

Climbing so hard I made my wheel spin!

Sure sounds good when I type that... and it's true, my wheels were spinning, as I climbed Redwood Gulch towards highway 9. Of course, the road was slick from the steady drip coming down from the trees, a result of this-morning's fog, certainly not from my awesome strength, shown by my barely sub-13-minute time for a climb that should take me just over 10.

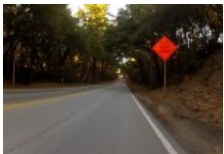
It was time to do something other than the usual Sunday ride to the coast, time to do something different and in some ways more challenging. Maybe something in the "ugly" category. And what could be uglier than heading south through the foothills before turning west on Stevens Creek, then up up up Redwood Gulch & Highway 9 and then return via Skyline? What I didn't plan on was doing it alone (Kevin wasn't feeling well), nor leaving pretty late to avoid the heavy morning fog.

By the time I finally got out it was just past 1pm, making this yet another "chasing the sun" event. Can't tell you how many times, as I headed south, I considered truncating the ride, maybe head up Page Mill (but didn't), maybe stop by the Los Altos store to work on the computers for a bit and then head back the same way I came (but didn't) and finally two other options. One, ride up Stevens Creek to where it dead-ends and then retrace the route back home (but didn't) and then finally, after climbing Redwood Gulch, descending 9 from that point and again heading back along the foothills. But didn't.

It wasn't a fast or pretty ride, but it was purposeful. No stops for food, just to change batteries in the video camera and to put on warm gloves once up on Skyline.

Skyline, by the way, has been destroyed by Caltrans. Their idea of repairing the road has been to ignore the potholes and just pour a little bit of oil and a lot of gravel onto it, not enough oil for the gravel to actually sink into the pavement, but rather adhere to the top. It's nuts! A road that used to be remarkably smooth is now like riding on glued-down gravel, eliminating the feeling of your bike gliding along, every turn of the cranks feeling like it has to be forced. You've got to wonder how much efficiency is lost, not just to bikes but motorists as well.

If this is the new method for road repair, we're going to be selling a lot of Trek Domane road bikes in the future (they've got a design that really eats up the bumps).



Why doesn't it just say "Road Destruction Ahead"?



The end of the smooth and the beginning, just ahead, of the awful



An example of the “glued gravel” concept of road repair



Another example showing how uneven the new surface is