

Montana Back Roads 4x4 Club meeting
March 16, 2009
Montana Club, North Reserve Street, Missoula, MT

Members present: Willie and Jeanne Worthy, Mike and Marcella Lenz, Curtis and son Justin Evelo, Jeff MacGill, Joe Lorenzo, Craig Happ, Bruce Erickson, Rachel Maxwell, Paul Schaller, Jason Vaughn, Steve Schardt, Larry Garrison, Mark Pickles, and Jim and Lorna Younkin, along with guests Charlie Correl, Eric Engleburt, Russell Mills and Hilary, Pete Elmer, and Aaron Linz.

Willie read treasurer's report with current balance of \$748 after dues received from all members. If you'd like a detailed report, contact Willie.

Jeff passed out list on what to carry while on the trail to be able to help yourself and to make it easier for someone to help you. Please feel free to add to the list, and people commented about adding jumper cables, CB radio or "talkabouts", panty hose to substitute for belt, emergency contact numbers for everyone in your rig, along with medical info if pertinent. Bruce spoke as to state requirements for travel off road, year round all you have to have is approved spark arresting muffler. Fire season regulations can add more requirements, as can using chain saw or having camp fire. List will be finalized and sent via email and put on web site.

Jeff suggested some changes to web site, including having the application in PDF format so new members can type directly into it. Willie will update with our web master. Jason mentioned that some picture pages don't link right. Let Willie know if you have any changes you'd like to make, or if other links don't work.

Jeff has the new club business cards, but be discreet in how you hand them out, as it should be someone who will be an asset to the club.

Discussion of how to increase membership: it took Pete Elmer from Victor four years to hear about us (he joined Ravalli County Off Road Users Association, and they mentioned our club). Possibly place an ad in Independent or the Missoulian? Participate in car shows and display club banner. Curtis knows a guy from Garden City Rods and will check with him on when their show is.

Tire covers with club logo are available thru Figma at JC Whitney price. A motion was made and seconded to spend \$25 for him to silkscreen large club logo. Contact Willie to order.

Trips: Mark is going to Moab in May, not sure on dates yet. Larry and Ron MacDonald are going to Moab, leaving May 4, for 12 days. Craig mentioned Jeep Jamboree is a fun thing to go to, but expensive. Bill Boldt will be going to Moab over Easter week. Bruce is also going some time this year. Bruce will

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lead a trip in the next three or four weeks to several off shoot roads from Highway 135 (between Paradise and St. Regis), one of which ends at old mine. Jeff and Curtis may lead another snow trip. Trip notification will be via email.

Willie received email from Pintler District Ranger Charlene Bucha Gentry, based in Phillipsburg, on Meadow Lakes restoration work near Thompson Lake, out of Maxville. She will have her team contact us soon.

Bruce, Derek and Steve Emerson, Willie and Jeanne attended Forest Service meeting mid February regarding off road use conflicts on the Frenchtown front area. Homeowners are complaining of illegal use, mostly by quads. Most attendees were adamant with "it's public land, I can ride anywhere I want!" type opinions, but Garry Edson, district ranger, is trying to get group to work together.

Jeff will host a ramp travel day soon over week end once weather warms up, and the club will buy hot dogs and ice cream.

Mark, Jeanne and Willie, and possibly Joe will attend how to write grants class put on by FWP Friday, March 20. FWP receives money from sale of ATV stickers, then issues grants only for ATV projects (but can be used for reconstruction of damage done by ATVs). You can apply for up to \$30,000. Has to be submitted by June 1 of each year. Yamaha also makes grant money available.

Joe is enthusiastic to begin tracking down some sponsors for club events, but we need a definite project first.

Willie used paper towels to make a face mask to harass Bruce about forgetting his sun glasses when he went ice fishing (which is what Bruce did to protect his eyes from the glare).

Several club members sent letters to Senator Max Baucus regarding the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest plan, and only received a generic response. The recreational travel plan refers to interim travel map (but is it available yet?) and doesn't say anything about 4x4 vehicles. It cites 5700 visits a year to wilderness, but how many would it be for motorized usage? It does state that there will be no challenge routes or any specially constructed routes. There are 3,380,000 total acres in the B-DL plan, with 219,000 acres already designated as wilderness, and an additional 1.8 million acres is inventoried roadless area. If designated as wilderness study area, it's treated as wilderness.

Bruce bought a neat little 18 volt battery powered chain saw with 8 inch bar, for approximately \$130. Should work great on the trail to remove small trees.

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Curtis has been researching which off road organization the club should join and presented the following information:

Montana 4x4 Association, state organization which puts on the Divide Ride each year (and often are able to utilize private land that wouldn't be available otherwise). They do not do much as far as public relations. They currently have 187 members. Club membership at \$100 would also include United Four Wheel Drive Association membership for each member as well (you receive monthly United magazine), with additional cost \$20 for each member. Would be best to have two delegates from club to attend quarterly meetings (usually held in Helena or Butte). Jeff and Mike volunteered to be delegates if we do join (we can send any two members as delegates).

Treasure State Alliance, state organization, has no national backing, but has contacts through Blue Ribbon Coalition. They keep track of what's happening in Montana. \$100 for club membership.

Blue Ribbon Coalition is national organization, primarily western US. Is multi use, mostly motorized (some mountain bikes), and mainly motorcycles. Very strong in keeping trails open.

Citizens for Balanced Use is multi use, horses, hikers, and motorized. Wants to keep public lands open and deals mostly with access issues. Their web site (www.balanceduse.org) didn't list cost.

United 4 Wheel Drive Association, national group, well organized, keeps up with federal and national closures, while relying on local groups to provide local information. \$100 for club membership.

Sierra Club...don't laugh! It's called "know the enemy", use it to keep track on what's proposed to be closed. \$35 per member.

Curtis suggested that the club join one state and one national organization. Joe commented we should join BRC, United and MT 4x4 Association. Discussion on whether we should vote tonight, consensus was for Curtis to send more information via email for discussion and then an email vote.

Willie stressed that it's important that we get politically involved, as otherwise we'll just sit back and say everything is closed anyway and that's what will end up happening.