

Pinon Canyon Trail
11-19-2011

It was a long.....long.....day, but well worth it. I loved the trail, but couldn't they move it a just a little closer to where I live?

Ten rigs met up at TA truck stop with Alfred Ricci and Lisa Brenner, Fred and Lorie Prater, Bill and Janet Emery, Ben and Donna Yacobozzi, Ray and Bonnie Trowbridge, Randy and Mary Ellen Smith, Lee Elster, David and Cindy with their son David, and Mike Deaner with Ann and Snoop, and Ron Peck. Things started going south for me at the truck stop, my drag link was loose causing the steering wheel to start turning off center. While working on it someone found that one of my bump stops had come off and was flopping around inside the spring. Couldn't fix it there, so off we finally went.

Ron Peck was with us until we got to the gas station near the trail head and found out they were out of gas. Ron couldn't make it on what was in his tank so he had to bail on us.

I should start this out saying Mike Deaner was "kind" of right and I was "kind" of wrong about how hard this trail was. Ok, ok, I totally off my rocker calling this trail a Class 2. I last ran this trail about 3 or 4 years ago and "insisted" to Mike that it was an easy Class 2 while Mike politely said he thought it was a Class 3. I resolutely poopoo'd him only to be shocked to see an impressive series of rocks along the trail. I must have had a serious senior moment, or maybe a senior year, because I had totally forgotten about them. In any event, Mike was certainly correct; it was one heck of a trail with every kind of condition found in the deserts of SoCal. You have your sandy trail with wide desert vistas, rocks, steep desert hills, more rocks, waterfalls (made of rocks), the squeeze (two big rocks), Heart Attack Hill (rocks and dirt), more rocks, a lot more rocks, and finally sandy gullies with high sandstone walls (how could I have forgotten about all the rocks?). Altitude varied from -100 ft to almost 4000 and the weather went from cool to cold and then to warm





No one had any problem with the Squeeze, but it just looked neat going through there.

Dave and Cindy were driving a stock Suzuki 4dr which thankfully had a tow ring in the front. Mike and I thought the chance of the Suzuki making it on the trail unscathed was less than "0". Ray was in front of him and had to strap him so many times Ray is going to have to apply for a commercial tow truck license. (I hope David knows about our club's rule requiring a payment of \$1.00 for each strap, \$1000.00 should just about cover it.) Astoundingly he made

it with all of his parts attached and no visible damage, although a few times when being drug over rocks his exhaust sounded like he dropped his muffler off somewhere.



No, this isn't the trail, although Alfred considered trying it.



Heart Attack Hill was impressive. The last time I went down the hill it was just some dirt paths, now it was dirt, rocks, and a drop off. Careful tire placement was imperative. I walked it and pointed out to Mike where I wanted my tires. I headed down and Mike spotted me perfectly, it was easier than it

looked. Ben spotted everyone at the top of the hill, I took over about the middle and Mike brought them down the rest of the way. There were a few harrowing moments, including one where Lee forgot his left from his right, but everyone did get down without damage. Just to show everyone up Bert came down, went back up and came back down the other side (showoff).

We all wondered how the Suzuki would do on the hill. He started over and with a lot of help from spotters and gravity he made it down without a strap and without leaving any body cladding behind.



My CB started out working fine but then quit transmitting and later quit receiving. At one point I was in the lead with a group waiting for the rest to catch up (Bert got stuck playing in the rocks). I didn't hear them radio that we were all together so I just kept everyone just sitting there while I munched on snacks. Ben finally came walking up to me politely asking if we were taking a snack break, kindly informing me we could go now. (Oh the embarrassment of it all)

Finally we took a break in a gully with about 1 ½ hours until dark and my GPS showed we had come a little over half way along the trail.

With thoughts of navigating in the dark we picked up the pace and made it out in about 45 minutes. While

airing up, a Ranger came up to us and told us an idiot (my word, the Ranger was much kinder) had taken a two wheel drive truck across the desert and buried it. The Ranger asked if we could go pull him out. Mike and Bert headed back and found this young man (baggy black clothes with undecipherable silver writing all over it and a straight brim ball cap) (got the picture) with his lifted truck's rear tires buried up to the frame (why lift a 2WD truck, I just don't get it). He started griping to Mike about getting a ticket for driving off road over desert plants; Mike harshly stopped him saying "You had better just stop talking". (Our boy here was a poster child for trail closures). Mike and Bert had to strap themselves together to get him out, then he promptly buried himself again after Mike and Bert left. I went in and made the final pull of the day. (Hey, he should have paid the \$2.00 strap fee.)

We finally headed home after a great day of wheeling.

Don't forget we have Mottino Wash coming up on Dec 10th.

Happy Trails
Gary Blackman

