

2024

Caribou Loop Ride Report

After our trip around the Caribou Loop last year, we immediately knew we had to return so planning began. First, synchronizing vacations for all those that were not retired or had summer vacation like me.

Over the last few weeks, I poured over my notes and maps and made a few outlines on what we wanted to go explore this year.

Wednesday, July 31st

On Wednesday, Kelly Willis met me at Kris Larson's house so we could load up machines. I had my Yamaha Grizzly 700 in the bed of my truck, and after hooking up the trailer, Kris loaded his RZR first followed by Kelly's Maverick Trail.

We headed to Maverick for breakfast and to meet Bill Mefford and Ted MacNeil so we could caravan to our staging point.

After gathering everyone up we headed out. We jumped on the freeway at the Burley exit and headed to Pocatello and then to Soda Springs where we stopped for lunch. Lunch was bad this year. The ice cream machine at the A&W was broken and the tacos were not the best at Taco Time either.

After lunch we stopped at the Forest Service office for some information and then headed to camp. We arrived at our camping spot at 12:42 in the afternoon after driving 173 miles.

After arriving at camp we found that another member of our party, Jacob Metcalf, was there and waiting. We all picked out spots for our tents and setup camp. We mostly just hung out and chatted in the shade.



At dinner time we broke out the grills and cooked burgers.



We didn't bother with a fire that night went to bed after making sure our ATV's were all ready to go.

[Picture archive for Wednesday](#)

Thursday, August 1st

That night I woke up about four o'clock and it was cold. My thermometer that was synced to my Garmin Montana 700i said it was 38 degrees outside.

Everyone was out of bed at about 6:30 or so, and after we had everything packed up, we headed out at 8:03 am. I was in the lead of the group.

We headed north on the 102 road and headed to a phosphate mine at the Lanes Creek Road junction and then continued north once again then turned onto the 095 road jumped across highway 35 and connected with the ATV trail that was along the highway that we missed last year.



We went across the Tincup Creek bridge just like last year and we also stopped to take a photo as well.



After the bridge, we continued up the road to where we diverged from last year's trip. We took the 189 road to where we camped at on another trip last year. At the top of the road we looked at where we camped last year and took a short break in the mosquitos. After the short break, we continued on the 449 ATV trail (5.5 miles). This trail is an intermediate trail system, and it has some off camber sections and some steep sections. It is fairly narrow in spots and doesn't allow many passing opportunities as well.

At the 451 ATV trail junction we continued down that trail (3.7 miles). This trail is also an intermediate trail that is narrow and there are not very many passing opportunities. On this trail I ran across two bull moose that did not appreciate us on the trail. As we passed the moose, I heard on the radio that Kelly had a problem. I found a turnaround spot and headed back up the trail about 100 yards where I found him. He bent a tie rod.



Fortunately, I also have a Maverick Trail and before our trip I put in my tool kit from my machine. It has two spare tie rods in it. We found that his jack was of poor quality and had some fun jacking it up.

After 45 minutes of work, we were back on the trail and connected into the Grays Lake Road where we jumped onto the 118 road we took last year and took a break at the same lookout point we did last year and had lunch.



After lunch, we continued up the road and then took the 188 road which was just like last year, a nice road through trees and a collapsed cabin.



We headed down the 087 main road for about ten miles where we had our next break and then continued for another nine or so miles until we came to Palisades Reservoir. After looking for a bit, we found the trailhead to the 138 ATV trail that we didn't take last year.

We found this trail to be a novice trail for the most part, but people have made big holes where the water collected. There were some off camber crossings as well but nothing to be alarmed about. The trail, along with both road ends is about 5 miles long.

After navigating this trail, we headed to Alpine for fuel, snacks, and ice. At this point we had covered 76 miles and arrived at 3:05 in the afternoon.

I burned 2.943 gallons of fuel which gave me about 26 mpg. The other ATVs were in similar areas with the side by sides getting about 17 mpg or so.

We then had a quick stop at the Ace Hardware and dollar store for a few items, and at 3:55 we were back on the road (138 to be exact). We jumped onto the 001 road and crossed the river and connected to the

183 ATV trail. It was at this point I rolled over 3,000 miles on my Grizzly.

We found the 138 trail to be just like last year. A fairly novice trail with a wide base and lots of passing areas. It was pretty dusty in areas as well.



As we got to the bottom we passed some horse riders. We also found that they had been working on the trail. A mini excavator and other equipment were parked on the side and the rest of the trail had been widened, water bars installed, and other trail work accomplished.



We passed through the gate at the bottom and headed down 002 and then north on 138 to camp. The camp site we were at last year was taken so we went down the road a little farther and found another spot. We arrived at 5:17 after traveling 94 miles.

At camp we setup and cooked more burgers again. We visited and went to bed at 9:30 after a long day.



[Picture archive for Thursday](#)

Friday, August 2nd

Before bed, I left my GPS on to log the temperature. As the night\morning went on, it fluctuated between 43 and 38 degrees all night. When we got up, it was 41 degrees. We packed up and hit the road at 7:42.

We continued down 138 and once again came to the landside area that happened some years previous and took a few more photos.



We continued on the road past the private airport and a new house being built and stopped at the Meadows Guard Station for a break and for a few to use the outhouse.



Just outside the guard station was the trailhead to the 64" wide 215 trail. We rode this trail last year and found it in the same shape as last year. It is a nice trail with lots of trees and rocks.



At the 043 road, we took a short break, and headed up it until we came to the 422 junction and headed up this 64" trail. Just like last year, it was a nice trail. The first portion is very rocky, but after that it was dirt with some rocks strewn in. We took a short break where the trees had knocked down some huge trees and took some more photos.



We connected back to the 138 road and headed south again and stopped at the Cazier Guard station for an outhouse break.

After the break, we headed to the 126 road (7 miles long) that we did not take last year. We found the lower 2 miles of the road covered in shale. It also had a few long climbs as well. After this, the road was really nice.



After hitting the 138 road once again, we went a ways and just before we jumped on 171 we stopped and some of us filled up with gas. I all of the gas I had in my two 2 gallon Rotopax that were filled clear to the top (so a bit over 4 gallons or so) and had about a quart of gas

left over in one of them. We had traveled 76 miles since we filled up at Alpine at this point.

After gas, we headed up 171 and found that this was a really nice road (11 miles) as well. We explored the 392 dead end road and it was just a old road through a tunnel of trees.



We connected to the 138 road again and then to the 072 road and headed to the Labarge Guard Station where we arrived at about 3:15. We chatted with someone renting the building for the night and then headed to our camping spot for the night which was about 18 miles west.

We arrived at camp at 4:12 after covering 99.3 miles that day. We set up camp and cooked steaks for dinner, had a fire, and went to bed at 9:30.



[Picture archive for Friday](#)

Saturday, August 3rd

That morning, the GPS logged a low of 60 degrees. It was warm and humid as we packed up and hit the road at 7:23 am!

We continued down 072 and hit the highway and followed it on the side of the fog line for about 14 miles to Maverick (7:55 arrival time) in Afton. We filled up with gas, got some breakfast and snacks, and made some phone calls.

I filled up my Rotopax and my machine and it took 5.512 gallons to travel the 136.6 miles from Alpine. I got 24.8 mpg!

We left Maverick at 8:40 and headed to road 111 and then road 146. At this junction we had covered 20 miles of paved and dirt roads to get to the next major riding area.

146 as noted last year was rerouted and rebuilt and is a really nice road. At the upper end there is a display for the phosphate mine on the mountain. On this road you will cross the mine haul road twice. Watch for 150 ton dump trucks, they will squish you flat!



After our viewing, we headed to road 102 and then took the 561 ATV trail. A bit up the trail, it connects to another atv trail on private land. We broke into two groups at this point and continued up 561. I would suggest that side by sides NOT go any further than this junction. It has some very steep and very off camber sections. The three of us went to the end, turned around, and headed back to the group.



We then headed down the private land trail that has no name. It goes through an old mine site and is just an old road. We found the concrete pad for the repair shop and then connected to 102 again.



Right across the road was the entrance to the 563 ATV trail. It is NOT marked, and it can be hard to find but it is a cut up the side of the mountain. It is a nice trail and is just an old road. It doesn't get much use and is somewhat overgrown but a fun and interesting trail. We had to stop and cut an overhanging tree that was too low for the RZR to go under. We also found that the RZR had a Allen wrench embedded in the tire. We didn't hear hissing, so we opted to fix it at lunch.

We arrived at the 197 junction right at noon and fixed the tire and had lunch.





We left at 12:34 and headed down the 598 ATV trail. Just like last year, I would NOT recommend you go UP the trail, go DOWN the trail like we did. It is very steep, very rocky, and has some stair steps to navigate. It is also VERY narrow and off camber in the lower area. You could probably do it, but with fully loaded machines, downhill is the best in our collective opinion.



We then took the 211 and 260 ATV trails that are really nice trails and I would give them a novice rating.



These trails came out at a campground, and we saw some folks camping there. After waving, and

collecting everyone, we headed up 095 and then onto 238. This road was a good road and I would be ok driving our car on it. It is not really wide, but a good road non the less. We followed the road to 220 ATV trail.

This trail is NOT for a novice. The one mile section from 238 to 338 is steep, very narrow, and has some off camber sections. Kelly rubbed very nicely on some trees on his way down. We would also suggest not going east to west in travel either.

After navigating this trail, we took a break and then headed up the 337 road to connect to the 215 ATV trail. We found that this trail is actually an old forest road. It was nice and wide, in good condition, and what I would rate a novice trail.



The 234 trail was taken by a few of us and we found that there really wasn't anything of note to cause us to go on it again. It was just a narrow dead end trail.

As we went down the 233 ATV trail, it was again an old forest road. We took the dead end 216 trail and found it to be a nice tunnel of trees and green plants!

We then headed back down 233 and went through the gate and down 236 and then on 095. 095 is a main road, nice and wide, smooth and gravel. Safe for campers.



We jumped on 100 and then the 206 ATV trail where we gathered up to go through some sheep.

206 trail goes through an old mine site and is out in the open for the most part. You will pass through the mostly reclaimed mine and can see down into a few of the big holes.



The 601 road is out in the open and in the desert. It is dry and dusty, and you go through cows and past two windmills pumping water. Boring...

This road then jumps across the railroad tracks and heads to road 134.

At this point, the power went off and I lost the next several paragraphs, so once again...

601 as you cross the tracks follows the tracks and past both reclaimed and active mining activities. They have rerouted the road so don't follow your GPS or it will take you past a no public access sign and you will be confused. Stay on the main gravel road instead.

The 134 road goes through the active mine but is a public road. You will get past the active mine area and continue.

It was at this point; Kris was having trouble with his RZR. It had no power. After going as far as he could, Bill towed him up the mountain and then down the other side until Kris's brakes overheated.

Kelly was behind him and hooked a rope onto him and put it in four low along with Kris. As they went down, Kelly acted as the brakes as Kris's machine ran enough to give him power steering and some active downhill breaking from the engine.

At bottom, we were planning on camping for the night, but all the spots were taken, including the one we camped in last year.

We tried a few other areas, but finally we opted to just head to base camp 12 miles down the road and bag riding the next day due to the impending rain and broken machine.

Kris had enough power, and the brakes had cooled so he, and the rest of us limped to base camp.

We arrived at 6:19 after covering 125 miles to the dot!

We cooked dinner, set up camp, built a fire and went to bed at 9:30.

That night the coyotes were howling, and it only dropped to 60 degrees for the low.

[Picture archive for Saturday](#)

Sunday, August 4th

Sunday morning we were all up by 6:30, had our stuff packed, machines loaded, and on the road by 7:27 am. We headed for Soda Springs with the intention of having breakfast at a café, which was closed, so we filled up at Maverick and headed to Lava Hot Springs where we did have breakfast, then headed to Burley and Twin Falls.

Had we ridden, we had a 30ish mile ride planned with the intention of being back to base camp by noon. Oh well, we will be back next year!

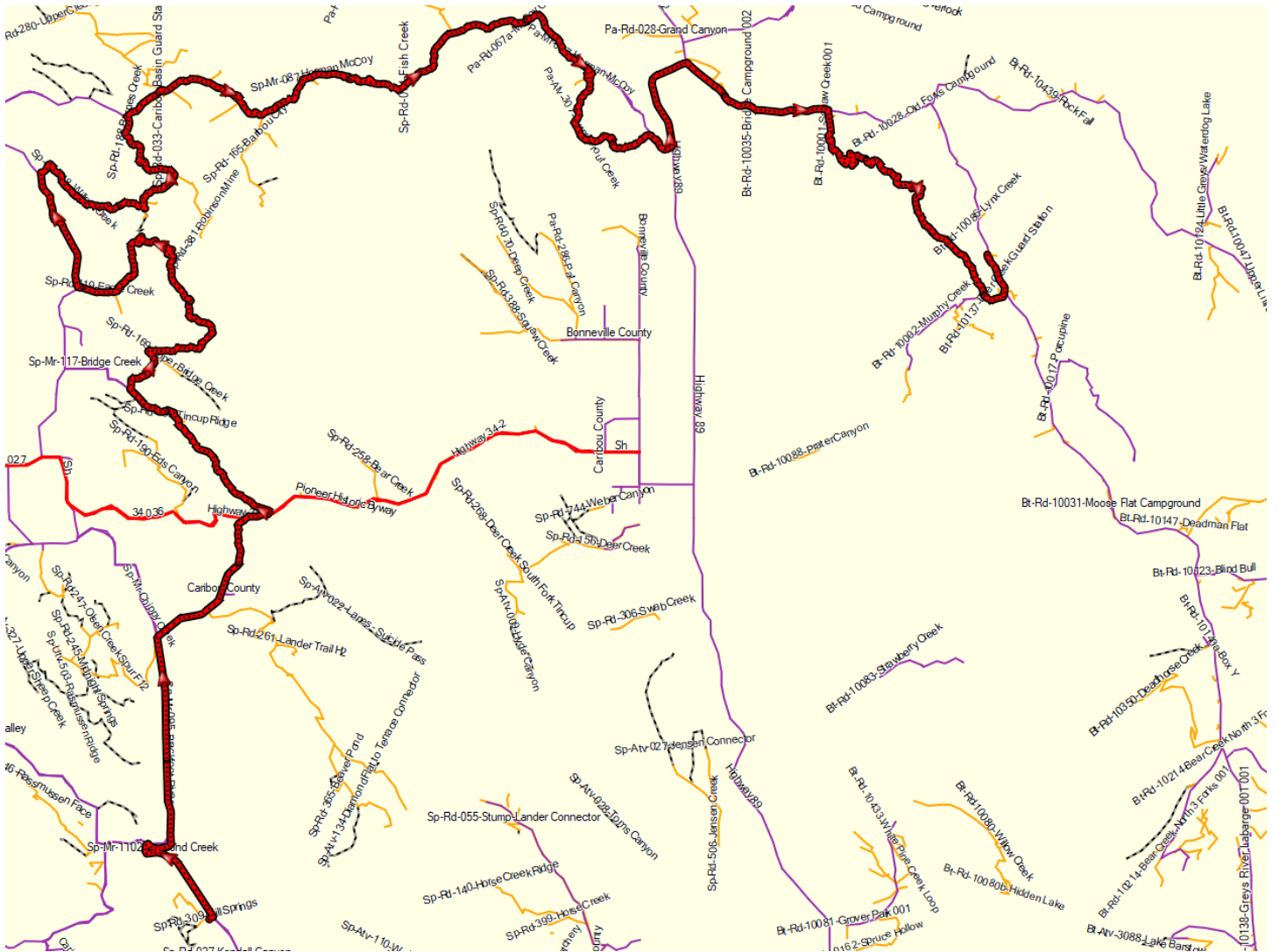
Mileage & Trip Stats & Maps

- Base camp to Alpine – 76 miles – 2.943 gallons = 25.8 mpg (based on my 2022 Grizzly 700)
- Alpine to Afton – 136.6 miles – 5.512 gallons = 24.8 mpg.
- Alpine to base camp – 106 miles – 4.25 gallons = 24.9 mpg
- Total of 318 miles, 12.7 gallons, and average of 25.2 mpg on the trip
- 18:14 moving time & 10:28 stopped time.
- Average 17.5 mph moving time.

[Palasades](#) – [Soda Springs](#) – [Montpelier](#) – [Kemmerer](#), [Big Pney & Greys River](#) [Front & Back](#) – [Wyoming Range ORV map](#)

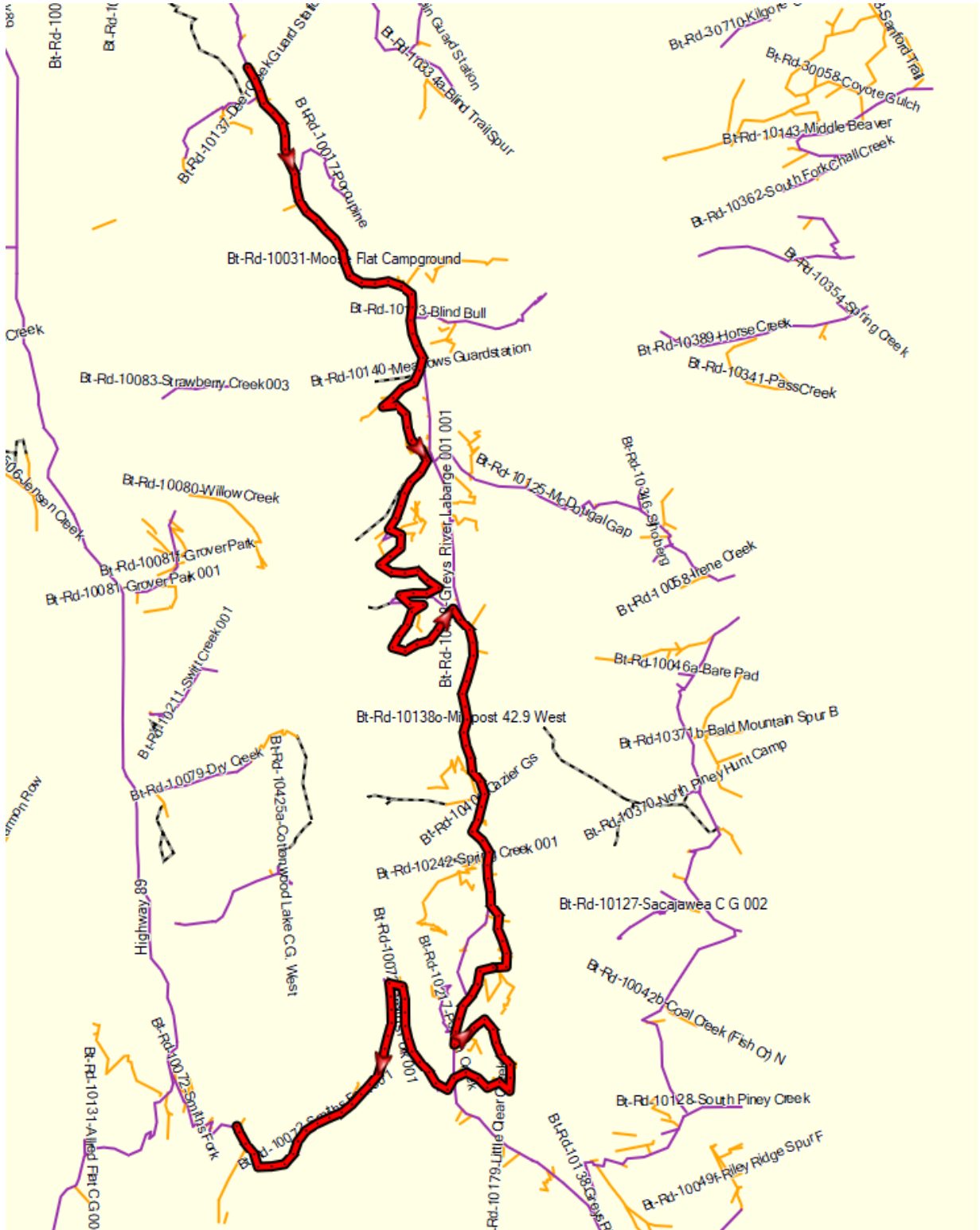
Thursday Ride Map

94.0 miles. 9:16 elapsed time. 5:35 moving time. 16.8 average moving mph. Left at 7:59 and arrived at camp at 5:16 pm. The temperature ranged from 44 when we left camp, to a high of about 95 in Alpine, and 96 when we got to camp.



Friday Ride Map

99.3miles. 8:30 elapsed time. 5:45 moving time. 17.3 average moving mph. Left at 7:42 and arrived at camp at 4:12 pm. The temperature ranged from 42 when we left camp, to a high of about 95 at 1:00 pm and 89 when we got to camp.



Saturday Ride Map

125.0 miles. 10:55 elapsed time. 6:54 moving time. 18.1 average moving mph. Left at 7:23 and arrived at camp at 6:18 pm. The temperature ranged from 68 when we left camp, to a high of about 100 at noon and 86 when we got to camp.

