



Official Newsletter  
July 1, 2026



## Important Updates to Our Digital Trail Maps: The Future After Avenza by Frank Whiston



If you are like me, you probably rely heavily on the Avenza Maps app to navigate the trails, track your location, and stay legal by pulling up Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUMs). However, a major shift is coming to how we access digital trail maps, and it is going to impact our upcoming trail rides. Here is what is changing, what it means for NM4W, and how we can adapt.

### The End of the Avenza Map Store as We Know It

Back in April, I received an official notification from Avenza's parent company, Blue Marble Geographics. Due to corporate restructuring and a shift in focus toward professional geospatial workflows, **Avenza has officially frozen the Map Store.**

Effective immediately, they are:

- No longer expanding the Map Store.
- No longer accepting new map publishers.
- **No longer accepting any new map content.**

While existing maps will remain available for download and purchase on a "best-effort" support basis for now, no updates or new additions will ever be uploaded to the platform.

### How This Impacts the U.S. Forest Service & MVUMs

This corporate shift has a massive domino effect on public lands. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) released a statement confirming that **beginning April 2026, the Forest Service can no longer update or add new digital maps to the Avenza Map Store.**

Here is how they are handling the transition:

- **No Updates:** When a paper map is updated, the outdated digital version will be permanently removed from Avenza and *not* replaced.
- **The MVUM Catch-22:** Digital maps that haven't been updated yet will stay online for now. However, MVUMs are legally reissued every single year. Because it is entirely the responsibility of motor vehicle users to possess the *current* MVUM, relying on Avenza will quickly become a legal liability as those maps expire and disappear.

**The Silver Lining:** Earlier this month, the USFS announced the debut of a brand-new, official recreation mobile app. While I am still waiting for confirmation from my point of contact at the USFS Region 3 office, it is highly likely that this new app is designed to replace the MVUM delivery system we used to get through Avenza.

## What This Means for NM4W (and Gordy's Hill)

This brings us closer to home. We recently installed a new kiosk panel at Gordy's Hill featuring our new map. When the time comes that we need to update that GeoPDF map, **the Avenza QR code on the kiosk will no longer work** because Avenza won't accept the updated file.

Fortunately, we planned ahead. The kiosk panel also includes a second QR code that points directly to the native GeoPDF hosted right on our NM4W website.

## Tracking Yourself on the Trail Without Avenza

The big question now is: *How do we use our website's GeoPDF file on a mobile device while out on the trail without cell service?*



**The Alternative:** I have been testing a mobile app called [FO Maps](#). It allows you to upload any custom GeoPDF directly into the app, meaning we can download the [NM4W Gordy's Hill map](#) as well as [USFS MVUM maps](#) to our phones and still track our rigs offline like we used to in Avenza.

## Why Not Just Use Gaia or OnX? (Author's Opinion)

Many of you might be wondering why we don't just switch entirely to popular third-party navigation apps. While commercial platforms like Gaia GPS, OnX Offroad, and TrailsOffroad all feature built-in MVUM layers, I still firmly believe in viewing the MVUM straight from the source.

First, there can be major delays in how quickly these third-party apps mine and update the digital data from the Forest Service. If a trail designation changes, you might be looking at outdated information on a commercial app without knowing it. Second, I simply find the native MVUM maps easier to digest. Trying to decipher seasonal closures and dispersed camping corridors is a lot cleaner on a dedicated MVUM, without all the cluttered, extra layers that these other apps force you to look at. I do enjoy Gaia GPS for most of my navigation, but firmly believe that having the MVUM by itself is best for ensuring that I stay on legal routes.

## Next Steps

As the USFS rolls out its new app and we transition away from Avenza, I'll keep testing alternatives to ensure we always have accurate, offline navigation handy. Next time you are out at the Gordy's Hill kiosk, bypass the Avenza link and practice downloading the native GeoPDF from our site via the second QR code.

Stay tuned for more updates, download [FO Maps](#) to give it a test drive, and see you on the trail!

# Why Your AWD SUV Can't Come on a NM4W Ride

by Frank Whiston



We get the question from time to time from eager newcomers: *"Hey, I have a modern AWD crossover with a 'Trail' mode. Can I tag along on the next NM4W ride?"*

It's an honest question. Modern All-Wheel Drive systems are absolute marvels of engineering on snowy pavement or rainy highways. But when it comes to tackling the rugged, primitive terrain of New Mexico—like the rocky crawls, deep ruts, and steep inclines found around our favorite routes—AWD falls drastically short.

The **New Mexico 4-Wheelers (NM4W)** club has strict vehicle requirements for a reason: safety, vehicle preservation, and trail etiquette. If you're planning on joining a club ride, here is exactly why an AWD vehicle won't make the cut, and why a true 4WD setup is non-negotiable.

## 1. The Missing Link: A Low-Range Transfer Case

Every official NM4W ride announcement features a list of mandatory equipment. Right alongside "full tank of gas" and "front/rear recovery points," you will almost always see: **Low range gear box required.**

AWD vehicles are designed for variable traction at highway speeds. They do not have a transfer case. A true 4WD vehicle has a secondary gear set—**4-Low (4L)**—which drastically alters the gear ratios.



1 True 4WD vehicles utilize a physical transfer case to mechanically lock axles and multiply low-end torque..

Source: Trail-Gear

When you shift a 4x4 into 4-Low, you multiply your engine's torque while drastically slowing down your wheels. This gives you:

- **The crawl power** to ascend steep, loose vertical steps without destroying your transmission.
- **Engine braking** to safely creep down treacherous, rocky descents without overheating and fading your brakes.

Without a low range, an AWD crossover trying to climb a steep mesa shelf will quickly overheat its transmission fluid or burn up its clutch packs.

## 2. Speed and Power Allocation vs. Mechanical Locking

AWD systems are **reactive**. They rely on computers, center differentials, or electronic clutches to sense when a wheel is slipping, and *then* divert power to the wheels with grip. Often, they use "brake-vectoring"—meaning the car actually applies the brakes to a spinning wheel to force power to the other side.

On an off-road trail, this causes a few massive problems:

- **Lag:** By the time the computer realizes you're stuck in a deep silt bed or high-centered on a rock, you've already lost momentum and buried the vehicle.
- **Overheated Brakes:** Using brakes to manage traction on a long, grueling trail ride will quickly cook your pads and rotors.
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A true 4WD system is **proactive**. When you shift into 4WD, the front and rear driveshafts are mechanically locked together 50/50. They spin at the exact same speed, regardless of traction. There's no thinking, no computing, and no waiting for slippage.

## 3. Ground Clearance and Structural Architecture

The NM4W FAQ notes that even on trails rated as "Easy," you should fully expect "scrapes, scratches, dings, and dents."

AWD vehicles are built on unibody car platforms. They prioritize a smooth ride and fuel efficiency, resulting in lower ground clearance and independent suspension systems with limited "flex" (wheel travel). When an AWD vehicle lifts a tire off the ground over a boulder, it completely loses traction on that corner.

Furthermore, AWD crossovers lack the heavy-duty underbody protection (skid plates) and rugged frame-mounted recovery points needed if a vehicle gets stuck. NM4W rules require rated front and rear recovery points. Hooking a heavy kinetic snatch strap to an AWD vehicle's thin emergency towing eyelet can quite literally rip the bumper or subframe straight off the car.

Feature	All-Wheel Drive (AWD)	Four-Wheel Drive (4WD)
<b>Primary Design</b>	On-road adverse weather (rain, light snow)	Severe off-road terrain, rocks, mud, deep sand
<b>Low Range Gearbox</b>	No	Yes (Essential for crawling and steep descents)
<b>Power Split</b>	Variable, computer-managed reactive routing	Mechanical 50/50 locked split (and optional locking differentials)
<b>Recovery Options</b>	Light-duty screw-in shipping eyes	Frame-mounted, rated steel tow hooks/shackle mounts

### The Federal Reality Check: Even the Rangers Are Cracking Down

If you think these rules are just pedantic club politics, think again. The National Park Service (NPS) has seen a massive surge in drivers misjudging their vehicle's capabilities, fueled by "wilderness-themed" marketing that makes everyday crossovers look like rugged overland rigs. Rangers in parks across the Southwest—especially neighboring areas like Canyonlands and Moab—have been overwhelmed by rescues involving AWD vehicles high-centered on rocks, stuck in deep sand, or suffering complete mechanical failure on primitive backroads. The problem has gotten so severe that the NPS has officially defined what constitutes a true 4WD vehicle (requiring a low-range transfer case and specific ground clearance) and has actively begun issuing warnings and hefty fines—up to \$5,000—to motorists who attempt to take AWD platforms onto restricted 4WD trails. When you get stuck out here, it's not just an inconvenience for your weekend; it's a major safety hazard, an expensive towing bill, and potential legal trouble.

### The "Tread Lightly" Factor

Ultimately, NM4W strongly champions the **Tread Lightly!** principles. When an inadequate vehicle tackles a trail, it spins its street tires helplessly, tears up the delicate desert terrain, widens the trail trying to bypass obstacles, and inevitably breaks down—stalling the entire group's ride for hours.

If you want to experience the jaw-dropping vistas of New Mexico with the state's premier club, look into a platform with a true, shiftable transfer case (Jeep Wranglers, Toyota Tacomas/4Runners, Ford Broncos, older Chevy/Ford/Ram trucks). Your vehicle will thank you, and the trail leaders will gladly welcome you to the staging lane!



# 2026 New Mexico 4 Wheeler of the Year

This award is the most coveted of all as the winner is selected by the club members and presented to the person who has gone beyond the norm and has made significant contributions to the New Mexico Four Wheelers. This year, several people received multiple nominations – Jonathan Rivera, Andrew Schwebke, Frank Whiston, Mary Turpin. Thanks to each of them for their support. The winner of this year's award goes to **Jonathan Rivera**. Congratulations Jonathan!

Previous winners: Current club members are indicated in blue.

- 2026 [Jonathan Rivera](#)
- 2025 [Jack Dickey](#)
- 2024 [Rich Steele](#)
- 2023 [Jeff Boggs](#)
- 2022 [Don Roy](#)
- 2021 [Frank G. Whiston](#)
- 2020 [Frank G. Whiston](#)
- 2019 [Frank G. Whiston](#)
- 2018 [Ross Burchard](#)
- 2017 [Bill Gardner](#)
- 2016 [Jennifer Chapin](#)
- 2015 [Jennifer Chapin](#)
- 2014 [Don Roy](#)
- 2013 [Jennifer Chapin](#)
- 2012 [Jeff Boggs](#)
- 2011 [Dixon Patrick](#)
- 2010 [Jeanne Meier](#)
- 2009 [Cliff Meier](#)
- 2008 [Frank G. Whiston](#)
- 2007 [Mark Werkmeister](#)
- 2006 [Glenn Bontly](#)
- 2005 [Lauri and Jeff Rector](#)
- 2004 [Chuck Peeples](#)
- 2001 [Pat Brady](#)
- 1998 [Bob Telepak](#)



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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2003 <a href="#">Leon Duggar</a>    | 2002 <a href="#">Glenn Bontly</a>     |
| 2000 <a href="#">Mark Wolf</a>      | 1999 <a href="#">Mark Wolf</a>        |
| 1997 <a href="#">Charlie Wilson</a> | 1996 <a href="#">Mark Werkmeister</a> |



# Meeting Minutes – June 13, 2026

by Sec Shirley Godfrey

President Jack Dickey called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

The meeting was held at the City of Albuquerque Open Space Carolino Canyon upper picnic area

**MEMBERS ATTENDING:** Bruce Allen, Glenn Boudreaux, Janet Crosby, Mike Crosby, Cathy Dickey, Jack Dickey, Marcia Duggar, Doug Elkins, Shirley Godfrey, Ed Kausche, Lyn Kausche, Leroy Lints, Allison Martinez, Jennifer Myers, Myron Myers, Bob Norton, Snow Petersen, Matthew Ray, Lauri Rector, Travis Rendell, Jonathan Rivera, Christine Robson, Steve Robson, NaDeen Roland, Don Roy, Richard Steele, Josh Tucker, Mary Turpin, Fred (Wally) Wallis, Ian Watson, Tonia Watson, Anthony Weaver, Andrea Webb, Ben Webb

**GUESTS ATTENDING:** David Brogdon, Stephanie Brogdon, Melissa Garner, Preston Garner, Laura Perlichek, Amy Silver

**PRESIDENT** – Jack Dickey

Jack thanked Alli and Anthony for coordinating the picnic meeting and asked for a little clean up help from everyone before leaving. The city was pleased how clean we left the area after last year's picnic.

The July meeting will be at Frank Whiston's home. We still need a host for the August meeting. These are held at someone's home and the date and time is up to the host.

Cathy will do the 50/50 raffle at the end of the meeting. After the 50/50 raffle, Shirley Godfrey made and donated 4 tumblers that will be raffled off. Make sure you get a free raffle ticket.

Jack announced the winner of the 4-Wheeler of the Year for 2026 award to Jonathan Rivera.

**VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – VP Jonathan Rivera

Johanthan explained and went over this past month's transgression fines.

Mike Crosby – tripped over rocks. Members helped to stop the bleeding and he did have to have head stitches. Lesson learned - MAKE SURE AND HAVE A GOOD FIRST AIDE KIT in your vehicle.

Jonathan Rivera, Cedro-go topleless day. Went the wrong direction and had to back up. The fines collected over the year is raffled off at the Christmas party.

Jonathan explained full memberships and associate memberships.

There were 6 guests at the meeting.

A motion was made and approved by a majority of members present without discussion to vote in the following as new members – Laura Perlichek and Amy Silver, voting (full) members.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT** - Shirley Godfrey

Meeting minutes can be read in the Newsletter. - A motion was made and approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** - Rich Steele

Current balances for checking, saving accounts, and Pay Pal were provided. The annual report will be given at the July meeting. Tread Lightly and NMHOVA memberships

have both been paid.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurer's report. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. This motion took place after the Trip Chairman's Report when Rich Steele brought it to Jack attention. Jack Dickey paid a transgression fine.

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

Trip leaders/ride attendees gave a brief rundown of their ride.

#### **Past Events and Trips (10 since last meeting)**

- May 14, Edge of the World – Flagstaff, - Snow reported the ride was uneventful but the hike had a great view.
- May 15-17, Overland Expo – Western US, Mary Turpin – Snow reported the companies had the same old thing.
- May 16, Ribbon Cutting: New Trail Signage at Gordy's Hill, Frank Whiston
- May 16, Go Topless Day @ Cedro, Jonathan Rivera – new applicant and took him up the stairs on his first try.
- May 16, Go Topless Day @ Gordy's! (Mod/Hard Run), Mary Turpin - ran Lower Amado and Cat Scratch.
- May 30, Jemez Ride, Cliff Meier – 16 riders and no major issues. Nice easy ride.
- June 3-7, Grand Mesa Jeep Club - Rock Junction, Grand Junction, CO – no one went
- June 6, La Ventana - Search for Waterfall & Overlook, Lauri Rector – made this an exploratory run because Lauri said she knew she would get lost.
- June 11-13, Rock Rally, Vernal UT – no one went
- June 13, Rigs & Coffee, Mary Turpin – several at the picnic were also at Rigs & Coffee

Marsha Duggar gave a very detailed on her and Armando Sanchez's trip to Green River at the end of April.

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

Six trips and events with several pending are on the calendar before our next meeting, refer to website for details. Contact trip leader if there are questions.

**DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPORT** - Bill Zobel, is on a deep sea diving trip. Jack Dickey reported that President Trump rescinded multiple significant land and conservation policies. Most notably, his administration finalized the repeal of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Public Lands Rule and revoked two executive orders regulating off-road vehicles on public lands. Additionally, his administration has actively moved to overturn the national "Roadless Rule" on forest lands. This had been put in place by a past President.

**Program Chair Report** – Cathy Dickey - We got new shirts in lots of colors and sizes. Currently have license plates, stickers and hats. You can get our logo done on your own apparel at - ASI Custom Apparel, Banners and Embroidery.

**HISTORIAN'S REPORT** – Jack Dickey for Frank Whiston – You can look at the photos in the gallery and also get the ride reports by viewing the pictures.

**WEBMASTER'S REPORT and NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT** - Don Roy – Nothing on the website. Don would like to receive newsy stories from others in addition to ride

leaders. I.E., fixing your vehicle, being a passenger on a ride, etc. From June 1<sup>st</sup> when the newsletter was posted, 22 members looked at the newsletter. 130 visitors reviewed it. Also, half of the Club's members have been a member for 3.5 years or less.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Election of Officers for the July meeting - Nominations - President - Mary Turpin; Secretary - Lauri Rector; Trip Chair - Jeff Boggs; Environmental Affairs - Jack Dickey; VP - Jonathan Rivera; Treasurer - Rich Steele; Program Chair - Cathy Dickey, and Historian - Frank Whiston.

Proposed changes to the SOP: clarification of leader points, change to dues discount for trip leaders, addition of article for use of club logo/emblems on items for sale by Club members for profit. Go to the Home page of the website and review the Draft Changes to NM4W Standard Operating Procedures. You can also comment and those comments will go to the president for review.

### **NEW BUSINESS: Tabled**

50/50 raffle \$83.00. Winner – Ben Webb, \$55.00

The tumblers made and donated by Shirley Godfrey were won by Allison Martinez, Janet Crosby, Leroy Lints, and Richard Steele – Congratulations!

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Meeting adjourned at 5:49 pm.





## Officers and Staff

<p><b>President</b> Jack Dickey <a href="mailto:pres@nm4w.org">pres@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Vice-President</b> <b>Membership Chair</b> Jonathan Rivera <a href="mailto:vpres@nm4w.org">vpres@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Secretary</b> Shirley Godfrey <a href="mailto:sec@nm4w.org">sec@nm4w.org</a></p>
<p><b>Treasurer</b> Rich Steele <a href="mailto:treas@nm4w.org">treas@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Program Chair</b> Cathy Dickey <a href="mailto:prog@nm4w.org">prog@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Historian</b> Frank Whiston <a href="mailto:hist@nm4w.org">hist@nm4w.org</a></p>
<p><b>Trip Chair</b> Mary Turpin <a href="mailto:trips@nm4w.org">trips@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Environmental Affairs</b> William Zobel <a href="mailto:envdir@nm4w.org">envdir@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Membership Info</b> Shirley Godfrey <a href="mailto:info@nm4w.org">info@nm4w.org</a></p>
<p><b>Outside Org Mgr</b> Frank Whiston <a href="mailto:outorg@nm4w.org">outorg@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Web Admin</b> Don Roy <a href="mailto:webadmin@nm4w.org">webadmin@nm4w.org</a></p>	<p><b>Newsletter Editor</b> Don Roy <a href="mailto:editor@nm4w.org">editor@nm4w.org</a></p>

