

February 2005



Trail Tales

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ARIZONA LO-RANGERS 4WD CLUB

Cover Picture

Here's Ron's Cherokee on one of the obstacles in Upper Woodpecker. This ledge is much more difficult than it looks in the picture.

Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2005

Scott Nixon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members in attendance: Scott Nixon, Charlie and Becky Babcock, Sean and Lynette Murphy, Nick Sesma, Dan Egge, Matt Parkes, Stephen Smith, Ed Lyons, Marty Boetel, Steve Graham, Jim Sanford, Ron Couch, Roy and Terri Conner, Loran and Jake Gersztyn.

Guests in attendance:

Erin Buckholz, Dan Heath, Jason Pfeifer, Ron Rasmussen and Alishia, Nick and Heather Jackson.

Election for new officers was held. Ron Couch nominated for President, Charlie Babcock nominated for Newsletter editor, Ed Lyons nominated for Treasurer, Loran Gersztyn nominated for Secretary. Since there were no other nominations Charlie Babcock made a motion to call a white-paper vote. Motion was seconded. Vote was called and passed unanimously.

Trip Reports: The Christmas party trip was given by various members who attended.

Ron Couch gave the trip report for the New Year's Day trip to Woodpecker. There were 6 or 7 trucks in attendance.

Lower Terminator trip consisted of 4 to 5 trucks, Ron Couch gave the trip report.

Scott Nixon gave a trip report for the snow trip from 2 weeks ago. Everyone had fun.

Matt Parkes is having a party at his home Saturday, February 19th. There will be playing on his rock pile. Pot luck dinner and barbeque. Details to follow or contact Matt Parkes.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40.

Calendar of Events

February 6 – Club run on Upper Terminator call Ron @ 480-726-8509

February 19 – Matt's backyard rock garden contact him @ 480-888-9581.

February 23 – Meeting at Round Table Pizza, 7pm NW corner of Rural & Ray

March ? – Club run

March 30 – Meeting at Round Table Pizza, 7pm NW corner of Rural & Ray

Trip Report

Upper Woodpecker 1/1/05

1973 K5 – Charlie, Becky, Shelby, Hailey, and Reilly Babcock

1976 Cherokee – Ron Couch and Mike Tutor

1980 Scout II – Steve and Linda Graham

1984 CJ7 – Jim Sanford

2000 Denali – Jerome, Logan, Zoë Gill and Brandon

New Years Eve the family and I spent camping out with the Southwest Outdoor Club (my father and brother are members). Every year they have a potluck dinner and breakfast along with a giant bonfire to celebrate the coming year. We were just off a forest road north of Boyce Thompson Arboretum. After breakfast we packed up the muddy camping gear and loaded it into my dad's truck taking only the 4 wheeling essentials with us. We were at the meeting spot in a matter of minutes.

Most of the gang was there; we aired down and waited for the rest. We took off down Mineral Mountain Road and at every dip there was a deep puddle of muddy water. The kids were yelling faster, faster so I couldn't let them down. Speeding through the puddle created a canopy of mud clearing the top of the Blazer. After running the windshield wipers for a while I could see again. I was surprised to see Jim in his open Jeep doing the same. Both our trucks were now camouflaged desert tan.

At the trail head we unloaded Jerome's crew from the Denali (which wasn't running Upper Woodpecker) and the spectators walked up the trail to the first obstacle. Ron told me to take the lead so I crawled through the off camber entrance. I'd never driven the K5 through this obstacle with the top on but I didn't have any problems.



Ron and Jim followed me through without any trouble and Steve took the bypass. We made our way through the rest of the boulder filled canyon admiring the perfect weather and super green desert. Between major obstacles Jerome hopped in with Jim and 4 kids rode in the back of the Blazer.



Notice the green carpeting the ground in the bottom corner of the picture.

Soon we were at the Firehole and everyone bailed out to watch. My first attempt I didn't have a very good line and the K5 slid into its passenger side door. I backed up and made a better second attempt. Ron made it over without any trouble. The rest decided to drive around.

The kids were hungry so we stopped for lunch and sat in the sun enjoying the spring weather. The kids climbed everything in sight getting stickers in their fingers. The older kids sat and talked about trucks. We watched the kids hurling rocks into one of the pools of water along the trail while other kids stood as close as they could and then complained about getting wet?

We headed for the next obstacle and soon we were at the rocky side path that Ron and I drove through (see cover page of Ron on this obstacle). When exiting this path it takes a little maneuvering to get the front end pointed down the slope to avoid being pitched into the wash.



The good line on the Firehole!



Jim trying to score extra points with the judges.



Steve bringing up the rear, approaching one of the ledges on Woodpecker.

When we arrived at the end of the trail two Blazers and a Jeep were sitting there. The Jeep was a hundred feet up the exit road, one Blazer was near the bottom of the exit road and one Blazer was in the wash pointed towards the exit. Some of the people were trying to push a Blazer up the exit road. This road is fairly steep and loose where it dumps into the Woodpecker wash. I asked them what their problem was (hehehe). They said the dead Blazer's battery cabled was burned up. None of the trucks had a locking differential to split amongst them and they all had small crappy tires. I told the guy in the K5 on the road to drive up the road out of the way. Then we pushed the dead Blazer back so I could get around it. I drove up the road, hooked up the dead Blazer and towed it far enough that I thought the other Blazer could tow it the rest of the way.

Everyone hiked down to the beginning of "Highway to Hell" to see the trail, Jim and Jerome had never seen the sign. We walked through the first few obstacles commenting on how none of our trucks were ever entering this HTH. We walked back and loaded up for the drive back to the trail head. Jerome's truck was still there, we talked some more and then made our way back to civilization. On the way we passed the Blazers making their way out.

Submitted by Charlie Babcock

Lo-Rangers Snow Run, Saturday January 15, 2005

Participants:

Nixon family, 1989 K3500

Babcock family, 1999 Suburban

Rolling out of bed a full half hour before I normally get up to go to work I cursed whoever it was that decided to start this trip so early. Then I remembered it was me, and as trip leader, I should probably show up on time. Lynn and I scrambled to get the kids dressed and the cooler packed, jumped in the truck, and headed for Fountain Hills.

Despite the numerous stop lights on Shea and our lethargic children, we pulled into the meeting spot less than 10 minutes late and only a few minutes ahead of the Babcock's. Jumped out, chatted a bit, visited my favorite creosote bush, and headed north. Trying to keep the boring highway time to a minimum I kept my foot in it the whole way up, the normally aspirated 6.2 wheezing right up to the governor. Apparently my speedometer is screwed up more than I thought; Charlie said I was doing a good 65-70mph the whole way.

Zooming into Payson we passed a suspicious looking man sitting off the side of SR87; he was a well dressed older gentleman wearing dress pants, a light jacket, and nothing but a pair of socks on his feet. While I fueled up at the first gas station we came to, the Babcock's called 911 to report him. Back on the highway we crawled through town and then headed east up 260 towards the gorgeous looking snow dusted Mogollon Rim. As soon as patches of snow appeared off the side of the road the children clamored for me to stop and let them play. I assured them better snow was up ahead.

Finally cresting the top of the rim, we drove passed FR300 which was gated off. The road to Young was open, but looked too well plowed to offer much challenge. Eight or ten miles down the road was the turnoff for FR237. I slowed up, hit my turn signal, and pulled off the road only to get stuck almost as soon as my rear tires left the pavement. Locking the hubs and shifting into 4-lo got me about three more feet. The snow was about a foot deep and covered in an inch thick layer of frozen crust. The 50 degree air temperature meant any compression turned it into ice.

Charlie attempted to drive around me, but his bald BFG AT's and gimpy factory locker prevented much forward progress. Even worse, he was off the beaten path a bit and sliding down into a muddy ditch. We piled out to let the kids play in the snow while we marveled at how stuck we were literally feet off of the bone dry highway.

While Charlie dug himself out I aired my tires down from 50psi to the upper teens. A shovel two or snow out from behind my tires allowed me to back up. Vowing to at least make it far enough that I couldn't see pavement I floored it and slammed into the fresh snow. Each pass got me about a truck length or two (hey, it's a long bed crew cab, that's pretty far!). Backing up I would see two tracks for the tires with a shallow track in the middle where the big D60 diff dug. Achieving my goal, barely, I backed up and got out to watch Charlie dig.

The Suburban struggled slowly to crawl out of its ruts. The ABS system prevented quick rocking between forward and reverse, the bald tires refused to grip the snow, and the factory locker occasionally gave power to only one tire. Worse, the ditch kept sliding it over towards a rather beefy Forest Service billboard built out of stout 6x6 timbers. Persistence paid off though, and Charlie eventually pulled back up into the ruts on the road.



We ate lunch and let the kids play. Steven seemed more interested in climbing on my truck than rolling in the snow. After a few snow angels, a couple of pathetic snow men and some tree climbing we called it quits and headed towards home. I had to limp into Star Valley; my tires were really squirrely with such low tire pressure. Charlie stopped to say hi to his brother in Christopher Creek; we pressed on hoping our somewhat cranky kids would fall asleep.

The Babcock's caught up with us as I struggled to refill my tires with a free but frustratingly slow gas station air hose. I took it easy heading home, only flooring it before the hills. Along the way I had to move over and slow down as we passed a State Trooper standing guard over some smoldering wreckage. A mile or two later we passed the rest of it. A large motor home had been reduced to a burned out frame; a fire truck was down sucking water out of Sycamore creek to finish putting it out.

Even though we spent as much time driving on the highway as we did playing in the snow it was a fun trip. Charlie and I both vowed to go back next time with better tires!

Submitted by Scott Nixon

Items of Interest

Remember the club meeting is the last Wednesday of every month, 7:00pm at
Round Table Pizza
9920 S Rural Rd
Tempe, AZ

It's located on the northwest corner of Rural and Ray. If you visit <http://www.roundtablepizza.com/> you can get discount coupons on pizza to use at the next club meeting. Come early and eat with the gang.

February club runs

Mike/Ron is leading a trip on upper Terminator Super Bowl Sunday February 6th. We'll meet at 9am at the Table Mesa Road parking area, west of I17. Some people are coming to watch so come out and have some fun. If you want to go call Ron @ 480-726-8509.

Saturday February 19th Matt Parkes is having a backyard potluck and BYORC (bring your own rock crawler) to try out his offroad park. You don't have to bring a wheeler just show up, eat, and watch the fun. He said to show up anytime after 10am. Contact Matt for more information @ 480-888-9581.

Jim Sanford is heading to the Tierra Del Sol March 5th&6th, 2005. Its \$45 for the weekend if you pre register. I've seen this in the magazines every year and it looks like a blast. If you're interested call Jim @ 480-225-5770 or go to <http://www.tds4x4.com/>.

Land Use Issues

ARIZONA STATE LAND PROPOSAL

The Arizona State Land Department is proposing a new rule that will enable ASLD to close State lands to recreational uses when those lands are subject to conditions conducive to increased dust problems, i.e., heavy recreational vehicular use or post-fire situations. The proposed rule will enable ASLD under ARS 37-132(B)(8) to close urban lands to special uses for remediation purposes, dust abatement and other public health and safety reasons.

No public proceeding is scheduled. A person may submit written comments or request an oral proceeding be held by submitting comments or request no later than 5:00 pm Feb. 7, 2005 to ASLD (Lillian Moody, ASLD, 1616 W. Adams, PHX, AZ 85007, 602-542-2643, lmoodey@land.az.gov)

This is part of many proposed rules listed in the Arizona Administrative Register/Secretary of State: Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (Title 12 Natural Resources, Chapter 5 State Land Department, Sections affected R12-5-534).

The Arizona State Land Department is looking at trying to put this into the next special elections.

All the work we have done will be for nothing if we cannot get a handle on the PM 10 and fugitive dust issue. As long as the county can set rules that treat the open desert as a vacant parking lot, we will lose every riding area in Maricopa County.

We in Arizona have had the best luck with the folks that have been fighting for land access for years here is what we need:

Look At the above notice and submit a letter telling the State Land department that OHV has worked very hard to help manage our Recreation areas and will continue to help in any way we can. Closing the areas will only move these uses to other areas, making the problem worse. Tell them that if the dust is the issue then the area must be closed to all users, motorized or not. Everyone causes dust and everyone accesses their recreation in some type of motorized vehicle.

Add that you would like this to be an oral proceeding. There has to be public comment and hearings to close these lands.

If we are expected to follow the PM10 rules we need to have the PM 10 readings averaged over a 7day/24hr. time period, most use is on weekends and very little dust is generated during the week, this would be similar to the commercial rules.

As far as whom else to write to, write your Senator (<http://www.senate.gov/>), your district rep (<http://www.azleg.state.az.us/>). your congressmen (<http://www.house.gov/>) and tell them that your recreation brings into AZ. \$4.3 billion and 36,000 jobs.

Tell them that this will be a big economic impact and should be considered very carefully. The PM 10 rules were not written or designed for outside of the urban environment; consider possible revisions that would take casual use into consideration.

This can and will affect any State Trust Land and in a short time after these closures, put more pressure on nearby "Other" Agency lands, which will force them to consider the same rules to deal with PM 10.

For businesses this will affect every aspect of our Sport, the OHV's you sell, the accessory's, the tires, the Toy haulers, trailers, food and beverages.

And once Maricopa county falls, all surrounding Counties will have to follow in suit or be sued for cross over dust by Maricopa County.

Please consider sending and email, or fax or letter, but do something!

Business folks, you need to form an association that will represent all of you and take that to the Governor YOU will lose business.

You folks that Hovers pay dues to for help in situations like this. Please consider this issue, as it will affect all BLM and FS land if allowed to go unchallenged. We have come a long way in the last 6 years with creating managed recreation areas and parks; we can not allow this to pass without a fight.

This is up to all of you, my one letter will not stop this, it needs all of us to stand together to

make a difference.

If you have any question please let me know.

Becky Antle

ASA4WDC Legislative Liaison

Editors Stuff

If you need any Lo-Rangers shirts, hats, etc. call Loran @ 480-678-7272 she'll be putting in an order soon.

Anyone know where I can get a couple 38/13-16 TSL tires cheap?

MAKE SURE YOU PAY THE CLUB DUES.

You can pay at the next meeting or send your \$40 to Ed at:

Ed Lyons

936 E Wesleyan Dr

Tempe, AZ 85282

Make sure you tell him what it's for.

Things you need but didn't know it

For Sale: Chevy TH350 transmission \$50 obo call Scott for more information @602-482-8973

For Sale: 3 camper jacks 1000 # capacity that I had for my Alaskan camper, they'll lift high enough for a 4x4 truck. Also have a 36" cab high sleeper that fits a full size Ford '75 - '97, or Dodge up to '84, or Chevy / GMC up to '87. It's solid, has a roof vent, 4" foam mattress, and a lift gate. Made of 1"x1" framing, 3/8th Plywood, and covered with .030 silver aluminum, & lockable. Best offer on them. Want to get them outta here! Call Ed Lyons @ 480-921-1171.

Quote

"Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's troublesome."

- Isaac Asimov

Created by Charlie Babcock