



Great Basin Bicycles

8048 S. Virginia St. Reno, NV. 89511 775-825-8258

www.greatbasinbicycles.com

Bishop, California – White Mountain Peak Road

Garmin Connect Link: <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/223152041>

Strava Link: <http://app.strava.com/activities/22103884>



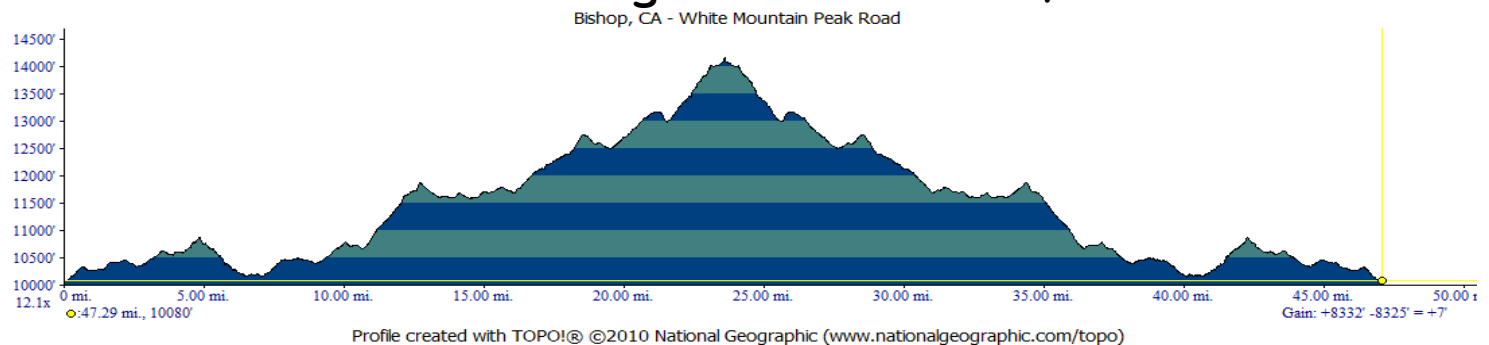
The White Mountains are the mountain range just to the east of Bishop, Ca. To get there from Reno, Nevada, take Highway 395 south for about 3 hours. Then you run smack dab into Bishop, Ca. From Bishop, Ca., continue south on Highway 395 for about 15 minutes or so to highway 168 east. Take a left on 168 and follow this extremely fun to drive twisty road up to the summit, and take a left on White Mountain Road. Continue on White Mountain Road to the end of the pavement where there will be the Bristlecone National Forest Visitors Center on the right. Park here to start your ride.

The White Mountains got their name from the Dolomite in the range. It looks kinda like white marble, and the Bristlecone trees love this stuff. That would be the reason there are so many growing in this area. White Mountain is 14,232 ft high, and only a little lower than Mt. Whitney, but you do not need a permit to ride or hike to the summit. The views are spectacular with Death Valley to the east, and Owens Valley to the west.

The jeep road is not technical at all, except for the very last couple of miles, but the rest is just a simple jeep road above 10,000 ft. Even though the road is not technical at all, it is horribly demanding. When you start, you almost immediately come to a climb that puts you over 10,600 ft, then you drop back down to 10,200 ft. Then you climb again. There are really 4 climbs in this ride. You climb up only do descend on the other side. So, you don't leave the car and just climb up to 14,242 ft. Rather, you go up and down 4 different times, then you have to retrace your path back to the car. Your total elevation gain is almost 9000 ft of climbing in 50 miles, and all of it is above 10,000 ft. It is challenging. Lastly, please make sure that you carry everything that you need to stay alive. At 14,000 ft, weather can change on a dime. My first attempt was met with a freak snow storm that dropped 40" of snow in 45 minutes. Needless to say, I did not make it to the top on that attempt. I am very happy that I rode with extra warm clothes in my pack. When you make this trip, you realize how remote it is, and if you need help, you are the only person you can count on. If you have someone that wants to hike to the summit, they can drive to within 8 miles of the summit, then hike from there. If you do this ride with a driver, they can park, and you have an out. Much safer. But watch the weather report before you go, and plan for a 100% clear day.

The Ride: Bishop, CA. White Mountain Peak Climb

47.29 miles – 8332 ft of climbing – All of it above 10,000 ft.



From Bishop, take Highway 395 south to Highway 168. Take a left on H-168 and follow to the summit. Take a left on White Mountain Road, and follow this paved road to the end. At the end of the paved road is the White Mountain & Bristlecone National Forest Visitors Center. Park here to start the ride. Head out of the parking lot, and take a right on the dirt road. In 2.76 miles you will see a power line road on your right. This road is a little rocky, and cuts out the upcoming climb in front of you. You also might want to remember this road for the return trip. The return part of the climb is harder than the outward bound side of the climb. However, continue straight toward your climb, and in .42 miles (3.18 miles from the start) you will come to a flat. Here you can go left or straight. If you were to go left, this road would drop you very quickly down to Bishop. It is steep and loose in some sections, but a great road to remember if you have to bail for any reason. Continue straight, and your first climb starts here. In 1.63 miles (4.81 miles) you will



be at the top of your first climb. You will be at 10,855 ft with a fantastic view of the valley to the left. You will have to get off your bike and walk over to the edge to see it, but a great view. Continue straight (north) on the jeep road and it will drop through a handful of switchbacks. In 1.84 miles (6.65 miles) you will see that pole line jeep road mentioned before your climb entering on the right. Continue north on a gradual uphill section, right before the top of this climb you will hit a paved section of road. This section is horribly steep. But once up, you have a reprieve at the top, and in 6.1 miles (12.75 miles) you will be at the top of this climb, cresting out at 11,880 ft. Continue north heading down hill, and you will pass the Patriarch Grove. There are tons of very cool Bristlecone Pines in this grove, and if you can return to the area around sunset, you will have fantastic photo opportunities. However, continue on the road which turns left to the west, and start this descent. This descent turns into a slightly rolling section, and in 3.41 miles (16.16 miles) you will come to a parking section. There

is a gate here that usually prevents vehicles from driving any further, and a bathroom here as well. When hiking to the summit, this is where most hikers start. There are a couple of times during the year where this gate is open, and you can drive 2 more miles up the road to Barcroft Research Station. However, usually this is the last stop for vehicles. So, if you have a supply vehicle on the trip, this is usually where it would be. From this point, it is 8 miles to the summit of White Mountain. Here the road turns right and again heads north. In 1.98 miles (18.14 miles) you will reach the University of California Berkeley Barcroft High Altitude Research Station at 12,400 ft. This station usually has a bunch of penned sheep, and usually one caregiver. You almost feel like you are trespassing as you ride through the station grounds, but continue around the right side of the sheep pens, and the jeep road will pick up on the other side of the pens and switch back up the side of the hill. This is a hike a bike section of jeep road. It is loose, and very steep and not at all like the road you have been on. But, get used to it, because the last part of the climb up to the summit is just like this section of road. Continue uphill, and in .48 miles (18.62 miles) you will crest this climb at 12,750 ft. Continue mostly north and you will see an old observatory on the right. Keep heading mostly north and you will start a slight downhill, followed by yet another gradual uphill section that will top out in 2.56 miles (21.18) 13,160 ft. There is a fantastic view both to the west and the east. When I was at this point, there was a herd of Big Horn Sheep just wandering around on this flat. So keep your eyes out. After taking in the view, jump back on the bike and continue north, and start yet another downhill. From the base of the downhill 0.45 miles (21.63 miles) you will be on your last ascent to the summit. This section is very loose, very steep at an average gradient of 14% with sections that are steeper. In 2.08 miles (23.71 miles) you will be at 14,232 feet and on top of the world. From here, all you have to do is retrace your path back to the start. But remember, you still have a lot of climbing to get back to the car, so take it easy, your brain does not work that well at 14,232 feet. Take it slow and safe, and have fun.

