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RIDING THE IDAHO CENTENNIAL TRAIL NORTH TO SOUTH

by Doug Patchin

The ride started on Sunday, August 5, 2012, and has become known as "Idaho North to South the Dirty Way" following the Idaho Centennial Trail (ITC). The masterminds behind this ride were Bill Whitacre and Sam Stone with the route planning carried out by Sam Stone. The characters involved in this ride were Bill Whitacre, Sam Stone, Larry Meredith, Curtis Bjerke, and Doug Patchin (from Boise), Bob Jandro and Matt Griffin (from California), and Steve Killburg (from Seattle). The plan was for everyone to meet up in Sandpoint and stay the first night at the home of Curt and Martha Forget - better known as Black Dog CycleWorks.



Old Whitebird grade with the Highway 95 in the background

My plans changed due to being out of town until Sunday night; hence I was to meet the rest of the group at the second night's planned campground, the Cedars, off of FS-250 northeast of Pierce, ID. My route to Pierce was going to be all pavement so that I could get there by the evening rendezvous. I traveled up Highways 55 and 95 to Whitebird where I followed the old Whitebird grade into Grangeville.



Old Whitebird road snaking up from the town of Whitebird



If you haven't ridden this road, it is a must do - no traffic, good road surface and enough curves to scrub off you sidewalls. From Grangeville I went onto Highway 13, another great twisty road, down to Kooskia and then Highway 12 north along the Clearwater River through Kamiah to Highway 11 with more hairpin curves up onto the Weippe prairie and finally to the town of Pierce. There I filled my tank with gas but neglected to fill up my Rotopax gas container. This will be more significant later on. From Pierce I took FS-250, French Mountain Road, that turned from pavement to dirt dirt after about 10 miles. This is a part of the state I have not had the chance to explore. The road eventually leads to the North Fork of the Clearwater River and follows the river past the Kelly Forks Work Center. It's just another 15-20 miles to the Cedars Campground or roughly 40-50 miles from Pierce.



If I remember correctly, I arrived at the Cedars Campground around 5pm and just waited - and waited and waited. There were not many people here, and none of my riding companions were showing up. I wonder if they are lost, or more likely that I am lost. I know they can't be lost because there are seven of them, and Sam always knows where he is! Are they behind me, or are they ahead of me?

There is nothing for me to do now but set up camp, eat, and wait for them to arrive.

Anyway, it gets dark quickly surrounded by these giant cedar trees, and still nobody is showing up! I decided to call it a night and I will just have to find my lost companions in the morning.



Setting up camp and waiting at the Cedars Campground



That Rotopax (red auxiliary gas can) sure makes a great resting place to put a bag on top of! [<http://www.rotopax.com>]



Kelly Creek Bride

Tuesday August 7, 2012:

The sun does not penetrate these giant cedar trees until late morning, so I got up, ate breakfast, packed, and got out of camp around 7:30am. It's now time to find my companions, who are obviously lost somewhere behind me or ahead of me?

Sam had given each of us the GPS route, and so I decided to move forward to the next rendezvous point, which was the Three Rivers Resort at Lowell. I headed south on FS-250 to its junction with FS-255 and continued south to the Old Kelly Creek Work Station on Kelly Creek. The morning was warming up nicely so I took a break on the bridge crossing Kelly Creek.

After sitting in the warming sun long enough, I mounted up and headed south on FS-581 up to East Saddle and down to the Cayuse Emergency Landing Field.



*Cayuse Emergency Landing Field
along FS-581*



This area also is home of the Kelly Creek Fishery Special Management area in which Kelly Creek supports a unique wild population of Westslope Cutthroat Trout. I don't know what kind of fish this is, but I may begin using these trips to start fishing again. Well, I have been wasting time, hoping the group would catch up with me. They are either really lost or just slow.



The beginning of Toboggan Ridge on FS-581

It is time to proceed up Toboggan Ridge. The road starts to climb into some dense forest and I came upon the first person I have seen all morning. He is driving some kind of giant mower that is cutting down brush along the right hand side of the road. The reach on the extended arm is about 5-6 feet and he is cutting down almost everything in its path. I have to follow behind him for a couple of miles. He can't see me or hear me because of the racket the machine is making. I was not able to get a photo. Finally he senses somebody is behind him and stops and lets me pass. Once you climb up out of this area you reach Toboggan Ridge which is an area that has had fires in the past and the scenery opens up with many acres of burnt, trees and lots of new growth.

Somewhere along Toboggan Ridge

It was in about this location I started to notice that my fuel level was not where I thought it should be. I was just enjoying the ride and really wasn't paying attention to the miles since my last fill up. Well, it can't be that many miles to the Lolo motorway! When I finally reached the Cayuse Junction on the Lolo Motorway (FS-500), my low fuel light came on. I usually can travel another 40 miles until empty. I kept having that nagging feeling that I might just get stuck in the mountains in an area I don't know and with not a soul around is closer to becoming reality. I ride another seven miles along the Lolo Motorway until I come to an unmarked



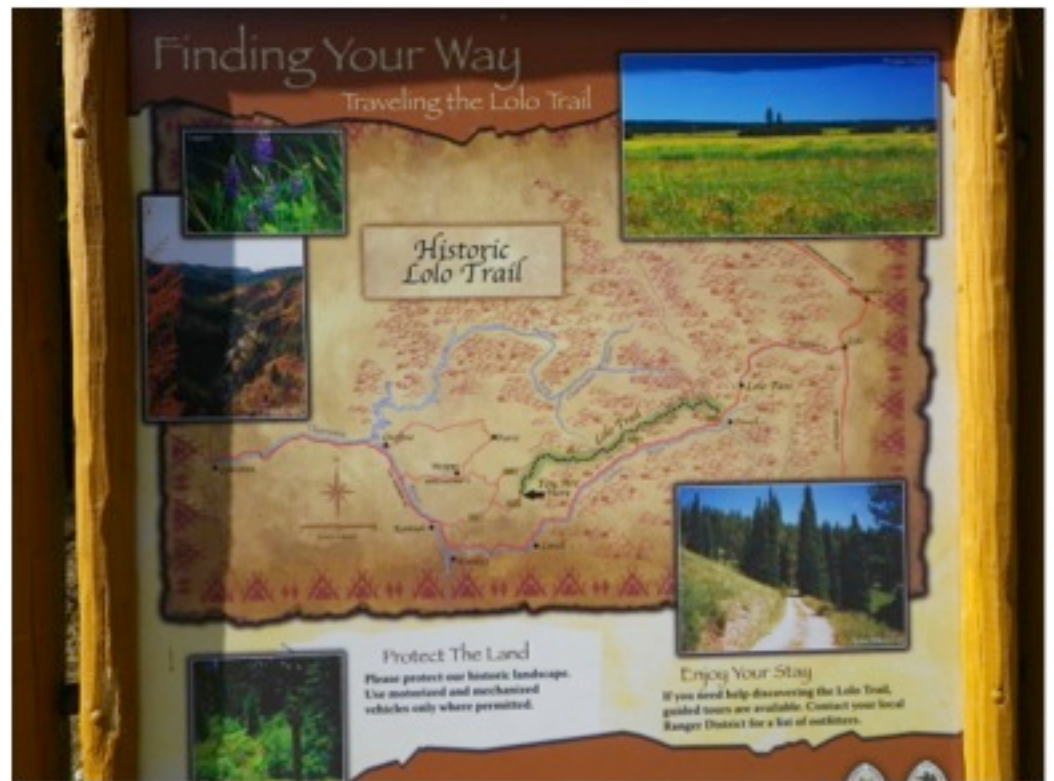


road that drops down to Highway 12. I decide to take a break and contemplate my situation. It's obvious I am not going to be able to accomplish my goal of riding the Lolo Motorway to its beginning/ending at Canyon Junction, so I sit and try to figure out if I should continue to Canyon Junction or bail out onto FS-107 at Saddle Junction to Highway 12 or try the small unmarked road behind me that also goes down to Highway 12. My dilemma is that this unmarked road on the Benchmark map is a very faint red line connecting to a bigger road down near Doe creek. While sitting and contemplating my woes, I notice that red plastic thing under my tail bag (the Rotopax auxiliary gas can)! Remember earlier when I mentioned this would be significant? Well it's now that I can really use a gallon of fuel!

Another half hour of contemplating doesn't get me anymore fuel, so I decide to take my chances and head down the unmarked road that turns into FS-566. Well, it turns out to be a great ride down to Highway 12, and I've just used up another 20 miles of gas. When I arrived at Highway 12, I had to decide whether to go north to Lochsa Lodge where there might be fuel, or south to Lowell where I know there is fuel. I decide to head south and get behind another motorcycle, an early 1990's BMW GS 100. I follow him for about 5 miles and he decides to pull over for a break, so I follow. I was hoping he could tell me if there was fuel back up Highway 12 at Lochsa Lodge. He didn't think so, but he did offer to drain some fuel from his **11 GALLON** tank. He asks if I have anything to put the fuel in. Of course I do, I always carry a Rotopax just for these occasions!!

We drained about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a gallon into the Rotopax and into my tank. He said he would follow in about 10 minutes in case I ran out of gas completely. This happened about 5 miles up the highway from Lowell. Since becoming experts at draining fuel into a Rotopax and transferring that into my bike, we repeated the procedure again! I made it to Lowell, filled up the bike, and had a late lunch. Filling up the Rotopax can work up an appetite!

Now, do I just sit around waiting for everybody to show up or maybe try to find them up in the mountains. Maybe I should ride the Lolo Motorway from west to east and perhaps meet up with them on the motorway. I decide to ride up to Canyon Junction on FS-101 and wait.



Beginning (west end) of Lolo Motorway at Canyon Junction

It was about 6pm by now, so I decided not to ride the Lolo Motorway, and I headed back down to Lowell and the Three Rivers Resort to wait for my lost companions. At the resort, I tell the woman at the counter I need a tent spot and she asked me if I was waiting for some other guys to show up. She had just received a call from them, that if I showed up, to let me know they were at the Lochsa Lodge getting fuel and dinner and would be at the Three Rivers Resort about 10pm. She also informed me they had lost one of the guys! At 10:30 they roll in and the first one I see is Curtis. He proceeds to tell me that they lost Sam sometime during the day and have not seen him since. Just at this moment Sam rolls up behind Curtis and Sam is no longer lost but has been found. It seems Sam was leading the group and missed the turn to FS-255 and rode all



the way down the North Fork of the Clearwater River to the Kelly Creek work center. He then had to double back and never did catch up with all of the others. Because of this *slight* detour, he too was becoming low on fuel up on Toboggan Ridge. But unlike me, Sam does not use his Rotopax fuel container as a platform for bags! So he puts in his gallon of fuel, and when he gets to the junction of FS-566 and the Lolo Motorway, his low fuel light comes on again. He heads down to Highway 12 and proceeds to run out of gas on the highway in the dark. Nobody stops to help him, so he is planning on spending the night on the side of road when most of the group rides past him, except one who stops and rescues him from a lonely night spent on the side of the highway.

And as Paul Harvey use to say "*And now the rest of the story*". Click on the link below to read the rest of this saga in Sam's ride report of this adventure.

<http://www.advrider.com/forums/showthread.php?t=815513>



TIRE TALK...

Editor's Note: The following is reprinted with minor revisions by permission of the author, Bill (aka BannerUp), from ThumperTalk at this link: <http://www.thumpertalk.com/topic/671886-tire-selection-guide/>

You've installed new springs to accommodate your weight and riding style, adjusted the preload, and spent three weekends out in the rocks and roots getting the compression and rebound dampening just right, then your buddy says you've got the wrong tires. Hey, maybe he's right. What good are all those performance and handling modifications if the rubber that puts them on the trail isn't getting the job done?

The number of brands, models and styles complicates choosing the "right" tire. It's enough to boggle your mind. In the old days, tires were like ice cream, they came in three flavors: street, knobby or trials. Today, there are a lot more than 31 flavors, and trying to simplify your decision by visiting a tire-talk forum is like tuning into a "Church of Tires" broadcast. But there are criteria for making the right choice. Here's a four-step process for finding a new pair of shoes for your bike and riding style. It won't eliminate some trial-and-error, but it will help minimize poor choices:

Step 1: Understand the General Rules of Thumb...

- **Knobbies provide more traction and are less prone to flats than street tires in off-road terrain;**
- **But some DOT approved dual sport tires work quite well in off-road situations;**
- **Trials tires provide more traction than knobbies on just about everything;**
- **But most feel wishy-washy on paved or hard-packed roads unless you pump them up;**
- **The more technical a trail becomes, the more a trials tire will out perform a knobby.**
- **Tires with soft rubber provide more traction but do not wear as well as hard-rubber tires;**
- **Wide tires provide more traction and straight-line stability than narrow tires, but less steering precision;**

Step 2: Understand the "Knobby Versus Trials" Rules of Thumb...

Most off-road bikes work best with knobbies, but some riders have mounted one of the modern radial-ply trials-type tires for superior handling in certain conditions. The more technical a trail becomes, for example, the more a trials tire will out perform a knobby. With more power getting to the ground, a stock 250 can feel like a 300, and that's good news! It's controversial, of course, and perhaps always will be, but here are some things to consider when you're looking for a new set of shoes...

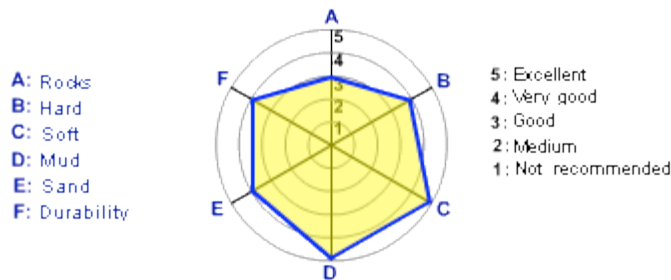
- **Knobbies get their "bite" by digging into the ground and pushing;**
- **Trials tires gets traction by wrapping itself around the rocks and roots and rolling over them;**
- **On slippery surfaces, such as dry weeds, wet rocks and pebbled roads, a trials tire flattens out more than a knobby to give you a better bite -- the more "technical" a trail becomes, the more a trials tire will out perform a knobby.**



- Trials tires do not, therefore, break loose as easily or as predictably as a knobby, so you probably would not choose one for sliding around corners or for any situation where you need some wheel spin
- But a rear trials tire will break loose in a more predictable and controlled way with a trials tire on the front, because the front will remain more firmly planted while you're swinging the rear through a turn
- You should adjust your suspension to be stiffer for a trials tire than you would for a knobby
- Since trials tires flatten out more than knobbies, they give the rider more "cone effect" in turns. Take a paper cup -- small at the bottom and large at the top. Toss it on the ground, and give it a kick. See?
- Knobbies have a stiffer sidewall, and therefore provide more protection against flats due to a slashed sidewall than do trials type tires
- But you can minimize "pinch" flats in a trials tire by installing a tubeless trials tire (which has a stiffer sidewall than the tube models) with a heavy duty tube, such as the 4 mil Bridgestone Ultra Heavy Duty tube
- You can use as little as 6-9 pounds for maximum traction, but 10 lbs is recommended to minimize flats
- Trials tires are easier to mount than a knobby, but the bead comes off the rim quickly with a flat -- you won't be riding back to camp on a flat trials tire, so be prepared to replace the air by one method or another.
- Keep a close eye on your spokes -- the more flexible sidewalls on a trials tires seems to put more forces on the rim and accelerate loosening of spokes.
- Keep a close eye on the valve stem. Install the tube so the stem leans forward slightly when at the bottom position. If you notice it leaning backward, your tire is slipping on the rim. Try a wider rim lock or insert a small strip of inner tube between the bead and rim at the rim-lock location.
- Trials tires do not handle big whoops as well as knobbies do, and some are "squirmy" on paved or hard-packed roads, so they're not the best choice for desert or dual sport events with easy trails and occasional highway riding.
- The trials tire with the best wear has the best traction but the worst side knobs and the least overall knobby feel...

Step 3: Compare the Rules with the Characteristics of Specific Tires...

Visit the websites of off-road tire manufacturers and browse through the different models they offer. Check out the fitment guide at each website for your bike, model and year -- sometimes those guys at the factory really do know what they are talking about. Most tire sites provide a picture of each tire with a brief description of its intended use, but Michelin makes it even easier by providing a chart for each of its tires. Here's the chart for one of their enduro tires...



- BRIDGESTONE... http://www.bridgestone.com/products/motorcycle_tires/
 CONTINENTAL... http://www.conti-online.com/generator/www/de/en/continental/motorcycle/general/home/index_en.html
 DUNLOP... <http://www.dunlopmotorcycle.com/default.asp>
 IRC... <http://www.irc-tire.com/mce/top.html>



- KENDRA... <http://www.kendausa.com/en/home/motorcycle.aspx>
- MAXXIS... <http://www.maxxis.com/MotorcycleATV.aspx>
- METZLER... <http://www.metzeler.com/site/us/>
- MICHELIN... <http://teammichelin.com/>
- PIRELLI... <http://www.pirelli.com/tyre/ww/en/motorcycle.html>
- SHINKO... <http://www.shinkotireusa.com/>

And here's a chart to help you understand those designations on the sidewall of the tire...

FRONT		REAR	
60/100	2.50/2.75	80/100	2.50/3.60
70/100	2.75/3.00	90/100	3.60/4.10
80/100	3.00/3.25	100/100	4.00/4.10
90/100	3.25/3.50	110/100	4.00/4.50
		120/100	5.00/5.10

110/100-18 64M/TT

- TUBE (TT) OR TUBELESS (TL)
- SPEED RATING (M = NON-DOT)
- LOAD RATING (SEE BELOW)
- RIM DIAMETER (INCHES)
- HEIGHT-WIDTH ASPECT RATIO (%)
- CROSS-SECTION WIDTH (MM)

Step 4: Visit Tire-Talk Forum and Read the Rider Reviews...

AMA: <http://www.americanmotorcyclist.com/Riding/Street/Resources/TireDesignations.aspx>

WEB BIKE WORLD: <http://www.webbikeworld.com/Motorcycle-tires/tire-data.htm>

PROCYCLE: <http://www.procycle.us/info/guides/wheels-tires/tire-information-0211.html>

MOTORCYCLE.COM: <http://www.motorcycle.com/rider-safety/motorcycle-tires-101-91339.html>



Editor's note: This article is republished by permission of the author, Peter Jones, and originally appeared in the September 2007 issue of Cycle World, pp. 72-73. For many it captures the inspiration of motorcycles and sums up "the why of riding."

Love Machine

I LOVE OLD BIKES FOR WHAT THEY WERE AND NEW BIKES for what they are. I love the romance of kick starts and the convenience of starter buttons. I love bikes with more power than I sometimes have the discretion to use properly. I love passing cars where no car can pass. I love how motorcycles keep getting quicker, if not faster. I love the feeling of freedom and power a bike gives me.

I love the responsibility of riding smartly. I love being alone on a motorcycle. I love riding in groups. I love how motorcycles make me feel like the hero I'm not. I love that riding a motorcycle means I might be half as cool as Steve McQueen.

I love that motorcycles are confusing to non-bikers. I love how being a biker is to be a member of a special club. I love how bad girls are turned on by guys who ride bikes. I love how good girls are turned on by guys who ride bikes.

I love how a motorcycle is the cheapest way to go racing—roadracing, drag racing, dirt racing, any and all racing. I love choppers. I love sportbikes. I love riding down a long road to nowhere. I love riding too fast down curvy roads. I love the boom of Singles, the bellow of Twins, the In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida beat of Triples, the screams of Fours and Sixes...I'd love the sound of a five-cylinder if someone made one. I love complex valvetrains. I love fully adjustable upside-down forks. I love modifying a perfectly good bike into a beastly machine that's a pain to ride.

I love putting on my leathers. I love hanging out in leathers, but only if I have a bike nearby. I love girls who ride...in leathers. I love attending roadracing events. I love the sound of a bike taken to redline in every single gear. I love the thrill, the look, the art, the feel, the smell, the taste, the sensual adventure of motorcycles.

I love wide tires. I love spoked rims. I love magnesium wheels. I love being able to pick up an engine with my own two arms that can take me to speeds more than twice any legal

limit. I love doing stoppies. I love dragging my knees through turns. I love two-fingered braking. I love one-fingered braking even more. I love my memories of the Syracuse Mile. I love the hints of crazy hope that emanated from Jimmy Adamo every time he threw a leg over a Ducati. I love the stunning artistic beauty of the 1974 Laverda 750 SFC.

I love 70-year-old bikers who ride like there's no tomorrow. I love watching the road fly by just below my feet. I love standing on the pegs and seeing the front tire going 'round. I love riding a bike as fast as it will possibly go. I love going



140 mph for three minutes straight (that's 6.99 miles). I love riding with no particular place to go. I love that being a biker means something, even if I don't always like what it means to some. I love how bikes have connected me with people across the country and worldwide. I love hanging out at motorcycle nights. I love the foolish hell of Daytona Bike Week. I love saying aloud the mysteriously promising names GiaCaMoto, Yoshimura, Yoshima, Dunstall and Ferracci.

I love clip-ons and rearsets. I love loud pipes. I love tight racing gloves. I love wearing black leather. I love wearing



The why of riding

BY PETER JONES

leather of loud colors. I love going 175 mph with only the dyed skin of a dead cow between me and planet Earth. I love riding bikes and writing about them. I love hanging in the streets of L.A. with other bikers. I love riding the mountains of North Carolina. I love walking through seas of parked bikes. I love motorcycling's brave history. I love taking girls for rides. I love how children stare in wonder at motorcycles. I love riding in any mountains. I love riding across the desert. I love splitting lanes in California. I love washing and polishing my own motorcycle. I love

I love the rattle of a dry clutch. I love the intake honk of big bikes. I love the crisp rasp of an open exhaust. I love the beastly booming brutish bellow of a big Vee's low-end torque. I love the risks of riding. I love 90-degree Twins. I also love 45- and 60-degree Twins. I even love parallel-Twins. I guess I love Twins. I love old GSX-Rs. I love the feeling of anticipation while rolling a motorcycle out of the garage on a cool morning. I love the smell of burning two-stroke oil any time of day. I love the conspicuous mechanics of motorcycles. I love the stance of a bike resting on a rear stand. I love the insane hubris of the Isle of Man. I love riding ratty old bikes that remind me of my original thrill of motorcycling. I love bob-jobs. I love re-reading old motorcycle magazines. I love collecting stickers from aftermarket companies.

I love how motorcycling makes travel intimate. I love how a bike gives me an immediate feel of subtle changes in temperature. I love wearing full-face helmets, because I've used every inch of the exterior of them at one time or another. I love how, on a bike, each of my limbs has controls of its own. I love right-side-shifting bikes. I love riding for days on end. I love hiding under a bridge during a thunderstorm. I love how riding clears my head. I love bike clubs. I love motorcycle movies. I love parking on a mountain summit

and staring at my bike's engine. I love machined-billet brake calipers. I love windowed case covers. I love how a motorcycle is sometimes a preposterous *deus ex machina*. I love the echo of a drive chain on tight left-hand curves. I love the technological efficiency of modern sportbikes. I love the simplicity of old naked bikes. I love the imposing nastiness of rat bikes. I love the mystery, romance and sex appeal of motorcycles. I love how bikes make me dream. I love how bikes make me who I am. I love how a motorcycle is never just a motorcycle. I love motorcycles. □



visiting bike shops in whatever state or country I'm in. I love doing that for no special reason at all. I love dragging the pegs and bags of cruisers. I love customizing bikes. I love admiring someone else's customized bike. I love lightweight 600cc sportbikes. I love heavy sportbikes with insanely excessive power—I love those very much, thank you. I love riding around the Grattan racecourse outside Grand Rapids, Michigan. I love the Streets of Willow.

I love holding modern, thin, lightweight, chemically coated pistons in my hand. I love the chatter of flatslides.

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