



The SLO 4-Wheeler



Volume 21, Issue 6

November / December 2015

Holcomb Creek

Inside this issue:

Trip Report — Halcomb Creek	1
2015 SLO4-Wheelers Officers	1
Trip Report — Johnson Valley	2
Catch A Burro If You Can!	4
Meeting Minutes	6
Sponsors	7
Associated Organizations	7
Upcoming Events/ Runs	8



Written and photos by Eric F.
 My work sent down to Ontario for Chrysler training. Time for another 4x4 run while I'm down there. Big bear and Arrowhead have lots of OHV trails and interconnected forest roads. Something for the hardcore wheeler or the family in the family SUV. I decided to run Holcomb Creek. One reason it is a fun and challenging trail, **Second, it's a listed trail** on the Jeep badge of honor app where you earn a trail badge from Jeep. If you have a Jeep

check out the badge of honor app on the App store or Google play store. I put out the word through emails. I was able to get three others to go wheeling. We met up at the fire station in Fawnskin. Matt F. and his son Andrew in a TJ, Tony Sebastian and his grandson Tyler in a V8 powered TJ, Brian S. and his Daughter Madison in a 2012 Rubicon. and Eric F. 2000 XJ. We all said hello chatted a little bit. I pretended that I forgot how to get to the

trail and tried to get Matt to lead. **It didn't work.** I lead us to the trail head and into the trail just before the creek crossing at Holcomb creek. We all stopped aired down our tires, disconnected sway bars and put our rigs into 4 wheel low. I was able to get Matt to lead, Eric second, Tony third and Brian Forth. Matt made his way up around the first bend and toward the gate keeper and climbed over

(Continued on page 5)

2015 SLO 4-Wheelers Officers

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 Pine Mountain Trail:..... Phil B.
 La Panza Camp Ground: Open

Open

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

Fun in the Desert 2015 — Johnson Valley:

by Tom B., photos by Kenn B.

This event was hosted by the Victor Valley 4 Wheelers

Attended by Kevin B., Kenn B. and Tom B.

We met up at 6:00 A.M. Friday morning and headed for Johnson Valley. We stopped at Lost Hills and Kenn found one of his trailer tiers was flat and fortunately we were parked right across the street from a tire shop. After getting it fixed we continued on our way.

The trip over was uneventful from there and we arrived at J.V. around 3:00 p.m. . After setting up camp we headed over to sign in. Our entry included breakfast and dinner Saturday as well as a t-shirt and whatever run we signed up for. We also received 1 raffle ticket. In addition, since we pre-registered on line we received 15 extra tickets. We also got through the safety check for our rigs.

We had the rest of the day so we ended up on a trail called Turkey Claw. It was challenging with lots of rocks and when we got almost to the top it was dark so we took a cutoff down a very step cambered hill. When we got to the



bottom there were several rigs headed our way. It turns out they were having a **“Reflector Run”** where they had set up 40 reflectors and each participant was to find each one. When they got to the even numbered one there was a question and at the end the team with the most answered questions got 100

raffle tickets each. Needless to say we did not participate.

Saturday we hit the breakfast line at 7:00 and proceeded to our trail run line. We had signed up for **“Aftershock”**. **There were about 9 rigs** on our list but only 6 showed up. We headed out as this trail is one of the **furthest out. It was in the 90's and hot with little breeze. Give me the Sierra's** anytime. We had a trail boss and a tail gunner from the club and they were very nice and good spotters. We came to a waterfall with a 2-3 foot climb and you had to approach from the right and turn left without falling in the hole on the left side. The Jeep in front of me was attempting the climb and hooked his right front under a rock and there was a loud ping. That was his front axle. With 2 wheel drive it took us awhile to get him through there especially since the spotters kept telling him to turn left but he knew there was a big hole he did not want to fall into so his mind kept saying no. After we got him through there the rest of us crawled through with no problem. The rest of the trail was challenging and it took a while because of the 2 wheel drive jeep.



We got back around 3 and Kenn and Kevin went to run fast in the desert while I sat back with a cold beer. At 6:00 we headed over to the dinner line. It was good with tri-tip, salad, beans, lemonade and a cookie for dessert. Then we set up our chairs for the raffle. We have been to quite a few of these kinds of events and never won anything so our hopes were not high. **They had a full set of 35" off road tires,** new custom jeep bumper, 2 winches and lots of misc. stuff. A miracle happened when I had a winning ticket. I won a Dewalt cordless drill set with charger and 2 batteries. It also came with a box of 9 MM shells and a \$50.00 gift cert. to Lead Foot Off-Road. They are a fab shop for Jeeps but they also have L.E.D. lights so I am sure I can find something. I am hoping I have broken the curse and next time Kenn or Kevin can also win.



hour or so we realized it was not the right canyon. We headed back to camp.

Monday morning we loaded up and headed home. We came Highway 58 through Tehachapi and had a good trip home with no problems. Wednesday there was a mud slide right where we had been and closed the highway and **I am not sure it's open yet. It was a** great trip with very challenging runs and excellent company. I would recommend it to anyone.

The next day (Sunday) we were on our own so we ran the bottom of Jack Hammer until we got to the 4 foot wall straight up. We turned around and ran Claw Hammer. We had all run it before but it was not as rough as it was now. We got to the top and had lunch. By the time we got back it was 3:00. So we chilled.

Sunday night we headed out for a night run. We were going to run Big Johnson. **We didn't have a trail map** and it was dark so we headed up the canyon we thought was it but after an



Catch A Burro If You Can!



Sign: Marietta was a town developed by Francis Smith when he mined Borax on Teels Marsh

One of the things that makes four wheeling so much fun is seeing new and unusual places. The driving itself, while an experience in its own way, can be secondary to what you see while off road. The destination can be as fascinating as the drive.

One of the more fascinating areas in the southwest is known as the Great Basin. Encompassing parts of California, Oregon, Nevada and Utah, the Great Basin covers more than 184,000 square miles. What makes this area unique is that its rivers and lakes have no outlet to the sea (unlike other waterways). All the water stays inside the basin.

A good place to start exploring the Great Basin is in Mineral County, Nevada. Located in the southwest part of that state, Mineral County contains Marietta Wild Burro Range. BLM manages this 68,000-acre range for the protection of roughly 100 wild burros. (I know, I know: sounds like a lot of territory for a handful of critters. But this is sparse desert range requiring many acres to support the browsing needs of one burro.) **Suffice to say, it's fascinating**—though rugged—land for exploring.

Nearly 66,500 acres are public land. Among the sights worth visiting are Teels Marsh and the ghost towns of Marietta and Candelaria. (Marietta has a few hardy souls in it yet so it might not really qualify as a ghost town.) Also located along the western edge of Mineral County is the Excelsior Moun-



Sign Sign found in Garfield Flats.

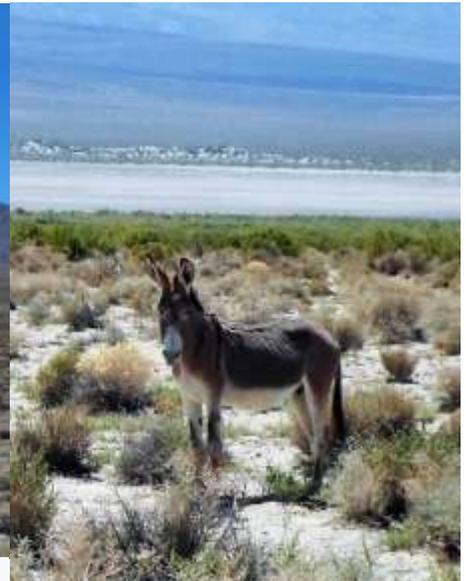
tain range. You may consider making it a camping trip.

A good loop would be to take in Teels Marsh, Huntoon Valley, an overnight stay in the Excelsior Mountains and back through Rattlesnake Flat to Garfield Flat and out to Mina, NV on US95.

Mina was a major depot for the Carson & Colorado Railroad and later the Southern Pacific. It was the northern terminus for the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad which serviced the gold mines in Esmeralda County, NV. Mina was the nickname for Wilhelmina, the daughter of a railroad executive. The town would never have existed if land speculators had not driven up the price of lots in Sodaville (4 miles south) in hopes of selling to the railroad for a big windfall.

What you'll encounter in the Great Basin

Plant and wildlife are different in this area of the Great Basin from the southern area containing the Mojave Desert. In this area



the Creosote bush gives way to the Greasewood bush. The wood of the Greasewood is so hard that people used to use it for arrow points. In fact the transition line from Creosote bush to Greasewood defines the dividing line between the Mojave Desert and the Great Basin Desert. Much of the area is covered by shadscale and sagebrush too. The dominant rattler is the King Rattlesnake who just wants to be left alone and will not bother you. Antelope share Teels Marsh with the burros and wild horses. It is easy to spot the Great Basin Collared Lizards but less likely the Chuckwalla Lizard despite being the second largest Lizard in the United States.

Despite decades of experience in this hobby—and having traveled many of the same trails countless times—I'm **always amazed** at what I see and encounter. The same is true for the Great Basin Desert. On top of that, Mineral County is mostly unknown by 4WD enthusiasts. You could have the area nearly to yourself.

Bear in mind, though, that you are in the desert. Towns are sparse. Hawthorne, Luning and Mina are the only communities of significance, and they are miles apart. Conditions are hot and dry, so pack accordingly. Spring and fall are the best times to visit the area.

As I mentioned, a chunk of Mineral County has been set aside to protect the wild burros. **Make it a goal to spot 'em. Government officials say that burros usually don't let you get very close.** Pack binoculars and a

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 1)

no problem. I was next and I picked the wrong line and with wet tires, I was too far to the right and tried to climb the gate keeper when my left tire slipped even farther to the right. My right front was now wedged against a large rock and my left rear had fallen in front of the rock I tried to climb. The term between a rock and hard place was fitting.

With some spotting from Matt and Tony and some front and rear bumper fascia scrape-age I was able to make it over the **gate keeper**. **I'm thinking the trail was made harder for the Big Bear Forest fest that came through in June.** Next was Tony. He made it through no problem.

Next was Brian, well he ended up wedged in between the rock on the right front and the rock on the left rear, but he was worse than I was because the rock in the front was wedged against his steering linkage. the rear bumper was so far down there was no forcefully backing up his Jeep.



We took a few minutes to look at the situation. It was decided to high lift his Jeep on the left rock rail just ahead of the rear wheel. We got as many rocks and wood pieces as we could find and stuffed them under the left rear wheel. We also had to do some stacking under the right rear wheel and left front wheel. We lowered down the high lift and we had stacked just enough rocks so Brian was able to forcefully backup his Jeep. But the front end was still too far over to the right.

Tony backed his Jeep down the trail and hooked up the strap. He gave it a pull but we had the strap too far over to the right. Next attempt we hooked the strap to the left tow hook. A good solid pull and Brains Jeep was unstuck. Damage report bent tie rod, damaged steering stabilizer, electronic sway bar now inoperable. Left rear plastic bumper pushed in.

We continued our trail trek. We made our way through some of the smaller rock gar-

dens that used to in water. Completely dry. Still lots burnt dead trees from the fires a few years ago.

We made it about 5/8 of the way through the trail and broke for lunch.

We had a nice trail lunch. We loaded up and continued down the trail. We came to the center rock garden when there was about 10 Jeeps from Huntington beach Jeep doing a trail run coming towards us. We pulled over and watched them come through. One of them got hung up and Matt was able too give that person a good tug along with some spotting from their trail boss.

Matt was first came through no problem. I was next I took the same line as Matt and was able to make it through I did hear my rock sliders at work. Next was Tony, he made it through no problem. Brian was up

next he had some trouble as his electronic sway bar was fully locked,so there was a couple of times he was hanging air on the left front. I **don't member if it was at the gate keeper or this rock garden where Brian's left front** was so far in the air we had to pull the Jeep down.

We continued on as we made our way down the trail there is sweeping left hand turn that has V notch on the inner portion and the outer section looks off camber with a dip and large rock dividing the inner and outer section. I froze as this looked exactly

like a section I was on Cleghorn Trail when I had my Wrangler where my back wheels came off the ground and I almost went over. I asked Matt to come back and spot me. He spotted me. It was easy. Silly me. We made our way down to the gate keeper.

I watched Matt he made it through no problem I took the same line and was able to drive my way through. Yes, I did have some beating and banging going but I made it through the hardest section. I was very happy. Tony was next, he drove through with no problem. Up next was Brian; It was a little harder for his Jeep as his electronic sway bar was fully locked and we did see some more tire airtime.



And lots rock scrapping underneath. We all had made it through Holcomb Creek Trail. We were now on the main forest road heading up to Green Valley Lake Road. It is a several mile long road.

We came across a creak crossing that was about 2 feet or so deep. There was a Subaru sitting on the other side, I guess deciding whether to cross or not. They decided not to cross after seeing us cross. We had almost made it to the top, about 3/8 of a **mile to go.** **Tony came over the CB "I have a flat tire."** I went back ,Brian rolled up, yep Tony's right rear side wall had shredded apart. We helped him change his tire then got to the top of the forest third.

We aired up our tires, reconnected our sway bars. Chatted for a bit and headed home. On the way down the mountain I hear a thump and see something bounce up on my left side. I pulled over it was my left front fender flare had torn off.; trail damage. Overall it was a great day, great weather, great trail and great wheeling friends.

The Jeep app rates this trail up to an 8. I would agree. I also found this trail harder more challenging than Gold mountain even though Gold mountain has up to a 9 on the Jeep App.



Club Meeting Minutes:

Meeting Minutes by Kevin B., Club Secretary

September 2015:

Old Biz:

Adopt a highway cleanup went well. We only had 5 volunteers though. We could really use more help.

48 paid members

New Biz:

Tom brought up the subject of what "Tread Lightly" means after an issue on the Coyote Lake run. We went over some of the thoughts of what tread lightly means and we as a club need to see if there is any way we can help educate the masses. In addition we discussed trash on the trail as apparently there was quite a bit up at Coyote Lake.

The club voted and approved of having the Christmas party at the Templeton Community Center. We also voted and approved not having alcohol at the event, reserving a few more additional hours at the event, and the main dish will be a beef roast from Tahoe Joes. The party will be Saturday Dec 5th and is not a meeting. Setup will start at 4pm-6pm. The actual party will be 6-10, with an hour of cleanup following. Karen is head-

ing up decorations, but I'm sure she could use some help. Que has already put up a post asking for folks to volunteer for sides and appetizers. There will also be a \$10 gift exchange.

Trip Reports:

Sounds like everyone had a good time on the Coyote Lake run even though there was some damage. Check out this months newsletter for more about that!

Runs:

The High Sierra Poker Run has been cancelled due to smoke.

Some of us are going to go attend the Victor Valley 4wd Clubs annual Fun in the Desert event out in Johnson Valley, Oct 9-12. All are welcome!

October 2015:

Old Biz:

We currently have 50 members, although I think we picked up a few more.

The Christmas party is Dec 5th, 6pm to 10pm at the Templeton Community Center. Not a regular meeting. We need volunteers to help setup and Deque has already started a thread on signing up for sides.

We had a good highway cleanup a few weeks ago, but we really need more help with this. Please volunteer if you can!

Tyler talked to Lloyd at the forest service and it looks as though there is grant money coming for some future projects although its not clear yet how the money will be spent. Future projects include clearing more brush from the Garcia Ridge Trail as well as making a new picnic table for the end of the trail, also there are some erosion issue to deal with on the Pine Mt. trail.

New Biz:

Nov 14th Garcia Ridge workday, although this date might be changing now. Brush clearing to open the trail up a bit more. Spend the morning clearing the trail, eat lunch, then spend the afternoon playing around. It would be nice to see a large group out there again!

Swamp Lake trip Oct 24th weekend. Last chance to get into the Sierras for the year! Contact Tom, hawks-valley@sbcglobal.net, or simply reply to his ongoing thread here if you want to go.

Dec 19th is the San Miguel Christmas parade.

(Continued from page 4)

telephoto lens. The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of December 1971 provides federal protection against harm and harassment.

Speaking of burros, here's some trivia for your next campfire. Do you know the difference between a burro and a mule?

Burro is just another name for a donkey. A male donkey is known as a Jack (also sometimes called an ass); the female is a Jenny.

A mule is what you get when you cross a Jack with a mare (female horse). Though rare, you could find a mule **that's a product of a male horse and a Jenny.** Those are known as hinnies. (Mules are sterile, by the way, so someone has to keep **creating them.** **How's that for an occupation?**)

Other than for trivia, burros occasionally show up while driving in the southwest. Burros were often used by miners many years ago. Their strong, sturdy bodies made them ideally suited to carrying out heavy loads in the hardscrabble, desert

conditions. Most of the mines are long gone, but you can still encounter a wild burro on occasion.

As you can see, a destination can be as much fun as the off-road driving itself. **Next time you're in the mood for some four wheeling, check out an area you haven't visited before.** If you live in the southwest US, consider Mineral County, Nevada, and other parts of the Great Basin. You can test your 4WD skills and see a new part of the country. And you may even spot a burro or two. Just take a picture - it is illegal to harass then.

Ask your buddies to top that!

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Tom Severin, President
Badlands Off Road Adventures, Inc.
4-Wheel Drive School
310-374-8047
<http://www.4x4training.com>
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It's Membership Renewal Time!

Please complete this coupon and mail it with your check for \$20.

Remember, you can only vote in the January elections if your membership is paid up into the new year!

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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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SLO 4 WHEELERS

PO Box 2271
Atascadero, CA 93423-2271



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.

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. Templeton Community Center.

December 19th — San Miguel Christmas Parade December 2015. Driving down Main Street with the option to dress your rig up with lights, ornaments, wreaths, etc.

January 6th — SLO 4 Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

January 9th or 10th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

February 3rd — SLO 4 Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

February 6th or 7th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

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

March 5th or 6th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

April 6th — SLO 4 Wheelers General Club Meeting at La Mexicana.

April 9th or 10th — After meeting Run: To Be Determined at the meeting

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

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

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.