

# This stuff is out there

## Forest Roads Volume II

By Brian Zongker

I figured that I would continue the article of last month about the stuff that I have seen on the trail. Well, hang on to your hats -- here we go!

One time, on one of the forest service roads, I rode past a minivan that was pulled off to the side, back door and side sliding door wide open. Outside the vehicle was a full drum set. Not talking a bongo and a couple tambourines, we're talking full set up with cymbals and everything. The drummer was "asleep" in the back section of the minivan. I was kind of disappointed that I had missed the show, not to mention, where was the rest of the band? I wonder what the elk and other forest critters thought of the concert....

On the Chipmunk Connector one day, I passed a pack of dogs, maybe wild dogs, that had treed something. I was dying to see what they had treed but was scared to death to get too close. They sounded very angry and excited. Times like these, I wish I was packing heat. At Los Burros, I was riding along in the middle of a section that the mountain bike community, using the Strava app, calls the lung bleeder. This section is a steep uphill section with a couple of switch backs and rough spots. The first time I rode it, I could not make it up riding and had to get off and walk my bike up. Incidentally, I always strive to not only make it up but be competitive in my time. Well, here I am heading in to one of the rougher sections and suddenly -- there is a bike just abandoned in the middle of the trail. I couldn't ride around so I had to stop and get off. I looked at the bike. It was a nice Trek Mountain Bike, score. Now how am I going to ride one and have one in tow? It's not like ponying a horse. Fortunately, the dilemma was solved as I looked up and finally saw the owner most the way up the trail throwing rocks off. While I appreciated him making the trail smoother, did he really need to screw up my segment by leaving his bike in the middle of the trail?

On the #187 road one day, I was riding uphill back towards Sky Hi road and suddenly was passed by a nice Lexus SUV. Very quickly, the smell followed. This Lexus happened to have a skunk, in a cage trap, strapped to the top of this car. I'm thinking that not only does the inside of this Lexus smell bad but so must the driver because the cage holding the skunk was wide open. He must have been sprayed a dozen times strapping that skunk to his car. Here's your sign. Different incident on a different day but pretty sure it was the same SUV coming down the #187 road drifting the corners in fast and furious style. Nearly took me out.

You never know who you are going to meet out there either. Last summer, almost daily, I would ride by a gentleman that I eventually referred to as "Quickdraw." I gave him this nickname because he would freak out every time I came up on him. Yes, I would announce myself -- because I'm a nice guy that way -- but mainly because I didn't want to give him a heart attack. Every time, he turns around, he is grabbing for his pistol. Ready to shoot me down. One time, I stopped and asked him, "You're not going to shoot me, are you?" He said, "Only if, when I turn around, you have a gun pointed at me too." Same stretch of trail, I would come across this very nice lady walking her very large dog. This dog would chase me almost every time he saw me. He even grabbed my forearm and pulled me off my bike on one occasion. Eventually, he got to know me -- didn't stop him from chasing me but at least we became friends.

Most recently, I was riding on the Ironhorse Connector and, shortly into the section, I looked up and saw what I thought was a girl, raggedly dressed, long scraggly black hair, dirty and hovering just above the trail. Well, needless to say this scared me so, like in most horror movies, I continued to ride straight at her. She was swaying back and forth and I was really struggling with what I was seeing. Still didn't stop because this is a segment in which I need to improve my time. Just as I was going to stop -- completely freaked out -- she turned and ran away. And she was an antelope that was just a little in the shadows so I could not tell what it was. Heart pounding, I continued my ride thinking about it the whole way. What did I really see, wildlife or something else? Shape Shifter? Who knows but, for what it's worth, I have seen all these things -- for real? Believe it or not.