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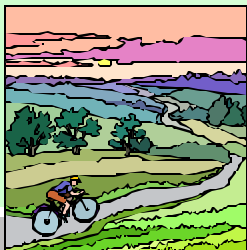
Letter from the Prez

Man, we're over half way through 2001 already—where has the summer gone? With the heat, rain and insects we've had this season, it's been a bit more difficult to fit the rides in. Like every summer, there are fewer bikes on the trails right now. While that should give us some time to catch up on trail maintenance, the heavy rains and other erosive forces we're dealing with have been a real challenge. The vines and shrubs along the trails have enjoyed all the rain and they've been growing like, well, like weeds. And it seems the bugs were just gathering their forces for this year, they've definitely been worse than the last few seasons. I'm looking forward to the cool days of autumn. But until fall comes, I'm grateful that I can get up tomorrow morning, drive 10 minutes, and be able to sweat my cuds off, get my *arse* chewed by yellow flies and have a total blast on these trails we have. But the trails need work. So come out and pitch in at the next trail maintenance day and improve these trails we are lucky enough to have in our neck of the woods. Remember, you don't have to be a club member to join in the trail maintenance fun and festivities.

While we've focused on trail maintenance, we'd like to do more as a club. But just like our members, we have jobs, families and other commitments that compete for our time. If you have an interest in playing a more active role in the club, let us know. If you just want to maybe organize the occasional group ride or contribute an article to the newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. Or, if you have other ideas for us, we're always looking for suggestions.

Thanks, and happy trails.

Ed



FROM THE MESSAGE BOARD

"The Battle at Mobile Hill" - Posted by Ivo

I knew it would be a rough day from the moment I woke up, because of the rain, but I did not know just how rough. The moment the horn sounded, the pack violently attacked the muddy field that lay before them. Everyone scrambled into position and hoped to maintain it. After about 200 yards we entered the trail, which would prove to be more of a trial. I entered in 3rd position and immediately "checked" the field. I was very happy sitting there because the guy that I needed to beat was two spaces back and fading pretty fast. I was not sure how long I would be able to keep up with the leaders, Ford and Tagg, but I knew that if I could, I would be running with the big dog, Ford. The guy trains 300 miles a week!! (I max at 120). As the first of 3 laps continued, I tried to follow close enough to the leaders so that I could grab their lines in the mud, roots and puddles. As we approached the first road crossing, 2 miles into the race, Ford and Tagg went down on the slippery bridge. Ok, I know what you're thinking—here's my chance right? Not. First of all, we're on the first lap and I don't want to burn myself out by hauling these guys behind me. Then I realized that only Tagg was getting up and moving. As I slowly passed by my fallen comrades (hey, they're cyclists too, right?) I saw Tagg turn the body of Ford over like a heavy rag doll...and my heart froze. From there—instinct took over, time slowed, and the world around faded to a gray silence. "Ford, Ford, are you okay? Ford, wake up!" As Tagg held him upright, Ford's head fell over to the side with one eye open and one eye closed. I saw nothing that resembled the aggressive and intimidating Ford that I knew him to be just minutes before. Instead, what I beheld was the face of vulnerability, weakened and helpless. His eyewear was smashed into his face, and blood began to flow. Then a murmur came out, "mnm, urrgghhh", he said. "Ford, are you okay?", we asked. By then, I was just happy to see his eyeball roll around as proof that he was still there. Though I knew he was still semi-conscious, I felt a huge relief, and immediately decided that I should leave Tagg with him and ride back to the finish line for help. As I looked back, I saw that others had caught up and that the race would have to be stopped. "Ford is down!", I exclaimed between breaths. "He hit his head on the pavement, and we've got to go get him", I said. The lady patiently called into her radio, "Clint, Ford is down and he hit his head." I then turned and rolled quickly back to the scene. Ford had gone down, indeed (I saw with different eyes). It was as if I was returning to a place known to me—hours later, like a dream, but only minutes had passed. The wounded man was sitting up now, still a bit shaken by what was a wicked blow to the side of the head. Stitches would be required for sure, probably 15 to 20 of them. The blood spread over his head was half-dry by now, and served as proof that only minutes had gone by. This helped me to regain a frame of reference with the world around me. I began to look around; people seemed very calm. I realized this was because they had not seen what Tagg and I had seen from our camera lenses. Pure pictographic madness! Put on permanent film in our minds, an image of the worst thing that can happen to a cyclist—every rider's most dreaded thought.. The race restarted and positions were taken exactly as before. Tagg pulled and pulled, and slowed down before the bridges, which I liked. After I knew we had a pretty good gap on rest, I relaxed a lot. Then the race was over. Tagg crossed first, I passed, and the Kelme dude came in right behind. Not much of a race, huh?

Escambia Search and Rescue

is trying to start a cycle division! In the search for Mrs. Greene, the few people that had bikes were able to cover a goodly amount of territory, checking ditches, woods accessibility, and contacting neighbors. There are also searches that occur in rough country when skilled off-road cyclists may contribute greatly. If this sounds interesting, you can contact myself, or the ESAR Commander, Joe Ramey thru the ESAR web page: www.esar.com

A LIT-O-BIT OF CLUB NEWS

PORC has been staying fairly busy these last few months. The Bump and Grind Race at Oak Mountain, AL was a blast. It was great seeing old friends like Mike Hurley and Tinker Juarez. Also, RPC Cycling has been having regular MTB races as part of the Summer Sizzle Series.

Trail maintenance events have been productive. We've logged many hours, and made improvements to Pate, Treehugger, the Chute, and Wantz Bridge—just to name a few. Volunteers at these events have been treated well with plenty of free water and CliffBars (Thanks IMBA) not to mention the loads of schwag given away every month. T-shirts, pumps, tires, heart-rate monitors, jerseys, cabin trips to North Alabama, and more have been raffled at each trail maintenance, and we plan to continue this for as long as the sponsors keep sponsoring.

Also of interest, PORC has been mentioned in two major publications in the last few months. IMBA's Spring 2001 Newsletter mentions the club and website. Bike Magazine, in the "Local's Knowledge" portion of the June 2001 Issue, discusses the UWF Trails and the club website and makes mention of the PORC logo.

ATTENDANCE AT FLORIDA STATE PARKS REACHES ALL-TIME HIGH from www.fdep.org

More than 18 million people visited Florida's state parks last year, which is a new attendance record for the state's award-winning state park system. The latest attendance figures are for fiscal year 2000-01, which began July 1, 2000 and ended June 30, 2001. These figures show that park attendance reached 18.1 million visitors -- 8.2-percent more than the 16.7-million visitors to Florida's state parks the previous fiscal year. "Because of the growing interest in nature and heritage tourism, Florida's state parks are attracting record numbers of visitors," said Mike Bullock, Acting Director of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks. "This desire on the part of our visitors to experience Florida's natural areas benefits Florida's important tourism industry, especially in rural areas. "In the 1999-2000 fiscal year, Florida's state park system had an overall direct economic impact of nearly \$464 million on local economies throughout the state and generated over 14,000 jobs. Florida's state park system is one of the largest in the country, with 155 units covering nearly 600,000 acres. Florida state parks have received numerous awards for excellence, obtaining the ultimate recognition in 1999-2001 by winning the National Sporting Goods Association/National Recreation and Park Association National State Park Gold Medal, recognizing Florida's state park system as the best in all 50 states. Florida's state parks receive no general revenue funds from the state budget. About half the state park system's operating budget is from fees paid by visitors. For this reason, "We have implemented very effective public awareness programs to raise the visibility of Florida state parks among our residents and visitors," Bullock said. "The results have been outstanding, with attendance and revenues both up some 30 percent over the past five years." A recently-released Florida state parks visitor satisfaction survey conducted by the University of Florida found that nearly 99 percent of the more than 5,000 survey respondents felt that the parks' natural and cultural features are worth protecting, while 95 percent would like to visit the park again and 96 percent of respondents were satisfied with their trip. Ninety-five percent felt that Florida's state parks are clean and well maintained.

TRAIL BLURB : Boni ta Lakes, Mi ssi ssi ppi

QUICK FACTS : Meridian, MS | » 10 miles long | 190 Miles or 3.5 hrs from UWF |

Quick Description: I was impressed with these trails. Located behind the Bonita Lakes Mall in Meridian, MS, they were much more than I expected and the 1st trails in Mississippi I've ever been on. This trail is nearly all singletrack with a nearby fire road which we crossed a few times. The trail has lots of good, steep, climbs and fast curving sections -- there are also some fairly technical areas so I would not recommend beginner riders for this trail (beginners should go to Clarko State Park nearby). The scenery is nice in places with an outstanding overlook of Meridian along the fire road. I experienced no sand at all. Can't wait to go back. Check out the "Links" option of www.porc.org for more info.



Tales from the West, an adventure of off-road riders in Moab by Robert Cone

June 1 was the start of a new adventure for Membership Chair John Darrohn, ATB Chair Scott Bays and myself (Vice President Robert Cone) when we jetted to Moab for a week of fun and adventure. Arriving in Salt Lake City, we rented a White Ford F150 4X4 that we named Moby Dick and drove to Moab arriving on Saturday afternoon. First stop was Poison Spider Bike Shop, where Scott and John picked up their rental bikes, Ice Nine and Ramble Rouser. I had shipped my bike, White Lightening, and was glad to see that she had arrived unharmed. We met up with a few friends, Mike and Dan and headed up Manti LaSalle for our first ride.

The ride started with a nice 5-mile climb to the top of this 11,500' mountain. We eagerly started the decent on the trail named Moonlit Meadow. Proudly wearing our Coastal Cyclists Jerseys, we rode along a beautiful trail that was a sequence of green grass meadows with white Alpine Trees, babbling brooks and some boggy flats scattered along the down hill trail which followed the melting snow with intermittent steams. As the ride progressed, the presence of snow along with the rapidly descending sun soon became a source of concern as we rode further into the depths of the mountain. We began to think that the trail we were riding would not lead to where Moby Dick was parked, so Mike decided to trek back up the hill and ride down the road to the car. He attempted to warn us that staying on our current path may lead to nowhere, or at least not where we thought we were going, but the group was determined to finish the trail.

There we were, shorts and jerseys at dusk in the mountains, no food, no warm clothes, and no idea where we were or how the story would end. The barely ridden trail was difficult to follow due to the amount of snow and mud. The rocks and grade of descent threw each of us off our bikes (several times) and into the streams and mud making a cold evening even colder. The downhill was steep and we had fun making the jumps, but this gave John's Ramble Rouser and Scott's Ice Nice a few snakebites, or pinch flats, and we soon ran out of tubes. Survival mode began to set in; we saw it in each other's eyes. The thought of spending the night on the mountain, cold and hungry kept the group riding. Fear and fatigue turned into drive, and the cold and hunger was put out of our minds. The trail finally broke into a jeep trail and made a turn by a river. The campsites we spotted were the closest link to civilization we had seen in several hours and kept our morale high. We just kept riding, no idea where we were going, but further down the mountain.

Finally, by the grace of divine intervention, we saw Mike. He had been driving around for hours with no idea where we would come out. We saw him in the distance and recognized his Pathfinder. You could hear the sighs of relief over the deep breathing that accompanies extreme exertion. Mike gave me a ride to get Moby Dick. "We were way off course", I said during the 30-minute drive to where we were supposed to have come off the trail. Without finding him, we would have spent a long cold night somewhere on Manti LaSalle.

While driving back, deer surrounded Mike and me. The herd numbers in the 30's... big fat Mules, does, spotted Fawns, and yearlings (many more and much larger than I had seen all season in the Carolinas). Once back inside (Moby Dick), we drove into Moab to Eddie McStiff's Restaurant for much needed food and drink. We arrived at the campsite very late that evening and too tired to set up tent, so we decided to sleep in the belly (bed) of Moby Dick. Laying in the open truck bed, seeing "billions and billions" of stars in wide-open sky, more than one could imagine, us Charleston boys said our silent "thank you" to the sky and fell asleep.

The next morning we woke up to another amazing sight. We had camped on the edge of a 2,000-foot cliff. A sheer drop into the valley, and desert wilderness as far as the eye could see. It was breathtaking to say the least. Cacti, balancing rocks, and morning wildlife accompanied the sun as she began her ascent into the sky. Driving to our next adventure, Scott spotted some movement in the distance. It was a coyote, and it passed right in front of Moby Dick running at speeds off-road riders can only dream about. Sunday's ride was Porcupine Rim, an outstanding mixture of solid and loose rock, sand, and more rock, 3 miles up-hill followed by 11 miles of downhill. The trail was blessed with shaded spots, cool areas and scenic overlooks. We each took turns leading trying to find the best way through the course, shouting tips to the next in line. At the end of the trail, we knew that all the training and riding of the season was going to be tested here, and we were ready for it.

Monday we drove to Fruita, Colorado and tested our abilities on Joe's Ridge, the most breath-taking ride of all. Not breath-taking as in beautiful but breath-taking as in "whoa dude". Many of the down hills offered no chance of walking due to the narrow trail and steep slopes on either side. "You either made it or you would roll down the mountain and die", said Scott while reflecting on what we had just ridden. We had a great ride then drove back into Moab to a new campsite in The Valley of the Goblins. We camped that night surrounded by soft rock formations that resembled castles and after setting up camp, we went for a night hike. We climbed, actually crawled, to the top of a huge steep hill in a hollow that was filled with soft sand from years of erosion. We were worried that the hike down was going to be more of a "roll" down, but Mike showed us the way. The hill, had a layer of soft sand from decades of wind, Mike simply jumped, landing on his feet and slid down like he was on skis, we all followed and thought to ourselves, what a thrill under the almost full moon, an experience like no other.

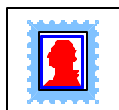
Tuesday was a day off from cycling, it was hiking day. We hiked around Goblin Valley which received its dubious name because the rocks were in formations that looked like a cross between a snowman and a rock creature. After the hike, Moby Dick took us back Manti LaSalle where we set up camp for the rest of the trip. We then took naps in the green meadows, surrounded by snow, trees, soaring Peregrine Falcons, and the mountain range views of a lifetime.

Wednesday morning was the ride we had all been waiting for, Slick Rock Trail. While driving out, we came across a family of Antelope. The mother was keeping her distance with a few adolescents but the two young'ns were out testing their new legs, sprinting through the fields. Slick Rock Trail is famous for the steep grades up and down and the traction that only solid rock can give. A cyclist can climb steeper hills that they ever thought possible on Slick Rock Trail. By then us Charleston boys were well acquainted with the terrain, and rode like Rock Stars, flying up hills, booming down trails and easily making stunts and jumps along the way. Since it had been days since any of the group had taken a shower, we decided to go to Butch Cassidy's Moab Water Park. This way we could get clean and stay cool at the same time. You can imagine the feel of 5 days of riding, camping and sweating in the desert, just as you get on the slide, zooming down into the pool until finally Bam! totally under cool clean water. We raced each other down the parallel slides, floated in the pools and laid out in the sun, then headed back to camp to prepare for the evenings ride at Barrett's Wash. Wednesday night was the full moon, and Barrett's Wash was the perfect night ride. It is mostly solid rock, out and back about 4 miles but very wide. The locals due to the amount of stunts and bowls and half pipes call it The Playground. We rode around until we could not ride any more.

Thursday morning, Amasa Back Trail, very similar to Porcupine Rim with a great variety of challenges, some shade spots, lots of fun. We were all acclimated, sure footed and riding our best, easily making obstacles that we wouldn't even consider earlier in the week. That night we took it easy, watched Pearl Harbor at the local movie theater, ate popcorn and drank soda pop. It was good to feel air conditioning and comfortable seats. Friday, last ride, took the Coyote Shuttle to the start of Porcupine Rim, the favorite trail of the week. The trail felt good under our tires. We were flying over the trail averaging 18 mph in the technical downhill spots and bursting over 23 on occasion. A crash every now and then but nothing to slow us down, and we rode on like there was no tomorrow. The trail ended, just as the adventure, we knew it was coming but it still came upon us fast. A long drive back to Salt Lake City, Prime Rib at a nearby Steak House and a few hours in the whirlpool at the hotel. Asleep by 10:00pm, dreaming about the trails we had just ridden, and missing our homes and loved ones back in Charleston.



PORC
1708 David Rd
Pensacola, FL 32514



**Interested in supporting
PORC?**

Many of the trail improvements you may have noticed are a direct result of volunteers' hard work and our member's support. Individual membership starts at only \$20. By joining, not only do you help to improve the trails, but you also get special benefits, such as member discounts at participating bike shops. Check out www.porc.org for more information, or write us at 1708 David Street - 32514.