

Onto the next challenge, a combination articulation test with a sharp right turn thrown in for good measure. Still wanting to test the limits of his suspension, Reid went right at it. This time losing the left front spring, but not before it tangled in the brake line. Once we freed the spring from the brake line we attached his Jeep to mine with a winch rope so that we could lower the Grand back into the hole that loosed the spring. Now we can reinsert it into place and continue on. The rest of the group tangoed through with aplomb.



Reid on winch line. Note Hi-Lift jack on left front.

The next challenge presented itself soon enough and we were again reinstalling a spring in the left front of Reid's Grand, but hey, we're getting pretty good at this. We got the operation down to five minutes. The rest of the group rumbaed through this section without incident. Do you sense a pattern developing here?

And ever upward we climbed. For anyone not familiar with the Freeway Ridge trail, it is about 7 miles of steep hill climb with some off-camber and tippy sections scattered randomly along the trail, occasionally interrupted by **REALLY** steep parts. But traction is excellent and the weather awesome, so we climbed with little trouble towards the top to Evans Flat Campground.

We stopped for lunch near the junction with the Black Gulch trail to spread out for a well deserved rest and some refreshment. Once rested and refreshed, we remounted to continued up, and before long we found that flat area where Reid's brakes could be bled. Soon he had brake service again. When we returned to our vehicles, we discovered that a Diamondback rattlesnake was taking a rest under the Dorey's Jeep! But not before they had gotten in! Too much excitement for one day, I'll tell you.

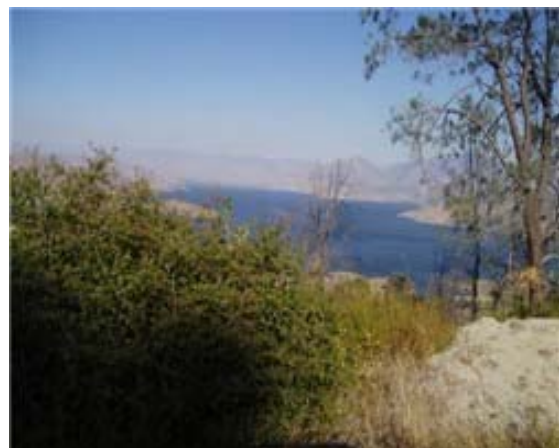
At this junction we left that portion of the trail where the Freeway Ridge and the Black Gulch trails share the roadbed and were once again on the Freeway to the top.

At this point I came to the conclusion that my "roll over alarm" may be in need of recalibration. You see, I lofted a tire or two while at Big Bear with little or no activation, but the combination of the steep hill and the off-camber trail set my alarm off so many times that my hearing may be permanently damaged. For the uninitiated, a "roll over alarm" is a spouse/spotter, who gets a little vocal when all they see through the windshield is blue sky.

This section of the trail was bypassed last time and I was concerned that we should bypass it this time as well. But I really wanted to see if it was "doable" for the less experienced. So with my "alarm" sounding constantly, we proceeded up the tricky section. Despite the alarm I saw that the trail had smoothed out considerably since I last did it and knew that we would have no problem. By this time though, we knew that in order to not have to replace Reid's spring we would have to hold it in place when driving through certain types of terrain. Reid, you owe Bill D. big time.

Soon we arrived at the last hill; "I promise Babe, it's the last one". We stopped to take a good look at it, as the wet weather had been very unkind to this particular hill. The good line was bad and the bad line was worse, but wait, it looks like a new line has been made right up through the middle. We're saved! This hill is steep with a capital "**S**", and the surface is loose and sandy, but traction is good and we were able to conquer it without problem. Just a short jaunt to the end and we're done. But wait, there's more! Not 100 yards to the campground and 2 trees are partially down across the trail. I knew I brought my chainsaw for a reason! Two quick cuts and we were on our way again.

Once we finished the trail we headed down on Sawmill Rd. towards the bottom and dinner at the Cheyenne Stage Stop Saloon. All in all, a good time was had by all and we really showed Reid's Dad what 4 wheeling is all about: **More money!**



A very full Lake Isabella.

GHOST TOWN TOUR *By: Bill & Kathy Martin*

Despite the early hour, we were joined by Bill & Samela Dorey; Warner & Pam Fellows; Mary Grimsley; Jim & Donna Kenney; Gary Luckerth; and Reid Wackermann & his dad Neil (driving Pam's Jeep, but that's another story) for our trip to the Reilly town site and the Minietta & Modoc mines.

The first stop was at a small petroglyph site in Poison Canyon, just off the highway. After a brief visit we were again on our way to Reilly in the Argus Range. We didn't stop to air down when we pulled off the highway, because the road to the town site is relatively short and we had a long stretch of pavement to get to the mine sites later on.

About an hour was spent walking around the Anthony Mill and the building remains in Reilly. We then headed back to the highway toward the Minietta mine. Mary decided to go back home, because the walking around wasn't doing her sore leg any good. We aired down when we turned off the highway, then

made our way to the Minietta cabin, part of the Adopt-A-Cabin program. A lot of work has gone into the cabin and it was in very clean condition inside. Everyone made their way to the top of the road to get a closer look at some of the mines and equipment, then went back to the cabin for lunch.

The next stop was another site west of the Minietta. Gary, Reid, and Neil did some deeper exploration in a chute, whose purpose was not completely clear. Pam and Donna were on their way into a mine when warned about snakes. Pam made a quick exit. Exploration of the Modoc area was the last stop of the day.

After airing up at the highway, everyone headed back to Ridgecrest and dinner at Nickoletti's. There we were joined by Mary and George & Linda Graham. Pam also treated us to a slide show of the Saturday trip to Freeway Ridge and Sunday's Reilly trip.



The group in Poison Canyon.



Beautiful rock work of the Anthony Mill



Mine dump chute at the Minietta Mine.

JUNE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

George welcomed a new guest, Mark Buffum, and returning guests Mike & Christine Redmond. We also welcomed back Dan Burkhart with a chuckle, since we hadn't seen him in awhile. We had a full house again.

Warner gave a brief run-down of the next months events, which included: McIver's trail maintenance trip on Saturday, June 25; Inyo Crest Trail on July 4th; Borderline & club picnic on July 9th at Evans Flat campground; Freeway Ridge on August 6th.

The usual Committee reports were given, along with trip reports. Reid earned the BIG bell for his vehicle destructing on Freeway Ridge.

Samela won the 50/50 drawing, and Wynn & Carla Gregory were voted in as new Associate Members. Welcome. That was it in a nutshell.

DEFENSE MINE RUN *By Andy Couch*

I'd rather be wheeling than writing about a trip we took, but I understand the requirements of being a trail boss, thus this late report. Those that chose to tackle the Defense Mine on April 30 included: Dennis & Kelly Ambrecht; Pamela Fellows & son Trey; George & Linda Graham; Matt Lemons; Randy & Karen Schortzmann; myself & Lisa; and guests Brice Ambrecht and friend Jennifer; Kevin & Denise Serpa; Jason & Sandra Maddocks and family; Jesse Rivers (visiting from Northern CA).

To make the trip more of an adventure, we dropped down into the wash shortly after turning off the pavement. There were a few minor obstacles, but overall we traveled quickly through the wash and were ready to traverse the first of the water falls of Stone Canyon.

Most attempted the fall while a few decided they'd rather play safely. Jason left an impression by driving through the fall, somewhere I don't think I'd take a Lexus. Kudos goes to Kelly Ambrecht for the "screaming" entertainment – and to Dennis for staying calm while

spotting her. Jesse Rivers and I drove an optional obstacle just after the first of the falls.

We broke for lunch at the turn off heading up to Defense Mine. After lunch we wasted at least an hour and a half playing on another optional obstacle, one that won't be attempted again without a winch ready to go. By the way, Randy, why didn't you follow? Many of us made the climb up to the mine and spent a few minutes exploring inside. Some spent longer than others and even climbed to the other levels.

We had a minor delay on the way out of the canyon someone coming into the canyon stopped in the middle of the trail. Luckily it didn't take long to locate them and have them move off the trail.

Dennis and Kelly offered their home for a barbeque after the run. We all enjoyed the good food and company. Trey brought the laptop with the pictures and video. No casualties reported (other than a sick dog) - it was a good day for wheeling.



Jason Maddock's Lexus in Stone Canyon.



Dennis spotting Kelly screaming.



The group of vehicles below the Defense Mine.

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

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