

The Greenway in Maine

8/16/21 Calais to Meddybemp ...

Moosehorn National Wildlife Blind – Quiet. Motorists in the distance. Flies buzzing – doing what they do when humans aren't around. Trills in the underbrush. Insects unknown. Loosing track of time here. What is time to ecology? Fields of Golden Rod. Gentle Breezes.



Most of this ride, along the Greenway route, was quiet with minimal motorized traffic. There was a point, though, where dump trucks became more numerous. With no shoulder, this became a point of contention as we vied for who had the rights to the road. The heavier vehicle won out (mine was 30 lbs).

In short order, I came to the point where turning off the Greenway was required. There were still miles to go ... but what miles! Up hills, passed by a logging truck. Logging trucks, unlike Tractor Trailers, demand care when being passed. Their slipstream is more chaotic and easier to mis-handle. Important, then, to recognize whether the vehicle passing you is a logging truck or T-T because you want to handle the bike differently in each case.

This first day, and others like it, made me realize the map is not the terrain. While your eyes might say "That doesn't look bad", your legs will say "What a burn!" My overnight was

tenting on a lake in the quiet of the Maine Woods. The unusual aspect to this overnight was that my host knew members of my extended family and grew up not far from my family. Such coincidence. So, we had much to talk about beyond cycling. I was driven to the nearest connection with the Sunrise Trail, an eighty-four mile multi-use trail stretching between Pembroke and Ellsworth. Multi-use meant mostly ATV's and thus the trail had a certain quality. Still, my host thought that with proper inflation, my tires could handle the trail and the thought of 80 miles without cars and trucks convinced me to try it. I could always go back to the road farther up the trail.

8/17/21 Meddybemp to Cherryfield ...

Meddybemp – Excellent site on the water. Hard to reach and hard to leave with many hills. Engaging hosts. Wonderful dinner

Sunrise Trail @ Mile 80 (?)



Facilities were non-existent for many miles. Mostly flat. No cars or trucks. Some friendly ATV'ers. Display maps would be useful at primary street crossings. Extended, paved aprons at street crossings and bridges would make the trail more amenable to cyclists. Crowned trail grooming would make it more of the multi-use trail it aspires to be. Dual lanes for ATV's and Cyclists might be possible in many areas. Many bogs. Long grueling ride.

Cherryfield – Tenting overnight at a blueberry farm. Left the trail a few miles short of the farm. Second night tenting. Good friendly people.

8/18/21 Cherryfield to Orland...

Mile after mile passed me as I continued on the Sunrise trail. In many places, again, it was easier to leave my left foot un-clipped. This is the foot that un-clips first and lands on the ground. Many days into the ride, this would become the norm. 30 Miles spilled me out into Ellsworth unceremoniously where I was

forced to deal with fast, incessant motor-vehicles and shoulder-less roads. An unfriendly town to cyclists. The "86 This!" restaurant had really good food with outdoor dining but no adequate bike storage.

Entering Orland, I was treated to a rear flat tire. I informed my hosts and was assured that they would pick me up – it was only 4 miles away. I didn't turn it down even though I was able to repair the flat readily (somewhat) . Reconnecting the rear break calipers was a more difficult issue and didn't happen until the morning. I slept on a porch. The site was on a lake and I went for a dip to wash the road-dust off. After two nights of tenting, and two mornings packing away a wet tent fly, this was a welcome change. I would tent three more times on this trip.

8/19/21 Orland to Bangor ...



Orland – An early breakfast with my hosts and pleasant goodbyes saw me off to my next destination – Bangor. First, though, I had to pass through Bucksport. Even though the route followed the Penobscot Watershed, it did not follow the river and instead meandered it way through hill and dale. Consequently, when I came out

in Brewer, I was dis-oriented and unwilling to navigate my way to the bike shop located there, instead, choosing to proceed directly to my host's address. I had navigated Bangor many times by car, as a driver and as a passenger but never as a cyclist. A different experience. I visited the library and walked down to the waterfront. A KISS concert was being organized – something I definitely didn't need to see or hear.

8/20/21 Bangor to Unity ...



There were some really nice stretches of road. Without the humidity, it would have been a really nice ride. The upcoming tropical storm was pushing up lots of hot sticky air and lungs are punished under such circumstances. Bangor / Brewer was a big disappointment. The bike paths promised were not found riding in and under construction riding out. Thanks, though, go out to ECGA staff and MDOT for the excellent signage otherwise. Digital help is almost not needed although I might have to invest in a Garmin farther along. Still haven't purchased a mount for the Go-Pro

camera I am carrying. Watershed maps might be useful as we pass from one to another. ... Writing now, I am waiting for a pizza at the UHOP (Unity House of Pizza). Not much ambiance but good fare for a hungry cyclist. I stopped in Troy to visit friends and had lunch with them. It was nice to learn at that time that Unity was only 10 miles away. Manageable with only a few toiling hills. Along the way, I met a fellow cyclist traveling the other way, to Calais.

By the way, average speed was 8.76 mph today and included walking several hills. Afternoon tea today, a rare occurrence, was \$9.00+ and dinner was \$16.00. I bought a cantaloupe at an Amish Farm Stand for \$3.00 and this was indicative of food costs at the time.

The overnight was peaceful and, unlike other overnights, located right on the Greenway route.

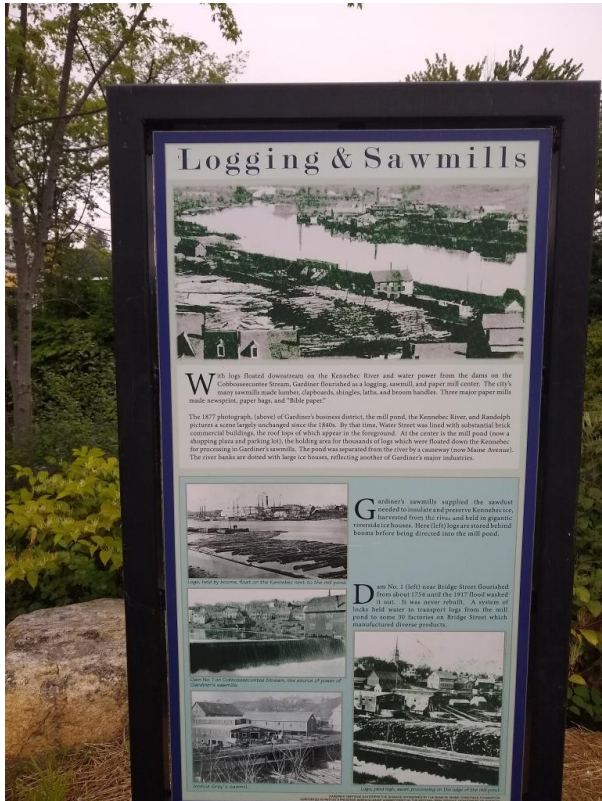
8/21/21 Unity to Hallowell ...



More road miles than trail miles. I have found how convenient it is to have overnights adjacent to the Greenway – as Unity was. Even so, and for several hours, I was crossing watersheds and once, questioned the signage, thinking it was sending me in the wrong direction. Indeed, arriving in Benton, I missed a turn and found myself in Fairfield far from any Greenway signs. Much time was lost in finding them again, but, I have a general head for the direction I want to go and proceeded in

that vein. Great relief was found upon getting to Augusta (despite not being able to lobby legislators for more bike paths). A short ride, shorter cafe visit and several blocks later, I found myself at the Airbnb in Hallowell, a professional accommodation with much to commend itself for the budget business traveler. I found many amenities but no dinner or breakfast. There was a sauna – I didn't use it. Slates was the restaurant of choice but with an overlong wait for which they were apologetic.

8/22/21 Hallowell to Brunswick ...



The longest ride as of this writing. All was going well – the normal hills, one turn after another, a nice bike path from Hallowell to Gardiner. Then I hit Lewiston. I'd been using the Greenway signage in large part as sort of an umbilical cord. It kept me on task and confident that I was making progress toward my goal. I missed a turn. This would turn out to be a recurring motif during the trip. There were three reasons this could happen; a missing sign, tree branches covering it, or just zoning out. Whatever the reason this time, I came into Lewiston and picked up signage again only this time they looped me around to the north and backwards about 10 miles. Never once did I see a direction marker indicating that I was in fact traveling north. As soon as I realized I was headed backwards, around I went and, following the route as shown on my phone app, managed to pick up the trail again headed south toward Brunswick.

Later in the day, hitting Lisbon, ME I had about two hours of steady rain, making the ride treacherous and

miserable, I managed to find Brunswick and arrive at the motel where I would be staying, at great cost, I might add. Eighty-Eight miles that day.

8/23/21 Brunswick to Scarborough ...



This day went fairly well. It was a challenge to find the Greenway again. I had some well-meaning help from a woman who appreciated my story, which I shared while waiting for the Visitor Center to open. She at least advised me that I could take a picture of google maps and refer back to it if I was lost. This I could do in lieu of using DATA, always an option. Once on route, I made it quickly to Freeport and expected to come into the center of the town. No such luck. The route led me far to the south before issuing me onto route One. I started back up Route One in hopes of some lunch and a shopping trip to

LL Bean. It turned out farther than I wanted to backtrack so I ended up having lunch at a small cafe

with rude waitresses. Then onward. All was going well getting into Portland when I decided to walk across the Casco Bay Bridge. Sheesh! What a long bridge. That walk made me uncomfortably late for Scarborough but I pushed on with much communication, made it to my destination with just enough time to sign in, shower, and get to dinner with my host at Piper Shores, an impressive elder community.

I spent a day and two nights there. My first day off since starting out. Laundry, shopping, a picnic, and walking were all on the list. A busy day that did not include biking.

8/25/21 Scarborough to Eliot ...



The Eastern Trail, a long pleasant stretch from Scarborough to Kennebunk, underscores why I am doing this ride. To promote more stretches like this – interconnected into a continuous safe whole. Because of this trail, I ended up in Eliot ahead of schedule and another home-stay, my last full day in Maine. A conversation with two fellows on the trail led me to understand that money and financing were not always the answer to trail expansion or completion. Sometimes you just need another engineer...