

BACKROAD EXPLORERS NEWSLETTER
April - June 1987

Our first newsletter!!! We have reason to celebrate now that the Backroad Explorers Committee is official. Let's do it by making our committee one of the best.

We have been busy since our official formation March 5. Our committee write-up was sent into the main Schedule and it should be included in the next issue thanks to the extra effort of Lori Ives. Patty and Bob submitted an article to the Southern Sierran and it may (slim chance) be in the next issue. Copies of both items are included in this Newsletter as well as a copy of our revised "Credo" which most of you already have.

Things to think about for our Committee:

(1) Membership: Spread the word that we exist and want new members. Four wheel drive vehicles are not required for membership, just belong to the Sierra Club and have an interest in backroad exploration. Those interested should contact John MacLean and/or send \$4.00 membership fee to Backroad Explorers, c/o Bob Jaussaud, P.O. Box 6269, Canyon Lake, Calif., 92380. John is working on a membership form for us, but it was not ready for this mailing.

(2) Outings: To help encourage support we should have an active outings program. We would especially like to have some offerings in the main Schedule this Fall. Those write-ups need to be to Randy Bernard before June 6. Write-ups for our next newsletter (July - Aug) have to be to Randy no later than June 1. A few outings are included in this Newsletter. I hope you can join us on them.

(3) Suggested Vehicle Equipment List.

(4) Outing sign in/out sheet and equipment check list. This could also include an outings procedure check-off list. Emergency forms and leader procedures for an emergency would also help.

(5) Driving Manual: This might include behavioral protocol, backroad driving techniques, ideas for backroad repair and maintenance as well as recommended tools and parts, emergency procedures, etc.

(6) Newsletter Input: Send anything you feel will be of interest to our membership to Bob Jaussaud by June 1.

Our next meeting will be Wed. May 27, 7:30 P.M. at Doug Fuhlrodt's house.

Happy Exploring,

Bob

BACKROAD EXPLORERS COMMITTEE

Purpose: (1) Provide for the exploration and enjoyment of our desert and other remote areas not practically accessible by conventional vehicles or other means. (2) Work to increase support for environmental and conservation programs. (3) Attempt to reduce the perceived gap between the Sierra Club and other responsible groups.

Membership: Membership will be open to all Sierra Club members who subscribe to the Backroad Explorers Newsletter (\$4.00). Many outings, trips and projects may be limited to four wheel drive vehicles.

Meetings: 4th Wednesday of odd months.

Doug Fuhlrodt (Chair)

Patty Carpenter (Programs)

Bob Jaussaud (Sec/Treas)

Randy Bernard (Outings)

John McLean (Membership)

George Grosso (Conservation)

OUTINGS

APR 24-26 FRI-SUN BACKROAD EXPLORERS
O: MOPAH SPRINGS AND TURTLE MTN: Camp on the Colorado River Fri. night. Sat. drive to trail head and hike into see the palms and petroglyphs at Mopah Springs. Pleasant 3 mi. round trip 500' gain. Then drive over Turtle Mtns. via Gary Wash Pass. Camp in vicinity of Painted Rock in Old Woman Mtns. Sun. on to Willow Spring. Possible hike to Woman Peak via old mining road. 5 mi. round trip 1500' gain. 4wd vehicles only. For more info. send SASE to Leader (experience trip): Bob Jaussaud Asst: Elden Hughes.

JUNE 26-28 FRI-SUN BACKROAD EXPLORERS
O: RUBBER DUCKY PLUS EXPLORE THE NEEDLES AREA: Fri. and Sat. night camp on the Colorado River. Sat. morning explore Grapevine Canyon and Christmas Tree Pass. Sun. morning visit the Maze near Topock. 2wd OK. Lots of rubber ducky time at river. For more info. and map send SASE to Leader: Bob Jaussaud. Asst: Doug Fuhlrodt.

SEPT 18-20 FRI-SUN BACKROAD EXPLORERS
O: RUBBER DUCKY WEEKEND: Relaxing, fun oriented time at the Colorado River. Camp riverfront on private property. For map and more info. send SASE to Leader: Bob Jaussaud. Asst: Doug Fuhlrodt.

BACKROAD EXPLORERS COMMITTEE
by
Bob Jaussaud and Patty Carpenter

The Western States contain a vast amount of public lands where the only practical access is by motorized vehicle. The use of four wheel drive vehicles to explore these areas is becoming increasingly popular. There has been a growing need for an environmentally concerned group for those who use four wheel drive vehicles to relate to without the fear of being associated with the prevailing notion of "off road" abusers. Fortunately the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club has recognized this and moved to make an advantage of it.

The Backroad Explorers Committee was ratified by the Executive Committee at their March 5, 1987 meeting. The organizers expect it to be a very viable committee and feel that the Sierra Club will benefit greatly from its existence. Motor vehicles already play a role in almost every outing and project. The Backroad Explorers Committee hopes to make even better use of their potential by providing outings and projects for the many areas where access is not easily obtained by other means. This use will be strictly limited to established routes.

The idea behind the Backroad Explorers was conceived quite naturally in the Mojave Desert. In so vast an area there is no practical way for most people to explore other than by using a four wheel drive vehicle. There are literally thousands of miles of "backroads" weaving to many extraordinary locations, so there is no need for anyone to travel "off road".

The concept of staying on existing routes is very critical to the existence of the Backroad Explorers. Conservative driving on existing roads does not alter the landscape. Damage occurs when irresponsible people drive off existing roads or are overly aggressive when driving on existing roads. The outings sponsored by Backroad Explorers will give people a chance to learn through experience the driving methods and attitudes that will best preserve our environment. The sheer number today of four wheel drive enthusiasts warrants the need to get involved and influence the driving habits and techniques of these people. The Backroad Explorers can serve a valuable function as role models.

The Backroad Explorers Committee will limit its difficult outings to four wheel drive vehicles. One reason this policy was adopted is to prevent the destruction caused by wheel spinning. When tires slip they can tear into the surface of dirt roads. Because four wheel drive vehicles apply power to all four wheels there is much less tire slippage than there is with two wheel drive vehicles. The use of four wheel drive instead of just two wheel drive should be encouraged to help save the environment. Another reason outings will be limited to four wheel drive vehicles is because their design seems best suited to our needs. Modified vehicles such as dune buggys and baja bugs are seemingly more adapted for speed and "off road" use than for carrying people and or supplies. The exploration and preservation of our areas are the primary objective of the Backroad Explorers. Speed that contributes to destruction and "off road" use will not be

tolerated, so vehicles seemingly designed for such use are not appropriate.

Since its conception there have been a great many Sierra Club members who have expressed an interest in joining the Backroad Explorers. It seems that many members already own or have access to four wheel drive vehicles and, in fact, use them in club related functions such as gaining access to trail heads, carrying supplies, environmental projects and other support needs. Their potential is obvious, but there has been a stigma attached to four wheel drive use. They have been too closely associated in peoples' minds with the destructive "off roader". The Backroad Explorers hope to dispel that image. There are many four wheel drive organizations and individual users that are environmentally oriented.

Responsible four wheel drive operators are done an extreme injustice by the promoters of "off road" vehicles and accessories. Many ads seem to encourage the notion that your vehicle should be equipped and used to go anywhere anytime with total disregard for the environment. Vehicles are shown traversing pristine areas, plunging into clear natural streams and tires are shown tearing up the terrain. Such ads encourage irresponsible use of four wheel drive and "off road" vehicles and should be eliminated. Making manufacturers aware that many potential users resent this approach to advertising and educating the public to the destructive results of such ads should persuade aware promoters to switch their emphasis to more environmentally acceptable advertising. There is a vast untapped potential in the environmentally concerned four wheel drive population. The Backroad Explorers Committee can help represent this force.

For membership information contact John MacLean.

BACKROADS EXPLORERS COMMITTEE

Organized March 5, 1987

Preamble

Motor vehicles already play a role in almost every outing and project. We would like to make even better use of their potential. We can increase the club's base of support by providing outings and projects for the many areas where access is not easily obtainable by other means.

Purpose

As a committee the Backroad Explorers will work to provide for the exploration and enjoyment of our desert and other remote areas not practically accessible by conventional vehicles or other means. Preservation of our pristine areas for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations will be emphasized.

Statement of Credo

Explore areas that are not accessible by other practical means through the use of four wheel drive vehicles. This use is strictly limited to established routes.

Establish a four wheel drive vehicle behavioral protocol.

1. Remain on established routes.
2. Use four wheel drive to reduce impact on terrain.
3. Camp only in appropriate areas. e.g., Camp away from scarce desert water supplies.
4. Respect private property.
5. Maintain proper mufflers, spark arresters, etc.
6. Carry out all litter.
7. Coordinate group size and environmental impact.

Work on conservation and environmental projects.

1. Participate in environment clean-up programs.
2. Help control vandalism.
3. Provide access for conservation needs and political awareness.

Provide for backroad exploration outings and trips.

1. Organize desert and mountain study outings.
2. Provide access to hiking trails which are impractical to reach by other means.

Establish and maintain an educational program.

1. Emphasize need for environmental awareness.
2. Promote backroad safety.
3. Provide a suggested vehicle equipment list.
4. Make drivers aware of proper backroad driving techniques

5. Give help and information for repair and maintenance.
6. Establish emergency procedures.

Be role models for other four wheel drive operators.

Increase support for environmental and conservation programs by reducing the perceived gap between the Sierra Club and other responsible groups.

Membership

Membership will be open to all Sierra Club members who subscribe to the Backroad Explorers Newsletter (\$4.00). Many outings, trips and projects may be limited to four wheel drive vehicles.

Meetings

Meetings are to be held on the 4th Wednesday of odd months with times and locations listed in the newsletter and either or both the Chapter Schedule or Southern Sierran.

Officers

Doug Fuhlrodt (Chair-Elect)

Patty Carpenter (Programs)

Bob Jaussaud (Sec/Treas)

Randy Bernard (Outings)

John MacLean (Membership)

George Grosso (Conservation)