

Armchair Adventurers! Today we travel on the dirt-bike adventure of a lifetime...

Riding the Wasatch! The Wasatch mountains are in Utah, east of Salt Lake City, and the home of both Robert Redford's **Sundance** enclave and a multitude of high-fun activities...

Here's what the Sundance area looks like...



...and the Sundance enclave is up the valley beneath the “bowl” area, below the rock-face of the mountain. Sundance has its’ own ski area, and has perfectly groomed grounds and of course eco-friendly “hybrid” Lexus shuttle-vehicles...

The ski area...



The grounds...



The hybrid eco-friendly Lexus shuttles...



Sundance is first-class-all-the-way and if visiting Utah, not to be missed.

Now, under the heading “credit where credit is due”, the whole unfolding adventure (yes yes we’ll get there) was the creation of Glider Girl, who said “Let’s visit Sundance!” so off-we-went...



Passing through the town of Heber, UT, we saw a Kawasaki dealer... Wanting to show Glider Girl the new "it" bike of 2007, I spy two **KLX-450R** dirt-bikes, on a trailer. Picture! Must-have!



“Snooping-around” (I love snooping-around) I see a sign...

Could it be? Is it possible?

That this shop **rents** dirt-bikes?



Yes! WooHoo! \$150/day includes the trailer!! Note this is not a street-legal bike. ***9am Thursday, I'll be there!!!!*** And so I was!

Here's the bike, attached to Glider Girls' car (and hey, how cool is it to have a girlfriend who not only "suggests adventurous things", but loans you her car to do them?).



Below is the **Cascade** riding area, and it extends much farther on the far side of the ridge...



Off I go... Up! Up! Up!



And I mean waaay-up!!



The dirt roads seen throughout the above pic were all ridden. In the pic, I'm at approx 8,000' and I'll see approx 9,000' at my highest climb.

Now, dear readers, I've run into an issue with my pictures...

I have a penchant for taking "vertically oriented" shots. Which allows me just one-pic-per-page. Bummer. So, "words follow"...

The bike so far, flawless. Massive torque, from idle just twist-the-throttle and it lunges forward. No need to rev the engine. Handling is stable, the bike is light. For the last few years, this bike was the KX motocross race-bike. So the engine is "bulletproof" and the suspension well-tested. The model I'm riding is the "enduro" ("cross-country") version with a significantly de-tuned engine. Less horsepower than the race-bike, but having more torque ("low-speed pulling-power"). Nice.



Here's as high as I got, approx 9,000'.

Hmmm... Seeing terrific roads in the distance, I headed down the far side of the mountain, where I discovered...

Route-signs telling me exactly where I was (always nice to know). And... The previous day (with Glider Girl) we had not gone to the end of the road because we were out of time.

Here was my chance to see wonderful things!

*** **Note!** The following section is pure-fiction. ***I am making this up, not a word is true.*** Police-take-note! I will tell you when reality appears again. ***

The drawback of course is that my dirt-bike lacks a license plate, “registration” of any sort. Uh-oh. To “explore” I must break the law...



Off I go!! I made it 20+ miles on narrow/twisty 2-lane to the ***Timpanogos Cave National Monument...***

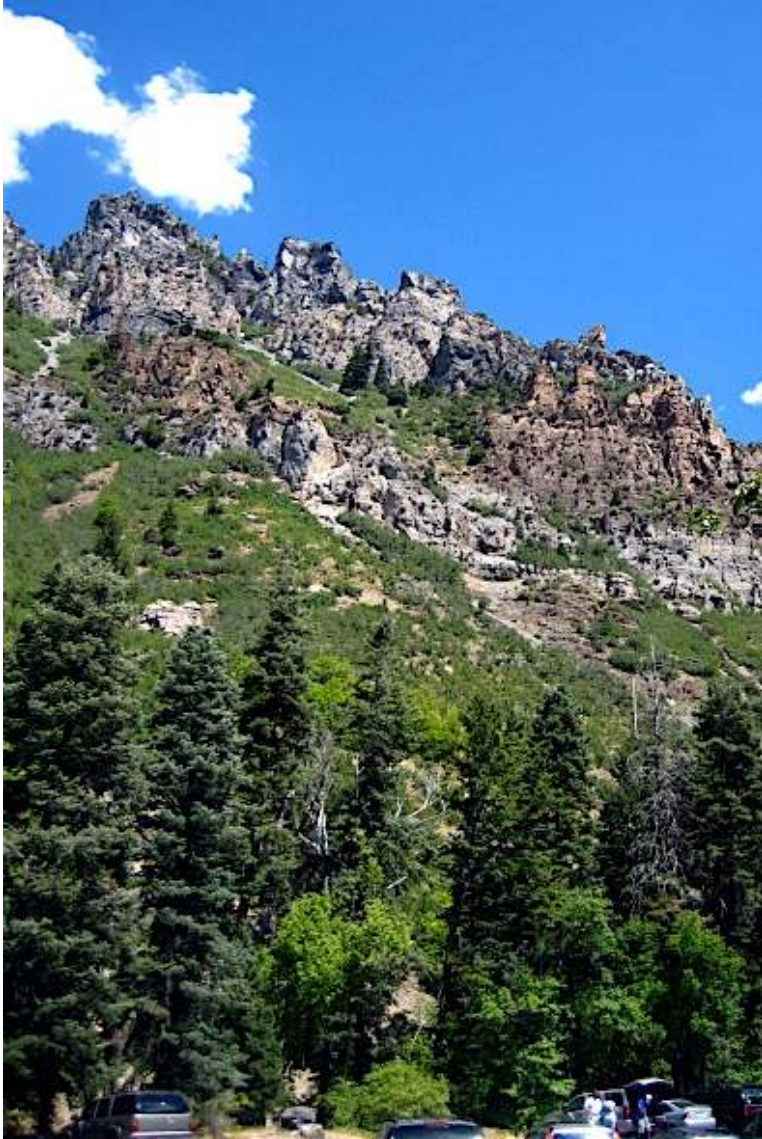


The parking area where I oh-so-stealthily put my jacket over the (“missing”) license-plate...

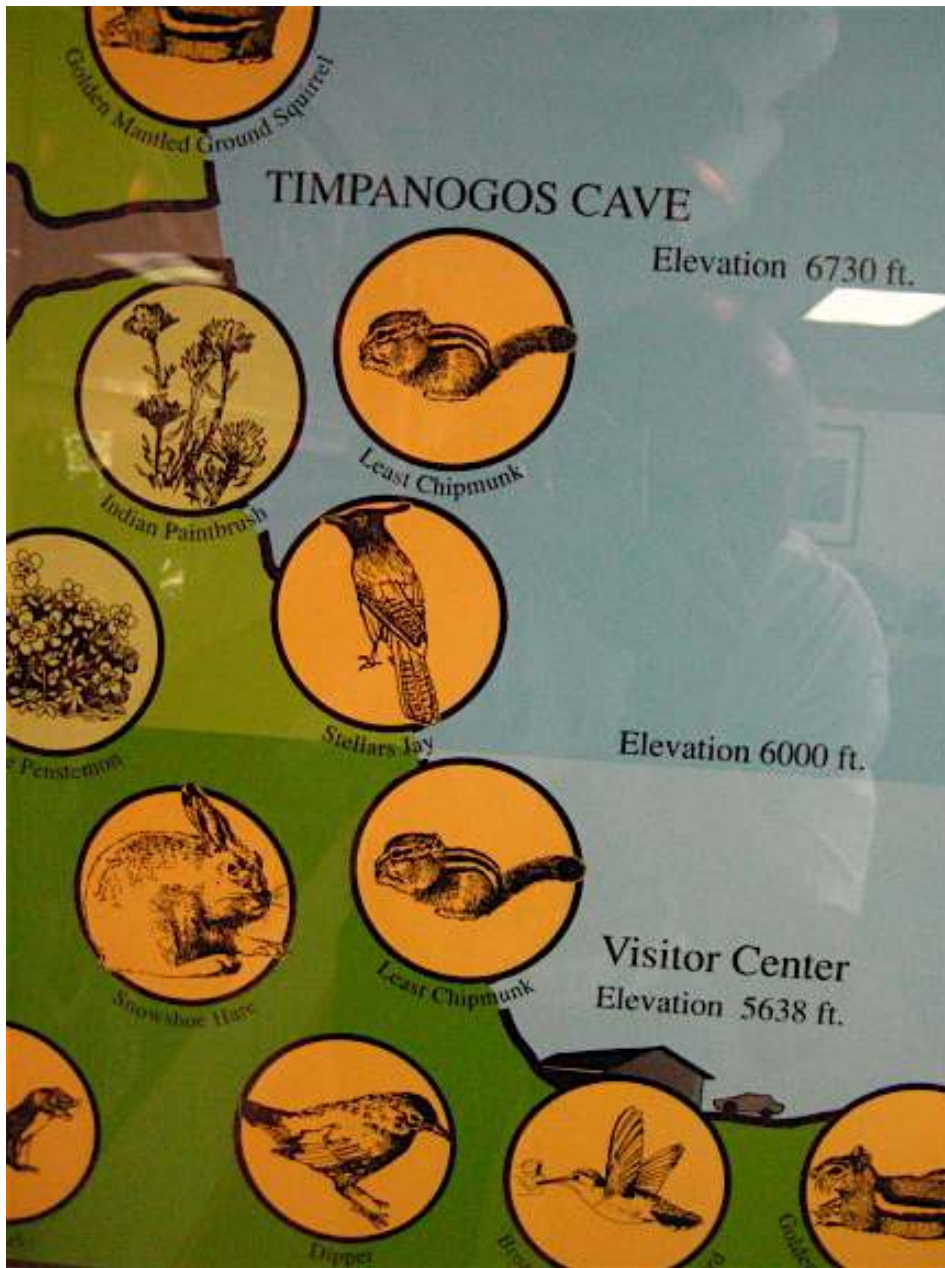


The actual cave is a 1.5 mile hike, with a **1,000' vertical rise way-steep!**

The caves are... Ummm... “Up there somewhere”...



In the below pic is a cross-sectional view of the floor of the canyon (where I'm parked) to the cave area. In the picture, it “looks steep”. In real-life, “even steeper” 😞



Moving right along, I scooted back down the canyon and got back on the dirt road network...

*** Truth-in-writing resumes; Below follows non-fiction ***



Pretty scenic eh?

Here's Mac... My Utah host (never alienate your host) in his ummm... "natural state"...



Here's Mac's (usual phraseology) "better-half" (Ann).

Modified-phraseology ***far better half!***

(Later in the story, we'll see why Ann & Mac really matter)...



What? No wine? Ann & Mac are partners in the winery **Parallel Wines**..

<http://www.parallelwines.com/>

...and who were (in-part) sponsors of the *Smokey Robinson concert* (yes more on this later)...

But I digress! Back to dirt-bikes!

Cresting a hill, I came upon a grove of White Birch. My Park City host Mac had assured me "...there are no White Birch in Utah!". OK. I confess. "Trick photography"!

Below is my heavily-falsified, out-right-lie (jeez it was hard to splice-in the bike) picture of a "synthetic" Birch grove at 8,000' in Utah...



Gosh, I am so ashamed of myself for “creating fiction, for the sake of a Good Story”. Oh well...

Late modification: ***Oh no!*** Google informs me that these trees might (“might”) be **Quaking Aspen**. Has Mac skunked me? Hmmmm?

Moving right along... I spotted a trail, which shortly got very-narrow, followed by very-steep... I'd read a magazine article on how the KLX-450R was "...very good at single-track" (defined as a "cow-trail through the trees"). Here's the start of the trail...



And at max-steep I was really slipping ("brutalizing") the clutch as the slowest the bike can go without clutch-slipping is 7-mph and the **best** speed I could make on the trail was perhaps 3-mph.

After approx 300 yards of this mechanical-mayhem I discovered...

Oh no! Overheating!

That's genuine-steam pouring out of the radiator overflow-tank...



This is not as bad as it sounds, as the boil-off is part of the cooling-scheme, and as long as the white header-tank has coolant in it, I'm OK. This bike, having no optional cooling-fan (behind the radiator) is a candidate for **Redline Water Wetter** which is a "surfactant" designed to alleviate this overheating problem...

www.redlineoil.com/products_coolant.asp

Now, I must say I was somewhat surprised at this overheating, as the day was cool (approx 80F at altitude). Worse, the "competition" for this bike is the more-expensive (approx \$1,000 more) KTM 450EXC which also has this cooling-problem **but offers an optional radiator cooling-fan** which almost all KTM buyers do install. Made in Austria, here's a pic of a KTM (an awesome bike)...



Above is a KTM factory-pic, and below is a Kawasaki factory-pic...



Also, the KTM is street-legal, the Kawasaki KLX-450R is not...

The Kawasaki can be street-legalized for \$1,000... Worth it?

More on this at the end of this story...

I came up through the valley, along the dirt road in the pic...

I came westward, up the ridgeline, after following the valley floor...



...and started back towards home. The shot below is looking southwest from the vantage point overlooking Heber, UT.

Note that in the below pic, you can see the Heber airport, which until recent years was the Heber gliderport and which still has a strong glider operation running May-Oct.



Heading down to my entry-point was a great shot of the 6-mile Cascade Area all-dirt access-road... A great ride!



***** **Surprise ending** *****

At the Heber dealership, ***I bought a new KLX-450R, plus the street-legalization kit.*** The bike will be ready in approx 2 weeks, the dealer gave me lower-than-L.A.-pricing, and this will be the companion to my KDX-200 (2-stroke) trail bike ***to which the Heber dealer will also add a street-legal-kit.*** This upgrade is not allowed in California, but both bikes will be legal in CA as long as they are registered in Utah!

Thanks to my hosts Ann & Mac ☺

But... Oh my... What have I done? Stay tuned!

***** **Addendum #1** *****

Glider Girl and I always check out “the glider scene” wherever we travel. We went over to the Heber airport, and the glider operation of **Soar Utah!** Really terrific, here’s Glider Girl & Louie in the hangar...



And there were many other gliders (for rent!) in the hangar as well as a glider club on the field.



Prices are very reasonable...

A framed sign for SOAR Utah Glider Rides. The sign features the company logo, which includes the word "SOAR" and "Utah" with a stylized glider and mountain range. The sign lists prices for glider rides for two people and for one person. There are also logos for FAA and VISA on the sign.

SOAR *Utah* **GLIDER RIDES**

GLIDER RIDES FOR 2

INTRO	\$ 100
ADVENTURE	\$ 120
EXPLORER	\$ 140

GLIDER RIDES FOR 1

FIRST FLIGHT	\$
ADVENTURE	\$ 110
EXPLORER	\$ 130

FAA VISA

And the rental-fleet is in primo-condition...



Below is their training glider, a Schweizer 2-33 “mint”...



***** **Addendum #2** *****

After I got back to Park City, we were the guests of Ann & Mac at the **Smokey Robinson** concert (he was awesome).

Below is my closest-pic of Smokey Robinson, who in person (and close-up) looked great at age-66! Flirting with a lady in the front-row!



And remember... Through it all... I had Louie with me...



Louie (a Standard poodle) is now 4 ½ months old, 35-lbs, will “fetch” reliably, never leaves our side, loves the doggie-park!

Many thanks to all of you for reading along... When I started this story, I meant for it to be perhaps 10 pages (“pretty short” for a picture story) but wow it went out to 27 pages...

...and this is an interim report! Glider Girl and I arrived back home (Laguna Beach) last night, “beat” after partying way-too-hard in Las Vegas (a “rest stop” on the way home from Park City, we said).

Next week, I’ll do a picture-story of the second half of our vacation (the first half was **Amazing Americana!** Which is on my website)...

www.pencikowski.com/articles/QuikLook.pdf

Enjoy the day!

Paul P.