

June 9, 2012 Telephone Butte run (Watson Children's shelter **pre-run**)

The MTBR4x4 club decided to have a pre-run of the Telephone Butte trail on June 9th in order to do the majority of trail clearing before the June 16th run with children from Watson's. Jason Summerfield, Dick Riebe, Steve Gehring, and guest Jordan Summerfield met at the base of Blue Mountain road at 9:00 am. Shortly after starting up the road Jason's CB started to function poorly. He noticed that his antenna had come loose, so he stopped to tighten it. It still didn't work well for the rest of the trip.

The drive to the saddle was rather uneventful, and there was not much traffic on the road. From the saddle we started up the jeep trail, stopping periodically to pick up trash, and clear some smaller trees from the road. Several miles further up the road we encountered a large tree across the road in the middle of a mud hole. People had been driving around it, and tearing up the land around the hole. We decided to attempt to cut the tree and winch it out of the way. Jason drove around the tree, and turned around while Dick, Steve, and Jordan began cutting the tree and looking at possible rigging opportunities. Jason started to pull out his winch cable, and everyone noticed that somehow the drum end of his cable had come loose from his cheap Harbor Freight winch. Luckily, the screw was still lying nearby, and he was able to re-attach it with some help from Steve. Once the winch was back in order and it was connected to a tree strap Dick put his jacket on the line. Safety first! Jason was able to use his little 6,000 lb winch to pull the tree parallel to the road. We limbed the tree and left it along side the road and out of the way.

The next few miles were more of the same, and larger trees here and there were removed. Others were left as obstacles for the trip with the kids. Jason and Jordan saw a bear in the road at one point. They could not get a great view of its face or back to determine what kind it was. At this point it was lunch time and we started looking for a place to have lunch. We found a nice place to pull off of the road, and had some great conversation while eating.

After lunch we started up the hill again, only now it was snowing lightly. This should have foreshadowed what was yet to come. As Jason rounded a corner he saw a stretch of road that was drifted in. He made several attempts at the three foot deep drift before Jordan got out the shovel and started to dig a trail. Jason's rear locker appeared to be intermittently working in this stretch for some reason. In the end the locker didn't matter that much. After a dozen or so attempts, Jason made it through the first set of drifts. Several drifts that weren't quite as bad later and we were on our way again.

We continued on to the top of the hill, but were soon stopped by a lot of snow on the downhill side of north face. We saw that because this was approximately the same area the kids went to last year, we would do the same this year. We turned around and Dick led the way out. On the way down we encountered several motorcycles, a pickup truck, and a Land Cruiser. We all stopped at the saddle near the lookout, and the guy with the pickup showed up shortly after. He told us that he was on the trail because he was reading a book that was telling him about 4x4 trails in Montana. I wonder whose book

that could be? We gave him a club card, and encouraged him to check out our web site. At this point we all said our farewells, and headed down the mountain to go home.