

Jan. 31, 2009 by Christina Evelo

Snow Wheeling to Garden Point (almost...)

Curtis and Christina Evelo and their children Brittany (11), Justin (8), Megan (5) and Madisyn (3) loaded up the Big Black 'Burban and headed for the meeting point just up the road at the Cross Roads Travel Center.



Waiting there were Jeff and Diane McGill and Jim Younkin. Shortly after, Steve Knudson (a friend of Curtis') and his girlfriend, Brittany arrived.

Just after 9am we all headed west on I-90. The wind was blowing so hard that we felt the Big Black 'Burban being pushed around. I couldn't imagine how the guys in the Jeeps felt!



We took the Petty Creek exit off of I-90 at Alberton. We stayed on Petty Creek Road until we reached the Garden Point Trail Head, just past Mike's Creek. After lowering the air pressure in all 16 tires, we were ready to see how far our "FEARLESS LEADER" (as Jim called Curtis) could get us off of the beaten path. We were busting through about 2 feet of snow with 3 - 3 1/2 feet in some areas. The snow had a thick 'crust' over the softer 'fluffy' snow. The bigger vehicles had a hard time staying on the 'top' whereas the Jeeps could keep somewhat afloat. With the Big Black 'Burban breaking trail, we carved our way several miles up the mountain toward Garden Point.

JEFF TO THE RESCUE! Our first stuck! Steve and Brittany



Steve was making it work with *'his'* Brittany's help. We voted her passenger of the day! She had to hold the 4WD shifter into 4 low to keep it from slipping out due to the shifter hitting the floor pan. On our lunch break, that problem was fixed with a pair of side dikes, channel locks and a hammer. Voila!



Curtis making a run at the switch-back. The snowmobile tracks were causing some 'rut-grabbin'.



Being on the sunny side of the mountain caused the crust of the snow to be harder and deeper, making it a bit tougher to break through. Also with the trail becoming steeper it was difficult to maintain momentum through the deep snow.



The trail made a switch back, got steeper, the snow got deeper, and we were digging through the snow to ice. Needless to say, this made the decision to back our way down the trail. Jeff thought we should try a side trail that wasn't near as steep that would lead

us into a campsite (not that we were planning to camp!). The only problem was, the snow got REALLY deep!



The Big Black 'Burban got STUCK! Jeff made some tow strap attempts, but the ice caused the BEAST not to budge. Jim had the trusty winch raring to go. It took Jeff's Jeep to be anchored to Jim's to pull the weight of the 'Burban out of the deep snow. All that fun made for some HUNGRY tummies. The kids got out to play, and Jim and Jeff demonstrated their CRAFTY skills on how to build a fire...

#1 Dig a hole in the snow, and neatly pile the wood.



#2 Dip a cotton ball in Vaseline and light



#3 Stand back!



#4 ENJOY!



Megan & Madisyn Evelo

And we all enjoyed lunch.



We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful sunny winter day. After our tummies were full and the fire was out, we headed back to the trailhead. The Evelos, Jeff, Diane, Steve and Brittany decided to continue on Petty Creek Road toward Hwy 12. Jim decided to head back the way we came from as this was closer to home.

A great end to the wonderful day was at the Lumberjack Saloon. We sat down with tater tots and hot chocolate and discussed MANY future trips.



Jeff heading into the JACK

THE END