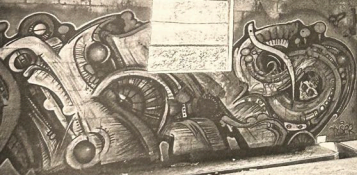


ferry county cycling federation

Barstow Dispatch
Volume 3, Number 3

December 2023



Subscribe to Barstow Dispatch

Subscriptions are cheap! But they must come by snail mail. No email.

New subscribers, send us a one-time payment of a book of stamps or something homemade (some art, a sweet potato pie, whatever) and your mailing address.

Re-up every year or so by sending a postcard or letter (no loot required) to let us know that you're still in.

John @ FCCF
1 Rooster Way
Kettle Falls WA 99141

Contributors:

Writers: Alex Wetmore, Thomas Yeates, Lee Williams, John Speare, Ty Talbot, Scotty Stalp, Scott Gamble, Stine Hansen

Photos: By contributor unless noted.

All visual, layout, and font magic:
Stine Hansen (theaugustinemachine)

Gripes, comments, ideas, submissions, etc.? Bring it!
ferrycountycyclingfederation@gmail.com

On the covers

Front: Glen rolls through the ruins of a former USAF radar site in Colville National Forest. Story on page 3

Inside: Rory charges towards the second of seven summits

Back: Fred

December 2023

Welcome back to black and white. If you were a Dispatch subscriber over a year ago, then you know B/W was the OG format. Color is fun. Color is rad. Color is spendy. We can make a bunch more B/W copies for much cheaper than a handful of color copies. So in the spirit of getting more content out to more eyes, we're going to B/W for a while... though we may splurge on a color cover in the future. Who knows?

This issue was a difficult slog. More than normal. Of course, it's saved by the contributors who threw in. We've got some Ashland riding intel from Scotty. Lee gives us a tiny taste of a huge trail project from Canada into Oregon. Alex introduces us to island hopping and boat camping in Puget Sound. We take a quick detour from Don's musical trailwork with Ty. Scott inadvertently contributed a little ditty. Stine poetry! He's not just visual guy. Thomas comes in with some Antoine Peak intel and a fantastic narrative on following your gut. Of course there's the usual heap of drivel from me (John) to fill some gaps.

It's just starting to snow as I write this. Hopefully we can finally get our act together to come up with some interesting ski content in the next Dispatch. There's all sorts of cool wintering potential in Ferry County.

As usual, if you've got something you want to share, contact us!

Have a good winter!



Tidbits

The Painhouse - Radar Dome Mountain

Back in Dispatch 2.4 we had a little ditty about the Sullivan Lake Ranger District of the Colville National Forest. The upshot was that the previous ranger of that district, Douglas Bladek - who has since moved on to the Olympic district, and who was a bonafide mountain biker - educated us about what made the Sullivan district so great for mountain biking. Two things specifically: the strong moto bike user base that gets the trails open early and maintains them well, and the loopiness of the system, where reasonable road climbs bring you to banger descents.

In one outing at one place, we can verify these statements as true. In mid-August, the FCCF Recon Riders checked out Radar Dome Mountain. We rode up Radar Dome road and came down trail 143.

There are two reasons you should probably organize your life to do this ride at some point. The easy-obvious reason is that it's just a fantastic rough stuff gnarly mountain bike descent from Radar Dome. Trail 143 is one of these moto trails that are clean and well kept. But they're moto for sure. This means that they're scaled slightly larger than a typical mountain bike trail. Drops are more sendy, yet somehow slower, if that makes sense - big chunky loose rocks that can be a challenge on mountain bikes, are likely easily overpowered

with big moto tires. Bermed corners appear to have evolved from moto use: riders accelerating out of turns, so they're narrower than most mountain bike-specific built berms and require a bit more attention to holding. In mid-August the trails are dusty and deep with fine silty dirt. But early spring must be fantastic. That should be the time to go.

The second reason you really need to ride this loop is to visit the Painhouse. As the name of the mountain suggests, the site at the top of the climb was the location of a Radar site. It was built at the height of the Cold War in 1950 and lasted about a decade, fully operational and manned by about 150 military personnel and a handful of civilians. The



killing of which is allowed in most states. Coincidentally, it was the eradication of the wolf – the coyote's most significant predator – that has contributed to coyote population growth in the last century. For the most part healthy livestock is not a target of coyotes, but they are often blamed nonetheless.

Despite the efforts to eradicate coyotes, they have thrived as they are squeezed out of the wilderness where cities devolve into suburbs and then exurbs. Coyotes are resourceful. They are scrappy. They are smart. They are social. As an environmental historian, Flores builds a rich biographical portrait of the coyote that's an engaging and easy read.

Cougars are another traditional foe of rural America, and recently becoming more of an urban boogeyman as well. While cougar attacks on humans are exceptionally rare, they are highly publicized and just downright scary to ponder. For those who wonder about cougar-human interactions, reading wildlife biologist Maurice Hornocker's memoir, *Cougars on the Cliff*, unintentionally provides some assurance that such attacks are anomalies. We'll get to that...

The memoir recounts Hornocker's multiyear study (1964-1973) deep in the Idaho backcountry of what is now the Frank Church River of No Return. The study was unique in its commitment to collecting such a significant swath of longitudinal data. Among other findings, such as an accounting of how cougars rear their young (for about 18 months, teaching them to hunt); how they attack and kill prey (grasp the back of the animal's head in their mouths, and push against the animal's back with their forelegs, thereby quickly separating the head from the spine); the surprising finding of the study was that cougars establish their territory in a behavior called "mutual avoidance." Essentially, they mark their area to communicate the territory and other established cougars avoid the area. In some cases, a transient tom may pass through, but he generally will not attempt to establish an overlapping territory.

There's a bunch to like about this memoir. Firstly, it's just an incredible adventure to ponder. This young biologist, fresh off his PhD coursework proposes a multiyear study to investigate another apex predator that is generally despised and killed indiscriminately by residents and bounty hunters in cougar country. Throughout the study, he continually runs up against roadblocks and resistance from local community members, wildlife agencies,

and other government organizations. He recruits a local mountain man cougar bounty hunter, to help him in his study. The transformation of this hunter from one of cougar-killer to one of cougar admirer and protector is a quiet and satisfying thread that floats under the narrative of the action. The action of the book is in the awesome challenge of tromping through the winters of deep backcountry. The author and his partner take the myriad challenges in stride. The study predates radio collars, so all data is gathered in the winter where tracks can be followed up both sides and through a giant river drainage spanning about 20 miles. There are multiple small cabins, most left from previous hunters or mountain men, that the duo and their dogs inhabit. Supplies are dropped by plane to a main ranch where the duo then packs into the backcountry.

Hornocker's book is written 50 years after the study was done. He relies on notes that he and his partner painstakingly kept each day. As such, we are privy to fondness for the country, the cougars, and his partner in a way that's genuine but not sentimental. There's a lot of mundane detail too about individual cougars, many of which were treed, sedated, measured, and let go multiple times during the decade long study. This can be a bit much, but for wildlife biologists or those who really connect with the perspective of cougars, that detail may be the best part.

But to bring the focus back to where we started here: the one shocking detail that stands out is that there is never an accounting of a cougar attacking either Hornocker or his partner. These are guys who are traveling deep in cougar country in the winter and are often literally eye-to-eye with cougars. The cougars are hungry. The men are generally in waist-deep snow and therefore nearly immobilized as potential prey. Granted there are dogs – but very often, the men are separated from dogs that are far off in the distance chasing and treering other cougars. There are hundreds of opportunities for cougars to take a risk of attacking these guys and yet it never happens. Perhaps it did and Hornocker did not document it for fear of stoking more anti-cougar sentiment? That seems like a reasonable possibility.

Read this book if you want to learn about deep commitment to a project and if you pine for a time when such an adventure could be one's life's work. This study, in this way, would never happen now for lots of reasons.

Seven Summits denied: A ride report mostly in pictures

In late September the Seattle bros came over to Ferry County to ride Seven Summits in Rossland BC. This ride has been on the todo list for years. The weather was sort of trending cold and damp, so we called the bike shop in Rossland the day prior to verify trail conditions. We were told that Seven Summits was all clear.

The pictures tell the story from here. But for context: we started with 5 riders. Two dropped out on the climb into the snow. And the rest bailed down the "Old Glory," a trail "not recommended" by the friendly Canadian sign. We love Canada: they apologetically recommend not taking this route as it is "particularly rough and over-grown in places." As it turns out, the trail was fairly standard condition by lousy Ferry County standards just a few miles south.

We bailed this time, but we'll be back. What sections we did manage to ride were wonderful.



Correction: Taylor Ridge

In the last Dispatch, we incorrectly attributed the naming of Taylor Ridge to Jasper Taylor, who was maybe the first Forest Ranger in the CNF. In fact, a different and older source attributes the naming to his brother, Worth Taylor, who was also a former forest ranger and who was gassed in World War I and died in about 1923. Jasper was not excluded from the name game however. Jasper Mountain, due west of Orient a couple miles, is named for him.

KCT update - Evergreen funding

As we've been reporting over the last few Dispatches, the folks at Evergreen struck some gold from the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) that will provide trail maintenance for Colville National Forest. According to Mic McLane, the Trails Program Manager for EWA at Evergreen, the plan is to put two teams in CNF next spring for at least 3 months. Each team will have a lead plus 2 or 3 crew members. They'll work fulltime clearing and maintaining existing trails in CNF focusing on Kettle Crest and its feeders and the Selkirk. As we detailed in previous Dispatches, this work is maintenance only. The funding does not cover new trail construction. However, the Evergreen crew will be coming in after initial log out by the Forest Service contractor, so the work can be focused on new maintenance projects.

A crew of Evergreen folks came out the first week of October to scout the trails and get a feel for the work that needs to be done. As usual, we pushed for more attention on Taylor Ridge – a hearty brushing, maybe some tread work, and some water work for Upper Taylor. We also encouraged the team to do similar work on the north end of KCT from Ryan Cabin to Boulder.

The team that recon'd the east side of CNF also discovered a trail into Grassy Top that fell off the forest inventory list. Mic was excited to get this trail back open.

Bike Etiquette

by Emily "Dropper" Post

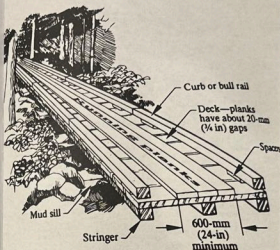
You probably don't need this list, but someone might. Give it to them.

So, if a friend gave you this copy of the FCCF Dispatch, perhaps they gave it to you in hopes that you'd read this list. Pay heed!

- Know thy place. When riding a new-to-you trail or area do not take the lead. On the first ride, follow the host, no matter how old, slow, or decrepit they may be. Sit back, chill, enjoy the ride, and chat pleasantly.
- Don't toss your scraps. Obviously, don't leave air canisters and Gu wrappers behind. But also: don't toss your banana peels, apple cores, and other food stuffs. It's bad form, ciod.
- Read the room. This is deeply rural Ferry County. Leave all butt-hugging, nut-accentuating, lycra race kits at home. When in Rome, respect the Roman way.
- Offend not with thy ignorance. Cyclocross bikes and gravel bikes are different. Verily. Be precise in your usage.
- Offer no unsolicited advice, nor phony encouragement.
- But, be genuinely cheerful as you overtake and are overtaken.
- Yield to other cyclists whose passage is more arduous than your own. Pay heed not to climb vs descent rules, for these are Fredly. Strive rather for the consummate ideal: to forgo yielding and attempt an ad hoc negotiated co-passage with requisite high five.
- Look and act like a human to horses. Most stock in Ferry County are not bike-savvy. When encountering horses, get off your bike, remove your helmet and shades, and move off the trail.
- Clear downfall and other trail debris as you are able.
- Wear not headphones on busy public trails.
- As a cyclist on a trail, you yield to everyone. If other trail users step aside to let you pass, thank them.
- Yell not, "On your left!" as you approach other trail users. Rather, try something like, "Good morning."



Building a puncheon



This illustration of a puncheon is from the USDA's Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook, along with the accompanying description:

Puncheon is a wooden walkway used to cross bogs or deep muskeg, to bridge boulder fields, or to cross small streams. It can be used where uneven terrain or lack of tread material makes turnpike construction impractical. Puncheon is also preferred over turnpikes where firm, mineral soil cannot be easily reached. Puncheon can be supported on muddy surfaces better than a turnpike, which requires effective drainage.

The puncheon described here connects a section of trail on Lower Taylor Ridge that Tom Creek intersects. This photo shows the sills laid out across the muddy edge of the creek crossing. The previous crossing of Tom Creek was destroyed by the Bulldog fire in 2021.



The span of the puncheon is nearly 30 feet. Here, the stringers are laid out over the sills and the approach is built up. The crew scours the area for rocks that will be used to support the fill.



Crew leaders, Forest and Miles lift a stringer in place.



Due to the trail configuration in relation to the creek, the puncheon isn't a straight shot. The "turn" in the puncheon is assembled with notched stringers that are then drilled with a manual auger, and then pinned with galvanized stakes.



The work is hard but satisfying. Lots of manual tools are put to use. Here, crew leaders Hannah and Forest use a block and tackle pulley setup to haul the heavy stringers in place. In a previous trip to the site, fire restrictions were in place, so no chainsaws could be used. Instead, the crew used sawer and felling saws to cut most of the lumber used for the project.

More manual labor. Four-foot logs are split into decking with wedges and mauls. After the rough deck pieces are split, they are "tuned" with a felling ax. Tuning is a process where the high spots are cut down and the edges are more-or-less squared off so the decking sits flush with the stringers.



Miles levels out the stringers in preparation for laying the decking. The puncheon appears over built for mere pedestrian and mountain bike traffic, and it is. But this trail is popular with equestrian users and the puncheon must support horse traffic as well.



John pounds a stake into a deck piece. The decking must be reasonably level as to not trip people. It must also be fairly tight fitting so that horses aren't scared of gaps.



The finished approach. A retaining wall holds a foundation of rock filled with dirt. You can also see the curb or bull rail on the puncheon. This feature is also mainly for the benefit of the horses. Apparently, horses like defined edges and boundaries. Fair. Fair.



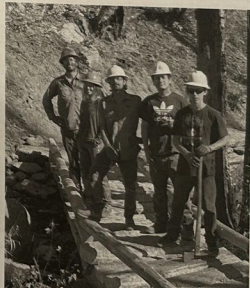
A crib-style wall holds in rock and dirt on the other approach.



This puncheon was built over the course of 4 days in early October. The project was managed by the Pacific Northwest Trail Association (pnta.org). The crew consisted of

three crew leaders, two job corp students, and a volunteer (me - John). I can't recommend volunteering for this org enough. Each of the crew leaders were great workers, communicators, leaders, teachers. The two job corp students were funny, engaging, and hard working. I was really excited to learn how to build this crossing and I wasn't disappointed. The work was insanely hard. I was wrecked every night as I drove home to my comfortable bed while the crew happily camped out in the woods. But the experience was one of the best 4 days of a great summer. And I'm looking forward to using some of the skills (splitting decking! More pulleys) to build some skinny log trails and to improve other sections of trail. I'm hoping to throw in on another project with this organization next summer. You should too!

The crew on the final day. Left to right: Crew leaders Forest, Hannah, and Miles. Curlew Job Corps students: Brayan and Xavier



Fiskars PowerGear Super Pruner/Lopper

I never thought I'd have much to say about loppers, but it's kind of rare to find a perfect tool, which these loppers seem to be.

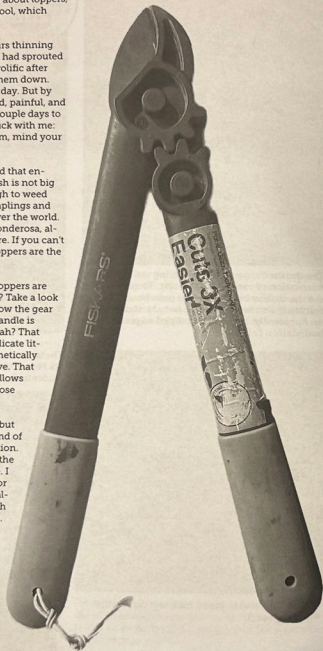
A few years ago, I spent a couple hours thinning hundreds of ponderosa saplings that had sprouted along our road. These saplings are prolific after fires. I used standard loppers to cut them down. My wrists were sore at the end of the day. But by the next day, my wrists were inflamed, painful, and functionally immobile. They took a couple days to get back to normal and the lesson stuck with me: loppers suck and if you must use them, mind your technique and minimize the time.

The fact is, there is brush in this world that encroaches on our trails. Often this brush is not big enough for saws, but not small enough to weed whack. There's a lot of finger-sized saplings and seedlings out there looking to take over the world. As noted, especially after a fire, the ponderosa, alder, and other saplings are everywhere. If you can't dig these out of the trail tread, then loppers are the answer.

Specifically, these unassuming little loppers are the answer. How can these be perfect? Take a look at those gears: that's the magic. See how the gear on blades is big and the gear on the handle is small? Kinda like 53/11 on the bike, yeah? That gear removes all the hard work my delicate little wrists had suffered through so pathetically a couple years ago as I cleared my drive. That gear is no joke. It's not a gimmick. It allows you to have legit cutting force with those comically short handles.

Speaking of short comics, everything but the blades on these loppers is some kind of high-zoot fancy polymer plastic situation. I have beat these to heck and back for the last 2 years and there's no failure there. I drilled holes at the end of the handle for easy strapping and portaging. I generally pack these on my butt bag along with the trusty Silky Big Boy for easy access.

And the final part that makes these so perfect? They weigh less than a pound: 13.7 ounces by my scale. Are you kidding me? These should be an essential tool in your trail kit. MSRP is \$38. A bargain at twice the price!



ASHLAND, WITH MOUNT ASHLAND IN THE BACKGROUND

Mountain Bike Destination: Ashland, Oregon

By Scotty Stalp

If you know Ashland, it is likely because of the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival which runs from May to October every year. You might know Ashland is nestled in the heart of Southern Oregon in the Rogue Valley at the base of 7,500 foot Mt. Ashland. There is an amazing art scene, over 100 restaurants, pubs and Caldera Brewing Company. Ashland is home to Southern Oregon University - a public liberal arts school which brings all the benefits of a "university town." But did you know Ashland is a true mountain biking destination with fantastic trails accessed right out of downtown?

The city of Ashland sits at an elevation of 2,000 ft and has 40-50 miles of varied, purpose-built mountain biking trails tracing the forested flanks of Mt. A to the summit at 7,532 ft. These trails can be accessed from anywhere in town. The most popular climb into the watershed skirts 93-acre Lithia Park adjacent to the OSF theaters in the heart of town. From the main plaza it is 3.5 miles and 1,000 vertical feet on Ashland Loop road (Forest service gravel from the edge of town) to the first descent-only trails, "Alice" and "BTI."

Many of the trails in the system take names from Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland." Continue up Ashland Loop (past the gate - no more cars!) about half a mile to the top of Jabberwocky, the signature trail of the system and the ONE trail not to miss. Two recent first-timers called it "the best mountain bike trail" they have ever ridden. If you would rather continue climbing on the road, the options continue for another 10 miles and 4,000 vertical feet to the lodge at Mt. A Ski Area. There are more technical trails like "Time Warp" and "Marty's" for experts craving gap jumps and steep descents. After a day or two of climbing and descending you may choose to grab a shuttle at Ashland Mountain Adventures, get dropped off at the Mt. A lodge and bomb the entire system descending for nearly an hour on single-track the whole way! The dirt trails are well maintained by the Rogue Valley Mountain Biking Association. Although the crushed granite substrate is a fantastic 12-month surface, regular maintenance is vital as the high usage takes its toll. Even when they are most in need of attention, the trails in the watershed are very weather resistant and rideable.

Take a day to stay on gravel for the entire Ashland Loop road for 20+ miles around the "West Side" and end up back where you started at Lithia Park. The West side has a number of great trails in the cross-country style and also behind forest service gates (motors and e-bikes prohibited). In the paved-trail category is the Bear Creek Greenway that winds 18 miles, traffic-free, from Ashland through the Rogue Valley to Central Point. Opportunities for wildlife viewing (salmon!), parks and towns like Talent with restaurants, bars, and food trucks along the way. All of the trails in this area offer views of the Siskiyou/Cascade Crest as you pedal.

If you are road-tripping from the Ferry County Cycling Federation World Headquarters you might think of a stop in Bend, Oregon. Perhaps you will find a trail there you like? If you have an extra day in the Rogue Valley, take the 30-minute drive up to the Mountain of the Rogue Trail System near the town of Rogue River; a solid and fun low elevation option, especially in "winter". This is a great option when snow (rarely) closes the lowest parts of the Ashland watershed a week or two each winter. The trails at Mountain of the Rogue are well-laid out, machine-built gems on a 1500 foot knob with great views of 9495 ft Mt. McGoughlin from the top. If you want to swing over to the coast, Bandon has a large developing trail system, Whiskey Run, getting great reviews since its inception in the last few years.

Bring your bike to Ashland - discover a true mountain biking destination you didn't know about!



stays:

Ashland Springs
(historic, downtown)

Ashland Springs
(South end retro cool)

Jackson Wellsprings
(camp at historic alkaline hot springs)

restaurants:

Pie and Vine
Greenleaf

Morning Glory
(awesome breakfast!)

bike shops:

Ashland Cycle Sport,

The Handlebar,

Siskiyou Cyclery,

Piccadilly Cycles

Bear Creek Bicycle.

Flywheel Bicycle Solutions (Talent, OR)

watering holes:

Skout (on the promenade next to Lithia Park and Ashland Creek).

Caldera Brewing (at the South end of town boasts a great menu, many local brews and an awesome view from the outdoor seating.)

There is a solid rumor that Sunriver Brewing is opening a satellite in Ashland soon!



MAP OF TAYLOR RIDGE AREA SHOWING VARIOUS HISTORICAL AND PRESENT ROUTES. IGALA GPS, OPENSTREETMAP

Mappery

In the last Dispatch, we wrote about a deprecated trail that we had stumbled upon while clearing brush on Taylor Ridge. Our theory was that the trail was the original termination of the Big Lick trail, a chunk of which still (sort of) exists along St. Peter Creek on the west slope of the Kettle Crest.

Finding that trail sign and the chunk of old trail in the forest behind the sign sparked a slight obsession about the history of the trail. The main question is, why was this trail closed? We couldn't find a Forest Service person who could answer this. We do have one contact who has not returned a call, so there may still be hope.

So as a consolation, we started digging around for old maps. Since this trail was in a national forest since the early 20th century, there's actually a lot of maps of the area that is now the Colville National Forest (CNF).

The earliest national forest topographic map with this area was published in 1915, but there's no known copy of that map available. However, we were able to get scanned copies (1918, 1922, 1928, and 1931) from a nice librarian at Oregon State University. Thanks Kathy! We will be putting these up for download to share soon.

In addition to these scanned maps, we have hard copy maps from 1973, later 1990's, and 2000's. Finally, there exists a historical map layer from 30's-40's on CalTopo. And there are two layers (30's and 60's) available on Gaia GPS.

By pouring over all of these various maps, we can see an area where trails and roads have changed quite a bit over a hundred years. It is a bit surprising that such a remote area would show so much change, but the forest has gone through multiple loggings and before that, was ransacked for minerals. No doubt before that, the forest had some longer established routes from Indigenous travelers. It seems probable that some of the earliest miner, settler, logger routes may have used those Indigenous routes, but of course, we'll never know that for sure.

So what do the maps suggest about that section of Big Lick that was removed? One answer is that the trail went away sometime in the late 80's or early 90's. It would be great to find a map from that era. It appears that the section of Kettle Crest Trail from about Ryan's Cabin to Sentinel Butte was built as an alternative to the Big Lick "summit" trail. The Big Lick summit trail from Ryan's Cabin cut right

up some pretty steep grades, whereas the newer section of KCT is fairly moderate by comparison. The other thing that appears to have happened was that Taylor Ridge was converted from a fire road to a trail in the same era. As was the Indian Creek road approach to Taylor Ridge.

Perhaps the maps tell us more with further study and some creative thinking. It's likely. One other intriguing fact is that there were a couple different trails over the years that led up to the Taylor lookout from the east side. These trails (maybe a road?) followed drainages and might make for a fun exploratory hike in the future. Stay tuned!

Have you heard the good news?

The bike industry is jam-packed full of charlatans that push all sorts of new tech onto unsuspecting cyclists who just want to go faster, be radder, and get fitter. Seems like every year there's some industrial design genius who focuses on a singular problem (dirty chains, bike theft, etc) and designs an otherwise fully compromised bike around solving a singular issue. How many shaft-driven bikes are yet to percolate from this crowd? How many weird suspension solutions? How many ridiculous saddles?

Not all new designs are rubbish. Clearly, innovation is welcome when it solves a hard problem without introducing new ones. Years ago, Sheldon Brown was asked which bike-related components or solutions were the most innovative in his lifetime. His response: LED lights. The point he was actually making and others have made, is that we understand the bike and how it works and at its most fundamental level, it's about as refined as we can make it. Undoubtedly, we can fiddle with different frame materials and there's improvements at the edges that can be made in components, but the basic design of a bike is done.

So innovation happens in these spaces: just about every component is now available in carbon. Electronic shifting is quickly replacing cables as hydro replaces them for braking. Inner tubes mercifully replaced by tubeless technology that finally delivers on all hype. And tires for all purposes: appropriately stiff-casing XC knob-bies that can take hard hits and grab on corners; high-zoot supple tires equally adept at road and gravel riding; and legit spiky-studded tires that hang onto ice, even on rutted trails.

Forks are all over the place: you've got a lefty, you've got elastomers, the road-suspension fork is back, and that weird-o backwards one is stubbornly here to stay. Innovations that died a quiet death (Biopace, Softride stems, Hite Rite posts) have risen from the ashes, though generally, it seems, without recognition of these solutions that preceded them.

The lowly seatpost is easy to forget about, its job seemingly one dimensional: hold up the seat in the right spot. Over the years it got lighter, now made of alloy or carbon. And various lengths of set back, or lack of it, is available. But until the dropper dropped in the general industry a decade or so ago, the seatpost might have been the most uninteresting part of any bike. No more! Dropping the seat for descents is nothing new.

Our buddy Glen at Elephant Bikes, reminded us of Gary Fisher's innovation of putting a quick release on an early mountain bike seatpost. Indeed, Glen continued: until the QR on the post, a common bike accessory of the Marin days were Vise Grip pliers attached to the bike specifically for slamming the saddle before the descent down Mount Tam. And clearly, BMX kids get it: those seats have always been slammed and out of the way for the acrobatic racing and street freestyle-riding for which the bikes are optimized.

In fact, the precursor to the dropper, which is likely mostly unknown to mountain bikers today was the Hite Rite. Thankfully, our buddy Glen still has one and plans to build mountain bike at some point that uses it. See the accompanying picture – but the Hite Rite was super simple and very short – it was a spring where one side connected to the bike's seat tube and the other attached with a collar to the seatpost. It was a fixed length of drop. Set it up with your saddle in climb mode. When the time comes to descend, release your quick release, slam the saddle and close the QR cam. At the bottom of the hill, open the cam, and POP – up goes the saddle.

So with the current generation of droppers, we get way more drop and the up/down actuation is simple and quick. It has taken a few years for these droppers to become reliable.

Anyone riding in the last decade or so as these droppers gained popularity have been on a ride with someone where a dropper has misbehaved, stuck in either the up or the down position. Of course these sorts of failures only confirmed the suspicion of retro-grouches who were slow to adopt yet another moving part on the mountain bike. For god's sake, we have front suspension and even rear suspension to worry about. And another button to make riding even easier!? Thus the smug grouches among us reveled in each instance of dropper failure.

But over time, even the most biased could not ignore the ubiquity of the dropper, nor could we deny the improved bike handling skills of our contemporaries. Seemingly overnight, these peers who deployed droppers were railing and carving at the next level.

Still, one must resist. Because along with this new-found skill is an even more troubling development: a shift in ideology. These same friends are sharing the gospel. And like the worst fundamentalists, they are hardening over time. After their good news is rejected, they begin a pressure campaign, teaming up to intimidate the infidels who cling to their rigid freedly single-purpose seatposts.

Meanwhile, the droppers evolve and mature. The industry has figured out how to make them relatively cheap and as reliable as any other moving part.

No longer satisfied with improving the ride on mountain bikes only, the religious faithful continue their crusade and outfit the dreaded "gravel" bike with droppers. The grouch continues to resist, but it's clearly futile at this point. "You don't know what you're missing!"

Submission is the only option. And if you submit to the dropper, then what's the point of holding any line? The grouch buys a full sus flunk, of which, just one of many sins it proudly flaunts, is the dropper post. And behold, the grouch is saved. Verily.

The grouch watches some YouTube videos about "how to corner." The videos naturally extol the virtues and necessity of the dropper in proper cornering. Push the bike down into the corners, extend the inside arm all the way to tilt the bike dramatically. Hold your chin over the stem. Be aggressive!

And by god it all works. The grouch is suddenly better at cornering. Clearing small drops and hops is so much easier with the saddle out of the way. Shudder! The grouch is faster and worse, the grouch loves it. The improvement is so immediate and complete, the grouch laments for all the wasted years of "riding" a fixed saddle height.

And the grouch now sees the mission with clarity and purpose. While there's not many infidels left, there are some, and they must be corrected. Because they just don't know what they don't know. They will comply. Yea verily.



Ty's lollipop route: A music trail tangent

By Ty Talbot

"There are only two kinds of music: good and bad."
- Duke Ellington

In the previous Dispatch, Dr. Don Goodwin introduced the legendary Miles Davis album, *Kind of Blue* as a path leading towards a few other masterpieces of mid-20th-century American jazz. As Don pointed out in Part I of this series, jazz is a challenging art form. At its core, however, it is simply another form of pop music, intended both as entertainment and as a means of pushing pop music and pop standards into new directions. The medium can be appreciated through seemingly random paths which, over time, yield interconnections and inspirations for deeper listening. Consider this article a tangent into related ideas.

The path to and around *Kind of Blue* and the other previously mentioned albums can easily be seen as non-linear, non-chronological and even nonsensical. Let us circumambulate...

An easy entry point for many listeners, particularly those who grew up in the 1980s is the British New Wave band, the Police. The Police was the outgrowth of two jazz-influenced bands: drummer Stewart Copeland's prog-rock outfit, Curved Air, and vocalist/bassist Sting's jazz-rock fusion band, Last Exit. Jazz always lurked under the surface of the Police's music, reaching fuller fruition once Sting left the band. In the mid-1980s, he employed a full jazz ensemble for his first two solo albums. If you listen closely to his "Moon Over Bourbon Street" from 1985's *Dream of the Blue Turtles*, it is clear that he borrowed heavily from the 1945 standard, "Autumn Leaves," written by the French-Hungarian composer Joseph Kosma.

From "Autumn Leaves," follow the breadcrumbs virtually anywhere - to albums Don mentioned last time: Cannonball Adderly's *Somethin' Else* (1958) and Bill Evans Trio's *Portrait in Jazz* (1960) all the way to versions by Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, and even Eric Clapton. The song has been recorded nearly as many times as the Beatles' "Yesterday," so it's the perfect gateway into nearly any jazz artist.

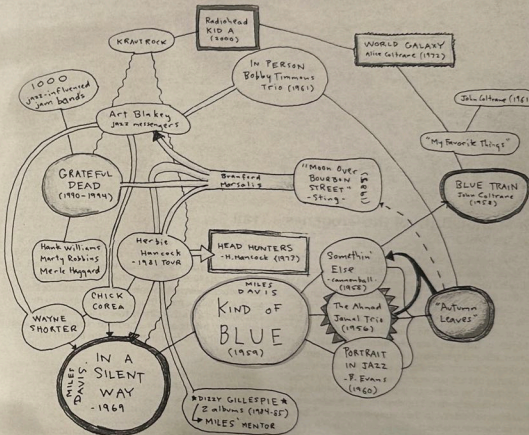
For example, a version of "Autumn Leaves" truly worth listening to can be found on The Ahmad Jamal Trio (1955). Indeed, strong echoes of this surprisingly funky version (despite having no drummer in the trio at the time) can be heard on

the Cannonball/Miles version from *Somethin' Else*. Miles was never shy about his admiration for the lesser-known Jamal. "All my inspiration comes from Ahmad Jamal," he said to the surprise of many. In his autobiography, Davis wrote that Jamal "knocked me out with his concept of space, his lightness of touch, his understatement, and the way he phrased notes and chords and passages."

Going back to Sting: one of his secret weapons in the mid-80s was the saxophonist Branford Marsalis, the eldest brother of the famed Marsalis family and the one who embraced a far wider span of music than his purist brother, Wynton. Through Branford, follow the winding paths to musicians with whom he collaborated. Those paths lead to Art Blakey (whose *Jazz Messengers* employed literally dozens of the greatest musicians of the 20th Century at one point or another), Herbie Hancock, and even Miles Davis' first mentor, bebop king Dizzy Gillespie. Branford even played off and on in the early 1990s with the Grateful Dead, who repeatedly asked him to join them onstage.

The Dead, who Miles Davis opened for at the Fillmore West in 1972 (Davis said: "[T]he place was packed with these real spacy, high white people. . . I think we all learned something. Jerry Garcia loved jazz, and I found out that he loved my music and had been listening to it for a long time."), are uniquely situated to bridge the genres of not just rock and jazz, but also to the great mid-century artists of country music that the Dead frequently covered: Hank Williams, Merle Haggard, Marty Robbins.

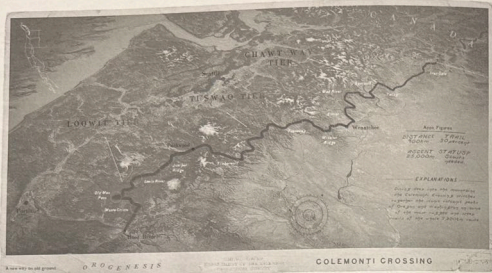
Kind of Blue further offers an opportunity to meander off with tenor/soprano saxophonist John Coltrane, obviously a heavy influence on Branford. Coltrane, according to Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh, was also the original model for the Dead's improvising - a few chords and a ton of intensity. That said, Coltrane is a more challenging listening experience than Cannonball Adderly, the other saxophonist on *KoB*. *Kind of Blue* is a great springboard for approaching Coltrane's mighty (yet highly accessible) *Blue Train* (1958) and then to *My Favorite Things* (1961), his first on soprano sax. These records lead to a whole other universe, from his spiritual journey on *A Love Supreme* (1964) to the deeply challenging *Om* (recorded 1965, posthumously released 1968).



Coltrane's recording of "My Favorite Things," though, is a terrific opportunity to connect with his second wife, Alice, who recorded a version of the song on her 1972 album *World Galaxy*. Alice takes the song, breaks it into a billion tiny pieces and reassembles them into something her own. The song is new again, but she meditates on the fractures like a shattered Kintsugi bowl, with the edges repaired with lacquer and gold, leaving a gold seam where the cracks once were.

Through Alice Coltrane, the brilliant fusion pastiche of Miles' *In a Silent Way* (1969), and the Miles/Dead-inspired *Krautrock* of CAN, and blueprint for albums like Radiohead's 2000 masterpiece *KID A* can also be glimpsed. As Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood said of Miles: "We've taken and stolen from him shamelessly, not just musically, but in terms of his attitude of moving things forward."

And on and on. All these things connect, meander around each other, leaving the listener to determine what is "good" or "bad."



Snapshot: Birth of the Orogenesis Trail

By Lee Williams

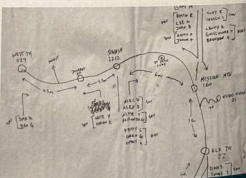
Nestled between Pahto (Mt Adams) and Loowit (Mt St Helens), the Klickitat Trail #7 (also known as the Klickitat Sisters Trail to disambiguate it from the rail trail to the east) has for thousands of years connected villages of the Yakima Valley on the east side of the Cascade Range to those in the Cowlitz Valley on the west. Its seventeen miles stays high along the ridgelines from Elk Pass west through to Kilborn Creek, affording breathtaking views of the nearby peaks as the occasionally tops out above the trees. Evidence of bark peeling shows that this route was not only about connecting dry- and wet-side trade, but also the abundant huckleberry and mushroom foraging to be done in the loamy volcanic soil between the mountains.

Now the trail is forming a new connection as part of the Orogenesis Trail, an over five-thousand mile long mountain biking trail from the tip of Baja California into British Columbia. The Washington portion of the trail is the Colemonti Crossing - from the Chinook Jargon for "Cold Mountain". Within that, the southernmost tier from White Salmon up through the Gifford Pinchot forest is the Loowit Tier - piecing together "a new way on old ground" by connecting these historic trails that still survive above the logging roads.

Over the past two years, Orogenesis has hosted major work parties to pack chainsaws, McLeods, loppers, and power brushers up onto the Klickitat Trail and clear scores of blowdowns and a wide swath of overgrowth along the trail to make the go-

ing - well, not exactly easy, but at least possible. Like many of the historic ridgeline trails in the Gifford Pinchot, the Klickitat Trail is full of punchy climbs and switchbacks, off-camber descents and rocky sections. Unlike most though, it's not open to motorcycles - so it's mercifully free of the sandy ruts, loose baby heads, and washed-out corners that make the difficulty bar for other mountain biking trails in the region.

This summer's stewardship event was made challenging by strict Industrial Fire Protection Level (IFPL) restrictions that required saws to be turned off by 1pm. Combined with steep hikes into the trail from various access points, it's impressive that the crew was able to clear as much as they did - all but a central two miles near St. John Lake and a few easily-accessed miles near the Elk Pass trailhead. Reconnecting this trail into a permanent network is going to be a long-term project which will involve re-opening the long-forgotten Lone Tree and South Point trails at either end.



My favorite state parks

By Alex Wetmore

My favorite Washington State Parks aren't accessible by bicycle, but are still fun to get to under human power. Washington has dozens of island state parks that are only accessible by water.

I first started to explore these parks by sea kayak about 15 years ago. In that time I've explored many of the islands both by kayak and sailboat. More recently I've really enjoyed these trips with my children and using it to introduce them to exploring remote and more isolated outdoor spaces.

Hope Island near Shelton was the island that really got me hooked. A quick (under an hour) paddle got me onto an island with just a few visitors per day, beautiful camping, and seemingly unlimited huckleberries. On the paddle over I saw bald eagles, harbor seals, and river otters. The island had a nice perimeter trail to explore and a mix of rocky beaches and high bluffs. There were a lot of other nearby islands to poke around as well.



A 6 YEAR OLD PARKER ON SKULL ISLAND WITH A SEAL SKELETON



Blake Island is really accessible and close to Seattle. It is also unusual because there is a privately run ferry that can take you there. Blake Island provides instant relief from city life with just an hour long paddle or a quick sail, while still providing nice Seattle skyline views. It's a really fun trip to do with friends and the human powered sites (not available to power or sailboats) on the NW corner of the island get the best beach and views.

My favorite islands to visit are in the San Juan Islands, just north of Puget Sound. There are so many state park islands that I can't name them all. They vary from the tiny Skull Island (a large rock with some trees, you can scramble from one end to the other in a couple of minutes) to the huge Sucia (which has 15 miles or more of hiking trails). Some of my fondest memories were taking my now 6 year old daughter to Skull Island when she was only 3 and letting her explore the rocks and forest herself. She insisted that we return when we were sailing near it this summer. I find it easy to spend 3 or 4 days at Sucia Island without getting bored. The views are incredible, there



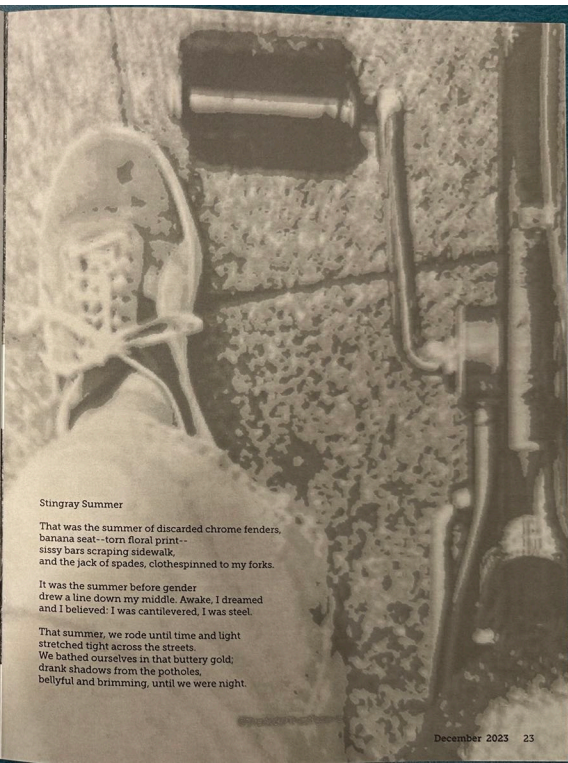
SKAGIT ISLAND SUNRISE

is great wildlife (I've seen larger groups of river otters than anywhere else in WA), and the trails are fun too.

As I mentioned I got into visiting the marine state parks through kayaking. Kayaks are an approachable and great way to get on the water. The more protected islands like Hope (there are two Hope Island State Parks in different counties, both are great but different) are great for early trips where you are figuring out the basics. They can make great \$240s (sub-24h-overnighter). Kayak camping is a lot like bike camping, but even easier because you can carry more and don't need to worry so much about weight because there aren't any hills. As you get comfortable with kayaking (and learn the critical safety skills that go along with open water paddling) you can expand into the San Juan Islands and take bigger trips to Sucia or Patos.



CAMPING ON ICE ISLAND NEAR CIRCAL
A COUPLE OF FRIENDS AND I HAD THE WHOLE ISLAND TO OURSELVES



Stingray Summer

That was the summer of discarded chrome fenders,
banana seat--torn floral print--
sissy bars scraping sideways,
and the jack of spades, clothespinned to my forks.

It was the summer before gender
drew a line down my middle. Awake, I dreamed
and I believed: I was cantilevered, I was steel.

That summer, we rode until time and light
stretched tight across the streets.
We bathed ourselves in that buttery gold;
drank shadows from the potholes,
bellyful and brimming, until we were night.

It's kinda about the bike

In the spring of this year, I finally bought a full suspension mountain bike. I've always sort of been an aspiring retrogrouch and as such, a typically smug proponent of underbiking. I love mountain biking more than anything, so it's really silly to have waited this long to give a full sus a fair shake. I had resisted full suspension (and the requisite dropper) long enough to become that irritating guy who doesn't know what he doesn't know but damn well stands by his ignorance.

So when a buddy offered to sell me his basically new Ibis Mojo 3 for his pro-deal cost, I ran it by my trusted bikey consultants for approval. They agreed that this was a good bike for me, in that it was not super travel downhill or even enduro focused, but rather a lively XC 27.5-shod carbon wunderbike with 140/130 travel. All agreed that this would be a good transition from my still stubbornly NORBA-esque hardtail upbringing.

As it turns out, the bike has been a great agent of change for me and my riding. If you're tired of this already – here's the punchline: I still prefer my hardtail for almost all the riding I do, but I'm loving all mountain biking way more thanks to my time on the Mojo. Ultimately, the full sus bike allowed me to open up and enjoy descents in a magical way that I'd never managed to pull off on the hardtail.

The rest of this column goes into my opinions and reflections about the process of how I think the full suspension bike made my riding more fun. The experience is 100% my own and ought not have any bearing on your experience, nor should my thoughts here imply anything about how you enjoy your bike and riding.

Firstly, the dropper post is a game changer. Perhaps it's the most important part of my full sus experience. This fact is probably obvious to just about 100% of the people reading this. But it rocked my world. Still does. So much so, that there's a whole other column in this dispatch about the gospel of the dropper.

Rear suspension may be a placebo. It's not in all ways, but for me I think just the existence of rear suspension made it ok to try bigger drops, jumps, dives. There is zero doubt in my mind

that rear suspension totally paves out brake bumps and baby heads in a way that just makes riding chunky stuff easier, and faster. My back and shoulders totally appreciate the cush of full suspension as well. But the placebo part is what I totally appreciate about my experience on this bike. Allow me to explain...

In mid-summer, I committed to riding the full sus on early morning rides at Beacon. Beacon is a Spokane mountain bike park. Lots of trail types on the menu. I focused on a route that included two standard blue descents (Stalingrab and Master Blaster). These are well-built bumpy, non-technical descents with some fun hops. By running Strava, I could compare my time on these segments, which I'd barely ridden on my hardtail – mainly because I was scared off by some of the jumps and a couple drops through some rocky areas.



Riding the full sus down these trails the first time, I transferred my inhibitions about the jumps and drops to the bike, reasoning that this is the point of a full sus bike. Off to the races – super fun. Faster times. Actually – really fun. Exhilaratingly fun. I spent the next month getting to Beacon as often as I could to ride the same loop. Each time having more fun than the last on the descents and generally PR'ing a couple sections on each ride.

Two things happened that made me realize that full sus may be a placebo in this context:

Firstly, a couple weeks into my Beacon sessions I loaned the bike to a friend for a weekend. He noticed that the rear suspension was locked out. Since I never paid attention to this, I have to assume it was locked out for most or all of those early sessions.

Which let to the second thing: I decided to bring my hardtail up to Beacon the next morning and do the same loop. Alas: I was just as fast and actually PR'd Stalingrab. I'll be damned.

I don't love the full sus for climbing. I totally prefer climbing on my hardtail. This is mostly a me-problem: I'm a grinder, not a spinner. I love standing on climbs. I love the physical maneuvering and man-handling involved with little technical hops and sharp switchbacks of climbing. Everyone knows


that these are not how to ride a full sus bike up hills. I've tried the right way: staying seated while spin spin spinning away. Let the bike do the technical work of getting up the steps and hard bits. The full sus does its job. Maybe I need to try more or harder, but I don't prefer it.

The full sus bike is fantastic for mountain bike parks. But for epic XC days: not so much. Well-built mountain bike parks have nice flowy climbs and well-designed airy, bumpy descents that make a full sus bike like the Mojo an absolute dream to ride. Specifically I'm thinking about blue trails at Galbraith and Beacon.

As for long days at Kettle Crest or in Roslyn or Rossland, I want the hardtail. I want the climby goodness of the hardtail. I want the ability to put 3 water bottles on my bike and only travel with a small bum bag.

In the end: I feel like the Mojo teased out the little BMX bro that atrophied when I transitioned to my first ten speed as a teenager. And it's awesome. I still visit Beacon once or twice a week, but I do so on my hardtail now. I love mountain bikes as much or more than ever. I have the Mojo to thank for that. But I think our journey together is over. If you're in the market for a fancy full sus with low miles and mojo to spare, let me know.





The Prison Break

By Thomas Yeates

"I was surrounded by chaos. Not just my surroundings, but my thoughts too. Something has been stirring for years and it's finally coming to a boil. I don't belong here. What the fuck am I doing with my life?"

Everyone of us has that one thing that we love doing more than anything else. It makes us feel alive and the hours fly by like seconds. Painting, skateboarding, yoga, making delicious apple fritters, it doesn't matter. Everyone has their passion.

Mine is riding bicycles.

Bicycles have captivated my mind since before I can remember. From a little plastic 3 wheeler barrel-rolling around the driveway to riding mountain bikes today, my feet on the pedals and the sound of a hub clicking has always made me smile. I ride by myself, I ride with friends, I ride with complete strangers. A very large majority of the people I know, I have met through bicycles. Riding has given me more confidence, good health, excitement and personal growth than anything else I've tried and has become the foundation for my entire life.

I started working when I was 15. As I grew older, one job led to another, which led to another, each an increase in pay. Quality often comes at a price and as my riding skills grew, the bikes became more expensive. I began to pursue higher paying jobs to pay for them. All the while, I wondered why I don't just work at a bike shop. I like working on my own bikes, I like fixing other people's bikes, I like riding bikes and the employee discount would make the bikes I want more affordable. If I kept my lifestyle simple and focused on putting bikes as a priority, I could make a living from what I love to do. This concept would stick with me for decades as the expectations of society lured me back into monotony and conformity.

Years later, here I am. 33 years old and sitting in a small room with 4 other people, surrounded by drugs and it's chaotic. It's chaotic in the room and it's chaotic in my mind because I know I am doing something I shouldn't be. I never thought working in a pharmacy would be like this. It wasn't so much the people I worked with or the company's corporate bullshit. It was that this job, just like every job before it, had been slowly whittled away to just a paycheck. Trading my valuable time for money to buy things I didn't need to impress people I didn't like.

I could go on for hours about my grievances with the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare in general. Parts of that job made me feel like an accomplice to murder. This is not the venue, so I will let you do your own research if that interests you. As I watched my work hours go up and my riding hours go down, an often recurring question popped back into my head.

"What the fuck am I doing with my life?"

I stumbled to my truck for my lunch break, trying to clear the chaos from my mind. I had been in this same exact situation many times before. Sitting in my truck, struggling to find something other than a paycheck that would motivate me to go back inside. This time, I wouldn't suppress it. I couldn't. I was not willing to just let it go, appease society's bullshit expectations of me and walk back inside with my tail between my legs. I had reached my tipping point.

In frustrated desperation, I sent a text message that I had been wanting send for years.

"I need a career change. Do you need any help at the bike shop?"

A couple days and conversations later, I was offered a spot and my dream from almost 2 decades ago became a reality. No longer would I spend 40+ hours

a week doing something I have no interest in, purely for money. In fact, this is my first job where money wasn't the primary focus. While I am indeed paid for my time, being surrounded by likeminded individuals, learning everything I have always wanted to know about bicycles and the satisfaction of making an honest living from something I love to do is the real paycheck. It may be a pay cut on paper but it's a very significant life raise in my eyes.

My definition of success has always been "making a living doing something you would do for free because you enjoy it." By this definition, this is the first time in my life that I can consider myself successful. I've been a lifeguard, a gas station attendant, a grocery worker, an auditor at several hotels, a billing analyst, an account manager, a landscaper, a pharmacy technician, each eventually being reduced to just another paycheck. Eighteen years of trying on new shoes when I knew deep down the grubby pair of FiveTens were the only ones that fit.

While I find myself wishing that I had just listened to my gut from the beginning, I do believe if I had started earlier in my life, I wouldn't be able to appreciate the rewards as much as I do now. I needed to get caught in the corporate machine, sacrificing riding time and dreams for money and job titles. I needed to know how unfulfilling and empty it can be in order to fully appreciate working at the shop. Money being the root of all evil, it should never be the solitary factor when selecting a career. Do what you love to do, be honest (to others and yourself) and take steps to make it happen.

When a person is doing what they love to do, it affects their entire life. They are happy, motivated and willing to apply themselves fully instead of just doing the minimum required to get paid. If you hate your job, you may be holding a spot that's someone else's dream. Going towards yours may help someone else get theirs. Someone stoked on what they do will subconsciously pass that stoke to every person they encounter, which in turn gets passed on to the next. In essence, the world needs you to pursue your passions, whatever they may be.

The best lesson riding bikes has taught me is that the only real limitations in life are the ones you put on yourself. If you believe you can do something, you can. The opposite is also true. You were not put here to just pay bills and die. My advice is to find what your passions are and pursue them at all cost. Fuckin' go for it. Life is too short to spend it doing things you don't want to be doing. Everyone of us can achieve our dreams in life, it's simply a matter of convincing yourself you can and finding the courage to make it happen.

If you've found it, I salute you. If you haven't yet, go find it.

Today.

Now.



Chilito (for your burrito)

- 7 ariel chiles de Arbol
- 3 Guajillo pepper - dried, hatch
- pinch of dried oregano
- 3 ripe tomatoes (peeled, seeded, chopped - remove juice)
- salt - pinch!

Toast peppers in hot pan - draft heat, set & drain. Put it all in a blender. Malt it.

\$0.60 low carb
Almond cookies that
RULE

2.5 c Almond flour 20
\$4.16

1/4t babe salt

1/4t salt

3/4t ~~oil~~ ~~oil~~ Sugar 9.53

1/2c ~~oil~~ ~~oil~~ 1.81

1/4c butter

1 TB lemon zest

1 TB lemon

1.25 egg Almond

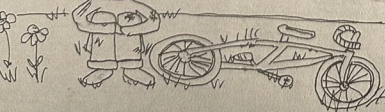
2 egg yolk 1.5

2 TB almond

350 F 11 min

20 per cookie

BIKING IS
HARD.



Training Grounds: Antoine Peak Conservation Area

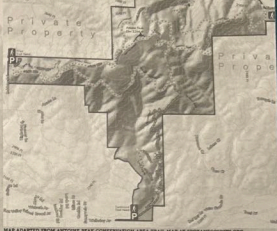
By Thomas Yeates

No matter where you live, there is always that local spot that gets more of your ride time than anywhere else due to proximity to your home base. You learn every nook and cranny, finding all the hidden gems only to keep finding more. For me, that spot is Antoine Peak Conservation Area.

Antoine Peak was named after Antoine Plante, the first citizen of the Spokane Valley who ran a ferry across the river a couple miles downstream in the 1850's. The conservation area consists of 1296 acres of mountainous terrain on the northern edge of Spokane Valley that was acquired between 2007 and 2019 mostly through Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office grants. There are 3 trailheads, Canfield Gulch on the East, Antoine West on the west and Trentwood on the South side. The Trentwood trailhead was finished most recently in 2021 and conveniently allows me to ride straight from my doorstep.

Regardless of which trailhead you choose to stage from, you're going to be climbing to reach the 3373 summit. From Trentwood, once you've crossed the gravel path across the field, you have two options. To the right, Arrow Leaf is entirely singletrack and after a punchy start the trail meanders through the forest at a comfortable grade eventually tying in with Emerald Necklace. If you want a more mellow warm up for the legs, an option is to take a left and go up the road which will bring you along a creek gully to an old homestead with a line of large oak trees. Here you can connect with the aptly named Turkey Trot, the newest section of singletrack that also climbs up to Emerald Necklace where you will most likely encounter the local flock of turkeys that inhabit this area of the hill. Lost Apple will transport you from the homestead across to Arrow Leaf for a hybrid option. Going up Arrow Leaf and down Turkey Trot or visa versa is a fun little snapper with great views, ample climbing and fun descents.

Once you have connected with Emerald Necklace which is a doubletrack road that circumnavigates the top of the mountain, you can connect to either of the other two trailheads. Riding counter clockwise, your first major intersection will present Antoine Summit trail and Canfield Gulch trail for your consideration. After briefly following another doubletrack, Canfield Gulch will take a right onto singletrack and trend downhill until the trailhead at the bottom. This section is one of my favorites, starting with a high speed descent into a dense forest trail with great fall colors, good views, flowing



MAP ADAPTED FROM ANTOINE PEAK CONSERVATION AREA TRAIL MAP AT SPOKANE COUNTY, ID.

tURNS and just enough low stress obstacles to keep things interesting. Fantastic.

Once reaching the trailhead, continuing on the Canfield Gulch doubletrack will bring you to Leland Pond. Some of you may be wondering the same thing I do when I learn of a new body of water: Are there fish? I have read that there's catfish and heard rumors of bass but have not verified this due to questionable legality. Not encouraging anyone to poach, just pointing out that it's there.

Another option I have recently discovered is a trail apparently called Middle Road that takes off to the left from Canfield Gulch a ways before the pond. It's not on Trailforks and it's not signed but is very well established and consists of a pretty, undulating singletrack traverse through the woods with a couple small creek crossings to eventually tie back in with Canfield Gulch above the pond. Highly recommended.

Continuing the climb on Canfield Gulch there is a small stream in the trees on the right that is great for dunking your cap and bandana in during the hotter months. The trail will eventually put you back at the Emerald Necklace intersection. I typically hang a right here and continue on to the north side of Emerald Necklace. Views of Mt. Spokane, Rathdrum Mountain and the surrounding area are abundant while you noodle along on the doubletrack through dank sections of forest that MUST contain morels in the spring but I haven't been able to track any down. Lots of Thimbleberry bushes provide trailside snacking during certain parts of the year.

Once reaching the west side of the mountain, Emerald Necklace will run into the gravel service road for the towers at the top. At this point you can continue downhill to the west where there is

Spice Rub for Chicken

7/19/95

Rub keeps for up to 6 weeks if tightly covered

- Makes 1 1/4 cups
- 3 tablespoons ground cardamom
 - 3 tablespoons ground ginger
 - 2 tablespoons ground turmeric
 - 2 tablespoons ground coriander
 - 2 tablespoons ground cumin
 - 2 tablespoons ground coriander
 - 1 tablespoon ground allspice
 - 3 tablespoons ground black pepper
 - 2 tablespoons cayenne pepper
 - 1 teaspoon ground cloves
 - 3 tablespoons fenugreek, ground (optional)

Mix all ingredients in small bowl

another great section of buff singletrack on the exposed hillside with more great valley views leading down to the West trailhead. There is also a short but fun unmarked section of singletrack that takes off to the left when you hit the gravel service road if you know where to look. From the bottom, you can then climb back up the access road to Emerald Necklace and continue east towards the Trentwood trailhead.

From Emerald Necklace, that same gravel service road can also take you to the summit where the views are great in all directions and a terrific singletrack descent awaits on the other side. The Antoine Summit trail heads east from the summit and works great up or down but I must say I prefer this section as a descent. Good ol' forested rip-pin' with great flow and a couple spots with good visibility to let off the brakes and let the bike run a bit. Beware of the sharp and off camber right hand switchback a little ways off the top. I've yet to clean this corner without putting a foot down. You'll hoot and holler your way back to the Emerald Necklace intersection. From there, continue west on Emerald Necklace to descend either Turkey Trot or Arrow Leaf back down to the Trentwood trailhead for debriefing and cocktails.

There are many ways to configure the trails at Antoine and it's possible to work out a 20 mile 3000' adventure. Nothing I have found is overly technical and I find it's best enjoyed on a hardtail or gravel bike. If you want it to be more technical, just go faster. I have encountered many different species of birds, moose, whitetail deer, squirrels and coyotes. Cougars have sporadically been spotted but I



haven't personally had the pleasure. Antoine seems to fly under the radar a bit and I never seem to find it crowded even on weekends. Keep in mind that these are multi-use trails so please be courteous to other trail users on foot or on horseback.

RECOMMENDED LOOP

Wanna get in on the TL:DR loop? Check out Thomas' Antoine Greatest Hits route on Ride with GPS.

14 miles. 2300'
ridewithgps.com/routes/44934698



Idaho Man

By Scott Gamble

I don't recall if I relayed this anecdote but in Idaho I had maybe the most truck - or maybe the most Idaho - thing ever happen to me. I'm in Arco. Moira and team are out bikepacking. It's dusk, I'm at a bodega getting fuel and snacks. This fella pulls up beside me and leans out and motions for me to roll my window down.

"Goddamn that's a good lookin' truck, you drink?" He says it all in one long sentence, one arm on the steering wheel, big smile on his face.

"Not anymore, I'm a bad drunk," I reply.

"Oh I am too," his smile gets a little bigger somehow. "I've never seen a Ranger ripped up proper but this is all dialed in where you going?" Again he says it all in one sentence.

"Blakey Trail down to Kings Bowl," I reply.

He does a short whistle. "Tonight? You know it just rained right? Gets real boggy out there you be careful so you like this Ranger hunh?"

"Yeah, pretty good truck, little bit smaller than a full size, a bit better in the trails"

He perks up "Oh yeah? How wide is she?"

I give him a confused look, hold my hands out "How wide?"

He laughs looks at my hands says to himself "how wide" then waves and says "have a guddun!" as his passenger returns with a case of beer from the bodega and they pull off into the dark.

Idaho, man.



