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Summary of the 2016 IAMC Challenge



by *Craig O. Olsen*

The year 2016 has come and gone. It marked the 7th year of the IAMC Challenge, which ran from April 1, to December 31, 2016. In 2016 we had 33 club members participate in the IAMC Challenge of which 25 participants posted photos at one or more sites. As usual, there were some who visited sites but did not post any photos. The theme for 2016 was small towns in Idaho. There were 40 of them listed alphabetically ranging in population from 16 to 1,189, and they covered the entire state from the Canadian to the Utah & Nevada borders, as well as the Wyoming & Montana to the Oregon and Washington borders.

While the majority of these sites could be reached on paved roads, many club members chose more adventurous off-road routes to visit many of them. What constituted a site visit was a photo of the participant and/or the participant's bike displaying this year's blue Challenge bandana at some point identifying the site. Credit for a site visit was only given to those participants who uploaded their photos to the appropriate 2016 Challenge site at motoidaho.org on or before December 31, 2015. In addition to the 40 small towns, there were 4 additional mandatory sites in order to achieve any tire level. These mandatory sites included the 4 dealerships that are so instrumental in sponsoring our club - Happy Trail Products, Big Twin, Carl's Cycles, and Snake River Yamaha.

Of the 25 club members who participated during 2016, four achieved the bronze tire level (10-19 sites visited): Matt Spurlock, Burton Briggs, Gary Mountain and Trent Holderness. There were five who reached the silver tire level (20-29 sites visited): Wayne Smith, Bob Hammond, Dan Driscoll, Gary Kayser and Jim Jorgensen. Two club members attained the gold tire level (30-39 sites visited): Arden Hill and Chuck Scheer. There were six club members who achieved platinum tire level (40-44 sites visited): Mark England, Ron Schinnerer, Ron Hoppins, Doug Patchin, Rick Skinner and Craig Olsen.

We thank Mike Hardy for organizing the IAMC Challenge for 2016, and we recognize all who participated in visiting any of the 2016 Challenge sites. Several of the articles in this issue of the newsletter highlight the 2016 Challenge journey of our platinum and gold tire level winners.

Off-road riding tips: When to sit, stand or paddle

by Marisa McInturff

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Marisa McInturff is a Motorcycle Safety Foundation certified instructor and an instructor with Zacker Adventures, teaching off-road riding techniques to owners of adventure motorcycles.



Knowing when to sit or stand when riding in the dirt will help you go faster with greater control. Photo by Kevin Wing.

One of the most frequently asked questions by new off-road riders is: "Should I stand, or should I sit?"

One of the most important off-road riding skills you should learn and practice is standing while riding, whether you are a seasoned street rider learning to ride off-road or totally new to motorcycling. Standing while riding does more than make you look cool and allow you to stretch your legs – it will keep you balanced and in control of your motorcycle.

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Riding posture and controls setup should be carefully analyzed before trying to ride while standing. Always keep your head up and eyes looking where you want to go and remember to relax. Photo by Caleb McInturff.

If you are a brand new dirt rider, I suggest trying to stand while



riding off-road as much as possible to get comfortable. At first, standing while riding may seem clumsy and unnatural. Over time and with plenty of practice, it will become second nature. Being able to decide when to sit, stand, or paddle your bike through a section will conserve energy and leave you a more skilled off-road rider.

Motorcycle setup and posture

This topic deserves a post of its own, but we will hit the high points for now. First and foremost, it is important to set up your motorcycle so that it is comfortable to ride whether you're standing or sitting. This usually takes a little adjusting. Typically, folks will need to move their gear shifter and rear brake lever up slightly and their clutch and front brake levers down slightly. Handlebars should be in line with the front forks and risers should not be considered unless the length from the foot pegs to the end of the handlebars is less than half the length of your height.

You should stand with the balls of your feet on or near the foot pegs, knees somewhat bent, and your body leaning slightly forwards towards the handlebars. Be sure to keep a slight bend in your arms, your elbows up, and only one or two fingers on the clutch and front brake. Keep your head and eyes up and looking in the direction you want to go.

Moving your feet further forward on the pegs places your toes closer to the controls and will make it easier to reach the gear shift lever and rear brake while standing, but will give you slightly less balance and control through very technical terrain.

Many new off-road riders have trouble with unwanted throttle and steering input while standing. This is largely due to improper bike setup and can be solved by analyzing your riding posture and controls. It is important to note that if you cannot comfortably use the controls, you will not feel comfortable standing and riding. It might take a little trial and error to find the adjustment that is right for you.

If the terrain is smooth, you can sit to conserve energy. Sliding back will weight the rear and increase traction, necessary for hard acceleration. Photo by Caleb McInturff.



Sitting

For most people, sitting is the most natural position on the motorcycle. You are conserving the most energy by sitting and have less distance to fall if you do crash.

Typically, you sit when you are navigating long and relatively smooth sections or tighter corners on smooth terrain. Sliding back on the seat while sitting can help with acceleration, as well. Due to the increased weight over the rear tire, traction will be improved. When you think about sitting while riding off-road, think of flat-track racers and their ability to accelerate quickly and slide around corners.



Rocks, roots, ruts and other obstacles are best traversed while standing. Be sure to bend your knees and elbows and keep your body loose. Photo by Caleb McInturff.

Standing

Standing takes a bit more energy, but allows your body a wide range of motion to aid in balancing the motorcycle. Keeping your legs slightly bent will act like suspension as you cross obstacles in the trail, saving your back from injuries resulting from the jarring. While standing, you will be able to quickly shift your weight forwards and backwards as needed to maintain traction for hills and obstacles, and side to side as needed for balance. Standing allows you to easily weight and de-weight (compressing and decompressing the suspension), a necessary technique for crossing larger obstacles.

The majority of the time while standing you will want your knees to be loose and away from the tank of the motorcycle. This will allow the motorcycle and your body to move independently. In certain circumstances, like hard acceleration or braking or descending steep hills, you may grip the tank with your knees to keep your body in position on the motorcycle and reduce fatigue in your arms.

Your body movements and weight transfer will affect your motorcycle more while standing than sitting, giving you the ability to quickly adjust for trail conditions. You will find that while standing you will have more control in technical terrain, allowing the motorcycle to work (move) under you. Check out some videos of trials riders standing and using their body positioning to remain balanced through very technical sections.



Paddling is best for very technical or high-risk sections taken at low speeds. Paddling is sometimes the best (and safest) option! Photo by Caleb McInturff.

Paddling

If you have ever watched the top Extreme Enduro racers like Graham Jarvis, Cody Webb, or Johnny Walker, you will notice they stand most of the time. However, when they get to a section that becomes too difficult or risky to remain standing on the motorcycle, they will sit and begin to paddle their way through the section.

Paddling is done at slower speeds, through very technical or slippery terrain. It is important to note that paddling means to remain sitting on the seat of the bike and use your legs to dab on either side to remain upright. Paddling does not mean you are trying to push your way through with your legs. You should allow the motorcycle to do the work and only use your legs for balance – think training wheels here.

Most of the time when paddling you will want your bottom towards the rear of the bike to keep weight on the rear wheel for increased traction.

Deciding whether to sit or stand

It all really comes down to the rider to practice sitting and standing in varying terrain to determine what works the best. I have found that for the most part, sitting in the smoother sections, standing through the technical sections, and paddling through the very technical sections will be the best course of action.

You will need to become comfortable both while standing and sitting before you can swap back and forth without much thought. When you get to the point where you can ride any terrain while sitting or standing,

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then you can decide how to get through each section as quickly and safely as possible. Being able to swap seamlessly between each technique to maximize traction and control will greatly increase your speed and have you leaving your riding buddies in the dust!

My Experience with the 2016 IAMC Challenge



by Mark Englund (Platinum Tire Level Winner)

I don't write much and I have a terrible memory so I was a bit nervous when Craig asked me to write an article outlining my experience for achieving the platinum tire level for the 2016 IAMC Challenge. I didn't take any notes along the way but luckily my Challenge picture files are date stamped.

Back in January, I signed up for the Challenge knowing that my summer was already booked up. My youngest daughter was graduating high school, my oldest daughter was getting married in June, and my wife was turning 50 in August, which meant a big celebration or trip. There would be a trip to Victoria, backpacking, and several vintage trailer rallies. I am retired but my wife has a few more years to work, so I promised to keep the weekends for her. My strategy was to lump as many challenge points as possible in the fewest mid-week trips.

While watching the news on April 6th, I learned from meteorologist "Liar" Larry Gebert that there would be a few days of unseasonably good Idaho weather with abnormally high temperature. After receiving the go ahead from my wife, I packed my duffle bag and hit the road to visit as many Eastern Idaho challenge points as possible. Most of the roads I would travel are 80 mph speed limit and paved so I took my Triumph Thruxton. It has heated grips and enough watts to power my heated vest. The right cylinder was running very rich but the problem only seemed to affect drivability in the low rpm range. I was going to go fast anyway.



April 7th: I rode to Bruneau, Castleford, Eden, Acequia, Almo, Malta, Rockland, Bancroft, Dingle, and Freedom. Heading north I stopped at a nice motor inn in Wyoming somewhere between Freedom and Swan Valley.

Memorial Park in Bancroft (Southeastern Idaho).

April 8th: I rode to Swan Valley, Tetonia, Island Park, Mud Lake, Spencer, Leadore, and Mackay. After Mackay I was planning on continuing to Atomic City, but I stopped at the Bear Bottom Inn in Mackay and learned they were having a barbecue rib dinner special. They had some excellent dark beer on tap so I

April snow drifts in Island Park (Eastern Idaho).



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booked a room at the Inn. The ribs and beer were excellent! I struck up a conversation with some folks at the bar and they invited me and my wife back for the upcoming town events. "This is really a great place to live," they told me. This invitation came after they found out that my wife is a school teacher. Apparently they can't find any teachers to move here.

The Women's Club in Mackay (founded in 1907).

After dinner I took a stroll down what I guessed was Mackay's main drag. There was a bar open advertising "beer to go and .22 long rifle ammo for sale." I had to check it out. Inside were two elderly men at the bar and a little old lady bartender. They all looked 80+. They were nice people and seemed interested in my explanation of the IAMC Challenge. I think they were excited for the possibility of more adventure riders passing through Mackay. One of the old guys informed me that he had "connections" in the ammo industry allowing him to procure .22 long rifle ammo. His prices were crazy high, so I skipped on the ammo. After leaving the bar, I walked several blocks to explore the rest of the town. I came to the conclusion that Mackay is a dying town.

The AC Bar in Atomic City — both in decline.

April 9th: I road to Atomic City, then home to Nampa.

A few years ago I stopped at the AC Bar in Atomic City when riding the MotorcycleJazz.com Utah to British Columbia route. I met the owner of the AC Bar — he's a nice guy. Back in the day when the atomic industry was bustling, he was a specially trained crane operator for nuclear plant construction. He told me the AC Bar was a busy and popular place. His wife liked the AC Bar so much that she convinced him to buy it. He said he didn't want a bar but he bought it to keep his wife happy. As years passed, the work around Atomic City declined and so did the AC Bar business. He said his wife took off, leaving him with a bar he didn't want in the first place. He sold the AC Bar



He sold the AC Bar

once but, since no bank would touch financing it, he had to hold the paper. He explained that the new buyer sold off the hardwood bar and appliances, stopped making payments, and skipped town. He was stuck with the bar again but now it was in much worse shape. It is a sad story. There has got to be a lesson in there somewhere.

As I began, on day three of my trip I stopped at the AC Bar to visit with the reluctant bar owner and found it closed. The bar and the entire town looked deserted. There wasn't a soul in sight. Possibly the AC Bar opens on weekends? I took a breakfast break in front of the closed AC Bar, dusted off, and then hit the road.

Just out of town I stopped at the Experimental Breeder Reactor No. 1 (EBR-I) Atomic Museum, located on U.S. Highway 20/26, to take a look at the Air Force's attempt at a reactor-powered bomber plane. I walked around two aircraft nuclear propulsion prototypes on display next to the parking lot. I chuckled at how massive these things are. No wonder they scrapped the idea of a reactor-powered bomber. These bombers would have been just too massive and dangerous to fly.

I made it back to Nampa and the Thruxton was still running poor. The bottle of Seafoam I added to the gas at the beginning of the trip didn't clear up what I thought might be gelled gas from the winter. It turns out that the right carburetor float adjustment was out of specification allowing the cylinder to run very wet. For the remainder of spring and summer I rode my Suzuki DR650.

For my next ride I focused on northern Idaho challenge points before the annual forest fires made riding difficult.

April 26th: I road to Weippe, Peck, Elk River, Santa, Avery, Harrison, and Cataldo.

I stayed at the Stardust Motel in Wallace. I got a kick out of the Stardust's 1970's décor. This hotel and the entire town of Wallace are like entering a place stuck in time. The historic 1313 Club has decent food, but for me the main attraction is the local beer from the Wallace Brewing Company that they have on tap. My favorite is the Black Lager. Their marketing literature says they create this beer by cold steeping dark Idaho grown pilsner malt for 24 hours prior to brewing. They had another excellent oak barrel aged beer on tap. No worries; the hotel is within walking distance.



Post Office in Santa (Northern Idaho).

April 27th: I rode to Murray, Bayview (great pancakes at Ralph's Coffee House), Coolin, Clark Fork, Moyie Springs, and Porthill. After Porthill I made my way to Moscow Idaho and stayed at my daughter's apartment for the night.



Waterfront in Bayview (Northern Idaho).

April 28th: I headed south to Riggins, but stopped in Lewiston for a massive breakfast at Waffles n' More. This was the only meal I needed for the day. I attempted to get to Warren from Riggins via NF-1614 along the Salmon River and headed up the mountain on NF-246, but hit impassable snow before Burgdorf. It was a nice ride anyway and I managed to surprise a herd of 15 or so elk.

After backtracking to Riggins, I headed to McCall to see if Warren was accessible via the Warren Wagon Road. Nope. They stopped plowing snow several miles past Payette Lake. A warning sign would have been nice. There is nothing like rounding a curve to find a wall of snow in front of me. Because of all the snow in the area, I didn't try to get to Yellow Pine via McCall. Instead I reached Yellow Pine via Cascade and Warm Lake. The South Fork route is 70 miles of mostly paved single lane road. I am not sure how any government entity could justify funding such a road through a remote area like this, but I am glad they did. The road is an absolute blast.

This three day trip was great even though it was a bit too cold at times. The DR650 proved once again super reliable. The only problem I had was operator error. It is too embarrassing to write down the details, so I won't; but I had an altercation with a drainage ditch that required a new skid plate and hand guard mount. These parts did their job so I was able to make it home. I also learned that a few feet of water make it much more difficult to upright an upside down bike and then get it out of a ditch.

I was able to visit the remainder of the 44 challenge points with a few more day trips. I managed to see my first wild cougar somewhere in the hills between Elk City and Warren. It was a surprisingly big cat with strong, stocky legs. It was a good thing that it had no interest in me.



Pioneer Cemetery in Placerville (Boise Basin).

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It has been a great eventful riding season. The challenge points gave me an excuse to visit places I would not have thought of plotting courses to. Great job Michael and Craig for putting this together!



One of the many interesting non-challenge sites I encountered on my challenge journey this year is Petticoat Junction located about 25 miles southeast of Leadore along Highway 28 (GPS coordinates: N 44° 22.004 W 113° 09.498).

Petticoat Junction (windmill and water storage tank on Highway 28 in Eastern Idaho).

2016 IMAC Challenge Experience



by Ron Hoppins (Platinum Tire Level Winner)

Let me just start with a little background. I have been a member of IAMC since 2010. I was introduced to the club by Ed Hiatt at Happy Trail Products in 2009 when they were down on Chinden.

After several years of not having a motorcycle, I purchased a 2009 KLR 650, and to me there was nothing more enjoyable than to go look and see how much more money I could spend on that brand new KLR (don't tell Leslie, my wife, but as most of you know, it's a lot). I wasn't new to riding. I have had some sort of motorcycle since I was a kid. My dad, two younger brothers and I would be out at Blacks Creek, Reynolds Creek or up 8th Street almost anytime of the year. I also worked at Carl's Cycle Sales for 11 years in the 80's and early 90's, but it had been about 15 years since I had been off in the dirt.

This adventure riding concept was amazing — leave the house, ride the pavement or the dirt and go places not everyone gets to go. It wasn't long before I decided I could use a set of new panniers; "stuff" you have to have room to pack all that gear. Shortly after that I rode my new panniers home, they just happened to be mounted on a BMW R1200 GSA.

Then, lo and behold, IAMC posted the 2010 Challenge — look at that list of all those wonderful places to "adventure" off to. I have 2 different adventure bikes, and I have my weekends off — Sign me up! I'm going to get me one of those fancy Challenge stickers! That year I did pretty well, I made it to 36 sites, most of them with my brother-in-law, but a few of them on my own. More importantly though I brought home the "Gold" (sticker). The excitement, the anticipation of next year's Challenge was already filling my brain. Surely I can do better.

2011: I only visited 10 sites — Bronze Sticker! Are you kidding me? What happened to all that excitement and the sense of adventure? To be fair my brother-in-law had moved out of state, and I'm pretty sure there weren't as many weekends in 2011 as there had been in years past. However, after a ride one Saturday morning on the KLR, I came back into town, stopped at Carl's Cycles, and listened to Jack Struthers always trying to sell me something I shouldn't have. He said, "Go to my house and get my KTM 990 out of the garage and take it for a ride." I showed him though; I didn't buy that new KTM 990 for almost a full month. 2012 Challenge sites look out; I'm coming for you!

2012: I'm so disappointed. Can anyone tell me why 2012 was so short? Not only were there fewer weekends than 2011, but I swear there were whole weeks that just flat vanished — only 3 sites visited. All the luster and shine of that fancy sticker, and I make it to only 3 sites. The hardest part though was going into the garage; I couldn't even make eye contact with those two beautiful motorcycles. 2013, I have to do better!

2013: Finally a normal length year with no missing weeks and the exact number of weekends a standard year should have. I visited 25 sites, "That's Silver Tire stuff right there, baby." My motorcycles and I were friends again. I just know 2014 will be better!

2014: I was wrong! In fact 2015 was not much better; but 2015 was the year I learned to really appreciate the ability and adventurous spirit of the other club members. Several times a week I could sit in my recliner, open up the lap top, view the IAMC website, and start living vicariously through all the other challengers with their ride reports and wonderful pictures. Then if you combine that with Google Maps and satellite view, it's like I was right

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Leslie smiling at Sweet on our way to Ola, site #-28.

Cambridge is next, breakfast in Emmett and a great day ride. That's a total of 3 sites in about 4 weeks; it must be time for a new motorcycle! It took about a month to sell the old BMW and get the new one but now it's the middle of June, and the Breakfast tour can resume. Up next is breakfast at the Boise Stage Stop with 3 sites on the list, Bruneau, Castleford and Eden with a drive by photo shoot at Balanced Rock. Plus there was a bonus dinner at the café in Shoshone. Is it just my luck or does the wind always blow about 100mph when you're headed back to Boise from Mountain Home?

there. Add in a couple of Adventure Motorcycle YouTube videos and a bowl of Rocky Road ice cream and that's just truly SAD!

This brings us to 2016. It all started with Chuck Scheer's (AKA Oldnut) report on the Ola Inn, so I told Leslie, my wife, I needed to start this year's Challenge with breakfast in Ola. Leslie is a wonderful woman but always slow to get ready. We had a nice lunch. Had to stop and take this Sweet photo on the way to Ola.

A couple of weeks later we go have breakfast in Idaho City and make our way over to Placerville — 2 sites down and I'm thinking I'm on to something; "It's all about breakfast."



Leslie and I at Balanced Rock.



Apache helicopter at Fort Rucker, Alabama.



I have to stray a little bit from my story but Leslie and I were able to spend the 4th of July with our daughter, son-in-law, and 3 grandkids at Fort Rucker Alabama. Our son-in-law is a helicopter pilot for the US Army. He was flying the OH-58 Kiowa, Warrior, which has been retired by the Army, so he transitioned to and is now flying the AH-64 Apache. The 4th of July (Freedom Fest) on an Army base was awesome, and Leslie I are so proud and thankful for

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these young men and women that serve our country. If any of you reading this are serving now or have in the past, "Thank you." I hope you know how truly grateful we all are.

I was able to take my grandsons to McDonalds for breakfast a couple of times so my Challenge spirit was still intact. Did you know they have biscuits and gravy on the menu at McDonalds in Alabama?

Okay, so now we're back home, and I go to the website to see where the challengers have been. Thanks to Craig Olsen (AKA coolsen) and Ron Schinnerer (AKA Ron S) the answer is right there — a lot of miles in a very few days. And now with my proficiency using Google maps, I could make this happen; maybe not 1,100 miles in 2 days, but something very close.



Craters of the Moon National Monument in the background.

We took off on a Thursday afternoon and headed east, went by the Craters of the Moon Monument then on to Atomic City and Mackay before settling back in Arco at the Mountain View RV Park. That's right; I made Leslie stay in a tent and sleeping bag at an RV Park.



Leslie relaxing in the big chair at Pickles in Arco.

Friday morning it's breakfast at Pickles in Arco and then on to Mud Lake, Leadore, Spencer, Island Park, and Tetonia. We were also able to pick up a site from the 2013 Challenge, Indian Massacre Historical Marker at Birch Creek (site #9 that year), so that was a bonus.

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After Teton we made our way to Victor, ID and stayed the night at the Teton Valley RV Park. Both of the RV parks we stayed at were very nice, a little noisy being right off the highways but most importantly they have showers. Saturday morning it's breakfast in Swan Valley, then on our way to Freedom, Dingle, Bancroft and Rockland and back into Pocatello where I had booked a Hotel. I thought Leslie and I would enjoy the comforts of a room after 2 nights in a tent. We got our room, and it was bad. It smelled, and after two cans of air freshener from the front desk, I think we just couldn't smell anything. The first thing Leslie asked when we walked into the room was, "Do you think we should go find an RV Park?"

Indian Massacre Historical Marker at Birch Creek on Hwy 28.

Almo, Acequia and back home to Boise. 25 sites completed including the 4 shops in Boise. I'm on a roll, and Leslie is a champ!

When we decided to head north, I thought it would be best to stay in hotels because of weather concerns. I was right. Also, because of time, I had to decide to leave a couple of sites off the list; so Elk City and Weippe were cut.

We left on a Thursday afternoon and made it to Winchester. That is where I found that I had left my Challenge bandana at home. After a small fit and maybe a few tears, Leslie was able to calm me down enough to make it to Lewiston. Friday morning we headed out and had breakfast just outside Peck. Then we made our way to Orofino and over the Dent Bridge

Sunday morning the continental breakfast is rather slim but it's something. We then headed to Malta,



Looking South at the Dent Bridge over the Clearwater River.



on our way into Elk River. From there we went on to Santa, Avery, Harrison, Cataldo and Murray. Then it was back to Coeur D'Alene. The weather was beautiful all day. Saturday was a different story. We got up to pouring rain, but we made it to Bayview before we stopped and had breakfast in Sagle. Somewhere along the way we stopped at a Walmart, and the lady in the vision center sold me some Cat Crap anti-fog. It was raining so hard that I couldn't keep my visor open, and when it was closed, it

Taking a break from the rain under an awning in Clark Fork, site #-12.

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fogged up so fast that I couldn't keep it down. There was just no happy medium. The Cat Crap worked just okay so off to Clark Fork, Moyie Springs, and Port Hill with a totally wet face and a half fogged helmet visor.

The plan that day was to also go to Coolin, but because of the rain and the number of stops we had already made, we just ran out of time. By the time we made it to Port Hill, the rain was letting up a little but it was getting really cold. So back to Coeur D'Alene it was.



Sunday morning the weather had broken, and we got out of there fast. We went all the way to Lewiston and had breakfast at Waffles N' More. On the way back to Boise we picked up another Challenge site from 2013, White Bird Battle Field (site #8 that year).

Looking over White Bird Battle, site #8 from 2013.

Northern Idaho added 12 sites, and now we're sitting at 37 Challenge sites visited, I had intentionally left the closer sites to Boise for last thinking they are the easiest to get to but they are also a lot of fun. Lowman was a nice leisurely afternoon ride, and I made the loop through Banks and Idaho City. The next day I went into Atlanta on the Middle Fork Road and out through Featherville and Pine. The following Saturday I went by myself into Yellow Pine. I had never been there before, and that was real fun! Oh, I did have breakfast in Horse Shoe Bend. Then the next day my favorite site of all, Warren, not because Warren is my favorite site, but because breakfast at the Pancake House in McCall is.



Looking at Warm Lake to the West on my way back from Yellow Pine.