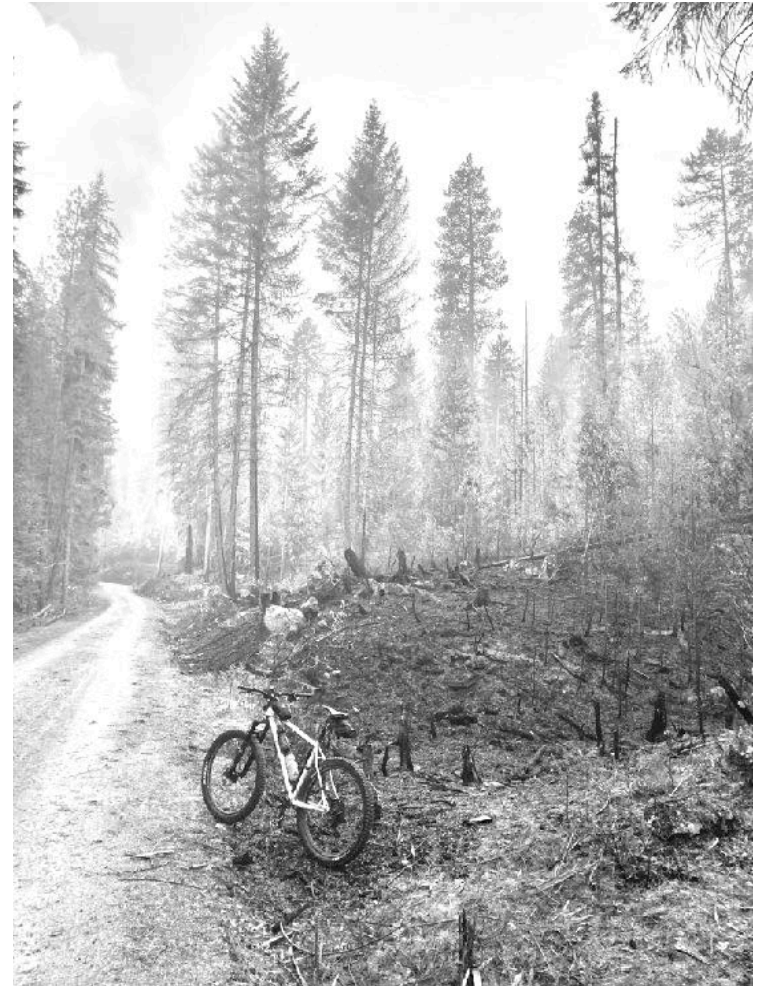


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FERRY CYCLING COUNTY FEDERATION

Barstow Dispatch #5

October 2021



South Boulder Creek Road, Oct 2021. The eastern edge of the Bulldog Fire reached all the way to South Boulder Creek road and engulfed about 4 miles of Lower Taylor Ridge Trail.

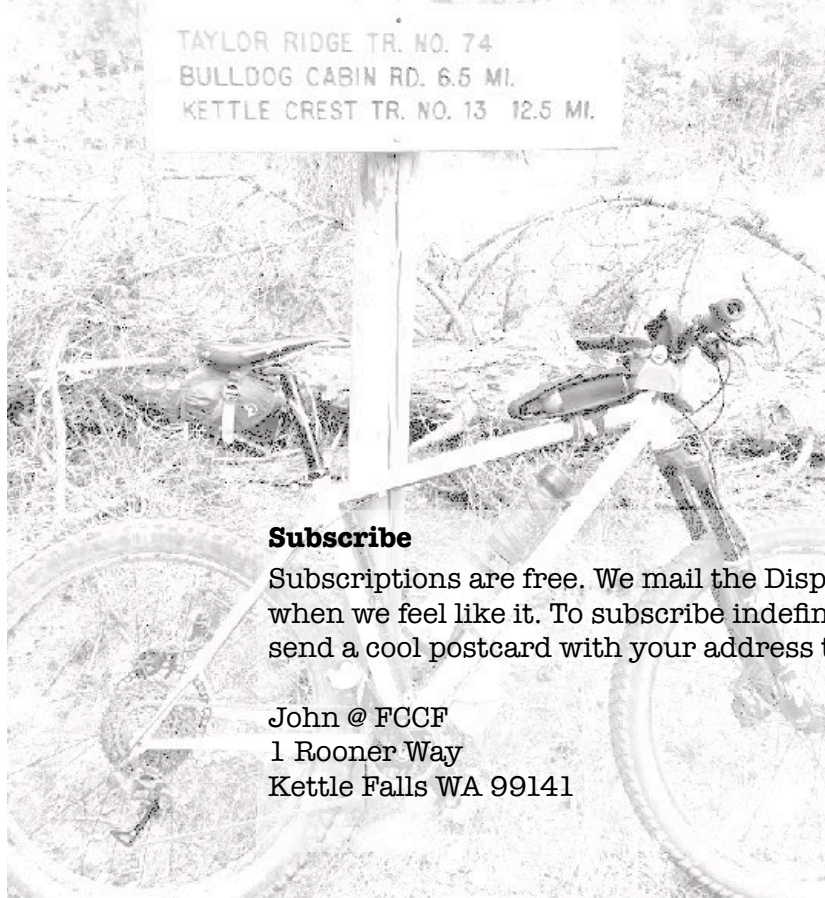
First things first!

Long-time subscribers may have noticed a slight downgrade with this Dispatch.

The upshot is that we lost our sweetheart insider color print deal. Paying real cost for color Dispatch is way too much to consider... especially since it's the same schlocky writing. Instead of shipping a grayscale version of the old format we decided to revamp the lot. We brought in expensive consultants and this is the result: Derivative rubbish!

The booklet format is one we've wanted to do forever but couldn't figure out the printing magic to make it happen. Turns out it's a well-known thing to those who do a lot of printing: Flip on Short End!

So this is where we're at... until we try the next thing.



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Alex Wetmore's "Travel Gifford" strikes a pose. Destination: Jumbo Mountain in Colville NF. Oct 2021

On riding national forest roads...

Our country may be screwed up in a lot of ways—but dammit we've got a shit ton of national forests and those forests have a lot of roads. And they're fun to ride.

The best NF rides have ridiculously steep sections, tons of climbing, payoff descents, rutted washed-out roads, views for miles, minimal human interaction.

While you can ride a CX bike or a mountain bike for this type of riding, my favorite is the NFE-style bike. This is basically a traditional rando bike + fat tires. The design is optimized to handle well with a front load above the wheel. That's a key feature.

The bike in the picture is a near-perfect specimen of a NFE. The frame is made with light, standard diameter steel tubing. Gearing is simple: a true-compact double (46/30) which makes for big enough + bail out for steep stuff. Shod with 26" fat slicks (Rat Trap Pass), this sucker is cushy on rough stuff and fast on pavement. Alex built this bike a decade ago, and it's a joy to ride.



Surly Pants



Swrve Camp Trousers

Pants for riding around

First off, there's nothing wrong at all with tooling around in whatever trouser, jean, pants you've showed up in. Let's just get that outta the way for the punk rockers.

The pants I'm on about here are fancy pants. The Surly Pants come in at \$95 and the Swrve come in at \$125. Why the hey should you spend that kind of money on pants for riding around in? You probably shouldn't. But I do. Because I like that both of these pants fit thunder thighs with room to spare. They're both gusseted at the crotch to keep the seams from crushing and squirming and chafing down there. And then, when you've ridden around comfortably, you can be in the world and look normal without peacocking around in your spandex.

The Swrve are my favorites of the two. The fabric is stretchy cotton comfy nylon. The internet can give you details. But I've never known a more comfy pair of pants and they ride great. I will probably get another pair. I wish they had a button or strap or something for bringing the cuffs in a bit. I also wish they handled rain a bit better. But on the dry side of the state, these do the job.

The Surllys are good too. They have cuff buttons that are super handy for rolling and staying put. The pants are made of cotton-canvas that do better in moderate rain. This is at least the second iteration of these pants from Surly, and they come in normal lengths now, and the fabric seems thicker. As for fit: I wear a 34 pant. The Surllys run big. I wear a 32 there. Swrve is a perfect 34.

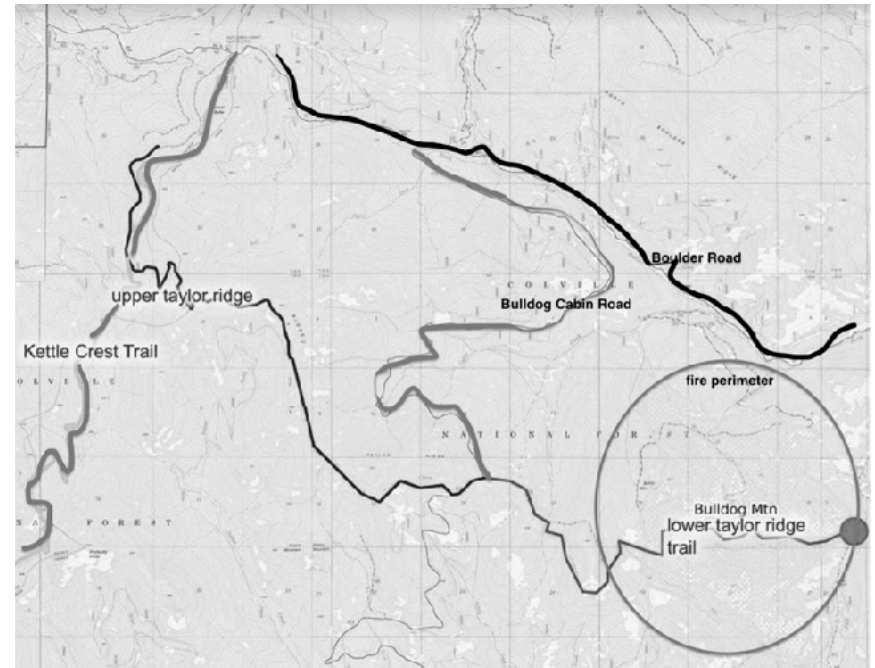
Bulldog fire... and how it torched 4 miles of Lower Taylor Ridge Trail

In the last Dispatch, we waxed cloddish about Taylor Ridge and what a fantastic, under-used trail it is. About a week later, the Bulldog fire tore through the area. We've only been able to recon about 1/2 mile of the Lower trail. It needs work—no doubt—but it's not as trashed as we expected. Though there's still 3.5 miles of burned trail area to inspect.

We'll report back.

Wanna help clean up and clear this spring?

Stay tuned: in a future Dispatch, we'll announce a date for a trail-cleaning party. We'll host a weekend hang at FCCF World HQ: biking, clearing, eating, and carrying on!



The situ: This expertly-produced map shows the approximate perimeter of the fire in relation to Taylor Ridge trail and the KCT.

KCT: South Sherman Loop

Just about every year the Seattle freaks come over for a spin around KCT. There's lots of great things about these visits. But one of the greatest is that we end up either getting lost and/or trying a new-to-me route.

This year was no different. Someone (probably Rory, cause he's generally a pain in the ass with innocent, yet leading questions) asked if I'd ever ridden the south side of KCT.

The only time I'd been on the south section was in the middle of winter when a buddy and I ran out of daylight without a map in a snowstorm and had to sleep in a half-ass cold-ass shelter. So, I've shied away from the south side.

So off we went to the South Sherman Loop. And as with all unexpected detours with this crew: it totally paid off.

This loop is short—about 5 miles when you start from the KCT Sherman trailhead. We rode the loop clock-wise. The first half of the ride goes up about 1000' over 2.5 miles. Then down you go. The beauty of this ride is the perfection of the trail features: my favorite kind of climbing. Lots of switchbacks. Lots of rocky steps and wedges. And it's all cleanable. The descent seems a bit swoopier with a bit more dirt? It's hard to say for sure since it all goes so fast.



This loop would be a great add-on to the Jungle Hill loop. Or you can start from Albian Hill/Trail 82 for about a 12-13 mile loop. We opted to sacrifice one of our own who bailed at the Sherman trailhead while the rest of us rode 82 back down to Albian. Money move.

I've tried to find the Indigenous name for this mountain and area. I'm not having luck. But I found a phonetic spelling in a 1882 expedition report that refers to Sherman Creek, the headwaters of which are right in this area: "Sin-pail-hu". (Not to be confused with "San puelle," which is the present-day San Poil.) You can find that report on the internet by searching "Expedition from Fort Colville, Henry Pierce."