

Trip Report

Big Island of Hawaii, Nov 13-27, 2018

Co-Leaders: Maureen Weston and Delores Franz Los

I'm sitting curb side at the Kona airport, reflecting on a wonderful 14 days of cycle touring around the Big Island of Hawaii. The bikes are all packed or returned to the rental agency, our winter clothes close at hand for the nasty weather at home. The keyboard is my lap, and I'm trying to think how to summarize this trip.



The first thing that comes to my mind is just how difficult the cycling was. The combination of heat, humidity, intense sunshine, rain and winds could turn a simple ride into a major challenge. Some days were super easy - the 44 km ride downhill from Volcano to Hilo took all of 90 minutes.



Lots of smiles after the grueling climb into Captain Cook

There was the ride from Hilo to Honokaa that got rained out; OMG it can rain on the windward side of the island! Delores efficiently organized taxi cabs to transport all of us and our gear, as we were worried that roads would be unsafe for travel. We also got wet nearing Volcano and departing from Hawi, but otherwise we were treated to clear skies. Heat and humidity were huge factors in the ride up to Volcano, but we all persevered.



The support van at a lunch stop

The support van really earned its keep, supplying us with lots of water and an occasional adult beverage.



Breakfast at Volcano – what a feast!

The last day's ride was from Hawi to Kona and it was our longest and most challenging. The route was the return leg of the Kona Ironman cycle ride. A couple of folks had to abandon this leg due to heat exhaustion crossing the black lava fields in the heat of the mid day. Several others didn't attempt the leg due to a bout of suspected food poisoning the night before. A tough day for sure, but good spirits soon returned in time for the farewell dinner.



Our Thanksgiving Day feast – thanks to Delores!

Thanksgiving? Who would have thought that Americans might celebrate Thanksgiving while we were overnighing in Honokaa? We were ready to join in just about anybody's feast but we found all the local restaurants and cafes were CLOSED!. We attempted to get invited to the Salvation Army supper for the homeless, but the tables there were full. Delores again came to our rescue and quickly ordered up some BBQ chickens, several salads, and pumpkin pie complete with whipped and ice cream for dessert. This culinary rescue won't be forgotten quickly. It was a great way to celebrate with 15 of my new found friends.



The gang gathers for a supper time meal at the Hana Hou in Naalehu – the southern most restaurant in the USA

The tour traversed most of the climate zones on the Big Island. We were treated to tropical rain forests, desert-like lava fields, pasture lands populated with cows, and beautiful rugged coastlines. Beaches are few and far between on this island, and those that are to be found are small and usually black or green sand. We spent one of our rest days at Captain Cook hiking down to snorkel at the Captain Cook monument. This area has some of the best reefs on the island for snorkeling. At Hilo, many of us cycled or hiked to Rainbow Falls. A few brave souls endured one of the steepest, longest roads in the world to hike down to Waipio Bay to enjoy some refreshing body surfing.



A panorama view as we hike down to the Captain Cook Monument for an afternoon of snorkeling



The snorkelers pose in front of the Captain Cook Monument

**Rob at the Waipio Valley Lookout.
Several folks hiked
down to the valley
bottom!**



A seaside vista on the ride from Hawi to Kona



Maureen at the Pololu Valley Lookout



Rainbow Falls near Hilo with Rob, Jim and Lawrence



Rainbow Falls with a rainbow!

Accommodations on this trip were varied. They ranged from unique and rustic to comfortable. Some establishments offered some sort of breakfast, in others we relied on local restaurants and cafes. The food was always plentiful and inexpensive. I was happy.



**At the
Honoka'a
Hotel**



This was my first ever cycle tour with CCCTS. I was pleased with the camaraderie that developed between all the participants. I know I have made 15 new friends, and look forward to many more tours with them.



The black lava fields between Hawi and Kona



No photo essay is complete without the bird who woke us every morning at 4 am!