



The Forest to the Beach Run

20th November 2019

Report - Pauline Jones

Paul Gunton – Trip Leader

Greg & Pauline

Andrew & Hertha

Sue & Nicole

Chris R.

Ernesto & Elijah

Bob J. + Daughter & 2 children

Ian & Denise

Daniel Martin (Visitor)

Ian Andrews + 2 children (Visitor)

Wayne Smith + 5 children (Visitors) + a Dog

Starting time: 8.30am

11 vehicles (included Trip Leader) 14 Adults 11 Children 1 Dog

Morning Tea: 11.05am at 3 Hills

Lunch: 1.05pm on the beach

End of Trip: 4.05pm

The trip from my experience. It is a long reading so you might want to get your beverage of choice.



We left the meeting place after a short instruction from Leader Paul. We headed towards the Gngalara Powerline track along the pines forest. Another visitor (Daniel) was late at the meeting place but was able to catch up with us at the airing down area. Everyone let their tyres down somewhere under the powerlines.



Before reaching 3 Hills, we heard over the radio that a Prado was bogged. Since the stuck vehicle was ahead of us, we got out to check what was happening. It was Sue Mortin's Prado with an "L" plate for Nicole – wonder who was driving? The vehicle behind Sue was Ian (a Visitor) and he could not help Sue 'cuz he didn't have any front recovery points and he did not have the snatch strap to pull her out. Adding to the excitement, Ian could not move his Prado as he, too was stuck. This scenario reminded me of the January synchronised recovery.

Greg's Patrol was behind Ian's Prado, and so Ian needed to get out of the way in order for Greg to reach Sue. (I don't know about all these Prados??) Meantime, Greg turned the Patrol around so he could do a proper recovery and provided our maxtrax and shovel for

Ernesto, Chris, and Ian to dig Ian's Prado. Ernesto did a great job helping in the recovery – good onya!

Finally, Ian's Prado was freed, and he was able to drive on a firmer ground away from the boggy sandy track. The plot thickened now, Greg's Patrol was bogged and wheels spinning with black smoke and spraying sand. He was able to self-recover with shovel and maxtrax. Meantime, they've decided that the ground in front of Sue was firmer and it would be better to pull her forward than backward. So, Leader Paul came back to the rescue and was able to free Sue's Prado. Greg noticed that Sue's tyres were nearly bald and were road tyres.

After all these recoveries, we thought we're on our way to morning tea. Then, a sweet, gentle voice came to the radio "Paul, we're stuck". Oh no! It's Sue again. Leader Paul spent the morning directing and leading the convoy plus helping others get unstuck. All these goings-on before morning tea.



As we continued on this very soft sandy track, came the sharp corner where Greg got stuck during recce, and you'd think that he learned how to manoeuvre on that corner – no – he got stuck again but again self-recovered by uses of heavy right foot and a Patrol smoke screen.

We finally reached the 3 hills and had a nice relaxing morning tea on top of the hills. Leader Paul informed the group that if anyone wanted to play 4wd up and down the hills, they may do so. Chris Redgrove was so proud of his achievement climbing 3 hills. The visitor Ian tried the hills and was also successful in his attempt to climb the hills. His friend Wayne (visitor) was heading downhill from where we were watching. Greg noticed that in Wayne's vehicle, there were a lot of children not wearing seatbelts, and the driver also didn't have a seatbelt. Greg said to the kids "put your seatbelts on" and the father put his own seatbelt as the vehicle was starting to roll down the hill. It's very sad to see that there are people not treating 4wd driving as a serious sport.

The tracks towards Wilbinga was very dusty. We had 2 choices: (1) get closer to the vehicle ahead of us and suck up all the dust, or (2) leave enough space to let the dust dissipate. Choosing the second option might result on us missing the correct turn. Decision was made to suck up the dust and keep closer to the vehicle ahead of us. Along the sand tracks were few scattered rocky lime stone outcrops that did not cause a problem to the convoy.

On our way to the beach for lunch, Leader Paul warned the convoy to make sure we can see each other as the sand dunes were a “rabbit warren”. We found out that on every turn, there were 2 or 3 tracks in front of us, and failing to see where the convoy went could easily mean you were heading in the wrong direction.

Arrived on the beach for lunch at 1.05pm. So hungry, we ate before socialising while the children had a swim. Ian (visitor) even set up his bbq. We had a relaxing lunch, and at 2.15pm we headed up the dunes again to find a new way home. We just turned onto the dunes when we heard somebody was stuck again. Luckily, they self-recovered and we continued amongst these scratchy, narrow rabbit warrens tracks. We’ve been driving for a while and I was starting to think that we were lost. Leader Paul assured us that he knew where’s he was heading – gave us peace of mind that the Leader was confident and very positive that he wasn’t lost.

We reached another dune (the race track) where each vehicle had a climb. Almost all had a go twice or 3 times before reaching the top. We tried once.... Patrol gave up halfway. Reversed back and tried again with no success. So, finally, Greg check his tyre pressures. His original tyre pressures of 16-18 were now 22 due to heat. So he had to deflate it again and this time, the climb was a success.

I could see the boundary between the areas we were allowed to 4wd and areas that were off limits, and Greg and I were discussing what to have for dinner, when suddenly boom! My bum left the seat and my head nearly hit the ceiling of the Patrol. Thanks to our Stratos chairs with good springs, my spine was saved but I was lifted out of my seat. I complained to the Leader that he failed to warn us about that deep hole and he said he didn’t feel it. The track to home was so full of wombat holes that I thought I lost 10 kilos just sitting, bouncing, and hanging on for my dear life. Greg said “lucky that Paul didn’t charge you for weight lost”.

We finally reached the airing up ground. As I got out of the truck, I could barely walk. I staggered ‘a la’ ‘John Wayne’ walk to say goodbye to the group.

My final assessment of this trip: It was a trip with Paul Gunton’s signature – it’s fun, exciting, challenging, tough hills to climb, awesome, and a relaxing day out. If you are an addict to challenging 4wd driving, watch out for trips run by Paul. Last but not least, Andrew and Hertha did a magnificent job as Tail End Charlies (our Guardian Angels at the rear).

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