

# FJC MAGAZINE



APRIL 2013 • VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 2





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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

### Busy times for sure!

You may have noticed this issue is a bit tardy. We strive to publish on the first day of the quarter, but sometimes life gets in the way. Our family has been fully taken care of, so I'm happy to present the April 2013 issue for your enjoyment!

I'm so excited to announce that we have a new Associate Editor: Long time FJC fanatic and overland enthusiast, Paul Thompson from the Last Great Road Trip! Of course you've read Paul's great content before, so join us in officially welcoming him to the team!

To say that we have a busy spring & early summer would be an understatement. If you missed the news, Angie is expecting our baby girl in early July (our FJ Summit attendance is TBD), so we're busy preparing for the new bundle of joy.

Before then though, you can find Jim & I in Sedona in two weeks for a Vehicle Based Survival course with Barlow Jeep School. Jim will also be manning the FJC TRD for Cruise Moab this year, so say hi if you see him around Moab!

Mid-May will take the entire team down to Mormon Lake once again for Overland Expo. Join us in the FJC & Tacoma Mag camping area right next to the action - e-mail us or send a message on Facebook for details. It's going to be an amazing trip!

We're stoked for what the rest of 2013 has to offer, and can't wait to see everyone on the trail!

Until next time, Stay the Trail, Tread Lightly, and Have Fun!

Shane



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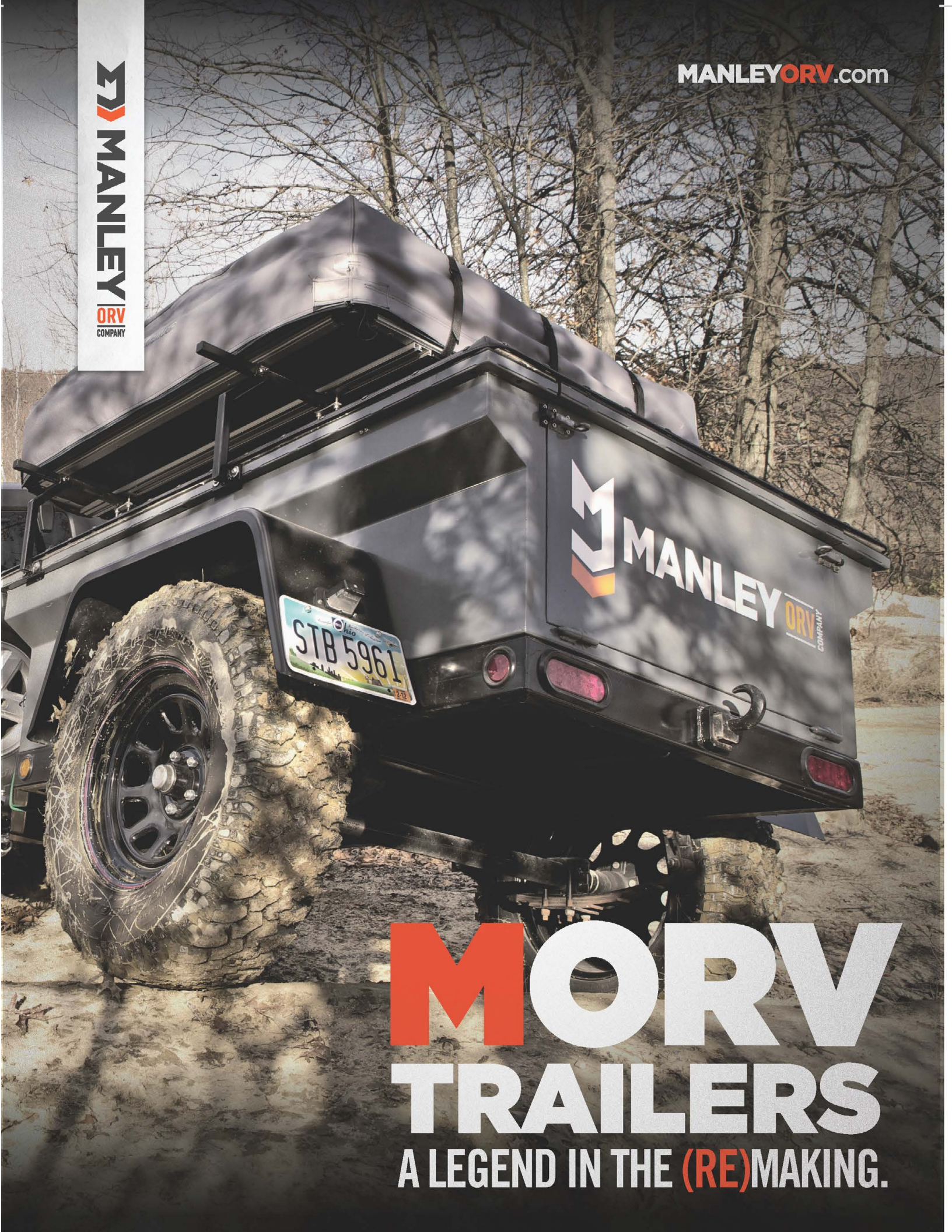
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# New & Noteworthy

## Just Differentials

### Nitro Gear & Axle R&Ps for FJ Cruisers

If you've fitted oversized tires you are likely experiencing a huge loss in performance and fuel economy. Nitro Gear has created a remedy with the industry's only aftermarket Ring & Pinion package for the FJC (and Tacoma & 4runner). The benefits can be huge: improved low-end torque, fuel economy and better acceleration.

Nitro Ring & Pinions are manufactured in the best factories, using computer controlled heat treating and machining process. This ensures that quality meets or exceeds the OEM parts that Toyota owners have grown to love. Nitro Gear & Axle offers Ring & Pinion sets in 4.56 & 4.88 ratios, as well as installation kits, Heavy Duty Axle Shafts, Solid Preload Spacers, and more.

SOURCE: [JustDifferentials.com](http://JustDifferentials.com)



## DIY Hotbox From A/T Overland

As you may have read in the March issue of Tacoma Magazine, we are very interested in the DIY Hotbox furnace kit from A/T Overland.



Well, as we were going to print we have a kit on the Fedex truck from Arizona to Colorado! The kit includes all the pieces & parts needed to build a portable furnace for our MORV & CVT setup.

Mario over at A/T said it will take 'a good part of the day' to get this up & running, so stay tuned to our Facebook feed for info on the build. We'll be knocking it out very soon. Full coverage in the next issue of Tacoma magazine!

SOURCE: [AdventureTrailers.com](http://AdventureTrailers.com)



# EVENTS

Lone Star Toyota Jamboree  
May 3-5 013  
Gilmer, TX

37th Annual Mud N Yer Eye Frolic  
April 26-28 2013  
Hollister Hills, CA

Cruise Moab 2013  
May 1-5 2013  
Moab, UT

22nd Annual  
Great Smokey Mountain Trail Ride  
May 13-18 2013  
Oliver Springs, TN

25th Annual Rubithon  
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Coal Mine Cruiser Classic  
July 17-20 2013  
Rausch Creek Off-Road Park, Joliet, PA

Black Hills-Cruiser Classic  
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# NEW SHOES FROM DISCOUNT TIRE



As part of our Extreme Make-over FJC project, and with about 45,000mi on our last set of tires, we decided it was time for an upgrade. If you remember last time we were trying to select tires (in 2009/2010), we had a hard time deciding which to go with. Luckily this time there wasn't much discussion, since the tire we've dreamed about had finally been released.

When the Nitto Trail Grappler first came out sizes were very limited, specifically the 16" size. We had to run with the stock-size 285/70/16 tires the first time around. Those 32" tires worked well, but didn't look



'quite right' on the TRD, especially after we installed Bushwacker fender flares.

When we contacted Discount Tire Direct for a new set of meats, we were excited to see that the coveted 285/75/16 Nitto Trail Grapplers were available and in stock! We ordered 5 tires for the FJC and two more (with outstanding Level 8 Tracker wheels) for our new Manley ORV trailer (See page 8) since we wanted everything to match.

The tires shipped quickly, as they always do from DTD, and our favorite UPS driver dropped them off a few days later. Of course 5 tires at the house doesn't do me much good, and the MORV hadn't arrived yet, so





I had to enlist the help of everyone's favorite Tacoma Mag Managing Editor Jim Akers to get the tires over to my local Discount Tire shop for the install. Three hours later and our TRD FJC was sitting pretty on 33" shoes.

These tires are as awesome as the last set we had, but with just a little more awesome on all sides. The 285/75 size really does fill out the fender wells

better, and the truck even still fits in the garage with about 1/16" of an inch to spare. While we haven't had these in the muck or rocks yet, there is no doubt performance



will be fantastic. We sold the old set (with about 15% tread life left) to our buddy Tim for his T100, so we'll be able to keep track of them until they're fully worn out.

We can't wait to see everyone on the trail, make sure you check out the latest from Nitto Tire & DTD when you see us!

**SOURCE: DiscountTireDirect.com**

# Fort's TOYOTA OF PEKIN





# Manley ORV Trailer Introduction

By Shane Williams



**W**ith a growing family and publication business (did you know we publish a Tacoma Magazine?), space in the FJC has been getting short for a while. Combined with our love for the CVT Roof Top Tent, but disdain for packing it up every day to go play, the need for an adequate trailer quickly became clear.

You may remember we tested the Ruger Trailer last year (including taking it to Ouray), but it lacked several standard features that we decided were requirements for any off road trailer (ORT) we would haul around the southwest. The Ruger was a little small, didn't offer a standard rack option for the RTT, and the \$275 small tailgate option was less than ideal. It's a great budget trailer, but just didn't meet our needs.

Luckily all of our requirements were met last October when Josh Manley launched Manley ORV. Unlike many ORT

manufacturers, Josh decided to do something a little different with his trailers. He would simply offer three versions, in two different 'finishes' that all include great standard features. His three models: Original, Utility, and Explore include a 'military style' powder coated box trailer, LED lighting in one style, stainless steel hardware, a really cool tailgate design, a plethora of tie







down points, and a receiver tongue as well as a receiver in the rear of the trailer. See [ManleyORV.com](http://ManleyORV.com) for a full list of standard features.

The two different 'finishes' is where Manley really thinks outside the box. The Economy finish is perfect for budget-minded people who need to get into a trailer for the least amount of cash. These trailers are assembled in the US from foreign sourced tubs and frames. For \$1,500 more, the Elite finish is 100% fabricated and built in the USA, for those able and willing to support 100% Made in the USA products. Josh put together a short YouTube video showing the differences between the finishes. Check it out [HERE](#).

Since the primary purpose of our trailer will be as an ORT, we opted for the Explore Model that includes an aluminum lid and tall rack. The curb weight on this model is 850 lb. with a 2,000 lb. GVWR, so after the ~150 lb. RTT we have about 1,000 lb. for payload. That should be enough to haul the piles of gear we normally travel 'lightly' with.

We originally planned a quick trip to Kansas City to meet Josh and pickup the trailer, but time got away from us so when it was ready (we customized the wheels & tires to match our FJC) we had it shipped. In the end we're glad we opted for shipping so we got to see the detail that goes into packing a MORV for shipping. Not only is the trailer stretch wrapped to the pallet, but there are straps everywhere holding the trailer down. They bolt the foot of the trailer jack to the pallet, cover the wheels and protect all the corners with Styrofoam before wrapping. You can tell the artists at MORV love their work and want to make sure it arrives in perfect condition.

The little details on the Explore trailer are really what get me. The bed of the trailer comes with a nice rubber mat, and the tongue includes anti-skid coating. The trailer jack is easily removable, MORV uses safety cables instead of chains, and even uses cables on the tailgate,







all of this to keep your trailer quiet and annoyance-free on the trail. The lid struts seemed very heavy when closing until we installed the tent—now it opens and closes perfectly. You do have to lift the lid to open & close the tailgate, which is a great security feature even if it's not the most convenient. It's also nice to have a large tailgate to help easily slide larger items in and out of the trailer with much less lifting.

This is a great starter trailer that won't remain stock for long. We had Discount Tire Direct ship our Nitto Trail Grapplers and Level 8 Tracker wheels directly to Manley, who installed a Toyota bolt pattern axle on the trailer before he shipped it. The matching tires look great on the black wheels. For future additions, current plans include a tongue box, propane mount, integrated lighting for the tent and accessories, and possibly integrated storage options for smaller items. We'll cover details of those mods in future issues.

As luck would have it, we haven't been able to get the trailer out in the woods for real use before this issue is published, so for now we'll have to settle for a few poser shots. We'll be down to Arizona twice this spring, along with a trip to Moab for Cruise Moab. Of course you'll see the trailer at other events this summer including the FJ Summit in Ouray and Thrill on the Hill in Cloudcroft, NM. ●



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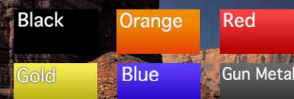
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# LAST GREAT ROAD TRIP: BAJA MEXICO

By Paul Thompson • [www.lastgreatroadtrip.com](http://www.lastgreatroadtrip.com)

Sitting in my office, looking out the window on another rainy northwest day I find my thoughts drifting south... south of the border to Baja Mexico. Sunny beaches, arid deserts, rocky hills and miles of nothing. For me Baja remains one of the last wide open, untamed places left that can still be explored on a budget.

The Baja peninsula extends 775 miles below San Diego separating the Sea of Cortez from the Pacific Ocean. The Baja's personality changes as you descend from the north toward its southern tip. Time actually does slow down, as you become more alive in this magical land of racing legends.



Close to the USA boarder, Baja is dotted by cities such as Tijuana,



Ensenada, Tecate and Mexicali. The economic downturn and constant drug violence reports in the media have driven out the hordes of tourists who once came across the boarder for cheap trinkets and late night parties. But it is not the cities that interest me.

For adventurers, Baja begins about 100 miles or so outside of Ensenada at one of the most famous spots known to racers, Mike's Sky Ranch. The ranch is a secluded, backcountry facility making it a haven for off-roaders. Think rustic with all the comforts including a stream fed pool, hot showers, clean rooms and water you can drink. If you're on a weekend get away this is the perfect place to use as your base. The trails and backroads around the ranch offer all sorts of challenges for anyone willing to explore. The trails change each

year as flash floods reshape the land often requiring you to crawl your way through rock filled dry river beds and up steep embankments to get back out as you find your way around the hills. Other dirt roads in the area allow you to unleash your inner racer, stomping on the skinny peddle and bombing through the desert as fast as your nerves, suspension and wallet will allow. Back at the ranch, after a full day in the dirt, you can enjoy the company of other off roaders at the bar or over the family style steak dinner that comes with the room rate. Life at Mike's Sky Ranch is laid back and on any given weekend it draws off roaders, motorcyclists and pre-runners looking to drive hard and enjoy life.

Although the Mexican government continues to pave Baja, there are still



thousands of miles of dirt roads and two tracks that will take you deep into the heart of Baja. Follow a dirt road south along the Pacific coast and you find little coves and beach communities where surfers, wind boarders and sailors abound. Here you can follow any one of the countless trails that lead down to the beach sand and spend the day or night, away from the crowds surfing, fishing, swimming or just watching the sun set.

Head further south and move inland, the tree covered hills give way to high desert plains. The landscape is spotted with cactus and giant boulders as it takes on a brown hue. Dirt roads through the interior will take you by ranches, working mines and small towns. The rocky dirt roads will test your suspension as miles of washboard ruts heat up your shocks and try their best to rattle every bolt on your rig loose from the frame. While



the dirt roads are jarring, in Baja the paved surfaces present the real perils. Barely wide enough for two vehicles, traffic flies in both directions at 60 mph, 18 wheelers taking their half out of the middle, nonexistent shoulders, blind corners, shear cliffs without guardrails and livestock randomly appearing in the road requires constant vigilance to avoid becoming one of the many roadside memorials that dot the highways.

If Mike's Sky Ranch is laid back, things really slow down once you cross into the depths of central Baja. This is where true solitude can be found. Vultures perch atop 20 foot tall saguaro cactus, livestock carcasses rotting in the sun and the hot breath of Satan blowing in your face remind you that this is an unforgiving land. Break down and you will have a whole new understanding of the term self reliance. Down here pulling two inch cactus thorns out of your tires is the new normal.

At first glance this land appears to have been forsaken by god with no hope of redemption. But look again and you'll see a land filled with beauty and life. Work your way along the Sea of Cortez where isolated bays, such as



Bahia de los Angeles, are filled with the sound of seals barking and gulls calling out from above. Walk along the sand and you will most likely be following tracks of the coyotes who patrol the beaches at night. Sit quietly and watch small crabs scour the sand, pelicans dive for fish or even catch a glimpse of a sea turtle cruising at the surface just off shore. The hard pounding surf of







the Pacific side is replaced by calm, sapphire blue sea water gently lapping at the shore as the tide dances its endless waltz with the moon in the place where dreams come to life.

In Baja California Sur, the southern state of Baja, hard packed, washboard dirt roads give way to long stretches of soft, sandy, road like trails that connect one little fishing village to the next. Crossing the deserted interior this far south provides endless navigational choices as two tracks and trail spurs criss cross, presenting more route options than any map can cover. Depending on the choice you make, a trail may fade out after a mile, only to reemerge a thousand yards further ahead or stop altogether forcing you to





find your own way to the next trail that shows promise of delivering you to your destination. Even driving the main trails presents challenges with patches of axle deep, baby powder fine silt appearing out of no where, capable of holding a rig as tight as any Alabama gumbo mud hole.

Exploring this far south in Baja is truly a unique experience. You are in a place where you will likely only see one or two other people the entire day and that is only if you stop for fuel or cross the main highway. You can spend the entire day retracing a ten mile stretch of a long abandoned road or cross the the entire peninsula coast to coast. The choice is yours.

When you finally reach the southern tip of Baja, cruise ships replace the leaky little fishing skiffs. If you're after luxury to wash off all the hard miles, Cabo is the place, filled with resorts that define rest and relaxation. Driving into any of the hotel courtyards this far south will make you somewhat of a celebrity. Few, if any, of the other guests can even imagine driving down to this costal resort let alone on the dirt trails. But even in the coastal resort towns you will find a little oasis of culture if you explore the back roads of town for eateries, local markets and small cafes.

Throughout Baja the people are warm and friendly. Everyone we met went out of their way to compensate for our nonexistent spanish skills and were genuinely interested in talking with us, providing suggestions for places to explore or must see points of interest.

I really can't talk about exploring Baja without discussing crime and drug violence. Crime in Mexico is serious business and anyone who suggests that safety isn't a legitimate concern is kidding themselves. The most recent State Department travel warning for Mexico, issued in November 2012, has the following segment on safety in northern Baja.

*"You should exercise caution in the northern state of Baja California, particularly at night. For the one-year period ending July 2012, the number of murders in Mexicali increased by 43%, from 127 to 181, over the preceding year. The number of murders in the city of Tijuana was 351 for the same period. In the majority of these cases, the killings appeared to be related to narcotics trafficking. Targeted TCO assassinations continue to take place in Baja California. Turf battles between criminal groups resulted in assassinations in areas of Tijuana frequented by U.S. Citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours. Twenty-five U.S. citizens were the victims of homicide in the state in the 12-month period ending July 2012."*

Most folks who have traveled to Baja agree that the southern part, including cities such as Cabo, La Paz or Todos los Santos, is generally safe. Any international travel (or big city in the USA for that matter) requires some basic cautions. We followed some common sense safety tips and never experienced an issue throughout Baja:

- ★ Don't wander around at night
- ★ Avoid driving at night (this is as much livestock in the road related as crime. We ended up driving into the dark most days but were off the road before 8:30 pm)





- ★ Stay out of the red light districts and leave the bars well before closing
- ★ Don't stand out in a crowd (loud ,drunk, flashing cash, excessive jewelry...)
- ★ Know and follow all the laws, including speed limits
- ★ Pay attention to your surroundings.

Military checkpoints are in place to protect you and reduce the drug trafficking. All the way down the young soldiers would smile and wave us on. Heading north the routine had a little more rigor. We would be asked to step out of the rig as they politely poked through all our gear and spare parts piled in the back. We found a smile and respectful attitude made up for our poor language skills getting us back on our way within a few minutes.

Is Baja dangerous to explore? The best advice I can provide is: off road adventures come with risks: vehicle damage, medical emergencies, criminal risks. If you are not comfortable with any of them consider your adventure and adjust it accordingly. Never put yourself into a position that will exceed your abilities or personal level of comfort. There are plenty of locations to explore, select the one that is right for you.

Baja is hard... but following the Baja1000 race route was one of the most amazing off road adventures I have ever undertaken. We faced stretches that challenged my driving skills, sections that pushed the suspension beyond its limits and the entire adventure tested our navigational skills at every turn. I found solitude, met great people and lived the dream.

If you're looking for off road travel that goes on forever, sunshine, warm beaches and endless adventure, Baja may be just what you're looking for. But for now, staring at the endless grey drizzle outside my window, I can only dream about going back to Baja for one more adventure.



In 2011 driver Paul Thompson and navigator Brad Day left Seattle, WA and headed south to follow the Baja 1000 race course. The team covered the route from Ensenada to Cabo San Lucas in a modified 2007, Toyota FJ Cruiser without the help of any other rigs or support vehicles. Alone, they had to drive, navigate, repair and overcome any obstacles they encountered on their last great road trip. ●





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*Photos: Exploring Egypt by Land Cruiser (Roseann Hanson) and aerial shot of Overland Expo 2012 (Rob Martinson) showing exhibitors, campers, driving and riding courses*



# INSTALL

By Shane Williams  
Photos by Shane Williams & Jim Akers

When the original snorkel was released for the FJ Cruiser, I realized that someday we may want to install that as an option, but I really never liked that design. Something about that giant plastic sticking to the side of the truck, plus drilling a large hole in the fender just never worked for me. Over the years I've seen several DIY options that seemed promising, but I was holding out for something a little different.

As we reported in the last issue, the River Raider Snorkel aims to provide another option for your deep water fording needs. This snorkel has three primary differences from other options



## Snorkel Install

I've seen. First, it's made of steel so it just feels more 'solid. It also doesn't require drilling a fender, but you do have to drill the cowl, which is probably more difficult. Lastly, this snorkel looks more like military style options, which I personally love but others may not.

The install instructions covered each step adequately, although the photos (like most installs) don't always provide enough information. As you can see from our pics, it's extremely difficult to document many of the nuances of an install at this level. This is definitely not a 'beginner' install, and if you're not very comfortable with cutting things off your FJ, I recommend having a professional do the work.

A big question with this install before we even began was the dual battery. Since most dual batteries require custom fabrication for a proper install, it would've been helpful to do the snorkel first. Perhaps then the tray for the battery could be located in the area of the original intake box, since it's eliminated



The finished install





**You WILL break clips ,  
have extras handy**

with this install. Unfortunately we already had the battery done, so I basically just routed the new intake tube over the battery. The tube does contact the battery fully when the hood is closed, but since it's a rubber tube I don't expect any issues. If I notice any rubbing that could become a problem I'll simply wrap the tube with tape to protect it.

(about 200 miles in), this hasn't been an issue and if you didn't know it was originally there, you wouldn't miss it. This modification, like so many others, requires a fair bit of ingenuity to complete.

The instructions require you to modify the stock air box if you have a 2010 or newer FJC, so we can't comment on how that process would go. The other required modifications, including cutting part of the hood hinge and heavily modifying your corner cowl

**Removing plastic &  
washer fluid bolts**



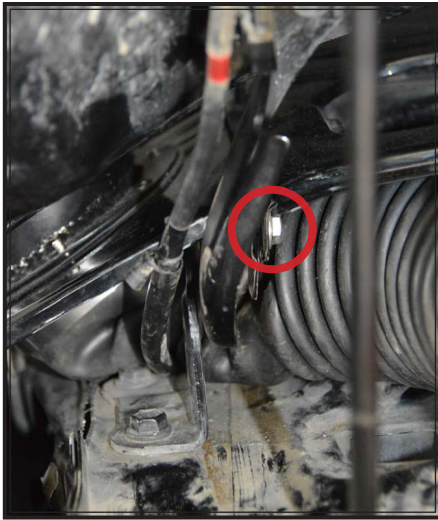
Since the battery is blocking access to the underside of the cowl, I opted to leave out the plastic box that the River Raider instructions require be cut. So far

piece worked as instructed. The overall install isn't terribly difficult, it's the finishing that's really a pain.

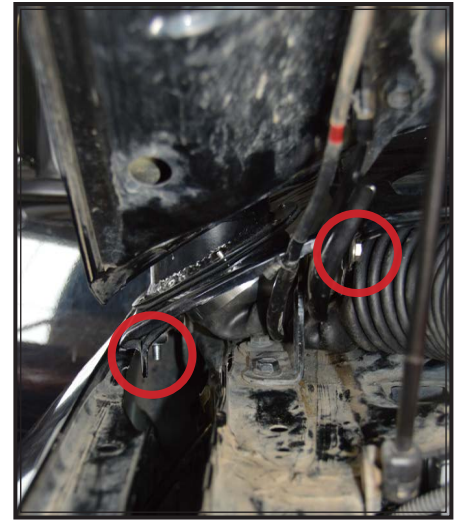
**Prepping the cowl according to instructions. Cleanup may be necessary before drilling**







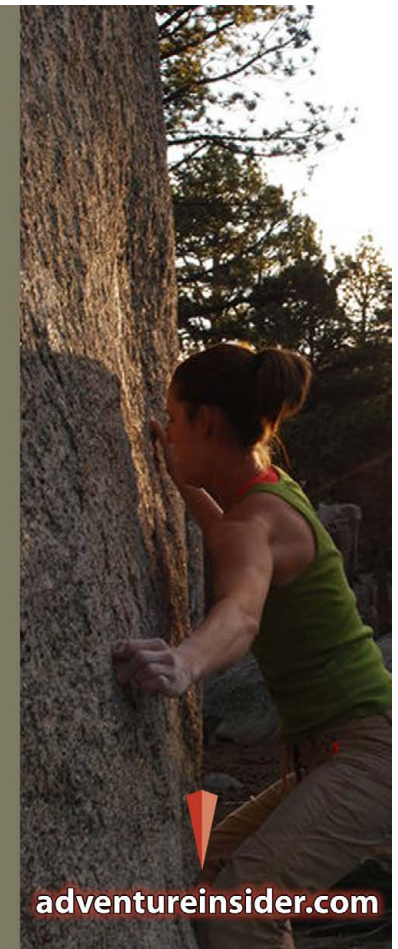
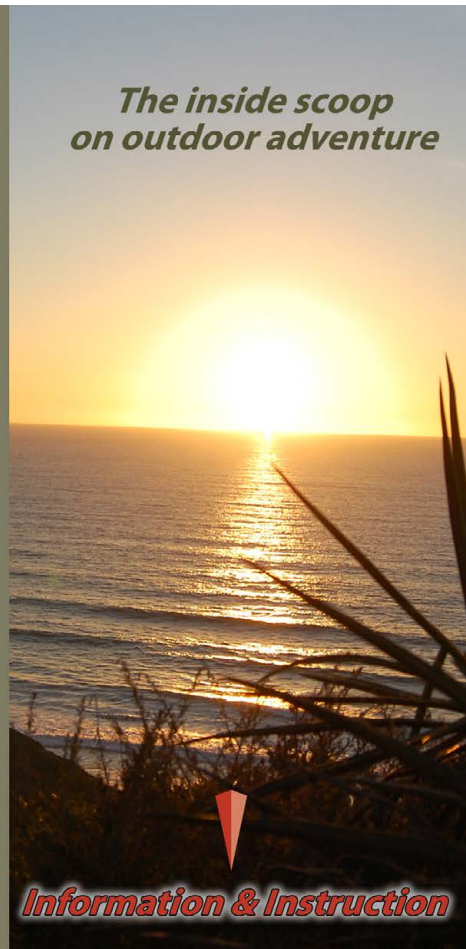
The under-hood and outside bolts (circled) are extremely difficult to install



The last steps include adding three bolts to the corner cowl to hold it in position. In stock form there are 4 clips that hold it to the truck, none of which have the force to hold it in position after the snorkel is installed. All three bolts (one on the inside of the cowl and two outside) are very difficult to install. The outside-rear bolt requires holding the top of the bolt through a tiny opening through the door jam, while threading and tightening the lock nut with a washer on it from inside the front fender.

This would be much easier with two people, unfortunately I was without help for this part of the process. It literally took over 2 hours for me to get that bolt tightened down.

One other point I need to make that applies to almost any install. If your truck has high miles (our TRD sits at over 93,000 as of today), make it a point to inventory and purchase the three or four types of plastic clips





you'll need. While some clips come out fairly easily, almost all of them break (either partially or completely) during removal of your fender flares and the plastic piece on top of the fender. If you have spare clips handy, the install would be much easier because you won't worry about breaking clips off.

River Raider Snorkel, but so far so good!

**SOURCE:**  
**RiverRaider.com**



Intake tube routed over the battery seems to work OK.

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# CENTERFOLD



Slavik, Megan, Addy from Phoenix, AZ  
sent this pic of their Muddy FJC. It  
looks like it was originally Silver,  
but we like the brown :)









# Warrior Products Front Bumper One Year Later



*By Tim Barry*


I have had the Warrior Products FJC front bumper installed for a little over a year now with no issues at all. The bumper has held up really well: zero rattles, zero problems with the powder coat, and of course it looks great.








About two weeks ago I added the Warrior Products Filler Plate to my bumper in order to protect the vulnerable area between the bumper and skid plates. Up until the filler plate install there was zero rust on the bumper, however since the filler plate was installed rust has been showing up around the top 5 screws.



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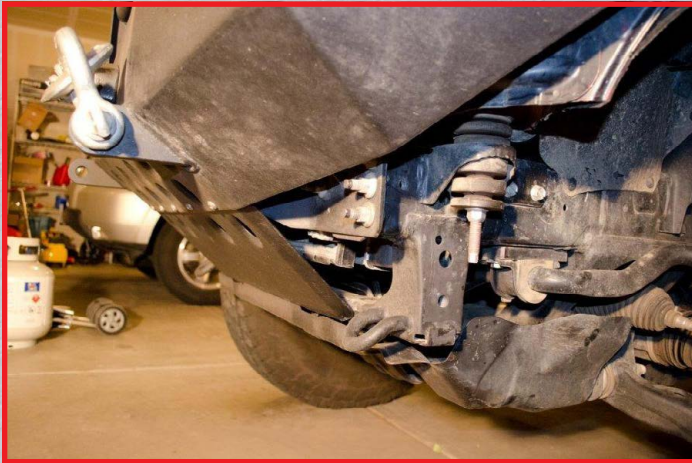
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Unfortunately the filler plate was not a direct bolt on and a little modification was needed. Out of the seven bolts only three were able to be installed without drilling. The top outside screws were blocked by an angled support piece of the bumper and the screw would not fit through the hole. Also, the bottom two mounting tabs did not line up with the factory skid plate mounting holes which looks like what Warrior had in mind. Drilling and tapping was required to mount the bottom two bolts. I'm still thinking about the best way to deal with the rust issues that have cropped up, I'll update the FJC Magazine Facebook Page when I figure out a solution. ●



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ALONE AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN.

TRD



# MAYA RALLY FJ CRUISER

By Steve Frame



The MAYA RALLY is a multi-week, multi-national, expedition scavenger hunt and challenge course. It pits teams of overland drivers in their own vehicles against one another and the elements. It traverses thousands of miles of variable and unknown terrain, enters rarely-seen locations far off the beaten track, and spans countless foreign horizons.

The MAYA RALLY is an overland adventure distilled to its most raw form: there is a start, there are designated challenges which must be completed for points, and there is a finish. Everything else is up to you. There is no route. There is no support. There are few rules. If

you break your will, if you break your body, or if you break your ride, you are on your own.

At a remote point deep in the forests of Latin America, at the farthest reaches of your long and perilous journey, we were received by an End of the World celebration in our honor, and if you won, you were recognized with a healthy reward. That is, if you made it. Although, I didn't come home with a trophy for 1st place, I did come home with a win and awesome experience in my heart!





My FJ Cruiser saw and pushed through whatever Mexico threw at her. She was my home ... my base ... my safe place to fall back to when times were tough and believe me it did get tough! Although an experience like this needs to be shared: basically I'm saying take a co-driver! Covering the amount of mileage on an adventure like this truly wears the body, mind, and soul out. The views and foods were awesome; the terrain was rough and the locals unpredictable. But that's Mexico. Would I do it again ... Yes!

First of all I want to thank my family for the support and the freedom to make an adventure like this a reality! Also, to all of the sponsors that found a way to take care of the teams that make our sport(s), hobbies, and passions possible, I couldn't have done it without you!

**Thanks again to all of our sponsors and family:**

Trey Frame—SPEED Energy

Bobby—Cascadia Vehicle Tents

Scott & Susan—S&S Custom 4X4

Neal Hollingsworth—Randy's Ring & Pinion

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Andy Moss—Black Rock X

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Frank Roush—DEI

Dr. Elma Bernardo,  
MD

Kyle Mork - ECA

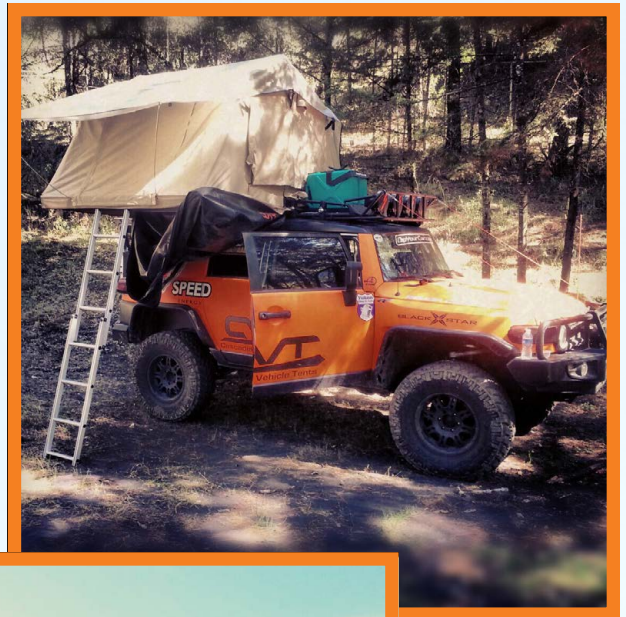
Dr. Jack Bernardo  
DDS,

Dr. Magdaleno Nucum  
DDS,

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Spot Messenger,

Dr. Alvin Castillo







## FJ Cruiser Specs & Mods:

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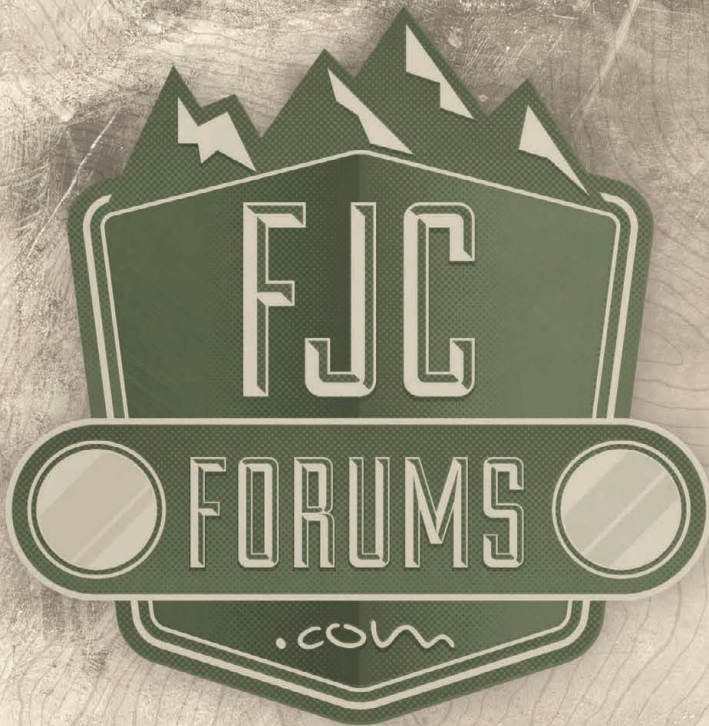
TLCA membership includes a subscription to **Toyota Trails** magazine, featuring in-depth tech and trail articles, event listings, TLCA merchandise and Land Cruiser classifieds.

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As promised in the last issue, we were able to get the new Redline Land Cruisers sliders installed on the TRD. I was cautiously curious to see how the sturdy OEM sliders have handled 93,000 miles and some pretty good off road abuse. So one afternoon I whipped out the jack stands and tackled the removal/install.

In reality this article should be more about removing old sliders than in-

stalling new ones. Not that removal should be terribly difficult, and in fact it wasn't – for 15 out of the 16 bolts. With 8 bolts in 4 pairs per side of the truck, getting the old sliders off isn't hard, but it does take some time. Luckily Toyota was thinking outside the box when they designed the sliders, the top bolt holes are notched so the hard-to-get-to bolts simply need to be loosened to remove the slider. The passenger side went great, the



**The Redline slider dwarfs the OEM option.**





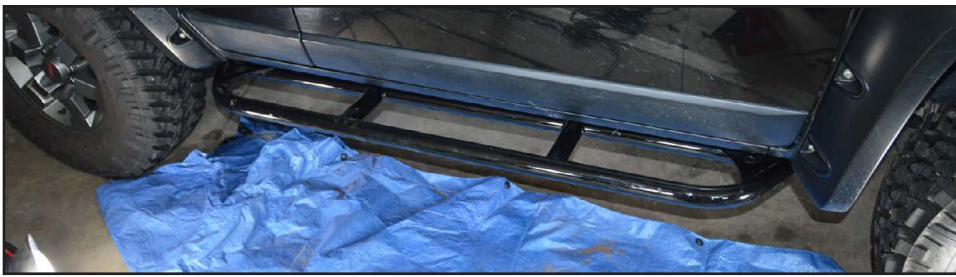
## FJC SLIDERS

bolts came right out (almost too easy) and I was able to clean up the frame before installing the Redline Sliders. The FJC just looks weird without sliders, but I digress. 16 zips later with the ratchet and side 1 was done.

The first thing you definitely notice about the Redline Sliders is the width. They're easily twice as (or three times) as wide as the OEM version, so the panels of the FJ will be fully protected, that also means you can use these as







steps front-to-back. I also really like the built in mounting holes inside each gusset. You can use these to mount rock lights or any other item you may need to mount low (crawl cameras perhaps?). At first I wasn't sure about the shiny finish, but after the install I think it looks great – it matches the <almost> shiny surface of the FJC. I'm sure Redline will sell you a bare or matte set if you ask nicely.

As quick and easy as the first side was, I anticipated no issues with the driver's side. Of the 8 bolts on this side, 7 came out perfectly but one bolt decided it wasn't going to cooperate. Apparently the nut that's welded inside the frame broke off after a very hard hit sometime in the

last 90,000+ miles, so the bolt just spun without budging at all. In the end it took Jim and I over 40 minutes of prying, banging, and eventually cutting to get that last bolt out.

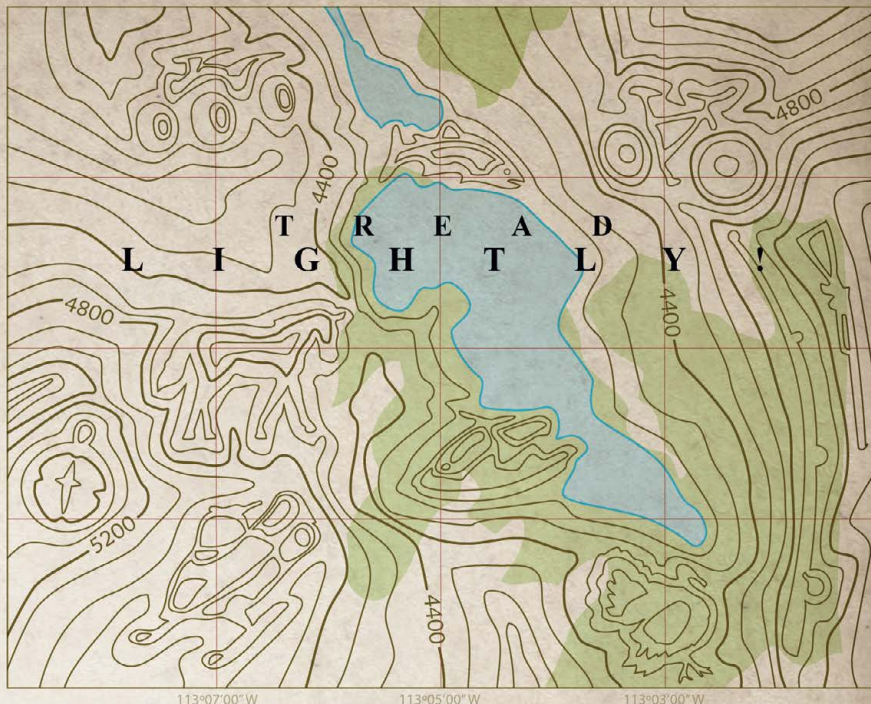
The quick 30 minute install ended up taking over twice that long, and I'm currently short one bolt on the driver's side. I'll be at Redlines shop doing some work next month, so I'll see what they can do to remedy the issue. We may just have them weld that portion of the slider to the truck.

So great looking sliders, providing outstanding protection and added features, for a reasonable \$449 including powder coat! These are a great option for your FJC.

#### SOURCE:

**Redline Land Cruisers**

<http://redlinelandcruisers.com>



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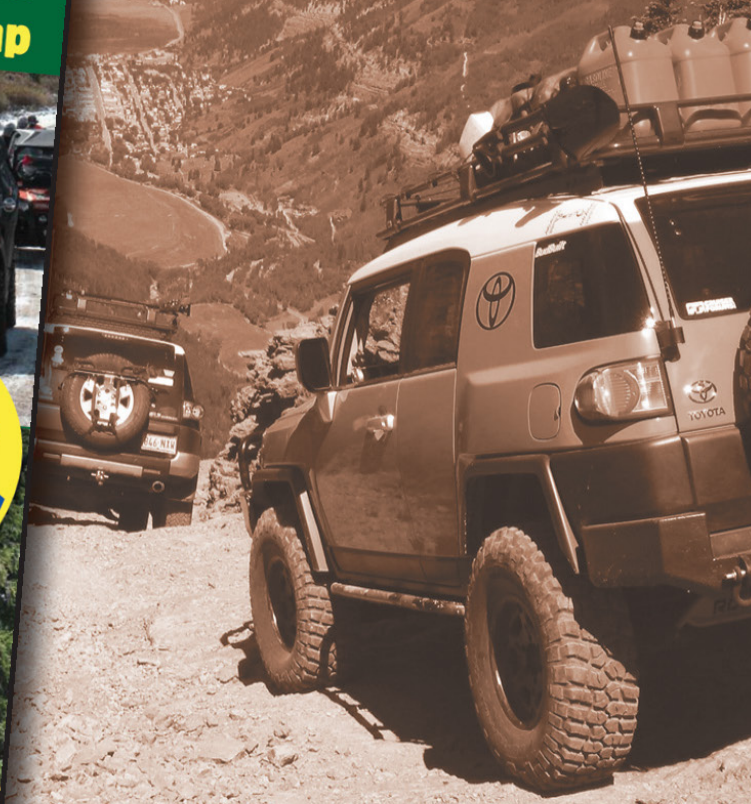
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# TABLET NAVIGATION + AUDIO SYSTEM FOR UNDER \$500??

When we first installed the iPad after removing our Kenwood head unit in 2011 (See January 2011 issue), our goal was to keep the price tag under \$1000. In order to do that, we had to go with an entry level iPad paired with a fairly expensive connector concoction of wiring that worked, but was fickle at best. A lot can change in three years. Although the iPad Mini is a great option for audio/nav replacement (See March 2013 issue of Tacoma Magazine), a GPS enabled Mini will still run you \$459 since you have to upgrade to the cellular version. For 2013 (as part of our Extreme Makeover FJC project) we wanted to prove that you can have a very functional, modern tablet audio+nav install for under \$500.



To make this a reality, we changed a few things about the way our system is setup. The original amplifier from the 2011 install remains, since it can be had for about \$97 from Amazon.com. We also kept the line-level volume control (\$59 JL Audio CL-RLC), although with the next addition it may not be necessary. To replace the issue with a dock connector (we went through 5 dock cables in 3 years), we opted to use Bluetooth as our audio interface. For this, we picked up a \$59 Belkin Bluetooth kit with a stereo output. Using this means you could do this install without removing your stock radio, and just using the Aux input if you prefer. The last item was a solid mount for the tablet, which runs \$49 for the ProClip.

So before we add the tablet, we're at \$264. Our requirements for the table include built-in GPS and Wifi, and at least 16gb of memory. To stay below the

**All the parts you  
need for about \$463**





NAV on the new system works great



\$500 mark we had to go to an Android tablet, but didn't want a \$99 cheap knock off, so we headed to Google.com/Nexus to check out the Nexus 7. The \$199 16GB model includes GPS, WiFi, the latest Android OS, and all the 'normal' features such as a camera, Bluetooth, and several sensors. Total for this install: \$463. Add another \$36 for various wiring and other bits you'll need, and you have a very functional, expandable, and exciting \$499 nav/entertainment system.



### We added a 12v outlet to the mount

We've been running this setup for a little over two months and it hasn't let us down yet. Sometimes the lack of cellular data is an issue, but a little planning to pre-downloading off-road maps makes it well worth the \$500 in savings over a similar iOS system.

We're still evaluating several app options for navigation, topo, trails, and entertainment. We're excited to try the system at the many different events we'll be attending this year. If you see our FJ, stop and take a look at the system. ●



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**JUMPING OFF ROCK, SC  
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