

## What to Expect on the Road

A blog by “Little Ole” aka Arne Stefferud

Hi there. My name is “Little Ole”, one of your friendly volunteers who will help you have fun on the Habitat 500. I’ve been around since the ride began, so I’d like to provide you with a little story about “what to expect on the road” while you ride the Habitat 500. I understand this story is a blog on the Habitat 500 website. Blog has a new meaning now. In my day, “blog” was overcooked lutefisk!!

Anyway--on with the story. After rising from your slumber, getting dressed, and packing your stuff on the Gear Truck, it’s time to do the following routine before riding to breakfast:

1. Check your bike’s brakes to make sure they work, and check your tires to see if they are inflated to the pressure marked on your bike tire’s sidewall. Tire pumps with pressure gauges will be by the Gear Truck for your convenience. Jamie the mechanic will be nearby if you need some mechanical assistance for your brakes.
2. Make sure you carry the following items with you or have them on your bike: insurance and ID card; a little cash; the day’s Trip-Tic; sunglasses; sunscreen; cell phone if you have one; spare inner tube and 2 tire sticks; tire pump; plus 2 water bottles—preferably full, but folks usually get water at breakfast. If the weather is cool, or rain is forecasted, please bring a rain jacket. Leaving your jacket in the Gear Truck won’t do you any good if you need it later on the road. As my fellow Norwegian Helly Hanson likes to say, “There is no such thing as bad weather—just bad clothing.”
3. Put your bike helmet on and adjust it to fit snugly. Put your bike gloves on and look for the elusive but clearly marked “Out” arrows to Breakfast. They will be spray-painted or marked with chalk near the Gear Truck. Ride and follow the “B” arrows to breakfast.

Typically breakfast will be at a church or school. There will be an “In” arrow showing you the entrance. It’s always a good idea to take your shoes off when entering the building, since your bike cleats could scratch/mar the floor. After breakfast, you should definitely check to make sure you have 2 full water bottles on your bike before you hit the road. Look for the “Out” arrows and begin your day’s ride.

The route will be marked with pairs of arrows (at least 3 pairs) before each turn and one “confirmation arrow” at the end of the turn. There may also be single “confirmation arrows” on long stretches of road. As my Lutheran Sunday School teacher would say, “Confirmation arrows will show you the way. This is most certainly true!”

As you ride, please share the road with vehicles/other cyclists and follow all stop/yield signs and signals. Please ride single file—especially on busy roads and on any hills. Please ride no more than two abreast on low traffic roads, but pull into single file when a car approaches. The same rules apply for riding on trails. When passing, always pass on the left and shout out “on your left” to warn the persons you are overtaking.

Habitat 500 support vehicles will be on the road with you. They are marked with pink “Habitat 500 Support Vehicle” signs. As they pass you, a volunteer will tap his/her car horn or sound an

ooga—ooga horn to greet you and ask if you need assistance. If all is well, please lift your left hand off the handle bar and give a thumbs-up. If you need help, give them a thumbs-down. They will stop up ahead where it is safe to do so to provide you assistance. If you need assistance, and no support vehicle is around, please call the Habitat 500 hotline number listed on your trip-tic.

Typically, Rest Stops will be about 15 to 20 miles apart. They will be marked with a bright pink “Habitat 500” banner as well as “In” and “Out” arrows. Please stop at each one to refill your water bottles, eat snacks and use the restroom. Each Rest Stop has plenty of food and water to satisfy your thirst and hunger. **Remember to drink before you’re thirsty and eat before you’re hungry.**

**Please always check in at “Rest Stop 2”** by finding the friendly volunteer support staff with a clipboard and tell them your rider number. We need to know you made it that far. When everyone has reached that point, we can close down the route from Breakfast to Rest Stop 2.

The route has hills and dales. As I like to say, “Gently undulating topography”. Please use your bike’s gears and keep a relatively constant spin rate. The gears on your bike are most happy to help you, but you have to use them. Shift into a lower gear when you feel stress on your knees/legs.

Please sip from your water bottle about every 15 to 20 minutes. Rest stops have water and energy drink powder, but you need to drink between rest stops to stay well hydrated. A special volunteer--“Hydroman”--will also be on route to provide water between Rest Stops each day. Support vehicles will also carry water if you need it.

There will be fun and interesting sights along your journey. If you decide to stop to enjoy the scenery/yard art, etc. please park your bike off the roadway/trail.

Before you know it, you’ll ride into the overnight stop where you’ll be welcomed and given the next day’s trip-tic and answers to your Frequently Asked Questions on a nearby whiteboard. Please give your greeter your rider number so we have you “checked in”. Your luggage may be unloaded from the Gear Truck. If not, you are one of those lucky riders who help unload the Gear Truck with a bucket brigade. Many hands make light work.

More arrows and signs will direct you to bike parking, showers, indoor and outdoor sleeping areas and the location for dinner and the “Nightly News”. So my friends, “follow the arrows, and all will be well. This is most certainly true!”