

T410 MOUNTAINBIKING CAMPOUT REPORT
Colorado Bend State Park
10/19/07-10/21/07
Jim Rankin/ASM

T410'ers enjoyed the fabulous, cloudless weather, 90 high/65 low, with plenty of wind, at the beautiful hill-country escape, Colorado Bend State Park, in the river group area. Our area was a grass-covered flood plain with some huge, shady, pecan trees right next to the full, slow-moving Colorado River. The river was backed up to our location because Lake Buchanan is near full elevation. A couple miles upstream showed the normal, running, shallow, Colorado with plenty of flow.

We had the largest biker group yet, with approximately 37+ bikes getting transported by van, truck, and two ASM-modified trailers: Lots of pointing fingers and smiles from the cars on the highway going & coming.

Saturday Morning was the biggest surprise for the Leadership Patrol. Mr. Theo Painter, our up-to-now untested, grub master, whipped up his own secret recipe for hash-browns/sausage/egg-on-top casserole that had us all licking our chops before & after. Add to that, two big boxes of apples & oranges for the whole troop to consume, courtesy of ex-T410er Dean Fountain. Everyone had Chad's agenda, and every patrol did what they needed to do to get cleaned up and on the bikes in groups of four by the scheduled time, with their maps and compasses and personal first aid kits.

The state park map showed the trails but no contour lines, with symbols for bikers at all but two short trails. Each group struck out in their own direction. Most park roads were loose gravel except for ½ mile of steep entry road asphalt just before the Ranger Station at the campsite. Scout Travis Burnett earned the Walking Wounded Award very early in the morning when the gravel seemed to reach up to make him spill. His group gathered up and got him back to the campsite to treat those road rashes correctly. Several other minor scrapes and one bull nettle encounter were treated that day.

The trails varied from an easy, wide-packed path, to a treacherous, cactus-covered, big-rock strewn monster without much in-between. Several groups, including my group, got started on a trail only to find it turning very nasty, but having to push bikes on through anyway to get to the end for the return to camp. I'm sure there were a few rattlers that slithered off just before we came upon them. Most morning rides were from 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 hours.

Back to the camp for lunch, cold water, and some rest.

Mr. Clark's Scoutmaster Challenge this campout was to eat "Things That Roll". Many scouts used their noggin on that one. There were hamburgers, burritos, hot dogs, meat balls, cheerios, donuts, tortillas, oranges, apples, wraps, etc.

A few late-comers, scouts and scouters, rolled in mid-morning to join us. Ms. Worley helped Mr. Painter with Grubmaster duties for the rest of the meals.

After lunch, SPL Chad had scheduled some free-time (what those scouts keep asking for) and some advancement work. Mr. Hackett got the buzz going with a custom spreadsheet showing each scout and

exactly what requirements were needed for advancement and a wealth of supplies that were needed. This included a chin-up bar from the pecan branch that soon transformed into a chin-up contest. Mr. Hill gets the Big Bicep Award for 17 chin-ups with scout Atticus leads the scouts with 15. Keep up the exercises at home, scouts, as it looks like there could be many rematches on this during campouts and you are bound to beat the adults soon, if the quality of the camp food remains high...

Mr. Hackett got even more buzz going for patrol flags and patrol yells. Patrols also worked on those skits for the upcoming campfire. Some bikers took advantage of more trails that were known to be good. A small waterfall and beautiful, clear, spring-fed pool was just a short roll downstream. Victor Vogt, our imaginative, self-appointed, gamemeister thought up the group competition with two throwing footballs with tails getting thrown back & forth into a field of tents, trying to get the football to hit the ground in that area without being caught or deflected. It was a hard-fought game with a few footballs to the head for a couple inattentive scouts, finally ending in a sudden-death throw-off. Evening brought on Mr. Painter's secret surprise -- , pre-smoked, pre-sauced, pre-rubbed, (at his home) pork ribs which were foil-wrapped and heated up in the coals, followed up with beans, a good salad, potato salad, and garlic bread. Do I talk about food too much? It is such a camping highlight.

Mr. Pitts started the evening entertainment with a special program about the ashes of scout fires from all over the world spreading the scout spirit. He spread those ashes he had collected previously into the fire ring, and low and behold, there was massive smoke, and fire erupted like a volcano. Scouting Mojo at its best.

Then Mr. Clark asked for any new SPL nominations, and many capable scouts had to respectfully decline due to tough school & other obligations. Once the frenzy subsided, we all learned that it would be our accomplished Rush Hemphill by Acclimation, to fulfill SPL duties at the end of the upcoming (11/6/07) Court Of Honor.

Scouts Zach Pitts & Jonathan Hemer performed the M.C. duties with many skits, songs, and old skits revisited-AGAIN. Maybe a future Scoutmaster Challenge can produce some new skits for our entertainment. The adult leaders did an encore of a different High-Brow Comedy Skit that still sailed over the scouts heads. After the skits, Scout Joey Westfall led the whole troop down to the river bank and expertly directed the Chaplain's reverent service by star & lantern light with prayers & patriotic songs.

Mr. Hackett had been working all through the skits and produced 3 mighty fine Dutch oven cobblers for everyone's enjoyment.

Off to bed with a big moon and cloudless sky and high gusty winds and stars out the wazoo. Some streakers were seen, -- falling stars that is, -- not naked people.

SPL and Scout Leadership did a superb job of getting the troop fed, cleaned up, and packed on time. We performed a trail clearing service project with loppers and clippers on a real fine trail that wasn't on the map. Scouts and loppers -- it was like a helicopter on its side flying down the trail edge. The trail was quite a ways from the campsite, so just the logistics of the project made us 1 hour later rolling away than planned. Lunch at Storm's drive-in, during the height of the Church crowd, and then back to home.

A successful campout enjoyed by all.

Let me just end this, reiterating the open invitation to the scout parents to come join us on campouts, or possibly just during the day, in order to see your boys in action. They are in their element, and the years are flying by. There is so much personal change in the scouts during these formative years. We leaders see it because we see them periodically. Parents may not be noticing it since you see them every day.