

# FERRY CYCLING COUNTY FEDERATION

Barstow Dispatchlet V2.2

June 2022



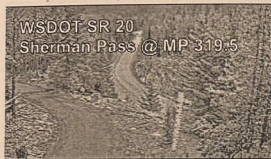
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Glen waits for me to finish flushing the bear spray out of my slobbering face after a bush whacking sesh went sideways. April 2022

The intention was to get the cap project figured out and sent out last month, then jam out a June Dispatch before KCT season kicks in proper.

As per usual, everything runs late and here we are with a tiny Dispatchlet insert for the cap project.

If the cap project works, we'll do another run. It's pretty straight forward and a great way to focus lots of small donations to local organizations. If you are a person or business and you want to throw in on next cap project let us know and we can figure out a way to squeeze your logo or name on the back of the next one.



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Spring has been wet and cold. I'm down for that. We're all hoping to maintain the strong snow pack so Kettle River and the mountain streams are trickle-charged late into summer. This summer should be a fantastic one

for fly fishing.

With the prolonged rainy season, the anticipated morel haul from the Bulldog fire has exceeded all reasonable expectations. I spent 4 days up there last week, catching my limit every day. We're in good shape with lots of dried and sautéed-then-frozen morels to keep us going for a month or two.

As I write this, the Sherman Pass camera is showing no snow at 5500 feet, though there are sure to be pockets in the northern facing slopes and valleys.

The word from the Three Rangers Ranger District is that contracts are in and we'll soon see trail clearing in earnest, though scheduling is still being worked out.

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Inspecting the loot: morel madness at the eastern edge of the Bulldog fire site. May 2022

Last summer's Bulldog fire made for a bumper crop of morels this spring. A confluence of life stuff gathered for a perfect storm of obligation that kept me out of the action for all but four days of morel collecting. There were just so many mushrooms. They'll continue to pop at higher elevation the course of June, so hopefully I get another day or two to gather some more.

We get multiple gallons a day in these post-burn years. We eat a ton of fresh morels this time of year.

But we also preserve a bunch. We put some in the dehydrator. Drying them degrades the texture and makes them a bit too toothsome. So we preserve the majority of our morels by sautéing-then-freezing. Cliff's notes method: sauté in olive oil; cover to sweat for 5 minutes; uncover to cook off the liquid; bag em into 1 cup portions; freeze them.

The beauty of this method is that you've got fully cooked morels that are ready to toss into a pan or on a pizza or into a burrito or whatever's at a moments notice.

**Well-being**

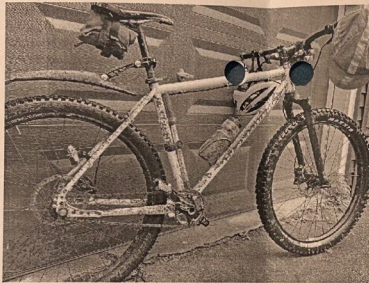
Seems like that if you read bikey stuff, the inevitable hackneyed column about single speed—or god forbid, fixed gear—shows up. You'll read about how the simplicity of the machine reinforces the zen experience of living in the flow and being one with the bike. In time's past I've made arguments elsewhere about how riding a fixed gear bike for a year or so will brute force the mechanics of fast spinning, standing grind, and recovering at pace.

But I'm old and I find these sorts of claims tiring. No, my pitch in this particular treatise is all about health. So many years ago, Sheldon Brown made a comment on the old iBOB list about how he started every morning with a vigorous 20 mile fixed gear ride while listening to Vivaldi or some similar triumphant classical music. The health benefits were implicit. No matter that he ended up dying of a massive heart attack a short time later.

No. My claim is one of mental health and well-being. All cycling helps us stay sane. But I think the single-speed mountain bike might

provide the best mental health benefits of all.

The rational here is straightforward: with a single speed you get all the same endorphiney goodness as you do from geared bike time but you also get the added benefit of low bike-related cognitive load. Your mind



My first Elephant mountain bike converted to single speed with ENO eccentric hub. Rigid carbon fork makes for big BMX fun.

devotes near-zero attention to any of the mechanics of bike stuff. Just pedal. Going up? Pedal harder.

It's not like riding a geared bike imposes a demanding mental tax, but it's not nothing. A few bits of suspension that may require in-flight fiddling and \*some\* tax is compounding.

The positive psychology folks talk about the "flow state." This state is where you're fully immersed in an activity to the extent that it consumes all of your focus and energy. You're truly in the moment. In my experience, this is the point of mountain biking. I submit that

single-speed gets you there quicker and more often. So there it is.

Another hackneyed "flow" argument. Dammit.

So how about fun? If flow is the point, then fun is the drug to get there. If you came up on a BMX then a single speed mountain bike is a solution to turning the fun up to eleven. Put a rigid fork on it and your back in 1985 grinding up hills and taking sweet jumps.

**Build it.**

Unless you're coming to mountain biking in the last decade or so, it's likely that you've owned, or still own a bike that would make a great single speed. If you don't have one in the back of your garage/shed/basement/living room, then they're pretty easy to

come by.

Don't shy away from 26" wheels and steep head angles. Those just contribute to good clean fun. The big hard technical problem is chain tensioning. There are a bunch of options to solve that.

The cheapest is to find an online calculator to see if you can get lucky with the right combo of chainring + sprocket + chain stay length to hit the gear you want.

More likely, you'll need to figure out a tensioning solution. I've not found a derailleur-type solution that works under mega load, but that's probably user error, since lots of folks seem to make it work.

There are a handful of production frames that use modular dropouts (find a 90's Kona!). These allow you to slide the dropout to tension the chain. Of course finding a frame with horizontal or track dropouts or and eccentric bottom bracket would make it all super easy, but there's just not many of these.

The solution I've used on a couple bikes is the White Industries ENO eccentric hub. Works great.

Figure it out. Give it a shot. You may find that you spend way more time (if not miles) on this bike. Report back.

## Gear stuffs



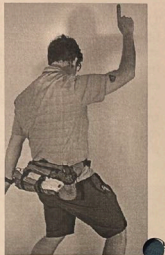
### Swift Industries Anchor Hip Pack

I almost always carry bear spray when I ride in Ferry County. You got your bears, wolves, and some cougar creeping around. And you've got the odd odd human as well.

Carrying bear spray can be a hassle because it's a narrower cylinder than a standard water bottle. So the zillions of water bottle carrying options don't work with bear spray.

A buddy of mine, Scotty, has a sweet REI hip pack that includes a pouch for bear spray. Of course that's no longer made. I've looked all over the place for the REI pack and I've inspected others—none fit a bear spray canister with proper snugness.

So when I ran across the Swift Industries Anchor Hip Pack that allows the optional feedbag attachment — I knew immediately



that my search was over.

If you don't know Swift, you should. This is a small company in Seattle. All the bags are made there. All the bags are designed by actual cyclists who get out and do real bikey adventuring. It's high quality stuff.

Aside from canister-friendly feedbag (which is an add-on, not included) the hip pack is typically smart Swift design with tough poly fabric and a Goldilocks size. But the money feature is a rear flap for stowing a jacket and a saw.

Since I pack my water and tools on my bike, this pouch carries my snack, some first aid stuff, map, water purifier, emergency blanket/bivvy.

At \$140 + \$50 pouch it's not nothing. But it's a lifer. I've had a few Swift bags. One is about 15 years old now. High quality stuff.

## Advice

I've only used my bear spray three times, and each time it was discharged by accident on myself. Word of advice: don't let this happen.

The core issue with accidental bear spray discharge comes down to the tether that holds the trigger guard in place.

This is a classic, "for want of a nail, the war was lost" situation.

The default tether that comes with the spray is elastic that breaks down over the course of a season. Over time, the vibrations from descents down KCT rocky trail cause the trigger to pop off, leaving the spray ready to discharge with the lightest tap on the trigger.

The fix: I replaced the lousy tether with a small loop of 30-lb fishing line. Until this spring that seemed to be the fix. That is, until that loop was snagged on brush as I bushwhacked through thick forest.

Unbeknownst to me, the trigger guard popped off, and as I lifted my bike over an obstacle, my elbow rested on the trigger and unloaded a massive dose directly on to me and a cloud around my riding partner. My bad.

The fix on the fix: tape down the loop on the fishing line. Use weak masking tape that's good enough to hold the loop, but not



strong enough to get in the way should the spray actually need to be deployed.

Another bit of advice: if you must carry the spray on the bike, then carry it in its holster. The holster has a flap that folds over the top of the trigger in a way that keeps it reliably in place. Strap the holster to the top tube.

I think the ideal place to carry the stuff is in a hip pack where your body can take a lot of that vibration out of the system and has the added benefit of keeping the spray with you. It would suck to need the spray that's on your bike that is between you and an angry ferocious thing.