

## Carriage Road Bike Ride

Location: Acadia National Park, ME

Date: May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Written: May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Spending Memorial Day weekend at Acadia National Park in Maine was better than I ever could have expected. I went on an awesome hike on Saturday, enjoyed the warmth of the campfires each night, and got to camp with amazing friends for three nights. But the best part of my three day adventure in coastal Maine was spending Sunday biking the carriage roads throughout the park. These roads were built from the early to mid-1900's as a result of a gift from John D. Rockefeller Jr. He wanted a way to travel throughout the park on carriage or horse without running into traffic from motorized vehicles. These roads are now mainly used as bike trails for visitors to Acadia.

The day began by visiting Acadia Bike, a sister company of Coastal Kayaks where we rent kayaks from, with 19 other NUHOC bikers. We received our bikes and helmets and were given maps of the carriage roads in the surrounding area. Alysha, Christine, David, Sean, Steve, Theja and I decided to do a loop of about 20 miles around Jordan Pond and other ponds in the area.



Eagle Lake, the first stop on our bike ride

Our first stop was a couple of miles into our ride at Eagle Lake. We took a water and snack break and pulled out our cameras to take some pictures of the awesome views. I personally took this opportunity to post a picture to the newly created NUHOC Instagram.

We then headed back on our way. The carriage roads were much hillier than we had originally expected, but the thought of the quick and windy downhills got us through the treacherous steep parts of our ride. One of the funniest moments of the day was when we passed a guy walking his bike up one of the more difficult hills wearing a football shirt that said "No Excuses" on the back.

At around noon we reached Jordan Pond House where we decided to take a breather and eat lunch. Jordan Pond House has a restaurant and a gift shop

and continues dining traditions that were common in teahouses in the early 1800's. The restaurant is known for their famous popovers and I had been looking forward to trying one as every NUHOCer I had talked to said they were amazing. Unfortunately the restaurant was closed until June 1<sup>st</sup> as it will soon be run by the US government rather than privately operated. This was a bit disappointing but I still enjoyed sitting on the lawn with a great view of the Bubbles and Penabscoot Mountain.

After about an hour of laying on the lawn and soaking up the sun we headed back out to finish the second half of our biking loop. It was hard to get my legs moving again after an hour of being inactive,

but I quickly adjusted. We ran into a group of NUHOCers coming off of the Nature Trail just as we were beginning.

Stops were more frequent on the second half of our trip as we were all getting a bit tired. I have spent the last two summers biking on the Prairie Paths in Illinois a couple of times a week. Beginning the day I thought that 20 miles seemed like a fairly easy day especially since we were stopping often; however, the hills eventually caught up to me and my knees started to hurt. Needless to say I pushed through and finished off the loop. The best part of the day was descending all of the hills we had climbed up and speeding down them. Even after putting my bike in the highest gear I couldn't pedal down the hills I was going so fast.

This was one of the first times in recent years that NUHOC has rented bikes while at Acadia, and I am so glad it was proposed for because it was an awesome time with a great group of NUHOCers! I am already looking forward to Acadia next year, and am considering bringing my own bike to make the experience even more enjoyable.

-Sam Levin



Our group at the top of the last hill of our loop