



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

January 2006

A few months have passed since our last newsletter so let's get caught up.

The Florida Four Wheel Drive Association, Inc., was in attendance at Jeptoferfest held by the Ocala Jeep Club. It was nice putting some faces with names after exchanging emails.

We sold some shirts but still have a ways to go before Jason and I are free of the T-Shirt bins. Be on the lookout on the website, www.fl4wda.com, for links to purchase your very own Florida Four Wheel Drive shirt.

United Four Wheel Drive Association

United Four Wheel Drive Association, Inc., recently announced changes to their membership structure. In the past, clubs and individuals could join United apart from the regional four wheel drive association. In order to be a more effective organization, United Four Wheel Drive is now striving to be an "association of associations". What exactly does that mean for you? In the past when your club joined the United Four Wheel Drive Association, your club paid \$10.00 on your behalf and supplied

United with your name, address, etc., so that you may receive a copy of their quarterly newsletter (which is very informative). The regional or state associations also joined United for a flat fee of \$100. This created a lot of paper work for United which takes away from the true purpose of the association. United has a paid staff including an attorney to assist with legal matters pertaining to off road use. And yes, United's attorney has assisted the Florida Four Wheel Drive Association recently with issues related to Babcock Ranch and to the Record of Decision for the Access Designation of the Ocala National Forest.

As an incentive to join both United Four Wheel Drive and the regional association, United dues, PAID THROUGH FLORIDA FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION, INC. will be only \$10.00 per family member instead of \$15. FL4WDA will process all names and addresses to United. So to join both United and Florida it will cost \$15 per family member.

Please continue to support the Florida Four Wheel Drive Association as well as United Four Wheel Drive Association by

joining both organizations, our voice is stronger in numbers.

MLK WEEKEND CAMPOUT



For those of you that weren't in attendance, a great time was had by all last weekend at Lake Oklawaha RV Resort. Florida Four Wheel Drive Association, Inc., held its annual meeting on Saturday morning and was honored to have Carla Boucher, legal counsel and legislative advocate of United Four Wheel Drive Association.

Bret Bush, Recreation Director from the Ocala National Forest also joined us to speak about the very recent Record of Decision for the Access Designation of the Ocala Forest. The weather was mostly cooperative with exception of a flying tent.

The high points of Bret's comments were: ONF will be "Closed Unless Posted Open" and that there will be one day use/play area-Rodman Pit on the north side of the forest. The Forest Service hopes to have the signs up by March or April and have already begun to put up unmarked posts in anticipation of the ADP not getting held up in appeals.

Carla's presentation was very informative. Her talking points were:

file an appeal to the recent Record of Decision. This provides the FL4WDA with an avenue for legal action in the future, should it be warranted. "Closed Unless Posted Open" was a topic of conversation and United's position is that this is an unrealistic position of the forest service-signs can be removed, damaged, etc to which a trail would be considered closed until maintenance could be done. Carla also spoke of the National Park Service's recent lawsuit from the Blue Water Coalition. The best way to describe this lawsuit would be that this environmental group wants to ban all ORV/OHV use in National park areas (including Preserves) until a route designation is completed. For those not aware, Big Cypress National Preserve does have off road vehicle trails available, for a permit fee of \$50. It was enlightening to be able to hear someone speak about the issues facing the off road community and what can be done to promote the cause.

Carla and her husband Chris (along with her two children) were chauffeured around the forest by "Inverness" Jason of the Ocala Jeep Club. A big thank you to Jason for his hospitality.

There were several clubs in attendance: Ocala Jeep Club, Orlando Jeep Club, Matanzas Jeep Club, Extreme Jeeps of North Florida, Gator 4X4, Suncoast Flatlanders, Mosquito County, Jeepers Jeep Club, Florida Land Cruisers, Pavement Ends, some guys formerly known as Trail Rigs Unlimited, Legendary Jeepers, Florida Toyota, Florida Jeepers, Lakeland Jeepers (thanks for coming David). There were some folks who were there as singles but I think we all made them feel welcome. If I missed any clubs, please let me know

and I'll be sure to post it in the next newsletter.



Saturday night's dinner was superb (that's what I heard because I was stuck behind the table selling raffle tickets and didn't get any food-I won't complain too much). A HUGE thanks goes out to Big E-Ernie Prevedel, John (this ain't no dang hiking club) Warner, and Steve (ain't my buggy) Felder of the Ocala Jeep Club for all the great BBQ, hotdogs and burgers, cooked on GrillZilla. Thanks also to all of you who brought food to share with everyone.

The raffle after dinner was a great success. Warn Industries graciously sent not one but TWO XD9000 winches to raffle off. The 50/50 drawing was for \$135.00 and congratulations to John Warner and Bronco Jim, the winners of the Warn winches. Overall, the raffle proceeds raised nearly \$2000.00. Thanks to everyone who participated by purchasing tickets.



A few hearty souls stayed on until Sunday evening. A handful of Ocala Jeep Club folks stayed through until Monday and were lucky enough to see former FL4WDA president Ray Woo sink his only slightly modified Cherokee, along with his wife and children, along FR 77 in 4 feet of water. Along the lines of a recent FJOA thread "Bilge pumps are for sissy's!".



Needless to say, the MLK Weekend Campout is turning in to a great event. We hope that all of you make down the date for 2007 so that all the clubs in Florida can be in attendance. It's always been a great time for us.

Meeting minutes:
fl4wda.com/pdf/minutes_20060114.pdf

ONF RECORD OF DECISION

The U.S. Forest Service released its Record of Decision pertaining to the recent Access Designation. Nearly 1000 miles of trails are scheduled to be closed-HOWEVER, these 1000 miles of trails are mostly “snake trails” that full size 4X4’s do not use. Former president Ray Woo who was instrumental in the route designation leading up to the decision feels that these 1000 miles are not as critical as one would suspect. However, a critical point of the RD is “Closed Unless Posted Open” and the near elimination of Concentrated Use Areas. These are major sticking points because of the issues stated earlier.

If you’d like to more information as this issue progresses, please contact the FL4WDA president, Jason Kawaja, jason@fl4wda.com.

BABCOCK RANCH

Monica Monroe attended the Governor’s Cabinet meeting in November to state our position regarding the purchase of the Babcock Ranch in south Florida.

Babcock Ranch is a 90,000 acre working ranch in Lee and Charlotte counties, just southwest of Lake Okeechobee. A developer from West Palm Beach wants to develop 20,000 acres with the State of Florida purchasing the remaining 70,000 for preservation. Under the existing Management Agreement, ATV’s and motorcycles and other unlicensed vehicles are PROHIBITED whereas licensed vehicles (Jeeps, Toyotas, etc) are allowed. For those of you in South Florida, please watch your newspapers and TV newscast for information regarding Babcock Ranch and let us know immediately if you hear anything

to the contrary. Many thanks to Dan Stewart of Caloosa Jeeps and Richard Thorpe of Peace River Jeeps for keeping us informed.

With the purchase of Babcock Ranch, there would be available four wheel drive recreation in all regions of the state; Appalachicola NF in the Panhandle, Osceola NF in Northeast Florida, Ocala NF in Central Florida, and Babcock Ranch in South Florida. However, this will take a legislative push not yet seen by four wheel drive groups in Florida. The only way this initiative will survive is if all four wheel drive owners, even down to the mall crawlers, call and write their respective representatives. There are thousands of four wheel drive vehicles in the state, it is time we banded together with one voice.

....AND IN OTHER NEWS

The Board of Directors of FL4WDA is still in need of Regional Directors for Northwest Florida and Southeast Florida. Your responsibilities would be to recruit four wheel drive clubs in your area, keep area clubs informed of upcoming events, attend any Net Meetings, and attend some four wheel drive events in your area. If you are interested, please email Jennifer Hawkins at vicepresident@fl4wda.com . We also need a Membership Director. Russ Hawkins has volunteered to step down in order to allow the members of the Board of Directors to have staggered terms. Bryan Small has also stepped down as Secretary. Dawn Taylor of Ocala Jeep Club has agreed to fill the secretary position. This is your opportunity to participate in the decisions affecting the four wheel drive community here in Florida. Thanks to Russ, Bryan and

Jeffrey Fogel, our webmaster for all of their hard work.

The ByLaws for the FL4WDA have been amended. Please check the website for the updates-mostly administrative changes.

A 2006 budget and a year end financial are available. Please email Jennifer at vicepresident@fl4wda.com for a copy. Please include your physical address, club affiliation and club position if you would like a copy sent to you.

Annual Fees are due beginning now. Club Presidents/Treasurers/Secretary, when you send in your dues for the year, please send along a roster with physical addresses and email addresses so they may be forwarded to United Four Wheel Drive. The total dues for the year will be \$15 per family member (\$5 for FL4WDA and \$10 for United).

One other important legislative note, there is currently a bill work its way through Congress where portions of public lands will be sold to pay for Hurricane Katrina rebuilding. A link can be found on the FL4WDA homepage. Write your Congressman to state your opinion regarding this legislation.

To keep up to date on the latest news regarding four wheel drive recreation, please visit our website, www.fl4wda.com. You can also contact members of the Board of Directors via the website.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jeepers Jeep Show
February 18th, 2006
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Stuart Jeep
2755 S. Federal Highway
Stuart, Fl. 34994
www.jeepersjeepclub.com

Florida Jeepers Offroad Association
Spring Scramble
April 21-23, 2006
Ocala Forest Campground
26301 SE Hwy 42
Umatilla, Fl 32784
www.floridajeepers.net
Catered BBQ dinner on Saturday night