out of the lake, tells of a time when the scene was less tranquil.

But Day 2 had many other high points, including fifty miles of downhill on roads so suave you could approach or maybe exceed the speed limit. Part way down, we passed Diamond Lake, an aptly named treasure. Just beyond, the Umpqua River canyon clutched three waterfalls like jewels (Clearwater, Watson, and Tokatee)...each different, each impressive, each well worth discovering. Watson Falls, the highest, had a trail to its base. I stood in shade by the waterfall's wet wind, surrounded by the hushing noise the river made as it plummeted earthward from basalt cliffs 300' above. Cool beads of dew—welcome on this warm day—clung to my arms and legs. We coasted into Horseshoe Bend Campground along the Umpqua, and seeking relief from the heat, most of us soon found our way to the swimming hole. As we tucked into our bedrolls that evening, we noticed a few gathering clouds floating across the starry sky...

Day 3. A long, loud, wet thunderstorm rumbled down out of the Cascades that night. Hunger, lightning, thunder, and the sound of rain on tent fabric kept me awake, worrying through the wee hours mostly about riding in rain come morning. I woke up in a damp sleeping bag thanks to a ground cloth that deftly carried the rain fly's runoff to the leaky floor under me. My eyes, on the other hand, were dry from sleeplessness. It was a misty, moist daybreak, and before breakfast, I installed fenders as a supplication for Oregon sun. It worked: the sun

burned off the morning mist, and by day's end in Camas Valley, the temperature was near 100°. When planning this ride, Bill had expected these valley miles to be the boring but necessary ones, connecting the scenic mountains with the spectacular seashore. "The eggs you have to break to make the omelet," as he put it. Instead, he told us he had found some sweet little roads through Roseburg and the surrounding countryside, but I don't think anyone believed him. I didn't. I'd driven through Roseburg before. It turned out that he was right. We enjoyed quiet roads as pretty (and as hot) as the best roads in Lake and Napa Counties. Except when our bus or sags came along, our conversations were seldom interrupted by shouts of "car back." A few people were surprised and sorely tested by the long, hot, steep climb on Coos Bay Wagon Road near the end of the day, but I had my granny's help over that one.

Day 4. Day four opened with an hour-long downhill hoot, broken only by a stop to admire an old covered bridge. We rode into the lovely, agricultural Coquille River Valley, with its storybook farms, near enough to the coast now to forget all about the heat we'd endured the day before. Mesmerized by the beauty, many of us got lost meandering about on a maze of little roads along the river. "Is this Fat Elk Road or Fishtrap Landing Road?" But it didn't matter which wrong road we found, they were all lovely—the prettiest little valley in the world.

At one point, we passed a modest, but particularly well-kept house whose perfect lawn, trimmed hedges, and redolent flower beds shone with the pride of ownership. A polished middle-aged Buick gleamed in the driveway. I remarked in a voice loud enough for the riders around me to hear, "Isn't that the prettiest picture you ever saw?" As the words left my lips, the owner, who had been out of view crouched behind his car, straightened up, smiled shyly, and waved his buffing rag.

We camped that night in a secluded group site on a bluff overlooking picturesque Sunset Bay. The scenery at Sunset Bay State Park is possibly the most beautiful on the entire west coast, and we arrived in time to stroll along the beach and among the flowers at nearby Shore Acres, a large formal garden begun a century ago by logging king Louis Simpson. We were also treated to the amazing spectacle of thousands of barking sea lions hauled out on the rocks a few miles south of our campsite.

Day 5. After a foggy breakfast we rode along a ridge of rolling coastal hills known as the Seven Devils and had a fun swoosh down East Beaver Hill Road to the north bank of the lovely Coquille River, which we followed to the seacoast town of Bandon. Most of us stopped for an ice cream cone at the famous Bandon Creamery and then headed south to our campground at Humbug Mountain. Some of the route was along the beautiful cliffs above the sea and some was on a rather unremarkable stretch of Hwy 101, away from the ocean. After four days of riding quiet country roads, two or three abreast, we had to adjust to riding single file along the shoulder of a busy highway. However, a brisk tailwind helped us put this section behind us as quickly as possible, and the day finished up with a generous sampling of rocky headlands tumbling down to the blue Pacific.

Day 6. We followed the spectacular SW Oregon coast on our way back to California. Early in the day, we approached a construction zone where the road was being repaved. We prepared for a grim stretch of chewed-up road, but the flagger waved us out onto brand-new asphalt, and we became the first cyclists to schuss downhill on its silky surface. Coming down Cape Sebastian was for many the fastest downhill of the tour. Only a few riders chose to forsake the coastline for the longer, optional climb into the wooded hills south of Pistol River, but those who did report a wonderful 25-mile detour reminiscent of Myers Grade. After leaving Oregon, we abandoned Hwy 101 for quiet backroads winding down to journey's end at Jedediah Smith State Park in an ancient grove of redwoods along the Smith River, the last wild river in California.



Stage 1: near Fort Klamath on the road to Crater Lake



Stage 3: Watson Falls



Stage 5: Cape Arago



Stage 4: Umpqua River

Stage 7: Cape Sebastian Scenic Corridor





• Central Coast Tour •

June 21-28, 1997

This is another tour we ran another time, in 2013. This was the first year we prepared a preview booklet for a tour and against all odds, that document still exists. Unfortunately, it's not online and we can't link to it. It's almost the same as the booklet prepared for the 2013 tour, with just a few minor differences. If you browse that doc, you'll pretty well have the scope of this tour.

There were some differences though. Mostly we learned some things on this first tour and revised and improved those elements the second time around. But not in all cases. For instance: Fort Hunter-Liggett and the Mission San Antonio de Padua (within the fort). On this first tour, the Franciscan fathers were still in residence at the mission and they would not accept one dime from us to stay in the woodsy meadow below the mission. We had access to showers and a swimming pool at the rec center on the army base. And we made arrangements for dinner and breakfast at William Randolph Hearst's magnificent old Hacienda Ranch House. My report at the time said the food was not great but it was decent. They normally did not do breakfast at all but for three dozen cyclists, they brought in the staff and laid on a special breakfast seating just for us. None of that was the same in 2013. By then, both the mission and the Hacienda were being run by private concessionaires. We could still stay at the mission (for a price) but we didn't even try to dine at the Ranch House, nor use the pool or showers at the army rec center. We also were allowed to use a nice closed road out the backside of the army base to begin the next day's ride on this tour. But in 2013, in the militant, post 9/11 world, that was off limits. We had to do a longer and much less interesting detour instead. So some things improved on the second tour but others...not so much.

One of the best things all week was our camp at Santa Margarita Lake. For reasons I cannot now recall, I had reserved, sight unseen, what I thought would be a decent group site at that park. It turned out to be a big, bare parking lot for RVs, out in the baking sun. As we were just beginning to put up our tents, a nice ranger lady saw us, grabbed me and drove me out to a lovely, grassy, shaded meadow, right on the lake, and said, "Wouldn't this be better?" It was supposed to be only a day-use area but she bent the rules for us. And if that's not enough, in the evening a guy showed up with a jumbo-size hot tub on a flat-bed truck. For a cost of—I think—\$100, he fired it up, nice and hot. Many of us spent the later evening soaking in the tub, under the stars, right on the shore of the beautiful lake.

Another cool feature on the tour was the hike-and-bike on the final day: hike through Pinnacles National Monument and hop on your bike on the other side. (There is no east-to-west road through the park.) We talked to the rangers and they worked with us. We loaded all the bikes into our truck after the next-to-last stage, then Vin Hoagland, Rich Fuglewicz, and Wendy Page drove the 60 miles around to the west trailhead. Although there is no campground over there, with the rangers' blessing, Rich and Wendy were allowed to spend the night to watch over all the bikes. Vin then drove back to the east trailhead, where we were camped. In the morning, we loaded all the luggage in the truck and he drove back around again, or actually to the tour finish in Carmel Valley. Complicated but worth it!

CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Last year, after our wonderful Southern Oregon Tour, we were pessimistic about putting together another tour as nice for 1997. Now, after returning from eight days of cycling in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and San Benito Counties, many of the three dozen participants are asserting that this trip was at least as good as that one. Whether it was better or not is the sort of happy argument folks lucky enough to have been on both trips can kick around all winter. In any event, it was certainly different.

For one thing, we were without the services of Byron and his magic cycle-touring support bus. We had to improvise with a rented truck to haul the gear and car pools to haul the bodies to and from Monterey. Fortunately, all those logistical details fell nicely into place, thanks to exhaustive (and exhausting) advance planning, and especially thanks to the members of the group, who individually and collectively rose to the occasion and handled every challenge cheerfully and competently...no slackers, no whiners, and no loose cannons. A great group.

The tour began with a non-cycling afternoon in Monterey. While some of the group visited the famous, newly expanded aquarium, others strolled the waterfront or shopped, and then everyone assembled in the evening for a restaurant dinner before retiring to the beautiful group camp at the top of the Del Monte Forest. All the extra cars were shuttled out to our tour destination in Carmel Valley to await our return, and we hit the hay, eagerly anticipating our first day's ride the following morning.

In defiance of Monterey's reputation for chilly summer fog, Day 1 dawned clear and absolutely gorgeous...a pattern of great weather that would hold for most of the tour. We started out with a run around the justly famous 17-mile Drive...silk-smooth pavement and the best scenery money can buy...a plutocrat's idea of a wilderness experience. After meandering through the Hansel-and-Gretel streets of Carmel, we hit the highway: Hwy 1 south—meaning the cliffs and climbs and classic postcard panoramas of Big Sur. Everyone knows what Big Sur looks like, right? But until you ride it on a bike, bowling along on a brisk tailwind, you can't really appreciate what a splendid place this rugged chunk of real estate is. More than one rider, caught up in first-day-of-the-tour excitement, blasted off in an explosion of excess energy...an overindulgence on a hilly, 73-mile day that many would regret later in the week. We camped that evening at Lime Kiln State Park. Our actual campsite was a bit cramped, but any inconvenience was more than made up for by the surrounding natural wonders: below camp, a beautiful beach, and above, a magnificent, 100' waterfall splashing down into a cave-like grotto...well worth the fairly arduous hike it took to find it.

Day 2 was intentionally kept short (44 miles) to leave the afternoon free for an optional tour of Hearst Castle. Over half the group took the tour, while the others either lollied about the beach at San Simeon State Park or added a few bonus miles on San Simeon Creek Road near camp. The main ride was a reprise of Big Sur's spectacular scenery...climbing up and over the rocky headlands and descending madly into each succeeding canyon...before the coast route leveled out just north of San Simeon.

In the opinion of many riders, Day 3 was the highlight of the tour, as we turned away from the sea and climbed into the hills of San Luis Obispo County. While the shorter, easier route stayed near the coast as far south as Morro Bay, the more challenging optional route tackled the steep climbs and dizzy descents along Santa Rosa Creek Road and Old Creek Road, south of Cambria. Although the climbs were tough (5000' in 68 miles), what everyone talked about later were the many downhill delights: mile after mile of smooth descending through sun-dappled

woods. Biking at its best. We camped that night at Santa Margarita Lake, where an angel in ranger's clothing went to a lot of extra effort to place us in a beautiful campsite off by ourselves...with an oak-studded lawn sloping down to the lakeshore in front of us and magnificent rocky crags looming behind. Bobcat, deer, and osprey all put in appearances during our stay. This was probably the nicest campsite of the tour.

Day 4 was every bit as fine a ride as Day 3: over 70 miles of peaceful backroads—all of them completely devoid of cars—wandering around in the rolling hills south of Paso Robles and Atascadero...roads used in the Central Coast double and the SLO Wildflower Century. This area is so quiet and unpopulated that we passed through only one small town all day (Creston)...and you missed that one if you blinked. Two highly entertaining downhill spills spilled us out into Paso Robles, where we camped at the Mid-State Fairgrounds (site of the Great Western Bike Rally) and dined out on the town. (It was a fine testimony to our cook crews that everyone agreed the dinners we made for ourselves in camp were far superior to any we had when we ate in restaurants.)

Day 5, from PR to the Mission San Antonio de Padua in Fort Hunter Liggett, was a little less exciting than the previous days—more quiet roads to nowhere—but it was also somewhat easier (less climbing) and that had a certain appeal to folks nursing tired legs. After riding through quiet, empty hills all day, we finished up in the middle of a curious "village" made up of oddly mismatched elements: we camped at the beautiful 1772 mission, showered and swam at a modern sports complex (part of the Army base), and took dinner and breakfast at the grand old Hacienda Ranch House (a splendid pile designed in the 20's for William Randolph Hearst by Julia Morgan...now on the National Register of Historic Places). It really is a grand old edifice...too bad the cuisine and service at the restaurant didn't quite measure up to the impressive setting.

We began Day 6 with a run out the backside of Hunter Liggett on a sleepy little road, normally off-limits to civilians, but opened up especially for us by the cheerful MPs. After a brief climb and a rocket descent along Jolon Road, we rolled out into the Salinas River Valley...America's salad bowl...home to every sort of vegetable crop, from chilis to lettuce to onions to tomatoes. On the far side of King City, the two route options diverged, but both offered more quiet backroads climbing slowly into the hills on the east side of the valley. Both routes led to Hwy 25, which took us north over a series of small climbs and snappy little descents, eventually delivering us to the large campground at the east entrance to the Pinnacles National Monument. The Pinnacles presented us with our biggest logistical challenge: there is an access road from Hwy 25 on the east and another from Hwy 101 on the west, but they don't connect. The only way to cross through the park is to hike. So we loaded all our bikes in the truck and shuttled them around on the perimeter road, while we hiked the 3.3 miles through the park (on the morning of Day 7).

It was well worth it. The hike through the towering, sculpted spires and shadowy caves and canyons of this old volcanic plug was one of the best adventures on the trip. Back on the bikes, we climbed steeply up from the west trailhead and then flew back to the Salinas River Valley one more time on a wild, 9-mile plunge down Shirttail Canyon. Once out on the valley floor, we confronted the only adverse weather of the entire tour: a stiff headwind that would beat on us all the way to end of the 65-mile ride. This was unfortunate, because the final 40 miles of the route represent one of the nicest bike rides anywhere...Arroyo Seco and Carmel Valley Roads, with a climb up to Cahoon summit (highest point on the tour) followed by miles of superb downhill. Most folks were a little too whipped by the wind and by the cumulative total of over 450 miles and 26,000' of climbing to appreciate it. But in spite of being tired, everyone finished up with very positive memories of a great tour.



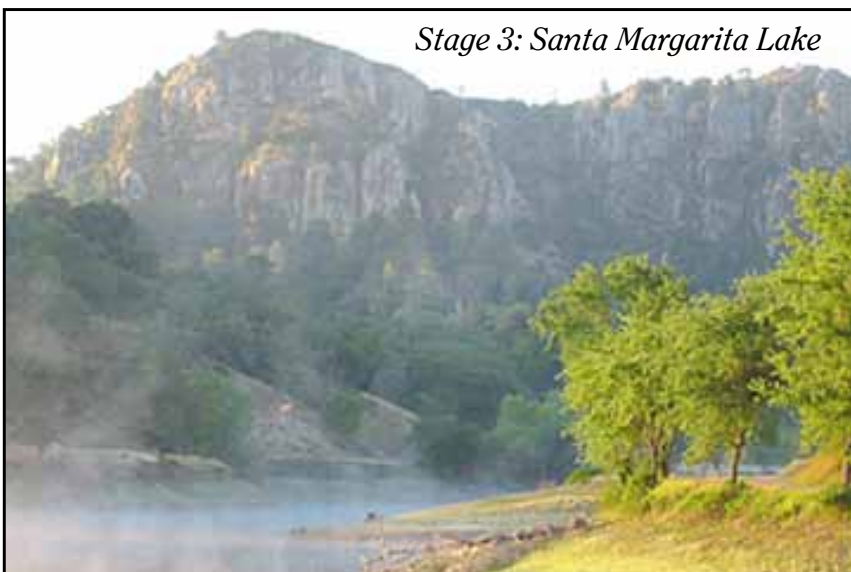
*Stage 5: Mission
San Antonio de Padua*



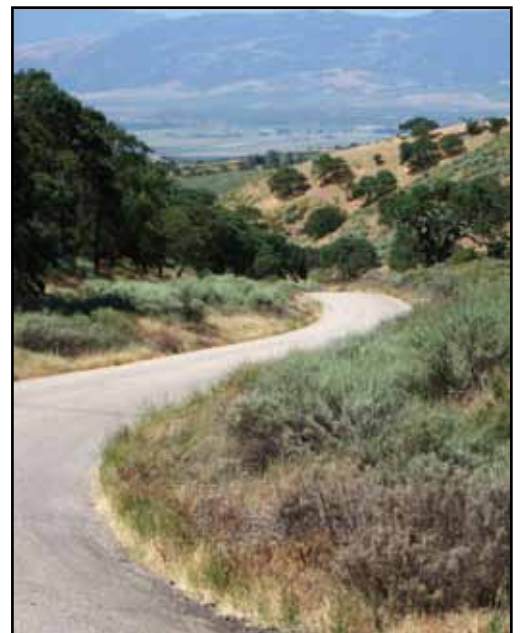
*Stage 1:
Lime Kiln Falls*



Stage 4: Park Hill Road



Stage 3: Santa Margarita Lake



Stage 7: Shirttail Canyon, Pinnacles National Monument



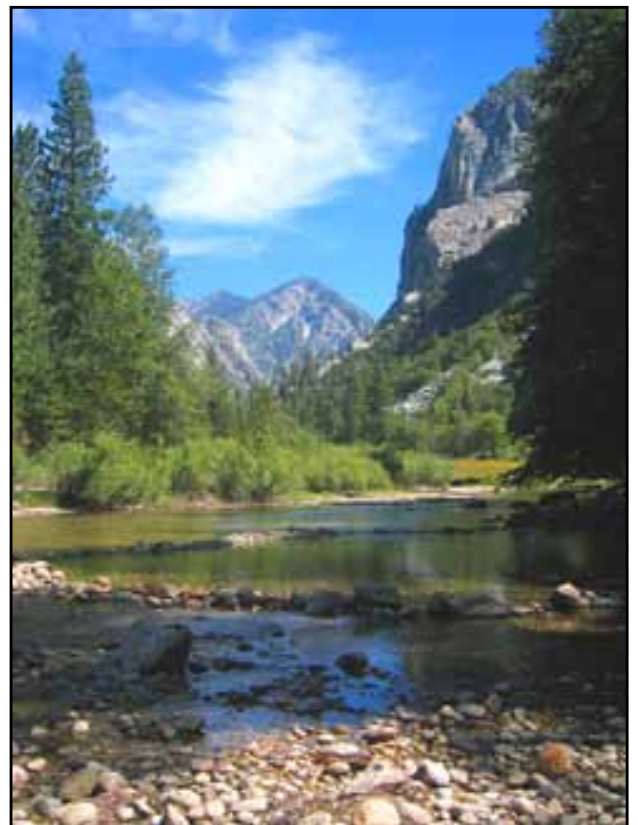
• Three Parks Tour •

September 11-20, 1998

A tour connecting the three big national parks in the Sierra: Yosemite (above), Kings Canyon (right), and Sequoia. It seemed like such an audacious and ambitious undertaking, almost too much to comprehend. And yet when we got all the details nailed down—the routes and reservations—it turned out to be just about the perfect tour. It was a challenging week—big climbs, early and often—up and down, all along the granite backbone of the High Sierra. (Some of the elevation profiles are absurd.) But we did it and we loved it. Those who were fortunate to be there still count it as one of the best tours ever, perhaps one of the highlights of their entire cycling lives.

This tour was run again in 2008. Although we had a preview booklet for this 1998 tour, I'm afraid I cannibalized it to create the 2008 book, never thinking these early documents might have some historical value. If you read the book for the later tour, you will have this 1998 version pretty well covered.

There are only two significant differences. On this tour, we had a layover day in Yosemite Valley between Stages 2 and 3; on the 2008 tour, we had a layover day in Kings Canyon between Stages 5 and 6 (that is, between the two hardest days of the tour and after we had five tough stages in our legs). That made more sense. Also, on this first version of the tour we spent our last night in a trashy campground in Three Rivers...really a dump. Second time around, we stayed in a lovely inn just outside the southern gateway to Sequoia National Park. Big improvement! You can read about it in the 2008 book. The tour was already awesome; those little adjustments made it even better.



The Three Parks Tour

—Bill Oettinger

From September 12-20, 40 Santa Rosa Cycling Club members and friends participated in the club's annual cycle-tour, an adventure that—in its 1998 version—tested the limits of both the rider's physical endurance and their ability to absorb spectacular scenery. It was sensory overload at almost every bend in the road and over the crest of every hill...and there were many, many hills...as we traveled the Sierra high road through Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks.

After riding Byron's magic bus to Bridgeport, everyone settled into our first night camp on the banks of Robinson Creek, under the towering peaks of the Eastern Sierra. That camp was one of the nicest on the trip: a vast, rolling meadow, broken up with granite boulders and pretty little groves of aspen trees. Most of the riders loosened up their legs with a 13-mile out-&-back along the shores of Twin Lakes...a really impressive setting, with jagged mountain peaks looming at the end of the lakes.

The first real day on the road featured two big climbs: 8138' Conway summit and 9945' Tioga Pass (the highest paved road in California). Conway was relatively easy: just a long, gradual spin up to the vista point overlooking Mono Lake. With the day's route listed at only 52 miles, some of the more ambitious members of the group chose to pad their miles with optional out-&-backs on either Bodie Road or Virginia Lakes Road (both beautiful, well paved, and all sizzling downhill on the way back). There was a long, fast downhill off Conway to near the shore of the briny lake, and then folks settled down to mastering the big ascent of Tioga: 3200' in 12 miles. While this climb is never very steep, the high elevation can take its toll, and many riders huffed and puffed along at very slow speeds for most of the afternoon to get the job done. Finally, once over the top, we all got to enjoy a final, six-mile descent to our camp at Tuolumne Meadows...a smooth, delightful, 40-mph run that set the tone for the days to come: long climbs and smooth, fast descents.

Day 2 was more about descending than climbing, as we dropped from Yosemite National Park's attic at Tuolumne (8600') all the way to the legendary Yosemite Valley (under 4000'). In an effort to avoid the worst of Yosemite's notorious traffic, we scheduled our visit here to be on weekdays after Labor Day, and for the most part, this helped in keeping our entanglements with cars and RVs to tolerable levels. Except for the occasional irritating incident, we mostly had the roads to ourselves. Highlights on this day were jewel-like Tenaya Lake, the views from Olmsted Point, and the many examples of spalled, exfoliated granite that make this park such a natural sculpture garden. And then there were the downhills... Although there were a few rather substantial climbs, the main business of the day was descending—mile after mile after mile—all of it on well-engineered, beautifully paved roads. We had a ball! And with only 58 miles to do, start-to-finish, most riders were in camp in the valley shortly after lunch time, even with a late start. That left plenty of time for showers, exploring, dining, and getting acquainted with the ground squirrels and racoons that invited themselves to dinner. (Although we had been warned about aggressive bears, we never saw one in Yosemite or anywhere else on the trip.)

The following day (Day 2.1) was a layover day for sampling the many attractions of this Disneyland-for-adults. Some folks climbed to the top of Half Dome and some hiked to Glacier Point. A large group rode the tour bus to Glacier Point and some rode their bikes back (another 4000' descent). A few others rode their bikes up to Glacier Point and back, and others just spent the day lounging around camp or exploring the valley,

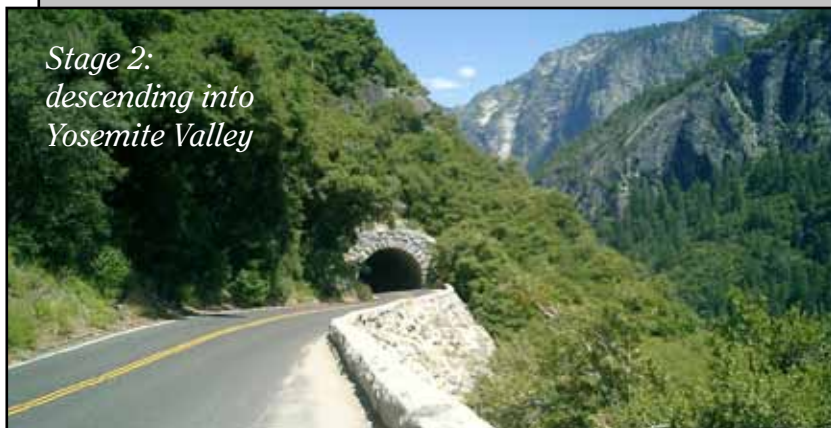
We bid the valley goodbye on Day 3 with a long climb out of the valley along Wawona Road, including an interesting, mile-long run through the Wawona tunnel...quite exciting. Most folks stopped at the famous old Wawona Hotel to soak up a little of its Victorian charm before leaving Yosemite Park via a long, long descent toward the town of Oakhurst. (There are actually two great descents along the Wawona Road, each around 12 miles long. Neither is very steep, but with a little pedaling, both can be turned into immensely entertaining full-tilt fliers.) Oakhurst brought us to probably the least pleasant miles of the trip. A road construction project forced us to detour around our planned route on a longer, hillier, busier, and, as luck would have it, hotter road. All in all, these may have been the hardest few miles of the tour, but all ended well: our camp on beautiful Bass Lake was just a few steps from a pleasant beach, and the temperature of the water was perfect for swimming, which is what most of the hot, tired riders did for the rest of the day.

Day 4 explored a network of tiny backroads in the foothills south of Yosemite and north of Kings Canyon. There were great descents all day long, as well as several quite daunting climbs, and with the mercury bubbling up into the high 90's, it eventually turned into quite a long day, especially for those who opted for the longer, hillier route. After the relatively busy roads around Yosemite, these little lanes were a treat: most were thoroughly devoid of traffic. We camped overnight in a quiet county park on the bank of the Kings River, and as at Bass Lake, most folks hopped in the water to cool down after the ride. Only in this case, that meant a lot cooler: whereas Bass Lake was quite warm, the Kings River was cold! You could dive right into deep water right at our camp, and it's just as well we could, because no one would willingly have gotten in all the way had they attempted to wade in, inch by inch. Some of the friskier players organized an impromptu crit around the park roads before dinner...sandals only, one speed only, and no helmets (just to keep it easygoing). The race stayed pretty mellow, but somehow the rivalries didn't end with the race: later that night, Emilio's bike was found 30 feet up a tree. (This was only one of several practical jokes on the tour. Most notable among the pranksters was Gary Grayson, sneaking around in the night, slipping lead weights into the saddlebags of some of the stronger climbers. Gary called it handicapping, as in horse racing. At the end of the tour, Gary revealed all and presented King and Queen of the Hill awards to Emilio and Donna Birky.)

Day 5 was billed as the hardest day of the tour: over 75 miles and almost 10,000' of climb on our way into Kings Canyon. Most of the climbing came in the first 40-some miles...4000' in the steeply folded foothills and 4000' in the long (Tioga-sized) grade up into the park. It was a hard day, but most riders actually felt it was a wonderful day in the saddle. The big climbs were mostly shady and not too steep...and then there was the descent into Kings Canyon (the deepest gorge in the country): 3600' down in a little less than 20 miles, all of it through some of the most breathtaking scenery imaginable. Most people are familiar with the granite cliffs of Yosemite, but far fewer have experienced the magnificent stone ramparts of Kings. It was a real eye-opener for many tour participants, and a number of people said it was the highlight of their trip.

Day 6 began with a silky, ten-mile downhill along the Kings River (as slick and slinky as a downhill could be), and then a long—but gentle—climb out of the canyon and up to the Generals Highway that connects Kings to Sequoia NP. This was actually the longest day on the tour (almost 90 miles), but it ended with almost 30 miles of downhill (losing 6000'), and so didn't seem quite as arduous as the two preceding days.

Once into Sequoia, we took side trips to pay our respects to the majestic big trees and many riders shed their cleats to hike to the top of granite monolith Moro Rock for views as grand as any on the tour. Finally, we launched off into that ultimate descent: an endless, tangled snake of a road, with dozens and dozens of switchbacks and S-bends dancing down into the canyon of the Kaweah River. Many folks agreed: this is probably the wildest, most exciting and entertaining descent they've ever done. You really have to ride it to understand how great it is. It took a downhill this fantastic to put the proper exclamation point on a tour that had been larger than life every day and every mile along the way. Truly, an epic journey.



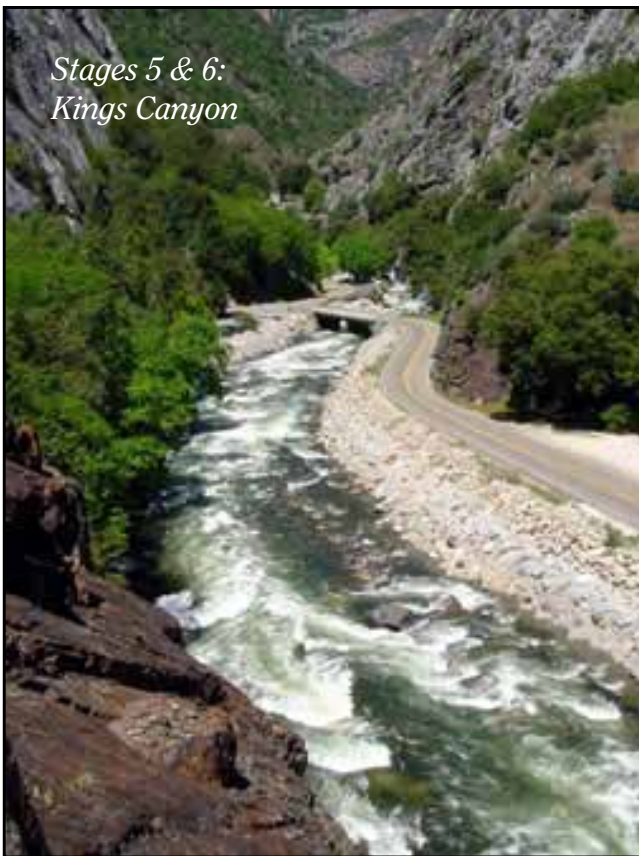
Stage 2:
descending into
Yosemite Valley

Stage 1: climbing to Tioga Pass



Stages 2 & 3: Yosemite Valley

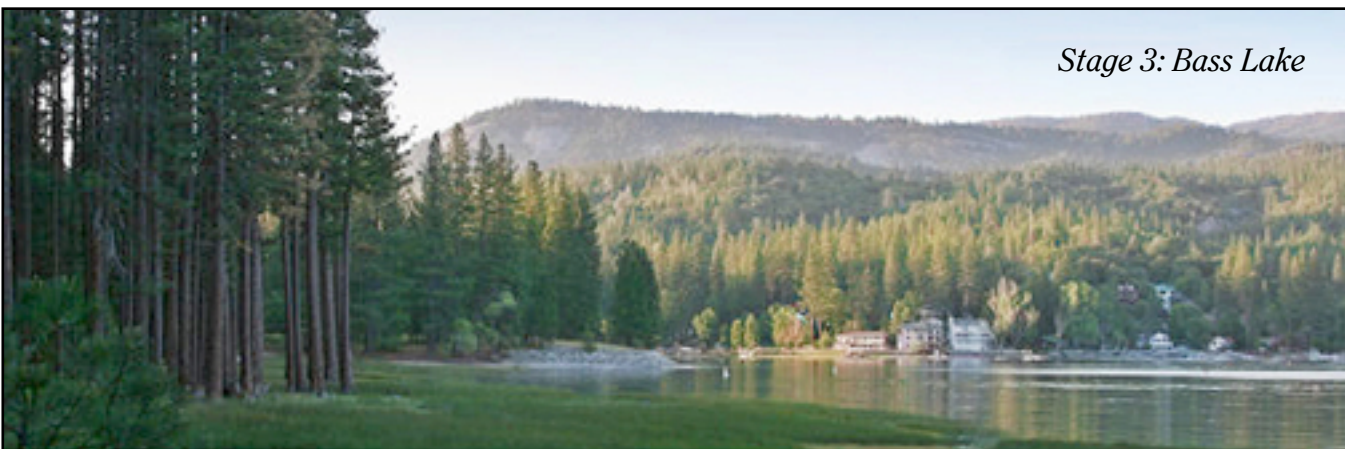
*Stages 5 & 6:
Kings Canyon*

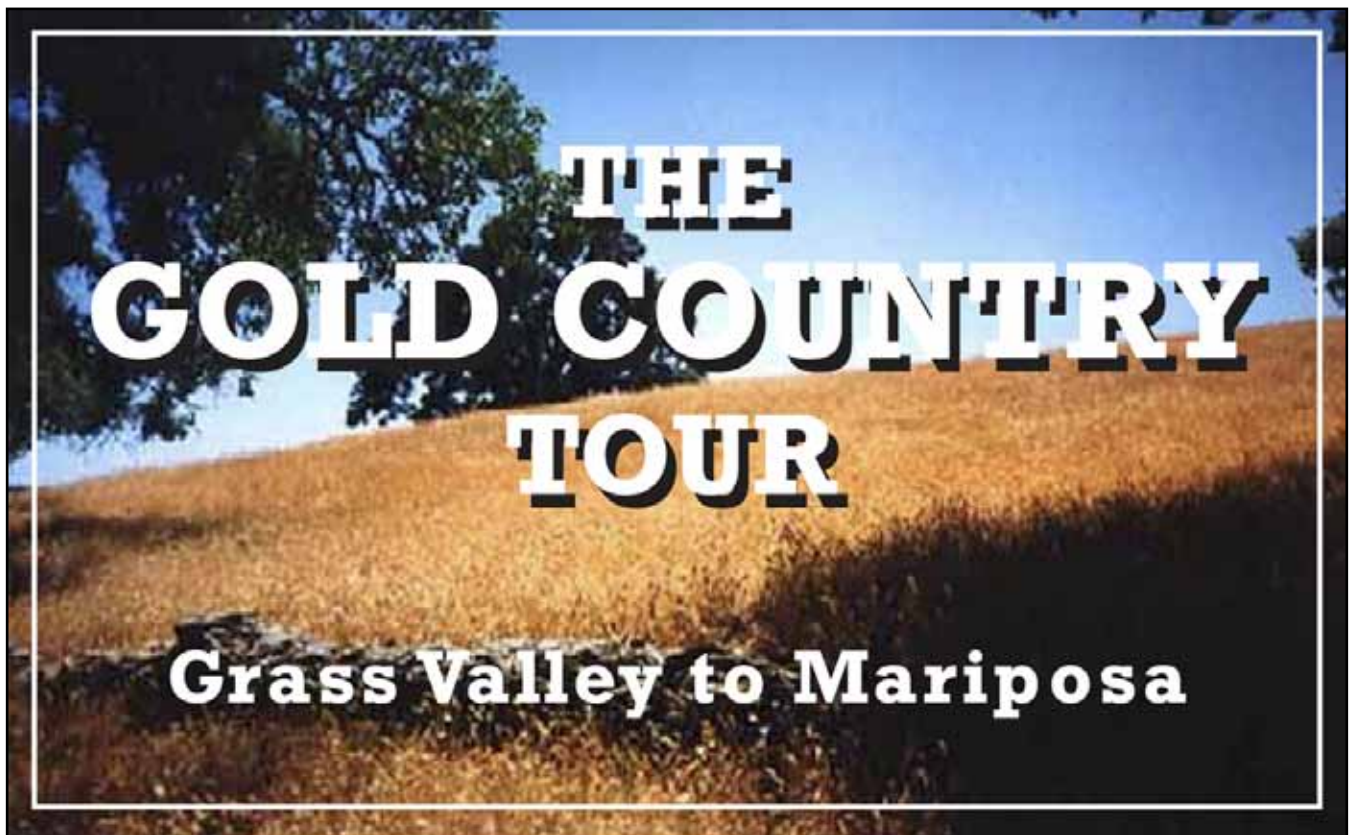


*Stage 6:
Sequoia National Park*



Stage 3: Bass Lake





June 5-12, 1999

Finally, a preview booklet for which we can provide a link: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/gold-country-tour/>

That opens the Gold Country Tour page at the Adventure Velo website. Once there you can click on the link to the tour booklet. The graphics and formatting are a little crude by the standards of later years but it's fairly accurate.

The report in the July, 1999 newsletter was much shorter than our usual after-tour reports. What it says is correct but there's not much of it. One item that needs comment is the matter of the elevation gain being badly underestimated. This was a chronic problem on all of the early tours. In those days, before GPS was available, my wife and I would scout the routes in our Honda with the first-generation Avocet altimeter propped up in the car's ash tray. The Avocet, tabulating its data from barometric pressure, had lots of glitches but the main one in this scenario is that it could keep up with elevation changes at bike speed but not at car speed. As we would zoom up and over some little summit, its read-out would be lagging hundreds of feet behind. We were aware of the problem and on really big mountain passes we'd stop at the top and wait for it to catch up before making notes in our running log. But the Gold Country is a lot like Sonoma County: many, many smaller climbs all jumbled together, short but steep. If we had stopped on the top of every little ridge, it would have taken weeks to scout all the stages. We did our best but it was garbage in, garbage out. After awhile, with so many climbs being bigger than what was listed in the preview book and on the route slips, someone started calling them Mr Bill's Mystery Hills.

This tour was extremely hilly. The newsletter report says the elevation gain was 45,000' over about 500 miles. My own log shows 47,000' in 508 miles. Compare that to the 1998 Three Parks Tour: 39,500' over 503 miles. We thought that was a monster but this bad boy was way worse. That's the most elevation gain we've ever recorded on a one-week tour. And while some of the gain was accumulated on longer but more moderate grades, most of it was logged on ferociously steep pitches, way up into double digits. It was a beast.

And yet...I don't recall any of the three dozen participants being totally destroyed by the hard work. I can remember being well used up on some of the days but not utterly hammered. We were young and dumb and full of energy!



Gold Country Tour strikes it rich

Thirty riders and a half-dozen support personnel recently completed a week-long cycling dream ride on the 1999 edition of the Santa Rosa Cycling Club's annual multi-day tour. Starting in Grass Valley and ending in Mariposa, the tour took seven days to meander down the entire length of California's legendary Mother Lode...eight days if you count the 20-mile prologue ride up to Nevada City on our arrival day.

They say timing is everything, and that certainly applies to the scheduling of this tour. In the week prior to our ride, the snow level in the Sierras was as low as 4000', with some of our roads and campsites as high as 5000'. And yet, one week later, we saw nothing but blue skies and balmy climates...every day in the 70's or 80's...perfect weather for cycling.

Scenery was everything we expected it to be: picturesque pioneer towns; tiny backroads through the empty foothills or out across the oak-studded grasslands; vistas to distant, snow-capped peaks; wild rivers, flower-flecked meadows, and peaceful, sun-dappled forests. And the roads...ah, the roads! A very few roads were too busy, and a few other roads had rather decrepit pavement, but in between, the vast majority of the miles were covered on silky smooth asphalt, with hardly a car or truck to be seen.

Perhaps the only knock on the tour was that the elevation gain had been woefully underestimated by the tour planner. Days that were listed at 4000' of gain usually ended up closer to 6000'. After the first couple of days, riders started factoring in another 25% over whatever was listed. On the bright side, the total amount of downhill went up by a similar amount, and these were some really terrific descents...much longer than we're used to in Sonoma County...often several miles long and almost always with top-quality paving. What's more, the descents were never boring: they were all twisty and curvaceous, rewarding frisky descenders with extremely high readings on their fun-o-meters. Overall, the seven stages of the tour added up to about 500 miles and 45,000' of climbing.

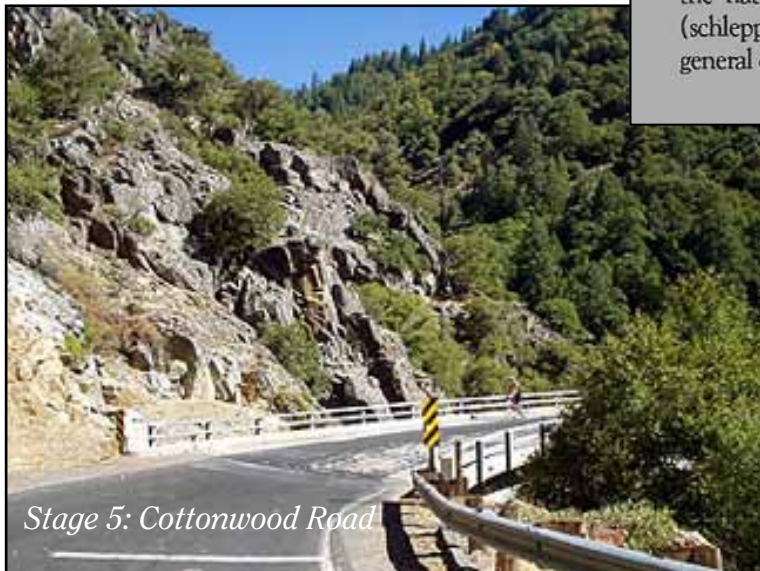
Campgrounds were good to excellent, with the highlight probably being the Yosemite-like waterfall and lake at Cherry Valley Forest Service Camp. The group appeared to gel very well, with little or no friction or fuss. Special thanks should go to our wonderful crew: Byron Feldhake (at the controls of the magic bus); Susan Edmonds (food guru); Marty Powell, Rich Stout, Linda Grayson, & Martha Barton (sags)...and an extra tip of the hat to riders Donna Younger (menu planning); Doug Simon (schlepping gear from the club locker); and Bob Stolzman (finances and general oversight). Thanks to one and all! —Bill Oettinger, tour leader



Stage 3: Bridgeport School Road



Stage 3:
Shake Ridge
Road



Stage 5: Cottonwood Road



Stage 4: Campo Seco Road

*Stage 3: St George Hotel,
Volcano*



*Photo on page 29:
Stage 2: French Creek Road*

*Stage 4:
Columbia State Historic Park*



*Stage 3: climbing Perry Creek
on the way to Slug Gulch*



Stage 5: Big Hill





The Bigfoot Tour webpage at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/168-2/>

This was our first foray into the Northwest corner of California. It is in some respects the precursor of all the Wild Rivers Tours that would follow in the years ahead. Unlike those carpool-based loop routes, on this one we still had Byron and his bus to shuttle us along, so we could end up far from where we started...as the header above says, from Yreka to the Avenue of the Giants.

The preview booklet linked above was revised after the tour to reflect changes we made en route. In its original configuration, there was only one route on Stage 1: what ended up being the “short” route of 74 miles. But when we drove into our first camp in Yreka we learned that a forest fire was burning near our route down along the Klamath River. Apparently it would still be okay to go that way but there might be smoke and complications with fire fighters. Gary Grayson suggested a hillier and slightly longer route that would avoid the problem area. We kicked it around and decided it was worth doing, at least for the hardier riders who were comfortable with the additional climbing (fairly substantial). I think this was our first encounter with a wildfire—the first of many over the years—and we did what we do when confronted with a problem: we talked through it, weighed our options and made good decisions. Half the group stuck with the lowland route, just dodging around the fire, while the other half tackled the hilly route and had a great time.

The route slips will say Stage 1 ends in Happy Camp, same as Stage 3 does on most of the Wild Rivers Tours. But we didn't stay at Curly Jack, the USFS camp closest to town where the WRTs usually stay. We were at Elk Creek, a private camp just up the road. I liked it much better than Curly Jack but the folks who had laid out the first Wild Rivers Tour in 2006 said they'd checked out Elk Creek and felt it had gone downhill and was no longer all that nice. That's something we should always bear in mind when planning tours: nothing stays the same for long, especially when it comes to private camps. The owner or manager gets old and sells out or dies or just fails to stay on top of maintenance and what had been a nice spot goes to pot.

We didn't have a paid food wrangler (or two) on this trip. Long-time club member Bill Ellis offered to be in charge of food while also riding every day. That's a tough challenge. He did it and all was well, but on the final night, after the last dinner had been prepared and he had nothing more to worry about, he relaxed. I mean really relaxed: he won't mind my saying he got drunk as a skunk and we pretty much had to carry him to his tent. He had aspirations of being an Italian chef and put all sorts of effort into his dinners, which we all appreciated. But we had to draw the line in the budget on some things. He wanted pancetta for the spaghetti carbonara. I said to him: “Bill, you can have all the pancetta you want...as long as you spell it B-A-C-O-N.”

BIGFOOT KICKS BUTT

A report by tour director Bill Oetinger on the Bigfoot Tour, the 2000 edition of the club's annual multi-day tour, run from July 22-29.

I was concerned that this year's club tour would not be as successful—as interesting, fun, scenic, etc.—as some of our other recent tours. After all, last year's Gold Country Tour and the prior year's Three Parks Tour (through Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks) were pretty tough acts to follow. Would seven days of riding among the tall trees and along the wild rivers of California's northwest corner really measure up in comparison? In the end, I needn't have worried. The Bigfoot Tour turned out to be as good as any tour we've done. The scenery, the roads, the campgrounds, the weather, and the *esprit* of the participants all added up to something approaching perfection, or as close to it as mere mortals have any right to expect.

After assembling in Santa Rosa, about four dozen riders and support personnel drove north to Yreka, on Interstate-5, just south of the Oregon border, primed for a week of nothing but cycle-touring...

Day 1: Yreka to Happy Camp. 74-78 miles, 2200'-3300'

This was the only day on the tour that offered shorter and longer options. The split in routes came right at the start, with the shorter and flatter route heading north along the Shasta River, downhill through a zone of chapparal and high-desert meadows, to a meeting with Hwy 96 and the long run west along the banks of the Klamath River. This relatively easy run downstream was made more exciting by having to ride through the "war zone" of a forest fire fight. A thousand acres were burning just north of the road, and riders watched helicopters scooping buckets of water out of the river and then roaring off to douse the flames. Fortunately, because the wind was blowing from the road toward the fire, smoke was not a great problem for the riders, and an added bonus was that the emergency forced CalTrans to divert the cyclists onto a nice, quiet side road on the other bank of the river...as it turned out, a better road than the main highway originally planned for our route.

The longer, hillier route attacked its major topographic challenge immediately outside Yreka: over 1500' of climb in a few tough miles to Forest Mountain summit. Doing this first thing in the morning—while it was still cool and we were still fresh—made it fairly painless, and the payoff was a howling downhill of several miles on silk-smooth pavement to the town of Fort Jones. South of town, the route turned onto Scott River Road for 30 miles of absolute cycling nirvana...most of it one lane wide and most of it either alongside the whitewater Scott or dancing up and down over small hills high up on the canyon walls...all of it on excellent pavement and with hardly a car to be seen all day. (This was a repeated theme throughout the tour: smooth pavement and no traffic.) After the two routes rejoined, we rolled downstream next to the Klamath to our shady camp on the bank of little Elk Creek. We saw our hottest temperature of the entire tour on this day: a brief spell in the high 90s. Weather from then on was perfect, from mid 80s to low 90s inland (where it was 110° the following week!) to mid 70s on the coast.

Day 2: Happy Camp to Matthews Creek. 66 miles, 3500'

This was one of the best days we've ever done on a tour. It began with more of the same mellow, gently downhill run south and west along the Klamath, almost always with the river providing impressive vistas around every bend. But the big thrills this day were reserved for the second half of the ride, as we turned east and began to climb up the narrow, rocky gorge of the Salmon River. Here, the road narrowed to one lane and tiptoed along the edge of the canyon cliff, often with a sheer wall soaring high overhead on one side of the road, and an equally sheer dropoff of 100' or more, straight down into the deep green pools of the river on the other side. This was not a place to hammer, and most of us took several opportunities to stop and gaze in wonder down into the depths of this magnificent gorge. Our camp was a pleasant but primitive US Forest Service site in a stand of oak and fir, but any lack of amenities (read: no showers) was more than made up for by one of the best swimming holes of all time, with deep, clear pools snuggled into rocky grottos beneath towering, overhanging cliffs.

Day 3: Matthews Creek to Coffee Creek. 64 miles, 7000'

Most of the riders had been worrying about this day, with two huge climbs of 17 and 7 miles on tap, dodging around the shoulders of the Trinity Alps. As is so often the case though, most of those fears were overblown, for while the two climbs were long, they were never out-of-saddle steep, and a steady cadence got the job done with not too much loss of composure. Best of all, each big climb was followed by an equally big descent, both on satin-smooth pavement. The second downhill—from Scott Mountain summit—was the highlight on the day for those who like to descend: a whirling dervish, corkscrew plunge of several miles that had folks all tied up in knots of excitement. This last big drop was followed by an easy roll-out along the Trinity River to our camp on the bank of Coffee Creek, where another fine swimming hole—with osprey nesting overhead—awaited the tired and sweaty riders.

Day 4: Coffee Creek to Hayfork. 69 miles, 5300'

This day consisted of two distinct parts. The first half was an up-and-down run south along Trinity Lake to the historic town of Weaverville. This section consisted almost entirely of washboard hills...climbs of a mile or so each, followed by somewhat longer descents, all on smooth pavement. Many folks took a break for *al fresco* dining at a streetside, patio cafe in Weaverville—great fruit smoothies!—and then it was off to the main feature of the second half: the long, hot slog up to Hayfork summit, followed by the long, twisty, highly entertaining descent to the town. We pitched our tents that night on the shady lawns of the Trinity County Fairgrounds, just outside Hayfork, where excellent showers made a change from washing up in swimming holes.

Day 5: Hayfork to Grizzly Creek. 67 miles, 5000'

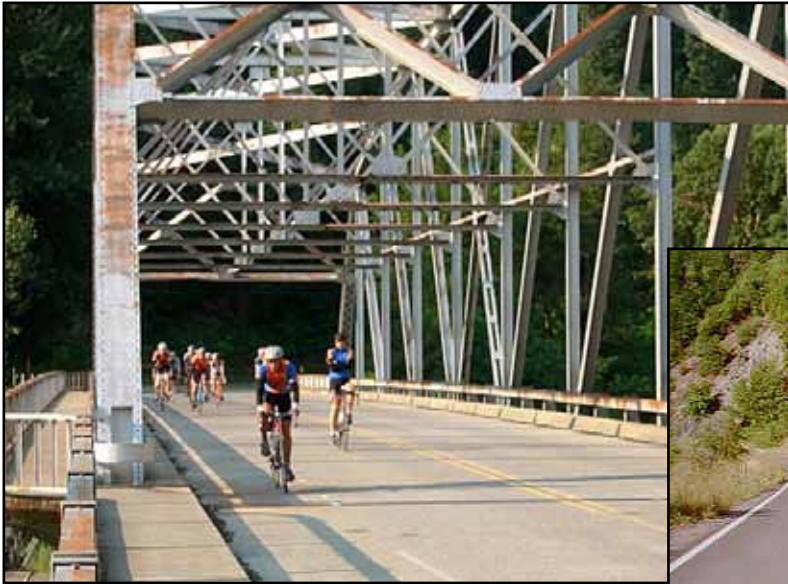
This wonderful stage headed west from the hot, dry interior, dropping into a cooler, temperate zone of redwoods and ferns. There was a significant overall net loss of elevation on this stage, so although there were several long, usually gradual climbs throughout the day, each was chased by an even longer descent, some of which seemed to go on forever. Some of the downhills were wide open and flowing, some were tangled up and twisty, and the last, biggest one was long, steep, and technical to a hair-raising degree...a real white-knuckle drop down the rabbit hole, with several hair-pins that made you think seriously about when the last time was you checked your brake cables. Much of this day was spent in company with the pretty Van Duzen River, and we camped on its bank in a grove of redwoods...a long way—literally as well as visually—from the high, dry chapparal at the start of the tour.

Day 6: Grizzly Creek to the Unknown Coast. 64 miles, 5500'

Day 6 began with a foggy run through the redwoods to the town of Fortuna, and after a brief spell of traffic and urban bustle, an escape to the Unknown Coast via the tiny village of Ferndale. Everyone took time to sample the scenic charms of this historic town before tackling the climbs and descents of the coastal hills between Ferndale and the ocean. This terrain is more like what we're used to in Sonoma County: shorter hills but steeper pitches; in a few cases, wickedly steep walls approaching 20%, both uphill and down. Depending on one's affinity for climbing and descending, these hills were either entertaining or cruel, but in either case, they were surrounded by some of the most magnificent scenery of the tour: sweeping panoramas over grassy hills, with the blue Pacific sprawling away to the horizon. We camped in a county park with yet another wonderful swimming hole, this time in the Mattole River. And considering how close we were to the beach, we were pleasantly surprised to find it sunny and warm here...a very nice setting.

Day 7: Unknown Coast to Dean Creek. 55 miles, 3700'

After a rolling run up the valley of the Mattole River, we went to work on the last big climb of the tour: 2200' up and over Panther Gap, followed by a long, twisting descent into Humboldt Redwoods State Park and our last, lazy run south along the Avenue of the Giants, cruising amidst the tallest trees on earth, with the south fork of the Eel as our river-of-the-day. This final, quiet run through the redwoods was a fitting valediction for the week, giving us all a chance to unwind, while reflecting on 460 miles of ups and downs, rivers and ridgelines, tall trees and deep pcanyons, good food, good company, and generally happy days in the saddle or in camp. The only question we have now: will next year's tour be able to live up to this one and the ones that preceded it? We shall see...



Stage 2: leaving Happy Camp



Stage 2: a good day for a pace line



Stage 2: heading into the Salmon River Gorge



Stage 4: fruit smoothies in Weaverville



Stage 6: descending "The Wall" to the Unknown Coast



The Condor Country Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/condor-country-tour//>

This tour was our deepest penetration into Southern California to date. I scouted this region and these routes when I was down south for the Heartbreak Double and the Grand Tour, both of which I did in the late '90s. Sections of both those doubles are included in the stages of this tour.

The newsletter report is an accurate and essentially complete account of the tour but I can add a few tidbits. The first campground was kind of funky, with nasty vault latrines. When I first laid out the tour, I had made arrangements for us to camp at a pleasant sports camp for kids not far away. Nice green lawns under a shady wood, with showers and a big swimming pool. The managers were agreeable. The price was acceptable. It was all set. Then at the last minute they changed their minds and backed out of the deal. We had to scramble to find anything halfway decent nearby. You think you have something all figured out and then...pffff! It falls apart. They did at least allow us to use their showers and swimming pool after the ride.

This was sort of a tour in two parts: first the days in the high country of Los Angeles County and down into Ventura County, and then a transition, past Montecito and Santa Barbara and over the mountains into the Santa Ynez Valley around Solvang and Buellton. Gorgeous, rugged country! We've never been back to those early stages but we've recycled the Santa Ynez Valley roads on two other tours, the Mid-State Tour (2007) and the Camino Real Tour (2018). It's a wonderful region for cycling. There are good reasons why the Solvang Century and Double are popular rides and why every bike-touring caterer offers packages in this region.

Over the years, I've noticed—or at least imagined—a subtle little prejudice on the part of Northern California residents against anything in the southern half of the state, at least when it comes to cycling. There is arguably some justification for that. No one would ever think of the staggeringly vast sprawl of Los Angeles and its suburbs as a cycling paradise. It is pretty grim. But if you venture out beyond the last ragged fringe of suburbia you find some really lovely countryside. We've done what we can to try and convince SRCC members that there can be good cycle-touring in the bottom half of the state with this tour, Mid-State, Camino Real, and the Southern Peaks Tour (2006). It's a tough sell but I think we've opened a few eyes and maybe made a few converts. My goal with these tours is always to expose the participants to regions and roads and landscapes they might never visit otherwise.

CONDORS SOAR OVER THE MOUNTAINTOPS

No, we didn't actually see any condors on our recent club tour in Southern California (The Condor Country Tour, June 9-17), but we "Condors"—the tour participants—soared like raptors over spectacular high mountain ridgelines and swooped downhill through rugged canyons on wings of titanium and carbon fiber.

This multi-day tour of Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties was our club's first foray into the south state. In a few spots, we encountered some of the less attractive elements for which that region is known: tract neighborhoods; trashy highways; arid, barren nowheres; and hot, desiccating headwinds. But for the most part, we found what we wanted: gorgeous, remote, rugged landscapes...very different from what we're used to, and all the more interesting because of it.

Day 1: Canyons Loop #1. 40-66 miles, 4800'

In retrospect, most tour participants would probably agree this was the least exciting day of the tour, taking us into the suburbs on the outer fringe of the LA metroplex. But it did include several very tasty sections down in canyons dappled with the shade of huge old sycamores and oaks, and it included cold, clear streams and waterfalls, long, screaming downhills, and a wealth of fascinating high-desert scenery: blooming yuccas, giant, biscuit-colored boulders, and so on. And it ended very well with an afternoon of splashing and sunning at a lovely swimming pool near our camp. If it wasn't the best tour day we've ever done, it at least whet our appetites for the days to come...

Day 2: Lake Hughes to Reyes Creek. 67 miles, 6000'

The first and last thirds of this stage were excellent cycling, while the middle 20 miles were just something to be endured: connector miles hooking one nice backroad region with another. The first section climbed out of the rift of the San Andreas Fault...a wonderful, meandering, up-and-down byway amid pines and oaks...before descending to the traverse of the Grapevine and Tejon Pass at Interstate-5 (the boring miles). The final section featured several slinky descents through forested, rocky canyons in the shadow of 8000' peaks. We overnighted in a very remote camp along a little creek in the bottom of a box canyon... about as far off the grid as you can get in California. The big joker in the deck this day was headwind—all day long—that made the ride seem much harder than it might have been otherwise.

Day 3: Reyes Creek to Lake Casitas. 50-60 miles, 4000'

After a 7-mile climb near the start to 5084' Pine Mountain Summit, the story for most of the rest of this superb day was all about descending. Back-to-back downhills of 14 and 12 miles along scenic Hwy 33 kept folks rocking and rolling through the heart of the ride (all of it surrounded by magnificent mountain and canyon scenery, sometimes out on the cliff face and sometimes deep in the rocky gorge). After an exploration of the charming village of Ojai—including a break for a nice *al fresco* lunch—we finished up with several pleasant miles wandering through the woods and meadows near town on our way to an overnight on the shore of Lake Casitas.

Day 4: Lake Casitas to Paradise. 60 miles, 6700'

Perhaps the best day of the tour...certainly one of the most challenging and most scenic. The day began with easy miles in the hills and valleys between Ojai and Santa Barbara, varying between mountain passes, avocado orchards, floral nurseries, and lavish, opulent estates. Midway through the ride though, the world tilted on edge for a huge, switchbacking climb, up, up, and up out of Montecito to Camino Cielo, a narrow twist of road teetering along the knife-edge ridgeline, 4000' above the ocean. Once again, the weather gods were friendly, and the fog pulled back just in time to offer us panoramic vistas to the Channel Islands, looming out of the Pacific. After a highly technical—some would say frightening—descent along the ridgeline, one last, fast plunge off the far side of the mountains spilled us out into a gorgeous wilderness setting in the deep canyon of the wild Santa Ynez River, with a warm swimming hole to wash away the sweat before our salmon barbecue. Can it get any better than this?

Day 5: Paradise to Buellton. 35-75 miles, 6000'

Can it get any better? Maybe! Almost as impressive as the preceding day, this stage featured a beautiful run up idyllic Happy Canyon, followed by an extremely steep and remote loop up and over Mt Figueroa, high above the Santa Ynez Valley. Nothing up there but heat, lizards, rocky cliffs, scrappy pines, wildflowers, and perfect, panoramic beauty, as far as you can see (and up on that exposed mountaintop, you can see a long, long way). Oh yeah...and brand new pavement on the far side of the mountain (smoothing over what had been a really dreadful old road), making the wild, tangled descent back to the valley a true epiphany for those who chose the highland route. For others, it was a quieter day of exploring the posh horse ranches in the valley and visiting the quaint Danish village of Solvang, or doing an out-&-back and short hike to pretty, 100' Nojoqui Falls, with a plunge into the cool grotto below the falls to take the heat off the day.

Day 6: Jalama Beach Out-&-Back. 70 miles, 4000'

The surprise hit of the tour: folks loved this lazy, meandering run west from our camp to a secluded beach on quiet, out-of-the-way backroads. We had worried about brutal headwinds on the ride out to this world-famous windsurfing destination, but the ride to the beach was almost calm, while the ride back was helped along by a tailwind that came up in the afternoon. Highlights of the day: freshly paved, slinky downhills, cool surf, hot sand, and killer hamburgers at the funky beachfront cafe. All three of our final days were spent camping in a resort with a great swimming pool and spas, so picture a refreshing dip at the end of each ride as part of the total package.

Day 7: Canyons Loop #2. 60 miles, 4000'

Another relatively easy day exploring some popular cycling roads in the Santa Ynez Valley, as well as some obscure, seldom ridden backroads. Each of four "canyon" roads featured at least one challenging climb and a matching descent, some of which were about as much fun as a downhill can be. In between the hills were miles of rolling terrain through the area's famous vineyards or past meadows dotted with ancient oaks. After the larger-than-life scenery of some of the previous days, some riders felt this final stage was a little tame, but others found it to be the perfect way to wind down at the end of the tour, spinning out the legs and bringing the week to a mellow conclusion.

Add to all the great rides the friendship and bonding of four dozen happy campers, playing, cooking, eating, and generally messing around together, and you end up with another memorable tour.



Stage 5: descending Figueroa Mountain



Stage 3: climbing Pine Mountain



Stage 3: leaving Reyes Creek



Stage 4: Sage Hill Group Site, Santa Ynez River



Stage 5: taking a break on Figueroa Mountain



• Northern Peaks Tour • July 27-August 3, 2002

The Northern Peaks Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/northern-peaks-tour/>

As the newsletter report below will tell you, this tour had some serious problems. Nothing wrong with the routes or the riding, not at all. The cycling and scenery were wonderful. But the logistics...whooo! The report kind of glosses over the problems but it has it about right: we had to grapple with some really tough difficulties but we did so. We figured out a way forward and saved the tour.

The problems were all to do with Byron's old bus. After a lot of deferred maintenance it finally fell apart. It broke down on the drive north on our travel day, along the shoulder of I-5 around Williams (on a day that was over 100°). Some wrenching by Byron and José Mundo got it moving again but it conked out for good just east of Redding. Those of us driving the sag vans were already up at Robin and Deb Dean's house in Burney, on the road to the tour start in the Fall River Valley. This was in the early days of cell phones but there was one on the bus and we kept up a conversation through the breakdown. With the bus terminally kaput, many thought we should abandon the tour but I insisted we could salvage it. Robin called up several of his neighbors in Burney and organized an amazing late-night caravan of pick-up trucks down to the bus to ferry all the people and as much gear as they could carry up to the Fairgrounds in McArthur, where we finally settled in after midnight. Fortunately, the first stage was a loop in Fall River Valley so we didn't have to move the next day. While most of us were riding Stage 1, a few people drove back to Redding and rented a truck and collected all the rest of the gear out of the bus.

The bus went on a flatbed wrecker back to Oakland to be repaired while we carried on with our tour stages: up and over Lassen summit (above) and down toward Lake Almanor. At 8:00 AM on Wednesday, before the start of Stage 4, Byron rolled into our camp on the shore of Lake Almanor, having driven the repaired bus through the night from Oakland. Then we had to deploy a sag wagon and two people to return the rental truck to Redding. But that's not the end of it. On the drive home at the end of the tour, rolling slowly up East Cotati Blvd, one of the huge aluminum doors over the cargo bays on the right side of the bus suddenly flew off and went skating up the road, taking out a poor cyclist who had the misfortune to be riding beside us. (I had pointed out the sketchy hinge on that door to Byron earlier in the day and he admitted he hadn't gotten around to fixing it.) The cyclist who was knocked down by the flying door wasn't hurt, thank goodness, but he could have been. He could have been killed. Or he could have sued us.

For me, that was the last straw. I couldn't deal with that broken down bus anymore and couldn't subject our participants to that level of slipshod carelessness. Nor did I want to expose the club or myself to the liability risk if something really catastrophic were to happen. So that was the end of our relationship with Byron and his bus. In the days after the tour, I realized I was frazzled from the stress of this tour and maybe all the tours. I announced to the tour participants that I was going to take a break from planning and leading club tours. But as you will see in the pages ahead, it was a promise I wasn't able to keep.

Northern Peaks: a Tale of Two Tours

It was the best of times...

The first thing to know about The Northern Peaks Tour—SRCC's annual one-week summer vacation, July 27-August 3—is that we were beset by serious logistical challenges that caused us no end of stressful problems. The second thing to know is that we survived and surmounted those challenges and ended up having a great week.

The bulk of our troubles had to do with the old greyhound bus that hauls most of our participants to and from the tour and most of our gear from camp to camp during the tour. This year the aging warhorse turned from trusty to merely rusty, with mechanical breakdowns large and small, early and late. We won't itemize all the wrenching woes here, but they resulted in substantial inconvenience and necessitated midnight rescue runs, a back-up rented truck, and lots of improvisational heroics on the part of many helpful people. In the end, the only cycle-touring miles we lost were those of the optional prologue ride on our arrival day. (Seeing as how most of us didn't arrive in our first camp until well after midnight, it didn't allow for much riding time that day.) After that though, most of the tour went very well...

Day 1. Fall River-Pit River Loop: 60-71 miles, 3400'-3900'

This tour down the length of the southern Cascade and northern Sierra mountain ranges started with a relatively un-mountainous loop ride. We began and ended the loop with almost level meanders across the floor of the tranquil Fall River Valley, complete with fragrant fields of mint, pretty vistas along the mirror-smooth river, and magical sightings of eagle, osprey, ibis, and sandhill crane. In between, we climbed and descended in or near the canyon of the Pit River, including a very worthwhile, optional out-&-back down into the canyon, a ride across a 1920's era, art deco dam, and a hike to beautiful Burney Falls.

Day 2. Fall River Valley to Lassen Nat'l Park: 65 miles, 5500'

This day began with pleasant up-and-down miles climbing out of the valleys of the Fall and Pit Rivers, followed by a long, generally uphill run south along Hwy 89, with pretty Hat Creek usually nearby for scenic treats and for cooling off hot tootsies. Midway through the ride, most folks set their bikes aside for a hike through cool, dark Subway Cave, a half-mile long lava tube. After that, a large helping of gentle uphill led to Lassen Volcanic National Park, where the already nice scenery took a quantum leap to the realm of the magnificent. Washing up after the ride this day meant jumping into Summit Lake, which we feared would be snowmelt cold, but in fact turned out to be quite pleasant.

Day 3: Lassen to Lake Almanor: 61-71 miles, 3000'-3500'

We anticipated that this run up and over the top of Lassen would be one of the best tour days ever, and we weren't disappointed. The 8-mile climb to the summit at the start was easy on the legs and easy on the eyes, and the monster descents off the south side were everything we had hoped they would be: twisting, slinky, in-the-moment madness. For those who did the optional loop to Mineral and Mill Creek, the downhill fun went on for 17 crazy miles. And then, after a brief climb, there were another three miles of kinky downhill hijinx to the Mill Creek resort. 20 miles of wild descending between miles 9 and 31 made the rest of the ride a bit of an anticlimax, but there were some pleasant sections, including the run along the Lake Almanor Recreational Trail and the Prattville bypass off Hwy 89. We ended up camping on the beachfront of the lake and added one more lake swim to our showers at the end of the ride.

Day 4. Lake Almanor to Portola: 72 miles, 3600'

Bypasses off busy Hwy 89—or the lack of them—defined the quality of the ride on Day 4. This section of the highway carried a lot of traffic, including too many log trucks, and that made for less than ideal backroad touring conditions. Whenever possible, we detoured onto little local roads that yielded delightful, quiet miles through woods and meadows. We wish there could have been more of these miles, but we had to put up with the traffic on the highway for a good portion of the day. That fact, plus the generally uphill profile for the latter half of the ride (after some killer descents in the morning), made the day seem to drag for most of us as we homed in on Portola. Temperatures for all but the last two days of the tour flirted with triple digits, which also contributed to the overall workload, and this was the hottest day of all. On the bright side, we had a swimming pool at camp, along with a shady site and nice showers, so most folks rebounded quickly.

Day 5. Portola to Truckee: 73 miles, 6800' (or less)

After some of the traffic hassles of the previous day, many folks opted to sag through one section of Hwy 89 on this day that was anticipated to be quite nasty. In the end, those who rode the whole stage found it to be not too bad...the danger had been overrated. Prior to that worrisome stretch of road though, this may have been as spectacular and enjoyable as any stage we've done, on this or any other tour. For those who chose the long route, there was the big climb to Gold Lakes summit, spiced up by a side trip and hike to Frazier Falls—a true high Sierra, big granite experience—and then the full tilt flier down the other side, past magnificent Sierra Buttes, followed by the pretty, gentle climb to Yuba summit, and the endless, twisting descent to Sierra Meadow. These two descents—6-mile Gold Lakes and 7-mile Yuba—were every bit as much fun as the drops out of Lassen...major excitement. The alternate lowland route along the Feather River and out across Sierra Meadow was an equally big hit with those who went that way. Its nearly level profile offered respite for weary legs and a pleasant change of scenery in the wide open vistas across the grassy meadow. For those who chose to ride all the way to camp, the final miles were surprisingly pleasant, with traffic not too bad, and the many hills not too daunting. The day ended in a very nice little campground near Tahoe-Donner, with good camp sites in an aspen grove and probably the best showers of the tour.

Day 6. Truckee to South Lake Tahoe: 45-60 miles, 2200'-3700'

Sandwiched between two of the hardest days of the tour, this was something of a riding rest day for many people. Low miles and the generally gentle terrain—much of it on bike paths—encouraged riders to set a sedate pace, with plenty of time for dillydallying and sightseeing. The extensive system of bike paths offered an escape from the rather heavy tourist traffic around Lake Tahoe. The only real challenge on the day was the optional climb to Donner Pass. This yielded sweeping views over Donner Lake and classic high Sierra cliffs, and on the return trip, a wild, curling descent back to the lake. Highlights of the day, aside from the wonderful Donner excursion, were the many scenic overlooks and hikes around Emerald Bay and Eagle Falls at the southwest corner of the lake. There was one more stiff climb over the granite headland above the bay, and a couple of squiggly descents off the other side and down to our camp on the south shore of the lake.

Day 7. Tahoe to Jenkinson Lake: 72 miles, 5800'

We dodged out of South Lake on dinky, wooded backroads that avoided the major traffic snarls, then climbed over 7740' Luther Pass and 8573' Carson Pass—highest point on the tour—on our way to the long, mostly downhill run along Mormon Emigrant Trail to Sly Park at Jenkinson Lake in the Gold Country foothills near Placerville. Long climbs and longer descents were the order of the day, along with huge views from the summits. After a picnic lunch and a dip in the warm lake, weary riders climbed back on the weary bus and were home in time for dinner.

Those who did the whole tour—all the longer options—ended up with about 500 miles and 34,000' of climb...a good week on the bike. Thanks to all the good folks who pitched in on the chores in large ways and small. These tours couldn't happen at anything close to their bargain price without the cooperation of everyone involved.

Each of our eight one-week summer tours has developed its own character, and this one was certainly no different. What with all the logistical struggles we faced, it seemed a little more stressful and a little less carefree, at least for those doing the organizing, or for those caught on the bus when it did one of its meltdowns. But in the end, the main thing we took away from it was not the trials but the triumphs: the knock-out scenery, from rock-ribbed ridgelines to serene river valleys; the day-in-day-out riding entertainment; the pleasant camps, with their swimming holes and shady glades and afternoon schmoozing. We expect to learn from our troubles on this tour and do a few things differently when next we hit the road—wherever and whenever that might be—and to reaffirm the simple basics that have made our tours work in the past: good roads, good scenery, good food, good friends.



Stage 3: Lake Almanor

Stage 4: Indian Valley



Stage 3: Robert & Pilar, Lassen summit



Stage 1: mint fields in Fall River Valley



Seven stages • 340 miles • 45,000'

The Eastern Sierra Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/eastern-sierra-tour/>

Article about the tour at BikeCal.com: <http://www.bikecal.com/asp/columns-detail.asp?w=B&offset=200&bRecNo=13>

My vow to take a break from planning and leading—and riding—club tours didn't last long. They're simply too much fun, in spite of all the work and worry that goes into them. Within a short while, I was dreaming and scheming about new routes in new regions. But there was one significant change at this point. To dial back the stressful issues that had made the last tour not much fun for me, I elected to keep the tour groups small and made up of people I knew to be solid tour vets...good team players. We would still make use of the club's equipment and supplies but the tours would not be promoted by the club.

I appreciate that this may have been unfair to some folks who wanted to do the tours. But it was what I felt I needed to do to preserve my peace of mind and still find satisfaction in running the tours. Four of these unofficial tours were staged between 2003 and 2006. No one else mounted any other official club tours during that span until the first Wild Rivers Tour debuted in 2006. After that, the tours went back to being open to all members. The Board urged me to go public again and I agreed. For what it's worth, although these four unofficial tours were not promoted by the club, any club member who heard about them on the grapevine and enquired about them was welcome to join in. No one who asked to be included was ever turned away.

Planning this tour was a collaborative effort between me and Linda Fluhrer. She knew the region better than I did, having organized a SuperTour along these same roads. I did the maps and route slips and tackled the nuts-and-bolts stuff. One detail we've lost is how many people participated. A safe guess would be about 20. There were a few non-cycling spouses and friends along too and some folks chose to do hikes in the mountains on some days instead of riding. The rides were essentially a series of relatively short but challenging out-&-backs along the roads that clamber up the eastern flank of the Sierra range, starting from the towns dotted along Hwy 395, from Lone Pine up to Mammoth: Horseshoe Meadows, Whitney Portal, Onion Valley, Bristlecone, South Lake, Sabrina Lake, Sherwin Grade, Rock Creek, Mosquito Flat, Mary Lake, Minarets. (To be a little pedantic, Bristlecone—Schulman Grove—does not climb into the Sierras but into the White Mountains.)

Between the preview booklet and the BikeCal.com article noted above, the tour is pretty well described. For some reason, I left our final stage—Mammoth and Minerets—out of the BikeCal write-up but it is included in the preview booklet. Our original plan offered a couple of stages we ended up not doing and it did not include this final stage. Things evolved over the course of the week. But the “preview” booklet presents the tour as we finally did it, not as we had originally proposed to do it.

Stages 1 & 2: The Alabama Hills and the Eastern Sierra



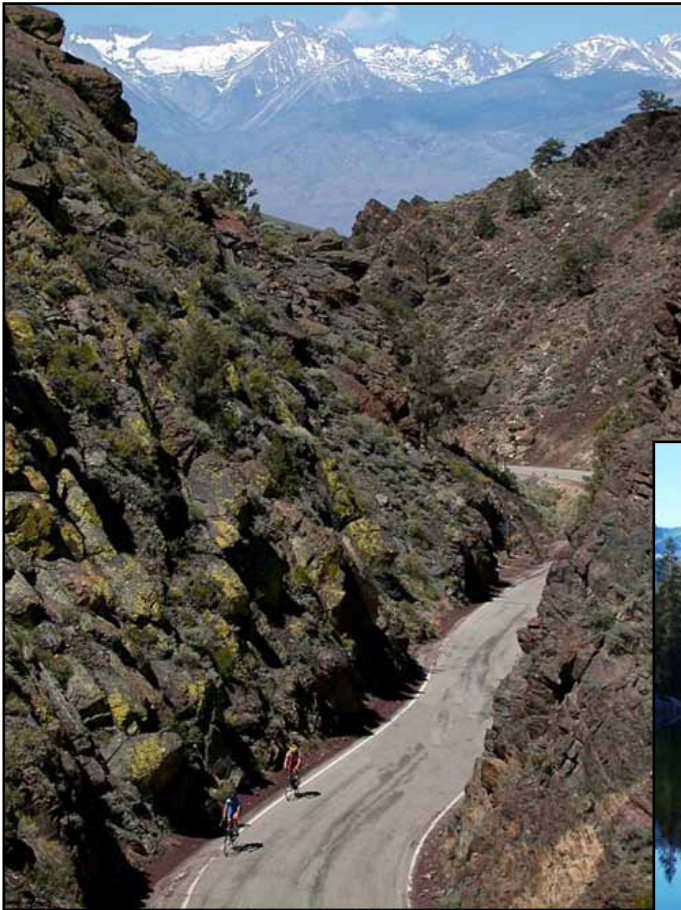
Stage 3: Onion Valley



Stage 5: climbing to South Lake



Stage 4: The Narrows on Westgard Pass



Stage 7: Lake Mary



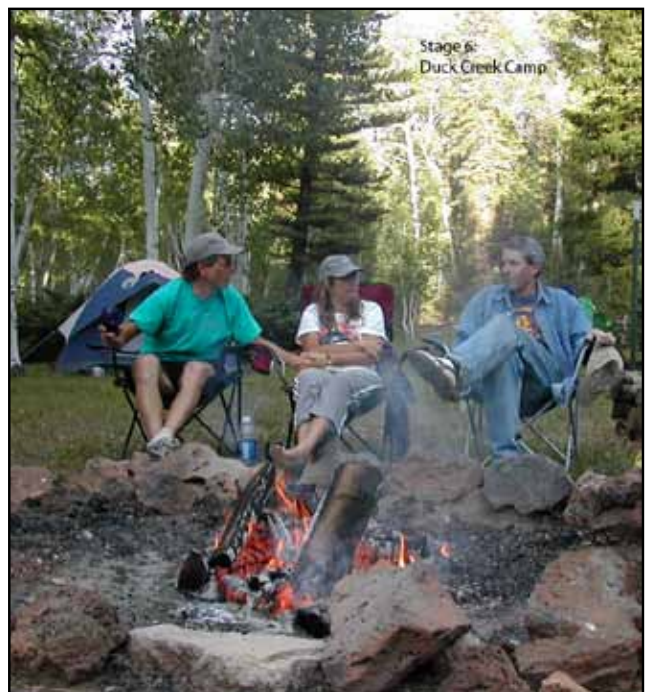
Article about the tour at BikeCal.com: <http://www.bikecal.com/asp/columns-detail.asp?w=B&offset=200&bRecNo=108>

During this period, when I was thinking about tours for small, select groups, this seemed like an ideal offering. My first thought was that it was too far from home and too complicated to be proposed for a larger group. However, once we did it, we all agreed that it went so smoothly and efficiently that it would be realistic to scale it up for a bigger group. We did that in 2011. I produced a nice pre-view booklet for that tour and will provide a URL for it when we get to 2011. For now, there is a link above to an article I wrote at my BikeCal.com site after we did this first edition of the trip. It's a comprehensive review of the tour. It's aimed at people who might want to try a tour here but it includes enough detail from our tour that you'll have a full accounting of how we fared.

Both this tour and the 2011 tour were effectively the same...the routes anyway, and the travel from Santa Rosa to Utah and back. They differed in some minor ways that are worth mentioning. For one thing, this first tour had only 16 participants, while the second tour had 48. The little photo on page 7, with the word "Welcome!" on it: that's the entire group for the first Utah tour, plus the person taking the photo. Instead of having two sag wagons and a huge truck crammed with cargo, we had one sag and one small truck. We had no food wranglers or special staff. We took turns driving the truck each day.

For another thing, the weather. On the 2011 tour we were absolutely murdered by headwinds. Every way we turned, we were still banging into the wind. It was brutal and exhausting. Also it was triple-digit hot at least some of the time. On this tour, we never had any headwinds, at least nothing worth whining about. And it was never too hot. Our biggest weather gremlins were a few thunderstorms on Stages 2 and 3. But like most desert thunderstorms, they would boom and bluster for half an hour and then peter out and we'd be dry again almost immediately.

Another nice thing about being a little group... On the later tour with the bigger group, we had to stay in the main campground at Duck Creek Lake (end of Stage 6). It's a very ordinary camp with no showers and not much to recommend it. What's more, the reservation folks make you pay for two nights because it's on the weekend (Friday). But before this first tour, I had made friends via e-mail with the head ranger at this park. He was a cyclist and was really excited about our trip. I asked him if he could help us avoid that paying-for-two-nights scam. He could and he did: he arranged for us to camp on a pretty green lawn in a grove of aspens, away from the main camp and over by the ranger station, where we could use the nice showers they have for the rangers and firefighters. He even dropped off a load of firewood (right).

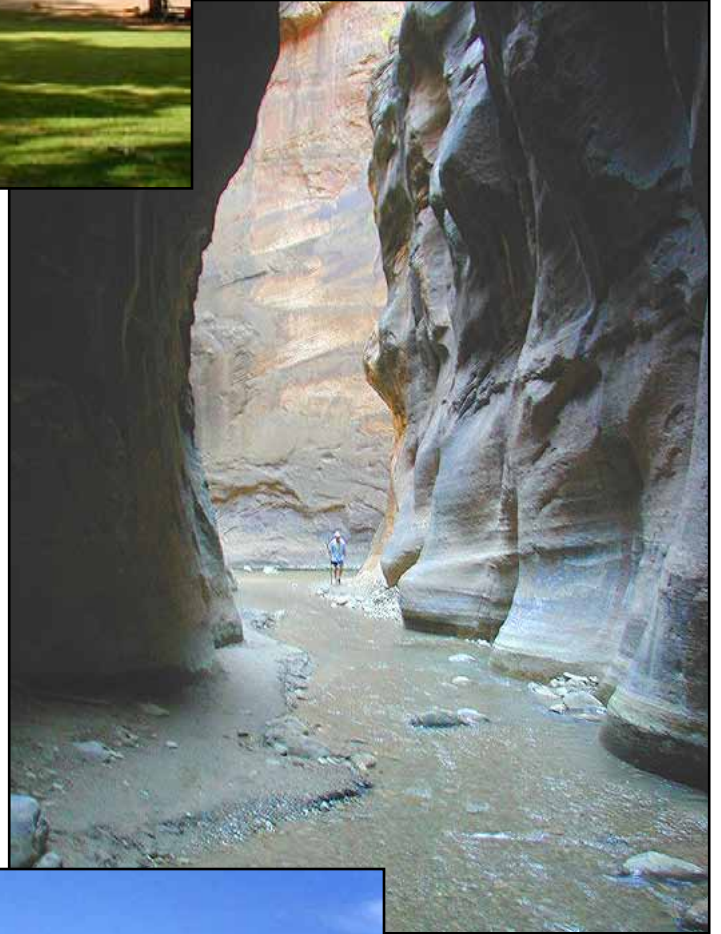




*Stage 2: Fruita group site,
Capital Reef National Park*

*Stage 7: The Narrows,
Zion National Park*

Stage 5: Bryce Canyon National Park



*Stage 4: Hwy 12
near Escalante*



• Southern Oregon Tour •

August 6-14, 2005

Southern Oregon Tour article at the BikeCal.com website:

<http://www.bikecal.com/asp/columns-detail.asp?w=B&offset=160&bRecNo=148>

This is yet another tour we have run more than once. Much of it is the same as our second tour, Crater to Coast (1996). On that one, we still had the bus and so ran the tour all the way down the coast to Crescent City. Now, without the bus, we had to circle back to our start at the Ashland YMCA, where we left our cars for the week. We repeated pretty much this exact tour in 2014. We have a good preview booklet prepared for that tour and we'll link to it from the 2014 page. As additional reportage for this one, we can send you to another article I wrote at BikeCal.com, similar to the piece I wrote about Southern Utah. There was no particular reason why I should have written BikeCal columns about the Eastern Sierra Tour (2003), the Southern Utah Tour (2004), and the Southern Oregon Tour (2005). I just thought they were good topics to mess around with. But it's nice that I did so because none of those tours had a club newsletter report, all falling within my unofficial tour hiatus. I suppose the reason we ran the tour again in 2014 was to offer it to the full club membership. This tour in 2005 had only 21 participants and we wanted more members to have a chance to do it.

My BikeCal article fails to mention a couple of anecdotes. 1. Someone told us about a hot springs we could ride and hike to off our Stage 3 route (or was it Stage 4?). Several of us did it...rode up a little side road, stashed our bikes in the bushes, and hiked up into the forested hills to a really neat hot spring. 2. On Stage 7, from Powers to Glendale, we dodged around a big forest fire. It wasn't burning right along our lovely road and we weren't even in the smoke. But it was in the hills nearby. When we got to our overnight site at the high school in Glendale, expecting to have the place all to ourselves, we instead found over 2000 firefighters on the campus. The school had been commandeered as the firefight headquarters. Not exactly the peaceful evening we'd been expecting. We were allowed to stay but were shunted off into a tiny corner, well out of the way. We didn't even try to cook a dinner in camp. We all wandered into the town to their best restaurant: a pizza parlor.

At right, some of the usual suspects at a break along Annie Creek on Stage 2: Emilio Castelli, Martha Barton, Greg Durbin, Tony Buffa, Wes Hoffschmidt, Bob Stolzman. Note the chilled white wine...standard rest stop refreshments when the Party Van is the sag.





Stage 2: Westside Road, along Klamath Lake

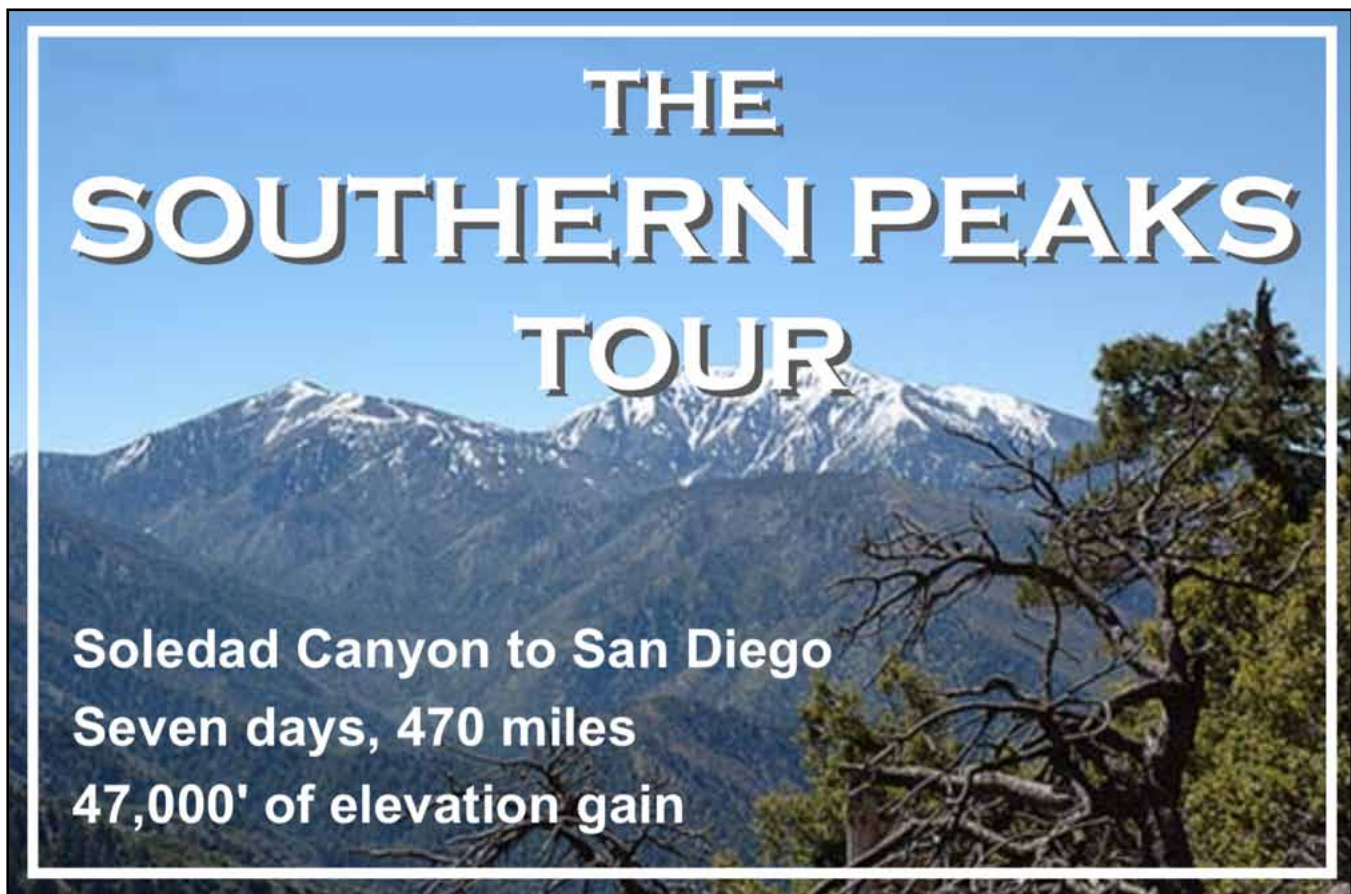


Stage 3: Tokatee Falls

*Stage 5:
Shore Acres State Park*



Stage 8: Grave Creek Road



September 9-17, 2006

The Southern Peaks Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/southern-peaks-tour/>

This is the last of my four semi-official tours. There was no report on it in the club newsletter and I didn't write about it at BikeCal. However, there is a good preview booklet covering it and it was extensively revised after the tour and reflects what actually happened.

As noted in the booklet, we decided not to camp our first night and leave our cars at the old private "camp" in Soledad Canyon (a camp I had chosen at a distance but only got to see close-up later). The place was really just a trashy trailer park and I didn't like the idea of leaving our cars there for the week. Instead we found a camp with a place to stash the cars at a regional park near Santa Clarita that used to be the ranch of silent film star Tom Mix. It was a decent camp. Not great but good enough.

However, it was a good distance from our ride start in Soledad Canyon. We had around 24 people on the tour and somehow we crammed almost all of them and their bikes into our sags and transport truck...all but four. We would have driven back to pick the last four up but they—Gordon Stewart, Donn King, and Linda and Sid Fluhrer—decided to ride from camp, ending up with a very stout ride of over 100 miles and well over 10,000' of gain. Heroes!

We had truck trouble on this tour. It started acting up on the drive down and barely limped into our first camp. We called the customer service people and they sent out a mechanic. After poking around for a bit, he declared it dead and ordered a new truck to be delivered. That one arrived at about 10:00 PM and we had to unload all the gear from the dead truck and then repack it into the new truck. That was the first of several logistical speed bumps on the tour. In addition to changing that first campsite, we had to improvise new overnights when two other camps we had reserved were cancelled at late dates. One of those was only a minor inconvenience but the other one deprived us of a really sweet camp up a really neat road...that was soooo frustrating! We also had a road closure on Stage 1 that we had to work around. That's covered in the write-up...a real walk on the wild side (see Angeles Crest photo below).

In spite of being a car-pool tour, this was not a loop. It started northeast of Los Angeles and ended east of San Diego. How did we manage that? It could only have worked for the small group. For the return trip, we had room for almost everyone in our sags and truck but not quite everyone and everything. So we rented another passenger van in San Diego, drove it back to the start, and dropped it off somewhere up there. It cost a few bucks but was money well spent.

Notice the header at the top: 47,000' of elevation gain. That matches the Gold Country Tour as the hilliest tour we've ever done. Those are big, rugged mountains down there...the San Gabriel, San Bernardino, San Jacinto, and Laguna mountain ranges. The highest peaks are over 11,000' and our highest roads were over 8,000'. It was a seriously hard tour.



Stage 1: why Angeles Crest was closed



Stage 2: climbing toward Silver Lake



Stage 3: round up the usual suspects

Stage 4: taking a break at the Paradise Store



Stage 5: Boulder Creek Road



Stage 5: big downhill on Mesa Grande Road





• Wild Rivers Tour-1 • July 31-August 5, 2006

While the Southern Peaks Tour was on the runway in the summer of 2006, heading for take-off in September, another tour was already under way. Two goals underpinned the creation of the Wild Rivers Tour. One was to bring the tours back out of the shadows; to make them official again and accessible to all club members. The other was to create a tour that was not quite as challenging as most of the tours had been, up to this point.

There had been some grumbling around the club that the tours we were offering were too hard. This was not outright revolt. No pitchforks and torches. Just some murmurs of discontent. There was some justification for that. Full stages on all the tours run thus far were averaging about 70 miles and 5000' of gain. Stages offering longer and shorter options were rare. These were not monster numbers but were probably not in the comfort zone of most moderate riders. The Wild Rivers Tour was designed to address that: six stages at an average of about 57 miles and 4200' of gain. (Ironically, although those numbers are moderate, the big climb on Stage 2, Etna summit, is one of the hardest climbs on any tour we've ever done, before or since.)

Doug Simon cooked up the first Wild Rivers Tour and roped me in to do maps and other stuff in that vein, with Lou Salz checking my elevation numbers with his latest GPS-based cyclometer. (I had a CatEye by now and my numbers and Lou's numbers matched up closely, every day.) Since this first edition, it has been on the club ride calendar five more times (!)...in 2011, '12, '13, '14, and '19. More about those as we get to them. If there was a preview booklet for the 2006 edition, it has been lost in the mist of history. In fact, the first one I have in my files is for 2012.

As noted in the newsletter report, this was yet another tour where we had to cope with wildfires and their smoke. The photo at right was taken midway up the magnificent Salmon River gorge on Stage 1. It clearly illustrates the poor air quality. That afternoon, Doug asked me to drive the sag along the next day's stage—the big climb over Etna—to see how bad the smoke was likely to be for us. If it was really awful, we might have called the rest of the tour off. But I could report (honestly) that part way up the Etna ascent, the smoke cleared and didn't appear to be all that bad further along. Reassured, we kept the tour going and things did improve in the days ahead. Another example of encountering unexpected challenges and figuring out how to sort them out.



Wild Rivers Tour lives up to its name

The Santa Rosa Cycling Club summer touring program is back in business and better than ever. From July 30 to August 5, 37 club members and support staff wound their way through the woods and meadows of the far northwest corner of the state, logging anywhere from just under 50 to just over 70 miles a day in six days of riding.

The name Wild Rivers Tour turned out to be very apt, as we rode alongside the Trinity, the Klamath, the Salmon, the Scott, the Klamath (again), the Illinois, the Smith, the Klamath (again), and finally the Mad River. All but one of our campsites were on one or another of these lovely streams, and we made good use of the available swimming holes.

The quality of the cycling could hardly have been better. We rode on a few moderately busy highways, but for the most part, we spent our time on quiet byways with little or no traffic and wonderful scenery... scenery which varied from the hot, dry canyons of the interior through majestic groves of old growth redwoods to the ferns and alder groves and foggy vistas of the coast.

The trip was set up along the lines of past cooperative tours we have done, with all participants pitching in on the food prep and other camp chores. This year we had the added benefit of two paid food coordinators to keep the food crews pointed in the right direction (and they did a great job). We also had a big truck to carry our gear and sag wagons to keep us happy on the rides. It was pretty much the lap of luxury for a camping-based tour.

Day 1: Tish Tang to Nordheimer; 53 miles, 4500'

We began the tour at a camp on the Trinity River on the edge of the Hoopa reservation. The stage broke up into three, roughly equal parts. First was a run north on Hwy 96, along the Trinity and then the Klamath. This section contained some nearly flat valley miles and a few unexpectedly large climbs up the river canyons. Part two was a delightful detour along a tiny byway called Ishi Pishi Road... a great name and a great road, with dramatic, cliff-hanging sections above the gorge and a world-class descent at the end. Part three was the best part of all: the run up the magnificent Salmon River gorge. This is a legendary cycling road, with soaring cliffs, hair-raising drop-offs from the narrow road into the deep canyon, and clear, turquoise pools linked by waterfalls and cascades. Anyone who was carrying a camera gave it a good workout over this stretch. Bike rides really don't get much better than this.

Day 2: Nordheimer to Indian Scotty; 67-72 miles, 6300'

One look at the elevation profile for this day and you knew you were in for a whopper of a ride. Right in the middle loomed 5919' Etna summit. With the ride starting at about 1100', and with a number of little descents mixed in, that meant well over 5000' of climbing in the first 34 miles. More precisely, it meant over 2000' of gain on an up-and-down run up the Salmon River for 26 miles—all very pretty and not too difficult—followed by 3000' of steep, unrelenting climb over the final eight miles to the summit. Those final miles were as hard as any climb we've ever done on a club tour. We all agreed that it would deserve an HC rating (beyond category) on any Tour de France stage. Etna was epic. The descent off the far side was equally out-of-scale, with many miles of hairball-steep grades and hairpin turns. The final miles of the day were a little less dramatic but very pleasant: a rolling stroll across the Scott Valley and into the Scott River canyon, with either a shorter or longer option over this portion accounting for the varied miles listed above. The highlight of this part of the ride: nesting bald eagles above the Scott River.

Day 3: Indian Scotty to Curly Jack; 50 miles, 1500'

After the volcanic explosions on Etna the day before, everyone was grateful to have an easy day up next. We continued along the Scott River into its lovely gorge, sometimes right next to the stream and sometimes climbing—gently—over ridges high above the water. Midway through the ride we found ourselves back on the Klamath River, this time further upstream. The Klamath would be our pretty roadside companion all the way to our camp on the outskirts of Happy Camp. Over the course of the first three days we were riding through an area in the grip of a major forest fire crisis, with lightning-sparked blazes out of control on several fronts. We had a little trouble with smoke, especially on Day 1, and our roads and skies were buzzing with fire-fighting crews and vehicles. Overall, we managed to stay out of the way of the hard-working crews, and we were fortunate to dodge most of the worst of the smoke plumes. Best of all, we did not have to alter our routes. We threaded the needle between the assorted hot spots and escaped to clearer and quieter skies by Day 4. We were also fortunate in our timing: our hottest days in these inland canyons only reached the high 80's, but the week before, it had been 114° in Happy Camp. (We had the same good luck with the weather the last time we toured in this region in 2000.)

Day 4: Curly Jack to Patrick Creek; 63 miles, 5500'

On paper, the elevation profile for this stage looked almost as daunting as that for Day 2. But everyone agreed that the big climb on The State of Jefferson Scenic Byway was not nearly as hard as Etna. We gained close to 4000' in the first 21 miles of the ride, but it was never steep nor especially painful. The 4750' summit marked the beginning of a brief foray into Oregon. For a couple of hours we were out of California, first descending from that summit, then cruising along the quiet valley of the Illinois River, and finally climbing along Hwy 199 toward 2480' Hazel View summit. This last was reached via Oregon Mountain Road, a wonderful, meandering bypass off the main highway. It offered an easy climb and then a twisting, curling descent off the south side and back into California. Once back on 199, we steamed downhill at a snappy tempo on the wide, smooth shoulder of the highway, always with the wild Smith River nearby. We had worried about the traffic on 199—on this and the following day—but it turned out to be a non-issue. The shoulders were usually huge and traffic was relatively light. We stayed in a pleasant camp on the river with the best swimming hole of the tour. After dinner, over half the group strolled across the road to the 80-year old Patrick Creek Lodge for an impromptu 8-ball tournament.

Day 5: Patrick Creek to Elk Prairie; 60 miles, 4000'

This stage took us downhill out of the mountains to the coastal hills. After 15 very fast miles along 199, the route veered south along several miles of unpaved road through a magnificent stand of old growth redwoods in Jedediah Smith State Park. A few in the group were less than thrilled with the prospect of those gravel miles and improvised a route through Crescent City which turned out to be ten miles longer and much hillier, but also included a beautiful run along the rugged coastal cliffs north of town. Both routes then tackled 19 miles of busy Hwy 101, featuring the biggest climb of the day: 1200' of sometimes steep gain in five miles, followed by a descent of the same size. While the traffic on the big highway was always there, the road engineers have done a good job of providing comfortable shoulders most of the way, and with a passing lane on the ascent, most cars and trucks gave us a wide berth in the inside lane. Bottom line: it wasn't really a problem. After our third encounter with the Klamath River, now near its mouth, we went back to work on a long, steady climb from the river valley back over the mossy, fog-shrouded hills and out onto a lightly travelled backroad along the sea cliffs of Redwood National Park. It was on one stretch of this beautiful road that we had our only serious crash of the tour, with Joe Morgan tripped up by an invisible dip in the pavement. Extensive bumps and road rash, a head wound (and shattered helmet) and a possible broken scapula sent Joe to the hospital in Arcata, with a few friends along for moral support. This was our only night without a swimming hole, but no one really minded, as the chilly fog had everyone digging through their duffel bags for all the warm clothes they could find.

Day 6: Elk Prairie to Arcata; 48 miles, 2200'

The final day of the tour included the drive home to Santa Rosa, so the actual stage was quite short. But in spite of its shortness, it turned out to be a very entertaining package. We began with another 20, mostly smooth, fast miles along 101. A few folks explored a 101 bypass called Old State Hwy, which proved to be a real gem... longer, hillier, and twistier than the main highway. At mile 21, we left Hwy 101 behind for a series of wonderful little roads closer to the ocean: Patricks Point Drive, Stagecoach Road, and Scenic Drive, plus the quaint village of Trinidad with its picture postcard harbor. These little lanes were as nice as anything on the tour, and all were scaled perfectly to the tempo of bicycle travel. The final 15 miles of the tour were on an assortment of pleasant roads and one surprising bike trail that did a remarkable job of dodging the congestion around the towns of McKinleyville and Arcata. We had anticipated suburban sprawl but instead found lightly traveled farm roads and only a minimal amount of traffic and clutter. We rolled into the Arcata Rec. Center around midday, and after showers and a flurry of luggage juggling, our car pool caravan headed south for home.

Overall, it was a very successful tour. Riders of varying abilities and ambitions found common ground on the lovely back roads of Bigfoot country. New friendships were formed, on the roads and in the camps. Thanks to Doug Simon for planning the trip and orchestrating the impressive logistics; to Lou Salz and Bill Oetinger for cranking out the maps; to Faith Harrison and Matt Parks for keeping us fueled up on delicious chow; and to Linda Grayson, Tom Helm, and Chris Culver for running the sags all around the route. SRCC tours are back! Stay tuned for announcements about another great adventure already being planned for about the same time next summer.



Stage 1: taking a break on Ishi Pishi



Stage 2: Doug and Richard, headed for Etna



Gary and Linda



Joe and Gordon

Stage 2: Salmon Bar



Stage 6: sketchy pavement outside Trinidad

THE MID-STATE TOUR

Seven stages • 300-450 miles • 30,000' (or less)



June 2-9, 2007

The Mid-State Tour page at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/mid-state-tour/>

Doug Simon was the leader of this tour and the one who proposed it to the club. I supported him with advice on the routes and with the usual medley of maps, slips, preview booklet, etc. As was the case with last year's Wild Rivers Tour, the objective here was to offer a tour that would be easier than the other tour this summer, the Northern Oregon Tour. The newsletter report below claims that both tours were more-or-less equal in level of difficulty. But that's not really accurate. Both tours had seven stages but NOT was 200 miles longer than this tour. This tour averaged a bit over 61 miles a day; NOT averaged 90 miles a day. However, the elevation gain per day is not all that far apart and that may be what we were thinking about when we wrote that newsletter copy.

For a tour that was supposed to be moderate, this one packed in quite a few seriously hard climbs. Some of those could be avoided on lowland routes but some could not...Gibraltar Road, for instance (above), one of the biggest, baddest climbs around. No, it would not be accurate to say it was as hard as NOT, but it would also not be accurate to describe it as moderate. It turned out to be quite a bit harder than we thought it would be when we were kicking the idea around.

And Doug and I should have known better because we had ridden all of these roads before. The first half of this tour consisted of stages we'd done on the 2001 Condor Country Tour and the latter stages were all repurposed from the 1997 Central Coast Tour. Those were all hard stages then and they were all still hard this time around. We tweaked the routes a little bit here and there but that didn't make them any easier; in fact, it may have made them harder. We got our tickets punched!

We had a short final stage planned for our getaway day and that is shown in the preview booklet. For some reason, we changed our collective minds and substituted a ride of about the same length that stayed closer to our overnight in Paso Robles. It was a tasty little ride that we all enjoyed. But it's not the one in the book.

When we stayed here on the 1997 Central Coast Tour, we camped at the Mid-State Fairgrounds (where they hold a big bicycle rally every summer). Ten years later, the folks at the fairground were impossible to work with so we ended up in a Motel 6 a couple of blocks away. Ditto for when we stayed here on the 2013 Central Coast Tour and the 2018 Camino Real Tour.



Mid-State Tour: Hilly but Heavenly

Thirty SRCC members headed south in early June to do the first of the club's pair of one-week cycle-tours of this summer season. This was the Mid-State Tour, which explored a scenic assortment of hills and valleys around Santa Barbara, Solvang, and Paso Robles...in or near the Santa Ynez and Santa Lucia Mountains.

The guiding theory for this tour was that it would be a bit easier than the longer Northern Oregon Tour scheduled for August. It was a worthy goal, but it turned out to be just about as hard, thanks to a more-or-less non-stop hit parade of big and little climbs. If one did every mile of every stage over seven days of riding, the total would have been around 440 miles and 37,000' of gain, which puts it in the same league as the Condor Country Tour. That's no coincidence, as this tour shares many of the same roads with that earlier tour.

However, no one did every mile on offer. Some came very close, but many made use of sags or shortcuts to whittle the stages down to a more manageable size. Socializing, relaxing, and being comfortable were higher priorities than climbing every hill and pounding out every available mile.

Stage 1: 64 miles, 8500'. Probably the hardest and hottest day of the tour. We began in Paradise Canyon on the wild Santa Ynez River (where we camped for our first two nights). We first climbed to the village of Painted Cave, above San Marcos Pass, then descended, through a thick, damp fog, to the outskirts of Santa Barbara by way of twisting, technical Old San Marcos Road. A meandering transit of Santa Barbara and Montecito, with a visit to Mission Santa Barbara along the way, eventually brought us to the massive, epic climb of Gibraltar Road (compared in this month's *Outside* magazine to the Col du Galibier in the Tour de France). This really is a monster ascent, and temperatures in the mid-90's didn't make it any easier. But the payoff was the ridgetop run along Camino Cielo, with panoramic vistas spilling 4000' down to the blue Pacific—the fog burned off just in time—plus almost 15 miles of wild and crazy descending back to camp to wrap it all up.

Stage 2: 70 miles, 6000'. A long, lazy run over the rollers next to Lake Cachuma brought us to lovely, tranquil Happy Canyon in the Santa Ynez Valley, home to the vineyards of *Sideways* fame and to Kentucky Derby-level thoroughbred ranches. Half the group followed a lowland route around the valley, lopping off many miles and climbs, while the other half tackled the extremely hilly and remote backcountry in the shadow of Figueroa Mountain. Big, big climbs and slinky descents made this walk on the wild side a grand adventure for those

who took it on. Both groups visited the quaint but touristy faux-Danish village of Solvang, then found several different ways to ride from there to our camp for the next three nights: an RV park in Buellton. This sprawling complex has a shady lawn set aside for campers, and it offers a nice swimming pool and hot tubs for weary riders. The only bad part about it was that it was cold and windy all the days we were there...shockingly chilly for June.

Stage 3: 70 miles, 5000'. This was a simple stage: out-&-back to remote Jalama Beach. We rode into the teeth of that chilly, foggy wind on the way to the beach, then cruised home on a zephyr tailwind after lurching on delicious Jalama Burgers at the beachfront cafe. Although much of the route is nearly level, there are enough mid-sized summits to add up to a fairly substantial elevation gain.

Stage 4: 59 miles, 4000'. Certainly the easiest full stage, but still with several significant climbs of up to 16%. This is the definitive Santa Ynez Valley loop, connecting Drum, Cat, Foxen, and Ballard Canyons... all pretty, quiet, rolling back roads through a mix of vineyards, oak-dotted meadows, produce fields, and forests. The wind once again slapped us about all day. Mostly it was against us, except along famous Foxen Canyon, where we caught the tailwind just right. The wind made the day harder than it would appear on paper, including beating into a brick-wall headwind at the end.

Stage 5: 74 miles, 6000'. Another challenging, hilly stage, but very scenic. After moving our car pool caravan 80 miles north to Templeton, we set off on a trek through the Santa Lucia Mountains to the Pacific shore. York Mountain and steep, tangled Santa Rosa Creek were our way west to a stop in faux-English Cambria. Then a sweet tailwind run south on Hwy 1 brought us to Cayucos, where we had to grapple our way back up from sea level into the high hills, including two brutal miles with non-stop grades in the mid to high teens. Some folks retrieved the cars in Templeton and drove to our motel in Paso Robles, while others rode there via lovely Las Tablas and fabulous Peachy Canyon...one of the best bike roads in the world.

Stage 6: 70 miles, 5000'. Beautiful early but boring later, this stage began with more pretty miles in the Paso hills, then broke out into more open, austere country—some called it desolate—east of the Salinas River. Not a great stage but still a decent ride.

Stage 7: 30 miles, 2500'. A little gem for the morning of our getaway day: a reprise of nearly perfect Peachy Canyon, followed by Vineyard and Adelaida Roads, both almost as good as Peachy...one of the best little rides on this or any other tour, and a fitting finale for a week of wonderful cycle-touring, with good food, good company, great scenery, and best-quality biking, every day of the week.

1



Stage 6: Chimney Rock Road



*Stage 1:
descending from
Painted Cave*



*Stage 4:
Foxen Canyon*



*Stage 5:
Santa Rosa Creek Road*



The Northern Oregon Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/oregon/northern-oregon-tour/>

Article about the tour at BikeCal.com: <http://bikecal.com/asp/columns-detail.asp?w=B&offset=160&bRecNo=170>

“The Northern Oregon Tour began with two dreams: to cycle the famous Historic Columbia River Highway and to explore some roads in the Cascade Mountains, in particular, McKenzie Pass and the Aufderheide Forest Drive. Both of these goals had been simmering away on a back burner for years before I finally sat down with a pile of maps—and a great deal of web surfing—to hammer out the route that would pull those notions together into a manageable, closed-loop tour.”

That’s the first paragraph in the preview booklet and it sums things up pretty well. However, the 570 miles listed in the graphic above (from the preview book): that’s not what we ended up with. I have 60 more miles than that in my log. 40 of those came on Stage 2 when we were turned back by construction on McKenzie Pass and had to take a long detour over Santiam Pass, blimping what should have been a 70-mile stage up to 110 miles. The other 20? I don’t know...a few every day. An average of 90 miles a day. You have to think we kind of overdid it. But we did do it. There was only one shorter option offered (on the final day), so unless folks rode around in the sags, they did all those miles. And these were not all long-haul hardheads. There were plenty of everyday-average cyclists in the group. They all did it.

Although this tour shares a lot of roads and scenery with the reinvented Northern Oregon Tour Redux, they are quite different. Obviously, with one averaging 90 miles a day and the other 60, they’re not going to look and ride the same. This one goes around its loop in the counter-clockwise direction; the later tour goes clockwise. And so on...very different. They each have their own preview booklets.

Pilar Rand brought her little son Owen along on this trip. He became the tour mascot. How old was he? Three? Four? And yet we could already see his father Robert in him. (Robert had passed away the previous year, our long-time biking buddy.) Owen had a pair of Oshkosh overalls with a little loop for a hammer. He had never considered what that loop was for, so among the bike tools we found him a little ball peen hammer. He was so excited! And we were excited for him. So then we had to find him some little nails and scraps of wood...

When the tours are muddling along the way they should, they’re a village, a family. Not everyone gets along every minute of every day, but generally we make it work and we have fun doing it. Little moments like that one, helping Owen be a hammerhead? We are reminded that it’s about much more than just the miles.

Was the club tour a success? NOT!

NOT? Not a success? No, no...just kidding. We're talking here about the Northern Oregon Tour, referred to in shorthand as NOT. And just to be as clear as can be about it: yes, it was a successful tour, perhaps as good as any we've put together over the past 15 years.

It's true there were some glitches and snafus. No tour would be complete without them. But overall, we're confident the 32 participants would agree that it was a wonderful way to spend a week on the bike, exploring new and fascinating territory.

This tour followed a big counterclockwise loop beginning and ending in Springfield (just east of Eugene). It spent its first two days heading east and north through the heart of the Cascade Range, then two days meandering north through the high, dry desert of central Oregon on the east side of the big mountains. Thursday brought the marquee attraction of the tour: the run from east to west down the Historic Columbia River Highway in the gorge of the great river. Finally, the route took two long days to work south from the gorge back to Springfield through the western foothills of the Cascades, along the edge of the green and fertile Willamette River Valley.

As has been the case on so many of our tours, we got lucky with the weather. The previous week had been over 100° around much of our loop. But when we arrived, things had cooled off to a range between high 70's and low 90's...very comfortable for riding. The only bogey man was the wind: sometimes a bike-friendly tailwind, but all too often a wicked cross or headwind that had us digging deep at the ends of stages. We never complained about the tailwinds, but we cried like babies when the headwinds pounded on us. On balance, it was about a wash on that score. Win some, lose some.

Many folks had been nervous ahead of time about the length of the stages. We didn't set out to make them overly long, but when we had strung together all the best, wandering back roads, the numbers added up, and we had an additional problem crop up on Stage 2 that only made the day longer. So yes, it was a long week for a recreational tour. If you did all the miles on offer for seven stages, you would have logged well over 600 miles. (Most of our tours run between 450 and 500 miles for a week.) But it was far from the hilliest tour we've done, with just over 40,000' of climbing. (A few others have had nearly 50,000' of gain.) Some people did ride all of those miles, but many made use of our shuttle vans to trim the stages down to size. This was a vacation, after all, not a stage race.

Tour participants converged—via car pool—on Springfield on Saturday, August 4 for a night in a motel and dinner in a riverfront brew pub before hitting the road on Sunday morning.

Stage 1: Springfield to Frissell Crossing; 78 miles, 4600'. After leaving the urban clutter of Springfield behind, we enjoyed several miles of quiet country lanes through broadleaf forest, including passing or crossing four historic covered bridges. We had to suffer through too many miles of too busy Hwy 58, but after that minor purgatory, we were repaid with over 30 miles along the legendary, nearly perfect Aufderheide Forest Drive, heading gently upstream along the headwaters of the Willamette River and culminating in a slinky, silky descent to the headwaters of the McKenzie River, all the way to our lovely camp on a little creek, deep in the mountain forest. The elevation profile looked intimidating, but the climb turned out to be not too bad, and most agreed it was an easy, pleasant day.

Stage 2: Frissell Crossing to Sisters; 110 miles, 8500'. This should have been our shortest day at 70 miles, but the unfortunate closure of magnificent McKenzie Pass forced us to detour over the much less bike-friendly Santiam Pass. The detour alone would have made the day 83 miles, but we did as much of the famous McKenzie Pass Road as we could, adding a 27-mile out-&-back to the basic route. It was a terrible shame to be cheated out of the great alpine pass, but we did get to do almost half of it (both climbing *and* descending it), and we also were treated to over 20 more miles—mostly downhill in the very best way—on another section of the Aufderheide. We were stymied and frustrated, but we made the best of it and focused on all the good miles we did get, even if we missed some of the very best miles.

Stage 3: Sisters to Kah-Nee-Ta Hot Springs; 77 miles, 3500'. Highlights on this day included crossing the deep, steep gorge of the Crooked River—300' straight down—an optional excursion to magnificent Smith Rock State Park, the vast, Lake Powell-like panorama of Lake Billy Chinook, and the wide open spaces of the huge Warm Springs Indian Reservation, where we spent the night sleeping in teepees next to their big hot springs and swimming pool...an oasis in the desert. This is also where we got our first taste of brutal headwinds, beating us silly over the last 20 miles of the stage.

Stage 4: Kah-Nee-Ta to The Dalles; 80-90 miles, 5800'. Crossing the Warm Springs Reservation in the early miles, we saw several ...herds of wild mustangs. Those beautiful, free ponies made it plain: we were deep into the classic American west. About half the group added a 10-mile round trip to see a grand waterfall on the White River. A long, hot climb to Tygh Ridge summit set us up for almost 30 miles of nearly constant descending to end the stage, heading down to the Columbia River at The Dalles. But those lazy downhill miles were marred by headwinds so fierce we had to pedal hard in our little rings at times, just to keep descending. Our camp on the soccer field at The Dalles High School became especially exciting when the sprinklers came on right around dinner time, prompting a pell mell removal of tents to dry spots off the lawn. We could have been upset about it, but mostly we couldn't stop laughing at the farcical, slapstick comedy of it all.

Stage 5: The Dalles to Troutdale; 80 miles, 4500'. It doesn't get much better than this: mile after mile along the legendary Historic Columbia River Highway, always with the majestic river on display on our right. Enormous, out-of-scale vistas from Rowena Crest and Crown Point; one dazzling waterfall after another...Horsetail, Multnomah, Bridal Veil, Latourel...and in between the meandering old road, with all its historic charm, some of it even closed to cars. A few miles along the shoulder of Interstate-84—where bits of the old highway were wiped out by the bulldozer of progress—served as a reality check for us: that we had not quite died and gone to bicycle heaven. At the end of the day, a wonderful evening at the magical Edgefield Resort, quaint almost beyond belief, with brew pubs, wineries, and bistros galore, and quirky, original art on nearly every available surface...a perfect end to a perfect day.

Stage 6: Troutdale to Silver Falls; 95 miles, 9100'. This was the day we had all been dreading, and it lived up to its advance billing: short but very steep climbs all day long, but also loads of short, technical descents...down-the-rabbit-hole plunges. Never a dull moment. A few miles were on busier highways, but most were on remote, tranquil back roads perfect for riding, if riding perfection can be defined as leg-breaking climbs, one after another after another... We ended up in Silver Falls State Park, famed for its ten beautiful waterfalls. But everyone was too tired that evening to make the hike to even the closest of the falls. Instead, many in the group got up early the next morning and visited at least some of the best falls before beginning the final stage.

Stage 7: Silver Falls to Springfield; 85-97 miles, 4500'. A much easier day than the one preceding it, even on the longer course. Not so many steep climbs. Loads of rollers and a few mellow ascents—and snappy downhills—but nothing brutal. A long but relatively lazy day, traveling through the foothills along the eastern edge of the Willamette Valley...shady woods, verdant pastures, fine old barns and farm houses, and more historic, wooden covered bridges: three on the short route and five on the longer option, all crossing pretty little rivers and creeks. After returning to the same motel where we had begun the tour, almost everyone went out to the same delightful riverfront brew pub for one final feeding frenzy, sluiced down with endless pitchers of Hammerhead Ale.

In spite of having our transit of McKenzie Pass blocked; in spite of battering headwinds now and then; in spite of long miles and steep climbs and rogue sprinklers, it was a grand adventure, with a great variety of scenery and topography on display. It was also a congenial week of socializing, both on the bikes and in the camps and resorts, renewing old friendships and making new ones, eating good food and drinking good wine and beer, and just generally having a ball. It pretty well sums up what good cycle-touring should be.



Stage 1: Aufderheide Forest Drive



Stage 4: mustangs near Kah-Nee-Ta

*Stage 3:
Lake Billy Chinook*



*Stage 5:
Historic Columbia River Highway*

*Stage 7:
Hannah Bridge,
one of a dozen covered bridges
we rode across in
Linn and Lane Counties*

Stage 6: Mt Hood





• Plumas-Lassen-Shasta Tour •

July 13-20, 2008

The PLS Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/plumas-lassen-shasta-tour/>

The picture above may not be worth a thousand words but it's worth quite a few. Once again we were caught up in the summer fire season and it was bad enough that it almost scuttled the tour. The newsletter report below covers the matter in depth, so there's no need to repeat it all here. But it did have a significant impact on the tour. This was another instance where we pulled our fat out of the fire...or pulled our tour out of the fire anyway. Lots of consultation and brainstorming before the tour to decide if we could save it and what would that look like. What it looked like was a darn good tour, once we'd shuffled all the pieces around.

This was not a loop route but somehow we managed to shuttle the car pool fleet along. Not quite sure how we did it. Drive a car to the finish of a stage and then ride back along the course? It must have been something like that.

Some tidbits the newsletter report doesn't mention: skinny dipping in Lake Almanor by the light of the moon; one of our participants flashing her assets at the other riders as we went over Lassen summit; Bodega Joe Conway blowing a tire to shreds using the power-pneumatic pump at Bodfish Cycles in Chester; Trudy Nye, Joanne DeVries, and Carol Hasenick egging each other on to do the full Fall River Century on the last day...a first century for all of them...and when they came up a fraction of a mile short at the finish, riding around the parking lot until their cyclometers registered exactly 100.0.

Kym Sawyer's daughter Julia was our mascot on this tour. She was in charge of quality control on the dish washing line. One little speck on a plate and back it went for a better scrubbing.



The Plumas-Lassen-Shasta Tour: *smokin'*!

The club's first week-long cycle-tour of 2008 almost didn't happen. Scheduled for July 12-20, it ended up right in the thick of the terrible wildfires that were scorching the state at the time, in particular the Cow Fire along Hwy 70 (near Lake Oroville) and the Cub and Onion Fires up along Hwy 32 (near Lake Almanor). Not only was Hwy 70—our route to the start—closed, but the smoke from the fires was making breathing an unpleasant and unhealthy chore right where we were expecting to be riding.

For several days leading up to our departure, the 45 tour participants kept up a lively e-mail exchange of opinions and conjecture bolstered by assorted fire incident reports and satellite images of smoke plumes. Tour coordinator Bill Oetinger called all his contacts in the area for eye-witness assessments on the air quality. In the end, we decided that the worst conditions were near the tour's start in Indian Valley, and that things were likely to improve as the week progressed and as we moved from south to north along our course. So it was proposed that we start the tour on Sunday, the 13th—a day late—as it appeared the fires were dying down finally. Then we consolidated the first three stages into two stages, spending less time at the most affected end of our journey.

We had to detour through Truckee to outflank the fires, and as we drove past the Feather River canyon, the air was a hazy amber color that didn't look too promising for quality cycling. But by the time we were settled in our camp in Taylorsville, things seemed a little better, and we polished off our first camp dinner and went to bed cautiously optimistic about the days to come.

Stage 1: Antelope Lake Loop; 55 miles, 3200'. This had been planned as our original Stage 2, but it made a better first stage because it climbed from Indian Valley up into fresher air near Antelope Lake. We awoke to nearly clear skies and the promise of better things to come. The ride consisted of essentially three parts: the long, gradual climb to the lake; the clockwise loop around the lake; the long descent back to the valley. Most of the forest around the pretty lake had been burned in a fire a few years ago, and some sections had burned as recently as last year, so the high country presented a somewhat barren aspect, although the roads were still fun to ride. Lower down, the woods and meadows were all pretty and green. The highlight for some of us was taking a break at shady picnic tables in the quaint little pioneer village of Genesee. At the end of the day, we were able to cool off with a dip in Indian Creek, running past the camp.

Stage 2: Taylorsville to Lake Almanor; 55 miles, 2500'. We combined the best parts of Stage 1 and Stage 3 into a new Stage 2. In the end, we only lost about five miles of good roads with the new route. We began with the lovely meander up the length of Indian Valley, about as pretty and mellow a bike ride as one could ever wish for. Then we had to tackle the long but relatively easy climb from Greenville, at the north end of the valley, to Canyon Dam, at the south end of Lake Almanor. A flat ramble along the eastern shore of the lake was followed by a series of jumbo rollers around the northeast corner of the lake, eventually dropping us into our camp on the north end of the lake, just shy of the town of Chester. This would be our home for the next two nights.

Stage 3: Almanor Out-&-Backs, 48 miles, 2400'. This stage consisted of the flat run into Chester and then three uphill out-&-backs in the forested hills above the town: Warner Valley, Domingo Springs, and Juniper Flat. Warner Valley rewarded us with our first view of Lassen Peak, which had so far been lost in the smoky haze. Domingo Spring's pay-off was the springs: a pretty little grotto with cool, drinkable water. Juniper Flat was the most un-flat of the three, with a stiff climb going out and a wild, fast descent coming back. Other highlights on the day included stopping at an old-fashioned soda fountain in Chester for floats and shakes and malts, and then invading Bodfish Bicycles, the local bike store of Chuck Bodfish Elliot. We noticed a pattern to the smoke's movement while at Lake Almanor: we would awake to find that a NE wind had cleared all the smoke away overnight, but then around midday, the wind would back around into the west, and a high haze would creep back in. As we would watch from the lake in the afternoon, the mountain ridges in the west, at first just ghostly, turned a whiter shade of pale.

Stage 4: Lake Almanor to Mill Creek; 55 miles, 2400'. One can drive from our camp to Mill Creek in just 19 miles, but we chose to circumnavigate the lake before heading west to the next camp. This included retracing our Stage 2 route down the east side of the lake, then winding along the bike path that spans much of the southwestern side of the lake, and a delightful path it is. The balance of the stage was a rather uneventful run along Hwy 89/36... big rollers through forest and meadow. Pleasant but not epic. The best part of the day may have been the swimming hole in the creek at camp: deep enough for paddling about and not at all nippy.

Stage 5: Mill Creek to Subway Cave; 59 miles, 5200'. On summer bike tours, if forest fires aren't complicating your life, road construction projects probably will be. On this tour, we got both. Over the top of 8512' Lassen summit, the crews had several miles of pavement ripped up for repaving. We knew about this ahead of time and had spent quite a bit of energy worrying about it and making contingency plans. In the end, a few in the group elected to shuttle through in our cars, but most rode all the way through and didn't find it all that bad. The surface was hard-packed dirt, and it was possible to climb easily and, once over the top, to descend at over 20-mph. Eventually the rough stuff was behind us, and we got to enjoy the balance of the downhill...still many miles of silky fun at way more than 20-mph. We rolled out at Subway Cave, and while we waited for our follow fleet to catch up with us, we had time to explore the cool, dark lava tube cave. Then we all piled in the cars and drove a few miles further north to McArthur in the Fall River Valley, where we would camp at the Intermountain Fairgrounds, along with hundreds of other cyclists in town for the Fall River Century.

Stage 6: Fall River Century; 62-100 miles, 4500'. Having the last stage of the tour be the century was a great idea, and it worked out very well, not only for us but for the event organizers, who were happy to welcome such a big group to their ride. We have reported favorably on this nice ride in the past. If you've never done it, you should give it a try someday. It's a very tranquil and laid-back century, and probably as easy as a 100-mile ride can be. We offered our riders options of 62, 70, 81, or 100 miles, and we were pleasantly surprised to see that, in the end, almost two-thirds of all the tour participants knocked off the full century. (This, after a week of daily rides, including the crossing of an alpine-sized summit the day before.) Aside from the beautiful scenery all around the course, the highlight for many may have been the amazing buffet of home-made munchies—from peanut brittle to brownies—laid on at the last rest stop in the tiny town of Day, all prepared by the local farm wives...the Ladies of Day.

This tour was packaged as the easier of our two tours for 2008. (The harder tour, through Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks, is going on this month.) As such, the stages were mostly quite short, with the exception of the century, and the elevation gain was modest, with the exception of the chug up and over Lassen summit. Totals of 370+ miles and 20,000' of gain bear this out. But we didn't hear anyone complaining that they didn't get enough miles or that they hadn't had their fun-o-meters red-lined each day. Besides, shorter, easier stages left us with plenty of time for hanging around camp and swapping yarns with our fellow travelers; for splashing around in creeks and lakes; for consuming vast quantities of excellent food, washed down with even vaster quantities of wine and beer.

Considering how close we came to canceling the tour at the outset, and considering how bad it might have been, we feel very fortunate to have pulled this one off. As predicted, the air quality improved as the week went along and as we went along, south to north, away from the fires. But the best part of the whole adventure, was not the scenery, nor the roads, although both were excellent. The best part was the people: the cheerful *esprit* of all the participants...no whiners, no slackers, no malcontents...just lots of happy people having a great time riding and hanging out together.

PLUMAS-LASSEN-SHASTA TOUR ROSTER

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Bill Oetinger (tour coordinator) | Sebastopol |
| 2. Matt Parks (food coordinator) | Sebastopol |
| 3. John DeVries | Santa Rosa |
| 4. Joanne DeVries | Santa Rosa |
| 5. Gordon Stewart | Sebastopol |
| 6. Richard Anderson | Healdsburg |
| 7. Dave Trumbo | Petaluma |
| 8. Joe Conway | Bodega Bay |
| 9. Gary Grayson | Santa Rosa |
| 10. Linda Grayson | Santa Rosa |
| 11. Tom Russell (half-time sag) | Alamo |
| 12. Bobbe Foliart | Alamo |
| 13. Richard Lambert | Sonoma |
| 14. Hiroko Lambert | Sonoma |
| 15. Vicki Duggan | Santa Rosa |
| 16. Tom Bahning | Santa Rosa |
| 17. Ivan Clinton | Santa Rosa |
| 18. Martin Clinton | Santa Rosa |
| 19. Michael Kane | Cloverdale |
| 20. Michele Kane | Cloverdale |
| 21. Rich Fuglewicz | Carmichael |
| 22. Jean Cordalis | Carmichael |
| 23. Bob Puckett | Santa Rosa |
| 24. Arlene Morgan | Petaluma |
| 25. Joe Morgan | Petaluma |
| 26. Ed Steiger | Santa Rosa |
| 27. Robin Abramson | Santa Rosa |
| 28. Janet Petersen | Santa Rosa |
| 29. Tom Petersen | Santa Rosa |
| 30. Cynthia Spigarelli | Sebastopol |
| 31. Tom Helm (half-time sag) | Santa Rosa |
| 32. Barbara Moulton | Santa Rosa |
| 33. Donn King | Sebastopol |
| 34. Carol Donovan | Glen Ellen |
| 35. Bill Carey | Gary, IN |
| 36. Doreen Carey | Gary, IN |
| 37. Valerie Denney | Chicago, IL |
| 38. Sandy Mailliard | Yorkville |
| 39. Kym Sawyer | Midland, TX |
| 40. Uta Gabler | Santa Rosa |
| 41. Bob Hasenick | Santa Rosa |
| 42. Carol Hasenick | Santa Rosa |
| 43. Mary Hoover | Los Gatos |
| 44. Jose Mundo | Santa Rosa |
| 45. Maurice Magsamen | Santa Rosa |
| 46. Trudy Nye | Rohnert Park |
| 47. Rick Sawyer | Sonoma |
| 48. Cathryn Raan (assistant food coordinator) | |





Stage 1: heading out, first morning

Stage 3: Lake Almanor out-&-backs



Soda jerks in Chester



Stage 1: climbing to Antelope Lake

• Three Parks Tour-2 •

September 6-14, 2008

The Three Parks Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/three-parks-tour/>

The Three Parks Tour: even better, ten years later

Last month in this space, we reported on the club's first one-week cycle-tour of the summer: the Plumas-Lassen-Shasta Tour. While you were reading about that tour, three dozen of your club mates were preparing for the second club tour of the season. That was the Three Parks Tour, scheduled from September 6-14, which visited Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks.

We first ran this tour in September, 1998. Ten years later, we decided to take another crack at the out-of-scale route through the high Sierra. Many of the participants were the same, except for the unavoidable fact of being ten years older than we were the last time we tackled those mighty mountains. We wondered, ahead of time, if the old legs were still up to the task.

For the most part, the answer was yes: we did manage to surmount all of the big passes, and generally we had a great time, with much more enjoyment than suffering. There's no question though that the challenges were substantial. Everything is bigger in the big mountains. The climbs are longer, but then so are the descents. And of course the scenery in three of our greatest national parks is bigger and more impressive than just about anywhere else we will ever tour.

Before revisiting each of the stages, we need to tip the old chapeau to the people who helped to make the tour a reality. In particular, we want to acknowledge the car pool shuttle drivers Jim Draeger and Ginger Kuhn, who moved cars for us from the start to the finish. This required a 15-hour day of non-stop driving on difficult roads, with lots of heat, at least in the afternoon. This was unseen by any of the riders, so they might not appreciate what a heroic effort was made on their behalf. We must also thank our sag drivers—Robin Dean, Martha Barton, Kimberly Hoffman, and Arlene Morgan—who were there for us every day, whenever we needed a cold V8 or soda or some munchies. And, as is always the case on cooperative tours, everyone involved pitched in with the chores...not only the KP and luggage-hefting during the tour, but the prep work and clean-up before and after the tour. Staging one of these productions is no small feat, and it only works when everyone helps, which everyone did.

We drove, on Saturday, September 6, to a camp near Bridgeport, on the far side of the Sierra. One of the only logistical tangles of the tour came right at the start, when our big truck suffered a flat near Sacramento. Penske's support folks got us rolling again eventually, but the delay set the first night's timing back by a couple of hours, and that was enough to deny most riders a shot at the little 13-mile prologue ride we had planned. (Although the riders were in camp, their cycling clothes were all in the truck.) A handful of riders managed to do the ride along the pretty lakes, including some in camp shorts and sandals.

Stage 1: Twin Lakes to Tuolumne Meadows; 57 miles, 5500'

The marquee attraction on this stage was the monster climb to 9945' Tioga Pass. But before that whopper, there was the long, gradual climb to 8138' Conway summit, with its lovely vistas over Virginia Creek

and Mono Lake. For the more ambitious, there were bonus-miles additions to Virginia Lake and Lundy Lake and even up the Bodie Road, all of which might have added another 20-plus miles to the day (for some). The big Tioga climb, to such a lofty elevation, certainly was formidable, but most folks got it done with slow, careful metering of their reserves. Over the top, all were rewarded with the long, fast descent to the finish in Yosemite's attic. We were surprised to discover that the promised showers at Tuolumne Lodge are no longer available to campers, but we found a gem of a swimming hole in the Tuolumne River, right at our camp, and that was good enough for most people.

Stage 2: Tuolumne Meadows to Yosemite Valley; 58 miles, 2500'

More significant than the 2500' of climb listed here might be the approximately 7500' of descent on the day. This was a downhill dream—often on silky new pavement—and the only thing to distract one from the endless gravity candy was the iconic landscape of Yosemite, from Tenaya Lake and Olmsted Point to the Tunnel View overlook into the valley and then the valley itself. As often as one visits Yosemite, it never ceases to amaze. The day was not all downhill though, and several riders who had focused primarily on the downhill prospects were heard later commenting on the scope of some of the climbs we had to do. But even with the climbs, we were in camp just after midday, and that left the whole afternoon for relaxing and/or exploring the valley. Some took short hikes and others logged a few bike miles noodling around to various sites.

This is as good a spot as any for mentioning the weather. We really noticed it on this day: a wall of heat as we descended from the cooler high country into the hotter valley. It was warm all week, but rarely really baking. It had been wicked hot the previous week in this region, but we lucked into a mild cooling trend that kept temps in the 70° to 90° range every day. Warm enough to seldom need arm warmers or vests, but never brutally hot.

Stage 3: Yosemite Valley to Bass Lake; 56 miles, 4900'

Heading south out of Yosemite Valley means, first, a sweet run down the magnificent valley, and then a long climb along the Wawona Road, including riding uphill through a mile-long tunnel. There are other big climbs too, but there are also two 13-mile descents sandwiched around a nice rest stop at the grand old Wawona Hotel. We also offered the busy beavers in the group a couple of bonus-miles out-&-backs, including one to Mariposa Grove. We camped on the shore of Bass Lake at a campsite that had a nice beach on the lake where many went swimming in the not-too-cold lake.

Stage 4: Bass Lake to Choinumni; 70 miles, 6400', 58 miles, 4000'

Both routes were fairly challenging, and the longer one was quite a brute. But both routes did contain more descending than climbing (9000' on the long route), so the day was not all hard slogging. In fact, there were extremely entertaining downhills all day long...real down-the-rabbit-hole twisters. This is the only day on the tour that

didn't contain any miles in a national park, but that didn't mean we were riding through boring scenery. Much of the route was lovely, with oak forest and meadows and big rock just slightly less grand than what one finds in the famous parks. And without the lure of the parks, traffic was virtually non-existent. Our camp was in a remote, peaceful county park on the Kings River. We recalled this river being heart-stoppingly cold when we were here before, but we were pleasantly surprised to find it much warmer this time, so that one could actually stay in the stream and loll about. The "peaceful" aspect of the camp was somewhat compromised by about three dozen Fresno County Sheriff's personnel conducting some sort of operation in the camp, replete with low-flying helicopter, scuba divers, and pretty much all the law-enforcement toys they own.

Stage 5: Choinumni to Kings Canyon; 75 miles, 10,500'

This was a giant of a stage, the equal of a typical century, at least. But it was also one of the most spectacular stages we have ever done. The first 45 miles were taken up with climbing from the foothills to the top of the mountains along a series of smaller, steeper roads and then more gradually along the main highway into the park. A missed turn in this section led all the riders on a slight detour that didn't add any miles but did add another climb, ensuring that our total elevation gain for the day was well over 10,000'. Once into the park, the next 20 or so miles comprised one of the world's most amazing descents... down, down, and down into the massive canyon. The space available here cannot do justice to how epic this section is, with soaring rock ramparts and sheer cliffs above and below the road, and with smooth pavement much of the way. In the deepest reaches of the gorge—near Horseshoe Bend—the interplay of winding road and towering rock cliffs is as impressive as any cycling venue you might care to name, anywhere on this planet. From that dramatic spot, the last ten miles were all uphill, next to the wild cascades of the Kings River. Ten miles and 1600' of climb might seem like a hard way to end such a big, tough day, but this was never really a cruel climb, especially with the magnificent river always nearby for scenic relief and with an afternoon tailwind giving us a little assist. We camped for two nights in a pleasant group site overlooking the river.

We planned for a layover day in Kings Canyon to recharge our batteries after the long Stage 5 and ahead of the even longer Stage 6. We also wanted more time to explore this little-known wonderland. It turned out to be a delightful, relaxing day...no camp to move; no big miles to pound. Some folks hiked to Lookout Point or Mist Falls, while others rode a few miles to Road's End in the deepest part of the canyon, where the huge granite monoliths look like the big walls in Yosemite Valley, only bigger. Many visited Roaring River Falls, a picture-perfect waterfall dropping into an exquisite punch-bowl grotto. Some even took the tour of Boyden Cavern. And a few hardy souls took the plunge into the river (much colder up here than down at Choinumni).

Stage 6: Kings Canyon to Choinumni; 84 miles, 8400'

If Stage 5 wasn't the most challenging stage, then this stage was; if Stage 5 wasn't the most spectacular stage, then this stage was. Hard to choose between them, and the fact that the tour participants are still debating which of these two was the best bike stage they've ever done tells you a little about how over-the-top these miles are. We began our final stage by retracing the last 24 miles of the previous stage, beginning with those final ten miles of climbing, now turned around to become a screaming, high-speed descent. Then we had to climb out of

the deepest canyon in the United States, first with the 14 miles we had done as a descent on the main road. As we climbed, we could look back down into the canyon, and we came to realize how close we had come to having another tour messed up by forest fires. Small fires had been burning for over a week in the Kings Canyon high country, but had grown substantially while we were in the valley. Now we could see the smoke pouring down into the area where we had been camping; we had escaped just in time.

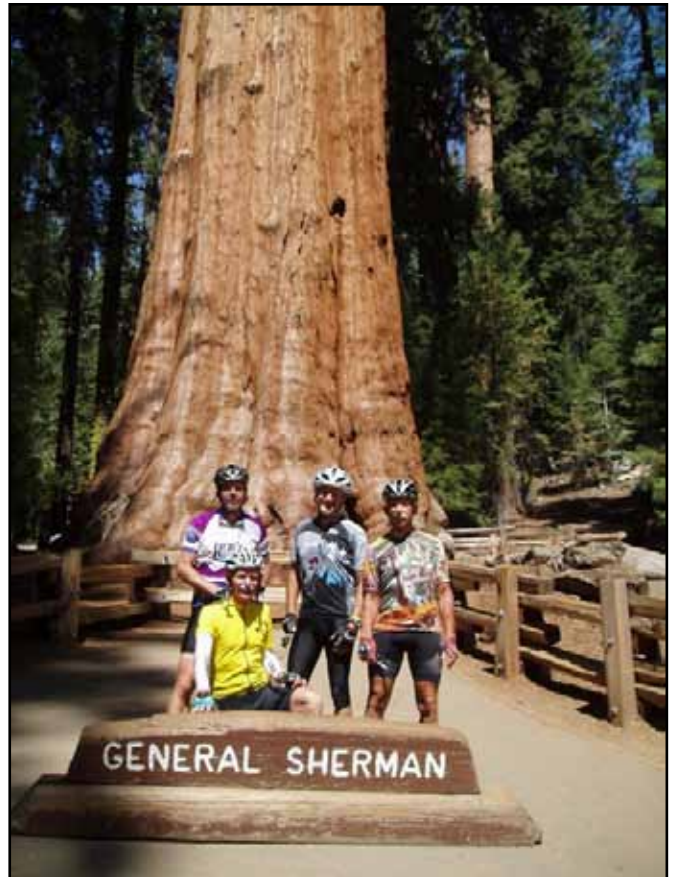
After turning off the highway and descending to Hume Lake, we began the next section of uphill: another dozen miles at a substantial gradient, topping out at a 7300' summit at mile 41. This was by no means the end of the climbing on the day, but at least from here on, the downhills began to dominate. At mile 47, we entered Sequoia National Park and began seeing those namesake trees, those prodigious paragons of the plant world. In particular, we stopped to pay our respects to General Sherman, the largest living organism on earth. The old grandfather tree has recently lost a branch that's about the size of a mature oak tree, but the main tree is still doing fine. After visiting the General, many of the riders took the pretty little spur road to Moro Rock and climbed its 300+ steps to the summit, where there are views to forever in all directions. Finally, at Giant Forest Village, we launched off the mountain into our final, epic descent: almost 5000' down in almost 20 miles, and every inch of it a curling, swirling, whirling dervish of a downhill...one slinky bend after another, most of it on satin pavement. This too-much-fun downhill was the perfect conclusion to our wonderful tour, and in fact, we ended the tour where we ended the downhill, just outside the park's southern gate, at a quaint old inn on the banks of the wild Kaweah River. Dinner on the terrace of a nice restaurant, watching the full moon rise over the river, put a final exclamation point on this best of all possible tours.

Without a doubt, this was one of the most spectacular and most entertaining and challenging tours we have ever done. (We've done it twice now, and it was as good the second time around as the first time.) Only the Southern Utah Tour of 2004 even comes close to matching this one for eye-popping scenery. This will be a hard act to follow in the years ahead. But we did follow it with other tours a decade ago, and we will do so again now.



THREE PARKS TOUR ROSTER

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Bill Oetinger (tour coordinator) | Sebastopol |
| 2. Matt Parks (food coordinator) | Sebastopol |
| 3. Cathryn Raan (assistant food coordinator) | |
| 4. Robin Dean (sag crew #1) | Burney |
| 5. Martha Barton (sag crew #1) | Santa Rosa |
| 6. Kimberly Hoffman (sag crew #2) | Santa Rosa |
| 7. Greg Durbin (finances) | Santa Rosa |
| 8. Arlene Morgan (sag crew #2) | Petaluma |
| 9. Joe Morgan | Petaluma |
| 10. John DeVries | Santa Rosa |
| 11. Joanne DeVries | Santa Rosa |
| 12. Gordon Stewart | Sebastopol |
| 13. Richard Anderson | Healdsburg |
| 14. Susan Forsman | Gilroy |
| 15. Barley Forsman | Gilroy |
| 16. Susan Noble | Santa Rosa |
| 17. Rich Fuglewicz | Carmichael |
| 18. Bob Puckett | Santa Rosa |
| 19. Donn King | Sebastopol |
| 20. Nancy Marinsik | Petaluma |
| 21. Emilio Castelli | Sebastopol |
| 22. Bob Stolzman | Nevada City |
| 23. Bill Ellis | Novato |
| 24. Evelyn Ellis | Novato |
| 25. Janice Oakley | Santa Rosa |
| 26. Kipp Frey | Santa Rosa |
| 27. Margit Pirsch | Forest Knolls |
| 28. Wes Hoffschildt | Santa Rosa |
| 29. Robert Cotton | San Rafael |
| 30. Scott McEldowney | Windsor |
| 31. Tony Lee | Petaluma |
| 32. Mike DeMicco | Antioch |
| 33. Steve Kroeck | Sebastopol |
| 34. Karl Kuhn | Windsor |
| 35. Robert Redmond | Petaluma |
| 36. Darrin Jenkins | Rohnert Park |
| 37. Firouzeh Attwood | Santa Rosa |
| 38. Jose Mundo | Santa Rosa |
| Shuttle Crew | |
| Jim Draeger | Santa Rosa |
| Ginger Kuhn | Windsor |





Stage 1: beginning the climb to Tioga Pass

Stage 2: Yosemite Valley



Stage 4: open range on Maxson Road

Stage 5: descending into Wonder Valley



Stages 5 & 6: Kings Canyon

Stage 6: descending the Generals Highway, Sequoia NP



• Blue Wallowa Tour •

September 6-14, 2008

The Blue Wallowa Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/oregon/blue-wallowa-tour/>

Blue Wallowa Tour: far from home; far from ordinary

The club's first multi-stage tour of 2009 took place from July 18-26, with 40 members in attendance, plus a crew of two transport/food wranglers. This was the Blue Wallowa Tour, which explored the Blue and Wallowa Mountains of Northeastern Oregon. Seven stages, averaging 74 miles each, added up to a full tour of over 500 miles. This made it one of the longer tours we've put together, but with less than 30,000' of elevation gain, it was one of the least hilly. What hills there were though were quite substantial and memorable: they were rarely steep, but were often long. Every day offered at least one climb of at least four miles in length and some were well over ten miles. We just don't see grades of that length in our Sonoma County backyard.

The real challenge for the riders was heat. We flirted with 100° on almost every stage, and it always seemed as if the hottest temperatures were to be found on the steepest, longest, and most exposed climbs. This took a toll on everyone, and most folks felt pretty well wrung out when they rolled into camp each afternoon.

The other big challenge was travel: this tour was as far away from home as any we've done, requiring a long drive to Bend, an overnight in a motel there, then another long drive to the start of Stage 1 the next morning, followed by a full stage. At the end of the tour, the process had to be repeated, in reverse. The timing and logistics of this long haul were rather complex, but we pulled it off.

As the tour went along, more and more participants expressed pleasant surprise at how green and woody the landscape was. When imagining Eastern Oregon ahead of time, most had envisioned a barren expanse of mesas and sagebrush...an empty western desert. We did see some of those wide open spaces, but more frequently we were riding through rugged granite mountains not unlike the Sierra or Trinities, cloaked in forest of douglas fir, ponderosa pine, and aspen. Or else we were meandering along next to one pretty river or another, cruising through verdant farm fields, or visiting charming little towns.

Stage 1: Long Creek to Sumpter; 81 miles, 5000'

From our motel in Bend, we drove 190 miles east and north, through the Ochoco National Forest and the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, fetching up in the little town of Long Creek, where we stashed our car pool fleet at the high school for the week. We began our ride with a modest climb followed by a long, fast descent into the beautiful canyon of the Upper Middle Fork of the John Day River. Moderate riders were given an option of skipping this first up-and-down section and ending up with a stage of 68 miles. Once down into the river canyon, we enjoyed a dream-like run of 40 miles, heading east alongside the wild, wandering river: perfect scenery and no traffic, along the southern fringe of the Blue Mountains. The final 27 miles were on a slightly busier highway—but still very quiet—which included two 5000' summits (6 and 4-mile climbs), with a nice descent in between. Our destination was a vast, rolling lawn near the tiny town of Sumpter. Known as “the grounds,” this big meadow is the site of flea markets three times each summer, but is otherwise empty and available for camping, and includes a big picnic area and

bathrooms with showers.

Stage 2: Sumpter to Halfway; 85 miles, 3200'

This stage ran gently downhill for most of its miles, along two different sections of the Powder River: long, lazy runs with even a hint of a tailwind to make the miles fly by. In between the river runs was a transit of Baker City (pop. 10,000, the biggest town we would see all week). A smallish climb led past a museum about the Oregon Trail, which passed nearby. It was from this hill that we began seeing the rocky ramparts of the Wallowa Mountains on the NE horizon. After the second Powder River run, we climbed gently to the town of Richland and then geared up for the one really big climb of the day. This unnamed ascent was only four miles, but what a tough four miles it was! Every inch of it was out on an exposed, rocky cliff face, and midway up the hill we were seeing 103° on our bike thermometers. Pretty much everyone in the group was hammered by this brute. But at least we were rewarded with a long, fast descent to the charming town of Halfway, where we set up camp on the shady lawn at Pine Eagle High School.

Stage 3: Halfway to Wallowa Lake; 78 miles, 6500'

This was probably the most spectacular stage of the tour: a hilly trek through the high heart of the Wallowas, ending up at lovely Wallowa Lake. It was also the stage with the most climbing: a 19-mile, 2600' climb, followed by a ripping descent, and then an 11-mile, 2000' climb. There were other uphill as well, and downhills to match. There was also an optional 6-mile out-&-back to a vista point looking down into Hells Canyon on the mighty Snake River. Some of the more ambitious riders tackled this. Scenery was a mix of deep forest along Pine Creek and the Imnaha River and open, sub-alpine meadows in the high country. Then, in the last few miles, all that wilderness gave way to green pastures and farm fields around the quaint town of Joseph. Finally, on the far, uphill side of Joseph, we rode out onto a low ridge overlooking magnificent, blue Wallowa Lake, cradled in its deep bowl of surrounding alpine peaks and glacial moraines. What a view! The stage ended with a run down the shore of the lake to the state park at the south end, where two nice group sites had been reserved. In addition to all the scenic charms of this pretty lake and park, we were treated to many up-close encounters with the tame mule deer who inhabit the park, all of them comfortable with being petted by the park visitors.

Stage 4: Wallowa Lake to Cove; 87 miles, 2500'

The longest stage, but not the hardest, at least if one could ignore the heat. But the heat was hard to ignore on this day, as it once again topped out at triple-digit levels in the late miles, making what should have been an easy day more of a hard slog. The stage began with a mildly downhill run along the Wallowa River, flowing north out of the lake. Some of these miles were spent wandering around on little side roads through a succession of small, quaint farm towns... Enterprise, Lostine, Wallowa...and some of them were taken up with the Wallowa River Scenic Corridor, a rugged,

dramatic gorge. This pretty run ended our easy, downhill cruise, and we then had to work our way up and over a 5-mile climb known as Minam Hill, up above the Minam River. It was the only significant climb on the day, and with only a thousand feet of gain, should not have loomed too large. But the heat made it harder and it all worked us over pretty thoroughly. After a long, screaming descent to Elgin, now curving us around to the western flank of the Wallows, the last 28 miles were a more-or-less level run south, down the valley of the Grande Ronde River, amidst fields of wheat, mint, sunflowers, and alfalfa. We spent a pleasant afternoon and evening at the 75-year old resort of Forest Cove Warm Springs, lolling about in their big pool, heated by a natural spring to a balmy 86°.

Stage 5: Cove to Anthony Lake; 45, 63, 80 miles, 4000'-6000'

This was the only day with longer and shorter options, and the group split up fairly evenly into three groups for the three routes. We were headed west, back across the twin valleys of the Grande Ronde and Powder Rivers, leaving the Wallows behind and heading back to the Blues. The stage ended with the most challenging climb of the whole tour: the 15-mile, 3600' ramp up to Anthony Lake. But before that whopper, we had the various options that gave us our longer or shorter courses. The longest course looped south along pretty, shady Catherine Creek, then bore west across a more austere landscape, through the town of Haines. The middle distance did the best part of Catherine Creek before doubling back to the short course. The shortest course headed southwest, over one small summit and down to the town of North Powder before approaching the big climb. Fortunately for all of us, it was not quite as hot on this day—only 95!—and a thin veil of cloud kept us borderline comfortable for the long, long climb, which included some pitches as steep as 14%. Some of us stopped midway up the climb to splash about in a snowmelt creek, and that made the climb much more manageable. Camp was in a wonderful USFS group site on the shore of the lake. The lake itself looked like a classic, rock-ribbed Sierra lake. Picture-postcard perfect and pleasant for swimming. The only bad thing about the site was a plague of voracious mosquitos. Without liberal applications of Cutters and Off, we would have been eaten alive.

Stage 6: Anthony Lake to Lehman Hot Springs; 64 miles, 3300'

This stage was mostly about descending—over 6000' worth—but there were also a few climbs to keep us honest. A small climb of a bit less than two miles started things off and took us to the high point of the tour: 7392' Elkhorn summit. From that peak, it was down, down, and more down: 37 of the next 43 miles were downhill, often at a very speedy tempo. First we had about 14 miles of fast free fall in deep fir forest, railing it around one sweeper after another. Then, after a moderate, 5-mile climb, another seven or so miles of the same downhill rush through the trees. Finally, the dense forest gave way to huge meadows, and we rolled out along the headwaters of the Grande Ronde for another 15 sweet miles, curling back and forth by the stream, with big basalt cliffs knuckling up next to the road. But eventually this heavenly glide had to end, and after a regroup at friendly Starkey Station, we had to grapple our way over ten mostly uphill miles, gaining 1200' along the way. One more lazy, downhill cruise brought us to our camp. This was a good news-bad news camp. The good news: wonderful hot springs—up to 105°—where we soaked our weary bones all afternoon. The bad news: a very funky campground; the worst we've seen in several years of tours. The hot springs made up for it to some degree, and we just laughed off the rest of the inconvenience. We made it work: forty-plus people with good

attitudes can overcome a lot of adversity. (Note: one year later, the Oregon Dept of Health shut this campground down.)

Stage 7: Lehman Hot Springs to Long Creek; 59 miles, 3300'

While this stage featured two stiff climbs near the end, it began with 30 miles of really tasty descending, first along Hwy 244 for 17 miles and then for another 13 miles of Hwy 395, next to Camus Creek, along another Scenic River Corridor. The long, easy grades were perfect for tandems, and we had two good ones on the tour: the Kane's green Comotion and the Ellis' red Comotion. Both pulled like steam engines on this section, and the singles lined up behind in droves. At one point, we had side-by-side pacelines, 15 riders deep, snaking down the gorge at close to 30 mph. Locomotion by co-Comotion! So favorable were the conditions and so efficient were the pacelines that over half the group ran off over 25 miles in the first hour of the ride...a very sweet run. But then we had to dig ourselves out of the hole at the bottom of the gorge: first, a 7-mile, 1400' climb to 4127' Meadow Brook summit; then, after an absolute howler of a descent, a final, 4-mile, 1100' climb in the midday sun. After that summit, ten miles of rolling terrain delivered us back to Long Creek, where our car pool fleet was waiting to shuttle us back to Bend for another night in the motel. We dined on both our nights in Bend at the excellent McMenamin's Old St Francis brew pub in old town, and as it happened, on our final Saturday night there, the Cascade Classic pro stage race was running a criterium right past the front door of the restaurant. (We thought we were fast in our double-downhill pacelines until we saw the pros scorching the streets of Bend.)

From both an organizational and a cycling point of view, this was a nearly perfect tour. No rain, no forest fires, no crashes, no mechanicals on bikes or follow fleet (at least none we couldn't fix). Next-to-no traffic and very little highway construction. None of the bogeys that can bushwhack a tour. Good roads, good scenery, good food, good company, friendly locals. An opportunity to explore a far-off region that most of us would otherwise be unlikely to see in this lifetime... and to explore it on our bikes. What could be better? Aside from the riding, food and friends, a large part of what makes these tours special is the cooperative energy that animates them: all of those involved pitching in with the various chores, from shopping and prep work before the tour, through clean-up afterward, and through all the cook crews and luggage-loading brigades on every day.



BLUE WALLOWA TOUR ROSTER

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Bill Oetinger (tour coordinator) | Sebastopol |
| 2. Nick Curran (food coordinator) | Sebastopol |
| 3. Brooks Euless (food coordinator) | Petaluma |
| 4. Robin Dean (sag van #1) | Burney |
| 5. Ginger Kuhn (sag van #1) | Windsor |
| 6. Kimberly Hoffman (sag van #2) | Santa Rosa |
| 7. Douwe Drayer (sag van #2) | San Francisco |
| 8. Greg Durbin (finances) | Santa Rosa |
| 9. Uta Gabler | Santa Rosa |
| 10. John DeVries | Santa Rosa |
| 11. Joanne DeVries | Santa Rosa |
| 12. Mary Hoover | Los Gatos |
| 13. Richard Anderson | Healdsburg |
| 14. Ivan Clinton | Santa Rosa |
| 15. Jim Draeger | Santa Rosa |
| 16. Nancy Vallance | Mill Valley |
| 17. Trudy Nye | Rohnert Park |
| 18. Bob Puckett | Santa Rosa |
| 19. Donn King | Sebastopol |
| 20. Michelle Kane | Cloverdale |
| 21. Mike Kane | Cloverdale |
| 22. Frank Pedrick | Nevada City |
| 23. Bill Ellis | Novato |
| 24. Evelyn Ellis | Novato |
| 25. Janice Oakley | Santa Rosa |
| 26. Tony Lee | Petaluma |
| 27. Jill Lee | Petaluma |
| 28. Vicki Duggan | Santa Rosa |
| 29. Tom Bahning | Santa Rosa |
| 30. Scott McEldowney | Windsor |
| 31. Steve Thomas | Santa Rosa |
| 32. Mike DeMicco | Antioch |
| 33. Monica Franey | Santa Rosa |
| 34. Karl Kuhn | Windsor |
| 35. Robert Redmond | Petaluma |
| 36. Darrin Jenkins | Rohnert Park |
| 37. Firouzeh Attwood | Santa Rosa |
| 38. Jose Mundo | Santa Rosa |
| 39. Chris Jones | Glen Ellen |
| 40. Linda Fluhrer | Pleasant Hill |
| 41. Sid Fluhrer | Pleasant Hill |
| 42. Rick Sawyer | Sonoma |
| 43. Steve Kroeck | Sebastopol |
| 44. Jessie Kroeck | Sebastopol |





Stage 1: riding along the John Day River

Stage 3: Sid, Bill O, Darrin...Lonesome Saddle summit



Bob and Bill E



Kimberly and a deer friend



Our clueless leader



Douwe and Robin



Santa Cruzin'

October 4-9

Five stages • 200+ miles • 9000'

Join us, during the wonderful month of October, for Santa Cruzin', a cycle-tour exploring the hills and valleys and seashore of the Santa Cruz area.

We will stay at New Brighton State Beach for five nights (photo at bottom). That's right: no moving; set your tent up just once and leave it up.

There is a beach nearby that is an easy hike or ride from camp. The village of Capitola, with many shops and restaurants, is also nearby. There is a pier that rents kayaks for some easy ocean trips. We mention all these activities because the average ride will be only 40 miles, so participants should have time to explore and pursue other interests after each ride. There are also some areas nearby for mountain bike rides that are really spectacular. There are several opportunities for the road mountain goats to test their skills on some optional, hilly routes.

Stage 1: 41 miles, 1000'

From Natural Bridges State Park, north of Santa Cruz, we will ride north towards Davenport. At Davenport, we'll

turn right onto Swanton Road. This is an absolutely gorgeous 7-mile ride through farm land. At the end of Swanton, there is a short climb and then a great downhill back to Highway 1. Take a right up to Ano Nuevo State Reserve. There may be some sea elephants to observe, and you can stop and watch the kite surfers. Finally, return on Hwy 1 to the camp.

Stage 2: 40 miles, 2400'

The climb up Eureka Road is fantastic. There is very little traffic on this road because the top is closed to cars at Highland Road. It is a climb of about nine miles that you will really enjoy, then sail down Old San Jose Road and right back to camp.

Stage 3: 40 miles, 3000'

The Gazos Creek ride is really great. You will ride along Cloverdale Road, Stage Road, then up La Honda Road and down Pescadero Road to Hwy 1. You might want to stop at Pigeon Point Lighthouse before going back to Gazos Creek.

Stage 4: 45 miles, less than 1000'

This is a flat ride to and through Elkhorn Slough, a great natural wildlife reserve. You might happen upon sea otters and many other marine creatures.

Stage 5: 40 miles, 1800'

The last day will be an easy ride out to Corralitos, Browns Valley, Hazel Dell, Green Valley, and back to Corralitos. This is a fun loop to complete a week of Santa Cruzin'... then we'll head back to camp and finally home to Sonoma County.

Tour fee: \$300

Entry form available as a pdf at the club's website. Go to src.com and click on the Club Tours link, then follow the cues from there.



*New Brighton
State Beach*

And this promo appeared in the September, 2009 SRCC newsletter...

Santa Cruzin' Tour

October 11-16, 2009

Now that the Blue wallowa Tour is over and done with, we turn our attention to the second of our club tours for this season: the Santa Cruzin' Tour, scheduled for October 11-16. Note that those dates are one week later than the dates originally laid on for this tour. We had to move it because of reservation issues at the camp. The good news is that the new dates do not conflict with either the SRCC's Grizzly Century Weekend or Levi's King Ridge Gran Fondo (both on the previous weekend).

There are still a few spaces available on the roster for this tour, perhaps as many as half a dozen more. This tour is shorter and easier than the BWT...more accessible for moderate riders.

There had been a wildfire burning in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but we anticipate the fire will be gone and we will have clear skies. Our routes will go from the strawberry fields in the Watsonville area to the hills east of Aptos and more hills west of San Gregorio, Pescadero, and La Honda. We will be exploring Tunitas Creek, Gazos Creek, Cloverdale Road, Eureka Canyon, Green Valley, and Browns Valley Road. There will be some climbing, but no more than you would expect in Sonoma County. The pavement is good for the most part and when it is not, it is about the same as our roads.

There are farms everywhere. You will have your choice of vegetables, organic or not, and flowers too. Wednesday night is the Farmer's Market in downtown Santa Cruz. Since we will not be moving camp, tour members will have a chance to ride in the morning and visit the Santa Cruz attractions in the afternoon. Some choices are hiking, mountain biking, playing in the ocean, visiting shops in the area, etc. Some of the routes can be expanded to include more miles per day.

We have checked with the park ranger at New Brighton Beach State Park and she assures us that the park will be open because it is one of the most-used parks in the California system.

All the members who had signed up were eagerly anticipating a tasty tour in the hills and along the coast around Santa Cruz. All our ducks were in a row. But as they say, life is what happens when you're making plans. Life, in this case, meant Mother Nature. Or the weather gods. Here's how we described what happened in the November newsletter's *Backroads and Breakaways* column...

"Sunday, October 11 marked the beginning of the club's last one-week tour of the year: the Santa Cruzin' Tour, organized by Joe and Arlene Morgan. Unfortunately, the weather turned ugly on Tuesday, with the first rain storm of the year blowing ashore along the California coast...and not just a little drizzle either: this was a serious, gully-washing, frog-strangling downpour, especially where they were planning to ride (and camp): over 18" of rain fell in two days (some kind of record, I think). With their campground closed down and many of their routes either washed out or under water, they threw in the very wet towel after a couple of frustrating, uncomfortable days and called the whole thing off. They did get in one very nice ride on Monday before the rains swarmed ashore."

Tony Buffa added this: "I was on that washed out Santa Cruzin' tour. We had one day of good riding before the campground closed. Joe and Arlene did a great job of finding accommodations that allowed us to set up our kitchen in the parking lot. Next day, during the storm, Larry and I drove to the next ride start where the sheriff had a roadblock set up and was evacuating residents."

What makes this especially galling is that they had originally wanted the tour to be one week earlier. (Note the date change between the promo on the previous page—October 4-9—and the one on this page—October 11-16.) They couldn't get their campsites at New Brighton State Beach on the weekend they had wanted, so they had to scramble and book sites for the following week. (We had exactly the same problem when we tried to book sites there for the Santa Cruz Tour in 2015. It is, as the promo says, one of the most-used parks in the California system.)

In this year, one week later coincided with an earlier-than-usual first storm of the season. (We usually get our first real rain around Halloween.) If they'd been able to book the sites when they wanted, the weather would have been fine and the tour would have played out along much nicer lines.





The Mother Lode Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/mother-lode-tour/>

Reading the newsletter report below reminds me how nice this tour was. I had forgotten, or my memories of it were tainted with the bad things that befell us, in particular the outbreak of norovirus. I was the team leader mentioned in the report who caught the bug, and I can attest to just how nasty it was, at least for me. No one wants to read the details about what this virus does to you so I will just say this: between my first bout of it, after Stage 5, and then another bout once I was back home, I lost almost ten pounds in three days.

The resort where we were camped when I and others got sick—Yosemite Pines—also had a few little rustic cabins to rent. As soon as we knew we were becoming sick, some of us rented cabins (with bathrooms). No way we could have dealt with this in a tent.

A tour is a little sampler pack of real life. In theory, cycle-tourists are going to be healthier than some average cross section of the population. And yet even healthy people get sick. The flu. A crippling migraine. Saddle sores. Fit, agile people have accidents and sustain injuries, on their bikes or around camp. This may have been the worst incidence of ill-health on our tours but it is by no means the only time we've had to deal with medical demons.

Rick Sawyer and I were co-chairs on this tour. It was a good package and without a few spats of rain and the virus, it would have ranked as one of the best tours we've ever done. It recycled some of the roads we'd ridden on the Gold Country Tour (1999), as well as two of the campgrounds from that epic week. But then it broke out into new country and did some fresh roads. Really amazing riding. It's hard to beat the Gold Country and the Sierra foothills for superb biking back roads.

It was not a loop-back-to-the-start tour but with some creative planning and some good volunteers we figured out ways to shuttle our cars along. We only moved twice, so that helped. On each move day, we had special routes that started with the group but then peeled off and circled back to the start. A handful of riders did these loops and scooped up the cars. Everyone had good rides. As far as I can recall, it worked perfectly.



The ups and downs of the Mother Lode Tour

From May 15-22, 32 SRCC members were off on the Mother Lode Tour in the western Sierra foothills. The title for this report works on a couple of levels. First of all, the tour was very hilly, with steep ups and downs the order of the day, every day, every step of the way. Second, we had a couple of jokers in the deck over the course of the week that complicated our lives and made the trip a bit more of a roller coaster ride than we really expected it to be.

The first joker was the weather. We had scheduled the tour in mid-spring to avoid the almost-certain torrid heat of summer up in those hills. This worked: it was never more than 80° and the hills were still green, the waterfalls and creeks were still at full spate, and wildflowers were still carpeting all the meadows. But we also encountered a few *el niño* showers that weren't much fun. We were only sprinkled on for about an hour apiece on two stages, and although it felt wet to us, most passing cars only had their wipers on intermittent, indicating it really wasn't coming down all that hard. In retrospect, the light rain was more of a negative for overall morale than for any real discomfort it produced.

The other joker was a bigger problem: a nasty little visitor called *norovirus*, one of the most vicious gastroenteritis bugs around. We don't know where it entered the group, but eventually around half a dozen participants fell victim to it, including the tour leader. It's highly contagious, and a camp setting, with communal food, is just about the perfect environment for its spread. We're probably lucky more people weren't affected. Some escaped with just a little upset tummy, but others were laid out for days with vomiting and diarrhea... not easy to manage while living in a tent!

So that's the bad news. But if you can get past those bogies, the rest of the tour was a great adventure.

Stage 1: Fiddletown-Omo Ranch Loop; 70-76 miles, up to 7600'

We began with three loop rides out of Pine Grove, in the mountains above Jackson, in the heart of the Gold Country. The first stage included a large chunk of the old Sierra Century course, including Volcano, Rams Horn Grade, Fiddletown, Slug Gulch, Omo Ranch, and upper Shake Ridge. Big climbs and big descents, all day. But then, that was true of every day on the tour. At least at this point, our legs were still fresh! And the weather was lovely.

Stage 2: Pardee-Paloma Loop: 50-55 miles, up to 5500'

Down out of the high hills into the valley for a loop around Pardee Reservoir. Fast, slinky descents at the beginning—Climax, New York Ranch, and Stony Creek Roads—meant long, sometimes hard climbs at the end—Paloma, Middle Bar, Butte Mtn, and Tadeaud Roads—making the ride feel tougher than the miles would suggest. We caught our first showers on this day, covering the last hour or so of the ride. We finished up damp, but not miserably soaked.

Stage 3: Sutter Creek Loops; 56-82 miles, up to 8200'

Down to the valley again, this time near the pretty pioneer town of Sutter Creek, for more miles in the rolling foothills. The shortest course was relatively easy, but three progressively longer and hillier options gave folks as much as they wanted in the way of challenge, including the leg-breaking, 21% ascent of Charleston Road, out of Volcano. Snappy descents on lower Shake Ridge and Sutter-Ione Roads, sweet little back roads around Drytown, the vineyards of Shenandoah Valley (right), and the pleasant climb along Sutter Creek were all highlights on this day of nice weather.

Stage 4: Pine Grove to Columbia; 58-69 miles, up to 7500'

Finally moving on from Pine Grove to camp number two in historic Columbia, beginning with screaming descents—Irish Town and Clinton Roads and Hwy 49 into the canyon of the Mokolumne River—then the climb to Mok Hill and the glorious, as-good-as-it-gets ups and downs of Jesus Maria, Whisky Slide, Michel, Old Gulch (what a find!), Calaveritas, and Dogtown Roads. Truly, this is what bike touring is all about, in spite of a late-ride sprinkle.

Stage 5: Columbia to Groveland; 41-58 miles, up to 7300'

The shortest option was a loop back to the start to retrieve car pool vehicles...a very nice, relatively mellow ride. The through-route to Groveland offered a bonus-miles loop for the more ambitious in the group. Two big climbs at the start—Big Hill and Middle Camp Roads, near Twain Harte—set us up for rocket descents on Confidence and Tuolumne Roads. Yosemite Road and the many little roads of the optional loop were all up and down, over and over, and all scenic and quiet and great fun. The big finale was Wards Ferry Road, snaking its one-lane, cliff-hanging way down into the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne...and then climbing up and out the other side...an epic, world-class road. Beyond the canyon, rolling climbs led to our new camp outside Groveland.

Stage 6: Mather-Hetch Hetchy Figure 8; 62-80 miles, up to 8000'

A journey into Yosemite NP's little-visited, magnificent Hetch Hetchy region, with an optional out-&-back all the way to the lake. A few ordinary miles on Hwy 120, but many more miles on tranquil, lovely side roads: Feretti, Cherry Lake, Mather, Evergreen, Hardin Flat. No rain, but quite nippy, with a promise of snow in the air.

Because of worries about the virus and perhaps more rain ahead, or even snow, most of the group elected to decamp after Stage 6. Only four riders with their own transport chose to stay on and do a shortened version of the Stage 7 that had been planned. They did a nice, 34-mile ride and short hike, all with nice weather.

Aside from the brief brushes with rain and the more serious issues with the virus, it was a splendid tour. The routes were challenging and endlessly entertaining, with those ups and downs making for hard climbing but lunatic descending. The scenery was spectacular over nearly every mile, both out in the country and in the historic Gold Country towns. And the group worked well together. In the long run, we're confident the many good memories will trump the few uncomfortable ones.



MOTHER LODE TOUR ROSTER

Bill Oetinger (tour co-leader)	Sebastopol
Rick Sawyer (tour co-leader)	Sonoma
Robin Dean (half-time sag)	Burney
Kimberly Hoffman (half-time sag)	SR
Ginger Kuhn (full-time sag)	Windsor
Jose Mundo (truck wrangler)	SR
Nancy Vallance	Mill Valley
Bill Carroll	SR
Rich Fuglewicz	Carmichael
Kipp Frey	SR
Margit Pirsch	Forest Knolls
Gordon Stewart	Sebastopol
Tina Forsman	Castro Valley
Susan Forsman	Morgan Hill
Deborah Hoag	San Jose
Nikola Farats	SR
John Russell	SR
David Johnson	Alameda
Sarah Auker	Portland
Gabby Gonzalez	Napa
Steve Kroeck	Sebastopol
Firouzeh Attwood	SR
Michelle Kane	Cloverdale
Mike Kane	Cloverdale
Sid Fluhrer	Pleasant Hill
Linda Fluhrer	Pleasant Hill
Mike DeMicco	Antioch
Karl Kuhn	Windsor
John DeVries	SR
Darrin Jenkins	Rohnert Park
Bruce Carroll	Oakland
Maggie Leutell	Portland





Hangin' in camp

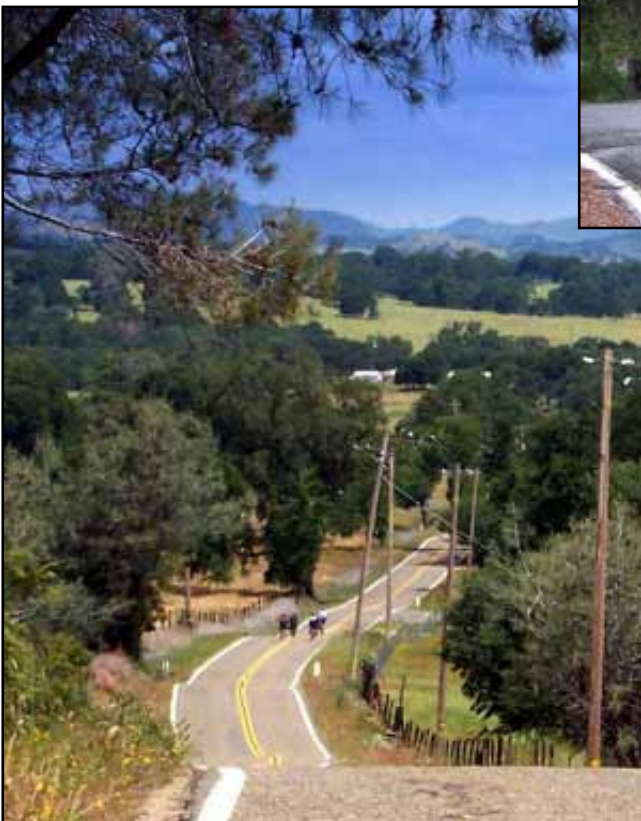


Stage 4: climbing Jesus Maria Road

Stage 2: Tabeaud Road in the rain



Stage 3: Willow Creek Road



Mike, Gabby, Bill, Rich



Alpine Road Trip

July 21-24, 2010



Alpine Road Trip: short but sweet

A report on the recent SRCC Alpine Road Trip mini-tour from tour coordinator Rick Sawyer.

With all of our preparations completed by late evening on Tuesday, July 20, the ART group of 25 adventurous souls was free to meet the next morning with their various carpool mates and embark for Alpine County and the high Sierra from whatever departure points were convenient. People started arriving in camp at Grover Hot Springs by mid-afternoon, where we settled into a cluster of individual campsites that worked well as a makeshift group site. Bear lockers were filled to the brim with our edibles, drinks, and even sunscreen and toothpaste, as the rangers instructed. The first night's dinner was for most of us a restaurant trip, either to The Overland (a well known and authentic Basque establishment in nearby Gardnerville, Nevada) or to the Wolf Creek Inn in Markleeville. A few did their own thing in camp, including short hikes or bike rides or visits to the hot springs.

Next morning, all met at the County Courthouse in Markleeville, as planned, and pedaled northward to Diamond Valley and then Carson Valley, Nevada. The weather was perfect, right down to the lack of what can often be pesky winds coming off the eastern front of the towering Sierra. Quite a bit of late snow was still visible on the higher peaks as we rode along, with nearly no traffic to contend with, splitting into pace lines of like-spirited travelers. Upon reaching the turnaround point of the day, lunch was found at a deli-cafe across

from the old Mormon Station in Genoa...once a Pony Express stop on the western edge of the Great Basin and the oldest settlement in the state. We logged up to 63 miles, and around 3000' of climbing. The route made for a good tuneup for what was to come and gave us a chance to get our lungs accustomed to elevations much higher than anyplace here at home.

We were joined on this first stage by three guest riders from the Veloraptors Cycle Club of the East Bay. They were friends of some of the tour participants, and had a good enough time that they ended up sticking around and having dinner with us back in camp, a BBQ of tri-tip, chicken, and a trail drive vegetarian stew, complemented by a refreshing fruit salad concocted by Tony and Jill Lee. The SRCC touring wine club convened for a spirited meeting around the campfire as night fell. Life is good!

On Friday, we decided to start the day's ride in staggered fashion, so those who felt they needed more time could get a head start on the most difficult stage of the tour. For those who rode from camp, completing the entire out and back, the route was a very stout 75 miles and nearly 8000' of gain. Many chose turnaround points at Ebbetts Pass or Hermit Valley to shorten the day. A few also rode all the way to lunch at the Lake Alpine Lodge, but sagged back to camp. (Liz Sinna, who was nursing an injury and not doing much riding, volunteered for impromptu sag duty.) I think it safe to say everyone enjoyed their day and was favorably impressed with the vistas, lakes, and wandering streams, as well as the challenge of this roller coaster ride that four times tops out at over 8000' in elevation and includes

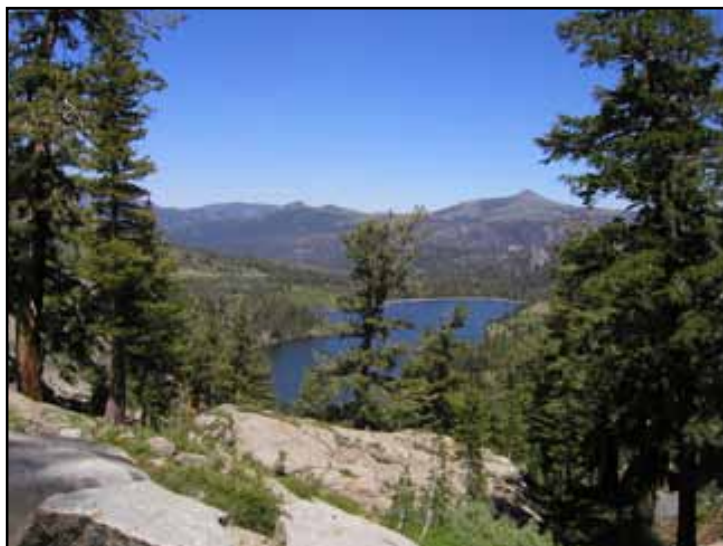
several pitches in excess of 20%. We were even treated to a brief thunder storm in the afternoon, adding some drama but not much moisture. Dinner tasted extra good that evening. Special thanks to Ford Greene, who jumped in and assisted with the seafood pasta, adding his special touches.

After-dinner discussion on Friday evening revealed that our group had quite diverse amounts of remaining ambition for the last stage of the tour, and we collectively decided to modify and freelance the Saturday route as people saw fit. Most folks drove to Hope Valley and rode either to the end of the Blue Lakes Road and back, or over Carson Pass to Caples Lake and back, or both. Some did nothing but repair to the hot springs to soak their tired legs, and a couple headed to Lake Tahoe for some mountain biking instead of doing the published route. Overall, it seemed a worthwhile bit of anarchy, and everyone got what they wanted out of the day.

With the success of this shorter tour format—one that is more relaxed and doesn't require quite as much travel or multiple movings of camps—you may safely assume there will be a sequel coming along one of these days. Stay tuned.

As with all of our club tours, this was a cooperative effort that could not have happened without the talents and efforts of many along the way, through planning, promotion, preparation, execution, and close-out. Thank you to all who took part.

Rick Sawyer	Sonoma
(tour leader)	
Del Bogart	Petaluma
(wrangler)	
Donna Norrell	Santa Rosa
Tony Lee	Petaluma
Jill Lee	Petaluma
Dick Lambert	Sonoma
Hiroko Lambert	Sonoma
Barbara Wood	Benicia
Trudy Nye	Rohnert Park
Chris Jones	Glen Ellen
Gary Wysocky	Santa Rosa
Ford Greene	San Anselmo
Marc Moons	Petaluma
Rita Mathys	Petaluma
Richard Anderson	Healdsburg
Liz Sinna	Santa Rosa
Steve Linden	Oakland
Bill Oetinger	Sebastopol
Brian Purcell	Sebastopol
Kevin Purcell	Oakland
Nancy Vallance	Mill Valley
John DeVries	Santa Rosa
Joann DeVries	Santa Rosa
Stephen Purcell	Mountain View
Firouzeh Attwood	Santa Rosa



• Southern Utah Tour-2 •

June 25-July 4, 2011

The Southern Utah Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/utah/southern-utah-tour/>

Southern Utah Tour: Heat, Wind, & Wonders

On Saturday, June 25, 48 SRCC members piled into a small fleet of cars, vans, and trucks to drive across the wide open spaces of the American West, headed for an epic cycle-tour in Southern Utah. Moving such a large group to such a distant venue calls for a good deal of advance planning, and several club members had been churning away at the details for months to have everything in readiness for the big adventure. Their attention to detail paid off in a nearly flawless tour, save for a few interesting glitches noted below.

After an 11-hour drive, the gang spent the night at a motel in Ely, Nevada, then drove another 200 miles to the start of Stage 1 near Cedar City, Utah. (Excess car pool vehicles were stored in Cedar City for the week.)

Stage 1: I-15 to Otter Creek Lake State Park 55 miles, 3000' up, 2400' down

We began with a relatively easy stage (in light of all the driving in the morning), beginning with a long but gradual climb through the Tushar Mountains, then a long, lazy descent into and along the pretty canyon of the Sevier River. A moderate climb along another branch of the river brought us to our camp on a large lake. It was here we discovered our transport truck needed major repairs. We had to empty out a week's worth of supplies and equipment and have it towed to a shop, where mechanics worked on it overnight. After retrieving it in the morning, it had to be put back together and reloaded...a huge task. It was stressful and frustrating, but we got it done with only slight modifications to our riding plans.

Stage 2: Otter Creek Lake to Capitol Reef National Park 76 miles, 4000' up, 5000' down

After a long run up a grassy valley and a long, gradual climb (and descent), we headed east into a moderate headwind that wore us down for most of the day. Within the last third of the stage, we finally arrived at the true red-rock canyonlands we had come to explore, beginning with the long, fast descent into the magnificent national park, with soaring sandstone cliffs and monoliths on every side. Capitol Reef is one of the great, somewhat unknown treasures of the region, with scenery almost on a par with Zion, but with a tiny fraction of the tourists. We stayed in the lovely Fruita group site: wide lawns shaded by old fruit and cottonwood trees, surrounded by massive red cliffs that lit up like neon in the last rays of the sunset.

Stage 3: Capitol Reef to Calf Creek 60-72 miles, 7000'-8200' up, 7200'-8400' down

As the elevation numbers indicate, this was a day of big climbs. About half the group elected to do an optional out-&-back along magnificent Scenic Drive in the park before tackling the basic stage. (Hence the extra 12 miles.) The basic route began with a long and sometimes steep climb, then backed that up with three more really big climbs along mythic State Route 12, including crossing Roundup Flat summit at 9600'. But the climbing was only half the challenge. A stiff headwind blew down every inch of every climb, no matter which way the road was curling up the mountain. It turned what should have been a hard day into a real grinder. On the bright side, the scenery was fantastic all day long, most especially along the

Hogback, an amazing road that tiptoes along a narrow spine of rock above deep gorges...steep drop-offs on both sides of the road at once. For those who had the energy and time after the ride, there was a three-mile hike to 125' Calf Creek Falls, one of the prettiest falls and grottos in the region.

Stage 4: Calf Creek to Kodachrome Basin State Park 59 miles, 4400' up, 3500' down

What should have been an easy recovery day—after the rigors of the previous day—turned into a sick joke of a ride because of the incessant, intense headwind that ground us down every mile of the way. The first few miles, through the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, were spectacular, with scenery to rival anything on the tour. But the balance of the stage was a more-or-less straight run west, up and over a modest summit and down the other



side, all of it into the teeth of a 30-mph headwind, with gusts much harder and frequently with flying sand adding its abrasive bite to the wind. Finally, at the end, the road curved around in the other direction and we enjoyed a brief tailwind run up into the state park, where the Oasis group site awaited, set in a beautiful box canyon amidst towering sandpipe pillars and pillow-shaped domes of smooth rock.

Stage 5: Kodachrome Basin to Bryce Canyon National Park 30 miles, 3000' up, 800' down

The basic route on this day was short so that participants could park their bikes and hike down in amongst the hoodoos and spires and slot canyons that make Bryce famous. It was theoretically possible to ride up to almost 70 miles on the day if one did all of the optional miles on offer, but we think everyone chose the hikes over the bonus miles. (You can't really see and appreciate Bryce on a bike. You have to get down into the canyons, and that has to be done on foot.) Although short, the bike ride did include a substantial climb onto the mesa where park headquarters reside. And once up on that mesa, it included another short but tough session of banging into another stout headwind. After this last puff, the winds mostly tapered off for the rest of the tour.

Stage 6: Bryce Canyon NP to Duck Creek Lake 75 miles, 6000' up, 5200' down

After leaving Bryce, we enjoyed a frisky descent through picturesque Red Rock Canyon along a well-engineered, silky, slinky bike path. At the bottom, we turned north toward the town of Panguitch, the biggest town on the whole tour. Panguitch, at 6560', was the launching pad for 36 miles of mostly continuous uphill (except for a level run of a few miles along pretty Panguitch Lake). By the time the climbing ended, we would be looking out over the colorful canyons of Cedar Breaks National Monument from the Supreme Point overlook at 10,350', the high point of our tour. The climbing was never difficult, but it did go on and on. Over that lofty summit, we descended—most of the time—along Hwy 14 to our USFS camp, deep in the pine forest, where tour veterans introduced the newbies to the fine art of making smores.

Stage 7: Duck Creek Lake to Zion National Park 60 miles, 3000' up, 7700' down

Note the amount of descending: a big downhill day, starting with a rockin' run along Hwy 14 and Hwy 89. All but four of the first 35 miles were downhill. At that point, as we turned onto Hwy 9 and followed the signs toward Zion, the road tilted back uphill for ten miles, much of which was hard, hot work. But finally, at mile 45, at the park entrance, the road dropped off in a wonderful downhill run through the park's high country... one of the prettiest, most amazing bike runs in the world. The only problem with this dream descent is the Zion tunnel: a mile long and closed to bikes. All bikes must be loaded into vehicles and shuttled through the unlit tunnel. Our sags worked overtime to move over 40 riders and bikes through the tunnel, and for the most part, it went well. But our lives were complicated—almost catastrophically—by a huge rock fall across the road below the tunnel. Two of our riders barely escaped the tumbling boulders, which they described as being “as big as Winnebagos.” Both sag vans and at least a dozen riders were trapped above the avalanche and couldn't ride into the canyon for three hours while park workers scrambled to reopen the road. Several riders found a way to carry their

bikes down a steep cliff, across a creek, and back to the road below the closure, but others were stuck for hours in temperatures that hit 108°. Eventual relief from the heat came in the form of a hike up the famous Narrows of the Virgin River, wading in the cool water in the bottom of a thousand-foot deep slot canyon. But the water was running so high and so swift that this normally placid hike became real work, and folks didn't venture as far up the awe-inspiring canyon as they might have on another day. Amazingly, in light of the triple-digit heat, several people elected to hike to cliff-hanging Angel's Landing in the afternoon.

Day 8: Zion National Park to Kolob Canyons 41 miles, 3000' up, 2000' down

Our final stage was intentionally short and easy because of the long drive back to the motel in Ely, Nevada that would follow the ride. It was not a hugely spectacular day...nothing like the days we had been enjoying. But it was mostly pleasant, and for riders with any energy left, there was an optional ten-mile out-&-back at the finish that reentered Zion National Park via the Kolob Canyons Road in the seldom-visited northwest corner of the park. Mostly though, this day was about wrapping things up: getting to the finish, retrieving the car pool fleet, and driving around 250 miles back to Ely. All of our well-laid plans worked, almost perfectly, and we were at our destination with plenty of time left to hang around on the patio at the motel, sipping wine and beer and rehashing the wonders of the week just past.

Our drives to and from home went very smoothly. We were dreading gridlock on the roads approaching the Bay Area on our return trip on July 4, but we were never even slowed down once, and we were back at the club warehouse with hours of daylight to spare, providing us with plenty of time to deconstruct the truck and the two rental vans and get them returned. One week later, a good many of the tour participants returned to the warehouse to give all the equipment a final cleaning...one last example of the club's cooperative touring ethos. Because of the long drives, the tricky car pool arrangements, and assorted other challenges, this was a complex tour to mount and manage. But it all went very well, thanks to a great deal of hard work from several super-volunteers.

Most participants will remember the Southern Utah Tour as one of the best tours we've ever staged. In spite of the truck break-down and the brutal headwinds and the occasional avalanche, it was a spectacular visit to the Highlight Zone, with out-of-scale scenery and adventure around almost every bend. It was a tour for the ages.



Southern Utah Menus and Cook Crews

1. End of Stage 1; Sunday, June 26

Otter Creek Lake State Park

Pasta Frutti di Mare. Spaghetti in a light wine sauce with shrimp, scallops, salmon, and fresh herbs. Mixed green salad, garlic bread. Pesto pasta alternative.

1. Kimberly Hoffman
2. Michele Kane
3. Mike Kane
4. Nancy Vallance
5. Frank Pedrick
6. Arlene Morgan
7. Joe Morgan

2. End of Stage 2; Monday, June 27

Capitol Reef National Park

Grilled chicken in a Thai peanut/coconut marinade. Steamed rice and blanched broccoli and salad. Grilled tofu alternative.

1. Bill Oetinger
2. Ginger Kuhn
3. Karl Kuhn
4. Rick Sawyer
5. Michael Barnes
6. John Russell
7. Kym Sawyer

3. End of Stage 3; Tuesday, June 28

Calf Creek USFS camp

Pasta Carbonara. Traditional recipe with eggs and bacon (no-bacon or soy-bacon alternative). Mixed green salad, garlic bread, and grilled veggies.

1. Nikola Farats
2. Steve Linden
3. Brian Plaughter
4. José Mundo
5. Kipp Frey
6. Brian Chun
7. Dave Batt

4. End of Stage 4; Wednesday, June 29

Kodachrome Basin State Park

Barbecue night. Grilled chicken and tri-tip. Portobello mushroom veggie alternative. Baked potatoes, salad.

1. Donna Norrell
2. Laura Stansfield
3. Clay Popko
4. Monica Franey
5. Michael Pucci
6. Bill Dunn
7. Sarah Auker

5. End of Stage 5; Thursday, June 30

Bryce Canyon National Park

Fiesta Night. Build your own burritos buffet. Fresh fixings and leftovers from barbecue night. Chips, salsa, guacamole, etc.

1. Doug Schrock
2. Greg Durbin
3. Scott McEldowney
4. Jill Lee
5. Tony Lee
6. Linda Fluhrer
7. Sid Fluhrer

6. End of Stage 6; Friday, July 1

Duck Creek Lake USFS camp

Five Cheese Tortellini with chicken/apple sausage and roasted bell peppers. Pan-roasted green beans. Tofu sausage with pesto sauce alternative.

1. Trudy Nye
2. Gabby Gonzalez McNamara
3. William McNamara
4. Richard Anderson
5. Brian Purcell
6. Kevin Purcell
7. Gordon Stewart

7. End of Stage 7; Saturday, July 2

Zion National Park

Barbecued loin of pork, hot German potato salad, Waldorf salad. Veggie-bacon potato salad alternative.

1. Bill Oetinger
2. Margie Biddick
3. John Biddick
4. Tom Hiltz
5. Steve Thomas
6. Janice Oakley Thomas
7. Chris Jones

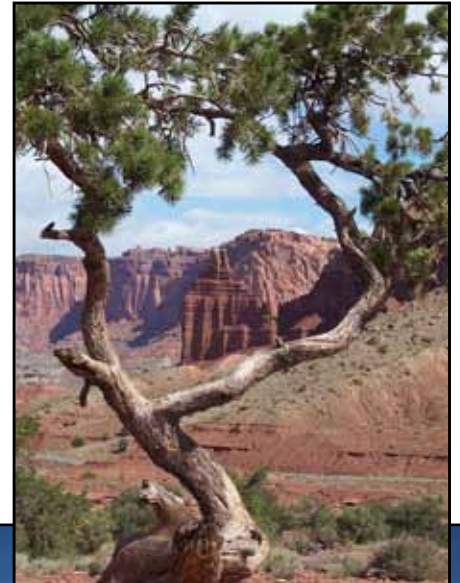


Getting organized at the motel in Ely, Nevada

Stage 3: The Hogback



Stage 7: descending into Zion



Sandpipe, Kodachrome Basin



Stage 6: bike path out of Bryce





Wild Rivers Tour Two: Too Much Fun

From July 31 to August 6, 37 lucky club members enjoyed a wonderful week of cycle-touring on the club's second tour of the summer. The Wild Rivers Tour explored the far northwestern corner of the state of California, up along the rivers that give the tour its name: the Trinity, Klamath, Salmon, Scott, Illinois, Smith, and Mad. It spent most of its time deep within the Siskiyou, Klamath, and Six Rivers National Forests and Redwood National Park.

In general, this tour was less challenging and less stressful than the Southern Utah Tour that ran a month earlier. The drives to and from the course were much shorter, the stages were shorter and—usually—easier, and there were only six of them instead of eight. All in all, it added up to a package that was more accessible for moderate riders, and that sector of the club was well represented in the field.

On Sunday, July 31, the troops drove to the Trinity Alps (leaving the carpool fleet in Arcata) and spent the first night in a pleasant camp along the banks of the Trinity River on the Hoopa reservation.

Stage 1: Tish-Tang to Nordheimer 51 miles, 4500' up, 3750' down

After the steep climb out of camp (to wake us up in the morning), we settled in for an easy, downstream run north along the Trinity to its junction with the Klamath, where the road began to tilt uphill. The route became decidedly more uphill when we turned onto Ishi Pishi Road, a dinky detour high above the river. Riders who thought Ishi Pishi was about as good as it could get—and it was—found out it could in fact get even better when they turned away from the Klamath and headed upstream into the Salmon River gorge, one of the most

impressive roads on this or any other tour, with sheer rock cliffs soaring high above the road on one side and plunging into the gorge on the other, without even a hint of a guardrail between the riders and the abyss. Quite the adventure. After all that excitement, we cooled off with an afternoon dip in the pretty swimming hole at camp.

Stage 2: Nordheimer to Indian Scotty 67 miles, 6500' up, 5100' down

This stage, or at least part of it, was the exception to the notion that this tour was easy. There is nothing easy about the long and sometimes steep ascent to 5900' Etna summit. It is a monster of a climb, and riders dealt with it with whatever tools they had at their disposal, including walking for brief spells for a few people. Prior to the really hard part of that climb, there were many miles of lovely, rolling roads along the headwaters of the Salmon. On the far side of the climb, there was the endless descent to the little town of Etna. After Etna (and its old-fashioned soda fountain), there were miles of flats and little, lumpy climbs crossing the pastoral Scott Valley and Quartz Valley, eventually ending up along the Scott River, leading to Indian Scotty camp, where another relaxing swimming hole awaited.

Stage 3: Indian Scotty to West Branch 59 miles, 3100' up, 3500' down

This relatively easy stage began with a dream run along the rest of the Scott River—mostly downstream and downhill—until it flowed into the Klamath. A run west along another reach of the Klamath brought us to the town of Happy Camp, where most riders stopped to have their pictures taken with the Bigfoot monument. After that, it was a long, mostly uphill—mostly gradual—run up the State of Jefferson Scenic Byway to a camp on Indian Creek. Those final



uphill miles, out in the sun on a hot afternoon, made the stage seem a bit harder than it really was. Hiking down to the creek from camp was an arduous trek, and the tumbling cascades in the creek were icy cold, so there wasn't as much lingering in the stream on this day. Our portable showers got a workout.

Stage 4: West Branch to Panther Flat 55 miles, 4300' up, 6100' down

The long, gradual climb that ended Stage 3 continued for several more miles beginning this stage: up, up, and up to an unnamed summit at 4750', where the remote road toppled over the crest and descended into Oregon. The elevation profile looked almost as monumental as the Etna climb, but it was in fact much easier. The descent into the valley of the Illinois River was about as much fun as it could be—3200' down over 12 slinky, kinky miles—and the only complication was some road work near the top that held us up and rendered some stretches a bit sketchy with assorted paving issues. But once past those impedimenta, it was a jumbo portion of gravity candy...big fun. We took a mid-ride break on the shady deck of the store in tiny O'Brien, Oregon, then headed south back to California. One of the best bits of the stage was a run along quiet, beautiful Oregon Mountain Road near the state line, up and over Hazel View summit and down the twisting south face into the canyon of the Smith River. What a great road! The balance of the stage was run along Hwy 199, which was mostly downhill, mostly well paved, and just a bit busier than we like...but not really all that bad. Panther Flat is a nice camp along the Smith River, offering both good swimming and good showers.

Stage 5: Panther Flat to Elk Prairie 71 miles, 4500' up, 4800' down

This stage was listed at 64 miles, but we improvised a nice detour to avoid a busy, narrow section of Hwy 199. This took us further north along the Smith, then followed a level or rolling run into the town of Crescent City. Some of the town miles were a bit blah—the usual suburban clutter—but the miles out along the ocean were spectacular. Our first glimpse of the sea didn't disappoint, with rugged sea stacks and crashing surf. That was as good as it got for awhile though, as we had to suffer through the heavy traffic along Hwy 101 for several miles south of Crescent City. This busy run encompasses a long climb, a long descent, and a long roll-out to our third encounter with the Klamath, this final time near its mouth. The last crossing of the Klamath included an odd sideshow, where masses of tourists were thronging the bridge to catch a glimpse of a wayward gray whale that had somehow swum up the river and didn't seem able to find its way back out to sea. It

was swimming in circles right under the bridge. We were happy to leave 101 behind us as we pedaled west along the south bank of the river, headed for an obscure route out along the coast. Brand new, absolutely perfect pavement on gorgeous Alder Camp Road led to the exact opposite on Coastal Drive: a closed and abandoned road, with crumbling pavement giving way to gravel single-track that had even the most skillful mountain bikers in the group hopping off for a little cyclocross action when the going got too rough. But after that walk on the wild side, the stage ended with several marvelous miles of best-quality pavement rolling downhill through stands of magnificent, massive redwoods in their namesake park, with a tailwind thrown in as frosting on the cake.

Stage 6: Elk Prairie to Arcata 45 miles, 2600' up, 2700' down

Are there elk at Elk Prairie? Yes indeed: huge Roosevelt Elk were on hand to see us off at the start of our final day. This stage was intentionally short and easy because we would be driving home in the afternoon. But it still contained a good deal of quality cycling and scenery. Highlights were the run along Old State Highway above Freshwater Lagoon, the pretty side roads through Patricks Point State Park, down into the picture-postcard village of Trinidad, with its snug little harbor, and the cruise south of Trinidad along aptly named Scenic Drive, overlooking the rocky coast. A meandering route along the back streets of McKinleyville brought us to Hammond Trail, a pleasant bike path taking us across the Mad River and all the way into Arcata. We showered up, piled into our car pool fleet, and cruised home to Santa Rosa, arriving with enough daylight and energy left to clean out our vehicles.

Thanks to excellent planning by Doug Simon and Joe and Arlene Morgan, the trip logistics were a breeze. Food bosses Matt Parks and Jenny Allen kept us all well fed and fueled throughout, and great sag work from Audrey Mattice, Ramona Turner, Tom Helm, and Barbara Moulton had us on easy street every day. Add in great weather, great roads, superb scenery, and a good group and you have the nearly perfect tour.





Day 4: Over the border into Oregon.

We found this menu floating around in our files for the 2011 Wild Rivers Tour. No idea why Day One is missing. With or without Day One, it's evidence that the catering wizardry of food wrangler Matt Parks was at work.

Wild Rivers Bistro

Day Two: Monday

Five Cheese Tortellini with Pesto Alfredo.
Grilled Gourmet Sausages with artisan mustard.
Quinoa Tabouleh Salad with fresh mint, flatleaf parsley and lemon zest. Green salad, garlic bread.

Day Three: Tuesday

BBQ Tri-Tip, Chicken, and Portobello Mushrooms with a Baked Potato Bar.
Tarragon vegetable sauté with fennel, green beans and shallots. Bill's German Potato Salad.

Day Four: Wednesday

Fiesta Nite! Make your own burritos with all the fixings;
Green Salad.

Day Five: Thursday

Spaghetti Carbonara, Garlic Bread, Insalata Caprese,
Green Salad.

Day Six: Friday

Vegetarian Chow Mein (Chicken too) with Fresh Garlic and Ginger, Bell Peppers, Green Onions and Carrots.





Because the club has run this tour two years in a row and three years in fairly close succession, we're not going to devote quite as many column inches to it this time around. But that doesn't mean the club members who took part this year had any less fun or rode any fewer beautiful miles than those who did it in the previous two editions. It remains a delightfully entertaining tour.

Stage 1: Tish-Tang to Nordheimer
51 miles, 4500' up, 3750' down

After driving to the Hoopa Reservation, NE of Arcata, on the previous day, the 30+ tour participants set off on their journey by heading north, first through the reservation and along the Trinity River, then further north along the Klamath, and finally, most magnificently, east up the rugged gorge of the Salmon River, a dream cycling destination if ever there was one. (The Salmon River gorge—below, right—should be on every cyclist's bucket list.) On a hot day, Nordheimer camp offered up a wonderful swimming hole along the river.

Stage 2: Nordheimer to Indian Scotty
67 miles, 6500' up, 5100' down

In general, this tour is considered moderate...not too challenging. However, this day offered up the most glaring exception to that rule: the long, hard climb to 5900' Etna summit. We feel certain this climb would be rated HC on any Tour de France stage. It is a stern challenge for even the best riders. To make things even more challenging this year, the thermometer was flirting with 100° as the riders clawed their way up the sun-baked pitches. But, for whatever it's worth, the summit came and went at exactly halfway through the stage, meaning the final 33+ miles were almost all downhill, often extravagantly so. The stage ended up with a lovely run along the Scott River, ending up at Indian Scotty camp, with another refreshing swimming hole to revive the tired riders.

Stage 3: Indian Scotty to Curly Jack (Happy Camp)
47 miles, 1700' up, 2100' down

Probably the best part of this stage was the first hour, rolling out 17 miles along the canyon of the Scott River. Slightly rolling, but mostly downhill, and every inch of it as pretty as it can be. After that, it was another visit with the Klamath River, following its downhill course all the way to the finish. After an experiment with a remote, primitive camp at the end of this stage (last year), this year it was back to the original camp, where, once again, a pleasant swimming hole was waiting for the wading.

Stage 4: Happy Camp to Panther Flat
67 miles, 5700' up, 7500' down

This stage began with a long, long climb, up the State of Jefferson Scenic Byway to a 4750' summit right on the Oregon border. On paper, it looked almost as terrible as Etna summit, but in reality, it was all quite gradual and generally manageable for everyone. After that first, long ascent, most of the rest of the stage was downhill (with one notable exception). The gravity candy began with a 12-mile free fall into the state of Oregon, a sweet, switchbacking swagger down out of the clouds. After a regroup at the general store in O'Brien, Oregon, the gang crossed back into California for the only other real climb of the day: Oregon Mtn Road over Hazel View summit. It's only a two-mile climb, and an easy one at that, but the payback on the other side is great: several miles of kinked up twisties in the woods, then a long, lazy grade beside the Smith River. Panther Flat offered up one more nice swimming hole for those who wanted it.

Stage 5: Panther Flat to Elk Prairie
71 miles, 4500' up, 4800' down

More pretty miles along the Smith River to begin, then a transit of Crescent City, including a promenade along its attractive ocean-front drive. Then the section no one likes: a long uphill and downhill run on Hwy 101, usually with too much traffic whizzing by. Riders were happy to see the last of that as they turned off on little—very little!—roads along the ocean cliffs. This walk on the wild side includes a few sections that hardly meet the definition of road at all. More like unpaved single-track. But things get better with the last miles through Redwood National Park, gliding along on silky pavement under the giant trees.

Stage 6: Elk Prairie to Arcata
45 miles, 2600' up, 2700' down

A short stage, as the day also included the drive home to Santa Rosa. But still a fun stage, with cute little roads meandering along the coastal hills in and around Patricks Point State Park and the picturesque village of Trinidad. A cool bike path and a bikes-only bridge over the Mad River returned the troops to Arcata.

Special thanks to the dynamite food wizards Matt and Nick, Jenny and Sydney, who continue to raise the bar on camp cuisine. Also thanks to all who helped out, from sag drivers to warehouse washers to long-term planners and organizers.





Northwest Oregon Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/oregon/northwest-oregon-tour/>

August 4-12, 2012

Chatting with participants after the tour, the consensus was fairly unanimous: this year's journey around the northwest corner of Oregon was one of the nicest tours we've ever staged. The routes and scenery were great; the logistics were almost flawless and not at all stressful; the weather was mostly benign. It was pretty much the opposite of Murphy's Law: whatever could go right...did.

After a well-organized day of prep chores on Friday, August 3, 37 club members converged on Corvallis the next day, either traveling to Oregon on their own or as part of our fleet of big passenger vans. Most folks stayed in a motel on the Willamette River waterfront, dining out on the town, happy to finally be launched on the tour and eager for the first stage to get underway.

Stage 1: Corvallis to Champoeg State Park 75 miles, 3400' up, 3300' down

Mostly easy, rolling roads through the farm fields of the Willamette Valley, with the combines out, bringing in the wheat harvest and with hops ripening on their tall trellises. Ahead of time, we had wondered if this stage might be a little boring—just a lot of farm fields—but everyone loved it. We crossed the big river on the tiny Wheatland Ferry, then rolled north to one of the prettiest, most comfortable group sites we've ever encountered. About the only bogey on the day was the heat, with it well up into the 90's (and humid) in the late miles and then right around 100° in camp, where we settled in under the shady oaks and cooled off with repeated infusions of ice-cold beer.

Stage 2: Champoeg SP to Vernonia 73 miles, 5000' up, 4500' down

Two detours padded the miles from the original 68. The tour leader suggested the first one as a way to avoid a busy highway. It certainly did that, and was very pretty, but it was a much tougher climb than the highway it avoided, topping out at 19%. That was on our way to the highest point on the tour: up on Bald Peak, early in the stage, which offered up—after the big climb—panoramic vistas over the verdant valley and then a twisty, 17% descent back into the valley. After 25 more miles of rolling farm fields and dappled woods (including a long detour around a short construction zone), we were treated to the Banks-Vernonia State Trail: the final 21 miles of the stage on a sweet new rails-to-trails conversion. Dream riding through the forest without a car or a care in sight. Also nice: the temperature dropped from near 100° to around 80°. We shared our overnight camp in the village of Vernonia with a tour group from the Sacramento Wheelmen. We crossed paths with them, off and on, throughout the first three days of the tour, before we went our separate ways.

Stage 3: Vernonia to Seaside 72 miles, 3300' up, 3900' down

A peaceful, simple day, cruising through lush forests of fir and alder, first along the meandering Nehalem River, then along the Youngs River. There's almost nothing to say about this stage. It was all the same, from start to finish: rivers and woods, woods and rivers, with the occasional green meadow thrown in. One big climb, bundled with an even bigger descent, but overall, mostly mellow,



easy miles. Most of the day we headed west, eventually fetching up at the ocean in the glitzy, kitschy resort of Seaside.

Stage 4: Seaside to Cape Lookout State Park

71 miles, 5000' up and down; 61 miles, 4200' up and down

Things got complicated when we headed south down the coast. Most of the complexity involved the side road diversions to get off busy Hwy 101. All of the detours were scenic and fun and usually low-traffic. We visited pretty Cannon Beach and some riders added a nine-mile out-&-back into Ecola State Park (picture-postcard scenic). Then, further down the coast, we climbed to Neahkahnie summit, 600' above the rocky coast, where everyone who carried a camera was burning up pixels in wholesale job lots, trying to bring home that spectacular view for their photo albums. After two more tranquil detours off the highway and a stop for lunch at the Tillamook Cheese Factory, we tackled the rugged headlands around Cape Meares, with wonderful scenery every mile of the way (above). The short option saved a few miles and dodged the last, biggest climb, but was still a very nice way to go. We all reunited in the pretty state park, where we trooped out to the dunes after dinner to watch a classic Oregon beach sunset (below).

Stage 5: Cape Lookout SP to South Beach State Park

72-79 miles, 4800' up and down

“Your mileage may vary” could have been the motto of this stage, as another construction detour and a glitch on the route slip caused riders to end up with varied totals on the day, depending on how they handled those two jokers in the deck. But it was all good, in spite of the unexpected, improvisational bits. In broad outline, this day was a lot like Stage 4, as we continued south down the coast, using as many side-road *divertimenti* as we could think of to reduce the miles on Hwy 101. These included the balance of the wonderful Three Capes Loop, begun the day before with Cape Meares and continuing today with the big climb up and over Cape Lookout, down through the sand dunes of Cape Kiwanda to the little village of Neskowin. A nifty, bike-friendly loop around Devil’s Lake bypassed schlocky Lincoln City. Then, later in the day, we enjoyed several miles of riding right along the sea cliffs, highlighted by the Otter Crest Loop, a short but sweet byway off the highway. Finally, we wiggled through the big resort town of Newport and carefully tiptoed across the elegant, art deco bridge over the Yaquina River. (Imagine crossing the Golden Gate Bridge with 4'-wide sidewalks and no railing between you and the traffic.) We stayed for the next two nights in a nice group site at a huge state park on the beach.

Stage 6: Layover day in Newport

For this day of staying put in the same camp, we laid on rides of anywhere from 30 to 65 miles. In the end, we think everyone who rode—and many didn’t ride at all—did just the easiest (almost flat) ride around beautiful Yaquina Bay to a coffee-&-pastry break at Sassafras Sue’s in the old mill town of Toledo. That left plenty of day for lazing around camp or beachcombing; for visiting the nearby Oregon Coast Aquarium or the Rogue Nation Brewery (good food and great beer). It was mostly an intentional rest day ahead of the final, most challenging stage of the tour.

Stage 7: South Beach SP to Corvallis

100 miles, 5000' up, 4800' down; 85 miles, 4000' up, 3800' down

We saved the best for last on this tour, with a final stage that was long on miles and jam-packed with best-quality biking. After one last rolling run south along the ocean and one last back road bypass off the main highway, we followed the pretty, winding Alsea River inland. The shorter route kept company with the sleepy river for almost 40 miles before tackling the 1000' ascent of Alsea summit, and then the rockin’ descent into the farm fields and woods west of Corvallis. Almost three-quarters of the group elected to try the century. That route left the river at mile 35 and traced a convoluted course along several tiny roads through some of the prettiest, most peaceful landscapes one could ever imagine. For over 40 miles, it was fantasy biking: as close to perfection as we have any right to expect in this mortal coil. Meandering lanes, usually with satin-smooth paving and zero traffic, shaded by an endless canopy of broadleaf forest. It ran mostly over rolling terrain, but featured one big climb and a too-much-fun descent. Near the end, both routes came together to follow a pleasant bike path into Corvallis, finishing up with a run along the Willamette River, right up to the door of the motel.

At the finish, most of the riders we saw had blissed-out grins plastered on their faces. No one complained about the long miles or about being trashed. Everyone was simply in a state of euphoria, over the final stage and over the tour as a whole. It was an always pleasant and occasionally fantastic adventure, from start to finish, meeting or exceeding all of our expectations.

We must thank all of the people who helped make the tour a success, including our two rookie food coordinators, Nick Parks and Sydney Anderson, and our four part-time sags, Robin Dean, Douwe Drayer, Janice Thomas, and Donna Norrell...plus all of those who pitched in with the chores, before, during, and after the tour. These cooperative tours only work when everyone lends a hand, and this year, on this tour, that premise worked to perfection.



• COOK CREWS •

Sunday, Aug 5, Champoeg SP

Pork loin, marinated in garlic, olive oil, white wine, and herbs

Grilled organic veggies

Seared tempeh and green salad, artisan bread

1. Donna Norrell
2. Janice Thomas
3. Steve Thomas
4. Linda Fluhrer
5. Sid Fluhrer
6. Hunt Moore
7. Darrin Jenkins

Monday, Aug 6, Vernonia

Five cheese tortellini with pesto alfredo

Grilled gourmet sausages with mustard

Quinoua tabouleh salad with fresh mint, flat leaf parsley and lemon zest,

Green salad, garlic bread

1. Bill Oetinger
2. Douwe Drayer
3. Robin Dean
4. Rick Sawyer
5. Donn King
6. Chris Mickelsen
7. Cynthia Spigarelli

Tues, Aug 7, Seaside

Barbecue tri-tip, chicken, and portobello mushrooms with baked potatoes

Tarragon vegetable sauté with fennel, green beans, and shallots

Wild rice salad with garbanzos and cherry tomatoes

1. Sarah Bousfield
2. Mike DeMicco
3. John Russell
4. Monica Franey
5. Clay Popko
6. Nikola Farats
7. Jose Mundo

Wed, Aug 8, Cape Lookout SP

Fiesta Night: build your own burritos with all the fixings

Green salad

1. Richard Anderson
2. Mary Beth Roselli
3. Caroline Cullen
4. Gordon Stewart
5. Susan Noble
6. Brian Chun
7. Bob Redmond

Thur, Aug 9, South Beach State Park (Newport)

Dining out at Rogue Brewery

Because there is no dinner crew on this day, we will need a volunteer crew to put out the breakfast fixings and pocket food the next morning before the ride on our layover day.

Fri, Aug 10, South Beach SP

Spaghetti with meat balls (on the side)

Garlic, bell peppers, green onions, carrots

Sourdough bread

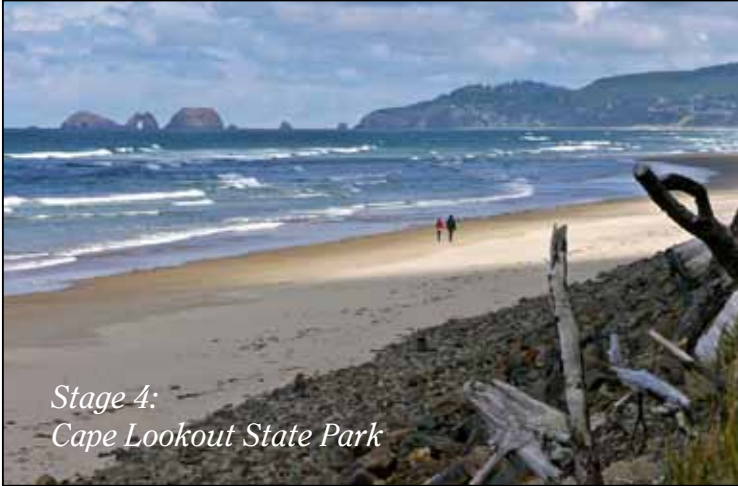
1. Steve Kroeck
2. Jessie Kroeck
3. Gabby McNamara
4. William McNamara
5. Nancy Vallance
6. Richard Sellman
7. Gary Wesley

Crews are on duty from the end of the ride on the assigned day until after breakfast the following morning. This includes putting out snacks and drinks, etc. after the ride.

We always welcome energetic helpers who want to join in on any crew, for a few minutes or longer.



The Wranglers: Sydney and Nick

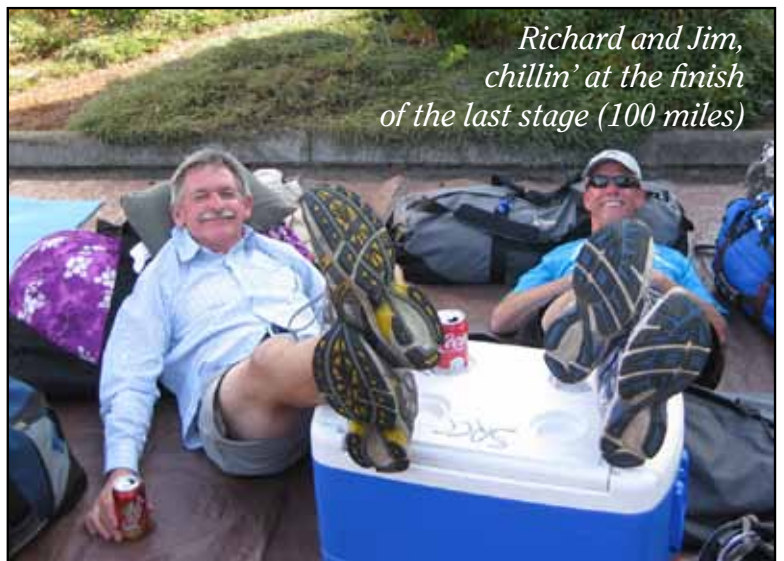


*Stage 4:
Cape Lookout State Park*

Stage 4: descending to Cannon Beach



*Stage 7:
South Fork Road*



*Richard and Jim,
chillin' at the finish
of the last stage (100 miles)*



Central Coast Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/california/central-coast-tour/>

This was the second time around for this tour. We did it first in 1997. Almost everything was the same except for those few things noted in the 1997 chapter. We had left our cars for the week at a school out in Carmel Valley on the first tour. That worked okay but involved a shuttle run out and back for all the drivers, and with over 50 people on this tour, that represents a lot of cars and a lot of drivers. Cumbersome. So this time around we rented a group site in the park where we were staying on the first and last nights...rented it for the week and parked all the cars in it. That sounds expensive but it wasn't. It worked out great.

The "glitches over reservations" mentioned in the newsletter report were two classic examples of park personnel jerking us around. When group sites aren't available, we may have to book six or eight individual sites. But no single individual can book more than two, so we'll have two for Oetinger, two for Russell, two for Sawyer, etc. But when our riders or our trucks arrive at the campground, the person at the entrance kiosk says, "You only have two sites!" He's seeing one set of bookings and not acknowledging the rest. We show him the confirmation documents and still he says no dice, no way. If he can't see the ID for the person whose name is on the reservation, he won't budge, even though we have the paperwork and explain that it's a bike tour for many people and that the guys who made the other reservations are still out on the road. We had this happen on two nights in a row, at Lime Kiln State Park and San Simeon State Park. I finally got them sorted out but it was like pulling teeth to get these knuckleheads to understand. Arggh!

In contrast to that, we had the nice rangers at Santa Margarita Lake County Park putting us in the lovely day use area again, just as they did on the first tour. the ranger in charge told me, "We're the ones on the ground here; we know what makes sense. Those pencil pushers down in the main office in San Luis Obispo don't have a clue...and we're not going to tell them what we're doing!" How refreshing!

When I went up to the Mission San Antonio to pay for our overnight, the office seemed really old...ancient. I said as much to the woman in charge and she replied: "It should look old; it's Father Junipero Serra's personal office."

On Saturday, June 1, 54 SRCC members converged on Monterey for seven days of touring through Big Sur and the hills and valleys just inland from the coast. This was the largest group the club has ever assembled for a tour. Aside from a couple of glitches over camp reservations—not our fault and for the most part sorted out satisfactorily—the bigger group did not prove to be cumbersome. Everyone worked well together and, as far as we could tell, had a great time. All but one day had longer and shorter options, affording participants various ways to tailor the stages to their respective ambitions. It was a challenging tour, but not brutal.

Saturday, June 1

After a busy day of prep work on Friday—buying tons of food and outfitting two trucks and two vans—most participants gathered at the club warehouse for the relatively short drive to Monterey. Others traveled to Monterey on their own. After we set up camp in the highlands of Del Monte Forest, we loosened up our touring legs with a 12-mile prologue ride around the picturesque Monterey and Pacific Grove bay shore.

Stage 1. Monterey to Lime Kiln State Park: 70 miles, 4500'

After a cruise around the famed 17-Mile Drive in Monterey and a meandering exploration of too-cute Carmel, we headed south along the Big Sur coastline. Morning fog burned off before noon, leaving us reveling in the panoramic views down the rocky cliffs to the blue coves below. Camp was a hodge-podge of odd sites, some near the beach and some up in the redwood-shaded canyon. An added treat was a hike to beautiful Lime Kiln Falls, deep in the forest above camp.

Stage 2. Lime Kiln to San Simeon State Park: 45 miles, 2500'

A run south along the balance of the Big Sur coastline on a day kept intentionally short to allow time for a visit to Hearst Castle in the afternoon. A stop at a beach to view hundreds of elephant seals was a treat for most riders, while others added bonus miles with an out-&-back on hilly Nacimiento Road, high up into the Santa Lucia Mountains. The evening included a big bonfire and an advanced class in marshmallow roasting and smore construction.

Stage 3. San Simeon to Santa Margarita Lake: 57-67 miles, 3000'-5000'

After both routes rolled through Cambria, the short route made a bee line down Hwy 1 through Cayucos to Morro Bay. The long route took a detour through the coastal mountains along Santa Rosa Creek and Old Creek Roads, two very hilly lanes (up and down, with pitches over 18%). Reunited, both routes climbed over the mountains to Atascadero and then headed south to a pretty county park, where we stayed in a lovely, shady, quiet group site on the shore of the lake.

Stage 4. Santa Margarita Lake to Paso Robles: 65-75 miles, 4000'-5000'

One of the best days of the tour, with wonderful little roads in the foothills: Pozo and Park Hill, Las Pilitas and Peachy Canyon and more...perfect for back road cycling. Challenging but not killer climbs and wiggly-worm descents through the woods. Spent the night in a motel in Paso Robles and foraged for dinner around the town, including one large group visiting Firestone Brewery for a massive infusion of craft brews.

Stage 5. Paso Robles to Mission San Antonio: 51-68 miles, 3100-5000'

More picture-postcard-perfect back roads for the first half of the ride

in the wooded hills northwest of Paso Robles, similar to the great roads on Stage 4. Then some slightly less exciting miles at the end (flat and straight and into a headwind). And it was hot. This was the first of three days where the mercury topped 100°. We spent the afternoon and evening at the Mission San Antonio de Padua, locked up like an 18th-century time capsule deep within the sprawling Fort Hunter-Liggett army base.

Stage 6. Mission San Antonio to East Pinnacles: 57-67 miles, 3500'

A relatively easy day, heading north and east to and through King City, amidst the produce fields and vineyards of the Salinas River Valley, then up into the hills on the east side of the valley. Elevation gain was essentially the same on either route, and the shorter route had the steeper climbing. The run north through the empty hills along Hwy 25 at the end of the stage was especially nice. We camped in Pinnacles National Park and dealt with the triple-digit heat by spending most of the afternoon in the tree-shaded swimming pool at camp.

Stage 7. East Pinnacles to either Carmel Valley Village or Monterey by various routes: 61-102 miles, up to 6000'

The final stage presented us with the most challenging planning of the tour. The proposal was to begin the day with a three-mile hike through the magnificent national park, from east to west. Meanwhile, all the bikes would be transported around the perimeter of the park to the west trailhead to await the arrival of the hikers. (There are no roads through the park.) Swap out hiking shoes for biking shoes and head out on the ride back to Carmel Valley or even all the way back to the tour's starting point in Monterey (where we would spend our final night). In the end, 14 hearty souls elected to ride all the way around the park and on to Monterey, a century-size day. A few people dodged the hike by riding in the sag vans to the west trailhead. Meanwhile, the majority of the group did the hike, including clambering through a big cave.

Once we were on the bikes, we were confronted with some brutally steep climbs in the park and then a long, rockin' descent back into the Salinas River Valley. After crossing the valley at Greenfield, we tackled the long, hot climb from the Arroyo Seco River to the high point of the tour: 2394' Cahoon summit. How hot was it? Bike thermometers were reading between 115° and 127° on the climb. That was intense! However, over the summit, now on the ocean side of the ridge, it began to cool, and by the time riders reached Carmel, it was down around 65°...a drop of well over 50°. Some riders climbed into sags in Carmel Valley Village, while others rode on into Monterey.

That we pulled off this very complicated stage and all the rest of the week's challenges was a testament to the cooperative ethos of our club tours: everyone doing a little so that together we accomplish a lot. That spirit was evident throughout the tour and made the entire adventure a delight. Thanks to all who took part, especially to our sag drivers and food wranglers.

One note to add in this little bit of space. Bob Puckett, one of those riding around the park on Stage 7, took a tumble. Got his wheels off the pavement and banged down on his butt. Didn't seem too bad at first but it turned out to be really serious. Bob had an extremely complicated surgery to repair his pelvis and his recovery took most of a year. It made an unhappy end to our tour, one that, aside from that mishap, was about as nice as any tour we've ever done.

Central Coast Menus and Cook Crews

1. Start of tour, Saturday, June 1

Monterey

Pasta Frutti di Mare. Spaghetti in a light wine sauce with shrimp, scallops, salmon, and fresh herbs.

Mixed green salad, garlic bread. Pesto pasta alternative.

- 1, 2. Barley & Susan Forsman
3. Donna Norrell
4. Dave Smith
5. Dave Muela
6. Dennis French
7. Darrin Jenkins

2. End of Stage 1, Sunday, June 2

Lime Kiln State Park

Barbecued loin of pork, hot German potato salad, Waldorf salad. Veggie-bacon potato salad alternative.

1. Leslie Blankenship
2. Robert Stickley
3. Frank Pedrick
4. Trudy Nye
5. Uta Gabler
6. Bob Puckett
7. Firouzeh Attwood
8. Dave Johnson

3. End of Stage 2; Monday, June 3

San Simeon State Park

Grilled chicken in a Thai peanut/coconut marinade. Steamed rice and blanched broccoli and salad.

Grilled tofu alternative.

1. Bill Oetinger
2. Robin Dean
3. Douwe Drayer
4. Clay Popko
5. Monica Franey
6. Donn F King
7. Kym Sawyer

4. End of Stage 3; Tuesday, June 4

Santa Margarita Lake

Five Cheese Tortelline with chicken/apple sausage and roasted bell peppers. Pan-roasted green beans.

Tofu sausage with pesto sauce alternative.

1. Jose Mundo
2. John Russell
- 3, 4. Margie & John Biddick
- 5, 6. Janice & Steve Thomas

7. Liz Sinna
8. Paul Whitely

5. End of Stage 4; Wednesday, June 5 Paso Robles (Motel 6)

Dining out in town. We will arrange some camp food for those who do not wish to dine out. Breakfast the following morning will be a combination of the motel continental breakfast and tour supplies off the back of the truck.

6. End of Stage 5; Thursday, June 6 Mission San Antonio de Padua

Barbecue night. Grilled chicken and tri-tip. Portobello mushroom veggie alternative. Baked potatoes, salad.

1. Chris Jones
2. Steve Kroeck
3. Richard Sellman
4. Bill Conklin
5. Kendra Markle
- 6, 7. Linda & Sid Fluhrer
8. Christian Wagner

7. End of Stage 6; Friday, June 7 Pinnacles National Monument

Fiesta Night. Build your own burritos buffet. Fresh fixings and leftovers from barbecue night. Chips, salsa, guacamole, etc.

1. Sarah Schroer
2. Scott Duncan
3. James McElrory
4. Bryan Davis
5. Denny Davis
6. Karen Seelhoff
7. Jerry Stinson

8. End of Stage 7; Saturday, June 8 Monterey

Pasta Carbonara. Traditional recipe with eggs and bacon (no-bacon or soy-bacon alternative). Mixed green salad, garlic bread, and grilled veggies.

- 1, 2. Karl & Ginger Kuhn
3. Susan Noble
4. Bob Redmond
5. Gordon Stewart
6. Michael Barnes
7. Harry Williamson
8. Denise Stebler

Photo on page 91... Stage 4: Peachy Canyon Road



Stage 1: Carmel



Stage 3: Old Creek Road



Stage 4: Webster Road



Stage 5: Halter Ranch, Adelaide Road



Stage 6: Hwy 25



Stage 7: hiking through Pinnacles National Park



<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2014%20Tours/WRT-copy.2014.pdf>

The 2013 and 2014 Wild Rivers Tours are bundled together here because they are essentially the same as the other Wild Rivers Tours. That is, the routes and the scenery and the roads are the same. There were a few minor tweaks to the campgrounds between the 2006 and 2011 versions, but by 2012, 2013 and 2014, the package was a settled matter. Only variables such as the weather and the participants and Murphy's Law will change from year to year. So not much point in repeating the same story. However...

Murphy's Law did put in an appearance in 2013. This edition of the WRT was chaired by Gordon Stewart. 39 members were signed up and rarin' to go. And then the tour was cancelled on the Thursday before departure. Another instance of wildfires getting in the way of our summer fun. In this case, it wasn't simply a matter of dodging around the smoke plumes. One of the campgrounds we would have used had been entirely taken over as command center for the firefight. So that was that. All participants were given full refunds.

As for the 2014 WRT, we know next to nothing about it. It fell just one month too late to have a report in a newsletter. (The last month of the newsletter was June, 2014.) With no report, and without having ridden it myself, I am stumped. A search of the Events archive at the website turned up nothing. We don't know who was in charge. We don't know how many people participated. We don't know about the weather or any special circumstances...fires, road work, injuries, good news, bad news. We do have a PDF preview booklet for the 2014 tour (above). All it tells us is that the 2014 edition of the tour was planned to be exactly the same as the 2006, 2012, and 2013 versions. (The 2011 edition had a few changes to campsites. The 2019 editon had some minor route changes but we'll get to that later.) We don't have a preview booklet for the 2012 or 2013 tours but, except for the dates, they're precisely the same as the one with the link here.

If you participated in the 2014 WRT and can enlighten us in any way about how it went, please get in touch. We can always update this history if we come into possession of new information and anecdotes.



Nine days • Nine stages • 570 miles • 41,000'

The Southern Oregon Tour at the Adventure Velo website: <https://adventure-velo.com/tours/oregon/southern-oregon-tour/>

We've now moved into the years beyond a club newsletter. So no more after-tour reports for us. On this one, I'm not even going to crank out one of those stage-by-stage accounts because this is almost exactly the same tour as the one we ran in 2005 and the BikeCal.com article I wrote about that tour, along with the preview booklet, will pretty much cover this one, at least in broad outline. All the stages and overnights are the same. We carpoled and stashed our fleet at the YMCA in Ashland, same as before. We once again had little rides on both our travel days, hence the nine stages in nine days. As far as I can recall, the weather was pleasant. Okay...it was hot some of the time. Not up in the high mountains and not on the coast. But in the inland valleys on Stages 7 and 8, it baked. That's pretty typical for that part of Southern Oregon.

The biggest change from 2005 would be the cast of characters. We had 21 people on that tour and 45 on this one. (We're including in these histories the pages that show the menus and dinner crews, if we have them. This is not just to remember all that yummy chow but because they serve as a roster for who was there. Those sheets are printed at poster size and taped on the wall of the luggage truck so everyone can be reminded of which day they're on cook crew.) Over twice as many people makes a difference. For instance, on our night at the little high school in Camas Valley, we overwhelmed their plumbing. Not the waste going out but the water coming in. No pressure...just a trickle in the showers. But we made it work: not too many people trying to shower at once.

On Stage 6, we turned inland at Bandon and ended up in a very nice park in the little town of Powers, down along the South Fork of the Coquille River. When we rolled into the park, we were tickled to find signs at the entrance welcoming the SRCC tour. The nice ladies who put on the Tour de Fronds Century found out we were coming and formed a welcome party for us. Small town friendliness. Gotta love it.

And then almost the opposite the next night at the high school campus in Glendale. This is where we stayed in 2005 when we shared the school grounds with 2000 firefighters. This time around, we had the place to ourselves but not without a little friction. Before the 2005 tour, I met the Principal personally and he was super cordial and supportive. This time I made our arrangements via e-mail with the Principal's secretary. But this was a new Principal and his secretary had failed to mention our visit to him. He got his knickers in a twist when all these cyclists started pitching tents on his back lawn. WTF? He was quite upset. Wanted to know who authorized this. I said, "Your secretary." And showed him our printed correspondence. So typical of schools that the secretary runs the place and the Principal never knows what's going on.

• **Southern Oregon Tour** •
Menus and Cook Crews

1. End of Stage 1; Saturday, July 26
Howard Prairie Lake County Park

Pasta Frutti di Mare. Spaghetti in a light wine sauce with shrimp, scallops, salmon, and fresh herbs.

Mixed green salad, garlic bread. Pesto pasta alternative.

- 1, 2. Ginger & Karl Kuhn
- 3, 4. Linda & Sid Fluhrer
5. Laura Stansfield
6. Donna Norrell

2. End of Stage 2; Sunday, July 27
Mazama Village, Crater Lake National Park

Barbecued loin of pork, hot German potato salad, Waldorf salad. Veggie-bacon potato salad alternative.

1. Sarah Bousfield
2. Mike DeMicco
3. Andy Hill
4. Mary Beth Roselli
5. Philip Welch
6. Sherry Adams

3. End of Stage 3; Monday, July 28
Horseshoe Bend USFS Camp

Grilled chicken in a Thai peanut/coconut marinade. Steamed rice and blanched broccoli and salad.

Grilled tofu alternative.

1. Bill Oetinger
2. Robin Dean
3. John Russell
4. Kym Sawyer
5. Chris Jones
6. Donn F King

4. End of Stage 4; Tuesday, July 29
Camas Valley High School

Five Cheese Tortellini with chicken/apple sausage and roasted bell peppers. Pan-roasted green beans.

Tofu sausage with pesto sauce alternative.

1. Darrin Jenkins
2. Richard Anderson
- 3, 4. Steve & Jessie Kroeck
5. David Smith
6. Sarah Schroer

5. End of Stage 5; Wednesday, July 30
Sunset Bay State Park

Dining out in nearby town of Charleston. We will arrange some camp food for those who do not wish to dine out. Breakfast the following morning will be a volunteer crew...anyone who wants to pitch in.

6. End of Stage 6; Thursday, July 31
Powers County Park

Spaghetti Marinara with with meatballs on the side (plus vegetarian option). Mixed green salad, garlic bread, and grilled veggies. Traditional, once-a-tour special breakfast the next morning: pancakes, bacon, sausage, etc.

1. Doug Wagner
2. José Mundo
3. Miguel Sanchez
4. Steve Backman
5. David Henry
6. Karen Steele

7. End of Stage 7; Friday, August 1
Glendale High School

Barbecue night. Grilled chicken and tri-tip. Portobello mushroom veggie alternative. Baked potatoes, salad.

1. Susan Scarlet-Macaw
2. Shawn Servoss
3. Brian Gully
4. Denise Stebler
5. Lidia Karina Alcazar
6. Doug Schrock

8. End of Stage 8; Saturday, August 2
Cantrall-Buckley County Park

Fiesta Night. Build your own burritos buffet. Fresh fixings and leftovers from barbecue night. Chips, salsa, guacamole, etc.

1. Hunt Moore
2. Sandy Mailliard
3. Bob Helmes
4. Michael Barnes
- 5, 6. Gabby & William McNamara

Food Wranglers:

Nick Parks
Ry Mintz
David Skilles



Steve, Kym, Jessie, Richard at Crater Lake



Brian & Denise

Kym, Phil, Chris, Sandy, Doug, Karen at Sunset Bay



*Photos:
Laura Stansfield*



Five stages • 315 miles • 42,000'

Marc Moons dove into the world of leading tours with this rather stout package of routes up and back along the eastern face of the southern Sierra. It was inspired, at least in part, by our Eastern Sierra Tour of 2003. There were 20 participants. Not a lot of miles but a big bucket of elevation gain. As we learned on the Eastern Sierra Tour, you don't have to log big miles to get a workout on these high-altitude mountain roads. If you want to know more about these roads and routes, check out the links in the Eastern Sierra Tour entry (page 42).

Marc has provided us with RideWithGPS links for the routes and that seems like the best way to cover this.

Stage 1: Lone-Pine-Onion Valley-Lone Pine

68 miles, 6700' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/3945318>

Stage 2: Whitney Portal-Horseshoe Meadow-Whitney Portal

56 miles, 9600' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/3945941>

Stage 3: Bishop-Sabrina Lake-South Lake-Bishop

55 miles, 7100' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/3946042>

Stage 4: Glacier Lodge-White Mountains-Glacier Lodge

69 miles, 10,600' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/3946052>

Stage 5: Bishop-Mosquito Flat-Bishop

81 miles, 7100' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/3946070>

• High Sierra Tour •

Five stages • 315 miles • 42,000'
May 30-June 5, 2015

Less than a year later, Maarc Moons was back with another high-altitude training tour (or sufferfest) on the far side of the Sierra. There were 25 participants. Marc has provided us with RideWithGPS links for the routes.

Stage 1: Markleeville-Ebbetts Pass-Alpine Lake-Ebbetts Pass-Markleeville

685 miles, 8000' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6768910>

A classic ride in Alpine county. Ebbetts Pass (8736') is by far my favorite climb around Markleeville. Altitude range: 5500'-8800'

Stage 2: Markleeville-Monitor Pass-Markleeville

26 miles, 3400' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6786944>

A short and fun climb up another famous Alpine resident, Monitor Pass (8314 ft).

Break-up camp and transfer to June Lake, 122 miles / 2:15 drive from Markleeville. Altitude range: 5500'-8300'

Stage 3: Green Church-Benton Crossing-Green Church

75 miles, 5200' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6766318>

A "social" ride to get familiar with Eastern Sierra air. Don't be fooled by the initial "flat" profile ... we are pushing pedals between 7000' - 8000'!

Stage 4: June Lake-Tioga Pass-June Lake

63 miles, 5100' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6786960>

The gateway into Yosemite National Park. Share the road but most of all enjoy the amazing scenery and screaming downhill. Altitude range: 7000'-10,000'

Stage 5: Mammoth Lakes

40 miles, 4100' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6774341>

Before we set up camp along Big Pine Creek (70mi / 1:30 drive from Mammoth Lakes), we explore the beauty around Mammoth Lakes: Mammoth Scenic Loop, Minaret Summit, Mammoth Lakes Basin. The hilly terrain and high altitude make this area prime country for many elite long-distance athletes; for us the perfect warm up for the next two killer stages! Altitude range: 7600'-9300'

Stage 6: White Mountain-Waucoba Pass

74 miles, 10,300' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6765535>

White Mountains, home of the ancient Bristlecone Pines, which are remarkable for their ability to survive adverse conditions ... will you survive?! No matter what, you will be struck by awe on your way to the visitor center at 10,000'. Spare some appetite for a final climb up Waucoba Pass (7600'). Altitude range: 4000'-10,000'

Stage 7: Lone Pine-Alabama Hills-Horseshoe Meadows-Whitney Portal-Lone Pine

63 miles, 10,600' up and down

<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/6765580>

The view of Horseshoe Meadows Road zigzagging up the mountain will silence even a Mountain Goat ... and it isn't all what you see is what you get! After topping out at around 10,000' you better fasten that seatbelt for a blasting downhill. You really want to be crowned Queen/King of the Mountain? See you on top of Whitney Portal!

• Central Oregon Tour •

June 28-July 4, 2015

Seven days • Five Stages • 350 miles • 17,000'

This tour, starting and ending near Bend, Oregon, was dreamed up by Gordon Stewart and Chris Jones. I assisted with the maps and elevation profiles and perhaps some local knowledge. The goal was again to offer a tour that was somewhat easier than the other club tour this summer: the Santa Cruz Tour. It probably met that goal, although it was not exactly a walk in the park, with long miles and hills or heat or both every day. There were 41 participants. There was no preview booklet. It shares quite a few miles with parts of Stages 2 and 3 of the original Northern Oregon Tour and also used roads that are in the High Desert Tour (2023). It's an interesting area, well worth exploring.

Stage 1: Bend to Crane Prairie Resort

56 miles, 3000' up, 2400' down

The stage began at a the J-Bar-J, a ranch/school on the northeast fringe of Bend, and started out with a NE to SW diagonal across the city. After crossing the Deschutes River, we began climbing and would continue climbing for the next 19 miles, all the way to a 6400' summit near the Mt Bachelor ski resort. The steepest pitches were around 6% but most of it was less than 3%. Over the summit, now into the heart of the Cascade mountain range (with high, snowy peaks much in evidence), we began a long, long run of downhill dancing: two full-tilt descents of five and three miles, with a two-mile flat in between. Then another 15 miles of mostly fast downhill roll-out. Once we were out of Bend and into the hills, the highway took on the designation of the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway. There were indeed scenic lakes on display: Sparks Lake, Devils Lake, Elk Lake. A few rolling ups and downs delivered us to our camp on the shore of Crane Prairie Lake.

Stage 2: Crane Prairie Lake to Packard Creek

71 miles, 2500' up, 5400' down

The route began with with a run south through fir and pine forest, finishing off the balance of the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway. These first 30 miles of the stage were constantly up and down...small climbs and descents, if you can call two or three-mile ups or downs small. (In the big mountains, those are small fry.) Just before mile 30, we turned right, west, onto Hwy 58. Those of us who knew this road were not looking forward to mixing it up with what we expected would be fairly heavy traffic. However, we lucked out on that score. First we did 11 miles of mostly gentle uphill (with decent shoulders), but with one steep mile at the finish, to top out at 5128' Willamette Pass. Just over the top, we were stopped by a flagger uphill from a construction project. She held us back until all the cars and trucks had gone through, then let us go...and slammed the door behind us. That meant we had an insanely fun downhill—3500' over 20 miles—all to ourselves. Not a car in sight. The construction project was there but it didn't affect the paving, which was excellent. We hit that descent

so hard and fast, the next batch of cars released by the flagger didn't catch up to us until we were about to bail off the highway onto pretty little back roads meandering south to our camp near Hills Creek Lake, where most of us cooled off with a swim off the floating dock.

Stage 3: Packard Creek to Paradise

77 miles, 4400' up and down

We began by retracing our nice backroads downhill to cross Hwy 58 and continue north through the old logging town of Oakridge. The way out of town was a stiff pitch: less than a mile but quite steep, followed by three lively downhill miles to the village of Westfir, where everyone stopped to admire Office Bridge, one of the most impressive of the many old covered bridges in this region (below). Westfir marks the beginning of one of the all-time great cycling adventures: Aufderheide Forest Drive. 28 out of 32 miles between Westfir and 3748' Box Canyon summit are uphill.





Half of that is false flat but some of the rest is serious work, including the last three miles to the summit. It's all beautiful, riding next to the headwaters of the Willamette River. And then what great payback after we went over the top! A 16-mile plunge down the rabbit hole, a slinky, kinky free fall on satin pavement, following the downstream headwaters of the McKenzie River. After that sweet run, we climbed one mile and then cruised along Cougar Reservoir for four miles before another screaming descent of three miles. Whew! We decompressed over the final nine miles, slightly uphill, to our camp on the river, passing another venerable covered bridge along the way.

Stage 4: Paradise to Smith Rock State Park 69-72 miles, 4500' up, 3200' down

When we crossed 5128' Willamette Pass on Stage 2, we were crossing over the top of the Cascades, from the east side to the west side. Now we had to head back over the big ridge to get back into Central Oregon. While the climb up and over Willamette Pass was fairly easy, this one was a much bigger challenge: 5324' McKenzie Pass, a legend among cyclists. We got right at it from the start: 3700' up over almost 24 miles, with a few fairly mellow miles but most of it a long, tough grinder. After a brief break at the summit, amid a moonscape of black lava (above), it was downhill into Central Oregon and into the heat. It had been warm before but now, on the east flank of the mountains, it was stinking hot. The descent was shorter and not as steep nor as dramatic as the climb. When it rolled out at the bottom we were heading toward the town of Sisters and onward across a rolling landscape around the Deschutes River. Pretty country and nice riding but the heat was hammering us. When we met up with the sag wagon at mile 53, it was packed full of exhausted riders. They'd had all they could handle. The last miles were relatively easy, aside from the heat. The extra three miles represent an optional out-&-back to a scenic overlook into the deep, sheer-walled Crooked River Gorge...an amazing vista. Those of

us who did it found sprinklers watering the lawn at the wayside. We all walked out onto the lawn and let the sprinklers soak us. It made the last few miles to Smith Rock State Park a bit more manageable. Smith Rock has to be seen to be believed (below). One of the most extravagant red rock fantasy lands around...a mecca for rock climbers. We camped with the climbers in the big bivouac camp. No reservations and no assigned campsites but plenty of room for everyone...and showers!

Stage 5: Smith Rock State Park to Bend 67 miles, 2200' up, 1300' down

This last stage looked easier on paper and was easier on the road: 18 mostly level miles heading east to the town of Prineville, then 31 miles heading south along the Crooked River National Scenic Byway, and finally, 26 miles of rolling or level roads heading west back to the J-Bar-J Ranch. The heat was still an issue: not as hot as the day before but still toasty. The highlight of the day was the run down the Crooked River, a magnificent gorge, clearly deserving of its National Scenic Byway designation. But we were heading in the upstream direction along the wild river, so that meant more climbing than descending, with a medium-steep ascent at the end, about 1000' up over four miles. That's a bump compared to what we had done over the past days but it put a hurt on us. And then those last miles across the open sagebrush mesa back to Bend... those miles really dragged. So maybe it was easier than the previous days but there were still a lot of tired riders at the finish. I remember a late-afternoon nap being one of the best parts of my day.

Overall, it was a delightful tour. It's tempting to call it a "little" tour because it had only five stages, but look at those stages: major summits on each of the first four days; 71, 77, and 72 miles on the middle three stages. Certainly not the hardest tour ever but still a good, solid challenge and a job well done for all who completed it.





Stage 1: Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway

Stage 1: Crane Prairie Lake



Stage 3: Aufderheide Forest Drive

Stage 5: Crooked River National Scenic Byway





[https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2015%20Tours/SCT/SCT-fullcopy%20\(2\).pdf](https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2015%20Tours/SCT/SCT-fullcopy%20(2).pdf)

The idea of offering a tour so close to home seemed odd at first. But the more we worked through the routes and logistics, the better we liked it. The short drives to and from allowed us to drive to the start, stash our cars at the park where the tour would finish, and then do a full stage that same day. At the end, we stayed the last night in the park, then drove home on Saturday morning and had the afternoon for cleaning up all the equipment.

There were 42 on board for the trip, including our food pros, Matt Parks and Cathryn Raan. Inez Barragan and Brier Welch—Phil Welch’s daughter—were our sags, both of them taking on that job for the first time (they did very well). Special thanks to Margie and John Biddick of Aptos for helping me find all the best little roads down there.

This was the first tour where we provided RideWithGPS route links in the preview booklet. Folks could download the routes to their smart cyclometers.

Stage 1: Huddert Park (Woodside) to New Brighton State Beach (Capitola)

70 miles, 5200' up, 5900' down

72 miles, 5600' up, 6300' down

Up and over Old La Honda Road (above) and down to the coast on lovely, mostly quiet back roads. Down Hwy 1 to Santa Cruz (with or without optional side road detour on Swanton). Along the waterfront through Santa Cruz to finish. A lovely ride but with some frustration at the end. We had worked our fannies off to secure a special permit to use a really nice day use area, with a cooking gazebo and picnic area, as our home base in the park. But when we arrived, the lunkhead at the entrance kiosk refused to even read our special permit papers. He wouldn't even let our truck into the park until late afternoon! We ended up shoehorned into some little family sites. We tackled the head ranger later

and he apologized and put an official reprimand in that guy's work file. Because we were here for two nights, we did at least get to use the site we had paid for on the second night and eventually received a refund for the first night.

Stage 2: Santa Cruz Mountains Loops
59-65 miles, 5600'-6900' up and down
73-77 miles, 7200'-7800' up and down

Many options in the Santa Cruz Mountains, all of them hilly, with the hilliest of all being very challenging. This proved to be a really, really hard day. Some hardcore riders said it was one of the hardest days they'd ever ridden. And it was very hot, considering it was right on the coast. (Actually, quite a bit of it was on the inland side of the mountains.) On the other hand, it was very pretty and the roads were a delight, if you weren't too hammered to enjoy them.



Stage 3: Capitola to San Juan Bautista

57 miles, 4000' up, 3900' down

63 miles, 4500' up, 4400' down

Optional out-&-back: 23 miles round trip, 2500' up and down

Beautiful little lanes in the coastal foothills near Aptos, then flat farm fields near Watsonville, more meandering byways near Elkhorn Slough, and a long, easy climb and descent (awful pavement on the descent) to the little mission outpost of San Juan Bautista. Optional climb to Fremont Peak near the finish. We spent the night in a nice hotel and dined out in the old village. Such a nice stage! So many tasty roads! Not too hard unless you did the optional out-&-back at the end. After exploring the well-preserved mission in the afternoon, most of us gathered in a really pleasant Mexican restaurant, dining on the patio in their beautiful garden.

Stage 4: San Juan Bautista to Big Basin Redwoods State Park

71 miles, 5800' up, 4800' down

82 miles, 7200' up, 6300' down

Back into the Santa Cruz Mountains (after a few more miles of flat farm fields). Many miles wandering through redwood and broadleaf forest, with big climbs (above, Eureka Hill) and big descents. The 71-mile route was relatively moderate (for that distance), but the longer route was a real challenge. So many good roads, it's impossible to mention them all in the limited space here. Read the preview booklet for more in-depth coverage of each day's charms. Finished up in a pleasant group site in the state park, well away from other campers.



Stage 5: Big Basin SP to Memorial County Park

49 miles, 5400' up, 6000' down

72 miles, 8000' up, 8600' down

More pretty, tranquil roads, on both the western and eastern sides of the mountains. Three optional add-ons bulked up the long route. People did one or two or all three. Many big climbs and descents, some very steep. While planning the tour, I had another camp in mind for the end of this stage (Portola Redwoods State Park). But there were several problems with it. I was frustrated, trying to pound a round peg into a square hole, until Sarah Schroer suggested the county park we ended up using. Everything about it was a better fit for us. (Thank you, Sarah!)

Stage 6: Memorial County Park to Hurdert Park

43 miles, 3800' up, 3400' down

50 miles, 4300' up, 3900' down

59 miles, 4800' up, 4400' down

Out of the wooded mountains and down to the little valleys near the coast (for a while), then back up over the ridge on Tunitas Creek and down Kings Mountain to the finish for one more night in our final camp. In counterpoint to that idiot out at New Brighton Beach on Stage 1, the rangers here considered our group and our needs and moved us to a nicer group site than the one we had booked. Once again, an absolutely amazing tangle of little roads, both out on the coast and up into the hills. As good as any day on the tour.

All of my concerns about a tour in this region—so close to home—were proven wrong. It was one of the best tours we've ever put together. Challenging but incredibly beautiful and bike-friendly.

• Santa Cruz Tour •

Menus and Cook Crews

1. End of Stage 1; Sunday, July 19

New Brighton State Beach

Wine Country Pork Loin, marinated in garlic, olive oil, white wine and Italian herbs. Spring Vegetable Risotto. Green Salad, French Bread.

Monday morning: bacon & eggs for breakfast.

1. Firouzeh Attwood
2. Dave Johnson
3. Brian Purcell
4. Doug Schrock
5. Karen Steele
6. Michael Barnes
- 7, 8. Jill & Tony Lee

2. End of Stage 2; Monday, July 20

New Brighton State Beach

Five Cheese Tortellini with Pesto Alfredo. Grilled Gourmet Sausages with artisan mustard. Quinoa, Brown Rice, and Lentil Salad. Green Salad, French Bread.

1. Sarah Bousfield
2. Mike DeMicco
3. Bill Oetinger
4. Donn King
5. Rick Sawyer
- 6, 7. Margie & John Biddick
8. Ben Lev

3. End of Stage 3; Tuesday, July 21

Posada de San Juan, San Juan Bautista

Dining out in the town of SJB. Several restaurants. Access to truck supplies for minimal dinner prep for people who don't want to dine out.

Wednesday morning: breakfast and lunch service out of the truck (in addition to the motel's continental breakfast).



4. End of Stage 4; Wednesday, July 22

Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Barbecue Tri-Tip and Chicken. Grilled Mixed Vegetables. Wild Rice Salad with garbanzos and sweet cherry tomatoes. Hot German Potato Salad (with or without bacon). Green salad.

1. Darrin Jenkins
2. Richard Anderson
- 3, 4. Steve & Jessie Kroeck
5. David Smith
6. Sarah Schroer
7. Paul McKenzie
8. James McElroy

5. End of Stage 5; Thursday, July 23

Memorial County Park

Spaghetti Carbonara and Penne Alfredo with Veggies. Garlic Bread, Insalata Caprese, Green Salad. Friday morning: pancakes with real maple syrup.

1. Doug Wagner
2. José Mundo
3. Phil Welch
4. Brier Welch
5. Christian Wagner
6. Nathan Moore
7. Nikola Farat
8. John Russell

6. End of Stage 6; Friday, July 24

Huddart County Park

Vegetarian and Chicken Chow Mein with fresh garlic, ginger, bell peppers, green onions, carrots. Green Salad with Napa cabbage and bean sprouts.

Saturday morning: light breakfast and coffee before driving home.

1. Inez Barragan
2. Bob Redmond
3. Dennis French
4. Miguel Sanchez
- 5, 6. William & Gabby McNamara
7. Kipp Frey
8. Steve Backman

Food Wranglers:

Matt Parks
Cathryn Raan

Stage 2: North Rodeo Gulch Road



*Stage 1:
riding through Santa Cruz*

Stage 3: San Juan Bautista



*Stage 4: Big Basin
Redwoods State Park*



Stage 5: Alpine Road



Stage 6: Stage Road

• Eastern Sierra Tour •

June 3-11, 2016

Inspired perhaps by our original Eastern Sierra Tour (2003) or by the two tough tours Marc Moons put on in the region (2014, 2015), Dave Smith jumped into the fray with one more challenging tour amidst the high peaks of the Eastern Sierra. It also shares routes with our Alpine Road Trip (2010). We don't know how many people took park. Nor do we have any details or anecdotes for the week. All we have is a list of the stages...

Stage	Day and Date	Route	Distance (miles)	Climb (feet)
	Friday, June 3	travel		
1	Saturday, June 4	Oh Ridge CG (June Lks) to Tioga Pass, return	63	5,100
2	Sunday, June 5	Mammoth area (Lk Mary, Reds Meadow)	44	4,900
3	Monday, June 6	Millpond CG (Bishop) to end of Rock Ck Rd	66	6,920
4	Tuesday, June 7	Millpond CG (Bishop) to South/Sabrina Lake	49	4,950
5	Wednesday, June 8	Big Pine to White Mtns to Waucoba Pass	74	10,300
6	Thursday, June 9	Leavitt Mdws to Kennedy Mdws, return	36	6,150
7	Friday, June 10	Grover HS to Ebbetts Pass/Alpine Lk, return	73	8,500
8	Saturday, June 11	Grover HS to Monitor Pass, return	<u>26</u>	<u>3,400</u>
	Total		431	50,220



Rock Creek



South Lake



White Mountains



Sabrina Lake



July 9-17, 2016

<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2016%20Tours/NCT-fullcopy-maps-routes.new.pdf>

This is a tour of the very hilly back roads of Humboldt and Trinity Counties. The first seed of an idea for this tour had to do with Alder Point Road, the main attraction on the final stage. I had often noticed it on maps and wondered about it... wondered what it was like and how it could be incorporated into a good ride. Eventually that seed took root and blossomed into a full, seven-stage tour. It shares a fair bit of DNA with the old Bigfoot Tour (2001) and also has some brief encounters with roads from the Wild Rivers Tours. I made use of the local knowledge of old Terrible Two pal Larry Kluck, who lives near Eureka and knows the roads up there better than pretty much anyone.

There were 45 participants, including our two new food wranglers, David Watts and Holly Raan. They were protégés of the old wrangler master, Matt Parks, so Matt made a cameo appearance over the first couple of days of the tour to mentor the new crew along. With such expert guidance, they quickly got the hang of it. Robin Dean and John Russell were our sag drivers, sharing one vehicle and trading off every other day. This was a classic loop route and we stored our carpool fleet for the week at the Dean Creek Resort, where Stage 1 would begin and Stage 7 would end.

It was a fairly short and easy drive to the start at Dean Creek, just north of Garberville and just south of the beginning of the Avenue of the Giants. Many of us stopped for lunch in Garberville. At the gas station there, we ran into Dave Clark and Phil Welch, who were driving the luggage truck. I said, "See you up the road at Dean Creek!" We drove the few miles to Dean Creek and settled in to wait for the truck carrying all our gear. We waited...and waited...and waited. Finally got some cell service and tracked them down. They were in Fortuna! (That's 50 miles north of Dean Creek or a 100-mile round trip back to our camp.) To say they missed their turn-off would be a bit of an understatement. (Sorry, guys: we'll never let you live this one down.) The kitchen truck was in camp but the stoves were on the luggage truck. Needless to say, dinner was a little late, as was pitching our tents.

We had finished the Bigfoot Tour at this same Dean Creek Resort. We did not camp there; we just took showers and hopped on Byron's bus for home. Now, spending our first and last nights there, we decided the place was a little seedy. Not terrible. Just not great. Much worse was the camp I had chosen for the end of Stage 4, up in the Trinities. It had completely fallen apart and was no longer acceptable (as I discovered when I scouted the course). Somehow or other, I hooked up with folks with another really nice camp not far away. That proved to be a delightful camp, right on the Trinity River. We used the Trinity County Fairgrounds for an overnight on the Bigfoot Tour and thought it was really nice. 15 years later it was pretty dismal. Among other things, a water line exploded right in the middle of our cooking area, sending a geyser ten feet in the air. That took some fixing! Things change. On the bright side, our camp after Stage 1 only had cold showers on

the Bigfoot Tour but now had fancy new bathrooms with hot showers.

The stage-by-stage document here is not an after-tour report. We found a good preview that was used as a promo for the tour at the club website and edited it slightly to work here. Most of the days were uneventful, although there was a bad crash on Stage 2 that sent a rider to the hospital and another on Stage 7 that also ended up in the local ER.

Aside from those two crashes, it was an excellent tour. Good weather. No significant problems. Lots of hard, steep climbing, including the amazing Alder Point Road, where the dream began. Lots of weary but satisfied riders at the end.

Stage 1: Dean Creek to A W Way Park 55 miles, 3900' up and down

Chief challenges...

- Panther Gap: 2400' in 7 miles = 6.5%

North along Avenue of the Giants (Redwood National Park), west over Panther Gap and descend for 8 miles into Mattole River Valley (the route of the Tour of the Unknown Coast). Camp at county park. Showers and a good swimming hole.

Stage 2: A W Way Park to Eureka 58, 66, 71 miles, 4600'-5500' up and down

Chief challenges...

- Two 1-mile climbs near Petrolia
- The Wall: 900' in 2.5 miles = 5% (but up to nearly 20%)
- The Endless Hills: 1400' in 4 miles = 6.5% and 450' in 1.8 miles = 5%
- Med & long options: Table Bluff: 400' in 2 miles = 4%
- Long option: Tompkins Hill: 650' in 1.5 miles = 8%

Through Petrolia and out to the Unknown Coast. Up and over the infamous Wall, down to Capetown and through the Endless Hills to historic Ferndale. North across the flats along the Eel River to Eureka. Stay in lodgings in old town Eureka. Three fairly modest bonus-miles options.

Stage 3: Eureka to McKinleyville 55 miles, 4200' up and down (or more)

Chief challenges...

- Two climbs on Greenwood Heights Drive: 1200' in 3.5 miles = 6.5%, 1100' in 4 miles = 5%
- Climbs of 1, 2.5, and 2 miles, all around 5%

Southeast out of Eureka and up into some very quiet and scenic hills. Two long climbs early on, but then big payback for most of the rest of the stage: tiny, lightly-traveled roads meandering through the forest. Lunch at the Mad River Brewing Company in Blue Lakes. Later miles are mostly flat, rolling across the dairy lands along the Mad River. Overnight on the lawn at McKinleyville High School.

Stage 4: McKinleyville to Camp Kimtu 66 miles, 7000' up, 6500'down 47 miles, 4500' up, 4000' down

Chief challenges...

- Lord Ellis summit (2262'): 1700' in 5 miles = 6.5%
- Berry summit (2859'): 2000' in 7 miles = 5.5%
- Titlow Hill: (4842'): 2000' in 5 miles = 7.5%

Rolling coastal hills from McKinleyville to Blue Lake before the first long climb to Lord Ellis summit on an extremely obscure side road off Hwy 299. After a 4-mile descent, two big, back-to-back climbs to the high point of the tour. Then 4300' of descending over 14 miles. A few miles on Hwy 299, but mostly on very remote side roads. Camp in a quiet park on the Trinity River. Showers.

Stage 5: Camp Kimtu to Hayfork 66 miles, 6600' up, 5100'down

Chief challenges...

- Underwood Mountain: 3200' in 12 miles = 5%
- Two 2-mile climbs and three 1-mile climbs.

After a few miles on too-busy 299, some extremely remote back roads in the Trinity Alps back woods, beginning with the long climb noted above. After the climb, descents of 6 and 7 miles. More modest ups and downs follow. Stay at the county fairgrounds in the village of Hayfork. Showers.

Stage 6: Hayfork to Grizzly Creek State Park 66 miles, 5100' up, 6800'down

Chief challenges...

- Forest Glen summit (3919'): 1300' in 5 miles = 5%
- South Fork summit (4090'): 1800' in 7 miles = 5%
- Three smaller climbs, about a mile each

Head south out of Hayfork on Hwy 3 through a pleasant valley, then climb to Hwy 36 and head west (on 36 for rest of day). Two big but never steep climbs, followed by long, smooth, fast descents of 9 and 6 miles. Then three fun descents of 2, 1, and 4 miles, the last very steep...wild! Last miles roll downstream along the Van Duzen River to a nice state park (with a group site) on the river bank. Showers.

Stage 7: Grizzly Creek to Dean Creek 58 miles, 5800' up, 5900'down

Chief challenges...

- Assorted summits along Alder Point Road:
 - 750' in 3 miles = 5%
 - 650' in 2 miles = 6%
 - 1550' in 4 miles = 7%
 - 1150' in 4 miles = 5.5%

After retracing 7 miles on Hwy 36 to Bridgeville, turn south on Alder Point Road and stay on this remote, beautiful back road for most of the stage: 47 miles. Big, hard climbs but nice descents after all of them, including, after the final summit, 2700' down over 8 miles. Finish up with a few miles through Redway to the same camping resort where the tour started. Showers and swimming pool...even a spa to sooth those weary legs.

• North Coast Tour •

Menus and Cook Crews

Food Wranglers: Matt Parks, Holly Raan, David Watts

End of travel day, Saturday, July 9

Dean Creek Resort

Wine Country Pork Loin, marinated in garlic, olive oil, white wine and Italian herbs. Spring Vegetable Risotto. Green salad, French bread.

1. Charles Cafarella
2. Chris Jones
3. Bill Oetinger
4. John Russell
5. Robin Dean
6. Donna Norrell

End of Stage 1; Sunday, July 10

A W Way County Park

Vegetarian and Chicken Chow Mein with fresh garlic, ginger, bell peppers, green onions, carrots. Green salad with Napa cabbage and bean sprouts. Monday morning: Eggs and Bacon.

1. Kipp Frey
2. Mark Grismer
3. Brian Purcell
4. Doug Schrock
5. Karen Steele
6. Michael Barnes

End of Stage 2; Monday, July 11

Quality Inn, Eureka

Dining out in the town of Eureka. Many restaurants near the motel, including the Lost Coast Brewery. Motel's continental breakfast should be decent. We'll need helpers with putting out snacks after the ride and pocket food before Stage 3.

End of Stage 3; Tuesday, July 12

McKinleyville High School

Barbecue Tri-Tip and Chicken. Grilled Mixed Vegetables. Wild Rice Salad with garbanzos and sweet cherry tomatoes. Hot German Potato Salad (with or without bacon). Green salad.

1. Darrin Jenkins
2. Richard Anderson
3. Steve Kroeck
4. David Smith
- 5, 6. Richard & Galen Drace

End of Stage 4; Wednesday, July 13

Camp Kimtu, Willow Creek

Thai Chicken Saté. Grilled chicken thighs marinated in a rich sauce of coconut milk and Asian spices, served with a homemade peanut sauce. Sliced eggplant and zucchini are given the same treatment for the vegetarians. Served with steamed rice and green salad.

- 1, 2. John and Suzanne Aronson
3. Phil Welch
4. Rick Sawyer
5. Christian Wagner
6. Nathan Moore
7. Kym Sawyer

End of Stage 5; Thursday, July 14

Trinity County Fairgrounds, Hayfork

Five Cheese Tortellini with Pesto Alfredo. Grilled Gourmet Sausages with artisan mustard. quinoa, brown rice, and lentil salad. Green salad, French bread. Friday morning: pancakes with real maple syrup.

1. Hunt Moore
2. Bob Redmond
3. David Muela
4. Jim McElroy
5. Gabby McNamara
6. Dennis French

End of Stage 6; Friday, July 15

Grizzly Creek State Park

Fiesta Night! Make your own fajitas. Grilled Chicken and Veggie Fajitas with rice and beans, sour cream, guacamole, shredded cheese, flour and corn tortillas; Green salad

1. Harry Williamson
2. Bill Conklin
3. Richard Sellman
4. Mike DeMicco
5. Sarah Bousfield
6. Jon Hermstad

End of Stage 7; Saturday, July 16

Dean Creek Resort

Spaghetti Carbonara and Penne Alfredo with Veggies. Garlic bread, Insalata Caprese, green salad. Sunday morning: light breakfast and coffee before driving home.

1. Lidia Karina Alcazar
- 2, 3. Linda & Sid Fluhrer
- 4, 5. Mike & Michelle Kane
6. David Clark



*Stage 1:
Avenue of the Giants*



*Stage 2: approaching
"The Wall"
on the Unknown Coast*



*Stage 3: Butler Valley Road
crossing the Mad River*



*Stage 7:
Alder Point Road*



<https://ridewithgps.com/events/28619-2017-sierra-tour>

Nine days • Seven stages • 400 miles • 21,000'

This tour was put together by Chris Jones and Gordon Stewart. There were 36 participants. Camille Pope was the head food wrangler and received rave reviews for her cuisine and organization. We don't have an after-ride report but we heard from various participants that it was an excellent week of riding and socializing. Instead of a report, we are printing the promo copy that was published at the club website...

The plan is to drive to the first campground—Plumas-Eureka State Park—and stay there for three days while we do local loop rides. Then on Wednesday we'll pack up and move 40 miles to Taylorsville Campground in Indian Valley and spend the remainder of the tour doing loop rides from there.

We'll have several rides of differing distances mapped out from each campground, so we should be able to accommodate individual tastes. All of the rides (except for the moving day) will start and end at the same place. Since all of the rides are loops and really not much different from a regular club ride, we're not sure how important it is to have SAG vehicles. The tour leaders have discussed the various pros and cons of this and thought it best to include the tour participants in the decision-making process. So, once we have the bulk of the participants signed up, we'll get the group together and decide on these final details. We do expect to have the usual rental truck to carry food and cooking equipment and overflow bags/bikes but we may not have a baggage truck.

As usual, this is a cooperative tour and everyone will be assigned to a cook crew for a day. Much of the enjoyment of these tours is riding with new and old friends and then spending a (sometimes) quiet evening in camp at the end of the day. In an effort to keep the group as cohesive as possible, we'll actively discourage the temptation to slip into town to the local pizza joint in lieu of dinner in camp.

Schedule

Saturday, July 8, 10:00 AM: Depart Santa Rosa for Plumas-Eureka State Park near Graeagle in Plumas County. The campground is about 60 miles northwest of Reno and five hours from Santa Rosa. We have five campsites reserved and will be staying there for four nights.

Sunday, July 9 to Tuesday, July 11. Local rides in the Graeagle area. Be aware that there is a 3-mile, 800' climb to the campground from the town of Graeagle, so you may want to take a car down to the valley floor in the morning to make it easier to get back in the evening.

Wednesday, July 12. Shift camp: ride/drive to Taylorsville Campground (30 miles). This is a full-facility public campground run by the local Chamber of Commerce.

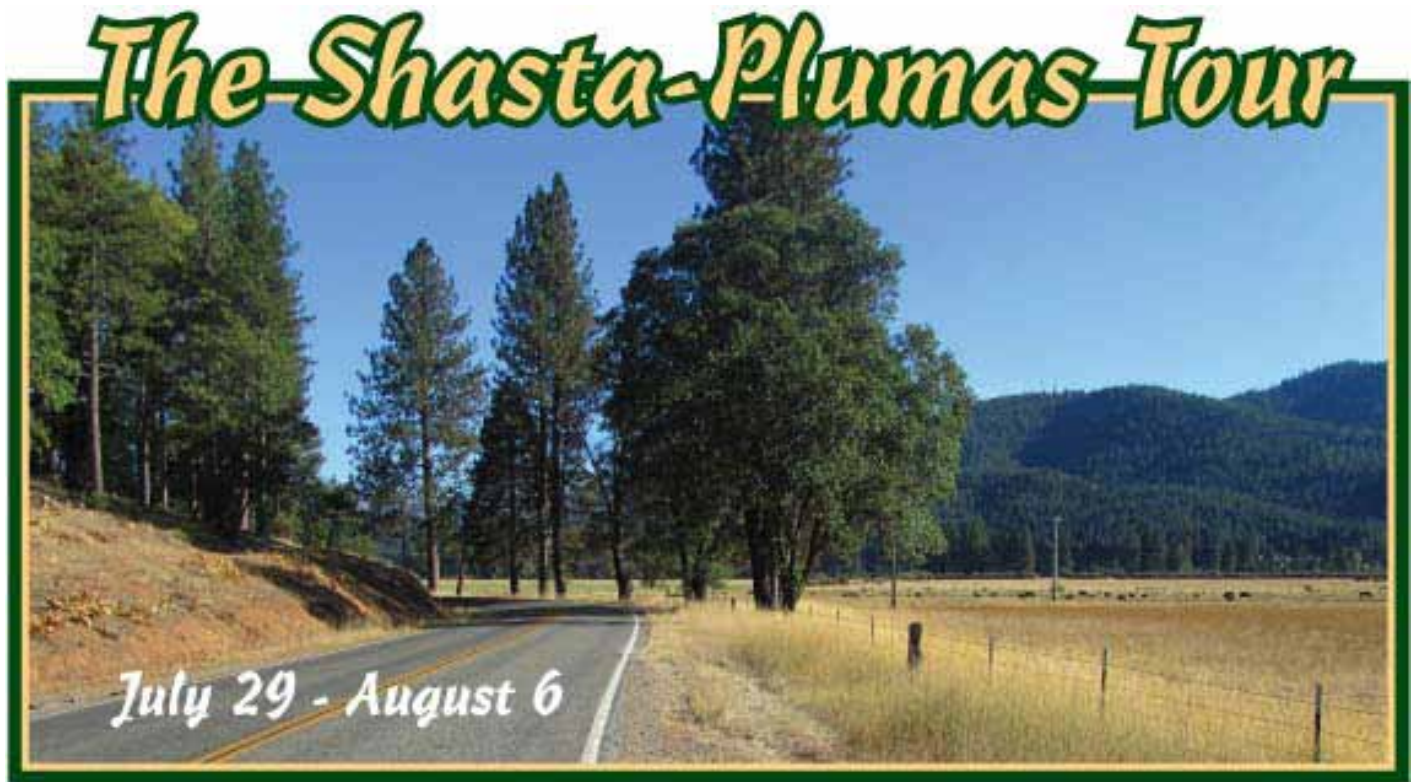
Thursday, July 13 to Saturday, July 5. Local rides in the Taylorsville area.

Sunday, July 16. Possible short ride and then head for Santa Rosa.

Roster • Sierra Loop Tour

James Albrecht	Sausalito
Steven Aquilino	Santa Rosa
Tony Buffa	Sebastopol
Andy Deseran	Glen Ellen
Dennis French	Rohnert Park
Mark Gire	Corvallis, OR
Linda Gloystein	Novato
James Gloystein	Novato
Karen Gould	Santa Rosa
Mark Grismer	Sebastopol
Brian Gully	Santa Rosa
Jon Hermstad	Rohnert Park
John Hervey	Sebastopol
Jim McElroy	Santa Rosa
Darrin Jenkins	Rohnert Park
David Johnson	Alameda
Chris Jones	Glen Ellen
Nathan Moore	Santa Rosa
Paul Musson	Vence, France
Megan Nguyen	
Donna Norrell	Santa Rosa
Trudy Nye	Grass Valley
Frank Pedrick	Grass Valley
Chuck Pope	Santa Rosa
Camille Pope	Santa Rosa
Brian Roberts	Larkspur
Cints Simon	Healdsburg
Cynthia Spigarelli	Sebastopol
Denise Stebler	Windsor
Karen Steele	Novato
Gordon Stewart	Sebastopol
Ramona Turner	Windsor
Bruce Vecchitto	Novato
Peter Verbiscar-Brown	Santa Rosa
Christian Wagner	Santa Rosa
Debbie Wymer	Windsor





<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2017%20Tours/SPT-fullcopy-routes-maps.pdf>

Nine days • Seven stages • 350-470 miles • 20,000'-28,000'

Deja vu? This tour began 13 days after the Sierra Loop Tour ended. They were both nine days and seven stages. They offered a range of miles, with long and short options, that were almost identical. Ditto for elevation gain. And they both traveled along many of the same roads in the same region. Was it a case of great minds thinking alike? Or was it the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing? It was a puzzle then and is still a puzzle. What it was not was a case of robbing Peter to pay Paul: both tours had full rosters...that one 36 and this one 38. Several people did both.

It would appear the club just can't get enough of this region. This is the eighth club tour to visit the area in the last 20-plus years: the Sierra '95 Bike Tour, the Northern Peaks Tour, the Plumas-Lassen-Shasta Tour, The Sierra Loop Tour, three unofficial Gourmet Tours, and now this one. They didn't all do exactly the same routes but there have certainly been many encore performances for our favorite roads. And while there are some club members who've done more than one of the tours, there are new people on every tour discovering this wonderful backcountry for the first time.

That vote of confidence—happy cyclists (and tour planners) coming back again and again—tells us all we need to know about this region. It really is nice for cycle-touring, with great roads, great scenery, and nice campgrounds at convenient intervals along our routes. Most days, routes can be put together that can be fairly moderate or moderately hardcore. It's a Goldilocks world: not too easy; not too hard...juuust right!

This was not a loop route so we had to come up with a plan to move the cars. The fact that we stayed in three of our camps for two nights each shortened the distance from start to finish. We decided to move the cars during Stage 2, our first moving day (from Burney Falls State Park to Lassen Volcanic National Park). That's a mostly uphill day and can be hard work, so we sold the idea to our riders that this might be a good day to do something other than ride. We recruited a crew to do the job and gave them a discount on their entry fees to compensate for the lost day and for the good deed they were doing for the group. One of our two sags brought them all back to the camp in Lassen. It worked!

We camped at Burney Falls for the first two nights but only cooked in camp the second night. The first night we all piled in our cars and drove a few miles to the home of Robin and Deb Dean in the town of Burney, where they had laid on a lavish gourmet dinner for all of us, served out in their beautiful back yard. It was a delightful way to kick off the tour. After that, the food wrangling (and truck driving) were in the capable hands of Holly Raan and David Watts.



Stage 1: Fall River Loops
60-64-71-82 miles, 2500'-3700'

The best parts of the Fall River Century, with little loops added to progressively bulk the miles. We've done variations on this loop on four tours now but it never gets old. One of the prettiest valleys anywhere, plus a climb to higher country and a loop around Lake Brittain and Burney Falls back to camp. And no visit here would be complete without a short hike to the magnificent waterfall.

Stage 2: Burney Falls SP to Summit Lake, Lassen Volcanic National Park
55-60 miles, 4700'-5000'

South along Hwy 89—plus a few side roads—into the national park. Once in the magnificent park, we did about half of the climb to Lassen summit to our beautiful campground on the lake. As advertised, a fairly testing day. Lots of uphill although never steep. Late in the afternoon we were nailed by a mountain thunderstorm. 30-plus people huddled under three canopies made for a cozy bunch. But it didn't last long.

Stage 3: Summit Lake to Lake Almanor
49-59-76 miles, 2800'-4100'

Up and over Lassen summit and downhill toward Lake Almanor. The 59-mile route added the little Mineral summit and descent and was well worth the extra effort. An out-&-back near the finish accounts for the longest option. We camped in North Shore Campground near Chester. The legendary climb to Lassen summit and the crazy descent off the south face...pretty well defines dream cycling, especially with the Mineral summit and descent included. Really a sweet run. The later miles are a little blah but okay.

Stage 4: Lake Almanor to Taylorsville
38-49-64 miles, 1100'-2700'

Along the east shore of Lake Almanor and down into Indian Valley, a lovely, tranquil region. We included a really nice little detour along Lake Almanor that we'd never done before...value added! The longest route added two out-&-backs. and the medium route added a nice detour in Indian Valley. We stayed two nights at Taylorsville Regional Park. Lots of folks in the swimming hole at camp.

Stage 5: Antelope Lake Loop
54 miles, 3500'

The only day without longer or shorter options. Ride up to Antelope Lake, circle the lake, and ride back downhill to camp. A relatively easy day but never boring. We saw sand hill cranes on this ride.

Stage 6: Taylorsville to Portola
47-52-64 miles, 3600'-5300'

South on Hwys 89 and 89/70 toward Portola. We stayed two nights at a resort west of town (showers and swimming pool). 52-mile option added an easy loop in Indian Valley at the start. Longest loop added a rather hilly out-&-back near the finish. We included three detours off the main highways that were all nice (wish there were more of them). A little too much traffic on the highways but not too bad.

Stage 7: Portola Loops
45-70 miles, 1900'-4600'

Headed into Portola on Hwy 70 and then descended to Hwy 89. Short route took 89 south while longer route tackled the hilly Gold Lake loop: spectacular High-Sierra scenery with two big summits to conquer. Routes rejoined in Sierra Valley for a flat run back to Portola and camp. An awesome day, especially if you did the Gold Lake and Yuba summits loop. However, our day was dampened with some fairly steady rainfall. Not a downpour but more than drizzle. It was dry by the time we were back in camp.



• Shasta-Plumas Tour •

Menus and Cook Crews

Food wranglers: Holly Raan, David Watts

End of travel day, Saturday, July 29 Home of Robin and Deb Dean, Burney

Lasagna with Insalata Mista, Garlic Bread, Dessert

1. Deb Dean*
2. Robin Dean
3. Kathy Oetinger*
4. Clay Popko*
5. Monica Franey*
6. Douwe Drayer*

**tour visitors*

End of Stage 1; Sunday, July 30 Burney Falls State Park

Vegetarian and Chicken Chow Mein with fresh garlic, ginger, bell peppers, green onions, carrots. Green salad with Napa cabbage and bean sprouts.

1. Donna Norrell
2. Karen Steele
3. Michael Barnes
4. Bill Oetinger
5. Hunt Moore

End of Stage 2; Monday, July 31 Summit Lake, Lassen National Park

Wine Country Pork Loin, marinated in garlic, olive oil, white wine and Italian herbs. Spring Vegetable Risotto. Green salad, French bread.

1. Charles Caffarella
2. John Russell
3. Mike DeMicco
4. Paul Whitely
5. Dave Holmes-Kinsella

End of Stage 3; Tuesday, August 1 North Shore Campground, Lake Almanor

Barbecue Tri-Tip and Chicken. Grilled Mixed Vegetables. Wild Rice Salad with garbanzos and sweet cherry tomatoes. Hot German Potato Salad (with or without bacon). Green salad.

1. Tim Kaczmer
2. Richard Anderson
3. Steve Kroeck
4. Bill Comings
5. Jessie Kroeck

End of Stage 4; Wednesday, August 2 Taylorsville County Park

Thai Chicken Saté. Grilled chicken thighs marinated in a coconut milk and peanut sauce. Grilled vegetables are given the same treatment for the vegetarians. Served with steamed rice and green salad. Thursday morning: pancakes with real maple syrup, eggs, bacon.

1. John Aranson
2. Suzanne Aranson
3. Phil Welch
4. Rick Sawyer
5. Margie Baer

End of Stage 5; Thursday, August 3 Taylorsville County Park

Five Cheese Tortellini with Pesto Alfredo. Grilled Gourmet Sausages with artisan mustard, quinoa, brown rice, and lentil salad. Green salad, French bread.

1. Bill Conklin
2. Bob Redmond
3. Richard Sellman
4. Jim McElroy
5. Doug Wagner

End of Stage 6; Friday, August 4 Feather River Resort, Portola

Fiesta Night! Make your own fajitas. Grilled Chicken and Veggie Fajitas with rice and beans, sour cream, guacamole, shredded cheese, flour and corn tortillas; Green salad

1. Margie Biddick
2. John Biddick
3. Christian Wagner
4. Linda Fluhrer
5. Sid Fluhrer

End of Stage 7; Saturday, August 5 Feather River Resort, Portola

Spaghetti Carbonara and Penne Alfredo with Veggies. Garlic bread, Insalata Caprese, green salad.

Sunday morning: light breakfast and coffee before driving home.

1. Tony Buffa
2. Dave Clark
3. Jill Lee
4. Tony Lee
5. Frank Pedrick



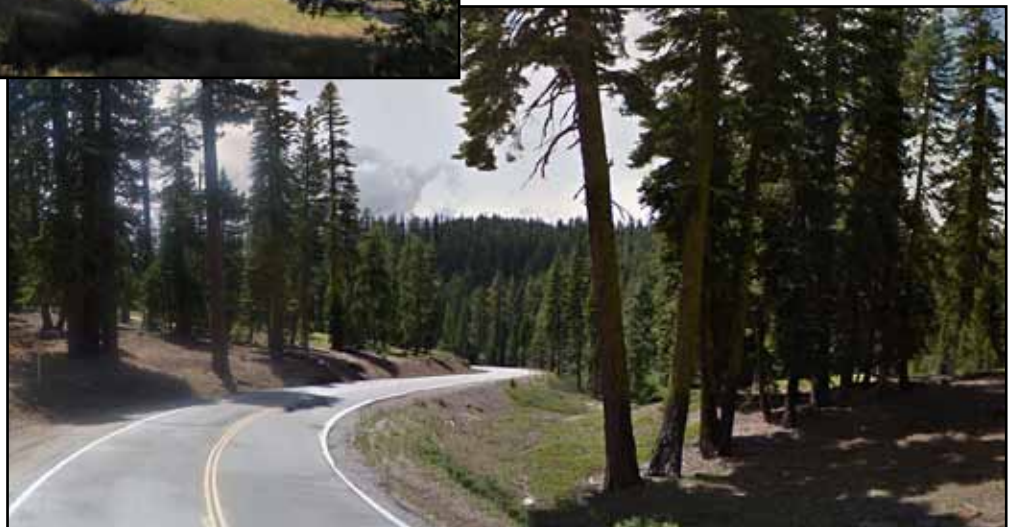
*Stage 1:
Fall River Valley*

*Stage 3: Helen Lake,
Lassen National Park*



Stage 4: Indian Valley

*Stage 7:
descending from Yuba Pass*





Eight days • Six stages • 360-430 miles • 35,000'-46,000'

<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2017%20Tours/TPT3-fullcopyroutesmaps.pdf>

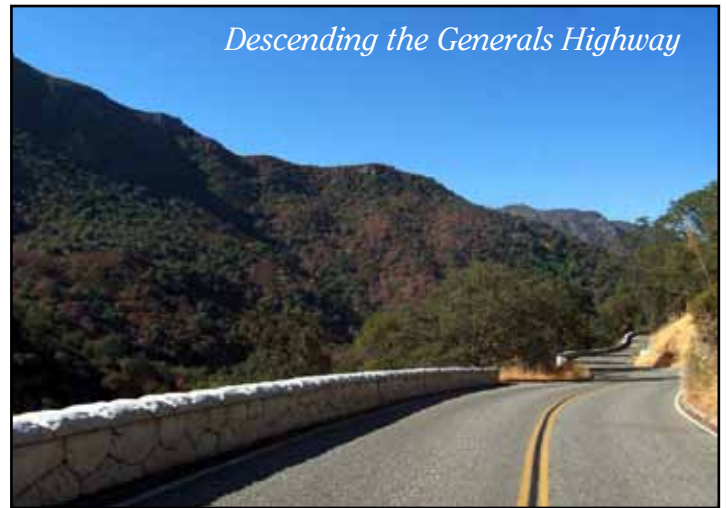
The club first offered the Three Parks Tour in 1998, then again in 2008. It was an awesome tour, one of the best ever. In 2017, Rick Sawyer and Dave Smith took a shot at a modified version. They signed up about 20 participants. Instead of starting north of Yosemite and traveling all the way through that park, the plan was to start near Wawona (south end of Yosemite) and head north into the park on Stage 1, doing a couple of out-&-backs. Then they would head further south toward the other two parks. The linked preview booklet has the tour as it was planned. But things did not go exactly as planned. In response to our query, Rick Sawyer sent in this note...

For the first time, we tried using just two big passenger vans that hauled all of us, were also the sag vehicles, and did double duty by pulling two of the club trailers with all of our gear. We used an enclosed trailer for the food and equipment, and a low-side, open trailer for our camping gear, with a home-made wooden rack over the sidewalls that we rigged up to hold about a dozen bikes on typical roof-style racks. This was quite an efficient set-up from a cost standpoint and worked well, except for some unintended consequences. Because we were using these same vans with the trailers as the sags, they required really big pull-off spots to provide any rider support. Also, they had to be out on the courses all day until the last riders were finished. That meant the fast guys had to sit around at the finish campgrounds for hours waiting for their tents and such (and for any post-ride refreshments).

At the last minute before we left town for the tour, we were informed that our campsite for the first two nights had been closed to the public and was to be used as a staging/camping spot for fire-fighting crews. The smoke from the fire was also very bad in the area, so we opted to start the tour at a no-water group site near Huntington Lake. Nothing else was available at the last minute for camping.

Stage 1 went over Kaiser Pass to Edison Lake, then back down to a camp on Shaver Lake. Both Huntington and Shaver are very beautiful spots! So is Mono Hot Springs. So no Yosemite at all. Right from the start, our Three Parks Tour became a Two Parks Tour.

The modified Stage 2 required a short ride in the vans to the start in North Fork and we then rode a substantial chunk of the Grizzly Century route, ending at Bass Lake. From there on, we continued with the rest of the original tour plan.



In addition to the above, on the way into Kings Canyon after the camp at Choinumni, we went to gas up the van at the only gas station within miles. The station was out of gas, so we tried to make it into the park without filling up. Big mistake! We ran dry well short of the next place to get gas and sat on the side of the road for hours waiting for AAA to bring us some gas. Then we had to do a long detour to the only gas station remotely close to our campsite to fill up, of course pulling one of the trailers that was needed in camp!

Overall, the majority of the campsites were crummy. But we made them work. We had a bad crash coming down out of Kings Canyon. Hauling ass downhill in a tight group at the beginning of that stage, there was a rock in the road about the size of a cantaloupe. It was not called out by the lead riders and Richard Anderson rode squarely over it, wrecking both of his \$1500 carbon wheels. He somehow didn't go down, but behind him, Brian Purcell did crash and had some bad road rash and an arm injury of some kind. I don't recall the exact details. Dr. John Russell took over and patched him up.

The climb to Mineral King is something every rider should do at some point. What an epic climb and beautiful at the top.

That's the end of Rick's report and it's going to have to suffice as our report on the tour. Stages 3, 4, and 5 were exactly as they were on the previous tours, which would have been the final three stages of those tours. Back then, we had talked about adding another stage to do the massive out-&-back on Mineral King Road, up from Three Rivers. I recall a few hardy souls did it on their own at the end of the 2008 tour but it was never an official stage. This time around, after lopping off the first stage coming into Yosemite from the north, they were able to add this as a new final stage.

That old saying, life is what happens while you're making plans? We see that over and over on the tours. This time it was forest fires...again. The folks on this tour managed to salvage their week. It might not have been exactly what they had hoped it would be but they still got in six big stages in some of the most impressive mountain country in California. Click through to the preview booklet to read about the final four stages.





• Southern California Coast Tour-1 •

November 4-11, 2017

Copy: Bridgette DeShields • Photos: Ramona Turner, Jose Martinez, Jen Benedetti

This tour was originally planned for mid-October, but fate intervened. The tour leadership met at the warehouse on October 8, 2017 to organize the tour supplies with the tour set to start the following weekend. That evening at 9:43 PM, the Tubbs fire broke out in Calistoga and burned through to Coffey Park, destroying the club's warehouse. Some of the folks signed up lost homes. Others were left shell-shocked. But many still wanted to do the tour. The original tour dates were out of the question, with many people still under evacuation orders. But the tour team rolled up their sleeves and worked with sympathetic hotel managers to rebook the tour for November. People were moved from the wait list to the new tour dates and it was all a go!

The tour took members from Santa Barbara to Imperial Beach (with an optional trip to the U.S.-Mexico border). The return to Santa Barbara was by train (Amtrak). Total miles for the tour were about 300. This was an "inn-to-inn" tour, also known as a "credit card tour." There were two SAG vans with trailers to provide support, including snacks and lunch and breakfast each day, transport for luggage each day and back from San Diego while participants were on the train.

Everyone arrived in carpools on Saturday, November 4 in Santa Barbara. Vehicles were parked in the Amtrak lot and folks ventured out for dinner after a quick logistics meeting.

TOUR LEADERS AND STAFF:

Bridgette DeShields	Ramona Turner
Jose Martinez	Kathie Leader
John Mills	

ROSTER:

Jackie & Charlie Niles	Jen Benedetti
Sue Bennett & Alan Bloom	Anne Graver
Jeff Simpson & Debbie Hegardt	John Hervey
Michael & Cynthia Dawson	Debbie Wymer
Roxanne Bleier	Becky McVittie
Sheeda Ferguson	Alison Musco
Susan Cohen	Richard Bernstein
Jim McElroy	James Warren
Robin Abramson	Dan Gould
Marilyn Anderson	
Amy Buegeleisen	
Rich Cherpeck	
Jerry Applegate	

Stage 1: Santa Barbara to Oxnard (48 miles)

The tour started with a scenic loop from downtown up around Hope Ranch, then continued along the Santa Barbara waterfront, also known as the American Riviera: the harbor, Stearn's Wharf, and the beach promenade. We continued down past East Beach and into Montecito. The first coffee stop was at the Lucky Llama in Carpinteria, where Al Gore's daughter was married.

From there a short (<0.5 mi) section of riding on US101 took us to frontage roads and then the scenic Caltrans First Adopt-a-Bike-Path in California. Headed over to Surfer's Point in Ventura for lunch. We continued south along the coast on East Harbor Blvd into Oxnard near Port Hueneme, where we spent the first night at the Channel Islands Harbor.



Stage 2: Oxnard to Marina Del Rey (53 miles)

We departed Oxnard through the military-type housing areas, then headed through the agricultural fields along Hueneme Road and past Point Mugu Missile Park. The group met some friendly (sort of) MPs.



From there, we merged onto Hwy 1, aka the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), towards Malibu. We stopped for snacks at Neptune's Net which has all the character the name implies. Rolling hills took us from Point Mugu to Malibu where we had lunch with a view at Malibu Bluffs Park. Just past Pacific Palisades, we cruised along the Oceanfront Walk, the first of many beach bike paths.



We checked out the Santa Monica Pier and cruised through Venice Beach to our hotel in Marina del Rey Harbor. Several folks decided to make a dinner out of the happy hour fare at the hotel bar.



Stage 3: Marina del Rey to Sunset Beach (40-55 mi)

The third day started with a short ride through the Ballona Wetlands and a bike path, followed by a fine ride through several beach towns (Manhattan, Hermosa, Redondo). After

coffee in Redondo Beach, the group did a little bit of climbing through Palos Verdes, rewarded with spectacular views from the bluffs – you can spot Catalina Island if it's a clear day. The Palos Verdes route joined up with the LA River Trail (the only way to circumvent the Ports of LA and Long Beach). The LA River Trail took us to the Long Beach waterfront, past the Aquarium of the Pacific.



We had lunch at Shoreline Aquatic Park while gazing across the harbor at the Queen Mary. After post-lunch ice cream at Shoreline Village, we rode the final 9 miles of the day along the Belmont Shore, across Alamitos Bay and into Sunset Beach. A fun night was spent having beers on the rooftop followed by karaoke at a local bar.

Stage 4: Sunset Beach to Oceanside (63 miles)

Stage 4 was one of the longest riding days on this tour and had the most total climb, although it was mostly rollers. The first section took us on beach bike paths with coffee at Rose Bakery in Newport Beach. From there, we hit the rolling hills of Laguna Beach with lunch at Dana Point.

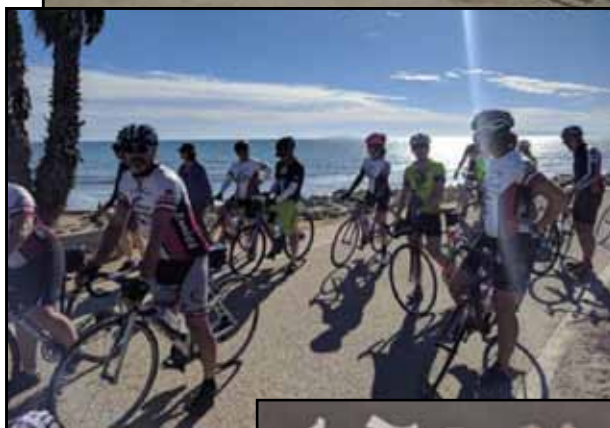
Then we headed out along the seemingly desolate old Pacific Hwy and trail that leads to Camp Pendleton, the big marine corps base. All groups met up at the North Gate for a check of IDs and then rode 8 miles through the base to the South Gate together. The base has strict rules (don't deviate from the route!) but we got to ride through the base while being passed by Humvees!

Just a mile or so past the south gate, we cruised into Oceanside for the night. We hung out by the pool at the Best Western and enjoyed the warm evening.



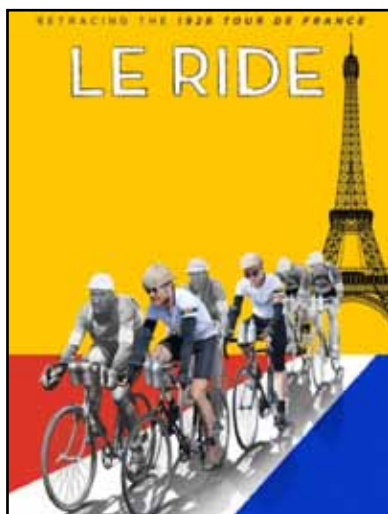
Stage 5: Oceanside to Imperial Beach/Chula Vista (58 miles plus 5-18 miles)

After continuing down the coast for 22 miles past surf towns like Encinitas, the only significant climb of the trip, up to Torrey Pines, was just ahead. The climb is less than 2 miles and an average of only 5%. Once the climb was done, we proceeded into the “village” of La Jolla for coffee at Brick and Bell. From there, down into Mission Beach and across Mission Bay and then past the north portion of San Diego Harbor, the airport and downtown.



At Broadway Pier, we caught the the ferry to Coronado Island. After lunch and a quick spin past the historic Coronado Hotel, we were off down the Silver Strand towards Imperial Beach.

A subset of the group headed further south to the US/Mexico Border while others just took a spin past the beach. We had planned a catered feast at Bayside, a beachside park, but with the change in dates, it was too dark. Instead, we had burritos at the hotel and shuttled to a movie theater to watch the world premiere of *Le Ride*.



Stage 6: Chula Vista to San Diego (13 miles) and return to Santa Barbara

We rode a short 8 miles back to San Diego, where we loaded bikes into the SAG vehicles at Seaport Village and headed over to the Amtrak station for the trip back to Santa Barbara. SAG vehicles met folks at the train in Santa Barbara and we headed back to La Quinta for a final night in Southern California. All headed north on November 11.





<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2018%20Tours/CRT-fullcopy-routes-maps1.pdf>

Once again, we returned to one of our favorite cycle-touring regions. Or rather, two regions: the Santa Barbara-Solvang region and the Paso Robles region. We first toured in the Santa Barbara and Solvang neighborhoods on the Condor Country Tour (2001) and the Paso Robles area on the two Central Coast Tours (1997, 2013). We combined the best of both regions for the Mid-State Tour (2007), with a car transfer day to hook the two regions together. This tour followed that format but added some new roads and just generally tinkered with the routes to make it fresh and, we hoped, better.

The biggest change this time around had to do with our overnights. On both Condor Country and Mid-State, we had stayed for multiple nights in a big RV resort in Buellton. It worked well for us. They had a nice lawn set aside for tents and we took it over. A swimming pool and spa were a bonus. But by 2018 the resort had built a bunch of little cabins all over our tent lawn. We had to look elsewhere. Enter the Andersen's Split Pea Soup Motel, just up the block from the RV resort. They would be delighted to rent rooms to 40-some cyclists and at a very reasonable group rate. What's more, they had a nice garden courtyard with seating areas for socializing, which we like to do. Even a cornhole set-up. Each day we would lug over a few coolers of drinks and some tubs of munchies and take the place over. It was perfect. Then in Paso Robles we were in another motel for two nights. It wasn't quite as ideal as Andersen's but it worked well enough for us.

So we ended up in motels for five nights and in camps for only three. With only three nights of preparing camp dinners, it didn't make sense to pay for a pair of food wranglers. What with not having to budget for the wranglers, we were able to reduce the entry fee to somewhat offset the added cost the participants would have to shell out for all the motel nights. (On most of our tours, motels are not covered by the entry fee.) We could also get away with just one truck. We needed to organize the camp dinners on our own and move the truck on our own...no staff to do that stuff. We managed the dinners with assigned crews who knew the ropes. Camille Pope kind of morphed into the role of alpha wolf on the cooking front. We didn't ask her to do it; she just got involved. As for the truck and the car pool fleet, we cobbled together a system using all the participants who weren't assigned to cook crews. It was complex but it worked. See the crew roster to get a sense of it. Aside from all those logistical considerations, it was a standard tour. You got on your bike in the morning and did another wonderful stage...seven days in a row.



Stage 1: Camino Cielo Loops

47, 50, 56, 58, 60, 67 miles, 2600'-9300'

Over the top of the Santa Ynez Mountains and down to Santa Barbara and Montecito, then back along legendary Gibraltar and Camino Cielo Roads. We camped the first two nights in the Sage Hill Group Camp in Paradise Canyon, headwaters of the Santa Ynez River. We rode this the day before the Tour of California had a mountaintop finish on Gibraltar. The big finish-line structures were all set up and Christian Vande Velde was doing a TV spot when we rode by. Egan Bernal won the stage and did it in exactly half the time it took our fastest riders to do it. This is always one of the most awesome stages anywhere...here, Europe, you name it. It's world class.

Stage 2: Sage Hill to Buellton

34, 56, 61 miles, 2600'-6000'

From the Santa Ynez Mountains down into Santa Ynez Valley. The short routes stayed in the valley amid the affluent horse ranches of Happy Canyon. The long route looped up and over Figueuroa Mountain...rugged, challenging, and beautiful (above). After the stage we settled in for three nights in the motel in Buellton. Another epic, off-the-chart stage. The Figueuroa Mountain section is hard work but stunningly impressive and with a great descent back to the valley. Two people drove our truck to Buellton and doubled back on the course to get in a good ride.

Stage 3: The Canyons Loop

43, 58, 79 miles, 2900'-5400'

The essential Santa Ynez Valley Loop, visiting Ballard Canyon, Foxen Canyon, Alisos Canyon (shortcut), Tepequet Canyon (bonus miles), Cat Canyon, and Drum Canyon. We had done this loop twice before but always in a clockwise direction. This time we turned it around and went the other way, just for a change. We also added the Alisos Canyon shortcut, which several people did. And the Tepequet Canyon out-&-back. Last time we were here, that one had a stretch of chunky gravel through an arroyo; this time, nice new pavement.

Stage 4: Jalama Beach

36, 42, 69, 71 miles, 1800'-4800'

Out-&-back to remote Jalama Beach with an option to visit one of the most interesting of the early California missions: La Purisima. Mostly mellow valley miles but a few substantial climbs and descents. This was our third time on this delightful ride and it was as good as ever. The wildflowers were carpeting the hillsides. We always grab a burger at the little cafe at the beach. The service people are crabby but the burgers are the best.

Stage 5: Solvang-Nojoqui Falls (travel day)

21, 31 miles, 1200'-1700'

Short rides in the morning before moving the car pool fleet north—1.5-hour drive—to Santa Margarita Lake in the afternoon for our only other night of camping. Rides included a visit to the faux-Danish village of Solvang and to a remote park and waterfall.

Stage 6: Santa Margarita Lake to Paso Robles

54, 64, 75 miles, 3200'-4900'

A stage featured on at least two past club tours and well worth repeating. Dream miles all day long. End of the stage begins two nights in a motel in Paso Robles. There aren't enough fancy words to describe how nice this stage is. Early miles on Pozo, Park Hill, and Webster; later miles on Vineyard, Willow Creek, and Peachy Canyon...so sweet. Once again, folks moved the truck to our new motel and then knocked off a nice loop ride from there out onto the course.

Stage 7: Paso Robles Loop

51, 58, 60, 68 miles, 3100'-4100'

Some roads done on past tours but many new ones as well in the rolling hills and occasional woods to the NE and NW of Paso Robles. Another nearly perfect bike ride. We thought this stage would be easy but it turned out to be harder than we expected, with a couple of hot, hard climbs. But it ended with a long, snaking descent back to Paso Robles...a nice way to wrap up a nice tour.



Saturday, May 12, Sage Hill

Pasta Carbonara. Traditional Italian recipe (with and without bacon). Mixed green salad, Italian bread and grilled veggies.

1. John Russell
2. Kim Kaczmar
3. Bill Conklin
4. Janice Thomas
5. Doug Wagner
6. Michael Barnes
7. Karen Steele

Sunday, May 13, Sage Hill

Grilled chicken, tri tip, and veggie burgers. Hot German potato salad and mixed fruit salad.

1. Paul McKenzie
2. Paul Chuck
3. Paul Whitely
4. Nancy Vallance
5. Camille Pope
6. Chris Jones
7. Andy Deseran

Thursday, May 17, Santa Margarita Lake

Fiesta night. All the fixings lined up buffet style to make your own burritos, tacos, and tostadas. Chips and salsa and plenty of guacamole.

1. Firouzeh Attwood
2. Kevin Foley
3. Peter Verbiscar-Brown
4. Nathan Moore
5. Jon Hermstad
6. Marianne Moore
7. Linda Karina Alcazar



Stage 4: Jalama Beach

Mornings in Motels Tailgate Teams

Tuesday, May 15, Buellton:

1. Richard Anderson
2. Jim Davies

Wednesday, May 16, Buellton:

3. Gordon Stewart
4. Tracy Daly

Thursday, May 17, Buellton:

5. Linda Fluhrer
6. Sid Fluhrer

Saturday, May 19, Paso Robles

7. Kipp Frey
8. Darrin Jenkins

Carpool shuttle drivers

Saturday afternoon, May 12 Sage Hill to Buellton

Thursday afternoon, May 17 Santa Margarita Lake to Paso Robles

1. Phil Welch
2. Phil Penna
3. Louise Penna
4. Richard Sellman
5. Mike DeMicco
6. Sarah Bousfield
7. John Aranson
8. Suzanne Aranson
9. Rick Sawyer
also car driver on AM runs
10. Bill Oetinger
*van driver on shuttle runs and
truck driver on AM runs*
11. Donna Norrell
car driver on AM runs
12. Camille Pope
car driver on AM runs



*Stage 1:
Kinevan Road*

*Stage 3:
Foxen Canyon*



Stage 3 or 5: Ballard Canyon

Stage 7: Von Dollen Road





• Oregon Coast Tour • September 8-16, 2018

Copy: Bridgette DeShields • Photos: Ramona Turner, Jose Martinez, Jen Benedetti

This tour followed the Oregon coast from Astoria to North Bend (Coos Bay), with the start and finish (and riding opportunities) in Albany, Oregon. The total distance for the coastal portion of the tour was approximately 250 miles with 13,000' of climb. The route includes some Category 3 climbs, with an average of 50 miles and 2600' of climb a day.

The tour was “inn-to-inn” style...a “credit card tour.” Participants carpooled to Albany, Oregon on September 8th and home after the tour on September 15th or 16th (final day was optional). There were two SAG vehicles with trailers/racks to provide: support (including snacks and lunch); transportation for bikes and participants to and from the main route start and finish locations in Astoria and North Bend; and transportation for luggage from hotel to hotel each day.



In typical Oregon style, the week before and after the tour were beautiful and sunny. But the morning of the first day of riding, the rain made its appearance. It was very heavy some days but the group was up for the challenge. At the end of each day, as we rode into the hotel parking lot, the sun would magically appear, only to be replaced by rain the next morning. This continued through the third day, when fairer weather appeared, with only scattered showers. The last two days of the tour were sunny!

Sunday, September 9

The group got in rental vehicles and headed to Astoria. Astoria sits on the Columbia River. The waterfront holds shops and microbreweries; the Astoria Column, a towering hilltop monument with murals depicting area history, offers panoramic views. We had time for the quick hike.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum showcases fishing, shipping and military history in a waterfront building. Our group dinner was pizza at the Fort George Brewery.

TOUR STAFF:

Bridgette DeShields	Jose Martinez
Gary and Anne Graver	Jen Benedetti

PARTICIPANTS:

Amy Buegeleisen	Philae Carver
Michael Fassler	Joe Fassler
Carol Feagles	Sheeda Ferguson
Edie Gordon	David Gordon
Karen Gould	Julie Gugel
Debbie Hegardt	Pam Higi
Mark Miller	Alison Musco
Twyla Robert	Robin Rothrock
Jeff Simpson	Bill Stites
James Warren	Gary Weeks



Stage 1: Astoria to Rockaway Beach (56 miles)

We headed out in the drizzle along the Astoria waterfront and Old Young's Bay Bridge – the first of many bridge crossings on this tour with the Lewis & Clark Bridge crossing just three miles ahead. The next 15 miles follow the meandering Lewis & Clark River into Seaside, where the first stop was at Seaside Coffee. From there, a few miles on Hwy 101 and then into Cannon Beach. Back on 101 for several miles, through Arch Cape and into the sleepy village of Manzanita for lunch at the City Park at mile 44. The last 12 miles run along the eastern shore of Nehalem Bay to Rockaway Beach where we spent the night at the Surfside Resort on the beach.



Stage 3: Pacific City to Newport (56 miles)

Still more rain! We headed out onto Hwy 101 around Neskowin Bay and Neskowin Beach, then, a beautiful, gradual climb along Slab Creek Road paralleling Neskowin Creek. A descent into Otis for a coffee stop at the cute Otis Café (which burned down the next year). A short jaunt back onto Hwy 101 then around Devil's Lake to Lincoln City for lunch on Siletz Bay. The last 20 or so miles skirt Depoe Bay and takes the Otter Crest loop (above) for a view of Devil's Punchbowl; past the Yaquina Head Lighthouse and into Newport, home to the Oregon Coast Aquarium and the Hatfield Marine Science Center. We stayed at the Whaler Motel.



Stage 2: Rockaway Beach to Pacific City (41 miles)

Another rainy morning took us around Tillamook Bay, where we made a stop at the Tillamook cheese factory for some tasting. We then headed along the Tillamook coast and hit two of the three capes: along Netarts Bay to Cape Lookout (which includes a 2-mile, 700' climb) and through the Sandlake Dunes to Cape Kiwanda. From there, we dropped into Pacific City, where we spent our second night on the coast. A snack stop at Cape Lookout State Park before the climb with lunch in Pacific City at Pelican Brewing, right across from our hotel, the Inn at Cape Kiwanda.

Stage 4: Newport to Florence (51 miles)

The day started with just over 20 miles on Hwy 101, with fairly wide shoulders, into Yachats for a stop at the Bread and Rose Bakery. The next section was pretty narrow and winding for about 13 miles, including our stop for lunch by the Heceta Head Lighthouse (below) before the climb past the Sea Lion Caves. Ten more miles took us to the cute town of Florence. We stayed at the Old Town Inn with a view of the Siuslaw River and bridge. Cute shops and great restaurants await.





All smiles! Who's afraid of a bit of moisture?

Stage 5: Florence to North Bend (46 miles)

The final day on the coast, sunshine at last! We went about 20 miles along the Oregon Dunes and into Reedsport on the Umpqua River and Winchester Bay for treats at the Sourdough Bakery. We then headed up to view the Umpqua lighthouse and back onto Hwy 101, past several lakes and across the bridge into North Bend. We had a catered late lunch before loading up and heading back to Albany.



Changing a tire at the Covered Bridge Cafe

Optional: Saturday September 15 – Albany/Corvallis
A group of us spent the day in and around Albany riding the covered bridges route.



Dinner at Fort George Brewery in Astoria. Ready to ride!



Leaving our first hotel in Astoria...the rain has just begun.



Alison Musco was proud of her mud



Enjoying the beach at Pacific City



Anne and Gary Graver, David Gordon, Mitch Warren



We got good use out of those new raincoats



• Southern California Coast Tour-2 •

October 13-20, 2018

Copy and photos: Bridgette DeShields.

This tour was similar to the Southern California Coastal Tour we did in 2017. We made a few route improvements and added some planned happy hours. Oh, and we finally had that end-of-tour beach party.

A few interesting anecdotes...

- On stage 2, from Oxnard to Marina del Rey, the Santa Ana winds started unexpectedly early. Participants rode through 50+ mph cross-winds and it took about twice the time to get from point A to B. About eight riders opted not to ride and we crammed them into SAG vehicles. The wind kicked up the summer's store of goat heads and we ended up with over 20 flat tires! We needed to buy more tubes in Santa Monica. Everyone made it in one piece and by the next day the winds had died down.
- On Stage 3, we had to ride the shoulder of Interstate-5 past Camp Pendleton due to new security requirements at the base. It was exhilarating!
- Finally, the train from San Diego back to Santa Barbara was delayed for several hours due to the train hitting a pedestrian who wandered onto the tracks near LA. By the time we arrived, we were exhausted and hungry, so we ordered pizzas and had a final group meal in the hotel lobby.

TOUR STAFF

Bridgette DeShields

Ramona Turner

Len Hirschi

PARTICIPANTS

Loie Sauer & Lorraine Trautwein

Coni Ahrendt & Barbara Cisneros

Liz Sinna & Guy Rittger

Brad & Lynn Valentine

Melinda Posner & Ron Duren

David Bellis & Uta Gabler

Steve Bumstead & Joan Meyer

Marlene Mills & Bert Welti

Cheryl & Charles Wheeler

Jose Martinez

Gary Graver

Gary Welsh

Ann Gilster

Mark Mauerhan

Eric Peterson

Steve Saxe

Mike Cooper

Julia Reagh

Tom Abrams





<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2019%20Tours/WRT-copy.2019.pdf>

And yet another Wild Rivers Tour! Hey, they're good tours. They're fun. I did this one, and as far as I can recall, it was a nearly flawless tour. There were 46 people on the roster, including Camille Pope and Craig Gaevvert managing the food service and Don Jordan and John Hervey going half-n-half on the sag duties. Jens Vidker was in charge of putting up and taking down the portable shower whenever it was needed.

There were two really miniscule adjustments to the routes, one very near the start of the first stage, in the Hoopa reservation, and one very near the end of the final stage out along the coast north of McKinleyville. The first one was just a little side road wiggle off the main highway for about four miles. The one on the last stage was even shorter but had a bigger impact. Coming south from Trinidad, instead of crossing the freeway to the inland side and then climbing—steeply, painfully—to the butte north of McKinleyville, we kept the route right down along Clam Beach, latching onto the north end of the Hammond Trail. We'd already been doing the southern end of the Hammond Trail for years but somehow this northern section had escaped our notice. It simplified the route considerably and eliminated that wicked-steep climb we used to have to do. If you study the Stage 1 and Stage 7 maps in the preview booklet, you can find the changes.

Aside from those earth-shaking changes, I can't recall anything out of the ordinary happening. We didn't have any forest fires to dodge, for once. No one crashed, as far as I know. Camille and Craig were on top of the food service. Ishi Pishi and the Salmon River Gorge were their usual amazing wonderfulness on Stage 1 and the new road was an added treat. Etna was still Etna on Stage 2...hard as ever and in fact probably getting harder as we're getting older. We did have one interesting interlude in the town of Etna when many of us dropped in on mountain bike guru Stevie Potts at his shop on the main street of town. Stage 3 was just about perfect, especially the run along the Scott River canyon. As I said at the time: "A heaping helping of heaven!" Several of us snuck off from camp that night to the pizza parlor in Happy Camp so we could catch the Warriors and Raptors in the NBA finals (the Dubs lost). Stage 4: same old same old...up and over the State of Jefferson Scenic Byway and down into Oregon for about a couple of hours. Over the top of the delightfully remote Hazel View summit, back into California, and down, down, down to Panther Flat. Stage 5: through Crescent City and then the part nobody likes...the climbs and descents on Hwy 101. Past the Klamath River and out to that unpaved piece of wilderness not-road on the cliffs, then down through Redwood National Park to Elk Prairie. And finally, Stage 6 with all those fun detours off the highway: Old State Highway, Patricks Point, Stagecoach, Scenic...nice riding...and then the new bit on the Hammond Trail. We all fetched up at the finish in Arcata but the sag van—our ride home—was nowhere to be found. Cell phone calls finally found him a long way from wherever he should have been, so our drive home was a little bit delayed. But it was a small glitch and we were soon on our way home, with another nice tour on the books.



Nine days • Seven stages • 450-500 miles • 25,000'
July 20-28, 2019

<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2019%20Tours/NWT-copy.2019.1.pdf>

This is the second edition of a tour first run in 2012. We don't usually repeat a tour that soon but we had what we thought were good reasons to do so. First of all, it was a great tour. Everyone who did it the first time loved it. But also, there were some significant changes this time around, enough to give the tour a new look and feel...at least a little.

In general, it's the same tour. The first four stages are almost exactly the same, with a change in the overnight site at the end of Stage 3 the only new wrinkle. And the final three stages are kinda, sorta the same but with more changes...changes that make a big difference. We think we kept all the good stuff and simply made it a little better.

The main change is we went to motels for two of our overnights on the coast: after Stage 3 in the resort town of Seaside, and after Stage 5 in another beach town, Depoe Bay. The first change only meant a route adjustment of a block or two at the end of the stage, from Seaside Middle School to a motel on the Promenade overlooking the beach. The second change, to the motel in Depoe Bay, was more substantial and had a domino effect on the stages that follow. In 2012, Stage 5 went through Depoe Bay, through Newport, and ended up at South Beach State Park...79 miles. Then we took a layover day at the campground: did a little local ride, went to the aquarium or the Rogue Brewery or both, etc. And then the final stage was a full century, 100 miles back to Corvallis. It was a relatively easy century but still...

This time around, breaking off Stage 5 in Depoe Bay gave us runs of either 55 or 65 miles. Stage 6 then became a full stage to a new campground...57 or 63 miles. And Stage 7, back to Corvallis, ended up at 67 or 79 miles. Much more balanced and not so hardcore. The motel in Seaside was just an aesthetic consideration: nicer than the back lawn at the middle school. The switch to the motel in Depoe Bay and the discovery of the hitherto unknown group camp for the end of Stage 6 were the real keys to reinventing the tour. We were also in a motel at the start and finish of the tour in Corvallis, so that worked out to four motel nights and four camp nights.

Food service for the camps was handled by Camille and Chuck Pope. Sag drivers were Robin Dean and Inez Barragan. There were 44 people on the tour.



Stage 1: Corvallis to Champoege State Park

75 miles, 3300' up, 3400' down

We headed north up the Willamette Valley on mostly rolling roads through either woods or agricultural countryside... wheat and hops. Quiet roads and a quiet landscape. Not spectacular but pleasantly rural. Crossed the river on the tiny Wheatland Ferry. We stayed in two group sites in a beautiful park on the Willamette River. We had showers but also swimming on the river. A crash today: Christian Wagner hit the deck just a mile from the end of the stage. He had to fly home the next day.

Stage 2: Champoege State Park to Vernonia

68 miles, 4000' up, 3500' down

More miles through farmlands but also more variety, with bigger climbs (and descents), and a good deal more deep forest. The final 21 miles were on a beautiful bike path through dense forest... Oregon's first linear trail state park. Camped in Anderson Park on the Nehalem River. We had showers but also swimming in the river.

Stage 3: Vernonia to Seaside

73 miles, 3000' up, 3600' down

Headed west to the coast through endless broadleaf forest. It was the same all day: mile after mile of rolling terrain, cycling along quiet, pretty roads amidst the dappled shade of overhanging trees. Only a couple of climbs, with entertaining descents after each. A side trip to a pretty waterfall. We spent the night in a nice motel fronting on the beach and strolled along the famous old Promenade in search of restaurants. Before the stage began, Paul Chuck fell off the back of the truck while loading luggage and was injured too badly to ride. His wife drove up and took him home.

Stage 4: Seaside to Cape Lookout State Park

70 miles, 4100' up and down

61 miles, 3400' up and down

Bonus miles: 5.5 miles, 550'

Our first day on the coast, although many of the miles were spent inland, in quiet valleys away from the congestion of Hwy 101. But there were good sections on the coast as well,

with some great scenery. The long option explored the hilly Cape Meares Loop, one of the prettiest, most pristine sections on the Oregon coast (left). We camped in a state park right on the beach and enjoyed a technicolor sunset.

Stage 5: Cape Lookout State Park to Depoe Bay

55 miles, 3200' up and down

65 miles, 3600' up and down

Similar to yesterday's coastal stage: a mix of side roads meandering through quiet woods and meadows (avoiding Hwy 101), and several sections right out on the beach. The long route's extra miles were accumulated over four small additional loops. (Do as many as you like.) We spent the night in a motel facing the ocean in the little town of Depoe Bay. Had a great dinner in a brew pub overlooking the harbor and then sat on the cliffs watching whales spout.

Stage 6: Depoe Bay to River Edge Group Camp

57 miles, 2800' up, 2700' down

63 miles, 3400' up, 3300' down

The day began with more coastal miles, including riding through the resort city of Newport. We were turned back by construction on one road, adding a few extra miles to our day. The latter half of the stage left the coast and headed inland along the pretty, meandering Alsea River to our camp at a large group site on the river. No showers, but a nice swimming hole at the camp. (We found this camp on a scouting trip. Missed it in the scouting of the 2012 tour.)

Stage 7: River Edge to Corvallis

67 miles, 3850' up, 3800' down

79 miles, 4400' up, 4350' down

Lovely little roads through the middle of nowhere: Lobster Valley and the Alsea River National Back Country Byway (below). One of the best rides ever with pavement as smooth as a race track. The long route added an out-&-back along another little creek to visit an historic covered bridge. We rolled into Corvallis on a nice bike path along the river frontage, right back to our motel. Everyone prowled the downtown looking for dinner spots. There are many. We ended up at the Block 15 Brewery.



Cook crews and other assignments

Sunday, July 21. After Stage 1 Champoeg State Park

Jim Davies
Paul McKenzie
Paul Chuck
Sarah Schroer
Alana Schoonover
James Persky
Mark Gire

Monday, July 22. After Stage 2 Anderson Park, Vernonia

Linda Fluhrer
Sid Fluhrer
Linda Gloystein
Phil Welch
Tim Kaczmar
Peter Verbiscar-Brown
Tony Lee

Wednesday, July 24. After Stage 4 Cape Lookout State Park

Robin Rothrock
Dave Clark
Roger Sparks
Karen Gould
Doug Lyle
Inez Barragan
Robert Redmond

Friday, July 26. After Stage 6 River Edge Group Camp

Phil Penna
Karen Steele
Michael Barnes
Christian Wagner
Don Jordan
Miguel Sanchez
Lidia Karina Alcazar

Mini-crew for motel mornings Sunday, before Stage 1

Wednesday, before Stage 4

Friday, before Stage 6

Richard Anderson
Wayne Woogan
Doug Schrock
Mark Miller

Truck shuttle drivers

Kitchen truck...
Every day: Chuck Pope
Luggage truck...
Sunday, Stage 1: Bill Oetinger
Monday, Stage 2: Jill Lee
Tuesday, Stage 3: Donna Norrell
Wednesday, Stage 4: Jon Hermstad
Thursday, Stage 5: Jill Lee
Friday, Stage 6: Deni Lee
Saturday, Stage 7: Robin Dean

Sag drivers

Stages 1, 3, 5, 7: Inez Barragan
Stages 2, 4, 6: Robin Dean

Other assignments

Camille Pope (food boss)
Chuck Pope (asst food wrangler)
Jeanie Daskais (asst food wrangler)
Marianne Moore (asst food wrangler)
Chris Jones (coffee wallah)
Jim Gloystein (coffee wallah)



Stage 1: Spring Valley Road



Stage 3: Nehalem Highway



Stage 4: Neahkahnie Summit



Stage 5: Slab Creek Road



Stage 6: Otter Crest Loop



Stage 7: Lobster Valley Road



• Oregon Rogue-Deschutes Tour •

May 22-30, 2021

Copy: Bridgette DeShields • Photos: Ramona Turner, Jose Martinez, Jen Benedetti



Everyone arrived in Ashland on Saturday, May 22, where we had a meeting and happy-hour refreshments and pick up of lunch items in the hotel (look for SRCC signage in the lobby). This was our first Covid-era tour, so everyone brought an ice chest and handled their own food. We stayed at the historic Ashland Springs Hotel. Rumor is the hotel is haunted. One participant may have seen the ghost!

Sunday May 23 - Tuesday May 25

A variety of rides to choose from in the Ashland/Medford/Rogue area. Everything from an easy bike path along Bear Creek, a ride from Ashland to Jacksonville, an option to ride a metric century from Jacksonville to the Rogue River Parkway and Grants Pass, then over the Applegate pass. Or some shorter, rolling terrain loops. And a couple good climbs.



On Sunday evening there was a group dinner in the English Garden at the Ashland Springs Hotel.



Karl Burkhauser, a former SRCC member who lives in the area, led us on a ride along the Rogue River, through Sam's Valley, and past the Wimer covered bridge before looping back through Grants Pass.

After we finished the Ashland "stage" folks loaded up and drove to Bend. Many stopped along the way at the Rogue River Gorge Falls. Then we settled in at the Fairfield Inn. We even saw a marmot on the back patio.





Wednesday May 26 – Saturday May 29

Rides in/around Bend, ranging from short and fairly flat/rolling to longer and hilly and something in between. Participants could pick from multiple routes each day leaving from the hotel or elsewhere, including an option to do the Sisters/McKenzie Pass climb and to ride up to Mt Bachelor or do the Sunriver loop. The road had just opened. Those that did McKenzie pass got to enjoy it car free! One day, a group took a day off the bike and hiked at Smith Rock.

We had another group dinner on Thursday at one of Bend's Food Truck "villages" - a very Oregon thing! The Podski.

Sunday May 30: We all headed back to Sonoma County.



TOUR STAFF

- Bridgette DeShields
- Ramona Turner
- Jose Martinez

PARTICIPANTS

- Amy Buegeleisen & Sheeda Ferguson
- Loie Sauer & Sarah Gevirtz
- Kathie Leader & Susan Cohen
- John Mills & Patty Graham
- Jan & Don Billing
- Steve Bumstead & Joan Meyer
- Ron Duren & Melinda Posner
- Charlene & Richard Warne
- Deb & Jack Hartnett
- Nancy Vallance & Ron Lehman
- Doug & Pam Schrock
- Mike DeMicco & Sarah Bousfield
- Kim Warne & Mary Lou Hicks
- Julia Reagh
- Mark Miller
- Jerry Applegate
- Ed Estrada
- Gary Weeks
- Ken Cushman
- Cints Simon
- Darrin Jenkins





Sunday, August 15 - Friday, August 20, 2021

<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2020%20Tours/MLT-copy.2021.1.pdf>

Back around 2018, Peter Verbiscar-Brown and Chris Jones asked my advice about putting together a new tour. They wondered if any of my old tours could be recycled and revised as a new one. Among the check-boxes on their wish list: that it be fairly close to home and that it not be too hard. I knew right away that was going to be a tough nut to crack. Back a few years, we were younger and stronger and more willing to take on daily rides that now seem too arduous. Even as recently as 2012, we had a tour stage of 100 miles. Plenty more in the 80-mile range. Tours at that level wouldn't meet their criteria. And then there were many that were far away: Northern Oregon, Southern Utah, Southern California.

But then I remembered a tour I had played around with years ago in Mendocino and Lake Counties. It was certainly close to home and the stages were not too brutal. For various reasons I had never done much with it. But the routes and research were still in my files. I dusted it all off, made a few new tweaks, and shared it with them. They liked it, so off we went! It was put on the club calendar for late May of 2020. Of course we know what happened to 2020. The tour was cancelled, as was the Northern Oregon Tour Redux, which had been scheduled for August of that blighted year.

Fast forward to 2021. Because of the rather challenging logistics around the Northern Oregon Tour, we didn't think we could mount it in August of 2021. But Peter and Chris felt the more modest Mendo-Lake Tour might be possible, only not as early in the year as May. (The world of COVID was evolving every month.) We chose to slot this tour into the August dates where the NOTR would have been. That worked, sort of. We were okay with COVID. We wanted everyone vaxxed but aside from that, we were good to go. We had 36 people signed up, plus food wranglers Holly Raan and David Watts.

However...there was a reason we originally had the tour scheduled for May: summer heat in Lake County, which is where the tour would start. Moving it to August plunked us right down in the middle of a triple-digit heat wave. On top of that, smoke from fires to the northeast was smothering Lake County, making the air quality very poor, certainly not good for bike rides. What to do? As on past tours, we talked it over, kept up-to-date on local conditions, and ultimately decided we had no choice but to modify the tour. We scuttled the first two stages in Lake County. Then, from our start site at Ukiah

High School, we rode south through the orchards to intercept the Stage 3 route as it came down off Hopland Grade, heading west into Mendocino County, where it was cooler and only a teeny bit smoky. Instead of the 65 miles of the original Stage 3, we ended up with a nice 58-mile ride. I at least was disappointed to lose those Lake County days. Lake County is an under-appreciated region and those routes would have exposed our riders to some roads they've probably never done. But when we announced the change to the group, the only responses we got expressed relief at avoiding the bad conditions and thanks for making the hard call...and saving as much of the tour as we could. After all the bleak months of the pandemic, folks were so starved for any decent cycle-touring, they were thrilled to be able to do just the four stages that were left. After all the anxiety and stress, we ended up with a nice little tour.

Stage 1: Ukiah to Hendy Woods State Park **58 miles, 3700' up, 4100' down**

After leaving our carpool fleet at Ukiah High School, we headed south down the Russian River valley (with one stiff climb right near the start) and hooked up with the original Stage 3 route near Hopland. We climbed over the many ridges on Mountain House Road, then spilled down the hill on Hwy 128 into Anderson Valley (photo below). Many people stopped for refreshments in Boonville ahead of the last run up to Hendy Woods State Park, deep in the redwoods on the Navarro River. While we were setting up camp among those redwoods, a large branch broke off a tree and crashed down right in the middle of our group. It was over 50' long and several inches thick. Just by pure dumb luck, it didn't land on anyone.

Stage 2: Hendy Woods to Russian Gulch SP **36 miles, 2100' up, 2400' down** **49 miles, 3100' up, 3400' down** **52 miles, 5200' up, 5500' down**

North and west toward Mendocino. The two shorter routes did so by way of Hwy 128 along the Navarro River, then north along the coastal cliffs on Hwy 1. The middle route added a couple of detours off Hwy 1, up into the wooded hills. The shortest route made a bee-line for the camp at the finish, except that both the shorter routes also did a scenic detour through the town of Mendocino. The longest route headed west on hilly Philo-Greenwood Road to the coast at the tiny town of Elk, picking up Hwy 1 there. Those folks also did the detours the middle route did and another loop at the end of the stage. Russian Gulch State Park would be our home for the next two nights.

Stage 3: Fort Bragg Meandering **34 miles, 1800' up and down** **49 miles, 2800' up and down**

This was the ultimate herding-cats day. Folks went off in every direction, not only doing the listed routes but improvising variations of their own. It's a wonder our sag driver, John Russell, kept track of everyone. Actually, I'm not sure he did. But it was okay because we were always near towns and food and any other assistance one might need.

We headed north from Russian Gulch into and through the old lumber town of Fort Bragg, then returned, eventually, south on an old logging road—now a coastal trail—above the beach in MacKerricher State Park. That trail connected to the

new Noyo Headlands Trail west of Fort Bragg. Two moderately hilly out-&-backs were the only difference between the long and short routes.

This layover day between two nights at Russian Gulch State Park was intended to offer many options for participants: hiking in the beautiful park, visiting a big garden, having lunch in Fort Bragg, or perhaps heading back into Mendocino, just a couple of miles south of camp. Most people did the listed rides, with or without added embellishments, but the rides were short and that left plenty of afternoon for those other pursuits. It was all a bit of relaxed anarchy.

Stage 4: Russian Gulch State Park to Ukiah **49 miles, 5600' up, 4900' down**

On our last day, we rode back to Ukiah through the remote and rugged hills along Comptche-Ukiah and Orr Springs Roads, all of it gorgeous. Don't be fooled by the relatively low miles: there was some serious climbing today. We started out with another loop around the Mendocino Headlands before climbing into the forested hills to the east. After that, the hills—up and down—just kept on coming, all the way to the finish. We had another opportunity for problem solving on this day. We had learned that the county was doing major repaving along our route (Orr Springs Road) and that the road might be closed for as long as half a day at a time. We had been in touch with the public works department before the tour and during the tour to stay updated on the project. After all our discussions, they were very considerate of us: when we arrived at the work zone, they all conveniently decided to take their lunch break and we were able to ride through with no delays at all.

High heat, forest fires, road work. We had it all. And yet we managed to work around it all and saved our tour.



Mendocino-Lake Tour • Menus and Cook Crews

End of Stage 3-alt; Tuesday, August 17 Hendy Woods State Park

Spaghetti Carbonara

1. Robin Rothrock
2. Georg Ockenfuss
3. Rodney Noda
4. Dave Clark
5. Mark Gire
6. Doug Wagner
7. Nathan Moore
8. Charlene Warne
9. Norman Fujita
10. Judy Fujita

End of Stage 4; Wednesday, August 18 Russian Gulch State Park

Barbecued Tri-tip

Thursday morning: pancakes, bacon, eggs

1. David Levinger
2. Angela Levinger
3. Nancy Vallance
4. Christian Wagner
5. Bob Rumohr
6. Kipp Frey
7. Darrin Jenkins
8. Tony Buffa
9. Paul McKenzie
10. Bill Conklin
11. Michael Barnes

End of Stage 5; Thursday, August 19 Russian Gulch State Park

*Grilled Thai Peanut-Coconut Chicken
Saté with Rice*

1. Karen Gould
2. Doug Lyle
3. Russel Haswell
4. Sandy Haswell
5. Cints Simon
6. Douwe Drayer
7. De Lewis
8. Wayne Woogen
9. Wei San Hui
10. Phil Welch

Food Wranglers:

Holly Raan
David Watts

Coffee Wallahs:

Andy Deseran
Jim Gloystein

All dinners offer vegetarian options as well as salads, breads., etc . Breakfasts offer oatmeal and dry cereals except for Thursday morning, which is our once-a-tour full breakfast...see above.

Stage 2 or 4: Mendocino





Stage 1: heading out of Hopland



Stage 1 or 2: the old bridge over the Navarro River at Hendy Woods



Stage 2 or 3: Point Cabrillo Drive

Russian Gulch State Park



Stage 3: Coastal trail north of Fort Bragg





Nine days • Seven stages • 400+ miles • 32,000'

<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2022%20Tours/NOTR-copy.2022.3.pdf>

Article about the tour at BikeCal.com: <http://bikecal.com/asp/columns-detail.asp?w=B&bRecNo=390>

“In 2007, the club ran the original Northern Oregon Tour. It was an epic adventure but also a long, hard tour. It averaged 90 miles a day, with the final two stages 95 and 98 miles. 630 miles in all. No doubt there are still some club members who would relish the idea of banging out 90 frequently hilly miles a day for seven days straight. But the feedback we hear from most of our recent tour participants is that folks no longer want to work quite that hard on their cycling vacations.

“That brings us to this tour: the Northern Oregon Tour Redux. “Redux” means “to bring back or revive” and that is certainly accurate for this reprise of the previous tour. But taking a spin on its Latin root—*reducere*—we can also propose that it means “to reduce.” We’ve put the old, hardcore tour on a diet. Or if you prefer a more radical take on the changes, we’ve performed a major surgery here, lopping off the southernmost third of the loop. Now, instead of those grueling 90-mile days, the stages run 64, 56, 60, 59, 59, 52, and 52 miles.”

Those are the first two paragraphs from the preview booklet for this tour. They do a good job of setting the historical context: where we were then and how we got here. This was going to be our marquee attraction for the summer of 2020 but of course had to be cancelled because of COVID. To have tried to stage it in 2021 would have meant making camp reservations as early as Fall of 2020, when we did not yet have a vaccine and life was uncertain. So we put it off until 2022 and finally did it. We had 45 people signed up. Chris Jones and Jim Gloystein were the half-sags and Bob and Becky Stender were our new food wranglers. All did their jobs well.

The preview booklet linked above will give you the full scope of the tour as it was planned. The article at the BikeCal.com site will tell the the full story of the tour as it actually happened. The two are not the same. We had some serious challenges that might have killed the tour off. But we dealt with them and ended up with a successful tour. We had two crashes, which seems about average for a week-long tour with 40-plus riders. One rider continued and finished the tour. The other couldn’t ride but stuck around to help out as a sag driver. In spite of everyone being vaxxed and boosted, we had eight people test positive for COVID but only two during the tour. The rest only tested when they got home. Could’ve been worse! In spite of the difficulties, we pulled it off. We had a great tour.



Stage 1: Silver Falls State Park to Estacada
64 miles, 5100' up, 5900' down

We worked our way through large and small climbs and descents all day as we headed north through the wooded foothills of the Cascades along the eastern flank of the Willamette Valley. Many steep pitches, some over 20%. And it was over 100°! A much harder day than we expected. Overnight on the back lawn of Estacada High School.

Stage 2: Estacada to Troutdale
56 miles, 4850' up, 5250' down

Another day heading north through the rolling, wooded hills east of Portland. Similar to the previous day but not quite as hard, nor as hot. Woods and farm fields. Up and down. Overnight at a Comfort Inn near the town of Troutdale. Dining out on the town. Full breakfast at the motel.

Stage 3: Troutdale to Hood River
60 miles, 4300' up, 3600' down

This was the first of two days riding through the magnificent Columbia River Gorge on the Historic Highway or its adjacent Historic State Trail. Off-the-chart scenery all day. Overnight at the Hood River County Fairgrounds. Light spritzes of rain midday and again at camp but it petered out and never really got us wet. Made us nervous, though.

Stage 4: Hood River to Dufur
59 miles, 4000' up, 3450' down

We started out with lovely miles amidst the apple orchards and prosperous old farm houses in the hills above Hood River. A couple of climbs and descents early and then easy rolling for most of the stage. At about mile 10 we got onto the eastern section of the Historic Highway in the river gorge, every bit as nice as yesterday's section. We rode a nice new bike path along the river near the city of The Dalles, bypassing the busy downtown. On the far side of town, we rode out into the dry, hot landscape of Central Oregon, in this case mostly wheatfields across rolling hills. These last miles were uphill, often easy climbing but sometimes hard work. We spent the night in a city-run park in the tiny town of Dufur. Showers and a big swimming pool.

Stage 5: Dufur to Clackamas Lake
59 miles, 6300' up, 4300' down

Long, gradual climbs and some descending, up and over the shoulder of Mt Hood in the immense national forest. Some of those roads were traffic-free and tranquil but a few miles were on the shoulders of busier highways...it was good to put those miles behind us. We spent the night at a small lake deep in the woods at a primitive USFS camp.

Stage 6: Clackamas Lake to Detroit Lake
52 miles, 3200' up, 4900' down

After all the long climbs yesterday, we were now heading down out of the mountains on remote forest roads. It would have been an almost perfect day except for an obnoxious USFS official who tried to prevent us from using the road we needed to use. (We had no choice. It was the only road available to us in that vast wilderness.) He was being a jerk, not considering our predicament as cyclists at all. After a stand-off in the deep forest, he got in his truck and left. As soon as he was gone, we did the road anyway. It was in fact gated for a brief section. No problem for bikes but our trucks and sag had to make a long detour and the riders were all in camp before they arrived. We stayed in a nice USFS camp on a quiet corner of the big lake.

Stage 7: Detroit Lake to Silver Falls State Park
52 miles, 2600' up, 2800' down

We began with a run west along the shoulder of a main highway. We feared it might be a bit nasty but we were out there early enough in the morning that the traffic hadn't built up yet. It was a breeze for us. No trouble. Off the main highway, we had another long stretch of almost level roads along the bank of the Santiam River. But "level" would not apply to the last third of the stage, up into the foothills approaching the park. This was like Stage 1: many small but often steep climbs and then one last long but more gradual (but hotter) final climb. And, at last, a nice curling descent into the park. Most folks found time and energy in the afternoon to hike to at least a few of the ten waterfalls for which this beautiful park is so famous.



Northern Oregon Tour Redux Dinner Menus and Crews

Food wranglers: Bob & Becky Stender
Portable shower tenders (after Stages 5 & 6):
Michael Barnes, Janice Oakley
Coffee wallahs: Richard Anderson, Jim Gloystein

1. Start of tour, Saturday, August 6 Silver Falls State Park

Seafood Pasta. Fettuccine in a light wine sauce with shrimp, scallops, clams, and fresh herbs. Mixed green salad, garlic bread. Pesto pasta alternative.

- 1, 2. Russ & Sandy Haswell
3. Bill Oetinger
4. Dave Smith
5. Nancy Vallance
6. Guy Neenan

2. End of Stage 1, Sunday, August 7 Estacada High School

Barbecued loin of pork, hot German potato salad, Waldorf salad. Veggie-bacon potato salad alternative.

- 1, 2. John & Suzanne Aranson
3. Brian Purcell
4. Sandy Haswell (night), De Lewis (morning)
5. Robin Rothrock
6. Karen Steele

3. End of Stage 2; Monday, August 8 Comfort Inn, Troutdale

Dining out in town. Breakfast the following morning will be a full service motel breakfast. Ride food off the back of the truck.

4. End of Stage 3; Tuesday, August 9 Hood River County Fairgrounds

Five Cheese Tortelline with chicken/apple sausage and roasted bell peppers. Pan-roasted green beans. Tofu sausage with pesto sauce alternative.

1. Christian Wagner
2. John Russell
- 3, 4. Dave & Irene Batt
5. Peter Verbiscar-Brown
6. Ed Buonacorsi

5. End of Stage 4; Wednesday, August 10 Friends of Dufur Park, Dufur

Grilled chicken in a Thai peanut/coconut sauce. Steamed rice and blanched broccoli and salad. Grilled tofu alternative.

1. Chris Jones
2. Kipp Frey
3. Doug Wagner
4. Bill Conklin
5. Miguel Sanchez
6. Dave Clark

6. End of Stage 5; Thursday, August 11 Clackamas Lake USFS camp

Barbecue night. Grilled chicken and tri-tip. Portobello mushroom veggie alternative. Baked potatoes, salad.

1. Tim Kaczmar
2. Phil Welch
3. Mark Gire
4. Gerry Camarata
5. De Lewis
6. Rick Sawyer

7. End of Stage 6; Friday, August 12 Hoover USFS camp, Detroit Lake

Fiesta Night. Build your own burritos buffet. Fresh fixings and leftovers from barbecue night. Chips, salsa, guacamole, etc.

1. Sarah Schroer
2. Paul McKenzie
3. James McElrory
4. Nathan Moore
5. Scott McEldowney
6. Rowan DeBold

8. End of Stage 7; Saturday, August 13 Silver Falls State Park

Pasta Carbonara. Traditional recipe with eggs and bacon (no-bacon or soy-bacon alternative). Mixed green salad, garlic bread, and grilled veggies.

1. Denise Ellestad
2. Larry Sokolsky
3. Peter Sheridan
4. Jon Hermstad
5. Darrin Jenkins
6. Tony Lee



Stage 1: Mollala River Scenic Corridor



Stage 2: Marmot Road



*Stage 3:
Peter, Janice, Jon, Phil,
John, Tim, Gerry...
taking a break on the
Historic Columbia River Highway*



Stage 4: Historic Columbia River State Trail



Stage 7: Silver Falls State Park



Seven stages • 395-467 miles • 18,000'-23,000'

<https://srcc.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/Tours/2023%20High%20Desert%20Tour/HDT-copy.2023.1.pdf>

The tour started and ended in a pretty state park near the city of Bend. It explored the “High Desert” of Central Oregon. The region offers an attractive mix of landscapes and cycling vistas: rolling farm fields, vast forests of fir and pine; high alpine peaks and meadows; spectacular rock formations that would look right at home in Southern Utah; chunky lava flows evoking the area’s volcanic legacy; meandering lanes and bike trails through several upscale resorts; visits to small towns and some interesting new neighborhoods around Bend’s suburban fringe.

This proved to be a very popular tour, with 49 people signed up (plus two food wranglers). We’re guessing finally being comfortably past any serious COVID concerns led to the robust sign-up. Plus it was an attractive tour! We probably won’t allow such a big group on future tours. The logistics become a little cumbersome.

We enjoyed mostly good luck over the week. The weather was warm and sunny but not brutally hot. There were no crashes. No one was sick. No serious mechanicals on the bikes. A couple of minor problems with one of the trucks but nothing catastrophic. All in all, a pleasant week with nice rides in a fascinating region.

Stage 1: Twisted Sisters

- 51 miles 3100’ up and down (basic route)**
- 59 miles 3600’ up and down (bonus miles #1)**
- 54 miles 3400’ up and down (bonus miles #2)**
- 62 miles 3800’ up and down (bonus miles #1 & 2)**

A remote start-finish in the town of Sisters. First a nearly level loop through the forest, then a meander through the resort of Black Butte Ranch, followed by the long ascent to majestic McKenzie Pass. After that summit run, back down out of the mountains to Sisters.

Stage 2: Tumalo State Park to Newberry Caldera (East Lake)

- 60 miles 4600’ up, 1400’ down**
- 63 miles 5100’ up, 1900’ down**

Into and through the suburban fringe of Bend (attractive, interesting neighborhoods) and then south into the Lava Lands National Monument. Several miles of delightful bike trails through the forest and through the sprawling Sunriver resort complex. South down the valley of the Deschutes River and finally a long climb to the pretty lakes in the Newberry Caldera.

Stage 3: East Lake to Crane Prairie Lake

51 miles 1200' up, 3100' down

59 miles 1400' up, 3300' down

The shortest and easiest day of the tour. Early miles in the high country include vistas over East Lake and Paulina Lake and a visit to impressive Paulina Falls (right). A huge descent back into the valley and many miles of easy cruising through deep fir and pine forest, finishing up at a camp on the shore of a large, handsome mountain lake.



Stage 4: Crane Prairie Lake to Tumalo State Park

58 miles 2900' up, 4200' down

66 miles 3300' up, 4500' down

We spent most of the day on the beautiful Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway, climbing into the mountains past pretty alpine lakes and then dropping out the other side, back down around the fringe of Bend to another night at Tumalo State Park. Back near the city of Bend again, so a night out in restaurants.

Stage 5: Tumalo State Park to Smith Rock State Park

77 miles 2300' up, 2700' down

63 miles 1400' up, 1800' down

Heading east out of Bend across a vast, empty mesa that almost lives up to the “desert” in the tour’s name. The route eventually turns north along the spectacular Crooked River National Scenic Byway (photo previous page). After tacking back west, the stage ends up at Smith Rock State Park (right), an amazing red rock extravaganza.



Stage 6: Gorges Loop

58 miles 2600' up and down

78 miles 4200' up and down

Heading north, at first through an agricultural world: rolling wheat and alfalfa fields, with the snowy peaks of the Cascades on the horizon. Then many miles riding along the rims of the mesas overlooking deep gorges. Lake Simtustus, Lake Billy Chinook (below, left), and the Crooked River Gorge are all memorable panoramas. Return for a second night at Smith Rock State Park, perhaps with time for a hike in this rock-candy wonderland.



Stage 7: Smith Rock State Park to Tumalo State Park

55 miles 2400' up, 2000' down

62 miles 2800' up, 2400' down

A less dramatic but still enjoyable meander looping back to Tumalo State Park. A mix of farm fields, woods, rivers, and rural residential...ranches and country homes and one more golf resort. All quality cycling. A good end to an almost trouble-free tour. Lots of happy participants.

High Desert Tour Dinner Menus and Crews

Food wranglers: Alina Nuebel, Denise VonBargen
Coffee wallahs: Richard Anderson, Jim Gloystein

Start of tour, Saturday, July 8

Tumalo State Park

Seafood Pasta. Fettuccine in a light wine sauce with shrimp, scallops, clams, and fresh herbs. Mixed green salad, garlic bread. Pesto pasta alternative.

1. Doug Wagner
2. Rick Sawyer
3. Bruce Vecchitto
4. Dave Smith
5. Peter Verbiscar-Brown

End of Stage 1, Sunday, July 9

Tumalo State Park

Indian Curry Night. Chicken Curry. Veggie: Chana daal (chickpeas simmered in flavor-rich gravy). Rice, naan, salad, mint-yogurt dip.

1. Mark Seedal
2. Kathy Tappero
3. Karen Steele
4. Bob Stender
5. Nancy Vallance
6. Guy Neenan

End of Stage 2; Monday, July 10

Cinder Hill Campground, Newberry Caldera

Cucina Povera Night. Pasta e Ceci. Chicken-apple (or other) sausage. Veggie sausage alternative. Main dish is Pasta e Ceci (penne in a smooth, aromatic sauce with rosemary, bay, and tomato), with green salad, and seared green beans.

1. Ed Buonacorsi
2. Ben Lev
3. De Lewis
4. Robin Rothrock
5. Drori Gould
6. Eric Scalera

End of Stage 3; Tuesday, July 11

Crane Prairie Lake

Grilled chicken in a Thai peanut/coconut sauce. Steamed rice and blanched broccoli and salad. Grilled tofu alternative.

1. Andrea Wells
2. Matthew Cardle
3. Jim Hudson

4. Mary Davies
5. Christine Sippl
6. Jon Silver
7. Kipp Frey

End of Stage 4; Wednesday, July 12

Tumalo State Park

Dining out in town. Breakfast and ride food still to be prepared the following morning.

1. Bill Conklin
2. Richard Sellman
3. Dave Clark
4. Margie Baer

End of Stage 5; Thursday, July 13

Smith Rock State Park

Barbecue night. Grilled chicken and tri-tip and hot German potato salad. Portobello mushroom veggie alternative. Salad.

1. Tim Kaczmar
2. Phil Welch
3. Marek Mierzwinski
4. Karl Kuhn
5. Mark Mauerhan
6. Philip Dresser

End of Stage 6; Friday, July 14

Smith Rock State Park

Fiesta Night. Build your own burritos buffet. Fresh fixings and leftovers from barbecue night. Veggie: Soyriso or Impossible burger "ground beef." Chips, salsa, guacamole, etc.

1. Sarah Schroer
2. Paul McKenzie
3. Robert Conover
4. Nathan Moore
5. Scott McEldowney
6. Bill Oetinger

End of Stage 7; Saturday, July 15

Tumalo State Park

Pasta Carbonara. Traditional recipe with eggs and bacon (no-bacon or soy-bacon alternative). Mixed green salad, garlic bread, and grilled veggies.

1. Bob Redmond
2. Larry White
3. Peter Sheridan
4. Georg Ockenfuss
5. Darrin Jenkins
6. Tony Lee
7. River Bull

Note: several of these crews were shuffled around as circumstances changed; this roster may not be accurate.

Stage 3: taking a break at Paulina Falls



Stage 4: along the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway



Stage 5: along the Crooked River National Scenic Byway

Stage 2: East Lake



Stage 6: Larry and Ben



Stage 7: an alpaca ranch