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Update on the 2011 Challenge

by Craig O. Olsen



We live in an amazing place where countless adventurous destinations exist, and fantastic roads wait to lead us to them. The 2011 IAMC Challenge, much like the inaugural 2010 Challenge, invited us to get out there to see new sights, visit old favorite spots, and even push our limits a little. This year's challenge sites centered predominantly in central Idaho, but also included sites in southeast and northeast Oregon, as well as southwest Montana and southern Idaho.

Similar to last year, April was the month for the kick off of the 2011 Challenge this time at Municipal Park. Sixty members opted to participate, and over the remainder of this year multiple club events and rides have been posted on the club calendar (<http://motoidaho.org/events>), the majority of which have centered on visiting these sites. Most of the activity on our website this year has been concerned with the 2011 Challenge with over 630 posts and ride reports about it (<http://motoidaho.org/forum/104>).

As of the most recent update of the 2011 Challenge Progress Report this year (7 November 2011), 6 club members have made the bronze tire level (10-19 sites visited), another 6 have reached the silver tire level (20-29 sites visited), and 4 more have attained the gold tire level (30-44 sites visited). Five club members have achieved the platinum tire level (visited all 45 sites). The majority of this newsletter is dedicated to their summary of this achievement.

Rick Skinner

(Aka: Silverspurs)



Site #-16: Grime's Pass Memorial looking north into Garden Valley.



When I purchased my KLR in August of 2010, it was my first off-road bike in 36 years. I was really looking forward to getting into the Idaho back country and exploring new territory. Soon after buying the KLR, I was talking to a doctor at work about places to ride; he mentioned IAMC and suggested I check it out... I did, and joined the club soon afterward, then in September and October, I visited over 20 of the 2010 Challenge sites before the snow flew. I was hooked!

So... with a nearly new dual-sport bike in the garage, I was really looking forward to the 2011 Challenge... typical of any excited newbie, I was chomping on the bit to get started in March. I was driving poor Ed Hiatt crazy, bugging him about when the bandanas would be ready so that I could start visiting sites... I was so excited that I even made my own temporary bandana and hit the road up to Ola and High Valley while there was still plenty of snow on the ground... Silly newbie...!

Once we had the real bandanas and the challenge was underway, I became aware that visiting every site was going to take a pretty big commitment in time and require a lot of planning to pull off. Ultimately, it would involve over 4000 bike miles on and off tarmac, and require 21 full days on the bike. After my experience with the 2010 Challenge, I also knew it would take some modifications of the KLR to make it more off-road capable... The bigger than normal snowpack we received over the winter made this planning a bit more challenging because many of the sites would not be accessible until late in the summer, making visiting all of the sites even more of a challenge.

The 2011 Challenge took me to places I've always wanted to visit, but hadn't. This is one of my favorite aspects of IAMC, and doing the Challenge motivates me to visit those places I wouldn't make time for otherwise. Here are some of the new places for me that the Challenge took me this year... Leslie Gulch, High Valley, Imnaha Valley, South Mountains, Lick Creek Summit, Louie Lake, Black Rock Mine, Hindman Lake, Dead Wood Road/Reservoir, Grand Jean, Owyhee Backcountry Bi-way, Pahsimeroi Valley, Lemhi Pass/ Lewis and

Clark trail. It was a fun summer filled with adventure.



Site #-40: Homestead on the Pine Creek Road northeast of Enterprise, Oregon.



Site #-4: Dagger Falls cat walk on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River near the Boundary Creek boat ramp, the put in site for floating the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.



Site #-36: Barney Hot Springs just off of Little Lost River Road near the Pahsimeroi Valley.



Will I make it a goal to visit all the Challenge sites in 2012? I am not sure. A lot of things were put off around the house, and my work schedule was more open this year, allowing me to complete the 2011 Challenge. I'm not sure I can make the same commitment for 2012. But it doesn't really matter, because the 2012 Challenge will still be an opportunity to visit places I've always wanted to go, but needed a little push to get me there... I'm looking forward to it.

I want to thank Ed and the IAMC leadership for putting together the 2011 Challenge and Happy Trails for their sponsorship and support of dual-sport and off-road riders in the Boise area... It's a big commitment to put this together each year and I appreciate their efforts.

Chuck Scheer

(Aka: Oldnut)



Site #-39: Hess Road on the west side of Hells Canyon between Oxbow and Hells Canyon Dams.

A common theme among the senior dual-sporters I've talked to is their return to riding after a hiatus brought on by family and career commitments.

And so it has been with me: I rode at an early age and, over time, owned a variety of bikes many that are now classics.

I owe my return to riding to an early retirement, vast improvements in design and manufacture of

the dual-sport machine, a persistent hard-riding brother-in-law who encouraged me to "get back on" and an indulgent spouse who enjoys letting me ride.

The Challenge has been a great chance for me to revisit some of my favorite trails and places, but more importantly, it has encouraged me to travel roads and trails to places I've only seen on a map, in a book or heard of in the tales told by intrepid travelers. Last year I was able to collect 35 Challenge sites earning a "Gold Knobby." Fellow Challengers know well the commitment in time, cash, resources and spousal acceptance it requires. But the level of riding skill to acquire the most difficult sites is beyond that of most dual-sporters.

In spite of the obstacles I determined to make all 45 Challenge sites in 2011. Several sites were a definite stretch for my skill level but the acquisition of a Suzuki DR in mid-summer allowed me to make the leap to a more trail-friendly ride. The rides to Flint, Black Rock Mine and Hindman Lake would have been nearly impossible for me on the KLR, and were definite challenges for my riding skill.



Panorama of the Sawtooth Mountains seen going into Hindman Lake (Site #-25).

The spectacular panoramas and scenes I witnessed at Hat Point, Hess Road, Red Rock Lakes, Pike Mountain and Sturgill Peak must be seen first hand to appreciate as no photograph can truly capture them. The Club Ride and camp out was a ton of fun as was the ride out of Yellowstone via the South Fork of the Salmon River on smooth twisty asphalt. I had never been to Balanced Rock or Niagara Springs though I've lived in Southwest Idaho my whole life. Unfortunately, Louie Lake was not available due to road closure but we did the best we could.



Site #-30: Red Rock Lakes in southwest Montana between Lima, Montana and Island Park, Idaho.



Site #-6: Black Lake at the end of FR-112, northeast of Bear.

All that said, if asked to pick a favorite site, I think the ride that has it all is Council to Bear and Black Lake. I had ridden the southern Seven Devils country back in the early '70's when there were no restrictions for motorcycles and my Bultaco Alpina covered quite a chunk of it. Today the ride to Bear is well maintained and along Hornet Creek is smooth and twisty asphalt. Beyond Bear it's not an easy ride, perhaps a half dozen level 3 spots but the panoramas are amazing, the lake picturesque and it's history as a mining claim are legendary Seven Devils Idaho.

The IAMC Challenge has been a great vehicle for exploring Idaho and its adjacent states.

Many thanks to Ed, Terri and Craig for all the hard work they do to make the IAMC events, workshops and the Challenge a success.



Site #-12: Bear Idaho, old school house from early 1900's.

Ed Torrey (Aka: Special Ed)



Site #-11: Elk Summit on FR-340 between Yellow Pine and Warren, Idaho.

This year's challenge took a while to get going, and I was chomping at the bit to get out and ride even so much so I made up my own Challenge flag and



headed out. I had not been to 27 of the 45 sites for this year, so I was excited to get out to see some new areas.

My work schedule kept me from joining most of the posted rides, so I did a majority of the Challenge sites solo. I had 2 different days I clocked over 500 miles, one of those was part of a 3-day 1100-mile run that I picked up 11 sites. I logged over 12,000 miles this year; all the miles are not from recreational riding. I also use my bike to commute to and from work. I wore out 2 rear tires, 1 front tire and a chain and sprocket set. The girl has 41,000 miles on her already, and I'm hoping for a lot more.

My favorite site this year was Black Lake. It was my first time up there and I was pleasantly surprised. I will definitely go back.



Site #-6: Black Lake

I had 2 mishaps this year. My first Challenge ride into Leslie Gulch where my back tire got hung up in a rut on a corner and down she went.



Rutted road into Leslie Gulch (Site #-20).

My second was a planned overnighter into Flint/North Fork Owyhee CG/Doyle's Place with a friend from work (Shaun) who just got a new DR650, and I was going to show him how fun adventure riding can be. It had rained the night before, and I thought it would dry out.... I was wrong.





Typical muddy roads in Owyhee County when it rains.

By the time I realized we needed to get out of there, it was too late and the mud was setting up like concrete. It was not long before my clutch could not take the abuse of this Owyhee mud. Shaun's DR held out long enough to get him out of the sticky stuff and bring back his truck.



Burned out KLR clutch caused by the heavy mud.

This was a costly mistake, and both of us were ordering clutch parts the next day. Shaun now thinks ADV riding is more work than he first thought, but that's part of the game; "to play we must pay," I told him. Funny, he has not asked me about any more overnighter since.

I'm anticipating next year's Challenge season and hoping there will be some more new places to go. I know there is a lot going on behind the scenes to make the Challenge work, so I would like to thank everyone that made it possible.

Ron Schinnerer

(Aka: RonS)



Picture is taken at Pole Creek Wilderness area on Mud Flat Road.

"Craig and I are riding over to the Hell's Canyon gathering on Friday and coming back on Saturday," queried Ed Hiatt. "Do you want to go along?" I didn't know it at the time, but that was really when my quest for all 45 of the 2011 Challenge sites started. Up to that point, I hadn't really thought much about the Challenge. I had only gotten three sites by then. My first response to Ed's invitation was, "No Thanks, I can't really take the time off." By the time I got back from my lunch break, I was hooked. The idea of the first camping trip of the year just wasn't something that I could pass up.

I picked up five sites that weekend and cleared off most of the Oregon locations. Ed, Craig and I spent the day Saturday riding in the rain. It was actually one of the more fun days of the season. Wallowa Lake was one of the scenic stops of that trip.



Site #-41: Wallowa Lake near Joseph Oregon.

After the Oregon trip, I took a couple of day trips in July and picked up nine more sites. It was around that same time that I started looking at the remaining sites and realized that I might be able to complete the entire list. The one hurdle that I would have to get past was the Challenge sites all the way over into East Idaho and Montana. I started the process of planning the big ride. I named that ride "Head East." I spent quite a bit of time plotting that ride on the GPS maps, trying to gauge how many days it would take and where to camp each night. When I told my wife what I was planning, her first response was, "You're not going alone are you?" I took the hint, and posted the ride on the club calendar. I really didn't expect anyone to sign up, but figured it couldn't hurt. To my surprise, BoiseMike signed up. About a day after he signed up, he must have realized what he was getting himself into and posted a comment about it being a death march. To Mike's credit, he went on the ride and put up with me very well, despite some long days and a few details that weren't planned out as well as they could have been. We didn't make it to our planned campsite on the third day. As it turned out, we ended up camping at Bannack City, which has a really nice campground nearby. It was probably a better choice than near Mesa Falls where we had originally planned to camp.



Site #-26: Black Rock Mine, one of the more memorable sites from my rides.

Once I got back from the big ride, I only had 16 sites left and half of August plus September to finish them. I planned to get the remaining Challenge sites on two weekend trips, the club campout at Cascade and a loop down to the Southwest. I was pretty confident that I would finish up with plenty of time to spare.

The weekend of the club campout came, and I was excited about three days of riding with a lot of good friends. My wife and I headed up to Cascade Thursday night, so that I could get an early start Friday. I had planned to go to Black Lake and Sturgill Peak that day. I originally planned to ride by myself on Friday, but Ed called Thursday evening and told me that Sam and Craig were going to be going to Black Lake also. I debated whether I should ride with them or take off on my own. I made a good choice that day and went to meet the group for breakfast in Cascade. Before we left, Dan Driscoll showed up to meet our group, and a fifth rider, Allan Leahy, from west of Portland, Oregon completed our group. We were getting a later start than I had planned, but I was still intent on going to both Black Lake and Sturgill Peak. We had a good time riding into Black Lake.

On our way out, my bike, plans and possibly my chances of completing the challenge came to an unexpected halt. My bike died and wouldn't start! We tried quite a bit of trailside resuscitation, but it just wasn't going to cooperate. I have to give a big



thanks to Dan. He rode two hours back to Cascade, got his truck and drove two more hours to come pick me up and then drove two more hours to take me and my dead bike back to Cascade, missing one of Ed's awesome dinners in the process!

All of a sudden, I had missed out on all of the sites around Cascade. My plans for the Southwest sites the following weekend were also in jeopardy, because it was pretty unlikely that I would be able to get my bike repaired in time for that. It was looking like I might fall short of my goal to finish the challenge.

When I got back to Boise, I started a mad scramble to identify the cause of the problem, get the required replacement parts and get my bike going again. Through a process of elimination, I concluded that I needed a new stator assembly. I wasn't absolutely sure, but it was my best guess. I ordered a new stator and anxiously waited another week before it arrived. With my Southwest ride pushed back by a week, the replacement stator arrived Thursday, just two days before I planned to leave. That evening I put everything back together, and with my fingers crossed, I hit the starter button. I was extremely relieved when the old girl fired up!

The Southwest ride weekend was a fun ride. There were five of us on that trip. Saturday turned into a fairly long day and we ended up riding into the North Fork of the Owyhee campground in the dark. I had never been there before and was pleasantly surprised by the scenery when I woke up the next morning.

Three weeks after the club campout, I went back up to Cascade to finish the remaining Challenge sites. I headed out on a Saturday morning to do a loop that would wind its way through Yellow Pine, over Elk Summit and into McCall. Everything was going well all day. I was on my way into McCall on Warren Wagon Road, and I only had Louie Lake left to complete the Challenge. However, my adventure wasn't over yet. My bike started handling strangely. I pulled off the side of the road to find my back tire was flat. I was prepared for this, and it should only mean a little bit of delay. It was my

first flat, and it took me about 50 minutes to get back on the road. Caution suggested that I should skip Louie Lake and just head for camp. I wasn't going to let something as trivial as common sense keep me from getting that last Challenge site! I did get into the Louie Lake area, but I didn't make it out. My front tire tube in the rear tire fix had worn out, and my tire was flat again. Fortunately, I did have cell service and was able to call my wife to come rescue me. That made the second time in a row I had to be hauled back to Cascade. It didn't bother me as much this time, because I had finished the last of the 45 Challenge sites.

There were so many notable sites that I visited this year. Black Rock Mine, Hindman Lake, Leslie Gulch and North Fork Owyhee campground were all magnificent places. I think that my favorite has to be Mesa Falls. The beauty of the falls, the lush plant growth in that rocky canyon with the wild river far below is something that I really find impressive.



Site #-32: Mesa Falls on the Henrys Fork of the Snake River near Ashton, Idaho

There are so many things that I enjoyed this summer completing the Challenge sites; some incredible scenery, many solitary hours on the bike and even a few challenging situations along the way. The thing that I have enjoyed the most this year is riding with good friends. I also have to thank my wife for her patience with me being away as much as I was.



Craig Olsen

(Aka: coolsen)



Site #-31: Craters of the Moon between Carey and Arco, Idaho.

I really had not planned on getting all 45 Challenge sites this year because on the Continental Divide Trail ride from Antelope Wells, New Mexico on the Mexican border to Roosville, British Columbia on the Canadian border that I did in two stages in July and September taking up nearly 3 weeks. Similarly, last year due to a group ride to Inuvik in the Northwest Territories of Canada that lasted 3 weeks, I only achieved 12 of the 2010 Challenge sites, just enough to qualify for the bronze tire level.

It was not until after our annual club ride out of Cascade in early September of this year that I decided it might be feasible for me to complete all 45 sites. I had already picked up a few sites on group rides including Niagara Springs in May and Hat Point in June during the Hell's Canyon Ride.



Site #-45: Niagara Springs on the Snake River between Wendell and Buhl, Idaho.



Site #-38: Hat Point at the end of FR-4240 overlooking the Snake River in Hells Canyon.

I was able to pick up several more sites during the annual club ride, and 3 more sites completing the Montana portion of my Continental Divide Trail ride in late September.

In mid October I did a solo 880 mile 2-day ride to pick up the last 7 2011 Challenge sites. On October 19th I made it back to Sturgill Peak and made the summit from the Upper Mann Creek Road (FR-009).



Site #-37: Sturgill Peak lookout west of Cambridge, Idaho.

I had tried it earlier in October, mistakenly from the West Fork Road side (FR-031). When I got to Benton Saddle, there was a steep 3-mile section of 2-track to the summit (Sturgill Ridge Trail 285). I made it approximately 1 mile up this trail before I lost traction and spun out. I think if I had been on my DRZ-400 instead of my KTM-990, I might have made it...I had the wrong tool for the job.

In a post on our club website Challenge Forum Chuck Sheer gave me this advice: "I tried that also with same result. You need to go in from Mann Creek Reservoir. Pretty nice ride with some gnarly rocks right before the lookout but nothin' you can't handle."

I should have given more attention to Chuck's comment about the gnarly rocks, but I didn't and I paid a price. Again, I took my KTM on the second try and dropped it in a steep and sharp rocky turn about one tenth mile from the lookout. On the way back down I fell again within 10 feet of where I had fallen going up...once more I had selected the wrong tool for this peak!

The 2010 and 2011 IAMC Challenges have been fun, but require planning, dedication and a significant commitment of time. I hope more of our club members will participate next year when we select 45 different sites. I will give you a little hint what they will be...think spooky and high!

The Circle of the "Frank"

by Marty Morache

(Editor's note: We are deeply indebted to Marty Morache for his knowledge of Forest Service and BLM roads in Idaho. For over 50 years he has ridden the back roads and trails of Idaho, and he continues to ride well into his 9th decade. His knowledge of the Idaho back country is encyclopedic and accurate. Marty gave us the first description of the motorized version of the Idaho Centennial Trail [IAMC Newsletter, Issue # 4, August 2011]. Following is a description of an off-road route that circumnavigates Idaho's Central Wilderness Area as first described by Marty Morache. I am told by those who have ridden this approximate 1,100 mile trail with Marty, that it is some of the best riding they have ever done in Idaho. Thank you, Marty, for creating it and sharing it with us.)

Starting at Lowman, the Clear Creek Road (FS-582) is accessed from the Lowman/Stanley Road on the eastern edge of Lowman. Head north on FS-582 to the intersection of FS-579 in Bear Valley. Turn right on FS-579 past Bruce Meadows Landing Strip, then over Cape Norn Summit to intersection with Highway 21. Turn left and continue down Highway 21 to FS-008, crossing Marsh Creek. Then it is up Beaver Creek and hang a right on FS-172 to Pinyon Peak Lookout and past the Lost Packer Mine, down to Loon Creek. Stay right continuing up FS-172 over Loon Creek Summit and down Jordon Creek to the Yankee Fork Dredge. Then turn left up FS-070 over Mill Creek Summit and down to junction with FS-080.

Turn left on FS-80 and go approximately two mile to FS-079. Turn right on FS-079, swinging south of Corkscrew Mountain and down to Challis Creek. Turn right on Challis Creek and turn left less than one mile on Darling Creek (FS-138), which merges with FS-588 down to the West Fork of Morgan Creek. Then it is less than one-fourth mile to Morgan Creek. Hang a left on Morgan Creek Road (FS-055). Top over Morgan Creek Summit and



continue down Panther Creek, still on FS-055, to the confluence with the Main Salmon River.

Turn left on the Salmon River Road. Continue down the Salmon River Road and travel approximately six miles to Colson Creek (FS-123). Turn right up Colson Creek and stay on FS-123 to intersection with FS-044. Turn left to Horse Creek Pass and down Beaver Creek in Montana to the West Fork of the Bitterroot River, continuing past the Painted Rock Reservoir to junction with the Magruder Corridor Road (FS-468). Continue over Nez Perce Pass and down Deep Creek to the Selway River. Turn downstream, crossing the Selway River, traveling approximately three miles, staying on FS-468. Continue across the Magruder Road to the junction with Primary Forest Road 222. Turn left proceeding over Dixie Summit to Dixie. Then go south on FS-222 to junction with FS-311. Turn right on FS-311, going north over Badger Summit down to Orogrande. It then becomes Primary Forest Road 233 down Crooked River to junction with State Highway 14.

Turn left down Highway 14 to the Hungry Ridge Road (FS-309). Follow FS-309 to junction with FS-221. Turn left on FS-221 and stay on it across Slate Creek Basin and down Keating Ridge and down Allison Creek to the Salmon River. Hang left on the Salmon River Road going upstream to French Creek. Turn right up French Creek (FS-246) to Primary Forest Road 21. Turn left on Primary Forest Road 21 to Warren.

Continue on FS-340 over Warren Summit, down to the South Fork Salmon River and up Elk Creek and over Elk Creek Summit and down Government Creek to Big Creek. Turn right up Big Creek, still on FS-340, over Profile Summit, down to the East Fork of the South Fork Salmon River Road. Turn right on FS-412 to Yellow Pine. Then go up Johnson Creek (FS-413) to Landmark. Pick up FS-579, continuing south up Johnson Creek over Deadwood Summit and around Deadwood Reservoir (FS-555) to Scott Mountain and down Pine Creek to the Banks/Lowman Road. Turn left here and to Lowman, the point of beginning.

Names of mountains, summits, landmarks, streams and rivers are mentioned for purposes of orientation if road signs are missing.

7 September 2011
