

The planned ride ran into some trouble today. High-water trouble!

I'll tackle the high-water issue in a moment. First, the planned ride (because there's always a plan, and the plan is generally adhered to). Kevin (my son, not the pilot) was supposed to ride with me today, and wanted to do something "different." He was bored of doing the same loop/loops over and over again, so I devised something a bit different. Below is what I came up with-

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Actually, that's the ride I actually rode, and is slightly-different from the original plan. Up Old LaHonda, down the other side to LaHonda, over Haskins Grade to Pescadero (no surprises yet!) and then, instead of heading north towards Tunitas, I added a loop out to Gazos Creek & back to San Gregorio, then 84 over the hill back to Woodside, instead of the usual Tunitas Creek.

Kevin ended up not being able to ride, due to a nasty head cold, so I was out there on my own. I don't mind riding along sometimes, but it's unfortunate when I miss an opportunity to ride with Kevin, because after he's been out on a bike for an hour or so, his mind clears of the fog that his epilepsy drugs create and you he becomes a lot sharper and more perceptive. That plus his riding helps keep him in shape for LaCrosse.



Cyclists heading up west-side Old LaHonda as I was heading down While the weather was fairly nice, Old LaHonda was still wet in places and the top was very slippery, none of that being a surprise after so much rain this past month, and provided a convenient excuse for the frustrating 22 minutes, 12 seconds it took. One of those times when you keep thinking about where those 13 seconds went, because 21 minutes, 59 seconds sounds so much faster! The descent on the east side is becoming increasingly touchy as the road continues to deteriorate, plus you have to watch out for cyclists heading up, of which there were quite a few today! Then it was up over Haskins Grade to Pescadero, another source of minor frustration as I timed myself at 10 minutes, 10 seconds to the top. A lot more than the 8 minutes I used to easily climb that stretch of road, but faster than I've been up it recently.



No way for a bike to get to the coast from Pescadero today. Some cars weren't even brave enough to drive through this flooded section. The run into Pescadero wouldn't be the same if you didn't have that small dog that [runs across a huge yard](#) to chase down cyclists. Fortunately there's a fence between you and the dog, but I paid attention to where he comes from and it's way, way, way at the back of a huge lot. Very impressive speed from that little guy! The next stop would normally be in Pescadero for food, but I'd decided I'd do that after returning from the southern loop down to Gazos Creek. This is when plans changed a bit; originally, I was going to ride out to the coast at Pescadero and then head south on 1, but a flooded section of the road between the town of Pescadero and the coast essentially closed the road to cyclists (not a good idea to try and ride through water that's up to your crankset and too deep to see what you're riding through).



Cloverdale Road between Pescadero & Gazos Creek The easiest thing to do would have been to simply head north and do the usual Tunitas loop (again), but the plan had been to head down to Gazos Creek, and some way or other, I was going to stick to some variant of the plan. The solution was simple; ride south on Cloverdale Road instead of the impossible-to-get-to Highway 1, and then return on the coast all the way to San Gregorio, bypassing Pescadero. This worked out quite nicely, since there's a good place to eat right where you hit Highway 1 ([as seen here](#)). It's called the Gazos Creek Grill, and it may become our new stop on trips to Santa Cruz. Much faster service than the over-crowded Whaler Cafe in Davenport.



Pigeon Point Lighthouse, a place many of us visited on a school field trip... if you're old enough to have been in school when they still had field trips. Then it was a fast run north on Highway 1 to San Gregorio. Yes, fast, heading north. This was an unusual day with reversed wind direction, for which I was quite thankful. Yes, that means I did have a strong headwind at times on Cloverdale Road, but much better there, with its twists & small hills, than on the coast, where you can see the road stretch out in front of you for miles, and a headwind feels like something meant to punish you forever. I was in San Gregorio and heading up 84 in no time, and made it back a fair amount earlier than I expected.

Overall stats, from my house, came to 76 miles, 5900ft of climbing, and 17mph average riding speed. There's a story to the average speed. I hadn't paid attention to it most of the ride, finally checking it at the bottom of 84 as I approached Woodside. 16.9 miles per hour. Panic quickly set in; I'd much rather it had said 16.7 than 16.9, because there would be no possible way of bumping 16.7 up to 17 by the time I got home. But 16.9? Ouch. I just might be able to pull it off. So, instead of taking it easy the final few miles to home, I was pushing the pedals as hard as I could, trying to keep my current speed as much above 17 mph as possible, knowing that I was going to be going a fair amount slower than that on my way over Jefferson. Somehow, I did it. I managed to bump it up to 17mph, almost making up for the missed opportunities on Old LaHonda and Haskins Grade. Redemption is where you find it.

If you do this ride starting from Woodside, it's going to be about 67 miles and 5500ft of climbing. Food & water will be available at LaHonda, Pescadero, Gazos Creek, San Gregorio and again at LaHonda. There's also food & water at Sky Londa, but that's only 10 mostly-downhill miles from the finish in Woodside. This ranks as a challenging ride, not something to attempt as your first 100k!

--Mike--