

TRACKS

July 2019

Rausch Creek Summer 2019

Lisa Horowitz

The first Baystate-organized camping trip of 2019 took place on Wednesday June 26th, where Dan, Kurt, Mark, Lisa, Ethan, and Dave S. met up at the Charlton rest stop on the Mass Pike. Everyone trailered their rigs except for Ethan, who, in typical Ethan fashion, drove his jeep all 332 miles with his kilt on, and doorless. After we all found each other (which clearly was easy enough to do, with 4 trailered rigs and a bright Punk'n JL) we took off for the five and half hour drive out to PA. We drove down to Connecticut, then cut across New York State, where we stopped in Port Jervis. We fueled up at a gas station with a massive dinosaur and a half-working bathroom and jumped back on I-84 into Pennsylvania. That put us on I-81 for a while, and we ended up arriving at Rausch Creek at 4:45pm.



Rausch is a pretty unique place. The property is part of a former anthracite coal mine, which was active up until the early 20th century. It's a 1,700-acre property with over 40 different trails. They range from stock to buggy, and there's also a competition course, which is fun to play on, towards the entrance

of the park. I had heard about Rausch for years, but this was my first time going, so I had no idea what to expect except that it was one of the best places to wheel.



When we first entered and passed through the gates, Rausch appears pretty unassuming. There's a large dirt parking lot, and a small house where you check in, which was not open since we arrived on a Wednesday. There were some banners hanging up along a fence with sponsors and past and up-coming events. Some including Crawling for Cops, which was held two weeks before, and Eastern PA RC Crawlers NE National, which happened to be the weekend we were there. The little RC cars looked like ants next to Mark's stickies and it was kind of funny to see these little RC vehicles zooming around the parking lot next to our campsite and around the competition course in the mornings we headed out. The camping is all along the parking lot, and

primitive, minus the five port-a-potties on either side of lot. Rausch has plenty of available firewood, a lot of which has been left from previous campers. There is no electricity and no running water. Yay for Kurt's shower!

Upon our arrival, Kathe, Bullwinkle the Blue JK, and her friend, Barbara were already there, tents set up and picnic table claimed. The rest of us claimed our spots, set up our tents, unpacked, organized, got the rigs off the trailers, oh, and Kurt set up his shower-- complete with a wooden floor and hot water too! While we were getting set up, new member, Shane arrived, trailering his red JKU, and Dave C. arrived soon after, exhaust leak and all! We all gathered around the fire ring, set up our chairs, some of us perched on the picnic table, and hung out, ate dinner, and talked about plans for Thursday's first day of wheeling. We chatted and got to know each other, and everyone seemed eager to explore Rausch. As the sun went down and darkness blanketed the campsite, minus the glow from the dwindling campfire, people started heading towards their tents and trailers to get some rest after a long day of driving and setting up.



Since Rausch Creek Off-road Park is within the close confines of the Rausch Creek Watershed, a tributary of Pine Creek in Schuylkill County Pennsylvania, there are still plenty of active coal mining permits in the surrounding area (<http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Mining/BureauOfMining>)

[Programs/BMPPortalFiles/Annual_Reports/AnthraciteAnnualReports/2016/2016AnthraciteOperatorsAddressInformation.pdf](#)). Due to the active mining,

there was plenty of early-morning traffic from behind the campsite, including heavy machinery that's constantly moving equipment and coal up and down the road. By 5:30am, everyone is pretty much awake from the traffic behind the campsite.

Everyone started appearing from their tents and trailers by 6:45am, cooking over their camp stoves and most importantly, making coffee. The weather was clear and not a cloud in the sky, but everyone was prepared for it to be hot out on the trails.

Coolers were packed with tons of waters, Gatorade, lunch items and snacks. Mark make sure to bring his two favorite things: Kurt and DumDums, Kurt had his Epi-pen, Dan brought his humor, and I made sure to bathe in bug spray much to Kathe's disappointment. At 9am, we all headed across the parking lot and over to the main office to purchase tickets for Day 1. Once we were all banded, we were ready to hit the trails.



Before we headed deep into the trails, we all played on the competition course which we then obviously had to pose next to. It's hard to explain how unique the terrain at Rausch is, and while there are some man-made obstacles, the majority of the 1,700-acre property is not only expansive, but it has so much variation in terrain, as well: Windy narrow trails, water-crossings consisting of black coal silt, rock creeks a mile long, black dunes hidden in the midst of dense forest, tall grass and overgrown brush, steep hill climbs, class VI trails, powerlines, murky red-clay looking watery mud holes, and clear brooks to cool off in on a 96-degree day without a cloud in the sky. Occasionally, off to the sides of the trails you'll see pieces of history: open test holes 20-40 feet deep, fingerprints of a once-working mining operation.





The first day was a blast. Mark, Kurt, and Shane attempted some pretty steep rock faces, Kathe, Dan, Dave S., Ethan, and Dave C. navigated some large boulders and we all ended up wheeling together all day. We did split up occasionally, but the trails always come together, and we were never far from each other. After a solid 7 hours of wheeling, we made one last run through a rock garden, where Mark ended up getting turtled: The only cable Mark had to pull all weekend. Kurt, zero. As the day was coming to a close, and everyone was exhausted, dripping in sweat, and covered in mud and silt, we headed back to the campsite, passing through the comp course. As we were about to enter the parking lot, not 100 yards from the site, Dave C. blew a bead. He limped back to his trailer and put on a spare (which I could easily write an entire article about...), Mark flexed his buggy on the RTI ramp, and we all called it a day.



I ended up taking a post-wheeling nap in the surprisingly cool and shaded tent, woke up, ate dinner, and joined everyone around the picnic table and fire pit. We talked for a few hours, and then people slowly went back to their tents and campers to sleep, preparing for another fun-filled day exploring what Rausch has to offer.

Day 2 consisted of more wheeling and even more breakage. We all must have packed an additional 10 bottles of water from the pervious-day, after knowing what to expect temperature-wise. It was definitely a hot few days on the trails. Dave C.



impressed everyone with breaking not one, but two U-joints, his transfer case yoke, centering pin on his passenger-side leaf spring, and had a nice golf-ball sized hole in his transfer case. Oh, and his air compressor line blew, and his tow-rig also had a gas line issue, as well. But who's keeping track, right? I just know that I've never seen someone constantly need to remove their drive shafts like Dave did. We again, wheeled from 9am to 5:45pm and arrived back at the campsite, even more filthy than on Day 1. Did I mention Kurt's shower? That evening, we made a few friends from next door: a couple from Texas and their dog, whose friends had bailed on them. They came over, we all broke into teams of two and played Cards Against Humanity, ate a ton of cheese balls, hydrated well, laughed endlessly into the night, and made plans for them to come join us on Saturday morning.



Day 3 ended up being a pretty short day due to even more breakage and an epic torrential rainstorm. We got up pretty early, and those that were leaving in the afternoon packed up their tents and gear before we headed out on the trails. Ethan left early that morning before we all headed out, after looking at the weather. We all wheeled up until around Noon. Shane was determined to finally succeed at Crawl Daddy, so we made the trek over that way, where he earned his trail badge. We then did to Shoot the Moon and hung out at Lake Christy, did some pretty steep hill climbs, and headed over to Lunch Spot which then took us directly through Crawling for Cops.





Again, we all stayed together, but split up when it came to Rock Creek. I'm sure everyone's seen pictures of this pretty famous trail. It feels like it goes on for over a mile, and must be at least 50 yards wide, and it's just endless rocks on top of more rocks, on top of even more rocks. It's a pretty unique trail, and the photos don't do it justice. Mark, Kurt, and Shane crawled around the creek, while Dan, Dave S., Dave C., the Texas couple, and Kathe took the trail that runs parallel to Rock Creek and then cuts across the trail.





able to move, and Kathe headed back to the parking lot.



About half-way into Rock Creek, Dan got on the radio and said there was a pretty serious issue with Bullwinkle, so we cut back across the creek and joined up with the group to check out Kathe's blue JK.

Apparently, Kathe's driver side rear control arm completely snapped in two. In the middle of an uneven and rocky trail, and directly over a perfectly-placed puddle of murky water, Kurt and Mark lead the operation to put Bullwinkle back to together and get Kathe safely not only off the trail but also safely home to Massachusetts. The fix included cutting Kathe's hi-lift jack handle to create a sturdy tube, and then reinforcing it with a pry bar that Kathe just so happened to have in her Jeep. The pry bar slid into the hi-lift handle perfectly after "Texas" cut off the curved ends, and then the now-reinforced pipe was reattached to the two broken ends of the control arm and secured with ratchet straps. Bullwinkle was



Mark, Kurt, and Shane took a different route once we got back onto Rock Creek. We found some extremely narrow trails that seemed to go on forever. We made our way to back to the campsite around 2pm. Just as we pulled in, the sky suddenly turned dark grey, the wind picked up, and everyone scrambled to get their tops on their Jeeps before the torrential downpour hit. Just as we were loading up Mark's truck and buggy, the rain started. I barely said good-bye to anyone, threw a large bag of garbage in the front seat of the buggy, made sure I didn't forget the Pop-Tarts and cheese puffs, jumped in the truck to hide for cover, and we headed out to make the long trek back home. A few other's left later on as well. Kurt stayed that night and welded Kathe's control arm back in place.

Rausch was a good time. I'm glad I went and got to explore the park that I've heard so much about. It really is a place for everyone to wheel due to the large variety of trails and terrain. It's so big that you forget it's a park and it often feels like you're alone out in the wilderness. The entire time we were there, we only saw three Land Rover Defenders pass in front of us, and two slightly build XJs. The camping was fun, and the company was enjoyable. October 2nd is the next Rausch trip. If you would like to explore this place, start planning now. It's definitely something different and going with people who have been before makes it even better.



Second Time Lucky at Harris Mountain

By Andrea Della Monica

It's déjà vu all over again.

This is my second time wheeling and Harris Mountain on June 22 was a fun ride. My first time tackling the mountain in Granby was in the spring with a totally stock 2018 JL. (Yes, I am still making payments.)

Then the modest build began. Does red pin striping really count as a Rubicon build feature? If not, how about my self-installed red door hinge covers courtesy of Wild Rock 4X4?

Granted these are aesthetic choices, like adding a little blush and nail polish. I am quickly learning that you need to turn a few screws to get over the more treacherous trails.

It helped that I was totally overwhelmed by fellow Baystate members creations. I was awe struck by the lifts, bumpers, and myriad of other design innovations transforming my fellow club members' Jeeps into-- dare I say--mechanized monsters.

When I attended (proudly representing BSJ) at May 18's Take Off Your Top Day at Tanner Park in Copiague, New York, I also saw a blend of pretty versus tough modifications that appealed to me.



Before the June 22 run, I decided to get a little more serious about armoring up my JL for off-roading. I got a Barricade Heavy Duty Replacement Bumper, full length. In retrospective, a stubby design would have given more clearance but what was purchased and installed will have to do for now.

In addition, my JL is now sporting a Vehicle Recovery Electric Winch. My manual is dog-eared from reading the safety precautions many times over. Baystate's 101 gave me good insight about winch maintenance, including re-spooling the cable to avoid pinching and binding (even the words sound painful). I have my tree saver straps and heavy duty gloves and am all set.

Did I get to use them?

No, not this time. Still shiny and new.

My riding guest, who was also my personal spotter, wanted to stay on the green trails. With only 19 Jeeps at my count participating, we had plenty of time to take it slow and have some fun crossing some deep mud (thanks to the day's intermittent rain showers) and found ourselves alone for about an hour or so with our buddy Dave in his trusty 2015 Sahara.

We had met at the 101 and figured we better stick to together given our lack of experience. A great time was had as we swapped our novice experiences. I must say I was a little envious of Dave's compressed air tank. This man was prepared.

I would not say we were lost, but we were meandering about for a bit and with no chatter on the radio I figured why cause any trouble. It was like a game of hide and seek and allowed many photo opportunities.

After a sandwich break back at the entrance, a fellow Baystate member gave me a map of the property and out we headed out again. This time I took a few more challenges, rather than opting for the go arounds, and heard the predictable and

reassuring number of groans and creaks, which left me sufficiently satisfied before heading home.

Still putting other planned modifications on my wish list before the Fall Crawl. Stay tuned.

Adventures with BEV

Matt Janchar

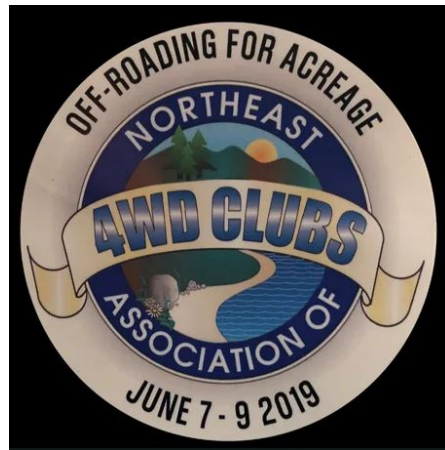


BEV's adventure for the month of June was the NEA Offroading for Acreage event in Barre, Massachusetts. The weather was perfect, the trails were extreme, and the attendance was HUGE! Over 200 Jeeps were there, filling several fields for two days of camping and trail runs.

Baystate Jeeps was represented by Kurt, Kathe, Josh and his family, and MattJ with BEV. Kathe joined the run that Kurt led to Ma Bell and the Summit, while MattJ, Josh and his family headed off to The Battlegrounds in Rutland. After a full day of rock crawling, mud-slinging and tree-rubbing, everyone met back at Felton Field for a huge catered dinner, plenty of refreshments and an auction of great gear that was donated by the many sponsors of the event.

BEV really loves the camp-and-crawl events since she gets to play outdoors for multiple days and meet hundreds of other Jeeps. The NEA events are always full of great wheeling, great friendship and a great chance to check out other rigs of all shapes and sizes. And best of all, the Offroading for Acreage event raised a lot funding for a REALLY good cause . . . more acres for wheeling!

For a short highlight video of all the fun, click here:



[<https://vimeo.com/341247093/b42941437b>]

BEV can't wait for Fall Crawl! She's already got her tickets . . .





Carl “McFly”

Fun Run

When I saw Gary's post about a run up the coast and lunch at a brewpub I thought, I'm in! About 12 rigs took advantage of the offer and we met in Salisbury MA. From there we caravanned north along the coast, through NH and into Maine where we stopped at the Shipyard Brew Pub for an awesome lunch. Along the way we got lots of looks and waves from beach bums (who were obviously envious of our rigs)



Wrenchfest at Kurts, 1.0

As a regular in Kurt's garage I've been on the receiving end of more than a few wrenchfests and being a firm believer in 'what goes around, comes around' I always try to find time to pay it forward. This fest involved a lift on a JK and in possibly the quickest lift install ever, the whole thing – springs, shocks, control arms, EVERYTHING – took maybe 2.5 hours. Crazy, right? Well then bucko, stray tuned for Wrenchfest 2.0 where we'll see if the streak can continue

Wrenchfest at Kurts, 2.0

SPOILER ALERT: the streak was broken. I couldn't wait to tear into a JL and when I saw Pat's was scheduled for surgery, I scrubbed up and signed up! Similar to the prior weeks WF, this was a similar lift on a similar vehicle. But that's where the similarities (and all references to the word 'similar') stopped. Unlike the JK, this practically new JL took all day. I figured without years of New England rust to deal with, this would go quick, but it didn't. On the other hand this was our first JL and there's a learning curve on anything new. The good news is, the lift looks AWESOME and it was completed without any real carnage

Ted Brown Wrenchfest Photos!





One Item You Can't Be Without...

1) Besides from a Jeep, BSJ required equipment, and a tank of fuel, what is ONE thing you absolutely cannot be without on the trails.

2) Favorite thing to eat/snack on/drink while out wheeling.

MDSRacing398: Kurt and Dum Dumbs

LisaH311: Dented Yellow 32-ounce Hydroflask and Quest Protein Bars

BlacknBlue-ISH: Humor and Market Basket whole Italian Sub, lettuce and black olives

Frank: My Helmet and Jamaican Beef Patties heated up on the hood of Mona
Car Jack: Speed and Power

JeepAddict: Common Sense and 4 slices of meatball and roasted red pepper pizza from Dean Park, and Twix bars

Modeler: Friends and Iced Tea and Pringles

Hig: Bug Spray

Cassandra: Chap stick and Gummy Bears

Pirahnah3: Duct Tape and Beef or Bacon Jerky

Kurt: Epi Pen and Pizza in tin foil heated on the manifold while wheeling

BlackKnight: Air

Blue Yeti: My Son and a big Italian sandwich

Carl McFly: Sun Screen and water with lemonade packets and PB&J

Stewartcloth6: Impact gun/ wide range of extensions and protein bars and granola bars

Marky: Electric chain saw and egg salad sandwich from Honey Farm

Fall Crawl Sponsors 2019 (In no particular order)



Battlegrounds

Harris Mountain Off-Road