



# Trail Tales



April 1, 2025

Official Newsletter  
of the  
New Mexico 4-Wheelers

[www.nm4w.org](http://www.nm4w.org)



## Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2025

By Shirley Godfrey

The meeting was held at North Domingo Baca Multi-Generational Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

President Jack Dickey called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm thanking Mary Turpin for bringing in the refreshments.

**MEMBERS ATTENDING:** Glenn Boudreaux, Guy Conway, Cathy Dickey, Jack Dickey, Patrick Dobson, Shirley Godfrey, Jeff Grenier, Ric Henry, Ed Kausche, Lyn Kausche, Allison Martinez, Cliff Meier, Jeanne Meier, Jack Nutter, Angel Pena, Jonathan Rivera, Don Roy, Richard Steele, Mary Turpin, Anthony Weaver, Frank Whiston, William Zobel

**GUESTS ATTENDING:** Janet Crosby, Mike Crosby, Karl Leigh, Oly Olson, Stefanie Olson, William A Reed, Andrew Schwebke, Carol Sheriff, John Sheriff, Douglas Story II, Don Taylor

### **VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT** – Mary Turpin stepped in for VP Jeff Boggs

Mary explained the 5 points system to become a club member and explained the transgression fines.

Guests attending introduced themselves and the vehicles they drive.

Erik Baldwin and Anthony Weaver are eligible for full membership but were not in attendance.

A motion was made and seconded to have Don Roy become an HONORARY MEMBER!!!!

A motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Don has been the club’s webmaster since May 5, 2011.

Transgression fines – Cliff Meier, one transgression for not staying on the correct trail.

### **SECRETARY’S REPORT** - Shirley Godfrey

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

### **TREASURER’S REPORT** - Rich Steele

Current balances for both checking and saving accounts were provided.

PO Box rental has been paid and renewed.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurer’s report. Motion was approved by

a majority of members present without discussion.

### **TRIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Mary Turpin**

Trail leaders are needed for more rides. A good way to get involved is to be the tail gunner or mid gunner on the larger rides. This is a good way to learn the ropes working with the ride leader.

#### **Past Trips**

February 21, Scouting Run, Arroyo del Coyote, Frank Whiston

March 6, Mesa Gallina/Cerro Alesna Pre-Run, Cliff Meier. Cliff believes in doing a pre run/practice run when you haven't been on the trail for a while. Terrain changes, and it's not always the same as the last run. The group also ran into a no trespassing sign.

#### **Upcoming Events and Trips**

March 15, American Red Cross Wilderness First Aid, Mary Turpin (Class Full)

March 23, La Ventana Mesa, Cliff Meier

March 29, NMOHVA Annual Meeting, Frank Whiston. Frank would like NM4 Wheeler to attend the meeting.

Please check for additional upcoming rides on the website. Some of the rides are slated for members only. Get those points to go on the members only rides!

### **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPORT - Bill Zobel –**

The 25 Gordy's trail markers signs will cost approximately \$25,000.00. The NMDG&F Grant application for the trail markers signs has been submitted by NMOHVA.

Frank Whiston showed a picture (on the computer screen) of the new signs.

There was a discussion regarding crossing State Trust lands and recreational use permits. In the 1700's the Governor gave private land grants to individuals. Frank pulled up the following information on the screen:

“Recreational Access Permits:

Recreational access to state trust lands is generally prohibited without a recreational access permit.

You can apply for an annual permit and pay the \$35 fee to access these lands.

Permits are valid for a year from the date of issuance and allow up to 10 family members to accompany the permit holder.

Crossing Private Land:

You may cross private land only with written permission from the landowner(s).”

This has been brought to the attention of NMOHVA

### **PROGRAM CHAIR'S REPORT - Cathy Dickey –**

Cathy gave the treasurer money from ticket and swag sales. She has a restock of t-shirts, hats and stickers. Business cards are available to pass out.

50/50 tickets available. Hats, license plates and stickers can be purchased with a credit card. 50/50 tickets sales are cash only.

### **HISTORIAN'S REPORT - Frank Whiston –**

Keep sharing pictures to document where you've been on the rides.

### **WEBMASTER'S REPORT and NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT - Don Roy**

Don is going to send emails to the trip leaders to submit articles to the newsletter.

The Club's hosting service (website) renewal is May 11<sup>th</sup>. Don is trying to negotiate a new 3 year deal.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

The annual picnic is tentatively scheduled for June 14. Reservations for the campsite do not

open until March 15. Jack Dickey will call first thing that morning to reserve the location.

Think about becoming an officer for next year. Elections at the July meeting.

A host is needed for the July meeting. The host can choose the date and time).

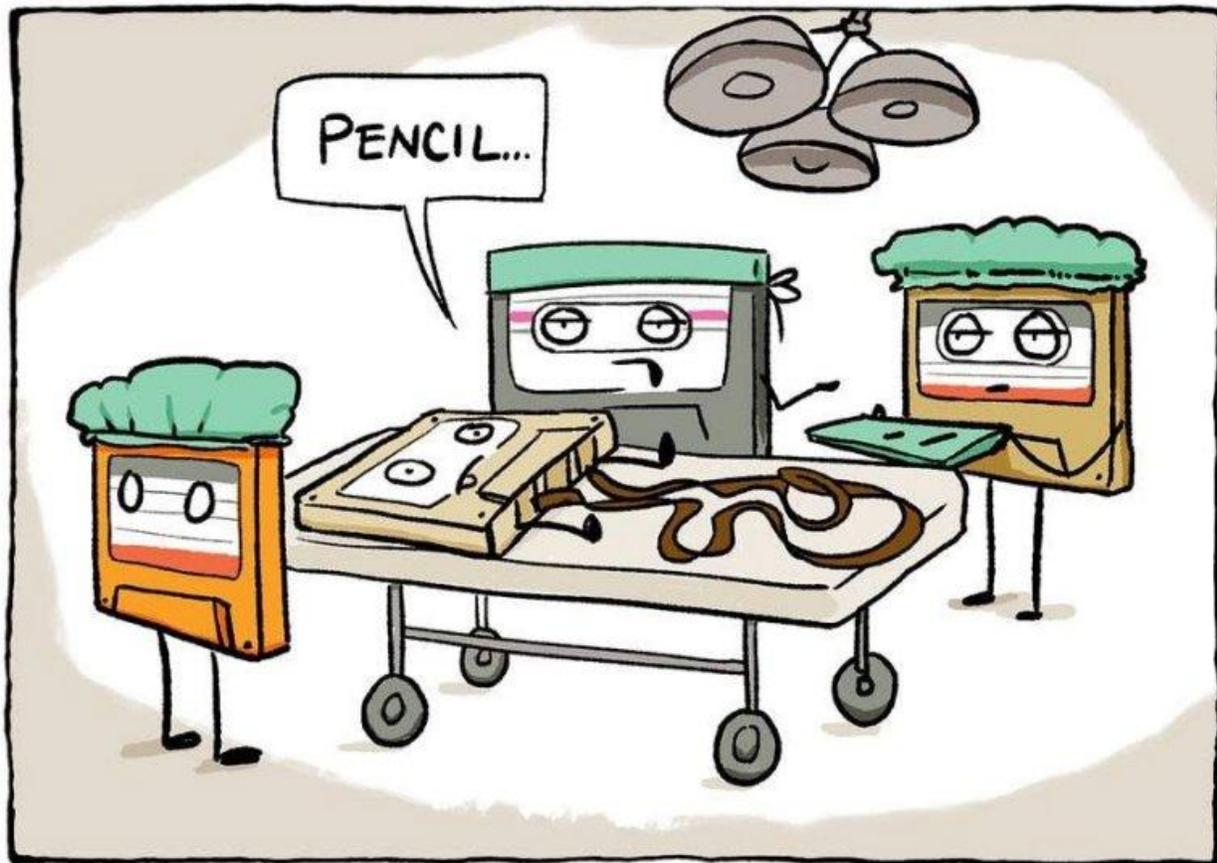
### NEW BUSINESS:

Jack Dickey received a call from Thomas Manley from YouTube's Hard Lines Only. He wants to do an event at Gordy's and will provide the event passes. Looking at March 2026. Thomas would like the NM4Wheeler's to install winch points at Gordy's, primarily Coyote Hills area. Jack Dickey explained to the club that winches have to be installed properly, maintained and it would not be a good idea for the club due to the liability.

Frank Whiston gave a demonstration on the Gordy's Geo PDF map. Frank Whiston created a Georeferenced PDF map of the club's most popular trails at Gordy's Hill to retain E/M/H/X color coding for the trails, including a table showing trail names and ratings and displaying the trail names. The PDF file is available to members of the club in our on-line documents and NM4W Gordy's Hill trails page. The map can also be downloaded from the Avenza Maps app store.

50/50 raffle - \$47.00. \$23.50 split, winner, Glenn Boudreaux.

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.





# President's Report

By Jack Dickey

## *A Good Problem*

Recently NM4W trips have been filling up fast, sometimes a month or so before the trip date. This makes it hard for guests and applicants to get the required points for their desired membership level and for members who procrastinate signing up for a trip to participate. This is a good problem because it means that our membership is thriving, and folks are interested in going on our trips.

Also, part of the problem is that it is prudent to limit the number of rigs on a ride. Ride limits are necessary because on some trails it is not practical to have a large group, we want to lessen the impact rigs may have on an area, and we don't want to draw attention of land management agencies to the number of rigs on a trail at any given time. Also, a trip leader simply may not want lead a large group. How to we solve this good problem? Part of our purpose is to provide social, educational, and recreational activities for our members and promote and participate in safe and responsible four-wheel drive activities.

The solution is to offer more trips. Trip leaders can set up more trips either to known or new trails. Trip leaders can offer multiple trips on a single day or repeat a Saturday trip on the following Sunday (an overflow trip). However, offering the same trip only with a later start time on the same day seems to conflict with the concept of rig limits.

But in order to offer more trips, now more than ever, there needs to be more folks willing to lead trips! So, who can be a trip leader? Anyone? Only members in good standing? Someone who has been lots of trips? To me, someone who has "some" experience with the type of trip they want to lead and the **DESIRE TO LEAD A TRIP**, is all that is needed to be a trip leader. The rest of the stuff will come with the experience and a prospective trip leader can get help with: where to go, posting on the calendar, waivers, route finding, monitoring attendance, points, and trip close out.

As fellow members we need to offer encouragement and support to those who wish to be trip leaders as well as those who currently are leading trips. Working together, being creative, and having an open mind we can solve this good problem.

Happy Trails,

*Jack Dickey*



## Director of Environmental Affairs

By William Zobel

### Traveling Across New Mexico State Trust Lands

As I reported during the March meeting, we encountered a sign during the pre-run for the Mesa Gallina ride at the entrance of New Mexico State Trust Land stating a Recreational Access Permit was required to conduct a variety of activities on trust land. At the time, this raised several questions about crossing State Trust Land on the established two track trail/road.

- Was a permit required to just cross the land?
- Did everyone (all vehicles) need a permit or was one good for the group?

At Jack Dickey's request, I did some investigation and called the New Mexico State Trust Land office and found out that State Trust lands have different rules than the BLM or USFS lands where we typically travel:

- Trust land is not public land
- They date back to 1785 and were granted by the United States Congress to states upon entering the Union
- These lands were designated to support essential public institutions which are primarily public schools
- State trust land managers lease and sell these lands to generate revenue for current and future designated beneficiaries

My initial question was "Does just crossing the trust land on an existing road require a permit?" The response was surprising. The individual I spoke with stated that the two-track trail/road we were on was probably not considered a public road and, therefore, we should not be on that trail/road with a motorized vehicle. Here is what is stated within the New Mexico State Trust Land Recreational Access Permit:

"Motorized vehicle (and any mechanical form of transportation) access is permitted via public highways and roads only (as defined by Section 67-2-1 NMSA1978) and established roads that cross state trust lands to which recreational access is granted under the terms of a Permit."

#### Section 67-2-1 - Public highways; definition

"All roads and highways, except private roads, established in pursuance of any law of New Mexico, and roads dedicated to public use, that have not been vacated or abandoned, and such other roads as are recognized and maintained by the corporate authorities of any county in New Mexico, are hereby declared to be public highways."

One of the prohibited activities you agree not to engage in when applying for Recreational Access Permit is: "conducting off-road vehicle activities." Note that this is true whether a sign is posted or not.

So, back to the road in question during the Mesa Gallina pre-run. This road has no designation, such as a BLM number, to officially declare it as a public road so it is considered private. Crossing this

section of State Trust Land, where a rancher has purchased grazing rights and posted signs at the gates entering the property, would be considered trespassing.

At this point we want everyone to be aware of rules regarding New Mexico State Trust Land. The plan is to work with NMOHVA (as representatives of all motorized recreationalists), discuss this issue, and develop a unified position that we can propose a solution to the state land office that would benefit all motorized users. We will report back as things develop in the future.



## La Ventana Trail Double Feature

By Frank Whiston and Cliff Meier

This March, the club experienced its first-ever double feature, where two groups embarked on the same trail over two consecutive days. This unique event unfolded after a lively March club meeting that saw more than a dozen eager applicants and guests, hopeful of joining upcoming rides, only to find them fully booked. The limitation on vehicle numbers is essential, ensuring that the group moves at a comfortable pace without overcrowding. Cliff had already scheduled the La Ventana Trail for Sunday, which quickly reached its vehicle limit and had enthusiasts on the waitlist. Recognizing the demand, Frank decided to lead another group the day before, effortlessly gathering a sizable second team for the adventure.

So, how did this route get its name? La Ventana, meaning 'the window' in Spanish, is a ghost town which lies 14 miles south of Cuba, NM, on US 550. This is where the name originates. The area features striking high red rock cliffs, one of which contains the window that lends its name to the region. La Ventana's rich history dates to the 1870s, though it faced frequent Indian raids that delayed settlement. It wasn't until 1914 that the Padilla family resettled in the area, marking the beginning of a new chapter. From the mid-1920s to early 1930s, La Ventana thrived as a coal mining hub, attracting more residents and transforming the landscape. The Padilla family's arrival paved the way for a vibrant community centered around coal mining.



In its heyday, La Ventana was a bustling town with the charming El Nido Hotel offering sixteen rooms. The community featured general stores, various restaurants, a stage line, a post office, and a school, creating a lively atmosphere. With a population of 150, La Ventana buzzed with activity and connection, reflecting the character and spirit of its residents. Today, La Ventana serves as a rest

stop on US 550 between San Ysidro and Cuba, holding onto its intriguing past. For more about the area's history, click [here](#).



Our adventure kicked off just beyond the ghost town, where the remnants of the old NM Highway 44 climb eastward which is now CR 11. Cresting the hill marked the entrance to the BLM's Elk Springs Area of Critical Environmental Concern, a winter haven for elk migrating from the Jemez Mountains. Each spring, the BLM reopens the area, preserving the

habitat and protecting the roads from muddy chaos.

As we navigated south, the trail hugged the mid-terrace of a majestic bi-level mesa, weaving around colossal Navajo Sandstone boulders that had tumbled over centuries. This dramatic scenery, punctuated by pinion and juniper forests, offered breathtaking vistas. On Saturday, Tom managed to find a hole with his right rear tire as we climbed the major southern mesa and managed to pop his fender flare completely off. After throwing it in his backseat, we were on our way again. It should be an easy fix with some new clips once home.



Emerging onto the mesa's flat expanse revealed a sprawling meadow adorned with sagebrush.

On Saturday, our adventurous group embarked on a thrilling detour, choosing a spur road for our



lunch break. This path descended a dramatic finger of the mesa, skirting the northern edge of Jemez Pueblo. It was no walk in the park; the off-camber shelf road was precariously eroded, presenting a real challenge. But teamwork rose to the occasion! With shovels in hand, we dug out the uphill track and filled the downhill one, swiftly making the trail passable. Cliff had not been on this run in several years and he missed the turn for this spur road on Sunday, so that group did not take advantage of the work Saturday's group did, oh well.

As the Saturday group reached the southern edge of the finger, the two-track trail faded away, and we found perfect pullouts for a well-deserved break. The weather was phenomenal, offering picturesque views that complemented our camaraderie.

Adding a sweet touch to the day, Stephanie shared iced sugar cookies shaped like rubber ducks, bringing smiles all around.

After a delightful respite, we returned to the main route without any incident, ready for the next leg of our adventure. The trail led us to the dramatic eastern edge of the mesa, where it plunged into a geologic fault surrounded by a majestic ponderosa forest. Navigating eight tight switchbacks, we reached the depths of the drainage, each maneuver requiring the utmost attention as the eroded tracks tested our driving skills. Pedro was allowing his young son



to drive, and he managed to get their stock Rubicon in a somewhat precarious position. With a little help, the white Jeep got a course correction and continued without incident.

Our adventure took a historic turn as we arrived at the Wilkins Number Two Mine for an afternoon break. The remnants of a rock fireplace, likely part of an old wood cabin, stood as a silent testament to the past. The canyon, lined with towering sandstone walls and stately ponderosa pines, captivated us as we ventured deeper.

A closed gate loomed ahead, signaling the beginning of several sections of private land. Respectfully, we passed through carefully closing the gate behind us. The canyon widened,



unveiling sagebrush meadows dotted with grazing cattle.

We maneuvered with care, ensuring to not disturb them, as we made our way back to CR11, completing an unforgettable chapter of our journey.

The Saturday group returned to US 550 at approximately 3:30 PM. The Sunday group, except for missing the trail to the overview, followed the same route and finished around 1:30 PM, which was quicker than anticipated. Several participants mentioned that they appreciated the shorter duration of the run. Reflecting on this remarkable journey, it's evident that our club's spirit of adventure and



camaraderie is strong. The La Ventana Trail, with its rich history, challenging terrains, and breathtaking landscapes, provided an unforgettable experience for everyone involved. As we continue to explore and embrace the beauty of our surroundings, we also forge stronger bonds, creating memories that will last a lifetime. Our shared passion for discovery keeps us eagerly anticipating the next thrilling ride, ready to uncover the stories and trails that await us.

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# Keep PUBLIC lands open to the PUBLIC

## NM4W Officers and Staff

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