

STAR 2018 Routes

By Carl Wieman, Owatonna, Minnesota

These notes will give you an introduction to each of the pre-designed routes. There is a brief description of where the route will go and what you will see as well as the riding terrain. There will be a link on the MSTA website with more details of each route as well as a turn-by-turn description and map.

We will have additional routes available by the time STAR comes around and they will also be listed on the MSTA website. You will also want to print copies of each route that you would like to ride, as there will not be copies for each route at the hotel.

I would like to thank Roger Ries, Doug and Sherry Mars, and Ray Kang for help in designing these routes. Each person, including myself, designed a few of the routes from our previous experiences of riding in these areas.

These are suggested routes and you can obviously modify them or take your own route. For more details or questions, please contact one of us, or ask at the Registration Desk. We are there to assist everyone to have a great time at STAR 2018 in the La Crosse area.

Routes 1 – 3 designed by Carl Wieman

Route 1 – Galena, Illinois

Estimated time, 6.4 hr, 290 miles

www.bing.com/maps



This route will start by taking you to some great riding in the heart of the Driftless area of Wisconsin, away from the Mississippi River through some farmland and into Illinois to Galena and back along the Mississippi River on the Iowa and Minnesota side on the Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

As you leave La Crosse and the river valley you will take the many turns and curves through this valley area. This may be a US Highway, but that does not mean it is flat or straight. It has long sweeping curves as well as some changes in elevation as you ride through the valleys. The further you ride away from La Crosse, the more farmland you will see, but not large fields. The hills and valleys dictate the size of the fields as well as you will see where many farmers have terraced the hillsides to help eliminate erosion.



Scenery near Viroqua, Compliments of Viroqua Images

There are a few small towns that you will travel through, with the route being the main street in town. Most of these towns don't have a single stop light.

Galena can be considered a family destination with many touristy things to see. Plan for the non-riders to join you to spend some time in Galena, before riding back on the West side of the Mississippi River. If a non-rider did not come with you to STAR, you will still enjoy this great riding destination. There are many great places to eat in downtown Galena along with novelty shops. If you are into hot sauces, there are two shops that specialize in hot sauces with 1000's to sample and buy. Some other shops include a specialty popcorn as well as candy stores and antiques. The downtown has many historic buildings from the 1800's to look at if you are not interested in shopping.

After spending some time in Galena, you will head west crossing the Mississippi River to Dubuque, IA. The route will then take you along the Mississippi back to La Crosse. As you leave Dubuque you will be on a steep climb from the river valley, with many twists and turns.

This portion of the route will allow you to see the Mississippi River many times as it follows it back to La Crosse. At some times you will be riding next to the river, with only the railroad tracks between you and the river. The railroad was built along the Mississippi on both sides, long before the roads were built. This has some of the most scenic river riding you will ever find.

The route will also meander away from the river at some areas which will give you a very good view from the bluffs above of the river below along with the backwaters. The backwaters are created from the many dams along the river. At some places the back waters and river is over two miles wide. There are many wayside viewing areas to pull off to take in the scenery and a few photos.

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Harpers Ferry, Compliments of Iowa Images

This is just a sample of the sites that can be seen along this route. For more details, ask at the Registration desk.

Route 2 – Lanesboro, Rochester, Weaver, Winona, MN

Estimated time, 4.4 hr, 193 miles.

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This route will take you into Minnesota. You will start by leaving the hotel and crossing the Mississippi River and within minutes you will be in Minnesota. At this area, the river is almost 3.0 miles wide as the dam downstream has created a wide section of backwaters for a very scenic area.

This is a smooth flowing route with easy riding twists and turns until you get about 30 miles from the start. When you reach Rushford, the route will cross the Root River to the north side and then back to the south side after a few miles. This is where you get into some very twisty areas for many miles. The twisty sections on this route are not real challenging, more of the fun type.



Near Rushford, Compliments of Carl Wieman. This road is known as the Historic Bluff Country Scenic Byway.



Amish Buggy, Compliments of visitharmony.com

You will ride through Harmony, which is also the largest Amish community in Minnesota, with many small Amish shops. Not just shops, but also restaurants with great food and large portions. This is a good place to stop for lunch. You will also want to watch for the Amish buggies on the road. The buggies are all black, and most of them will have a bright orange triangle sign on the back. But, then there are some Amish people that do not believe in the signs, making them harder to see. Be careful.

From this area the route will head north to Rochester, the home of the world renown Mayo Clinic and take you past the Mayo Clinic. The Mayo Clinic has a museum of the history of the clinic and the Mayo family, as well as the history of medical inventions and discoveries. This would be an interesting place to visit for riders and non-riders that are attending STAR.

The route will then head to the east as the road winds past Whitewater State Park and through a State Forest, before heading to the Mississippi River and then follows the river for a few miles before heading back into the valleys and where the route will take you to Winona on a steep down hill road

with steep cliffs on one side and high sandstone cliffs on the other side of the road.

At Winona the route will take you past the Lakeview Drive Inn, the oldest family owned drive inn, founded in 1938 and is run by the same family today. They are noted for the burgers, homemade root beer, car hops and car cruise-ins. If you have not stopped to eat lunch yet, now is the time. While eating lunch you can take in the scenery of looking at Sugar Loaf above on the bluffs.

This is just a sample of the sites that can be seen along this route. For more details or questions, please ask at the Registration Desk. We are there to assist everyone to have a great time at STAR.

Route 3 – Prescott, Hastings, Winona, along both sides of the Mississippi River

Estimated time, 5.5 hr, 258 miles

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This route will take you along the Mississippi River on the Wisconsin side heading north to Prescott, WI, cross the river and back along the Minnesota side. If you spend too much time site-seeing and would like to take a shorter route back to La Crosse, there are 3 places to cross the river and come back on the Minnesota side, before reaching Prescott.

There is a bridge 38 miles upstream at Winona, Wabasha at 72 miles, and Red Wing at 102 miles. You can choose your pick of crossings, but once you start the trip, you will want to continue the whole route to Prescott at 124 miles.

This is a very scenic ride along the river with overlooks where you can stop to take in the scenery, and wildlife, as well as see the river from most of the route. This will give you a good view of the bluffs across the river on the Minnesota side.

There will be very little elevation changes. Just smooth flowing roads that follow the river. This is a scenic ride without any challenges.

When you cross the river to the Minnesota side, you will get a very different view. The Wisconsin side does not have as many bluffs. As you ride along the river going south on the Minnesota side, you will be next to the bluffs for most of the trip.

The route follows the Great River Road to La Crescent, where you cross the river on your way back to the hotel.

As you ride south to Winona, you will be able to see Sugar Loaf high up on the bluffs. It sticks out of the trees overlooking the city. It is also a beautiful site at night when it is lit up with bright lights.

This is just a sample of the sites that can be seen along this route. For more details or questions, please ask at the Registration Desk. We are there to assist everyone to have a great time at STAR.

Routes 4 & 5 – Wisconsin Rustic Roads Motorcycle Tours Designed by Roger Ries

Wisconsin has 120 marked Rustic Roads covering over 724 miles in 59 counties.

We have a route that will cover 7 of these rustic roads, a few of our favorite roads and a short trip across Lake Wisconsin on the Merrimac Ferry.

Cover 3 more of these rustic roads on your trip to or from Star and you'll be eligible for a Rustic Roads Motorcycle Tour patch for visiting 10 WI Rustic Roads. Or run a 150 mile trip of three stops to complete the tour.

For more info visit: <http://wisconsindot.gov/rusticroads>

Rustic Road Tour 1 (Red Route)

287 miles, Estimated time, 7.5hr.

Covers the following Rustic Roads. R-21, R-26, R-31, R-49, R-55, R-56, R-112

Rustic Road Tour 2 (Magenta Route)

150 miles, Estimated time, less than 3.0hr.

Covers the following Rustic Roads. R-54, R-64, R-91





Adventure Riding at STAR 2018

Article and photos By Doug Marsh

As you know, topography is important for good motorcycling roads; hills, valleys, winding, climbing, camber, tight curves, sweepers ... What a delight! Most roads are built on the path of least resistance and follow topography. Just as important is how the community has invested in building roads on local topography.

Consider Wisconsin and Minnesota. Topography surrounding the La Crosse area is quite similar, but, the roads are, oh, so different. Wisconsin has invested heavily in pavement. Minnesota, not so much. Therefore, Wisconsin is a mecca for road riders. Minnesota, on the other hand, has more gravel and dirt roads and that makes it quite enjoyable for adventure riders.

In addition, each state has their own take on interesting

back roads. Wisconsin offers Rustic Roads (RR), designated and maintained “to preserve lightly traveled country roads with outstanding natural features,” quoting from the Wisconsin Rustic Roads Guide. Minnesota has minimum maintenance (MM) roads, which are “used only occasionally. They are maintained at a reduced level than the minimum maintenance standards required for state-aid highways, roads, and streets. The public travels at its own risk,” per MN Statute.

Presented are four ADV loops that provide a spectrum of adventures. From wild to mild, classy to sassy. Enjoy! And, ride well!



ADV Route 1 – Plainview, MN Loop - Adventure to the Max

Stats: 175 miles, 7 hours, plus lunch, 80% gravel/ 20% pavement. **Gas** at 99 mi-lunch, and at 120 mi.

This route has all the bells and whistles for the adventure rider. Lots of gravel, challenging bits of road and trail, interesting places to visit, and a relaxing place for lunch. Get an early start. You’ll need it. The route starts big with a gravel climb on a MM road right off the Interstate. Next, you’ll explore valleys and ridges as the route passes the historic Pickwick Mill; a restored grain mill built in 1845. It features a 20’ diameter overshot wheel and fully operational milling machinery. Open Tues-Sat 10am-5pm.



STAR 2018 MN & WI ADV Maps. (Sherry Marsh)



Pickwick Mill.

Depart the mill and pick up more gravel, more ridges, and more valleys. Soon, you'll enjoy another MM road that drops down to an imposing double-arch railroad bridge, built in 1882 and known as The Arches. Take a moment to ponder the construction with locally sourced limestone (as with the mill) and the point of view as the historic arches present a binocular framing of a contemporary highway bridge.



The Arches railroad bridge.

Continue on to another MM road and journey to the Trout Valley OHV area. With special arrangements with the DNR, you're good for a short lap on an ATV trail without an OHM sticker! Follow the MSTA arrows. You'll ride a moderate climb with water bars, negotiate a tricky ravine crossing, ride a little sand, firm dirt, and steep gravel downhill. Intermediate skill set and bit of attitude will pay off with an enjoyable 1.8 mile encounter. For safety, ride with a buddy!

Next up is a tour on the valley parkway of the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area. Slow down and enjoy, lunch is not far. Exit the valley and pick up another MM road before turning onto the highway to Plainview. Find Cabin Coffee (Subway and motorcycle shop in town) at the main crossroads, drop the side stand and enjoy the relaxing ambience and a sandwich.



Exiting Trout Valley trail.

After lunch, gas up, and take the fast road south out of town to a gravel road that leads to the Whitewater Valley. Now comes a treat as you cross a creek on a two-track bridge. It may be closed if rain or flooding. Just navigate a go-around.

Now that the blood is flowing well, pick up the MM road sign to a semi-gnarly two-track road downhill to a river view. Not bad with intermediate skills. Turn around and ride back. More fun, eh? Buddy system, right?

The next many miles of route is designed to 'make some time' on that big ADV bike. After the Interstate, enjoy two more valleys and a long ridge ride as we return to La Crosse. Back at the Radisson, kick back and enjoy your favorite beverage.

ADV Route 2 – Peterson, MN Loop - Ride to Pie II

Stats: 117 miles, 4.5 hours plus lunch. 80% gravel/ 20% pavement. **Gas** at 80 miles (7 miles after lunch)

Got up late? Had a long breakfast? Too much visiting with friends? I get it. This is a short route with a nice mix of ridge and valley roads, a variety of fun bits to ride, and a sleepy little cafe for lunch.

After crossing the river, the route passes through the quaint town of Hokah and picks up a nice ridge road followed by a couple of narrow valley roads. Gravel of course! After a few pavement miles you come to a fully operational 1876, turbine powered, Schech's Mill. The last time I was there, he was grinding up some mash for a distillery! Sorry, open for tours Fri-Sun only.

more **ADVENTURE** on 34 ➔



Schech's Mill.

From here, follow the MM sign for a good piece of backwoods two-track. I think you'll like this one.

Back to reality, take a left up a nice hardwood hollow, pass through the village of Black Hammer, and enter the scenic Rooster Valley. What a treat! Winding, narrow at times, beautiful surroundings, and just a calm place to ride through.

Now, get ready for an exciting uphill, twisting, paved backroad, well-suited for some deep leans and generous throttle roll-ons. Oh, that felt good! Settle down and turn down a gravel road into Peterson for lunch. Find Burdy's Cafe; a classic small-town cafe known for excellent homemade pies. Yes, they make their own crust. Yum! You could actually bring one back to the hotel because 'home' is not so far away.

After pie, warm-up your engine for a 500 ft climb on a steep 10% grade. YeeHaw! Get gas in Rushford and return on gravel roads through the wide and easy Root River Valley. Near the end, a nice uphill climb bit puts an accent on the trip before the descent into La Crescent and on to La Crosse. Now, be sure to share your pie.

ADV Route 3 – Soldiers Grove WI Loop – A Bit of the Trans Wisconsin

Stats: 185 miles, 6.5 hours plus lunch, 33% gravel/66% paved.
Gas at 50 mi, 82 mi-lunch, 145 mi, 155 mi.

You've heard of the Trans Wisconsin Adventure Trail. Maybe always wanted to ride it. Or have. This route takes you to the Trail for 95 miles of Adventure. The route covers a nice piece of the Driftless Area and offers many gravel and dirt roads.

The route starts on a twisty RR just south of La Crosse, tours scenic ridges and long valleys, and briefly joins another route that follows the trail of the Sac Native Americans in the Black Hawk War. Stop and visit Black Hawk's Outpost historic marker on County Rd UU and give it a read. A brochure at the site provides additional info.

Now, drop down to town of De Soto (gas) on the river and pick up the Trans WI. Cross over a ridge and drop into the Rush Creek Valley and wind your way on a scenic gravel road to the headwaters.



Black Hawk marker.



Rush Creek Road.



South West Prairie Lutheran Church.

Turn to the north and pass the postcard perfect white Lutheran church, built in fine Norwegian-prairie architecture, and enter an Amish settlement.

After a few miles, pass the monolithic Monument Rock and drop into the winding Tainter Valley and slow down. There's a healthy trout stream on the right. Look for the turnout on your right and enjoy a little solitude and beauty.

Motor on to Soldiers Grove for lunch at Country Gardens, a motorcycle friendly place and gas nearby.

Back on your stead, tour wide valleys, small towns, and rolling hills leading to narrow hollows. You'll pick up a nice paved RR that rolls into Ontario, the canoe capital of the Kickapoo River. From here, the route turns away from the Trans WI and offers a quick 40-mile return to La Crosse on state highway 33 with miles of sweeping ridge-top curves. Whee! That's nice. Many smiles returning to the Radisson.

ADV Route 4 Hatfield, WI Loop – Trans Regional, Trans Wisconsin

Stats: 195 miles, 7 hours plus lunch, 20% gravel/80% paved
Gas at 55 mi, 102 mi - lunch, and 117 mi.

Ditto first three sentences above for 60-some miles of the Trans Wisconsin. This route may be considered the trans-regional route as it changes from hilly, to flat (outside the Driftless Area), to hilly again. It's also, this author's opinion, the most scenic of all the four adventure routes offered.

The route opens with a sweet twisty bit over the Mindoro Cut and continues east through beautiful hilly terrain, navigating a few low passes to reach the plains. Pick up the Trans Wisconsin on County B, just south of Cataract. You'll go over a steep pass with a rutted tread, just for a little challenge and character.

Next, skirt Fort McCoy and enter the Black River State Forest on a four mile sandy stretch of road. A turn leads to a nice rustic road through a refreshing flowage. Cross a railroad and pick up a forest road leading to a grand crossing over the Black River. The bridge has a wide shoulder, perfect for a quick picture. Now, have lunch at the Mug Bar and Grill in Hatfield, a Wisconsin sportsman bar that can serve a huge BLT.



Black River

We depart the Trans WI in Hatfield for a return route that passes through the town of Black River Falls. Take a secret right turn in town and the route improves as we find tight and narrow roads on ridges and in coulees. Beautiful.

Now, for an encore, the route culminates on the best dirt rustic road in the area, followed by an extended set of twisties back to La Crosse. So sweet! I hope you got a few nice pictures to share with your family and friends at home.

STAR 2018 Motorcycle Dealerships in La Crosse

By Carl Wieman, Owatonna, Minnesota

Rods Ride On Powersports (STAR 2018 Host Dealership): Sales and Service for: Polaris, Victory, Kawasaki, Suzuki, CF Moto, Genuine Scooter, 4140 Mormon Coulee Ct, La Crosse, WI 608-788-4514, Purchased in 2010 from Steiger Powersports 3.8 mi south of Radisson Hotel



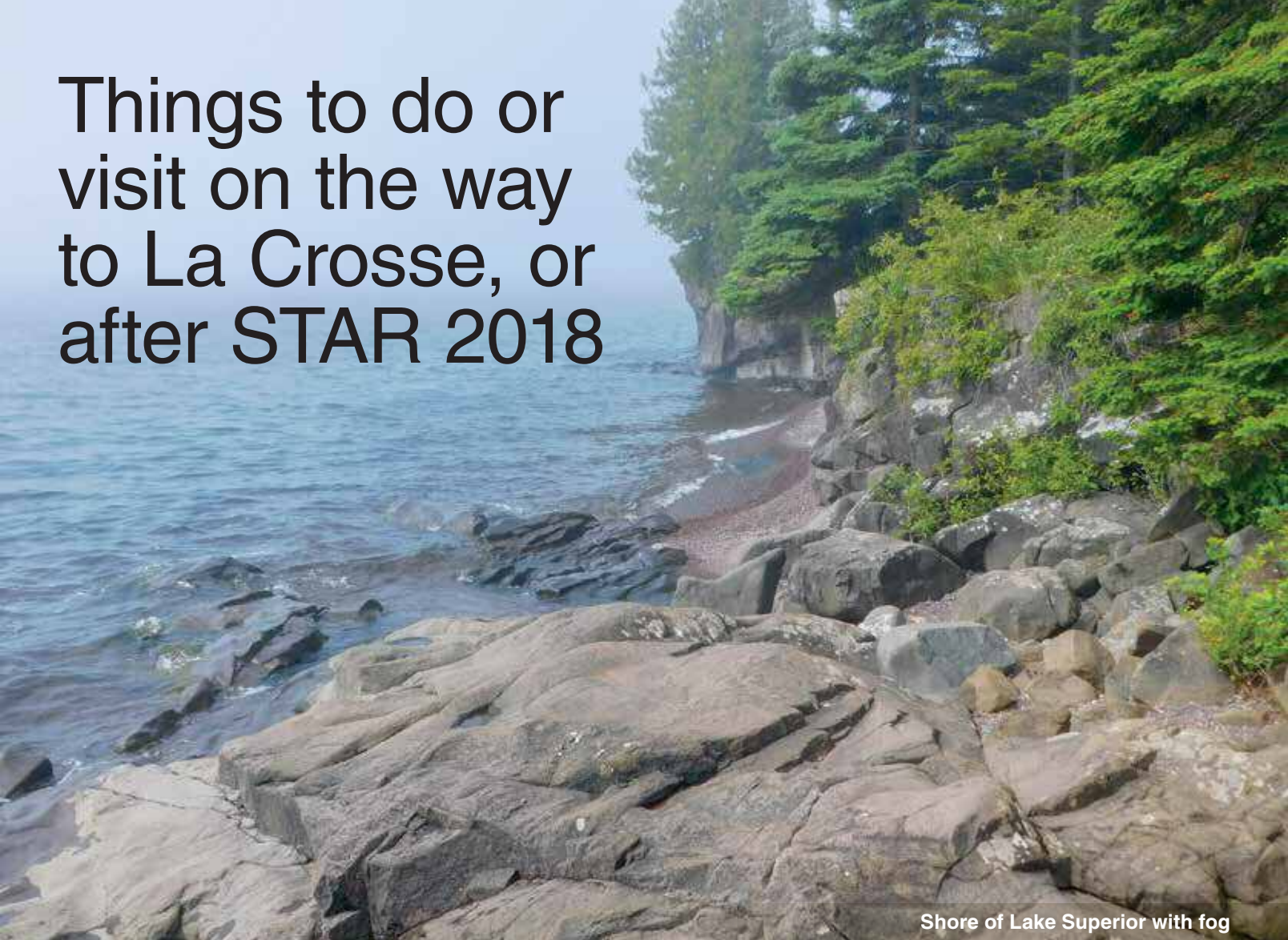
2Brothers Powersports: Sales and Service for: Honda, Can-Am, Yamaha, Spyder, 905 Oak Ave S, Onalaska, WI, 608-781-3360, 5.3 mi north of Radisson Hotel.



La Crosse Harley-Davidson: Sales and Service for: Harley-Davidson, 1116 Oak Forest Dr, Onalaska, WI. 608-783-6112, 5.7 mi north of Radisson Hotel.

Jeff's Auto & Cycle: Independent Repair & custom work. Call for emergency repairs, 1133 Caledonia St, La Crosse, WI. 608-385-6979, 1.7 mi north of Radisson Hotel.

Things to do or visit on the way to La Crosse, or after STAR 2018



Shore of Lake Superior with fog

Article and photos by Carl Wieman

For places to see along the way to La Crosse, see issue 3303 pages 24-25, on the MSTA website under archive issues. This was written for STAR 2014 in Rapid City, SD. Rather than rewrite it in reverse for La Crosse, you can use it as a guide if coming from the West, and do not want to take I-90 all the way. It covers from La Crosse to Rapid City. This will give you some ideas of things to see along the way.

In addition to those places, Indian Motorcycle opened the New Experience Center in Spirit Lake, IA, in August, 2017. It shows the history of Americas first motorcycle company. Check their website for hours and details.

For those people coming from the East, you will have several route options. Take the Interstate around south Chicago, and I-90 all the way to La Crosse, the least fun ride, and lots of traffic, and tolls.

Option 2 is still on the south side of Chicago, stay on I-80 and then take any one of the less traveled roads to Rockford, IL and take US-20 to East Dubuque and follow US -61 & WI Hwy 35 to La Crosse. This will give you a scenic less traveled route. If you are traveling from a more SE US location, then you have the opportunity to stay as far away from the Chicago traffic as possible.

Option 3 is take a ferry across Lake Michigan. There are two choices here, Muskegon, MI to Milwaukee, WI and Ludington, MI to Manitowoc, WI. The second would be more scenic and less traffic. A friend of ours had been using the Milwaukee ferry for many years and now uses the Manitowoc ferry and likes it better with her SUV. Both ferries require planning ahead to get there at the correct time as to not have to wait for the next ferry.

Option 4 would be to take the long way around the north side of Lake Michigan and ride through the forest of Michigan and Wisconsin. This would also require more riding time, depending on your starting point.

If coming from the south, you can take I-35 for interstate riding or hauling or for the scenic route, head for East Dubuque, IL and follow the river to La Crosse. These are just some suggestions. The main goal is to stay away from the Chicago metro area and traffic.

These options all depend on how much time you have, and how fast you would like to get to La Crosse, as well as, if you are you riding, or hauling your cycle.

There was also some discussion on some of these routes on the MSTA forum in June, 2017 under STAR 2018 discussion.

more **ON THE WAY** on 38 ➞

Check it out for more details. Anyone interested could start the discussion again and make it a group ride to La Crosse.

Now for the things to do after STAR 2018.

Minnesota and Wisconsin have many sites to see and some great riding roads that are too far to include in a daily ride route. Duluth, MN is 230 miles north of La Crosse and Grand Portage, MN, on the Canadian border, is another 140 miles. Duluth is home to Aerostich which is easy to find as you come in from the south side of Duluth in the old downtown warehouse district. They have a showroom where you can try on the clothes and find the correct size and then have it made for you with your color combination and shipped directly to your home. Denise and I were there in July, 2017 and took a tour of the place and ordered a new jacket for her. The tour of the operation will show you where the material is cut and sewn as well as a display of suits that had an unhappy ending, but the rider survived and may not have if they had not been wearing Aerostich.

There are several routes to get to Duluth, without riding I-35. Some in Minnesota as well as Wisconsin. All of them will take you through some of the least traveled roads in the Midwest with lakes and trees every mile of the way. Minnesota is home to over 10,000 lakes and the further north you ride, you will see many more than in the south farm land. The roads have sweeping corners as they go around the lakes and hills.

If you continue north along what is known as the North Shore, which is actually the north shore of Lake Superior, aka "Gitche Gumee." The road starts in Duluth as a 4 lane divided highway with a speed limit of 70mph. The further north you go, the speed limit goes down and the road turns to a two lane road along Lake Superior. Eventually it will be down to 55 mph and some places have a 40 mph limit. It is a great road to view the Lake with the many rivers flowing into it, as you

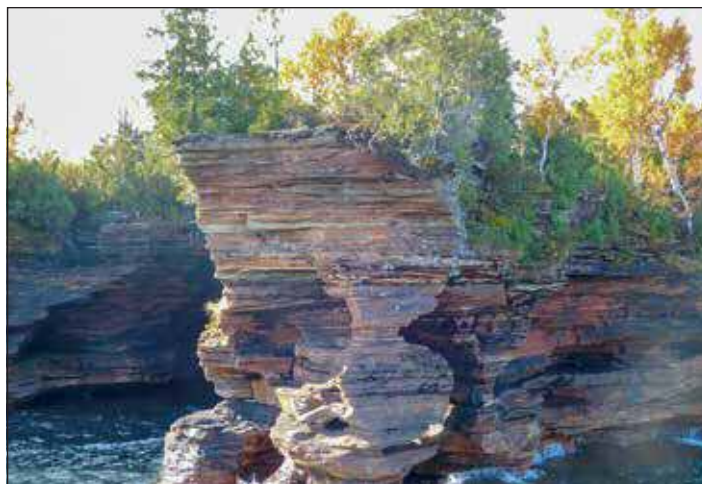


Waterfalls on Pigeon River

ride along the high cliffs and through the tunnels carved into the rock for the road. There are over 97 waterfalls in those 140 miles. Some require you to walk in on the trail to see them. The last stop at Grand Portage at the border crossing has an Information Center and a short walk in the woods to several waterfalls and the High Falls, which as you look at it; one side is in Minnesota, the other is Ontario, Canada.

If you decide to bring along your passport, you can continue to Thunder Bay, only 40 miles from the border. Another addition to this trip could be taking, "around Lake Superior" route back to Sault St. Marie and cross back into Michigan.

From Duluth, you can also ride to the east for about 85 miles and spend some time in Bayfield, WI. From there you can visit the Apostle Islands. There is a ferry that can take you and your bike or vehicle or just people to Madeline Island. Once on the island, you can ride or drive around the island, or rent scooters to visit the island. We have toured the island by car, foot and scooter. About five years ago, five of us rented the scooters. It was so laid back, that you give them your driver's license and do not get it back until you return the scooter. I asked what happens if we get stopped by the Police. They said, first, don't get stopped. Second, if you do, tell them that I have your license. We stayed out of trouble.



Apostle Islands

The Apostle Islands can be viewed by a tour boat or kayaks. Bayfield was a place that JFK Jr. would visit many times with some of his friends for days at a time and they would kayak around the islands. There is a restaurant in downtown Bayfield with some photos of JFK, Jr. and his group, at the Fish Boils.

All of these routes are easy to ride with not a lot of elevation changes, except along the North Shore, if you ride away from Lake Superior. Eagle Mountain is the highest point in Minnesota at 2,301 ft. It is only about 15 miles from Minnesota's lowest elevation, Lake Superior at 600 feet. Much of this area is also known as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, of approximately one million acres of wilderness, with over 1,000 pristine lakes and streams, and over 1,500 miles of canoe routes. For more details or questions, please contact me.