

This journey had two distinct segments, both involving some cycling. In the initial part, I joined my niece Natalie for skiing in Idaho, followed by cycling along sections of the Centennial Trail in Spokane and part of the Coeur d'Alene bike trail in Idaho. The second leg of the trip involved traveling from Alabama to Arkansas with my niece Caleigh to witness the total eclipse and I also explored rails-to-trails routes in states near to Alabama.

Part1: Spokane and Idaho – Ski and Cycle

There was no GPS track recorded, and not all expenses from the first segment of this two-part trip were documented.

Day 1, Sunday, March 10, 2024

I participated in the Sunday coffee meetup hike in Portland before returning home to swiftly load my car. From home, I drove to Spokane, though regrettably, I forgot to bring my laptop along. Despite this setback, my cell phone proved sufficient for staying connected and managing emails. I reached my hotel, the Ramada by Wyndham Downtown Spokane, around 9:30 PM.

(Daily bike miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles (KM 0))

(Daily Car miles 355 (KM 571.32) miles; Total trip car miles 355 miles (KM 571.32))

Day 2, Monday, March 11, 2024

I woke up at around 9:00 AM and set off on my bike from the hotel heading towards Idaho. As I was nearing Idaho, I received a text from Natalie informing me that her plans for the evening had changed, she wanted to know what time I would arrive in Spokane and she suggested meeting for dinner in Spokane. We had arranged to go skiing together the following day. I responded, informing her that I had arrived in Spokane the previous evening, was currently cycling and I estimated I would return to my hotel by approximately 5:00 PM. After completing my ride along the Centennial Trail into Idaho and back to Spokane, I messaged Natalie to let her know I had returned to the hotel. She then came over, and we went to dine at the Bark a Rescue Brewpub before she returned me to my hotel. I called it a night around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 65.43 (KM 105.3) miles; Total trip bike miles 65.43 miles (KM 105.3))

(Daily Car miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip car miles 355 miles (KM 571.32))

Day 3, Tuesday, March 12, 2024

I woke up around 6:00 AM and enjoyed the complimentary breakfast at the hotel. Afterward, I prepared for a day of skiing, and Natalie arrived at about 7:15 AM. Two of her friends joined us, and Natalie drove us all to Lookout Pass for a day on the slopes. It was an exceptional powder day, and Natalie seemed to know many of the skiers there. Interestingly, there were 35 people from her medical school class, which consists of 80 individuals, skiing at Lookout Pass that day. I skied with Natalie until the lifts closed at 4:00

PM. It was a blast skiing with her; she's become faster than me! Overall, I had a fantastic day skiing with Natalie at Lookout Pass Ski Area. We skied hard all day. Additionally, I installed the Love app to save \$0.10 per gallon on gas. One of the individuals Natalie drove to the ski area showed me the app to save on gas. Natalie appears to be quite content in Spokane and has built a strong circle of friends there. After returning from skiing, we had dinner at a lovely Thai restaurant before I returned to my hotel. I called it a night around 10:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip bike miles 65.43 miles (KM 105.3))

(Daily Car miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip car miles 355 miles (KM 571.32))

Day 4, Wednesday, March 13, 2024

I woke up around 5:50 AM and had breakfast at the hotel before loading my car and departing around 7:00 AM. Near exit 2 in Idaho, I stopped at the Love station to refuel and saved \$0.10 per gallon using the Love app. However, I made a wrong turn after leaving the gas station as I wasn't paying close attention to my GPS, thus taking the longer route to Sandpoint. Arriving at Schweitzer ski area around 9:30 AM, I hit the slopes by 10:00 AM, enjoying the excellent light powder despite the limited visibility due to being in a cloud. Despite the conditions, I had a delightful day of skiing until 4:00 PM, with few other skiers around. By around 5:00 PM, I reached my hotel in Ponderay and checked in. Later, I took a bike ride to Sandpoint and explored the area until after sunset. Overall, I had a great day of skiing at Schweitzer Ski Area.

(Daily bike miles 11.7 (KM 18.83) miles; Total trip bike miles 77.13 miles (KM 124.13))

(Daily Car miles 95 (KM 152.89) miles; Total trip car miles 450 miles (KM 724.2))

Day 5, Thursday, March 14, 2024

I had my hotel included breakfast, loaded my ski stuff in my car and drove to Schweitzer ski area (about 10 miles from my hotel) I quit skiing at 3:30 PM so I would have time for cycling. I got back to my hotel at about 4 PM and was cycling by 4:30 PM. I cycled to Sandpoint and around. I skied several vertical feet at Schweitzer Ski Area.

(Daily bike miles 20.42 (KM 32.86) miles; Total trip bike miles 97.55 miles (KM 156.99))

(Daily Car miles 20 (KM 32.19) miles; Total trip car miles 470 miles (KM 756.39))

Day 6, Friday, March 15, 2024

I woke up around 6:30 AM, packed up my car, enjoyed the complimentary breakfast, checked out of my hotel room, and set off for Schweitzer ski area. Arriving at the parking lot around 8:15 AM, I noticed it was already quite full, with only a few spaces remaining in the lot. Soon after I arrived, they began directing vehicles to an additional lower lot as overflow. It was a picturesque bluebird ski day, perfect for hitting the slopes. I skied continuously from 9 AM to 4 PM, feeling more exhausted than usual. Even more tiring than skiing at Meadows. Schweitzer ski area truly offers an exceptional mountain experience! After skiing, I drove to Coeur d'Alene and

checked into my hotel around 6:00 PM. However, there were issues with processing my payment, so I had to provide a cash deposit. Despite feeling under the weather with a deep cough and headache, I still managed to go biking until 8:00 PM after settling in. I then unloaded my car and retired for the night around midnight. Due to my condition, I decided to cancel my Sunday meetup hike. Overall, I had a rewarding day of skiing, covering several thousand vertical feet of skiing.
(Daily bike miles 10.64 (KM 17.12) miles; Total trip bike miles 108.19 miles (KM 174.11))
(Daily Car miles 59 (KM 94.95) miles; Total trip car miles 529 miles (KM 851.34))

Day 7, Saturday, March 16, 2024

I woke up around 6:45 AM, packed my car, and then enjoyed the complimentary breakfast provided by the hotel. However, retrieving my cash deposit proved to be a bit of a challenge. The person who checked me in the previous night encountered difficulties and hadn't properly recorded my payment. Thankfully, the morning staff member located my \$50 deposit in a drawer and returned it to me. I departed from the hotel around 8:00 AM and drove to Harrison. From there, I cycled to Cataldo, I realized I had forgotten sunscreen and didn't bring any water along. Unfortunately, there was no store in Cataldo, but I managed to purchase bottled water from a restaurant. However, sunscreen wasn't available. After cycling back to my car, I had covered over 50 miles. I applied sunscreen and rode a short distance towards Plummer before returning to my car. My goal was to achieve a 100 KM (62 miles) cycling day. Once done, I loaded my bike into my car and set my GPS to guide me home. To my surprise, I discovered that I had to pass through Cataldo and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, to reach home, realizing I could have saved over 50 miles of driving if I had started my ride from Cataldo. I departed from Harrison around 4:30 PM and eventually arrived back home in Portland around 1 AM.
(Daily bike miles 64.62 (KM 104) miles; Total trip bike miles 172.81 miles (KM 278.11))
(Daily Car miles 455 (KM 732.25) miles; Total trip car miles 984 miles (KM 1583.59))

Day 8, Sunday, March 17, 2024

I biked to Alameda Street and then to Kelley Point. Despite still battling a persistent cold, that evening I decided to take a COVID test, which revealed that I was positive for COVID.
(Biked 37.49 miles – Not part of trip)
(Daily bike miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip bike miles 172.81 miles (KM 278.11))
(Daily Car miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip car miles 984 miles (KM 1583.59))

Part2: Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Arkansas – Eclipse and Cycle

Day 1, Tuesday, April 02, 2024

I planned my trip until around midnight the night before and didn't sleep well that night. The next morning, I finished packing, cleaned the house, and set up a dentist appointment. At about 8:00 PM, Marty arrived, and we loaded my stuff into her car. We went to Chipotle for dinner, and then she dropped me off at Portland International Airport (PDX). After checking in for my flight to Huntsville, Alabama, I spent about an hour on my phone. Around 10:20 PM, I put my phone in airplane mode to save power, used the restroom, and boarded the plane.

As the plane was about to depart, I realized I didn't have my phone. The flight attendant called to check if my phone was at the departure gate or in the restroom, but it wasn't found, and shortly the plane took off. I paid for in-flight internet and sent emails to try to get Caleigh's phone number and address, as I had no way to contact her without my cell phone. Fortunately, Ellen saw my email and sent me Caleigh's contact information before my flight to Washington, DC ended. Ellen had woken up thinking she hadn't heard from Caleigh and noticed my email.

Despite being exhausted and intending to sleep on the overnight flight, I stayed awake for most of the flight, figuring out how to contact Caleigh once I arrived in Huntsville. I managed to get about an hour of light sleep on the plane.

(Daily bike miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip bike miles 172.81 miles (KM 278.11))

(Daily Car miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip car miles 984 miles (KM 1583.59))

Day 2, Wednesday, April 03, 2024

Before my flight was over, I managed to get Caleigh's contact information. Once I arrived at Washington DC Airport (IAD), I contacted Caleigh via email and planned to meet at her apartment between 5:00 and 5:30 PM. Without GPS or my phone, I had no idea how I would navigate there. Upon arriving at Huntsville International Airport (HSV), I picked up my rental car, but they didn't have any paper maps. The rental car staff directed me to the information booth for a map, where I also received directions to Walmart.

At Walmart, I discovered that the staff handling prepaid phones were on a 1.5-hour lunch break. So, I went to Cricket, where I bought a cell phone and they helped me set up the prepaid phone for one month. It was actually a monthly plan, and I was worried about potential future billing issues. When I returned to Portland, I canceled the phone to avoid charges for the following month. Though it was a nice phone, it cost more than I wanted to spend. I sent Caleigh a text message, but accidentally to the wrong number.

Next, I visited the Botanical Garden, which had very colorful flowering trees. Then, I went to Caleigh's apartment and found she hadn't received my text because I had mistyped one of the numbers in her phone number. We walked to Moe's Original BBQ (445 Providence Main St., Huntsville, AL 35806), a place near her apartment, for dinner. We checked out the car show in the park nearby, then returned to her apartment and played Sequence, a card-matching board game. I went to sleep in her spare room around 9:45 PM.

(Daily bike miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip bike miles 172.81 miles (KM 278.11))

(Daily Car miles 22 (KM 35.41) miles; Total trip car miles 1006 miles (KM 1619))

Day 3, Thursday, April 04, 2024

I woke up at 4:50 AM, packed the car, and left Caleigh's place at 5:15 AM as she headed to work. I then drove to Piedmont and cycled the Chief Ladiga Trail to the Georgia border. After returning to my car, I drove to Cedartown, Georgia. Once I checked into my hotel, I went to the Cedartown visitor center and cycled the Silver Comet Trail to the Alabama border where it connects to the Chief Ladiga Trail, and then back to my rental car.

I drove back to my hotel and called the Portland International Airport (PDX) lost and found to check on my missing cell phone. I was on hold for about 10 minutes, and it took another 10 minutes for them to locate it. Given the long wait, I assumed they hadn't found it, but they did. I arranged to pick it up when I returned to PDX on April 11th. After the call, I cycled into town and then back to my hotel.

(Daily bike miles 59.07 (KM 95.06) miles; Total trip bike miles 231.88 miles (KM 373.17))

(Daily Car miles 139 (KM 223.7) miles; Total trip car miles 1145 miles (KM 1842.69))

Day 4, Friday, April 05, 2024

I woke up around 6:00 AM and had breakfast at the hotel. It was still dark outside since the sun doesn't rise in Cedartown until after 7 AM this time of year. I packed my things and left the hotel by about 7 AM. I drove to the Cedartown visitor center and cycled to Rockmart, Georgia, where I had previously cycled towards Atlanta on November 10, 2021. I continued cycling to Pumpkinvine Trestle and then returned to my car in Cedartown. After that, I drove to Huntsville and met up with Caleigh for dinner. I stayed in her spare room that night.

(Daily bike miles 63.08 (KM 101.52) miles; Total trip bike miles 294.96 miles (KM 474.69))

(Daily Car miles 328 (KM 527.86) miles; Total trip car miles 1473 miles (KM 2370.56))

Day 5, Saturday, April 06, 2024

I woke up at 4:15 AM, packed the car, and left Caleigh's place at 4:30 AM as she headed to work. On Interstate 565 near Decatur, the police had the entire interstate shut down, and my GPS wasn't showing an alternative route. I ended up following a truck that was also diverted to Interstate 65. I followed it until my GPS provided a new route, but I lost at least 30 minutes due to the detour.

I arrived in New Albany around 8:00 AM and found the Tanglefoot trailhead parking lot. A one-armed lady also arrived, and we both initially went the wrong way. Shortly after, I started biking in the right direction, the lady passed me. I cycled to mile marker 18 (about 25 miles from New Albany) and then quickly biked back. I never saw the one-armed lady again; she must have cycled the full 84-mile round trip to Houston. I did 53 miles, and her truck was still parked next to my rental car when I returned.

At one point on the trail, two dogs chased me a long way. One dog on each side was growling and chasing me, and one cut me off, causing me to rub against it (a pitbull). Fortunately, it didn't take me down. After my bike ride, I decided to check out the Natchez

Trace Parkway before going to my hotel. After a lot of driving and a couple of short hikes, I found the road wasn't very interesting. It would likely be better in the fall. The Natchez Trace Parkway is a 444-mile scenic highway with some cool parts, I'm sure.

I then went to my hotel, bought groceries at Walmart, ate dinner, worked on my journal, and went to sleep a little after 11:30 PM.

(Daily bike miles 54.11 (KM 87.08) miles; Total trip bike miles 349.07 miles (KM 561.77))

(Daily Car miles 155 (KM 249.45) miles; Total trip car miles 1628 miles (KM 2620.01))

Day 6, Sunday, April 07, 2024

I woke up at 5:47 AM and had the hotel's complimentary breakfast. For some reason, I didn't leave the hotel until about 6:45 AM. I drove towards Little Rock and, running low on gas, stopped just before reaching the city. All the pumps were busy, mostly with empty cars. I waited behind one parked car, and after a few minutes, the driver got out to fill his tank. I hadn't realized he was inside the car; I thought he was inside the gas station. Another lady was slowly doing something before finally moving, and I managed to get to her pump before anyone else did. It was my longest wait ever for gas without customers actually pumping gas. If people had just moved their cars after fueling, there wouldn't have been any lines.

Once in Little Rock, I left my suitcase at the hotel and found the Arkansas River Trail. I cycled the entire trail and planned to meet Caleigh at the hotel. Although I wanted to continue biking, I hurried back to the hotel. When I got to my room, I saw a text message from Caleigh saying they wanted to meet in town. I wished I had seen it before leaving for the hotel, as I wanted to stay in town too. I called Caleigh and drove back to town. We had dinner at Lost Forty Brewery, then walked together to their car. They gave me a ride back to my car, and I returned to the hotel. I went to sleep at about 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 31.38 (KM 50.5) miles; Total trip bike miles 380.45 miles (KM 612.27))

(Daily Car miles 218 (KM 350.84) miles; Total trip car miles 1846 miles (KM 2970.84))

Day 7, Monday, April 08, 2024

I woke up at 5:30 AM, packed my car so I could take Caleigh and Joseph to Russellville. We had the hotel's complimentary breakfast and left a little before 7:00 AM. We headed to a church parking lot in Russellville where Caleigh had reserved a spot for us to watch the eclipse. The drive to Russellville was easy with not much traffic, and we arrived around 9:00 AM. We went to Walmart first and then to the church parking spot.

From there, we walked to the Bona Dea Trails and hiked all the trails. Afterward, I biked around and explored the train station area in Russellville, where hundreds of people had gathered to watch the eclipse. I then biked back to our parking spot, and we watched the eclipse together. We stayed for a short time after the totality ended and then started driving back toward Memphis.

Our parking spot was close to I-40, so we easily got on the interstate. The drive went smoothly with light traffic through Little Rock, where I dropped Caleigh and Joseph off at their car. There wasn't much traffic leaving Little Rock until about 30 miles from Memphis, where it became very slow and often stopped. After stopping for gas and getting back on the interstate, the traffic was still backed

up. It took over two hours to cover the last 30 miles to Memphis. I have no idea what caused the backup; it seemed like too much traffic for the highway to handle.

I checked into my hotel, planned my last night (deciding to go to Nashville), ate dinner, and went to sleep around 11:30 PM.

(Daily bike miles 5.38 (KM 8.66) miles; Total trip bike miles 385.83 miles (KM 620.93))

(Daily Car miles 337 (KM 542.35) miles; Total trip car miles 2183 miles (KM 3513.19))

Day 8, Tuesday, April 09, 2024

I woke up around 6:00 AM and got my hotel's included sack breakfast. When I went to check out, there was no receptionist and no key drop box, so I gave my key to the maid. Then I drove to the trailhead of the Wolf River Greenway Trail and biked about 20 miles in a light continuous rain, ending up soaked.

Afterward, I drove to Nashville, and the rain stopped. It hardly rained during the 3-hour drive. Once in Nashville, I parked and cycled to the Capitol building, then explored the downtown area. I then drove to my Best Western hotel in Brentwood and checked in. Since it was only 5:00 PM, I went to the Brentwood Parks Trail and cycled from Concord Park to Crocker Park. I saw lots of deer, birds, and a raccoon. I also saw the 1832 Boiling Spring Academy building near the bike trail.

When I returned to my car at dusk, a police officer was in his car in the parking area, likely waiting for all the cars to leave so he could lock the gate. There were still three cars in the parking lot when I left. I got groceries, went back to my hotel room to eat dinner, and went to sleep around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 35.92 (KM 57.81) miles; Total trip bike miles 421.75 miles (KM 678.74))

(Daily Car miles 227 (KM 365.32) miles; Total trip car miles 2410 miles (KM 3878.51))

Day 9, Wednesday, April 10, 2024

I woke up at 6:17 AM, had the hotel's included breakfast, packed my car, and drove to Smith Lake. I started cycling around 8:30 AM and rode to Crocker Park, where I had cycled the previous day. I also explored a couple of dead-end legs of the trail, including one that ended at the city line, before returning to my car.

Next, I drove to Decatur and cycled the Decatur Trail from Rhodes Ferry Park to Point Mallard Park. The trail was hard to find and not easy to follow, with many signs that were easy to miss. After cycling back to Rhodes Ferry Park where my car was parked, I continued into town. The trail remained difficult to follow, and I often had to use my cell phone to find it.

I stopped at the 1905 Train Depot Museum, which had a friendly lady running it and lots of cool train models. It started raining as I left the museum and continued raining for the rest of the day. Although I had been dry before, I ended up very wet by the time I returned to my car.

At one point, a train stopped and cut off the trail while I was waiting for it to clear the tracks, as the bike trail switched from one side of the tracks to the other. I cycled a long distance trying to get around the parked train, using my cell phone to find new routes several times. When I finally biked back to my car, the train had moved, making it easier to find my way back.

Then, I drove to Caleigh's, packed my bike into its suitcase, and had a home cooked dinner. We played games until 10:00 PM, after which I checked in for my flight, took a shower, and got ready for my return trip to Portland.

(Daily bike miles 39.16 (KM 63.02) miles; Total trip bike miles 460.91 miles (KM 741.76))

(Daily Car miles 112 (KM 180.25) miles; Total trip car miles 2522 miles (KM 4058.76))

Day 10, Thursday, April 11, 2024

I woke up at 6:00 AM, packed my car, and left Caleigh's place by 6:20 AM. My new cell phone's touch screen stopped working in one corner, making it hard to navigate to the Land Trust of North Alabama: Monte Sano Nature Preserve. Once at the Preserve, I took a 2-mile hike. About a mile from my car, it started pouring rain, and I got soaked as there was nowhere to take cover. It was the wettest point of my trip. I then walked back to my rental car.

Next, I drove to Monte Sano State Park for a quick visit, then went to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center Museum and spent a lot of time there. The exhibits were very cool, featuring big rockets and other interesting displays. Afterward, I went to the airport and got cheap gas at BJ's Wholesale Club with help from the attendant. Since you need a membership to buy the gas, he let me pay with cash and use his membership card.

At the airport, I confirmed my ride home and other details. I flew back to Portland and retrieved my cell phone from the lost and found using their after-hours phone number. Marty then picked me up and gave me a ride home.

(Daily bike miles 0 (KM 0) miles; Total trip bike miles 460.91 miles (KM 741.76))

(Daily Car miles 65 (KM 104.61) miles; Total trip car miles 2587 miles (KM 4163.36))