

## PMC 2014 - The Team McKay experience

Day 1: Yarmouth -> Bourne (26 miles)

This is Year 10 of Team McKay / Team Trout taking on the Pan-Mass Challenge, a two-day cycling extravaganza across Massachusetts. We try to make each year a different experience, seeing a different part of the state, riding a different ride, doing something different. We decided this year we would combine our ride with volunteering at the Day 1 Finish Line at Mass. Maritime Academy in Bourne. We would ride from our Cape House to Bourne in the morning, work our shift unloading and sorting rider luggage, then return to Yarmouth on the bike (which we have done the last several years to sleep in our own beds rather than in the relative discomfort of the dorms at MMA).

The morning began in promising fashion. We were joined by fellow Team Trout member Steve for the early morning ride, which was a beautiful two hour run to Bourne. We had the roads to ourselves, except for the pair of osprey who glared at us from their nest as we passed. We rode in past year's PMC jerseys, and were ready for our morning shift at 8:30. The bags, however, did not arrive until nearly 10:00, so Ian found his own way to pass the time while we waited to get to work in earnest. (Free donuts - what could be better?)



The weather forecast was iffy for Saturday, and around 10am it started to rain. Hard and steady. We were under a tent unloading and shifting bags, and we really felt for the riders as they arrived, soaking wet. We were happy to help them find their bags and let them get into dry clothes, it is MISERABLE riding in the rain. At the same time, it was clear they felt a sense of shared accomplishment - the overall mood was upbeat and positive, despite the rain - everyone was working for a cause. And (joined by Elmo), we all enjoyed our volunteer experience, and got wet enough (as you can see from our end of day photo in our green volunteer T-shirts) to feel like we had shared in the suffering.



Day 2 - Yarmouth -> Newton (112 miles)

Lest you think we were complete slackers! - we teed up Day 2 as a "mega ride", longer than any day on the regular PMC route. PMC offers volunteers a one-day ride back from Bourne to Wellesley of 80 miles, we added on to that by riding the 25 miles (again) back to Bourne, plus a few more extra miles to our home in Newton. The day began with 4:15am wakeup, and rolling in (as Ian puts it) in the "black dark" well before sunrise. The team was cheery at the start, in their bright 2014 PMC colors and traditional trout-topped helmets.



Why Trout? That's a long story, and goes back to Steve and Elmo's [favorite book from high school](#). But the trout let us spot each other, and the crowds enjoy them (especially when we

squeak at them). And, as I pointed out, the trout keep the rain away – we didn't have them on Saturday, but despite the again iffy forecast enjoyed a largely rain-free ride on Sunday.

We enjoyed a beautiful morning running up through Southeastern Massachusetts, an area I have spent little time in. Cranberry bogs EVERYWHERE, along with Ocean Spray's plant in Carver. I got my first visit to Gillette Stadium, where we were greeted by Pat Patriot and Patriots cheerleaders. We were met along the way by other Team Trout members Alex and Len, who joined us for part of the ride. And (finally!), carried by our trusty grey tandem steed, arrived home safely in Newton, tired, but feeling a sense of accomplishment.



I always have so many emotions during and after the ride. Our typical training ride is 40-60 miles, so beyond that length that things get a little hairy. There is a strong feeling of "I'm really tired / my butt hurts / when is this going to end". And I make that go away by thinking about why I am doing this, and who I am doing it for – not just people I know affected by cancer, but all the people you have told me about too. I run through the list of names in my head, that keeps me going for a few more miles. And I keep repeating that process. It works. When I say "I can't do this without you", it's not just financially, it's also because I know it means as much to you as it does to me. So I keep going, this year, and hopefully for more to come.

Thanks to all of you (more than 60 of you!), Team McKay raised over \$15,000 for cancer research this year, bringing our total over ten years to over \$120,000. 100% of those dollars go to support research activities at Dana-Farber. PMC will raise over \$40 million this year, and has raised over \$400 million over the past 35 years. Together we make a difference, it adds up. Thanks again for helping to make this possible!

Best – Team McKay (Mike, Ian plus of course Judy, our support team this year)