



# Michigan Sport Touring Riders

## April 2026 Newsletter

Editor - Peter Stephan

In this issue!  
Getting to Shafer Trail  
Shafer Trail  
Bridges - Grand Tour

## Getting to Shafer Trail

By Roger Zander

### Club Meetings & Events

#### **Eastside Meeting**

Saturday, April 25, 9 AM

[Senate Coney Island](#)

34359 Plymouth Rd. Livonia

#### **Westside Meeting**

Saturday, May 8, 11 AM

[Alibi Bar & Grill](#)

1394 E. Riverside Dr. Ionia

### 2026 Membership

#### Forms

#### [2026 MSTR Renewing Membership Form](#)

\$25 to renew for 2026

#### [2026 MSTR New Membership Form](#)

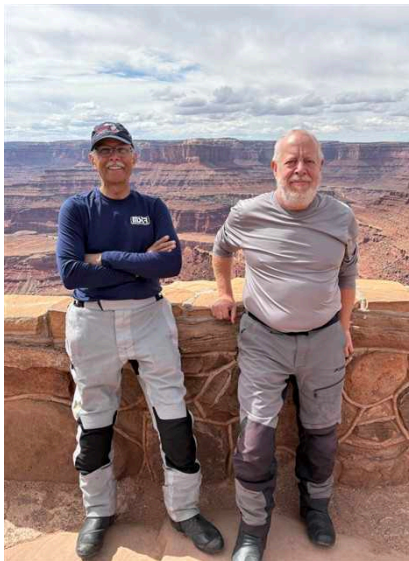
New members may join for \$25. The form includes the release form for new members to join in 2026 rides.

Learn more about MSTR  
HERE: <https://mstriders.com>

You may have heard of the 2025 Route 66 Road Trip which was organized by Keith Danielson. The four participants, all on BMW Motorcycles, were Keith, Kelly McCrystal, Tom Hudson and I.

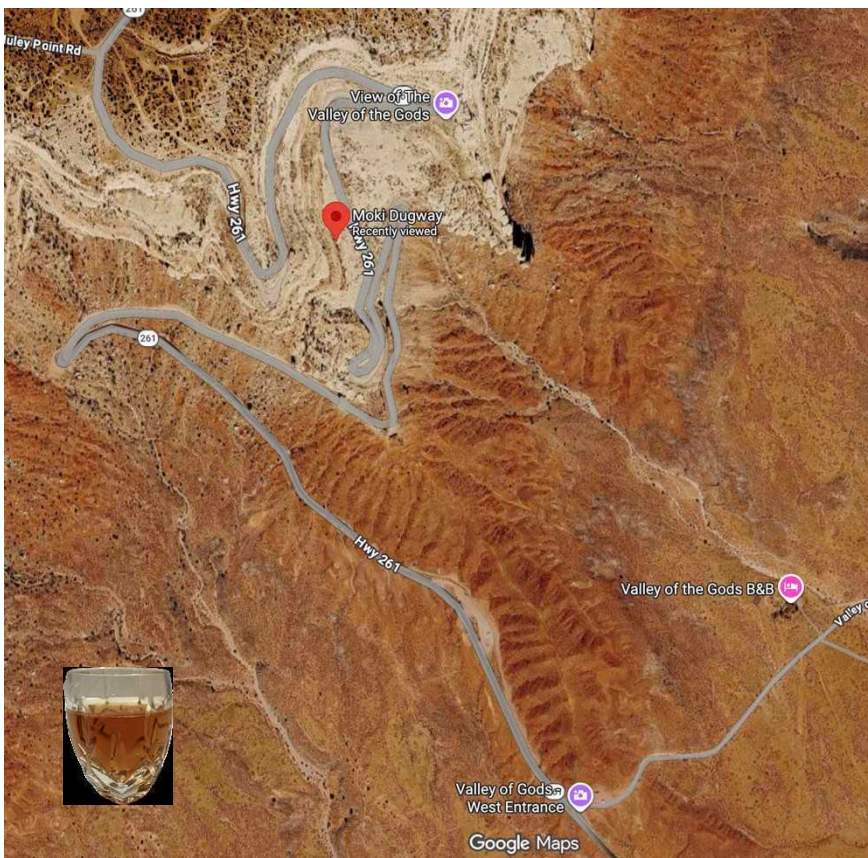
Upon the completion of the westbound Route 66 trip, we were free to determine our own path back to Michigan. Early in the morning, our group rode together one last time. Following the Angeles Crest Highway to cross the mountains north of Los Angeles, we headed northeast taking I-15 to Las Vegas. From

that point, Keith & Kelly chose the shortest distance between two points and made a beeline for home. Tom and I chose to visit most of the national parks in southern Utah before we too made the monotonous, cruise-controlled crossing of the Great Plains.

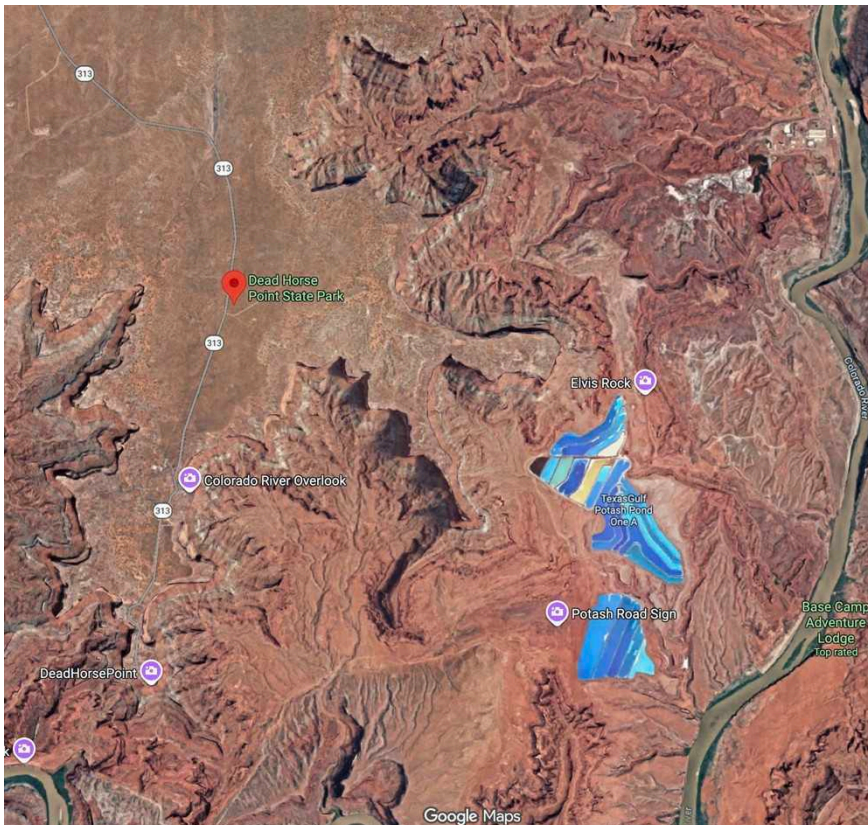


We headed south on Utah Highway 95 after visiting Capitol Reef National Park early in the morning. While sightseeing it he paved road came to an end with the option to venture into a steep walled canyon to Capitol Gorge Road. I don't recall which of us proposed we should try it, but the road was certainly worth

the 5-mile round-trip on a level graded gravel surface. The canyon walls at times we're near vertical, rising hundreds of feet to the clear blue sky. A hiking trail began at the end of this road. Tom and I agreed that this was to be a riding trip only with no hiking. These roads were mostly in good repair and the riding was unremarkable except for the time when my bike sunk into soft sand on the edge of a dirt road. Our day finished in the small town of Mexican Hat arriving at the San Juan River Inn, overlooking the river for which it was named. Upon checking in, it was suggested that we could take a walk along the river. The trail was narrow and rocky with a steep drop off into the fast-flowing river. No thanks, we're good. No unnecessary risks for us. Ha!



On this day, we were to follow Utah 95 south, turn onto Utah 261 south and eventually take US 163 to tour Monument Valley. Now the beginning 25 mile stretch of Utah 261 is smooth, flawless pavement, up until it's not. Reaching the southern cliff edge of Cedar Mesa, the pavement ends and the road drops off into the Moki Dugway. The Dugway was created in 1958 by Texas Zinc, a mining company, to transport uranium ore to a processing mill in Mexican Hat, Utah. Suddenly we were on a narrow one lane gravel road with 5 miles of switchbacks that drops 1200 feet over 2 1/2 miles. This was a planned part of our route which I had researched beforehand. Reading Google descriptions and viewing many pictures, including one of a C-8 Chevrolet Corvette, I had determined that our R1200 RT bikes should be able to handle the Dugway, especially since we were headed downhill. The road surface was mostly graded level and there were a few places where opposing traffic could pass. No guard rails did add to the anxiety of trying to not fall off the edge of the road. Our mission was accomplished and at the bottom, after the last switchback, the blacktop returned on Utah 261 to carry us onward to Monument Valley.



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The morning dawned sunny and we had pleasant weather for our long ride north up US 191 to Moab. Just before reaching the city, we made a right turn onto Loop Road which is a twisty route into the Manti-LaSal National Forest. The road was a black ribbon of new pavement, so new that it had no marking lines and we are both anticipating some fun riding up ahead. However, after just a few miles, an orange sign announced ROAD CLOSED AHEAD and a highway construction worker turned us around due to active paving operations.

Back on the highway to Moab, it was too early to check into our motel so we instead continued north of town to Utah 313 which is the highway leading to Dead Horse Point State Park and the Canyonlands National Park. On the way, I was calculating when we should return to Moab so we could still do a ride into Arches National Park later in the



Dead Horse Point offers some amazing vistas of the Colorado River canyons and the Potash Ponds near the river. The park ranger station has informational displays regarding the geology and history of the area. According to legend, the park is so named because of its use as a natural corral by cowboys in the 19th century. If horses were trapped out on the point, they could die due to no water and no way to escape. We continued on the paved road to the Overlook on the actual Dead Horse Point. After the obligatory photo ops, Tom pointed out a road deep in the canyon. From our high vantage point, viewing down and outward, this road was over 3000 feet distant. Watching for a few minutes, there appeared to be some SUVs and a couple of GS style motorcycles on the stretch of road visible to us. "We could ride on that road," Tom suggested and I said that we need to ask the park ranger about it. We parked the bikes, I went inside and asked the Ranger: what is

the name of that road, where does it go, how do we find it and can we take our motorcycles on it? The Ranger replied it is the Shafer Trail and Potash Road, well-known dirt roads that descend into the canyon following the Colorado River back to Moab for 45 miles, the turn-off was easy to find and yes motorcycles use the road along with other vehicles. Internet was not available, so I could perform no additional research on these supposedly well-known roads. We were off on a spontaneous side trip adventure.



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MSTRiders is a community of enthusiastic, sport-touring motorcycle riders, based in Michigan open to all motorcycle brands.

Community Organization

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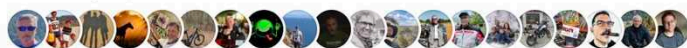


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## MSTR-Michigan Sport Touring Riders

Private group · 47 members



+ Invite

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## 2026 Event Schedule

### 1/2K Ride

Saturday, May 2, 2026

### Ladies Day Ride & Stockbridge All Clubs Day

Sunday, May 3, 2026

### Michigan Renegade Mountain Ride (MR2)

\* May 10 – 15, 2026

### Don & Jan Pennington's Summer Sizzle BBQ

Sunday, June 7, 2026

### Hocking Hills Twisty Tour (HT2)

\* June 18 – 21, 2026

### Up North Camping Ride V (UNCR)

\* July 9 – 19, 2026

### Barn Burn Raid (BBR)

\* August 12 – 16 (standard)  
August 9 – 16, 2026 (extended)

### Tip Of The Mitt (TOTM)

\* September 10 – 13, 2026

### Fall Color Ride (FCR)

\* September 23 – 27, 2026

### Last Fall Ride (LFR)

\* TBD, 2026

\* Multi-day events include travel days to and from the event.

### ½ K Ride - Saturday May 2, 2026

This ride starts in Brighton and goes to the Fox Powersports complex in Wyoming, Michigan for lunch. We take mostly curvy back roads to get there. Have lunch and browse some of their offerings in motorcycles and riding apparel. Indian, Triumph, Honda, Royal Enfield, Kawasaki, Yamaha, Aprilia, Can Am, Ducati and more all under one roof!

The ride departs the Brighton Meijer gas station at 9 a.m on Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Be ready to go with a full tank.

Event Organizer: Bob Komjathy

Email: [Rx\\_Mich@yahoo.com](mailto:Rx_Mich@yahoo.com) for gpx files and any other questions.

## The Shafer Trail

By Roger Zander



I was confident that we wouldn't get lost. Passing by a large sign at the beginning of the trail that read SHAFER TRAIL, Tom asked me to wait so he could take a picture. He had some concerns about the fine print on the sign but I said not to worry since we had done this the day before and the road immediately before us appeared as a level graded dirt road. In short order, the trail dropped off the mesa just like the Moki Dugway, this time it was 1500 feet down. Unlike the Dugway, the rough, slippery narrow switchbacks had probably not seen a surface grader for years. On street tires, our R1200RTs were okay rolling downhill but it would be challenging to get traction and go back uphill.

When the descent to the canyon leveled out and the most dangerous part was over, we pulled off to take some pictures and ponder our situation. We were having second thoughts about what we were doing there. It was best to continue through the canyon which seemed safer than a return uphill.

Weaving back and forth, we sought the smoothest course amongst the rocks and ravines. Sometimes we would give it the gas, hold the bike straight and hope for the best. We experienced no crashes but numerous near misses and continuous high anxiety. I became quite upset with myself for leading us into this mess. At one point the trail dissolved into an expanse of nothing but rocks and gravel. I scanned the rocks ahead, looking for those that were shiny from tires rolling on them to determine which way was best for us to proceed. I'm sure there were some awesome river canyon landscapes had we stopped. I didn't want to stop being far more concerned with mechanical survival than natural scenery. This day had turned into a real Ninja course for street bikes. Thankfully the weather was dry. If there had been even a sprinkle of rain, traction would have been lost. When I thought we had seen it all on the trail, before us appeared about a 50 yard stretch of bare rock slanted about 15 degrees to the left.



This was another "hold on and hope for the best" moment. We kept bobbing and weaving along eventually arriving on Potash Road. The Shafer Trail portion was only 13 miles but felt it more like 50 miles. Following Potash Road, which turned from a trail into a real maintained gravel road, we passed by the vast Potash Ponds that we had viewed from Dead Horse Point hours earlier. Like an oasis in the desert, we saw pavement up ahead. What a relief! Our Shafer Trail torment was over but the memories remain. Fool hardy bravado and assumptions based on recent prior experiences resulted in some unhappy riders taking unnecessary risks. However, I am happy

to report that no motorcycles were harmed in the making of this adventure.



Once safely back in Moab, we checked into The Virginian Motel. Who remembers "The Virginian" a TV western from the 1960s? This motel was a decently maintained relic from that era. After a quick shower we were both revived and ready to jump back on the bikes making our way to Arches National Park. Since we didn't have a timed entry ticket for Arches, we had waited until 4:00 pm, when the park was open to anyone. It turned out that due to government shutdowns, there was no ranger to control the entrance and we could have visited earlier in the day. Under different circumstances it's possible that the choice to ride Shafer Trail may have never occurred. The day finally ended with dinner across the street from the motel at the Moab Diner, a retro themed breakfast and burger joint. While enjoying some much-needed comfort food, Tom and I reflected on our day. We had survived a miserable ride on a potentially dangerous backroad and in the end was nothing to brag about. It was resolved to keep our R1200RTs on the street and leave the dirt and rocks to the dual sport folks.

Special thanks to Roger for the article and photos featured in this issue.

**Remember:** All published articles earn entry into the year-end newsletter drawing AND your fellow members and newsletter editor appreciate you! You will also earn points toward the **2026 MOTY Awards!**

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# 2026 Michigan Bridges Grand Tour

Keith Danielson, Creator and Organizer



There are 14 different bridges selected as checkpoints. To document your visit to a checkpoint, all you need to do is take a picture of your motorcycle with the grand tour sign and the checkpoint behind it. If riding two-up, you can take one picture as above with your passenger in it. At the MOTY banquet we'll have the usual awards for Grand Tourer, Baby Grand Tourer, and Troll (for those who have to stay below the bridge). You can also earn up to 42 extra credits for special recognition as a Grand Tourer PRO. Extra credits can include other Michigan bridges, attractions, scenic spots, historical spots, unique restaurants (McDonald's doesn't count), or whatever else you find that is uniquely Michigan. This year, I'm also suggesting three bridges that are not located in Michigan that I think you'll find very interesting. One is one of the oldest suspension bridges in the USA, and two more are less than an hour from that, and can be a great destination on one of our favorite riding events of the year.

As in the past, all you will need to do is sign up at a meeting, or request the information directly by emailing me at [keithmdanielson@gmail.com](mailto:keithmdanielson@gmail.com) to receive the detailed information for the grand tour.

The *2026 Michigan Bridges Grand Tour* will begin on March 28, and runs to December 21. It's done at your convenience, in any order, by yourself or with friends, and as quickly or slowly as you like. There are no prescribed routes, just 14 checkpoints. It's basically an excuse and a destination to go for a ride on your motorcycle.