



# TRAILS & TALES

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GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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## **MAPPING MISSION #1, *By: Warner Fellows***

Our first foray into the trail inventory/mapping effort went off without a hitch. On this glorious January 23, we gathered at the triangle for a driver's meeting and an 8:30 departure. Our caravan included myself; George & Linda Graham; Jerry & Mary Grimsley; Jim Kenney; Matt Lemons; and Bill Maddux. We headed south to Pine Tree Canyon (formerly Lone Tree) where we met Gary Luckerth and Guy & Kay Kendall. We aired down our tires and distributed inventory forms to the drivers. After discussing filling out the forms and the plan for the day, we set out to do some mapping.

We headed west towards the gate at the mouth of Pine Tree Canyon and soon passed under the "new" aqueduct and shortly after that we came to the first parting of the trail. Jim Kenney with his nephew Brian, were my mapping partners. The rest of the group paired off as trails diverged from the main canyon road. We were careful to remain in pairs so that if trouble was encountered no one would be alone. And "a mapping we did go".

Jim and I took the first trail heading north and we got to drive over the "old" aqueduct. The trail took us into a canyon, wound around, and we soon came out atop a ridgeline which took a westerly direction. That trail narrowed into a single track motorcycle trail, so we saved our track on the GPS, and turned around.

We had passed a side trail on the way in, so we back tracked and followed it. This one took us up a steep hill, so we had to shift into 4-lo, around another switch back and into the rocks we went. This one was definitely a "4WD" trail. We were thinking "We're havin' some fun now!" But too soon this trail became single track too. Again we saved our track and turned around.

Back tracking to another side trail we were soon mapping new ground again. This one took us to Chuckwalla Canyon which ended at an aqueduct vent and lunch. Following a good lunch, we back-tracked to another side road that we found was an aqueduct service road that soon ended. We followed another aqueduct service road that looped around the top of a hill. Another ended almost as soon as it started. We found more dead ends than we thought possible that day but the weather was fantastic and we were exploring new areas. What could be better?

We ran out of roads to explore in that little canyon so headed down to the main canyon road. Arriving at the bottom an hour or so before the rendezvous time, we decided to map a few trails to the south of Pine Tree Canyon. The first one we followed probably goes all the way to Los Angeles, so after about 3 miles, we turned to the east and then doubled back to Pine Tree Canyon Road.

Still not time to meet the rest of the group, we headed north and soon found a service road that looped around another hill. Tiring of chasing our tail we headed even farther north and found a trail to the west that took us up to an old homestead ruin. The trail continued beyond the ruin and into a small canyon and to another dead end. Now it was time to head back to the rally point and meet the rest of the group.

Arriving a little before anyone else we started to air up. Once the rest of the group started arriving, stories were swapped, forms were collected and a dining place was decided on. All aired up we exchanged goodbyes with the members

from “down below” and headed for Ridgecrest.

Our first time on this effort we mapped more than 20 miles of trails and I feel we accomplished a lot. Our next trip out will be better organized and a little closer to home. I hope to see you there.

**MEANWHILE:** *By Mary Grimsley*

The rest of the group, did basically the same thing. Peeling off two by two, exploring this road or trail. At one point, after Kay & Guy and Jerry & I had explored a side canyon, we headed south, eventually catching up with George & Linda, Matt, Gary and Bill, and we all had lunch at an old homestead site in the shade of a tree. We explored some of the junk that remained on the ground, before proceeding on.

There is a hill that you see from Hwy 14, with a couple of rutted trails heading up, that has always intrigued me, however, in the Cherokee (and we are new drivers of this particular vehicle) it looked more like a downer. So we proceeded up the canyon to the south of it, passing by an old ore chute and mining

operation. Once to the top, we split up the group, with Gary & Matt and us heading south, and the rest heading north. Following the road, we passed by some pretty rock out-croppings and views down canyon to the desert floor. After about 3 miles, the road dead ended. The guys walked on down the hill to where the aqueduct was a “bridge” across the deep canyon and disappeared into the hillside.

We turned around, and headed back. We then realized we had totally missed all of the California poppies that were blooming on the south facing hill-sides. This was January 23, way to early for so many wildflowers. We were finally at the steep hill, which Matt drove down while we took the canyon. Matt said it was rather intimidating looking down the huge ruts of the “other trail” that is no longer passable. He also mentioned that you could stuff several vehicles in the largest rut with no problem.

We waited for the “north” crew a few minutes, then headed to our rendezvous point, with them arriving shortly.

## **MAPPING MISSION #2** *By: Warner Fellows*

We met at the Albertson’s Express on the south end of town, for a trip into the southwestern corner of the El Paso Mountains and Red Rock Canyon State Park. 12 Gear Grinders – Larry & Barbara DeVries in their new Rubi; George & Linda Graham; Jim & Donna Kenney; Matt Lemon & his guest Ashley Hind; Bill Maddux; Bill & Kathy Martin; Pam & I, and one guest, Tom Perkins, in 8 vehicles, headed south, regrouping and airing down at the trail head, where we met Gary Luckerth.

Once we were all aired down we had our driver’s huddle to work out pairings and assignments. Once we were underway and going our separate ways, we didn’t get to see much of each other, but we were able to keep up with the action by the CB chatter. It sounded like some of the teams really had some fun.

Our group, The Fellows, the Kenney’s, The Martins, and Matt and Ashley, headed up the main trail, a dry wash one canyon west of Last Chance Canyon. Once we came out on top, we separated again and followed different roads that fanned out in several directions.

Matt and I teamed up to follow the roads that pass an old mine near the exit of Nightmare Gulch. Many of the roads ended abruptly or petered down to single track or just faded into the desert, a common occurrence out here. As we followed one road that meandered around the mesa top, it intersected with the road that the Kenney’s and Martins were on.

Since it was nearing lunch time we decided to join up with them for lunch and tales. We chose a beautiful spot on a cliff with a beautiful view of Last Chance Canyon. During the tale swapping portion of the stop, it came to light that somehow, one of the drivers **RAN**

**OVER** his wife/spotter! We won’t mention any names but the guilty party knows who he is. The wife/spotter survived with only minor bruising to her foot and major bruising to the driver’s ego. We’ll let the guilty party discuss it at our next meeting.

Once our lunches were eaten and tales swapped, we mounted up to continue the inventory of trails in this little corner of heaven. Since we were in the area and on that particular trail, it was decided to continue on to Last Chance Canyon.

You know the trail with the wicked steep hill that drops down into Last Chance right below Cuddahy’s Camp? Well, it’s quite the intimidating drop off, but all were up to the task and made it without damage. We then turned up canyon and exited Last Chance Canyon for the trip back up to the mesa top.

Once on the mesa we heard a call on the CB that brought us to a quick stop. George was in a sand wash somewhere with a stalled engine that refused to start. A quick exchange of location coordinates and we were ready to roar off to the rescue, but before we could get under way, George’s Jeep miraculously restarted. Oh well, we were ready to come to the rescue.

With the time limit we set for ourselves approaching we set off for the meeting place at the trail head. Once there, we aired our tires, collected forms and compared stories.

With another successful mapping mission under our belts we started home. I would like to thank everyone that came out to help inventory trails with us. We were able to inventory over 24 miles of trails.

**WANT TO ATTEND THE  
TDS DESERT SAFARI???**

Never been before, and need a form to register? Go to:

[http://www.tds4x4.com/tds\\_safari/safari.htm](http://www.tds4x4.com/tds_safari/safari.htm)

**Deadline for pre-registration is fast approaching. It will cost you \$15 more to register in camp.**

**GEAR GRINDERS WEB SITE**

Trey Fellows has our web site now at the permanent address of:

<http://www.geargrinders.org/>

**Don't forget to send Trey your vehicle info and pictures.** There are a lot of you who have not sent pix or info, so won't you do it today. Send to: [webmaster@geargrinders.org](mailto:webmaster@geargrinders.org) with "Trey" or "website" in subject line.

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