

2018 CDT RIDE “INTO THE WINDS”, JULY 29, 2018

PHOTO 1

The horses and I got an early start and said our farewells to my mom at 8:30am. It's so nice having my mom's help loading Takoda with the panniers since they are uncomfortably heavy to lift at the start of a section before the horses eat a night's worth of feed.

We had an ambitious 32 miles planned and the first 20 or so were not easy. The trail didn't look like it had seen much travel, let alone by stock, in many years. The trail was very overgrown and littered with downfalls. Numerous times the trail would just seem to fade away and I'd have to look out for rock cairns or colored trail marking tape on tree branches to determine which way to go. A few times I had to dismount and spend time cutting downfalls to clear a path for Shyla and Takoda. So needless to say, after we got through the first challenging 20 miles I was relieved to join up with a much more popular trail in the late afternoon. I knew we were on well-traveled trails now as there was plentiful manure and hoofprints all over. Not to mention, no more down trees! There were also a lot more hikers. We hadn't seen a soul all day and now there were backpackers all over.

PHOTO 2

PHOTO 3

The Wind Rivers Range requires a backcountry permit for camping but the ranger district was very understanding and allowed me to camp without having to have a committed place so long as I did intrude on other people and choose campsites that were away from other people, especially stock. Due to the obstacles earlier in the day we stopped for the night about 2 miles earlier than planned. This was my first night ever camping in grizzly country and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't nervous about it. I was more cautious in camp after dark and set up my camp as close to the horses' highline as possible, as well as sleeping with bear spray in my tent.