



Trail Tales



April 1, 2024

Official Newsletter
of the
New Mexico 4-Wheelers

www.nm4w.org



Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2024

By Shirley Godfrey

The meeting was held at North Domingo Baca Multi-Generational Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

President Jack Dickey called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Cathy Arlowe, Tracy Bakewell, Jeff Boggs, Bob Brazell, Guy Conway, Cathy Dickey, Jack Dickey, Patrick Dobson, Shirley Godfrey, Jeff Grenier, Ric Henry, Brendan Hodgson, Jennifer Myers, Myron Myers, John Nolen, Jack Nutter, Christine Robson, Steve Robson, Don Roy, Richard Steele, Mary Turpin, Ben Webb

GUESTS ATTENDING: JP Bowdoin, Susan Bowdoin, Cyvil Burks, Darren Sandow, Bradley Wilson, Steven Wimberly, Beck Winckler, Kris Winckler

VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT – Jeff Boggs - VP, sheriff, and membership.

Guests were introduced and asked to tell a little about themselves and what they drive.

Jeff explained the point system for membership to the applicants.

Motion to vote Patrick and Linda Dobson as members. Second and past.

Motion to vote Brendan Hodgson as a member. Second and past.

Sheriff’s collecting of fines explained – You can self-report or rat someone out. This month’s fines –

Jeff Grenier – stuck in “quick-sand” needed to be pulled out.

SECRETARY’S REPORT – Shirley Godfrey

Meeting minutes were accepted. Minutes can be read on the Club’s website.

TREASURER’S REPORT - Richard Steele

Checking account – \$6,287.03 Savings - \$8,670.77

Treasurer’s report - motion, second and past.

TRIP CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – Jack Dickey gave the Trip report. Cliff Meier out of town.

Past Events:

February -

Richard Steele, Gallina Mesa Ride. Snowy start in the parking lot and turned into a beautiful ride. Richard stated he “messed up” the lunch break and felt he should pay a dollar fine.

Jack Dickey, Great American Crawl – Caballo Mountains. The ride was listed as a ride for everyone, but it was primarily rock crawling. It was a free event. Lots of great prizes, i.e. tires, winch, etc. Jack paid a fine for breaking a link bolt.

March –

Mary Turpin gave the report for William Zobel – Exploratory ride of east side of San Mateo Mts. was a fun ride.

Jeff Grenier, Exploratory Marble Quarry Road Run. Roads on the map were no longer there or were washed out.

Upcoming rides in February –

Frank Whiston, Big Rosa Canyon; David Ham, West of Southern Trail Ride; Jeff Grenier, Array Loop; Iftikhar Khan, Canyonlands, Needles district, Utah.

Be sure to check the web site. There are a lot more runs listed, and new runs being added.

DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPORT -

Bill Zobel. No report. Bill was unable to make the meeting.

PROGRAM CHAIR’S REPORT – Cathy Dickey - Cathy is still looking into using a card reader and not have to carry money. 50/50 raffle and a second raffle. A Factor 55 D Ring was donated by Cyvil Burks.

HISTORIAN’S REPORT – Frank Whiston – Unable to attend. Jack Dickey said there are over 17,00 photographs on the web site. Check the club web site for lots of information.

OLD BUSINESS:

Gordy’s Hill kiosk – Update/history of Gordy’s Hill with the relationship with the Club.

Hosting upcoming meetings –

Jack and Cathy Dickey – May

Cliff and Jeanne Meier – JUNE PICNIC MEETING at Oak Flats Picnic Area

Cliff and Jeanne Meier - August

Myron Myers – September

Trip leaders needed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Richard Steele – CNM Automotive Technology – Skills USA State competition. Looking for 10 volunteers from our club. Great to work with the kids and also a learning experience.

Jack Dickey for Cliff Meier, asked to talk about the 300 miles of trail closures in Moab and The Blue Ribbon Coalition’s fight to keep trails open including San Rafael Swell. Jack Nutter made a motion for the club to give \$1,000 to The Blue Ribbon Coalition. Tracy Bakewell second, voted and passed.

Mary Turpin mentioned the All-4-Fun event in Buena Vista, Colorado, July 20th-27th, 2024.

50/50 raffle - \$29.50 to Ben Webb AND Ben Webb also won the second raffle for the A Factor 55 D Ring.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:53 p.m.



President's Report - *Stewardship*

By Jack Dickey

Just like last month, I find myself writing this report when the weather outside is cold, windy, rainy, and snowy; much like the start of the Big Rosa Canyon trip earlier in March. Oh well, writing is much more fun than doing yard work in less than pleasant weather.

Earlier today, I decided to try the onX Offroad app. Once I paid for a premium subscription and got it installed on my phone, I got the usual welcome and how-to emails. One of the onX emails had a paragraph about land stewardship. That got my interest, so I checked further on the onX website and found some interesting information regarding stewardship. Here's some data from OnX:

- 70% of outdoor enthusiasts head outside 12 or more times each year.
- 92% rely on public lands for their outdoor activities.
- 87% have given back to public lands at least once in the last decade.
- **Only 19% of outdoor enthusiasts annually commit to stewardship activities such as volunteering, donating money, and advocating.**

Let's take a look at the NM4W purpose statement from our bylaws. "The New Mexico 4-Wheelers is organized as a non-profit club for the purpose of:

- A. Providing social, educational, and recreational activities for its membership.
- B. Promoting and participating in safe and responsible four-wheel drive activities.
- C. Keeping members of legislatures informed of the needs of vehicular recreationists.
- D. Informing Members of pending legislation and land-use matters.
- E. Enjoying and protecting all local, state, and national resources.
- F. Assisting various government agencies in the development of off-highway trails and areas.
- G. Rendering aid and assistance as needed."

Stewardship is inherent to our club! NM4W is a member of several offroad recreation advocacy groups: United Four-Wheel Drive Association, New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance, BlueRibbon Coalition, Colorado Off Road Enterprise and Tread Lightly! Through membership dues and donations, we support the activities of these organizations. Our members participate in clean-up days, assist BLM with construction of the Johnson/Gordy's Hill information kiosk, and regularly provide input to USFS and BLM draft travel/recreation management plans.

I have written about stewardship before, but it's a topic that deserves regular attention. Our motorized recreation hobby, whether it's traveling backcountry roads or extreme rock crawling, will continue to grow. With that growth comes trail impact including overuse and environmental changes. Use of public lands is also impacted by public perception and changing land management policies: consider what has happened in the Moab area.

What can we do? Continue to drive only where it's legal, avoid sensitive areas, clean up trails, and hold our friends and ourselves accountable for responsible four-wheeling. As I finish writing this article, the sun is shining and it's sleeting. March weather is so unsettled. Thank you for being good stewards and practicing the principles of Tread Lightly!

Happy Trails, *Jack Dickey*

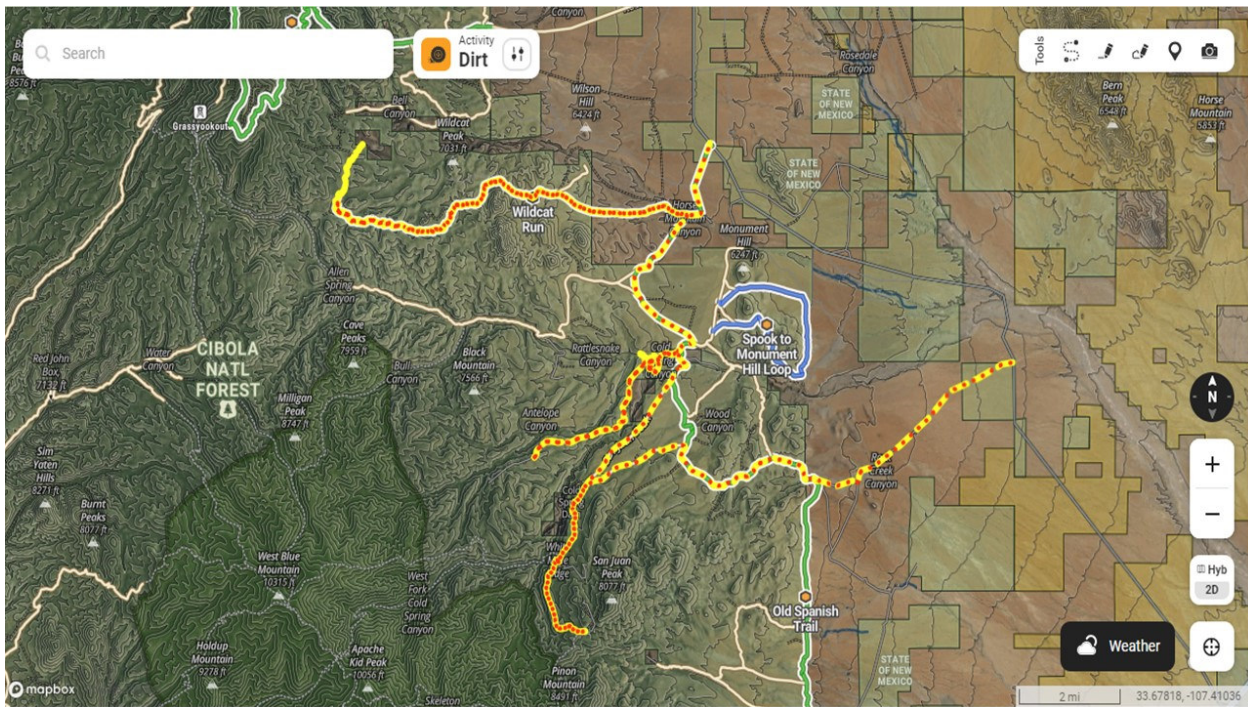


Ride Report

Exploring East Side of San Mateo Mtn

By William Zobel

Eight vehicles met in Socorro, New Mexico, on Saturday, March 2, 2024. We traveled down I-25 approximately 20 miles to CR 107. After turning onto Rock Canyon road, we aired down and headed for the first of three out and back exploratory routes into the San Mateo mountains. This first route was along FR 332A to the base of San Juan Peak/Skeleton Ridge trailhead at an elevation of 7,356 feet. A short hike led to a great view to the southeast and the Sacramento Mountains in the distance. After returning down FR 332A, we traveled north to the base of East Red Canyon/Cold Spring Canyon where we stopped for lunch. After lunch we continued up FR 984 to Panther Flats. The final leg was up Wild Cat Run/ FR 378 to a meadow called “The Park”. Several of the group returned home via Magdalena where they had dinner at the Tumbleweeds Diner. Overall, a great day with no issues.





Ride Report – Big Rosa Canyon

By Frank Whiston



Back in May of 2020, as I was leading the Monica Cabin/Grassy Lookout Loop, I noticed the sign for Big Rosa Canyon on FR 52 and this view made me very curious about this route. After looking on a map, FR 56 is just over 6 miles ending at the mouth of Water Canyon. Big Rosa Canyon skirts the Eastern boundary of the Withington Wilderness. There are a couple of short, motorized spurs off the main track and several designated hiking trails that provide more areas of

exploration for smaller groups and outside your vehicle.

When our VP announced that he would not be able to lead all the trips that he had posted to the club calendar, I decided to pick the date of March 16th up, where Jeff had already scheduled a run in this area. The meet point was in Magdalena, NM. I invited several friends to come along, and all accepted including a couple who lives in Elephant Butte, NM. We had a great crowd. Having not traveled this route previously, I limited the group to 15 vehicles to make sure that we had enough room at the end to get everyone turned around. That turned out to be a great size group for this trail.



The weather forecasters had me somewhat concerned about this trip early in the week as there was a strong low-pressure system looming to the west. Day-by-day, the precipitation forecast continued to decrease. Given that the end of FR 56 reaches a max of 7200 ft elevation at the end, I was not too concerned about snow accumulation. We didn't have the weather that I had hoped for, but it was overall tolerable.

Fourteen vehicles accumulated at the empty lot just west of the Steer Stop gas station in Magdalena, NM. After topping off gas tanks, airing down, and devouring some breakfast burritos, we headed out via NM HWY 107, which turns to dirt about 5 miles south of town. The Highway follows the Milligan Gulch drainage separating the Magdalena Mountains and the San Mateo Mountains. A hard left turn about 17 miles in on FR 52 got us to a snow dusted 2-track road. Heading west for approximately 3 miles provided access to FR 56 near the northernmost point of Big Rosa Canyon. The entrance of the canyon is labeled with a Primitive Road sign giving promise for



needing our vehicles 4WD capability. Starting at higher elevation, the views are wide open and give a glimpse of the canyons below as well as the surrounding mountains. The track is primarily a dirt



and rock surface towards the beginning but does have low-lying washes that are softer sand with some loose rocks and ruts. As the trail descends into the canyons, the surface becomes more gravel and rock with several areas showing signs of water runoff and small washes.

Shortly after reaching the canyon floor, the old Cooney Windmill becomes visible. There is also an old cabin near the windmill. This site is clearly still in use by ranchers who have purchased grazing rights for cattle due to the modern solar panel nearby. We traveled to the Potato Canyon spur before stopping for a 10-100 break. The canyon floor in this area is covered with rocky sediment with a mixture of juniper, pine, and oak trees. The canyon walls are steep with beautiful rock outcroppings. The ride up the canyon follows an old road used originally by miners and later by loggers. Past Dry Canyon, there were a couple of dry stream bed crossings that

required careful tire placement for longer wheelbase vehicles that do not have any traction aiding devices. The roadbed continues beyond Water Canyon all the way to Rosedale Canyon but is gated off. I found a 1977 map of the Magdalena District that belonged to my father that shows the road ending at Water Canyon, so this route has been a dead end for at least the last 47 years. Water Canyon is appropriately named given a small stream was flowing right at the end of the road, but disappearing as it meets the Big Rosa Canyon drainage.

The clouds began to break into small patches of blue sky and sunshine as the group accumulated at the end of the road. After a small break to look around, we backtracked to a stand of ponderosa pines within the main canyon for a lunch break. The sun didn't last long, and a breeze started through the canyon which reminded us all that it is not quite spring yet. After having lunch consumed and a small group spending 20 minutes or so playing with RC rock crawlers, the group continued backtracking through the canyon. The



road winds through some oak stands

which would be really cool to see when full of leaves. The trip out affords new views of the rock outcroppings on the eastern side of the canyon.



It was still early enough in the day by the time we got back to FR 52 that I decided that we should continue west to Monica Cabin. This road passes a large windmill at Jones Spring, then paralleling Estaline Canyon reaching an elevation of nearly 8000 ft. before descending Little Monica Canyon. There was a little bit of mud to deal with once we got above 7500 ft. The mud was very easily navigable by the front of the pack but required increasing attention as each vehicle passed. However, it was nothing that we could not handle, even with stock vehicles with novice drivers in the group.

The weather continued to provide rather unique vistas along this route. Christine Robson said “It sometimes looked like we were above the cloud line in the distant... Even winter weather is pretty in NM!” The foothills of the San Mateo Mountains had exposed faces covered in snow while the ridge lines were contrasted by the trees. This effect gave real dimension to the mountains along with the storm clouds hanging over the higher peaks. We could return on a clear day and it would be a very different experience.

The next stop was at Monica Cabin which was an old Forest Service Outpost situated in a swale near an ephemeral stream. The cabin is one of several on the Magdalena Ranger District still standing. These cabins were used primarily during the early to mid-1900's by Forest Service personnel who needed to stay "in the field" for several days and avoid having to make the trip back to headquarters in Magdalena. We took some time looking around, but eventually a swell of falling graupel chased us back in our vehicles to continue our journey.



With a quick climb out of Monica Canyon, FR 52 Tee's into FR 549. We turned to the north eventually crossing the tracks for one leg of the Very Large Array Radio Telescope. Upon recommendation by Willy Crawley, we turned east short of the pavement to follow Old HWY 60. This is a short ~3.5-mile section of the old highway that has a lot of overgrowth through broken blacktop. A couple of spots, the old center stripe was still visible and openings between juniper trees were barely wide enough for a Jeep. It also passed an old vertical mine shaft before meeting up with the current highway. Just across from where we met the highway is a rest stop with a historical marker speaking to the Magdalena Stock Driveway.

DAD I'M IN A JK



THERE IS AN YJ BEHIND ME

**THE NEXT PART IS VERY
IMPORTANT**



**THEY ARE GOING TO OUT
WHEEL YOU**

Keep PUBLIC lands open to the PUBLIC

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