

Thursday, June 11, 2020

Day 2 of our seven-day odyssey dawned clear, cool, still and beautiful – I paused briefly – inhaled deeply and exhaled slowly – and knew that it could be a special day – in fact, it already was. Each day has beauty – of some kind – if I can just focus on that idea long enough to let it come to me. That I was wrapped in this gorgeous beginning to this day was a gift I carried with me until the end of that amazing day.

Following last week's Day 1 ride – a long series of what I would assess as substantial climbing – we knew that a less challenging day of altitude gain would be welcome. Therefore, with consultative advice from Teddy and Freddie, we decided to plan a ride that would be longer than our usual, but that likely would be much less a climber's paradise than last week's ride. Ultimately, we (sort of) succeeded at both goals.

Because we knew we had a longer day ahead, we left around 7:15 a.m. – putting a bit of a push on our opening leg (home to REI in Denver, at Confluence Park). The hurry was due to the fact that we were to meet a PD friend there who wanted to ride part of the way with us. We were supposed to leave home at 7:00 a.m., to enjoy a leisurely warm-up ride to REI – alas! – my last-minute preparation started behind schedule; the ride to Concourse Park was NOT leisurely – but it was invigorating!!! Our friend, Evan Metcalf, was already at the meeting point – but we were only 3 minutes late, so did not feel too badly about the tardiness.

To his credit, not only was Evan not terribly bothered by our tardiness – he was incredibly gracious as it became necessary to make various Teddy/Freddie photo op stops along the way. Thank you, Evan - it was fun to have you join us!!

Our itinerary for the day was somewhat ambitious: the first leg of our travels was Home to Engineer Lake (but of course!! – one needs one's own lake wherever one goes – so Engineer Lake became our rendezvous point with bike trails). We had taken the Mary Carter Greenway Trail from the Bowles/Santa Fe intersection to where it morphs into the Platte River Trail, following that to Engineer Lake (about 7 ½ miles beyond REI in Denver). At that intersection, we turned left onto Clear Creek Trail, headed to Standley Lake Regional Park, our first major destination of the day.

Arrival at Standley Lake brought a bit of relief to us all – we had traveled nearly 32 miles by then, with not much to show for it, as far as the two furry pals were concerned. Rumbly from the rumble ( backpack) seat had begun to take on a decidedly impatient tone – what was the point of all of this pedaling if there were no really neat things to see and do – you know, like “dinosaur tracks and ice cream sandwiches” (thanks, yoga mama!!) – on last week's trip!!!

Finally, some exploration. First read the Park Rules



Then study the Park Map



Well, the two little fellows were definitely impressed with the exquisitely beautiful Standley Lake – smooth, pristine – gorgeous. Teddy and Freddie were quite proud to show off Blue to two little two-legged's who had never seen a bicycle that two people could ride at the same time!!

We decided to ride around the park (about 4 ½ miles). Teddy and Freddie realized – shortly before we were to exit the Lake and Park – that we were a stone's throw from one of the many small docks all around the Lake's shore. And look – there were tiny tow legged's playing in the water!

## T-RAD2020 Day 2 – Standley Lake, Butterfly Pavilion, DPF Headquarters

Well, nothing would do but to go find out what all those small two-legged's were so excited about. They went down the dirt road to the dock, which had been pulled up on the shore.





As they learned about how a dock functions – and that it involves some serious rope work and hauling,



they quickly decided that they were not really too interested in signing on to become sailing mates!! Finally, we turned our attention to the pathways that would lead us to our next destination – the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster – nearly a straight line from the exit on the east side of Standley Lake park (on the west side of US36) to the Pavilion on the east side of US36. While that sounds rather straightforward, there are enough twists, turns and tunnel underpasses to keep the trip interesting. Having left the park with the beautiful water, the two furry friends wondered what could be coming next.

Upon arrival at the Butterfly Pavilion, we quickly found the gift shop – sadly, it was the only part of the Pavilion that was open. There were fun butterfly cutouts.



The Pavilion was closed.





Eventually, we all made our way over to the outside gardens portion of the Pavilion – where Teddy and Freddie were appropriately awe-struck by the gigantic bright green Preying Mantis that inhabits – and likely rules!! – the Butterfly kingdom which it guards.





Finding the giant Mantis friendly,



our two little friends proceeded to investigate up close and personal.



Additional exploration discovered a hollow stump that had to be the site of a round of Bear and Horse on the Mountain.



This stop was SO much fun – Teddy and Freddie did not want to leave. However, when they were reminded that it was already noon, and a very special lunch stop was an hour away – well, yes, they guessed it was time to leave, after all. So – off we went – our next destination being the headquarters of the Davis Phinney Foundation. The route involved traveling the US36 Bikeway (which parallels US 36 from Denver to Boulder), exiting at McCaslin Blvd. This part of the journey revealed



## T-RAD2020 Day 2 – Standley Lake, Butterfly Pavilion, DPF Headquarters

itself to be quite a challenge – hills reminiscent of the C470 hills going north/west along the foothills on the west side of metro Denver. This part of the trip was when Teddy and Freddie realized that they just might be called upon to provide some auxiliary energy!

As we exited McCaslin Blvd and entered the parking lot for DPF, we heard screams and shouts and cheering at the opposite end of the parking lot. The DPF staff had set up a sheltered Aid Station





and provided us with a very special party.



It was SO special – fun and amazing – it was certainly the first such experience either Ken or I had ever been given. I am still moved by how thoughtful the entire experience was. We even debuted the 2020 RAGBRAI uniform tops!! And there was FOOD! – lots of food.

After the business Zoom call was finished and the laptop was closed, Teddy and Freddie finished their working lunch.



The two furry friends' reputation had preceded them, and they were treated like royalty!! It was just terrific to meet several of Polly Dawkins' DPF staff members. We thank them all – especially Rebecca Reifel!! – for the wonderful welcome and the tremendous support we have received, as this project has evolved from an off-the-cuff remark a few weeks ago to its current reality.

And so, having accomplished our riding goals for Day 2, we departed DPF



and turned our thoughts - and Blue - in the direction of Home. It was necessary to re-negotiate the US36 Bike Trail hills once again. We retraced our bicycle prints back across Clear Creek Trail to its intersection with the Platte River Trail at - of course!! - Engineer Park. The entire trip down the Plate was uneventful.

But this gorgeous and rewarding day had one more surprise in it for Team T-RAD. As we approached our turn-off from the Trail, I glanced at the odometer. I tapped Ken on the back and advised the Captain that the Stoker had just determined (with a little bear and horse math involved) that we had 95.7 miles on the odometer at that point. Well, it did not take long for the Captain to ask "Shall we?" - to which the Stoker replied, "If you want to give it a go, I'm in."



And so it was that we added 6 more miles at the end of this long and amazing day - riding into the garage at 100.97 miles – unintentionally until the very end of the journey – we had just completed our first-ever century ride!!!



This was one of those “memory” days. Thank you for sharing it – we hope you enjoyed the journey...

If you are thinking of riding with us, please be advised that we have decided to do all seven (7) of the rides on Thursday of each week – June 4, 11, 18, 25 and July 3, 10, 17. We welcome you – please let us know, so that we can plan appropriately.