

# TRAILS & TALES

June 2019

GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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## **CB Channel 1**

## **Old Dale Mining District** *By: Terry Grimsley*

For many years now, Memorial Weekend meant it was time for our annual run up to Big Bear. However, due to global warming, strike that, climate variation, unusually cool weather chased us to lower elevations. We decided to visit the Old Dale Mining District, an area that neither of the Grimsley's had been to in many years. Jerry & Mary arrived on Thursday and secured a campsite. Terry & Cheri arrived early Friday morning. After setting up camp and relaxing a bit we decided to take a run over to Joshua Tree National Park. Shortly after entering the park we looked for some pictographs at the Split Rock trail head. Although we found them they were very faint and had also been vandalized.

After a short lunch we headed towards Keys View. We decided take a detour and loop through the Jumbo Rocks campground to take a look around. While passing through we picked up some firewood that was left behind. It seemed like a nice score at the time, but we would soon find out that it was more like a punishment. When we left camp it was warm and sunny, however, by the time we arrived at Keys View it was downright chilly thanks to a climb of almost 4,000 feet and some light clouds. However, the views of the Salton Sea, Indio and Palm Springs were quite nice. On our way back to the Jeeps we found a snake laying next to the trail soaking up the sun.

We then drove over to Barker Dam, but decided not to stop since every parking place was occupied. We decided to head back to camp, but ended up stopping once more for a short hike to the Desert Queen Mine. After dropping back down to the desert floor, the weather warmed up nicely. That night we discovered that the wood we thought was a score turned out to be



Photos by: Jerry Grimsley



The view across the valley from camp.



Our campsite was pretty rocky. Very hard on Gus's paws.

Pretty day to be out.

inflammable. I do believe that it was the most pathetic campfire we have ever had. All it did was smolder and smoke (mostly smoke!). The citronella candle campfire we had up in Big Bear many years ago was probably better. Late Friday night, David & Megan Lowe arrived with a rig full of kids and set up camp in the dark.

On Saturday we headed out do to some exploring, nothing planned, just shooting from the hip. Since the area was mostly new to all of us, we just picked some trails to see where they went. We ended up on a sandy trail that was very reminiscent of the trails around Crucero Mountain down by Afton Canyon. We ended up dropping down into a canyon and following the wash southbound. As faint as the prior tire tracks were, it had been a long time since anyone had been this way. We eventually reached the end of the tracks and had to turn around. By this time we were on the other side of the mountain from the main mining district, so we decided to back track and work our way over to where we really wanted to be. On our way we had some fun on some really soft sandy hill climbs.

We made our way over to the Virginia Dale Mine and explored what remained. After a short lunch, we continued working our way around the hill towards the Supply Mine. Along the way we found some other mines and explored a mining shaft. As we poked around the hills we stumbled upon a burned out YJ. Somebody's day had ended badly. After exploring the Supply Mine we headed over to the OK Mine and explored what was left of a shack. Afterwards we decided to call it a day and head back to camp. That night we had a much better camp fire.

On Sunday we opted for a planned route. Since Jerry had the best maps of the area he took the lead. We headed south on the Gold Crown and Old Dale Roads towards the northern border of Joshua Tree. The Golden Egg Mine was hanging on the side of the canyon and had quite a few remains. Next up was the Sunset Mine. There wasn't much here except for a concrete building with an American Flag painted on one wall and a California Flag painted on another. Next up was the Mission Mine. This was a much more recent operation (probably the 60's) and had a lot of steel equipment remaining. The equipment standing over the vertical shaft also provided us with shade for lunch.

After lunch, the trail took us into Joshua Tree for a short bit before turning to the north east and up a canyon to the Los Angeles and Brooklyn Mines. There was a very nice cabin still standing at the Brooklyn mine. We then finished the loop and drove back up past the OK Mine. This time around we decided to take a lower trail down to the tailings. When we got out to look at the holes in the ground we saw some really scary mining conditions. They were

**Virginia Dale Mine  
These were settling  
tanks for gold mining.**



**The Three YJ's lined up made the  
one look pretty sad.**



**David Lowe and sons,  
Carter & Mark. They all  
had such a good time.**

*Photos by:  
Jerry  
Grimsley*

**Terry &  
Cheri at the  
Sunset  
Mine's  
patriotic  
building.**



**At the Mission Mine, we ate  
lunch in the shade of this  
more modern mine  
equipment.**

following a large angular vein that was very deep and wide and shored up all over the place. We just couldn't imagine crawling down into there and working! At this point it was time to head back to camp. However, from this vantage point we discovered another structure that we didn't see the prior day tucked around a little hill. It was a very large ore chute positioned over a very deep vertical shaft. A nice find at the end of the day!

We finally headed back to camp, watched David load everything into the Cherokee so they could head for home, and once again we had a nice campfire to end the day.

While I was bit disappointed to be chased out of Big Bear by the weather, I really was looking forward to going back to the Old Dale Mining District. We had been there about 15 years ago with Scott and Denise Bart. Although I didn't remember much about it, I did remember that it was an interesting area and that I wanted to go back some day. It's always enjoyable exploring old mining operations as well as new country. What were a bit surprising were the Jeep trails. I was expecting just regular dirt roads. What we found were many of these had sections that were borderline black diamond trails. There was some real Jeeping to be had. It was a real enjoyable weekend with beautiful weather, interesting mines, nice Jeep trails and wonderful company. We will definitely need to go back again some time!

**MONDAY, in OLD DALE, by Mary & Jerry Grimsley**

We sadly watched Terry & Cheri pull out of camp, headed for home. But, we happily still had another day to poke around. We headed east further than we had gone on Friday, looking for a way through the Pinto Mountains. Went up a couple of canyons unsuccessfully, however, I found more of the beautiful "red needled" barrel cactus ..... they were very red.

We then got on a rocky road headed at a diagonal up the side of a mountain to the Ivanhoe Mine that was turning into a shelf road. We didn't get too far and were feeling really uncomfortable doing this by ourselves, so Jerry had to back down quite a ways, with me watching the tires and the side of the trail very closely. We were probably 50 feet or so above the wash and of course the trail leaned us out over it.

Once turned around, we decided to go back into the Dale District and then head west and check out a totally different area than we had during the weekend. We visited the Golden Eagle, Maria, and Gypsy Mines. Not much to see at any of those, but at least now we know, however, we were amazed all weekend at all the bushes that were blooming and there were still a few blooming wildflowers.

Leaving that area, we returned to camp for happy hour and another nice evening around the fire.



These are usually growing out of the rock singly, but I found this 1 group.



Jerry & Gus checking out this one-man operation.



Desert Willow tree, I think.

Photos by: Mary Grimsley

**Show & Shine and Pizza Night**

Meet at the Pizza Factory,  
**on 1<sup>st</sup> non-flex Friday, July 5, at 6:00pm**  
 Why cook tonight?  
 Instead order your favorite dinner or pizza!  
 Trade stories, tech info, etc.



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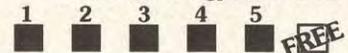
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**CLUB CALENDAR at a GLANCE**

- Jun 26 Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at Casey's Steaks & BBQ, 1337 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest.
- Jun 27 Ridgecrest Round Table meeting at the BLM office, 300 S. Richmond Rd., 6:00pm
- Jul 5 Pizza night (see above)
- Jul 24 Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at Casey's Steaks & BBQ, 1337 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest.
- Jul 25 Public Lands Round Table meeting. 6:00pm at the BLM office, 300 S. Richmond Road
- Aug 1 New date .... Red Rock Canyon State Park  
COMMENTS DUE

**2019 TRAIL BOSSES NEEDED**

- Jun
- Jul
- Aug 30 thru
- Sep 2 Big Bear – Terry Grimsley
- Sep
- Oct TBD Razor Road – J. Grimsley's
- Nov PVD
- Dec 7 Christmas Party

**DON'T FORGET TO CONTACT**

Vice-President, Earl Wicker,  
to volunteer to lead a run at:  
[ebwicker@gmail.com](mailto:ebwicker@gmail.com) OR: 760-608-7240 – cell  
OR 760-446-2121 - home

**ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRONT**

National Public Lands News

Get updates & info at: <http://nplnews.com/>

Office located at: 941 E. Ridgecrest Blvd or call @ 760-371-1073

**CLUB WEBSITE**

Please check the club Face Book page or our website for the latest information regarding meetings & runs at:

[www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/](http://www.geargrinders4wdclub.org/)

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