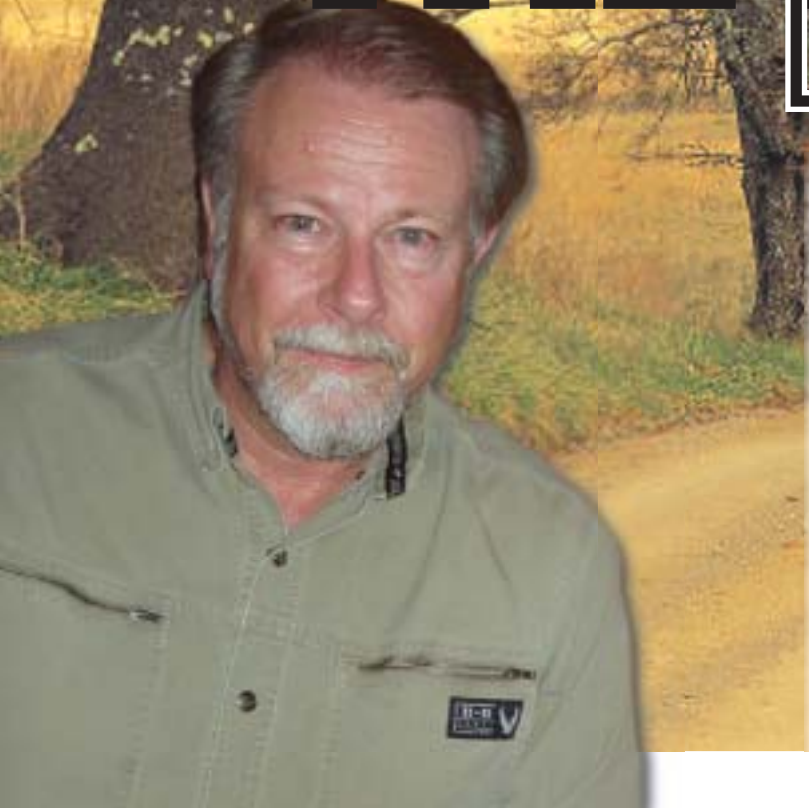


THE ROAD Less Traveled



One of the best kept secrets we have about Missouri is all the scenic riding to be found in the southern reaches of our state. This next ride is going to have us explore a few of these roads. Our destination will be Greer Spring located about 18 miles south of Winona, Missouri. We will be able to combine some great riding along with visiting one of the most impressive springs to be found in the state. Now don't plan on partying too hardy the night before. This ride will need to leave no later than 8:00am. Total round trip mileage is going to be around 350 miles depending on your starting point. What makes Greer Spring so special is that not only is it the second largest natural spring in Missouri, it is the 10th largest natural spring in the world. Now, are you surprised you have never heard of it? The spring has an average flow of 220 million gallons of water per day and provides over half of the water which flows in the Eleven Point River. The spring emerges from the mouth of Greer Spring Cave and at times provides a fountain shooting up in the air over 2 feet high. On a hot summer day, the trail which leads to the spring feels naturally air-conditioned by the spring and the raging river which runs parallel to the trail. Water can be drunk straight from the river. You will also find watercress lining the banks of the river which is fine to eat. At one time, Anheuser-Busch had planned to build a plant and bottle the spring water except for the environmental organizations which argued against this from happening. Instead, Anheuser-Busch provided a grant for any non-profit organization which would purchase the spring and maintain it in its natural state. Greer Spring and the surrounding area were eventually purchased in 1993 by the U.S. Forest Service and have been under their protection since. Now that I have your attention, getting to the spring does take a little bit of effort. From the Forest Service parking lot, the trail leading to the spring is 0.9 miles long and descends at a grade of 5 feet every 100 feet. There are several park benches located along the trail. The hike to the spring and back will take about 1 ½ hours and don't forget to bring your camera.

Now that we know where we are going, let's see about how we're going to get there. From St. Louis, take I-44 west to St. James, Mo. It always takes a little highway traveling till you can get to the fun stuff. At St. James exit south on Hwy. 68 and head to Salem, Mo. After you reach Salem, travel south on Hwy. 19 toward the town of Winona, Mo. This will take you into the Mark Twain National Forest and the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. There are sections of this highway that make you feel like you are riding a roller coaster. Once you pass through Winona, you'll have about 18 more miles to go. Pay attention when you cross over the Eleven Point Bridge. At this point you will go up a hill and the Greer Spring parking lot will be on your right. Now it's time to get off the bike, stretch your legs, and take a little hike. Remember, when visiting the springs, everything you carry in needs to be carried out with you. This is probably the only hard fast rule they have there but once you get back to the spring, you'll see why.

This ride can easily be made into an overnigher. There are a number of lodges and resorts in the area if you want to spend the night. Check out Rivers Edge in Eminence, Mo. If you are looking for a place to eat, there is RS Steakhouse also in Eminence at the Aguila Lodge. There you can get a 16oz. strip steak for \$16.00. To find RS Steakhouse, head back toward Eminence and turn on Tom Akers Drive just after crossing the Jack's Fork River. You will pass Tim's Fast Stop where the road will turn into gravel. RS Steakhouse will be around the bend and on your left. Another option might be to head back on Hwy 19 to Rolla, find a motel in town and explore the nightlife that Rolla has to offer. Whatever you plan on doing, you are sure to have a great time riding through this section of Southern Missouri.

Now let's try something a little closer to home. Let's say it's a week night and you only have time for a short putt and a burger but you want to go somewhere new. There is a new Bar and Grill on Creve Coeur Mill Road that hasn't received much attention because it opened shortly after the new Maryland Heights Expressway opened and now traffic bypasses it. It's called the Creve Coeur Lakehouse and it is well worth checking out. Now I could tell you to take Olive Blvd. past Fee Fee Rd to Creve Coeur Mill Road, turn right and the C.C. Lakehouse will be a few miles down on your right. But what fun would that be? We need to at least make this some sort of a ride. So instead, continue on Olive past Hwy 141 for 1 mile. Just past the Suburban Leisure Center, and turn right on Hog Hollow Road. For a fleeting second, you will feel like your back on the Tail of the Dragon, but only for a second. Continue on Hog Hollow until you come to the stop sign at River Valley Dr. Turn right on River Valley Dr. and just before you cross the railroad tracks, turn left on St. Louis County Waterworks Dr. This will take you over to Creve Coeur Mill Rd. Turn left but watch for cars coming over the bridge. It's a bit of a blind spot. Head north and you will find the C.C. Lakehouse on your right. They have a nice bar and an outside patio with bands on the weekends. If the air gets cold in the evening, the tables are equipped with a built-in fire pit for your warming pleasure. Spring is here and summer will be coming on fast. Let's all go put some miles on and try to find someplace new. So until next month, I'll be plotting out the next road adventure at That One Place.

Ride Safe,
Doug