



By Adrienne Warren

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GWRRA Members will be riding into Wisconsin this July from all directions to help celebrate GWRRA's 25th Anniversary Wing Ding—"A Family Reunion." It's going to be a big party, as preregistrations at press time are running 210 percent ahead of last year's Wing Ding. Many new events and activities are planned, and attendees will have a wide variety of family entertainment to choose from. And as everybody knows who's been to Wisconsin, some of the most inviting riding roads in the nation are located here.

Part of the fun of Wing Ding is the journey, and the State of Wisconsin has a treat for all motorcyclists. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a program to preserve the state's most scenic and lightly traveled routes called Wisconsin's Rustic Roads. You can choose from over 90 marked byways, spanning over 480 miles.

To qualify for the Rustic Roads Program, a roadway must have outstanding natural features along its edges and be a lightly traveled, local access road. Most are paved, but some are gravel or dirt. You can check on their condition with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Distinctive brown and yellow signs mark all officially designated Rustic Roads. To avoid confusion with the state truck roads, the letter R precedes the number, such as R-41 or R-50. All directions and maps to the Rustic Roads are available in a booklet published by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 7913, Madison, WI 53707-7913. (608) 266-0639.

The Rustic Roads Program guide divides the state into four quadrants, and you can choose from the section appropriate to your route. Each of these roads is a local access road, and all are off the major routes to Madison. Even if you are an ardent "Super Slabber," you can find choices that require just a bit of a detour for a scenic spot for a picnic lunch.

The Southwest Quadrant

The major routes into Madison from the southwest include Interstate 90 that enters Wisconsin at La Crosse and U.S. Highway 151 that enters Wisconsin from Dubuque, Iowa.

R-26

To the south of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, is U.S. Highway 14/61. Rustic Road R-26 is paved County MM that turns off to the right, just past Wisconsin Route 35. After 5.3 miles, you intersect 14/61 again and can head back up to I-90. R-26 provides views of the Mississippi River Valley and the Morman Coulee Creek Valley. A view of the river from Brinkman's Ridge includes the Goose Island wildlife refuge. Stop to see the 1854 Oehler Mill site for a bit of history before returning to more traveled roads.

R-31

Try the loop of paved County C from I-90 to Wisconsin 16 and back. This road takes you through several streets in the Village of West Salem, and you will pass by several historic homes. The Gullickson Octagon House is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Hamlin Garland Homestead is where the late Pulitzer prize-winning author (1860-1940, Late-Traveled Roads, Under The Lion's Paw), did much of his writing. The loop turns you back by following the Swartout Lakeside Park around Lake Neshonoc.

R-66

Riders who come north on U.S. Scenic Highway 151 through Dubuque, Iowa, can detour east on County Highway W for 7.5 miles of paved road. Turn right onto Kennedy Road and follow the Rustic Road signs to Buncombe, Beebe, and Enschede through hilly fields and farmlands. An abandoned lead mine with outbuildings, ore buckets and piles of tailings is visible from Kennedy Road. This part of Wisconsin once mined 85 percent of America's lead.

R-70

From Dubuque, the more adventuresome may want to take U.S. Highway 61 north to R-70. This is

10.1 miles of gravel road that winds through the farms and tree-covered hills of the Platte River Valley. Turn right onto Liberty Ridge Road and pass by a church built in 1861 by German settlers. You can take this road into the town of Stitzer, or take Hill Road to end up on Scenic Road. Here you will find one of the few remaining one-room schoolhouses.

The Northwest Quadrant

The main routes to Madison from the Northwest Quadrant of Wisconsin are Interstate 94 from St. Paul and U.S. Highway 53 from Duluth, Minnesota.

R-71

This Rustic Road is short, but sweet. Just 2.2 miles follows the western edge of Stone Lake, and the trees form an arch that creates a tunnel for much of this route. Take County A off of U.S. 53 to the beginning of this road, just beyond Lake Road. Meander along the lake down to State Highway 70, which will take you back to 53. An alternative is to take the scenic B to M to Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Chrome lovers may want to take a break here to visit the home of Big Bike Parts at 2300 Pioneer Ave. (888) BIG BIKE.

R-67

Wing Ding attendees coming from the Northwest states and Canada or Alaska can reach a classic bit of Wisconsin countryside via U.S. Highway 8. For a calming adventure through woods and wetlands, and along the edge of Skinaway Lake, take West County Line Road north to 16th Avenue. U.S. Highway 63 below Echo Lake completes the loop back down to 8. This 4.6 miles is partially paved with some gravel portions where wildlife and wildflowers abound.

R-6

Travelers coming from St Paul on I-94 or from Duluth on U.S. Highway 53 can swing over on Wisconsin Route 64 to E north for 13.3 miles of paved Rustic Road R-6. The trail ends at the Chippewa-Rusk County line. This stretch is part of the historic Flambeau Trail; important for early settlers traveling north. Wind through county forestlands and the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve in Chippewa County.

The Northeast Quadrant

U.S. Highways 51, 45 and 141 are the major routes for riders coming into Wisconsin from upper Michigan and Eastern Canada.

R-58

Rustic Road R-58 can be reached from U.S. 51, easy access for Members coming from Eastern Canada and upper Michigan. Take State Route 70 west to Mercer Lake Road and travel south. This turns into Blue Lake Road that takes you back to 51. This paved, 9.6-mile route crosses creeks, the Tomahawk River and a railroad bed that was used in the 1800s as a main line to Minocqua.

R-47

U.S. Highway 45 crosses Wisconsin 29 at Wittenberg. South of the town, take County Road M and travel back to U.S. 45. At this point, you can take 45 back up to 29, or turn around and see this 14-mile, paved route from the other direction. A round barn, red granite town hall and a stone filling station are among the historic buildings along the way. The Tigerton and the Wittenberg Historical Museums are also on County M.

R-23, 24

Travel east on State Route 29 to a scenic route that extends from upper Michigan to mid-Wisconsin. Take 29 to 55 south to 22. At this point you can meander the scenic route down to State Route 54. Rustic Road 23 is Rural Road, and passes through Hartman Creek State Park. Rustic Road 24 is Emmons Creek Road. On this road you will cross a spring-fed trout stream and stands of pine and hardwood trees.

R-32

U.S. 141 that ends at Green Bay has a Rustic Road nearby in Marinette County. Dense forests, plentiful wildlife and river and waterfall views may tempt riders to this paved 26.6-mile route. From County Road C, take Parkway Road down to County Road W, which will take you back to 141.

The Southeast Quadrant

Riders coming to Madison from Illinois have Interstate 90 as a major route from Chicago. Interstate 39 connects with 90 near Rockford, Illinois. This route is also labeled U.S. Highway 51. Chicagoans may also want to take Interstate 94 up to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, then pick up Interstate 39 to Madison.

R-2

Members who will be coming from or through Chicago can detour to Rustic Road 2. Take Honey Lake Road, Maple Lane and Pleasant View Road north to Wisconsin 83. Pass through the Wehmhoff Woodland Preserve and see views of rolling fields and dairy farms.

R-12

U.S. Highway 12 out of Chicago intersects Wisconsin 50 at the town of Lake Geneva. Go east on 50 to Back Road and travel north for 5.7 miles of paved twisties. Points of interest are Kettle Moraine formations, several ponds and a tamarack swamp. After crossing the White River, Church Road goes through the community of Lyons. Explore this town's several quaint churches before its ending at Wisconsin 36.

R-68

Admirers of historic houses might want to explore Rustic Road 68. From U.S. Highway 14, take Riley Road north to Wisconsin 59. The route extends up to the Rock and Dane County line. Pass by the 1850s Stebbens and Richardson Grout houses. Also, there is a park at the south end of Riley Road.

R27

Described by the Rustic Road program as having "some of most beautiful landscape in the area," R-27 is off of County Road F that connects the towns of Brodhead and Albany. Take Wisconsin 11 from Interstate 39/51. Park Road is Rustic Road 27, which will take riders past views of high bluffs and dense woods. Take County F up to Wisconsin 59 at Albany.

Be sure you are a part of the celebration of GWRRA's 25th Wing Ding, "A Family Reunion" July 1-4, 2003 in Madison, Wisconsin. Take just a bit of extra time to search out a Rustic Road or two on the way. These scenic byways will yield photos and memories to enhance your stay in the beautiful state of Wisconsin.