

# Day one – Casco to West Forks – 242 miles

There's always something that makes starting this story so hard. This year things turned on the eve of the last day. With my making a vital mistake in judgment, I was bumming, and Steve finding out about a real estate transaction that had gone bad, he was fuming. That all was our primer for the most grueling day I've ever spent on a snow machine. You'll have to read on to find out about it.

So, anyway now that I have that off my chest, let me start over. It's Friday morning 7AM, I'm set to go, waiting for my two comrades Pete (AKA Popeye), and Steve (shucks didn't come up with a nickname). I wait, and wait. Call Pete, they're still 10 miles out in the truck. So, I figure 8:30 I go wait in the back yard. Now I know what effect icing the kicker has. I wait another eternity and they finally show. Typical start to these trips. Finally the route is locked and loaded, and we're on the trail! Somewhere around Buckfield, 65.5 miles out I have the first of my many mechanical problems. One side of my brand new saddlebags tears off completely. Fortunately, our crack field troubleshooting team has it re-engineered to at least get us moving again. Well, the rework lasted the entire rest of the trip.



Excellent piece of work. No duct tape either! ^

The things you see on the trail.  
----->



I think this Pete and Steve deserve a Noble award or something for that. Other than that, things were going like clockwork. The climate and trails were probably the best of the trip. It was a good call taking the long way through Eustis. None of us had been there before. Pretty cool looking mountains. The end, coming into 3 Rivers, West Forks was a bit frustrating. That place is great to ride to from the north. From the south, forget it.





# Day Two – West Forks to Lac Etchemin – 158 miles.

As we gassed up Pete runs into kin Folk; a team of six or so fairly compatible riders. Coming out of the forks we ran into heavy traffic and the kin crowd catches up. Some looked fairly aggressive and I asked Pete if I could play with them. I don't think I actually waited for an answer. I had his nephew in front of me, and this piped up Ski-doo behind me. Just as I hit the left to pass the guy pulls LEFT to let the ski-doo go by. Yipes. So, the Ski-doo waited for us to get ourselves straitened out and zipped by. Guess they realized what I was up to, cause they didn't leave any slots open for me after that. I completely deny any stories of me passing some young wippersnappers on the right after that. What can I say? Too much Tabasco on the eggs I guess. I do recall thinking I better calm down some. You know what they say about having too much fun. Hmm, maybe that's the problem, I don't know what they say...Never mind.





## Day Two segway into day Three....

On to her lady Canada. We meet Mr. FCMQ himself (that means Snowmobile Club of Quebec or something like that) at the zero tolerance club house (with a full bar). He graciously transfers one trail pass to Steve and gives us most of our money back for the other pass. Charlie and Matt bailed on the trip and we picked up Steve. Pretty cool guy. Laurent, that is. OK, Charlie and Matt are cool too. We arrive at Lac Etchemin. hmmm, speaking of cool we noticed a pretty cool leather jumpsuit. It was sweet Lucy, ready to host away our, ummm home sickness. I better leave it at that. Day 3 already. This is one of two days we planned to do whateva! We didn't plan on taking a huge loop, but it ended up that way. Pretty cold, marathon run. Nice scenery. Ah, but back to Lac Etchemin. I had been planning our signature arching spot on top of this 10' snow bank. I was making 3 nice paths for my comrades to take, but the outside was a tad too steep, laid it on its side. Oh well. Back to Sweet Lucy to fix what ails us!



Reason for coming to Canada? Lucieeeee





## Day Four – Lac Etchemin to St. Pamphile 83 miles

Ug, this is the really painful day. Short miles....Yeah, shorter than we knew. About 20 miles from the border, I'm in trouble. Exhaust value dropped. Pete started towing me. Rock and a hard place scenario. I'm thinking there's no way Pete's going to tow me 40 miles to Dicky, Maine. We pass through St. Pamphile without realizing that even if we WERE to do a stupid thing like that we'd just past last chance for gas. On the way back to town I conclude that this is it. Either I get fixed there or I find other means of transportation home. Well, there's a Ski-doo dealer. We were able to communicate enough for him to point me up the street. Same thing at a garage a bit further up. So, I find my destiny....for the day. Christopher's garage was one bay about the size to comfortably fit a fully loaded logging truck. First thing I noticed was it was neat! I like neat. He'd been a Polaris mechanic and strung out on his own. Bought this place for 10K! We didn't communicate too well, but enough. We had figured out which cylinder was bad and Chris made the same diagnose. I just said wee, you fix? He calls someone, talks a bit, and hands me the phone. Hello, is this the Polaris dealer? No, I'm the neighbor, she says. Ahh, an interpreter! We make the arrangements, and head off to the only motel. I guess I knew I was already spending a lot of money in this town so I was in the bargaining mood. I told the guy if the price is right, we'll take 3 rooms, otherwise we're going to squeeze into one. Like that's going to happen! He says \$120; I say \$60, etc. I don't remember what we settled on, but when the bill came it was \$38 for 3 rooms, cool! We had a fun night. And it was a nice break despite the expense.



Not a bad garage for 10K.!!



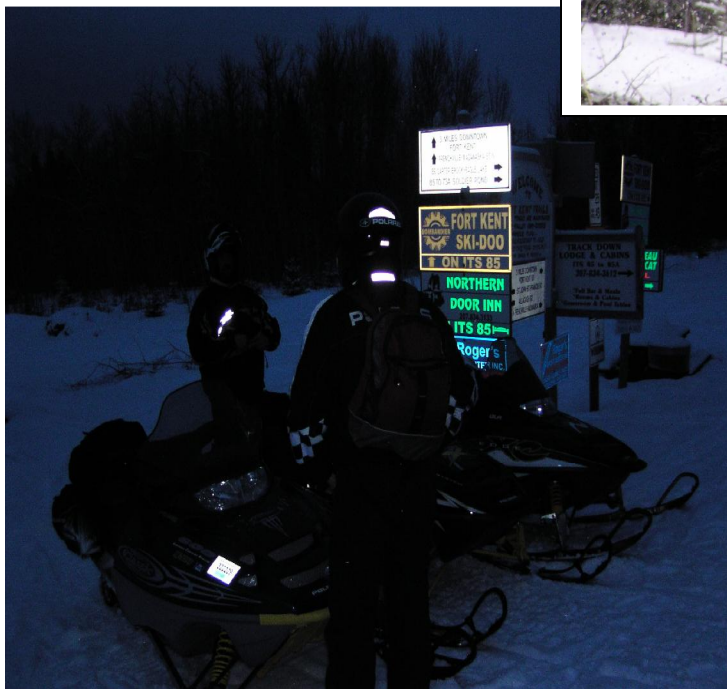
We all weren't drinking to drown our sorrows.





## Day Five – St. Pamphile – Fort Kent Back on track 120 miles.

So the next morning the objective was to accumulate \$X cash to get the sled that was hopefully almost ready. Bank opens at 10AM. I drain my checking and savings from the ATM and raise less than 1/2. Gotta wait for the bank and do a cash advance. We go into the convenience store, and it's our good friend the motel clerk behind the counter. I ask him if he can do the cash advance. He makes a phone call and says yes, he can do it back at the motel. We walk down there, and there he is! Reminded me of the Monty Python skit where the guy behind the counter is the town clerk, and then the guy needs the priest, and he ducks behind the counter and comes up as the priest. But, you're the SAME PERSON. I AM NOT!.... Never mind. Oh, and the hotel guy told us that my sled would be ready at 11AM. Yeah, small town. Been there. So, back to Christian's. Things are good. I pay him off, thank our interpreter for the help, and off we go. Christen did an excellent job. On to the Alagash. Big flake snow coming down all day. All I can think about is I missed capturing the beauty of that place again. Maybe next year. Cool shot of the deer though. He gave me this, you don't have a gun look. Up to Ft Kent. Once again, no time to explore that area since we had to sit down at St Pamphile. Great dinner and breakfast at least.



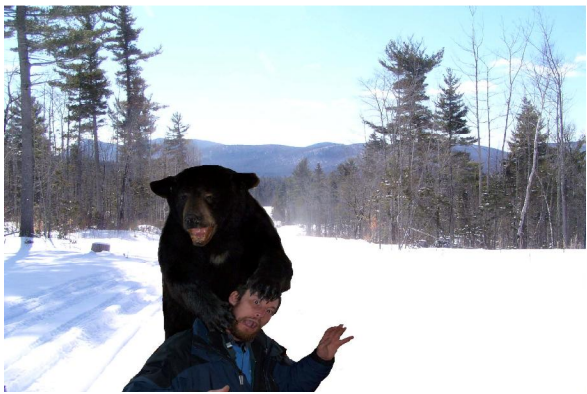


# Day six – Fort Kent to Shin Pond 152 miles.

Time for the scramble down past Eagle Lake to take the MSA winning photo (might have just jinxed me self) Actually, it took me so long to write this up, I already know it took 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Down to Portage for lunch at the only place in town. Good thing it's good cooken! Onward to Mt. Chase Lodge. George, I'm surprised I haven't talked you into checking this place out! And of course Oxbow Lodge on the middle right is a must see.



Had a little scrap with a bear there.



You'll see this one in the MSA land.



If you lived here, you'd probably never leave home, so you'd be home by now.

Mt. Chase. Keeper!



# Day Seven – Shin Pond to Rockwood – 184 miles

I have to type small. Too many pictures. Again, we decide against the easy route. Route 66 would have got us to the Birches at about 2PM. So, we head to the Black Frog in Greenville. Good food and cocky wenchens. Yeah. Sorry ladies, but we're men, and we're on the trail. Oh, I was bumming, because the trail from Greenville to Rockwood sucks. But there's a new trail. An "Alternate trail" as they called it. It was great. Steve thought it was really great. We'd stop, and he'd be singing Tom Jones, I wanna be loved by you"! Yeah, the mind does weird things on the trail. So now I suppose I have to document my major mistake. On ITS...the last part goes out onto Moosehead to the Birches. It looked exactly like I remember. Down into the parking lot, past the boat landing. Onto the lake. I saw stakes I thought marked out the trail. I still think it was the right place, you just have to head strait out. I didn't. Broke one of my golden rules. Read all signs. I figured it said "stay on marked trail" I'm heading for the stakes. About when I start I noticing there's spots on the ice with no snow, I notice the front end is high and I've lost a lot of speed! I knew this was serious bad! I think my experience watching the water crossers kicked in. I.e. I BARED it! I saw this stone wall sticking way out, and just had to lean it a tad to steer that way. I hit one rock pretty hard and landed on this 10'X10' plateau. It didn't matter, it was dry land. So, now I can either try to ride out this 50' stone break water to shore, or...Well there was plenty adrenalin flowing I'm sure. I didn't think about it much. I skimmed my way back. I think the other thing I realized going out was that it was pretty smooth. It's taken me this long to over come the shame I've felt by it all and actually tell the story. But I must get back on my high horse, and exclaim "Can't read the sign, TOO FAST".

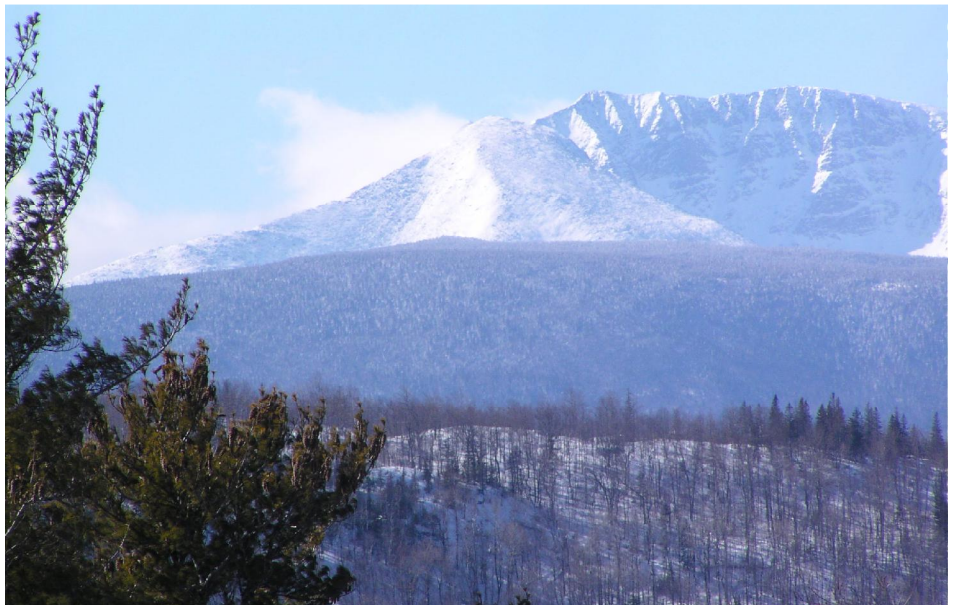


Bloody tourists

A new view for sledders -->



Another award winning picture of Katahdin..Not this year I guess.



A view Ms. Millionaire Conservative left over hippy Bitch doesn't want to share with sledders ^



# Day Eight – Rockwood to Casco via New Jersey – 271 miles

Well, on to the last day. That last, last day. That last last last day. That last grueling last grueling last day. I can't find the words for it. All I can say is just don't bother with ITS 87. Or just **DON'T!!!** I'll never see it again. It was one of those things that you just can't foresee. Like they say, hard telling, not knowing. So, just to give my readers the benefit of foresight, if you ever think about taking ITS 87 from Solon to Wilton **DON'T**. On the map it looks like it's much shorter than ITS 84 to ITS 89, IT'S NOT. It wasn't because of bad conditions; it's just a horrible route. The map shows it crossing Route 2 ONCE. I lost count around the eighth time we crossed it. I remember seeing Rt 2 and seeing the place where it crosses rt2 on the map and thinking great, we're making good progress. Then it went on and on and on and on and on and on and on. We kept crossing route 2 over and over. Towards the end I was completely numb. It was midnight and Otisfield might as well have been New Jersey. The mind was not functioning. Pleasant Lake was like the promised land. It took a lot of control not to hold it wide open, but I knew I would have blown a belt for sure. Oh well, time to take it into account and start planning next year!!!!

Can you say tired? Only 6 more hours. We were beginning to realize we **found the trail from hell!! ----->**

Another one of those great shots with the exposure way off. Sigh.



Border cut.