

“UNOFFICIAL” Mottino Wash Powder Puff run, (Sort of)

In spite of my dire warnings and prognostication of impending damage we had ten rigs arrive at the meeting place, one attendee later turned out to be most valuable, but more on that later. In attendance was yours truly with my beloved Sherry (with Sherry driving), Dan and Leslie (with Leslie refusing to drive Dan’s Jeep), Ben and Donna, Ray and Bonnie (with lots of cookies and cake), Bert, Josh with wife Stacy and children Olivia and Justin, Joe, Warren, Richard, Darrel and Karyn (with Karyn driving),



We headed out for the trail head at 8:30 arriving at 9:30 and headed into the valley of the shadow of death, or at least the valley of the shadow of breakage. Dan and Leslie led with Sherry following and the rest falling into line behind. The trail had changed quite a bit from my last time through, it appears that gentle water flow had filled in a lot of holes with sand and buried a lot of rocks. I hardly recognized the first waterfall because it was so easy. I was a little concerned about Richards nearly stock 4-dr JK although it did have a 2 inch lift and aftermarket bumpers front

and rear, but Richard was determined and followed us into the gully fully committed.

There were so many stucks, straps and at least one winch that it is hard to remember what happened when or where, and this was only at the front. I heard the rear of the pack had a lot of the same problems. Soon after entering the rocks Richard got hung up and had to be strapped back a little.

A little later Josh climbed this insane rock wall, I couldn’t believe he made it. Minutes later Warren, not to be outdone, climbed the rock with tires spinning and rocks flying (I was so impressed I forgot to take a photo).

Somewhere in here I think it was Josh that lost air in a tire due to a popped bead, a little work from the group and he was moving again.



A short time later the bolts holding Josh’s transfer case in place fell out and the group ground to a halt while Josh slapped it together with bailing wire and duct tape; we soon headed down the trail again.

Sherry climbed the rocks like a pro, she had a good time and I had a great time spotting her (although she said that half the time she didn’t have any idea what my hand signs meant). Just before we reached the last waterfall Dan got stuck a bit but my winch quickly pulled him free.

The final waterfall had about four places to climb. Dan quickly clambered up the wall with his 37’s, and I positioned Sherry to climb a slick vertical wall I had wanted to climb for years but had never tried. Sherry got the front wheels up and over but when the rear wheels hit the slick vertical wall they just spun. We tried it a couple of more times, but I’m afraid I found the limit of the MTR Kevlars.





Dan looked at the wall and told Sherry to back up a bit. Sherry followed Dan's directions to the left about a foot and easily went up and over the rocks followed by Richard (it took a while to get that long 4dr over) and then Josh worked his way up the waterfall, losing his transfer case bolts again in the process. Josh was stuck at the top of the easiest line up the waterfall leaving a more difficult path on the far right for the rest of the folks. Warren made it up without a problem but when I spotted Ben through this gap, his rear tires

(sorry Ben). A strap to the front was for naught, but a strap from the rear moved him back just enough for us to pile some rocks in front of the tires and get him over the top.

Darrell worked his way to the front of the line and saved the day by welding Josh's transfer case back in so he could make it home without dropping the TC on the ground (which I think would be a bad thing).

We all got out of the gully and headed towards pavement when Josh

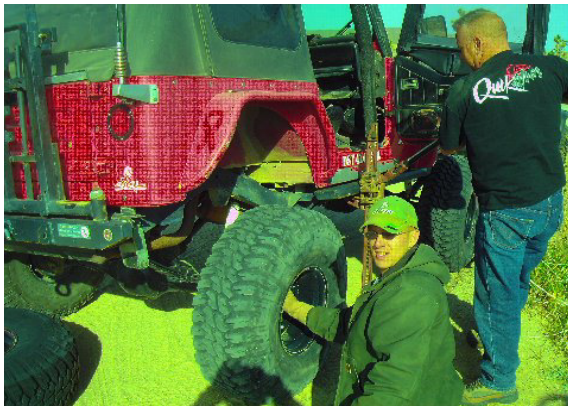


had trouble with the transfer case again. Some of us waited with Josh while he worked on it, leaving the rest folks to drive on to the air down point. When we arrived at the air down spot we found that one of Dan's new MTR's had split wide open and the tire had to be changed (the fun just never ends).

(sorry about the color, my camera is failing)

This was Msgt Dan's last wheeling adventure with us for quite a while, he will soon be playing in a big sandbox called Afghanistan. We'll miss you Dan, be careful.

It was a cold but fun day. Sherry had a great time driving (I hope she lets "me" drive on the next run), and best of all, we didn't break anything.



At home Sherry wondered if she, Leslie and Karyn were the only women to drive all the way through Mottino Wash ; I think they might be. Congratulations ladies.

Happy Trails
Gary Blackman