

A person wearing a blue shirt, green pants, and a hat is riding a mountain bike down a steep, rocky trail. The trail is covered with green vegetation and large rocks. A large, dark, charred log lies diagonally across the foreground, partially obscuring the path. The background shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees on a hillside.

# ferry county cycling federation

Barstow Dispatch 4.2

Summer 2024



## Summer 2024

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### Photos:

By contributor unless noted.

### All visual magic:

Stine Hansen

### On the covers (by John)

Outsides: Lower Taylor Ridge with Curlew Tom  
Inside: Paint house



## Letter

Hey,

Finally got around to reading the dispatch from Dec. Enjoyed it a lot, thanks!

Who wrote the poem Stingray Summer?

Anything that isn't credited is you perhaps?

Would love a little tiny bio of each writer! After reading an article, I always enjoy knowing more about the author. I'd like to know who Stine Hansen or Thomas Yeates are for example. Something short and sweet.

Bob

Renton, WA

Bob: Congrats. You're our millionth letter! Your prize is a FCCF water bottle. Next time we see you out here, we'll give it to you. As for your request: you're really raising the bar here, man. But you're right on two counts: I missed the credit for Stine's poem. That was his. And secondly, we should include small bios, because the handful of folks that throw in on this effort are interesting. In general, yeah, I jam out all the drivel that isn't tagged with an author. Starting this issue, each article will be tagged. And we'll include bios. The hard part with bios is that they can be so goddamn reductive. So we'll do it, but they may not be short or particularly focused. Thanks for the nudge.

*Bob is about the tastiest damn percussionist in the greater Seattle area. He spent his youth woodshedding on all manner of percussion instruments. He then played in various bands touring the west coast during and after college and into his late 20's when he finally settled down and became an elementary school music teacher and free jazz player in the Seattle scene. Seriously, he's so fucking good – a tidy, precise, intensely intelligent, sensitive player. He brings those qualities to his daily life teaching, daddling two kids, husbanding, and being a good egg. He rode a v1 Surly Crosscheck before it was cool. He's always been a weirdo one-bike dude – one of those. Now he rides a Surly Midnight Special. He maintains his bike legs by commuting daily, but in recent years he's discovered randonneuring and generally long rides. He's a True Believer in hydration and electrolytes. You can see a picture of him in Dispatch v1.4*



## Letter 2:

Didn't you positively review the Outdoor Research Helium jacket a few years ago? Then pull back a little in a later issue? I had my own at the time and I think I wore it in that killer rainy/snowy morning with you and JD on Copper Butte. Well the zipper finally broke. I emailed OR through their warranty portal. They sent instructions to repair it myself but it didn't work. I just got the brand new replacement they immediately sent me. No charge for the \$170 jacket or shipping or anything. And a link I'll share to keep it waterproof and in good shape. Pretty great customer service. OR was already high on my gear list but pretty killer customer service. I'll patronize when I can.

Scotty  
Colville diaspora, Ashland, OR

Scotty:  
All true. OR is generally high quality stuff. We glowingly reviewed and recommended the Helium jacket in Dispatch 1.3, then tearfully retracted the recommendation for it in Dispatch 2.4 after getting soaking out in it. To be fair, our retraction was in part a recognition of the lie that any jacket will keep you dry and warm in an aerobic activity during pissing down rain. It's a fantasy! OR is guilty of playing along. But we're all complicit. After much consternation, heated discussion, and abrupt walkouts by members of the editorial board, we continue to work through two long-term rain jacket reviews. We'll spill the T on those after one more season of rain, or thereabouts. All that said, I'm glad to hear OR took care of you. Thanks for the letter. Come home and pick up a FCCF water bottle and take a spin on Jungle Hill!

*Scotty is one of a very small handful of original FCCF subscribers. I met him a few years ago when I sold him a van. He has the distinction, along with buddy (and contributor JD), of introducing me to Colville Mountain. You can see a pic of these two guys in Dispatch 3.1 alongside JD's article about Colville Mountain. Until moving to Ashland a couple years ago, Scotty was a Colville lifer. It was a sad day when I learned that he'd be picking up with his sweet family and moving off to Ashland. He digs Ashland. He wrote about it in Dispatch 3.3. He's a high-school Biology teacher by day. And a daily commuter. See the trend here? This summer, he's picked up a job as a driver with a mountain bike shuttle outfit in Ashland. If you happen to pass through the area, find him and ride with him. He's a super good guy.*

Send letters, comments, effusive praise, backhanded compliments, backhanded beatdowns, beatboxing jazz hands, and passive aggressive fake-nice criticisms to [ferrycountycyclingfederation@gmail.com](mailto:ferrycountycyclingfederation@gmail.com). Or better, snailmail it!





PHOTO BY FANCY FRED

## Tidbits

By John

At this writing, KCT is being cleared in chunks by the Forest Service contractor. Evergreen KettleFest is scheduled for July 17-20. If you come for that, please connect. Come hang by the Kettle River.

Super bummer news that Northern Ales was permanently closed last fall. Owners Steve and Andrea are such great people who worked to bring that thing to life. The hole left by the closing of the brewery is real – they built a space that was special. I always loved walking there. In their early days, they learned about Elephant Bikes and hung a couple of the old print screen posters on the wall that stayed there for the life of the place. It was a meeting place – the Rickey Point Yacht Club met regularly there. It's where we watched the World Cup. Local live music and some small traveling bands

often played there. And of course home-style cooking and fresh beer.

Taylor Ridge is my obsession, it's true. The snow melted more or less on time this year so I was able to get up and start logging out in mid-May. The downfall from last autumn was significant. It took me three after-work trips up there to log out 2.5 miles. That's full chainsaw mode, mind you. By first week in June, the Forest Service contractor made it up there and cleared the entirety of Upper Taylor. At the time of now, Lower Taylor is still being reported as unclear.

Every year the first ascent to the top of Upper Taylor is mini-milestone, sort of the harbinger of the Proper Ferry County Summer Riding Season. As it turns out, my first ascent attempt this year was a couple weeks after it





was fully logged out, but also a few days after a windstorm. If you know Taylor Ridge, and you should, and if you don't, that's a damn shame, then you know the Stickpin fire in 2015 left a bazillion standing dead zombie trees that are prone to falling over all the time. So I assumed there would be some logging along the climb.

Just a week or so prior, Fancy Fred gifted me a Silky Katana Boy saw. This saw is a two-handed monster with a 20" blade. It cuts. These Silky saws are incredible. My daily Big Boy goes on every ride on Taylor. And now I'm a fan boy of the Katana Boy too. Obviously the difference between slinging this guy on my back, and packing the chainsaw, oil, fuel, tools, safety gear, is night and day.

On my first ascent attempt of Taylor, I did not get all the way to the top. I cleared

about 60 downfall. About half of those required cutting, and maybe half dozen or so were legit lunkers that would normally want a chainsaw. This Katana cut right through. My arms were feeling it by the top of the ride, but for speed, here's the thing. At the time of cutting, yes, a chainsaw will be quicker. But on a ride like this where you're stopping frequently, cutting, clearing, then back on the bike and climbing – all that process with a chainsaw is tedious. I haven't figured out a way to ride with a chainsaw on a normal mountain bike that doesn't require a bunch of fussing and strapping and unpacking. There's also overhead in time when dealing with fueling and oiling. And in some cases, you're farting with the chain. But with a saw that packs this easily and works this well, the time part is generally a draw.

The most compelling reason for bringing a monster saw like the Katana Boy over a chainsaw, is not the time part, or the misery of lugging a chainsaw pack up steep ass climbs like Taylor, rather, it's the descent! Descending with a chainsaw pack sucks. The shittiness of it is multiplied by the expense of the climb – how can you





work that hard to get up a hill and then have such a rubbish descent. It's just Not Right. The Katana, slung over your shoulder like a continental soldier – you don't even know it's there on a descent. And that is everything. The *raison d'être*!

The overall mild but appropriately damp spring has made for a good climbing season. First road ascent to the top of Boulder was April 13. Morel-Cougar loop has been passable since early March. And we've got a new lunch road-dirt ride that optimizes elevation-to-time, where we can squeeze in 1700 feet in just over an hour. All-in-all: ready for KCT!

Colville Mountain, given its relatively low elevation, is a great early-season single track option. It's riding great. The NEWTS crew keeps working in new trails and keeping it all clear. Gold Hill in Chewelah is similar – another community driven, fledgling trail system that's a good stop for a quick loop if you're charging through the 395 corridor.

There's talk of connecting with NEWT, FCCF, and other folks later this summer to create a work party on some Sunday in July or August to do some treadwork on Lower Taylor. This would be meeting at the South Boulder trailhead of Lower Taylor Ridge trail, hiking up for about 3 miles, and working on the gnarly, rocky, sandy, sloughy, stumpy, bouldery sections. If you've bombed that last few miles, you know the puckery sections with sketchy turn-cuts into eroded gaps. The spring run off creates these gaps and just leaves big bouldery terror behind. At speed, these corners sneak

up on you. It would be a really good thing to fix those corners. Wanna help? If you are not local, we've got a prime spot to set you up with. Email us.



Good buddy and Dispatch contributor, Lee, just showed up and gave me a new-to-me bike magazine called Low Pressure. This Bay area zine is perhaps the best of its kind: irreverent, pretty, fantastic photos and art, speaks its truth – it's all about the ride. There's notes of Thrasher and vintage MAD in the best way, And great, engaging writing, including a delightfully surreal, Thompsonesque-Gonzo ride report. You can find the internet space on Instagram @lowpressurezine. It's not clear to me how to get your hands on a hard copy, which according to Lee, are published more haphazardly than the Dispatch. I love that there's a pocket of the world where this sort of thing exists.



## On Cougars: A book review of sorts

By John

### *The Cougar Conundrum – Sharing the World with a Successful Predator,* By Mark Elbroch

#### The Cougar Conundrum – Sharing the World with a Successful Predator, By Mark Elbroch

About two years ago on a cool summer morning, I was riding my favorite forest road loop just west of Barstow. The loop climbs up to a little ridge on one of the many foothills of the Kettle Crest. I love the ride because it's a hard climb and the forest road descent is twisty, rocky, and tricky. According to Strava, I've done this ride over 60 times in the last few years. I can count the number of times I've seen other people on one hand.

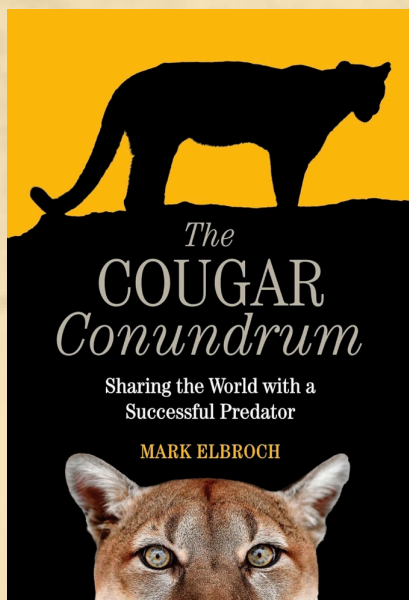
On this morning, I came blasting through a rolling corner at the flat section on top of the ride when I encountered two cougars in the road: a massive, long older cougar and a still big, but smaller cougar. I assume that was a mom and her yearling. The interaction was over in a flash. We all froze for a beat, stared, and then they scattered as I coasted through. As they bounded off, I saw a third butt and tail bounding with them.

The incident shook me. I avoided that loop for the rest of the summer.

Though rare, cougar attacks are high profile sensational events. Deaths are even more rare, but every cyclist I know is aware of the cyclist that was

killed in North Bend in 2018. And more recently, the story of the five cyclists in the same region who fought off a young cougar for 45 minutes is the current cautionary tale swirling through the biking community.

As I ponder my cougar incident and think about these attacks, the pressing questions are, How do I avoid an



attack? And secondly, What's the right way to react to an attack? And finally, Why do cougars attack?

The internet has a bunch of common-sense, unsurprising answers to the first two questions. In general, avoid attacks by traveling in pairs, making some noise, being human-like in how you move through



an area (bikes, unfortunately put you in a bit of an animal posture, which is not helped as you zoom by - which, in turn may activate chase instinct in a large cat), traveling during the day rather than early morning or dusk, and wearing bright, non-forestry-animal clothing colors.

For the love of Pete, always have your bear spray on your belt, not on your bike or in a pack.

As for how to react if you're attacked? Fight like hell. Yell like a Banshee. Throw rocks. Be big. Be aggressive. Fight to the death.

But the "Why" question lingers. That's where Mark Elbroch's excellent book, *The Cougar Conundrum*, is a must-read. The subtitle of the book sums up the plot: *Sharing the World with a Successful Predator*.

This book deserves a more thorough review than what I've got here, but as I read more wildlife and wildlife management books about predators - and this is the fourth book I've written about in these Dispatches - there are recurring themes. There's a strong reaction to species reintroductions (wolves, grizzlies), conservation (cougars, wolves), or hunting restriction (bears, coyotes, cougars, wolves). These reactions fall along predictable political and cultural lines, with rural folks who generally bear the brunt of unfortunate interactions against the urban policy makers who are guided by a distanced review of data and ecological science. Economics play a role in some respect by those who graze cattle or sheep on public lands, but really the economic muscle in these

discussions are flexed by hunters and the various organizations they fund. The influence of hunters extends into the governmental wildlife management complex, as again, it's mainly hunting fees that buoy much of their funding from tag and license fees.

So what does this standard morass of political gunk have to do with answering the question, *Why do cougars attack?*

Because answering that question requires a lot of cougar data: studying and documenting their behaviors; tracking them over great distances across multiple generations of far flung genetically connected "metapopulations;" hunting (harvesting) and depredation methods; mortality rates. Getting all that data and synthesizing it is a challenge. But most importantly, agreeing on the science is not even on the menu at the moment.

According to hunters and those who rely on their funding, the data indicates that cougars attack because there's too many of them. We need to "manage" them more aggressively. Elbroch concedes the "cold logic" of this position at its extreme: the fewer cougars that are roaming around, the fewer interactions we're likely to see.

And as it turns out, since the 1970's, cougar attacks have increased, peaking in the 90's and generally holding. The hunters would argue that this logically follows the conservation efforts enacted in the 50's and 60's that put a stop to the bounty programs throughout the country, which had been in effect for decades. These bounty programs nearly killed off the cougars in America,



rendering them essentially extinct in the east, and pushing their numbers to barely sustainable in the west. Today, estimates of the cougar population in the US ranges from 20,000 to 40,000. Elbroch points out that 1) we really don't know the actual number, but 2) by any attempted count, this recovery is a resounding conservation success.

So if the cougar population has grown exponentially in the last few decades and cougar-human interactions have grown with it, why isn't the "why" question settled by the hunters' answer: we have more conflicts because we have more cougars. And the fix for that is to have less cougars. Let's hunt! It's a win-win: cougars will stay afraid of humans and hunting cougars with hounds specifically increases human safety.

There's a compelling alternative to the hunter's answer to the "why."

The meat of answering the "why" question in Elbroch's book is the chapter called, "Staying Safe in Lion Country." In it, Elbroch cites the authoritative "Cougar Management Guidelines," which concludes that "sports hunting has not been shown to reduce risk of attack on humans." It's worth noting that California, where all cougar hunting has been outlawed for decades, reports fewer cougar-human incidents than any of the other nine Western states where sport hunting is allowed.

In fact, there is gathering evidence that perhaps heavy hunting pressure may increase attacks or aggressive incidents. There's evidence that implicates some hunting practices to these

cougar-human attacks. The basic shape of this argument is that killing adult cougars leaves behind young cougars, and "young cougars in poor condition are more likely than other cougars to threaten people."

Elbroch illustrates this argument in his telling of the Kauffman incident. You may not know this by name, but you surely remember the story of the jogger in Fort Collins, Colorado who was attacked by a cougar and killed it by choking it out. As it turns out, the cougar was a kitten – still 50 to 60 pounds – but it was a starving kitten. One of two left behind after its mother was hunted and killed. After Kauffman choked it out, the kitten's sibling eventually came along and ate the dead kitten. Further, by means of a Freedom of Information Act request, an investigative journalist found that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department encouraged staff to suppress the details about the death of the mother. Why? Because speculation that hunting might draw a direct line to human attacks would not fit the mission and interests of the organization.

So in the end, we don't know why exactly. We will someday. Lots of smart and dedicated people are studying cougars. Like the wolf conundrum here in Ferry County, there exists some imperfect way to manage cougars and soon, grizzlies. The same factions will have the same battles and the same distrust. And we'll keep riding through it, bear spray on the belt and a loud bell hanging off the bars of our bikes... clanging loudly to announce our approach.



## Macha Oil Works

By John

In the last dispatch, Stine laid out his take on salsa macha. If you haven't made it yet, you're screwing things up. Drop everything and make some salsa macha. Here's the thing – if you're a strict recipe follower, then that list of dried peppers might jam you up. Unless your local grocer is a bodega, you're not likely to find that exact list of peppers at a local grocery store. It's ok. Grab a bunch of different dried peppers and try to get about the same number. It'll turn out!

Also - a less expensive and good alternative to avocado or olive oil

is grapeseed oil. Come back when you're done.

Ok. Now that you've made it, you'll notice that you've got a ton of amazingly perfumed infused oil left over. This stuff is gold. Here are two uses for it:

1. Every savory thing that you saute/fry in a pan should start with this oil. Fry up some veggies. God help you, fry an egg. Dribble it far and wide, verily.
2. Mayo. It's ridiculous. Do this...

### Macha oil mayo

*In a blender or food processor do a couple quick pulse-whirs of the following:*

*1 egg*

*5 teaspoons of acid (some combo of lemon or lime juice, mild vinegar)*

*teaspoon of salt*

*Now: emulsify. With the blender on, slowly stream in 1.5 cups of macha oil. If you don't have enough, you can cut it with olive, avocado, grapeseed, even corn/canola oil. Also - if you're tough, you can do all of this manually with a whip.*

*By the time you finish streaming in the oil, it'll be done.*



## Book Review

### Wayfinding: The Science and Mystery of How Humans Navigate the World

M.R. O'Connor

2019 St. Martin's Press

354 pages

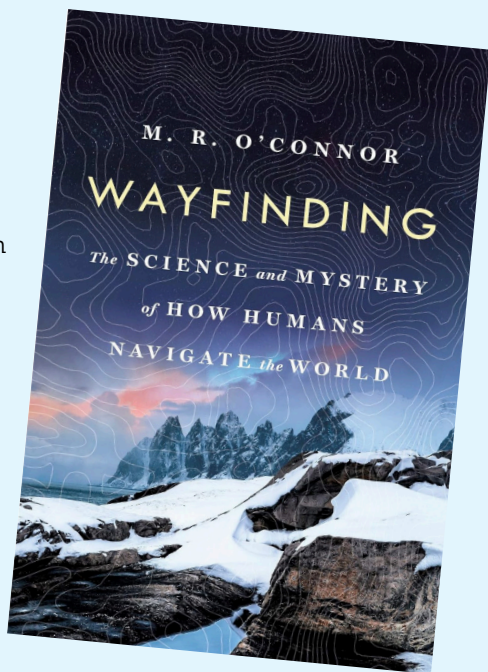
By Lee Williams


In *Wayfinding*, M.R. O'Connor explores our understanding of human navigation, and how rapidly our world has been changed by access to GPS and high-quality maps. The book situates its study in three biomes where traditional forms of human wayfinding still hold sway - the Inuit hunters of the arctic, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, and the skilled navigators of the South Pacific. Through these lenses she unpacks both the cultural and biological underpinnings of how we interpret place and direction in the world.

The book is complex in places, delving into the distinctions between egocentric (directions orient from the self) and allocentric (directions are fixed in space) forms of navigation - concepts that are probably familiar to you if you've needed to tap "face my direction" or "North up" when using Google Maps. More interesting is then how those map to different areas of the brain and improve and decline in the balance as we age. Neither is particularly better - entire cultures in Australia operate in a fully allocentric form where a character walking toward the TV

screen is traveling in the cardinal direction the TV is placed - but the ability to engage the brain for navigation seems key to aspects of how we develop as a species. Unlike other animals, some of which undergo massive migrations throughout their lifetimes, we add communication and narrative to our journeys.

The cultural stories form the most interesting portions of the book, traveling with people who can navigate hundreds of miles by reading the signs of snow drift, ice floe, and rock cairn or by looking at the stars





and feeling the interactions of the wavefronts reflecting off distant islands as they rock the canoe. Core to all of these is attention and learning to deeply read the landscape around you. These skills have been passed down in their cultures over generations but now with the advent of modernity have been nearly extinguished. Adding to this loss has been the impacts of climate change, subverting traditional knowledge of weather patterns and shifting hunting and fishing grounds into more perilous regions.

For those of us who have spent time in the wilderness and become, if not hopelessly lost, at least slightly disoriented, this is an book that will make you take a deeper look at your surroundings and try to absorb the idea that it could be perfectly navigable if you only possessed the knowledge to see the paths.

*Lee is about as quick-witted as they come and one of my favorite people to talk with and learn from. His good-humored delivery of trivial information on all topics betrays the depth of his prodigious intelligence and scope of interests. And he's a brute cyclist. In the early years, he would show up to KCT rides on his Karate Monkey: fully rigid single speed. Cheerfully walking the steep bits. I'm always bugging Lee for content for the Dispatch because his writing seems effortlessly clear and eloquent. This is at least his 3rd book review.*





A BIT OF THE "PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE" DESCENT: ROOTY AND DENSE AND FUN.

## Klootchey Creek County Park, Oregon

By John

Trailforks shows almost no mountain bike trails along the Oregon coast. The lack of (published) mountain bike trails is surprising, given the eminently bike-able coastal topography that immediately rises away from the coast. Driving from Portland to the ocean, the last 60 miles are a fantasy of dense lush cedar forests sprawled across a range of small mountains. You may ask yourself, maybe there is such a thing as intelligent design? Does God want us to mountain bike? Why would God build this, as clearly there's no other useful way to optimize this space. You will also have to concede that there's no way that there's only one network of trails out here. Just as there's some quiet coves on the coast for locals-only surfing, there must be some real humdinger trails along Highway 26 for the locals, tucked away from the Portland bros and the rubes visiting Cannon Beach with their \$8000 e-bike. Alas, that's not what this column describes...

If you live in the northwest, at some point it's likely that you'll end up traveling to the Oregon coast. And no doubt, Cannon Beach will be on the short list. And for good reason. Cannon Beach is the home of the famous Haystack Rock where endless reels of Instagram selfies are created. As a vacation destination, one can make their own judgment on Cannon Beach, but should you find yourself bound for the area, bring a bike. As it happens, Klootchey Creek County Park is only about 6 miles away and is a great place to ride and escape the vacationing masses.

The park itself is actually a pretty small wedge of a park along the Necanicum River right of Highway 26. (It's worth noting that fly fishing is allowed on this section of the Necanicum River, and it looks pretty damn fishy). The money part – the bikey part of this park – is the



adjacent chunk of land owned by a private timber holding company.

The Klootchey Creek trail network is a classic public-private deal between Lewis and Clark Timberlands, Clatsop County Parks, and the Northwest Trails Alliance. The NWTA designs, builds, and maintains the trail network. As such, the network is well-built and well-signed. Certainly Klootchey Creek is no destination mountain bike park, but in context, where it's the only public mountain bike trail network in a hundred miles, and given its proximity to Cannon Beach: it's a miracle of bike respite!

It's not about the bike. Any bike is a good bike for this relatively small trail network. The blues/greens are generally smooth, the climbs well-designed, and very manageable rooty obstacles. With the exception of a couple black trails, a cyclocross bike would make for a fun outing. A mountain bike (and its cringy close cousin, the gravel bike), of course would also make sense. Even a single speed would work for most of the nicely designed climbs.

Bring your kids and/or beginner mountain bike friends! There is a fantastic set of loops coming off a perfect climbing trail called "Greenwood." This is a gentle, smooth, meandering trail that climbs about 400 feet with a number of one-way green swoopy options that lead back down to the start. Criss Cross, in particular, is a great beginner descent trail. Wide and with good sight lines, Criss Cross would be a great session trail. This section of Klootchey would be an ideal place to let kids

or buddies who are beginning their mountain bike journey to explore, play, practice.

Meanwhile, a more demanding morning loop into the top of the forest starts with the climb up West Hawley Access Road. The climb is 800 feet over two miles on nice forest road. Follow the signs to "Passive Aggressive" and enjoy a fast, twisty, rooty, short-drop-py descent through the forest that connects to "Defibrillator." These are listed as black trails, but ride more like spicy blue. All big technical stuff has ride-arounds.

Another fun descent that is worth the climb is "Upper Low Tide." This will eventually hook into the green trail network around "Greenwood." Avoid "Toads," as it's a short, unfinished, rough cut through the forest that puts you far out on an access road.



PRISTINE AND WELL-MAINTAINED ACCESS ROAD CLIMBS FOR THE HIGHER TRAILS.



## The Safety Dance

By John Speare

A good scare can focus your mind. Earlier this year, I buried an ax in my ankle and had a bleeding situation. My only first aid supply was a blood clotting sponge, more suitable to puncture wounds than a cut vessel running over my ankle bone. I was unable to stop the bleeding enough to walk or ride out. To keep the bleeding stanch, I had to stay immobile. As it happens, I was close to home and my wife was within cell coverage to rescue me. We compressed, then duct taped the wound to slow the bleeding.

The half-hour drive to the ER gave me time to ponder the alternative endings to this relatively minor wound could have been much different had I been up on Taylor Ridge – out of cell range, miles from car access – where I spend the vast majority of my time doing solo trail clearing, often with a chainsaw.

With some robust and persuasive encouragement from my wife, I resolved to figure out and practice elevated safety protocols for my trail work, especially solo work where I'm running a chainsaw. Generally they boil down to this:

***Don't get hurt.*** Practically speaking, this means minimizing risk to injury. There's a bunch of actions here: maintain your saw; stay aware of your space; be smart/safe in the cuts you make by evaluating the effect of how cutting a log under load will react to cutting at a particular spot in a particular direction. But the real no-brainer here is to wear protective gear.

***Be prepared if you do get hurt.*** This one is actually harder to prepare for because every injury situation will have its own unique fingerprint of complicating variables. So for solo chainsaw related injuries I focused on wounds and bleeding. Along with some friends, we took a "Stop the Bleed" course from a certified instructor. We also took a field suturing class from an MD friend who is experienced with street, field, and Army medic situations. From these classes, I built a first aid kit for my solo chainsaw-related trail work and a supporting kit for home.



PHOTOS: MADDIE SPEARE





## Chaps

I resisted chaps because they're so bulky and I couldn't imagine riding in them. But to my surprise, when paired with shorts, the chaps are great. Aside from the obvious protection from wandering chainsaws – which is not insignificant, given the rather critical vessels that run through your legs – I've loved how these chaps stop the scrapes and punctures on my legs from the various thorny, pokey, and blunt branch attacks that are common in this work. These particular chaps are Husqvarna, as recommended by Dispatch reader, friend, and arborist, Cory. One extra nice feature is a perfectly placed pocket for my phone. So there's that.

## Ear muffs

According to my friend and audiologist, Dr. Crista Copus, chainsaws are loud. And that's a professional assessment of fact. Specifically, they run at about 114 decibels. This means that after about 2 minutes of exposure, without ear protection, some temporary damage occurs to your eardrum. After an hour or so, you can inflict permanent damage. That's not trivial.

As for protection in this scenario, Dr. Copus doesn't like the little squishy plugs because she says people just don't cram them in far enough to be effective. For easy, always-works ear protection: the good Doctor says use the over-the-ear muffs. Done.

## Gloves

Duh. Right? Unlike other gear bits here, where we're not really pushing a specific brand, these particular gloves are worth knowing about. They're kind of great mountain bike riding gloves and they are excellent for trail work, so I've adopted these as my daily driver 3-season gloves. They're



"Omberra Goat Skin Mechanic" gloves – the goats really deliver on this. The palm is tough, thin, and pliable. The back of the glove is a stretchy-knit-breathy spandex. So they fit, well, like a glove. And big mega bonus: these are distributed out of Spokane and are available on the end caps of just about every grocery store in the region for about \$20 a pop.

### **Glasses**

This year, I finally bought a proper pair of prescription safety glasses and they have made all the difference. Aside from prescription – which allows me to just leave them on when sawing, reading, checking my phone, looking at my watch – my particular pair also has amber glass for all-light conditions. They block UV during the height of the sun, but also turn the world prettier as twilight emerges. The side blocky panel things are the money piece – that's what makes them safety glasses. I didn't appreciate these until cutting with the chainsaw in the typically blustery conditions of spring up on Taylor Ridge. Normally at least one wood chip finds its way into my eye during a cutting session. Not now! You don't have to get a zoot pair like these, but damn this is a no-brainer for a good-enough hardware store version of safety glasses.

### **Bell and bear spray**

After happening across a family of cougars last fall, I've become religious about packing these two things on each ride that goes off the main paved roads around Barstow. The bell is a bit more robust than the little REI-style bells. It's a good clanger. I have it on a

shock cord loop so it's trivial to move around to each bike. The bear spray is on my belt always. I used to keep it on the bike, but I spend so much time away from the bike when clearing and maintaining trails, that the only thing worse than having my guts ripped out by some wild animal would be having my guts ripped out while my bear spray was just out of reach on my bike.

### **Tracker**

Much to Garmin's satisfaction, the InReach GPS tracker is becoming a standard gizmo for all manner of outdoor activities. In a nutshell – this machine allows you barely communicate in areas of no coverage; it makes summoning SAR (too?) easy; and most usefully for us, it creates a real-time bread crumb map track for friends and family to monitor as you're out playing in the dirt. We've got a full write up of this later in this Dispatch.

### **Reflector**

The RECCO Rescue reflector is a small plastic band attached to my helmet. Inside this band, is a passive reflector that returns a signal to a SAR radar detector. Wha? Originally developed for avalanche situations, this technology has been standardized to the extent that the RECCO reflector is now sewed into a lot of outdoor gear during production. You can learn more online, but the upshot is that this \$40 reflector takes no batteries, will outlast you, and may be the bit of technology that allows you (or maybe your body) to be located by SAR teams that use the RECCO helicopter detector to search large areas.



# Be prepared

## Stopping the bleed

Gauze, Israeli bandage, tourniquet, cotton rags, duct tape, coagulant powder. First order of business is to stop the bleeding. Basically, you're doing what you need to engage the coagulation process at the wound site. After that is done, you should be able to clean and dress the wound.

## Cleaning wounds

Alcohol wipes, flush, gloves. The hardest and most painful part of the process is cleaning the wound. For most surface wounds you should do your best to clean as much as you can after you have stopped the bleeding.

## Staying put

In the case where you have to spend the night or otherwise wait: water filter, food, matches, cord, emergency bivvy.

## Closing wounds

Suture strips, super glue, skin stapler, sutures, forceps, lidocaine, syringe, mirror. Ideally, stopping the bleed and dressing the wound will be enough to get mobilized and back home. But if the wound doesn't allow mobility without breaking open again, you will have to close it. Easy and relatively painless methods are with suture strips or super glue. The skin stapler is exactly what the name implies: position the stapler on each side of a wound and staple to close it. For wounds that don't lend themselves to stapling, stitches may be the only choice. The mirror is a plastic shower jobber: handy for suturing face injuries.

## Dressing wounds

Bandages, crepe bandages, gauze.





# Garmin inReach Tracker

By John

I resisted this gadget for a while. Firstly, it's spendy. The hardware is \$300. And it requires a monthly subscription (\$13). There's also usage fees beyond that. But my hesitancy extends beyond my usual cheap-bastardness. Mine is a principled, ideological stand... but we're well over the bars here.

## **What is this inReach?**

The inReach is Garmin's version of a GPS tracker. Other devices like this exist. SPOT is probably the most well-known alternative. Unlike a standard GPS device that uses satellites to determine position and display the position to the user on preloaded maps, the inReach is all that, plus the additional capability to communicate with the Iridium satellite network. This functionality allows the device to transmit short messages to the internet. By pairing the inReach with your smartphone, this setup is pretty useful for emergency off-grid situations. A paired phone is not a hard requirement for emergency use. You can send simple messages or trigger a full on SOS-rescue operation from the device alone.

The Iridium + Garmin network solution enables inReach to send periodic notifications into the Garmin "MapShare" system where friends/family can follow your track in near real time (to 10 minutes). You specify who can track you by sending them a password-protected link that can be

opened from any browser. They'll see your location on a map. Should you get in trouble, your location is known. For this reason: wear the device – don't hang it on your bike.

For my use, this tracking function is really the reason for the inReach. I do a lot of solo trail logging and deep woods trail riding. Most of the Kettle Crest and surrounding Colville National Forest are off the grid. Most trips into these areas include unexpected delays that can draw out the trip length to uncomfortable delays for family back at home. With the tracking feature – this anxiety is eliminated; your people can see your (lack of) progress and where you're headed. If necessary, they can message you.

As for usage fees – after a couple months, the fees feel reasonable considering the value of peace of mind for friends and family at home. Aside from the \$13 monthly fixed subscription cost, there are two kinds of fees: messages and tracking. The first 5 text messages per month are free. Then they're 50 cents each. These can add up. For tracking, each ping to the Garmin system is 10 cents. (It's worth noting that you can still use the inReach on trips and \*not\* enable tracking; you can use it just as a means to text as needed). By default, when you enable tracking, the device pings back every 10 minutes. So you're looking at 60 cents/hour. I set mine to every 20 minutes for

most outings. For longer outings, I'll set it to 30 minutes. This sort of cheapery can save a bit of money over time, but I don't really use it enough to see huge savings. But it feels more frugal!

The ideological part? Perhaps there's nothing here, perhaps I'm clutching pearls. Initially I resisted the inReach because I'm sort of a grump about gadgets and very much a grump about subscriptions and packing more stuff. But I also didn't like the idea of being so connected. I saw the inReach solely as an off-grid text messenger + SOS summoner. Neither of those scenarios appealed to me. In fact, part of what I like about long rides and bushwhacking is being prepared, planning, and making decisions. I think perhaps that knowing you can get bailed out as soon as stuff goes sideways impacts how you make decisions. That takes something away from the whole deal. I think? But that's also a privileged perspective. I think if I were not a white dude tromping around the backwoods of NE Washington, I'd definitely want this device.

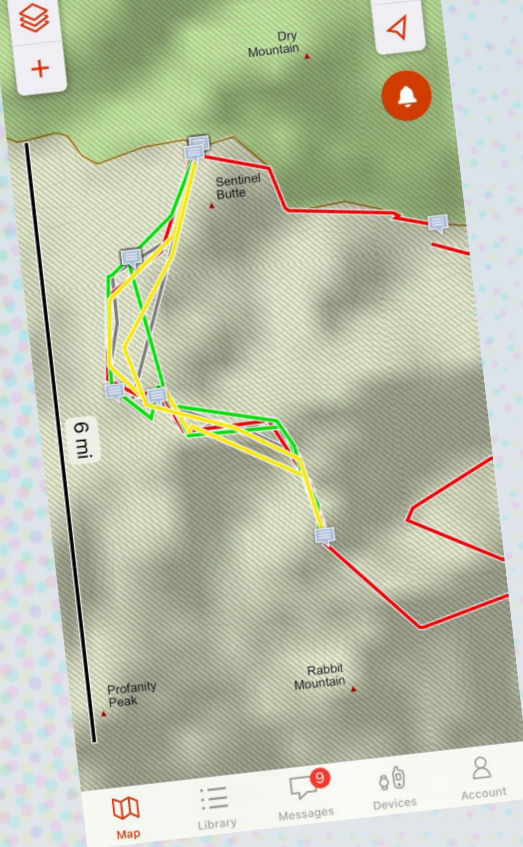
The second part of pearl clutching has to do with search and rescue. I wonder what happens when you put this sort of device in the hands of people who don't have experience and who might make foolish decisions – again, knowing

there's an Easy Button to get out of a jam. Well. What then? They get saved. They don't die. They learn.

When you hit the SOS button on this device, it doesn't automatically call in the local SAR team. Rather, the process is mediated by the Garmin Response team, which according to their website, communicates with "a global database of first responders







SAR is expensive. The internet conjures a cost of around \$1000-\$1600 an hour. In most cases in the US, SAR services don't cost the victim. The costs are borne by usage fees, local government, and volunteer time. There's also an opportunity cost – one can imagine a place like Ferry County, where perhaps the local SAR operations may not have resources to deploy more than one or two teams simultaneously. There is some rumbling for high-use areas in some states to charge for SAR in more cases. Indeed, Garmin sees a self-serving opportunity here too, they offer insurance for this cost. These seem like misaligned incentives. But that's capitalism.

In the end, when my wife discovered the inReach, I was in. For her it's a no-brainer. And she's totally right. The tracking function just makes our life a bit better and hers a bit less anxious. Getting more people outside and into nature is always a good thing. If this device can help nudge folks into some of the good stuff – folks who might not venture far without a safety net – that's good.

and emergency services... (in) more than 200 countries and territories." So Garmin Response evaluates the situation, communicates with you, and if necessary, contacts the emergency service. Garmin provides a yearly report ("SOS Year in Review") about its response service. They provide a bunch of information about who used the service, what the people were doing, and the response services that were dispatched. But interestingly, they do not provide numbers. We don't know how many incidents they served. And we don't know how many were frivolous calls or for negligently unprepared users. It's certainly not none.

5/15/2024 8:27:28 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 8:37:00 PM	Text Messaging	
5/15/2024 8:43:17 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 8:47:00 PM	Text Messaging	
5/15/2024 8:57:00 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 8:57:00 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 9:07:00 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 9:17:00 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 9:27:00 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 9:47:00 PM	Tracking	
5/15/2024 9:49:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 5:11:30 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 5:13:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 5:23:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 5:33:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 5:43:00 PM	System	
5/17/2024 5:53:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 6:03:00 PM	Text Messaging	
5/17/2024 6:25:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 6:27:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 6:33:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 6:43:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 7:53:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 7:59:45 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 8:03:00 PM	Text Messaging	
5/17/2024 8:13:00 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 8:17:30 PM	Tracking	
5/17/2024 8:27:30 PM	System	
5/17/2024 8:37:30 PM	Text Messaging	
5/17/2024 8:43:30 PM	Tracking	
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5/18/2024 12:08:30 AM	Tracking	
5/18/2024 1:17:15 PM	Tracking	
5/18/2024 1:17:15 PM	Tracking	
5/24/2024 4:37:15 PM	Text Messaging	
5/24/2024 4:46:00 PM	System	
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## Reenactment Bikes

By John

About a year ago, Glen at Elephant Bikes bought a box of new old stock Ishiwata bike tubing. Ishiwata tubing was made in Japan until the 90's, when the company folded. The tubing was used on a bunch of Japanese import bikes through the 80s and into the early 90s. Like all steel tubing manufacturers, the company produced a range of tubing for different applications.

The particular set of tubing that Glen bought was called "015." This was one of their lightest, thin-walled tube sets. So what? So it matters. And there's gobs of ink and virtual ink spilled on this all over the internet and in (mostly vintage) bike magazines. Alex provides an overview in the companion article that follows this one.



The first bike Glen built with this tubing was a French-inspired road bike. He had a bunch of nice old French components stashed away among

his vast collection of bike bits. The resulting bike was astounding. Light, flexy, fast, responsive, smooth, analog. Also sort of bird-like and fragile in an attractive way. This is a bike that takes a bit of skill to handle and operate, which makes it even more fun to ride. In some ways it's the antithesis of modern bikes. And this isn't a slam on modern bikes, which are designed to optimize weight and stiffness, and are equipped with components that have been precision engineered to reduce learning curve while providing impeccable performance. Bikes today are amazing and the diversity of bike options available allow way more people to immediately enjoy riding than Glen's French reenactment bike.

All that said, there is a wonderful thing going on with the reenactment bike in how it responds, especially in climbing efforts and in turning inputs. If you grew up riding these sorts of bikes (or some of the cheaper mass-produced facsimiles), their flexy rhythmic feedback is familiar. If you've never ridden these sorts of bikes, give it a shot if you have the opportunity. For some, this flex feels noodly, imprecise, and is distracting. But for others, it clicks. And even for others – there's nothing: no flex, no feedback, no rhythm... just hype.

The French bike has simple and elegant components from nearly 50 years ago. Changing gears properly requires understanding where the load on the chain is relative to the



timing of your shift. Brute forcing a change of gears under load could break the rear derailleur. Indeed, Glen, in his wisdom, does not allow some people (ahem) to ride this bike more than up and down the street in front of his shop.



The second bike Glen built with this tubing was a traditional cyclocross race bike. Unlike the French bike, which was built for some special components, this CX bike was put together with a smart mix of mostly unremarkable components that Glen had in his bins. The point of this bike was to build a flexy, fun, race-ready reenactment CX bike of the mid-90's.

One remarkable detail of the CX bike is the tubular wheelset. Tubular tires (also referred to as "sew ups") are not tubeless and they are not clincher.

If you're not familiar, check out the internet. These tires are entirely a folly of excess fussery for all but professional racers. But with a great XTR/Mavic tubular wheelset hanging from the rafters coupled with a fire sale of fantastic Michelin CX race tubulars on QBP, the universe had spoken.

The CX bike is heaven on wheels. With cantilever brakes, you can mostly slow, if not come to a quick stop. The fit and feel is fast and lively. And the tires are like riding on fast little clouds of 35 psi. There's a reason professional racers still ride these. The tires are only 33 mm (that's the max width for UCI CX tires), so bombing down the sharp-rock, rutted forest roads must be done a little slower and with a bit more finesse than normal. But for paved and gravel roads, this bike sings. And climbing? The best. Riding this bike on the roads of Ferry County has made for a blissful climbing season this year.

I hope to ride this bike for many years, but as Glen presented it to me, in all its spray-painted purple-green colorway glory, he quipped, "You'll enjoy this. Until you break it."

*Glen Copus reviewed this article and Alex's companion article. For a bikey-bio on Glen go check out the "About" page at [www.elephantbikes.com](http://www.elephantbikes.com). That'll suffice for now, though Glen is so, so, much more than just a bikey guy. We'll have a proper bio in some future Dispatch.*



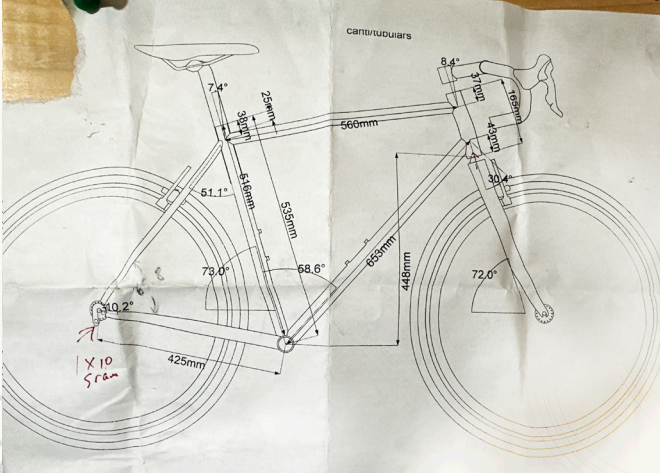
# Tubing Explainer

By Alex Wetmore

John and Glen shared the tubing spec for John's CX bike with me and asked me to write something about the ride characteristics. I'll start by saying that this is a tricky task, every bike and rider are unique. I have the advantage here of riding the same bike size and setup as John, so I can fall back on my own experiences. Despite our size similarities John does break many more bikes than I do, maybe due to him riding more miles than me and differences in riding style (I'm a spinner, he's a masher).

Anyway, onto the bikes. John's bike is made with very light tubing, the top tube is 28.6mm 6/4/6 tubing and the downtube is 31.8mm 7/4/7 tubing. The diameters here are what we call "oversized" even though they are the most common choices today. "Standard" diameter would be 25.4mm top tube and 28.6mm downtube. Those 6/4/6 numbers mean that the tubing is 0.6mm at the ends and 0.4mm thick at the centers. For comparison you average Surly/Soma/Jamis/Kona steel bikes are more like 9/6/9 or even 10/7/10 – so we're talking about tubing that is half the thickness of most mass production bikes. Both numbers are important to tubing stiffness, with the diameter being the dominant factor and thickness being secondary.

About 15 years ago I built a tubing deflection model in Excel (sadly this is



long lost) and figured out that exchanging a "standard diameter" 9/6/9 tube for an "oversized" 7/4/7 tube resulted in a bike with very similar stiffness but a little lighter. This bike does this on both the top and down tubes. This is very good news because 70s and 80s road bikes (made of Reynolds 531 or Columbus SLX) typically used standard diameter 9/6/9 tubing and rode beautifully. The front triangle of John's CX bike will have similar stiffness to these classic race bikes but be even lighter, what an awesome outcome.

Compared to a modern production CX bike that uses oversized 9/6/9 tubing in the top and downtubes, John's bike will be quite a bit more flexible and a lot lighter.

The rear triangle of John's bike uses beefy chainstays that are about 30% thicker than normal (1.2mm vs 0.9mm). This makes a lot of sense for his preferred low rpm climbing where he puts a lot of torque through the frame. I like flexible bikes, but I think John needs a stronger rear triangle.

I can't wait to ride it when I'm in Ferry County later this summer!



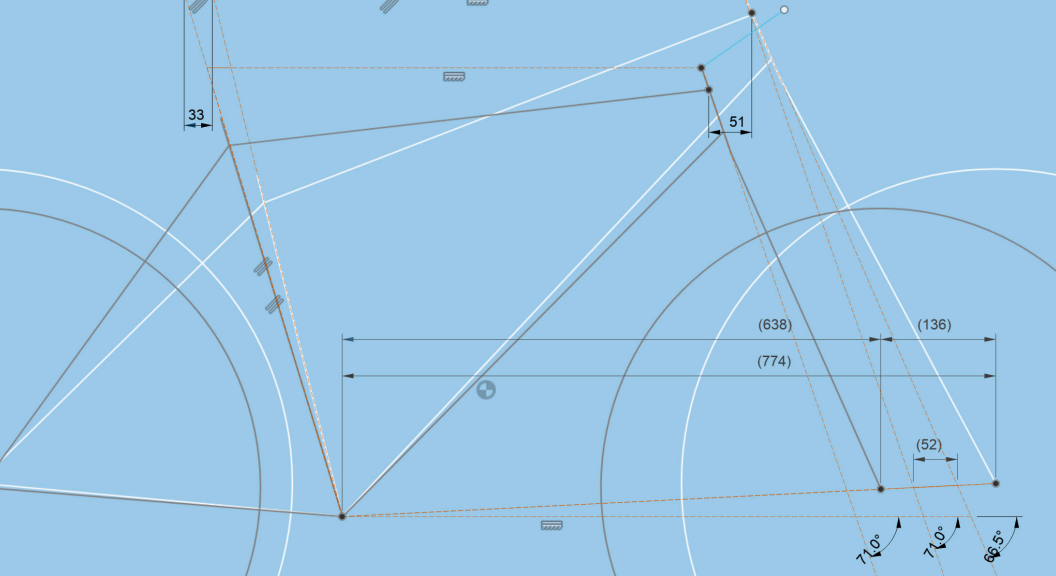


ILLUSTRATION BY ALEX WETMORE

## WTF is front center?

By Alex Wetmore

Anyone reading mountain bike reviews in the last five years has noticed that people are fixated on head tube angle, with an implicit assumption that the lower the angle the better the bike is.

A slacker head tube angle is one way to get to a longer front center, which is really what most mountain bikers care about. Front center is the distance from the bottom bracket to the front hub. The longer front center makes the bike more confidence inspiring downhill and allows riders to ride harder terrain. For this article I'm going to look at the geometry changes that have allowed the front center to grow by about 20% (136mm) between the Trek 920 that I was riding 25 years ago to the Ibis Ripley that I ride today. The attached drawing shows a few of the geometry details on the two bikes. The drawing highlights that the 136mm increase in

front center comes from three areas: 33mm from seat tube angle changes, 52mm from head tube angle, and 51mm from a longer top tube.

**Slacker head tube angle:** Every degree change in the head tube angle moves the front wheel out by about 10-12mm. In the last 15 years we've seen standard mountain bike head tube angles go from 71 degrees to 66 degrees, with extreme examples going as slack at 64 degrees. Around 66 degrees has become the sweet spot for trail bikes because very slack head tube angles increase the flop factor of the front wheel, which requires wider bars to muscle the bike through turns. The change from 71 degrees on my Trek 920 to 66.5 degrees on the Ripley has increased the front center of my bike by 52mm.

**Longer top tube/shorter stems:** Top tubes have gotten a lot longer on



mountain bikes, which also requires shorter stems (common MTB stem lengths have dropped by 70-80mm). Trading length in the stem for the top tube moves the head tube and front wheel forward without changing the rider's position on the bike. Swept back bars can allow for even longer top tubes, which may allow some riders to go up a frame size to increase front center. This has increased the front center by about 51mm on my bikes.

**Steeper seat tube angle:** Steeper seat tube angles moves the saddle forward over the bottom bracket and decreases the distance from the saddle to the head tube. This is a smaller change, but allows the front center increase without increasing the top tube length. On trail bikes (mostly ridden on steep uphill and downhill terrain) this also improves riding position on the climbs and has no downsides on descents (where the rider is standing). On the bikes that I'm riding this has changed by about 3 degrees and increased front center by 33mm.

The right set of geometrical changes will depend on how you are riding your bike. For instance I love the steep seat tube angle on my Ripley for trail riding, but wouldn't like it on a bike-packing bike where I would want the ability to comfortably ride long flatter sections of rail. In that case I would trade off a slightly shorter front center with all day riding comfort.



ZERO-LENGTH STEM DESIGN FROM PVD CYCLES. PICTURE SNIPPED FROM [HTTP://WWW.PETERVERDONE.COM/BICYCLE](http://www.peterverdone.com/bicycle)

Some builders think we've gone too far with slack head tube angles and are trying other extreme approaches to get a long front center. PVD Cycles for instance is experimenting with reverse stems to allow the top tube to be even longer while keeping the head tube angle at 68 degrees for better handling.

Regardless of how it is achieved the longer front center of modern mountain bikes make them more capable and allow riders to successfully ride more challenging terrain.

*Alex Wetmore is a true polymath. He's a guy with an insatiable curiosity about how it all works and who possesses the rare combination of skills, intelligence, persistence, and resources to figure it all out. Overhauling internal gear hubs, re-programming OS software for an ancient mill, building (like, from a pile of tubes) bikes in his basement, designing the famous Elephant NFE, and printing, turning, or machining all manner of bike and sailing-related bits. All the while – a super human of empathy, good humor, and ethical goodness. He's married with kids and lives in Seattle. He's contributed a couple times to the Dispatch over the years.*



## Stine's Gluten free pizza dough

*Your suffering is over.*

*Trust me. I'm a professional.*

*Do this by hand:*

- ☛ 300 g water, room temp or slightly tepid
- ☛ 16 g Psyllium Husks (not powder)
- ☛ 150 g Gluten Free Sourdough Starter\*
- ☛ 90 g Tapioca/Potato starch blend (any ratio works)
- ☛ 150 g Bob's Red Mill 1:1 gluten free flour blend
- ☛ 7 g fine sea salt
- ☛ olive oil for brushing and cornmeal for dusting

*In a medium mixing bowl, whisk the psyllium into the water. As it begins to thicken, add sourdough starter (or discard) and gently whisk to fully incorporate. Using a mesh strainer or flour sifter, sift in all dry ingredients. Retrieve your **DANISH DOUGH WHISK** and proceed to stir, stab, mix and mash until you have a fairly cohesive ball of dough. Form in into a smooth round, lightly brush with olive oil and set the bowl aside (inside a bag or under a damp towel, or cling film) in a warm place for 2 - 3 hours. I use the top of a warm espresso machine.*

### **PREHEAT OVEN TO 425F**

*When it's risen maybe 1.5x, generously dust a wooden board with cornmeal and roll the crust out atop it to approximately 12 - 14" diameter. Gently roll it onto your rolling pin, then back off of it onto a piece of parchment atop either a peel or a trashy old pizza screen.*

*Par bake it on the parchment, on a pizza stone for 15 minutes. Remove from oven, lose the parchment, and increase heat to 435F. Top the pizza as you wish, then return to the oven, directly on top of the pizza stone. Bake 15 minutes, remove and transfer to a cutting board.*

*Have at it.*

*Augustine (Stine) Hansen is one of these guys who always has the most uniquely creative hot take on ideas in real time. What that means is that if you want like, 10 different titles for an article, or a bunch of different options for visual anything, Stine will rattle them off – all over the conceptual map – as you finish the question. He's the most broadly creative person I know. He does the layout for Dispatch, but also makes amazing stained glass (come over sometime and see his masterpiece in my window: Slugs Having Sex); has a true gift of taste – he's spent time cooking professionally for a some high-zoot places, but his ability to taste and tweak is all the difference. Oh yeah – also a crack bike mechanic. He worked at Seattle's Free Range Cycles back in the Kathleen days. Finally, he's an excellent friend who is always down for early coffee hang and who I never tire of talking with.*



THE FCCF WORLD HQ FROM ABOUT 5000 FEET. PHOTO: JOHN

## Flying into Colville and around the Kettle Crest

By Michael Zyskowski

When the skies are clear and spring is in the air, the magic of the Kettle Crest and the valleys below are off the charts. On this, our inaugural trip by small airplane, the winds were light and variable with just a few patches of turbulence around the peaks. We based out of Colville airport (63S). About a 30 min drive from the Barstow HQ, the airport has a well-paved runway of 2700' long and an altitude of 1900'. There's fuel (100LL and Jet A), nice bathrooms and showers, an awesome air-conditioned pilot lounge, and a sweet Crown Vic courtesy car for \$10/day. Tie downs are \$3/night. Dave Garringer is the airport manager and an awesome guy - very helpful (509) 675-1041.

The airport sits just east of a small hill and takes traffic for both runway 01 and 19. Prevailing winds are from the south, but on this trip they were changing direction rapidly and it was hard to predict so used AWOS and the windsock for confirmation. We ended up using 01 on all our flights and entry is an extended base leg due to the hill to the east. CTAF is 122.8 and folks are good at announcing intentions.

Taking off from Colville to the north towards Barstow, the terrain rises rapidly and at 2000' and 80 deg F density altitude was ~3600'. Flying a fuel injected 180 HP experimental aircraft, a Vans RV-7, we climbed to 6000' down the valley to the NW towards Kettle





Falls. Reaching altitude, we explored the confluence of the Columbia and Kettle rivers before heading towards the Kettle Crest range. Here we zig-zagged across the mountains and through the valleys on both sides, including Copper Butte, Snow Peak and through Sherman Pass. There are not many landing options, but Ferry County airport (R49) is nearby and the field across the river from Barstow HQ is an option. It was magical and we were able to identify quite a few trails and forest roads below.

When flying in mountain regions it's important to consider positioning relative to the prevailing winds - usually to avoid wind rotors over the crest of mountains that can have significant downdrafts.

For fun we ended the trip by following the Kettle River up the valley to the Canadian border, where the little town of Laurier, WA also hosts a small grass airstrip (69S). Recon complete, we headed back down the Kettle over Orient, Barstow, and Kettle Falls to an extended base leg for a good landing at Colville (Good Landing defined as, "Any one you can walk away from"). From the trails or from the air, the

Kettle Crest dictates beauty from every angle. I for one will definitely be coming back - hopefully with a mountain bike in the back of the plane next time!

*Michael Zyskowski has been obsessed with flying since I met him in the late 70's when our parents got married. He has been building the plane pictured here for the last 16 years. The trip to Colville was the first flight after the paint job was finished. His obsession with flight has propelled (ha!) his career in a bunch of directions: developing forensic computer models of crash investigations for Boeing, designing and writing flight model code for Microsoft Flight Sim, building autonomous drones for Google X. He's got an endless stream of weird-cool ideas for personal flight. He lives in Everett with his wife and son and he's awesome.*



MIKE AND HIS EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT. PHOTO: JOHN



"DOWNTOWN SPOKANE" BY BEN TOBIN. ORIGINALLY POSTED MAY 17, 2023 ON INSTAGRAM. USED WITH PERMISSION.

*Ben has shot a bunch of bikey stuff for all sorts of national publications over the years and he's done lots of commercial work for different companies and magazines. The last few years, he has shared candid street shots on his Instagram feed, [cave\\_mfg](#). Ben walks Spokane most days, chatting and connecting with folks who the rest of us attempt to ignore and see past. His best photos force us to see the people who occupy the fringes of what often feels like a failing society.*



