

Recalibration ride- Redwood City/Santa Cruz loop

August wasn't a great month for me and my bikes; aside a short demo ride on a mountain bike in Wisconsin (Trek dealer show) and a single commute ride to & from work (2.9 miles each way, but at least a hill in one direction!) I went 19 days without riding. That first day back (last Tuesday) wasn't easy, but not nearly as tough as I expected... but of course that was just 30 miles. Another 30 miles on Thursday, and then yesterday, another 30 miles (a bit of a pattern here?) riding from Morgan Hill to San Jose. Those rides weren't going to make up for what I missed in August.

That's where today comes in. I had to come up with something that was ambitious, yet possible. Kevin had the same idea. The Santa Cruz loop. 112 miles, familiar territory. Impossible would have meant going up Bonny Doon; we'll leave that for another time.

It felt good doing something so familiar; Kevin and I know this loop like most know "The Loop" in Portola Valley. Up Old LaHonda, over Haskins Grade, then the rollers of Cloverdale. The only real surprise came when we exited to the coast and found that the Gazos Creek Grill is no longer in business. Not an issue for us, since our planned lunch stop was in Davenport (14 miles down the coast) but something to keep in mind for other rides.

Mild crosswinds for the run to Davenport, with moderate tailwinds from there to Santa Cruz. Normally we'd make a full lunch stop at Davenport, but the Whaler Cafe had run completely out of their awesome ham & cheese (or turkey and cheese) croissants, and everything else for that matter other than cookies. So we shared a quick Mtn Dew and cookie and continued on to Santa Cruz, eating lunch at Emily's, which is highly recommended. Not terribly fast, but very friendly and very good.

As always, the worst part of this ride is the run up Highway 9 from Santa Cruz to Boulder Creek, and this being Labor Day, the traffic was even heavier than normal. We made our usual water & Mtn Dew stop at the Boulder Creek gas station and then headed up 9 to Skyline, leaving behind the heavy traffic and narrow roads, and finally feeling like we were on home turf, especially once on Skyline with Mr. Mustard waiting. No hot dog for us this time, just some drunks and then a fast run across Skyline, down into Woodside and home.



We weren't the only ones out today; this looked like a Western Wheelers ride



25 miles to Santa Cruz. Seems like a long way… and feels like it too.



Approaching Davenport (and leaving the fog behind)



Emily’s Cafe in Santa Cruz. Cook bike wind thingee out front.



We’re not sure what this guy is protesting or fundraising for…



Boulder Creek gas stations/refueling stop. 93 degrees so we went through a lot of water.



The sign announcing Waterman Gap ahead



Kevin climbing up Highway 9



Mr. Mustard at Saratoga Gap



Scenic overlook on Skyline.