



In this Issue. . . .

- ❖ 10 Steps to Winterizing Your Bike (Ax from STAR)
 - ❖ The Dempster Highway: Dawson City to Inuvik (Mike Anderson)
 - ❖ Destination - Seeing the Light (Bob Sims)
 - ❖ Riding Rocky Terrain (Craig O. Olsen)
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Editor's Note: The following article recently appeared in the Idaho STAR Newsletter and is reprinted with their permission for your interest. Please note that a more detailed coverage of this topic, specifically relating to dual sport adventure riders, will be conducted as a community event at Happy Trails (11777 Executive Drive, Boise, ID) on Saturday, December 8, 2012, from 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM. Please visit our club website at motoidaho.org and click on the Events Tab for more details.



10 Steps to Winterizing Your Bike

by Ax

Whether you do it yourself or go to a shop for maintenance, there are a few things you need to take care of before you cover your bike for the winter months. Depending on how much you plan to ride during the winter (readers here range from "every time there is sunshine" to "the baby sleeps in the garage until spring") you may have to adapt some of these tips, so you can access your bike easily and safely those sunny winter days you still feel like riding.

- 1- Clean your garage.** If you are keeping your bike in the garage, you need to make room for it. While you are at it, put all your bike-related stuff together in one area (double bonus: you can find it next spring and your live-in partner will appreciate the clean-up effort).
- 2- Change the Oil** even if the oil is not due for a change. Byproducts of combustion produce acids in the oil which will harm the inner metal surfaces. Add a new filter as well.
- 3- Use Fuel Stabilizer:** Fill the tank with fresh fuel, and, if possible, add the fuel stabilizer to the tank right at the station to give it a few miles to run through the fuel system on your way home.



4- Battery Care: If you are not riding at all during the winter, the battery should be removed from the motorcycle when it's in storage. A conventional battery should be checked for electrolyte levels. Add distilled water to any of the cells that are low and then charge the battery. Battery charging should be performed at least every two weeks using a charger that has an output of 10% of the battery ampere hour rating. You can also use a battery maintainer (which won't damage your battery like a trickle charger can). They have smart monitoring circuitry that charges the battery only when it needs it. So connect one to your battery and it will be fully charged and ready to fire up in the spring.

5- Spray chain lube: You should already be doing this during the riding season. Don't forget to spray all pivot points (brake and clutch levers, kickstand, fold-up foot pegs, etc.) as well before storing your bike. That'll keep rust from forming on the parts during the winter.

6- Exhaust and Mufflers: Exhausts/mufflers can rust fast when they are not used. Spray light oil into the muffler ends and drain holes. Lightly stick a plastic bag into the end of each muffler hole to keep moisture from getting inside the exhaust. Then cover each muffler with another plastic bag to keep outside moisture off. If you have 'critter issues,' a way to keep mice out of mufflers is to stuff the plastic bag with steel wool and then pushing the bag into the air intake and tailpipes. The bag keeps steel wool strands out of the engine. Use bright-colored caution tape as a reminder to remove it in the spring.

7- Check your tires with an air pressure gauge. Make sure each tire is properly inflated to the maximum recommend pressure. Some riders recommend placing a piece of cardboard, wood board, or carpet scrap under each tire to keep the rubber raised up from a freezing floor.

8- Service all fluids. You should follow your owner's manual, but if you haven't followed some of their indications during the year, this is a good time to catch up on maintenance. Test antifreeze and coolant.

9- Surface Preparation: Waxing and polishing the motorcycle might seem like a waste of time since you are putting it away and no one will see it. But wax is important because it will act as a barrier against rust and moisture during the winter months.

10- Cover it.

If you are one of the riders in the above-mentioned category and enjoy riding "*every time there is sunshine,*" remember to wear warm gear (layers, heated gear, etc.); be aware of ice on the road; and remember drivers are probably not expecting motorcyclists in January.

Sources:

<http://www.familyhandyman.com>

<http://www.totalmotorcycle.com>



The Dempster Highway: Dawson City to Inuvik

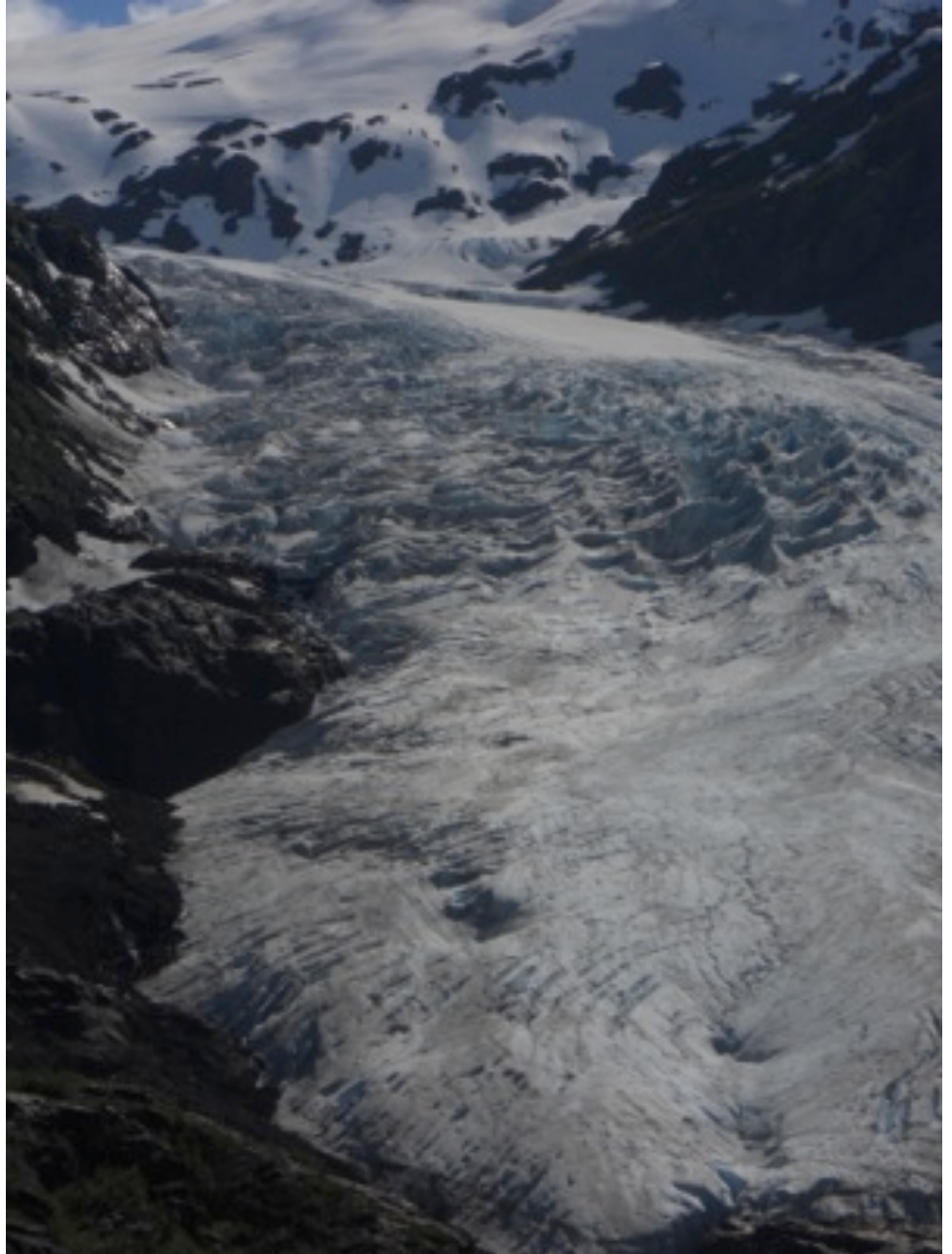
by Mike Anderson

(March 2012): "So are you going to get that Dempster thing out of your system or not? I don't want you to look back and say, 'I wish I had done that when I could have.' You have new knees now, so get it done," she said. I love my wife, but replied, "I don't even have a bike." "Well you know how to fix that!" was her retort.

OK, buy a bike - BMW GSA; never had one of those. Next, fix the seat. You would think, in today's world, a motorcycle seat would fit straight from the factory. A trip to Fisher's Upholstery in Eagle cured those ills. Next, buy a guide book to Alaska and Canada. **Milepost** is definitely the leading authority; \$29.95 at Hastings. Next, talk to someone who has been there and done that. Dr. Olsen sent me some valuable information and a timeline in which to get it done. Next, visit Happy Trails and spend a little moola acquiring all the tidbits and service items I will need on the road. Trust me, you do not want to have to buy anything in Canada \$\$\$\$.

And so it began - the fulfillment of a dream ride that started in 2005.

"You're going where?" was the question most of my friends asked, along with "How are you going to do that?" "Well, you go out the driveway and turn North," was my reply, "and 2800 miles later you are there."



Spectacular Bear Glacier on the Glacier Highway midway between the Meziadin Junction and Stewart, BC.

(July 2012): Getting to the start of the Dempster Highway is the ride of a lifetime. Spence's Bridge, The Glacier Highway, The Caribou Highway, The Cassiar Highway, The Klondike Highway, and The Alaskan Highway - roads to be enjoyed with all their beauty, and the hundreds of untouched lakes and wildlife.



Camping at Provincial Parks in Canada is economical: \$20 in B.C., \$15 in Yukon and \$10 in NWT. Loonies are required for showers, which are \$1 coins.

The campgrounds get more primitive the farther north you go. Surprisingly, you seem to get more for your money the farther north you go, free firewood and of course nicer views. One mistake I did make was the choice in color of my tent. Go with a darker color, such as dark green, as the sun doesn't set and the gold accentuated the midnight sun.



Peel River Valley - typical magnificent vistas seen along the Dempster Highway.



Ride north until you get to the Klondike River Lodge. I chose to stay here for the night (there is no darkness this time of year), do laundry and catch some sleep in a real bed before attempting the Dempster alone. All the horror stories about the Dempster were in the back of my mind. I was originally going to fly and rent a motorcycle, but the rental agencies will not rent for the Dempster anymore. In their words it is too much liability and too difficult to retrieve their broken bikes.

The Dempster Highway (Yukon Highway 5 and NWT Highway 8) is Canada's greatest adventure road. Officially opened to the public on August 18, 1979, it is 736 km (457 miles) - each way - of mud, shale and bad weather, leading from just east Dawson City, Yukon, to Inuvik, in the North West Territories. It is the only all-weather



Above: The Klondike River Lodge is located about 25 miles east of Dawson City at the beginning of the Dempster Highway.

Left: The author photographed at the Arctic Circle.



public road in Canada that crosses the Arctic Circle (at only 403 km into its total length), and it is the Mecca for motorcyclists hungry for adventure. For the past seven years, I have been single-minded in my quest to become one of those mud-soaked adventure riders.

The Dempster is a well-graded road that when dry, can be ridden as fast or as slow as a rider desires. My goal was to just keep moving as long as I felt good and as long the sun was out - that can be a rare event on the Dempster.

After stopping at Eagle Plains for a nice lunch, gas and a mandatory souvenir, I was off to the Arctic Circle! Words cannot explain the feelings and memories of riding with my dad that overcame me at this point. Although he didn't live to make the trip, we often talked about going.

A big thank you to Hans from Berlin, Germany for taking this picture. He spoke English well, and his wife spoke



none. They were on holiday, and in their words "on the Holy Grail of adventure roads."

Right: Hans and his wife "on the Holy Grail of adventure roads."



From the Arctic Circle it was a dash up the Dempster to Inuvik. There were a couple of road blocks on the way. You just wait till they say you can continue, as they are at the top of the food chain.

Grizzly bears can be seen anywhere along the Dempster Highway.



The views on the Dempster are something that will live in your memories for the rest of your life. When you look east and west from Eagle Plains, which is really a ridge in between the Oglivie and Richardson Mountains, you realize there is nothing out there east or west for 750 miles.

After crossing the Peel and then the Mackenzie Rivers on the ferries, it is a just a few hours to Inuvik on some straight gravel roads. Watch out for the truck traffic and pull over so you don't get blasted with gravel. Speed limits are largely ignored by the locals. One of the ferry workers told me it was only a little over an hour ride to Inuvik from the ferry 125 miles away. OK.



The Dempster Highway just north of Eagle Plains.

I stayed at the Nova Inn in Inuvik - rooms were \$160 per night. In the hotel lobby, the tour guide to Tuktoyaktuk (shortened to Tuk) on the Beaufort Sea has a desk. This is where you can arrange to fly another 194 km (121 mi) north to Tuk and dip your toes in the Beaufort Sea. The cost is \$450 for four hours. I slept well, as the rooms are set up for the midnight sun. When I awoke, the rain had set in. In the Arctic, when the weather changes, it

changes hard. From my vantage point above The Circle, I witnessed the northern horizon turn from endless summer to the monsoons of southern Asia overnight. I had planned to ride my motorcycle the Dempster's whole length - come hell or high water; but common sense was tasking me to stay another day. Hence the forecast was for four days of this weather, and costs and scheduling would not allow me that long of a layover.



So off I went in the rain. The once hard-packed roads became chunky cake batter. My rear tire spun wildly and the 550 pounds of motorcycle I straddled told me it wanted to lie down and give up, with or without me. My helmet's face shield was lousy with fog, but the



rain whacked my eyes if I lifted it. My hands were numb and useless - so much for waterproof gloves. Ahead, the clouds were sinister enough to shut out even the eternal sun of an Arctic summer. Still, I continued south. When I left Inuvik, a couple of young riders fell in with me, and we rode together to the Mackenzie River ferry. My pace was set to the conditions of the road. After the ferry ride across the river, the boys told me they wanted to pick up the pace, as they had plans in Dawson City that night. So we parted ways.

The result for riding too fast on an unknown road in the mud can be disastrous. As I came over a rise, I found one



of the two young riders and his bike, a brand new BMW GS, spread out over about 50 yards. In the crash he had ripped the cylinder head open spilling oil into the mud puddle, broken his handlebars, and tore off one of his hand guards. He had no cylinder head protectors or crash bars on his bike; and he was only wearing a hoody, jeans and tennis shoes! Motorcycling north of 66 degrees is no sightseeing tour, no joke and no tourist-friendly amusement ride. Fortunately for him, Inuvik fire and rescue happened alone about 30 minutes after his wreck on their way to a training seminar in Dawson City, and they loaded him up; otherwise, he might still be there!

For the first time since leaving Caldwell, I felt my sense of safety slip away. Eagle Plains was still over a 100 miles away. As the fog began to lift and the rain started to let up, and with only one bar-swapping incident in 250 miles, my feeling of confidence began to return. It was a few more miles to a bowl of gut-warming soup at Eagle Plains, a fill-up of the tank on the GSA, and then six more hours to the Klondike Highway Junction and end of my return trip on the Dempster.

It was only 2300 miles to Caldwell from there - Piece of cake!

If you can dream it, you can do it.

Mike/tvbh40a



Continued muddy road conditions about 100 miles north of Eagle Plains.



Editor's Note: As Mike says, riding the Dempster is "no sightseeing tour, no joke and no tourist-friendly amusement ride." The Dempster is a desolate nearly 500 mile stretch of dirt and gravel road between the Klondike River Lodge and Inuvik, a small community of about 3,500 people, with Eagle Plains (only a gas station with small motel and restaurant) positioned approximately midway between the two. Just how desolate is it? When I rode the Dempster in July 2010 and was in Inuvik, I looked through the phone book for possible restaurants. In addition to the few eating establishments listed for Inuvik, I noted several listed in the surrounding NWT community of Yellow Knife - 1,900 miles away by road and 690 miles away by air; and there is very little in the way of any civilization in-between the two.

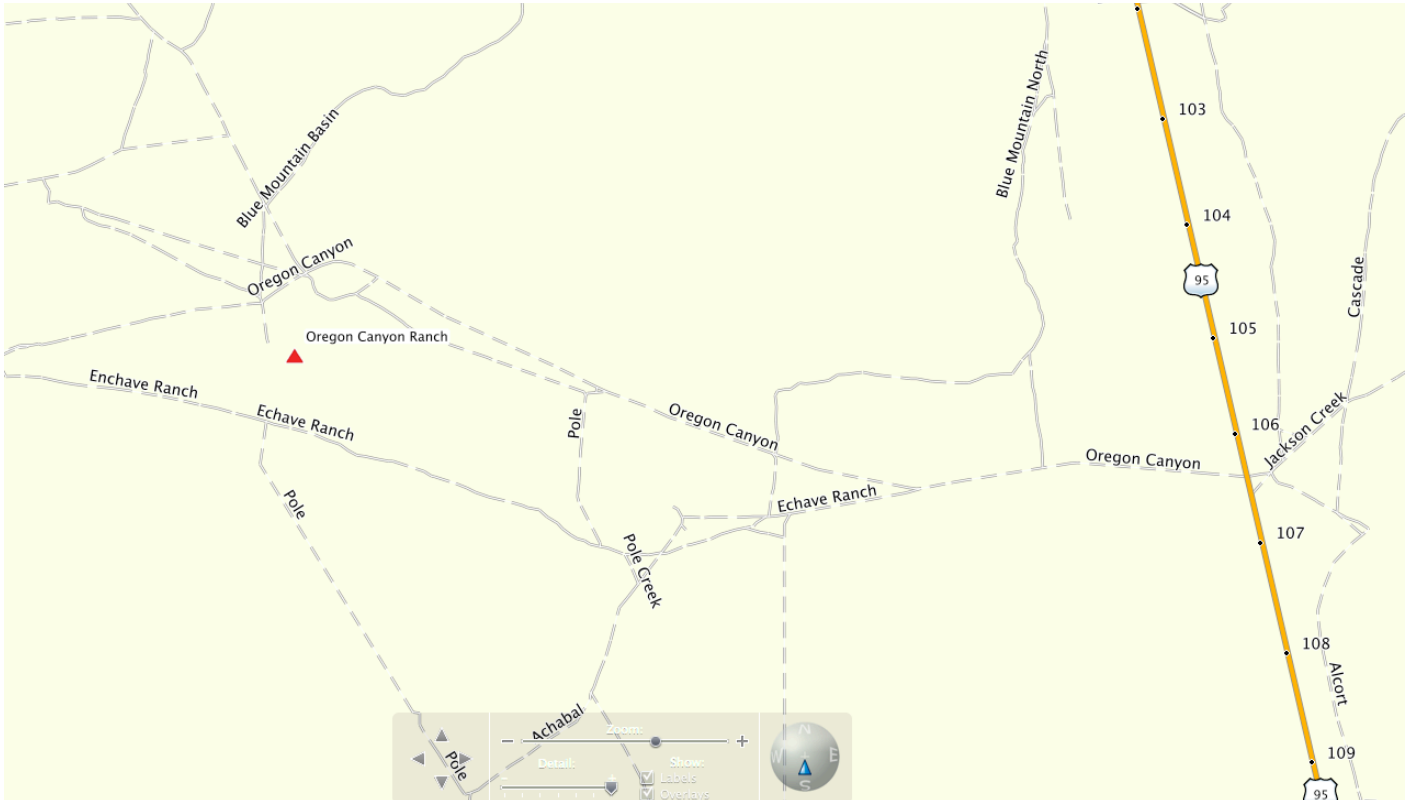
If you plan to ride the Dempster, be well-prepared and well-equipped to handle a wide range of potential emergencies. Don't be like the two young riders Mike encountered. If you break down, you really are on your own, and any help is a very long distance away. Though you can do it solo, as Mike did, I recommend riding the Dempster in a small group, even if that group is only one other rider. We took two days riding in and two days coming out, staying over at Eagle Plains each way. We also stayed two days in Inuvik. I would not recommend riding the entire Dempster in one day unless you are a very skilled and confident rider, like Mike.



Destination-Seeing the light

By Bob Sims

I love the desert. Vast, quiet and sometimes mysterious. Along the Oregon-Nevada border near the microscopic town of McDermitt, Nevada, lies the Oregon Canyon Ranch. Many of us have probably ridden through this area but have never known of the “McDermitt Lights.” [1]



Above: Oregon Canyon Ranch off Highway 95 (Garmin BaseCamp)

Left: Satellite view of Oregon Canyon Ranch near McDermitt (Google Earth)



You may have heard of the “Spook Lights” (no, not the psychedelic indie band who take their name from the phenomenon) or “Ghost Lights,” and what’s going on near the ranch seems similar to what is seen in other states and around the world.

Spook lights have been recorded in various places throughout earth’s history. They have been the basis of folklore around the world, often associated with dragons, faries, UFOs, gods and the paranormal. It wasn’t until the 1950s that the western cultures began calling them “ghost lights” or “spook lights”



The Spook Lights typically appear at night and are usually described as orbs or discs varying from the size of a baseball to a basketball. They appear to hover or dance a few feet above the ground.

You can search the internet for photos and videos if you're curious. A more famous occurrence happens in Marfa, Texas. I happened to speak with an individual who lives there and he was very aware of the "Marfa lights." I asked him if he thought the lights were from car headlights and he said, "No. When you see them, you will know it; it will make the hair on the back of your neck stand up."

The following is an interesting account of the McDermitt Lights that I stumbled upon:

'Phantom Lights in Nevada'

Fate Magazine, Vol. 1, page 98, Fall 1948. [3]

Written by Kenneth Arnold who was the pilot who first reported Flying Saucers, and touched off major 'flaps' of UFO sightings. Here is the article he wrote in the first issue of this magazine.

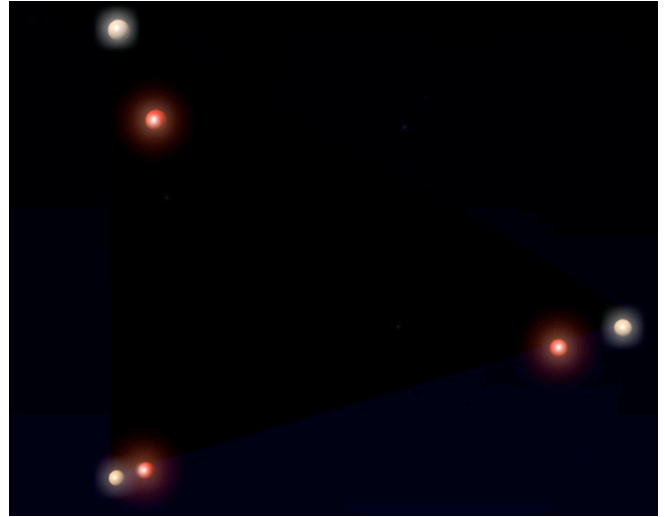
Note, the article clearly uses the spelling 'McDermott' but this could be a typo for McDermitt which is near Oregon Canyon on the Nevada-Oregon border. The article talks about a Ranch at Oregon Canyon. Note 'at'.

"About every ten years, in the desert near Oregon Canyon Ranch, which is located near McDermott, Nevada, mysterious lights are seen at night by shepherders and cowboys. Although rarely receiving publicity, these lights are a frequent subject of comment and conjecture on the part of the local ranchers.

The elevation is approximately 4,400 feet above sea level, and the area is extremely dry. There is no swampland, no damp area which might account for the lights as 'swamp fire'. Shepherders, most of them Basques (those strange people from the northeast provinces of Spain), have seen the lights most frequently, and describe them with complete and positive accord.

The lights, they say, appear somewhat like the lights of a car, but with either a pale red or a pale yellow glow, and hugging very close to the ground. The general appearance is as if someone was carrying a lantern, or a car was approaching. They are of a circular shape, glowing like a fluorescent light, and very often appear to be only twenty or thirty feet ahead of the observer. Yet, when approached, they seem just that much further away. The lights have been chased as much as two or three miles, but never could the pursuer get close enough to determine the exact nature of the light. A series was seen in 1922, again in 1927, and others in 1930.

In 1930, Joe Bankafier, a rancher, was riding back to his ranch at night when he noticed a large, pale reddish glow or light, circular in shape near the sheep corrals on his **ranch at Oregon Canyon**. His horse carried him to within fifty yards of the light, then became frightened. Bankafier was unable to control the horse, which turned in terror and ran with him for more than a mile. Finally exhausted, the horse pulled up, and Bankafier turned the animal around and tried to get it to return to the ranch. The horse went slowly, but remained nervous and jittery. The light had disappeared, but when they reached the gate to the sheep corral, which was also the gate into the yard of the ranch, the horse refused to pass through the gate. Once more the horse bolted and ran with him a half-mile before he could bring it to a halt. On the next try, he got off the horse and attempted to lead it through the gate. The horse refused to budge, became wild and panicky. Bankafier remounted the animal and once more tried to spur it through the gate. For the third time the horse bolted. This time, halting after a hundred yards, the horse turned, and proceeded to walk calmly through the gate, its terror completely vanished.



Example of "spook lights" seen at night by several people and photographed near Marfa, TX on 9 November 2011. [2]



More than fifty of the shepherders of the area have seen the mysterious lights, and it has been noted that dogs bark at them, proving that they are visible to animals as well as humans.

A second type of mystery light seen in this area is best typified by the story of Tito Bengoa, one of three brothers who run the King's River Ranch near King's River, Nevada. Tito's brothers are Frank and Chris Bengoa, and all are Basques. The ranch usually runs 2,500 head of cattle, and is reputed to be worth a million dollars.

It was in 1930 that Tito Bengoa and his wife and a number of other persons went out onto the desert and witnessed the phenomenon. They saw only one light, which seemed to travel along ahead of them, and at times circle them. They could not tell what it was. It was rather disk-like or moon-like. It looked exactly like a full moon, but it was not the moon, because of its travels around the party, and its passage between the party and the mountains in the distance.

The stories of Joe Bankafier and Tito are confirmed by hundreds of residents of the valley and surrounding territory, and the reputations of each is unimpeachable. What are the mystery lights of Nevada? To date, there has been no satisfactory explanation." [4]



Oregon Canyon Mountains photographed by the author.

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Editor's Note: This is an unusual but interesting article--not the typical one that we publish. It should be noted that no additional sightings of "spook lights" near the Oregon Canyon Ranch after about 1930 (reported in Fate Magazine in Fall 1948) can be found. If you do go near the Oregon Canyon Ranch, be sure to ask some of the old timers about this phenomenon, and if you are camping, be sure to keep an eye out and a camera close by for them!

Along with the usual list of things to see in the desert—ghost towns, abandoned ranches and mines, plane crash sites, hot springs and the like—you can add the Phantom Lights of Nevada!

If you have a story or experience with regard to this phenomenon, please share. There are many theories on what causes the lights to occur which I won't go into here. My purpose is merely to make you aware. If you ride to the area and find yourself camped out in the dark of a new moon, be on the lookout. You may just "see the light."



Riding Rocky Terrain

by Craig O. Olsen

Like many of you, I came to dual sport riding late in life. Loving to ride the twisty paved mountain roads, for years I would slow down when passing a gravel or dirt road leading off the pavement and winding up into the forest. I would longingly wonder where that road went and what adventures traveling it would bring me. Finally, five years ago I purchased my first dual sport bike and began exploring those less traveled roads; and on my, the adventures I have had!



Coming over Hurrah Pass, south of Moab

There is no doubt that learning to ride a dual sport bike off-road has made a much better rider out of me. I quickly learned that some of those roads led to difficult rocky sections requiring skills to traverse that initially I did not possess. Only with repeated practice of the tips learned from more seasoned riders did I eventually gain the skill set to tackle and overcome these more difficult sections. And that has made all the difference in where I am able to ride and how safely and confidently I am able to get there and back. Here are just a few things that I have learned along the way.

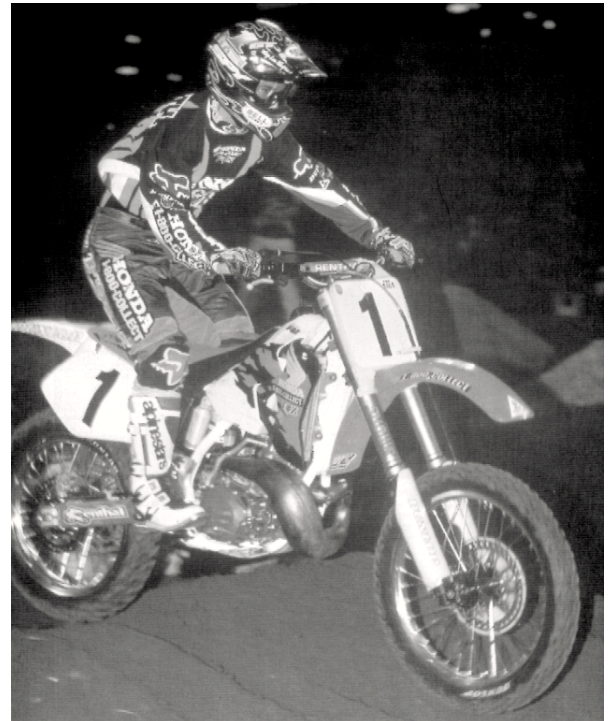
Body Position: The goal of proper body positioning on the bike is to minimize fatigue while maximizing control. It has been said that developing a good understanding of basic riding position is one of the most important things in helping you become a better rider. The more of a habit the correct body position becomes, the better your riding will be. Body position is always changing with the terrain, conditions and speed. [1]

The basic body position is to have your weight centered on the seat, and your head over the triple clamps with your elbows up and out away

from your sides so that you over-grip the throttle across your palm, not across your knuckles (like turning a door knob). Your feet should be centered on the pegs much like a ball joint such that you can rock front to back and side to side, especially when standing.

Standing allows better control by allowing you to act on the bike rather than be acted upon. The basic or neutral position when standing is with the feet centered on the pegs, the knees slightly flexed and the hips above the pegs. Your back is slightly arched. This position is used when traversing level ground. When climbing or accelerating, shift your body weight forward with your hips in front of the pegs, and when descending or decelerating, shift your weight backward with your hips behind the pegs.

In the standing position your head will be over the triple clamps with your elbows up and out away from your sides similar to the sitting position. Your weight should be supported on the pegs thus lowering the center of gravity of the bike and rider, and not



The basic body position for most riding techniques. [1]



on the handle bars, which has the effect of raising the center of gravity toward the highest point on the bike. When transitioning from the sitting to the standing position, all the action should come from the legs such that you do not pull yourself to a standing position using the handle bars. [2]

Your grip on the bars should be firm (not tight) and your arms and shoulders loose and relaxed, not tight or tense. The more aggressive the climb or acceleration, the more your weight should be shifted forward in front of the pegs with your head above or even in front of the triple clamps. The more aggressive the descent or deceleration, the more your weight should be shifted backward behind the pegs, and your head will be behind the triple clamps.

You should cover and operate the clutch and front brake levers with one or two fingers only, leaving your other fingers to secure the grips. Adjust the levers downward below the level of the grips so that your hand remains in a neutral position (not cocked up) with one or two fingers on them when standing. This is important both for riding comfort and safety in operating the clutch and front brake.

Picking Your Line: The key to riding difficult terrain strewn with rocks, ruts and holes is to keep your head up. Look down the trail as far ahead as the trail, speed and common sense allows. Look where you want to go and the bike will naturally follow an invisible line towards where you are looking. If you see a large rock or pothole, do not allow your eyes to fixate on it, otherwise you will hit it -- a phenomenon called target fixation. Take it in, and then allow your eyes to continue to move beyond or to the side of it. The bike will follow your eyes and avoid the obstacle automatically. [3]

By always looking ahead you can usually see a bad patch, such as rocky terrain, before you actually ride over it. This is your cue to slow down, stand up and look to the end of it or far enough down it that you can pick your line of travel through it. That way you have room to gently accelerate through the bad section without starting to go too fast. Keep your eyes fixed on the exit point as you shift your weight forward and gently accelerate through the bad patch. By keeping your forward momentum up and gently accelerating, you will stabilize the bike more as it passes over the rough section. [4]

If you find that the bike moves around a bit, give it a bit more gas, and the bike will steady up. By standing you allow the bike to move and bounce around freely beneath you as it moves over the uneven surface, and your arms and legs will absorb some of the uncontrolled motions from your bike. [5]

Do as little turning as possible over loose rocks. If you have to ride through a section of loose rocks, pick as direct a line as you can and stick to it, focusing on the exit point. Feather the clutch as needed to prevent unnecessary wheel spin. You have better traction and control when the rear wheel is hooked up rather than spinning.

When picking a line through a rough section, look for good traction even if it is over rougher embedded rocks rather than the smaller loose ones adjacent to them. On cambered sections of a trail the loose debris and rocks usually migrate to the lower segment, so pick the higher berm for better traction.

When encountering sharp turns on rocky or rough sections, stay to the outside until you can see around or well into the turn, and then turn into the turn late. This gives you more options for picking your line out of the turn into the next section, and it applies whether you are on the level, climbing or descending. Also, when turning on any loose surface, weight the outside peg through the turn to keep the bike more upright and counter balanced through the turn. This keeps both front and rear wheels more firmly planted through the turn and less likely to wash or slip out.

When possible, try to cross rock ledges (step-offs), ruts or roots at a right angle to prevent them from inadvertently turning your front wheel along the edge of them.

When riding rocky terrain, choose a line, commit to it and look ahead. With modern bike suspensions you can attack obstacles without tensing up or manhandling the bike. Let the bike do the work it is designed to do. You and your bike are a team. Use the principles of weight distribution and body positioning described above, and work with your bike, not against it.



Ride Your Own Ride: As you are building your off-road riding skills, stay within your comfort zone. Don't take on unnecessarily difficult terrain until you have practiced and mastered the skills to do so. When riding with a group, spread out. Riding too close together, especially over rough terrain, is asking for trouble if the rider ahead suddenly slows down, stops or worse yet, tips over.

You don't have to keep up with the rider ahead of you all the time. It is far safer to ride your own ride at your rate, especially through the rough stuff, and then catch up at each junction.

If the terrain becomes too challenging, especially going up a steep rocky section, find a safer place to turn around and head back. Generally, going down a difficult rocky section is easier than going up it. Just remember to keep your weight back as far as you can while standing with your butt just off of the seat of the bike. Use a lower gear to control your down hill speed (braking by engine compression) and use the front brake cautiously not to lock the front wheel. Use the rear brake less and do not lock it.

Additional Instruction: I have had no experience taking any off-road motorcycle training courses, but I know of riders who have, and they highly recommend these courses. While I am not aware of any such courses in Idaho, some in the region were reviewed in a previous club newsletter article. [6]

There are instructional videos available on the internet that review some of the techniques for riding rough rocky terrain, as well as other aspects of off-road dirt bike riding. [7-8] Two excellent instructional DVDs for beginning and advanced dual sport riding techniques are available on the internet along with PDF files containing instructional drills that review many of the concepts discussed in this article. [9]

Whatever you do, don't let those difficult rocky sections you encounter intimidate you. Practice and improve your riding skills until you feel more comfortable riding them. If you can't envision success, you won't attain it.

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