

Network of trails provides hours of cycling in North State

By Kathryn Reed

REDDING – Nearly 10 miles of paved trails without ever getting onto a city street. Clearly, I must not be in Tahoe anymore.

This spectacular ride was in Redding.



Pam Valentine rides one of the many paved trails in Redding.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

More than 80 miles of paved and natural surface bike-pedestrian paths are scattered throughout Redding. But they are also linked so it makes for a harmonious experience instead of some disjointed, annoying ride.

Cyclists can go from the Sundial Bridge to Shasta Dam on a paved route – 17.5 miles one-way.

I was glad we didn't park where we had intended to because it meant not going up what the bike shop guys called Cardiac Hill. Instead, my sister, Pam, led Sue and me on a 19-mile

round-trip ride through some spectacular scenery before the dam stopped us.

The Keswick Reservoir is to our right as we start our ride. On the north end is the Shasta Dam, to the south is the Keswick Dam. This reservoir is part of the Central Valley Project – one of the main water systems running through California that provides water to farmers and municipalities downstream.

Below the Keswick Dam is the Sacramento River.

A few fishermen are on the Keswick Reservoir in hopes of catching wild trout like German browns and rainbow.

As pretty as the ride is, I know the landscape should be much greener. No moisture until this weekend has left the entire state parched. Still, the austere winter beauty is captivating.

The water is glass-like, providing reflections of the hillside as though it's a mirror.

Rocks protrude from some locations, reminding me of the tufas that dot Mono Lake.

Where the water is shallow it's most obvious how fast the current is as mini rapids are created as the water skips over the rocks.

This is part of the Sacramento River Rail Trail that follows the historic rail alignment. One spot has us passing through a tunnel built in the 1920s.

The trail ends at Shasta Dam where there is a dirt park for all terrain vehicles. Just before we get there a Bureau of Land Management employee (and this was a Saturday) is sweeping some debris from the trail. It's maintained that well.

Redding's trails are a collaborative project, just like they are in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Where we were last weekend was on

Bureau of Land Management property. The McConnell Foundation (founded by the largest shareholders of Farmers Insurance) has contributed significantly to that city's trails.

The first segment of the Sacramento River Trail opened in 1983. And the network keeps growing.

More information about the Redding Trail System is online. And the trails are accessible year-round.

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