

We rode 6 days and camped 5 nights in the Sawtooth Wilderness.

We rode about 70 miles, I'm sure Bindi Sue (our dog) ran even more. We had about 38 hours of 'in the saddle' time.

Excellent weather, minimal bugs, dry conditions. Perfect time for a pack trip.

We saw some of the most spectacular scenery available, and it's right in our backyard.

On Sunday we rode in from Pettit Lake Tin Cup trail head at 6996' via Yellow Belly Lake and Edith Lake. We then went over Sand Mountain Pass at 9400'. We rode past Edna, Vernon, and Summit Lakes and dropped down to Ardeth Lake at 8228'. About 15 miles. We spent 4 nights at Ardeth Lake and had the entire lake to ourselves. Good campsite and good grazing. We figure that most backpackers can only make it to Edna Lake in one day, then they pass up Ardeth Lake on their way to their next camp spot.

Monday we rode about 12 miles to Hidden Lake and the Cramer Divide at 9480'. Fantastic views. Didn't meet anyone! In true BCH fashion, we cut 3 downfall from the Hidden Lake Trail. We crossed the South Fork of the Payette River a few times - it's narrow near its headwaters.

Tuesday we had a spectacular 12 mile ride with completely fantastic scenery. We rode over the Ardeth Lake/Spangle Lake divide at 8952'. We dropped down to Spangle Lake at 8585' and met a group of 6 horse folks camped there. We then rode up to Ingeborg Lake at 8890'. What a beautiful high mountain, rugged lake. We lunched at Rock Slide Lake - another beautiful lake. We rode further down to Benedict Lake at 8240'. We also took a little used trail to the tucked away and scenic Three Island Lake at 8598'. We cut 3 downfall on the trail between Rock Slide Lake and Benedict Lake. Coming back, we were able to see the Red Mountain fire smoke plume from Ingeborg Lake.

Wednesday we had another 12 mile ride. We again rode over the Ardeth Lake/Spangle Lake divide at 8952'. On the way we cut out a downfall. We had negotiated it the previous day and had decided that it was too dangerous for horse crossing. On this ride we turned SE down the Middle Fork of the Boise River. Our goal was the Flytrip Creek trail and Camp and Heart Lakes. The views of the canyon and peaks were stunning. We cut 2 more deadfall that were treacherous for horses to cross. The Flytrip Creek Trail was very rugged, steep, and rocky. We lunched at Camp Lake at 8520', a long narrow lake tucked away below the peaks. We then went cross country to Heart Lake, another stunning high mountain lake. We stumbled across a hiker at that lake - the only person we met all day. On the return ride we could see how the Red Mountain fire had exploded and could now see the new explosion of the 'contained' Trail head fire. The Sawtooth peaks were beginning to be shrouded in smoke.

Thursday, we packed up. The smoke was rolling in and we wanted to take a longer route out to the trailhead and did not want a marathon ride. We rode 12 miles that day. We retraced our route from Ardeth Lake to Summit, Vernon, and Edna Lakes. We went over Sand Mountain Pass at 9280' to Toxaway Lake. We then climbed Snowyside Pass at 9280' and dropped down to Twin Lakes at 8868' where we set up camp and spent the night. We had a bit of rain that night and woke to a grey day. We decided it was the right time to be heading out of the wilderness.

Friday we had an easy 7 mile ride from Twin Lakes at 8868', past Alice Lake and back to Pettit Lake at 6996'. The view of the Stanley valley was hidden by smoke.

It was a wonderful trip and just the right length.