



TRAILS & TALES

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GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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PANAMINT VALLEY DAYS, *By: Curtis Martin*

Another year has come and gone and it was another banner year, with great club participation and significant donations to the raffle. Once again we were Trail Leaders for the Pleasant Canyon/South Park Loop (3rd year in a row).

A few members showed up on Thursday Nov. 11 to stake out our encampment, which turned out to be very fortunate as we had a rather large group this year. As has been in previous years, camp was setup on a knoll just north of the BBQ Pit/kitchen. I showed up Friday afternoon with my oldest daughter (who was visiting from Virginia Beach) as I spent all day Thursday swapping out a failed transmission in the Cherokee. By the time I arrived most of the club members that were already there were out on runs, so I checked in and picked up the Trail Crew shirts and associated paraphernalia.

By the time everyone started rolling in and returning from their runs, dinner plans were developing. There was a huge potluck with plenty of food to go around.

Saturday came too early and I located my Trail Crew and we decided on a plan of attack. It was first decided who would be Tail End, then we would try to evenly distribute ourselves amongst the participants. I made it clear to Randy and Karen that they were **NOT** going to be Tail End, because the last 2 years they've had to bring people back and haven't been able to complete the run.

The Trail Crew consisted of Curtis Martin (Trail Leader), George & Linda Graham (Tail End), Andy & Lisa Couch, Ron Page & family, Dennis & Kelly Ambrecht and last but not least Randy & Karen Schortzmann. We then proceeded to assemble at the designated spot.



Matt taking the wrong line, which ultimately ended him on a tow line.



He didn't get any body damage, but it was close; maybe body massage.

By the time we arrived at Ballarat to air down we had accumulated around 42-44 vehicles. WOW! I think we only had 30+ last year. From what I heard there was a couple of minor incidents that separated us. The first incident was Matt Lemons following me and trying to straddle a washout and slipped in. I tried to no avail to pull him forward and he ended up being freed by a tug backwards.

During the extrication we found out that someone else was stuck further back on the trail. We waited for what seemed like forever before proceeding up to Claire Camp. We ended up making it the lunch stop while waiting for everyone else to catch up. After awhile a few stragglers showed up and we got word from the back of the pack to go ahead on to Rita's Cabin. We hung out at Rita's for a bit then headed over to Middle Park. By the time I reached the far side of Middle Park I heard over the radio that the group doing South Park/Pleasant was heading our way. They decided to hold up and wait for us to pass. We proceed to a lookout overlooking Stripped Butte and Death Valley. After playing "Parking Lot Attendants" I took off up a hill to get a group shot. There are 42 vehicles parked on that little lookout.



The lookout overlooking Stripped Butte and Death Valley, where 42 vehicles parked.

We then proceeded to the infamous Chicken Corner and Bridge. I got out and spotted everyone around the corner to make sure we didn't lose anyone, then jogged down to the Briggs Cabins to catch up to my daughter. After a short time at the cabins my daughter, Jessica, drove the rest of the way down South Park and back to camp.

All in all I think everyone had a good time and I'd like to thank the Trail Crew and the rest of the Club members that were there to assist if needed.

NIGHTMARE GULCH *By:*

Curtis Martin

November 28, 2004. Feeling the need for a Thanksgiving trip and wanting to play with my new GPS, I sent out an email about a run to Nightmare Gulch on the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

Those in attendance were myself and daughter Jessica, George & Linda Graham, Matt Lemons, and Bill "Maddog" Maddux. We met at the theater parking lot at 0800 and left shortly thereafter. Once we arrived at the trailhead & aired down we hit the trail.

Everything was pretty uneventful until the climb out of the gulch. I made it up and waited for Matt to follow, but with his "open" differentials he again needed a tug (sorry Matt!) After some rock tossing and a couple of tugs, he was at the top and the others followed.

From there, we just wandered around and I followed a little used road by an opal mine and up a wash until we couldn't go any further with the rigs that were there. It looked like an old motorcycle trail that went a little farther up the wash before heading up a hill. Another day!!

From there we backtracked and headed out to Hwy 14 and ended up at Texas Cattle Co for lunch. Another good day! Thanks all...

NOVEMBER MEETING HILIGHTS

The November meeting is always held one week earlier than usual in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday. As usual, it was supposed to be held at Texas Cattle Co. However, our preferred server, Jenny, who was home from work early at 4:00, not to go back, gave us heads up that we were not down on the book, and another party was booked. So Bill called club members and I put out a late email, that the meeting was changed to Nickoletti's. We had a good turn out. We welcomed new guests, Bill & Samela Dorey.

Trey Fellows is working on our web page in a class he is taking at Cerro Coso.

Bill & Kathy Martin were voted in as our newest members. Welcome.

Since we hadn't talked about the Christmas Party at the last meeting, and no one volunteered their home, we discovered it was too late to make a reservation for any of the weekends in December, so settled for the 15th, a Wednesday night at Texas Cattle Co.

The following were elected as officers for the year 2005:

President: George Graham

Vice President: Warner Fellows

Recording Secretary: Mary Kus

Corresponding Secretary: Mary Grimsley

Treasurer: Jim Kenney

Board of Directors: Andy Couch & Bill Maddux

CONGRATULATIONS NEW OFFICERS.

2004 CHRISTMAS PARTY

Just about every member attended the weeknight party, except our Associate members, who all live out of town and could not make a weeknight party. We apologize for our not handling the arrangements earlier, so we could have had a weekend get together.

We had a nice dinner, the President's plaque was presented to Dennis Ambrecht for a job well done. Then we played Gear of Fortune, with "Mr. Webster" at the helm . . . our very own . . . Mr. Maddog Maddux. It was the usual fun and laughs, with the ladies acting like ladies and letting the men win. Or did they win because they were sober???? Hmmmmm!

Gear was followed by our usual gift exchange, which is always fun, with the usual excitement over two or three gifts that intrigued with wrapping or size or weight. All in all, a fun time was had by all.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE

USFS Announces New Planning Rules

The Forest Service has released its new Forest Planning Regulations. These regulations will continue requiring public input on major decisions while also making management plans more flexible.

Additionally, these regulations will streamline the planning process and reduce costs. There is also a proposed change to procedures for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that will be open to public comment for 60 days.

The new rule and the proposal identifying how plan development, amendment and revision will comply with NEPA are expected to be forwarded to the Federal Register today for publication. Both documents are available at

www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma.

The public will have 60 days to comment on the NEPA proposal. Written comments may be sent to: Forest Service Content Analysis Team, P.O. Box 22777, Salt Lake City, Utah 84122. Comments also will be accepted by electronic mail to planningce@fs.fed.us or by facsimile to 801-517-1015.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2004/releases/12/planning-rule.shtml>

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PROMOTING PUBLIC LANDS FOR RESPONSIBLE MULTIPLE USE