



The SLO 4-Wheel er



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Las Chiches and Pine Mountain Run



Written by Eric F.

All photos provided by the author.

A last minute run was put together for Memorial weekend on Saturday. The meeting time and place was Santa Margarita Park at 10:00 AM.

The group consisted of two **Cherokee's**, a **TJ Wrangler**, Toyota 4 Runner and an early Bronco with a Bronco II body.

A quick look at our array of vehicles indicated that no one should have a problem on the trails planned for the day. Eric's Cherokee with 5 inch lift and 32 inch tires was smallest of the vehicles. A quick drivers meeting of what the plan was for the day we pulled out at 10:16 and made our way to Turkey flats. The drive out to Turkey flats was pretty. There are still some wild flowers and greenery.

We all made it to Turkey flats where everyone aired down there tires used the facilities and got ready for the run. Being Memorial weekend there was only 1 other vehicle at Turkey flats, a guy loading up his dirt bike.

The group headed up to 5 points and we all put our vehi-

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2015 SLO 4-Wheelers Officers

Officers:

President:..... Tom B.
 Vice President:Kirk R.
 Secretary:..... Kevin B.
 Treasurer:.....Devin L.
 Board of Directors (includes officers):
 Ways and Means: Open
 Membership Director:George W.
 Events Director: Phil H.
 Land Use Liaison: Kelly D.
 CA4WDC Liaison:Susy J.
 Social Chairperson: Open
 Newsletter Editor:.....George W.

Committees:

Safety Chairperson:Nathan L.
 Promotional Chairperson:..... Dan H.
 Virtual Club Scrapbook: Mark B.
 Archived Scrapbook..... Randy P.
 Virtual Committee: Mark B.
 Adopted Trails and Campgrounds:
 Garcia Ridge Trail:..... Tyler F.
 Pine Mountain Trail:..... Phil B.
 La Panza Camp Ground:Open

Newsletter submittals
by two weeks before the
next issue to George W.



(Continued from page 1)

cles into 4wd and locked hubs if they were equipped with locking hubs.

We made the turn onto Las Chiches and down the first down-hill. Then we all climbed the long first hill, one at a time. There is some new rock exposure on the

trail here. Also noticed on the trail is the trail seems narrow in places due to the plants growing along the trail.

We all made it to the top of Las Chiches trail. The group had lunch and took in the scenery: great weather and great visibility.

While we were at the top not one vehicle or motorcycle or anything came up the trail. After about 45 minutes or so the group loaded up and headed down the





trail towards Pozo Road/Pine Mountain. We all made it down to the bottom no problem.

The downward part has changed a little. There are a couple of rain cutouts that will raise the back of your rig up while **you're coming down the other side of it.** This caught a couple of us off guard.

At the bottom of the trail Julie and Scott in the TJ Wrangled opted not to do Pine Mountain and headed home via Pozo road. The Bronco 3 thought he broke a body mount after some further inspection felt his vehicle was ok and the rest of the group headed up the bottom part of Pine Mountain to the stair steps.

The trail to the steps was easy and uneventful. We all made it to the steps. The group had 5 brave souls that decided to climb the stair steps on foot. The group climbed the steps all the way to the top where the extreme 4x4 sign is. After a short while the group that climbed the steps returned. They all stated that the steps are a lot larger than they had thought or seen in the distance. They all commented how hard it would be to climb the steps in a 4x4. Also how hard it was to climb in person.

After a short break we headed back down that Pine Mountain back to Pozo Road. We ran into another 4 wheeler that was looking for an easy trail I recommended Las Chiches. I believe his girlfriend thought it looked to scary and they headed down Pozo Road towards the camp ground area.

We also ran into a motorcycle rider on a cruiser bike lost looking for a short cut to Pozo Saloon. We guided him towards the right roads to take. The group made its way out of the Forrest onto asphalt where we all aired up and said our good-byes and thanked each other for a great day.



Avoid "Trail Prices" - Take Spare Parts

Normally we think of in terms of **basic supplies**. Here we're focusing on spare parts. Bear in mind that the farther you are from civilization, the more troublesome a breakdown can be.

Remember this important axiom of **four wheeling from last month's article**:

The more difficult and more remote the trip, the more stuff you need to take.

For a day trip to the local mountains, you may only need to throw in a cooler and a warm jacket. Your buddy can run into town and bring back tools and parts. For a longer camping trip or a difficult trip like the Rubicon, you need a lot of gear and in particular spare parts.

You may wonder, what are "trail prices"? The term refers to the extra price you pay to compensate for a critical part you didn't bring along. One example is the part you had to buy from a buddy. You might pay 3 times what it cost at the auto parts store. Another example is the time needed to acquire or fabricate a part. In essence, any cost that allows you to drive off the trail under your own power.

Here are the top three areas to focus on :

- Tires
- Drive train
- Electronics

Tires top the list because of all the abuse and stress they take. Of course, your vehicle comes with a spare tire. Is it in good shape and inflated to proper level? Do you have a tire repair kit? Many tire problems experienced off road can be repaired **on the spot, so it's good to review tire repair procedures**. See: **Tire problems shouldn't deflate your day**

Stuck 3 day on Rubicon. Had to go to town for parts.

The drive train also takes a lot of abuse. Tie rods and drag links are particularly susceptible.

They hang down in front of the vehicle and are susceptible to being hit and bent, even broken. Consider buying heavy duty replacement parts. They are pricey and available **only from a dealer, but you're stuck** without functioning parts. Axles, u-joints and drive shafts are at risk as well. A set of U-joints are small, easy to pack and good insurance.

A complete set of front axles (inner & outer for both left and right) is a good investment if you are doing extreme and remote trails like the Rubicon.

The electronic system in today's vehicle has components and sensors for which there is no work around. The worry here is that a critical part will go out leaving you stranded. Without a spare sensor the vehicle's brain will not function. On the list of critical parts with no work around are your coil/ coil pack, fuel pump, MAP sensor, crank sensor and the starter (on automatic transmissions). Spark plugs and spark plug wires (on older vehicles) bear watching, too. Replace the set of wires if any are cracked. When you replace the wires, save the longer ones and pack them with your spare gear. If you ever need a spark



plug wire while off road, you'll have a spare.

Regular inspection, while important, **won't catch all the parts that are ready to go**. Sensors are perfect examples. **There's no way to tell in advance** when a sensor will fail. If your vehicle has a lot of miles on it, I encourage you to replace the sensors mentioned above, and keep the old one to bring as a spare.

Upgrade vs. Stock

One big decision 4WD owners need to make after buying a vehicle is whether (and to what extent) to upgrade their vehicle. Should they swap in a heavy duty tie rod with beefier tie rod ends, for example, or leave the vehicle in stock condition? Understand that upgrading adds cost and, in the case of heavy duty tie rods, new tie rod ends might be available for purchase only from the manufacturer. Damage one on the Rubicon and you will be waiting on the Greyhound bus to deliver a part (and that is just into the closest town, not out on the trail).

There are good reasons to go either way. My suggestion is that if you decide to upgrade, keep the stock



parts in your vehicle. You may discover while on the trail it is easier to convert back to stock parts than to repair.

Final route: fabricate, fix

Even with a comprehensive set of spare parts, you may find that you need to fabricate or fix a certain part. Consequently, I suggest you buy and pack some additional gen-

eral purpose gear. Useful spares include fuses, hoses, sealants, hose clamps, baling wire, electric wire, chain, duct tape, zip ties, ratchet straps, and the ability to weld. Install a Premier Welder under the hood. **Now you've got a welder at your disposal, but it doesn't take up valuable space inside your vehicle.**



Broken track bar

Many four wheelers have fixed a bent tie rod using the handle from a Hi-lift to reinforce the tie rod. A few track bars were fixed (just to get home) by welding two big wrenches across the broken section. A cracked axle tube was held together with chain wrapped around the lower control arms and then using the winch to take the slack out of the chain. A broken rear control arm bracket was held together with a number of ratchet straps until pavement was reached.

A mechanic's tool set is always valuable. You don't need a full, 200-piece set, however. Select the top tools, and store in soft-sided containers (pouches or military packs). Those will tuck nicely into nearly any spare space or crevice.

Final thoughts

Taking a friend on the trail with a similar vehicle doubles your spare parts. While it will not help get you off the trail, AAA's 200-mile tow plan will get your vehicle home where it is easier to work on it. And in the worst case turn the hubs to free-wheeling and drop the rear drive shaft. Yep, turn your vehicle into a trailer.

Packing spare parts may seem like a **daunting task. There's no way to** know in advance which, if any parts, will crap out on you. And, you have a limited amount of space to work with.

Driving off road for decades has given me some invaluable insight; following the suggestions above will help ensure any breakdown you experience has a minimal effect on your trip.

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Tom Severin, President
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<http://www.4x4training.com>
 Make it Fun. Keep it Safe.

Club Meeting Minutes:

*Meeting Minutes by Kevin B.,
Club Secretary*

May 2015 Club Meeting Minutes:

Old Biz:

The club has participated in Earth Day because of our Adopt a Highway cleanup this month. Another cleanup is scheduled for May 16th.

Once again the Christmas party is not going to be at the San Miguel RV park and we are looking at options for this get together.

La Mexicana seemed to work out well for this months meeting. We will be having the June meeting at La Mexicana also. The club is still open to other suggestions though.

Sounds like everyone had fun at the annual Spring Fling event and run up Garcia Ridge!

New Biz:

To coincide with the May 16th Adopt a Highway cleanup and to do an after the meeting run it was suggested to make a run up Pine Mt trail or if the weather is too hot go to Los Chi Chi's. Meet at 7:30am at the park in Santa Margarita, cleanup starts at 8am and most likely leave for the trail at 9am or whenever done with cleanup.

June 6th desert night ride. I believe this was up Los Chi Chi's also.

Cal 4 Wheel- If you want to renew your membership through the club you must have your check made out to the club and into the club by the next meeting. The club will then cut one check to Cal 4 Wheel. Alternately you can renew or signup on the Cal 4 Wheel website and indicate SLO 4 Wheelers when asked which club you belong too. Keep in mind, the Sierra Club has about 2-3million members and large corporate sponsors, Cal 4 Wheel might have about 4000 members, so every membership counts!

Meeting was adjourned with a 50/50 raffle.

June 2015 Club Meeting Minutes:

Old Biz:

The past highway cleanup went well. The tentative date for the next cleanup is June 27th.

George has run out of material for the newsletter so please write a little story on a recent trip you've taken and send it in to him.

High fire risk in Pozo.

Donations from the club were sent out to Cal 4 Wheel, Corva, and the Blue Ribbon Coalition.

New Biz:

Need to find a place to host the Christmas party.

If you want your rig to be posted on the website, send a picture and short write-up, email Mark

BBQ at Toms place June 13th, please let Tom know your coming,.

Scheduled Club Runs:

4th of July parade in Templeton. Once again let Tom know if your interested,

Aug 8th, Coyote Lake run

Sept, nothing on the books yet.

Oct, Harvest run.

Dec, Christmas party.

Other Runs:

June 13th-14th, Jeep Beach West in Oceano Dunes SVRA.

June 19th-21st, Big Bear Forest Fest in Big Bear, Ca.

Off-Road Code of Ethics

Follow the "Code of Ethics" below and you can help preserve the land and protect your off-roading privileges.

- Respect the planet. Learn about the ecology and environmental issues.
- Obey all off-road vehicle laws and regulations.
- **Only use approved trails and Don't alter trail markers.**
- Always get permission before entering private property. Obey "Closed area" and "Private Property" Signs.
- Do not disturb livestock and wildlife. Leave all animals alone.
- **Avoid excess noise. Don't altar vehicle mufflers.**
- Be considerate of others on the trail.
- **Protect the land's historical and natural wealth. Don't take "souvenirs" with you.**
- Clean up any spills completely. **Don't leave any fuel or other chemicals behind.**
- If you pack it in, pack it out. Clean your campground and remove trash.
- Make sure any legal fires are completely extinguished. Always get fire permits and know what the local campfire regulations are.
- Leave the land as you found it or better.
- Always set a good example for those in your party and those you meet along the way.

Planning Weekend Drives

By George W., Editor

What do you do when you find you have some time and want to go for a drive on a weekend? How do you pick your destination? Partly, it depends a lot on what you want to discover, what sights you want to see and what you find "fun". Over the years I've found that several things can provide the excuse I need to go off onto the back roads or off the main highways.

Any and I have several things that we have in common that makes our choices for weekend drives easy. We love history, among many other things, so anything historical is an easy choice. Whether it be California Missions, old cemeteries, old churches, bridges or anything else that has a history about it. We also love beautiful scenery, whether its seeing it from the road or having to hike a little ways to see it.

Some ideas for a weekend excursion can include:

- California Missions. If you grew up around here, this one is easy. If you grew up back east, these are not that old.
- Old Cemeteries. Ok, this does sound a little creepy until you find out how much history there is in old cemeteries and how many of them there are around here. There are at least 15 registered in Northern San Luis Obispo County alone. Let alone the rest of the county, Southern Monterey County and Northern Santa Barbara County. Some of them hold surprises for more than 100 years ago, some even further back.
- Old bridges. Its actually pretty amazing how many old road and railroad bridges there are in the three counties. Those of us with a little bit of engineering curiosity will love them. Some are totally functional and some are elegant and graceful.
- Old churches. You'd be amazed how many of these there still are around

the three counties, some where you'd least expect them.

- Scenery. If you don't know where to find this around our counties, you need to rethink things or start asking the other members.
- Wildflowers. This is actually part of scenery, but a special part.
- Geocaching. Some will find this intriguing, others will find it boring, but it does provide another excuse to get out and about and learn more about the area that you are in. To get started with this, it helps to have a GPS that allows entry of Longitude and Latitude and I would also suggest going to the web site "https://www.geocaching.com".

Also think of your own interests outside of four wheeling and places that work with those interests. This part of California has a lot of opportunities, you just need to be open to them.



SLO 4-Wheelers contributes to and/or is a member club in these organizations. Visit and support, -they are working for US!

<http://www.sharetrails.org/>



The United Four Wheel Drive Associations also acts as your voice to keep 4x4 roads and trails open so that we can continue enjoying four wheeling in the great outdoors.

<http://www.ufwda.org/>



A varied group of outdoor recreationists who are extremely active in promoting the positive aspects of vehicular access on public lands and protecting that right.

<http://www.corva.org/>



SLO 4-Wheelers is also a member club in the California Association of Four Wheel Drive Association (CA4WDA) If your not a member, check it out,

<http://www.cal4wheel.com> or ask Suzy



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(Toll Free: 800-350-2223)

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We're on the web:

<http://www.slo4wheelers.org/>

Upcoming Events / Runs

In addition to this list, keep your eye on the club email list and web site:

<http://www.slo4wheelers.org/>

for last minute events or spur of the moment runs.

July 1st — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

July 4th — Templeton 4th of July parade. The local event in Templeton, celebrates our Independence Day with a parade. Members of our club will be participating in the parade. Meeting places & times to be determined. This is the after the meeting run.

August 5th — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

August 8th — Coyote Lake Run, Annual Club run to Coyote Lake in the High Sierras. This is the after meeting run.

September 2nd — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

September — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the meeting, may not be the first weekend due to Labor Day.

October 7th — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

October 10th — Harvest Run. This will be the after meeting run.

November 4th — SLO 4-Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

November 7th or 8th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

December 2nd — SLO 4-Wheelers General Meeting at La Mexicana. Note the Christmas party will NOT be held instead of the Dec. general meeting as in past years, moved to a separate night)

December 5th — SLO 4-Wheelers Annual Christmas Party 2015

December TBD San Miguel Christmas Parade. San Miguel Christmas Parade December 2015. Driving down Main Street with the option to dress your rig up with lights, ornaments, wreaths, etc.

If you have any questions or events, local runs, not so local runs you would like to do, coordinate and/or participate in, please contact the SLO-4-Wheelers Events Director.