

Sometimes 42 miles is just right



Pretty easy to see why West Alpine is a local favorite! Yes, it would be nice to start cranking out some 100k+ (62 mile) rides again, but December generally isn't the kindest to my quality riding time (didn't help that I was off on vacation the first 10 days), plus the need to bring my son back up to speed after almost three months off the bike from his (now-in-the-past) kidney issues. That plus there was some unfinished business with presents for my kids that took up most of the morning.

But y'know, you don't need all day to have a good ride. You can get in a high-quality ride in just a few hours, and that's what we did today. Consider it the "West Alpine Classic." From the traditional starting point (Olive Hill & Canada Road, about a mile north of Woodside), you head through Woodside via Mtn Home to Old LaHonda, up and over the other side to 84, down 84 to LaHonda, then up West Alpine to Skyline, north on Skyline to 84 and back down into Woodside. If I've done things correctly, you can view the route below-

[View Larger Map](#)

Sure, it was a bit on the cool side, between 48 & 55 degrees, but the roads were mostly dry, the sky mostly clear, the traffic mostly



A steadily-improving Kevin heading up West Alpine

light. This wasn't going to be a speed run, and at almost 32 minutes up Old LaHonda, there was some question whether Kevin was going to be able to do the planned ride or turn back at Skyline! But I knew that Kevin gets stronger as the ride goes on, so despite his suggestion that we cut it short (which he now denies having made), we pressed on. Beautiful views on the west side of Skyline, lots of ducks (including some of the biggest ducks I've ever seen) in the pond next to the "shortcut" between LaHonda and West Alpine, and a steadily-improving Kevin as each mile passed by.

The actual ride from home was 42 miles, while the route actually shown on the map is a mere 38. But those are 38 quality miles, with two significant climbs (Old LaHonda & West Alpine) and an exposure to whatever elements there may be during the run north on Skyline towards the end of the ride. Kevin's time up West Alpine was about 56 minutes, just 7 minutes off a pretty decent time for him, showing just how much better he got as the ride went on (by contrast, his time up Old LaHonda was off by the same amount but on a climb half as long).