

The MS-X Factor



The MS-X Factor was 1,103 Miles in 18 Hours and 46 Minutes

A couple weeks before Labor Day 2022, the Iron Butt Association (IBA) called and said they were creating a new series of rides. Someone had figured out that riding an X in several states comes out to be about 1,000 miles. Would I be interested in helping to create an X ride for Mississippi?

After a few emails back and forth, we came up with the following requirements:

The Mississippi-X Ride is a minimum of 1,100 miles. You will ride your motorcycle to or from all four designated corner jurisdiction and cross the center jurisdiction three times.

A DBR photo in front of your odometer is the preferred method of documenting your start and end, however it may not be possible to find a business or ATM at the time you are at that location.

In the village of Pinckneyville it may not be possible to get a DBR, Post Office or Welcome sign. In this instance take a photo of your bike with the Pond Store or a picture of the sign of the Pond Store.

You may take any route you like but remember you must visit each of the listed corner jurisdictions and you must visit the center jurisdiction in between each corner for a total of 3 times. You must document each visit

with a DBR or photo. You must use Spotwalla.

*Northwest Corner - Walls
Center - Kosciusko
Northeast Corner - Safe Harbor
Aqua Yacht Harbor - near the Tennessee state line - take a picture of your bike in front of the entrance sign
Center - Kosciusko
Southwest Corner - Pinckneyville or Pond Store
Center - Kosciusko
Southwest Corner - Pascagoula*

I started at the Pond Store at 3:46 am on Saturday, September 3rd.



SW Corner - Pond Store

The Pond Store is 6 miles from the Louisiana state line in the southwest corner of the state. It's in the middle of nowhere! Pinckneyville is 4 ½ miles to the south. Woodville is 14 miles east.

After snapping the required photo and uploading it along with a photo of my odometer to Spotwalla, I

headed east toward Woodville. It was dark and the rural county road was rough! About 5 miles down the road were two cars side-by-side blocking the road (in the middle of nowhere). As I rode closer, one of the cars started to leave, but then pulled over to allow me to pass. I don't know what was going on, but at 4:00 am, I doubt it was anything good.

I continued to Woodville where I jump on Hwy 61 north. I took this up to Port Gibson where I exited onto the Natchez Trace. I rode the Trace 122 miles up to the center point, the town of Kosciusko.

As I rode up the Trace in the wee hours of the morning, there was a lot of critter action going on before the sun rose! I had a couple families of raccoons cross in front of me in different areas. I saw opossums at least two different times in the road. A baby armadillo was on the right side the road, then later a larger one in the middle of the road. I saw countless number of deer everywhere! A rough guesstimate would be over fifty. A lot of small ones! At one point, a small deer was nursing on its mother. The baby had its rear feet in the road while Mom was off the road in the grass. The deer didn't seem to mind me riding by! They would just look up, then continue to graze in the grass on either side of the road.

There were advantages to riding the Natchez Trace, light traffic and no commercial vehicles! Although the

speed limit is 50 mph, there aren't any stop signs or stoplights, so I kept moving the entire time.



Sunrise on the Natchez Trace

As I pulled off the Trace at Kosciusko, there was a gas station and a "Welcome to Kosciusko" sign. Great! This was my designated intersection for the rest of this ride!



Designated Center

From there, I got back on the Natchez Trace and continued northeast. I followed it for 123 miles through Tupelo to Kirkville.

A friend that was watching my Spotwalla, asked if I saw the airplane that was circling Tupelo threatening to crash into the Walmart store? What? No, my eyes were on the road! He said the local guy was finally coaxed down safely

by the authorities before being taken into custody.

At Kirkville, I exited onto backroads up to the marina north of Iuka. It's located right before crossing the Tennessee state line. Here, I took a picture of the Aqua Yacht Grille sign.



NE Corner - Aqua Yacht Sign

From there, I retraced my route back to the Natchez Trace and then to Kosciusko. After the required photo upload to Spotwalla, I headed toward the northeast. It was around 1:00 pm as I followed Hwy 35 up to I-55 north.

Up to this point, the weather had been great! The forecast the week prior had called for thunderstorms and hot temperatures. The actual weather for me was overcast with pleasant temperatures.

The sun came out as I rode north on I-55. It was an uneventful ride up to the northwest corner. I exited onto I-69 west, then zigzagged over to Walls at Stateline Road and Hwy 61.

Just as I crossed Hwy 61 to the parking lot where the Big John statue was located, I saw a guy on a

motorcycle there taking pictures. I thought to myself “What are the odds of another motorcyclist taking pictures of Big John the same time as me?” Come to find out it was Jimmy Burns! He had been following my Spotwalla tracker. Coincidentally, I arrived the same time that Jimmy was headed home from work! Jimmy lives just a few miles away.



NW Corner - Walls

I took a minute to say hi and upload the required corner pics. Jimmy followed me south for a few miles before he peeled off for home. That was a pleasant surprise! Good friends do that! Thanks, JD!

Again, I retraced my route back to I-55 and onto Kosciusko. My third and final time to intersect the center of the state. Arrival time was 5:48 pm. Now, I only had 236 miles left to complete the X.

This was also the longest leg of the ride and all, except a short stretch, was backroad riding. As the sun was going down, I was talking to Karen on the phone. I was headed east on Hwy 98. We had been talking for several minutes when I noticed the GPS told me to do a U-turn! I told

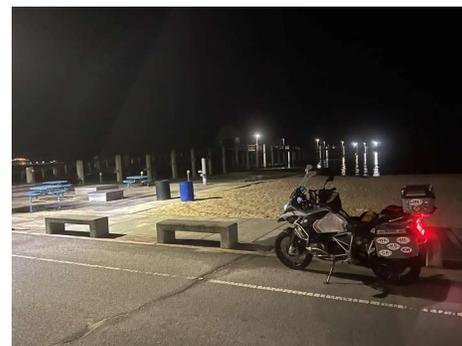
Karen that I had to go, something was wrong!

I pulled over to the side of the road to see why the GPS was acting up. A message was displayed that stated Hwy 63 was closed. This was where I was headed to on the eastern side of the state. It paralleled the eastern border between Mississippi and Alabama. Beyond that I would cross into Alabama. Hmmmm? Well, I didn't want to make a U-turn and I didn't want to go beyond Hwy 63. I wanted to go south! So, I turned south at McLain, MS and ran into Hwy 57 south. I thought to myself, I know this road! “BBQ Heaven on Highway 57”, one of the slogans for “The Shed” in Ocean Springs. Although 60 miles from there, I knew I would eventually end up passing this well-known BBQ and Blues joint. Once there, I knew exactly where I would be in relation to Pascagoula!

By now, it was dark! Hwy 57 took me south through the DeSoto National Forest. And, just like that morning, the forest rats (deer) were out in full force! I even saw a small buck with velvet on his antlers. I love to see wildlife when they are no threat to me. The road was narrow and curvy as I continued south. There seemed to be a lot of traffic on it for a rural country road. I guess since Hwy 63 was closed, the traffic was diverted over to Hwy 57. I finally passed The Shed with relief! I jumped onto I-10 east for a few miles. There I exited and zigzagged

my way to the Pascagoula Pier. I took the required final photos at 10:32 pm. For a total of 1,103 miles in 18 hours and 46 minutes.

This was a great ride! It was very challenging. A third of the ride (368 miles) was on the Natchez Trace. Most of the remaining miles were backroads.



SE Corner - Pascagoula Pier

The X ride allows you to see the inside of the state while the Ride Around MS showed you the perimeter. Both rides are awesome, and both are just as challenging! If you want to see all of what Mississippi has to offer, I highly recommend riding them!

2019 BMW R1250GSA

Distance: 1,103 miles

Time: 18 hrs, 46 min.

Average Speed: 58 mph

Fuel Used: 30.253 gal

Fuel Mileage: 35 mpg

Low Temperature: 74°

High Temperature: 93°