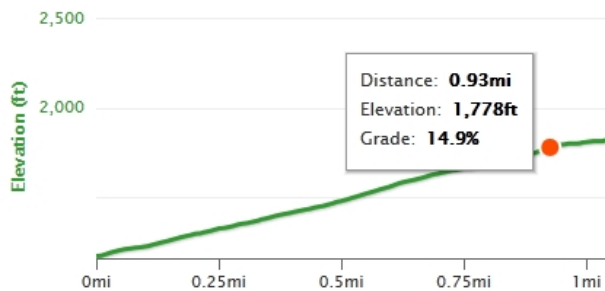


Dead-end roads off Skyline- two down, one to go!

With west-side Old LaHonda still under construction, it was time for yet another variant of the Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride. Almost warm enough to go without leg warmers and a base layer... almost, but not quite. Better to keep the knees protected. No need for long-fingered gloves at least!

Predictably large group today, with Karl, Kevin, Kevin, Eric, Karen and Jan, whom we haven't seen for a while. Kevin (the pilot) lied about his intention to ride slowly up the hill; last I saw of him on Kings he was up at the front with Kevin (my son) and Karl. I was doing my best to try and work my way back up to Jan, who's likely figured out that I fall apart on the steeper sections and then claw my way back when the grade eases up.



Now, about our dead-end roads mission this week. There are three of them, all coming off the coast side of Skyline, between Kings/Tunitas and Sky L'onda. Tuesday we hit up Star Hill, and today it was the mother of them all, Bear Gulch. As you're heading south on Skyline from Kings, Bear Gulch is on your right, just as you begin the continuous long descent into Sky L'onda. It starts with a short climb, then becomes a long gradual descent on a twisty narrow (yet nicely paved) road until... until the bottom literally drops out. The last mile or so is a killer. A "bear" of a climb as it were. But the views of the redwoods, the coast, the cattle grazing on the hillside next to the road... those all make it worthwhile. That is, if you could see them through your salt-stung eyes.

If you would like to check out Bear Gulch, I'd do it sooner than later. This is not a ride to do on a warm day, nor is it a ride to attempt without a low gear (the road is too narrow to effectively zig-zag your way up the hill, although Jan did an admirable job of trying). But it's definitely one to scratch off your list.