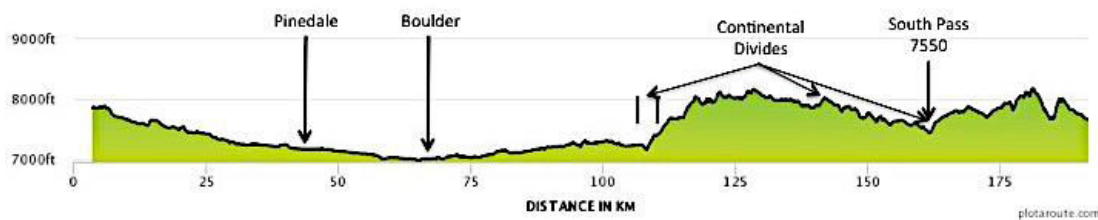
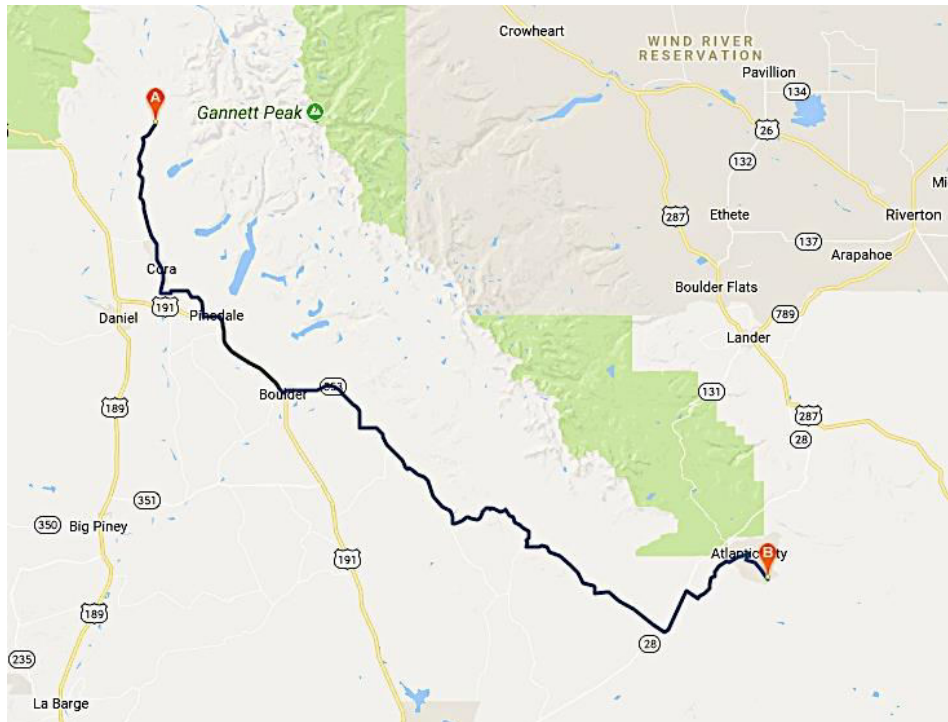


Day 15 **23rd June 2017**
Cyclists only Cabin to past Atlantic City

191.6k / 119.1miles **1904m / 6246ft (1938m / 6358ft descent)**
36.4%↑ 46.6%↓ 22%→ 14.4% max

*Right now, the sun is bright, the air is cool, my head is clear,
there's a whole day ahead of us, we're almost to the mountains,
it's a good day to be alive. It's this thinner air that does it.
You always feel like this when you start getting into higher altitudes.*

Robert M. Pirsig



My rough notes start with the entry 'Odd day'. It wasn't a hilly day but nevertheless it proved a relatively hard one, principally because to the wind.

No-one had returned to the property during the night and there was just the friendly dog to see me off. I left a thank you note in the visitor's book and wondered when the owners would learn that they had had a clandestine visitor.

It was cold; almost immediately I spied a newly opened café on the road to Pinedale. Parked outside were two bikes - belonging to Rich and Mark. We breakfasted on expensive crappy fare and chatted. It transpired they had found a mitt and looking through my kit it I found that unbeknownst to me I had dropped it. What's the odds that I would have been reacquainted with it?

1. Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values

They had stopped overnight at the Whiskey Grove Campsite. They asked where I had stayed. When I told him of my exploits at the cyclist cabin Rich was very surprised. He implied he would not have risked been found on someone's property - UK ignorance vs Tennessee American gun toting apprehension I suppose. Anyway it turned out alright in the end.

Rich said the Fish Mountain Bypass was tougher than the Union Pass. I was pleased to learn that I was not the only one to have suffered yesterday.

Right from the off after breakfast it was apparent that, while I might be able to out climb my fellow cyclists, I was no match for their long levers on the flat. When it comes to cycling on relatively flat good road surfaces they left me for dust, or would have done so had there been any dust to leave me in.

I accepted my lot and rolled south towards Cora and Pinedale on my own.



I came across a stream of cattle some 3 miles long on my right heading north.

*Rear end of a
3 mile cattle drive*

Like traffic jams on the opposite side of the motorway, you don't notice the increasing numbers until some time after it started.

Given the density of cattle several thousand must have made their way north. Both cowboys and cowgirls were involved in this drive.



Several ranches had impressive entrances. I have been unable to identify this one. But given the positioning of the R's I suggest it should be:

*The R Lazy R
Ranch*

The Green River / New Fork River valleys were wide and expansive and a little tedious in all honesty.



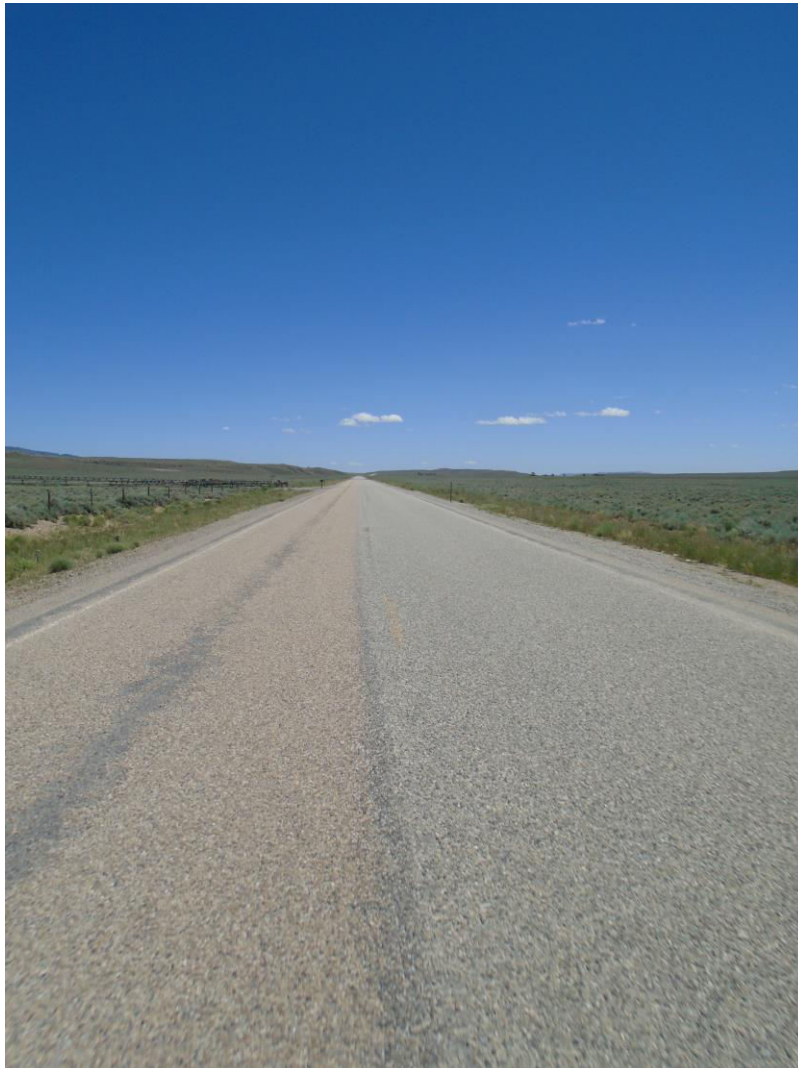
Wide open Wyoming



I blinked and missed the settlement of Cora – not because I was going so fast but because it was so small.

Pinedale afforded the opportunity to recharge the Stans fluid in my tubeless tyres. This was probably unnecessary but the Basin was coming up soon and I wanted to be 100% primed. I also bought some more chain lube and stocked on up on food at a supermarket in town - Ridley's store.

I admit to being rather apprehensive about the Basin part of the trip but reconciled myself to the fact that I had done everything possible to prepare for the forthcoming experience.



The route from Pinedale was not busy, as demonstrated by these photos.

Selfie on the Big Sandy/Elkhorn road

As the afternoon progressed the dominant feature became the increasing wind, which slowed progress significantly.

I stopped at the store in Boulder for a drink and continued a further 30k to the Big Sandy/Elkhorn Road.

Here I left the tarmac and started back on the ubiquitous trail

I met a NoBo who was revelling in the wind, especially as he said it had been against him for the last week!! It was a pity I had missed it. I told myself I should've gone faster to get further south sooner.

Happy NoBo meets wind - battered SoBo



Lander Cutoff sign

After crossing the Big Sandy River at a crossroads I started on the Lander Cutoff, a trail built in the late 1850's to help facilitate settlers and their wagons. This trail crosses the Divide and runs east west down Lander Creek / Sweetwater River

Unfortunately the photos of the wide open plain do not show the high wind which was developing during the afternoon.



Big Sandy Road looking north to the Bridger Wilderness and the Wind River Mountains



Views along the Lander cut off en route to South Pass

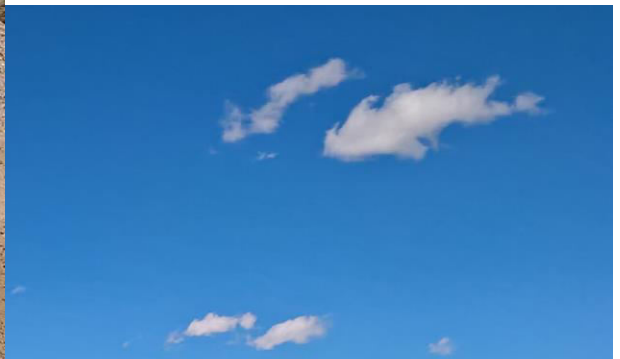




*Continuing east
towards South Pass*

This part of the trail runs along the Continental Divide

The photo below shows the strength of the wind. You can see the red cord at the top of the sign, blown out virtually horizontally.



After reaching the summit of South Pass 5,550' I turned north, directly into the huge head wind.

The road ran down to the Sweetwater River and then straight up the far bank.

I was conscious of the fact that time was progressing and that I still had 27k to complete before arriving at Atlantic City. Atlantic City represented the last food stop for some 130k.

Looking at Trackleaders I see that it took me almost exactly 2 hrs to cover those 27k and believe me I was working hard. I certainly did not want to arrive at the in Atlantic City Mercantile only to find it closed.





En route I passed signs depicting the historic sites of the Carissa Mine and South Pass City, both describing the boom and bust cycle associated with the discovery of gold.

The mine buildings are now a historic monument.



I was very pleased indeed to crest the final hill and finally see Atlantic City (pop 'about 57').

I arrived at the Mercantile with 15 mins to spare before they stopped serving food.



Atlantic City caught in the dying light, blurred because I was moving fast attempting to arrive before the Mercantile closed.

Floris, Rich, Mart, Massimo and Bobby were there, together with one NoBo. I had a burger and charged my electronics while I waited.

I thought I had lost one of my batteries but was pleased to subsequently find it in my rucksack.

There was a local playing 'country and music' – badly. The NoBo blotted his copybook with the locals by commenting on the performance!!

Rich and Marty left while I was eating. I left soon after, excited town just as the sun was setting. I climbed the steep 1k hill out of Atlantic City, and headed out into the Basin. I stopped after 12k at a cattle grid and set up camp. The wind had died down significantly

Two riders passed me while I was in my sleeping bag.

I drifted off feeling that, even though I had done nearly 200k today, I should have done more.

In a curious way I was looking forward to the morrow.