

TRAILS & TALES

September 2019

GEAR GRINDERS 4WD CLUB, INC.

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Big Bear Bash *By: Terry Grimsley*

Due to unseasonably cold weather predicted for Memorial weekend, the annual Big Bear run was postponed until Labor Day weekend. As usual George & Linda Graham and Bill & Kathy Martin arrived on Wednesday to secure our favorite campsite. Jerry & Mary Grimsley and Byron & Patty Self arrived Thursday afternoon and were joined later in the evening by Terry & Cheri Grimsley. We ended the day with a spectacular evening around the Campfire-In-A-Can. David & Megan Lowe (and their girls) made it to camp sometime after midnight.

On Friday we decided to change things up a bit and run John Bull (3N10) in the eastbound direction. Besides the trail boss, we only had one other taker, the Lowe's. With only two rigs the plan was to make time and complete the trail in about an hour. The rest of the group took the short cut through the Pinnacles to meet us at the gate keeper on the east end of the trail. The gate keeper for the west end of the trail was at one time just a rocky patch that barely got your attention. This isn't the case anymore. All the dirt filling this rocky patch is gone and left a legitimate rock garden. About 20 feet into this rock pile David straddled a boulder that was about an 18" cube. This rock got a hold of his undercarriage and would not let go. It seemed like we were never going to get him off this rock, but the rock finally let go and we continued on. About five minutes later the Grand Cherokee (GC) barfed up a coil spring. Of course the tools we needed to put it back in place required unloading all of the kids. After about 30 minutes and some creative use of a malfunctioning high-lift jack, the spring was in. With only about a 1/4 of a mile of trail covered in 45 minutes the plan to "make time" was not looking good.



Photo by: J. & M. Grimsley.



The barfed out spring lying on the ground in front of the Grand Cherokee.

Coming down John Bull into the east end rock garden.



SPRING
George holding the wayward spring.



About five minutes later the GC was hung up in the rocks and needed a tow rope to extract it. We finally made it to the top of the trail where we typically have lunch and headed down the east side of the mountain. While dropping down the most significant obstacle on this end of the trail (I call it granite hell), the GC barfed out a coil again. This time the location was less than ideal. After some struggles the spring was in again and off we went. We finally reached the east gate keeper and met up with the rest of the club, but not before hearing the clanging sound of a coil falling out again and another strap to drag the GC off of the final rock pile. At least this time we had flat ground to put the spring back in & plenty of moral support. Since it was almost noon, we opted to have lunch and watch a couple of other Jeeps tackle the gate keeper.

We finally reached the end of the trail by about 4:30 PM, much later than I had hoped. So, we called the Graham's, and we went directly to our annual Friday night dinner and margaritas at Sonora Cantina. Excellent as usual! We ended the day with another perfect night around the "campfire".

On Saturday a couple of the ladies (Linda & Cheri) opted to stay in camp, so George rode with the trail boss. Byron & Patty also sat this one out due to the anticipated difficulty of the trail. We decided to get an early start and headed westbound on 3N16 straight for the west end of the Holcomb Creek trail (3N93) to beat the heat. After walking the west end gate keeper to check out some lines we started crawling our way through. Once again the rocks on this trail were even more exposed and bigger than ever. The gate keeper is probably only



Going across the noisy rock quarry on the Gold Mountain Trail.

Photos by:
Jerry Grimsley



David pulling Terry back off a rock pile on the Holcomb Creek Trail.



Vehicles on top of a lookout mountain on the White Mountain Trail.



After lunch everyone but the Graham's headed over to Gold Mountain (3N69) to run it east bound, again, not our normal direction. The side trail we take to get to 3N16 was a bit tougher this year and the GC needed a strap on one rocky climb. After a short run down 3N16 we made it to the west end of Gold Mountain. We usually bounce down the west side without really paying much attention. When you climb the west side you realize just how much you climb in elevation. There's not much in the way of obstacles (rock piles) so we pushed on to the top and took a short break to stretch the legs. Even though we were dropping down the major rock gardens there was some excitement along the way. Unfortunately whatever was happening was out of sight of the trail boss, so I can't really give a good account of what was transpiring. I do know that a tree jumped out and bit Byron & Patty's JK.

As we continued down the mountain, each rock pile we dropped down was noticeably more challenging than past years (I seem to be saying that every year!).

only about 100 yards long, but it's 100 yards of nastiness now, much to the chagrin of the GC. Once again big rocks and not enough ground clearance was a problem for the GC. After multiple extractions with straps and winches, a whole lot of rock stacking and sweat, we were finally through. The first 100 yards of the trail took over an hour! During our trials and tribulations of the gate keeper we met another fellow named Ben driving a well set up older Toyota pickup (and his buddy Katt) and they brought up the rear for the rest of the day. After the gate keeper there's a pretty good stretch of trail without any major rocks. For the most part the west end of the trail hasn't changed much compared to past years. Upon reaching the middle rock garden we once again stopped and scouted out the trail on foot. With it being later in the year the rock garden was much dryer than normal, but once again, more dirt was gone exposing more and bigger rocks. The trail boss



The Self's RV got its rear wheels stuck in a ditch, so the rear was dragging in the dirt.

It took 2 Jeeps in tandem to pull the RV out.



drove through the garden without much issue, only needing to pause once to extract the GC with a strap. Before finishing this obstacle, the trail boss got off his line and almost flopped the freshly painted YJ. I think the only thing that kept the YJ upright was the clenching of the drivers derriere to the driver's seat. Everyone else made their way through the obstacle without issue and we broke for lunch in the shade of one of the few trees on this stretch of the trail.

After a short lunch we continued on and climbed through a couple of smaller rock gardens without any problems. When we encountered a lone Jeep (w/ Scott & Sommer) we noticed it was leaking power steering fluid. After stopping to lend a hand (mainly tools) with a trail fix, we were off again and headed towards the east end gate keeper. The trail boss was almost through these rocks when he got spun and hung up. Much to my chagrin (and David's delight) I needed a strap to pull me back. Everyone else made it through with no problem until the other Grimsley's take the same line as the trail boss. This time the plan was to have Bill Martin pull him forward with a strap. The first attempt just about pulled Bill off into the ditch. After realigning, another attempt was made, but this just made matters worse. Ultimately Jerry needed to attach a winch line to a tree up on the hillside to get a better angle to drag himself out of the rocks. After clearing the east gate keeper we finished what remained of the trail and made our way back to camp. Our third night around the campfire was just as enjoyable as the first two nights.

On Sunday we hopped on 3N16 once again and drove west for about 15 miles until we reached the west end of the White Mountain Jeep Trail (3N17). Along the way we picked up a couple of guests (Ben & Katt's daughter). This trail works its way to the east following the ridgeline while climbing in elevation. While the rock piles are pretty tame compared to prior days, there are definitely some good climbs with limited traction and sizeable ruts.

While we were on the south side, there wasn't a breath of wind and it was pretty warm, despite it being early in the day. We were slowed a bit by some mall crawlers (newer Land Cruisers) but we were able to pass this slow moving group near South Peak. The pass resulted in missing our normal stop at South Peak and the trail boss missed the turn for North Peak so we missed both of our best vista points.

Once we got up on the ridgeline we had a nice breeze the rest of the day. There were several climbs with some decent rocks and ruts as we traversed the ridgeline. Eventually we dropped down into one of the saddles and had a very pleasant lunch under a group of trees. At this point we didn't have much of the trail remaining. After lunch we finished the trail and rejoined 3N16 and headed back to camp. About halfway back to camp we ran into Scott & Sommer again and talked to them for a couple of minutes. They also dropped by our camp later in the day for some more Jeep and trail talk. For a fourth consecutive night we had a wonderful evening for a campfire.

On Monday the plan was take a drive over to Butler Peak since it was finally open again after being closed for many years. So I thought! It was open in March, I was there, but apparently the heavy spring rains played havoc with the trails and once again the road up was closed. We looked around for one of the old bypasses around the gate but they are now blocked off. We started to poke around some trails on Delamar Mountain but ultimately decided to head back to camp so the LA Grimsley's could start their drive down the mountain and into the LA basin. When we arrived in camp, we found the Lowe's were already gone.

We passed Byron & Patty in the motor home towing the Jeep just west of camp. A short while later Bryon drove back into camp driving the Jeep. It turned out that they took a wrong turn on the way out and ended up getting the motor home stuck in a ditch while trying to turn around. Fortunately the group had returned to camp early, so there was plenty of help to get them out. It took both George's & Jerry's Jeeps in tandem to pull the RV out.

Another Big Bear weekend has come and gone. I think we set a record for tow straps and winches used in one weekend. This was the first time it was held over Labor Day, but after spectacular weather all weekend, particularly the summer nights, I'm tempted to do it again. It's pretty unusual to have perfect nights for a campfire every single night. Thank you to everyone that made the trek down from Ridgecrest, I hope you enjoyed the weekend. As always, I'm already looking forward to next year!

Pleasant Canyon to South Park Run

WHEN: Saturday, October 5, 2019

Meet: 7:45am **Leave:** 8:00am

WHERE: Meet at the Richmond Road Park 'n Ride

WHY: This will serve as a Pre-run for PVD

WHAT TO BRING: 4X4 vehicle with a full tank of gas; lunch, water, & Snacks for the day; a jacket for the higher elevations; camera.

WHO: George Graham will be your trail boss & guide.

To **RSVP**, please contact him @:

email – graham.george@mediacombb.net

phone: 760-375-7390

PANAMINT VALLEY DAYS

WHEN: November 7 – 10, some are going over on the 6th to help set up.

WHERE: Panamint Valley, off the Nadeau Road paved road.

WHAT: Bring your 4X4 vehicle; RV or tent for camping; food, water for the length of time you'll be there; camera; firewood.

WHY: This is C4WDA, Southern District run/fund raiser. You can Preregister at: <https://cal4wheel.com/> or register in camp (could be extra).
Registration is \$55.00 if you are a Cal4wheel member.

If you are a Gear Grinder Member you are also a Cal4wheel member.

If you are not yet a member, it says registration is \$80. If I were you, I would wait and register in camp. If you are close to qualifying as a Gear Grinder member, you could apply that extra \$25 towards paying for a C4WDA membership of \$55.00. We'll talk about it at the meeting. I'll have more info by then.

WHO: The Gear Grinders lead quite a few of the runs. See the chart that will be passed around at the meeting on Sept. 25 to pick the run you would like to lead or be tail gunner for.

Or contact Mary at maranjer@gmail.com to sign up.



Show & Shine and Pizza Night

Meet at the Pizza Factory,
on 1st non-flex Friday,
October 11, at 6:00pm

Why cook tonight?

Instead order your favorite dinner or pizza!



BRIAN REED is just a phone-call away for YOUR 4-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES PART NEEDS at 760-559-2124.



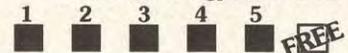
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For your 4WD part needs. Mention Gear Grinders for a club discount. At the end of the year 4WD Hardware will send the club a check for a % of the sales from members for the year.

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CLUB CALENDAR at a GLANCE

- Sep 25 Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at Casey's Steaks & BBQ, 1337 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest.
- Sep 26 Public Lands Round Table meeting. 6:00pm at the BLM office, 300 S. Richmond Road
- Oct 5 Pleasant Canyon run – George Graham
- Oct 11 Pizza night (see above)
- Oct 23 Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at Casey's Steaks & BBQ, 1337 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest.
- Nov 7-11 PVD – Register at C4WDA web page
- Nov 20 Club meeting, 6:00 PM dinner, 7:00 PM meeting at Casey's Steaks & BBQ, 1337 N. China Lake Blvd., Ridgecrest. This is a week early due to Thanksgiving.

2019 TRAIL BOSSES NEEDED

- Sep Possible PVD pre-runs
- Oct 5 Pleasant Canyon - Graham
- Oct 18-20 Razor Road – **CANCELLED**
- Nov 8-11 PVD
- Dec 7 Christmas Party

DON'T FORGET TO CONTACT

Vice-President, Earl Wicker,
to volunteer to lead a run at:
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/

PROMOTING PUBLIC LANDS FOR RESPONSIBLE MULTIPLE USE