

Two Rivers Tracker

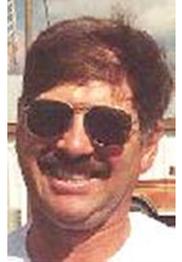
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The Prez Sez

From Lee



This year we've had quite a few new members joining. **We welcome you** and hope you'll join us for our events! Some of the most fun times are the Trail Builders, also called Work Weekends. We meet at the VFW about 7 AM for breakfast and spend a couple hours talking Jeeps and socializing. At 9 AM we leave to go work on various trails. Sure, there's work involved but there's also a lot of fun wheeling with a small group of people. These Trail Builders are the most fun of all!

So when you come to the VFW for breakfast, or show up just before the trails leave, please introduce yourself as a new member. Folks that have been in the club for a while love to talk with new people and will give you a lot of good information about the club and the trails. We welcome all you new members and hope to see you at our coming Trail Builders and events.

This Spring's Coming Attractions!

All events, except the Safari, meet at the VFW. We leave for the trails at 9 AM.

March 5: Trail Builder

March 19: Trail Builder

April 2: A trail ride.....no work! At 7:30 AM a Board meeting will be held and at 6 PM a **free** catered member appreciation dinner will be held at the VFW. Call the club phone or email trcjieff@yahoo.com to reserve your food.

April 16: Trail Builder

April 30: Trail Builder with a Board meeting at 7:30 AM

May 7: Quincy Dogwood Parade. Details on Page 2.

May 12, 13, 14: This is our 10th Annual Illini 4x4 Safari. All members should have received a *discounted* registration form. If not, call the club phone and we'll get you one.

Please pass the word of the Safari to your friends and other clubs and encourage them to attend. This is a great event and the more folks that show up, the more fun we have and the more we can give back to the community that supports us. Post notes on bulletin boards, your Facebooks and wherever you can to let people know of this event. This is one of the longest running 4wheeling events in the Midwest and has been written up in a number of 4WD magazines. This has also been recognized as one of the top 25 4WD events in the United States!

Two Rivers and its members have been invited to drive our Jeeps in the Quincy Dogwood Parade. We will meet in the North parking lot of the Quincy Mall (by the movie theater entrance) at 8:15 AM on Saturday May 7th and drive to the parade line up. If you need to trailer your vehicle, you may leave your truck & trailer at the mall. Bring your own candy or contact Jen and she will purchase tubs of bubble for \$8 (cost at Sam's Club). You can pay when you pick it up. Contact Jen Bell (217-779-2391) for details or check our website.

So polish up those Jeeps and let's have a great turnout!

2011's First Trail Builder

By Doug Watret, Trail Coordinator

Well it's finally here. The first trail builder has come and gone and it was a great time. I hated to cancel the first one two weeks prior but I felt people had better things to do like dig out from the large amount of snow we had received. Pike County had in the neighborhood of 18 - 24". It would have been difficult enough getting to the trailheads let alone getting around on the trails. But anyways, the Kickoff Saturday was blest with good weather. There were several people that showed up for breakfast (which tasted good as always) and plenty of trails for everyone. Thanks to Ridge Rambler, Myer's Mayhem, and Atlas for taking people out. At the beginning of the day we were afraid the ground would be way too soft to run but we were pleasantly surprised to find that the ground had firmed up enough to be able to run.



As my Jeep is still in the re-assembly stage I was a passenger/winch monkey/photographer most of the day.

Thanks to Bill for giving me a ride. We left around 9:30 and headed to Myer's not knowing what to expect. The going was slow just getting into the trail. The first few Jeeps made it with no problem, but due to some slight erosion the trail started to get a little tricky. Several Jeeps slid off the trail and one CJ gently laid over on its side. Who said you can't teach an old dog (or in this case a Jeep) new tricks. Luckily it was a slow soft landing and nothing was damaged. After righting him it was Bob Miller's turn at the hole. He was doing fine until he blew all of his power steering fluid out leaving him with manual steering. We got him winched up and off the

trail and he jumped in with someone else. After that everyone was finally in from the trail and headed for the lunch spot. By this time it was 12:30 so we broke for lunch.

After lunch we decided to head up the hill. The two choices we had was Brenda's "Brokedown Alley" or Charles Ater's Turd Ave. Both proved to be quite a challenge. The first few Jeeps made it up Brenda's Alley, but then it got a lot tougher. Randy decided to try after thinking that it not being rutted up might be a better choice. He was wrong. Saying that it was slick was an understatement. It was so greasy that I could barely stand. After about an hour and two Jeeps winching, we finally got him to the top. We got all but two of the Jeeps to the top then it was on to Hell's Gate. It will throw you from side to side and test your Jeep's articulation. This is a tight, downhill run that is usually not too bad. Today was not the usual day. Carl Anderson and his little CJ spent more time on its side than on all fours. Thanks to Seth for helping to pull Carl back down and through. One of the guys made the comment that Dennis needs to rename that section. He said it was easier to get through Hell's Gate than that part of the trail.

By this time it was getting close to 5 and we needed to load up and leave for supper. We collected Bob's Jeep (you're lucky he doesn't have the same policy as Murphy) and loaded up then headed back to Pittsfield to enjoy a fine soup and sandwich supper put on by the men at the VFW. It had a pretty good turnout. Several people came out that couldn't make it out for wheeling. It was good to see old friends that I hadn't seen since last fall. There was also a little surprise birthday party for our very own Walt Gilbert. Dave Jacobs (a.k.a. Maddog) came bearing gifts he felt were necessary for Walt. Everyone got a good laugh out of the "gifts" he received and the stories that were behind some of them. Happy Birthday Walt! I won't tell how old he is. You just have to ask him.



Please come out and join us for this year's trail builders. They are scheduled for March 5th & 19th, April 2nd, 16th, & 30th. Thanks to all the trail guides that put in hard work to make this club what it is and those that show up at the trail builders to give the extra muscle to keep these trails open. And that reminds me: a huge **thank you** to all the landowners that allow us to run on their property. Without them we would just be sitting in the parking lot comparing Jeeps. Hope to see you March 5!

We ran out of room for all the photos....check the website for more pictures of this weekend's fun!

Between a Tree and a Hard Place.....

By Jeff Sorensen



Atlas had a large turnout of three Jeeps with a total of four people! The day was used as a trail maintenance builder with some new trail cut and added. Here's "older-than-dirt" Walt moving the dirt to increase the width of the new trail. ☺ The weather was beautiful and the day very productive. See what ya'll missed out on with our **toughest** trail?

And yes, for those of you less inclined to be lumberjacks or earthmovers, we do have *MUCH* easier trails! But you have to admit, photos like these are mighty impressive.

A Great Time on Myer's

By Karl Anderson

I just wanted to let you all know what a great time Mike Finlay and I had on our first outing with the club Saturday. Awesome!! We went on Myer's Mayhem with Dennis and 8 or 10 others. What a great bunch of folks! We learned a lot (like how Dennis has some hidden desire to scare otherwise stable adult men into filling their drawers). Everybody was very helpful, showing how to traverse terrain we've never seen before and live to tell about it, and how spend money to



make improvements to do it even better. My wife **ESPECIALLY** appreciates that! We definitely look forward to future events and hopefully being assets to the club itself. I'm sure Charlie will insist I'm only off by three letters there. I only wish Sir Charles would have been on the trail with us instead of doing lawn care and sipping ice tea all day. But I realize with royalty comes privilege. I'd add an LOL here, but it's implied. I'm sending along a few examples of my

photographic genius to entertain the masses and hopefully someone will send me some of my wonderful Blue Steed in action. Until next time.....

Trail of Life

By Chief



Plans are a wonderful thing to have. Without them we set ourselves up for some big failures and disappointments. There is however, a flip side to the plan thing, plans can also lead to disappointments when they fail to materialize. Mrs. Chief and I were really looking forward to the TRJC Annual Kickoff Dinner. We made travel plans and motel reservations, the dinner reservations, everything you are suppose to do to ensure an enjoyable and well deserved weekend away from the everyday humdrum of life of February in Central Illinois. Things at the firehouse have been really busy with two long term operations, a drowning recovery and a snow storm. Mrs. Chief has been called to service all winter to babysit sick grand-kids and watch over her 97 year old mother. It was time for a little R&R Jeepin' style. Well that didn't happen. Thursday evening Mrs. Chief made a comment she was having a little sore throat and maybe some fever. Friday morning she had a full blown case of strep throat with all the "fixins", sore throat, fever, chills, and an upset stomach. She was miserable. Needless to say our plans changed. Now it was a trip to the "Doc in the Box" and the drug store. As I write this on Monday morning, she is feeling much better and we are planning to make it to the next Trail Builder weekend.

I am really looking forward to getting the "New Jeep" on the trail. It has been a challenge getting all the totally necessary items, lights, siren, radios switched from the Chief's Buggy, but it is coming along. The different configuration of the interior has really tested my engineering skills. I have a really interesting story about dealing with a company when I was buying an aftermarket bumper system. Somehow, by trying to be honest and totally upfront with this company, I got a Smittybuilt rear bumper with a tire carrier for nothing, like no cost nothing.

I am so looking forward to being the one with my windows rolled up and the air conditioning on in August at the Blast. Murph and his new Jeep will also be A/C equipped so we are working on a loud speaker system so we can give directions while guiding Murphy's Law without even having to get outside of our vehicles.

For being a basically stock 2002 TJ, it has performed really well in the situations I have had it in so far. During our five day drowning recovery operation it was tested in some pretty rugged river-bottom territory with 4" of snow to boot. It was even called to duty to retrieve some squad cars which found themselves helpless at the bottom of some of the hills. During the snow storm, we were called to assist local hospitals in getting nurses and cooks into the hospitals for their shifts. I think most of them had a lot of fun driving past all those regular vehicles stuck in the snow. One of the ladies told me on the phone not to come up her lane, the snow was too deep. She said she would walk to the road to meet me. Excuse me, but that sounded like a challenge to me. I pulled up her lane and picked her up right by her back door. She was impressed and glad she did not have to walk all the way out to the road.

I don't want to take up too much space so I will wrap it up for now. I hope to see you at the next Trail Builder. Be safe out there and see ya on the Trail

Chief

Food for Thought: The main reason Santa is so jolly is because he knows where all the bad girls live. And..... I went into the bookstore and asked the saleswoman, "Where's the self-help section?" and she said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

Random Ruminations

by Charlie Ater

After canceling the first Trail Builder for too much snow, we were sure that the 19th wouldn't be much better- it is February you know. Then it warmed up (don't get used to it, it's February you know) and we were sure we'd have a mudfest. Yep, there was much mud, but out on Ridge Rambler it was very solid. We covered a lot of territory with an enthusiastic crew that was happy to be outside and doin' stuff! The chainsaws were put to use and much manual labor was performed. A few areas had problems that will be taken care of later, like a bridge over a gully that washed out a little too deep. The only downside was finding out how sadly out of shape I really am.



Over on Meyer's Mayhem they did find some mud, and didn't even have to look for it! First, a little background. Some of you may remember a tale or two about or involving Karl Anderson. He's been a paid member of the TRJC for a year but hasn't made a single event due to a multitude of problems involving work, Jeep, and his Father's health. When it became obvious that he was going to make this event, he had the usual anxiety about how well he'd do, would we think he was good enough, etc. I told Dennis to be easy on him but Karl managed to put "Ol' Blue" on her side - twice- and blow a bead in a bad place with no spare. Bill Williams loaned him a spare and said he'd get it back at the next event. I guess you could say that Karl is an over-achiever! However, he did redeem himself nicely with a very well written note on the TRJC Forum as well as bringing a new member, Mike Finlay, with him and having his patient and lovely wife and daughter join us at supper. Mike only managed to get on his side once! We'll work on that!

Over on Atlas, Walt and crew found it firmed up nicely except where it was muddy... It wasn't too bad, as Walt said they'd cut a new loop. The Veterans at the VFW had supper ready for us at 6:00 and when it was announced that dinner was ready I didn't see anybody holding back. Things got real quiet for a while as we took care of some major portions of chili and vegetable soup. Then Dave Jacobs, aka Mad Dog (ride with him one time and you'll know why), hollered for attention. It seems that Walt Gilbert has a birthday coming up so a few age appropriate gifts were doled out. The best one was the old "Mad Dog's Trail Building Lunchbox" that Walt was happy to "lose" when he sold me his '89 YJ seven years ago. As Walt was unwrapping the "gift", I swear I heard him say "Oh, Sh!t!" when he realized what it was. Ask either Walt or Dave about it- each has a slightly different version and will tell you about it.

I did see some new faces around- or maybe my "Cognitus Interruptus" kicked in (that's a variation of CRS...) and I just didn't remember. We're always glad to see new faces around and hope to have you at most of our club events. It's always more fun when there's more people around to share those "Duh!" moments when you "get all Homer Simpsoned out!"

In checking out the required and recommended equipment, I was reminded that a "choker chain" is part of the recommended equipment if you have a winch. It seems that a lot people don't know what it's for or how it's used. The chain should be a rated chain of 10,000 lbs or more (no "bucket chain") and should be 8 to 12 feet long with a grab hook on each end. Use it to anchor a winching vehicle to a solid point or another vehicle. Broke a motor mount or axle U-bolt? The choker with a few long bolts and heavy washers can make a repair that will get you back to civilization. I saw some pictures on the net of a "Redneck Engineered" fix to a steering box that had been ripped off the frame that got them back to camp where there was a welder. If a stuck vehicle has no tow points, the chain can be wrapped around a frame member to make a good point to attach a winch or strap.

I need to get this fired off to the Webmaster Dave 'cause he's running under a tight deadline. We'll see you on the trail! If you're going to walk on thin ice, you might as well dance!!!

