

Overdid it on the "dirt" idea today; crossed Towne Fire Road off the list of do-agains

The video above shows Kevin attempting to cross the creek at the base of Towne Fire Road.

Kevin's been pushing to do another off-road ride for a few weeks, after mastering the first attempt on dirt Alpine and a few trails up off Skyline. That ride was only 30 miles or so, not enough to really qualify as a proper "Sunday" ride, but something to get our feet wet. Well, not quite literally; that we saved for today!

It was a bit of a struggle finding more "dirt" within a reasonable distance from home; it's not much fun riding a cross bike with dirt tires very far on pavement. I thought maybe I had something figured out though. Up dirt Alpine again, some fooling around up on Skyline (Ridge Trail) and then drop into Portola State Park to reconnect with more dirt, this time Old Haul Road (which I'd previously done on my regular road bike with regular tires) followed by Towne Fire Road, which looked really promising on the map, yet I couldn't find out much about it on-line.

Well there's a reason you can't find out about it. It's because few are dumb enough to do it! The climb up from the creek at the bottom is, at times, brutal, and the "road" abysmal. Just one small section of it appears on Strava ("hidden" at that), with just 21 others ever having ridden it. Given that most of the times were substantially faster than ours, my guess is that they actually rode it during the early 1920s when it might have been paved. Yeah, that's my excuse. Sure.

Towne Fire Road dumps you off across from Sam McDonald park, on the east side of Haskins, just before it gets steep. Much as this ride was all about dirt, it was a relief to be on smooth pavement again, and within a few minutes be in LaHonda for a coke and sandwich. Kevin was not doing terribly well by this point, while I was feeling stronger as we went. Makes me wonder just how fast Kevin might climb something like Tunitas if it came earlier in a ride, before wearing himself down a bit.

We'll have more "find the dirt" rides on our cross bikes in the future, but none of them will find us on Towne Fire Road. --Mike--