

Greetings fellow riders, here's my second e-blast with more information about the 2017 Three Flags Classic (3FC17).

Opening Remarks

The 42nd 3FC is less than nine months away so let's start making plans now. As an experienced 3FC rider I'm going to try and give you as much information as I can from the riders perspective. The intent with every Three Flags Classic is for all participants to have a wonderful experience, whether it's your first time or you've already completed many.

Timing

As mentioned in the first e-blast, registration will be on August 31st in Abbotsford, BC. The rally will start there on Sept. 1st and finish up four days later in Puerto Peñasco, Mexico. The wind up banquet will be on Tuesday, Sept. 5th. The biggest significance to those dates is planning your vacation time. Allow yourself a reasonable amount of time to get to the start in BC. and back home after our banquet in Mexico, then book your vacation time right away.

The Route

The general route is complete, but details of exact checkpoint locations are still to be determined (TBD). I'm giving you the route in point form now and the final "turn by turn" GPS files and route sheets will follow later. Connect these dots and you should be able to make all of your plans now.

Abbotsford, BC – Start

Cross the USA border at Sumas, WA
Mt. Vernon, WA
Everett, WA
Leavenworth, WA
Ellensburg, WA
Yakima, WA
Randle, WA
Carson, WA
Hood River, OR – 1st Checkpoint
Madras, OR
Prineville, OR
Burns, OR – GASOLINE!
Winnemucca, NV – 2nd Checkpoint
Battle Mountain, NV
Austin, NV
Ely, NV
Garrison, UT
Milford, UT
Cedar City, UT
Duck Creek Village, UT
Glendale, UT
Kanab, UT – 3rd Checkpoint
Jacob Lake, AZ
Flagstaff, AZ
Black Canyon City, AZ
Gila Bend, AZ
Lukeville, AZ
Puerto Peñasco, MEX – Finish

Additional Route Notes:

Other than making sure you get gas in Burns, OR the other significant route information is that the roads running south from

Randle, WA to Carson, WA are closed every winter, As a “seasonal” road your software may try to run you the long way around. We’ve only been on this piece of road one other time and it was not long after Mt. St. Helens blew so the roads were all new.

After riding this piece of road three times in the pre-ride I will say this. Allow yourself 2 hours for this stretch of road. If you try to go too fast you won’t enjoy it.

And that leads right into this VERY IMPORTANT route point. There is absolutely no reason to rush or even feel rushed while driving through Washington state. Take your time and enjoy the beauty offered in this part of the world. There are many hundreds of miles going through Nevada, Utah and Arizona where it will be quite easy to make up a bit of time, if required.

Ticket Sales

Tickets should go on sale January 1st, 2017, BUT, if for some reason there’s a glitch in the process, don’t sweat it! No need for anyone to start freaking out if they can’t buy a ticket at 12:01 on January 1st. We’re selling 325 tickets this year (first come first serve), so there should be no reason for anyone to panic.

For all those participants born in the years 1938 to 1991 inclusive your cost is \$275 USD.

For all those participants born in the year 1937 or earlier you ride for free! (Seniors)

For all those participants born in the year 1992 or later your cost is \$150 USD. (Juniors)

Additional Ticket Sales Notes:

- **Regardless of your age or gender, anyone participating must be a current SCMA member!**

- I don't expect hundreds of 80+ year olds to come out of the wood work just because it's free, but I firmly believe that the very few of these senior riders that can still pound out 2000+ miles over a four day weekend have earned it! I have nothing but respect for these people and I can only hope that I'll still be around at 80 and still riding.
- Young riders are virtually non-existent anymore. When the first Three Flags ran in 1976 virtually every one was young. Running my first 3FC in 1980 I was one of these kids at 24 years old. Well I'm still one of the kids and just had my 61st birthday!
- The youth today have a very tough go of it and this small gesture is my way of trying to encourage a few more younger riders.
- The exact process for how we'll be handling the ticket sales for the seniors and the juniors will be discussed in the next e-blast as there is web site work to be completed first.

The Start

Another big change for this year will be at the start. I'm doing away with the "start card" process. Our hotel in Abbotsford is about 10 minutes away from the Sumas border crossing so just imagine 325 riders all leaving at the same time and then lining up 10 minutes later to cross the border. Totally unacceptable!

Instead of a start card every rider will be given a poker chip with their rider number on it when registering. There will be a jar in the hotel lobby starting at midnight Thursday and it will stay there until 8am Friday morning for you to deposit your numbered chip. These chips will be taken to Puerto Peñasco and used for picking ALL the prizes at the finish.

No chip, then no possible prize. It's that simple. Obviously this will allow everyone to leave pretty much whenever they want and we won't need volunteers running around collecting all these cards very early in the morning. Each rider is responsible for their own chip and if it gets lost or someone forgets to drop it into the jar, no problem...you just don't win any prizes.

The Checkpoints

I'll be trying to use local charity groups to man our checkpoints this year. In the spirit of giving and helping to support these local charity organizations I believe it is a good direction for us to go. Not only are the logistics much simpler when the checkpoint volunteers are living locally but they can also provide good local knowledge of the area and at the same time they're raising money for good causes.

In addition, when checking into the Finish at Puerto Peñasco you will be asked to pick your favourite checkpoint. The winning checkpoint will get extra money for their charity so it should encourage them to do a great job for us, It could be the great coffee, that special pot of homemade soup or just the way they made you feel when you pulled into their checkpoint that wins you over. A win-win for all of us.

The checkpoint schedule is complete. Click [HERE](#) to read/print it in a separate window. Please remember that the exact location of each checkpoint is still TBD and may not necessarily be at a hotel. In fact, over the years we've had checkpoints in parks, highway rest stops or just a parking lot somewhere.

The Finish

Our first Mexico finish in 25 years and only our fourth ever! Now I

know there are people that have concerns about crossing into Mexico and I get that. So step one was to go to Puerto Peñasco (PP) last May for my first time and check it out. So picture this, you cross the Mexican border at Lukeville, AZ, drive through the small border town of Sonoyta, Mex. and then drive in a virtually straight line for 60 miles to the Finish. This stretch of highway is a “hassle-free” zone which means there are no military or police road blocks ever. PP is where residents from Phoenix and Tucson go for weekend getaways or summer vacations and for the rest of the time it is a very quiet little village. So far so good.

Then back for another three nights at the Peñasco Del Sol Hotel before Tombstone this year. Sunday night there were still people around but they were thinning out and for Monday and Tuesday nights I virtually had the hotel to myself. The food was good, the staff helpful and friendly, the air conditioning worked well and best of all, the Wi-fi worked quite nicely. This is not the case in many other locations.

Now another huge change for this year is the timing of the Finish. Over the years the 3FC has been basically either a four day, 2000 mile ride or a five day, 2500 mile ride every five years. (The next 5-day rally's in 2020) Since we're going south this year it will probably be very hot driving from Phoenix to PP and the route is a bit more than the 2100 miles, I'm trying to encourage more participation by making it safer and allowing riders to check into the Finish on Tuesday. So for those riders that find themselves tired, running a bit behind schedule, or just too hot to finish up on Monday night, they can get a room somewhere on Monday and then leave early Tuesday for PP. This is all about getting more people to join in and share in this good time!

Having said that, let me be clear, we have never tried this before and

there are some serious reservations about making this change. The intent on everyone's part should be to get to the Finish in PP by Monday night and I expect that 99% of us will do that. What I do not want is someone to push themselves beyond their limits just to "get a buckle".

Other Information

The Mailing Address for all mail-in entries this year will be:

SCMA
20812 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 220
Woodland Hills, California
USA. 91364
Attn: John Mickus

The border crossing in Sumas, WA is open 24 hours a day.

The border crossing at Lukeville, AZ is only open from 6am to midnight daily.

Mexican insurance is highly recommended, but not mandatory. The cost for me each time was about \$15 USD for every 24 hours regardless of when you are in Mexico. In other words, you can get insurance from noon on Monday to noon on Wednesday for 48 hours of coverage. There will be more information about this Mexican insurance to follow in future e-blasts.

I'm planning to have another poker game this year with \$275 USD as first prize.

For T-shirt sales this year we're looking at giving you a choice of

either long sleeved or short sleeved. Also if anyone wants to buy some extra T-shirts we'd like to make that available as well.

Closing Remarks

Let's go and have some more fun this year. Talk to your friends and spread the word and this ride. Nothing would make me happier than selling 325 tickets and having another 50 people on the waiting list. There are roads we've only done once or twice before and some of Nevada's Hwy 50 that we've never ridden in our first 41 years.

If you have any questions at all about any of this, please ask!

Click [HERE](#) for the Flyer.

Chris White

3flagschair@sc-ma.com

[250-283-7256](tel:250-283-7256)
