

Still Riding Across America for OWLS

By Trish Slape

Although the actual "Ride Across America" has come to an end, OWLS will always look back on this summer as one of amazement. One person, one dream, and an invitation to become a part of a journey of a lifetime. That's what Paul Rudershausen, marine research assistant for Center for Marine Sciences and Technologies (CMAST), did for the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter when he offered to take his dream of biking across America and open it up as a fundraiser for the shelter.

OWLS was hit extremely hard financially over the last year and a half, as were all non-profits, so any opportunity to raise money was definitely well received, and Paul's



OWLS Hero: Ride Across America's Paul Rudershausen pictured with the mountains in the background as he wends his way home.

idea seemed like an interesting one. All fundraisers have the basic groundwork necessary to get them off the ground, and "pedal4wildlife" was no different. Mailings were done, media releases were sent out, logistics planned, and so on. The difference with this one is in the journey, not the end result. Paul set up a website to promote the fundraiser for OWLS, but the website has become so much more. His blog created a window for all of us to experience what he experienced, to see what he saw, and even to feel what he felt.

As we got closer and closer to Day One - the kick-off of this phenomenal journey - the anticipation was growing, and the farewell party was but a memory. Paul's gear was packed, we'd ironed out all of the last minute details and communication lines were put in place. Supporters all across the country logged in to read how Day One and the start of the journey would begin, only to find out that due to traffic delays - weather and airlines mishaps - Day One was not to be. As quoted from Paul's Blog - Day One - "In my daydreams I thought it was a long way across the country, I didn't dream it would take so long to get there. I felt a little like a tape-less horse in the 5-hour plane ride

Saturday... I hope the day delay won't negate my chance to get to Yellowstone Park... If you like wildlife, Yellowstone is one of the premier places for wildlife viewing in the continent." Even on the first day, Paul is busily calculating and recalculating the number of miles per day he needed to cover to make his journey home in the 34, now 33 day trip he had mapped out.

Right off the bat, Paul had experienced in Day Two what he referred to as "a benchmark by which others on this journey - and throughout life - are measured... relative to the Cascade climb in '09." He tells us in his blog that the day started out reasonably enough, even with time to take a refreshing swim in the Santium Creek, but then "the Cascades showed themselves." On a brutally hot day, making 6 mph for 2 hours up a 4% grade, he ran out of water. For the grace of God and a few strangers who stopped and gave him water, he made it to his camp sight and collapsed into bed - too tired even for dinner.

A note received from one of those strangers read, "Paul, as one of the strangers who saved your life on Monday's trek over the Cascades, I was happy to see online that you had made

it despite the gruesome ride. You were such a gracious person, I only wish I had been able to give you more water. I was caught totally unawares about your water shortage, and while one doesn't really expect to meet someone on the pass riding a bicycle by, ha ha, that was very interesting. It sounds like you've got quite a road ahead, and quite a fantastic journey awaiting. I can only be envious of what you'll be seeing as you go along. Take care, God Bless, and best of rides to you!" Juli

By Day Eleven, Paul was making progress, traversing across state number three, every day experiencing new wonders as well as new struggles. Some days began with a tailwind helping him over the next hill, while by the afternoon the wind was in his face pushing him back. The wildlife and views that he saw were unparalleled, like the golden eagle silhouetted against the rays of the setting sun as they lit up the cliff rocks of the Flaming George Reservoir Dam.

It was a phenomenal journey made by a phenomenal person and shared by all who took the time to visit www.pedal4wildlife.org. Thanks Paul - you're one in a million!

New York Trip

By Cierra Tomaso

New York for many people likely evokes strong opinions, whether negative or positive. To tell the truth, it's got many sides. I mean one minute you're glaring at people shoving you in China Town and the next you're on the subway on your way to Broadway.

If you only have, say, three days, the things you absolutely have to do are as follows. Take a ferry to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. Get caught in a downpour on the way back from Ellis Island and wish you'd brought an umbrella. Make sure you hit a few shops because New York is

rightfully famous for its variety of shops. The Toys 'R Us has an indoor ferris wheel, by the way. Grab a slice of NY pizza - nothing beats NY pizza. Take the subway a lot, too. You might meet some interesting people, or you might get lost and end up rushing. It really can go either way. The buses, however, are normally a safe bet.

Central Park is a must-see as well. The Alice in Wonderland statue is amazing, and the lake is pretty. However, if you want to eat somewhere, I can't really recommend the Boathouse restaurant. We waited a fairly long time, the food, was in

small proportions, and there was a hair in the butter. Plus, the service was awful and the food overpriced. However, there's a café in the same building that was cheaper, but we didn't eat there.

If you like carousels, you have to go to the one in Central Park. But please make sure you have quite a long time to find it. During the summer, it stays open later. And get directions. Because if you don't, you will likely be wondering Central Park for hours. And if you're us, you'll be wearing awful shoes, be already tired, and be carrying tons of bags...

After that, you may want to get a carriage ride and have a tour guide tell you a bit about New York. The next day, seeing Broadway is something you can't miss. Believe me, you won't regret it. Going to the theater may be expensive and getting tickets may be an ordeal, but it's really quite an experience. On Broadway, we happened to see "Mary Poppins," which was really good. But I've heard all of them are very good.

So if you want to visit the city that never sleeps, I encourage you to go for it. Remember your map and have fun.