

6-16-1984

# High Country Offers Variety for Bikers

By AL LIDDLE

To a Southern California transplant, who likes to throw his leg over a motorized two wheeler, the area near Ramsey Bar is like heaven on earth.

The Ramsey Bar area is mostly owned by Diamond International and is accessible via the first dirt road to the right when entering Stirling City.

Off-road motorcycle riding, southern style, entails lots of driving (in a truck) to get to dusty desolation — either a motorcycle park or the desert. When the terrain is almost always the same — flat and sandy or baked clay and hot — the results are nearly always the same: dirt bike riding becomes merely a go-fast experience.

But in the high country the sport takes on a whole new meaning and neophyte woods riders can acclimate themselves slowly, savoring every minute.

For the fans of twisty and relatively smooth, old logging roads can be pure joy. They can be challenging at a quick clip, but also offer a chance for the less experienced rider to putt around with a pack or by him, or her, self.

For the more adventuresome, there are well-defined side trails and smaller roads that wind in and around the trees and offer varied terrain. Negotiating quick jogs in the trail is even a bigger thrill when there are drop offs, small uphill or series of stutter bumps thrown in.

Climbing big hills is a favorite past time of a large number of cycle riders and the area around Ramsey Bar offers several.

Then there's the water.

Motorcycle riders in the lower portions of the state only dream about creek crossings. The only time they get wet is when a pit crew member at a race sprays them with a garden hose.

Many a cycle fan spends years reading about how to ride the wet stuff in their favorite magazine, but never get a chance to put that knowledge to use.

For example, before moving to the North State, I personally could have told you of three ways to cross a creek: putt through with your feet up on the tank, jump it (sail over the water and land on the other bank) or wheelie on the back wheel across as far as you can, put the front wheel down just long enough to regain your balance, pick it up again and continue on.

Despite the fact I had never crossed a creek, I was more than happy to give all three methods a try the first time I encountered one. Suffice it to say, my compa-



Al Worley warms up Yamaha for long ride



Author crosses creek in Ramsey Bar area



John Gentry cruises up old logging road



Russ Brooner finds small trail on Honda 200

Mercury Photos by Jerry Teague

nions drew much merriment from the attempts and I learned that with few exceptions, the putt-through method is the only way to stay dry.

The water crossings in the Ramsey Bar area vary in depth with the seasons. In the winter or early spring months, some can be dangerously high and fast so riders unfamiliar with water or a particular creek should be careful.

Being careful in the high woods

is good advice in general. It is easy to get lost if you haven't spent much time there. Even locals can get turned around. It's smart to carry a canteen if you're away from the streams and creeks and some strike-anywhere matches to build a fire should your bike break down or you do get lost and you have to spend the night.

Bringing along a couple of high-protein candy bars is another little trick that can help you make the best of a bad situa-

tion should one arise.

In addition to being careful, being polite goes along way in the high country.

Polite, in its basic sense, means using approved spark arrestors and mufflers and giving any other recreationists you encounter a lot of room. In the extended sense, polite can mean being aware of your sport's impact on the environment — both in terms of noise and disturbance of soils — and trying to lessen the negative effects whenever possi-

ble.

That's not preaching, just advice from someone who has spent years riding where there's no shade, or water or anything taller than a small cactus to motor around.

In Butte County area there are several popular up-high spots, including French Creek and Fall River, but because of its isolation, Ramsey Bar is a favorite among many people, including the staff of the Mercury-Register.

# Lake Concow Water Case Hearing Ends

By WILLIAM SAMPSON

A state Water Resources Control Board hearing on Concow water rights concluded yesterday after Thermalito Irrigation District's manager spent more than three hours under cross-

examination yesterday.

Jim Schmidt was questioned repeatedly about measurements of inflow and outflow, ditch maintenance and use, and water needs and use in the Thermalito Irrigation District.

Robert Hewitt, attorney for the Golden Feather Community Association, used lines of questioning apparently designed to show discrepancies in what the Thermalito manager had said or reported in documents to the hearing.

But Darlene Ruiz, a member of the water board, stopped Hewitt on several occasions, saying his questioning was repetitious and not to the point of the hearing. Much of Hewitt's questioning involved Schmidt identifying and verifying materials already a

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## Concow

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part of the hearing record.

Under cross-examination, Schmidt said the district is not required to have inflow gauges, but the district does maintain gauge readings at the diversion structure and at the "Luntz property." Schmidt said no one asked for those records and the records the district submitted were more complete.

Schmidt said Thermalito employed a ditch patrolman for maintenance through 1976. Last release in the ditch was 468 acre feet in 1976, said Schmidt, but PG&E shows no records for a water shipment that year, Hewitt said. Schmidt responded that the water probably didn't reach the PG&E gauge "due to leakage and topage" from the ditch.

Hewitt questioned Thermalito's statements about anticipated growth in the district and accompanying water demand. Agricultural use had been replaced by domestic use, so the actual growth in domestic use is not reflected in percentage increase of water use for the whole district, Schmidt said.

Two Concow residents also made policy statements, not subject to cross-examination, at the hearing. Glenn Miller urged a moratorium on lake drainage "until this matter is settled."

Eugene Miller, who said he was a 51-year resident of Concow, said he knew of no earthquake damage to the Willenor Ditch. He said the last diligent maintenance employee of the districts was on the job in the 1940s.

In closing arguments, Hewitt said water flow amounts were based on Thermalito's "self-serving" statements alone, with no gauge measurements. He said there was a problem of a "lack of facts."

He said TID's actual consumption is no more than 1,500 acre feet and its license should be reduced from 3,690 to that. Hewitt urged Table Mountain Irrigation District's rights be revoked entirely because the district hasn't used its consumptive rights in nine years.

Hewitt presented photographs of the lake full and drained to ask the board to consider recreational, wildlife and fishing at the lake.

Jeffrey Meith, representing Table Mountain, urged the board

to use its discretionary powers in ruling on the district's water rights.

He said costs of repairs to the Willenor Ditch present a major hardship to the district and it is investigating other means of delivering the water to its boundaries.

Meith closed with what he described as a "common sense" argument. He asked what good revocation of Table Mountain's rights would do to Concow. Without Table Mountain's more than 4,510 acre feet in the lake, the level would drop to 3,690 acre feet, far below the 8,200 Golden Feather Community Association said is necessary for safe boating, fishing, and recreation.

William Spruance, representing Thermalito Irrigation District, asked the board not to set a precedent that a district that historically has used its water rights must forfeit them because of a five years of lowered use during a transition from agricultural to domestic use. He noted the state water code gives highest priority to domestic use over agriculture and recreation.

Spruance said it was the water districts that developed fishing and recreation use at the lake to its present level over a 60-year period.

He said Table Mountain is a "victim of circumstance" and reiterated Meith's claims that the lake would have less water if Table Mountain's rights were revoked.

"However well-meaning the complainants are, they run the risk of bringing a bad result for everyone," Spruance said.

Lawyers for both sides of the dispute have 30 days to submit legal briefs, then the board will take the matter under submission.

The hearing officer, Kenneth Willis, would give no indication when a decision might be reached. However, a source close to the board told the Mercury that matters such as this take approximately six months for a decision. The source cautioned that the decision could take as long as 18 months or as little as three months.

After the hearing, attorneys for the irrigation districts said they were very pleased with how the hearing had gone. On the other side, Hewitt said of the

districts' presentation, "Their crocodile tears were impressive."

Howard Clark of the Golden Feather Community Association said his group would abide by the board's decision. He said the group's intent was to bring the matter to the proper agencies and authorities. He said the board has a responsibility to protect the public and "we expect it do so."

Feather River Bulletin

9-19-1984

# Oroville man hurt in fall

An Oroville man who fell from some rocks while swimming near Quincy left the area with a fractured wrist and scalp lacerations, according to Sheriff and Plumas District Hospital reports.

Clifford E. Nimz, 56, of Oroville, was at an outing on Rock Creek, near the Feather River Canyon last weekend, when he slipped and fell into the water. Members of the Plumas County Search and Rescue team had to help him from steep terrain, using ropes to hold the rescuers, according to PDH EMT Steve Tolen.



The Chico Enterprise Record  
9-26-1984

## **Butte County historic site tour set Friday**

A historical tour, open to the public, will leave Chico at 9 a.m. Friday to visit several area points of interest.

The tour will include visits to Cherokee, Oregon City and Oroville, visiting the Cherokee mine, the covered bridge and restored schoolhouse in Oregon City and the Lott House and

Chinese Temple in Oroville.

A picnic lunch will be served in Sank Park in Oroville.

Cost of the trip will be \$17. Participants will meet at the Fairview Center across from Montgomery Ward's automotive center.

For information, call Jan Baker at 893-0876.■