



# TRAILS & TALES

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## COYOTE FLAT / BAKER CREEK, *By Gary Luckeroff*

We left Ridgecrest at 8:00 with 8 vehicles: Bill Maddux; Bill & Cathy Martin; Mark Pahuta; Kevin & Denise Serpa; Wynn & daughter Emily Gregory; Terry & daughter Megan Grimsley; and Guy & Kay Kendall. We fueled up in Big Pine and aired down, as it's only a couple of miles to the trailhead and it's back roads.

We headed up and across Warren Bench. This first part of the trail has some tight switchbacks, but after that the trail is very easy all the way to the top. Once at the top we could see cattle in Onion Valley, so we decided to go on down the rocky narrow section of the trail before the cattle started up. Everyone made it down with no problems and we had lunch in Onion Valley.

After lunch we headed out for Coyote Flats. Cattle were all over the place, including lying in the road. This made it very slow, as you had to wait for the cattle to get up and move out of the way.

Finally we are in Coyote Flats and there waiting for us was Greg Weirick from Bishop. He had some other vehicles with him, including a couple Broncos and a CJ. They were waiting for us because they wanted to go out the way we came in, but the rancher asked them not to. He wanted to keep the cattle in Onion Valley over night and drive them out toward Big Pine Sunday morning, so Greg and his group went back out the same way they came in . . . from Bishop.

We headed for the lower Baker Creek campground just to check it out, and found there was a lot of water in the creek. We then headed



Guy & Kay in their Rubi with the Palisade Glacier behind them.



Mark, Guy & Gary "sit 'n bull" in camp.

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for the upper Baker Creek campground and on the way we saw Mike, also from Bishop. His group was headed for Coyote Lake to camp for the night. We set up camp at the upper Baker Creek campground. A few of us went for a hike to Hidden Lake, including Cathy, Mark & myself, who took the trail and Terry & Guy went cross country. They had a much harder walk than those of us that took the trail. We all made it back to camp, fixed dinner and sat around the fire.

Sunday morning we left at 9:00am, stopping at the cabin. The cowboys had used it last night, as it was all cleaned up and the stove was still warm. So it was off to Funnel Lake. The lake has a lot of water but not enough to run over into the funnel. From there we headed back for Coyote Flats and had a lunch stop at the campsite and meadow just off of the Coyote Flat road.

After lunch we were off to Coyote Ridge where it was a little windy and a lot cooler. We went all the way to the end to the lookout for Green & Brown Lakes at the saddle. Just before the end of the road my GPS elevation was 11,740 ft. We walked to the lookout to see both lakes . . . what a view. Then we headed back down to Coyote Lake & found there is water in the lake.

We put out a campfire that someone did not do a very good job of putting out. We then went back to the first campsite as you start up the road to the lake and set up camp. Monday morning we left camp at 9:00am. We started to work our way out to Bishop, but instead turned north at Salty Petersons Mine to go to an overlook of Bishop.

We stopped for pictures then went down to the main road and down to Bishop, where we aired up at the DWP substation. It was then off to Big Pine to the Country Kitchen for lunch. After lunch it's the long trip down 395 & home. No one had any problems and the weather was perfect.

Vehicles parked above Green & Brown Lakes.



**DON'T FORGET** to check out the club forum under our Members Only page and to add your 2-cents worth.

## September Meeting Hilites

Vice-President Warner Fellows led the meeting in the President's absence.

Various runs and conditions of the trails in the Panamint Mountains were discussed. Both Pleasant and South Park need work and Goler is in bad shape too. It was pretty much decided that the PVD run up Pleasant would return via Pleasant, unless work is done or vehicles start traversing South Park. We will probably need to change the vehicle requirements for PVD. Jim Kenney has also volunteered to lead a historical run, which was to be more for the SUV crowd, however, after prerunning that could change also.

The Christmas party was discussed and voted on, and a South Park maintenance run was scheduled for Oct 1 with PVD organizers.

## **EUREKA / SALINE VALLEY TRAIL MAINTENANCE** *By Bill Maddux*

Met with Warner & Pam Fellows and Bill & Kathy Martin on a nice October 7<sup>th</sup> Friday morning. While waiting to see if any one else was going, Bill pulled out a book and asked if we had ever done the Sierra View trail. It was rated as a "difficulty 5" trail and it was just south of Big Pine. Well, that sound -ed better than driving some washboard, dusty road into north Eureka Valley, so I changed my plans.

We picked up Gary Luckeroff at Pearsonville and proceeded on up Highway 395. Just south of Aberdeen Station, we headed west on Division Creek Road. After taking a few wrong turns, which were not on the map, we rapidly climbed to over 8000-foot elevation and a nice view of the Owens Valley. We finally ended up in a beautiful campsite in Armstrong Canyon, where we ate lunch. The road was not that tough, but some big rocks in the road near the top would have made it very difficult for some yuppie-mobiles. We dropped back down and after getting gas, set up camp north of Big Pine.

Saturday morning we left Big Pine around 0900 for Saline Valley. The Eureka Valley Saline Valley narrows and corridor was in relatively good condition. At the top of Steele Pass we took the left hand fork in the road looking for a cabin, which is supposed to be in that area. We never found it. It took us one hour to travel the 11 miles from Steele Pass to the upper springs. It took us an additional 15 minutes to travel the 4 miles down to the middle springs. The road was in the best condition I have ever seen.

There were not a lot of vehicles around the spring but there were a lot of people in the pools. Warm afternoon until the wind kicked up. The wind did become subdued after sunset and it was a pleasant night, except for a burro loudly braying.

Sunday morning we went up the North Pass Road to Marvel Canyon and Jackass Flats. The road was in good condition except for the last couple of miles, which the road grader operator really screwed up.

We explored around some head frames and cabins and slowly worked our way down Marvel Canyon. We finally arrived at a real nice cabin, which was well maintained, clean and had a metal cabinet stocked with food.

Warner identified it as the Easy Picking mine claim cabin. At this point the Martins headed back for gas at Big Pine, which was only about 28 miles away. We kept going down the canyon in the wash. The road disappeared, but we kept on, over, around and thru the boulders. We finely stopped at the remains of a cabin for lunch. Gary walked on down the wash to examine the remains of a car. It was a

30's vintage 4-door convertible, the front doors being suicide doors. There were also insets in the front fender-wells for the spare tires.

At this point I finally compared my GPS location with my map. I determined where we were, and it was not where we wanted to be. We had just breezed by the turn off to Jackass Flats which was before the Easy Pickings cabin. We went back and was looking at some additional head frames when Bill and Kathy returned. Back to camp at just about sunset, the wind came up and did not let up until sunrise.

Monday morning we broke camp, next stop, the rock in Hunter Canyon, which has numerous bedrock mortars. On up Grapevine Canyon I rounded a corner and there was a Silver Chevy pickup stopped in the middle of the road. There was a gal changing a totally destroyed tire and a guy from another pickup standing there watching her. We pitched in and helped her. She was a little concerned about the tire as it was a rental pickup.

Stopped to eat lunch at the Buckhorn Mine cabin and the next stop was the White Swan cabin. The White Swan is a big, solid building, but needs a lot of work.

From there, the Fellows went up to Cerro Gordo to take pictures and the rest of us headed south for home. At the Mobile gas station in Olancha, Gary's odometer showed we had traveled 260 miles from Big Pine and Bill Martins showed 280 miles.

Good trip in spite of my screw-ups. Warner had dug up some good info on Jackass Flats. Next year we shall come in on the Saline Valley north pass road, head down Marvel Canyon and into Jackass Flats, then exit Saline Valley thru Steele Pass.



**Maddog heading down out of Steele Pass into Saline Valley.**

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