

## *The world's best time trial?*

BY CHARLES HOWE

Imagine a race course that winds along the shoreline of an island paradise, past glittering waters and miles of pristine beaches. Is it somewhere in the Caribbean? The South Pacific?

Hardly. In fact, this idyll is in our own back yard, about 120 miles away: it's Presque Isle State Park, just north of Erie, and for more than 20 years, it has hosted as fine a time trial race as can be found anywhere. Exactly 12.5 miles long, dead-flat, and with no corners, it's where you go to set a PR.

The course, therefore, is rather straightforward, but here are some highlights:

- ① Parking, registration/packet pick-up, and restrooms are at Beach #1 Bath House. An access road (dashed line) that is perfect for warming up runs parallels to the race course for the first couple miles.  
  
After registering, you might want to drive a short way up the road to the Vista #1 or Vista #2 Parking Lot, which (unlike the registration area) are paved.
- ② Up until this point – about 2 miles from the start, or the first 4-5 minutes, depending on your speed – you should try to restrain your effort, as described in the comments abouts pacing in the [accompanying article](#). Experienced riders should be able maintain their aero position through the gentle bends that start just beyond this point, but if time trialing is new to you, you might want to play it safe and come off the extensions, on to the handlebar ends. This will cost you time – but a crash can cost you even more.
- ③ Two-way traffic begins at this point going out, and ends here on the way back.
- ④ As you round this gradual left-hand curve, you'll encounter the one grade that may cause you to downshift, but it's very short and mild.
- ⑤ A few years ago, the author went a bit too wide and nearly off the right edge of the road at this innocuous-looking left-hand bend, possibly due in part to a gust of wind. Remember that a TT bike, with a rear disc or wheel cover and a deep-section wheel in front, will get pushed around a bit, so allow yourself some extra margin for error.
- ⑥ You shouldn't be able to sprint at the end of a TT – if you can, then you didn't go hard enough – but it's a good idea to hold a little bit in reserve, then begin to expend it from right about here (1.75 miles to go) to the finish line.
- ⑦ Don't just head home after finishing! The park offers a kaleidoscope of activities, including birdwatching, boating, canoeing, fishing, hiking, in-line skating, jogging, kayaking, sunbathing, swimming, volleyball, and water-skiing. A 13-mile paved multi-purpose trail parallels the main park road, and there are an additional 11 miles of dirt hiking trails.

The Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC), opened in 2006, serves as the gateway to the park. TREC is dedicated to teaching visitors about Presque Isle and its many different life forms. Admission is free to the interactive exhibits and the 75-foot observation tower. Large-format movies, guided tours, and other activities are also available. For more information, visit <http://www.trecpi.org>.

The spring and fall time trials are presented by the Iroquois Schools Foundation, while the summer edition of the race, named the Rick Gorzynski Memorial Time Trial, is staged by the [Presque Isle Cycling Club](#); keep an eye on the club's web site for more information on each event.. All three races are advance-entry only.



A simplified map of Presque Isle, showing the race course and start/finish detail.