

Bike Denali National Park - 2002 - 180 (289.68 KM) – July 3, 2002 to July 8, 2002

Total miles logged for Alaska is 2076.17 miles (3341.27 KM)

### **Bike Denali National Park - 2002**

Total miles biked on this trip was about 180 miles = (85 miles each way to wonder lake and misc. rides)

#### **July 3, 2002**

Wednesday after work I went to Big 5 with Larry to buy some binoculars. They were on sale for \$65.00 and their normal price was \$179.00. On the way we dropped Larry's car off near the Beaverton transit center. Then we went to Andrea's and she gave me and Larry a ride to the airport. We dropped Larry off, his flight left at 7:30 PM. Then Andrea and I went to eat at Sharie's. She then dropped me off at the airport and I took a small over the counter sleeping pill before boarded a 10:05 PM plane to Anchorage. The plane arrived in Anchorage a little after midnight. I slept soundly for the full 3.5-hour flight.

#### **July 4, 2002**

Thursday started at the Anchorage airport with a 5.5-hour layover. I walk around the airport terminal. I didn't want to leave security area, so I went to sleep on one of the benches in the terminal. I was sound asleep and a lady woke me up around 2:00 AM. She told me that if I was not on her flight that I would need to leave the terminal area. I then went to the main part of the airport and found that people were sleeping all around the main part of the airport. I went to sleep and woke up around 5:30 AM. I then went through security and boarded a 6:30 AM plane for Fairbanks. I arrived in Fairbanks at about 7:25 AM and went to get my luggage. I didn't see Larry at first and then he came down from the upstairs waiting room. Then we started driving to Denali national Park and stopped at Ester gold mine area, we didn't see much there. We continued and stopped at a gift shop near the highway, it was a place that I had visited in the 1982. It still looked the same as it did 21 years ago, a fish wheel, snow mobiles and bear cache near the shop. However, the bear cache looked like it had been rebuilt or new. On the way to the park, we saw a moose and marmot on the side of the road. Then we picked up our rental bikes, bought some snacks and went to the national park visitor center to get out permits. Then we went to Savage River, parked the car and packed our camping gear onto our rental bikes. By the time we were ready to start biking it was 4:00 PM. We then started biking towards Wonder Lake and stopped at Teklanika River rest stop. At the rest stop we saw the camper bus. I sort of wanted to take the bus to Wonder Lake. However, it was a little too soon and Larry wanted to continue biking. It was the last bus of the evening and we still had 40 miles to go. We didn't take the bus and continued biking. We talked with some of the campers and

told them we would see then at wonder lake. It was about 8:00 PM and I was not looking forward to biking all night, but I'm glad Larry wanted to continue biking. As we continued, we saw a bus stopped and found that they were looking at Dall sheep on the hill. We watched the sheep for a while and they finally disappeared over the foothills. We continued biking and a man in an SUV stopped and said there was a bear near the road on the top of the hill. We cautiously continued and near the top of the hill we saw 2 buses and a car parked. We biked to the buses and found that they were checking out a grizzly bear. We took some photos and then continued biking. As we biked Larry's trailer started making this dragging noise. The tire fell off his bike and at first, we could not find the wheel. I ended up finding the tire in some brush near the road. We put the tire back on his trailer and continued biking.

### **July 5, 2002**

Friday was a continuation of Thursday, we arrived at Stony Hill around 2:00 AM, I was drained, hungry, wet and cold. I ate a can of tuna and a power bar, it helped energize me. We continued and arrived at Eielson visitor center around 3:30 AM. We cooked some food and continued biking. We continued biking and I saw something moving in the field. We looked through our binoculars and saw a large bull moose. We arrived at Wonder Lake around 5:30 AM. We set up the tent in the rain. I got into the tent and the floor was wet, I didn't close the flap in time. I didn't bring a sleeping pad, I was cold (I would have been fine if I did not get my sleeping bag wet) and the ground was rocky. I was exhausted, but could not sleep. Normally, I can sleep through anything. At about 6:30 AM I could hear people talking near the tent, normally I can sleep through noise, but I was still not able to sleep. Larry woke up and went to the rest room around 11:00 AM. I still had not slept all night, Larry let me use his sleeping pad and I slept until 2:00 PM. Since Larry lent me his sleeping pad, he ended up sore after trying to sleep without his pad. I was very thankful that Larry let me use his sleeping pad. We had a back-country pass for the second night, we were supposed to camp in area 42. I lost the map and asked the camp host if he had a map that showed us where area 42 was located. He showed us a map and we finished packing our gear for back-country camping. Before we took off for the back country the camp host told us we could stay for an additional night at Wonder Lake. Originally, we wanted to stay at Wonder Lake, but could not get a permit for Saturday night. We thanked the Camp host and stayed at Wonder Lake. Before setting our tent back up, we hiked to the top of this hill and found an old wooden water tower. Then we ate and went for a hike on the Denali Bart trail. There were tons of mosquitoes around Wonder Lake. We went to a Forest ranger talk and most of the people watching the talk had mosquito nets over their heads. We stayed up until after midnight. Larry told me that I could use his sleeping pad at the beginning of the night, but I refused. I was able to sleep fine with the aid of an over the counter sleeping pill this night.

## **July 6, 2002**

We wanted to get an early start on Saturday, but slept till about 9:30 AM. We then ate and packed our gear. We did not leave Wonder Lake until about 11:00 AM. I biked ahead and Andrea's camera was not working well when I stopped to take a photo of Mt. McKinley. I changed the batteries and it worked. It was the second time that I had changed the batteries on this trip and the camera was working very weird. I stopped to take a photo of a beaver Dam with Denali in the background and Larry almost passed me. Luckily, I saw him and yelled. We both took photos and continued biking. Larry wanted to take a swim in one of the Beaver Ponds. I didn't really want to swim in the ponds. I took a photo of him in the water, he told me he would take a photo of me if I went into the water. I decided to go for the plunge. It was cool, but not too bad. I was expecting the water to be warm, since I had once gone swimming in a shallow Beaver Pond near Talkeetna that was warm. I think the time I went swimming near Talkeetna was later in the season. The mountain had been coming in and out of the clouds all day. It was a very nice day. I went a head of Larry again, after a while I noticed he was a long distance behind me. Then before I knew it, he passed me and was arrived at Eielson about 10 minutes before me. The guy at the visitor center pointed out a bear with his telescope and Larry bought some books. I took off before Larry. I was at the top of Stony Hill and could see Larry and a bus checking out something on the side of the road. I was looking with my binoculars and didn't see anything. He was a long distance away. I continued and Larry ended up catching me about 14 miles later, he was stopping a lot more than I was. Andrea's camera had completely quit working. At one point on the ride, I saw a rough looking Caribou. I also saw a large bird circling overhead. By the time I was with Larry I had seen one caribou and he had seen 3 Caribou's and a bear. We biked together for most of the 5-mile stretch that had limited access, it was an area where you could only observe animals from the road, no off-road hiking. In that area we saw a bear and its cub on the hill across the canyon. This was the same stretch of road where we had seen a bear and Dall sheep on the ride to Wonder Lake. We stopped at the Toklat River bus stop and had been rationing our food all day. We each only had 7 power bars for the 71-mile ride back to Salvage River. At the bus stop a man from Fairbanks gave us a roll of starburst, a package of 4 small sliced sausages and some pretzels. A couple of ladies on the bus gave us rolls. We then continue biking back to Salvage River. We still had 20 miles to go and we biked quickly for about 7 miles, then the up and down hills started again. Larry made it back to the car about 20 minutes before I arrived. We packed up our stuff and went to see if we could get some food. We stopped at the lodge that was near the train depot and it was gone. I had been at that lodge the previous year. We then went to the main highway and tried to get something to eat at the gas station, it closed at 11:00 PM and we arrived at 11:45 PM. We couldn't get food at the gas station, so we found pizza and beer pub across

the street. We sat near some people from Toronto and Larry talked with them, it was loud and I could not hear anything that the people said in the bar. After eating we went to see if we could return the bikes. As I looked to see the hours of the store a man asked me if he could help me. He had just come for the Pizza bar and I recognized him. He said they were closed and we could return the bikes at 7:30 AM the next day. We asked him about camping and he told us to drive north. We drove North a short distance and found a spot next to the road with RV parked. We slept in the car at that rest stop.

### **July 7, 2002**

I woke up and looked at the clock around 7:00 AM and told Larry that it was 7:00 AM. We both went back to sleep and the next thing we knew it was 8:30 AM. We wanted to get the bikes back at around 7:30 AM, but did not get them there until about 8:45 AM. After returning the bikes we drove to the Stampede Road and drove until we reached a lake. After that point the lake turned into a 4-wheel drive road. It would have been a great mountain bike road. However, there were tons of misquotes. As we drove to Fairbanks, I saw a wolf on the side of the road trying to drag a dead caribou into the woods. I told Larry to go back and the Wolf went into the road and stared at our car, I think it was protecting its dinner. Since Andrea's camera did not work, I could not get a photo of the wolf. Larry thought it was a dog and did not want to take a photo of it. I have been unhappy that he would not take a photo, it was a big cool looking wolf. We then drove to Fairbanks and Larry wrote Post cards while I checked out the Ferris boats. Then we went to the post office and Larry packed up his stuff and sent his post cards. I dropped him off at the airport and drove to Gold Dredge 8 and toured the site. Then I drove back to Alaskaland and checked out some of the old buildings. Then I stopped at the visitor center to see if there were any brew pubs in Fairbanks. The lady I asked did not know she asked a second lady and then told me where it was located. It was near the Gold Dredge 8, I drove back up there and found out that the lady at the visitor center had given me bad directions. I then drove back to the airport, I stopped to get gas and the 24-hour gas station was not open. I noticed a lady was still getting gas and she said that you could only get gas with a credit card. I tried 2 of the gas machines and they said the card reader was off. The other lady left and I tried her machine and was able to fill up with gas. I then returned the rental car. Larry did not tell them that I was going to use the car. The lady asked my last name and I told her Wininarski. She then asked if the car was full of gas and in good condition. I assumed that Larry had already signed for the car, well I was wrong. The lady told me to sign at the line, I was not sure what to do since the car was under Larry's name, so I just signed his name. After that I felt pretty nervous at the airport. I board the plane for Anchorage and the pilot flew near the top of Mt. McKinley. I arrived around 10:00 PM and looked around the airport. I found a taxidermied Wolf that looked

exactly like the Wolf that we saw trying to drag dead caribou into the woods on the Parks highway. I took a photo of the wolf and wrote a bunch of post cards.

### July 8, 2002

I boarded the plane for Portland at around 1:30 AM (2:30 AM Portland time) and the plane departed on time, around 1:40 AM. I was supposed to have a good seat on the plane, 14a. However, my seat was given to another person because they had a child and was in the emergency aisle. I was then put into the middle of the Emergency exit isle. I was mad, but sat down anyway. When the plane took off, I found out that the emergency row seats did not recline. I complained to the steward and asked if I could be put in the first class, since I was taken from my good seat. The steward was not at all helpful. The best they could do is tell me that I could stay between 2 people that were already sound asleep and using part of the middle seat. That seemed to be bad. They had plenty of room in first class, but were not willing to let me stay in one of those seats. I only got about 2 hours of sleep. When I arrived in Portland, I took the max to the Hillsboro Airport max stop and looked for a phone to call Larry. I did not see one, so I walked home. I called Larry to see if he had already left for work. He was already at work. He was nice enough to pick me up at home and give me a ride to work. My car was still at Andrea's house. I arrived at work around 10:00 AM.



Google map of Denali National Park Road that Larry and Ted cycled.



Moose in a river.



Ted and Larry with their bikes loaded with camping gear and heading to Wonder Lake to camp.



Ted with bikes on the way to Wonder Lake.



Ted with a grizzly bear in the background over his hand and to the left.



Ted at Denali National Park.



Ted at Denali National Park.



Beaver pond at Denali National Park.



The road that Ted and Larry cycled in Denali National Park.



Ted in front of Alaska Pipe line a little north of Fairbanks, Alaska.



Gold dredge number 8 a little north of Fairbanks Alaska.



Mount McKinley at Denali National Park, seen from the Alaska airlines flight Ted took when he was leaving Alaska.