

Expedition Family

3rd Annual FJ Summit

**WINCH
COMPARISON**

Which Tire
to Choose?



Thrill on the Hill
2009

FJ C Magazine

October 2009 - Volume 2 Issue 4

On the Cover:
A VooDoo Blue FJ gets
tippy at the Third
Annual Thrill on The
Hill over Labor Day
Weekend.



CONTENTS

6 2009 FJ Summit

12 Expedition Wheeling: Planning

14 2009 Thrill On The Hill

20 Off Road 101: Which Tire To
Choose?



TECH

16 Winch Comparison

29 Ricochet Front LCA Skids

FEATURES

22 Featured Rig

26 Kenwood DNX-7120 Follow Up

28 New Products

30 FJ Cruiser Groups &
Clubs

31 Events Calendar



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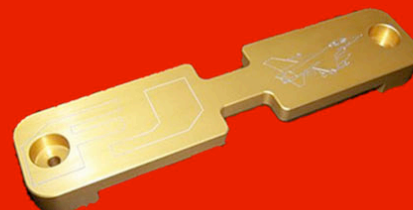
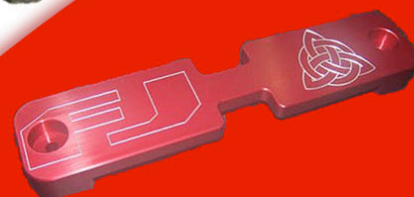


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From The Staff

This issue marks the second full year of FJC Magazine, and it's been incredible! We've been able to experience more events than ever and have met FJ Cruiser & Toyota enthusiasts from around the globe. We are constantly amazed at how great the community is, and it's still growing! The 2010 FJ Cruisers will start arriving at dealers soon, and sales of used FJ's are continuing to rise.

Our last issue was the most successful ever, achieving a distribution of over 6,000 copies in just three months. Traffic to FJC-Mag.com has increased over 150% since 2008, and we're seeing visitors from nearly every country on earth. It is through the good will and thoughts of the FJ Cruiser community that we continue to grow, and we thank each and every one of you for your support.

FJC Magazine stands ready to serve our readers through 2010 and beyond. See you on the trail!

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2009 FJ Summit

Ouray, Colorado

In late July nearly 200 FJ Cruisers made the trek from across the country to bask in the sunshine and play on the trails surrounding Ouray, CO for the 3rd Annual FJ Summit. Our trip this year began like the others, with the convoy from Colorado Springs to Ouray. We like organizing this meetup and convoy because every year there are people coming from all over, and we want to make sure they see as much of Colorado's great scenery as possible on the way to Ouray. The views on a clear day from Wilkerson Pass and Trout Creek Pass into Buena Vista are views you don't soon forget. It never fails, we always have at least one on the CB that says "That's it, we're moving!" Colorado is such a beautiful state and we like to show new-comers a good time!

After arriving in Ouray, the registration for the event went smoothly. The volunteers and organizers did a great job of keeping everything moving. It took less than five minutes to get registered and checked into the room. Again we chose to stay at the Box Canyon Lodge which is next to the Best Western (FJ Summit headquarters) and a little less crowded. Of course, if we had the deal that Justin from Stay The Trail had, we may have opted for the Best Western (he lucked out and got the 'suite' at the Best Western).

Once settled, we had a chance to check out some of the vendor booths. Our favorite newcomer this year was Outrider Suspension Armor. They have some of the toughest under armor available for FJ's (See New Products, Page 28). Digger is a great guy and his products are literally bombproof! Demello, Icon, Toytec, Metal Tech, OtterBox, All Pro, and several other vendors from last year were well represented once again. TRDParts4U and Frank Bonnet from TRD made the event extra special by unveiling the prototype 2010 Trail Teams edition FJ Cruiser for a private FJ Summit viewing. Overland Training and Bill Burke were also kind enough to give everyone great advice for trail driving then also helped spot every FJ down Black Bear Pass.



Running Black Bear on the first day of the Summit is quickly becoming an FJC Mag tradition. This year Justin from Stay The Trail rode shotgun in the FJC TRD and took some pretty amazing photos. We had a great group of drivers, so it didn't take long at all to get to the 'fun' part of Black Bear; the Drop Off. We decided to hang out with Bill Burke & Graham Jackson to get some pics and video of the FJ's tackling that section. We then headed down the switchbacks and managed to snap more than a few pics of FJ's flexing. Between Justin and I, we snapped over 400 pics that day, and still couldn't begin to capture the amazing views.

See the '09 FJ Summit Video on the FJC Magazine YouTube Channel

Friday night was 'night on the town' at this year's FJ Summit. A change put into place this year, there was no group meal served on Friday so that Summiteers would have an opportunity to visit some of the local establishments in Ouray. Metal Tech went above and beyond by sponsoring hors d'oeuvres and beer (along with the infamous Metal Tech pint glasses) at the Historic Western Hotel. During that event, Mark from Metal Tech started an impromptu raffle to help raise money for Rescue Tellico. The fund raising continued at the big raffle on Saturday, where Mark pledged to match the amount donated dollar for dollar. This great idea ended in over \$1,200 being donated to Rescue Tellico. FJ Cruiser owners really do care!



Starting down Black Bear



T2's 2WD Ti on Black Bear

Heading up Imogene



Graham Jackson of Overland Training talks an FJ down the "Drop Off" on Black Bear Pass

For the first time at the FJ Summit, we volunteered to lead a group over Imogene Pass on Saturday morning. Angie was nice enough to drive the first part, so I could get some really cool video of the ride up Imogene with our large group (Check out our [YouTube](#) channel for the video). There were a couple less experienced drivers in our group, but none of them had any problems at all and before we knew it we were at the midway stop. Some of the more challenging obstacles near the top of Imogene Pass have been cleaned up since last year, so the rest of the way to the summit was pretty uneventful, except for the absolutely amazing views of course! I took over driving on the downhill side of Imogene, once again with no issues. Everyone in our group did a great job of driving the whole day, we're excited to lead more runs next year. It is a lot of fun and a great way to meet everyone!



Toward the Summit of Imogene Pass
Photo by Rich (TRDemon)

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The infamous Saturday night raffle definitely did not disappoint this year! There were literally hundreds of great prizes given away, and it proved to be an amazing fundraiser for the event as well as local organizations. Tim, Seth, and the rest of the organizers and volunteers did an outstanding job of keeping things moving and entertaining the crowd. Unfortunately, despite my promises of great articles and coverage, we did not win the supercharger. Maybe next year!

For three great years the FJ Summiteers have headed to Ouray for wheeling, friends, and FUN. We thank the organizers & volunteers once again for their countless hours of hard work & dedication to make this an amazing FJ Cruiser event. We look forward to FJ Summit #4 in 2010 and can't wait to see everyone in Ouray once again.

Do you have a great story and/or pics from the FJ Summit? E-mail them to info@fjc-mag.com & we'll add them to the Readers Thoughts section of this article on the website.



Above tree line on Imogene



Lined up on the summit of Imogene Pass



Beginning of Black Bear Pass



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Expedition Family

BY LANCE BLAIR

[HTTP://WWW.DISABLEDEXPLORERS.COM](http://www.disabledexplorers.com)

Comfy in camp makes all the difference when facing another dirt road day in Baja



When it comes to expedition style travel many of us have that classic image of the solo explorer traversing dissolute dunes or fighting through dense jungle. In reality, it is more likely to be that other classic scene with dad screaming "don't make me pull this truck over" while the wife sits with her arms crossed and the kids in the back pinch and punch each other. Well truth be told, with a little pre-planning, some habit changes and a bit of post trip debriefing your family will transform into a laughing, talking memory making machine.

The first change to make is within yourself. You are no longer a husband, a father or a boyfriend. Instead you are a professional expedition guide with paying clients who want to experience backcountry travel. There is a pleasant lady and her kids and they may be experienced campers or complete greenhorns, it is up to you to find this out through your pre-trip interview. Just like a professional guide you want to make the route something they will enjoy, so ask about interest, desired trip duration, preferred time in vehicle vs. in camp, dietary desires and any other concerns. Then involve your family in meal and route planning. Make sure you research the history and culture of an area so you will have fun tidbits to toss out that can transform any old dirt road into the Emigrant Trail with it's tales of death, suffering and hardships. Your meals can tie into the route as well: bacon and beans match up to the Great Plains while Fajitas would be perfect in the desert Southwest.

Make sure to balance the time in a seat with the time out of the rig. The younger your kids or the newer to overlanding your family is, the more

frequently you should stop. Activities like taking pictures, jumping on rocks, exploring old cabins, sitting in the shade, brewing a cup of tea in the Classic British Style are just some great times you can have out of the vehicle. But like any true professional you will be constantly on guard for changes in mood, hunger and comfort with the weather. Another professional level practice is to make sure all persons have plenty of window space for viewing and ventilation. Nothing is worse than everyone else seeing cool things while you are stuck in a middle with only your toes and the headliner to look at.

It is always a wise rule to setup camp plenty early to ensure enough daylight for vehicle check over, meal prep, hygiene and campfire time. Depending on your children's nature they might enjoy having titles and roles like Expedition Medical Officer, Supply Steward, Camp Chief or Expedition Combustible Fuel Officer, that can change the dull duty of gathering firewood into a sacred oath not to fail your Office.

Hygiene means more than just washing your hands before meal prep. For wives, girlfriends, teenagers and even some younger kids, a hot shower and change into camp clothes can be a miracle transformation. A stainless steel sprayer with a RV style spray handle set on a camp stove can provide a couple of gallons of hot water which is plenty for a quick soap and rinse.

Our family has switched over to a Fire Dancer portable propane fire pit to ensure that no one has to suffer the sting of smokey eyes. Not only are we no longer carrying firewood, we also have eliminated the chance of insect or snake bite that can come from scrounging in the desert. Also here in the desert southwest there are often "no fire" times that would rule out a regular campfire. For our family there is nothing better than that time after a meal when you are sitting around a fire talking about what life must have been like back in the day.

Now that I have planted picture perfect moments in your mind I am going to risk the wrath of

children across our country by saying you should ban all electronics except navigation or communications. No music players, portable games, DVD players or other devices that allow your family to disengage from each other and the land. Of course there will be the horrible withdrawal of life without electrons but by making sure you are armed with some history, cultural information, stories of pioneer struggles, great adventures or other fun facts then you can maintain a steady conversation with a bit of peaceful quiet. My rig does have a near NASA level of electronic upgrades but they are all part of the adventure and open to use by my family. The ham radio makes for fun trail chatter with other rigs in our group or reaching out to distant repeaters if we are solo. The laptop navigation system is often run by my 11yr old, he still glows when I refer to him as the Official Navigator for our Continental Divide Expedition. And my wife likes to pick out classic books on CD from the library or to read short bits we can then discuss as a family.

Continued on page 22



Research turned up these emergency beacons on the Devils Highway.



Changed the flag on a Boy Scout Monument while traveling the Devils Highway.



The third annual Thrill on the Hill event was held this year outside Cloudcroft, New Mexico on Labor Day Weekend. The HQ headquarters for the event was [Camp of the Tall Pines](#), high in the mountains near Weed, NM. Nearly 70 FJ Cruisers made the trek this year, the weather cooperated (for the most part), and everyone had an amazing time!

On Friday everyone got registered and some decided hit the trail before the group photo. The town of Cloudcroft was nice enough to let TOTH participants block off the street in front of the historic buildings in town. The pics turned out great!



Photo By Angie Williams



Photo By Jake Quinones



Photo By Angie Williams

We wanted to take a second to thank everyone that helped us on the Upper Pendleton trail run at the Thrill on the Hill. While running through a puddle one of our rear lower control arm bolts came loose and fell out. Luckily everyone on the trail with us (especially Paul Bearce & his son) chipped in to get us fixed and rolling again. Paul happened to have an extra bolt & nut with him, as he's experienced this same problem in the past. Thanks to his (and everyone else's) generosity and good will, a potentially dangerous situation was avoided.

To avoid this issue in the first place, always make sure you check the torque on all bolts regularly, and use a good thread locker product to ensure your bolts & nuts stay tight!



Photo By Angie Williams



Photo By Angie Williams

On Sunday morning, FJ's were lined up at the staging areas nice & early. We were scheduled to run Upper Pendleton Canyon with a pretty large group. Brandon Burling, the organizer of the event, led our group up the trail with his trusty sidekick. After a dusty

drive to the trailhead, everyone got aired down and we were ready to hit the trail.

Most of the trail is very tame, with a 3/10 rating at the worst. There are a few optional obstacles that allowed us to test our FJ's a little bit. The most popular obstacle on this run was an optional tippy section that really showed how well balanced our FJ's are (as you can see on the cover). After watching so many different FJ's go through this obstacle, it's pretty clear that our Toytec Ultimate lift adds flex. While many of the trucks got very tippy, our run through the obstacle was a little more level.



Photo By Angie Williams

Continued on page 23

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Winch Comparison

BY SHANE WILLIAMS



Adam winches up the obstacle

We've all seen dozens of winch comparisons that usually conclude with "Buy X-Brand winch, because it's the best". We agree that if you're looking for a winch that you'll use three times a day every day, you'll want to spend as much money as you can afford on a competition-grade winch. The reality is that for most of us, the winch is an insurance policy that will rarely be used. However, on the very rare occasion that we need it, we want it to work.

The purpose of our winch test was to ensure that the various winches tested would work on a moderate obstacle. We looked at details such as: Pull speed, ease of use, perceived power (non-scientific), and best practices. We want to stress that our winch comparison was not an 'endurance' or 'show down' type of test. We wanted to show that the winches we tested (all makes and models) would work just fine with our test FJ's.

Once again we had great support from the local Colorado FJ community for this comparison.

Our test trucks included:

Ken (Turbo Truck) | Sandstorm FJ | Fab Fours bumper | Bulldog Winch | Standard cable

Brian (BriansFJ) | Sun Fusion | ARB bumper | Smittybilt XRC8 | Standard cable

Denver (Denver Hagar) | Black Diamond | ARB bumper | Warn M8000 | Standard cable

Shane (Shane4x4) | TRD | Aluminess bumper | Smittybilt XRC8 | Masterpull XD 5/16" Synthetic

Adam (FJinCO) | Titanium Silver | Expedition One bumper | SuperWinch EPi9.0s | Winchline.com synthetic

Nos (FJNos) | Titanium Silver | ARB bumper | Warn M8000 | Standard cable

And special thanks to Taft (MountainMan) for his help spotting & keeping everything running smoothly, as well as James (token Jeep guy) for his patience.

Our test obstacle was a fun little hill just north of Woodland Park, Colorado called Moab Hill. It's about the most difficult obstacle this close to Denver & Colorado Springs, so it was perfect for our test. There are multiple lines up this hill, for our test we used the easiest (moderate) line so we could have a good test. We want to point out that every FJ in the group could make it up the obstacle without winching, but the two shelves made a perfect test bed for a 'real world' winch test.

Most of our winches had to be set up properly before we could use them. It's very important to wrap the cable onto the winch under load before you try to use it. The common rule of thumb is to put about 500lbs (such as another vehicle) on the winch line as you reel it in. This will set the first wraps on the drum really tight so they won't bind while winching. Make sure you do this before you need to use your winch.



The test obstacle was moderate, but proved a good test for our winches

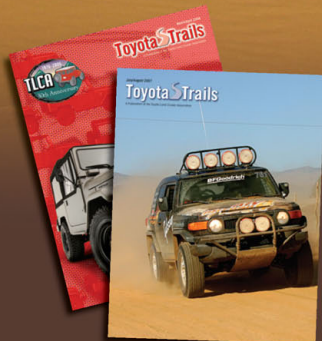
The first noticeable difference in the winches is line speed. This obviously relates directly to the amount of load on the winch, and the amount of available power (See Winching & Power below). Under load, the fastest winches were SuperWinch and Warn, which was expected. The Bulldog was slightly faster than the Smittybilt, but both winched just fine. The Smittybilt was noticeably faster when winching with only one wrap of cable on the drum (vs two or three).

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Winching & Power

When winching, always make sure you keep the RPM's on your FJ above idle. This ensures that your alternator supplies as much power as possible. The standard alternator in an FJ puts out 100 amps, which is a little lower than the 200+ amps required by most winches under load. Also let your FJ idle for a while after winching to recharge your battery. This is where a dual battery setup would come in very handy.



Synthetic line, such as this MasterPull XD is much safer than standard wire cable



A blanket should be used on top of steel cable to help absorb the energy released if the cable breaks.

How easy a winch is to use comes down to two aspects: The bumper you're using and the clutch release. All the winches tested had a similar clutch release lever except the SuperWinch, which uses a pull & turn release. That could be an issue with bumpers like the ARB that hide the winch. It takes a small hand to reach in to the ARB to move the lever. It's also difficult to observe the winch line being reeled in on the ARB. Both the Expedition One & Fab Fours bumper expose the top of the winch so it's easy to get to the release and see the winch reeling on to the drum. The Aluminess bumper features a removable door that allows easy access to the release, and good visibility of the winch. If you have a bumper that leaves the winch exposed, you may want to consider a winch cover.

Another best practice when winching is to make sure you leave one wrap of rope on the drum. The technical specs on your winch show that it's highest rating is with most of the cable off the drum. Each wrap/layer of cable on the drum decreases the power of any winch substantially. One way to increase your power on a short pull is to use a snatch block, this gets more cable off the drum so you get more power. Be careful though, on most winches, the cable is attached with a single screw and one wrap is needed to secure it. Since our Masterpull cable is only 80ft long, we mistakenly rolled too much cable out before winching. The screw held through the pull, but it ended up sheering off from the drum.

If you don't use your winch regularly, here are a few tips to make sure it's ready when you need it. At least twice a year, or before a big trip, re-wrap and inspect your cable for any damage. Replace damaged cable before using your winch. Make sure all your connections are solid and that your winch remote is in good working order. Make sure your battery & alternator are strong and not degraded in any way, since winching will test the limits of your charging system.



A snatch block helps get more power out of your winch on short pulls

Just like many FJ mods, the winch you choose will greatly depend on your intended use. If you're a hard core wheeler that will be winching 'regularly', a higher end 'competition' level winch may be better for you. This also goes for anyone that does many deep water crossings, you'll want to spring for a submersible winch. If you're more moderate and will rarely (if ever) use your winch, then a less expensive 'self-recovery' winch may be a better fit. Of the 6 test trucks in our group, no one had ever needed to use their winch for recovery. At the end of the day, every winch performed great and left no one stranded.



Ken's Bulldog winch easily pulls him up the obstacle

Which Tire To Choose?

With over 40,000 miles on our original BFG All Terrain tires, discussions of what our next tire should be have begun at FJC Magazine headquarters. A quick Google of 'off road tires' yields more than 300,000 results, so we won't find any answers there. Heading to the wheels & tires section on FJCruiserForums.com shows a little more promise. There are dozens of discussions on virtually every option. Still, the tire you choose is (like many things in the FJ world) a little like religion. That's true for us as well, our family has owned seven different 4x4 vehicles in the last 10 years, and we've run the BFG A/T tires on all of them.

Requirements

As we've grown in the sport of 4x4 driving and have attended many more events and trail runs, our thoughts on what make a good tire have changed a little. First, we want a tire that will perform above average on the street, since our FJ is a daily driver. We also want very good all weather performance. In Colorado, we drive through rain, snow, and ice very regularly, often all on the same day. Any tire we choose must perform well in all these conditions.

Off road performance is obviously very important as well. We're not into the idea of changing our tires every time we want to do a trail run, so we need a tire that does as well off road as it does on the pavement. While we spend much of our time on rocks here in Colorado, we've had more than a few muddy days in the last year or two. We want a tire that will perform adequately in muddy conditions, so we don't end up stuck somewhere with no way out. Our next set of tires should also look good. After all, our FJ is the branding for this magazine. A sharp, aggressive tread pattern is an essential feature of the next set of tires we choose.

Plenty of options

Luckily for us, in the last few years several 'hybrid' off road tires have been introduced. Manufacturers' marketing information points

out that these hybrid tires have great on road AND off road performance. New blends of rubber that wear longer and provide more traction promise to give us everything we want. Factory siping is supposed to help overcome the poor wet & icy performance of previous mud terrain tires. Nearly every manufacturer has some type of hybrid that looks great and should provide good performance. *Which one do we choose?*



**Open Country M/T
Toyo**



**Trail Grappler
Nitto**



**Mud-Terrain T/A KM2
BF Goodrich**



**Wrangler DuraTrac
Goodyear**



**Destination M/T
Firestone**



**Xterrain
ProComp**

Our Six Tire Options

We've narrowed the list down to these six options.

The pros & cons listed below have been gathered from around the internet, and are not guaranteed to be accurate.

Toyo Open Country M/T

Avg Rating: 8.2/10

What people are saying:

Pros: They're sturdy, very puncture resistant, plenty of great reviews

Cons: A little noisy on the highway, heavy, pricey

Avg Price: \$239/ea (285/75R16)

Nitto Trail Grappler

Avg Rating: Not Available (Terra & Mud Grappler

Avg Rating: 8.5/10)

What people are saying: Initial reports on these tires are very positive

Pros: Unavailable

Cons: Unavailable

Avg Price: AROUND \$170-\$200/ea (285/70R16)

Goodyear Wrangler DuraTrac

Avg Rating: 8.6/10

What people are saying:

Pros: Quiet, good hybrid choice, good rain performance

Cons: Little stiff, since they're relatively new, long term wear data is not available yet

Avg Price: \$187/ea (285/75R16)

BFGoodrich M/T T/A KM2

Avg Rating: 8.7/10

What people are saying:

Pros: Amazing off road capability, very aggressive tread

Cons: Not great in snow & ice, wear quickly

Avg Price: \$228/ea (285/75R16)

Firestone Destination M/T

Avg Rating: 9.0/10

What people are saying:

Pros: Wear well, inexpensive, heavy duty sidewall

Cons: A little noisy, not as much ride control as other tires

Avg Price: \$190/ea (285/75R16)

Pro Comp Xtterrain

Avg Rating: 7.0/10

What people are saying:

Pros: Wear well, good off road performance

Cons: Not great in ice & snow, a little noisy, expensive

Avg Price: \$243/ea (285/75R16)

So now that we have all the specs, details, and reviews, we can figure out which tire will be best for us. If you're thinking of new tires, which set will you go with? Checkout the poll at www.fjc-mag.com and let us know your thoughts. In the January 2010 issue, we'll reveal which set we went with and cover the install as well. Don't miss it!



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Another great morning in Baja, the propane fire pit warms up quickly and packs away easily when you are ready to roll out of camp



Of course you have been itching to hear some talk about gear and I would never let you down in that regard. Beyond the already mentioned shower sprayer, think like a professional and make sure your travelers will be warm or cool at night as needed. One fun trick we do when the temps rise is to dampen bandannas and twirl them around to increase evaporation, this is an old pioneer trick along with hanging damp sheets to cool a sleeping area. Once again you have a way to look like a wise expedition leader and talk about the good ol' days. Quality chairs, a decent table, plates that won't dump your food in your lap, cups that don't spill your drink on the ground, all these things and more are the details that make a great overland trip possible. One bit of gear that always makes my wife happy is a hammock that I can quickly place in the sun or shade as needed. She enjoys camp time spent with a book and the sounds of nature and that can make a huge difference in the overall mood of a trip. Then there is the fridge which makes sure you aren't faced with soggy sandwiches or soaked greens. And our shade awning is a prized place to hide for a lunch stop when the desert sun is relentlessly beaming down.

Lastly it is often more important what happens on the way home and after the trip than everything that went before. Playing a game of "Roses & Thorns", what you liked and what you didn't like can make the next adventure a chart

topper. Make note of the parts of an outing that your family refers to during the weeks after you are home. Was it the campfire stories, the old ruins, the hikes, the ham radio contacts or the cool animal life spotted? This information is part of your professional expedition leader database for future trip planning.

I will say that I do my fair share of solo overlanding, then there are some trips with only my younger son, both my sons and then those with the entire family. Each has its merits, but overall it is the sense that I am responsible for creating the same love and wonder of the backcountry in them that I have which keeps me focused during planning, on the trail and on the way home.

Lance Blair is an overlanding enthusiast, expedition leader, and Tread Lightly trainer. He's also the founder of [Disabled Explorers](#), a non-profit group dedicated to helping mobility impaired outdoor enthusiasts gain access to the backcountry. He's a regular contributor to [FJCruiserForums.com](#), the [Expedition Portal](#), and of course [FJC Magazine](#). Lance can be contacted through the [Disabled Explorers website](#).

Parked our rigs in a square and put up a huge tarp against wind & rain on the Devils Highway -El Camino del Diablo.



Photo By Jake Quinones



We were very excited to attend our first Thrill on the Hill, and can't wait until next year. Brandon and all of his great volunteers did an outstanding job at putting this event together. The best way we heard it described is that it's a very 'social' event. See everyone in 2010!

Photo By Angie Williams



We asked Brandon Burling what his thoughts on the 2009 Event, this is what he had to say:

"This was my third year planning and hosting The Thrill on the Hill. I do this on top of my 60 hour a week job as a sales manager for Desert Sun Toyota. People ask why I do it. I do it because it is the one thing I look forward to every year. It is the new people who are attending for the first time that I can't wait to meet and the people that I have become friends with over the three years that meet with a hug instead of a hand shake. We host this event so that everyone knows that they have a friend in the Automotive Industry that are here for them that can cater to their needs! It is such a great fun packed weekend of off-roading, live entertainment, great raffles, and great camaraderie. I hope to see you all at the Fourth Annual Thrill on the Hill Labor Day Weekend, 2010!" – Brandon Burling, Thrill on the Hill Host

Photo By Jake Quinones



Jon's TRD



Hometown: Apache Junction, AZ
Home Club: AZFJ
Year: 2007
Color: BD-TRD
Tires: 33" BFG KM2
Wheels: 16" TRD
Lift: 3" ICON
Shocks: Remote Reservoir ICONS

Bumper: Expedition One w/2-4" Kragen HID's and 2 Hella
Angel Eye Fog lights
Rear Bumper: OEM
Skids: ManAFre
Rails: OEM
Winch: Warn M8 w/synthetic
Rack: Gobi Stealth w/4 Hella FF50 Drive lights and 2 Hella
FF75 Fog lights (on the rear)



It is said that "what doesn't kill me makes me stronger", but that doesn't mean it leaves you happier or able to do everything you once could. However, we at Disabled Explorers believe that there is a peace and joy to be found in the wilderness, and regardless of physical mobility issues we want to help get you out there!

Our goal is to create a resource for vehicle based back country access by the disabled. Our motto is Adapt, Overcome, Explore and we are working to live up to that motto in the following ways:

Adapt: Vehicle modifications, equipment reviews, recovery methods, driver training, and more.

Overcome: Feature stories of those who are out there already, from amputees to those with spinal cord injuries

Explore: Trail ride-along events to introduce the disabled to the outdoors, presenting at land meetings to fight against trail closure, adapted trail guides and more.

For those of you who are currently able bodied, we could use your help with many of our activities while providing you with a chance to learn how to wheel with the disabled. Our desire is not to change the trails that already exist, but to keep them open so that people with mobility impairment can enjoy the same wilderness access that the able bodied have.

To find out how we can help you, or how you can help us, go to our website (www.disabledexplorers.com), email us at info@disabledexplorers.com, or call 602-451-6079.

Eric's BD "The General"

Hometown: La Habra California

Home Club: (TWA) Toyota

Wheelers Association

FJ Nickname: "The General"

Year: 2008

Color: Black Diamond

Trans: Auto

Tires: 315/75/16 BFG KM2

Wheels: Black American Racing

Teflon Mojave's

Lift: Rear Icon Springs

Shocks: Front: Walker Evans 2.5

Coilovers, Rear: Icon Monotubes

Front Bumper: All Pro 3 piece

Winch Bumper with Single hoop

Rear Bumper: All Pro

Skids: All Pro IFS, Transmission skids and Diff skid, Trail Gear Transfer Case Skid, Outrider Suspension Armor Rear link skids

Rails: Trail Gear

Air/Co2: Magna Flow 12 Volt Air Compressor

Rack: OEM Toyota FJC rack

Other suspension: All Pro Ultimate Rear Links and Front Sway Bar Collars, Total Chaos Upper Control Arms

FJ Cruiser Roll-top Console Cover

PANAMINT - brushed
black aluminum door
(pictured)

BORREGO - satin silver
aluminum door

URBAN - ABS
plastic door

Stainless Steel Locking Option
Available on all models

**Industrial
Forming**

805-658-3350

www.roll-topcover.com



www.702FJCrew.net
Las Vegas, Nevada

Family Oriented
No Membership Fees
Monthly Meetings
Weekly Trails
Group Mod Parties

KENWOOD DNX-7120

LONG TERM REVIEW

We've been using our [Kenwood DNX-7120](#) daily for over 9 months now, so we thought it was time for an update on our original January 2009 article.

On the entertainment side of things, we still love the iPod (iPhone) integration that we added to the 7120. While the interface is not as nice (obviously) as the iPhone or an iPod, it is not difficult to use and gets the job done. Every once in a while (probably more often than we'd like), the 7120 drops the connection to the iPhone. The error is usually 'Authorization Failed', so I'm not sure if that's an iPhone problem or a 7120 problem. When that does happen, I can still play music through the phone directly, but I have to reboot the 7120 for it to once again recognize the phone. The video integration is great too. There have been a couple of times when we were on the trail waiting for someone to finish a repair that watching Two Roads to Baja came in handy. There is always a movie or two on my iPhone, so it's a great way to pass the time.

The MP3 playback has become a source of frustration for us. In the original article, we discussed how you really need to organize your music for it to

work well. Unfortunately, if you over-organize your music, you'll quickly become frustrated. I created a DVD with 4GB of music on it, organized by artist then album. When I hit the RND (random) button during playback, I quickly learned that only the songs in the current folder would be shuffled. That means that if there are only 4 songs from that album in the current directory, it will only shuffle those 4 songs. In order to switch to another folder, you have to manually navigate to that folder. This is not the best implementation of MP3 playback I've seen. Luckily I use the iPhone 99% of the time, so I rarely have to worry about this problem.

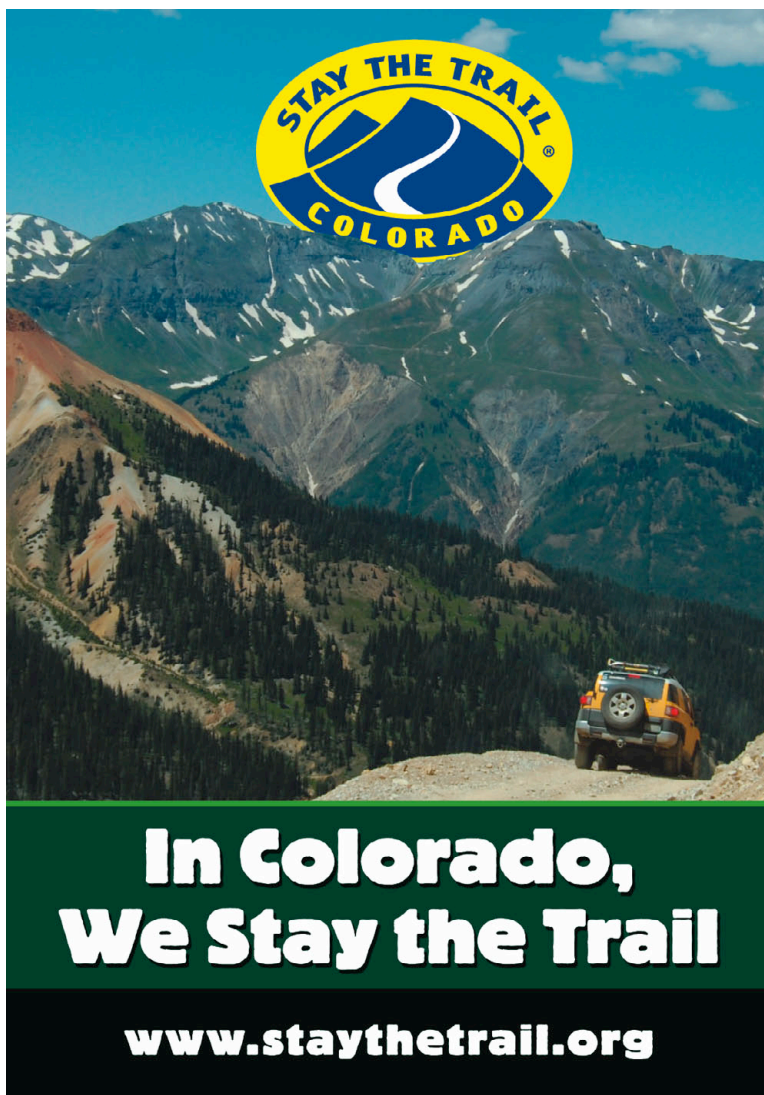


Topo maps on the DNX-7120 with custom TRD FJ icon

The built in Garmin navigation is the bread & butter of the Kenwood 7120. I can't explain how great it is to have custom maps for any trail we want to hit. We found a great resource at GPSFileDepot.com that has hundreds of free Garmin maps for just about anywhere. For our recent trip to the 2009 Thrill on the Hill, I found a set of topo maps for the entire state of New Mexico. We were also able to load custom POI's for the trailheads we wanted to check out near Cloudcroft, NM. One feature I really wanted was the ability to download the track data from the unit. Well, after a little 'hacking', I figured out that I could plug my laptop in to the 7120 and download the track data using Garmin's MapSource software. This will help us update all of the trails that we run so we have more accurate GPS tracks.

The iPhone integration got a little better with the recent 3.0 software update, except for one minor annoyance. Since the iPhone 3G now supports audio over Bluetooth (BT), if BT is turned on and the phone is paired for phone calls, the 7120 automatically activates the audio over BT feature. This would be fine except that audio over BT with the 7120 & iPhone doesn't work properly. This means that you have to go through several menus to disconnect the BT audio on the 7120. Again, this could be solved by either Kenwood or Apple, but they're just not on the same page. Still, the BT audio for making phone calls is better with the latest firmware, and it's very useful in keeping my hands on the wheel & eyes on the road.

Overall we're still really happy with this unit, and fully recommend it to anyone wanting a great navigation & pretty good in-dash unit. We've also recently tested the new [DNX-9140](#) from Kenwood at the local [Car Toys](#), and found that it supports custom topo maps as well. As far as we can tell, it's the only new Kenwood model that has an SD card slot. This is great news for anyone looking to install a top of the line in-dash navigation system. We found this unit on Amazon for under \$1,500.



Kenwood DNX-9140

NEW PRODUCTS

Rear Differential Skid from Outrider Suspension Armor

- ✓ 1/4" CNC Plasma Cut 4130 Steel Plate
- ✓ Hand Welded Joints both inside and out - All joints blended for smooth, hang-free strike surface
- ✓ Bead Blasted & Powder Coated Red (Additional colors upon request for additional fee)
- ✓ Built to tight tolerances for best fit
- ✓ CADD Designed and reviewed by Licensed Engineer
- ✓ New Grade 5 Hardware Included



From Digger (the manufacturer): This diff skid was designed and built with a few ideas in mind:

- 1. Clearance** - Some other diff skids on the market sacrifice clearance for protection. This diff skid fits flush against the bottom of the rear diff. The only clearance lost is the thickness of the material.
- 2. Ease of use** - Our diff skid is currently the only one on the market that allows diff fluid servicing without removing the skid. This is accomplished by guarding the factory drain plug standoff with a 1/2" long piece of 3" DOM tubing (1/2" wall). This provides the best protection without sacrificing accessibility.
- 3. Fail safe attachment system** - Our diff skid is mounted under tension and designed to be an integral part of the skid structure. There is no slipping or sliding into the driveshaft or 3rd member yoke. The drain plug stand off does not only protect but also acts as part of the attachment system.
- 4. Strength** - Our diff skid body is made from 1 solid piece of 1/4" HR plate. It is CNC plasma cut and bent to conform to the rear diff of the FJ cruiser. There are 4 seams that are welded inside and out to ensure maximum strength and durability. As mentioned above, it is put on and torqued under tension. This "pre-loads" the diff skid and allows it to also to act as a kind of axle truss to strengthen the interface between the diff housing and the axle housings.

For more information or to order, contact Digger at outrider@citbroadband.com

Baja Rack FJC Basket Insert

Baja Rack has introduced a new basket insert that will give you a little room at the rear of your rack to use. This basket does not increase the height of your rack. A stretch net is also included. Look for a full

option for your FJ Cruiser. It's not a full length basket, which means you'll have as much room as you like. It ships with an airdam and has tabs for up to four lights. FJ, so if you fit in your garage now you still will after this basket. review in an upcoming issue of FJC Magazine.

More details & info at
TRDParts4U.com



Ricochet Front LCA Skids

Although they're new to FJ Cruisers, Ricochet Off Road Armor has been producing skid plates for dirt bikes & ATV's for over 30 years. During the Toytec / FJC Magazine Fun Run in June, one FJ Cruiser managed to get a rock wedged in the open space in front of the front lower control arm (LCA) and had to be jacked & yanked off the obstacle. That's when we first thought of adding a little protection to our LCA's.

After reviewing all the top vendor websites, we found very few options for a front LCA skid that was lightweight and provided great protection. That's where Ricochet comes in. Just a couple of months ago they released their front LCA aluminum guards. They're very lightweight, super easy to install, and fit perfectly. At only \$129, they're a great way to protect one of the most vulnerable areas on your FJ. For all the install pics, look for this article at www.fjc-mag.com.

We'll be testing them out in the coming months, so look for a long term review in 2010. For now, we're happy to have this added protection. Contact [Ricochet Off Road](#) for more information.



These skids protect one of the lowest hanging areas of the FJ's suspension



CLUBS & GROUPS

702 FJ Crew <http://702fjcrew.net>

ATL FJ's <http://www.atlfjc.com>

AZ FJ's <http://www.azfj.org>

Aloha FJ's <http://s6.invisionfree.com>

Colorado FJ's <http://www.coloradofjs.com>

SoCAL FJ's <http://www.socalfjcruisers.com>

UAE FJ Group <http://www.uae-fj.com>

FJ Bruisers <http://www.fjbruisers.org>

Sin City Wicked FJ's

<http://www.sincitywickedfjs.com>

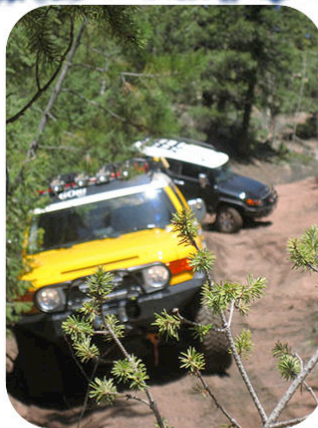
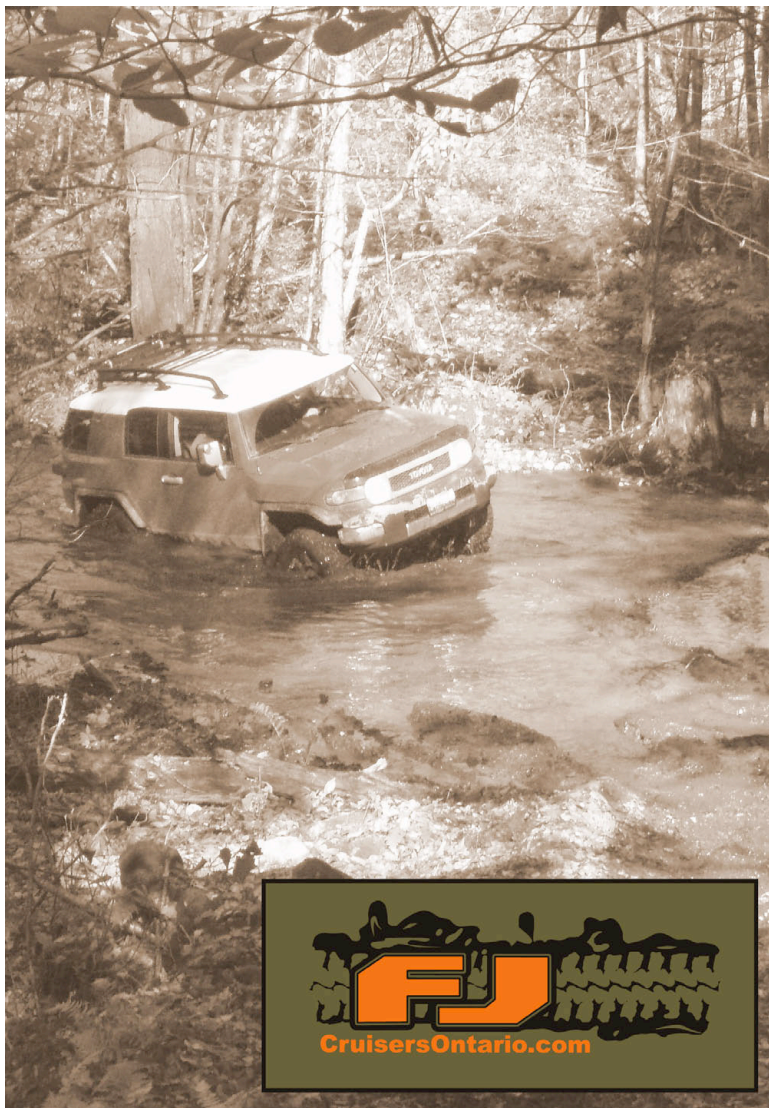
FJ's Ontario <http://www.fjcruisersontario.com>

FJ's Quebec <http://www.fjcruiserquebec.com>

NWFJCC <http://www.nwfjcc.com>

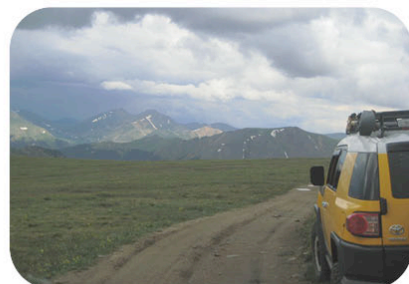
FJ Northeasters <http://www.fjnortheasters.org>

For more Toyota and FJ Cruiser groups and clubs, visit www.fjc-mag.com. Look for the FJ Groups & Clubs link.



Monthly Trail Runs
Trip Reports for all of
your favorite trails

Trail Conditions



<http://www.coloradofjs.com>

FJ Cruiser Events

4th Annual BBRC Fall Crawl

Dates: October 12-13
Location: Rausch Creek Off Road Park
Contact: [Bay to Blue Ridge Cruisers](#)

Southern Cruiser Crawl

Dates: Oct 16-18 2009
Location: Gardendale, Alabama
Contact: [Cottonland Cruisers](#)

8th Annual Surf N Turf

Dates: Nov 6-8
Location: Pismo Beach, CA
Contact: [Surf N Turf Website](#)

Lone Star Jamboree 2010

Dates: Jan 15-17 2010
Location: Gilmer, Texas
Contact: [Lone Star Jamboree Website](#)

2010 FJ Summit

Dates: July 21-25 2010
Location: Ouray, Colorado
Contact: [FJ Summit Website](#)

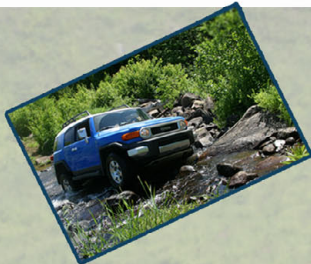
2010 Thrill on the Hill

Dates: Labor Day Weekend
Location: Cloudcroft, NM
Contact: [Thrill on the Hill Website](#)



www.fjcruiserquebec.com

Le seul club francophone de FJ Cruiser.



**The only french speaking FJ Cruiser club invites
all FJ owners to come ride with us and
discover our beautiful province.**



FJ Nation

*Have a great pic of your FJ?
E-mail a high-res version to pics@fjc-mag.com*

