

TCT MAGAZINE



APRIL 2015 • VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 2

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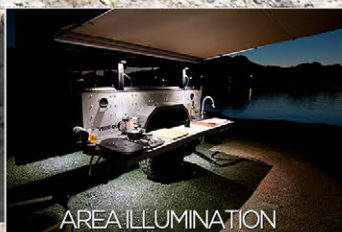
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John Hefton off-
roads in his 1977
FJ40 at the 2015
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Cruiser Round Up

photo by Phillip
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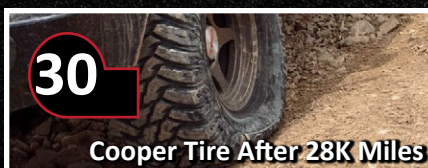


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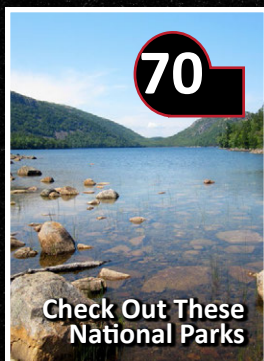
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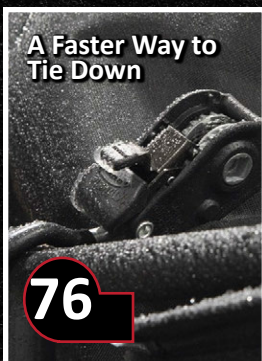
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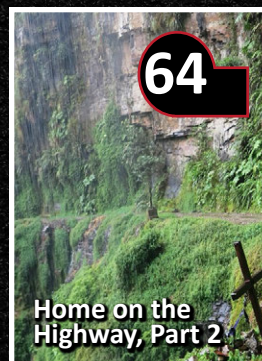
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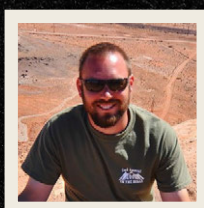
Shane Williams | Publisher
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2007 Lexus GX 470
Colorado Springs, CO



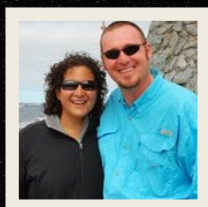
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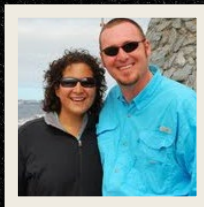
Bob Holliday
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Jonathan Harris
2005 100 Series Land Cruiser
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Krista Johnston
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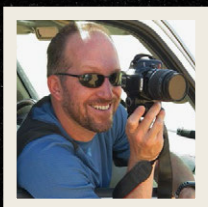
Beau Johnston
1998 4Runner | 1969 FJ-40
Casper, WY



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Frisco, TX



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2010 FJ Cruiser
Irvine, CA



Daniel Markofsky
1993 80 Series Land Cruiser
Denver, CO



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Spring is upon us and that means we're getting ready for BUSY season. In the next few months our team will hit the road & trail, covering nearly a dozen events around the country and working hard to bring you the best Toyota coverage on the planet.

This issue is very special for a couple of reasons. First, we're introducing the new TCT Magazine flagship 2015 Tundra CrewMax. This truck is meant to succeed (not replace) our original FJ Cruiser that started this little experiment, and she's well on her way. The truck will be revealed this spring, so look for her at an event near you! We also have a couple of non-standard articles in our Outdoor Life section. We're wondering if this kind of outdoor exploration content is interesting to you, our reader, so please send us a note, comment on a social network, or otherwise get in touch to let us know what you think.

Finally, this is the first issue with our latest Managing Editor for FJ Cruisers - Dennis Lloyd - working on great FJC content. Dennis is an icon in the FJ Cruiser community and I'm certain he'll do an amazing job.

If you haven't registered for your summer Toyota event yet, stop reading and go do it now. The FJ Summit sold out in just 37 minutes, but the waitlist is open so get on it if you haven't registered yet. There are also plenty of other events this summer, so visit our event page at <http://tct-magazine.net/events> to learn all about them.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we did putting it together. Until next time, stay safe, Tread Lightly, and HAVE FUN!

Shane



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**Let's
Go
Places**

New & Noteworthy

Rear Trailing Arm Mount Skids by Insain Fabrication

Have you damaged your rear trailing arm mounts or are worried you might? The factory mounts are made up of a thin sheet metal that are susceptible to damage when going through the rocks and are not easy to replace as they are welded onto the frame. Rear trailing arm mount skids are not new to the game, we understand that, however, Insain Fabrication out of Thornton, Colorado has come out with a new design that will make many FJ Cruiser and '03+ 4Runner owners happy.

Insain Fab creates their skids out of a stout $\frac{1}{4}$ " steel for optimum protection against the rocks and a unique design that makes installation quick and easy. Their design allows for installation without having to remove the rear trailing arm's mounting bolt to install and uses existing holes to run a provided bolt to secure the mount in place.



Their skids are available for the 2007+ FJ Cruiser and 2003+ 4Runner and can be purchased through Insain Fabrication or any of their authorized dealers.

SOURCE: : <http://www.insainfab.com>

Rock Slide Engineering Front Tundra Bumper



The search for useful modifications for our 2015 CrewMax Tundra began before we even took delivery. Our main requirement for a front bumper was a lightweight aluminum in order to keep the ride

quality as close as possible to factory. We found the perfect bumper from Rock Slide Engineering

Their Patriot Series Tundra front bumper is constructed from tough 3/16" aluminum and is powder coated texture black. It's made in the USA and the model we sourced from RSE includes a winch plate and square fog light cutouts as well as a 20" light pocket under the winch. The lines match the Tundra perfectly and it's also compatible with our front parking sonar sensors.

We'll be live-streaming the installation later this month, so look for it at <http://tctmagazine.net>
MSRP: \$1449.99

SOURCE: <https://www.rockslideengineering.com>

Controlling the Dust

By Beau Johnston

4
Runner

We struggled, for years, with dust entering into the 4Runner through the rear vent. We would vacuum out the rear of the truck after each trip to the desert. Finally I had enough and decided tear into the truck to diagnose the problem.

I removed the driver-side portion of the rear bumper and was amazed to find the vent flap assembly, which allows the air pressure to equalize between the vehicle interior and the exterior, was missing. With this gone, there was a straight shot for dust to enter into the vehicle.

I ran down to our local home improvement store and purchased two types of filter media to make my own two-stage filter assembly. I used the finer mesh register filters to create the inner portion of the filter and placed it against the interior body panel. I then used the coarser mesh furnace filter to completely fill the void between the inner and outer panels.



After installing the filter material, I reattached the driver-side portion of the rear bumper and took the truck for a test run. Thanks to our two-stage filter, we no longer have dust billowing into the back of our 4Runner! The mod took less than 30 minutes from start to finish and only cost us around \$10. I really wish I had taken the time to determine the source of dust earlier. 🐉



A Comet Chasing Expedition

in Big Bend National Park

By Phillip Jones



Scenic Big Bend is even better from one of the multiple 4x4 roads.

One of the more scenic overland destinations in Texas is located within Big Bend National Park in the mountains and basin region. By stitching together a route from the network of 4x4 park roads, a sightseeing overland trip with multiple nights of backcountry camping without ever leaving the park can be formulated. Because I was chasing a comet, BBNP was an ideal destination as it hosts some of the darkest skies in the Lone Star state.

At the beginning of 2015, Comet Lovejoy (C/2014 Q2) was at its brightest as it passed earth and headed toward the sun. To photograph the comet meant hauling photography and astronomy equipment. This didn't leave much room for camping gear in my 2007 4Runner. Thankfully, an opportunity arose for me to try the roomy XVenture XV2 off-road trailer, equipped with a James Baroud hard-shell roof top tent. The XV2 cargo space is triple that of a typical bucket trailer. *A review of this very capable trailer will appear in the next issue.*

It was mid-January and the Moon was safely tucked away, ensuring my dark sky pursuit. A spectacular forecast of clear skies, Spring-like temperatures during the day, and high 30s at night added to my excitement. My planned overland route was to start at the northern end of Old Ore Road, a 26 mile 4x4 trail. As I approached the BBNP Persimmon Gap entrance, the Chisos Mountains emerged into view. Within the park's 801,163 acres, BBNP contains an entire mountain range. At 7,825 ft., Emory Peak towers as the highest point.

Upon arriving at the visitor center, I learned I had to identify and reserve all of my backcountry campsites right then. Not familiar with the 4x4 roads, I abruptly plotted a rather ambitious route that involved 13 miles on Old Ore Road to my first campsite, and then another 33 miles the next day across three different 4x4 roads. Fourteen miles lay between the visitor center and the Old Ore Road entrance, and with only four hours until sundown, I wasn't worried because I was fairly sure Old Ore was simply a dirt road.



Comet Lovejoy produced a beautiful tail as it headed toward the sun.



adventure, I was growing concerned about reaching the campsite before dark. While I blamed the terrain, the real culprit was me stopping at least 20 times to shoot photos along the way.



Old Ore Road frequently exercised the articulation hitch.



The scenic 26 mile Old Ore Road is a rugged trail requiring clearance and capable tires.

The XV2 trailer is very rugged. I discovered this when I encountered the difficult terrain on the northern half of Old Ore Road. A simple dirt road, it was not. Twists and turns accompanied the many elevation changes. It was never a dull moment as I crawled over the many large steps and rocks, affirming my decision to air down at the start. The trailer rolled over the obstacles with ease thanks to the 32-inch trail tires and multi-directional hitch system. Much of the terrain kept my speed below 10 mph. There are no bypass routes on Old Ore, and park rules are explicit: do not go off the trail. The vehicle must be able to conquer each crux. While I was enjoying my legitimate off-road

The park is sprawling with geological wonders. Every mile brings about new visual treats and intrigue as the landscape changes frequently. It was January, yet yellow flowers and rainbow cacti in full bloom decorated the roadside. Large valleys in the foreground shadowed by distant peaks and the winding road ahead



all laid out a captivating scene. As the sun positioned itself to cast light and shadows, I had to stop to take it all in. I knew my photos were taken in vain. There was no way to absorb the moment into a digital image.



Old Ore Road runs along the edge of a vast valley.



Despite it being the middle of January, the rainbow cactus and yellow flowers were in abundance.

I arrived at Telephone Canyon campground just as the sun was setting. The amber glow sufficed for setting up camp and grabbing some photos. To the southeast, a large walled rock formation changed colors rapidly as the sun presented its final light. Setting up the tent was easy: release four latches and watch the tent rise. I attached the folding metal counter to the side of the trailer and hooked up the stove for a quick dinner. As darkness crept in, so did the clouds, dashing my hopes of capturing the comet.



A near perfect campground setting.

Tent camping alone in a desolate wilderness area presents discernment challenges for the senses. Did that growl come from my belly, or outside the tent? More sounds soon followed, only because my brain and ears were now on alert. I tried to reassure myself that it doesn't matter what fierce critter might be trouncing about because I'm in a tent 6-feet off the ground.

The next day I experienced the tamer southern half of Old Ore. The road did wind and change

elevation, but gradually and with a broader span. Off-road clearance was still a vehicle necessity for certain spots.



The southern half of Old Ore Road provided less technical terrain.

I finished out the trail and arrived at the busy Rio Grande Village where a Wi-Fi equipped store offered gasoline, showers, and laundry facilities. My one regret was not being able to

cross the border, via a small ferry a few miles away, into the little Mexican village for some shopping and dining. After 9/11, the border crossing was closed. It reopened in April 2013, and now requires a passport. While I had my passport, I was unaware the border crossing is open only on certain days of the week, and it was not one of those days.



The town of Boquillas Del Carmen across the border.



Gassed up and e-mails updated, I headed to my next route, which involved taking the River Road East dirt trail 9.6 miles and turning onto the Glenn Springs 4x4 road for another 10 miles to my reserved campsite. While Glenn Springs Road was rather tame, technical hurdles were plentiful. In the distant west, the Chisos Mountains provided a beautiful scene in the mid-day light.



Glenn Springs Road leads toward the Chisos Mountains.

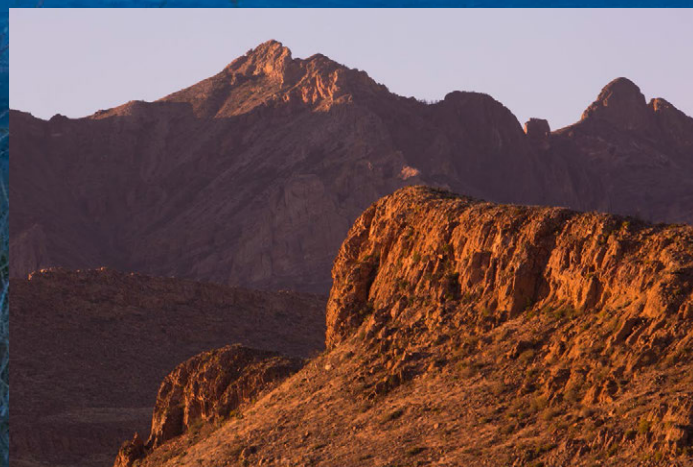
The Chisos view remained prevalent at the Rice Tanks campsite, but a hill in my immediate background blocked eastward views. The surrounding hills would block out wind, providing me with a stabilized telescope for imaging, but I suspected I was missing something scenic in the east. I cooked a quick meal and set up the telescope.



Rice Tanks campsite was surrounded by hills, which blocked wind for the telescope.



Lightweight and portable telescope system used for capturing comet images.



Sunglow on some of the lower Chisos Mountains.

With the sun setting, I decided to drive out north to see what I was missing. As I went up in elevation, I was able to view the multi-mile long cliff wall to the east just as the sun painted it in pinkish colors. Note to self: get the Chilicotal campground next time, as that site sits high on a hill with a perfect view of the scenery in all directions.



The eastward view at sunset from the northern section of Glenn Springs Road.

As daylight departed, clear night skies permitted me to capture the bright green comet. As the images appeared on my laptop screen, I knew the chase was complete. The next morning I continued north on Glenn

Springs until it intersected with Pine Canyon Road, and headed east back to pavement where my 51 mile route of 4x4 roads came to an end. I plan to return to conquer the other 4x4 roads, hike some of the many designated hiking trails, and relive the existential moments generated by the beauty of Big Bend. 🇲🇽



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Long Term Review: ARB Outback Solutions Drawers

By Jonathan Harris

From day one, safety was a primary factor in the build of our 100 series. Having been indirectly involved in several roll-overs or flops, I'm all too familiar with the effects of a small object becoming a projectile. From tools to recovery gear to phones and tablets, all of these can become dangerous to vehicle occupants. With long distance travel a primary application, I knew that I would be traveling with a lot of gear. My search for a more useful replacement to the cramped third row had begun. Initially, I looked at simple, removable storage solutions such as action packers, aluminum boxes and the always handy, milk crates. While these options provide a fair amount of utility, they are often hard to secure. In one rear end collision, the driver doing the rear ending experienced an impact hard enough to move a "well secured" spare tire into the middle row of seats hard enough to break the mounting brackets and bend the seats forward. Had a passenger been in the middle row, this impact could have injured an occupant.



The search for a more permanent, secure, and useful alternative was on. The first consideration was material. Wood, offers some warmth, often lower cost, ease of repair and the potential to self-build. Unfortunately, every wooden drawer system I had experienced to date had fitment issues due to swelling and shrinking and were very heavy. Not being a woodworker meant that building my own system, even a simple one, was out. Polycarbonate systems were not available in my application, so this option was dismissed. Poly is also known to suffer from strength to weight issues making systems very heavy.

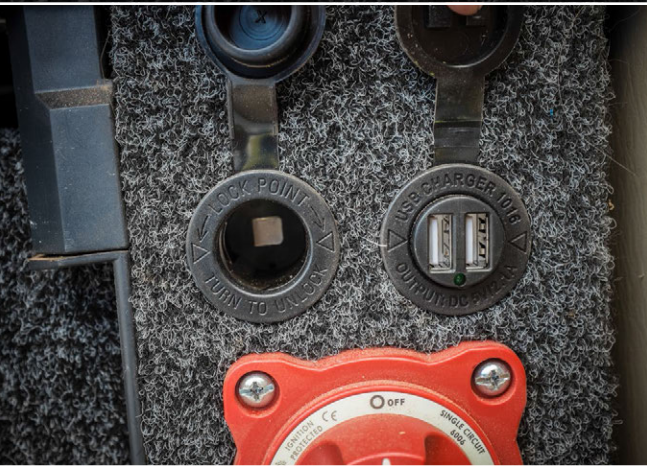


I had heard rumblings in 2010 that ARB would be bringing the Outback Solutions line of drawers to the US market along with several vehicle specific fit kits. Having used ARB products in the past, I knew that this wasn't something that they would skimp on. I immediately gave them a call to discuss options. Wanting a level platform in the back, I purchased two medium depth (RD1045US) drawers along with the 100 series fit kit (100AIRFKUS). I found out that I had ordered one of the first sets of drawers to be imported and no one had any experience with the install. Installation was initially accomplished by Safari-Ltd in Grand Junction and was fairly straight forward. Instructions included several photos but at times some guessing had to be done. I'd estimate it took the guys two hours to do the install.



The construction of the drawers is top notch. Made of galvanized steel with integrated slide rails, the drawers are rated to hold a hefty 220 lbs. each! The frames are also steel and feature integrated rollers that slide smoothly. The drawers feature the best handles in the industry. They are large, easy to operate and can be operated with the

heaviest of gloves or mittens. The ability to lock them also adds some peace of mind. The fit kit is one of my favorite features. With dozens of vehicles to choose from, a clean, professional and custom solution can be implemented. The fit kit features removable storage panels and handy locations to mount accessories. I've mounted a BlueSea battery disconnect, USB and 12V power outlets, fuse block and inverter.



The drawers aren't without a couple of negatives. First, the drawers only extend approximately 80% when open. This hasn't been a major concern but could make larger objects a little harder to install. Second, and the biggest frustration I have had with the system are the locks that hold the drawer open. While convenient, they are designed with a miniscule plastic tab to hold things open. This part (RDSTP) has failed four times in four years. Removal of a drawer to replace is required and time consuming. Thankfully, ARB has provided these replacements at no cost but a better solution needs to be implemented.





My initial configuration was two like-sized drawers and the fit kit. For my refrigerator, I've been struggling with a love hate relationship with the Tembo Tusk drop slide. If you have seen this device, you will understand. On a personal level, I love the drop slide. The engineering, the build quality and the customer support of Tembo Tusk are exceptional. In practice, the slide is imperfect. When the fridge is filled to the perfect level, the slide can operate with one hand. When full, it's tough for me, impossible for my wife. Therein lies the problem, and my wife is buff so it's not a brute strength issue. To counteract this, I decided to change things up a bit. I ditched the Drop Slide and purchased the short roller drawer (affectionately called the map drawer) with the roller top (RF1045). The roller top is stable, will easily facilitate an 80 lb., fully loaded fridge (in fact, it's rated to hold 165 lbs.), and is only moderately annoying in that I now have to reach an extra 4–6 inches for a beverage. Overall, it's been a great change with more storage space and more convenience. I will note that the top drawer now touches the middle row seat. Over time this could potentially wear through the leather, so use this configuration at your own risk. The safety, reliability and utility of a drawer system has made it one of, if not my favorite upgrades to the 100 series.



Outback Solutions Drawer Systems (Prices Vary)

<http://store.arbusa.com/Storage-Solutions-C75.aspx> 

Our Toyota Journey

By Shane Williams

It has been a long road, to say the least ... our journey from buying a silver FJ Cruiser in 2007 (used with about 10,000 miles) to signing the papers on a brand new 2015 Tundra Crew Max in gorgeous radiant red. This is our journey:

In 2005 when Angie and I got married, she drove a 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee and I drove a 1992 Jeep Cherokee. We were not hard core Jeep people, but we liked to explore. Fast forward to 2006 when I returned from deployment and we found a used 2007 FJ Cruiser in Titanium Silver at a dealership in Denver, our Toyota enthusiasm began.



Shortly after buying our first FJC, Angie purchased a 2007 V8 4Runner Sport. We loved both Toyota trucks and explored quite regularly. At this point though, we were just into these trucks for their exploration potential, we had no idea how deep the rabbit hole would go.



On the 5.5 hour drive home from Ouray following the first FJ Summit in July 2007, we discussed the best ways to upgrade our truck and become more involved in the FJC community.

The result of that conversation was FJC Magazine, and purchasing our third Toyota: the 2007 TRD FJC. From 2008 until 2012 the FJC was our only Toyota (Angie sold the 4Runner in 2008 and started getting into faster vehicles). In 2012, when our baby Alana was on the way, we realized the FJC wouldn't cut it for two little ones and purchased the GX-470 to be our new family explorer. It served us well for the next couple of years.



Last year when we realized we'd driven the FJ less than 500 miles in the previous 12 months, we made the decision to sell her. Luckily Kayla, the fiancée of Truck editor Bob, was interested and took her off our hands. You'll see plenty more of our original TRD FJC in future issues. Following the FJC sale, we purchased Toyota vehicle number five: the 2006 Tundra. This truck was meant to compliment the GX and become a work truck, so we could get projects at out house and cabin done in a more timely manner. We would also build the Tundra up a bit, so she could have plenty of fun exploring Colorado mountains.



As it turns out, the '06 Tundra was nice but didn't meet our needs quite the way we expected. The lack of available aftermarket accessories for the first gen full size truck left us looking for more, and seriously considering a late model Tundra. After spending a little time with the Toytec Tundra (see January 2015 cover) in Vegas, and talking with several owners, we decided to change directions. We would sell the '06, sell the GX, and put all of our effort into a new 2015 CrewMax Tundra.

In February we welcomed Toyota truck number six to the family when we headed down to Larry H. Miller Toyota Scion of Colorado Springs to sign the papers. The team at LHM did a fantastic job in locating and delivering our perfect truck. See the following article on the first 2000 Miles on the 2015 CrewMax to learn how this journey will continue. ❤️



Our Toyota Journey took the next step on a cold, snowy February day. I received a call from Bill Stahelin, the General Manager of Larry H. Miller Toyota Scion of Colorado Springs. The long wait for our 2015 CrewMax Tundra was finally over, the transport truck had just dropped her off at the dealership.



Ready for a surprise? This was the first Toyota vehicle we bought from a Toyota dealership, and the first brand-new Toyota our family has ever purchased. The truck had less than 50 miles on the clock when we signed that day, brand new in every way. The team at LHM took great care of our entire family, and we were in and out of

the dealership in record time (less than two hours).

Our goal from the beginning was to spend some quality time in the Radiant Red beauty in stock form, so I could get a feel for how a fresh off the lot a Tundra performed prior to starting any modifications. Of course I couldn't NOT do anything to her, so the first mod was a new startup screen for the Entune entertainment system.



We started small in terms of spending time in the truck: a quick trip to the cabin in the mountains (about two hours each way), lumber hauling, and general around-town duties. I did take her up into the woods after some snow to test the traction control and ABS functionality. Everything performed flawlessly and it's easy to see how many people would choose to keep their rig stock.



Less than two weeks after bringing the Tundra home, we got a little antsy for a road trip. Two quick phone calls later and plans were place to visit friends and family in New Mexico for a long weekend. We loaded up a few bags and the kids in the Tundra and headed south.

The trip to Clovis on Friday, then to Carlsbad on Saturday went completely without incident. The Tundra feels at home on the interstate as well as two lane highways. The CrewMax's spaciousness combined with the limited trim makes for very comfortable travel, it's almost like rolling down the highway in your living room. Other than the overabundance of chrome on the truck, there was nothing about this part of the trip that wasn't perfect.



We spent Saturday afternoon and evening watching the grandkids play and catching up with my family. Sunday morning was more of the same, Brenden and Alana had so much fun playing on the farm. Finally though, it was time to pack up and head north. The seven hour drive from Carlsbad to Colorado Springs is not difficult, but can be a bit boring. So we planned to stop and spend a little time at a few places along the way.



See Me on the 2015 CrewMax

By Shane Williams



There's a neat state park outside Roswell, NM with a cool playground so we made our way out there for a pitstop before heading north. Spending this time meant we'd hit the Colorado border after dark, but we didn't expect any issues. A little after dinner time, we arrived in Las Vegas, NM for a quick bite before getting the kids ready to pass out in the truck. Angie checked Facebook real quick and learned the news that it was snowing at home in Colorado Springs and the out-of-nowhere storm was headed south.

Our sense of urgency to get home safely quickly escalated, and we got loaded up and hit the highway. Weather and road condition checks now became a minute-by-minute affair, and we pushed the speed limit in an attempt to make it to Colorado before it got ... bad.

As we made our way up Raton Pass, the snow started coming down in heaps, with wind blowing massive snow into the truck. Visibility dropped to less than 50 feet in the span of a few hundred yards, and I remarked that I would turn around if I could find a safe place to do so. We were on the road with about 15 other vehicles, all now crawling up the pass at less than 30 mph.

I can honestly say this is the most dangerous driving I've done on an interstate—in the dark, in a new truck, whiteout conditions, and still driving up a pass. Of course I switched to 4WD, but the Tundra still had stock wheels and tires, and I wasn't sure how she would handle climbing in these conditions.

Luckily the pure whiteout only lasted a few miles, and once we reached the top of Raton Pass visibility was back up to about quarter mile. We continued following taillights and taking our time, no need to hurry and be unsafe at this point. On the down side of Raton Pass toward Trinidad, I-25 becomes fairly curvy and while it's not steep, in a snowstorm extreme caution has to be taken. I downshifted the Tundra using manual mode and was able to keep 100% control of the truck all the way down.

We took the first exit, found the first hotel we could, and got checked in. The only photo I was able to snap during this ordeal was after everyone was unloaded and she was parked, snug in the snow after a job well done.



To recap our first 2,000 miles in the Tundra:

- Mountain trip
- Kid hauling
- Lumber duty
- Trailer towing to the Yotas on the Beach event
- Road Trip to NM
- Dangerous mountain pass in a snowstorm

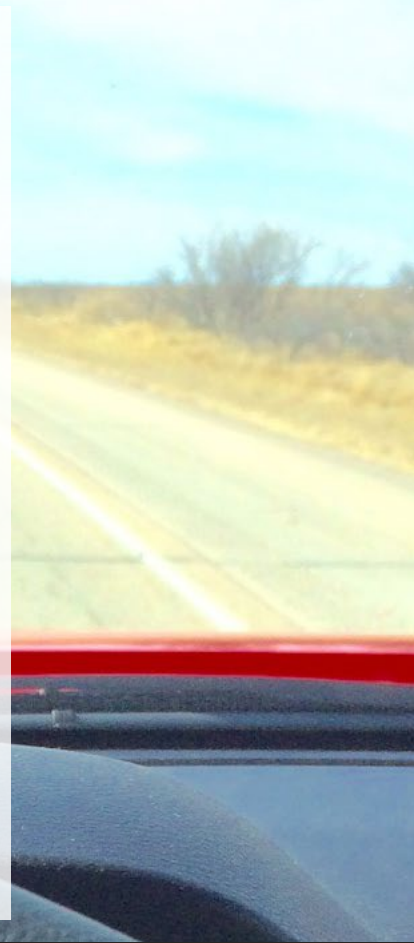
Needless to say, we're sold on the CrewMax. In completely stock form, she performed perfectly and quite surprisingly well in some very dangerous conditions. This truck has more features, comfort, power, and utility than any of our previous Toyota trucks. While she will never handle difficult trails like the FJC, and may not fit on some of our favorite exploration spots in Colorado, as an all-around multi-purpose vehicle, I don't see how it can get any better.



At this point you may be wondering what's next for the Tundra? Well, at just over 2,000 miles on the odometer, the modifications have begun. We're working with the following vendors to create a one-of-a-kind Tundra, and you'll see plenty more of her in future issues and at events around the country.

2015 CrewMax Tundra Supporting Vendors:

- Toyota Racing Development/TRD
- Ken's Colors of Colorado Springs
- Toytec Lifts
- Rock Slide Engineering
- Larry H. Miller Dealerships
- Bully Dog
- Discount Tire Direct
- Icon Vehicle Dynamics
- Demello Off Road
- BudBuilt



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Snorkel Install

on the 5th Gen 4Runner



Story and photos by John-Paul Clark

I never wanted to put a snorkel on my 2013 4Runner, simply because I wasn't planning to go anywhere requiring one. After a year of off-roading, I found myself searching for a snorkel compatible with the fifth gen 4Runner. I found the FTS product imported and sold by *Pathfinder Outdoors*. For installation guidance, I referenced two install discussions on T4R.org, plus I recruited an industrious 4Runner buddy to assist.

To minimize rubbing and vibrations, Plastidip was applied to the snorkel backside. Next, we secured the cutting template to the fender with painters tape.



The cutting template taped into position.

Using a center punch, we dimpled the centers of all six bolt holes as well as the main hole for the air inlet. Removing the template from the fender, the next step was to get all the holes started, so we used a 5/16-inch titanium drill bit to drill all seven pilot holes. When drilling, brace the drill well to prevent the bit from escaping the dimple. With our pilot holes drilled, we used a 1/2-inch unibit step drill bit to enlarge the six bolt holes to a full 1/2-inch (online instructions say 9/16-inch). With the bolt holes drilled out, I took a long deep breath, put the 4-inch bi-metal hole saw in the drill, and tried to block the thought from my mind of what I was about to do to my fender. My skin crawled at the sound of the bit chewing through the fender. After what seemed like an eternity, it was done ... and surprisingly smooth, only needing a bit of mild sanding with some 600 grit sandpaper.



Cutting of fender holes was a bit unnerving.

Based on a tip posted on T4R.org, I opted to replace the included bolts with studs and lock washers, using only the included large washers. Loosely fitting each of the studs in the snorkel, we tried our first fitting only to discover it made sense to remove the air box completely.

With the snorkel having a solid fit against the fender, our next step was to ensure a quality fit with the air box. After temporarily reseating the air box and confirming fit, we mounted the A-pillar bracket. This was done by loosely fitting the bracket to the snorkel, removing the 2-sided tape backing, then carefully reseating the snorkel and pressing the tape against the A-pillar. After removing the bolts, we screwed in the two self-tapping screws.



The A-pillar bracket.

We were ready to bolt up the snorkel. Using permanent Loctite on the headless bolts, we set them in the snorkel. While the Loctite was drying, we discussed how we were going to bolt down the unit. The only way to get to the inside of the fender is by coming up and through the fender liner.





Headless bolts before applying Loctite.



Location of the fender liner grommets.

Much of the fender liner had been cut away for an aftermarket bumper. To reach where we needed, we still had to remove several of the plastic grommets along the top of the fender well. In order to do this, we had to squeeze the plastic pins of each with pliers while reaching in through the 4-inch air vent hole. Having removed several of the grommets, my buddy verified he could reach his hand between the fender liner and the fender, up to the point where it would be needed to attach washers and nuts to the headless bolts.

To mount the snorkel, we cleaned the entire fender area and lined each of our holes with liquid tape for rust prevention along the edges. We encircled each hole with black RTV silicon. Finally, we used the RTV silicon on both the snorkel air vent hole where it would make contact with the air box, as well as in the air box. We decided there was no such thing as too much silicone in this step, since one mistake could cost me an engine. Next, we carefully seated the snorkel, and proceeded to attach each of the six washers, lock washers and bolts. (Hint: A tiny dab of RTV silicone on the washer will keep it from sliding off the bolt as you're fumbling around blind with your hands in the fender.) With the six mounting bolts secure, we attached the washers and bolts to the A-pillar bracket, finished bolting the air box back in place, and replaced the fender liner grommets.

Since we could not see where the snorkel joins with the air box, we placed a phone inside and took a photo. Feeling around with our tube

of RTV silicone, we used a ledge as our guide and proceeded to use nearly an entire tube, sealing up that joint as best we could. The fun part was using our hands, squeezed tight in the intake, to smooth out the silicon.



RTV sealant applied inside air box intake. Note the ledge where the snorkel terminates inside the air box.

With everything buttoned back up, we fired up the rig. Even at idle speed, we could feel the flow of air across our hands near the intake. At last ... I was ready to take on the flooded side streets of Houston in the rain! 🌧️



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Free Membership!



Fossil Springs

Arizona Oasis

By Jes Zaneis (aka Chronic Climber Chick)

The Hike

Distance round-trip to the Old Fossil Creek Dam via Flume Trail: 8 miles

Elevation change: 1280 feet

Difficulty: Moderate

Time: Allow 2–3 hours each way, with additional time to swim and explore the falls.

Water: No potable water available. Water can be filtered from the creek.



The Drive

From Phoenix

Travel north on 1-17 to Camp Verde. Head east on AZ Highway 260 for about 7 miles to a well-marked sign for Fossil Springs Road (FS road 708). Proceed 16 miles on rough dirt road to the Irving Flume trailhead.

Vehicle

A high clearance vehicle is recommended. The road may be impassable during wet weather. It is possible to travel by car when conditions are dry.

Seasons

Spring, Summer and Fall

Camping

Camping is free. The sites are mostly pullouts along the road. There is dispersed camping along the FS road 708.

Camping is allowed downstream of Fossil Creek Bridge if your camp is at least 100 feet from the edge of the creek. Camping is also allowed upstream of the Old Fossil Creek Dam.

Camping is prohibited within a quarter mile either side of Fossil Creek from the Old Fossil Creek Dam downstream to Fossil Creek Bridge.

A map of the area and current regulations from USDA.gov can be found at http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5426007.pdf.

Why this hike?

Fossil Creek marks the true definition of what an oasis is meant to be. This dazzling riparian spring-fed creek is made possible by a group of springs that pump 72 degree crystal clear water to the surface at a rate of 20,000 gallons per minute.

This wide and steep canyon produces paradise at the edge of the Colorado Plateau near the Mogollon Rim. This is one of the most diverse ecosystems in the state of Arizona. The native desert shrubs and cacti are joined by more than 30 species of trees and serve as a retreat for abundant wildlife.

The area hosts many recreational activities including hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, swimming, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, star gazing and of course the ever important solitude.

The abundant travertine deposits along the stream bed, caused by high levels of calcium carbonate in the spring water, has created large fossil-like rock growths which has aptly given this area its name. These rock growths have made this oasis one of the most unique and possibly the most abundant spring systems in the state of Arizona.

On The Trail

I arrived at my campsite two hours before the sun rested for the evening over the shoulders of the mountains in the Coconino National Forest. It left enough time to explore the surrounding creeks under the Fossil Springs Bridge and to view the cotton candy skies that make Arizona one of the best places in the world to view a sunset.

A night of rest in the five billion star hotel that hosted some brilliant star gazing opportunities





allowed for a leisurely start to the morning before heading out on the Flume trail.

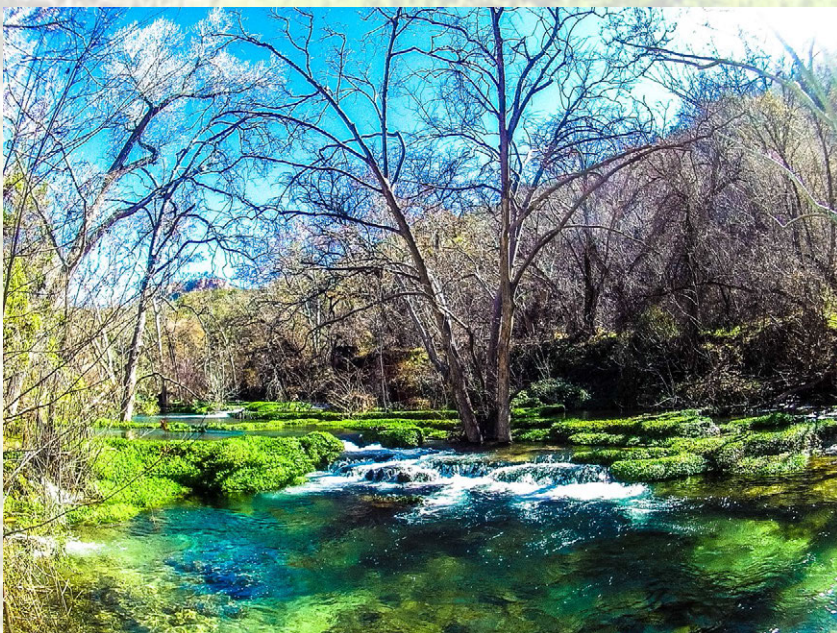
Nine a.m. was a perfect time to begin the trek to the Old Fossil Creek Dam. The flume trail begins with an immediate crossing of the creek to the west side of the water. It continues up a slope along the rocky old flume road. You keep trekking along this arid high desert trail that offers panoramic views from 600 feet above the canyon. This route faces south, and with temperatures in the summer reaching above 90 degrees, it is an ideal area to visit in the spring or fall. The summer months bring massive amounts of people and can cause closures due to the crowds. With the water at 72 degrees it is perfectly slated for a springtime adventure.

There are several opportunities to take refuge in the shade offered by the wise old sycamores and box elders. The sun is warm enough to keep you constantly thinking about the pools this riparian oasis has to offer below. When you have that last mile to trek and you begin to constantly wipe the sweat from your brow, you get a glorious glimpse of the gem below waiting for you as a bounty.

Once you drop down onto the shaded shoulders of the creek there are small travertine dams and falls all along the creek babbling and encouraging you to take a dip into the mineral laden water.

Schools of chub swimming in the ponds along with the endangered Chiricahua leopard frogs and canyon tree frogs leaping into the water provide an example of how it should be done.

Once you arrive at the Old Fossil Creek Dam you can spend all afternoon jumping into the many pools; marveling at the butterflies, damselflies, and birds; relaxing in the sun



on a slab of rock; swimming; or enjoying the soothing sounds of the many falls that enter all along the creek.

At some point you have to leave this oasis to its permanent inhabitants and thank them for allowing you to visit, then tackle the task of the four-mile hike back to the bumpy road that leads to the hot asphalt streets of civilization.

Keep in mind during this dirt filled and reality stricken trek back that there is one last chance to splash around in this terrific sanctuary at the creek crossing where you began this tour.

There are many other incredible sights and trails in this wilderness, but the maximum camping allowed is 14 days. Take some time and visit the area for a day or a couple of weeks, just be sure you leave no trace when you do. 🇺🇸



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Cooper Discoverer STT

Long-Term Review

By Bob Holliday

28,000 miles and countless memories later, I finally have a chance to look back at my time with the Cooper Discoverer STT. With 170,000 miles now on the clock, I've had some great journeys with my Tacoma and have had a handful of different tires on the rig throughout that time. Not trying to show a bias on my opinion, but so far these Coopers have worked their way to the top of my list of tires.



Climbing its way to the top, the STT has proven to be a great all around tire choice.

From the factory Rugged Trail to BFG AT, then to Duratracs and finally MT/R before making the move to these STTs, I've had a variety of tires on the Tacoma over the years. Coming from the Duratracs and their outstanding winter handling, they had a high bar set for comparison in the winter time. The Goodyear MT/R made a great name for itself in the dirt, rocks and mud in the time I had them installed and also set a high standard in those categories. These tires, however, still had their drawbacks and kept me looking for a better overall tire to hold its own in a variety of categories and not just excelling in a few aspects.

Enter the STT into our lives. We've taken these tires from the streets of Denver, to the high alpine roads in the San Juans of Colorado and on many back roads throughout Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Arizona. In every condition, I've seen favorable outcomes with the STT. Take that statement with a grain of salt as mentioned before, previous tires set high standards in winter and off-road conditions in my opinion.



Climbing high in the San Juans of Colorado

When it comes to winter conditions, were the STTs the best? No. When it comes to off-road handling and durability? Almost. How about tread life and wear? Not really. That being said, they are nowhere near bottom of the list, far from it. In those categories, the STTs are a close second in the list of tires I've tried on my 2006 Toyota Tacoma. With the needs I demand of my truck, I've been very pleased with the overall performance of these mud-terrains.



Taking the long way through some New Mexico backcountry.

Through the rocky terrain of Colorado, their sidewall has proven their worth time and time again. They did show their mortality on a tough climb on Grizzly Lake. Angling my truck up a tough ledge, the wet rocks didn't provide enough traction and I slid my sidewall into a nasty rock that pinched my sidewall between my FN Wheel and the rock. The tear wasn't significant, but it did enough damage to warrant swapping out and later replacing the tire. Besides that, the STT airs down great and they still feel plenty sturdy even at 12-15psi where I typically run them.

They aren't the stickiest tire out there, but they hooked up great on a variety of off-road conditions and through all the abuse, they did not show any major signs of chunking.



STT showing their off road abilities while aired down to 13–15psi.

Last fall, we took the truck into the backcountry of the San Rafael Swell and we saw some muddy conditions in areas near Fuller Bottom, but it didn't take much to get the STTs and us over muddy river banks and push us effortlessly through muddy washes. On long trips like those through backcountry areas where a reliance on your equipment is crucial, I began to appreciate the comfort my STTs gave me over an assortment of terrain and weather conditions.

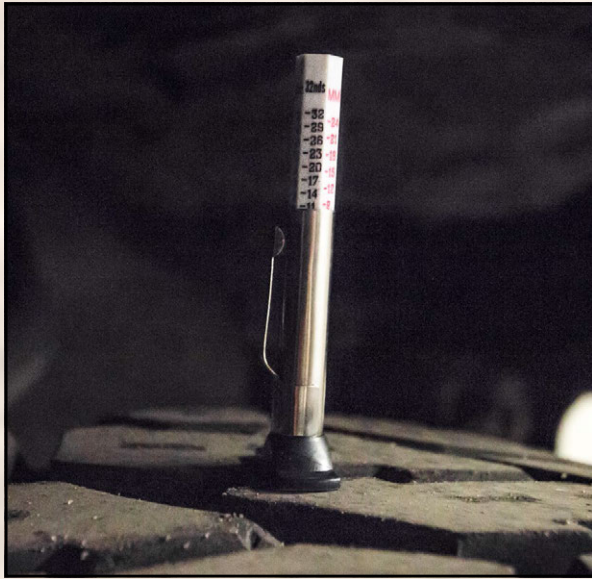


The STT proving their reliability in the Utah backcountry.

Having a winter under my belt with the STT, I can also say they hold their own on a variety of winter conditions. Again, are they the best?

No, but they really do kick some serious butt for a mud-terrain. I'm sure if I had the tires siped, their performance on icy/hard pack would improve, but I never felt that uncomfortable with them to warrant that step.

Tread life and wear are a couple categories that I was surprised and pleased with. Coming from the MT/R right before the STT, I did not see favorable tread life in the short time I had the MT/Rs. They were great when they were off the pavement, but I drive my truck daily and see a lot of highway miles on some of our journeys. This is where the full package of the STT really comes into light. The STT comes new with 20/32nds tread depth and so far I'm still showing 11/32nds with over 28,000 miles on them. Longevity coupled with great (given not the best, but a close second) off-road and all around handling, the STT has made its way to the top of my list on an overall tire standpoint.



Approx 11/32nd left after 28,000 hard miles.



What's next for these tires? Not sure but I like where things are heading! 🏔️

FJ Cruiser Upgrade: Rear Door Power & Lights

By Dennis Lloyd

As the saying goes you can never have enough power outlets in an FJ. There's only one OEM outlet mounted on the lower dash. So you definitely need to add this mod to your list. It's very common to add outlets in the dash, center console and at the rear of the FJ near the OEM inverter outlet. Since building my rear cargo drawers plus fridge slide I didn't have the space to effectively install and use power outlets on either wheel well panels.

I wasn't planning on adding outlets in the rear. I wanted to install a light on the rear door for camping. I was tired of sticking a magnetic light up on the door and



having to remove it each time. My original plan was to just add a strip of LED lights above the window on the rear door and a switch to the flat portion of the rear door panel just under the window. While searching for a waterproof switch on Amazon I discovered a nice looking three hole triple socket trim plate. You can mount a combination of 12v sockets, switch and/or power meter. I used it to install a Blue Sea 12v cigarette lighter socket, Blue Sea dual USB socket and a generic toggle switch for the LED strip lights.

You'll need some basic tools to get this mod done. Cordless drill, step drill bit (size 1/4" to 1-3/8") wire stripper, wire cutter, fish tape or coat hanger, shrink tubing, various female and male spade connectors and of course some wire; 10awg and 14awg. I began by removing the rear door panel. First, open your rear window. Second, pop off each round bolt cover at the top corners of the plastic panel and remove the 10mm bolts. Third, get yourself a panel puller or flat head screw driver wrapped in tape

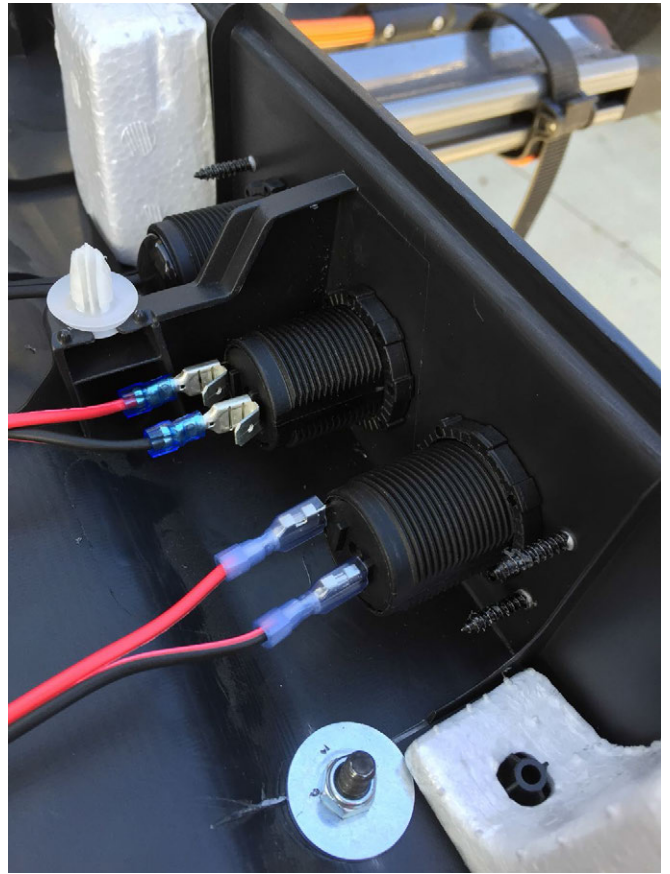


and start pulling out on the lower portions of the panel. Once it's started just use your hands to pull. The panel will hang freely from the top portion. You'll need to swing the lower portion out, then lift up to remove it completely.

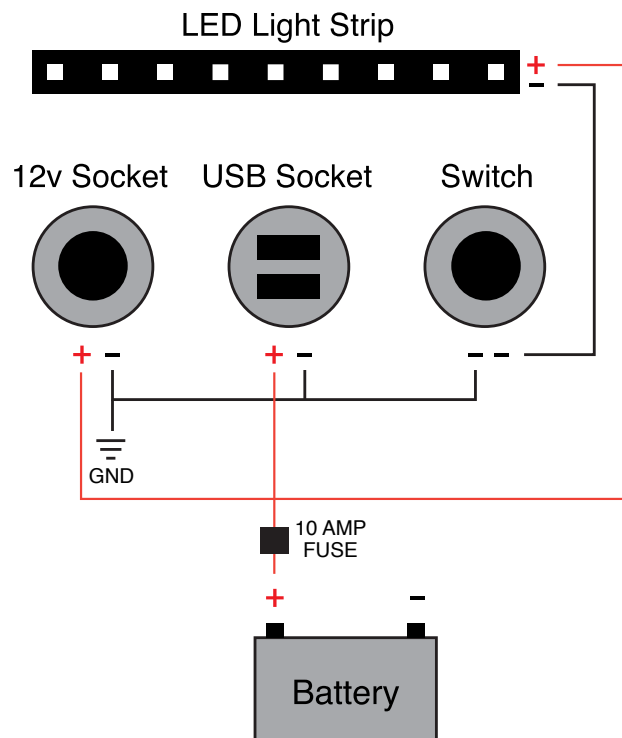
Next, you'll need to route 10awg wire from the battery or in my case a Blue Sea AUX fuse box mounted under the dash to the rear. I highly recommend installing an AUX fuse box to avoid having to run all your accessories wiring to the battery and to avoid tapping into any OEM wiring. I fished the 10awg wire through the OEM wire harness boot near the door hinge. It's a bit of a pain but take your time and use an old coat hanger or fish tape to pull the wire through. It's time to determine the location of your outlets on the rear panel. There are plastic reinforcement ribs and door metal to avoid behind the panel. You'll see what I mean when you pull the panel off. I placed mine about 1/2" from the front edge and about 6" inches from the left edge. Using the three hole trim piece as a guide mark the location of each hole with a pencil. Measure to determine the center of each hole. Use a marker or awl to mark the center of each hole. Grab a step drill bit and drill each hole. Install your outlets and the switch using the included backing nut to secure it.



I purchased a small roll of white, waterproof LED strip lights at Amazon. Choose an appropriate length of lights, cut and fire up your soldering iron. If you don't want to solder, Amazon also sells LED strip light connectors you can use to connect to the tiny terminals and provides a positive and negative pigtail. I chose to solder my wires on by cutting off the clear waterproofing layer and exposing the two small copper terminals. Each are marked + and -. I had plenty of small gauge 2 conductor jacketed wire left over from my rock lights install. I used a length of shrink tube to protect the tiny solder joints. The light strip comes with peel and stick albeit fake 3M adhesive. I stuck mine on the top of the rear door frame above the window. If yours doesn't stay put use Scotch's Permanent Outdoor Mounting double sided tape. I tucked the wire behind the door's weather seal molding and into the hole where the bottom of the strut is connected to the door.



The three hole triple socket mount comes with connecting wires. Follow my wire diagram and make your connections to the 10awg power wire. I used a nearby bolt to ground the negative wires and shrink tubing or shrink tape on all my connections.



Flip the toggle switch and test your new lights! This is probably one of the most useful mods I've ever done. Those with cargo drawers, fridges, sliding/folding rear tables, or whatever, you now have plenty of light. I charge my iPhone, camera batteries, headlamp, and can power my soon-to-be-installed LED strip lights inside the roof top tent. Happy camping! 🏕️



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FRAMED

f/9 30s 20mm





Big Bend NP, TX | Phillip Jones



Cleveland NF, CA | Kevin Shaw

FRAMED

f/11 1/500s 44mm



FRAMED

f/9 1/321s 10.5mm





Top of the World, UT | Matt Moghaddam



Horse Haven, NM | Bob Holliday



FRAMED

f/4.0 20s 10mm



Sardine Taco:

TLACOULA BAJA CALIFORNIA

By Dean Moran



The early morning chill turned to a dry heat as the sun rose lazily above the distant bluffs. We passed agave fields at high speeds while simultaneously dodging bony highway dogs. My surroundings reminded me of past years spent in the desert, but unfazed by the arid landscape, I was distracted by the day's plans. The town of Tlacoula appeared on the horizon. We skipped breakfast because we knew what lay ahead. My backpack was empty, anxious to be filled, similar to the situation with my stomach. We came here the previous week not knowing what to expect, but this time around, we arrived prepared. After several months of living out of the Tacoma (the Taco), experiencing Mexico in its raw form, I am reminded that experiences like the market





in Tlacoula, makes this lifestyle all the more rewarding.

We drove the Taco from Jersey to the South of Mexico and we were deep in the country. It is times like these when we are stoked that we quit our jobs in NYC for a life on the road. It is just a small reward for choosing the road less traveled. We arrived here by chance, a tip from a native. This is not the Mexico you see in travel brochures, this is not a tourist attraction. This is a market where locals buy from locals. They sell fresh produce from nearby farms, animals can be purchased either dead or alive, and the mounds of spices on display resembled miniature mountain ranges. We came for the food, but they sell everything here. Handmade machetes with handle of bone, freshly weaved clothing that has been made the same way for centuries, hand knocked pots and pans large enough to cook for herds of hungry citizens, and the list goes on. You get the idea.

We swiftly walked past the non-food vendors and spotted several smoking stew pots as large as beer kegs. An elderly Mexican woman extended her skeletal hand and placed goat meat in my mouth while I stared at the dusty wrinkles on her brown weathered face. If this happened in the states I might have slapped

the hand of meat and retreated into the crowd, but I was in Southern Mexico, out of my element, and gladly accept the tender goat that melts in my mouth. We sat at her table and ordered two. Two what? (While



traveling and buying street food, I sometimes don't know what I'm ordering. Most vendors specialize in a particular dish so I will order one. I then address the situation once I am served. It is always a success.) The elderly woman brought us each two tacos and a bowl of birria (goat meat stew served with onions



and tortillas.) My wife Sara, claimed these were the best tacos to date. She might have been right, so I raised my eyebrows and gave a nod of agreement. After I traded Sara half of my last taco for the rest of her birria we kept moving through the crowd, satisfied and ready for the next.

We mazed through the area where unrefrigerated meat sat openly on display. I had starring contests with decapitated pig heads, but they always seemed to win. Oil drums converted to grills fired amongst the crowd, because one might want to cook freshly purchased fare. I purchased a thinly sliced piece of marinated cow and laid the red meat on the makeshift hot grill. I cooked it to perfection, while observing a complete disregard to any sanitation standards that USAers might take for granted. The beef was salty and satisfying, hitting the spot.



The vendors are indigenous Mexicans wearing traditional clothing. They have corrugated skin from a lifetime of work. An old round woman, draped in colorful garb, was hunched over as she shuffled our way. Missing several teeth she smiled and extended her bag full of eggs in hope we would buy them. Her face and squinted eyes told a story. I denied the eggs, fearing they would break in my bag, then Sara stepped over me and purchased some. It was hard to say no to the woman, as well as my wife. We moved on.

Getting lost in the market you're exposed to fruits and veggies, or any number of foreign



treats that don't exist in the states. Free samples are encouraged with hopes of a sale. It was here where I tasted chapulines (dried grasshoppers with chile powder) for the first time. Large mounds of chapulines sat on display. The woman manning the stand, hands one to me. It is crunchy, salty, spicy only comparable to popcorn, and along side a beer its a splendid afternoon treat. Salted fish, animal innards, gutted and plucked chickens lay on their backs with their feet pointed to the sky like a group of suburban moms at their weekly yoga class.

You need to be careful, you can overfill your backpack. Only buy what you can eat. It's hard when 10 pounds of food cost as much as a handful of avocados back in New Jersey. In this part of Mexico eating is cheap, and drinking is fun. A successful day, but my shoulders are sore from a heavy pack on my back. We exit the market headed back to the truck, but not without a bottle of local mezcal with a scorpion sunk to the bottom. Before we caravan South we take a shot of the clear alcoholic liquid to celebrate the day's splendor. 🍷



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2015 Lone Star Land Cruiser Round Up

Story and photos by
Phillip Jones



Deep in the Texas hills where rural communities flaunt rustic décor and pickup trucks are the primary means of transportation, the 12th annual Lone Star Land Cruiser Round Up entertained 163 people during four days of sunny spring weather. A jaunt around the campground reveals a truck variety spanning crawlers, expedition rigs, and low-tech Land Cruisers. Despite taking place at an off-road park, some attendees choose the path of Land Cruiser preservation over a dirt path. As an open event, other Toyota 4WD trucks are in the mix, but Land Cruisers account for the majority.



Scott Holbrook gets a wheel up in his 60-series as he crosses over a granite trail.

An FJ55 successfully conquers a tricky descent.

Texas Hill Country is home to a large number of unique restaurants, scenic roads, and towns gleaming with character, including Mason. A little over an hour west of Austin, Mason is home to Katemcy Rocks off-road park. What makes this park so intriguing is the fact that it contains large specimens of the geological phenomenon known as the Llano Uplift. In a concentrated area of the Hill Country, the large pinkish granite Precambrian rock is exposed above ground. The largest pieces of the Llano Uplift are the giant granite domes at nearby Enchanted Rock State Park.

At Katemcy Rocks, the varying sizes and shapes of the granite provide sections of varying off-road difficulty levels. The Easter Egg section is a trail of smaller rounded granite rocks, whereas Smokin' Butthole is a near vertical ascent ideal for crawlers, and somewhere in-between are the slabs with inviting crevices and shelf structures. Tires tend to grip the granite much better than other types of stone, but the granite is unforgiving when undercarriage parts come in contact.

On Saturday morning, Chris Smith led a large group of trucks across multiple trails that were accessible even for stock rigs. The final destination was the parking area surrounding Smokin' Butthole for the purpose of spectating as crawlers lined up for their shot at the complex ascent.



It might be a crawler playground, but this FJ Cruiser made it unscathed.



Easter Egg trail consists of scattered large round granite rocks.



Manny Valesco navigates his '94 Pickup through large granite chunks.



Barry Beadle takes his FJ40-themed crawler up the notorious Smokin' Butthole.



As Allen Giacobbe worked his way up Smokin' Butthole, his Cruiser crawler started to topple backward, but was stopped by nearby spectators.



Jasen Lopez stands next to his 80 series, which is powered by a 5.3L Vortec LS1 engine.

The Dallas-based Lone Star Land Cruisers club puts on this event with the intent of drawing all levels of off-roaders. One of the event highlights is participating in the organized daytime overland run through a scenic 60-mile dirt road loop. The Friday trip included dining at a small restaurant in a very small town (London, TX), stopping to see a large bluff decorated with bat mud houses, and experiencing multiple water crossings.



An 80-series Land Cruiser proceeds through a water crossing on the scenic loop trip.



Mike Frisbee demonstrates a more dramatic method for crossing the river.

Another highlight is the Texas-style BBQ featuring smoked brisket, pork, sausage, and chicken. This is followed by the Saturday night raffle. Before the adults get their chance at off-roading goodies, the kids' raffle takes place and doesn't end until each kid walks away with a prize and a smile.



Kids hold onto their tickets as they anxiously await the kids' raffle.

If you haven't made it to a Texas off-road event, consider adding Round Up to your bucket list. The laid back atmosphere of the event fits in perfectly with this area of Texas. Seeing the many classic Land Cruisers is an added bonus, as is engaging in jovial Toyota truck discussions with owners of the varying types of rigs. 🇺🇸

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Survival Necessities

By Rob Anderson

Visibility dropped to less than 50 yards. Fog moved in making it impossible to see his way out. He had grown up in these mountains, no way he could be lost. The truck had to be just across the creek. Wondering why there wasn't any water in the creek, he surmised it must have dried up. Then he wondered why his truck wasn't where he parked it. He resisted the confession. He had no idea where he was. He panicked. He ran. His pack grew heavy and for a moment he thought about dropping it so he could move faster to the security of his rig. He ran downhill into an open meadow that he was sure led back to the road, only to trip over continuous waves of waist-high deadfall. He had no idea where he was now. The cold sank in along with the realization this was going to be a long night. The fog turned to a light drizzle and then into small ice pellets. His clothes were soaked, his morale diminished. He was alone.



Survival situations don't "just happen." There is usually a path that the accident victim has taken to get to where they are in time and space. An unexpected phone call that interrupts a hiker's packing routine can mean not having a rain jacket when the weather changes. Then the same hiker stays too long sun bathing at a lunch stop, notices storm clouds moving in and gets lost as she hastily makes her way back to her truck. It gets dark faster than she expected and she loses her way back to her rig. Accidents are a combination of events that impact other events. People who love the outdoors die every year following their passion because they are ill prepared. Let's talk about the gear you can take in a small daypack.

Cutting Tool



Of all the survival tools, a knife is the most difficult to replace or replicate. The ability to cut cordage, split wood, carve objects, etc. depends on a good blade.

In Your Pack: A non-folding knife is the first preference for survival. You want a knife that can cut, slice, hack, baton, chop, and take abuse. A carbon steel, full tang blade with a 90 degree spine is preferred. A folding knife is a nice second or back-up knife. Better to have two and lose one, if you lose one you could have none. Also, don't discount a small folding saw in your bag as well. When it comes to chopping versus sawing, chopping burns up to four times the calories you need to preserve.

Fire



Over 700 people in the U.S. die of hypothermia every year. At this point it's up to you and Mother Nature to come to terms in getting flame. Fire is one of the most critical skills you can learn and be prepared to create when faced with adversity. Fire is warmth, a

psychological lift, an ability to purify water, a signal device, and if needed, a means to cook food. Practice skills such as the split-wood, twig, and wet wood fire techniques often so fire making becomes second nature.

In Your Bag: Nothing beats the portability of a ferro rod (such as a Light My Fire) used to create a spark and ignite tinder into a flame. Sure, lighters and matches are convenient, but a ferro rod does not take on moisture like matches (even water-proof) and is not mechanical like a lighter. You will need something to catch the spark and turn it into a flame. For tinder, carry cotton balls dipped in petroleum jelly in a small metal tin or tin foil and zipper sandwich bag. Throw in a pencil sharpener to quickly create dry tinder for igniting. Add a windproof lighter, birthday gag candles that don't blow out, and a small tin of wood shavings in your daypack.

Water

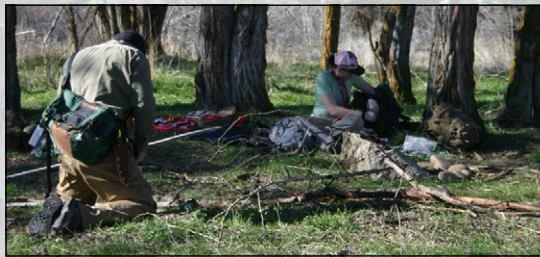


The water you are looking at may look clean and pure, but it most likely isn't. When you start opening your survival kit, things have already gone south. Don't make them worse by ingesting protozoans, bacteria, and other things that cruise in the streams, lakes, and rivers.

In Your Pack: First, go prepared. A hydration bladder-based pack is your best option. It holds up to 100 ounces of water and there is a convenient tube to remind you to stay hydrated. Second, when you run out of life-liquid, fill it up using a water filtering system. A ceramic or paper-based water filter is best for ensuring water is free from Giardia, protozoa,

and bacteria. Giardia is a microscopic parasite that causes diarrhea, something to avoid when already in a dire situation. Filters are lightweight and easy to pack. Word of caution, you don't have to drink the water to get Giardia, simply getting it in your ears, eyes, nose, or mouth can cause illness.

Shelter



It can only take three hours of exposure to extreme elements for you to give up the ghost. Whether it's heat, rain, snow, wind, or temperature, you have to get out of the elements. A proper shelter alerts rescuers as your location when they start looking for you.

In Your Pack: A heavy duty Mylar space-blanket is worth its weight in gold. It can be used in the winter to retain up to 75% of your body heat by wrapping it around you. It can double as a tarp to sleep under in hot or cold conditions, and can be used to catch rain water for drinking. Carry one that is either red or orange for ease of spotting. Add black gorilla tape to your kit and when in trouble, mark it with three Xs. You are not advertising any kind of backwoods entertainment, rather you are signaling rescuers. Don't forget to throw in 50 feet of 550/para-cord to tie up your tarp.

Food



OK Daniel Boone, here's hoping you were ready for adversity and had some pre-packed calories in your bag when you took off. If not you're either going to go hungry or resort to a few field expedient methods to fill your pie hole.

Your Pack: Keep backpacking meals, jerky, granola bars, GORP, or hard candy in your pack. Don't overlook the need to take game. People have survived on small game and fish when food ran out. A small survival-sized fishing kit, slingshot, and snares can get you game, but master each one of these. Go out and fish with the kit you put in your pack, most likely you will then modify it. Snares are easy to make, but in reality it's a game of chance and you need 10–15 snares to increase your odds. A slingshot is the most practical game taker, easy to use and if you run out of ammunition, there is plenty on the ground in most environments. Last, learn how to clean and cook game.

Signal



Most victims fail to call for help when they actually need it. Don't be shy about calling for rescue and don't wait until the last minute, by then it's too late. Working on search and rescue teams I always preferred to rescue a haphazard mountain biker than do a body recovery.

In Your Pack: Signal mirror, emergency whistle, and pen flares should be a part of your signal kit. Learn the right methods for using a center-style mirror and stay away from

any whistles that have a ball or pea in them, your breath will freeze it and make it useless in the winter. Some day packs now come with a whistle embedded in the buckles and a few companies that make sparking devices to create fire have also integrated emergency whistles into the handle. Don't forget to throw in an orange bandana or fleece hat to aid in rescuers seeing you. A DeLorme, SPOT or other satellite communicator is well worth the cost of the device and subscription service.

First Aid



In Your Pack: While out exploring trails or tracking down game, your risk of injury changes and you could find yourself alone. Cuts, abrasions, stings or sprains are common injuries. A solid backpacking first aid kit should do the trick. Here we are talking cuts, scrapes, blisters, and stings. You need something to treat minor wounds and not bear attacks.

In surviving a catastrophe there are really three groups of people and they fit into the 10-80-10 rule. The first 10 percent of people simply don't survive an accident. The last 10 percent seem to just make it through no matter what. The middle 80 percent are those who survive if prepared, but become a detriment to others if unprepared. Go and explore the world, but be prepared to wind up in a real world survival experience. Train now, pick your gear, learn how to use it. Keep simple rules in mind like letting others know where you are going and when you will be back. 🐾

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Reviewed: 2 Way Air

By Jim Akers

Additional photos by Bob Holliday



After a beautiful day on the trail with the Las Vegas FJ Club on the Sunday before SEMA 2014, I am looking around the parking lot and everyone is hunched over airing up and checking their PSI. That is, except one person. I watched at him enjoying an adult beverage and still socializing with his hood up and these hoses attached to all of his tires. I immediately stopped what I was doing and went to investigate. Well, his air compressor is running, he is not hunched over watching each individual tire, and he still has a smile on his face. What is wrong with this picture?

He starts to tell me about the 2Way air system that he came across at a local 4x4 meet and greet in Vegas, purchased, and installed. It seemed simple enough and after explaining how it works, I was a more than a little intrigued. It is a manifold system that runs to a whip connector near each wheel. You connect each whip to each tire valve stem, turn on your compressor (in his case), and sit back and watch one gauge controlling all four tires. You can even install a pop off valve in the system so when you reach your preset inflation level, the valve pops and you are done.



When he was done inflating his tires we looked around and just about everyone with us still had one if not two tires left to air up. Running through my head was the fact that he was done faster than almost everyone there but he was also not complaining about a sore back or achy knees. He just walked around his FJ and disconnected his whips and put them in a nice little storage bag, closed up his hood and asked where everyone wanted to go for dinner. I think somebody might be on to something here. When we were about to leave he gave me the company info from 2-Way Air and told me that they would have a booth at SEMA that week.



Just about every product ever created or any new way of doing something stems from someone getting frustrated with the way things have always been done. With that being said, one of the biggest frustrations that come with off-roading is the time and pain that come with airing up and airing down. Pat Hickman shares that frustration, well he used to.

Pat was tired of running around his Toyota Rock Buggy and deflating each tire, one at a time, and then inflating them in the same fashion when it was time call it a day. So instead of just gritting his teeth and doing this routine over and over again, he decided he would come up with a real solution to this annoyance. You see, Pat is the founder and engineer behind Rock Smasher Engineering (a rock buggy suspension company). Pat came up with his “whip and manifold” system to create a way for us to deflate and inflate all of our tires equally and efficiently.



The 2-Way air system features flexible, easy installation along with durable and reliable materials. The polyurethane tubing in the kit (3/8-inch for the manifold and 1/4-inch for the whips) are chosen for being more flexible and durable than a nylon or rubber tubing. Push-to-Connect fittings make assembly simple and straight forward. Where Teflon is needed, they come already wrapped. The fittings for the whips are a quick connector to make connecting the Shrader valve for the tires to the brass inflation valves clean and simple. The kit

works great with every possible way to air up. You can use onboard or non-fixed air compressors, as well as CO2. The 2-Way Air Kit can be ordered by number of axles on your vehicle; two wheels for a trailer, four wheels for a car or truck, all the way up to 10 tires on an RV or semi tractor and trailer. Installation is even flexible; you can mount all of the pieces where they work best for you whether in the cabin, under the hood, or in a trailer.



2-Way Air was created not only for the off-road community, but is used with RV's and 18-wheelers just the same. Though the users may vary, the usability is equally simple and straight forward.

This is one of those products that once you see it in use, you must own a kit yourself and once you use it you will ask yourself what took you so long to install it! 🇺🇸



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OUTFIT FOR ADVENTURE



Olivia & Her FJC

By Daniel Markofsky



Olivia and her FJ Cruiser met in the summer of 2007 while she was attending Ohio State. The FJ served mainly as a means to get to and from class, and the ice rink where she

played Division I. During the summer months, her hockey commitment was at a minimum and Olivia enjoyed trips camping and fishing near the Columbus area. After graduating, Olivia and her boyfriend, Ben, packed the FJ and headed west to Colorado, to satisfy their love for the Rocky Mountains and the FJ's true potential. So thoughtful!



In their early off-roading adventures Olivia made her best efforts on the trails with her stock FJ and no experience. (Haven't we all been there.) Olivia and Ben headed to the Great Sand Dunes for one of their first off-roading trips in the spring of 2010. Olivia researched Colorado's Medano Pass 4x4 road and decided to give it a try. She recalled reading about airing down the tires, but wasn't sure how to air back up, so decided against the idea. A few times Ben got out to help her navigate harder parts of the trail and check the depth of the water crossings. On the last creek crossing they came across

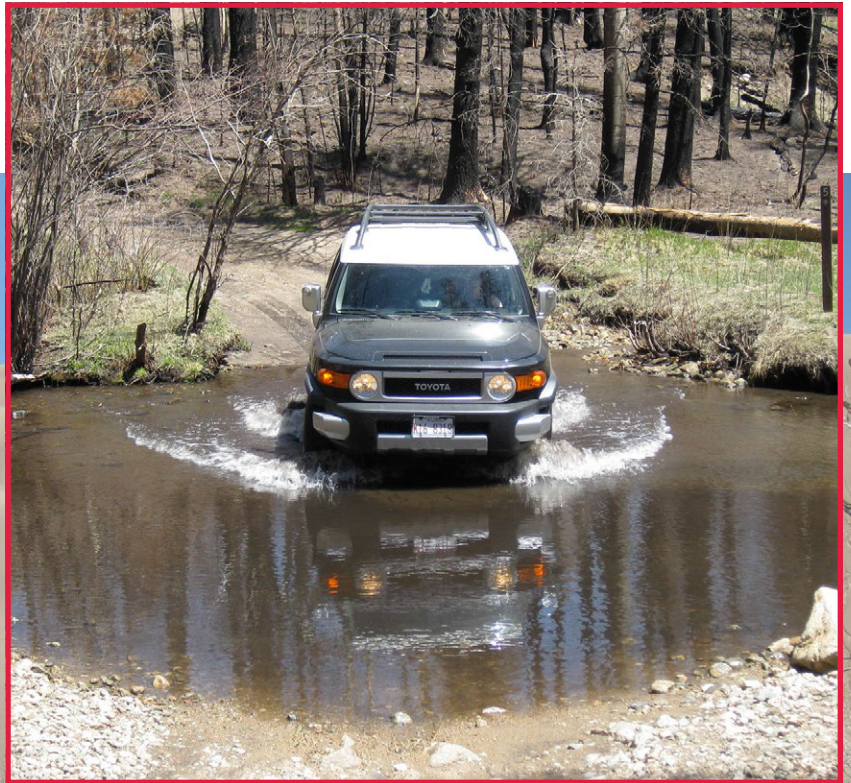
a Jeep Cherokee stranded in the water. Ben tied his trusty nylon rope to the back of the FJ and after a few attempts Olivia was able to pull out the Jeep.

Over the years of trials and tribulations Olivia and Ben have slowly started perfecting the art of car camping. They now have a Rubbermaid tub that serves as a bug-out box for the camping and fishing gear and doubles as a table. The tub houses reusable plastic camp dishes, a jet boil, a 3 person tent, sleeping bags and pads, head lamps, and of course a pudgy pie maker. Another essential is the collapsible propane grill with wheels, AKA the Sea Turtle. The grill surface allows for more sophisticated menu options than an open fire and keeps within regulations during times of high fire danger. Typical meal favorites include Skyline Chili Mac, homemade breakfast burritos, and shish kabobs.

After 5 years of keeping to easy/moderate 4x4 trails, Olivia is ready for more difficult terrain.

As a licensed insurance professional, Olivia is also ready to be more prepared. However, as the FJ serves as one of their primary vehicles, so they have no interest in a monster truck build. A recovery strap or winch seems to be a constant need during their past trips and would be good to have. Protecting the undercarriage is a priority. Yet they also can't have any modifications that increase the vehicles overall height as it is already a tight clearance in their garage. Potentially they could use a different model of ski rack to add more room to grow vertically.

Let's follow Olivia, Ben, their canine friend, and the FJ (How can it not have a name?! Even the grill has a name!) as they explore available options and add to their own capabilities and those of the FJ. 🐾



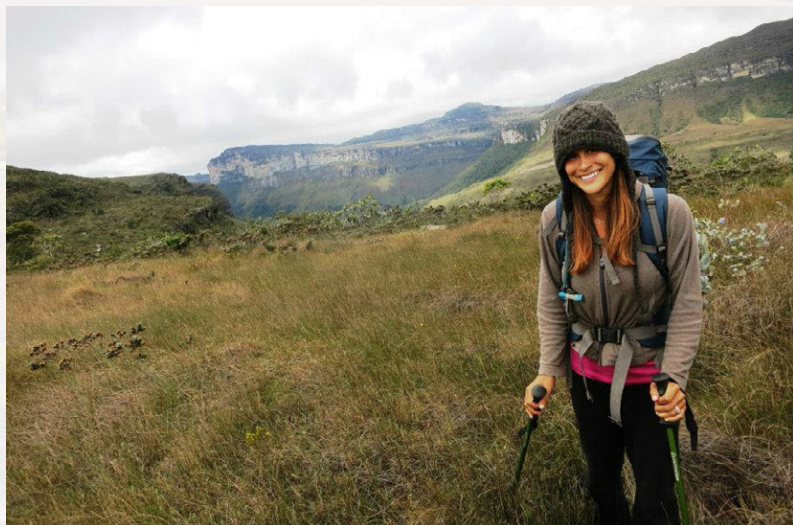
Home on the Highway—Part 2

By Phillip Jones, Photo provided by James Hart

In 2011, James Hart and Lauren Neel took off from San Francisco and headed south of the border seeking adventure in their 1st generation 4Runner. TCT Magazine interviewed them about their fantastic journey. This is the 2nd of a 2-part series. See the January 2015 issue for Part 1.



James hanging out over Cacheoirra Valley in Chapada Diamantina National Park, Brazil.



Lauren hiking in beautiful Vale do Pati, in Chapada Diamantina National Park, Brazil.

What were your most dangerous moments?

While in Colombia, we read about a tough mountainous track. This mud road, the width of a large truck, is carved out of the side of a jungle-covered mountain. Adorned by waterfalls and rivers, the road is frequented by rain and fog. Everyone told us to avoid this route, so it was obvious we had to check it out. The steep and winding road was slick with mud and the edge was a 700-foot sheer drop with no guardrails.

Adding to the challenge, it is a primary logging route for illegal wood harvesting. Expect to encounter a huge semi-truck barreling down the mountain loaded to the brim with illegal timber. Might-makes-right on this mountain and since there is not enough room for two trucks, it becomes a scramble to find some way to allow the bigger truck to pass. At times we were reversing down a slippery mud mountain road hugging the cliff edge. Occasionally we could see below a truck shattered into a pieces with cargo flung across the jungle canopy.

It was during one of these maneuvers we experienced the most dangerous time of our entire trip. We were coming around a bend when we saw a huge truck barreling down on us. It was approaching quickly and we did not have time to back-up or hunt for a new spot. I quickly jerked us over to the side of the road, yelling for Lauren to stick her head out the window and tell me how much room I had. She said she could not see any road! In this instant the truck passed within 2-inches of hitting our front bumper. It actually clipped my side-mirror as it roared past, not slowing even a bit. Had that truck been any closer, there is no doubt we would have been knocked off that cliff. I would love to drive that road again ... it was epic.



This road in Columbia is where James and Lauren had their scariest ordeal.

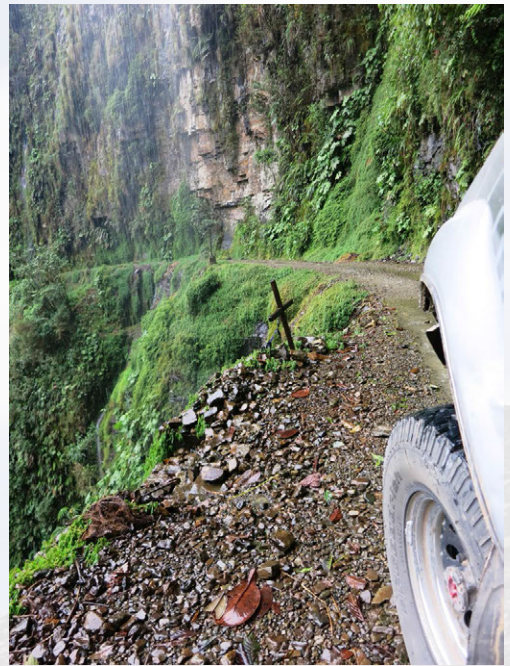
We also traveled on the infamous Bolivian Death Road, where we spotted many

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I would love to drive that
road again ... it was epic.
.....

memorial crosses. Traffic is lessened since a new highway was recently built. Despite a lack of traffic, it was still pretty sketchy with the fog so thick, I could not see past the hood.



The treacherous one-lane Death Road in Bolivia looks inviting.



The notorious Death Road in Bolivia was riddled with crosses.

Did the 4Runner cause you any moments of panic?

While in the beautiful San Guillermo National Park in Argentina, we made it across a deep river crossing, but the truck stalled on the other side. Water got in the



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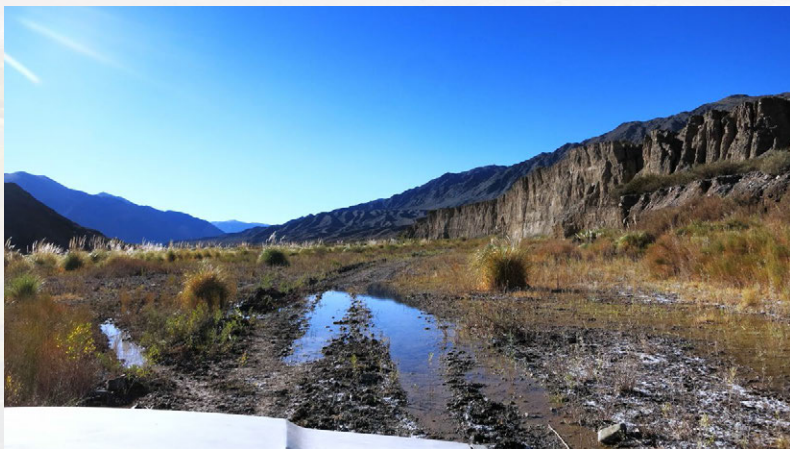
Meeting up with other folks who share similar interests, mindsets, and lifestyle is always a welcomed social engagement.

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airbox. Fearing hydrolock, I removed the intake, filter, and MAF and let everything dry out. After about 30 minutes, I reinstalled everything and it started right up. Have we mentioned we love this truck? It never lets us down. We camped out in the park for a few days, never seeing another soul. Park rangers informed us the park only gets about seven visitors per month!



With air intake disassembled, James inspects the air filter after the engine stalled following a river crossing in San Guillermo.



The rarely visited San Guillermo National Park.

In a remote park along the ridge of the Andes called Paque Lauca, Chile, we saw alpaca, flamingos, and hot springs while we bounced along because we lost a shock mount bolt somewhere on this trail. It was a week before we found a replacement.

Another incident was while driving on the beach in Brazil. We got stuck in the sand and the tide was coming up. We could see where it breaks on the sandbar. Ended up cutting to the left and mashing it, the sandbar broke way and I fell down that berm. Eventually we made it above the tide line.



Stuck in the sand as the tide began to rise.

How many other overland adventurers have you come across?

We have met many fellow adventurers from around the world: Germany, France, Switzerland, South Africa, Czech Republic, Australia, Holland, Argentina, Mexico, United States, Canada, Japan, Brazil, and others. The Pan-American Highway has popular campsites everyone goes to and it is easy to spot other overland vehicles on the road. Meeting up with other folks who share similar interests, mind sets, and lifestyle is always a welcomed social engagement. It can be difficult to explain to someone back home the intricacies and quirks of extended living inside of a small truck, or the nuances of how to deal with an officer looking for a bribe, but fellow overland folk can relate.



Camping and traveling with fellow Toyota overland couple, Jed and Megan, of Adventure Americas.

From a cultural awareness standpoint, have your interactions with the various people you've met along the way been beneficial?

In America we are constantly blasted by the media, friends, and family that anywhere south of the border is a dangerous, desolate, wasteland—full of wild criminals wanting to kidnap, torture, and execute us. We were a bit apprehensive at first. My research from dozens of other overland travelers assured us we were going to be fine. Yet, we were still scared. How could the mind set in the U.S. be so inaccurate about a place that is right next door?

We crossed the border fully expecting chaos and mayhem. What we found was a polite guard who assisted us and happily welcomed us to his country. Within the first week in Mexico, we had made new friends, visited beautiful places, and eaten delicious foods. We found the people to be so warm, friendly, and giving. We saw no signs of the malicious violence we believed pervaded the entire country. This continued on and on. Danger and violence is out there; however, we have found that if you do not seek trouble, you'll be okay. Perhaps it is a bit of hippy philosophy, but we found that people are mostly good. Sure, we encountered some who made us wary, but for the most part, the people have been great.

As far as cultural awareness, before this trip I couldn't spot Ecuador on a map. Now I know the entire history of Ecuador, the current situation involving development of their rainforest, regional

dialects and accents, geography, and the best place to get a cocktail in Quito.

What destinations are next?

We are considering an East Coast trip to Canada, then Alaska, and back to California—thus completing the entire Pan-American Highway. After that, make some more money and start planning the next big trip. Australia, South East Asia, Africa? Who knows? It's a big world out there and we plan to drive the whole damn thing!

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We found the people to be so warm, friendly, and giving.
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James and Lauren just outside of Sao Bento Do Sul, Brazil.

These photos captured
some of the most scenic
places James and Lauren
experienced...



Chapada Diamantina National Park, Brazil.



Paracas, Peru.



Hierva el Agua, Oaxaca, Mexico.



Valle de La Luna, Bolivia.



Perito Moreno Glacier in Los Glaciares National Park, Argentina.



On the high altitude pass (14,000-ft) from San Pedro Atacama, Chile to Argentina.



Sand dunes in Huanchaco, Peru. 🇵🇪





SUMMER ROAD TRIPS

Three Must-Visit National Parks

By Katie Levy

With warm weather just around the corner, it's time to start planning summer road trips. And when it comes satisfying your thirst for adventure, national parks are among the best road trip destinations in North America. Getting to some of our nation's best known parks is half the fun, and once you're there, many offer plenty of roads to travel and explore.



Mount Rainier National Park—Paradise

Mount Rainier National Park, Washington

<http://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/maps.htm>

Mount Rainier National Park is home to a towering active volcano, which also happens to be the most glaciated peak in the contiguous United States. But that's not the only reason to plan a trip there. The park is a two hour drive southeast from Seattle, two and a half hours northeast from Portland, and has five separate entrances. Once you're in, the park's 147 miles of roads are narrow and winding, but ideal for road trip exploration.

Coming in the Nisqually entrance at the southwest part of the park will take you along the Nisqually River to Longmire, where lodging and camping options are available. Continuing on, you'll pass the Cougar Rock campground then arrive at aptly-

named Paradise. Paradise is home to a beautiful visitor center and is the jumping off point for many Mount Rainier summit attempts. After a visit to Paradise, the park roads will bring you to the Stevens Canyon entrance and the nearby Grove of the Patriarchs. Continuing north gives you the option of visiting the park's White River entrance and the Sunrise Visitor Center.

When you're not on the road, be sure to go for a hike on the park's 260 miles of maintained trails. The Nisqually Vista Trail, Rampart Ridge,

Mount Rainier National Park



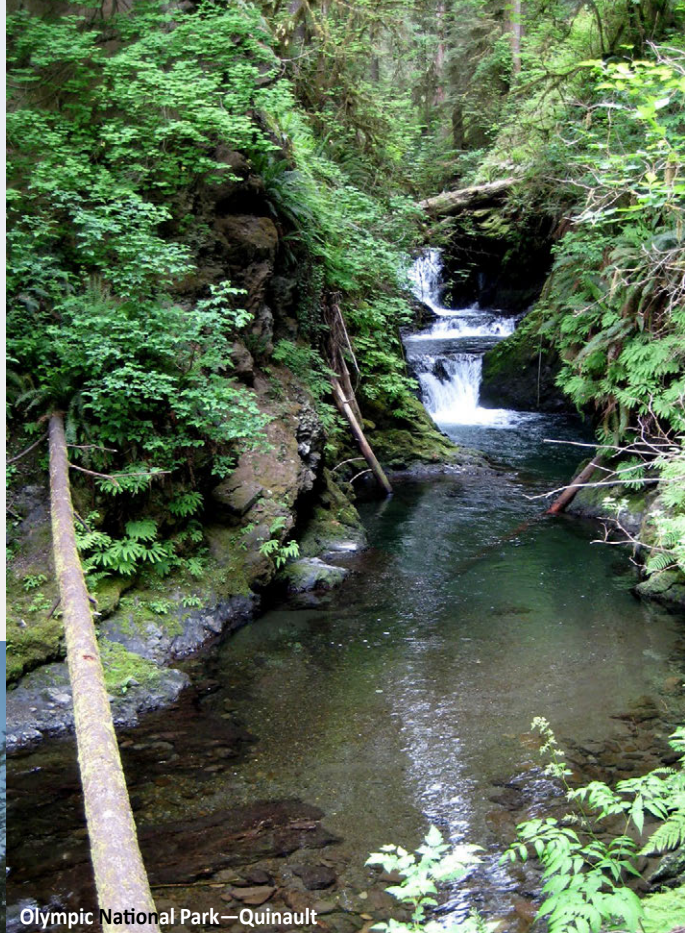
and Panorama Point are ideal day hiking options, but be sure to check trail conditions when you arrive.

Olympic National Park, Washington

<http://www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/gettingaround.htm>

When it comes to ideal parks to drive around in, Olympic National Park is near the top of the list by virtue of the fact that it is within a day's drive of a major metropolitan area, visitors can see stunning Pacific Ocean shoreline, old growth forests, and wild glaciated peaks. U.S. Highway 101 makes the entire Olympic Peninsula accessible, including must-see destinations like Hurricane Ridge, Lake Crescent, Kalaloch, Sol Duc, and the Quinault Rainforest. Though circumnavigating the peninsula can be done in two days, you'll want to take your time.

Drive an hour south of Seattle to Olympia to pick up Highway 101, or take the ferry to Bainbridge Island and head west from there.



Olympic National Park—Kalaloch



Olympic National Park—Quinault

Circumnavigating the peninsula counter clockwise, make a left up Hurricane Ridge Road for your first stop. In good weather, the views are unparalleled. Next, follow Highway 101 to Lake Crescent. Admire the beautiful blue water, visit Marymere Falls, and spend the night at Lake Crescent Lodge, the Log Cabin Resort, or the Fairholme campground. Continue to follow Highway 101 west to the Pacific

Coast, stopping at Kalaloch and Ruby Beach. They're popular destinations in the park, and with good reason. Kalaloch hosts a lodge and campgrounds for overnight stays as well as numerous hiking trails. Keep following Highway 101 south for 30 miles to Lake Quinault for more stunning views and lodging options as well as camping and hiking.

Acadia National Park, Maine

<http://www.nps.gov/acad/index.htm>

Though America's western national parks are spectacular road trip destinations, so is Maine's Acadia National Park. It's smaller than both Mount Rainier and Olympic National Parks by a long shot, but what Acadia lacks in size, it makes up for in true beauty. Just a four and a half hour drive from Boston, Acadia's Park Loop Road's 27 miles give visitors beautiful coastal views and access to

Acadia National Park—Isle Au Haut



Acadia National Park—Jordan Pond



quiet forests. The park is a popular destination in the summer months, and with good reason.

Access to Park Loop Road is possible via a number of intersecting

thoroughfares on Mt. Desert Island. Coming in via Paradise Hill Road to the north gives you immediate access to the Hulls Cover Visitor Center. Follow the road south to Park Loop Road and head southwest for quick access to Cadillac Mountain, a must-see destination in Acadia National Park. Visiting for sunrise or sunset is highly recommended. After driving up to Cadillac Mountain, head back down to Park Loop Road and continue south to the Jordan Pond House and enjoy popovers on the lawn.

In addition to Cadillac Mountain and Jordan Pond, the Bass Harbor Head Light, Isle Au Haut, Otter Cliffs, and Thunder Hole are all must-visit Acadia destinations. Hiking trails like the Jordan Pond Path and Bubble Rock Trail are ideal moderate difficulty hiking options, and if you don't have a fear of heights, the Beehive Trail is a must. Biking, rock climbing, fishing, and horseback riding are also great options for getting the most out of your visit. 🍷



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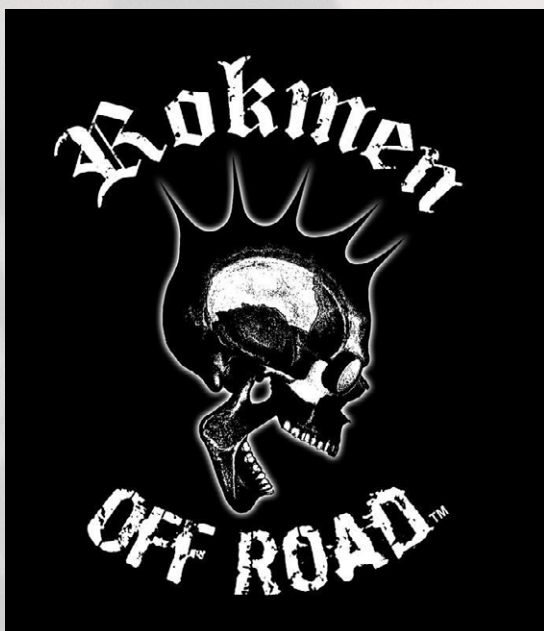
Introducing

Rokmen OFF ROAD

By Bob Holliday



Stopping by our friends at Rokmen



To some of you, Rokmen Offroad may seem like a new name, however, these guys are anything but new to the off-road industry. Dave and Jeff have nearly 30 years of combined off-road industry experience and bring with them over a decade of high quality fabrication and knowledge to the Toyota market.

Over the years Rokmen has made a name for themselves in the Jeep market by providing high quality, high performance suspension components, armor and many other aftermarket products over a wide variety of Jeep platforms. Looking to spread their attention to detail and pursuit of providing high quality products for competitive pricing, Rokmen has begun to spread their reach into the Toyota, Dodge and Ford markets.



Dave monitoring CNC projects in progress.

Around the same time Dave's chocolate Lab was brought into this world, Dave and Jeff gave life to Rokmen Offroad. What started with an engine swap back in 2002, Dave and Jeff have been building their business to become a successful Colorado-based fab shop and nation-wide manufacturer of high quality products for a variety of vehicle manufacturers in the off-road market.

When asked why Dave and Jeff decided to make the move from their well-established place in the Jeep industry, they mentioned that the overall goal is to provide high quality products to the average Joe, for reasonable prices. They want to make sure that their customer, no matter the make or purpose of their vehicle, has the components necessary to build a functional and reliable rig.

Forged in Colorado, Rokmen uses 7075 aluminum, which has nearly double the tensile strength of the more common 6061 aluminum, and in turn, brings added strength to their ever expanding product line. CNC machined with quality hand polished finishes, Rokmen ensures their products don't just look good, but also meet their high standards set after set, for every product offered. For their suspension components, Rokmen has teamed up with Currie and are utilizing Johnny Joints in their links for Jeep, FJ Cruiser and 4Runner platforms.



A look at ways Rokmen looks to improve the products that go on your rig. Factory control arm versus components that make up the new Toytec and Rokmen control arms for the FJC and 4Runner.

What sets Rokmen apart from the rest of the crowd? "Our passion is in our products." Dave and Jeff are able to pay close attention to the details that distinguish a good product from a high quality product. "It's the little things," Dave mentioned, that keeps him continually looking to better their products, picking apart their own products, always looking for ways in which to make them better. Their quality control allows them to offer the same

high quality, time and time again, giving the customers a product they can rely on for years to come.

Even though Rokmen has been expanding greatly into the manufacturing side of the industry, they still haven't left their roots behind. Each time I go back to their shop, they always have a full bay full of customer rigs looking to get the Rokmen touch. Dave is the mastermind behind many of the CNC productions, while Jeff works his magic on the many build projects that come in and out of the shop.

What can we expect next to come out of the Rokmen team? With the help of key partnerships around the industry like Toytec Lifts, they will continue to push themselves to provide high quality products for your next project; helping you build a functional and reliable vehicle for both on and off-road domination. With no need at this time to expand vastly, Rokmen plans to remain a small Colorado fab shop while leaving a large footprint on the market, offering high quality manufacturing for their industry partners. With their eye on creating their own shock component line, A-arms and link joints for a variety of Toyota platforms, keep an eye on these guys as they'll be bringing some magic to the market that we'll all want to get our hands on.

Follow Rokmen's journey on Facebook and check out more on their company and products at www.rokmen.com. Rokmen's craftsmanship can also found on www.toyteclifts.com and Toytec's ever growing product base for our Toyota Cruisers and Trucks. 🇺🇸





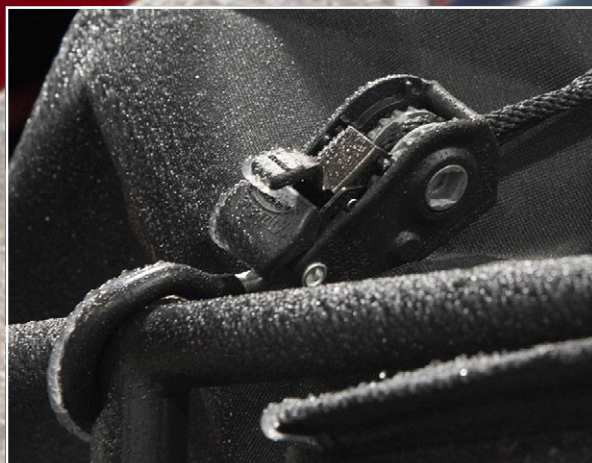
Product Review: Quickie Tie-Down Ratchet Rope

By Phillip Jones

Auto part and giant retail stores offer tie-down ratchet straps at varying lengths and colors. While these certainly work, there are some constraints and issues. Try to shorten the strap by winding it too tight, and you'll quickly discover the frustration of trying to unwind the jammed strap. The range in length is limited, so you need to own multiple sizes. The mechanism to loosen the ratchet feels like a guillotine against your fingers.

While at SEMA, we discovered the Ratcheting Rope Tie-Down at the Quickie Tie-Down Enterprises booth. No worries of going too tight since the rope length is up to 12 feet. The ratchet is easy on the fingers and a breeze to use. Applying tension is easy: pull on the loose portion, then use the ratchet to remove any slack, or use a socket wrench on either side of the ratchet. To release the tension, press the release tab on the ratchet handle and rotate the handle backwards.

I recently used these ratchet ropes in 20-degree weather while driving through a 7-hour ice storm, and again on my Big Bend National Park overland trip for securing luggage to the roof rack. I also used them for tying down heavy loads in the bed of a Tacoma. With the strength and durability tested in scenarios typical of Toyota owners, these performed very well.





Advantages:

- Working load limit is 225 lbs.
- Four convenient ways of applying tension.
- 12 feet of rope is more than enough for most scenarios.
- No jamming possible, unlike ribbon straps that jam easily.
- Hooks on each end are big and easy to attach to supports.

The size of the product I used was 1/4-inch, but a 3/8-inch version with a working load limit of 650 lbs. is also available.

1/4" Ratcheting Rope Tie-Down

Part Number: 00051

The 1/4" Loadmaster Ratchet Tie-Down

<http://quicketiedown.com/14-ratcheting-rope-tie-down/>

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