



I got up on the plateau in the late dusk which hangs deep with reds and orange on the horizon late into the solstice evenings of the Washington northern latitudes. Bull frogs croaked all over the well watered young corn growing along the road. At long last I made it into Mattwa (+376mi) a small predominantly Mexican farming town that provides labor for the mostly industrial agriculture of the region – they don't look like farms out there; at least there are no barns, but rather, large, clean white buildings surrounded with bright mercury vapor security lights and fleets of industrial vehicles and giant specialized Ag-tractor equipment. But I was happy to be in Mattwa where my Dad had volunteered to staff the control even though I couldn't stay long because **I was late.**

The route returned the Columbia, then took off back up east on Beverly road, a long, long climb up in the dark of the moonless night – a large owl flies silently across my path giving hope. At the crest Beverly I saw we were in for some monster rollers that seemed to drop and rise +500 ft across a half mile or so, and this went on, up and down repeatedly as the headwinds increased. Always I could see I-90 off to the left, I was approaching at an angle and it was the next instruction, so it created confidence. But I never seemed to get closer. It was like an illusion with a confusing perspective at night; I knew that I should be crossing it and it appeared to run at a diagonal in front of me, but I could never get there. And the wind was getting harder. At last I found the I-90 frontage road and I could see Quincy, our overnight control. But it was not Quincy, it was George and everything was closed at George, even the truck stops and I was out of water. Quincy was still 10 miles away! Fortunately, I found a spigot in front of a liquor store and continued on.

I got to Quincy (+416.5mi) at 4am as it was beginning to get light and riders were beginning to get up. So I found my drop bag, took a shower, put on a clean pair of shorts, had breakfast. I joked with other people that I just didn't want to waste time with having to wake up; I tightened up my break cables, oiled my chain, raised my bars a little bit, pushed my saddle forward just a hair and kept going.

The wind was really strong now and we were going right into it, and it looked like it was going to rain and it did start raining; not a lot but it was raining and blowing. We headed up along Soap Lake, which surrounded by really interesting cliffs and had big pile of foam all over it. The light was a bright, opaque sort of gray with the clouds, rain and lake, the cliffs and the road. I was glad to be with other riders now so we could draft each other, but it was hard. The wind must have been 30 mph sustained with 50 mph gusts that would nearly blow you over. We were going straight into it. It was so hard. Then we climbed up the cliff out of Soap Lake, still into the wind out of saddle, finally at the Dry Falls overlook control (+459mi) we could stop for a few minutes and check out the really awesome view of the cliffs that were once the greatest water fall in North America when an ice dam had failed in Montana releasing a volume of water that of Lake Ontario across Eastern Washington creating some fabulously interesting geologic features. But we had to continue on north into the wind, up more long hills and rollers in to the wind, oh it was hard.





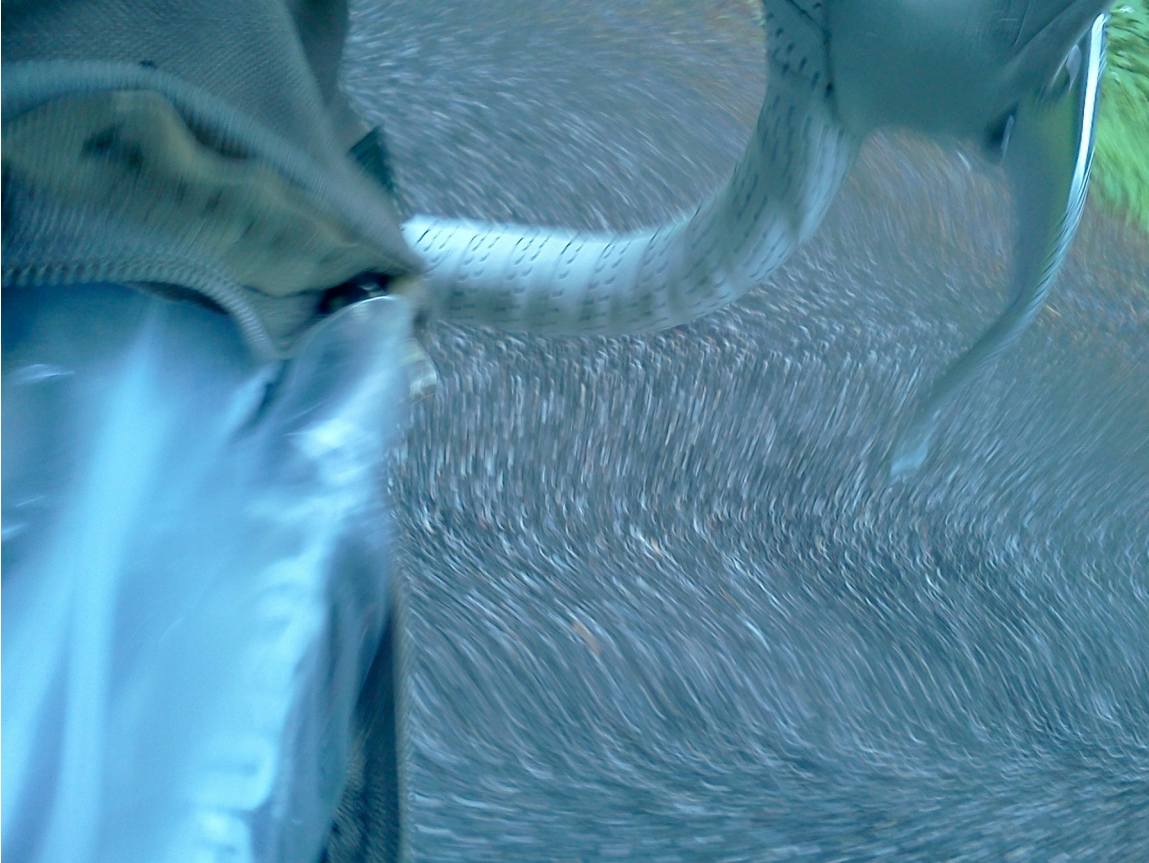
last, now riding alone, I turned left. After six hours of riding into the wind, it stopped. I was passing through beautiful golden green rolling hills of young wheat, stocks still green with heads golden, waving in the now gentle breeze. The fields were interspersed with giant house size boulders called erratics left by retreating glaciers after being picked up somewhere in Canada long ago, or some times piles of smaller boulders with shrubs and flowers creating native habitat. But I was so exhausted now I was ready to throw in the hat at the next control. I stopped on the road and took a nap for 20 minutes or so and continued on. I made it to the control in Mansfield (+489mi) about 3pm and dramatically collapsed in the grassy park in a quaint and lovely old farming town. I was done. I told the control volunteers that with no sleep I would be quitting here. They encouraged me to relax and take a nap in the grass and see how I felt then. The control would be open for another hour and a half. So I did even though there were reports of thundershowers and lightning on Loop Loop Pass.

I awoke about an hour later and felt quite refreshed and that I could indeed continue on. So I jumped on my bike and headed west out of town. The road curved north a gradually descended back into the Columbia River valley through some of the most beautiful, rolling, soft minty green verdant hills covered with rich sage brush, mullen and small pale green grasses – it's usually blazing hot and dry as a bone through these sections of Eastern Washington, but the late spring rains have left green and blooming the hills and meadows, food for the ground squirrels and rabbits making pleasant the hawks soaring over head – a large coyote the size of a Shepard sees me from the side of the road and dashes into the scrub. Continuing along the Columbia River, I cross at Brewster where I am happy to see Bill, both because it's nice to have company again, and because he's riding a recumbent and the winds are picking back up.

We continue up old HWY 97 into the wind, but keep a good pace with each other, and we happily make into the control at Mallot (+533mi) and prepare for our 13mi climb up Loop Loop Pass (4020'); the weather was clearing up, thankfully, and it did not any more look like we would be stormed on. It's a long hard climb, the first and last of which are fairly steep out of saddle climbs; but we make it, putting on our warm layer just a ½ mile before the top so as not to loose any heat by having to stop on the pass to put on layers before the long, a little bit too fast, decent. At the bottom I stop for a rest and Bill catches up to me. He has gotten too cold and I am exhausted. Peter is there with the sweep vehicle and we load up ready to quit. But once in the vehicle, having warmed up a bit and realizing that it's only 24mi to the overnight control at Mazama, relatively flat with no wind or rain, not too dammed cold, and that I still had an hour and a half to get there before the control closed, I asked Peter to let me out. "Really?" he asked. And knowing that I would regret having thrown in the towel without real physical necessity except for

lack of sleep, which I could recover from simply by taking a nap on the side of the road, I told him yes. He turned around and dropped me off the short distance back where he had picked us up, and I continued on into Twisp.

At Twisp the route turns off the main highway and takes a back road to Winthrop. Here I stop to eat a Cliff Mocha Gu packet with 50 mg caffeine – mistake. My body was producing plenty of drugs not to have to add some extra synthetic stimulants. I start mildly hallucinating on the quivering gravel in the pavement and the Rorschach like wet spots the look like screaming rock-star silhouettes. I stop for a nap and sleep 20 minutes or half an hour and start again, slowly pressing forward.



At Winthrop we go STRAIGHT on HWY 20 at LFT on Bridge St. I take a left across the Bridge and pass through Winthrop, but something is wrong. The que sheet has all of these instructions at 0.0 miles, and I've gone through town and traveled at least half a mile before I pass a highway mileage sign that says 8mi to Twisp. I'm going the wrong way! I turn around and cross the bridge again and pass through Winthrop proper, a funny old Western model town with a boardwalk and saloons with swinging doors. I take my left on Bridge St, not across the bridge, and have just 14 miles to go before Mazama. It's very hard. I am so tiered sometimes I am almost crying, but the birds are starting to wake in the pre-dawn light and the rushing river is making a soft, lovely sound as it winds through the valley. It is a beautiful, peaceful time, but I have to stop again. A passing truck wakes me and I push on to Mazama (+585.5mi), arriving at 5:45am (almost exactly 72 hours after our start), as the last of the other riders are leaving. The control closed at

4:19am, so I warily turn my card in to (very) tall Bill, being officially timed out, and go have breakfast. It is quite an accomplishment and I do not feel bad.

My bike and bag were loaded up into the truck and I got a ride over Washington and Rainy Pass, which were very cold and heavily rainy. We worried about the dangers of the hypothermic decent for the riders who would finish the Cascade 1200 back in Monroe (770mi), so we stopped at Newhalem, a Seattle City Light company town and encouraged riders to pull off and warm up in the visitor center with some coffee, many of whom were quite grateful to see us there as the possibility was not clearly marked and the need for some was quite extremely present, not having fenders or enough layers of synthetic or wool. I slept in the back of the Prius and was happy to see my Dad and everyone else at the finish control.

Know your route and understand your que sheet well in advance, and have it easily accessible and visible for rechecking (mine was hard to pull out of the bag or my back pocket, though that worked better than the bag, and I still wont use a GPS). Be paced and be measured, but be quick and don't lolly-gag. Only eat as much as you need, listen your body and its signals, and don't change your diet right before a big ride (I was carbo loading with a lot of brown rice and nuts before the ride, which I think is fine, but gradually ease into such a diet a week or two before hand). Push on, stay committed, even when it hurts and is just so hard, but understand limits when it gets dangerous. And keep your humor up and stay good natured because it's really not that big a deal, you'll be happy about it later.

