



Trail Tales



September 1, 2024

Official Newsletter
of the
New Mexico 4-Wheelers

www.nm4w.org



Meeting Minutes

August 10, 2024

By Shirley Godfrey

The meeting was held at Cliff and Jeanne Meier's house, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

President Jack Dickey called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Cheryle Bakewell, Tracy Bakewell, Jeff Boggs, Cathy Dickey, Jack Dickey, Linda Dobson, Patrick Dobson, Shirley Godfrey, David Ham, Rebecca Ham, Ed Kausche, Lyn Kausche, Cliff Meier, Jeanne Meier, Jack Nutter, Don Roy, Beth P. Steele, Richard Steele, Mary Turpin, Frank Whiston, William Zobel

GUESTS ATTENDING: Erik Baldwin, Keith D'angelico, Doug Elkins, Jason Haynes, Michael Hoffman, Nikolai Mondragon, Angel Pena, Matthew Ray,

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Jeff Boggs -

There have been 3 new applicants. Two new memberships were voted on by members present. Motions were made and seconded to approve Michael Hoffman and Matthew Ray as voting (full) members. Both motions were approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Jeff explained the 5 points to become a club member and explained the transgression fines. There were no transgression fines levied.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – Shirley Godfrey

Meeting minutes - A motion was made and seconded to approve the July minutes as published in the the August newsletter. The Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Richard Steele

Rich provided current balances for both checking and saving accounts. A motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurers report. The Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

Rich also reported 46 members have not paid to renew their membership. There are 52 paid members. Rich sent a mass email reminding those to pay their dues.

TRIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Mary Turpin

Past Trips:

July 14 - Mt Tayler from the East, Cliff Meier

August 3 - Jemez Ride, West Side of Jemez Mountains, Jeff Boggs

Upcoming rides/events explained on the website

September 7 - West Jemez, FR17, Jeff Boggs

September 8 - Peralta Ridge Trail Clearing Work Day, Mary Turpin

September 21 - Peralta Ridge/Ponderosa/East Jemez, Mary Turpin

October 4-7 - Cooke's Canyon, Massacre Canyon – Overnight Trip, David Ham

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPORT -

Bill Zobel: Bill and Frank Whiston provided members with information about the Rugged Ridge/Real Truck trail access program grant. Bill signed up for the grant for trail signs. Frank came up with 25 trails to have trail markers made at Gordy's Hill.

PROGRAM CHAIR'S REPORT – Cathy Dickey

50/50 tickets available. Cathy turned in T-shirts sales to Rich. Cathy has received the card reader and should be able to take credit cards at the next meeting. If you want a certain item with the club logo on it, you can take it to ASI Custom Apparel off Osuna on Academy Parkway. The club is still panning to give members stickers.

HISTORIAN'S REPORT – Frank Whiston

Frank has updated the trail section on the website for the northern area of New Mexico, between south of Taos and Angel Fire.

WEBMASTER'S REPORT - Don Roy

Nothing new to report this month.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT – Don Roy – The Newsletter is always looking for articles.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mary reported that 9 people have signed up for the CPR course that will be held in the Fall and the Wilderness first aide that will be held in the Spring.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jeanne Meier asked for people to take the remaining hot dogs and buns home. Also, if you brought food, take it home.

50/50 raffle - \$56 split.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

	President's Report
	By Jack Dickey

There is no President's report this month.



Gordy's Hill Kiosk Install

By Frank Whiston



Socorro, NM July 11, 2024 — **Five** volunteers from the New Mexico 4-Wheelers worked alongside the Socorro BLM to install a new informational kiosk at the [Arroyo Los Piños Staging Area](#) on Johnson Hill OHV Area in central New Mexico. After a very delicious and filling breakfast at the Crane Café in Lemitar, NM, Mary, Rich, Jack, Glenn, and Frank headed up the Quebradas Road to meet Deeny from the Socorro BLM Office to complete the installation of the 3 panel kiosk. The Socorro Field Office provided the framework for a 2 panel Kiosk. The New Mexico 4-Wheelers funded and fabricated an extra upright as well as a full canopy for the 3-panel kiosk. The kiosk panels were funded by the Quadratic 50 for 50 Initiative and produced by Tread Lightly! The BLM had set the kiosk framework prior to our arrival utilizing heavy equipment that they had at their disposal, which was a good thing! When setting the last post, the BLM crew encountered a large subsurface boulder that left no choice but to install the last post at an angle.



Jack brought a couple gallons of brown paint, plywood backer panels, and hardware. Given it was mid-July and the temperature was quickly rising, the crew got right to painting. Frank set up a shade canopy off the back of his Jeep so that we could escape the summer sun during water breaks. The paint dried quickly, and we were able to immediately transition to installing the informational panels. We had a perfect size crew and were all finished by 1 PM.

Thank you to the following partners for their support:

- BLM Socorro Field Office
- Tread Lightly!
- Quadratec
- New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources
- New Mexico Tech
- New Mexico Game and Fish

“We are so thankful for Quadratec and Tread Lightly! for their help in creating, and the New Mexico 4-Wheelers for installing new kiosk signs for our Arroyo Los Piños Staging area. This area is one of the most frequently used staging locations in the Johnson Hill OHV area for trail users. The new kiosk signage welcomes users, identifies what motorized activities are in the surrounding area and how to recreate them responsibly. This kiosk is an informative and beautiful addition to our recent improvements to this staging area.” -- Deeny Apachito, BLM Project Manager
“The kiosk serves as a tribute to the New Mexico 4-Wheelers decades-long commitment from concept, designation, and to the official trail system of Gordy's Hill OHV area. It displays educational and recreational activities while promoting safe and responsible tips which are all core values for our club. Thank you Tread Lightly!, BLM Socorro Field Office, Quadratec, NM Game and Fish, and New Mexico Tech for collaborating with us to make this happen.”—Frank Whiston, New Mexico 4-Wheelers Historian.





Adventures at All 4 Fun 2024!

By Mary Turpin, NM4W Trip Chair



I went to All 4 Fun from Saturday July 20th – Saturday July 27th. A4F is hosted by the Mile High Jeep Club (MHJC) in Denver. This is a long-running annual event that floats among various locations in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado. This year it was in Buena Vista, about a 6-hour drive north of ABQ.

I was planning to tow the Jeep behind my truck, allowing me to take lots of gear to make for a comfortable week camping, but had a trailer reservation fail with UHAUL at the last minute so I spent two hours repacking everything in my driveway on Friday July 19th and drove the Jeep instead. It's amazing what you can fit in a 2-door Jeep when properly motivated!



Last minute driveway chaos.



Cliff Meier gave me a great recommendation for the KOA in Salida, and I stayed there Friday night, wanting to get up to BV as early as possible on Saturday. Cliff was spot on – what a great park!

Camping for A4F wasn't the best as it was at the Buena Vista Rodeo Grounds (across the highway from the SuperMax KOA prison, no less...) and very dusty and weed-filled. But life is good when you're surrounded by a couple hundred other Jeeps for a whole week, right?!? MHJC has been doing A4F for years and they have a few things figured out about how to run a large event. They really do an amazing job given the number of people they host and the number of organizations they coordinate with.



Buena Vista Rodeo Grounds

Paul and I took the YJ to A4F up in Leadville, back in about 2013, and since he died, I've wanted to go again. There has been a part of me wanting to prove to myself that I can keep Wheeling on my own and I've let that push me to tackle pretty much anything I come across. For me, this trip helped rebuild my independence and my autonomy as a Wheeler in my own right. And it was an AMAZING week!

At check-in on Saturday, you get the list of trails, and my first thought was, "Wow, there aren't that many hard runs!" MHJC works with the USFS and sometimes struggles to get permits for runs, and that limits what they can offer. This year there definitely weren't as many Level 5+ runs as many folks wanted, so sign-ups for those runs got pretty competitive.

I scored a spot for Holy Cross for the first trail day, on Sunday. Holy Cross is rated



Entrance to Holy



For real, the sign ain't

Level 7-8 and is the hardest trail I've ever run by myself (having shared the first four Jeeps and the driving with two husbands), and in a rig I've built by myself. Holy Cross gets serious about 10 feet into the trail and keeps you working from that moment on.

There was a quick moment early on when I wondered if I had completely lost my mind, jumping into a trail this hard with a rig I had owned only two months, and whose mods were less than three weeks old. My Rubi and I were still in the courtship phase, and here I was asking it to deliver the world. I quickly decided we were meant for each other, and that working together, we would conquer Holy Cross at any cost. I talked to my Jeep all day long and listened to what she told me in return. She's a beast and I love her!



There are several fun rock climbs, with the most challenging being the departure out of French Creek, about 2/3 of the way to Holy Cross City, an old mining town with incredible scenery and views. I biffed the climb and high-centered in two spots. Winching me out straight from the front didn't work, so I used a permanent winch hook installed in a massive boulder to the left of the trail. I realized afterwards my mistake was not 100% listening to my spotter.



My oops climbing out of French

When you high-center not one, but two different places...

He said keep my wheels towards Driver, and I didn't. My squirrel brain took my wheels more Passenger than I should have, and I met those two high-center spots. (face palm)

Trusting your spotter is everything!



Holy Cross = big rocks to climb!

Headed back out.

Jeff Boggs said that I had to have pictures to prove it!



We didn't go to Cleveland Rock, we left that for the crazy people. :-)

I tried for a spot running Iron Chest (Level 8) for Monday but didn't make it. It's a hugely popular trail!

MHJC wasn't able to get official permits for Chinaman Gulch (Level 8) in time, so they partnered with High Country Performance, a Colorado off-road shop, to help lead this run. HCP volunteered to help get folks on Chinaman, meeting



each day a couple

of blocks off-site and doing the run unofficially. I LOVED CHINAMAN! It was an awesome blend of climbs and



drops with rocks and ledges; it was the most similar in some ways to what we run down here in NM, winding up and down over hills and through arroyos. It was also the closest to the Rodeo Grounds, which meant I was off the trail early enough that day to go into town and take a shower, LOL. Somehow, I lost all four

valve caps that day when airing up. They were in my hand one minute and then completely gone from the universe the next. (face palm) #Amazon



I scored a spot doing Iron Chest on Tuesday. Like Holy Cross, Iron Chest puts you to work about 10 feet onto the trail. While I love me a good rock



garden, the first 3/4 mile of Iron Chest is a freakin' boulder garden that almost made me cry. I was happily learning my new Falcon shocks, but still, that was just waaaay too much being knocked around. After the boulder garden, the rest of Iron Chest is a typical rock garden, with some terrifying drops down a mountainside at the edge of the trail, with some beautiful scree fields thrown in. The top of Iron Chest is amazing, ending at an old mining camp with spectacular Rocky Mountain view.



Coming out of Iron Chest we ran into a separate group coming in. Iron Chest is barely wide enough for one vehicle – and there is absolutely nowhere easily wide enough for two rigs. We, coming out,

outnumbered the folks coming in, and so they somehow magically pulled off the sides for us to sneak through. It was insane how they managed to squeeze out of the way enough for us to get by. It took them about 45 minutes to somehow make way, but we snuck by and kept slogging our way out.





Definitely a time when seeing headlights coming at you is a very bad thing!

Coming out of Iron Chest means running that boulder garden in reverse, and more almost-crying for me. LOL. At one point, my passenger front tire rolled a boulder straight into the path of my front drive shaft, meaning it lodged hard and I wasn't moving. The folks behind me worked with the Trail Leader, winching me backwards, and got me unstuck. Yay!

Iron Chest is relatively short and only took us the morning to do. The

afternoon was going to be Grizzly Lake, which is just a short drive down the road. There is a sizeable obstacle called the Gatekeeper at the beginning of Grizzly. I was starting to feel the fatigue of multiple hardcore days driving a manual transmission on tough trails. I took one look at the Gatekeeper and tapped out. (face palm) I hung around and watched other folks playing on and tackling it, and then went back to camp and took a nap!



The Gatekeeper at the beginning of Grizzly Lake is just beyond the creek.



Just might be how I mount my RotoPax on



Wednesday was Vendor Day, giving folks a day off to rest, and to shop for gear! Much drooling. 😊 I managed to come home with only business cards and a stack of stickers.



ran with the same great MHJC Trail Leader from Iron Chest, on Thursday, doing Wheeler Lake (Level 7). Chinaman was my favorite run from a driving point of view, but Wheeler had an

entire mountain goat family including an adorable baby mountain goat. So, Wheeler won my favorite trail of the week. 😊





I'll have a Rubi, on the rocks.



Wheeler Lake has incredible scenery and views for miles.



Wheeler was a great mixture of elements – large rocks and bouldery things to climb, lots of water crossings, rock gardens, tight turns, and breathtaking Rocky Mountain views at the end of the trail. After lunch, not long after heading back, I miscalculated the clearance of my front axle and lodged it into a boulder next to the passenger tire. The folks behind

me had a great view of my underside and immediately hopped out and started winching me backwards. For me, Wheeler was a close second to Chinaman from a technical skills point of view. I would definitely run Wheeler Lake again!



Note the stylin' smooshed license plate.



The top of Wheeler.

By Friday, my knees were shot. Even my braces and Advil weren't helping. Four days of hard trails in my manual transmission meant they were about as sore as I could stand. I really wanted redemption on Holy Cross, having lain awake at night thinking through my mistakes and what I needed to do differently on French Creek, but was able to recognize that it wasn't likely to end well as tired as I was. I needed to be able to drive my Jeep home to ABQ in one piece, and I was pretty physically exhausted. The same Trail Leader from Iron Chest and Wheeler Lake was slated to lead the Holy Cross run on Friday, and I scored shotgun with him, at



least allowing me to get eyes on the trail again, if not drive it myself. Rumor has it that A4F will be hosted out of Leadville in 2025, meaning I can do Holy Cross next year and conquer French Creek properly! #Redemption

I have to give huge credit and thanks to Darren and his crew at Desert Rat. They do my mechanical stuff for me and they are awesome. They made sure everything was ready to go right before A4F and they took a look at everything after I came back. I texted Andrew after runs most days

Friday's MHJC Trail Leader, David "Mac" McDaniel leading Holy Cross.



with reports on various noises and issues, and he would help guide me on what to climb under the Jeep and have a look at. Since I don't do my own mechanic-ing, it was the closest thing possible to having my mechanic along with me. Grateful doesn't even begin to describe how I felt – his/their support was fabulous. Post-run inspection showed the only thing I actually loosened was the front trac bar. I discovered that my driving style means the passenger rear shock mount will get replaced sooner than other parts, as it is no longer shaped normally. (face

palm) I also put a pretty good smash into the stock passenger side rail, but it held up well.

I came home the final Saturday utterly exhausted and filthy, and as happy as I could be! I got winched three times and ran trails with folks from all over the country. I got to watch other rigs with different configurations, thinking through why they took then lines they did and how their gear worked for them, or not in some cases. So much Jeep oggling!

As I wrote in the July article about my Overlanding trip, I love learning from other folks' wheeling styles and skills. I love my NM4W world, but I also love learning from folks with hugely varied experiences on different types of trails and obstacles. 😊



It was a great experience, in particular, to run trails with primarily male drivers, while being one of only a handful of women with our own rigs. The 4WD world is male-dominated and I've been a unicorn in that world for 30+ years. There's a lot of confidence gained for myself there, and I plan to keep it going. I've Wheeled since my teenage years, but always with a husband. Being on my own now and proving to myself that this is something I know how to do, and do reasonably well, was incredible. Jeeps are in my soul, and I don't plan to ever give this up.

I'll be at Chile Challenge in a few weeks, again tackling Level 7 – 8's. Bring on the rocks!

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"NOT ALL THOSE WHO WANDER ARE LOST."

— J.R.R. TOLKIEN

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