

Ride Around Colorado – Ride Report

Surely the most scenic Ride Around

Preface: The basic route was approved by the IBA with an emphasis on making the ride repeatable for future riders, so I looked at it from that angle while still trying to be a purist. I intended a Gold level ride, whatever that might be, I think I got it. I'm not a speeder, so for me it's about staying on the bike.

Planning: Planning this route was actually very challenging. Rally level challenging. Particularly in the Western and Northern sections. For me, the difficulty was that Google Maps and Garmin did not agree on what was a dirt road. I have my Garmin set to avoid dirt roads, though I also saw on Google Maps Satellite view that neither one was really 100% accurate. It forced some reconnaissance time along with some rerouting on the clock. I did try to be a purist since it was a first ride, and I have a lot of suggestions that I will discuss below. Lastly, I planned on a Midnight departure headed West from Durango, for reasons of having daylight in Mountains I've never ridden in, and I knew I wouldn't have the sun in my face all day. I planned on being out of the mountains and into the plains by nightfall.

The Ride: I left shortly after Midnight on June 5th as planned. I headed West on US 160 from Durango all of the way to the sign at the Four Corners Monument. I know I left the state, but that was pre-approved for the half mile just to get that picture which is a cool part of the ride. This section of the ride was uneventful outside of a few deer sightings (I love my aux lights), but no close calls and no planning issues, it's really a straightforward section. I did have to stop and adjust a few things just to get myself settled. I think I kept a good pace through this section despite the night. There was ample opportunity for Gas during this stretch.

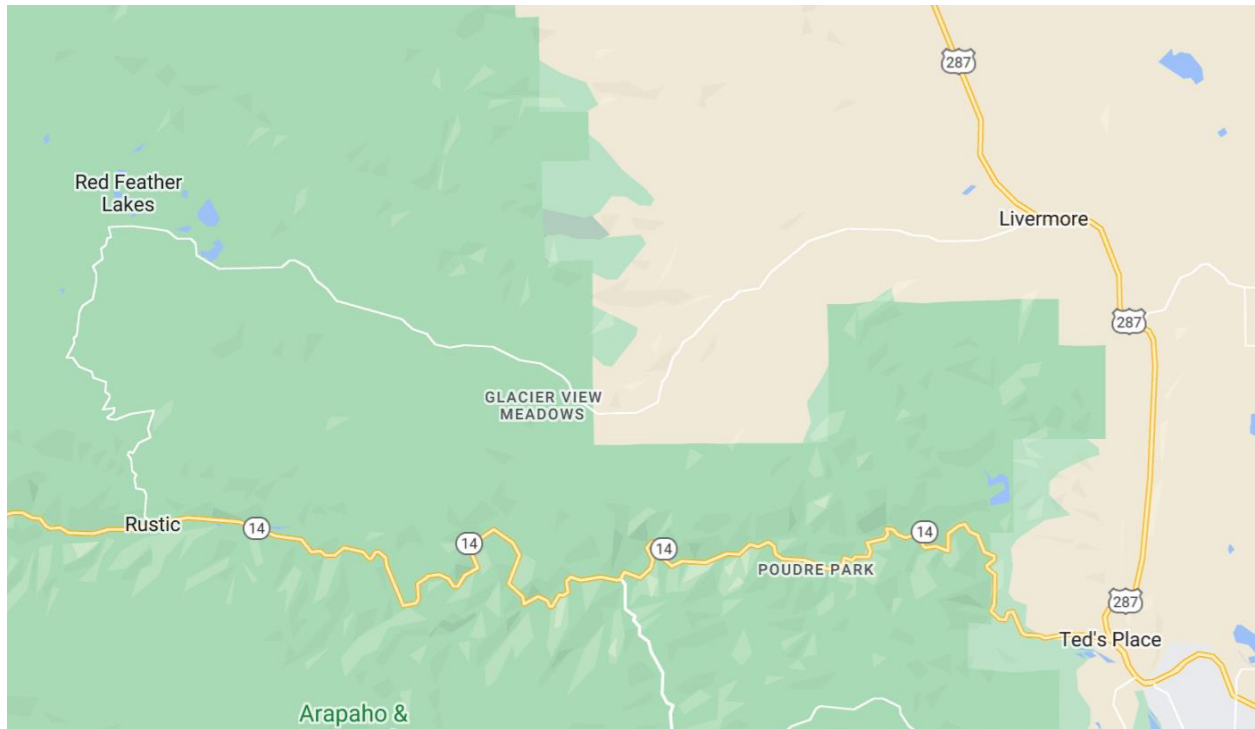
From the Four Corners Monument I headed North. The Western part of Colorado, up to Dinosaur is very straight forward from a planning perspective, except for one

hiccup. My planned route had included what I now know to be The Colorado National Monument, this is a fee area so I skipped it in my route, that skipping did make me miss a road I could have taken that ran parallel to where I went by a couple of miles, but I don't think it's a large omission at all. Please see the Grand Junction area on the Spotwalla map. In this section I was very cautious as it was still nighttime, so my pace wasn't all that great as Bambi was out in force. Again, no close calls of any kind. I also took a few photos that you will see in Bubbler. This was what I feel to be my slowest paced section. Slow and steady, right? Fuel available at night.

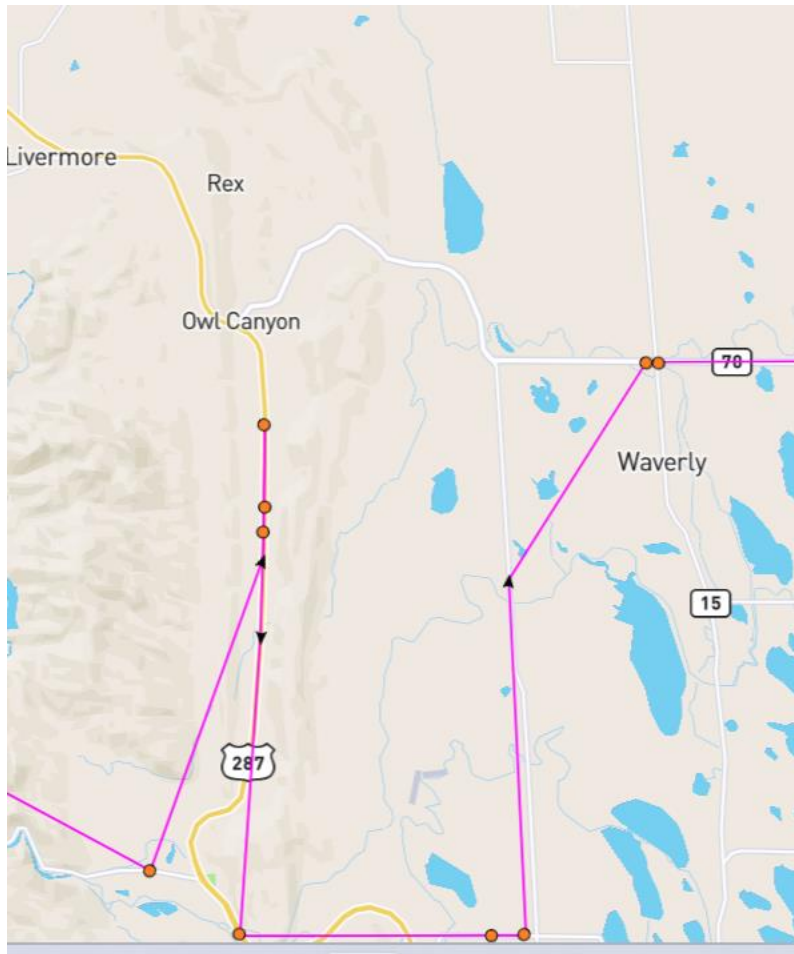
The Sun came up for me right around Grand Junction. I realized that I was on target with my plan for getting out of the mountains by dark, so I had a renewed urgency and really tried to stay on pace. There were a lot of twisting mountain roads, so that pace was good in my opinion. From Grand Junction to Dinosaur, CO is a beautiful road without any planning issues. No Fuel Issues

The routing and planning issues started after Dinosaur. This time Garmin thought a Dinosaur National Park Service Road would be the fastest way to that road headed into the Northwest corner, but it was a dirt road, and I chose to avoid it by continuing to Maybell, CO. I had put a waypoint into the Northwest Corner on a road I knew to be paved, CO 318, out of Maybell. My Garmin went nuts and kept trying to divert me onto dirt roads for what reason I am still unsure? It thought 318 was a dirt road but it has been paved for a while. CO 318 is paved all of the way to the border, and it is a pretty road. Open range from Maybell all of the way to the border, and back to Maybell. No fuel outside of Maybell. My pace may have suffered in this section while I verified that Garmin was wrong.

After the NW corner, and Maybell, I headed East towards Steamboat. This was easy and beautiful; my pace was good and I was making time. US 40 to Colorado 14, it's very easy to plan. There was a long stretch that was just very beautiful mountain roads, it might have been my favorite ride of all time across the Northern Portion of the state. Ample fuel as long as you're conscious of your range. My big hiccup on this section occurred almost all the way to Fort Collins, this time both Garmin and Google agreed that a road was paved when it was definitely a goat trail. Please see the map, riders must stay on CO 14 as that road to the North is not for Street Bikes.



From Ted's Place, as seen in the map above, my route had me taking US 287 North to the road pictured in the single white road headed East. My Garmin thought that was a dirt road, so I rerouted as seen in the following Spotwalla Track. I think that road was likely paved but I didn't want to risk it, and cell data sucked so I couldn't see the satellite view.

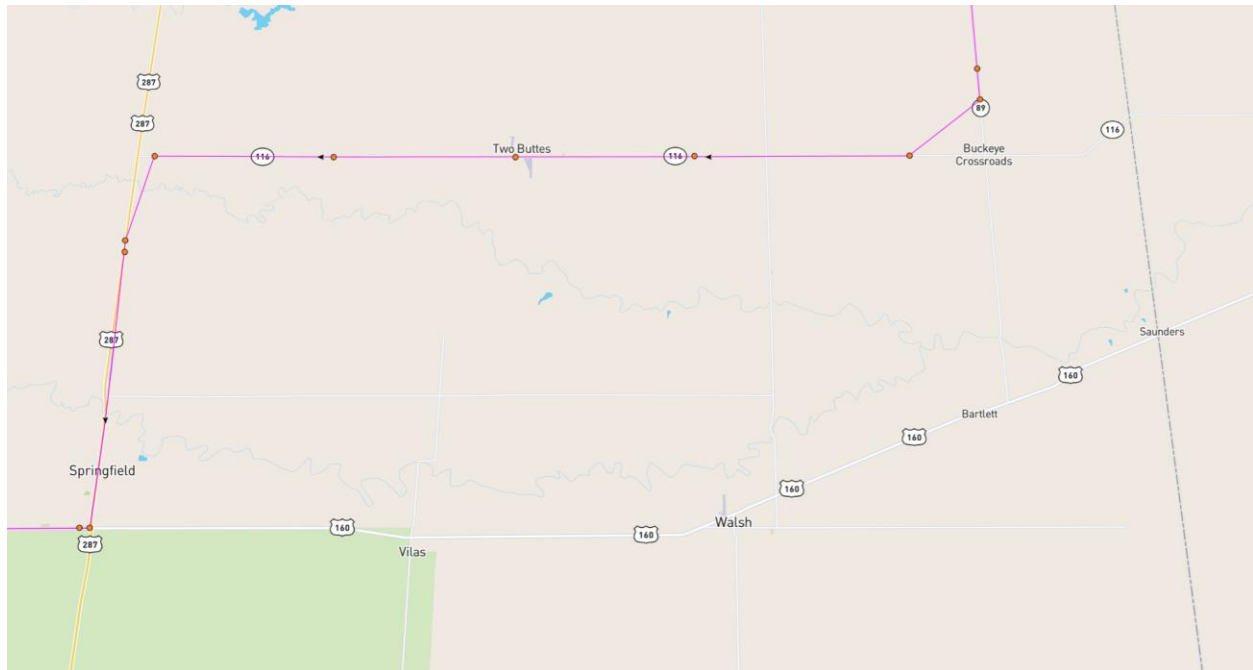


After I exited the mountains, which is really in the area pictured above, I made good time to Sterling where I had a hotel room waiting for me for my mandatory six-hour break. Just out of the mountains, there are a few roads that look like they should have been ridden, and they were in my route, but again dirt intervened.

Planning is relatively straight forward in the plains section, and the riding is far easier than all the mountain riding I had just done.

I left Sterling before the Sun came up, there is a DBR for the start and end of break. I was on a mission to get home before dark at that point, I knew was probable and I kept a great pace all day. I carried on Northeast to Julesburg in the Northeast corner of the state, there is a road that parallels the Interstate, I took it and thought it was a fine road. Heading South from Julesburg to Springfield in the far Southeast corner of the state is very straight forward except for one section at the very corner of the state. Garmin thought it was dirt, I later found out it was

paved, insignificant really but it cost me time. You could sort of make it out in the picture, there is a white road.



I did not continue East or South of US160. No fuel issues in the Eastern Part of the state. Good roads, just a nice place to make time.

Heading West from the corner on US160 to Trinidad was a desolate and fun road. At Trinidad there is a jaunt south to keep it a ride around ,CO12, what a pretty road? That links back up with US160 which you are forced on until after Pagosa Springs. This part of the route was very fun for me. I made great time. There is a jaunt South at Chimney Rock to Arboles. Past Arboles, I think I could have done minorly better at keeping it a ride around, actually maybe not? Google and Garmin disagreed about what was dirt and not, they fought each other with neither one being right all of the time. It was here that I encountered snow, in June, it didn't stick but it happened. My ride ended shortly thereafter, in Durango, where I started. Ride around finished! I did celebrate.

Finishing comments: Before I go on, this was probably the most beautiful IBA ride I've ever taken. I couldn't believe the beauty of the roads.

- Mandatory Rest Stop. At first, I didn't think it was a great idea, but it really is a good thing considering the ride is at least 35 hours of driving. It lets you enjoy the road a little more. This is an extreme ride! It's not just about the time, you're working on this one with all of the twisting mountain roads.