

map out a little far and it looked like our turn was coming up. I then looked up from the screen to see a sign for EP15 and yanked a quick right turn into Bonanza Gulch. Well at least I knew where we were and I also knew that this would eventually take us to the section of the road that I had intended to take. So we took a nice tour of Bonanza Gulch.

Passing the "Tin Cabin" I saw a guy standing and staring out the window. I'm thinking "There's a guy staring out the window at 10 o'clock at night, how strange." I'm sure he was thinking "There goes a whole bunch of Jeeps in the dark, how strange." just another night in the El Pasos.

Once passed the Post Office, we continued up the hill towards the main part of EP15 and

our ultimate goal, the Stone Cabin. I adjusted the scale on the map so I wouldn't miss the turn to the cabin and soon we were headed in the right direction. Finally making it to the mysterious Stone Cabin in the dark was a real treat ; for some it was the first time. We dismounted and took in the sights, basked in the moonlight, shared stories and some delicious cookies.

Since the hour was getting late and past the bedtimes of some, we remounted and headed for the road out. We followed EP15 all the way to CA14 and aired up our tires by the roadside. We hit the road, some going north ... others south we headed home tired from a fun day and night in the desert.

EDITOR NOTE: *The nighttime pix offer no contrast, so do not print well, so I didn't put them in.*

4th ANNUAL BIG BEAR BASH *By: Terry Grimsley*

For a fourth year the Gear Grinders found their way to the San Bernardino Mountains for a weekend running trails near Big Bear Lake. As with previous years many arrived early to get the most out of the long holiday weekend. George & Linda Graham and Bill & Samela Dorey arrived on Tuesday to stake claim to our campsite. When we, Terry, Cheri, Megan & Brandon, arrived Thursday night we also found Jerry & Mary Grimsley, Bill & Kathy Martin, and Bill Maddux relaxing by the campfire. While unhooking the Jeep in Fawnskin I discovered that my brake master cylinder decided it was no longer going to function. It was a minor annoyance, but better there than on the trail.

The agenda for Friday was in question due to the issue with the trail bosses' brakes. Gary Luckerth arrived early to find he had plenty of time to set up camp and get ready for the day. By 7:45 AM my dad (Jerry) and I headed for the Napa Auto Parts in Big Bear. A couple others took advantage of the extra time and sought out a hot breakfast at a restaurant in Fawnskin. Thankfully, Napa had a new master cylinder sitting on the shelf and it was even priced to move. We wasted no time getting back to camp and within 45 minutes we had the new master cylinder installed and the brakes bled. Since the delay was minimal we decided to go ahead and run the Dishpan Springs and Holcomb Creek trails as originally planned.

The Dishpan Springs trailhead is just East of Lake Arrowhead. After about 45 minutes of pavement, we came upon a locked gate at the end of Hook Creek Road. A quick call to the ranger station was made and within 10 minutes Ranger Rick was there to unlock the gate.

Over the last two to three years the Dishpan Springs Trail has been closed a majority of the time for various reasons (fire, bridge wash outs, etc.). With virtually no use and lots of erosion it has changed considerably since we ran it last. There were lots of ruts and rocks for most of the trail. Towards the middle we encountered what has always been the most difficult part of the trail. This time around, it was as rough as I've ever seen it. After we scouted it on foot, we were glad we had so many vehicles with winches and ample trees to anchor to. Surprisingly, with good spotting, most everyone made it up with minimal effort. The Dorey's were the exception, as they were the only one without lockers and traction was definitely an issue. Despite the late start that day we were still able to enjoy a late lunch in the shade at the group campsite just east of Crab Flats.



The Dorey's on Dishpan Springs Trail

After a fairly short lunch we made our way to the Holcomb Creek Trail (3N93). The rock garden at the beginning hadn't changed much in the last year and we were all making quick work of it until the trail boss slipped off a bunch of rocks and landed on the front differential. Fortunately my parents were more than happy to put a strap on me and pull me off.

Since it was late in the day we pressed on without stopping again until we reached the middle rock garden, which is typically the toughest portion of this trail. While this was without question the most washed out I have seen this obstacle, everyone made it through without any issues. Shortly after passing the Lower Largo Flats intersection I found myself hung up on some nicely placed boulders again. This time a few well-placed rocks and I was moving again. Before too long we were finished with the trail and headed back to camp. When we arrived back in camp we found Wynn, Carla, Emily and JD Gregory setting up their camping gear.

On a side note, I would like to extend a **big thank you to the Riverside Ruff Riders** for the trail maintenance they performed. Their hard work on two off camber sections of the trail was very apparent.

Saturday morning we were joined by Scott, Denise, Abbey & Jesse Bart, Guy & Kay Kendall and John, Kris, Tina, Johnny & Ryan Traber. At 9 AM sharp we set out for the White Mountain Jeep Trail. This trail is north of camp and follows a ridgeline over looking Lucerne Valley. The morning started out cooler than usual and when we reached the trailhead there was a pretty good breeze. After a brief climb the trail descends down the steep and rocky mountainside. By the time we reached the bottom of the hill the wind had really picked up, dropping the temperature quite a bit.

We proceeded northwest along the ridges dropping and climbing various small hills on our way to the White Mountain overlook. With each passing minute the wind blew harder and the clouds began to move in. Before long it seemed like we were in the Arctic. Unfortunately, the trail boss was determined to make it to the first overlook so we continued on. **THIS WAS NOT A WISE CHOICE!** Those of us in open vehicles were really suffering. When we reached the Southern Peak, we briefly took in the views and then started on the quest for lower ground. Within about 10 minutes we were off of the ridge and the temperature seemed like it climbed 50 degrees. After a brief meeting at the intersection of 3N14 & 3N16 we decided to head over to the Lower Largo Flats Trail (2N06X).

After going about five miles west on 3N16 we reached the turn off for 2N06 X. There are a few small rock gardens spread along this trail and a really nice rock garden about a mile into the trail. This climb required some good spotting and was a challenge to most one way or another. Although the morning got off to a rough start because of the bone chilling wind on the ridge, the weather down in the canyon was wonderful. Not long after the major rock garden we stopped for lunch and it was warm enough that we sought out



Terry's rock pile on the Holcomb Creek Trail.



The Graham's & Martin's enjoying dinner in Big Bear Friday night at the Sonora Cantina



**From front to back:
The Graham's, Bart's, Kendall's & Traber's on Lower Largo Flats Trail**

the shade of trees. After lunch we headed for the intersection of the Holcomb Creek Trail (3N93) and only encountered some minor ruts and rock gardens on our way. At the intersection we proceeded east and headed for camp. The trail boss managed to get hung up on the same rocks on the same flat section of trail that caused him grief on Friday. Again, a few well-placed rocks and he was on his way.

The remainder of the trail was completed without incident and before long we were in camp and enjoying happy hour. Randy & Karen Schortzmann arrived in time to join us for potluck. Cheri's dad Roy & his wife Debbie also drove up for the evening. Unfortunately the Butler Peak sunset run had to be cancelled again because the trail was still closed (snow). Next year!

On Sunday we ran the two trails that are a must every year. These are Gold Mountain (3N69) and John Bull (3N10). Although Gold Mountain is rated as a black diamond trail, it's not particularly difficult. The trail climbs up a mountainside north of Baldwin Lake, providing spectacular views of both lakes (Big Bear & Baldwin). It's a very rocky trail with a couple of moderate rock gardens thrown in here and there. The trail seemed a little easier than usual and no one had any problems with any of the rock gardens. After a short break up top, we headed down the backside of the mountain and made our way to the John Bull Trail.

We reached the John Bull trailhead at noon, however, since no vehicles were ahead of us we decided to start the trail and have lunch at the top. It normally takes about 30 to 45 minutes to reach the normal lunch stop, but things would be different today. The first 100 yards of the trail was easier than usual and one by one we started up the trail. Although John Bull is normally the toughest trail on the mountain, on this day the rocks seems to be nicely placed and most found it to be a bit easier than past years. Even so, many found themselves hung up here and there and needed to adjust their lines or enlist the aide of spotters.

There's one spot that's always a bit of a pucker and this year was no exception. This is the off-camber right turn around a large shrub. It was washed out and even more off-camber than it has been in the past. Even before we reached this spot, I was concerned about the Dorey's and their tall, sway bar challenged TJ. After crossing this obstacle there was no question: the Dorey's would need help to avoid laying their TJ on its side. George and I tried to spot them through but the open diffs, lack of traction and severe off-camber were too much.

There was no doubt that if we didn't get a winch on the Dorey's they were going over. Fortunately, the Martin's were directly behind them and there was a nice tree above the Dorey's to attach a rope and snatch block to. With the winch attached to the high side, we were able to work the Dorey's through the obstacle. We decided to leave the rope and snatch block in place in case anyone else needed it and continued on towards the top of the mountain.



Lucky Gary on Lower Largo



Maddog on the Lower Largo Trail



Gregory's & group taking a break on Lower Largo.



Everyone sitting around the "not yet lit" campfire in anticipation.

Just as the trail boss was approaching the lunch stop we heard "Jerry's on his side" come across the CB. Needless to say, we knew where he was. After 37 years of four wheeling Jerry & Mary found themselves lying on their side for the first time. Fortunately they couldn't have laid it over any softer or in a better spot and everyone, Jerry, Mary, Murphy, Beaudry and the CJ were all just fine. Despite the flop they were righted and moving within 15 or 20 minutes.

EDITORS NOTE: *Thanks to Gary, the little bell was tied on our vehicle before we could get moving.*

Everyone finally reached the lunch stop at about 2 p.m. Instead of the usual 30 to 45 minutes to complete the first 1/2 mile of the trail, on this day it took 2 hours.

During lunch, Kevin, Desiree, Stacia & Josh Rowland caught up with us. After lunch we continued Westbound on the trail, dropping down off the mountain. The remainder of the trail was pretty typical except for the last descent, which was far easier than usual. After regrouping at the end of the trail we headed back to camp.

On Monday morning, Roy & Debbie drove up so they could experience John Bull without scratching their YJ (theirs is mostly a mall crawler). Roy rode with the trail boss and Debbie with Wynn. Gary, with Bill Dorey riding along, brought up the rear. We went ahead and ran John Bull the same direction (Westbound). Normally with only three vehicles we would make real short work of the trail. However, Wynn was apparently talking to Debbie a bit too much and not paying attention to his lines. This resulted in two delays while he was extracted from the rocks. Even with the delays and a lengthy break up top, we were finished with the trail after about 2 hours and were back in camp by noon.

With the exception of the arctic expedition on Saturday, we had great weather, even though it was cooler than usual. As with previous years, we had a lot of members join us for the weekend. Mark your calendars because the 5th Annual Big Bear Bash is on the calendar for 2007. Once again I would like to thank George & Linda for arriving early to secure our preferred campsite and thanks again to all that joined us for the weekend.



A "zorse" in a Big Bear pasture. Note mane & stripes of a zebra.

Potluck dinner Saturday night.



Kendall's in the "rock pile" on the Gold Mtn. Trail



2 weeks shy of 37 years owning this 1969 Jeep, and Jerry flops it over.

Beaudry was the first one out. We all walked out the back - unhurt.



May Meeting Hilites

Vice-President Warner Fellows conducted the meeting, with the usual committee reports and trip highlights. He also attended the Stewards of the Sequoia meeting and spoke very highly of their group. He also announced that Trey received the honor of Student of the Year in the Computer Sciences Department. He is also a new permanent employee at the college.

Mark Pahuta won the 50/50 & donated it back to the club.

Terry Grimsley has also cancelled the Dusey trip in July, as the trail is still closed due to snow. Ranger predicted that it would be "sometime" in August to open. No trip planned in place of Dusey.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST ROUTE DESIGNATION MEETINGS

The Inyo National Forest has scheduled the next round of workshop meetings for the designation of routes that will ultimately make up the system of routes where motorized access to the forest will be allowed. The currently scheduled meetings are as follows. All meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Lone Pine - June 16 at Stathem Hall, 138 N Jackson St - (Monache Meadows and Sierra Escarpment). Areas covered by this meeting will include Monache Meadows, the area around the Kennedy Meadows Campground, and the foothill canyons on the east slope of the Sierras from Tunawee Canyon north almost to Big Pine.

Mammoth - June 22 at Minaret Village Shopping Center, Suite Z (Upstairs). The area covered by this meeting is east of Mammoth.

June Lake - June 26 at June Lake Community Center, Howard Ave (Gull Lake). The area covered by this meeting will be the area around Mammoth.

Bishop - **July 12 at US Forest Service Office, 351 Pacu Lane. This meeting will be to cover the area around Bishop and also the Coyote area.**

For more information regarding the upcoming meetings, see the Forest Service News release on the Internet at http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/news/2006/06/route_des.shtml

All interested parties should check the Inyo National Forest website very often for new information and to see which geographic area of the forest is, or will be, under review. The Inyo National Forest website is located at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/projects/ohvroute5.shtml>

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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