

This booklet will help the cyclist enjoy the beauties and the grandeur of the California Sierra Mountains. It describes 5 loop trips through 8 scenic passes and a longer trip through the Northern California mountains. The two to five day trips are on roads with relatively light traffic. Descriptions of the trips includes distances, elevations, locations of stores, cafes, motels, and public camps.

SECTION	TRIP	PAGE
II	Deer Creek Pass, Feather River Canyon Loop	2
III	Yuba Pass, Donner Summit loop	3
IV	Echo Summit, Luther Pass, Carson Pass loop	4
V	Ebbetts Pass, Carson Pass loop	5
VI	Tioga Pass, Sonora Pass loop	7
VII	Dunsmuir to Truckee via Lassen National Park	8
VIII	Preparing your bike and yourself	9
IX	Suggested things to take	10
X	Some precautions	13
XI	What to do besides pedal	13
XII	Some good books to read	14
XIII	Miscellaneous data	15

All of the loop trips start on the west side of the Sierra at locations where there are motels or campgrounds. The detailed trip descriptions give the distance in miles from the starting point and the elevation of the location in feet above sea level.

The abbreviations used in the trip descriptions are:

PC	public camp	Jct	junction
RS	ranger station	Rt	route
NF	national forest	Pop	population
NP	national park	el	elevation
SP	state park	mi	miles

II DEER CREEK PASS - FEATHER RIVER CANYON LOOP TRIP

Route summary: Oroville to Chico, Rt 32 to Rt 36 over Deer Creek Pass to Lake Almanor, Greenville, Feather River Canyon to Oroville.

Mileage: 194 ml **Elevation gain:** 6700 ft. **Time:** 2 1/2 to 3 days **Gain per mile:** 34 ft per ml

Start and end: Oroville. **Best dates:** May or September

Maps: CSAA Feather River and Yuba River Regions Lassen National Forest, Plumas National Forest

This is a relatively easy ride. Traffic is usually light except along the Feather River on weekend afternoons.. The best time for the trip is in May when the river is flowing full. The trip may be extended by a day to include a visit to Lassen Volcanic NP.

Start - Oroville Pop 9,000 County Seat Butte County. Motels, Stores, Cafes, CHP, hospital. Start early to avoid winds. Cross the Feather River on Bridge Street. Pass Fish Hatchery and take Table Mountain Road parallel to freeway 7 ml to Rt 70. Left on Rt 70. Go 0.1 ml to Rt 149. Right on Rt 149 to Chico.

- 20 - 200 Leave freeway at Skyway Rd, Go West 0.5 ml to Midway Ave. Rt on Midway to Chico.
- 25 - 200 Chico, Pop 20,000 Stores, motels, cafes, U. of Cal. Go right on Rt 32 in center of town.
Cross freeway and start up long, long hill.
- 41 - 2539 Forest Ranch. Grocery.
- 56 - 3797 Lomo Summit. This Is Ishi country. Read reference 4 for a fascinating true story about
the last Indian to live in this area.
- 60 - 3600 Soda Spring PC near stream. Water.
- 68 - 4261 Transfer Summit. Caution, downhill with curves.
- 73 - 3400 Potato Patch PC. Fee, water.
- 79 - 4400 Elam Creek PC. Fee, water. (A good spot for the first night) The cool air at night gathers
near streams. The warmer sleeping places are on the south facing slopes near sun-warmed rocks.
- 82 - 4500 Jct 36 and 89. Enjoy the forests and meadows along Deer Creek. For a one-day extension,
visit Lassen Volcanic NP. The added distance from this point to Lassen Summit is about 45
miles round trip. There are no stores but there is a cafe and campground near the south entrance.
- 90 - 4939 Deer Creek Pass. A gradual and easy climb.
- 93 - 4600 Jct Rt 36 and Rt 89. RS, store & Cafe. A longer but more scenic route is around the east
side of Lake Almanor through Chester (el 4525, stores, motels, cafes) and is 6 miles.
- 99 - 4500 Lake Almanor PC, fee. Groceries, motel, and cafe at Plumas Pines in summer season.
- 105 - 4500 Fox Farm PC (PG&E).
- 107 - 4590 Canyon Dam Jct. Store and motel. Follow branch of the WPRR down Wolf River.
- 115 - 3600 Greenville County PC. Free, water uncertain.
- 116 - 3570 Greenville. Stores, cafes, motels, RS, hospital. A beautiful little town.
- 128 - 3100 Jct Rt 70 and Feather River Canyon and start of joyful downhill beside roaring river in
the spring. Careful! nearest hospital is at Quincy.
- 136 - 2700 Twain PC (officially closed). Access to river here.
- 146 - 2400 Jct North Fork road, There are several PC's 0.5 and 1.5 miles up the fork. Good fishing.
- 148 - 2350 Belden PC. Motel, cafe, water.
- 154 - 2000 Injun Jim PC.
- 162 - 1600 Arch Rock Tunnel. Watch for water on road in this dark tunnel.
- 168 - 1371 Rest, cross high bridge and start up.
- 174 - 2250 Jarho Gap. Cafe. Start long coast!
- 187 - 200 Back to Jct 149 again and Table Mountain Road.
- 194 - 170 Oroville again. End of ioop.

III YUBA PASS - DONNER SUMMIT LOOP TRIP

Route summary: Start at Nevada City. Take Rt 49 up the isolated Yuba River Canyon, through Yuba Pass, then Rt 89 to Truckee, over Donner Summit, parallel Rt 80 on the old road, and Rt 20 back to Nevada City. **Mileage:** 159 mi. **Elevation gain:** 11700 ft. **Gain per mile:** 74 ft per mi. **Time:** 2 1/2 to 3 days. **Start and end:** Nevada City. **Best time:** May or September. **Maps:** CSAA Feather River and Yuba River Regions Tahoe National Forest

This is a beautiful ride in the spring or fall. The isolated road up along the Yuba River canyon takes one back to the gold rush days. The' first stretch has some ups and downs, but the total ride is not difficult. Three major passes are crossed.

Start - Nevada City, Elevation 2525, Pop 2,000. County Seat Nevada County. Motels, stores, cafes, District RS. The last working deep gold mines were found in this area. There is an interesting mining museum in Grass Valley. Start riding at sunrise to avoid the heat at the lower elevations. Use caution on the hills. The nearest hospital is in Grass Valley.

- 6 - 1238 S. Fork Yuba River (2 more forks to go!)
- 12 - 2884 Sweetland summit.
- 14 - 2100 North San Juan. Motel, cafe, store. Note old church north of town.
- 17 - 1535 Middle Fork Yuba River.
- 21 - 2800 Camptonville. Cafe? Now things get pretty!
- 30 - 3176 Summit and begin of nice downhill coast.
- 33 - 2246 North Fork Yuba River. There are 4 PC's in the canyon between here and Downieville.
- 43 - 2865 Downieville, County Seat Sierra County, the smallest in population. Motels, stores, RS, museum. Downieville was a rich gold mining town in the 1850's. In 1870 \$20,000 was voted for a road from here across Yuha Pass and down the east side.
- 50 - 3400 Union Flat PC.
- 59 - 4187 Sierra City. Motels, small store.
- 60 - 4400 Wild Plum PC, 0.5 mile off the highway
- 62 - 5380 Bassetts. Motel and store.
- 64 - 5600 Sierra PC. A nice place to spend the first night but it may be cold near the river.
- 66 - 5800 Lincoln Creek PC.
- 70 - 6701 Yuba Pass PC if you enjoy the company of RV's.
- 76 - 4935 Sattley on Rt 89 at bottom of fine downhill coast.
- 81 - 4950 Sierraville. Cafe, motel, store, RS.
- 85 - 5800 Cottonwood PC along the highway.
- 87 - 5800 Cold Stream PC.
- 90 - 6441 Truckee Summit and Henness Pass Road.
- 92 - 6200 Little Truckee PC along the highway.
- 103 - 5800 Alder Creek Historical site. Part of the Donner Party spent the winter here in 1846 (see reference 10).
- 105 - 5820 Truckee, Pop 1,400. Cafes, motels west of town, stores, District RS, CHP, hospital, AMTRAK (No checked baggage. Reno AMTRAK has no checked baggage, Greyhound). After going thru the town, go under freeway, past motels, and west on old Donner Pass Road to Donner Memorial SP, camping fee \$4, good museum. As an option if an extra day or so is available, go south on Rt 89 13 ml to Lake Tahoe and take the 75 mi trip around the lake (heavy traffic in the summer). After passing Donner Lake, start up historic Donner Pass Road. Try to pause frequently to see the view and the snow sheds for the SPRR. At one time there were 40 miles of snow sheds. Now only 4 miles remain.

- 115 - 7088 Historic Donner Summit.
- 116 - 7000 Clair Tappaan Lodge of the Sierra Club. About \$10 for lodging, supper, breakfast, and bag lunch if you help with the work. Bring sleeping bag. Make reservations if you have a group. At least one in the group must be a Sierra Club member. Address is P.O Box 36, Norden, Ca. 95724,
- 117 - 6939 Norden. Store, motel.
- 119 - 6766 Soda Springs, cross freeway and go on north side thru Kingvale Park..
- 122 - 6100 Kingvale Park.
- 125 - 5800 Hampshire Rocks PC. Fee.
- 127 - 5900 Big Bend PC, RS, water.
- 128 - 5650 Cisco Grove. Cafe, RS, . Ride on the freeway for 4 miles.
Bicycles are permitted here. Note truck advisory signs on this stretch.
- 132 - 5650 Exit from freeway on Rt 20 to Nevada City.
- 137 - 4500 Bear Valley. Note old flume.
- 140 - 5300 Summit. It's mostly downhill from now on.
- 145 - 4328 Junction with the road to the isolated old mining town of Washington, el 2.612, store, PC on the S Fork of the Yuba River. Six miles down!
- 148 - 4300 White Cloud PC. RS, fee.
- 159 - 2525 Nevada City again. End of trip.

IV ECHO SUMMIT - LUTHER PASS AND CARSON PASS LOOP TRIP

Route summary: Sly Park (16 mi E of Placerville), Rt. 50 over Echo Summit to Rt 89. Over Luther Pass to Rt 88. Over Carson Pass to Omo Ranch Road. Through Fairplay, Somerset, Pleasant Valley and back to Sly Park. **Mileage:** 136 mi. **Elevation gain:** 10500 ft. **Gain per mile:** 77 ft per mi. **Time:** 1.5 to 2 days. **Start and end:** Sly Park. **Best dates:** May or September. **Maps:**CSAA Lake Tahoe Region El Dorado National Forest, US Geological Survey 15' Camino Topographic Sheet

This ride combines close-in views of the American River Canyon with long vistas from the summits of Luther and Carson Pass. The best time is in the spring when the wild flowers are out and the rivers are full. Avoid Rt 50 on summer weekends because of the Lake Tahoe traffic.

 Start - 3470 Sly Park, 916-644-2545. This is a large public park on an artificial lake that is used to store irrigation water. There are 160 sites along the lake. Fee \$3, fishing. A store is near the entrance. Cars may be left in the park if the fee is paid. Start at dawn to avoid the afternoon traffic on Rt 50. An alternate starting point is Placerville, Pop 6,000, el 1860, with stores, motels, and cafes. The additional distance added to the loop is about 13 miles.

- 4 - 3920 Pollock Pines. Jct Rt 50, cafe, grovery, RS 2 mi east
- 13 - 3200 Riverton, low point, end 4 lane road. There are 10 PC's between here and Echo Summit. Their elevations vary from 3,300 to 6,440 ft.
- 22 - 4080 Kyburz. Cafe, motel.
- 33 - 6117 Twin Bridges, A waterfall is up the canyon on your left. There is a cafe at Strawberry.
- 39 - 7382 Echo Summit. This pass was discovered in 1852 and was used extensively because it is 2000 feet lower than the older Carson Route. Weekly stage coach service started in 1857 from Placerville. The traffic was bumper to bumper with 1 to 8 span mule teams and miners on foot. The first road costing \$50,000 was completed in 1860. It was open only in the summer. In the winter the legendary "Snowshoe" Johnson carried the mail over the pass from 1856 to 1876. The road was paved in 1923.

- 43 - 6337 Meyers. Motel, cafe, small grocery, CHP. Leave Rt 50 and take Rt 89 south. Get water.
- 51 - 7740 Luther Pass. Stop and rest at Grass Lake.
- 54 - 7100 Jct Rt 88, Pickett's Junction. Nearest PC is 3 ml down along the Carson River, el 6600 ft. There is another PC 3 ml up Rt 88 and off Hope Valley Road (1 mi. gravel). The Mormon Battallion named Faith, Hope, and Charity Valleys in 1848. See reference 1.
- 63 - 8537 Carson Pass. For a description of the route between here and Cook's Station, see Section V, Ebbetts. Pass - Carson Pass Loop. A good place to spend the first night is near Kirkwood Lake or Silver Lake.
- 95 - 5000 Cook's Station. Cafe, Leave Rt 88, take Omo Ranch Road and watch the bumps.
- 103 - 3600 Omo Ranch. Store.
- 110 - 2600 Jct Fairplay Rd. Turn right.
- 112 - 2300 Fairplay. Store.
- 118 - 2025 Nelson's Corner. Store, Jct Rt P16.
- 119 - 1692 Middle Fork Consumes River.
- 121 - 2090 Somerset. Store, cafe. If you started in Placerville, turn left and go 13 mi to Placerville
- 123 - 1760 North Fork Consumes River.
- 128 - 2430 Pleasant Valley. Store. Follow Rt E16.
- 134 - 3600 Summit. Sly Park Fire Station.
- 136 - 3470 Sly Park again. End of the loop.

V EBBETTS PASS - CARSON PASS LOOP TRIP

Route summary: Start at Calaveras Big Trees State Park or at Murphys. Take lightly traveled Rt 4 over Ebbetts Pass, Rt 89 to Rt 88, up the Carson River and thru Carson Pass. Leave Rt 88 at Pioneer and take hilly back road thru West Point and Sheep Ranch back to Rt 4 and Calaveras State Park or Murphys.

Mileage: 165. **Elevation gain:** 13,100 ft. **Gain per mile:** 79 ft per mi. **Time:** 2.5 to 3 days. **Start:** Calaveras SP. **Best dates:** May., early June or September. **Maps:** CSAA Lake Tahoe Region, Stanislaus National Forest, El Dorado National Forest, US Geological Survey. 15' maps Columbia & Nokelumne Hill

This is a longer ride but most is on lightly traveled roads. The section from Pioneer south is a hill climber's delight. An alternate starting point is at Murphys but it is 25 miles longer. The old hotel and the museum in Murphys are worth seeing.

Start - 4688 Calaveras Big Trees SP. 129 sites, hot showers, swimming and fishing. Stores, motels, and café at Arnold and Darrington. Cars may be left overnight in the picnic parking area if the ranger is notified. The area was explored by John Bidwell in 1841 and stage route to the area was started in 1854. The biggest tree is 300 ft high and 22 ft in diameter. The park is 25 mi NE of Angels Camp. The nearest CHP and hospital are in San Andreas.

- 2 - 4860 Dorrington. Motel, store, RS.
- 16 - 6700 PC with 45 sites. Stanislaus NF
- 20 - 6900 Onion Valley. Motel, cafe.
- 23 - 7000 Bear Valley Resort. (ski bear!)
- 25 - 7300 Silvertip PC. 9 sites.
- 26 - 7400 Lake Alpine PC. 20 sites, store. Rest here because the road gets steep (but very pretty). Rt 4 east of here is closed in the Winter. Traffic is generally light over Ebbetts pass.
- 31 - 8050 Pacific Grade Summit and beautiful little Mosquito Lake.
- 32 - 7600 Pacific Valley PC 1/4 mi south, 6 sites.
- 36 - 7100 Hermit Valley PC, 4 sites, nice valley.

- 41 - 8730 Ebbetts Pass. Major Ebbetts led gold seekers through the pass in 1850. It became a toll road in 1865. Be careful on the switchbacks going down the steep east side.
- 45 - 7500 Silver Creek PC, 13 sites. The scene of a silver strike in 1855. The golden aspens are often pretty here in the fall.
- 54 - 6000 Jct Rts 4 and 89.
- 58 - 5500 Markleeville PC. 9 sites.
- 59 - 5500 Markleeville. Motels, cafe, store, RS First aid, County Seat of Alpine County. Four miles west of town at 5900 feet is Grover Hot Springs State Park with 76 sites and swimming.
- 66 - 5610 Woodfords, Jct Rt 88 and Rt 89. Store?. Go west.
- 67 - 6100 Crystal Springs PC for those who like the companionship of RV's.
- 69 - 6500 Snowshoe PC, 6 sites, water. There are many pretty campsites along this stretch of the Carson River. This is a good place to spend the first night.
- 70 - 6600 Kit Carson PC
- 71 - 7000 Store, cafe, motel
- 72 - 7100 Picketts Junction. Jct Rt 88 and Rt 89. Hope valley was named by the Mormon Battallion in 1848. See ref. 1. Hope Valley PC is up Rt 88 3 mi. and then 1 mi off on a gravel road.
- 81 - 8573 Carson Pass, enter El Dorado NF. The pass was named by the Mormon Battallion. Fremont was one of the first to cross the pass in 1844. See reference 1. A toll road was completed over the pass in 1862. The pass has been open in winter since the road was relocated to the north side of the canyon.
- 86 - 7800 Caples Lake PC. 35 sites.
- 89 - 7600 Kirkwood Lake PC, 1/2 mi N of Rt 88.
- 93 - 7200 Silver Lake PCs. 75 sites, store, RS, Kit Carson Lodge.
- 97 - 7900 Tragedy Springs Summit. Three members of the Mormon Battallion were killed by Indians here in 1848.
- 103 - 6500 Lumberyard PC. District RS. Water.
- 111 - 5430 Hams Station. Motel, cafe.
- 113 - 5000 Cooks Station. Cafe, Jct Omo Ranch Road.
- 125 - 2970 Pioneer. Store, motel, water. Leave Rt 88 and take Defender Road to West Point.
- 128 - 2100 Mokelumne River. Swimming downstream from bridge.
- 133 - 2790 West Point. Store, motel. The land from here to the end of the ride is nearly all private. Request permission before sleeping on private land. Take Rt 26 for 1 mi to Railroad Flat Road.
- 134 - 2452 Middle Fork Mukelumne River. This stretch from here to the end of the ride has some ups and downs, but it is quiet and scenic particularly when the spring flowers are in bloom.
- 135 - 2740 Wilseyville site.
- 137 - 2215 South Fork Mukelmune River.
- 140 - 2750 Railroad Flat. Site of placer mining.
- 141 - 2640 Jct Jesus Maria Road.
- 142 - 2249 Jesus Maria Creek.
- 146 - 2512 Jct road to Mountain Ranch & San Andreas.
- 149 - 1900 O'Neil Creek. The low point of the trip.
- 151 - 2370 Sheep Ranch site.
- 152 - 1950 San Antonio Creek.
- 153 - 2700 Jct Avery Sheep Ranch Road. Take it unless you left your car in Murphys.
- 158 - 3550 Avery. Jct Rt 4.
- 162 - 4000 Arnold. Motels, store, RS, ambulance.
- 165 - 4688 Calaveras Big Trees State Park again. End of ioop.

VI TIOGA PASS - SONORA PASS LOOP TRIP

Route summary: Sonora to Yosemite NP via Big Oak Flat Road, across Tioga Pass (el 9945), Lee Vining, Bridgeport, Sonora Pass (el 9624) and back to Sonora.

Mileage: 245 mi. **Elevation gain:** 16000 ft. **Gain per mile:** 64 ft per mi

Time: 3 1/2 to 4 days **Start & end:** Sonora. **Best dates:** June or early July

This is the most difficult of all the rides. **Sonora Pass is a real "chain stretcher"!!**

Maps: CSAA Yosemite National Park, CSAA Lake Tahoe Region, Toiyabe National Forest Stanislaus National Forest, US Geological Survey 15' topo map, Tuolumne Meadows

The scenery on this loop is unsurpassed. The ride thru the high country of Yosemite NP is an unforgettable experience. Crossing Tioga pass from the west is relatively easy and the 10 mile coast down the east side fast! Sonora pass is a bit steep near the top but the traffic is usually light and there is plenty of time to rest in the flower- filled meadows. This ride is a highly rewarding experience.

Start - 1796 Sonora. Pop 3100, founded 1850, many motels, cafes, stores, PS, Greyhound, CHP, sheriff, hospital, ambulance, and historical sites. It is best to start at sunrise to avoid the heat at the lower elevations. Go east on Rt 108.

- 2.5 - 2000 Leave Rt 108 and take Tuolumne Road right.
- 5 - 2220 Turn right on Wards Ferry Road. Watch bumps on down grade.
- 13 - 900 Cross Tuolumne River, low point of the trip
- 20 - 2844 Groveland (for the second breakfast). Cafe, store, RS.
- 28 ????- Pines PC, water.
- 31 - 3000 Buck Meadows. Store, cafe.
- 45 - 4315 Big Oak Flat entrance to Yosemite NP. Water, Fee (save receipt for exit later), Hodgen Meadow PC is 1/2 ml off road to left at entrance station.
- 50- 6192 Crane Flat PC. Fee.
- 54 - 6500 Jct Tioga Pass Road. Store June 1 thru August 31.
- 65 - 7120 Smokey Jack PC. Fee, water.
- 70 - 8158 White Wolf 1.5 mi.north of road. Good cafe, tent cabins, RS, small store, PC. Season June 1 thru August 31. This area is a nice place to spend the first night.
- 76 - 7450 Yosemite Creek crossing and trailhead.
- 80 - 8090 Porcupine Flat PC. Fee, water, telephone.
- 87 - 8141 Tioga Lake, "walkin" PC (crowded)
- 95 - 8600 Tuolumne Meadows. Small cafe, store, RS, tent cabins, large PC, telephone. Season usually June one thru August 31.
- 102 - 9945 Tioga Pass Entrance Station, water. Prepare for 11 ml downhill!
- 103 - 9651 Tioga Lake PC.
- 104 - 9523 Ellery Lake PC, motel, store. The old Tioga Road was built in 1883 to carry equipment to a silver mine near here.
- 112 - 7200 RS Inyo NF. Water, weather reports.
- 113 - 7000 Lee Vining Creek PC.
- 114 - 6780 Lee Vining. Motels, stores, Greyhound, water. Named after Leroy Vining a prospector who found gold in the area in 1854.
- 128 - 8138 Conway Summit (the grade can be hot and windy).
- 147 - 6465 Bridgeport. Motels, cafes, stores, museum, CHP, County Seat, Mono County.
- 151 - 6800 District RS. Toyaibe NF.
- 154 - 7000 Aspen Creek PC on creek that parallels the road. Entrance is not marked, look for tables along creek. No fee. Suitable place for the second night but can be frosty even in July.
- 162 - 7519 Devils Gate Summit.

- 164 - 6950 Sonora Jct. Take Rt 108 left.
- 170 - 7155 Leavitts Meadows. Cafe, motel, PC. Rest here because the road gets serious now. After climbing about 500 feet look for Leavitts Falls about 200 feet off the road on the left. Near the top of the pass the road becomes a chain stretcher. If you resort to switchbacking, watch and listen for cars. Rest frequently at these high altitudes.
- 179 - 9624 Sonora Pass! Enter Stanislaus NF and Tuolumne County. Check brakes and prepare for steep downhill with sharp corners. A toll road was built over the pass in 1864.
- 188 - 6500 Kennedy Meadows. Store, motel, cafe, telephone.
- 193 - 5800 Dardenelle. Store, motel, cafe, RS. There are 6 PCs between here and Clark Fork. The last one, 1.5 ml before the Fork, has the last water for a while.
- 196 - 5670 Clark Fork Stanislaus River road junction. Low point
- 201 - 6640 summit. It's mostly downhill from now on.
- 203 - 6000 Cascade Creek PC. Water?
- 214 - 5230 Strawberry. Cafe, store, motel, telephone.
- 215 - 5600 Pinecrest. District RS.
- 225 - 4963 Long Barn. Cafe, store, motel, RS.
- 229 - 4570 Ni-Wuk Village. Cafe, store, motel, RS.
- 232 - 3650 Twain Harte. If traffic is heavy, take Tuolumne Road back to Sonora, 3.5 miles. If time permits, visit the old town of Tuolumne, el 2577.
- 245 - 1796 Sonora again. End of the loop.
- (Note: Sorensen's Resort 1/2 miles east of 88 & 89 junction has meals and a small store in the summer)

VII DUNSMUIR TO TRUCKEE NORTHERN SIERRA TRIP

Route summary: Dunsmuir (served by AMTRAK), McCloud, McArthur Burney Falls SP, Lassen NP, Lake Almanor, Feather River Canyon, Quincy, Plumas Eureka SP, Sierraville, and Truckee (AMTRAK but no checked baggage. Reno AMTRAK has checked baggage and Greyhound). **Mileage:** 263
Elevation gain: 12000 ft. **Elevation gain per mile:** 46 ft per mi. **Time:** 4.5 days riding **Best time:** June or September. **Maps:** CSAA Northeastern California, CSAA Feather River and Yuba River Region Shasta Trinity National Forest, Lassen National Forest, Plumas National Forest, Tahoe National Forest

This is a nice ride particularly in the autumn. The Lassen Summit can be closed by snow in early June - check with CHP or CSAA. The distances and elevation gains each day are not severe, so panniers, cooking equipment, and more clothes can be carried. If an extra day is available, circle Lake Tahoe in the fall after the summer traffic has gone.

- Start - 2347** Dunsmuir. Pop 2,300, motels, stores, cafes, spring water! See Section XIII or CSAA for a list of motels or write Chamber of Commerce, Dunsmuir, 96025. It is only 40 miles to the suggested place to spend the first night so a late start is ok.
- 7 - 3600 Jct Rt 89, go right and climb some more.
- 12 - 4484 McCloud Summit. The rest of the day is flatter.
- 17 - 3238 McCloud. Store, cafe, motel. Note McCloud logging RR.
- 28 - 3800 Cattle Camp PC, 8 sites.
- 40 - 3000 McArthur-Burney Falls SP. 118 spaces, showers, store, fee \$4. Reservations may be required from 6-1 to 9-15. Write State Department of Parks and Recreation, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, Ca. 95814. This is the suggested first night stop.
- 54 - 3200 Boundary PC. 13 sites.
- 60 - 3200 Hat Creek. Store, cafe, motel, fishing, water.
- 67 - 4300 Subway Caves. Water. Bring flashlight.

- 68 - 4360 Old Station. Motel, store, Jct 44. There are 3 PCs within a few miles of here on Rt 89.
- 81 - 5740 Jct 44. Entrance Lassen NP. Fee (save receipt for exit), interpretive center. If early or late in the season, check which PCs are open.
- 86 - 5400 Lost Creek PC.
- 94 - 6700 Summit Lake PCs. Nice mountain lake to spend the second night.
- 102 - 8500 Lassen Summit. Trail to Lassen Peak, 10457. Last eruption was in 1915. it's still active.
- 108 - 7000 Sulphur Works. Steam vents, hot pools.
- 109 - 6700 Entrance Station. PC, cafe.
- 114 - 5700 Jct Rt 36. Morgan Summit- Take Rt 36 east.
- 122 - 4700 Guernsey Creek PC, fee, 25 sites.
- 126 - 4500 Jct Rt 36 and Rt 89. From here to the Feather River refer to the Deer Creek Pass to Feather River Loop trip description, •section II. Greenville is a convenient spot to spend the third night.
- 172 - 3100 Jct Rt 89 and Rt 40. Feather River Canyon. Go east up the canyon.
- 176 - 3223 Keddie.. Jct Oregon branch of the WPRR. Famous Y trestle over the river 1/2 mi.north of the RR station. Security concerns may make this a closed area.
- 183 - 3423 Quincy. Stores, cafes, motels, historical museum, hospital, airport, CHP, sheriff, County Seat Plumas County, District RS.
- 190 - 3900 Famous loop on the Western Pacific Railroad. (Rail fans, hike bike and hike along RR)
- 205 - 4300 Little Bear Campground, privately operated, AAA approved.
- 207 - 4390 Blairsden (el 4420), Craegle (el 4400), and Mohawk (el 4350). 3 small settlements within a mile. Motel, cafe, and store at Greagle. Cafe and RS at Mohawk. Suggested fourth night stop is at Plumas-Eureka SF, 4 ml off on Rt A14 and **up** 1000 ft.
- 211 - 5250 Plumas-Eureka SP. Showers, fee \$4. 67 sites. Cafe in Johnsville (expensive) .2 mi from the park. Interesting mining museum and partially restored mill.
- 216 - 4400 Graegle. Jct Rt 89. Motel, store, cafe.
- 232 - 5000 Jct Rt 49. See the description of the Yuba Pass - Donner Pass Loop, section III, p. 5, for the ride from here to Truckee.
- 263 - 5820 Truckee, Pop 1,400, AMTRAK (**NO CHECKED BAGGAGE**). An additional trip is to Lake Tahoe. Truckee to Lake Tahoe is 13 miles via the Truckee River route. Distance around the Lake is 75 miles. Traffic is heavy in summer around the lake. Donner Memorial SP is 3 miles west of Truckee has a good museum.

VIII PREPARING YOUR BIKE AND YOURSELF

Your enjoyment of the Sierras can be increased if you and your bike are well prepared. To prepare yourself for a trip, take a number of one day rides more than 50 miles long that have more than 5000 feet of elevation gain. If possible, ride a bike to school or work regularly and try to ride during the noon hours and in the evenings. On long rides “listen” to your body symptoms and learn to recognize when it is time to rest so that you can complete the day and not feel discomfort. Get plenty of sleep and avoid “junk food” and sweets.

Preparing your bike for the Sierra loop trips is simple because on these short trips no panniers or rear bags are needed. Just install a rack on the back and get a front handlebar bag. Make sure to use lock washers when installing the rear rack and tighten the bolts well. Some of the roads are rough, so give your bike a good shake test to see that things don't come loose. Load it up and ride over the roughest roads you can find.

Lubricate hubs, derailleurs, and pedals if needed, and adjust derailleur stops carefully to prevent embarrassing chain debacles. They will always happen so carry an old rag or sock to keep the grease off your hands when putting the chain on the sprocket.

If you are strong and/or young the grades on most of these rides can be handled without alpine or geriatric gearing. However, Ebbetts pass and Sonora are a bit steep in spots. A low gear of about 36 inches is suggested for all the trips. The "gear" is computed by multiplying the wheel diameter by the number of teeth on the front sprocket and dividing by the number of teeth on the rear sprocket. For example, with a standard 27 inch wheel, if the front sprocket has 36 teeth and the rear has 27 teeth, the "gear" is $27" \times 36/27 = 36$ inches. Wide range gearing will usually require a rear derailleur with a long arm.

Handle bar padding can increase the comfort on a long trip and also avoid nerve damage to the hands. It also feels nice and warm on cold mornings. Some bike stores have a thick tape that can be applied in several layers to make a soft covering.

Install a good pair of strong tires. Inflate tires to the recommended pressure daily.

Before going on a trip in the High Sierra, follow the weather reports and forecasts for several days particularly if traveling in the fall. Usually several days of clear and cold weather follow the passage of a storm system over the mountains. Most storms move from west to east. Short summer afternoon rain squalls are usually warm and present no problems. Autumn storms often bring snow on the high passes even in late August. If caught in snow in the high country in the autumn, hitch a ride to lower elevations as soon as possible.

It is not a good idea to plan to ride at night on the two-lane mountain roads. However, one should be prepared for possible night riding by mounting a 3 inch red truck type reflector on the back of the rear rack. These reflectors are available from automotive parts stores. A 2 inch white reflector on the front, pedal reflectors, and wheel reflectors are also required for night riding in California.

IX SUGGESTED THINGS TO TAKE

The word in selecting equipment is "travel light". Food, clothing, and tools should be selected to be light but essential. On the short loop trips, panniers and cooking equipment are not needed. Carrying camping equipment is strongly recommended so that one can be free from a rigid schedule and not dependent upon motels. This allows flexibility to accommodate unexpected side trips, time for explorations, rain storms, or mechanical trouble. The feeling of being able to stop, eat well, and sleep comfortably at any time or place is a happy feeling!

On the short loop trips a lightweight sleeping bag, tube tent, small foam pad, and spare clothing can be carried on the back. In rainy weather they can be put in a waterproof oversize stuff bag. A more stable load results if the pad and the tube tent are folded flat and put under the sleeping bag. The load can be tied down with rubber stretch cords but watch that they don't come loose and wrap around the wheel. Food and other items can be carried in a front handlebar bag where they are more accessible. Tools and a spare tube are seldom used so they can be stored in a small bag hung under the seat or from the top horizontal bar of the frame. Two water bottles are needed. They can be supplemented with canned juices, beer in the evening, etc. if sleeping in a campsite without water.

All of the trips described have stores and cafes at frequent intervals, so it is not necessary to carry large quantities of food. The ideal is to find a food store late in the afternoon so that the heavier items for the evening meal do not have to be carried so far.

The selection of lightweight clothing for the large range of altitudes and temperatures should get some attention. For the fall and spring rides, a wool shirt and pair of warm wool pants for the nights and mornings at high altitudes are comfortable. Cotton pants and long underwear are an alternative. Freezing morning temperatures on the east side of the Sierras above 6000 feet are common even in mid summer. At low elevations one can always roll up the pants and take off the shirt.

To reduce body heat loss, some type of windproof jacket is needed. Although it “seldom rains in the Sierras in summer”, rain can spoil a nice trip if you aren't prepared. A rain suit consisting of pants and a hooded jacket made of lightweight coated material can provide both rain and wind protection. They are available in bright orange or yellow so that the rider can be seen in the rain or at dusk. (Most ponchos are nearly useless when travelling on a bike at nearly any speed) In the autumn and early Spring a turtle neck sweater and a windbreaker with a hood are a great comfort when riding in the early frosty mornings. An extra pair of socks may be used to keep hands warm if the toes don't need them.

CLOTHING, SLEEPING GEAR AND SUCH

The following checklist is used by the author. It may be incomplete or excessive for your needs:

Sleeping bag, (2.25 lb down), 57 oz.
 Ensolite pad, short 10 oz,
 Tube tent, line, and 6 clothespins 20 oz.
 Stuff bag, waterproof, large, bright color 3 oz.
 Rainsuit (jacket & pants, coated nylon, bright color), 17 oz.
 Sweater, turtleneck, lightweight, bright color 12 oz.
 Wool socks, 2 pairs, Use one pair for mittens 6 oz.
 Wool pants, tight windproof weave with belt 20 oz.
 Shirt, warm, bright color 12 oz.
 Underwear (long underwear if pants are cotton) 9 oz.
 Shoes, light but suitable for walking over rocks 22 oz.
 Wool cap for wear at night 2 oz.
 Helmet with rear view mirror attached 20 oz.
 Cycling gloves, leather with fingers exposed 2 oz.
 Identification, medical data, credit cards 1 oz.
 Handlebar bag and support bracket 17 oz.
Total weight of sleeping gear = 230 oz=14.4 lbs

TOOLS AND SPARE PARTS

Tire patching kit with fresh cement 2 oz.
 Tire iron for removing casing 1
 Emory cloth for cleaning rims
 Small screwdriver 1 oz.
 Small pliers to loosen valve nut etc. 2 oz.
 Small Crescent wrench 4 oz.
 Chain oil (a Cutter's bottle is a good .dispenser) 2 oz.
 Spare inner tube 6 oz.

Tire boot (part of old tire casing) 1 oz.
 Spare brake shoe of correct size 1 oz.
 Spare brake cable 2 oz.
 Spare derailleur cable 2
 Spare bolts, nuts, and lockwashers 1 oz.
 Spare spokes of correct length in seat tube 2 oz.
 Spoke wrench 2 oz.
 Glass fiber tape, small roll 1 oz.
 Tool bag 4 oz.
 Pump 5 oz.
 Adapter, Presto valve to Schrader valve 1 oz.
 Rag or old sock for chain debacles 1 oz.
Total weight of tools and spare parts = 41 oz=2.6 lbs

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Suntan lotion 2 oz.
 Lip salve 1
 Soap in small plastic bag 1 oz.
 Compass, small pocket type 1 oz.
 Band-aids 1 oz.
 Maps 2
 Pencil and small note pad 1 oz.
 Pants clips 2 oz.
 Sun glasses 2 oz.
 Salt and aspirin tablets 1 oz.
 Cup, aluminum 1 oz.
 Spoon 1 oz.
 Knife 1 oz.
 Can opener, lightweight "GI" type 1 oz.
 Plastic bags for food, tools, clothes & seat 2 oz.
 Book, paperback 6 oz.
 Radio for weather information at night 7 oz.
 Rubber stretch cords (2) for rear load 4 oz.
 Water bottles (2) full 44 oz.
Total weight of miscellaneous items = 81 oz=5.1 lbs

FOOD ITEMS CARRIED AT START OF RIDE BY THE AUTHOR

Granola mixed with powdered milk, 3 days supply 15 oz.
 Peanut butter mixed with jam in squeeze tube 6 oz.
 Cheese (hard) 8 oz.
 Pilot biscuits or hard bicycle-proof bread 4 oz.
 Tuna or chicken, small can 8 oz.
 Dried fruit, mixed 8 oz.
 Dextrose tablets for that last hill of the day 2 oz.
 Instant cocoa powder 3 oz.
Total weight of food items = 54 oz=3.4 lbs

Total weight of all items carried= 25.5 lbs

X SOME PRECAUTIONS

Check the weather reports and forecasts before starting particularly in the late fall. Bikes don't like snow! Review the weather situation after 35 or 40 miles to see if the trip should be aborted. Ranger stations or CHP offices have weather reports or can get them for you. Read a little about hypothermia, symptoms, treatment, and how to avoid it. Carry a radio on the longer rides to get weather forecasts at night. You can hitch a ride to lower elevations if the weather turns bad. There are lots of pickup trucks in the mountains.

Travel in small groups. If more than 3 riders attempt to travel together the probability of having to wait for somebody approaches 100%. Agree on meeting places or places to leave messages (ranger stations, PC's, etc.). Watch for potholes in the rural roads particularly in the spring after the winter frosts.

Carry enough food and water in the late afternoons for supper and breakfast so that you can spend the night wherever you happen to be in the event of a breakdown, illness, or an unexpected storm.

Make attempts to become sensitive to body signs of fatigue, excessive heat, cold, or thirst and take care of them before they reach the pain level. Do not take drugs, stimulants, nor pain killers that might conceal body signs that might require preventative or remedial action. Rest and read in a lying position 10 to 15 minutes every hour to ration your strength to last for several days. These rides should not be ridden like one-day centuries. They should be pleasurable sightseeing trips. So rest before you are tired, drink before you are thirsty and (you fill in the rest).

Inspect the bike frequently for worn brake cables, loose bolts, and other problems. Check brakes before the long downhills, particularly on the Sonora Pass loop. Oil the chain frequently to reduce friction and wear.

When leaving a car in a public place overnight, avoid leaving anything in sight. Leave the door to the glove box open. Install a cap on the gas tank that can be locked. An inexpensive switch is available that sounds the horn when the engine compartment is opened.

Avoid traveling on the first day of deer hunting season. Inebriated deer hunters may be hazardous to your health.

XI WHAT TO DO BESIDES PEDAL

These High Sierra trips take one through some of the most scenic areas in the U.S. They pass through places of great historic interest. The changes in elevation reveal many different types of trees and flowers including unforgettable alpine meadows and lakes. The exposed rocks reveal the geological history for anybody to see. The enjoyment gained from these rides can be increased by a little reading-in some of these areas.

When traveling, watch for historic signs and markers. Visit the museums and talk with the old timers that have retired to the quiet foothills. The rides described are not races nor endurance tests. There is enough time for the average 52 year old like the author to stop frequently at historic and scenic spots or talk with the local citizens. These unexpected experiences on these rides provide the greatest pleasures and best memories. Be flexible and avoid rigid schedules so that you can stop and enjoy them. This can be helped by being prepared to stop and sleep anywhere along the route. If you do this be sure to minimize your "impact" upon the environment by removing all traces of your stay. Traveling in small groups or alone improves your flexibility and increases the chances for local experiences.

XII Some good books to read

- 1 The Year of Decision, 1846, B.A. DeVoto, Little Brown & Co., 1943 This book weaves together the story of the Donner Party, the Fremont story, and the story of the Mormon Battallion. It reads like a mystery novel.
- 2 Kit Carson and the Wild Frontier, R. Moody, Random House, 1955
- 3 Donner Pass and Those who Crossed it. C.R. Stewart, Calif. Historical Society, 1960
- 4 Ishi in two Worlds, T. Kroeber, Univ.. of Calif. Press, 1961 The story of the last indian of his tribe.
- 5 The Mighty Sierra, Portrait of a Mountain World, D. Webster, American West Publishing Co., Palo Alto, 1972. The best of many books about the Sierras. Exellent pictures and well written text.
- 6 The Mountains of California, John Muir, Houghton-Mifflin, 1917. Written about 1884 - a classic.
- 7 Son of the Wilderness, the Life of John Muir, L.M. Wolfe, Alfred Knopf, 1945.
- 8 Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of California, R. Nadeau, Ritchie Press, 1965.
- 9 The Shirley Letters from the California Mines (1851-1852), Alfred Knopf, 1970. Letters written by a doctor's wife from mining camps.
- 10 Ordeal by Hunger: the Story of the Donner Party, C.R. Stewart, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960.
- 11 Anybody's Gold: the Story of California's Mining Towns, J.J. Jackson, D. Appleton-Century, 1941.
- 12 Historic Spots in California, M.B. Hoover, Stanford Univ. Press, 1958.
- 13 History of the Donner Party, C.F. McGlashan, Stanford Univ. Press, 1962.
- 14 Two Wheel Travel: Bicycle camping and Touring, Bike World, Mountain View, 1974 (paperback).
- 15 Bike Tripping, T. Cuthbertson, Bike World, Mountain View, 1972 (paperback).
- 16 Bicycle Camping and Touring, Leisure Marketing, San Rafael (paperback).
- 17 Travelling by Bike, World Publications, P.O. Box 366, Mountain View, Ca., 94042 (paperback).
- 18 Richard's Bicycle Book, A guide to Buying, Maintaining, and Repairing, R. Ballantine, Ballantine Books, N. Y., 1978, (paperback).

XIII MISCELLANEOUS DATA (Caution: Phone numbers may be out of date)

AMTRAK reservations toll free 1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245)

Yosemite NP Headquarters (209)372-4461, Hospital (209)372-4240

Lassen Volcanic NP (916)595-4421, McArthur-Burney Falls SP (916)335-2777

Plumes-Eureka SP (916)836-2380, Grover Hot Springs SP (916)694-2248

Donner Memorial SF (916)587-3789

Calaveras Big Trees SP (209)795-1181, P.O. Box 686, Arnold, Ca. 95223

Maps of the National Forests are available by mail from the San Francisco headquarters or from National Forest Ranger stations. Check with ranger stations for latest weather information.

US Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service Office of Information 630 Sansome St., San Francisco, Ca. 94111, (415)556-0122

Google maps are excellent. Latitude and longitude can be found by clicking on "what's there".

Tahoe National Forest Supervisor, Nevada City, Ca. 95959, (916)265-4531

El Dorado National Forest Supervisor, 100 Forni Road, Placerville, Ca. 95667, (916)622-5061

Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor, 175 S. Fairview Lane, Sonora, Ca. 95370, (209)532-3671

Lassen National Forest Supervisor, 707 Nevada St., Susanville, Ca. 96130

Plumas National Forest Supervisor, P.O. Box 1500, Quincy, Ca. 95971

US Geological Service mail order map sales, Box 25286, Federal Center, Denver, Cob. 80225

CHP emergency number 1-800-TELL-CHP (1-800-835-5247)

Times of sun rises and sets anywhere :

<http://www.usno.navy.mil/USNO/astronomical-applications/data-services/rs-one-year-us>

maps: <http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&tab=wl>

Weather predictions: <http://www.noaa.gov/>

and <http://www.weather.com/>

Historical weather records: <http://www.weatherbase.com/>

XIV DISCLAIMER

This document was originally written in 1979 after I had ridden all the routes. It was revised in 2011 but many of the businesses like motels, grocery stores and phone numbers may have changed. Be assured that the elevations and mileages are still accurate. Contact me if you have questions.

Norton Bell, nwbell@juno.com

File: BGHS.doc

Revised 10-2-11