

UPPER HUNTER RECREATIONAL 4WD CLUB INC.

TRIP REPORT – WALLAROO STATE FOREST

Sun 7 March 2010

Trip Leaders - Peter Pilgrim – Assisted by Graeme Marriott from Maitland districts 4WD Club

Preamble

Due to the 35mm of rain over the previous week, we were unsure of the conditions of the tracks and whether we could indeed proceed safely and without doing damage to the tracks.

Following consultations between Peter, John Folpp, John Worthington and Phil Johnston, it was decided to commit to the day regardless and if it was too wet, then we would go to our “Plan B” and head over to Stockton Beach. As it turned out we were welcomed by a beautiful sunny day and the tracks had dried out beyond our expectations.

Club Members Participating - 17

Shirley & Peter Pilgrim - Peter Rayfield – Mal and Beth Duff, John Folpp, Julie and Daryl Gray, Clemy and Geoff Hurst, Diane and Phil Johnston, Mal Johnston, Ian Payne, Peter Purcell, Ray and Cody Risby.

Visitors - 8

There were three other vehicles along for the day. These people were friends of Graeme and not members of any club.

Vehicles – 15 total

(11 from our club plus 4 others)

Landcruisers - 5	Nissan Patrols – 4
Ford Courier – 1	Landrover – 1
Hilux – 3	Prado - 1

Trails Used:

Nine Mile road, Italia road, Lone Pine road, Drews Trail and several un-named tracks.



Acknowledgement

Firstly it is entirely appropriate that we acknowledge the generosity of Graeme Marriott for giving up his time to come along and lead us through what turned out to be a great day of 4WD driving. Also thanks to John Worthington from ARB Newcastle who was originally going to lead us but family commitments prevented him at the last minute. John kindly arranged Graeme to lead us at short notice. Thankyou Graeme and John.

The Trip

The people attending straggled into our meeting place at Raymond Terrace MacDonalds, for a 9.30 start. There was no sign of our newly acquired trip leader and a quick phone call discovered an early breakdown in communication. Graeme thought it was 9.00 at Maccas and as we weren't there he headed up the road to meet us at the entry to Wallaroo Forest.

Once our communications were sorted, we clearly ignored our convoy procedure and headed up the Pacific Highway towards Nine Mile Road, where Graeme was awaiting our arrival.



We met Graeme and proceeded to let our tyres down to a more suitable pressure for the day. While undertaking this task, it was discovered that we had already lost three vehicles from the convoy. Another phone call got things sorted and we were soon all together for our first challenge – the water crossing at the quarry. It appears that on a dry day, quite an enjoyable could be had just in the quarry, with various grades of climbs and water crossings to be experienced.

We pressed on along the Nine Mile road to the camp area then turned off Lone Pine Road into a fairly interesting track heading in a northerly direction. The track was generally dry but had quite a few deep waterholes and washouts, so wheel placement was a priority for safety. There were quite a few places where incorrect placement of the wheels meant being in a very deep waterhole or precariously leaning sideways. At one deep hole, one of the Nissan drivers over estimated either his own, or the vehicle's ability and ended up requiring assistance from the Toyota in front to pull him through the water hole. There were a couple of steep climbs, but nothing too difficult. On one occasion the Prado had a back wheel about half a metre in the air and I believe the red Ford Courier also lifted a wheel on occasions. All part of a good day 4WD driving.



On the return journey, again one of the Nissan drivers misjudged the track and ended up severely leaning to the right in a very deep rut, such that he had to escape via the passenger side to connect the recovery gear. Again a Toyota to the rescue, pulling the vehicle back onto level ground and enabling a different line to be taken.

We stopped for lunch at the cleared camp area at the junction of Nine Mile road and Lone Pine Road.

After lunch we headed along another very slippery track towards Italia Road. Along here a bit, one of the visitors (in a Landcruiser) misjudged the track and got himself well and truly stuck in a very deep water hole. In fairness he was rescued by the Nissan in front after a couple of unsuccessful tugs.

We aired up our tyres and headed home just after 2.00 pm, heading towards the ice cream shop at Seaham.

Overall the day was most enjoyable with only a couple of bent side steps on the Hilux.

We look forward to exploring more of this region in future, particularly in dry conditions. The maps indicate several interesting tracks further to the north worth exploring.

Peter & Shirley Pilgrim

