

Run Report
Miller Jeep Trail
05/09/2026

Participants:

Members

- Jeff and Gina Stubbert (Run Leader)
- Dave Mauer
- Danny and Linda Ward
- Bill Schopper
- Gary Alexander
- Gerhard, Kat, and Robbie Liebel
- Jim Haley
- Tim Thomas

Guests

- Cam Grieg
- Enrique Silva

The Short Version – On Saturday, May 9th, our club enjoyed a fun run on Gold Mountain Trail in Big Bear, California. We had a great group of 10 vehicles—eight Jeeps of all kinds and two Toyotas (one belonging to our President Tim Thomas). After meeting up in the Fawnskin Fire Station parking lot, we headed over to the Gold Mountain trailhead and made our way through the trail with a little spotting here and there. When Gold Mountain was done, part of the group called it a day, while the rest kept the adventure going with a run on John Bull before heading down the mountain. That bonus stretch gave two club members the opportunity to earn cowbells. Read the longer version below for the full story.

The Long Version and Gold Mountain

We arrived at the Fawnskin Fire Station to perfect spring weather, which set the tone for a great day on the trail. After a quick driver's meeting and radio check, we headed down the road to the Gold Mountain trailhead. As always, we took a little time to air down, catch up, and admire each other's rigs—no matter how many times we've seen them before. This was also the moment Bill showed off his shiny new rims, which would definitely get a proper introduction to the rocks before the day was over.

As run leader, I had the honor of being the first up to the gatekeeper, and that's where my own adventure started. At first, I couldn't get the Jeep into 4WD, and then the lockers didn't want to cooperate either. After a quick backup and another try, everything finally worked as it should. From there, the rest of the group made their way through the rocks, with just a short delay as we all picked our lines.

Somewhere around the first or second waterfall, our guest Enrique lost the front bumper valance on his Toyota Tacoma. Once we reached the boneyard, we decided to take the alternate route before merging back with the traditional route a little farther along. For anyone who hasn't been there, the boneyard is a football-field-sized stretch of loose rocks about the size of baseballs. That climb gave Bill's new rims a very thorough break-in. I didn't inspect too closely, but I did notice that at least three wheels were nicely "seasoned" and properly prepared for his summer Rubicon trip. Despite a few exciting moments, no cowbells were earned on Gold Mountain.

On to John Bull –

After lunch near the end of Gold Mountain Trail, about half the group decided to call it a day and head home. The rest of us figured it was still early enough for a run on John Bull. Since I had no idea how to get to John Bull from there, Dave Mauer stepped up and led the way. As expected, Dave, Bill, Gerhard, Tim, Gary, and our guest Cam all made it cleanly through the gatekeeper without any drama. I, on the other hand, had a little more trouble. No matter how many times I tried the same line, I kept high-centering. After a few attempts, I finally decided it was time for a winch forward instead of another backward tug—and with that, I earned myself a coveted cowbell.

The trail definitely lived up to its reputation and gave us several fun challenges along the way, including one rock garden where Gerhard earned a cowbell of his own. Somehow, the little assist Bill gave him didn't quite make it onto the radio, but as always, those stories have a way of coming out by the end of the day. Our guest Cam also had a close call when his Jeep ended up leaning against the famous leaning tree. Fortunately, whether it was excellent driving, excellent luck, or a little of both, he avoided any damage. His roof rack landed in exactly the right spot to keep the hardtop and window safely off the tree.

From there, it was smooth sailing all the way back to the blacktop.