



Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association

Spring 2006

The Boondocker

Inside:

- Picking the right GPS
 - Capital Crawling
 - Quarterly Meeting Minutes
 - Winter Wheeling!
 - A Thanksgiving to Remember
 - Cheap Truck Build
 - Wilstem Ranch Trail Ride
- ...and much more!



Help keep our sport alive! Membership applications available on-line!

www.glfwda.org





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Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association

Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association Incorporated is a noncommercial association of four wheel drive enthusiasts organized for the promotion of interest in maintaining closer contact between four wheel drive clubs and individuals, to promote cooperation, friendship, conservation, ecology, and to preserve access to public lands through wise management policies. It shall also provide a network of communication in the event of disasters or emergencies, and for the advancement of four wheel drive awareness, the representation of four wheel drive interests in legislative affairs, and for maintenance of fraternalism by encouraging a high standard of conduct.

GLFWDA is an incorporated association, without capital stock, chartered under the laws of the State of Michigan, and is an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986. Its affairs are governed by the Executive Board of Directors, whose voting members are elected every two years by the Directors of each member club. The officers are elected or appointed by the Directors. The Association is noncommercial, and no one who could gain financially from the shaping of its affairs is eligible for membership on the Executive Board.

A bona fide interest in four wheeling is the only essential qualification of membership; ownership of a four wheel drive vehicle is not a prerequisite.; Membership is granted to anyone within the United States and Canada.

Membership Inquires should be directed to the Membership Secretary. Inquires of a general nature should be addressed to the Corresponding Secretary or a member of the Executive Board. Articles for publication should be sent to the Boondocker Editor.

Advertising Rates

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Cover Photograph:

Bruce Rettig
Michigans Upper Peninsula

Table of Contents

A Word from the Treasurer	4
Trail Ride Committee	4
Capital Crawling	6
Great Lakes Club Listing	6
DOA Application	7
So Far... So Good... SoFO	8
MSG Easter Egg Hunt	11
Tri-City Trailriders Road Rally	12
January Quarterly Trail Ride	13
Project Budget Samurai	15
Quarterly Minutes January 2006	16
GL Clothing	19
A Reason to Give Thanks	20
Getting Started with GPS	24
Wistem Ranch Trail Ride	27
Calendar of Events	29
Associate Members	30
Membership Application	31

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Boondocker Submissions

Please note that any submission for the next Boondocker should be made before **May 9, 2006** and be sent preferably via email to the Editor at editor@glfwda.org

You can send anything you feel is relevant. Pictures, articles, event dates, or even an entire article with pictures! Before you unpack from a trip, write up a story and send it in!

Stories and articles are submitted from various Association Members. The views and opinions expressed in the stories and articles within are solely those of the individual, or individuals who submitted said stories or articles. Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association neither advocates, endorses, nor recommends any of the said views or opinions.

Trail Ride Committee

Jim Kitson

Welcome to a new season of GLFWDA trail riding! I am the new trail ride committee chairman, replacing Vic Brasseur after he decided to step down after several years in this position. First, we should all offer our thanks to Vic for his hard work. Thanks Vic!

As you all know, GLFWDA is operating under a new format and we have a new executive board. With all the effort to invite our members into the decision making processes, our trail ride committee is also stepping up our activity.

If you have been on our website lately, you may have noticed that we have added a new topic in our forums for the Trail Ride Committee. (TRC) Please feel free to comment on any thread or start your own. We invite any discussions that revolve around trail riding. I have also put together a list of those that wish to be a participant of the committee. If you feel that you can volunteer some time, please contact me.

All of our quarterly meetings will now have a trail ride included on the preceding day. This idea was first brought up by several members over a year ago and although it didn't start right then, it planted the seed. We had our first ride in January in West Branch. Next will be April at Silver Lake, back to West Branch in June and

finally at the Mounds in October. These are all informal rides. No trail leaders, sign up sheets or difficulty levels. Just show up, hook up with some fellow members & go have some fun. Each time, we will stay at a local hotel (and or campground) and we will have a casual get together each Saturday night to meet & greet.

I am also encouraging each club, group or individual within our organization to openly invite your fellow members on any runs you may have. I am fully aware that there are times where a small group or capability rating would make it difficult to do an open invite. But, where practical, please invite others. For example, if you and your pals are planning a trip to the Mounds, Silver Lake or any other location, even if it is a last minute decision, post it up! Others may be looking to hook up with someone on that day and be sitting home just because they do not have someone to wheel with.

I am sad to announce that the Troll's will not be hosting their annual "Spring Opener" this year. Hopefully we may see it again in 2007.

Mud, Sweat and Gears (MSG) is once again hosting their Drummond Island Adventure. For anyone who has never attended, it is a well organized event that is good for stock vehicles to well built rigs. MSG does a bang up job and their Saturday evening banquet is always lots of fun.

The GLFWDA trail ride committee is also once again hosting our annual Gitchee Gumee event this fall based out of Blueberry Hills Resort north of Sault St Marie Canada.

Canada is a rugged area. Most of the trails are tight and challenging with a variety of terrain. We will offer guided rides for stock vehicles all the way to well built vehicles. I must stress that a stock full size pickup will struggle where a stock Jeep will do fine. If you are interested in attending and are unsure of what to expect or how your vehicle will fit in, please contact me!

Over the years, each event has been different. We have had from: cooked meals to cold pastries and juice, to no food at all. We have had no awards, simple awards and a nice door prize for every attendee. Each one of these items comes with a cost associated with it.

Now we would like some input from you! What would you like to see for Gitchee Gumee 2006?

From the Treasurer

At our executive board meeting on March 4th., a new member attended and introduced himself. He is Paul Hittie, an experienced and practicing accountant, who is stepping up to the treasurers job and has the approval of the board to finish the remainder of my term. The transition is planned to take place May 1st. Thanks Paul.

Since New Years our income has exceeded our outgo and we are planning to keep that trend.

All of the board members are absorbing their expenses.

Rick Ingman

Are you more interested in attending a low cost run and just enjoying the scenery and bonfire camaraderie or would you like to see food and awards? Please note that a full blown meal is very difficult to put on since the rugged terrain makes it difficult to arrive back in camp in time for a fancy meal. Therefore, we have considered a catered breakfast as an option. How many of you are interested in this extra expense? Should we offer a lower cost run with PRE ORDERED food as an option? I encourage you to get on the TRC forum and give your comments. If you do not have access to

the internet, or are all thumbs when typing, call me!



In addition, we have a poll going on the TRC forum for when we will meet for Gitchee Gumee. Please vote! Please vote! Please vote! (see a pattern here?) And once again, if you prefer, a call to me is fine.

Sincerely,
Jim Kitson
jkitson@allor.com

248-620-2144

Capital Crawling

Ari B. Adler
secretary@glfwda.org

Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association is in many ways an advocacy group. We are a loose-knit collection of folks interested in the same sport for many reasons. Off-road vehicles – off-highway vehicles as the politically correct now call them – come in as many different shapes, sizes and capabilities as their drivers.

Nevertheless, the one thing we all treasure is our right to enjoy the great outdoors from the driver's seat of our vehicles. Unfortunately, some would use political muscle to change the access we have to public lands and scale back on the liberty all four-wheelers currently enjoy.

That's why one of the most important things those of us who love Jeeping, Hummering, Geo Tracking, etc. can do is let our voices be heard. We need to take action when there are political changes in the wind blowing against us or when we can affect political change by all pushing in a positive direction.

By now, many of you know I'm the GLFWDA recording/correspondence secretary. However, by day I work in the state Senate, so I have a unique opportunity to see and hear all that is going on under the dome in Lansing. Did you know that you, too, could have an inside track to legislative activity? By logging on to www.michiganlegislature.org, you will discover a wealth of resources regarding the legislative branch of Michigan's government. You can find out about your local legislators and search for legislation by bill number or key words. If you are willing to register, which is free, you can sign up for legislative action alerts on specific subjects. For example, I am registered and have an e-mail sent to me whenever legislation is introduced or acted upon involving environmental issues, recreation, the Department of Natural Resources and a few other topics.

Right now, I am tracking Senate Bill 924; a bill I think many of you should be interested in as well. SB 924, introduced by Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Leelanau, would alter the rules regarding replacement ORV permits and state park motor vehicle permits.

Continued on page 6

The bill was introduced after I contacted Sen. McManus about the trouble I had trying to get a replacement ORV permit and finally just purchasing a new one. What SB 924 does is tell the DNR that if you can produce a receipt and the remains of an ORV permit or state park motor vehicle permit that has been damaged, then the department shall issue a free replacement. This will help you replace an ORV permit because you changed a bumper or have to get a new state park sticker because of a windshield replacement.

Now some of you may think that shelling out another \$16.50 or \$24 for a new permit isn't that big of a deal but what drove me to take action was consistency more than cost. As I researched getting my ORV permit replaced, I discovered that where you lived, which DNR office you visited and which DNR employee you dealt determined whether you were getting a free replacement. If – and I'm hoping soon I can say when – this bill is approved by the House and Senate and signed by the governor, there will no longer be a question and all of us will be treated equally and fairly when seeking a replacement sticker.

If you would like to show your support for SB 924, you can contact Sen. McManus via e-mail at SenMMcManus@senate.michigan.gov. The bill is in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmen-

tal Affairs. You can contact the chairperson of that committee, Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugutuck, by writing to her at SenPBirkholz@senate.michigan.gov.

I plan to submit a legislative column for each Boondocker, so I will keep my ears open for legislation that would or should be of interest to you. If you would like me to look into a specific proposal or find out how you can start some personal advocacy crusade of your own, I'd be happy to help. Just drop me a line at secretary@glfwda.org.



GLFWDA Club Listing

1. **Delta Fourwheelers**

Member since 1972
Director: George Motes
10332 W. Dodge,
Montrose, MI 48457
gmotes@centurytel.net

2. **Flintstones**

Member since 1975
Director: Rich Nowak
1339 S. Vasser, Davison, MI 48423

3. **Golden Triangle**

Member since 1978
Director: Darrin Buss
13155 Waters, Chelsea, MI 48118

4. **Jackson Stump Jumpers**

Member since 1972
Director: Brad Perkins
5614 Larch, Jackson, MI 49201
jacksonstumpjumpers@hotmail.com

5. **Mid-Michigan Fourwheelers**

Member since 1990
Director: Ron Roggow
4125 Roosevelt, Hemlock, MI 48626

6. **Mud, Sweat, and Gears**

Member since 1987
Website: www.msg4x4club.com
Director: Joe Cefali
80480 McFadden
Armada, MI 48005
doublej@msg4x4club.com

Continued on Page 17



South Eastern Michigan Mud, Sweat, and Gears Presents...

Sixth Annual Drummond Offroad Adventure August 25th - 27th, 2006

Opportunities to
ride in
Michigan's new
Off-Road Park

Turtle Ridge

Additional fees apply,
more info at check in.

Registration begins April 15th, ends July 15th

- 50 Truck Limit
- Must meet Great Lakes Sanctioning Vehicle Safety requirements
- All pets must be leashed!



**A Great
Lakes
Sanctioned
Event**



- Membership to Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association is required.
- Not a member? Join with registration.

Two Major Runs – Friday and Saturday

Dinner & Awards banquet provided on Saturday

Goodie bags, door prizes, and raffles

**New for 2006
Online registration!**
Pay online using Credit Card or PayPal.
www.msg4x4club.com

Detach this portion and send to the address listed below, or register online at www.msg4x4club.com

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/St/Zip _____
 Phone Number _____
 E-mail _____
 GLFWDA# _____
 # Adults _____ # Minors (11-17) _____
 # Children (10 & under – Free!) _____
Total Participants _____
 Vehicle _____
 Tire Size _____ Winch (Y/N)

DOA Essentials			
	Size	Quantity	Total
T-Shirts \$18 (S-XL) \$20 (2XL & 3XL)			
Sweatshirts \$28 (S-XL) \$30 (2XL & 3XL)			

PRICES:
 Adults - \$45
 Minor (11-17) - \$12
 Kids
 10 & Under are Free!

Registration:
 # Adults x \$45: _____
 # Minors x \$12: _____
Subtotal: _____
GL Membership: _____
Shirts: _____
Total: \$ _____

- Check out our website, for more details www.msg4x4club.com, Contact Joe Cefali at 810-798-2823 doubleJ@msg4x4club.com
- Registration packets will be furnished.
- Make checks payable to MSG.
- Mail registration form to:
 Mud, Sweat, and Gears
 PO Box 183165
 Shelby Twp., MI 48318

Great Lakes
 Membership - \$35

Registration begins April 15th, ends July 15th



The first laugh for us on Fri, 1/6 was while “Deathdealer” was filling up the TJ. A Buick stormed into the gas station and ran over a 4" high island curb, and never even flinched. We left Ypsilanti around 7 AM and picked up “Kixx007”, “Evil_E” and Sam. The five of us chugged along onto 23 and made our way to the rally point on M-59 in Hartland. We met up with “Bult4mud”, “Princess”, and “Ninja”. We then caravanned up to the “Casa de Chupacabra” near Rose City. Our friend Shawn showed

moderate grade. “Amc78cj7’s” recently completed rig had a malfunction about ½ the way up. It turned out to be a loose transfer case chain.

After everything, we filled ourselves up with 3/4 lb. burgers, filled the gas tanks, and headed back to the cabin. The laughs were in full swing until about 2 AM. During our slumber, more snow was falling much to the delight of the morning ganders outside. “Bult4mud” fired up the stove and sent a noticeable shockwave throughout the Casa, which of course, garnered more laughs.

The first rough portion the next day was a series of mud tracks that “Bult4mud” called the “Bear Swamp”, and the first mud hole was a challenge for some of the rigs. “Bult4mud” and “Deuce” had gone through, but then it



up later. In the TJ alone we had 3 guys, all the gear, tools, and gas. “B-Nasty’s” back seat area was dubbed “The Squirrels Nest”. It was amazing to see 9 people piled in the Casa. The Casa was quite a sight, with amazing bonfires, the Saturday morning stove lightings (a crowd favorite), burned biscuit throwing, and mass ammo releases throughout the entire week-end.

”SoFO” took a different way out of town this time. The challenge of the run was a 75ft tall hill with a



was “Kixx’s” turn. He was stuck about ½ way through it, and was up to the axles. “Bult4mud” turned his TJ around and managed to extract “Kixx” without much of a challenge. “Evil_E” and Shawn made it through without a problem, then “Amc78cj7” went through and stopped about ¾ of the way through, with the transfer case chain slipping something fierce. He finally went around the ruts as did “Motrcyman”. All made it through, except “Amc78cj7” and “Motrcyman” took the bypass. After the mud was some trail riding of little difficulty but amazing scenery, however “Amc78cj7” had some overheating issues.



We stopped for lunch amidst a ½ snow, ½ sleet mixture. “Kixx” was in front with “Bult4mud” behind and we strung a tarp up between the two vehicles. “Kixx” broke out the propane Coleman grill and proceeded to make pizza sandwiches for all who wanted one. Everyone enjoyed the break, chatting about the area and the run through the “Bear Swamp”. After about 45 minutes, we headed back out to the main road.

and turned around to find “B-Nasty” napping as well. “Deathdealer” and I just chatted about the fun we were having while we entered Bull Gap.

I had never been to Bull Gap, much less heard of it. I have been out of the loop for about 9 years and this was my big plunge back into it. While milling around the base, “Deathdealer” went over some moguls pretty fast and jarred “B-Nasty” out of his nap. We were all playing around the little trails at the base when “Motrcyman” asked “Anyone want to go up first for bragging rights?”



“Motrcyman” went up first, and then a bunch of us followed. “Kixx” even exclaimed “I don’t know if this XJ will make it up there, I’ve already got stuck in the mud.”

The CB came alive with back patting, as “Kixx” did make it to the top. We toyed around up on top for a while. “Bult4mud” was trying like mad to climb a steep grade on the right side on top of the hill. He finally made it, but then white

”Motrcyman” and Brian conferred with “Bult4mud” about the remainder of the day and where they should go while they were comparing GPS plots and measuring the time remaining. During the lull, “Amc78cj7” decided to head back to West Branch. We continued on 406 and I was starting to nod off. After a quick nap, I was awake

smoke billowed from underneath the hood. The overflow had spilled over and turned the snow a hideous fluorescent green. Worse yet, the radiator cap had bubbles coming from underneath it. This eventually subsided, so Brian suggested we go down the “other way”. The off-camber turns were a joy to be a passenger in, but I can only imagine what the driver’s nerves had been going through.

The Boondocker

Brian took pictures of all of the rigs on the way down.

Everyone made it down, and again everyone was toying at the base, watching the sled drivers go up the hill. We noticed “Kixx” had begun to get stuck in a hidden sort of mud patch. He was able to work himself free, and headed

It worked, and it worked even after the Quarterly meeting. “Evil_E” and “Kixx” had gone to AutoZone in West Branch and they did not have the cap so “Kixx” rode his rig home like this to buy a new one. Now that this was solved we headed to the “Casa de Chupacabra” to have the Pot Luck. There were about 15 people in the cabin and everyone had a great time. All were laughing and carrying on. The group watched “Bult4mud”, “B-Nasty” and “Deathdealer” pig pile “Kixx”. The laughing was nonstop for 3-4 minutes afterwards. Even “Kixx” was laughing at it. “Amc78cj7” left with “Motrcyman” and Brian. Then a few of us stayed outside and talked until about 2am. We realized this was the end of our SoFO run and wished this weekend could be stalled, replayed, or extended.



out with a couple of others to a parking lot. It was then the bad news came over the CB. “Kixx” asked “Guys, if anyone happens to notice a power steering cap lying on the ground, mine is missing.”

All of us searched frantically, but to no avail. The cap had eluded the sight of everyone’s eyes. Then over the CB came some more bad news. “Motrcyman” had gone up on the left side and was stuck $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up on the incline. I told “Deathdealer”, “come on, let’s get to the top and see what we can do.”



We arrived at the point of no return, the junction of the incline and the turn. Brian was getting out the winch cable. We also realized that we had to go down the incline, to avoid a mishap or damage to “Deathdealer’s” TJ. They were able to get free, and “Motrcyman” went in reverse down the hill, “Deathdealer” followed, and then “Bult4mud”, who had also come up to help.

Now with all of us down, one problem still remained what to do about the missing power steering cap? Brian had the answer, “take a zip tie and a Ziploc bag to cover it”.



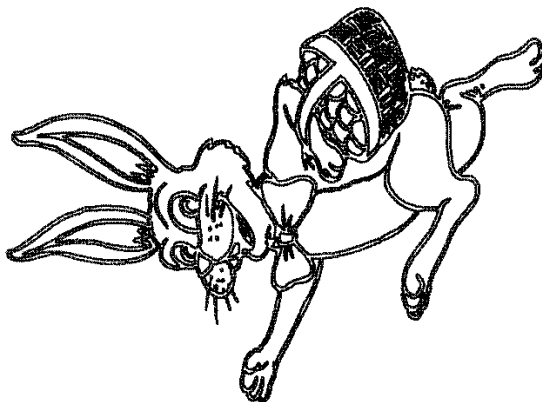
EASTER EGG HUNT

April 15th
Saturday, 12 P.M.

Rain, Snow, or Shine!



Ages 1 thru 10
\$3.50 per Child
Includes Hot Dog
and Drink

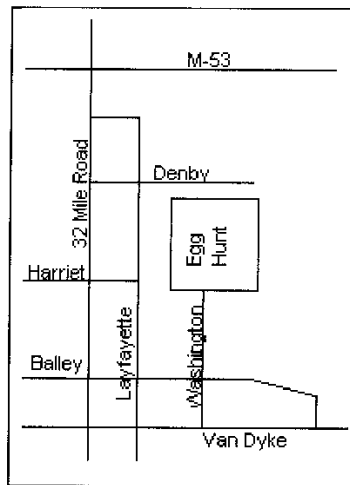


All Proceeds will be donated to ALS Association, Michigan Chapter.
This association assists patients and families with ALS and supports research into the cause and cure of ALS (more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease). As a club we picked this association to due losing a member to this disease.



With a visit from the Easter Bunny, who will also be available for pictures!!!

For more Information, call
Maria @810.798.2823
Or Teresa @586.615.2001



The Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Romeo Lions Club Grounds in Romeo (See Map Above)





January Quarterly Meeting Trail Ride

Story and Pics: Bob DeVore aka Jarhead

Additional Pics: Brian Wysocki & Tim Strader



The first Pre-Quarterly Meeting Trail Ride started with just an idea. I mean, what else are you going to do the first weekend in January? Now, I must confess sitting at home, in my lazy-boy, next to the fireplace did come to mind. But I wanted to attend the Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association (GLFWDA) Quarterly Meeting in West Branch and see what all the stir was that was going back and forth on the GLFWDA Website (www.glfwda.org).

While I am at it, I must also confess, I am not much for winter sports anymore; I leave that to my grandchildren and enjoy the cold of winter from a distance. But then again, an opportunity to get out and wheel with a few friends and GLFWDA members, sounded like a great idea.

There was some concern, on the web site; we would have little or no snow for our trail ride. Mother Nature prevailed and provided four fresh inches of snow overnight and as I arrived at Forward's, in West Branch, it was a brisk 27 degrees with snow flurries. There were a few vehicles in the parking lot as I arrived. Some of the vehicles had arrived on trailers, while others had arrived under their own power. The collection of vehicles slowly took shape as the 10 o'clock hour drew nearer. We had everything from trail hardened rigs, to a bone stock GMC Jimmy. We waited a bit past 10 to have a driver's meeting and cover all the pertinent issues for today's trail ride.



As we left Forward's, I counted fourteen vehicles leaving the parking lot. Out of the parking lot, down the road a piece and with a slight u-turn by the lead vehicle we found ourselves on the St. Helen ORV Trail System.

The snow and the trees were absolutely fabulous. Up, down and around we went; taking a leisurely pace, which allowed plenty of time for us to talk and watch the children play in the snow. It really was a beautiful day to be outside with family and friends.

We slowly worked our way to the St. Helen Motorsport Area where we were greeted by eight more vehicles and a bon fire to warm ourselves. Our one and only Ironman built the bon fire. Now there is an ole' saying that says, "Where there is smoke, there is fire." Now as you can tell by the picture, we had



All and all, the trail ride was a wonderful experience. No awards, no dinner, no real fan fare, just an opportunity to wheel with some friends and Great Lakes Members. I look forward to our next Quarterly Meeting and romp at the Silver Lake Sand Dunes on April 8th and 9th. Hope to see you there!

In closing, I would like to thank and acknowledge that a number of the pictures used in this article were posted on the GLFWDA Website (www.glfwda.org). Thank you to those that posted their pictures.



plenty of smoke – but we are still waiting on the fire. You can't blame Ironman for the lack of trying, but if you absolutely, positively need a fire to warm your food or yourself, send Ironman out two weeks ahead of time (to work on the fire) or better yet, provide your own. While standing aside the smoking wood, I overheard someone say, "It's a good thing his trail leading abilities exceed his fire making abilities." It was a little hard looking at the people's faces, as their hotdogs begin to refreeze, instead of roast by our huge bon smoke, I mean bon fire.

We played a bit in the Motorsport Area and after eating some slightly refrozen hotdogs, or some of Brewman's Fire-Engine Hot Chili; we set out for a little more trail riding. As we twisted this way and that we found ourselves searching for Pin-Ball Alley. Now Pin-Ball Alley was a great deal of fun, especially as daylight slowly left us.



Project Budget Samurai

By: Keith Kodet

With Special Thanks to Lucas Gottler and Brian Dow for the Technical Information and Help Needed to Complete this Project

Over the last few years, many off-road magazines have professed to do a “budget” buildup of a 4x4. They usually set their budgets low, and then completely blow them out of proportion and end up with a vehicle that the average Joe could never afford. This bugs me, and so I have decided to try this very task. Since I have no corporate sponsorship and everything is coming out of my pocket, I have no choice but to adhere to my budget, which will be \$1,000.

Finding a cheap 4x4 can be a challenge, but deals can be found if you are patient and smart. Check eBay, local papers, garages, and junkyards. Many times cheap to free vehicles can be found that are no longer street friendly, but great for off-road adventures. Since this 4x4 project will never see the streets, wilder modifications can be made, and I do not recommend any of them for a street driven vehicle.

My search for the ultimate cheap 4x4 came in the form of a 1990 Suzuki Samurai. It has some rust, had been rolled, and had been sitting for several years, but it was free! However, it has fuel injection (first year) and it runs. To keep the challenge honest, I'll deduct \$200 from the budget, because that is probably what most people could find a similar condition 4x4 for. I figure this is a good truck for the buildup, because parts are available for it, and it's a very universal platform, so many of the modifications could be done to other 4x4's.

After freeing up the stuck brakes and dragging the Samurai home, I started tearing into it. The first thing I did was to rip out the moldy orange shag carpeting (yuck) and remove the



keep it from rolling) and pulled it with the winch on Lucas's Jeep until it was straight.

Samurais are put together with a lot of large metric Philips head screws that get stuck with age, so a trick to getting them out is to gently tap on the screw head edge with a cold chisel until they break loose.

A trip to the local junkyard found an old imported 1985 SJ410 (same as a Samurai, but with a few unique pieces) and from this truck we were able to scavenge a decent targa bar with supports, and a factory fold down windshield kit that was never on U.S. Samurais, all for \$40. Through eBay I was able to get a nice used windshield frame with glass shipped to my door for \$92. Upon installing the new windshield frame, I found that the 1990 wiper motor would not work, it turned out that the SJ410 windshield hinges are plastic, so no ground was going to the motor. The ground problem was cured with a piece of wire from the body to one of the motor's mounting bolts.

The seats were quite torn up and dry rotted, so a set of generic “neoprene” seat covers were purchased through eBay for \$38 shipped to my door. Now that the truck was looking decent, I decided to drive it around for a few months to see if any other problems arose. One of the two problems that did pop up in the 500 or so miles I put on it was that it would eat an alternator belt every 50 miles at first. Turns out the alternator pulley was severely rusted, so wire wheeling it fixed that, and a new belt cost me \$9. The other problem was the solenoid would click instead of start, so some online research found that this is a common Samurai problem. A “clicky starter fix kit” was purchased through eBay for \$12 shipped, it installed in about 10 minutes with directions, and fixed the problem immediately.

Now that I knew the Samurai was a decent runner, I knew it was time to start the buildup. A few days before I touched the first wrench, I got underneath the rig and sprayed every nut and bolt I could see with PB Blaster, which I would highly recommend with any old rig you work on. My plans for the buildup were simple: lift it enough to clear 33's, get lower gearing, and lock up the rear axle.



ripped and torn soft-top. The doors were tweaked beyond repair in the rollover, so those were removed and discarded along with the severely bent windshield frame, targa bar, and supports. The rollbar was bent about four inches to the drivers side, so Lucas and I anchored one side of the Samurai's frame to my tractor (to

The Boondocker

Since I do not have a lift, like most of us, I had to work on the floor of my old cattle barn. I carefully jacked up the truck front and rear, and supported it by the frame with 4 jackstands (always make sure everything is secure before getting under ANY vehicle).

Since I knew from experience that spring and shackle bolts on old rusty vehicles rarely come out easily (if at all), and I knew I was taking the axles apart, I decided to strip the axles while still in the truck, and try to work them out sideways without having to unbolt the springs. The first thing I discovered is that a good assortment of metric wrenches is necessary when working on a



Samurai, especially 12 and 17mm. Both axles came apart quite easily. The rear axle is just like a Ford 9 inch in design, and comes apart the same. The front axle takes a little more time, but is much simpler than Dana axles. The locking hubs are a two piece design that simply unbolt, with one snap ring inside the second half of the hub. The axleshafts in the front have birfield joints that are a very tight fit inside the knuckle, and quite a bit of wiggling the axleshaft around is necessary to get the axles to pop out. Once the front and rear axleshafts were out, I disconnected the steering, and removed both third members. I simply torched the old U-bolts off, since I learned the hard way in the past never to reuse them. I ended up having just enough room between the frame and springs to slide the axle housings out. The axle housings are extremely light when stripped bare, and probably weigh less than 30 pounds!

Now that I had the bare housings on the floor, I knew I wanted to lift the truck via a spring over conversion using the stock springs. Knowing that axle-wrap might be an issue, I took the rear overload springs out, cut off the locating tabs, and re-assembled the rear leaf pack with the overload springs arching up. For the front, I looked in my scrap pile for an extra leaf for each side. I found them in an old set of Samurai springs from an old project. Most junkyards would charge you about \$10 for a similar leaf, so let's add that to the budget. Once again an eBay purchase got me a set of Rocky Road spring over lift pads for \$48 shipped directly from Rocky Road Outfitters. I have used the Rocky Road pieces in the past, and like them since they are a no-brainer fit with their extension supports that sit on the factory spring pad. These do need to be welded onto the old pads, so you'll need to do this yourself if you have a welder (I do) or get a friend to do it for you. I chose the 6 inch pads versus the 5 inch ones for the extra height and advertised 32 inch tire clearance.

Knowing that I would need just a little extra room for clearance for the tires, I decided to move the front axle forward 1 inch. I did this by drilling a hole in both the front spring pad and

plate 1 inch back from the factory pin holes. Since the shocks mount to the spring plates, the rear plates can be swapped side to side to work with the new spring-over setup, however the front plates are different on each side (one is larger than the other) so I cut off the existing shock mounting points with a sawzall, and turned them around on the plates and re-welded them to mount in the right location. A new set of longer U-bolts were purchased locally for \$60, and the axles were bolted back into the truck. Re-gearing a Samurai is actually a very easy task. The front differential gears out of Suzuki Sidekicks and Geo Trackers happen to fit perfectly. Since the stock Samurai gears are 3.73, I wanted to go deeper. Automatic equipped Trackers and Sidekicks have 4.30 or 4.62 gears and Manual equipped ones have 5.12 gears. Since this is a trail only rig, I decided to go with the 5.12 gears. I was able to purchase one front third-member locally for \$50, and another for \$100. For the front axle, the swap is as simple as dropping the aluminum Tracker third member right into the Samurai axle. Since I was not locking up the front, this was fine. Since no locker is currently available for the Tracker front differential, you would have to swap the Tracker gears over to the Samurai differential to put a locker in the front.

For the rear axle the Tracker differential will bolt in, but the axle spline count is not the same, so the tracker gears must be removed and swapped into the Samurai carrier. Being that this is a trail-only rig, I decided to weld the rear spider gears (turning it into a spool) instead of buying a locker and probably blowing my budget. I have never done this before, so I talked to people that have. What I decided to do was to heat up the spider gears till they were hot, then weld them together, and let them cool down slowly to help preserve the strength of the material. Swapping the tracker



front ring gear onto the Samurai rear carrier is as simple as bolting it on and setting the backlash (a manual is good for this), however you must use the stock Samurai ring gear bolts, because they are the proper shorter length. Lots of red Locktight on all the bolts is also a good idea. The cross-pins for the spider gears are held on by the ring gear in a stock Samurai, however once you swap the 5.12 gears on, the ring gear no longer is thick enough to do so. You can buy a kit online to hold them in place, or you can make a ring out of a one-quart paint can to hold them in. Since I had already welded

Continued on page 30

Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association Inc., January 8, 2006 Quarterly Minutes:

President Mark Burns called the meeting to order at 11:15am on Sunday, January 8, 2006.

Introduction of new Executive Board Members:

President – Mark Burns

Vice President – Jim Mazzola

Treasurer – Rick Ingman

Membership Secretary – Robert DeVore

Recording Corresponding Secretary – Pat Kinne (Acting)

Roll call showed 42 members present.

Jim Mazzola explained how future quarterly meetings will work with the new membership structure and stressed the importance of everyone being involved in the meeting process since it is the entire membership's association.

President: Mark Burns

Mark asked for direction from the membership as to what they want from GLFWDA. He has a lot of ideas and needs to know what direction to take with these ideas. Mark has asked for members to contact him on the GL message board or via his e-mail that will be posted in the Boondocker and on the main page of the GL Website (www.glfwda.org).

Corresponding Secretary: Pat Kinne (acting)

Pat asked the membership for a volunteer to take over this position.

Treasurer: Rick Ingman

Rick gave his report and a motion to approve the report was made by Paul Mulder and seconded by Tim Treadway.

Website: Tim Strader

Tim has been working diligently on the site and issues regarding it. Tim asked for input for the site and the forums. Tim received a round of applause for all of his hard work.



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Boondocker: Lucas Gottler

Lucas gave several options for reducing costs in regards to printing of the Boondocker. One of the options is to have the Boondocker available on-line in a PDF file. This would allow members to print it from the *member's only* forum on the GL Website. A sign-up sheet was made available to those that wish to receive the publication in this manner.

A lengthy discussion on several options took place. Nothing was set in stone.

Trail Ride Committee (TRC): Jim Kitson

Jim gave a rundown of what the TRC is and what it is going to be. Jim stated that it is going to be a 'work in progress' and will take the membership to help mold it to its highest potential. Insurance is going to be a major hurdle. Jim stressed the importance of the smaller runs being an open invite to other GL members if at all possible. Jim then gave a quick synopsis of GG 2005. He also wants to make sure that the TRC keeps everyone involved and not just the "hardcore" group, but the stock class as well. Jim then turned the floor over to Vic Brasseur to present the names of the 2005 Dirty Dozen

Award winners. Those who made the list will receive their award at the April quarterly.

ORV Advisory Committee: Paul Mulder

Paul gave the dates for the upcoming spring trail maintenance. A description of what is involved in this maintenance and where the funds come from was given. Pat Kinne read an e-mail from Paige Perry he received about additional miles being available for GLFWDA.

Insurance: Mark Burns

Mark gave a rundown on the association's current policy and the search for a cheaper and more user-friendly carrier. There was a lengthy discussion about insurance and why and who needs it.

Club Reports: Membership

The first club report came from Kim Fischer-Kinne representing Tri-City Trailriders. The TCT club is putting on a Road Rally on April 1, 2006. Kim gave a brief description of the event and said the flyer will be available on the GL forum and in the next Boondocker. Tim Treadway then gave a few reasons as to why the Troll Four Wheel Drive Club will not be hosting the Annual Spring Opener event in Indian River.

Continued on page 18

Continued From Page 6

7. **R.P.M. Off Road**

Member since 2002
Director: Steve Kitchen
P.O. Box 347, Ewart, MI 49631

8. **SoFO – Michigan**

Member since 2005
Contact: Jim Roy – Club Secretary
31026 West Chicago
Livonia, MI 48150
sofomich@gmail.com

9. **Tri-City Trail Riders**

Member since 2003
Director: Steve Gradowski
1634 Hotchkiss Rd
Freeland MI 48623
nvrenuf@gmail.com

10. **Troll Fourwheelers**

Member since 1993
Website: www.trolls4wdclub.com
7200 Bunker, Indian River, MI 49749
nephd@blazeconnect.net



Clothing & Decals: Maria & Joe Cefali

Joe said they brought a little of everything they have in stock for the GL store to sell at the meeting.

Associate Members

President Mark Burns then asked the Associate Business Members in attendance if they would like to say anything about their businesses. Kevin Bentz from Jeeperz Creeperz gave a brief description of his shop that is located in Wyandotte. Brian Wysocki from Ultimate Air told about his product, the Ultimate Air CO2 tank. He then told the membership he would be raffling one of them off at the break in the meeting.

UFWDA: Doug Saul

Doug gave a brief description of his experience at the 2005 UFWDA Convention that was held in Montana this past fall.

Old Business:

Mark Burns spoke of the Mounds cleanup along with Jim Mazzola. Jim said the mounds have a lot more to offer than most people realize. By GL doing brushing and clearing, opening up old overgrown trails is in our best interest.

Gitchee Gume Report and Video: Pat Kinne & Tim Strader

Pat reported that the final report still needs all those involved to sit down in the same room and put pencil to paper. Tim Strader then played 15 minutes of a DVD he put together of the Trestle Trail from GG'05. The video was well received and discussion took place about having a promo video done for the Association.

New Business:

GLFWDA SOP's proposal status: Jim Mazzola has been working on them and will be continuing to do so until they are complete. He hopes to have them ready by the April

quarterly meeting. We still have and are working from the current set of SOP's.

United Dues, GL Dues Structure, and 2006 Budget

Proposal: These items will all be lumped together for discussion purposes as they go hand-in-hand and the board asked for help from the membership in forming the new financial plan for GL.

Jim Mazzola presented some figures he put together from the Treasurers Reports. Jim then presented 3 different plans for the GL dues structure and asked for direction from the membership. A lengthy discussion was held. Jim stated that at \$35.00 per member per year, we will have to do some serious "tightening of the GL financial belt." It was proposed that the GL Toll Free number be cancelled. This costs GL over \$800.00 per year. After much discussion, it was decided to get rid of the number. Several other budget cut proposals were discussed. Tim Strader made a motion for a dues increase and Ari Adler seconded the motion. It was tabled in order for the Board to fine-tune the budget.

Legislation Activities Roundtable: All Members

The membership discussed several issues. One of which was how does GL become more directly involved in the various land use related meetings across the state.

Winching and Extraction Demo: Pat Kinne

Due to the length of the meeting, Pat was only able to give a brief demo and entertained questions after the meeting.

Ham Radio Demonstration: Jim Mazzola

Due to the length of the meeting, Jim was only able to give a brief demo and entertained questions after the meeting.

Miscellaneous Discussion: Members

Discussion took place regarding the 2006 GL Calendar. Dates were set for 2006 Quarterly meetings and these will be published in the Boondocker and on the Website.

Jim Kitson made a motion to start the quarterly meetings at 10:00am instead of 11:00am and it was seconded by Bob Velasco. Motion carried.

Mark Burns made a motion to adjourn this GLFWDA Quarterly meeting and the motion was seconded by Bob Velasco. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Kinne

Recording & Corresponding Secretary (Acting)



Great Lakes Clothing!!!

Contact: Maria Cefali
810-798-2823
rockenria@msg4x4club.com

Silk-screened Items

Item	Style	Price	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X	QTY	Total
T-Shirt	With Pocket 100%	\$12.00								
T-Shirt	Without Pocket 100%	\$12.00								
Polo	With Pocket	\$16.00								
Polo	Without Pocket	\$16.00								
Sweatshirt	9oz. 50/50	\$20.00								
Tank-Top	Male Female	\$12.00								
Jacket	Baseball style	\$45.00								
T-Shirt	Long Sleeve	\$16.00								

Embroidered Items With Logo On Front Chest

Item	Style	Price	S	M	L	XL	2X	3X	QTY	Total
T-Shirt	With Pocket 100%	\$20.00								
T-Shirt	Without Pocket 100%	\$20.00								
Polo	With Pocket	\$24.00								
Polo	Without Pocket	\$24.00								
Sweatshirt	9oz. 50/50	\$28.00								
Tank-Top	Male Female	\$20.00								
Jacket	Back Only	\$67.00								
Jacket	Front and Back	\$77.00								
Hat	Adjustable	\$15.00								
Hat	Knit Winter	\$15.00								

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E-mail _____

For each 2x add \$2.00	
For each 3x add \$3.00	
Subtotal	
Shipping & Handling	\$5.00
Total	

Please make checks payable to GLFWDA

Personalized items are available on request.

◆ To avoid shipping charges, please attend the next GLFWDA Quarterly and stop by the store to see what we have in stock.

Thanksgiving 2005

A reason to give thanks:

Story: Jim Kitson

A few years back, Vic Brasseur and I decided to start doing an annual late season run in Canada. We wanted to go with a small group and check out different challenging areas that are virtually impossible to do in large groups. Our past runs have always had a little adventure but nothing like the Thanksgiving of 2005!

We arrived at Blueberry Hills about 3:00 am on that Friday morning. Up early to breakfast, we headed out towards Searchmont with 4 rigs. I was in the lead towing my Jeep on the trailer behind my 04 2500 HD Chevy Crew Cab 4x4. My co-pilot was Pat Kinne. Behind me was my son in law Ryan with his pal Randy. They were trailering Ryan's YJ behind Randy's truck identical to mine. Then came Steve Kitchen with his pal Brad trailering Steve's Scout behind his Dodge Sport 4x4



crashes down a beautiful waterfall. The water was really high with small icebergs floating down. There was about 2-3 inches of fresh snow on the ground. We stopped to take pictures of the falls & since we were only a couple miles from where we would unload, we all started our rigs on the trailers to warm up. This would prove to be catastrophic!



and bringing up the rear was Vic's Bronco II trailered behind Fred Crawford's Dodge 2500 HD. Our intent was to trailer out Whitman Dam road and run some of the trails in the area. About 12 miles out the Goulais River

Whitman Dam road is gravel. I had been in four wheel drive the entire time just to be safe and had never slipped a tire. The road parallels the river and heads up a hill about ¼ mile long right beside the waterfall. Just as we started up the hill, we stopped to take another picture and I remember one of us saying something like "I hope we can get going again". We had no problem starting up the hill and since it was a casual no-rush morning, we just gradually increased our speed as we climbed the hill. As we were just a couple hundred feet from the crest of the hill, I started to spin. I told the guys over the CB to stop and I tried to steer left away from the bank that drops off to the river. I continued to spin and then the unimaginable happened. We started to slide backwards! I was on the brakes and I remember the anti-lock brakes just chattering away. The weight of the Jeep & trailer was pulling us backwards. I tried to steer to keep it straight & no luck. It was one of those slow motion backward rolls

that seems like an eternity. I remember saying to Pat “hold on, we’re going over”. Pat seems to recall some swearing but I think all in all we were both pretty calm.

The trailer started to turn towards the river and I was waiting to hit a tree. You would never imagine that with such a wooded embankment, the trailer never hit a tree but rather went straight over the bank. The guys behind us said that as the trailer tires left the bank, the trailer and jeep were suspended straight



out over the bank. The weight of the truck was keeping the tongue down. Then the weight became too much and the trailer swung down and pulled the rear tires of the truck over the bank. We came to a stop with the trailer down a 40 degree bank and the truck teetering on the frame with all 4 tires in the air. A quick assessment told us that we were both all right. Ryan and Randy had jack-knifed behind us but were not in any trouble. But, the problem had just begun. How do we get it out? The bank was so steep that a person could not stand upright. The truck was sticking out into the middle of the road and at risk of being hit by anyone coming down the hill. The trailer hitch had broken off right in front of the hitch ball and the entire trailer was hanging from only one safety chain and the hook was starting to unbend. Because the angle was not totally straight, the other chain was slack. **Now remember the jeep is running!** It was without a doubt unsafe to climb down to shut the engine off. We talked about it and figured that since the oil pump is in the back of a chevy motor, it would be all right. And as far as I was concerned, it could have burned to the ground before I would allow anyone to get down there. We had no idea if the trailer would start to slide and pull the truck over the edge. What was keeping it from sliding further?

Now we had to get organized. The other guys backed down the hill, unloaded their rigs and blocked the road.

Randy and Ryan are both firefighters so Randy took his truck to the top of the hill and blocked the road with his flashers on. What a good plan since shortly after, we had four fully loaded logging trucks stopped. Can you imagine a logging truck coming down that hill with my truck blocking the way?

We had a discussion on how to do the recovery and started rigging up. All 3 rigs backed up to the opposite bank and strapped off to trees. Steve took the uphill side and we ran his

winch to the right front of the trailer. Ryan took the middle and ran his winch to the truck. Vic took the down hill side and ran his winch to the left front of the trailer. Finally we could shut off the Jeep engine! We winched the trailer up hill enough to unhook the safety chains. With the truck free, Ryan winched it out. As it turns out, the new Chevy trucks have aluminum driveshafts that are foam filled. Needless to say, the driveshaft was broken totally in half. We pulled the shaft, cut a water bottle to plug the back of the transfer case & taped it in place. I was then able to drive the truck in front wheel drive. The loggers had a

Continued on page 22



schedule to keep so we used my winch and a couple straps to tie off the trailer & removed all of the winch cables. The loggers were gone!

Now with 3 winches on the trailer, all 3 snatch blocked, we tried to pull the trailer & jeep up the hill. Not gonna happen! It was just too much weight. In fact, Ryan and Vic's rigs were suspended in the air resting on one or two tires! So we ran Ryan's winch to the front of my Jeep and also ran my winch to a tree. We felt that at this point, nothing major was damaged and we would be doubly safe by double winching the jeep down the hill off the trailer. We unhooked the jeep & Vic (he had always wanted to drive my Jeep!)

piloted it down the hill off the trailer. With this done, back to 3 winches, we pulled the trailer up the bank. Steve hooked on and took it to the top of the hill. Then the easy part: With some winch assistance, Vic drove my jeep up and onto the road! Finally, after 4 hours, we were out.

So, I told everybody, let's go wheelin'! We're already here! So we drove down to the bottom of the hill to regroup. As I got down onto the flat road, my trans started to slip. What the???? Long story short, the oil pump in the Turbo 350 is in the FRONT of the trans. So my trans ran for an hour with no oil. No one thought of this. This was probably my biggest disappointment. I had just rebuilt my trans in August & now it needed it again. We drained the fluid, cleaned the filter & put fresh fluid in. Not a chance!

So, Fred trailered my Jeep back to camp, Vic pulled my trailer (which we did not trust yet) and everyone else loaded up. It was somewhere around 4:00 pm when we got back to camp. So, it was off to the bar! Saturday rolled around and we had a great day of wheelin. Pat and

I snuggled into the back of the Bronco II & once we were on the trail, we became the official camera men.

Since my truck was front wheel drive only, I did not try to pull anything. We got everything back to Vic's and I went up a week later to bring it home.

Official damage: Jeep trans, Jeep electric radiator fan (coincidence?) Truck driveshaft, 2 marker lights on the trailer, damage to trailer tool box from winch cable, one flat on the trailer.

In summary, there are many things to reflect on: Tons of woulda, shoulda, coulda: If we hadn't taken a picture, if

we had been going 2 mph faster, if the road had not been slippery right there, if I had newer tires, if I had stood on the gas instead of the brakes, if I hadn't started the Jeep, if we had hit a tree stopping us from going over the bank... See what I mean? But it doesn't matter..... it happened!



And what about the title of this article? No one got hurt! I had great friends who dove in to help! I am sure I was bossy at times & a little high strung. No one took offense to me. No one whined about ANYTHING. It was a non-stop effort where no one even stopped to eat. Just a couple bottles of water were drank. All of the gang had recovery and winching experience. With that in mind, caution was taken, cables had weights on them, no one took risk. When first hooking up, it was very risky and everyone was extremely conscious of the situation. Everyone worked as a team. If a situation like this were to ever happen again, I would welcome every one to a man.

Thanks guys!

Jim

TRI-CITY TRAILRIDERS 2ND ANNUAL ROAD RALLY

DATE: Saturday, April 1, 2006
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Freeland High School
8250 Webster
Freeland, MI 48623

*****REGISTER EARLY....THIS EVENT IS LIMITED TO ONLY 15 VEHICLES*****

Your four-wheel drive vehicle will not be required to participate in this event. You may use the grocery getter and may have from 2 up to a maximum of 4 people in the vehicle.

Your registration will include loads of fun & hors d'oeuvres at the final top-secret destination.

ITEMS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EVENT:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Full tank of gas | GPS | Digital Camera |
| Compass | Raincoat or Poncho | Pencil |
| Notepad (paper) | Clipboard | Dictionary |
| Calculator | Umbrella | Flashlight |
| Wet Ones or Wipes | Lifjacket | Bathing Suit |
| Duct Tape | Towel | Crayons |
| First Aid Kit | \$5.00 in cash | |
- 1 non-perishable food item per person for a local food bank

*Even though we are a family-base club, you must be at least 21 years old to participate in this event.
Confirmation via E-mail will be given upon our receipt of your registration. Sorry, NO REFUNDS*

REGISTRATION – Deadline is Friday, March 17, 2006

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone#: _____

E-mail: _____

Entry fee: \$15.00/person x _____ = \$_____ TOTAL = \$_____

Please make checks payable to: Tri-City Trailriders

Please mail completed registration with full payment to:

Tri-City Trailriders, Attn: Wayne Barber, Treasurer, 4121 Clement, Saginaw, MI 48603

Getting Started with GPS

By Bruce Rettig a.k.a. GreyBeard

GPS and 4WD go together like peanut butter and jelly. They complement each other in so many wonderful ways. Get away to the most remote boondocks and know exactly where you are. Find the same location again, even if some of the landmarks change. Know the path you have taken. Be able to reverse your path and get back to where you started. Provide unambiguous directions. In addition to those, it just adds to the confidence level as you travel the path that very few even realize exists.

What is GPS?

GPS is both very simple and very complicated. It is simple in that it really does one thing and does it with very little fuss and bother. It

based on a series of satellites that send very precise time signals and related information via radio. The time is generated from an atomic clock in the satellite. The GPS unit is a radio receiver and dedicated computer that receives the data from multiple satellites and then is able to calculate its current position, heading, and speed. It may also include some type of display and map information so that you can see where you are in a format that is useful to you. This was originally developed to enable missiles launched from nuclear submarines to find their way to a preprogrammed target. It took 24 satellites and \$12 billion of our tax dollars to put this system in place.

Hardware choices – the basics

There is an array of GPS hardware on the market that ranges from a computer chip (in every new cell phone) to a multipurpose unit intended as an aircraft panel mount display with many additional features for upwards of \$10,000. There are special purpose units for boats as well as aircraft. Even when we restrict ourselves to “reasonable” hardware for use in an automobile, there is a rather drastic range.

I like the categories that GPSNOW.com uses on their web site. Here are their categories with my descriptions and comments.

o Units for use ONLY with your Portable Computer

Garmin, DeLorme, and Microsoft all have products in this category. The GPS receiver just receives the data and determines your location. It then passes that info to your laptop to actually make it useful to you. These packages include software and map information to be loaded onto the laptop or other portable computer. List prices generally run between \$100 and \$200 and include the receiver and software, but not the portable computer. The prices can run higher for Bluetooth enabled units that can communicate to the computer without the hassle of wires. Examples are DeLorme Earthmate, Microsoft Streets & Trips with GPS Locator, and Garmin GPS 18.

o Self Contained units

§ **Basic GPS** – This is a basic hand held GPS to determine and display latitude and longitude. It can also store waypoints, routes, and tracks. It can NOT display or store maps. It usually has a communication port that allows it to talk to a computer and transfer information about current location as well as upload and download waypoints, routes, and tracks.

§ **Points-of-Interest GPS** – All the capabilities of a basic GPS plus the ability to receive, store, and display numerous points-of-interest. There may be extra cost for the PC software which contains the points-of-interest and transfers it to the GPS unit. This does NOT have the ability to display a map with features like roads and rivers.

§ **Mapping GPS** – These units have built in maps, the ability to display maps, and the ability to download and display additional map information from a PC. This will show your current position



tells you exactly where you are on the face of the earth. It does this by giving the latitude and longitude to an accuracy of a few yards. The only thing you need to do is turn on the GPS unit and wait for it to tell you. There is no need for a sextant, compass, star charts, clock, visibility of the sun or stars, or any of the other things that man has used to navigate with in the past. The complicated portion is that it uses satellites, super accurate clocks, radio, mathematics, and computing power to determine the simple latitude/longitude information. The nice part is that everything is in place to do that for you. There is no subscription cost. If you own a working GPS receiver, the rest of the whole complicated system is provided by the government and paid for by the taxpayers.

Background

GPS, or global positioning system, is a sophisticated geographical reference and guidance system developed by the U.S. military. It is

on a map on the GPS display screen. Be aware that the **only** maps you can download are those provided by the manufacturer of that GPS unit.

Software

There is additional software that can be loaded onto your GPS, your personal computer, or both. Often times, the GPS manufacturer will include software that provides for the exchange of information between the GPS and a computer. This usually covers waypoints, routes, and tracks. In addition, there are many add on programs that can be used. The software is available from a number of sources and comes in all kinds of price ranges. I'm going to save that for a potential future article. If you can't wait, here are some things to look at:

- o DeLorme Topo USA – Available at retail. Moving map capability. Extensive maps to be used on your PC. <http://www.delorme.com/>
- o OziExplorer – Available from the web. Moving map capability. No maps included, but you can scan your own. <http://www.ozieplorer.com/>
- o EasyGPS – Available from the web. No map capability, but simple and **free**. Useful to exchange info with other people. <http://www.easygps.com/>
- o ExpertGPS – Available from the web. Automatic retrieval of free maps from the internet to your PC. <http://www.expertgps.com/>

OziExplorer is my personal favorite, but the DeLorme Topo USA is the one I use the most.

Choices

The range of GPS units, features, and prices is dizzying. As with all consumer electronics, the longer you wait, the more capability you can get and the less you will spend. You can get a brand new name brand GPS unit with tremendous accuracy (12 channel, WAAS enabled) for under \$100. You can also pay well above \$1,000 for a unit. What you want, what you need, what you are willing to pay, and how you intend to use it are the variable parameters.

You will find variations among the available specifications, features, and capabilities.

You should be looking for twelve channels or more, with WAAS, from one of the major name brands like Garmin, Magellan, Lowrance, MLR, Silva/Brunton, or Eagle. The WAAS gives you accuracy to about ten feet, while without it you will have accuracy to around fifty feet. Picking one of the listed brands will make sure that most GPS software for your PC will be able to talk to your GPS unit. The interface to the PC may be serial (RS-232), USB, or Bluetooth (wireless). Any is fine, but you will need the ability to communicate between the GPS unit and a PC. The Bluetooth wireless has some obvious advantages if you intend to use it in conjunction with your laptop in the vehicle on the trails. For a hand held unit, water resistance is a highly recommended feature. Some of them even float. Look for the IPX7 certification which is one meter under water for 30 seconds.

How else will you be using it? Will it come out of the vehicle and go hiking, hunting, boating, biking, horseback riding, geocaching? Keep those additional uses in mind as you wade through the

myriad additional choices and features: Mapping or non-mapping display, monochrome or color, 3D maps, screen size and resolution, backlighting so you can see it at night, touch screen (on some of the larger units), size, weight, external power source (cigar lighter plug), external antenna (better signal under tree cover), speaker or speaker jack, mount or cradle, amount of memory and capacity to add memory, auto routing and rerouting, multi-address routing, voice prompts for turns, sun moon and tide information, and capacity for waypoints, routes, route legs, and track logs. How about thermometer, electronic compass, altimeter, weather radio, or FRS/GMRS radio? There are even units that have added an MP3 player. Some are built as part of a PDA with either PALM or Pocket-PC operating system. Some of the boating oriented units can communicate with certain depth finders and fish finders. Although the GPS signal is free, there are now units that will let you pay a monthly fee to receive satellite radio (XM), satellite weather (XM), and live updated traffic and construction information.

Decisions, Decisions

If you do not yet have a GPS unit, I would recommend starting with a portable mapping GPS. You will be amazed at what capabilities are available in that little device, and it will serve you well as you begin to explore the world of electronic navigation. Expect to spend \$150



to \$400. Some good starting points for consideration would be the Garmin GPSMAP 60C (\$370) or Garmin eTrex Legend (\$150).

A non-mapping unit is a cheaper option. If you pick a non-mapping GPS, make sure it can communicate with a PC/laptop so that you can eventually have serious maps and a moving map display. This means you can consider the Garmin eTrex (\$100), but do NOT bother with the Garmin Geko (\$90) or the Magellan eXplorist 100 (\$95) since they are lacking the communication.

The third option, if you have a laptop, is to get a GPS unit intended to work ONLY with your portable computer. The advantage is that you have a wonderful large screen along with plenty of storage and processing power. The disadvantages are that it will take up room in the cab, and it is limited to the vehicle. You will not take it hiking or



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on horseback. For \$100-\$200 you can get the GPS receiver and some serious electronic maps. Packages are available from DeLorme, Microsoft, and Garmin. The prices vary depending on what type of port the GPS connects to and also which software is included. **Microsoft Streets and Trips with GPS Locator** runs around \$105 to \$130. **Garmin's GPS 18 Deluxe Package** is about \$120 to \$130, but they also have the GPS-10 (Bluetooth) for \$210-\$250. DeLorme has the Earthmate LT-20 with Street Atlas software available for about \$95 and the **DeLorme Earthmate GPS USB with Topo USA 5.0** is about \$200 with either CD or DVD format data. The reason that all these are so reasonably priced is that the laptop is providing a large full color display, storage for software, waypoints, routes, and track logs, the computing power for turn-by-turn navigation, and audio for the turn-by-turn. It probably even provides the power to the GPS receiver. The only hardware you pay for is the GPS receiver and cable. The rest is software or part of the laptop. (Note – not all the packages mentioned include turn-by-turn. Check out the specifics before purchasing. ALWAYS check the web for potentially great prices)

Bonus

Time – Since GPS is based on extremely accurate time signals, your GPS unit can always give you an exact time. Use this to set the clocks in your house. The GPS itself actually deals with Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) but displays it as your local time if you properly set up your time zone and daylight-saving-time information when setting up the unit.

Speed – Your GPS unit will give you a very accurate speed reading in a moving vehicle. Use this to test and calibrate your speedometer at various speeds. This is a very simple way to find out what is going on after changing tires sizes or gear ratios. It can also tell you how accurate the factory speedometer is on your daily driver.

Learning your unit

Sorry, but I can't really help you with your specific GPS unit. You need to refer to your owner's manual. If the manual is no longer around, you can likely find it on the web from the manufacturer. The manual for my GPS 12 MAP is available from Garmin as a free PDF download or an actual printed manual for \$8. There are likely to be features that you will never use. Don't worry about learning every detail, just get started with the basics. Learn how to turn the



unit on and navigate around the menu system. Then try the things that seem like they would be useful.

It may take a few minutes the first time for the unit to wake up, figure out what it is doing, find the satellites, receive the information it needs, do the computations, and display exactly where it is.

Continued on page 30

11th IFWDA Wilstem Ranch Trail Ride

By Doug Saul

Being from northwest Ohio limits your local opportunities for trail riding. However, to make the best of our opportunities, we have elected to join Great Lakes FWDA and the Indiana FWDA, along with United FWDA. The Indiana Four Wheel Drive Association holds a summer trail ride and campout each August at Wilstem Ranch near French Lick, IN. This is also the site of the French Lick Jeep Jamboree. At the ranch, they give the horses the weekend off and the trails are put in to the competent hands of the Trail Guides, from various IFWDA member clubs.

Registration and tech inspection start about 1:00 pm on Friday, with goodie bags for all participants and gifts for the kids. Vehicles are classified by capability and driver experience and assigned a color group. As usual, you can drop down in level of difficulty but you can not go above your assigned color group, for the obvious reason of assuring a more satisfactory trail experience for all in your group. During registration, there are some fun activities usually available, such as how slow you can climb a hill, broom ball driver/passenger course, blind drivers course or reverse steer driving course. Trail rides are optional on Friday and at a mild level, however, each year more participants are ready to hit the trails after registration. So as soon as there are enough participants checked in, a trail guides heads the group into the woods. Dinner is at 6:00 pm and a catered affair and is also optional on Friday night, so the guides try to have all back to the barn by 5:00 pm.

Saturday morning brings everyone back to the barn for the 8:30 am drivers meeting. The Trail Guides are lined up in the field by color group, so you just get in the line for the color group (level of difficulty) you want to run for the morning. It is always wise to go prepared with some food and water for the day, however, the rides are scheduled to return to the barn for lunch which is on your own (with nice restroom facilities). For the afternoon, depending on your assigned color, you can stay with the same group or drop down a level of difficulty. Again rides are due in at 5 pm with a catered dinner at 6 pm. Prizes are awarded after dinner and there are a bunch of them. The evening

continues with some form of good times ... campfire, music, karaoke ... and good stories with good friends.

The trail conditions consist of woods, hills, creek beds, grass, dirt, mud and rocky ravines. As usual, ratings can change with the weather, especially after a nice rain. This year was HOT and therefore dry. We could run many trails with our Grand Cherokee that have given us difficulties in past years. It is hard to describe each trail but some of the names given by the locals do lend a clue about what is in store for you. For example, there is the fire place trail with remnants of an old cabin, rock hill, the trestle trail with the remains of the old railroad, drive shaft hill (you can figure that one out), the pipeline, Carter's crack which is a rocky ravine, Randy's Ravine which is more challenging, and the Little Rubicon which my Grand does not go up or down.

As with most trail rides, there can and usually is some carnage and breakdowns. The Trail Guides will lend assistance, as well as the other participants, so no one is left in the woods. You see a wide variety of rigs from 3-6 states. This year there were over 125 vehicles with more than 200 adults and 30 kids, so it is a family event. For more information, check out the IFWDA website at <http://www.ifwda.org/>. We'll be back in 2006!



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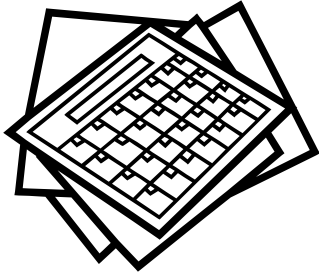
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2006 GLFWDA Quarterly Meetings

April 9 Silver Lake
June 11 West Branch
October 8 Mt. Morris (The Mounds)

ORV Advisory Board Meetings 2006

Visit www.michigan.gov/dnr for details

May 10
August 9
Nov 8

<http://www.midnr.com/publications/pdfs/ForestsLandWater/ORV/2006ORV-SCHEDULE.pdf>

April 1, 2006

Tri-City Trailriders Road Rally
Freeland, MI

See flyer in this issue on page 12!

April 8, 2006

Silver Lake Dune Riding
Day before the Quarterly Meeting
Leaving at 10 am
See Website for more details

April 9, 2006

GLFWDA Quarterly Meeting
Dunes Waterfront Resort
Silver Lake Sand Dunes
10 a.m. Sunday
www.duneswaterfrontresort.com
See trail run above

April 29 & 30, 2006

Atlanta Trail Maintenance
Meeting Locations:

May 20th BP Gas Station on M33

May 21st North Branch Trail Head

8:30 am both days

For last minute changes to events or for additional event information, visit the Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Associations web site: www.GLFWDA.org

If your club wants to put a date on the Boondocker Calendar, just email the date with a description of the event and contact information to:

Boondocker Editor
editor@glfwda.org

May 20 & 21, 2006

West Branch Trail Maintenance
Forwards Conference Center
I-75 Exit 212
8:30 am both days
See Website for more details

June 10, 2006

West Branch area trail ride
Day before the Quarterly Meeting
Leaving at 10am
See Website for more details

June 11, 2006

GLFWDA Quarterly Meeting
West Branch, MI
Forwards Conference Center
I-75 Exit 212 @ 10am
See trail run above

July 12-15, 2006

United Four Wheel Drive Association Convention
Oakridge, TN
www.ufwda.org
Visit website for more information

August 25-27, 2006

Drummond Offroad Adventure
SE MI Mud, Sweat and Gears
Drummond Island, MI
See Flyer in this issue on page 7!

Continued from page 15

the carrier, I decided simply to spot weld the pins directly to it. Once all this was finished I bolted the entire unit back into the rear axle housing and re-assembled both the front and rear axles.

Driveshaft length becomes an issue whenever you lift a vehicle. Several companies offer spacers, or you can lengthen the driveshafts. I chose spacers for their cheapness and simplicity. Since I had ended up pushing the front axle forward, I needed a spacer at both ends of the front driveshaft, so I needed 3 spacers total. I happened to have them around from another project, but these spacers can be commonly found on eBay for \$25 a piece, so I'll add \$75 to the budget. By the way, the stock Tracker drive flanges will bolt to the 1988 1/2 and newer Samurai driveshafts, but on the older rigs you will have to swap the Samurai flanges onto the Tracker units.

So here I had a rig coming together nicely, with only \$686.00 into it so far. However I still needed tires, longer brake hoses, tow points, steering, and a lot of other small things. We'll see next time if I can keep it under budget, and take this little rig out on the trail to see how it does!

Congratulations to Robert DeVore! His article that appeared in the last issue of The Boondocker was printed in the UFWDA's national quarterly publication, The Voice. Check out your last issue of The Voice and see what he had to say!

Continued from page 26

You will want to do this outdoors, where the unit has a good view of a broad expanse of sky. Clouds do not cause any problem; but buildings, dense foliage, or the structure of a vehicle can definitely interfere with the strength of signal available to the unit. The unit may have a simulation mode which will let you explore a lot of its capabilities from the comfort of your LA-Z-BOY. Just sit down with the unit, some fresh batteries, the manual, and an hour or so of available time.

Comfortable with your GPS? Good. Now, let's get some experience with it before we take it on a real trip. Take it out to your car, turn it on, get the location, and store that as a waypoint. You can probably even name it "home". Now we are going to take a trial run. Keep the GPS running. Fasten it in the car so it can see the sky through the windshield, but won't slide around. Use Velcro, masking tape, chewing gum, or whatever it takes. If you have a Wrangler, just toss it in the little rubber coin tray on the top of the instrument panel. Drive to your favorite store, stop, store a new waypoint and see what your GPS can tell you. Does it have trip information? Can it tell you how far you went, how long it took, what your average and maximum speeds were, and how much of the time you were moving and how much stopped? That's nice, but most of that won't do you much good as far as off road

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navigation. You want to make sure you can store and display a track log, store a waypoint, and navigate to a particular waypoint.

If your unit is a mapping GPS, it will probably have a base map already built in with all major highways and towns. It may even have minor roads, rivers, and various topographical features. If it has points of interest, it will likely have parks, campgrounds, libraries, airports, and possibly gas stations and restaurants.

Conclusion

Well, it's time to saw this one off. I know that sometimes I tend to go on and on. Next time we will talk about how to exchange GPS information with others. We will also touch the surface of software that runs on your PC and can help with your GPS enjoyment. Remember, GPS is a great "man tool" – **I always know where I am and I never have to ask directions.**

Why become a member?

In unity there is strength. Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association is dedicated to upholding the rights of citizens, and the continued use of public lands. Public lands belong to its citizens to RESPECT, to PROTECT, and to ENJOY. If you support these principles, your membership will add your voice to the millions of other recreationists who are striving to protect their rights and freedoms. GLFWDA believes, with firm conviction, in this right and this trust. GLFWDA believes that citizens have the right of access and to enjoy these public lands, by vehicle, as well as by other means. GLFWDA recognizes that citizens who use these lands, in return, have an obligation to uphold the trust – to respect the land, and so conduct their activities that the public interests are protected. We invite the cooperation of all in upholding the right of citizens to continued use of the public lands they jointly own.

We urge individual four-wheel enthusiasts to become members of Four-Wheel Drive Clubs, or to form new clubs, and to affiliate with the Association. We invite the support and participation of related businesses as Supporting Associate Members of GLFWDA.



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Other 4WD Affiliations: _____

Send your completed application for with your check for the \$35 yearly individual dues made payable to “Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association” to:

Bob DeVore
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Since membership entitles you to receive the “Boondocker” newsletter, please include your full mailing address.

Inside:

- Picking the right GPS
- Capital Crawling
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Spring 2006

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