

Road trip Oh Seven Eighteen – Destination: Warsaw MO.

I hadn't been on the bike for a trip in over two weeks. This past weekend there was some very cool weather for July and the weekend of 17th and 18th was to be in the 70's F (20's C). It was just too much, Friday morning I decided on a destination. Having not been South yet, Warsaw MO was chosen. This is right next to Harry Truman Reservoir near the start of the Lake of the Ozarks system.

Saturday morning started early for this slacker that sleeps in long after the pets have tried to wake me up.

The sky was brilliantly clear and blue without a cloud anywhere. I was up by 7am and by 8am I was doing my walk around the bike to make sure all bolts I could find were tight.

The Green Damsel was rolled out of the garage and into the early silent morning of a neighborhood weekend day. She gleamed in the early sun since she'd had a bath just the day before.



I rolled out of the driveway by 9am and headed off to fill up. After the tank was full, I headed over to Ace Hardware for a tire plug kit. (Been traveling all over without one and after reading a few forum posts about flats it hit me that I should have one.) All was great and I headed back to the bike and got ready to put on my back pack when...BAM!...I got the most intense, burning cramp in my upper back. Right between the shoulder blades was screaming. I was NOT going to give up this trip! I forced my arms to continue moving and attempted to stretch out my back a bit.

So, ignoring the pain I climbed on the bike and headed out. 9:30am and I was on the road! Heading out of town takes about 20-30 minutes and I finally reached the first of the back road state hwy's that I would be following. Hwy 7 would take me all the way to Warsaw.

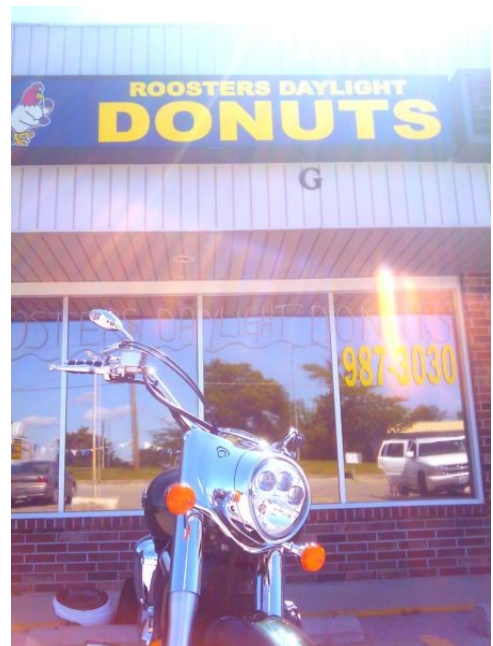
About an hour or so into the trip, the day continued to be wonderful. Traffic on the road was very light and I didn't have to worry about too many crazy, distracted drivers.

There was an AMAZING variety of wild flowers all along the route.



The first cloud showed up in the sky around 11am or so. The rest of the day turned a bit more cloudy as the hours passed. But it never got more than partially cloudy all day.

Eventually, I had to stop for a bit of mid morning food. Turns out there was a donut shop right along Hwy 7 in Pleasant Hill.



I had a cup of coffee, one of the sandwiches I had packed, half an orange and a German chocolate donut. Getting ready to head back out, I decided to double check my map. Imagine my surprise when I found only the map holder! The map and all my research about Warsaw had disappeared somewhere on the road. (Oops, five trips so far and never had my printed out maps just blow out of the plastic holder like that.)

From here on out the trip was seat of the pants. Ha ha ha. I really had most of the trip memorized anyway, and just sticking to Hwy 7 all the way was not too hard. Most of the road was small state highway until 7 joined up with 71.

The road from there to Clinton MO was divided highway and really kinda boring after a few minutes. Oh well, after Clinton Hwy 7 turned back into a small state highway and I came across one of the towns I was looking forward to seeing.



Tightwad Missouri. Pop 63.

Tightwad tourist info...ha ha ha. I wonder if they were planning for me to visit. I should have stopped in to see if they had any tips about how to travel and keep my money in my pocket.



It was around 12:45pm when I rolled into the outskirts of Warsaw. There were three things on the itinerary for the day. Food, the swinging bridge, the fish hatchery, and the Truman Lake visitor center. At some point on Friday, a co-worker suggested that the best BBQ in the area was the Chuck wagon.



The food was pretty good and the place was very popular. (Always a good sign.) They didn't have a small/lunch version of their burnt ends so I went with the beef brisket. Their beans were pretty good and had a whole lot of meat in them. A bit sweeter than I like, but they were good and balanced out the meat.

The brisket was a bit dry, must have been cut too soon after coming out of oven. Had to use a bit of extra sauce to it.



From lunch I went on to find the Joe Dice Swinging Bridge.



This bridge was originally a toll bridge built in 1904 by Joseph A Dice. It was destroyed in 1924 by a tornado and rebuilt by Dice in 1928. The suspension is a cable with 720 strands. Although he never finished the 4th grade, nor did he have any formal engineering training, he is credited with building over 30 swinging bridges in central Missouri. Mr. Dice carried his blueprints in his head and when the highway department started requiring blueprints for construction, he retired as a bridge builder.



The bridge does exactly what the name implies and it swings as you walk across it. You can feel it flexing and moving under foot. Which makes it all the more impressive that this bridge was used for AUTOMOBILE traffic for many, many years. I left the bridge and continued up the road for the fish hatchery. I was a bit worried at this point because I had asked for directions at the restaurant, and since they were completely wrong for the bridge I couldn't put too much faith in them for the hatchery.

But I did eventually find the hatchery along the outer road for Hwy 61. There is a visitor center and you are allowed to roam the land to look into the little out door ponds. I didn't do too much wandering as I was informed that the land for the hatchery covered a whopping 900 acres. WOW!

Inside the visitor center you can look into the actual working area of the hatchery where they take the eggs out of adult fish and start making little fishes.

There was no work going on when I got there, but you could see into a couple of the holding tanks.



There was also a very large aquarium that contained all the native fish for Missouri. (Except the spoonbill, a very funky looking fish. If it was in there, I didn't see it.) There were big and small mouth bass, gar, sturgeon, cats, and I think the little ones were something called Topeka Shiners, a minnow that is endangered.



Outside there is even a kid's fishing pond. Kids under 15 can cast a line and try to catch fish. (Honestly, not sure if you wouldn't have better luck in a local sunfish/bluegill pond somewhere.)

I went walking around to some of the holding ponds and it was really kinda cool. There were a couple of times I could see the fish in the ponds doing their normal predatory thing or just schooling. At one point a very large fish came zooming out of the deep and up into the shallows. Then with a loud flip of the tail that splashed water around he went zooming back off into the deep. I can only assume he got the minnow that was dinner with that move.

It was running late in the day and I still had close to 4 hours to get home, but I decided to still run up to the dam and the visitor center. There wasn't much in the visitor center for adults. It has a whole replica of a dig site that held a mastodon skeleton, but it wasn't too interesting to me. The view from the observation area is cool, but I had to go outside and get some pics of my own views.



There is a nature trail outside the visitor center that has some replica log cabins. The trail is very primitive, but it does lead to some views of the lake. Careful though they do go right up to the edge of the bluff.

(I do regret not getting a pic of the real rock foundation as I passed it. Where a house from a long time ago was actually standing. Following the trail I didn't come back that way. Oh well.)

Since Hwy 7 had turned into a bit of a bore at one point, I decided to take a different route on the way home. Thank goodness for Google Maps on the cell phone. Ha ha ha. I decided that I would take Hwy 13 out of Clinton and see how that went. I then started following a zig zag pattern on the way back. (This being the Midwest, all you have to do is a right, then a left, then a right, then a left and you never get lost.) The route back was something like...Hwy 7 (W) to Hwy 13 (N) to Hwy 2 (W) to Hwy 131 (N) to Hwy 58 (W) to Hwy 7 (N).



Hwy 2 was MUCH MORE FUN than Hwy 7. While it was a bit straight, there was quite a bit of rolling hill to the road. Traffic was still very light and I had the road to myself in many places. (...as witnessed by the fact that the pics are taken from center of the street. Ha ha ha)



All day long the weather was was great. Even around 5:30pm the day still looked great. I made it home about 280 miles later.