

Heart-to-Heart



A Missouri Politician Wants Cyclists to Ride With 15-Foot-Tall, Fluorescent-Orange Flags

He's proposing the idea in the dubious name of safety.

A pole rising 15 feet into the air with a fluorescent-orange flag at the top—such an object could have many uses, like hailing a rescue helicopter or fending off aggressive raccoons.

But Missouri State Representative Jay Houghton has a different idea. The Republican pol and swine finishing facility manager is pushing a bill that would require cyclists to carry these goofy rods ostensibly for safety reasons—though just whose safety, cyclists or drivers, isn't specified. Here's the amendment in its entirety:

Every bicycle, as defined in section 307.180, operating upon a lettered county road shall be equipped with a flag clearly visible from the rear and suspended not less than fifteen feet above the roadway when the bicycle is standing upright. The flag shall be fluorescent orange in color.

Lettered country roads are all over the place in Missouri. Richard Masoner at the Cyclelicious blog explains what a hassle it would be for cyclists to avoid these streets, should they prefer not to fly the orange badge of shame safety:

The 20,000 miles of "lettered county roads" are a system supplementary routes that are not part of the state highway system. When the system was initially created in the 1920s, transportation officials designated these roads with letters instead of numbers so the local yokels wouldn't confuse them with a state highway.

The state took this system of farm-to-market routes over in 1952, with the goal of providing a state-maintained road within 2 miles of more than 95% of all farm houses, schools, churches, cemeteries and stores. Missouri surpassed this goal, creating one of the largest state-maintained highway systems in America.

Given that hauling around towering poles would pose some difficulty, between the way they alter the bike's balance and smack into overhanging trees, bridges, and electrical wires, some have voiced suspicion that Houghton's act is meant to be punitive against cyclists. It's not a wacky theory given his history. In 2013, he co-sponsored a bill prohibiting cyclists from using state roads when there is a "state-owned bicycle path or trail that runs generally parallel to and within two miles" of the thoroughfare. (It didn't succeed.)

On the bright side, HeartCycle has not scheduled any tours in Missouri for 2016!

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Notes from the Board

Colorado Pedals Project

Last September, at the Interbike trade show in Las Vegas, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper announced that \$100 million would be prioritized for biking and walking projects over the next four years.

The response to this announcement was overwhelmingly positive. Communities across the state expressed support and excitement for improvements to biking and walking.

The Colorado Pedals Project is a multi-million dollar initiative combining public and private funding to make Colorado the best state in the nation to ride a bike.

Two of the top new U.S. bike lanes are in Colorado

In a recent PeopleForBikes list of the top ten new bike lanes in the U.S. in 2015, two protected bike lanes in Colorado took the #7 and #8 spots.

The recently opened Arapahoe Street bike lane in Denver is ranked as #7, and 5th Street in Pueblo is #8. The Pueblo project is part of the Kaiser Permanente-funded Walk and Wheel program that Bicycle Colorado provided technical assistance for.

Pueblo and Denver are tracking performance measures, such as safety and ridership, to determine the impact of these new lanes.

In addition, the Pueblo project has been awarded the WRS Colorado Small Innovative Transportation Solution of the Year. Congratulations to the project team in Pueblo.

Idaho Panhandle Tour

By Bill Buckley

If you are looking for a little bit of everything in a set of rides for a bike tour (smooth roads, flat rides, “lumpy” rides, bike paths, serious climbs, usually near-traffic-free roads and spectacular scenery) then the Idaho Panhandle tour may be for you. If the riding isn’t enough, then add in million dollar views from hotel rooms, enough wildlife to excite any naturalist and some of the better beers in the northwestern part of the United States.

The Idaho Panhandle tour was a seven-day tour that started and ended near the airport in Spokane, Washington. This made transportation to and from the hotel for all travelers quite convenient. (Hats off to the hotel for cheerfully accepting and shipping out bikes from riders who traveled from afar.)

Weather for this entire tour ranged from the single digits celsius (42.5 F) to the low 30’s C (89.4 F). Only a smattering of rain was recorded and only a few souls noticed it. Otherwise, it was either sunny or partially overcast.

There was one noticeable aspect to the atmospheric conditions to the tour and that was smoke. The entire tour consisted of traversing through forested areas that were surrounded by wildfires. And while on occasion the smoke could be either observed or even tasted, only a few folks suffered significantly by its presence.

Fortunately, the tour was lead by Rich “the Doc” Loeffler who helped out those afflicted by the particulates. Doc Loeffler was assisted by Chris “The Pres” Matthews whose presence helped to assure there would be no whining on the tour. The SAG support was provided by Mary Ann “What can I do for you” Loeffler and Kathleen “I’ve made a list” Schindler.



To say the tour worked like a finely manufactured watch is an understatement. For example, during the first day’s ride, human signposts were assigned to assist riders at key intersections. This non-traditional aspect to the ride was included because the bike leaders Doc and The Pres had carefully scouted out the route several times before the tour started.

Another example of how well the tour ran was the easily spotted SAG stops. (Of course there is always the individual who chooses to focus his or her attention solely on the road.) And of course the number of choices for meals, both snack and lunch, was significant.



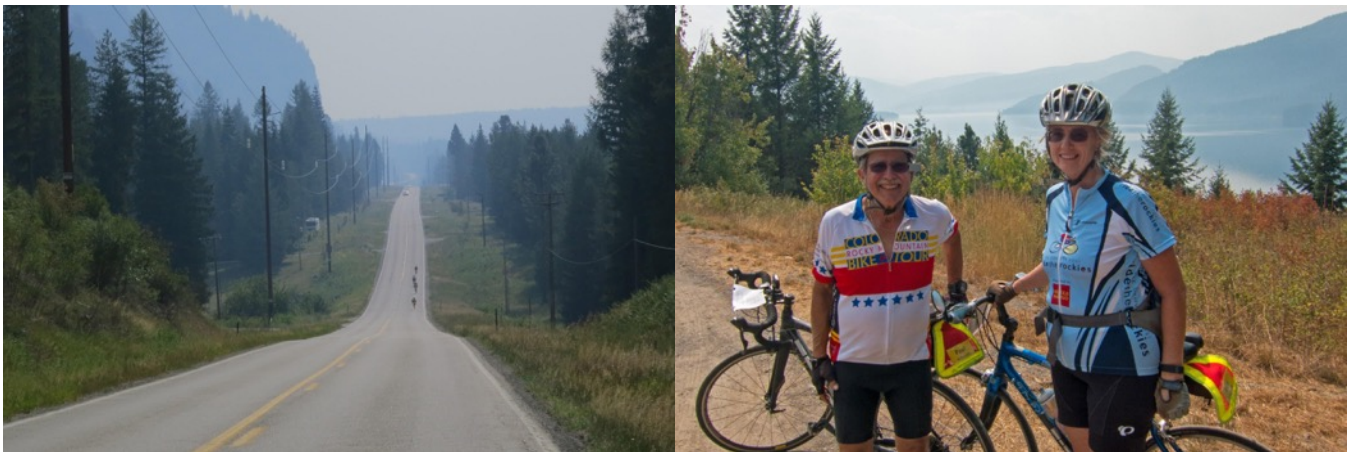
The first day saw the tour head north and west away from Spokane, down the Spokane river, through the woods along a beautiful bike path. After crossing the river, the ride turned east, up the river, by the spectacular falls of downtown Spokane. We meandered through Riverside Park, taking photos and confusing ourselves more than necessary. Eventually, after a SAG stop, we headed toward Coeur d'Alene in Idaho. Nearly all of the riding was completed along a section of the famed Centennial bike path. The path was mostly flat with only a few short rises. Wildlife spotted along the path included ospreys, deer, and a bald eagle. While the hotel was a couple kilometers from the downtown and beach area of Coeur d'Alene, a smooth, flat and traffic free bike path allowed many riders to explore the area.



Day-two started with one of the prettiest sections of the entire tour, circumscribing nearly all of Hayden Lake. With its numerous twists and turns, rises and descents, all within a forest of conifers, the road around Hayden Lake is worthy of a second ride. Our leaders played jokers as they placed the SAG spot up a steep hard packed road into a camp ground. While deer,

osprey, and turkeys were frequently spotted on this section of the ride, fortunately, we did not come across bear or moose. That was later. The remainder of the ride took us first west and eventually along the Pend Oreille River. Unfortunately this was when we first encountered smoke from nearby fires. And as part of the ride, we traversed 3 miles of a hard packed dirt road. The ride finished with a delightful ride across the causeway, parallel to Highway 95, into the town of Sandpoint, Idaho. This location had numerous dining locations, a couple of good breweries/eateries and a Thai restaurant which was rated quite highly by some of the riders. Some outside diners reported ash dropping from the nearby fires.

Day-three could be characterized as a ride of many personalities. The highway along the northern section of Lake Pend Oreille was pleasant with a combination of chip seal and smooth roads, limited traffic and wide shoulders. As Highway 200 continued to follow the Clark Fork river south and east toward Montana, traffic density increased. In addition, the "Ride Idaho" tour was following the same route but in the opposite direction. With nearly zero shoulder space and warm temperatures, this section of the tour may have been the low point. (Although the angel food cake with berries and whipped cream were a hit at the SAG stop.) Smoke continued to follow the tour, but so did great scenery. Eventually we found ourselves on the outskirts of Thompson Falls, Montana at the Rimrock Lodge. There we ate, mostly drank, and watched the Clark Fork river pass by our rooms. A few riders attempted some fishing, but with no success.



So while the trip to Thompson Falls was possibly the least pleasant section of the tour, the ride out of Thompson Falls was considered by many to be the highlight of the tour. We started Day-four by heading up Highway 471 on our way to Thompson Pass. This road was smooth with wide shoulders and virtually traffic-free. Fewer than five vehicles passed us in the two to three hours of riding to the first SAG stop at the top of the pass. In addition, the morning was cool and slightly overcast and there was little sense of smoke in the air. Since the climb is long, 36 km (22 miles), with an altitude gain of 800 meters (2600 feet), it truly is worthy of an HC HC category climb label (HC HC = "HeartCycle hors category"). Riders felt a real sense of accomplishment at the top.

The descent was also along a smooth, wide road that contained wide sweeping turns. Riders easily hit 70 kph (42 mph) as they rode into the valley. Unfortunately, this was also when we were hit with dense smoke, making breathing a bit challenging. At the second SAG stop, at the bottom of the valley, our leaders made a difficult, but important decision to terminate the ride and SAG people over the final climb of the day, Dobson Pass, and into Wallace, Idaho. Several riders had left the second SAG point before the decision was made, so they “got” to ride. When the SAG approached them, they were given the opportunity to continue to ride or get into the Spinter. Approximately seven riders completed the full ride. This group was later characterized as the “EFI” gang.

For those who rode up Dobson Pass, it had less climbing than Thompson Pass, but averaged nearly 10% for the final 5 km (3 miles), with parts up to 14%. Taking the inside section of some of the switchbacks required riders to push themselves up 18% grades. Fortunately, once the climb began, riders experienced very little smoke. (Otherwise, it would have been pure carnage.) From the top of Dobson pass, the final ride into Wallace was only 10 km (6 miles) and virtually all downhill. And the best brewery on the entire tour could be found just at the “city limits” of the 4 blocks by 9 blocks town. Getting into town early gave plenty of time for lunch and relaxation.



During our group meeting in the evening, we were instructed by the “Prime Minister of Wallace” on what to expect on our next day’s Hiawatha Trail mountain bike adventure. Some riding awards were presented for the day’s ride including the “DFL” award to one of our leaders.

Day-five was our chance to ride mountain bikes on the famous Hiawatha Trail. We started off through a cold, wet, very dark tunnel of 2.5 kilometers (1.6 miles) playing follow the leader. On the other side of the tunnel, we saw some terrific smoke-free scenery as we rode down the 20 kilometer (13 miles) route through more tunnels, over several trestle bridges, while stopping to read the informative signs. Most riders opted to shuttle back, but some of the heartier (more mentally challenged?) ones rode back up the hill where lunch was waiting.

We walked into town for our group dinner that night and saw plenty of sights in town: signs welcoming Heartcycle, decorated bikes, signs and a plaque declaring the “Center of the Universe”, and even a spaceship. Dinner was good and there were even a few alcoholic beverages consumed.

Day-six started with some intrigue. It seems a bag of BBQ potato chips was purloined from the SAG truck. And while Kathleen was demanding an answer, coincidentally, some riders started the day early and went back to climb up Dobson Pass before starting the day’s regular route on the beautiful Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes all the way to Harrison, Idaho. (Perhaps some extra energy and some guilt?) The trail followed the Coeur d’Alene river with a stop at the historic Mission Cataldo where we were treated to watching Mary Ann trapping yellow jackets. Some riders bought cool jerseys at the visitor’s center. Just before lunch, many riders saw a moose and her two calves beside the trail. Other wildlife seen included deer, ospreys, grouse, and an eagle.

Our daily happy hour, provided by Kathleen and Mary Ann, this time included fresh cooked sausages, among the other treats. As the afternoon turned to evening, the smoke increased dramatically until the sun was a bright red disc in the sky. Undaunted, we managed to find dinner at the few restaurants in town and many managed to find the ice cream store to bulk up for the final day of riding.



Day-seven, our last day of riding, gave us a variety of terrain to ride through. We started on the Trail, which followed Coeur d’Alene Lake before crossing it on a no-car bridge, then traversed a road under construction, following by a long climb, and then rode across rolling wheat fields to a lunch stop in Fairfield. With a healthy tailwind, many riders cruised along the flats roads at speeds in excess of 50 kph (30 mph). After lunch were more rolling wheat fields, and then back into Spokane. There, numerous riders indulged in further beer tasting before riding the remaining 10 km (6 miles) back to the hotel. These hearty souls paid for their questionable choice by suffering up the last steep hill which they completed at near walking speeds. The more responsible individuals of the tour rode the hill with ease. (Actually, they didn’t. This was “the Doc’s” bit of humor for the tour.)



We spent one more night at the hotel in Spokane. Some folks headed into Spokane for dinner. In the morning, we left at various times and in many different directions after making new friends, renewing old ones, seeing great new scenery, and enjoying everything this tour had to offer!



Colorado HeartCycle 2016 Tours

In Search of Texas Bluebonnets

March 30 - April 6 Status: Open
 7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,180.00
 Jim Bethell, jim@bikes5.com (518) 446-1766
 Jay Wuchner, jaywuchner@comcast.net
 (720) 840-6467

Durango Fixed Base Sampler

June 4 - 8 Status: Wait List
 4 days, Int. \$750.00
 Steve Parker, bsparker116@gmail.com
 (970) 382-9551
 Chris Matthews, chriswmatthews@msn.com
 (303) 618-4789

Paso Robles Wine Country

April 23 - 30 Status: Wait List
 7 days, Int. / Adv. \$1,365.00
 Becky Bottino, bbottino7@gmail.net
 (206) 683-9220
 Ken Condray, condray3@gmail.com
 (425) 334-1444

New Mexico - Land of Enchantment

June 11 - 18 Status: Wait List
 7 days, Adv. \$1,330.00
 Rich Loeffler, richardtloeffler@gmail.com
 (303) 981-2963
 Bob Raicer, rjr@raicer.com

The Island of Mallorca, Spain

April 30 - May 14 Status: Wait List
 14 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,400.00
 Rich Crocker, richcrocker@hotmail.com
 (719) 237-3350
 Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
 (303) 910-7230

Re-Living the Pro Challenge

June 25 - 29 Status: Open
 4 days, Int. / Adv. \$565.00
 Diane Short, dianbike@eazy.net
 303-763-9874

Heart of Holland Bike & Barge

May 21 - 31 Status: Open
 10 days, Easy / Int. \$1,940.00
 Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs@aol.com
 (303) 312-7252

Le Monastere - SESSION 1

July 2 - 9 Status: Wait List
 7 days, Int. / Exp. \$2,350.00
 Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
 (303) 910-7230

Friesland Bike & Barge

June 1 - 11 Status: Open
 10 days, Easy / Int. \$1,940.00
 John Penick, jdpenick@gmail.com
 (203) 232-8946

Le Monastere SESSION 2

July 9 - 16 Status: Wait List
 9 days, Int. / Exp. \$2,350.00
 Bob Rowe, browe@comcasst.net
 (303) 910-7230

Colorado HeartCycle 2016 Tours

Cowboy Country

July 16 - 23 Status: Open
7 days, Adv \$1,225.00
John Penick, jdpenick@gmail.com
(203) 232-8946
Fred Yu, frederickyu@comcast.net
(303) 321-4530

Grand Valley Ramble

September 22 - 25 Status: Open
9 days, Int. / Adv. \$485.00
Joanne Speirs, jcspeirs@aol.com
(303) 312-7252
Doug Moll, doug@aaplus.com
(720) 312-1203

Mothers Daughters Weekend

July 28 - 20 Status: Open
2 days, Easy \$415.00
Julie Lyons, julie@lovesweatandgears.net
Ann Lantz, ann@lovesweatandgears.net

Fireworks of Fall, Upper Hudson River

Sept. 26 - Oct. 2 Status: Open
8 days, Int. \$1,260.00
Jim Bethell, jim@bikes5.com (518)
446-1766
Janet Reilly, janet@bikes5.com

Coast to Coast, The Northern Tier: Year 1

September 19 - 23 Status: Wait List
13 days, Int. / Adv. \$2,490.00
Steve Parker, bsparker116@gmail.com
(970) 382-9551
Chris Matthews, chriswmatthews@msn.com
(303) 618-4789