

Turn north at Trafalgar on Willow Grove Rd, Left at Moe-Willow Grove Rd. Cross River Connection Rd, Farrell Rd, Next left Paynters Road

Bring :

Club Banner & mounting
GPS WGS84 / Rooftop Maps
Compatible Camera & cables to hook up to computer at Base Camp

Please register your Club and number of vehicles with the FWDV office on 9857-5209 or office@fwdvictoria.org.au



Wayne Hevey

General Manager

Four Wheel Drive Victoria

Trip Reports:

Trip Report – Inaugural Border Track and Big Desert Adventure.

Thursday 9th – Sunday 12th Oct 2014

This was our promise - *'The Best Dune Driving outside the Simpson'*

This is predominantly a drivers trip, not a sightseeing trip, we will be covering long distances & experiencing as much sand (and mud) driving as we can fit-in in our 4 days. Our itinerary requires long fun filled hours in the saddle travelling at a brisk pace to experience all this fabulous area has to offer.

Vehicles will have to be well prepared for this inhospitable environment with drivers & passengers equally well prepared for long hours and desert conditions.

WARNING - Some pin striping may occur on the Border Track.

Our destination was the Wyperfield National Park - Big Desert State Forest - Big Desert Wilderness Park and the fabulous SA/Vic Border Track and it had to be done before it was locked up for the summer at the end of October.

Trip leaders: David and Matthew Jackson

A comment from one of the seasoned 4wders "this is the best trip I've ever done"

8am start from Wangaratta saw myself and Dean head off to meet Terry and Peter on the Hume at Benalla, not much room in the shorty so we had to tie Dean's monster swag onto the spare wheel hanging off the back. All the way down the Hwy he was watching and hoping he didn't see a big puff of down feathers from his swag as trucks roared past us.

Rearranged a few things with Terry taking our spare fuel, the swag and a few bits and pieces and off we went for our much anticipated sand adventure.

Frankston boys left about 9am after dropping the kids at school and we all met up as planned just before 12:30 in Inglewood for a spot of lunch, a check on paperwork and the normal meet and greet for those that hadn't met before. Now we had 4 vehicles 7 participants with one more meeting us at camp that night.

Got to Hopetoun – fuelled up the cars and jerries and off to Western Beach camp on Lake Albacutya, one of our group who will remain nameless was really looking forward to a swim and a freshen up – alas no water to be seen. However we were very impressed with the standard of the amenities there.

Keith arrived just before happy hour giving us a full complement of 5 vehicles, with our 6th participants having to bail because of illness.

We had our first and only bogging of the trip that same afternoon as our Melb guys got used to sand, sand and more sand.



Friday saw us 'doing' the Milmed track and quite a few tracks in the Big Desert before we came upon our first big challenge – The Big Dune. We tried it this way, that way, with an extra bit of this and a bit less of that. High range, low range, locked and unlocked, even threw out the passengers to see if that would work.

3 tracks were available, all 3 to within a cars length of success with the sand monster pulling us into the ground each time. We were learning a lot about sand and loving it!

We planned a trip into Pinnaroo on the Saturday morning for fuel, so camped at the Ngallo Park tennis courts just out of the desert expecting to find amenities NO NO NO, it was very primitive so we saved up for the morning to attach the Border Track fresh.



Border Track now is well gated and offers the drivers and campers an opportunity to pay \$10. per car for the privilege of being there. We were more than happy to pay and receive our permits which were proudly displayed. Only to meet the Ranger later in the day who didn't even ask to see them – what a letdown!

Each morning we were up by 6:45 and on the road by 8:15. Saturday saw us start the Border Track proper at 10am and we were well finished and into camp at Red Bluff by 2pm. Red Bluff is a lovely area but has been ravaged by fire recently, burning down the amenity block leaving a smelly hole in the ground and millions of bees. We thought better of staying there with 2 anaphylactics in the group so after playing on a few more big dunes and some mighty deep (dry) mud holes a little further south we backtracked north to Diggers Hut camp which while it had no amenities was a delightful campsite. Even at 7pm there were at least 6 or so vehicles still driving south down the track.

I must say I was a little disappointed in the condition of the track compared with about 9 years ago when it really was a challenge or could be if you didn't take the chicken tracks. The main track can now be done by any 4WD with the correct tyre pressures. The establishment has fixed it up in the same manner as Blue Rag and the Staircase in the high country. Pity!

Sunday morning, back down south turning east onto the Red Bluff track then north back up the 'very dry' clay based Murrayville track. No doubt a totally different story after some rain, as we could still see tyre marks set into the road from the last wet trip thru this major access road. Really, really enjoyed the smooth run after the incessant whoop de doos of the previous few days. Back east again on Chinamans Well track and eventually into Rainbow for a feed and a fuel up. The first few kms on the blacktop were like heaven – did I mention we were over the millions of whoop de doos.

We said our goodbyes as each of us had a different preferred path to take home. Remember Bathurst was on that same day. We stopped in Donald for a cuppa and half hour in front of the tele and then stopped for tea on the Hume and saw the last 12 laps or so – a consolation prize for a great weekend away.



We've booked the weekend before Bathurst for next year's run, with the passengers all saying they want to drive their own rigs next year.

Thanks to all the guys, you worked really well together, we all learned a lot about sand driving and how to get the best out of our vehicles. Air pressures were the key ingredient learned time and time again. Some of us redid the tyres 4 or more times till we got them right. Tyres ranged from muddies to all terrains no clear winner here. Fuel consumption varied a lot between the vehicles as did internal vehicle set ups and packing. Most of us bought too much gear, some of the swags were nearly as big as a camper trailer. Food! We could have fed Burke and Wills and Leonardo De Caprio and the Titanic crew. Everyone took a turn leading and as TEC. There should be some great movies and pics from this trip.

Weather was fantastic – similar to Wang I believe. The nights weren't as cold as planned so a bit of gear was never used. Recoveries as I mentioned were non-existent once the tyres were dropped.

Keith mentioned after the first day and later re confirmed that this run was much harder than his recent trip to the Simpson. He stood out as one that especially honed his driving skills and got much more out of his vehicle as the days progressed as we all did. Well done Keith and to his mentors.

A great trip – everything that we'd hoped for – no mechanical problems what so ever, new friends and a love for the sand tracks. We're looking at Robe 2014 towards the end of the year, which will be different again – that's why we love 4WDiving.

Report by David Jackson

Ed: Thanks for this report David....glad to include it here today, sounds like an awesome trip.

The High Country Huts Trip

9 vehicles in total attended the high country hut day drive, Damian (trip leader) Kerry (navigator) and Thomas (lil Tom) O'Connor in a 80 series Landcruiser, were followed by Chris Penniceard (tail-end Charlie) in a Hilux, Steve and Tracey Twomey and kids in a 80 series Landcruiser, Dave and fiona Van Zanten in a GU Patrol, Noel and Virginia Robinson in a GU Patrol, De Brown in a GQ Patrol, Barry Burns and kids in a GQ Patrol, David Chapman in another Hilux and Milton Davies in a Pajero left APCO service station Wangaratta around 8am in the morning to head towards Lake William Hovell, where we arrived at around 9am, we all lined up in a row for a photo opportunity together with our vehicles and then air down for the journey ahead of us.

We then started to hit the tracks up behind Lake William Hovell, where our journey started by tackling Buckland spur track up to Tomahawk Hut where we had morning tea, checked the hut out and talked to a nice couple that had camped in the hut over night, the bloke was disabled in a wheelchair, but was a keen 4wder that liked to get out and about, he also had a nice looking GU Patrol (we won't hold that against him though).

After morning tea, we set off and headed towards no. 3 road, which was a rocky hill climb with switchbacks that took us up to a viewing point to take some photos at the corner of no3 rd and Westons track, which over looked a couple of valleys. We travelled down no.3 rd a bit further till we come to no. 3 hut, where again we took the opportunity to take some more photos.

We proceeded further along no. 3 rd, until we found Razorback track, which lead us up to Razorback hut, which when we got there I was surprised that no one else was there at all, as the last couple of times I had been there, musterer's with their horses were occupying the huts, but it was deserted this time.

As we left Razorback hut, we then did some easy driving along the Circuit rd, past Telephone junction (Mt. Stirling cafe) which is shut for renovations at moment, then we did a hairpin turn to the left and made our way to Howqua hut, where everyone relaxed and enjoyed their lunch and had a look around. To our surprise, someone had put 3 big logs of timber in the ground around a fire pit and carved 3 arm chairs to sit in. They weren't there two Saturdays before when I and a couple of other club members did the recce for this trip.

We then continued along Circuit rd for about 25 minutes before we came across Monument track, there we waited for our convoy to regroup as the dust was thick and getting hard to see at times. Once together, we then did the climb up Monument track, which lead us to Craigs hut car park, but before we made it to the car park, we had encountered our first lot of traffic on a track that didn't